

More Debate on the Balkans

Richard Tate

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Dear Citizens:

David Watson's piece criticizing the *Alternative Press Review's* (APR) coverage of the show trial of Slobodan Milosevic in FE #358, Fall 2002 ["The Sad Truth: Milosevic 'Crucified': Counter-Spin as Useful Idiocy"] should be rewarded with a job at Human Rights Watch.

It's as if he's trying to respond to the increasing ranks of its readers who say the *Fifth Estate* has become a liberal publication by saying, "Look—I'm not a liberal—I don't even support the concept of innocent until proven guilty!" His only criticism of the NATO Tribunal in the Hague is that it appears to require the prosecution to prove its case.

The Tribunal is directed almost exclusively against Serbs. If there were an international court which specialized in prosecuting Jewish alleged war criminals, would Watson support it? The Tribunal doesn't just have "more than a whiff of victor's justice," it is a kangaroo court in which the likes of Madeleine Albright give evidence against small-scale butchers from the Balkans. Watson wastes no time in resorting to "reductio ad Hitlerum," a variant of the amalgam technique.

If Michael Parenti is a "Stalinist hack" for questioning the extent of Serb war crimes in Kosovo, David Watson is a NATO hack for trying to prevent us from making our own minds up by opposing the publication of alternatives to the official viewpoint, and smearing those who do publish those alternatives.

He amalgamates defenders of the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, supporters of Pol Pot, and the brave French communists who, defying the legal system, Zionist and leftist cops, and France's own anarchist establishment, insisted on taking the claims of Holocaust revisionism seriously. I'll make my own mind up about Nazi crimes against Jews via a careful examination of the arguments of both sides, thanks, citizen Watson.

Watson asks if we should publish statements by Pinochet or old Nazis? Certainly, if they expose Kissinger and the CIA! Milosevic and other Serb leaders have much to tell us about links between the CIA, the KLA and other Islamic fascist organizations. I don't want to defend Leninists, and still less, mass-murdering ex-heads of state, but if the likes of Watson slander them, what choice do I have?

The World Socialist Website is a useful source of information. So are conservative and libertarian sources, if one keeps one's critical faculties. For example, Nebojsa Malic explains the errors in each part of the prosecution case against Milosevic at www.antiwar.com/malic/mo9o5o2.html.

If it's convenient to blame NATO for events in Yugoslavia, it's much more convenient to take NATO's side! Contra Watson, the defenders of Milosevic do publish plenty of evidence that NATO countries were behind the breakup of Yugoslavia. It's true that the EU initially opposed the secession of Croatia, but Germany changed its mind. In claiming that Serbia "started the wars" in Yugoslavia by attacking the secessionist republics, Watson reveals one dangerous idea he shares with Leninists—national liberation.

To say Serbia "invaded" Croatia is to recognize Croatia's independence, and to take sides in a capitalist conflict: secession is an act of war. He even claims that Serbia had a "colonial" relationship with Kosovo. Nevertheless, it is true that Milosevic's defence is one-sided. NATO didn't simply attack Serbia and support its opponents. As

you point out, it imposed an arms embargo on Bosnia, preventing Bosnian “Muslims” from defending themselves against Serbian and Croat nationalists.

I don’t want to give the impression that I take sides in the Yugoslav tragedy. In many cases, all parts of the ruling class collaborated to massacre the working class at Vukovar, Sarajevo and other places. I am not aiming to take Milosevic’s side, just restore the balance of facts, and most importantly, opposing Watson’s attempt to suppress part of the story.

For a class analysis of the reasons why the ruling classes on all sides in Yugoslavia are war criminals, check out www.webcom.com/wildcat/Yugoslavia.html.

Here’s hoping you rediscover your radical past,
Richard Tate for *Wildcat*

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See: Response by David Watson: On Keeping Our Critical Faculties, FE #360, Spring, 2003.

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