

Balkans to distract their people from internal crises by raising the banner of war to “protect” and “liberate” their ethnic kinsmen who formed minorities in adjacent countries. This was the basis for the Second Balkan War of 1913, and the 1914 Serbian drive to “liberate” Austrian-held Bosnia, which created the matrix for the Sarajevo assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand, which triggered World War I.

The parallels to today, where the bankruptcy of Serbia acts as a driving force in its war of conquest, are striking. Serbia is striving to conquer and annex economically lucrative areas. Slavonia, for example, has the only oil and gas deposits in Yugoslavia. Another objective is the southern half of Croatia’s Dalmatian coastal region, Yugoslavia’s major source of foreign exchange earned from tourism. Not accidentally, the Serbian attacks of Sept. 10-12 were aimed at cutting off southern Dalmatia. This was preliminarily achieved on Sept. 11, when the vital bridge at Maslenica, on the coast, southern Dalmatia’s only link to the rest of Croatia, was attacked and forced to close. On the third front, the Banija region, southeast of Zagreb, economic considerations also play a major role. A primary Serbian objective there is the vital rail and road junction of Sisak, which also houses one of the two largest oil refineries of Croatia.

The Carrington “peace conference” process has sabotaged any early European recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, and any near future chance for effective measures against the Milosevic regime. It has officially opened the door for redrawing the internal borders. The “peace conference” began on an ominous note, by accepting the negotiating guidelines set by a “Yugoslav Presidential Commission” which, acting as a front for Serbia, called for the “fate of Yugoslavia” to be decided by “the freely expressed will of the six nations,” and specified the admissibility of border changes through negotiations, corresponding to the “will” of a “nation.” In Yugoslav parlance, “nations” is limited to the dominant ethnic group of each republic, referring, for example, not to Serbia or Croatia, but to Serbs and Croats. Otherwise, the “nations” are the Slovenes, the Montenegrins, the Macedonians, and the Bosnians. The definition explicitly omits Albanians and Hungarians, who are listed as “national minorities,” and therefore rules out any changes within Serbia, concerning the regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina.

This little-noticed declaration, which opens the door for redrawing the map in the republics of Bosnia and Croatia, where the Serbian “nation” is numerically strong, was warmly endorsed by Serbia’s Milosevic, and rejected by Croatia.

While the “peace conference” deliberates, and in Carrington’s words, attempts to “find a joint basis” for a solution, 25-30% of Croatia will remain occupied by Serbian forces. The “peace conference” opened with an EC declaration, signed by the foreign ministers of the six Yugoslav republics, agreeing that there should be “no border changes without negotiations.” Thus, border changes through negotiations—the Serbian position—have now been legitimized.

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## Interview: Michael Montillo, Antun Irek

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# ‘Anti-Semitic slander supports genocide!’

*Michael Montillo is deputy foreign minister of Croatia. A Sephardic Jew, a partisan during World War II, and awarded the Knighthood of the Italian Republic in 1982, Montillo strongly rejects the slander that Croatians are anti-Semitic and “Ustashi” (Nazi collaborators). “It is a campaign conducted to justify the genocide against our people. It is totally false and people should learn history not rumors.”*

*Montillo talked to EIR from Zagreb’s Dubrovnik Hotel, where he was expressing support to a Jewish-American citizen of Croatian extraction, Antun Irek, who has been on hunger strike since Aug. 29. Mr. Irek, a piano teacher with 200 very young pupils in Los Angeles, is not the only example of international solidarity for the Croatian cause. Several foreign citizens who were vacationing in Croatia joined the defense of the republic when they saw the horrors the Federal Army is perpetrating without any serious reaction from the outside world. Both Montillo and Irek talked to Umberto Pascali on Sept. 11.*

**EIR:** Mr. Irek, why this hunger strike in Zagreb?

**Irek:** Because I think that my country, the United States of America, must recognize Croatia and Slovenia immediately. When I was in Los Angeles the news of this war was not circulating. When I arrived here and I saw what was happening I was very disappointed to discover that people in the U. S. do not know anything. I want to get the attention of the U. S. people and the administration.

**EIR:** Why do you think the U. S. refuses to recognize the two countries?

**Irek:** Somebody in the U. S. has been blocking the news. I think the Serbian lobby has succeeded in lying about Croatia and convinced people that being Croatians is the equivalent of being Nazis and genocidalists so that people don’t care about Croatia. They think that maybe if they are eliminated from the face of the earth nobody will really care. As long as this war was going on in Slovenia, it was everyday front-page in the Los Angeles media, with big color pictures. But as soon as it came to Croatia it stopped completely.

**EIR:** What would you say to people who believe in these slanders?

**Irek:** This is a 100% lie. First of all, besides isolated events, the Croatian people have not been anti-Semitic. There is a

long tradition of friendship. There has been a Jewish community in Croatia from the very beginning of the Croatian nation. Our first king nominated as top advisers two Jewish thinkers. Minister Montillo is here with me. He can explain it to you.

**Montillo:** It was King Kreshmir IV in the 10th century. But what I would like to point out for your magazine is that today we have in Serbia the last Communist regime in Europe. They only changed the name into Socialist Party. And the Serbians intend to conquer a large part of Croatia. That's why we have this bloody aggression. Chetniks cross our borders to lead gangs of terrorists to terrorize our people. So far we lost 30% of our territory. Everyday there are 20, 30, 50 or 60 dead.

Let me tell you something about the so-called anti-Semitism of the Croats. I am a member of the Jewish Council in Zagreb and I am deputy minister of foreign affairs. Our

health minister is a Jew and the president of the Constitutional Court is a Jew, together with some other very important figures. The president of the American-Croatian Society is a Jew.

**EIR:** So the whole campaign is a big slander?

**Montillo:** Yes. It is false. I witnessed a few days ago a meeting of 30,000 people in Zagreb. There was a 10-meter-long Jewish banner. The President of the Republic of Croatia arranged with the representatives of the Jewish community to restore, after 40 years, our synagogue in Zagreb. It had been destroyed in 1941. Under the Communist regime it was impossible to restore it. But nobody noticed it!

Over the last year we had 70,000 Jewish tourists in Croatia and all enjoyed our hospitality. Our government is very explicit in guaranteeing the rights of minorities in Croatia. Let's not believe in speculation from journalists or intellectu-

## EC grovels to Milosevic

*"Would we really go to war in Yugoslavia?" Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis, at a press conference in The Hague following the EC meeting, sneered in answer to a question from the correspondent of the Catholic daily Avvenire. The journalist printed the details of the performance on Sept. 11 in the article excerpted below. A top aide of De Michelis called Avvenire to pressure the journalist and his editor after the article appeared:*

The European Community, in order to open the talks pompously baptized "Peace Conference for Yugoslavia" in The Hague, had posed an end to fighting as the condition. The Yugoslav Army continued to bomb Croatian villages. The EC decided to hold the conference anyway. "We cannot silence the guns, but at least the guns do not silence us," said Dutch Foreign Minister Van Den Broek, trying to present the humiliation as a success.

It is a success: People were saying last Saturday in The Hague, that the six leaders of the Yugoslavian republics came, including the Croatian Tudjman, and the Serbian Milosevic. So as not to spoil the "success," the Europe that met in The Hague avoided reminding Milosevic that the Serbian rebels and the Yugoslavian (Serbian) army are occupying a third of the Croatian territory with the declared aim of annexing it to Serbia. Europe limited itself to warning, while looking the other way, that "changes in the borders obtained by violence will not be accepted."

Milosevic contemptuously replied that the borders between Serbia and Croatia are "internal and simply

administrative." . . . The EC tried to see even this as an act of good will. "There is room for negotiation," our De Michelis crowed. In his view the opening of the conference "makes escalating the confrontation inconvenient" for the forces in Yugoslavia that want war. Forces, he insinuated . . . located more in the attacked Croatia than in the aggressor Serbia. And he almost bet that the clashes would end. On cue, the contrary happened. War rages on in Yugoslavia.

Radio Belgrade announces Nazi-style retaliations: "If the army is attacked for any reason, Vukovar [in Croatia] will be annihilated." So, the Yugoslav Army will bend to the demands of Europe, while it is in doubt that they obey the orders of any legal authority in Yugoslavia? "For all I know, the army obeys the federal authorities," De Michelis replied with a straight face. His words are denied once again by Stepa Mesic, the legal chairman of the Yugoslav Federal Presidency, in theory the supreme commander of the Army. Mesic asked the Army to withdraw to barracks: He got no answer. The day before the conference in The Hague, Ante Markovic (head of the federal government legally recognized by Europe) had also denounced the Army for "excessive use of force." And what if the Communist Yugoslav generals were, as Mesic says, "coup-makers" who keep the whole country hostage?

. . . The EC avoids the question because, as De Michelis says, "Let's be clear, would we really go to war in Yugoslavia?" To die for Zagreb? Surely not. But De Michelis had been inflexible in defending the war against Iraq. . . . The only thing to do is to recognize the two republics (Slovenia and Croatia). But the EC in The Hague appeared to be less worried about stopping the massacre than about an increase in German influence.

als—let people come here and witness the reality. We are fighting for a system based on Western democracy. We are rebuilding in Zagreb a big Jewish center with 10,000 rare books.

I visited last year Mr. Singer of the Jewish Congress and I organized the visit in Zagreb of the very famous Rabbi Arthur Schnier. He is member of the White House commission on human rights and visited Zagreb last year, in the fall. He was received by President Tudjman and by the Cardinal of Zagreb. At that time the decision was made to rebuild the synagogue. Rabbi Schnier is the president of the ecumenical delegation in the U.S.A. and he was part of the U.S. delegation at the United Nations. He has contacts with the most important figures in the world. In Rome he visited the Pope, in Moscow the Patriarch, and he is respected by all the statesmen of Europe, a very known figure in the Jewish world. Why there are people who want to stick to this dangerous slander of the anti-Semitism of the Croatians?

**EIR:** Why in your opinion does the U.S. not recognize Croatia?

**Montillo:** Formally, the U.S. ambassador came here to Zagreb and recognized that Croatia has been attacked by Serbia. Officially the State Department recognizes it, but words are not enough. The statements are there, but we need action. We ask all the governments of the world to recognize Croatia. Nobody should forget: We had a referendum and 94% of the people voted for independence.

The other problem is the Serbian lobby in the U.S. You have people like Congresswoman [Helen] Bentley [R-Md.]. She goes to Congress and she says: Croatia was on the wrong side in World War I and World War II, and Serbia was on the right side. Well in a sense this could be true for World War I. My father, for example, was in the Austro-Hungarian army because these regions were part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. But in World War II in Croatia we had 1% of the people with the Ustashi and with Hitler, but there were 200,000 guerrilla partisans that fought against that.

More than half of the partisans in the whole of Yugoslavia were in Croatia, while in Serbia they fought only three months in the beginning of 1941, then they would break for years and wait for the Red Army. So the war of Serbia was very symbolic, only three months in 1941! But the biggest anti-Nazi forces, the partisans, were in Croatia, this is a historical fact. More than half the partisans were in Dalmatia.

I personally was a partisan. I was 16 years old, and I fought in northern Croatia. But now the Serbian lobby, I suppose, would say that I am a Ustashi! As they said about our [Federal] President Mesic [a Croatian], who was a partisan and had 11 members of his family killed by the Nazis!

The problem is this Serbian lobby. You know, Lawrence Eagleburger. He was ambassador in Belgrade. Lived there for a number of years. He got involved in some business in Serbia like the production of the Yugo cars, this I know.

## ADL and Bronfman defame Baltic states

by Ronald Kokinda

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and friends of world Zionist figure Edgar Bronfman have opened a defamation campaign against Lithuania and the Baltic states as being filled with "Nazis" and "Nazi collaborators." The attack is part of an Anglo-American effort to keep a grip on the Baltic states in the vacuum left by the dissolution of Bolshevik-Stalinist tyranny.

The ADL "collective guilt" propaganda campaign went into high gear on Sept. 5 after Lithuanian prosecutor Arturas Paulaskas announced that several Lithuanians who had been convicted in a Soviet communist court of being Nazi war criminals, or accomplices in Nazi war crimes, would be rehabilitated. Paulaskas made no apology for the Nazis, but stressed the illegitimate way the individuals were tried: "These people were convicted not by courts of law, but by special commissions established by Moscow after the war. They were forced to make concessions. Witnesses against them were coerced. They had no right to a legal defense. The trials were corrupt, and therefore the verdicts have no legal standing."

World Jewish Congress President Edgar Bronfman said in a letter to the *New York Times* that the rehabilitations would diminish Lithuania's reputation just as it was becoming independent, and would "cast a shadow on its soul." The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles demanded an immediate halt to the rehabilitation process.

The Bronfman-ADL apparatus instigated the creation of the Office of Special Investigations in the U.S. Department of Justice, which, using KGB evidence, stripped naturalized American citizens (such as Karl Linnas, an Estonian) of their citizenship and deported them to face communist "justice." The Bronfman-ADL collaboration with the communists runs deep, and Bronfman personally received an award from former East German dictator Erich Honecker. The shrillness of their campaign may arise from fear that the KGB files will be opened.

That Paulaskas's action was merely a pretext was clear from the series of inflammatory statements which preceded the campaign, including an editorial in the Henry Kissinger-linked *Jerusalem Post* on Sept. 3, entitled "Baltic Debt." The editorial claimed: "The Baltic people in the main were pioneers in implementing the 'final solution.' . . . Throughout the war they were the Nazis' most ardent helpers in the work of extermination."