



Political Myths in the Former Yugoslavia and Successor States explores and deconstructs various political myths and counter-myths that continue to threaten the processes of reconciliation in the region of the former Yugoslavia. The authors show a mutually dynamic interaction between mythology and politics throughout the 20th century. A wide variety of myths are identified, such as "Yugonostalgia", the mythologization of mass graves and deceased persons and the impact of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia on nationalist mythmaking. This work offers the reader a multi-national and multi-ethnic shared perspective on the origins, evolution and influence of myths on political discourse.

This work was one of the components of a broader research and shared narrative program entitled "Facing the Past – Searching for the Future" initiated by the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (The Hague, The Netherlands) and the Center for History, Democracy and Reconciliation (Novi Sad, Serbia).

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POLITICAL MYTHS IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA AND SUCCESSOR STATES A SHARED NARRATIVE
VJEKOSLAV PERICA AND DARKO GAVRILOVIĆ (EDS.)

POLITICAL MYTHS IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA AND SUCCESSOR STATES

A SHARED NARRATIVE

EDITED BY
DARKO GAVRILOVIĆ AND VJEKOSLAV PERICA



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A SHARED NARRATIVE

Edited by

Vjekoslav Perica and Darko Gavrilović

Translation:

Dana Todorović

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHCR	Association for History, Cooperation and Reconciliation
AVNOJ	Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia
CACR	Croatian Association for Cooperation and Reconciliation
CHDR	Centre for History, Democracy and Reconciliation
EU	European Union
FPRY	Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1963)
FRY	Federal Republic Yugoslavia (1992-2002)
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
ICTY	United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IHJR	Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation
JNA	Yugoslav People's Army
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDH	Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NOR	National Liberation War in Yugoslavia (1941-1945)
SPO	Serbian Renewal Movement
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963-1992)
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VHP	Vishva Hindu Parishad

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This book evolved from one of several core projects that since 2007 have been carried out under the auspices of the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) headquartered previously in Salzburg, Austria under the Salzburg Global Seminar and then transferred to The Hague, The Netherlands, in cooperation with the Centre for History, Democracy and Reconciliation (CHDR) based in Novi Sad, Serbia. The team that produced this book worked together on a number of projects with many other colleagues and activists associated occasionally or permanently with CHDR and devoted to the cause of post-conflict recovery in Southeastern Europe. In the final stage of the making of this “shared narrative” the co-authors met for a workshop at the IHJR’s main office in The Hague on 22-26 February 2010. There we planned to complete the task by the end of 2010 and eventually succeeded as intended. Needless to say, our own efforts would not have sufficed for making, publishing and disseminating this product had it not been for many other people to whom we would hereby like convey our gratitude. The project was developing and advancing as planned thanks to invaluable support, guidance and collegiate partnership from the entire IHJR leadership and staff. However, our special appreciation goes out to the incumbent IHJR Executive Director Catherine Cissé van den Muijsenbergh, the previous Executive Director Elazar Barkan, Marie-Louise Ryback, Senior Advisor of Development for the IHJR, and Joke Oranje, Senior Program Coordinator. We are also thankful for the suggestions and comments that we have received in the final phase of writing the manuscript from Steven Blockmans, Professors Wim Blockmans, Margaret MacMillan and Jacques Rupnik. Their kind assistance and expertise has considerably improved our final product, both substantially and methodologically. On the part of CHDR, Darko Gavrilović has participated not only in the writing but the co-authors owe him recognition for his tireless management of CHDR and for bringing us together. Last but by no means of less importance, we are thankful to Dana Todorović for translating the original contributions in English, Hilmar Requena for copy-editing and Laura Boerhout who compiled the index section and bibliography.

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FOREWORD BY RICHARD J. GOLDSTONE

In early November this year I returned from a four-day sojourn through the Balkans that took me to Zagreb, Sarajevo, Srebrenica and Belgrade. Apart from Sarajevo, it was the first time I had been back to the region since the mid-1990s when I was serving as Chief Prosecutor for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. At the time, a war was raging that claimed tens of thousands of lives and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. As prosecutor, it was my responsibility to investigate alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity, attempting to identify perpetrators, build cases and issue indictments. This was an awesome responsibility fraught with legal and logistical challenges. It was also personally wrenching to hear the accounts of atrocities perpetrated by all sides to the conflict.

This recent visit was more serene. I visited some of the formerly war-ravaged places and found impressive signs of recovery. However, the scars of the war remained very much in evidence. I was impressed and encouraged by the significant rebuilding that has taken place in Sarajevo. However, at Srebrenica, the site of the worst human slaughter in Europe since World War II, widows and children of the dead still gather daily to mourn their lost kin. At the same time I was privileged to meet there with young Serbs and Bosnian Muslims who are working hard to reconcile.

On this visit, I was reminded how important history and memory remain to the Balkans. I was also reminded how easily history, both fact and memory, can be distorted to serve partisan purposes, often with horrifying results. In the mid-1990s, I was repeatedly subjected to extended history lessons from one perspective or another, all laying claim to historic truth. Human memory is long; historical memory longer still. It is the basis on which the identity of future generations is nourished. It is also subject to manipulation and distortion. It can also serve as a healing process, a means for overcoming enmity and distrust.

In my role as chairman of the Executive Committee of the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation, I therefore welcome this volume as an example of how scholars and, in particular, historians with different national and ethnic backgrounds, from a region ravaged by warfare and beset with distrust, can work together in a spirit of mutual trust and cooperation. I applaud the efforts of the two editors, Darko Gravilović, and Vjekoslav Perica, whose leadership and vision have made possible this groundbreaking work of bringing shared views of political myths in the former Yugoslav republics to light.

The present volume is undoubtedly an important contribution towards reconciliation efforts. It offers the readers in the Balkans and elsewhere a fresh look at the past through an innovative joint exploration and interpretation of the roots of the wars in the Balkans. The editors identify eight of the most destructive political myths and they investigate how these myths exerted such powerful influence in their societies. This volume, I believe, can help pave the way for further work of this nature whether it be in the form of continued research and shared narratives, the creation of new history textbooks and other means for dispelling historical myths and promoting mutual understanding and reconciliation.

In closing I would also like to express our thanks to the Sigrid Rausing Trust and the Robert Bosch Foundation for their support in making this project possible.

Richard J. Goldstone
November 2010

New Haven, USA

VJEKOSLAV PERICA (CROATIA) AND
DARKO GAVRILOVIĆ (SERBIA)

INTRODUCTION

National consciousness deals with much difficulty with myths set up against it or forced upon by nationalism. A critical historical scholarship, above all in small nations, is oftentimes condemned to defeat or exclusion.

Predrag Matvejević

The disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1991 triggered a series of wars. During the whole decade, from the brief war in Slovenia to the long and bloody wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1991-1995, to the war in Kosovo and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing of Serbia, 1998-1999, and the war in Macedonia in 2001, Western Europe – then amidst the optimistic process of integration, has encountered on its soil a long, destructive and disturbing conflict unseen since World War II (1939-1945). Hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives, whole cities were destroyed, several millions of people lost their homes and never returned to their places of origin, many became gravely handicapped from war wounds, and invaluable material property, cultural heritage and historic monuments were destroyed or seriously damaged. The new European enthusiasm and faith in the progress of civilization have been temporarily frustrated by the horror happening less than a two-hour flight distance from the major urban Western European centers. New states founded on the ruins of the destroyed Yugoslav federation, except for the western most Slovenia, have gone through a difficult process of stabilization, democratization and renewal attaining ambiguous and in some cases disappointing results. This postwar rebuilding and transitional struggle continues with hardships and many ups and downs as these essays are being written. The fate of the region is uncertain: some states are barely viable economically and politically, some at risk of economic collapse, further loss of legitimacy and even new conflicts and further balkanization. At present, mostly due to outside pressures, all current political elites in power regardless of their extremist

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nationalistic past verbally express a pro-European Union (EU) orientation. Even the notoriously anti-EU and pro-Russian Serbia now has a government whose proclaimed policy priority is EU admission. Yet, according to recent public opinion polls, people do not trust political leaders, popular support for the EU is not great, crisis of legitimacy and lack of faith in all institutions, domestic and foreign alike is widespread. Nevertheless, although the EU evidently wants to buy more time for preparing ex-YU successor states for full membership, it seems that the region could find lasting peace, stability and prosperity only through faster admission and integration into the EU.

Arguably, there are several reasons why the desired changes in the region would proceed faster within rather than outside the EU. First, it is said that the former Yugoslavia was an “artificial nation” but its successor nations are even more artificial constructs carried out by small groups and imposed upon masses of people through war, invention of hatred and enmity among close ethnic relatives, ethnic cleansing and mythmaking. Of course, all nations are more or less artificial constructs – no nation is “natural” but a product of national movements operating under various historical circumstances. Yet in this part of the world under consideration, the relatively most “natural” are its historic provinces, micro-regions and some cities with their surroundings. These communities often possess all main features of a nation such as distinct language and literature, folk customs, folklore and folk music, dialects, distinct historic attire, collective memories, shared mentalities and patterns of behavior toward foreigners, concept of “the other” and, in short, distinct collective identities sometimes even in competition with the national identity and in quarrel with the national center. Often differences among provinces within the same nation are greater than differences between two provinces separated by national borders. Only within the EU framework once they enter as parts of their states as full members, these provinces and micro-region will get the opportunity for the new development through interaction with other, including earlier foreign provinces. Such new territorial transborder and transnational associations will open up new possibilities for economic progress and multicultural interaction in the spirit of tolerance and even mutual attraction and the sense of belonging to the same community within the broad community of Europe thus making the nation-state further redundant and declining as historical anachronism.

Second, the potential of the indigenous reform-minded pro-western elites is rather limited. The current condition of some kind of “ghettoization” of this large region of Europe discourages and frustrates them. And for the EU, also, this “Balkan ghetto” inside Europe is both counter-productive

and unfortunate. It is reminiscent of the continuation of the previously discredited western policy in the early 1990s of punishing the war victims e.g. by imposing arms embargo on all sides in conflict thus hurting most the potential victims – primary targets of otherwise well-armed prime movers of war and perpetrators of ethnic cleansing. Intentionally or not, the consequence is that under such conditions, in this “ghetto”, while economies crumble, not only corruption and crime but also mythmaking thrives, sectarian mentality prevails and rural primitivism allied with ethnic and religious nationalistic parties is undoing the urban culture created during decades of socialist modernization before the war. Consequently, anti-nationalistic educated urban elites are fragile, eroding, discouraged and incapable of influencing masses which are still accustomed to measuring patriotism in terms of myth and the militant discourse of the 1990s rather than the ability for changing societies in such a way to resemble developed western countries. Second, there is the example of Slovenia whose EU membership made her the envy of her southern neighbors, at least on the part of the urban classes that suffered the most from isolation and were also only home-grown forces capable of transforming these societies. The EU is right about the principal responsibility of the home-grown human capital for change and preparation for EU admission. And the EU is indeed helping a great deal to invigorate these social forces, but in vain. Admittedly, their potential for change would be more effective inside than outside the EU, because it is primarily the ethnic nationalistic Eurosceptics who benefit most from the prolonged pre-admission process and a stalling transition. They have become nouveau riches via corruption and criminal privatization during the 1990s. The 2003 assassination of the liberal pro-western Serbian premier Zoran Đinđić, followed by the 2009 mafia-styled murder of a Croatian media mogul and finally, the recent arrest in Austria for serious crimes and abuses of power of the runaway Croatian ex-premier Sanader, unveil only a part of the horror and scope of the corruption and crime otherwise perpetrated by all post-socialist regimes in the region ever since the first multi-party elections in 1990. The new power holders consolidated new structures of power consisting of the following: ethnic nationalist parties allied with majority religions and the worst among ex-communist converts to ethnic nationalism. All together those movements deliver new cadres for key political offices and new business leaders. No wonder they proclaimed sovereignty, independence and worship of newly constructed national myths as highest patriotic values because they abhorred any international control, especially EU “meddling”. They have recently turned “allegedly pro-EU” because they have been literally speaking, forced and threatened

from Brussels and Washington. Nevertheless, the majority of the regional regimes' leading cadres remain unchanged. They have come from the same corrupt power elites created in the 1990s by the regimes that incited wars, were involved in the criminal privatization and war crimes either directly or by cover-up and sabotage of sincerely cooperating with international prosecutors and human rights organizations.

In the meantime, chances for the strengthening of a truly reform-minded, honest and trustworthy indigenous human capital have decreased. Too many people have left never to return, especially people capable of post-conflict rebuilding from within and carrying out a regional reconciliation among the previously warring ethnicities. Consequently, in addition to demographic losses caused by waves of refugees who went abroad escaping war during the 1990s, a loss of human capital is immeasurable. Hundreds of thousands of highly educated and skilled persons mostly under forty years of age have since the early 1990s left the ex-YU space to settle permanently in Western Europe and the Americas.¹ And today, every pragmatic urban parent desires his or her youngster to leave this hopeless place seeking educational opportunities and employment in developed western countries. Yet, the EU needs not to fear a massive influx of settlers from ex-YU successor states simply because all who really wanted and managed to leave have already left and those who remained there are so "patriotic" that they would never leave, which is good for the West because such people are only capable of doing harm or at best doing nothing.

Furthermore, one of characteristics of the wars of the 1990s was the so-called "urbicide" – a special type of crime against cities, destroyed not only in material sense but also as communities and micro-cultures. Once growing under socialism and developing each a peculiar urban culture, these cities have been in postwar period not only overpopulated due to influx of "ethnically cleansed" refugees, but deprived of their old elites that have been replaced by corrupt mafia-styled local leaders. Populated by mostly rural newcomers and refugees, these groups imported different modes of behavior including various forms of social pathology (organized crime, drug trafficking, street violence, sport fans fights, neo-fascist organizations etc.). Unfortunately, it must be too late for a "revolution from within" by indigenous liberal elites assisted by the EU. Instead, the EU had better try to incorporate and assimilate those countries as member states.

¹ See Dejan Jović (ed.), *Postjugoslavenska akademska dijaspora*, monthly, *Reč.* no. 70/16 (June 2003).

In other words, the EU should Europeanize them as soon as possible *by embrace rather than by exclusion* (until they are disciplined), to borrow the terms from the reputable liberal Christian theologian Miroslav Volf, who is himself one of the native intelligentsia that left and found educational opportunities and recognition in the West.²

The fourth reason is related to the previous argument about provinces vs. nations and transborder associations of provinces as more suitable than nation-states. Some of those states are small, barely viable and dependent on each other and larger countries. Some need constant outside assistance and in some cases supervision (e.g. Montenegro has a population of 600,000 but also a notorious branch of “Balkan mafia” which also applies to Kosovo and some provinces). Some are not even states but *de facto* international protectorates (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, but, again, very close to its status are Kosovo and Macedonia). Fourth, all the peoples under consideration, although recognized by eminent scholars of nationalism such as Anthony D. Smith, as “old ethnies” i.e. “nations before nationalism”, actually have never lived independently or, more precisely, never created successful and viable nation-states. They were always within broader multinational polities such as empires, larger states or, in the case of the former Yugoslavia, federations or confederated states based on interdependence and solidarity and therefore relatively the most successful regardless of its sorry end by destruction from ethnic nationalistic movements, and not by “systemic failure”. For example, present-day Croatia, currently an EU candidate country nearing admission was, both with respect to national rights and economic development, a relative success in the socialist past and a failure in post-socialism. The most successful period of development for this nation ever in the long history of the Croatian people was from 1974 to 1989, i.e. within the socialist Yugoslav federation. The same applies to neighboring countries. In short, no state that emerged from the socialist federation thus far has neared the level of development and prosperity under socialism. Last but not least, one does not need to be an old school “realist” in international relations theory but simply a common-sense observer of world affairs to have noticed that ever since the 1990s, while the EU has been (as it still is) confused about proper policies regarding the troubled southeastern region and the role of the international community regarding the conflict, some other world powers, acting on their own are very active in this region (i.e. in the heart of Europe). Thus,

² Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (1996).

Serbia became closer to Russia (see more on this in ensuing chapters); while the United States of America (USA) have strongly supported Croatia and Kosovo, and while Turkey and Iran have shown great interest for Bosnian Muslims. That is to say, Samuel P. Huntington³ might have been wrong about a few things but in some cases he got it right. And the EU in this case, as in a number of others, again showed that the familiar problem of its (un) common foreign policy, including relations with other world powers, had remained unsolved.

Therefore the EU has to deal further and with very special effort with this region but as EU member states. The successor states of the former socialist Yugoslav federation are not the same as Russia or Turkey and have some advantages compared to EU members such as Romania or Bulgaria. The former Yugoslavs succeeded in World War II to liberate themselves from fascism by their own effort, to unite and, in less than four decades to transform the poorest agrarian European region into a modernized and predominantly urban society. During the Cold War they did not live under Soviet rule, pursued an independent foreign policy and millions of Yugoslavs traveled freely, lived and worked in Western Europe where they well adjusted. Their former country joined some forms of European integrations that preceded the EU. Finally, the theses about the purported “ancient hatreds” that fuel a “perpetual conflict” in this part of Europe have been proven false and condemned as ignorant and malicious by numerous highly reputable scholarly authorities worldwide. The 1991-1995 genocidal war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina started by the indigenous peoples while the rest of Europe was peaceful is not a “Balkan historical pattern” whatsoever but a historical aberration. Western Europe, after all, itself experienced much longer and worse warfare among its peoples than the peoples of the former Yugoslavia – otherwise for many centuries’ victims of imperialist conquest and invaders’ terror – never had.

The editors and co-authors of this book believe that Europeanization will facilitate stabilization, lasting peace, democratic transition and development in the region. Of course, the problems to be solved in the region are many but they do not justify the continuation of the shameful ghettoization. Some of these problems will be elaborated in this book. Our objective is to create portrayals of some aspects of the identities of these new nations and images as they constructed themselves through times of crisis. Hereby we wish to facilitate for the EU to understand them and

³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996).

get to know them better instead of forcing changes upon them without knowing them well and comprehending how they perceive themselves and others and how they came to be what they are now. And they are brand new nation-states even though they might be made up of old European peoples. In addition, the conflict management in Southeastern Europe is a new invaluable lesson and precious experience for European institutions. This text is also a contribution to this learning opportunity. And last but not least, we have tried in the conclusion of this text to develop a set of specific policy recommendations for the international community regarding its post-conflict and Europeanization-bound management of a very specific kind of transition in Southeastern Europe that makes this part of Europe distinct from other transitional countries. With due respect for international and domestic factors working hard and with noble intentions on various dimensions of the transition, such as, for example, economic and legal dimensions, we often felt that our task has been even harder or at least exceptionally difficult because our topic involves very sensitive topics such as culture and mentality. What seems to us most difficult is that people today tend to put up, for example, with economic imperialism with less resistance than when it comes to foreign attempts to change a country's "identity" and "national culture". However, the culture created through war, violence, crimes of genocide and massive crimes against humanity cannot be tolerated in present-day Europe. It needs to be altered and peoples affected by such a culture need to be anyhow "re-educated".

This text is the result of work carried out on a project that was jointly developed by a group of scientists from the territory of the former Yugoslavia under the auspices of two non-governmental organizations for peace/humanitarian activism – the Centre for History, Democracy and Reconciliation (CHDR) from Novi Sad, Serbia, and the Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation (IHJR) from The Hague, The Netherlands. The text was written in the form of a so-called *Shared Narrative*.⁴ This is a fairly new method which is most frequently used in the field of International

⁴ The term "shared narrative" describes a joint exploration of historical data that intertwines and brings closer perspectives of two or more national histories that are in direct conflict. Shared narratives aim to provide a space for stakeholders from different communities to find a historical identity that transcends conflicting exclusivity. The goal is to erase the dichotomies along national, religious, ethnic or racial lines and take into account interpretations of the data as viewed by the various interlocutors. It is a step in a process of conflict resolution. The shared narrative is unlikely to be linear or mono-vocal and most likely has distinct registers and diverse interpretations and perspectives. See www.historyandreconciliation.org.

Relations, particularly concerning international conflict management. The concept behind this method, which is applied primarily for conflict resolution purposes in zones of prolonged conflict and violence (e.g. the Middle East, India-Pakistan, the Balkans, recently, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.), is that history be written by contributors whose personal background (but not necessarily institutional, and especially not by government authorization) represent the groups in conflict and without the imperative to reach a consensus regarding every controversy. It must be emphasized that a “shared narrative” although it strives toward meeting academic standards is not competing for academic recognition but for the goal of the concrete conflict resolution, peace and reconciliation among the peoples in trouble. In other words, it is a joint study of history by a group of authors “on a mission” which does not primarily concern their academic career advancement or primary professional interests – although they are usually academics and have related professions – but which concerns peace and human rights activism. The teamwork between the authors whose personal backgrounds represent if not “the sides in the conflict” then at least the various groups from the conflict zone, and the issuance of a joint publication and presentation, contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Thus, the country that disintegrated (or arguably was destroyed against the will of a majority of its people) through a bloody series of wars and transformed into several mutually hostile states has been symbolically and temporarily reunited – not in order to advocate its restoration as it was, but in order to send the message that a lasting peace is possible only through sincere cooperation of all of the peoples and groups involved.

The wars in what used to be the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s – presumably the first large-scale wars in history to be followed by daily live mass media coverage – induced massive academic and popular writing and publishing. The authors’ motives might have been diverse such as journalistic assignments, scholarly analysis, human rights, religious and peace activism but also of rather different character such as propaganda, rival governments and intelligence services’ intrigues, self-promotion, personal career advancement, and so on. Therefore, these authors wish to clearly state that they joined forces working under the auspices of the IHJR with the principal objective to facilitate better mutual understanding, promote the peace process, healing and reconciliation among the concrete peoples that suffered a long and serious conflict which has not yet ended. If our objective were to produce a best possible work of scholarship for the sake of advancing our careers and meeting the highest academic standards, we would have done a number of things differently. Thus, for example, we could have upgraded references and bibliographies and could have more

rigorously articulated theses and arguments to fit in the relevant academic disciplines and debates – but we intentionally did not. Nonetheless, we hope that this is also a scholarly contribution particularly to studies of nationalism, international conflict and peace studies, comparative genocide and civil wars studies, studies of communism and post-communist transitions.

We do bear in mind Predrag Matvejević's concern expressed in the above quoted epigraph. We have occasionally experienced the sense of "defeat and exclusion" but this book shows that neither these authors nor many other likeminded colleagues in this region will give up their struggle. Time and historical circumstances are ambivalent forces: on the one hand, they play into the hands of the myth-engineers provided they succeed in consolidating the myths bolstered by ideological regimes, national churches and similar institutional mechanisms; on the other hand it weakens the nationalisms' emotional appeal and erodes mass mobilization that created favorable circumstances for myth-engineering. Critics of the nationalist-myth engineering benefit both from the growing distance from the times of conflict and trouble and from their own effort, i.e., the painstaking anti-nationalist activism is no less stubborn than the nationalist mythmaking. The co-authors' backgrounds mirror the cultural mosaic of the region recovering from conflict. It was their intention to testify to the fact that the peoples of this region, regardless of their different collective identities and traditions, have always had more things in common than dividing and conflict-generating problems and have been so much interdependent and called for solidarity that the road toward a full recovery unavoidably leads toward various forms of reintegration and cooperation. This does not involve the restoration of whatever pre-existing "multinational nationhood" but it involves passing the message that the optimal solution and lasting peace should not be expected from foreign factors even though they demonstrated the will to help – after all, without assistance from the international community this project would have not been possible in this form – but should evolve from home-grown forces reunited in peace-building and democratic development and sharing certain principles and values.

All things considered, although scholars will benefit from this book its principal objective is not to please scholars and earn book reviewers' accolades but its aim is primarily to help overcoming the consequences of massive and long human suffering. Each of these authors as scholars and not merely specialists in this kind of "area studies" were hurt personally and were also directly affected. Although we are fortunate not to have lost close family members, we have lost some friends and property and also

the common country in which we were born, which is always painful. The pain does not go away and neither does the shame of the collective stigma for having come from that “barbaric” periphery of Europe. Normally, our approach to this “issue” involves a greater emotional pressure from which outsider analysts are spared (which does not warrant their greater objectivity). In many respects we differ from other teams who previously dealt with similar topics and we tried to turn our uniqueness into our advantage. In addition, we evidently differ from established elites in post-Yugoslav states and scholars close to them. We also ventured into some unorthodox approaches, such as, for example, regarding the original language(s) in which this text was written. Thus, it was the editors’ and co-authors’ deliberate decision that the original text be written in the combination of languages that are today called: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, combining their present-day standards sanctioned by the new states with parts of the text written in various versions of the former Serbo-Croatian language (including its “ekavian” and “ijekavian” idioms) or the way how that language was spoken in certain jargon or by people whose mother tongue is different such as the Slovenes, etc. In the English translation this will not be visible but in the Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian edition of this book this provocative “mix” is noticeable and we are hoping that ethnic nationalist language puritans will find it irritable.

The co-authors commenced from the assumption that the wars in the former Yugoslavia were waged with the purpose of forming ethnic national states which – as early as in the phase of ethnic nationalist movements, and later, following the consolidation of the state – had imposed new myths, i.e. mutually conflicting versions of history, so that the new states be as different from each other as possible and new national identities be formed. Not all relevant myths will be analyzed in this text, because in that case the text would have to be at least five times longer than the one featuring the selected relevant myths that were factors in the conflict and are still disrupting the peace process. The history of the peoples who once lived in the unified Yugoslav state has remained shared regardless of the fact that this state no longer exists but has given birth to several new states, each of which has its own national history, interpreting the same events, processes and problems in different ways. This text contains contributions for a new, shared history which does not necessarily connote a kind of general consensus on each controversy but is also not reluctant to admit that these peoples share a history and that both the former state and the newly-formed states are nationalistic in character.

Nations and national states that sprouted from that multinational socialist federation (1945-1991), overthrown by ethnic nationalist

movements and the wars of the 1990s, remain unfinished national/nation-building products in the process of construction. At present, these are states in transition waiting to join the EU, and they face serious economic difficulties, as well as internal national consolidation problems and tense relations with their neighbors. The specific subject of analysis is the problem of using history to legitimize the nation as a political and ethnic community. In particularly extreme cases of ethnic nationalism – which is precisely the case here – such an “applied” history is reduced to a conglomerate of historical and political myths legitimized by the states, while the states only continue to produce and consolidate the nation.

This analysis deals with the relevant historical and political myths regarding the former unified state, the myths surrounding the ethno-nationalist movements within the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY)/SFRY (including political emigration myths), and the myths and countermyths concerning the new states created in the 1990s (along with the “Yugonostalgia” myths). Methodologically, this project emphasizes the dynamics of these myths and observes them in their continuous interaction. Thus, as opposed to the architects and engineers of these myths who see these myths as “natural” and “eternal”, as well as freed from “artificial creation”, this project places the emphasis on the artificial, or constructed, character of all these myths and states, both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav, as well as on their changes, dynamics and interaction. Of course, classifications and typologies of myths are numerous and some selection had to be made. For example, secular nationalist myths as parts of national ideologies have been given preference over religious myths because we assume that the majority religions merged with ethnic nationalistic movements providing sacralization of politics. Hence, it was our decision not to attribute a special role to religion and analyze it as an autonomous variable which does not mean that religion is not relevant but our message to such religions is that they are simply ethnic nationalists in religious garb. Likewise, we did not have the ambition to supplement existing theories of political myths although we believe that our case studies selected according to each contributor’s topical choice will be scholarly serviceable. Finally, most of the text covers the period from World War II until the present day although the nature of some topics (e.g. ethnogenesis) requires references to a more distant past.

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MYTHS, POLITICAL MYTHOLOGIES AND NATIONALISM

The myth is an exceptionally complex phenomenon, and the interdisciplinary theory of the myth is so extensive that not even its brief outline can fit into this essay.¹ Therefore, we are focusing rather narrowly on political myths; that is to say, myths of the polis, founding myths of the state and in particular myths of the nation. In other words, these myths are not only modern, secularized myths but also most recently constructed. These political myths in our focus are components of the new national political ideologies. Myth in its broad meaning is not only a more complex but also much older human invention than the notion of ideology which is also essentially modern. Yet, ideologies do make nations but no national ideology can exist without myths. What is in focus here is political myths (as components of national ideologies and nationalist movements) that changed the recent past in the Balkans and brought to the fore new nations that historians will notice and categorize as the most recent wave in the long history of nation-formation in Europe.

We have singled out to examine in greater detail the following types of political national myths that influenced the most recently formed Balkan nations: myths about origin; myths about borders; myths of World War II and the socialist era; myths about the ethno-diaspora and other nation-building myths and countermyths; the mythologization of memory, monuments, tombs and famous deceased persons; and finally, Yugoslav mythology after Yugoslavia, i.e. the nostalgic reminiscence of the former state, its myths and new myths that have emerged from that nostalgic subculture.

Twenty years after the war and the process in which the former Yugoslav federation was replaced by several independent states which had constructed themselves as states, debates about the character of these changes are still ongoing, and the newly-established creations remain

¹ Robert Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (2004).

inarticulate. The destroyed socialist federation (although the current ruling elites insist on the term “failed” in order to free themselves of responsibility for encouraging mass violent nationalist movements, for the results of the breakup and for the wars) was an enigma not only in regard to the experimental political and economic model but also as a “multinational nation”. The nations which sprouted from it are unfinished products in the process of construction. This research project deems that a comparative analysis of the former state is also necessary for the analysis of that process. The specific subject of analysis will be the legitimization of a nation as a political and ethnic community by means of history which in particularly extreme cases of ethnic nationalism – and this is precisely the case here – is reduced to a conglomerate of historical and political myths. We will analyze not only the structure, content and roles of these myths but also their interaction with “countermyths” from the neighboring rival nations, from the “outside world” or from “within”.

By “political myths” we mean primarily myths that are connected to the state. Italian political scientist Emilio Gentile believed that the emergence of modern national states created a “religion of politics”, comprised of myths, symbols and rituals which sacralize politics, give that national state a saintly quality and represent it as a sublime ideal for which people are prepared to die.² Such an understanding of the myth is, hence, narrower than its cultural and anthropological meaning. Specifically, it is not about some sort of spontaneous “ethnic war”, as was noticed by American anthropologist V.P. Gagnon,³ one of the rare Western analysts with such a perspective, but about organized movements that existed for the creation of national states based on the ethnic principle but outside the framework of the former federation which emphasized the necessity of inter-ethnic harmony and solidarity. These movements used a mythical history to try to envision new states and then impose them on reality, which had to have resulted in war because the myths in question were incompatible and could exist only in the sphere of the imaginary. Unfortunately, the international community – although it noticed this way back in the 1980s – underestimated this “Balkan mythomania” because of the stereotype of the “Balkan mentality”. As Denison I. Rusinow, one of the top American experts for the Balkans during the entire Cold War era, had noticed, back in the mid-1980s many in the West had sensed

² Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, translated by George Staunton (2006).

³ See e.g. V.P. Gagnon, Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990's* (2004).

the possibility of a war in the Balkans, but the West at the time was losing interest in Eastern Europe; besides, they did not foresee just how bloody and destructive this war would be, nor were they prepared to take measures to prevent that war in every way possible.⁴

On mention of the word “myth”, the first thought that comes to mind for most people is some sort of fabricated, fantastic and fairytale-like story, something that probably does not have much to do (if anything at all) with the “truth” or with “reality”.⁵ Naturally, in the past two and a half thousand years, philosophers have spent much time and have written many books in order to explain that the “truth” is rather difficult to establish. Additionally, entire branches of science (contemporary social anthropology, for instance) have developed due to the realization that it is impossible to establish something so definitive and ultimate. Even in the so-called “exact” sciences, as illustrated by Feyerabend with physics as an example,⁶ the “truth” is a rather deceiving notion, and scientific theories (which are convincingly supposed to explain “reality” to us) have often been accepted only because their proponents were convincing to the “common sense” of the majority of the population – scientific or expert argumentation has been, for the most part, of secondary importance.

Myth and politics are permanently interconnected. We are intentionally mentioning them here together, because politics cannot be imagined without the use of myths (the myth about the chosen people, the myth about the brave nation, the myth about origin, the eschatological myth about a bright future, the myth about a unified Europe, to mention only a few).⁷ The language of daily politics is connected and intertwined with the mythical to such an extent that it is nearly impossible to understand it without this “supernatural” or “irrational” element. Even back at the time of World War II, German philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945) pointed to the dangers which come from the state’s (institutional, i.e. official) manipulation of myths – Nazism was constructed, among other things, on the myth about the superiority of the “Aryan race”, as well as on the myth about the eternal victimization of the German people.⁸ Germany (and all of Europe, in fact) was feeling the consequences of this myth for many

⁴ Dennison I. Rusinow, *Yugoslavia: Oblique Insights and Observations* (2008).

⁵ Robert Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (2004), p. 6.

⁶ Paul Karl Feyerabend (1987 and 1993).

⁷ For some other very distinctive examples regarding national myths, cf. for example Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation* (1996); i.e. Miodrag Popović, *Vidovdan i časni krst*, 3rd ed. (1998).

⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (1946).

decades after the war. On the other hand, it is easier to understand some apparently “irrational” views of Mirce Eliade (1907-1986), one of the twentieth century’s most influential interpreters of myth and religion, when the political context in which some of these viewpoints were formed is taken into consideration – for example, Eliade’s sympathy for Romanian fascism from the 1930s to World War II.

In a certain sense, one could easily agree with Lévi-Strauss when he says that myths on their own do not pronounce any big or “eternal” truths, but that, on the other hand, they tell us a lot about the societies in which they were created and the way those societies operated.⁹ For this reason we consider the myth to be primarily a form of ideology. Then again, we are referring to ideology in the most general sense, following the French sociologist Raymond Aron (1905-1983), as a system of ideas¹⁰ – ideas that are not necessarily good or bad on their own but that primarily depend on how they are used and in which context. Naturally, since the material which myths contain is so multilayered, multifaceted and often times ambiguous, it would be best (in an ideal world) to keep myths far from politics, but we do not live in an ideal world, and the question also remains whether without the use (or manipulation) of myths, politics – as we know it today – would exist at all. As a system of ideas, ideology helps people to understand and rationalize the world around them. However, at the same time it is a powerful weapon of the ruling elites, which through direct political control or (in somewhat subtler aspects) through an indirect influence on the means of communication (primarily mass media) attempt to impose on all other parts of society their particular view of the world as the only one possible.

This precisely-defined view of the world imposed from “above” is based on mythical patterns which include (among other things) elements such as moral purity and value, heroism, suffering, sacrifice, as well as the necessity to reach the “promised land” somewhere at the end of the journey.

⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *From Honey to Ashes: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, Vol. 2, translated by J. and D. Weightman (1981), p. 639.

¹⁰ Aron defined ideology as a “pseudo-systematic formulation of a total vision on the historical world” (Raymond Aron, *The Industrial Society: Three Essays on Ideology and Development* (1967), p. 144). Back in 1943 he wrote that ideology is “secular religion”. Also cf. the following definition: “Ideology is more or less a systematic interpretation of society and history, which those who support it consider the ultimate truth” (Raymond Aron, *Progress and Disillusion: The Dialectics of Modern Society* (1968), p. 194). Aron opposed what he called “total ideologies” (what we would today call *totalitarian*), but he did not deny the value and importance of possessing certain *systems of ideas* as the guiding principles for human development (which he called “cohesive factors”).

It is characteristic both of the powerful and developed states of the present day and of countries “in development” and so-called “third world” countries. In all fairness, though, the patterns of imposing a specific view of the world differ greatly – their brutality is typically directly proportionate to the degree of technological, political and cultural development in a certain society, where the most developed states are usually the most benign towards their residents, while “developing countries” often do not shy away from much more direct and brutal methods of convincing.¹¹ Therefore, each form of presentation of anthropological (or historical, sociological, mathematical, etc.) information and research results stems from a certain sphere of power, and power in itself is never something benign or something that can be ignored. For example, during the previous years in Serbia, from the sphere of ruling political parties stemmed a modification of the history of World War II (and in keeping with the myth about the Serbs as a “chosen people”), resulting in a new, entirely original interpretation of who participated and who won in this war – this, among other things, resulted in Serbia being the only European state without a high state delegation at the 60-year anniversary of the victory over fascism in Moscow in 2005.

The model of American culturologist Bruce Lincoln illustrates the dynamics of myths. According to him, myths can be the agents of social and historical change in the following ways: by stripping established myths of their authority; by elevating a certain story to the status of myth; by carrying out a revision of certain standard myths or reinterpreting standard and widely-accepted myths.¹² We should also mention political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, who included the “exchange of symbols and myths” in his famous definition of revolution.¹³

By focusing on the situation in the former Yugoslavia twenty years after the crucial year of 1989, this project will try to shed more light on newly constructed collective identities. In other words, it will attempt to answer the question of “who is who” in the region today, while emphasizing the ephemeral nature and changeability of these collective identities. In that context, various peacekeeping activities should also be

¹¹ This, of course, is a generalization, because even in developed countries there are occasional cases of incredible brutality. Also compare Aron’s ironic comment in Dominique Schnapper (ed.), *Power, Modernity and Sociology: Selected Sociological Writings*, unpublished texts translated by Peter Morris (1988), p. 125.

¹² Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (1989).

¹³ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968).

considered as frequently unsuccessful, since they strive to freeze and cement something that cannot be frozen or cemented (e.g. the Dayton Peace Accords of 1995 which in some respects awarded the results of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina although it is naive to believe that genocide will ever be forgotten by the victimized nation). In doing so, foreign interventions and domestic institutional arrangements are repeating the mistake of Titoism – sweeping conflict under the carpet (e.g. Communist retaliation against their wartime opponents in 1945). Normalization and the creation of conditions for reconciliation can be achieved only if the character and origin of the conflict is properly understood – at least when historical/mythical engineering is concerned – and if incompatible and unreconciled myths are eliminated.

The role of myths is a familiar topic in academic debates about the breakup of Yugoslavia. For example, Holm Sundhausen and Richard Crampton, with whom Maria Todorova disagrees, believe that throughout history the Balkan peoples developed a specific “hypersensibility” in relation to the myth and the mythical.¹⁴ This was also written at an earlier time by Mircea Eliade, who ascribed a great influence to the Kosovo myth on all Balkan peoples.¹⁵ Norwegian Slavist Pål Kolstø dedicated a study to the role of myths in the breakup of Yugoslavia and the formation of post-Yugoslav nations, and he edited it with the assistance of most of the scientists from the region. Kolstø discovered that there were four archetypes of myths which had the most influence on nationalism in Southeast Europe. Myth *sui generis*; *Antemurale* myth; *Antiquitas* myth; and *Martyrium* myth.¹⁶ Due to the above mentioned, there is a gap in the myth debate which this project wishes to fill, as well as numerous controversies which require further debate.

Socialist Yugoslavia – as Slavoj Žižek tried to explain to the West back in the mid-1990s – did not seek legitimacy in Marxism/Leninism but in nationalism.¹⁷ The greatest success of the Yugoslav communists was the

¹⁴ Richard Crampton (2001); Maria Todorova (2004).

¹⁵ Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History*, translated from the French by Willard R. Trask; with a new introduction by Jonathan Z. Smith, 2nd pbk. ed. (2005).

¹⁶ Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe* (2005).

¹⁷ By using popular, ideological/“rebellious” language, at the height of the war of the 1990s, Žižek informed Western audiences of what decades of research of numerous political scientists and sociologists, both Yugoslav and foreign, had suggested. See especially: Laslo Sekelj, *Jugoslavija, struktura raspadanja* (1990); Carl-Ulrik Schierup, “Quasi-proletarians and a Patriarchal Bureaucracy: Aspects of Yugoslavia’s Re-peripheralisation”, *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (1992).

solution to the problem of nationality and not the construction of socialism. Socialist nationalism, therefore, was also above all a conglomerate of symbols and myths which need to be analyzed in comparison to those of the post-Yugoslav era. All post-Yugoslav states (including Slovenia, to a certain extent) are unfinished projects. They define themselves primarily in relation to the past (Yugoslav states, wars of the 1940s and 1990s and pre-modern history), then in relation to one another and in relation to the leading Western countries. As states in transition, they are close to fitting into the concept of failed states, yet they made more progress when it comes to nation construction than the construction of statehood and the political/economic system. These nations have a “symbolic nationality” above all: a flag, national anthem, state religion, sport national teams, as well as collective fantasies about history and the present articulated as political myths and countermyths. This “symbolic-mythical nationalism” perpetuates instability although it is unlikely that it will generate new wars because the same historical circumstances of 1989-1991 will never repeat. However, the analysis of the “imagined” (e.g. national myths, group self-perceptions and misperceptions) against the “real” (e.g. economic downfall, class relations restructuring, legal sanctions, etc.) is the only way to answer the question about collective identities created after Yugoslavia. Nationalistic movements, especially in extraordinary circumstances such as civil wars, rise of new nations, and postwar crises create mass delusions in which the groups involved to put it simply, are not what they think they are. In the region under consideration there are no winners, no heroes and no real reasons for whatever celebrations. The sooner they realize this, the better. However the West, while dealing with “them” as a problem, also needs to stop blaming victims for their loss and using stereotypes and misperceptions of their own. The peoples of former Yugoslavia will “get real” and recover faster if Europe embraces them rather than if they continue to be excluded and despised, for they proved that they are capable of many things other than warfare and sport.

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ETHNOGENESIS MYTHS

Considering that the national states in question here were designed on the ethnic principle, as states with a majority ethnic group, it is important to determine the question of identity and of differences in relation to minority groups and neighboring rival nations. The first myth we are covering here falls into the wider category of the myths about origin – specifically, myths about ethnogenesis, the “chosen people”, etc.

In the beginning of the 1990s, just prior to the breakup of Yugoslavia, writers appeared on the Serbian literary scene who expanded on the work and ideas of Serbian nationalistically-oriented historians who wrote history textbooks in the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. At that time, Serbian creators of myths about the longevity of the Serbian people and size of the territories they occupied claimed that “all Slavs were once called Serbs, and only in the 6th century after Christ did they start calling them Slavs....”¹ Some of their colleagues – geographers – saw the states of the neighboring peoples as exclusively Serbian and considered Dalmatia to be an exclusively Slavic country where

all the people of a Slavic origin – Orthodox and Catholic – are Serbs...
Statistical information about Dalmatia and its population is not stated in historical textbooks. All that was written in them was that the first Serbian settlements in Dalmatia extended all the way to the Cetina River. This is why the islands of Brač, Hvar, Korčula and Mljet were identified as Serbian²

while Serbian lands stretched further, from “the Drava and Tamiš and to the south over the Sava and Danube, reaching the Thessaloniki Plain, as well as Mount Olympus and Pindus, the city of Durrës in present-day Albania; in the west, the border of the Serbian fatherland extended to the Una River, the

¹ Milenko Vukičević, *Istorija srpskog naroda za srednje škole – od dolaska Srba na Balkansko poluostrvo do polovine 15. stoleća*, Vol. 1 (1904), p. 1.

² Milan Ubavkić, *Istorija Srba za osnovne škole u Kraljevini Srbiji*, (1891), p. 6; Charles Jelavich, *Južnoslavenski nacionalizmi – Jugoslavensko ujedinjenje i udžbenici prije 1914* (1992).

Cetina River and the Adriatic Sea, and in the east past the middle region and the Rhodope Mountains....”³ Following the example of their colleagues from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the Serbian myth-bearers of today have readily placed their fountain pens in the service of the national idea and continued to spread the myth about the “chosen people”. The work of these writers – among them Borislav Vlajić-Zemljanički, Jovan I. Deretić, Dobroslav Jevđević, Olga Luković-Pjanović and Draško Šćekić – was also supported by painters such as Milić Stanković and Dragoš Kalajić. They all shared one idea, which is that Serbs are the oldest people in the world. During the time of difficult Presidency sessions, when suspicions were first voiced in public that the state would disintegrate in the vortex of war, such statements made by writers – probably according to the creators of national policy – were intended to have a beneficial and mobilizing effect on the national consciousness of the Serbian people. Their works soon reached the public, and among those that attracted the most attention was the book by Olga Luković-Pjanović titled *Serbs ... the Oldest People*, published in 1990. Through the work of this author, the long-familiar and ideologically well thought-out way to prove the greatness and age of this (chosen) people by means of language and its link to toponyms, had found a simple path to the readers with the intention of awakening their national self-awareness in the ideological sense. This is profoundly contradictory to Croatian myths about the oldest national states, which insist on seniority, especially in comparison to the Serbs, thus mythologizing the Croatian state and its rulers who governed at least 300 years before the Serbian state that was created in the 13th century.

Intertwined with the myths about the chosen people are elements of the archetypal myth about the Promised Land. For example, Draško Šćekić, referring to the words of Sima Lukin Lazić, claims that the First Migration of the Serbs and their dispersion began about 4500 years before the birth of Christ.⁴ Moreover, Šćekić states that: “In India, the first cradle of the Sorbs or Serbs, where as early as 5000 years before the birth of Christ two Serbian states existed: the great Sarbar state, in the Gangetic region, and the coastal Panonska state...”,⁵ based on which it turns out that the

³ Milenko Vukičević, *Istorija srpskog naroda za srednje škole – od dolaska Srba na Balkansko poluostrvo do polovine 15. stoleća*, Vol. 1 (1904), pp. 28, 30-31.

⁴ Draško Šćekić, *Sorabi: istoriopsis* (1994), p. 17, as well as in Radivoj Radić, *Srbi pre Adama i posle njega* (2003), pp. 38-39.

⁵ Draško Šćekić, *Sorabi: istoriopsis* (1994), p. 72; Radivoj Radić, *Srbi pre Adama i posle njega* (2003), p. 39. Jovan I. Deretić also wrote about the ancient history of the Serbs, emphasizing

(Continued)

Serbs are such an old people that, when compared with the Old Testament, they are older than Adam and that, since the author himself stated that the world was created exactly at 9 o'clock a.m. on 23 October 4004 BC, they are older than the world itself.⁶ Therefore, if we were to follow this train of thought, it turns out that first the Serbs existed, and only then did God create the world!⁷

Other than the abovementioned writers, the myth about the chosen people is also projected in the paintings and writings of Milić Stanković, better known as Milić of Mačva. He arbitrarily relied on the work of Miloš S. Milojević. In an artistic trance (both historiographically and prophetically false) and while receiving the greatest coverage in the media as his beliefs suited the propaganda activities of Milošević's regime – which had to instill the feeling of uniqueness and greatness among the Serbian people in order to prevent personal political failure – Milić openly attacked all those who did not agree with him, including Dragoslav Srejović, one of the greatest Serbian scientists. While working during the high tide of nationalism, Milić Stanković linked his understanding of history with the prophecies about the Serbs as the oldest people. According to Stanković, spreading across the Western Hemisphere will be a

fifteen-minute unexpected chain tectonic cataclysm, and there would be so few survivors that they would fit under the branches of a single plum tree. This tree top is a metaphor for Serbia.... The Serbs will survive as the last

that ancient Serbia extended across the Adriatic peninsula several centuries before the Roman conquest. Its capital was Sarda, present-day Shkoder. Other than this Serbia, there was another Serbia in Dacia, and yet another in the north on the Sarmatian Sea, which is today called the Baltic Sea.

⁶ Maja Medan, *Oni koji znaju sve*, manuscript (2008), p. 22, states that Šćekić cited this date on page 14 of the abovementioned book.

⁷ Such a mythological notion fostered Serbian nationalism during the 1990s. Nevertheless, it very quickly found itself in opposition to another mythological notion – that of the Russians, the friendly and brotherly nation of the Serbs. At the time the Russians also harbored the myth about being the oldest people in the world, and its loudest proponent was Y.P. Mirolyubov. The already published *Book of Veles*, which he persistently adhered to as the book about the creation of the world, spread the dream about the Slavic Russians being the oldest people on earth, that their original homeland is located between Sumer, Iran and North India, from which they had migrated approximately five thousand years ago, broke through to Iran, crushed despotic rule in Mesopotamia with their cavalry, conquered Syria and Palestine, invaded Egypt, and reached Europe in the 8th century BC. We think that the followers of Y.P. Mirolyubov should come face to face with the followers of Olga Luković Pjanović for an endless discussion in a “brotherly Serbian-Russian embrace”, during which they can express their arguments regarding which people are the oldest in the world. Radivoj Radić, *Velesova knjiga – uzbudljiva priča o jednom falsifikatu*, *Kultura polisa*, No. 6/7 (2007), p. 124.

offspring of the Sorbs, the ancestors of all European peoples. The Serbian language will also survive as the planetary language ... the only language which can be used to communicate with the civilizations on other planets, because Serbs originate from that bright, otherworldly side of the face of Atlantis.⁸

In the former Yugoslavia, it was not only the Serbs who spread ethnogenesis myths regarding the multi-millennial age of the people. Certain Croatian scientists considered the ancient inhabitants of Iran to be the ancestors of the Croats, whereas others considered them to be the Ostrogoths – an idea that was particularly popular during World War II, with the aim of pointing out that Croats are not Slavs. Prior to the appearance of authors who served the Ustasha propaganda with the intention of separating the Croats from the Slavic group of people by coming up with fanciful ideas about the origin of the Croats, there were quite a few of those whose vision of the greatness of their people and their borders was – similarly to their Serbian colleagues from the beginning of the 20th century – far removed from reality. For example, Vjekoslav Klaić, whose specialty was the Middle Ages, wrote about the existence of a “Great or White Croatia, from which Slavic tribes and peoples emigrated in all directions”.⁹ This was an assertion somewhat similar to the one made by the Serbs. According to this Croatian author, all Slavs were once Croats. The lands inhabited by the Croats matched the descriptions of Serbian lands. As Srkulj had stated,

the land where the Croats settled extended from the Adriatic Sea and Raša in Istria all the way to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the east, and from the Danube in the north to the Bojana River in the south. Chronicler Priest Dukljanin calls the land which at first extended from Cetina to the Zrmanja river, and then to Raša in Istria – the old Liburnia – White Croatia, whereas the region between the Cetina and Bojana rivers he calls Red Croatia... Croats also inhabited Southern Panonia, the land from the Drava and Danube rivers all the way to Kapela and Gvozd to the south and southwest.¹⁰

The tendency to reach so far back into the past continued during the 1990s, and the creation of geographical and historical maps with state or national borders had largely aided the creators of the wars in the former Yugoslavia to convince the population of the ethical value of their deeds. Particularly

⁸ R. Radić, *Srbi pre Adama i posle njega* (2003), p. 183.

⁹ See Charles Jelavich, *Južnoslavenski nacionalizmi – Jugoslavensko ujedinjenje i udžbenici prije 1914* (1992), p. 210.

¹⁰ Stjepan Srkulj, *Povijest srednjega vijeka za više razrede srednjih učilišta* (1912), p. 58.

imaginative was Mate Marčinko, who decided to convince the Croatian people of their multi-millennial existence as an ancient Indo-European people, while the borders held by the Croats, according to him and those with similar beliefs, were far wider than they are today.

The Slovenians are also not immune to the multi-millennial elongation of their own history. Representatives of their autochthonous school claim that Slovenians are directly linked to the Veneti, whilst insisting that their link is of a genetic nature and that it represents a continuous line of development which has allowed the Slovenians to exist as a people for 2000 years.¹¹ The desire to present their people as the “chosen people with a great history” and their land as a “promised land with far wider borders” can be found in the fantasy that the lands the Slovenians inhabited in the 9th century – which were three times the size of Slovenia today and which had this very country as its geographical center – were Slovenian lands even back in that time. Not only were they three times the size of Slovenia, but they even extended to the Donava, between the Danube and Linz, in the north. According to the abovementioned fantasy, all those areas were inhabited by the Slovenians, including a large part of present-day Austria, yet what is neglected is that these were Danube Slovenians who the Slovaks, in keeping with their own nationalistic views, also frequently consider their own people.¹² For this reason, it is not surprising that the statements of Slovenian politicians in 1991 when Slovenia was declared independent contained mythical ideas about the fulfillment of the “thousand-year Slovenian dream” and “long-time wish of all Slovenians” ever since the time of Carantania, the inhabitants of which it is impossible to equate in the national sense with the Slovenians of today because even the name itself is completely different (Carantanians – Slovenians), and the entire science-based Slovenian historiographic community of today is prepared to confirm that the thesis which holds Carantania as the first Slovenian state was in fact an “intellectual construction” of Slovenian revivalists from the end of the 18th century, i.e. from the time when the

¹¹ Peter Štih, “Ej ko goltneš do tu-le, udari po konjih! O avtohtonistične in podobne teorije pri Slovencih in na Slovenskem”, *Zgodovina z vse 3/2* (1996), p. 87; Rajko Bratož, *Začetki slovenske etnogeneze. Dejstva, teze in hipoteze o prehodnem obdobju med antiko in srednjim vekom v prostoru med Jadrantom in Donavo*, v. *Goriški letnik 30-31* (2003-2004), p. 212; Peter Štih, *Miti in stereotipi v podobi starejše slovenske nacionalne zgodovine*, *Zbornik Mitsko in stereotipno v Slovenskem ogledu na zgodovino* (2006), p. 30.

¹² Peter Štih, *Miti in stereotipi v podobi starejše slovenske nacionalne zgodovine*, *Zbornik Mitsko in stereotipno v Slovenskem ogledu na zgodovino* (2006), p. 33.

Slovenians began to transform into a modern people.¹³ The problems surrounding the myth about the Promised Land were best explained by Igor Grdina when he wrote that “Gospodsvetsko Polje was the Slovenian Kosovo Polje and that, as such, it became the metaphor for the expression of collective national frustrations.”¹⁴ Speaking about the deaths of the flower of their medieval nobility, the Croats also had their own Kosovo Polje – and that was Krbavsko Polje where the Ottomans completely defeated the Croatian Army, while in recent times the clash between the Partisans and the remainder of the Army of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) at Blajburško Polje could be considered an equivalent of that myth.

Early medieval history is extremely important for the fabricated tradition in modern Macedonian nationalism. This is why towards the end of the 20th century the question of Tsar Samuel’s nationality, and therefore the question of to whom Macedonia belonged, was once again posed in the public. With the goal of strengthening the national spirit and their state, on the threshold of the 21st century scientists who were nationally-inclined to Macedonia developed the myth that Samuel was Macedonian by nationality. In an edition of the History of the Macedonian People (*Istorija makedonskog naroda*), the first volume of which appeared in 2000, Samuel’s state is definitely called the “Macedonian state”, in which Macedonians were the ruling people.¹⁵ The fact that Byzantine authors, who provided the most information on Samuel’s state, called the state “Bulgaria” and its inhabitants “Bulgarians” is only casually mentioned and is not taken seriously. The Macedonians did not stop at the time of Samuel to trace their roots. They went all the way to ancient times, and hence the discourse about the ancient Macedonians was intended to substantiate the Macedonian claim to their homeland, the territory of their ancestors and a long-standing national pedigree.¹⁶ It is clear that such a position served the Macedonians, who began developing their national identity only some hundred years ago, not only to flare up the myth about the chosen people that was to grant them antiquity but also to initiate the finalization of state

¹³ Matjaž Klemenčič, *Ustanovitev slovenske države – Davna želja vseh Slovencev?*, Zbornik *Mitsko in stereotipno v slovenskem pogledu na zgodovino* (1996), pp. 84-85.

¹⁴ Igor Grdina, “Karantanski mit v slovenski kulturi”, *Zgodovina za vse* 3/2 (1996), p. 57.

¹⁵ Branko Panov (ed.), *Istorija na makedonskiot narod*, Vol. 1 (2000), p. 357.

¹⁶ Ulf Brunnbauer, “Drevna nacionalnost i vjekovna borba za državnost: Historiografski mitovi u Republici Makedoniji”, in Husnija Kamberović (ed.), *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu, Collection of Works* (2003), p. 305.

or national territory, which required the creation of the myth about the Promised Land – some sort of Macedonian state of Samuel.

As in other countries much earlier, or in the communist countries after 1989, both historians and history enthusiasts in Bosnia and Herzegovina turned to the Middle Ages, focusing on the link between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the medieval Bosnian state and emphasizing the validation of its statehood dating back several hundred years and its continuity. When the international community acknowledged Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state, the focus shifted from the issues of continuity and statehood to the issue of proving the exclusive rights to it.¹⁷ Thus, after it was appropriated by Serbian and Croatian nationalism (with the firm support of historiography, i.e. professional historians), the Middle Ages also found its place in the national narratives of the Bosnian Muslims. Material from the Middle Ages had already been used before and what the creators of the national narrative found especially convenient was the specific character of the medieval Bosnian state, the separate church organization and the story about the heretics who were neither Orthodox nor Catholic. However, medieval symbols or historical figures from the Middle Ages could not be incorporated so easily into the national identity. The medieval period contained too many crosses, St. Stephens, and “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”, with which Bosnian Muslims could not easily identify. As proud as they were of King Tvrtko who at one point ruled the territories of the former Serbian medieval state and a large portion of Croatian territories, or of Kulin who signed the “birth certificate of Bosnian statehood” (the most popularly-used phrase for the oldest Bosnian state document, the 1189 trade agreement between the Bosnian ban, Kulin, and Dubrovnik), in order to fit them into the desired pattern it was first necessary to marginalize their Christian identity. And very convenient for that was the old myth about Bogomils as heretics who recognized neither the Orthodox nor the Catholic faith, who did not have churches, who hated the cross... and they were somehow... the closest

¹⁷ “It is not an unfathomable fact that in comparison to neighboring Serbia and Croatia, but also to other South-Slavic states, Bosnia was able to preserve its land for the longest time. May we be reminded that Croatia lost its land in 1102, Serbia in 1389, whereas Bosnia in the year 1463, while all were established at the same time, during the 9th century. That shows the depth of the roots of Bosnian statehood and independence. Therefore, these days Bosnia is gaining what it had once enjoyed, which it is now only renewing.” Enver Imamović, “We Did Not Gain It, We Renewed It”, *Zemlja* 1(4) (1992), p. 4; or “Bosnia is 50 years older than Croatia, while the Serbian state did not even exist at the time. Bosnia was named after its people, the Bosens, which means that they were gentle, communicative and good-natured people”, *Ljiljan*, 21 December 1992.

to Islam.¹⁸ This opened a new chapter in the myth about the Bogomils, which has been making its appearance in various contexts for over a hundred years.¹⁹

In this context, a significant role was played by newspaper series, feuilleton-type articles – in rare cases signed by historians but much more frequently by history enthusiasts. Historians usually do not hold monopoly over their profession in the media; it is the history enthusiasts, with their simplification of the past, who dominate, and it is they who are the creators of historical culture.²⁰ Authors of articles and feuilletons published in installments in various daily and weekly papers, one of the more significant of which is the *Ljiljan* magazine, were supposed to strengthen the love of the Bosnian Muslims towards a pre-Ottoman and pre-Islamic past through medieval history lessons. It is enough to look at the titles of the series about Bosnian Queen Catherine: “Catherine, our Bosnian Queen” (*Ljiljan*, 21 September 1994, p. 23), “Heirs to the throne moved to Istanbul” (*Ljiljan*, 5 October 1994, p. 23), “Neither was Queen Catherine ever mentioned as a Croat, nor was Bosnia ever mentioned as a Croatian province, because Croatia did not even exist at the time” (*Ljiljan*, 29 January 1997, pp. 30-31), “Bosnian Princess Catherine, the daughter of our last Queen Catherine, died as a Muslim, and her mausoleum was built in Skopje” (*Ljiljan*, 4 February 1998, pp. 40-41), etc.

Mythomaniacal ideas about the past surfaced among one group of Bosnian Muslim authors. In his *History of the Bosnian Muslims (Historija Bošnjaka)*, Mustafa Imamović considers the Bosnian Muslims of today to be descendants of a special Slavic tribe called “Bosna” (Bosnia), which inhabited the region and gave it its name,²¹ while presenting them alone as

¹⁸ “The Bosnian Bogumils believed that Jesus Christ was not crucified, and that he was an illusory character, with which they denied the basic foundations and suppositions of the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church. They prayed five times a day, fasted, fell to their knees, and expressed their piousness and devotion to God. Prayer was required of everyone, along with the rituals of washing, turning towards the sun and a specific way of fasting. Therefore, at the core of the religious practices of the Bosnian Bogumils is Islam”. Omer Đulić, “Stećci na Radimlji”, *Most* 200 (111) (2006), pp. 68-71.

¹⁹ Dubravko Lovrenović, “Bošnjačka recepcija bosanskog srednjovjekovlja (Geneza bogumilskog mita i njegove suvremene političke implikacije)”, *Zeničke sveske* 2 (2005), pp. 241-290; and Dubravko Lovrenović, “O historiografiji iz Prokrustove postelje (Kako se i zašto kali(o) bogumilski mit)”, *Status* 10 (2006), pp. 256-286.

²⁰ Todor Kuljić, “Tito u novom srpskom poretku sećanja” (Tito in the New Serbian Culture of Remembrance), *Sociologija* 45 (2003), p. 103.

²¹ Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka* (1997), p. 25. American historian Robert Donia gave a positive review of Imamović’s book *Historija Bošnjaka* in the magazine *Nationalities Papers* 28, No. 2 (2000), because he himself belongs to that group of historians who are ready to develop the new myth about the chosen people, in this case “a unique Bosnian people”

(Continued)

the descendants of Bosnian Slavs without mentioning other descendants.²² Enver Imamović delves even deeper and more inaccurately into the past of the Bosnian Muslims. While according to Mustafa Imamović the history of the Bosnian Muslims begins with the settling of the Slavs into Bosnia in the 5th and 6th centuries, according to Enver Imamović it extends several thousand years back into the past. In his book titled *The Roots of Bosnia and Bosnianhood (Korijeni Bosne i Bosanstva)*, he writes: “in scientific terms, it is no longer a disputable fact that the Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina are an indigenous Balkan/European people who have existed in this region for over 4000 years, as far as archeology can trace back”,²³ which means that according to him, the Bosnian Muslims, as a people, came into existence at approximately the same time as the Middle Kingdom of Egypt (2040-1785 BC). By establishing the myth about the Bosnian Muslims as the chosen people, i.e. the oldest and only native inhabitants of Bosnia, he also began to construct the myth about the promised land by suggesting that only they have the right to Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the “frequent wars, epidemics, as well as economic reasons, brought numerous settlers to Bosnia (typically cattle breeders and serfs), mostly from Serbia, Montenegro and Dalmatia. This way, foreign national nuclei were created in part of Bosnia and Herzegovina.”²⁴ With the desire to stifle Serbian mythical ideas about the Serbs as the chosen people, he began to portray the Serbs through the myth about the enemy. As Imamović said about the Serbs and Montenegrins:

It is utterly evident that the motive behind all their previous aggressions was robbery, that is to say, the thirst for the possessions of another. This is the typical mentality of Nomad looting hordes, from which these two peoples originated.... Characteristic of these assailants from the other side of the Drina River is that their actions are not guided by reason but by instincts shaped by the ruthless conditions of their living environment

with the aim of solidifying Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state. This is an example of how a positive idea, which attempts to destroy mythical ideas of nationalism of the Serbs and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, leads to the creation of new mythical ideas that are equally detrimental to the stability of the abovementioned country.

²² Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka* (1997), p. 23.

²³ Enver Imamović, *Korijeni Bosne i Bosanstva* (1995), p. 129; Jon Kvaerne, “Da li je Bosni i Hercegovini potrebno stvaranje novih historijskih mitova?”, in Husnija Kamberović (ed.), *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu. Collection of Works* (2003), p. 95.

²⁴ Enver Imamović, *Korijeni Bosne i Bosanstva* (1995), p. 122; Jon Kvaerne, “Da li je Bosni i Hercegovini potrebno stvaranje novih historijskih mitova?”, in Husnija Kamberović (ed.), *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu. Collection of Works* (2003), p. 99.

where everything is based on force, cunningness and deceit. This is why such communities have lost sensitivity for what the civilized world calls humanity.²⁵

By developing the myth about his people being a chosen people and about Bosnia as the Promised Land, Imamović clearly established yet another myth which serves not only to confirm the validity of the former two but also to actively mobilize his own nation – the myth about the enemy. In the development of this myth, he, in a biased way, used the ideas of biological inheritance and race by unskillfully and unscientifically transplanting them into his own mythomaniacal ideas.

The abovementioned historian Enver Imamović is also responsible for introducing symbols from the repertoire of the medieval epoch into public discourse in the 1990s, gradually changing its original meaning and inventing its tradition. The symbol in question is the lily, which in 1991/1992 was chosen as the authentic symbol of the medieval Bosnian state and was supposed to validate the continuity of Bosnian statehood (Imamović was a member of the committee for the selection of new state insignia of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina). After he had carried out this role, a new one appeared. The inclusion of a pre-Islamic period in the formation of the Bosnian Muslims' identity required mitigation of the Christian foundations in the Bosnian medieval period and thus the Christian basis for this symbol. For this reason, it was necessary that the origin of the lily on the coat of arms be traced back to a special endemic subspecies called *lilium bosniacum*, a flower that grows only in the mountains of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The lily became older than the Middle Ages, and those “who are somewhat more familiar with the history of medieval Bosnia know that the appearance of the lily on the coat of arms and flag of medieval Bosnia has a much longer tradition than the countries which consider themselves the cradles of the lily”.²⁶ Moreover, monuments from that period suggest that the lily was a favorite in medieval Bosnia and that it appeared more frequently than in the culture of any other people in Europe. Yet, not only was the lily used in Bosnia even before the Middle Ages and

²⁵ Enver Imamović, *Korijeni Bosne i Bosanstva* (1995), p. 349; and Jon Kvaerne, “Da li je Bosni i Hercegovini potrebno stvaranje novih historijskih mitova?”, in Husnija Kamberović (ed.), *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu. Collection of Works* (2003), pp. 96-97.

²⁶ Enver Imamović, “Bošnjaci i ljljan”, *Duh Bosne* 1/ 2 (2006) (last accessed on 13 January 2010), <http://www.spiritofbosnia.org/?lang=bos&x=17&y=22>.

the appearance of European dynasties to which its use is frequently linked, but also it would be

wrong to think that the love of the Bosnian Muslims towards this flower is linked only to the Middle Ages. The same goes for the time of Turkish rule. The common name for it at that time was zambak. It was cultivated in backyards, songs were sung about it, manuscripts were decorated with its image, it was placed on tombstones and used in decorative architecture, especially mosques.

Through such interpretations, the symbol was completely taken out of its medieval context, and the author drifted away from the initial concept in his writing. It should also be emphasized that in Imamović's texts, the Bosnian Muslims are the only descendants of the medieval Bosnians, while the Serbs and Croats are merely settlers in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The acceptance and further distribution of the abovementioned myths among the Bosnian Muslims, especially the younger generations, is most evident on Internet forums where these ideas are massively used and copied. The reactions of their peers from the "other side" can also be observed on the forums. The recent appearance of the lily on the Croatian portal www.index.hr, along with the euphoria surrounding the national soccer team of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the World Championship qualifications, was criticized on the forums as a "major slap on the face to the Croatian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina", because while this coat of arms was in use, "Croats were killed across Bosnia and Herzegovina only for being Catholic". Or, as Bosnian author and publicist Željko Ivanković wrote regarding the perception the Bosnian Croats have about the lily: "To the Catholic Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as one of the more frequent symbols of Western Christianity, the lily suddenly became detested even in the hands of the Virgin Mary, let alone St. Anthony and lower-ranking sanctities."²⁷

From Bosnia and Herzegovina, let us now move to the southeast, in the tiniest ex-Yugoslav state of Montenegro (the current population is around 600,000 but almost as much Montenegrins live outside their native country). The following section examines briefly political myths reinventing ethnogenesis of the nation in present-day Montenegro (Crna Gora) which has been since 2006 an independent nation-state. The existence of territorial – political entities consolidated over time has played a decisive role in the construction of the national identities of

²⁷ Željko Ivanković, "Rat i njegova medijska slika u Bosni i Hercegovini", *Status* 3 (2004), p. 77.

Montenegro. The people of Montenegro were drawn to identify themselves with the territorial reality of an ecclesiastical principality which later became a secular regime, and was, in any event, constantly struggling against Ottoman attempts at establishing centralized power. The process of national identification promoted in Montenegro by the Petrović family, principally through the elaboration of a national historic memory, was successful, although the establishment of ties with the medieval Serbian Empire, a common heritage shared by Serbs and Montenegrins, sowed the seeds for the ambiguity in the definition of the nation of Montenegro.

Following the dissolution of the Nemanja state, which coincided approximately with the area occupied by present-day Montenegro, there arose a principality ruled first by the Balsa family, and then by the Crnojević family. This state, in spite of the Montenegrins' myths about their brave hearts and long resistance to Turks, managed to survive in the face of the Ottoman power longer than the other Christian potentates, thanks to its harsh mountainous territory, and to its alliance with Venice. When the last representative of the Crnojević family found the political situation hopeless, he abandoned the country for Venice. The bishop (*vladika*) was elected from among the monks of Cetinje by an assembly of local leaders, and, beginning in 1557 he was consecrated by the Patriarch of Pec, recognized by the Patriarch of Constantinople as the spiritual head of all the Serbs.²⁸ In the region whose mountainous terrain led the population to fragment into small clans, this ecclesiastic structure was destined to long remain the only unifying element. And so, in 1754, vladika Vasilije Petrović, in attention to force his power and create myth about Montenegrins, published in Moscow *Istorija o Cernoj Gori*. With that book he also wants to provide historic legitimacy to the theocratic regime and the power of the Petrović family. Myths were created by having narrated the glories of the ancient Serbian Empire – and how, following the disappearance of the Empire, the Balsa and Crnojević families handed down their power to the Metropolitans, who had continued to administer that power up until the days of vladika. In this way Vasilije legitimized his power as having passed from the Serbian sovereigns to the counts of Montenegro, finally ending in the hands of the bishops. By that, today, some politicians continue to attribute present feelings and ideas to people of the past, and vladika Vasilije is sometimes described as a Montenegrin nationalist.

While vladika sought to legitimize the power of his family by using the tool of history and mythology, and by obtaining the blessing of the Russians, others in Montenegro wished to perform the reverse operation

²⁸ Barbara Jelavić, *History of the Balkans* (1983), p. 85.

with the same means. In 1774 an anonymous Montenegrin dedicated another summary of the history of Montenegro to Count Aleksaej Orlov in a text which remained in manuscript form until recent times: *Kratkoe opisanje o Zeti i Cernoj Gori*.²⁹ In contrast with the melancholy present, the author extols the glory of the Slav peoples, drawing on a legend often cited in the Slav world – namely that of the heritage left by Alexander the Great to the Slav peoples, which modern nationalist writers often used for their purposes. Celebrating the Montenegrins' independence and vladikas' ruling policies took form in poetry. Peter II Petrović Njegoš wrote *Gorski Vijenac* (1847) where he celebrated Montenegrin independence through their massacre over the entire Slav Muslim community, together with their Turkish protectors. And so Montenegrin independence is consecrated through the bloodbath desired by the Christian nobles and their vladika, performed with the benediction of the monks, who are personified by Hegumen Stefan. In this way, Njegos celebrated his dynasty through the figure of his ancestors, whose pain over the plight of “Serbness”, as well as his agreement with the aristocracy and his participation in the struggle, make him the interpreter of the sentiments of the entire people, elevating him to the position of Father of the Country. In this manner, people and the dynasty become one. He also spread the myth about the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, because he put that the Montenegrins are the descendants of the heroes of Kosovo Polje; those who refused to compromise with the invader; those whose task it was to defend the values of the faith, the Serb name and freedom. By that, it was a call on national struggle and a way to use the myth for that purpose.³⁰

At the end, the process of national identification promoted in Montenegro by the Petrović family, principally through the elaboration of a national historic memory and myths, was successful, although the establishment of ties with the medieval Serbian Empire, a common heritage shared by Serbs and Montenegrins, sowed the seeds for the ambiguity in the definition of the nation in Montenegro.

²⁹ *Kratkoe opisane o Zeti i Cernoi Gori*: there is a photostatic copy, edited by Slobodan Radovanović with a Serbian translation of the title only, *Kratki opis Zete i Crne Gore* (1970).

³⁰ In the poem he wrote:

Who flees before the Turkish sword
Who refuses to dishonor the true faith,
Who declines to live in chains,
Takes refuge in these mountains,
So that some will die and blood will be spilled,
In order to defend their heritage as heroes,
The splendid name and the holy freedom.

VJEKOSLAV PERICA (CROATIA)

A POST-COMMUNIST SERBO-RUSSIAN ROMANCE: EASTERN RELIC OF THE PAN-SLAVIC MYTH

A united Europe will not be possible without unification of the two great lungs of Christianity, namely, the Eastern and Western Churches, Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy...

Pope John Paul II, 1985

The true apostle of the Slavs is F.M Dostoevsky, the uncompromised critic of the West and prophet of its imminent death.

Archmandrite Justin Popović, Serbian Orthodox Church's current saintly candidate

The myths of ethnogenesis and common descent have been exploited by ethnic nationalists insisting on smaller homogenous ethno-confessional nations but also by various visionaries of large continental nations-empires. For example, the idea of the great kingdom of Slavonic peoples epitomized in the ideology of pan-Slavism or its rump variants such as the Russian Empire, Yugo (i.e. South) Slavism or the common state of the Czechs and Slovaks – Czechoslovakia. In the 17th century Croatian-born theologian and scientist Juraj Križanić, inspired by the myth of common descent and linguistic similarities of all Slavonic peoples, pioneered a pan-Slavic ideology. As he predicted, it would bring together in a single powerful state all Slavonic peoples under the leadership of either Poland or Russia. In the 19th century pan-Slavic ideologies dominated Central and Eastern Europe, appearing in two major forms as a Western variant championed by Czechs, Poles and Slovaks and Eastern Europe dominated by Russian *Slavophil* theologians and philosophers.¹ In the 1980s, with the great change in sight, pan-Slavism

¹ See Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology*, 2nd and rev. ed. (1960); Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, translated by Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (1975); David MacKenzie, *The Serbs and Russian Pan-Slavism 1875-1878* (1967).

would be recalled in public discourse and countries that incorporated it in their national identities would meet different fates including disintegration. The one time moving pan-Slavic myth had significantly eroded, resembling the fate of pan-Germanism after World War II. Some pockets of resistance to this process could be observed in the Balkans, especially in Serbia and in Russia.

In the second half of the 1980s, three particularly appealing visions of Europe's future circulated in public discourse in Central and Eastern Europe. The writer Milan Kundera wrote about a new Europe in which Central Europe is merged with the West and isolated from Russia as an innately "un-European country" and threat to Europe, particularly its smaller Slavonic peoples. This embittered Czech perceives every Russia (communist or non-communist alike) as "un-European" because of the notorious Russian imperialism extended through every ideology but also due to what he views as incompatibility between Russian and European cultures. A very different, actually the opposite perspective came from the communist reformer Mikhail Gorbachev. He hoped for a new democratic Russia integrated into a new liberal-democratic Europe and such an emerging world order in which the East and the West friendly cooperate and share the responsibility for the world's fate. The third influential vision came from the first pope of Slavonic descent, namely John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła). This religious leader, echoing, for that matter, most of European Christian churches, envisioned a "Christian Europe", more traditional, religious and churchlike. To this end he called for a "second evangelization" of Europe comparable to the original conversion to Christianity of the Roman Empire and the barbaric peoples. This re-evangelization is necessary, in this pope's view, because of the damage done to the Christian Church, faith, culture and civilization by modernity and especially by totalitarian ideologies, notably Nazi-fascism and communism. The Polish pope also believed that the Slavonic peoples should have an important role in the second evangelization as they have had in the first. Yet, the full potential and contribution of Slavs to this grand project of the Church, according to John Paul II, depended on a desirable reunification of Eastern and Western Christianity that have been historically separated and estranged.

Twenty-plus years later, these visions experienced different fates. With the rise of the EU and Russia's willing distance from the West, it seems that Kundera was the most prophetic. Gorbachev seems to have been the most utopian of the three thinkers. Likewise, the Slavic pope's dream did not come true. Although the two churches sporadically showcase mostly symbolic gestures of sisterhood, the path toward even a symbolic

unity seems to be a hard and long way to go into the future. However, a novelty could be observed in the East, namely a rebirth of the Eastern Slavophile variants of the pan-Slavic myth which energized a “special relationship” between Serbia and Russia. While this one-time powerful myth almost died out in Central Europe and barely lives in its Western variant, its Eastern form seems as orthodox as its spiritual sponsor, namely the Orthodox Church as usual allied with states with Eastern Orthodox Christian majority.

It was the two Orthodox Churches, namely the Patriarchates of Serbia and Russia, which most vocally and articulately championed this new wave of pan-Slavism and pan-Orthodoxy. The Churches were actually teaching the post-communist (including ex-communist) elites of the East the rhetoric and key tents of a conservative-nationalistic ideology that would fill the ideological vacuum. During the NATO bombing of Belgrade, the journal of the Serbian Patriarchate, *Pravoslavlje*, pointed out as follows in an editorial:

Our people keep faith in the Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians, in these Orthodox Slavs that are as endangered from the West as we Serbs are today; or soon they will be targeted also; with them we share the same saintly cults, the script and similar languages. Often we shared historical fate and fought against common enemies. We hope that our Eastern Slavic brothers will understand that our struggle is theirs, too ... here we Serbs do not defend Serbia alone: we are merely a fortress in the first line of defense of the Slavic world...²

The Serbo-Russian politics based on the pan-Slavic myth exemplifies the phenomenon that Serbian and Croatian ethnic nationalisms have in common, which Pål Kolstø in his analysis of nationalist myths in Southeastern Europe has termed the *antemurale myth*.³ Accordingly, the two tiny European nations believe to have indebted Europe by defending the West from Ottoman invaders. In mutual conflict during the 1990s the two modified the same *antemurale myth* so that the Croats perceived themselves as holding ground in the first line of defense of Western Europe against “wild East” (Bolshevism, communism, Orthodox Christianity, the Great Serbian threat), while Serb war propaganda portrayed Serbia as defender of the West against aggressive Islamism while also protecting – according to them – the most genuinely Slavonic core of the Slavic world, namely Orthodox Slavdom. And caught in the crossfire, were Bosnian Muslims

² *Pravoslavlje*, br. 771, 1-15. V. 1999.

³ Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe* (2005).

aided by warriors of the jihad, volunteer fighters from Arab countries. These clashes, as Samuel P. Huntington pointed out, took place along “the lines of separation between civilizations” in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as well as elsewhere in the post-Cold War changing world.⁴ This kind of representation of Serbia as a little warrior-nation fighting for the Orthodox Church and genuine Slavic identity during the war in Bosnia, for awhile enjoyed considerable popularity in Russia. During the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, hundreds of Russian volunteers, mostly experienced fighters from the wars in Chechnya and elsewhere in the Caucasus, joined the Army of the Serb Republic (*Republic Srpska*) under supreme command of General Ratko Mladić, a globally-haunted war crimes suspect indicted for genocide and still at large. Some of these Russian volunteers returned to Russia after the war (General Mladić might have also found shelter there like the former supreme commander of ex-Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) General Kadijević or the Milošević family) but some stayed to live in the Serb Republic within post-Dayton Bosnia. In this enclave, Russian war veterans, particularly those seriously wounded handicapped persons and invalids, have recently started complaining about maltreatment, severe cuts in government pensions and indifference toward them that replaced the wartime and early postwar thriving mass outbursts of “Slavic brotherhood” and worship of Russia among the Serbs.

In 1995, the Patriarch of Moscow initiated and the Serbian Patriarch welcomed the founding of what was called “Endowment for advancing unity of Orthodox peoples”. This organization funded various programs, such as for example an “Inter-parliamentary Orthodox Council of Europe”, for political lobbying in the EU. It also organized annual pilgrimages for young Orthodox Christians from East European churches. Such a pilgrimage in the year 2000 included holy sites through what was called a “Fraternal Orthodox-Slavic Corridor” departing from Moscow, then going westward and southward, through Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia (including Orthodox shrines of Kosovo) to conclude in Athens, Greece. In November 2004, the Patriarch of Serbia, Pavle, visited Moscow. There, he was awarded from his Russian counterpart the “Order of the Holy Prince Vladimir”. In addition, the Serbian Patriarch received from the Putin administration a generous financial aid specifically for icon paintings and other internal decoration

⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996).

of the as yet unfinished monumental Orthodox Church, Saint Sava's memorial Temple in Belgrade. In addition, the government of the Russian Federation lobbied internationally for the protection of human rights of the Serb minority in Kosovo and provides special financial assistance for the renovation of the medieval Serb Orthodox monasteries in Kosovo. As russophilia spreads across Serbia, an unofficial but numerous delegations from Moscow showed up at the 2006 funeral of the war crimes suspect and former Serbian president, Slobodan Milošević. Meanwhile the Milošević family enjoyed political asylum in Moscow.

The regime of Milošević's political heir Vojislav Koštunica (2004-2008) was emphatically pro-Russian. The official national religiosity, conservative nationalism, neo-Slavophile tendencies and occasionally even outbursts of anti-Semitism, are manifested in public. A new law regulating church-state relations is passed imitating the Russian model so that the Serbian Orthodox Church was made a state religion. The increasingly influential Church called for the removal of Darwin's theory of evolution from school textbooks. Serbia worshiped the cult of the Russian writer F.M. Dostoevsky who is called "Apostle of the Slavs" (perhaps as the challenge to the papal cult of saints Cyril and Methodius as *Slavorum apostoli*). Even greater popularity was enjoyed by two new national icons and champions of clerical nationalism, namely the Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović canonized in 2003, and the antiwestern zealot theologian Justin Popović. The conservative nationalistic, Church-backed youth organization *Dveri srpske* (named after a section of the altar in Orthodox churches) is frequently active at Serbia's university campuses. In one of its lectures at the University of Belgrade's School of Mechanical Engineering, the speaker calls for resistance to the EU and then uniting forces of all Christian Europe led by Russia and Germany against Islam that allegedly endangers Slavs and Germans but also the whole of Europe.⁵ In 2009, the far right Serbian Radical Party announced that its president Vojislav Šešelj, who is being prosecuted for war crimes at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, should be released to assume leadership in Serbia and, relying on Russia, take the country out of economic recession.⁶

⁵ Speech by Srđa Trifković in January 2005 at the Mašinski fakultet, cited in Svetlana Lukić and Svetlana Vuković (eds.), *Peščanik FM*, knjiga 3 (2007).

⁶ Daily news on Croatian internet website "Index.hr", 28 December 2009, <http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/pusti-snovi-srpskih-radikala-seselj-od-lipnja-na-slobodi/467391.aspx>.

In the meantime, throughout the whole period of more than a decade since the early 1990s (especially after the NATO 1999 bombing) some kind of a “Serbo-Russian romance” has spread in spheres of pop and folk culture and everyday life. Among many examples, presumably the most bizarre, besides the Russian pop-song played at Milošević’s funeral, is the series of public performances of the Russian folk songs such as, for example, the famous *Ryabinushka* staged by an orchestra of 100 trumpeteers dressed in the traditional Serb peasant attire before an emotionally charged, Russian flag-waving tearful audience of Serbs moved by pan-Slavic sentiments.⁷ Of course, Russian romances (which in this meaning are equivalent to the French *chanson*) have earlier been popular across whole Europe, particularly in France, Spain, Italy, and naturally, Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Yet, this notion, understood both as a song and relationship, is telling especially for discourse analysts. It is a key message for the EU whose foundations today rest preeminently on a franco-german alliance cordiale. What is still missing to make EU foundations firmer and long-lasting is the “eastern brotherhood” from Europeans of Slavonic descent, particularly those left outside the borders of the EU. It is noteworthy that one important historical figure reminded the EU about this – both in his sermons and encyclicals, namely, the indisputably pro-European unity pope John Paul II.

The Serbian elections of 2008 brought to power a more liberal figure, Boris Tadić, who campaigned playing a pro-EU card. However, albeit changing, Tadić’s Serbia did not turn back to the tradition and its Russian brothers. It was under Tadić’s authority, marching along the Serb clergy and church dignitaries from Russia and Greece, that Serbia staged a pompous, massive, state-sponsored funeral for the Patriarch Pavle, thus at least symbolically showing to the world its traditional image. All things considered, although the Eastern variant of pan-Slavism saw a revival which still endures in Serbia, under the influence from the EU, the East left outside EU borders is changing. After all, pan-Slavism per se, does not seem to be Serbia’s dominant national ideology but only a component of the newly constructed ideological hybrid. Instead, like in the case of Russia, it lives in certain circles (the Churches, conservative nationalists, cynical political manipulators and populists etc.) while being exploited for pragmatic purposes by political leaders as a political mythology, Serbia has

⁷ See on You Tube: “100 Truba u Beogradu Rjabinuška”, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Vf_i-DQcA8&feature=related.

found its national interest in preserving relics of the one-time influential European ideology. In other words, although pan-Slavism as one-time megaideology of Europe has become after 1989, like pan-Germanism after 1945, a historical anachronism, its vestiges and pockets of resistance are still alive in the Eastern version through the myths, symbols and rituals. With the prominent role of the Churches and religious discourse this new conservatism in Serbia and Russia could be described as a new civil religion of Serbia or, that which Emilio Gentile would describe as “religion of politics”.⁸

However, behind these new civil religions and their emotional appeal, operate some older practices known from the communist era such as the politics of authoritarianism, state-sponsored restrictions of individual liberty and dissent and sometimes even state terrorism, wars of territorial conquest, oppression of minorities, organized crime, corruption, etc. And while such pan-Germanic rituals in the West largely died out and today could be found only among small groups of ultranationalists and racists in Serbia and Russia, where such groups also make themselves visible in public sphere, it is also noticeable in the politics of two governments and in certain cultural and intellectual circles. Artists, priests, politicians as public actors and populist political groups in the streets serve this politics well as it serves the real politics of power. Thus, for example, Emir Kusturica, the most globally advertised film-maker from the ex-Yugoslav school of the cinema, distinguished himself as a performer on the state of this politics when, on 10 September 2009, he went to Moscow and received from the “International Fund for the unity of the Orthodox Christian Peoples” the annual award for “global promotion of Orthodox Christianity”. The award was named after the late Russian Patriarch Aleksei the Second. The Sarajevo-born Kusturica, who used to be known by the name Emir but spectacularly converted to Serbian Orthodoxy under the name Nemanja and who has since less practiced spirituality than Serb nationalism, now lives on an estate in Serbia which he received from Belgrade’s regime where he founded the international film festival. The Moscow awarding committee underscored on this occasion that Kusturica “contributed to strengthening unity of Orthodox peoples and promoted the role of Christian values in the life of his community”.⁹ Another similar political show took place on 29 April 2010, in the “Russian Hall” in Belgrade. There Dmitry Rogozin,

⁸ Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, translated by George Staunton (2006).

⁹ “Hrišćanski uzor: Nemanja, kolekcionar nagrada”, *E-novine*, 17.09.2009, <http://www.e-novine.com/entertainment/entertainment-vesti/30036-Kusturici-nagrada-irenje-pravoslavljja.html>.

Russia's ambassador to NATO, stated that "Kosovo is a creation by bandits that will not survive" wishing Serbia which he complimented as a "country of heroic people" – to defend its territorial integrity with the help of Russia.¹⁰ The occasion for this performance was the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II and victory against fascism. However, the Kremlin rulers did not go so far as to invite Serbian military troops for the grand parade in Moscow featuring all allied armies. It seems that in the Kremlin they still remember a certain Yugoslav leader by the name of Tito who fought against fascism and its collaborators (including Serbian Chetniks and Croat Ustashas), but Tito's JNA, due to natural causes and the absence of a successor nation to Tito's, was not available for the parade.

Only a few scholars focused their attention on pan-Slavic themes at the time of the great transformation of the landmark year of 1989 and beyond. Stefan Troebst tends to magnify the significance of pan-Slavism thus being closer to Wojtyła's and Gorbachev's than Kundera's who would keenly send it to the notorious "dustbin of history". However, Troebst thinks that what he calls "Slavicity" (*Slavizität*) even has a future.¹¹ "Judging from the many, frequently successful revivals of the 'Slavic' idea in the twentieth century, a 'renaissance' [...] in the twenty-first century is likely to be a political and cultural option; yet [...] at the most in a part-Slavic, i.e. bi-lateral or regional form", writes Stefan Troebst ...

In the age of nationhood, the end of which is not foreseeable despite European integration and accelerated globalization, the asymmetry between Russia – as the '(eastern) Slavic' empire – and the western and southern Slavic national movements, or rather medium-size, small and micro Slavophone states, is too dominant – not to mention the differences in political system, economic structure and legal culture. This, and not the EU/non-EU border, is currently the real division between the Slavophone nations.¹²

At any rate, none of the three grand visions of a new Europe was fulfilled. Kundera's westernism and Rusophobia seem relatively triumphant; Gorbachev's "Common European home" in which Russia also has a place turns into the opposite, namely some kind of excommunication of Russia with EU's tactful manoeuvring with the mighty rival, and pope

¹⁰ "Rusi se udvaraju Srbiji: Kosovo, banditska tvorevina", *E-novine*, 30.4.2010, <http://www.e-novine.com/entertainment/entertainment-vesti/37020-Kosovo-banditska-tvorevina.html>.

¹¹ Stefan Troebst, "The Slavic idea after pan-Slavism", *Osteuropa 12/2009*, www.eurozine.com/.../2010-01-21.html.

¹² *Osteuropa 12/2009*, www.eurozine.com/journals/osteuropa/issue/2010-01-21.html.

Wojtyła's dream about the unity of the two great lungs of Christianity in a re-evangelized Europe seemed the greatest fantasy of all. The least fulfilled seems the papal dream of a Europe restoring its medieval image but with Roman Catholicism reconciled with Orthodox Christianity. Kundera and other Russophobe Central European intellectuals who wanted a new wall separating East-Central Europe from Russia should be presumably the most satisfied. Regarding the Russian "westerners" (and their counterparts in Serbia, too), they are probably the most disappointed. During the 1990s down to the fall of Milošević and his successors, Serbia unsuccessfully tried to drag Russia into some kind of a pan-Slavic alliance against westernization (also calling for a clash with Islam). Serbia also revived the pan-Slavic "political mystification" (to borrow Kundera's term), and accordingly redesigned its post-communist image. However, some Serbs, like some Russians, are "westerners" even though "slavophiles" seem more visible. Yet, looking at the broader European picture, pan-Slavism as an ideology has become history. What has been described in Serbia and Russia now is a new post-communist and new global product. To be sure, the Serbo-Russian "special relationship" could be traced back in history in several forms, in modern history at least since the 1876 uprising.¹³ Nevertheless, these vestiges of the pan-Slavic myth (rather than ideology) are new inventions of post-communism and post-Yugoslavism. It has been carried out through the politics of the new populism (often former communists turned nationalists), conservative nationalists and churches. By the same token, in order to explain the change under consideration, it is relevant to distinguish between the concepts of ideology and myth. Ideologies can be prime movers of revolutions and nation-building projects, they always "aim high" containing some utopian characteristics. Myths, by contrast, although they possess the mass mobilization potential, gain relevance as forces of historical changes only under specific circumstances.¹⁴ More often they are merely a "side show". As noted earlier, although pan-Slavism was at one time a powerful ideology it is nowadays a historical anachronism. Its last vestiges are visible through mythmaking, Church liturgies and nationalisms seeking legitimacy in religion (in this case Eastern Orthodox Christianity),

¹³ See David MacKenzie, *The Serbs and Russian Pan-Slavism 1875-1878* (1967).

¹⁴ See Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (1989). More specifically on the role of myth in the post-Yugoslav region, see Vjekoslav Perica, "Sumrak panslavenskih mitova", in Ivan Čolović (ed.), *Zid je mrtav, živeli zidovi. Pad Berlinskog zida i raspad Jugoslavije* (2009), pp. 303-325.

i.e. the social phenomenon which the political philosopher Emilio Gentile describes as a “religion of politics” or “sacralization of politics”.¹⁵ It is hard to say how relevant this political theater is for the real politics of Serbia and Russia and how much the two and its rivals take it seriously; yet, it is still visible and acting on the historical stage.

¹⁵ Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, translated by George Staunton (2006).

DARKO GAVRILOVIĆ (SERBIA) AND ANA LJUBOJEVIĆ (SERBIA)

MYTHS ABOUT BORDERS

It is interesting how ambivalently the national community adheres to national territory, in the sense that this territory never has clearly-defined contours and established borders. In modern Serbian folklore that sprouted during the wars of the 1990s, various landmarks were proclaimed as the borders of ethnic territory. In one case, the national territory extended from “Karlovac to the plains of Kosovo”, while in another more humorous case, “Serbian land will extend from Oslo to Crete”. On the Croatian side, Zlatni Dukati wrote nationally-engaged verses with a similar intonation:

*Between the Sava, Adriatic and the Drava
Always somewhere near a border
From ancient times lived
The Croats – men and women.*¹

This brings us to a group of myths about the special role of small Balkan peoples as the protectors of larger civilizations, for instance Christianity – both Western and Eastern – and so forth. These myths are linked to the myth about sacrifice made by a small group of people to fulfill the role of savior of a large civilization. For example, some of the Serbian myth-makers have gladly seen themselves as the “keepers of the gates to the civilized world” (*Antemurale*), taking particular pleasure in citing poems from the Kosovo cycle. For them, the Battle of Kosovo of 1389 was a sacrifice made by the Serbian people for the benefit of the entire Christian civilization, as well as an example of how the same civilization never “repaid” this sacrifice, for it was the Serbs who – in spite of their defeat – weakened the Ottoman Army, thus rescuing Europe from an invasion from the East. According to this myth, the Serbs made a sacrifice for which they were never rightfully rewarded. Slobodan Milošević also called attention to this in his often-quoted warmongering speech delivered in June 1989 at the celebration of the 600-year anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo

¹ Ivan Čolović, “Tema granice u političkoj mitologiji”, *Mit, Collection of Works* (1996), p. 280.

in Gazimestan.² Due to the lack of understanding for the “Serbian issue” and the situation in the Kosovo province as presented by Serb nationalists to the domestic public and foreign observers, Serbs harbored a growing feeling of injustice and bitterness towards the West, while the nationalists once again found themselves inspired by topics from ancient history. Nevertheless, it should be made clear that Milošević was never in favor of the Serbian nationalist movements and ideas from the 1930s, when Dimitrije Ljotić was head of the Serbian Right. The Serbian regime did not initiate a rehabilitation of nationalistic figures in the period between the two world wars or during World War II. Milošević never even thought of rehabilitating Draža Mihailović, Commander of the JNA in the Fatherland. Furthermore, Milošević kept the Serbian Orthodox Church at a distance. The revival of old nationalistic values was left in the hands of opposing right-wing political parties and various influential nationalist institutions, but only within the framework permitted by Milošević. On the other hand, he did not exactly prevent the rise of Serbian nationalism. He took advantage of it and profited from its growing popularity, as well as from the popularity of all sorts of national sentiments. When he so needed, especially in his relations with the West, he used nationalism in a different way – he posed as a moderate while pointing a finger at the right-wing parties. He had only one agenda in mind – to place Serbia under his rule regardless of the price of human sacrifice and to use wars so that he could seize as much as he could from others. In order to achieve this, he made extensive use of the media, which provoked strong anti-Western sentiments and created myths such as the myth about the Serbs as a “victimized people”, a “heavenly people” and “Serbs as the eternal gatekeepers of civilization”.

In a broader sense, the tragic quality of the Kosovo myth is also present in the Montenegrin epic poem *Gorski vijenac (The Mountain Wreath)* from 1846. The author of this poem, Bishop Petar I Petrović Njegoš, does not directly deal with the historical events which the poem is based on (“the Inquisition of the Turkicized” in Montenegro at the end of the 18th century), but the context in which the characters appear in this epic (Bishop Danilo in particular) point to the significance of the moral dilemma regarding the legitimacy of the fratricidal conflicts within Montenegrin clans. The tragic quality of this (Montenegrin internal) conflict lies in

² See for example, Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers – America’s Last Ambassador Tells What Happened and Why* (1996); Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War*, 2nd ed. (1996).

the fact that it is inevitable, but it also symbolically represents the clash between two religions (Christianity and Islam), understood at the same time as a reflection of the eternal battle between good and evil. As religious expert Milan Vukomanović explains: “a historical tragedy occurs when a morbid imagination, the horror of our dreams, finally penetrates the sphere of the real”.

Concerning the Kosovo myth, the first time it was used as a tool towards the legitimization of the state was by the Lazarević dynasty in the Middle Ages. In modern times all South Slavic states used varieties of this myth, yet in Serbia, two dynasties – the Obrenović and Karađorđević dynasty – continued to develop it, and then finally Milošević. The Kosovo myth was not only used for purposes of consolidation of Serbian statehood but can also be encountered in the ideology that corresponds to the concept of creating a Greater Serbia. This brings us to myths that are turned more inward and focused on the construction of borders between South Slavic peoples.

The Croatian nationalists, Milošević’s contemporaries, also focused on myths about borders and their role as gatekeepers of civilization. However, as opposed to Milošević, who did not continue where Serbian nationalists had left off at the end of World War II, the Croatian nationalistic establishment did begin at the point where their predecessors had left off in 1945. The ideology promoted by Franjo Tuđman attempted to ensure continuity with the old forms of Croatian nationalism. Many controversial historical figures, such as Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, Ustasha leader Ante Pavelić and others, were officially or semi-officially rehabilitated, and they revived anti-Serbian and anti-Semitic topics which characterized Croatian fascism of the 1940s.³

One of the maximalistic forms of Croatian nationalism which is rooted in the Party of Rights ideology of Ante Starčević insists on the Drina River as the border. Ante Starčević believed the Croatian national territory to extend all the way to the Drina. This idea was later accepted by Stjepan Radić. However, as opposed to the later Ustasha ideology, Radić accepted religious, regional and other forms of pluralism, while the Ustasha ideology insisted on a repressive role of the state that strives towards homogenization. In Croatian political circles, but also among Croats and Bosnian Muslims in the 20th century, a thesis that would be very frequently put forth was

³ More about that can be found in Jill Irvine, “Nationalism and the Extreme Right in the Former Yugoslavia”, in L. Cheles, R. Ferguson and M. Vaughan (eds.), *The Far-Right in Western and Eastern Europe* (1995), pp. 114-122, as well as in Jovan Byford, *Teorija zaverie* (2006), p. 69.

that in the past there was a border on the Drina, that is to say, that on this river there used to be a centuries-old – even thousand years old – border between the East and West, i.e. between the Catholic and Orthodox faiths. Though this mythologem seems old, it actually is not. It originated from the Pure Party of Rights, then found its way into the works of Milan Šuffaj in the 1990s and continued to develop abroad, among the Ustasha emigrants, in the 1950s. The mythologem about the “border on the Drina” is based on a mythomaniacal use of the fact that following the death of Roman Tsar Theodosius in 395 the Roman Empire was divided into the eastern and western parts, and that along one part the border followed the Drina valley all the way to the Montenegrin coastline. This historical fact is only relatively accurate, because the divisions in terms of culture, civilization and society extended both east and west of the Drina. In order to establish the border on the Drina, the radically negative view of the Bosnian Muslims had to be altered, which is what Starčević did, and the Muslims became “the flower of the Croatian people”,⁴ while at the same time the Croats in Slavonia in the north were able to keep the myth about their land as a sort of *Antemurale Christianitatis* – “the bulwark of Christianity”.⁵ Pro-Ustasha oriented intellectuals wrote about this myth, emphasizing the racial differences between the Croats and the Serbs. In his collection of essays, articles and speeches, Filip Lukas (geographer, geopolitician and President of Matica Hrvatska for a number of years) presented a racial map of the Balkans. He concluded that Croats and Serbs represent opposite racial types but that the Montenegrins belong to the Croatian racial type. He agreed with the Iranian theory about the origin of the Croats, but his interpretation of it was particularly biased.⁶

After World War II, during the “second emigration”⁷ of the Ustashes, the myth about the Drina transformed from the “gate of civilization” to a source of longing, nostalgia, resistance and the desire for revenge, to which numerous works of prose and poetry bore witness. Though these works did not hold much literary value, they were ideologically unambiguous and most of them were featured in the Drina magazine, established by Vjekoslav Maks Luburić, who during the war was the most notorious

⁴ During the existence of the Independent State of Croatia, Mladen Lorković considered the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina to be Croatian land, while he considered the Bosnian Muslims to be Croats of an “Islamic faith”.

⁵ Ivo Goldstein, “Granica na Drini – razvoj i značenje mitologema”, in Husnija Kamberović (ed.), *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu. Collection of Works* (2003), p. 111.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁷ The first emigration took place during the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

figure in regard to the terrors committed by the Ustashas.⁸ Their political program contained the very heart of the Drina myth. Luburić himself spoke about this most openly: “Our name is our program, and we call ourselves Drina. Our entire program is there. No more, no less. This is a program for the millennia and for all Croats.... We were said to foster the Drina cult and we did not defend ourselves. We were called fanatics and were not offended. We were blamed for killing and being killed for this program and this we admitted.”⁹ The wars of the 1990s showed that the border on the Drina is unattainable, and this led to an attempt to find a middle solution by dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was unsuccessful.

The historiographic myths of the Bosnian Muslims about Bosnia as a land on the border between two worlds go back to the chroniclers of Austro-Turkish wars from the 18th century. Omer Novljanin and Ahmed Hadžinesimović wrote about “Islamic fighters”, that is, “fighters for faith”, about “Islamic flags, decorated with the color of victory, crisscrossed with the pagan flags that spilled misfortune”, about “Islamic heroes who plunge into the enemy prey like into the sea”, about Bosnia as the “Islamic borderland”, about the “bulwark and firm border of Islam”, and about the “serhat warriors” who fight with exaltation as they “give both their souls and their lives for their faith”.¹⁰ While writing his chronicle, Salih Sidki Hadžihuseinović, the most significant Bosnian Muslim chronicler of the 19th century, used the same terminology and expressed the same ideology with regard to Bosnia, not only as the fatherland of Bosnian Muslims but also as the Islamic Antemurale during the Ottoman period of Bosnian history.¹¹

Part of the Muslim population reacted with passive resistance to the attempts to “Serbanize” and “Croatize” it with the use of propaganda from the end of the 19th century. In the beginning of the 20th century, Safet-beg Bašagić and Ćiro Truhelka not only strived to prove the historical rights the Bosnian begs (noblemen) held over properties of land but also glorified

⁸ Lengel – Krizman, *Teror*, 10; *Tko je tko u NDH*, pp. 62-63, 90, 240-242.

⁹ General Drinjanin (Maks Luburić called himself “the General of the Drina” even though he never fought on the Drina), Father Dominik Mandić establishes the border on the Drina in *Drina*, No. 1 (1963), p. 9; Ivo Goldstein, “Granica na Drini – razvoj i značenje mitologema”, in Husnija Kamberović (ed.), *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu. Collection of Works* (2003), p. 127.

¹⁰ Srećko M. Džaja, “Bosanska povijesna stvarnost i njezini mitološki odrazi”, in Husnija Kamberović (ed.), *Historijski mitovi na Balkanu. Collection of Works* (2003), p. 47.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

those begs as the representatives and keepers of Bosnian traditions and Bosnian Muslim interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The reasoning behind Truhelka's claims, as opposed to Bašagić's which carried within them a nationalistic connotation, was that the Austro-Hungarian government relied on these classes of the population for support in their political strategy. With their insistence on Bosnian patriotism, they used begs with the goal of counter-balancing Croatian and Serbian nationalistic tendencies in the monarchy.

The leadership of the Yugoslav Muslim Organization, founded in 1919, resisted the Serbian and Croatian national plans regarding the Muslims with claims that the Bosnian Muslims are a branch of the Yugoslavs but that they are not aware of their tribal name and that their nationalism is not a question of daily politics but of cultural and social development.¹² The political leadership of the Yugoslav Muslim Organization articulated the separate economic and cultural interests of the Bosnian Muslims and emphasized their Yugoslav character ingrained in Bosnian soil.

It was not until the time of the communists, in socialist Yugoslavia, that more attention was paid to the separate identity of the Muslims. The reasons for this were partly related to foreign policy, because the acknowledgement of the Muslims as a third people in Bosnia and Herzegovina with equal rights resulted in more dynamic economic and political relations with the Islamic member states of the Non-Aligned Movement.

¹² Atif Purivatra, *Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija u političkom životu Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (1974), pp. 596-599.

VJEKOSLAV PERICA (CROATIA)

MYTHS ABOUT WORLD WAR II AND THE SOCIALIST ERA

One of the still most influential definitions of revolution came from American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, who in his 1968 classic *Political Order in Changing Societies*, contrary to Marxist scholars who disregard it, lists myths and symbols among things that matter because all revolutions seek to change them and replace them by myths from their own “myth factories”. As this is being written, two decades after the end of the socialist era and even longer (because the Yugoslav socialist revolutions virtually ended with the death of Tito in 1980), the influence of myths and symbols of the old order continues. In the chapter below dealing with post-socialist culture of nostalgia there will be more on this continuity. This chapter will briefly review the origins and the system of myths that were prevalent during the socialist era.

The system of patriotic myths, symbols and rituals from the Yugoslav socialist era (1945-1990) was an effective instrument for the legitimacy of a system that lasted for an entire epoch of nearly half a century.¹ Even though it could not on its own secure the legitimacy of the newly-found state and its revolutionary system, a certain degree of legitimacy – along with other things – had been sustained for decades. The Cold War West had recognized it. Describing the entire Tito era as a brutal dictatorship in an artificial, illegitimate nation, comes primarily from ethnic nationalists responsible for two cycles of genocide, whereas liberal democrats criticize certain phases and practices of Titoism but acknowledge its anti-Stalinist struggle, independence from the Soviets, ethnic minority rights, emphasis on inter-ethnic harmony and numerous liberalization policies.² Although after the Tito-Stalin conflict of 1948 the

¹ See Ljubiša Despotović, Srđan Šljukić, Darko Gavrilović, Vjekoslav Perica and Mitja Velikonja (eds.), *Mitovi epohe socijalizma* (2009), especially the chapter by Vjekoslav Perica, “Kult narodnih heroja i patriotska mitologija titoizma”, pp. 93-130.

² See Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkanski idoli. Religija i nacionalizam u jugoslovenskim državama*, translated from English by Slobodaka Glišić and Slavica Miletić (2006), Vol. 2, Chapter 6, “Ujedinjeni opstajemo, razdvojeni propadamo”. Regarding the weaknesses and problems of

(Continued)

Yugoslav system became increasingly different from the communist systems designed according to the Soviet model, all communist systems – including the Yugoslav – attached importance to rituals, pompous displays, ceremonies and myths.³ Revolutionary movements, such as the one in the Spanish Civil War (not to mention the famous Bolshevik example), also performed spectacular “counter-rituals” and made iconoclastic attacks on the symbols of the old structure.⁴ In other words, revolutions would change the entire discourse and introduce their own, which would also result in the transformation of both group and individual identities.⁵ Hence, as would be expected, when the communist regimes collapsed, counter-revolutions attacked their symbols, rituals and myths with fury.

Although it functioned for several decades, the Yugoslav “patriotic mythology” consisted of a number of contradictions, both internal and in relation to its rivals in the realm of ethno-nationalistic ideologies. As opposed to ethnic nationalisms, multi-ethnic Yugoslav nationalism was legitimized through the mythology of a successful, mutual battle for national liberation from the invaders and their local collaborators in World War II, as well as through the construction of socialism by joint forces of all the people in the Yugoslav federation. Not only did the multi-ethnic “brotherhood and unity” idea – represented by the patriotic socialist mythology – ensure legitimacy and relative harmony for multi-ethnic Yugoslav nationalism in terms of inter-ethnic relations in the territory of Yugoslavia, but it also ensured its social solidarity and relative productivity on the large market, as well as a level of prosperity which most successor states have still, to this day, not achieved. Additionally, it ensured a relatively larger degree of sovereignty in international relations than the post-Yugoslav mini-states thus far have managed to gain. To be fair, ethnic nationalisms had tradition on their side – tradition that was always more or less invented and constructed, yet ever so effective in appealing to Balkan masses which prefer to envision themselves as the descendants of the “most ancient European peoples”

legitimizing the Yugoslav national and social structure, see Sabrina Petra Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (2006).

³ For the Soviet case see Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society: The Soviet Case* (1981); Zh.F. Konovalova, *Mif v sovetskoj istorii i kulture* (1998). About Poland see Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (1994).

⁴ Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (1989).

⁵ In the case of the Chinese Communist Revolution see R. Keith Schoppa, *Revolution and Its Past: Identities and Change in Modern Chinese History*, 2nd ed. (2006).

rather than as part of a new nation, created only recently (in this case during World War II). More serious internal contradictions in the patriotic system of the Yugoslav socialist era arose with the creation of so-called Titoism, i.e. Yugoslav national communism, following the separation from the Cominform and the conflict with the Soviet Union in 1948. In all fairness, Yugoslavia did obtain a higher degree of international sovereignty during this time, but it also found itself in a sort of isolation. Namely, all Eastern bloc countries under communist regimes had developed patriotic systems and heroic mythologies with the focus on World War II and the fight against fascism, headed by the Red Army and the Soviet Partisans as role models,⁶ and with the help of national Partisan resistance movements led by the communists. For example, for a long time the people of West Germany had nothing to pride themselves on because all of the most prominent German anti-fascists were communists who were celebrated by East Germany.⁷ A similar patriotic system existed in Yugoslavia before the conflict with the Cominform, but after the conflict the role of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was diminished and the independence and heroism of Tito's Partisans were overemphasized. Under a unique new social/economic system and with foreign non-alignment, the now wholly national Partisan myth and cult of Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) – the national leader and victor over Hitler, and later Stalin – became the objects of apotheosis and the mythological framework of a new type of nationalism with an emphasis on multi-ethnic brotherhood in arms between the Yugoslav people and on the multinational Army Tito had created. At the same time, the cult of Tito's persona became so strong that it overshadowed all other components of this patriotic mythology to which he himself belonged.⁸

The Yugoslav Partisan movement's heroic mythology, which was later institutionalized when honored with the Order of the People's Hero of Yugoslavia, drew inspiration from a combination of influences from both the Partisan myth and the Soviet state cult, and with the experience of the People's Liberation Movement and the tradition of the Yugoslav peoples, who harbor a particular fondness for heroism. The grand order of the Hero

⁶ See Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1989* (1999).

⁷ See Ben Shepherd, *War in the Wild East. The German Army and Soviet Partisans* (2004).

⁸ See this subject in detail in Vjekoslav Perica, "Kult narodnih heroja i patriotska mitologija titoizma", in Ljubiša Despotović, Srđan Šljukić, Darko Gavrilović, Vjekoslav Perica and Mitja Velikonja (eds.), *Mitovi epohe socijalizma* (2009).

of the Soviet Union (*Герой Советского Союза*) was established during the upsurge of Stalinism, in the beginning of the Second Five-year Plan but also of the cycle of great purges and state-induced terror. The cult of the Hero of the Soviet Union had developed throughout the entire history of the USSR as one of the main components of socialist patriotism and Soviet national mythology. The total number of persons who were awarded this title was approximately 12,500 (most during World War II – 11,635). Some were awarded several times, and at most – four times, like Marshal Georgy Zhukov, Hero of World War II (he also received the Yugoslav People's Hero medal) and party chief of mature socialism, Leonid Brezhnev. The Spanish Civil War was the second great myth following the Russian Revolution and Civil War. Spain greatly inspired the Yugoslav people's heroes (of the 1,550 Yugoslav participants in the Spanish Civil War, most were from Croatia – 651, then 371 from Slovenia, 251 from Serbia, 137 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 41 from Montenegro, and 39 from Macedonia).⁹ Nine participants of the Spanish Civil War were proclaimed People's Heroes of Yugoslavia, which included the people's hero medal for volunteering in the Spanish Civil War, and thirty of them received the rank of general in Tito's Army. In February 1942 there were already 22 people's heroes proclaimed in the *Supreme Headquarters Bulletin*. The first was a veteran of World War II and one of the oldest heroes in terms of chronological age – Petar Leković, a stonemason from Užička Požega, Serbia. A total of 1,322 participants of the People's Liberation War were awarded the People's Hero medal (Tito three times and everyone else only once), and 955 of them were killed; 19 foreign citizens who either participated in the People's Liberation War or helped the Yugoslav Partisans in some way also received the medal – 16 from the Soviet Union, one from Czechoslovakia, one from Poland and another from Italy; then 32 units of the Partisan Army, 4 political organizations and 8 Yugoslav towns.¹⁰ These sources provide no detailed information regarding the nationality and religion of these People's Heroes, but information is available regarding their place of birth. The largest percentage was born in Croatia (21.9%), then in Bosnia and Herzegovina (20.6%), in Montenegro (18.7%), in Serbia – without the autonomous provinces (15%), and in

⁹ See Vjeran Pavlaković, "Our Spaniards: Croatian Communists, Fascists, and the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939", PhD thesis (2005); Vjeran Pavlaković, "Matija Gubec goes to Spain: Symbols and Ideology in Croatia, 1936-1939", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (December 2004).

¹⁰ Institute of Contemporary History, *Narodni heroji Jugoslavije, 1-2*, Book Two (1975 and 1982 editions), 1975 edition quoted here, p. 463.

Slovenia (11%).¹¹ There are two typical profiles of the People's Hero: the first is the hero/warrior whose heroic deeds on the warfront brought military successes to the Partisans, and the second is the hero/martyr who sacrifices himself, spites the enemy and dies in utter agony that is later on remembered and described in detail, much like in church hagiographies. The accounts of the heroic deeds of Partisan resistance fighters but also of their suffering and martyrdom together with the people they defended from the brutalities of foreign invaders and their domestic collaborators are passed on through school textbooks, youth literature, Partisan genre cinema, etc. to younger generations. Of the 955 People's Heroes that had lost their lives, most of them (77%) were killed in direct battle with the enemy; about 15% were executed or lost their lives in prisons and detention camps; as for the year of the war, most of them died in 1943 – nearly 30% (almost half of the main force of Tito's Army, amounting to about 20,000 Partisans, were killed in the Battle of Sutjeska alone, in June of that year), then in 1942 (27.5%); of the 91 female heroes, 71 were killed – most as a result of torture or executions in prisons and detention camps, but a few also broke the stereotype of "Partisan nurse" by heroically getting killed in direct battle with the enemy.

As the Yugoslav socialist system changed, there occurred a sort of imbalance of strength between Tito's cult and other patriotic cults of the Yugoslav socialistic multi-nation. The cult of Tito's persona was such a dominant component of "Titoism" that Slovenian author, Drago Jančar, commented in one of his texts that the country should have been called "Titoland" rather than Yugoslavia. The country fell apart following Tito's death, but the cult, ritual and myth resisted until the very last. Consequently, the People's Hero cult also weakened. Though Tito was indeed one of the People's Heroes, the cult of his persona was not only far stronger than the cult of each People's Hero individually but also of the People's Hero cult in general. The majestic monuments dedicated to Tito and the special state ritual conducted in his honor overshadowed all the memorials erected for the People's Heroes and all the memories of them. The mature, liberalized, market-oriented socialism – particularly Titoism during its last two decades – caused a gradual erosion of the patriotic mythology of the Yugoslav socialist era. Tito's cult and the contradictions of Titoism undermined the Partisan mythology, while the run down system and ritual exaggerations to present it as a sturdy one undermined Tito's cult. During this phase, regardless of the status of Tito's state outside of the Soviet bloc

¹¹ Ibid.

and of Tito's personal aversion towards the image that communist leaders hold in the world, the imitation of the Soviet model appeared once again, specifically in the exaggerations surrounding patriotic cults. It was as if Tito was competing against Leonid Brezhnev in the number of the highest state decorations: the Soviet leader received four medals as USSR Hero, whereas Tito received three People's Hero of Yugoslavia medals. The patriotic system was not entirely imposed on the people, because it was the people from whom it had partly originated. It had been popular for a long time and was widely accepted, not only through the school system, army and similar mechanisms, but also through national traditions and popular culture – in short, through discourse in daily life during the socialist era, ensuring the system a significant part of its legitimacy. Following the fall of the SFRY, revisionists in the former Yugoslav states – especially Croatia and Serbia – attempted to rehabilitate quisling leaders and ideologies, while demonizing the communists' excesses, their contribution to anti-fascism, and everything else they represented.¹² Along with the so-called ethnic cleansing of the 1990s, the material symbols of anti-fascism and the socialist era were also "cleansed". A total war against "politically incorrect" memory was in progress. Over 3,000 Partisan monuments were taken down in Croatia, and while the number was not as high in the neighboring states, heroes everywhere lost their commemorative plaques, busts, town squares, schools and factories – once named after them. Many (including Tito) were now presented by new political elites and revisionist historians as brutal mass murderers and traitors of the Croat national cause. The Partisan mythology did not come close to maintaining the status it had before or the degree of esteem that the anti-fascist tradition usually maintains in European countries and this was not only the case in the ultra-revisionist Croatia, where revisionism was the state policy for at least ten years during the Tuđman era, but also elsewhere in the region.

¹² See Todor Kuljić, *Kultura sećanja: teorijska objašnjenja upotrebe prošlosti* (2006); Sulejman Bosto, Tihomir Cipek and Olivera Milosavljević (eds.), *Kultura sjećanja: 1941.: povijesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti* (2008); Olivera Milosavljević, *Potisnuta istina: kolaboracija u Srbiji 1941-1944* (2006); Jovan Byford, *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism: Post-communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović* (2008).

VJEKOSLAV PERICA (CROATIA)

ETHNIC DIASPORA AS POLITICAL ACTOR AND NATIONAL MYTH

The topic of the diaspora and return to one's homeland is a well-known motif of the post-socialist – and in our case, war and postwar – discourse in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.¹ At the time of the first multiparty elections, the word “diaspora” – infused with a new meaning and symbolism and serving a specific nation-building purpose – first made its appearance in public discourse and then in national, nation-building mythologies and ideologies, as well as in new national cultures. During the war and postwar period of the 1990s, it became an inevitable part of the political “newspeak” used by the ruling elites. Throughout the 1990s, in new Croatia and new Serbia the topic of the diaspora was much more frequent in opinion journalism, literature, art, religion, and even science, than it had been earlier.² Just like domestic ethnic groups, their foreign offspring were also mobilized towards their parent-states that were in the process of being formed. Diasporas became political lobbying groups and entered the new political repertoire of mass mobilization of ethnic movements. Ethnic diasporas also took on an aura of martyrdom. Prominent individuals who had suffered a tragic fate in a foreign land, had served time in prison etc., became the new national heroes; even a terrorist like Zvonko Bušić, who was convicted to 30 years in prison abroad, was received as a hero upon returning to his homeland. The homogenization process of ethno-nations also involves the eradication of

¹ See this subject in detail in Vjekoslav Perica, “Nacije i dijaspore: mit o sakralnom centru i vječnom povratku”, in Ljubiša Despotović, Darko Gavrilović, Vjekoslav Perica and Srdan Šljuki (eds.), *Mitovi nacionalizma i demokratija*, (2009).

² See, among other things, Boris Maruna, *Bilo je lakše voljeti te iz daljine: povratničke elegije* (1996); Gojko Borić, *Hrvat izvan domovine: sjećanja političkog emigranta* (2007); Dragoljub Đorđević (ed.), *Srbi u dijaspori. Collection of Works* (2004); Vladeta Jerotić, “Srbi u dijaspori i dijaspora u Srbiji”, *Književne novine*, 51, 974 (15 May 1998), p. 2; Krinka Vidaković-Petrov, “Dijaspora je dijalog o identitetu”, *NIN*, No. 2662 (31 January 2002), pp. 28-30; Dragan Nedeljković, *Dijaspora i otadžbina: govori, predavanja, ogledi o jugoslavenskoj drami i o srpskoj sudbini u smutnom vremenu: 1990-1993* (1994).

differences between numerous previously-conflicting groups of emigrants, conflicting church communities and emigrant cultural clubs, which is why various international congresses took place, as well as global congregations between representatives of the ethnic nations' domestic and foreign segments.

As opposed to Serbia, the ethno-diaspora in Croatia was a key political factor from the very onset of the great change, and it even had the right to vote in the elections. From the moment it appeared on the Croatian political scene in 1989, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) strongly emphasized the role of the Croatian diaspora, selected the delegates from the diaspora for the famous First Parliament of 1990, while during his well-known tour of the Croatian diaspora in 1989, HDZ leader Franjo Tuđman collected the money necessary to organize his campaign and win at the elections. It was during that campaign that Tuđman gave his famous statements about an economic revival and prosperity that the money of the Croatian diaspora is to bring to the new Croatia. Tuđman was creating not only a new Croatia but also "new Croats", and he counted on the diaspora to fill the positions of the "excommunicated". At a later stage, while constructing the myth about the Homeland War (1991-1995) as a constitutive, nation-building, patriotic myth of new Croatia, Tuđman and the HDZ would emphasize the role of the volunteers from the diaspora and the diaspora's financial assistance in the defense of Croatia. During the same period, Milošević's forces in Serbia did not place as much emphasis on the diaspora's role because the situation there was such that the old regime, having undergone an ideological transformation, continued to be in power. The Serbian diaspora was, instead, a trump-card of the conservative opposition, particularly the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) and other similar parties that had assigned the Serbian diaspora the role of renewing the nation. Even before, the role of the diaspora had been emphasized by the Serbian Orthodox Church, which in the beginning of the 1990s had taken a few important and symbolic moves to create the impression of spiritual unity by healing differences within branches of the church abroad. In recent years (2006-2010), the diaspora's role in Serbian politics has gained significance, whereas in Croatia it has weakened, indicating a relative de-ideologization and democratic progress to the benefit of Croatia and a stagnation of the transition process for Serbia. At the same time, the left-wing candidate Ivo Josipović won the elections in Croatia in 2010, the polls showed that 80 percent of respondents (nearly every other Croatian citizen) felt that the Croatian diaspora (this mostly refers to Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina) should not have the right to vote due to its ideologically-motivated support in

the elections and detrimental effect on democracy in Croatia.³ Therefore, the weakening of extreme right-wing ethno-nationalism also caused the erosion of the once-great Diaspora Myth.

This myth, however, did experience its stellar moments in history during the “years of lead”, i.e. the years of war, nationalistic euphoria and wild capitalism of the 1990s. At that time, both in the case of Serbian nationalism and new Croatian nationalism, diasporas were used in new political discourse, but they were also used as a material political force of ethnic nationalist movements. In Croatia, the new government would give out awards and pay honor to old exiled political activists, while granting positions in the Army, diplomacy and the top state level to the younger generations. Crown Prince Aleksandar Karađorđević returned to Serbia from Great Britain and began learning the Serbian language, yet the monarchist movement was relatively weak and of no use to the then all-powerful Milošević, which left the Crown Prince’s role in Serbia unarticulated. For a relatively brief period of time, Milošević also tolerated American tycoon Milan Panić as the Serbian Prime Minister until the American became too independent-minded and popular. With similar promises of support from the Serbian diaspora, he announced an economic boom and democratization process in Serbia but was sent back to California by Milošević the moment he had come into his way.

In the 1991-1995 war, the ethno-diaspora was already an active participant and relevant factor in the war. While in emigrant communities abroad governments of great powers and mass media were being lobbied for the “correct” version of the truth about the Balkan wars, that is to say, “our” truth as opposed to “their” truth (and the communists’), and while money was being collected for financing the war, as well as humanitarian aid, highly-motivated militants were arriving from abroad at the warfront and joining political party leaderships. Many exiled political activists who gained a certain civil and cultural reputation abroad became disappointed or at least reserved toward the Tuđman regime. But some of them from more obscure emigrant circles climbed to the top levels of new political elites. The most famous example of this is probably Gojko Šušak, a Croatian emigré from Canada. This owner of an Ottawa pizzeria was brought back to fill the position of Emigration Minister, and he ended his career as the Defense Minister of the Republic of Croatia. According to the famous 1995

³ “Svaki drugi Hrvat ukinuo bi pravo glasa dijaspori”, *Jutarnji list*, 19 February 2010, <http://www.jutarnji.hr/dokument-europskog-parlamenta--svaki-drugi-hrvat-ukinuo-bi-pravo-glasa-dijaspori/575429/>.

Austrian/British documentary titled “The Death of Yugoslavia”, the ICTY, as well as other sources, Šušak (convinced that an independent Croatian state cannot be created without war), incited and wished for the nation-building war, at least as passionately as those among the Serbs who believed in the thesis that Serbia wins in war and loses in peace, and that it is only by war that it can prosper. On the Serbian side, former internationally-convicted criminals and paid assassins used by the communist secret police were arriving from the diaspora. There were also adventurous characters such as Dragan Vasiljković, aka Captain Dragan, an emigré from Australia charged for war crimes in Croatia. On the Croatian side, Ante Gotovina had a similar role; he had advanced from his position of Commander in the Foreign Legion to the position of General in the Croatian Army at the speed of lightning and carried out sensitive assignments towards the end of the war. At the time, the criminal mafia, operating within the vortex of capitalist privatization, was also created out of various foreign “personnel”. Nevertheless, the entire emigrant population of the Cold War era, as well as the returnees from the 1990s, cannot be reduced to criminals and terrorists. Many emigrants at the time were of a different profile, and upon their return to their homeland, some even became distinguished democratic, liberal or left-wing politicians, as well as publicly-engaged intellectuals and critics of the new ruling elites (such as author Boris Maruna, singer Vice Vukov and historian Ivo Banac in Croatia, philosopher Mihajlo Mihajlov and architect Bogdan Bogdanović in Serbia, and of the younger post-Yugoslav generation, writers Tena Štivičić in Croatia and Biljana Srbljanović in Serbia, etc.). The reason for the negative image of returnees from the diaspora lies in the regimes of Milošević and Tuđman, who in terms of staffing chose to give a chance to the worst among both locals and returnees.

At least three, clearly pragmatic roles of the Diaspora Myth should be mentioned. First, ethnic nationalism has always been obsessed with demography. The demographic trends in Serbia and Croatia today are alarmingly negative.⁴ Mass emigration, particularly of younger generations, is making the dramatic demographic situation even worse. Since the change of the regime and beginning of the wars in the 1990s, this emigration intensified instead of permanently discontinuing – as was announced. The two peoples are literally becoming extinct as they continue to disappear from the territories they fought for between themselves and with others.

⁴ See for example, Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Demografija Hrvatske – aktualni demografski procesi”, Zagreb: *Diacovensia*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2005).

Secondly, the Diaspora Myth makes a small nation bigger and cures the inferiority complex of small peoples. On the European scale, the former Yugoslavia was a medium-sized country in terms of area and population, positioned just behind the few largest ones. The breakup of Yugoslavia and the “balkanization” process caused the country to be fragmented into “banana ministates”. Very soon the new states had to face serious limitations in their development, as well as problems with sustaining the level of national dignity. In such circumstances, the Diaspora Myth gained significance. The parent state and the diaspora jointly created the illusion that these were no longer “small countries”; and when the general influence of the Myth about the Nation is added to that – creating the illusion of organic unity between all its dead and living members throughout the centuries of mythical history – national pride and confidence increase. Thirdly, the diaspora provided money to ethnic, nationalist parties, and secured votes for them in the elections. Without the diaspora, the HDZ could not have won in the first multiparty elections in Croatia, and perhaps neither in the subsequent elections until the very last in 2007. From 1990 to this day, the structure of the new Croatian ruling elite has been as such: HDZ-Church-Diaspora. Tuđman’s movement first launched the seductive thesis about Croatia’s economic boom and generous investments from the pockets and reserves of exiled political activists of Croatian origin. Monetary donations for the pre-election campaign arrived as a result of Tuđman’s 1989-1990 pre-election tours in America, Australia, Western Europe and elsewhere, but also from some of Tuđman’s political associates, who would later steer his movement towards greater nationalistic extremism. Thanks to newly-established laws which granted the Croatian diaspora the right to vote in the Croatian elections (including Western Herzegovina, which was a crucial region for the HDZ movement), “Tuđmanism” took rule of Croatia and remained in power – both in its hard and reformed versions – for a total of fifteen out of the eighteen years of transition.

In the new Croatia, the Diaspora Myth was characterized as a church, nation-building, ideological and political myth. A subsequently written article titled “The Church of the Diaspora” offers the following perspective:

The Croatian people can rightfully be called an emigrant people. Rarely does a nation, except for the Jews and Romas, live so dispersed across the entire globe. Emigration of peoples is generally caused by various problems in the spheres of politics (deportation, colonization), society (discrimination, oppression), demographics (density of population), economy (poverty, unemployment) or ecology (natural disasters, climate). Although today far more than 3 million

Croats live outside their homeland, we have, for the most part, preserved our national identity, faith, tradition and culture, as well as our mother tongue – Croatian. The old generations have kept their homeland, Croatia, in their hearts all along and have also passed on this love to the younger generations. A great contribution to preserving the national treasure was undoubtedly made by our priests (the Franciscans) and nuns, who followed us abroad to be our brothers, councilors and offer support as we live our lives as ‘guest workers’. Most of us did not choose this life outside our homeland on our own free will but were victims of the Yugo-communist regime and underdeveloped economy. Some Croats in the diaspora are still not aware of how important our priests are to us and how crucial their presence is here abroad. What would happen to us if our priests were not with us?⁵

One emigrant club stated the following: “Take a look at Ireland and Israel, which are among the wealthiest countries of today. Those countries passed laws on the diaspora, created the most beneficial conditions for the return and financing of their diasporas....”⁶ Israel is, incidentally, frequently mentioned as an example and role model to new Balkan ethno-nationalist movements. In Croatia’s political leaders’ rethoric, from Tuđman to his successors’ speeches, Croatia is portrayed as the Israel of Southeast Europe – an extended arm of the West in the critical region bordering with the East. Also, back in the 1980s the Serbian nationalist movement had developed the rhetoric, symbolism and mysticism of the Serbian-Jewish analogy which originated from the myth about the collective victimization and martyrdom of the people. The two main ethnic nationalist movements in the former Yugoslavia both developed the policy of “imitating Israel”. Both new Serbia and new Croatia founded friendship societies with Israel and Jewish communities in the country. New organizations also emerged, modeled on the World Jewish Congress. Also, in local governmental structures of both Serbia and Croatia, the newly-established ministries of emigration and the diaspora ministers played an important role.

On the side of the Serbs, the Diaspora Myth played a more important role in religious/conservative nationalism. The unification of Serbs in South-Slavic states and their spiritual connection with Serbian exiled political activists (the diaspora) is the leitmotif of Serbian national mythology. In Croatia, Tuđman’s regime called for a so-called reconciliation between the parent-state and the diaspora, which also involves bridging

⁵ “Katolici na internetu”, 1 February 2008, at katolici.org, http://www.katolici.org/kolumne.php?action=c_vidi&id=2955.

⁶ Ibid.

ideological differences. At the time when the multiparty system in Serbia took its first steps, the transfer of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović's remains from the USA to Serbia in 1991 had great symbolic significance. On that occasion, the Serbian church announced not only the canonization of a future national saint but also the end of the clash within the church. As is the case with national Catholicism in Croatia, the Serbian Church is still given special merit and is practically acknowledged as the savior of the diaspora. The year 2003 was the year of ritual reconciliations and spiritual unification of the Serbs and thus a definite ending to "Yugoslavhood". Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović was canonized at the time, symbolizing – as the Serbian Orthodox Church had intended – the reconciliation between the diaspora (which he alone had also represented) and the fatherland, and subsequently, the reconciliation of all Serbs who were once ideological opponents. Moreover, in the context of international relations in the region, the canonization of church leader Velimirović played a similar role for the Serbs as the beatification of Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac in 1998 did for the Croats, which is to place into the national pantheon – as national role models – two proved opponents of communism, liberalism and the cooperation between Serbs and Croats, i.e. Catholic and Orthodox Christians, resulting in a permanent alienation between two close peoples and churches.⁷

However, even though they were forcefully imposed upon state myths, these two ethnic nationalist diasporas were not the only diasporas from the former Yugoslavia that underwent the process of migration. There is one more, the "invisible" diaspora – invisible because it has neither a church nor a state. In the beginning of the 1990s – in the shadow of the great "triumphalistic" mythical discourse about exile, the diaspora and the return to restored ethnic nations – streams of new refugees and exiled political activists came pouring in worldwide from the former Yugoslavia. Though they can be counted by the millions, they have neither a state nor a church which would commemorate their experience. Some of them have remained "Yugo-nostalgic" and cannot get over their lost homeland, and some have transformed into "revived" ethno-nationalists of a new kind. Some have reluctantly reconciled with new ethno-nations and identities that were imposed upon them, while others have dismissed them and, consequently, do not have a parent homeland to return

⁷ Vjekoslav Perica, "The Sanctification of Enmity. Churches and Construction of Founding Myths of Serbia and Croatia", in Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe* (2005), pp. 130-157.

to (nor do they desire one). In spite of the many “world congresses” held by the diaspora and the fact that potential returnees were being encouraged to return, approximately 80,000 people emigrated from Croatia between 1990 and 2002 (while according to certain media statements, which also include Serbs, the figure amounts to approximately 40,000), and these were mostly younger people under the age of forty.⁸ As a political counter-attack to the drama surrounding the new exodus and in keeping with the new nation-building Diaspora Myth, the Croatian Government initiated the “brain gain” campaign. In 2007 it had announced that during the course of those few years alone and in response to an invitation from the Croatian Government, 34 scientists returned to their homeland from abroad (while an additional 10 were in the process of returning). These were scientists who had acquired knowledge abroad that was unavailable at home, and they were to pass it on to younger generations of Croats; HDZ’s Minister of Science took a photo with them in front of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts for a media presentation.⁹ However, as Ivan Đikić, a Croatian scientist with an international reputation, had said on a number of occasions, the most famous among the Croatian scientists abroad did not return, apart from a few who had entered into special arrangements with the HDZ and had received special privileges from the regime. In addition, during this time thousands of highly-educated Croats went abroad for their graduate studies, and they continue to leave without any intention of returning. If this should be the case in Croatia, one can only assume that even more people emigrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina (according to one survey, 42,000 young people left Bosnia and Herzegovina alone in the course of only two years, from 1996 to 1998).¹⁰ Serbia presumably has followed similar trends.

In conclusion, the new post-Yugoslav ethno-confessional nations were formed with a new mythical structure featuring the Diaspora Myth as one of its constitutive myths. When it comes to ethnic nations, the myths about origin, survival, collective suffering and struggle, as well as myths about being special in comparison to other peoples and so forth, are also the main source of the government’s legitimacy in such national states.¹¹ The diaspora

⁸ *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 8 January 2003.

⁹ “Znanstveni gastarbajteri: Zašto smo se vratili”, *Globus*, 11 May 2007, pp. 52-57.

¹⁰ Stated in Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkanski idoli. Religija i nacionalizam u jugoslovenskim državama*, translated from English by Slobodanka Glišić and Slavica Miletić, Vol. 2 (2006), p. 152.

¹¹ See Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe* (2005); G. Hosking and G. Schöpflin, *Myths and Nationhood* (1997).

is emphasized in the nationalisms of famous ethnic and ethno-confessional, culturally-homogenous nations, such as for instance Israel, Ireland, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Poland, as well as of new South-Slavic Balkan nations that are the focus of this narrative. However, when nationalist movements of the majority take hold, the role of the diaspora is often emphasized in multi-ethnic pluralistic societies as well. This is how, by a comparison, the diaspora became important in the nationalist movement of the Hindus on the Indian subcontinent, especially since the 1950s when the international Hindu organization, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), was founded.¹²

Restructuring themselves in contrast to the SRFY and to one another, the successor states were created as distinctly ethnic states which consider it important to dismiss all multi-ethnic pluralism and emphasize mutual differences. Furthermore, the new ethnic nationalism in the Balkans developed during the global rise of yet another nationalism to which it is related – sometimes referred to as “religious nationalism”. This form of nationalism usually exists in combination with ethnic nationalism – as “ethno-religious” or “ethno-confessional” nationalism.¹³

¹² See for example V.A. Pai Panandiker and Ashis Nandy (eds.), *Contemporary India* (1999).

¹³ See, among other things, Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (1994); Dino Abazović, *Za Naciju i Boga. Sociološko određenje religijskog nacionalizma* (2006); Mitja Velikonja, “Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, translated from Slovenian by Rangichi Nginja, *Eastern European Studies*, No. 20 (2003); Ivan Cvitković, *Konfesija u ratu* (2004); Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkanski idoli. Religija i nacionalizam u jugoslovenskim državama* (2006).

ANA LJUBOJEVIĆ (SERBIA), DARKO GAVRILOVIĆ (SERBIA) AND
VJEKOSLAV PERICA (CROATIA)

MYTHS AND COUNTERMYTHS AND THE INCORPORATION OF MYTH INTO NEW NATIONAL IDEOLOGIES

The mythical basis for the national identity of present-day Croatia and present-day Croats offers three historical topics, crucial to forming the nation: World War II (1941-1945); the Yugoslav-communist era (1945-1948); and the War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991-1995). The first two topics are interpreted, that is to say, mythologized, mystified and in this specific case even sacralized, in the Myth about Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, while the third topic is covered in the Myth about the Homeland War. All of these myths have corresponding “countermyths”, i.e. contradictory interpretations in new nationalist mythologies of the Serbs and Bosnian Muslims – two peoples who were directly involved in the abovementioned historical events and who have a mutual history with the Croats, that is to say, who share with them the same historical experience but without the goal of creating a Croatian national state, thus interpreting and mythologizing history in accordance with their own national projects. One should also bear in mind the mythology of the former Yugoslav state from the communist era, which exists today only within the realm of memory and nostalgic subcultures.

The Myth about Cardinal Stepinac was first created during the Cold War and completed in Tuđman’s Croatia with the beatification of Alojzije Stepinac in 1998. According to this myth, Zagreb Archbishop, Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, is not only the leading figure in the Catholic Church but also in the Croatian national pantheon.¹ He is credited with heroic deeds, martyrdom and political impartiality. He allegedly resisted both Nazi-fascism and communism

¹ See Stella Alexander, *The Triple Myth: A Life of Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac* (1987); Vjekoslav Perica, “The Sanctification of Enmity. Churches and Construction of Founding Myths of Serbia and Croatia”, in Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe* (2005), pp. 130-157.

with equal enthusiasm and while risking his own life, which would make him an “opponent of any form of totalitarianism”. In the historical reality of World War II and the communist era, Stepinac’s role was much different. His support to the NDH was much more clear and frequent (and lasted over a continuous four-year period) than his protests against certain excesses of the Ustasha regime or his engagement in humanitarian work. He verbally condemned the Jasenovac concentration camp as if it were a single excess rather than a continuous genocidal policy of the regime. On the other hand, following a short-lived and unsuccessful collaboration with the communists, he most strongly and openly rose against Tito’s regime, forbade the clergy any form of cooperation with him and used the 1946 trial (and later his time in prison and internment) for the fight against communism in Yugoslavia and elsewhere. There is no doubt that Stepinac was a much greater opponent of communism than of Nazi-fascism. He became a national icon of new Croathood as a de facto Ustasha sympathizer (his occasional criticism of the Ustasha policy does not undermine his proven support for the idea of an independent Croatian state, whether it be designed like the NDH or precisely because of it), as well as a proven communist and anti-Yugoslav. The myth about Stepinac today legitimizes Tuđman’s profile of Croathood and the privileged role of the Catholic Church as a key national institution in Croatia. Just like Stepinac in history, Croatian Catholicism of today – teamed up with the right-wing trends of Croatian nationalism – has a revisionistic outlook on the Ustasha ideology and considers Yugoslavhood, communism and greater Serbian nationalism its primary opponents. Serbian nationalism responded to the Myth about Stepinac with an arsenal of countermyths, two of which should be singled out as particularly significant. First, as part of the Jasenovac mythology emphasized by Serbian nationalism, particularly from the 1980s, eight victims of the genocide carried out by the Ustashas were canonized in 1998 (the same year Stepinac was beatified), and these were mostly victims from the Jasenovac concentration camp. Then, in 2003, came the canonization of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, who, among other things, insisted that the Roman Catholic Church prompted the genocide. This year, in 2010, the Serbian Orthodox Church also canonized famous anti-ecumenist and anti-Catholic theologian Justin Popović.

Before we continue with the comparison of the two myths and their roles in the nationalisms of today, it is necessary to point out that the lives of specific historical figures also need to be considered, as they do not always coincide with these myths. Alojzije Stepinac, for instance, was very significant in organizing church life and insisted on the Church’s autonomy in relation to the state; to be fair, he did this less successfully in the NDH

than in the communist regime, but his resistance to the communist regime was, nevertheless, an undeniable contribution to anti-totalitarianism. In the same context, also to be considered is his condemnation of the Jasenovac detention camp after the Ustasha regime executed Catholic priests who aided the Partisan movement in spite of the Church's protest. However, most relevant to Croatian nationalism of today is Stepinac's evolution from a former pro-Yugoslav to an anti-Yugoslav; at the same time, as a church leader he concluded that there is no co-existence with the Orthodox Church in the same state. For this reason, we consider his beatification primarily a tribute to his resistance to communism, while for Croatian nationalists he has remained a distinguished fighter for Croatian national interests.

Concerning Nikolaj Velimirović, his international reputation as an Orthodox theologian and clergyman is undeniable. However, he was one of the leading ideologists responsible for Serbian nationalism as it is today.²

This mythical history, as seen by Serbian nationalism, provides a different picture of Croatian Catholicism (and of Stepinac as its leading figure). This Catholicism is represented as an Ustasha-related ideology, which shares with the Ustasas the genocidal aims of destroying the Serbs and rooting out the Orthodox faith on the territories of present-day Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Srem (Serbia). The canonized Bishop Nikolaj, the leader of the Church (in a similar way to how Croatian nationalists wish to see Stepinac), was shown to be a persistent opponent to both Nazi-fascism and communism. However, to a certain degree, Nikolaj's appearances in the 1930s also revealed expressions of anti-Semitism. The saintly Serbian bishop distinguished himself in particular as an opponent of the Catholic Church. He opposed it by blocking the Concordat in 1937, and then by making accusations regarding the destruction of the Yugoslav state and support to Ustasha Croathood. He was the architect of the idea that Roman Catholicism is an important component of the Ustasha ideology and Croatian nationalism in general, as well as of the conspiracy theory about the Vatican's alleged long-standing plans to destroy the Serbian Church and, therefore, the Serbian people. This equates Croatian nationalism with Catholic clericalism, obliterating its civic/liberal, secular, pan-Slavic and ecumenical dimensions. Basically, the autonomy of Croathood is denied within the framework of Catholicism, which is understood as an imperialistic, totalitarian ideology.

² See Jovan Byford, *Denial and Repression of Antisemitism: Post-communist Remembrance of the Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović* (2008).

The Myth about the Homeland War was constructed by the first Croatian President – and also professional historian – Franjo Tuđman. With this myth, he wished to emphasize the just and defensive character of the 1991-1995 war. Tuđman took a professional approach to the construction of this myth, because in the 1950s he was a highly-ranked federal military historian of communist Yugoslavia, and he specialized in studies of just, defensive wars, such as anti-colonial or Partisan wars. According to Tuđman, the mass people's democratic movement – which unified all Croats – had won in Croatia in 1990, even though his party secured only a narrow victory over the reformed communists, and it is a question whether such a war would have broken out if the communists had won. Following a democratic victory (according to Tuđman) – which was also a plebiscite for Croatian national independence – an attack was made on Croatia by the Yugo-communist and “greater Serbian” Army, which consisted of parts of the former JNA that operated under conservative pro-Russian and “greater Serbian” generals, as well as various Serbian extreme nationalistic paramilitary troops. Tuđman introduced the term *branitelji* (the “defenders”) as an official title sanctioned by law for soldiers-participants in this war, thus killing two birds with one stone – the name in itself suggests that the Croats were leading a defensive war on their own territory (even though the Croatian Army carried out numerous operations on territories where Serbs were the majority population, as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina), but it is also reminiscent of the word “*domobrani*” (home guards or home defenders), officially the Croatian Home Guard, which was the Croatian army in the NDH and earlier Croatian regimes, and the radical nationalists found this appealing.

Tuđman simplified and ideologized history and ignored the wider historical context, complexity and causes of the Yugoslav crisis throughout the last two decades of socialism. He fogged the complexity of the situation and possible options for a solution during the critical pre-war year, particularly the responsibility of ethnic/religious parties for the state of chaos, as well as the responsibility of extremists in his own party and various “greater Croatian” and neo-Ustasha tendencies which he himself had encouraged and later used in the war and towards consolidation of the government. However, Tuđman's idea about the “Homeland” War (or patriotic/fatherland and defensive/just war) as an all-encompassing people's resistance to the aggression, uniting all patriotic forces of the same ethnic group against “the others”, was one that appealed to all ethnic nationalist leaders of factions involved in the 1991-1995 war. Each faction had adopted it and applied it to its individual case, while perceiving itself as the just defender and the enemy(ies) as the aggressor(s).

Today only Belgrade views the 1991-1995 war as a “civil war in Yugoslavia”, just like it views the other wars of that decade as the “Yugoslav wars of the nineties”. For everyone else it was a homeland, patriotic and liberation war waged by a specific ethnic nation against the greater Serbian aggression that was planned and orchestrated in Belgrade.

The architect of the “Homeland War” concept, Franjo Tuđman, was a former communist general and military historian. In his early works he is influenced by Soviet military and historical thought. The Croatian “Homeland War” is a translation and term borrowed from the Russian “Patriotic War” concept, which was invented as a philosophy, war strategy and patriotic mobilization instrument at the time of Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812. It is also described in Tolstoy’s masterpiece, *War and Peace*, and in the second half of the 19th century it became an important instrument in the construction of the Russian nation. The “Patriotic War” (*Отечественная война*) places primary emphasis on justice, i.e. the defensive character of war, on the existence of an invasion or aggression from abroad (led by “unbelievers” – as Tolstoy describes Napoleon – which would place God on the side of those who are defending themselves), and on the concept of the homeland or, literally, the “fatherland” (*отечество* in Russian, although the words *родина* and *страна* are also used for the same concept). This concept was pragmatically applied by the Bolsheviks in the 1918-1920 Civil War. Leon Trotsky, Commissar of War and creator of the Red Army, used the unfortunate and unskillfully-conducted intervention of the Western allies on the side of the Whites as an idea to mobilize, i.e. gather the Russians around the Reds in defense of the fatherland/homeland. The leaders of the revolution, Lenin and Trotsky, temporarily placed their priorities surrounding the communist revolution on the sidelines, and called upon tradition and even Russian nationalism for help. The Red Army had a far greater number of regular soldiers than the White Army to begin with, because the Reds held the heart of European Russia and all the major cities, and they promised the division of that most fertile Russian land to the peasants. The White counter-revolutionaries had more generals and officers but fewer troops. Above all, the Reds needed educated tsarist officers in order to organize an effective and potentially victorious army. Trotsky made Lenin solicit all patriotic tsarist officers for the defense of the homeland by returning their ranks to them and promising them a proper military career. In order to control “unsuitable” officers (and also due to the continuation of the revolution), Trotsky introduced a “parallel chain of command” (dual command) in which “political commissars” indoctrinated the Army Bolshevik-style while also controlling tsarist officers and others from the bourgeoisie class (intellectuals, wealthy,

etc.). Trotsky's strategy was a success, and the revolution continued following a military victory in 1920. The same strategy was applied by Trotsky's killer – Stalin, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. The term “Great Patriotic War” or *Velikaja Otecestvennaja vojna* (*Великая Отечественная война*) first appeared in the newspaper *Pravda*, in November of 1941, on the anniversary of the October Revolution, in an article titled “The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People” (*Великая Отечественная война советского народа*). In the People's Liberation War, the Yugoslav communists led by Josip Broz Tito also applied the identical strategy to Trotsky's, that is to say, Stalin's at the time. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia called on the people to rise against the external aggressor (Germans, Italians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, etc.) in defense of their homeland (Croats for Croatia, Serbs for Serbia, Montenegrins for Montenegro, and so forth). The Partisan Army also recruited a number of officers from the former Royal Army, as well as Chetniks and members of the Croatian Home Guard. Naturally, they also introduced the “dual command system” with political commissars, members of the Party who taught Marxism to the soldiers, and they kept an eye on all non-members, particularly those in command structures.

In the beginning of the war, Franjo Tuđman invited professional officers and generals – Croats who deserted the JNA – into the new army formed by the independent Croatia. They patriotically accepted the invitation in defense of their homeland. Tuđman, however, did not trust them fully, especially regarding their capability for the execution of the ethnic cleansing plan he had masterminded. Knowing that most of them were either former members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia or that they simply were not ethnic nationalists and chauvinists like he was (although he also used to be in the JNA, he had much more time for an ideological transformation), he doubted their loyalty and willingness to commit war crimes and crimes of genocide. For this reason, Tuđman introduced the well-known “dual chain of command” system. He introduced a mechanism-reminder of the World War II communist political commissars. Above all, these “commissars” had to be haters of the Serbs, anti-communists and anti-Yugoslavs, and in an ideological sense – ethnic nationalists, clericalists, etc., prepared for the execution of the ethnic cleansing plan justified by retaliation for the Serbian rebellion. In particular demand were returnees who used to be Croatian exiled political activists, members of the Foreign Legion, and the like. They controlled those “suspicious” Croats from the JNA, learned from them, and quickly advanced ahead by “cutting in line”. This allowed certain lower-ranking commanders of the Foreign Legion, such as Ante

Gotovina, to rapidly advance to the highest rank of general. That is why the ICTY prosecuted Gotovina as a member of a “joint criminal endeavor” aimed at expulsion of the Serbian minority from Croatia” and commanded by Tuđman and his defense minister Šušak. The same role in the Serbian rebel forces against Croats to be cleansed from Serb-occupied territories was assigned by Milošević to an émigré from Australia known as “Captain Dragan”.

As the Croatian armed forces developed and when the possibility of military defeat ceased to exist, Tuđman gradually removed “the unsuitable” (Tito’s highly educated but non-extremist generals) from key positions regardless of their capabilities and war merit. As soon as they would successfully complete their tasks and after the greatest danger had passed, the most capable Croatian military leaders with a high level of education and extensive experience in the JNA, such as General Martin Špegelj, General and former SFRY Air Force Supreme Commander Anton Tus, Admiral Sveto Letica, General Božidar Grubišić, and others, were moved out of the way. This also happened to the hero in the defense of Vukovar, Colonel Mile Dedaković Jastrebović, who, although he had turned into a right-wing Croat nationalist, was never fully trusted by Tuđman. The 2007 trial of General Rahim Ademi and Colonel Mirko Norac, in which Ademi – who transferred to the Croatian Army from the JNA – was acquitted of the charges for war crimes while Norac, his “commissar”, was convicted, confirmed the existence of a dual chain of command, and this was exactly the thesis on which Ademi based his defense. But herein possibly lies yet another reason for the purge of former JNA personnel – they were not fit to conduct the “ethnic cleansing” of Serbs from Croatia towards the end of the war. In any case, on 13 October 2000, the Croatian State Parliament at the time adopted the Declaration on the Homeland War. The purpose of this document was to sanction the Homeland War to prevent the possibility of it being dealt with by the left-wing, which after the Tuđman era had a chance of winning the elections and coming into power (the center-left coalition was later in power from 2000 to 2003). In other words, the Myth about the Homeland War was an instrument for the continuity and legitimacy of Tuđman’s Croathood. Most active in sustaining and consolidating the Myth about the Homeland War in Croatia today are Tuđman’s ruling HDZ party, the Catholic Church and associations of war veterans, or as they are officially called – defenders from the Homeland War. At the same time, Croatian historians are debating whether the war in question was a “homeland/defensive war that was also

a civil war” (*Neven Budak*) or primarily an “aggression against Croatia”, on which Ivo Banac insists.³

The first to adopt the Homeland War doctrine were the Bosnian Serbs under the leadership of Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, during the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serbian Orthodox Church in particular assisted them in this. At the height of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Metropolitan of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral Amfilohije Radović (currently acting Serbian Patriarch) organized two philosophical/theological symposiums on interpretations regarding the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They were held in Cetinje in 1993 and contributions were also sent by those who due to the war could not participate, such as Radovan Karadžić and some high-ranking officers in Mladić’s army. The result of these symposiums was an anthology published in 1996 under the title *Jagnje božije i zvijer iz bezdana: filosofija rata (The Lamb of God and the Beast from the Abyss: Philosophy of War)*. In his contributing text, Orthodox theologian and publicist Matej Arsenijević considers the beginning of the defense of Serbhood’s mere right to survive to have been the uprising of Serbs in Croatia in August of 1990, followed by the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the end of the war was marked by the unjust (as he sees it) Dayton Peace Agreement in November 1995. Arsenijević called this war a “five-year patriotic war in western Serbian countries”.⁴ Vladika Atanasije Jevtić, the leading theologian in the Serbian Orthodox Church and one of the main ideologists of new Serbian nationalism, stated

(...) our Serbian wars have always been defensive. We are not denying that this was our war as well which the Serbs also waged, but the Serbs truly did wage a defensive war. They did not penetrate foreign territory. The only Serb who penetrated foreign territory, i.e. Byzantine territory, was Tsar Dušan.... I will say that this was a heroic war, at least as far as the Republic of Srpska, the Serbian Bosnia and Herzegovina, is concerned.⁵

In the Republic of Srpska today, the Myth about the Patriotic War (*Otadžbinski rat*, which means basically the same as Croatia’s official term, War for the Homeland or *Domovinski rat*) is one of the foundational myths of

³ “Budak: Da, imali smo građanski rat! Banac: Ne, to je bila agresija”, *Jutarnji list* online, 12 October 2009, <http://www.jutarnji.hr/clanak/art-2009,10,12,,179376.jl>.

⁴ Matej Arsenijević, “Pravoslavlje i rat”, in Radoš M. Mladenović and Hierodeacon Jovan (Ćulibrk) (eds.), *Jagnje božije i zvijer iz bezdana: filosofija rata* (1996), pp. 219-238.

⁵ Radoš M. Mladenović and Hierodeacon Jovan (Ćulibrk) (eds.), *Jagnje božije i zvijer iz bezdana*, pp. 70-72.

this creation that considers itself a state and part of the Serbian nation.⁶ This myth also legitimizes the ethnic cleansing operation, which was necessary for the construction of this ethno-confessional monolithic state. Yet, the Republic of Srpska also included in its mythology the commemoration of Partisans from World War II (once again borrowing Tuđman's ideas, i.e. imitating Croatia in its celebration of the Anti-Fascist Struggle Day from the days of World War II), as well as (unlike Croatia) the cult of the Jasenovac concentration camp as the Serbian Golgotha and not only a war crimes scene. According to a report from Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2009 on the celebration of 9 May, European Victory Day over Fascism and Europe Day, this is the situation today:

Of the activities in Banja Luka, we would like to mention the following: On the Fallen Soldiers Square, Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska Milorad Dodik will place a wreath on the monument to the soldiers killed in the People's Liberation War. Boško Tomić, Republic of Srpska Minister of Labor and Veteran/Disability Protection, will place wreaths on the monument to the soldiers killed in the Defensive/Patriotic War at the Sveti Pantelija cemetery. Wreaths will also be placed on the monument to the victims of camp Jasenovac, on the monument to the soldiers of the People's Liberation War that were killed near Hotel Bosna, as well as at the Partisan Cemetery in Potkozarje.⁷

The name of the 1992-1995 war is debatable, as mentioned earlier in the text. Therefore, conflicting interpretations of the 1991-1995 war exist in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosnian Muslims consider this war to have been a Serbian genocidal attempt against the Bosnian Muslims and the Bosnian Muslims' fight to have been a defensive/homeland, i.e. patriotic war for the survival of the Muslim people and defense from Serbian aggression aided from Serbia.

Finally, it should be added that in terms of their perspective of the 1991-1995 war in Croatia, organizations of Serbian refugees from Croatia have also adopted the "patriotic war doctrine". Therefore, what the Homeland War against Serbian aggression aided by the JNA and Serbia represents for the Croats and for Croatia is the same as what the Defensive/Patriotic War – in which they fought for survival and defended themselves from the Croats and the Croatian state – represents for the Croatian Serbs.

⁶ See Nebojša Popov (ed.), *The Road to War in Serbia: Trauma and Catharsis*, English version edited by Drinka Gojković; translated by Central European University Press (2000).

⁷ Portal Sarajevo-x-com. 15 May 2009, <http://www.sarajevo-x.com/bih/clanak/080508126>.

For this reason, some Serbian refugees from Croatia, for instance, prevented the attempt made by the association of veterans of the Homeland War in Croatia to place a commemorative plaque at the former location of camp Stajićevo, where Croatian detainees from Vukovar were kept.

The end of the war resulted in the arrest and transfer of political leaders to the ICTY. This caused the creation of new post-modern myths about national heroes in the SFRY successor states. The special scenario that follows the myths created in and surrounding the Tribunal in The Hague is the setting for the final act in the careers of charismatic leaders. Along with the rebirth of nationalism, greatly significant are the “shows and spectacles” put on by ICTY indictees, even though their appearance on the political scene is of a more recent date. Formerly active political and military leaders prosecuted by the ICTY are sometimes celebrated by football hooligans and right-wing groups but also defended by some church leaders.

Here we wish to describe the mythmaking mechanisms, observed from the perspective of the relationship between charismatic leaders and their followers. Special attention is given to the support created in society, which developed into new myths about martyrdom and the chosen people. Nonetheless, the moment they leave the ICTY courtrooms, these myths cannot be preserved in their original form, but instead they mutate through the speeches of uncharismatic leaders who had inherited the exhausted political scene. This “tragedy of the new age” abandons the pretentious war rhetoric and shifts its focus on a much more concrete and wide-ranging situation – the wave of violence in towns.

Emile Durkheim was the first to describe the sociological elements of legal rituals, particularly trials for crime, as exogenous in relation to individual consciousness, which in itself places them in the collective consciousness of the social system.

The charisma of political leaders is the result of the process of managing the impressions they leave in their “theatrical pieces”, which consist of the acts of shaping, writing, directing and performing, and to which their followers react by creating “situated” collective identities. The dialogue between the leader and his followers leads to the improved construction of the shared identity.

ANA DEVIĆ (SERBIA)

THE MYTHOLOGIZATION OF MASS GRAVES AND DECEASED PERSONS

In this chapter, we are going to discuss the stages of development of the narrative about the deceased (graves, bodies, bones) or, anthropologically speaking, their “evocation” in the public discourse and in the sphere of the political engagement of the elites in the SFRY until the mid-1980s, while primarily focusing on Serbia, as it was in this country that the speech and historical “science of the victims” of medieval wars (the Battle of Kosovo in 1389) and of the war crimes of World War II first merged, acquiring mythical form and summarizing and “reducing” the victims to their posthumous and collective life. In this section, we wish to support the thesis that the most brutal inter-ethnic violence in the region of the former Yugoslavia so far was orchestrated not so much with the intention to “increase” or perpetuate the “normal” forms of ethnic delineation and previous nationalist brutalities (as nationalist historians explain it), but rather with the intention to destroy all components of memories and reminders of everyday life with all its “impurity” of trans- and inter-ethnic experiences, and most importantly to destroy the presence of the “Other” in one’s personality, i.e. the layers of the individual that arise from everyday communication (and not only the official culture).¹ We are not going to spend a lot of time mythologizing and juxtaposing World War II victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp and the massacre of Bleiburg, as those positions have been discussed at length in the context of contradicting myths about martyr/patriot nations and fascist nations, and in this book in the section about Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac.²

¹ In his movie “Remake”, Dino Mustafić offered probably the most powerful depiction of the consequences of the violent destruction of the former culture of everyday life in the personality of an individual as a result of the acceptance of nationalist culture. A Serb officer tortures a Bosnian Muslim prisoner by forcing him to sing “our” (his? Serbian?) songs (a form of torture that many survivors testified about). When a prisoner sings a Bosnian song, the torturer begins to enjoy it, but is later angrily snapped awake from his “return” to his own self.

² Ivan Čolović, *Politika simbola: ogledi o političkoj antropologiji* (2000).

In the early 1980s, three years following the death of Josip Broz Tito, a theater play titled *Golubnjača* (Pigeon Cave) – in which children at play discover a deep pit where Ustashas used to throw murdered Croatian Serbs during World War II, and many years later they find out that those were their ancestors – was banned after the opening performance, first by the Provincial Committee of the League of Communists of Vojvodina and then in the other republics as well. One should not try to find the reasons for the ban in the script (which is far from a masterpiece), the dramatic composition or direction, or the political views of the author, but in the then relationship between the ideological shifts between the republican and provincial branches of the League of Communists (the majority of which, but not all of them, ideologically became more rigid in the early 1980s) and the newly created pan-Yugoslav Committee for the Protection of the Freedom of Speech. The members of this forum in Serbia and Slovenia often provided a safe place and work opportunities for their colleagues from other republics where their books or movies had been banned. *Golubnjača* became a turning point for the way in which the republican officials of the League of Communists were able to instrumentalize the beliefs of democracy-oriented intellectuals. By protecting the director's and actors' right to perform the play, the intellectuals were for the first time faced not only with a completely new definition of a proscribed work (it was no longer the generally-defined "action that undermines brotherhood and unity, aimed against anti-fascist national liberation heritage"), but also with an open conflict between republican elites on one side, some of which (those from Vojvodina) thought that this was a work by a Serb nationalist, and the Association of Writers of Serbia on the other, which thought that the performance of the play marked the democratization of the public arena in Serbia and SFRY, and that the Ustasha crimes (which, allegedly, used to be a taboo) were finally called by their real name – a genocide against Serbs, rather than the crimes of a pro-Nazi collaborationist regime. The most significant moment was when *Golubnjača* started existing off the stage, over the whole decade, and started being used in the discourse of the literary establishment in Serbia as a symbol of the communist regime's intolerance towards the truth about World War II, in which – as intellectuals were allegedly not allowed to say before the 1980s – the Serbs were the biggest victims only because of their ethnicity. The fact that the play talked about pits also served as a link with a whole new growing compendium of the discourse of writers, linguists and historians. The renowned poet Matija Bećković (never persecuted by the communist regime) is known for his metaphor that pits are the only ethnically clean Serbian settlements. On the other hand, it is important to say that the

Serbian literary and humanist elite launched the process of public glorification of *Golubnjača* only after Slobodan Milošević's faction took power over the Serbian League of Communists in 1987, when books about the centuries-long threat of the neighboring nations to the survival of Serbs began to be expressly written and printed in large numbers.

At that time, the Serbian Orthodox Church also carried out commemorations, since the beginning of the 1980s and particularly in 1990-1991, at the graves from World War II in Jasenovac and in Herzegovina. Between 1987 and 1989, the Church carried the remains of Prince (or Tsar) Lazar, a feudal lord who led the Serbian Army in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, throughout all Serb-populated areas of the SFRY, to finally bury them in Kosovo Polje on the 600th Anniversary of the battle. In 1991, the remains of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, a well-known anti-communist and anti-Catholic, were also moved to Serbia. Among the Serbs, a great myth was created about the people as a collective victim. After the fall of Milošević's regime in Serbia in 2000, Vojislav Koštunica, the newly elected president of rump Yugoslavia, participated in the ceremony for the arrival and burial of the remains of writer Jovan Dučić, since the return of his remains had been forbidden for a long time as a result of his support for Draža Mihailović.

As Slobodan Milošević's faction rose to power between 1987 and 1989, Milošević's visits to Kosovo Polje indicated the final transformation of the meaning surrounding the medieval battle and its casualties. The dead soldiers of Prince Lazar, the blood and the Kosovo land soaked in it, and the traitor Lord Vuk Branković, come to life in the public discourse as analogous "explanations" of alleged historical continuities in the following ways: Kosovo as the center Serbian medieval state is now in the autonomous province where key positions are occupied by Albanians, and the Serbs are moving out of Kosovo (leaving their dead behind); the fate of the Serbs in Kosovo is the same as the fate of those in other parts of the SFRY (Croatia) where they are not allowed to talk about those who are responsible for the death of their ancestors in World War II (those responsible are no longer called Ustashas and traitors but Croats – German servants). Since the end of the 1980s, in certain sections of the newspaper with the largest circulation in the SFRY, the Belgrade based *Politika* ('Reactions – allegedly, the section with the readers' letters), approximately 50% of the printed space is filled with the fears of "ordinary people" that in the unpredictable future of the SFRY, following the fall of the Berlin Wall, one can clearly see the signs of history repeating itself and the creation of new "pits for Serbs" that are prepared by separatist nations: Albanians (who are still not referred to as S.....), Slovenians (whose anti-Serb

role is new but “determined” through their link with the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and Croats.

Some time later in Croatia – which under Tuđman tried to establish continuity with the old varieties of Croatian nationalism and even with the NDH – one could hear the first public requests to mark the crime at Bleiburg in 1945 as the suffering of the Croatian people, and not primarily of Ustasha collaborators. However, the more comprehensive truth is that these soldiers and people killed or captured at the Bleiburg field in May 1945 by communist Partizan forces were mostly members of the NDH Army and some Croatian civilians afraid of the communists, but among masses of the retreating soldiers and refugees there were also Slovenian pro-Nazi collaborators, Serbian Chetniks and even some other nationalities from foreign countries that ended up on the losing side and feared revenge. That year, in 1945, the British refused to take them and requested that they all surrender to the Partisans with the promise that the Partisans would respect international laws and Geneva conventions on prisoners of war, which they did not do, but instead carried out mass executions or marched the prisoners to concentration camps. The surviving prisoners of war were forced to march to prisons in Yugoslavia on foot and many died on their way due to hunger and exhaustion. A number of those who survived these marches were later released and some received long prison sentences. Nowadays, despite the fact that mostly Croats, and a number of Germans, but also Serbs and other nationalities (e.g. Ukrainians, Tatars etc.), were killed near Bleiburg, it is only the Croatian nationalists who see national interest in marking the deaths of those who were killed there or died on their way back to the country, considering all of them innocent victims of communism and creating a myth of their martyrdom.

After the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in 1995, the political leaders of Bosnian Serbs in the parts of Sarajevo they controlled during the war announced through public and private channels that if the Serbs wanted to avoid the violence coming from the “Mujahedeen” Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, they should move to the territory of the Republic of Srpska. The cameras of numerous world TV stations recorded truly exotic scenes: dozens of Serbian families carrying along on their cars and tractors the coffins with the bones of their family members that had just been dug out at cemeteries. It seemed like such a “natural” act for the peoples of the Balkans who could not peacefully coexist even in death! The gravity of these scenes managed to suppress even the fact that the Orthodox Serbs who lived and died in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been resting near Catholic and Muslim cemeteries for centuries, as well as at communal secular cemeteries after 1945.

Since 1995, the Commission for Missing Persons of the Republic of Croatia, which operated separately from the Bosnia and Herzegovina Commission of the federation, has been involved in the exhumation and identification of graves and bodies of many Serbs who were killed in the territory of the federation during the war, as part of its search for the two thousand Serbs who went missing after 1992 and for the cause of their deaths. The Commission has the right to exhume the graves of all people whose families were not present when they were buried. However, some families informed the public that the graves had been dug out without their knowledge and that the bodies which had been buried there were not the people reported missing.

After the fall of Milošević's regime in 2000, Vojislav Koštunica, the newly-elected president of the rump Yugoslavia, went on his first visit abroad – to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The purpose of the trip was his participation in the ceremony to mark the arrival and the burial of the remains of Jovan Dučić, a Serb from Bosnia and Herzegovina, who was born in Trebinje. In the socialist Yugoslavia, Dučić was known (from required school reading material) for his sensual love poetry, but the return of his remains had been forbidden for a long time due to his support for Draža Mihailović who led the JNA in the Fatherland, known among the nations of the former Yugoslavia as Chetniks.³ During his life in the USA (where he died), Jovan Dučić wrote numerous nationalist anti-Croat and anti-Muslim texts. The return of Dučić (freed from the burden of being judged for nationalism of the socialist period) to his homeland, now in the territory of the Republic of Srpska, was dubbed by the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the “Dučić affair”: Koštunica was criticized in the media for his visit to the Republic of Srpska because he did not go to Sarajevo first, and also because the purpose of his first postwar visit

³ Draža Mihailović was a colonel in the Army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After the break-up of the Kingdom in 1941, he started creating a resistance movement against the occupying force. The objective was to reestablish the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. As the Royal government portrayed Mihailović to the western public as a war hero fighting only against the Germans, and not against the Partisans, a movie about him was made in the USA in 1942. However, this image soon proved to be false. The allies abandoned him and turned to the Partisans. Mihailović saw the end of the war in Serbia. In 1946, the Yugoslav authorities arrested him and sentenced him to death by execution. The core of his movement was in Serbia. Some of his detachments were active in Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia. Despite the fact that his soldiers also included members of other nationalities, Chetniks committed war crimes against Croats, Muslims, but also Serbs who supported the Partisans in the NDH controlled regions.

to Bosnia and Herzegovina was the burial of a poet and a diplomat who had extreme nationalist views.

The “Dučić Affair” is important to us because of the new, post-Milošević phase of the treatment of “our” (co-ethnic) graves and deceased. While in the late 1980s the remains of Prince Lazar were carried throughout the entire SFRY to mark the rebirth of the Kosovo myth (organized by the Serbian Orthodox Church and to the initial ambivalence of the communist authorities), the remains of Jovan Dučić traveled from the USA to Trebinje with only one stop on the way – in Montenegro. The representatives of Milošević’s Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) were visibly absent from the burial ceremony, although it was the SPS, together with other nationalist parties, that planned the entire process of the transfer and burial as early as the late 1990s. In the meantime, the ruling party was defeated and excluded from the ruling coalition in Serbia and therefore Dučić “returned to a society” of different, “democratic” nationalists. Those attending the ceremony were the leaders of the Republic of Srpska, Vojislav Koštunica with his entourage, and the representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The trajectory of the remains, as well as the attendees at the ceremony, reflected the new demarcation line and the geopolitical reality of Serbia and its Bosnian “offspring”. It sheds light on the considerable elasticity of the nationalists’ use of events and actions, where it is possible for the plans for the transfer of Jovan Dučić’s remains to be initially made by the heirs of the socialist regime, then the creators of new ethno-state maps in the SFRY and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and ultimately to be finalized by their previous opponents or those who represent themselves as such.

In the late 1990s, in the town of Jajce in Bosnia and Herzegovina, two ceremonies took place on the occasion of the return of the remains of Stjepan Tomašević, the last Bosnian king from the 15th century. One was organized by the HDZ, President Franjo Tuđman’s party, and the other by the local community of the Franciscan brethren, whose friary was where the remains were kept before the war started and before they were taken to Split. The local Franciscans refused to participate in the ceremony organized by the HDZ.

Dubravko Lovrenović, a historian originating from Jajce, who was involved in the Franciscan gathering, describes his experience of the event in the following way:

It is true that it is not the Croatian (national) flag that is fluttering on the Jajce citadel, but the historical flag of the Croatian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina; but it is equally true that for me, a man born in Jajce, this flag does not ease the feeling of resounding emptiness when I walk through this

Pompeii of Bosnia as a foreigner with a surplus of history and a shortage of life.⁴

Aside from the fact that they included ethnic persecution, genocide, burial, exhumation and reburial of the dead in “their” lands, the wars of the 1990s were also acute interventions for a forceful “confirmation” of an allegedly clear, obligatory and “clean” ethnic (as well as institutionalized/religious) affiliation of the victims and enemies. The purity of the common “quality” of those who die (“the remainder of the slaughtered nation”, as Matija Bećković cried out to poetically foreshadow the declaration of war) becomes the cause of their death. The purity of the joined deceased confirms, but also simplifies, the “explanation” (in our narrative – the myth) regarding the non-material and non-current nature of social conflicts and organized violence.

⁴ Dubravko Lovrenović, “U susret boljoj prošlosti”, *B-H Dani*, Issue No. 124 (15 October 1999).

MITJA VELIKONJA (SLOVENIA)

NOSTALGIC/PATRIOTIC MYTHOLOGY AFTER YUGOSLAVIA

This chapter is based primarily on the research regarding the phenomena of “Yugonostalgia” and “Titostalgia”.¹ Unlike other political mythologies in the post-Yugoslav countries, the one that appears in Yugonostalgia is devoid of state or institutional support. Intrinsicly, it is polycentric, polymorphic, and appears among various groups, with different ambitions and potentials. Let us deal with them one by one. First, it lacks a center of any sort; like an amoebae, it often appears where it is not expected and less often where it should logically exist. Secondly, Yugonostalgic stories, sentiments and the production appear and manifest in a full spectrum of various forms – they do not have a preferred shape or medium. Thirdly, Yugonostalgia appears among extremely different groups and none of them have a monopoly on it. It can also be found among the young, post-Yugoslavia generations, among the diaspora, and even among the right-wingers.² And finally, the political mythology – Yugonostalgia has a number of various potentials and groups that emerge around it and have different ambitions with it. It can be completely introverted, sentimental, and turned towards itself; it can become an excellent market niche (“nostalgic industry”) or an aesthetic inspiration; it can also have utopian dimensions and serve to certain emancipatory policies; in other words, from total escapism and passivity to a new engagement and activity.

The average question would therefore be what the elements and the actual impact are of the political mythology of the socialist Yugoslavia as something that no longer exists, that is to say, something that is viewed with nostalgia. It is less relevant here how “Yugoslavia” as a mythological creation used to function in the past, when it existed both as a political

¹ Mitja Velikonja, *Titostalgija*, translated from Slovenian by Branka Dimitrijević (2010).

² One of the most prominent Titostalgics in Slovenia is an extreme nationalist, Z. Jelinčič. This is not unprecedented, as the biggest nostalgics for the powerful Soviet Union in today’s Russia, aside from neo-communists and national-Bolsheviks, are also some other right-wingers.

reality and a state. This text likewise disregards the new antagonistic political mythologies, those that are nationalistic, religious/integristic, parliamentary, neo-liberal or “Europeanization”, which operate in the institutional framework of the new states and supranational organizations. This article’s objective is to analyze how “Yugoslavia” is still alive now, after its breakup in 1991, as it exists in the sentiments and mentality patterns at various levels of culture, production and activity in post-Yugoslav republics. The mythological creations that can be found in Yugonostalgia will be diachronically divided into a temporal structure that consists of three parts.

BETTER PAST

The first would definitely be the Partisan resistance. Just like any other mythology, Yugoslav mythology – both from the ‘former times’ and current nostalgia mythology – has its initial, original myth, *Urmythos*, a distinct time of conception of the source society, and rituals that go back to that primal time. This is, of course, the Partisan resistance, National Liberation War (NOR), from 1941 to 1945. This is why a large majority of the nostalgic production is related to this “heroic” era; the Partisan motifs and symbols prevail in it (for example, a picture of Tito from that time appears on T-shirts). As a rule, the participants in nostalgic celebrations wear the insignia, the hand-bells, and they even administer uniforms of that time. In Slovenia, for example, the typical three-pointed Partisan caps, the so-called “*triglavke*”, are being manufactured again.

This is followed by the mythology of the leader of the Yugoslav revolution and the state, Tito. My research has shown that most of Yugonostalgia is actually “Titonostalgia”,³ i.e. nostalgia for the “good”, “brave”, “just” and “visionary” leader Tito. His myth of the leader transformed over time from ‘Alexander’s myth’ (courageous warrior) during the war and ‘Moses’ myth’ (preacher) to ‘Solon’s myth’ (lawmaker) from the beginning of ‘his’ Yugoslavia.⁴ Tito exists as a “trickster” character from the classical mythologies, a hero who outsmarts each and every opponent, who are all more powerful than him. According to Lévi-Strauss, the trickster’s “ambiguous and equivocal character” arises from the fact that the “mythical thought always progresses from the awareness

³ Mitja Velikonja, *Titostalgia – A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz* (2008) (Serbian translation, 2010).

⁴ R. Girardet, *Politički mitovi i mitologije* (2000), pp. 84-90.

of oppositions toward their resolution”.⁵ It is with almost exactly the same words that one of my interlocutors during my last research field trip in Bosnia described him, saying that he was, of course in a positive way, “a world class thief, who knew how to take advantage of opportunities and cheat on both sides”. “Tito” bars or restaurants in almost all post-Yugoslav states, merchandise bearing his name or picture (from coffee, mineral water, wine, liqueur to T-shirts, badges, desk busts, tobacco, key rings and lighters), his presence in the media, popular culture and advertizing, as well as mass celebrations and commemorations in his honor, testify that his persona is still regarded as positive despite strong counter-tendencies. It is literally like the slogan from that time says: “After Tito – Tito”.

The third is the mythology of exclusiveness. “We were something rather special”, is what I heard and read many times during my research field trip. In most of those examples, this exclusiveness is seen as positive and in some cases as something specific in itself, and not necessarily in a good way. Nice things normally prevail, but this eccentric sentiment is also attached to certain bizarre elements of popular culture and everyday life that marked the decades of Yugoslavia. This, for example, is evident in the “odes” to the legendary cars Fićo or Yugo, which are sent by e-mail and make reference to their frequent mechanical failures, impracticality and the like. The same is true of another such e-mail titled “Seven Wonders of Socialism” which lists all the things that were not functional in those days but in spite of which the system still worked. Moreover, it was often repeated in interviews and conversations that “everybody knew about us then”, that the “red passport” was respected and one could travel with it where others were not allowed to, or that there was “respect for Tito and Yugoslavia” which Yugoslavs encountered worldwide, wherever they went. In other words, this was something special; literally “non-aligned”.⁶

This is followed by the mythology of prosperity and superiority. Yugoslavia and life in Yugoslavia were not only regarded as being something specific and different from everything else but also as being better than “both the East and the West”. Anything that was “ours” was always the best – the athletes, the political system, the natural treasures, the food, the standard of living, etc. “Those were the days!”, reads an inscription in the visitors’ book in Dedinje. Similar remarks can also be

⁵ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturalna antropologija*, 2nd ed., translated by Anđelko Habazin; afterword by Ivan Kuvačić (1989), pp. 221-223.

⁶ The “neither ... nor” position (balancing between two oppositions, to ultimately reject them both) was for Barthes one of the most typical mythological figures (Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Vintage (1993), p. 153).

found in popular culture and literature. To sum it up by using a frequently used expression that can also be heard in other parts of post-socialist Eastern Europe – “we had it all”.⁷

DIRE PRESENT

The first mythological narrative in Yugonostalgia to talk about the present is the mythology of the paradise lost. While the thought that “a better future awaits us” was ideologically generated during the time of Yugoslavia, many people today resignedly conclude that “the better future is already in their past”. It was not just “the golden ages” that were lost but also hopes. It is successfully summed up in a rhymed entry by a visitor from Banja Luka in the visitors’ book at the Museum of the 2nd Session of Anti-Fascist Council of the People’s Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) in Jajce: “During your time / Life was more than fine / But the misery of today / Eats honest people away / We love you and will always remember you with fondness”. It is also somewhat evident in the results of the Slovenian public opinion poll: respondents described their life in Yugoslavia mostly as “good” or “very good”.⁸ In 2009, the respondents answered that the terms “freedom”, “prosperity” and “righteousness”, in their view, better described a socialist than a capitalist society.⁹ A research among the student population showed that as much as 27 percent of Slovenian students would like to live in the SFRY again, while on the scale between 1 (negative extreme) and 5 (positive extreme), Yugoslavia received the highest score in Bosnia (3,61) and the lowest in Kosovo (1,48).¹⁰

The second narrative is the persona of the enemy, which, as a rule, is one of the principal myths in every political mythology. Yugonostalgic people lay the blame for the doom of the shared country on old enemies (“the old fascist have raised their heads again”), but also some new ones who could be divided into three groups. The first is made up of political opponents (“nationalists”, “neo-fascists”, “religious extremists”, “people financed from abroad”); the second includes opportunists, i.e. the “traitors”, converts from among the ranks of the former communists who suddenly

⁷ M. Bobić Mojsilović, *Dnevnik srbske gospodinje* (2009), p. 20.

⁸ N. Toš (ed.), *Vrednote v prehodu*, Vols. 2 and 3 – SJM 1990-1999 (1999), pp. 565, 872 and SJM 1999-2004 (2004), p. 474.

⁹ N. Toš (ed.), *Vrednote v prehodu*, Vol. 4 – SJM 2004-2009 (2009) p. 513.

¹⁰ <http://24ur.com/novice/slovenija/27-odstotkov-bi-jih-znova-zivelo-v-jugoslaviji.html>, dostup 31.1.2010. Interestingly, three different local student newspapers about Yugonostalgia have been launched in Slovenia in less than a year.

became the greatest of patriots, the faithful (“battery-run believers”, as they have been humorously described to me); and the third included military profiteers and tycoons (that is, all those who gained wealth during the turbulent 1990s through wild privatization, denationalization, the black market, the spoils of war and legalized robbery of what used to be shared property). It is in them that most nostalgics see the greatest opponents to reconciliation, because it would jeopardize their position. Their success is ascribed to too much tolerance within the SFRY which they all exploited (and they are grateful to Tito because he “had the gang under control”, which is stated in an ironic arrest warrant for him, according to which he is “responsible” for anti-fascism, social justice, progress, brotherhood and unity and other similar “crimes”).

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

An indispensable, third part of the Yugonostalgic narrative is also the uncertain future where anything can happen. It is dominated by two complementary extremes: pessimistic, fatalistic and lamenting on one side, and the optimistic, utopist and active on the other. But first, let us say something about the fatalistic mythologies: On too many occasions I have heard or read statements like “we are doomed”, “look at us now”, “it is all ruined” – i.e. not looking forward but literally being in a vegetative state. One can often draw that conclusion from the musealization of what has been lost – like, for example, on the “Virtual Museum of All Things Yugoslav” blog or on the webpage titled “SFRY”. In some of them, fatalism turns into irony, or even sarcasm, like in the various forms of the “Encyclopedia of the SFRY”.

Still, aside from the pessimistic thoughts and sentiments, Yugonostalgia also includes many optimistic and emancipatory thoughts and sentiments, and even activities. They can be classified as eschatological mythologies, which can roughly be divided into two groups. Some are just abstractly utopistic, which means that they involve contemplation and stories about a “better day to come” (in brief, it is a “things are bound to get better” rhetoric). This is, for example, the red trait of all “Yugoslavias” in the virtual world (for instance, the founders of Cyber Yugoslavia wish to gather 5 million people and request membership in the United Nations) as well as societies and organizations with similar names, such as *Naša Jugoslavija* (Our Yugoslavia) from Croatia or the commercial *Zavod Nostalgija* (Nostalgia Institute) from Ljubljana. The others are more program based, pragmatic and activist: the myth of the better past can serve as an ideological platform for concrete (sub)political engagement.

Myth is never just a story; according to Tudor, it is a “story told in order to promote some practical purpose”.¹¹ Therefore, Yugonostalgia often includes public calls for social change, either in the form of radical reforms (social security, social solidarity, eradication of injustices, the “construction of destroyed bridges of friendship”), a new revolution (a poster in Bosnia says “Revolution – The Only Solution”;¹² see also the webpage “*Slobodna Jugoslavija*” (“Free Yugoslavia”)) or even the restoration of Yugoslavia (for instance, a graffiti in the Istrian town of Labin says “Let’s create it again 1945-1990”). Regardless of whether it is about wishing for a more just society or a new Yugoslavia, Yugonostalgia can also serve as a starting point for concrete policies. As an official of one of the 42 Tito societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina had said, “Yugonostalgia carries in itself values that could gain recognition in the future”. One of the most active societies based in Tuzla published a very concrete program-based “Tuzla Declaration on Unity” in November 2009. There are also other societies, such as *Front Slobode* (Freedom Front) or *Liga antifašista jugoistočne Evrope* (League of Antifascists of Southeastern Europe), that have a nostalgic agenda and clear ambitions for fundamental social and political changes in their countries. What these two types of eschatological mythologies in Yugonostalgia – contemplation and action – have in common is their yearning for a better future based on the better past.¹³

Instead of a conclusion: judging by the trend of an increasing number of nostalgic phenomena in almost all parts of the former federation, their new forms, informal groups with as many as several thousand followers (some institutionalized¹⁴ and some created ad-hoc at various celebrations), the obsession of pop culture with “those times” (I am mentioning only the tours of old “Yugo” bands, while the word “Yugo” is a trade mark in its

¹¹ Henry Tudor, *Political Myth. The Political Uses of History, Tradition and Memory* (1972), p. 133.

¹² Together with the pictures of the “national hero”, Tito and the “golden lily”, a member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina presidency, Ž. Komšić – the caption below the first picture “what I started” continues below the second “you shall resume ...”.

¹³ In relation to that, one should recall Suzanne Citron (*Le mythe national – L’histoire de France en question. Les Editions ouvrières, Etudes et Documentation internationales* (1991), pp. 286-287), on how to distinguish between “existential” (cultural, identity-related) and “critical memory” (which unites ethics and critical historiography).

¹⁴ Societies of Josip Broz Tito in Bosnia and Herzegovina, associated into the Union of Associations have as many as 20 000 members!

own right¹⁵), the abundance of those names and symbols in advertizing, the organization of exhibitions about various aspects of culture and art from those times,¹⁶ constant retrospectives of Yugoslav movies, the interest for the objects from those times at flea markets and antique shops, the construction of new monuments in honor of that time¹⁷ and the restoration of the old ones¹⁸ – the right time is yet to come for Yugonostalgia. The disillusionment in Yugoslav lands with the grand promises of prosperity and triumph made by the West or by their own nationalist leaders, has created the conditions in which certain narratives from the past can be re-established either as they are, in their own right, or as a new political engagement.

The narratives of Yugonostalgia follow the “iron repertoire” of every political mythology (great start, myth of a hero, a foe, the golden age that has been lost, visions of the future ...). As opposed to the socialist decades, when this mythology was dominant, it now emerges as an alternative or as a counter-mythology to new dominant political mythologies. It adjusted to the current conditions – it is no longer about mechanical or mimetic transposition of the same stories to another context, nor is it about their unchanged position in society. Even though mythology always “economizes” with the notions of “eternity”, “primordiality” and “fatality”, it is essentially always variable, elastic, and adaptive to new conditions. On the one hand, it carries along the narrative continuity, and on the other, it appropriates the discontinuities, cuts, breakdowns, but also new elements. Therefore, the political mythology in Yugonostalgia is not the same as the one during the socialist Yugoslavia, neither in the sense of content, which gets adapted, modified, supplemented with novelties, etc., nor in the sense of position, as it is set in a completely changed mythological environment of post-Yugoslav societies.

¹⁵ There are also funny twists: until recently, the music from the time of Yugoslavia was only labeled as “former domestic” or “ex-Yu”; and the new music from those regions is now labeled in Slovenia as “nu-Yu” or even “new ex-Yu”!

¹⁶ Exhibitions of the art and design of that time are organized one after another. According to the information available to me, ten exhibitions (not including the permanent ones) just about Tito (his visits, private life, valuable gifts, celebrations, etc.) have been organized in the last couple of years. At least four museums related to the events from the Partisan times have recently been reinstated in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¹⁷ According to the information available to me, four new monuments to Tito have been erected since the 1990s.

¹⁸ A public opinion poll conducted by *Slobodna Dalmacija* showed that almost two thirds of the respondents supported the restoration of the monuments of NOB (National Liberation Struggle), and a solid third opposed (62% vs. 36%) (11.7.2007, p. 29).

In such unfavorable conditions, the mythological narratives of Yugonostalgia are by definition subversive, anti-systemic and emancipatory. Its mere existence is seen as an insult or threat to dominant political mythologies – even in the case of sentimental nostalgia. This is why, for example, hundreds of monuments and memorials from the Partisan struggle and the decades of Yugoslavia have been destroyed. And they are even more afraid of active nostalgia, the political mythology of which is directly antagonistic to all mythologies that are dominant today, as it warns about their drawbacks and delusions, and also offers alternatives to what exists at the moment. Allow me to explain each of these relationships individually: to nationalist mythologies it proves that it was possible to live together in the past, not without tension and conflict, but still better than today, as separate entities. To the religious integrists it shows that there is sense and social cohesion even without organized religion. To the advocates of parliamentarism it shows that it also seems alienated from the masses and that, under the cover of democracy, it protects the dominance of various small interest groups. To the apologists of the present as the “best time ever”, i.e. to the presentists with a total amnesia of the past, it shows that “the year 1991 is simply not year zero”.¹⁹ To neo-liberals, now facing recession, it shows that there might have existed of an efficient economic system which did not neglect the social aspect of development. The fifth – and at the same time liberating – potential of Yugonostalgia I see in the fact that it offers an alternative to the still not very popular new Europe.²⁰

To sum it up, all these mythical narratives assure that the better past could be an indication of a better future and that the most important part of every nostalgia is actually utopia, that is, the mythology of a better tomorrow.

¹⁹ According to the front man of the Yugonostalgic band “Sklonište pjeva” (*Delo*, SP, Lj., 28.6.2003, p. 21).

²⁰ “Yugoslavia – to us that was Europe, that was freedom!”, I was once told by a member of the Gorani minority in Kosovo.

VJEKOSLAV PERICA (CROATIA) AND
DARKO GAVRILOVIĆ (SERBIA)

**THE IMPACT OF THE HAGUE WAR CRIMES
TRIBUNAL ON NATIONALIST POLITICS,
MYTHMAKING AND TRANSITION**

From (and owing to) the international tribunals for war crimes in Nuremberg and Tokyo after World War II to the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and former Yugoslavia after the wars in the 1990s, the ideas of international justice and worldwide protection of human rights have made significant progress. National sovereignty is no longer a shield for the worst violators of human rights and perpetrators of crimes against humanity. For that matter, the ICTY has introduced an important historic precedent by bringing before an international criminal court and accusing of crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity a head of state while he was virtually still in office. To be sure, even though some most powerful states in our times still resist authorizing a permanent international criminal court of justice under the auspices of the United Nations (UN), it is hopefully only a matter of time when all UN members will undersign a charter founding and authorizing such a world court. The history-making role of the ICTY is undisputable; it is an invaluable and noble effort in service of civilization and humanity, and encouraging to all people who hope that what some scholars call a “global human rights revolution” will continue making progress as it has visibly done since World War II. However, a distinction needs to be made between this success of the ICTY perceived from a global vantage point and its specific impact on the most troubled European region of the ex-lands of former Yugoslavia. In other words, the ICTY has been a global success but regional controversy. Regarding this regional impact, the ICTY’s achievements have been relatively less successful and encouraging, pregnant with a certain number of mistakes and accompanied by unintended outcomes which did not always assist and serve the chief objective of justice for all, regional stability, democratization and Europeanization.

More specifically speaking about the ICTY from this general vantage point and regardless of some of its particular hotly disputed

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decisions and ambiguous impact of its trials on the stability and politics of the troubled region in its postwar period, the important role of this international institution as a confirmation of the historic progress of the ideas of human rights and international justice is undisputable, praiseworthy and encouraging. Consequently, one author of this new literature dealing with the Hague Tribunal points out at least that those studies also acknowledge that “judged by more realistic standards, international law is seen to play a modest yet important role in postwar transitions (and even in the most complicated cases such as for example, Bosnia and Herzegovina, not to mention the relatively most successful case of Croatia), the under-appreciated court has in fact made a substantial contribution to the transition to democracy”.¹ And last but not least, this ICTY’s experience remains an important and new contribution and supplement for the study and practice of international conflict management.

However, it is now in order to critically examine some specific problems, particularities and cases regarding the impact of the ICTY on the postwar situation in the region under consideration, as well as the influence of its trials and verdicts on local politics and, in particular, on nationalistic mythmaking. According to several most recent analyses, albeit general public interest in the role of the UN’s ICTY has somewhat subsided, scholarly interest has increased, and new ambitious publications appear dealing with what the Tribunal has hitherto done.² Some comparably most valuable studies in this opus of literature inspired by the wars of the 1990s ventured to compare the two current UN war crimes tribunals namely for Rwanda and former Yugoslavia while also emphasizing the issue of state cooperation with the tribunals rather than the work by tribunals per se.³ As most other studies about the ICTY are generally positive appraisals about the very idea of such courts and concrete tribunals’ practices and accomplishments, yet one reviewer of this literature on implementation of international justice via global courts in our times holds that most authors lack a more aggressive approach and critical spirit as well as information

¹ Lara J. Nettelfield, *Courting Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Hague Tribunal’s Impact in a Postwar State* (2010), p. 276.

² See for example, Rachel Kerr, *The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia: An Exercise in Law, Politics, and Diplomacy* (2004); Magali Bessone and Isabelle Delpla (eds.), *Peines de guerre. La justice pénale internationale et l’ex-Yugoslavie* (2010); Lara J. Nettelfield, *Courting Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Hague Tribunal’s Impact in a Postwar State* (2010).

³ Victor Peskin, *International Justice in Rwanda and the Balkans: Virtual Trials and the Struggle for State Cooperation* (2008).

about these tribunals' – especially the ICTY – mistakes.⁴ Some of these recent studies do not hesitate to voice criticism about some aspects of the ICTY's mission, such as, generally speaking, that much of the early rhetoric about the transformative potential of international criminal law helped foster unrealistic expectations that institutions like the ICTY could not meet.⁵ Often scholars and journalists blame the Tribunal for alleged mistakes outside its authority, such as arrests and extradition of suspects for war crimes and crimes of genocide. It is the states, including the regional governments and the leading states in Western Europe and the USA, that are principally responsible for this aspect of the Tribunal's overall endeavor.

Yet, at this point it is fair to note that the Tribunal per se does not bear responsibility for several perhaps most unfortunate developments. First of all, it is true that international justice has not been applied to the three principal political culprits, namely the local ethnic nationalist leaders, Milošević, Tuđman and Izetbegović, who created and managed the movements that dragged the peoples who lived in peace and the mutually beneficial common state for half a century into a fratricidal war and later presided over corrupt nationalistic regimes. The widely believed principal instigator of the conflict in the Balkans, Serbia's Slobodan Milošević, suddenly passed away in his Hague cell in 2006 amidst the trial for crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. Tuđman and Izetbegović, both ill men of advanced age, had died before the prosecution was prepared to bring them before the court because the states obliged to provide requested evidence and other relevant information for the court did not cooperate. Milošević's and Tuđman's closest aides in charge of the dirtiest jobs and gravest crimes of ethnic cleansing, political assassinations such as Željko Ražnatović (Arkan) (Serb paramilitary leader who was assassinated in a mafia showdown), Nikola Koljević (Bosnian Serb political leader who committed suicide) and Gojko Šušak (Croatian defense minister and presumably the worst Croat war criminal who died of cancer) all died before coming to The Hague to face justice. The only top political leaders of the ethnic parties involved in war sentenced by the ICTY are Momčilo Krajišnik (20 years) and Biljana Plavšić (11 years, released after 9). The two leaders of the Bosnian Serb republic created through ethnic cleansing were found guilty

⁴ See James Gow's review of Peskin's study on the Rwanda and Yugoslavia Tribunals in *Slavic Review*, Spring 2010, Vol. 69, No. 1, p. 232.

⁵ Lara J. Nettelfield, *Courting Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Hague Tribunal's Impact in a Postwar State* (2010), p. 277.

of crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, their imprisonment did not create a sense of victory of justice in the region particularly for Bosnian Muslims. Plavšić's case was particularly painful for the victims, all Bosnian Muslims, and human rights activists in the region. In prison she enjoyed a much higher living standard than 80% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina and when she came out she received hero welcomes and obtained privileges and a high reputation in the Serb Republic. This case is an insult to the victims but, unfortunately, is not the only such example.

In short: the ICTY was an unlucky court because without sentencing the chief political leaders and masterminds of genocide it failed to significantly encourage the faith in a better future and just international order. It also failed to contribute to myth busting and writing an objective and complete history of the Yugoslav conflict. The ICTY has produced only some fragments of this history, insufficient for grasping a truthful and clear picture and understanding of what really happened. Thereby, the ICTY's function of retributive justice did not provide much comfort to the victims' families, for example, in the case of the Vukovar crimes, Srebrenica massacre, etc., which they frequently demonstrate in public.

Furthermore, the Bosnian-Serb Army supreme military commander, General Mladić, who is, in addition to other crimes, also considered responsible for the single gravest genocidal war crime at Srebrenica, Bosnia, in 1995, has been at large for more than twenty years now, among other things, presumably also thanks to the protection of various governments. Similarly, the Bosnian-Serb principal political leader Radovan Karadžić, before his 2009 arrest and prosecution before the ICTY in The Hague, spent 15 years living in disguise in Serbia's capital Belgrade probably not merely thanks to the government of Serbia but also under the protection of some western governments.

Furthermore, Veljko Kadijević, the old-guard communist general and former supreme commander of the SFRY Army who ordered the use of the Army in the beginning of the war, specifically ordered the bombings of civilian targets in cities such as Vukovar and Dubrovnik and sided with Milošević, has not been prosecuted and the ICTY never explained to the public why. He lives in Russia and the ICTY never published an indictment against him although he is still alive. Likewise, former Serb Krajina top military and political leader Goran Hadžić is still at large.

However, although ICTY is not largely and directly responsible for the non-prosecution of those persons, the fact is that those men are among the principal culprits most to blame for the Yugoslav catastrophe. And they have not been sentenced by this Tribunal or any other court. It makes the

ICTY's credibility fragile and leaves a lasting bitterness and disappointment among millions of victims and all people who fight worldwide for human rights and international justice. And whatever the court has achieved, the fact is that justice did not triumph over the worst among the worst criminals (e.g. Milošević, Šušak, Mladić, Hadžić). In addition, it is very sad that the principal victim-state of this war, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina and its majority Muslim population, has not received sufficient support from the international community necessary for becoming a viable state, for rebuilding and prospering after the war. This fact saddens and often enrages not only millions of Bosnians but also hundreds of millions of Muslims worldwide, which is definitely not a good thing for the West. Actually, as noted earlier, the West would have done wisely (as a great political investment) if it had thoroughly rebuilt and modernized Bosnia and Herzegovina as the notable and truly exceptional example of a secular European predominantly Muslim society (at least it used to be such and in major urban areas such as Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica also showed tendencies to renew the old socialist-era *de facto* western lifestyle).

Let us now turn to several specific ICTY cases and their implications. The selected are not the most important but only some exemplary cases chosen randomly due to big media coverage and heated political debates. For example, the following:

- The Mirko Norac et al. case of 1993 war crime against Serb civilians at Medački džep near Gospić, Croatia, and,
- The case of Mrkšić, Šljivančanin et al. regarding the 1991 mass execution without trial of the two hundred wounded and sick Croat prisoners of war captured at the city hospital at Vukovar, Croatia.

The two cases concern the key founding postwar national myths, namely the Croatian official perspective on the 1991-1995 war versus the Serbian. The Croatian view calls it the Homeland War (*Domovinski rat*) presented as just self-defense of a sovereign western-oriented nation against foreign aggression from the East. The Croatian official state ideology teaches that the war was masterminded and directed from Serbia by Greater Serbian nationalists allied with remnants of the old guard Communist militarists. This contradicts the Serbian view of a “pre-emptive action” by Serb minorities in Croatia and Bosnia (in Bosnia's part called the Serb Republic, it is the “Patriotic War” myth) remembering genocide against them in World War II, which along with Albanian nationalism against the Serb minority in

Kosovo, caused a “spontaneous civil war” within the SFRY.⁶ According to the Serbian view, the war was caused in the first place by Croatia’s secession and the reasonable fear of Croatia’s Serb minority of the repetition of the World War II Croat genocide against Serbs in Croatia. The Croatian view is closer to the truth but does not admit to the role of Croatian nationalist extremism of the late 1980s interacting with Serb nationalism, thus jointly provoking war. The Serb perspective is not incorrect about the role of Croatian nationalism but remains silent concerning a ten-year-long upsurge of a massive Serb nationalist movement spreading from Serbia across the former Yugoslavia that precipitated the war and provoked nationalistic extremists from other groups.

Generally speaking, in respect to these two largest states that came out of the former Yugoslavia, namely Croatia and Serbia (whose mutual conflict basically destroyed the common state), although the Tribunal’s proceedings and verdicts would temporarily destabilize those countries and also unintentionally give a political cause for offensives of the far right in domestic politics, the Tribunal’s key success – looking at all completed cases – is in making it difficult for the ethnic nationalist regimes to consolidate ideologically, feel secure and exercise power by means of a mass indoctrination of the people based on ethnic hatred and myth. In other words, the Tribunal prevented them from writing mutually-exclusive conflicting histories about the same issues and from continuing memory battles in autarkic ideological states isolated from the international community. Namely, the ICTY not only encouraged democratic opposition, human rights activism and civil societies in the two countries but also to some extent frustrated attempts of ethnic nationalists’ politics to keep the people in a state of mobilization for a “perpetual war” while mentally confined within the two conflicting “regimes of truth”, imposed by two governments that interpret the common history according to the ruling elites’ present-day interest and fantasies about the past and sustain the new national founding myths that legitimize their rule.

Croatia’s long-ruling right-wing nationalist regime (HDZ) found itself in a relatively more difficult position *vis-à-vis* cooperation with the ICTY than Serbia. Croatia wants to join the EU and therefore cooperates with the ICTY. However, in Serbia, which builds a special relationship with Russia and where traditional Serbian anti-westernism is a component of the prevalent nationalist ideology, cooperation with the ICTY is considered unpatriotic. Little has changed for that matter since the fall of Milošević:

⁶ See Nebojša Popov (ed.), *The Road to War in Serbia: Trauma and Catharsis* (2000).

Serbia-ICTY have remained distrustful. According to media speculations, The Hague's most wanted suspect, General Mladić, is in Serbia. Croatia imagined by the Croats as belonging "naturally" to the EU was not only about the national strategy leading to EU admission. It is also part of the nationalist mythology according to which Croatia must "return" to the West where it culturally belongs as a Roman Catholic country and former Habsburg domain. However, pressures from the West mounted on both countries insofar as both needed to break out of international isolation and the prosecution of war crimes according to international law was one of the preconditions that the international community demands from former Yugoslav countries in order to advance their international status and ambitions.⁷ This accelerated the already mounting frustration in Croatia, especially at the end of the authoritarian nationalist Tuđman regime in 1999. A public opinion poll published in a national newspaper (*Jutarnji list*, 28 August 1999) demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of the population primarily held the government and the ruling party responsible for the country's isolation and particularly bitter relations with the ICTY caused by Zagreb's refusal to send to The Hague war crimes suspects such as, notably, the generals Ante Gotovina and Mirko Norac. In the beginning of 2000, the opposition bloc of the six parties of the left and left-centrist orientation won the parliamentary and then also the presidential elections. From then on, it was clear that the new top officials of Croatia would follow a policy line different from that of the HDZ under Tuđman's regime (1990-1999), as far as war crimes were concerned. The new president Stipe Mesić was one of the strongest supporters of unconditional cooperation with the ICTY. Almost immediately after the new government and the president took office, the HDZ-controlled media started to publish comments describing the new policies of cooperation with the ICTY as a humiliation of the Croatian nation (*Slobodna Dalmacija*, 22 February 2000). For the supporters of this point of view, especially for several war veterans' organizations, the equation was very simple: any move towards the investigation of war crimes allegedly committed by the Croat forces was an open insult to the integrity of the *Domovinski rat*, which was considered of sacred national value and a symbol of sovereignty. A massive right-wing movement came into motion ignited by the HDZ party, some Catholic Church circles and a group of militant

⁷ See Mieczysław P. Boduszyński and Victor Peskin, "International Justice and Domestic Politics: Post-Tuđman Croatia and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 55, No. 7 (2003), pp. 1117-1142.

generals/war veterans. President Mesić succeeded in maintaining order and later sent the generals into retirement. Afterward, General Gotovina was arrested abroad and extradited to The Hague (the trial is still in process).

Mesić had earlier sent into early retirement the accused General Mirko Norac. The Hague Tribunal indicted him for the 1993 summary executions of Serb civilians near the town of Gospić (this pre-war waiter in an obscure provincial town personally shot in the head an elderly woman and ordered the shooting of other Serb villagers captured from the area from which Serb rebels earlier shelled Gospić). Under the 2000-2003 left-wing collation administration, the Croatian political right mobilized in defense of Norac. The accused war criminal was elected to a honorable title of the *vojvoda* (duke) of a traditional game Alka at the historic city of Sinj in Dalmatia. The movement grew so strong that the Zagreb government tried to appease opposition by asking the ICTY to return Norac for a trial in Croatia. The ICTY agreed and Norac was sentenced in Zagreb to 12 years in prison. Protests followed, and the nationalist HDZ party was returned to power, but under pro-EU leader Ivo Sanader. However, the accused Norac went to prison and Croatia has significantly improved its record of cooperation with the ICTY. To be sure, the political right was furious when in 2004 the ICTY sentenced the Bosnian-Croat general, Tihomir Blaškić, to 45 years in prison for war crimes against Muslims in Bosnia. Yet, due to the subsequent discovery of the Bosnian Army's relevant confidential documents, the ICTY reduced Blaškić's sentence to 7 years and he was eventually released in 2006. The Croatian right was somewhat appeased, but critics of the ICTY in the region (and worldwide) exploited this to argue that the ICTY is both an incompetent and "political" court (the argument voiced by the accused Slobodan Milošević, as well as, when finally captured, his Bosnian accomplice, Radovan Karadžić).

The Croatian liberal and left-wing opposition was especially hurt (and right-wing nationalists unintentionally encouraged and acquired resources for political agitation) by the 2007 ICTY ruling in the case regarding the war crimes committed by the Serb military commanders, Mrkšić and Šljivančanin, in 1991, following the battle of Vukovar. The Vukovar battle is one of the major battles of the 1991-1995 war. In addition, the city of Vukovar has since become a martyr-city in new Croatian patriotic mythology because of its two-month-long siege by the JNA and Serb paramilitaries that razed it to the ground, its heroic defense by outnumbered defenders and a massive refugee tragedy after the fall of the city. On 20 November 1991, after the city fell and the refugee tragedy was shown on TV, the JNA and Serb paramilitaries captured between 200-300 wounded Croat defenders from the city hospital, transferred

them to the city's suburb called Ovačara, and tortured and executed them without trial. Not only combatants, but civilians, journalists and others were among the victims of this crime. In 1995, the ICTY released an indictment for the war crimes at Ovačara against the supreme commanding general, Mrkšić, and the head of military intelligence, major Šljivančanin (both were officers of the Yugoslav Army, paid by the government in Belgrade). The first directed the siege and destruction of the city and approved the executions and expulsion of the Croat refugees, whereas the other led the summary investigation of the captives, decided which among them were to be executed, and then supervised the execution and hiding of the mass graves. In 2003, Šljivančanin was arrested in Belgrade where he lived freely eight years after the indictment, and extradited to The Hague. According to the ICTY verdict of 27 September 2007, Mrkšić received a 20-year prison sentence, Šljivančanin received a 5-year sentence, and the third suspect by the name of Radić was released due to a lack of evidence. The 5-year sentence, in particular for one of the persons directly responsible for organizing and commanding the mass execution, caused media uproar and victims' families protests in Croatia. Anti-EU sentiments grew and both Croatian left- and right-wing parties united in condemnation of the ICTY. Regarding the impact on national myths, the ICTY verdict challenged the Croatian view of the 1991-1995 war as purely defensive and added credibility to the Serbian nationalistic theory of a chaotic civil war for which all groups involved are evenly guilty, as if there was no ten-year-long unfolding of the Serbian nationalistic movement leading to the war recognized by most scholars as the prime mover of the crisis with such catastrophic outcome.⁸

Further proceedings at the ICTY, considering appeal and including additional evidence, eventually resulted in overruling the 2007 verdict so that in May 2009 the accused Šljivančanin received a new sentence to 17 years in prison. The appealing judge, according to a Croatian leading daily newspaper, called the earlier verdict "unreasonable" and "evidently erroneous".⁹ However, this verdict came following the 2008 arrest of Radovan Karadžić, the Bosnian Serb leader and principal mastermind of the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This seemed as some kind of "appeasement" for Croatia which, in a final analysis, again encouraged the

⁸ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War*, 2nd ed. (1996).

⁹ *Jutarnji list*, 5 May 2009, <http://www.jutarnji.hr/sljivancaninu-kazna-povecana-na-17-godina/204386/>.

right-wing critics of the ICTY (in Serbia and Croatia alike) who viewed the Tribunal as a “political court”. Thus, Miroslav Tuđman, the son of the late president, as a presidential candidate at the 2009 elections in Croatia, said in a speech that the Hague Tribunal, according to all sentences hitherto passed “punishes defenders and awards aggressors while confusing and obscuring historical truth”.¹⁰ Yet, the electoral results, with Tuđman’s poor performance and triumph of a left-wing candidate who campaigned for further cooperation with the ICTY, have shown that Croatian democracy has advanced and EU-orientation prevailed despite all of the ICTY’s mistakes. Meanwhile, in order to revitalize the official patriotic perspective on the Homeland War, the Croatian Parliament debated the possible inauguration of a national order of heroes-defenders of the homeland among war veterans that have not been indicted by the ICTY but sacrificed their lives on the battlefield, such as, notably, the commander of the defense of Vukovar, Colonel Blago Zadro.¹¹

In Serbia, relatively less cooperative with the West than Croatia, anti-westernism is still vibrant. The recent canonization of anti-western zealot Justin by the Serbian Orthodox Church is another impetus to conservative nationalists and popular response to the pro-western rhetoric of the Tadić presidency. The popular negative view regarding the ICTY prevails as ever in all social strata except for small human rights advocate groups and NGOs in major urban centers. For example, the 2009 increase of the sentence to Šljivančanin caused an eruption of protests in various segments of the political spectrum, and a popular daily newspaper entitled it “The New Rape of Serbia by The Hague”.¹² Likewise, street rallies often take place across Serbia in support of the accused Hague prisoners on trial, namely, Karadžić and the notorious Šešelj who was head of the wartime Serb paramilitaries and is still the president of the influential Radical Party. All this mentioned, coupled with the fact that General Mladić has not yet been captured (although the ICTY is not in charge of it, but the states involved), maintains the ICTY’s credibility in the region fragile. Serbia’s debt to the ICTY is still relatively the largest. After all, it was the inaccessible Mladić who, among other crimes he had committed, ordered the most single gravest crime in the wars of the 1990s – the massacre at Srebrenica, about which the National Assembly of Serbia has recently released a declaration condemning the crime but

¹⁰ At 21 December 2009, <http://predsjednicki-izbori.com/tag/haaski-sud/>.

¹¹ Dnevnik.hr, <http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/tko-su-heroji-domovinskog-rata-2.html>.

¹² “Reakcije povodom presude Žalbenog veća MKS Veselinu Šljivančaninu”, 11 May 2009, <http://www.pescanik.net/content/view/3110/103/>.

without mentioning the word genocide and the fact that Mladić was on the payroll of the Serbian government. All things considered, the earlier thesis stated in this text – that the ICTY willy-nilly helps the consolidation of the Serbian nationalist myths – holds water. Thereby, the ICTY has hitherto little contributed to the pending task of writing an impartial and accurate history of the period under consideration.

We shall analyze two cases that are most significant for the research on the origins of myths: the trials of Milošević and Šešelj. These two trials were chosen for the highly theatrical atmosphere in the courtroom, caused by the fact that these two charismatic leaders chose to represent themselves. Particularly significant were the constant “discussions” about the past between the individual and social structure. The constant retelling of past events and attempts to offer an alternative “version” create the basis for the creation of the myth about the origin of a national society. The ultimate goal of the leader in offering this “new truth” is to prove that he was unjustly accused but is prepared, as a martyr par excellence, to carry the burden of the entire nation on his shoulders. In keeping with that, when the followers accept the vision and values of the leader, the nation itself becomes the object of the indictment and stands on its own against “the West”. The result of this process is the subsequently-developed myth about the chosen people.

Every leader has their own personal identity – socially developed over time, developed at a specific time and in a specific place. When former Serbian President Slobodan Milošević became certain that he would be transferred to the detention unit in Scheveningen, he began working on “self-victimization” in order to assume the “situated identity” of a martyr. The broadcast of Milošević’s arrest on 1 April 2001 did not have any practical value; its value, instead, was symbolic, due to the attempt to “cleanse” the difficult past of an entire society. Milošević presented himself as a chosen martyr of a chosen people – a martyr whose concern was not to prove his innocence but to announce a general “*j’accuse*” against the international community. Milošević’s defense was based on the justification of his harmful policy as an expression of “the will of the people” and “state interests”.

Vojislav Šešelj carefully prepared his “heroic departure” to the ICTY. He did not opt for presenting himself as a martyr but as a Serbian knight, prepared to fight for “the honorable cross and the golden freedom”. Šešelj could have avoided the ICTY indictment had he chosen to shift the blame on the State Security Agency, Milošević, Martić and Karadžić, yet he remained stuck in his role of nationalistic hero. However, he also changed his behavior when the ICTY Trial Chamber tried to assign defense attorneys

to his case. The new situated identity, “assumed” with the goal of gaining the right to self-representation, was very similar to Milošević’s.

The image of martyr is presented on two different levels: the physical and the mental. The mental is found in the situated identity of the leader, while the physical aspect can be observed through Milošević’s refusal to undergo a medical examination by a doctor he himself had not chosen, as well as through his death that was caused, among other things, by the irregular use of prescribed medication but was later on interpreted as an international conspiracy resulting in the murder of the former President of Serbia and Federal Republic Yugoslavia (FRY). On the other hand, Vojislav Šešelj went on a hunger strike for nearly two months because of the judges’ decision to appoint a defense attorney to his case. The worn-out appearance of the Serbian Radical Party leader was made even more dramatic when he read out his will, in which he called on the Serbian people not to give up on their dream about Greater Serbia.

Several years before being arrested, the Serbian Radical Party leader had telephone conversations with the ICTY in front of journalists, during which he expressed his “wish” to be indicted and sent to “The Hague casemate”, to be among Serbian heroes.

Vojislav Šešelj remained within the framework of nationalistic Serbian ideology which envisions the Serbs in a unified state consisting of all territories where Serbs are the majority. He developed the attitude of making constant provocations in the courtroom in order to spread and preach the idea of Greater Serbia. Similarly, Slobodan Milošević claimed that everything he had ever done was for Serbia’s benefit. Even during the trial he would not abandon his “patriotic Bible”, saying that Serbia had never participated in the war but only protected its national interest.

Milošević and Šešelj obtained their power on the streets by organizing mass political rallies with the goal of gaining the support of the people. Milošević and Šešelj secured their leadership positions by constantly distancing themselves from other “politicians”, characterized as such in the worst sense of the word. Their rhetoric was developed on “state interests” and not on politics: Milošević transformed the war that was lost into a great victory for the Serbs, along with a total denial of the crimes committed by the Serbian side, while Šešelj went even further into extreme right populism. The team performance with the aim of mobilizing the masses was a persistent, carefully organized event of “the happening of the people”. Milošević managed to prevent the transition of a post-communist society towards democracy by reducing his policy to the “Serbian people’s fight for survival”. The repeated return to national myths began with mass processions displaying Serbian images and national symbols. Even today,

nearly fifteen years after the war in Croatia and Bosnia has ended, denial of Serbia's responsibility for the war is widespread and the ICTY is considered a part of an international conspiracy against the Serb people.

Slobodan Milošević tried to transform the legal procedure against him into an ideological debate about the responsibility for the start of the war and breakup of Yugoslavia. Milošević attempted to change history in order to attract the attention of imagined future audiences that would examine the historical records of his trial. However, the ICTY was not prepared or willing to play political games, but instead, it tried Milošević as an individual responsible not for the war as an evil mystical product but for very precise and specific war crimes. He was indicted for the following crimes committed in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo: genocide, crimes against humanity, and violations of the laws and customs of war. Moreover, he was not put on trial because he had caused the fall and breakup of Yugoslavia but because he was to be proven a war criminal.

Vojislav Šešelj displayed the same pattern of behavior towards the ICTY claiming it to be illegitimate and created by the USA out of hatred of the Serb people. He even went a step further in his accusations against the ICTY by calling it an anti-Serbian Tribunal which falsified the genocide in Srebrenica. Such extreme rhetoric was further encouraged by the fact that the Prosecutor was facing problems regarding Šešelj's indictment. Šešelj, as opposed to the rest of the indictees, never had control over the army and was not officially part of the government at the time the crimes were committed. Even so, Šešelj was indicted on the grounds of individual responsibility for the crimes, such as persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds, deportation, inhumane acts, murder, torture, cruel treatment and other violations of the laws and customs of war.

The Tribunal in The Hague sometimes looks as a place where nationalistic leaders leave the course of history and enter into a soap-opera with live coverage. Milošević also behaved symbolically: he refused to address ICTY officials in the appropriate way as a sign of contempt towards the Tribunal. For instance, he showed disrespect toward the Presiding Judge and refused to stand up when he spoke. At the same time, Serbian audiences were left in the hands of the media, which presented the image of a triumphant Serbia guided by a great leader. Yet another virtual reality was created which had nothing whatsoever to do with the actual situation. Even in the courtroom, Milošević continued to play his role in this parallel dimension.

Šešelj also tried to present the untrue, parallel story about how the right to self-representation can not be denied in the "civilized world", although this is by no standards an "absolute right". Additionally, Šešelj

included a number of his own books in the evidence, was inspired to make jokes, and generally behaved as if he was having a great time. The atmosphere in the courtroom resembled that of a soccer game in which Šešelj was playing against the ICTY, while the audience was cheering for him “at home”.

The regional state-controlled media, as well as some ethnic nationalist politicians and journalists, have constantly argued that the ICTY distorts history by trying to allegedly make all peoples and former warring factions equally guilty, but the key nationalist creed in all groups is self-perception as a collective victim of aggression and genocide. The denial of crimes and the glorifying of war criminals as patriotic heroes persists in all formerly-warring states, and it is often (especially in election campaigns) openly supported by governments, major political parties and majority religions.

In the end, there are a few more remarks to be added concerning the ICTY. Often in public debates in the region about this international (i.e. “foreign”, “alien” and “hostile” in the discourse of ethnic nationalistic parties) court, the question arises not only about persons tried and sentenced (or those main culprits that have not been sentenced) but also about many others who admittedly should have been tried and sentenced. For example, because former Yugoslavia was not similar to the less modernized Rwanda but it was a modernized European country, i.e. more than 50% urban country with well-educated population – mass media, particularly television, radio, newspapers and literature and science have all played crucial roles in spreading hatred and paying lip service to the nationalistic ethnic movements preparing ground for war. Afterward, the same modern resources have been exploited by ethnic and religious parties for cementing myth, invented hatred and prejudice.¹³

Unfortunately, no government minister for propaganda or outspoken notable media figures ended up in The Hague prosecuted by the ICTY. The same applies to nationalistic writers, authors and literary figures. Paradoxically, internationally-recognized Croatian author Predrag Matvejević was sentenced by Croatia’s high court to a prison term for exposing to the public the names of some of those hatred-inciting writers. Likewise, the famous freedom-fighting journal *Feral Tribune* from Croatia received no adequate financial and legal support from abroad when facing

¹³ See Aljoša Mimica and Radina Vučetić, *Vreme kada je narod govorio, Odjeci i reaganja u Politici, 1988-1991* (2008); Pål Kolstø (ed.), *Media Discourse and Yugoslav Conflicts. Representations of Self and Other* (2009).

numerous lawsuits from nationalistic groups and war crimes suspects. Also, many warmongers and hate speakers came from religious leaders and clergy of majority religious organizations, but they were considered sacred cows.¹⁴ None of these accomplices in the grave crime and gross human tragedy were prosecuted. In the end, most of those who have been prosecuted are military leaders who merely carried out orders from above and others indoctrinated by the nationalistic ideologies and myth, but the creators and communicators of these ideas remained intact.

¹⁴ Michael A. Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*, with a new preface (1998); Paul Mojzes (ed.), *Religion and the War in Bosnia* (1998).

VJEKOSLAV PERICA (CROATIA) AND
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RECOMMENDATIONS ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

To begin with, it is necessary to point out that the *shared narrative* method as principally concerned with conflict resolution and postconflict healing of ruined and traumatized societies, determines that the co-authors avoid concluding chapters of customary scholarly books featuring generalizations and references to current academic debates. Instead, in the following chapter we come up with specific policy recommendations to international conflict management factors in order to help improve the situation with respect to the key problem we have dealt with.

COUNTERBALANCE

Myth is a highly complex and difficult phenomenon to deal with, particularly if the objective is “unmaking the mythmaking” or “de-Mythologization”. These myths have taken root during a 20-year time period. They are official national myths, protected and perpetuated by states and ruling parties, schools and churches. It is analogous to dealing with religion which, as history teaches, cannot be “abolished” but, as liberal democracies practice, only counterbalanced by secular thought and other religions. Yet, most political myths examined in this analysis are primarily myths of the state, closer to secularism and ideology than religion and as such relatively more manageable. They are imposed upon the people “from above” through official patriotism, state institutions, the educational system, majority religious institutions and state-controlled mass media (only one example showcases myths that came “from below”, e.g. post-communist nostalgia). These political myths will be eventually weakened and “withered away” through Europeanization and globalization. Yet, it takes time. Nothing will be profoundly changed prior to at least two decades of ALL these states’ EU membership, through which the myth-deluded masses will be “re-educated”.

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PATIENCE

In the meantime, this team of co-authors recommends to the EU, in particular, caution, patience and tact. Europeanization must not be perceived as cultural imperialism. Even political myths are still myths, i.e. narratives, stories and interpretations of the past in which millions of people sincerely and emotionally believe. Their governments made them accept and internalize these myths through times of long crisis, war, collective suffering and conflict with neighboring peoples portrayed as archenemies. In other words, these myths tell us what all these peoples we are dealing with are, how they perceive themselves and the world, and what their collective identities are about. Therefore, we advise a systematic, cautious and tactful approach to the process of “deconstruction” and de-mythologization. Yet, there is no doubt that it needs to be done without delay and most effectively insofar as these myths perpetuate conflict.

DE-MYTHOLOGIZATION

Furthermore, there will never be a complete and thorough de-mythologization and deconstruction of currently existing national identities. New nation-states and peoples can change to some extent, particularly those who emphasize that they feel like Europeans (Croats, Serbs, and even the idea of a “Euroislam”, born in Bosnia). Of course, Europeanization cannot totally eradicate nationalistic myths and similar ideologies. After all, far-right groups and parties obsessed with similar myths and ideas operate in all leading western democracies, sometimes draw a large number of votes and have many followers. Therefore, the maximum success that the de-mythologization process in the ex-Yugoslav region can possibly achieve is to change the states so that they become as much as possible like the leading western democracies in which a moderate democratic majority and strong civil society secure stability and preserve democratic and liberal western political culture. How this will be achieved?

EU ADMISSION: EMBRACE RATHER THAN EXCLUSION

As noted earlier on a number of occasions, the EU admission process should be accelerated, leading toward admission of all ex-Yugoslav states. Earlier we have argued in favor of transnational associations of historic provinces, cities and micro regions within the EU framework as a more effective form of development and cooperation than nation-states. Regarding the issue of grooming reform-minded pro-western indigenous elites, we have also pointed out that their potential is rather limited. Besides, they have not been encouraged

and supported enough by the EU. The term “ghettoization” may have been too strong and “collective and indiscriminate punishment of the victims” too broad a generalization, but neither is far from the truth and are associated with past and present EU policies toward this region and its peoples. The ever-low popular support for the EU by ordinary people in this region mirrors their embitterment with wartime and postwar EU’s indifference or incompetence, in spite of great expectations from the EU and the West in general on the part of the victimized majority. Consequently, these conditions must be changed both on moral grounds and for the sake of political pragmatism. As noted in the introduction, EU membership, in this case would not be primarily recognition of these countries’ transitional success being awarded by EU admission, but something more analogous to, for example and *mutatis mutandis*, US policies toward Germany and Japan after World War II, i.e. punishment of the guilty individuals and groups, civic education and investment in economic development. In other words, there should be a combination of solidarity among all Europeans with close supervision and rigorous Europeanization from the center. Again, as noted above, there is no direct continuity between the Turkish wars in the Balkans and the wars of the 1990s. The EU seems to have forgotten that during the Cold War former Yugoslavia became a modernized nation and that Tito’s nation was not under Soviet occupation. During the Cold War it used to be more advanced and closer to the West than any other East European country. The wars of the 1990s were a tragedy – not a crime for which the peoples of the former Yugoslavia should be collectively punished by isolation, economic stagnation and a collective stigma. That is unfair and un-European. Although some “collateral damage” could be understood, it is not justified to hurt the innocent and among them those who Europe expects to bear the burden of social re-education, recover civic culture and cultivate civil society. It is analogous to the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia in which the main target was Belgrade although 99% of Milošević’s domestic opponents and peace/human rights activists lived there and they and their families had suffered, which means hundreds of thousands of people were affected – instead of targeting main centers of extreme Serb nationalism such as the cities of Valjevo, Kragujevac, Niš, etc., and military bases and deployments throughout the country and in Kosovo and especially the Serb military facilities and major ethnically cleansed cities in the Republic Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The pro-western people of Serbia largely living in Belgrade and affected by NATO’s “friendly fire” found it easier to justify NATO’s and the USA’s mistakes, but as Europeans they were saddened and disappointed by the role of the EU in this bad strategy (e.g. at the time Britain’s

Prime Minister Tony Blair was hated in Belgrade more than the American President Clinton). Likewise, the EU showed similar policy miscalculation and misunderstanding of the character of the former Yugoslavia with respect to the post-2004 EU eastward expansion. Tito's country, as the only East European country, had been independent from Soviet rule during almost the entire Cold War. Yet, the EU admitted the ex-Soviet satellites Romania and Bulgaria to full membership. The two were in every respect less prepared for EU membership than, say Croatia and Serbia or even Bosnia. Nonetheless, as the EU had calculated, the admission would prevent Russia from controlling the two Balkan countries that had been since Catherine the Great within a sphere of Russian westward expansion. As a result, Romania and Bulgaria as full EU members have failed and Russia was not even interested in them, while in the meantime, Serbia and Montenegro – historically pro-Russian at least since Peter the Great, have established a special relationship and alliance with Russia (see above for more details on this problem the chapter titled “A Post-Communist Serbo-Russian Romance: Eastern Relic of the Pan-Slavic Myth”).

A whole culture, perverse in many respects regarding the perception of Europe's South-East, must be changed in the western part of the Continent and the accurate knowledge must be acquired. The term *Balkans* must be liberated from its pejorative meaning imposed upon the Balkan peoples by the West and by the newly invented Central Europe.¹ More specifically speaking about the EU's postwar policies, why did the West not rebuild and modernize postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina rapidly and forcefully, comparable to the renewal of Germany after World War II or Spanish investments in troubled regions such as the Basque Country or British in Northern Ireland? Instead of this, the western neglect of the despicable “Balkans” opened doors for countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and other Muslim nations to pump money in Bosnia and Herzegovina for building gigantic mosques and Islamic fundamentalist schools and sects, thus transforming Bosnia and Herzegovina into something that this European country – although Muslim, never was. This is the single most shocking example of western incompetence after the war. Besides, who is responsible for presenting to the West a picture of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a holdout of the Mujahedeen and is now advocating its partition claiming it to be a hopelessly failed state although the idea of Bosnia and Herzegovina's partition was one of the

¹ See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (1997).

crucial causes of the 1991-1995 war?² How is it possible that convincing publicly discredited western misperceptions during the war still continue fifteen years after this war? Not to mention the numerous and repeatedly manifested defects of the Dayton Peace Accords of 1995 and the continuous avoidance of international factors to amend this imperfect and problem-generating international arrangement.

ACCESS TO REGIONAL MARKETS

Of course, success will come after a long process, but it has already been too long. The EU must be aware that isolation, ghettoization and creation of a European “Wild East frontier” foster a sectarian mentality. In addition to creating space for operations of transnational mafia networks, this also strengthens the influence of myths. Thus, the “state of siege” plays into the hands of extreme nationalists and religious extremists. By contrast, an open society and multicultural interaction within Europe and the wider world reduces the influence of extremists and myths. That is to say, every new day of prolonging admission of these states into the EU leads to further isolation of the region, the deepening of collective frustration, the loss of human capital and brain drain, while the prevailing political myths are being revitalized and utilized for sustaining the corrupt elites in power. EU admission would not cause an exodus of Croats, Serbs and Bosnians in order to get to the West. Actually, almost all of the best quality of the regional human capital has already left and those who love to stay and live in the successor states of ex-Yugoslavia are not even interested in moving out because they can enjoy such a privileged status only within their turfs. At any rate, the EU admission process needs to be accelerated thus to encourage the pro-western reformists who left and possibly also to stimulate the exiled ones to return and help democratic transformation, rebuilding and reconciliation. The creation and visible functioning of the so-called *Yugosphere* (the term invented in 2008 by British author Tim Judah) through free trade and cooperation on a regional market, while the common language facilitates continuous cultural exchanges (if 18 million people like the very same popular song, performing artist or

² Montgomery: “B&H is a failed state; only solution is peaceful partition”, 1.XI,2010, <http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/montgomery-bih-je-propala-drzava-rjesenje-je-mirni-raspad/521102.aspx>.

film it certainly helps the reconciliation cause), sustains the argument that faster admission will increase the likelihood of success.

EDUCATION

Supporting alternative approaches and new technologies in education. Present-day generations prefer visual learning. Therefore, every university and even high school library in the region needs to receive from abroad (including support from translation) top quality documentary films (and even some valuable featured films, such as “*Welcome to Sarajevo*” and “*Hotel Rwanda*”) about the Holocaust, genocide, contemporary ethnic conflict and civil wars, as well as international conflict management. Students need to learn about and compare the Holocaust, genocides in Rwanda, the Balkans, Darfur, East Timor, the conflict in Northern Ireland, Israel-Palestine, etc. They also need objective documentaries about the Balkan conflict (e.g. “*Death of Yugoslavia*”, BBC, 1996). Universities need to promote and encourage the attendance of summer schools for cultivating peace and tolerance, organized by regional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and peace activists (e.g. the annual Post-Yugoslav Peace Academy at Sarajevo). In addition to films, domestic translators need funding and encouraging for foreign-published top-quality books on the Yugoslav conflict in the 1990s. These books need to be distributed to university, high school and city/public libraries. In addition, courses on theory, history and contemporary studies of nationalism and civil wars, as well as genocide and Holocaust studies, must be mandatory in high schools and universities. Through negotiations for EU accession, these curricula can be imposed upon candidate countries, and adequate assistance and instructors’ training can be provided. Also, the exchange of books, media programs, newspapers, as well as cooperation between universities/schools in various parts of the region, also merits support.

EDUCATION FOR MINORITIES

Special educational programs for ethnic minorities in their own language often encounter difficulties and merit more support and funding.

CONFERENCES ON HISTORY

Regional and international scholarly conferences on the common past, dealing particularly with World War II, the communist era and the wars of the 1990s should be held. These events should be promoted in the media and held in significant places such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo,

Macedonia but also in major centers such as Zagreb, Belgrade, Dubrovnik etc. Books and other materials from these conferences need to reach schools and public libraries.

CULTURE

Supporting a new culture of peace and tolerance in domains of high-quality cultural and artistic production. Financial assistance from the EU has been normally focused on economies of the states in the region. However, no less important – or perhaps even more important – is western assistance in the domain of culture, science and education. As mentioned earlier: domestic-made featured and documentary films, satirical and humoristic programs on television, songs and videos in the common language, literary and scholarly books, independent media, student exchange, summer schools for the young, NGO activism, and so forth – provided they promote new values and deconstruct destructive political myths – can bring people together and foster reconciliation. However, neither state-controlled mass media nor commercial media will buy such products but would rather spend money on “trash” Hollywood movies, soap-operas and other means of stultifying the population and making profit. Likewise, educational systems promote the political myths we criticized in this text. Financial help from abroad is much needed for the import and translation of important foreign books, documentary movies for university libraries, schools and city public libraries, as well as for such publishing and production by domestic authors. Likewise, public universities and schools have no computers and adequate classroom technology. Since domestic capitalism will not invest in this, assistance from abroad is needed.

STATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA

Dealing with state-controlled media, especially government-run public television. Ethnic nationalistic parties rule thanks a great deal to their control of state television networks. Television was one of the prime movers of the wars in the early 1990s and afterward kept authoritarian rulers in power. There must be a way that the West can pressure the states in the region to make major TV networks more autonomous; strengthen independent programming and investigative journalism in these media while weakening government meddling into the autonomy of the major media. Major TV networks and newspapers need to be managed by the most capable members of the profession, instead of by those appointed by political parties and boards on which corrupt puppets from major political parties are sitting.

The EU must not let the Russia-styled model of government to penetrate the Balkans!

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Supporting independent and alternative media, especially helping anti-nationalist, myth-busting and anti-corruption investigative journalism in autonomous media. For example, the weekly *Feral Tribune* from Split, Croatia, was such an established institution, that the EU should have never allowed the Tudman and Sanader regimes to undermine and terminate it. It is comparable to the EU's insufficient help to the besieged Sarajevo during the war. It is hard to believe that Brussels was unaware of the importance and impact of the *Feral Tribune*. Actually, it is impossible that Brussels did not know about the case, because many prominent intellectuals from European countries and the USA sent an open letter to the European Parliament about it. Similarly to this scandal, in which the ruling party in Croatia – the country which is the first-in-line candidate in the region for joining the EU – forced out of business anti-government media such as the weekly *Feral Tribune* and Radio 101, recently there have been government attempts to shut down, for example, the independent specialized regional business channel *Kapital Network* and the main state TV daily show *Croatia Live*, merely because they criticized government corruption and championed human rights and the free exchange of goods, capital, information, knowledge, peoples and ideas throughout the whole region. The EU must not tolerate such excesses, especially in the countries on which it has strong influence, and Croatia is precisely the case in point, in contrast to a far less cooperative Serbia.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Supporting inter-ethnic cooperation and civil society activism at the local level. For example: the “Peace Village of Golubic Project” revitalized a rural area in southern Croatia. In the vicinity of Zadar (a little more than an hour driving time to the north), the CHDR and its sister-NGO, the Association for History, Cooperation and Reconciliation (AHCR), based in Golubić, Croatia, and founded this year, have been developing for three years now the “Peace Village of Golubic” Project. This village is located in a war-devastated hinterland of northern Dalmatia that was formerly populated by Serbs. There, one of the oldest medieval Serb-Orthodox Christian spiritual centers is located (Krupa Monastery). Although only a

small percentage of the pre-war Serb population returned to their homes, the area has been revitalized by CHDR/AHCR activities.

PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

Introducing, across the region, specialized interdisciplinary university programs in Peace and Conflict Studies, Human Rights courses, Genocide and Holocaust Studies, etc. The University of Belgrade, in Serbia, which is not yet a EU candidate country, has decades ago established an interdisciplinary program in International Conflict Management, while purportedly EU-loyal Croatia, near EU admission, still does not have such programs or that type of education curricula. Its government does not want it and also resists specialized seminars in genocide and Holocaust Studies in state universities (because Croatia still denies a Croat pro-Nazi regime's World War II genocide against Jews and Serbs). CHDR and its Croatian sister-NGO, the Croatian Association for Cooperation and Reconciliation (CACR), can be entrusted with the initiation of such programs and with providing instructors in the beginning phase. Likewise, the largest Institute for Peace Studies and Conflict Management in the whole region is based in Ljubljana, in the stable and wealthy Slovenia, an EU member. Yet, the rest of the region does not like to be lectured, patronized and disciplined by this wealthy ex-YU country that luckily escaped the horrors of war even though it took part in provoking the war. Having such an institute there is not the happiest solution, but since it is already there, it needs to establish cooperation with local NGOs throughout the whole region.

RELIGIOUS MEDIATION

Dealing with ethnic nationalistic extremism from religious organizations and promoting interfaith tolerance. Croatian Catholicism, Serbian Orthodoxy and Bosnian Islam are the major troublemakers. This can be managed through religious mediators, e.g. friendly churches and renowned religious figures (e.g. Bishop Desmond Tutu, theologian Hans Kung etc.) direct diplomacy with the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, cooperation with liberal religious universities in Britain, USA, Germany, France and elsewhere, and moderate Islamic circles for example from Egypt, India, Malaysia, Turkey etc. At the same time, domestic moderate religious circles promoting tolerance and criticizing religious extremism such as, for example, Bosnian Franciscans and some liberal clergy in other confessions, need to receive support for their peace and dialogue programs instead of wasting time on top religious leaders who are so close to leading ethnic nationalists

in power that together they create the structure of conflicting and corrupt administration that needs to be changed. However, in some most extreme cases, perpetrators from clerical profession must be prosecuted and sent to prison. For example, Bosnian Islamist Wahabbi groups, or a Croatian priest who has recently used church celebration for the glorification of World War II fascist leaders and war criminals sentenced by the ICTY, should have already been in jail.

JUDICIAL SYSTEMS

Judicial systems in the states of the region should effectively and rigorously prosecute violence motivated by ethnic hatred, e.g. attacks on Serb tourists and returning refugees. Unfortunately, perpetrators often remain unidentified and unpunished. Through EU accession negotiations, regional police forces and judiciaries need to be pressured regarding this. In addition, there should be more drastic laws against extremist political parties (e.g. Croatian “Pure Party of the Rights” or the Serb “Radical Party”), including their ban; and laws against glorifying nationalist myths, public hate speech in politics and the mass media, and the display of racist and offensive symbols, need to be introduced and implemented.

MOBILITY

Improving transportation, and making it easier to travel around what once was the common country. Through EU admission negotiations, border checkpoints need to be removed; more bus and railway lines need to be introduced, and traveling without passports but only with an identification card should be allowed. It is particularly shameful that the most advanced EU candidate country of Croatia is still blocking the establishment of regular air connections between Serbia and Croatia while at the same time luring Serbian tourists to the Adriatic. EU pressures could have solved this issue a long time ago.

OPENING ARCHIVES

Arrests and criminal trials of General Mladić, Goran Hadžić and other war crimes suspects at large, including the ICTY’s publishing of an indictment against General Kadijević, remain the obligations of the ICTY and international community when it comes to cooperation with governments in the region. And perhaps, even more importantly, for the reason that the ICTY

could not sentence some major political leaders, masterminds and chief executive officers of genocide, the ICTY should make its archive concerning these persons public and available for researchers so that scholars can use them and complete the writing of the history of the bloodiest conflict in Europe after World War II.

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