

# RE NEW AL

Journal for culture, society and politics.  
1st issue | November 2018





# Renewal

---

Journal for Culture, Society and Politics

November 2018

PUBLISHER

**“Renewal” organisation**

PUBLISHER

**Marko Paradžik**

EDITORIAL BOARD

**Marko Raič, Matej Tolić, Marko Mustić**

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

**Ante Starčević**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**Dino Ljubić**

WEBSITE

**[www.obnova.com.hr](http://www.obnova.com.hr)**

E-MAIL

**[casopis.obnova@gmail.com](mailto:casopis.obnova@gmail.com)**

# Table of content

## Introduction 5

---

### Interviews

TIHANA PŠENKO

**Interview with Mario Grčević, PhD 7**

LEO MARIĆ

**Interview with Tomislav Sunić, PhD 19**

---

MARKO PARADŽIK

**Ideology in Michel Houellebecq's novels 25**

LEO MARIĆ

**Crossing Borders: Multiculturalism and Identity in the 21st Century 32**

MARIO TOMAS

**The Revolution of Nothingness: Julius Evola and criticism of manifestations of social change in the 1960s 39**

MATE ŠIMIĆ

**Emil Cioran and Cultural Pessimism 47**

### Articles

MARKO RAIĆ

**The Statehood-Legal Status of Croatian Lands in the Austro-Hungarian Empire 60**

MARINA SKELIN

**Regionalism of European Space and the Question of Croatian Identity 70**

ANTONIO MOCK

**Homeland War - A civil war or war of defence? 83**

TOMO HUNJAK

**Neofolk And Death In June: Revolt Against The Modern Music 95**

---

**About "Renewal" Society 101**

# Introduction

Dear Reader,

The “Obnova” or in English, “Renewal” journal for culture, society and politics was launched in Croatia in 2012 by an organisation of young enthusiasts under the same name, “Renewal”. The organisation’s fundamental aim is to protect and develop national identity, educate the young and connect young people throughout Europe. Today, we consist of many young intellectuals, artists, students and working people with similar fundamental values and views of the world. Through our activities, we would like to become a significant *Think Tank* of young people who actively propose solutions for the cultural, ethical and political renewal of social components in Croatia and Europe. We wish to motivate networking of individuals and groups throughout Croatia, Europe and the world through the exchange of experiences, education and discussion on key social issues and contemporary challenges. We also wish to be a source of pro-active ideals, concepts, visions and creativity. In addition to preparing the periodical, we organise lectures, roundtable discussions and artistic events. Over the past year we organised several events, just to mention a few: lecture about Italian philosopher, Julius Evola; a panel discussion on the topic of mass immigration to Europe with the fundamental question - does this pose a potential or a danger(?); as well as afternoon poetry readings in a semi-formal ambience and socialising.

As previously mentioned, one of the key projects by the association is publishing the Renewal journal. Renewal is a multidisciplinary journal for culture, society and politics. To date, we have published ten Croatian editions and dealt with the following themes in chronological order: cultural hegemony, identity, geopolitical alternatives, Croats abroad (Diaspora), nationalism, economic prospects, multiculturalism and migrations, traditionalism technics and technology and conservative revolution. The journal is designed in such a way that we find relevant speakers with whom we conduct an interview for each individual topic. After the interview is conducted we prepare articles related to the theme of that particular issue, followed by various articles by individual authors on topics of their own choice. The last section of each journal is dedicated to art and culture, with authors writing about topics related to the fine arts, drama, music and contemporary cultural trends and phenomena.

With regard to domestic recognition, our friends from abroad have also recognised

our efforts and quality and have motivate us to have the periodical translated into English so that it can be accessible to a wider audience. As a result, we decided to publish a special edition of *Renewal* in English. That issue is designed a little differently from the issues in Croatian. Primarily, we've translated some articles that have been published in previous issues of *Renewal* that we consider to be interesting to the target foreign audience. The editorial carefully selected certain articles and interviews published in the first and second issues of *Renewal* (Identity and Cultural Hegemony). In this English issue, our first dialogist is Dr. Mario Grčević, PhD, a Croatian linguist with whom we discussed the identity of language and the impact of language itself on the identity of a nation. Our second interlocutor is Dr. Tomislav Sunić, PhD, a reputable Croatian politologist, author, former diplomat, philosopher of world repute. We spoke with him about the theory of cultural hegemony in an effort to explain the relationship and confrontation of contemporary ideologies and culture.

Of the articles in this issue, I wish to highlight a few: a literary essay - *The Ideology in Michel Houellebecq's novels* by Marko Paradžik; and an article by Leo Marić - *Transgression of Borders: Multiculturalism and Identity in the 21st Century*. Both articles deal with post-modern society through a critique of ethno-masochism of multiculturalism as an ideology. Mario Tomas also wrote an article in that context entitled - *A Revolution of Nothing: Julius Evola and Criticism of the Manifestation of Social Changes in the 1960ies*. The topic of the article is obvious in its title and there is no need for any additional explanation. This is followed by Mate Šimić's article on the topic of cultural pessimism which he analyses through an opus by Romanian philosopher and author, Emil Cioran. We have added an interesting historical topic through a concise work entitled - *The Statehood Position of Croatian Lands within the Austro-Hungarian Empire*. Marina Skelin is the author of a very interesting article entitled - *Regionalisation of European Space and the Question of Croatian Identity*. From a geopolitical perspective the article deals with the Croatian identity as an analysis of the notions of the Balkans, Western Balkans, Central Europe and Southeast Europe and notices a correlation between the regionalisation of European space to national identity. Considering that the (1990ies) *Homeland War* is a very significant part of the Croatian national identity, we decided to publish an article that deals with that topic. The article written by Antonia Mocka is entitled - *The Homeland War - A Civil War or War of Defence*. Finally, we prepared an article in the field of culture. Tomo Hunjak presents a neofolk band - *Death in June* in an article entitled *Neofolk and Death in June - A Revolt against Modern Music*.

# MARIO GRČEVIĆ:

“Language is very important in determining a national identity”

INTERVIEWED BY

**Tihana Pšenko, Mr.Ed. Croat; Mr.Comm.**

Croatian linguist Dr. Mario Grčević was born in 1969 in Varaždin. He completed secondary school education in Zagreb (Language Education Centre) in 1988 and enrolled in the University of Mannheim, Germany and obtained his master's degree in 1995 in Slavic and German philology. He obtained his PhD in Slavic philology in 2005 on the topic of the Croatian National Language Missal of the 16th Century.

Dr. Grčević has worked abroad in a Croatian language schools, at the University of Mannheim, at the Institute of Linguistics of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), and at the University Department for Croatian Studies, where he has been lecturing since 2006. He is currently Head of the University Department for Croatian Studies.

In 1998/1999 he was awarded with the HAZU prize for his contribution of special and lasting significance for the Republic of Croatia in the field of philological sciences and in 2010 he was selected as an associate member of the Academy.

Scientific publications by Dr. Grčević are dedicated to topics on the history of the Croatian standard language and contemporary Croatian language issues. In his research of early Slavic and its relationship to the Croatian language he discovered many forgotten or unknown facts that are essential to comprehending the history of Croatian literary language in the 19th century but also to individual problems that the Croatian language is faced with today. His research is essential in the mosaic of works by Croatian linguists.

**T.P.: What in your opinion is the basis the Croatian language identity is built upon?**

M.G.: On communication relations within the Croatian language community, as once nicely described by Radoslav Katičić.

**T.P.: What do you mean when you say communication relations and what does that mean with regard to the fact that Croatian is one of the South Slavic languages? Since when has the Croatian language existed?**

M.G.: It's not possible to cite a date or century of its emergence however based on written records, its development can be followed until the time of the emergence of the Baška Tablet and other early Croatian language monuments founded on sacral Slavic heritage. As far as the correlation of the Croatian and other South Slavic languages is concerned, it is important to know that initial language relations in South Slavic regions were such that one language could have emerged with one literary and standard language and its relevant dialects could have extended from Vardar to Triglav. However, cultural-political developments did not go in favour of that, instead they activated the development of several separate languages - on the one hand Slovenian and on the other Bulgarian. During that development, Torlakian dialects on the Serb side became idioms of the Serbian language even though grammatically speaking, they could have entirely become part of the Bulgarian language. As a result of these developments, Chakavian and Kajkavian are exclusively dialects of the Croatian language, whereas Shtokavian doesn't exclusively just belong to it. As such, the Croatian language as a separate Slavic language did not develop merely as dialectic stratification of the ancient Slavic language but by following centuries-long literary language development, communication and cultural-ethnic integration.

**T.P.: However, traditional Slavic studies mostly start from the presumption that Kajkavian, Chakavian and Shtokavian are part of a common language as a diasystem once referred to as Serbo-Croatian.**

M.G.: That was due to the idea of an imaginary Serbo-Croatian standard language and of an attempt to combine dialects that it "imparts" so to speak, into a parallel whole. Nevertheless, there were no grounds in the dialects themselves for them to be combined. For example, certain Serbian linguists in the 1950s pronounced speech in Dimitrovgrad in Serbia as a Shtokavian version of the Serbo-Croatian language



and they approached related speech in Bulgaria in the same way which extend all the way to Sofia. After several years they “excluded” all these speeches from the so-called Serbo-Croatian language and “let” them to the Bulgarian language without anything actually being changed in the language. This was exclusively due to the fact that in their perceptions they adopted the fact that Bulgarians used the said eastern South Slavic speech idioms in the Bulgarian literary language and that the identity of those idioms of the Bulgarian language cannot be changed on the basis of two or three isoglosses that connects them to the Shtokavian dialect. These examples show that genetic-typological linguistics cannot appropriately distinguish genetic-typologically close languages of its own accord. As such, genetic-typological Slavic could not explain by what criteria for example, speech in Pirot is annexed to the diasystems of speech in Bednja or Hum na Sutli. The same goes if we were to seek an answer to the question of why the Croatian language enters into the speech of Bednja or Dubrovnik.

**T.P.: Is it possible to linguistically explain why the Croatian language enters into the speech of Bednja and Dubrovnik?**

M.G.: Yes, if we use the appropriate methodology, and no, if we think that languages need to be distinguished isolated of their carriers and if we are blind to the fact that the differences between languages can be varied.

**T.P.: Can you give us an example of Croatian language development which, as you said, surpasses dialectic borders?**

M.G.: We can take Dubrovnik poets as an example. Dialectically speaking they were western Shtokavians however they used numerous Chakavian terms in their texts that were not characteristic to average Dubrovnik speech. Debates existed for a long time in Slavistics whether Dubrovnik was originally a Chakavian or Shtokavian town. Gundulić too used certain Chakavian terms in the 17th century whereas about the same time Chakavian Bartul Kašić adopted Shtokavian in his works primarily under Dubrovnik’s literary influence. A certain climax in these developments is recognisable in the grammar that was published by Dubrovnik Rajmund Đamanjić in 1639. He says that he wrote for the “Slovene language” which was used by the “authorities” of “Dubrovnik and all of Dalmatia.” Even though Chakavian appeared only on the margins of Đamanjić’s language, his grammar is dedicated in fact to a Chakavian from Zadar as an orator of his “Slovene language.” Kajkavians were also included in these developments even though this is less known. Dubrovnik

Vladislav Menčetić in 1663 proclaimed Petar Zrinski as the “trumpeteer of Slovene” and the most reputable poet in “Dubrovnik regions.” He says that Zrinski is a poet “whom all of the Slovene people take pride in.” He also equates the notion of Slovene and Croatian and recognises strength in Croatianness that saved even Italy from the Turkish onslaught. These examples show nicely how the common Croatian ethnic and language identity were built despite dialectic and state borders which for example did not include the Orthodox in the Dubrovnik hinterland even though they dialectically and geographically were closer to Dubrovnik than Zrinski and his Kajkavians.

**T.P.: It is a fact that language is vital in determining the identity of any nation. In the case of Croatia, what role does its difference to other languages, particularly Serbian, have in the structural, pragmatic, lexical sense? What conditions the fact that on the one hand language is a vital determinant of identity yet some nations do not have their own language?**

M.G.: Language is very important in determining a national identity however there is no universal rule that can help us to measure that. Nations can be nations even when they don't have a national language that is specific to just them. That is conditioned by historical circumstances, for example, the expansion of certain languages through colonisation or during varied developments of separate languages in a particular geographical space where similar idioms are spoken. For example, Austrians and Germans have the same common language with one literary language. German is mentioned as the state language in the Austrian Constitution. The specifics in realising German in Austria and Austrian-German differences cannot be equated with Croatian-Serbian language differences, among other reasons, because contrary to German, Croatian and Serbian have two completely separate normative systems. Regardless of how slight the differences between Croatian and Serbian may seem from the outside, they matter when it comes to culture, politics and values. If that were not the case, there would not have been such effort exerted in the past, since the early 19th century, to attempt to remove these differences and to create a common Croatian-Serbian literary language with a common system of values. Had the differences been removed and had a common standard been adopted we would have a common literary language that would have impacted further cultural-political development. Even though Croatian-Serbian language differences are essential, they are not vital in determining Croatia's language identity. It would be absolutely wrong to list the differences between Croatian and Serbian languages

and to present them as proof of the existence of the Croatian language. The differences or similarities of Croatian and Serbian are just part of our language identity.

**T.P.: What role in determining language identity and distinguishing between languages does the degree of mutual understanding of their speakers have?**

M.G.: Mutual comprehension in some cases can serve as a criterion to draw the line between languages. For example, German and French speakers do not understand each other when they speak in their languages and based on that we could conclude that their languages are different. However, based on that realisation we cannot claim that speakers of the Czech or Slovak languages speak the same language. With reference to similar languages there is always some mutual comprehension which largely depends on the abilities of individual speakers and on the topics they are discussing. When referring to a separate Croatian literary language, we don't mean that it differs to neighbouring Slavic literary languages to the degree that German and French literary languages differ. We also know that we understand Serbian speakers very well. However, Croatian and Serbian are two languages that developed separately. That isn't evident only at the level of literary languages and their history, but also at the level of non-standard idioms that are largely "inter-twined" with their literary of standard languages. The Croatian language identity as such cannot be searched for only in the standard language but much wider.

**T.P.: Does a language have an identity at all, or is the identity of a language the identity of a culture? How can we distinguish them?**

M.G.: With regard to language identity, Radoslav Katičić provided a key motivation in our linguistics in the 1970s in his study *Identity of Language*. In it he sets the hypothesis that the notion of language has various aspects of identity: descriptive-typological, historical-genetic and value aspects. According to the aspect of value, the carriers of a language feel a language as theirs or someone else's, as beautiful or ugly, as nurtured or neglected. I would agree with the presumption that languages have a cultural identity, even though we can study a language in such a way that we can avoid the question of identity and that we learn just some of its parts, for example, phonemes. The fact that the majority speakers of a particular language are not aware of phonological facts does not mean that these facts don't exist. Equally so, if we do not consider the existence of the value aspect of a language identity, that does not mean that it does not exist. When it comes to language identity, there is no need or any sense to distinguish the identity of a language and the identity of the culture

that that language belongs to.

**T.P.: That language is the carrier of culture, is the basic presumption of Croatian philological traditions says Jadranka Gvozdanović in her article “Language and the Cultural Identity of the Croats”. How do you view language with regard to cultural identity and philological tradition of the Croatian language?**

M.G.: Language is the carrier of culture but to that measure that is part of that culture. That is the reason why we consider records like the Baška Tablet as first class language-cultural monuments. Here language is not just the carrier of culture but is culture of its own accord. However, one group of Croatian linguists in the second half of the 19th century tried to separate the Croatian language from its literacy and to create new communicative relations where the Croatian language would disappear as a separate factor. That was possible because of the exceptional similarity between the Croatian and Serbian literary languages. That is part of our philological tradition, too.

**T.P.: You are referring to Croatian followers of Serbian linguist Vuk Stefanović Karadžić. How do you interpret their actions and relations toward the language of the Zagreb Philological School and language of Croatian literature of that time?**

M.G.: Their actions are the result of complicated historical circumstances. One of those circumstances was that individuals in Zagreb estimated that Zagreb could become the centre for the literary language to be standardised for Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the endeavours for Zagreb to become a regional leader, so to speak. That is essential for a complete understanding of the question why influential individuals in Zagreb in the 1960s and 1970s strived to have the language in Croatian literature of the time rejected as an exemplary model and that standard examples be sought in the language of Đuro Daničić and Vuk Karadžić. That was preceded by a decision by Viennese political circles for language integration of central South Slavic regions, more or less following the ideas of Viennese critic Jernej Kopitar from the first half of the 19th century. In that regard, authorities in Vienna urged the signing of the Vienna Literary Agreement of 1850.

**T.P.: What was Jernej Kopitar’s intention?**

M.G.: Kopitar wanted to unite the Croats and Serbs under the single name of Serbs

and Karadžić's language codification, to combine them into one literary language and as a Slovenian patriot, to integrate Croatian Kajkavians into the Slovenian corpus. This angered Ljudevit Gaj when he abandoned Kajkavian in 1836. Kopitar's objective was to thwart the Russian influence on Serbs and draw them closer to the West in such a way that they connect in literature and language with Catholic Croats and to reject the Russification of the literary language through which Russia influenced Orthodox Serbs in areas under Austrian rule. With that objective in mind, Kopitar sought and empowered Vuk Karadžić as a reformist of the Serbian literary language which used organic Shtokavian speech and Croatian literary Shtokavian style as its example and not the literary language of Serbian culture. The Croatian side was generally satisfied with Karadžić because he promoted its literary-linguistic values albeit under the name of Serbian. Serbian church circles recognised what this was about and proclaimed Karadžić as Vienna's tool to "transform to Croatianism" i.e. to denationalise the Serbs.

**T.P.: Why did Kopitar want to unite Catholics and Orthodox under the name of Serbs in fact and not, for example, under the name of Croats or Ilyrians?**

M.G.: For several reasons, primarily because with the assistance of the Serbian name it was possible to penetrate from Vienna deep into the Ottoman Empire, in the area of the then Serbia. When it was obvious that non-Serbs did not accept the Serbian name, Serbo-Croatian was offered as an alternative. That was in fact acceptable to some Croatian philologists in the second half of the 19th century because it expressed Shtokavian as also being Croatian and not just Serbian which many Slavists who followed Kopitar claimed.

**T.P.: How concretely was that politics implemented in the second half of the 19th century?**

M.G.: Key moves were taken in 1867 during the time of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. During the time the Settlement was prepared, Ignaz Sopron, a publisher from Zemun, moved to Sarajevo in 1866 and began to spread Karadžić's Cyrillic and language variant. Seeing that the Turkish authorities in the Bosnian vilayet began to ban books from the Principality of Serbia that were used in Orthodox circles, in 1868 the Principality of Serbia lifted the last ban on Karadžić's grammar in an effort to prevent the division of the Orthodox people. At the same time Pero Budmani, a follower of Vuk Karadžić, published his Vuk inspired grammar (1867) in Vienna in fact, for schools in Dalmatia under Viennese rule. It is obvious that this

was not done of his own accord, i.e. without the consent of authorities in Vienna. Had Strossmayer and Rački not become actively involved in that game in Zagreb, the Viennese lobby would probably have united the standard language of Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and so-called Civil Croatia would have been left isolated. Strossmayer prevented this from happening. He adopted an “appeal” by Duchess Julija Obrenović, an influential Viennese duchess from the Hungarian Hunyadi clan for Karadžić’s successor Đuro Daničić to be appointed as the secretary-general of the recently established Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU) and together with Rački, Daničić’s arrival to Zagreb was conditioned with Daničić abandoning his Greater-Serbian ideology which Daničić advocated the entire time until he arrived in Zagreb. The Academy’s large *Dictionary of the Croatian or Serbian language* which was published in 1880 under Daničić’s editorship, which had been conceived before Daničić by Rački, was to have inspired changes to language standards in Croatia but also to make Zagreb the main centre of language standards for the Serbs too. Some Serbian linguists realised this and accused Daničić of betraying Serbian interests and that he put Zagreb in the service of greater Croatian interests. Finally, the Serbs did not accept Croatia’s Vuk standards nor did they accept the Yugoslav Academy in Zagreb, which today is the Croatian Academy. The Serbs did distance themselves in language and literature from Russia and its heritage and drew closer to the Croats while Croatian philologists returned to Croatian literacy as an exemplary language but with the consequences we still feel to this day.

**T.P.: Is there still anyone today who wishes to create a common literary language for Croats, Serbs, Bosniaks and Montenegrins?**

M.G.: Yes, not just abroad but some individuals here in Croatia, too. There is a series of linguists abroad such as Leopold Auburger, Artur Bagdasarov or Barbara Oczkova who each in their own way contributed exceptionally, or one could say, significantly advanced the Croatist view of the Croatian language.

**T.P.: In that regard it is interesting to reflect on Snježana Kordić’s book *Jezik i nacionalizam (Language and Nationalism)* released in 2010 which denies the existence of the Croatian language. She wrote that Croatists and other South Slavic philologists incorrectly interpret the notion of a standard language. They present it in such a way that they hide its main properties.**

M.G.: It is one thing to develop a descriptive model, for example, for an overview of Croatian and Serbian while it is something completely different to say that people

who care for the Croatian language are falsifiers, nationalists, chauvinists, while at the same time asking that the provision of Croatian being the official language should be erased from the Croatian Constitution because that language allegedly doesn't exist. Ms Kordić radicalised her attitudes to that point that she even accused some foreigners of Croatian language nationalism who aren't even that fond of the language in fact. The problem is not her as an individual but rather the media support she was given in the entire region, particularly from major media outlets in Croatia. Nevertheless, the campaign did not achieve anything. Croatian language exists and its greatest official recognition lies in the fact that it was recognised as an official language in the European union.

**T.P.: Nevertheless we could say that the Croatian language is threatened even today. On the one hand it is threatened by the lack of care by the people, or rather, not nurturing Croatian language values, and on the other hand, simultaneously, by the penetration of foreign terms, particularly English in the Croatian language. The influence of English increased particularly since the end of the 20th century as a consequence of neo-liberal globalisation however, it is particularly widespread in the Croatian language, particularly in the media. How is that reflected in the language identity with regard to the existence of the Croatian state in which Croatian is the official language?**

M.G.: I don't think that Croatian is threatened in that regard even though it is true that it is changing at some levels under the influence of globalisation. This is occurring similarly with other languages too. That's natural, just as it is natural to influence that development how we see fit. It would be normal for the Croatian state to implement a designed language policy in favor of Croatian as the official language of the state, but unfortunately that is not the case.

**T.P.: Would you please comment on the role of state polices with regard to language?**

M.G.: Unfortunately there is no indication that the Republic of Croatia is explicitly conducting any language policy in favour of the language that is prescribed in the Constitution as the official language. What is more, a negative attitude is obvious toward those instruments that could serve in favour of such policies. In 2005 the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports established the Council for Standard Croatian Language Norm for the purpose of stabilising and regulating the norms of the Croatian standard language. This was largely the merit of the then minis-

ter, Dragan Primorac. The Council was headed by Radoslav Katičić and his co-chair was another prominent Croatian intellectual and linguist, Mislav Ježić. In addition to resolving the issue of language norms, the Council had another very important role. It was supposed to become the key body that would create, shape and impact the state strategy toward Croatian as the official language of the state. However, in continuation of implementing the language policy that had begun during the term of the government before that, the then Minister of Education Željko Jovanović, disbanded the Council on 8 May 2012, without any explanation whatsoever. At the very start of its term that government for no reasonably justifiable reason at all changed the names of two of its ministries. The Ministry of Health - *Ministarstvo zdravstva* was changed to *Ministarstvo zdravlja* - which coincidentally or not, was exactly how it is called in Serbia. That same Social Democratic Party (SDP) led coalition government in 2012, similarly to the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) government in 2010, rejected a language bill proposed by the Croatian Labor Party, referring to the EU *acquis communautaire*, claiming that there was no need for any additional legislative regulation of the Croatian language to enter the EU. Unfortunately, neither the HDZ nor SDP explained why many other EU member states have their own specific language legislation that explicitly regulates the rights of the official or state language in their countries. In Croatia the rights of minority languages are regulated to an exemplary degree but Croatian language is not.

**T.P.: Recently there has been a great deal of controversy with the introduction of bilingual signs with the Cyrillic script, particularly in Vukovar. How do you see this in regard to the Croatian language and Latin script within the framework of the Croatian language identity?**

M.G.: Cyrillic in Vukovar has an exclusively symbolic nature. This is just one more indicator that authorities in Croatia must be more aware of public opinion than they are. It is detrimental that an NGO in Vukovar quite easily collected 650,000 signatures petitioning against the placement of Cyrillic signs in Vukovar. It is obvious that some Croatian Serbs also expressed their opinion against those signs. Instead of resolving that problem, allegedly calling on the law and justice, the government was adamant in putting up Cyrillic signs in Vukovar. That certainly cannot be good.

**T.P.: Nevertheless Croats once used Cyrillic, Bosnian Cyrillic and Croatian Cyrillic?**



M.G.: Yes, but they also used the Glagolitic script yet no one would possibly demand that signs in the Glagolitic script be erected. These are historical Croatian scripts. However, Cyrillic in Vukovar is not being introduced as a version of the Croatian script. Serbs in Croatia do not use Cyrillic often and it is being used less in Serbia itself so it is not clear why the Croatian government of the time insisted so ardently to erect Cyrillic signs in Vukovar. People remember 1991 and that same Cyrillic was brought into Vukovar on tanks.

**T.P.: A “unit” of linguists from the Institute for Croatian Language and Linguistics who worked on the new grammar have announced that the grammar will end the 20-year long controversy and resolve this Croatian grammar confusion, which was particularly advocated by Ante Jozić, PhD. Did that grammar resolve any disputable points that burdened the public and experts? Has that controversy truly been resolved?**

M.G.: There are some contentious issues concerning that grammar that experts are irritated by. Initially it was advertised as a free grammar, claiming that one should not profit from a grammar book. Despite those claims the Institute’s grammar is not free and someone is making a very good profit from it. Its free version on the Internet is practical as long as you buy the printed version that contains instructions how to use it. Recently the Institute’s web site introduced a menu in a truly inappropriate place - “e-shop” and the main sales item was in fact the Institute’s grammar book. I do not deny the Institute’s right to earn money on the grammar however, what was the purpose of the demagogic story that the grammar would not be used to make a profit, even though it was known that it would be. Is it possible that for some other aspects too, one thing was said while something else was planned? As matters stand, we’ve just got one more grammar in the so-called grammar controversy. It did not have to be that way.

**T.P.: Language is alive and is constantly exposed to change. However, the Croatian language is featured with numerous grammar ambiguities and disagreement between linguists. What is your opinion of that? What do you think about Croatian grammar? Should it be changed?**

M.G.: In my texts, I adhere to the Council for Standard Croatian Language Norm, and consequently those grammars that have a positive stance toward the Council that follow or upgrade the Council’s conclusions and currently that is the *Croatian School Grammar Book* by Stjepan Babić, Sanda Ham and Milan Moguš and the *Croa-*

*tian Grammar* by S. Babić and M. Moguš. If certain grammar rules were to change, I would support those changes. As a lecturer in higher education, for years I have noticed that many first year students do not know how to decline certain words even though they are taught this from primary school. Many students are inclined to use morphological principles which do not contain similarity by sound. In that regard and in regard to the history of Croatian grammar and almost all other Slavic languages, it would be worthwhile for our grammar to be enhanced with certain versions of words like “podpredsjednik”, “podhodnik”, “razčistiti” instead of “potpredsjednik”, “pothodnik”, “raščistiti”. I believe that will be adopted in Croatian grammar at some stage and that it will be accepted well in practice.

**T.P.: The Croatian language is adorned with three dialects: Shtokavian, Kajkavian and Chakavian which changed their primacy in history. What would you highlight as the most important within the framework of that dialectic wealth of the Croatian language?**

M.G.: The fact that Kajkavian and Chakavian are under-represented in the standard language and that they should be given more attention in schools and the media.

# TOMISLAV SUNIĆ: “The Right and the question of cultural hegemony”

INTERVIEWED BY

**Leo Marić, M.A. (History)**

**D**r. Tomislav Sunić (1953) is a Croatian political scientist, author, translator and former diplomat. He studied French and English language and literature at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb.

He obtained his Master’s degree at the California State University in Sacramento and his PhD in political sciences at the University of California in Santa Barbara. He lectured at the California State University, University of California, Juniata College in Pennsylvania, Anglo-American College in Prague and at the Centre for Croatian Studies in Zagreb.

He served as a diplomat in Brussels, Copenhagen, London and Algeria and worked as an adviser in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a prominent right-wing intellectual, he participated in several hundred lectures and conferences and wrote for reputable newspapers like *Le Monde*, *New York Times*, etc. His books and essays were published in English, French, Spanish, German and Croatian with the most significant being: “Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right” (1990), “Fragmenti metapolitike” (1997), “Homo Americanus: Child of the Postmodern Age” (2007), “La Croatie: un pays par défaut?” (2010).

**L.M.: Firstly, I would like to thank you for accepting an interview in the first issue of our periodical. The topics and themes present in your essays and books are relatively original for Croatia. One of the topics you deal with is cultural hegemony which we will endeavor to analyze in the first issue of “Obnova.” How would you briefly describe your theory of cultural hegemony?**

T.S.: Generally looking, ideas, the ways we handle matters, i.e. everything we use in everyday public speech, in schools, all the wisdom of the world that today’s media, intellectuals of the System and politicians serve to us - are part of cultural hegemony. The basic question is: who defines these notions? Who defines our language and our idioms? Here’s a banal example: At one time people believed that the Earth was flat. Today there is a flat belief that democracy and parliamentary systems are the pinnacle of humanity, an indisputable empirical fact. In a hundred years’ we will likely have new flat myths that the masses will take for granted. The dominant ideas or zeitgeist (spirit of the time), and the people who craft them represent cultural hegemony.

**L.M.: In your opinion to what degree has right-wing, conservative and nationalist political thought impacted the Croatian public? Which media in general or institutions can we refer to as the Right-Wing?**

T.S.: Weak. None at all! To start with, these are three different notions. The Croatian people are conservative and a very “rightist” nation but that is primarily a healthy biological instinct coming not from learning some academic theory of the Right-Wing endeavor. However, with regard to theorizing rightist thoughts, in view of some political right-wing platforms, there is no right-wing school of thought in Croatia. Various institutions like the Ivo Pilar Institute, or Centre for Croatian Studies should perhaps have had that goal, but that was not the case, except for some rare individuals who use the right-wing methodology in the field of history, sociology, literature and the like. Paradoxically, the Church in Croatia is the only “rightist” institution, even though it does not use that definition, nor is it perhaps even aware of the very meaning of the notion “Right.”

**L.M.: Currently in Croatia, the ruling party is a left-liberal coalition, but if we take into consideration that the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) was in power for 18 out of 22 years since the fall of communism – a party considered to be to the right of the Croatian political spectrum – how would you interpret such weakness of rightist ideas in Croatia? Can the failure of the right-wing policies be seen in the**

**cultural policies during the Tuđman's and Sanader's rule or are there other reasons for such a situation?**

T.S.: Words don't mean anything. President Tuđman had a different vision of the Right than did members of the HDZ. The HDZ was making cardinal mistakes for 17 full years; it never even tried to raise the question of cultural hegemony; it never even tried to generate young competent intellectuals in social sciences who were in a position to impose their cultural hegemony, their language, their way of handling matters, their aesthetics, and their definition of lies and the truth. The HDZ was in power primarily by its own inertia – because the people never liked the Left – and not because of its intellectual merits. The same applies to the Croatian Party of Right (HSP) and other rightist parties that never worked on their own cultural-political promotion. Let's recap: throughout history, anywhere in the world, political authority is gained only when cultural-political power is secured, i.e. the control of cultural hegemony. The Left in Croatia realized this phenomenon far better and more successfully. Cultural promotion doesn't mean playing only the tamburitzas, the cheese from the island of Pag, or visiting the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. Cultural hegemony implies being aware of intellectual trends in Europe and in America, being aware of leading ideas and the ability to make oneself credible, regardless of whether the ideas are credible or not, right or wrong. "Right" or "wrong" doesn't mean anything in politics. What does have meaning is the right perception.

**L.M.: The most significant cultural phenomenon in Croatia in the past decade and perhaps the most influential institution for the Croatian Right in that era would be Marko Perković Thompson and his musical work. What do you think about the possibility of popular music shaping the political and cultural identity of a nation? Will Thompson's music remain just a topic for musicological debate or will we be able to project some far-reaching political messages?**

T.S.: That's right. Maybe even Thompson himself is not aware of that. He has done more in promoting Croatian right-wing thoughts abroad than any right-wing political party in Croatia, much less Croatian diplomacy. Thompson is well-known in contemporary right-wing nationalist circles in Western Europe and America, who love his ethno-rock. We can draw a parallel with Slovenia's band Laibach, who is well-known in nationalist circles throughout Europe. Today it is much easier and more enjoyable for young people to listen to Thompson rhymes than reading novels of the rightist author Eugen Kumičić.

**L.M.: Do you think that academic institutions and “high culture” have a greater importance in achieving cultural hegemony of some ideology within society or can that important role in the 21st century be attributed to the media and popular culture?**

T.S.: I agree. That is an important matter. At one time high culture was attributed to the military, to high schools, universities, to princes' courts and ministerial salons. Today the basic source of ideas and as well as the place of cultural-political battles, is in the media – primarily electronic media. They will determine what politicians will say the day after. What does Obama do every morning? First he watches CNN. What does the ex-Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor do when she wakes up? She listens to Croatian Radio. Once it was the opposite. French philosopher, expert on the media, and a former minister, Régis Debray, wrote that the “videosphere had devoured the graphosphere.”

**L.M.: How do you view the role of intellectuals in today's post-communist and post-modern society in Croatia and to what degree is it similar to the role of intellectuals in the West? What are the causes for this self-censorship and “politically correct” rhetoric in intellectual circles?**

T.S.: Actually, these are two questions. If you raise the first question to the normative level then I can suggest what Croatian intellectuals should do. I indirectly referred to that earlier. If your question requires a track record of the current intellectual class in Croatia, then we need to ask who they are and what are they doing? They are pathetic! They represent a poor copy of the West without any trace of originality and lacking any critical self-awareness! With reference to the second question, i.e. self-censorship – I did write a lot about that subject. That is a complex topic and dates back to 1945. However, at least now, after the fall of communism it helps us not to have illusions about the “freedom of speech and thought,” which the System brags about day and night. At least it helps us to realize how the so-called alternative, liberal democracy we are living in now is pretty much scared regarding its cultural hegemony and its media, along with its paid watchdogs who dispense intellectual terror, which is much worse than communism.

**L.M.: For more than 20 years you have been writing for various European and American New-Right periodicals and have spoken at various conferences and panel discussions set up by the New Right and other nationalist groups. Do you consider that today “internationalization” and “ecumenisation” of right-wing**

**movements and ideas are a logical response to globalist trends?**

T.S.: I don't like the term "new right". Those labels were invented by the media in 1970s. Nevertheless, if that is the case then I have to accept the term "new right" against my own will. The New Right (Nouvelle Droite) is not a party, nor a sect, nor a clan, nor a religion. That term comprehends a heterogeneous group of intellectuals regardless of whether they are geneticists or novelists, scientists or poets. Their (our) basic common factor is the rejection of modern myths, rejection of any form of dogmatism, a multifarious approach to the idea of the truth and primarily continual questioning of our/ their own beliefs. With regard to some sort of internationalism, this by no means that we need to reject our Croatian-hood. My genes are here in Croatia. That is my fate. It is essential, however, to overcome the framework of a clannish or a tribal stance and to put instead the Croatian right-wingers into the wider European context. In that sense I would advocate contacts with all rightists regardless whether they are Serbs or Swedes.

**L.M.: You are the author of the English-language study on the European New Right (Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right, 1990). As a result of that book and many other works on that and similar subjects you are considered to be well versed in the ideology and works of the European schools of thought. What in your opinion is the reason for the failure of the European New Right in promoting its ideas over the past four decades? What has led to the fact that the average member of the Front National doesn't know who Alain de Benoist is and what ideas the Nouvelle Droite advocates?**

T.S.: That's a good question, and I myself don't know the answer. Perhaps the reason lies in the media and its demonization of the so-called New Right? Maybe the reason is in our insufficient work? The problem is that the so-called New Right is not a monolithic school of thought. There are huge differences between its followers. Here we see the supreme paradox among rightists, which we also observe every day in Croatia, even among right-wing political parties: rightists are much greater individuals, in the true sense of the word than leftists who are more inclined toward dogmatic thought, to one-mindedness - and to party discipline.

**L.M.: Finally, what in your opinion is the prospect of a cultural revolution of the right-wing in Croatia? Is there a possibility for rightists "to march through institutions" in our homeland?**

T.S.: It's a little late for that. I don't know. A march through institutions requires decades of hard work. I doubt that we have time for that, should the right wing really come to power some day in Croatia. If something is about to happen in the months or years ahead it would probably be a situation similar to that in 1991, i.e. the rise of a reactive and not proactive Right Wing that would be installed into power as a consequence of international circumstances, without actually being prepared for that. I am referring to state of emergency here - which could occur in two or three years, or even sooner in Europe and America, with the downfall of the liberal-capitalist System.



# Ideology in Michel Houellebecq's novels

AUTHOR

**Marko Paradžik, LLB**

The relationship between art and ideology has always been complex because both are in a certain way a reflection of the real world and at the same time a sort of expression of the author's world views. There are various definitions and explanations of the notion of ideology that emerged during the French Revolution when major ideologies were shaped such as socialism and liberalism. There is no single definition of ideology, nevertheless we can try to determine ideology through its social functions: 1) it contributes to fulfilling personal needs for identity and development of the human being; 2) ideologies gain perspective which helps to better understand and interpret the world; 3) ideologies motivate action that can be directed to establishing or maintaining certain values or beliefs; 4) they supply social groups or society on the whole with sets of common principles and values.<sup>1</sup> The term itself was forged in 1796 by Antoine Destutt de Tracy of France who tried to establish ideology as the science of ideas.<sup>2</sup> France in fact is the place of birth of contemporary writer, essayist and poet, Michel Houellebecq (1958). In his novels he dissects, analyses, subtly criticises and mocks many contemporary social phenomena: ideologies, egalitarianism, liberalism, socialism, multiculturalism, feminism, psycho-analysis, Muslim fundamentalism, new age sects, pornography industry, progress of science with regard to genetics and energy, and so on....He is just as popular and criticised on the French scene as for example, Pascal Bruckner or Frédéric Beigbeder whom he allegedly convinced to take up writing. I believe that the author's attitudes and life itself need to be read through his literary achievements. It would be wrong to withdraw his attitudes from his sketchy biography or from his relationship with the media with whom he conducts a sort of performance of passivity and terse responses after deep thought so they seem to be given as if dragged out by force. Most of Houellebecq's leading characters in a Romanesque world are lifeless, without any will and with a defeatist attitude. To what extent are his characters an expression of his autobiographic alter ego and to what extent are

---

1 Slaven Ravlić: Uvod u sociologiju, Ideologija- socijalne funkcije ideologije, pp. 295 – 296.

2 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destutt\\_de\\_Tracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destutt_de_Tracy). 10.11 2012.

they ideal types of contemporary man shaped with overpowering ideologies, is hard to say. In his novel *The Map and the Territory* he himself is a character in his own novel.

It is important to mention that Houellebecq's literary idols could be Balzac, Flaubert, Baudelaire, and Dostoyevsky.<sup>3</sup> While developing his fable he shares a great deal of similarity with the realists taking real events however, the difference is that he often uses these as digressions in his novels whereas Dostoyevsky and Flaubert for instance, use them as the basis for their novels.<sup>4</sup> Just as we would be able to reconstruct French society should all historical sources disappear, from Honoré de Balzac's novels, we would be able to reconstruct the late 20th and early 21st century from Michel Houellebecq's novels sometime in the future. That chronicler of society in one paragraph that explains the title of his first novel *Extension of the Domain of the Struggle* he expresses his opinion of liberalism as an ideology as a sort of indirect criticism and reflection of reality as it is.<sup>5</sup> His direct attitude on liberalism as was expressed in his poetry in the poem *The Last Defence of Liberalism* because "it cannot give meaning, a path to reconciliation of the individual and his closest in the community that we could call human."<sup>6</sup> It is interesting that in that poem, where he gushes out on destructive economism as the main social criteria of liberalism<sup>7</sup>, he

---

3 "Excellent, also excellent-you're a real reactionary, that's good. All the great writers were reactionaries: Balzac, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Dostoyevsky," Michel Houellebecq: *Elementarne čestice*, Litteris, Zagreb, 2004, p. 220.

4 Flaubert allegedly based his best known novel *Madam Bovary*, on newspaper articles, while Dostoyevsky used court transcripts in the trial against Admiral Nechayev to create his fable and main character Peter Verkhovensky in *Demons*. There are numerous examples where Michel Houellebecq incorporates social reality in his novels. With the exception of those that directly mention public figures, there are many indirect examples, such as in *Elementary Particles* which literally as a digression, specifically refers to the agreement of cannibalism between Armin Meius and Bernd Jürgen in 2001 in Wilhelmshaven or for example, the end of the novella *Lanzarote* which clearly alludes to the paedophile scandal in Belgium in August 1996 when high society in collaboration with Jean-Michel Nihoul, organised sex parties for sexual abuse of children.

5 "In a liberal economic system, some build huge fortunes; some endure unemployment and misery. In a perfect liberal sex system, some have a varied and exciting erotic life; some are reduced to masturbation and loneliness. Economic liberalism is broadening the field of struggle, broadening it to all the stages of life and to all social classes. On an economical point of view, Raphael Tisserand belongs to the winners; on a sexual point of view, to the losers. Some are winners on the two criteria; some are losers on the two criteria. Companies fight for some young graduates; women fight for some young men; men fight for some young women; trouble and agitation are considerable," Michel Houellebecq: *Širenja područja borbe*, Litteris, Zagreb 2004, p. 96.

6 Michel Houellebecq: *Sabrane pjesme, Posljednja obrana od liberalizma*, Litteris, Zagreb 2007, p.51.

7 "...It is indisputable that every human project  
It is increasingly assessed clearly on economic criteria,

calls on rejecting the liberal ideology in the name of the encyclical by Pope Leo XIII on society's duty of the Gospel, which his first novel *Extending the Field of the Struggle* begins with a quote from the Epistle to the Romans, "The night is almost gone and the day is near." Therefore let us strip off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light." We could say that he sees Christianity and Catholicism as something that is opposed to the ideology of liberalism. Nevertheless, it is worth recognising that his sympathies toward Christianity and Catholicism are more of a nostalgic nature as is his reactionary attitude which is in fact nostalgia toward a one-time situation that is now decaying in the face of change. In his *Elementary Particles*, thought to be his best literary work, in his prologue he presents Christianity as an example of metaphysical mutation that destroyed the ancient world. In the novel, similarly to Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground* using induction he comes to conclusions about certain social phenomena through digressing from the main plot of the fable. For example, presenting the transgression of the Hippy movement which emerged during the sexual revolution of the 1960s (cultural revolution of 60 eighth graders), on to rock n roll (Woodstock) as a musical media of which metal music is a metamorphosis (black metal, death metal, heavy metal) that impacts the formation of Satanic sub-cultures and sects in the 1980s and 1990s when films like *The Silence of the Lambs* win the Oscar awards with the main character being an anti-character, a mass murderer - Hannibal Lecter.<sup>8 9</sup> In his novels, Houellebecq often mentions many people in public life like Mick Jagger whom he considers to be a symbol of unpunished evil (he suspects that he murdered Brian Jones)<sup>10</sup> and Michael Jackson as a symbol of egalitarian ideology because of his hermaphrodite physiognomy and racial transformation with the assistance of surgery. Houellebecq as a writer discusses the celebrity scene and pop culture because it would be impossible to portrait such decadence in our society without those people as they surmise what the masses in liberalism idolise. Unlike his first novel in which the dominant perspective is by the narrator in the first person, in *Elementary Particles*, the narrator is in

---

Absolutely numeric criteria,  
 That can be input into information data bases  
 That is not acceptable and we have to fight to  
 Monitor economies and their subdual of certain  
 Criteria that I would dare to call ethics..." Ibidem

8 Michel Houellebecq: *Elementarne čestice*, Litteris, Zagreb 2004, p. 252.

9 In the late 1980s Oliver Stone's film *Natural Born Killers* gained cult status. The film superbly directed idealises through the media and masses a romantic couple who are serial killers. Croatia's most-known killer Srđan Mladan allegedly said once that that was the best film he had ever seen and that he had watched it several times.

10 Michel Houellebecq: *Elementarne čestice*, Litteris, Zagreb, 2004, p.247.

the third person and in the perfect tense indicating that someone from the future is doing the narrating. Based on some fictitious Clifden Notes, personal impressions and theories by the main character, the narrator endeavours to reconstruct the life of that main character that is significant for the history of the future because he launched a biological revolution by changing human life more than any revolution of physics, or information technology. His next novel *The Possibility of an Island* perfectly continues from *Elements* where presenting two perspectives, one from the main character from the present and the other, his clone who lives in a anti-utopian world in the future, something like Huxley's future where the allegoric image is the extreme consequences of today's ruling ideology of liberalism and socialism as part of the cultural hegemony of the present. It is interesting that the writer is indeed critical of Huxley as a writer and underscores that Huxley's grandfather was a good friend of Darwin's who defended the main presumptions of the theory of evolution. His father and brother were prominent biologists, what is more, Julian was appointed the first director-general of UNESCO and wrote an article, *What I dare think* as the main proponent of eugenics, in which he describes the idea of improving the genetic composition of the human population.<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note the title of Huxley's last novel *Island* (1962) through an interpretation of the relationship between a fictitious hippy, liberal society and social democracy.<sup>12</sup> Keeping to his flowing and easy to read style, in *Elementary Particles* and *The Possibility of an Island* Houellebecq sees the thin line between intellectualism and pornographic vulgarity by bombarding the reader with accentuated sexual images of the relationship of the main character and his wife, presenting the clearly obviously emptiness in that relationship. The genesis of the New Age Elohim movement in *The Possibility of an Island* that becomes the dominant religion in the final death of Western European society and its Scientology nature will lead to a spiritual and biological metamorphosis of the human kind with the intention of creating pure individualism without any personality is similar to the genesis of the New Age Raelian movement in his novella *Lanzarote*. That shows very well to what extent his works are mutually permeated thematically and a sort of organic unity in a hyper-realistic exposition of the ideological-cultural situation facing our society and what the implications are for our future.

---

11 Michel Houellebecq: *Elementarne čestice*, Litteris, Zagreb, 2004, p.189.

12 "The book was second-rate, but it was easy to read and it had an enormous effect on hippies and, through them, on New Agers. If you look at it closely, the harmonious society in *Island* has a lot in common with *Brave New World*. Huxley was probably senile by that time. He didn't seem to notice the similarities himself The society in *Island* is as close to *Brave New World* as hippie liberalism is to bourgeois liberalism—or rather to its Swedish social-democratic variant."

*Ibidem*, p.191.

Houellebecq showed his intrinsic comprehension of socialism in an essay in which he reflects on the messianic book by Dostoyevsky written in exile in Siberia after converting to Christianity from revolutionary socialism in the so-called Petrashevsky circle, where he honours leftist with this description: ... "Scum who monopolised intellectual debate during the XX century..."<sup>13</sup> In the novel *The Platform* where the main theme is sexual tourism (generally as a notion of liberal society and set in Thailand and Cuba) and radical Islamisation, he comments on socialism. That work lacks a partial analysis of the said phenomena in comparison with the analyses given in Houellebecq's other novels, he and some other authors nevertheless are capable of recognising traces of the conflict with the Left.<sup>14</sup> Houellebecq's novel *The Map and Territory* where he deals with the end of art in wilderness post-modernism and overwhelming commercialism is certainly not an exception to Houellebecq's ideological showdown except that it has taken on a dose of greater refined subtleness and irony. Jed Martin created the portraits, "Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons carving out the Art market" or "Bill Gates and Steve Jobs Discussing the Future of Information Technology," as an expression of the domination of liberal reality only in the end with his photographs of Michelin Cartes which brought him a huge profit and he became a part of senseless liberal, abstract and inorganic art with its only value being the price it reaches on the market. It is in the character of a missed existence of the main character's father - an architect inspired by the ideal of Charles

---

13 "This is the moment (at least we can hope so) that we return to the misdeeds of left intellectuals and it's best to recall the novel *Demons* published in 1872, where their ideologies are completely exposed where misdeeds and crimes a clearly announced in the scene with the murder of Shatov. So what was it that made Dostoyevsky's intuition make such and on that historical movement? Absolutely nothing! Marxists, existentialists, anarchists and leftist of all kinds could have progressed and infected the world just as much without Dostoyevsky ever having to write one word. Did they at least motivate some sort of idea, any new thought compared to his previous novels? Not in the least. A vacuous century that did not invent anything! It is also exaggerated to the limits. And it loves to ask the most ridiculous questions like: Can we write poetry after Auschwitz?" Michel Houellebecq "Lanzarote i drugi tekstovi, Izaći iz XX. stoljeća, Litteris, 2007, p. 77.

14 "Here are the author's views on Cuban socialism: 'Cuban society like all societies is a mere complex system of deceit with the aim of some people avoiding boring and distressing tasks. The only thing is that the deceit has failed, no-one believes it anymore and no-one any longer carries hope that they will enjoy the fruits of common labour.' Houellebecq like a true Westerner enters into harsh conflict with the Left. I have to admit that the cultural history of the Twentieth Century in fact is completely a history of the Left and that it has a dominant role, just like the Right had (conservatism, Christianity) until the second half of the Nineteenth Century. Unlike politics, the Right barely exists in Twentieth Century culture. However, the history of Twentieth Century culture is the history of the individual in conflict with the Left (Krlježa, Kiš, Orwell, Kundera, Solzhenitsyn, Babelj, etc.)."

Rade Jarak: Varijanta općeljudske gluposti, Vijenac, No.244, 10 July 2003  
<http://www.matica.hr/Vijenac/vijenac244.nsf/AllWebDocs/pl>,

Fourier<sup>15</sup>, William Morris<sup>16</sup> and the Bauhaus movement of Walther Gropius, can we see an analysis and knowledge of socialism in its cultural derivatives.<sup>17</sup> Naturally he wasn't even aware how much the source of his ideal impacted his life in which he didn't achieve his ideals through projects in his own vocation but rather adapted perfectly well in a capitalist system working in tourism settlements for the simple reason because that was profitable. As such it is impressive that his long years of silence and resignation toward his son ended with an expose of his worldview, and the symbolism of their relationship as father and son gives an additional note to everything.

It seems that because Houellebecq himself profited by profiling socialism and liberalism in his literary works and in some way realised the connection between those ideological phenomena in the sense that one can't exist without the other as both have the same philosophical roots (e.g. Enlightenment, rationalism) and common founding postulates (e.g. Primacy of the economy, fetishism of technology, egalitarianism, belief in progress...etc.). A common or more appropriate definition for both those ideological phenomena would be liberal-socialism. The majority in our society still live in a false dichotomy of those notions of liberalism and socialism so that both notions represent two diametrically opposing notions. There is a belief in society that anyone who considers themselves as a leftist or socialist is opposed to the capitalist system of liberalism while at the same time ignoring or not realising the fact that the coalition in our political life of the ruling majority between the Croatian People's Party (HNS) as a liberal party and the Social Democratic Party

---

15 "Charles Fourier (1772-1837) wrote a book *The New World of Love* which was carefully preserved and remained unpublished until 1967. The French edition of *Collected Works* (1841) published only a few good refined fragments. That social-utopian, fierce fighter of man's emancipation in general, particularly women, in *The New World of Love* deals with the theory of society that will be called harmony, and the basic driver will be sexual passion rid of any limits, including polygamy, incest, paedophilia, sadism, masochism and so on," translator's comment in Michel Houellebecq: *Mapa i teritorij*, Litteris, Zagreb, 2011, p 198.

16 William Morris (1834-1896) became the treasurer of the National Liberal League 1879. In December already motivated by Friedrich Engels and Elanore Marx he founded the Socialist League. An architect, textile designer and painter, a follower of Pre-Raphaelitism.

17 "It is unusual that when Gropius established Bauhaus, he was on the exact same line - perhaps a little less political and more spiritually preoccupied - even though he too was a socialist. In the *Proclamation of Bauhaus* (1919) he states that he wishes to bridge opposition between art and crafts, proclaiming everyone's right to beauty: William Morris's programme entirely. Little by little however, as Bauhaus drew closer to industry, he became more of a functionalist and productivist; he was marginalised in the Kandinsky and Klee school and when Goering closed the institute he had completely passed into the service of capitalist production." Michel Houellebecq: *Mapa i teritorij*, Litteris, Zagreb, 2011, p. 205.

(SDP) as a socialist party is completely logical. I can note one more real example of their real cooperation during the Subversive Film Festival where the main guest was Slavoj Žižek who was not at all disturbed by the fact that the sponsors of the festival are part of liberal capitalism which he as a declared leftist supposedly criticises. People like him in fact are necessary because they just make him stronger. Finally, as another argument we can always take the example from the history of the previously mentioned 60 eighth graders who as leftists fought against a capitalist liberal system only to be melted into that system and taking up key positions in state institutions.

# CROSSING BORDERS: Multiculturalism and Identity in the 21st Century

AUTHOR

**Leo Marić, M.A. (History)**

The Dutch people, just like Croats and many other European nations, celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas on December 6th. St. Nicholas (*Sinterklass* in Dutch) brings gifts to good children while his black co-traveller punishes bad children. That co-traveller in German-speaking countries and in Croatia and Slovenia is called *Krampus*, whereas in The Netherlands their somewhat different version of saint's co-traveller is named *Zwarte Piet* (Black Pete). That is part of European culture, of European folklore, of European identity. However, certain human rights groups in the Netherlands called for this character to be removed from St. Nicholas Day celebrations due to racism. According to anti-racist activists and the Negro population in the Netherlands, because of his black skin, *Zwarte Piet* is associated with Africans and that this is in fact a call to renew slavery in Europe. Despite it almost being tragicomic to accuse a character in folk tradition for racism, the accusations has led the UN Human Rights Council, in the 21st century, to send an official request to the Dutch government to ban the character of *Zwarte Piet*. The request, though, was rejected with the government refusing to ban a children's character and several public rallies and on-line petitions were held to show that the accusations of racism were not acceptable.<sup>1</sup> The ridiculousness of the accusations was obvious; however this brings us to question the influence of the ideology of multiculturalism on European identity and cultural heritage.

First of all, it is necessary to define the notion of *multiculturalism*. In the descriptive sense, multiculturalism defines all societies that are made up of members of several cultures, nations, ethnic groups or religious denominations. In that context,

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the Peil.nl, Dutch public polling agency, as many as 92% of Dutch people do not consider *Zwarte Piet* to be a racist character nor associate him with slavery, 91% are opposed to changing the character's features. An on-line Facebook campaign in defence of *Zwarte Piet* ([www.facebook.com/pietitie](http://www.facebook.com/pietitie)) collected over 2 million likes, making it the most popular Facebook site in The Netherlands ever.



multiculturalism just represents a demographic fact without any additional political connotations. On the other hand, multiculturalism in the normative sense is an ideology or political attitude that promotes the concept of a multicultural society and is inclined to institutionalise the multicultural features of a society. In fact, this latter definition of multiculturalism, i.e. the ideology of multiculturalism, represents one of the most important problems of European society at the start of the 21st century. The ideology is opposed to the American system of dealing with immigration, popularly known as the *melting pot*, which assumes complete assimilation of immigrants into the domicile society. Unlike the *melting pot*, multiculturalism advocates preserving the specifics of cultural, ethnic and religious minorities within a certain society.

### **Ethnomasochism as a threat to European societies**

The central problem with the *multi-kulti* ideology lies in education policies and in public discourse that it promotes. They comprise the conscious decline of European (Western) culture, the deconstruction of the national founding myths, imposing a guilt complex for their colonial past and crimes committed during World War II, encouraging the acceptance of a larger number of non-European immigrants, etc. French philosopher Guillaume Faye described that group of attitudes with the expression *ethnomasochism*, which actually refers to attributing a sense of guilt and worthlessness to one's own ethnic group, that is, one's own nation.

These attitudes were implemented into education system of USA by the New Left during the 1970s, and a decade later by their European colleagues, too. In the meantime, the ethnomasochism gained support from the political establishment. American neoconservative theoretician and political commentator Irving Kristol believes that "these campus radicals (professors as well as students), having given up on the 'class struggle' - the American workers all being conscientious objectors - have now moved to an agenda of ethnic-racial conflict. The agenda, in its education dimension, has as its explicit purpose to induce in the minds and sensibilities of minority students a 'Third World consciousness' - that is the very phrase they use. In practice, this means an effort to persuade minority students to be contemptuous of and hostile to America and Western civilization as a whole, interpreted as an age-old system of oppression, colonialism, and exploitation. What these radicals blandly call multiculturalism is as much a 'war against the West' as Nazism and Stalinism ever were."<sup>2</sup> Similarly to Kristol, Croatian essayist Tomislav Sunić accuses the West-

---

2 I. KRISTOL, *Neoconservatism*, p. 52.

ern education system that “no longer are professors required to demonstrate extra skills in their subject matters; instead, they must parade with sentimental and self-deprecatory statements which, as a rule, must denigrate the European cultural heritage.”<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the education system, ethno-masochism exists in public discourse where it is referred to as *political correctness*. The *newspeak* of multiculturalism comprehends the use of so-called culturally inclusive expressions. That means avoiding expressions that allegedly discriminate cultural, ethnic and religious minorities. Tomislav Sunić describes that phenomenon: “As a result of growing racial diversity the liberal elites are aware that in order to uphold social consensus and prevent the system from possible balkanization and civil war, new words and new syntax have to be invented. It was to be expected that these new words would soon find their way into modern legislations. More and more countries in the West are adopting laws that criminalize free speech and that make political communication difficult.”<sup>4</sup> In fact, the case noted at the start of this article is an example of that ethno-masochism and *newspeak* which is imposed by new, multicultural value system.

## The end of multiculturalism?

The development of the situation with non-European immigrants in Europe over the past decade has shown even the most optimistic that the multicultural ideology in practice is experiencing its decay. Strengthening of Islamic terrorism on a global level, rebellions by young Muslims on the outskirts of European capitals, the failure of integrating Muslims in European society and comparatively, the growing number of Muslim immigrants in Europe clearly show that multicultural utopia doesn't have a future.

European political leaders have confirmed that fact. In October 2010, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that the “the approach [to build] a multicultural [society] and to live side by side and to enjoy each other ... has failed, utterly failed.” Merkel gained support for her views from the heads of the Christian Democratic Union and their partners in the Christian Social Union while surveys among public opinion indicate that her attitudes about the downfall of multiculturalism is shared by the majority of German society.<sup>5</sup> Several months later, British Prime Minister

---

3 T. SUNIC, *Postmortem Report*, p. 130.

4 *Ibidem*, p. 129.

5 “Merkel says German multicultural society has failed”, BBC News, 17 October 2010 (<http://www.bbc>).

David Cameron in February said that the *doctrine of state multiculturalism* has fallen through. “We have failed to provide a vision of society to which they [Muslims] feel they want to belong. We have even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run counter to our values”, Cameron said in his speech to the Munich conference on European security.<sup>6</sup> Finally, French President Nicolas Sarkozy joined in the proclamation of the death of multiculturalism, while saying in a television interview: “We have been too concerned about the identity of the person who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him.” He added that “if you come to France, you accept to melt into a single community, which is the national community, and if you do not want to accept it, you cannot be welcome in France.”<sup>7</sup>

The said statements by leading European statesmen certainly did not stop the influx of non-European immigrants to Europe nor did they remove the fact that current European societies are exceptionally multicultural. However, they have to a certain extent legitimised public debate about the problem of multiculturalism which until then was considered to be a marginal political issue. Because mainstream political parties did not offer a solution to the problem of the large number of illegal immigrants and the existence of a huge number of unintegrated Muslim communities in Europe, this has led to a strengthening of nationalist and populist parties in the continent advocating a wide range of anti-immigrant measures: to stop or at least decrease further immigration, to repatriate illegal immigrants who have committed a crime, abolishing the Schengen Area of free traffic of goods and people in the EU, etc. Some of the parties with these political platforms are currently participating in the government of some European countries, however, a wider European platform to resolve the problem of massive immigration and the downfall of the multicultural model has still not emerged.

---

co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451)

6 “State multiculturalism has failed, says David Cameron”, BBC News, 5 February 2011 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994>)

7 “Nicolas Sarkozy joins David Cameron and Angela Merkel view that multiculturalism has failed” Daily Mail Online, 11 February 2011 (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1355961/Nicolas-Sarkozy-joins-David-Cameron-Angela-Merkel-view-multiculturalism-failed.html>)

## Toward alternative solutions

French philosopher Alain de Benoist - the founder of the European New Right as a school of thought - took an interesting attitude with regard to multiculturalism. In an interview with the American *The Occidental Quarterly*, De Benoist said that, “it would be unrealistic to believe that immigrants who are already here will decide to leave or that it would be possible to oblige them to leave. That’s why I think that it would be better to abandon the Jacobin logic of assimilation, which knows only abstract individuals and restricts cultural identities and religious liberties to the private sphere.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, De Benoist rejects the demands for faster and more consistent assimilation for non-European immigrants into European society, as most Western European nationalist parties are calling for. That is why in 2004 he criticised the centre-right government’s attempts to ban Muslim women from wearing a hijab. Instead, he advocates a communitarian model of co-existence of various cultural, ethnic and religious communities in Europe.

The key concept of the European New Right with regard to the question of identity is *ethnopluralism* (also known as *ethno-differentialism* or simply *differentialism*). It is an attitude that every nation has the right to preserve their cultural heritage and national identity, recognition of its specificity by others and creating their own political institutions.<sup>9</sup> Ethnopluralism is opposed to universalism and mixing cultures (which leads to their disappearance), but also against the theory of the conflict of civilisations. The world is *pluriversum*, comprises a multitude of various cultures, nations and beliefs. “The recognition of differences is now a requisite to living together in a globalized world in which no Western nation is any longer ‘homogeneous’. Of course, such recognition demands reciprocity and respect for the common law. Federal or imperial policies are the best suited to the coexistence of diverse populations, because such policies do not force different peoples into the same mold, but deter separatist tendencies by generalizing the principle of autonomy - that is, in establishing a flexible dialectic between the necessity of unity in decision and respecting the diversity of the communities”, says Alain de Benoist.<sup>10</sup>

This French philosopher presents *the right to difference* (fr. *la droit a la difference*) and *the cause of the people* (fr. *la cause des peuples*) as a response to an ideology of liberal egal-

---

8 B. SYLVIAN, “European Son: An Interview with Alain de Benoist,” *The Occidental Quarterly*, p. 19.

9 See Pierre-André TAGUIEFF, “From Race to Culture: The New Right’s View of European Identity”, *Telos*, 1993, No. 98-99, pp. 99 - 125.

10 B. SYLVIAN, “European Son: An Interview with Alain de Benoist,” *The Occidental Quarterly*, p. 22.

itarianism and individualism. In that case these attitudes are by no means a concession to liberalism, as claimed by his critics from the right. American new-right publicist Michael O'Meara says that De Benoist "was no less responsible for leading the New Right into a dead end, compromising its project and making undue concessions to the liberalism he ostensibly opposes."<sup>11</sup> According to O'Meara, Benoist advocated "communitarian liberalism" (which is in fact a *contradictio in terminis* because communitarianism and liberalism are conflicting political ideologies). The root of these unjustified accusation is the incomprehension of liberalism and multiculturalism. Liberalism presumes the absence of any indirect relations between individual and the state. Egalitarian liberalism today is also critical of multiculturalism, but from another angle.<sup>12</sup> Unlike liberalism, De Benoist's ethnopluralism clearly calls for affirmation of ethnic communities as mediators between individual and state. On the other hand, while the ideology of multiculturalism comprehends explicit ethnomasochism and strengthening ethnic minority groups at the expense of the majority, ethnopluralism calls for the right to difference of all ethnic communities, affirming their ethnic identities in that way.

### **Conclusion: What happens when you cross the borders?**

The ideology of multiculturalism has undoubtedly been defeated as a political project in Western Europe. Ethnomasochism, which has remained after it, has brought significant damage to Western European societies, their identities and political self-confidence. Together with gender ideology, homosexuality, feminism and human rights ideology, it will probably continue to represent a factor in the European political space for some time yet, as long as there is security and peace in Europe. However, with the increasing number of African and Arab immigrants crossing European borders and Muslim immigrant communities in Europe growing and strengthening, we can assume that European society will eventually reject ethnomasochism and reaffirm ethnic identity as the foundation of social cohesion. In other words, when immigrant Muslim communities with their demands cross

---

11 M. O'MEARA, "Benoist's Pluriversum: An Ethnonationalist Critique," *The Occidental Quarterly*, p. 30.

12 From the position of universal egalitarian liberalism, the problem of the ideology of multiculturalism lies in its unsustainability. If state laws were to be implemented differently in relation to various ethnic and religious groups due to consideration of their real differences (and that is exactly what is happening in multicultural societies in the West) the result would be an unjust society. Advocates of universal egalitarian liberalism consider that religion has to remain in the private sphere and the state has to establish common moral obligations. More in B. BARRY, *Culture and Equality: And Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2001.

the borders of what is possible and desired, ethnomasochism will have to disappear from the education system and public discourse.

Nevertheless, the question should be raised how can we regulate relations between various cultural, ethnic and religious communities in Europe. Multiculturalism of European society will remain a demographic fact even after the multicultural ideology disappears, and that sets the task for European societies to create a new system to replace the civic liberal multiculturalist one. Can ethnopluralism be an achievable alternative or will Europe once again have to wage bloody wars to preserve its identity and the way of life?

# THE REVOLUTION OF NOTHINGNESS: Julius Evola and criticism of manifestations of social change in the 1960s

AUTHOR

**Mario Tomas, M.A. (History)**

This article tries to provide a complex insight into Evola's thought in the 1960s, while adhering to the interpretation of the significance of its metapolitics through a decade that represents a period of Evola's great popularity and intensive publications that labelled him as "The Marcuse of the Right." In that period, particularly at the end of the sixties, he published a series of books and interviews describing social changes from various aspects. Evola's criticism relates to the student movement that was stigmatised as an irrational and subversive phenomenon, a new culture that impacted the character of younger generations and formulated a modus of opposition to the right, comprehended as a revolt against the modern world and as a form of legitimising possible questioning and contesting dominant systems.

## ***Cavalcare la tigre as an assumption of criticism***

His work *Cavalcare la tigre (Ride the Tiger)* published in 1961 represents a sort of instruction by Julius Evola for, as he called them, "foreigners of the modern world," i.e. *People of tradition*:

*"This book sets out to study some of the ways in which the present age appears essentially as an age of dissolution. At the same time, it addresses the question of what kind of conduct and what form of existence are appropriate under the circumstances for a particular human type.<sup>1</sup>* Referring to "differentiated" men, Evola presents the norms and a strategy of behaviour in facing modernity that comes from traditional metaphysics, believing that dissolution of the modern world affects the bourgeoisie in a similar way to that affecting the traditional. That "negation of a negation," signifies a certain alterna-

---

1 Evola, Julius, *Cavalcare la tigre*, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 2009, p. 21.

tive between “nothingness” and a possible return to tradition: “*The alternative is a “negation of a negation,” so as to signify a phenomenon that, in its own way, is positive. This double negation might end in nothingness—in the nothingness that erupts in multiple forms of chaos, dispersion, rebellion, and “protest” that characterize many tendencies of recent generations; or in that other nothingness that is scarcely hidden behind the organized system of material civilization. Alternatively, for the men in question here it might create a new, free space that could eventually become the premise for a future, formative action.*”<sup>2</sup> The metaphor “ride the tiger” describes a pattern of behaviour that traditional ethics prescribes as a terminal phase of an historical cycle: “*When a cycle of civilization is reaching its end, it is difficult to achieve anything by resisting it and by directly opposing the forces in motion. The current is too strong; one would be overwhelmed. The essential thing is not to let oneself be impressed by the omnipotence and apparent triumph of the forces of the epoch. These forces, devoid of connection with any higher principle, are in fact on a short chain. One should not become fixated on the present and on things at hand, but keep in view the conditions that may come about in the future. Thus the principle to follow could be that of letting the forces and processes of this epoch take their own course, while keeping oneself firm and ready to intervene when “the tiger, which cannot leap on the person riding it, is tired of running.*”<sup>3</sup> Abandoning direct action, Evola advocates withdrawing the “differentiated man” to an internal position as a precondition for any possible return to tradition in the future. In that regard he suggests the connection between *apoliteia* with the dissolution of politics.” “*The hierarchical, organic state has ceased to exist. No comparable party or movement exists, offering itself as a defender of higher ideas.*” “*The situation has gone so far that even if parties or movements of a different type existed, they would have almost no following among the rootless masses who respond only to those who promise material advantages and “social conquests.*”<sup>4</sup> For the “differentiated man” the only acceptable norm is *apoliteia*, i.e. detachment from everything that is “politics.”

The book’s central theme is to advocate the concept of tradition as is Evola’s entire thought because in it he finds anti-nihilistic continuity in the development of society and culture. In tradition he finds the principles that he described as superior and opposed to various social aspects of the sixties.

## Criticism of the young and the student movement

Evola’s criticism of 1968 above all presumes youth as mass-men to be lost politically

---

2 Ibidem, p.25.

3 Ibidem, p. 27.

4 Ibidem, p.152.



and socially. In the philosophy of history directed toward the idea of decadence, the concept of “youth” is not the equivalent of “new.” Youth is a “regressive phenomenon of modernity” and he considers the young person to be a voice of change, the carrier of new and authentic values who needs to be given a free path and from which we need to learn instead of educating and forming it.<sup>5</sup> Speaking of Italian youth, he concludes that it is infantile: “*When this type of youth pretends that it is misunderstood, the only answer one can give it is that there is simply nothing to understand about it, and that, under a normal order, it would only be a matter of putting such youth back where it belongs without delay, as is done with children when their stupidity becomes tiresome, invasive and impertinent,*” and concludes that in the majority of cases their arguments do not deserve to even be considered at the level that is dedicated to it nor the significance assigned to it with the absurd rejection of those who are not “young.” “*There can be no doubt that we are living in an age of dissolution: so much so that people approximate to the condition of the “rootless”, for whom ‘society’ no longer makes any sense.*”<sup>6</sup> The concept of “youth” according to a traditional perspective rejects the generational boundary presenting it as an internal dimension, characterised by the will for the unconditional which implies everything that idealism is in the positive sense while on the other hand, every form of courage, creative initiative, a mood that leads to new positions having in mind one’s own personality.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, Evola considers biological youth that transforms into political youth but only to that measure that it becomes revolutionary at any price, does it become an exponent of tradition and the carriers of its power.<sup>8</sup> By assessing youth he rejects the main characteristics of the culture of youth in the sixties. The acceptance of certain models by young people with regard to music, dress sense and use of jargon, Evola interprets as a vulgar excess and symptom of “regressive progressives” connected to the decadence of the modern world. He particularly condemned vulgar expressions of the youth: “*Since this manner of speaking is not that of their social class, of the social environment to which they belong by birth, and since youths, girls, and even elderly persons from the middle classes, from the respectable bourgeoisie, and even parts of the aristocracy, imagine themselves to be demonstrating anti-conformism, freedom, and ‘modernity’ by ostentatiously making use of slang, the real meaning of the phenomenon must simply be a pleasure taken in self-degrada-*

---

5 Casata, Francesco, *A destra del fascismo - profilo politico di Julius Evola*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2003, p.395.

6 Evola, Julius, *L'Arco e la Clava*, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 1995, p.191.

7 Evola, Julius, *Ricognizioni*, Edizioni Mediterranee, 1974, p.39.

8 *Ibidem*, p.42.

tion, self-abasement, and self-contamination.”<sup>9</sup> He refers here to the success of the Beatles, whom he characterised as “screaming singers” and yet just another manifestation of vulgar taste. In addition the prevalence of pop and rock on a global scale is represented as an expression of internationalism and American cultural hegemony that has attracted youth *en masse*.<sup>10</sup> Evola gives a dual interpretation of the massive student movement in the sixties, depending on the connection or rather, not being connected to the student revolt and politics. On the one hand, almost conspiratorially, the student revolt is presented simply as a weapon in the hands of Marxist subversion, in the sense of mere instrumentation of the student movement and also as a feature of real political affinity. On the other hand, the student movement has a depoliticised character, defined as irrational and an anarchistic instinctive phenomenon: *reaction against the negative aspects of the current world is characteristic of these currents, it is even more characteristic for them that this has to do with instinctive manifestations that are unregulated and anarchic and cannot be legitimised as being against those being opposed.*<sup>11</sup> In that way, opposing or contesting the student movement is defined as irrational anarchism of the masses with uncoordinated instinct which in Evola’s decadent and anti-progressive understanding of history represents a symptom of additional degradation and regression of modernity.

## On Marcuse and Maoism

From a certain political and ideological perspective, Evola considers Herbert Marcuse and Mao Tse-Tung as the idols of the student protest in the sixties.

Interpreting Marcuse’s popularity, Evola underscores that his case is interesting as an example of the way myths were created in that era: *The strength of Marcuse’s myth lies in having crystallized a confused impulse to revolt, without principles, he believed to have found in him a philosopher without a clearer view and without a clearer separation of positive and negative in any serious study. In reality, Marcuse could have given a valuable contribution to the critique of modern civilisation, by not just representing himself as an epigone of one group of thinkers who had already started it before.*<sup>12</sup> From a certain political and ideological perspective, Herbert Marcuse for Evola represented an important philosopher who inspired the student and youth revolt in the sixties. He shared one aspect of criticism of the system, an analysis of the repressive character of technological pro-

---

9 Evola, Julius, *L Arco e la Clava*, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 1995, p.81.

10 Cassata, *A destra del fascismo*, str.397.

11 Ibidem, p.405.

12 Evola, Julis, *Il mito Marcuse*, in: “I testidiTotalità, Il Borghese, La Destra,” 2002, p. 65.

gressive society: Marcuse outlined a rough frame of “industrially advanced society” and a “civilisation of consumerism” accusing forms of its equalisation, enslavement and repressive conditioning, within the framework of a system of domination that, so that it does not transform into terror and direct imposition, is realised in the sign of welfare, maximum satisfying needs and alleged, free democracy yet in reality it is no less totalitarian or destructive in character than communism. In his analysis, Marcuse shows that functionalism is personified in the same area as speculative and scientific thought, that take not of every metaphysical character, subduing everything to instrumentalised “rationalism.”<sup>13</sup> Evola subtracts the originality of this interpretation and concludes: *In all this Marcuse did not say anything new at all. Predecessors of that criticism can already be found in De Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, A. Siegfried and Nietzsche himself.*<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, he underscored Marcuse’s inconsistent criticism and described him as an author of revolutionary utopia left to implementation of students and marginalised minorities: *“This realization has caused a bypassing of revolutionary Marxism, now deprived of its original motive force, in favour of a “global protest” against the system. This movement, however, also lacks any higher principle: it is irrational, anarchic, and instinctive in character. For want of anything else, it calls on the abject minorities of outsiders, on the excluded and rejected, sometimes even on the Third World (in which case Marxist fantasies reappear) and on the blacks, as being the only revolutionary potential. But it stands under the sign of nothingness: it is a hysterical “revolution of the void and the underground,” of “maddened wasps trapped in a glass jar, who throw themselves frenetically against the walls.” In all of this it confirms in another way the general nihilistic character of the epoch.*”<sup>15</sup> As such Evola’s criticism has a complex nature. “Marcuse’s myth” is undoubtedly condemned even though he offered legitimacy to his revolt underscoring the absence of offering a positive alternative. According to Evola, Marcuse becomes a philosopher worthy of the “revolution of nothingness” in the form of “wild and destructive” revolt.<sup>16</sup>

Motivated by Mao Tse-Tung’s popularity, particularly in certain circles of the right, the *Il Borghese* in 1968 published an article in which he analyses the nature of Maoism. Evola considered that there can be no talk of a real, specific Maoist doctrine, as such one clear myth of Maoism which lack a precise ideological formulation he draws from a meaning given of Mao’s “cultural revolution” and nationalism. *Nationalism is considered to be the basis of Maoist doctrine. But beside the fact that nationalism*

---

13 Ibidem.

14 Ibidem.

15 Evola, Julius, *Cavalcare la tigre*, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 2009, p.43.

16 Evola, Julius, *Il mito Marcuse*, p. 68.

was already affirmed with Tito's 'heresy' and it seems to be advancing in many satellites of the USSR, it passes over a key question, that is that Maoism is essentially communist nationalism, founded on the collective concept of the masses, or almost hordes, nations, and in the end, no different from Jacobian. When Mao says that he wants to fight against rigid party and bureaucratic structures to be directly connected to the 'people', when he speaks about 'the army that does everything with the people', taking on that well known formula 'total mobility', he more or less manifests the same spirit, or pathos, as masses of the French Revolution, while the relationship of the masses - leader (cult of individualism against anyone those who post-Stalin's fought against, rose up in the figure of Mao), reproduces one of the most problematic aspects of dictatorial totalitarianism. Communism plus nationalism is in fact in opposition to the superior articulated concept - aristocratization of the nation.<sup>17</sup> Interpreting Mao's Cultural Revolution he continues: 'The cultural revolution' would be positively nihilistic, aimed at renewing that starts from nothing. These are all empty words. Apart from that, Mao is not talking to the man but the 'nation': nation, nation is the only driving force, the creator of universal history. Contempt of a person, an individual is no less violent than in the first Bolshevik ideology. The famous Cultural Revolution was in fact an anti-cultural revolution. Cultural tradition in the Western sense (even traditional Chinese: Confucian ideal *jena*) was contested and fought against. In the end he concludes that Mao can impress the naive, they who in their initial activist phase, euphoric for the revolutionary movement, but not to a great extent. The idea of 'heroic realism' by Ernst Jünger, is a more adequate point of orientation, formulated outside any form of instrumentation or epoch directly after World War I.<sup>18</sup>

## Opposition of the Right

Many of Evola's works after World War II aimed at theorising the traditional right that would become an accepted norm. According to his definition and in the context of "parliamentary anarchy," the right is not equated with the conservative party opposed to the left, nor any social class or interest group but rather as a force directed to the idea of defending the state in regard to the domination over the state in the name of the economy and individualistic atomised society.<sup>19</sup> Considering his own critique *opposing the system* that was advocated by the left, which was in fact a false opposition void of any positive alternative and characterised as "irrational foundations," Evola's opposition advocates *real opposition* from the right, legitimised

---

17 Evola, Julius, *L'infatuazione maoista*, in "I testidiTotalità, Il Borghese, La Destra, 2002, p.69.

18 Ibidem, pp.70, 71.

19 Cassata, *A destradel*, p.321

by metaphysical tradition and directed not just against the *system and consumerist society*, but at a general level, against modernity. According to his theorising, that global protest should comprise several elements: the idea of creating a political and spiritual elite, a model of reforming universities and a project to progressively transform society.<sup>20</sup> Conscious of the impossibility of having such a concept accepted on a wider, mass scale because of the predictable inertia of wider layers of the population not prepared to waiver the comfort that has come from the *culture of consumerism*, he considered that representing that idea on a wider scale was too abstract.

As such, the subject of the proposed *conservative revolution* didn't need to be identified with the masses, but to the political and spiritual elite and opposed to "stupidified" youth and the *beat* generation that he considers to be '*rebels without a flag*.' That elite would have to build enthusiastic capacities, unconditionally dedicated, removed from bourgeois existence and pure material and egotistical interests. They would be the preconditions for a process of spiritual formation in the traditional sense, through traditional metaphysics. The said spiritual formation should be the starting point for activism in society and on the political platform<sup>21</sup> that would be reflected in a *cultural revolution* as presented in the analogical debate by Wilhelm Von Humbolt and his associates more than a century before in the early stages of industrialisation, in opposition to everything that represented practical and unitarian instrumentation of knowledge. He proposes affirmation of tradition as an alternative, as essential to a different "view of the world" that would be based on "anti-scientific demystification" because he associated the rise of science to the growing importance of materialism.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

*We are living in an epoch of dissolution and ruin.* That is how Julius Evola described his value judgement of the early sixties when cultural tendencies privileged completely different trends.

The thought with which he articulated European cultural tradition through an analysis of social trends and political organisation was completely marginal. Today, we are dramatically aware that the dominant idea of contemporary society in

---

20 Cassata, *A destradel*, pp.409-410

21 Evola, Julius, *L'Arco e la*, pp.201-204.

22 Cassata, *A destra del fascismo*, pp.412 – 413.

economic simulacrum without cultural identity and a real understanding of our tradition. The consequence of such a heritage is reflected in corruption in culture and politics and the prevalence of conformity. A bold synthesis between idealism and metaphysics that characterised the philosophy of Julius Evola indicates these processes and was not directed to an abstract premise of freedom as much as it was to identify the possibilities of surpassing spiritual and social crisis of the West. Evola's analyses derive from the fact that they are not founded only on his philosophical texts and abstract thoughts but also on certain quantitative historical, mythological and religious materials that Evola used and was certainly very familiar with, searching for their logic and deepest meaning. Even though he often used complex arguments, his research of constant duality in relation to the material and spiritual render him always current.

# Emil Cioran and Cultural Pessimism

AUTHOR

**Mate Šimić, LLB.**

**E**mil Michel Cioran is a Romanian essayist. He was born in a small mountain town of Resinar in 1911. He spent his early childhood in his hometown and later in Sibiu, a town marked by Central European architecture and strongly impacted by German culture. Sibiu is a city in Transylvania which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire when Cioran was born. Even when the Empire collapsed, that region of Romania remained strongly under German influence and Cioran was fluent in German language from an early age.

After living an idyllic life up until the age of ten in Transylvania's mountains, Cioran moved to Sibiu where he went to school. He did not excel at school, however, he was already more educated and well-read compared to his school mates. At the early age already he was intensively reading Novalis, Shakespeare, Schlegel, Dostoyevsky, Shestov, Turgenev, Pushkin and Tolstoy.<sup>1</sup> In addition to reading, he intensively played the violin and visited bordels. As a youth anecdote Cioran often told the story of how he met his school professor in a bordel, carrying a book - Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>2</sup>

After finishing school in Sibiu, he enrolled in the University of Bucharest where he studied philosophy. In that period he experienced problems with intensive insomnia which would haunt him throughout his life. In an effort to overcome his problem with insomnia, he would spend 15 hours a day in the library reading. After graduating in 1932 he enrolled in post-graduate studies in philosophy. In that period he met Eugene Ionesco and Mircea Eliade and they remained friends for the rest of their lives. As a recipient of Humboldt-Stiftung scholarship, he spent two years in Berlin and Munich but he did not attend any lectures.<sup>3</sup> After returning from Germany in 1935, he spent another two years in Romania and then went to France

---

1 Charles SIMIC, "Filozof nesanice", *Peščanik*, 1 May 2011, accessed 20 June 2017, <http://pescanik.net/filozof-nesanice/>

2 Ibidem.

3 Ibidem.

where he remained until his death. His best known books in Romanian are: *On the Heights of Despair, Tears and Saints* and *The Passionate Handbook*. His first book published in French was *A Short History of Decay*. Cioran was awarded with the Rivarol Prize for that book by unanimous decision of a prominent judging panel including Nobel Prize winner Andre Gide.<sup>4</sup> After winning the prize, Albert Camus publicly invited Cioran to join in with the “tend of ideas.” Cioran was insulted by Camus’ invitation, particularly because he considered that Camus wasn’t particularly philosophically educated. He spent the remainder of his life writing exclusively in French and some of his works included: *The New Gods, All Gall is Divided* and *The Temptation to Exist*. He lived an isolated and withdrawn life in the Latin quarter of Paris until his death in 1995, socializing with homeless and prostitutes, as well as with the greatest minds of all time such as Samuel Beckett and Paul Celan.

### From Barbarians to Sceptics

While studying at the Faculty of Philosophy in Bucharest, he intensively read Kant, Fichte, Schopenhauer and Bergson and his graduate thesis was on the theme of Bergson’s intuition. However, soon after that he abandons Bergson believing that he had not realised the tragic dimension of life and dedicates himself to Nietzsche’s philosophy. Together with his friend Mircea Eliade, he belonged to a group of young Romanian intellectuals who publicly supported the anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi Iron Guard - Romanian mystical political movement.

Influenced by lectures given by charismatic professor of philosophy, Nae Ionescu, he actively participated in the Romanian “cultural Renaissance” of the 1930s and in messianic nationalism. He believed that totalitarian repressive methods were a way to overcome the third-grade role of the Romanian people.<sup>5</sup> He abandoned his fascination with Hitlerism and political extremism with which he sympathised during his youth and spent the rest of his life isolated from social and political events, living and writing from the perspective beyond any political affiliation.

His early works were written under the impression of Schopenhauer, taking a pessimistic perspective of life and preoccupation with themes such as love, pain, death, suffering, nothingness, melancholy and boredom. He rejects reason and intellect as a means of finding any truth or solution to any problem and emphasises that most philosophers do not have the courage to face their “internal doubts” and to admit

---

4 Ibidem.

5 Ibidem.



to themselves that they are trying to solve “unsolvable problems.”<sup>6</sup> In his book *On the Heights of Despair* he wrote: “I like thought which preserves a whiff of flesh and blood, and I prefer a thousand times an idea rising from sexual tension or nervous depression to an empty abstraction. Haven’t people learned yet that the time of superficial intellectual games is over, that agony is infinitely more important than syllogism, that a cry of despair is more revealing than the most subtle thought...?”<sup>7</sup>

As a young political activist, Cioran advocated aggressive and undemocratic methods as a way of destroying existing social and political barriers and to create vital preconditions to overcome the problems that prevented the Romanian people on their path to the great future. Cioran recognised ideas in Nietzsche’s philosophy in which he saw the way to overcome limits that were imposed by sterile intellectualism and empty abstractness. Only those ideas that come from the irrational can be valuable enough to enable “revaluation of all values” that after “God’s death” will enable overcoming Western nihilism.

Later he described his political activism and youthful extremism as a consequence of endeavouring to participate in the contemporary. He later described his support for national-socialism as: “Convinced that troubles in our society come from old people, I conceived the plan of liquidating all citizens past their forties--the beginning of sclerosis and mummification.... Must this intent of mine be condemned? It only expresses something which each man, who is attached to his country, desires in the bottom of his heart: liquidation of one half of his compatriots.”<sup>8</sup>

After his activism in youth, Cioran did not change his ideology or the group he associated with, but instead broke ties with all groups and ideologies. Incapable of choosing or believing in anything, he lived and wrote from beyond any political and other orientations, rejecting to participate in any groups or in any form of contemporary life. He presented himself as a person out of his time. “Other people fall into time; I have fallen out of it.” “Insensibility to his own fate is the quality of someone who has fallen out of time, and who, as this fall grows more evident, becomes incapable of manifesting himself or even of wanting to leave some trace of his existence.”<sup>9</sup>

For Cioran, politics is nothing but a form of attempting to rule over others, to sub-

---

6 Ibidem.

7 Ibidem.

8 Emil M. CIORAN, *Volja k nemoći*, p. 7.

9 Ibidem, p. 231.

ordinate others to your authority. The fundamental inspiration for any political activism is the desire to be the first in town and anyone who hasn't realised this have not realised anything about politics or people. All political conflicts, all bloodshed and games behind the scenes are primarily an attempt to gain political power. Dürer is a prophet, and his image of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* is the most authentic description of modern political history. Dürer's horsemen of the apocalypse symbolise people with political ambition who participate mutually in the fight for power and in the end only one will survive. The one surviving is a tyrant who imposes his self-will on the account of the people whom he will exploit and despise at the same time. If the tyrant is the fundamental thread of history, then our era certainly is not moderate. It can be compared with Mongolian invasions and the period during the Roman Empire.<sup>10</sup>

As a dark moralist, Cioran considers jealousy and envy as the founding motivators of all activity and in particular of politics. Our tendency to act is the consequence of our need to be recognised by others. The first sin described in *The Book of Genesis* is not the consequence of the desire for knowledge, but primarily the desire for glory.<sup>11</sup> Just like the first man was prepared to commit sin for glory that will burden all of mankind, his motivation will remain permanently present as the main driver all political conflicts in history. For this reason, in fact, in political life it is necessary to sever firstly with all those who are closest to you, who share our ideas, our dreams and our envy. Hitler demonstrated that wisdom when he had Röhm assassinated. Röhm was the only man who dared to refer to Hitler as "you". Stalin proved to be just as capable, which we are taught in the Moscow Trials.<sup>12</sup> In politics, we first have to settle accounts with our friends and then with our enemies, Cioran believed.

With the desire for glory and envy, we are condemned to find happiness and satisfaction from something outside of us, on the dependence of others who will never make us happy. Only if we abandon these desires, if we abandon the contemporary, shall we overcome suffering. We will be satisfied with ourselves and conquer that "serpent" within us. Cioran is considered to have matured on time and who decided on time not to participate in the contemporary because he in fact noticed the mistake in seeking satisfaction outside of oneself and the senselessness of any sort

---

10 Ibidem, p. 42.

11 Ibidem, p. 174, "Let us correct the *Book of Genesis*: it has clouded its initial happiness not so much for the desire of knowledge but for hunger for glory. Once we begin to want, we fall under the jurisdiction of the Devil. And glory truly is devilish in its nature and manifestation."

12 Ibidem, p. 44.

of political activism. Considering these views, it is no wonder that later in life he showed interest in historical figures like Charles V or Marcus Aurelius.

He moved away from Nietzsche's philosophy in the belief that Zarathustra was a naive prophet who lived his life too remote from people to know them. That is why he in fact created the superman and replaced old values with new ones.<sup>13</sup> Contrary to young Cioran who was a "man of will", in his later phase Cioran represents the decadent and sceptic. "To Nietzsche, in whom Cioran recognises personal betrayed hopes, he contrasts an apotheosis of decay; to the will to power, he contrasts with the will to weakness. Just as Nietzsche wanted to be an anti-Christ, Cioran wishes to be an anti-Nietzsche and so a man of desire would be a "barbarian", while the civilised man would be decadent and a sceptic."<sup>14</sup>

Of all the great politicians he showed the most interest in Charles V and Marcus Aurelius. Charles V was at the height of his power when he abdicated in Brussels and withdrew to the monastery where he spent the rest of his life praying and contemplating about faith, enjoying music and Titian's art. With that he showed maturity that can only be achieved by those who have become numb to the desire for political power. In addition to Charles V, Cioran dedicated special attention to Marcus Aurelius who spent long hours of the night on the northern frontier of his empire to rest from his duties as an emperor, for philosophical meditation and contemplation. Being an emperor he did not have as much time as he wanted to contemplate on philosophy nor did he have the advantage of monastic peace and silence, so he tried to apply his philosophical principles in administering his empire.

In a collection of thoughts he wrote to himself, without any intention of them being read by anyone else, we discover a modest and simple emperor who considered his role as emperor as his duty above all. What is fascinating in Marcus Aurelius is the absence for the will to power. It is a fact that as the ruler of the Roman Empire, he did not show any desire to rule over anyone but himself. Writing about Marcus Aurelius, Cioran underlines: "It is difficult to like Marcus Aurelius but equally so it is difficult not to like him. To write about death and nothingness, at night in a tent, to balance the triviality of life among the rattling of weapons. As a human paradox it is no less odd than Nero or Caligula... The entire globe is his, yet he finds solace in meaninglessness! Had he followed the Greek tragedies not delving into doctrine,

---

13 Emil M. CIORAN, *O nedaći biti rođen*, pp. 79, 80.

14 See J. N. Vaumet's foreword to Emil M. CIORAN, *Volja k nemoći*. In later interviews Cioran considered Nietzsche's private letters and manuscripts to be more authentic. Nietzsche is more truthful in them and as such much closer to the truth and man.

what exclamations would the human spirit have recorded.”<sup>15</sup> He is exceptional to that measure that his thoughts are not connected to doctrine of stoicism, and he is average in that measure that his thoughts are connected to doctrine. Indifference to any form of power, even to his own status, is what makes Marcus Aurelius so special. On the other hand, the feeling of duty, and everything else that is the consequence of stoic education, he considers to be mediocre.

Cioran rejects any system, describing it as spiritual penance for man and philosopher, regardless if it comes from St. Thomas Aquinas, Hegel or Aristotle. “As a warrior, Marcus Aurelius did not have any consciousness of nothingness. What poetry have we lost.”<sup>16</sup> Cioran is a philosopher who destroys old ideals but does not build new ones. He does not attempt to transcend nihilism by finding some new meaning. “If I would be a general, I would lead my soldiers into death without any deception: without a homeland, without ideals and not baiting them with rewards in this or the other world. I would tell them all, first of all what is priceless in life and death. One can be courageously encouraged in the name of non-existence; as soon as something exists, even the smallest victim becomes an irrecoverable damage.”<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to conclude that his pessimism was a world view that called for depression, suicide or pain. On the contrary, he offers another perspective in relation to the prevalent notion of individual phenomena, events and spectres. At a time when Western society is burdened with consumerism and people are obsessed with searching for pleasure and entertainment, authors like Cioran represent the only real alternative.

Spengler's definition “optimism is cowardice” is probably the best description of today's ideology of consumerism which comprises current pleasure and entertainment of people trying to avoid facing fundamental problems of existence. Facing fundamental problems of existence comprehends primarily facing finality, that is, facing mortality of the individual.

In that context, similarly to Martin Heidegger, Cioran dedicates special attention to Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. In his essay on death as the “oldest of all fears”, Cioran describes Ivan Ilyich as a man who spent his entire life fighting for trivial interests and, paradoxically, he began to live after being faced with his own death. “Had he not been ill, Ivan Ilyich would be an example of an ordinary spirit and would not

---

15 Emil M. CIORAN, *Brevijar poraženih*, pp. 57 - 58.

16 Ibidem, p. 58.

17 Ibidem, p. 57.

have had any expressiveness, no strength. In fact, by destroying him, it grants him another dimension. Soon he will be nothing; before, he was also nothing; he exists only in the space between the emptiness of health and death. He exists only when he dies. What was he before then? A doll filled with appearances, a judge who believed in his vocation and his family? Returning to the false and illusionary, he now understands that the entire time until his illness he wasted in nothingness. Of so many years, he only has a few weeks in which to suffer and in which his illness revealed a reality he never dreamed of before. True life begins and ends in agony - that is the lesson that gives Ivan Ilyich the temptation to exist just like that of Brekhunov in the *Master and Man*.<sup>18</sup>

Studying Cioran's works, the reader almost exclusively encounters themes such as suffering, death, boredom, suicide and the meaning of existence. Reading his texts and thought more subtly, we conclude that the only inspiration he had was in these themes, often giving authentic meaning to individual phenomena. He considered that enjoying in suffering is the way to find the basis for success in every spiritual vocation, while he thought of Dostoyevsky's literary and psychological genius as a consequence of the fact that he suffered more than other writers.

After he abandoned his political and philosophical obsession of his youth, he reconciled with the tragic nature of human life and spent the rest of his life writing aphorisms and essays on questions that interested him. By carefully reading his works, we come to the same conclusion that we find in reading Dostoyevsky: "Anyone who doesn't realise that spirituality is the main feature of his writing hasn't realised anything about Cioran." For this reason in fact, they who call his pessimism a "healing pessimism" are right. Finally, while writing his texts, Cioran treated himself for insomnia and depression.

## Cioran as Cultural Pessimist

Cioran can be placed together with Heraclitus, Plato, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Spengler, Hofmannsthal, Evola, Berdyaev, Heidegger and Jünger as one of the most significant authors who can be related to cultural pessimism, which at the end of the 20th century remained the only serious "philosophy of life."<sup>19</sup> Cultural pessi-

---

18 Emile M. CIORAN, *Volja k nemoći*, p. 200.

19 Žarko PAIĆ, *Mjesečari pred zidom*, p. 525. The author underscores Nietzsche, Cioran, Broch, Musil, Spengler, Heidegger, Jünger and Viennese *fin de siècle* with Hofmannsthal as cultural pessimists. The others are taken from the book by Alen TAFRA *Kulturni pesimizam u tradiciji filozofije povijesti*. Even though this refers to well known facts, perhaps it would be worthwhile to add some information. It is known that

mism isn't a separate school of thought or movement but primarily a "general ideal that lies on the belief of the decay of nations, civilisations and mankind, with the inevitable or conditional preservation of the existing direction."<sup>20</sup>

More concretely, cultural pessimism can be placed in "ethical-aesthetic worldviews" in which art appears as a "anti-movement *vis-à-vis* nihilism"<sup>21</sup>; as a critique of the idea of progress and technical advancement<sup>22</sup>; as an anthropological pessimism of Carl Schmitt, who sees conservative anthropology as a precondition for the soundness of the political category of "friend" and "foe" which supplements the idea of politics as human destiny<sup>23</sup>; as a romantic pessimism of F. W. Schlegel who advocates rejuvenating culture and believes in the "return of Dionysus in renewing contact with the mythical power of origin"<sup>24</sup>; and is probably the most fruitful period of

---

authors such as Schopenhauer and Heidegger considered the categories of "optimism" and "pessimism" inappropriate descriptions of their philosophy. Apart from that, many authors that we today consider as cultural pessimists do not consider themselves as pessimists at all. Many *conservative revolutionary* authors were not considered as such even though one of the most relevant - Oswald Spengler - was an advocate of "strong pessimism" and considered optimism to be cowardice. "Spengler sees 'strong pessimism' in the mythological core of Faust's culture - in tragic Nordic epics as the 'deepest form of that strong pessimism'. Only he who is capable of experiencing tragedy can become a figure of world repute. Tragedy is destiny and only 'admirers of the useful' consider it to be senseless or immoral." (Alen TAFRA, *Kulturni pesimizam u tradiciji filozofije povijesti*, p. 21.) Finally, Cioran himself did not consider himself a pessimist or nihilist. Nevertheless, here pessimism is referred to as a "general idea" and not as a philosophical system or movement. Apart from that, their philosophy is not analysed as a form of cultural pessimism but primarily as cultural pessimism which today has become one of the serious "philosophies of life" from the perspective of their philosophies.

20 Alen TAFRA, *Kulturni pesimizam u tradiciji filozofije povijesti*, p. 27.

21 Žarko PAIĆ, *Mjesečari pred zidom*, p. 535. It is necessary to note the possible varied interpretations of the notion of "decadence." Evola sees decadence as apostasy from "Tradition", Nietzsche's decadence is seen as a style of art that is a consequence of prevailing nihilism that is, the "death of God". In that context, Nietzsche advocates the return to ancient ideals in art. Žarko PAIĆ, *Mjesečari pred zidom*, pp. 535 - 540. (The author adds that Nietzsche in a way was a "child of decadence". Nevertheless, we will stop here due to the complexity of the issue.) Apart from that, decadence is a feature of civilisation on its last legs, condemned to face its ruin in hedonism. In that context, as an historical example with Cioran's interpretation at the end of the Greek and Roman civilisations, we can underline Ibn Khaldun's interpretation of the downfall of the Berber civilisation after the transformation of the Bedouin way of life to Sedentarisation. Alen TAFRA, *Kulturni pesimizam u tradiciji filozofije povijesti*, p. 116.

22 Alen TAFRA, *Kulturni pesimizam u tradiciji filozofije povijesti*, p. 23.

23 Ibidem, p. 273.

24 Ibidem, p. 59. We can add Novalis and Schiller among cultural pessimist to the period of Romanticism. In that period the importance of beauty in art is emphasised and the need for spiritual renewal through the return of mythology. Finally, Nietzsche himself presents Dionysus instead of a dead God, while accusing Socrates and Euripides of destroying the balance between Apollo and Dionysus in favour

cultural pessimistic era of a conservative revolution in Weimar's republic.<sup>25</sup> Oswald Spengler too believes that history can be described primarily as a "movement of the spirit through time", in which cultures, like living organisms, pass through phases of birth, growing up, climax and death.<sup>26</sup>

As such, the sceptic and barbarian in Cioran's view are not just the personification of the extreme of two diametrically opposite individuals, but represent the personification of two types of society. On the one hand there is a society that is the personification of the sceptic, burdened with doubt and confusion, incapable to sacrifice for ideals and even less capable of transforming their enemies into victims. On the other hand, there is a society that is the personification of the "barbarian", that is full of vitality and sees the only truth in its founding myths. It is too primitive for any burdening with any form of rationalism or scepticism and in fact gains its strength in commitment that can only exist with the sincere belief of the existence of "good" and "evil".

The history of ancient philosophy teaches us that the philosophy of scepticism is the feature of a dying civilisation. The scepticism of a dying antiquity possessed a strength that would be futile to search for in the Renaissance or 18th century. It is without a doubt that Phyrhon's hypothesis and Sextus's tractate represent a collection of the most complex, most methodical and most boring literature that was ever written. That literature, as an expression of the climax of scepticism can only emerge in a civilisation that no longer has a "spirit", using Plato's definition of "spirit" as something that "comes from itself".<sup>27</sup>

Scepticism of the theoretical and philosophical sphere is supplemented with liberalism and tolerance in the legal and political sphere. The martyrs of doubt who do not believe in the founding myths of their civilisation, who do not believe in the superiority of their values toward others, who have "wide views with regard to all questions", are only capable in the name of tolerance to prepare the terrain for the final surrender to a barbaric civilisation that is full of vitality and living energy. "A civilisation begin by myth and ends in doubt; a theoretical doubt which, once it turns against itself become quite practical."<sup>28</sup> The imbalanced fight between a "nation that speaks" and the "nation that is silent" is confirmed with the Roman inva-

---

of Apollo.

25 Ibidem, p. 35.

26 Žarko PAIĆ, *Mjesečari pred zidom*, p. 549.

27 Emil M. CIORAN, *Volja k nemoć*, p. 156.

28 Ibidem, p. 147.

sion of Greece and the German invasion of Rome.

Scepticism will gain strength in future Western philosophy. It will be the final philosophical heritage of the French, English, German and Austrians who today justify the status they have among others. On the other hand, detachment from the Western world has earmarked a special role for Russia in the future. "While the Western nations exhausted themselves in their struggle for freedom and, still more, in that freedom once acquired (nothing is so wearing as the possession or the abuse of liberty), the Russian people were suffering without self-expenditure; for one expends oneself only in history and since the Russians were excluded from history, they were obliged to submit to the infallible systems of despotism inflicted upon them."<sup>29</sup>

Freedom as an ideal achieved by suppressed nations gives them the illusion of a brighter future which keeps them alive, which allows them to preserve the vitality required for extraordinary endeavours in the future. The paradox of freedom lies in the fact that the desire for freedom represents the main source of living energy and its achievement represents the main source of weakening the same. Constantly aspiring for freedom without achieving it, Russia achieved significant superiority compared to the West, which unfortunately, gained its freedom long ago.

However, this is not the last of the paradoxes. To a large extent Russia has gained admiration from the West even though, unlike the West, it did not reach its ideals. "The Encyclopedists were infatuated with the projects of Peter and Catherine, just as the heirs of the Enlightenment (I mean the Left) were to be infatuated with those of Lenin and Stalin. This phenomenon argues in favour of Russia, but Westerners who, complicated and ravaged to the last degree and seeking 'progress' elsewhere, outside themselves and their creations, today find themselves paradoxically closer to Dostoevsky's characters than the Russians themselves. Yet we might observe that they evoke only the defeated aspects of these same characters, that they possess neither the ferocious obsessions nor their virile sulks: so many 'possessed' men weakened by rationalizations and scruples, eroded by subtle remorse, by a thousand interrogations, martyrs of doubt, dazzled and annihilated by their own perplexities."<sup>30</sup>

Russian adopting Orthodoxy in the moment of Great Schism was an expression to stand apart from the West, and the fact that Russia did not experience Renaissance led it to all of Russia's intemperance and tendency to skip historical phases. "Where

---

29 Ibidem, p. 27.

30 Ibidem, p. 29.



are you rushing, O Russia?”, Cioran underlines Gogol’s question as the best warning of Russia’s excess and skipping historical phases. Russia was never mediocre with its misfortunes. “Ideology always becomes utopia and scepticism become nihilism.” Today Russia looks upon the West similarly to the way the Mongols saw China or the Turks Europe. Nevertheless, seeing that history always opens the question of whether Russia will become the master of Europe or whether it will skip that phase and simply fall apart without experiencing its climax.

Naturally, Cioran did not advocate violent or repressive methods in order to achieve spiritual renewal or to prevent the decay of a certain civilisation. Nihilism and decadence are present in dying cultures. In that context, Cioran often recalls that at the time of the Roman Empire’s downfall they mostly valued Greek leisure (*otium grecum*), which they despised the most at the moment of its supremacy. He sees decadence as a feature of contemporary Western society. Unlike the young Cioran, who similarly to members of the Conservative Revolution in Weimar Republic saw the decay of socio-political relations of his time to be the foundation to build new relations, the older Cioran appears as a prophet of the West’s apocalypse without the desire to participate in any form of social development. What is more, he sees a special artistic and existential inspiration in nihilism. “Decadence has its charms. It signifies historical weariness, endeavouring to replace the senseless with empty glory and the fall of grandness with madness.”<sup>31</sup>

The decadence that flourished during Caesarean nihilism gave us better lectures in philosophy than all the philosophical textbooks together. The decadence of the Roman emperors represents the personification of man in his extremes and their madness represents the most valuable lessons about the dark corners of human psychology. “Are we not all hiding the desire in the mud of our souls that only the dark Roman Emperors can admit? Is appointing a horse as consul merely a good assessment of people?”<sup>32</sup>

In a period permeated with nihilism, any search for meaning is condemned to failure because the idea for the search comes from the conclusion that there is meaning. Those people who are resigned to the unsuccessful search for meaning are forced to seek refuge in art that in eras of decadence always experiences its bloom. “The decadence of the Roman emperors, those monsters inspired by geniality of boredom in their madness had so much style that all the aesthetes of the world

---

31 Emil M. CIORAN, *Brevijar poraženih*, pp. 26 - 27. In that regard he differs from Nietzsche.

32 Ibidem, p. 26.

in comparison are fools and all the poets are just salesmen of shadows.”<sup>33</sup>

In his mature phase, Cioran does not desire the survival of civilisation in which he lives nor the coming of another civilisation. The coming of a new civilisation or popularity of some new utopia means nothing new under the sun. As one of the darkest moralists he doesn't believe in the soundness of any world utopia, stressing that only the simpleminded can be writers of utopian prose void of any philosophical instinct. Utopians are people who do not see man as a being of flesh and blood but “an automated, fiction and marionette”. They have gone so far with their excessiveness that they have even managed to make children to be lifeless robots.

“In Fourier's ‘cooperative society’ they are so clean that they are never tempted to steal ‘to pick the apple from the tree’. A child who doesn't steal is not a child. Why create such a society of dolls at all? I would describe Fourier's description of falange as the best vomiting agent.”<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

As a young person, Cioran supported apocalyptic Romanian nationalism and like advocates of the “conservative revolution” in the Weimar Republic; he advocated the destruction of existing social and political structures and the creation of new form of political community which would help the Romanian people overcome their third-class historical role. In the philosophical sense, similarly to the “conservative revolution”, the young Cioran was a child of Zarathustra, an obsessed follower of the philosophy of the “will to power.” After maturing, he abandoned this radical ideology and Nietzsche's philosophy and lived his life writing aphorisms and essays in which he rejected every ideology and every philosophical system.

Regardless of the fact that he changed his political and philosophical beliefs, Cioran was a writer who could always be categorised among cultural pessimists. Even though cultural pessimism at the end of the 20th century and start of the 21st century was particularly significant among philosophers, certain critics warned that almost all cultural pessimists were close to radical right-wing regimes and consider that the reception of cultural pessimism could be seen as political struggle with other means. This warning may be founded only if it is accepted as a correct metapolitical attitude that ideas have a vital role in historical and political life.

Regardless of the possibility of politicizing cultural pessimism, it is without a doubt

---

33 Ibidem, p. 26.

34 Emil M. CIORAN, *Volja k nemoći*, p. 81.

that in his more mature phase Cioran wrote from beyond all political affiliation. In that regard, it is clear that any political instrumentalization of Cioran's philosophy represents a disarrangement and sin toward the author. Cioran should primarily be seen as a writer who, with his literary exhibitions, sincere and clever view of the world, offers an authentic perspective of reality. He is an author for anyone who does not want to flee from essential existential issues, surrendering to easy themes, a comfortable life and shallow optimism. He obsessively endeavours to be sincere at all times, writing about the "hardest" themes such as boredom, death, alienation and pain. Nevertheless, Cioran was not isolated in his "sincere" approach either in its refined and unbeatable style of writing that enabled him to authentically transfer every psychological and philosophical nuance to the reader. It is the topics that he writes about that brings him closer to the reader, while his clever and lucid comments often successfully twist the usual perspective of certain issues. It is no wonder then that his pessimism is often perceived as a healing pessimism.

# The Statehood-Legal Status of Croatian Lands in the Austro-Hungarian Empire

AUTHOR

**Marko Raič, History Student**

Following Prussia's victory and the growing instability within the Hapsburg Monarchy, in 1867 the Viennese court had to reach a compromise with the other strongest nation - Hungary - aimed at preserving the state. With that pact between these two strongest stakeholders, the Hapsburg Monarchy was reorganised into a new, dual empiric and royal Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The Croatian Sabor (parliament) was commissioned by Franz Joseph I of Austria to organise its position in the new state within Transleithania or the Hungarian part of the Empire.<sup>1</sup> Following several rounds of negotiations in July 1868 an agreement was finally reached in Pecs between a Croatian regnal deputation and a Hungarian deputation that was confirmed by Franz Joseph I, which created a special statehood-legal organisation in the Hungarian half of the Monarchy. That special pact created the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom comprising the Kingdom of Hungary and the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia. The pact recognised the Triune Kingdom as the Croatian political nation headed by its Sabor (Parliament) and Ban which, together with Hungary formed one political whole.<sup>2</sup> After several years of the pact being violated, particularly with reference to financing that hardly allowed any financial progress in Croatia, the railways, language and so on, Hungary's hegemony led to growing dissatisfaction in Croatia and the desire to respect the purity of the Pact and its revision as a partial solution to Croatia's issues.

One other solution to the crisis in the Monarchy was the idea of re-structuring the Austro-Hungarian Empire based on the principle of trialism. Trialism itself rep-

---

1 The official name "Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen comprised the Kingdom of Hungary with Budapest as its capital, the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia with its capital in Zagreb and the cities of Rijeka as *Corpus separatum* under Budapest's administration.

2 ŠIDAK J., GROSS M., KARAMAN I., ŠEPIĆ D, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860. – 1914*, Zagreb, 1968., pp. 38 – 42.

resents a project of once again reorganising the dual Monarchy to include a new federal unit - the Kingdom of Croatia. In that case, it would be equated with the Austrian Monarchy and Kingdom of Hungary. Trialism is considerably different to the other solution concerning the Croatian issue in unity with the Hapsburgs because, for example, unlike a statehood alliance with Hungary, as was the case with the Croatian-Hungarian Pact (which proved to be short-lived and an ineffective solution for the politically maturing Croatian people) or the idea of federalization so that each political nation in the Monarchy (Germans, Hungarians, Croats, Poles and Czechs) would have complete autonomy, advocating full independence and unity of all Croatian lands that would form statehood communities with the other countries and united in the person of the ruler, a common army, navy and common foreign affairs.

Following the Croatian Sabor's decision of 1790 to submit to the Hungarian Regency Council, Croatia, for the first time truly became submitted to Hungary in the legal sense. That situation continued until the revolutionary 1848 when the Sabor, headed by Ban Josip Jelačić severed all statehood-legal ties with Hungary.

Following the end of Bach's absolutism and the sitting of Sabor in 1861 and 1865, a pact was voluntarily signed in 1868 between equal sides - Hungary and Croatia. With that pact Croatian lands gained special statehood-legal status compared to Hungary with the Dual Monarchy, which is evident in the text of the Croatian-Hungarian Pact. Article 1: The Croatian-Hungarian Settlement determines the territorial scope of the Croatian state, which represents one of the fundamental determinants of statehood. In article 2 of the settlement it says that the joint king, crowned with the crown of St. Stephen is to be known as the king of Hungary and King of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia and it is determined that the coronation ceremony of 1867 be written in Croatian and sent to the Croatian Sabor. The document further underscores the common business, monetary and taxation system (Article 10), maritime affairs, customs, railways, citizenship and maintenance of the court. All other affairs that are not mentioned as common, remain under the autonomy of the Croatian Sabor (Article 47). The text of the Settlement recognised the affiliation of Dalmatia and the Military Frontier as constituents of Croatia (Article 65) that until then were not under the jurisdiction of the Croatian Sabor and Ban.<sup>3</sup> Legal pro-

---

3 Up until the fall of the Monarchy in 1918, Dalmatia was not united with Croatia and Slavonia. After demilitarising the Military Frontier in 1873, its territory was only put under the remit of the Sabor and Ban in 1881.

ŠIDAK J., GROSS M., KARAMAN I., ŠEPIĆ D., *Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860. – 1914*, p. 80.

visions determined that Croatian is the official language for legislation, judiciary and administration of the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia (Article 56) while all joint institutions in Croatian regions would also use Croatian as the official language (Article 57).<sup>4</sup> It is important to note the question of the army which was also regulated by the Settlement which notes that in lands under the crown of Saint Stephen, the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia has its official army in the form of the Royal Croatian Defence Forces with its main command in Zagreb and that Croatia is the official commanding language and the Croatian flag as official flag. The majority of the officers' corps consists of Croats.<sup>5</sup>

Even though it was not in the same legal position as Austria and Hungary, from what is noted here we can conclude that with its Sabor, Ban and minister-president, official army and own language, Croatia *de facto* enjoyed most of the elements of statehood, which apart from Austria and Hungary, not one other political nation in the Monarchy had. The legislature, which represents the features of a state and which the Triunion Kingdom had, testifies to a Croatia that had the nature of a special state. With all these elements however, Croatia was not a fully independent state because its statehood-legal status was manifested only through its union with Hungary. As such it did not have any direct relations with Austria or other foreign countries except through common affairs that were prescribed by the Settlement. Its dependence on Hungary is evident in Article 51 of the Settlement which determines that the Ban is appointed by the Emperor at the recommendation of the joint Hungarian minister-president. As mentioned already, violations and abuse of the settlement by Hungary were frequent, posing a huge problem to Croatia's national integration and progress.

## The crisis of dualism

Growing imperialism and social and economic empowerment of the two ruling nations in the Monarchy in the 1880s resulted in dissatisfaction among the non-ruling nations and strengthening of national resistance. Often there were mutual conflicts between the carriers of dualism - Austria and Hungary - inspired by the strengthening of the other side that wanted greater equality with Austria which finally ended with Hungary's supremacy as opposed to Vienna. That resulted with the 1867 weakening and crisis of dualism. Viennese aristocracy, senior church and

---

4 ŠARINIĆ J, *Nagodbena Hrvatska*, Zagreb, 1972, pp.271 – 293.

5 POJIĆ M, *Ustroj austrougarske vojske na ozemlju Hrvatske 1868. – 1914.*, Arh. Vjesn., god. 43 (2000), pp. 156 – 157.

military circles were all the more disgruntled with the existing dualism and openly showed their disapproval. Convinced that dualism exclusively favoured Hungary encouraged political leaders to greater cooperation with the non-ruling nations, primarily with the Croats, the greatest exponent of this being the leader of the Austrian Christian Socialists, Karl Luger. Later Luger becomes the main pillar of Duke Franz Ferdinand's policies and one of the leading politicians in the Empire.<sup>6</sup> This could hint at the beginning of the idea of trialism as a solution to the crisis of dualism in the Monarchy which mostly functioned on the principle *divide et impera* (divide and rule).

As far as Croatia was concerned, at the end of the 1880s, Ban Khuen fortified his pseudo-constitutional regime and bureaucratic apparatus and refined methods and electoral engineering to hold the political situation firmly under his control. Not allowing the development of a constructive and progressive political life and quashing the national integrity of the Croatian people, he incited a revolt against dualism on the one hand and with his policies on the other hand, he directly drove Croatian and Serbian political elites toward cooperation which as its primary objective that was not publicly declared however, was to create a south Slavic unity that would lead to the secession of Croatian lands from the Monarchy and annexation to the Kingdom of Serbia.<sup>7</sup> In the late 19th century, the crisis deepened. Czech-German conflicts began to arise in the Austrian part of the Monarchy and the unsustainability of the existing system became more evident. The main opposition parties in Croatia - Obzoraši (Visionaries) and later the Frankovci (Franks)<sup>8</sup> closely monitored the conflicts in Vienna and Pecs. For both these opposition movements, Hungary's victory meant intensified hegemony and each of them offered a solution to overcome the crisis.<sup>9</sup> Stronger ties between Croatian and Serbian youth and parties of a south Slavic orientation aimed at resisting dualism aroused suspicion in Viennese circles, particularly among those gathered around Duke Franz Ferdinand

---

6 ŠIDAK J, GROSS M, KARAMAN I, ŠEPIĆ D, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860. - 1914.*, pp. 137 – 138.

7 Ibidem, pp.137 - 143.

8 The Pure Party of Rights founded in 1895 followed Frank after falling out from the Party of Rights. The movement was named after the party's founder Dr. Josip Frank. The party comprised Croatian nationalists prepared for a pragmatic cooperation with Vienna with the objective of creating the Kingdom of Croatia which would form one-third of a federal unit in the trialistic Monarchy. They believed that this was the manifestation of Starčević's idea of an independent national Croatian state as opposed to the Party of Rights (Homelanders) who were prepared to cooperate with the Serbs and the idea of South-Slavism (Yugoslavia).

9 Ibidem, pp.149 - 151.

who believed that this was in fact a campaign against the dynasty which led him to become more interested in Frank's rightist followers who were exceptionally inclined toward the dynasty.<sup>10</sup>

### “Yugoslav” trialism

The Independent National Party, founded in 1880 with the dissension of prominent members of the National-Liberal Party because of the growing compliance with Hungarian hegemony, moved toward a political compromise. Its members represented the purity of the Settlement and full autonomy for Croatia, Slavonia and the City of Rijeka within the countries under the reign of Saint Stephen. Subsequently, with the achievement of those policies, they would enter into a trialism that would join all south Slavic peoples within the Monarchy. They however, did not proclaim this publicly so as not to compromise their primary objective - autonomy. During their activities they endeavoured to unite with Serbian parties in order to be stronger in their efforts against Khuen's regime. They succeeded in this with only a few Serbian parties as Khuen's refined policies bought out Serbian politicians in Croatia with the intention of thwarting any unity of the opposition and forcing the accentuation of Slavonic and Croatian as two regions to keep Croatia divided territorially leaving but a few counties to Croatia proper, without any national identity.<sup>11</sup>

Later, in the mid-1890s the Independent National Party and homeland fraction of the Party of Rights coordinated their platforms and formed a coalition. That coalition came across strong opposition from Khuen's firm regime and went to attract the Serbs who agreed to stand with Ban Khuen for their own interests. In 1902, based on the programme from 1894, the Croatian Party of Rights was founded comprising the homelander, visionaries and Croatian Progressive Party. After the failure of the “new course” which wanted to achieve reconciliation and cooperation with the Hungarians in order to join forces against Vienna, finally the Rijeka and Zadar Resolutions were formed. The result of the two resolutions was the forming of the Croatian-Serbian coalition<sup>12</sup> that recognised the equality of Croats and Serbs in the Monarchy and its platform formally advocated uniting all south Slavs into a separate whole under Hapsburg rule, that is, a trialistic system. That trialistic mod-

---

10 GROSS M., *Povijest pravaške ideologije*, Zagreb, 1973, p. 313.

11 ŠIDAK J, GROSS M, KARAMAN I, ŠEPIĆ D, ., pp. 131 - 136.

12 The coalition comprised the Croatian Party of Rights, Croatian Progressive Party, Serbian Progressive Party, Serbian National Radical Party and the Social-Democratic Party. The Radicals and Social-Democrats later left the coalition.



el of a Croatian-Serb coalition was just a smoke-screen for the Viennese authorities. Inspired by the idea of pan-Slavism and Yugoslav brotherhood, the coalition leadership led dual politics toward the Monarchy. Their real objective in fact was to slowly weaken dualism, unite Croatian lands and gain greater independence from Vienna and Pecs so that when the time came, they could secede from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and access the Kingdom of Serbia in one large south-Slavic (Yugoslav) state. That coalition was considered in Viennese circles to be a grave danger due to justified suspicion of its separatist tendencies.<sup>13</sup> Agitators of Yugoslavia believed that no support whatever should be given to transforming the Monarchy because, according to them, any reorganisation of that state would go in favour of the Croats and would thwart their plans to create a Yugoslav state. Svetozar Pribičević who was one of the leaders of the Croatian-Serbian coalition, in his memoirs wrote that the coalition's motto was: "The worse the better!" With that he meant that destructive action would cause a greater crisis in the state after which, when the time was right, it would not be possible for the Croats to return to pro-Viennese policies.<sup>14</sup>

### Greater-Austrian Trialism

At the start of the 20th century the dynasty's leadership was no longer united. Old Emperor and King Franz Joseph I continued to firmly stand by dualism and believed in it while Duke Franz Ferdinand gathered opponents to dualism leaning on the Christian Socialists. The trialism of Frank's followers perceived as a greater Croatian state unit within an equal union with Austria and Hungary was acceptable in Austrian political circles because that would weaken the Hungarian side of the monarchy and achieve a balance in the state. Even though it was considered to just be a means of deterring the Hungarian side during phases of hegemonic expansion, at the start of the 20th century trialism was a more realistic option for the Monarchy which was continuing to sink further into crisis. That is best seen in constant consultations between Josip Frank with the chief-of-staff of the empire's army, Franz Conrad Von Hötzendorf, the leader of the Christian Socialists (the strongest Austrian party) Karl Luger and at certain times with the leaders of the dynasty themselves.<sup>15</sup>

The Croatian-Serbian coalition was the greatest problem facing the gradual reali-

---

13 ŠIDAK J, GROSS M, KARAMAN I, ŠEPIĆ D, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860. – 1914.*, pp. 221 - 223.

14 PRIBIČEVIĆ S, *Diktatura kralja Aleksandra*, Zagreb, 1990, p.18.

15 GROSS M, *Povijest pravaške ideologije*, Zagreb, pp345, 350.

sation of this trialistic concept. The coalition comprised the current government in Croatia and managed to exist until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918. It was exceptionally pro-Yugoslav and maintained contact with authorities in the Kingdom of Serbia which after the replacement of the dynasty in 1903 became very antagonistic toward Austro-Hungary because of its aspirations toward its territories, primarily Bosnia and Herzegovina. All that resulted in mistrust toward the situation in Croatia. The question arises: What if Croatia obtains administrative wholeness and an independent state as opposed to Pecs and embarks of creating a Yugoslav state with Serbia? That is why authorities in Vienna supported Frank's followers whom they trusted. They tried with exploited election engineering, constant court processes and initiating scandals against members of the coalition and attempts to introduce open absolutism and military dictatorship in Croatia to create favourable conditions to Frank's followers to step into power. That would be followed by administratively uniting Croatian lands and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into one large unit that would be the basis to establish a new state unit - the Kingdom of Croatia.<sup>16</sup>

The main difference between the concept of Frank's trialism and the Croatian-Serbian coalition was that the Frank's considered the political issue to be a Croatian issue while the coalition called it a Yugoslav issue. That is best described in a convention of Frank's followers who sent a message to the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs 19.10.1918 which says: "How can we resolve our issue? We Rightists refer to it as a Croatian issue while they, Yugoslavs, call it a Yugoslav issue. We Rightists demand that all Croatian lands: Banovina<sup>17</sup>, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Istria, Slovenian lands, with the return of Međimurje and Rijeka, be united into one state body - into the Croatian state. They, the Yugoslavs seek that all Yugoslav lands and lands where 'Slovenes, Croats and Serbs' live (...) to unite into one state - Yugoslavia. Do they support the unification of Croat and Slovene lands in the south of the Monarchy or do they support the Corfu Declaration?"<sup>18</sup>

Their demands were sent to the new emperor, King Charles I of Austria who received them in an audience on 21 October 1918. The ruler came across complete understanding and adopted their stance on the reorganisation of the Monarchy based

16 Ibidem, pp.347 - 353.

17 This refers to the division of Croatia in Bans

18 MATIJEVIĆ Z, *Stranka prava (Frankovci) u doba vladavine Narodnog vijeća Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba (listopad – prosinac 1918.)*, ČSP, No 3, Zagreb, 2008, p.1108, [http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id\\_clanak\\_jezik=62428](http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=62428) Accessed: 22 February 2014.

on the trialistic concept after which he authorised them to negotiate on his behalf with Count István Tisza in Budapest. Success was achieved there too since the Hungarian government had freed Charles from giving his oath to the Hungarian crown and allowed him to proclaim the unification of Croatian lands in a special state. On that occasion Tisza said: "I saw that we had made a big mistake toward Croatia." The same day a telegram arrived to Zagreb from Budapest for a proclamation to be prepared for the Croatian people of establishing Zvonimir's kingdom. The National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (SHS) did not accept the proclamation and continued on their project to unite with the Kingdom of Serbia.<sup>19</sup>

### **Scope, administration and common affairs of the Croatian Kingdom in the trialistic Monarchy**

The concrete plan to implement the trialistic organisation of the state is best described in the booklet *Trialism and the Croatian State* by Nikola Bjelovučić published in 1911. In it he underscores that the state needs to be organised based on the system of the Austrian Empire, Hungarian Kingdom and Croatian Kingdom. The only right to rule in Croatia lies in the Hapsburg dynasty based on the Cetingrad Treaty of 1527 and Croatian pragmatic sanctions of 1712 which notes that the person who is the Croatian king is at the same time the ruler of Kranj, Styria and Corinthia. Each new ruler in the Croatian kingdom has to be crowned in the capital Zagreb where a royal palace is to be built. The king had to open every session of the Sabor and appoint the ban after a recommendation by the Sabor.<sup>20</sup>

As far a territory was concerned, the kingdom of Croatia comprised all lands of the Triunion kingdom of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia with Međimurje and Rijeka. The Austrian coast that included Istria, Trieste, Gorica and Gradiška, belonged to it, followed by Slovenian lands - Kranj, south Styria and south Corinthia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Trieste County would have special autonomy with cities on the coast where Italians live.<sup>21</sup>

The state was governed by the Croatian government with its Ban who was the minister-president. The government's responsibilities included finance, judiciary, education, trade, railways and transport, agriculture and home defence which was conducted by the army. Common affairs with Austria and Hungary included the navy, land army units, common currency and joint foreign affairs and all these were

---

19 Ibidem, pp.1109 - 1110.

20 BJELOVUČIĆ N, *Trializam i hrvatska država*, Dubrovnik, 1911, p.7.

21 Ibidem, pp.8 - 9.

financed equally. With regard to citizenship, there was just one, Croatian citizens and one political nation - the Croatian people. The remaining nations would have their rights if these were not in violation of state law. Nations could have their own secondary and higher schools with compulsory Croatian as a subject while elementary schools would be in the remit of the state. Croatian and Italian were the official languages in the Trieste County. The Croatian flag was red-white-blue with a coat of arms of red and white squares with the Croatian crown above it. All titles of nobility and charters were to be approved by the Sabor and have a duplicate written in Croatian. The official currency was the common currency of the Austro-Hungarian-Croatian Bank. The currency would be inscribed in Croatian. The administrative Court would be located in Zagreb with several district courts. The Croatian kingdom's defence forces represented the official army of the Kingdom of Croatia and all costs were to be borne by the Sabor. The defence forces were obliged to reconstruct old towns, fortresses and castles of monumental value.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

Growing dissatisfaction with dualism in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and certain path toward decay, transformation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was inevitable. Growing political maturity of part of the Croatian political elite and maturing Croatian nation did not go unnoticed in Vienna which in the future would have to count on yet another strong stakeholder in the state. However, in addition to Croatia's political elite, another elite with Yugoslav inclinations was also growing, promoting Yugoslav brotherhood and unity and the desire that all Slavs be united in one state. That idea represented a direct threat to the dynasty because of its separatist tendencies and cooperation with antagonistic neighbours, the Kingdom of Serbia, particularly after 1903 with the aggressive change in dynasty in Serbia. For that reason in fact, the ruling, Yugoslav, Croatian-Serbian coalition with its hidden but obvious interests became one of the main barriers to the realisation of trialism. The Viennese court knew that under the leadership of the Croatian-Serbian coalition if Croatia managed to act freely it would undoubtedly head toward deteriorating relations with the dynasty and gradual access the Kingdom of Serbia, depending on the circumstances at hand. As such attempts to exploit election engineering, the introduction of extraordinary circumstances in the form of a commissariat and other methods to create favourable circumstances in Croatia where Frank's followers were in power as a political stakeholder close to the court, would gradually adapt to the situation of creating a new state unit as part of the Monarchy

---

22 Ibidem, pp.10-17.

- Kingdom of Croatia. The foreboding world war and its negative consequences for the Monarchy and dynasty prevented those endeavours and accelerated the activities of Yugoslav agitators in Croatia and abroad. All that resulted in the downfall of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and within it Croatia, which found itself in an alliance with a state it had warred with for the preceding four years. Accessing the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under Serbian supremacy, Croatia's state, institutional and national continuity ended.

# Regionalism of European Space and the Question of Croatian Identity

AUTHOR

**Marina Skelin, mag. M.A. (Hist; Soc.)**

The question of regional determination of a particular state is connected with its geographical positioning<sup>1</sup>, political and global interests and relations of power in geopolitical order in a defined historical context of a wider area in which that state belongs. It maintains denotative and connotative political features - features that are most often founded on (and agreed to as such) of a cultural hierarchy and relations between subject - object, centre - periphery - semiperiphery. The existence of a cultural differentiating category itself with regard to the issue of political regionalism of space, leads to opening a discussion of identity that results from the latter. The angle of observation is important with regard to identity because often the vision of identity is not identical from the point of view of the actual carrier of that identity and other stakeholders, as such, auto-perception of identity features a desirable identity from the perspective of the carrier of that identity, while imposed identity maintains the currently predominant image in the world about a certain country.<sup>2</sup>

Auto-perceived identity is the result of a defined geopolitical culture of a nation, that is, a culture of the conceptualisation of a state and its unique identity, position and role in the world which results from its encounters with other countries in the world and is conditioned by the geographic position of the country, historical conditioning and bureaucratic organisation, discourse of national identity and the tradition of theorising about relations with the rest of the world and power net-

---

1 Geographic location is defined by natural, relatively unchangeable features and are considered as static geographic features of a location while a geographic position is defined by social and political features that are changeable with time and such is an extremely dynamic feature of a geographical location. (In: Mladen KLEMENČIĆ, "Zemljopisni i geopolitički položaj: sastavnice hrvatskoga identiteta" *Biblioteka Zbornici*).

2 Ibidem.

works that operate within the country.<sup>3</sup> Geopolitical culture comprises geopolitical imagination (perception of one's own position in relation to the rest of the world) and geopolitical tradition (theoretical thought of the foreign policy direction of the state).<sup>4</sup> The geopolitical culture of a certain nation also reflects the relationship of power in a certain historical period because it is characterised as positive or negative, that is, acceptable or not acceptable, depending on the agreed valorisation by the international community. In a certain historical context, this also represented the basis to create a defined geopolitical culture of the Croatian political nation that experienced certain phases depending on the historical development of its geopolitical position, which in the case of Croatia, can be seen in analyses of political debates during certain historical periods.<sup>5</sup> As such, the development of the geopolitical culture of the Croatian nation impacted Croatia's status as a periphery country because of its contacts and influences of various civilizational circles that permeated it as well as conflicts that impacted the historical and cultural development of the entire area which in the end featured Croatia's complex politogenesis and geopolitical morphogenesis.<sup>6</sup> The reasons for its periphery nature with regard

---

3 Gearoid O' TUATHAIL, Simon DALBY, Paul ROUTLEDGE, *Uvod u geopolitiku*, PK, Zagreb, 2007, p.21

4 Ibidem.

5 During the period following 1102 A.D. it signified the struggle for the rights of Croatian rulers as opposed to the Hungarian dynasty. During the Ottoman onslaughts, it expressed the need for the homogenisation of the nation and returning confiscated lands. At the start of the 19th century, the Ilyrian concept emerged which reflected the Romanticist spirit of the times that longed for past historical times while practically maintaining the fact that the political idea of preserving the Monarchy was possible only by uniting Slavic lands. After the downfall of the Monarchy that south-Slavic idea gained support from the West to organise a state unit. The idea of a free, independent Croatian state was for a long time the political framework of a minority, most probably because of the burden of a complex to size, the non-existence of a Croatian ruling dynasty (which in the political imagery of the times meant a great handicap) and which in the end led to the creation of a geopolitical culture featured by a consciousness of the existence of a Croatian nation however, with the only possibility of achieving it being through some larger formation. The political elite crystallised the idea of the existence of Croatia as an independent state as the only political option, only after the escalation of the conflict in the 1990s and the rejection of the offer of a Yugoslav confederation, presented by the Presidency of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). (More in: Petar VUČIĆ, *Politička sudbina Hrvatske*, Mladost, Zagreb, 1995).

6 Three essential cultural-civilizational circles however are accentuated. Croatia was exposed from the west and south, to the impact of the European Mediterranean which represented Catholic civilizational circles (nationally primarily Roman). To the north, it was impacted by central European civilizational circles, also predominantly Catholic (with premises of Judaism and Protestantism), while the influence that Croatia absorbed was primarily manifested through its contacts with Germany (Germans and Austrians) and the Hungarians. The third cultural-civilizational circle was that of the Balkans, featured by Orthodoxy and Islam (Ottoman onslaughts).

to geopolitical status can be comprehended by its geopolitical status within the so-called Rimland theory. Geostrategist Nicholas J. Spykman considers that anyone who controls the marginal areas (Rimland) is in a position to control Eurasia, which implicitly connotes controlling the world. The main geopolitical and geostrategic features of geopolitical Rimland is that it refers to a continual zone of conflict whereby the south-Slavic regions comprise the geographically continental whole of the Balkan Peninsula but without the key hot spots of that area of Europe (the mouth of the Danube, Constantinople and straits, Thessalonica, Trieste).<sup>7</sup> Throughout history several local conflicts instrumentalized in that area aimed at preventing the super-powers of establishing their influence in the region by applying offence and defence mechanisms.<sup>8</sup>

These relations could be evaluated through four modern categories of regional determination of Croatian areas (Balkans, Western Balkans, Central Europe, South-east Europe). An additional definition used is “Euroregion” which has resulted from modern European policies of regionalism that vitally sustain latent European Union (EU) interests toward the definition of a state and its functions. We will ignore the physiognomic view of geographic regionalism of an area and lean on an evaluation of the morphogenetic approach. The principle of physiognomic homogeneity was applied more widely in the past, when it was considered that natural features had a vital impact on space and the formation of regions, whereas the impact of man was considered to be secondary.<sup>9</sup> With time more importance was attributed to anthropogenic impacts in the approach to regionalism of an area and the morphogenetic approach increasingly accented the need to observe social factors that influence an area and the forming of regions.<sup>10</sup> Finally, a reciprocal impact is placed between natural and social-political circumstances because human communities transform natural *milieus* equally as much as they themselves are under its impact.<sup>11</sup>

## The Balkans

Observed geographically, the Balkans is an extremely undefined notion, and every encyclopaedia, atlas or expert literature in the field of geography, defines different

---

7 *Atlas Europe*, (ed.) Mladen KLEMENČIĆ, Leksikografski zavod M. Krleža, Zagreb, 1997, p.349.

8 Jure VUJIĆ, *Fragmenti geopolitičke misli*, ZG, ITG, 2004, p.112.

9 Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, “Hrvatska u europskim regionalizacijama: regionalizacija kao integracija ili geografija moći” *Društvena istraživanja*, 17/2008., No. 3(95), p.352.

10 Ibidem.

11 Jure VUJIĆ, *Fragmenti geopolitičke misli*, ZG, ITG, 2004, p.108.



determinants for the Balkans.<sup>12 13</sup> However, this in fact refers to a geopolitical determinant that identifies a multi-ethnic and politically unstable area on the south-east periphery of Europe and that notion indicates a problem and not a region, which means that it refers to a historical and political notion<sup>14</sup> and not a geographical one.<sup>15</sup> Maria Todorova explains the reasons that leads to this claim and describes the Balkans as: In the wider sense of the word the region that we today refer to as the Balkans is “the complex result of interplay of numerous historical influences: political, economic, social, cultural, etc.”<sup>16</sup>

Geographically, the Balkans which encompass a wider area of southeast Europe was

---

12 The natural Balkans are a geographical and popular notion for the southern area of European space which comprehends the area south of the junction Rijeka bay - Kupa, Sava and Danube rivers, and seeing that Dobruđa and the Danube delta in Romania are more alike the remainder of Romania and Ukraine than the Balkans, the farthest eastern frontier of the Balkans includes the Romanian-Bulgarian border from around Silistra to the Black Sea. The Balkan Peninsula is also defined as the south-east part of the European continent with land frontier usually defined by the line Trieste-Odessa. Based on the geographic definition of a peninsula which notes that this is the protruding part of land that is surrounded by sea on three sides, with the shortest side of that imagined triangle facing the mainland, the Balkan Peninsula defined with the perimeters on the Sava and Danube rivers is geographically unsustainable. The land side of that imagined triangle is determined by the farthest points - Trieste and Odessa which is 1,365 kilometres long while its lateral sides would stretch 1,285 kilometres (Trieste - South Peloponnese), and 1,350 kilometres (Odessa - south Peloponnese) and in this case the perimeter facing the mainland of the imagined triangle would be the longest side while the shortest side of the triangle, and accordingly of all the conditionally said Balkan countries, only Greece and a part of Albania and Macedonia have an accentuated protruding peninsula position, which means that the Balkan peninsula can naturally and purely geographically refer only to that area defined as south of the Balkan Mountains. (More in: *Atlas Europe*, (ed.) Mladen KLEMENČIĆ, Leksikografski zavod M. Krleža, Zagreb, 1997, Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, “Hrvatska kao Zapadni Balkan – geografska stvarnost ili nametnuti identitet?”, *Društvena istraživanja*, 20/2011., No. 2(112), Radovan PAVIĆ, „Europa: zemljopisni sastav i geopolitička podjela“, *Anali Hrvatskog politološkog društva*, 4/2007, No. 1).

13 Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, “Hrvatska kao Zapadni Balkan – geografska stvarnost ili nametnuti identitet?”, *Društvena istraživanja*, 20/2011., No. 2(112), p.402.  
[http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id\\_clanak\\_jezik=103699](http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=clanak&id_clanak_jezik=103699)

14 Politically, the Balkans' core is in Serbia without Vojvodina and Macedonia and has a significant geopolitical and transport meaning. The geopolitical brunt of the Balkans is Macedonia and the term “Balkan fragile zone” is a geopolitical definition to a belt of insecurity, conflict and unresolved ethnic-religious problems and the problem of demarcation and incomplete processes of statehood. (In: *Atlas Europe*, (ed.) Mladen KLEMENČIĆ, Leksikografski zavod M. Krleža, Zagreb, 1997, p.201).

15 Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, “Hrvatska kao Zapadni Balkan – geografska stvarnost ili nametnuti identitet?”, *Društvena istraživanja*, 20/2011, No. 2(112), p.405.

16 Nevenka TANASIĆ, “Denotacija i konotacija imena ‘Balkan’ i njegovih izvedenica”, *Hrvatistika*, 4/2010, No. 4, p. 115.

first introduced by a German teacher of Geography, Johann August Zeune in his work *Gea* (written in 1809) who first used the definition “Balkan Peninsula”, incorrectly concluding that the Old Balkan mountain range spreads from the Adriatic to the Black Sea and that its function is a central mountain range that divides the continent from its sub-continent.<sup>17</sup> That definition of enlarged Balkans was not widely accepted at the time due to the existence of political-geographic determinants that had a very similar spatial scope - “European Turkey” (which comprehended all European lands under Ottoman rule.)<sup>18</sup> When, following the Berlin Congress, the geopolitical picture of Europe began to change, the notion “European Turkey” lost its function and it was relativized and given the name “Balkan peninsula” as a substitution, however its northern perimeters were not identical to Zeune’s central mountain chain but with the achievements of Turkish invasions in the 19th century.<sup>19</sup> The fact that the geographic notion of the Balkans at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century was primarily connected to Ottoman territories in Europe is confirmed by maps from that era and as maps of the Balkan peninsula that were made until 1878 included Bosnia and Herzegovina, those produced later spread to the north as far as Serbia and Montenegro only, that is they encompassed those areas of the then Ottoman territory in Europe (excluding Greece which also was no longer under Ottoman occupation).<sup>20</sup> The only map in the 20th century that includes Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Balkan Peninsula are those of Yugoslav orientation.<sup>21</sup> Serb geographer, Jovan Cvijić had a special role in revitalising the term Balkans in his work published in Paris in 1918 - *The Balkan Peninsula - Humane Geography* (this is indicative - of the place and year that it was decided to create the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs or SHS).<sup>22</sup> To adapt to the times, Cvijić moved the frontier of the Balkans to the Soča River and the alpine mountain range in its hinterland, encompassing all of Slovenia in the peninsula, claiming that

---

17 Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, *Hrvatska kao Zapadni Balkan – geografska stvarnost ili nametnuti identitet?*, *Društvena istraživanja*, 20/2011., No. 2(112), p.405-406. (Following Zeune’s work that introduced the contentious notion, we rarely come across this same term in the first half of the 19th century and finally German geographer Carl Ritter expresses his disagreement and emphasises that only those areas south of the Old Mountain have the attributes of a peninsula and as such proposes that the said peninsula be named the “Greek peninsula.”).

18 Ibidem.

19 Ibidem.

20 Ibidem.

21 Ibidem pp.406 - 407.

22 Ibidem p.407.

this covered areas to where Serbs migrated.<sup>23</sup> The idea of that type of Balkan Peninsula served as an argument to determine new borders based on ethnic principles while the Balkans represented as an ethnically homogeneous space was vital to emphasise the unity of a heterogeneous space.<sup>24</sup>

Continuing the debate on Yugoslavia during the Cold War, it was perceived as a part of the Balkans open toward Europe, which in the 1980s had already signed an agreement on cooperation with the European Community however, during the war conflicts in the 1990s the interpretation of the Balkans also changed for political stakeholders in the European Union (EU), the Balkans became a joint geopolitical definition for the group of post-communist countries in south-east Europe featured with continuing national hatred, constant national conflicts within and between states, historical animosity and vulnerability of the political and economic system encompassed in the definition of a “weak state.”<sup>25</sup> After the fall of communism, the Balkans as a conditionally defined geographical determinant, is often used and usually the connotation that the Balkans is given in European and global media discourse, is the one that says that the Balkans is that dark and inaccessible part of Europe, the periphery part in the cultural sense and often is related to the notion of conflict, instability, insecurity, anarchy, corruption and the like.<sup>26</sup> One of the connotations that the definition of the Balkans carries is that it comprehends the European periphery or province, and sometimes referred to as the Western East.<sup>27</sup> For that reason, in the initial years of the creation of the Croatian state, that term even today refers exclusively in contradiction to the definition of Europe/West and Croatia itself identifies itself as being opposed to the Balkans.<sup>28</sup>

## The Western Balkans

The phrase “Western Balkans” identified symbolic power that determines the rules of the games and decides not only the conditions to enter the “West” but also the

---

23 Ibidem p.407.

24 Ibidem p.408.

25 Nataša BEŠIREVIĆ, Ivana CUJZEK, “Regionalna politika Europske unije prema Zapadnom Balkanu – dosezi i ograničenja”, *Politička misao*, 50/2013, No.1, p.158.

26 Nevenka TANASIĆ, “Denotacija i konotacija imena ‘Balkan’ i njegovih izvedenica”, *Hrvatistika*, 4/2010, No.4, p.112.

27 Ibidem p.114.

28 Ibidem p.112.

very title of a political region.<sup>29</sup> The “Western Balkans” geopolitical project expresses a strategic and experimental soft zone of Southeast Europe and EU policies toward it, the area of the former Yugoslavia (without Slovenia, plus Albania), which then is promoted as a geographical determinant of the same spatial scope.<sup>30</sup>

The first political ideas and initiatives of the reconstruction of the Balkans as a new region in Europe appears in 1993 while the political concept of the western Balkans intensively develops as of 1997 when the “General advisory of the European Union” adopts the “Policy of regional approach for countries of the western Balkans,” and the notion of western Balkans itself was introduced into EU institutions when within the framework of the “EU ministerial council” the special “Regional Commission of the Council of Minister for the Western Balkans,” was established.<sup>31 32</sup> A joint EU report entitled “The role of the Union in the World” had a vital role in the political affirmation of the definition of the “Western Balkans.” In paragraph seven under the title Relations with countries of the western Balkans the “Western Balkans” are concisely geographically defined and since then identify not just a virtual political definition but a unique geographic region defined primarily by certain EU foreign policies toward the said area.<sup>33</sup>

At one time, when that definition emerged, in Croatia, it was considered to be an insult and it was criticised by the country’s authorities however, with time pragmatism prevailed and the political elite began to accept that definition.

## Central Europe

“Central Europe”<sup>34</sup> and the notion of the “Balkans” as a geographical notion, historical category and “status of the spirit,” as a European political/geopolitical/civ-

---

29 Nataša BEŠIREVIĆ, Ivana CUJZEK, “Regionalna politika Europske unije prema Zapadnom Balkanu – dosezi i ograničenja”, *Politička misao*, 50/2013, No.1, p. 158.

30 Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, “Hrvatska kao Zapadni Balkan – geografska stvarnost ili nametnuti identitet?”, *Društvena istraživanja*, 20/2011., No. 2(112), p.409. (Democratisation of the region through civil society projects, protection of human rights...)

31 “Council for the Western Balkans” comprising diplomats of EU member states and some members of the European Commission and members of the secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

32 Ibidem pp.409 - 410.

33 Ibidem.

34 Even though there is a distinction between the political and geographical “Central Europe.” Geographically it is territorially a little larger.

ilizational notion.<sup>35</sup> It encompasses the European continent with its perimeters surrounded by the Baltic sea to the north, the Alps and Adriatic in the south, the borders of the former USSR to the east and the French border to the west and represents the transitional region toward the rest of Europe.<sup>36</sup> In the mid-19th century, Georg Friedrich List used the distinctive name “Mitteleuropa,” where the interior of that same central Europe is identified by the German and Austrian empire, Switzerland and the land of current Benelux which in geopolitical theory is often identified with the German term “lebensraum.”<sup>37</sup> The Western European political definition of the region in history differs. It represents a buffer zone that separates Russia from Germany, a sort of defence from the Bolshevik East and the European vision of central Europe today is Central Europe without Germany<sup>38</sup> (Minor Central Europe) which comprises Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Austria.<sup>39</sup> After World War II, that central zone is divided between the west/capitalist and east/socialist bloc. That division created the official definition of “Central Europe,” which, with the disintegration of the socialist system once again began to change, returning within its realm all countries that once belonged to it culturally and historically. Even though ethnically varied to individual strong identities, on the most part permeated with German civilisation (with the strong influence of Judaism). It is the junction between the north and south, west and east as well as participating on the seas (North Sea, Baltic, Adriatic) and is well positioned for penetration toward the north-east, east and toward the south-east, and the central position of Germany is similar to the position of Italy in the Mediterranean.<sup>40</sup> Cultural, historical and religious arguments of belonging to Central Europe are present in all attempts to determine the central European area.<sup>41</sup> Today, defining Central Europe there are countries that are exceptionally identified as transitional. Apart from Romania which forms a natural connection of Eastern and Central Europe, Croatia is one of the transitional countries. Its northern part belongs to the

---

35 Duško TOPALOVIC, *Balkanska Europa: geopolitičke teme*, Diorama, Zagreb, 2000.

36 The notion appears with Zeune with the primary aim of emphasising the transitional features of the central part of the continent, the Atlantic Ocean and continental Euroasian influence. (In: *Atlas Europe*, (ed.) Mladen KLEMENČIĆ, Leksikografski zavod M. Krleža, Zagreb, 1997).

37 *Atlas Europe*, (ed.) Mladen KLEMENČIĆ, Leksikografski zavod M. Krleža, Zagreb, 1997, p.201.

38 With that the political and historical features of the German definition lebensraum” were erased.

39 Ibidem.

40 Radovan PAVIĆ, “Europa: zemljopisni sastav i geopolitička podjela”, *Anali Hrvatskog politološkog društva*, 4/2007, No.1, p.238.

41 Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, “Hrvatska u europskim regionalizacijama: regionalizacija kao integracija ili geografija moći”, *Društvena istraživanja*, 17/2008, No.3(95), pp.359 - 360.

central European region while southern Croatia with an exceptionally Mediterranean heritage belongs to south European countries and apart from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia are exceptionally transitional countries.

## Southeast Europe

The definition emerges to define the southern border of “Central Europe” and the transitional nature of individual countries so the southern part of “Central Europe” is separated as “Southeast Europe” which comprises Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Croatia.<sup>42</sup> The notion itself however, during World War II became unfavourable in public use because of the Nazi usage of that name even though in the rest of Europe and the USA, both names were used identically equally, in that the name, the “Balkans”<sup>43</sup> had prevalence. It is reactualised as a regional determinant in the 1920s with the American “Southeast Europe Cooperation Initiative” (SECI).<sup>44</sup>

In the political sense, SECI was to be evidence of America’s resoluteness to be present in Southeast Europe with the premise that along with developing cooperation with countries in southeast Europe it would weaken the influence of Islam in that area and at the same time, some Russian actions would be greatly weakened.<sup>45</sup> The plan involved stronger American cooperation with countries in south-east Europe where the process of democratisation had begun. The plan’s objectives were: consolidating reforms, developing regional cooperation, assisting integration into European and transatlantic communities, strengthening peace and stability in the region.<sup>46</sup> The Clinton administration’s policies introduced the USA into the strategic areas of Southeast Europe, particularly with regard to access and connections with

---

42 The definition is in contradiction to the basic geometrics of the continent and is legitimate only if Russia is not perceived as a part of Europe because the said area is defined as south east is not situated on the south east edge of the continent but forms the central part of southern European front that spreads from the Pyrenees peninsula to Povolzhje and this refers to the central part of South Europe. (In: Radovan PAVIĆ, “Europa: zemljopisni sastav i geopolitička podjela”, *Anali Hrvatskog politološkog društva*, 4/2007, No.1; Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, “Hrvatska u europskim regionalizacijama: regionalizacija kao integracija ili geografija moći”, *Društvena istraživanja*, 17/2008., No. 3 (95), 2008, pp.359 -360.)

43 Nevenka TANASIĆ, “Denotacija i konotacija imena ‘Balkan’ i njegovih izvedenica”, *Hrvatistika*, 4/2010, No.4, p.112.

44 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Turkey, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia.

45 Radovan VUKADINOVIĆ, “Američka politika na jugoistoku Europ”“, *Politička misao*, 35/1998, No.4, pp.11 - 12.

46 Ibidem.

vital points of current US foreign policy involvement (Middle East, Caspian Sea region, the Gulf, eastern Mediterranean).<sup>47</sup>

The public in Croatia did not accept the said initiative positively, as they opposed being given the “identity” of the East.

## The European Region and Euroregion

The thing that is common to regionalism projects to date is that until the most recent times, the boundaries of the region were those of country borders. However, in the 1990s, regionalisation of Europe is defined by the notion of geo-economic regionalisation that is not bounded by state borders and the initial idea of a “Europe of Regions” comprising national regions the idea of a “Euroregion” as a trans-national and trans-cultural region begins to emerge.<sup>48</sup> The basic criteria to create the “Euroregion” are that it refers to a region that encompasses parts of territories of at least two countries and that this is based on a mutual agreement between the countries in the cooperation.<sup>49</sup> The definition, “Euroregion” is used more often in smaller states and forms a natural, geographic whole which due to its natural and other social factors have common development interests.<sup>50</sup> It is indicative however, that thanks to its direct participants in the “Committee of Regions” and the “Assembly of European Regions,” the Euroregion can adopt decisions without previously consulting the governments of national states and has its own official acts (Statute),

---

47 Ibidem p.19.

48 Mirela SLUKAN-ALTIĆ, “Hrvatska u europskim regionalizacijama: regionalizacija kao integracija ili geografija moći”, *Društvena istraživanja*, 17/2008., No. 3(95), pp.362 - 364. “The region of Europe comprises regional units of national EU member states and states that are yet to access the EU and have official status within the framework of their home country as a unit with an administrative-territorial organisation. The trend of the fragmentation national areas strengthened in 1985, when the “Assembly of European Regions” was established in Strasbourg as a body of the European Union that promotes the participation of regions in adopting policies at the European level and interregional cooperation. Apart from institutionalising the participation of regions in the political life in Europe, it was made possible for the model of the regionalisation of Europe to be placed as one of the models for the development of a united Europe. The 1992 Maastricht Treaty enabled regions to have representatives in the Council of the Europe Union/Council of Ministers and is shaped as a new political body - “Committee of Regions,” which in addition to the “Economic Committee” and “Social Committee” became the second advisory body in the EU seated in Brussels and with that the said regions gained an instrument for their own social-political activities even outside their national state bodies. Regions of Europe with Croatia encompass 21 regions that in fact comprise all Croatian countries and that equated the administrative-territorial organisation of Croatia with geographical regions.

49 Ibidem pp. 362 - 364.

50 Ibidem pp. 365 - 366.

president of the region, its common bodies, flag and symbols.<sup>51</sup> This is an attempt at the European level to reduce the powers of nation-states in decision making and based on the spatial integration theory of the emergence of states - flags and symbols being centripetal/connecting aspect in the process of the emergence of states because they are symbolically the carriers of the state idea and national identity, which in this case leads to the conclusion that regionalism (which has generally become a form of growing national expression in recent times) and is at the same time motivated.

One of the Euroregions that include Croatian territories is the “Adriatic Euroregion.” It was established in 2006 in Pula with the intention that the current fragmentation of the Adriatic space in national states and its periphery nature in relation to the remainder of the EU, surpasses cross border cooperation and in that way facilitates economic growth and development as one coherent whole.<sup>52</sup> Followed by Euroregional cooperation “Danube – Drava – Sava”<sup>53</sup> which emerged in 1998 and encompasses parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Hungary which gravitate to the said area of the said rivers and within them meet the principles of the “European Framework Convention on transboundary cooperation between territorial communities or authorities.” The reason to combine them was primarily due to the project to construct the European transport corridor V/c (TEM Project) for better connectivity of these areas and facilitating better connectivity between central Europe and the Adriatic Sea.

---

51 Ibidem p.367.

52 Its members comprised: apart from Croatian counties (Istria, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Lika-Senj, Zadar, Šibenik-Knin, Split-Dalmatia and Dubrovnik-Neretva counties), seven Italian regions, Slovenia's Izola Municipality, Herceg-Neretva Canton, five Albanian local government units and Montenegro's Kotor Municipality and is a cross-border institutional framework to resolve common problems, among other things, to protect cultural heritage, the environment, sustainable economic development in tourism, agriculture, fisheries, resolving infrastructure problems. At the same time it is a framework of stabilising the political platform and latently enlarges the EU area beyond its borders. (In: (More in: Daniele DEL BIANCO, „Crossborder Co-operation as a Tool for Trans-national Integration and Conflict Resolution: The Upper Adriatic Euroregional Experiences“, *Narodna umjetnost: hrvatski časopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku*, 43/2006, No. 1).

53 Information taken for the web site: <http://www.ddseuro.org/>. Accessed: 12.1.2014.



## Conclusion

The regional determinant of the European area is a political, cultural and geographical organisational shape, valued hierarchical area. The historical category is what maintains relations of power in the geography of an area at a defined time. In modern European regionalism, Croatia economically and politically belongs to problematic and culturally peripheral regions. After the fall of socialism in Europe, the process of European stabilisation began in areas that Europe itself refers to as the “Balkans,” “West Balkans,” “Southeast Europe.” The objective was to enlarge and adapt the European (“Western”) model of the functioning of legal states (democratising society and institutions and concurring economic and legal regulations) propagating at the same time the need for economic linkages of the said countries in the spirit of geo-economics, based on the same idea that once represented the premise to create a united Europe (which connected economically, would overcome its historical burdens of war and prevent any war in the future). The problem that emerges with this approach is as follows – the (conditionally said) “Balkans” area, because of a series of historical reasons, today is still an area of unresolved national issues and unfinished statehood issues (that among other things are the interests of the West). As such, today in the spirit of fetishism of global geo-economies, a latent cultural propaganda has emerged about the idea of post-national and post-territorial society, Europe neglects the fact that the area of the “Balkans” is a conglomeration of “young” states which have just emerged from war for territory yet regardless of that “youth” - they have long traditions of the existence of national identity. Based on the model of structural fragmentation of Lipset and Rokkana according to which the dimension of a political area is defined by social and value divisions/fragments, which highlights the fragmentation of the prism of integration-independence/national-European,<sup>54</sup> particular attention was drawn to the definition EU-Balkanisation, that is, integration-territorial fragmentation. Apart from creating the impression of a cultural hierarchy, which is the result of the emergence of resistance toward the same (which were impacted by symbolic features that emerged from that same regionalism), it resulted in a sort of discrepancy between the demands and aspirations by the EU toward this area and between the real situation in the field by which the micro-level of society is latently under the influence of rhetoric from the West which creates a divided geopolitical culture and at the same time, creates two cultural fractions that are constantly warring (and which is often instrumentalized for political purposes). One features a certain

---

54 Marko TRNSKI, “Prošlost u sadašnjosti: Lipset-Rokkanov model rascjepa i regionalna politika EU”, *Politička misao*, 43 / 2006, No. 4.

form of atraditionalism and anationalism because nationalism is connected to the impression of exclusivity as are chauvinism and xenophobia (which in the end is a shallow approach to the definition itself and the result of global rhetoric supported by globalistic effects). It also features the negation of positive functions of tradition like traditional institutions in society, emphasising only the negative aspects of these.<sup>55</sup> The said aspects are equated with the past and conservatism (which in today's imagination is considered to be negative), which creates a caricature of stereotypes (in Weber's sense), stereotypes that belong to other groups that possess national-cultural (and in some cases Croatian) identity. Every social institution possesses negative and positive social functions.

---

55 Every social institution has its negative and positive social functions.

# Homeland War - A civil war or war of defence?

AUTHOR

**Antonio Mock, mag. Edu. Hist. et geog.**

**D**uring the aggression against the Republic of Croatia in the 1990s, more than 21,000 people were killed: 13,583 on the Croatian side, including the missing (Goldstein 2003). More than 14,760 square kilometres - 26 % of the country's territory was under occupation. According to the State Audit office, damages in Croatia caused by direct or indirect consequences of the war in the period 1990 - 1999 amounted to 236,431,568,000 HRK or 63,350,635,000 DEM. Other information notes that 180,000 homes were destroyed, 25% of Croatia's economy was impacted with an estimated loss of 27 billion USD in material damage.<sup>1</sup>

The Homeland War was preceded by a revolt by a part of the Serb population living in Croatia which erupted in August 1990, whereas the Homeland War itself comprised three phases. The first phase lasted until January 1992, with the military aggression against Croatia, compelling it to take up arms in defence. Armed conflicts began to erupt in April 1991, with the gradual support from the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) to Serb rebels while in August 1991 that turned into an outright aggression from Serbia. The second phase, from January 1992 to May 1995, saw a pause in the aggression and deployment of UN peace forces along the cease-fire line. For Croatia, this was a period of diplomatic endeavours and negotiations and patiently strengthening its forces with the implementation of tactical operations which liberated many areas of occupied territories. The third phase from May to August 1995 signifies a period of military operations that liberated most occupied territories in Posavina (Sava river delta) and western Slavonia as well as Banovina and Kordun, Lika and northern Dalmatia. The remaining areas Danube river region was reintegrated with the assistance of a transitional international administration in the period between 1996 – and 1998.

I would like to observe this topic from two aspects, which may have been the key to launching such a large machinery that involved all the significant stakeholders of

---

1 PERKOVIĆ, I., 2001: Ratne štete, izdatci za branitelje, žrtve i stradalnike rata u Republici Hrvatskoj *Revija za socijalnu politiku* 8 (2), pp.81–90.

Serbian society. The first is, Serbia's seizure of territories and preparing the area for quick battle activities through the prism of reorganising military commands in the then Yugoslav People's Army and the second is the demographic causes of the aggression. What occurred in Yugoslavia and its federative republics and their residents in the decades preceding the war?

Does the natural population growth and census and maintaining it have any correlation to launching the war in the former Yugoslavia?

### **The Serbian concept of controlling the area**

The Yugoslav People's Army was the crux of the armed forces of SFRY. Until the end of 1988, it comprised six components, navy, air force and anti-aircraft, defence and one independent corps. Based on its plan of *Unity* at the end of 1988 the JNA transformed into a military-territorial organisation and armies were replaced with operational units, or army districts. These organisations were featured with the unconstitutional subordination of Territorial Defence units (TO) under JNA command in the war. That meant that republic and regional TO headquarters in the war became army headquarters and TO units commanded corps. This organisation functioned to some extent in peace time, which was observed in Slovenia and Croatia during 1990.

The 5th Army District was established in Zagreb comprising JNA troops in Slovenia, north-western Croatia, Istria, Gorski Kotar, Lika, Kordun and Banovina. The 5th Army District comprised sub-command units, four corps, two of which were in Croatia and one infantry division. The air force support for the 5th Army district was provided by the 5th Corps of the Air force and anti-air force defence with its headquarters in Zagreb. The remaining, larger part of the territory of Croatia was divided between the 1st army district and Navy command. The 1st Army district's headquarters was in Belgrade and incorporated Slavonia and 17th Corps with their command in Tuzla. The Navy command was located in Split and was responsible for the Adriatic coast and northern Dalmatia and comprised a fleet, three navy sectors and a marine corps in Knin. (Image 1)



Im. 1 - Military districts of the JNA in the second half of the 1980s<sup>2</sup>

This is the structure of the JNA that entered into the war. The JNA's war plan was part of a single plan of defence of the SFRY. Since the early 1970s the defence plan of SFRY armed forces was dubbed *Sutjeska*. The variant of an attack from the East was dubbed *Sutjeska-1*, from the West *Sutjeska-2*. As of the spring of 1990 *Sutjeska-2* was the JNA's basic plan. In the winter and spring of 1991 the JNA prepared its final version of that plan. The enforced Guard mechanisation division which was stationed in Belgrade and inner Serbia was put under the command of the 5th army district. The Banja Luka and Tuzla corps of the 1st Army district gravitated to Belgrade too as did the Knin corps and navy commands.<sup>3</sup>

The idea to manoeuvre forces was announced by federal secretary of the JNA Veljko Kadrijević in his view of the war. According to his confession, the idea for the offensive was based on a request to completely block Croatia from the sea and air. The main task though was on land and the plan was to cut Croatia off along the following lines: Gradiška - Virovitica, Bihac - Karlovac - Zagreb, Knin - Zadar and Mostar - Split. The strongest JNA group of armoured mechanised forces were deployed to eastern Slavonia with the aim of quickly penetrating to the west and to combine JNA forces in western Slavonia and extend toward Zagreb and Varaždin and on to the Slovenian border. At the same time, strong forces from Herceg Novi - Trebinje were to block Dubrovnik from the land and penetrate into the Neretva valley and in

2 Source: <http://www.google.hr/imgres?q=vojne+oblasti+jna&um=1&hl=hr&tb>

3 MARIJAN, D, 2003: "Jedinstvo" – posljednji ustroj JNA, *Polemos*, 6 (1-2), 11–47.

that way provide assistance to forces deployed on the Mostar - Split front (Image 2). According to the planned implementation, part of the action was to secure and “hold the border of the Srpska Krajina frontier in Croatia,” withdraw remaining JNA troops from Slovenia and after that withdraw JNA troops from Croatia. The already deployed JNA troops were to be backed by an additional 15 to 18 armoured, mechanised and infantry brigades. Their mobilisation, preparation for mobilisation and demobilising troops and deploying them to the mentioned fronts was to take 10 - 15 days depending on the level of alert and distance from the planned positions. The operation began in the second half of September 1991 (Image 2).<sup>4</sup>

The JNA descent on Croatia in September 1991 was undoubtedly characterised with elements of a detailed planned war operation *Sutjeska-2*. Serbia's problem was the non-transparent war objective due to disagreement between Serbia and the JNA which had to be put into action. Serbia advocated a Greater Serbia while the JNA fought to renew Yugoslavia. Following the conflict in Slovenia, Serbia's political leadership demanded the military leadership to promise that the Army would concentrate its main forces on the “Karlovac - Plitvice line in the west, Baranja, Osijek, Vinkovci - Sava to the east and Neretva in the south.

In that way all territory where Serbs lived would be covered until the situation is completely unravelled, that is, the free determination by the people at a referendum.” In addition, orders were issued to completely eliminate Croats and Slovenes from the Army. Pursuant to that order, in the second half of 1991, the JNA attempted to defeat Croatian forces and on 14 May 1990 an order was issued to disarm the Territorial Defence (TO) which indeed occurred over the next week.

JNA confiscated arms from the TO of the Socialist Republic of Croatia and stored them in JNA's arsenal. The Army claimed that the arms were exclusively in the competence of the army and not the republics and that the arms could be returned if “good security conditions” were re-established. Even though some municipalities established favourable security conditions, the weapons were never returned.

---

4 Ibidem



Im. 2 - JNA's plan to attack Croatia<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, on 15 May 1990, the general-staff of the Armed forces signed an order to reorganise JNA troops in line with new political circumstances in western areas of Yugoslavia. At the end of 1990, with the introduction of the duty to prevent civil war, the doctrine of JNA's procedures were changed to extraordinary circumstances. The Army introduced a novelty in its actions - "buffer zone." The "buffer zone" was directed equally toward the legally elected authorities and rebel Serb groups.

Amid all this, statements by Serb politicians supported the idea of a Greater Serbia. Statements by Vojislav Šešelj indicate the problems and opposition that the Repub-

5 Source: [http://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datoteka:JNA\\_offensive\\_plan\\_1991\\_-\\_hr.svg](http://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datoteka:JNA_offensive_plan_1991_-_hr.svg)

lic of Croatia was faced with. "Our stance is perfectly clear. We advocate the renewal of the Serbian state on the Balkans, a state that will unite all Serb lands: today's Serbian federal unit, Serbian Macedonia, Serbian Montenegro, Serbian Bosnia and Serbian Herzegovina, Serbian Dubrovnik, Serbian Dalmatia, Serbian Lika, Serbian Kordun, Serbian Slavonia and Serbian Baranja." (Interview by Branko Akarmica with the Tribun, 1 October 1990).

On the eve of July 4, Šešelj told the ON newspaper, what he would do were he at the helm of Serbia: "I would first order the Army to withdraw troops and arms from Slovenia and would allow Slovenia to secede. Then I would order the amputation of Croatia and withdrawal of the army and arms to the Karlobag - Ogulin - Karlovac - Virovitica line. I would abolish all federal government bodies and form a committee for Serbia's national salvation that would have all the responsibilities of extraordinary situations until the election of a constituent assembly and the election would be called for the end of the year. That would be painless. Because the Croats would crawl into their holes! They are a cowardly nation. Their genes are cowardly. In western Srijem, just 22 Serbs thrashed more than 300 Ustasha special troops. Bosnia is undoubtedly Serbian and any Muslim fundamentalist who doesn't agree will have to pack his bags on time and move out. I believe that the Serbian people with their genes are always ready for war. When any Serb is born, he is born a warrior and Europe knows that. Many here in the Balkans have paid a dear price because they undermined the Serbian people. I don't believe that there will be anyone found that soon who could forcefully impose any solution that would not be in our national interests."<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the Belgrade based *Politika* newspaper released the following statement by Šešelj in its edition of 14 May 1991: "We don't have any objection for the new Ustasha 'leader' Franjo Tuđman to create his Independent State of Croatia but only up to the Karlobag – Ogulin – Karlovac – Virovitica line. We will revenge Serb blood and send our bill to the new Ustasha movement for all the crimes and for a million Serb victims. Overall Serbism; Serbism has no price! (...) 100,000 Croats have to leave Serbia. Otherwise Serbia simply cannot take in all those misfortune Serbs expelled from Croatia. That's a simple exchange of the population under duress of Croatian state terrorism."

From these statements by Kadrijević and Šešelj it is more than obvious that the vision of Serbia's aggression was to exit to the Croatian Adriatic coast with the clear

---

6 List ON, 7 (1) 1990.



idea of splitting Croatia and amputating certain sections of Croatian territory.

## Demographic causes of the aggression

When we refer to the causes for the war and the Greater Serbian aggression in territories of the Republic of Croatia, we certainly have to consider the demographic situation in Yugoslavia and Serbia itself as one of the key causes. Many people, when we speak of the Greater Serbian war and its causes, will not find the real reason for that mechanism. Everything was idyllic. The army, police, foreign affairs, education, etc. were all under the watchful eye of Belgrade. Brotherhood and unity thrived and other trivial matters however some matters could not be controlled.<sup>7</sup> These led to mass protests in Kosovo in 1981 when slogans were shouted in Priština - "Kosovo, a republic," etc. These protests were violently quashed when Belgrade deployed the JNA to calm down protesting Albanians who advocated for self-determination and independence of the Independent Autonomous Region (SAP) of Kosovo.

The numbers were what concerned "official circles" in Serbia and Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union had a similar problem, that is Russians in the USSR whose numbers were gradually decreasing in relation to other nations that made up the Soviet Union. The number of Russians in the 1980s came dangerously close to a 50% share in relation to the total population. The Serbs didn't have that problem because, according to the 1981 Population Census, they comprised 36.3% of Yugoslavia's population. However, the share of Serbs in the total population of Serbia was reduced to only 66.4%. At the same time the share of Croats in Croatia was 75.1%. In Slovenia, 90.5% were Slovenes, etc. (Šterc i Pokos, 1993). It was obvious that the number of Serbs in Serbia and Yugoslavia was decreasing and that something had to be done to stop the reduction of the number of Serbs in relation to the other peoples and nations. The growing number of Albanians in Kosovo and in Serbia proper was a huge problem for Serbia.

According to the 1981 Population Census, Albanians comprised 7.7% of the population of Yugoslavia and observing the percentage of other nations in relation to the total population, Albanians could become the third largest peoples in relative numbers, immediately following the Serbs and Croats because the Montenegrins accounted for 2.6%, Macedonians (6%), Muslims (8.9%) which was almost the same as Albanians (Šterc i Pokos, 1993). The Albanian problem was reflected in the fact

---

7 ŠTERC, S, POKOS, N, 1993: Demografski uzroci i posljedice rata protiv Hrvatske, Društvena istraživanja 4-5 (2-3), Zagreb, pp.305-333.

that the area they resided in - Kosovo - was becoming too small and they began to settle in western Macedonia in areas bordering with Montenegro, south Serbia and according to all demographic indicators the Albanians were growing relatively fast thanks primarily to the high birth rate. As such, had the Albanians participated in the 1991 Population Census and had the Greater Serbian aggression not been launched then, Albanians would have been the third largest nation in Yugoslavia based on relative numbers of the population. In 1981, Albanians accounted for 14% of the population in Serbia proper and by 1991 that had increased to 20% of the total share of the population in Serbia.<sup>8</sup>

A special problem for Serbia's politics was the ratio of newly-born Serb ethnics and of non-Serb ethnicity in Serbia and Yugoslavia. Of the total number of children born in 1989 in Serbia (144,926), 50.48% were of Serb ethnicity while 33.69% or 48,812 children were of Albanian descent. According to the trend, in the following period it could have been expected that that number of Serb and Albanian children born could have been equalled. Furthermore, at the Yugoslav level, the number of children of Serb ethnicity was 28.54% while at the same time, the number of children of Serbian descent born in non-Serb republics was below the relative share of Serbs in the population. In Bosnia and Herzegovina for instance, 23.97% accounted for newly-born Serbs while the share of the Serb population in that republic was 32%. In Croatia these numbers were 9.36% compared to 12.2%, etc.<sup>9</sup> All this led to the conclusion that by waging the war of aggression in 1991, the Serbs wanted to cover up the negative demographic trend of the Serb ethnic contingent in Serbia and generally in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, because of the positive natural birthrate rate in Kosovo, Albanians began to settle in other Yugoslav republics however, most of them settled in areas in western Macedonia and border regions in Montenegro. Two towns in southern Serbia are predominantly populated by Albanian ethnics (Bujanovac, Preševo) and Medveđa also has a very high portion of Albanian residents. Furthermore, two municipalities in southern Serbia are inhabited by a majority Bulgarian population with a small share of Serbs in absolute numbers, such as Trgovište and Bosilegrad.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that the south was lost ethnically, laced with several non-Serb ethnicities who are settling the territory of Kosovo, Macedonia, southern Serbia and Montenegro. This opened room toward the west to execute the Greater Serbian aggression and occupation of non-Serb territory at all costs.

---

8 Ibidem

9 Ibidem

10 Ibidem

For years Serbia successfully settled non-Serb regions with ethnic Serbs. Vojvodina which was never part of Serbia's historical lands, demographically it practically became Serbia with a share of 60% of the population according to the 2002 Population Census. Serbia deliberately settled Serbs in all urban regions of the former Yugoslavia through public and state services and they were present in all municipalities of the former Yugoslavia. As Serbs traditionally inhabited mountain regions of the former country, the natality rate began to fall, demographically dying out and finally re-settling to Serbia, which naturally did not go in favour the Greater Serbian plan and the execution of aggression against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as Serbia was also an origin of emigration however, the majority of its citizens remained within the borders of Yugoslavia while Croats on the most part emigrated abroad in search of employment. Furthermore, national categories were often manipulated with and in particularly, the term "Yugoslav" was usually used in various polls and surveys for "expert-scientific" works. Deeper analysis indicated that the national category "Yugoslav" were usually not Serbs but rather of mixed ethnic background where that national category was promoted. People from mixed marriages were often referred to as "Yugoslavs" which indicates that this did not refer to just Serbs but other ethnicities. That was one of the manipulations among many other procedures that Serbs attributed to themselves but always to support their own interests and later used as propaganda in the idea of a Greater Serbia.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, based on constantly propagating throughout history to convince themselves and others that they are the carriers of Pan-Slavism, Pan-Yugoslavism, anti-Fascism, etc. and the forced myth of a Greater Serbia, a warring Serbia, of Serbian heroism and various other myths, they managed to position themselves in the international community as the most important factor in these regions and as the largest nation even though according to demographic indicators in the twentieth century that was not the case.

According to the 1981 Population Census, in Yugoslavia there were 8,140,507 Serbs or 36.3% of the population and 4,428,043 Croats or 19.8%. As Serbs never intensively emigrated from Serbia toward European countries but remained within the borders of Yugoslavia, it would be accurate to estimate that there are around 9 million Serbs including the ethnic Serb community in Romania (about 34,000). With that number, the Serbs were considered to be a large nation and the Croats were considered a small nation. It is estimated that there are around 4.8 million Croats in the area of the former Yugoslavia. An analysis of demographic changes in the period

---

11 Ibidem

1921 - 1981 in Croatia and Serbia indicate that had the population in Croatia grown at the rate that the population increased in Serbia, Croatia's population could have been 1.8 million more. When we speak about the emigration of residents from Croatia in that period, figures indicate that around 1 million people emigrated from Croatia. Taking into account the reproductive rate of the emigrant population, we come to a number of an additional 2 - 2.5 million people that make up the Croatian emigrant contingent. (Šterc i Pokos, 1993). As S. Šterc writes, "Serbs remained and fortified their Yugoslavia. Croats emigrated and dreamt of returning to their own state. The Serbs are a numerous and large nation and the Croats, even they were only insignificantly fewer, share the fate of a small nation."<sup>12</sup>

During the revolt and aggression in Croatia, the aim of rebel Serbs, as instruments of the Greater Serbia policies orchestrated from Belgrade, was to penetrate to the sea and control the Adriatic from Karlobag in the north to Konavle in the south. An analysis of sources indicates that Serbs occupied municipalities where they were the majority population and those municipalities where there was also a larger number of Serb residents. Combining certain local government units and other municipalities where Serbs comprised the majority of the population was conducted in those regions that fitted into the idea of a "Greater Serbia" on the Virovitica - Karlovac - Ogulin - Karlobag line. The Krajina Serbs (in occupied territories of Croatia) were offered *Plan Z-4* providing them with two autonomous districts - Knin and Glina - which would connect territories across Slunj. They rejected that offer to end the aggression and wanted to keep the existing frontier of the so-called Republika Srpska Krajina.

In that regard the Serbs challenged military intervention by the Croatian Army (HV) so that the blame could be put on the Croatian leadership and in that way fortify their position in Croatian territory.

By rejecting *Plan Z-4* the Serbs gave a clear signal of their intention to retain currently occupied territories and to annex them to the so-called Republika Srpska (in Bosnia and Herzegovina). The situation in the so-called Krajina was exceptionally difficult for several reasons. Economically it was about to crash, inflation was high, the Army of the Republic of Serb Krajina was not paid and was unmotivated for any sort of action. Serbia's president at that time, Slobodan Milošević had the final word in political decisions as was confirmed by Peter Galbraith in the trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague against Milošević, and as A. Nator writes in his book *Velikosrpska agresija na Hrvatsku*

---

12 Ibidem, p.310.

1990-*ih* on the first day of the *Storm* (military operation by Croatian forces) Milošević called (Serb rebel leader) Mile Martić and ordered him to hold “Krajina” for five to six days so that Belgrade could be given some room to take action. They counted on discrediting Croatia before the international community and that Belgrade, which was burdened by previously imposed economic sanctions, would be given status of a negotiator to retain the “Krajina” region in Croatian territory.

The Serbs in Croatia did not concede to truce. Their explanation was that they wanted to unite into a Serb conglomeration from west of the Drina river and then annex to its mother country - Serbia. Based on evidence in the field, it was obvious that rebel Serbs in Croatia were encouraged by the idea of a Greater Serbia orchestrated from Belgrade where the political and intellectual elite had but one aim - the amputation of a larger part of the Republic of Croatia, to penetrate to the sea via strategically important and not incidentally occupied territories of the western “Krajina” and to control the Adriatic from Karlobag down to the south.

It is absolutely obvious that the Republic of Croatia used its legitimate right to establish its independence that followed after growing nationalism by Serbs in Croatia encouraged by Belgrade. The war in Croatia was imposed and Croatia fought a war of defence against Greater Serbian aggression. With a justified struggle, it liberated occupied territory which ended with the peaceful integration of the Danube region and placed its entire state territory under control.

The tragedy of the defence-liberation war in Croatia is that the aggressor did not intend to just physically invade the country. The idea was to totally destroy the Croatian identity of Croatia and the Croats - its individuals, culture and history. This is most evident in the shelling of Dubrovnik, listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, as well as the Šibenik cathedral, Zadar and many other historic monuments.

The question now may be why present all the figures of the then number of those killed and material damage that were caused by the war and aggression against Croatia? It is very important to determine the nature of the war that was waged in Croatia. Today, in the 21st century in Croatia, when many aspects of society are being revitalised, it is necessary to clearly state that the war fought in Croatia and the defence offered by its loyal citizens was a war of independence and liberation from an aggressor that has for centuries had the intention to invade its territories and to conquer the Croatian national area with the need to heal its century old complexes of its own identity that due to perhaps personal wealth, dared to embark on an invasion of another land, culture and identity. Thank heavens! Courageous Croatian heroes gave everything they had. I will conclude these thoughts with the words a

Vukovar reporter and hero killed in the war, Siniša Glavašević: “There are no spines that are stronger than mine or yours so therefore, if it is not too hard for you, if you have any of that youthful spirit in you, join us. Someone has touched my parks, my benches where our names are carved, the shadow in which you hid for your first kiss - someone simply stole it all, how can we explain that that Shadow no longer exists? There are no shop fronts that dazzled your eyes, there is no cinema where you watched the saddest films, your past has simply been destroyed and there is nothing left. You have to build it anew. First, your past, seek your roots, then, your presence, and then if you still have any strength, to invest in your future. And don't be afraid that you will be alone in the future. The town, care for it, it was always there inside you. Just hidden! So that the bloody hangman doesn't find it. The town – it's you!”

# Neofolk And Death In June: Revolt Against The Modern Music

AUTHOR

**Tomo Hunjak, Student of Umweltsystemwissenschaften (Environment Systems sciences) at the University of Graz**



The cover from “Something is Coming”, a Death In June live album from a war-time period of Zagreb, 1992. All the proceeds were donated to a Croatian war hospital.

The term “Neofolk” signifies music and culture which have evolved from “post-industrial” music genre in the mid-eighties. Its initial characteristics were combining the Punk and New Wave sounds with traditional acoustic instruments, mainly guitar, as well as usage of subjects and motifs popular in the then dark alternative scene (*Schwarze Szene*)<sup>1</sup>, such as occultism, mysticism and Norse mythology<sup>2</sup>.

Neofolk beginnings were closely tied to London, with the local group Death In June and akin projects considered as its founders. The main driving ideas behind those artists were a disgust towards predominant pop music in the 1980s and a strong urge

---

1 <http://ultimategothguide.blogspot.com/p/schwarze-szene.html> accessed August the 17th, 2015

2 Andreas Diesel , Dieter Gerten, *Looking for Europe: Neo-Folk und Hintergründe*, Index Verlag, 2013, 15-16

towards some older, romantic and more spiritual era, void of, in 1980s so strongly present, materialism. However, their song lyrics are predominately of personal and pessimistic character, providing a comfort in this, according to *neofolkers*, period of degeneracy, more than they call for any sort of reactionary activity. Through their work, neofolk artists strive for their listeners to become aware of a postmodern crisis we all are surrounded with, and to point out the values which could, to the fullest extent, render us unaffected by the general state of consciousness.

*“The problem with [...] contemporary Western music is that it offers [...] nothing except shallow pleasure, petty enjoyment and a promise of dancing the night away [...] all completely pointless things to do...”* - David Tibet, cca. 1988<sup>3</sup>

## Neofolk development

As did, by the year 1985, *Death In June* slowly turn into, one of its founders – Douglas Pearce’s, a one man band, so was its sound abandoning the (Post-) Punk influence and started to introduce a wide spectrum of traditional instruments, with the leading one being acoustic guitar. Almost simultaneously with Di6 (popular abbreviation for Death In June), there has been another genre developing, closely tied to and almost inseparable from Neofolk – a so-called “Apocalyptic Folk”, pioneered by David Tibet, a founder of „Current 93“ group, and a long-term close associate of Douglas P. The word Folk, in this case, according to Tibet himself, does not signify music, it is rather an informal word for people in general<sup>4</sup>. It differs from Neofolk in its predominance with spiritual themes and preoccupation with eschatology as its main thematic focus. There is one more musician worth mentioning – Tony Wakeford, one of the original Di6 members, and a founder of his solo project Sol Invictus, as yet another influential Neofolk trailblazer.

Later Neofolk artists have based their work mostly on the sound and ideas of the mentioned three, with minimal deviations in musical and thematic aspects. Therefore, it can be argued that since early 1990s, when there was the last bigger shift in Neofolk sound (abandonment of post-punk and new wave influences almost in their entirety, and an even greater emphasis on acoustic instruments), the genre remains quite unchanged. The 90s were a particularly fruitful decade for Neofolk music, marked by the genre expansion centred around a record label called “World

---

3 <https://youtu.be/2oXSDKbFj2w> - Dutch documentary “The Sound of Progress - Pop Music according to Foetus, Coil, Current 93 & Test Dept” [excerpt], accessed August the 17th, 2015

4 <http://www.wordaz.com/Apocalyptic.html>, accessed August the 17th, 2015



Serpent Distribution”, which had, until its bankruptcy in the year 2004, published a vast majority of the genre’s titles. Today, there is a several larger Neofolk record labels in existence, and the scene is to a far lesser extent concentrated in London, instead being present in all around the Europe, with the majority of artists being based in the countries of Scandinavia, Austria, and Germany.

## Neofolk and its controversies

A topic that arises quite often in Neofolk discussion and which is present in a vast majority of its artists is its controversial aesthetics, in which Death In June particularly stands out. Beginning with the band’s name, which is a reference to Night of the Long Knives (a 1934 purge conducted by Adolf Hitler), then the band’s logo, which is the SS version of Totenkopf, virtually every band aspect is permeated by negative connotations. Since later Neofolk acts were strongly influenced and/or inspired by Di6, they have, to a lesser or greater extent, took over the aforementioned aesthetics. Some activist groups also consider controversial a widespread usage of runes and other Germanic pagan symbols in the scene, as well as its militaristic clothing style. Even though Douglas P. refuses to explain his reasoning behind such visual aspects of his work, it would be very ignorant and pretentious to mark Di6 as a “Neo-Nazi” project. Merely the fact that Douglas P. is openly gay, and repeatedly uses the said symbols in a combination with symbols of the queer subculture, such as rainbow flag, points out to their different usage context, outside of their originally intended purposes. Thus, it’s about being visually provocative, which is in accordance with historical development of the Neofolk genre. As already stated, Neofolk is an Industrial music’s sub-genre, and the core element of the Industrial music has always been the breaking of taboos and provoking the controversy, with Laibach, with its aesthetics similar to Neofolk artists, being one of the more famous examples. On the other hand, rarely does an artist decide for such a direct usage of the symbols of National Socialism as Di6 does. It is mostly about elements which might provoke visual associations with totalitarian regimes, without any official insignia being used.

Probably the most logical reasoning behind such Di6 usage would be, besides the typical Industrial controversy purposes, that Douglas P. attempts to allegorize his project with respect to the state of mind in the Third Reich, drawing from the ideas of spiritual alienation. In his lyrics prevail the motifs of melancholia, loneliness, unconformity and nihilism, and as much as he is, in his state of mind, detached from his social environment, so were the architects of the Third Reich, in their worl-

dview, in a complete disparity with the social norms and morality of that time. A comparison which, even though it deals with completely different levels and motivations for such disparities, is very provocative and maybe even cynical, and due to its extreme nature makes a quite striking point.

All the above things considered, it can be concluded that Death In June is not, by any means, a Right Wing extremist music project, and its (mostly visual) thematic resemblances with totalitarian regimes are of purely artistic nature. Despite that, Di6 had been boycotted in quite a few instances, and met organizational problems when trying to perform in some countries<sup>5</sup>, a part of its discography has been banned from selling in Germany, as well as some of the group's symbols, which are often being censored during live performances. Other Neofolk artists' difficulties are mostly caused by usage of Pagan symbols, most often the runic alphabet, as well as some other pagan symbols, which have seen modern usage in the era of Fascism<sup>6</sup>. Causing controversies was never foreign to artists among the Industrial genre and its derivatives, but in most cases, its only about visual enhancement of their lyrics and live performances, all in the function of creating an exalting and mystic atmosphere (runes and other pagan symbols), or provoking a critical review of contemporary *Zeitgeist* (image below)



A modified flag of the USA; used during a Di6 USA tour; an example of controversial usage of symbols in order to provoke; typical of Industrial and related genres

---

5 Robert Forbes, *Misery and Purity, A History and Personal Interpretation of Death in June*, Jara Press, Amer-sham 1995., 15

6 Sara Buttsworth, Maartje Abbenhuis, *Monsters in the Mirror: Representations of Nazism in Post-war Pop-ular Culture*, 2010., 221

## Neofolk today

Even though in musical and thematic aspects Neofolk genre has not moved from its established sound for about two decades, its idea as a pop-movement alternative is still equally significant as it was at the time of its inception. Forenamed genre's forefathers are still active, yearly neofolk festivals attract audiences from all over Europe, and every now and then a new quality artist emerges to provide the genre with some freshness, necessary for new listeners and for keeping the scene active. With raising perpetually relevant questions, and with themes present in its songs, Neofolk genre is a cosy haven for all the souls disappointed with nowadays' social and cultural values of the West.



# About “Renewal” Organization

**“Renewal” Organization** was founded in Zagreb in 2012 by a group of students with the goal of education, developing and protecting Croatian national identity and fostering connections with the youth across Europe. Among its members are young intellectuals and artists, students from many Croatian universities and various individuals from the Republic of Croatia and the diaspora.

Our vision is to become a leading think tank of educated Croatian youth. A think tank that actively proposes solutions for cultural, ethical and political renewal of all layers of society in the Republic of Croatia. Our mission is to gather and connect academically educated people and students across Croatia so that we can exchange our experiences, discuss and learn about key social topics and participate in various cultural events. We want to serve as a source of diverse ideas, concepts, visions, information and creativity.

“Obnova” has a wide range of activities, but one of our most important projects is the multidisciplinary journal for culture, society and politics of the same name. This journal serves as a platform for well reasoned dialogue as well as debate, in cases of opposing views or opinions held among members, journal authors or the public. Special attention is placed on promoting and cultivating Croatian cultural heritage and art among the young.

We call on all interested individuals to contact us and collaborate, either by submitting articles for the journal or to participate in the various events that we organize or take part in.

WEBSITE

**[www.obnova.com.hr](http://www.obnova.com.hr)**

FACEBOOK

**[www.facebook.com/obnova.casopis/](http://www.facebook.com/obnova.casopis/)**

IBAN ACCOUNT

**HR1423600001102326839**