

## **(Out)living the War: Anti-War Activism in Croatia in the Early 1990s and Beyond**

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Unlike nationalism and the wars in former Yugoslavia, which have attracted considerable scholarly attention, anti-war activism has only recently started to arouse interest among academics. Nevertheless, what emerged as a reaction to war and brutality and later developed into a proactive and long-lasting commitment towards core changes in Croatian culture and society requires a scrutiny which transcends “round” anniversaries. By drawing upon some conceptual tools borrowed from social movement theory, the paper analyses the Croatian anti-war movement, organized around the Anti-War Campaign (AWC) and its subsequent transformation(s). It is argued that, although its first and most important goal (stopping the war) failed, the AWC outlived the war years by establishing the foundation for long-term influence, which is most visible in the still existing horizontal network of organizations devoted to ideals of non-violence and human rights protection.

**Keywords:** anti-war activism; Yugoslavia; Croatia; social movement theory; long-term influence

The multi-faceted processes of Yugoslavia’s demise and violent break-up have aroused considerable interest across the social sciences. Although numerous, the different scholarly accounts of Yugoslavia’s bloody dissolution written over the past 20 years have largely neglected the emergence of anti-war initiatives immediately prior and during the armed conflict.<sup>1</sup> In fact, anti-war engagement in Croatia and other former-Yugoslav countries has only recently become an object of research and critical reflection (Bilić, 2011abc, 2012; Božićević, 2010; Dvornik, 2009; Fridman, 2006, 2011; Janković and Mokrović, 2011; Jansen, 2005, 2008).<sup>2</sup> This should not come as a surprise, given that in July 2011 the Anti-War Campaign (and its “successor”,

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Documenta-Centre for dealing with the past) marked the twentieth anniversary of its foundation and almost 15 years have passed since the first democratic changes started in Croatia, a country that is entering a new phase of its existence as a European Union member. In such a climate, it is perhaps appropriate to intensify efforts to critically assess recent history (i.e. the 1990s), particularly when it is used (as in the post-Yugoslav region) as a lens for retroactively interpreting the history of the entire twentieth century. This paper thus aims to examine the Croatian anti-war movement<sup>3</sup> in terms of its transformation from engaged reaction to long-lasting action by drawing upon some conceptual tools developed within social movement theory, which has rarely been used outside the Western context (Tarrow, 1998: 19) and almost never (excluding Dević, 1997; and Bilić, 2011) applied to former Yugoslavia. The aim is not to assess the Croatian anti-war movement merely in terms of “success” or “failure”, but rather to focus on its long(er) term effects, like for example the promotion of non-violence or the development of civil society networks, despite a lack of influence at the policy level.<sup>4</sup>

The first section of the paper examines the emergence and progress of the Anti-War Campaign (AWC) and the socio-political context within which it operated. Part two consists of a brief description of the main interpretative tools used to scrutinize the legacy of Croatian anti-war activism, which follows in part three.

### **1. ‘We wanted to stop the war!’: Anti-war activism from reaction to action**

Inter-ethnic tensions, antagonisms and “scape-goating”, which had been on the rise in Yugoslavia throughout the 1980s, began to intensify towards the end of the decade. By July 1991, a series of armed clashes had already taken place, namely the Plitvice Lakes incident (the so-called “Plitvice Bloody Easter”) in March/April, the Borovo Selo killings in May, the assassination of Josip Reihl-Kir<sup>5</sup> in July and the Ten Days War in Slovenia in June/July. In hindsight, these events seem to be clear signs of imminent war, but at the time such an outcome was hardly imaginable. As Zoran Oštarić (in “Arzin”, 1993) wrote:

The war came uninvited, in their cities and homes [of the Croats] [...] The moment came when you could not do without armed resistance [...] We live with this war, it is around us and in us, regardless if we are carrying guns or not, it is impossible to refuse to take part in it.

It was then that a group of activists, who had been previously engaged in environmental protests and anti-militaristic groups like *Zelena akcija* (Green Action),

*Svarun* or *Društvo za unapređenje kvalitete života* (Life Quality Improvement Society), initiated the Anti-War Campaign (*Antiratna kampanja-ARK*) (AWC) in Zagreb as an *ad hoc* attempt to stop the war and to promote non-violence.

Almost simultaneously, a number of initiatives and anti-war groups were taking shape in Belgrade (the Centre for Anti-War Action), Sarajevo (the Citizens' Forum), Titograd-Podgorica (the Citizens' Committee for Peace) and Ljubljana (the Peace Institute). Although it had been founded after Croatia's declaration of independence (25 June 1991),<sup>6</sup> the initial aim of the AWC was to create a network of organizations throughout Yugoslavia:

We, citizens of our republics, citizens of Europe and the World, resolutely reject violence and war. We will communicate and cooperate regardless of differences in political views and regardless of future relations between the republics. Everybody for himself and all together, we will confront those who are imposing war as the “only remaining” solution for our problems. (“Arzin” 0, pilot edition 1991)

However, it soon became clear that a coalition of Yugoslav non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was no longer feasible. The AWC thus became the umbrella organization of the Croatian anti-war movement, consisting of several branches which would later become its autonomous members, like the centres in Karlovac, Osijek, Pakrac, Poreč, Pula, Rijeka and Split. After communication lines between Croatia and Serbia, and later Bosnia, had been cut off, activists continued to meet outside the borders of the former Yugoslavia—which has brought them the label of war profiteers, perceived as selling themselves for a ‘handful of Judas’ coins’.<sup>7</sup>

According to Dević (1997: 151), anti-war protest developed as a reaction to the gradual disappearance of the cultural space with which many Yugoslavs identified, and an expression of a pan-Yugoslav identity that began to fade as early as 1992. Around that year, the various anti-war initiatives went from being street cultural–artistic anti-war protests mainly directed towards the political establishment to a variant of “proto-NGOs”, i.e. documentation and counselling centres offering humanitarian and/or legal aid to refugees (*ibid*). To put it in Stubbs’ terms (2001: n.p.), there was ‘a shift from “authentic” social movements to “projectized” NGOs, and from politicized commitment to technocratic routinization’. This transformation seemed to mark the end of the anti-war movement and its pan-Yugoslav character, and paved the way for more pronounced organizational specialization of the various groups within the borders of the newly created nation states. As a result, there was an

increase in the influx of international financial aid, mostly directed towards humanitarian work rather than anti-war protest.

Despite its *ad hoc* nature, Croatian (and Yugoslav) anti-war activism did not develop in a political vacuum, but was underpinned by different ideological orientations that had peace and coexistence as potent undercurrents (Bilić, 2011d: 47). Bilić argues that the anti-war initiatives that emerged during or immediately prior to the wars in former Yugoslavia drew upon three major examples of extra-institutional civic engagement: the 1968 student demonstrations, Yugoslav environmentalist initiatives and feminist organizations (2011b: 47-52). To these three examples of engagement a fourth could be added, namely the Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (*Udruženje za jugoslovensku demokratsku inicijativu*), since it anticipated some of the activities of the AWC.<sup>8</sup> In another study by Bilić, when asked about their motivations for engaging in anti-war protest, the activists of the AWC of Croatia answered that they could not have done otherwise (2012c: 54). Previous research has shown that individuals who are socialized in highly politicized environments are more likely to become activists (Bilić, 2010: 383; 2012c: 54): “biographical exposure” to politically oriented settings propels people to engage in political protest, creating incentives of a moral and ethical nature rather than an economic one (Bilić, 2010: 54).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, activism does not tend to be movement-specific and it often assumes a durable contour, i.e. disposition to participation is formed through engagement in activism (Crossley, 2003: 51) and the people involved usually remain politically active years after (Bilić, 2011b: 49).

Following the first, mainly street-focused, actions, the activities of the AWC went in four main directions: human rights protection (advocating conscientious objection and civil service, opposing forced evictions from military housing and refugees’ *refoulement*); the issuing of a newspaper, fanzine *ARKzin* (the pilot edition was published in September 1991)<sup>10</sup>; educational and data collection activities (workshops, seminars, organizations, the establishment of the Centre for Peace Studies, research and publications on war crimes); and peace-building (which began with the pioneer Pakrac Project and continued with MIRamiDa).

In the first months, solidarity and co-ordination between the groups were strong, but as the AWC’s branches were transforming into professionalized, autonomous NGOs, complications arose.<sup>11</sup> As early as September 1991, the first military alarms generated a sense of imminent threat that led to disagreement between

the three founding fragments of the AWC (green, feminist and spiritual organizations). In particular, the question of responsibility created friction—i.e. whether Croatian politics was responsible for the war, or whether Croatia was just a powerless victim unable to influence events—as did the issue of the responsibility of the Croatian state towards its citizens (Janković and Mokrović, 2011: 60). When people began to be evicted from the apartments of the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (YPA), the question was whether the AWC should be dealing with this issue and focusing on human rights protection. A third stumbling block was the distinction between “professionals” (who were paid for their work) and volunteers (*ibid*). Moreover, the AWC’s loose structure created tensions between centralization and decentralization forces.

When fear of an external threat grows exponentially, the public tends to label anti-war activists as non-patriots, if not traitors. Croatian activists were publicly attacked by the media and the political élites as “yugonostalgic”, pro-Serbian quislings, foreign mercenaries and multi-coloured devils. To some, the AWC, with its prefix “anti” was directed against the newly independent Croatian state and its fanzine, *ARKzin*, an abbreviation for *Arkanove zidne novine* (Arkan’s wallpaper).<sup>12</sup> It was argued that public support in Croatia was lacking because most people were either misinformed or did not have access to enough information on the actions of the anti-war movement. Nevertheless, a quick review of the press at that time seems to confirm the AWC’s “presence” in the media, at least in the initial phases of the war, when peace rhetoric prevailed among government officials.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, the state sometimes used the AWC as a ‘kind of legitimization in front of international institutions, a proof of its democracy and openness’.<sup>14</sup> In search of international recognition, the government balanced peaceful and violent rhetoric and this instrumentalization of their cause initially suited the activists:

I think that back then this situation was favorable, that they bragged with us. In fact, Croatia was open because it wanted international recognition and this openness made the arrival of foreign activists and observers possible and it somehow protected us and gave us the space to work. On the contrary Serbia was under embargo and in autoisolation’. (Janković and Mokrović, 2011: 66)

Notwithstanding this ambiguous relationship with the political establishment, the AWC was a breeding ground for numerous projects and organizations, and even if it no longer exists in its original form it left an indelible mark on the civic and cultural tapestry of Croatia.

Following this brief description of the genesis of the Croatian anti-war movement and the context in which it operated, we will now unpack some of the interpretative tools that will be used to examine the transformations it underwent, as well as the outcomes this produced.

## **2. A successful failure? Without fail**

Sociological scholarship has only lately turned to the study of movement outcomes and consequences rather than their emergence and mobilization which has dominated the research on social movements for decades. Consequently, a broader empirical analysis of the conditions under which movements produce certain effects is still lacking (Giugni, 1998: 373). Furthermore, there are several methodological shortcomings in studying social movement outcomes, including causal attribution, the problem of inter-related, unintended or perverse effects, time reference and effect stability, and the problem of movement goal adaptation (Rucht, 1992; Gurr, 1980; Snyder and Kelly, 1979, cited in Giugni, 1998: 385). Since it developed relatively recently, the analysis of the outcomes of social movements draws upon the existing literature on mobilization, namely resource mobilization theory, political opportunities and framing processes (Amenta *et al.*, 2010: 289). According to the fathers of resource mobilization theory, McCharthy and Zald (1977), a movement becomes visible in the political arena and transforms into a “Social Movement Organization” when its goals meet informational and material resources that are necessary to attract audiences and recruit activists. On the other hand, the political-process model privileges the broader political context in which the movement operates (Giugni, 1998: 381), by analysing the role of public opinion and the media and focusing on political–opportunity structures. Within this perspective, the two fundamental variables in the relationship between movements and their working environment are the system of alliances and oppositions, and the structure of the state. Finally, the framing processes’ interpretative framework presupposes that activists are perceived as “signifying agents” actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers (Snow and Benford, 1988). They are deeply embroiled, along with the media, local governments, and the state, in what has been referred to as “the politics of signification” (Hall, 1982) (Benford and Snow, 2000: 613). As it is shown below, the most often cited

explanations for the limited influence of Yugoslav anti-war initiatives often combine these three theoretical approaches.

The Croatian anti-war movement, as part of a broader all-Yugoslav initiative, failed to stop the war. The AWC was undoubtedly lacking and could not count on the same availability of resources at the federal or local levels as other actors (i.e. former communist elites) (Dević, 1997: 148). It was a heterogeneous, decentralized group with informal membership practices that managed to maintain cohesion during the first two years. Its distinctive features were visible collaboration with members of a nationally adversary group and framing that did not resonate with mainstream values (Lieberfeld, 2008: 10). Due to the persistent lack of financial, informational and symbolic (Bilić, 2010: 384) resources, it was marginalized within the political arena and relatively unknown to the general public. Given the particular situation in which Croatia found itself, it was very hard to gain influence. In times of war, the space for contestation, civil liberties and human rights is drastically reduced and the media are subject to even greater censorship. The public is sometimes misinformed, or not at all informed, about anti-war initiatives. Furthermore, several state-sponsored attempts to “hijack” (to use Bilić’s term) the peace movement—like for example the mothers’ protest, which attracted a lot of attention and contributed to the rise in ethnic tensions—weakened the genuine anti-war movement. By using a simple divide-and-conquer strategy, the (Croatian) state was relatively successful in neutralizing critical voices. The AWC had very little time to develop a clear agenda in a period when elite strategies were anything but neatly defined; the (Yugoslav) state was falling apart and, within it, certain identities were being replaced with new ones. Consequently, the AWC did not develop an unambiguous action plan until it was too late: the war was in its full swing and the media were infused with war-mongering rhetoric, which rendered their activism purely symbolic. The different groups found themselves confined to the newly independent states and began following different development trajectories, corroborated by specific tactics.

In a recent article, Amenta wrote that failure is intrinsic to every social movement, because of the discrepancy between their generally ambitious goals and their frequent lack of power (Amenta, 2013: n.p.). When that goal translates into wanting to stop a war in a hostile political context, influencing policy becomes a near impossible endeavour (Amenta, 2006: 295), despite the high level of personal and emotional involvement usually displayed by activists. Moreover, in a country which

has been invaded or attacked, the rhetoric of self-defence becomes indisputable, which in turn drastically reduces the space for civil liberty and anti-war movements.<sup>15</sup> In other words anti-war movements challenge the state's legitimacy, as they denounce governments for breaking the social contract by asking their citizens to bear the burden of war (Lieberfeld, 2008: 3). Challenging the legitimacy of a state that is itself trying to legitimize its existence (as was the case with Croatia in the 1990s) does not leave much space for contestation. In such circumstances, it is extremely hard to affect government policies, especially on national security issues where citizens' influence is already limited. It has been suggested that in Yugoslavia there was a latent anti-war force among people, but it failed to become politicized because of the state of emergency, which is why it took time before the anti-war movement could articulate a clear strategy.<sup>16</sup> Those who hold the reins of national security policy (military and other executives) hardly ever perceive grassroots peace activists as qualified to participate in debates around sensitive issues (Lieberfeld, 2008: 3). In fact, none of the peace activists in the former Yugoslavia were ever invited to ceasefire or peace negotiations, despite their engagement in that area. This suggests that the AWC was a stillborn organization, condemned to failure from the outset; however, its long-term ability to adapt to changing circumstances indicates the opposite. In fact, the AWC acknowledged its failure as an anti-war movement relatively early on and turned to human rights, data collecting and peace education-related activities. Even if the AWC's immediate goal (of stopping the war) failed, its actions soon went from being "reactive" (to use Kriesi's term, 1995), to being "proactive". From a "negative peace" perspective—from which it advocated for the absence of war and violence and was thus more related to *ad hoc* anti-war movements and limited time horizons—it moved towards a "positive peace" perspective that gave peace a meaning that extended beyond the single goal of changing the security-oriented policy (Lieberfeld, 1998: 3). In other words, the AWC outlived the anti-war campaign, albeit in an "NGO-ized" form. It thus "successfully" failed as an anti-war movement, but it was without fail, and remains, an important presence in Croatian society.

### **3. The anti-war campaign of Croatia: “Acting against time, on time and for a time one hopes will come”<sup>17</sup>**

In one article in *Arkzin*, Zoran Oštrić wrote that it was an early decision of the AWC to focus on long-term, rather than short-term, goals, to avoid mass protests and not to engage in political fights or attempt to resolve immediate problems. According to him, the failure of the Citizens’ Alliance in Serbia (*Gradanski savez Srbije*)<sup>18</sup> in the 1992 elections weakened the Serbian peace movement: political engagement drained a lot of energy, and plans for the future were not made (Oštrić, in “Arkzin”, 1993).

Although the war required direct engagement, such as joining the army or procuring humanitarian aid, activists opted for lasting commitment aimed at obtaining core societal and cultural changes, rather than political ones. They wanted to show people that:

[...] madness, horrors and demons are not just on the opponents’ side [...] Madness is inside all of us and we’ll have to face it, otherwise it will destroy us and we’ll become the same as those who attacked us, people and a nation) worth hating. (Oštrić in “Arkzin”, 1993)

Thus, keeping inter-ethnic communication alive between centres in the warring republics became an important task. The help of international organizations like War Resisters International or the Open Society Foundation was crucial in this respect: ‘What was important in that moment was to establish connections with international organizations, institutions, because no one wanted to listen to us here [in Croatia], but when the initiative comes from abroad, it becomes extremely important’ (Janković and Mokrović, 2011: 61).

As previously mentioned, AWC activities included human rights protection (advocating for conscientious objection and civil service, opposing forced evictions from military housing and refugees’ *refoulement*), peace-building (beginning with the pioneer Pakrac Project and continued with MIRamiDa, the first peace-building training centre in former Yugoslavia) and educational and data collection activities (workshops, seminars, organizations, the establishment of the Centre for Peace Studies, research and publications on war crimes).

Promoting conscientious objection was one of the AWC’s enduring commitments that dated back to *Svarun*. It was on the insistence of the latter that the authors of the Croatian constitution that entered into force in December 1990 (the so-called “Christmas Constitution”) inserted, in Article 47, a limited right to conscientious objection.<sup>19</sup> Through the group of conscientious objectors (CO), Union

47 (*Unija 47*), founded in 1995, the AWC tried to raise awareness of the subject and provided COs—who were often subjected to physical and psychological harassment—with legal advice. Union 47 also fought for equating the period of civil and military service and offering recruits the possibility of serving in NGOs. The AWC’s most ground-breaking peace building initiative was probably the Volunteer Project Pakrac (VPP or the Project), carried out between July 1993 and February 1997 in the Western Slavonian town of Pakrac. It was one of the first examples of co-operation between the United Nations and local human rights associations, after the *Prodere* programme in Central America. In 1994, when it was extended to the “other side”, it became one of the few, if not the only, official collaboration between a Croatian association (AWC) and a Serbian one (Centre for Anti-War Action and Most-Bridge Group). As a unique example of grassroots peace building, combining both physical and social reconstruction, the project attracted the attention of many, like the European Peace University (EPU) in Stadtschlaining in Austria that used it as case study in the elaboration of the “Do No Harm” principle (Božičević, 2010: 50). When it came to education, the AWC’s efforts were “institutionalized” with the foundation of the Centre for Peace Studies in 1997 and the launching of its first one-year programme of education for peace. Fifteen years later, in the school year 2012/2013, a pilot civic education programme was introduced in six schools, resulting from co-operation between governmental and non-governmental sectors. Finally, already in 1993, the AWC showed clear proof of its commitment to collecting war crimes data with the publication of *Rat i ljudska prava na području bivše Jugoslavije-Dokumenti Amnesty Internationala i Helsinki Watcha: od višestranačkih demokratskih izbora 1990. do rata u Bosni i Hercegovini* (‘War and Human Rights on Former Yugoslavia-Documents of Amnesty International and Helsinki Watch: from the first multi-party democratic elections in 1990 to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina’). The publication denounced, among others, war crimes committed by the Croats in 1991.

Data collection also became one of the main activities of the legal “successor” of the AWC, Documenta-Centre for dealing with the past. The Centre was founded by a number of Croatian NGOs with the aim of collecting data and publishing research on war crimes, on the violation of human rights and monitoring war crimes trials. Documenta is also active in promoting co-operation between civil society organizations in former Yugoslavia—such as RECOM, a coalition for setting up a

regional commission charged with establishing factual truths about war crimes and human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2001. Apart from documenting human loss, recording personal memories in the form of oral histories and reporting on the work of human rights organizations, the Centre has been systematically monitoring war crimes trials and reparation procedures. Most importantly, a lot of effort has been invested into public policies and dialogue in order to ‘shift the discussion from the level of dispute over facts towards a dialogue on interpretations’.<sup>20</sup> Twenty years after Yugoslavia’s bloody dissolution, its successor states are still displaying a wide gap between (declared) intentions and actions, contending interpretations and opposing narratives, which are considerably complicating the so-called process of “dealing with the past”. Contrary to some positive predictions and statements, recent events in Croatia<sup>21</sup> seem to suggest that the European Union cannot help former Yugoslav countries to resolve their memory conflicts and overcome old narratives; that can only be done by cultivating a deeper understanding of the contradictions and grey areas of the 1990s.

In that respect, the signatories of the AWC Charter distinguished themselves by thinking ahead, showing awareness that the conflict would not last forever and that there would be a time when both sides would have to work together to build peace:

[...] no matter how present conflicts end, people in this region will continue living together [...] We all need peace, we all have to work together in order to develop democracy and reach economic, social and environmental welfare [...] We are part of contemporary Europe, where state borders no longer divide, but connect individuals and nations.<sup>22</sup>

This message (of peace) was circulated around Zagreb in 1991 in the form of a flyer, until the strong winds of nationalism swept it away. It resurfaced again some time later, when different actors began (re-)using the same expressions to promote pro-European agendas. Today, when anti-war activism has given way to memory activism, and we are facing some new/old extremisms, contesting the hegemonic discourse continues to be a necessity.

### **In lieu of conclusions**

Stubbs rightly summarizes the challenges faced by those who study the anti-war contention in Yugoslavia:

Trying to describe and analyse grassroots peacebuilding in the post-Yugoslav space from 1991 is a little like representing a diverse and changing landscape through a series of black and white photographs. Some of the core features,

even the beauty, may be captured but often at the expense of the richness, complexity and certainly, the range of colours. Such photographs can never be more than a selective memory, telling perhaps as much about the photographer as the landscape. There is a risk of ignoring or rendering peripheral that which others may see as crucial. (Stubbs in Božićević, 2010: 16-19)

This paper is no exception: it constitutes a minor contribution to a much broader area of research, where these and other issues are analysed more thoroughly.<sup>23</sup> It was principally aimed at shedding some light on the genesis and transformation of a movement that considerably influenced the human rights-oriented civic scene in Croatia and is today (albeit in a different form) the main advocate of the process of “dealing with the past”. The intention was to show that initiatives that might appear irrelevant or marginal to both laymen and academics can sometimes fuel wider and more noticeable activities. However, more research is needed to shed light on the facets that were, deliberately or by choice, left uncovered.

Even if it failed to stop the war, the Croatian anti-war movement constituted an important step in the development (and emergence) of many Croatian civil society organizations. By adapting to changing circumstances, it outlived the war years and is today (at least indirectly) the main source of alternative approaches in a post-Yugoslav society that is still struggling to come to terms with its past. Although it no longer exists in its original form, the AWC spawned many groups and projects, and initiated the debate on war crimes and international responsibility (Gordy, 2013: 171). Through their actions, which although marginal had high symbolic value, the members of the AWC network kept a metaphorical “foot in the door”, preventing it from closing completely.<sup>24</sup> Always a few steps ahead of its time, it presented an alternative to the dominant discourse in Croatia—that of victims and victors—that was often used to legitimize the questionable actions of a regime that called itself democratic.

As Alberto Melucci (1996: 1) wrote in the introduction to his book, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*:

Contemporary Movements are prophets of the present. What they possess is not the force of the apparatus but the power of the word. They announce the commencement of change; not, however, a change in the distant future but one that is already a presence. They force the power out into the open and give it a shape and a face. They speak a language that seems to be entirely their own, but they say something that transcends their particularity and speaks to us all.

It is no exaggeration to state that the anti-war network and most importantly, the people who created it, acted precisely as “prophets of the present”, able to

overcome imposed divisions (which could not have lasted forever) and to anticipate significant changes, with the courage to “speak to us all”.

### Notes

1. There are a number of reasons why anti-war initiatives in Yugoslavia are not the subject of extensive study, ranging from their relatively small size and limited scope of action to the lack of archives and information management systems. Furthermore, elite and nationalism-based scholarly approaches to the demise of Yugoslavia, combined with episodic and sometimes shallow representation in the media as well as weak support from the general public, further dim the picture. From the activists’ side, fear, disillusionment and the lack of (financial) support certainly contributed to the overall paucity of accounts (Dević, 1997; Bilić, 2011a). However, the recent increase in the number of publications and efforts to safeguard and sort the documentation, in order to place it in the Croatian State Archives, clearly show that this trend is being reversed.
2. Some earlier works include Pešić (1992); Dević (1997); Stubbs (2001), Rosandić *et al.* (2005). Similarly, women’s organizations like Women in Black and the Center for Women War Victims have been active in documenting women’s testimonies on war and anti-war engagement, published in volumes such as Zajović *et al.* (1995); Vušković and Trifunović (2008); Kesić *et al.* (2003).
3. The term “movement” has often been contested in the context of anti-war initiatives in the former Yugoslavia, mainly due to their quantitative marginality: in Croatia, for example, the number of anti-war activists would sometimes drop to approximately 15 people. The sociologist Bojan Bilić thus calls for use of the term “contention”. He argues that the latter term is more appropriate because it comprises different methods of contesting the state or opposing the war, while the term “social movement” in general refers to a greater number of participants, which was not the case with the Yugoslav groups (Bilić, 2011a: 100). Activists themselves used the words “campaigns”, “forums”, “centres” and “movements” to appear stronger to the authorities, the media and to mobilise the general public. In this paper, the terms “movement”, “contention”, “engagement” and “activism” are used interchangeably.
4. Nevertheless, numerous scholars have examined social movements’ consequences in terms of “success” or “failure” (Amenta *et al.*, 1992; Banaszak, 1996; Brill, 1976; Burstein *et al.*, 1995; Frey *et al.*, 1992; Gamson, 1990; Goldstone, 1980; Mirowsky and Ross, 1987; Nichols, 1987; Perrot, 1987; Piven and Cloward, 1979; Shorter and Tilly, 1971; Steedly and Foley, 1979, cited in Giugni, 1998: 383). On the other hand, many firmly dismissed the reduction of social movement consequences to those oversimplified categories (Amenta and Young, 1999; Giugni, 1998, Jenkins and Form, 2005, cited in Bosi and Uba, 2009). The lack of consensus among scholars could be explained by the fact that “success” and “failure” are subjective categories, and are not equally evaluated by different parties, including protesters and external observers (Giugni, 1998: 383).
5. Josip Reihl-Kir (1955-1991) was the chief of police in Osijek when he was killed on 1 July 1991 in Tenja (together with two associates), while trying to prevent escalation of the conflict in Eastern Slavonia. His murderer, Antun Gudelj, was only sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2009, while those who ordered the killings were never held to account. Thus, Reihl-Kir’s assassination continues to be a controversial issue in Croatia. On the twenty-third anniversary of the murder, in July 2014, there were two commemorative events organized in Tenja and Zagreb, where activists symbolically “renamed” the streets dedicated to the Croatian war-time Defense Minister, Gojko Šušak, and President Franjo Tuđman, displaying signs reading “Josip Reihl-Kir Street” instead. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatian-activists-commemorate-peace-seeking-police-chief>. Retrieved: August 15, 2014.

6. However, the declaration was subject to a three-month moratorium.
7. The then president of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, used this expression in a famous speech he delivered on 26 November 1996 at Zagreb airport. He was referring to the “foreign mercenaries” that were receiving help from foreign organizations, like the George Soros Open Society Foundation (OSF) (among others). This was an open reference to the fact that *Feral Tribune*, one of the rare independent newspapers at the time, was receiving funding from OSF. The speech (in Croatian) can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqbJOVIEzng>. Retrieved: June 18, 2012.
8. The Association was founded by a group of intellectuals in early 1989 in Zagreb, soon spreading to 13 cities across Yugoslavia. However, the group was often considered an urban and elitist phenomenon, and its already limited space for action kept shrinking until it dissolved in 1990, after the first multi-party elections. Besides promoting “Yugoslavism”, the association advocated for democratic transformation and organized conferences and debates on political pluralism, human rights and environmental protection. In doing so, it anticipated some of the initiatives of the AWC.
9. This finding goes against rational action theory which presupposes that rational actors, knowing they will not be the only ones to benefit from engagement, tend to leave others to produce the desired effects for them. Although no one is motivated to participate in a collective enterprise, there are people who do it and even put their lives at risk (Bilić, 2010: 383).
10. First conceived as a newsletter for all (ex)-Yugoslav peace initiatives, *ARKzin* went from being a fanzine to a low-circulation, but respectable, monthly; in April 1994, it became a bi-weekly and was one of the few independent newspapers in Croatia in the 1990s, along with the satirical paper *Feral Tribune* (before 1993, issued as a supplement in *Slobodna Dalmacija*) in Split and *Novi List* in Rijeka. In those years, special funds were established to promote freedom of the press in former Yugoslavia, like the Dutch Press Now or the Swiss *Medien Hilfe*.
11. However, the organizational structure of the AWC and the relationships between centres should be addressed in a separate article.
12. Željko Ražnatović Arkan (1952-2000) was a Serbian criminal and commander of a paramilitary force during the wars in former Yugoslavia.
13. A research project jointly carried out by the AWC of Croatia and the CAA Belgrade on the media and war has shown that in 1991 the media in Croatia went through three phases:
  - 1) Before Plitvice Bloody Easter, when peaceful rhetoric dominated;
  - 2) After Plitvice and the Borovo Selo massacre, but before September 1991, when Croatia was represented as a victim and the other side defined as opponents (*protivnici*) or rebel Serbs (*pobunjeni Srbi*);
  - 3) After September 1991, when the opponents were increasingly dehumanized and labelled as Serbian Chetniks (*Srbočetnici*).The results of the research were published in *Mediji i rat*, 1999.
14. It became more explicit on two occasions: when the president signed the Charter for Peace, and when the government gave flyers on conscientious objection to a delegation of the Council of Europe. See Janković and Mokrović (2011: 66).
15. For instance, it was a common belief in Croatia that no crimes could be committed in a defensive war, and articles in the media suggested that Croatian soldiers could not develop post-traumatic stress disorder (popularly known as “Vietnam syndrome”) because they fought in a defensive war and not in Vietnam.
16. Private communication with a prominent peace activist from Rijeka.
17. Expression borrowed from Nietzsche, as quoted in Schrift (1997: 153).
18. The Citizens’ Alliance was a political party in Serbia, famous for its anti-war and anti-nationalist stances, guided (among others) by Vesna Pešić.
19. A seemingly very liberal provision, especially for the time, turned out to be mere ink on paper, since it limited this right within 90 days of being registered for military service.

20. See <http://www.documenta.hr/en/programme.html>. Retrieved: August 15, 2014.
21. I am referring, for instance, to: the so-called “anti-Cyrillic campaign” in Vukovar and the ensuing request for a referendum, the reactions to the theatre-play “Aleksandra Zec”, the competing genocide cases that Croatia and Serbia have opened against each other at the International Court of Justice, etc.
22. <http://www.documenta.hr/hr/međunarodna-razvojna-suradnja-u-regionalnom-kontekstu-okrugli-stol.html>. Retrieved: March 20, 2014 [Author’s translation].
23. In my MA thesis ‘Anti-War Activism in Croatia in the Early Nineties: A Social Movement Approach’, defended at Bologna University in September 2012, I also analysed feminist initiatives, as well as concrete actions taken by the group, from a comparative (all-Yugoslav) perspective.
24. The expression is taken from Srđan Dvornik's book, *Actors without Society*, who borrowed it from Žarko Puhovski.

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