

RRR

ROTHBARD-ROCKWELL REPORT

JUNE 1993

VOLUME IV, NUMBER 6

Hands Off the Serbs!

by Murray N. Rothbard

I used to think that the ultra-Left, *not* the Social Democrats or the Commies, but the "independent-radical" Left, a floating melange of Left Trotskyites, pacifists, and left-anarchists, while hopeless and evil on "domestic" questions, were at least sound and consistent in opposing American war and intervention abroad. (I also used to think they were good on free speech, but *that's* all gone with the rise of the Hate Crime and Sexual Harassment movements.) After all, they proudly called themselves, "the anti-war movement." But there's no "anti-war Left" left anymore. So either they've changed radically without even realizing it, or I was naive and they were Commies all along. (I suspect the latter, otherwise how could a "dedicated anti-war" movement become pro-war so darned *quickly*, that is as soon as the Cold War against Communism was over?)

It started with the Gulf War, when lifelong anti-war warriors, people like the Red troubadour Pete Seeger and the Reverend William Sloane Coffin, suddenly whooped it up for war. Even Noam Chomsky, left-anarchist and always a gutsy battler against American war, supported the Gulf War. The argument given by these people was that this was the holy

"United Nations" conducting the battle and not really the United States. In short, that the cause of a war-making world government is more important to them than anti-war principles. Showing that these people were not really against imperialism or foreign military intervention (they were always, of course, in favor of foreign *economic* intervention such as foreign aid), but in favor of world government imperialism, and war-mongering.

Well, I like to say that everyone is entitled to one deviation. Maybe it was an aberration. Maybe the full moon was out.

But there are no excuses left anymore. The entire "anti-war Left" has now joined the rest of

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THE EAR

by Sarah Barton

In his second public appearance since being confirmed, Clarence Thomas spoke at a May 4th fundraising dinner for a left-libertarian group in Georgia. Afterwards, Thomas was presented with a foot-tall bronze eagle. Only one problem: Thomas and the group were giving the bird to the code of

judicial ethics. Federal judges are strictly forbidden from

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The "anti-war" Left has joined the rotters on the Respectable Spectrum.

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participating in such events.

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I forget which R first called them "nihilolibertarians," but take a look at this statement from neocon-libertarian, P.J. O'Rourke: "I don't know what's best for you. You don't know what's best for me. Neither of us knows what's best for mankind." But P does know what's best for the Balkans. He's beating the drums for war against the Serbs.

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Romancing the . . . ? Before his Vancouver summit with Boris Yeltsin, Bill Clinton spent the evening with movie star Sharon Stone.

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One of Clinton's former colleagues, a Southern Democratic governor, isn't speaking to him. Clinton seduced his wife.

* * * * *

Clinton refers to his wife as "the c-t." She calls him "d-khead."

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After church, Mrs. C. threw a Bible at the prez, and then pounded him with her fists. A Secret Service agent had to pull her off. On another occasion, Mrs. C. threw a heavy glass ashtray at a Secret Service agent. He required 15 stitches.

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Thanks to *Human Events* for this one: Federal Appeals Court Judge Richard Arnold, an Arkansan and old friend of

the Clintons, was supposed to be on the short list for the Supreme Court vacancy. But Arnold is out. The reason: two Politically Incorrect decisions. In 1983, Arnold ruled that an all-male chapter of the Jaycees did not have to admit women; and in 1988, he voted to uphold a Minnesota parental notification law for minors trying to get an abortion. Litmus test, anyone? ■

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the rotters on the Respectable Spectrum: liberals, Establishment centrists, Official Conservatives, neoconservatives, and virtually everyone else, in hysterical calls for intervention against the Serbs in Bosnia. *This time*, it's not because the United Nations is behind the war; on the contrary, the UN is getting as much flak as the U.S. from this "international community" of war-mongers. Why have they "sat it out," they charge, in the face of "Serbian aggression" and expansionism against the poor Bosnian Muslims?

As usual, there are disagreements about the extent of military intervention demanded; but as usual, the "moderates" are either liars or self-deluders, since timid and moderate first steps will obviously not work, and then the precedent being set and intervention begun, the pressure will become irresistible for ever more accelerated steps, until the maximum pain is inflicted. No-fly zones, air strikes against artillery, all will fail and lead further; and now,

the war crowd is beginning to call, *not yet* for bombing Belgrade—the only Serbs they can find and target—but for bombing the "bridges" near Belgrade where supplies are being sent to the Serbs in Bosnia. Bombing Belgrade itself will follow, and when that won't work, which it won't, the Unthinkable will be voiced: nuking Belgrade, using "clean" nukes of course to avoid the fallout's harming other peoples. And when *that* doesn't work, American ground troops—under a UN cover, of course, with half a dozen Brits, Canadians, and Indians thrown in—will be next.

And one of the reasons none of these measures will work, is because the Serbs are a magnificently gutsy people, a "primitive" folk who don't give a tinker's dam for "world opinion," the "respect of the international community," and all the rest of the pretentious cant that so impresses readers of the *New York Times*. What do the Serbs want? It's very clear what they want, and there is no need for the sort of eternal *kvetching* that Freud indulged in about "what do women want?" The Serbs want all the Serbs in former Yugoslavia to be part of a new Greater Serbia being carved out of the ethnic mess in the Balkans. They want a Serb nation, and they don't give a rap for any of the considerations that so intensely motivate Establishment World Opinion, and God bless them for that. World Opinion, in turn, doesn't give a rap for a Serb nation. But why should World Opinion hold sway *anywhere*?

Before dealing with the Serbs

in depth, let us focus a bit more on the pro-war anti-war movement people whom Harry Elmer Barnes bitterly used to call "the pro-war pacifists." This gang has just written an open letter to the UN, President Clinton, and the US Congress (published in *In These Times*, April 19-May 2). Of course, they are "moderate"; no call, yet for nuking Belgrade. Also, there are the usual Marxoid obeisances to the "democratic opposition in Serbia," an "opposition" generally confined to Belgrade, and virtually non-existent on the Bosnian front. What they want is the supposedly "even handed" approach of lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnians, so that the Bosnian Muslim government can "defend itself." Sounds fine and balanced on the surface, except that these and similar groups egregiously omit the fact that the UN, prodded by the US, has been cruelly imposing an embargo, not just on arms, but *on everything else*, on the Serbs for many months. I would be all in favor of lifting our arms embargo on the Bosnians *provided that* all international sanctions against the Serbs were lifted as well. But, of course, our pro-war anti-warriors say not a peep about this. Instead, they demand: "vigorous prosecution of war criminals" (who? where? and who's going to do all this, and who will kidnap these "criminals," and how will they get a fair trial and on precisely *what* ex post facto charges?); and "air lifting humanitarian aid, under military protection, to all civilians in need." (You mean like dropping

those food mounds?) Furthermore, in addition to denouncing "aggressive Serb expansionism," these bloodthirsty "anti-war" warriors also have the nerve to demand that the US/UN insist that "the Croats cease their aggression in Bosnia." (*What* aggression? The Croats have only occupied Croatian areas in Bosnia, notably Herzegovina in the southern part of that province.) This attack on the Croats shows what these ex-anti-warriors are up to: shilling for the Bosnian Muslim government, which presumes to speak for a non-entity called the "Bosnian nation" and its alleged "territorial integrity," a "nation" that sprang into existence only a few short months ago.

Let us emphasize: there is not, and never was, anything called a "Bosnian nation." There was and is a Serbian nation, a Croat nation, and a Slovene nation, each with identifiable longtime national, cultural, and ethno-religious characteristics. There is no more a "Bosnian nation" than there is a "nation" of North Dakota. Bosnia is simply a geographical entity, in which have lived three very different, clashing, and mutually antagonistic nations; the Serbs, the Croats, and the "Bosnian" Muslims.

These are three nations slugging it out in one small territory.

But first let us name these traitorous ex-anti-warriors, now shilling for global military intervention on behalf of the Muslim government. The signatories include: Israeli Hegelian political theorist Shlomo Avineri; Noam Chomsky; Christopher Hitchens; CUNY shrink Robert Jay Lifton; Michael Lerner, editor of the "pro-peace" *Tikkun*; Michael Foot, dotty guru of the Leftwing of the British Labor Party; Bogdan Denitch, of CUNY and long-time social-

ist; Chilean pest Ariel Dorfman; Berkeley sociologist Todd Gitlin, participant-historian of the old New Left; Joanne Landy, of the "Campaign for Peace (sic) and Democracy," former leader of the Draperite "Third Camp" wing of international Trotskyism; Phyllis Jacobson, of *New Politics* magazine, another spinoff magazine of "independent Marxist-Leninists";

Peter Weiss, long-time financier of Leftist causes in New York; and Columbia University's lionized moderate Palestinian Arab and literary deconstructionist, Edward Said.

May they all wind up in Srebrenica to greet the Serbs as they come marching in!

But what about us at RRR? Haven't we, too, flip-flopped in

Harry Elmer Barnes bitterly called these people "the pro-war pacifists."

the opposite direction? Aren't we former anti-Serbs now born again as pro-Serbs?

Not quite. To recall those dear dead days of only a few months ago: the United States, along with the UN, and all Received Opinion, including leftists/liberals/Centrists/Official Conservatives/ and neocons, were all fanatically pro-Serb, calling for the old Wilsonian-Rooseveltian "guarantee of the territorial integrity of 'Yugoslavia,'" and therefore bitterly hostile to all national secessionist movements, including the Croats and Slovenes. The Croats, in particular, were constantly smeared by Received Opinion as being "Nazis."

We at RRR, on the other hand, always Out of Step with Received Opinion, recognized from way back that "Yugoslavia" is not, and never has been, a nation, that it was born of the rotten Victors' Peace imposed by the Entente Powers (redubbed the "Allies" Britain, France, and the U.S.) at Versailles and in other dictated settlements after World War I. Yugoslavia was a geographical expression which served only as a mask for Serbian imperialism and dictatorship over the other peoples incarcerated into that expression: notably the Croats and the Slovenes.

For the problem with the Serbs was, and still is, that while yearning for the perfectly acceptable ideal of a Greater Serbia, that they have not been exactly reticent or scrupulous in avoiding expansion of the Serbs' unwelcome embrace to the Croats etc. in the Balkans.

So we at RRR were always,

and still are, staunchly opposed to "Yugoslavia" or any of its pomp and works.

But now that Yugoslavia has fallen apart, and has collapsed into its constituent peoples and nationalities, the situation is very different. The Serbs seem to have abandoned the goal of a Greater Yugoslavia, and have moderated their demands into the perfectly reasonable one of a Greater Serbia. And the guerrilla warfare on the ground has, more or less, sorted it all out, as it always does: with each nationality getting more or less its own ethnic areas. Much of Croatia in the hands of Serbian guerrillas and incorporated into the Republic of Krajina is ethnically Serb; the Slovenes have ethnic Slovenia, etc.

Bosnia, with its ethno-religious mixture of villages and populations, is particularly difficult to sort out, but even Bosnia now enjoys rough ethno-religious justice with the Croats running the Croatian areas of Herzegovina, the Serbs running their areas, and so on. The Bosnian Muslims have less territory than the others because most of the Muslims are concentrated in the large Bosnian cities, such as Sarajevo.

And so rough ethnic justice has come to Bosnia, and it will sort itself out provided that the blankety-blank US/UN combo keeps its hands off. If the Bosnian Muslims get a bit less than their quota, so what? The main problem now in former Yugoslavia is not the Serbs but the pretensions of the Bosnian Muslim government to run and dominate *all* of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is the Muslims and

their skills in "world opinion" who keep bleating about the "territorial integrity" of this non-existent nation, an "integrity" that didn't even exist before 1991. It is the Muslims and their skills who refuse to agree to the "cantonization" of Bosnia, a process that that area sorely needs. The Vance-Owen plan was only a feeble step in that direction, for it insisted on preserving the powers of a central Bosnian (Muslim) government. Instead, the only hope of genuine peace and justice is to destroy "Bosnia" and to allow this non-country to be divided completely into its constituent parts.

What is really incomprehensible is the intensity of the flip-flop on the Serbs from the serried ranks of Received Opinion. The Serbs... are Serbs, and always have been, with their vices and virtues. The Serbs are a constant factor; they want a Greater Serbia, as much as they can get, but are willing in the end to settle for Serb lands. And so are all the other nationality groups in the area. But what about the dread term "ethnic cleansing," repeated like a mantra in every news item in the West for months? Well, in the first place, the Serbs didn't *say* "ethnic cleansing"; they used some Serbo-Croat phrase and that doesn't sound so bad. Serbs have recently claimed mistranslation; that what they really meant is "ethnic transfer." And it makes sense: the Serbs don't want to exterminate clashing peoples; they just want them *out* of predominantly Serb areas, out of Greater Serbia. And let us not forget that it has

been the sainted Bosnian Muslim troops who have done their darndest to prevent UN workers from getting Muslim civilians out of Srebrenica and other Muslim towns; they want the Muslim civilians staying there in mortal danger, to keep world pressure on for these towns to become part of Muslim Bosnia. All these clashing groups perform ethnic transfer/cleansing when they can get away with it.

And what about the mass rapes, which have brought Left Feminists screaming into the kill-the-Serbs camp? Well, I don't want to disillusion any tender souls, but almost *all* victorious troops through history, commit systemic rapin' and lootin' of the vanquished. It's called the "spoils of war," and will continue to exist, despite received opinion, so long as war exists. Trying to *expand* the war, as the Establishment is doing, will only prolong and expand the looting and raping. And yes, it hasn't only been the *Serbs* who have committed these crimes, believe me; all the groups do it, and it's just that the Serbs have been better fighters in this civil war and so have had more occasion to indulge in this time-honored practice.

American meddling is made even more futile by the fact that

it is impossible for Americans to understand, not only these fierce rivalries, but the tremendous sense of *history* they all possess. How can Americans, who have no historical memory whatever and scarcely remember

when Reagan was president, possibly understand these peoples of the Balkans, to whom the great 15th century battle against the invading Turks is as real, nay *more* real, than yesterday's dinner? To the Serbs and the Croats, the Bosnian Muslims are not the "gentle people" lionized in Western propaganda. The Bosnian Muslims are not only still

reviled as traitors selling out to the hated Turks, but in addition, the very quality of their devotion to Islam is in question. For the Bosnian Muslims were once the hated Bogomil heretics, a Manichaeian heresy with horrifying implications, and there is much evidence that the Muslims still practice their Bogomil rites in secret, engraving its symbols on their tombstones. The Bogomils were what Ayn Rand followers wrongly believe all Christians to be: believers that the world of matter and the flesh are pure evil created by Satan, whereas the spirit is good and created by God. As for the Nazi question, the Serbs tried to be as much

"pro- Nazi" as the Croats (a minority) but weren't trusted by the Germans, whereas the "gentle" Bosnian Muslims enlisted in proportionately far greater numbers in the Waffen SS than did the Croats or Serbs. So let's stop romanticizing the Bosnian Muslims. Let them take their chances on their own.

So what to do about Bosnia? What do to do about the Serbs? The answer, as repugnant as it is to this meddling age, is to stay the Hell out. Let the peoples of Bosnia and the Balkans slug it out and sort it out.

US Out of Bosnia and the Balkans, hands off the Serbs, and let these people sort it out among themselves. If any of our host of desk-bound warriors, from Abe Rosenthal to Mrs. Thatcher to Christopher Hitchens to Noam Chomsky, want to fight the Serbs, let them parachute into Krajina or Srebrenica and slug it out, *mano a mano*. Frankly, in any kind of a fair fight, my nickel is on the Serbs. Every time. And, by the way, if you were caught in an ambush, wouldn't you love to have a few Serbs on your side? ■

"Debauchery! Debauchery!" At Tailhook

by M.N.R.

Drunkness and "debauchery" at a convention of naval aviators and their boosters! My, my, my! I hate to keep bringing up Claude Rains and his "shocked! shocked!" at gambling in *Casablanca*, but it seems to be

Trying to expand the war, as the Establishment is doing, will only expand the looting and raping.