

## PREFACE

The 2nd International Interdisciplinary Scientific and Professional Symposium: The War and Its Socio-economic Impact on the Development of the Croatian East was held in Osijek, on December 2-3, 2015. The organizers of this event were: the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar - the Regional Center of Osijek; the Department of Cultural Studies, the University of Josip Juraj Strossmayer, Osijek; the Faculty of Philosophy, the University of Mostar and the Branch of Matrix Croatica in Osijek. The Symposium was held under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Croatia Ms. Kolinda Grabar- Kitarović.

In their everyday life both the organizers of this Symposium and the citizens felt a certain lack of knowledge regarding many topics from the Homeland War, especially those relating to the Croatian East. Regarding the contents, the Symposium represents the continuation of the Symposium that was held in 2014 and attended by fifty-three scientists and prominent social and political activists, who came from inland and abroad (from the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Italy, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The composition of the presenters was very heterogeneous and it included prominent doctors, theologians, lawyers, historians, economists, humanitarian activists, university professors and highschool teachers, constitutional legislators, the former and the current prominent functionaries of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities and others. During the two-day Symposium the participants presented thirty-seven papers regarding the domain of theology, education, culture, anthropology, medicine, history, military tactics and doctrine, law, sociology, economics, political science and humanitarian activities.

The Book of Proceedings from the aforementioned Symposium is a product of scientific and professional presentations done by the scientists and professionals who brought closer the unknown or less known topics of the recent Croatian history to the overall Croatian, European and world public in a systematic and interesting way. The scientific and professional papers confirm with no doubt whatsoever the undeniable fact that the Homeland War was a defensive war of liberation and not a civil war, as it has been claimed by certain groups from the ranks of the Greater-Serbian intelligence in the Republic of Serbia, the Republic Srpska, and even in the Republic of Croatia. The structure of the papers in this Book of Proceedings represents a scientifically

sound evidence that the Croats and other Croatian citizens had led a defensive and liberating war continuously since the beginning of the so-called boulder-revolution that took place in approaches to Knin on August 17, 1990 to the peaceful reintegration of the Croatian Danube region on January 15, 1998, and thereby they had respected all the provisions of international humanitarian law contained in the Geneva and Hague conventions.

In geo-political terms the Croatian East was the subject of the interdisciplinary scientific and professional research in the past two years and it includes: Osijek-Baranja County, Vukovar-Srijem County, Virovitica-Podravina County, Brod-Posavina County and Požega-Slavonia County, e.g. the areas where the Croatian armed forces won a significant victory over the armed rebels in Croatia in the Homeland War. On the other hand, the area of the Croatian Danube region is a part of the Croatian East and it was the last part of the Croatian state territory that had been peacefully reintegrated into the legal system of the Republic of Croatia, through the wise policy applied by the first Croatian president, Franjo Tuđman, PhD. The area covers 12,556 square kilometers, or one-fifth (22.2%) of the total national territory (56,542 square kilometers); according to the census of 1991, 975,359 people or 20.4% of the total number of Croatian people (4,784,265) lived in this area.

In the early days of the Homeland War the fiercest battles took place in the Croatian East, showing the greatest war dynamics and intensity of action of the Croatian armed forces against the part of the rebel Serbs and the Yugoslav Peoples Army (JNA), having caused the greatest military and civilian casualties. The Croatian East is located in the area where Serbia directly borders with the Republic of Croatia so that the rebel Serbs and the Yugoslav Army had an unlimited logistical support from the direction of the Serbian towns of Sombor, Apatin and Šid, that used to be the distribution centers for the Serbian Chetniks and the JNA. In addition, the national makeup of the population in the Croatian East, where there were Serbian enclaves (Tenja, Bobota, Vera, Pačetin, Trpinja, Bijelo Brdo, Borovo Selo, Markušica, Negoslavci, Jagodnjak and other villages), facilitated the Great-Serbian aggression and hindered the defense activities of the Croatian authorities.

The last year Symposium as well as the First Interdisciplinary Scientific Symposium with International Participation: the Croatian East in the Homeland War – Experiences, Insights and Consequences was held in an extremely complex financial time and it took place because of the financial support granted by the business companies and the administrative units of the local and regional self-governments, who had expressed their sensitivity to the themes from the Homeland war and the post-war period. These themes have not been systematically addressed in the area. On behalf of the co-organizers and me, I would like to thank the representatives of the business

companies and the local and regional authorities, whose financial support made it possible to hold these two Symposia; without their financial support that would have been a «mission impossible».

The Symposium is dedicated to the veterans and the victims of the Homeland War, as well as to all the patriots and the martyrs who lost their lives, were persecuted, imprisoned and harassed fighting for the identity and the survival of the Croatian people in the course of thirteen-century-long Croatian history. Likewise, the Symposium is also dedicated to every person, who was not a member of the Croatian national corpus but fell victim in the Homeland War. Therefore I express my special gratitude to this group of Croatian citizens for everything they had done for the identity and viability of our only and beloved Homeland of the Republic of Croatia.

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