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‘Playing Hapsburg:’ The Hapsburg Monarchy and The post-Yugoslav Croatian Society

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Abstract:

One of the more interesting forms of memory of the Hapsburg past, one can find in Croatia. This small European state, to borrow Benedict Anderson’s words, started to “reimagine” itself in the 1990s and reclaim its “Western” European heritage lost following admissions, first, into the South Slav Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and then authoritarian socialist state in the aftermath of World War II. Not surprising, given that many of Eastern European nations, formerly part of the Soviet sphere of influence, started to fabricate their own past and utilize nationalism as a tool of not only awakening national consciousness necessary to delegitimize communist rule but also desire to purify their nations and bring them home—to Europe, to West—where they believed they truly and historical belonged. What this article thus will attempt to do is to provide an objective analysis of how Croatian political elites, but also ordinary people, used the heritage of the Hapsburg past to narrow down the 1990s bloody divorce to binary terms—they vs. us, west vs. east, and civilized vs. uncivilized—and, in a sense, announce to the world that they should have never been put under one South Slav roof in the first place. But, most importantly, how the monarchy continued to be invoked, remembered, and preserved in the moments of national upheaval way past the 1990s. The analysis of the dominant ideology of the 1990s in conjunction with four case studies is in the center of this argument.

Keywords: Memory, Nationalism, Central Europe; Hapsburg Monarchy, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Slobodan Milosevic, Franjo Tudjman

On October 17, 1990, the Zagreb’s main square was packed with people waving Croatian flags and casually singing patriotic songs, *budnice*, many of which were written in the 1830s and 1840s, when the whole European continent was rising against their rulers, demanding rights and liberties for their citizenry, and forming national consciousness. The sound of the bells of Zagreb Cathedral, which is barely a block away from the square, could be heard. In the distance, a slow procession accompanying a truck carrying a statue of a man riding a horse with a sword in his hand could be seen. Once this solemn procession arrived closer to the cathedral, tens of thousands of spectators started to sing in one voice “Holy mother, Queen of Croats” (Croatian “Rajska Djevo, Kraljice Hrvata”), a song that could be characterized as unofficial Croatian anthem, such as “America the Beautiful” in America, “Rule Britannia” in the United Kingdom, or “Waltzing Matilda” in Australia. Loud and long applause followed the song. And, once the procession arrived at the square, the band playing Croatian folk music, *taburasi*, started to sing

“Rise up, governor” (Croatian “Ustani, bane”), a song that was banned during Socialist Yugoslavia. The man these people were welcoming was neither a king who ruled over a vast empire nor a patron saint. Instead, it was Joseph (Josip) Jelacic, a Croatian nobleman who was a governor of Croatia, *ban*, in the nineteenth century and a general in the service of the Hapsburg monarchy who helped Austrians to crush the Hungarian uprising in 1848. The statue removed following the establishment of the communist regime in 1945, was coming back to a spot where it stood during the monarchy. But this time, the Jelacic’s sword would not point toward Hungary, as it did before.

In the early 1990s, following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the Croatian society started to question its position in Yugoslavia while at the same time old memories and desires for the free and independent Croatian state began to reemerge in the minds of both of those who were imprisoned during the previous calls for reform within the Yugoslav state in the 1960s and 1970s and those who disagreed with the direction this multinational state took following Marshall Josip Broz Tito’s death in 1980. These former communists, still party ideologues but not willing to subdue to the demands of the leader of Serbian communists Slobodan Milosevic, gradually dismantled the party while simultaneously leading a process of national awakening with a zeal of reimagining community spirit and redefining what it meant to be a citizen, a member of the Croatian nation. Concepts such as multi-ethnic brotherhood and unity had to be replaced with a notion of individuality, ethnic and cultural distinction, or rather uniqueness. The symbols forbidden and removed from the official public memory during the communist rule such as Croatian tricolor or coat of arms, together with political institutions such as parliament, *Sabor*, had to be reinstated. But most importantly, language, a fundamental determinant of national belonging, had to be redefined in order to remove a perception of linguistic similarity between Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, and even Slovene languages. The way to do it was to capitalize on strong cultural bonds and the legacy of the Hapsburg monarchy, from architecture to bureaucracy. And, especially utilize memory of the monarchy preserved within individual families and passed from generation to generation as a tool of internally, psychologically rejecting dominant tradition and official history following the collapse of the monarchy, and especially with the arrival of the communist regime.

Since the collapse of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the Yugoslav wars that followed, historiography, both Balkan and Western, has engaged in long discussions of the origins of the conflict and analysis whether the Yugoslav state was prone to dissolution from the beginning. Of course, there were numerous monographs and articles written during the years of the South Slav state on topics ranging from how to reform this multinational

country to questions of its legitimacy.¹ But these works are mostly associated with the dissident circles and often lack impartiality that is the most crucial ingredient of studying history.

However, the question of objectivity remains to be a huge obstacle in analyzing any existent literature on Yugoslavia or creation of national identity in the 1990s in states like Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Bosnia. Today, the Balkan historiography is ethnically divided. Serbian historians almost unanimously accuse Croats--and other former Yugoslav nationalities as well-- of the dissolution of the federation while the Croatians with the same zeal accuse Serbs of creating an environment of ethnic discrimination and hatred within the Yugoslav state which resulted in bloody war and suffering. This *J'Accuse* approach to history limits ability to find points of agreement that are necessary for understanding developments of the 1990s and uncovering truth from lies, what really happened from myths. This discussion gets even more hostile when one ponders into questions of belonging, the memory of, and nostalgia for the former union of the South Slav states. The nationalistic narratives present during the Yugoslav wars suddenly reemerge. That is why Western literature is important. It provides the ability to serve as a "check and balance" to the Balkan historiography.

The other problem one uncovers with the secondary literature on Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav states is the disinterest in understanding what role memory plays in studying history and how it might affect the society or be used in the process, to borrow Benedict Anderson's words, of creating an "imagined community."² There is a wide literature available on the concept of memory, both in public and private spheres, museums and statues, cemeteries, rituals, and commemorations. But one can hardly find any historian, both Western and Balkan, addressing developments in Yugoslavia by utilizing these theories. Understandably, these topics are more complex and less attractive to a wider readership, especially to one that is still trying to cope with many consequences of the 1990s conflict, than the stories of the Balkan conflict and diplomatic settlements such as Dayton Peace Accords. However, as Dr. Robert Gates wrote in his remarkable work on American foreign policy, *Exercise of Power: American Failures, Successes, and a New Path Forward in the Post-Cold War World*, "memories are long in the Balkans."³ Croatians look back to the 10th Century and Kingdom of Croatia as the highest aspiration. Serbian culture and national interest cannot be understood without understanding the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 when the Ottoman Empire defeated the Serbian army. Thus it is not sufficient to just analyze the ideology and foundations of nationalism, as Alex Bellamy and

¹ See Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia, Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (New York: Praeger, 1957); Petar Simunic, *Nacertanije: Tajni spisi srpske nacionalne in vanjske politike* (Zagreb: Globus, 1992); etc.

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2016), 5-7.

³ Robert Gates, *Exercise of Power: American Failures, Successes, and a New Path Forward in the Post-Cold War World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020), 135.

David MacDonald did in their works.⁴ But also look into tools, or rather counter-arguments, necessary to construct new limits of nationalism and replace old narratives with the new ones. These Balkan nations, to paraphrase Paul Connerton's words, could not "pass judgment on the practices of the old" Yugoslav "regime" without evoking some *hochkultur* that was appealing to everyone.⁵ As Vladimir Tismaneanu wrote in his work *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe*, "A political myth is needed around which the afflicted society or groups that have been displaced or uprooted by the stormy changes can identify themselves, can gather and attempt to restore their collective life."⁶ And, exactly, the Hapsburg monarchy, with its intriguing cultural tradition, gentlemanly manners, and continuing legacy, was a perfect choice in the case of Croatia and its desire to "rebrand" itself and "return home" to Europe. Thus any study of Croatian nationalism and the events of the 1990s should not exclude perception of the monarchy, both public and private, and what role did or might still play in this society while it was engaged in the process of "imagining" a new community.⁷

The "invention of tradition" and presentation of it through rituals of commemoration, remembrance, and education where a simple act of repetition plays a crucial role is not peculiar only to the post-Yugoslav Croatian society but has been ever-present during human history. As historian Eric Hobsbawm writes, "'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rulers and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."⁸ Almost any nation that is engaged in the process of "imagining" their new national identity searches to uncover a "deep past" that becomes a foundation of their community, and especially when the difference between the old one and the new one is minimal.⁹ In a sense, the nation has to prove that they are distinct and cannot be assimilated into any other community. As anthropologist Ernest Gellner describes, the search for "the cultural shreds and patches" is necessary given that "modern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture."¹⁰ With only the imposition of homogenous culture on a society through universal education and message, people can be initiated into a new community, develop understanding and appreciation for new symbols and *hochkultur*, and ultimately acquire means of communication that not only allows them in Gellner's view ability to work together

⁴ See Alex Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries Old Dream* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003); David MacDoanld, *Balkan Holocaust? Serbian and Croatian Victim Centered Propaganda and The War in Yugoslavia* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002)

⁵ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 7.

⁶ Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 7-8.

⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.

⁸ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.

¹⁰ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 35.

easily but also distinguish themselves from other nations. That is why the ritualized ceremonies and strong emphasis on a cultural heritage almost always dominate the “rite of passage” to the newly created community. As critic Michael Bristol describes, “Every festival reunites the individual with the collective. It reawakens and strengthens feelings of solidarity among persons who will actually benefit from it.”¹¹ By participating in these rites, spectators “separate” themselves from their old practices and old self and enter a period of transition during which they are gradually introduced to the new norms and wait until they are fully ready to become full members of a new society. The loyalty to the old culture and the old state is thus discredited.

What this article will attempt to do is to provide an objective analysis of how the Croatian political elites, but also ordinary people, used the heritage of the Hapsburg past to narrow down the 1990s bloody divorce to binary terms—they vs. us, west vs. east, and civilized vs. uncivilized—and, in a sense, announce to the world that they should never have been put under one South Slav roof in the first place. But, most importantly, how the monarchy continued to be invoked, remembered, and preserved way past the 1990s in the moments of national upheaval. Theories of nationalism, including Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, in conjunction with works on the role of commemorations, rituals, and museums in preserving memory, will be in the center of this analysis. This work should not be seen as offering one correct view and rejecting others, instead, as a survey of different ways of remembering the past and utilizing it for the purposes of nationalism. Thus the reader will be first introduced to a short history of the developments and ideology of the 1990s. Then we will ponder into four case studies: Loyalty to the Hapsburg Dynasty; Monuments and Street Names; Museums and Exhibits; Tourism and Public Memory. And, finally, we will conclude with the short discussion on whether these calls to the Hapsburg past have a certain historical merit. Hopefully, this work will invite scholars of European history and nationalism interested in studying Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav world to think not only more broadly about the concept of memory-- and the nostalgia for the pre-communist period--in their analysis of national awakening during and following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. But also to understand that the monarchy was not only a mere tool for claiming Western heritage, as might have been used in other post-Soviet Eastern European countries, rather that it became universally accepted, though indirectly, a component of Croatian national consciousness--a something that seems paradoxical for the state emphasizing its own independent, pure Croatian heritage in the process of creation new community in the 1990s.

The 1990s: Yugoslav Conflict, National Imagination, and Ideology

The now infamous Memorandum of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) was leaked in 1986 and raised eyebrows in many of the Yugoslav Republics, and especially in

¹¹ Michael Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebian Culture and Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 29.

Croatia. The memorandum among other things argued that the constitutional structure of Yugoslavia established with the passage of the last constitution in 1974 laid the foundations for eventual disintegration of Yugoslavia and discrimination against Serbs:

All nations are not equal: the Serbian nation, for example, did not obtain the right to its own state. Unlike national minorities, portions of the Serbian people, who live in other republics in large numbers, do not have the right to use their own language and alphabet, to organize politically and culturally, and to develop the unique culture of their nation...With the exception of the Independent State of Croatia from 1941- 45, Serbs in Croatia have never been as persecuted in the past as they are now. The solution to their national position must be considered an urgent political question.¹²

Without any doubt, this controversial document could be seen as an overture to the tumultuous events of the 1990s and eventual collapse of the Yugoslav state. It among other things brought up questions of national identity upfront to the political stage and gave strong political and nationalistic mandate to nations like Croatia and Slovenia that were already dissatisfied with their own position within the federation and bureaucratic structure that often preferred Serbian nationals over their own. As J.F. Brown writes in his work *Hopes and Shadows: Eastern Europe after Communism*, “The fact that Belgrade was both the federal and Serbian capital in itself gave Serbia a certain preeminence. (This was something that the other republics came to resent more and more, regarding Belgrade as the Serbian, not the Yugoslav, capital.) In terms of real power--security, police, military, and finance--the Serbs had much more than they proportionally deserved.”¹³ The images of the Croatian Spring from the early 1970s when many Croatian intellectuals demanded more autonomy for Croatia and cultural and political reforms within the federation suddenly emerged in the collective memory. The period, as Brown calls it, of “retreat into hibernation” following Tito’s crackdown of the movement was certainly coming to an end.¹⁴ However, it will be the new Serbian leader, a former senior banking official in Belgrade, Slobodan Milosevic, who was able to embody and articulate the Serbian pain expressed in the SANU memorandum. In his speech in Kosovo, the region that had been seen as crucial to the Serbian national myth, Milosevic declared, “Six centuries ago, Serbia heroically defended itself in the field of Kosovo, but it also defended Europe... In this spirit we now endeavor to build a society, rich and democratic, and thus to contribute to the prosperity of this beautiful country, this unjustly suffering country, but also to contribute to the efforts of all the progressive people of our age that they make for a better and happier world. Let the memory of Kosovo heroism live forever! Long live Serbia!”¹⁵ It was now obvious that to relieve this “suffering” it was not only necessary to protect only Serbia but also all of the regions where Serbs lived. The memory of this

¹² “Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum, 1986,” Making the History of 1989, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/show/674>

¹³ J.F. Brown, *Hopes and Shadows: Eastern Europe after Communism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 236.

¹⁴ Brown, *Hopes and Shadows*, 242.

¹⁵ “Slobodan Milosveic’s 1989 St. Vitus Day Speech,” University of Arizona, accessed August 28, 2020, https://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/SLOBODAN%20MILOSEVIC_speech_6_28_89.pdf

battle in Serbian recollection required the dignity of all Serbs, and especially *precani*, those living across rivers of Danube, Sava, and Drina in the territory of former Hapsburg Monarchy, to be preserved and their liberties guaranteed. All of this led to the arrival of another figure on the Yugoslav political scene.

A former Yugoslav general Franjo Tudjman with a Ph.D. in history utilized the moment of the rise of the Serbian nationalism to renew the call of greater Croatian autonomy and eventually independence. As Louis Sell writes in his book *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, “Unlike Milosevic, Tudjman had a firm set of core beliefs that shaped his political behavior. These were a strong belief in Croatian nationhood and an almost messianic faith in himself as the symbol of the first Independent Croatian state in one thousand years.”¹⁶ Tudjman was a dissident whose credentials were confirmed with his imprisonment following the Croatian Spring and whose strong nationalistic message, first read in the form of samizdat, and later championed publicly easily appealed to people who were dissatisfied with the organization of the Yugoslav state. Although he certainly lacked charisma, his language, vocabulary, and message of always connecting past and present created an image of a man who became the embodiment of the image of a real, or rather, pure Croatian. He became a father-like figure whom people always addressed by using his academic title and to whom they looked for protection when they believed they were discriminated against. In his election campaign for the first multi-party elections in Yugoslavia, he avoided calling for declaration of independence and instead was advocating that Croatia is “recognized as a sovereign republic in a new Yugoslav confederation.”¹⁷ But once his party, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), came to power, the reorganization of internal structure of the state started and foundations for the future sovereign state were laid.

However, Tudjman’s call of “going back home,” an appeal to Croatian tradition and symbols, oftentimes raised eyebrows among Serbs and even in western countries. As J.F. Brown describes, “[Tudjman] had been a controversial figure for several years largely because of what some considered a rapid anti-Serb attitude and for statements smacking of Ustasa-type nationalism that had ruined Croatia’s reputation during World War II.”¹⁸ He eventually “moderated his language” following the election but his biases and the questioning of, or rather contesting, the number of people killed in the biggest Ustasha concentration camp Jasenovac remained.¹⁹ This attitude often undermined the credibility of Tudjman’s policy and sometimes caused embarrassment on the international scene such as in the case when Tudjman was invited to participate in the dedication of Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Nobel Laureate Elie

¹⁶ Louis Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 118.

¹⁷ Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 115.

¹⁸ Brown, *Hopes and Shadows*, 242

¹⁹ Brown, *Hopes and Shadows*, 242

Wiesel, for instance, stated that Tudjman's presence was "disgrace."²⁰ Without any doubt, Tudjman's dismissal of Holocaust and exaggeration of data in conjunction with his rhetoric toward Bosnia in the later years of war were troublesome and undermined his calls for democratization of Croatia. But he was able to avoid harder scrutiny because his enemy Slobodan Milosevic was openly engaged in policy of ethnic cleansing and ultimately was a worse evil. As George Kenney, a former American specialist on Balkan policy, described, "The Croats have pulled off a diplomatic miracle here. They've moved from pariah status, very close to Serbia, to being a golden child of the Balkans. You have to give credit Tudjman for something."²¹ Certainly, with this leeway it was much easier to construct a post-communist identity.

The new Croatian national image started to form in the late 1980s and was further developed during the tumultuous events of the 1990s. At the same time, it was a process of (re)imagination of Croatian community and a rite where former Yugoslav subjects were gradually transitioned not only physically but also politically, culturally, and linguistically into new community, which according to Tudjman and many other Croatian leaders was not completely new but rather built on the foundations of Croatian tradition that had been stopped by foreign occupation and especially admission into South Slav union. Their first step was to unify people with an appeal to the collective memory and culture.

One of the first acts--as the introduction of this paper alluded and later will be further elaborated-- was the return of the Ban Josip Jelacic statue to the central Zagreb square. In 1989, the Croatian Social Liberal Party took the initiative for the return of the monument and organized a petition in which it stated that "we, the undersigned citizens, consider that the statue of Josip Jelacic should be returned to the Republic Square, and placed where it used to stand."²² Tudjman's HDZ distributed a proclamation that, as Sabrina Ramet and Ivo Goldstein described, took a different, more nationalistic approach to the topic than the latter one.²³ The document among other things read the following: "The fate of the statue of the unhappy ban has become the symbol of how Croatian national feelings were trampled in socialist Croatia, a symbol of a policy of heartless hatred for one's own nation, its history, culture, heritage."²⁴ Once the street names and monuments removed or seen undesirable by the communists were returned, the second step in this process, in Benedict Anderson's words, of "imagining new community" could

²⁰ Nick Ludington, "Ad Attacking Tudjman Greets Croat Leader in Washington," *The Associated Press*, April 22, 1993; Diana Jean Schemo, "Anger Greets Croatian's Invitation To Holocaust Museum Dedication--Correction Appended," *New York Times*, April 22, 1993

²¹ Barbara Demick, "Croatia has moved from near-pariah to US Friend," *Miami Herald*, April 8, 1994.

²² Sabrina Ramet, and Ivo Goldstein, "Politics in Croatia Since 1990," in *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989*, ed. Sabrina Ramet and Christine Hassenstab, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 283.

²³ Ramet and Goldstein, "Politics in Croatia Since 1990," 283.

²⁴ As cited in Ramet and Goldstein, "Politics in Croatia Since 1990," 283.

begin.²⁵ The new Croatian coat of arms and state flag were introduced. This change was officially made by the ritual of replacing the old Yugoslav tricolor on the central Zagreb square with the new flag while spectators were singing Croatian national anthem and looking at Tudjman kissing the flag before it was raised, as he continued to do occasionally during his presidency. With the new constitution and declaration of independence proclaiming the newly constructed Croatian state and election of Tudjman as the first president of Croatia, this formal stage in the establishment of a new nation was over.

However, the nationalists knew that the possession of the Croatian passport and new symbols of power was not sufficient to complete this rite of passage from one regime to another. They also had to introduce a new code of behavior and shared perception of the past. Thus all schools were mandated to display Croatian coat of arms into classrooms and history textbooks and speeches always included references such as “we,” “our nation,” and pointed to hardship in the past and always glorified Croatian resilience. As Sinisa Malesevic writes, “So we read about Croats as always being nationally conscious and showing unity and harmony at crucial moments of their history: ‘by defending their rights and benefits, the Croatian nobility has set up the basis for Croatian national consciousness,’ or ‘Croats in the fatherland and abroad have homogenized their patriotism, strength, feelings, and thoughts,’ or a permanent and stable bridge between domestic Croatia and Croatia abroad has received one more support.”²⁶ Then, as Malesevic further describes, claims and language used in the presentation of history always appeals to the collective memory and is subjective and personal: “So we read about the Dubrovnik Republic as a ‘long and glorious of the free Croatian state,’ or about Franciscans who ‘have contributed to the Croatian people’s consciousness remaining alive.’”²⁷ Even a daily historical show on the Croatian National Television (HRT) that talks about the events that happened on that particular day uses similar tools. For instance, if one watches the episode talking about Austrian archduke Otto von Hapsburg, she or he learns how von Hapsburg was one of the small number of the Hapsburg rulers who visited Croatia while emphasizing that he was one who visited the country during its critical moments of its history, following the independence from Yugoslavia.²⁸ The program also doesn’t fail to mention how von Hapsburg always stated that Croatia is his homeland, something one can see over and over again in the Croatian analysis of von Hapsburg, as we will see later in this paper.²⁹ And, to avoid any potential questions about the celebratory attitude toward the Hapsburgs and distinguish the time under Viennese rule from Belgrade, it concludes its lesson of history with images of von Hapsburg kneeling at the Zagreb Cathedral

²⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.

²⁶ Sinisa Malesevic, *Ideology, and the New State: Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Croatia* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 255

²⁷ Malesevic, *Ideology, and the New State*, 255

²⁸ “Otto von Habsburg u Zagrebu,” Zagrebacki Momento, January 16, 2017, August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJGpeNo9xIk>

²⁹ “Otto von Habsburg u Zagrebu,” Zagrebacki Momento, January 16, 2017, August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJGpeNo9xIk>

before tombs of two Croatian noblemen who were killed by the orders of the Viennese court and the following words: “He had a [moral] strength to correct the old Hapsburg sin. During his first visit to Croatia, he prayed in front of the tomb of Fran Krsto Frankopan and Petar Zrinski for the souls of martyrs who wanted to establish a sovereign Croatian state. They were killed under orders of Otto’s ancestors in Wiener Neustadt.”³⁰ What this approach to history attempts to do is not only to educate younger generations about the past of their nation but also to help people understand the history they should be proud of and one that they should forget and erase from their memory. But that was not completely possible as long as people continued to use words that could be found in Serbian and other Yugoslav languages.

The question of creation of a distinct Croatian language that shares minimal and even no resemblance with the Serbian was taken seriously from day one given to its importance. But as Alex Bellamy describes in his work, “On the one hand there was the question of whether the Croatian language was distinct from Serbian. On the other hand, there was the issue of what that Croatian language should look like, given that there has been no generally accepted and widely used Croatian standard language in recent history.”³¹ Regardless of whether they truly believed that the Croatian language has origins in the old Croatian language exhibited in documents written in Glagolitic script such as Baska tablet or had foreign origins such as Persian, the Croatian linguists in the 1990s tried to demonstrate that the Croatian was distinct from the Serbian by publishing dictionaries comparing the former with the latter.³² As Bellamy further comments, “The effect of this concerted effort to promote the difference between Serbian and Croatian was that by the mid-1990s virtually everyone in Croatia referred to their language as Croatian, though the spoken vernacular had not discernibly changed.”³³ Suddenly, words, many of which are derived from other languages, that commonly were used throughout Croatian history were seen as taboo and raised questions about the loyalty to the new community. For instance, it was no longer acceptable to call airport “aerodrom,” but rather, it was advisable to use the word “zračna luka” because Serbs did not use that word. Similarly, old words such as “kancelarija” (“office”), “firma” (“company”), “secretar” (“secretary”), “gliser” (“boat”), and “stambilj” (“stamp”) were replaced with Croatian words such as “ured,” “tvrtka,” “tajnik,” “brzibrod,” and “pecat,” respectively. Oftentimes it was bizarre to hear from Croatian elites that certain industrial innovations such as airports or planes had “pure Croatian” words when these things did not exist before the twentieth century.³⁴ But, most importantly, it was hard to demand people to change their vocabulary. One thing was to get teachers to teach children in schools proper grammar and vocabulary. The other was to get them all to avoid using words that were

³⁰ “Otto von Habsburg u Zagrebu,” Zagrebacki Momento, January 16, 2017, August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJGpeNo9xIk>

³¹ Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity*, 140

³² Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity*, 140-142

³³ Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity*, 142

³⁴ Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity*, 144.

seen as undesirable in any communication with their friends, family, and so forth. Moreover, with constant changes of the standards of the language and debates among linguists, it was almost impossible to have all people knowing what the correct word for a certain thing is. Some politicians tried to point to Tudjman to follow his suit in expressing their “Croatiness” and use his “pure Croatian” words. Some even went one step further and attempted to pass legislation that would establish an office for language that could punish people for using words that were not Croatian and purge certain words from the official language. Because of overwhelming disapproval from the public, media, linguists, the bill did not pass. But as Bellamy describes, this policy step showed how far some in the ruling elite were willing to go.³⁵ Paradoxically, the state that was fighting for democracy was trying to do things that are synonymous with the authoritarian states with a strong cult of personality, as in the one they were trying to leave.

However, this process of emphasizing “time immemorial” was even more emphasized in former communist states, specifically in the former Eastern bloc, given that the leaders who were in charge of that transition were servants of that system once.³⁶ As Vladimir Tismaneanu describes in *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe*, “In countries like Hungary and Poland, astounding transmogrifications have allowed former communists apparatchiks to mutate into champions of privatization and free-market competition. In the former Soviet Union and the Balkans, the ex-communists have created gigantic networks of influence, preserved or restored many of the old patterns of hyper centralized state controls over the economy and the media, and embraced nationalism as a convenient ideological substitute for the defunct Leninism.”³⁷ Thus by imagining new community, they not only were looking to disassociate themselves from the old order; but also, try to shift attention to new communal values from their own conflicting roles of being a nationalist, a liberator, and a loyal communist. In other words, their hysterical calls for a total abandonment of any connection with the old regime could be explained as a way of proving their loyalty to the new system and capability of being in charge of it. This view, for instance, explains why the Croatian leaders in the 1990s needed to push for a change of Zagreb Soccer club’s name from “Dinamo Zagreb,” the name under which many of active participants of the 1990s developments knew it for their whole lives, to “Croatia.”³⁸ With that said, strong calls for the community with a unique and strong history going for centuries in the former communist countries was a sort of a “mea culpa” moment for many of those who were active participants of the system they were trying to dispose of.

Besides creating, or rather, reimagining new Croatian identity distinct from any other Yugoslav one, the Croatian political elite also had to ensure--as many other former Eastern bloc

³⁵ Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity*, 143.

³⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11

³⁷ Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation*, 3-4

³⁸ Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity*, 113.

states did as well-- that they did not belong to Eastern Europe but the West. But unlike in many other former communist states, this narrative was more important than anything else given that the country was facing Serbian aggression and was met with political immobility and confusion on the international stage, as certainly many Croatian nationalists saw it in the early years of conflict.

Unofficially, the bloody ethnic conflict between Serbs and Croats that has been expected since 1918, when Croatia became part of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later known as Kingdom of Yugoslavia), began with the insurrection activity known as the “log revolution” and illegal referendum calling for secession of Krajina, territory of Croatia where Serbs lived, to Serbia in August 1990, which was a response to the growing demands for Croatian independence and awakening of Croatian national consciousness. During these initial months of conflict, the war was fought between Serbian militias and the Croatian police. But it was just a question of time before the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) intervened on the behalf of the Serbian rebels and Milosevic’s government in Belgrade. In the Summer of 1991, following the Slovene declaration of independence, which happened on the same day as the Croatian one, Milosevic started to reorganize the positions of the armed forces, consented to an idea of the independent Slovene state after 10 days of “confusing conflict,” as Louis Sell describes, and provided weapons and military support to the Serbian militias in Krajina.³⁹

Quickly, the Serbian forces were able to capture Croatian territory and the ethnic war officially started. Neighbors fought their neighbors; friends fought their friends; and siblings fought their own siblings. Thousands of people were forced to flee their homes and some even saw their family members being killed. To raise morale of the forces but also spread fear among the Serbian population living in Croatia, Serbian military leaders reminded people of the Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945), Nazi puppet state, and compared its leader Ante Pavelic to Franjo Tudjman. Thus directly attacking and discrediting Croatian nationalistic rhetoric of the 1990s. On the other hand, Croats characterized Serbs as Chetniks, members of the twentieth century guerilla that wanted to create an ethnically pure Greater Serbian state. These aggressive Serbian tactics were on full display during the siege of the old Austro-Hungarian town of Vukovar at the border between Croatia and Serbia. After three months of constant shelling, the town fell in November of 1991. Many of the Croatian residents were allowed to flee the town but the number of men was executed on the nearby field. This all was happening while the Croatian leadership was unable to figure out the defense strategy and provide resources for their own defense. As Carl Skutsch explained, “the Serbs had tanks while the Croats had mostly police vans.”⁴⁰ And, the professional military required not only people,

³⁹ Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 145.

⁴⁰ Carl Skutsch, “Croatia: War with Serbia, 1991-1995,” *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II*, edited by James Cimet and Kenneth Hill (New York: Routledge, 1999), 493.

which Croats were able to mobilize, but also weapons that they could not get given that there was an international embargo on weapons to all Yugoslavia.

With the international community figuring out how the world will look like in the era without the Soviet Union and how former communist countries will be integrated into European and Atlantic institutions, no one cared about what was going on in the state that was neither communist as Poland or Hungary were during the Cold War nor democratic at all. But most importantly, the European Community thought that the “hour of Europe has dawned,” as the Luxembourg Foreign Minister stated.⁴¹ No longer divided on the East and West and more politically cohesive European community following the Maastricht Agreement was confident that it was time to return to the international stage and solve the crisis on their own. But unfortunately they did not have power nor strength necessary to end the conflict that got worse with every day that passed. The Croatian political establishment that oftentimes got into hot water with their own nationalistic and discriminatory policies thus needed something that could help them prove their case for statehood and get that much needed military and political support.

In reality, Slobodan Milosevic and Serbian aggression were the main reason why the world came up to the Croatian side. But, one of the dominant ways they were trying to use to explain that their cause was justified was through invoking the memory of the old Hapsburg Empire, Croatian accomplishments exhibited during that state, and ultimately institutions of power they were able to preserve in the monarchy but not in Yugoslavia. This Central European Empire allowed them also to delegitimize its consent and admission into the both South Slav communities, in particular Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the late 1910s, and to attempt to remove itself from the Balkans, something that would be certainly impossible without such a strong link with Central Europe. But most importantly, the legacy of the monarchy was preserved in the collective memory and there was no one who did not admire it. Thus it was a natural choice to be used to unify a new nation and educate those “Yugo-nostalgics” and foreign visitors that Croatia did not nor does belong to the South Slav or Balkan community. Indeed, it is true that Croatian coastal regions were looking much closer to the Mediterranean identity than the Viennese. But that sentiment was more expressed in the Istrian region that has strong social and cultural connections to Italy and one that was actively pursuing, and still continues, political and regional identity different from the dominant Croatian national ideology. In Dalmatia, and especially on the territory of the former Dubrovnik Republic, on the other hand, any mention of foreign occupation was often not welcome. They portrayed themselves as the staunchest Croatian nationalists, protectors of Croatian identity, and thus served as the base of Tudjman’s party. And,

⁴¹ Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War* (New York: Random House, 1998), 28; George Packer, “The End of American Century,” *The Atlantic*, May 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/05/george-packer-pax-americana-richard-holbrooke/586042/>

by placing the Hapsburgs and Central European identity at the center of the Croatian national image, in a sense naturalizing it, they did not perceive it as foreign *per se*.

In the following pages, thus, through four case studies, we will see how the Hapsburg monarchy was remembered in Croatia publicly and how the Croatian politicians, and the press, used and preserved it, and continue to do so, to create and strengthen the image of the Croatian community they were “imagining.” But at the same time how it was romanticized and became synonymous with the Croatian identity and thus evoked whenever it was under threat. In other words, the story of Croatian constant and continuous obsession for western perception comes next...

Loyalty to the Hapsburg Dynasty

In a documentary movie “Otto und Kroaten” (“Otto and Croats”) premiered at the Croatian Diplomatic Mission to Austria, in 2012, Otto von Hapsburg stated that “Homeland is, and always will be, the foundation of the future. And thank god we have such a beautiful homeland.”⁴² From the phrases such as “Kroatien im Herzen” (“Croatia in Heart”), “Er glaubte Kroaten” (“He believed in Croats”), “Der Kroatische Koning” (“Croatian King”) that appear in the movie and from the whole narrative centered around a special bond between the Croats and Otto von Hapsburg, and in general the Hapsburg dynasty, it seems that “homeland” in the remark is Croatia.⁴³ It might be surprising to some that the son of the last Hapsburg monarch, Charles I, and the heir to the throne, who was not allowed to return to Austria following the collapse of the monarchy and did not want to renounce his claim to his father’s throne until 1961, was calling the former Hapsburg territory his “homeland.” Or, someone even might wonder why his former subjects were not offended by this remark or why they were so gracious in their comments. But what if someone told you that there was an online survey--one that for our American standards might be considered more as a push poll than a credible one--that showed that 41.6% of Croatian respondents said that they would prefer monarchy over a republic.⁴⁴ Or someone pointed to the article published by the Croatian news portal, “tportal.hr,” that asked, “what would happen if we revived Austro-Hungary?” and immediately in the first sentence claimed that “Croatia would

⁴² “Otto und Kroaten,” directed by Vanja Vinkovic, 2012, Accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eaTNh0JmU8&t=66s>

⁴³ “Otto und Kroaten,” directed by Vanja Vinkovic, 2012, Accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eaTNh0JmU8&t=66s>

⁴⁴ “Anketa o Preustroju Ustava, 41.6% Hrvata bi podrzalo Kraljevinu naspram Republike Hrvatske,” *Direktno*, January 24, 2019, <https://direktno.hr/domovina/anketa-o-preustroju-ustava-416-hrvata-bi-podrzalo-kraljevinu-naspram-republike-hrvat-ske-145209/>; Mark Thomas, “Two-Fifths of Croatsians want to return to Monarchy,” *Dubrovnik Times*, January 26, 2020, <https://www.thedubrovniktimes.com/news/croatia/item/6099-two-fifths-of-croatsians-want-a-return-to-the-monarchy>

play a very important role in it.”⁴⁵ But if we look at the news articles on the Hapsburg dynasty published by the Croatian press, previously mentioned comments appear over and over again. The message to the readership is clear: Croatia is still loyal to the dynasty even after its independence from Yugoslavia.

There are two different narratives associated with the Hapsburg dynasty in the Croatian press. The first one is Otto von Hapsburg’s role in Croatia’s integration into Western institutions and ultimately the European Union. Newspapers often presented their readership with an optimistic message regarding the status of negotiations, regardless of challenges Croatia might have been facing on this journey, such as a notable dispute with Slovenia, already an EU member, over border and access to the international waters in the Gulf of Piran. In an article published by Voice of America in April 2005, readers were informed that the patriarch of the Hapsburg family said that the Croats are a civilized and efficient nation on a right track of becoming a full member of the European family. “[Croatia] is an excellent country, extremely European,” von Hapsburg commented, “When you travel around Croatia, you can see the whole of Europe. The Croats are a very civilized nation. It is a very efficient country. Its recovery is remarkable, given the fact that Croatia has not received significant foreign aid.”⁴⁶ Similar sentiment could be seen when Croats were not invited to the negotiations regarding the expansion of the EU, but Bulgarians and Romanians were. This was a big setback for Croatia which always thought of itself being better than these two Eastern European nations--people on the streets of Croatian cities often lamented that they could not understand why the Romanians and Bulgarians would join the union before the Croats did. To potentially lower this disappointment, and also explain that the Croatian dissatisfaction was not only present in their own homeland, the newspapers brought Otto von Hapsburg back into the spotlight. “Bulgarians were there, Romanians were also invited, but there was no one from Croatia. I was sad to see that only two old friends of Croatia stood up for its interests, but Europe seemed to have no ear for what they were saying and what the real needs and values of Croatia were,” as Deutsche Welle (DW) article recollected Otto von Hapsburg’s words upon being asked about the meeting in Strasbourg at the beginning of the twentieth-century.⁴⁷ This message of patronage, or rather, a powerful ally in the prestigious European political circles, given that von Hapsburg also served as a member of the European Parliament, was certainly calculated to provide the public with comfort during challenging moments of negotiations. But most importantly, it gave them someone who listened to their grievances and even accepted their beliefs that might have been controversial, such as in case of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the

⁴⁵ Nikola Sucec, “Sto bi se dogodilo kad bismo ozivili Austro-Ugarsku,” *tportal.hr*, March 03, 2017, <https://www.tportal.hr/biznis/clanak/sto-bi-se-dogodilo-kad-bismo-ozivili-austro-ugarsku-20170302>

⁴⁶ “Otto von Habsburg: ‘Hrvatis su vrlo civiliziran narod,’” *VOA*, April 16, 2005. <https://ba.voanews.com/a/a-37-2005-04-16-voa15-86095272/1166385.html>

⁴⁷ “Otto von Habsburg je sebe smatrao Hrvatom, a Hrvatsku svojom domovinom,” *DW*, July 4, 2011, <https://www.dw.com/hr/otto-von-habsburg-je-sebe-smatrao-hrvatom-a-hrvatsku-svojom-domovinom/a-15208697>

Former Yugoslavia in Den Hague. As the VOA article recollected, von Hapsburg questioned the competence of the leading prosecutor, the same as many Croats did at the time when many of Croatian military leaders during the Yugoslav wars were indicted as war criminals. “Otto von Hapsburg is very critical of Carla del Ponte,” the article stated before quoting the following von Hapsburg’s words: “I must honestly say that I strongly oppose the way Ms. del Ponte leads the prosecution. She has obviously provided us with proof that she does not understand the law at all.”⁴⁸ With that said, Otto von Hapsburg played a crucial role in any commentary in the Croatian papers regarding negotiations for the integration into the European system.

The second narrative one could find is the belief that Croatia was always a special nation, sort of “shining city upon a hill” on the borderline between West and East, and that from all of the territories that once constituted the Hapsburg monarchy, Croats were the most beloved and respected by the dynasty--a claim that certainly was crucial in the process of national “reimagination.”⁴⁹ “A Man who loved Croats,” “Otto von Hapsburg and Croats—the love that lasted for 99 years,” “Otto von Hapsburg was a great Croatian patriot,” “Otto von Hapsburg: ‘Croats are very civilized people,’” “Vienna: Otto von Hapsburg supported Croatia’s approach to the EU,” “A Friend of Croatia, Otto von Hapsburg, died,” or, “Otto von Hapsburg thought of himself as a Croat” are some of the handful titles or sentences that one could find in Croatian publications.⁵⁰ Besides, there are long articles celebrating Hapsburgs by claiming that Otto von Hapsburg only used his Croatian passport by the end of his life, which was granted to him in the 1990s (another example of expressing loyalty to the monarchy) and that he always thought of himself as a Croat and Croatia his homeland. “He always pointed out with special zeal and belief that from all nations he especially loves Croats, and as a proof, he always used Croatian passport by the end of his life,” as an article published recently on a news portal *Narod.hr* states.⁵¹ A similar sentiment could be seen as well in a documentary “Otto und Kroaten ” where the claim of Otto’s use of Croatian passport is reiterated.

⁴⁸ “Otto von Habsburg: ‘Hrvatis su vrlo civiliziran narod,’” *VOA*, April 16, 2005.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/a-37-2005-04-16-voa15-86095272/1166385.html>

⁴⁹ See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

⁵⁰ See 4. Srpnja 2011. Preminuo Otto von Habsburg--čovjek koji je volio Hrvate,” *Narod.hr*, July 4, 2020,

<https://narod.hr/kultura/4-srpnja-2011-preminuo-otto-von-habsburg-covjek-koji-volio-hrvate>; “Umro prijatelj

Hrvatske Otto von Habsburg,” *Poslovni.hr*, July 04, 2011; Otto von Habsburg je sebe smatrao Hrvatom, a Hrvatsku svojom domovinom,” *DW*, July 4,

2011, [https://www.dw.com/hr/otto-von-habsburg-je-sebe-smatrao-hrvatom-a-hrvatsku-svojom-domovinom/a-152086](https://www.dw.com/hr/otto-von-habsburg-je-sebe-smatrao-hrvatom-a-hrvatsku-svojom-domovinom/a-15208697)

[97](https://www.dw.com/hr/otto-von-habsburg-je-sebe-smatrao-hrvatom-a-hrvatsku-svojom-domovinom/a-15208697); “Otto von Habsburg: ‘Hrvatis su vrlo civiliziran narod,’” *VOA*, April 16, 2005.

<https://ba.voanews.com/a/a-37-2005-04-16-voa15-86095272/1166385.html>; Snjezana Herek, “U Becu pokopan Otto von Habsburg, veliki prijatelj Hrvatske: Ministar Radovan Fuchs predvodio je hrvatsko izaslanstvo na oproštaj od von Habsburg,” *Vecernji List*, July 16, 2011,

<https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/u-becu-pokopan-otto-von-habsburg-veliki-prijatelj-hrvatske-31094>; “Bec: Otto von Habsburg podrzao približavanje Hrvatske EU,” *Index.hr*, May 06, 2003.

⁵¹ “4. Srpnja 2011. Preminuo Otto von Habsburg--čovjek koji je volio Hrvate,” *Narod.hr*, July 4, 2020,

<https://narod.hr/kultura/4-srpnja-2011-preminuo-otto-von-habsburg-covjek-koji-volio-hrvate>

However, the most common way of expressing this special bond between von Hapsburg and Croats, and thus “superiority,” was with memory, or rather idea of importance of Croatian territory and the people in the defense of the Ottoman Empire--Pope Leo X famous characterized Croatia as *Antemurale Christianitatis* [“the bulwark of Christianity”] for their ability to save Europe from the Turks. In a sense, this controversial appeal to history served as a way of not only boosting the fighting and patriotic spirit, especially during the 1990s conflict but also playing around with emotions of the West and implicitly asking for the return of the favor--the Croats saved Europe in the past. Now, it was time to save Croatia. And, they found one the loudest proponents of this idea in Otto von Hapsburg. “For me this,” von Hapsburg once stated, “is especially important because of the following reason: First and foremost, Croatia was one of the countries that have always been loyal, whose courage served as an example to others--what I could personally see during the conflict [Croatian-Serbian War] in many areas of Croatia.”⁵² One would, however, think that the described rhetoric was closely associated with the developments of the 1990s and only Otto von Hapsburg, who, like many other disposed European monarchs or heirs to the throne, was looking for a way to profit from the changing map of Europe. But it did not.

Following the death of Otto von Hapsburg in 2011, this European dynasty continued to be treated, in our American sense, as rock stars in the Croatian press and certain members of the family continued to play a crucial role in the concept of the “imagined community.”⁵³ In particular, the press continued to follow every move and every statement made by Otto von Hapsburg’s son, Karl, and his successor as the President of the Pan-European Union-- a group advocating for stronger and united Europe-- and most importantly, as a protector of the Hapsburg territories and lands, a title that has been within the family for centuries, both explicitly and implicitly. In an interview with the Croatian daily *Vecernji List*, published six-seven months after Croatia became the 28th member of the European Union, Karl von Hapsburg stated that he was “convinced that Croatian negotiations with the EU lasted for so long because Croatia is a catholic country with catholic values.”⁵⁴ He went even further by saying that he disagreed with European Union’s political and geographical terminology, which he believes is not only discriminatory but also racist, providing a powerful endorsement to the national goal of removing Croatia from the Balkan. “First, the terms Western Balkans was coined by Brussels,” von Hapsburg said, “When I first heard that neocolonial label, I was horrified. What Balkans, Croatia belongs to Europe.”⁵⁵ Karl’s brother Georg von Hapsburg, while visiting Zagreb, was

⁵² “Otto und Kroaten,” directed by Vanja Vinkovic, 2012, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eaTNh0JmU8&t=66s>

⁵³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.

⁵⁴ Sandra Veljkovic, “Grozim se izraza zapadni Balkan, to je bruxellski neokolonijalizam,” *Vecernji List*, November 06, 2013, <https://www.vecernji.hr/premium/grozim-se-izraza-zapadni-balkan-to-je-bruxelleski-neokolonijalizam-901206>

⁵⁵ Veljkovic, “Grozim se izraza zapadni Balkan, to je bruxellski neokolonijalizam”

asked by the same daily to comment on his brother's remarks. Although he did not provide a specific answer to the question of whether Croatia was discriminated against by Brussels because it was a Catholic country, he did say that "Europe was in danger," from losing its Christian foundations and that some other religion will fill the vacuum created by the lost faith.⁵⁶ This comment was a direct response to the reporter's question regarding the rising fear of domination of Islam on the European continent, especially after the migration crisis, when thousands and thousands of Syrian refugees came to Europe in 2015 via Croatia and Hungary. Georg von Hapsburg, however, rejected a claim that he was criticizing Islam, or rather, that his remarks might be seen discriminatory and racist by stating that many people in the Hapsburg Monarchy, and especially in the army, were Muslim. Instead, he argued that Europe is one to blame for the loss of faith.⁵⁷

What these remarks show is that the monarchy continues to be invoked at the moments when nationalism, in particular, political ideology, needs it. And often because of being an institution characterized by traditionalism and conservatism, the monarchy emerges in and appeals to the Croatian collective memory at times when community values are under threat such as in case of the 2015 migration crisis that certainly caused fear and rage, especially after both Slovenia and Hungary closed off Croatia from the rest of Schengen Zone with the wire fence and placed her in the same box as other non-EU countries, such as Serbia and Bosnia. In a sense, the monarchy through words of comfort and support spoken by the only "legitimate" representatives of this former empire, the Hapsburg family, serves as an entity that gives hope in the moments of national tragedy, both literally and figuratively, and, most importantly, provides credibility to the argument.

To illustrate this last point a little bit further, we can look at the article published by another Croatian daily, *24 Sata*. In the April 6, 2020 edition, the readers were informed that the first nobleman to contract the novel coronavirus, which put the whole European continent, and the world, on a lockdown, was, as the article states, "the Croatian king," Karl von Hapsburg.⁵⁸ It also mentioned that von Hapsburg's wife and his daughter found a refugee on an island near Dubrovnik while the heir to the throne is recovering--simply evoking the memory of the nineteenth century when Austrian nobility and many affluent Hapsburgs came to the Adriatic coast to recuperate-- before it goes to talk about Karl von Hapsburg's son, who was baptized in Zagreb and given name Zvonimir, the name of the last Croatian born king, and "the greatest

⁵⁶ Sandra Veljkovic, "Ne bojim se Islama, vec Europe koja odbacuje krscanstvo," *Vecernji List*, May 08, 2018, <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/ne-bojim-se-islama-vec-europe-koja-odbacuje-krscanstvo-1243935>

⁵⁷ Sandra Veljkovic, "Ne bojim se Islama, vec Europe koja odbacuje krscanstvo," *Vecernji List*, May 08, 2018, <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/ne-bojim-se-islama-vec-europe-koja-odbacuje-krscanstvo-1243935>

⁵⁸ Andrea Topic, "Habsburgovci su pobjegli od korone i spas nasli u Dalmaciji," *24 Sata*, April 06, 2020, <https://www.24sata.hr/news/hasburgovci-pobjegli-od-korona-virusa-i-spas-nasli-u-dalmaciji-685625>

friend of Croatia,” Otto von Hapsburg.⁵⁹ However, the purpose of the story is far from just expressing commitment of the monarchy to Croatian people and vice versa. Rather, it attempts to assure the people that everything will be fine. If kings and queens or princes and baroness are affected and are able to overcome challenges caused by COVID-19 pandemic, then normal, ordinary people could do the same. But, in particular, the notion of Hapsburg family escaping from Austria to Croatia while that country was under stay at home order not only signified to the public that the pandemic was under control but also provided a proof that the Croatian government, which was up for the election in summer 2020, did, and continued to do, a good job to keep people safe.

Without any doubt, the Croatian press elevated von Hapsburg to the status of a beloved monarch and a trusted friend. These titles would be unimaginable in any country that was trying to become a democracy or almost in any that deposed a monarch—and especially foreign one. The same pro-Hapsburg message could be seen in the places of public memory as well.

Monuments, Square, and Street Names

Public monuments and street names are “bread and butter” of any discourse on collective memory and national history. Every day routinely, thousands of people pass by statues or go through streets commemorating achievements of their national heroes, both local and international ones, to get to work, take their children to school, or just go to a grocery store. Many of them probably do not ask themselves why this monument is here or why this street was named after this or that person. There might be even some who do not recognize the name and the historical significance of that person. But the drivers and pedestrians are not students of history who are about to take the exam. What does matter is the presence of these names; people going through the places of public memory will be well acquainted with the name and location of the monument or street, or rather, in relation to prominent parts of the city. They will certainly know that streets closer to the main city square bear names of people who are more important to the city’s and nation’s identity than those on the outskirts of the city, and will have a much easier time recognizing their significance. The same is true for statues. As Melinda Harlov-Csortan argues, “these public art pieces target a broader audience able to understand and accept the standardized forms and messages of public commemorations.”⁶⁰ In that sense, traveling through city streets takes the form of a ritual where the present is connected with the past and where community values and identity are recalled. And, just because of that, they are the first thing that has to go when the regime changes. Paul Connerton, in his work on memory, writes, as already

⁵⁹ Andrea Topic, “Habsburgovci su pobjegli od korone i spas nasli u Dalmaciji,” *24 Sata*, April 06, 2020, <https://www.24sata.hr/news/hasburgovci-pobjegli-od-korona-virusa-i-spas-nasli-u-dalmaciji-685625>

⁶⁰ Melinda Harlov-Csortan, “Betrayal of Memory in Hungarian Public Memorials of the Twentieth Century,” in *Traitors, Collaborators and Deserters in Contemporary European Politics of Memory: Formulas of Betrayal*, ed. Gelinada Grinchenko and Eleonora Narvselius (Palgrave Macmillan 2018), 337.

stated before, “to pass judgment on the practices of the old regime is the constitutive act of the new order.”⁶¹ With old streets signs and monuments removed and the new ones (re)introduced, the new chapter in some nation’s history can begin.

Ban Josip Jelacic Statue: Return to the Central Zagreb square

Even before the war started and independence was announced, in October 1990, Croatian people had their “Berlin Wall” moment with thousands and thousands of people welcoming the return of the old statue of Ban Joseph (Josip) Jelacic, a general in the service of Hapsburg throne and governor of Croatia, to the main Zagreb square following the petition calling for its return and change of the name of the square from “Square of Republic,” as it was during the Socialist Yugoslavia, to “Ban Josip Jelacic Square,” as it was during the monarchy. The pompous ritual accompanied the unveiling of the statue with people coming from all around Croatia and Croatian diaspora, to witness the ceremony that signaled the end of one era, an era when communists suppressed Croatian identity, and beginning of a new one.⁶² With old patriotic songs written during the Spring of People in the nineteenth century and recital of poems with a strong nationalistic sentiment, spectators became active participants in not only this pageantry but also liminal rite, or rather, a gradual passage from being Yugoslav citizens to being Croatians. “Oh beautiful, oh beloved, oh sweet freedom,” the words of the old Croatian poet Ivan Gundulic echoing across the square, “God has given us all the treasures in you, you are the true source of our glory, you are the only decoration of this Dubrava [forests/garden]. All silver, all gold, all human lives cannot repay your pure beauty!”⁶³ Followed by Franjo Tudjman’s words, “Ban, you woke up, you are here; you’ll stay with us as long as our ‘white’ Zagreb and beautiful homeland (‘Lijepa Nasa’) will be.”⁶⁴ These words signaled to everyone that the moment had arrived when the new regime was anointed and the old party communist system was diminishing; it was tried during the election in the early 1990s, its memory was now revoked, and its execution will come soon in the future during the war for Croatian independence. As Harlov-Csortan describes, “during commemorations, both inaugurating power and the public signal their acceptance of the memorial and confirm the significance of its intended message.”⁶⁵ Along the similar lines, Paul Connerton recollecting the death of Louis XVI on a guillotine writes, “the whole point of Louis’ trial and execution lay in its ceremonial publicity; it was this that killed him in his public capacity by denying his status as king.”⁶⁶ From that moment, on October 17, 1990, when the

⁶¹ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 7.

⁶² See “Povratak Spomenika bana Joispa Jelacica, 16.10.1990,” YouTube, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Agga2wJcJa0>

⁶³ See “Povratak Spomenika bana Joispa Jelacica, 16.10.1990,” YouTube, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Agga2wJcJa0>

⁶⁴ See “Povratak Spomenika bana Joispa Jelacica, 16.10.1990,” YouTube, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Agga2wJcJa0>

⁶⁵ Harlov-Csortan, “Betrayal of Memory,” 338.

⁶⁶ Connorton, *How Societies Remember*, 8.

statue returned to a place where it once stood, it was known to everyone that the Yugoslav regime was delegitimized, and it was time to cross the lines to “the right side” of history.

The Croatian press elevated the ceremony and figure of Jelacic to a status of country’s secular patron saint who could secure their freedom and independence. The Croatian daily *Vecernji List* on the front page of its October 17, 1990 edition immediately following the title “Undefeated spirit of the Croatian nation,” stated Franjo Tudjman’s words that “Jelacic has become a symbol of Croatian resilience/ courage to every conspiracy against liberty and integrity” of Croatian national identity.⁶⁷ The same paper ran a similar story almost three decades later, commemorating the event and reminding people of Jelacic’s significance. “The return of the Ban: A Political Event that heralded hard-won freedom: ‘Vecernjak’ [the daily] recognized the long-suppressed desire of the Croatian people,” the paper stated.⁶⁸ There was also a story published with the title “Why no one sings ‘Get Up Ban’ (‘Ustani bane’) today,” the Croatian patriotic song banned in Yugoslavia, and one talking about how the first Croatian flag was flown during the installation of Jelacic as the governor.⁶⁹ Even Croatian museums commemorated the day when Jelacic was returned to the central Zagreb square. “With great enthusiasm,” Zagreb city museum describes changes in Croatia in the 1990s, “Zagreb set out on the transformation of society and the realisation of a major project called Zagreb--the Croatian metropolis, the first symbolic step towards which was the re-erection of the Ban Jelacic Monument on the place it had been removed from in 1947.”⁷⁰ Without any doubt, Jelacic became the biggest national hero in the eyes of the press and one that should not easily be forgotten.

Indeed, Jelacic achieved many positive things as a governor of Croatia such as abolition of serfdom, promoted the idea of Croatian autonomy from the Kingdom of Hungary, and contributed to the development of the national identity as a proponent of the Illyrian movement, Croatian movement for national awakening in the nineteenth century. But he was still loyal to the Hapsburg throne and the Austrian state. Because of that, he certainly became even more important. As Steven Beller in his work on the monarchy writes, “traditionally, Croats had prided themselves on their loyalty to the Habsburgs, with Jelacic being the prime national-loyal hero, but there was also a tradition of being disappointed with Habsburg betrayal, as occurred from a Croat perspective, with Croatia being abandoned to the Hungarians in 1867, for

⁶⁷ As included in Renata Rasovic, “Povratak bana: Politicki Dogadjaj koji je nagovijestio tesko izborenu slobodu,” *Vecernji List*, August 07, 2019, <https://www.vecernji.hr/vecernji60/povratak-bana-politicki-doga-aj-koji-je-nagovijestio-tesko-izborenu-slobodu-1337002>

⁶⁸ Rasovic, “Povratak bana: Politicki Dogadjaj koji je nagovijestio tesko izborenu slobodu”

⁶⁹ Denis Derk, “Zasto danas nitko ne pjeva ‘Ustani, Bane,’” *Vecernji List*, September 15, 2017, <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/zasto-danas-nitko-ne-pjeva-ustani-bane-1194583>; Zoran Vitas, “Prvi Puta se zavijorila 1848. Godine za ustolicenje bana Josipa Jelacica,” *Vecernji List*, April 24, 2019, <https://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/prvi-put-se-zavijorila-1848-godine-za-ustolicenja-bana-josipa-jelacica-1241092>

⁷⁰ “Zagreb in Independent Croatia,” Museum of City of Zagreb, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/croatia/>

example.”⁷¹ In their desire of “returning back home” to Europe and erasing any association with the Balkans, “disappointment” with the monarchy, what emperor might have done, or dislike of Hungarian policies and Budapest’s intentions following the settlement in 1867 did not matter, and if it did, it was minimal. The only thing that mattered was proof of “westernness” and the monarchy provided them with that. And, there was no better evidence than Josip Jelacic. However, to build that western and pro-democratic image, and remind people of and at the same time remove from the collective memory any links to Yugoslavia, it was necessary to rename other streets celebrating Yugoslav heroes and ideological concepts such as brotherhood and unity. But most importantly it was time to remove Yugoslavia’s authoritarian ruler’s name from the prominent Zagreb square where the national theater built during the Hapsburg rule stands. However, it would take them more than two decades to succeed in that endeavor.

Square of Josip Broz Tito

In 2017, almost thirty years after the collapse of the Yugoslav state, Zagreb city council after many previous attempts successfully enacted law renaming the square known during the Hapsburg monarchy as the “Theater square,” from Square of Marshall Josip Broz Tito to the Square of Republic of Croatia. One of the sponsors of the bill Zlatko Hasanbegovic, who served briefly as Croatian Minister of Culture, stated after stripping the communist leader’s name, “small and belated satisfaction to all victims of Yugoslav communist Titoist terror.”⁷² This act was a final culmination of national reimagination; a moment when the former regime was discredited for once and for all. No longer protestors “carrying candles and dressed in red aprons bearing the slogan ‘crime is a crime,’” symbolizing suffering during Tito’s regime, as those demanding change did in 2008, could be seen as only ones desiring to strip the name of the square.⁷³ Now, the political establishment joined the call and helped them to overcome objections from many of their fellow residents who strongly objected and pointed to Tito’s record during World War II.

Although reconciliation with the past and the evolution of national identity during the process of, in Anderson’s words, “imagination,” certainly takes time, what is moreover interesting in the case of this square is its new name.⁷⁴ It was neither replaced with its old Hapsburg name nor was named after Franz Joseph, given that the monarch himself opened the theater, nor bears a name of government officials and architects who oversaw the construction of almost all buildings present on that square and subsequent streets in the second half of the nineteenth century. Instead, they chose to commemorate “the republic.” What one can assume from this act are two things. One that it is a pure political move given that the nationalistic

⁷¹ Steven Beller, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1815-1918* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 228.

⁷² “Croats strip Tito’s name from Zagreb square,” *Digital Journal*, September 01, 2017.

⁷³ “Thousands of Croats rally against ‘Tito’ square,” *Agence France Presse*, February 09, 2008.

⁷⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.

parties, such as Hasanbegovic's party, might have had political leverage in the city council or was strategically important to secure another term. The second reason, or rather speculation, is more related to the memory and notion of the Hapsburg past that has been so present in Croatia. By celebrating the republic on a square where the Viennese influence is most visible, perhaps serves as a signal to the collective that that 'republic' was built on Central European values and always has belonged to Europe. But also at the same time reminded people that on that square many of Croatian political and historical figures, such as politician Stjepan Radic, protested against strong Magyarization especially under, as Steven Beller describes, "avid Magyar chauvinist," Croatian governor, *ban*, Khuen-Hedervary and that the 'modern' Croatian identity was established in the nineteenth century with these specific calls for greater autonomy from Hungary.⁷⁵ However, one definitive thing, the name change did not serve to commemorate any other regime or identity than the Croatian one that was established in the 1990s. And, this certainly could be seen from other monuments erected and streets renamed following the collapse of Yugoslavia in the same city. As Bellamy writes, "across Croatia thousands of streets, buildings and squares that were formerly named after anti-fascist fighters were renamed after Croatian 'heroes,' many of whom had participated in the NDH abomination."⁷⁶ If the names of streets or squares shared any resemblance to the former regime, it was changed. The only name that was allowed was the one that was commemorating "time immemorial" and compatible with the image of new national identity.⁷⁷

Museums and Exhibits

Every day thousands and thousands of visit museums worldwide. These visitors are looking to see famous pieces of art, such as Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa or Michelangelo's David, founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, or just to learn something new about their national history or the history and culture of the country they are visiting. But visiting museums is more than just walking from one room to another and reading short descriptions near artifacts. It is an experience that requires visitors to immerse themselves in the content fully, or rather, a narrative presented. "All museums are a stage," as Wolfgang Ernst describes, "and all the artifacts merely players; they have their entrances and their exits, and one artifact in its time plays many parts."⁷⁸ In particular, each room in the museum is one piece of a bigger puzzle that not only builds on the content of the previous room but also invites visitors to become, at least temporarily, curious. There is no visitor who doesn't suddenly discuss a painting or a statue with his fellow visitor, or if alone, engages in an internal debate with himself from topics ranging from techniques used to offer their own opinion on the quality of work.

⁷⁵ Beller, *The Hapsburg Monarchy 1815-1918*, 198.

⁷⁶ Bellamy, *The Formation of Croatian National Identity*, 71

⁷⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

⁷⁸ Wolfgang Ernst, "Archi(ve)textures of Museology," in *Museums and Memory*, ed. Susan A. Crane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 18.

Oftentimes, the artifacts serve as a madeleine cookie from Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* and evoke personal, and even public, images of the past. For instance, almost any visitor visiting the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York will remember where he or she was on that tragic day in September 2001. Or, similarly, going to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., people will recollect stories of their family members or their own during the Great Depression or Vietnam War. As Ernst writes, "as depot (for filing and registering), the museum implies not history but rather memory--the preservation of objects as memory triggers and archival resources."⁷⁹

But this recollection and utilization of memory don't have to be triggered by some artifact *per se*; bare museum space is just enough. In 1988, Karl Ernst Osthaus Museum in Hagen, Germany, organized an exhibit called *Silence*--similar to John Cage's musical piece *4 minutes and 33 seconds* where the orchestra sits in silence on the stage--featuring only things that could not be characterized as art, meaning viewers could only see windows, doors, display cases, heaters, and plumbing installations. As museum director later remembered, "The one really striking experience I had during the event that, in retrospect, proved to be the most important was that at the opening of the exhibition the public not only behaved as usual and walked through empty spaces just as *if* something were on display, but also begun to recollect the previous placement of the collection and to discuss the works of art I had taken away."⁸⁰ Suddenly, the building was discovered as a historical artifact together with personal memories. With that said, the purpose of a museum is the catharsis, an education, that reaches "far beyond the limits of museum walls"⁸¹ triggered not only by a specific piece of art but rather a combination of memory, space, and, most importantly, "response to ideas," as Susan A. Crane argues.⁸²

In the post-Yugoslav world, museums certainly had a role in appealing to a collective and inviting them to put together different pieces of public-- and especially private-- memory of communist era and contrast it with other periods of Croatian history such as the Hapsburg monarchy and earlier periods. If one looks to the permanent online exhibit at the Museums of Zagreb, which doesn't differ much from the one visitors could physically see, she or he will learn about the development of the Croatian capital city from the Roman period to the present day with a strong emphasis on its successes, achievements, and importance. This virtual tour starts with the section talking about the period "Before Zagreb," and immediately the visitor is exposed to, in Benedict Anderson's words, "time immemorial," a notion of a long and unique Croatian, or

⁷⁹ Ernst, "Archi(ve)textures of Museology," 25.

⁸⁰ Michael Fehr, "A Museum and Its Memory: The Art of Recovering History," in *Museums and Memory*, ed. Susan A. Crane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 43.

⁸¹ Ernst, "Archi(ve)textures of Museology," 17.

⁸² Susan A. Crane, "Curious Cabinets and Imaginary Museums, in *Museums and Memory*, ed. Susan A. Crane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 80.

more precisely, Zagreb tradition.⁸³ “Through it,” the section states, “we would like to draw attention once again to the importance and significance of today’s urban area *in the most ancient past*, to the exceptional value of the archeological material that has been found, and to the thousands of years of culture that *we have inherited* (emphasis added).”⁸⁴ Then it goes to talk about the importance of the city in the Christian world, the title of Royal Free Town that the city received in 1242 when the town Gradec provided refuge to the Hungarian king, architecture before it gets to the period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period known for the cultural and political achievements in the Hapsburg monarchy, not to mention national awakening in the 1830s and 1840s.⁸⁵ In these sections, artifacts portray Zagreb as a typical example of any other Central European city such as Vienna, Prague, or Budapest. “Satisfying the formula comfortable, simple and functional,” the part addressing the Biedermeier period (1815-1848) states, “the apartments of the citizens were arranged in a way that was identical to the style of interiors in other Central European cities.”⁸⁶ Similar Central European narrative with strong Austrian tradition could be seen in sections on the establishment of civic societies and clubs, theater and culture, commerce, and innovation.⁸⁷ But this story of progress abruptly comes to an end with the display on World War I.

What is interesting about the WWI section is not so much a story of battlefield experience and hardship present in the society during the war but rather its wording. In particular, how it builds upon already established context and appeals to the visitor. Traditionally, any World War I narrative starts with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Archduchess Sophia by a Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo in 1914. But in the Museum of Zagreb’s online display, the visitor, first, learns about the “demonstrations and demolition of the Great Cafe at Jelacic square” in 1914 alluding to “mournful procession” following the assassination in Sarajevo that suddenly turned into anti-Serbian demonstrations with people carrying pictures of Ferdinand, Croatian flags, and shouting anti-Serbian slogans.⁸⁸ Certainly, evoking a little bit of the 1990s ideology. The exhibit further goes on to talk about how the initial “splendid celebrations that started the war faded away when a number of

⁸³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

⁸⁴ Zelimir Skoberne and Boris Masic, “2. Before Zagreb,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/before_zagreb/

⁸⁵ “Permanent Display,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/under_the_museum/

⁸⁶ Nada Premerl, “29. From the Homes of Zagreb People during the Biedermeier Period,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/biedermeier/>

⁸⁷ Zeljka Kolveshi, “30. Civic Societies and Clubs,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/societies/>; Nada Premerl, “32. Ilica Becomes the Main Commercial Street,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/ilica/>; Nada Premerl, “35. Theater Life,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/theatre/>.

⁸⁸ Ivan Ruzic, “39. Echoes from the Battlefield,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/echoes/>; Damir Agicic, “The Civil Croatia on the Eve of the First World War (The Echo of Assassination and Ultimatum),” *povij. Pril* 14 (1995), 305.

wounded, captives, and the hungry began to pour into Zagreb.”⁸⁹ Although the narrative describes human suffering and horrific conditions of the war, it is still very positive and optimistic. It talks about how charitable organizations such as the Red Cross and the Committee of Zagreb Ladies were helping, how schools were turned into hospitals, and the new buildings were built.⁹⁰ Words such as resilience, courage, patriotism, and loyalty to Vienna come to visitors' minds. It is not immediately known why there is such a strong emphasis on the identity and communal values until the visitor comes to the last paragraph when the notion of national reimagination started in the 1990s, together with the nostalgia for the Hapsburg empire, suddenly emerges on the surface. “At the end of 1918,” the exhibit states, “the centuries-old Hapsburg monarchy collapsed, the Yugoslav union was created, and in consequence of *crucial and tempestuous events, Croatia ceased to exist as a state in its own right* (emphasis added).”⁹¹ Now it is obvious to the visitor that the period during the monarchy should not be seen as a foreign occupation but rather as a period of membership in the community of autonomous European states under one ruler, which contributed to development of Croatian nation and national identity.

In the following sections, this cultural nationalism with a focus on Croatian achievements continues to be evident. In the section “house and life,” the exhibit talks about the expansion of the city and new modern buildings that were built in the twentieth century, avoiding any mention of the period during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.⁹² Then, in part on World War II, the exhibit talks about the Croatian role in fighting fascism and nazism and the importance of the Partisan movement for the liberation of Croatian territory.⁹³ Although it condemns crimes against Jews and Serbs committed during the Independent State of Croatia, something Croatian politicians were reluctant to do in the 1990s, the section doesn't mention concentration camps built on the territory of Croatia such as Jasenovac and how many people were killed.⁹⁴ But, unsurprisingly, it mentions the Bleiburg massacre when thousands of soldiers, civilians, collaborators of the Ustasha regime, and their families fled the Independent State of Croatia following the end of war in fear of the Partisan retaliation who surrendered to the British troops near the Austrian border on the condition that they would not be handed to Parisians. But they were tricked by the British, packed on the trains, and returned to the territory under the Partisan control where they were massacred. The Croatian nationalists commonly refer to this event as “Croatian holocaust” and use it as a way of deligitimizing the communist regime and countering Serbian claims on

⁸⁹ Ruzic, “39. Echoes from the Battlefield”

⁹⁰ Ruzic, “39. Echoes from the Battlefield”

⁹¹ Ruzic, “39. Echoes from the Battlefield”

⁹² Nada Premerl, “40. House and Life,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/house/>

⁹³ Ivan Ruzic, “41. The Second World War,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/world_war/

⁹⁴ Ivan Ruzic, “41. The Second World War”

Jasenovac.⁹⁵ As MacDonald describes, “by suffering such a massacre, the Croats underwent their own ‘way of the Cross’, as it was frequently dubbed in Croatian writings. The sins of the Ustasha could be cleansed by their martyrdom at Bleiburg, vindicating both the Croatian nation and the NDH.”⁹⁶ And, then finally, in the sections “socialist reality” and “Zagreb in independent Croatia,” the exhibit ponders into themes such as removal of Ban Josip Jelacic statue, mock trials, communist terror and other parts that played an important role in the process of “imagining” a new community.⁹⁷ In these four sections, again, the rhetoric of the 1990s and Hobsbawm’s notion of “invented tradition” is on the full display.⁹⁸

The Museum of Zagreb’s permanent exhibit is not the only place where the visitor can actively interact with the dominant interpretation of history. If one looks at the exhibition archive on the website of the Croatian history museum, one could see a similar narrative. The museum’s mission is “to educate children, youth and the general public on the past of their own people and nation, so that they can understand the present, learn and retain the fact that the Croatian national identity was formed in correlation with the peoples who lived in our neighborhood.”⁹⁹ In this educational endeavour, they mostly focus on the period of the Hapsburg monarchy, especially the nineteenth century when the Croatian national identity started to form, and the time of national reawakening, the 1990s and contemporary period. “Ivan Kukuljevic Sakeinski-The Initiator of Croatian Identity,” “Dubrovnik during the Homeland War 1991-1995,” “Faces of War,” “‘45,” “1918-A Turning Point for Croatia,” “Images of the Great War,” are some of the displays.¹⁰⁰ The museum even organized an exhibit titled “Indescribable” featuring photographs during the welcome ceremony for the Croatian soccer team after winning the silver medal at the World Cup in 2018. With words such as “magnificent,” “famous,” “historical entry,” “proudly,” and emphasizing number of people attending the event at the central Zagreb square with the Jelacic statue in the background, in a nation where soccer is certainly part of national identity, the narrative in particular plays with visitors’ emotions and memory, and contributes to the idea of “Croatian exceptionalism” and as a proof of prominent Croatian role within European and World’s political, cultural, and now athletic circles.¹⁰¹ The image that the politicians in the 1990s were aspiring to establish to dissociate Croatia from the Balkan.

⁹⁵ MacDonald, *Balkan Holocaust?*, 171-172

⁹⁶ MacDonald, *Balkan Holocaust?*, 171-172

⁹⁷ Nada Premerl, “42. In Socialist Reality,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/socialist/>; Nada Premerl, “44. Zagreb in Independent Croatia,” Muzej Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.mgz.hr/en/display/croatia/>; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5-7.

⁹⁸ Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” 1.

⁹⁹ “Museum Mission,” Croatian History Museum, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.hismus.hr/en/about-us/museum-mission/>

¹⁰⁰ “Exhibitions: List of Exhibitions,” Croatian History Museum, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.hismus.hr/en/exhibitions/list-of-exhibitions/?page=1>

¹⁰¹ “Indescribable!!!,” Croatian History Museum, accessed August 28, 2020, <http://www.hismus.hr/en/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/indescribable/>

What is evident from this short survey of two Croatian Museums is that museums have a central role in preserving public memory. They emphasize the importance of early ages, Hapsburg period, and the post-communist world while skipping, and often erasing, the period of Yugoslavia. If they indeed mention it, they often focus solely on the progress of “Croatian people,” avoiding any discussion of the South Slav idea and contribution of many prominent Croatian leaders to that concept. Both the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Socialist Federal Yugoslavia are presented as pure Serbian ideas and conspiracy against the Croatian nation with the desire of removing, or rather, wiping out Croatian identity that had been continuously developing from the “time immemorial.”¹⁰² Ironically, the cultural nationalists who promoted an idea of national reimagination and “independence after 900 hundred years,” as we have seen newspapers and politicians were claiming in the 1990s, were championing one state that in our American sense could not be recognized as a place where “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness” were protected. This brings us back to Vladimir Tismaneanu and his belief that a certain common myth is necessary for groups who experienced “stormy changes” which explains “growing nostalgia for pre-communist national and cultural values,” in particular, monarchy.¹⁰³ This ever-present need for expressing the right Croatian history is also present in tourist brochures and guidebooks.

Tourism and Public Memory

Besides monuments and museums, tourist information and guides are other places where public memory of the past could be exhibited. Before leaving their home countries for a family vacation, honeymoon, or even a short business trip, many travelers lookup online for landmarks to see, restaurants to eat, or what local dish they must try. Some also go a step further and go to their local library or bookstore to search for travel guides containing information on their travel destination or even get scholarly books on the country’s history and customs. Once they arrive, they meet a local guide who shares with them local interpretations of history they might have come around while researching. They try to blend in and impress local residents by saying a couple of words in a local language. They go to souvenir shops to buy gifts for their family and friends. And, maybe, they end up seeing some sight which was not part of the official tour but was recommended by a resident or even tourist board. In other words, from the moment people book their plane tickets and accommodations, they are exposed to a dominant narrative and become active participants in a discourse concerning local history and culture. They are a consumer that has to be intrigued, but at the same time, a product that will share memories of their travel with their friends, family, or colleagues.

¹⁰² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

¹⁰³ Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 7-8.

“Croatia Full of Life” is a slogan with which Croatia tries to attract tourists from all around the world.¹⁰⁴ In essence, similar to Disney’s “Where all dreams come true,” it tries to send a message that a visit to Croatia would not be like any other trip or a vacation. It portrays an image of a country that is a place of untouched nature, a place where people can relax and reconnect with nature, but at the same time enjoy rich heritage, local cuisine, wines, and Croatian way of life in general. But it is more than just a typical marketing campaign. What this slogan, and in particular the “full of life” portion, attempts to do is also change the narrative, or rather, perception of Croatia that the foreigner visitor might have based on the memory of the 1990s conflict, corruption scandals, or whatever else he or she might have heard, read, or experienced. If the image of the beautiful Adriatic sea or Dubrovnik city walls are the first thing that comes to mind of the tourists, then the visitor will not bother to think about the political climate. Or, if the strong connection with Central Europe is presented, then the Balkan label and resemblance to other South-Eastern European countries will fade away. Once these preconceptions are removed, the visitor can not only fully explore the wonders this country can offer but also experience it through memory and interpretation of its residents.

Croatian National Tourist Board, whose website is undoubtedly the first stop for many of those interested in visiting Croatia, in its presentation of cultural heritage heavily relies on the narrative we have already seen in the previous sections where Croatian national identity traces roots from the “time immemorial” and is closely tied with both Central European--and as well Mediterranean, especially in Dalmatia and Istria -- tradition.¹⁰⁵ If the visitor clicks on a link titled “explore Croatia” and chooses to explore the “city of Zagreb,” she or he in the first sentence learns that, although Zagreb is a city with a deep history, it is still very modern.¹⁰⁶ “The Croatian capital Zagreb,” the website states, “is young and playful at heart, despite the almost thousand-year-old history of its old town.”¹⁰⁷ Immediately after this cheerful introduction that concludes with emphasizing “Croatian hospitality,” the first signs of Central European, or rather, Viennese touch, could be seen. “Zagreb’s old town is a true feast for your senses, where you can sample some of the country’s most renowned restaurants and coffee shops in the midst of classic facades, lush gardens, and striking Neo-Gothic buildings.”¹⁰⁸ And, then in the last two sections “Meet the charming heart of Croatia,” and “Stroll the streets of the metropolis and walk through history,” like in an opera, the initial sounds we have heard in overture emerge with the whole orchestra playing full notes, the link and resemblance to other Hapsburg cities come to the

¹⁰⁴ “Croatia Full of Life,” Croatia.hr, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://croatia.hr/en-GB>

¹⁰⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

¹⁰⁶ “Croatia Full of Life,” <https://croatia.hr/en-GB>

¹⁰⁷ “City of Zagreb: An Old City with a Young Soul,” Croatia.hr, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://croatia.hr/en-GB/Destinations/Regions/Cluster/City-Zagreb>

¹⁰⁸ City of Zagreb: An Old City with a Young Soul,” Croatia.hr, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://croatia.hr/en-GB/Destinations/Regions/Cluster/City-Zagreb>

surface, and the visitor no longer can doubt that this city is not like Vienna or Prague. The images associated with Balkan cities are incompatible with the image just described:

“With written history dating to the year 1094 when the diocese was established, Zagreb, the capital and the biggest city in Croatia, is a typical Central European town. The classicist and secessionist facades of its historical nucleus exude the lofty spirit of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but here and there one can also discern the contours of the panoramas of Prague. Almost all of the main sites of the city and cultural venues are located in the very centre, which teems with charming coffee houses, fine restaurants, garden restaurants, and lovingly tended parks like, for instance, Ribnjak, which lies beneath the walls of Kaptol with its filigree spires of the neo-Gothic cathedral, or the Lenuci green horseshoe with Zrinjevac, Zagreb, indeed, is a city tailored to man.”¹⁰⁹

These colorful words evoke memory, like Proust’s madeleine cookie, in visitors’ minds of their previous visit to either Vienna or Prague, or a book or Rick Steves’s travel post that they might have read on Viennese culture, or documentary movie about the Hapsburg monarchy that they might have seen. Now, they know that the proper way of understanding the culture of Zagreb is through Austro-Hungarian lenses. And, what the best way to do it than a stroll, a great Viennese tradition, through the streets of Zagreb, as the tourist board ultimately recommends. Through this seemingly short tourist description of the city, visitors can understand the dominant Croatian memory of the past and become an active participant in this discourse.

On the website of the Zagreb Tourist Board, a similar narrative to the one just described could be seen. The story starts with an introduction, titled “Zagreb-city with million hearts,” that provides visitors with a geographical location and a short general description of the city.¹¹⁰ Immediately, in the first couple of sentences, it hints to the Central European heritage and a notion of “deep history.”¹¹¹ “The façades of Zagreb’s buildings,” the website describes, “reflect the ebb and flow of history, while its streets and squares bear witness to the coming together of the many cultures that have shaped the identity of this laid-back capital.”¹¹² And, then, in subsequent sections, same as the Croatian Tourist Board, it explicitly states Zagreb’s similarity with other Central European cities and architectural achievements, such as Park Ring in Vienna. But it also mentions its own uniqueness: “The series of open green spaces [‘Green Horseshoe’], is formed in the shape of the letter ‘u’ and contains important institutions of public culture.”¹¹³ Although the website attempts to offer only objective facts and avoids giving judgment on

¹⁰⁹ “City of Zagreb: An Old City with a Young Soul,” Croatia.hr, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://croatia.hr/en-GB/Destinations/Regions/Cluster/City-Zagreb>

¹¹⁰ “Basic Facts,” Turisticka Zajednica Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.infozagreb.hr/about-zagreb/basic-facts>

¹¹¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11

¹¹² “Basic Facts,” Turisticka Zajednica Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.infozagreb.hr/about-zagreb/basic-facts>

¹¹³ “Basic Facts,” Turisticka Zajednica Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.infozagreb.hr/about-zagreb/basic-facts>

certain cultural and political issues during both Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, besides focusing on progress and modernization of the city--the narrative we have already seen in the section on museums and exhibits--there are a couple of areas where the dominant ideology and public images of identity in conjunction with already seen arguments regarding the Hapsburg past could be seen. Alluding that the Zagreb University is “one of the longest existing in Europe,” mentioning the railway that connected Zagreb “with all other Central European capitals to the present day,” or talking about cafes, coffee house, and concept of ‘promenade’ as part of “lounge culture” certainly give that Austrian touch and target collective memory.¹¹⁴ Without any doubt, the example where that image of preserved sovereignty, in particular, the continuous existence of Croatian state within the Hapsburg monarchy, is explicitly stated is the one where the tourist board ponders into a discussion about the 1990s and post-communist world. “The Parliament of Croatia and the Government,” the website tells, “have their seat in the Upper Town, the oldest secular center of the city, *where historic decisions have been made for centuries* (emphasis added).”¹¹⁵ It is obvious that the monarchy is perceived as a state where Croatian symbols of power were respected and preserved--a notion we will later see was the basis of the whole memory of the Hapsburg past concept--under control of imperial administration in Vienna while the same was not the case in the South Slav union.

However, this narrative of a strong connection with Europe is not only present in the case of Zagreb. If the tourist looks at coastal regions such as Kvarner or Istria or countryside such as Zagarje or Slavonia, they would find a similar approach to history. Opatija, for instance, located in the Kvarner region, has promoted itself as a place where Austrian elite came to recuperate from illnesses or just to take a break from the bustling streets of Vienna during the monarchy. There is even Franz Joseph I Memorial and the 7.5-mile long promenade named after him that goes near the hotel where the emperor stayed when visiting Opatija. Not surprisingly, even the hotel on its website emphasizes the city’s association with Austrian elegance and the royal family. “Remisens Premium Hotel Kvarner,” the website describes, “is considered the beginning of tourism tradition in the area and has hosted famous guests like Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I...Remisens Premium Hotel Kvarner breaths history and class.”¹¹⁶ But this image of Opatija as a Hapsburg “wonderland” is also visible in the real estate market and the way how it is perceived in the Austrian press. Austrian daily *Der Spiegel* published an article in 2007, titled “Croatia’s ‘Austrian Riviera: ‘A Habsburg Playground Becomes Fashionable Again,’” in which it talked

¹¹⁴ “Basic Facts,” Turisticka Zajednica Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.infozagreb.hr/about-zagreb/basic-facts>

¹¹⁵ “Basic Facts,” Turisticka Zajednica Grada Zagreba, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.infozagreb.hr/about-zagreb/basic-facts>

¹¹⁶ “About Hotel,” Remisens Premium Hotel Kvarner, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://www.liburnia.hr/en/hotel-kvarner>

about the history of this coastal city and Austrians buying Opatija's real estate.¹¹⁷ The article also targets the collective memory by emphasizing Otto von Hapsburg, who once said that he feels "entirely at home here [in Opatija]," and stating that it is no wonder why so many Austrians come to this town every year because "everything is so familiar. The waiters even serve 'Saher Torta' (Vienna's famous *Sachertorte*) at the local cafe Wagner."¹¹⁸ Besides this cultural heritage, one local politician asked to comment on Austrian interest in Opatija's properties brought into a discussion the reason why the Hapsburg past matters for Croatia in the process of national reimagination, a claim that we have seen over and over again in the previous sections. "During the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire," the city council member described, "we [Croatians] were European, and now we are becoming European again [alluding to becoming a member of the European Union]."¹¹⁹ This notion of claiming European identity through the Hapsburg past and delegitimizing any association with the Balkans is visible over and over again on the city or tourist board websites all around Croatia.

Although almost any tourist organization around the world is engaged in a sort of fabrication. Rather, by overemphasizing one period of history in order to sell the destination to the tourists, certainly nationalism plays a role. Even if souvenirs with images of the Austrian family, or Austro-Hungarian architecture are just on the shelves of Zagreb or Opatija souvenir stores because they tell a story of one period of Croatian history, they definitely have an impact on anyone who sees them. Or, just seeing the ceremonial change of guard dressed in uniforms resembling Austro-Hungarian ones in Zagreb or seeing actors reenacting life during the monarchy strolling on the Jelacic square evokes the memory of the past among both locals and visitors. As a person from the Croatian Ministry of Culture told a Wall Street Journal reporter in the 1990s, "Look at all of these wonderful buildings. They were all built during the monarchy. The only thing built in the last 40 years were those horrible apartments outside of the city."¹²⁰ With that said, in the Croatian public memory, the monarchy serves as the only right representative of its national history and identity.

Epilogue

After spending some time looking at dominant Croatian ideology of the 1990s and four different ways of how the Hapsburg monarchy was used and connected with the Croatian nationalism, it is time to ask ourselves whether the whole narrative of Croatian "Europeness" and "Westernness" based on the Viennese heritage, among other things, is a total fabrication or does

¹¹⁷ Kraske von Marion, "Croatia's 'Austrian Riviera': A Habsburg Playground Becomes Fashionable Again," *Der Spiegel*, July 09, 2007, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/croatia-s-austrian-riviera-a-habsburg-playground-becomes-fashionable-again-a-493631.html>

¹¹⁸ Von Marion, "Croatia's 'Austrian Riviera'"

¹¹⁹ Von Marion, "Croatia's 'Austrian Riviera'"

¹²⁰ Roger Thurow, "The King is Dead! Long Live...Otto von Habsburg," *Wall Street Journal*, March 27, 1991

have some merit. Students of the Austro-Hungarian state are familiar with the writings of Stefan Zweig who characterized the period of that vast entity as “the golden age of security,” and a place “where everything stood firmly and immovably in its appointed place.”¹²¹ Although Zweig’s book offers a splendid and nostalgic image for the Hapsburgs, it captures the essence of why this Central European state remained so popular in so many of its former realms and kingdoms, and, in particular, in Croatia. This notion of security and protection embodied in an image of an old emperor ruling from the majestic royal city of Vienna where culture, intellectualism, and way of life, in general, were more important than the politics and oftentimes amusing developments happening in the parliament building.

The revolutionary events in the nineteenth century indeed caused widespread interest in political discourse and literature discussing the glorious past of their nations and what was coming next for their empire. But they all knew that no revolution or secession would happen and even more succeed. As great Mark Twain writing for Harper’s Magazine described, “Things have happened here recently which would set any country but Austria on fire from end to end, and upset the government to a certainty; but no one feels confident that such results will follow here...There is some approach to agreement upon another point: that there will be no revolution.”¹²² As one of the people interviewed for Twain’s story further explained, “Look at our history: revolutions have not been in our line.”¹²³ Within the monarchy, all of these territories and lands had a space to practice their national consciousness and call for more equality not because they solely wanted to be equal among the equals but also to “screw their neighbors” in a game known as capturing and securing more influence within the court and state as a whole. But, at the end of the day, they neither had to worry about any foreign threat, industrial and military competition with other European powers, nor the national budget. That was the problem for the emperor residing in a majestic palace in Vienna and his successors. They just knew that their lives without monarchy would be substantially harder.

Besides this belief in guaranteed security and order, the monarchy provided to Croatians the ability to construct its identity and even a belief of seemingly autonomous institutions such as governor, *ban*, and Croatian Parliament, *Sabor*. While they were certainly far from being solely loyal to the Croatian people and principles of liberalism *per se*, these organs of power were the places, as in many other Hapsburg lands, where the national consciousness was developed and oftentimes tested. The *Sabor*, for instance, was a venue where the allegiance to the Viennese throne was pronounced in documents while Hungarians were condemned. It was also a place where the first speech was delivered in the Croatian language and where delegates to coronation

¹²¹ Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (Germany: Plunkett Lake Press, 2013), https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_World_of_Yesterday/4f-B09t2lngC?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover, chap.1, “The World of Security.”

¹²² Mark Twain, “Stirring Times in Austria,” *Harper’s Magazine*, 1898.

¹²³ Twain, “Stirring Times in Austria”

ceremonies were selected. Even though occasional fights might have occurred between those advocating closer union with Hungary and those opposing it. Or, disagreement between those advocating staying loyal to Vienna and those rejecting it almost always ended up on front pages of local newspapers, the Parliament was exercising its authority and attempting to provide some pretense to a claim that Hapsburg or Croatian kingdom had some liberal elements younger nationalists were calling for in the nineteenth century. But exactly because of this ability to operate continuously throughout Croatia's history in the monarchy and to be the space where different ideas were discussed, or rather, attempted to be proposed, allowed the Croatian leaders in the 1990s to compare it with the Socialist Yugoslavia and Kingdom of Yugoslavia where there was only one party dominated by Serbs and Croatian deputies were shot for their beliefs, such as the case of Stjepan Radic killed by the Serbian deputy in Belgrade in 1928.

Most importantly, however, the monarchy and the acts of parliament, such as address to the King in June 1848 or as any other reiterating belief or rather right on certain dose of Croatian autonomy or authority over domestic issues, allowed Croatia to provide an argument that exercised certain influence during the monarchy as well as to claim that membership in the monarchy was consensual while in both Yugoslavias was not, as has been already alluded in our previous analysis.¹²⁴ Although this claim is definitely overemphasized in the case of the monarchy, there is some merit to that belief. If one looks acts of the parliament such as in regard of representatives that had to be present at the coronation of the new Hapsburg ruler or *pacta conventa*, the document that allegedly states the Croatian nobility after the death of the last Croatian king agreed to the Croatian union with Hungary in 1102, one can see that there indeed was sort of consensual relationship between Budapest and Croatia. To prove that the Viennese court confirmed and honored this equal status with Hungary, Croatians also point to 1526 when the Croatian nobility elected Archduke Ferdinand Hapsburg as their king and thus secured and received powerful protectorate during the Turkish invasions. The most cited evidence, however, is the *Pragmatic Sanction* of 1713 when the Croatian Parliament was asked and agreed to allow Maria Theresia, a daughter of the Hapsburg monarch, to the Hapsburg throne.

With that said, it is understandable that the monarchy became such a crucial component of the Croatian "imagined community," and a romanticized symbol of the glorious past and natural belonging to the Central European circles rather than the Balkan peninsula where it was placed while in Yugoslavia. Whether these stories are completely true or invented, it is totally another question. But one thing is for sure; the blank canvas was filled with the images that were believed to be the "best" representative of the new Croatian brand. And, the rich and ambiguous legacy of one of the most famous European empires, and certainly anomalies, in history allowed them to do so.

¹²⁴ See Juraj Krnjevic, "The Croats in 1848," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 27, no.68 (1948): 106-114.

As we have seen from this analysis, collective memory is a very abstract concept but a very effective foundation on which the new identity could be constructed and other discredited. At the same time, it is a narrative where the dominant image is presented to the citizenry but also supplemented by personal stories of attachment to that history in the form of living memory being passed from one generation to another one. This connection does not have to be a nostalgia for a better economic life or even titles and wealth that families might have possessed during the old time. But it can be simple as a memory of life dominated by cultural events, humbleness, simplicity, and strong family values. When those two components of collective memory merge together, the image of the national identity is both individualized and shared with fellow compatriots allowing the creation of not only such a strong community Anderson describes in his work but also one that is prone to the attacks from alternative images of both past and nation. At inflection points, this concept of memory is the strongest and provides the ability to cope with the reality that often is bumpy and harsh. That is why its analysis is crucial for understanding any national awakening. And, especially one on the territory of the former Yugoslavia where it was and will continue to be, the main catalyst for disagreements, both political and cultural, between the neighboring countries that once were part of this South Slav community.

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