

## The results of the scientific research

A large number of students do not fully understand the political framework and the causes of the Homeland War. The students have only some superficial knowledge about the fact that after the death of Josip Broz Tito there had been some significant changes in the political scene of the former Yugoslavia regarding the political order and the survival of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Many do not know that a significant number of the members of the Serbian political and intellectual elite were spreading their dissatisfaction with the provisions of the SFRY- Constitution 1974, that guaranteed the autonomy of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo within the Socialist Republic of Serbia. The students are not familiar with the process of forming the opinion of the “inequal and neglected position” of the Socialist Republic of Serbia. This attitude was originally presented in Serbian academic circles and published in the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Art (SANU Memorandum) in 1986. The SANU memorandum enlivened the traditional nationalist myths and demanded the unification of all Serbs in one state. In the political context, Croats were again accused of the genocide against Serbs in World War II and of the discrimination against Serbs in the Republic of Croatia.

The students are only superficially aware that Slobodan Milošević, who came to the head of the Union of Communists of the Socialist Republic of Serbia in 1987, quickly installed himself as the leader of the Greater-Serbian movement and began to organize mass proclamations with the help of militant groups in all the large cities in the summer of 1984, which became known as the so-called Anti-bureaucratic revolution. In his political speeches, Milošević and his political clique demanded the reorganization of the SFRY according to the policies of the SANU memorandum. This political pressure led to the withdrawal of autonomy from the SAP Kosovo and the SAP Vojvodina, and a pro-Serbian lea-

dership was established in Montenegro. Through these political maneuvers Milošević secured the political support of the Federal Republic of Serbia in the federal institutions and Serbia tried to impose its views on the other republics. The Serbian propaganda targeted first the Socialist Republic of Croatia and the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, which had both been pleading for the reconstruction of the SFRY on the basis of a confederation. Before the first democratic elections in Croatia in 1990, Belgrade promoted an anti-Croatian sentiment among Serbs. After the elections in August 1990, there was an armed rebellion of a significant number of the Serb population in Croatia, having made allegations that there had been a restoration of Ustashism. This rebellion was fully orchestrated from Belgrade and logistically supported by the Yugoslav People's Army and it is known as the so-called Log revolution.

The students know that Slobodan Milošević, working on his expansionist goals and the Greater-Serbia project, relied most on the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), where there had been more Serbs present traditionally in the leadership structures. The students are not aware, however, that this increasing transformation of the Yugoslav People's Army into the Serb military started mid-1980s. In the end of 1988, the then military structure, which had reflected the federal system of the state, was replaced by a new military structure. Instead of the military districts, which mostly corresponded with the republican borders, one the military regions and military corps were introduced, whereby the borders of the individual republics were fully ignored. Likewise, the students do not know that the Yugoslav People's Army seized the armaments assigned to the Territorial Defense during the 1990 multiparty elections. The Territorial Defense was a special component of the defense forces, for which the constituent republics had been solely responsible. In this way, the Republic of Croatia was deprived of weapons and the capability of arming 200,000 men. The question, what had happened with these weapons of the Territorial Defense afterwards, was answered showing a great deal of ignorance of the historical facts. 6 students did not answer. 286 students answered that the weapons had been distributed to the Croatian volunteers, to the Corps of the National Guard of the

Republic of Croatia and to the Croatian police. 170 students answered that the weapons had been transferred to the Republic of Serbia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina. 419 students responded that most of the weapons had been distributed to the Serb rebels by the Yugoslav People's Army. 137 students answered that the weapons had been destroyed and 81 students answered: none of the answers stated.

Among the student population, 532 students or 48.8% are very well acquainted with the fact that the Homeland War was a defensive war over the independence and integrity of the Croatian state, a war against the aggression of the united Greater-Serbian forces, e.g. against the aggression of the Serbian extremists in the Republic of Croatia, the Yugoslav People's Army and the Chetnik volunteer units from Serbia and Montenegro. The students know, that the Republic of Croatia had led the just and legitimate war of defense and liberation and not a war of aggression and conquest against someone, and that it had defended its own territory within the internationally recognized borders. This part of the student population knows the fact that through the successful defense in the Homeland War, including the final military and police liberation operations: Bljesak (Engl.: *Flash*) and Oluja (Engl.: *Storm*) and also by the subsequent reintegration of the Croatian Danube region into the constitutional system of the Republic of Croatia, all the conditions necessary have been created for the harmonious development of the Republic of Croatia. Croatia has been a country that accepts the democratic standards of the modern Western world and opens up numerous opportunities to come nearer to this world in the political, security, economic and cultural sense. On the other hand, a considerable number of students are not familiar with the character of the Homeland War: 3 students gave no answer on the character of the homeland war; 119 students described the homeland war as a civil war; 312 students called it the National Liberation War; 91 students described the homeland war as an international conflict and 34 students responded with: none of the answers stated.

The students have only a superficial knowledge of the Greater Serbia project on the territory of the Republic of Croatia: more

than 50% of the student population did not answer the question of where the western borders of the so-called Greater Serbia would have been. 8 students let the question be unanswered; 296 students indicated the line Virovitica - Pakrac - Sisak - Knin; 181 students answered that it would have been the line Virovitica - Pakrac - Knin - Split; 25 students thought that there had been no plan to occupy Croatian territory; 71 students answered with: none of the answers stated. 500 students gave the correct answer that this border would have been on the line Virovitica - Karlovac - Karlobag.

The students are aware of the fact that the establishment of the Republic of Croatia as an independent, sovereign state within internationally recognized borders represents a realization of the centenary aspirations of the Croatian people and the citizens of the Republic of Croatia to have their own state, based on the togetherness of the Croatian people in the homeland and in the rest of the world. However, the students are only very superficially aware of the political and legal concept of the establishment of the modern Croatian state, which includes the basic values of the constitutional state order: freedom, justice, rule of law, pacifism with national equality and respect for human rights, all of which is guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic Croatia of 1990, in the so-called Christmas Constitution. On the other hand, they are unaware that there is a Declaration on the Homeland War adopted by the House of Representatives of the Croatian Parliament on October 13, 2000. The main purpose of this Declaration is to stop the radical politicization of the Homeland War and the worry causing polarization of Croatian society, which could have some far-reaching consequences.

Even before the Homeland War, the Republic of Croatia had had its own statehood, but during that war it achieved its state independence and the international recognition of a considerable number of states in the first half of 1992. On May 22nd of the same year, it was admitted together with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Slovenia to the full membership of the United Nations. The Republic of Croatia became the 178th full member of the United Nations. During the receiving

ceremony, the Croatian national flag was hoisted in front of the United States building on the East River in New York. Namely, the fact of statehood is generally known to most students, but the more concrete knowledge is quite reduced; the actual context of the state independence and the international recognition is very little known to them; they know least of all about the Homeland War, about the war sufferings, about the demographic and the economic losses. They all know the symbolism of Vukovar, but they know very little about the war crimes that occur throughout the Republic of Croatia, e.g. in Škabrnja, Voćin, Četekovac, Čojlug, Balinci, Hum, etc.

*In fine*, the results of the scientific research carried out, point to the necessity to redefine the curriculum of History as a school subject at the elementary and secondary school level. It is obvious that the students do not have the essential knowledge about the establishment of the Croatian state and about the Homeland War. On the other hand, there is an urgent need to introduce two study courses in the basic studies of social sciences and humanities, which would be: the Establishment of the Croatian state and the Homeland War. In other words, it is necessary to introduce an educational vertical, studying the modern Croatian history, which has not yet been sufficiently researched. The care of national history is one of the essential foundations for securing national and state continuity.