

Blood marks Yugoslavia's borders

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THERE are no surveyors out on the roads of Krajina, the mainly Serbian spur within Croatia. Blood, not cartographer's ink, is already delineating the future internal boundaries of the forthcoming new federation of Yugoslavia.

Three Croat policemen were shot dead on Saturday by a gunman near Daruvar, 68 miles east of Zagreb. Two others were killed and five wounded 48 hours earlier near the village of Sirac, south of Daruvar. There, Croat workers at the local sawmill said they were being menaced by what they call "fascist, terrorist *Chetniks* [Serbs]" hiding in the thickly wooded hills nearby.

Last night Croat police said they killed five Serb guerrillas, when Serbs attacked two mainly Croat villages near Glina, bringing the death toll in the country's worst weekend of violence to at least 12.

At least 22 people have been

killed in clashes between Croatian security forces and rebel Serbs in the past week, and Croatian authorities vowed on Sunday to step up their campaign against Serbian guerrillas, or "chetniks".

Meanwhile, the federal army began moving troops yesterday in preparation for the withdrawal from Slovenia. Slovenian radio said that the federal troops had begun pulling back to their barracks in Nova Gorica.

The country road south of Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, wound through gentle rolling hills. Villagers leant on garden fences in a picture of pastoral tranquillity. These were prosperous-looking villages. Newly built farmers' homes ran along the road. Great are the individual stakes that would be lost in the violence that looks increasingly unavoidable.

Many Croatian flags flew from lamp posts. Until the village of Dugo Selo. At the entrance of the village a banner proclaimed "Wel-

From Charles Richards in Krajina, Croatia

come to Krajina". Around the bend, two heavy barricades straddled the road. Traffic was flagged down. Men with Serbian accents, and Krajina militia shoulder flashes examined documents.

A little further along the road, men jumped out of the bushes to wave cars down again. They said they were expecting an attack by the "terrorist" Croatian National Guard. Later Croatian radio reported that there had been an attack in the area, but launched by (Serbian) "terrorists".

For this was a *de facto* Serbian enclave within Croatia. Croatia looks like a bent arm. The Serbian minority lives in Krajina, in the crook, and to the east in Slavonia.

The young men of Krajina were armed to the teeth: knives in their boots, pistols in their belts, Kalashnikovs slung round their

shoulders, grenades strapped to their waists.

All the way to Vrginmost, this was territory controlled by Serbs: not the Serb-dominated federal army, but local militia, some in ragtag uniforms, others in militia garb, most in whatever they could find.

Partisans were strong in this area during the Second World War, and people remember the RAF airdrops. As in all regions of conflict, life goes on as normal. Farmers drove their tractors to the fields, chickens scratched for food at the kerbside and boys splashed about in the River Kupa.

Even in Zagreb, a city more Central European than Balkan in appearance, if not always in outlook, municipal workers were digging up electricity cables.

Yet the roadblocks told another tale. The road to Glina was barred by a felled tree. Serbs pointed to the nearby village of Topusko, which they said had been taken

over by the "fascist" MUD — the Croatian National Guard. A railway wagon blocked the way. In this area, the Serbs are armed to resist what they see as the Croat leadership's efforts to dominate them. To the east, villagers in mixed Serb and Croat hamlets have fled to the safety of bigger towns such as Glina and Petrinja.

In Zagreb, salon talk was of the new map of Yugoslavia. It looks like this. Now that the green light has been given to Slovenia to secede, the principle has been established of the disintegration of the present federation of Yugoslavia. The Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, wants to draw new borders that would hive Krajina off Croatia and join it to Bosnia. He also wants to split off parts of eastern Slavonia, that part of Croatia where many Serbs live, so as to control both banks of the Danube. He is unlikely to achieve this without a fight. Both sides are squaring up for a bloodletting.