

*The goal of Serbian policy since the mid-19th century was to secure to Serbia access to the sea with its western border deep in the territory of Croatia, so that all Serbs could live within one state (the so-called Greater Serbia). This goal had mainly been achieved with the creation of (the first and the second) Yugoslavia. However, the aspirations of part of the Serbian political elite focused on the total domination of Serbia over the other Yugoslav republics, publicly expressed in the mid-nineteen-eighties, ultimately caused the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Specifically, the process of democratization in the states of Southeastern Europe, symbolically linked with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, facilitated the introduction of the multi-party system in the Yugoslav republics but also ushered in the issue of the rearrangement of Yugoslavia. After the multi-party elections the leaderships of Yugoslavia's (pro) Western republics, Slovenia and Croatia, committed themselves to the greater decentralization of the state. Conversely, the ultimatum of the Serbian leadership called for a strictly centralized state (greater power of federal authorities, reduced prerogatives of the republics), with the dominance of the most numerous (Serbian) people in it (after the principle "one man one vote"). The top Yugoslav People's Army echelons also opted for the preservation of Yugoslavia as a centralized state without hiding their intention, if required, to impose their commitment by force of arms as well.*

*For the Greater Serbian ideologues the alternative to a Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia was the creation of a single Serbian state ("Greater Serbia") comprising the territory of the former Yugoslavia roughly east of the Virovitica – Pakrac – Karlovac – Ogulin/part of Gorski Kotar – Karlobag line. That goal could only be achieved by military means, by conquering a considerable part of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

*The sources clearly indicate that the war in Croatia in 1991, and then in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was caused by the continuity of the Greater Serbia policy. In the summer of 1991, the Serbian leadership, with the help of the JNA, conducted the aggression against Croatia, and by the end of 1991 Serbian forces occupied nearly a third of the territory of the Republic of Croatia, with a view to annex that territory to the Republic of Serbia and exercise the plan of "all Serbs living in one state". Without weapons and army, in the summer of 1991 Croatia could not stop the progression of a superior enemy. However, Croatia was not defeated, and after setting up its own armed forces and after the leadership of the rebel Serbs in Croatia rejected all peace initiatives of the Croatian government and international actors, Croatia's military operations freed most of the occupied territories until the end of summer 1995. The rest of the occupied part of Hrvatsko Podunavlje (the Croatian Danube Region) ("Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem") was finally returned through the process of "peaceful reintegration" until 15 January 1998.*

*Croatian Homeland War Memorial and Documentation Centre was founded as a public research institution and a specialized archive in order to collect archival material from that period. In line with the fact that "one photograph is worth a thousand words" photography occupies a special place among the collected material. Their display keeps the Homeland War scenes from oblivion and the public can gain an insight to the extent of the suffering of people and material goods. The war photographs by Martin Grgurovac, that witness the destruction of Vinkovci and the surrounding area during the period from 1991 to 1995 and the situation in the area until 1997, are accompanied by parts of his diary in this photo-monograph.*