

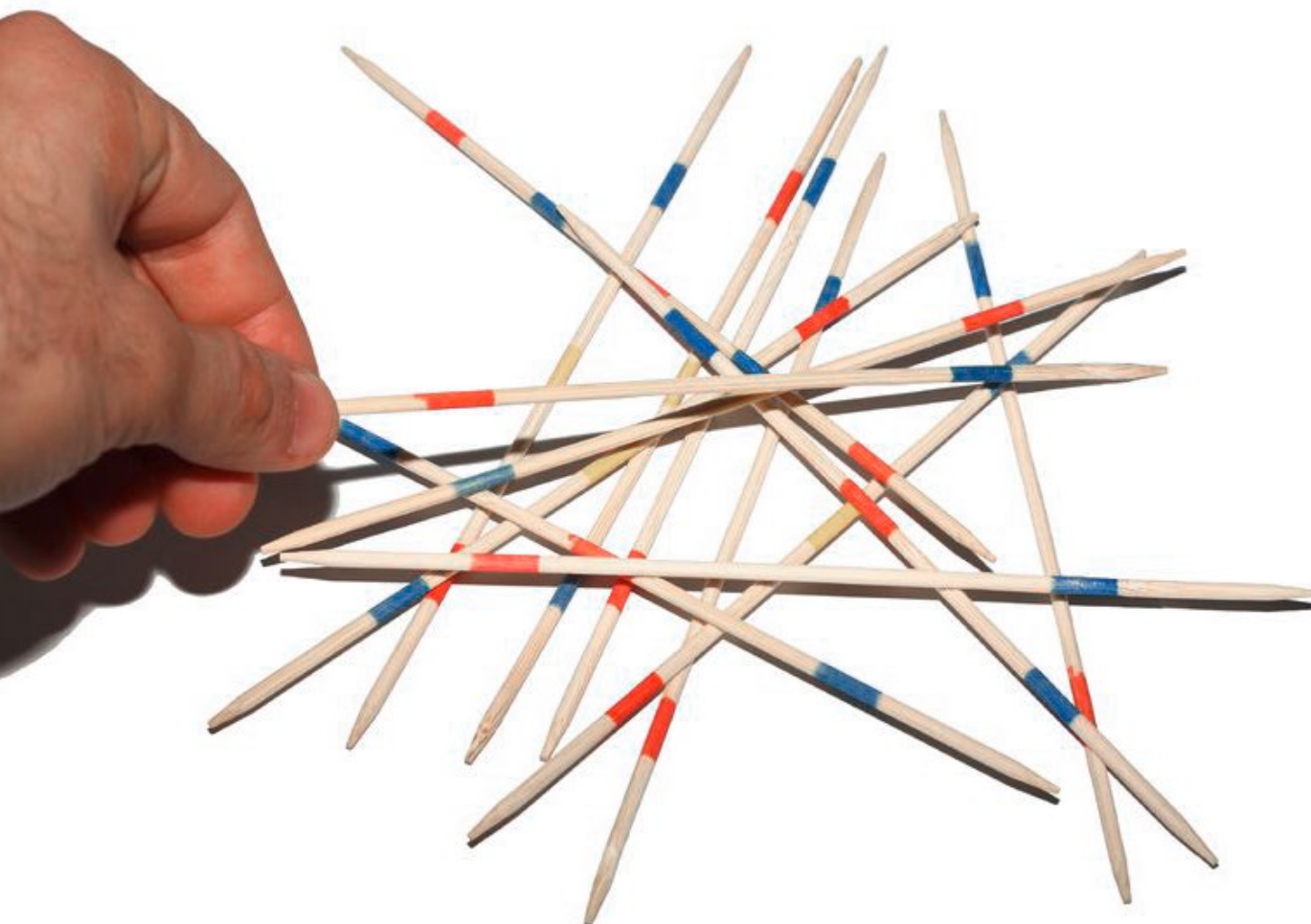


HELSINKI COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SERBIA

# THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF YUGOSLAVIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA

*Developing polypeitharchic history*

Srđan M. Jovanović



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THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF YUGOSLAVIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA – Developing polypeitharchic history

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# Contents

Introduction	5
CHAPTER I – Developing Polypeitharchic History	22
CHAPTER II – The Story	49
CHAPTER III – Unity	64
CHAPTER IV – Dramatis Personae	73
CHAPTER V – The Big And The Small	91
CHAPTER VI – Gender, Sexuality And Rape	99
CHAPTER VII – Language	117
CHAPTER VIII – Religion	137
CHAPTER IX – The Story, Once Again	157
CHAPTER X – Instead Of A Conclusion	182
List Of Maps	190
List Of Tables	191
Bibliography	192

*I have lived among people of letters, who have written history without being involved in practical affairs, and among politicians, who have spent all their time making things happen, without thinking about describing them. I have always noticed that the former see general causes everywhere while the latter, living among the unconnected facts of everyday life, believe that everything must be attributed to specific incidents and that the little forces that they play in their hands must be the same as those that move the world. It is to be believed that both are mistaken.*

– ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *Souvenirs*

## INTRODUCTION

*Historians have a duty to speak out, even  
if they are certain to be ignored.*

– PATRICK GEARY

### OF CONTEXT, HISTORY, HISTORIOGRAPHY AND RELEVANCE

A third of my adult life I have lived in what used to be known as the capital of Yugoslavia, Belgrade. The second third I have spent in what was known as Czechoslovakia, in the Moravian city of Olomouc. Yet both countries came into existence and ceased to exist within the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many would say that similarities were aplenty. Both countries were formed in the immediate aftermath of the Great War (though Yugoslavia was initially called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), both suffered immensely during World War II, both endured almost half a century of Communist rule, both expired by the end of the century. However, the differences were far greater than the similarities, especially when it comes to the breakup of the two states, as ‘the process of that breakup was vastly different in the two states: it was virtually painless in Czechoslovakia, while it is excruciatingly painful in Yugoslavia’ (Bookman 1994, 175). Much has been written on the two topics, with the death of Yugoslavia probably receiving the most attention, due to the sheer brutality of the bloody breakup during the 1990s, yet a comparative research – to my knowledge – has seen scant attention, with a few notable exceptions (Bookman 1994, Bunce 1999). Approaches to the aforementioned

historical instances have been aplenty though, and this work will concentrate primarily on Yugoslavia, using the same issue on the topic of the Czech Republic as a comparative counterweight, in an attempt to expand historical research broadly enough to power a solid explanatory mechanism.

But do let us approach the topic from a different point of view. In the vast world of English literature study, there are two very well known names – Louis Cazamian and Emile Legouis. Cazamian and Legouis are recognized as the Frenchmen who wrote one of the most insightful and revealing histories of *English* literature (Legouis and Cazamian 1927). Though one would have expected Englishmen, both Cazamian and Legouis were, as the names tell us – *French*. This fact came as no huge surprise to me. Patriotism, nationalism, loving one's homeland and other instances of deep underlying bias have been keeping thwarting scientific objectivity for almost two centuries now, since the beginnings of multifarious national movements (and the very concept of the 'nation' as we know it today) by the romantically oriented thinkers of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. If one *willingly belongs* to a certain nation or people, chances are he will write about that nation's literature and that nation's authors with great praise and even greater subjectivity; a significant body of research testifies to such a claim (ESF 2006, Berger 2007a). In my days of more active language and literature studies, I had been encountering such instances on an almost daily basis. German literature historians were writing about Goethe on every second page, the Swedes tried to put Strindberg's name wherever possible, the Norwegians had their mouths full of Henrik Ibsen, while the English, as one could have expected, did most of their discourse about Shakespeare. And all the time I kept finding Robert Herrick's poetry more captivating than Shakespeare's, while Achim von Arnim and Frank Wedekind, in my eyes, stood at least on the same value scale as Johan Wolfgang von Goethe. Although we are more often than not dealing with personal views on the subject in literature, something triggered my attention, especially after reading about Goethe's cry for a 'literature of the world' and the plea to stop drawing national boundaries in literature, a notion easily transferred to the study

of the past. Albert Einstein was not a genius because he was a German or a Jew. One always has to take a few steps back in order to see the ‘bigger picture’. We need to stop making boundaries, fullstop.

Going back to the topic, one of the arguably best, by far most comprehensive histories of modern Serbia was written relatively recently. Coming from the pen of a *German* historian, Holm Sundhaussen, the *History of Serbia in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries* is by far one of the most successful histories written about a region of the Balkans that I have ever read (Sundhaussen 2007). With a lucid, somber approach, the author analyses the last two centuries of not only political, but *cultural* development as well, in a rather synthetic, all-encompassing *Weltanschauung*. The only appropriate counterpart I found for the Czech Republic was, unsurprisingly, a work written by an anthropologist, a scientist who wrote a detailed, deep-delving work that could be classified as anthropological, historical and sociological. The author’s name is Ladislav Holý, with his work *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation* (Holý 1996). Anthropologists may well be the only ones who can boast some greater levels of objectivity in social sciences, thanks to the intrinsic demands of their discipline – explanation of human societies, behavior and development from above (there will be talk about ‘objectivity’ in the chapters to come). As Georg Iggers noticed, it is small wonder that an anthropological approach to history seems to be ‘even more urgent’ (Iggers 2004, 146–154). Needless to say yet arguably very useful to mention, a *non-Croatian historian* writing about the history of Croatia is not necessarily *objective*. Ultimate objectivity – as propounded by 19<sup>th</sup> century positivists – does not exist. As the Czech historian Dušan Třeštík wrote, positivism is *dead*. One should abandon the positivist dualist idea of an objective reality and subjective understanding of it (Třeštík 2005). However, that does not mean that knowledge is *unattainable*. This shall all be discussed in much detail in the following chapter. What I wanted to emphasize in this paragraph that historians writing from a different cultural, personal and geographical perspective tend to have a ‘fresher’ view, so to speak, in

which much of the potential local bias (whether national, religious, ethnic) tends to be removed.

Due to reasons described above, this is the moment in which I get influenced by the prolific French philosopher and educator, Michel Onfray. Onfray, namely, prefers to *present himself* to the reader (Onfray 2005). He is of the view – and may I add, rightly so – that the author influences the subject of his work in a rather strong way. Even Ladislav Holý felt the need to present himself in more detail in his *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*. One should also perhaps mention Edward Carr, the noted historian, who said that one should ‘study the historian before you study the facts’, echoed by Lawrence Stone and Frank Ankersmit (Carr 1962, Stone and Spiegel 1992). Theodor Zeldin stressed how knowing one’s self is a very useful property of a good historian (Zeldin 1981). As it is close to impossible to completely remove one’s self from the matter of discussion, so the reader should be made aware *whom* he is getting his data from. The writer/scientist/academician should be frank towards the reader. In the same vein do I thus find it to be a matter of importance for the reader, whether he be an academician or a layman, to know where I, as the author of this work, stand.

There are other approaches to the subject, and one should at this moment mention Roland Barthes and his arguing that there is no difference between truth and fiction, as well as the ‘whole world is a text’ (Evans 2001, 253). Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida went so far as to even try to eliminate the author as a relevant factor in the production of the text, trying to ‘liberate’ the text from its author (Iggers 2004). As Iggers noticed, for Foucault, history thus loses its significance altogether. Why would one want to write historical texts at all then, if the very significance is *lost*? This postmodern school of historiography goes entirely against basic de Saussurean linguistics, wholly negating the unity (although arbitrary) between the signifier and the signified (how quaint that *post-structuralism* became the theoretical foundation of postmodernism). The fact that the unity is *arbitrary* does not mean it does not exist, or that it is random. As Iggers put it,



‘(...) for Derrida, this unity no longer exists. Instead he sees an infinite number of signifiers without clear meanings, because there is no Archimedean point from which a clear meaning can be assigned. For historiography this means a world without meaning, devoid of human actors, human volitions or intentions, and totally lacking coherence’ (Iggers 2004).

That is why this position has not been accepted by a significant number of scholars (a majority, it seems), as the whole world and the entirety of human actions simply loses both their significance and point from the postmodernist point of view – why study anything if the *a priori* postulate is that we cannot understand it? The text *cannot* be entirely liberated from its author, as the author leaves a sort of an *imprint* on the text. But what *can* be done is having the author *liberate himself* from as many an influences as possible, which is exactly where I stand. As Richard Evans of Cambridge put it, ‘the historian has to develop a detached mode of cognition, a faculty of self-criticism and an ability to understand another person’s point of view’ (Evans 2001, 252).

As I have already noted, and what especially applies to studies of history, the historian’s affiliation to a particular nation stands as the most prominent of hindrances. In my case, though, there is no such issue, as I do not belong to any *people*, *nation* or *ethnicity*. Much in the vein of Benedict Anderson, Patrick Geary, Ulrich Ammon, Eric Hobsbawm, Carsten Weiland (and many, truly many others) I realize that the nation is not much more than an ‘imagined community’ and that the subject himself chooses if he wants to belong to this invented social group or not. I simply choose *not to*. Being that there is no objective, existing link between me and any other nation, I always openly claim not to possess any nationality or belong to any nation. When it comes to the question of ethnicity, the UCLA historian Patrick Geary, in his revealing work *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, has already noticed that *ethnicity* as well only exists *in the minds of those who think it does*, in a thoroughly solipsistic fashion (Geary 2002). Thus, I hail from no ethnic group as well. I find this more than relevant to share with the reader as it is rather clear that nation/ethnicity affiliations

quite unambiguously have the tendency to make the researcher partial. Skeptics on the matter of the lack of factual existence of nations and ethnicities would comment that both nations and ethnicities actually do exist, and that I am in huge error. As this work does not wish to tackle the immense problem of concepts such as nationalities and ethnicities in *such* detail, as there has been ample production on the topic (Kedourie 1961, Smith 1983, Geary 2002, Wodak et al. 2009, Habermas 1992), there is but one simple rebuttal to this remark – *it does not matter* even if I am outright wrong about nations and ethnic groups. What matters is the fact that even if I were completely and utterly wrong, and nations and ethnicities *are* fact-based instances of our reality, the fact is that I do not *think* them to be such, and I do not *feel* tied to any of the abovementioned. This alone allows me to take a step back and observe historical issues with a more lucid approach, a more solemn point of view. My name and surname (at the moment of writing this) can be tied to almost any country/state/region/area in former Yugoslavia, the genes that I inherited on the Y chromosome do tie me genetically even to a far Scandinavian ancestry, but I neither consider myself to be a Croat nor a Serb, a Montenegrin nor a Macedonian, a Norwegian nor a Swede. To those who actually do think that there is a connection between a person and his name (a designation *given, imposed* on a person, thus not being a matter of his or hers own choice), I will just offer essential linguistics (semantics) and semiotics, reminding of the fact that there is no preordained connection between the *signified* and the *signifier* (i.e. the *signans* and the *signatum*, as described in de Saussure's *Course de Linguistique Generale*) (De Saussure 1989). Last, though not least, Ernest Renan himself already noticed that the development of historical sciences often mean a danger to the nation (Renan 1882). Simplified: the more somber, scientific the approach, the easier it is to understand that nations are just products of the mind, however real and dangerous these product may be in reality. Miloš Řezník, the Czech historian, claimed how one could not leave the 'national framework' without taking a position on national identity himself (Řezník 2006). This, in that case, might simple be the case of me taking a 'position' that is entirely constructivist and

negatively ontological. Having in mind all of the above, I shall proceed in the manner of the cultural anthropologist Marvin Harris, who wrote how there is ‘nothing wrong with setting out to study certain cultural patterns because one wants to change them. Scientific objectivity does not arise from having no biases – everyone is biased – but from taking care not to let one’s biases influence the result of the research’ (Harris 1997).

The choice of the topic of this work – the creation and breakup of two states, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, of which much was written *separately* (especially during the last two decades), might need some further elaboration.

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a time of trouble and commotion. Nobody was *prepared* for World War I, at the time only known as the Great War; for indeed it had been the largest military conflict the planet has seen so far. In a very flawed and disconcerting world, war has been both *common*, as well as a *customary* and *accepted* way of solving geopolitical issues and power struggles for millennia. Yet no one had ever expected a bloodbath of such mammoth proportions. Having also in mind the dreary, bleak period of the *fin de siècle* just a short while before, one can only imagine the trepidation and disillusionment many a man and woman used to feel at the time. (On a more despondent note, nobody seemed to learn from it as well, as World War II was but a couple of decades away.)

In such a post-war commotion many a country had been broken, many a country had been formed. Perhaps worried by the constant shift of power between major and minor forces in the world (primarily in Europe), many people seemed to have seen strength in numbers, thus starting to join forces in more or less weak alliances and states. The Soviet Union was formed after the fall of the Russian tzardom, a conglomerate state comprising hundreds of millions of people of various backgrounds. In Central Europe, *Czechoslovakia* was formed, while the Balkans saw the birth of what will soon become *Yugoslavia*, the country of the South Slavs (with the exception of Bulgaria, which has often waged war with other South Slavic countries), at the time named the *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*. Formed at the same time, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia

lived to see rather different fates. Even during the age of Communism, from the fall of the forces of the Axis and the introduction of Communist thought and state-running throughout Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia differed hugely.

There was a time when a significant number of Czechs and Slovaks (sometime even referred to as Czechoslovaks) even considered going to Yugoslavia for good, primarily in order to try to receive the invaluable ‘red passport’, being that the Yugoslav passport *i.e.* Yugoslav *citizenship* allowed the holder to travel freely across Europe. So strong is the positive memory of the red passport that even nowadays, from Croatia do Macedonia, all the older generations often pine for it, while the rather popular musician from Vojvodina, Serbia, Đorđe Balašević (a singer and composer who seems to be equally popular in all the countries of former Yugoslavia, perhaps igniting a spark of so-called ‘yugonostalgia’ in some of those who like him), chose to immortalize it in one of his songs, *Devedesete*, referring to it as the ‘flawless red passport / that passes through borders / without much ado’. After the fall of communism worldwide, the situation in the two countries continued to develop in two entirely different directions: while Communism really *ended* in Czechoslovakia, in Yugoslavia it transformed itself gradually into something that can be classified only with extreme difficulty, a kind of state-based nationalistic oligarchy run from the state capitol, Belgrade. In the words of Valere P. Gagnon,

‘instead, Yugoslavia shifted from being the cutting edge of East European socialist theory and practice, the most open and liberal society in the region, the socialist country with the region’s highest per capita income, and deemed most likely to join the European Community, to being not only behind the regional curve but also the site of growing political conflict which, a little more than a year later, would lead to violent warfare and to the dominance of authoritarian forces which successfully prevented the kinds of shifts seen elsewhere in the region’ (Gagnon Jr 2010, 23).

While the nineties served the newly separate Czech Republic and Slovakia as a period in which they would embark on the arduous process of ‘catching up’ with the

Western world, eventually even to join the European Union in 2004, the same period in Yugoslavia became world known for the first massive genocides after World War II as well as an immense growth of nationalist and religious thought, while the already decrepit country started to slowly disassemble itself. It would be indeed difficult to find anybody praising a Macedonian or Bosnian passport nowadays; the tables have turned noticeably (with the sole exception of Slovenia). A portion of this work will try to contribute to the explanation of these differences.

What immediately needs to be mentioned is that the disappearing of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (as well as the USSR) is most commonly regarded as a ‘breakup’, ‘disassembling’. These designations, however, fail to properly depict the vastly different situations in which these states found themselves prior to the end of their official existence, as well as the very reasons and processes through which their existence came to an end. Though the Czech Republic and Slovakia really did ‘break up’, i.e. *split*, Yugoslavia started to crumble in on itself (and still *is* in the process, according to some). *The process of the dismemberment of Yugoslavia is best described as the process of its parts trying to break free from Serbia’s grasp, one by one.* This is a very important instance in choosing a viewpoint for the analysis of the end of Yugoslavia, and it represents the realization of the fact that Eric Hobsbawm put so clearly in his *Age of Extremes*, when he wrote how after the Great War, ‘Serbia was expanded into a large new Yugoslavia’ (Hobsbawm 1994). To put it in a broader context, *the history of Yugoslavia in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century is the history of Serbia and its neighbors/satellites trying to break free from it.* A similar view can be found in Holm Sundhaussen’s *History of Serbia* in the moment the author asks whether the question of the creation of Yugoslavia ‘was about Yugoslav unification, or tying of several Yugoslav nations (if yes, then how many?) or was it an *enlarged Serbia?*’ (Sundhaussen 2008). The *Hrvatski dnevnik* in 1918 wrote: ‘What is Yugoslavia, after all? You can only understand it as “Great Serbia”, nothing more!’ (Kamberović 2009). According to the Belgrade historian, Nikola Samardžić, what is more, ‘Serbia is the main reason for the violent breakup of Yugoslavia’ (Samardžić 2011, 8). Nonetheless, being the ‘main

reason’ is far from being the ‘wholeness’ of it. This is but a part of what I shall try to depict in this work.

At the moment of writing, the number of states that used to be part of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia is problematic to enumerate, and seems to be increasing each couple of years due to the simple crumbling up of Serbia’s parts and satellites. The countries at hand are Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, as well as the not completely recognized, newly formed and still not completely recognized state of Kosovo and the ill-defined (or, better to say, *undefined*) *entity* within Bosnia and Herzegovina, the so-called Republic of Srpska (*Republika Srpska*), whose status is a matter of political and legal dispute, not to mention a linguistic miscreation (the syntax of the nominal phrase is invalid in modern Serbo-Croatian, as the adjective comes before the noun in Ser-Cro. syntax). All in all, we are speaking about seven to nine states or *stateoids* (I am introducing the concept of the *stateoid* as an ill-defined political entity that looks like a state in many aspects, but can hardly be classified as one, due to the questions of unrecognized and disputed borders, disputed leadership, and the like). It is clear that writing an encompassing history of theirs throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century is no small task indeed, yet only such a bird’s eye view, all-encompassing and interdisciplinary, can give us proper results. Naturally, being that the matter of discussion is so broad (up to nine states), one has to narrow down. Since more problems have been noticed in (former) Yugoslavia than in (former) Czechoslovakia, it is clear that some more space will be spent on Yugoslavia than on Czechoslovakia. Within Yugoslavia, however, having in mind Hobsbawm’s defining of the state as an ‘enlarged Serbia’ (Hobsbawm 1994), most of the analysis will have to concentrate on Serbia itself. Mini-states such as Montenegro and Macedonia, on the other hand, have played an arguably small role in the development of Yugoslavia’s history both in the beginning and the end of the union (at least when it regards the issues of analysis within this work). Without any traces of eventual ‘political correctness’ that tries to boast any states role in history once it has been officially formed

(which a diligent scholar could easily call the bane of scientific objectivity), one has to realize that some instances are more important than others; to be more precise, some instances (geopolitical regions, countries, states, stateoids – we can call them whatever we want at this point) have played only a minor role in what we perceive as history. Eric Hobsbawm is one of those relevant historians who were not afraid to utter the obvious – he called Montenegro at the time of the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes a ‘formerly independent small tribal kingdom of herdsmen and raiders’ (Hobsbawm 1994). Such a level of relevance it will keep during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, and not much more could I add to it within the frame of this work.

The monograph began as an integral one, trying to encompass the creation and breakup of both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in a broad, interdisciplinary perspective. During the course of the work, however, many issues presented themselves, and a direction slowly started to arise amidst the panoply of happenings, issues, individuals and historical/political/cultural entities, drawing the work to concentrate more heavily on Yugoslavia and its breakup (as its case is *significantly* more complex, *ergo*, in need of more space and effort), using the parallel between itself and the fate of Czechoslovakia to help the examination. Furthermore, I have taken this work to develop the beginning of a framework of interdisciplinary historical methodology that I have dubbed ‘polypeitharchic history’, a broad approach to historical and sociopolitical developments, which will be elaborated on in the following chapter. The work, to further emphasize, does not follow the old, traditional ‘kings and battles’ approach to history, that is, strict *event-to-event geopolitical history* that is still common in many places.<sup>1</sup> As Evans noted, ‘political history is now only written by a minority’ (Evans 1999, 163), while the voices of historians such as Elton and Himmelfarb, who try to convince the academia that a historian should return to traditional political history, are no more than ‘whistling in the wind’,

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1 It would be useful to notice that the ‘kings and battles’ approach seem to be more common in Europe as one goes geographically towards the East. Western historiography has accepted other types of history a time ago (intellectual history, cultural history, Begriffsgeschichte, gender history etc).



to use Evans' description. When it comes to the history written nowadays in former Czechoslovakia (primarily the Czech Republic), it pleases me to say that other types of history have already been present for a while, even though political history is still the most popular area of historical research. As Michal Kopeček noticed, 'there has been a growing interest in the approaches of oral history, gender history, or environmental history, written mainly by younger historians, historical sociologists, cultural anthropologists and literary historians, usually educated abroad and inspired by French, German, or American historical scholarship and methodological innovations' (Kopeček 1989, 80). Maren Lorenzová, for instance, wrote in detail about the 'anthropologization of history', connecting history with neurophysiology and psychoanalysis (Lorenzová 2005), whilst Dušan Třeštík included anthropology in his work (primarily Clifford Geertz), chaos theory and Neo-Darwinism (with stress on the work on Richard Dawkins, which my work will do as well). These I find to be very encouraging, as much of this work will stem from the starting points defined by, for example, Dawkins and Geertz. Geertz' explanation of the importance of *minimal differences* and societal instances will help much in further elucidating those factors that might sound less important (or even simply *strange*, such as the influence of climate, see the Appendix), while the work (and academic influence) of Richard Dawkins will be crucial to the explanation of the religious factors that have played a large role in the breakup of Yugoslavia. According to Zdeňek Nešpor, since 1989, we can follow the adoption of 'modern western methodological approaches' in history such as historical anthropology (Nešpor 2005, 87) and sociology; these being only the first of all; other approaches were to come gradually, as Harna noticed, for instance, economic history developing strongly after 1990 (Harna 2001, 130), and this work will continue in the relatively same direction.

These approaches have already been used in the debates regarding the beginning and end of Czechoslovakia. However, the issue of Yugoslavia is a less known and less popular topic within the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and only few works have been written on the topic, the majority of which belonging to the standard political history



approach. The impressive 700 pages long volume *Dějiny Jihoslovanských zemí*, compiled by Šesták, Tejchman, Havlíková, Hladký and Pelikán is one of the more exhaustive histories written about Yugoslavia in the Czech Republic. Content-wise and information-wise, the work is quite useful, especially for those who lack historical knowledge of the Yugoslav states. The work, simply put, contains valuable information. Yet its explanatory value is not as high as one might want it to be. It is a work of relatively typical old-fashioned geopolitical ‘kings and battles’ history, going chronologically from one event to the other, telling a long, long story. There is, needless to say, *nothing wrong in telling a story*, and all the facts that Miroslav Šesták *et al* gave are quite well written, yet the lack of the explanatory moment is quite visible. For instance, when writing about the ‘bloody end of the Yugoslav state’, Šesták *et al* wrote how, when Slovenia declared independence in 1991, the Yugoslav army was very capable of dealing with the small Slovenian army, yet ‘for an energetic intervention, there was no political will’. Yet – *why* was there a lack of political will? Is that not the key question? This is a typical example in which a fact is simply stated, yet never elaborated or explained. In the following paragraphs, it is noticed that the regime of Franjo Tuđman ‘purposefully discriminated and provoked the Serb community’, yet *why* never gets elucidated. ‘The majority of the Croats supported the policies of Tuđman’s regime,’ the authors continued, yet again – there was no explanation *why*. The whole volume is written in this way, and these three examples are taken from just one random page (Šesták *et al*. 1998, 579). A history concentrating on the cultural (which can be said that much of this dissertation adheres to), especially when it comes to these issues, is scant. As Josef Harna noticed, ‘modern Czech historiography has not yet sufficiently mastered either a theory or methodology of cultural history to compare with those that have been in use in some other countries for decades’ (Harna 2001, 137).

A similar example is the work of František Šístek on Montenegro, an attempted monograph romantically entitled *Naša braća na jugu* (‘Our brothers in the South’, original published in Czech, *Naši bratři na jihu. Obraz Černe Hory a Černhorců v česke společnosti*,

1830–2006), originally written in Czech, and then translated to Serbo-Croatian (Šístek 2009). A somewhat useful source of information, this work stands as a mini-encyclopedia on the relatively minuscule topic of Czech/Montenegrin relations, seen exclusively from a Czech point of view. On hundreds of pages, the author tells stories and describes travel documents and paintings. He attempts to analyze the views of the Czech on Montenegro by examining mostly the paintings of Jaroslav Čermak and writings of Jozef Holeček. He admits that his work ‘attempts to achieve the atmosphere of a gallery, in which the author assumes the role of both the curator and the guide’ (Šístek 2009, 11). His whole work actually *is* a gallery, in which the author attempts to examine what he thinks are the visions of Montenegro from an exclusively Czech point of view. Yet his approach is both methodologically lacking as well as extremely narrow and old-fashioned. There is not a *single sentence* on theory or potential methodology. The analysis of a literary text is a well-developed discipline within *literature studies* and *discourse analysis*. There are rules and methods by which this is achieved. One has to analyze stylistic figures, for instance – did the author whose text we are examining use the hyperbole often? How often was metaphore used and in which manner? How about the synegdoche? Or the metonymy? None of this is even mentioned by Šístek, who fully ignored a panoply of authors who are experts in the necessary fields. Furthermore, one has to position him or herself within a certain school of literary criticism and analysis. Is it the New Criticism? Or perhaps the cultural studies approach? Which experts on literary criticism were called upon? Next – discourse analysis. Which authors does one draw upon here? George Lakoff? Zellig Harris? Teun van Dijk, perhaps? Or perhaps the works of Ruth Wodak in Critical Discourse Analysis? Norman Fairclough’s seminal *Language and Power* is, for instance, an ineluctable work for Šístek’s topic. There is an unsurmountable plethora of scholarly production that could (or *should*) have been used (Wodak 2001, van Dijk 1993). Šístek prominently fails even to *mention* these works and authors, seemingly completely unaware of their existence. When it comes to the examination of works of art (paintings, in this case), there are also well developed

schools of art criticism and examination (Osborne 1971, Machajdik and Hanbury 2010, Dickie 1997). The author does not mention them as well. His work is ‘history’ in the oldest, most traditional manner of speaking – digging through primary sources and attempting to interpret them without *any* theoretical academic background, poor even from the standpoint of ‘old school’ history. That is why his work ended up simply as a layman’s gallery of pictures, text and shallow interpretation.<sup>2</sup> In most of former Yugoslavia, as I shall proceed to show, the situation is even worse.

The third example I shall take from the work of the Head of the Department of History at the Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy (an influential public position), Radoš Ljušić, and his work *Karađorđe*. The vision of history in which it becomes exclusively a story, and nothing else, is complete in the works of Ljušić. He starts by enumerating one by one irrelevant bit of information concentrating on the prominent 18<sup>th</sup> century Serb figure, Karađorđe, even using a language often seen in literary works:

‘Karađorđe’s father, Petar, lived such a difficult life that he could not even afford to pay the taxes, so his village took over the obligation. It was written that the village chief, having seen emblems of war on the newborn baby, told Karađorđe’s mother: “Aye, my young woman, your son shall be a great hero and a great man”. Karađorđe’s grandfather Jovan moved to Šumadija with his sons Petar and Mirko and made house in Viševac. Petar married Marica, the daughter of Petar Živković of Masloševo. Due to poverty, the family lived a bad life. Petar earned a living caring about bees in Turkish beehives, while Marica took care about the house and did hard labor. Forced to work on the land and with the horses, she became so proficient in riding, that they called her Marica the Horsewoman’ (Ljušić 1986).

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2 To make ‘bad things worse’, Šistek wrote how the version of the book I am referring to was translated into *Montenegrin* (*sic!*), the proponents of which are known to be ideologically driven nationalists from Montenegro, as well a trivial number of pseudoacademicians not originally from Montenegro (primarily from South Poland), but possessing a liking towards it due to Silesian local-patriotism.

The rest of the work goes in the same direction, by simple enumeration of peoples and events, chronological when possible, reminiscing of an epic fantasy tale. There is a complete and utter lack of all and any explanatory instances. This all reminds of the account given by the known medieval historian, R. W. Southern, when he worked with Ferdinand Lot, the French historian. In 1933, Southern's disappointment was tangible, as his view of Lot's seminar is that it 'wasn't penetrating enough. There was, to be sure, no lack of subtlety or complexity, no lack either of penetrating criticism of sources or imaginative force in interpreting them. All that was lacking was the study of the minds of the main actor' (Southern 2008, 131). Note that psychology (the 'study of the mind') will be crucial to the later development of interdisciplinary history within this monograph.

As another example, a review of historical works done in Croatia shows that a vast majority of history is written (and taught) in a very typical, old-fashioned way. Damir Agičić of the Department of History at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb, has compiled a review of the postgraduate works done in his department. Most of the thesis defended were strictly of national direction (histories of Croatian affairs), with barely any (if at all) topics relating to other countries, social history, *Begriffsgeschichte*, intellectual history or any other history at all (Agičić 2009). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance, the journal *Historijska traganja*, though quite useful and full of information, also sticks almost exclusively to political history. In Serbia, some authors have noticed how history books, especially textbooks 'look like pre-military education', and how historiography 'seemed to have missed a few steps in the development of historical science' (Petrović Todosijević 2010, 64).

On the other side, works stemming from the territory of former Yugoslavia that deal with the Yugoslav issues have been – unsurprisingly – much more abundant, while works concentrating on Czechoslovakia have been exceedingly rare. Yet a significant difference in historiography and production of historical works between the lands formerly belonging to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia is easy seen. Modern tendencies in historical studies, whilst having reached the Czech Republic, for instance, barely

scratched the surface in Serbia, Bosnia or Croatia. Aside from a select few historians mostly concentrated around the politically liberal wing of the Department of History of the University of Belgrade (other universities have only minor departments of history), most history is still being written in the old fashioned way (the already given example of Radoš Ljušić, a leading historian in Serbia, being a symptomatic example), in most countries of former Yugoslavia even in a very nationalist-oriented manner. This issue has been confronted, among others, by the Belgrade historian, Dubravka Stojanović, in her *Konstrukcija prošlosti – slučaj srpskih udžbenika istorije* (Construction of the Past – the case of Serbian history textbooks), in which the author elucidates how history textbooks in Serbia (and Bosnia) suffer from many errors of factography, inspired by nationalist thought (Stojanović 2007). Radina Vučetić noticed how history textbooks are written in such a fashion that they can seldom pique a student's curiosity, 'as they offer a bunch of facts, without the intention of explaining history' (Vučetić 2010, 36). The similar goes for most of the remaining countries.<sup>3</sup>

This work, to repeat, will aspire to achieve more than narration.

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3 The question of *why* the situation within historiography in former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia is a huge topic within historiography in itself. This is probably due to the fact that the former Communist regime, which in most of Yugoslavia transformed into state-propagated nationalisms, did not promulgate critical thinking and analysis. Especially within nationalist cultures, analytical rigor and critical thinking tend to be suppressed, as they point out conclusions that are entirely opposite to the ideologies of nationalism. As Renan noticed, the development of history, for exactly those reasons, is often debilitating for the 'nation'. Nevertheless, this is an important topic on its own.

## CHAPTER I

# DEVELOPING POLYPEITHARCHIC HISTORY

*Mindes, that have not suffered themselves to fixe, but  
have kept themselves open and prepared to receive  
continual Amendment, which is exceeding Rare.*

– FRANCIS BACON, 1597, On Custome and Education

Methodology has ever been a sore spot in historical research. History, habitually seen only as a chain of events that need to be told as a story, commonly lacks any solid methodology which it could boast with. And indeed, even in many a language, the words that stand for ‘story’ and ‘history’ are identical, such as the German word *Geschichte* or the Swedish *historia*. Even the English language word ‘story’ is etymologically easily located in the word ‘history’. History, thus, is seen as a *story* to be told more often than not, operating by instinct. As Wilson noted,

‘to put this differently, historical knowledge is founded upon a cluster of tacit skills which the historian deploys in mundane practice. These skills embody what might be called “the invisibility paradox”: on the one hand they are routinely practiced and well-known, yet on the other hand they remain untheorised and indeed unnamed’ (Wilson 1993, 293–324).

When issues of methodology do come up, broad, undefined references to method are made, and the story stops. For instance, Isaiah Berlin claimed how in history, ‘there plainly exists a great variety of methods and procedures than is usually provided for in textbooks on logic or scientific method’ (Berlin 1931, 5), and Richard Evans agreed (Evans 1999, 73), yet no exact *method* has been given by either of them to support those

claims. Wilson's 'invisibility paradox' truly is a depiction of reality, as 'the foundations of historical inference are by their very nature hidden from view: they do not operate at the level of explicit interpretation; instead they work their effects from deep within those myriad private, mundane micro-activities which make up the practice of historical research' (Wilson 1993, 295). Out of similar reasons did Evans claim that historical writing (teaching included, if I might add), makes a point to convey the 'provisional and uncertain nature of interpretation, and the need to test it constantly' (Evans 1999, 109). According to the Yale historian John Lewis Gaddis, 'historians give little thought to whether they practice science at all and, if so, of what variety. Like J.R.R. Tolkien's hobbits, they're for the most part content to remain where they are, and are not much interested in what goes on around them' (Gaddis 2002, 92). That is why many went back to 'the basics', asserting that analytical rigor, as well as definitional clarity and fidelity to the sources should remain the leading principles for the study of history in her attempt to lay the foundations of historical research *an generale*. Much more is needed, however, for *history* to become more than just a *story*, and for historians to become more than Tolkien's lethargic hobbits.

In their recent work, Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating of the European University in Florence and the University of Aberdeen, respectively, went some steps further in asserting a broad methodological depiction of the social sciences, in which they counted history in, as do I (Della Porta and Keating 2008), similar to Dubravka Stojanović and her depiction of history as an 'exact science' (Stojanović 2009a). They are well aware that 'concepts are often unclear and contested' within the social sciences and humanities. History is not seen as a chain of independent events, yet as a sequence in which one event influences the next one' (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 4), and it should be observed and analyzed as such. In other words, Della Porta and Keating stress the *explanatory* within history. It is exactly this explanatory moment that I wish to utilize in this work. Instead of simply telling an assortment of stories about Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, *explanation* will be the focus of this treatise. According to Corbetta,



‘usually, competing approaches in the social sciences are contrasted on (a) their *ontological* base, related to the existence of a real and objective world; (b) their *epistemological* base, related to the possibility of knowing this world and the forms this knowledge would take; (c) their *methodological* base, referring to the technical instruments that are used in order to acquire that knowledge’ (Corbetta 2003, 12–13).

The ontological question pertains to the object of study, that is, *what* we study, which is hardly a problem nowadays, as ‘disputes about the existence of a physical world go back to the ancients. This is not the point at issue here, since few people now bother to dispute the existence of physical objects’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 21). The epistemological base, on the other hand, is about the ‘nature, sources and limits of knowledge’ (Klein 2005), an ever-present topic of debate among historians. Some have claimed that historical knowledge is absolutely possible, an achievable, objective goal (Carr), while others, of a more postmodern direction, have claimed that it is not (from Derrida onwards, in philosophy and history alike). Della Porta and Keating have, thus, depicted four different, broad, epistemological approaches within the social sciences and humanities: *positivism*, *post-positivism*, *interpretivism* and the *humanist* approach.

The *positivist* approach, championed most prominently by Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim, claims that there is no essential difference between the social and the physical sciences. ‘The world exists as an objective entity, outside of the mind of the observer, and in principle it is knowable in its entirety. The task of the researcher is to describe and analyze this reality. Positivist approaches share the assumption that, in natural as in social sciences, the researcher can be separated from the object of his/her research and therefore observe it in a neutral way and without affecting the observed object. As in the natural sciences, there are systematic rules and regularities governing the object of study, which are also amenable to empirical research’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 23). Or, in the words of Emile Durkheim,



‘since the law of causality has been verified in other domains of nature and has progressively extended its authority from the physical and chemical world to the biological world, and from the latter to the psychological world, one may justifiably grant that it is likewise true for the social world’ (Durkheim 2014, 111).

This approach currently does not possess too much influence within the social sciences and the humanities, as the world of social connections, historical events and the actions of the ‘human animal’ have shown to be far more complex to be jotted down in mathematical formulae. As Gaddis noticed, the search for independent variables within the social sciences and humanities is doomed to failure do to the procedures upon which it depends are based on an old-fashioned view of the hard sciences (Gaddis 2002). That is why in *neo-positivism* or *post-positivism*, which ‘follows modern scientific development’, the ‘assumptions are relaxed. Reality is still considered to be objective (external to human minds), but it is only imperfectly knowable. The positivist trust in causal knowledge is modified by the admission that some phenomena are not governed by causal laws but, at best, by probabilistic ones’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 24). In other words, social reality is *knowable*, however imperfect out knowledge may be. Needless to say, this leads to an ineluctable discussion about *objectivity* in historical knowledge (or lack thereof). The equally unavoidable musings of E. H. Carr promptly come to mind, in a majestic utterance: ‘It does not follow that because a mountain appears to take on a different shape from different angles of vision, it has objectively either no shape at all or an infinity of shapes’ (Carr 1962, 30). Reality *objectively exists*, it cannot be argued, yet our *knowledge* of it is limited, and thus the neo-positivist stance. Let us understand *as much as possible*, let us *try* to be *objective as much as possible*. History is *knowable*; as Evans asked, *what kind of history are we going to write at all if not that, which can be understood?* That is why I shall adopt Evans’ approach, lucidly put in the last, almost immortal, paragraph of his magnum opus, *In Defence of History*:

‘So when Patrick Joyce tells us that social history is dead, and Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth declares that time is a fictional construct, and Roland Barthes announces that all the world’s a text, and Hans Kellner wants historians to stop behaving as if we were researching into things that actually happened, and Diane Purkiss says that we should just tell stories without bothering whether or not they are true, and Frank Ankersmit swears that we can never know anything at all about the past so we might as well confine ourselves to studying other historians, and Keith Jenkins proclaims that all history is just naked ideology designed to get historians power and money in big university institutes run by the bourgeoisie, I will only look humbly at the past and say despite them all: *it really happened, and we really can, if we are very scrupulous and careful and self-critical, find out how it happened and reach some tenable though always less than final conclusions about what it all meant*’ (Evans 1999, 253, italics S.M.J.).

Next, we have the *interpretivist approach*. Within this approach, objective and subjective meanings become extremely intertwined. The approach tends to stress the limits of mechanical laws and human volition. Having in mind that human beings are ‘meaningful’ actors, scholars need to concentrate on discovering the meanings that motivate their actions, and not just rely on universal laws external to the actors (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 25).

‘Subjective meaning is at the core of this knowledge. It is therefore impossible to understand historical events or social phenomena without looking at the perceptions individuals have of the world outside. Interpretation in various forms has long characterized the study of history as a world of actors with imperfect knowledge and complex motivations, themselves formed through complex cultural and social influences, but retaining a degree of free will and judgment’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 25).

The *humanistic* approach ‘shifts the emphasis further towards the subjective’, led by Clifford Geertz’ assumption that social science is ‘not an experimental science in search of laws but an interpretative science in search of meaning’ (Geertz 1973, 5). Without much ado, it is left to the researcher him – or herself to take their pick among the four

approaches. In the case of this work, the post-positivist approach shall be taken, with no small regard to the interpretivist one.

After the ontological and epistemological issues, the issue of stricter methodology is given by Della Porta and Keating. They identify three approaches, two standing on completely different sides, and a third one, walking the thin line in between. The *paradigmatic, exclusive* approach, perhaps the most common today and reminding much of Kuhn's views, 'where only one paradigm is considered as the right one, combining theory, methods and standards together, usually in an inextricable mixture' (Kuhn 1962, 192). Those who see the social sciences as paradigmatic 'stress the importance of converging on (or imposing) one single way to knowledge' (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 33), a stance which is getting more and more abandoned, especially in the social sciences and humanities. Standing opposed is the *anarchist, hyper-pluralist approach*, the adherents of which subscribe to Paul Feyerabend's view that

'the world we want to explore is a largely unknown entity. We must therefore keep our options open . . . Epistemological prescriptions may look splendid when compared with other epistemological prescriptions . . . but how can we guarantee that they are the best way to discover, not just a few isolated "facts", but also some deep-lying secrets of nature?' (Feyerabend 2000, 12)

The third perspective, that is going to be followed in this work, is explained as the 'search for commensurable knowledge', that is,

'between those two extremes, there are positions that admit the differences in the paths to knowledge and deny the existence of a "better one", but still aim at rendering differences compatible. Within this third perspective – which we tend to follow in this volume – it is important to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each method and methodology' (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 33).

So far, we have established that a *positive ontological viewpoint* is going to be used (there exists a social reality), in accordance with a *post-positivist epistemological approach* (however difficult it may be, social reality can be understood, even though

perhaps not entirely), all in a search for *commensurable knowledge and explanation*. The question remains of how to *get* that knowledge, and explanatory knowledge shall be drawn from various disciplines other than history, making the methodology *interdisciplinary* as well. The methods used will be *synthesis* and *triangulation*. Synthesis is, to put it simply, ‘merging of elements of different approaches into a single whole, and can be done on various levels’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 34). Triangulation, standing very close to synthesis, is ‘about using different research methods to complement one another’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 34). These varying elements shall be taken from other sciences, social and life ones (evolutionary psychology, geography, sociolinguistics etc). ‘Synthesizing different epistemologies is virtually impossible, since they rest on different assumptions about social reality and knowledge,’ explained Della Porta and Keating. Yet, making things much easier, *methodologies*

‘may be easier to synthesize since (...) they are not necessarily tied to specific epistemological assumptions. Techniques and methods are most easily combined since, as we have noted, many of them can be adapted to different research purposes. So comparative history and historical institutionalism have adopted and adapted techniques from comparative politics, history and sociology to gain new insight into processes of change’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 34).

History should use a ‘wide range of methodological approaches’, as historians ‘are – or ought to be – open to diverse ways of organizing knowledge’, as Gaddis propounded (Gaddis 2002, 108). Already there is a steadily growing number of historians who are making use of other disciplines, from Philip Abrams and his connection between history and sociology (Abrams 1982) to Czech Republic’s Dušan Třeštík, who heartily borrows from many an adjunct discipline, or even Jan Křen and his generally broader approach. In fact, nowadays it is exactly a broad, macrohistorical, interdisciplinary approach that characterizes most of Western historiography.

Since the approach I am going to use tries to dig deeper into the very structure of social reality (identifying key instances within the topic), it can also be designated as (at

least *somewhat*) *structuralist*, at least up to a certain point. Introduced and championed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss, the structuralist approach tries to examine the ‘structures that underline and generate the phenomena that come under observation’ (Strinati 2004, 78). For instance, *sexuality* shall be stressed as an underlying factor (just *one* of the causes) that might have helped add fuel to the fire during the Yugoslav wars of the nineties, as a ‘fragment of the meaningful whole’ (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 22), to use Lévi-Strauss’ words on the relevant methodology.

Stemming from the aforesaid, this work represents *post-positivist interdisciplinary structural comparative synthesis and triangulation*, with a strong emphasis on the *interdisciplinary*, as ‘influences come not only within the discipline but also from other areas of science’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 36). As Richard Evans noted, ‘there is a huge variety of ways of approaching the past, and (...) this plurality and diversity is to be welcomed and defended’ (Evans 1999, 280). In other words, ‘to be an objective historian’, Evans wrote, one has ‘to take a larger view’ (Evans 1999, 225). Thus, this work, as much as Gaddis’ *The Landscape of History*, is a ‘plea for methodological tolerance’ (Gaddis 2002, 108). In debating the breakup of Czechoslovakia, for instance, Jiří Musil has noticed that ‘the sociological and long-standing causes of this separation, with a few exceptions, are not investigated’ (Musil 1993, 78), pleading for a broader approach.

A different approach to history is crucial for other reasons as well, the most important of which is to *abandon the standard writing of national history*. A huge research supported by the ESF made a solid foundation for such an enterprise. ‘The European Science Foundation (ESF) was established in 1974 to create a common European platform for cross-border cooperation in all aspects of scientific research. With its emphasis on a multidisciplinary and pan-European approach, the Foundation provides the leadership necessary to open new frontiers in European science’ (De Bens 2007, 1), and within the frameworks of the ESF, a huge historiographical survey was conducted, perhaps the largest one ever to have been commenced. Led by Stefan Berger, a team of

historians from over 20 European countries formed the NHIST team<sup>4</sup> (*National History*)

- 4 The team of researchers (most of which are historians) who contributed only to the volume *The Contested Nation. Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories* (where the results of the research were presented) is quite impressive: Stefan Berger, Chris Lorentz, Krijn Thijs, Joep Leersen, James C. Kennedy, Gita Deneckere, Thomas Welskopp, Jitka Malečková, Hugo Frey, Stefan Jordan, Keith Robbins, Peter Aronsson, Narve Fulsås, Pertti Haapala, Bernard Eric Jensen, Marnix Beyen, Benoît Majerus, Guy P. Marchal, Sérgio Campos Matos, David Mota Álvarez, Gernot Heiss, Árpád v. Klimó, Pavel Kolář, Dušan Kováč, Anna Veronika Wendland, Maciej Janowski, Marius Turda, Hercules Millas and Ulrich Wyrwa. The complete NHIST team is, needless to say, much larger. The NHIST Newsletter names the following within the Steering Committee: the already mentioned Stefan Berger (Program Chair, University of Manchester, School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures), Christoph Conrad (Program Co-Chair, Université de Genève, Département d'histoire générale), Guy P. Marchal (Program Co-Chair, Universität Luzern), Nicholas Canny (Centre for the Study of Human Settlement and Historical Change, National University of Ireland), Christophe Charle (École normale supérieure, Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine), Moritz Csaky (Kommission für Kulturwissenschaften und Theatergeschichte Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften), Robert J. W. Evans (University of Oxford, Faculty of History), Pertti Haapala (Historiatieteen laitot), Gudmundur Halfdanarson (University of Iceland), Milan Hlavačka (Historický ústav Akademie věd České republiky), Chantal Kesteloot (Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation Guerre et Sociétés contemporaines), Dušan Kovač (Historický ústav, Slovenská akadémia vied), Michel Margue (Université du Luxembourg Faculté des Lettres, Arts, Sciences humaines et sciences de l'éducation), Aadu Must (Ajaloosakond, Tartu Ülikool), Jan Eivind Myhre (Universitetet i Oslo, Historisk institutt), Alberto Gil Novales (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Uffe Østergaard (Afdeling for Holocaust – og Folkedrabsstudier Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier), Attila Pok (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Történettudományi Intézete), Paolo Prodi (Università di Bologna, Dipartimento di discipline storiche), Ann Rigney (Fakulteit der Letteren, Universiteit Utrecht), Jo Tollebeek (Departement Geschiedenis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), Rolf Torstendahl (Uppsala Universitet, Historiska institutionen), Rudiger vom Bruch (Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin), Janusz Żarnowski (Instytut Historii im. Tadeusza Manteuffla, Polska Akademia Nauk), Tibor Frank (Angol-Amerikai Intézet, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem), Frank Hadler (Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum, Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas), Matthias Middell (Zentrum für Höhere Studien, Universität Leipzig), Ilaria Porciani (Università di Bologna, Dipartimento di discipline storiche), Lluís Roura y Aulinas (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), Andrew Mycock (School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures, University of Manchester), Monique van Donzel (Head of Unit and Senior Scientific Secretary to the Standing Committee for the Humanities, European Science Foundation), Maurice Bric (School of History and Archives, University College Dublin).

which was set to ‘change the face of European historiography and stimulate new discussions at national and European level’ (ESF 2006, 6). The conclusions were staggering. As Stefan Berger noted, a historian should best ‘break away’ from what he calls ‘historiographic nationalism’, i.e. the stress on writing national histories. In his words, ‘there are many good reasons to avoid history becoming the basis of national identity formation and legitimation. It seems wiser to assume that society would be better off with weak and playful identities rather than those underpinned by a strong sense of a common national past’ (Berger 2007a). Writing more global, international and interdisciplinary histories was deemed to be a better, more successful option. ‘Since the 1980s more powerful challenges to the stranglehold of the national paradigm have appeared in the form of comparative and transnational approaches to the writing of history, the “constructivist turn” in nationalism studies, and the emergence of new fields such as world history, historical anthropology and women’s/gender history,’ elaborated Berger (Berger 2007a).

‘We will argue from a fundamentally different position,’ claimed Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz in their milestone volume *The Contested Nation. Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ‘because we use a different, multidimensional notion of “historical identity” which recognizes other “codes of difference” in historiography alongside the “code of nationality”’ (Berger and Lorenz 2008, 18). It is exactly these ‘other codes of difference’ that this monograph will concentrate on. Adopting a non-national, yet *international* choice of subject (almost ten contemporary states/stateoids), this work will concentrate on precisely how those codes/instances/entities of difference – such as religion, language or attitudes towards sexuality, to name but a few – have contributed to the creation and breakup of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, as the *story* behind these states has already been written plentifully. ‘Methodologically, the [NHIST] project unites cultural transfer and comparative approaches, which are best suited to explore the complex relationship between national historiographies and national historical cultures in Europe’ (Berger 2004, 74), and so does this work. ‘More specifically’, the project compares ‘the role of social actors and institutions, as well as



the importance of diverse narrative hierarchies in nationally constituted historiographies' (Berger 2007b). and it is exactly the problem of narratives that shall be confronted in this work, as well as the various social *actors* who have immensely contributed in the historical developments of the topical entities of this work. It is of utmost importance to adhere to interdisciplinarity, taking data from life sciences and social sciences alike. As Gaddis noticed, 'historians (...) have remained happily on their methodological island, going about their business largely unaffected by these trends, for the most part hardly even aware of them'. Yet,

'Marc Bloch and E. H. Carr (...) bothered to scan the horizon [and] saw the paradox: that the ship sailing toward the historians was that of the "hard" sciences, which don't deal with human affairs at all, while the one fading from view was the one that claimed, at least, to be building a science of society' (Gaddis 2002, 91).

Marc Bloch and the *Annales* School of history, to remind the reader, were among the first to introduce a broader, interdisciplinary history, initiated in the journal *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* at the Strasbourg University in the period of 1920–1929, enriching this field immensely. This work will follow in these footsteps, taking perhaps larger ones as it goes. In other words, it is easy to write a *story*, but more difficult to write *history*, especially one that explains. Or, as Gaddis wrote – 'we're historians, not novelists' (Gaddis 2002, 107).

It would be useful to note that I am not writing entirely – at least at this moment – *against* national histories. Even though personally and academically I stand against them, it is of use to emphasize that I am stressing the other types of history in this work. As Jan Křen wrote in 1999, 'I do not wish [this text] to be understood as a phillippic against microhistory (microhistories) and national histories' (Křen 1999, 488), even though microhistory and national histories seldom play a role in Křen's work, similar to mine. This work is simply classified as *non-national, interdisciplinary macrohistory*. In other words: *polypeitharchic history*.



What we will see in this work is a collection of instances that seldom get their chance under the spotlights of the narrow-minded world of humanities and social sciences. Pleas for *developed interdisciplinarity* from many an established academician worldwide have only recently started to be heard; it will take time to introduce fully fledged interdisciplinary studies into the curricula worldwide. What makes this work easier is an already established school of historical research that prides itself with interdisciplinarity (the *Annales* school), yet it is only recently, with all the advances in technology and research that full interdisciplinarity can be utilized. It is of small wonder that the work of Stefan Berger within the European Science Foundation is a recent, yet strong development in studies of history.

During the years of work on this topic, I found it hard to believe how history was still seen in an unimaginably narrow view by many historians; Bloch, Febvre, Evans, Berger, Lorentz and similar excluded. While in many countries and many systems of education (especially in Eastern Europe, countries of the former Soviet bloc etc) history is still seen very often in the light of the 'kings and battles' approach (seen in unimaginatively monotonous high school history books, written in the uninspiring, tedious language of an old historian: 'And then king X built a castle, and then his song married the princess of the country Y, and his brother then went to the monastery, and then the monastery was burned by his cousin Z' etc), commonly in French, English, German and American historiography we can even see a line of interdisciplinary thought (the influence of the already mentioned *Annales* school of France), though this line still needs to develop (this line actually *is* developing in the works of Berger and Lorentz, and their host of historians). Let us reiterate what Carr noted, and Evans agreed, that 'to be an objective historian, you had to take a larger view' (Evans 1999, 225). Though there are new, interdisciplinary moments in, for instance, Czech historiography, the works concentrating on the issues of Yugoslavia are still written in the old fashioned way. Works concentrating on the issue of Czechoslovakia (primarily in the Czech Republic), on the other side, boast more modernity.

It should be noticed that one might be tempted to say that ‘true interdisciplinarity’ can only be achieved by a virtual scholar who is an expert in *all* fields he chooses to tackle. This is true as much as the basic assumption of positivism – on its rawest epistemological level – that society can be *fully* understood by use of strict scientific laws and methods. However, as much as raw positivism was abandoned, so too does this stance need to be abandoned altogether. Even a single, *monodisciplinary* researcher, an expert among experts in his or her field is *limited*, he or she does not *know everything* and many such have committed mistakes, from Freud to Carr. Yet that did not mean that they have not made immense contributions to psychology and history, respectively. A ‘hundred percent’ knowledge attainment is impossible as much as attaining the status of a ‘hundred percent’ successful expert in one *or* many disciplines. Thus, this work – as much as any honest history – will forever be unfinished. Going firmly in the neopositivist stance, I shall reiterate that social reality can be understood *as much as it can be understood, and the researcher can provide results as much as he can*, and with each new research, we get one step further in our understanding of social issues. We do have to remember that Della Porta and Keating noticed that some societal instances (if not all) are governed ‘at best by probabilistic laws’. *How*, then, should interdisciplinary history function, having in mind all the hindrances?

### HINDRANCES AND IGNORANCE

Once again it becomes crucial not to put the academician on the pedestal above other people. Karl Popper has written extensively about not putting what he called ‘great people’ on pedestals in a similar fashion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And once again, being biological beings, we are prone to mistakes, as our organs – in this case the brain – are no more than a collection of larger or smaller gaffes. Academicians are biologically as prone to making mistakes as any other specimen of the species. What makes a real academician, thus, is an essential *comprehension* of this fact, an understanding that one

can make a mistake, which in turn helps them in committing a much smaller number. A very typical mistake made by the common academician nowadays (as the situation is much more different than, say, a century back) is common to anyone else as well – nes-cience. Even in hard science, it is imperative that one should possess a huge amount of sheer, factual knowledge. Understanding even an elementary instance in hard science – such as the Big Bang for instance – requires bountiful knowledge.<sup>5</sup> The Big Bang is one of the *easier to explain* instances in astrophysics, and a very important one, being that we owe our existence to this single large-scale event. The *amount* of data, of information – of *knowledge* – that is necessary for its *thorough understanding*, as evidenced in the footnote, is staggering. Coming, finally, back to history (though all social sciences

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5 *Understanding the Big Bang*: There are three major factors that prove that the Big Bang has occurred in the distant past (some 13.7 billion years ago): the redshift in the spectrographic analysis of distant galaxies, the prevalence of light elements in the universe and the existence of the cosmic microwave background radiation. It is safe to say that the reader of this text does probably not know what the following are: the redshift in spectrographic analysis, light elements and cosmic microwave radiation. I am taking for granted that ‘analysis’, ‘galaxy’ and ‘background’ are understood (it is almost daunting to find out that even this is not often so). Thus, in order to *understand* the Big Bang, all the instances named above need to be explained: The redshift in the spectrographic analysis gives us the information that the Doppler effect readings have been shifted towards the red side of the spectrum, that is, not to the blue one. This means that the galaxies are all going away from each other. Secondly, measurements have indicated clearly that the prevailing chemical elements in the universe are Hydrogen and Helium, both of which are so called ‘light elements’, i.e. they comprise a very small number of quantum particles. Thirdly, cosmic microwave background radiation has been discovered by Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson in 1965, as a steady hiss that has been proposed by George Gamow as the remnants of radiation left by the immensely large explosion to which our universe owes its existence. Still, this is not clear enough for the person who is *not a physicist, astronomer or cosmologist*. What one now needs to understand is the following: what is the Doppler Effect? Why would light elements point towards a Big Bang? The Doppler effect, named by the physicist Charles Doppler, is the change in the wave frequency from the point of view of the observer, relative to the wavesource, whilst light elements are elements with the smallest nucleic content, easiest to form in the primordial nucleosynthesis.

and humanities have the same problem), we can notice that a historian has an even larger problem, as he does not deal with clearly cut laws of physics. While the Doppler Effect simply *is as it is*, and that is the end of the issue, history does not deal with such lucid data. Understanding a country that has been torn by religion, thus, cannot happen unless the historian goes into a detailed sojourn into evolutionary psychology, and I even had to devote half a chapter to it. *Ignorance*, the translation of which is simply ‘lack of knowledge’, prohibits him from fully comprehend the matter at hand.

Favoritism towards one’s own chosen field of interest/science can also serve as a hindrance in interdisciplinarity. It is no secret that many academicians think their discipline to be the most important. This personal bias, however, is only a hindrance for an academician who is interested in achieving results.

### TRUE INTERDISCIPLINARITY: ESTABLISHING THE METHOD FOR POLYPEITHARCHIC HISTORY

One of the main problems in history, as we have already established, is the *lack of method and structure*.<sup>6</sup> As David Thomson stressed, the historian’s approach by definition has no proclivity to making a system (Thomson 1969, 105). We are used to writing about instances that *have happened* in historical studies just because they are a part of history, and that is it. I shall use a colorful analogy: let us imagine a chef cooking *just because he is a chef*, or *just because he wants to*. It would be far from enough for anything practical, for instance, cooking at an Italian restaurant. In order to be an actually successful chef in an Italian restaurant, he would have to modify his cooking, direct it accordingly to his customers who expect good Italian food, using the methods of cooking common to Italian cuisine in order to please his patrons; working with olive oil,

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6 When it comes to, for instance, Czech historiography, Petr Čornej rightfully noticed that ‘Czech historiography is known by its a priori lack of trust towards theoretical constructions’ [Řepa 2006]. When it comes to most ex-Yugoslav and Slovak historians (exceptions excluded, of course), a similar thing might be said.

parmesan and pasta would be obligatory. A similar problem we find in history, which is written about as if there had been no reason to do it, without any *direction, methodology* or *goal*. Most historians seem to be satisfied just with writing about historical instances they fancy on a personal level; they seldom devise a methodology or explain their patterns of thought, the reasoning behind their conclusions and the logic behind their ideas. A goal is missing, as well as a method. In short, history is most often *what* and *when*, and seldom *why* and *how*.

True interdisciplinary – *polypeitharchic* – history, to use the Greek compound, is thus seen as a means to an end. The goal is the understanding of issues that have happened. The *historical* in it is essentially just a temporal marker, one which other disciplines, with their methods and results need to support.

I shall thus divide the influence of other disciplines in the two parts seen above:

- a) their *methodology* and
- b) the *results* they provide.

It is important that these two stay separated, and I shall proceed to explain why. As John Tosh of Roehampton University wrote, there are many reasons for historians to make use of existing theories (Tosh and Lang 2006). It is, naturally, close to impossible to expect from a historian to re-educate himself up to such a great extent as for him to be able to read magnetic resonance images (i.e. to make him a neuroscientist as well – an instance crucial for the understanding of religion). That is why polypeitharchic history can *use the results* of such sciences, since neuroscience (in this instance) is too complex and time consuming. A neuroscientist can *read, interpret* the result of the MRI scan or the EEG; the evolutionary psychologist will then integrate them into his theories, and the historian can simply *use* the results as a valid starting point for his/her research. In this work, for example, it was *religion* that was explained from the points of departure of life sciences; needless to say, religion has played an immensely important role in the historical development of society – *understanding it* was of key importance

in this issue, being that historians are – for the most part – seldom aware of the findings of evolutionary psychology.

Whilst complicated life science and hard science results may still elude the historian (i.e. he will not be able to perform an actual MRI scan himself, nor will he be able to interpret the result), *methods* used by other social sciences *can* be taught and learned with less effort. Using sociological methods (for instance, questionnaires) or perhaps anthropological (observation with participating, for instance) can yield important results that the historian would be wise to use himself, within his field of interest, working towards his goal: the understanding of a certain instance within the historical development of the world. In my case, these instances were the creation and breakup of two states.

*Polypeitharchic history*, consequently, gives us the beginning of a broad, methodological perspective that is to be used in the following manner:

- a) The temporal and special selection of the desired instance, in which the historian selects the time and geopolitical area that he wishes to analyze,
- b) The selection of the topic, where he chooses the exact topic of his work,
- c) The *disciplinary selection*, namely, the choice of the appropriate discipline (or, in most cases, *disciplines*) to tackle the issue. The choice of the discipline may vary depending on the topic itself (or the temporal selection). In my case, I have added the disciplines of evolutionary psychology, sexuality studies, linguistics and even geography, and they have, to put it bluntly, *produced results*.
- d) The next step is the *use* of either the methodologies of the disciplines at hand *or* the use of their research results and findings. The results then need to be integrated into the topic itself.

The method/selection table of polypeitharchic history, given for the topic of this thesis, is given below. In essence, the selection stems from Richard Evans' topic 'breakdown', the division of causes into groups, as he had done while researching the Hamburg

cholera epidemic of 1982. In the same manner, the research will be a ‘mixture of narrative and analysis’.<sup>7</sup>

In short, this work will try to debate, examine and answer – as much as possible – the following questions. How much do the elites influence the course of history? What is the amount of the influence of powerful individuals in the creation and breakup of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia? How did the ideas of unity come to pass in light of the aforementioned elites and powerful individuals? What are the impacts of the diverging attitudes of sexuality on the development of societies and how much are they connected to heightened levels of aggression? What is the role of religion in it all? Does geography influence the development of societies? How was language used as a means to an end and support of various ideologies in former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia?

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<sup>7</sup> What was meant by ‘analysis’ was, to be more exact, *examination*. *Analysis*, on the other hand, is the methodological opposite of *synthesis*.

**POLYPEITHARCHIC HISTORY METHOD / SELECTION TABLE**

Given on the example of this work

**Selection:**

TEMPORAL	→	20th century
SPATIAL	→	Yugoslavia [primary] / Czechoslovakia [secondary]
TOPICAL	→	Creation and breakup of the aforementioned historical/geopolitical entities

Topic breakdown into issues:	Disciplinary delegation:	Result vs method selection:	Chapter:
IMPACT OF IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS	History / politology	Result + method	4
GREAT POWERS' INFLUENCE	History / politology	Result	5
GENDER	Sex studies / medicine / biology / gender studies / neuroscience	Result	6
LANGUAGE	Linguistics / sociolinguistics / discourse analysis	Result + method	7
RELIGION	Evolutionary psychology / psychohistory	Result + method	8
NARRATIVE	History / Politology / culture studies	Method + result	2, 3 and 9

**Use** of the results and methods: Analyzing, Inferring, Defining, Examining, Questioning, Reasoning, Synthesizing, Triangulating, Conceptualizing, Generalizing.

+ The **narrative** behind the developments



## THE GENERALIZATION PROBLEM

The core of any science, discipline, scientific activity and scientific research, whether it be in the fields of the ‘hard’ or the ‘soft’ sciences, from social sciences and humanities to physics and astronomy, is to *understand* the reality that surrounds the researcher. In other words – to post *general rules* about it. In essence, every true scientific explanation is a type of generalization, *i.e.* postulating how some players (social or physical), instances, entities and/or key points *act* within a certain physical and social *environment*. This is then called a *rule*, a *generalization* of a sort. It can be found in any academic discipline. The theory of gravity, for instance, generalizes the behavior of objects interacting physically. The theory of evolution is a generalization of the principles of sexual selection and biological mutation that explains the *longue durée* development of biological species. In hard sciences, generalizations can be extremely broad, extremely ‘general’, to use a truism. Evolution has been proven to work on literally 100% of the species known on the planet Earth. It has been also confirmed by genetics, so this *generalization* is now used as a *rule* of behavior of species for *deductive reasoning*. It is taken for granted that evolution functions for all and every living being, and it is taken as *a priori*. Gravity, as far as we know it, also functions in 100% of the cases, though it has been argued that there were different universal physical laws during the so-called Planck time, the tiny split of the second after the Big Bang. Whether gravity also functions on the level of strings is also unknown. So, in *almost* 100% of the cases, gravity is the generalization that is more than useful, explained and functional. If we cannot make a generalization of a principle / conduct of an entity / behavior of a pattern, it only means we do not have a rule, that is, we do not understand the principle/entity/patter at hand. *Science would cease to exist without generalization*. As Henry Teune and Adam Przeworski argued in their *Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*,

‘the pivotal assumption (...) is that social science research, including comparative inquiry, should and can lead to general statements about social phenomena. This assumption implies that human and social behavior can be explained in terms of general laws established by observation. Introduced here as an expression of preference, this assumption will not be logically justified’ (Teune and Przeworski 1970, 4).

Or, as Imre Lakatos wrote, *increasingly general theories are necessary for the development of the social sciences and humanities* (Lakatos 1976). When it comes to the neopositivist and structural approach to history such as this one, Breisach noticed how it was exactly that

‘a variety of structural histories of society became the most prominent scientific histories (...) seen as a fitting response to the quest of historiography permitting large-scale generalizations (...) that reflected reality’s basic structural patterns and forces. The beneficial result has been a greatly enhanced knowledge of the economic, social and political structures and forces that shape human life’ (Breisach 1994, 407).

Parsons paraphrased Lakatos on the same topic, stressing how this viewpoint claims that ‘advancing knowledge requires *ever-more-general* theory’ (Parsons 2007, 165). In the social sciences and humanities, nonetheless, we have a slightly more complicated situation to deal with. Generalizations of societal rules are always ‘less than 100%’, and are primarily *inductive*. As Karl Popper noticed, ‘hard’ sciences function with *deduction*, whilst the other sciences boast *inductive* reasoning as their prime *modus operandi* (Popper 1972). Although it may pain us to observe it, ‘it is a fact that the utterance of a historian has a far lesser value than the worth of a scientific explanation’ (Tosh and Lang 2006). John Tosh has stressed the perhaps most important instance of this methodological section: that a historian’s hypothesis present the *best approximation of the truth*, and need to be accepted as such. In short, this may be written on the banner of the post-positivist approach; in layman’s words: *one has to do the best he or she can*. We observe as many a societal instance as possible, and conclude that in *most cases*, this or that *may* happen. Being that the positivist stance does not function within the realm of

human conduct, ‘100% solutions’ are simply not possible. Yet ‘less than 100% solutions’ are more than possible; they are *probable* and *obligatory*. Let us take an example claim, the famous Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (stemming from anthropology and linguistics):

*Every person's thought and patterns of behavior are  
determined by their native language up to a certain level.*

(WHORF 1956, Hoijer 1956)

The sentence above is one of the keystones and building blocks of modern linguistics and anthropology. It is also a complete and utter *generalization*. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf did not examine *every* living human being in order to postulate such a generalization; it would never be possible (*i.e.* it is not *deductive*, but *inductive*). Yet after enough research, it was viable to postulate it. It, however, *does not mean that every person's thought and behavior are completely and only determined by their native tongue*. A person's cognitive and behavioral patterns are determined by panoply of other instances (the environment they grew up in, their parents, cultural influence, congenital cognitive disorders – to name but a few). Yet the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis stresses *language* as *one of* the relevant (important) factors in addressing the issue of a person's cognitive and behavioral patterns.

In social reality, every entity that we try to ‘dissect’, to understand, to explain, is under the influence of many a factor. As Richard Evans noticed, drawing upon E. H. Carr, ‘the essence of being a historian was to *generalize*’ (Evans 1999, 130). We can use the allegory of a modern music player and its *equalizer*. The equalizer is the part of the sound reproducing system that tweaks the balance (adjusts it) between several frequency components of the sound wave reproduced. The basic ones have three components, the *bass* (lowest frequencies in a sound wave), the *mid section* (middle frequencies) and the *treble* (highest frequencies). Common equalizers nowadays tend to have three bars for each of the three components, thus making nine of them (if not even more). The sound reproduced is governed by the position of each of the nine bars. If we should

tweak just one of them, the sound will change, yet slightly, and the global, general sound picture will not have been drastically changed. Yet every *preset*, such as *rock*, *pop*, *techno*, *large hall*, *small room* or *live* (many exist), consists of several bars being pushed up or down (the corresponding frequency being stifled or strengthened). In order to get a clear sound picture for the wanted preset, at least several bars of the equalizer need to be tweaked. The same goes with social reality. One factor is seldom enough, yet it cannot be acoustically, technically and electronically examined. The same stands for social factors. Whilst one of them is rarely enough, it needs to be analyzed on its own.

As seen in the table above, there are several social/historical factors that I have chosen to examine as regards the creation and breakup of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The influence of the Great Powers (Misha Glenny's resurrected term) is one of them. The acting of powerful individuals is another one (as elaborated in the work of Ser Lewis Namier and Fritz Fischer, for instance). Attitudes towards human sexuality are yet another one. And so on. Many inductive generalizations need to be made, such as the following one, for instance:

*The influence and large impact of stronger, larger  
and economically more stable states on smaller and  
weaker ones is common throughout history.*

This is a generalization related to Chapter V of this work. It does *not* mean that the influence of a larger state is the only factor relevant; neither does it mean that all small states suffer from the influence of their stronger neighbors in the *same manner and in the same way*. Yet the reader might – as my experience tells me – tend to misunderstand them in such a way. The verb and action we are looking at here is in English called 'reading *in*' the text, where the reader tends to input his own cognitive patterns, schemes, notions and knowledge in the text that he or she is reading. *Complete generalizations most often come from the reader, not from the author*, and any scholar with some experience will notice this within the review process. Yet the linear nature of both language and our cognitive apparatus prohibits us from examining the complete 'equalizer scale'

within the social sciences and humanities at once, at the same time, so the factors, each one ‘tweaked’ in its own particular way, need to be examined separately. Once the examination has been completed, *putting them all together* to reach the whole ‘sound picture’ will be the task of the *synthetic approach* to the subject.

To continue with the rather useful allegory: not every equalizer bar has to be pushed to the upper or lower maximum. Some of the bars are tweaked just a little bit, as much as some of the social factors analyzed will seem to have more or less impact on the bigger picture. It is of high importance *not* to disregard the minor factors or minor players, as the end picture will not be representative. In the Appendix, for example, based on valid medical research and the work of Jared Diamond, I will claim that the differences in the geographical location of regions tend to have an impact on the historical development of societies. This is also a generalization, proved in much, really much detail in Jared Diamond’s *magnum opus*, entitled *Guns, Germs and Steel* (Diamond and Renfrew 1997), supported even by medical research. Though – much to my dismay – no detailed research was (or can) be done to examine all the tinier instances that relate to the geographical difference between Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, some basic postulates can be made, and the whole idea can be classified as a ‘minor factor’, at least for now. That does not mean I will discard it. After all, it was the British historian, A. J. P. Taylor, who constantly goaded his colleagues by postulating minor causes as explanations for larger events (Taylor 1976). As Evans explained, Taylor’s view on the causes of the Great War concentrated on the railway timetables, since they ‘locked belligerent powers into a sequence of troop mobilizations and war declarations from which they could not escape’ (Evans 1999, 132). The Yale historian, J. L. Gaddis, spoke even about Napoleon’s underwear (*sic!*), asking whether Waterloo had been perchance influenced by Napoleon’s smallclothes that might have bothered him on that particular day (Gaddis 2002, 103). *Chaos theory*, however strange that might sound, can only confirm this kind of reasoning. The historian Geoffrey Roberts, for one, argues often that pure *accident* can sometimes influence the course of history (Roberts 1999). In short, however

minor a *cause* can be, or however undeveloped its explanation is, a diligent academician cannot ignore it.

Let us take one more generalization into account:

*The Czech Republic is one of the most  
irreligious countries in the world.*

It is important for the reader *not to* project into the text. In his *In Defense of History*, in the lengthy *Afterword*, even Evans confessed he had to face immense problems with other historians reading in his text and misunderstanding him severely (Evans 1999, 272). For instance, the sentence above is *not the same as* the following: ‘There are only atheists in the Czech Republic’ or ‘The Czech government promotes irreligiousness.’ For those versed in studies of religion and irreligiousness, the italicized example above is an elementary one, as even a rookie scholar who deals with these matters knows that the population of the Czech Republic boasts one of the lowest percentage of religiousness worldwide. No other explanation should need to be made. It does not mean that there are no religious people in the Czech Republic; it does not mean that religion does not exist in it; it does not have anything to do with Communism. It simply means what it says: *The Czech Republic is one of the most atheistic countries in the world*. What it means *within a certain context* is something different, and as such it needs to be read as a part of the whole, the whole paragraph, the whole chapter, and the whole work. This is especially important within a work that takes a *synthetic* – rather than analytic – approach, such as this one. Every reading-in, every mistaken generalization by the reader endangers the ability to understand the work.

This leads to yet another problem, ever so common within the social sciences and humanities, and that is the issue of the synthetic, holistic approach. If a collection of factors relevant to the societal instance examined seem not overly ‘coherent’ or ‘compact’, it is simply because they are as such. Social reality is a tangled web of causes, effects and actors, and weaving a simple strand out of such a web is literally impossible.

This should especially be stressed to historians, as the linear nature of history tends to project itself onto the linear nature of narration (history in the more traditional sense), and when explanation comes into play, the linear nature of history tends to be disassembled. Frankly and bluntly said, there is nothing that can be done. Complex issues are complex, and trying vainly to make them less complex only destroys the quality of the work and diminishes the explanatory moment. That is why I have developed the already presented polypeitharchic history table, in which a more concise overview of the whole work can be seen.

It is also of crucial importance to realize the lack of possibility of the aforementioned ‘hundred percent solutions’. It is impossible to be certain without any reasonable doubt of the impact of a certain factor onto a certain historical development. In methodology, this is known as the problem and nature of *qualifiers*. As Toulmin, Rieke and Janik elaborated, it is entirely possible to ask: ‘Are you making this claim unconditionally and without qualification? Are you saying it is certainly and necessarily so, or that it’s probably, very likely or quite possibly the case?’ (Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik 1979) There are many possible versions of an *implication* within the social sciences and humanities, such as:

*G, so C*  
or  
*G, so in all probability C.*  
*G, so certainly C.*  
*G, so apparently C.*

The list of all adverbial qualifiers these authors have compiled includes the following:

- Necessarily
- Certainly
- Presumably
- In all probability
- So far as the evidence goes
- For all that we can tell
- Very likely
- Very possibly
- Maybe
- Apparently
- Plausibly
- Or so it seems

After all, as Corbetta noticed, ‘some phenomena are not governed by causal laws but, at best, by probabilistic ones’ (Della Porta and Keating 2008, 24), a property of social reality that must not be ignored. Having said all that, it is now possible to proceed to the examination of the topic ahead. I shall start with event-based history, going through the basics prior to embarking on other, less-trodden paths.



## CHAPTER II

# THE STORY

*Historia magistra vitae – non est.*

– TOMISLAV IŠEK

The (hi)story behind the birth and death of the two states has been written numerous times, yet before I embark into the explanation about which factors contributed to the historical development at hand, I need to set the story straight – we need to see what we are dealing with. And to compare.

On 1 December 1918, Aleksandar Karađorđević proclaimed the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. With the capitol in Belgrade – Serbia – and a majority of ethnic Serbs (some 4 million), the state was often regarded as most useful for the Serb faction. Altogether, the Kingdom had almost 12 million citizens, covering a geographical area of almost 250,000 km<sup>2</sup>. ‘The new state’, writes Teichman, ‘was geographically and ethnically very controversial’ (Šesták et al. 1998, 387). As mentioned, a third of the population was Serb in origin; Croats had barely more than a fifth part, while only 8% were ethnic Slovenians. The country was regarded as a Serb-centralized unitarist monarchy (Šesták et al. 1998, 396–399). According to Latinka Perović, the Belgrade historian, there were many obstacles towards complete federalization and integration, but first of all ‘the identifying of the Serb people with the state as *their own state*’ (Perović 2006). Bosnian historiography is often of the same view, stressing how the decisive role in Yugoslav unification was played by the Government of Serbia led by Nikola Pašić and the Karađorđević Dynasty. During the war, there were several concepts of unification, yet given the military and political circumstances, Regent

Alexander succeeded to impose the concept of unification that was most suitable for Serbia (Karabegović 2009, 11–14). The situation got worse as time went by, and from 1938, with the acknowledgment of the ‘Croat question’ and the creation of the *banovina* Croatia, ‘the question of unifying the Serb national unit came to pass. Macedonians, Montenegrins and Muslims were, what is more, considered to be Serbs’ (Karabegović 2009). The peak of this problem was mayhaps seen in the 1974 Constitution – much later – and in the 1980s, but I shall have to come back to that later.

It was the fear from Italy, according to Šesták, that drove those ethnies together, even in such a misrepresented percentage. Croats and Slovenians saw it useful to get under the protection of the much more powerful Serb army, which had even won a fair amount of respect within the broader international community after the Great War (Sundhaussen 2007). Yet this ‘sense of victory’, to use Šesták’s words, made the government and the Serbian people adopt a conviction that they freed Croatia and Slovenia, ‘and Croatia and Slovenia had to respect that’ (Šesták et al. 1998, 388). And indeed, the Serbian losses (relative to the population number) were two and a half times larger than the French, and three times more than the English. Basically, the creation of Yugoslavia was a good idea to bring in some manpower and finance, or, as the leader of the Slovene People’s Party, Anton Korošec said, ‘the Serbs rule, the Croats discuss, and the Slovenes pay’ (Šesták et al. 1998, 380). In this Serb-driven state, Macedonians were seen simply as ‘Southern Serbs’, while Muslims in Bosnia were ‘Serbs of Muslim faith’. The tripod’s three legs were still Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, as testified in the initial name of the federal state, though one of those legs was clearly thicker.

Slovenia, perhaps by the fact that it had spent so much time under Austria-Hungary and being in the vicinity of Vienna (one of the largest cultural centers in Europe at that time), was the most modern of all, and this is the status it will keep up to today. Noel Malcolm called it ‘the most Westernized and independent-minded of the [Yugoslav] republics’ (Noel 1994, 214). The question of ‘modernity’, nevertheless, was a key issue in a Serb-led Kingdom, according to Perović. As she elaborated in much detail in her

work *Između anarhije i autokratije* ('Between anarchy and autocracy'), there were two strong, diametrically opposed currents in the state. This is seen in the phrase 'two Serbias', used by the leader of the Serb Social Democrats, Dimitrije Tucović, in 1910 (Tucović 1981). The Serb society, even before the creation of the common state, 'is characterized by the existence of two historical tendencies: the *patriarchal* and the *modern*. The center around which this revolves is the relation towards Western Europe' (Perović 2006, 18). The same extreme cultural and political opposition exists within Serbia even today (Croatia as well), as 'this dichotomy is organic and universal' (Perović 2006, 30). The forces of traditionalism have ever been stronger, as 'the modernization has been projected and realized by the minority' (Perović 2006, 23). As Slobodan Jovanović, the Serb historian and sociologist wrote in 1934, the members of this modern minority 'felt the need of a modern cultural state, and they did not fear from unpopular measures, which they have shown when they took the farmer's child and put it into school' (Јовановић 1935, 382). The forces of the traditional, however, had the Church on their side, a Church that has been an 'important restrictive factor of the modernization of Serbia, that is, of its Europeanization' (Perović 2006, 24), and it still is today. With an overabundance of tradition-loving people and politicians, such a state could not prosper much. There was a 'lag' between the Kingdom (later to be renamed to Yugoslavia) and the rest of Europe, and 'this lag cannot be explained simply by temporal lagging, but first of all by *structural differences* that influenced the creation of various mentalities' (Perović 2006, 53). This stance reminds much of the Belgrade philosopher Radomir Konstantinović, who has described what he dubbed the 'philosophy of the small town' (Ser-Cro. *Filozofija palanke*; a relatively untranslatable word, *palanka*, designates a small town, plucked away from the goings-on of modernity) in his work written almost four decades ago (Константиновић 1981). Often hailed as being of prophetic character, the work *Filozofija palanke* has actually identified the atavistic nature of the mentality that was present in Yugoslavia as a 'spirit' that necessarily leads into conflict and strife. 'There cannot be transformation, there cannot be action, passivity is needed, letting go to that which is,'

wrote Konstantinović in the language of philosophy. ‘The spirit of the *palanka* is the spirit of singularity, first of all, the spirit of a ready solution, a form, a very determined form’ (Константиновић 1981, 7). It is *traditionalism* that Konstantinović identified to be a strong instance in the spirit of the *palanka*, as well as infantilism as a ‘spirit of a collective will that protects [us] from all’.

A similar line of thought we have seen in the well known work by Karl Popper, the *Open Society and its Enemies*, in which Popper debates not only the *open* society, but the *closed one as well*, later to be expanded on by Jaroslav Miller. According to Miller, we are talking about ‘an extremely collective organism, whose internal coherence and stability rest on half-biological relations like that of kin and the life in a community for sharing common goals and values, in order to defend from outer threats’ (Miller 2006, 12). The stress of collectivity versus individuality is shared between Konstantinović and Popper; the accent of the ‘interventionist’ character of the closed society as well. Miller has used the concept of the ‘closed society’ to describe the ‘principle of the organization of life in the medieval and early modern city, and by no means the relation of the city and its citizens towards the outer world’ (Miller 2006, 337). Even without the relation of the city and its inhabitants towards the outer world (which Konstantinović *did* describe), Miller’s description of the medieval/early modern city is extremely similar to Konstantinović’s and Perović’s view of Serbia/Yugoslavia. There were ‘structural differences’ abound, as Perović noticed. It is exactly those structural differences that Perović identified I will devote this work to, much in the vein of the ESF team of historians. These differences/instances, nonetheless, are still seen in most of Yugoslavia even today.

In a revealing work entitled *We and the West*, Jorjo Tadić, the Croatian historian, wrote already in 1925 how

‘it is not only a lag in time, we are talking about two psyches: whilst the Westerner is a prototype of rationality (...) the Slav, thus, our people, is a complete opposite. And that is understandable. The Slavs are mostly farmers, and the farmer is no rationalist, especially in a primitive state. And whilst the Westerner stands on the pinnacle of a culture that he himself had raised, we stand still without our own culture, and we have not been made to, nor are we entirely capable of, completely taking a etymologically and spiritually different culture’ (Tadić 1934, 287).

In such an undeveloped, rural society, lagging behind the West, there developed a mentality of collectivity. Such a mentality, ‘the base of which was collectivism, spread to the entire *socium*, which meant a strong emphasis of the corporation over the personality and the dissolution of individual interest in the collective ones. On all levels – from the family to the state’. (Shemyakin and Silkine 2006, 642) Dubravka Stojanović noticed how it is a ‘fact that some political circumstances, dilemmas and problems of today, are almost unchanged in comparison with those that plagued the citizens of Serbia by the end of the XIX century’ (Stojanović 2010, 60). Though the system of parliamentary monarchy introduced after the coup in 1903 was based on the Belgian role model from 1831, though this Constitution ‘defined a clear division of power and the introduction of democratic procedures based on the highest European standards of the time’ (Stojanović 2010, 190), the *implementation* of said standards failed, as the institutions never actually functioned according to them. Instead of a modern political model, a ‘pre-modern’ one took root, one in which ‘politics is not seen as a means of articulating and solving societal conflicts, but as a confrontation, a war’ (Stojanović 2010, 62). The media from the beginning of the 20th century wrote about a plethora of ‘revenge, hatred and perjury’ (Politika 1907), ‘the freedom of strife’ (Trgovinski glasnik 1906), ‘personal hatred and personal goals’ (Trgovinski glasnik 1906) within the parties.

In a Yugoslavia led by *such* a Serbia, built on a shaky foundation, there were many troubles. Local nationalisms were aplenty (Macedonian, Croat, Albanian, Montenegrin). In such chaos and commotion, the first joint government was formed in 1918, led

by Stojan Protić, with one Bosnian Muslim, two Slovenians, four Croats and thirteen Serbs (Šesták et al. 1998, 396). Misrepresentation of national minorities led to the formation of local populist parties, such as the Croat National Youth in 1922, quickly to get a Serb response in the manner of establishing the Serb National Youth. ‘The Kingdom felt itself to be in a deep collapse’, Tejchman wrote, and so in 1928 the King proclaimed how the state was ‘endangered by blind political passions and inter-party strife’ (Šesták et al. 1998, 408), and he felt, backed by the French, that establishing a royal dictatorship was the only way to deal with this problem. This seemingly created more problems than it had solved, as the minorities now felt even more threatened, so groups such as the Croat right wing led by Ante Pavelić emerged. In 1930, the *Ustaša* squads were formed, ‘as a terrorist organization with an extremely right-wing national program’ trained in Hungary and Italy (Šesták et al. 1998, 418–419). All these instances shall peak in World War II, when Croatia became a Nazi puppet-state, and all shall be revived in all but name in the 1990s.

Having in mind the already mentioned fact that Serbia was the center and heart of such a Yugoslavia, we saw ‘separatist’, i.e. ‘independence’ movements very early in time. An article in *Slovanský přehled* in 1933 notes the commotion that Dr Maček, the Croat politician, created with his Croatian Peasants’ Party. Maček, namely, insisted that ‘Yugoslavia should be turned back towards its consistency from the year 1918’ (before the complete establishment of the Serb hegemony by the introduction of a royal dictatorship on 6 January 1929), and the Serb side understood that as a separatist movement from the Croatian side:

‘The state official saw in it a propaganda for the separation of a part of Yugoslavia as a independent state. (...) Dr Maček defended in front of the court by saying that the Zagreb resolution wished for the removal of the Serb hegemony, not at all for the destruction of the state unity. “We never wanted Croatia to secede from the state. The Croat question should be settled within the frames of the Yugoslav state”’ (Slovanský přehled 1933).

As seen, though there were no separatist/independentist movements, no irredenta, the fact that the very *wish* for the diminishing of the ever-present Serb hegemony was interpreted by the Serb side as a move towards the breakup of the state, indicating the very loose bonds the federal states had between each other. Similar discourse will be seen much later, in the 1990s, when Serbia was still a dominant republic in the Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (Chrobák and Hrabcová 2010, 120). There is a continuation of Serb state hegemony within Yugoslavia.

The Serb domination, one could claim, was official since 1929 and the ‘introduction’ of the dictatorship. This move had a wide echo in Europe, Czechoslovakia included. For instance, Hubert Ripka wrote in 1933 how

‘[t]he elementary mistake of the post-war internal Yugoslav politics was the exaggerated, mechanical centralism. The historical development of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the political and social structure of the new state, the cultural differences, everything opposed the uniforming centralism. The creators of Yugoslavia allowed themselves a tragic error at the time the country was formed: they thought that the idea of folk unity leads towards a centralized state with logical necessity’ (Ripka 1933).

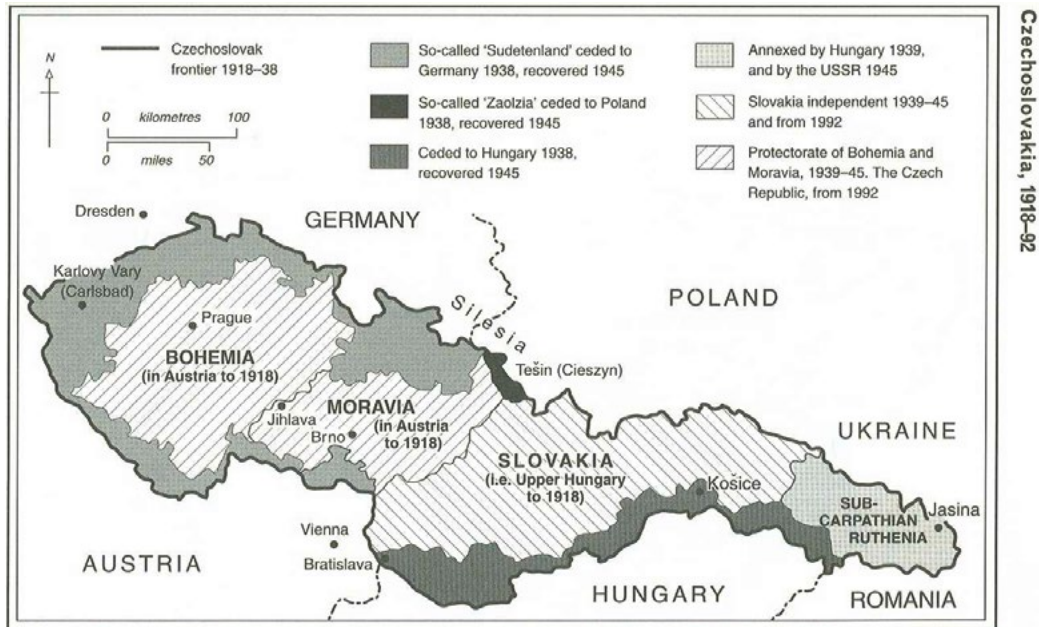
The same author noticed what seems to be *inevitability* in the development of the Yugoslav state, when he wrote how ‘from the year 1930 there was no doubt that the Serbo-Croatian antagonism failed to be overcome, while there were increasing signs that there was an anti-Serb sentiment on the rise in Croatia’ (Ripka 1933, 5). Seeds of discontent were already sown. While there was a rift between the Serb and the Croatian part, nonetheless, Bosnia with its Muslim population was largely ignored. As Ripka wrote in an article in 1931, ‘there was no mention of the Muslims in the new regime. Not a single of their representatives was made a part of the new government’ (Ripka 1931, 38).

Even more chaos erupted after the successful assassination attempt on King Aleksandar in Marseilles on October 1934. When World War II came, with an already established Communist core, a failing economy, a majority of traditionalists, nationalists,

right-wing oriented people, Yugoslavia (that changed its name in 1929) was too minor a factor to be relevant for the Great Powers.

Somewhat to the north, Czechoslovakia was formed at the same time, in 1918, when the Prague National Council took power on 28 October 1918. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk was elected the first president as he returned to Prague, addressing the nation by citing Comenius, whose words ‘were full of faith that the governance of things would again return to the hands of his conquered nation’ (Polišenský 1991, 110). As many other states, Yugoslavia included, the formation of Czechoslovakia was helped by the fear of the (returning) Great Powers and larger players (Austria-Hungary and Germany for Czechoslovakia; Austria-Hungary and Italy for Yugoslavia). Independency from what is often dubbed as foreign rule was crucial; as Dušan Kovač wrote, ‘the Czechs formed themselves into a nation on the basis of an independent statehood’ (Kováč 1998, 364–365). Kvaček also stressed similar instances (Kvaček 1998, 244–265), while Holý emphasized how ‘Czechs constructed their national identity in conscious opposition to the Germans with whom they shared geographical, political, and economic space (...) Their pursuit of national sovereignty culminated in 1918 with the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic as one of the successors of the defeated empire’ (Holý 1996, 5). Czechoslovakia, half-surrounded by Germany and comprising huge national minorities (the Germans in Sudetenland and Hungarians in southern Slovakia) immediately faced geopolitical problems.





**MAP #2: CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1918-92**

The map shows how Czechoslovakia was 'bitten away' by its neighbors before the end of WWII

Source: University of Nevada, Las Vegas

In 1919 Hungary attacked Slovakia, yet without success. The Germans in (mostly) Sudetenland were a 'problem' *per se*, though no separatist movement sprang from their midst – the Munich agreement in 1938 was initiated by Germany's *elite*, and *not* by Sudetenland Germans. It was a tough time *and* place to form a state. The very ideologies that were in play in Central Europe differed vastly, from a democracy driven Masaryk in Czechoslovakia to the totalitarian National-Socialist, Adolph Hitler, not even to mention the stronger and stronger Communist ideology taking firm root throughout Europe. Unlike Yugoslavia at that time, both the Czechs and the Slovaks went through what is falsely considered a 'national revival' (the 'national revival' of Serbs, Croats etc came

only by the end of the century and ended up as bloodshed). As Kovač elaborated, ‘the process of formation of Czechs and Slovaks into modern nations began at the end of the eighteenth century’, much in the vein of other European nations. Let me remind the reader, at this point, that the ‘first nation’ to have been formed (in the vastly accepted constructivist view) was the French nation by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, very lucidly and famously elaborated by Eugen Weber (Weber 1976). This process was called

‘the national revival. Though historically incorrect, this term is still in use. The term “revival” relates to the idea that the nation is an eternal entity. It was created at the dawn of history and after years of hibernation it came to life again. A detailed analysis of the “revival” reveals that since the end of the eighteenth century both Czechs and Slovaks became gradually conscious of their national make-up, and this acquisition of national consciousness became a prerequisite of their existence as modern nations. Begun by a small group of intelligentsia in both nations, this process affected large sections of the population by the middle of the nineteenth century’ (Kováč 1998, 365).

I shall stress the role of the ‘small group of intelligentsia’ and the power of the individual and the elites, as emphasized by Fritz Fischer and Sir Lewis Namier respectively, and devote a whole chapter to it later on. The ‘nations’ were the key players now, led by the elites. As Holý wrote,

‘The inclusion of Czechs and Slovaks in a common state was to the advantage of both. For Czechs it meant the achievement, together with the Slovaks, of an indisputable majority in a multiethnic state. For Slovaks it meant the preservation of their national identity, which had been under constant and ever-increasing threat’ (Holý 1996, 6).

It is motivating to notice how joining with Czechoslovakia was at that time considered to be a ‘preservation of the national identity’, when the same ‘preservation’ will later be seen in a separate Slovak Republic by the end of the century. However, building a common house on largely misunderstood premises (the very concept of the ‘nation’) was bound to produce trouble, and, according to the poll in the journal *Respekt* in 1991 (no 16.), the majority of the Czechs and Slovaks thought that their side was financially

supporting the other one. Similar sentiments were to be found in Yugoslavia, where it was first of all the Serb side that insisted on gratitude by the Croats and Slovenians, while most of the economic strength of former Yugoslavia indeed *was* coming from Slovenia. The truth was, however, that Slovakia *was* financially and economically underdeveloped in comparison to Slovakia, a thorn in the Slovak side that was never drawn out.

The World War II brought misery to both the peoples of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia alike, from the Munich Agreement to the April 1944 bombing of Belgrade, numerous concentration camps not even having a need to be mentioned. This work, however, concentrates on the creation and disassembling of the two states, so, in order to continue the story, it has to skip to the 1980s very quickly. After World War II, *Communism* was the one most important common factor for the two states, a Communism, which by the use of well-established means of repression, kept the two states together. From the ‘implementation of the Brezhnev doctrine’ and the Prague Spring, from Tito’s breakup with the USSR and the Constitution of 1974, both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were ready to fall apart when the iron manacles of Communism began to give way. Yet these two countries saw vastly different fates.

By the end of Josip Broz Tito’s life, Yugoslavia started to crumble in on itself in many instances – demographic, economic, social, and even linguistic (Pelikan in: Šesták et al. 1998, 543). The ethnic issue, however, had been the most pronounced, as in Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia the birthrate lowered, while in Kosovo and Macedonia, Albanians saw a ‘demographic explosion’. The legal statuses of Kosovo and Macedonia – that have had powers of a federal state from the 1974 Constitution – got even more powers on a federal level. This will lead to the secession of Kosovo in 2008 – by many seen as the final piece breaking off from Yugoslavia – and to much trouble in the 1990s. Pelikán notices a problem in linguistic unity as well, as in the year 1967, a Croatian national(ist) linguist movement published the *Declaration about the position and name of the Croatian*

*literary language*, which destroyed the language unity of the Novi Sad agreement of 1954 (to be analyzed in much detail in Chapter VII).

With the death of Tito in May 1980, ‘national consciousnesses’ were allowed to go rampant. While Tito successfully kept squashing all local nationalist movements, such as the Muslim radicals of Alija Izetbegović in 1983, or the Serb nationalist ideology propagated by Vojislav Šešelj from the University of Sarajevo, all these movements, people and ideologies broke loose in the 1980s. The new various groups could never cooperate (Šesták et al. 1998, 553–554). The strongest of the new nationalist groups concentrated around Slobodan Milošević, who in 1986 became the leader of the Serbian Communist Organization, with Franjo Tuđman in Croatia and Alija Izetbegović in Bosnia. During the course of time, these three will make an enormous impact on the historical development of Yugoslavia (see: Chapter IV), each supporting a local version of ethnic and religious nationalism of the Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims, respectively. From 1991, Slovenia, Croatia, and then Macedonia were the first to proclaim independence, triggering the ‘Ten day war’ in Slovenia and the War in Croatia. Bosnia and Herzegovina broke free from Serbia’s grasp in 1992. The War in Bosnia broke out in 1995, and will forever be known as the genocidal war with ethnic cleansing at the turn of the centuries. Yugoslavia was now only a union between Serbia and Montenegro, and so even the country changed its name to ‘Serbia and Montenegro’ in 2003, when the country called Yugoslavia officially went to the dustheap of history. In 2006 Montenegro broke free with a very tight majority on the referendum, while Kosovo gained a much disputed sovereignty in 2008. Much of this work will concentrate on the internal (and to some extent, external) factors that have contributed to such a development.



### YUGOSLAVIA, 1991

The map shows the heavily dispersed and numerous ethnic groups vividly.

Source: University of Texas, Austin



The situation was rather different in Czechoslovakia. While in Yugoslavia, Communism – an authoritarian system in itself – was replaced by a similarly authoritarian panoply on nationalist regimes in several new countries, Czechoslovakia lived to see the real *fall of Communism* after Nikita Khrushchev and the fall of the Berlin wall, as well as a *peaceful* Velvet Revolution (some have asked whether the Velvet Revolution should be called a revolution at all, having in mind its peaceful character). As Paul Sigurd Hilde wrote,

‘the Velvet divorce came as the result of the failure of the new democratic regime to deal simultaneously with the two main tasks it faced after the collapse of Communism. The problem of finding a new model for the common Czech and Slovak state, while at the same time reforming not only the economy but the whole of society away from the socialist model, proved to be a heavy burden’ (Hilde 1999, 647).

To put it bluntly, Hilde stresses a simple collision of two different points of view that have led to the peaceful disassemblment of Czechoslovakia.

‘After the second post-Communist elections in June 1992 the struggle over the preferred way forward came to a head. Led by Václav Klaus of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), the election winners in the Czech lands presented an ultimatum to their counterparts in Bratislava: either a Czech-Slovak state with a strong central government and radical economic reforms, or no state at all’ (Hilde 1999, 647).

Vladimír Mečiar, with his populist patriotic movement, chose the latter. Karel Vodička also stressed as one of the main reasons for the split to be ‘primarily the consequence of the emancipatory forces and patriotism of the Slovak people’ (Vodička 2003, 1). The strong *will* for separation – without many uses of derogatory terms such as ‘irredenta’ and ‘secession’ – is often stressed on this matter. In 1992, a peaceful split was simply brokered as a deal. As Václav Klaus noticed,

‘[t]he relations between Czechs and Slovaks, and not only the political ones, are perfectly unproblematic. We have become an example for the world by solving our own problems by action and consensus. For successfully manoeuvring through the

uncharted pitfalls of transformation and becoming a respected and relatively rich democratic country, we owe largely to this “velvet divorce”, which, in spite of this, is not remembered with pleasure’ (Klaus 2002).

On the other hand, Dubravka Stojanović gives a short, yet effective account of the ‘unfinished business’ issue in Yugoslavia, stressing how problems kept permeating this country throughout the century:

‘The Balkan wars created a national frustration almost in every people that took part in them. Everybody was left with at least a small part of unfulfilled desires, which strengthened their pretensions towards a larger state. Separatist and irredentist movements during the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been founded on those pretensions, which was one of the important factors of the instability of the region. Even those countries that were considered to be winners, such as Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, remained unsatisfied, as their maximal desires remained unfulfilled. That is why they kept a feeling of “unfinished business”, which meant a continuous warming up of the idea of the necessity for new conflicts’ (Stojanović 2009b).

This was especially pronounced in the mutual relations of Serbia with Kosovo, to be shown in the penultimate chapter in more detail.

As already mentioned, this was the *story*, at least its major parts. It is the easiest part – telling what happened, without much of a bother to actually see *why* it happened, which is why it is fairly pointless to retell it yet again; numerous works have tackled the questions of the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak creation and fall separately (Kirschbaum 1993, Pavlinek 1995, Kudei 1996, Perman 1962, Bradley 2000, Krejčí and Machonin 1998, Skilling 1991, Innes 1997, Young 1994, Rogel 1998, Lucarelli 2000, Spencer 1998, Ramet 2005, Transchel 2007, Duijzings 2003, Sekulić 1997, Gross 1979, Trifunovska 1994, Stokes 1914, Magaš 1993, Pavković 2000); this is not the ambit of this work. Instead, this volume tackles the interdisciplinary potential of history as a methodological development. The story is just the first, shallow layer of history. Going deeper into the explanatory will be the core of the rest of the work, stressing especially those instances that commonly fail to be included into historical research.

## CHAPTER III

### UNITY

*Independence and power of the Czechoslovak Kingdom  
can be secured only by a firm and uninterrupted  
Russian occupation of the Czech and Slovak lands.*

– T. G. MASARYK

Problems with historiography we encounter even at the very beginning.

The known Czech historian Josef Polišenský saw the forming of the Czechoslovak republic as an intrinsically democratic instance, claiming that it ‘arose out of the will of the Czech and Slovak people’ (Polišenský 1991, 111). Even though this petite work was originally published in English and meant for ‘outsiders’, we do have to remember that *everything* is a secondary source, and even though the short history had no higher ambitions, this was the view that was expounded to foreigners, and thus well deserved mention. He is far from being the only one, as even the anthropologist Holý also sees Czechs to be somehow ‘more democratic’ than others (Holý 1996). ‘It is true that between the two world wars Czechoslovakia was the only country in Central Europe with a democratic political system’, wrote Holý, ‘but the democratic form of government ended in 1938 following the surrender of the Sudetenland to Nazi Germany as a result of the Munich agreement’. Going from the country’s birth, ‘Czechoslovakia has enjoyed a democratic system of government for twenty or at best twenty-three years. For more than twice as long – a full forty-six years – it has had a totalitarian form of government’. Yet still did Holý see democracy ‘within’, as ‘totalitarianism has not created



a tradition; it is the democratic tradition which is constantly being acknowledged and invoked' (Holý 1996).

Said sentiments provoke thought – did anything in the first decades of the last century arise from the *will* of the people at all? Do 'peoples' have a collective will at all? Doubtful. In the utter chaos Europe saw itself in, in the fear and trepidation that were more than common constitutes of the daily lives of ordinary men and women, how can it be said that anything actually represented the *will of the people*? And do the *people* have a common, unified will at all? It is a very romantic notion, idealistic and essentially infantile. Though a rhetorical question *per se*, I should perhaps stress a strict negative answer. In his *History of Czechoslovakia in Outline*, he tries to point out (over and over again) how there is a quintessential proclivity to democracy rooted in the Czech and Slovak people, and similar instances kept being repeated throughout the book *ad nauseam*. He mentions 'a contemporary Russian author,' whom he does not name, who 'has compared Czechoslovakia to a tree which stands most erect where winds from two sides blow upon it' (Polišenský 1991, 131). Whilst the phallic visage of the 'erect tree' in Polišenský's ecstatic vision surely deserves a deeper, Freudian investigation, one has to wonder about the sheer hyperbole Polišenský used. Or was it hyperbolic at all? 'Because of her geographical position Czechoslovakia has as her very task to support peace and tolerance in the world,' claimed the author in a rather megalomaniac manner (Polišenský 1991, 131). Even if we should take a step back and take a broader look, 'in retrospect the First Czechoslovak Republic has been viewed almost as an ideal state, an island of democracy in a sea of fascist and authoritarian regimes' (Dowling 2002).

In Yugoslavia, other people thought as well that they were the ones in the center of civilization. It is more than a common issue in many ex-Yugoslav states (even *today*) to think that the country holds a unique geopolitical location, a special niche on the map of Europe that puts the state in an important place. Even so early as in 1914, there was a text written and signed by prominent scientists throughout future Yugoslavia, in which they claimed how the Balkans had a 'Eurasian and Eurafrian function' (*sic!*), as well

as being ‘the stage of conflict of interest for many a big and small state’ (Sundhaussen 2007). The undersigned were, among others, the eminent anthropologist/geographer Jovan Cvijić, the ethnologist Tihomir Đorđević, the historians Jovan Radonić and Stanoje Stanojević, the lawyer Ljubomir Jovanović and one of the best known philologists dealing with the Serbo-Croatian language, Aleksandar Belić. Aleksandar Baucal of the Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy has noticed the same, stating how he ‘heard the same story in numerous countries’ (Baucal 2006, 64). Some old Swedish texts I stumbled upon while studying the languages, literatures and histories of Scandinavia used firmly to place Sweden in the center of Europe. And it is not a far stretch to envisage a Ukrainian historian placing Ukraine as the center of European development and history. As I have already written, and as I will be repeating often (*repetitio mater studiorum est*), national affiliations can only efficiently obliterate any traces of objectivity the author might possess. And similar to the Czechoslovakism described above, there was *Yugoslavism* in the south (and it still exists, though in weaker versions). In both cases – Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia – problems had been encountered at the very beginning.

Josef Harna has noticed that immediately after the forming of the Czechoslovak state, there was a mass of conceptual problems in the newly formed Czechoslovak historiography, the largest of which was the relation to the past of two regions now joined together.

‘From the moment that the newly established Czechoslovak state began to interest Czech historians, there has been a marked asymmetry in their view of this historical formation. Czech historiography, although it formally treated Czechoslovak history, found itself unable to abandon the earlier interpretative scheme of Bohemian history. Historians continued to focus on the historical development of Bohemia and Moravia, possibly including also what had been Austrian Silesia, while Slovakia and Ruthenia were only of marginal interest or even treated as a sort of appendage of the western part of the state’ (Pánek 2001, 114–115).

Small wonder that Eric Hobsbawm dubbed both the union of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia ‘shotgun political marriages’ that proved ‘not to be very firm’ (Hobsbawm

1994). Needless to say, with the establishing of communism in both states, both saw nothing more than Communist ‘historiography’, for which the word *propaganda* indisputably functions as a better substitute (See: Kopeček 2007).

Almost identical problems were encountered in historiography issues in the newly formed union of the South Slavs. In the thirties, Stanoje Stanojević, the abovementioned historian published a *History of Yugoslavs (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes)* (Jelavich 1958), which was nothing more than a new edition of his *History of Serbia*, in which the designation paradigm ‘Serb’ was replaced by ‘Yugoslav’. As Sundhaussen put it, ‘if common history is the necessary prerequisite of a nation, then the lack of capability to write one stands as clear evidence of weakness in the creation of identity’ (Sundhaussen 2007). Stanojević’s *History of Yugoslavs*, as described by Charles Jelavich,

‘was a history of Serbia in which one chapter was dedicated to Croats and one to Slovenes. Its two books together numbered 266 pages, where history of Serbia got 205, Croatia 35, and Slovenia 13. (...) What comes easily to attention is that the Serbian uprisings of 1804 and 1815 have been described on 12 pages, which is twice as much than was dedicated to Croatia and Slovenia in that entire century. (...) Nothing contained in that history pointed towards a history of the South Slavs’ (Jelavich 1958).

According to the historian Tomislav Išek of the University of Sarajevo, the very name *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* was ‘farcical, as these three nations existed only formally in the name of the state, while other nations never even got mentioned’ (Išek 2009, 18).

Desimir Tošić, a politician affiliated to the Serbian Democratic Party depicted the first Yugoslavia as

‘Šumadija-Belgrade Yugoslavia, every minister had to be from Kragujevac or Belgrade, there was no one from Eastern Serbia, there were no Montenegrins, no Bosnian Serbs, no Croats. (...) Yugoslavia was a state of the Serbian people in which Croats and Slovenes also lived. You cannot find a better explanation for our hegemony than that’ (Peščanik 2007).

The historian Latinka Perović is of similar views, claiming how ‘in the perception of Yugoslavia (...) Serbia was at all times on one side, while all other states stayed on the other. That fact cannot be ignored while talking about the character of the wars in Yugoslavia in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’ (Perović 2008, 27). This is perhaps the most important reason for which I have defined the breakup of Yugoslavia as other states trying to break free from Serbia’s grasp. The extremely Serb-centralized government and ideology will come to influence and decide the fate of the whole of Yugoslavia.

‘Serbia led the formation of this state – as was indeed desired by the other component parts prior to their liberation – because Serbia was the largest south Slav community around which the other communities could cohere. It had already liberated itself from Ottoman rule and established a nation state, and was struggling to liberate other south Slav peoples prior to the First World War’ (Hudson 2003, 8).

This Serb-centerdness is often seen as crucial in the development of Yugoslavia as a state:

‘Serbia, as an independent nation state, was the obvious focus for the realization of the south Slav state, particularly after a number of advances towards the liberation of Serbs still under Ottoman rule in the early part of the twentieth century. Indeed, as Fred Singleton has pointed out, it was only in the early twentieth century that the idea of Serbia as “the focal point for South Slav unification – a kind of Yugoslav Piedmont” gained significance within Serbia itself, for in the nineteenth century the primary focus of the Serbs was the liberation of the Serbian people. While a number of Serbian leaders in the nineteenth century did promote the south Slav idea, “it was far from being a widely held concept until the twentieth century”. By the twentieth century, of course, the struggle for Serbian independence – while narrower in conception than the south Slav idea – had provided the base from which the idea could actually be realized, particularly after the strengthening of Serbia during the Balkan Wars’ (Hudson 2003, 11).

Going back from historiography to history, from meta-discourse to discourse, we see vast differences even in the functioning of the newly formed unions from their very

conception. In 1918 Czechoslovakia was formed, but *Yugoslavia* came some years later. At first, its name was the unifying designation of the *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*. One should immediately notice that even though Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia were parts of it, they had not been included in the name. Its official language was *Serbo-Croato-Slovenian* (*sic!*), a language that never existed, being that Slovenian is a completely separate language from Serbo-Croatian, while a similar conglomerate was formed in Czechoslovakia and its official Czechoslovak language (Kamusella 2008). The artificiality of the ‘shotgun marriage’ was clear from its beginning. As Sundhaussen stated, ‘the birth of first Yugoslavia created more problems than it had solved’ (Sundhaussen 2008). It is possible that the factor of *panslavism* (that established itself firmly during the 19th century) helped in creating both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

Still, panslavist thought kept its popularity that it inherited from the 19th century. Pavel Bujnak, in an article in *Slovansky Přehled* from the beginning of the 20th century claims that ‘the precondition of joining of all Slavs is the brotherhood with the closest of them’. It is not a far stretch to see that the Czech panslavist sees the Slovaks as ‘the closest of brothers’ and *vice versa*. Antonín Frinta saw the same ‘closeness’ between the Slavic people, noticing that there is only a ‘language barrier’, which can easily be removed:

‘The term “Slavic intercommunity” contains in itself the direct intercommunication, excluding by nature any presence and influence by a third element, especially non-Slavic. And here, in practice, we are always faced, among other material problems, with the formal language barriers, which are possible to remove by various means’ (Frinta 1932).

As Oskar Krejčí noticed, ‘[t]he basis for Masaryk’s conception of the Central European balance (within which Czechoslovakia as a geopolitical entity was to function, my edit, SJ) were the ideas of radical Pan-Germanism, the *idea of Slavonic solidarity* (my italics, SJ) and hope placed in treaties of alliance between the national state and other selected states’ (Krejčí and Styan 2005).

What we see here, in short, is nothing more than a myriad romanticist ideas. Masaryk's program 'included not only the destruction of the existing, Central European order, which was already disintegrating under German pressure but also the construction of a new balance. It had to be based on Slavonic solidarity and the interests of the Western powers' (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 231). He – in all actual fact – thought it possible to create a literal, land-based, geographical *belt* 'of Slavonic states in Central Europe: Poland, Bohemia (Czechoslovakia) and Yugoslavia', as he regarded 'the freedom of the Czechs, Poles and Yugoslavs [to be] inseparable.' In a similar vein, he saw Serbs as the 'most natural allies of the Czechs'. In an even broader Pan-Slavic *Weltanschauung*, Masaryk thought that such a union would have to be guaranteed by Russia, which has, probably due to its sheer size, power and influence, often seen in the Slavic world as the Big Brother/Mother Goose. This idea of Masaryk's led to some eerily dangerous conclusions, not even to mention the official implementation of the Brezhnev doctrine in 1968. It seems that 1917, as described by Krejčí, was but an overture to 1968, as Masaryk, 'in a discussion with the Russian ambassador in Rome in December 1994, (...) even expressed his view that the "independence and power of the Czechoslovak Kingdom can be secured only by a firm and uninterrupted Russian occupation of the Czech and Slovak lands (...)"' (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 236). The much praised Masaryk, whose busts and statues adorn many a square within the Czech Republic, is seldom known among the laypeople to have had such views. My inquiry about him among the lay population kept being met with exclusive disbelief and a strongly acroholistic attitude towards me whenever I tried to dig a tad deeper.

'During the Communist era in particular, Czechoslovaks were wont to look back nostalgically at this "golden era" ruled over by Masaryk, who was simultaneously the "President Liberator" and the "little father"', notices Dowling, contrasting this idea 'to the view of the appeasing Western democracies in the late 1930s, who saw a corrupt subaltern people exploiting and oppressing a noble and suffering German minority. More recently,

revisionist historians such as Zbenek Zeman have questioned both the virtue of the Republic and the integrity of President Masaryk and his associates' (Dowling 2002, 19).

Similar views we can see propounded by Edvard Beneš, who 'sought protection from this situation in what he called the Slavdom of the future' (Beneš 1947, 352), or, in Beneš's own words:

'I think the only possible Slavonic policy for the health and success of all is a permanent Soviet – Polish – Czechoslovak alliance'. However, even though leaning towards the pro-Russian side, he 'expressed fear of the spread of the Soviet form of government to the small Slavonic countries, but he saw the unity of the Slavonic countries as one of the main guarantees for the maintenance of statehood' (Krejčí and Styán 2005, 244).

The idea of a pan-Slavic unity was coming from a time already long in the past. The historicist ideology was seen in an article by Věra Vrzalová in 1932, in which she wrote about Ilija Garašanin and the politics of Serbia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to her, the idea of Yugoslavism stemmed from Garašanin and his 'broad political views'; he was 'the first statesman to spread the until then narrow view of Šumadija [central Serbia] to the idea of "Yugoslavism"' (Vrzalová 1932, 134). Pan-Slavic ideas of unity were easily identifiable:

Garašanin, then still the minister of internal affairs, founded his 1844 *Načertanije* on the thought that a great task among the peoples of the Balkans awaits Serbia. Turkey was about to fall soon, Austria and Russia were hasting to divide the spoils. Serbia needs to shed the unworthy influence of both, draw to itself other Slovene peoples and replace the Turkish realm with a creation of a new and healthy union of the Christian Balkan peoples, which will then successfully flank the policies of the Western powers (Vrzalová 1932, 136).

In general, the concept of 'the Slav' was much stronger than it is today. Today, it plays almost no role in the politics of the Czech Republic or Slovakia, while it only seldom appears in Serbia or Croatia, in ultra-nationalist discourse. Yet at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the designation 'Slav' or 'Slavic' was quite common. For instance, Jan Slavík's

article in the *Slovanský Přehled* in 1938, freely uses the phrases ‘great danger for the Slavs’, ‘driving the Slavs towards unity’ or ‘battle against the Slavic people’ (Slavík 1938).

Though the panslavic sentiment perhaps was not the decisive factor, in more than well deserved mentioning, as it is no chance that only Slavic lands got united in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The bizarre idea of the bridge that was supposed to connect Yugoslavia with Czechoslovakia is also an offspring of another, greater panslavic conjoining, an idea that failed completely. Especially in the thought of Masaryk, though, one could have seen broader, European ideas, and ideas of larger unity that was perhaps to come to pass only after World War II and the foundation of the European Union.



## CHAPTER IV

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

*Why do you bother with these bandits?*

– SIR LEWIS NAMIER, addressing a Ph.D. candidate who concentrated on a popular movement during the French Revolution, and not on the ‘people who mattered’

Sir Lewis Namier was known as the historian who stressed the importance of *individuals* in influencing the developments throughout history. He did, arguably, go too far in his insistence on the significance of powerful individuals (as seen in the quote above), often completely disregarding other, minor players. This is perchance easy to designate as *methodological individualism*, i.e. the notion which stresses that ‘all observable behavior is ultimately individual behavior, and thus (...) demonstrable explanations rest entirely on attributes on individuals’ (Parsons 2007, 23). According to Parsons, Popper, Watkins, Lukas and Little are typical representatives of this approach. In this work, I shall take the same approach as a basis, championed in history by Lewis Namier, showing how there were only a few important individuals that have significantly influenced both the creation and breakup of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The German World War II historian, Fritz Fischer, has similarly emphasized the importance of the *elites* in historical development. After all, ‘it is clear that the first integration processes [during the creation of Yugoslavia] were elitist’ (Brkljača 2009, 139), to just name one example. Let us now proceed how individuals of the elite – and their ideas – shaped the course of history in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The Balkanologist from Berlin, Ridiger Rosig, clearly stated: ‘Yugoslavia actually blew up. (...) It was dismembered, destroyed

and marauded by its political class. Until we do not acknowledge it, I do not think we will have any political or economical advancement in the region of former Yugoslavia' (Filipović 2010). Or, in the words of V. P. Gagnon,

‘it is important to understand that the Yugoslav federation did not just collapse as a natural phenomenon. Rather, the Yugoslav federation was purposefully and strategically destroyed, first by those who wished to recentralize the state and thus sought to end federalization, and then by those (some of whom had earlier sought recentralization) who sought to bring an end to the Yugoslav state itself as a way to establish smaller republic-based states’ (Gagnon Jr 2010, 25).

Gagnon notices that without the ‘intra-elite processes... it is highly unlikely that Yugoslavia would have become the site of Europe’s bloodiest war since 1945’ (Gagnon Jr 2010, 25).

### **‘NATIONAL REBIRTHS’ AND NATIONAL SENTIMENTS. T. G. MASARYK**

The idea of ‘national rebirth’ was a popular one in the beginning of the 20th century. With the crumbling up of old Empires, primarily the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary, peoples that have been ruled by those two Great Powers found themselves in an uncanny position. All of a sudden, after centuries and centuries of being ruled by superpowers, they were finally left to their own devices.

In the north, Masaryk spoke often about the ‘Czech national renewal’ and the ‘Czech question’. The famous first president of Czechoslovakia, although a rather important figure in history, held a romantic, almost infantile (and rather spiritual) philosophy behind his actions, which he used as a means to an end, that is, for the creation of a common state. He propounded the idea that there was some kind of renaissance going on within the Czech lands, and his ‘Czech renewal’ seemed to have been closely connected to Slovakia itself, being that he stated how ‘it is no accident that our [Czech] national ambitions were first expressed by a Slovak [Kollar]’. He even made a list of whom he

called ‘awakeners’ (Dobrovsky, Puchmajer, Marek, Dobner, Durych, Voigt, Vydra). He saw the roots of this alleged awakening in the Hussite movement and the Protestant reformation: ‘This free thinking in Bohemia naturally had its roots in the Czech reformation, in the tradition of the Hussites and the Brethren’. Masaryk even went that far, as to claim how

‘Slavs are spiritually and linguistically more close to each other. (...) The position of the Slavs in the world, in Europe and in Asia, is completely central (...) In the Czech lands, we have the creator of Slavic studies, Dobrovsky... after whom Kollar set himself to develop the Slavic ideas...he took his philosophy of history from the German, Herder (...)’ (Masaryk 1936).

Masaryk’s views, as seen above, are almost magical. The sheer intoxication with the Schellingian/Herderian/Hegelian romantic idealism is something a historian sees almost in any European country. There is basically nothing we have not seen in putting one’s one people out as the best. Even Masaryk himself was aware of this, citing how Kireyevsky thought that the saviour of humanity would be the Russian, how Mickiewicz thought it would be a Pole etc. Even this brief excursion into objectivity did not do much to stem Masaryk’s subjective, romantic approach. Small wonder that this was a man who was the first president of a Czech and Slovak union, a mini-panslavic conjoining. Smaller wonder that this union *failed*. It can be said – and it is most probably true – that Masaryk used the ‘national’ and religious sentiments as a tool to help the creation of a state or a ‘national ideology’, yet we must not forget that the union failed, and that Masaryk’s means were intrinsically flawed.

Masaryk’s ideas of how Europe was to function (or at least what he saw as his vision of Central Europe) were crucial to the ideas for the forming of Czechoslovakia. He realized the growing strength of pre-Nazi Germany and how ‘one of the main roles of the World War was to break up Austria-Hungary’ (Krejčí and Styan 2005). In the chaos in which Europe found itself after the war, the geopolitical perturbances were to be used as a means to an end. The status and importance of T. G. Masaryk is nowadays in the

Czech Republic vastly overblown. People in general respect him, but when asked why, seldom is there a tangible answer. He is almost a mythical figure. What needs to be said, however, about his agendas concerning Czechoslovakia is that they, ever so simply, *failed*. Czechoslovakia is no more, and it is of small wonder that it is so, being that it was founded and led by a man who drew his ideals from a fallible, idealistic and essentially erroneous conception of history. One barely knows where to start when presenting the fallibility of Masaryk's romanticist views. His idea that the Czech national renewal stems from the Reformation, for example, is as biased as can be. Or would we expect anything else from a Protestant, than to say that Protestantism is the 'best option' of all? Catholic scholars, politicians and philosophers who claim the same for Catholicism are perhaps even more numerous. And should we veer slightly to the South and the East, we would easily find the same for Orthodoxy. Secondly, the very idea that it is precisely the Czech that should lead all Slavs in a 'renewal' is as biased as the Protestant stance above. All in all, what we have here is nothing more than a Czech Protestant claiming how the Czechs and Protestantism are the most viable options. Convenient, is it not? As Karl Popper wrote, Masaryk, although

'one of the greatest of all fighters for the open society, (...) fell a victim to a movement that sprang from the most reactionary and servile political philosophy that had ever been imposed upon meek and long-suffering mankind. He fell victim to his upbringing in the metaphysical political theories of Plato and Hegel, and to the nationalist movement based upon them' (Jarvie, Milford, and Miller 2006, 157).

Masaryk's views (similar to the views of Edvard Beneš on these issues) have, on the other hand, been more prominent in the idea of a broader, pan-European unity, today best represented in the very existence of the European Union, but that is a noteworthy story on its own. To paraphrase Esbach, nationalism *invents* nations, and the *state elite* creates and shapes them (Esbach 2000). Ideas similar to Masaryk's, as Sundhaussen put forward, were easy to find in the idea of Saint Stephan's Great Bulgaria, Mizkiewicz's Great Poland, Starčević's Great Croatia and, naturally, the most dangerous of all – Great

Germany (Sundhaussen 2007). In the 1990s, the identical idea of a Great Serbia led to many deaths and much misery as well, not even to mention the notion of Great Albania.

Similar nationalist/romantic discourse is easily found in the south, principally in Croatia and Serbia during the nineties. The nationalist discourse was mostly concentrated around the ‘breaking free’ from Austria-Hungary (Croatia, Vojvodina) and the Ottoman Empire. Sundhaussen noticed how the two Serb uprisings at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are seen as a ‘renewal’ of the old nation, even though they are in fact milestones that mark the *beginning* of the Serbian state. The idea of the ‘foreign ruler’, however strongly implanted in the mentality of the people, as well as most historians, was explained by Sundhaussen in a rather different fashion.

‘The topos of the “foreign ruler”, much used in Balkan historiography, only covers the basic problem that all countries of the Balkans had to tackle: the overcoming of the deep gap between the traditionally oriented majority of the population and the elder, respected, on one side, and the new elites prepared for modernization on the other. Whether it had been the “Bavarian rule” in Greece, the oligarchic rule of the “Defenders of the Constitution” in Serbia (1839–1858) or the rule of Carol I in Romania (1866–1881) – the same elementary problem was present everywhere (though with specific modifications for certain countries): the creation of the state and the nation, as well as the implementation of that which promised to give strength and prestige to the “national state”, was created from the above, with the help of an already functioning state apparatus and the strong resistance of the majority of the population that has ever been seeing the state as the enemy so it did not know how to begin with the construction of nations; the capitalist industry it saw as an attack on the traditional equality and solidarity within the society, and Roman law as a caricature of its own vision of law and value’ (Sundhaussen 2007).

According to Sundhaussen, the idea of the ‘foreign rule’ is intrinsically misconceived, as whoever leads the country tends to be far from the social reality, or, bluntly said, whoever rules, tends not to rule well. As the *reis ul-ulema* Džemaludin effendi Čaušević of

Bosnia said on the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918, 'do whatever you can, I will help any course of action that will bring freedom to our people. I have had enough of our, Turkish or German rule' (Kamberović 2009, 95).

Serb nationalism was, according to Sundhaussen, born in the year 1839 and the coming to power of the Defenders of the Constitution. Very soon, there sprang a nationalist philology (as described by the historian Patrick Geary in his *Myth of Nations* and the philosopher Karl Popper to have been an important moment in the development of both nationalistic and totalitarian thought in Europe) in the work of Vuk Stefanović-Karadžić, helped with a literary nationalism of Petar Petrović Njegoš as well as by the metaphysical, theological musings of *Vladika* Nikolaj Velimirović (2007). These three figures have arguably influenced the upcoming centuries in immense ways. This line of nationalist thought will prove to be ubiquitous in the development of not only Serbia, but Yugoslavia as well, and I shall present how.

### ETHNICITIES, PEOPLES AND NATIONS

The idealistic, romanticist *Weltanschauung* that led to what is often referred to as 'nation building' was firmly rooted in many a decision maker's mind by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As Jenkins and Sofos explained, both the 'people' and the 'nation' are constructs created by nationalist movements and ideologies (Jenkins and Sofos 2003). Emotionally charged ideas such as 'nation', 'people', 'ethnicity' and similar were keywords that had been used as means to geopolitical ends and questions of power. The keyword 'people' had special importance when it came to the founding and existence of Czechoslovakia, as explained by Vodička:

‘Czechoslovakia was built on political make-believe that there is such a thing as a Czechoslovak nation. This ideological construct, however, had to face a deeply rooted and very real Czecho-Slovak dualism with a cultural, religious, political and economic dimension, which even the 74 years of being joined in a single country could not overcome – and which, at the same time, was not respected enough by Czechoslovak politicians. The dualism originated in millennia-long separate historical development of both nations within different state formations before the foundation of Czechoslovakia. A single state of Czechs and Slovaks failed to become a space for converging mindsets and motives of both nations and their elites, often the result was quite opposite. The Czechoslovak legal system did not reflect the existence of two nations adequately ... The constitutional law on the Czechoslovak federation from 1968 was a mere formality; in the political reality of so-called “normalization” in the 1970s, all decision-making was in the hands of central party and state institutions in Prague. The fact that the Slovak desire for emancipation was not sufficiently reflected upon and embodied into a corresponding state and legal establishment until the revolution in 1989 contributed to Slovaks not identifying with Czechoslovakia enough, to a non-existence of the feeling of Czecho-Slovak belonging, a Czecho-Slovak nation in the political sense, which would work harder to preserve the united state’ (Vodička 2003, 2).

Having in mind Anderson’s explanation of the ‘nation’ as an imaginary community, together with Geary’s lucid noticing that ‘ethnicity’ is none the different, it is of small wonder that the entity dubbed by Hobsbawm ‘a shotgun marriage’ failed to last long. The ethnic question was further exacerbated by other alleged ethnicities, such as the Germans and Hungarians, as seen in the vision of Václav Klaus: ‘If the Czech side needed the Slovaks as a part of the “Czechoslovak” nation against the opposition of Sudetenland Germans, the new state enabled the Slovak side to save themselves from a revanchist Hungarian takeover’ (Klaus 2002).

The ethnic/national issues, however, had been far more important in the Balkans, especially at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Still, there was one important distinction.

While infantile romanticist ideologies serve to *create* Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, what they perpetuated from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to its end in Yugoslavia led as well to this country's *breakup*. Whilst romanticist, idealistic vision of the 'nation' served as a factor of almost exclusively unity (with the exception of the Slovak 'separatism' later on), in Yugoslavia, based on ideologies from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we saw an eruption of violence. The prime difference, as explained by Latin-ka Perović and Dubravka Stojanović, is the *continuity of traditionalism* in Yugoslavia and the lack of willingness to improve the society. According to these authors, unlike in Czechoslovakia, that has followed the courses of modernity with greater effort and success, there was a strong influence of the '*anti-modern*' *political thought* in Yugoslavia from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that still plagues most of these countries (Perović 2006, 5–34). These modes of thought will turn out to be most influential in Serbia, swaying the rest of Yugoslavia towards similar cultural and political views. That is why it is of crucial importance to present and analyze the three figures that have opened the door towards nationalism, traditionalism and the lack of modernity that will later on come to completely characterize the development of Serbia (or lack thereof), and consequently, the whole of Yugoslavia.

Even today, Vuk Stefanović-Karadžić is in Serbia presented as more of a mythical figure than a real person who actually lived and worked on an agenda. His popularity is unrivaled; he is considered to be a figure of immense importance, popular even more than Masaryk in the Czech Republic. His work and influence, however, once scrutinized more closely, reveal more than a nationalist bargained for. His linguistic work has undoubtedly profoundly influenced (a better word would be *changed*) Serbo-Croatian as it is today, and there is not much to be argued here. His was the orthography reform that made the language extremely easier to learn and write, thus enabling the largely illiterate masses to read and write.<sup>8</sup> He introduced the so-called *phonetic orthography*

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8 One could compare – though completely uncalled for – Stefanović-Karadžić's reform with the Czech language orthography reform by Jan Hus. However, while Stefanović-Karadžić's orthography



(such as is used in, for example, Arabic), which is pragmatically the easiest to both learn and use (both for native and non-native speakers). His positive influence on the language is beyond all doubt. However, his ideological work, as scrutinized by Sundhaussen and Banac, is of a different nature altogether.

Influenced by the romantic movement and ideas such as Herder's, namely, that the language is the most important property of a people (nation), Stefanović-Karadžić tried to define 'Serbs' as *those who spoke Serbian* (that is, the so-called controversial dialectal variety in Serbo-Croatistics known as 'štokavski'), an idea that still holds its ground firmly among the members of Serb intelligentsia. Some authors, such as the Croatian historian Ivo Banac, see this type of 'linguistic nationalism' as a 'modern Serb nationalist ideology' that had as a goal the complete assimilation of Croats and Muslims, being that the designation 'Serb' was thus stretched even unto those who by no means defined themselves as Serbs. There is a weird saying in Serbia today, referring to other peoples within former Yugoslavia: 'They are all Serbs, they just don't know it'. However – as we shall well see later in the course of the work – these 19<sup>th</sup> century ideologies have been *used* in a modern context during the nineties, and linguistic nationalism in Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro will play an important role during that period, from shibboleths to simple theory-based (though poorly) linguistic chauvinism. Where Stefanović-Karadžić's ideological work most profoundly influenced contemporary and modern national thought is his gathering work. He gathered folk poetry, and his collection of epic folk songs were assembled into several categories, among which are the 'pre-Kosovo poems', 'Kosovo cycle poems' and 'post-Kosovo poems'. As we shall see and discuss in much more detail, the obsession with the battle on the Kosovo field will

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made the written language more accessible to the populace, making it easier to learn and use, Hus' reform arguably created chaos in the language. The Czech language is nowadays the only Slavic language that actually writes post-accentual vowel lengths in a word, and many a Czech, especially students in high-schools and universities complain more often than not about the unnecessary complexity of the orthography.

become a major milestone in the development of Serb nationalism, which will in turn influence the whole of Yugoslavia (Čolović 2016). Its theoretical basis was build during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, exactly in the work of Stefanović-Karadžić, but the *vladika* Petar Petrović Njegoš as well. As Sundhaussen put it, ‘the heroic-epic and the sacred-legendary type of folk literature merged during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in a nation-formed unity and formed the Serb national myth’ (Sundhaussen 2007).

The heavy influence of Stefanović-Karadžić on the developments in the 1990s cannot be disputed, including the very same mentality that led to a discourse full of strife and hatred. As the historian Miroslav Jovanović elaborated, Karadžić’s persona became inextricably linked to the irrational concepts of the ‘nation’ and the ‘people’, where Karadžić became identified with ‘Serbhood’, as opposed to ‘Croatianhood’ or ‘Bosnianhood’.

‘At the very end, logically, a question arises: is it necessary, is it possible or, generally advisable (and allowed) to doubt “the genius”, “the messiah”, that is, “the national culture” and “the nation”. Definitely not. This dilemma and the answers to this dilemma are the source of the destructive force of the stereotypes. Cultural and social stereotypes, as well as the legendary and mythological representations of a person doing something or of an event in the past, do not require suspicion ad understanding – but total belief. “We”, simply, must love Vuk. Why? “The division between “we” and “they” has been reduced to two sharply defined contrasts, the positive one (“we”) and the negative one (“they”)”. Such a functional mechanism of mythological contents in society entails extremely simplified identification: Vuk=positive=we. On the other side, he enforces an extremely rigid concept of “spreading stereotypical contents about complete exactitude of ‘one’s own cause’ as a collective taboo that one must not touch, and the enemy side as a second pole, submerged hopelessly into the depth of the mud”. And indeed, in our social consciousness one could discern the elements of the taboo connected with Vuk’s personality and, in particular, his work, the one we positively must not touch. In addition, the opinion of Vuk’s opponents as the second pole, the one submerged into the dark depth of evil, has been firmly entrenched’ (Jovanović 2002).

This artificial polarity, the invented dichotomy served as fuel for the fire in the already broadening abyss of ethnic/national/religious hatred that swept most of former Yugoslavia by the end of the 20th century. Stefanović-Karadžić's figure served as a factor of division in the creation of 'Otherness' between the people of the country. Even though he stood as a figure of (early) science, Stefanović-Karadžić is most commonly referred to as if the speaker (or writer) knew him. *In summa*,

'It should be noticed that, when we speak of Stefanović-Karadžić, we refer to him using his given name, Vuk, and not the family name, Stefanović-Karadžić. On the other hand, we speak of Brozović's ideas, Ivić's engagement, Bugarski's works – we use their family names and not their given names, that is, not of Dalibor's ideas, Pavle's engagement, and Ranko's works. In this type of relationship with him it becomes clear that he is not seen as an expert, a scientist, but as a mythical figure that one can have an emotional, not scientific, relationship' (Jovanović 2002).

'Stereotypes, legends and myths, built over the number of years and cherished in the works of the most prominent scientists of a couple of generations, are the results of the epic understanding of the past' wrote Miroslav Jovanović.

'The power of the stereotypical and mythological representations results from the fact that, particularly in rather undeveloped society, it is more attractive (and socially and politically more useful) to interpret the past using simplified clichés. (...) However, the social myth of Karadžić would be difficult to be successful for such a long time without being fitted into a considerably broader system of political myths whereby the rural in the Serbian politics, society and culture has been glorified'. (Jovanović 2002).'

Njegoš's work, the well-known *Mountain Wreath*, has contributed immensely to the development of 'Serb national imageology', where the battle on the Kosovo field is represented as 'a great tragedy and a moral/religious sanctuary', from 1989 to be used by Milošević and by Koštunica at the beginning of the 20th century as a means of staying in power. As Sundhaussen put it, 'The Mountain Wreath may well be a glorious literary work, but the subtext and the messages contained within are separation and exclusion

in their most extreme form' (Sundhaussen 2007). In it, Njegoš calls for revenge on those who have 'betrayed the Orthodox faith', so that instead of the old blood-feuds, a religious war took the lead. The *Serb vs. Turk antagonism* was now 'upgraded' to a religious level, to a Christianity vs. Orthodoxy, an instance that will fuel the Bosnian and Croatian wars of the nineties, while the Battle of the Kosovo field became a 'great tragedy' and source of 'various misery' (Babović 1991, 7–19). An important moment in the Mountain Wreath is the idea that changing a religion entails an automatic *betrayal of one's own people*. This identifying and equalizing a *people* (nation?) and a *religion* is something that has been an integral part of almost every conflict in former Yugoslavia during the last two decades. Nothing of the sort, on the other hand, can be seen in neither Slovakia or the Czech Republic. Those who have 'betrayed their faith and people' are both religious and national traitors, and Njegoš invites patriots to commit vengeance. As Sundhaussen put it,

'The mental Kosovo as the "cradle" of medieval Serbia, as a place of the "sacred story of Serbia", as a "Serbian Jerusalem", as well as a "remembrance" of the defeat on the field of Kosovo, are the basic components of the myth of Kosovo. The battle of 1389 is taken as the embodiment of death and disaster, a punishment of the divine court, the suffering of the people, on one side, and of glory, willingness for sacrifice, catharsis, hope in the "resurrection" of the Kingdom of Earth and the vengeance for the injustice committed, on the other' (Sundhaussen 2007).

The extremely politically active priest, Nikolaj Velimirović, was a strong voice of nationalism, romantic ideologies and anti-Semitism in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After Njegoš and Stefanović-Karadžić, Velimirović continued in presenting the battle of the Kosovo field as a crucial moment in Serb history:

Not one Christian people has, in its history, what the Serb people has – Kosovo. A little over sixty years after the Battle of Kosovo, Constantinople, the throne city of the Eastern Christianity, fell. The Christian emperor Constantine, of the Serb blood and origin inherited from one of his parents, was beheaded. One would say: this reminds one of Kosovo. One would say, again, this is an event greater than Kosovo. Heavens forbid! In Kosovo, it was the Christian army that marched to face death; in Constantinople, the army remained inside, in the town, hoping, until the last moment, that death would somehow avoid them, would about face before reaching them. When the cannonballs, fired from the first canons in the history of man, breached the town walls, panic broke out among the soldiers and the citizens. All the temples were filled with cries of anguish and the prayers to God to save the town, that is, the body, to save the state and the earthly empire. That is why the fall of Constantinople, among the Greeks, was recorded as having occurred by night, not by day, as a defeat and not as the victory. True, here, too, it was the battle of the Cross against the Crescent Moon, but without heroism and without inspiration for the future generations. Because the defeat understood only as the defeat cannot inspire anyone. Nor can Golgotha alone, without Resurrection, inspire and strengthen anyone. The situation with the Serb Kosovo is quite the opposite. As the dead man is dressed in his new, finest clothes for the burial, thus the Serb army was dressed in their Sunday best. The shiny and glorious procession was marching from the farthest reaches of the empire toward the focus of honor and glory, toward Kosovo Polje (the Field of the Blackbird). In the shadow of the flags bearing the image of the cross and those with the images of the home patron saints, singing and crying out, with songs and music, with songs and joy, the procession was marching toward their goal – the Kosovo place of their execution. Does this not remind us of the groups of the first Christians who, with like feelings, went to the swords, into fire, before the wild beasts? There is no knowledge of a Christian martyr praying to God to save him from immediate death while there is knowledge of thousands upon thousands praying for the suffering and death not to avoid them. Nor did the cross-bearing Lazar's army pray for their salvation. On the contrary, it underwent the rite of confession and took the Holy Communion

– in preparation for death. (...) Kosovo is something unique in the twelve century long Christian world. They are making a mistake, those who say that Kosovo has arrested the wheels of our history; has made us backward; that, had it not been for Kosovo, we would have been a great nation today! It is Kosovo itself that has made us a great people. Kosovo is our people's Golgotha, but, at the same time, our people's Resurrection, spiritual and ethical. Kosovo has put a stop to the moral degradation of the Serb people. Kosovo has given us the status of the knights of faith, of honesty and sacrifice, the status undoubtedly worthier than any other status of marble statues, made at the time of peace from the peoples that did not have their Kosovo. They are making a mistake, too, those who believe Kosovo was a defeat. If anyone had been defeated it was the great gentleman Vuk Branković, and not Prince Lazar. Lazar, who was killed, won; Vuk, who stayed alive, lost. Whoever offers his life in the battle for truth and Godly justice has sacrificed what was most dear to him and – has won. Even if the battle was, technically, lost, he remains the victor. And since the whole Serb army was lost in the Field of the Blackbird – voluntarily – lost in the battle for truth and Godly justice, it did win. It sacrificed to God everything it had and could – and thus won. It lost the body, but preserved the soul. (Velimirović 1988[1939])

As we can see in the lengthy passage above, an eldritch glorification of defeat is seen in the ideas of the *vladika*. The battle was lost, but there was a 'moral victory' – the same rhetorics will successfully be used by Milošević in the 1990s, after a series of official defeats. A more somber and lucid depiction of the same issues, as well as of the very person, is seen in the sociologist Jovan Byford's analysis of the issue. As Byford wrote, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Nikolaj Velimirović, at that time the bishop of Ohrid and Žiča, was one of the most respected Serb priests, known both for his nationalistic fervor and for his charisma, oratorical skills and erudition. In 1930s, at the top of his priestly, theological and evangelistic career, Velimirović appeared as the strongest voice of the Christian nationalism in Serbia. He was in favor of establishing a society based

on orthodox Christian tradition and the unique form of Serb religious nationalism and monarchism. Also, Velimirović promoted the casting off

‘of all foreign customs and superficial western traditions’ including individualism, equality, religious tolerance, democracy and other values of modernism and enlightenment. The obvious anti-western feelings and anti-modernism in Velimirović’s papers were mixed with strong feelings of anti-Semitism that permeated his religious stands from the middle of 1920s. His anti-Semitic and anti-Judaic remarks were a mixture of religious anti-Semitism, with a long history in (the orthodox) Christianity, and the conspiratorial anti-Semitic tradition from the 19<sup>th</sup> century whose popularity culminated all over Europe in the decades preceding World War II. In Velimirović’s papers the Jews are always presented as the murderers of Christ and the damned people who had betrayed God, but also as a powerful, satanic force plotting against the Christian Europe ... Velimirović implied that Ljotić was his “disciple and a faithful follower in Christ” who, in the general project of the Christian nationalism, was the one who only bore “the incense burner” (Byford 2005)‘.

Velimirović’s thought was of great importance for the development of Yugoslavia as a whole, as it solidified the nationalist/romanticist foundations laid by Njegoš and Stefanović-Karadžić, later to shape the official stance of the Serb nationalist elite and strengthen their resolve. We need to have in mind that the core of the Yugoslav problem was to be found in Serbia and its heavy nationalist tendencies. Velimirović’s thought still permeates Serbian nationalist thought:

‘The inclusion of the name of Nikolaj Velimirović (1881–1956) into the diptych of the Serb saints rekindled the long-lasting public debate about the contribution of the bishop to the Orthodox Christianity and the Serb culture in general. The debate is spurred by the fact that the new Serb national saint is a controversial historical figure. As often pointed out by the critics from the liberal left, Velimirović was one of the most important ideologues of the Serb fascism in 1930s whose clerical-nationalistic, anti-modernistic and anti-Semitic religious papers continue to inspire the forces of the Christian right in



present-day Serb society ... Also, a number of representatives of the mainstream of the Serb political establishment, including the ex Yugoslav president, Vojislav Koštunica, and the current Serbia's Minister of Justice, Vladan Batić, have publicly expressed their positive attitude toward Velimirović's religious philosophy' (Byford 2005).

Velimirović, however, laid the foundations of even more hatred-driven ideologies, such as anti-Semitism, which was later on carefully hidden:

'A recently published study on the inclusion of the bishop into contemporary Serb culture has shown that the wide-spread apotheosis of Nikolaj Velimirović in present-day Serb culture – despite the existing controversies – demands a considerable amount of social forgetfulness. In the popular presentations of Velimirović's life and work the disputed elements of his biography have been set aside and routinely substituted with acceptable and selected interpretations that cover-up the bishops leaning toward anti-Semitism. In this sense, there still exist a general adulation of Bishop Nikolaj, one would say more despite than because of his controversial views' (Byford 2005).

And indeed, his quotations are found on plaques in many a home in Serbia nowadays. The very fact that he was a highly respected member of the clergy, having in mind that religion plays a more than significant role in most of today's Yugoslavia, only strengthened his influence:

'The dynamics of pushing down that exists in public memory does not exist in the extreme, right-wing and anti-Semitic literature where the controversial papers of bishop Nikolaj are openly used to support clerical-nationalistic and neo-fascist and ante-Semitic ideological claims. This is the reason why one could say that the authority of Nikolaj Velimirović in present-day Serbia is a focal point where the mainstream orthodox culture that applies pressure and tries to reduce the importance of his controversial political orientation meets the exponents of the ... It is important, however, that the popularity of Nikolaj Velimirović that encompasses a broad political spectrum clouds the borders between mainstream and extremism in the Serb religious discourse. The extended respect of Nikolaj Velimirović and the unwillingness of the

church authorities to deal with the controversies surrounding his literary opus implicitly – and largely unintentionally – give legitimacy to political extremism and facilitate the spreading of anti-Semitic prejudices in contemporary Serbia' (Byford 2005).

What history, historians and historiography seldom notice is that there is a *select few who have influenced major developments in an area/country's history*. The German historian Fritz Fischer was one of those who noticed this, though the designation he chose to put on them was *the elite*. In his view, it is the elites who influence the course of history the most, the elites who shape the world by their actions. So far, we have seen the immense influence of figures such as Masaryk, Beneš, Stefanović-Karadžić, Njegoš and Velimirović – and many others, naturally; I just concentrated on those whom I saw as more important for the topic of this work. Monographs and monographs, even encyclopaedias could be written on this topic. For now, it suffices to emphasize the importance of the approach.

The end of existence of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia can also be seen from an individualist point of view. Figures such as Václav Klaus, Vladimír Mečiar, Slobodan Milošević, Franjo Tuđman, Josip Broz Tito and Zoran Đinđić are of crucial importance in this matter. The dichotomist duo Milošević-Tuđman, for instance, was highly important during the late 1980s and 1990s (Milošević more than Tuđman, the truth be told), when rampant nationalism got introduced into Serbia and Croatia, respectively, and their influence shall be examined in the pages to come. For example, the infamous *Memorandum* of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, a document representative for official nationalism on the Serbian side, got published in 1989. When the Velvet Revolution was taking place in Czechoslovakia, as a sort of an introduction towards better developmental and economical times, Yugoslavia's horrors were just beginning, introduced by Milošević and Tuđman. In Czechoslovakia, Václav Havel and Vladimír Mečiar were, contrary to the grim Yugoslav duo, responsible for the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia. The overthrowing of the Communist government in Czechoslovakia was really an overthrow, while in Yugoslavia, Communism was simply replaced by

local nationalisms after the death of Josip Broz Tito. The importance of another single figure, Tito, to emphasize, was most important during the Communist era, when he steered away from the Soviet Bloc and led a policy of his own, specific kind, leading the country in his own manner. Since this work concentrates on the beginning and end of the two states, not much can be said about him, but it is important to emphasize the influence of a single man, who held a country artificially together by use of an iron fist in a velvet glove.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BIG AND THE SMALL

*The right of Czechoslovakia to exist was not in question;  
the problem was the small power of this state.*

– OSKAR KREJČÍ

#### FIN DE SIÈCLE AND FEAR OF THE SUPERPOWERS

Alleged nationalist renewals and pan-Slavic notions were not the only instances that influenced the creation of states such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. What I have already touched is the *fin de siècle* atmosphere which, conjoined with the fear that was present in Europe after the Great War arguably functioned as an important factor as well. There is strength in numbers and unity. Joining together within state-formations such as the two above came as a relatively natural consequence of this fear; there is even a biological need to form groups, as well as an equally biological feeling of safety within a group (Alcock 2003). As Křen noticed, Serbs, having technically won in the Great War, with an army of imposing numbers, were a good umbrella for the neighbouring nations to heed as an aegis (Křen 2005, 349). However, it was not only the general atmosphere of trepidation that influenced the people of the newly formed countries. As ever, the fear of the superpowers might have been one of the crucial factors. One could divide the threats into two categories: one would be the fear of the re-emerging of the old empires, such as Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire; the second is the apprehension due to the presence of new emerging superpowers, primarily Nazi Germany and Italy, but possibly the USSR as well. As the years went by, fear from the

former group proved to be as unfounded as the fear from the latter proved to be more than a real threat.

Miroslav Henchman rightly noticed that the fear of the Italians and the revolution was one of the defining moments that drove Croats and Serbs to seek shelter within the Serbian army and bureaucracy. How effective this ‘protection’ was is rather arguable. This attitude allowed the Serbs to see themselves as ‘liberators’, ‘protectors’, so ‘the government and the Serbian people arrived to the new Yugoslavia with the mindset of the victor, convinced that Croatia and Slovenia were liberated, and that they should respect that fact’. The Serbs kept re-emphasizing their casualties and successes in the Great War, where indeed their casualties, relative to the number of the people, were two and a half times larger than the French, three times than the English. One of the basic elements of Masaryk’s program was based on, so to speak, the fear of the resurgence of Austria-Hungary (so the Small Antante was formed) and the growing power of Germany. Fear was more than common in the period between the world wars. This introduces the next problem, and that is exactly the source of fear – the Great Powers, nowadays more commonly referred to as the ‘international community’.

### THE STRONG AND THE WEAK, THE BIG AND THE SMALL

‘In 1938, the right of Czechoslovakia to exist was not in question, the problem was the small power of this state’, noticed Krejčí (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 250), summing up a very important issue, carefully evaded in public discourse. The small are small, the weak are weak. It is futile trying to evade this fact, as well as the consequences it bears. According to the same author, both the Czech Republic and Slovakia belong among ‘small states’, i.e. ‘those without enough power to participate in shaping the European balance of power’ (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 398). He gives three criteria which determine the power of a state: population, size of territory and the share of the global gross domestic product. On all three accounts, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are seen

as small states. These small states are seldom key players in geopolitical affairs, and often have to bow down to the will of the Great Powers. The same goes for Yugoslavia, as noticed both by Misha Glenny and Maria Todorova. In Todorova's words, the 'very existence of the different Balkan states was almost exclusively regulated by great power considerations' (Todorova 2009, 109). Gale Stokes, on the other hand, disagreed, saying that 'no one would deny the fundamental importance of the great powers both in regulating the international position of the small Balkan states, nor in the enormous impact their political, cultural, and intellectual lives had on the region. But to completely deny any agency to these states is almost surely wrong. They came into existence by the exertions, sacrifices, and follies of many people who believed that they were doing something grand and important, and who in many ways were, whatever the disabilities under which they operated and the disappointments one might feel at some of the outcomes' (Stokes 1997).

However, Todorova did not, as Stokes put it, 'completely deny' the Balkan states 'any agency'; in her own words, these states were '*almost* exclusively regulated by great power considerations' (my italics, S.J.). Stokes made a generalization where it was completely uncalled for. The sheer impact of the stronger state and its influence was arguably best demonstrated by Glenny, who noticed many an instance in which the Great Powers kept thwarting smaller states such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, such as the French and British policies against the Little Entente. In a proleptic passage, Glenny did fend off any accusation of broad generalizations or insufficiencies:

'Reducing the events of the First World War to an inevitable consequence of imperialist competition is neither original nor specially revealing. Not only, "is this insufficient", as one Yugoslav historian has noted, "it is a truism which offers no clues as to why peasants, belonging to different churches, were fighting one another many miles from the front line on some Balkan hills as though it was their war". It is an explanation that has masked the complex web of relationships between the two blocs, the Entente and the Central Powers' (Glenny 2012, 308).

Glenny comes to a lucid conclusion: ‘Most Balkan countries, especially Serbia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania, were hopelessly tangled in a web’. The influence of the mighty was undeniable. One only needs to take a look at Churchill’s, for lack of better words, *warmongering* in Yugoslavia at the beginning of World War I, when he spoke:

‘Early this morning the Yugoslav nation found its soul. A revolution has taken place in Belgrade, and the Ministers who but yesterday signed away the honor and freedom of the country are reported to be under arrest. This patriotic movement arises from the wrath of valiant and warlike race at the betrayal of their country by the weakest of their rulers and the foul intriguers of the Axis Powers. The British Empire and its Allies will make common cause with the Yugoslav nation, and we shall continue to march and strive together until complete victory is won’ (Glenny 2012, 471).

This proclamation by Winston Churchill happened on 27 March 1941, just one day after the *coup d’état* by Dušan Simović in Yugoslavia, when people protested against the Cincar-Marković Pact made in Vienna. To recall, ‘the text regulating Yugoslavia’s entry into the Tripartite Pact as negotiated by Cincar-Marković in Vienna was a diplomatic triumph. The only real concession made to Germans in the secret clauses attached to the published agreement concerned the transport of war materials through Yugoslavia. The Germans were not permitted to send troops across country; nor did the agreement burden Yugoslavia with any other military obligations’ (Glenny 2012, 473). The agreement reminded much on the agreement that Germany had with Norway, which was, in essence, neutral in the war, with the exception of some German presence and arms transport. Essentially, when the deluded masses, led by Communist and monarchist elements protested in the streets with banners such as ‘better in a grave, than to be a slave’ (*Ser-Cro*. ‘Bolje grob, nego rob’) and ‘better to go to war instead of making a pact’ (*Ser-Cro*. ‘Bolje rat, nego pakt’), they were paving their way to sure annihilation. Winston Churchill, this *great* politician and statesmen, supported this delusion, a delusion that lead to Hitler’s immediate carpet bombing of Belgrade on 6 April 1941 and the division of the country among the forces of the Axis. The *Wehrmacht* destroyed the weak



Yugoslav army in April 1944 within a few days. As John Keegan wrote in a lengthy passage on the issue,

‘[Yugoslav] signatures were entered at Vienna on March 25 [1941]. Hitler exulted in the result – but too soon; incautiously as a former citizen of the Habsburg Empire with which the Serbs had played such havoc, he had failed to allow for the impetuosity of the Serb character. On the night of 26–27 March a group of Serb officers, led by the air force general Bora Mirković, denounced the treaty (...) The Mirković coup still appears in retrospect one of the most unrealistic, if romantic, acts of defiance in modern European history. Not only did it threaten to divide (...) the country; it was also bound to provoke the Germans to hostile reaction, against which the Serbs could call on no external assistance whatsoever to support them. They were surrounded by states that were wholly inept, like Albania, or as threatened as themselves, like Greece, or actively hostile, like Italy, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, with all of which they had bitter and long-standing territorial disputes. If Croatia, which would shortly take its own independence under Italian tutelage, is added to the roll of the Serbs’ enemies, the behaviour of General Mirkovic and his fellow conspirators of 27 March appears the collective equivalent of Gavrilo Princip’s firebrand assault on the Austro-Hungarian monarchy personified by Archduke Ferdinand in June 1914. It ensured the extinction of the Serb national cause as if by reflex; it would also doom Serbia, as in 1914, to invasion, defeat and occupation and with it the peoples of Yugoslavia... to an agony of protracted civil and guerrilla warfare for the next four years. (...) *There is no doubt that [Serbian officers] had been encouraged in their foolhardiness by the British and the Americans* (my italics, S. J.)... [but]... The 27 March coup was an autonomous Serb initiative, to be seen with hindsight as the last outright expression of sovereign defiance made by any small peoples who lie between the millstones of [New World Order] Germany and Russian power... It was to be punished with vehemence and without delay’ (Keegan 1990, 151–152).

Jiří Musíl notices similar instances as regards Czechoslovakia, namely, he summarizes three ‘various assessments of [Czechoslovakia’s] historical potential to become a

stable state’ (Musíl 2000, 9): the idea that it was ‘an artificial construction’ (echoing the view of Hobsbawm); a failure to integrate the various ethnic groups and, most notably – that it was ‘destroyed towards the end of the 1930s by external forces and which never fully recovered from this catastrophe, i.e. Munich’. In this view, Czechoslovakia was hindered by a superpower, Germany, already in September 1938. Going into more detail on the last view, Musíl writes:

‘The disintegration of Czechoslovakia in 1992 was a result of an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances and was not a necessary event. In 1939 it was a direct effect of the Munich agreement and in 1992 it was the consequence of lack of experience, imagination and abilities among the Czech and Slovak politicians (notice the lack of reference to the people, S. J.). But it was also the consequence of skillful activities of political elites who used the national card for their group interests. The 1993 breakup was, according to this (...) perspective, also caused by insufficient patience on the part of leading politicians and by the pressure to make crucial decisions without the knowledge of their probable results’ (Musíl 2000, 10).

Further stress is given to the fact that ‘activity abroad’, i.e. in the neighboring states, was crucial to the formation of Czechoslovakia:

‘it is essential to consider the circumstances of the birth of Czechoslovakia. (...) diplomatic and military activities abroad combined with a bloodless revolution at home had resulted in the making of the state’ (Dowling 2002, 19). The Czech historian, Milada Paulová, notices a similar instance in Yugoslavia, putting out the idea that ‘the USA, among other things, opted for the creation of Yugoslavia thanks to personal connections and friendship between Masaryk and Wilson. According to her, Masaryk personally kept supporting the creation of the Yugoslav state’ (Karabegović 2009, 14).

Jan Gebhart has stressed in a similar fashion the Czechoslovak ‘necessity of obtaining international guarantees’, especially from France (Gebhart 2000, 202).

Krejčí’s views are similar. According to him, there was indeed an immense influence of the international community on the founding of the Czechoslovak state, which

originated ‘because a specific political interest had sufficiently powerful support’ (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 320). The essential origin of the Czechoslovak state was in the interest of the Great Powers, especially France, that has wholeheartedly supported the founding of Czechoslovakia. Not only Czechoslovakia was influenced by the international community; according to Krejčí, ‘the fate of the other states and regimes in Central Europe also developed in connection with the general European balance of power’ (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 321). Krejčí has summarized the aforementioned, saying how small states *can become successful in world politics*, but only when they become supporters of the Great Powers (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 403).

\* \* \*

Understanding why a state broke up cannot come to pass without a thorough understanding how the state initially came into existence, as well as what it went through during the course of history. As shown above, both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia suffered from the ‘mudhouse’ syndrome – if you build a house of mud, the rain will wash it away, to use the vivid idiom. States and peoples who have joined together because of fear (of the superpowers), melancholy (*fin de siècle*, post-war Europe) and ideologies based on the metaphysical (panslavism, nationalism) are doomed to quick failure, and the stories of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia serve as arguably the best example. However, the ways in which these countries ceased to exist did diverge, and now is the time to take a look at the panoply of factors that took part in the *end* of the existence of the aforementioned states.

What comes to attention when one compares the diverging fates of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia is the sheer *difference* in how these two composite states expired. Though Communist Yugoslavia saw no Russian tanks on the streets in 1968 (as Czechoslovakia did), tanks did come out on the streets of Belgrade in the early nineties. The difference was in the fact that these were tanks of the Yugoslav People’s Army, pointed

at the citizens of their own country. While Czechoslovakia saw a peaceful split, Yugoslavia crumbled up in a bloody cycle of strife, conflict and war. This work will try to add to the explanation *why* this visible difference came to be in the first place.

Chronologically, being that this dissertation deals with the beginning and end of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, we are bound to ‘fast forward’ over the Communist Era, Tito’s breakup with the USSR, the implementation of the Brezhnev doctrine in Czechoslovakia, the Prague Spring and similar. It is of high importance to separate the topic of research from the rest of history, so to say, or every work written in history would be thousands of pages long, to say the least. Thus, we shall continue with the analysis of the ‘codes of difference’ stressed by the huge team of historians led by Berger and Lorenz (Berger and Lorenz 2008).

What is also of high usefulness to stress yet again is that this work concentrates on the *less examined* factors that are relevant. None of those should be taken into consideration on its own; all of the factors that are presented act parallel to one another.

## CHAPTER VI

# GENDER, SEXUALITY AND RAPE

*In matters of sexuality we are at present, every  
one of us, ill or well, nothing but hypocrites.*

– SIGMUND FREUD

From the 1950s onwards, *gender studies* have been growing, concentrating on the perceptions of sexuality in the modern society, drawing initially on psychology, biology and psychoanalysis. Gender studies have recently permeated history and political science immensely, as well as concentrated on the area of former Yugoslavia in many works. Karl Kaser's work *Patriarchy after Patriarchy: Gender Relations in Turkey and the Balkans* is perhaps a good example of a historian going deeper into the questions of sex and gender (Kaser 2008). And indeed, the *attitudes towards sexuality*, the attitudes towards *gender issues* are shown to have been a significant factor in the historical development of societies, especially former Yugoslavia, and vice versa. As Elisabeth Katsching-Fasch stated, 'the masculine gender regimes (in former Yugoslavia) are products of historical processes' (Katsching-Fasch 2005, 14). There is interplay between gender and history. 'In the case of the disintegration of former Yugoslavia,' as testified by Rada Iveković and Julie Mostov, 'gender hierarchies and deeply anchored patriarchies at different levels sustained all of the post-socialist nationalisms. Gender and patriarchal hierarchies facilitated the reshuffling of the social structure, communal order and the state' (Iveković and Mostov 2002). Vesna Kesić has written in a similar fashion, claiming how womanhood, manhood and ethnicity 'became actualized within the context of the collapse of Yugoslavia and the wars that followed' (Kesić 2004, 63).

As stated by Katsching-Fasch and a team concentrated around the work *Gender and Nation in South Eastern Europe*, gender is defined as the ‘social and cultural localization of perceptions of sex’ (Katsching-Fasch 2005), in which the biological, social and political roles of gender have been closely scrutinized – same what we shall be doing in this chapter. However, sexual intercourse (and sex in general), as stated by Masters and Johnson, is still an issue evaded as much as possible, even on high levels of the academia (Johnson 1979). If not discussed by psychologists, those with a medical background or people dealing with gender studies, sex is most commonly shirked as a topic and not discussed as a cause of any societal instance, ‘as if Europe never recuperated after the connection of sin with sexual pleasure’, to quote Henriques (Henriques 1959). Scientific research regarding sexuality has time and again been ‘hindered and (in)directly blocked’ (Kišjuhas, Kandić, and Jelačić 2006). However, a long-term on-the-spot experience of living in both a former Yugoslav country and a former Czechoslovakia country provides one with a different perspective, as there is a striking difference between the attitude to sex and sexuality between all countries of former Yugoslavia (except Slovenia) on one side, and former Czechoslovakia with Slovenia on the other. From the point of view of a strict historian, sexuality has been a topic in historical studies for a while now, especially with Foucault’s *History of sexuality*, a series of books given in three volumes by the end of the seventies, in which sexuality is seen as a *topic* of historical research (Foucault 1978). Other uses of human sexuality have also been seen in history as well, namely, it can also be used as explanatory material, such as seen in David Zbíral’s essay ‘Bylo a bude’, in which Le Roy Ladurie’s work is seen ‘encompassing various details about everyday life, including sexuality and more or less “alternative” sexual mores’ (Zbíral 2008). Conjoining with the findings of life sciences, in all of which it is often expounded that the biological roots of the human species are intrinsic and ineluctable for any deeper understanding of the ‘human animal’ (to use the zoologist and anthropologist Desmond Morris’ term), it is quite clear that a broader approach, including analyses of human sexuality and the relations towards it, is *necessary for the better understanding of*

*societal development, both historical and present.* In short, the *difference* in the attitudes towards sexuality between Czechoslovak and Yugoslav lands (gender) will be shown to have had an impact on the mentality of the people, and consequently, on the levels of aggression they have showed. Said aggression has contributed to the numerous conflicts in Yugoslavia, none of which was seen in Czechoslovakia.

Sex, sexuality and sexual intercourse are seen from two entirely diverging perspectives in the two abovementioned areas. In the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia (group A), sexuality is not as much as a taboo as it is in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo (group B). Subjects from group A are more prone to finding more numerous quantities of Short Term Partners (STP) than those in group B, while group B has shown a proclivity towards Long Term Partners (LTP) in a much larger amount. This, however, requires a more detailed explanation and elaboration, especially for those readers who are not well versed in the subtleties of psychology and sex studies. In group B, namely, since sex is somewhat of a taboo, a young person's first sexual congress can take place even as far as in his or hers mid-twenties. It is not uncommon to find a young male or female, around 25 years of age, of adequate (if not positively evaluated) physical appearance, who has never had any sexual experience. This is due to the memes that evaluate sexual conduct as promiscuous; this memetic instance is especially strong with the females, as the societies in group B will be much more prone to designating a female with a stronger libido as a 'slut', and should she have a larger quantity of STPs – a 'whore'. This meme is a rather strong one; the whole of the society is invariably influenced by it. Social anthropology, sociology and psychology find these memes to be inextricably linked to underdeveloped industrial societies and cultures where conservative, traditional and religious values are seen as positive and important – all that can be used to easily describe group B.

Research regarding sexuality in former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia has most commonly been coming in the shape of medical or sociological investigations. For both the Czech Republic and Slovakia, research conducted by Dr Jaroslav Zvěřina, director of the



Institute of Sexology, President of the Sexological Society of Prague and member of the executive committee of the European Federation of Sexology, gives us valuable data. Given in the *International Encyclopedia of Sexuality*, the information regarding sexual competences, practices and attitudes in Slovakia and the Czech Republic puts a clear delineation between these two countries on one side, and former Yugoslavia on the other (Francoeur 2004). ‘First sexual intercourse usually occurs between ages 17 and 18’, in former Czechoslovakia, while ‘premarital sexual intercourse is very common, with 98 percent of women having had sexual intercourse before marriage. Premarital sex is accepted, and quietly tolerated’ (Francoeur 2004, 322). Even journalistic reports show especially the Czech Republic population to have ‘traditionally liberal attitude towards moral issues, which has led to an equally relaxed relationship towards sex’. According to Englund, it was the specific ‘dryness’ of Communist life that had an impact towards making sexual intercourse a favorite pastime:

‘In addition to the utilitarian attitude towards marriage, the grey and dull life in communist Czechoslovakia did little to enhance marital fidelity. It was hard to travel abroad, it took extreme efforts to get hold of consumer goods that were common to every Westerner, and it made no sense to pursue a career (it often required great humiliations, and your pay didn’t rise much anyway). So what did you do? Enjoy all the fleshy temptations that life could give. The writer Milan Kundera does not have many fans in the Czech Republic, but he’s at least credited for one thing: in his novels, he gave a vivid picture of how the Czechs used sex and promiscuity as a remedy against their Weltschmerz!’ (Englund 2009).

**The Czech liberal attitude towards sexuality has even reached interesting culminations:**

‘In that respect, it was hardly a coincidence that in 1995 the Czech broadcaster TV Nova became the first in Europe to feature naked weather forecasters. The reactions that this revolutionary innovation evoked are equally telling. Hordes of female viewers bombarded the TV station with letters to express their anger. Not about the nude forecasters, but about the fact that they were all women! Some weeks later, Nova admitted its guilt, and introduced nude males as well’ (Englund 2009).

Religion, however – or the lack thereof – is also an important factor, as the more liberal attitude towards sexuality, as propounded by Bertrand Russell, is primarily an atheistic prerogative (Russell 1987).

In former Yugoslavia – Slovenia excluded – the attitude towards human sexuality is anything but liberal. Number of partners reported by the surveys done by a team of professionals within the International Encyclopedia of Sexuality, for instance, give the numbers of four sexual partners as an average for women in Croatia, and eight for men.<sup>9</sup> When asked about whether women and men should have equal rights to sexual expression, only a half of the population responded positively (57%), while the position of homosexuals in Croatia is ‘absorbed by silence’ (Francoeur 2004, 241). Regarding, for instance, the sex life of an average citizen of Serbia, the sociologist from the University of Novi Sad, Aleksej Kišjuhas, stated how he believes ‘that many citizens of Serbia, males and females, are not satisfied with their sex lives, and not necessarily (just) by the lack of it.’

As I have already mentioned, sex is often shirked as a topic, and if not avoided, one tends to be less than honest when debating it. Yet every now and then, some relevant material pops up for examination. At the popular internet forum *Tarzanija*, designated sarcastically a ‘male place’ by its founders, a revealing article tells us a lot about the young male’s problems in approaching the opposite sex in Serbia. It is written in an eldritch fashion, with attempts of humor (probably to counter the quite grim reality the article is depicting), in a very slangy fashion:

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9 The team consisted of the following experts: Aleksandar Štulhofer, Ph.D, Vlasta Hiršl-Hecej, M.D, M.A, Zeljko Mrkšić, Aleksandra Korać, Ph.D, Petra Hoblaj, Ivanka Ivkanec, Maja Mamula, M.A, Hrvoje Tiljak, M.D, Ph.D, Gordana Buljan-Flander, M.A, Sanja Sagasta, and Gordan Bosanac.

‘In these parts, until 1990, there existed an institution known as *korzo* so that... let me skip the nostalgia for Yugoslavia, I understand you were fed-up with it. It was the time you were expected to be funny, and with it, you could get a piece of ass. It was the money, everybody had money. The 90s were upon us; a small pool, too many crocodiles, and some other values. Subconsciously, the girls preferred a geek with piles of money than a penniless jurist. I pass no judgment; subliminally, every one of them is looking for a provider for the future children. Then the 2000s came, in the words of my apocalyptic grandmother, the end of days had come. We did not have a rerun of the 80s, but, if truth be told, we are not lining up for a cup of yogurt. The girls have upped the ante. You are supposed now to recite Barbara, to be a macho man, (...) drive an Audi TT and have a villa in Bečići. And, naturally, the already mentioned platitude: “I need a strong male, who will understand me.” No need to say we did not make do.

– You look great tonight...

– (mumbling).

– Where do you live??

– (mumbling).

– May we exchange phone numbers?

– ABSOLUTELY NOT!

– You are not mumbling now, you fucking cunt!

Thus, for fear of failure, avoiding contact with the girls has become a default setting. I know a dude who has not made contact since 2009 and is fed up with everything. He goes out. Gets drunk in the style of Josif Tatić and then off to jerk off. Avoiding contact has become a role model and everybody breaking the rule is weird... You made contact with a chick? You are crazy! Are you *on drugs*? I’ll tell your folks!’

The part of the article cited above is an excellent presentation of what is known as ‘the game of coupling’, as witnessed by a young male in Belgrade nowadays. Needless to say, the same is found in most of former Yugoslavia, Slovenia being almost eternally set aside.

## BIOLOGY AND PSYCHOHISTORY

The biological reality of male-female relations pertaining to the wish (or lack thereof) for sexual intercourse and the functioning of the libido have by now been well explained. While it is universally known that it is mostly a prerogative of the male to keep trying to find STPs in larger quantities, and the common desire of the female to settle down with an LTP, the biology of these instances – while explained by science – are not so well known in the lay population. The wish for sexual merging is a strong one from a biological perspective; those whose libido forces them to be more active in finding a mate will consequently procreate more, and thus this trait has been well preserved in the biological development of the species. The male is especially potent in this view. After reaching a culmination during intercourse and disseminating his seed, the male can continue procreating within a matter of minutes, as the sheer quantity of the sperm available will be replenished within ten to fifteen minutes after the orgasm. Thus, the male is available for new sexual congress and a new partner. The more partners one has, the more offspring he can create, all well within the normal parameters of a species that has been led to where it is by the forces of evolution. A slightly different development do we see in the female of the species. The female ovulates only once per month. Only once per month is she *capable* of producing offspring, and thus she needs to be much more selective in choosing a mate,<sup>10</sup> and neuroscientific research has confirmed this several times in many studies during the course of the decades (Kokko and Jennions 2008, Janicke et al. 2016). Perhaps a slightly more detailed explanation is necessary for those not well informed in the findings of evolutionary psychology; namely, as nowadays sexual intercourse is not used only as a means of continuing the species and

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<sup>10</sup>It is useful to mention that this does *not* mean that the female of the *Homo sapiens* species is 'intrinsically monogamous', just that there is a larger chance that the female will seek stability. All of this information has been wonderfully explained by, among others, Meredith Small of Cornell University, Richard Wrangham of Harvard, and many more, in the scientific documentary *Evolution: Why Sex?* <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/about/show05.html>>

getting offspring, people condone sexual congress for the sake of pleasure and social relations. Even when, for instance, a female chooses an STP (*id est*, not someone who shall be the father of her children), thousands of years of evolutionary development have lodged themselves firmly in the behavioral patterns and cognitive schemata of the *homo sapiens*' brain, and similar screening processes that would be used for finding a permanent mate are used even with STPs. *We cannot escape the biological reality of our existence* as much as we should not be overly constrained by it.

It would be wise to notice that there is a not so easily dismissable row of pop-scientific/pseudo-scientific faux-gender studies works that range from biology/evolution denial (reminiscing much of the Right Wing) to a reductionist view in which they claim that all sexual attitudes are socially construed (though *gender* is a social construct, *sex* is not), but these can hardly fit into any valid scientific analysis (such as Fine 2010). Though these 'studies' (mostly activist texts trying to simulate scientific form and present themselves as research) may stem from a genuine and noble desire to diminish gender-based discrimination and patriarchy, misinformation, poor scientific rigor and the common denial of biology is not the way to do it. As the biologist Jerry Coyne wrote, this cannot be achieved like that, 'not by denying the truth. And, in fact, sex is indeed biological—not a social construct like gender. But biology doesn't give us a reason to discriminate ... for discrimination is a moral issue, and can't be decided by biology alone' (Coyne 2017).

Now that I have explained the basic findings of evolutionary psychology as regards sex, we need to see how these behavioral patterns pertain to group A and group B. Though biological beings in our very core, thousands of years of social interaction, development and changing of diverse moralities etc have modified our behavioral patterns to a certain extent. These 'cultural genes', 'social instances' are nowadays more often than not referred to as 'memes'. Biological needs are modified by these memes as well, and more often than not – in a way that is negative to the development of the species. Thus, in different cultures, which have in turn developed differentiated concepts

of what is less or more socially acceptable or not, behaviorally desirable or not, we see different value positions towards sex and the physical libido. Though differences in cultures have been stressed as far as in the late 1800s in the works of Franz Boas (Boas 1896), leading to the development of *cultural relativism* in anthropology, only did we recently understand the biological roots of the complex problem. Having, thus, in mind that different cultures (in these case, the division goes between groups A and B) have different moral values, we see an immense difference in the attitude towards sex and sexuality between the two groups.

In group B, females with more STPs are seen as ‘whores’, ‘easy women’, ‘sluts’. The list of denigrating designations is longer, but we need only the essential (Serbo-Croatian: *kurva, drolja, laka riba, droca, dromfulja, profukljača, radodajka* etc, Macedonian: *кyрвa, чeнгуja, опocнуja, давaj гaз, paдoдajкa* etc). This mentality has led to the even stronger diminishing of sexual desire among the females in group B, as the society would treat them worse should they have a larger quantity of STPs. Being that sexual openness and availability for copulation in the females diminished, stronger sexual desire emerged in the males, who now find it very difficult to find an STP, which is much more important to them than to the females. Numerous studies have been done about the lack of sexual success in the human species, all of them pointing towards the fact that sexual dissatisfaction can leave a heavy psychological toll on the subject (Nazareth, Boynton, and King 2003), from a debilitating influence on the psyche to a general feeling of incompetence and inadequacy. The biological reality of the human being hits us hard once again, making it almost impossible to ignore even by the most conservative of scientists – human beings are biologically predisposed for having sex, and not fulfilling one’s biological needs can lead to disaster. I shall very shortly come to what this leads to.

An undersexed male, as a rule, functions improperly. He often resorts to violence when the levels of testosterone reach overly high levels. A *chronically* undersexed male can represent a force of nature in his violent behavior and diminished capacity for reasoning and judgment. This was remarkably well noticed by the Nobel Prize winning

Japanese author, Kenzaburo Oe, in his short novel *Seventeen*, in which a young Japanese teenager is depicted during the troublesome years of late puberty (Oë, Miyoshi, and Van Haute 1996). He is socially inept, sexually incompetent, bad at sports and molested by his parents. Painfully aware of his status of an utter loser, he can only resort to masturbating, thinking that the whole world sees him and laughs at him. Then he gets in touch with a group of extreme nationalists, all of which dress up in uniforms and glorify the old Japanese empire, hating the woman that they cannot have, in a relatively standard nationalistic, chauvinistic and misogynistic combination. Oe could easily have written about Croatia or Serbia.

Recent medical research also shows a clear connection between sex and violence. Experiments conducted by researchers from the California Institute of Technology and the Allen Institute for Brain Science have shown that neurons within the ventromedial hypothalamus in mice activate both while engaging in sexual activity and in fighting (Lin et al. 2011). This seems to be an evolutionary development, as described by Clifford Saper, a neuroscientist at Harvard Medical School in Boston: ‘There is a need to protect their own territories against a male invader and a need to have sex with female invaders, and this is sort of built into the circuitry of the brain’ (Calaway 2010). According to Newton Canteras, a neuroscientist at the University of São Paulo, the same circuits probably exist in the human brain as well, having in mind that the hypothalamus is one of the oldest structures of the brain, also linked to aggression in monkeys (Calaway 2010). In short, it is more than possible that lack of sex can be substituted by violence in the undersexed, as the same part of brain is responsible for it. To blunt it down even more: the satisfactory release provided by successful coitus can be replaced by *violence*. According to James W. Prescott, a neuropsychologist at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in Maryland, the connection is even clearer: ‘A neuropsychologist contends that the greatest threat to world peace comes from those nations which have the most depriving environments for their children and which are *most repressive of sexual affection and female sexuality*’ (Prescott 1975). In more detail, Prescott explains:

‘As a developmental neuropsychologist I have devoted a great deal of study to the peculiar relationship between violence and pleasure. I am now convinced that the deprivation of physical sensory pleasure is the principal root cause of violence. Laboratory experiments with animals show that pleasure and violence have a reciprocal relationship, that is, *the presence of one inhibits the other*. A raging, violent animal will abruptly calm down when electrodes stimulate the pleasure centers of its brain. Likewise, stimulating the violence centers in the brain can terminate the animal’s sensual pleasure and peaceful behavior. When the brain’s pleasure circuits are ‘on,’ the violence circuits are ‘off,’ and vice versa. Among human beings, a pleasureprone personality rarely displays violence or aggressive behaviors, and a violent personality has little ability to tolerate, experience, or enjoy sensuously pleasing activities. As either violence or pleasure goes up, the other goes down’ (Prescott 1975, 11).

This is essentially the essence of what is called the *mate deprivation hypothesis* in psychology and neuroscience, which is also described by Lalumiere, Chalmers, Quinsey and Seto: ‘According to the mate deprivation hypothesis of sexual coercion, males are more likely to use sexually coercive tactics if they are disadvantaged in gaining access to desirable mates’ (Lalumière et al. 1996). This will explain much in the following paragraphs about rape in the Yugoslav wars, having in mind that rape is *the* most ‘coercive tactics’ for gaining ‘access to a mate’. Similar results have been given by Thornhill and Thornhill, as well as many other researches during the last three decades (Thornhill and Thornhill 1983). In gender studies, Mosse has noticed something similar in connection with nationalism and sexuality, namely, that ‘nationalism redirects man’s passions to a higher purpose’, the ‘higher purpose’ being, in this case, a sense of solidarity with a highly masculine nationalist hierarchy. Iveković and Mostov wrote, regarding the *unsuccessful male*, how ‘a kind of cult of virility follows from their unsuccessful differentiation as selves in their development as men’ (Iveković and Mostov 2002, 15). It is of imperative importance for the *masculine man* to develop in a relationship with the opposite sex, as a confirmation of one’s biological needs, in order for a normal, functional, non-violent member of society to exist.



Going back to the historical and political, we see Wilhelm Reich, in his *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, written in the thirties, who has showed how a repressed sexuality in a traditional society twists towards a strong lust towards the mystical ideas such as those of the nation, religiosity, honor and similar, all of which have been symbols skillfully exploited by the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s:

‘Sexual repression aids political reaction not only through this process which makes the mass individual passive and unpolitical but also by creating in his structure an interest in actively supporting the authoritarian order. The suppression of natural sexual gratification leads to various kinds of substitute gratifications. Natural aggression, for example, becomes brutal sadism which then is an essential mass-psychological factor in imperialistic wars’ (Reich 1970, 26).

More recent research has yielded similar results. Theweleit sees a comparable instance, where the fascist/nationalist,

‘rather than build his identity through a process of differentiation and individuation that relies on exchange and interaction, the aggressive type (the aggressive nationalist, or the fascist) seeks immediate exclusion – violence and war. Since life is possible only in time, he knows only death (the other’s death, but by that implicitly his own death too). He can, paradoxically, try to compensate for his sense of insufficiency only by increasing death and violence’ (Theweleit 1989).

Richard Dawkins, in a lecture at the University of Minnesota, said how ‘sexual desires can be subverted to gain power. For frustrated young men, access to women is a primary goal, an all-consuming purpose. How easy it is for those in power to subvert it’ (Dawkins 2009).<sup>11</sup>

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11 Note that some claim that the influence of sexuality on the individual is not considered to be as important or as strong nowadays (as it had been stressed in Freud’s work), yet this claim is far from right. Some Freudian concepts *have* been criticized, attitudes towards sexuality being criticized rather unsuccessfully, though most of the critics made the truistic point that if psychoanalysis is conducted wrongly, it gives false results.

This, in essence, is the use of psychology within history, and historiography knows it under the name of *psychohistory*. According to Ernest Breisach, ‘psychohistory is a thoroughly modern endeavor which owes its present status to the quest for a science of human behavior’ (Breisach 1994, 342). It has become more prominent since 1957 and William Langer’s ‘appeal to plumb the depth of the human psyche in the interest of a fuller historical explanation’ (Breisach 1994, 344). According to Langer, there is ‘still ample scope for penetration in depth, and I personally have no doubt that the ‘newest history’ will be more intensive and less extensive. I refer more specifically to the urgently needed deepening of our historical understanding through exploitation of the concepts and findings of modern psychology’ (Langer 1958, 284). Written in the 1950s, Langer’s ideas could not be backed up by as much professional, ‘modern’ psychology that was available at the time. Nowadays, however, with help of neuroscience, CT scans and MRIs, psychology has got *significantly* much to offer, (this shall be debated much in the chapter on evolutionary psychology). The central views of psychohistory puts the individual into the spotlight, thus going hand to hand with the Namierian approach I have adopted.<sup>12</sup>

### NATION, GENDER, RAPE

Going further, aggressive nationalism (a typical trait in former Yugoslavia) can be explained from the point of view of gender studies, psychology and sexology. In short, ‘nations are gendered’, as stated by Mostov and Iveković. These authors claim how ‘any serious study of the “national” issue must look at the gendering of political discourse and the sexualizing of concepts related to the complex of nation and nationalism, state – and nation-building, citizenship and membership, and community and society’

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12 Going hand to hand even stressed by Namier himself. It is interesting to notice how Breisach wrote that ‘psychology has not yet fulfilled Sir Lewis Namier’s hope that it would become to history what mathematics has been to the sciences’ [Breisach 1994]. It is a shame Namier did not live to see the newest achievements of history.

(Iveković and Mostov 2002, 9). To be more precise, Daša Duhaček, in her *Gender Perspectives on Political Identities in Yugoslavia*, named two discursive approaches in analyzing nationalism and sexuality: ‘one looks at how nation encircles gender through the state and uses sexuality for its purposes, and the second considers how and why any gender chooses to either embrace a national identity or reset it’ (Duhacek 2004, 117).

Drawing on Alarcon, Kaplan and Moallem (Alarcón and Moallem 1999), Mostov and Iveković write how

‘variations of struggles for power by new or would-be guardians of the nation are played out over the feminine body: over the feminine space of the nation – battlefields, farmlands, and homes – and actual females bodies...these variations parallel gender roles that reinforce sexual imagery and stereotypes. The feminine is passive, receptive, and the masculine is active. The Motherland provides a passive, receptive, and vulnerable image in contrast to the active image of the Fatherland, which is the force behind government and military action – invasion, conquest and defense’ (Iveković and Mostov 2002, 11).

That is why the image of the woman is often invoked in the portrayal of one’s country, that is why we have often seen, for instance, Croatia and Serbia being portrayed as ‘Mother Serbia’ and ‘Mother Croatia’. In other words, the nation was ‘gendered’ (Einhorn 2006, Yuval-Davis 1997).<sup>13</sup> Bracewell described it by postulating how (particularly in Serbia) ‘nationalist ideology has reinforced this tendency by using mothers as symbols of the nation and by emphasizing women’s responsibility for the biological reproduction of the nation’ (Bracewell 1996, 25). In former Yugoslavia, where Communism was replaced by nationalism, the result of such policies was that there has been ‘a marked change in the concept of patriotic womanhood – woman’s task is no longer to build socialism through work, but to regenerate the nation through her role as a mother’ (Bracewell 1996, 25). This happens, according to Theweleit and List, because a failed

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<sup>13</sup> The band from Banja Luka, *Interfector*, for instance – comprising only Bosnian Serbs – has made much of its relatively localized career with their one hit entitled ‘Majka Srbija’ (Mother Serbia).

process of individualization. These individuals who succumb to such nationalist, sexist and gender-biased urges Theweleit has called ‘Nicht zu Ende Geborene’, people ‘not yet fully born as selves’ (Theweleit 1978, 289).

*Rape* – according to many scholars – was one of the most important means of enemy humiliation during the Bosnian and Croatian war in the 1990s; in the words of Elizabeth Kohn, rape was ‘a weapon of war’ (Kohn 1994, 199). It is very possible that many of the sexually repressed young men had their first intercourse exactly in the form of rape. Seada Vranić wrote how

‘rapes committed by Serb forces in Bosnia are premeditated crimes: carefully planned, even to the particulars of the program, systematically and uncompromisingly executed. This is a specific of the Bosnian case. Rape was used as a component of the Serb political and military strategy. This is a selected and refined weapon for attaining the goal of the war and the final political aim. This specifically sets apart mass rape in Bosnia from other cases’ (Vranić 1996, 317).

Most of the raped women were Muslims, according to Hladký (Šesták et al. 1998, 632). Beverly Allen of Stanford University does not blame the perpetrators as *men* (as opposed to *women*), ‘but as individuals, as criminals, as vicious perpetrators of horrible crimes’. However, more importantly, Allen stresses how she sees them ‘at the mercy of a sexist and nationalist ideology that forms them that way’ (Allen 1996, 2). The sexual repression that has become a normal state of affairs helps the development of the sexist ideology, all to be ‘subverted by those in power’, as Dawkins put it. After all, war crimes against woman ‘destroy the physical and psychological existence of the women concerned and, moreover, inflict harm on the culture and collective identity of the whole group, ethnicity, or nation under attack. War crimes against women have a symbolic meaning and must be analyzed within the symbolic contexts of the nation and the gender system’ (Seifert 1996, 35).

This wider ‘national context’ is precisely a context of deep sexual frustration and repression that has erupted in a bloody conflict in the 1990s.<sup>14</sup> The *Trešnjevka* feminist group reported in 1992 that

‘our sources indicate that there are over 35,000 women and children in Serbian-run rape/death camps, enduring the most frightful methods of terror and torture’. Though the Serb side was accused of rape more often than the other warring sides, Krause and Douglas wrote how rape was far from being an intrinsically Serb way of humiliation (Krause and Douglas 1993).

Michael Anthony Sells used the term *gynocide* – ‘a deliberate attack on women as childbearers’. In this connection, Serb and Croat nationalists were aware of two facts. The first fact was that the birthrate for Muslims in Yugoslavia was higher than that of Christians, and in some rural places, such as Kosovo province, this birthrate differential was dramatic. Birthrate became such a heated issue that Serb nationalists charged

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14 There are some claims that state how the data for the genocide, as well as the media reports, have been false, that the evidence for rape is fake. Professor Darko Tanasković, for instance, held a similar stance. Yet, as Sonja Biserko, the Head of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights reported, ‘In a series of articles that they wrote for daily and weekly publications, as well as for the army paper *Vojska*, professors Darko Tanasković and Miroљub Jeftić regularly presented Islam as backward and violent. A special theme, however, was the betrayal of the Bosnian Muslims, who had allegedly converted to Islam. At the time of the most virulent anti-Muslim campaign in late 1991 and early 1992, i.e. when it was becoming clear that Bosnia-Herzegovina would not remain in Milošević’s “Yugoslavia”, Tanasović interpreted the Bosnian Muslims’ appeal to Turkey for help as “their furtive return to the old-time position of *poturice* [converts from Christianity to Islam]”: for the Serbs, he recalled, *poturice* were “worse than Turks”. Tanasković warned: “To threaten the Serbs with Turks is even worse and more ominous than to threaten them with Germans.” The notion of Islamic fundamentalism as the greatest threat to Yugoslavia, far more important than Serb-Croat relations, was assiduously promoted. There were warnings about the realization of Islamic ideas in the Sandžak and Bosnia, although the main stress was on the Albanians. They spoke of the danger of Albanization, which led inevitably to the obliteration of Christian churches, graveyards and population, the building of mosques, and spread of the Muslim way of life.’ [Biserko 2006]. The *Visegrad Genocide Memories group* also mentions Tanasković as a ‘supporter of genocide’ [Višegrad genocide memories 2009].

Muslims with a premeditated plot to use their higher birthrates to overwhelm and ultimately destroy Christian Serbs (Sells 1996, 22).

Rape, it is imperative to stress, kept occurring on all sides. Though it seems that the majority of the rape happened on the Serb side, there are numerous cases showing how rape was a common thing during the Bosnian war. Anto Furundžija, for instance, was a Croat found guilty of horrific crimes, as stated in the proceedings of the ICTY:

‘Whilst Anto Furundžija interrogated a Muslim woman, a subordinate soldier threatened her by rubbing his knife on her inner thighs and saying that he would cut out her private parts. In another room the victim and her friend, a Croatian soldier, were interrogated and beaten on their feet with a baton. The woman was then repeatedly raped before a group of soldiers. The Croatian soldier was forced to watch the sexual attacks against his friend. Anto Furundžija did nothing to stop or curtail these actions in his presence, and the continued interrogation substantially contributed to the criminal acts committed upon the woman and her friend’ (ICTY 2004).

On the other hand, the ICTY case CC/PIU/364-E in 1998 found the Bosniak Muslims Zdravko Mučić, Hazim Delić and Esad Landzo guilty of the conduct in Čelebići prison camp:

‘The indictment against them was issued on 21 March 1996. It alleges that in 1992 forces consisting of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats took control of those villages containing predominantly Bosnian Serbs within and around the Konjic municipality in central Bosnia. Those persons detained during these operations were held in a former JNA facility in the village of Čelebići, the Čelebići prison-camp, where detainees were killed, tortured, sexually assaulted, beaten and otherwise subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment by the four accused’ (ICTY 1998).

This, needless to say, is just a couple of cases at the ICTY; presenting more of them would take thousands of pages. Attitudes towards such an important part of the human physique and biology (sexuality) and the attitudes towards it (gender) are significant instances of daily life, thus crucial to the understanding of *society*, and with it, all societal instances. The sexually repressed men of Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia needed to

‘vent steam’, and, as Dawkins mentioned, it was easy to subvert that strong driving force. To put it bluntly – it is much easier to put a gun into the hand of a sexually repressed male and convince him to fire it than into the hands of a content person’s. Rape, thus, became a regular occurrence in the Bosnian war in the 1990s, when an estimated number of 20,000 women ‘endured sexual assaults in the form of torture and rape’ (Salzman 1998), while some authors give numbers up to 50,000 (Kohn 1994). Rape was not only a regular occurrence, but many authors stress the *planned character* of rape, especially within ‘death/rape camps’ (Allen 1996).

‘Although these atrocities were committed on all sides of the warring factions, by far the greatest number of assaults was committed by the Serbs against Muslim women, though Catholic Croats were targeted as well. While in past conflicts rape was sometimes considered an inevitable byproduct of war, and thus largely ignored when it came to punishing the perpetrators, the Bosnian conflict brought the practice of rape with genocidal intent to a new level, causing an outcry among the international community. Evidence suggests that *these violations were not random acts carried out by a few dissident soldiers*. Rather, this was an assault against the female gender, violating her body and its reproductive capabilities as a “weapon of war”. Serbian political and military leaders systematically planned and strategically executed this policy’ (Salzman 1998).

In the late 2010s, much violence erupted in Belgrade, the perpetrators of which were almost exclusively teenagers in their late teens. Nebojša Petrović has noticed how exactly these young, sexually incompetent and frustrated males always represent the huge majority (Petrović 2008, 10–11). Groups that condone violence, from neo-Nazis and skinheads to simple chauvinists and nationalists, finishing with para-military formation members are almost exclusively not only all-male, but the males comprising these groups are seldom seen with the opposite sex. As proven by neuroscientific research, *sexual ineptitude is a powerful force for motivating violence*, and the wars in former Yugoslavia that led and followed its breakup have certainly been helped by it, unlike the sexually much more functional Czech and Slovak society.

## CHAPTER VII

# LANGUAGE

*[W]e share the same noble Slavic idiom, and  
the sublimity of the same noble language.*

– EMPEROR CHARLES IV, in his 1355 letter to  
Emperor (Tsar) Stephen Dušan of Serbia.

It has already been established that language can serve as one of the foundations of national identity (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998, Blommaert 2006, Hobsbawn 1996, Kordić 2010, Carmichael 2000, Barbour 1996). Having in mind that the nation-building projects of the 1990s in Yugoslavia have had linguistic nationalism as one of its vital components, sociolinguistics must be called upon in order to elucidate the issues. Tomasz Kamusella explained the situation, imploring the academic community *to approach historical and political issues from a linguistic point of view* in a very revealing paragraph:

‘Nationally minded linguists table their various ideas about language customized to the needs of politicians and decision-makers, whereas political scientists and historians busy themselves analyzing and recording political changes carried out on the ethnolinguistic basis. In this division of labor, historians and political scientists tend to treat linguists’ proposals on language as a “black box”, believing the latter objectively and faithfully describe the linguistic reality on the ground in a wholly disinterested manner. Thus, when linguists decide that “a Bosnian language of centuries-long pedigree undoubtedly exists and is inherently different from Serbian”, or that the “evidence clearly indicates that the Slovak dialectal area consists of three distinctive, though kindred dialects”, historians and political scientists usually accept such pronouncements as givens, not worth any further analysis’. (Kamusella 2008, xiii)



This is also a problem that I have dubbed the problem of *ignorance*, of sheer lack of knowledge of the developed social science known as linguistics. However, both sides seem to be making the same mistake:

‘Conversely, linguists treat national master narratives developed by historians as a “black box”, too. They do not question the anachronistic tendency to speak about the Holy Roman Empire as an early “German nation-state”, Greater Moravia as the “first Slovak nation-state”, Poland-Lithuania as the “true Polish nation-state”, the Kingdom of Bohemia as an “early Czech nation-state”, or Rus as the “first Russian nation-state”. As a result, more often than not linguists’ ideas about national languages end up as unquestioned “significant arguments” used for propping historians’ pet national master narratives and vice versa’ (Kamusella 2008, xiv).

Kamusella, however, sees the use of language by both linguists and historians as highly important in shaping ‘social and political reality’ during the course of history:

‘Artifacts created by both linguists and historians, although often only tentatively or merely nominally connected to linguistic reality and historical events, are of formative influence on the social and political reality in Central and Eastern Europe’s ethnolinguistic nation-states, perhaps to a greater degree than anywhere else in the world. Somehow, these clear instances of politics of language did not register with scholars, who so far have failed to investigate them in a comprehensive manner’ (Kamusella 2008, xiv).

This is why it is of high relevance to analyze the use and misuse of language as a motivating factor that shapes society through history.

The abovementioned ‘clear instances of politics and language’ have helped the disassembling of Yugoslavia, as the differences between alleged languages were blown out of proportions by the nationalist linguist corps, primarily in Croatia and Serbia, but in Bosnia as well. To quote Ranko Bugarski, there was a ‘role of language in the construction and deconstruction of the Yugoslav state’ (Bugarski 2009, 70). *Language, minor linguistic difference and linguistic policies* have significantly contributed to the development

of nationalism, and consequently, to the promotion of conflict and strife, leading to the dissolution of Yugoslavia. No such thing happened in Czechoslovakia, on the other side.

While there was no single language in Czechoslovakia, as *Czechoslovak* never existed (though there were ideas of ‘putting it together’), there were eldritch ideas of unifying even so early as in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. As I had already mentioned, the official language, *Serbo-Croato-Slovenian* linguistically never existed. Yet linguistic differences played a minor role in Czechoslovakia, whilst in former Yugoslavia, even the *shibboleth*<sup>15</sup> found its place in the grim reality of the 1990s wars.<sup>16</sup> It might take some time to properly explain these issues as well as more than a little linguistics. It is of much importance to comprehend this issue, as it was yet another instance of artificial *division*. First, however, I need to clear up the linguistic matters. One should know his basics.

Going from the strictly linguistic, the ever-present question ‘when does a language become a language’, i.e. when does a regional variety shift its status from ‘dialect’ to ‘language’ is a much debated one. Max Weinreich’s immortal statement that a language is a dialect with an army and a navy seems to hold much truth from one point of view. However, the linguistic situation is a tad more complex in the abovementioned areas. The debate about the language(s) in most of the parts of former Yugoslavia (Macedonia and Slovenia excluded, as the people in these two states speak Macedonian and Slovenian

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15 The *shibboleth* is a linguistic instance that identifies the speaker as a member of a certain community, that is, language or (more commonly) dialect. The difference is most commonly a minor one (phonological, not semantic) and identified almost exclusively by native speakers (if not highly trained linguistic experts). Thus, the minor, non-semantic, phonological difference in the pronunciation of ‘č’ and ‘ć’ is still kept in Serbia, while in the West (most of Croatia), these two sounds have merged in what sounds like the Czech ‘č’. During the wars, a simple pronunciation ‘test’ would be enough to separate what was thought to be a Serb from what was thought to be a Croat. The *shibboleth* (the word itself coming from Hebrew and Biblical times) was important even during World War II, not even to mention the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s.

16 On the shibboleth, see: (Eades et al. 2003), also: (McNamara 2005)

respectively)<sup>17</sup> has been riddled with prejudice, ideology and rather poor scientific data. Nationalistic tendencies and ideologies of derision have created a sort of pseudo-linguistics on the territories of Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro, a quasi-science that, depending on the place and ideology, developed various means of producing pseudo-linguistic works in support of nationalist ideologies. From a more scientific point of view, nonetheless, it is not that difficult to draw a line between languages and dialects: if two dialects (regional varieties etc) are mutually intelligible on levels on which two native speakers from allegedly diverse native languages can have a discussion on the highest of levels, *provided that the two speakers do not have regular and constant contact with the other dialect*, it can be said that they speak the same language. The latter part of the sentence above will serve to explain how Czech and Slovak are separate languages, even though they are mutually very intelligible. Thus, the main languages spoken in the areas of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia are the following (excluding clear cut minority languages such as German or Albanian, which easily differ): *Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, Slovenian, Serbo-Croatian* and *Macedonian*. However, the upheaval that Yugoslav pseudo-linguistics created begs for a more detailed elaboration.

To start with the easier part, Czech and Slovak, though reciprocally very understandable and interchangeable, are two separate languages. I might not even had considered to elaborate on this, had I not had the chance to speak with a colleague historian on these matters. As I explained that the varieties known as ‘Serbian’ and ‘Croatian’ are actually just instances of a larger unit, Serbo-Croatian, being that they are mutually understandable, I was confronted with the question why Czech and Slovak were not

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17 To be fair, the issue with Macedonia, together with the ‘Macedonian question’ (or, perhaps, as a part of it), has been the question of the existence of the Macedonian language, that has gotten its official status only in the forties. Similar genetically to both Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian, however, Macedonian is in possession of all the necessities of being a separate language, as acknowledged by most linguists. See, for instance: (Bugarski 2009) The debate goes much further, as Macedonian has been recognized as a language only from the 1940s, yet it is a story unto its own and does not have much to do with the topic of this chapter.

considered to be one language as well, having in mind their reciprocated intelligibility. As things are, we could easily imagine a group of German native speakers living for hundreds of years in close contact with a group of Cantonese native speakers (we are using German and Cantonese as an example due to the sheer difference between them, namely, they belong to entirely different *families* of language). It is not hard to imagine – it is even to be expected – that the German speaking group would at least passively understand Cantonese and vice versa. This is in linguistics called *passive bilingualism*, which is the case for most speakers of Czech and Slovak, a fact being even much easier due to the genetic relatedness of Czech and Slovak. Many elementary instances of language are diverse in Czech and Slovak, making them two separate languages; I shall name but the elementary few: the difference in phonetics (the Czech ř, the Slovak ä), morphology (*Ja jsem* vs *ja som*; *ja děkuji* vs *ja ďakujem*), a huge difference in the declension system, a diverse vocabulary and so forth.



**MAP #3: MAP OF EUROPEAN LANGUAGES.**

The map shows Czech and Slovak as separate languages, whilst Serbo-Croatian is one language.

Source: Pine Crest College

In the elementary Serbian/Croatian language diversification instance ('Bosnian' and 'Montenegrin' came chronologically later), none of these differences exist. The phonetics are almost identical, the morphology is the same, the declension patterns almost indistinguishable (but for a few minor regional differences that utterly fail to coincide with all borders or attempts of identifying with a 'nationality' or 'ethnicity'), with only a few dozen words in the vocabulary of the two varieties that actually differ. All in all, we are talking about elementary dialectal differences. To put it this way: Bohemian Czech and Moravian Czech have more differences between each other than the alleged languages of 'Serbian' and 'Croatian'. In fact, as elaborated by many an eminent linguist, the alleged 'Serbian' and 'Croatian' differences are smaller than the differences between polycentric variants of English (Pohl 1996, 219), or polycentric versions of French (Thomas 2003, 314), and even German (Pohl 1996, 219). *Why and how were these minor differences blown out of proportion in former Yugoslavia?*

During the 1940s, when Croatia became a Nazi puppet state, Ante Pavelić led the movement of 'neo-Croatian', in which new words were created in order to separate the alleged Croatian language from the others, primarily from the Serbian variety, as Slovenian was already a language on its own. Nationalist ideologies often claim that a separate language is needed in order to form a 'strong nation', and Pavelić's influence led to the creation of words that even today sound rather amusing both for Serbs and Croats (the most famous paradigms are the *zrakomlat*, i.e. 'air-puncher', *helicopter*, and *zrakoplov* 'air-swimmer', *airplane*. Both sound comical to any speaker of Serbo-Croatian, and are seldom used). Though these instances never really took root in Croatia (being that this type of morphology, used ever so often in languages of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family, yet not in the Slavonic branch), they were used anew from the 1990s and the regime of Franjo Tuđman. Note that the use of Nazi ideas and symbolic was a personal proclivity of his; one should not forget that he introduced the so-called 'šahovnica', the checkered flag emblem that was used by the Nazi in 1940s



Croatia, the emblem that still adorns Croatia's flag even today.<sup>18</sup> Even now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a quick browsing through Croatian television channels will yield a couple of 'puristically' oriented programs (most notably, popular quizzes such as 'Who wants to be a millionaire?' and 'The weakest link'), whose hosts are ordered to speak a strange version of 'neo-Croatian' that occasionally confuses even the contestants. Robert Greenberg wrote in great length about this issue:

'Under the fascist regime of Pavelić in Croatia (1941–5), the phonological writing system for the Croatian language was replaced by a strict etymological spelling. This switch away from the phonological system revealed a bias among Croat extremists. These individuals believed that only through an etymological writing system would Croatia regain its purity and authenticity, cleansing itself of the unwanted Serbian elements. After the establishment of Tito's Yugoslavia, the reunited Serbo-Croatian language was given back its phonological orthographic conventions. However, the perception remained among extreme nationalists in Croatia that this writing system was a Serbian import' (Greenberg 2004, 46).

We need to have in mind that the same discourse was used from the nineties onwards, and is *still* used, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, mostly by nationally-minded Croatian linguist such as Sanda Ham or Stjepan Babić. As Greenberg explains,

'after 1991, extreme nationalist legislators, such as Vice Vukojević, sought to pass legislation "restoring" the Croatian etymological writing system. Brozović dismissed Vukojević as "an amateur" linguist who erroneously believed the phonological writing system to be "Serbian" and the etymological writing system to be purely "Croatian." He argued that prior to the nineteenth century; the opposite had been the case. The extreme nationalist in Serbia seemed better informed on the history of writing systems, advocating a return to a pre-Vukovian etymological writing system for the Serbian language' (Greenberg 2004, 46).

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18 The truth be told, the *šahovnica* had been used in the medieval times as well (heraldry tells us that the same pattern was not uncommon throughout Europe), but the reintroducing of it had a *Nazi* connotation. Rare are those who know that the *šahovnica* was originally not a Nazi symbol.

The ‘Vukovian’ system, it would be wise to stress, is the first codification of the written Serbo-Croatian language in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

In Croatia, during the 1990s, one of the prime elements of creating artificial difference between Croatia and Serbia – something needed in order to create ‘otherness’ – was trying to separate Croatian from Serbian by any means necessary. Miro Kačić’s work ‘Croatian and Serbian: Delusions and Distortions’, published in Zagreb in 1997, serves as a good example of pseudo-linguistics used in nationalist purposes:

‘I have tried to present some of the fundamental delusions and distortions which have brought about the misconception, which is still present in world linguistics today, that Croatian and Serbian are one language. I have shown that Croatian and Serbian differ to a greater or lesser degree on all levels. These differences exist on the following ones: The level of literary language. There are two traditions of writing which are temporally and spatially separated due to the different historical, cultural and literary development of the two nations. The level of standard language. The two traditions of linguistic codification are completely disparate. The period of Croato-Serbian normative convergence, from the time of Croatian “Vukovians” to the imposed unification of these two languages in the former Yugoslavia, is only an interval in the development of the Croatian linguistic norm. As a turning point, this period was atypical with respect to three centuries of this development. The level of genetic relatedness. Croatian is based on three macrodialects, while Serbian is dominated by a single macrodialect. The interference between three Croatian dialects which provided the basis for Croatian writing and literature has uninterruptedly existed for centuries as a formative force in the codification of standard Croatian. The typological level. Differences exist on all levels of the linguistic system: phonetic/phonological, accentual, morphologic, word-formational, syntactic, semantic-pragmatic and lexical. Linguistic systems which differ on all these levels cannot be one language’ (Kačić and Šarić 1997).



The analysis of the work of Kačić and Šarić, however, runs entirely counterfactual, as literally *all* of the alleged differences do not exist; their depiction paints a picture of two languages from different language branches. Arguments, nevertheless, seldom figured in the nationalist pseudolinguistic discourse in Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia. Arguably the best information on the issue of Croatian linguistic secessionism is found in the work of the prominent linguist from Croatia, Snježana Kordić, formerly of Frankfurt University. Kordić has spent decades fighting nationalistic pseudolinguistics in Croatia, a process that culminated in her work *Jezik i nacionalizam*, for which the publisher received a prestigious award for the fight for human rights in Germany, as well as being sued in Croatia, making a clear difference between German values and Croatian ones. Language continues to be used as a *means in creating artificial difference*. When it comes to nationalism and strife, it is of crucial importance to say, is that every nationalism needs to create a difference in the Other, to create an enemy. Language was one of the main means to such an end in former Yugoslavia.



**MAP #4: A MAP OF SERBO-CROATIAN DIALECTS**

All colored areas are covered by Serbo-Croatian, which is in the upper right corner of the map called 'Croatian or Serbian'.

Source: University of Pennsylvania

The Croatian nationalist pseudolinguistics has perhaps found its pinnacle in the work of Stjepan Babić, officially a leading linguist in Croatia. His work, '*Hrvanja hrvat-skoga*', much debatable from the point of view of any scientific value, represents a collection of essays and articles that have been published as alleged linguistics during

the decades long period from the end of the 1960s all the way up to 2004. According to Babić, Serbs and his alleged Serbian language have ‘endangered’ Croats; they have tried to ‘impose’ the Serbian language in the period from the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918) up to 1939, which is the beginning of World War II – it seems, at least in the innuendo, that the second great war and the fall of Croatia to the status of a Nazi puppet state came as a sort of liberation to the Croats. After the end of the war, from 1945 on, Babić sees a renewal of the imposing politics of the Serbian language in what he calls ‘decroatization’. Note that Serb nationalists also use the non-existent word ‘deserbization’ in their discourse; a good example might be Predrag Piper of Belgrade’s Faculty of Philology, who is convinced that there is a ‘planned politics of deserbization’ (Piper 2003). Babić goes on to show how there was allegedly a row of conspiracies that have been hiding the differences between Serbian and Croatian as separate languages, as well as to try to show how it was exclusively the Serb side that somehow tried to ‘swallow’ the Croatian language. However, Snježana Kordić, in her very detailed review of Babić’s work, shows lucidly how it was exactly Babić and his ilk who have been trying to separate Croatian from Serbian by all means possible, out of which the creation of new words and use of old were on the top of the list of popularity.

‘He himself (Babić) describes the way he did it. For instance, in the 60s, the word *hiljada* (thousand) was a commonplace word in Croatia, while the word *tisuća* at that time, as well as before that time, was not widespread on the territory of Croatia. Babić decided to create a linguistic difference by insisting on the use of *tisuća* and by pronouncing *hiljada* a Serb word, despite the fact that it was a common word. Today, Babić writes about the 60s for the new generation, about how at that time “there was a danger for only the word *hiljada* to survive as a common word. That is why I favored *tisuća*” (Kordić 2010, 314).

He is aware of the fact that his persecution of the word *hiljada* was spreading untruths, as

‘when the Croatian freedom arrived many believed that *hiljada* was a Serb word. And that, simply, is not true. The majority of the Croatian people in their speech used the word *hiljada* (196). This means that Babić intentionally exiled the word usually used by the majority of the Croatian people in order to artificially create a difference from the language spoken in Serbia. He has been applying the same method for decades, up to this moment. At that, he well knows that the words he has been targeted by pronouncing them Serbisms are not Serbisms. Namely, he himself admits that, if you look at the texts from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “you would think that already at that time the Croats had used so many Serbisms. However, at that time, they were not Serbisms” (Kordić 2010, 314).

The core of Babić’s demagogy is, as we have seen, the effort to try to present Serbian and Croatian as two different languages at all costs.

‘The task that Babić was charged with was to convince the public of the existence of two languages, the Croat and the Serb (7). The manner of persuasion is illustrated by his own words: “As for the unity or duality of the Serb or Croat languages, in Croatia it has been accepted as an axiom that the Croat language is a separate literary language” (12). However, the word axiom shows that the statement about the duality of language is missing something essential: it is missing proofs. The word axiom is used to denote “a fundamental principle whose exactitude has been accepted without proof (Anić’s *Rječnik*), the basic principle that could not be proven, nor does it need proof as it is immediately obvious” (Klaić’s *Rječnik*). And it is immediately obvious with the Croats, the Serbs, the Bosnians and the Montenegrins, that they completely understand one another, which means that the immediate obviousness shows that it is one and the same language’ (Kordić 2010).

The simple obviousness, as seen, is hardly recognized by the pseudolinguist. In other words, linguistics has been replaced by clever demagogy and sophistry.

While Croatian nationalist core in a constant attempt to divide Croatian from Serbian – two names for one language, pseudolinguistics in Serbia has adopted a double-edged

*modus operandi*: one is to claim that there is only one language in question, and that its name is Serbian (a line of faulty argumentation led by the extreme nationalist core and authors such as Miloš Kovačević, Predrag Dragić Kijuk, Predrag Piper, Dragoljub Zbiljić and the like), while the other claims mostly that Serbo-Croatian still exists, equaling it with the Eastern, Serbian version (see, for instance: Jovanović 2008). In the minds of these authors, the Serbian language, together with the Cyrillic alphabet (that they consider to be intrinsically Serbian) and even the Serbian Orthodox Church are ‘under attack’, and their ‘defense’ continued long after Yugoslavia ceased to exist:

‘In addition to the Serb writing and the Serb language, the Serbian Church, this important national characteristic and support of ours, had been exposed to a violent and systematic influence and thus weakened and suppressed, the only one to fare thus in this common state of ours where three great religions were represented!

Our national name, too, had also been most seriously attacked and endangered by the propaganda in favor of declaring as members of the Yugoslav nationality, at the same time when, by the decrees of the all-powerful political elite and not by a natural and historical manner, new nations were created, the nations whose only task it was to remain afloat in this government-supported Yugoslavism! How is one to explain anomalies of this kind, such political and national senselessness and the Serb national defeat; how can one explain the calmness the Serb people expressed upon receiving this and the suffering experiencing all this!’ (Lepojević 2005, 14).

This mentality that sees itself and the people as a victim, as ‘under attack’, as ‘suffering’, was very lucidly elaborated by the already mentioned Belgrade philosopher, Radomir Konstantinović, in his almost prophetic *Filosofija Palanke*. Furthermore, as Riedel explained, the idea that one’s nation is under attack from all sides is one of the defining elements of nationalistic thought, and every ‘attempt of demythologizing their national history is seen as an attack on the group identity’ (Riedel 2005, 244). There is a constant perception of threat, though in reality, no threat looms over the daily-used Cyrillic writing, as much as not threat is posed by Croats.

What is postulated often is the assumption that the Croats are ‘taking over the language’ from the Serbs, followed by conclusions that were based entirely on assumption, with only a *mention* of the ‘principles of logic’. However, declarations by fiat cannot be accepted in academic circles. Lacking a factual basis to back up his claims, Miloš Kovačević, an influential professor at the University of Belgrade, makes his claim in an emotional tone:

‘Should we decide not to accept this fact, we give up a goodly part of the Serbian language which, its speakers (Croats, Muslims and Montenegrins do not want under the Serb name. Should we decide not to accept this fact, we shall be forced to agree with their fakes that are given to the world as Gospel truth. (Kovačević 2005, 48).

This row of pseudolinguistic gibberish took decades to grow in former Yugoslavia. While Croatian linguists of nationalistic orientation, led by Stjepan Babić even during Communist Yugoslavia, strove to create new, neo-Croatian words and artificially separate a Croatian language from Serbian, Serbian linguists of the same orientation strove towards the idea connected to the ideology of Great Serbia – ‘everybody is a Serb, they just do not know it’. These interventions were, however, in strong contact with the primordial ideologies of the nation and ethnicity (Kordić 2010, 211). While these ideologies already created an artificial Serb/Croat polarization, and while religion, as explained, served to help the division by identifying Serb with Orthodoxy and Croat with Catholicism, we now even saw language being used as a means to an end in the creation of an extremely polarized worldview, in which nothing existed but division and strife.

In Czechoslovakia, similar attempts *did* exist, but they all failed, as described by Kamusella:

‘What followed was a nation-state for neither the Czechs nor the Slovaks, but for the constitutionally proclaimed “Czechoslovaks”. Besides these tentative Czechoslovaks (or the Czech and Slovak nations), Czechoslovakia also housed a considerable number of German-speakers, Magyars, and Ruthenians. (The last group was defined as a “state nation” of Czechoslovakia, while the two others as mere minorities.) This state failed to

deliver its Czechoslovak nation and Czechoslovak language. Except Czechophiles, Slovaks wanted a federal Czecho-Slovakia, not actual Czechoslovakia, which they perceived as a Czech nation-state in disguise, thus, only a little better than pre-1918 Hungary' (Kamusella 2008, 525).

In short, what Kamusella is trying to explain is the already existing division between the Czech and Slovak entities, which coincided with the two existing languages. Policies barely scratched the surface and failed to take root.

'The root of the idea of the idea of a common 'Czechoslovak' language we can see as far back in time as the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the disputes regarding religion. After the battle of White Mountain (*Bíla Hora*) in 1620, namely, many Czech Protestants had to flee to Northern Hungary, where they would face no religious persecution from the Catholics. Those Czechs wrote the Czech language as it was codified in the so-called 'Kralice Bible'. It then 'became slightly Slovakized', to use Kamusella's depiction, as a result of the fact that Czech (that is, Bohemian) speakers were now immersed into a Slovak-speaking area. The complications, however, only started: 'In the framework of the Counter-Reformation, the Jesuits decided to use the vernacular as proposed by Protestants. In Upper Hungary, their answer to *Bibličtina*, distanced from the local Slavic vernacular, was cultural Western Slovak. In a largely unchanged shape, it was used in religious publications. During the second half of the 19th century, Czech and Slovak philologists imposed the nationally-colored designation of 'Jesuit Slovak' (*jezuitska slovenčina*) on this de facto Upper Hungarian Slavic written religious language' (Kamusella 2008, 133).

This Catholic Slovakization of the written language led the Protestants to 'counter-Slovakize' their language (let us remember how important is language to many a person's identity), so that the language would again come closer to their original Bohemian Czech. In order to see this accomplished, Pavel Doležal published a grammar entitled *Grammatica Slavico-Bohemica* in Bratislava in 1746.



‘This work emulated Vaclav Jan Rosa’s *Cžechořečnost, seu Grammatica linguae Bohemicae* (1672, Prague), who identified the idiom of Upper Hungary’s Slavophones as Bohemian (Czech). The title of Doležal’s work can be literally translated as *The Grammar of the Slavo-Bohemian Language*, but Slovak and Czech philologists usually settle for the more interpretative translation, referring to the language as “Slovak-Czech” (Kamusella 2008, 133)‘.

According to Alt, Krajčovič, Stankiewicz and many others (Alt et al. 1982, Krajčovič 1988, Stankiewicz 1984), this gave way to the idea of a unified Czechoslovak language later on, and it even ‘hindered the final codification of the Slovak language until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century’ (Kamusella 2008, 133). However, that is another story altogether.<sup>19</sup>

Though the idea of a unified Czechoslovak did exist, and even had its roots in history, its artificiality was visible. The difference was existing, seen and confirmed in the

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19 The sheer impact of *religion* on societal and historical flows is in this work elaborated in a whole chapter. Kamusella, however, continues to describe the influence of religious development on the society and language: ‘The Catholic–Protestant split translated itself onto Slavophone literacy in Upper Hungary through religious publications. In 1636, an influential Protestant hymnal, *Cithra sanctorum neb žalmy a písne duchovni stare i nove* (The Holy Sitar or Psalms and Old and New Religious Songs) was published in Bibličtina. Nineteen years later, the Catholics replied with their own hymnal, *Cantus catholici* (The Catholic Hymnal), printed in Jesuit Slovak. The Protestant camp gained the upper hand in this ideological race when Daniel Krman’s (Krmann, 1663–1740) Bibličtina translation of the Bible came off the press in 1722 in Halle. In the mid-18th century, there was an attempt at a Catholic translation of the Holy Scripture into Jesuit Slovak but it remained in manuscript. Interestingly, Calvinists, who did not wish to cooperate either with Catholics, who wrote in Jesuit Slovak (Western Slovak), or with Lutherans, who employed Bibličtina (close to Czech and Central Slovak), employed the local vernacular of the Komitat of Saros (Šariš), today identified as the eastern Slovak dialect. The Slavophone Calvinists published their translation of the Psalter into their specific written vernacular in 1752 in Debrecen. Calvinist translators used the Magyar system of spelling to make their language decisively different from Bibličtina so much influenced by written Czech. But the innovation of ‘Calvinist Eastern Slovak’ largely petered out by the turn of the 20th century. This language lasted longest among the Saros Calvinist Slavic-speaking emigrants in the United States.’ [Kamusella 2008, 134].



minds of the speakers. For instance, the Slovak language codification of Antonín Bernolák – the so called '*Bernolačtina*' – was even used to separate:

'But to future activists of the Slovak national movement, Bernolačtina seemed too close to Czech, as the West Slovak and Moravian dialects do not differ much. They perceived Moravia and its speech as 'belonging to' the Czech language. Due to this fact, Bernolák's codification could be used as an argument for subsuming Slovak as a dialect of Czech or for making it into a variant of some common Czechoslovak language' (Kamusella 2008, 135).

All of this was the reason why – even though for a time officially called 'Czechoslovak' – the Czech language was dominant

'in all the spheres of life in Czechoslovakia. In the short-lived independent Slovakia (1939–1945), there was no time to complete the codification of Slovak, but at least it was made into the sole official language of this state. This achievement could not be easily overlooked in postwar Czechoslovakia so Prague grudgingly accepted standard Slovak as a co-official language. The transition period lasted until 1968, when Czechoslovakia was federalized. The Slovak language received its long overdue six-volume *Slovník slovenskeho jazyka* (The Dictionary of the Slovak Language, 1959–1968, Bratislava) edited by Stefan Peciar and others. Similar extensive dictionaries of Polish and Czech were published in the first half of the 19th century, and of Magyar in the other half of this century. But Slovak became (perhaps) permanently *the* sole official language of a state only in 1993, when independent Slovakia emerged following the break-up of Czechoslovakia' (Kamusella 2008, 135).

According to Holý, it was exactly the idea that 'the Slovaks did not constitute a separate nation from the Czechs', that is, 'that they spoke a language which was only a dialect of Czech or, bluntly expressed, were Czechs speaking Slovak – forms the basis of the ideology of Czechoslovakism which became the official state doctrine of the new republic' (Holý 1996, 97). Holý states that there was a 'language schism between the Czechs and Slovaks', and that 'it would have helped the construction of a single

Czechoslovak nation if this schism could have been overcome, and until the late 1920s the view was still being expressed by Czech scholars and leading politicians that Czech and Slovak were in fact a single language' (Holý 1996, 98). Even Masaryk wrote that 'Czechs and Slovaks are one nation and have one language. The Czechs, who were more free, developed their language more intensively than the Slovaks. So it happened that the Slovaks preserved their older dialect' (Holý 1996).

Kamusella lucidly depicted the connection between language and nation, as well as the chaos this connection can produce, especially if guided by policy instead of science. The rampant nationalism that caught root in Yugoslavia was one of the prime reasons for the country's bloody breakup, and nationally oriented linguists have been among the most prominent among academicians who have supported the nationalist idea. As Ager wrote, 'most linguists are nationalists, and most nationalists are linguists' (Ager 2001, 38). Yet even though there *had been* a state of chaos when it comes to the languages used in Czechoslovakia, the *actors* in the Yugoslav conflict – in this case, linguists nationalists – used language as a tool, much in the vein explained by Horkheimer and Adorno, connecting this issue with the already stressed fact that *individuals* shape the world in which we live in, to just remind the reader of the core idea of Sir Lewis Nami-er's work. Indeed, linguistics and history go together.

One other point that needs to be made is that, technically, *anything* can be used as a means to support and justify nationalism, strife and conflict. Language is here used as a tool, a means to a certain end. As Bugarski wrote, 'language, which was by itself not among the more important causes of disharmony, in a sense paved the way towards such a development. It was then used as a means for the warring sides, a means which could be used in attempts to keep or conquer some "national" territories, ethnically cleanse them and build ethnic walls around them' (Bugarski 2009, 104). It is relatively easy to use language for nationalist purposes, as it has a 'sociopsychological function', as testified by Bugarski, a function that 'represents opinions, values and the praxis of the speakers that are connected to the identity and the common name of their national

language’ (Bugarski 2009, 139). According to Blommaert, it is quite common to see language as a center of national identity (Blommaert 1997, 5). This identity is also defined by the ‘Other’, in this case, by juxtaposing with the ‘Other language’. In Bugarski’s almost philosophical words, looking back, it was observable that ‘it is not enough to be what one is, but also not to be what one is not’, meaning that the alleged Serbian language exactly *is* ‘that which is not Croatian’, and *especially vice-versa*, the Croatian language is exactly ‘that which is not Serbian’ (Bugarski 2009, 106). This is essentially a Saidian *otherization of language*. Language was used to create otherness, to create an enemy.

## CHAPTER VIII

# RELIGION

*One man's theology is another man's belly laugh.*

– ROBERT HEINLEIN

One of the much ignored, yet very painful thorns in the side of many an academician nowadays is religion. Bashing in, as some might say, unwarranted respect and glory, religion has achieved an almost unique status in the contemporary world, a status that allows it to exist without even being questioned (Dawkins 2006). When it comes to research, however, this status is an enormous hindrance. An academician should have an open mind and be critical towards everything and anything he analyses, religion included, yet religion somehow keeps getting taken for granted; more often than not, it is seen in a positive light, and many a scholar has failed to include its influence in their analysis, sometimes even openly evading the controversial topic. I find this particularly non-academic and unprofessional; all instances of our society need to be put to *close, rigorous scrutiny, and religion should not have any privileged status*. The cognitive philosopher Daniel Dennett of Tufts University has devoted a whole book, *Breaking the Spell*, to fighting the idea that religion should be tiptoed around, indicating how significant the issue really is (Dennett 2006). When it comes to the issues of Czechoslovakia and (especially) Yugoslavia, religion as a driving force of destruction cannot be evaded by the diligent historian. In the words of the American neuroscientist and religion analyst, Sam Harris,

‘our world is fast succumbing to the activities of men and women who would stake the future of our species on beliefs that should not survive an elementary school education. That so many of us are still dying on account of ancient myths is as bewildering as it is horrible, and our own attachment to these myths, whether moderate or extreme, has kept us silent in the face of developments that could ultimately destroy us. Indeed, religion is as much a living spring of violence today as it was at any time in the past. The recent conflicts in (...) *the Balkans (Orthodox Serbians v. Catholic Croats; Orthodox Serbians v. Bosnian and Albanian Muslims)*, (...) are merely a few cases in point. In these places religion has been the *explicit* cause of literally millions of deaths in the last ten years [on a world-scale].’ (Harris 2004, 26).

Having in mind the massive difference between Czechoslovakia on one side (where, at least in the Czech Republic nowadays, we see Europe’s least religious population) and Yugoslavia (where there are three major religions that have been fueling conflicts and prolonging strife), a *profound and deep, scientific understanding of religion is crucial to the analysis*. Many are the authors who have blamed religion as one of the key factors promoting conflict in the Yugoslav wars (Powers 1996, Sells 1996, Perica 2002, Vrcan 1994, Vukomanović 2005). For that reason, I shall proceed to explain the newest scientific discoveries about religion and its roots. The influence on the topic will be salient.

### THE EMERGING PARADIGM OF EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

Evolutionary psychology (EP) is a relatively newly formed scientific discipline that has been around the academic community for less than three decades. From being just an ‘emerging paradigm for the social sciences that offers a powerful metatheoretical framework for personality psychology’ (Kirkpatrick 1999, 921), EP has, especially during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, become a fledgling science that has endowed academia with a potent set of ideas that have more than successfully explained how the brain of the *homo sapiens* species functions. Only in 2010 did the comprehensive, norm-setting essay *Evolutionary psychology: Controversies, Questions, Prospects, and Limitations* get published,

wrapping the most important issues up, and helping EP find its place among other disciplines (Confer et al. 2010). In the words of the authors above,

‘over the past 15 years, evolutionary psychology has grown from being viewed as a fringe theoretical perspective to occupying a central place within psychological science. Courses in evolutionary psychology are being offered at many colleges and universities throughout the United States and, indeed, in countries throughout the world. Evolutionary psychology is now covered in all introductory psychology textbooks, albeit with varying degrees of accuracy’ (Confer et al. 2010, 123).

Criticisms and controversies have accompanied the development of EP, of the likes that Buss *et al.* categorized in the following manner, namely, that EP

‘(...) has generated critiques and remains controversial among some psychologists. Some of the controversy stems from hypotheses that go against traditional psychological theories; some from empirical findings that may have disturbing implications; some from misunderstandings about the logic of evolutionary psychology; and some from reasonable scientific concerns about its underlying framework’ (Confer et al. 2010, 110).

When it comes to EP research that concentrates on religion *per se*, it would be useful to mention Roger Straus’ work from 1981, *The Social-Psychology of Religious Experience: A Naturalistic Approach*, that has shown, perhaps, the beginning of the paradigm shift that is currently on its way (Straus 1981).

This text offers to delve deeper into exactly those ‘findings that may have disturbing implications’; to be more exact, into the findings of EP that can (and from a point of view, probably *should*) have a major impact onto traditional social sciences and humanities. This can easily be seen as an already standard EP ‘attack’ on the so-called ‘Standard Social Science Model’ (SSSM); so we should perhaps define this model first. If anything, history itself, among with most researches and researchers within the humanities and social sciences, has been known to take the SSSM as a point of departure more often than not.

### CONFRONTING THE STANDARD SOCIAL SCIENCE MODEL

‘In what has been called the “Standard Social Science Model”, championed by many influential anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists, including Margaret Mead and J. B. Watson, human nature was held to be almost infinitely malleable. Human beings were treated as though they were biologically empty, their behaviour and temperament being almost entirely the product of culture’ (Webster 2002). Cosmides and Tooby (1997), well-known names within the EP community, describe the SSSM rather similarly, yet with an important explanatory twist at the end:

‘Over the years, the technological metaphor used to describe the structure of the human mind has been consistently updated, from blank slate to switchboard to general purpose computer, but the central tenet of these Empiricist views has remained the same. Indeed, it has become the reigning orthodoxy in mainstream anthropology, sociology, and most areas of psychology. According to this orthodoxy, all of the specific content of the human mind originally derives from the “outside” – from the environment and the social world – and the evolved architecture of the mind consists solely or predominantly of a small number of general purpose mechanisms that are content-independent, and which sail under names such as “learning,” “induction,” “intelligence,” “imitation,” “rationality,” “the capacity for culture,” or simply “culture”’ (Cosmides and Tooby 1997).

The phrase ‘simply culture’ arguably gives us an insight into the fact that exactly today’s *cultural studies*, as well as other disciplines dealing with culture and its products (from sociology to anthropology, history and so on) have largely been functioning in accordance to the SSSM and drawing conclusions from it. Historians, political scientists and sociologists (more readily than anthropologists) have been mostly taking the SSSM approach for granted. As will be shown in the course of this work, it is not ‘behaviour and temperament’ that are ‘entirely the product of culture’, but vice versa. EP offered a powerful engine of explanation of all the instances social sciences and humanities tend to take as their main topics – religions, nations, states, ethnicities and so forth. Let us

take religion as a detailed example, being that precisely in the scientific explanation of religion we find the ‘most disturbing’ implications.

As many authors have noticed, coming to a scientific explanation of religion – or even *debating* religion *per se* – took a long time. Due to the powerful status religion possesses even today, having in mind as well that one of the very definitions of *sacred* (a key instance in religion) is exactly ‘that what one shall not discuss’, a real, scientific explanation of religion came only by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to EP, nonetheless, religion is a *by-product of the evolutionary development of the human brain*, namely, ‘the diverse range of beliefs, behavior, and experience that we collectively refer to as religion emerge as *byproducts* of numerous, domain-specific psychological mechanisms that evolved to solve other (mundane) adaptive problems’ (Kirkpatrick 1999, 291). Gone were the theological explanations such as Otto’s *mysterium tremendum* (Otto 1958), and even sociology-based explanations such as Weber’s and Durkheim’s are now seen to leave much to be desired, however useful they might have been. Religion was, in EP, abridged to what might be simply described as an inaccuracy in the functioning of the mind, a mistake that exists due to the evolutionary nature of a biological organ, the *brain*. Instead, a significant body of work has been produced on the psychobiological nature of religious belief (Bulbulia 2004, Barrett 2000, Atran 2004, Bloom 2007).

Gone was also the ‘rookie-Darwinian’ idea that if there was an instance, a property of a species in existence, it was there because it had ‘some evolutionary benefit to the species’. Let us take a look primarily at some physical properties of the *homo sapiens*, as explained by the evolutionary biologist and physician Randolph Nesse and his colleague, George Williams (Nesse and Williams 2012). The human forearm, namely, comprises two bones, the *ulna* and the *radius*, both of which are rather thin in their lower part, close to the wrist joint. This slenderness has been a cause for many a typical injury throughout time and the evolutionary development of the species. However, exactly this narrowness of the bones was what evolved as to enable the hand to rotate more easily, a property without which it would have been far more difficult to use tools,



for instance. The fact that the *ulna* and the *radius* are so thin at their lower juncture with the hand wrist and easily breakable is clearly no adaptation, but a simple trade-off: *in order for the hand to be more functional, it also had to be more breakable*. As it was of more use for it to be more easily rotating and twisting than being stronger, more resilient, the members of the species whose mutations led them to a thinner, more acrobatic limb survived in greater numbers than those with thicker bones, and thus procreated more often. An identical thing has happened with the brain during the development of its cognitive functions, which in turn yielded religious ideas, which I shall proceed to explain.

As an important moment in the analysis, closely related to the ‘looking outside of the box’ paradigm shift I mentioned (breaking the SSSM model, it would perhaps be useful to mention that this chapter does not wish to engage in debating already known works on religion. There have been very useful contributions within this field ever since William James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, not even to mention Durkheim or Weber. Many useful contributions have already been published within journals such as the *Journal for the Scientific Study Of Religion*, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *Social Compass*, and many others. I am trying to walk a fine line between approaching religion from the point of view of the emerging paradigm and analyzing it appropriately; I would see it as too broad an issue to be fully debated within the confines of this work. Therefore, I will limit my analysis to the new paradigm, seeing how it could influence the greater picture.

It is also of importance not to go entirely in a reductionist fashion. It might be construed that EP offers a ‘reductionist’ vision of religion. It does so by no means. It explains the roots of the problem, the neural and cognitive basis, the very foundation of research about religion that is currently undergoing a paradigm shift. Anthropological research, as well as sociological will be crucial in the years to come, *after* the evolutionary basis has been included as the cognitive foundation of the phenomenon.

### AN EXAMPLE OF EP PROVIDING NEW INSIGHT: RELIGION

While with our limbs we are dealing with physical instances such as rotation or fracture, our brain deals with social-cognitive schemata that are constantly activated by other, non-human agents (nature, animals, the physical world around us etc). Our brains, thus, have developed ‘biased cognitive systems’ (Guthrie 1995), in which they can misinterpret the information given by the physical world around them. When a member of the *homo sapiens* species, some hundred millania ago spotted a branch of wood on the ground in the shape of a snake, it was a similar trade-off that happened, though the trade-off was confined to only one organ: the *brain*. It was more safe to presume that the shape on the ground was a snake than not, and those individuals who did so consequently survived more, as in some of the cases, the shape on the ground actually was a snake. Here we see how easy and simple it is to think that a non-living instance is a living one, how easy it is to *anthropomorphize*, to ‘give life’ to an object by simple analogy, an analogy that, functionally, was more than useful in protecting the very life of certain individuals within a species (escaping predators etc), but lost its usefulness when *misfiring*. Attributing a ‘spirit’, an *animus* to non-living things is the result of the same misfiring of a cognitive process. The younglings of the *homo sapiens* whose brains developed cognitive schemata that identified large, moving entities around them as *important* (the nurturing mother, the protective father, the dangerous predator) and *alive* consequently attributed ‘life’ to other important, yet non-living things, such as the sun, the wind, the rain. Thus, ‘spirits’ have been ‘assigned’ to natural forces, the sun, animals and so forth, all resulting in what anthropology defined as the first type of religion – *animism*, the belief that there is an unseen, supernatural force residing in beings and objects around us. Anthropology, however lucidly *classifying* religion, did fail in properly *explaining* why this happened; evolutionary psychology was the first one to produce a successful explanation.

‘Because our minds have evolved to detect patterns in the world, we may tend to detect patterns that aren’t actually there—ranging from faces in the clouds to a divine hand in the workings of Nature. Hood posits an additional cognitive schema that he calls “supersense”—a tendency to infer hidden forces in the world, working for good or for ill. On his account, supersense generates beliefs in the supernatural (religious and otherwise) all on its own, and such beliefs are thereafter modulated, rather than instilled, by culture. Hood likens our susceptibility to religious ideas to our propensity to develop phobias for evolutionarily relevant threats (like snakes and spiders) rather than for things that are far more likely to kill us (like automobiles and electrical sockets). Barrett makes the same case, likening religion to language acquisition: we come into this world cognitively prepared for language; our culture and upbringing merely dictate which languages we will be exposed to’ (Harris et al. 2009).

Religion, nonetheless, even though the discoveries of EP could be easily classified as a scientific breakthrough of immense magnitude, still is seen from the current points of view of the Standard Model by social sciences and humanities. Let us take almost any instance in history, for example, the Great Schism of 1054. Now it is no longer a difference in ‘understanding holiness’, no longer a question of was Jesus of Nazareth’s ‘divinity’ separated from his carnal form or were those two ‘imbued’ together – the Schism now becomes just a *difference between two versions of the same biological byproduct*. The innuendo is clear: the whole visions of religious historical developments that have so far been taking religion for granted as a ‘cultural instance’ need to reexamine their findings. And while we are talking about culture, how should cultural science (together with cultural anthropology) react to the newly found fact that religion, by the SSSM considered to be one of the prime defining elements of culture, is nothing more than a byproduct? To finish the truism – *one of the basic elements of culture is an evolutionary byproduct*. This paradigm shift, to use Kuhn’s words, is so *immense*, so *profound*, that it has not yet been able to get hold among those members of the academia who

desperately try to cling to the SSSM, as it would mean nothing more and nothing less than a whole rethinking and reevaluating a lifetime of work.

The already mentioned team of authors delved more deep than anybody else in explaining religion in terms of the physical, *i.e.* biological, showing how social sciences failed to see, present and analyze exactly those instances that are most capable of correctly and lucidly explaining religion, this time from the input of neuroscience, stressing how little is actually known about religion.

‘Given the importance of religion in human life, surprisingly little is known about its basis in the brain. The relevance of the brain’s ventromedial dopaminergic systems to religious experience, belief and behavior is suggested by several lines of evidence, including the fact that a variety of clinical conditions related to dopaminergic dysfunction—mania, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), schizophrenia, and temporal-lobe epilepsy—are regularly associated with hyperreligiosity. The serotonergic system has also been implicated, as drugs known to modulate it—like LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, N,N-dimethyltryptamine (“DMT”), and 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (“ecstasy”)—seem especially potent drivers of religious/spiritual experience. In addition, 5-HT<sub>1A</sub> receptor densities have been inversely correlated with high scores on the “spiritual acceptance” subscale of the Temperament and Character Inventory’ (Harris et al. 2009).

All issues considered, the newest findings in evolutionary psychology (as well as neuroscience) should be forcing the academia to rethink and reevaluate the Standard Social Science Model and to include new points of view and new methods of examining the world around us. In short, all of this has been the product of a single fact – that the human being, the species *homo sapiens*, is a biological entity, bound by biological laws, and thus itself a product of the long and onerous process of biological evolution. Everything our minds (*i.e.* our brains) produce, from religions to ideas of social interaction, political, religious and secular ideologies, as well as the historical development of the human race, is bound to the biological, to the physicality of our bodies. As Sam

Harris emphasized, while talking about the scientific analysis of morality, which can be said to be one of the prime defining factors of human existence,

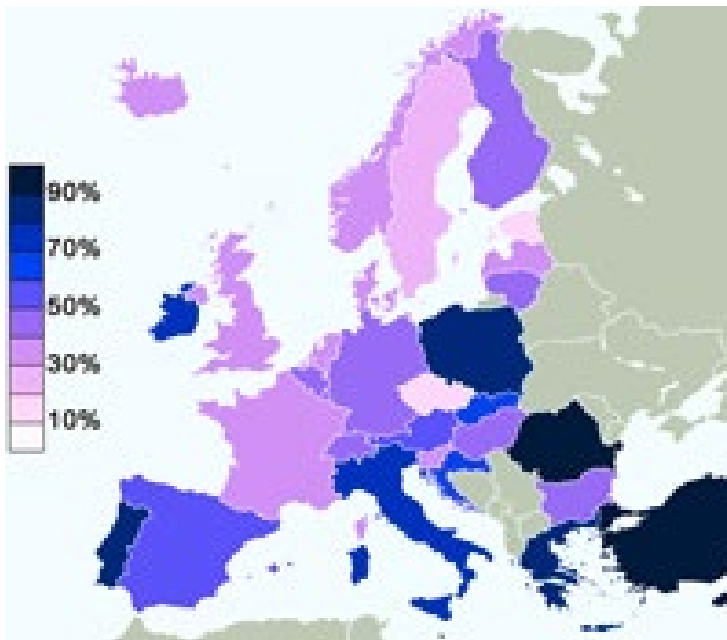
‘(...) in talking about values we are talking about facts. Now, our situation in the world can be understood at many levels – ranging from the level of the genome on up to the level of economic systems and political arrangements. But if we’re going to talk about human wellbeing we are, of necessity, talking about the human brain. Because we know that our experience of the world and of ourselves within it is realized in the brain – whatever happens after death. Even if the suicide bomber does get 72 virgins in the afterlife, in this life, his personality – his rather unfortunate personality – is the product of his brain. So – the contributions of culture – if culture changes us, as indeed it does, it changes us by changing our brains. And so therefore whatever cultural variation there is in how human beings flourish can, at least in principle, be understood in the context of a maturing science of the mind – neuroscience, psychology, etc’ (Harris 2010).

As stated above, not only morality, but ‘cultural variations’, whether they be in a political system that is used in this country or the next one, whether they be differences in the ‘perception of the holy’ in differing religions, can and *need to* be understood in the ‘context of maturing sciences’ such as evolutionary psychology (and neuroscience). Nonetheless, as Ian Lustick wrote,

‘the idea of applying evolutionary thinking to social science problems commonly involves strong negative reaction; in effect, social scientists treat life sciences as enclosed in a kind of an impermeable wall. Inside the wall, evolutionary thinking is capable of producing powerful and astonishing truths; outside the wall, in the realm of human behavior, applications of evolutionary thinking are typically treated as irrelevant at best, usually as pernicious and downright dangerous. And this failure to extend evolutionary thinking beyond biology I think is connected to a bigger problem, which is not often associated with evolution, and that is the fragmentation of knowledge (...) the ivory tower should be thought of as an ivory archipelago (...)’ (Lustick 2005).

Lustick's plea was not only about the usefulness of the conjoining of social sciences and humanities with life sciences, but also about the need for interdisciplinarity *an generale*. Being that expanding into life sciences makes one 'capable of producing powerful and astonishing truths', confronting those truths is most of the time the biggest of problems, even within the Ivory Towers of the Academia.

The implications of the results EP has given us are astonishing. For the first time in thousands of years, we have a fully-functional theory of religion, a theory that lucidly explains what religion actually is – *a byproduct of the evolutionary, long-term development of our brain*. Thus, in the vein of Dawkins, Hitchens, Dennett, Harris, Onfray and many others, we can approach the subject with stronger objectivity, finally realizing without a shadow of a doubt that this byproduct of the evolutionary development of the brain creates conflict *per se*. What would one expect, after all, from an evolutionary *byproduct*? History shows us that this reasoning is entirely valid, as religion, ever-present and more than strongly established on the Balkans, added fuel to the fire more often than not, inciting and prolonging conflicts, while the atheism in Czechoslovakia (primarily in the Czech Republic, though) disallowed any religious strife between the people(s). After all, 'the Czech Republic is one of the most atheistic countries in the world' (Václavík 2007, Zuckerman and Martin 2007). Zdeněk Pavlík and Milan Kučera also noticed a similar thing, writing about the Czech 'liberal' religious views and values (Kučera and Pavlík 1995).

**MAP #5: PERCENTAGES OF RELIGIOSITY WITHIN THE EU**

The map shows clearly how the Czech Republic is one of the least religious countries within the EU (the whiter the state, the more atheistic its populace).

Source: The European Citizenship project

Religious apologists will with small doubt claim that religion is surely 'not the only thing to blame' for the violent conflicts in former Yugoslavia; I will immediately correct them here in a prolepsis by reiterating how I never offered that it was *solely religion* that fueled or spawned strife, but that it is a *more than important factor*, a factor that it now clearly explained by evolutionary psychology. With EP, one more missing peace of the puzzle that is the Czechoslovakia/Yugoslavia dichotomy gets its place on the board. With realizing the fact that religion is, in essence, an *evolutionary byproduct*, it

shall be easier to see how this byproduct influences the course of history. To blunt it down, regions in which religion – a byproduct, a *mistake* – is strong, *less reasoning, less rationality, less education, as well as more violence are always present*. When it comes to studies concentrating on Yugoslavia and the 1990s wars, most academicians agree that religion was more than an important factor in creating division and promoting conflict.

Another important difference between Group A and Group B countries is the fact that the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia are members of the European Union (Croatia joined only recently), while the other countries of the Western Balkans are not. Religion has here served as a strong incentive *not* to join the EU, especially in Serbia, but in Montenegro, Macedonia and Bosnia as well. In Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, the nationalist right wing keeps claiming how joining the EU will lead to the 'dissolution' of their 'Orthodox values' as a relatively standard point in any debate or diatribe. The fact that both Romania and Bulgaria – both predominantly Orthodox and quite serious about it – are EU members and see no problem here, Orthodox majority countries from the Western Balkans often do not even realize that. On several occasions I witnessed clear ignorance of the fact that both Romania and Bulgaria host a Christian Orthodox majority, which seems to be predominant in Serbia, whose Orthodox Church has established an eerily arrogant understanding of itself, acknowledging commonly the existence only of the Serbian and Russian Orthodox Churches.

In a population that was predominantly non-religious during Communism, religion was, to use Aleksov's words, 'reintroduced' (Aleksov 2004) from the eighties onwards, to culminate during the nineties. Religious leaders became prominent in inciting hatred, tension and conflict (Perica 2002), and Churches on opposing sides became crucial in 'constructing state-forming myths' in former Yugoslavia (Perica 2002). During public meetings held by Slobodan Milošević in Serbia, 'professional demonstrators dressed in folk costumes, carrying placards and banners rich with Serb national and Orthodox religious symbols, for example, the names of Serb kings and saints, and, of course, "Slobo"' (Oberschall 2000). As Srđan Vrcan wrote, 'it is also fairly obvious that religion,



present in the area in three major persuasions: Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam, has been involved, implicated and engaged in some way and to some degree in the war' (Vrcan 1994, 414). Vreg noticed how 'Croatian warriors carry not only the HDZ signs but also Catholic crosses; Serbians do not carry Milošević's photos, but Orthodox crosses; Moslem fundamentalists and mujahedins kill under the slogan of Allah' (Vreg 1993, 664). In other words, ethnic differences were 'reinforced and strengthened by seemingly unbridgeable religious differences' (Duijzings 2003, 2).

Many have noticed that there was a wave of clericalization in motion in Serbia, first of all the sociologist of religion, Mirko Đorđević, and the philologist, professor at the Belgrade Faculty of Philology, Ljubiša Rajić. 'In a still patriarchal society that is by mentality mostly redneck, such as the Serbian society, the church, the army and everything that is patriarchal still carries high authority,' notices Rajić. He sees the clericalized nature of the state in the fact that the Serbian Orthodox Church has 'an increasing influence on state policies, education, cultural patterns and social life' (Vujadinović 2009, 74).

Having all of the above in mind, it is less surprising to see a person like Ljiljana Čolić (the Minister who removed Darwinian evolution from the school curricula) holding a position of such importance as the position of the minister of education. In Serbia, religion is integrated within the state; there is barely even *talk* about the separation of the Church and the state, with the exception of the liberal circles, concentrated particularly around the radio documentary/website *Peščanik* and the *Helsinki Charter for Human Rights*. Years after the breakup, in 2003, religious catechesis was introduced into elementary schools (a move that was unconstitutional), drawing upon the promoted religiosity during the breakup of Yugoslavia, so even now seven-year olds are indoctrinated, meaning that 'the state is taking care that the Church gets new believers', according to Rajić. The *Bukvar*, the first book by which six and seven year old children learn to write in Serbia, under the letter 'c' has the word *crkva* (church) as well as the following text:

‘The church is man’s most important home, he who goes to church shall have God as a helper inside of him. He who does not go to church should visit a doctor, maybe his parents are not healthy’ (B92 2002).

In light of this, Rajić’s following words have a clear resounding: ‘The goal is to make a country for the Serbian people out of Serbia, with the Serbian Orthodox Church as the prime church, that is, to help the church, which wishes a bit of a medieval state of affairs’ (Peščanik 2006). The wish for a strict binding of concepts such as Serbs, Serbia and Orthodoxy is even seen in an official proclamation of the Church in 1991, in the Voice of the Church:

‘In our renewal of the spiritual foundation, it is necessary to depart from the idea that Serbianhood grew on Orthodoxy and that serbianhood cannot exist without it. Serbs who stopped being Orthodox stopped existing as Serbs’ (SPC 1991/1).

Needless to say, such levels of religious fanaticism could neither be found in the Czech Republic, Slovakia or Slovenia. While the Czech Republic and Slovenia host a rather unusual number of irreligious citizens, Slovakia, the country with the largest number of religious people, never came even close to using Catholicism as an instrument for demonizing other religious groups.

In Bosnia, the situation is – as ever so often – more than chaotic, with three rampant religions that have been dividing the society for centuries now. While the Catholic Croats commonly do not have issues in joining the Union (that comprises several predominantly Catholic countries), Bosnian Serbs, mostly Orthodox, exhibit the same pattern of unwarranted ‘fear’. The Muslim third finds itself ‘unwanted’ more often than not by both the other two thirds within the country, while on the other hand, the anti-Muslim feeling that has been engulfing Europe as of lately keeps them from not seeing the EU integration issue as an overly important one. Bosnia and Herzegovina are a clear example of human (i)rrationality gone haywire, as three ethnicities (remembering Geary’s dubbing the very concept of ethnicity as imaginary) *and* three religions (evolutionary byproducts) *continue to divide and separate*. In other words, *divide et impera*.

According to the American neurologist Sam Harris – known for his groundbreaking study about neural bases of religious belief and his work on morality, *The Moral Landscape* – it was exactly religion in the roots of the enmity, violence and hatred in the Yugoslav war. I shall correct him here by modifying the statement in the sense of religion being *one* of the crucial instances that promoted strife and difference. He gives a list of conflicts where religion has played a prominent role throughout the world, where it had been an *explicit* cause of millions of deaths:

- Palestine (Jews v. Muslims),
- the Balkans (Orthodox Serbians v. Catholic Croats);
- the Balkans, once again (Orthodox Serbis v. Bosnian and Albanian Muslims),
- Northern Ireland (Protestants v. Catholics),
- Kashmir (Muslims v. Hindus),
- Sudan (Muslims v. Christians and animists),
- Nigeria (Muslims v. Christians),
- Ethiopia and Eritrea (Muslims v. Christians),
- Sri Lanka (Sinhalese Buddhists v. Tamil Hindus),
- Indonesia (Muslims v. Timorese Christians),
- the Caucasus (Orthodox Russians v. Chechen Muslims;
- the Caucasus, again (Muslim Azerbaijanis v. Catholic and Orthodox Armenians)

Richard Dawkins of Oxford University stresses the same fact (Dawkins 2006, 260). However, the sheer amount of respect that religion gets in the modern world prohibits one from seeing that religion itself is the cause of many problems. What could be said about Yugoslavia on the matters of religion was already written by Salman Rushdie when he told about India's religious problems:

‘What is there to respect in any of this, or in any of the crimes now being committed almost daily around the world in religion’s dreaded name? How well, with what fatal results, religion erects totems, and how willing we are to kill for them! And when we’ve done it often enough, the deadening of affect that results makes it easier to do it again. So India’s problem turns out to be the world’s problem. What happened in India has happened in God’s name. The problem’s name is God’ (Rushdie 2002).

Similarly, the name of one of the problems in former Yugoslavia could also be put down to ‘god’. For instance, in Croatia, as Powers explains, ‘Croatian cultural and national identity is closely identified with Catholicism’ (Powers 1996, 8), whilst a parallel runs in Serbia with its Orthodoxy and the sheer social power of the Serbian Orthodox Church. This goes to such an extent that Powers also stated that ‘in terms of effectiveness as a national symbol, the Catholic Church in Croatia ranks next to Poland’, one of the most religious countries in Europe, after Turkey. The Croat Catholic Church was well known for its support for nationalist and secessionist causes, as it wholeheartedly supported the independence of Croatia. An interview with Kardinal Kuharić of Zagreb, he clearly stated how [t]he Church among the Croats has always represented the rights of the Croatian nation, like those of every other ethnic nation, to freedom and ‘the guarantee of freedom for every ethnic nation is the state. What is more,

‘this linkage between religion, ethnicity, and national identity has led some to conclude that the Catholic Church bears considerable responsibility for the conflict. (...) It supported, especially in 1990–91, the nationalism of Tuđman’s Croatian Democratic Union. In Bosnia, the church supported the establishment of ethnic political parties, specifically the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which contributed to the political divisions that led to war there. Moreover, the church embraced Slovenian, Croatian and Bosnian independence, without adequately taking into account the fears of Serb minorities in Croatia and Bosnia’ (Powers 1996, 8).

In Serbia, we see a similar picture. Like in Croatia, there is a positive historical correlation between the rise of religiousness and the rise of nationalism and violence. The

following table shows *immense* rises in religiousness and religious behavior on all fields, in many a view of religion (simple declarative religiousness, church attendance, belief in the afterlife etc):

**CERTAIN INDICATORS OF RELIGIOUSNESS IN SERBIA IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS (%)**

INDICATORS	YEAR OF RESEARCH	1982	1993	1999
Positive confessional identification		88.0	96.7	93.5
Self-declared classic religiousness		23.8	71.3	59.3
Child baptism		59.3	84.4	83.9
Celebration of religious holidays		57.9	93.3	86.6
Church burial		—	92.4	86.1
Liturgy (all intensities)		6.8	26.3	48.1
Church attendance (all intensities)		25.5	70.5	74.8
Praying (all intensities)		24.4	77.7	69.7
Fasting		24.2	58.4	58.5
Believing in God		17.6	46.3	—
Believing in Jesus Christ		15.4	56.7	—
Believing in life after death		5.4	28.2	—

Ref: For 1982 Djordjevic's research of religiousness in the predominantly Orthodox region of Niš (D.Djordjevic, 1984); for 1993 Blagojevic's research of the predominantly Orthodox region of Branicevo (Blagojevic, 1995); for 1999 the research made by the Institute for Sociological Research of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade on a sample representative for Serbia without Kosovo and Metohija (Radisavljevic-Ciparizovic, 2005)  
Source: (Blagojević 2006)

Religion has made its contribution to national conflicts, as 'national and ethnic divisions correspond closely to differences in religious identity'. This link has been, as was shown, supported and maintained by both important religious figures and the elites. Yet 'religion is too readily dismissed as part of the problem in the former Yugoslavia because religious identity is, at least on the surface, a distinguishing characteristic of the opposing sides, and because the link between religious and national identity is often described in exclusively negative terms and as a source of conflict' (Powers 1996, 22).

Investigations show that the connection of religion to violence and any forms of rigid, authoritarian ideology are strong. According to Flere and Kanjšek, there is a 'strong

and positive association between authoritarianism and all types of religious orientation, regardless of the sample analyzed', and the exact samples these authors have analyzed are exactly from former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Slovenia) (Flere and Klanjšek 2009). It is of small doubt that religion *caused, helped, promoted* and *exacerbated* the conflict(s) in former Yugoslavia, as a complete difference in what had (not) happened in Czechoslovakia. In the words of Michael Sells,

‘the role of religion in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been both obvious and invisible. It was obvious in that both perpetrators and victims of organized atrocities were identified by their religious tradition. It was invisible in that the religious manifestations were viewed either as incidental or as masks for deeper social, political, and economic issues; or else categorized exclusively as aspects of ethnicity’ (Sells 2003).

Sells also lucidly stressed that there was a ‘bizzare mixture of religion and biology that can only be understood against the underlying religious mythology’ in connections to the massacres and mass rapes during the Yugoslav war, reminding us of how connected the factors of religion, ethnicity and nationality are. In short,

‘women who have been raped are often unable to find a husband and have a family. Patriarchal traditions of shame and honor make it difficult – and in some cases, impossible – for women who have been raped to be accepted as wives and mothers. The organized rapes were meant to destroy the potential of the women as mothers. The statement attributed to many rapists – that the victim would bear ‘Serb seed’ – are the flip side of this ideology: forced impregnation of Serb nationhood, a bizarre mixture of religion and biology (...) The rapes were a form of desecration, closely related to the desecration of the sacred spaces symbolized by mosques’ (Sells 2003, 22).

From the point of view of theory, this chapter was the only one that went deeper into the understanding of a discipline completely different from history, yet crucial in understanding one of the *key elements* of history worldwide – religion. This chapter concentrated on one of the factors that have contributed to the historical development of several regions. It is useful to stress yet again that one factor is just a notch on

the equalizer of historical development, and that every factor is diminished or strengthened by another, as was shown in preceding paragraphs. For instance, attitudes towards sexuality are severely influenced by religion, and the connection was brilliantly noticed by Sam Harris, who wrote how the happenings we are talking about are a

‘product of what men in these societies believe about shame and honor, about the role of women, and about female sexuality. One consequence of these beliefs has been to promote rape as a weapon of war. No doubt there are more creaturely, and less calculating, motives for soldiers to commit rape on a massive scale, but it cannot be denied that male beliefs about “honor” have made it a brilliant instrument of psychological and cultural oppression. Rape has become a means through which the taboos of a community can be used to rend it from within. Consider the Bosnian women systematically raped by Serbs: one might have thought that since many of their male relatives could not escape getting killed, it would be only reasonable to concede that the women themselves could not escape getting raped. But such flights of ethical intelligence cannot be made with a sufficient payload of unjustified belief—in this case, belief in the intrinsic sinfulness of women, in the importance of virginity prior to marriage, and in the shamefulfulness of being raped’ (Harris 2004, 188).

This is arguably one of the better examples in support of the interdisciplinary, synthetic approach, so much needed in history, now more than ever.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE STORY, ONCE AGAIN

*The [Communist] system destroyed the country. For it was the system which taught the elite to believe that politics is conspiracy and political success is the art of the lie.*

– MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

Shortly after the Velvet Revolution of 1989 and the fall of Communism, Czechoslovakia ceased to exist as a political entity officially on 1 January 1993 (known also as the ‘Velvet divorce’ due to its clean and bloodless properties). In a comparative perspective, while Communism really ceased to exist in Czechoslovakia after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Velvet Revolution, after the death of Josip Broz Tito, Yugoslavia saw a transformation of Communism into a type of state-driven nationalism, ending in a severe difference between the breakups of the states at hand. Eric Gordy called this nationalist-authoritarian, ‘a term meant to be more precise than nationalism and more generalizable than the currently fashionable post-Communism’ (Gordy 1999), while ‘the nationalist authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milošević...represents both a continuation and a departure from the old Communist regime’ (Gordy 1999, 14). As Sonia Lucarelli wrote, there was a ‘post-Communist nationalism’ stemming primarily from Serbia (Lucarelli 2000, 15). Michael Ignatieff wrote how ‘the [Communist] system destroyed the country. For it was the system which taught the elite to believe that politics is conspiracy and political success is the art of the lie. It was the system which taught these men that they had no other purpose than the maintenance of power by *any* means’ (Ignatieff 1995, 19). The arguably best description, though, of what was Yugoslavia with Milošević, was given



by, surprisingly, Noel Malcolm, who wrote that Milošević ‘acquired an unchallengeable personal standing in Serbia, by a combination of Communist methods and nationalist rhetorics’ (Noel 1994, 213).

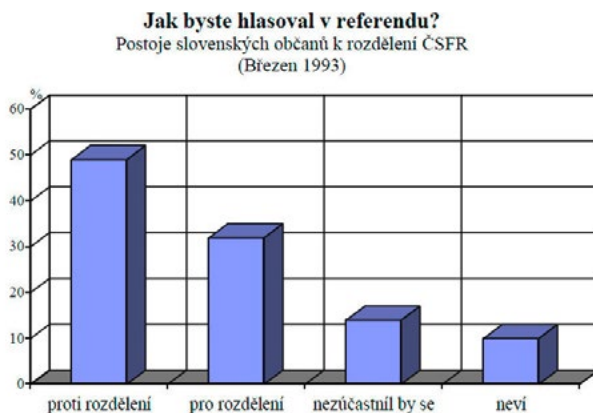
While Czechoslovakia went through an almost gentle ‘velvet’ divorce, Yugoslavia, from the early 1990s, started to crumble in on itself in a number of wars and conflicts, where part by part of it left the federation. Krejčí noticed that the idea of the Czech Republic as a sovereign state for itself had roots in what he called ‘natural rights’, i.e. that there existed the idea of a sovereign Czech state in a romantically ‘natural’ form even from the 1860s and the work of František Palacký. The idea was that the ‘doctrine of historical state rights attempted to prove the uninterrupted legal existence of the Czech state’ (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 310). The works of the politician and historian Václav Vladivoj Tomek at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the work of Josef Kalousek entitled *Czech State Rights* followed the same line (von Tomek 1898, Kalousek 1892). The main idea of the ‘natural rights’ ideology was that although the Czech lands were under Austria-Hungary, the ‘separate constitutional identity of the Czech state was not legally interrupted by the fact that the Czech Lands became part of the Habsburg Monarchy’ (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 310).

When it comes to the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, however, these arguments found scant support. The only questions raised by politicians were how the economies would fare should the two states decide to split up (Krejčí and Styan 2005, 321). The clean separation is seen in the following table, which shows the views of questioned residents of both Czech Republic and Slovakia on what were the best ways of dissolving the federation. The choice ‘referendum’ – the will of the people – was the most emphasized one, though it bears use to notice how similar the views of both Czechs and Slovaks are on all of the options:

	Best		Acceptable		Unacceptable		Don't know	
	CzR	SR	Czr	SR	CzR	SR	Czr	Sr
Referendum	<b>41</b>	<b>49</b>	29	32	21	12	8	7
Agreement between National Councils	16	19	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	21	21	15	12
Declaration of the Federal Assembly on Dissolution of the Federation	16	9	43	41	27	37	14	13
Agreement between Representatives of the ODS and HZDS	8	7	22	28	58	54	12	11
Unilateral declaration Of independance by one republic	5	3	18	14	<b>63</b>	<b>70</b>	14	13

Source: Krejčí (2005): Views on the acceptability of methods of dissolution of the federation (p. 322) Data given in percent (%).

Relevant statistical data shows that there indeed had been a significant majority that held the view that the Czech Republic and Slovakia should split, unlike in Yugoslavia, where the federation was tried to be kept together by the Serbian side, while other states wanted to secede.



Source: (Bútora and Bútorová 1993)

There is a common view that claims how the dissolution of the Czechoslovak state was influenced (if not caused) by the separatism/nationalism of the Slovaks. According to Křen, when Czechoslovakia was at its death throes, the ‘spiritus agens was undoubtedly the Slovak side’ (Křen 2005, 992). Yet, as sociological research has shown, it was far from the truth, as surveys indicated a relatively similar percentage of people opting for the dissolution of the state in both Czech Republic and Slovakia (Křen 2005, 323–324).

The press from that day gives an impression of an already formed discourse of difference. For instance, the *Český deník* from 1 September 1992 stated how Slovakia differed from the Czech lands in its historical development, which is directed more toward the East than the history of the more Western-oriented Bohemia (*Český deník* 1992). In short, there was a prepared mode of difference in which the two entities were seen as different. This was further helped after the 1990 demonstrations in Bratislava, in which the people were shouting ‘Independent Slovakia!’, ‘We’ve had enough of Prague’ and ‘We’ve had enough of Havel!’. As Holý wrote, ‘with their attitude to the Slovak state, Czechs saw the demonstration as a clear sign not only that the Slovaks were proudly celebrating their fascist past, of which they should be ashamed, but also that the political scene in Slovakia was again acquiring a distinctly fascist character’ (Holý 1996, 109).

Needless to say, there was nothing fascist about the demonstrations, but the very idea that the Czechs held – that the 1990 demonstrations were fascist – tells that they wanted to keep a distance from Slovakia. Havel spoke in 1992 in an article in *Respekt*:

‘In Czech spiritual history, in Czech statehood, there are some motives on which it is possible and, in my opinion, necessary to build. One from them is the idea that ‘Czechness’ itself is not enough and that it is not something hovering somewhere at the summit of all values but gains its meaning and fulfillment only by the way in which it accepts, so to speak, pan-human tasks and responsibility for a general human destiny. We are not here only for ourselves, and if we followed only our own interest we would not get very far. I think that a revived Czech statehood must have its spiritual and moral dimension

– that it should be founded in a new way on out humanistic tradition, which can be found in the sphere of thought as well as in the sphere of statehood’ (Havel 1992).

This is where a clear, lucid distinction can be seen between the policies propounded by influential politicians in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. While policies in Yugoslavia were all about creating special difference and separating from the Other, Havel, even though he emphasized ‘Czechness’ in a sort of a way, drew upon ‘pan-human’, global ideas – being simply ‘Czech’ was not enough. He did emphasize ‘faith, spirituality, tolerance, education’, reminding much on Masaryk (which probably gained him many political points), but a more global, universal and human system of values (the ‘humanistic tradition’) ended up being evoked. Thus, there was a ‘Czechness’, but it differed from anything else only by its invocation of a humanistic tradition and global values.<sup>20</sup>

Sociological surveys ‘indicated the wish of the majority of the population to preserve a united state, but this majority view did not have its own political representation’ (Křen 2005, 324). Or, in other words, remembering the Namierian view of the influence of the ‘people who mattered’, it is the select few who shape the course of history. It was the elites who wanted the separation most, echoing the similar conclusions of the work conducted by Fritz Fischer. Křen agrees, saying how there was no great power to facilitate the further existence of Czechoslovakia, ‘unlike in the case of Yugoslavia’ (Křen 2005, 327).

According to Jiří Musíl, there are three views (not necessarily mutually excluding, if I might add) on the breakup of Czechoslovakia. According to the first one, Czechoslovakia was an ‘artificial construction, which without external support and under

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<sup>20</sup> This evokes Holý’s view of the non-nationalistic views of Josef Pekař and Petr Pithart, in which this author elucidates how, in contrast to a nationalist view of Czech history that follows a line from Palacký onward, there was a second image of Czech history, which ‘was most explicitly formulated by what may be seen as a consciously non-nationalistic historiography whose main proponent was Josef Pekař. This historiography saw Czech history not as the unique achievement of the Czech nation but as the unfolding of events in the wider context of European history (...)’. Havel’s paragraph from 1992 seems to have drawn exactly upon those values and ideas. In: (Holý 1996, 124)

external pressure would tend to disintegrate’ (Musíl 2000, 10), what I have mainly argued throughout this work; the second view sees the Czechoslovak state as a (relative-ly) stable entity that never recovered after the Munich Agreement and the influence of stronger states (what I have also argued at great length); the third sees this republic as an ethnic mix that could not withstand such diversity, a view that I find no real reason to support. However, the ethnicity issue was significantly more important in Yugoslavia.

And indeed, the narrative regarding the dissolution of Yugoslavia is one that needs significantly more space. After the rise of nationalism, the Memorandum of the SANU and the rise to power of Slobodan Milošević, Slovenia was the first one to leave in 1991, while the last part of former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, declared independence in 2008. The short timeline goes as follows:

	DATE OF REFERENDUM	DATE OF SEPARATION
SLOVENIA	23 December 1990	25 June 1991
CROATIA	2 May 1991	25 June 1991
MACEDONIA	8 September 1991	25 September 1991
BOSNIA	29 February / 1 March 1992	3 March 1992
MONTENEGRO	21 May 2006	3 June 2006
KOSOVO	17 February 2008: declaration of independence by the Assembly.	

Sonya Lucarelli, in her *Europe and the breakup of Yugoslavia: In search of a scholarly explanation*, presents a more detailed table entitled *Phases in the Management of the Yugoslav Conflict(s)*:

PHASE	CONFLICT MANAGED	INSTITUTIONAL ARENA OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
<b>Phase One</b> June 1991 – January 1991	Intra-SFRY wars: <b>Slovenia – JNA/Serbia</b> (June 26 – July 8, 1991) <b>Croatia – JNA/Serbia</b> (since July 1991) Tension threatened to extend the conflict to other Yugoslav arenas and/or Eastern European states	Europe (EC, ESCE)
<b>Phase Two</b> January 1992 – April 1994	Intra-SFRY wars: <b>Intra-Croatia</b> <b>Intra-Bosnia and Herzegovina</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Serbs vs. Muslims</li> <li>– Serbs vs. Croats</li> <li>– Croats vs. Muslims (since March 1992)</li> </ul> Tension threatened to extend the conflict to other Yugoslav arenas and/or Eastern European states	International (EC/U + UN)
<b>Phase Three</b> April 1994 – November 1995	<b>Intra-Bosnia and Herzegovina wars:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Serbs vs. Muslims</li> <li>– Serbs vs. Croats</li> <li>– Croats vs. Muslims</li> </ul> Tension threatened to extend the conflict to other Yugoslav arenas and/or Eastern European states	International (EU + UN + NATO)

#### PHASES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE YUGOSLAV CONFLICT(S)

by Sonia Lucarelli (Lucarelli 2000).

The stresses that Lucarelli makes coincide perfectly with the fundamental ideas behind this theses, among others, that the influence of the international community was tremendous (from the European Community, over the CSCE to NATO), as well as the religious background of the conflicts, up to the main role that Serbia played, however negative that role might have been.

‘The 1986 Memorandum of the Serb Academy of Arts and Sciences, the 1987 putsch within the Serb Communist Party through which Slobodan Milošević took control, his attempts in 1988 to increase control over the Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins, and the 1989 constitutional changes signaled ominous developments. The Serbian leadership was clearly using post-Communist nationalism to develop expansionist, hegemonic plans’ (Lucarelli 2000, 15).

All of this led to a series of wars and conflicts, starting with the ‘Ten-day war’ with Slovenia in 1991, and escalating into an all-out war in Bosnia and Croatia from 1992 onwards. The probably best known instance regarding the aforementioned wars was genocide, both denied and claimed by all sides involved.

The much asked question was ‘who was to blame?’ for the destruction of Yugoslavia, as well as who was to blame for the wars themselves, a question that never needed to be posed in the case of Czechoslovakia. A large part of the scholarly debate centered around this question, such as the works of Viktor Meier, James Sadkovich, Norman Cigar and Laura Silber, put the blame squarely on the Serb side, and Slobodan Milošević. As Sabrina Ramet noticed, there were enough documents, memoirs, testimonials and publications heard and seen during the trial of Slobodan Milošević to testify of ‘Belgrade’s culpability in the war’ (Ramet 2005, 6). This work, in a similar fashion, stems from the perspective of Sundhaussen and Hobsbawm, in which Yugoslavia is seen as a sort of an ‘enlarged Serbia’.

However, as Ramet also noticed, Warren Zimmerman and Robert Hayden assigned blame even to Slovenia (sic), ‘for being self centered, arguing that they should have stayed in Yugoslavia longer in order to try to help the federation to reach a solution satisfactory to all parties’ (Ramet 2005, 6). Yet this view is held by few. Croatia’s culpability is also brought into play, primarily through the work and influence of Franjo Tuđman, especially in Sells’ book *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Sells 1996). After all, it was Tuđman who reintroduced the kuna and the šahovnica, remnants

from the Nazi regime, when Croatia was but a Nazi puppet-state. Once again, we see how history is guided by those in power.

Other authors I can put into the ‘Great powers’ section when it comes to ‘allocating blame’, primarily Crawford, Burg and Shoup, who argued that Germany’s diplomatic recognition of Croatia and Slovenia in 1991 (that is, immediately) added fuel to the fire. Burg and Shoup even argue how the European Community’s hasty acceptance of the aforementioned new states intensified the Serbian threat to Bosnia (Ramet 2005, 8). A similar instance was seen in Bosnia, which was recognized, according to Hladký, primarily due to the fact that the USA chose to accept its independence (Šesták et al. 1998, 631). Norbert Both wrote how ‘as early as November 1990, in the context of a meeting of European Community ministers, Germany argued forcefully that human rights had to take priority over the maintenance of the Yugoslav unity’ (Ramet 2005, 9). Lukić, Lynch and Conversi, as argued by Ramet, did not see the influence of Germany as crucial, but they concentrated on the encouragement given to Serbs by France and the United Kingdom. As Ramet noticed, the Netherlands also played an important role, advocating a ‘tough line’ against Serbia from the very beginning, including the present time. The notion that the ‘international community’ failed to act or acted in such ways as to worsen the situation is heard more often than not. As Malcolm wrote, statesmen of Europe and America ‘reacted to the fighting in Bosnia with policies which not only failed to solve the crisis but actually made it much worse’ (Noel 1994, xx). In a very ‘Fischerian’ sense, Noel wrote how

‘what had always endangered Bosnia was not only genuinely internal tensions but the ambitions of larger powers and neighbouring states. The history of Bosnia shows that, leaving aside the economic conflict between landowners and peasants the “national” animosities within the country have reached the point of inter-ethnic violence only as a result of pressures coming from outside Bosnia’s borders,’ (Noel 1994, 243)

Thus the blame for the war in Bosnia was allocated squarely within the realm of influence of other states and statesmen.



The influence of the elite, especially within, was very specific for Yugoslavia. According to V. P. Gagnon and Eric Gordy, it was an annihilation of alternatives that was so effectively used. Debating the authoritarian regime in Serbia, for instance, Gordy wrote how ‘specifically, the regime maintains itself not by mobilizing of opinion or feeling in its favor, but by making alternatives to its rule unavailable’ (Gordy 1999, 2). V. P. Gagnon has devoted an entire monograph on what he dubbed ‘demobilization’, a process in which alternatives (democracy, freedom of thought) were made into ‘not an option’. ‘In terms of the effects of these strategies, what is clear is that despite images of egregious injustices and dangers to Serbs and to Serbia, and of violence being perpetrated against Serbs, the population was not actively mobilized along these issues, and was certainly not mobilized into violent conflict,’ wrote Gagnon. ‘In fact, exactly because of the limited effectiveness of appeals to ethnic solidarity the regime had to resort to violent conflict along ethnic lines to keep its opponents from mobilizing the population against the regime itself. This silencing or demobilizing strategy has proved quite successful in the Serbian case’ (Gagnon 1996).

David Anderson included a number of factors that have played a role in the breakup of Yugoslavia (Anderson 1995, 13). First of all, he named ethnic tensions, namely those between the Croat and the Serb side, expanded to differing perceptions of the common state, in which the Croats wanted their own, while the Serbs preferred to stay in the federation. The revival of the Great Serbia, with the rise of Serbian ultra-nationalism was also named as one of the key factor. Yet general, elite-based explanations are the largest part of Anderson’s conclusions, such as the claim of ‘unfortunate leadership’, ‘quarrelsome leaders’ etc. Last, but hardly the least, Anderson delegates some of the claim to Germany as well, for the support it gave to the ‘secessionist goals’ of Croatia and Slovenia.

	Bosnia and Herze- govina	Croatia	Macedonia	Monte- negro	Slovenia	Inner Serbia	Vojvodina	Kosovo
Montenegrins	0.3	0.2	0.2	61.9		1.3	2.2	1.4
Croats	18.1	74.6	0.2	1.1	3.2	0.5	5.2	0.1
Macedonians		0.1	64.8			0.5	1.0	0.1
Muslims	41.0	0.6	2.2	13.9	1.0	3.1	0.3	3.5
Slovenes		0.5			89.1	0.1	0.2	
Serbs	30.7	11.3	2.2	3.5	2.6	84.8	54.8	11.4
Hungarians		0.6			0.5	0.1	17.8	
Yugoslav	8.1	8.9	0.7	5.6	1.4	4.2	9.1	2.4
Others	1.7	2.5	7.8	0.6	1.3	2.7	8.6	2.4

**TABLE 3: FORMER YUGOSLAVIA**

Ethnic composition of republics and autonomous provinces 1991 (percentages)

Source: (Anderson 1995, 13)

Regarding the factor of the much disputed ‘ethnic clonflict’, much needs to be added. Reductionist views, perhaps most famously expounded in Robert Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghosts*, laid claim that ‘ancient ethnic hatred’ had been the root of most of the conflicts that took place in Yugoslavia in the 1990s (Kaplan 2005). This conclusion led to many a severe criticism from the scholarly community, most successfully perhaps by Maria Todorova, whose works reveals that much of this idea has been vastly overblown or misrepresented within the media and political elites of the ‘international community’. Yet the fact stood that one’s ethnic affiliation was – next to religion – one of the most important factors in ‘Otherizing’ the opposing side. One’s ethnicity (or, perhaps, one’s perception of ethnicity, being that ethnicity does not objectively exist) was often deciding whether the person lived or died. Yet there had been no ‘ancient ethnic hatreds’,

just a serious misperception of reality, in which ethnicity took a major role. Such is the explanation of ethnicity propounded by Geertz, in whose view, ethnicity is not primordial per se, but people perceive it as primordial. There exists absolutely no trace of ethnic ties, blood ties, or whatever term can be used to describe the idea that a certain group of people (nation, ethnies, ethnicity, race) bears special 'blood ties' or genetic code within itself. As genetics has proven,

'DNA studies do not indicate that separate classifiable subspecies (races) exist within modern humans. While different genes for physical traits such as skin and hair color can be identified between individuals, no consistent patterns of genes across the human genome exist to distinguish one race from another. There also is no genetic basis for divisions of human ethnicity. People who have lived in the same geographic region for many generations may have some alleles in common, but no allele will be found in all members of one population and in no members of any other. Indeed, it has been proven that there is more genetic variation within races than exists between them (*Human Genome Project*)' (Project 2013).

Or, in the words of Francis Collins of the Human Genome Research Institute, the social constructivist instance was stressed:

'it is essential to point out that "race" and "ethnicity" are terms without generally agreed-upon definitions. Both terms carry complex connotations that reflect culture, history, socioeconomics and political status, as well as a variably important connection to ancestral geographic origins. Well-intentioned statements over the past few years, some coming from geneticists, might lead one to believe there is no connection whatsoever between self-identified race or ethnicity and the frequency of particular genetic variants' (Collins 2004).

Despondently, Bideleux and Jeffries have noticed that the courses of history took a completely opposing side.

'All European peoples are mongrels and every western European state is a *mélange*, the product of many centuries of migration, 'folk wandering', acculturation and inter-marriage...The endeavor after the First World War to construct "national" states in the Balkans and East Central Europe on the basis of a pernicious ideal of "ethnic

homogeneity”, which racists rapidly translated into concepts of (and demands for) ethnic and racial “purity”, was based on a grotesque misreading of Western European history and too much reading of dangerous German “idealist” and/or romantic nationalist ideologies’ (Bideleux and Jeffries 1998, 324).

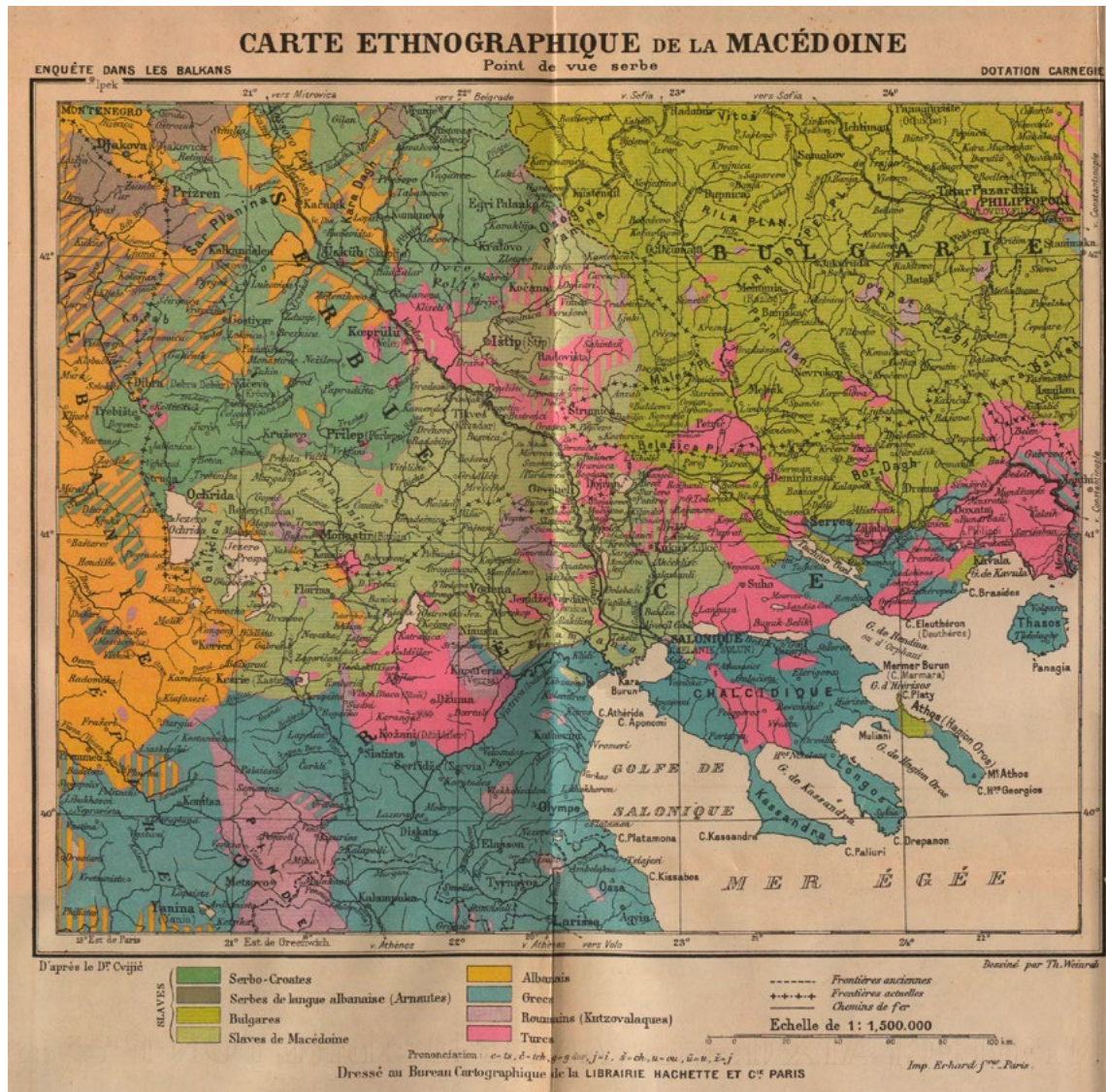
Lack of this knowledge has proven to be deadly in the course of history. As Richard Dawkins, Carl Sagan and Michio Kaku kept stressing, most people know nothing about how the world ‘functions’ and what are integral parts of it; most people do not know how the combustion engine in their car works, how inoculation prevents disease, what are the genetic attributes of the human being etc.

Bosnia has arguably suffered most because of the concept ethnicity and nation, in its case more than closely connected with the issue of religion. Division was, from a primordialist point of view, very clear – the Croats were of ‘Croat blood’ and Catholic religion; the Serbs ‘of Serb blood’ and Orthodox, while the Bosniaks/Muslims were of ‘Bosniak blood’ and Muslim in faith. Bosniaks were often treated as ‘Serbs of Muslim faith’ or even ‘Croats of Muslim faith’, as noticed by Hladký (Hladký 2005, 179). The plain weirdness of the concept of ethnicity was lucidly noticed by Hladký, who wrote about the situation in a Bosnian family, the Spaho family. Namely, one of the brothers of Mehmed Spaho, the later Bosnian *reis-ul-ulema*, Fehim Spaho, considered himself to be a Croat, while the second brother, Mustafa Spaho, claimed he was a Serb. Dr Mehmed Spaho considered himself to be a Yugoslav. Three brothers – three ethnicities (Hladký 2005, 180).

The following two maps illustrate ethnicity in its construct form in the Balkans. While Macedonians were ‘Southern Serbs’ in Serbia, they were also considered to be ‘Western Macedonians’ by Bulgaria:<sup>21</sup>

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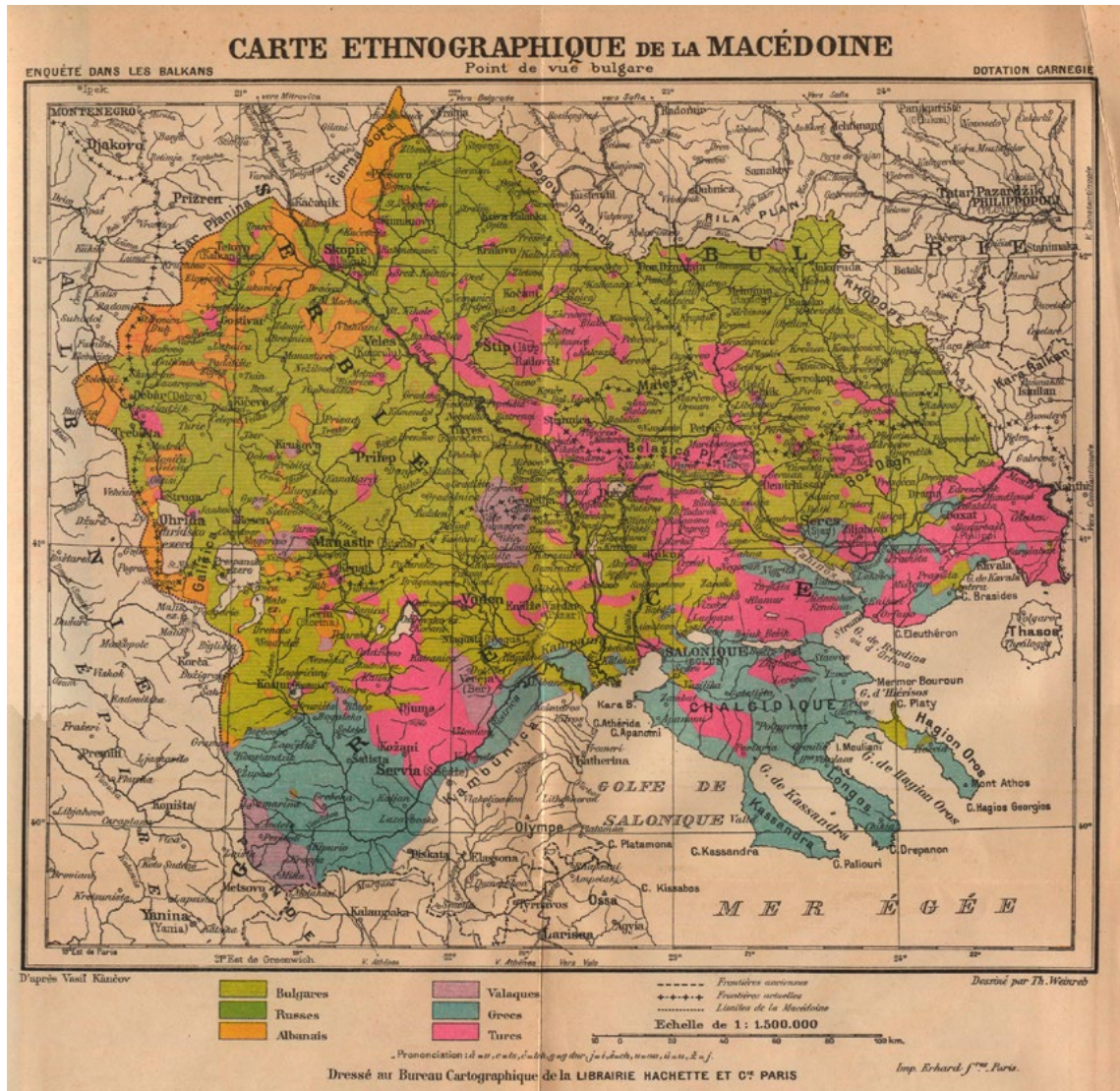
21 Most of such discourse (and points of view) stem from the nationalist side(s), and are not limited only to Macedonia. For instance, the leader of the Serb extreme nationalist party, the *Srpska Radikalna Stranka* (Serb Radical Party), Vojislav Šešelj, called the ‘Muslims of Bosnia (...) in fact Islamicized Serbs, and part of the population of so-called Croats consists in fact of Catholic Serbs’. In: (Noel 1994)



# ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP OF MACEDONIA FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE SERBS.

Map from "Report of the International Commission To Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars" 1914.





# ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP OF MACEDONIA FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE BULGARIANS.

Map from "Report of the International Commission To Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars" 1914.

From the Bulgarian point of view, Macedonia was riddled by Bulgarians, while from the Serbian point of view, most of the population were Serbs, some of them even ‘of the Albanian tongue’ (Fr. *Serbes de langue albanaise*). As Novica Veljanovski wrote, Macedonians were considered to be Southern Serbs (Veljanovski 2006, 315, 317). Ethnicity is *perceived, seen and used*. It is a construct in its entirety, same as *race* or *nationality*.

Going back to the issue of Yugoslavia, we have seen that many a factor played a role. Quantifying or juxtaposing them is, sadly, impossible. I have spent page after page in locating factors other than those described in this chapter, such as the general attitude towards sexuality, or even climate, which could only have helped exacerbate the conflict. Finding a single cause (or even a collection) that could be exactly identified as the root of all problems would not be possible.

While Czechoslovakia broke gently apart, its problems regarding the issue of the split ended with the end of the country itself. After Slovenia left, Yugoslavia was being diminished from year to year, as part by part left, leaving the state run from Belgrade as its center. From this center did all the other irredenta secede. In 2008, the final part broke away, Kosovo, sprouting yet another series of violent conflicts, though never a full-out, open civil war. Politics condoned by the politicians in the late eighties and early nineties were seen anew, primarily in the ideology of the Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica, who organized a huge meeting in the center of Belgrade after Kosovo ‘declared unilateral independence’ with the parole ‘Kosovo is Serbia’ (Ser-Cro. ‘Kosovo je Srbija’). Violence erupted immediately as hordes of young, undereducated, undersexed males broke into the American Embassy (one of the perpetrators died), as well as destroying Belgrade’s infrastructure.

### THE KOSOVO ISSUE

The Kosovo question within the breakup of Yugoslavia is more or less unprecedented, and in need of some more space. At the November 2011 conference ‘Debating the end of

Yugoslavia’ at the Karl-Franzens University in Graz, Austria, many politicians and academicians gave a very unifying statement that the problem of Kosovo was perhaps one of the main trigger events that has led to the ultimate dissolution of Yugoslavia.<sup>22</sup> The Czech historian Václav Štěpánek devoted a huge monograph to the issue, out of similar reasons, titled *Jugoslávie – Srbsko – Kosovo* (Štěpánek 2011).

In a relatively short, but detailed and information-saturated essay *Contemporary History of Kosovo* (Ser-Cro. ‘Savremena istorija Kosova’), written in 2011 by Damjan Pavlica, much information is revealed (Pavlica 2011). Namely, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kosovo was a part of the Ottoman Empire. Serbia was at that time what is today known as Šumadija, with Belgrade as its capitol. It has existed in such a state since the two Serbian Uprisings during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in which it broke free from the Ottoman Empire.

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22 <<http://yugoslaviainconference.wordpress.com/>>





Map from "Stanford's Compendium of Geography and Travel: Europe" Volume 1, 1899.

The diplomacy of the Kingdom of Serbia continuously tried to represent Albanians on Kosovo as savages, as ‘usurpers’ of the medieval state of Serbia. Serbia was thought to have an ancient ‘right’ to the territory of Kosovo, since it used to be an integral part of the state of Raška, the forerunner to today’s Serbia, over than half a millennium ago. In short, the same rhetorics was used over Kosovo a century ago as it is today, indicating the slow (if existing) change in Serb-based policies towards this region, now a state. Kosovo, however, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was in the center of the Albanian national movement, the one that also sought independence from the Ottoman Empire. In 1912, led by Isa Boljetinac, Hasan Priština, Bajram Curi and others, an Albanian uprising was staged in Kosovo, ending the rule of the Young Turk rule and securing independence. The fact that the Turkish Porta recognized an independent Albania served only to inflame other neighbouring countries – Serbia first of all – who had their own claims to the territory of Kosovo. As the Serb and Montenegrin armies invaded the Ottoman state in 1912, the Balkan wars were fully joined. By 1913, those armies won over Sandžak, Macedonia, Kosovo, and a part of Albania as well. As Pavlica notices,

‘when the wars ended, the Kosovo and Metohija areas were given to the Serbs and Montenegrins; the Serb historiography called this liberation, the Albanians called it occupation. From the point of view of political science, the right word is annexation as the joining of Kosovo has been carried out without the decision to do so passed by the people’s representatives and without the referendum of the citizens’ (Pavlica 2011).

What followed was Serb repression, as a sort of ‘vengeance’ for the year 1389, that ‘somehow magically got transferred from the Turks to the Albanians’ (Pavlica 2011). In essence, Kosovo had become a Serb colony, with a military rule in which the Albanians were discriminated and severely mistreated. Until 1940, some 60,000 Serb colonists were led to Kosovo in order to change its ethnic picture. New villages were created, such as Kosovo Polje, Obilić, Hercegovu, Orlović, Devet Jugovića, Lazarevo, Svračak, Novo Rujce,

Staro Gracko and many others. According to the Priština Institute of History, it was not only that Serbs had colonized Kosovo, but the domestic Albanian populace was transferred from Kosovo to Turkey. From 1919 to 1941, some 255,878 persons were relocated from Yugoslavia to Turkey, out of which a staggering 215,412 were of Albanian origin (Pavlica 2011). From those days onward, Kosovo was a ping-pong ball of ‘ethnic vengeance’ and retribution from both the Serb and the Albanian side, all the way up to today. In 1937, the Serb academician, Vaso Čubrilović, presented a manual of ethnic cleansing of Albanians, here quoted from Ante Beljo’s work:

‘The problem of the Albanians in our national and state life did not arise yesterday. It played a major role in our life in the Middle Ages, but its importance became decisive by the end of the 17th century, at the time when the masses of the Serbian people were displaced northwards from their former ancestral territories of Raska and were supplanted by the Albanian highlanders. Gradually the latter came down from their mountains to the fertile plains of Metohija and Kosovo. Penetrating to the north, they spread in the direction of Southern and Western Morava and, crossing the Sar Mountain descended toward Polog and thence, in the direction of the Vardar. In this way, by the 19th century, the Albanian triangle was formed, a wedge which based on its Debar-Rogozna axis in its ethnic hinterland, penetrated as far into our territories as Nis and separated our ancient territories of Raska from Macedonia and the Vardar Valley. This Albanian wedge inhabited by the anarchist Albanian element hampered any strong cultural, educational and economic connection between our northern and southern territories in the 19th century. This was the main reason why Serbia was unstable, until 1873, when it managed to establish and maintain continuous links with Macedonia, through Vranje and the Black Mountain of Skopje, to exercise the cultural and political influence on the Vardar Valley that was anticipated because of the favorable geographical and transportation links and the historical traditions in those regions. Although the Bulgarians began their state life later than the Serbs, at first they had greater success. This explains why there are permanent settlements of southern Slavs from Vidin in the

north to Ohrid in the south. Serbia began to cut pieces off this Albanian wedge as early as the first uprising, by expelling the northernmost Albanian inhabitants from Jagodina. From 1918 onwards it was the task of our present state to destroy the remainder of the Albanian triangle' (Beljo 1993).

World War II allowed the Albanian sides to exact 'vengeance' on the Serbs after some Albanians were used for the formation of Quisling forces. It was now the Serbs' prerogative to face discrimination and ethnic cleansing. All the way until the 1970s, Serbs were mostly molested in Kosovo, and some 57,000 of them had to leave by that time (Pavlica 2011). After the death of Tito, in the 1980s, strong anti-Albanian campaigns were perpetrated by the Yugoslav government, strongly supported by the Church and the priest Atanasije Jefić. There was a campaign claiming that the Albanian population was committing genocide over the Serbs. With the rise of Slobodan Milošević, who used the Kosovo issue to present himself very successfully as a protector of Kosovar Serbs from 1987 onwards, Kosovo's high degree of autonomy (received in 1974) was revoked, igniting the anger of the Albanian population. In 1989, Milošević developed the 'Kosovo rhetorics', the heart of which was the already mentioned parole ('Kosovo is the heart of Serbia'), still used in nationalist cliques in Serbia. Matija Bećković, a writer and prominent figure in Serbia known for his extreme nationalism, wrote in 1989, adding fuel to the fire:

'On the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, we have to announce that Kosovo is Serbian and that this fact depends on neither Albanian natality nor Serbian mortality. There is so much Serbian blood and so many sacred relics in Kosovo that Kosovo will remain Serbian land, even if not a single Serb remains there' (Bećković 1989).

This led to the development of the terrorist organization Kosovo Liberation Army, whose leaders were on the tops of Interpol lists, connected to severe crimes, drug and human trafficking. By 1996, the chaos was utter; Kosovo and Serbia were bombed by NATO, and by 2008, Kosovo declared independence, while what was left of Yugoslavia (that is, Serbia), got even smaller. Up to this day, the issue of Kosovo and Serbia remain

the pivotal problem of security in the Balkans, having a severe impact on the policies being led, as well as on the quality of life in Serbia, Kosovo and their satellites.

The almost singular instance of differentiation on Kosovo was ethnicity, i.e. nationality based on the idea of ethnicity, both proven by research to be social constructs. While Robert Kaplan spoke about ‘ancient ethnic hatreds’, and Todorova corrected him, saying that there were none, that the very Balkans themselves have been a construct, a third, more lucid approach can be followed. There were no ancient ethnic hatreds between Serbs and Albanians on Kosovo. But there was – and still is – the idea of ethnicity, strengthened by religion and those in power, that creates conflict, fueled by the discourses and policies of the elites. It is safe to say that without the idea, the concept of ethnicity (or nationality), the fate of Kosovo (as much as the fate of Yugoslavia *an generale*) would have been much more different, and much less bloody.

Why the Kosovo issue keeps being of such significance has been examined by more than a few academicians. The core of the problem lies in the much debated and plentifully analyzed myth of Kosovo. According to Mihaljčić, the Kosovo myth is a construct that consists of ideas, images and purposes that revolve around the Battle of the Kosovo Field on 28 June 1389, where the forces of the Ottoman Turks joined in battle with the Christian armies under the banner of one Lazar Hrebeljanović, a Serb knez (Mihaljčić 1989). Yet ‘the importance of the battle thus lies much less in the historical facts comprising and surrounding it than in the manner in which it has subsequently been interpreted throughout the centuries up to the present day’ (Bieber 2002, 97). According to Reinard Lauer, this myth was made an ‘instrument of fascist policy of violence and expansion’ (Lauer 1995).

As Bieber elucidates, ‘according to the myth, on the eve of the battle, Knez Lazar was offered the choice between establishing either a heavenly or an earthly kingdom. Lazar chose the former, which prevented his victory the following day but ensured the creation of a perpetual heavenly realm for the Serbian people’ (Bieber 2002). In essence, the

Kosovo myth entailed celebrating a defeat that has been turned into a ‘spiritual victory’ for the Serb, that is, the Christian side. Thus,

‘the rich and diverse stories surrounding it have lent themselves peculiarly well to explain, contextualize and justify a multitude of developments since the emergence of the Serbian national movement in the early nineteenth century. It was only most recently, for example, that the battle was ever present during the 1998–9 conflict in Kosovo when its disproportionate prominence in Serbian political discourse misled many casual observers to conclude that the contemporary ethnic cleansing of Albanians by the Serbian army and police was a continuation of an ancient tribal conflict dating back to 1389 or even earlier’ (Bieber 2002, 96).

In the early eighties, this myth was politicized and instrumentalized by the ruling elite, at first by the Communist party and Slobodan Milošević,<sup>23</sup> later by the Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica, and nowadays by many a clerofascist organization (Obraz, Dveri Srpske, Naši 1389 etc). It was then used by national-minded writers and historians in megalomaniacal claims:

‘In 1986 in a controversial book published by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Dimitrije Bogdanović attributed unparalleled historical significance to the battle of Kosovo as “one of the greatest armed confrontations in Europe”, which he considered not “a myth, but a historical idea which helps a nation to forge a link with its real historical past”’ (Bieber 2002, 100).

At the sexcentenary of the Battle, in 1989, Slobodan Milošević used the power of the Kosovo myth to fortify himself among his voters:

‘Long live the eternal remembrance of the heroism in Kosovo!  
Long live Serbia!

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23 This could arguably be a great illustration of the transition from Communism to nationalism, where we see a Communist party propagating what will later become the core of the Serb national ideology. A significant number of Communists became nationalists ‘overnight’ during the nineties, entering hateful discourses about the misdeeds of Communism.



Long live Yugoslavia!

Long live peace and brotherhood between the people!' (Milošević 1990, 135)

Very soon, the myth of Kosovo became ubiquitous in public discourse in Serbia, in what Čolović dubbed the 'metaphysical enigma of Kosovo' (Čolović 2016, 373) and

'the opposition parties that emerged in 1990 frequently appropriated the myth of the Kosovo battle as they propagated political programmes just as firmly rooted in Serbian national traditions as that of Milošević. Several leaders of the national opposition, for example, evoked the myth in 1991 by pledging an oath to the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch Pavle in the same manner as the Serbian nobility had to Knez Lazar on the eve of the Kosovo battle' (Bieber 2002, 103).

When the Serb Orthodox Church appropriated the myth, one can say that the circle was complete – almost all policy, internal and external, was being steered by mythology. It is wise to note what Florian Bieber wrote in 2002, a sentiment that largely coincides with the Namierian/Fischerian approach, that 'the myth of course is not an independent political agent with a life of its own; rather it is animated by contemporary political actors who in using it through these years have reinforced two powerful premises of Serbian nationalism' (Bieber 2002, 106).

The question, in the end, remains: has Yugoslavia finished with its breakup? Will another region leave Serbia? Sandžak and Vojvodina immediately come to mind to experts on the area, yet there are scant reasons to believe these two regions will secede. As an article in the *Economist* from 2009 claims, though, 'Serbian nationalists are outraged over a new autonomy statute for Vojvodina, their northern province. Their country has in effect been shrinking for two decades, and this may be the thin end of a wedge leading to Vojvodina's independence' (*Economist* 2009). Nonetheless, no serious secession movements have come forth.

History never stops, and further developments are to be seen. Whether anything can be done in order to prevent strife, conflict and misery rests solely on the shoulders of academicians, who can examine history in order to better the future. For the time being,



most former Yugoslav states are holding the worst positions in Europe when it comes to economic development, quality of life and human rights, after Belarus. A CIA examination has recently shown – to present only the figures for Serbia, for example – that this country boasts over a million illiterate people, last on the list by its export of goods, last on the list of average salaries, at the top of the lists when it comes to inflation (comparable to African states), and that its unemployment rates are among the highest in the world. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Macedonia, are also similarly ranked, according to the same source. Former Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, shows unimaginably better figures, from better economical development (Vintrová 2008) to better average salaries, not even to mention the general standard of living.

## CHAPTER X

# INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

*It ain't over 'till the fat lady sings.*

– AMERICAN PROVERB

However one might feel toward them, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia failed. What is more, while it can be said that Czechoslovakia simply failed, Yugoslavia's failure was incredibly brutal and atrocious: it failed miserably. What is worse, its failure still reverberates through the decades, and the same instances that have led to the dismal breakup still influence the peoples and states in the region. Some of the successor states have fared better than others, such as the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia. Nonetheless, the Czech Republic, for instance, has dwindled from Vaclav Havel as a state leader to a rather bizzare figure of Miloš Zeman. In former Yugoslav states, with the exception of Slovenia, the cultural, political, economical and social situation is atrocious, as Macedonia has suffered under Nikola Gruevski for years, Milo Đukanović has been in power in Montenegro for over a quarter of a century, Croatia and Bosnia have not seen much progress since their independence, while Serbia is run by Milošević's former Minister of Information, who has led the country into utter poverty and despair. Personal feelings and subjectivity have been thwarting analyses of these two sociopolitical entities for decades, not even to mention academic lethargy, sheer ignorance on the side of the lay populace, and evading fact.

Led by the interdisciplinary history approach stemming from the 'epistemological pathos' of the older *Annales* school and the younger ESF team approach, the approach to history I have dubbed *polypeitharchic* (as to separate from less successful attempts of

interdisciplinary research) has concentrated on the codes of difference and similarity between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in order to find those relevant societal properties, memes and elements of difference that have been important – more or less – in the formation and dissolution of these two states. It can be said that there were substantial differences – objective (attitudes towards sexuality, for instance) or imposed (artificial, such as overemphasized linguistic differences) – between the two states. The properties and differences that have played a role are the following:

- the influence of powerful, almost Nitzschean individuals, independent from our ethical view of them (the Namierian approach);
- the influence of the elites (the approach of Fritz Fischer);
- the controversial, yet existing difference in the climates;
- the varying attitudes towards sexuality;
- superimposed, artificial creation of linguistic differences;
- a diverging set of values (democratic, inclusive and pro-European in Czechoslovakia, nationalist, exclusive in Yugoslavia, Slovenia excluded);
- the small geopolitical power and influence of all the states debated, indicating that more powerful geopolitical entities (the ‘Great Powers’ or the ‘international community’) exert strong influence,<sup>24</sup>
- the use of dangerous constructs such as ethnicity and nationality by the elite and the media, and
- a significant difference in religious properties in diverging memplexes.

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24 Misha Glenny has lucidly noticed how the former designation ‘Great Powers’ grew to be replaced by the term ‘international community’ [Glenny 2012]. Sonia Lucarelli has explained the term ‘international community’ to be ‘nebulous’ [Lucarelli 2000]. And indeed, if we simply put all the external geopolitical factors under the umbrella of the ‘international community’ term, we loose track of all detail. Which states exactly are we talking about? Is it only their governments we are referring to? Are those only states or international bodies such as NATO? The questions could go further and further.

Needless to say yet useful to mention, these are only *some* of the instances that have contributed to the historical development as we know it. The methodology developed can allow other researchers to expand on the topic. As such, polypeitharchic history is an ultimately unending endeavor.

Some of the named societal instances were simply properties, some of them were properties that *created* difference. All of them had an impact on the creation and end of two states, some larger, some smaller, yet all of them made their impact *together*. The nature of social science research, sadly, does not allow us to *quantify* which of the properties had the strongest impact, but it is important not to ignore those properties that have arguably made the least impact, as non-important. After all, *Chaos theory* – a theory discussed not only in mathematics, but philosophy, biology and even history as well – tells us that only a small change, a small effect can drastically alter the course of events. As John Lewis Gaddis wrote, ‘maybe Napoleon’s underwear was itchy on the day of Waterloo, and the great man’s discomfort distracted him from the proper management of the battle. We’re not likely to know this, though, because it’s not the sort of thing that would have made its way into the written records’ (Gaddis 2002, 103). Or, bluntly said, of *some* of the factors we shall definitely never know. Yet however grim both the analysis and conclusion of this work may sound (having in mind that both Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia failed, and having in mind all the societal problems we have depicted), there is no need to despair. Realizing and understanding a set of mistakes can only help potential futures. Throughout the millennia, Europe has been rearranged and reassembled by breakups of old and creations of new states. It would be sheer historical ignorance to surmise that Europe is not going to change further in the future, near or far. Understanding why some states had longer lives and some shorter is a huge step in achieving a broader historical overview in births and deaths of states, kingdoms and tzardoms. Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were houses of mud, the latter having been built on a landslide area. Irrational, infantile romanticist ideologies were godfathers to the Hobsbawmian ‘shotgun marriages’. Not only were nonsensical

ideologies godfathers to a dysfunctional marriage, however, but the very core of the concepts these ideologies stem from are faulty and illogical. Building a community out of imaginary ones (Anderson on nationality) and out of products of the mind (Geary's depiction of ethnicity), as well as ignoring evolutionary byproducts (Guthrie, Dawkins, Alcock, Kirkpatrick, Buss and others on religion) and inventing languages (Kordić, Gröschel, Altermatt, Czerwiński and many more) is bound to fail unless a real, existing and tangible *cohesion factor* is brought into play. This cohesive factor can be any out of those seen in the United States of America or the European Union. Both have not completely removed state sovereignty and independence from the states these pan-national entities comprise, though it is difficult to make prognoses with the peculiar figure of the failed entrepreneur and reality TV star, Donald Trump, as the leader of what was once (and now increasingly sarcastically) known as the 'Free World'. The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia and others technically *disappeared* when Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were formed. The union was meant to be more stable and important than its parts, and this was the core error. The irrational building blocks of nation, religion and ethnicity were holding the houses of mud together. Labeling people according to them is only a means to an end, and that end is never good.

'There are two obvious problems with using labels without being concerned for whether they really map social groups in the world. One is what might be called the implicit teleology of ascriptive difference. It is often too easy for labels to masquerade as causes. To declare a conflict "ethnic," say, usually rests on a set of assumptions about the roots of the conflict and the unusual levels of violence said to characterize it. But emphasizing social identities can blind researchers to the mechanisms that are at work in shaping them, often in the middle of violence itself. Violence raises the stakes of defection by presenting both perpetrators and victims as threatened; it makes it more difficult to move across interidentity boundaries ... Violence does not always make identity, of course, but it can certainly push a particular identity to the top of one's repertoire. Another problem is that the way participants themselves label a conflict is often an

essential part of the contentious event, not analytically (or even chronologically) prior to it. Acquiring the power to define a hegemonic discourse about a conflict is a goal self-consciously pursued by belligerents. The aim is, in part, to convince outsiders of the rightness of one's own cause and the perfidy of others, to demonstrate that the opposite side is composed only of ethnic militants, fanatical hardliners, terrorists, separatists, and so on. But it is also to control the entire vocabulary that observers and participants use when they speak about the origins of the dispute, the identities of the belligerents, and what might count as a legitimate form of conflict termination. Labeling, in other words, is a political act' (King 2004, 74).

And indeed, even if the majority *wishes* to be labeled by national, ethnic and similar tags, severe dangers lurk behind such a line of thought, and the rise of the Right Wing and the reemerging of vicious identity politics and populism within the European Union gives us valid cause of concern. This is where I need to draw heavily on Sir Lewis Namier's *individualistic* historiography approach, which I shall dub to arguably be his most important contribution to history, historiography and methodology of history. In Namier's view, it is the *individual* that shapes the course of history. His individual is almost Nietzschean in his or her properties, it is a powerful, competent individual who possesses intelligence, strength and competences that no ordinary woman or man does. Let me immediately stress that this by no means includes or imposes an *ethical* value in it – we did not put judgment or value in the statement. The powerful individual can be judged to be a vile war criminal, a man deemed to have pushed iniquity to legendary levels (such as Adolf Hitler) or a good, benevolent man who has contributed to the development of civilization (Albert Einstein, for instance). Both of these figures have had *immense* impact on the development of the world as we know it, and they are both entirely *unique*. When we take a broader look back to the history (or histories) of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, we see similar figures sitting on both sides of the black and white fence of ethics, however debatable its position might be: T. G. Masaryk, Edward Beneš, Václav Klaus, Vladimír Mečiar, Josip Broz Tito, Zoran

Đinđić, Vuk Stefanović-Karadžić, P. P. Njegoš II, Slobodan Milošević, Franjo Tuđman, and more. The ideas and ideologies, strengths and competences (but primarily work and *effort*) of these *individuals* have shaped the course of history. As Marc Bloch stated in his *The historian's craft*, history is not a science about the past, but about *people* (Bloch 1962), something we cannot allow ourselves to forget. Though many of them, for instance, *used* ideologies that negate individualism and personal identity (nationalism, ethnocentrism, populism etc), they have been individuals themselves, and putting them down to social groups such as nations and ethnicities negates their importance and influence. As Evans explained,

‘one of the very great drawbacks of generalizing social-science history (...) was its virtual elimination of the individual human being in favour of anonymous groups and trends. To reduce every human being to a statistic, social type, or the mouthpiece of a collective discourse is to do violence to the complexity of human nature, social circumstance and cultural life’ (Evans 1999, 189).

After all, even in early anthropology, Benedict (1935) explored the way in which individuals are shaped by their society, while at the same time reconstructing and shaping society itself.

The conclusions I gave above have been reached by the use of *polypeitharchic history*, the beginnings of a method that can be used in divulging broader societal developments. It is safe to say that the analytical mode of thought is already a thing of the past, at least used without its counterpart, synthesis. Hard sciences, social sciences and the humanities are slowly but certainly moving towards a broad, *synthetic* approach, the only instance of which are *interdisciplinary studies*. Technically, any discipline can be used in the polypeitharchic manner, and this monograph took history as the prime discipline. History, with its broad scope of interest, is a natural bridge between disciplines. I heartily encourage experts in other fields to take their own discipline of preference as a starting point for polypeitharchic research.



This final chapter I have dubbed ‘Instead of a conclusion’, although one might have expected a more typical finale. This I chose due to the fact that history is in the process of being made at all times, in all moments; in the moment of writing this as well as in the moment of printing it, in the moment of it being read by anyone, at any time. There have been monographs and monographs, article after article, in which the topic of the creation and breakup of either Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia have been tackled from different points of view and approaches, with other conclusions, and more information. The main idea behind this volume is to ‘open up’ a mode of historical research – polypeitharchic history – and contribute to further analyses and syntheses as a commencement of an interdisciplinary research methodology.

People tend to have the proclivity to thinking that history ends with them, and many a historian tends to draw wrapped up conclusions to ongoing issues. Not only historians succumb to this type of extreme egotism though – the ‘great’ Hegel thought that all philosophy was there to lead towards him and his thought, until Karl Popper debunked him as a politically driven ‘charlatan’. When it comes to history, though, we have the now famous idea of the ‘end of history’, expounded by the conservative political thinker, Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama 1989). Fukuyama, namely, was of the opinion that society has reached its pinnacle when it comes to organizing the state and the ways in which geopolitical issues are solved. Though the human civilization barely started existing (we only have a couple of thousands of years of history behind us, almost nothing when compared to geological time), though the Western world only recently started implementing the ideas of human rights on a wider scale, though we only recently developed a more or less functioning democracy, Fukuyama thinks we have reached our pinnacle. Societies and civilizations have been changing and dying away for thousands of years, and with the exponential growth of technology, one could only expect even more rapid change and growth in the future. That did not bother Fukuyama to put a stop to history though. We are in Diakonov’s *eight phase* of historical development (*The paths of history*), and the ninth, tenth and so on shall most certainly come, even much earlier than

we expect. After all, as Diakonov observed, each subsequent phase is shorter than the previous one (Diakonov 1999, 9). To the contrary to Fukuyama, Diakonov tells us how ‘there is no doubt that the historical process shows symptoms of historical acceleration’ (Diakonov 1999, 336).

We shall put no such stop to human development, however. We shall insist on no final conclusions and worldwide solutions. We shall not offer to build a whole bridge, even though we might offer a huge stone for one’s foundation. This foundation has to be built on solid, ground, a ground based on fact and lucid analysis. The quagmires of nations, ethnicities and religions are not much better than landslide areas for such an architectural academic project. However, not all parts of the world are equally developed, and societies that have not reached even the seventh phase of historical development,

‘[h]ence the stubborn quest for “ours”, for national specificity; hence the separatist movements – Bretons and Corsicans in France, Flemings in Belgium, Catalans and Basques in Spain, Croats, Slovenians, Macedonians, Muslim Bosniaks, Albanians in Yugoslavia, the Welsh and the Scots in the United Kingdom, and even the Saams (Lapps) in Norway’ (Diakonov 1999, 332).

Disregarding ‘national specificities’ is an important step towards analyzing historical instances with less bias, and a step towards the next phase of history, whatever it may carry within itself. Tackling contemporary populism, as well as Krastev’s ‘authoritarianism 2.0’ is such as well (Krastev 2010, 18).

I will finish with Igor Diakonov’s words, still lucidly ringing from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reminding how ‘the reader should not forget that each line (in history) stands for oceans of blood and almost inconceivable suffering. And I cannot promise anything different from the future’ (Diakonov 1999, 338).

## SOURCES

### LIST OF MAPS

- Czechoslovakia 1918, Source: University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- Yugoslavia, 1991, Source: University of Texas, Austin
- Map of European languages, Source: Pine Crest College
- A map of Serbo-Croatian dialects, Source: University of Pennsylvania
- Percentages of religiosity within the EU, Source: The European Citizenship projectMap from “Stanford’s Compendium of Geography and Travel: Europe” Volume 1, 1899Carte Ethnographique de la Macedoine: Point de vue bulgare  
[Ethnographic map of Macedonia from the point of view of the Bulgarians]. Map from “Report of the International Commission To Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars” 1914.
- Carte Ethnographique de la Macedoine: Point de vue serbe  
[Ethnographic map of Macedonia from the point of view of the Serbs]. Map from “Report of the International Commission To Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars” 1914.

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## LIST OF TABLES

- Polypeitharchic History Method / Selection Table
- Krejčí (2005): Views on the acceptability of methods of dissolution of the federation (p. 322) Data given in percent (%).
- Bútorá, M, Bútorová. Z. 1993: Neznositelná ľahkosť rozchodu. In: Kipke, R, Vodička, K.: Rozloučení s Československem, Český spisovatel, Praha, s. 119 – 150.
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- Table 3: Former Yugoslavia, Ethnic composition of republics and autonomous provinces 1991 (Percentages) Source: Anderson, D. (1995). The Collapse of Yugoslavia: Background and Summary, Australian Foreign Defence and Trade Group Research Paper No. 14, Department of the Parliamentary Library, p. 13.

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