

Royalists push plan to slice up Yugoslavia

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THE INDEPENDENT

MIRKO JOVIC has a list of things to do. It starts with the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the restoration of the Serbian monarchy, and ends with the expulsion of 2 million Albanians and "the hordes of Romanians, gypsies and prostitutes from Ukraine who are flooding into Serbia without control".

As leader of the Serbian People's Renewal (SPR), one of several monarchist groups gearing up for a struggle over the carcass of Yugoslavia, Mr Jovic could be seen as a marginal actor on his country's stage. But the fears and hatreds that fuel Yugoslavia's strife have offered fertile soil for such groups, and they enjoy support among emigrés in Britain, France, Australia and Canada.

Touring Britain last week, Mr Jovic confidently predicted the imminent realisation of his ambitions. "It's 90 per cent there already," he said at the Ravna Gora hotel, a Serbian emigré rallying point in west London.

Mr Jovic says 20,000 Serbs have volunteered to help the SPR defend Serbs living in ethnically mixed parts of Yugoslavia. Only 2,000 to 3,000 were accepted at first, because "for this kind of work you need agile and committed men. We send no one erratic who might provoke an incident. They have been involved in clashes, but only in self-defence.

They are a kind of modern-day force of Robin Hoods. "They are the basis of the future Serbian national army. It's not as militant as

it sounds. They take food and medicines to areas where Serbs are in danger, and they help refugees."

The SPR's programme foresees the "amputation" of Slovenia and most of Croatia from Yugoslavia. What is left will become an expanded Serbia. The Karadjordjevic dynasty, which ruled Yugoslavia between the world wars, will be restored, the Serbian Orthodox Church will return in glory and all traces of communism will be extirpated. "We're not a classical political party. We are a Serbian monarchist, state-building movement. I would prefer the new state to be called Serbia, but it could be the United Lands of Serbia or Yugoslavia, whatever people want," he said.

The state's frontiers would encompass Serbia, its provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina and the republics of Montenegro, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as Serbian-inhabited parts of Croatia. This prospect frightens many people: Macedonians, the Muslim Slavs who make up 40 per cent of Bosnia's population and the Albanians of

Tony Barber speaks to an ethnic leader who believes in his country's division and the expulsion of millions of people

Kosovo, not to mention Croats, the second largest ethnic group.

But Mr Jovic says the Macedonians and Muslims are really Serbs whom Tito awarded separate status after 1945 to weaken Serbia. "Most people in Bosnia are either Serbs or, like those whom the Turks forcibly converted to Islam, people of Serbian origin. Bosnia is the heart of our people and we can't let anyone else have her.

"In Macedonia, we want Tito's legacy overturned and the 1,600 Serbian Orthodox churches returned to Serbs. Other people can build their own monasteries and churches or worship in marquees and tents if they want. For all we care, they can call themselves Macedonians or Martians.

"As for the Albanians, we're talking about adventurers, tourists and occupiers deliberately planted as political immigrants. Why should we behave differently from the Italians? They accepted boatloads of Albanian refugees this year but then got rid of them all. The Albanians have abused

our hospitality. They started to destroy our holy places, desecrate our cemeteries, kill, steal and terrorise Serbs. Why put up with this

any more?" Whether Crown Prince Alexander, the king-in-waiting, would endorse these views is debatable. But Mr Jovic is convinced that Serbs want and need a monarchy, and says a referendum to prove that is unnecessary.

"All constitutions since the end of the Second World War are illegitimate," he said. "The Republic of Serbia was created by a communist dictatorship. A strong Serbia has always had a monarch. When we didn't, it was because we were occupied or repressed by the Turks, Austro-Hungarians and Communists."

Mr Jovic envisages a constitutional monarchy with a dual-chamber parliament in which the lower house would hold most legislative powers.

Many Serbs complain that the Western portrayal of Yugoslavia's troubles is biased against Serbia. To counter that, Mr Jovic said, he had used his visit to set up a London-based Serbian Information Agency, which would present the Serbian monarchist case. "We have to break the media blockade of Serbia," he declared.

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