

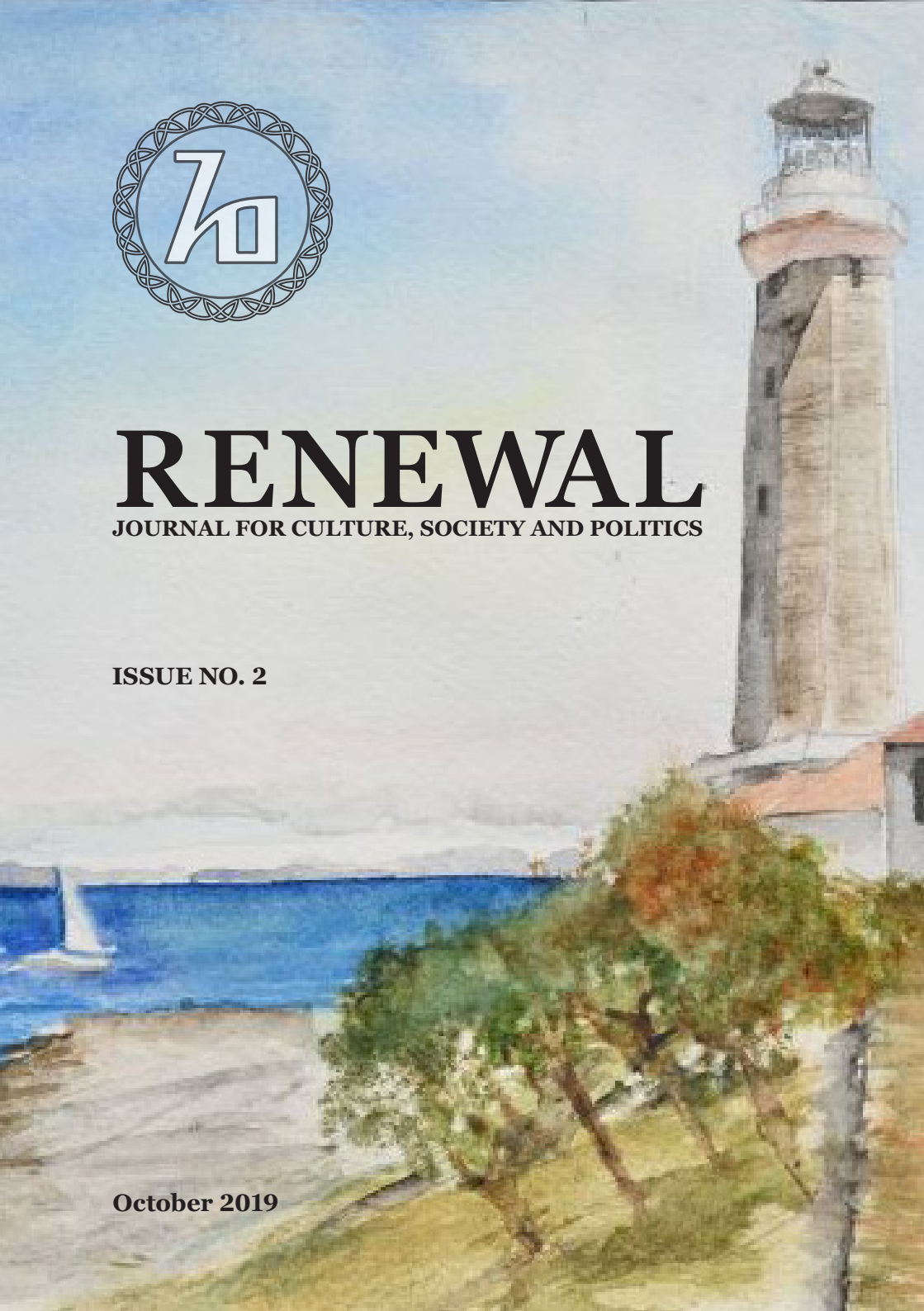


RENEWAL

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Dear reader,

Approximately a year has passed since the last issue of the “Renewal” journal, an English edition of the well-established Croatian journal “Obnova”. This time around the adjective Croatian will be a strongly emphasizes leitmotiv, which represents a noticeable departure from the last issue. Instead of covering a broad spectrum of subjects, the main focus is on Croatian history, with a still narrower focus on Croatian immigrants. Another noticeable development is the inclusion of new authors and new articles which were not present in any of the Croatian editions and thus not translated for this issue.

The essence of the subject of the issue is perfectly illustrated with the first entry in the series of articles, an interview with a young student Lucia Ukalović. A young student who went studying in the USA, a common life story for many young Croats, she brings us an inspiring story about Bepina Sabalić Kunin, herself an immigrant who through hard work made a life of fortune and renown. Bepina, being a passionate patriot, created a scholarship institution with the intention of supporting Catholic Croatian students pursuing degrees in selected graduate and professional programs. An endeavour which helped Lucia and other Croatian students to pursue their degrees in the most renowned US universities, with her only wish being that they in return devote some of their post-graduate career to their homeland. One can try in vain to find a finer example of patriotic love which doesn't diminish no matter how far and how long one is severed from home, which is why it shouldn't surprise us that the renowned film director Jakov Sedlar joined in the effort to spread the story of Bepina in the form of the soon to be released documentary, to create a permanent legacy that young Croats, like Lucia, could continue.

Following the interview, an article by Marko Paradžik takes us to a contrasting century, and one could say to a contrasting country in comparison to Bepina's case, Russia, where a Croat named Juraj Križanić went forth to bridge the chasm between Catholic and Orthodox Christians and to create a feeling of unity between Slavic nations, not straying from his cause even in the midst of his Siberian exile. Alas, not only have our great ancestors and contemporaries been severed from our homeland, throughout history Croatian land has been subjected to forceful annexation and its subjects and heritage through cultural appropriation, as Davor Dijanović picturesquely puts in an article titled "The Bay of Kotor Wrested from Croatia". His article, a review of a book by Đuro Vidmarović *Croats of Bay of Kotor through history, Memories and forgetfulness*, aside from a detailed journey through all of the history of the Bay of Kotor where we can witness a consistent Croatian identity and heritage, also notes the urgency of assuring its further continuance and preservation in the face of persistent efforts of culturicide, memoricide, linguicide and, most unfortunately, through sheer negligence of Croatian institutions.

However, there were times when we made the enemies pay very dearly for every inch of our territory in their attempt to forcefully conquer it, and at times dear allies and friends stood along us, shoulder to shoulder. Article "152 Days of Laslovo" by a Hungarian named Dániel Ferenc Dómjan tells of a little known, but very gripping and ferocious battle equal to the any of the more famous ones, that raged early in the Croatian War of Independence, in the village of Laslovo, where Croats and Hungarians fought outnumbered and outgunned like in the days of the siege of Siget. The ferocity itself is the subject of the next article covering the Homeland War. Sanja Knežević in her article "The Suffering and Resurrection of the Raped Vukovar Captives

1991-1992” links the unusual and, in recent times, incomparable brutality of the war with the contemporary spirit, describing it as the first European post-modern war. In the article “The Days of History”, Julienne Bušić, the wife of the famous Croatian martyr Zvonko Bušić, through various examples, including some autobiographical, explains the media distortions of various historical events, which in the modern global media might have catastrophic proportions which, she fears, could diminish a passion for resistance which she and her late husband had. In this manner, as Lucia puts it in her interview, Julienne really is an invaluable mentor.

Lastly, following the footsteps of the Croatian edition, we decided to include works of art in this issue, a concept which will surely go through further development with each new issue. The Croatian imagination of our renowned poets Lidija Bajuk and Tomislav Bilosnić travelled far and wide, from the dark mystic forest of northern Croatia to the scorching sun of Africa, encountering fair fairies and black-mane lions. The forefront of this issue features a lighthouse painted by Vanja Kalemba, symbolizing an everlasting guiding light for all of our compatriots far away in foreign lands, fuelled by the longing in their hearts for their homeland. We hope you will enjoy this publication of the “Renewal” periodical, which is, foremost in its essence, a love letter to Croatian people and their heritage.

Editor-in Chief,

Dino Ljubić

INTERVIEW WITH LUCIA UKALOVIĆ



Lucia Ukalović is a Masters Candidate in Applied Economics at Georgetown University. Born in 1996 in a small village Suhovare nearby Zadar, she finished primary school in Poličnik and Juraj Baraković comprehensive school in Zadar. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Zagreb where she received University of Zagreb's Excellence Scholarship to support her studies. In her senior year at University of Zagreb, she was working for the World Bank Group and decided to apply for Master's degree at Georgetown

University. After being admitted, she received a full scholarship for her study from Bepina Sabalic Kunin Endowed Scholarship Fund at Georgetown University. She has continuously been an excellent student. Her further plan is to enhance her mathematical and statistical skills and apply for a PhD in economics. By then, she is going to be developing her professional career in Croatia. Her research interests are in the field of macroeconomics, subfield monetary economics and international finance with a special focus on applications of distributed ledger technology in enhancement of effectiveness of the existing systems.

Dear Lucia, you're one amongst many of our compatriots that partook in the endeavour of living or studying or working abroad, far from home. A common endeavour, stemming from many different reasons, varying from economic necessity through sheer wanderlust. Having that in mind, is it possible to define an experience of a Croat living in the US, what would be the pros and cons in your opinion?

L K: Yes, I have been pursuing my Master's degree in Applied Economics at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. in the past year and at the very beginning I must say that it has been an amazing experience. The main reason I decided to do so was my wish to acquire new knowledge and new skills which were not available to me anywhere in Croatia. Namely, the field of my interest is very specific and pretty technical so I decided to pursue this degree and come back to Croatia as soon as I graduate. This idea of getting a degree in the U.S. and then coming back to Croatia has shaped my experience as a Croat living in the U.S. I do not have any cons that I could name as my experience has been very positive. I came to the U.S. very open-minded and ready to see what is it like to live in the great U.S.

It is easy to name pros starting from better infrastructure on campus, professor have an individual approach to every single student, everything we need for our studies as well as for physical and mental health is available on campus etc. The experience of studying here has just been a huge blessing to me. Not only that I have learned a lot, but I have also been challenged to go farther than I thought I can and push my own boundaries. Life in general is really nice here, there is plenty of opportunities, people are friendly and I have never felt like an alien here. It is not home, but it is definitely a positive experience.

In your view, how does the Croatian community fare in the US in general? How well is it interconnected within itself? Do Croats find it challenging to nourish and preserve their national identity along with their lifelong coalescence with, in many ways, a distinct American culture?

L K: Croatian community in Washington D.C. is relatively small and I have not got a chance to meet most of Croatians as I had my lectures at the time they would gather in the Embassy. However I have attended most of our Croatian catholic masses and met 20-30 Croatians. I do not think it is well interconnected relative to what I have heard about Croatian communities in Cleveland and Los Angeles, but that is just my point of view. For Croatian people I have met here in Washington D.C. it seems to be very challenging to nourish and preserve our Croatian national identity. I believe that having a Croatian church here could help, as many people said that things were quite different when we had our own church and priest here in Washington. Unfortunately, the church has been sold couple of years ago and people do not gather that often anymore.

We can surely confirm there are certain individuals who do everything in their power for the betterment of their compatriot's lives in foreign countries. One of them is Bepina Sabalic Kunin, whom you know personally. What can you tell us about her? How did she impact your life?

L K: Mrs. Bepina Sabalic Kunin is a 95-year-old native of Croatia who immigrated to the U.S. by way of New York City in 1961, to escape the communist system of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Born at the island Pag where she spent first 37 years of her life, she finished only 4 grades of primary school but has always been craving for education. Unfortunately, social and financial circumstances made her time at the island Pag be spent by taking care of sheep and goats. By the help of her uncle, she immigrated to the U.S. dreaming about better life but has always kept Croatia in her heart. In 1963, she settled in Washington, D.C. and began working in a tailor shop on Wisconsin Avenue in Georgetown, where she met her late husband who was the shop owner. As she recalls, she was highly skilled in delicate and durable Pag lace which is the pride of the island of Pag and prized throughout Croatia that even the tailor shop owner i.e. her late husband, was fascinated by her work and wanted her to start working for him right away. Together, they went on to make custom clothing for many prominent Washingtonians and among them the Georgetown students. She emphasizes that Georgetown students were always the best in taking care of the clothing, the most polite students she has ever meet in Washington, D.C. and that is the main reason she formed a long term relationship with Georgetown University.

Mrs. Kunin is an incredibly intelligent lady who started investing in the real estate in Georgetown after her husband passed away. Approximately 10 years ago, she noticed that she cannot take care of

the business anymore so she sold the business and started to think what her legacy would be. Mrs. Kunin says that the combination of her true love for her homeland Croatia, crave for education and sympathies for Georgetown University brought her to the idea of creating a Bepina Sabalic Kunin Endowed Scholarship Fund in September 2011 with the intention of supporting Catholic Croatian students pursuing degrees in selected graduate and professional programs. Her generous gift to Georgetown University has allowed 13 Croatian students so far to pursue their degrees at one of the finest and most reputable America's universities by providing them a full scholarship covering the tuition fees, health insurance as well as living support. Her only wish is that the recipients of her scholarship devote some of their post-graduate career to Croatia and that they use their knowledge and skills to improve the lives of Croatian citizens by strengthening universities, schools, businesses, organizations or governmental bodies. Mrs. Kunin is thus an extra-ordinary example of a philanthropist who wants to "give back" to the country and society she is coming from. Her generosity and a strong emotional bond with her loving Croatia has allowed us students to realize our dreams of studying at America's oldest catholic university without having any financial issue.

Our loving Bepina is currently situated in a senior living center in Bethesda and is always very excited and happy when we announce our visit. She keeps all the photos of her students in her bedroom and is always interested in every detail of our lives. She keeps on repeating that she wants us to be successful, reputable and fine people who would promote, protect and improve the lives of our fellow Croatians by living in service to them.

Everyone who meets Mrs. Kunin has only the nicest words to describe her and immediately notices that she truly cherishes her love for students, catholic faith but above all, for her Croatia. She likes to say that before going to sleep, she thinks of all the scenes of her one and only Croatia.

She has definitely had a significant impact in my life. Firstly, she taught me that we should always think about giving back our very best to the society that gave us so much. Secondly, her scholarship allowed me to realize my dream and pursue a degree at one of the best American universities without having to put myself in a huge debt. And at the end, she made me confirm my belief that we should all put ourselves, our knowledge, skills and achievements into the service to our country and for the better lives of our fellow Croatians.

You have been recently involved in a documentary about the life story of Bepina, in cooperation with the renowned director Jakov Sedlar. What can you tell us about the documentary?

L K: The idea of this documentary has been born once I told the story about Bepina to Mr. Sedlar. He immediately suggested making that documentary believing that her story is unique. Both of us agreed that is just stunning that a lady who has only 4 grades of primary school, decided to give everything she has for students at the world's renowned university like Georgetown. Documentary is just stunning. We have put a lot of effort into it and are really proud about it. I have no doubts that everyone who will watch it will deeply understand how special Mrs. Kunin is.

Have you met anyone else who made a similar impact on your life like Bepina?

L K: Bepina is truly special in my life and I could not compare her impact to anyone else's. However, there are couple of people who have deeply touched me and motivated me to always put my knowledge, skills and faith into the service of Croatia. Having said that, I have to mention one amazing lady whose story, energy, passion, optimism and patriotism have made strong impact on me and that is Mrs. Julienne Bušić. She is just one incredible woman and I wish we could give her more media attention so that she could spread her advices to broader audience of young people. I am convinced we all have so much to learn from her and I could not be more thankful and blessed for the opportunity to know her.

JURAJ KRIŽANIĆ – A MISSION TO RUSSIA

Author: **Marko Paradžik**

Juraj Križanić (Latin: *Georgius Crisanius*, Italian: *Crisanio*) was born in 1617 or 1618 in Obruha, Croatia. He studied the humanities with the Jesuits in Ljubljana, philosophy in Graz and theology in Bologna.¹ In Rome, he joined the Greek college of Saint Athanasius where he studied Greek language, literature and the theological controversies separating the Greek and the Latin Churches. While studying eastern liturgy, he paid especial attention to liturgical music.² After gaining a doctorate in theology in 1642 he became a pastor in Nedelišće, situated close to the distinguished library of Nikola Zrinski in Čakovec, which was rich in various economic, political, linguistic and literary works written in a variety of languages. While there, he refuses all invitations to move which were made by some notables and erudite nobles, for example: the invitation of palatine Ivan Drašković who offered him a bishop's seat, the invitation to the court of Petar Zrinski and that of Vuk Frankopan, the general of Karlovac.³ In 1646, while serving as a pastor in Varaždin, where he was promoted after Nedelišće, he was tasked by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to travel to Russia. He arrives at Smolensk, the so-called "key to Moscow" (Latin: *clavis Moscuae*), under Bishop Peter Parchevsky. He continues to Moscow, where he arrives on 25 October and where he remains until 19 December 1647.⁴ Shortly

1 Ivan Golub, *Križanić* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1987), 9.

2 Golub, *Križanić*, 1.

3 Golub, *Križanić*, 15.

4 Golub, *Križanić*, 16–17.

after returning from Russia, he seizes an opportunity for a stay in Constantinople (from 15 January to 13 March 1651) as the chaplain of the Viennese embassy and the personal secretary of Johann Rudolf Schmid zum Schwarzernhorn, a person well learned in the Turkish language, culture and politics.⁵ On his return to Rome, he translates “Cyril’s book” and refutes Orthodox theologians, beginning from Photios and continuing up to his own time. In 1658, against the will of the Pope, he leaves from Rome and again travels to Moscow. He stays in Nyezin as the guest of the Protopope Maximus, where in one of his letters he tries to persuade the Ukrainians to remain united with Moscow as Little Russia.⁶ The commander of the Russian army, count Trubetskoy and hetman A. S. Matveyev, who were at that moment suppressing a rebellion in Ukraine, send Križanić along with a certain Vasily Bezobrzov to Moscow with letters of recommendation. He arrives there on 17 September and is presented under the cryptonym Jurij Biliš the Serb and offers his services to the Propaganda Secretary Ignoli: “to write a history of Russia, serve as an imperial librarian, translate the Bible and work on orthography and grammar, which is the only one accepted out of all the offered ones.”⁷ For reasons unknown, he is exiled to Siberia and arrives to the capital of Tobolsk on 8 March 1661. During his exile he continues his work on orthography and his lexicon, translates for the Tsar, interprets various political writers and writes some works of his own.⁸ Fifteen years later, the son of the Tsar that exiled him, Feodor Alexeyevich Romanov, granted an amnesty to Križanić, after which he returned to Moscow on 5 March 1676 where he finds A. S. Matveyev a minister and Maximus

⁵ Golub, *Križanić*, 18.

⁶ Golub, *Križanić*, 26–27.

⁷ Golub, *Križanić*, 28.

⁸ Golub, *Križanić*, 30.

a bishop.⁹ He requested a permission to leave Russia from the Tsar and in return he offered him a translation of Aristotle's "Politics". In 1677 he moves to Vilnius, joins the Dominican Order and takes Augustine as his monastic name.¹⁰ Together with his manuscripts, he leaves for Rome again, with the intention of printing them there, but he never arrives to his destination as he joins the army of John Sobieski, to whom he dedicated his work *Historia de Sibiria*, and dies at Vienna in 1683.¹¹ In chronological order, these are the most notable works he wrote during his life: *Razgovori ob vladatelystvu* ("Discourse on Government"), a collection of works, titled "Politics", *Gramatičko izkazanje ob Ruskom jeziku* ("Grammatical Instructions on the Russian Language"), *De providentia Dei* ("On Divine Providence")¹², *Ob svetom kršćenju* ("Holy Baptism"), *Tolkovanie istoričeskikh proročevstv* ("An Interpretation of Historical Prophecies"), *O kitajskom*

⁹ Golub, *Križanić*, 36.

¹⁰ Golub, *Križanić*, 37.

¹¹ Golub, *Križanić*, 37.

¹² A political-theological work in which he discusses the question of victory and defeat during the Russo-Polish War, and which he interprets as an act of Providence which guides everything towards Jesus and the Church.

torgu ("Chinese Foreign Trade")¹³, *Obličeine na soloveckuju čelobitnu* ("A Refutation of the Solovetsky Monastery's Request")¹⁴, *O preverstvu beseda* ("A Sermon on Superstition").¹⁵

If we look at his life purely biographically, leaving aside the interpretation of his works, we can conclude that his life was filled with study and difficult journeys, interesting acquaintances, various reversals and dangers. The one thing that, more than any other, characterised him as a thinker and man was his Moscow notion, his mission of rapprochement between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, together with a strengthening of Slavdom in which Russia should have played the principal part. Considering that as a polymath he was engaged in multiple disciplines (philosophy, theology, language, musicology) it would be a significant task to deal with the entirety of his work and thought, so in this paper I will focus on the works of Križanić that are specifically concerned with Russia. Additionally, we will endeavour to briefly show his vision of how the Russian state should be transformed economically, politically and militarily. A further point that needs to be clearly explained is what he meant when he talked about Slavdom and how that affected the nature of his missionary work in Russia.

¹³ He sends this work to Moscow in 1675, with which he possibly contributes to the sending of Nicholas Sparafia Mileusk the Greek to China.

¹⁴ A unique case of a Catholic theologian rising to the defence of the official Orthodox Church when a schism appeared in its midst. To the Old Believers, the monks of the Solovetsky Monastery, he writes an almost literary work in which he begs, admonishes, entreats and encourages them to quit from their heresy and their schismatic behaviour. It is also interesting that Križanić gives the titles of Churches to the Orthodox Kiev and Moscow, which wasn't the case in the West until the Second Vatican Council.

¹⁵ Golub, *Križanić*, 30–35.

Juraj Križanić spent his youth and a part of his later life in Croatia which was then part of the Habsburg Monarchy along with many other lands containing a Slavic element. These lands were in an inferior position as opposed to lands with a predominantly Germanic element. Besides, the threat of the Turks, who already conquered many Slavic countries (parts of Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Serbia), was still real. The fact that his contemporaries Fran Krsto Frankopan and Petar Zrinski were executed in 1671 for conspiracy against the Habsburg Monarchy tells us that different methods and paths were being considered in a geopolitical sense, and Križanić, rather than turning to the Turks or the Germans, decided for a third path: Russia. It would be wrong to say that he was the first to consider and develop that notion. For instance, Constantine the Philosopher, Priboveći, Orbini, Palmotić and other poets in Dubrovnik, even before Križanić, showed their reverence of Russia and its political system and viewed it as a possible liberator. But, Križanić was the first one that attempted to bring his thoughts into fruition, on the basis of his deep studies and his vision of Russia.¹⁶ His first conceptions of Russia were received from the authors such as Giovi (*Libellus de legatione Basilli magni*), Herberstein S. (*Rerum Moscoviticarum Comentarii*) and Antonio Possevino, the papal nuncio to Ivan the Terrible (*Moscovia*). He copies entire passages from these books, comments and deliberates on them.¹⁷ It is perfectly clear that he couldn't obtain a clear picture of contemporary Russia based on these works, taking into account the passage of time, but they were obviously enough to engender his idea, such as the role of Russia among the Slavs, with the final impetus to his idea being the political situation in Rome (concerning his missionary work in Rome). Connected with that, we

¹⁶ A. Lj. Goljdberg, "Križanić i Rusija", *Historijski zbornik*, ed. Jaroslav Šidak (Zagreb, 1971), 261.

¹⁷ Goljdberg, *Križanić i Rusija*, 262.

should mention his famous *Promemoria* from 1641, which he wrote on his arrival to Rome and which contains his original intention: that his work shall be in the service of the master of Moscow in order to gain his benevolence for the furtherance of his own goals (the unification of the Churches and the fight against the Turks). With that purpose in mind he plans to translate various liberal arts and art booklets into the Moscow dialect, without translating any political works out of which he himself will give advice to the Tsar. He also intends to publish an encomium to contemporary and passed princes, in prose and poetry.¹⁸ Nevertheless, his Siberian writings consist in the main of critical political judgements on Vladimir Monomakh, Ivan IV, Boris Godunov and other imperial rulers. We can see that he went beyond his youthful intentions, which is natural considering his views on Russia changed with the time he spent in the country.¹⁹ In this way, his missionary-theological mission (rapprochement between the Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches) and his political mission (to build up Russia as a state which will help other Slavs to create their own states) will be inextricably linked, so it shouldn't surprise us that he developed a particular political theology.²⁰

¹⁸ Goljdberg, *Križanić i Rusija*, 263

¹⁹ Goljdberg, *Križanić i Rusija*, 263.

²⁰ The term "political theology" is mentioned for the first time in the noted essay of the same name by Karl Schmit, *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*. The main thesis of the essay depicts the link between the political organization of the society and the religious conscience which that society possesses. In other words, the political society is always coloured by its religious convictions, even when it is secular, it inevitably implies a certain form of civic religion. All significant concepts of the modern theory of state represent secularized theological concepts which have been, during their historical development, transformed from theological systems to a theory of state. For example, the idea of the Almighty God transformed into the Almighty Lawgiver or the concept of the equality before God which develops

The first work connected with Križanić's Moscow intention after his return from Moscow to Rome, is his never completed *Bibliotheca Schismaticorum Universa* ("The Universal Book of Schismatics") in which he wants to depict a number of controversies in Orthodox belief, as Bellarmine did for the Protestants. But unlike him, Križanić does not quote the words of particular Orthodox theologians out of context; he transmits entire documents from Orthodox writers in a special volume so one can look at their work as a whole, and then proceeds to respond to them in another volume.²¹ To understand Križanić's Moscow intention from that period, highly significant is his presentation and explanation of the *Promemoria* from 1641 to Francesco Ignoli, the secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith: "I don't hold the Muscovites to be heretics or schismatics (since their schism did not originate in arrogance, the true root of a schism, but out of ignorance), I hold them to be Christians who are simply in error. So, I think that going among them and speaking to them does not mean preaching correct belief to them (an undertaking which I would never dare take up), but to encourage them to virtue, science and the liberal arts."²² According to this, his foundational thought is that the separation of the Churches, which divided the Slavs into Catholics and Orthodox, was disastrous for the unity of the Slavs

into the egalitarian concept of equality before Law. The prominent Catholic theologian Johann Baptist Metz introduces this concept to his theological discourse in the early 1960's. Unlike Schmit, who used this expression when he talked about the authors of the Roman Catholic counterrevolution, men like Donoso Cortes, Bonald and de Maistre, authors who were theists and were ideologically backing the personal sovereignty of the monarch using theological analogies, Metz gives a new meaning to this concept and defines it as a kind of critical apparatus of society. (<http://blog.b92.net/text/13767/Kra-tak-esej-o-politickoj-teologiji/> 03 September, 2014).

²¹ Ivan Golub, *Križanić* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1987).

²² Golub, *Križanić*, 11.

as well as for the unification of the Churches. His goal is for all the Slavs to be under one Roman Church, but not necessarily under the same rite and discipline as he does not consider the Russians to be heretics or schismatics, but deluded by the Greeks, with his mission of educating them to understand their errors.²³

It is important to note that Križanić's religious mission and his Slavic mission never get in the way of each other, but that he focuses on both at all times without prioritising one over the other.²⁴ As Golub writes it, Križanić's works are the result of concrete events in Slavdom, both religious and secular, because: "Križanić's politics is theological, and his theology is political. Križanić's unionism is Slavic, and his Slavism is unionistic" (Golub 1987, 95).²⁵ On 15 April 1663 he begins writing *Razgovori ob vladatelystvu* ("Discourse on Government") in which he interdisciplinary, theoretically and practically advises the Tsar how to construct a state from the aspects of economy, theology, politics and philosophy.²⁶ Briefly, we can single out several key principles necessary for the comprehension of the work above and which are connected with the development of the Russian state: *ksenomanija Csužebjesie* ("anti-xenomania"), *Samowládstwo* ("self-governance"), *Sowerszenogó Iednowladstva* ("a perfect autocracy"), *Deržâwnik Bôžyi* ("the king as the statesman of God"), and an ecclesiastical-theistic interpretation of history modelled on Saint Augustine.²⁷

²³ Goran Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept političke teologije kao preduvjet praktičnome ostvarenju slavenskoga jedinstva", *Anthropos* 1–2 (2012): 306.

²⁴ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 306.

²⁵ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 306.

²⁶ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 307.

²⁷ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 306–324.

Xenomania

Križanić states that the central problem among the Slavs is their xenomania (a passion for the foreign or the strange), because of which we admire everything foreign, but despise, denigrate and reject our own way of life.²⁸ Due to this, we accept all kinds of strangers, we admire their verbosity and looks, their refined and opulent way of life “and we give them such power in our states so that they consume all our treasures and hold us on a leash as they please” (Križanić 1997, 195).²⁹ On one side, we should always attend to ourselves, and on the other never to trust strangers, so Križanić points out naiveté as one of the bad political traits due to which other nations constantly drag Slavs into foreign and needless wars.³⁰ Križanić holds that it is because of this that political revolutions in which Slavic rulers are left without their crowns occur, such as the case in Poland, wherein “the shepherd of the Persians is a Persian, that of Turkey is a Turk, the shepherd of France is French, of the Germans a German, with every large and independent people we find that their shepherd is a man of their people, but not with the Poles, where a foreigner rules” (Križanić 1997, 219).³¹ Križanić thus states his biblical or theological foundations for removing foreign rule and continues to compare Slavic xenomania to the idol worship among the Jews and concludes that the rule of a foreigner is contrary to the principles of political theology as it stands against the God’s commandment: “You cannot make a foreigner your king, who is not your brother.” Besides, it is contrary to the political sciences, which teach that it is impossible to

²⁸ Sunjako, “Križanićev teorijski koncept”, 309.

²⁹ Sunjako, “Križanićev teorijski koncept”, 309.

³⁰ Sunjako, “Križanićev teorijski koncept”, 309.

³¹ Sunjako, “Križanićev teorijski koncept”, 309.

harmonise the interests in a state if there are a multiplicity of nations who hold power or influence the ruling power, as foreigners do not care for the common (people's) good, but for their own gain.³²

Monarchy, despotism and autocracy

Križanić begins his theory of state with a typology of forms of government (types of states) and, as most theoreticians, accepts the classical division on autocracy (monarchy), rule of the nobility (aristocracy) and the rule of many (democracy).³³ In accordance to the theological tradition, he deems the best form of government to be the absolute and perfect monarchy, in other words, the perfect rule of one (*Sowerszenogó Iednowladstva*).³⁴ As arguments for his theory, he states that in an autocracy (*Samowládstwo*) justice is conducted better, it is easier to keep peace and harmony, it is more reliable against any threats, and finally (and most importantly), it confirms the principle of political theology, because autocracy is most like the rule of God.³⁵ To the existing types of government, Križanić, in accordance with tradition, pairs their distortions into negative types, so that the rule of many (*Obćewládstwo*) can turn into anarchy and dissolution, the rule of the nobility (*Bolyârskoe wladánie*) into an oligarchy, the rule of the few, and autocracy (*Samowládstwo*) into tyranny (Križanić 1965, 201).³⁶ Given that Križanić is an advocate for monarchy, the most damaging and harmful negative type of government for him is tyranny, with the tyrant being an extortioner (*Lyudodérec*), the one who oppresses and overburdens the people with taxes and uses them

³² Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 310.

³³ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 317–318.

³⁴ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 317–318.

³⁵ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 317–318.

³⁶ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 317–318.

to his advantage.³⁷ This is why the king who has his foundations in God must also have the confirmation of the people, which shows the modernity of Križanić's thinking about the state. Even though the king is not subject to any man's commandment, "he is subject to the commandment of God and the voice of the people" (or public opinion).³⁸ The two bonds that limit the king and admonish him to his duties are justice and fairness or the commandment of God and the people's scorn: "he who does not care for the fear of God nor the people's scorn, nor for future glory, he is the truest of tyrants" (Križanić 1997, 275).³⁹ Finally, he asserts that Russia needs a strong monarchy, with the tsar being the absolute ruler, because a strong Russian state in contemporary conditions can be built only with the help of a strong central power embodied in a central figure: "We need such a monarchy in which a ruler is not limited by any laws and in which he has the same, or even greater amount of power than the Turkish or the Persian monarch, such as Genghis Khan had."⁴⁰ We should interpret this as something required by extraordinary circumstances, which isn't foreign even to modern democracies where constitutions allow suspensions of many constitutional rights to strengthen the executive power in times of crisis, because, as we shall see, Križanić does argue for limits on the powers of the ruler.

³⁷ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 317–318.

³⁸ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 317–318.

³⁹ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 316–317.

⁴⁰ A. Lj. Goljdberg, "Križanić i Rusija", *Historijski zbornik*, ed. Jaroslav Šidak (Zagreb, 1971), 268

A king legitimized by God and the people

The God's providence which Križanić expressed, and which provides the foundation of a state, is manifested equally in the internal arrangement of the state. Thus, it is important for him to demonstrate the principles of his political theology as the relationship of the spiritual and temporal, otherworldly and natural, in a concrete world order that has its basis in God, as well as in theological tradition.⁴¹

The key thesis for the understanding of political theology, which Križanić repeats and maintains, is that "all lawful kings were not enthroned by themselves nor by other people, but by God" (Križanić 1997, 260).⁴² Further, in accordance with political theology, the king is the true lord of his kingdom, as opposed to other mortals, but as opposed to God, he is not a lord, but a statesman of God (*Deržawnik Bôžyji*) so that all tyrannical, cruel and covetous laws are contrary to God, because "the limitless tyrannical power is contrary to natural laws: this nature tells us that kingdoms were not made for kings, but that kings were made for kingdoms" (Križanić 1997, 280).⁴³

Universal advice to the ruler

According to the principle of "know thyself", a statesman must be aware of the following fundamental facts: first, he must know the nature of his people; second, he must know with what his country abounds and what it lacks; third, he must know how his people live in regards to other people; fourth, of what does the strength and the weakness of his people consist of; fifth, to know the laws and regulations as well as the old customs of the people; sixth, be knowledgeable

⁴¹ Goran Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept političke teologije kao preduvjet praktičnome ostvarenju slavenskoga jedinstva", *Anthropos* 1–2 (2012): 316.

⁴² Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 316.

⁴³ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 316.

of the strengths and weaknesses of the state, to be aware where dangers are coming from and of what use are the neighbouring states; seventh, to direct the knowledge and the activities of the subjects for the improvement of the state; eight, to hide from others the secrets of the state and the people; finally, to be able to differentiate between advice useful and damaging to his kingdom.⁴⁴ Križanić concludes that Russia and the other Slavs would already be successful if they were led by these principles. The influence of this advice on Russian rulers is a matter of debate, due to the influence of Križanić's work, but considering them, we can conclude that their universality still keeps them current, notwithstanding if they were adopted by a government with a prime minister, a president, a king or a tsar.

A theistic conception of history

Like Saint Augustine, his idol and the person whose name he took as his own when he entered the monastic order, Križanić begins his transformation of the theological into political with a theology of history which explains everything in theistic terms, as God's providence under which God not only created everything, but controls everything: "Blind chance does not control this world, but God's providence. Nothing in the world occurs without reason. With our eyes we see different consequences and events among the people, and reason was provided by God so that we can judge the cause of any incident" (Križanić 1997, 379).⁴⁵ God is the prime cause, the "unmoved mover" of Aristotle, while, teleologically speaking, the final consequence is the glory of God, so that the entire sequence of existence is directed to the ever-increasing glory of God (*ad maiorem Dei gloriam*). Križanić, however, managed to reconcile the theological

⁴⁴ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 319.

⁴⁵ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 311.

understanding or Providence with the philosophical tradition of causality. Golub (1986a, 3) also points out that in searching for the cause of a historical event, Križanić does not exclusively, nor primarily, rely on the illumination of reason (philosophy), but above all else with the illumination of revelation (theology), probably due to Augustine's influence. For Križanić, philosophy is not separate from theology: "All other just, lawful and sovereign kings, monarchs and God's deputies, such as Cyrus, Alexander, David and the others similar to them, did not receive their power from the pope or the emperors of Rome, but from God. So, we, by accepting the glory of God, do not seek and do not accept the glory of people, nor from the emperor, the pope, the patriarch or any other man on Earth who is seemingly above us" (Križanić 1997, 333).⁴⁶ The quoted statement about the direct legitimacy of God in the appointment of a ruler, as opposed the pope, represents an ecclesiastical leap forward, and is also a bold and daring statement for a priest and a theologian of the 17th century.⁴⁷

Križanić's conception of the Slavic language

Križanić finished his *Gramatičko izkazanje ob Ruskom jeziku* ("Grammatical Instructions on the Russian Language") in 1665 in Tobolsk, Siberia after 15 years of working on it. The title of the work is deceptive as the object of his interest isn't the grammar of the contemporary conversational Russian language, but the creation of a common language (*koine*) for the Slavs.⁴⁸ He planned to name the work "The Grammatical Depiction of the Slavic Language", but in his foreword he explains the title with a mythical conception of a shared kingdom of six tribes (the Russians, the Czechs, the Bulgarians, the

⁴⁶ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 311.

⁴⁷ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 311.

⁴⁸ Ivan Golub, "Slavenska koine Jurja Križanića", *Slovo* v. 36, (1986): 189.

Serbs and the Croats) out of which he considers the Russians the eldest. Besides, he considered the Russians as the originators of all the other tribes. On the other hand, the Bulgarians, Serbs and Croats called each other with the shared name of “Slavs” after crossing the Danube, so it would be wrong to call the common language of all those tribes “Slavic” when the original homeland and the language of all of them is Russia.⁴⁹ The language which Križanić writes about in his “Grammar” is the language of the books of liturgy (*lingua litteraria*), that being the old-Slavic or old-Russian language, created purely linguistically, and not normatively, so that it really could be understandable to all the Slavic nations of his time.⁵⁰ A further point of interest is that he claimed that a grammatically correct and pure old-Slavic pronunciation, with stresses very similar to the original Russian language, was preserved in Croatia around the river Kupa, in and around the towns of Dubovac, Ozalj and Ribnik.⁵¹

Križanić claims that the Slavic or Russian language is authentic and unique as “it is better and wiser to hold on to the truth and believe that our language is as old as the other original national languages, and was created by God when he multiplied the languages. Our patriarch, Slaven, lived then and our nations were begotten by him, and not out of any other people” (Križanić 1997, 325).⁵² This statement shouldn’t be interpreted as a contradiction on the part of Križanić, as his conception of Slavic tribes and Russians clearly does not hold a scientific dimension, nor should it. It is certainly one of the

⁴⁹ Golub, “Slavenska koine Jurja Križanića”, 189–190.

⁵⁰ Golub, “Slavenska koine Jurja Križanića”, 185–190.

⁵¹ Golub, “Slavenska koine Jurja Križanića”, 192.

⁵² Golub, “Slavenska koine Jurja Križanića”, 311.

irrational axioms the truth of which is irrelevant. What is relevant is the animating effect it could have on the prosperity of Slavs by creating a shared mythological consciousness of unity.

Conclusion

In a geopolitical sense, under the leadership of President Putin, with its accompaniments of tsarist characteristics, Russia is again gaining importance and we should definitely carefully consider all the aspects of our relationship, sharing, as we are, the same continent. If, as a country and a nation, we do not decide on an alliance to a particular geopolitical pole in a world that is slowly becoming multipolar, the work and character of Juraj Križanić could certainly become one of the links with which we can continue to build our relationship with Russia. The role of Russia in Križanić's vision wasn't that of the hegemon, but that of an assistant who will help the Czechs and the south Slavs to establish their kingdoms, and which will help forge a firm alliance with the Poles.⁵³ It is important to bear in mind that Križanić never conceived the creation of a single pan-Slavic state with a Russian tsar at its head, which we can see in the various parts of his *Politics*, so it is that Golub concludes that Križanić was opposed to any supreme kingship or overlordship, he certainly didn't conceive the Russian tsar as the sovereign of all other Slavic kings.⁵⁴ Goljdberg (1968 – 69) brings forth similar conclusions, despite the fact that Križanić, in his idea of the unity of Slavs and their states, did not elaborate the way in which it will happen, so that we can just assume

⁵³ Goran Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept političke teologije kao preduvjet praktičnome ostvarenju slavenskoga jedinstva", *Anthropos* 1–2 (2012).

⁵⁴ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept".

that he predicted the development of a unitary Slavic political alliance under the protectorship of the Russian tsar, but did not work out the shape of that alliance ahead of time.⁵⁵

At one time, during a conversation with Russian reporters, Tuđman mentioned Juraj Križanić in the context of the relations between Croatia and Russia: “The small Croatian nation always felt a closeness with the large Russian nation and sought its protection. That was not a momentary inclination or an advantageous request, which is confirmed by centuries of experience since the time of Juraj Križanić in the 17th century up to present days. We have always felt the influence of Russian literature in Croatia... people listened to Russian music here. Both Russians and Croats were united by the pan-Slavic idea, and not just it. At a certain point in time, a positive influence was provided by the communist internationalism which brought us together. Besides, history is learned on paradoxes.”⁵⁶

We shouldn't ignore Križanić's contribution to the theory of state, as he predicted in the 17th century, what, for example, Carl Schmitt (2005) warned about in the 20th century with his conception of political theology, which is an extreme rationalism, overreliance and worship of technology, uniformity of the world which acts on the form and without purpose or spirit, the world which rejected individualism and the character of the man of action in its formal generality.⁵⁷ It also appears that Križanić should be considered as a thinker of his time, one who tried to find a solution in which modern rationalism, mechanical philosophy and technicism does not fully contradict with

⁵⁵ Sunjako, “Križanićev teorijski koncept”.

⁵⁶ Franjo Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ u svijetu* (Zagreb: Hrvatska Sveučilišna naklada, 1999), 283-284.

⁵⁷ Goran Sunjako, “Križanićev teorijski koncept političke teologije kao preduvjet praktičnome ostvarenju slavenskoga jedinstva”, *Anthropos* 1-2 (2012): 320

traditional Christian theology and its foundations.⁵⁸ Despite being forgotten for a long time, Križanić's Moscow notion has been fulfilled in a way. Križanić managed to reconcile the irreconcilable by holding on to traditional Christian theology while simultaneously adopting modern political thought. He showed how modernity and tradition are not opposed when we take the positive aspects of both and discard the negative ones.⁵⁹

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⁵⁸ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 320.

⁵⁹ Sunjako, "Križanićev teorijski koncept", 320.

BAY OF KOTOR – THE PEARL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN *WHERE EVERY ROCK SPEAKS CROATIAN*

Author: **Davor Dijanović**

Vidmarović, Đuro, *Hrvati Boke kotorske kroz povijest. Sjećanja i zaboravi*, Tivat: Hrvatska krovna zajednica – Dux Croatorum, 2011.

*Kotor, like the nest of a hawk
On a branch up high
Where dragons and hawks lie,
Which worried the emperor much.
Nestled on a green fir,
Covering the Bay from Kotor,
Pride of the Croats,
And a valiant hero's heart...*

Andrija Kačić Miošić

When studying the history, or the literary and cultural heritage of the Croatian national minority in neighbouring countries, the name of Đuro Vidmarović, author, historian and former diplomat and politician, is indispensable. Vidmarović published the following books on the subjects mentioned above: *Hrvatska narodna manjina u Mađarskoj* (Zagreb: Zavod za migracije i narodnosti, 1982), *Suvremeni tokovi u književnosti mađarskih Hrvata* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1991), *Gradišćanskohrvatske teme* (Crikvenica: Libellus, 1996), *Gradišćanskohrvatske teme II* (Crikvenica: Libellus, 1998), *Juraj Lončarević. Bio-bibliografija* (Zagreb, 2006), *Teme o*

Hrvatima u Mađarskoj (Split: Naklada Bošković, 2008), *Hrvatsko rasuće* (Split: Naklada Bošković, 2009) and *Hrvati Boke kotorske kroz povijest. Sjećanja i zaboravi* (Tivat: Hrvatska krovna zajednica – Dux Croatorum, 2011).

In this issue of *Obnova*, we will present the last mentioned book - *Hrvati Boke kotorske kroz povijest. Sjećanja i zaboravi*. The book consists of Vidmarović's articles, studies and literary reviews, published in a variety of periodicals through the years, that deal with Croats in the Diocese of Kotor and in Bar. In the book, the author writes about the history, cultural heritage, social life, political developments and all the problems that Croats face as a minority group in Montenegro. To avoid a misunderstanding on the outset, it is important to point out that Croats in the Bay of Kotor do not constitute a diaspora, as they have been living there since the time the whole Croatian ethnos settled in the territory of Roman provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia. The Croats of Kotor are an integral part of the Croatian ethnic body, with a specific historical development and a heritage of millennia of Croatian history and civilization.

”Red Croatia”

As the book shows us, the first known medieval archaeological finds from the Bay of Kotor are those found on Mount Orjen, at Kameno plateau, where a flat grave necropolis was discovered which provided the data necessary to identify the first Slavs-Croats that have settled on the territory of the later Dračevica parish, but also the first ones we can identify on the whole southern seaside. In his book *Ranji srednji vijek Boke kotorske* (2003), Zdenko Žeravaica writes that “the presence of Croats in this area in the 6th and 7th centuries is testified by a ceramic vessel decorated with wavy lines as well as ceramic shards found in the fort of Ulcinj, dating from the early-Byzantine period,

i.e. the time of Justinian's *limes*. This was happening at the time when Byzantine troops (especially in 548) were heavily involved in fights against the Goths in southern Italy, precisely when 'an army of Slavs' penetrated up to Drač, according to Procopius, capturing many towns along the way, from which we can logically conclude that they captured many towns in Prevalitania."

On the basis of research results, Žeravica concluded that the Christianisation of Croats, one of the crucial moments in the history of the nation, occurred "during the 7th and 8th centuries, which is testified by an intense religious development (construction of churches, monasteries, etc.), beginning probably at the end of the 8th, but undeniably in the 9th century." Žeravica emphasises the discoveries that have been brought to light through the examination of the necropolis in Kameno: "Ceramic finds found in the necropolis are analogous to those found on early Croatian localities in Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in numerous necropolises. Through the material finds and characteristics of the funerary ritual, the necropolis in Kameno belongs to the group of early Croatian necropolises. We can assume that the necropolis and the triconchos in Doljani, near Podgorica, belongs to the same type and the same cultural background like Kameno, as the preliminary reports state that it dates from the Early Medieval Period..."

The territory of the Bay of Kotor as well as all of "Red Croatia" was united with "White (Western) Croatia" in a single state until the middle of the 10th century. It seems that around this period the Dukljans split into the later Montenegrins, who achieved independence, and Croats who remained living in the area of the Bay of Kotor (the latest genetic tests carried out by a laboratory in Vancouver supports this, as the 12a2 haplogroup, which according to them represents the Croatian marker, is dominant in the territory of modern Bosnia and

Herzegovina as well as Montenegro). According to Ferdo Šišić, one of the most respectable historians of the older generation, “from the 8th century Croatia spanned from the river Raša in Istria to Bojana flowing into the Adriatic. From Raša to Neretva it was called White Croatia, and from Neretva to Bojana (maybe even up to Drač) it was called Red Croatia.” “Red Croatia” encompassed the modern districts of Stolac, Ljubinje, Nevesinje, Gacko, Bileće, Trebinje, the environs of Dubrovnik, including Pelješac and Mljet, the Bay of Kotor and Bar, the environs of Cetinje, Virpazar, Crnojević Rijeka, Podgorica and Nikšić.

In the 12th century, Kotor was captured by the Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja. With this act the Bay of Kotor became an integral part of the Serbian state until the end of the Nemanjić dynasty in 1371 when Kotor came under the rule of Louis I, King of Hungary and Croatia. After the death of Louis I, the town came under the rule of King Tvrtko I of Bosnia, under whose rule the town of Herceg Novi was founded. Later wars, turmoil and treason (Ladislaus of Naples and the selling of his rights to Dalmatia to Venice for 100,000 ducats in 1409) put the Bay of Kotor under the rule of Venice, and also partially under that of the Ottoman Empire.

The year of 1647 saw an important change in the ethnic makeup of the Bay of Kotor. With the conquest of Grbalj in that year, as well as the Turkish part of the Bay in 1699, an influx of Orthodox settlers arrives in the Bay. Before this, the percentage of Orthodox inhabitants in the Bay of Kotor was negligible, despite the long rule of the Nemanjić dynasty (they did not interfere in the autonomy of the town, and were content with appointing the town’s governor). The demographic shift in the Bay was the result of the Morean War that lasted from 1683 to 1699. As a consequence of the war, and guided by its internal political reasons, Venice allowed a large number of Orthodox people from

Herzegovina and Montenegro to settle in the Bay of Kotor, particularly in the zone stretching from Herceg Novi to Risan. Despite this, Peras, Kotor, Dobrota and Prčanj still remained exclusively Croatian.

Croats as the bearers of the cultural-economic flourishing during the 17th and 18th centuries

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Bay of Kotor experienced a cultural and economic flourishing owing especially to the Croatian community which was responsible for the strong merchant navy and the commerce with the hinterland and the great trading centres in the Mediterranean and Europe. The bearers of this development were Croats, since the largest role in the seagoing trade was held by the “Kotor Navy”, a medieval Croatian Catholic fraternity whose statute dates from 1464. The economic growth especially benefited the town of Perast, which had more than 200 ships at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries. Croats of Perast were in contact with all the major maritime and cultural centres of Europe. The town developed into a powerful cultural centre, particularly as a centre of Baroque art, whose most famous representative was the Croatian painter Tripo Kokolja (designated as a “Venetian painter” in foreign encyclopaedias, as is Matej Ponzonej, the other famous representative of Baroque painting in Dalmatia).

In 1797 Napoleon brought down the Republic of Venice, and by the terms of the subsequent Treaty of Campo Formio, the Bay of Kotor came under the rule of the Hapsburg Monarchy. If we ignore the brief French (Napoleon’s) and Russian occupations, from this point the Bay will remain united with Croatian Dalmatia as part of the Kingdom of Dalmatia, the later crown land of the Austrian part

of the Dual Monarchy (the Austrian right to the Bay was confirmed by the Vienna Congress in 1814), all the way up to the Vidovdan Constitution in 1921.

One of the examples of the national and historic consciousness of the Croats in the Bay of Kotor was the tradition of the ship-owners to give their ships Croatian names, like “Ban Jelačić”, and to hoist the red, white and blue Croatian tricolour, which they called “*slav-janski barjak*”, on the masts of ships built between 1849 and 1851. The Bay’s Rightists at the time of the Croatian national revival were at the forefront of the struggle to unite Dalmatia with Croatia.

The Bay of Kotor wrested from Croatia

As previously stated, the Bay of Kotor was taken from Dalmatia, i.e. Croatia, and incorporated into the Zeta Oblast in 1921. From this point, the Croats in the Bay of Kotor have a de facto status of a national minority. The territory of the Bay of Kotor was in actuality taken from Croatia in 1920. The initiative for the separation of the Bay of Kotor from Dalmatia was provided by the Radicals in the Bay of Kotor, led by Mirko Komnenović and helped wholeheartedly by the noted leader of the Radicals, Ljubomir Jovanović, himself a native of Kotor. At the beginning of 1920, they forwarded a demand for the separation of the Bay from Dalmatia and for its integration into the Montenegrin oblasts to the then Minister of Internal Affairs Svetozar Prbićević. Their demand was granted in the September of the same year (the plan also demanded the whole of southern Dalmatia).

From April 1941 until the capitulation of Italy, the Bay of Kotor was occupied by the forces of Fascist Italy. Due to Italian territorial ambitions and, later, German military and political priorities, the government of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) could not

institute its rule over the Bay of Kotor, but despite this the authorities in Dubrovnik and Zagreb undertook measures of care for the Croatian population in that area, with the obvious hope that it will be placed under Croatian rule in the foreseeable future. The care provided by NDH authorities for Croats living in the Bay of Kotor was primarily concentrated on securing food and protection from the violence of the local Montenegrin administration, mostly the Chetnik elements in it.

The plan to amputate the Bay of Kotor, one of the most beautiful bays in the world, from Croatia was finalized by the Yugoslav Communists during the Second World War. In Kolašin, on 15th November 1943, the State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Montenegro and the Bay (ZAVNOCiB) was founded. The following year, also in Kolašin, during the formation of Montenegrin Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation (CASNO), the representatives of the Bay of Kotor, members of Tito's partisans, gave their consent for the Bay becoming an integral part of Montenegro, which was confirmed on the first session of CASNO, and later verified by the Constitution of the People's Republic of Montenegro from 1946. At the same time, eastern Srijem was separated from Croatia, similarly to the situation in the Bay of Kotor between 1647 and 1699, where 70,000 Orthodox under the leadership of the Serbian Patriarch Arsenij Crnojević settled in 1690 while fleeing the Ottomans. On both occasions a seed was planted out of which poisonous fruits will sprout in a few centuries, and which would bring about the removal of these areas from the territory of Croatia.

The Croats in the Bay of Kotor, together with the other Croats living on the coast of the Adriatic, spent more time throughout their history living under the power of foreign rulers, than unified with the rest of Croatia. Each foreign power strived to forcibly assimilate them into their own ethnos. The worst of it came during Yugoslavia,

where the non-national Yugoslav identity was used to rob the Croats of their own ethnonym, through a process of Yugoslavisation, in reality Serbianisation or Montenegrinisation, which was energetically anti-Croatian. It is worth additionally pointing out that the Communist Yugoslavia was even worse than the Kingdom of Yugoslavia for the Croats living there. While, for example, “the Lastva Croatian Reading-room” was founded in Donja Lastva in 1919, in the latter Yugoslavia, the Croatian name was forbidden to be used in the titles of organizations and associations, which paints a clear picture of the practice of “brotherhood and unity” in these areas.

Assimilation and the appropriation of cultural heritage

During the period of Communist Yugoslavia, there is an intensification of certain tendencies of Serbian-Montenegrin authors who, under the influence of Greater Serbian authors (Vuk Stefanović Karadžić and others), try to deny or minimize the Croatian history in the Bay of Kotor in their works and try to define them as an independent ethnicity, separate from Croatia. Such tendencies were motivated by their wish to assimilate them and to attempt to make the literature, culture and art of Croats in the Bay of Kotor into an integral part of Serbian or Montenegrin literature. From the position of Greater Serbian or Montenegrin nationalism, such behaviour was logical, since 50 to 60% of the total cultural heritage of Montenegro belongs to the Diocese of Kotor, and as such is the creation of the Croats living there. In reality, these acts can be characterized as violence and theft of Croatian history and culture. Similar acts can be ascertained in northern Bačka, where by raising the sub-ethnonym of Bunjevac, following the lead of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, on the level of an ethnonym, there is an effort to proclaim

the Croats living there as a special (micro)nation who will then be easier to assimilate into the Serbian ethnoses. The madness of the Greater Serbian ideologues does not stop there, but goes as far as attempting to proclaim that the old literature of Dubrovnik is in fact Serbian, even though the literature of Dubrovnik has no connections whatsoever with Serbian literature.

During the War of Independence, the Croats in the Bay of Kotor were treated as a *disrupting factor* or as *ustashe* and forced to flee or assimilate. Due to police and military pressure (with the complicity of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC)), a large number of Croatian families emigrated from the Bay of Kotor during the war, so that today we can find more Croats from the Bay outside the Bay than living there. Even though certain politicians claimed that Croatia was not at war with Montenegro (Stjepan Mesić for example), anyone serious knows that Montenegro took part in the aggression on Croatia and was involved in the attack on the surroundings of Dubrovnik (Konavle), when history was repeated in a way, since Montenegrins, together with Russians, sacked and pillaged Konavle in 1806, showing unusual cruelty. It is important to point out that there were Montenegrins who condemned the aggression, people like the great Montenegrin author and champion of independence Jevrem Brković or Slavko Perović.

After Montenegro gained independence, wholeheartedly supported by the Montenegrin Croats, the position of Croats in Montenegro and the Bay of Kotor somewhat improved. The Croatians are permitted to found organizations bearing the Croatian name, but, as Vidmarović states, they spend more time infighting than struggling against the program of assimilation supported openly and through law by the state of Montenegro. Montenegrin nationalists, taking the line from Karadžić's Greater Serbian rulebook, frequently label Montenegrin Croats as *Catholic Montenegrins*, and completely elide

the existence of Croats in the Bay of Kotor, Budva and Bar. They also promote expressions like *Bokeljs*, *Bokelj cultural heritage*, etc. The parallels with the situation in Bačka are obvious.

Vidmarović warns that “Historiographical works are printed which present the history and the rich and valuable cultural heritage of the Croats living here as the heritage of the people of Montenegro. Since there are few Croatians left, this trend will become more powerful. As they say here, there are more Croatian Catholic churches, monasteries, chapels, cemeteries, archaeological finds, ruins and religious localities than Croats themselves. “

The assimilation of the Croats in the Bay of Kotor and, more generally, in Montenegro is preceded by: 1. memoricide (the destruction of the historical consciousness, tradition, ethnographic and ethnologic heritage of a minority people), 2. culturicide (claiming that the minority group culture belongs to the majority group), 3. linguicide (the destruction of the minority’s mother tongue), 4. preventing minority groups from opening schools in their mother tongue.

Such assimilation measures, firstly from the Greater Serbian and now from Montenegrin nationalists, have produced a pathological fear of their own name among the Croats in the Bay of Kotor, who now prefer to call themselves Bokeljs, Yugoslavs or Slavs. To illustrate the point, it is enough to mention the book *Perast još živi – putopisi* by Tomislav Grgurević, a Croat from the Bay of Kotor, where he does not mention the ethnical composition of Perast nor the fact that it was precisely the Croats who created all the cultural and civilizational heritage that he so admires in his book. If the book was by any chance translated into English, the reader could never realise from the book itself that it was the Croats who produced the culture of Perast, they could only conclude that the culture he writes about is the product of Montenegrins, considering the current state of the Bay of Kotor. It is

obvious that the Montenegrin nationalism is supplanting the expansive nationalism of Greater Serbia, which can be seen in the fact that in recent years the term *Crnogorsko primorje* (Montenegrin Coast) is used more and more instead of the Bay of Kotor name.

According to the latest census data from 2011, there are 6,021 Croats living in Montenegro. On the basis of church data, it is estimated that the number is closer to 10,000. Most of the Croats involved (approximately 80%) inhabit the Bay of Kotor, while the rest live in Budva, Bar and the interior. Their numbers are falling rapidly, with Vidmarović warning that:

”The Croats in Montenegro will disappear as an ethnic community within a generation if the states of Montenegro and Croatia do not effectively, harmoniously and appropriately help them. Such help should begin with the creation of a positive political atmosphere, the creation of a legal infrastructure for the preservation of their identity, equality before the law and public encouragement by the highest state dignitaries of the two countries. They should state that the Croats there serve as bridges between the two countries, and that as a minority group they should freely and proudly feature their national name, ethnic symbols and preserve without fear their ethnic identity. Doing this would guarantee the freedom to state their ethnicity and consequently protect their name, rights and cultural goods. This should be followed by implementation, meaning kindergartens and schools in the mother tongue, journals, societies, public performances, sports, science, cultural institutions, religion... Without this, there is no future for them. They can only serve as single-use goods. Assimilation is also carried out through minority members who have disassociated themselves from their nationality and who are allowed to represent that minority to further its assimilation.”

Why is it important to preserve the Croatian character of the Bay of Kotor?

Why is it important to preserve the presence of Croats in the Bay of Kotor and some other parts of Montenegro? Primarily, it is to understand the role played by the Mediterranean Croats in European and world civilization, which can only be fully understood if we are familiar with the history of the Bay of Kotor and some other parts of modern Montenegro. Several important facts listed below argue for this:

1. Bar was the place of origin for the *Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja*, a primary historical source for the Early Medieval Period in Croatian history. According to some researchers, the author of this work was the Archbishop Grgur of Bar (1172-1196).

2. In the St Tripun's Cathedral in Kotor, we can find a baptismal font dating from the 8th century bearing all the stylistic hallmarks as the famous Baptismal Font of Prince Višeslav, one of the most important *signa* of the Croatian national identity. The much less famous one in Kotor is known to just a few historians and art historians and presents a living witness to the presence of Croats in Kotor from the earliest period of their settlement. The Academic Cvito Visković has this to say about the baptismal font in Kotor: "Out of all of our oldest baptismal fonts, the only one preserved is the one from Nin, bearing the engraved name of Prince Višeslav. The famous baptismal font in Split, bearing the figure of some Croatian ruler from the 11th century, is of later production, with some parts of it probably previously belonging to an altar partition. Monuments of this kind and from this period are but a few, so a baptismal font presented here is a rare monument from the period when artists, despite the general cultural decay, managed to connect the art of Late Antiquity with

the art of the Early Middle Ages that was just being formed. (...) The baptismal font in Kotor was for a long time hidden in a warehouse of a local merchant, Marko Mijušković, in the suburbs of Kotor, in the area known as Milušić. It served as a vessel for olive oil.” After a comparative analysis was performed, Visković concluded that “it is clear that the baptismal font from Kotor dates from the 8th century.”

3. The town of Kotor, with all of its history, is an integral part of the history of the Croatian people. The Cathedral of St Tripun in Kotor embodies the history, culture and spirituality of the Croats who live there. It is one of the oldest cathedrals constructed by their ancestors. The Cathedral of St Domnius in Split is older, but it was originally built as a mausoleum for the Emperor Diocletian and later refurbished into a Christian temple. Fisković states that the Kotor Cathedral belongs to southern Croatian architecture as “almost nothing distinguishes it from the circle of Dalmatian architecture.”

4. The town of Perast, impoverished of most of its Croatian inhabitants today, is a wonderful example of Mediterranean Croatian urban culture. The Missionary Church of the Lady of the Rock is one of the most beautiful Marian shrines to be found in the Church of the Croats. It was constructed in the 15th century by the piling of rocks and old sailboats on and around an islet. A blessed icon of the Holy Virgin Mary is kept on the altar. The Church is decorated with numerous paintings and works of art and there is a museum adjoining the Church.

5. Tripo Kokolja, a painter from the Bay of Kotor, is one of the greatest artists of the Croatian Baroque.

6. The literature of Croats in the Bay is inseparable from Croatian literary heritage. Croatian literary texts in this area start to appear only in the 17th century, but the unity and the continuity was apparent already in the humanities, as Latin poets in the Bay occur at the

same time as in other places in Croatia. All of them are connected by the same common characteristics which are best represented by the fact that many people from the Bay worked in other parts of Croatia, such as Nikola Modruški, Ludovik Paskalić and others.

7. The famous fraternity of *Bokeljska mornarica*, whose origins stretch to the 9th century (evidenced by the number 809 in the name of the fraternity) was founded by the Croats of the Bay of Kotor.

8. St Leopold Bogdan Mandić was born in Herceg Novi, a product of the Croatian nobility and the aristocracy of the Bay, and together with other Croatian saints, beati and servants of God (such as Gracije from Mula) is the reason why the Bay of Kotor is sometimes known as *Zaljev hrvatskih svetaca* (the Bay of Croatian Saints). It is interesting that the city administration in Herceg Novi did not allow for a memorial to be placed on the St Leopold's house of birth, even though he was a firm advocate of ecumenism and a friend of the Orthodox. Some Greater Serbian propagandists (Vasko Kostić), brought up on poetry such as *Bog je rodom iz Srbije* (God is a Serb), try to claim that Mandić was a Catholicized Serb (similarly to Ruđer Bošković). Some Italian circles also tried to claim Mandić for one of their own, even though he refused Italian citizenship in 1917 with the following words: "No, blood is not water. One can't betray blood."

9. Many notable Croatian scientists and men of culture originated from the Bay of Kotor, men such as Bishop Nikola Modruški, painter Tripo Kokolja, Admiral of the Russian Fleet Matija Zmajević, sailor Ivan Visin (who was the sixth person after Magellan to circumnavigate the globe), painter Bartul Ivanković, engineer Anton Luković (one of the chief engineers in the construction of the Suez Canal), poet Viktor Vida, author Vjenceslav Čižek, journalist Luka Brajanović (one of the most notable journalistic awards in Spain carries his name), poet

Ružica Orešković, the father of the Croatian comic Andrija Maurović, painters Antun Šojat, Melita Bošnjak Šojat and Vesna Šojat, mathematician Josip Pečarić and others.

10. Catholicism defined the civilization and culture of the Croats in the Bay of Kotor and placed it firmly in the West. Rare is the place in Croatia where we can find so many Roman Catholic churches, parish homes, monasteries, chapels, crosses and holy images as in the Bay of Kotor. Such cultural and artistic heritage belongs to Montenegro, but also to the Croatian cultural heritage. On a visit to the Bay of Kotor, the Blessed Alojzije Stepinac said: “every stone in the Bay of Kotor speaks highly of the cultural level of the Croatian people living here, which is also the best evidence for who really is the autochthonous element of the Bay of Kotor.”

Hrvati Boke kotorske kroz povijest. Sjećanja i zaboravi is a worthy contribution in the struggle to preserve the Croatian name in the Bay of Kotor. This book provides a variety of useful information on history and culture of the Croats in the Bay of Kotor and supplies many useful links to the numerous literature involved, so that it can provide a useful introduction for the study of this subject. The book is unfortunately not available in Croatian bookstores and libraries, so that the Ministry of Culture or other institutions concerned should secure another edition in the Republic of Croatia, to provide the students of history, literature and any curious reader the possibility to familiarize themselves with the history and culture of the Bay of Kotor, the pearl of the Mediterranean where *every rock speaks Croatian*.

152 DAYS OF LASLOVO

Author: **Dániel Ferenc Dómjan**

Laslovo (Hungarian: Szentlászló) is a small village on the bank of the Vuka river, close to the Vinkovci-Osijek railway line; full with small houses, corn fields, Hungarians and Croatians doing they daily chores. A scenery of typical rural idyll. Aside from some ruined houses a traveler can't imagine that twenty four years ago this village was besieged by the fourth largest army of Europe, for 152 days to no avail, thanks to the staunch opposition of Hungarian and Croatian soldiers and volunteers. During these 152 days Laslovo became the symbol of Croatian-Hungarian coexistence and friendship. But what happened exactly during these tumultuous days?

At the beginning of the 20th century the majority of Laslovo's population were Hungarian. To help the mixture of ethnicities in 1919 next to the two bordering Hungarian and Croatian towns (Laslovo and Kórógy) Serbians were settled, and a Serbian village founded, called Palača¹ (during the Yugoslav Wars this village will be important). Until 1991 the various ethnicities lived side by side peacefully, but it all changed with the spread of Milosević's propaganda and the beginning of the war.² With the spread of the propaganda the neighboring Serbs became more and more hostile towards the other ethnicities.

¹ SZIGETVÁRI Krisztián: A horvátországi magyarlakta falvak története (History of the hungarian villages in Croatia), In: *Öt Kontinens*, 2. évf. 361.p.

² According to reports of multiple elderly villagers, amongst which: Interview with Géza **BECE** 2013.03.13. Laslovo

According to the census of April 1991 the population of Laslovo were 1298, of which 45% was Hungarian, 39% Croatian, 6% Serbian and 10% other (Slovenian, Macedonian, German, Italian, Polish)³

Following the day of the declaration of Croatia's independence, January 26, was the first day when Laslovo was attacked. Serbs from neighboring villages (Palača, Ada, Silaš, Markušica) fired shots on the police building, because it already boasted the flag of the independent Croatia. In the following months the attacks continued, and defense was mounted by the local population. The ZNG helped with the defenses, but the civilian population (women, elderly and children) were evacuated at the end of August, mainly to Osijek and Hungary. (kids could continue their studies in the I. Elementary School at Szigetvár)⁴ There were a small number of civilians, around 20 person, mainly elders, who refused to leave the village, and stayed to provide for the animals and work on the fields. Sadly some of them lost their lives in the attacks.

Starting from September the defense of the village was done by the 3rd company of the Osijek battalion, under the command of Mihalik István (codename Horthy), and the subordinate Laslovacka četa, under the command of Kocsis László.⁵ The chief commander of the defenses was Branimir Glavaš. The village sustained heavy artillery attacks, there were days when more than 5000 rounds were fired.⁶ The tactics employed by the attackers consisted of bombardment then

3 Statistical Bureau of Croatia, <http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/pxweb2003/DIALOG/Saveshow.asp> (utolsó letöltés: 2013.04.05)

4 Interview with Dávid **KELEMEN** 2013.03.14. Laslovo

5 <http://www.wolfline.eoldal.hu/cikkek/horvatorszagi-hadszinterek---kelet-szlavonia--3.resz-.html> (last downloaded: 2015.02.16)

6 **DÉR** Zsolt: Megjártam a délszláv poklot (I was int he yugoslav war, presentation, 2013.02.21

assault with tanks and infantry. The hottest frontline was towards Palača, because here the distance between combatants were only 200-300 meters (the road east from post 6). ZNG was supplied from Osijek, their weaponry consisted of AK-47, PAP-56 assault rifles, MG-53, AKM-62 light machine guns, coaxial PKT-7,62, a 90mm BST anti-tank launcher, RB-53 grenade launcher and an M-60 *Oklopni transporter* acquired from the “white” barracks in Osijek. In October they were supplied with three T-55 tanks.⁷ The village was surrounded from West towards Palača, East towards Ada and South towards Markušica, the only road available towards Osijek led through Ernestinovo, which was a strategically crucial road as it provided supplies and connection with HQ. To defend the road a strong system of mines was built up.

On 3 September the blockade closed for a time. After heavy artillery strikes (230 round in one hour) strafe from Ada and from Palača infantry attack supported by tanks. The defenders retreated from Vendelovo up to the sports field (15. on map). The railway station (4. on map) was captured. The Laslovo defenses were able to disable a T-55 with an RB-57 and RPG-7, repel an assault and with help arriving from Ernestinovo on 5 September break the blockade. On the first day of October the temple tower was shot. In the early days of October the village was defended by 164 volunteers of ZNG, changing number of civilians and the 3rd company of the 1st battalion of Osijek, a total of approximately 300 defenders.⁸ Contact with HQ was maintained through radio, which could easily be intercepted, and through the road leading through Ernestinovo. Moral is also worth a few words. The defenders consisted mostly of local volunteers, guarding their own lands, with most of them would choose death than to give even a part of their land to the Serbs. This was one of the main reasons

⁷ **RÓZSA FLORES** Eduardo: *Mocskos háború (Filthy war)*, 1994, Budapest, 84.p.

⁸ Flores 81 p.

that the village could stand for 152 days. Also a number of young volunteers arrived from Hungary, for example the 21 years old Dér Zsolt, who travelled from Eger to Laslovo. His story shows how little information did these volunteers knew about the situation, Zsolt tried to cross the border to Croatia at Dvor (Hun: Udvar), which was already in Serbian hands. He wouldn't end up well if he had told the guards that he was heading for Laslovo.⁹

One of the most curious effects of Laslovo's defenses was the First International Company (Prvi Internacionalni Vod – PIV). The defenders consisted of multiple ethnicities, and on 10 October Branimir Glavaš commander gave his permit to the foundation of the PIV with six members, which was subordinate of the 3rd company.¹⁰ Rózsa-Flores Eduardo was given command, and their post was one of the most attacked position North-West from the school. (6)

During October the defenders were supplied with a VBR 128mm rocket launcher, that is capable of surprise attacks, and three 120mm and five 82mm mortars. Skirmishes are frequent between the combatants, attacking in small groups, firing a few rounds that rushing back to cover. The short distance between the two sides can be illustrated with an evening in October. The Croatian-Hungarian defenders held a musical night with the help of an aggregator, and positioned the speakers as close as possible to the Serbian forces. To which the Serbs responded with weapons, to which the defenders also fire, and the whole night goes on like this up until the aggregator runs out of fuel, after which the defenders shout various curses and swears to which the other responds in kind and they spend the rest of the night cursing at each other.¹¹

⁹ **DÉR** Zsolt: I was in the yugoslav war, presentation 2013.02.21.

¹⁰ Flores 88. p.

¹¹ Flores 98. p.

Until the end of October there were no aerial bombardment, but then the road between Laslovo and Ernestinovo, and the ammunition in Ernestinovo were bombarded. On the 20th of November Ernestinovo fell, connection with HQ is lost and Laslovo became isolated. Due to the earlier fall of Vukovar, the Serbian forces from there accompanied by the infamous Željko Ražnatović “Arkan’s” četnik forces could arrive at Palača. The last phone conversation between Glavaš and Mihalik happened at 15:00:

Glavaš: *Boys, hold out! We will break the blockade and go to Laslovo. You will get munition. We will not surrender!*

Mihalik: *Are you all right? Have you gone mad? What kind of surrender are you talking about? To whom would we surrender?*¹²

The četniks called for surrender through speakers, and promise that if the defenders surrender they will be taken care of according to the Hague Conventions. The Croatian and Hungarian soldiers however know quite well that the Serbs, especially the četniks, won't keep their promise, because they were informed about what has happened at Vukovar. But the main reason behind their refusal to surrender was that the defenders were fighting for their land. The Serbs also employed psychological tactics, they kept playing the March on Drina četnik military march and other Serbian songs through speakers.¹³

The first great assault against the fully surrounded Laslovo was mounted on 23 November with 28 tanks. The firm mine field by the school (11) however stopped the attackers, two tanks were destroyed by mines. Arkan's četniks were followed by a journalist since Vukovar, he recounted these days from the Serbian's point of view: “*The first attack was mounted on the road connecting the two villages and the*

¹² Szentlászló, edited by KELEMEN Dávid, Eszék, 1997, 26.p.

¹³ Flores 116. p.

*Laslovo railway station. We did not see what happened but from the intensity of the shooting we realized that the Croats had no idea of surrender. That day the attacks were halted, because our losses were greater than anticipated, the Serbs seemed surprised on the number of mines the defenders deployed in the area of the assault*¹⁴ The Serbs halted the offensive, while the commanders of the defender forces, Kocsis and Mihalik were planning the evacuation of the village, because it was deemed to be unfit for further defenses. The evacuation started at 24 November at 17:00. They leave the village in two groups. The first group was led by Mihalik István, it consisted of 120 healthy soldiers, their aim was to break a hole on the blockade, thus letting the second group, which had civilians and wounded also to escape. The first group formed up on the Vendelovo street and headed towards Vrbik. Sometimes they went by Serbian posts only by a few meters. They reached the Bobota drain and following that they reached Ivanovac, which was still held by Croats. The second group left at 17:30 with more than 20 wounded. They progressed slowly but in silence and reached Ivanovac at 5 am. Laslovo was emptied, with only the unburied dead and six elderly remained, who refused to leave their homes even when defeat was evident. (Their bodies were never found, and against multiple attempts to get the location of their graves Serbs refused to provide information¹⁵) After the village was empty there was still no sign of surrender. The aforementioned journalist recounted the events of the morning of 25 November, when the Serbian forces still thought that the defenders were in the village:

¹⁴ Flores 118. p.

¹⁵ **KELEMEN** Dávid personal interview 2014.13.17

"I was close during the whole time, close to Zeljko Raznatovic Arkan's military staff at Vukovar, so I was ascertained about the violence of the paramilitary group led by the Belgradian criminal [...] On the 25th of November, Monday at 07:00 the Serbian forces mounted an attack, and at noon Arkan's messenger came to tell us that we can go take photos of the bodies of the ustašas' and said that the whole village was captured [...] I arrived by Arkan who seemed angry, but I couldn't found out why. We asked about the prisoners: "No prisoners, they said, they "escaped" ... Arkan held his head with both of his hands and squawked hysterically: "Those sons of bitches"... he shouted, then broke out in tears. While we stood by him I could see that a number of Serbian bodies are piled up on trucks [...] most of the with gunshot wounds. The messenger said: [...] We were certain that the ustašas were still in the village and the three group mounting the assault were shooting at each other, all the dead you can see here are the product of coordination errors with our allies". We counted about 50-60 bodies"¹⁶

The Serbian forces attacking the empty village were shooting at each other in their belief that they were shooting at the defenders. From the locals of Laslovo 21 died heroic deaths, 17 of those not born at Laslovo sacrificed themselves in the defense. Four soldiers were captured as POW, there is no information about them up to this day. Laslovo the 800 year old Croatian – Hungarian village were left empty for seven years. The Serbian forces looted the village but nobody moved in in the empty houses, the frontline moved through the village. The heroic defenders of Laslovo held the town for 152 days, thus giving time to Osijek, to mount the defenses and get supplied with weapons. As the siege of Vukovar gave time to Croatia to prepare for the defensive war so did the siege of Laslovo to Osijek.

¹⁶ Szentlászló, edited by **KELEMEN** Dávid, Osijek, 1997, 30. p.

THE SUFFERING AND RESURRECTION OF THE RAPED VUKOVAR CAPTIVES 1991-1992

Author: **Sanja Knežević**

Modern society's escape from suffering and justice

Can postmodern culture endure suffering?

In the book *Sunčica-Sunny*, the testimonies of fourteen tortured and raped women – the victims, come to light, together with the testimony of a tortured and raped Croat in the concentration camp Manjača. The testimonies have not been processed analytically and the book itself does not suggest it. The book's editor, Ms Marija Slišković, also the president of Udruga žena u Domovinskom ratu (The Association of the Women in the Homeland War) and the *Sunčica - Sunny* Association, has conceived it through an image of 14 Stations of the Cross. With its concept and content the book sends an unmistakable message – the suffering of the raped women coexists as a part of the agony of Jesus Christ. It speaks about the mystery of human suffering, anticipated by Pope John Paul II, citing the apostle St. Paul: “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filled up with what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church” (Salvifici doloris: 5/ Colossians 1:24).

Now, what is with this kind of suffering in contemporary post-modern society? Pope John Paul II said that “human suffering derives compassion, it derives respect and it frightens” (Ibidem, 7). Furthermore, speaking about “the world of human suffering” he asserts a paradox of modern society, a time which is frightened of suffering

and bearing pain and at the same time, fearing with its own decomposition, yet still rushing deeper and deeper into fallacy and complete lack of compassion:

This way the world of suffering, which after all, resides in every human being, in our time perhaps more than ever, transforms into “the suffering of the world”, the world that has gone through changes more than ever by the progress of human labour, and at the same time, as never before, it is endangered by human deceit and sin. (Ibidem, 13-14)

The Pope’s conclusion is applicable to the case of *Sunčica-Sunny*. Namely, during the war in Bosnia and Croatia, a group of feminists headed by a professor of law, Catherine A. MacKinnon, succeeded in obtaining the treatment of “the intentional rape of human beings” as a War Crime, and in this sense, the victims’ compensation. As late as 1981, the UN Convention of the Elimination of *All Forms of Discrimination against Women* /4 (in Croatia it was accepted on October 8, 1991), imposed an obligation on society to protect women, especially the victims of any kind of violence. Also, Ivana Radačić, in her conclusion of an article “Human rights of women in the practice of the European Court of Human Rights” asserts that “the same Court has encountered more frequently the cases of human rights violations against women and it has been more gender-sensitive”, explaining, “the gender-sensitive approach especially present in cases of violence against women.” The Court recognized violence against women as a violation of human rights, including those of fundamental importance (...). And finally, being very important for Croatia: “It imposed a wide spectre of obligations for the countries, including an establishment of effective legislation which respects the autonomy of women and protects their physical and psychological integrity, an establishment of direct protection measures, effective prosecution and punishment

of the offender and the victim's reparation. (Radačić, 2011: 39). Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325, accepted on October 31, 2000, puts emphasis on the countries' following requirements towards women victims of war:

It puts an emphasis onto the responsibility of all countries to stop the impunity and to process persons responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including those related to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need for the exemptions of these crimes, where possible, from the amnesty regulations.

(www.women-war.memory.org/hr/REZOLUCIJA_VIJECA.....)

Having in mind all the afore-mentioned institutionalized regulations, one might ask why *Suncica* has appeared at a time when Croatia has signed the accession papers for European Union membership, and why the abused and raped women are going public now, on TV, sharing their painful experiences at book promotions, organizing their own web page with the witness statements. The reason, apparently, is that neither the Republic of Croatia nor the Republic of Serbia, that is, the foreign aggressor, has conformed to a single criteria from the Security Council resolution or European Court of Human Rights, or reacted even from an individual moral standpoint.

The women bear witness to the crimes they suffered and call attention to the fact that they have not been compensated, and that their civil and human rights as victims of war and war crimes have not been acknowledged. They have no pensions or any similar incomes. They meet the perpetrators face to face on the streets of Vukovar and nearby locations, and some were driven out of town by renewed

threats and have lost their residency rights as a result. They are constantly subjected to denigration by their neighbors so that they experience a double victimization.¹

Is the total lack of social and spiritual sensitivity the reason for the state in which some legitimate regulations are easily skipped, in accordance with the tendencies of the postmodern culture?

Are the female victims of war marginalized due to their gender affiliation, as to purport the neglect of female pain? From the fact that the Republic of Croatia and the Serbian Republic, which aspire to the membership of the European Union, Croatia has closed all the negotiating chapters thus being in its antechamber now, had done almost nothing to comply with the legal acts of international treaties about the protection of human rights in the case of the massive numbers of war rapes of Croatian women, and apparently, nobody from any competent EU institutions has claimed it from them, it may be understood they were politically legitimate in the past (and still are now). As it appears, deeper reflection on the genesis of genocide dimension of the war in Croatia, may offer, in a way, a satisfying answer to the situation of relativization of the suffering of the victims of mass rape. And then, where do *Sunnies* find their energy to survive and living death, live through genocide. Then two decades later, they speak about the suffering publicly and let the world know that their pain is still present, and point out the truth and justice. It appears, the answer is possible only in a reflection of their suffering within the mystery of the suffering of Jesus Christ. The strength of pain which

¹ "In Vukovar I began to receive threats from friends of those convicted, once directed to my daughter, who was told they'd do it all over again. I left Vukovar and live now in a rented apartment in another city where I have no residency rights due to bureaucratic procedures in Vukovar." (Witness statement I, *Sunny*: 32)

rises from testimony and the action of the survived victims carries a message of *resurrection* and as history teaches us, has existed much longer and is stronger than any political or social system in the world.

Why is the war in Croatia the first postmodern war in Europe?

Postmodern genocide in Croatia

Even during the duration of the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and immediately after it had ended, a theory has been set about the first postmodern war in Europe. Based on the theory of Jean Baudrillard, about simulation and simulacra of reality, Dubravka Oraić Tolić concluded “one face of simulacra was modern reality sailing off into hyper reality, and second, the fall into violence and the return of some repressed and unfinished realities or appearances of non-European realities” (Oraić Tolić, 1999:66). For the war on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, she says “it was a strange blend of over-civilizational force and pre-civilizational violence” (Ibidem, 69). The same authoress revealed this theory during 1991, in a text “Made in Croatia 1991” explaining furthermore, as to the aims of war being quotable, in this case them being “simulacrum of World War II”. Beverly Allen was on a same track, concluding, “this war turned out to be, in addition to everything else, the ultimate in citational practice, in a historical collage. (...) this mortal sea of paradox, this undoing of history in the name of brute aggression, is truly a postmodern war. It is also genocide” (Allen, 1996: 42).

On the controversy of dimensions of time and space, Dubravka Oraić Tolić sensed, the postmodern model of war which took place on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, is the model of war threatening the future of the world: “Following the fall of (...) utopias, we found ourselves in front of swooping imperialistic nostalgia, creating a really

empty blackboard of the Balkans, cleaning an occupied territory from all signs of memory, from all signs of culture and tradition written on this space” (Oraić Tolić, 1995: 53). Here, the word is about a genocide war – the war which destroys the remains of the different and the unlike, the war which used mass rape as a form of destruction, ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs and offered a pretext for ethnic warfare, as noticed by Beverly Allen.

When talking about ethnic cleansing, the authors Bartol Letica and Slaven Letica will assert, ethnic cleansing is a euphemism for genocide, which it is, indeed. Therefore, when we speak about the term of ethnic cleansing, which is nevertheless subject to interpretive manipulation, it is necessary to talk about it as of spatial removal, a total erasing of every strange body which distorts the ideal image of an ethnically clean Great Serbia – hence erasing man together with his civilizational and cultural marks. The genocide of real people has been conveyed onto the TV screen, in front of which everybody learnt a lesson but did not offer any concrete assistance in stopping the blood shed.³ The shelling of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina’s towns was accompanied with everyday video and audio inscriptions, but the manipulations with the reality of genocide went on nevertheless. Where did all the non-comprehension of the genocide in Croatia and neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina come from? Bartol and Slaven Letica tried to explain that phenomena by defining the postmodern war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, basing it on the attitude of Francois Lyotard in the book *The Postmodern Condition*, where he postulates “postmodern should be understood as a paradox of previous (modo)future (post)” (Lyotard according to Letica, page 42.), explaining:

As interpreted by westerners, “that” happening in Croatia and Bosnia was an aggression, but not a real aggression for, Croatia and Bosnia were not “real” countries then. Furthermore, “that” happening in the town of Vukovar, Croatia and Bosnia were genocides, but they were not real because the number of victims did not reach any hypothetical big numbers. The concentration camps also, were not real, for they did not correspond to historical ideal-types: they had no chimneys nor organized transportation to death with orderly reservation tickets for the train. (Letica, 1997:42)

In the wake of Letica’s conclusions it may be claimed that the women of Vukovar were not imprisoned in “real” concentration-camps, prisons, the rape camps, because they were held in empty private houses on which hung a white rag, as a sign to the Serbian soldiers, as a sort of guideline for rape, entry being free of charge. Women were raped in “*Velepromet’s*” warehouses, the *Penal Correctional* facility in Sremska Mitrovica, in official prisons, but also in café bars, restaurants and shops as well. Beverly Allen, however, asserts, the public “knew in great detail about the local instance of genocide rape and the rape/death camps, particularly in Vukovar” and confirms it furthermore, with the testimony of Zagreb university professor Ljubica Butula². Does the fact that Vukovar women inmates were not tortured in carefully organized camps like Auschwitz diminish their sacrifice as the civil war victims of war crimes and the crime of genocide? Cases of mass rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which shocked the world during the war, made the United Nations extend the original

² “Ms. Butula (Ljubica Butula, leader of the group and a professor at the University of Zagreb whose son died defending Zadar) said that some 400 women and 87 children were taken away from Vukovar and were unaccounted for. The rape of thousands of women has been documented. The Serbs even had camps for the sole purpose of detaining women. Serbs took 150 Muslims women away from the town of Brčko in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” (Allen, 66)

definition of genocide with two more elements – (f) systematic rape of a human being and (g) siege of towns and deliberately killing of civilians by random or targeted artillery fire” (Letica, 32). The case of Vukovar and the rest of Croatia’s occupied territory, unfortunately, showed that Croatia was only an overture for Evil which continued in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A deliberate system of genocide functioned the same way in both countries.

A mass rape in the service of genocide

The town of Vukovar was attacked by heavy military machinery for months, it has failed to renew itself till this day, and during November 1991, when it fell under the aggressor’s dominion, it had been literally, levelled to the ground. Along with Srebrenica, Vukovar is the most notorious crime area in Europe since the World War II, where the civilians and wounded patients were taken from the Vukovar hospital to the livestock farm Ovčara, tortured and finally killed. A woman in an advanced stage of pregnancy succumbed to the torture and died. Civilians were starved, intimidated and finally killed in brutal ways³. Vukovar’s women went through a grave Calvary of mass rapes, torture and murders. Hence the confessions published in *Sunčica-Sunny* may be read and problemized as a paradigmatic example of genocide rape in modern culture.

³ The same principle was applied in the other towns, as well. For example, Zadar and Dubrovnik were without water, electricity and the most vital necessities of life for months, they were cut off from the rest of the country and the world by means of communication and traffic, under constant sniper and artillery attacks by the aggressors. All this was repeated in an even more bloody issue in Sarajevo and other towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina..

On the basis of the report of mass rape in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Catherine A. MacKinnon suggested a theory as to why rape should be treated as a genocide and why, and to the difference between a war rape and a genocide rape:

In order to be genocide the aggressors must have the aim of physically destroying the group. This does not mean that all members of the group must be killed. The aggressor can inflict the group of victims group bodily or mental harm or conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's destruction. So, rape is genocide when it is part of this program. (...) In war, some women who are raped do not even know which side their rapists are on. In genocide, the identity of the perpetrator is essential. The woman (and by extension, her group) must know not simply that the atrocity occurred, but who was responsible. (MacKinnon, 2006⁴)

Also, Catherine MacKinnon divided the output of genocide rape into five important references: "Physical death; creating a submissive and terrorized person; the shame of being who they are (the kind of person this kind of act could happen to); the desire to leave the place where it happened and never come back; self hate and hate of those like herself" (Ibidem). Only several excerpts from the testimonies of the women of Vukovar confirm and found the theses by Catharine MacKinnon, that the rape in the town of Vukovar had been planned and performed in order to commit genocide:

I was completely beaten down, raggedy; they took me to see the doctor. The doctor examined me, and I told him how I had been raped. I coludn't speak any futher, I was in a severe psychotic state. (*Sunny*, Testimony VI: 84)

⁴ http://clg.portalxm.com/library/keytext.cfm?keytext_id=181 (11.06.2012.)

We spent part of our days in exile in Zagreb, and then we moved to Lovran to some hotel accommodating refugees. Then I had a nervous breakdown and couldn't speak anymore. I've had a hard time recovering, because I had to cope with all I've been through without any kind of assistance. (*Sunny*, Testimony VII: 94)

My health is very bad, I've been under treatment for years, and my organism is breaking down more each day. I feel the pain constantly growing on the left side of my head, and this represents even further damage. They're constantly taking new tests, but I know the real problem is the torture I suffered. (*Sunny*, Testimony XII: 142)

One another night they came again from the bar, drunk, and my husband told them I was ill and was lying in bed. They came again on a third night, the same ones who were there the first night. They insulted me, said they were disgusted by me, and spat on me. Two men raped me that night; the other three were too drunk. I was helpless. They were hitting me all over my body. After the rape, they stayed in our house because they had previously taken it over. They left us only the kitchen. (...)

Finally one of them came and told the five of us to go to the trailer, that he would go ahead in his car and take us to an UNPROFOR point. But before that, he said we had to go to the headquarters and sign a paper saying that we are leaving everything we have to "SAO Krajina". (*Sunny*, Testimony X: 119-122)

During one of these beastly rapes, I got pregnant, and when I was already deep into the pregnancy, over six months along, I suffered a spontaneous miscarriage. They raped me the entire time I was pregnant. I gave birth on the floor of the cell where I was imprisoned. I remember the guards coming in and taking the baby. I was completely devastated and depressed. (*Sunny*, Testimony IX: 109)

All this confirms a quotation from a report by Tadeusz Mazowiecky: “The Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia” – “Rape has been used as one method to terrorize the civilian populations in villages and force ethnic groups to leave. One example of this was described by a physician who interviewed several women from the region of Vukovar (Croatia)” (Allen, 73). Furthermore, all the victims who were held at the concentration camp “*Veľepromet*” in Vukovar or in other prisons in Serbia lived through mass and systematic (day and night) rape.⁵ The above mentioned excerpts of testimony from *Sunčica-Sunny* speak about these women not being the victims of random violators who took the chance during the war “scrimmage”, but the victims were picked as targets of genocidal abuse. Respectively, as concluded by MacKinnon – “...rape destroys a group’s identity without the trouble of having to kill every member of a group” (Ibidem). In her book, Beverly Allen shows a facsimile of the document where, during the blockade of Sarajevo it was ordered to abuse women and children, which is an unimaginable case of cruelty in the history of warfare up to these days. From the saved testimonies of Vukovar’s inmates, we can conclude that the aggressor’s plan was not valid for the genocide banishment of the Muslim population only, but the Croats from Croatian territory, as well.⁶

⁵ Compare testimony IV, Testimony V, Testimony VII, Testimony VIII, Testimony IX, Testimony XII.

⁶ Beverly Allen cites excerpts from the so called Ram Plan, assembled by special Serbian military services, including psychologists and experts for psychological warfare: “Our analysis of behavior of the Muslim communities demonstrates that the moral, will, and bellicose nature of their groups can be undermined only if we aim our action at the point where the religious and social structure is most fragile. We refer to the women, especially adolescents, and to the children”. (Allen, 1996: 57)

No matter what religion, both cultures, Islamic and Christian, the purity of a woman's body and motherhood are perceived as sacred, after all, and in civilization as a whole. Proof to the mentioned beside the testimonies of the victims, are also the confessions of the members of the Serbian paramilitary unity form 1993, today publicly seen on the web pages of Association *Sunčica*. Also, this confession proves the theory of C. MacKinnon, that "in genocide, rape is under control" (2006).

It happened on April 6, 1991. I saw a large number of men among whom was a number of my acquaintances, boarding six buses. When I heard they had signed up as volunteers who wished to participate in fights against the Ustasha, I joined them... In Vukovar I killed about 150 people, a larger number of which by rifle, and a few I cut their throats with a knife... While I was in Vukovar, I raped about 30 female victims. They were persons 40, 45 to 50 years old. Only one woman among them was 16 years old. Rapes were done in a small shop close to the park, not far away from the Vukovar hospital. Women were brought to the shop by Pajo, and I think his last name is Vatičin. Towards the shop, the women walked in front of him, and he followed them with a gun in his hand. He never brought them tied. Some of them cried, and some not. Some of them tried to resist, and they were held by two men, one of them holding their arms and the other their legs. A group of 9 to 10 men participated in all cases of rape. In all cases, the last rapist would be Pajo. After that, some women he would shout with a gun, some of them he would not kill but had them detained in a room next to the one where the rapes were done..."

[\(http://blog.vecernji.hr/suncica/2012/05/21/do-kada-trpjete-ig-noriranje-zlocina-silovanja-zena-stravican-iskaz-silovatelja-i-ne-ophodnost-tuzbe/\)](http://blog.vecernji.hr/suncica/2012/05/21/do-kada-trpjete-ig-noriranje-zlocina-silovanja-zena-stravican-iskaz-silovatelja-i-ne-ophodnost-tuzbe/)

Still during the war, there was a question raised, as to the reason for such widespread cruel treatment towards women. Maybe the cause of such behaviour is located in the patriarchal system of life? More and more spread of pornography? The conflict of traditional and postmodern culture in the 20th century?

Postmodern body

”The identity problem is not obvious anywhere else more than in the area of the body, either as a theme in literature or as a subject for media and bio manipulations. The messages of the body are so strong as to give an impression that the millennium openly breaks up on the body and physical problems, vividly in front of our eyes”, concludes Dubravka Oraić Tolić in her book *Muška moderna i ženska postmoderna: rođenje virtualne culture / Man’s modern and women’s postmodern time: the birth of a virtual culture* (2005: 78).

In Christian culture, the end and the beginning of the 20th century was marked by a revolutionary deed by Pope John Paul II - *Theology of the body* – where he brings a new biblical and evangelical reading of holiness of the human body and its inseparability from the whole of the spirit. In postmodern time, the body intruded itself as one among the main codes of consumerism, but the postmodern virtual luddism as well. If we look into our own culture at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, superficially at least, we will discover all the power of the postmodern paradoxes, based on the human body – sexual revolution and expanding frontiers of freedoms: more widespread prostitution, paedophilia, pornography, white slavery; the cult of youth and beauty (medical preparations such as the elixirs of youth, plastic surgery, cosmetic surgery, etc.); the cult of sport and physical endurance in sports; genetic engineering; different forms of drug addiction; escape from pain, suffering and death. If Dubravka

Oarić Tolić established a theory about a postmodern body as an area of identity, then out of all said and done it can be concluded that modern man runs away from his own identity, trying to build a simulacra image of the culture deprived of himself, his personal completeness and most of all, a primal connection with God, with the Absolute. Anticipating all the pain and fallacy of modern man, Pope John Paul II pronounced a fundamental truth of Man - a being created in the image of God, loved from his beginning, before birth, man as a participant of God's joy in creation, as a live image of Godliness.

Modern culture is based on an idea about possessions, manipulations and control. Christopher West, however, based on the Pope's postulates *theology of the body* asserts that "an inclination to 'grabbing' appears to be embedded in our nature". In a time when freedom to "grab" is desirable, as it is in all expansionist and genocidal wars, the body becomes a special area indeed, upon which the power of negation of the human being is expressed, his intimate and his cultural identity. Having in mind that the whole western culture grew up on the scheme "where a woman is understood as a nature/an object, man as a culture/the subject" (Oraić Tolić, 2005:70), we can find one more reason, why the mass and systematic rape of women in the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina indeed, had been converted into a sort of a weapon, a recognizable form of warfare. Namely, the mentioned opposition of man and woman by means of subject: object, has experienced a truly deviant form of behaviour in modern culture – woman being perceived as a space of negation of personality, her status from traditional patriarchy (woman a crankshaft and a bearing machine with an exceptional high degree of honour), has been converted into an object of sexual ranting, the one that can usually be met in pornographic conceptions. In this conflict of the traditional firmness where by the appropriation of a woman's

honour at the same time appropriates it from her man and the ethnic (cultural) group as well, and the modern pornographic barbarization where the body of a woman has been confined as an object of use, a woman-victim is converted into a simulacra image of genetic and identity engineering and manipulation.⁷

Since we feel and recognize the spiritual world through our bodies, the infliction of physical pain has as its goal a spiritual wounding. This is the essence of the cruelty of rape, – torture, the ultimate in degradation and subjugation, is inflicted on the most intimate parts of the human body, those that participate in the divine act of procreation, and the sacramental sanctity of the embrace of man and woman in love is violated. Undetectable in human words is the suffering the victims of these crimes endured and live with. Therefore, it is recognizable as a part of Christ's suffering.

⁷ During the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, several interpretations about mass and genocide rapes were set. Catherine A. MacKinnon, in her article "Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide" established a thesis about the merit of consuming pornography in the Balkans as misogynistic to the ideological system of committing a crime, and that "in the war in ex-Yugoslavia, pornography has become, for the first time, the medium of genocide". (cit. http://www.women-war-memory.org/hr/povijest_uvodna/show/15) Furthermore, Beverly Allen brings information how the mass rapes in the camps were filmed and distributed as pornographic material: "Numerous survivors have testified that rapes in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia were routinely videotaped. This amateur pornography production in keeping with what may be a generalized pornographic war use of erotic photos of women – inside bunkers, for example (MacKinnon, 28, illustration) – as stimulants for the rapists. An international pornography market awaits whatever videotapes of genocidal rape might be coming from the Balkans. According to one report, they have turned up in Los Angeles" (Allen, 34-35).

Susan Brownmiller, for the mass rapes in the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, subdued the guilt into a patriarchal edited social life, but from the testimonies of the victims and knowledge of politics of the war aggressor, it is absolutely clear that the violence upon women cannot be reduced to the gender dimension only.⁸ Croatian feminists of that time were on the same track of thinking and approach, as well. If the problem would be positioned at this level, it could be told that it can be spoken about “femicide”, which is not correct. Namely, women were used as excellent targets for implementation, complete national and religious extinction from a particular area. Negation of their motherhood identity is present in the hitherto unprecedented rapes until conception, aiming the women of non-Serbian ethnicity to bear Serbian children. Accordingly, the genocide awareness is multiple presented – a woman lost her identity of natural motherhood in voluntary by-creation with the divine element of love: in a woman, this kind of conception can invoke a feeling of hate towards the child she carries in her body, which is again, in total controversy with her motherhood identity; by humiliation she lost her ethnical and religious identity, for the rapist and the aggressor, her “blood” is not crucial in determining the identity of the child, she is only the object upon which there has been performed a force and power, so in that way a woman becomes a double target of the enemy – disgraced and humiliated by enemy motherhood, by now she is “an enemy” of her own ethnic group, and herself, as well. Therefore, the conclusions by Catherine A. MacKinnon have been confirmed by this kind of genocide - “Group destruction is the goal. In genocide, destruction is the point” as the same author concluded, – “Systematic rape to impregnate women in the victim group can be a method of socially re-engineering the next generation” (2006).

⁸ More on these problems may be read at Allen, 87-91.

Female gender determination has been used here as a method of destruction of her ethnic, cultural and religious community. The submission of suffering of the Vukovar women inmates and the victims is indeed, a deep convergence to Christ's sacrament on the cross.

Sacrament of suffering an unearthly sacrament

Suffering of the victims of genocide may be set analogously, as the suffering of the first Christians in the name of Jesus Christ. They suffered and were innocent victims because they belonged to an "other" community, their identity was Christ himself. Therefore, when Pope John Paul II writes about human participation within the suffering of Jesus Christ and redemption, recalling the words of Apostle Paul – "the sufferings of Christ are abundant in us, so also, our comfort is abundant through Christ" – in his words may be recognized the mystery of suffering and the sacrifice of the Vukovar inmates:

St. Paul speaks about different sufferings and especially about those suffered by the first Christians "because of Jesus". These sufferings enabled those, to whom this epistle (2 Corinthians, op.a.), has been directed, to participate in the redemption, which happened after the Redeemer's death and resurrection. The *Eloquence of the cross and death* are complements to the eloquence of resurrection. (Salvafici doloris, 35)

For man, it is difficult to understand the reasons for human suffering, its mystery, so within himself he tries to find the answer to the awareness of the transience of earthly life. A great strength and renouncement of the conformist way of thinking are necessary, in order to be compassionate with the suffering of an other human being, and especially those as deep as the sufferings of raped and tortured women, where abyssal problems are attempted to be solved by

mythical prejudice. The suffering of an innocent being is a mystery of deeply Christological nature indeed, therefore, very difficult to comprehend in the human mind and heart. We have been cautioned to the mystery of suffering of the innocent ones even in the Old Testament, Book of Job, where it was thought that God punishes Job for his sins. But, as Pope John Paul II says – “The Book of Job is not the last word of the Revelation on that question. In a way, it is a proclamation of Christ’s suffering” (Salvafici doloris, 19).

The principle of blaming the victim for his or her own suffering is unfortunately still built into today’s thought structures. Instead of confronting themselves with the depth of the suffering of the raped and tortured women, and in this way activating themselves, to think, to assist, to nurture feelings of empathy and justice at any price (even political), society instead adopts the conformist view that the victim is to blame, stigmatizes her, imposes upon her a double victimization. This process is present in the case of the Vukovar women, and other victims as well, on two levels: rejection by those closest to them (family neighbors, work colleagues), and an institutional boycott marked by the state’s failure to conform to the law and to ensure their human and civil rights. This is unambiguously confirmed by the statements of the Vukovar captives. Concerning this, without doubt, witness the statements of Vukovar’s inmates.

I gave testimony about the crimes committed against me to the Sotin police. I was asked to come to court, where they showed me some pictures from which I was asked to make an identification of the perpetrators. Since a significant amount of time has passed, I wasn’t able to recognize anyone, but I did recognize my perpetrator from a picture in the newspaper. There was a news article about those who

received medals and commendations for their successes in Vukovar, and among them was a picture of Borivoj Tešić. He was the one they called “Captain Boro”.

After they called me to give testimony, no one ever called me again. I didn’t receive any rights or compensation for the war crimes committed against me.

(Sunny, Testimony II: 44-45)

I haven’t received any compensation for the victimization and war crimes I suffered, and I was not given the status of invalid. I have a personal pension according to my age and years employed.

(Sunny, Testimony V: 75)

I have the status of civilian invalid, and based on that, receive 1.360 kuna a month. I don’t have the status of war crimes victim, and have not received material or moral compensation.

(Sunny, Testimony: 84)

For the wars crimes committed against me, one of the perpetrators was convicted and sentenced to three years, and is on the run; his lawyer complained about the severity of the punishment. One of the other perpetrators is still being processed, and as for the rest of them, there exists no information about their identity. The process has gone on already for ten years. I’ve attended all the hearings, and have given testimony and presented evidence ten times already. Each time I felt as though I were the one on trial. I had no attorney or support from the courts.

For the war crimes committed against me, I received neither material nor moral satisfaction.

(Sunny, Testimony VIII: 1029)

Still there remains the question, why did the women of Vukovar speak up twenty years after living these crimes. It appears, the answer is not only in the fact that none of them exercised their civic and civil rights, legitimately through the institutions concerned. It surely is one of the important problems and premeditations, but not the only one. Their scream within a manipulative silence and mood of hopelessness in the modern Croatian society, may be read, as per biblical sentence by which the Pope, also, tries to reveal the interpretation of the Book of Job – “Let them know that the displacements occurred not because of failure but to improvement of our nation” (Salvifici doloris, 19).

But they do not bear witness to their suffering in order to promote hatred and rage, they bear witness in order to emphasize through their *lives* that there is no resurrection without suffering and anguish. For individuals, or society, or nations. They were not raped as individual women, but in the name of the nation and culture to which they belong. They were not raped by any *fault* of their own, but in the name of the politics of Evil, one which to this very day has not acknowledged its evil.

So, if their suffering was endured in the name of their nation, then the testimony of their suffering and pain should be enshrined through “the creation of a tradition and culture of remembrance” (Letica, 1997: 38) based on the universal dimension of the Holocaust, which would signify that a message has been directed to Croatian society on the necessity of catharsis, on the creation of new life from the ashes of suffering.

Croatian society cannot send a message of peace and reconciliation until it confronts its own wounds, its own pain, until a catharsis is undergone. It is not sufficient to designate to the victims one day in the calendar, it’s necessary that the strength of the victims and the joy contained in the message of their resurrection become a spiritual

legacy of the entire nation. The suffering of the Vukovar captives can be seen in this sense as a paradigmatic example of genocidal warfare in all parts of the world, but also a paradigmatic example of society's stance and state of mind, which cannot be cleansed and healed until it acknowledges its suffering and victimization in the name of its own cultural and broader national identity. If postmodern society, grown up on the eschatological idea of "world consumption", does not endure suffering, pain and death, is it the reason for man to subordinate his life to such society, falling into a vicious circle of consumer entertainment?

Concluding remarks

Mary from Magdala, humiliated among the women, a prey of male rapacity, was the first to meet Christ. Before Christ, she did not have her own identity, she knew not her own image of God's mercy, humiliated in her pain, she had the strength to understand his cross and experience a personal resurrection with him.

It is totally clear that the process of enduring a pain which leads to personal resurrection from one's own ashes is not simple.

Nevertheless it may be presumed that almost every man enters suffering with some *inherent protest to man* and with his own question 'why'. (...) Surely, he questions the God several times, as well, just like Christ did. Beside that, it is impossible not to notice that the one he questions, suffers himself, and he wishes to give him the answers *from the cross, from the centre of personal suffering*. (*Salvifici doloris*, 51)

One of the Vukovar inmate's testimony pertains almost remarkably, to the Pope's perception of the relationship between Christ and man, about the Lord who provides comfort and strength.

When I returned to Vukovar in 1998, right away I ran into one of the perpetrators of the crime, Pero Krtnic, and I was still afraid of him. Every day I walked around with a knife in my purse, intending to kill him. For days I thought about how I would do it, since nobody else was punishing him... it was my everyday obsession, I would go to all the places where I knew he'd be. All year long I suffered, but then I finally found the strength in prayer and that prevented me from becoming a criminal. (*Sunny*, Testimony V: 67-68)

We see in this statement how the victim found peace in the power of prayer, in the joining of her pain with the wounds of Christ, in the mystery of his appropriation of the pain of others. But can we expect every victim to find his or her way to prayer, to Christ? What of our "availability" in empathy, our Christian "selflessness"?

Pope John Paul II, writing about the evangelical parable of the Good Samaritan, explicitly says that "man 'allied' cannot pass beside the suffering of another man indifferently, he cannot do it in the name of basic human solidarity, even more in the name of love of fellow man. He must 'stop', be 'impassioned', acting just like the Samaritans from the evangelic parable. This comparison predicates *the truth* which is within itself *deeply Christian*, and also, universally human. (*Salvafici doloris*, 56).

Therefore, to leave the victims to themselves, leave them in their pain, is a deeply inhumane gesture. The fact that their pain is well-known, and that it remains unacknowledged speaks of a deep moral crisis in our society.

Hence the story about *Sunny*, at the moment it came to light after twenty years of silence, it should be the light in which every person can survive his/her catharsis and recognize the mystery of good news about the credibility of the final Salvation and Redemption.

If we take a deep look at the course of civilization, which indeed, had gone to the very end in virtual manipulations upon human engineering, it may be discovered even more significantly, where women find the strength to speak about their suffering publicly.

Consciously or not, it is a fact that the Vukovar captives have spoken in the name of all women victims of genocidal politics, and that they are truly “representatives of their times” at the beginning of a new century, a new era.

There comes a time, it is here already, where the promotion of the invitation of a woman, develops in its fullness, a time in which a woman conquers the space of her social influence and position which she has never had before. In a time in which mankind is going through deep changes, women, inspired by the Gospel, may be of great help in order to avoid the orientation to disaster.⁹

Of course, the authors of the messages of the Second Vatican Council could not assume the amount of suffering and pain which awaited the women in genocidal wars at the end of the 20th century. But, reading “the sings of time” they managed to give a future diagnosis very well. Therefore, aren’t the *Sunnies* a signpost towards renewal? Did they not accumulate strength in order to speak about their pain, still living in injustice, thus directing their light towards each Christian, towards every human being who believes in Christ’s Resurrection?

To leave them in the care of the bureaucratic institutions in charge, means to reconcile and give over to the postmodern consumption culture of entertainment and emptiness conformistically. To be aware of the pain of others, executed in the name of “my” identity

⁹ A message of the Council to the Women (8. 12. 1965): AAS 58 (1966) 13-1. Cit. by John Paul II, *Mulieris dignitatem: an apostle’s letter about dignity and avocation of a woman on the occasion of the Marian Year*, KS, 2003., 5.

(of a woman – a mother - a Christian – a Croat, etc.), means to fight for tomorrow, for the future, for the dignity of every human being, for the world in the image of God.

As seen in the Gospel, the Word in its fullest meaning became the Body, and the Ur-ideal of humanity came into being in the body of the women. (*Mulieris dignitatem*, 12). Thus every crime against women and humanity is a crime against Christ himself. Fighting for the rights of the disenfranchised means fighting for the dignity of Christ in one's own time. Testifying to the suffering of the victims means assisting Christ, over and over again, in carrying his cross to Golgotha. And awaiting, with him, *resurrection*.

Translated by Julienne Eden Bušić and Đurđa Vukelić Rožić

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DAYS OF HISTORY

Author: **Julienne Bušić**

Young people today, at least what I have observed, are a lot different than we were and maybe we won't be able to find common ground.

Of course times are a lot different, too. Imagine that when I was in college there were no computers or cell phones. Can you even imagine that, since they have always been a part of your lives? What does that mean and how does it change your perception of the world and the way you act in it? Have they made people dumber, less willing to engage with the big issues today, have they robbed young people of passion, created passivity instead of activity, apathy, unwillingness to sacrifice even the smallest of comforts?

Unfortunately, I think they have. That's why I was nervous. Because I'm disappointed in young people today and needed to say it, even if I make someone mad.

These are the "days of history" in Zadar and it's great that such emphasis is placed on the discipline of history. Without a knowledge of what came before, we have no understand of the present and no vision of the future.

But I was thinking that even if one wants to have knowledge of what came before in history, it is often impossible to inform oneself! At least there is a greater possibility now with the advent of the Internet, one of its great advantages, but realistically speaking, do we, do you, depend in large part on the media for information on historical events without doing any deeper investigation?

Most people I know do depend on the media and, instead of questioning what they read, accept it as truth and pass it on. And this can have an enormous effect on human destiny and the course of history.

The great philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had something profound to say about this, and this especially applies to the study of history: what he said was that everything deep loves a mask. What did he mean by that? Of course there are many interpretations of this simple sentence, but regardless of the interpretation, I think we can all agree that the basic truth of his statement is clear: there are many levels to all events, not only in history but in every field of research, things are not as they appear at first glance, one must dig beneath the surface to get at the core of things, peel back the layers, be skeptical, examine the motives of each source, refuse to be a simple vessel for information.

Let me mention two cases that I have written about in the past which serve as good examples of the masks of which Nietzsche wrote. The first concerns the famine in the Ukraine in the 1930s. I took a personal interest in it because my grandfather was born there.

He fled from his village, Zhitomyr, in 1900, from an abusive stepfather, to Canada and then America, at the tender age of eighteen. When he finally arrived, without a penny in his pocket, he sat down on a curb and cried his eyes out. He later married and raised four children, one of them my father. In the early 1930s, while he and his family were enjoying the benefits of living in a free, prosperous, democratic society, with an allegedly free, independent media, a devastating famine was raging in the Ukraine. Stalin had forced the kulaks into collective farms under the guise of “agrarian reform”, and those who resisted were sent to concentration camps. The collectivization process led to the widespread famine, which, at the high point in 1933, took the lives of over 25,000 people every day. Whole families,

villages, and cities disappeared. A total of several million eventually perished, and what could be more painful, more horrific than slowly starving to death, watching one's family's lives slip away as their bones begin to protrude, their teeth fall out, their eyes implode? Death in an oven almost seems a blessing in comparison, much quicker and less agonizing. Yet the deaths of these millions were hidden, denied, as though they were fleas, or bugs, or some other trivial organisms instead of human beings of flesh and blood, with warm, pulsating hearts, souls, dreams, aspirations. As a child, I never recall the famine being mentioned by my grandfather or anyone else, but I know he never heard from his family members again. Some said later they were exiled to Samarkand. Others said they'd probably died or moved or emigrated. There were all sorts of stories, none of them confirmed.

At that time, the New York Times, which carries the famous byline, "all the news that's fit to print", had its Moscow station chief, Walter Duranty, reporting on Stalin's "agrarian reforms". Duranty, though, insisted that, although there had been "serious food shortages" in the Ukraine, "there was no actual starvation." There had been no "deaths from starvation", merely "widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition." In further articles he repeated the lies: "There is no famine or actual starvation nor is there likely to be"; "any report of a famine in Russia is today an exaggeration or malignant propaganda"; "you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs."- Duranty was eventually awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his Russian reports. As Soviet archives were opened to the public and information about the famine, and the millions of victims who starved to death, was exposed, it became increasingly impossible to deny that the New York Times Moscow station chief, Walter Duranty, had served as a Stalin apologist and propagandist, and had kept the world from learning about, and perhaps preventing, the mass starvations and

genocide in the Ukraine. He knew the truth, though, as did many others in the New York Times and elsewhere, because in the autumn of 1933 he is recorded as having told the British Embassy that ten million had died. “The Ukraine”, he said, “had been bled white”, a remarkable statement from someone who had, only days earlier, described talk of a famine as “a sheer absurdity”, Many public figures called on the Pulitzer Committee to rescind the award. Sally Taylor, author of ;Stalin’s Apologist: Walter Duranty, The New York Times Man in Moscow; (Oxford University Press 1990) fully documented how Duranty covered up the truth and distorted matters to ingratiate himself to Stalin and his “murderous henchmen”. Malcolm Muggeridge described Duranty as the “greatest liar of any journalist I have ever met.” Famed American commentator Joseph Alsop later said of Duranty that “lying was his stock in trade.” But the Pulitzer Committee rejected two calls for rescission, stating that “the Board has not seen fit to reverse a previous Board’s decision, made seventy years ago in a different era and under different circumstances.” (An era that tolerated genocide, perhaps? Circumstances that condoned the slow death of millions of innocents?) Meanwhile, his former employer, the New York Times, the so-called “epitome” of professional journalism, the “gold standard” to which every media aspires, continues year after year to proudly list Duranty’s name on its roster of Pulitzer Prize winners. All the news that’s fit to print? Indeed.

Another interesting and current example of historical subversion concerns the ubiquitous Che Guevara, especially after a recent and highly fictionalized account of his early life, “The Motorcycle Diaries”. Red T-shirts everywhere, coffee mugs, lighters, key chains, wallets, you name it, all sporting the bearded, handsome revolutionary (now a quintessential capitalist icon) in his jaunty beret. Imagine if he had looked like Sartre. He’d have sunk into immediate oblivion. I recently

came across an article by Vargas Llosa in “The New Republic” that totally deconstructed the myth of Che. First, the writer pointed out that it’s not really unusual for personality cult followers to know little or nothing about the object of their “affections” (pointing out that Rastafarians, for example, would immediately renounce Selassie if they knew who he really was) and then documented how youth hero Che, in actuality, murdered or personally oversaw hundreds of executions without allowing the benefit of a trial: “to send men to the firing squad, judicial proof is unnecessary...these procedures are an archaic bourgeois detail!”(said the young, handsome, bearded revolutionary.) He then quotes Che’s views on justice as outlined in his 1967 “Message to the Tricontinental”: “hatred as an element of struggle; unbending hatred for the enemy, which pushes a human being beyond his natural limitations, making him into an effective, violent, selective, and cold-blooded killing machine.” And because Che seemed to have the need to record every little thing, there is also the text of a letter to his mother about how he experienced witnessing the overthrow of the revolutionary government of Arbenz, (which shows an alarming incapability to recognize the seriousness of death): “It was all a lot of fun, what with the bombs, speeches, and other distractions to break the monotony I was living in.”

So of course I started to wonder about the T-shirt wearers – athletes, musicians, domestic “terrorism” experts, Joe Friday and Saturday and Sunday – what are they promoting? Human killing machines? Extra-judicial executions? Jaunty berets? Where are the mugs, keychains, T-shirts bearing the face of an inspirational teacher, young scientist, generous neighbor, or local hero? No, no, the hapless minions prefer hundreds of intentional deaths, the cold-blooded killing machine motivated by pure hate! (I got a laugh out of what the Argentines, who have at least recognized their

folly, have done. Their T-shirts read: “Tengo una remera del Che y no sé por qué”, which rhymes perfectly in Spanish for “I have a Che T-shirt and I don’t know why!”)

Of course there are countless other examples, too many to mention, but perhaps as the last one I can address one that I have a personal connection to. As you can imagine by looking at me,

I was a kid your age in the revolutionary 60s and 70s. We weren’t sending SMSs, or sitting in front of computers, or reading texts on a screen instead of a good old-fashioned book. We were kicking butt! if you’ll excuse the phrase. The Vietnam war was happening and there were demonstrations every day. The police were making mass arrests, beating the demonstrators, and even killing them on occasion; for example at Kent State University which involved the shooting of unarmed college students by the Ohio National Guard on Monday, May 4, 1970. The guardsmen fired 67 rounds over a period of 13 seconds, killing four students and wounding nine others, one of whom suffered permanent paralysis.

But we had passion back then. We were fearless, perhaps too fearless at times. Our friends and relatives were being drafted in a war in another continent, for reasons that didn’t make sense to us. America was not in danger, we were not being attacked, as was the case here in Croatia, yet we were waging a questionable ideological war in a country most had barely even heard of. I lost dear friends in that war, and many other friends fled the country to Canada, refusing to serve.

At about that time, I came to Vienna to study German and met a Croatian guy. At first, I didn’t know what Croatia even was: a fruit, a vegetable? I fell in love, people, and left Vietnam behind, joining in time his mission in life: freedom and independence for his people from the Tito dictatorship. It was the same struggle we had been fighting in

America so it was a natural match: resistance to oppression, support of human and civil rights, protest against state sponsored violence... why not combine my ideals with those of my new love?

My first concrete action was something we all did in America: distribute protest leaflets against government actions. Totally natural for me. And totally permissible in the U.S. Freedom of speech, democracy....But this time I distributed anti-government leaflets on former Trg republike, now Ban Jelacica, on Dan Republike, from the balcony of the skyscraper in the year 1970. What happened next?

I was suddenly transformed by the Yugoslav and then international media from a simple protestor against oppression to a fascist and an Ustashi. An Ustashi, what was that, a fruit or a vegetable? Here we see another major subversion of history. At the time of my leaflet incident, the student strikes were on the horizon, the demands for more rights for the Croatians, for their own language. This came to be known as the Croatian Spring or MASPOK, a political movement that called for democratic and economic reforms in Yugoslavia and therefore more rights for Croatia within Yugoslavia. In 1971, the Yugoslav authorities suppressed the movement by force. Things were set in motion in March 1967 when a group of 130 influential Croatian poets and linguists, 80 of whom were Communists, published a Declaration on the Status and name of the Croatian Literary Language.

You might say that when I crossed paths with Zvonko in 1969, the time was ripe for all kinds of acts of resistance against the Yugoslav dictatorship. Yes dictatorship, although in the West the government was supported as Communistic with a human face due to Tito's alleged opposition to Trotsky. But what else to call it but a dictatorship when, for the distribution of simple leaflets, a punishment of up to 12 years in prison was an option? Yes, 12 years, according to Article 118 of the Yugoslav law on "hostile propaganda".

I have a copy here that the US Embassy translated after my arrest. And it's interesting to compare the confidential report they sent to Washington, D.C. about my leaflet throwing incident with the reaction in the Yugoslav media and government (which were always the same; the media served as its mouthpiece, common knowledge back then. And not unusual even today, in allegedly democratic Croatia that the media is used by the government). They commented that "Although the leaflets, although highly uncomplimentary to the Yugoslav leadership are not such as to invite public condemnation... they did not call for violent action but urged Croats to stand fast in the face of injustice.."

In other words, the U.S. felt the leaflets addressed reasonable and widely supported demands. The Yugoslav media, actually government, condemned the act as that of extremist, violent, fascist, Ustashi elements operating outside the country, a Yugoslav tactic used for over 50 years already to discredit any and all dissidents and opponents of the then government. The former U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, Laurence Silberman, recognized this soon after his arrival in Belgrade in the 1970s. In a widely quoted article in *Foreign Affairs*, he writes the following: "Croatian emigres are always described (note: by Yugoslav government) as Ustashi....no matter what political views they espouse. Furthermore, senior Yugoslavs are either convinced or find it useful to claim that the American government sponsors the activities of these emigres."

My point in bringing up this case is that, so many years later, this tactic remains in place. Critics of the previous SDP government, the majority not extremists at all, are continually labeled in the same way: extreme right-wingers, fascists, Ustashi, and so forth, thus cementing the historical subversion that occurred in the former Yugoslavia. WE must remember, as many intellectuals have pointed out, that

Communists are all the same ideologically, but anti-Communists are not! They include a wide ideological spectrum, - right-wingers to conservatives, and also liberals, socialists, anarchists....they are not an ideological bloc, regardless of the Yugoslav tactic of presenting them in this way.

As students of history, it is your task to research the “official” versions of the events you study, to dig deeper, to uncover the lies and disinformation, to expose them, to protest them, to correct them. And while we are currently considering some kind of legislation which would remove from public offices those who disseminated these lies and historical disinformation, and engaged in even worse acts, such as torture and murder, we might ask ourselves what the task of students is in these processes. What, for example, is the role of students if such individuals are part of the university system itself, in today’s Croatia?

One such case reported recently in the media, but not enough, is that of Ante Barišić, amazingly still today a professor of political science at the University of Zagreb, and, according to the testimony of Marko Grubisic, a student political prisoner in the 1980s, also a former torturer! In a recent Jutarnji List interview, Grubisic related what had happened to him:

”Mr. Barišić is one of the successors of the SDS services which employed repressive and illegal measures during investigations of the so-called Lašćinski proces, 1982./1983. godine. Some of the measures used against me included: locking me to a radiator with special cuffs known as “Spanish”, accompanied by extreme interrogation intended to produce the desired answers; threats of death delivered with a pistol pressed against my forehead; threats to throw me out the window from the third floor, and so on.”

Barisic has never denied the allegations. I don't know, but if we American students in the 60s heard of such a professor teaching at our university, there would be immediate mass demonstrations, protests, media actions, petitions, demands from the university and government representatives for his removal and appropriate sanctions. We would boycott his classes or disrupt them, we would be loud and aggressive – not violent since that is destructive – but we would make sure he would never stand in front of students again and teach them about politics, history, or anything else.

What have the students here done so far? Obviously nothing. He is still a figure of “authority”, teaching political science to the future leaders and intellectuals of Croatia. It's absolutely unbelievable. (note: Barisic has died in the interim.) So this is what I was referring to earlier about the differences between the students of the 60s to which I belonged, to the students of today. I went to prison in Yugoslavia for throwing simple leaflets. I'm not saying this to praise myself – there were hundreds, thousands of others far braver than I - but to illustrate that we were prepared to make sacrifices for our ideals and beliefs back then.

Today's youth, it seems to me, is unwilling to do that. There has been no demonstration against Barisic or anything else, even though this kind of action is permitted today and there is no personal sacrifice to be made, except time! Where is the passion? Where are the ideals? I'll leave these questions for you to answer, you students of what I feel is the most critical area of investigation at today's universities. Take control of your past, which requires researching and then analyzing what REALLY happened, whether it be in the Ukraine, in Bolivia, or here in Croatia and the former Yugoslavia, in order that you are in control of the future. Otherwise, it will be created for you and then you have absolutely nothing to complain about.

DAWN-MAIDEN

Author: **Lidija Bajuk**

Translation by: **Barbara Močnik, David Read**

I'm a slave, yes, of the dark night.
When shall I meet my dear sweetheart?
The new Moon proudly leads the small stars
silently round, round the house.
With his very long silver hair,
gentle skin and ghostly footwear.
, Outside there is a horse's hoofbeat
giving his buckles the Moon wants me to treat.
Gives me buckles made of stone,
wants to be sure I'm not alone.
Playing his pipe the Moon is pale,
choosing for me a dress and veil.
Greet me with his shiny eye,
guesses my thoughts without deny(ing).
Gives me kisses and a smile
dancing, teasing for a while.
Drinking wine and offers cakes,
but in my soul the day breaks.
»Let's start dancing!« says the Sun 'loud
while the faries sail on a white cloud.

I welcome them and the wild horse neighs,
the pale Moon jerks changing his ways.
The night escapes in a trap of gold
with the Milky Way the Moon does a bolt.
»I don't love you! Can't you see?
The Sun is in the circle with me.«

KNEYA¹⁰

Author: **Lidija Bajuk**

Translation by: **Antonija Kavaš**

I lit the candle to drive away the dark, delusion and loneliness. The shadows are murmuring, the ground is undulating under my feet, the creaking, wooden doors suddenly open in front of me. The cottage and I, like an apple and its seed, bid our farewells in silence, because we know that light remains in the heart, just as a scent in memory.

The bushes are parting, behind me the grass is growing, wild eyes of beasts are glowing, I turn back, I have a presentiment. A lone chimney is beckoning to me. Far away from it, on rocky land, my God, the world is falling apart!

I am running, in tears, I must continue on! I stumble over tree roots, my knees are bleeding. Suddenly, I find myself on a rustling bed of leaves, as a roe with its nose tends to my bruises. Near the oak-tree, a good fairy is stoking a fire as she awkwardly whispers: »Don't be afraid! You are safe here. Do you understand? You are safe here.«

Soothed, I close my eyes, remembering her words...

¹⁰ An ancient, mystic, mythical forest from the northern part of Croatia

AFRIKA

Author: **Tomislav Marijan Bilosnić**

Translated by **Roman Karlović**

Will God ever forgive us

Will God ever forgive us
we'll know one day
will the heavens remain of indigo hue
we'll see
inside the bottleneck
Across the canopy, the music calls to us
there's someone crying
hidden in the woods
Will God
bound to truth for life
remain a mirage
constantly elusive
to a night-begotten soul
Will God, O say, will God
remain a keepsake
and the dark
before the candle's lit

When waterdrops petrify

The stone I can decipher like a book
and earth
and air
and sand, too
the calligraphy of stars
I watch the dead disappear
the virgin forest
pile up into crust
into a polished script
carved into the stone
Waterdrops petrify,
the words –
all that contends with gravity –
believe
it is their God

The lion hunt

Every lion will return
to his old lair
the dwelling unrecalled for generations
once the hunters have forgotten
and the alchemists
renounced their hope
that the *ambassa* will be turned to gold
That is Amharic for the lion
whose location is unknown to all
except the lioness that haunts
his fatal dream
Ambassa ambassa
the black mane's roar is heard
that won't survive the growth of teeth
the Kenyan people are gone hunting
leaving for Mau Mau
they took along the fence as well
their wives's skin
to catch off guard the very best security
the roar that melts the lead ball too
Every lion will return
to his old lair
grown into a recollection of the lion hunt

An African's prayer

O my God, every time I enter sleep

I step into your court

a dead room in the earth

O my black God, in caves

this teeming life is

carved into the rock

a leopard's gaping jaws

with human heads

for feet

O God, my God, before you venture in

and to the spirits sacrifice a bird

let those who have begun

their life on earth, accomplish it

O my God, take me, breathlike

love me as I'm dreaming

woe to the African, for he trusts

dreams

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

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

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

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