

**THE IMAGE OF SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA IN
CROATIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

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Abstract

The collapse of socialism pushed the political communities to reframe their past in order to secure the feeling of their continuity. These reshaped images of the socialist past in the period of great changes and intensive nation-building policies are one of the niches in which the *Zeitgeist* of the country can be caught. This thesis examines how the image of Yugoslavia is re-created in the Croatian historiography from the 1990s onward, what it consists of and how it evolved throughout time. It argues that those different modes of the representations of the socialist past in the contemporary Croatian historiography reflect the different phases through which Croatian society went through, but more importantly - they are a reflection of Franjo Tuđman's regime's metanarrative, which was imposed in the 1990's through various policies. The political crisis, eruption of the war and intensive nation-building processes had an effect on the tone of the narration on Yugoslavia, but so did democratic changes in 2000 and the subsequent "normalization" of the past too. Moreover, I argue that Croatian historiography tends to reflect the basic features of Croatian nationalism in the 1990's and the exclusivist conception of national identity. The focal points of Franjo Tuđman's legacy - "the thousand years old dream", "all-Croat national reconciliation", the notion of belonging to the West, Yugoslavia as "Balkan kidnapping" and the formation of the Croatian nation-state as a culmination of history are the basic tropes which influenced the historiography.

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Introduction

Historical ruptures, as were for example the dissolutions of the USSR or of the socialist Yugoslavia, pushed political communities to reframe the past in order to secure the feeling of their continuity. These historical ruptures do not represent a complete break with the past, but a mere reformulation of those visions of the past. The dissolution of Yugoslavia and the wars which accompanied it represent one such case. Like in all post-socialist states, Croatian society during the period of transition underwent the process of a paradigmatic shift. Notions of Europe, liberal democracy and market economy replaced socialism, “Brotherhood and Unity” and Yugoslavism. In Croatia's “return to Europe”, forty-five years of socialist past and collective experience under it are sublimed to a certain vision of the past which “stands at the core of socially integrating knowledge which constructs the various interests, forms the collective identities, protects from the outer world, generates solidarity between the members of the society, helps the complex environment to structure itself and made it comprehensive.”¹

The reshaped image of the socialist past in the period of great changes and intensive nation-building policies is one of the niches in which the *Zeitgeist* of the country can be caught. I would like to examine how the image of Yugoslavia is re-created in the historiography, what it consisted of and how it evolved over time. My assumption is that different modes of representation of the socialist past in the contemporary Croatian historiography reflect the different phases through which Croatian society went, but more importantly - they are a reflection of Franjo Tuđman's regime's metanarrative, which was imposed in the 1990's through various state-building policies. The political crisis, the

¹Todor Kuljić. *Prevladavanje Prošlosti: Uzroci I Pravci Promene Slike Istorije Krajem XX Veka*. (Beograd: Helsinški odbora za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2002.), 49-50.

eruption of war and the intensive nation-building processes had an effect on the narration about Yugoslavia, but so did democratic changes in 2000 and the subsequent "normalization" of the past. The image of the past is "always elastic since it is constantly being adjusted with the actual societal and political demands."² Thus, I argue that historiography, to a bigger or lesser extent reflects the prevailing (nationalist) ideology, not just during the turbulent 1990's, but also up to the present day.

The collapse of the socialist block brought a need to redefine the attitudes and views on socialism. Related to it, the "alteration of the views on socialism changed the views on fascism and in the last instance that led even to the alteration of the views on antifascism too."³ Overcoming the memories on the problematic collaborative past, reformulation of the national identities and ideological revision of history are processes connected to the very same syndrome - change of "epoch consciousness" which came with the end of the Cold War.⁴

I am interested in examining the effects of these paradigmatic shifts in the historiography once it underwent through process of revision from the socialist, Marxist and Yugoslav influences. In the newly created independent state, the whole history was reevaluated through this new statehood prism. In this new constellation of power with a nationalistic and anti-communist elite in charge, it became necessary to present the Yugoslav history differently. In the words of the famous writer Dubravka Ugrešić, Yugoslavia became "an almost forbidden word".⁵

² Kuljić, *Prevladavanje prošlosti*, 50.

³ Ibid., 6.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵ Natasa Kovacevic, "Yugoslavia, an 'Almost Forbidden Word' Cultural Policy in Times of Nationalism – Interview with Dubravka Ugresic" *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 17:3 (2007): 302

I see Dubravka Ugrešić's statement as one of the most powerful comments on the atmosphere in Croatia during the 1990s. It embodies the whole institutional and systematic attempt to reevaluate Croatian national identity and the common past with other South Slavic people. Albert Bing notes that the process of reshaping national identity took place on several mutually related levels; discarding the attribution of Yugoslavism, opening the wide specter of different national identification, affirmation of regional identities, stressing the notion of belonging to the West and a desire to join the euro-atlantic integration processes.⁶ Also, in the processes of reshaping national identity, national homogenization took dominance over the process of building civil society.

These policies were mainly focused on the aim of emptying out of any Yugoslavian (and linked to it - socialist) content from the public sphere. Fortunately for academia, there is a growing amount of literature which deals with such topics; Snježana Kordić's study on the Croatian purist language policies,⁷ Lešaja's study on the purging of the library funds of Marxist content or the ones written on then common Serbo-Croatian language,⁸ studies on the changes of the memorial landscape through the destruction of monuments and the processes of renaming streets, etc.⁹ Within the bulk of the literature on the post-socialist Croatia, the Croatian historiography on Yugoslavia was not a topic of extensive research. This is where I see the main contribution of my thesis - on the topic of the interrelatedness of historical production and the politics of history in post-socialist Croatia.

If the history is a defining factor for the formation of national identity, then historiography can be seen as the defining factor in the promulgation of the particular image

⁶ Albert Bing. "Pomirbena ideologija i konstrukcija identiteta u suvremenoj hrvatskoj politici. In: *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara 10/1*, (ed) Igor Graovac, 327-341. Zagreb: Dijalog, 2008: 327.

⁷ Snježana Kordić, *Jezik i nacionalizam*. (Zagreb: Durieux, 2010.)

⁸ Ante Lešaja. *Knjigocid – Uništavanje knjiga u Hrvatskoj 1990-ih*. (Zagreb: Profil, 2012)

⁹ Laura Šakaja, & Jelena Stanić, "Other(ing), self(portraying), negotiating: the spatial codification of values in Zagreb's city-text" *Cultural Geographies* 18:4 (2011): 495 - 516

of the (national) history in relation to which these national identities are formulated. In this particular case of Croatia, I am not interested in the interventions of Croatian intellectuals in the public space, but in the works of Croatian historians and the way they provided the framework for the interpretation of the past. Serbian sociologist Todor Kuljić assessed the role of historiography as the following; "historiography firstly legitimizes the present regime as the logical continuation of the deepest national and social aspirations, and then, not less importantly, secures the formation of identities by pointing out where we all came from and where are we going."⁶ While I do not aim to estrange Croatian historiography of its scientific elements, I would like to focus on its "instrumentalized side" in order to critically examine not only the way Croatian historiography is influenced by nationalist discourse, but also how it has legitimized that very same discourse.

In this thesis, only the works written after the dissolution of Yugoslavia will be examined. This refers to the ones written from 1993 (when the first work which deals with contemporary history appeared - Hrvoje Matković's "Contemporary Croatian Political History") up to 2008 when the last book which is taken into consideration was published (Ivo Goldstein's "Croatia 1918-2008"). The works to be examined, written by six different authors, are the works of prominent and acknowledged scholars whose works can be found in current syllabuses in Croatian universities (see more on this in Theoretical Chapter).

My point of departure in the thesis is that the Croatian historiography is concerned with the "troubled persistence" of the nation and statehood. Moreover, I argue that Croatian historiography tends to reflect the basic features of Croatian nationalism of the 1990's and its exclusivist conception of national identity. The focal points of Franjo Tuđman's legacy – a "thousand years old dream", "all-Croat national reconciliation", the notion of the natural belonging to the West, Yugoslavia as "Balkan intermezzo" and the formation of the Croatian

nation-state as the culmination of history are also the very same tropes which heavily influence the historiography. Thus, the independent state which emerged in 1991 is projected into the past and the specter of statehood is inescapable in the works of the historians; as if everything is evaluated from the standpoint of the Croatian nation-state and as if the Croatian nation-state is the only logical end of history.

The theoretical chapter, which follows this introductory chapter, is constituted of two parts. The first one deals with the theoretical aspects of the interconnectedness of history, historiography and nationalist ideology, while in the second part a justification for the methodological approach is offered.

The main body of the thesis is divided into three chapters. The first one covers more closely the contextualization of the 1990's period and outlines the basic features of Croatian nationalist ideology which are mentioned above. The second chapter reflects more closely on Yugoslavian historiography and the impact of it on the post-socialist period. Finally, in the third chapter, the results of the examination of the selected works from Croatian historiography are presented.

Theoretical chapter

History, historiography and the nation

In a situation where there is a shortage of studies on Croatian nationalism, Alexander Bellamy's book on the formation of Croatian national identity stands as the most encompassing study¹⁰ written on the topic. Thus, his study I found useful for building the argument for my thesis. In it, he leaned on authors who in their approach attempted to go beyond the "great divide" debate (Billig, Radcliffe, Westwood, Verdery) and who attempted to give an account of how nationalism is internalized by the various social operators. Bellamy coined the term "Franjoism"¹¹ which is defined as the framework of referent points through which the "Croatian statehood narrative" is proclaimed. Tuđman established a unified narrative of the 'centuries-old dream' of Croatian statehood by arguing that the different thinkers and politicians all shared that dream, even if they disagreed about the most desirable form of that state.¹²

While his study indeed is the most encompassing study on Croatian national identity, it lacks one important aspect: to explain why and how that particular narrative and conception of independent Croatia as a "centuries old dream" became a dominant, mainstream conception within Croatian society. While there certainly were opposing narratives which

¹⁰ Alex J. Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries-Old Dream?* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2003.)

¹¹ Although the term "Tuđmanism" would probably be more appropriate since in Croatia such an expression proliferated over the time and in general refers to the legacy of Franjo Tuđman's almost a decade long presidency.

¹² Bellamy, *The Formation*, 68.

offered different conceptions of national identity, Bellamy somehow does not acknowledge that they remained marginal in relation to "Franjoism". While Bellamy argues that those different social operators offered an alternative way of thinking about national identity, he misses the fact that the "Franjoist" perception of history is the predominant one in the public sphere, imposed by the various policies and solidified in the historiography, as I attempt to demonstrate in this thesis. In Chapter I, I will outline the four basic features of Tuđman's national ideology which I argue are echoed in the historiography.

Tuđman, first Party historian then a dissident one, won the first free elections in Croatia in 1990 "on a program which exploited common places of nationalist interpretations of Croatian history."¹³ He was the main ideologist of the Croatian nationalist movement, the main constructor of the processes of Croatian national re-formation and state-building.¹⁴ The reference to history thus was so important for Tuđman that he personally wrote the historical parts in the preamble of the Croatian constitution.¹⁵ Following that, the constitution offers a very good example of the centrality of history for Tuđman's regime.¹⁶ In the preamble to the constitution, the overview of Croatian history was given. This very act has a twofold consequence; a) the very project of the Croatian state is based in and on the history, not on the will of the people, and b) a component of legality was given to the facts which underpin that narrative. Thus, law and history became indivisible.

This particular narrative of "Franjoism", was further spread onto society through the regime's politics of history, here defined as the policies of the regime through which the political elites interpret the past and legitimizing policies through the use of history with an

¹³ Nenad Zakošek, "The Heavy Burden of History: Political Uses of the Past in the Yugoslav Successor States." *Politička misao*, vol. XLIV no. 5 (2007): 30.

¹⁴ Gordana Uzelak, "Franjo Tuđman's Nationalist Ideology." *East European Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (Winter97): 449.

¹⁵ Zakošek, "The Heavy Burden", 31.

¹⁶ The full text of the preamble or of the "Historical Foundations" can be read on this link: <http://www.sabor.hr/Default.aspx?art=2406> (Accessed in May 2013)

ultimate aim of mastering the collective memory of the nation. The politics of history as a public policy determines: 1) public discourse on national history, 2) spatial and aesthetic concepts of the representations and symbolism, 3) interpretations of history, 4) contents of collective memory, 5) forms and ways the history is thematised.¹⁷ This is where the aspect of political socialization of history comes in.

The function of political socialization "is expressed most clearly in the historical textbooks which have the function of breeding pupils in the spirit of the desired political and national values."¹⁸ The historical textbooks are thus the perfect nexus of history and politics. Although academia is a unit of the state system more autonomous than the educational system, which is fully controlled by the state, it is nevertheless affected by its policies. Since the state provides an interpretative framework, historians are bound to circulate within it. While they are also attempting to probe those limits, they are affected to quite an extent by the imposed rules and the language practices of the regime. As Roland Sunny notes; "even as history as a discipline helped constitute the nation, the nation-form determined the categories in which history was written and the purposes it was to serve."¹⁹ Historians both provide legitimacy for nations and states and question those metanarratives of nationalism and the restrictions of history to a national history.²⁰ These claims will put to the test in the case of Croatia in order to show this interaction of politics and historiography. Thus the first two chapters will outline the two spheres which influenced the formation of the historical narrative in Croatian historiography from 1990 onward; Croatian nationalism and Yugoslavian historiography.

¹⁷ Tihomir Cipek, "Politike povijesti u Republici Hrvatskoj" in: *Kultura sjecanja: Povijesni lomovi i prevladavanje prošlosti*, ed. Cipek Tihomir & Milosavljević Olivera, (Zagreb, 2007) 23.

¹⁸ Tihomir Cipek. "Ideološka funkcija povijesti. Problem objektivnosti u historiografiji", *Politicka misao* vol. 32 no. 3-4 (1995): 186.

¹⁹ Roland G Sunny. "History" *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, vol. 1, Academic Press, 2001., 335.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 335.

While there are few works which deal with some aspects of Croatian historiography (ones on the revisionism regarding the topic of the Second World War predominate), there is no study which attempts to give an account particularly on the Croatian historiography on Yugoslavia or the one which examines the interaction between writing on history and national ideology in such depth as I intend to do. In this sense I see my thesis as an original contribution.

The most similar approach can be found in Maja Brkljačić's short, but concise study "What Past is Present?"²¹ and Damir Agičić's on the reconstruction of contemporary Croatian history.²² Brkljačić in her study deals with the "troubled persistence" of the "statehood narrative" within present works in historiography. In it, an attempt was made to deconstruct some major tropes in Croatian historiography on the history of the 20th century, but what it lacks is the further contextualization of the period when these works were written, how the tropes which she rightly points out are also the same ones which are prevalent in Croatian nationalist ideology. Also, the broader scope of the literature could have been taken into consideration. Damir Agičić did a brief survey in which he problematized some simplified views on Croatian history in some synthetic works (which are taken into consideration here too). While both studies offer very good critiques on some aspects of the representation of history on which I would like to reflect, the missing link is the one which connects the existing narrative in the historiography and the politics of history in Croatia. Ivo Goldstein largely dealt with the phenomenon of historical revisionism in Croatia related to the

²¹ Maja Brkljačić, "What Past Is Present?" *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, no. 1 (2003): 41.

²² Agičić, Damir "(Re)konstrukcija suvremene hrvatske/jugoslavenske povijesti u pregledima/sintezama nakon 1991. godine" in *Revizija prošlosti na prostorima bivše Jugoslavije*, edited by Vera Katz, 59-73. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2007.

Independent State of Croatia and rehabilitation of the Ustaša movement.²³ The same author made a joint work with Goran Hutinec in which they dealt with the same topic, but this time going further into depth by examining certain socio-political causes and motives for such a trend in the historiography.²⁴

While all of these works are important reference points, what they altogether lack and which can bring them closer are two aspects, with which I will largely deal in the following sections: 1) how are changes in the historiography in the independent Croatia connected with the works written during the socialist period?, and 2) how is Croatian historiography related to Croatian politics of the 1990s? I intend to build on the findings of the aforementioned studies, but my plan is to go through the selected literature with my own focus in mind. Besides I bring six authors into the scope of the examination, I also intend to conduct the examination of the selected literature through focusing on a couple of key aspects which I find the most important (see these aspects in the Methodology section).

This examination of the historical works stems from the aim to deconstruct the problematic aspects of the prevailing “statehood narrative” and to reflect on how such discourse further perpetuates the nationalistic tropes in Croatia in general. By no means do I attempt to offer a new master narrative, nor do I argue that all these works just mirror the refined versions of Tuđman's ideology, but that they are influenced by it, that those narratives can and should be contested since this predominant view is the one which takes a view on history in relation to how much it contributed to the formation of the nation-state.

²³ Ivo & Slavko Goldstein, "Revisionism in Croatia: case of Franjo Tuđman". East European Jewish Affairs, vol. 32 no. 1 (2002): 52-64

²⁴ Ivo Goldstein, & Goran Hutinec, “Neki aspekti revizionizma u Hrvatskoj historiografiji devedesetih godina XX stoljeća – motive, metode i odjeci” in *Revizija prošlosti na prostorima bivše Jugoslavije*, edited by Vera Katz, 59-73. Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2007.

Methodology

The image of socialist Yugoslavia can be defined as a totality of the discourses on this particular topic. As mentioned above, this discourse, the very words which are employed, the events which are described or the way the causal relations are set up creates a certain vision of the past on which general consensus is reached and which acts as a cohesive factor in the particular group or community. While I agree with the claim that the "image of past is not the privileged domain of the historians but a constitutive part of self-conception of the groups and nation through which the identity is formulated"²⁵, I will stick to the examination of the certain image which is created by the historians in their works.

This attempt to extract the certain image of the past leans on the methodology which was used in the aforementioned study by Todor Kuljić. In his assessment of the revisionism in the selected works from Croatian and Serbian historiography, he opted for three levels of examination; 1) description of the events, 2) explanation of the causal relations between the events, and 3) the way synthesis is conducted.²⁶ I find this methodology useful and I will lean on it since it is the only one which is properly developed and systematic. In similar works mentioned above, no methodological pattern was set up. Since my plan is to select some key issues from the period of socialist Yugoslavia, I will borrow the first two levels of Kuljić's methodology when examining them. After the examination, I will try to give overall remarks on the author's synthesis of the socialist period and place such a narrative within the context of the discussed features of the Croatian national conceptualization of history.

Although the focus of the thesis is put on the period of socialist Yugoslavia, the period of the Second World War cannot be neglected in the analysis. Since the Ustaša

²⁵ Kuljić, *Prevladavanje prošlosti*, 49.

²⁶ Ibid., 453.

movement and the legacy of the Independent State of Croatia were the topic of heated debates in the 1980's, but also because this topic is a divisive factor for Croatian society in general, it seems important to refer to how that period is examined. I am interested in the way both the Ustaša movement and regime are presented, how the creation of the Independent State of Croatia fits within the narrative of the Croatian statehood tradition but also how the policy of national reconciliation echoed in those narratives, especially regarding the rehabilitation of the Ustaša movement. Connected to this, I would also touch upon the way the Croatian Peasant Party, its leader Vlatko Maček, the creation of "Banovina Hrvatska" and his "politics of waiting" during the war are narrated.

The second section of the analysis deals with the way the specific features of Yugoslavian socialism are represented; self-management and the Non-Alignment movement. I will analyze how much attention is given to these topics, how they are treated in the context of world history and what the prevailing attitudes towards these phenomenon are. I am aware these topics, such as self-management and Non-Alignment movement, are broad and of a long time span, so I will stick mainly to the author's approach to these topics - was there an attempt for a deeper understanding and examination and how are those distinctively Yugoslavian phenomena evaluated?

Limitations

I would refer in general to the works which were made since Croatian secession from Yugoslavia. Thus; I will deal only with works written after 1991 since that can be considered as a year when the process of disintegration was already in full swing, when the Croatian authorities proclaimed independence and when a full scale war broke out. Because of my predominating interest in the image of Yugoslavia and the positioning of the period of socialist Yugoslavia history within the broader Croatian one, I will deal only with works of

historical synthesis. I will take into consideration only the works which are either covering the whole period of socialist Yugoslavia as an object of research or the works in which that particular period is part of the wider timeframe and analysis. Accordingly, the works which deal only with certain aspects of the history of the second Yugoslavia (for example with the Croatian Spring or with the welfare system of Yugoslavia) are excluded since otherwise the amount of literature which would have to be taken into examination would be immense.

The second factor in considering the limitations of the scope of the research is the educational background of the respective authors. I reflect mostly on the works of the prominent historians who belong to academic circles and whose works are part of the syllabuses in departments at Croatian universities.²⁷ In this way, I am in a position to exclude from consideration various semi-professional (often either right wing or heavily biased) works which could barely withstand conceptual analysis and thorough scrutiny. In total, into consideration will be taken six different authors and their works; Ivo Perić's "A history of the Croats", "Contemporary Croatian Political History" and "History of Yugoslavia" by Hrvoje Matković, "History of Croatia" written by Dragutin Pavličević, "Contemporary Croatian History" by Dušan Bilandžić, "History of Yugoslavia" by Zdenko Radelić and lastly Ivo Goldstein's "Croatia 1918 - 2008".

²⁷ Selected works could be found on the syllabuses usually dealing with contemporary Croatian history at the University of Zagreb (Faculty of Political Sciences and Faculty of Humanities) and University Juraj Dobrila in Pula. The only one which I could not find on the syllabuses are Ivo Perić's "History of the Croats" and Dragutin Pavličević's "History of Croatia", but those authors can be seen as respected ones since they were receivers of state awards for their scientific contributions (Perić in 1997, Pavličević in 2000, source: Agičić, 69)

Chapter I - Nationalist ideology in the 1990's

In this section I will cover the basic features of Croatian national ideology, with specific attention to the context of the 1990's. I have distinguished four basic features and each one of them will be elaborated in a separate section; 1) Croatian statehood tradition, 2) affiliation with the West, 3) Balkanist discourse on Yugoslavia and 4) all-Croat national reconciliation.

Croatian statehood tradition and influences of the Party of State Rights

The Ottoman invasion in the second half of the 15th century reduced the former Croatian medieval kingdom to the so-called “Reliquiare Reliquiarum”, the following two centuries witnessed the foundation of the first proto-national ideas of the Croatian nation. These proto-nationalists were conceptualizing Croatian political identity through the broader notion of Slavic common origins, whose land of origin was the supposedly Croatian territories.²⁸ Since the medieval Croatian kingdom, founded in the 10th century, was from the year 1102 in the personal state union with the Hungarian kingdom, the Croatian political elites throughout the centuries stuck to the tradition of the Croatian state right as the basic foundation of Croatian national consciousness.

Insistence on the notion of “Croatian statehood tradition” constitutes an important part of Croatian national identity, as noted by Tihomir Cipek. It was a common feature of all the Croatian parties in the 20th century.²⁹ The same author in another text states that Croatian folk “aggregated all their history in a small historical term: ban.” Ban was an institution which emerged from the personal union of the medieval Croatian state and Hungarian kingdom.

²⁸ Topic, Vasiljevic, Djuraskovic, "The state of the art: various paths to modernity - Croatian case report" Working Paper, Identities and Modernities in Europe SSH-CT-2009-215949 (<http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/public/ime/>) (Accessed April 10, 2013)

²⁹ Tihomir Cipek. 'Stoljeće diktatura' u Hrvatskoj, in : *Hrvatska politika u XX. stoljeću*, Ljubomir Antić (ed.) (Matica hrvatska, Zagreb, 2006), 286.

Basically, ban was a king's deputy for the Croatian territories. Traditionally, persistence of the Croatian statehood tradition was seen in the person and function of ban.³⁰ But it was the Croatian Party of Right who transformed this “feudal *amor patriae* of Croatian nobility” into a Croatian historical consciousness. Its founders, Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik, with their writings solidified the ideas about Croatian statehood. They were the ones who projected the sovereign will of Croatian folk in the decisions and acts of the Croatian nobility.³¹

The two of them are essential for understanding the Croatian contemporary history. As Banac states; Starčević and Kvaternik “produced an integral Croat national ideology that negated Illyrianism in almost every respect.”³² Although they will in some point went to extremes (for example in negation of the Serbian existence as a nation), the doctrine they developed is one of the cornerstones for the history of Croatian political ideas. Although they were not the first ones who have dealt with the topic of Croatian medieval statehood, they are holding prominent place in history because they have articulated the idea of “Great Croatia” into a political program (or Croatia in its “natural” and “historic” borders, depending on the perspective).

Their ideology rested on the idea of the state right of the Croats which can be traced back to the 7th century (time of the supposed arrival of the Croat tribes on the Adriatic coast). Kvaternik drew the legitimacy for such a vision of an expanded Croatia on the basis of “primal *acquis*”; Croats were first the people who created some sort of statehood on those lands, thus they have a right to create a state within those projected borders. Important aspect in the ideology of Croatian State of Right is the coming of Arpadović dynasty as a Croatian

³⁰ Cipek, Tihomir. *Ideja hrvatske države u političkoj misli Stjepana Radića*, (Zagreb: Alinea, 2000), 12.

³¹ Mirjana Gross., *Izvorno pravaštvo. Ideologija, agitacija, pokret*, (Zagreb. 2000), 68-69

³² Ivo Banac, *National question in Yugoslavia*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 85.

rulers; it was not seen as a sign of conquest and occupation of Croatia territories, but as a mere replacement of the ruling dynasty. As mentioned, the institutions of *Ban* and *Sabor* were perceived as the symbols of persistence of Croatian statehood. That, in their opinion, secured the continuity of Croatian statehood.

Starčević discarded Strossmayer's and Rački's Yugoslav orientation as a way of withstanding the bigger and more powerful neighboring nations – Germans, Italians, Hungarians.³³ Instead, Starčević advocated “independent path”. He harshly refuted those perceptions of Croats as a small nation and was of an opinion that the strength of a nation does not lay in numbers, but in its spirit.³⁴ For the understanding of Kvaternik's and Starčević's thoughts about Croatian independent path, it is essential to have in mind their convincement about the exceptional spirit of Croats (and the proof for that were the extraordinary achievements of Croats throughout history).³⁵ Tuđman was by no exception follower of some of their original thoughts. He visions and his ideas are echoing the Starčević's and Kvaternik refutation of Yugoslavism, their “Croatian natural and historical borders”, but also their claims on the Muslims from BiH.

This longue duree examination of the statehood narrative was put forward in order to contextualize the Tuđman's constant referrals to the independent Croatian state as a "millennial dream" and to Croats as one of the oldest nations, but the strongest mythologem derived from Starčević's doctrine is the conception of the Croatian state as the "End of History". Tuđman presented his political platform as "synthesis of all the positive, and renunciation of all the negative components of the political development of the Croatian

³³ Gross, *Izvorno pravaštvo*, 221.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 221.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 222.

nation in the modern history, with basis on the doctrines of Ante Starčević, Stjepan Radić and on the antifascism."³⁶

"Antemurale Christianitatis" and the belonging to the West

Myth of "Antemurale Christianitatis" or about "Croatia as Bulwark of Christianity" is present in the Croatian political thought since medieval times. While this myth is by no means the Croatian *differentia specifica* and has its place within so many national narratives of European countries, it is interesting to examine why such medieval myth made a comeback in the last decade of the twentieth century. *Antemurale* notion is inextricably linked with another persistent notion in the Croatian historical thought – one of "belonging to the circle of Western civilization". Together with ideas of "European betrayal" and "European ungratefulness", it created a package of ideas which constituted the discourse about Europe (and inextricably linked to it - Balkan) in the 1990s.

As mentioned above, the politics of the Party of State Rights solidified the ideas on Croatian statehood and set up a framework which will be followed up to the present day. Their politics was for some short period the predominant one on the Croatian political scene in the second half of the 19th century. By the end of the century it was pushed aside by the renewed popularity of Yugoslav idea.³⁷ Simultaneously with that, turn of the ninetieth century brought the ultimate development of the "East-West" dichotomy and was expressed in the "notion of incommensurability of Croatian and Serbian national identity."³⁸ Developed by the right faction of the Party of State Rights, it equalized the Croatian nationhood and the Catholic affiliation.³⁹

³⁶ Matković, Stjepan. "Povijesne teme u programima hrvatskih političkih stranaka 1989-1990" in: *Kultura sjećanja: 1991*, ed. Tihomir Cipek, (Zagreb: Srednji put, 2011), 117.

³⁷ Topic, Vasiljevic, Djuraskovic, "The state of the art", 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5

Approximately at the same time, in the first half of the twentieth century, one variation of *Antemurale* theme was developed as an opposition to the Yugoslav project. The main bearers of such ideas during the interwar period were Croatian sociologists Ivo Pilar and the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party – Stjepan Radić. They contested the Yugoslav idea on the basis of the supposed incommensurable differences between Croats and Serbs.⁴⁰

Thus, following sentence stated by Tuđman some sixty years later points to the striking persistence of such a discourse; “Croats belong to the different culture – to a different civilization – from the Serbs... Croats are part of Western Europe, of Mediterranean tradition... The Serbs belong to the East... They are an Eastern people like the Turks and the Albanians. They belong to the Byzantine culture... Regardless of the linguistic similarities, we cannot be together.”⁴¹ In one sentence every obstacle is mentioned; civilizational division, incommensurable differences between those two nations, Westernness of Croatia and Easternness of Serbia, inability of being in the same state, rebuttal of any similarity besides linguistic ones.

This “East-West” discourse was radicalized the most upon the foundation of Nazi proxy regime of Independent State of Croatia which brought Ustaša movement to the power in 1941. It was at a time when the notion of the Croatian “comeback to Europe” was launched, packed into fascist ideology of Ustaša regime. That interpretation offered a view in which Croatian state, after nine centuries, finally emerged as an independent again and took a role of “Antemurale” against “Slavonic-Byzantine Bolshevism” within would be a new Nazi world order.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Ibid*,5

⁴¹ Bracewell, „National histories and national identities“, 158.

⁴² Topic, Vasiljevic, Djuraskovic, "The state of the art", 7.

Following the defeat of the Ustaša regime in the 1945 and the set up of socialist Yugoslavia, the discussions about European identity, Western civilization and the East-West dichotomy in general were suppressed or have simply vanished.⁴³ They were only maintained within the circles of the postwar Croatian political emigration, mostly consisted of the sympathizers of the former Croatian fascist state. Still, it was from these circles that future Croatian president would find an inspiration for his political program.

Balkan as Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia as Balkan

Maria Todorova in her famous book "Imagining the Balkans" convincingly shows how "the Balkans as a geopolitical notion and "Balkan" as a derogation were conspicuously absent from the vocabulary of Western journalist and politicians" during the period of Cold War.⁴⁴ Instead, the dominant category was that of the "Eastern Europe" which more or less encompassed all the European communist regimes, disregarded their mutual differences and put all of them in the same bulk. End of Cold war and the following geopolitical reconfiguration brought again the "new wave of utilizing "Balkan" and "balkanization" as a derogative terms".⁴⁵ Nineties witnessed the construction of Balkan self-identities which were "invariably erected against an "Oriental" other".⁴⁶ That other could be "anything from a geographic neighbor and opponent" to the "orientalizing of portions of ones own historical past".⁴⁷

Violent dissolution of Yugoslavia gave incentives to the renewal of discussions about violent Balkans. Term Balkan found itself in the center of this approach which explained the

⁴³ *Ibid*, 9.

⁴⁴ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (New York: Oxford University Press.1997), 136.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 136.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 20.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 20.

conflict in Yugoslavia as an expression “atavistic cultural distinctions and ancient hatreds.”⁴⁸ Essentially, as suggested by Milica Bakic-Hayden, the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia brought a destruction of “neutralizing framework” which then led to revalorization of various social categories which simply were transformed from differences to the oppositions.⁴⁹ This cultural constructs, when employed in the heated discourse within given reality of insecure nineties, prove to be the explosive formula.

This discourse on Balkan and Europe were heavily exploited in the post-Yugoslav context. It served as a legitimization tool for various policies, particularly for the negation of the Yugoslav project and memory on it. Balkan served as necessary and inevitable "Other" in opposition to which the national "Self" was constituted. A quote from the journal of Croatian Democratic Community published shortly after the winning the first multiparty elections in Croatia exemplifies the discourse of (Central) Europe – Balkan dichotomy: “...the inclusion [of Croatia] in the states of central Europe, the region to which it has always belonged, except for the recent past when *balkanism* and the forcibly self-proclaimed national representatives have constantly subordinated the Croatian state territory to an Asiatic form of government...”⁵⁰ As Todorova noted, “Europe ends where politicians want it to end.”⁵¹

The Balkanist discourse in Croatia revolved around the concepts of “Self” and “Other” and, as mentioned, it was used not just to legitimize the negation of Yugoslavian political project, but also its mere past. The “Other” (in contrast to whom the new Croatian identities were renegotiated) were primarily Serbs and Serbia. Serbs were essential component in the process of the “Return to Europe”. According to that scheme, the path

⁴⁸ Stef Jansen, "Svakodnevni Orijentalizam: Doživljaj "Balkana"/"Europe" u Beogradu i Zagrebu." *Filozofija i Društvo*, XVIII : 35.

⁴⁹ Milica Bakić-Hayden. "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia." *Slavic Review*, no. 4 (1995): 931.

⁵⁰ Milica Bakić-Hayden, and Robert M. Hayden. "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics." *Slavic Review*, no. 1 (1992): 9.

⁵¹ Todorova, *Imaging the Balkans*, 139.

towards the European integration processes is one of the central markers of new Croatian national identity. Europe was re-discovered and in an almost teleological sense, Croatia is coming back to its natural “family” from which was violently kidnapped with the two Yugoslav (non-European) episodes.

This “Balkan paranoia” was expressed in numerous ways; through election slogans (i.e. “Tuđman, not the Balkans”) or even through the constitutional amendments.⁵² In his State of Union Address in January 1997 Tuđman issued a following statement regarding the launching of Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI): "By its geopolitical position, by all of its fourteen-century history, by its civilization and culture, Croatia belongs to the Central European and Mediterranean circles of Europe. Our political links with the Balkans between 1918 and 1990 were just a short episode in Croatian history and we are determined not to repeat that episode again."⁵³ Even such a benign initiative which was aimed at the stimulation of the economies of the former communist regimes in the whole of Southeast Europe stirred up "Yugophobic" ghosts although it was by no means a political affiliation nor was Croatia bound to join.

Tuđman's ideology (and of his party Croatian Democratic Community) can be nicely examined just through the discourse analysis of Tuđman's speeches, as Gordana Uzelak did in her article.⁵⁴ Uzelak notes how in that process of “reconstructing the nation and the state, the language is reconstructed as well”.⁵⁵ Through the analysis of constructs Tuđman often used such as “Yugo-communists” and “Yugo-unitarists” we can see the continuous attempt to bury the Yugoslavia in hearts and minds of wider Croatian population. Communism and

⁵² "It is prohibited to initiate any procedure for the association of the Republic of Croatia into alliances with other states if such association leads, or might lead, to a renewal of a South Slav state community or to any Balkan state form of any kind." (Croatian Constitution, article 141.)

⁵³ Nicole Lindstrom, "Balkan is Beautiful: Balkanism in the Political Discourse of Tuđman's Croatia" *East European Politics & Societies* 18, no. 4., (2004) : 642.

⁵⁴ Uzelak, „Nationalist Ideology“

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 450.

Yugoslavia were seen as a “symbols of all what is evil”.⁵⁶ This was also perpetuated by the twofold politics of history of the Serbian political elite where Yugoslavism was propagated for the external audience, while the Serbian nationalism was instrumentalized for the domestic use.”⁵⁷

Often used and widespread coinage “Yugocommunists” is also good example. Two terms are fused; one signifies a group of people of South Slavic origin while another one signifies the political ideology. The notion is created that those two terms are inextricably linked and cannot go one without the other. Thus, it is impossible to have a Yugoslavia which is not a socialist and vice versa. Basically, what was in place was a process of taking different terms (“Serbs”, “Yugoslavia”, “communism”, “Četniks”, “unitarism”) as clusters which can be merged in whatever combination needed ; “Yugochetniks”, “Yugounitarists”, “Serbocommunist”. Creating those images with fixed connotations had a huge impact on two levels at least: a) shaping the public discourse through the use of communication mechanism and b) revaluation of the collective memory of the broader masses.

Second World War and all-Croat national reconciliation

Key to understanding of the treatment of the socialist past is the fact that communism, anti-Fascism and Yugoslavia became inseparable, as exemplified in the Tuđman's discourse above. Thus, it was impossible to get rid of one of the components without discarding all the others. Governing elites opted for reframing the whole socialist past in accordance with narrow national(ist) prism. Sign of equality was drawn between Yugoslavia and “Serbianess” and the whole “Yugoslav experiment” was seen as a mere tool for Serbian hegemony. On the other hand, anti-fascist struggle was one of the pillars of the Yugoslavian regime and it became slightly problematic how to revise it in a new context. Yugoslavian anti-fascist

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 451.

⁵⁷ Cipek, “Ideološkapovijest”, 17.

struggle did not fit that well into the new big picture because the Serbs and Croats fought together as partisans against the Nazis, Italians and their collaborators – Ustaše and Četniks. Moreover, as in the other countries, Second World War brought a major division in society and it was necessary to overcome this problematic period. Tuđman saw himself as a man who can bridge this ideological cleavage. This was done through two discursive practices: a) call for an "all-Croat national reconciliation", and b) nationalization of the anti-fascist struggle.

This ideological trajectory (national reconciliation) propagated by the Franjo Tuđman's Croatian Democratic Community had two basic consequences for the Croatian society; a) bridging the ideological division stemming from the Second World War between the Croats (which necessarily led to the rehabilitation of fascism), and b) exclusion of the Serbs from the conception of the Croatian nation. It was his conception of Croatian nation which won the major support in the first multiparty elections in Croatia in 1990. In this grand scheme of history developed by Tuđman and propagated by his Croatian Democratic Community (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica* - HDZ in the following text), a call for the independent Croatian nation-state was issued which would be ultimately achieved through the collective effort of the sons of former Ustašas and Partizans united under the Croatian banner.

Second World War, like in other European countries, brought a long lasting division in society. Members of the Ustaša movement, banned in the first Yugoslavia from the 1929, stationed in camps in Mussolini's Italy since, came to power upon the fall of the Kingdom Yugoslavia in the April of 1941. Leader of the movement - Ante Pavelić was installed as a head of newly created Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* - NDH in

the following text). They became notorious for their persecution of Serbs and Jews, introduction of the racial laws and the genocidal attempts during the four years long reign.

National reconciliation policy was ideological axis of the Tuđman's political platform. It is also linked to the one of the broken taboos in the wake of the dissolution of Yugoslavia - the one of the communist atrocities committed in the immediate postwar period. Bleiburg suddenly became one of the new sites of the *lieu de mémoire*. In a situation where the poles are ideologically opposed, their common national identity became the common denominator which can bring them together and overcome the past. Although that certainly was not Tuđman's primary intention (considering his partisan biography), rehabilitation of the fascists was inextricably linked to that process since it was necessary to ease the burden of the Ustašas and their supporters. The Ustaša movement was stripped of the fascist components and the national essence remained, while in the evaluation of the NDH its statehood component was crucial. Following Tuđman's statement embodies such reasoning; "on the Bleiburg there were one hundred thousand Croatian people killed, and not only Ustašas, rather Ustašas were a minority, but there were people from different parts of Croatia whose families were aligned to the NDH as to the Croatian state, and not to fascism, or to Nazism."⁵⁸

Responsibility for the communist atrocities were generally ascribed to the Serbian units within the partisan movement, while the ones allegedly committed by the "Croatian units" were exculpated to some extent by their national belonging.⁵⁹ Opening up of the space for the limited rehabilitation was signified by Tuđman's notorious speech at the first HDZ party convention in the February 1990, but the first attempts for practical realization of such ideas could be found in Tuđman's idea about Jasenovac. According to the plans, Jasenovac

⁵⁸ Uzelak, "Nationalist Ideology", 456.

⁵⁹ Cipek, "Politike povijesti", 19.

would become a place where all the victims will be buried, from all the involved sides in the Second World War. This "mixing of the bones" procedure, as it was labeled by the oppositional voices in Croatian medias, was similar to the Franco's "Valley of the Fallen" in Spain. In Tuđman's words; "Jasenovac was the consequence of an ideological division of Europe and the world between two major ideas - fascism and communism. ... A place like that can be a place of reconciliation, of bringing together, an appeal to overcome similar evils in the future."⁶⁰ This idea caused outrage both in domestic and international circles and was abandoned later on.

While Tuđman's regime allowed the rehabilitation of Ustaše due to the national reconciliation policy, most radical stances in Croatian politics can be found in one other party - Croatian Party of Right. Founded in 1861 ("Party of State Rights"), over the split in couple of smaller parties until finally banned in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. In the 1990's it was renewed by the former dissident in Yugoslavia - Dobroslav Paraga. Party and its members openly associated as the heirs of the Pavelić's movement and used the Ustaša iconography; photographs of Ante Pavelić were adorned in the party offices, paramilitary wing of the party wore black uniforms (similarly to the Ustaša elite units - "Crna Legija" (Black Legion)), greeted themselves with "Ready for the Homeland!"⁶¹ or had the fascist salutes at the meetings.⁶² Also, names of the paramilitary units bore names after the prominent figures of Ustaša regime, for example, the one of army general Rafael Boban. Interestingly, but similarly to the case of extreme right in Serbia in their relations with Milošević, HSP was one of the harshest critics of the Tuđman's regime.

⁶⁰ Uzelak, "Nationalist ideology", 456.

⁶¹ Ustaša's official greet and Croatian equivalent of the "Sieg Heil!"

⁶² Vjeran Pavlaković „Flirting with Fascism: The Ustaša legacy and Croatian Politics in the 1990s“. *conference „Shared History and the Second World War and National Question in Yugoslavia“*, Tres Culturas Foundation, Seville (Spain). 2008: 12.

What is significant for the discussion in this fetishizing of the Ustaša regime was negating its closeness to Nazism or fascism on the one hand, and venerating of the national component, on the other. While it is quite obvious that Ustaša regime was *per se* having the certain fascist and racial components and developed inherent anti-Semitic orientation, that was disregarded and it was exculpated by stressing the national component. Such views are embodying the Croatian nationalism of the 1990s; Ustaša regime was exculpated not because of its fascist orientation, but because of its "Croatiness". Statement of the vice president of the HSP throughout the 1990's illustrates such a view: "if an Ustaša means being a fascists or a Nazi, then we are not Ustaše, but if an Ustaša means being a Croatian soldier and a fighter for an independent Croatian state, then we *Rightists* ("Pravaši") are all Ustaše and we are proud of it. It is with pleasure and honor that we greet each other with "Za dom spremni!" to restore the image and respect to that Croatian soldier who forty-five years ago fought for the same thing as Croatian soldiers fight for today - for a Croatian state."⁶³ Pavlaković concludes how "in Croatia the Ustaše revival was primarily experienced as anti-Serbian and a reaction to Yugoslav communism and Milošević's Greater-Serbia project."⁶⁴

Although not openly pro-Ustaše, HDZ had ambiguous stances towards the Ustaša regime due to their extreme right factions within the party. While not sympathizing openly, the nostalgia for Ustaše was tolerated because it was perceived as a desirable element in in the war-time circumstances and as a dam for the Serbian ultra-nationalists. Return of individuals with ties to Ustaša movement to was encouraged and even a registration of Croatian Liberation Movement⁶⁵ as political party in Croatia was allowed.⁶⁶ One of the reasons why Tuđman was "white-washing" Ustaša regime, but did not go further than that

⁶³ Pavlaković, "Flirt", 14.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 20.

⁶⁵ Organization founded by Ante Pavelić and other Ustaša leaders in Argentina in 1956.

⁶⁶ Pavlaković, "Flirt", 5.

was because he himself had a "partisan past". He had, in the end, rank of army general of Yugoslav People's Army (JNA).

While national reconciliation policy could have had help to overcome the ideological divides between Croats in the war-time period,⁶⁷ the consequence of it was the further exclusion and antagonization of the Serbian population. As emphasized by the leader of the political party of Serbs from Croatia - Jovan Rašković; "for the Serb people, the publicly proclaimed national reconciliation creates the sense that the Ustaše have been forgiven."⁶⁸ This is the second important aspect of the effect of this proclaimed policy - effects on the members of Serbian ethnic group which at the beginning of the Yugoslav crisis constituted around 12% of the overall population in Croatia.

Upon winning the elections in the 1990's, much importance was given to the state symbolism, such as the change of coat of arms or the highly pompous manifestations with the religious symbolism.⁶⁹ Sea with rising sun and red star were removed from the coat of arms, leaving only the chessboard in the centre. That stirred up fears among Serbs because it looked identical as the one of the NDH regime. Although the chessboard as such is originally historical symbol which dates back to 11th century, it was exactly the similarity with the NDH flag that stirred up hysteria among the parts of Serb population. In the initial phase of the regime, many such acts and decisions were made (constitutive downgrading of the status of Serbian population) which, intentionally or not, have antagonized the Serb population within Croatia and turned them against the state.

⁶⁷ Pavlaković, "Flirt", 8

⁶⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁹ Following inscript from Škrabalo's book describes nicely the part of the atmosphere following the official ceremony of the HDZ to power on the parliamentary session on the May 30th May 1990: "The peasant cradle was brought on the stage in which Tuđman laid down the load of bread which was a moment before brought in by the beautiful girl dressed in the folk costume. Without any explicit explanation whether the cradle represents the homeland or something else, people understood that cardinal sprinkled it with water and blessed it as a symbol of the newborn Croatia, now when the democratic changes occurred." (in: Ivo Škrabalo. *101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj 1896-1997*. (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Globu, 1998.), 449.

Atmosphere in the public space was heated up further by the "Ustaša nostalgia". Although not openly encouraged, it was tolerated in order to bring closer the Croatian population and win the support of the émigré circles which by the time become very influential and which often represented the most radical elements on the political scene. Other such symbolic steps includes the example the (re)introduction of "hrvatska kuna" as currency, using official vocabulary that evoked the language practices of the Ustaša regime, "purification" of language from the Serbian terms and expressions or even the renaming of "Square of the Victims of Fascism" in Zagreb to the "Square of the Great Croats". Overall, it was not just this minor symbols which deteriorated the interethnic relationship, it was more the context in which such symbolical acts happened; it was the "combination of traumatic collective memory, Tuđman's policy of Croatian national reconciliation and ambiguous position on the NDH, and concerted efforts of Belgrade to destabilize Croatia which made Ustaša symbols, or perceived Ustaša symbols, a significant component in the deterioration of interethnic relations."

Annual commemorations which took place on the 10th of April every year further clarify the "nationalistic turn" in Croatia in the 1990's.⁷⁰ They were organized and attended almost solely by the most radical elements of Croatian political scene - HSP. Interestingly, on such occasions, any relation between the fascism and Ustaša movement was discarded. Statements such as "NDH was not anti-Semitic", "fascism never existed in the Croatia" or the one that "behind NDH was not some particular ideology, but only the will for achieving the Croatian state" could be heard.⁷¹ Behind such rhetoric was the fact that Tuđman's regime, while tolerating the rehabilitation of Ustaša regime, allowed actually radical right groups to

⁷⁰ That date was taken as the founding moment of the Independent State of Croatia in the 1941.

⁷¹ Vjeran Pavlaković, "Opet "Za dom spremni!" - Desetotravanjske komemoracije u Hrvatskoj nakon 1990. godine" In *Kultura sjećanja: 1941 - Povijesni lomovi i savladavanje prošlosti* edited by Sulejman Bosto, Tihomir Cipeak and Olivera Milosavljević, 113 - 129. (Zagreb: Disput, 2008), 121.

"transform Ustaše to the misunderstood nationalists and anticommunists and to make them especially charming in the midst of war chaos of the 1990's."⁷² Such commemorations and the HSP in general never had any significant support within the Croatian population. They were usually discarded and people were against any kind of commemoration on that day. But the potentially problematic aspect is the abovementioned prism which sees Ustaše as nationalists whose aims were justified, but not their means. That is the ultimate effect of the Tuđman's policy of national reconciliation - relativizing the Ustaše through their national belonging and the prism of the nominally achieved statehood. Results of one public pool from 1996 shows have much such views were grounded in the mainstream, 45,2% of respondents stated that NDH was "an expression of the historical yearnings of the Croatian people for their own independent state", 22,2% responded with a statement that "NDH was a criminal state" and 21,4% of them stated that it was both.⁷³

As with many things, elections in 2000 marked a new beginning in many aspects for Croatian society. Democratization of society and European Union integration processes led to the abandoning of the rhetoric from the 1990s. In that sense, European Union played a key role since political elites realized that they need to transform themselves into a modern European right party. Ustaša iconography were definitely abandoned on the Fourth party convention of HSP in 2001 when party leader Anto Đapić stated: "We would like to remove all the barriers which were making it hard for HSP to transform itself into a modern European right party and to attract all the potential voters which minded the Ustaša symbolic."⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid., 122.

⁷³ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 128.

Chapter 2 - Historiography between the Party and the Nation

Memory production in socialist Yugoslavia

Socialist Yugoslavia was publicly legitimized through the image of the heroic anti-fascist struggle against “people’s external and internal enemies” during the Second World War. The very project of Yugoslavia is thus achieved by the People's Liberation War (as it was officially called) and socialist revolution parallel to it. The distinctive features of Yugoslavia's system such as Tito's cult of personality, the split from the Soviets in 1948, the notion of "Brotherhood and Unity", the non-Alignment movement, the self-managed branch of socialism and remembrance on glorious anti-fascist resistance served as the pillars of the political community. This image of Yugoslavia was polished by all the components of society; culture, education system, academia, public commemorations and processions, everything was employed to further perpetuate such an image of the past.

Still, there were some taboos like the postwar retribution against the fascist collaborators or about the persecution of Stalin's supporters after the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948. These large scale revenges against what were seen as “people’s enemies and betrayers of the revolution” were the objects of silence. Memories on those victims and discussions about it were suppressed and were not publicly acknowledged. Parallel to this official memory on the heroic antifascist struggle widely encouraged by the state, „family memories" existed for the victims who were on the „wrong side“. Their suffering was not recognized and the memory on them was not allowed to exist in the public sphere.⁷⁵ But following Tito's death in 1980 and the economic decline, which led into a deep

⁷⁵ For example, if we take cinematography, first time those taboos were problematized were in the 1980's; Emir Kusturica in his "When father was away on business trip" from 1985 dealt with persecution of the people accused as the "Informbirovci", while in the Branko Schmidt's "Sokol did not love him" (1988) it was the first time in Yugoslav cinematography were the "Cross of a path" was shown in a scene.

political crisis, regime was no longer in a position to control these different memories and confronting narratives in society. The founding myths were attacked from numerous spheres - academy, journalism, culture, even from the political elites who were supposed to act as guardians of the Yugoslav memory. In such a condition, previous taboos finally appeared on the surface and had a corroding effect on the Yugoslav collective memory, which personified by Tito, acted as glue and was holding together the republics and suppressing the memories of the bloody civil war from which the country emerged.

Gordana Đerić notices in her study about Yugoslav memory production that Yugoslav case is very “inspirational” because it points to the existential importance on the state’s capability to produce national remembrance; “...because Yugoslavia is an example which began to cease to exist at the moment when it gave up on construing collective remembrance and it was a state which withered away when it was no longer capable of controlling public imagination of all those different community remembrances.”⁷⁶ The role of historiography regarding this aspect of the Yugoslavian past was very important both in preserving the image of Yugoslavia prescribed by the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) but also later, after the Party's constraints were loosed, when burying this official narrative and giving birth to a new nationalistic ones. In the following section I will outline the basic trends of the Yugoslavian historiography and how the nationalistic tensions were reflected in it.

⁷⁶ Đerić, Gordana. „Označeno i neoznačeno u narativima društvenog pamćenja: jugoslavenski slučaj“ in: *Kultura sjećanja 1945.*, pp. 83-92, (Zagreb: Disput, 2009.), 86.

Fifty shades of red - Yugoslavian historiography

During socialist times, as hinted above, Yugoslavian historiography was employed to perpetuate the official narrative on the PLW.⁷⁷ For example, only between 1945 - 1965 more than thirty thousand monographs, articles and edited volumes were published about the war and revolution in Yugoslavia.⁷⁸ Accordingly, historiography reflected the official taboos too. Aware that these introductory remarks are carrying a dose of essentialism, I do not want to argue that all the historiography written during the socialist period should be discarded and evaluated as highly ideologized works divorced from any sense of objectivity. Within the constraints of the given framework, historians were still finding ways to renegotiate the past and offer different interpretations, as much as it was allowed. While the topic of Yugoslavian historiography still awaits a study which will deal with all of its "fifty shades of red", I will deal briefly only with one of the nuances; the one which reveals the national tensions in the narratives of various historians.

Ivo Banac's short study on the Yugoslav historiography⁷⁹ reveals how the dissolution of the consensus in the Yugoslavian historiography precluded the actual dissolution of the state. He argues that tendencies which emerged in the 1960's had an immediate repercussion on the historiography. The sixties were a period when two opposing streams within the Party⁸⁰ crystallized; federalist vs. centralist blocs in whose center of dispute were the opposing views on the systemic reform and administrative decentralization of Yugoslavia. In the 1960's, the third volume of the state sponsored "History of the Peoples of Yugoslavia" was supposed to be published, but due to the confrontation regarding certain interpretations

⁷⁷ People's Liberation War ("Narodnooslobodilačka rat") as was the period of the antifascist resistance during the Second World War officially called. Term "Narodnooslobodilačka borba" which signifies the class element was also used ("People's Liberation Struggle").

⁷⁸ Sundhaussen, Holm "Feniks iz pepela - Druga Jugoslavija i njezini utemeljujući mitovi" in: *Kultura pamćenja i historija*, ed. Maja Brkljačić and Sandra Prlenda, 241 - 281. (Zagreb: Golden Marketing, 2006), 248.

⁷⁹ Ivo Banac, "Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Yugoslavia" *The American Historical Review* vol. 97 no. 4 (Oct. 1992): 1084-1104

⁸⁰ Communist Party of Yugoslavia was renamed into the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in the 1952, so from there stems the use of both abbreviations in the text; Party or LCJ.

of the interwar period, it was being constantly postponed and in the end it was not published at all. Due to the system's sensitivity on any kind of appearances of national tension, it is no wonder that Tito himself had raised some concerns on the "nationalist manifestations in historiography" at the Eighth Congress of the LCY in Belgrade in 1964.⁸¹

Limited liberalization of the society following Tito's removal of Ranković in 1966 opened up a further space for criticizing particular notions of centralism and unitarism, not just in the public sphere, but also in historiography. Banac notes the "chance" was not picked up by Croatian historians, at least not the ones who belonged to the academic establishment. While the works of Franjo Tuđman and Trpimir Macan appeared, they did not belong to academic circles. Moreover, members of academic circles were heavily criticized by others due to their hesitancy to counter the certain nationalistic voices coming from Serbia. This was done by publicist and historian Zvonimir Kulundžić who even went as far as stating that: the Croatian historiography is haunted by the "self-imposed Ustaša complex."⁸²

The early seventies brought a culmination of the ongoing tensions between two opposing blocs within Yugoslav politics. The "Croatian spring" in 1971 and Tito's removal of the Serbian "liberal leadership" in 1972 brought to the public surface the ongoing processes within the upper structures of the LCY. The pressure cooker, in this case personified by Tito, released the steam and weakened the reformist potential in the Party structures. Finally, it seems as if the 1974 constitution was Tito's final offer which aimed to put an end to those circles of contractions within the upper spheres of Yugoslavian politics.

It was exactly the "Croatian spring" and the subsequent persecution of its prominent members which led to the banning of the Trpimir Macan's "History of Croat People". According to

⁸¹ Banac, "Yugoslavia", 1087.

⁸² Ibid., 1088.

Banac, the content of the book hardly constituted something controversial. Instead, "the book's offense had more to do with the known political liabilities of the author and reviewer [Franjo Tuđman] than with its biases."⁸³ The following year (1972) witnessed the publishing of the "History of Yugoslavia" one of the editors of which was Tito's personal biographer - Vladimir Dedijer. Aiming to counter the narratives of the "decentralist camp", the book provoked negative reactions from various republics. This debate on the "History of Yugoslavia" was thus a "last major historical debate in the oppressive atmosphere of late federalism."⁸⁴

The new controversial, revisionist works did not appear until Tito's death in the 1980's and the subsequent political vacuum. The decade of the 1980s was a period which witnessed the rise of nationalism in the whole of Yugoslavia. If the "Titoist era" was just sensitive to certain issues in history, then it can be argued for the post-Titoist period that history became the sole content of the political debates. If, as briefly demonstrated above, historical representations occasionally made their way up to the agenda of the Central Committee's meetings during Tito's reign, history adopted a more prominent place in the public discourse in the following decade. Thus, Slobodan Milošević's constant referrals to the myth of Kosovo or Tuđman's speeches saturated with notions of history and references to it were just a culmination of the long term disputes on history. As stated by Sundhaussen; "The Second World War and the "Second Yugoslavia", its founders and its founding's myths are inextricably linked. That symbiotic connection proved counter-productive during the 80's and 90's."⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid., 1089.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 1092.

⁸⁵ Sundhaussen, "Feniks", 243.

Shortly after Tito's death, once again his biographer Dedijer caused public controversy with his writings. This time it was about his former patron - Tito himself. Publishing of "New Contributions to the Biography of Josip Broz Tito" in 1981 signified that the space for revision of the official narrative was opened. In it, Dedijer broke with many former taboos on Tito's cult of personality: he revealed his participation in the Austro-Hungarian army on the Serbian front during the First World War, Tito's negotiations with Germany in 1943 and his relation with the Cominform.⁸⁶ This publication was followed by many other works, scientific and fictional ones, which touched upon controversial issues from Yugoslavian history, written both by party loyalists and fellow dissidents. These works in Serbia ranged from Petranović's "ideological redefinition of the Četnik movement" up to the work of (later Serbian president) Vojislav Koštunica and Kosta Čavoški which dealt with the Party's terror in the initial phase of the regime.⁸⁷ Banac states how "their parallel activities weakened the established interpretations of wartime and postwar developments and contributed to the growing sense of resentment among the Serbian public, frustrated with the party's inability to "pacify" Kosovo, undo the constitution of 1974, and reconstruct a strong centralized administration favorable to Serb national interests."⁸⁸

Still, it was the later formulation of the thesis about Croats as a "genocidal nation" and inflation of the number of the people killed in Jasenovac which elevated the "discussions" to a whole new level. Jasenovac became battlefield on which the Serbian and Croatian memories have clashed.⁸⁹ In the heated atmosphere and due to the system insensitive handling of the whole Jasenovac myth, the various exaggeration appeared and even the number of 1,1 million killed proliferated around. This inflation of the numbers then lead to

⁸⁶ Banac, "Yugoslavia", 1093.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 1094-1096.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1094.

⁸⁹ Sundhaussen, "Feniks", 271.

the formulation of the thesis about the collective responsibility of the Croats for the Ustaša's crimes. Crown of those writings was Vasilije Krestić study on the Croat's genetic inclination towards the genocidal acts.⁹⁰

Such a situation on the Serbian historiographical scene provoked Stipe Šuvar (who had held a various office positions within the system but was perceived as the Croatian chief Party ideologist) to summon a conference in 1983 under the name "Historiography, Memoir-Publicistic, and Feuilleton Production in Light of Ideational Controversies". It was an attempt by Croatia authorities to counter the rising voices from the Serbian historiography.⁹¹ But while Šuvar also whipped up Croatian historians because of the apparent lack of Marxism in their works, it seems that was not the case with some Serbian historians who "became increasingly more daring in their publications."⁹² As the overall political situation was worsening, so was academia more and more employed. Other notable examples are republishing of the new edition of Velimir Terzić's (military officer both in the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia and in the partisan forces) book on the April war in Yugoslavia in which he repeated old theses on the Croatian betrayal and responsibility for such a quick conquest of monarchic Yugoslavia. Certainly, the most notorious example is the SANU⁹³ Memorandum written in the 1985, and published in September of 1986. While in the Memorandum many issues were reflected on, the novelty was in its questioning of Yugoslavia as an optimal solution for the Serbs. Although it raised controversies at a time it was published in one Serbian daily newspaper, it was the later developments which gave it notoriety and prominence because in the following years Milošević fully embraced nationalism and expressed stances similar to those in the memorandum.

⁹⁰ Sundhaussen, "Feniks", 271.

⁹¹ Banac, "Yugoslavia", 1097.

⁹² Ibid., 1098.

⁹³ SANU - Srpska akademija nauka i umjetnosti (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts)

The Croatian reaction to these tendencies from Serbian historiography was "inadequate and late", according to Banac. Besides a couple of interventions by people who were not "genuine historians", it was not until the late eighties when the Croatian academia returned the ball to their Serbian colleagues. If academia was silent, as Banac argues, it was from the platform of the Institute for the History of Worker's Movement of Croatia (in the following text: Institute) from which the Serbian historiography in the 1980's was countered. Interestingly, in cases of both "Encyclopedia" and "Dedijer's" "History of Yugoslavia" it was the Institute staff which was criticizing those publications. Still, these critiques were packed into factual and other professional misconducts, rather than ones regarding the certain interpretations and theses.⁹⁴ While in the 1980's Institute staff became relatively engaged in the polemics with Serbian historians - responses to the works of Vasilije Krestić were published, but also to the republished edition of Velimir Terzić,⁹⁵ Croatian historians were not ready to employ in the direct and heated confrontations. Instead the attitude of the Croatian historiography can be examined through the rise of the numbers of the works which are dealing with the topics from national histories or with topics which were avoided in the previous decades.⁹⁶

Nevertheless, one of those few historians from the Croatian side which were involved in those discussions was the future Croatian president - Franjo Tuđman. The following section will deal with his case and will also serve as an introduction to the following parts where an attempts is made to dig up further into the roots of historical revisionism in Croatia, but also too contextualize further the imposed interpretative framework from which the contemporary historical narrative is derived.

⁹⁴ Agičić, Damir & Najbar-Agičić, Magdalena "Hrvatska historiografija o 1941. - Polemika bez dijaloga?" In *Kultura sjećanja: 1941 - Povijesni lomovi i savladavanje prošlosti* edited by Sulejman Bosto, Tihomir Cipeak and Olivera Milosavljević, 145 - 155. (Zagreb: Disput, 2008.), 150.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 150.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 151.

From Titoism to nationalism - case of Franjo Tuđman

As described above, during the Tito's time, narrative of the historiography was generally following the Party's one. Statements coming from the LCY were taken either as an "absolute truths" or as guidelines in the process of writing the history. Here follows one symptomatic example of the relation between the Yugoslavian historiography and the Party narratives taken from the debates of historians in the sixties regarding certain "accusations" in historiography. Although the regime was trying to suppress any interethnic tensions and accusations, occasionally such nationalistic tendencies in academia appeared, as hinted in the previous subchapter.

When trying to "defend" the image of the "Croatian posture"⁹⁷ during the April war in 1941, Croatian historian Vaso Bogdanov in his "Origins and aims of the chauvinistic thesis on the Croatian posture in 1941" (1961) cited Tito's remarks that for the fall of Kingdom of the Yugoslavia the "Serbian governing clique" was responsible. Tito's speech in this case was the ultimate historical proof against such a thesis.⁹⁸ Bogdanov's article offers an interesting insight in the way of writing on history at that time; he argues that the thesis about the alleged pro-NDH and pro-German stances of Croats came from the émigré government and imprisoned officers of the Yugoslav royal army. But then he proceeds on locating exactly such attitudes in "Načertanije", journal "Srbobran" and the politics of Nikola Pašić.⁹⁹ These remarks are interesting because it is the same line of thought which is updated in the 1990s; Serbian politics starts with "Načertanije" and ends with Milošević, with Ranković and SANU Memorandum as an embodiments of such tendencies within the socialist Yugoslavia.

⁹⁷ "Croatian posture" here means the overall attitude of the Croatian masses during the Second World War and the whole discussions whether they were more inclined to ustašas or partizans.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 147.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 147.

Vaso Bogdanov, although a figure slightly ridiculed at the time because of his disputes with Jaroslav Šidak and his "positivist school" at the Faculty of Humanities in Zagreb, is interesting because of his companionship with another figure, who was both ridiculed and glorified, depending on the perspective, - Franjo Tuđman. While friends in private life, it seems that initially they had differing stances on one issue - the "specificity" of the Croatian posture during the Second World War. Bogdanov argued that it should not be written in terms of the "specificity" of any Yugoslav nation in general but only in terms of certain classes since it was the national bourgeois who typically collaborated with the occupiers and every nation had its own "betrayers".¹⁰⁰ Stress on the specificity was, on the other hand, a central feature of Tuđman's early writings.

Franjo Tuđman was a commissar of the local section of the communist resistance movement in the region of central Croatia during the Second World War. After the war, he moved to Belgrade where he finished his secondary education and got employed in the administration of the Yugoslav People's Army ("Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija" – JNA). Later on, he finished the Military Academy and began both his historian and military career. Gradually progressing in ranks within the JNA, he succeeded up to the rank of the general. Despite his progress, he decided to leave Belgrade when he was appointed as the first director of the Institute for the History of the Worker's Movement of Croatia in 1961. His directorship in the Institute marks the beginning of the wider scholarship on the contemporary history in Croatia, although still under the Party's control. Also, his directorship will be marked by some controversial statements which deviated from the official Party narrative and which will ultimately lead to his expulsion from the Institute in 1967 and turn him into dissident.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 149.

What started as a debate about the nature and importance of the partisan resistance in Croatia will transfuse to the debates surrounding the official interpretation and evaluation of the Cvetković-Maček agreement and the creation of Banovina Hrvatska in 1939. In the latter phase of his career, when he was already a well known dissident (at least within the Yugoslavian frame) he became involved in the controversial debates about the Jasenovac concentration camp and reevaluated to some extent degree the notorious NDH regime too in his notorious book "Horrors of War". These topics regarding the partisan resistance, of course, should be seen within a broader horizon of the ongoing disputes within the Party's ranks. His works about the nature of the NOB in Croatia should be seen not just as a response to the works of generals within JNA, which were undermining the importance of guerilla warfare and were stressing the importance of the frontal struggle, but within his attempts to "defend" Croatia. According to his biographer, his first "deviations" can be traced back to 1954 when he wrote an article under the name "For the appropriate assessment of the Zagorje partisans involvement in the NOB". In it, he made an argument about "specific conditions" under which both the resistance and the socialist revolution occurred in Zagorje region (in comparison to the other parts of Yugoslavia).¹⁰¹ It was his first public attempt to "defend" something which had Croatian connotations. From this point onward, more and more nationalist interpretations came into being.

His first two books "War against War" and "The creation of socialist Yugoslavia" are dealing with the same topics; evaluation of the guerilla partisan warfare in Croatia (in comparison to other parts of Yugoslavia). He was persistent in two arguments: a) that the nature of partisan struggle was dependent on the region where it occurred and b) in his conviction about the "superiority" of the NOB in the Croatian regions.¹⁰² In these initial

¹⁰¹ Hudelist, Darko. *Tudjman - Biografija*. (Zagreb: Profil International, 2004.) 243-244.

¹⁰² Ibid., 261.

works, one another important topic started to appear; the Cvetković-Maček agreement and the creation of *Banovina Hrvatska*.¹⁰³ At the time, he still perceived Cvetković-Maček government as a “governing clique” while the April coup d'état was regarded as a “first big victory of the antifascist movement of Yugoslavia.”¹⁰⁴

In his “War against war”, Tuđman defended the so-called “principle of dispersity”, where he argued that the nature of socialist revolution in the northwest region of Croatia was different because of the absence of large scale confrontation with occupation forces. He also argued that guerilla warfare of small local partisan units were the decisive factor in the overall partisan movement. To avoid the exposition of the tactical warfare of the PLW, what is important here is to note that was a beginning of his persistent attempt to relativise (or to remove) the blame of the Croatian people for the atrocities committed in the Second World War by the NDH regime. By insisting on the distinction between “domobrani” (regular, mobilized forces) and the “ustaška vojnica” (Ustaša’s special forces similar to the *Waffen SS* troops), he put the blame exclusively on the Ustaša’s formations. *Domobrani* on the other hand were perceived in a positive light because they were depicted as “reliable and constant source of ammunition and war materials.”¹⁰⁵

These slight tropes of relativization are characteristic for the rest of his career; reducing the range of responsibility exclusively to the Ustaša “special forces”, relativizing the overall responsibility of the Croatian people who were to some point involved in the NDH regime, relativizing the nature of the NDH regime by either depicting it as the outcome of the Serbian tyranny during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia or as the creation of the Axis forces. His

¹⁰³ The “Cvetković-Maček agreement” was a political agreement from the First Yugoslavia which attempted to resolve internal division in the monarchy and which created a large autonomous unit within the kingdom, consisted of territories which were predominantly inhabited by Croats. Signed couple of months before the outbreak of Second World War in 1939, aim of the agreement was also to secure the internal peace in the wake of forthcoming developments on the international stage.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 263.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 262.

last book “Horrors of War” will be the crown of his intellectual inquires throughout the almost four decade long intellectual career. In those four decades he will shift from the “Titoist” to Croatian nationalist.

In Tuđman’s biography, author Darko Hudelist notes how it was around 1963 when it can be considered that the national view acquired dominance over the Marxist perspective. Tuđman himself confessed that then already he saw the possibility of dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH in the following text) between Croats and Serbs in a positive light.¹⁰⁶ That year (1963), two books were published which were important for the development of his further career. One was the already mentioned book written by general Velimir Terzić and the other one was the “Overview of the History of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia”(“Overview” in the following text).¹⁰⁷ He employed staff of the Institute to write (negative) reviews of Terzić’s book which were then published in various Croatian journals and magazines, but the real controversy arose from the reviews which staff of the Institute wrote about the “Overview” (and he supervised them).

The “Overview” itself was problematic because their editors did not consult the Institute in the process of writing the part about Croatia (and besides it had some unpleasant judgments – following the old track of minimizing the Croatian contribution to NOB).¹⁰⁸ But it was Institute’s review which actually shocked the leadership of the League of Communists of Croatia. It was deviating to a large extent from the official stances. It was first time that the Cvetković-Maček agreement was given some positive connotations. Besides all that, some positive remarks about the Croatian Peasant Party, Vlatko Maček and *Banovina Hrvatska* in general were given. One of the problematic parts was a statement that the whole agreement

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 324.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 317.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 318.

“was a step ahead in solving the national question”.¹⁰⁹ The official stance of the Communist Party towards that agreement was very critical because from their point of view it was an agreement between Croat and Serbian bourgeoisie which had divided between themselves the spheres of interest. Moreover, the agreement could not be evaluated positively due the fact that *Banovina Hrvatska* had concentration camps for communists,¹¹⁰ but the Party also did not look brightly upon it because it did not solve the national question appropriately.

Following this “scandal”, Tuđman was invited to a meeting of the “Commission for History of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia”. There he was a target of harsh criticism. That was also the point where got into a dispute with the leader of the LCH – Vladimir Bakarić. A couple of years later, Bakarić would in the end sack him from his position in the Institute and Tuđman would be sent to a retirement. From then on, Tuđman became a dissident. It would culminate in the events surrounding the Croatian spring in 1971 when he would be sentenced to prison because of his (subversive) activities. He would be arrested and imprisoned again in 1981 because of the interview he gave to the Swedish TV station. From the moment of his retirement in 1967 up to his last work in 1989, he would publish a couple of works which deal mostly with contemporary Croatian history, out of which the most important are “Great Ideas and Small Nations” (1969) and “Nationalism in Contemporary Europe” (1981).

During the 1980's, he became involved on two "fronts"; he worked on his last book and he came in touch with Croatian émigré circles and started organizing his own political platform. While the book aspects of those activities are important, I will briefly deal only with his last book. Written in the 1987 and published, it was the major Croatian contribution to those "disputes" of historians. Although the book in English is known as “The Horrors of

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 321.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 321.

War”, the literal translation would be “Wastelands of Historical Reality” signifying the Tuđman's characteristic showing off regarding the knowledge about history. Nevertheless, two main themes are dominating in that book; a) analysis of mass violence and genocide throughout the history and b) attempt to crush the myth about Jasenovac. While he allegedly manages to a large degree demystify the fame about Jasenovac, he also went in another extreme; either by inappropriately minimizing the number of victims or relativizing the guilt of the Croat perpetrators.¹¹¹ Moreover, the book had certain anti-Semitic escapades which brought him even some positive reviews in the ill-famed "Journal of Historical Review."¹¹²

Circle of whole revaluation of his stances was finished with regards to the motives of Second World War. What started as a relativization of “domobrani” ended up as a notion of relativization and light rehabilitation of the overall NDH regime. Culmination point was, now already notorious statement on the First general assembly of HDZ in the February 1990. Tuđman stated at that occasion that NDH “was not just a bare quisling creation and fascist crime” but also a “statement of historical yearnings of the Croatian people for its own independent state”. If Serbian historiography paved the way for Milošević's rise to power, than it can also be said that Tuđman prepared the ground for the revisionism in Croatian historiography.

¹¹¹ Goldstein, Ivo & Goran Hutinec “Neki aspekti revizionizma u Hrvatskoj historiografiji devedesetih godina XX stoljeća – motive, metode i odjeci” in: *Revizija prošlosti na prostorima bivše Jugoslavije*, (ed.) Vera Katz, 59-73. (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2007.), 194.

¹¹² Kuljić, *Prevladavanje prošlosti*, 452.

Croatian post-socialist historiography

In the conclusion of his study on the Yugoslav historiography, Banac argues that the "dissolution of Yugoslavian historiography occurred because of the continuity of partisan loyalties to changing ideological banners."¹¹³ While one can argue about the "actual" extent of the partisanship of the Yugoslavian historiography, the very notion of its allegiance with the former system brought the question to Croatian academia on how to deal with legacy of the communist historiography in the context of the 1990s: "a flurry of historical revisionism, in an atmosphere where everything associated with the communist system was rejected, meant that a priori all communist historiography was inherently flawed as irrespective of its scholarly soundness. Suddenly the Ustaše, fascist collaborators and losers of World War Two were being rehabilitated simply because they had been vilified by communist scholars and politicians for nearly five decades."¹¹⁴

Croatian historian Nada Kisić Kolanović in her study on the state of research on the period of Independent State of Croatia distinguished two prevailing approaches to this topic during socialism; a) "Marxist", and b) "Nostalgic-apologetic one". While "Marxist" refers to the production of scientific knowledge during the Yugoslavia, the second one refers to the émigré literature which was mostly inaccessible in Yugoslavia. Both patterns were marked by their reductionist approach; the former Marxist approach was focused on the task of writing about the historical role of the Communist Party and its merits in the antifascist struggle, while NDH was reduced to the "symptom of evil and genocide, as part of the collapsed European democratic superstructure after the breakthrough of fascism and national-socialism."¹¹⁵ On the other hand, émigré literature was marked by its approach to the NDH as

¹¹³ Banac, "Yugoslavia", 1104.

¹¹⁴ Pavlaković, "*Flirt*", 4.

¹¹⁵ Nada Kisić Kolanović. "Povijest NDH kao predmet istraživanja" *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* vol. 34 no. 3(2002): 684.

to the "historical realization of the independent Croatian state" and in constant search for its legitimization basis.¹¹⁶

Those two essentially reductionist approaches were dominating the literature up to 1990. Last decade of the 20th century, marked by the violent breakup of the state, gave a new impetus to the research on this topic, as it is noticeable just from observing the number of the articles devoted to it in one most of the most prominent historical journals from Croatia - *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* ("Journal for Contemporary History"). The number of the articles on the NDH in the period of 1990-2002 quadrupled in comparison to the period of the 1969-1989.¹¹⁷ The past of NDH "did not become the past as any other, rather it reflects the modern political "creases".¹¹⁸ The way people thought and conducted research on the topic of NDH were more and more reflecting the processes of disintegration of Yugoslavia. Events and tendencies in the 1980's both on the political scene and in the historiography, but especially the beginning of the 1990s gave an impetus for historical revisionism.

Such were conditions in the Croatians historiography in the wake of its independence. Logical questions which comes next is the quest of how much continuity with the Yugoslavian historiography remained in overall, both methodologically and content wise?

As mentioned in the previous chapters, demonization of the socialist past in the post-socialist countries was important tool for homogenizing the national feelings. The forms of denunciation (or orientalizing) of the past varied, as shown in the previous chapter; communist past as an violent kidnapping from the destined path to the Europe, civilizational turn in the wrong direction, socialism as a system imposed by the foreigners or as an form of government alien to all the previous (democratic) traditions. One Bulgarian scholar in her

¹¹⁶ Kisić Kolanović "Povijest NDH", 687.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 691.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 679.

interesting employed the Foucault's legal category of "monstrosity" to describe how the demonic image of the socialist past was constructed in the post-socialist Bulgaria.¹¹⁹ While certainly bringing an interesting conceptual framework for analysis, I would argue the employment of it in the Croatian case would be an exaggeration.

In Croatian case, as in many others, this alleged debunking of the socialist past was imposed from above. Symbolic demonization of the past usually was launched from the stages at the public meetings or from the media. Such denunciations of the previous regime were materialized through the administrative decisions which commanded the removal of socialist symbolism from the memorial landscape. In line with Tudman's amalgam of Yugo-Serbo-communism, first victims of this processes were the memories on the antifascist struggle; streets which carried a name of some "people's hero" or the brigade from the war were renamed. Ones devoted to the founding fathers - Marx, Engels or Lenin had same destiny. The memories on the founding fathers of Yugoslav socialism were erased, but also on the victims of the fascism¹²⁰. Similar fate awaited the monuments; either they were destructed by the local patriots (which was tolerated by the government), or were removed from the public. There are also cases when simply the insignias on the memorials were transformed; red star taken out and replaced with the chessboard and/or cross.¹²¹

Since historiography is inextricably linked to the outer sphere, had the socialist historiography had a similar fate? While indeed couple of millions of books were indeed

¹¹⁹ Dimitrova, Ina. "How we raised a monster: Constructing the image of socialism during the post-socialist period in Bulgaria" *History of Communism in Europe* vol. 1 (2010): 153-165

¹²⁰ Events surrounding the "Square of the victims of fascism" is another episode which sublimates the processes which happened in Croatia in the 1990s. One of the nicest squares in Zagreb, located closed to the city centre, was renamed into the "Square of the Croatian noblemen" (Trg hrvatskih velikana) in the 1990. It turned into a site of protest of various oppositional groups until 2000 when the old name was given back to it.

¹²¹ Šakaja, Laura & Stanić, Jelena "Other(ing), self(portraying), negotiating: the spatial codification of values in Zagreb's city-text" *Cultural Geographies* 18:4 (2011): 495 - 516

taken out from the public libraries and destroyed,¹²² the authorities could not afford themselves to abandon the complete socialist legacy. Instead, it was looked upon with a suspicion and became untrustworthy. As one reader stated it in the letter sent to Matković after reading his book: "The book should be read not only by students, but also all of our people who in their youth obtained wrong or the incomplete picture of the Croatian history."¹²³ As if the "subverting the tenets of communist historiography turned into a task of eminent importance."¹²⁴ Of course, not everything could be subverted because, in the end, overwhelming majority of the historians wrote under the previous system and built their reputations. Picture had to be revised instead; otherwise it would mean that history written under the socialism was detached from any sense of reality. "Therefore, many revisionist efforts did not result in increased historical knowledge; rather they reversed the semantic value of the certain historical events."¹²⁵

As mentioned earlier, the Yugoslav postwar period was not in the general focus during the socialist period. What was more or less in the focus were the aspects of the national histories up to the Second World War, while the medieval history was often safe haven where there was less risk for historians to become entrapped in the politicized discussions.¹²⁶ As the episode with the "History of Peoples of Yugoslavia" suggests, the Yugoslav historians could agree about history only up to the period of the end of the 18th century. Thus, not much was left to demolish in the first place.

¹²² Lešaja, Ante. *Knjigocid – Uništavanje knjiga u Hrvatskoj 1990-ih*. Zagreb: Profil, 2012.

¹²³ Hrvoje Matković. *Suvremena Politička Povijest Hrvatske*. (Zagreb: Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova Republike Hrvatske, (2nd edition 1995)), IX.

¹²⁴ Antohi, Sorin., Trencsenyi, Balazs., Apor, Peter. *Narratives Unbound - Historical Studies in post-communist Eastern Europe*, Budapest & New York: Central European University Press, 2007: 50.

¹²⁵ Brunbauer, Ulf. (ed.) *(Re) Writing History - Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2004.), 24.

¹²⁶ But also, as Neven Budak notes; the medieval studies were traditionally most active field of historical research since it was considered as the most important period for the establishment of the Croatian nation. (in: Brunbauer, *(Re) Writing*, 132)

Instead, previous taboos and the points of disputes came into the focus, the very same themes which marked the Tuđman's career. While there were no really problem to handle the issue of the First Yugoslavia since as it has been denounced by the highest instances of the LCY for decades, the problem became the past from 1939 onward; Cvetković-Maček agreement, Banovina Hrvatska and the Second World War especially. Thus, in the post-Yugoslav context, focus was put on the war and immediate postwar period since those are the topics which constituted the "original sins" of the regime. Bleiburg, Alojzije Stepinac and Church's position in socialism, persecution of Croatian "informbirovci"¹²⁷ all became a part of both official memory and history. Numerous prominent figures from Croatian history were reevaluated and were put back on the historical stage in their full glance; Josip Jelačić, Stjepan Radić and Vladko Maček, Andrija Hebrang and Alojzije Stepinac while the Second World war went through the "Croatian filter."¹²⁸ In historiography, while most of the author's interpretations were heavily influenced with nationalism, it rarely went to the full revisionism, in sense of the complete negation of the certain events. Instead, as it will be demonstrated in the following section on the narrative of the Second World War in the selected literature, they are on the certain trails of the Tuđman's writings during the socialist period and the regime's politics of history of the 1990s.

¹²⁷ The alleged supporters and sympathizers of Stalin during the Tito-Stalin split in the 1948.

¹²⁸ Sundhauseen,, "Feniks" 263.

Chapter 3 - Narrative of the Croatian post-socialist historiography

Narrative on the Second World War in the works from 1990's

Nationalistic narration

While Vladimir Žerjavić's study temporarily resolved the "numberology" surrounding the Jasenovac and Bleiburg, the breakdown of the socialist interpretative framework opened up space for a new and different interpretation of the period of the Second World War. In a war ravaged country, where state-building policies were intensively implemented by Tuđman's regime and émigré literature became finally available, a new round of interpretation began. Thus, in the following part of this chapter I will examine the narrative on the Second World War written in the period between 1990 and 2000.

The first work I will examine is Dragutin Pavličević's "History of Croatia" written in 1994. This work was republished in three more editions (2000, 2002, and 2007), and the 2nd edition was awarded a National Science Award. Written as a synthesis of Croatian history, it covers the time span of almost fourteen centuries: from the "arrival of Croats" in the seventh century up to the end of the Second World War (1st edition). Pavličević was one more member of the Institute who spent most of his career in the previous system, mostly focusing on various topics from early modern and 19th century history.

The author's strict primordial conception of the nation instantly becomes noticeable - in his view, history is a continuation of a nation's life from the distant past. Written in the context of war circumstances, during a time when large territorial areas of Croatia were still not under the jurisdiction of the central authorities in Zagreb, this book exemplifies the

discourse many *državotvorni povjesničari*¹²⁹ ("state-building historians") used. It reflects the then present-day spirit of a country torn by four years of war that has undergone a period of intensive nationalistic atmosphere. Historiography, it seems, was also affected by it.

The book embodies all the mythologems of Tuđman's ideology outlined in the previous chapter; "thirteen century old statehood continuity" which is actually a "millennial struggle for survival". Of course, the struggle comes from the fact that "for centuries and in a systematic way, the aggression was coming from the East". One particular feature is more or less symptomatic for the rest of the works which came after - the vagueness in the portrayal of the ideological orientation of the Ustaša movement. Often their ultra-nationalist stances, anti-Serbianism and anti-Yugoslavism are mentioned and the creation of the independent Croatian state is imputed as their ultimate aim. Such a discourse on ustaše foreshadowed the future writings on ustaše - unwillingness to map their ideological position.

Partly this phenomenon can be attributed to the overall avoidance to use any theoretical approach which would put the Ustaše within the broader comparative framework of right wing movements which emerged throughout Europe in the interwar period. In general, Croatian historiography lacks such a study.¹³⁰ While there is a clear consensus that the Ustaše belong on the far right side of the political spectrum, it remains unclear whether the movement went through the process of "fascization" during their exile in Mussolini's Italy, whether it had fascist components inherently or was just *flirting* with it in order to receive support from the Axis powers. This indecisiveness to identify and proclaim their ideological orientation often leads to different interpretations of Ustaša's widespread terror practices: did such clearly racist legislation stem from the inherent ideological frame of the

¹²⁹ Often understood as a label for historians whose nationalist inclinations were clearly represented in their works and who saw a historian's profession as way to serve the nation-state.

¹³⁰ Kisić Kolanović, "Povijest NDH", 704.

movement induced by the Nazi's pressure or was it a reaction to the uprising against the regime? While the latest offered explanation seems the least plausible (or not plausible at all), it was nevertheless supported in some works.¹³¹ In Pavličević's case, Ustaša's affiliation with fascism is explicitly denied by claiming that "such an ideology never had a root in Croatia."¹³² Such narrative echoes the widespread consensus of the nineties which simply saw the Ustaša as "misunderstood nationalists and anticommunists" as suggested earlier by Pavlaković.

The portrayal of Croat's reception of the Ustaša regime usually goes with an argument that Croats initially welcomed the regime due to the oppression experienced in the first Yugoslavia:

after twenty years of greater-Serbian violence, the majority of the Croatians was also thinking that getting rid out of the Yugoslavian framework was the most important because behind it was a project of greater-Serbian state which was annihilating everything what was Croatian, democratic and European.¹³³

Ivo Perić's "A History of the Croats" published in 1998, the second work I will focus on, follows essentially the same line of argumentation as Pavličević. Perić spent most of his career working as a historian for the Dubrovnik branch of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences, with a professional focus on Dubrovnik and the Dalmation region in the 19th and 20th century. Alongside Pavličević, he was the author of historical textbooks in the initial phases of Tuđman's regime, and was subjected to heavy criticism by other historians because of their controversial content.

However, two tendencies became more evident in his book: the relativization of war crimes and the emphasis of Croatian victimhood. The crimes committed by the Ustaša during Second World War are depicted in a way that put all ethnicities in the same category:

¹³¹ Perić, Ivo. *A History of the Croats*, Zagreb: CTT, 1998.

¹³² Pavličević, Dragutin. *Povijest Hrvatske*. Zagreb: Naklada Pavičić, (1st edition 1994, 2nd edition 2000), 365.

¹³³ Pavličević, *Povijest* (1st ed.), 365.

Ustaše followed German racist policies and committed genocide against the Jews and Gypsies. They also terrorized a part of the Serb population, those Croats who did not approve of the Ustaša's policies, were communists and antifascists.¹³⁴

Thus while admitting that genocidal practices were aimed at Jews and the Roma population, the author did not provide any explanation why the Serbs were not included in this group. Also, if only a "part of the Serbian population" was targeted, it remains unclear how the other part of the population was treated. Moreover, by mentioning the persecution of Croats in the same line with Serbs, it seems these two groups were equally targeted by the regime. Additionally, the author did not make a clear distinction between communists and antifascists.

The second layer is the victimhood of the Croatian nation; "The Ustaša prisons were full of well-known Croatian writers, painters, sculptors, composers, scientists, priests, educators, and athletes."¹³⁵ Besides taking Croatian nationality as the most important indicator of evaluation regardless of that person being a partisan or an Ustaša, Serbs were always portrayed as the antagonists, in addition to četnik's who were "the common enemy of Ustaša and Partisans."¹³⁶ Furthermore, the emphasis was put on the figure of Serbian partisans:

During the war years many Croats were killed by Germans and Italians, by ustaše and četniks; and also by the partisans. Among the partisans, the Serbs were especially harsh on Croatian civilians.¹³⁷ There were instances of killing and mistreating of the Croats by Serb partisans for the single reason of their Croatian nationality.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Perić, *A History*, 213.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 213.,

¹³⁶ Ibid. 216.,

¹³⁷ Ibid., 216.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 218.

This Serbo-partizan-četnik amalgam was further perpetuated by another mythologem characteristic of the nationalistic narrative:

When Serbia was taken over in the fall of 1944, many of the Draža Mihajlović's četniks were drafted into the partisan army. They just changed the signs on their hats, installing the red partisan star instead of their četnik cockade, but deep inside they remained Serb expansionists, haters of the Croats and of everything Croatian or Catholic. [...] They have shown their true colors in the partisan army, which, in the spring of 1945, moved westwards from Srijem and the eastern Sava River Valley [...] They killed, raped, and plundered.¹³⁹

If the discourse of the first edition of Pavličević's book was unacceptable according to academic standards because it was written in the midst of the war and in the atmosphere of everyday nationalist propaganda, one could expect a normalized representation of the past and less nationalist discourse in the second edition published in 2000. This was not the case, although the book was expanded, written in a more detailed way and with a slight attempt to offer a more nuanced and objective approach.

The author acknowledged the different approaches in evaluation of the NDH ("communist" and "émigré"), but the *državotvorna* ("statehood") prism remained inescapable;

the fact is that it [NDH] existed for four years, it was charted in all the geographical and political maps of Europe, it had all the institutions a state usually has besides the elected *Sabor* [parliament][...] NDH, unlike Serbia, Norway, part of France, Poland and Czech Republic, was not completely occupied.¹⁴⁰

This introduction simply echoes tTuđman's vision of the independent Croatian state in the 1990s as the "End of History", in his own words: "the creation of both *Banovina Hrvatska* in 1939 and the NDH in 1941 was a further step toward the ultimate aim: creation of the independent Croatian state".¹⁴¹

The Rome Agreement with Italy is seen as a factor which largely determined the level of support for the NDH, but even more importantly, it is perceived as a crucial factor which

¹³⁹ Ibid., 218.

¹⁴⁰ Pavličević, *Povijest* (2nd ed.), 400.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 400.

pushed the Croatians to join the partisans.¹⁴² Again, it is the centrality of the Croatian state which is projected into the minds of the involved parties; the author simply does not give any space for the possibility that it was maybe the ideological convictions (or any other different motivations) which determined the individual's choosing a side.

Like Perić, Pavličević in the second edition also created a Serbo-partizan-Četnik amalgam; by stating that in the initial phases these two sides collaborated with the "foremost aim of the struggle against Croats (and Muslims)."¹⁴³ Moreover, he even names a subchapter in relation to such a discourse "Četnik-partisan insurrections."¹⁴⁴ The narrative on the Serbs in general is the one which sees the history of the last two centuries as the history of permanent struggle between these nations. Thus, the Second World War is just a continuation of the national, political, economic and territorial conflict from the first Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁵

Consisting of all sorts of revisionist tropes bolstered with the inescapable ethnocentric and necessarily victimhood-centered perspective, Pavličević's book is an example of a chauvinistic way of writing history - the author summed up the public discourse of the decade and projected it into the past ultimately legitimizing such discourse with academic credentials. This was the ultimate success of Tuđman's regime, not in disclaiming the past because there was hardly any attempt to deny the crimes, but managing through the modes of representation such as Pavličević's and Perić's, to give legitimacy to such narratives. Tensions surrounding the Second World War and partisans' communist orientation were eased by exculpating the problematic past through the nationalization of the antifascist movement and relativization of the fascist crimes through their "Croatianess" and the notion of the achieved statehood of the NDH.

¹⁴² Ibid., 406.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 416.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 442.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 419-420.

Distancing from the revisionism

While Pavličević and Perić are embodying the extremely nationalist narration in the Croatian historiography in the 1990's, Hrvoje Matković's works represent the attempt to normalize the representation of the last hundred years of Croatian history. His discourse is almost deprived from the evaluative remarks in line with the positivist approach to history from the socialist period. The approach based on scientific literature, but without a scientific apparatus is Matković's academic approach, specific for the above mentioned obsession with the objectivity and facts. I dealt with two of his works written in the 1990s; "Contemporary Croatian Political History" (1st edition 1993, 2nd edition 1995) and "History of Yugoslavia" (2nd edition 1998). His first work from 1993, as he stated, was based on his lecture notes for the courses he taught at the Faculty of Criminology (which was one of the publishers alongside the Ministry of Interior) and Faculty of Political Sciences in Zagreb.

Interestingly, his views on the period of the Second World War in his "History of Yugoslavia" are exactly the same as in the "Contemporary Political History"; the author copied the exactly same sentences and did not offer anything new. So, in the time span of five years (1993-1998), the outer reality did not leave any traces on Matković's writing. His moderate, technical and unbiased language remained intact. Nevertheless, his case still offers some niches to examine: in the centre of his writing is the figure of Vlatko Maček and the Croatian Peasant Party. They symbolize the tragedy of Croatia and Croatian democracy caught between two totalitarian systems (even the section on the Second World War finishes by referring to the fate of Maček and his family).¹⁴⁶

The part which covers the period of the first Yugoslavia constitutes two thirds of the book, while the period of socialist Yugoslavia is the least examined one. For both NDH and

¹⁴⁶ Matković, *Suvremena* (1st ed.), 131.

socialist Yugoslavia he opts for the totalitarian paradigm. His examination of NDH is restrained from any kind of denunciation or demonization, with noticeable attempt to avoid getting caught in the discussions on the Ustaša movement; "in a lot of regards, the NDH regime imitated the fascist Italy and Nazi Germany"¹⁴⁷ or when he talks about Jasenovac, he states it was "concentration camps for political opponents."¹⁴⁸ The racial policy targeted only Jews and was taken over from Nazi's. While Matković's language is not impassioned, as in the case of other two authors, his "distanced" language fails to point out certain phenomena, for example, the inherent anti-Semitism of the Ustaša movement (elaborated in the works of Ante Pavelić for example) and other fascist features of the movement. Focus on Croatia and the insistence to follow pure facts constrains him to approach the events with a critical eye. An impression is left that Jasenovac was not a death camp and that prisoners from all ethnicities who ended up there were all imprisoned as political opponents, and not because they were targeted as members of certain unfavorable groups.

Finally, while he neglects to point out the number of casualties in the case of Jasenovac, he does that in the case of Bleiburg ("approximate suggestions range from fifty up to three hundred thousand people."¹⁴⁹). Moreover, he describes the events in detail ("all those who have survived the killings on the Bleiburg field had to go on the "Way of a cross" on which they were exposed to tremendous suffering"), and ends that particular chapter with two excerpts from other books: memoirs of Ustaša officer Danijel Crljen and book of Nikolai Tolstoj on Bleiburg events. Such quotes necessarily provoke not just empathy but also create an impression that Bleiburg was the ultimate tragedy of the Second World War.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 131.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 131.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 154.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 155.

In comparison with two previous authors, he brings more due nuanced view the discussion; there is no partisan-četnik amalgam, moreover and he acknowledges the struggle between various factions of Četnik movement.¹⁵¹ Matković's two books represent the first attempt to offer more nuanced image of the past, but his selection of the parts where he decided to provoke the empathy from readers reveals the authors bias in text and his "Maček-centric" perspective brought another layer significant for the examination.

Normalization of the past and the setting up of standards

Disappearance of the war threat in the second part of the decade, overall economic decline and international isolation in which Croatia slipped meanwhile and the authoritarian nature of the Tuđman's rule led to a gradual disappointment with the ruling elite. These conditions alongside Tuđman's death by the end of 1999 led to a defeat of Croatian Democratic Union in the elections in January 2000. The Social Democratic Party of Croatia, the communist successor party, and a coalition of parties gathered around it formed the new government which marked a fresh period in which the representation of the recent past was somewhat normalized, the previously accepted interpretations were challenged and the nationalistic facade of the Tuđman's rule was gradually debunked. Those changes could also be seen in historiography; the works of Croatian historians written after 2000 also reflect the spirit of these "new times".

In the late summer of the 1999 "Croatian Modern History" written by the renowned historian and academic Dušan Bilandžić appeared on the bookshelves. His book and his whole personality offer a remarkable example for examination, due to his long time career both as a historian and politician. Born in the 1924, to some point he had a similar path as Tuđman; he was a member of the partisan forces during the war and finished Military

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 15

Academy in Belgrade where he was employed for some time. Their path diverged in 1967 when Tuđman was sacked from the Institute and Bilandžić replaced him. Bilandžić also had a political career, but unlike Tuđman, he left bigger traces within the socialist framework as a member of the Croatian parliament who participated in drafting the 1974 Constitution as well as a member of the presidency of the Socialist Republic of Croatia. In 1981 he publicly spoke against the national category of "Yugoslavian" in the census, he labeled it as a sign of "societal disease".¹⁵² In the 1990's, he was associated with Tuđman's regime - he became a Croatian deputy in Belgrade after the war broke out. In short, he was a person who had access to the highest political spheres in both regimes, balancing between two poles of "Croatianism" - one of the Bakarić and one of the Tuđman, attracted to each pole depending on the historical context.

His case is especially fruitful for examination due to the fact that he published the "History of Socialist Federalist Republic of Yugoslavia" in 1979. These two books, written in the range of the twenty years within two completely different political systems are offering a unique case for analysis. Since that was already done in the aforementioned study by Todor Kuljić, I am going to focus solely on the latter book. "Croatian Modern History" was published at the end of Tuđman's rule and became an unavoidable part of the syllabi in Croatian universities. Although it covers the period from the second half of 19th century up to the Dayton accords in 1995, the centrality of the book deals with the period of socialist Yugoslavia; the period from 1941 up to 1991 covers overall six sevenths of the book. Bilandžić made a clear break from the nationalist narrations like Perić's and Pavličević's and Matković's patriotic positivist approach, combining vast amount of literature and his personal insights into the world he belonged.

¹⁵² Dušan Bilandžić. *Hrvatska Moderna Povijest*. (Zagreb: Golden Marketing, 1999.), 12.

Already the preface of the book is very interesting; While he stated that he refused to write "History of League of Communists of Croatia" in the mid eighties because he "was convinced that a scientific based history could not be written in those political conditions."¹⁵³, he abandoned that belief in 1999. In his own words, the "historical conditions have appeared" with the fall of communism; "the necessary historical distance was created overnight". Shift from Bakarić to Tuđman pole is also acknowledged in the preface; he stated that he always "carried a "virus" of skepticism in the movement, ideology and politics he belonged and served."¹⁵⁴

Author sees the foundation of Ustaša movement as a "crude and cruel reaction on the terror of monarchic dictatorship" in the First Yugoslavia. He simplifies everything to the Biblical notion "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth".¹⁵⁵ He argues that beside an idea of "ethnically clean as possible" and independent Croatian state, they did not have any other visions.¹⁵⁶ For the partisans, he gives a more nuanced approach and goes a bit further into explication, offering the Party's history from the 1919. His narration of the Second World War follows the classical division - ustašas, partisans, Croatian Peasant Party.

According to him, the Ustaša movement was organized on the "Nazi-fascist" pattern while the NDH was "typical one-party dictatorship under the informal rule of Germany and Italy."¹⁵⁷ Regarding the "tragic sides" of NDH regime, he does not neglect to mention the racial laws and liquidations nor the numbers. Moreover, he refers couple of times to the statements of the NDH officials which are proof of those racial practices. He also does not neglect the persecution of Croats too. Again Maček becomes the tragic symbol:

¹⁵³ Ibid., 12

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 14-15

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 108.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 109.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 124.

Best indicator of the disrespect of the Ustaša regime towards the will and attitudes of the Croatian people is the fact that they sent their leader Vlatko Maček in Jasenovac camp already in October 1941.¹⁵⁸

The formula in the narration is: CPP = overwhelming majority of Croatian population, while the ustašas and communists are the extremist minority; "CPP - majority of Croatian population - in the years of 1941 and 1942 found itself between the NDH regime and CPY movement, both of which attacked them."¹⁵⁹

Bilandžić's writing on Maček and his "politics of expectancy" will be object of special scrutiny here. Matković's "Maček-centrism" got a continuation in the Bilandžić with an explicit identification of the CPP with the Croat nation;

CPP anchored itself from the beginning of the war in the strategy of waiting for the further developments and thus avoiding huge human casualties in the war which was imposed on them. Croatian nation became divided between itself in the most tragic way. Never in the history before were the Croats so much and so ideologically divided. ... Along the Radić's idea of "peaceful peasant republic" which was widely adopted by majority of Croats, Nazi-fascist and bolshevist ideology have infiltrated themselves with their own political platform and visions of the Croatian state.¹⁶⁰ These both totalitarian ideologies ... were two big delusions which crushed CPP. Maybe in the end it is luck that neither option managed to attract all the Croats around its platform - it would lead even to the bigger catastrophe."¹⁶¹

Maybe to stress the ethnocentrism in the book which deals with the modern Croatian history seems redundant, but I see it important at this point since the focus of the Croatian nation (and its statehood inextricably linked to that) became the main criterion for evaluation; antifascism in this case is no longer a categorical imperative. Line of this kind of argumentation is following;

massive participation in the war on the communists side in the initial phase of war would to the massacre of Croatian people as it happened in Serbia, on the other hand, continuous siding with the regime of NDH up to the end of war would end not with one but with couple of Bleiburgs, let alone the fact how much would that contribute to the renovation of četnik's Yugoslavia and the overall status of Croats and Croatia in the liberated antifascist Europe.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 125.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 133.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 134.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 134.

¹⁶² Ibid., 134.

Thus, the overall end is what mattered, not the means through which the end is achieved.

One may find it unreasonable to even think in the terms suggested above; would it be greater for the whole of Europe if it was a slightly bit antifascist since that would result in a slightly less number of people killed? This argumentation follows the presumption that the fascism was destined to be defeated from the mere beginning; thus giving an antifascism a notion of ahistorical force which will necessarily prevail in the end. This brings us the one more aspect which is completely absent from the Croatian historiography - to borrow Raul Hilberg's typology - the interpretation of the CPP as the bystanders. The perspective of the victim is always present (Croatian nation), the perspective of the perpetrator depends on the author, but the perspective of bystander is completely lacking in any of the examined books. Moreover, the bystanders are often the victims, as it happens with the Maček-centric approach.

Critical examination of the Croatian Peasant Party lacks completely due to the formula of identification of CPP with the Croatian masses. None of authors seems to dare to put on the test such a politics of Maček and consider the implication of it for the people who were persecuted by the NDH regime; what are the consequences of Maček's initial call for support of NDH, his "politics of expectancy" and his hesitancy to join the antifascist struggle for the persecution of Serbs, Jews and Roma targeted by the regime from the initial day?

Judging actors, their motivations and acts from the historical distance of seventy years may seem easy task, but it is important to not fall short of critical examination of all the involved parties. If the četniks, ustaše and partisans are the object of both scientific and moral scrutiny, so the CPP has to be too. This lack of perspective on the CPP as the bystander is as troubling as are some other persistent notions. Exculpation of Ustaša through their opting for Croatian state, explaining the support for communists through their youthfulness and their

inclination to adventurism, finding the understanding for the passive stances of the majority fails short of the critical examination of the whole period and the consequence of someone's opting for any of the involved parties. Passivity is a choice and is a form of collaboration too, thus CPP's opting for passiveness had dire consequences for the certain segments of society. While one may find it easy to speak like that with from the comfort chairs of the ivory tower, I guess the noticing that very fact and all the stakes in examining the period of Second World War is the first step further in the aim of offering more balanced and nuanced picture of the past.

Following that trail in Bilandžić, while Jasenovac is not mentioned in the context of persecuted Serbs, Jews and Roma people, it is mentioned when talking about Maček. It seems the author was for some constantly hesitant to devote a significant space to the ustaša's responsibility. Moreover, he exculpates the supporters of the regime by stating: "Ustaša regime practiced various ways of manipulating the people."¹⁶³ He also offer quite amount of understanding for the people who joined the regime;

People were patient and hoped that regime will democratize. However, the process of corruption of regime followed immediately. When it was created, a lot of people joined in for the sake of personal benefit. Some of them were "exculpating the sins" because of their service to the previous regime, others took sinecures, third ones saw simply a chance for getting rich through the expropriation of others. The sole regime was attracting people who were inclined to follow orders and serve to others.¹⁶⁴

Kuljić in his book notes two different approaches to the issues of Bleiburg; in the book from 1979 Bilandžić wrote about the "humanistic attitude of the CPY towards the native betrayers", while in the book from 1979 he quotes Vinko Nikolić en large and accepts his remarks that for the atrocities the "yugo-partizans" are the "main culprits".¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Ibid., 125.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 125.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 456.

Author's stances in the book are reflecting his career and the transition from one system to another one. Bilandžić, from the perspective of the independent Croatian state in the 1990s, found the idea of insurrection as "avanturistic"¹⁶⁶, while in the preface of the book he anticipated the reactions of the "Croatian Left" as following;

from the so called Croatian Left I do not expect furious reaction because most of those people are aware now that communism has played its historical role and that today it is nonrenewable, that it is dead, and that they admit their historical defeat...¹⁶⁷

Kuljić notes how Bilandžić's "revisionism of medium range" rests on the "mutual neutralization of the unsurpassed communist and the contemporary national orientation."¹⁶⁸ While he did not radically reevaluate the whole past, all the most important dates from the Croatian history are reevaluated from the perspective of the strengthening the position of Croatian statehood and national identity.¹⁶⁹ In total, Bilandžić followed the formula of normalizing the Ustaša movement through neglecting the critical examination of the Ustaša and also by putting it in the "totalitarian group" together with the communist movement. Such stance echoes the broader trend of abandonment of the European antifascist consensus and replacing it with the anti-totalitarian one. One occupation is followed by another one until the final formation of the nation-state in the 1990's.

Post-Tuđmanist narrative

Zdenko Radelić's book "Croatia in Yugoslavia 1945 - 1991" with a subtitle "from unity to split-up" is a bit different from the previously examined books in a sense that it strictly deals with the period of socialist Yugoslavia. Socialist period is not a part of the broader synthesis; it is the sole focus of the examination. Other point of differentiation is the author's handling of the topic of the Second World War; or more precisely neglect of it.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 128.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶⁸ Kuljić, *Prevladavanje prošlosti*, 454.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 454.

While he devotes the chapter to it under a section "Conquest of the power", besides a brief overview of the development of the partisan movement and short section about the CPP position during the war period, author avoided going into any deeper examination of the NDH. In general, he restrained from giving any detailed remarks on the divisions in the Croatian society in this period.

It is noticeable his intention to deal with strictly Yugoslavia and avoid any discussions on the war period. Thus, while his book is not offering much for this chapter, I will nevertheless point out on some noticeable aspects; he acknowledges the "great divide" in the Croatian society and in the introduction he criticizes both approaches due their hesitancy to deal with its bright and dark sides of the past.¹⁷⁰ Adhering to a liberal position a ("civic rights of the individuals and minorities, multiparty democracy and the right on private property are constituting the tenets of all the modern democratic regimes"¹⁷¹), he adopts a totalitarian paradigm in his examination ("previous regimes have unscrupulously negated those them.")

While the communists are defined as "sanguine fighters against multiparty parliamentary system"¹⁷², he sees ustašas as the "militant nationalist with conservative traditional orientation and with distinctive anticommunist notion"¹⁷³ and whose two main features are the cult of Croatian state and anti-Serbanism. Author acknowledges their intent that after military defeat, they were ready to become the allies of the West, to abandon the Third Reich, anti-democracy and racism. While author makes a breakaway from the sympathies for the Ustaša movement, there are some points where one can notice his attempts to polish their image; i.e. "it can be stated that chauvinistic discrimination and the persecution

¹⁷⁰ Zdenko Radelić, *Hrvatska U Jugoslaviji 1945 - 1991*. (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2006.), 15.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁷² Ibid., 15.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 29.

of Serbs were the original solutions of the Ustaša regime in their aim to stabilize the Croatian state in the long-term"¹⁷⁴ or while stating that Croats in general were not in danger of being persecuted or "de-nationalized." Also, it is noticeable author's hesitancy to employ terms other than persecution, even in the context of Jews. It is employed in the context of all the groups; Jews, Serbs, but also in the case of the expelled Germans.¹⁷⁵

The narrative on the Second World War comes to an end with an examination of the Ivo Goldstein's book "Croatia 1918 - 2008". Ivo Goldstein is often known in the context of the discussions on the historical revisionism in Croatia due to his numerous interventions in the public sphere in order to combat the "Ustašo-nostalgia", as he often portrays it. He is the only representative from the Faculty of Humanities in Zagreb within this group of selected authors. His focus on the historical revisionism and the rehabilitation of ustašas marked significantly his approach and those influences are clearly visible in this book.

In the preface he states that the aim of the book was to present the Croatian history of the 20th century "in a way that differs from the *partijnost* [party-minded-ness, partisanship] of the socialist period and from the revisionism of the nineties."¹⁷⁶ Moreover, he proceeds with a statement that it is "necessary that big historical events from the near past should not be evaluated in relation to the benefits of some group or the personal interests, instead, they could explained objectively only in relation with the circumstances and conditions of their development."¹⁷⁷ This promising preface reflects the new post-Tuđmanist environment in which book was written, but also acknowledges the burden of history in Croatia if such a statement is written as late as the September of 2008.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 30.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 57.

¹⁷⁶ Ivo Goldstein., *Hrvatska 1918. -2008.* (Zagreb: Novi Liber & Europapress holding, 2008.), IX.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., IX.

Covering the period of 90 years, from 1918 to 2008, the book attempts to sum up the experience of two Yugoslavia and the short period of Croatian independence. Still, from the very outline it is noticeable the author's main concern; section which covers the four years of the Second World War in Yugoslavia constitutes almost a quarter of the whole book.

In one section author examined the development of Ustaša movement before their accession to power. It is focusing (again) mostly on the political history of the movement, without an attempt to go deeper into the ideological trajectories of the movement. He reflects mostly on the brutality in their texts and how they were "indoctrinated in a vengeful spirit."¹⁷⁸ While (finally) providing the insights into their pre-1941 world by referring to the texts in their publications, he stops at analyzing the content of the mere hate speech. While the notions of hatred and revenge are the attributes of every fascist movement, often that hatred has some ideological basis and not vice versa; it is not ideological content which is derived from hatred.

Author circles around the fascist attributes of the movement and is hesitant to give clear conclusions; he states "beside national exclusivism which can be related to the indirect influence of Nazism and fascism" while on the other points he remarks that "ustaše have taken over from fascism and Nazism, besides national exclusivity and glorifying of the state, glorification of the combat and war, negative attitude towards communism, socialism and western democracies, together with a concept of a leader (*Fuhrer, Duce*)..."¹⁷⁹ Later he also mentions the publication of the magazine *Naša gruda* ("Our native land") which "openly promoted some elements of new, pro-fascist and pro-Nazi ideology."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 146.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 147.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 149.

Although this book was the first time some of the selected historians even tried to relate the Ustaša movement to the broader context of the rise of fascism in the whole of Europe, strict ideological orientation of the Ustaša movement still remains unclear; were they just flirting with certain aspect of fascism, were they flirting in order to receive the support of Germany and Italy or were they inherently fascist organization. At one points he even refers to Mussolini's "The Doctrine of Fascism" but then he fails to make a connection between fascist doctrine and Ustaša movement.

On the other hand, author also gives a special attention to the Jews and the issues related to Holocaust, which is actually a *novum* in comparison to the other works previously examined. Usually a sentence or two were devoted to the persecution of Jews. Goldstein offers in a quite detailed manner exposition of the persecution of the different groups, functioning of the propaganda system and how the terror was organized from above. Moreover, he refutes the claims that terror was a simple reaction to the previous atrocities;

terror which was developed into a real system was announced long before and carefully examined it cannot be exculpated with claims on the delirium of war.¹⁸¹

What is different from other works is that author does not offer any exculpation for the NDH regime; he defines them as "Croatian extremists"¹⁸², even the term independent is put into the brackets signifying author's position that NDH should not be seen in the light of Croatian statehood continuity. Author also stresses the heterogeneity of the movement, promulgation of different groups and factions within the movement and the crucial role of

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 268.

¹⁸² Ibid., 211.

Ante Pavelić. Still, while talking about reasons why people supported the NDH and became the members of the regime, he takes over Bilandžić's three-step rational choice theory.¹⁸³

Author also gives a special attention to Maček and his CPP and more or less clearly examines the various factions within the party and the gradual layering of the party as the situation was deteriorating. Interestingly, while writing on the communist's appeal to CPP for the creation of the popular front in the September of 1941 (which did not fell on the fertile ground), he states: "It is logical that such a call for insurrection in the September of 1941 did not have broader repercussion..."¹⁸⁴ Readers are spared from any further explanation why is that logical, especially because he states shortly after that already by the end of the 1941 great number of the CPP members have distanced themselves from the Ustaša regime and joined the partisans in the following years.¹⁸⁵ Similar to Bilandžić and Matković, while acknowledging the different factions within the CPP and their orientations, he does not problematize the overall politics of the CPP. On the other hand, he touches upon the Ustaša-Catholic church relations by bringing a balanced portrayal of Alojzije Stepinac (both his actions for saving the innocent lives, but also some controversial statements) of and proofs of the certain Church's sympathies for the Ustaša regime.¹⁸⁶

Superficial observations are the main weaknesses of Goldstein's book.¹⁸⁷ One such instance is the following remark, given when he tried to sum up the discussion on the level of support of the Croatian people for each of the involved parties;

¹⁸³ Ibid., 226.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 229.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 230.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 231-233.

¹⁸⁷ Sometimes his superficial observations are on the brink of completely invalid arguments, ie; "Germans have brought to power the group for which they knew they will suit them with their ideology and practice and which were similar to them (if they were, for example, brought Maček and CPP to power, as some wanted and planed, either there would not be a deportation of Jews and Roma or either the Germans would have to organize the deportations by themselves, and there certainly would not be a persecutions of the Serbs)."

All in all, population in the territory of NDH was more differentiated than majority of the other countries under the occupation or under the influence of Nazi Germany: there was a relatively more native people who participated in atrocities and relatively even more of those who participated in resistance.¹⁸⁸

While he puts most of the blame for the crimes on Pavelić, his closest associates and the leaders of the military units, for the mere executioners he states that "numerous executioners and butchers were often the unconscious tool of the real culprits, who were blinded by racial and other theories."¹⁸⁹

Kuljić argues that in Goldstein's case the dissociation from "Goldhagen's thesis" about the collective responsibility of Croatian people is especially clear.¹⁹⁰ Partially, I would agree with this remark. Aside from Goldhagen's thesis and the certain fallacies of it, I argue what is an issue here is that "Goldhagen's thesis" about the collective responsibility of the Croat nation for ustaša's crimes actually proliferated a decade before Daniel Goldhagen's actual book - in the works of Serbian historians. Not nearly as sophisticated and extensive as Goldhagen's study, but it was formulated - the notorious thesis about Croats as a genocidal nation. Since such a thesis came from Serbian nationalist historians, any discussion surrounding the responsibility for the Ustaša crimes is rebutted from the start because it is a remainder of the attempt of the Serbian historians to put a stigma on the Croatian nation. This is the reason why the discussion on the Ustaše still awaits a full blown *Historikerstreit* or a Croatian version of the discussion of the "Vichy syndrome". Otherwise, it seems quite hard to explain why Goldstein, renowned for his contribution in rebutting the rehabilitation of the Ustaša, would find a way to exculpate the willing (but apparently unconscious) executioners.

This part of the thesis served to outline the main narratives on the Second World War from 1990 up to the most recent works and different tendencies in the historiography which

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 236.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 236.

¹⁹⁰ Kuljić, *Prevladavanje prošlosti*, 453. It is important to note that Kuljić wrote his book in 2002, six years before Goldstein's "Croatian 1918-2008". Thus, he was referring to his earlier works.

appeared throughout the eighteen years. The narrative in these books was influenced by the developments and disputes in the Yugoslavian historiography, but also with the political context of the 1990s; metanarrative imposed by Tuđman, his national ideology and the state's politics of history. The general narrative evolved from Pavličević's and Perić's heavily biased and revisionist approach, through Matković's positivistic patriotism up to the more nuanced narration of Bilandžić and Goldstein. Partisans meanwhile evolved from the Serbo-četnik amalgam to the antifascist fighters and to quite an extent respected Croats. The effects of the national-reconciliation policies are still visible and are blocking the more critical reflection of all the involved parties, especially regarding Maček's politics. The ethnocentric prism and statehood remained the main reference and thus other possible critical remarks on this problematic period of the past are left out. Finally, the writing of the Serbian historians in the 1980's halt the more critical approach to the examination of collaboration and the responsibility of the broader masses during the Second World War.

While this section covered the period of the inception of the Yugoslavian regimes, its opponents and Yugoslav "original sin", the next sections will deal with the "Wicked Stepmother syndrome" of Croatian historiography - the neglect of the research of the distinct features of the Yugoslavian regime - self-management and the non-Alignment movement.

Neglected cases of self-management and Non-alignment movement

The previous chapter demonstrated how the socialist past affected writing on the pre-socialist period and colored the discussions on the Second World War and immediate postwar period. But since Yugoslavia was much more than Bleiburg, Goli otok and Tito, what about the rest? How much attention was given to the other features of the socialist regime? Since

the overall Yugoslav experience in general was refuted along the lines of Tuđman's rhetoric, how did all this reflect on some distinctive features of the Yugoslav socialism?

Since the socialist historiography was based on political history and since the majority of the historians were raised within that system, it is understandable that most of them stayed within their previous methodology and approach. The nation continued to function as the major organizing principle of historical research.¹⁹¹ Since the nation is embodied in the Party structure during the socialist period, in the examination of the socialist period the macrostructures are in the focus combined with the microhistory of the Party, as is noted in the case of Hungarian post-socialist historiography.¹⁹²

The research on the topic of the so-called "Croatian spring"¹⁹³ in 1971 is symptomatic of this discussion. This is very thoroughly analyzed in Marko Zubak's study.¹⁹⁴ Although one of the focal points for the events in the 1990s and a topic about which one could expect extensive research, the topic was heavily neglected in Croatian historiography. There are two reasons at least why one could expect a big interest in it; a) the fact that the actors of 1971 became the leading actors in 1991 (dissidents became the political elite), b) the importance of the 1971 for the 1974 constitution, which to a quite an extent affected the disintegrating processes of the 1980's. But, as Zubak notes, the collapse of Yugoslavia did not have a significant impact on Croatian historiography dealing with the socialist period; "silence had encompassed even hot, controversial topics such as the ... Croatian Spring."¹⁹⁵ The reasons for this lack of research on the postwar period he finds in the following reasons; 1) the overall situation of Croatian historiography; lack of personnel and communications with

¹⁹¹ Brunbauer, *(Re) Writing*, 13.

¹⁹² Trencsenyi, *Narratives*, 52.

¹⁹³ In Croatia known under that term, while during the Yugoslavia the term *maspok* ("masovni pokret") and its international version were used - mass movement.

¹⁹⁴ Zubak, Marko "The Croatian Spring: Interpreting the Communist Heritage in Post-Communist Croatia", *East Central Europe* vol. 32, no. 1-2 (2005): 190 - 225

¹⁹⁵ Zubak, "Croatian Spring", 191.

historiographies of other countries, methodological conservatism, the unfavorable war-time conditions and subsequent authoritarian rule and the rejection of the historical heritage from Yugoslavia.¹⁹⁶

These trends are also visible in the selected literature for the thesis. The whole period of Yugoslavia is not as such the predominating one. Exceptions are Bilandžić's and Radelić's books that put the socialist period in the centre of examination, but as will be revealed later, again the focus of nation prevailed; there is a certain neglect of the topic of Yugoslavia within the topic of Yugoslavia. Following that, in this section, I examine how much importance was given to the two distinct features of Yugoslavia which were not directly related to the sensitive issue of a nation; self-management and the non-Alignment movement.

Since these phenomena are of a longer time span, I do not go into details but just examine if the attention was given at all to them and how this fits into the overall narration. Thus, this subchapter will also reflect the asymmetry from the selected literature in terms of how much space will be given to it. This is not coming just from the fact that these topics were neglected in the works of the selected historians, but it also reflects the fact that these topics are broad and no fully appropriate assessment can be given within the limitations of this thesis.

At this point, it is probably redundant to note that in Pavličević's and Perić's book attention was not given at all. In line with their discourse and extreme superficiality, the whole political system of Yugoslavia was reduced to the centralized communist state, based on the Soviet model "with inherited Serb supremacy".¹⁹⁷ While the topic of Tito-Stalin split and related to it the topic of Andrija Hebrang and the topic of Goli otok went through the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 192-193.

¹⁹⁷ Perić, *A History*, 223-224.

patriotic filter; the self-management was invented just to prove to the world they are not siding with the soviets anymore.¹⁹⁸ Moreover; the "self-management was nothing particularly original. It existed in antiquity and was practiced by some medieval city-communes" while the "Yugoslav version" was a "farce"; in the end always the party was in full charge."¹⁹⁹

With Matković, barely a step forward was made. Matković's approach "literature, but not apparatus" completely neglected the whole period of Yugoslavia. As he remarked in the preface: "a lot more space was given to the events up to 1945 rather than to the postwar period" since the political stage after 1945 "is much simpler (it is one-party totalitarianism and the Party's state)..."²⁰⁰ He does not give any importance to the Tito-Stalin split because "the essence of the Party state ("partijska država") did not change even after the clash."²⁰¹

While he examines the period of the consolidation of power (collectivization, confiscation of private property, nationalization and other practices which relied on oppressive measures), the rest of the period is pretty much neglected. Moreover, he echoes the regime's yearning for the missed European past:

Actually, the introduction of the communist system imposed totalitarianism upon Yugoslavian countries and detached them from the Central and Western Europe, i.e. from the European civilization circle²⁰²

The author devotes only a small paragraph to self-management. It is often seen as a reaction to the crisis caused by the split with the Soviets,²⁰³ while the Non-alignment movement was not mentioned, except for the one sentence in the first edition. The second edition of the book (1995) replicated more or less the first, although it was a bit expanded. Still the issue of self-management was again reduced to its national dimension, but the part which deals with

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 223.

¹⁹⁹ Pavličević, *Povijest*,

²⁰⁰ Matković, *Suvremena* (1st ed.), VI

²⁰¹ Ibid., 157

²⁰² Ibid., 157

²⁰³ Ibid., 159.

the mechanism of it was taken from Bilandžić.²⁰⁴ Yugoslavia remained neglected in all three editions of his "Contemporary Political History of Croatia".

On the other hand, in his "History of Yugoslavia", these two topics finally received some attention, even a separate subchapter was given to each of them. The path to self-management was described as a model which was invented after the ruling elite found itself excluded from the rest of the socialist bloc. It outlines more or less in an objective and neutral way the foundations of such a path, but without going into particular depth. The author still noted that even this "designed system", carried "within it weaknesses which will be revealed later."²⁰⁵ He argues that such a model of organization of the whole society, not just of the economic one.²⁰⁶ Although the author offered a brief overview how that system functioned, he notes that overall the level of the real worker's self-management in the production process was symbolic and repeats the claim from the previous book that the whole system of self-management was just a façade.²⁰⁷

One of the main reasons why self-management received some attention was because through the prism of it the relations between republics are examined. Still, it was not the primary interest in the mechanism of such a system which drove authors to examine it, it was still reduced to the one of possible prisms through which the political dynamics can be examined.²⁰⁸ No room is given to the interpretation that such a system was indeed an experiment to create something new and was simply one more hegemonic tool;

²⁰⁴ Matković, *Suvremena*, (2nd ed.), 226.

²⁰⁵ Matković, *Povijest Jugoslavije*, 308.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 308.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 309.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 335.

free decision making of the workers was strictly directed and controlled from the Party and all the constitutional amendments always in the end lead to the same - strengthening of the Party state.²⁰⁹

A separate chapter is devoted to foreign policy too. Still, it deals mostly with foreign relations with the Soviets and the hot and cold phases of this relationship.

As with many other things, Bilandžić's book offered a breakthrough. In the preface of his book he writes against the trend of "anticommunism" in historiography. It seems this intervention was necessary in order to make history legitimate as a scientific discipline to deal with all the features of the socialist system. Moreover, he stated that self-management is the "reservoir of experiences" which can come "instructive" in the future since "people will not comply forever to be the "slaves" of the managerial and bureaucratic structures."²¹⁰ In general, the issues of self-management and federalism dominate in Bilandžić's book. His approach is based on examining the history elites and that is the prism through which the whole Yugoslav period is examined - often referring to economic indicators. His emphasis on the intersection between politics and economy is understandable given Bilandžić's educational background and political career; he defended his doctoral thesis in 1965 on the topic of applicability of market mechanism in the self-management system, but he also worked in the Federal Syndicate and was a member of the team which drafted proposals for economic reforms in 1965.²¹¹

The topic of self-management basically dominates the book combined with his insights into the Party's microcosm which constitutes the most valuable part of the book. Although politics is in the centre always, this specificity of the Yugoslavian system is never left off the horizon.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 343.

²¹⁰ Bilandžić, *Hrvatska*, 14

²¹¹ Ibid., 12.

In line with this, Yugoslavia's persistence in creating the Non-alignment movement was not reduced to the pure consequence of the Tito-Stalin split. Although he did not write that extensively on it, the broad factors were taken into consideration. The author also traced the gradual development of the idea up to from the early 1950's to the Bandung summit and the first official conference in Belgrade in 1961.²¹² Besides taking into consideration the broader international situation, he also brings Tito's personal ambitions, but also the promulgated idea of peace between the blocks and the inviolability of the state borders. The author also pays attention to the Yugoslav denunciation of the imperialism of both sides and places the whole phenomena of non-Alignment there.²¹³ Also, the implications of such policies are mentioned; the uneasy situation of the Yugoslav communists due to the occasional sanctions from the West or the attacks from various communist parties on the behalf of "Yugoslavian revisionism."²¹⁴

Radelić, on the other hand, did not pay special attention to it. Moreover, he wrote on it in a belittled way;

Non-Alignment movement, despite everyday propaganda about its crucial importance, did not have any bigger international importance. It connected Yugoslavia with poor countries of the third world and was satisfying the ambitions of its leaders.²¹⁵

He describes the involvement in the non-alignment movement as one more sign of the egregious ambitiousness of the Yugoslav communists. While he sees the good sides of such a path in the easing of the Cold war divisions and the economic cooperation with the countries of Asia and Africa, the bad sides of it are the occasional economic sanctions which were due to "Yugoslavia's support of the liberation movements and terrorism in those countries."²¹⁶

²¹² Ibid., 366

²¹³ Ibid., 374.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 379.

²¹⁵ Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji*, 283.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 284.

Regarding self-management, Radelić acknowledges that it "was one of the brands of Yugoslav socialism"²¹⁷ while the "desire to find a new ideology was the main motive of its introduction."²¹⁸ Still, the determining factor was that it was invented because the Party "had to explain the aggressiveness of the USSR and find a theoretical explanation why one communist country endangers the other one."²¹⁹

The causal relations are again interesting in his interpretation;

Yugoslavia was not expelled from the communist group because it was different but because it did not want to comply with Stalin. But, from the non-compliance the desire was born to detach Yugoslav communism from the communism of the USSR.²²⁰

Since the issues of the worker's council and syndicalism were Radelić's main interest in the socialist system, he gives a lot of attention to those phenomena. Moreover, it is the only work where the author refers to the Marxist classics and employs some sort of intellectual history; he examines the leaning of communists on Marx's Civil War in France.²²¹ Still, it seems that after all there is an ambiguous stance of the author regarding the motivation of the Yugoslav communists with their introduction of self-management: "with the introduction of self-management they intended to question all the known state models."²²²

Goldstein found also a place for these issues in his book, although they are not in the centre, as in Bilandžić's case. He does not go into details and he acknowledges that there are differing interpretations up to this day. For self-management he states that "the independent economic subjects were created which were at least partially pressured to act as responsible enterprises."²²³ While he states that "it was an important step further and one of the main

²¹⁷ Ibid., 284

²¹⁸ Ibid., 284

²¹⁹ Ibid., 284.

²²⁰ Ibid., 287.

²²¹ Ibid., 285.

²²² Ibid., 290.

²²³ Goldstein, *Hrvatska*, 469.

reasons of the fast economic development in the following decades",²²⁴ he shares the notion that it has bureaucratized over time and in it he sees the roots for its failure.²²⁵ A disparaging approach is noticeable in the examination of the phenomenon of self-management; "from the seventies self-management became the mere prosaic form" which "lacked any connection with the real world."²²⁶

The relations of Yugoslavia with the USSR are put in the centre of the part about the Yugoslav foreign policy and the author perceives the Non-Alignment movement as a logical outcome of the Yugoslavian postwar position.²²⁷ His examination does not go deep regarding the broader international context and he shares the disparaging approach of many other authors towards the Yugoslavian path. He sees this politics as a "strategic miss and harmful in the long-term" although in the initial phases it "allowed Yugoslavia a more independent position and distance from the Soviet sphere of dominance."²²⁸ Moreover, he perceives the non-Alignment movement as an "unimportant factor" in world politics and the Yugoslav participation in it as a complete failure since it was "exhausting itself" in the attempt to build and solidify the movement.²²⁹

This subchapter served to demonstrate how the Yugoslavian socialism was approached by selected authors regarding its two distinctive features; its foreign policy and the economic model. In general, the disparaging approach predominates; while the non-Alignment movement is almost completely neglected as a topic and is approached as unworthy of research, self-management was again mostly examined through the prism of the national relations and the constellations of the "federalist vs. centralist blocs". Besides

²²⁴ Ibid., 469.

²²⁵ Ibid., 469.

²²⁶ Ibid., 485.

²²⁷ Ibid., 485.

²²⁸ Ibid., 506.

²²⁹ Ibid., 577.

Bilandžić's and Radelić's case, the attempt to theoretically examine the phenomenon of self-management is completely omitted. Again the parochialism dominates; the attempt of the regime to find a third way in the bipolar world was often labeled as delusional. Even the potential economic benefits of both the economic ties with the Third World and the mechanism of self-management are completely disregarded. While the focus is allegedly on the nation as an autonomous and transcendental actor, any examination of how ordinary citizens were impacted with such policies is mostly neglected. Moreover, except for Bilandžić, the authors do not pay any attention to the sphere of ideas and the possibility that motivations for such ideas come from the ideological orientation of the main actors.

Conclusion

In this thesis I attempted to demonstrate how the various political processes in the last decade of the 20th century have affected the narrative of Croatian historiography. The collapse of communism in Europe and the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the outbreak of the war and the subsequent period of intensive state-building policies impacted the way it was approached in Croatian historiography. The collapse of socialist states brought a need not just to redefine the attitude towards the socialism and its past, but also about fascism and antifascism.

In the context of Croatia, I outlined four specific features which were all echoed in the narrative of Croatian historians. Traces of the statehood narrative, call for all-Croat national reconciliation, the notion of belonging to Europe and the Balkanist discourse on Yugoslavia impacted the way historians wrote on the past.

The statehood tradition remained an inescapable prism through which the past is examined and evaluated. The narrative on the Second World War was heavily influenced by the discourse of national reconciliation, resulting mainly in various levels of rehabilitations of the Ustaša movement and in the inability to critically examine the collaborative past. The widely proclaimed "Return to Europe" by Tuđman's regime accompanied with the Balkanist discourse "orientalized" the whole period of the Yugoslav past.

While the normalization of everyday life, the disappearance of the war threats and the termination of the intensive state-building policies also brought the gradual normalization of the narration about the past, some basic tropes of the metanarrative imposed by Tuđman's regime in the 1990s nevertheless remained visible in the works of the historians whom I selected for examination. It is the further task of historiography to locate and further

deconstruct those which are burdened with the troubled presence of the nationalist mythologems.

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