New Europe College
Ştefan Odobleja Program
Yearbook 2012-2013

FUNDATIA NOVA EUROPA
NEW EUROPE COLLEGE

CONSTANTIN ARDELEANU
CRISTIAN CERCEL
ALEX CISTELECAN
COSTIN MOISIL
RALUCA MUȘAT
MARIUS STAN
IOAN ALEXANDRU TOFAN
RĂZVAN VONCU

New Europe College
Ștefan Odobleja Program
Yearbook 2012-2013

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NEW EUROPE FOUNDATION
NEW EUROPE COLLEGE

Institute for Advanced Study

New Europe College (NEC) is an independent Romanian institute for advanced study in the humanities and social sciences founded in 1994 by Professor Andrei Pleșu (philosopher, art historian, writer, Romanian Minister of Culture, 1990–1991, Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1997-1999) within the framework of the *New Europe Foundation*, established in 1994 as a private foundation subject to Romanian law.

Its impetus was the *New Europe Prize for Higher Education and Research*, awarded in 1993 to Professor Pleșu by a group of six institutes for advanced study (the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, the National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Humanities and Social Sciences, Wassenaar, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Uppsala, and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin).

Since 1994, the NEC community of fellows and *alumni* has enlarged to over 500 members. In 1998 New Europe College was awarded the prestigious *Hannah Arendt Prize* for its achievements in setting new standards in research and higher education. New Europe College is officially recognized by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research as an institutional structure for postgraduate studies in the humanities and social sciences, at the level of advanced studies.

Focused primarily on individual research at an advanced level, NEC offers to young Romanian scholars and academics in the fields of humanities and social sciences, and to the foreign scholars invited as fellows appropriate working conditions, and provides an institutional framework with strong international links, acting as a stimulating environment for interdisciplinary dialogue and critical debates. The academic programs NEC coordinates, and the events it organizes aim at strengthening research in the humanities and social sciences and at promoting contacts between Romanian scholars and their peers worldwide.

Academic programs currently organized and coordinated by NEC:

- ***NEC Fellowships (since 1994)***
  Each year, up to ten NEC Fellowships open both to Romanian and international outstanding young scholars in the humanities and social sciences are publicly announced. The Fellows are chosen by the NEC international Academic Advisory Board for the duration of one academic year, or one term. They gather for weekly seminars to discuss the progress of their research, and participate in all the scientific events organized by NEC. The Fellows receive a monthly stipend, and are given the opportunity of a research trip abroad, at a university or research institute of their choice. At the end of their stay, the Fellows submit papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the New Europe College Yearbooks.

- ***Ştefan Odobleja Fellowships (since October 2008)***
  The fellowships given in this program are supported by the National Council of Scientific Research, and are meant to complement and enlarge the core fellowship program. The definition of these fellowships, targeting young Romanian researchers, is identical with those in the NEC Program, in which the Odobleja Fellowships are integrated.

- ***The GE-NEC III Fellowships Program (since October 2009)***
  This program, supported by the Getty Foundation, started in 2009. It proposes a research on, and a reassessment of Romanian art during the interval 1945 – 2000, that is, since the onset of the Communist regime in Romania up to recent times, through contributions coming from young scholars attached to the New Europe College as Fellows.

As in the previous programs supported by the Getty Foundation at the NEC, this program also includes a number of invited guest lecturers, whose presence is meant to ensure a comparative dimension, and to strengthen the methodological underpinnings of the research conducted by the Fellows.

- ***The Black Sea Link (since October 2010)***

  This Fellowship Program, sponsored by the VolkswagenStiftung, invites young researchers from Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as from other countries within the Black Sea region, for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice. The program welcomes a wide variety of disciplines in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Besides hosting a number of Fellows, the College organizes within this program workshops and symposia on topics relevant to the history, present, and prospects of the Black Sea region.

Other fellowship programs organized since the founding of New Europe College:

- ***RELINK Fellowships (1996–2002)***

  The RELINK Program targeted highly qualified young Romanian scholars returning from studies or research stays abroad. Ten RELINK Fellows were selected each year through an open competition; in order to facilitate their reintegration in the local scholarly milieu and to improve their working conditions, a support lasting three years was offered, consisting of: funds for acquiring scholarly literature, an annual allowance enabling the recipients to make a one–month research trip to a foreign institute of their choice in order to sustain existing scholarly contacts and forge new ones, and the use of a laptop computer and printer. Besides their individual research projects, the RELINK fellows of the last series were also required to organize outreach actives involving their universities, for which they received a monthly stipend. NEC published several volumes comprising individual or group research works of the RELINK Fellows.

- ***The NEC–LINK Program (2003 - 2009)***

  Drawing on the experience of its NEC and RELINK Programs in connecting with the Romanian academic milieu, NEC initiated in 2003, with support from HESP, a program that aimed to contribute more consistently to the advancement of higher education in major Romanian academic centers (Bucharest, Cluj–Napoca, Iași, Timișoara). Teams consisting of two academics from different universities in Romania, assisted by a PhD student, offered joint courses for the duration of one semester in a discipline within the fields of humanities and social sciences. The program supported innovative courses, conceived so as to meet the needs of the host universities. The grantees participating in the Program received monthly stipends, a substantial support for ordering literature relevant to their courses, as well as funding for inviting guest lecturers from abroad and for organizing local scientific events.

- ***The GE–NEC I and II Programs (2000 – 2004, and 2004 – 2007)***

  New Europe College organized and coordinated two cycles in a program financially supported by the Getty Foundation. Its aim was to strengthen research and education in fields related to visual culture, by inviting leading specialists from all over the world to give lectures and hold seminars for the benefit of Romanian undergraduate and graduate students, young academics and researchers. This program also included 10–month fellowships for Romanian scholars, chosen through the same selection procedures as the NEC Fellows (see above). The GE–NEC Fellows were fully integrated in the life of the College, received a monthly stipend, and were given the opportunity of spending one month abroad on a research trip. At the end of the academic year the Fellows submitted papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the GE–NEC Yearbooks series.

- ***NEC Regional Fellowships (2001 - 2006)***

  In 2001 New Europe College introduced a regional dimension to its programs (hitherto dedicated solely to Romanian scholars), by offering fellowships to academics and researchers from South–Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey). This program aimed at integrating into the international academic network scholars from a region whose scientific resources are as yet insufficiently known, and to stimulate and strengthen the intellectual dialogue at a regional level. Regional Fellows received a monthly stipend and were given the opportunity of a one–month research trip abroad. At the end of the grant period, the Fellows were expected to submit papers representing the results of their research, published in the NEC Regional Program Yearbooks series.

- ***The Britannia–NEC Fellowship (2004 - 2007)***

  This fellowship (1 opening per academic year) was offered by a private anonymous donor from the U.K. It was in all respects identical to a NEC Fellowship. The contributions of Fellows in this program were included in the NEC Yearbooks.

- ***The Petre Țuțea Fellowships (2006 - 2008, 2009 - 2010)***

  In 2006 NEC was offered the opportunity of opening a fellowships program financed the Romanian Government though its Department for Relations with the Romanians Living Abroad. Fellowships are granted to researchers of Romanian descent based abroad, as well as to Romanian researchers, to work on projects that address the cultural heritage of the Romanian *diaspora*. Fellows in this program are fully integrated in the College's community. At the end of the year they submit papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the bilingual series of the *Petre Țuțea* Program publications.

- ***Europa Fellowships (2006 - 2010)***

  This fellowship program, financed by the VolkswagenStiftung, proposes to respond, at a different level, to some of the concerns that had inspired our *Regional Program*. Under the general title *Traditions of the New Europe. A Prehistory of European Integration in South-Eastern Europe*, Fellows work on case studies that attempt to recapture the earlier history of the European integration, as it has been taking shape over the centuries in South–Eastern Europe, thus offering the communitarian Europe some valuable vestiges of its less known past.

- **Robert Bosch Fellowships (2007 - 2009)**
  This fellowship program, funded by the Robert Bosch Foundation, supported young scholars and academics from Western Balkan countries, offering them the opportunity to spend a term at the New Europe College and devote to their research work. Fellows in this program received a monthly stipend, and funds for a one-month study trip to a university/research center in Germany.

New Europe College has been hosting over the years an ongoing series of lectures given by prominent foreign and Romanian scholars, for the benefit of academics, researchers and students, as well as a wider public. The College also organizes international and national events (seminars, workshops, colloquia, symposia, book launches, etc.).

An important component of NEC is its library, consisting of reference works, books and periodicals in the humanities, social and economic sciences. The library holds, in addition, several thousands of books and documents resulting from private donations. It is first and foremost destined to service the fellows, but it is also open to students, academics and researchers from Bucharest and from outside it.

***

Beside the above–described programs, New Europe Foundation and the College expanded their activities over the last years by administering, or by being involved in the following major projects:

In the past:

- ***The Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Religious Studies towards the EU Integration (2001–2005)***
  Funding from the Austrian Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft enabled us to select during this interval a number of associate researchers, whose work focused on the sensitive issue of religion related problems in the Balkans, approached from the viewpoint of the EU integration. Through its activities the institute fostered the dialogue between distinct religious cultures (Christianity, Islam, Judaism), and between different confessions

within the same religion, attempting to investigate the sources of antagonisms and to work towards a common ground of tolerance and cooperation. The institute hosted international scholarly events, issued a number of publications, and enlarged its library with publications meant to facilitate informed and up-to-date approaches in this field.

- ***The Septuagint Translation Project (2002 - 2011)***

  This project aims at achieving a scientifically reliable translation of the Septuagint into Romanian by a group of very gifted, mostly young, Romanian scholars, attached to the NEC. The financial support is granted by the Romanian foundation *Anonimul.* Seven of the planned nine volumes have already been published by the Polirom Publishing House in Iași.

- ***The Excellency Network Germany – South–Eastern Europe Program (2005 - 2008)***

  The aim of this program, financed by the Hertie Foundation, has been to establish and foster contacts between scholars and academics, as well as higher education entities from Germany and South–Eastern Europe, in view of developing a regional scholarly network; it focused preeminently on questions touching upon European integration, such as transnational governance and citizenship. The main activities of the program consisted of hosting at the New Europe College scholars coming from Germany, invited to give lectures at the College and at universities throughout Romania, and organizing international scientific events with German participation.

- ***The ethnoArc Project–Linked European Archives for Ethnomusicological Research***

  An European Research Project in the 6th Framework Programme: Information Society Technologies–Access to and Preservation of Cultural and Scientific Resources ***(2006-2008)***

  The goal of the *ethnoArc* project (which started in 2005 under the title *From Wax Cylinder to Digital Storage* with funding from the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation and the Federal Ministry for Education and Research in Germany) was to contribute to the preservation, accessibility, connectedness and exploitation of some of the most prestigious ethno-musicological archives in Europe (Bucharest, Budapest, Berlin, and Geneva), by providing a linked archive for field collections from different sources, thus enabling access to cultural content for various application and research purposes. The project was run by an international network, which included: the "Constantin Brăiloiu" Institute for Ethnography and Folklore, Bucharest; Archives Internationales de Musique Populaire, Geneva; the Ethno-musicological Department of the Ethnologic Museum Berlin (Phonogramm Archiv), Berlin; the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest; Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Coordinator), Berlin; New Europe College, Bucharest; FOKUS Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems, Berlin.

- ***DOCSOC, Excellency, Innovation and Interdisciplinarity in doctoral and postdoctoral studies in sociology*** (A project in the Development of Human Resources, under the aegis of the National Council of Scientific Research) – in cooperation with the University of Bucharest (starting July 2010)

- ***UEFISCCDI – CNCS (PD – Projects): Federalism or Intergovernmentalism? Normative Perspectives on the Democratic Model of the European Union (Dr. Dan LAZEA); The Political Radicalization of the Kantian Idea of Philosophy in a Cosmopolitan Sense (Dr. Áron TELEGDI-CSETRI),*** Timeframe: August 1, 2010 – July 31, 2012 (2 Years)

Ongoing projects:

The Medicine of the Mind and Natural Philosophy in Early Modern England: A new Interpretation of Francis Bacon (A project under the aegis of the European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grants Scheme) – In cooperation with the Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study, London (since December 2009)

Business Elites in Romania: Their Social and Educational Determinants and their Impact on Economic Performances. This is the Romanian contribution to a joint project with the University of Sankt Gallen, entitled ***Markets for Executives and Non-Executives in Western and eastern Europe***, and financed by the National Swiss Fund for the Development of Scientific Research (SCOPES) (since December 2009)

Civilization. Identity. Globalism. Social and Human Studies in the Context of European Development (A project in the Development of Human Resources, under the aegis of the National Council of Scientific Research) – in cooperation with the Romanian Academy (starting October 2010)

The EURIAS Fellowship Programme, a project initiated by NetIAS (Network of European Institutes for Advanced Study), coordinated by the RFIEA (Network of French Institutes for Advanced Study), and co-sponsored by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme - COFUND action. It is an international researcher mobility programme in collaboration with 14 participating Institutes of Advanced Study in Berlin, Bologna, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Cambridge, Helsinki, Jerusalem, Lyons, Nantes, Paris, Uppsala, Vienna, Wassenaar. The College will host the second *EURIAS* Fellow in October 2012.

UEFISCDI – CNCS (TE – Project): Critical Foundations of Contemporary Cosmopolitanism (Dr. Tamara CĂRĂUŞ), Timeframe: October 5, 2011 – October 5, 2014 (3 years)

UEFISCDI – CNCS (IDEI-Project): Models of Producing and Disseminating Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: The Cartesian Framework (Dr. Vlad ALEXANDRESCU),
Timeframe: January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2014 (3 years)

Other projects are in the making, often as a result of initiatives coming from fellows and *alumni* of the NEC.

Present Financial Support

The State Secretariat for Education and Research of Switzerland (Center for Governance and Culture in Europe, University of St. Gallen)
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Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, Köln, Germany
Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences, Stockholm, Sweden

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CONSTANTIN ARDELEANU

Born in 1976, in Galați

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Thesis:*British economic and political interests at the Lower Danube (1856–1918)*

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Papers presented at international conferences and symposia in Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Turkey, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova

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Member in research projects in institutional history ("Al. I. Cuza" University of Iași, "Nicolae Iorga" History Institute, Bucharest), maritime history (Ionian University, Greece, International Institute of Social History, the Netherlands), coordinator of research team in maritime economic history (funded by the Romanian National Research Council)

Books:

Gurile Dunării – o problemă europeană. Comerț și navigație la Dunărea de Jos în surse contemporane (1829-1853), Editura Istros – Muzeul Brăilei, Brăila, 2008

Evoluția intereselor economice și politice britanice la gurile Dunării (1829-1914), Editura Istros – Muzeul Brăilei, Brăila, 2008

THE DISCOVERY OF THE BLACK SEA BY THE WESTERN WORLD: THE OPENING OF THE EUXINE TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND SHIPPING (1774–1792)

I. Introduction

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the subsequent conquest of all trading centers along the Black Sea coasts, the Ottoman Empire imposed an almost complete prohibition of foreign shipping in what became, by the annexation of Southern Bessarabia or the Budjak in 1538, a Turkish lake. The area was gradually integrated into a regional economy, whose main function was to supply foodstuffs and raw materials to the increasing market of the Turkish capital.

During the following three centuries, the Mediterranean and Western maritime powers attempted to get direct access to these cheap resources, but their requests to have the Black Sea opened to international navigation fell on deaf ears. Thus, passage right through the Bosphorus remained until 1774 a privilege which the Porte reserved for its own subjects, merchants or ship-owners who provisioned Istanbul with strategic goods such as grain or slaves. However, this closure was not completely hermetic, as the Ottoman authorities preferred to preserve the commercial and fiscal benefits of the Black Sea international trade when this did not impair their superior economic and political interests.

The Porte followed, throughout this period, clear procedures for the admission of ships into the Black Sea. Vessels carrying products under governmental orders enjoyed special privileges and were given priority in relation to ships chartered by private merchants. The former boats displayed special signs and were included on a list forwarded to the customs officer stationed at the Bosphorus Strait (in 1755, for example, 120 ships were allowed to bring grain from different ports of the Black Sea). Merchants trading in the area had to fill in papers with information about the ports of shipment, tonnage of ships, type and quantity of cargo, their guarantor in the imperial capital. After the request was sanctioned, they were given a firman addressed to the officials from the ports of shipment; the tradesmen' papers were endorsed there, and the entrepreneurs were provided with documents addressed to the Porte's customs and naval authorities, allowing them to return to Istanbul.[1]

Shipping in the Black Sea was thus confined to vessels under Turkish flag, and Istanbul played the role of a veritable staple port in relation to the territories beyond the Bosphorus. As a consequence of this navigation monopoly, the Euxine remained completely peripheral to those economic developments that were shaping, since late 15th century, the modern world–system. Few foreigners ventured to an area which came to be less known, on 18th century western maps, than the distant seas and oceans of the southern hemisphere.

This static picture of a closed sea, ploughed by ships of Greek or Turkish seafarers settled in Istanbul or in the commercial emporia scattered around the Pontos, completely, irreversibly and rapidly changed after 1774. It took this breach in the jealously guarded status of the Turkish Straits to feed a veritable revolution in European interest for the Black Sea.[2] Political and economic factors intermingled in this new episode of the Eastern Question. Apparently not only the fate of the Ottoman Empire was at stake, but also an economic heritage not least impressive – a fresh route eastwards, with ramifications towards the Balkans, Central Europe, Poland, Russia, the Caucasus, Persia. The golden wool of the Argonauts had now more palpable shapes: naval stores, grain and agro–pastoral goods.

In the following two decades, the prospects of the Black Sea were debated not only in the great port–cities around the Mediterranean, in Marseilles, Venice, Trieste or Leghorn, but also in most European capitals, in Vienna and Paris, London and Naples, not to mention St. Petersburg and Istanbul. Throughout the continent, in political and diplomatic offices as well as in traders' storehouses, the opening of a new market was received with natural inquisitiveness.

The present paper aims to reconstruct this puzzle, whose pieces are now extremely loose, lost in historical narratives analyzing the political or economic involvement of different European powers in the Black Sea area. It covers a short period (1774–1792), dominated by political fluidity in the area, in which Russia managed to implant herself on the northern Black Sea coast and to gradually take control over the strategic Crimean Peninsula. However, the relatively stable decade between the two Russo–Turkish wars waged during Catherine II's reign allowed remarkable commercial developments. The classical story of a restricted and regional trade caught in the vortex of the great global commercial exchanges is now clearly visible. Old and new, state and private, East and West met in the Black Sea, with state actors regulating the macro level of political economy and with bold private enterprisers acting as the bacteria that generated change at society itself. This first phase of economic promoters and commercial pioneers shows a Black Sea in complete and quick transformation, abruptly stopped when the entire continent got embroiled into the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. For two decades, trade lost its independence and had to serve the needs of combatant forces.

This approach aims to present the official developments and reactions in European countries following the opening of the Euxine in 1774, insisting on the diversity and rapidity of action at a continental scale rather than detailing the inner organization of trade. This choice was also dictated by the fact that in this early and necessarily chaotic phase (in the sense of lacking a clear organization), trade patterns were still unsettled, irregular and hazardous, confined more to intrepid speculators than to the meticulous and prudent mercantile networks of the 19th century.

II. Russia's march towards warm seas

With the maritime powers disallowed from entering the Black Sea, it took a terrestrial empire that mastered the Eastern steppe lands to force the Bosphorus from within the Euxine. Russia seemed fated to this destiny. She steadily approached the warm seas starting with the 17th century, and finally reached this goal when Peter the Great conquered the fortress of Azov (1696) and secured free navigation in that sea, the antechamber of the Black Sea proper.[3] A quarter century after Peter's disastrous campaign on the Pruth (1711), the Tsarist Empire resumed its march southwards. In 1736, the strategic strongholds of Azov and Ochakiv, at the mouth of the Dnieper, were regained, but unfavorable military developments prevented the execution of an ambitious expansionistic program.[4] By the Peace of Belgrade and the Convention of Nissa (1739) Russia retained Azov, but had to dismantle its fortifications; the navigation of Russian commercial ships was permitted in the Sea of Azov, although they were still not allowed in the Black Sea.[5]

Another quarter–century later, the able Catherine II followed in the footsteps of her predecessors, conscious that Russia's future as a European power greatly depended on getting a firm hold, military and economically, of the Black Sea. In order to achieve this, the Empress had to impose her control in two buffer areas that stood in Russia's way: Poland and the Crimean Khanate. During this period, a part of Ukraine east of the Dnieper and the steppe lands north of the Crimea were incorporated by Russia, whereas the Polish crisis of 1763–1768 enabled ample tsarist interventions in Warsaw's affairs. The outburst of a new Russo–Turkish war in 1768, emanated from these political developments, served perfectly the designs of Catherine's foreign policy and secured Russia's crucial step towards the Black Sea.[6]

The military actions of the war are of little significance for this narrative, although it should be mentioned that the Russian fleet played a major part in securing a smashing victory. By the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, signed on 21 July 1774, Russia gained a strategic foothold on the northern Black Sea coast, annexing the Kuban and Terek areas (formerly belonging to the Crimean Khanate), the ports of Azov and Taganrog, at the mouth of the Don, the fortresses of Kerch and Yenikale, and a small region between the lower courses of the rivers Bug and Dnieper, together with the mouth of the latter and the fortress of Kinburn, a territory securing a crucial connection with the core provinces of the Empire. In the same time, the formal independence of the weak Crimean Khanate equaled the establishment of a satellite state, not of a veritable buffer zone between Russia and Turkey. But the greatest success of tsarist diplomacy was the right granted to Russian ships to sail on the Black Sea and pass through the Straits, a provision with momentous political and economic consequences for the entire area.[7]

Adding numerous other privileges which Russia acquired in relation to the Porte, the treaty completely reset the balance of power in the Near East. With the tsars well implanted in the Black Sea and capable to build and equip a strong navy, Istanbul was under continuous and direct threat. The complicated European diplomatic situation did not allow any intervention to support Turkey, which, on the contrary, was assaulted with demands from France, Britain, the Dutch Republic and Venice, all requiring passage right into the Black Sea.[8] The only solution to belittle

Russia's victory seemed to completely crush down the Porte's resistance in allowing free international shipping beyond the Bosphorus Strait.

During the next decade, Crimea was the scene of a fresh trial of strength between the two imperial rivals, each trying to impose a dependable khan. On 21 March 1779, Russia and Turkey signed the Convention of Ainali Kavak, a reiteration of existing treaties, by which the Porte recognized Schahin Guerai, Russia's candidate, as khan, but re-confirmed the political independence of the Tartars; at the same time, the lands between the rivers Bug and Dniester, formerly part of the Khanate, were to fall under Turkish control, although most of the region remained uninhabited, as a buffer zone between the Ottoman Empire, Russia and the dominions of the khan. Nevertheless, as political unrest continued in the Crimea, the idea of annexing the Khanate gained preponderance among Russian leading circles, and in April 1783 Empress Catherine II issued a manifesto proclaiming the annexation of the Crimea, the Kuban and the Taman peninsula. A new Russo–Turkish war seemed imminent, but without consistent European diplomatic support the Porte had to refrain from intervening militarily.[9]

War did break out in 1787, and Austria joined it in February 1788, following the Christian empires' plans of partitioning the Ottoman territories. The conflict had noticeable military developments in the Caucasus and the Baltic areas, arousing to action the torpid European diplomacy. Hostilities ended with the Austro–Turkish treaty of Sistova (4 August 1791), which granted to the Habsburgs the Danubian key position of Old Orșova and the area around it in the Banat, north of the Iron Gates. The treaty of Jassy (9 January 1792) confirmed all existing agreements between Turkey and Russia (thus the latter's possession of the Crimea), gave Ochakiv to Russia and made the Porte responsible for pacifying the area south of the Kuban River.[10]

In less than two decades, Russia secured herself control over the entire northern coast of the Euxine, a territorial progress that was to reshape not only the political and military balance of the Pontic basin, but, combined with the granting of passage right through the Turkish Straits for Russian ships, also greatly augmented the commercial significance of the area. However, the integration of these territories into the rapidly growing Tsarist Empire and their linkage to the regional and international commercial route–ways required the imposition of several administrative, economic and social reforms.

III. The economic organization of "New Russia" – its integration into the Empire and linkage to commercial route–ways

Russia's military conquests were soon followed by explicit policies of economic integration within the structure of the Empire, of demographic growth and of social establishment. Several administrative reforms organized the territory of New Russia, culminating with the foundation of the Ekaterinoslav Viceroyalty in 1784, a territory ruled, throughout this period, by the almighty imperial favorite, Prince Gregory Potemkin.[11] Large estates were donated to the nobiliary elite, and ample colonization programs were enforced, in order to populate and economically exploit these extensive and fertile steppe lands. Domestic and foreign colonists were settled in the province, so population of the territories making up the Viceroyalty increased, during these decades, from about 263,000 to almost 820,000 inhabitants.[12]

These measures profoundly transformed the internal economic structure of New Russia, gradually providing to the markets a greater surplus of agricultural goods,[13] products that lay at the foundation of Russia's economic growth in the 19th century. In order to supply this merchandise to the foreign markets, the imperial authorities followed a coherent policy of constructing an entire trading infrastructure. The creation of a string of commercial emporia along the northern Black Sea coast provided the area with veritable economic lungs, capable to adapt the area to the atmosphere of a capitalist economy. In the Sea of Azov, the port of Taganrog, strategically placed close to the mouth of the Don River, was rebuilt in 1769 and shortly became the centre of considerable trade and shipping. Population increased from a few hundred inhabitants in 1774 to about 6,000 in 1793. About 60 ships called at Taganrog annually, and trade increased to more than half a million rubles yearly. Mariupol, founded by Greek settlers coming from the Crimea, was developed by several imperial privileges. Kerch, a very small village in 1774, reached a population of over 3,000 inhabitants by 1787, and survived by the lighterage operations carried for the ships crossing the homonymous strait.[14]

As promising was the Dnieper region, whose prospects increased after the foundation of Kherson, in 1778, as a commercial and naval port, the intended "St. Petersburg of the South." Greatly supported by local and central authorities, it slowly became "a concourse of strangers and a considerable commerce,"[15] the most important gate binding the

European maritime routes to the continental roads leading deep into Russia and Poland.[16]

After the acquisition of the Crimea, Sevastopol was established on the site of a natural harbor and became the operational basis of Russia's Black Sea navy. It also developed an export trade of about 500,000 rubles a year and imported merchandise amounting to about half as much. Theodosia, the prosperous medieval Caffa, was reestablished, but, similarly to all Crimean outlets, it suffered due to its bad connections with the rest of the Empire.[17]

In the same time, the authorities in St. Petersburg tried to encourage commercial relations with the Mediterranean and Western powers. In 1782 Catherine II issued an edict providing the reduction by 25 % of export and import duties payable in the southern ports for all Russian subjects or traders from privileged countries. Two years later, the ports of the Black Sea were formally opened to the merchants and ship-owners of all nations. Another ukase provided additional preferential tariffs and allowed the export of Polish goods through Russia's southern ports.[18]

Several European courts promptly responded to these commercial overtures. Austria, which was also allowed free navigation in the Black Sea, signed a commercial agreement with Russia in 1785.[19] Already aware of the economic value of the Euxine, France developed direct trading relations with Russia's southern ports, and the commercial treaty of 1787 stipulated further fiscal and customs reductions for direct economic exchanges.[20] Similar treaties were soon concluded with other states. The commercial treaty with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, signed on 17 January 1787, provided for mutual reductions by one fourth of tariff charges on goods exported or imported via the Black Sea.[21] Another agreement, with Portugal, referred to mutual reduction of duties by one half when several listed goods were imported directly.[22]

Not least of all, the decisive part in developing Black Sea trade belonged to the agreements concluded between Russia and the Porte. The trade convention of 1783 stipulated that only Russian commercial ships with a capacity of maximum 16,000 kile (25 tons) could cross the Bosphorus Strait.[23] However, it was rather difficult for Russian ships to enter and trade independently in the Black Sea. Disputes about cargo remained an obstacle for the passage of ships through the Bosphorus, as allegedly goods were allowed to be shipped by Russia to other countries only if they were not needed on Ottoman markets. According to Turkish sources, a total of 445 Russian ships passed through the Istanbul Strait into the Black Sea between 1774 and 1787, or a total of about 30 ships a year.[24]

Russia's regional position depended on her capacity to maintain a strong navy in the Black Sea. This consisted of the main fleet based at Sevastopol, and of a smaller squadron stationed at Kherson. The power of these warships was proven during the conflict that broke out in 1787, when the fortress of Ochakiv became the key to a larger strategic zone. The Ottoman fleet was destroyed in 1788 and the citadel fell, a similar fate as all major Ottoman strongholds in the area (Akkerman and Bender on the Dniester, Kilia and Ismail on the Danube), a great contribution belonging to the navy in Sevastopol.[25] These vessels and their crews managed to chart the Black Sea, a significant effort for improving navigational safety on a sea that was little known to Russian and foreign seafarers alike.[26]

IV. France and the Black Sea trade – the southern pathway to Russia

Trading in the Black Sea had always been an important objective for French merchants, taking into account their privileged position in the Levant and the fact that the northern commerce with Russia was dominated by English, Dutch and Hanseatic traders. The first direct French interests in the Euxine were related to the Crimean Khanate; barrier against Russian interferences in the Ottoman Empire, the Khanate was, despite its political weakness, an indispensable actor for the regional balance of power. In the same time, regarded economically, it was a valuable relay between the rich resources of the Russian provinces and the Constantinopolitan and Mediterranean markets. France was therefore greatly interested to implant herself in the Crimea.

Her presence became effective in the 18th century, when a consulate was established at Bahçeyserai. Since 1740 French merchants received the right to trade in the Black Sea on Ottoman ships, a privilege also granted to Russia, but the customs and naval controls at the Bosphorus made exchanges difficult. The outbreak of war in 1768 put an end to this consular agency, consequently with a direct Marseilles commercial venture in the area: the entrepot at Caffa, dependent on the Sultan, founded in 1768 by several merchants from the Mediterranean outlet. The conflict completely changed France's attitude regarding the Black Sea. On the one side the diplomats in Versailles tried to support Turkey and preserve the privileges

French traders enjoyed on the Ottoman markets; on the other side, they wanted to benefit from the advantages resulting from a predictable Russian triumph. Thus, shortly after the entry of a Russian ship into the Black Sea in December 1774, Ambassador Saint–Priest in Constantinople quickly demanded the same privilege for French commercial vessels.[27]

As Russia's control over the northern Black Sea coast strengthened in the following decades, French diplomacy turned to St. Petersburg, aiming to open a direct commercial route between Marseilles and New Russia. In the same time, mercantile circles in southern French ports were as interested to encourage trade relations with Poland, forced to redirect its agro–pastoral goods and raw materials southwards.

The foundation of Kherson in 1778 and Russia's policy to boost the export trade of her new provinces nourished great economic expectations among French merchants. At a time when disruptions of supplies with naval stores were frequent on the northern route, the interest for procuring these goods via the Black Sea increased rapidly. Kherson was favorably placed, as it could ship a large variety of goods, including cheap timber and hemp from the Ukraine; thus, in May or June 1780, a commercial ship hoisting the Russian flag headed to Toulon with a cargo of salted beef, but also with the high hopes of the traders from both ends of this fresh commercial route.[28]

The local and central authorities in the two countries supported these initiatives. Potemkin was closely interested to develop New Russia's commerce and one of his agents, Mikhail Faleev, founded a "Company of the Black Sea" for trading with the Ottoman Empire and France.[29] He signed contracts for delivering to Marseilles different goods, among which tobacco, iron, canvas, ropes and salted meat. However, although the products imported from Russia's ports enjoyed privileged customs duties, the profitability of these early shipments was considered unsatisfactory.[30]

A new phase in French commercial involvement in the Black Sea was inaugurated by the activity of an enterprising merchant, Antoine Anthoine, well accustomed to the trading conditions of the Near East. In 1781, commissioned by the French and Russian ambassadors in Constantinople, he inspected several Russian Black Sea ports, including the emerging outlet of Kherson, where several Frenchmen were "already established as barbers, shoemakers, watchmakers, tailors."[31] In St. Petersburg he presented Potemkin a list of compulsory improvements for developing the international trade of Kherson: to conclude commercial agreements with the Porte for securing commercial safety; to grant privileges to foreign merchants (allowing them to use the Russian flag and to trade within Russia), including fiscal and customs exemptions; to connect the port to the Russian and Polish postal services and to accept the nomination of a French consul.[32] Anthoine was granted the privileges requested, so that in July 1782 he established in Kherson, together with his brother Louis and his partner Sauron, the trading house called *Anthoine frères, Sauron et Companie*.[33]

Anthoine visited Poland, where his commercial overtures proved fruitful, as the authorities in Warsaw were also trying to reroute their exports towards the Black Sea. Thanks to his mediation, Polish and Russian officials agreed to cooperate and turn Kherson into the commercial gate of a larger region, related to the markets of Russia, Poland, Austria, the Danubian Principalities and the Mediterranean Sea. Back in France, Anthoine convinced his fellow statesmen that he could supply the French Admiralty with Polish timber, allegedly superior to anything available in the Baltic Sea. Well received at Versailles, he secured significant privileges for supplying the arsenal in Toulon, so that since 1784 he invested his capitals in this trade, his ships entering the Black Sea under Russian colors.

Quantitative data relating to these exchanges is rather inconsistent. According to French sources, the number of ships sailing from the Black Sea to Marseilles was as follows: 1782 – 2, 1784 – 4, 1785 – 9, 1786 – 17, 1787 – 25. As for French ships heading to Kherson, the numbers were: 1784 – 4, 1785 – 4, 1786 – 20, 1787 – 18. During the 1780s, 15 commercial houses traded with Kherson, the most important being owned by French, German or Swiss merchants (Anthoine, Veuve Councler, Folsch et Hornbostel, Rolland, Straforello, etc.)[34] Ships usually loaded at Marseilles alcoholic beverages (wine), textiles (Lyon fabrics, velvet, fine linen) and colonial goods and returned laden with hemp, wax, honey; but the most traded product became wheat, well received on the Mediterranean markets.[35]

However, despite its growing tendency, this trade proved disappointing for the French authorities. The savings, compared to the imports from the Baltic were estimated at 12%, although Anthoine promised as much as 37%. Moreover, the versatile merchant became more interested in lucrative speculations with wheat for his own account, and less eager to provide good shipments for the Admiralty. The quality of his supplies was rather low, as producers were not convinced to redirect their best merchandise towards the still unsettled southern route. The trade of the Black Sea hardly fulfilled the high hopes placed in it, and the new military conflict started in 1787 represented a new complication for the international trade of Kherson, already affected by its very unhealthy position in the delta of the Dniester River.[36]

V. Austria and the Black Sea – the employment of the Danubian route

Starting with the late 17th century, Austria accelerated her march towards the Black Sea. This progress was favored by the Peace of Passarowitz (1718), which gave her, besides significant territorial acquisitions, the right to trade at the Lower Danube and in the Black Sea by means of Ottoman ships. The Peace of Belgrade (1739) extended these provisions, and Austrian merchants were granted the privilege to navigate on the Danube down to its mouths and to cross the Turkish possessions aboard their own means of transport. However, such stipulations remained a dead letter due to several conditions, geographical and technical, as the barrier of the Iron Gates was hardly passable by commercial ships.

The first enterpriser to venture beyond this perilous gorge was Nicolaus Ernst Kleeman, an agent of the commercial company founded by Count Rüdiger von Starhemberg, who attempted to trade directly with Tartary and the Crimea when French merchants were also sounding the area. Kleeman left for the Lower Danube in October 1768 and crossed the Iron Gates in early November. He changed his vessels in the Turkish port of Rusciuk (Ruse) and, after descending the Chilia (Kilia) branch of the river, headed for the khan's residence in the Crimea and then to Constantinople. Although the tradesman had many mishaps, his manufactures (ironware, gallantry, cotton textiles and general wares) were sold with a huge profit – 87 ¾ %, proving the high productivity of developing this Danubian commercial route. Returned to Vienna, Kleeman advised, in memoranda sent to the imperial court, the organization of the Austrian trade towards the Levant, the Crimea and Little Tartary.[37]

The shipping privilege granted to Russia in 1774 nourished similar hopes in Austria. In January 1775 Chancellor Kaunitz instructed Ambassador von Thugut in Constantinople to obtain from the Porte the right for Habsburg subjects to navigate at the mouths of the Danube and in the Black Sea. However, such thing was still little practicable, as the imperials had few information on navigational conditions beyond the Iron Gates.[38] It thus became a priority of the Viennese authorities to collect details on the geographical, military and economic conditions of the Danubian Principalities and of the Black Sea littoral.

A favorable circumstance to map the Lower Danube came in 1779, when the new internuncio, Herbert von Rathkeal, proceeded to his post via the Danube. A topographical engineer, Captain Georg Lauterer, was appointed chief of his naval escort, but Lauterer's main mission was to chart the river section downstream of the Iron Gates. Experienced in piloting fluvial ships, the officer drew the first relatively accurate Austrian map of the Lower Danube (down to Ruse), but he also referred to fluvial shipping, port facilities and the general trading conditions of the area.[39]

The increasing commerce of the Black Sea was also closely scrutinized by investors in Vienna. The German company of Willeshoffen & Co., active in the Levant, sensed the profitability of trading Austrian merchandise in the Euxine. His overtures were favorably received by Emperor Joseph II, who supported a commercial expedition to the markets of the Principalities, of the Crimea and of Constantinople, with the view of turning the Danube into a permanent and lucrative artery for exporting Austrian manufactures. Joseph offered an imperial ship, mastered by Captain Lauterer (instructed with additional cartographical tasks), to convey down the Danube Austrian goods valued at about 25,000 florins (textiles, porcelain, glassware, mirrors, fashion goods, metal works and common wares). More cargo (mainly wine) was loaded in Hungary on another vessel, so that the expedition carried along the Danube about 700 tons of goods. The party left Vienna on 11 June 1782 and reached the Danubian port of Galați, on the maritime section of the Danube (i.e. accessible to sea-going ships) in late July. The goods were transshipped here, according to the final destination of the merchandise, most of it aboard a Russian vessel, "St. Catherine," bound for Kherson. Lauterer continued his military mission, mapping the last unknown section of the Danube and the north–western coast of the Black Sea, with valuable information on local trade and shipping.[40]

Willeshoffen organized a second expedition in 1783, led by the same Lauterer, now accompanied by two assistants, captains Karl Dominik Redange von Titelsberg and Frank Mihanovici. They left Vienna in April and in late May 1783 reached Galați, whence the three military agents parted ways. Lauterer left for Constantinople, Mihanovici surveyed the Danubian outlets of Galați and Brăila and then headed to the Bosphorus by crossing and mapping the southern (St. George) branch of the Danube, whereas Redange headed to the northern Black Sea area via the northern

(Kilia) branch of the river. They all provided valuable details on trade and shipping on the maritime Danube and the Black Sea, further encouraging official Austrian investments in the area. As for Willeshoffen, he proved a mere speculator and went bankrupt in 1784, to the dismay of Emperor Joseph II and of the other investors.[41]

However, more commercial ventures followed soon enough. In 1783 the Austrian officer Johhannes Haribert, Baron von Tauferer traded timber brought from the Danube. His enterprise was successful, and the enterpriser settled himself at Constantinople, where he conducted lucrative business for about three years, but he also went bankrupt in 1787.[42]

The diplomatic support for developing this trade led to the conclusion, on 24 February 1784, of a commercial agreement between Austria and the Ottoman Empire. The convention regulated the imports of Austrian wares into Turkey (metalwork, mining, china, mirrors, fabrics, glass and glassware, etc.), and Austrian navigation was allowed down to Vidin or Ruse, where goods were transshipped on Ottoman vessels. Customs rates were fixed at 3%, and Austrian shipping into the Black Sea, through the Straits, was also allowed.[43] A treaty of commerce between Austria and Russia was concluded in 1785, by which the imperials were granted reduced export rates for Hungarian wines and advantages for trading with the ports of Sevastopol, Kherson and Theodosia.[44]

Several other mercantile initiatives followed until the outbreak of the new war (the *Donau und Seehandlungscompagnie* founded in Vienna by Karl and Friedrich Bargum, the commercial house established in Galați by Count Festetics and the Transylvanian merchant Johann Gottfried Bozenhard, the companies of Christof Skivro of Semlin and of Demeter Tullio of Pest, the initiative of Valentin and Joseph Ignatz Göllner of Karlstadt, the Viennese company of Domenico Dellazia, etc.[45]), but all suffered from the same problem – the passage of the Iron Gates was not only perilous in itself, but it was also financially burdening.

The commercial treaty of 1784 opened another direct route of Austrian initiative in the Black Sea, encouraging entrepreneurs in Trieste to trade in the area. One of the most active merchants was Jovo Kurtović, interested in commercial ventures in Russian ports, but also in Sulina and Galați.[46] However, the outbreak of war in 1787 and Austria's involvement in the conflict in 1788 put a quick end to these drives.

VI. The Danubian Principalities and their restricted trade under the Turkish suzerainty

Besides the products supplied by Russian ports, in the last quarter of the 18th century foreign merchants became as interested in the commercial resources of the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, autonomous states under Turkish domination. At an economic level, one of the most obstructive elements of the Turkish suzerainty was the Porte's "relative" monopoly over the two Principalities' foreign trade, meaning a limitation of their ability to trade their products freely, at market prices. Wallachia and Moldavia were compelled to supply large quantities of grain (mainly wheat and barley), livestock (sheep), animal fat, butter, pressed cheese, honey, wax, timber, salt-peter, etc. for the needs of the Ottoman army, of the Turkish Danubian strongholds and of the Constantinopolitan market, either free or at fixed prices much under the real value of the merchandise. In the context of Russia's anti-Turkish offensive, the treaty of 1774 and a series of subsequent documents (1774, 1783, 1791, etc.) restricted the Porte's economic interferences in the Principalities' domestic life, limiting its requirements to a fixed amount of money and compelling it to purchase the products at local market prices.[47]

Despite these critical drawbacks, the political background of the Eastern Question and the broader diplomatic and cultural contacts with the West favoured the growth of the European interest for the economic possibilities of the Romanian Principalities, which could provide cheap and qualitative raw materials and serve as a convenient market for manufactured goods. The establishment of foreign consulates in the capitals of Bucharest and Jassy (Russia – 1782, Austria – 1783) was both the consequence of this increased relevancy of Wallachia and Moldavia on the international scene, and the cause for a further awareness of the commercial opportunities of the Lower Danubian area. Diplomacy and trade went hand in hand, and the prospects of a commercial expansion towards the Black Sea drew the attention of Austrian statesmen, just as the same relative opening of the Black Sea to European trade and navigation encouraged western diplomats to survey the economic opportunities of the Euxine and its adjacent provinces.

The establishment of consulates had considerable effects on the Principalities' trade, as the foreign merchants benefited from the advantages granted by their countries' capitulations with the Porte; entrusted with consular protection, these tradesmen were secured against the abuses of Ottoman or Romanian military and civil servants. Enjoying such juridical and fiscal profits, the quality of "sudit" (foreign subject) became a precious privilege for domestic merchants as well, who sought and bought the respected and profitable Austrian or Russian protection. Besides the restrictive trade in the products requisitioned by the Porte, Moldavia and Wallachia were also engaged, in the last quarter of the 18th century, in continuously increasing free commercial exchanges with the Ottoman Empire and other partners (Austria in the first place). The main categories of freely exported merchandise were live animals and animal products, technical plants, worked textiles, raw and worked hides, salt, etc., whereas the main imports were represented by textiles, fruit and luxury goods, as the modernization and westernization of the Romanian society enhanced the demand of these products.[48] When Istanbul was abundantly supplied, as in was the case in 1775, the export of wheat was freely allowed for the Principalities.[49]

VII. Poland and the Black Sea – escaping commercial isolation

Another state greatly interested in the increasing prospects of the Black Sea trade was Poland, whose difficult political constellation was doubled by a deep economic crisis. The First Partition of Poland in 1772 was a great economic blow to the Kingdom's commercial interests, as Pomerania, without Gdańsk (Danzig) on the Baltic coast and Toruń (Thorn) on the Vistula River, was annexed by Prussia. Gdańsk was virtually cut off from Poland, whose access to the sea was hindered by the exorbitant customs fees imposed upon Polish goods exported via its Baltic outlet.[50] Suffocated by this barrier, Poland and Prussia signed a commercial treaty in 1775 which, nevertheless, established huge taxes for Polish goods transited to Gdańsk (12 %) or sold to the Prussian industry (30 %). A fast consequence of this policy was a marked decrease in Poland's trade with Gdańsk by way of the Vistula River, with less than half of the number of barges and boats recorded on the river in 1776 as compared to pre-partition times.[51]

Faced with an acute economic crisis, the authorities in Warsaw attempted to redirect the country's trade towards the Black Sea, and in November 1776 the diplomat Boscamp–Lasopolski was sent to Constantinople to promote Polish trade in the Euxine. The network of internal rivers (the Dniester, the Dnieper and the Bug) could be profitably used to ship Polish goods to Russian or Turkish ports, the same routes being seen as advantageous solutions for encouraging foreign imports into Poland. Prince August Sulkowski presented these plans during a visit to Paris in 1779, when he advertised the possibility of exporting Polish grain, liquors, salted meat, flax, hemp, hides, and furs, cheap and qualitative resources for France's growing market.[52]

In 1782 Prince Michael Poniatowski and Chancellor Antoni Onufry Okęcki founded in Warsaw a "Polish Company for Oriental Trade," directed by Prot Potocki, whose entrepreneurial spirit greatly contributed to the success of this commercial initiative.[53] In the same time, during his Polish visit, Anthoine promoted the development of trade between France and Poland, which could be encouraged by a reduction of customs duties in the Kingdom's south-eastern territories. Anthoine supported the choice of Kherson as the intermediate port and even concluded a contract with the Polish Company for delivering local goods, amounting to 100,000 francs, to Marseilles.[54] The Russian authorities also encouraged this trade and Catherine's 1782 ukase accepted Polish goods to enter Kherson without paying customs taxes. Antoine Zablocki was appointed consul, and in 1783 the Polish Company was allowed to build its own warehouses and have an office in Russia's growing outlet.[55] In the same time, Russia allowed a Polish agent to purchase and use a ship, named "Saint Michel," under Russian colors.

The economic development of Poland's south-eastern provinces was greatly encouraged by the central and regional authorities, which invested in the modernization of land routes and inland waterways capable to carry bulky goods to the Black Sea outlets. By a decision of the Seym in 1784, import duties on goods entering the southern provinces were reduced to 4 %, and export duties to 1 % *ad valorem*. Russia granted further privileges to the Polish merchants involved in the Black Sea trade. Polish goods were allowed free transit through New Russia, a reduction of 25 % in customs duties was applied to Polish exports to Russia, and the import of goods destined for Poland enjoyed further fiscal benefits. Naturally enough, several Polish entrepreneurs, such as the banker Tepper of Warsaw, founded commercial houses in the Russian port.[56]

The Frenchmen were extremely interested in the raw materials provided by the Polish markets, well advertized by the consular agent in Warsaw, Bonneau. There was an abundance of agro–pastoral goods, although the strategic commodity was timber for masts. Shipments of mast logs were sent via Kherson to the shipyards in Toulon,[57] although the cargoes proved to be of low quality.

In 1785 Gaétan Chrzanowski was appointed Polish agent in the Turkish capital, entrusted with the special mission to expand the economic exchanges with the Ottoman market and negotiate the granting of passage through the Straits for Polish vessels. Although the request was duly rejected by the Turks, the Polish Company already owned a small fleet of ships which used the Russian flag for entering the Black Sea.

During the peaceful interval of 1784–1787, export from Poland through Kherson increased exponentially. The Dniester was a favorite waterway for shipping goods from Podolia, a route well popularized by large landowners such as the Prince of Nassau or Walery Dzieduszycki. Other rivers (the Pripet, the Slucz, the Horyn and the Berezina) were as important for supplying timber from the rich inland forests.[58]

Wheat also became profitable merchandise for Polish landlords, being well requested on the Mediterranean ports, at Alexandria, Marseille or Barcelona. In 1785, for example, the wheat sent from Poland to Kherson amounted to 3 million Zlotys, or 60% of the 4,900,780 Zlotys that represented the port's trade.[59]

New privileges were discussed between Russia and Poland in 1787, proving Russia's double attitude regarding the development of Polish exports. In the early phase of these exchanges, the Russian ambassador in Warsaw, Count von Stackelberg, encouraged them and insisted on privileges being granted for Poland's foreign trade through Kherson. But Russia was not desirous of increasing the commerce of the products which she could also supply. In the same time she aimed to prevent the direct contact between Polish and foreign merchants involved in the Black Sea trade. Similar intentions were displayed by Prussia, discontented by the shift in the direction of Polish exports.[60]

Thus, the Russians worked to frustrate initiatives such as that promoted by a French merchant, Hugon, who advised for direct trade between Polish and French merchants. Hugon settled himself in Podolia, on the coast of the Dniester, and sent to Warsaw several memoranda recommending the use of that river and the building of commercial entrepots in Ochakiv, Akkerman and Kiliajnova or of carrying goods by boat further to Kherson. This second route was supported by Chrzanowski, and the river was explored for navigability and charted.[61]

However, the employment of the Dniester depended on the Ottoman authorities which controlled the lower section of the river and refused to allow the transit of Polish goods without paying rather large customs duties. A Polish consul was appointed at Akkerman,[62] and the authorities in Warsaw understood the need of concluding a commercial treaty with the Porte. In 1792, when a Polish envoy, Piotr Potocki, was sent to Constantinople to discuss such an agreement, the political situation in Poland had already become critical; the war between Poland and Russia and the subsequent Second Partition of Poland made this mission fruitless.[63] It was the end of the flourishing Polish trade through the Black Sea, followed by economic ruin and the bankruptcy of several businesses and banking firms.

VIII. The Italian states and the Black Sea – on the footsteps of medieval trade

Geography placed the Italian states in a good position to benefit from the opening of the Black Sea to international shipping. The merchants in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies were very interested to conclude a commercial agreement with Russia, the trade between the two countries being negligible before this moment; in 1784, for example, only one Russian ship got to Naples with a cargo of iron and pitch.[64] After long negotiations, a commercial agreement was concluded on 17 January 1787, valid for 12 years and including all advantages and customs exemptions granted by Russia to her friendly nations. Vincenzo Musenga was appointed Neapolitan consul in Kherson, but the outbreak of war did not allow the development of trade for the period analyzed in this paper.[65]

The Venetian Republic was even better placed in relation to the Black Sea due to the large fleet it had in the Eastern Mediterranean and the skill of her Greek subjects, the most numerous and active seafarers in the Euxine. Hoisting the Russian flag, a privilege rather easily acquired, these Greek seafarers became well implanted in the international trade of New Russia and the Danubian Principalities. According to statistical information from 1786, 56 Venetian ships sailed under Russian flag (most of them belonging to Greek and Slavic Dalmatian ship-owners and merchants) in the Black Sea, making Venice a serious actor in this growing trade.[66] Besides shipping, Venetian traders were as interested in gaining direct access to the resources of the area, grain and agro–pastoral goods, and to exporting here the common wares of the Mediterranean markets.

IX. Britain and the Black Sea – from political and commercial interest

British involvement in the Black Sea had more to do with political than with commercial reasons, being included in the great colonial rivalry against France. After Russia received passage right through the Bosphorus, the Foreign Office required the British Ambassador to Constantinople, John Murray, to insist at the Porte for allowing the traffic of British ships into the Black Sea, a request duly rejected by the Porte.[67]

The French interest for the Russian route was noticed by the new British ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Robert Ainslie (1776–1794), who reported to the Foreign Office, in 1782, about the acquisition of naval supplies (masts and timber) at Kherson by French traders.[68] Ainslie sent a British merchant, David Gray, to explore the commercial opportunities of the Balkans and of the Black Sea coasts, and the tradesman gave a favorable account on products such as oak available in the Balkans or Crimean tobacco. Other information on the profitability of this new route came from British subjects employed in Russia's service.[69] However, direct British participation in this commerce was still absent.

Political developments made English statesmen pay more attention to the new conflict which started in the Near East in 1787. Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger was overtly hostile to Russia keeping the fortress of Ochakiv, captured from the Turks in 1788. Believed to command the estuaries of two rivers (Bug and Dniester), this last Ottoman stronghold on the northern shore of the Black Sea was also regarded as capable of blocking Polish trade down these waterways and of allowing France to draw large naval supplies from the mainland. Not least of all, the fortress strengthened Russia's position in the Black Sea and increased her ability to threaten the tottering Ottoman Empire and endanger British interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.[70]

The crisis determined the Foreign Secretary, Lord Grenville, to start gathering reliable information on the Balkans and the Black Sea. George Frederick Koehler, a young artillery officer, reported on the state of Turkish fortifications in the area,[71] whereas William Sidney Smith from the Royal Navy gave accounts on the state of the Turkish fleet, the ports and arsenals of the Euxine.[72] Trade was not absent in these reports, as the resources of the Black Sea seemed extremely remunerating. Thus, Grenville also required Smith information "respecting the commercial state of the several countries bordering the Black Sea; the means by which the inhabitants are supplied with the various articles of their consumption, the productions which they supply in return; and the mode of transportation by which such intercourse in carried on," with a view of sounding a future expansion of British trade and navigation in that part of the world.[73]

As important was the report drafted in 1791 by William Lindsay, secretary of the British Embassy to St. Petersburg. He drew up a detailed description of the Black Sea area, with particularities concerning navigation, the geographical position of ports, export goods and trade prospects for English merchants.[74] The British Government also requested a report regarding the perspectives of trading in the Euxine from the Private Council of Trade, which only provided general information,[75] mainly taken from the classical narrative of the former French consul to Bahçeyserai, Peyssonnel.[76]

X. Conclusions

This short episode in the history of the Black Sea is remarkable from several perspectives. Firstly, it shows European diplomacy in action, gradually integrating the Black Sea into the international scene and turning the question of the Straits into a significant issue of the continental balance of power. Russia's privileged position in the Black Sea area was followed by Austria and the western powers requesting similar advantages from the Porte so as to avoid the imposition of a renewed hegemony over the Euxine. Secondly, it proves how important strategic commodities such as naval stores had become in the political and commercial contest of the great maritime powers. Trying to secure reliable connections with a promising market, European cabinets hurried to conclude trade and navigation agreements with Russia, the new actor of the southern Mediterranean commercial route–way. Thirdly, at a micro level, it shows how merchants along this route ventured into the Black Sea and widened the breach in the jealously guarded status of the Turkish Straits.

However, during this early phase the trading infrastructure of the Black Sea area was too weak to allow continuous and secure trading relations. The Turks were still reluctant to completely open the Bosphorus to international shipping and mercantile fluxes remained insecure, resisting with the support of the governmental privileges meant to encourage the development of trade. It took three more decades and a peaceful period to fully integrate this area into the vortex of the capitalist world–system.

NOTES

[1] Idris Bostan, "The history of regulations regarding passage rights through the Strait of Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire era," in the vol. *The Turkish Straits. Maritime safety, legal and environmental aspects*, edited by Nilüfer Oral and Bayram Őztürk, Turkish Marine Research Foundation, Istanbul, 2006, 8–9 (online version at http://www.tudav.org/new/pdfs/turkish_straits_tudav.pdf). An Ottoman document dated 1782, referring to the merchants and ship-owners involved in provisioning Istanbul with Black Sea grain, suggests that most of them were either Turks or Muslims – Daniel Panzac, "International and domestic maritime trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th century," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1992, 195. A list of Ottoman ships seized in the Black Sea at the outbreak of the 1787 war in Faruk Bilici, "Navigation et commerce en Mer Noire pendant la guerre ottomano–ruse de 1787–1792: les navires ottomans saisis par les russes," *Anatolia moderna*, vol. 3, 1992, 261–277.

[2] References to a commercial revolution were already made in the instructions given in 1784 to Auguste de Choiseul–Gouffier, the French ambassador to Constantinople, as quoted by Robert Mantran, *Commerce maritime et économie dans l'Empire Ottoman au XVIIIe siècle*, in the vol. *Économie et sociétés dans l'Empire Ottoman (Fin du XVIIIe – Début du XXe siècle). Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (1er – 5 juillet 1980)*, edited by Jean–Louis Bacqué–Grammont et Paul Dumont, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 1983, 293; "Many speculations have been entertained concerning the extent and value of the traffick which Russia is likely to establish in the Black Sea, and the revolution which it may effect in the commerce of Europe, by transferring part of the Baltick trade to the ports of the Mediterranean" – William Coxe, *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, interspersed with historical relations and political inquiries*, second edition, vol. II, T. Cadell, London, 1785, 248.

[3] Charles King, *The Black Sea. A history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, 144–145.

[4] John P. LeDonne, "Geopolitics, logistics, and grain: Russia's ambitions in the Black Sea basin, 1737–1834," *International History Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2006, 3–4.

[5] King, *The Black Sea*, 146.

[6] The context in LeDonne, "Geopolitics," 4–6.

[7] The text in *Recueil des principaux traités d'alliance, de paix, de trêve, etc.*, vol. I (1761–1778), edited by Georg Friedrich Martens, J. C. Dietrich, Göttingen, 1791, 507–522; analyses of its significance, from different perspectives, in Matthew Smith Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923: a study in international relations*, Macmillan, London, 1966, XI; Paul Gogeanu, *Strâmtorile Mării Negre de-a lungul istoriei*, Editura Politică, Bucharest, 1966, 53–59; Roderick H. Davison, "'Russian skill and Turkish

imbecility': the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji reconsidered," *Slavic Review*, vol. 35, no. 3, 1976, 464; King, *The Black Sea*, 146–147.

[8] Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 2–5. Importance of this in Immanuel Wallerstein and Reșat Kasaba, "Incorporation into the world-economy: change in the structure of the Ottoman Empire, 1750–1839," in the vol. *Économie et sociétés* cit., 346–347.

[9] Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 9–10. The whole context of the annexation in Idem, "The Great Powers and the Russian annexation of the Crimea, 1783–4," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 37, no. 88, 1958, 17–18.

[10] Idem, *The Eastern Question*, 20.

[11] LeDonne, "The territorial reform of the Russian Empire 1775–1796. II: The Borderlands, 1777–1796," *Cahiers du monde russe et sovietique*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1983, 422–424.

[12] James A. Duran, Jr., "Catherine II, Potemkin, and colonization policy in Southern Russia," *Russian Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1969, 32. Other data in Jean–Louis van Regemorter, *La Russie Méridionale, la Mer Noire et le commerce international de 1774 à 1861*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Université de Paris 1, Panthéon – Sorbonne, Paris, 1984, 22 (Table 3, Evolution de la population masculine en Nouvelle-Russie); for the organization of the area, see Roger R. Bartlett, *Human capital: the settlement of foreigners in Russia 1762–1804*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, 109–142 (Chapter IV – "Southern Russia 1764–1796").

[13] Grain exports through the Russian Black Sea ports during this period in Arcadius Kahan, *The plow, the hammer and the knout: an economic history of eighteenth–century Russia*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985, 170 (yearly averages of 182 Chetverts for the period 1776-1780 and 14,136 for the 1781–1790 decade).

[14] Mose Lofley Harvey, *The development of Russian commerce on the Black Sea and its significance*, PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1938, 48–51; references to these ports in Vassilis Kardassis, *Diaspora merchants in the Black Sea. The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775–1861*, Lexington Books, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford, 2001, 29–32.

[15] *An account of Odessa. Translated from the French with some reflections showing the benefits of the trade of the Black Sea to the United States of America and the advantages of a commercial treaty with Turkey*, by an American, William Simons, Newport, 1819, 4.

[16] The attempts to use the Dnieper River in shipping goods to the Black Sea ports are detailed in Robert E. Jones, "The Dnieper trade route in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: a note," *The International History Review*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1989, 303–312.

[17] Harvey, *The development*, 49–51.

[18] *Ibid.*, 51–53.

[19] *Recueil des principaux traités* cit., II (1779–1786), 623.

[20] *Ibid.*, vol. III (1787–1790), 6–7 (article XI of the treaty has direct references to the Black Sea trade); Harvey, *The development*, 53–55. Significance of this treaty in Regemorter, "Commerce et politique: preparation et négociation du traité franco–russe de 1787," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1963, 230–257 and Frank Fox, "Negotiating with the Russians: Ambassador Ségur's Mission to Saint Petersbourg, 1784–1789," *French Historical Studies*, no. 1, 1971, 47–71.

[21] *Recueil des principaux traités* cit., II, 39–40 (article 7).

[22] Harvey, *The development*, 55. Spain was also very interested in these prospects – Eugen Denize, "Spania și Marea Neagră la sfârșitul secolului XVIII," *Revista istorică*, vol. VII, no. 7–8, 1996, 547–553.

[23] Text in *Recueil des principaux traités* cit., II, 389–391 and *Treaties and other documents relating to the Black Sea, the Dardanelles, and the Bosphorus, 1535–1877* (Turkey, No. 16), Harrisons and Sons, London, 1878, 7–8.

[24] Bostan, "The history," 11–12.

[25] King, *The Black Sea*, 158–160. Details in R. C. Anderson, "Naval events of the Russo–Turkish war of 1787–1791," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, vol. 61, February – May 1916, 309–331 and Donald W. Mitchell, *A history of Russian and Soviet sea power*, Macmillan, New York, 1974, 71–81.

[26] Vladimir E. Bulatov, "Eighteenth–century Russian charts of the Straits (Bosporus and Dardanelles)," *Imago Mundi*, vol. 52, 2000, 96–111; Aleksey K. Zaytsev, "The three earliest charts of Akhtiar (Sevastopol') harbour," *Ibid.*¸ 112–123.

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[28] Idem, "Tentatives d'implantation," 689–690; details also in Eric Schnakenbourg, "Genèse d'un nouveau commerce: la France et l'ouverture du marché russe par la mer Noire dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^{e} siècle," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, vol. 83, 2011, 8 (online version at http://cdlm.revues.org/index6304.html).

[29] See also references to Potemkin's estate in Krichev and its importance for the Black Sea area in Ian R. Christie, "Samuel Bentham and the Western colony at Krichev, 1784–1791," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 48, no. 111, 1970, 232–247.

[30] Schnakenbourg, "Genèse," 8–9.

[31] *Ibid.*, 10-11.

[32] M. Anthoine, Baron de Saint Joseph, *Essai historique sur le commerce et la navigation en Mer Noire*, V Agasse, Treuttel et Wurtz, Arthus Bertrand, Paris, 1820, 102–104; Schnakenbourg, "Genèse," 11.

[33] For Anthoine's career, see also Regemorter, "Légende ou réalité: Antoine Anthoine, pionnier du commerce marseillais en mer Noire," in the vol. *Hommes, idées, journaux. Mélanges en l'honneur de Pierre Guiral*, edited

by Jean–Antoine Gili and Ralph Schor, Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris, 1988, 319–326 and Gilbert Buti, "Du comptoir à la toge. Antoine Anthoine: négoce, familles et pouvoirs en Provence au XVIII^e siècle," *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest*, vol. 112, no. 4, 2005, 201–215.

[34] Bilici, *La politique française*, 129–133; Schnakenbourg, "Genèse," 15.

[35] Bilici, "Tentatives d'implantation," 692.

[36] Schnakenbourg, "Genèse," 16.

[37] Nicolae Docan, "Explorațiuni austriece pe Dunăre la sfârșitul secolului al XVIII-lea," *Analele Academiei Române – Memoriile secțiunii istorice*, series II, vol. 36, 1914, 547–550; Ileana Căzan, "Comerțul austriac la Gurile Dunării. Primele tentative, 1768–1791," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "George Barițʺ*, Series Historica, t. XLII, 2003, 218. Similar information in Eadem, "Austrian surveys at the Lower Danube and in the Pontic Basin (1778–1791). Topographic maps and military clashes," *Revue roumaine d'histoire*, vol. XL–XLI, 2001–2002, 109–127; Eadem, *Stratégie et commerce – navigation autrichienne au Bas Danube au XVIII^e siècle*, in the vol. *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en Mer Noire, XIV–XXI siècles*, edited by Anca Popescu, Ionel Cândea and Faruk Bilici, Istros Publishing House, Brăila, 2007, 211–221; Eadem, *Interese austriece la Dunărea de Jos. Strategie. Navigație. Comerț*, Oscar Print, Bucharest, 2007; Eadem, "La politique pontique de la Maison d'Autriche, de l'utopie à la stratégie (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècles)," *Historical Yearbook*, vol. VIII, 2011, 43–58.

[38] Docan, "Explorațiuni," 562–563.

[39] *Ibid.*, 554–555; Căzan, "Comerțul," 217.

[40] Docan, "Explorațiuni," 567–571; a detailed presentation in Hans Halm, "Ein Kapitel habsburgischen Osthandels. Die erste Reise des Willeshoveschen Compagnie (1782)," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1953, 180–240.

[41] Docan, "Explorațiuni," 582–583; Căzan, "Comerțul," 219. Details in Halm, "Cherson, das Amsterdam des Südens (Willeshovens zweite Expedition)," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1953, 383–427.

[42] Docan, "Explorațiuni," 583–586. Details in Hans Halm, "Donauhandel und Donauschiffahrt von den österreichischen Erblanden, nach Neurussland (1783)," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Osteuropas*, no. 2, 1, 1954, 1–52.

[43] *Recueil des principaux traités* cit., II, 513–514; *Treaties and other documents*, 9.

[44] *Recueil des principaux traités* cit., II, 623; Docan, "Explorațiuni," 594–595.

[45] Docan, "Explorațiuni," 589–596; Căzan, "Comerțul," 219–220. Hans Halm, "Wegbereiter des Grosshandels: auf der Donau bis zur Zäsur des Krieges 1787," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1954, 258–303.

[46] Cristian Luca, "Negustori venețieni și triestini în porturile de la gurile Dunării în ultimul sfert al secolului al XVIII-lea," *Revista istorică*, t. XXIII, no. 1–2, 2012, 100–102.

[47] The question of the Ottoman economic "monopoly" over the Principalities' foreign trade is extremely debated in the modern historiography. For the

important views, cf. M[aria] M[atilda] Alexandrescu–Dersca [Bulgaru], "Contribution au problème de l'approvisionnement en blè de Constantinople dans la seconde moitiè du XVIII^e siècle," *Studia et acta orientalia*, vol. I, 1958, 13–37; Eadem, "Les rapports économiques de l'Empire Ottoman avec les Principautés Roumaines et leur réglementation par les Khatt-i Šerif de privilèges (1774–1829),' in *Économie et sociétés* cit., 317–326; Eadem, "L'approvisionement d'Istanbul par les Principautés Roumaines au XVIII^e siècle. Commerce ou requisition," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, no. 66, 1992, *Les Balkans à l'époque ottoman*, 73–78; Bogdan Murgescu, "Avatarurile unui concept: monopolul comercial otoman asupra Ţărilor Române," *Revista istorică*, new series, vol. I, no. 9–10, 1990, 819–845; Idem, "Some considerations on the Romanian historiography about the Ottoman-Romanian commercial relations," *Otomano-Turcica*, vol. I, 2003, 127–140.

[48] Andrei Oțetea, *Pătrunderea comerțului românesc în circuit internațional (în perioada de trecere de la feudalism la capitalism)*, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 1977, 20–22.

[49] Alexandrescu–Dersca [Bulgaru], "Les rapports économiques," 320.

[50] Jan Reychman, "Le commerce polonais en mer Noire au XVIII^e siëcle par le port de Kherson," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, vol. VII, no. 2, 1966, 234–235; Henryk Klimesz, "Poland's trade through the Black Sea in the eighteenth century," *The Polish Review*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1970, 56.

[51] *Ibid.*, 62–63.

[52] *Ibid.*, 63–65.

[53] Reychman, "Le commerce," 236.

[54] Klimesz, "Poland's trade," 70–71.

[55] Reychman, "Le commerce," 236–237; Klimesz, "Poland's trade," 74.

[56] Reychman, "Le commerce," 238; Klimesz, "Poland's trade," 76–77.

[57] A presentation of this strategic product in William Eton, *A concise account of the commerce and navigation of the Black Sea from recent and authentic information*, Luke Hansard, London, 1805, 28–32.

[58] Reychman, "Le commerce," 244; Klimesz, "Poland's trade," 73.

[59] Reychman, "Le commerce," 243.

[60] *Ibid.*, 237–238; Klimesz, "Poland's trade," 71.

[61] Reychman, "Le commerce," 245; Klimesz, "Poland's trade," 67–68.

[62] Reychman, "Le commerce," 246.

[63] Klimesz, "Poland's trade," 75.

[64] Mirella Mafrici, "La diplomazia in azione nel Sette–Ottocento: rapporti commerciali tra la Russia e il Regno di Napoli," in the vol. *Mediterraneo e/è Mar Nero. Due mari tra età moderna e contemporanea*, edited by Luigi Mascilli Miglorini and Mirella Mafrici, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Naples, 2012, 38.

[65] *Ibid.*, 51. More information on this in Maria Luiza Cavalcanti, *Alle origini del Risorgimento. Le relazioni commerciali tra il Regno di Napoli e la Russia 1777–1815. Fatti e teorie*, Librairie Droz, Genève, 1979; Maria Sirago, "Il

consolato napoletano nel Mar Nero e losviluppo di Odessa tra la fine del Settecento e la prime metà dell'Ottocento," in vol. *Mediterraneo e/è Mar Nero* cit., 203–233.

[66] Luca, "Negustori," 95–97.

[67] Paul Cernovodeanu, "Diplomatic efforts for the access of the British merchant fleet to the Black Sea (1774–1803)," *Il Mar Nero*, vol. II, 1995, 275–276.

[68] Trevor J. Hope, "Anglia și comerțul în Marea Neagră la sfârșitul secolului al XVIII-lea," *Revista română de studii internaționale*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1974, 149. The same text, in English, "Britain and the Black Sea trade in the late eighteenth century," *Revue roumaine d'études internationales*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1974, 159–174. Similar information in Marius Gerald Epure, *Țările Române în politica orientală a Marii Britanii la sfârșitul secolului XVIII și începutul secolului XIX*, Paralele 45 Publishing House, Pitești, 2002, 39–53 and Nilghiun Ismail, *Relații economice anglo–otomane în Marea Neagră între 1774–1840*, Kriterion Publishing House, Cluj–Napoca, 2011, 22–78.

[69] Hope, "Anglia," 149–150. It has to be mentioned that English merchants from Constantinople also headed to the Crimea – E. D. Tappe, "Bentham in Wallachia and Moldavia," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 29, no. 72, 1950, 73.

[70] Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 16–18. For this question, see Idem, *Britain's Discovery of Russia 1553–1815*, Macmillan, London, 1958, 143–145 and Alain Cunningham, "The Oczakov Debate," *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1965, 209-237.

[71] Hope, "Anglia", 152. Details in Idem, "Georges Frederick Koehler, Sir James Bland Burges et les relations anglo–turques de 1791 à 1793," *Revue roumaine d'histoire*, vol. 13, no. 6, 1973, 95–114; Idem, "The secret Balkan missions of Captain Koehler and Captain Monro (1791–1793)", *Ibid.*, vol. 35, no. 1–2, 1996, 87–108.

[72] Hope, "Rapoartele amiralului Sir (William) Sidney Smith asupra stării Principatelor Moldova și Valahia în anul 1792", *Studii, Revista de istorie*, no. 4, 1973, 715–728.

[73] Hope, "Britain," 166. See also Idem, "The importance of the Ottoman Empire to British interests in the late eighteenth century," *Revue roumaine d'histoire*, vol. 34, no. 1–2, 1995, 141–163. In a larger context in Idem, *Interesele britanice în Europa de sud–est și în regiunea Dunării de Jos la sfârșitul secolului al XVIII-lea*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Romanian Academy, "Nicolae Iorga" History Institute, Bucharest, 1978.

[74] Cernovodeanu, "Un raport britanic din 1791 privitor la navigația și comerțul în Marea Neagră," *Revista istorică*, vol. VII, no. 7–8, 1996, 154–158; Jeremy Black, "The Russian Black Sea littoral in 1791: a memorandum on commercial opportunities," *Archives*, London, vol. XXII, no. 95, 1996, 121–129.

[75] Hope, "Anglia," 158–159.

[76] Claude Charles de Peyssonnel, *Traité sur le commerce de la Mer Noire*, vol. I–II, Cuchet, Paris, 1787.

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THE DEPORTATION OF ROMANIAN GERMANS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS PLACE WITHIN TRANSYLVANIAN SAXON MEMORY DISCOURSES IN GERMANY IN THE 1950S AND THE 1960S

Introduction

In January 1945, following Soviet orders, between 70,000 and 80,000 Romanian citizens of German ethnicity were deported to the Soviet Union, for forced labour, a situation that lasted in most cases until 1950/51.[1] A geographical breakdown of the deported looks roughly as follows: about 60,000 were Germans from Transylvania and Banat (30,000 Transylvanian Saxons and 30,000 Banat Swabians), while 10,000 were from the Sathmar region (5,000 Sathmar Swabians) and from the so-called 'Old Kingdom'.[2] The exact numbers are subject to debate, yet the higher percentage of Banat Swabians and Transylvanian Saxons mirrors the fact that from a numerical point of view these were the most significant German-speaking groups in Romania. The great part of the deported, men between 17 and 45 and women between 18 and 30 years old, were sent to the Donetsk region and to the Urals.[3]

The deportation to the Soviet Union can be historically integrated within the larger and more far-reaching process of flight and expulsion of Germans from Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the Second World War.[4] Nonetheless, the phenomenon displays significant differences when compared to the much better known expulsions of ethnic Germans from Poland or Czechoslovakia. Most importantly, it was a case of temporary deportation, in view of a precise purpose, and not of permanent resettlement. Furthermore, unlike in the Polish, Czech, or the Hungarian and Yugoslav cases, the Romanian government and other political actors tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to oppose the measure.[5]

At the same time, it must also be emphasised that Romanian Germans were not the only group of Germans from Central and Eastern Europe deported to Soviet labour camps. A similar fate afflicted Germans from Hungary, Yugoslavia and even from what is nowadays Western Poland. All in all, about 450.000 Germans from the said countries (Romania included) were deported.[6]

Nowadays, the deportation is undoubtedly a crucial element to Romanian German memory and, henceforth, to Romanian German identity and identification discourses. Salient evidence include processes of memorialisation that have taken place in the last two to three decades in both Romania and Germany: exhibitions, commemorations, inauguration of monuments and memorials, often in the presence of important political actors.[7] In the same context, the growing presence of academic and non-academic literature on the topic should be noticed. Nobel Prize winner Herta Müller's novel, *The Hunger Angel* (the original title is *Der Atemschaukel*),[8] is the best known literary work dealing with the deportation.

Questions surrounding the deportation of Romanian Germans and its consequences have been addressed on a scholarly level. The most comprehensive academic work on the topic is the three-volumes project, authored by Georg Weber et al., dealing with the deportation as a historical event, as a biographical event and as a topic handled in literature.[9] Other works looking at questions related to the deportation and its memory make extensive use of an oral history methodology, thus emphasising the perspective of the survivors and, in some cases, of their offspring, and aiming mainly to reconstruct experiences in the past.[10] Official documents and other primary sources have also been edited.[11]

Recently, Annemarie Weber analysed the representation of the deportation in *Neuer Weg*, the main German-language newspaper in Communist Romania, focusing on the same period as my own study (the 1950s and the 1960s).[12] She showed that in reality the deportation was not totally tabooed by Communist authorities in Romania and that at least in the 1950s a "valorisation of the reconstruction work" was present in the pages of *Neuer Weg*, in accordance with the ideological desiderata of the period. The ideological loading notwithstanding, Weber argues, this represented the "first and the most important integration offer for Romanian Germans".[13]

Nevertheless, in spite of this growing interest for questions regarding the Romanian German deportation to the Soviet Union, what is undoubtedly lacking is a study of the politics of memory associated with the deportation, charting the various top-down memory discourses about the phenomenon, their uses and their significance for the actors disseminating them, from the 1950s onwards. Worded differently, there is no analysis of the place and of the relevance of the deportation *after* the deportation, of its afterlife in the various conceptualisations of Transylvanian Saxon (and Romanian German) memory and identity. The present paper intends to partly fill in this gap, by looking mostly at discourses disseminated by Transylvanian Saxon elites in Germany in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the Transylvanian Saxon case, the two main Germany-based institutions aiming to speak on behalf of the community and thus shaping politics of identity and politics of memory were the Homeland Association (*Landsmannschaft*) of Transylvanian Saxons and the Aid Committee (*Hilfskomitee*) of Transylvanian Saxons and Evangelical Banat Swabians. Tightly interlinked, yet with partially different interests and with distinct approaches as regards Transylvanian Saxon future, both organisations were doing ethnic politics.

It is something of an obvious truth that, "the construction of memory is infused by politics".[14] Consequently, I grant attention to particular instantiations of what Lebow called "institutional memory", i.e. "efforts by political elites, their supporters, and their opponents to construct meanings of the past and propagate them more widely or impose them on other members of society."[15] Considering the fact that the main sources used for this research are press sources, I focus on top-down discourses and statements directly or indirectly related to the deportation. Furthermore, taking into account that the local component of memory plays a key role in the shaping of identity discourses and of self-representations and that the analysis of the local dimension facilitates the understanding of particular processes and tensions within larger social groups,[16] I also look at discourses about the deportation originating from more eccentric "ethnopolitical entrepreneurs". More concretely, I refer on the one hand to discourses promoted by elites within the two above-mentioned institutions (Homeland Association and Evangelical Aid Committee), and on the other hand to discourses disseminated from the margins of Transylvanian Saxon ethnic politics in Germany.

Furthermore, I connect the meanings of such discursive acts of memorialisation, coming from the centre or from the margins of Transylvanian Saxon ethnic politics, to broader Transylvanian Saxon self-representations and to the wider historical and socio-political contexts in which discourses about the deportation ensued. In this context, the present paper is fundamentally a study of textual discourses and of transmitted discursive knowledge, aiming to shed light upon what specific utterances stood for in particular contexts.

My own methodological approach has been informed by two studies on the memory of the expulsion of Germans from Silesia and of the loss of the region in favour of Poland, both of them much broader in scope than the present paper.[17] Christian Lotz analysed the stances of the most important organisational actors in the two German states, with respect to the memory of the expulsion and of the territorial loss, whereas Andreas Demshuk investigated the interpretative cleavage between the Silesian elites in Germany and the grassroots level, i.e. the ordinary expellees, members or non-members of the respective organisations. They both emphasised the conflicts regarding the interpretation of the expulsion, the various meanings such conflicts held, tightly linked with the politics pursued by and the interactions between the said institutions. For his research, Lotz used mostly archival material, found in several archives in Germany, whereas Demshuk also looked at press articles.

At the same time, it has to be emphasised that the landscape of memory discourses related to the Romanian German deportation has been and is undoubtedly broader than sketched in this paper, as a multitude of "memory workers" or "memory activists"[18] were directly or indirectly interested in the memorialisation of the event, representing various stances and acting in multiple ways. These actors can also be conceptualised as Transylvanian Saxon "ethnopolitical entrepreneurs", i.e. "specialists in ethnicity", who "may well live 'off' as well as 'for' ethnicity". One of the instruments they use is that of "reifying ethnic groups", through their management of ethnic politics on the one hand and through the fundamental role they play in the production and reproduction of ethnic identity discourses on the other hand.[19]

In order to delineate the memory discourses about the deportation and their role within the contemporary contexts they were part of, I resort to a number of sources inconsistently analysed until now. I refer mainly to the several postwar press publications of Transylvanian Saxons in Germany, such as *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, *Licht der Heimat*, or *Siebenbürgisch-sächsischer Hauskalender*. The first one was the official organ of the Homeland Association, whereas the latter two were published under the aegis of the Aid Committee. To these I added two *Heimatblätter*, *Zeidner Gruß* and *Wir Heldsdörfer*, i.e. periodical bulletins published under the aegis of former local Transylvanian Saxon communities for their members who had settled down in Germany. The attention I grant to press sources is based on the one hand on the close links between print media products and the shaping of collective memory,[20] and on the other hand on the fact that the analysis of Transylvanian Saxon publications in Germany offers the possibility to grasp and deconstruct the identity discourses and the related conflicts and tensions taking place within the institutions aiming to represent Transylvanian Saxons. Such publications were part of the so-called "expellee press".[21] They provide a valuable and insightful source on numerous aspects related to Transylvanian Saxon life and conflicts in Germany after the Second World War.

Through looking at these sources, this paper intends to provide answers, be they only partial, to a number of questions. The Homeland Association and the Aid Committee had very different perspectives as regards the future prospects of the Romanian German communities, but was this in any way linked with different interpretations of the deportation to the Soviet Union in the first postwar decades? What role did these interpretations play in the larger narratives promoted by these groups? Did Transylvanian Saxon elites within the Homeland Association insert the deportation in the wider context of the victimhood discourses promoted by the umbrela-association Federation of Expellees (*Bund der Vertriebenen*) and if yes, how?

By researching the particular case of Transylvanian Saxon elites in Germany in the first postwar decades, this paper sheds light upon some of the relevant actors in a very broad picture. Thus, it should be read and taken first and foremost as a starting point of an attempt to comprehensively chart the multitude of memory discourses on to the deportation, and the related conflicts. On the one hand, my intention is to shed light upon particular instantiations of the "Germans as victims" discourse and to see how discourses on the deportation stand in relationship to this broader discursive paradigm.[22] On the other hand, looking at the Transylvanian Saxon memorialisation of the deportation in the first postwar decades definitely opens the way for future elaborations on the transformations of Romanian German identity discourses from the second half of the 20th century onwards.

Transylvanian Saxons at the End of the Second World War

Saxon presence in Transylvania dates all the way back to the 12th century, with Saxon identity being maintained up to the 18th century by means of a certain degree of jurisdictional, religious, and cultural autonomy.[23] Following the First World War and the Paris Peace Treaties from 1919, Transylvania, until then part of the Habsburg Empire, was incorporated into Romania and henceforth Transylvanian Saxons became part of the German minority in Romania, which also included other German-speaking groups such as Banat Swabians, Sathmar Swabians, Bukovina Germans, Bessarabia Germans, or Dobruja Germans. In 1930 figures showed around 237,000 Germans in the region.[24] The relationships with Germany and with the German-speaking world had always been an important aspect of Transylvanian Saxon cultural and social life,[25] yet they gained political momentum especially after 1933, National Socialist ideology exerting a very powerful attraction upon Transylvanian Saxons.[26]

Romania entered the Second World War in 1941, siding with the Axis. In 1943, Romanian authorities officially allowed Romanian Germans to join German troops, yet the phenomenon had already started beforehand.[27] Romania's sudden change of sides, on 23 August 1944, abruptly placed Germans in Romania into a totally new situation: from a privileged minority during Romania's alliance with Hitler, they suddenly became enemies. Furthermore, the presence of Soviet troops on Romanian territory, *de facto* acting in many ways like an occupation army, was already rightfully perceived as omenous. In this context, following Soviet orders, the deportation of Romanian Germans (women between 18 and 30 years old, men between 17 and 45 years old) to the Soviet Union, 'for the reconstruction of the country' took place. Given the fact that many Romanian German men were at the time still serving in the Wehrmacht or in the SS, there was a gender imbalance within Romanian German communities. This also led to a situation in which more than half of the deported were women. Most of the deported were released by the end of the 1940s. About 15% of the deportees did not survive the harsh conditions.[28]

Practically, the Second World War led to the seemingly irreversible displacement of a significant number of Transylvanian Saxons. The massive enrolment of young Transylvanian Saxon men in the German Army and in the SS made it impossible, or at least extremely difficult, for them to come back to Romania.[29] According to Hans-Werner Schuster, most of the about

20.000 men in this situation were discharged in Germany.[30] Furthermore, during the war Transylvania was divided between Romania and Hungary, the northern part of the region falling under the administration of the latter country. Unlike most of their fellow Saxons in southern Transylvania, many Saxons in northern Transylvania fled from the advancement of the Soviet armies, ending in Austria and in southern Germany. Their evacuation practically started the chain of events better known as "flight and expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe".[31] Figures are far from being irrelevant: this was probably the largest group of Transylvanian Saxons in Germany, numbering about 50.000 individuals.[32] To these two groups one should add the relatively small number of intellectuals and other people who had moved to Germany before or during the war. Last, but definitely not least, of those deported from Romania to the Soviet Union, around 15.000 Transylvanian Saxons were sent back in the second half of the 1940s not to their home country, but to the Soviet Occupation Zone, in Frankfurt (Oder). Most of them then moved to the Federal Republic.[33] They completed the structure of the Transylvanian Saxon community in Germany in the first postwar decades.[34]

Just like in the case of all Germans from Central- and Eastern Europe who were expelled at the end of the Second World War, German legislation granted Transylvanian Saxons from the start relatively easy access to citizenship.[35] This also led to a situation in which the Transylvanian Saxon community was caught on the two sides of the Iron Curtain, communicating with difficulty, if at all: the greatest part of it was in Romania, whereas a smaller, albeit very active part, was in the Federal Republic of Germany. Moreover, this was conducive to increasing difficulties and conflicts regarding the prospects for the future of the Transylvanian Saxon community, conflicts placed and displayed in both Romania and Germany.

In the immediate postwar years, Germany being occupied by the Allies, the German expellees from Central- and Eastern Europe were prohibited from forming political organisations.[36] In this context, the very first expellee institutions to be created were the religious ones, "organised primarily to help alleviate individual hardships".[37] This was also valid in the Transylvanian Saxon case, most surely also on the basis of the traditionally political role of the Lutheran Church in Transylvania, the so-called *Volkskirche* (national church).[38] On 6 February 1947 the Aid Committee of Transylvanian Saxons and Evangelical Banat Swabians was founded.[39] Only later, in 1949, was the Homeland Association set up.[40] Nevertheless, the close interdependence of the two organisations was visible from the very start, on both a personal and institutional level. Fritz Heinz Reimesch, a Transylvanian Saxon writer settled in Germany since the interwar period and having made a career during Nazi rule, was in the early 1950s president of both institutions.

One of the key figures within the Homeland Association, and undoubtedly its main ideologue during the greatest part of the post-war period was Heinrich Zillich (1898-1988), writer and former Nazi enthusiast. Zillich had been a fervent admirer of Hitler and one of the so-called cultural renewers (*Erneuerer*) in the interwar period.[41] In effect, the Homeland Association was practically dominated by individuals who previously contributed directly to the success of National Socialism within the Transylvanian Saxon community in Romania.[42]

In time, the Homeland Association and the Aid Committee started to have divergent points regarding the future of Transylvanian Saxons. On the one hand, the lay/political elites within the Homeland Association pushed for migration of Saxons from Romania to Germany, considering that there can be no proper future for the community in the former homeland. On the other hand, the religious elites gathered under the aegis of the Aid Committee and fundamentally close to the Lutheran Church in Romania were very critical towards this approach. They were aiming rather towards creating the necessary conditions in order for a significant Transylvanian Saxon community to continue to exist in Romania, despite the hardships imposed by the Communist regime in the country.[43]

Integrating Romanian German Memory and Identity in the West German Context. The Deportation to the Soviet Union versus the Evacuation of Saxons from Northern Transylvania

Münz and Ohliger argue that the construction of Germans as a "nation of victims" was hegemonic in the first two postwar decades and one of the main elements of this scaffolding was connected with the suffering and the plights of the expellees.[44] Consequently, it is hardly a surprise that in the first two postwar decades (especially in the 1950s) the predominant discourse disseminated by Transylvanian Saxon elites was focusing on victimhood. As such, it could easily be acknowledged within the German public opinion and also within the circle of German "expellees" from

Central- and Eastern Europe, dominated by the Homeland Associations of Sudeten and Silesian Germans.[45]

Within this general setting, one could expect discourses on Romanian German deportation to the Soviet Union to be present in the foreground of Transylvanian Saxon public space, as displayed in *Siebenbürgische Zeitung, Licht der Heimat* or *Siebenbürgisch-sächsischer Hauskalender,* the three main publications of Saxons in Germany. The deportation of around 30,000 Transylvanian Saxons to the Soviet Union for forced labour was undoubtedly fit to enter a paradigm of victimhood. Nevertheless, looking for materials on the deportation in the issues of the said publications appearing in the anniversary months and years (January 1955, January 1960, January 1965, January 1970) proved to be a largely futile endeavour. Only in February 1970 did *Siebenbürgische Zeitung* publish an account about the deportation, on the page dedicated to women(!). Furthermore, the title of the article was "12 Januar 1965 - Erinnerungen" (12 January 1965 - memories), suggesting that it had to wait five years in order to be published.[46] What is even more striking is that roughly in the same period of time, the anniversaries of the evacuation of Saxons from northern Transylvania were marked through several articles, in all three publications.[47] Thus, an implicit memory conflict can be detected, between two sets of traumatic group experiences.[48]

The question regarding the reasons for the profuse interest for the evacuation of Saxons from northern Transylvania and the comparatively smaller attention granted to the deportation to the Soviet Union can be explained by several factors. Firstly, the discourse on evacuation could be easily integrated within the larger paradigm of 'flight and expulsion', prevalent within German public space in the first postwar decades. There are a number of important differences between the fate of Germans in the northern part of Transylvania, who were evacuated by and together with the retreating German army, and that of Germans in western Poland or from the Sudeten region, who were expelled by the local governments of the time. The former could more easily be presented as part of the 'flight and expulsion', an argument in favour of the institutional and political integration of the Transylvanian Saxon Homeland Association within larger expellee organisations.

Secondly, the evacuation of Saxons from northern Transylvania also brought forth consequences in many ways similar to those ensued from the expulsions from Poland and Czechoslovakia, such as the loss of property, and was thus legally addressed by the German state, through the Law on the Equalisation of Burdens (*Lastenausgleichsgesetz*).[49] In 1951, Heinrich Zillich argued for the integration of Transylvanian Saxons in the community of expellees, on the basis of the „common destiny", thus suggesting that this was not taken for granted and that debates in this respect were present either within the circles of Transylvanian Saxon leadership or within the wider expellee movement: "It must be said, that we have a common destiny, that we construct the block of 9 million expellees. We also belong to it from an organisational point of view and we are fully entitled. We have no reason to step out of line."[50]

Saxon self-identification discourses emphasising the flight from Transylvania were thus part and parcel of attempts to integrate within the broader expellee community, politically acknowledged by the West German state and active under the aegis of several institutions, out of which the Federation of Expellees emerged in December 1958 as the sole representative body.[51] The efforts of the Homeland Association to construct Transylvanian Saxons as 'expellees' reached their pinnacle in a different context, much later, in 1985, when the paradoxical expression "expelled, yet held back in the expelling country", was coined by journalist Hans Hartl.[52] The political connotations and goals related to the use of such an expression are linked with the perceived recognition granted in West Germany to German expellees from Central and Eastern Europe. The typescript bearing as motto the aforementioned locution was handed over to German politicians and policy-makers, in view of supporting Romanian German migration to Germany in the second half of the 1980s.[53]

It would go beyond the scope of the present paper to analyse in depth the ways in which the Saxon integration into the larger expellee community was construed, yet it is worth emphasising that in the first two postwar decades placing the experiences of Saxons from northern Transylvania under spotlight came hand in hand with an apparent lack of centrally-steered commemorative interest for the deportation to the Soviet Union.

Moreover, avoiding memory talk about the deportation could also be connected with the question of guilt and responsibility. Many of those involved in the politics of the Homeland Association had been, in the interwar period, fervent National Socialists.[54] Thus, they were practically the ones who made possible the equation of 'German' with 'Hitlerite', one of its consequences being the deportation of their fellow Saxons from Romania to the Soviet Union. Not transforming the deportation into an institutionally sanctioned part of official memory could also be a way in which sensitive questions regarding one's own responsibility for the phenomenon were avoided. Nevertheless, this hypothesis should be verified by recurring to archival sources, such as internal documents of the Homeland Association, correspondence etc. At the same time, despite the existence of animosities and tensions between the Homeland Association and the Aid Committee, often also regarding the Nazi past, such conflicts were rarely made public in the first postwar decades.[55]

Last but not least, one of the main differences between northern Transylvanian Saxons and deported Saxons settled in Germany was their degree of 'groupness'. Not only that the former were undoubtedly more numerous in the 1950s and the 1960s, but their evacuation often led to a situation in which villages and groups practically migrated *in toto*. This facilitated the reconstruction or the reinstatement of social institutions, that could then impose the collective remembrance of the recent past.

Nevertheless, the deportation seems to have been commemorated in the 1960s under the aegis of newly created *Heimatortsgemeinschaften*, i.e. communities gathering the former inhabitants of villages and localities in Transylvania, now living in Germany. In this context, the *Zeidner Gruß*, i.e. the news bulletin of the Zeiden/Codlea/Feketehalom community in Germany, offers relevant information about the twentieth anniversary of the deportation with extensive material on the event, thus showing a difference between the central indifference and the local need for commemoration of the deportation. Zeiden is a locality in southern Transylvania. Therefrom, around 500 Germans were deported in January 1945 to the Soviet Union. The total number of Germans in Zeiden was somewhere around 3,000 (around 400 Germans from Zeiden served in the Wehrmacht and in the SS during the Second World War). About 300 of the deportees returned to Zeiden, while around 100 were discharged in Germany, and about 100 died in the deportation.[56]

The commemoration of the deportation took place at the fifth edition of the Zeiden neighbourhood day (*Nachbarschaftstag*), celebrated in Bischofshohen, a locality close to Salzburg. The young *Nachbarvater* (neighbourhood elder), Balduin Harter, gave a lengthy speech on this occasion, published in the pages of the *Zeidner Gruß*.[57] Maria Bucur's claim that memory is always local appears to be borne out in this case.[58] Furthermore, even before this anniversary, one could read in *Zeidner Gruß* about various other local attempts to memorialise the deportation, such as religious services in the Transylvanian homeland for those who were deported to the Soviet Union, or even the composition of songs dedicated to the deported.[59]

Herter's intervention in 1965 is based upon his own memories of the event, as he was one of the deportees, but also on memories of other deportees, whom he asked and encouraged to write down their own experiences.[60] As thus, he fits in the paradigm promoted in the 1950s and 1960s by means of the large, eight volumes documentation project on the expulsion of Germans from Central- and Eastern Europe.[61] As Robert G. Moeller noticed, the documentation implied moving away from "a historiographical tradition that had focused all but exclusively on the stories of great men and nation states" and moving towards the grassroots level and the stories of ordinary people, accounts of eye-witnesses.[62] In the same vein, Herter's main objectives seemed to be the collection of firsthand material about the deportations from those directly hit by the phenomenon and the commemoration of those who died, whose names were read out loud in front of a standing audience.[63]

The Responsibility for the Deportation

Zeidner Gruß, in effect the first *Heimatblatt* published by Transylvanian Saxons in Germany,[64] offers thus important insights into the local aspects of memorialisation and remembrance of the deportation. Another similar publication appearing during the same period of time,[65] *Wir Heldsdörfer*, the *Heimatblatt* of the Heldsdorf/Hălchiu/Höltöveny community, partially confirms that the need to commemorate the deportation was bigger on the local level. Nevertheless, unlike in *Zeidner Gruß*, no reference was made to the organisation of commemorative events related to the deportation. Yet accounts of those deported or literary pieces inspired by the deportation were published.[66] More importantly, in 1970 six pages were dedicated to the forced labour in the Soviet Union.[67]

The latter material leads us to another relevant question regarding the deportation as a historical event and its afterlife, i.e. its memory and its interpretations within Romanian German circles in Germany during the Cold War. In a text published initially in *Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter*,[68] and then in *Wir Heldsdörfer*, Bernard Ohsam, in effect one of the very first authors of a novel about the deportation, inspired from his own experiences,[69] touches upon the question of responsibility for the fate of Romanian Germans at the end of the Second World War.[70] In Ohsam's view, Romanian authorities were the main culprits for the deportation, as they had decided to deport the German population, although Stalin and the Soviet Union had simply requested qualified labour force for the reconstruction of the country.[71]

Ohsam's intervention from 1970 was not the first one addressing the issue of guilt and responsibility for the deportation. At one point, in 1951-1952, the question had already elicited a short-lived debate, not within the small circle of Transylvanian Saxon elites, but rather between such elites and members of the Romanian exile, close to the Rădescu government, under whose administration the deportation took place. The reasons for contention were related to the responsibility for the deportations, ascribed by Heinrich Zillich and by others not only to the Soviet occupiers, but also to a large extent to the Romanian authorities.[72]

In January 1952, on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the deportation, a certain Cornelius (a pseudonym) published a harsh attack against the Romanian government: "When in late autumn 1944, the Soviets requested workforce from Romania, on treaty basis, the Romanian politicians in charge agreed to offer them first the human fair game of that time: the German-speaking population."[73] An exchange of opinions ensued. The Romanian answer to the allegations came from Constantin Vișoianu, Minister of Foreign Affairs during the deportation and president of the Romanian National Committee in Exile in the 1950s, who represented the today commonly held, historically based view that the Romanian government officially opposed the deportation.[74] Yet later on, in April, A.H. (most probably, Alfred Hönig) reinforced the view that Germans were targeted not only by Romanian Communists, but also by the bourgeois parties and, moreover, that they had been victims even under Antonescu: "We *Volksdeutschen* were not beneficiaries, but playthings of the alliance between National Socialist Germany and Antonescu's Romania… […] Under Antonescu, some of the regulations of the Romanian legislation directed against Jews were also utilised against us *Volksdeutsche*."[75]

The exchange is undoubtedly telling of the lack of information about the deportation and also of the rumours and opinions circulating as common currency within the Transylvanian Saxon community at the time, regarding who was accountable for the phenomenon. Yet the question that arises is whether ascribing the guilt not only to the Soviets, but also to the Romanian pre-Communist authorities had any meaning beyond the simple lack of knowledge on a very recent phenomenon. In 1995, Georg Weber et al. showed that with the exception of the Communists, members of all Romanian political parties tried, in different ways, to protest against the measure.[76] Although in the context of the early 1950s it was hard, if not impossible, for Transylvanian Saxon elites in Germany to be aware of what had happened on a political level behind closed doors in Romania, their initial stance regarding the accountability for the deportation can be integrated within the policy they developed towards mid-1950s, that of pushing for migration of Germans from Romania to Germany.

Furthermore, dissenting views within the community were not properly taken into account. For example, Herwart Scheiner argued that the deportation was a Soviet order.[77] He had been a member of the Romanian German leadership in Romania during the period of the deportation, trying to convince General Rădescu, the leader of the government, to cancel the order.[78] Henceforth, he probably had first-hand knowledge that the deportation was actually to blame on the Soviets. Nevertheless, his view was not properly taken into account by the elites within the Homeland Association.

Interestingly, this alternative stance with regard to the responsibility for the deportation came from one of the early opponents of the ethnic politics promoted by the Homeland Association. Pierre de Trégomain showed that in 1947 Scheiner was a supporter of the *in toto* migration of Transylvanian Saxons to Germany,[79] whereas the migration solution was embraced definitively by the Homeland Association only towards the mid-1950s.[80] However, in 1949, Scheiner set up an organisation aiming to represent all Romanian Germans in Germany, thus straightforwardly threatening to compete with the Homeland Association(s) for the top-down production and reproduction of Romanian German identities. Yet this time he was distinctly pleading for a Romanian German return to Romania.[81] This change of attitude might prove that Scheiner was looking for various ways to enter into confrontation with the established leaders of Transylvanian Saxons in Germany, i.e. the Homeland Association. Eventually, little came out of this dispute. Nevertheless, the fact that it was precisely Scheiner whose stance regarding the deportation was at odds with the prevalent one shows that one has plenty to gain, research-wise, from connecting the interpretations of the deportation with the broader political and cultural contexts they were part of. The uses and instrumentalisations of the deportation can thus be better comprehended.

Portraying both Communists and non-Communists in Romania as ready to offer Germans as labour force to the Soviets implied that the fate of the German minority in Romania was practically sealed, no matter who was in charge in Romania. In conclusion, Romania was a country Transylvanian

Saxons could not properly go back to. This vision fitted the policy of the Homeland Association, pleading for Transylvanian Saxon migration from Romania to Germany since the mid-1950s onwards.

The Deportation to the Soviet Union and the Second World War

Although the deportation was not often directly addressed and although it was not institutionally sanctioned within centrally-steered Transylvanian Saxon memory discourses in the 1950s and the 1960s, texts about Transylvanian Saxon (recent) history did include references to the deportation. For example, in his 1951 discourse at the Transylvanian Saxon homeland meeting (*Heimattag*) in Dinkelsbühl, Reimesch asked for a German recognition of Saxon deportation in the Soviet Union, thus suggesting that within the larger discourse on expulsion, the deportation did not have a place of its own:

> Tens of thousands of German lads and girls, men and women were deported as forced labourers to Russia and there they had to do penance for a guilt that was not theirs, but which they carried with spiritual greatness, without having won until now recognition amidst the German people! How many amongst them are lying now at the margins of Asia, in foreign lands!.[82]

One finds here in a nutshell the constant Transylvanian Saxon quest for German recognition, sign of a fundamentally asymmetrical relationship. Furthermore, considering the entirety of Reimesch's text and the prevalent self-identification discourses promoted by Heinrich Zillich, and also by expellee associations in general, the reference to "Asia" can also be comprehended.[83] The historical narratives disseminated by Zillich and Reimesch can be summarised as follows: in the past, Germans were sent as colonisers to Eastern Europe, thus being the main contributors to the advancement and progress of the region and properly inscribing it onto the European map. Endowed with positive connotations, Saxon colonisation in the region is seen as a 'mission', abruptly brought to an end by the loss of the war and by the advancement of Soviet armies. Such discourses practically stand for a continuation of National Socialist discourses from before and during the war. Consequently, the deportation is practically addressed as part of the war, with the deportees being often placed next to war prisoners or war victims.[84]

Sometimes, this led to a *de facto* equation of deportees with war prisoners. For example, on the occasion of the 1951 homeland meeting, Alfred Coulin pleaded for remembering those Saxons who lost their homeland: „…some fled on long treks, others came to Germany, where the black market was blossoming, through Russia, where they were in war captivity."[85] At first glance, the deportation is absent from Coulin's speech. Nevertheless, Coulin had been himself deported to the Soviet Union for forced labour, so it would be hard to think he did not intend at least to allude to a suffering that he was personally very much aware of, in a discourse on Transylvanian Saxon victimhood and loss of *Heimat*. He was one of those discharged in Germany after the deportation, so his loss of *Heimat* was a direct consequence of the deportation.[86] More probably, he perceived the deportation under the broader umbrella-term *Kriegsgefangenschaft* (war captivity), a phenomenon that was not so peculiar if we take into account that the deportation took place during the war or that in the early 1950s *Russlandheimkehrer* (returnees from Russia) were in the German public opinion the prisoners of war.[87] Furthermore, this can also be linked with the fact that according to German legislation, deportees were assimilated to war prisoners.[88]

Wir Heldsdörfer also listed war victims and victims of the deportation, under the heading "Unsere Kriegsopfer" (Our war victims). The four pages material ended with the list of the inhabitants of Heldsdorf who died in the Soviet work camps and with some considerations regarding the putatively small death rate of the Heldsdörfer as compared to Transylvanian Saxons from other localities.[89]

The erection, in 1967, of a memorial in Dinkelsbühl "for our dead in the entire world" (*unseren Toten in aller Welt*) can be interpreted in the same reading key. The memorial stands for a "bequest" (*Vermächtnis*), with the text on the plaque reading as follows: "We commemorate all sons and daughters of Transylvania, who fell in fight, obeying their duty, and who, defenseless, were torn away from us, on evacuation routes, in captivity and in work camps."[90] In so-called memorial books (*Gedenkbücher*) those who died in the two world wars, in the evacuation, in the work camps or in captivity were supposed to be listed.[91] Furthermore, instead of listing actual names of battlefields, prison and work camps, the choice was to append inscriptions with general denominations. Thus, the deportation to the Soviet Union was referred to on the one hand under the inscription "im

Osten" (in the East) and on the other hand under the inscription "hinter Stacheldraht" (behind barbed wire),[92] an expression commonly used at the time, which merged together war captivity and forced labour in Soviet work camps, also related to Holocaust imagery.

The Deportation to the Soviet Union and the Question of the Family Reunification

Family reunification (*Familienzusammenführung*) has become one of the key elements of the politics of the Homeland Association starting with the mid-1950s. This was also the key element of contention between the Homeland Association and the Evangelical Aid Committee.[93] The Cold War migration of Romanian Germans from Communist Romania to West Germany took place under the aegis of family reunification; secret negotiations between representatives of the two countries were also often recurring to this buzzword.[94]

The question of family reunification leads us to another way of addressing the deportation by Transylvanian Saxon elites in the 1950s and in the 1960s, which connects the latter phenomenon to the former issue. Thus, the deportation became part of an argumentative framework meant to prove that the family reunification, hence migration from Romania to Germany, is the only solution for the community. This approach can be noticed especially from the mid-1950s onwards. Consequently, it was concurrent with the development and stabilisation of the pro-migration policy and lobby of the Homeland Association.[95] Texts and articles on Transylvanian Saxon present refer to the deportation as a cause of the existence of families on both sides of the Iron Curtain, which in its turn is seen as a problem that thoroughly needs to be solved:

> Then, in 1944, Romania's decline follows. The Germans in North Transylvania are evacuated to Germany and Austria, the South Transylvanians stay behind. All Germans able to work amongst them are deported in January 1945 for forced labour in the Soviet Union - very many of those who came back from the war, from captivity or from the Russian forced labour in Germany and Austria, are separated ever since from their closest relatives, children, parents. Only when these families will be reunited will a hard human injustice be repaired.[96]

This and other texts connect the deportation and the subsequent discharge of some of the deportees in Germany, among other phenomena, with the fact that the Transylvanian Saxon community was divided between the two sides of the Iron Curtain.

Furthermore, there were cases in which the deportation was raised to the status of main reason for the phenomenon of family separation. For example, in 1957, A.H. (presumably Alfred Hönig) wrote an extensive piece pleading for "humanity" and asking rhetorically whether authorities in Bucharest were aiming to refuse family reunification. The author depicts the deportation, emphasising the fact that it touched upon all Germans, irrespective of political affiliation or of any other criteria. Then, A.H. critically argued, the same regime having conducted the deportations is not allowing those once persecuted and deprived of their rights to reunite with those deported or expelled.[97] Heinrich Zillich was also extremely active and vocal in drawing connections between the deportation and the issue of family reunification, the former arguing for the latter: "Dozens of thousands from us were shipped like cattle in sealed wagons to the Donetsk region, for forced labour which lasted for years, and an eighth of them died. Our families were separated and only you, a small part of our tribe, could knock at Germany's doors."[98] His use of the deportation as a historical process in order to argue for the policy supported by the Homeland Association, albeit based on a real situation, shows that the phenomenon had not gained a proper place of its own in Transylvanian Saxon collective memory and identity discourses in the first postwar decades.

The fact that the question of family reunification occupied a central place in Transylvanian Saxon discourses and preoccupations in the said period of time is also showed by Balduin Herter's addressing of it, in the already cited discourse on the occasion of the twentieth commemoration of the Zeiden deportation.[99] In the second part of his text, Herter addressed more contemporary topics, also relating the family separation, constituting the crux of the preoccupations of the Homeland Association, with the deportation. However, unlike the elites in the Homeland Association, he did not place that into an argumentation pleading for family reunification in Germany as the only solution for the Transylvanian Saxons, but rather offered a more nuanced account of Romanian-German relationships. He criticised Romanian policies towards Romanian Germans and the difficulties Germans still in Romania encountered when it came to travelling abroad, yet he was much more open towards the situation in

Romania as compared to the position of the Homeland Association in the same period of time. Thus, Herter's stance shows that the position of the Homeland Association was not necessarily reiterated at all levels of the organisation, despite its pretense of speaking on behalf of the entire community.[100] The most severe critique came from the Aid Committee, yet with no consequences upon the memorialisation of the deportation. Deviations from the official Homeland Association position, albeit small, were visible in other places as well. Addressing the deportation and its meaning was one of the triggers making such deviations visible, as the case of *Zeidner Gruß* shows.

Memorialistic and Literary Accounts on the Deportation

Nevertheless, it also has to be underlined that Transylvanian Saxon publications, especially *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, published at times memorialistic or literary accounts of the deportation. Usually, such texts were published as such, without any kind of additional explanations, contextualisations or interpretations. A significant part of them were found on the pages dedicated to women, thus mirroring the gender imbalance of the deportation, but also the fact that the deportation was not seen as a phenomenon of relevance for the entire community.

The fact that the deportation was rather marginal within top-down Transylvanian Saxon identity and memory discourses and attempts is also shown by the peculiar reception (or absence of it) of several literary and memorialistic sources. The first such book was actually published in French, by Rainer Biemel, himself deported to the Soviet Union, under the pseudonym Jean Rounault, as early as 1949.[101] I have not managed to track down any references to it in the pages of the Transylvanian Saxon publications I looked at. This is even more peculiar if one takes into account that in January 1950 an article dedicated to *Mon ami Vassia* appeared in *Der Spiegel*.[102] Furthermore, the German translation of the book was published only in 1995.[103]

The profusion of memorialistic accounts turned into books about the Romanian German deportation is a phenomenon of the past two decades. From the 86 entries under the keyword 'deportation' in the catalogue of the Institute for German Culture and History in South-Eastern Europe in Munich (Institut für deutsche Kultur und Geschichte Südosteuropas - IKGS), formerly Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, the oldest memorialistic publication related to the deportation to the Soviet Union dates from 1977. 69 entries (not all of them related to the deportation of Romanian Germans to the Soviet Union) are more recent than 1990.[104] The database of the IKGS might not include all books about the deportation, but the figures are definitely telling. On the same note: Liane Weniger, active in the Homeland Association and many years responsible for the women's page in *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* published in the 1950s some of her memorialistic accounts from the deportation,[105] yet only in 1994 did she publish a full-fledged book on her experience in the coal mines.[106]

The first and only book on the deportation published between 1950 and 1970 in German was Bernard Ohsam's novel, *Eine Handvoll Machorka* (A Handful of Machorka),[107] a rather unrepresentative semi-biographical account, since it tells the story of an escape from the Soviet labour camps. Notes on its publication were present in *Siebenbürgische Zeitung.*[108] Heinrich Zillich's review of the first edition of the book (1958) focused extensively on the language used by the author, arguing that Ohsam's characters use a jargon that was never used in Transylvania and offering some suggestions for an improvement in this respect.[109]

Conclusions

The position of Transylvanian Saxon elites in Germany cannot be fully comprehended without a thorough analysis of the other actors with interests at stake in the memorialisation of the deportation (e.g. Lutheran Church in Romania, other Romanian German Homeland Associations, various institutions within the West German and the Romanian states etc.). Nevertheless, some conclusions can undoubtedly be drawn on the basis of the material I have researched and whose analysis I have undertaken in this article.

In the 1950s and the 1960s the deportation was not acknowledged as a key moment for Transylvanian Saxon identity. The conflicts between the lay leadership of the Homeland Association and the religious elites grouped within the Aid Committee do not seem to be mirrored by conflicts regarding the interpretation of the deportation. Furthermore, both *Siebenbürgische Zeitung* and *Licht der Heimat* gave more importance to the evacuation and expulsion of Saxons from Northern Transylvania, marking its twentieth anniversary, whereas the same cannot be said about the twentieth commemoration of the deportation. Although at least at the beginning of the 1950s, Transylvanian Saxon elites settled in Germany continued to nurture thoughts of returning to Romania,[110] the new geographical and political context obliged them to adjust self-identification and memory discourses to the new setting and thus to construct Saxons as 'expellees'.[111] Merging together the deportation and the war captivity can be understood by recurring to the same reading key.

Furthermore, as the case of discourses on family reunification shows, the deportation was prone to be used as an argumentative piece in a larger scaffolding. Thus, the deportation was not necessarily relevant as such, but rather it was important in view of supporting the argumentative thread proposed by the *Landsmannschaft* elites, related to the migration of the German community from Romania to Germany as the only solution for the survival of Romanian Germans. This can also be read as connected to the symbolic geographies proposed by Heinrich Zillich and by other members of the Transylvanian Saxon elites in Germany, according to which Saxons were a bastion of Occidental civilisation at the Western borders. Yet in the context of the Cold War and of the existence of the Iron Curtain, the East had moved, incorporating Romania under the Soviet (read: 'Asian') influence. Thus, Saxons were supposed to move from the East to the West they putatively belonged to, the trauma of the deportation standing as another piece of argumentation in this respect.

Last, but not least, the case of the Zeiden community in Germany and of its commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the deportation, together with the nuances present in the speech held by Balduin Herter on this occasion, show that there were differences between the 'national' (*landsmannschaftlich*) level and the 'local' levels. The interpretation and the attention granted to the deportation made visible such differences, which in their turn should be further analysed in order to detect processes of identity and memory building in the Transylvanian Saxon case after the Second World War. Linking investigations on the centrally steered activities of institutions such as the Homeland Association and the Evangelical Aid Committee with research on what was happening on more 'local' levels and in private or semi-official settings should be the path to follow for future research. Thus, it will be possible to delineate the transformation of the deportation of Transylvanian Saxons to the Soviet Union from a historical event among others to a key element within Transylvanian Saxon and Romanian German memory cultures.

NOTES

[1] Mathias Beer, "Rumänien. Regionale Spezifika des Umgangs mit deutschen Minderheiten", in *Deutschsein als Grenzerfahrung. Minderheitenpolitik in Europa zwischen 1914 und 1950*, ed. Mathias Beer, Dietrich Beyrau, Cornelia Rauh (Essen: Klartext, 2009), 294; see also Theodor Schieder et al. (eds.), *Das Schicksal der Deutschen in Rumänien* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004), 75-80 (the 2004 edition is a republication of the initial edition, from 1957); Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will. The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR*, trans. Anna Yastrzhembska (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), 285-297.

[2] D. M. [Dietmar Müller], "Deutsche aus Rumänien: Deportation in die Sowjetunion", in *Deportation, Zwangsaussiedlung und ethnische Säuberung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Detlef Brandes, Holm Sundhaussen, Stefan Troebst (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 166.

[3] Georg Weber et al., *Die Deportation von Siebenbürger Sachsen in die Sowjetunion 1945-1949.* I: *Die Deportation als historisches Geschehen* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 404.

[4] Mathias Beer, *Flucht und Vertreibung der Deutschen. Voraussetzungen, Verlauf, Folgen* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2011), 15.

[5] Weber et al., *Die Deportation*, 154-169. Academic literature arguing differently is nowadays rarely to be found. One exception is Dallas Michelbacher, "The Deportation of Ethnic Minorities to the USSR and the Romanian National Idea", in *History of Communism in Europe* 3 (2012), 43-57. Nevertheless, Michelbacher manages to write about the deportation without any reference to Weber's groundbreaking work, which questions from the very start his credentials. His argument that the deportations (and "massacres", in his wording) of Romanian Germans were tightly connected with Romanian interwar nationalist discourses and policies does not stand if closely scrutinised.

[6] M. R. [Małgorzata Ruchniewicz], "Deutsche und Polen aus den ehemaligen deutschen Ostgebieten: Deportation in die Sowjetunion", in *Deportation, Zwangsaussiedlung und ethnische Säuberung*, 164.

[7] Hans-Werner Schuster, Walther Konschitzky (eds.), *Deportation der Südostdeutschen in die Sowjetunion, 1945-1949* (Munich: Haus des Deutschen Ostens, 1999); also Paul Philippi, "Zum 50. Jahrestag der Deportation in die Sowjetunion [12. Januar 1995]", "Zum 55. Jahrestag der Verschleppung in die Sowjetunion. Grußwort am 15. Januar 2000 in Temeswar", "Deportationsgedenken heute - und auch übermorgen? Referat bei der zentralen Gedenkveranstaltung am 22. Januar 2005 in Reschitza", in *Kirche und Politik. Siebenbürgische Anamnesen und Diagnosen aus fünf Jahrzehnten.* Teil II: *Zwischen 1992 und 2005* (Sibiu: hora Verlag, 2006), 97-104, 253-7, 393-400.

[8] Herta Müller, *Der Atemschaukel* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2009). For the English version see Herta Müller, *The Hunger Angel*, trans. Philip Boehm (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012).

[9] Weber et al., *Die Deportation*, 3 vol.

[10] In the last two to three decades, numerous first-hand accounts of the deportation have been published. Just two examples: Helmut Berner, Doru Radosav (eds.), *und keiner weiß warum. Donbaß. Eine deportierte Geschichte* (Ravensburg: Landsmannschaft der Sathmarer Schwaben, 1996) and Lavinia Betea, Cristina Diac, Florin-Răzvan Mihai, Ilarion Țiu (eds.), *Lungul drum spre nicăieri. Germanii din România deportați în URSS* (Târgoviște: Ed. Cetatea de Scaun, 2012). Yet the very first scientifically-oriented memorialistic account of the deportation was funded by the West German state: see Schieder et al. (eds.), *Das Schicksal*.

[11] Hannelore Baier (ed.), *Deportarea etnicilor germani din România în Uniunea Sovietică. 1945. Culegere de documente de arhivă* (Sibiu: Forumul Democrat al Germanilor din România, 1994); Hannelore Baier (ed.), *Departe, în Rusia, la Stalino. Amintiri și documente cu privire la deportarea în Uniunea Sovietică a etnicilor germani din România (1945-1950)* (Reșița: InterGraf, 2003); Weber et al., *Die Deportation*, vol. 3.

[12] Annemarie Weber, *Rumäniendeutsche? Diskurse zur Gruppenidentität einer Minderheit (1944-1971)* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2010), 108-123.

[13] *Ibid.*, 123. All translations from languages other than English belong to the author of this article.

[14] Richard Ned Lebow, "The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe", in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, eds. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 4.

[15] *Ibid.*, 13.

[16] Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth Century Romania* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010).

[17] Christian Lotz, *Die Deutung des Verlusts. Erinnerungspolitische Kontroversen im geteilten Deutschland um Flucht, Vertreibung und die Ostgebiete (1948-1972)* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007); Andrew Demshuk, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[18] The former term is borrowed from Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994). The latter is taken from Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," in *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics after Auschwitz* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006), 11-27.

[19] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups", in *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 10.

[20] A classical study in this respect: Barbie Zelizer, *Covering the Body: The Kennedy Assassination, the Media, and the Shaping of Collective Memory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992); see also Eyal Zandberg, "The Right to Tell the (Right) Story: Journalism, Authority and Memory", *Media, Culture & Society* 32:1 (2010), 5-24.

[21] On expellee press in general see Hans-Jürgen Gaida, *Die offiziellen Organe der ostdeutschen Landsmannschaften. Ein Beitrag zur Publizistik der Heimatvertriebenen in Deutschland* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1973).

[22] Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006).

[23] For a good overview of Transylvanian Saxon history, see Konrad Gündisch, in collaboration with Mathias Beer, *Siebenbürgen und die Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Munich: Langen Müller, 1998).

[24] Schieder et al. (eds.), *Das Schicksal*, 6; Beer, "Rumänien. Regionale Spezifika", 284.

[25] Glynn Custred, "Dual Ethnic Identity of Transylvanian Saxons", *East European Quarterly* 25:4 (1991), 483-491.

[26] On the relationship between Germany and Romanian Germans, see Wolfgang Miege, *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien. Ein Beitrag zur nationalsozialistischen Volkstumspolitik* (Bern: Herbert & Peter Lang, 1972) and the works by Johann Böhm: *Die Deutschen in Rumänien und das Dritte Reich 1933-1940* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999); *Das Nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien 1936-1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985); *Nationalsozialistische Indoktrination der Deutschen in Rumänien 1932-1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008).

[27] Paul Milata, *Zwischen Hitler, Stalin und Antonescu: Rumäniendeutsche in der Waffen-SS* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2007).

[28] Beer, "Rumänien", 294.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] Hans-Werner Schuster, "Grundzüge der Entwicklung der Landsmannschaft der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland," in *60 Jahre Verband der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland. Grundzüge seiner Geschichte*, ed. Hans-Werner Schuster (Munich: Verband der Siebenbürger Sachsen in Deutschland e.V., 2009), 9.

[31] Dagmar Kift, "Neither Here nor There? Memorialization of the Expulsion of Ethnic Germans," in *Memorialization in Germany since 1945*, eds. Bill Niven, Chloe Paver (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 78.

[32] Schuster, "Grundzüge", 9.

[33] *Ibid.*, 10.

[34] *Ibid.*, 10.

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[35] Georg Weber et al., *Emigration der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Studien zu Ost-West-Wanderungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002), 156-157.

[36] Pertti Ahonen, *After the Expulsion: West Germany and Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25-26.

[37] Hans W. Schoenberg, *Germans from the East: A Study of Their Migration, Resettlement, and Subsequent Group History since 1945* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 72.

[38] For a detailed explanation of the meaning of the term *Volkskirche* (national church), see Krista Zach, "Religiöse Toleranz und Stereotypenbildung in einer multikulturellen Region. Volkskirchen in Siebenbürgen," in *Das Bild des Anderen in Siebenbürgen. Stereotype in einer multiethnischen Region*, eds. Konrad Gündisch, Wolfgang Höpken, Michael Markel (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1998), 109-153.

[39] Schuster, "Grundzüge", 15-16.

[40] *Ibid.*, 16-18.

[41] Johann Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien vor und nach 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), 60-76.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Weber et al., *Emigration*, 517-625.

[44] Rainer Münz, Rainer Ohliger, "Auslandsdeutsche", in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* I, eds. Etienne François, Hagen Schulze (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001), 384-385; see also Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories. The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[45] Ahonen, *After the Expulsion*.

[46] E. P., "12. Januar 1965 - Erinnerungen", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 15 February 1970.

[47] See for example: "Heuer werden es zehn Jahre...", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 17 January 1955; "Tage des Gedenkens. Von 20 Jahren langten die siebenbürgischen Trecks in Österreich ein", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 15 October 1964; "Maniersch bei Schäßburg: Zur Erinnerung an den 8. September 1944", *Licht der Heimat*, August 1964; "Siebenbürgisches Tagebuch 1944/45", *Siebenbürgisch-sächsischer Hauskalender*, 1959, 92-96; Elfriede Csallner, "Bald zwanzig Jahre", *Siebenbürgisch-sächsischer Hauskalender*, 1964, 111-114.

[48] This statement can be better comprehended if one takes into account the fact that more recently the commemorations of the deportation always get to the foreground of Romanian German public space, unlike the largely forgotten evacuation of Saxons from Northern Transylvania.

[49] On the Law on the Equalisation of Burdens, see Michael Hughes, *Shouldering the Burdens of Defeat. West Germany and the Reconstruction of Social Justice* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

[50] "Unsere Lage in Deutschland und Österreich. Die Ansprache Dr. Zillichs", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* Mai 1951. In original: "Da muß gesagt werden, daß wir ein gemeinsames Schicksal haben, daß wir den Block der 9 Millionen Vertriebenen mitbilden. Wir gehören auch organisatorisch ihm an und sind in ihm vollberechtigt. Wir haben keine Veranlassung, aus der Reihe herauszutanzen."

[51] Ahonen, *After the Expulsion*, 137.

[52] Hans Hartl, *Die Deutschen in Rumänien: 1918-1940, 1945-1985. Zur Geschichte ihres Niedergangs als Volksgruppe,* typescript, 1985. In original: "vertrieben, aber im Vertreibungsland zurückgehalten"

[53] "Zum Besuch des rumänischen Außenministers in Bonn", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* 30 April 1986.

[54] Böhm, *Hitlers Vasallen.*

[55] An example of an internal conflict on the National Socialist past that was not displayed in public space: Brigitte Möckel-Csaki, "Brief an Hans Philippi zum Thema Wilhelm Staedel", in *Versuche des Widerstehens. Stationen meines Lebens* (Sibiu: hora Verlag, 2008), 100-104.

[56] Rainer Lehni, *Zeiden im Burzenland* (available at http://www.zeiden.de/Startseite.htm, last accessed 21 March, 2013).

[57] "20 Jahre nach der Verschleppung. Ansprache des Jüngeren Nachbarvaters Baldi Herter am 5. Nachbarschaftstag in Bischofshohen (Salzburg)", *Zeidner Gruß. Heimatbrief der Zeidner Nachbarschaft*, nr. 23, 1965.

[58] Bucur, *Heroes and Victims*, 3.

[59] See for example the first piece of news under the heading "Aus Zeiden", *Zeidner Gruß. Heimatbrief der Zeidner Nachbarschaft*, nr. 2, 1955. It refers to a commemorative service for those who returned home (*Wiederheimgekehrten*) held in January 1955 by the Zeiden pastor, Richard Bell. Furthermore, in 1958, in a text dedicated to the activity of teacher Hans Mild, the author refers to the fact that pastor Richard Bell and the latter dedicated a song to the "brothers and sisters" deported to the Soviet Union. See Hans Mieskes, "Danksagung an Lehrer Hans Mild", *Zeidner Gruß. Heimatbrief der Zeidner Nachbarschaft*, nr. 8, 1957. Consequently, it appears that despite the putatively imposed tabooisation of the topic in Communist Romania following, there were niches in which addressing the deportation was possible.

[60] "20 Jahre nach der Verschleppung".

[61] On the history of the said project, see Mathias Beer, "Im Spannungsfeld von Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Das Großforschungsprojekt 'Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa'", *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 46(1998), 345-389.

[62] Moeller, *War Stories*, 60.

[63] "20 Jahre nach der Verschleppung".

[64] Its first issue appeared in 1954.

[65] The first issue of *Wir Heldsdörfer* appeared in 1959.

[66] See for example Richard Jacobi, "Heimatlied eines 1945 nach Rußland Verschleppten", *Wir Heldsdörfer. Brief unserer Heimatgemeinschaft*, nr. 11, 1964; "Vor zwanzig Jahren", *Wir Heldsdörfer. Brief unserer Heimatgemeinschaft*, nr. 15, 1966.

[67] (Autor unbekannt), "Das Schicksal der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Aus den Jahren der Zwangsverschleppung 1945-1950"; Bernhard Ohsam, "Zwangsarbeit im Donezbecken. Vor 25 Jahren: Verschleppung von 80 000 Rumäniendeutschen", *Wir Heldsdörfer. Brief unserer Heimatgemeinschaft*, nr. 22, 1970.

[68] *Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter* was a more academic journal published by Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, a Munich-based research institution. Heinrich Zillich and other right-wing oriented personalities, with former National Socialist credentials, such as Fritz Valjavec, were among its editors.

[69] Bernard Ohsam, *Eine Handvoll Machorka. Roman aus Russland*, 3rd edition (Munich: Verlag Hans Meschendörfer, 1970). The first edition was published in 1958.

[70] Ohsam, "Zwangsarbeit im Donezbecken".

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] See for example Heinrich Zillich, "Eine zumindest befremdende Haltung," *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, September 1951.

[73] Cornelius, "Sie fuhren singend in die Nacht. Die Deportation der Siebenbürger Sachsen vor sieben Jahren," *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, Januar 1952. In original: "Als die Sowjets im Spätherbst 1944 von Rumänien auf Grund des Vertrages Arbeitskräfte forderten, waren sich die ans Ruder gelangten rumänischen Politiker darin einig, ihnen zunächst das menschliche Freiwild jener Zeit: die deutschsprachige Bevölkerung anzubieten."

[74] "Für eine Rückkehr der Deutschen", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, März 1952.

[75] A.H. - "Schicksalsgenossen," *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, April 1952. In original: „...wir Volksdeutschen nicht Nutznießer, sondern Spielbälle des Bündnisses zwischen dem nationalsozialistischen Deutschland und dem Rumänien Antonescus waren... [...] ...unter Antonescu manche Bestimmung der gegen die Juden gerichteten rumänischen Gesetzgebung auch gegen uns Volksdeutsche angewendet wurde...."

[76] Weber et al., *Die Deportation.*

[77] See for example "Bericht des Journalisten Herwart Scheiner aus Hermannstadt (Sibiu) in Süd-Siebenbürgen.", in Schieder et al. (ed.), *Das Schicksal*, 230.

[78] Michael Kroner, "Deportation vor 60 Jahren war völkerrechtliches Kriegsverbrechen", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 12 January 2005 (available at http://www.siebenbuerger.de/zeitung/artikel/alteartikel/3860-deportation-vor-60-jahren-war.html, last accessed 8 November, 2013).

[79] Pierre Aubert de Trégomain, "Les frontières du dicible. Les Saxons de Transylvanie et la seconde guerre mondiale", PhD dissertation, University Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2006, 157-158.

[80] Pertti Ahonen noted that "the organisations of the *Volksdeutsche* from areas non-contiguous with the former Reich, particularly south-eastern Europe" acknowledged by the mid-1950s "that a return to their older homelands was neither possible nor desirable". See Ahonen, *After the Expulsion*, 41. In the Transylvanian Saxon case, this change of approach came together with growing internal conflicts regarding the future of the community, with the Homeland Association pleading for migration to the Federal Republic of Germany of the fellow Saxons still in Transylvania, while those involved in the Aid Committee considered that Transylvanian Saxon life as such can only take place in Transylvania: see Weber et al., *Emigration*, 517-625.

[81] de Trégomain, "Les frontières du dicible",

[82] Fritz Heinz Reimesch, "Sich bewähren", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 1 April 1951. In original: "Zehntausende deutscher Burschen und Mädchen, Männer und Frauen wurden als Zwangsarbeiter nach Rußland verschleppt und mußten dort eine Schuld sühnen, die nicht ihre Schuld war, die sie aber mit einer seelischen Größe trügen ohne bisher im deutschen Volke Anerkennung gefunden zu haben! Wieviele von ihnen liegen irgendwo am Rande Asiens in fremder Erde!".

[83] Ahonen, *After the Expulsion*, 40.

[84] On Transylvanian Saxon memory of the Second World War, see de Trégomain, "Les frontières du dicible."; On Romanian German and Transylvanian Saxon identity discourses after the Second World War, see James Koranyi, "Between East and West. Romanian German Identities since 1945", PhD dissertation, University of Exeter, 2008.

[85] "Die Heimat und wir. Die Rede Alfred Coulins", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 1 Mai 1951. In original: "…die einen auf langen Trecks geflohen andere über Rußland über die Kriegsgefangenschaft nach Deutschland gekommen sind, in dem der Schwarzmarkt blühte."

[86] A short biographical note on Coulin in *Die Siebenbürger Sachsen. Lexikon. Geschichte. Kultur. Zivilisation. Wirtschaft. Lebensraum Siebenbürgen (Transsilvanien)*, ed. Walter Myß (Thaur bei Innsbruck: Wort und Welt Verlag, 1993), 91.

[87] Elke Scherstjanoi (ed.), *Russlandheimkehrer: die sowjetische Kriegsgefangenschaft im Gedächtnis der Deutschen* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012).

[88] Dr. Krauss, "Leistungen nach dem Häftlingshilfegesetz", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 15 December 1962. Explaining to the readers of *Siebenbürgische Zeitung* the provisions of the new Law for the Help of Detainees (*Häftlingshilfegesetz*), the author also argues: "The claims of our fellow countrymen who had to suffer the horrible fate of the deportees to the Soviet Union are already regulated through the Compensation Law for War Prisoners." In original: "Die Ansprüche jener Landsleute, die das schreckliche

Schicksal von Verschleppten in der Sowjetunion erleiden mußten, sind bereits durch das Kriegsgefangenenentschädigungsgesetz geregelt."

[89] "Unsere Kriegsopfer", *Wir Heldsdörfer. Brief unserer Heimatgemeinschaft,* nr. 8, 1963.

[90] "Eine Gedenkstätte in Dinkelsbühl für unsere Toten. Unseren Toten in aller Welt", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* 31 Juli 1966. In original (original emphasis): „**Wir gedenken aller Söhne und Töchter Siebenbürgens, die in der Heimat und in der Fremde der Pflicht gehorchend, kämpfend fielen, und wehrlos, auf Flüchtlingsstrassen, in Gefangenschaft und Zwangsarbeitslagern von uns gerissen wurden**."

[91] "Die Gedenkstätte der Siebenbürger Sachsen. Zur Verwirklichung unseres Anliegens in Dinkelsbühl", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* 15 January 1967.

[92] Hans Wolfram Theil, "Unsere siebenbürgische Gedenkstätte im Werden", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* 31 January 1967. In original: "…entschied man sich nun für allgemeine, alle Einzelfälle umfassende Bezeichnungen."

[93] Weber et al., *Emigration*, 517-625.

[94] See also Florica Dobre, Florian Banu, Luminița Banu, Laura Stancu (eds.), *Acțiunea "Recuperarea". Securitatea și emigrarea germanilor din România (1962-1989)* (Bucharest: Ed. Enciclopedică, 2011).

[95] Weber et al., *Emigration*, 517-625.

[96] Dr. Wilhelm Bruckner, "Aus der Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* 25 August 1959. In original: „Dann folgt 1944 der Abfall Rumäniens. Die Deutschen Nordsiebenbürgens werden nach Deutschland und Österreich evakuiert, die Südsiebenbürger bleiben zurück. Und von ihnen werden alle arbeitsfähigen Deutschen im Januar 1945 zur Zwangsarbeit in die UdSSR verschleppt - sehr viele sind nicht mehr wiedergekommen. Viele der nach Deutschland und Österreich aus dem Krieg, aus der Gefangenschaft und aus russicher Zwangsarbeit zurückgekehrten Siebenbürger Sachsen sind seither von ihren nächsten Angehörigen, Frauen, Kindern, Eltern, getrennt. Erst wenn diese Familien wieder vereint sind, wird ein schweres menschliches Unrecht gutgemacht sein."

[97] A.H., "Wir fordern Menschlichkeit! Will Bukarest allein die Familienzusammenführung verweigern?", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* 29 September 1957.

[98] Dr. Heinrich Zillich, "Wir sind Deutsche und Europäer", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung,* 1 July 1954. In original: „Zehntausende von uns wurden wie Vieh in plombierten Wagen ins Donezgebiet verfrachtet, zu jahrelanger Zwangsarbeit, bei der ein Achtel von ihnen starb. Unsere Familien wurden auseinandergerissen und nur Ihr, ein kleiner Teil des Stammes, konntet an Deutschlands Tore klopfen."

[99] "20 Jahre nach der Verschleppung".

[100] *Ibid.*

[101] Jean Rounault, *Mon ami Vassia* (Paris: Sulliver, 1949). For the English language version, see Jean Rounault, *My Friend Vassia*, trans. Vera Traill (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1952).

[102] "Dem Russen tat es leid", *Der Spiegel* 2/1950, 12 January 1950 (available at http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-44445888.html, last accessed 8 November 2013).

[103] Rainer Biemel, *Mein Freund Wassja*, trans. Claudia Brink (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1995)

[104] http://katalog.bib-bvb.de/cgi-bin/avanti/iks/detailsuche.pl?register1=PER&suchwert1=&trunkiert1=%3F&logik=AND&register2=TIT&suchwert2=deportation+&trunkiert2=%3F&idprefix=i&idwert=&idtrunk=%3F&eingrenzung=PYR&eingrenzungsmodus=%3E&eingrenzungswert=&db=iksopac&printapr=DEFAULT&searchmode=normal&max_dspl=200&index_zeilen=15 (last accessed, 8 November 2013).

[105] Liane Weniger, "Tagebuchblätter aus Rußland", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 28 March 1957, 29 June 1959,

[106] Liane Weniger, *Schatten am Don. Als Zwangsdeportierte aus Siebenbürgen in Kohlebergwerken in Russland, 1945-1946* (Dortmund: Forschungsstelle Ostmitteleuropa, 1994).

[107] Ohsam, *Eine Handvoll Machorka*.

[108] "Das Buch von der Deportation", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 25 November 1958.

[109] Heinrich Zillich, "Bernard Ohsam, Eine handvoll Machorka", *Südostdeutsche Vierteljahresblätter* 8:1 (1959), 56-57.

[110] For example, in 1950 Heinrich Zillich was stating: "We have no idea, how long this existence far away from home will last: we do not know when what was taken away from us will fall again in our hands. Henceforth we are compelled, if we do not want to be childish and blind, to make the best out of our situation enforced upon us by fate". See Heinrich Zillich, "Wir brauchen eine Auswahl", *Siebenbürgische Zeitung*, 15 July 1950. In original: "Wir haben keine Ahnung, wie lange dieses Dasein fern von Zuhause dauert: wir wissen nicht, wann das uns daheim Genommene wieder in unsere Hand zurückfällt. Wir sind daher genötigt, wenn wir nicht kindisch und blind sein wollen, hier das Beste aus unserer durch das Geschick erzwungenen Lage zu machen." The approach will change fundamentally by mid-1950s. In the 1960s the support for migration of Transylvanian Saxons still in Romania to the Federal Republic of Germany had become obvious.

[111] On the adjustment of Transylvanian Saxon discourses for a West German audience see Pierre de Trégomain, "Constructing Authenticity. Commemorative Strategy of the Transylvanian Saxons in West Germany's Early Years", in *Enlarging European Memory. Migration Movements in Historical Perspective*, ed. Mareike König, Rainer Ohliger (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2006), 99-111; also de Trégomain, *Les frontières du dicible*.

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THE THEOLOGICAL TURN OF CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THEORY

Closing the circle of political theology

In his famous commemorative piece on Carl Schmitt, Jacob Taubes pointed out the radical divergence between their own politico-theological projects: "I ask after the political potentials in the theological metaphors, just as Schmitt asks after the theological potential of legal concepts"[1]. Two completely opposed understandings of the same 'political theology' thus stand out: one which proceeds from the political and legal concepts, in order to unearth the theological dimension concealed in them; the other, moving in the opposite direction, from the "theological metaphors" to the political potentials that they contain.

Can one apply these opposite approaches to the same body of texts? Or, even better, can these two divergent trends of political theology be applied, successively, to one another? Our present attempt rests on the assumption that indeed, they can. And even more, that they should. Thus, the closing of the politico-theological circle (from the political, legal and social categories to their theological background, and back again, unearthing the political potential of this initial theological displacement) is not just a question of (logical or methodological) possibility, but one of opportunity and significant contemporary relevance. This is the operation we intend to apply to the theological turn of contemporary critical theory.

Even though still subject of dispute as to their exact meaning and consequences, the so-called 'return of the religious' and 'post-secular condition' are, by now, unquestionable realities for the contemporary social sciences. No school of thought has remained immune to this newly found irreducible statute of the religious phenomenon: from the most rationalist liberals to the most fiery Leninists, theological issues and concepts have started to populate the research agenda. In an unexpected new wave of Schmittianism[2], every concept and notion that, until recently, seemed to belong to the post-religious constellation of secular modernity and enlightened reason, has been unmasked as carrying with itself a heavy charge of theological content. Thus, even though these trends of thought started from different presuppositions and followed different paths, they all seem to verify Schmitt's endeavor of 'asking after the theological potential' of our basic legal, political and social categories. Thus, after almost two decades since this theological turn has left its mark on the contemporary critical theory, it is only natural that we draw an inventory and ask: what has been the *political* effect of this theological translation? Where, in terms of political theory and social agenda, has this new political theology taken us? It goes without saying that this line of enquiry is consistent with the guiding intentions of the authors involved: after all, from Rawls and Habermas, through Derrida, Nancy and Vattimo, up to Zizek, Badiou and Agamben, the theorists concerned with the theological substratum of our political categories are political philosophers, not theologians; their concern with political theology is, thus, intended not towards a religious awakening of our moribund democracies, but towards a new articulation and understanding of our political condition. If this is the case, our present attempt, of closing the politico-theological circle and assessing the political effect brought about by the theological turn in contemporary theory, means nothing less than evaluating this project in the light of its own programmatic intentions[3].

Mapping contemporary political theology

The opening step in this direction would be to chart the terrain standing before us. Thus, in this section I will try to draw a quick panoramic view of the contemporary politico-theological landscape, while in the next section I will attempt to refine the view and systematize the different trends on display, ranging them from the point of view of their underlying dialectics of form and content.

The first trend of thought worth mentioning here is what is known as liberal post-secularism, whose basic outlines have been drawn by Rawls and Habermas.[4] However, it should be stated from the beginning that this approach is not exactly political theology. Its wager is actually fittingly captured by the recurrent heading under which the texts and lectures of this school of thought are usually placed: religion *and* democracy. Thus, this is not exactly the Schmittian perspective on the irreducible and fundamental theological background of our political and legal dispositive; rather, it is an attempt to keep, as much as possible, democracy and religion neatly separated, or at least to articulate a possible peaceful coexistence between the two. The starting point of this project is the historical evidence provided by our epoch, in which the 'unfinished' or interminable nature of the modern project (enlightened reason plus secularization) is revealed. According to the post-secular liberal's view, the contemporary return of the religious is an undeniable proof that secular reason cannot be all-encompassing, cannot evacuate the religious phenomenon without turning itself into a totalitarian unreason. The irreducible nature of the religious phenomenon implies not only that the secular reason cannot vanquish all religious superstition, but that it is not even desirable: doing so would force the minimalistic liberal reason (conceived in terms of reasonability, proceduralism and form) to become thick with content, a comprehensive doctrine whose oversaturated content would preclude its desired universalism. In brief, an all-encompassing and triumphant secular reason would be as particular ('Eurocentric') and unreasonable as the religious superstitions it tries to fight.

Thus, if liberal democracies cannot get rid of religion without becoming undemocratic, liberal post-seculars conclude with the necessity of articulating certain rules of cohabitation between the public, political reason, and the private religious beliefs: namely, a set of rules of translation by means of which the private, religious claims can participate in the democratic dialogue only once they are translated into public discourse, deprived of their anchorage in various religious contents and couched in reasonable (that is: potentially accessible to all) terms and arguments. Interestingly, among the various contemporary trends of political theology, this is the only one in which one can still find the old Illuminist critique of religion as superstition and unreason – namely, in the works of Rawls' famous disciple Ronald Dworkin. The liberal vein of this critique is visible in its idealist bias: the religious beliefs and ideas are taken at their face value, as theses to be validated and tested (and most probably discarded), without concern for the social and historical determinants of the resurgent religious phenomenon.

The second contemporary politico-theological project is more difficult to delineate. However, with the risk of oversimplifying things, one could range this theoretical project under the banner of 'post-metaphysical theology'. Here, we can include theorists originating in (or influenced by) poststructuralism and postmodernism, from Derrida and Jean-Luc

Nancy, to Vattimo, Caputo, Critchley, and the so-called school of Radical Political Theology. This project starts from a similar thesis as the post-secular liberals: the demise of the triumphant and all-encompassing secular reason, and the historical destruction of both its political project (the 20th century totalitarianisms) and theoretical inspiration (the metaphysical tradition, the ontology of presence). However, in comparison to the post-secular liberals, here the politico-theological move goes in the opposite direction: it is not an attempt to salvage our democratic arrangement by its delimitation from private unreason and idiosyncratic belief, but rather a chance to save democracy via the religious. The reason why this is indeed possible is the fact that, after careful inspection, democracy proves to share the same (or at least a very similar) post-metaphysical structure as the messianic promise: that is, the zero degree of the religious opening, the pure messianic form without any particular and determined content. Just like this irreducible 'messianism without messiah', democracy has the same structure of pure opening, pure promise: it is a 'democracy to come', the open space and pure form of the promise of justice, which is irreducible, even though it is betrayed by any attempt to actualize it or fill it with content.

Hence, while for the post-secular liberals, the solution is to keep, as much as possible, public reason and private religion neatly separated, for the post-metaphysic theorists the solution is exactly the perceived threat: a certain idea of religion, a certain theological dispositive – the messianic apparatus – can remind to our contemporary democracies their initial and forgotten promise of justice. Confronted with the resurgence of the religious phenomenon, our democratic societies should recognize in its threat their own forgotten essence and original promise.

Finally, the third trend of contemporary political theology is represented by what I will call the Leninist messianism, mostly in the works of Slavoj Zizek and Alain Badiou. In this case, we are no longer dealing with a defensive reaction to the demise of the universalist project of secular reason. Rather, we are dealing with a counter-reaction to this defeatist reaction of scaling down the universalism of secular reason and accommodating the religious experience. In brief, it is a reaction not only to the end of secularism, but mostly to the new post-secularism: a renewed appeal to universality, against the triumph of the particular and the relative; and a new founding of a revolutionary politics (with its specific dispositive of subjectivity, collectivity and history) against both the pragmatic reasonableness of political liberalism, and the hopeful resignation of post-metaphysical theology.

Thus, the Leninist messianists cover the third logical possibility in our schema: their project is an attempt to rescue the rational, modern, progressive kernel of Enlightened reason via the very messianic apparatus. Their wager is that there is a modern, revolutionary and universal nucleus in the messianic event, which should be opposed to the obscurantist and reactionary wave of fundamentalism, new age spirituality and cultural relativism.

The dialectics of form and content

The previous section attempted to draw a panoramic view of the various trends in contemporary political theology. While the differences and similarities between these body of texts have been underlined, we are still in need of a more structured and systematized scrutiny of their conceptual positions. This is the task of the present section.

Its guiding idea is that one can arrange these three trends of political theology in a more revealing manner once they are approached from the standpoint of the relationship between form and content: that is, once we focus our attention on the way in which these currents of ideas negotiate and articulate the relationship between politics and theology, democracy and religion, secularization and post-secularization in terms of a certain dialectic between form and content. After all, already the panoramic presentation sketched in the previous section bumped repeatedly into the issue of form and content, only to leave it aside for the moment. Now it is time to approach this issue head on.

The attempt to define the conceptual positions of the three trends of political theology in terms of various combinations of formalism and materialism will lead to their structuring in an incomplete semiotic square. Thus, a fourth element – a further variation of the formalism-materialism mix – can be deduced merely by means of the inner logic of their arrangement. This fourth trend of thought, as we will see below, stands with regards to proper political theology in the same quasi-marginal way as the liberal post-secularism. In this politico-theological dispositive, it is actually the element symmetrically opposed of liberal post-secularism, the opposite margin of political theology.

The wager of this section – and, as a matter of fact, the central hypothesis of this paper – is that one can range the three trends of political theology – liberal post-secular, post-metaphysical theology (or radical political theology), and Leninist messianism – under the categories of formal formalism, material formalism, and formal materialism. Thus, as one can easily deduce from this progression, the missing fourth term could be labeled material materialism – which, as we will see below, covers mostly the position of historical materialism. The two-worded denominations of these various trends (formal formalism, material formalism, and so on) are to be understood as following: the second term describes the political theory of these different currents of ideas – their views on democracy and on what should count as a just society; the first term names their view on the relationship between this ideal political organization and the revenant issue of religion; in other words, it stands for the way in which these different political theologies understand or prescribe the correct rapport between politics and theology, democracy and religion, or, in a word, the very issue of secularization or post-secularization.

The first position in this semiotic square of political theology is what I call the formal formalist one. It names the liberal post-secular approach. The formalist character of its view on democracy and the just society is expressed in its proceduralist bias: in articulating the fundaments of a democratic and just society, political liberalism takes great care in articulating a basic set of procedural rules and formal constraints, without presuming any positive content. Political liberalism is traversed not by a *horror vacuum*, but, on the contrary, by a horror of fullness, by the threat of the saturated content. The reason for this horror of the positive content is the defining universalism of political liberalism: in order to appear as universal, the ideal liberal arrangement has to stipulate only the minimal set of formal rules, that could be agreed upon by any 'decent' person, without regard to his or her particular values, beliefs, etc. Hence, in order to be universal, political liberalism has to be grounded in a set of principles as thin as possible; the 'original position' of political liberalism is an Ikea-like landscape of minimalist, basic rules, which can be implemented in any society, regardless of its particular history and cultural values.

Not incidentally, the same formalist bias dominates also the liberal's understanding of religion. As we already saw in the previous section, even though liberals are led to agree, because of our historical evidence, that the religious phenomenon is here to stay, even in our most enlightened and developed societies, their reaction consists in formulating a set of rules of translation by means of which democracy and religion can coexist without denaturizing one another. Thus, even though at first sight religion appears as a menace to the liberal, reasonable order, it can still be democratically tamed by being enclosed in the private space. Its heavy, comprehensive baggage of values and positive contents can still be filtered by the liberal rules of translation into public reason. Thus, apparently everybody gains: the democratic societies become even more democratic, by allowing religious-minded people to join in the public debate; on the other hand, since these religious citizens are to translate their religious-based set of particular values into arguments couched in terms of public reason, our open, yet so fragile societies are not running the risk of being overwhelmed by an army of dissonant and aggressive comprehensive views.

Overall, the same horror of positive content dominates both the political theory and the 'political theology' of the liberal post-seculars. This is visible in the way in which liberal theory portrays its main enemies: totalitarianism, for what concerns political theory; fundamentalism, for what concerns political theology. In both cases – totalitarianism and fundamentalism – the danger, the *hubris* is the same overcrowding of the reasonable and universal form with saturated content. As a matter of fact, because of the basic delimitation operated by the liberal theory, between the public political space of reasonable procedures, and the private, enclosed space of particular positive religious values, every possible contender to the hegemony of liberal theory is perceived as a sort of religion in disguise: not incidentally, socialism has been usually discarded by the liberal theorists as a sort of barely secularized religion. Its view on the just political society is just too thick, too demanding, too fanatical.

There are, obviously, several problems with this attempt to reconcile the pure form of liberal democracy and the threatening army of positive comprehensive doctrines, be they political or religious. The first one concerns its very attempt to accommodate religion by relegating it to the domain of the private space. This magnanimous offer made by the liberal theorists will hardly pass for any religious person as an offer one simply can't refuse. After all, religion is – among other things – a certain view on what should count as public and what should count merely as private. And the religious delimitation between the public and the private space hardly coincides with the liberal one. It rather stands in an exactly opposite way: for the religious person, what the liberals relegate to the private space can pass as the eminently public concern (such as the issue of abortion); while what for a social liberal can pass as the utmost public issue (a certain relative egalitarianism and social justice) is, for the religious person, an issue pertaining to the private domain of our families, clans, tribes, or at least inner soul. Thus being the case, the attempt to apply the liberal rules of translation religious values into public reason can only lead to deadlocks. An illuminating picture of the ridiculous results of this process of translation when applied to various religious pop-stars from the old Yugoslavia has been brilliantly depicted by Boris Buden.[5]

Even more, the basic problem with the formal formalism of the liberal postseculars is the same, old, structural problem of political liberalism: it is the fact that, once a pure formalism is proclaimed as the political optimum, this form inevitably ends up by generating its own, exclusive content. Thus, what initially appeared as the most open-ended political arrangement, since it presumes only the most minimal and reasonable formal arrangements, starts being perceived as a genuine *pensée unique*, precluding any possible political alternative. This obviously has to do with the original history of liberalism: not only the fact that liberalism has originally been an economic theory, later expanded into a political one, for the purpose of legitimating the nascent capitalism; even more, it is the fact that the basic operation of this economic-political theory of liberalism is to separate the economic sphere (that is, all issues concerning the rather irrelevant material reproduction of society) from the proper political sphere. Not incidentally, any attempt to question this line of demarcation between politics and economy (a line which, again, repeats the same opposition between public form and private content) is perceived as a threat perfectly similar to the one represented by the fundamentalist stance. In brief: liberalism is nothing but the most plastic and accommodating political theory of the minimal formalism; however, since all of liberal's contenders start by questioning its fundamental divide between politics and society, public form and private content, they are all to be discarded as unreasonable, quasi-fundamentalist and proto-totalitarian threats. Thus, liberalism, as the open space of the plural and dynamic play of political alternatives, is, in the end, the only reasonable alternative: the empty form fills and saturates all political content.

Now let us pass to the other two trends of contemporary political theology. Since, in the next sections of this paper, I will dwell exclusively on the characteristics of the post-metaphysical theorists and the Leninist messianists, for now I will offer a shorter presentation of these two trends, just enough to stabilize them under the respective banners of material formalism and formal materialism.

The political theory of the post-metaphysical theorists and of the so-called radical-political theology (which is the politico-theological projection of Laclau and Mouffe's theory of 'radical democracy') is, for what concerns its aims, perfectly consistent with the liberal one: democracy as the open, empty space in which the pluralistic political dynamic of the society can take place. However, the means for enforcing this aim are perfectly opposed to the ones prescribed by the liberal post-seculars: while for the latter democracy has to be shielded from religion, for the post-metaphysical theologians the pure formalism of democracy can, and should, be re-enchanted by a strong dose of messianic essence. (Certainly, this alternative has also visited repeatedly certain liberals: hence, the idea of a necessary enchantment of the rather dull, formalistic and proceduralist liberal arrangement, an idea which resurfaces from time to time under the banner of Habermas' 'patriotic constitutionalism' or of the various avatars of Rousseau's idea of 'civil religion'. However, in the liberal's case, these openings towards religion – or a sort of religion of democracy – are always done reluctantly). Overall, hence, the post-metaphysical political theology presents us with the image of a more enthusiastic liberalism: the political theory of liberalism becomes here a genuine political theology. The cold, rational proceduralism of the liberals is turning here into a theology of the pure form, pure openness, pure difference. The form generates, or rather becomes, its own enchanted content. The liberal formal formalism becomes a passionate material formalism. The political stance of the post-metaphysical theorists can thus be described best by Loren Goldner's apt phrase 'middle class radicalism'[6]: the good old liberal principles of openness, difference, pluralism, are elevated into a militant arsenal of passionate values, by means of which modern democracies are to be brought back to their original, messianic promise. The theoretical outlook of this position bear the marks of its historical birth, that is, its origin in the milieu of the 60's and 70's 'new Left' in the West and the anticommunist dissidents in the East. Hence, its insistence on the necessary effort of reforming our political arrangements via the rather apolitical and quasi-religious notions of morality, integrity, intransigence, courage, imagination, creativity, loyalty etc. While this current of ideas generated a certain momentum in its initial phases, when it seemed able to articulate a plausible alternative to both the Stalinisms of the East and the routinized and dull democracies of the West, historically its effect was to re-enchant the image of the Western democracies and thus contribute ideologically to their victory in the Cold War. Whether willingly or not, knowingly or not, the post-metaphysical discourse (with all its offsprings – post-structuralism, postmodernism, radical democracy) has stabilized itself into a moralist critique of the existing status quo and, thus, into a rather convenient sentimental supplement to global capitalism.

Things stand a bit differently with our third alternative, the Leninist messianists, namely Zizek and Badiou[7]. The focus in their political theology is not on the articulation of the basic principles of a just society, but rather on the way in which we can reach such a just society. In brief, their political theology is a theory of revolution. While the liberal post-secular and the post-metaphysical political theology are theories of the political 'substance', the Leninist messianism is rather a theory of political strategy. The messianic apparatus is recovered here precisely as the ready-made conceptual dispositive of revolution. However, this is exactly where the problems start: in Zizek and Badiou's return to St. Paul, what we get is a Marxist (or rather Leninist, considering its voluntarist and subjectivist stance) theory of revolution, which is presented and proclaimed as a mere form: the pure ritual of the messianic event. Hence, theirs is a paradoxical undetermined materialism; or, to put it into more familiar terms, a sort of combination of Schmittian decisionism and romantic occasionalism[8]. The basic move here goes in the exact opposite direction as to the post-metaphysical theologians: while in the case of the latter we witnessed a sort of ontologization of the form (hence, the title of material formalism), with Zizek and Badiou we get a formalization of the ontological: hence, what I called its formal materialism. A ritualized Leninism, in which the concrete historical determination of the political action is abstracted and pre-ordained in the ready made procedural structure of the messianic event. Certainly, in spite of its abstraction and unhistorical nature, it is not difficult to trace the historical origin and determinants of this trend of thought: it is the disappearance of the so called 'historical transcendence', already famously decried by Marcuse[9], which makes it so that the concrete signals to a possible higher stage of our political societies have all been evacuated from history. Our contemporary history is no longer, as it used to be for classical Marxists, 'on our side', pointing the way forward, opening chances for its supersession from prehistory into proper history. But this is not that bad as it seems, would argue Zizek and Badiou. Not so bad, because even if concrete history has abandoned us, we already have the messianic dispositive – and, even more, the messianic event – already structured, ready made and just waiting to be applied. Thus, thanks to the already available messianic apparatus, the barren landscape of contemporary history, which offers no hope, no immanent transcendence, no concrete opportunity, is transfigured into a space full of promise: if it is true that history offers us no concrete occasion for its overcoming into a just order, it is also true that, thanks to the messianic apparatus we rediscover in St. Paul, every moment can become such an occasion. It all depends on the subjective commitment and loyalty to this originary promise. Hence, decisionism; hence, occasionalism; hence, formal materialism.

In the next sections of this paper, I will come back and dwell a little longer on the characteristics of the post-metaphysical radical thought and of the Leninist messianists, in an effort to trace back these aspects in the texts of their leading authors. For now, let us close our semiotic square and deduce its fourth possible term: material materialism, or what is more commonly known as historical materialism. Just like the liberal post-secular approach, historical materialism stands rather on the margin of political theology: if there is some messianic hope that we can hang on to, it doesn't come from the passionate re-consideration of our founding democratic values, nor is it already available in an abstract, free floating and easily detachable messianic apparatus, but it should be deduced from the concrete historical evolution. Certainly, this trend covers only some aspects of the Marxian tradition, namely the focus on the critique of political economy and, in general, its unparalleled insistence on the importance of the concrete historical determinants. In contrast to the usual critique of Marxism as teleology, as preordained history, this trend of Marxism is actually characterized by its insistence on the unique particularity and dynamics of each social constellation. Surely, this is a very unstable position: it can easily slip either into a sort of 'abstract empiricism'[10], or, in the opposite direction, it can surpass the historical evidence and sum it up into a pre-existing law of movement – thus falling into the trap of teleology. In this latter case, historical materialism runs the risk of making the exact opposite error of liberalism. Just like the formal formalism of liberalism generated its own, saturated content, historical materialism, in spite of its insistence on the concrete, material conditions, can turn this rich content into its own ruling and determining form.

The passion of the form

The previous section attempted to articulate the differences between the various contemporary trends of political theology in terms of a dialectic of form and content, or formalism and materialism. In what follows, I will deal, in turn, with the second and third trend – the post-metaphysical radical theology and the Leninist messianists –, taking into account some of the relevant ideas and arguments of their most important theorists. This is meant to highlight both the divergences but also the concealed similarities between these two versions of political theology.

For quite evident reasons, we will start our voyage through the land of post-metaphysical political theology with Jacques Derrida's arguments from his famous *Specters of Marx*. Derrida's understanding of the 'messianic' provides the first clear articulation of the 'passion of the form' that defines this body of thought.

What is, then, the messianic for Derrida? It is, at the same time, the pure form of the open promise and what remains after all deconstruction: the pure, undeconstructible form, that remains in spite of all the deconstruction of the metaphysical content of religion and/or ontology. It is, in Derrida's words, "the coming of the other, the absolute and unpredictable singularity of the arrivant as justice. We believe that this messianic remains an ineffaceable mark – a mark one neither can nor should efface – of Marx's legacy"[11]. The reference to Marx should not confuse us: the same operation consisting in the evacuation of content and reduction to pure form is also applied here to Marx. Once we strip Marxism of all the errors and exaggerations, all the metaphysical baggage and all the concrete content, Marx's legacy, according to Derrida, is nothing more than the pure messianic form of the promise of justice. Thus, Derrida's charitable return to Marx reduces the latter's arguments to nothing but its thrust for social justice, which is the pure form underlying all his texts. Everything else – that is, everything that is specific to Marx and Marxism, namely the concrete dynamics and determination of our social injustice, and the concrete, material traces of its overcoming – are to be rejected as a metaphysically contaminated content. This return and rediscovery of Marx is like saying that we should save from Kant only some vague hope of understanding the mechanics of reason, or from Hegel some vague, yet constant interest in the unfolding of history.

Nevertheless, for Derrida, what remains alive and benefic in Marxism is only this "spirit of Marxism", which is precisely "the opening of Marxism", which is exactly what the messianic is. If this is how things stand, it goes without saying that any concrete element from Marx's thought, any determined Marxist content, would lead to the contamination of the spirit of Marxism with its heavy letter, would enclose its opening and obviously temper with its pure messianism. Just like Hegel, Marx is right and justified as soon as he opens his mouth; but he is terribly wrong, metaphysical and potentially dangerous, as soon as he effectively says something.

Hence, in Derrida's reading, Marx is almost a random victim of the extremely stretched out argument of the imperative reduction of all content to pure form. In his place, it could have been almost anybody, almost any thinker expressing, at some point, some vague hope in social justice, human emancipation and historical progress. No point then in paying mind to the 'Marxist' inheritance that Derrida claims for himself. If he is a Marxist, almost everybody is.

Now that we cleared the way of this paper dragon, let us get back to Derrida's understanding of the messianic, approaching head on the issue of form and content:

> We will not claim that this messianic eschatology common both to the religions it criticizes and to the Marxist critique must be simply deconstructed. While it is common to both of them, with the exception of the content…, it is also the case that its formal structure of promise exceeds them or precedes them. Well, what remains irreducible to any deconstruction, what remains as undeconstructible as the possibility itself of deconstruction is, perhaps, a certain experience of the emancipatory promise; it is perhaps even the formality of a structural messianism, a messianism without religion, even a messianic without messianism, an idea of justice-which we distinguish from law or right and even from human rights – and an idea of democracy which we distinguish from its current concept and from its determined predicates today.[12]

Almost all of Derrida's theory and dispositive of the messianic is set in place here: the 'messianic eschatology', the pure promise of justice, is common to both religion and Marxism. That is, it is common to their originary form, while it is obviously foreign to their concrete content. And this form, which after all exceeds and precedes all these concrete messianisms (be it Marxist or religious), is precisely the condition of possibility of deconstruction: its undeconstructible, yet negative, without positive content, fundament. In brief, what is worth saving in Marxism or religion is nothing else than Derridian deconstruction; what is worth discarding is everything else: that is, while Marxists and religious messianists started, just like Derrida, from the correct insight into the undeconstructible form of justice, they took the wrong way, attempting to construct and articulate some positive content on top of this negative basis; Derrida, on the other hand, in insisting on the deconstruction of all content that would soil this pure fundament, took the right way. The right way being here no way at all.[13]

But there is something more here, namely a bizarre mix of vague Marxism and a certain liberal reasonability. And this is visible in Derrida's ruminations on the 'idea of democracy to come':

> The idea of democracy to come… is the opening of this gap between an infinite promise (always untenable…) and the determined, necessary, but also necessarily inadequate forms of what has to be measured against this promise… Awaiting without horizon of the wait, awaiting what one does not expect yet or any longer.[14]

Democracy is thus split, for Derrida, between the ideal idea of 'democracy to come', the infinite promise of justice, and the demoralizing awareness that this will not do, that any concrete attempt to fill in this promise will betray its infinite promise. This would be a rather awkward combination of utmost idealism and realist pragmatism, if it wouldn't be, after all, so convenient. As Zizek once pointed out, here we get the underlying perversion of the 68-ers stance of 'soyons réalists, exigeons l'impossible': since we know that our unlimited, infinite demands for justice are unfulfillable, impossible to meet, it is quite realist from our part to demand them; our impossible demands allow us to occupy the high moral ground of radicalism, while we are perfectly aware that the status quo is here to stay. Here, the classical, radical political position is enhanced with an ingredient it usually lacked: awareness, reasonability. This is the portrait of the revolutionary artist at middle age: still radical, still hoping for the impossible justice to come; yet not expecting anything, aware of our limitations and so on. This is Marxism radicalism with liberal reasonability. Or, as we already put it, liberal formalism plus radical enthusiasm.

The sober drunkenness of Derrida's 'democracy to come' is thus the perfect supplement for our rigid and routinized democracies: while it ensures that nothing radical, 'impossible' can alter our liberal-democratic arrangements, it makes place for a pure hope, pure promise, pure form of justice that simply haunts this barren landscape, and whose complete separation from the concrete political realities is precisely what guarantees its purity and idealism. The good old opposition between the ideal and the real, between the utopian thrust and the pragmatic reasonableness, is resurrected here and put to good use, an even better use than the liberals might ever have thought of:

> Apparently formalist, this indifference to the content has perhaps the value of giving one to think the necessarily pure and purely necessary form of the future as such, in its being-necessarily-promised… Whether the promise promises this or that, whether it be fulfilled or not, or whether it be unfilfillable, there is necessarily some promise and therefore some historicity as future-to-come. It is what we are nicknaming the messianic without messianism.[15]

While for the liberals, the classic opposition between promise and reality, ideal and pragmatic can always prove to be a cause for despair and frustration, in Derrida the very same unbridgeable opposition becomes a cause for enthusiasm. And this enthusiasm is all the more stronger and passionate, the more it is pure – that is, without concrete fundament and possibility of fulfillment. In a typical move for all the post-metaphysical thought (and its historical correspondent – the New Left movements and their Eastern correspondents, the anticommunist dissidents), Derrida's political contribution is nothing less than having managed to square the circle of our liberal democracies: how to reconcile our dull, routinized, and utterly unjust liberal democracies with their initial message of hope and justice? Quite simply: just keep them separated. At most, let them 'haunt' each other: thus, circling around one another without any risk of contact, they can regenerate themselves endlessly. In Derrida's recipe of political justice and 'democracy to come' – that is, hoping, waiting for justice, without expecting any – liberal democracy puts on its revolutionary, enthusiastic, radical and passionate cloths. Only its passion, promise, and justice have actually nothing to do with itself, or, for that matter, with this world.

Even if not so articulated in all its political consequences, we find a very similar view of the relation between democracy and religion in Jean-Luc Nancy. Again, a certain fundamental structure or dynamic of religion – in this case, the secularization of Christianity – is revealed as sharing a strong affinity with our present democratic arrangement. Even more, this fundamental affinity has to do with the prevalence of form over content: in both Christianity and democracy, we witness the same emptying of the form of its content, the same *kenosis* or secularization. Hence, one could deduce, in spite of its minor inconveniences, the purely formal arrangement of liberalism turns out to be the initial promise and structure of the messianic promise. In the death of God, in the reduction of the religious content and presence to the pure form and passage of the immanent community, democracy is resurrected.

Here, again, as in Derrida, deconstruction enjoys an unchallenged pre-eminence over all its possible contenders: it is the only one that can understand religion, at least the Christian one, because Christianity is already, in its initial promise, deconstruction:

> Obviously, then, we must say that deconstruction… is itself Christian. It is Christian because Christianity is, originally, deconstructive, because it relates immediately to its own origin as to a slack [jeu], an interval, some play, an opening in the origin. But, as we well know, in another sense Christianity is the exact opposite – denial, foreclosure of a deconstruction and of its own deconstruction - precisely because it puts in the place of the structure of origin, of any and all origin, something else: the proclamation of its end.[16]

The same Derridian dialectic of loyalty and betrayal thus lead to the same result: deconstruction is, in some sense, more Christian than Christianity, more messianic than any religious messianism (or Marxist, why not?), because it is the only one to hold on to its initial opening. Only with deconstruction, the messianic promise can be faithful to its pure formal opening, without tempering it with positive content. Nancy's 'deconstruction of Christianity' thus reveals the unparalleled Christianism of deconstruction: its unquestioned fidelity to the pure form.

In Jean-Luc Nancy's words, Christianity has to be understood as "a dimension of sense that is at once the opening of sense and sense as opening. From passage to presence, it does not cease being averred that presence always repeats passage, or that passage always leads to more opening at the heart of sense. The extreme point of that tension is attained when the absolute of parousia, the absolute of presence, ends by merging with the infinity of passage". Or, later on, "The revealed is properly that God is the revealable: what is revealed is the revealable, the Open as such"[17]. But if the fundamental insight of Christianity is this emptying of the form of its content, the reduction of the 'absolute presence' to the 'infinity of passage', to the 'open as such', then secularization, far from being a betrayal or deviation from our Christian legacy, is, on the contrary, its most inner dynamic and most faithful expression: "Christianity itself, Christianity as such, is surpassed, because it is itself, and by itself, in a state of being surpassed. That state of self-surpassing may be very profoundly proper to it; it is perhaps its deepest tradition"[18]. And this is where the political theology of the Right (from the Christian fundamentalist stance to the more refined 'radical orthodoxy' school) goes basically wrong: their denunciation of the process of secularization as a dangerous departure from our Christian history fails to notice that secularization *is* the logical unfolding of Christianity. As Jean-Luc Nancy puts it: "any analysis that pretends to find a deviation of the modern world from Christian reference forgets or denies that the modern world is itself the unfolding of Christianity".[19]

So where does all this lead us, politically speaking? Just like in Derrida, the political effect of these developments is to present the contemporary hegemony of the liberal-democratic formalism as the only heir to the original messianic promise. "Christianity's fate is perhaps the fate of sense in general, that is, what has been called in the last few years, outwardly, the 'end of ideologies'. The 'end of ideologies' is at least the end of promised sense or the end of the promise of sense as an intention, goal, and fulfillment"[20]. The end of ideologies, the demise of the 'grand narratives', the end of 'promised sense' as 'intention, goal, and fulfillment' – that is, sense in the guise of any palpable positive content – is not so bad as it appears at first sight: our post-ideological and post-utopian societies still present us with the formal structure of sense and promise. And, considering that any positive content of this empty promise of sense can only betray its sense of promise, the post-ideological landscape turns out to be the best political arrangement. No (particular) sense at all is better than any sense, since it saves the promise of sense, the form of sense, which any particular sense can only betray. Thus, again, the contemporary political status quo is re-enchanted via a detour through political theology: the formal-formalism of liberal democracies is infused with a vital doze of abstract religious enthusiasm. Openness, pluralism, difference, proceduralism, formalism and reasonability are no longer a dull liberal refrain, but the very arsenal of passionate messianism. We are thus led back to where we started from; except that now everything is illuminated.

A quick word on a different – yet so similar – view on political theology is here in order, namely Gianni Vattimo's recent rediscovery of the Christian legacy. In the same way in which Derrida and Nancy place deconstruction in the undeconstructible core of the messianic apparatus, Vattimo localizes there his own intellectual brand – the famous 'pensiero debole'. And the conceptual tool for this operation is a very similar understanding of what secularization means.

Thus, for Vattimo, modernity and secularization, far from being a departure from or a betrayal of the religious experience, constitute in fact its innermost dynamic. "Secularization", argues Vattimo, "is a constitutive characteristic of the authentic religious experience"; or, in even stronger terms, "secularization is the very essence of Christianity".[21] And in this aspect, secularization is exactly identical with the idea of 'weak thought': both of them describe and proclaim a necessary weakening of the metaphysical pre-eminence of presence, and a gradual liberation of form from its content. "The idea that the history of being has as its guiding line the weakening of the strong structures… is nothing else than the transcription of the Christian doctrine of incarnation".[22] The open secret of the Christian history is thus the dissolution of content and the opening of the pure form. Hence, the result of Vattimo's reading of secularization as a process of weakening is a picture profoundly similar to Derrida and Nancy's view. Is the political effect of this reading the same re-enchantment of liberal democracy that we get in French post-structuralism? On one hand, not exactly. In Vattimo's later works – for example, *Ecce comu* – we certainly find a political critique of our contemporary liberal-democracies that is largely missing in the writings of his French colleagues[23]. However, on the other hand, at a more attentive look, Vattimo's 'generic communism', or 'hermeneutic communism', as he later called it,[24] as the political arrangement adequate to our post-metaphysical condition, turns out to share all the characteristics of Derrida's messianic liberalism, except the name. The same horror of positive content, the same thrust in the inner efficiency of the pure form, and, inevitably, the same identification of our contemporary political arrangement (at least in its ideal form) with the originary messianic promise of justice. Certainly, this identification is never without some remainder; but this remainder is exactly what is needed in order to keep the democratic game and the messianic hope going.

I will close this section of the article with a discussion of Simon Critchley's political theology, for two reasons: while Critchley shares the basic assumptions of the other representatives of the post-metaphysical political theology, his famous debate with Slavoj Zizek allows us track down the major differences between their respective political theologies and, thus, to prepare the passage to the next section.

In his book *Infinitely demanding,* Critchley tries to solve a problem very similar to the one that tormented the other post-metaphysical theologians that we already discussed: namely, how can one rescue or generate some form of enthusiasm and political passion in our post-metaphysical and post-ideological time? In the absence of the good old grand narratives and great utopias, how can one avoid slipping into passivity and political cynicism? Critchley's answer points to the necessity of religion – or, more exactly, the necessity of some form of religion. In Critchley's words, "if political life is to arrest a slide into demotivated cynicism, then it would seem to require a motivating and authorizing faith which might be capable of forming solidarity in a locality, a site, a region".[25] Again then, the existing democratic political arrangement, in order to survive, requires an infusion of some kind of diffuse religiosity. And again, this religion that comes to save the democratic status quo is a purely formal religion, deprived of its embarrassing content (such as the existence of God). As Critchley describes the double bind of this decaffeinated religion:

> On the one hand, unbelievers still seem to require an experience of belief; on the other hand, this cannot be the idea that belief has to be underpinned by a traditional conception of religion defined by an experience or maybe just a postulate of transcendent fullness, namely the God of metaphysics or what Heidegger calls 'onto-theo-logy'.[26]

Or, as he puts it in another place: "Those who cannot believe still require religious truth and a *framework of ritual* in which they can believe"[27]. – in other words, what we need today, in our nihilistic age, when all the great narratives are dead and buried, is at least the *framework* of a grand narrative, its religious form, or even better, its practical form – its ritual. If not a grand narrative of democracy, than at least we should have a grand ritual. The dialectics of form and content, or, more precisely, the sublation of content into form displays here all its strategic advantages: "Must one either defend a version of secularism or quietly accept the slide into some form of theism? This book refuses such an either/or option"[28] – but it can refuse such blackmail only by playing on the dialectic of form and content, by hoping that thus we can still have the cake and eat it too – we can have all the advantages of secularism (pluralism, proceduralism, difference), with the enchanted world of religion.

So what is the political effect of this necessary religious form or ritual? A politics which could enlist the help of this form of religion would be a politics of 'infinitely demanding' – the politics of 'mystical anarchism'. In what consists the politics of infinitely demanding? This, argues Critchley, is a politics that "calls the state into question and calls the established order to account, not in order to do away with the state, desirable though that might well be in some utopian sense, but in order to better it or attenuate its malicious effect".[29] Infinitely demanding – but expecting very little, nothing more than an attenuation of the status quo. The mystical anarchism of infinitely demanding politics paradoxically coincides with the most reasonable and pragmatic reformism.

Not incidentally, we end up here with the same inevitable compromise between our infinite demand for justice and the concrete – and inevitably unsatisfactory – attempts to implement it, a compromise that we already found in Derrida. And just like in Derrida, what at first view appears as an unstable, potentially explosive tension – between infinite justice and concrete politics – is actually a very convenient and stable coexistence: their radical separation ensures the endless reproduction of both. In Critchley's words, "politics is action that situates itself in the conflict between a commitment to nonviolence and the historical reality of violence into which one is inserted, and which requires an ever-compromised, ever imperfect action that is guided by an infinite ethical demand"[30]. It is precisely the fact that our thrust for infinite justice will never impact on the concrete political situation the one that, on the one hand, our 'mystical anarchism' will remain forever pure, forever noble, while the political status quo will not only remain in place, but will also gain the legitimacy provided by its opening to our call for justice. "I argue that the only choice in politics is not, as it is for Lenin and Žižek, between state power or no power. Rather, politics consists in the creation of interstitial distance within the state…".[31] One should not attempt to abolish the state or occupy its commanding heights – nothing radical is politically possible, and this is not *in spite* of our infinite demand for justice, but precisely because of it. The most we can hope for is to create an 'interstitial distance within the state': mystical anarchism thus consists in creating an immanent transcendence into our status quo. Which expresses perfectly the ultimate political contribution of the stance of infinitely demanding: in the same way in which bourgeois society managed to accommodate the various radical political demands by creating small islands of freedom in its interstices (leisure time and high culture for the select few), it can perfectly accommodate the infinite demands of the mystical anarchism by offering them the necessary 'interstitial distance within the state' – such as, let's say, various 'occupied' parks in which the noble thrust for justice is kept alive, as in a natural reservation of political freedom, while everywhere else business goes on as usual.

Overall then, Zizek's critical appraisal of the 'politics of resistance' envisioned by Critchley and the other post-metaphysical radicals seems to be perfectly accurate: "today's liberal-democratic state and the dream of an 'infinitely demanding' anarchic politics exist in a relationship of mutual parasitism: anarchic agents do the ethical thinking, and the state does the work of running and regulating society". In other words, "the politics of resistance is nothing but the moralising supplement to a Third Way left".[32]

This diagnostic concurs indeed with our analysis of the post-metaphysical radical political theology that we developed so far. But how do things look in the other camp, in the formal materialism of the Leninist messianists? The next section will attempt to provide an answer to this.

The form of passion

While the material formalism of the post-metaphysical theorists amounts to, as we saw, a theological repackaging of the good old democratic reformism – which is thus saved from its epochal inertia and dead-end – , in the case of the political theology of Zizek and Badiou we are dealing rather with an attempt to re-articulate a theory (and eventually practice) of radical revolution.

This attempt had its first and most notorious contemporary articulation in Alain Badiou's *Saint Paul. The Foundation of Universalism*. As Badiou clearly states, the contemporary relevance of the figure of Saint Paul consists in the need to find a "new figure of the militant, different from the party militant of Lenin".[33] This difference from Leninism is, however, as we will see below, rather an internal difference: it opposes a ritualized, pre-existing and purified form of Leninism (which articulates the genuine figure of the revolutionary militant) to the real and institutionalized manifestation of Leninism. In brief, it opposes the initial Lenin, Lenin's intentions, a sort of ur-Lenin, to the real one that became institutionalized and corrupted in the party discipline. This is why Saint Paul can pass, for Badiou and Zizek, as the "Lenin of Christ":[34] that is, the one who universalized and put into practice the teachings of the master. What Lenin did for Marx – that is, transposing the master's message into a universalizable practical form – Saint Paul did for Christ. In both cases, the operation of universalization and putting into practice of the initial message has to pass through the decentered position of the apostle with regard to the original phenomenon.

This necessary decentering is the constitutive operation of the foundation of universality. Hence, Badiou's idea of universality has nothing to do with the traditional idea of universality, as the mere common element to be found in all differences, or as the dialectical overcoming of differences into their synthetic identity. Universality, for Badiou, the very traversal of differences – thus, it is not derived from the common substance shared by all particular elements, but rather on the very non-identity with itself of every particularity. Thus, in a way, universality always already traverses the particular and precluded its identity with itself.

This understanding of universality, that Badiou finds in Saint Paul, is crucial for our contemporary epoch because it allows us to avoid the mutually reinforcing opposition of global versus local. According to Badiou, these two alternatives – global and local – far from standing in a genuine opposition that covers all the possible alternatives, stand actually in a relation of concealed complicity: they are the two sides of contemporary capitalism, in which the homogeneous dynamic of global capital requires and effectively reinforces the manifestation of local particularities – or, as Deleuze would have put it, every deteritorialization produces a reteritorialization. Hence, the blackmail with which we are presented by global capitalism, of having to choose between global and local, between cosmopolitan capitalism and identitary resistance, is to be refused *in toto*. And the conceptual and practical source for this overcoming of the false opposition between local and global, or of the mutually reinforcing opposition between law and transgression, is Saint Paul's notion of universalism. As Badiou argues, "Paul's unprecedented gesture consists in subtracting truth from the communitarian grasp",[35] without turning it into an abstract universality. The obtaining universality is not a stable substance, or an empty, abstract form, but an active operation which requires the active fidelity of the particular subjects.

Thus, in the Paulinian gesture of universalization, subject and strategy meet. Hence, the contemporary relevance of Paul's message is that it understands universality in a purely political way: universality as such is a political strategy. Moreover, it also conceives of the subject as a purely political being: in this, Paul's epistles seem to confirm Badiou's old idea that "every subject is political, and that is why we have so few subjects and so few politics".[36] The Paulinian gesture of universalization thus presumes a mutual founding of subject and revolutionary politics: there is a universal politics of emancipation only as long as there is the fidelity of the subject to the messianic Event. On the other hand, the messianic Event exists – or persists – only through the community of atheist believers, of the ones that remain faithful to its call.

This is why Badiou, even if a declared atheist, is profoundly interested in Saint Paul. The apostle is relevant not a religious figure, but as the "thinker of the Event", as the one who articulates for the first time "the invariant traits of the militant figure".[37] Here we already encounter the dialectics of form and content that the messianic Leninists are led to presume. The religious content of Paul's epistles is reduced to a minimum. Actually, argues Badiou, this reduction of the religious content to its pure form was already initiated by Paul himself, when he reduced the religious 'fables' to the unique event of Christ's resurrection. This evacuation of the religious content is further pursued by Badiou, for whom even the concrete content of Christ's resurrection is distilled in the minimal message of the possibility of overcoming the mere, biological life, and in the promise of emancipation that it carries with it. Thus, Badiou's wager becomes perfectly clear: in Saint Paul's writings we are supposed to find, already articulated, all the formal structure of the militant, revolutionary politics, even if still a bit muddied in the content of the religious fables. Thus, perhaps paradoxically, in order to articulate a new Leninist politics of revolutionary practice, we are to go beyond the message and practice of the real Lenin, and return to the strategic theory of the messianic event as it was articulated by Saint Paul. However, this obviously does not amount to a return to Christianity: saving Lenin from himself presupposes rescuing Saint Paul from his Christianity. What we are looking for is merely the formal articulation of the militant's subjective disposition and revolutionary practice, as it appears in Saint Paul's writings on the believers' fidelity to the messianic event. Apparently, the purity of this Leninist formal dispositive is found in a more compelling and comprehensive way in the epistles of Saint Paul, even if it is contaminated with the religious content, than in the writings and actions of Lenin himself, where it is muddled with – well – its own concrete and historical content.

Before we pass to Zizek's encounter with political theology, a few words about Giorgio Agamben's *Th Time That Remains* are in order, since this book is partly a reply to Badiou's *Saint Paul*. Agamben's commentary of the beginning of Saint Paul's epistle to the Romans is concerned with uncovering a certain messianic structure of subjectivity and history; in this respect, it is largely consistent with Badiou's attempt. However, on a number of issues, Agamben formulates several critiques of the political theology of Badiou, which are worth taking into consideration, since they might further clarify the stakes involved here.

Agamben's main critique of Badiou is his claim that, with Saint Paul, we witness the foundation of universality. For the Italian philosopher, this is quite wrong, since the messianic call, far from overcoming the particular differences in a superior, encompassing universality, actually splits the particular identities from within. The effect of the messianic call is to "revoke all vocations": all existing identities are suspended, and preserved in the manner of "as if not".[38] In short, the messianic call separates the subject from his immediate identity: under the incidence of the messianic call, the subject is to remain in his previous condition, continue to be a farmer, a husband etc., but in the mode of the "as if not". However, this operation is not at all similar to the strategy of mere pretending to be something else, the "as if" position: instead of transgressing the subject's existing condition by allowing him to identify with another, fictitious one, the "as if not" suspends the current condition from within and, in opening this internal distance, allows the subject to pass from a relation of property (in which the subject 'owns' his identity) to a relation of free use.

But in this aspect we can see the extremely modern, or even modernist, effect of the messianic call. The revocation of all vocation, this suspension of all immediate identity, is at the basis of the modern concept of class, as opposed to the concept of estate. While the concept of estate presupposes the substantial identity of its members and an organic link between the one individual and his social position, the notion of class presumes only a functional and structural common identity of its members.

However, the messianic call, when read in this way, cannot – argues Agamben – be understood as a 'foundation of the universal': on the contrary, it is exactly what precludes the formation of universality, since it subverts the particular identities from within. The problem with this critique of Badiou is that the universality that Agamben rejects has nothing to do with the universality that Badiou advocates: Agamben's target is rather the traditional notion of universality, understood as the common substance underlying or overcoming all the particular differences. Even more, what Agamben opposes to this universality is actually very similar to Badiou's understanding of universality: not the stable and immutable general identity, which transcends all particular differences, but the impossible coincidence of the particular with itself. Agamben's messianic call traverses and opens up the immediate particular identities in the exact same way as Badiou's universality. For Agamben, the messianic cut introduces a remainder both in the subject and in history; it cuts the subject's identity with itself, and splits the chronological line of history: Messianic time introduces a remainder into historical time that exceeds the division between past and future. However, this historical cut is precisely the space for Badiou's 'immanent exception', in the same way in which the remainder to which the subject is reduced, after having his identity suspended from within by the messianic call, is precisely the 'stuff' of the universal for Badiou. Thus, in this respect, one can say that Agamben's critique of Badiou is a bit misplaced; but on the other hand, that Agamben's articulation of the condition of 'as if not' and the revocation of all vocations provides a better and more compelling picture of what Badiou meant to say with the messianic foundation of universality.

In another respect instead, Agamben's critique of Badiou seems to be perfectly accurate – namely, in the issue regarding dialectics. Badiou's avowed anti-Hegelianism leads him to the claim that the messianic apparatus is profoundly non-dialectical. It is actually meant to transgress the 'dialectics' of law and transgression, sin and desire. (In this respect, Antonio Negri's return to the Book of Job is very similar, since it also tries to find in it an alternative to the straightjacket of the dialectic between sin and punishment, measure and value – a dialectics that extends, according to Negri, in the underlying structure and dynamic of capitalism, the equation of labour time and measure of value[39]). However, if in the previous case we witnessed Agamben mounting a critique of universalism based on a very traditional understanding of this notion, in this case Badiou's (and Negri's) critique of dialectics is the one that is grounded in a rather poor and unidimensional – we could say: non-dialectical – understanding of dialectics. As Agamben brilliantly shows, the messianic apparatus, far from being non-dialectical, or even anti-dialectical, is actually the inspiration point for the whole dialectical tradition: the Greek term *katarghein*, designating the operation of 'revocation of all vocations', was later translated by Luther as *Aufhebung* – that is, precisely the central concept of the whole Hegelian dialectics.

It is not difficult to understand the reasons for Badiou's and Negri's resistance to the idea of dialectics: it is their belief that, once we accept dialectics, we are inevitably led to accept all the errors of the infamous dialectical materialism – that is, its rigid and teleological view on history, as a preordained set of stages through which history will necessarily pass. However, in their attempt to rescue revolutionary politics from the misgivings of its Stalinist institutionalization, it seems that they are too eager to throw the precious dialectical understanding of history together with the dirty water of revolutionary party politics. Furthermore, as we will see in more detail below, their attempt to replace the dialectical dynamic with the messianic apparatus, as articulated in the Church's founding writings, makes rather little sense, since this formal messianic apparatus stands in the same relation to its institutionalization in the Church as the dialectical apparatus stands in relation to its Bolshevik institutionalization. So, if we are to reject dialectics as having been irreparably compromised by its historical application, how come we are supposed to rescue the pure, formal messianic apparatus, even though – as Badiou explicitly admits – this apparatus has also been perverted and corrupted in the institution of the Church?

Before approaching this kind of issues head on, let us briefly review Zizek's contribution to the contemporary turn to political theology. Since his politico-theological writing comprise no less than three books explicitly dedicated to the issue, and numerous chapters and passages scattered throughout his other volumes, I will only point out the most relevant aspects for the present discussion.

The first thing to notice is that Zizek's turn to political theology comes after his famous debate with Judith Butler and Ernesto Laclau, and as an answer to their critique that there is no possible politics to be articulated on the basis of Lacan's psychoanalysis. What his interlocutors rightly pointed out is that one cannot build a Marxist political theory, or at least a theory of the subject compatible with the Marxist materialism – as Zizek claims – on the basis of the unhistorical and unchanging Lacanian structures. Zizek's answer seems to have consisted in his turn to Saint Paul and political theology: that is, not a rediscovery of historicity and materialism, but rather a better, more suited articulation of the formal and unhistorical structure of the militant subject. For Zizek, the turn to Saint Paul is not a divorce from the Lacanian unhistorical formalism and turn to a proper Marxist materialism, but rather a better formalism, in which the political limitations of Lacanian theory are turned into just so many political advantages, without leaving the sphere of formalism and having to take into consideration the historical and material conditions for such a revolutionary politics.

The programmatic intent of Zizek's turn to political theology is clearly stated in the opening pages of his works: in these times of engulfing obscurantism, one should not criticize the last remnants of religion, especially those still to be found in Marxism; instead, one should adopt the opposite strategy and claim: "yes, there is a direct lineage from Christianity to Marxism; yes, Christianity and Marxism should fight on the same side of the barricade against the onslaught of new spiritualisms – the authentic Christian legacy is much too precious to be left to the fundamentalist freaks".[40] The 'authentic Christian legacy' and the genuine Marxism thus stand in a relation of mutual founding and purification: in the same way in which Marxism preserves the genuine, revolutionary core of Christianity, the authentic Christian legacy expresses the same revolutionary and emancipatory message of Marxism. This is the same operation of the necessary decentered foundation that we encountered in the role of Saint Paul with regards to the Christian institution. In a move that resembles Derrida's ruminations on the negative and decentered statute of the origin, here the origin, the beginning, in order to function as origin and beginning, has to be displaced and take the necessary road of the exile.

And yet, in Zizek, between Marxism and Christianity we don't have a perfect symmetry, in which each of the two terms founds and purifies the other. The political theology of Zizek is more theology than politics: in our times of 'religious obscurantism', if one wants to re-articulate the genuine message of Marxism, one has to pass through the religious form of the messianic event; the opposite move – reading the messianic message in the Marxian corpus – doesn't seem to be advisable, precisely because one would then run the risk of alienating his presumed public. Because of the obscurantist times in which we live, the re-articulation of an emancipatory revolutionary politics has to borrow the form and terms of the religious experience, and just give them a different twist and a different – more genuine – political content. Never has an appeal to a new founding of a political radical alternative has started with a more complete capitulation to the imperatives and fashion of the status quo.

So which is then the reason for which, today, the emancipatory message of Marxism is more readable in Saint Paul's letters than in Marx's texts, besides the statistical fact that, in our obscurantist epoch, people seem to find more reasonable and plausible the existence of a life after death than the possibility of a just society after capitalism; or the fact that, to put it a little better, people believe that it is much more plausible to reach a just society through a miraculous resurrection or subjective rebirth, than through an implausible modification of our existing social structures? The reason is that, while we have to – as Zizek assumes – pay lip service to the tastes of our epoch and join hands with the overwhelming religious revival, we can still subvert the reactionary bias of this trend by unveiling the essentially modern and progressive kernel of genuine Christianity. Thus, a more proper and genuine Christianism is proposed as an alternative to its more common, obscurantist or fundamentalist form of appearance. The contemporary religious and reactionary wave is to be counteracted with a no less religious, but progressive stance. The return to Marx ends up in an internal war that traverses the Christian communities. The essentially modern, emancipatory and universalist kernel of the Christian stance is the only weapon against the reactionary and obscurantist contemporary revival of fundamentalism, politics of identity, new age spirituality and so on.

The reason why one can oppose a genuine, emancipatory Christian legacy to its own obscurantist debauchery consists in the fact that the very emancipatory dynamic is already the proper Christian one. In building this argument, Zizek comes as close as it gets to the understanding of secularization as the proper Christian dynamic that we already encountered in Nancy or Derrida. A few quotes from the works of the Slovenian thinker will suffice in order to prove their proximity: "My thesis is thus double: not only is *Christianity,* at its core, the only truly consistent atheism, it is also that atheists are the only true believers"[41]. Or: 'My claim here is not merely that I am a materialist through and through, and that the subversive kernel of Christianity is accessible also to a materialist approach; my thesis is much stronger: this kernel is accessible *only* to a materialist approach – and vice versa: to become a true dialectical materialist, one should go through the Christian experience".[42]

The reason for this is the unique dialectic nature of Christianity: what is sublated in Christianity is the divine Substance itself – negated but simultaneously maintained in the transubstantiated form of the Holy Spirit, the community of believers. The community of atheist believers is, then, a purely virtual community: it exists without any transcendent support and without any internal identity – it exists only as long as its members act as if it exists. It is only atheists who believe purely, because their belief is without any support in some presupposed Big Other. This is why the proper Christian stance is an alternative to the fundamentalist and obscurantist return of the religious: against the new spirituality, which focuses on inner, undetermined and non-institutionalized belief in some generic Supreme Being, or which is based in an enclosed and substantial community, the holy spirit should be conceived of as the community of engaged atheists – a community without 'Big Other', without internal identity and substance.

The inherent dynamic of Christianity is a properly dialectical move, in which it is fulfilled and overcome in the community of atheist believers. Thus, the whole point again boils down to a dialectic of form and content: the reason why we can return to the genuine core of the Christian legacy in order to counteract the contemporary onslaught of religious revivalism is precisely the fact that, at its core, Christianity is already such an evacuation of the content and reduction to pure form. As Zizek puts it: this "emptying the form of its content" already takes place in Christianity itself, at its very core-the name of this emptying is kenosis: God dies and resurrects itself as the Holy Ghost, as the form of collective belief. Or, in brief, God dies and resurrects as the communist community. The reduction of the transcendent content to the immanent form is the principal message of Christianity. In order to recover the Marxian politics of radical emancipation, one has to go all the way through the Christian dialectics. Adorno famously said that, at the concluding point of radical materialism, one encounters theology. Here, the opposite path is opening in front of us: at the end of Christian theology, one rediscovers Marxist materialism.

But what kind of materialism is the one that Zizek tries to articulate here? A more attentive look reveals that this is a very curious kind of materialism, namely a materialism which is not determined or influenced by any concrete historical and social conditioning. Borrowing heavily from Lacan's notion of 'pas toute', the 'not-all', Zizek ends up by dismissing any final determination by the material conditions: as a matter of fact, as Zizek argues, "the historical determination, the objective conditions are never 'total' – they are not-all, the subjective position is already inscribed in them… The question 'When does ordinary time get caught in the messianic twist?' is a misleading one: we cannot deduce the emergence of messianic time through an 'objective' analysis of historical process. 'Messianic time' ultimately stands for the intrusion of subjectivity irreducible to the 'objective' historical process, which means that things can take a messianic turn, time can become dense *at any point*"[43]. So, again, what kind of materialism do we get at the end of our theological detour? Definitely, a much better, permissive and promising kind of materialism, a materialism in which the objective conditions do not determine anything and in which the subjective position – that is, the subject's will – determines everything. The theological turn thus clearly was worth the price: from a panorama of obscurantism and political despair, we ended up with an exhilarating image in which we can still change and hope for everything, because the historical conditioning is utterly irrelevant. In the end, the search for a new, more radical revolutionary materialism cleared the stage of any possible concern for the critique of political economy and for the concrete analysis of the historical situation – all such endeavors pertaining merely to the vulgar kind of materialism – and left us with the pure form of materialism[44]. Not only the historical determination of this materialism is utterly absent, but even its concrete forms of organization – be it political party, class, state – are to be replaced by the vacuous and paradoxical 'communist community of atheist believers'. The only content or matter that counts is the subject's own will and decision, his fidelity to the messianic call; the only thing that counts as matter is the subject's "suspensive revolutionary consciousness": suspensive precisely because it cannot approach any kind of practice or concrete action without endangering the purity of its own form. Formal materialism is definitely the best kind of materialism: it has all the advantages of formalism (unhistorical abstraction enhanced with obstinate voluntarism), plus the prestigious etiquette of materialism.

Concluding remarks

Finally, in the concluding lines of this paper, let me try to synthesize the main problems of this trend of formal materialism. Not incidentally, they all have to do with the dialectic of form and content.

Firstly, the issue of the relationship between the form and content of the religious stance. According to the Leninist messianists, our epoch forces us to reverse the famous image proposed by Benjamin in discussing the relationship between theology and historical materialism: nowadays it is no longer theology that has to keep hidden under the table of the historical materialist chess player; it is historical materialism that has to be advocated for only if couched in the categories of theology. The rearticulation of a positive radical political program has to appeal to the theological form of the messianic apparatus. In order to become plausible again, any concrete politics of emancipation has to be grounded and promoted as the 'zero degree', the pure form of the religious stance. The problem here is, obviously, the difficulty of smoothly separating the form from its content: on the one hand, if the messianic promise is to be reduced to its pure form, and stripped of all its positive religious content, it is bound to turn into an abstract form, dispositive or ritual that will hardly generate any more passion or commitment than the historical materialism it is presumed to rescue; on the other hand, if this theological turn is to provide the necessary infusion of revolutionary enthusiasm and passion, it will have to carry with it a lot of its positive religious content, towards which Badiou and Zizek are nevertheless extremely reluctant. There is a good reason for which Marxist politics seem to be today in an unsurpassable deadlock: besides its historical record in the 20th century as 'state socialism', the conceptual sophistication of this theory is matched only by the growing sophistication of today's capitalism. In this context, it is hard to believe that importing a pure form from Christian theology will enhance the plausibility of Marxism, or translate today's economic realities into some more intuitive sense, or generate some new enthusiasm in this kind of revolutionary politics. Zizek and Badiou's wager that it nevertheless could amounts to claiming that one could generate a new enthusiasm in the rationalism of political liberalism by rediscovering Aristotle's axiom of logic.

Secondly, we have the issue of history and event: the possibility of the radical, emancipatory event is grounded, in Zizek and Badiou's political theology, not in the analysis of the concrete situation, but in the evacuation of all historical relevance. The only historical determination that the Leninist messianists seem to hold on to is concentrated in Benjamin's notion of 'readability': that is, the idea that the historical content becomes intelligible, readable only in certain privileged moments. But again, the historical reason for which we are supposedly reaching this readability today is, in Zizek and Badiou, extremely thin: the only argument would be that today's American global yet multicultural empire resembles the old Roman empire. But even if this were true, the political effect of the Christian opposition to the Roman empire was not communism, but feudalism.

And yet history – with all its concrete determinations – seems to be present in the background of the Leninist messianists mind, but only as a negative presence, as a stumbling block that one has to avoid. For Marx, communism was not a distant utopia, nor even a form already available, but the real movement of history.[45] In Zizek and Badiou, the reasoning seems to be instead as follows: if history doesn't present us with any concrete 'historical transcendence' – that is, with some concrete traces, signs and dynamics that would point towards its possible transcendence –, if communism is no longer the real movement of history and history is obviously no longer on our side, the only solution is to drop history altogether and stick to the pure, a priori form of transcendence: the messianic event. Paraphrasing Marx's famous thesis on Feuerbach[46], for

Zizek and Badiou the task of the philosopher is not to interpret the world, nor simply to change it – but rather to change the world by offering a different interpretation of it; or, to put it better, the revolutionary task is to find an interpretation of the world as already changed by a proper interpretation, i.e. the messianic call. Here, the objective conditions are replaced with the subjective disposition. And since the proper subjective disposition can be summoned anytime, this formal materialism converts formal possibility into occasion, and occasion into concrete possibility. It is, as Schmitt would say, political romanticism, with its conceptual trademark, occasionalism.

Finally, it is worth saying some words about the inevitable succession of occasional fidelity and necessary betrayal that this formal materialism leads to. For all its emphasis on political organization and mobilization, this trend is utterly vague on both issues. It is, at most, mobilization for the sake of mobilization; the fact that the messianic community – just like the lacanian psychoanalyst – authorizes itself from itself, with no external point of authority, leaves this political subject and this political movement totally undetermined. Hence, there is – at least at the concrete, pragmatic level – an overlapping with the other contemporary trend of contemporary political theology, the post-metaphysical theology of Derrida. The political practice that both of these theories entail oscillates between a radical subjective mobilization (with its melancholic reverse) and an abstract metaphysics of the unfathomable Event (again, with a similar melancholic reverse[47]). The very purity of the messianic form precludes its proper translation into practice.

Certainly, these authors are not unaware to this circulatory logic of fidelity and betrayal. After all, their turn to theology was meant precisely to resuscitate a possible Marxist and revolutionary politics from its betrayal in the state socialisms of the 20th century. But it is hard to understand how can one break this short-circuit between Marxist promise and Marxist betrayal by appealing to a pure, a prioric messianic form, which, according to these very authors, was not only betrayed by its concrete form of institutional organization, but already by its immediate, positive content.

The final verdict: in Zizek and Badiou's political theology, the theory (and, eventually, practice) of revolution is stripped down right to its zero degree – that is, the closing, formal stage of the material: what their theory of the messianic event amounts to is an ontological argument for revolution, whereby the existence of revolution is deduced from its unhistoric, aprioric concept – the messianic apparatus. Historical materialism survives here only in its minimal, formal and idealist mode of appearance. Theirs is indeed a liturgy of actual revolution and, consequently, of the possibility of history: its burial and resurrection as pure form, as the holy, immanent community of Marxist academics.

Such is, then, the sad and happy fate of our times: to reenact the good old, political opposition between bourgeois ideology and political practice (liberal democracy) versus the revolutionary left as not even a battle of ideas, but as a genuine battle of fantasies, between a mystical anarchism of the pure democracy to come (completely accommodating and even legitimizing to the liberal status quo) and a no less mystical Leninism of the revolution-as-already-there (ultimately, no less accommodating in its political effects).

NOTES

[1] Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2004, p. 69.

[2] 'Schmittianism', obviously not in the sense of a massive turn to the far Right, but in the strict sense delineated by Taubes' quoted remark: as a generalized attempt to uncover the theological substratum in our political, juridical and social categories.

[3] Since I will be discussing here the political effect of this theological turn in terms of emancipatory potential and thrust for social justice, I will be dealing only with political theorists belonging to the Left – understood in the broadest sense, from liberals to Leninists.

[4] See the articles in the famous Rawls-Habermas debate: Jurgen Habermas, "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism", *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 92, no. 3, 1995, pp. 109-131; John Rawls, "Political Liberalism: Reply to Habermas", *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 92, no. 3, 1995, pp. 132-180; John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited", *The University of Chicago Law Review*, vol. 64, no. 3, 1997, pp. 765-807; Jurgen Habermas, "Religion in the Public Sphere", *European Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1-25.

[5] Boris Buden, *Zonă de trecere. Despre sfârșitul postcomunismului*, traducere de Maria-Magdalena Anghelescu, Tact, Cluj-Napoca, 2012 [*Zone des Übergangs - Vom Ende des Postkommunismus*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2009].

[6] Loren Goldner, *Vanguard of Retrogression. Postmodern Fictions as Ideology in the Era of Fictitious Capital*, Queequeg Publications, 2011, p. 52.

[7] Besides Zizek and Badiou, Antonio Negri's reading of the *Book of Job* [*Il lavoro di Giobbe*, Manifestolibri, Rome, 2002] should be included more or less in the same trend. However, as it inevitably happens with such attempts to systematize and arrange conceptually large bodies of ideas, some important authors remain non-allocated: in our case, the most relevant ones would be Giorgio Agamben and Terry Eagleton.

[8] Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, Cambridge (MA), MIT Press, 1986.

[9] Herbert Marcuse, *The One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1991, p. 16.

[10] To use the apt expression coined by Nicos Poulantzas in his famous debate with Ralph Miliband.

[11] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, Routledge, London & New York, 2006 [1993], p. 33.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[13] "[Deconstruction] belongs to the movement of an experience open to the absolute future of what is coming, that is to say, a necessarily indeterminate, abstract, desert-like experience that is confided, exposed, given up to

its waiting for the other and for the event. In its pure formality, in the indetermination that it requires, one may find yet another essential affinity between it and a certain messianic spirit" (*Ibid.,* p. 112). Derrida is being here unusually modest: judging from his own arguments, it is not only that there is an affinity between 'a certain messianic spirit' and deconstruction. It is rather that deconstruction is the only legitimate heir to this messianic spirit. As we already saw, the other messianisms (Marxist or religious) share an affinity to this messianic spirit only in as much as they share the opening stance of deconstruction.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 81.

[15] *Ibid.,* p. 92.

[16] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2008, p. 149.

[17] *Ibid.,* pp. 146, 147.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 141. The same idea is present in the so-called 'radical political theology' trend. See, for example, Clayton Crockett: "secularization is not simply the opposite of religion, but a process inherent within it that empties it or weakens it of its strong, foundational manifestations" (Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology. Religion and Politics after Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2011, p. 12).

[19] Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure*, p. 138. Hence, an essential affinity between atheism and Christian religion, linked logically and historically via the mechanism of secularization: "The only Christianity that can be actual is one that contemplates the present possibility of its negation… "The only thing that can be actual is an atheism that contemplates the reality of its Christian origins.". (*Ibid.,* p. 137)

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

[21] Gianni Vattimo, *Credere di credere*, Garzanti, Milano, 1996, pp. 7, 42.

[22] *Ibid.,* p. 25.

[23] Certainly, the various 'critiques' of liberal democracy formulated by Derrida or Nancy, which function rather as a 'political' extension of their philosophical critique of metaphysics, and borrow heavily from the anti-totalitarian discourse of the Cold War, are not exactly a political critique; and, actually, they are not even a critique, since their main thrust is to rescue the pure form of liberal democracy, its originary messianic promise, from its concrete manifestations.

[24] Gianni Vattimo, *Ecce commu. Come si ridiventa cio che si era*, Fazi, Roma, 2007; Gianni Vattimo, Santiago Zabala, *Hermeneutic Communism: From Heidegger to Marx*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2011.

[25] Simon Critchley, *The Faith of the Faithless. Experiments in Political Theology*, Verso, London & New York, 2012, p. 5.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 3, my emphasis.

[28] *Ibid.,* p. 14.

[29] *bid.,* p. 8.

[30] *Ibid.,* p. 43.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[32] Slavoj Zizek, 'Resistance is surrender', *London Review of Books*, vol. 29, no. 22, 15 November 2007.

[33] Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul. The Foundation of Universalism*, Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 7.

[34] *Ibid.,* p. 13. See also Slavoj Zizek, *Repeating Lenin*, Arkzin, 2001.

[35] Badiou, *Saint Paul*, p. 18.

[36] Alain Badiou, *Théorie du sujet*, Seuil, Paris, 2006, p. 351.

[37] Badiou, *Saint Paul,* p. 4.

[38] Giorgio Agamben, *Il tempo che resta. Un commento alla Lettera ai Romani*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2000.

[39] See Negri, *Il lavoro di Giobbe.*

[40] Slavoj Zizek, *The Fragile Absolute: Or Why is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For*, Verso, London & New York, 2009, p. 1.

[41] Slavoj Zizek, *Less than Nothing. Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, Verso, London & New York, 2012, p. 116.

[42] Slavoj Zizek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf. The Perverse Core of Christianity*, MIT Press, Massachusetts, 2003, p. 3.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[44] As Critchley rightly points out, "Badiou is trying to establish the *formal* conditions of a legitimate politics. The more Marxist or sociological question of the material conditions for such a politics is continually elided" (*The Faith of the Faithless*, p. 96). The same goes for Zizek.

[45] Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01a.htm

[46] Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm

[47] Melancholic here in the quite technical sense that the term has in psychoanalysis, that is the strategy of saving the relation with the impossible, forbidden object by turning it into an object always already lost.

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PROBLEMS OF IDENTITY IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC IN TRANSYLVANIA

Transylvania and the Orthodox people from Transylvania

Transylvania is the region that stretches to the Central and Western part of Romania today. Broadly speaking, Transylvania represents the territory once under Hungarian and Austrian dominion which became part of the Romanian state after the First World War and in the aftermath of the dissolution of Austria-Hungary. Strictly speaking, the term refers to the territory delineated by the Eastern, Southern and Western Romanian Carpathians, a territory that generally overlaps the former principality of Transylvania since the time of the Hapsburg dominion. Transylvania, in a wider sense, also includes the territories stretching to the west of the former Transylvanian principality (Banat, Crișana) and to the north of it (Maramureș).[1]

The largest part of Transylvania's inhabitants are Romanian. The Hungarians are the most important minority, approximately 20% of the region's population.[2] A significant proportion is made up of the Roma population, but their number is difficult to estimate; the correct percentage is somewhere between 5 and 10%.[3] The Germans and the Jews, other times numerous, are nowadays an insignificant number.[4] As to the religious affiliation, approximately 70% of the inhabitants are Orthodox Christians, 10% each for Reformed and Roman-Catholic, 2% each for Pentecostal and Greek Catholic. In an overwhelming proportion, the Romanians and the Roma are Orthodox, while the Hungarians are Reformed or Roman-Catholic.

Although the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church (or *United with Rome*)[5] has a small number of devotees, it played an important part in the history of the Transylvanian Romanians in the 18th-19th centuries. The Romanian

Greek-Catholic Church was set up in 1701, when most Orthodox Romanians agreed to unite with Rome, accepting Catholic dogmas, but having the right to keep the liturgic rites unchanged. Transylvania's metropolitan, Atanasie, was ordained again by the Catholics, severed his ties with Bucharest and Constantinople and became subject to Rome. Once Catholic faith embraced, the clerics received legal rights and tax exemptions.[6]

For more than half a century, the united episcopate was the only churchly institution of the Transylvanian Romanians recognized by the Austrian Empire. Also, since the Romanian nobility had been turned Hungarian until the 15th century, the Greek-Catholic clergy made up the political and intellectual elite: it established and administered schools and printing houses, sent the youngsters to study in Vienna and Rome, fought for the political rights of Romanians, and later – around 1800 – developed works of history and linguistics and laid the foundations of the Enlightenment and of the national revival.

Not all Orthodox people accepted the union, though. As a consequence of the former's pressure and of Russia's influence, the Austrian Empire granted that the Transylvanian Orthodox people be represented by a bishop subject to Karlowitz, starting 1761; in the next 50 years however, the episcopal seat was vacant half the time. After the next half a century, in 1864, under Andrei Şaguna's rule, the Orthodox episcopate of Transylvania was to be reorganized as a metropolitan church, gaining full religious power, and to become politically active.

The proportion of the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholic people in the 18th and 19th centuries is hard to estimate. In the first half of the 20th century, the ratio was roughly one of equality. In 1948, shortly after the communist regime was instated, the Greek-Catholic Church was disbanded, and its churches and other properties went to the Orthodox Church. A part of the Greek-Catholic believers turned to the Roman-Catholic churches of the Hungarians, where the service was done in Latin. Others chose to perform the services illegally. Most, however, accepted the affiliation to the Orthodox Church as a temporary solution, and later as a consummated fact. Affiliation to one community or another only partly depended on the differences in teaching between the two Churches. For a healthy amount of believers, it seems that the social aspect weighed more than the dogmatic one: it was more important to attend service in the nearby church, where they and the rest of the village or the district used to go, and it was less relevant if the priest prayed for the Orthodox bishop or for the Pope, or if the Creed was recited with the Filioque or without it. This partly explains the number below expectation of Orthodox people who returned to Greek-Catholicism after 1989, as well as the large number of Orthodox people who accepted the union with Rome in 1701.

Orthodox church music in Transylvania – general overview

In this paragraph I will make a short presentation of the church chant nowadays, showing who sings it, where, when and what they sing exactly. The presentation takes into account the music in Transylvania, but – at a general level – many of the elements mentioned are present in the other Orthodox churches in Romania and in the entire Balkan area as well.

The church music is sung, naturally, especially in churches, during the services. It can be sung in other places as well: in people's houses and even in public institutions for blessing the water, in processions and pilgrimages. Outside the liturgical contexts, it can be listened to in concerts (sometimes in churches, other times on stage), in the radio or TV broadcasts (live or studio recordings),[7] in the clips uploaded on video-sharing websites[8] or on audio support (CDs, more seldom audio tapes).[9] For a few years now, in some churches the sound system plays church music also when the church is open but there is no service being performed. This music is rendered from original CDs or, of late, downloaded from the Internet.

During church services, the music is performed by several types of chanters. The most important is the chanter per se, who is remunerated. The latter is almost always a man.[10] His place in church is in a distinct area (*kliros*, Rom.: *strană*), in one of the lateral apses (in the front part of the church), usually the one on the right. Sometimes, there are several such "official" chanters. Beside the chanter or chanters who know the chant rules, one can find one or more persons willing to help, but whose musical and liturgical knowledge is scant. In the altar, there is another category of musicians, the priests and the deacons. Their musical role is limited: most of the times it is confined to reciting melodically certain litanies or passages from the Scripture. However, they may come to the kliros, in order to help the chanters, in certain moments.

In the churches that have a choir, be it plurivocal or monodic, it is set in the kafasi (Rom.: *cafas*), a balcony situated in the opposite side from the altar. The choir sings only at certain services: the Divine Liturgy (all throughout, or starting with a certain liturgical moment – the Gospel or the Cherubic Hymn), possibly at funerals and weddings. The choir is led by a conductor. Usually, the conductor has a musical education of the western kind and may be from outside the community. The chanter may or may not join the choir, depending on the type of musical education he has acquired.

In many churches, the congregation blends its voices with those of the chanters above mentioned, for the Divine Liturgy chants and a few other chants from the other services. The believers are people from all walks of life. The number of those who regularly go to church is hard to estimate: a recent survey which considered Romania entirely showed that 22% of Romanians declare that they go to church at least once a week, while another 26% go to church monthly, but this percentage is probably overstated.[11]

The chant is performed at well defined moments of the service, which alternate with recited passages or with passages that are recited slightly melodically, as I have remarked above. The services take place with a higher or lower frequency, depending on the church. At the monastery churches, the services are performed every day, at several moments in the day: usually, in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. At the parish churches, they take place once or several times a week, but more important from the theological and social points of view are the Divine Liturgies from Sunday mornings and the big feasts (Easter, Christmas, and so on), to which occasional services are added, such as for weddings, funerals or requiems. These are actually the services in which the choir, if there is one, sings.

The duration of a chant varies from less than a minute to several minutes; at the monasteries, one can find chants that may last for even half an hour. The duration of a service stretches from a few minutes (under 10 minutes for a commemoration service performed rapidly) to a few hours, and it also depends on the magnitude of the feast and the place where it is performed (in the parish or at the monastery). The general duration of the Sunday Liturgy is one hour and a half, the same length being valid for the Matins service that precedes it. The believers come to church earlier or later, and are allowed to enter the church anytime during the two services, but most take care to arrive before the beginning of the Liturgy.

From the point of view of the text, the musical pieces are divided into two main categories: psalms from the Old Testament and hymns. In the Eastern Orthodox Church almost one hundred thousand hymns must have been composed, many of which are the size of a single stanza. Of these, a few tens of thousands are still in use, including in the monasteries in Transylvania. The period when the poetic creation thrived is framed between the 7th-10th centuries, but hymns are being composed nowadays as well. Some hymns are sung more often, others more rarely (once a year or even more seldom than that), according to some relatively precise but complicated rules;[12] during Liturgy, most part of the repertoire is invariable.

The rules indicate the text that is to be chanted, but they give freedom to choose the musical version. Certain versions are more popular, but are not unique. Also, creation is not a closed field and nowadays new musical versions are being composed. Moreover, improvisation plays an important part.

Group identity and musical identity

The term *identity* is used with various meanings, depending on the field (psychology, sociology, philosophy etc.), on the school of thought and, of course, on the author. In this study, I examine group identity, not the individual one, and I will not focus on the psychological and philosophical perspectives.

Identity refers to a set of characteristics shared by the members of a group. X and Y, group members, are characterized by a series of common traits; hence, we can say that, from the point of view of the defining group traits, X and Y are the same. I chose to use a working definition adapted from that which Anthony D. Smith used for national identity.[13] This definition involves two aspects: on the one hand, identity is "the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of the group"; on the other hand, it refers to "the identification of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements". Hence, identity is not given and immutable, but the result of a continuous process of reinterpretation of the characteristics, a process which unfolds at a slower or faster pace, depending on the context. Identity also presupposes that the group member should acknowledge the values and the other elements mentioned as being his as well (to a larger or smaller extent).

Every person has a multiple identity, since everyone who lives in society belongs simultaneously to several groups. Most people have an ethnic affiliation, a geographical one, but also a familial affiliation, a professional one, an age one, and so on. Many of these types of affiliation can be subdivided, generating thus as many identities. For instance, someone can be a Transylvanian, but also a Romanian, a European, a person from Ţara Chioarului or another Transylvanian region, from X village or from Y district of a town. Similarly, someone can feel part of the group of teachers in general, but also part of a more restricted group, of the history of early music professors in higher education, for instance. One person may also have different identities of the same level: for instance, one can simultaneously be a fan of several rock music bands or football teams. Not infrequently, identities happen to conflict: for instance, a Romanian supporter of CFR Cluj and CF Barcelona football teams may find himself at odds in the event of a Steaua Bucharest – Barcelona match. His choice may depend on the context: to support the team which is supported by the people he chose to watch the match with; or to support the Romanian team, if he is in a state of expatriation and he experiences homesickness; or, on the contrary, the Catalan team, if he is an immigrant in Spain etc. Whichever his decision may be, it is the result of certain personal choices, but also of the ties with the groups to which the person considers he belongs.

Often, identity characteristics are defined in relation to other groups and less through reflection on the traits of one's own group. Face to face with someone from group X, a member of group Y will observe the differences and will take them on as specific: we are like this, unlike X, who are different. Thus, those from group Y construct their identity based on the differences between them and other groups with which they get in touch. To a distant observer, the identity differences between X and Y groups can seem minor, just as one shared trait of the groups might seem to him worth noticing; on the contrary, group Y can neglect the respective trait, as long as it is met with the groups with which Y gets in contact.

Music can provide components for a group identity, just as dress, hairdo, diet, the economic system and many other such aspects do. The elements of a group's identity connected to music make up the musical identity. They comprise the entire music of the group or, rather, certain parts of it (pieces or musical genres), regardless of whether they were created or not by the group members, performed or not by them (and regardless of their being used by other groups);[14] performance approaches acknowledged by the group as specific; particular traits (timbre, rhythmic formulas, motifs, harmonic sequences etc). Among these elements, one can also count discourses on the group's music; for instance, among the elements of Romanian national church music, one can find the myth according to which the Romanian church chant is more humble and is better suited to prayer, as opposed to the Greek one, given to pomp;[15] or the one according to which Anton Pann adapted the Greek chant by drawing it closer to the Romanian folk music.[16]

One must note that the identity elements are not necessarily recognized as such by the group's outsiders. Also, there can be identity elements shared by several groups. My research is not aimed at correlating the musical characteristics to a certain group, but it is interested in the manner in which each group considers that certain traits are its own, in the way it conceives of its own identity.

Orthodox musics in Transylvania

In 2012 and 2013 I carried out a field research study in cities, villages, and monasteries in Transylvania (Alba, Bihor, Cluj, Sălaj, and Sibiu counties). I attended services, recorded church music, took part in a 3-day pilgrimage to Nicula Monastery, and conducted interviews with chanters, priests and pilgrims. My main objective was to study the church music as collective identity mark. For achieving this, I had to distinguish between different kinds of music and to understand their norms and their relations with the concrete enactments.

In the Orthodox churches in Transylvania, one can find several types of music. I made the classification taking into account both the musical criteria, and the opinion of the chanters themselves. The prevailing music is the so-called *cunțană*, after the name of the priest Dimitrie Cunțan – or Cunțanu, according to the older spelling – the one who noted and edited (in 1890) the church chants which he would teach to his students at the Sibiu Seminary.[17] The music from Cunțan's volume became a norm and gradually spread in the Transylvanian Orthodox churches.

The *cunțană* music has its origins in the Byzantine music, the latter being a monodic music,[18] with its own notation system, and whose melodies fit one of the eight modes[19] and one of the three genres: syllabic (a syllable usually lasts one beat), short-melismatic (a syllable lasts two beats) or long-melismatic (a syllable most of the times lasts eight beats).[20] During the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, children from Transylvania could be found in the schools from Wallachia and Moldavia, where they learnt, among others, the Byzantine chant in Romanian. Upon returning to Transylvania, they would teach it in their turn, this time without using the musical notation.[21] For instance, Ioan Bobeş – the teacher from whom Cunţan learned orally the church melodies at the end of the 1850s – had studied Byzantine music at the Bucharest Seminary, as a student of Anton Pann during 1844-1848.[22]

As the Metropolitanate and the seminary from Sibiu – founded by Andrei Şaguna in 1855 – developed and acquired prestige, the *cunţană* music evolved distinctly from the Byzantine chant in Romanian performed to the South and East of the Carpathians. A juxtaposition of the two musics has been attempted in the interwar period – after Transylvania's annexation to Romania – and especially during the communist period, when the management of the Orthodox Church wanted the uniformization of church music throughout the country. Although the project of uniformization did not succeed completely, the standard repertoire promoted by the Patriarchate in Bucharest pervaded Transylvania at the time of communism and post-communism, at least for a part of the chants from the Divine Liturgy and especially in the city.[23]

After the fall of communism, a revival movement of the Byzantine tradition took place. The chanters tried to bring back into use the 19th century repertoire and to come closer to the Greek style of performing, by way of which they could rediscover the old "authentic" Romanian church music.[24] In Transylvania, the revivalist trend is prevalent in monasteries, where a significant part of the monks were born or educated in Moldova, Muntenia or Oltenia or had the experience of Greece and of the Holy Mountain. Secondarily, it can be found in some churches from university towns.

The Byzantine music (also called *psaltic*) is defined differently by the Transylvanians. For most of them (including the majority of chanters), the Byzantine chant, as regarded by the revivalist movement, and the uniformized chant from the communist period belong to the same category. On the other hand, the followers of the revivalist trend distinguish the two musics, both as far as the repertoire and the general sound are concerned, and the ornamentation and the musical scales.

Another music, called *Blaj*, is somewhat similar to the *cunţană* one. Before the Second World War, Sibiu was the seat of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Transylvania, and Blaj – that of the Greek-Catholic Metropolitanate. The chant taught in Blaj and practiced in the united churches continued to be used also after the disappearance of the Greek-Catholic church in 1948.[25] Today, its weight is significantly diminished in comparison to that of the *cunţană* one. The Blaj version is employed especially in the North of Transylvania, and by the more senior chanters; the youngsters from the former Greek-Catholic areas learn at the seminary or in college the *cunțană* music.

A special category is made up by the plurivocal choral music. It comprises pieces in several parts (usually 3 or 4, for male or mixed choirs), which are both harmonizations of the tunes from the above mentioned musics, and original compositions, generally tonal in character. The people I talked to seem to regard it as a unitary category; or, to be exact, they do not make within it the distinctions that they make between the monodic musics. Indeed, choral music has a special character and this is not only due to the musical features of the pieces from the repertoire. The choral music is performed only in some churches (especially in the urban and richer ones, which can afford to pay several choristers) and only at certain services and liturgical moments; it is sung from a score, and the improvisations are absent; the performers can be people with no connection to the parish or to the Christian faith, but with the ability to read the musical notes.

Two other special categories gather paraliturgical pieces: *pricesne* (sg. *priceasnă*) and carols (Rom.: *colinde*, sg. *colindă*). The former are relatively recent compositions (18th century or more recent, some composed even nowadays), with a stanzaic form and a simple melody. In church, they are sung during Divine Liturgy, at the time of the Holy Communion (hence the name *priceasnă*, from причастие (Sl.) = communion) or after the service is completed. Outside the church, they are sung in pilgrimages.[26] The carols are sung in church at the same moments as the *pricesne*, but only during the Christmas days and the 40 day fasting period that precedes the feast. They gather two distinct genres from the viewpoint of ehnomusicologists: *cântece de stea* (pieces for the Star boys' singing procession, written by the scholars of the 18th and 19th centuries, with texts about the Lord's Nativity, similar to the *pricesne* and the western noëls) and the *colinde* (anonymous peasant pieces, possibly pre-Christian, with frequently unreligious texts, which use a restricted gamut).[27] The distinction between the *cântece de stea* and the *colinde* is made only by ethnomusicologists; for the believers (including the chanters and the clerics) it is insignificant.

Identity in the Transylvanian church music

The interviews that I have conducted show that the Transylvanians indeed acknowledge a certain church music as being theirs and prefer it to others. The church musics do not merely reflect a personal or common preference, but are manifestations of identity and contribute to the construction of identity.

The preference for one church music or another and its connection to group identity can be detected only with some of the group members: few are those who are acquainted with the church music of other groups. Especially in the countryside, people know the music from the church they use to go to (provided they go to church regularly), but know very little about the music from the neighboring village or the nearby town. For instance, F. attends service every Sunday at the village church, and she did not happen to attend Liturgy somewhere else, except for the time she was hospitalized, when she went to service at the hospital church. F. asked me with surprise if the chant was not the same everywhere and said she did not watch the Trinitas channel, so she did not know what the chant was like in Bucharest. This is the reason for which most of the people I interviewed were current and former church chanters, people with the necessary abilities to notice the differences between chants and for whom these differences matter.

One of the identities most marked by the church chant is the Transylvanian one. The chanters often reply that their church music is the *cunţană* and often set it against the Byzantine music. Upon arrival in the S. village, the priest welcomed me by saying: "Where you come from, in Bucharest, the church chant is as in Suleyman", referring to a Turkish TV series about Suleiman the Magnificent, very popular in Eastern Europe. For many Transylvanian clerics, the church chant of Bucharest and of the Old Kingdom[28] – even more so the Byzantine revitalized one –, a chant that uses chromatic modes as well, melismas and a nasal tone, closer to the Greek one, is considered to be influenced by the Turkish music. The musical differences are only a part of the imaginary inventory of features that distinguish Transylvanians from the people in the Old Kingdom. The former consider themselves – and are considered as such by the rest of Romanians – more serious, more hardworking, more honest, more rational, more level-headed, more reliable than their southern neighbors, given to frivolity, idleness, easy gain bordering illegality, domestic squabbles and chatter. To put it differently, Transylvanians are more European, more

"German", while the Wallachians and the Moldavians are Oriental, Balkan, influenced throughout history by the Turkish and Greek Phanariot domination.

The stereotypes regarding the differences between the Transylvanians and the Wallachians and Moldavians are also reflected in the features that the Transylvanians ascribe to their church musics. Thus, priest I., asked to characterize the *cunțană* music and the psaltic music, states that the former is smooth, with popular influences, performed „in a more *doină*-like way" (i.e. in a rubato manner), while the second is "shaken", with Greek and Turkish influences. Naturally, the musical characteristics called forth are to a certain extent real; however, they also reflect the manner in which the interviewee conceives of the differences between Transylvanians as opposed to Wallachians and Moldavians: the former – more level-headed, with a smoother music, the latter – more agitated, like their shaken music. The first, true Romanians – *doină* (pl. *doine*), a musical genre in a rubato rhythm and with a free form, was and still is perceived as an identity badge for Romanians[29] – the latter, tied to the Orient.

Father I.'s view is consonant with the opinions of priest Gheorghe Șoima – who was in charge of the church music course offered at the Faculty of Theology in Sibiu during 1941-1976 –[30] published in 1945:[31] "The differences that the Transylvanian church music nevertheless presents compared to the psaltic one are due partly to a slight cultural influence from the West, but mostly to the influence of folk music. […] But it was undoubtedly not the dance music or the worldly one that influenced church music; rather, it was the melodies of our *doine*. […] However, if on these occasions we like to compete for emphasizing as much as we can the beauty of the Romanian *doine* and even their national spirit (with some of them), why, when it comes to the influence they were able to have in Transylvania, on the church music, we become much fearful and consider this influence so baleful? It is, after all, about the fusion and symbiosis of two musical genres about which, considered separately, we always voice the most exquisite appreciation."[32]

The Transylvanians define their *cunțană* music by comparing it to the psaltic one, the same as the Transylvanian identity is defined in opposition to that of the people from the Old Kingdom (the opposition between two geographic regions, the opposition between periphery and center, and at the same time between Europeans and Orientals). But beyond this musical regional identity, there is also a common national identity. The same Gheorghe Șoima stated: "In fact, the church chant in Transylvania is identical to the psaltic one in the Old Kingdom; with a few exceptions, the church modes can be reduced to the same musical scales and we can identify the same cadences." He also showed that the church musics contributed to the cohesion of the groups that practice them, particularly of the nation, and that the minor differences between the psaltic chant and the *cunţană* one, contributed to the national, common identity: "a uniform church music throughout the Romanian regions would be a factor of an even tighter national and Christian cohesion. But we all ought to admit that the actual differences between the church music from the various Romanian provinces are far from being so big and of such nature as to jeopardize the national and religious unity of Romanians."[33]

The national and religious identities happen to be competing. Priest D. remembers a memorial service which the Sibiu metropolitan attended as well. The moment the priest started singing a heirmos, the psaltic version, the metropolitan stopped him, asking him to sing "*our* chants", namely the *cunţană* ones. A few years later, in a similar situation, the priest started the same heirmos in the *cunţană* version. This time, the metropolitan stopped him asking him to sing it in the psaltic version. Hence, the metropolitan found his identity in both types of chant (personally, or as a bishop of Sibiu), whichever the reasons for his incongruous behavior might have been. It is possible that the context (the deceased person, the people attending the service, the Bucharest directives, etc.) should have determined him to choose one chant over the other, emphasizing – in turn – one of the identities to the detriment of the other. Nevertheless, the prevalent one seems to have been the regional one, the *cunţană* chants being called "ours". Also another bishop, Andrei, former bishop of Alba Iulia and current metropolitan of Cluj, known for his preference for the *cunţană* music, urged the chanters to leave aside the psaltic music and to sing "our chants".

There are chanters who believe that the Byzantine chant is the church music par excellence of the Orthodox, and that it should be performed in Transylvania instead of the *cunţană* one. For them, the Orthodox identity is more important than the regional or national one: we are Orthodox, hence we must sing the music of the Byzantium. However, this view is not shared by all followers of the Byzantine chant. For instance, Father S., a monk at a monastery from the Alba county, considers that the choice of the church music is a personal mater: everyone is free to choose the music he/she likes, everyone is free to go to a church where he/she likes the chant. His personal choice is the Byzantine chant, but the reason is not connected to putting forth a religious identity, it is rather a functional reason; the chant is connected to prayer, and experience showed him that the psaltic music is more suitable for prayer: "After I tasted the psaltic music, I cannot return to the others [i.e. choral and *cunțană*]." Also, according to Father S., the regional identity criterion should not take precedence when choosing the music: "Some say that this is how tradition goes with us [to sing the *cunțană* music]. But the tradition here was also to be Greek-Catholic. Should we then return to Greek-Catholic faith just because such was the tradition?"

The opposition Orthodox vs. Greek-Catholic exists in the imaginary of the Transylvanian Orthodox people, but it seems little present in the musical realm. If the priests sometimes characterize certain behaviors, the architecture or the painting of the church as Greek-Catholic, they do not do the same with the Blaj kind of music. Still, the Blaj chant can become a marker for the age and education identities. The young chanters from the former Greek-Catholic areas learn in school the *cunțană* music. Then, upon returning to their native village, they remark the differences between the music they learned and that sung by the local cantor. The music the youngsters sing helps them define themselves in relation to the others: their music, the *cunțană* one, is the music of the educated, of those who went to the seminary or to college. In opposition, in their eyes, Blaj is the music of the elderly and the music of the less knowledgeable ones.

Less to be expected perhaps is the presence of the European identity. I asked N., a chanter in a village near Alba Iulia, whether he would sing psaltic music in his church. He answered that, as far as he could see, the psaltic music is the future. The general tendency in nowadays society, N. explained to me, is that of integration. The church music undergoes a process similar to that of the European countries that formed the European Union and the differences between them are being effaced. It will be a music for the entire country, and that can only be the psaltic music. Moreover, the next step will be to have the same music for all Orthodox countries in Europe (including Russia). The European Union is for N. not only an example which serves to illustrate the comparison with the church chant. It is a territory in which he lives and which he sees becoming more important for him than Romania or the village in which he lives. And the psaltic music is not only the musical equivalent of the European Union, but it is, in his view, the future church music of the Orthodox in Europe. Declaring that he likes the psaltic music and that this will be the music of the future, N. expresses his European identity and his trust in the future of the Union.

I have shown thus far how various musics express various identities – regional, age identities, etc. – and how the musical identities are built by comparing the music of the group to the music of the other. I will further investigate other matters regarding the connection between the group identity and the Orthodox church music in Transylvania. The *pricesne* and the carols are considered by the Transylvanians as having no connection to any regional identity, they can be sung by anyone, from anywhere. Nevertheless, the *pricesne* can express through their verse a certain local identity: for instance, in the *pricesne* sung in the pilgrimage at Nicula Monastery, the place of the monastery is clearly specified: "At the Nicula on the hill / In our beautiful Transylvania / In the thick of the woods / There lies Virgin Mary" or "Among us you sat / At Nicula in pristine place [...] / And you came to a forest / And built yourself a monastery / Up there, on Nicula hill / At the edge of the forest."[34] Singing the *priceasnă* on their way, the members of the group of pilgrims express their belonging to the Nicula monastery, to which they feel connected and to which they come back periodically. In my opinion, there is a local religious identity generated by the important monastery in whose vicinity one lives (in this case, Nicula), and this can be sometimes expressed in the music.[35] Alongside this identity, the first *priceasnă* quoted also expresses a larger, Transylvanian identity ("our beautiful Transylvania").

A few years ago when mass media were not so invasive, pilgrims from Derșida village were concerned to learn and bring home a *priceasnă* in every pilgrimage. If they liked a priceasnă they listened to at the monastery, they asked the singer to sing it again in order to learn its melody, and wrote down the lyrics. After returning home, they transmitted the song to the cantor of the village, who was supposed to chant it at the following Sunday Liturgy. In this way, the entire village took part symbolically in the pilgrimage and shared the experience of the pilgrims. The *priceasnă* became a way of gathering the village, an element of the regional and local religious identities.

The carols can throw a different light on the identity issue, beyond the common aspects they share with the regular chants. The second day of Christmas of 2012, right after the Divine Liturgy, in each of the two Orthodox churches from the center of Ocna Mureș town, a carol concert took place. In one of the churches, the concert was performed by a choir of the teachers in town, conducted by a Hungarian lady conductor, of

Reformed affiliation. The repertoire included Western tonal pieces, but also a Jewish song. The concert sent to a larger Christian identity, without distinction of denomination, a fact which was explicitly stated by the parish priest in the introduction to the concert. At the same time, the concert appealed to the urban multiethnic identity of the town: Romanians and Hungarians from Ocna Mureș gathered together for celebrating the Nativity of Our Lord.

In the other church, the concert was performed by an Orthodox student association, grouped around a priest from Oașa monastery from Alba County. The students came from several university centers in the West of the country (among them Cluj and Timișoara) and were originally from various regions in Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The choir was to go to several Transylvanian towns, sing in churches after service and then divide into smaller groups and go carol singing through the town. The repertoire of the concert was different from that in the first church: most of the carols were those made popular in the 1990s by the Christian Orthodox Student Association in Romania (ASCOR), taken from George Breazul's volume,[36] to which a few other carols were added, among which the most famous was the Byzantine one *Ἄναρχος Θεός* (translated in Romanian by Sabin Preda: *Cel făr-de-nceput*).[37] The music was performed in one part, accompanied by the drone borrowed from the psaltic chant. Many of the choristers were dressed in folk costumes; similar to the carols, the dress was from various regions of the country. The identity exhibited by this choir – both as attitude, dress and as music – was a national one, with roots in the nationalism of the first half of the 20th century. Hence, the *pricesne* and the carols, although they are not strictly connected to a certain group and can be performed by any community, they testify to the identity (identities) of those who choose them to be sung and of those in whose church they are sung.

Last but not least, the group identity is built with the help of the congregational chant. In many places, during Divine Liturgy, the believers sing together with the chanter and/or the choir. As I have shown above, many times they do not know the chant manner from other places and thus do not use the church music as a defining identity element which could be compared to other communities. Still, it becomes an identity element the moment someone tries to change it. For example, in H. village from the North of Transylvania, the newly arrived priest tried to replace the music traditionally used during Liturgy – which the community had learned aurally and sung with pleasure – with that which he had learned in college. The chanter obeyed the priest's wish, but the regulars in church regarded the situation with displeasure, because the new pieces were unknown, it was difficult to memorize them quickly and they perceived them as foreign. In this case, the new music does not send to another clear identity, it is not the other's music,[38] but simply another music. However, it allows emphasis on the fact that the old music sung by the congregation has an identity role and consolidates the connection between the members of the community.

NOTES

[1] For a general presentation of Transylvania in the Hapsburg Empire see JELAVICH, B., *History of the Balkans*, vol. 1 (*Eighteen and Nineteenth Centuries*), Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 150-161, 321-327; HITCHINS, K., *The Romanians, 1774-1866*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, pp. 198-225; HITCHINS, K., *Rumania, 1866-1947*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, pp. 202-230.

[2] Demographic data (including the ethnic structure of the population and the correlation between ethnicity and religion) can be accessed on the website of the National Institute of Statistics: http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol1/titluriv1.htm. I calculated the percentages that totalize the data referring to the 10 counties in Transylvania according to the 2002 census, as they appear on the website of the Jakabffy Elemér Foundation and Media Index Association http://recensamant.referinte.transindex.ro (accessed June 28, 2013). The results of a more recent census (2011) are planned to be published by the National Institute of Statistics on July 4, 2013. The preliminary data which appeared in the press (see, for instance, http://www.gandul.info/stiri/recensamantul-populatiei-primele-rezultate-cati-romani-sunt-cati-etnici-maghiari-si-cat-de-mare-este-minoritatea-roma-9200308) shows that the differences between the 2002 and the 2011 data are insignificant, except for the case of the Roma population.

[3] The proportion of the Roma in Transylvania is slightly higher than the country average. Probably the 3.2 percentage measured by the 2011 census is undervalued, but it is lower than the 10% put forth by some NGOs of the minority.

[4] In 1930 there were approximately 800,000 of each Germans and Jews living in Romania (including Bessarabia and North of Bucovina, territories annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940). The number of Germans has decreased to almost 400,000 in 1956, and today it is lower than 40,000. The Jewish population counted approximately 350,000 at the end of the Second World War, and today it counts approximately 5,000 (see also GEORGESCU, V., *Istoria românilor. De la origini până în zilele noastre*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 6-7, 207).

[5] Today, the term *uniate* is considered derogatory by the international Catholic organizations. Nevertheless, the Greek-Catholic church in Romania is officially called *United with Rome*.

[6] For an Orthodox perspective on the Uniatism see PĂCURARIU, M., *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. 2, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucharest, 1994, pp. 289-317, 361-394. For a Greek-Catholic perspective, see PRUNDUȘ, S.A., PLAIANU, C., *Catolicism și ortodoxie românească*, Casa de Editură Viața Creștină, Cluj-Napoca, 1994, pp. 50-62 (http://www.bru.ro/istorie/istorie, accessed July 1, 2013).

[7] Trinitas TV Channel run by the Romanian Patriarchy is distributed by all cable and satellite TV providers. There are several local radio stations which one can listen to online, under the auspice of Dioceses. Among these, the most influential in Transylvania seems to be Radio Renașterea of the Cluj Diocese.

[8] YouTube is probably the most popular site where one listens to Orthodox music, followed by a similar website which originates in Romania: trilulilu.ro. Also, many audio and video recordings can be found on the crestinordodox.ro platform.

[9] The audio tapes have become obsolescent in the cities in Romania some 5-10 years ago. However, the cantor from the Derșida vilage (Sălaj county) listened to music on audio tapes and not on CDs in 2012.

[10] Two examples of women employed as chanters are mentioned in GRĂJDIAN, V., DOBRE, S., GRECU, C., STREZA I., *Cântarea liturgică ortodoxă din sudul Transilvaniei. Cântarea tradițională de strană în bisericile Arhiepiscopiei Sibiului*, Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga" Sibiu, pp. 344, 360-361: Angela Beschiu, in Jina (Sibiu county), and Ana Goja, in Hălchiu (Brașov county).

[11] http://www.inscop.ro/aprilie-2013-increderea-in-biserica-si-comportamentul-religios-predarea-religiei-in-scoli (accessed July 13, 2013). In my opinion, closer to the truth is 5%, which I found reading an opinion poll around 2005 (unfortunately, I did not find it online for bibliographical reference). The question from the 2013 poll was "How often do you go to church?" and it is possible that the respondents also considered the mere entering the church for lighting a candle or saying a prayer as going to church.

[12] The rules are laid out in a book called tipikon (Rom.: *tipic*). One of the editions in use is *Tipic bisericesc*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Ortodoxe de Alba Iulia, 1999.

[13] SMITH, A. D., *Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History*, Polity, Cambridge, 2001, p. 18.

[14] For example, *You'll Never Walk Alone*, a piece from a Broadway musical, became the anthem of the Liverpool football club. The anthem is sung before every match at home, by the supporters of the club who are on the stadium, and it has become a strong identity element. Wikipedia enumerates other 14 football clubs which subsequently took this piece and made it their anthem. Among these, three perform in the first German league, and three in the first Dutch division (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/You%27ll_Never_Walk_Alone, accessed July13, 2013).

[15] MOISIL C., "Romanian Church Music: Tradition and Revival", in *The Past in the Present. Papers Read at the IMS Intercongressional Symposium and the 10th Meeting of the Cantus Planus, Budapest & Visegrád, 2000* (ed. László Dobszay), vol. 2, Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Budapesta, 2003, p. 94.

[16] *Id.*, *Românirea cântărilor*, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31, 36, 43.

[17] CUNȚANU, D., *Cântările bisericești după melodiile celor opt glasuri*, Editura Autorului, Sibiu, 1890.

[18] Unlike Byzantine music, the *cunțană* one is not accompanied by drone (Gr., Rom.: *ison*).

[19] The division in eight modes is a liturgical one. From a musical point of view, each of the eight modes contains several sub-modes.

[20] I use the classification and the terminology from ARVANITIS, I., "The Heirmologion by Balasios the Priest. A Middle-point between Past and Present", in *The Traditions of Orthodox Music. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Orthodox Church Music. University of Joensuu, Finland, 13-19 June 2005* (ed. I. Moody and M. Takala-Roszczenko), University of Joensuu & The International Society for Orthodox Church Music, 2007, pp. 236-238.

[21] STANCIU, V., "Manuscrise și personalități muzicale din Transilvania în secolele XVII-XVIII", in *Byzantion Romanicon*, 3, 1997, pp. 77-78; BARBU-BUCUR, S., *Cultura muzicală de tradiție bizantină pe teritoriul României în secolul XVIII și începutul secolului XIX și aportul original al culturii autohtone*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1989, pp. 43, 51, 217-221; CATRINA, C., *Muzica de tradiție bizantină. Șcheii Brașovului*, Arania, Brașov, 2001, pp. 32-34, 73-76.

[22] DOBRE, S., "Dimitrie Cunțan – repere biografice", in *Dimitrie Cunțan (1837-1910) și cântarea bisericească din Ardeal* (ed. S. Dobre), Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2010, pp. 4, 9, 11-12; MOLDOVEANU N., *Istoria muzicii bisericești la români*, Editura *Basilica* a Patriarhiei Române, Bucharest, 2010, p. 363. The year 1849 given by Moldoveanu is wrong, as the seminary had been closed following the revolution in Wallachia in 1848. See also FRANGULEA, V., *Profesorul protopsalt Ion Popescu-Pasărea. Viața și opera*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucharest, 2004, p. 24.

[23] About the creation of a standard repertoire and the uniformization of the church chant see MOISIL C., "The Making of Romanian National Church Music (1859-1914)", in *Church, State and Nation in Orthodox Church Music. Proceedings on the Third International Conference on Orthodox Church Music, University of Joensuu, Finland, 8-14 June 2009* (ed. I. Moody and M. Takala-Roszczenko), The International Society for Orthodox Church Music, Jyväskylä, pp. 225-231. *Id.*, *Românirea cântărilor: un meșteșug și multe controverse. Studii de muzicologie bizantină*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2012, pp. 9-18, 174-185.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-23.

[25] The chants taught in the Greek-Catholic schools were published in CHEREBEȚIU, C., *Cele opt versuri bisericești. Vecernie. În felul cum se cântă la Blaj*, Cluj, 1930.

[26] For the *pricesne* sung in the Transylvanian pilgrimages, see CRISTESCU, C., "Pilgrimage and Pilgrimage Song in Transylvania", in *East European Meetings in Ethnomusicology*, 1, 1994, pp. 30-43.

[27] For the *colinde* and the *cântece de stea*, see HERȚEA, I., *Romanian Carols*, The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999.

[28] The Old Kingdom is the name given to Romania before the First World War, namely to the territories of Wallachia, Moldavia and Dobruja.

[29] See also RĂDULESCU, S., *Peisaje muzicale în România secolului XX*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2002, pp. 15-16.

[30] GRĂJDIAN V., "Oratoriul 'Octhoiul de la Sibiu' al pr. Gheorghe Șoima, un monument muzical al ortodoxiei transilvănene", in *Preotul Gheorghe Șoima (1911-1985). Scrieri de teologie și muzicologie* (ed. V. Grăjdian and C. Grăjdian), Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2010, p. 370.

[31] Reprinted in *Preotul Gheorghe Șoima*, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-171.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 191. One should mention that in the Sibiu area, one does not find *doine* (in the acceptation the ethnomusicologists give to the genre), but only chants that are similar to the *doine* through their character rich in melismas and the rubato rhythm.

[33] *Loc. cit.*

[34] In original: "*La Nicula colo-n deal / În frumosul nostru-Ardeal / În mijlocul codrului / Șade Maica Domnului* [...]" and "*Între noi te-ai așezat / La Nicula-n loc curat / Și-ai venit într-o pădure / Și ți-ai făcut mănăstire / Sus în dealul Niculii / La marginea pădurii.*"

[35] Naturally, belonging to a monastery is not done according to strictly geographic criteria, but, as in the case of belonging to other types of groups, it is to a large extent also a voluntary choice. For instance, in the case of the pilgrims from Derșida village, one part would go to the Nicula monastery, and another part to the Rohia monastery (Maramureș county), traveling together for a third of the trip. Belonging to a group would be kept throughout the years.

[36] BREAZUL, G., *Colinde*, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, Bucharest, 1993.

[37] The piece was recorded on several CDs by various choirs. The first recording is probably that of the Stavropoleos Group: Grupul Psaltic Stavropoleos, *Colinde vechi și Cîntări la Crăciun și Bobotează*, Parohia Stavropoleos, 2004.

[38] The new music may be considered „the priest's", but the priest is a local, and the village does not regard him as an outsider.

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CULTURAL POLITICS IN THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE: THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF THE *CĂMIN CULTURAL* IN INTERWAR ROMANIA

Within the process of Romania's modernisation, the question of how to transform the peasantry has held a central position on the agendas of both intellectuals and the state. On the one the hand the peasantry appeared to hold the cultural essence of the nation, while on the other, its 'backwardness' was seen as a major impediment to the development of Romania into a modern European state. This paper is part of a larger project, which I started this year at New Europe College, aimed at examining the long durée process of rural modernisation and development in twentieth century Romania under different political regimes. This project challenges the traditional historical barrier that separates the communist period from the regimes that preceded it after the 1918 Unification, looking at the continuing desire of the Romanian state – democratic, authoritarian and communist – to transform the peasantry and integrate it into modernity. Taking the ubiquitous but neglected institution of the village *cămin cultural* as its focal point, this study proposes to explore its history from the 1921 land reform to 1989, using it to explore the politics of culture in the countryside.

This institution offers an ideal starting point for understanding the process by which the state sought both to nationalise peasant culture and to modernise the rural community in an effort to make peasants into Romanian citizens.[1] The village house of culture was an institution meant to forge national culture in the midst of village life, acting as a modernising agent and as a place where local culture could be performed. This institution, although invented in the nineteenth century and consolidated in the 1920s and 1930s, was transitioned into communism and used by the new regime in their own process of culture building and of 'civilising' the peasantry.[2]

This paper concentrates solely on the interwar period, when the house of culture became part of a mainstream process of rural mass education. However, in analysing the high point of this initiative, I place this in its wider context, showing the common traits this institution shared with initiatives elsewhere in Europe, in an effort to uncover its social, cultural and political function and peculiarities.

This article proposes a novel approach to the cultural politics of rural transformation, focusing on the Romanian *cămin cultural*, a variant of a widespread institution, the 'house of culture', and its establishment as an important agency of cultural modernisation in the rural world. Whilst there is no existing literature on this topic regarding Romania,[3] similar institutions in other countries have received some scholarly attention. For example, the village halls built in interwar Britain also marked a transformation of leisure in village life and represented the desire to organise and regulate it through voluntary and state initiatives.[4] Closer to Romania, the 'peoples' houses' or 'village hearths' set up in 1920s and 1930s Turkey constituted an important part of Atatürk's programme of rural modernisation.[5] Similar movements also took place in Belgium, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland and Bulgaria.[6] This points towards the link between these cultural institutions and the idea of rural modernisation in different contexts, as well as to the underlying influences that led to the spread of these initiatives. In the literature on Romania, very little attention has yet been given to the many projects and attempts to achieve the modernisation of the countryside and the integration of villagers into the nation state throughout the twentieth century.[7] Furthermore, even within the existing literature, there is no study that focuses exclusively on the *cămin cultural* as such. My project seeks to show the unique perspective this institution can offer on the interplay between the state, intellectuals and the peasantry in the realm of cultural politics in the twentieth century. This article starts by setting the scene by documenting the process through which the *cămin cultural* became institutionalised within a state-driven process of rural development in the 1930s.

The house of culture as an international phenomenon

Houses of culture initially appeared across the more industrialised parts of Europe in response to the processes of modernisation, urbanisation and displacement of people. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one could find houses of culture in many places across Europe. The edited volume *Maisons du people,* which focuses mainly on the architecture of these institutions in Western Europe between 1870-1940, documents the trajectory of this institution across this period, showing its evolution from a 'working class fortress' to 'temple of social regeneration', to a 'polyvalent institution' of mass culture and finally its merger with the urban post-war civic centre.[8] The new buildings erected to house these institutions from the late nineteenth century onward gained a stable place within the urban and rural built environment, marking a new space and a specific aesthetics dedicated to the culture of the people. These new space of 'sociability' and education mushroomed in towns and villages under many different names. In northern Europe, especially in Belgium, such institutions, known as '*maisons du peuple*' and '*volk huis*' were connected to the rise of a working class movement. There, houses of culture were places where people working in towns could meet, eat, and discuss away from their homes and from their employers.[9] They were also places where the working classes could educate themselves in order to be able to represent their own interests. In other cases, houses of culture were not bound up with socialist ideals, being set up by the liberal (urban) elites as places for the education of the urban and rural masses.[10] Often founded by urban or rural elites, the state, voluntary associations or religious organisations, these institutions aimed to re-centre the life of urban and rural communities around 'more civilised' moral values and cultural principles. In these cases, the desire to educate the masses was not so much one of allowing or empowering the masses to represent themselves, but that of providing them with the same cultural values and vocabulary as the upper classes in an effort of creating consent and order. In most cases, these agendas were neither pure nor stable, meaning that that one cannot speak of one type of house of culture but of a new form that could be constantly filled with different ideological contents. The competitions that arose between different factions interested in setting up or leading houses of culture (like in Germany and France for example) showed the ever shifting ideas about what kind of culture was to be imparted to the working classes or to the rural masses and who was best equipped to undertake such missions.[11]

Similarly, there were disputes over what was necessary for a house of culture to fulfil its social and cultural function. For example, eating facilities were seen as essential in the socialist varieties, whereas the liberal and philanthropic ones did not cater to these more earthly needs.[12]

The transfer into the countryside indicated the extension of this modern culture beyond the urban sphere, reflecting back upon the transformations of the rural world. In a country like Britain, where the countryside was slowly but surely becoming the home of commuters and of the middle classes, the village halls were used extensively to host both modern and traditional leisure practices.[13] In countries with peasant populations (traditional agricultural workers and subsistence farming), this leisure culture was still to be forged, as the literature on this phenomenon in the Soviet Union clarifies.[14] Bruce Grant shows that the Soviet house of culture shared features with its West European socialist counterpart in that it represented a new social space for workers and peasants alike as well as an educational institution. However, it also differed from it in that it was a state-driven initiative rather than a grass-root one. In this respect, it was similar to the philanthropic and liberal variants of this Western trend, by being part of a wider civilising mission meant to turn the uneducated masses into Soviet citizens.[15]

The same state-driven initiative seemed to underlie most of the post-WWI houses of culture built in Italy and Turkey as part of national modernisation schemes. There, the *casa del fascio* and the *Halk Evleri* embodied the mission of authoritarian ideologies (fascism and kemalism) to 'go to the people', colonising the entire social sphere, from the urban centres to the rural hinterlands.[16] Like their Soviet counterparts, these movements shared the same agenda of creating a culture of consent and of socialising common people into a new modern way of life (with strict ideological traits).

Apart from being means to civilise and educate the working classes and the peasantry, houses of culture were also ways of introducing control and order over the leisure time and practices of the masses. The most telling example was the Italian *dopolavoro* initiative that, as its name indicates, was specifically geared to provide a pre-packed set of leisure practices for workers.[17] Houses of culture therefore became important spaces where leisure practices could be seen, managed and regulated by the state and by its cultural agents. The institutionalisation of the house of culture in many parts of Europe, including Romania, in the 1930s also affected the relationship between the elites (local or national) and the masses, leading in many cases to a recruitment and development of professional or semi-professional cultural agents who represented a centralised programme of cultural work meant to be implemented across a vast territory with the aid of a bureaucratic apparatus. This particular aspect represents the focal point of this article that deals in great part with the 'cultural work' and Social Service programmes initiated by the sociologist Dimitrie Gusti and funded by King Carol II between 1934 and 1938. Although the cultural work project only lasted until 1939, it was important because it established the *cămine culturale* as the core institution of rural development, setting up the buildings and bureaucratic apparatus that remained in place between 1939 and 1945, being then taken over by the communist regime and adapted to its new ideological requirements.

Evolution of the *cămin cultural* in Romania

In the Romanian territories, the impetus for the house of culture before the First World War and the Unification was manifested in different ways, with more or less intensity. The function of these institutions reflected the different socio-economic conditions of the people (and of the peasantry more specifically) and the political status of intellectuals in the Old Kingdom and the territories that were to form what came to be known as 'greater Romania' in 1918.

In the Old Kingdom, the small-scale socialist movement set up a 'Casa Poporului' and several study centres that fulfilled similar functions as other socialist houses of culture in Western European towns.[18] However, as Romanian socialism remained a small-scale initiative that was limited to the few urban centres (Iași, Bucharesti, Braila, for example), these houses of the people were also scarce and often short-lived.

In the countryside however, village houses of culture gained more momentum, being promoted by liberal social reformers and nationalist leaders respectively as a way to enlighten the rural masses and as an answer to the heated 'agrarian question'. The two main names generally associated with this initiative are Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu and Spiru Haret.[19] Haret, the founder of the *Sămănătorul* review and Minister of Education under several Liberal governments (1897-1899, 1901-1904 and 1907-1910), regarded 'the agrarian question as primarily cultural and insisted that knowledge would mean a better life for the peasants'.[20] He therefore promoted the dissemination of useful information in the villages, using the printed word and schoolteachers as his principal instrument. Through Haret's reforms, the village school became an established institution that guaranteed primary education in the rural areas.[21] Haret also promoted the *cămin cultural* as an institution meant to complement and expand the scope of the village school for the adult rural population. Moreover, since his education reforms addressed the peasantry as 'a class with well-defined social and economic needs', the acquisition of cultural capital became an important means of upwards mobility for the peasantry.[22] Nevertheless, the lack of corresponding economic and social reforms kept the peasantry at the bottom of the social ladder, in the condition of the economic mode of production generally known as 'neoserfdom'.[23]

A much more widespread phenomenon was that of the *cultural centres* set up by *Asociaţiunea transilvană pentru literatura română şi cultura poporului român* ASTRA (The Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People).[24] Privately funded, ASTRA functioned as a cultural and educational institution parallel to those of the central Hungarian state, catering for the needs of the Romanian community. Under the specific post-*Ausgleich* conditions of Hungarian state nationalism, the two main institutions that led this action and fought to keep the national spirit alive among the peasantry were ASTRA and the Romanian National Party of Transylvania. The Romanian elites saw the transformation of the peasantry through education (both practical and theoretical) as key to the advance of their entire "nation". ASTRA, alongside the two Romanian churches (Orthodox and Uniate) provided access to the peasantry. They were used to promote national mobilisation as well as to disseminate cultural and practical knowledge in rural areas. On the one hand, urban economists tried to turn peasants into prosperous farmers by publishing and distributing manuals and reviews for agricultural best practice. Whilst on the other hand enthusiasts for industrialisation organised craft schools meant to connect the peasant with the urban market. ASTRA had many local branches (*cultural centres*) and held annual plenary conferences in different urban centres (by rotation). The work of this association indicated the primarily national nature of their houses of culture and its aim of creating a sense of national solidarity between different social classes. This network kept the Romanian intellectuals connected to their peasant co-nationals in a way that was never paralleled in the Old Kingdom. After the 1918 Unification, despite an initial crisis, ASTRA remained the strongest cultural organisation that could best influence the peasantry in the region. Its activities pre-empted those of the interwar social reformers like Dimitrie Gusti, bearing a direct influence on their work.

The interwar houses of culture

After the 1918 Unification, there was a new impetus for the creation of a national culture. The interwar period in Romania was a time of great changes in the national discourse. Once the wish of national unification had been fulfilled, the future lay open ahead for building the right state for this nation. The unification of the Old Kingdom (*Regat*) with Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bucovina had changed the ethnic composition of the population, increasing the size and number of minority groups. As the external borders were consolidated, new invisible ethnic borders appeared internally. The process of building the state and its institutions within a larger territory, with an ethnically heterogeneous population (whose rural-urban divide overlapped with the ethnic one) called for the rethinking of the nation. All these factors and many others meant that the peasant became the symbol of the Romanian nation and, as Katherine Verdery, Irina Livezeanu and Maria Bucur point out, the new central trope of the interwar economic, political and social discourses.

This centrality of the peasantry to the cultural politics of the interwar era was also motivated by deep economic changes, namely the end of neoserfdom, and by important political reforms that led to an overnight transformation in the place this social group occupied in the overall hierarchy of Romanian society. In the early 1920s, the peasants received land and the right to vote, becoming, at least on paper, equal citizens of the Romania state. The reforms gave way to lively debates about the ills of the countryside and about its social modernisation, stressing the importance of enlightening and empowering the masses through culture.[25] The countryside therefore became an open-air laboratory, roaming with academic groups, social activists, party representatives or state administrators. In one of his speeches from 1926, the president of the ASTRA organisation, Vasile Goldiș, lamented the fact that members from three cultural associations at the same time 'ramble through the countryside and confuse the peasants'[26]. One such organisation was the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation that had been set up in 1922 by the prince regent as an institution for the enlightenment of the peasantry.[27]

This new institution complemented the other more established cultural foundations set up by the Romanian Royal Family, adding a specific interest in the welfare and modernisation of the rural world.[28] Apparently, the Prince's decision to embark on this cultural mission was inspired by his travels to India, but without doubt there were many other sources of inspiration available for this both in Romania and beyond.[29] The main instrument of modernisation at the local level used by the Foundation was the *cămin cultural*, an institution that revived Haret's prewar inititative in a slightly revamped form. In this early stage, the Foundations wanted to set up houses of culture (*cămine culturale*) across the country, using them in the scope of rural modernisation. Like Haret, the leaders of the Foundation, sought to use these new local institutions as a way of supplementing the activity of the village school and of reaching the rest of rural population. As Nichifor Crainic put it in more poetic terms, 'the *cămin* was able to connect the periphery with the centre, spilling waves of light from the central springs of national culture to the most distant borders of the country'. The main scope of the cămin was, he added, that 'uplifting the rural masses from the state of nature to that of culture'. [30] The activity and set-up of these new *cămine* was inspired by various foreign models such as the USA, France, and Czechoslovakia. Its main sections were: the library, the museum, the depot, the infirmary, the public bath, and a general information office (*birou de asistenţă generală*).[31]The rules and regulations that surrounded these sections expressed the paternalistic tendency of this institution that often infantilised the peasantry. The Foundation's cultural missions were clearly directed from the centre to the periphery, connecting urban experts with village intellectuals and making peasants the targets of a civilising mission. The tools used were therefore adapted to this scope – the library was meant to popularise literacy and to instil a sense of morality and temperance amongst peasants; the museum was meant to counter the 'false culture', that is the external influence of urban and foreign culture upon village life by nurturing an interest in local culture and a sense of local pride; the medical aid section, including an infirmary, a bath and a barbers, was to bring an interest in and practical facilities for health and hygiene in the village; finally, the general information office was a hub where people could get assistance and advice in any matter that concerned them. Most of its activities represented alternative educational methods through which culture was to be brought to villagers: organised trips, *şezători* (social gatherings) both in the villager's own home and at the *cămin*, public reading sessions, festivities, cinema and exhibitions.

Despite their great ambitions, the activity of these *cămine* remained rather insignificant especially after Prince Carol left Romania in 1927, rejecting the throne.[32] It was only in 1934, four years after Carol returned to Romania to take up the throne, that the Foundations were revitalised with the launch of the new cultural work programme designed and led by its new direction, the sociologist Dimitrie Gusti. In the period 1934-1939, the *cămine culturale* gained new importance as part of a new mission to 'cure, uplift and ennoble the countryside'[33]. In 1938, the launch of the Social Service made this small-scale institution the core of a social programme of rural development that, although was very short-lived, left a long-lasting legacy for the subsequent communist regime.

Dimitrie Gusti – social reformer

Like other scholars in countries whose territories had been reconfigured by the war and the Versailles settlement, Gusti was one of the intellectuals who saw the new drive for modernisation and social reform as an opportunity to contribute to the building of a modern Romanian state.

Born in Iași in 1880, to a rather affluent family, Gusti was one of many young Romanians who were able to undertake their studies abroad. He received a doctorate from Leipzig University (1904) and a Habilitation from Berlin Univeristy (1907) and then spent a year in Paris to study with Durkheim. He then returned to Iași in 1910 to take up a position as Assistant Professor in History of Classical Philosophy, Ethics and Sociology at the Faculty of Letters of the city's university. In the inaugural lecture presenting his academic interests and intentions, he singled out the agrarian question as a potential object of research for sociologists and stressed the importance of modern and practical study methods and techniques.[34]

He was part of the initiators of the the *Asociația pentru Știință și Reformă Socială* (the Association for Social Science and Reform), a forum of specialists prepared to study and debate the country's social problems and inform its future reforms, that later grew into the famous Romanian Social Institute.[35] Two years later, Gusti moved to the University of Bucharest to become professor of Sociology, Ethics, and Politics at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy. Alongside his academic career he also held many different posts in public administration and in the government.

As one of the leading figures of social research in a country in the midst of crucial social and political transformations, Gusti proposed sociology as the 'science of the nation', a discipline able to shed new light on Romania's existing social problems, starting with the rural world. Since the fate of the rural world dominated most academic and political debates about national identity and modernisation, Gusti's focus on peasant life reflected the heightened importance of this social group after the war.

At the University of Bucharest, Gusti transformed his seminar of sociology into an active research group that became known as the Bucharest School of Sociology, (*Şcoala de Sociologie de la Bucureşti*). The School offered students and scholars from different disciplines interested in the research of rural life the opportunity to undertake collective fieldwork in various Romanian villages. Gusti and the leaders of this group developed a unique methodology of collective field study based on the observation and recording of everyday village life that, by the early 1930s, established sociology firmly in the intellectual arena of the time.[36]

However, Gusti's ambitions for his discipline did not stop at academic and intellectual prestige. In his view, beyond its role of understanding social reality and producing research-based knowledge, which he termed *sociologia cogitans*, sociology also had the important role of informing and managing social reform, *sociologia militans*.[37] The transformation implied in Gusti's term *sociologia militans* was that of social reform or even social engineering. Understanding social reality would naturally lead towards the realisation of the ideal society, which, unlike the utopian socialist version, was not an invention but a process of discovery. However, whilst cultural work was the practical application of militant sociology, it also implied another dimension of Gusti's thought – culture and the politics thereof.

The people's culture in Gusti's vision

In a document from 1922, Gusti stated:

> The fortuitous unification of the Romanian territories has brought with it a series of issues that are crucial to our national and state life. The cultural problem is certainly one of them. (...) The most important of the socio-political aspects of our cultural problem today is our spiritual unification. Furthermore, the moral upheaval and the great social waves caused by the war have made the masses more prone than ever to demagogical promises and to stronger anarchical movements. Leaving these masses, which have not yet entered or have long exited the influence of the school, without any guidance, would lead to the break-up of the present state and society. The third socio-political aspect of the matter is that of building a real democracy. A cultural activity as intense as the gravity of the problem we face is therefore absolutely and urgently necessary.[38]

The quote above reveals the widespread fear of social unrest at the end of the war and the trust that the education and 'guidance' of the masses would restore order in the state and in its society. Like many other intellectuals of his time, Gusti saw the reform of Romanian society as a 'cultural problem', which he engaged with in his writings and political speeches. Gusti argued for the organisation of an institution for the life-long education of the masses, called the House of the People (*Casa Poporului*), meant to supplement and expand the role of the school, already coining social reform in terms of new, extended forms of mass education and culture. The idea of a 'culture of the people' became clearer in later speeches that discussed new forms of cultural politics:

> the true goal of the people's culture is the transformation of the people, a bio-social unit, into a Nation, a superior spiritual-social unit. Thus understood, culture creates the community spirit, the consciousness of national values, the consciousness of national solidarity.[39]

Presenting culture as the source of national self-realisation, this quote clarified its role in making the transition between the expansion of the social realm to the higher ideal of creating 'the consciousness of national solidarity'. In realising his vision, Gusti proposed to combine top-down intervention with a bottom-up approach. He criticised earlier attempts to 'civilise the peasantry' and to 'domesticate the people', explaining that culture '[could] neither be given nor imposed from above, as it had to be acquired freely, from below', the role of any cultural activists being to enable the rural population to 'develop their own culture'.[40] He was equally critical of initiatives of bringing culture to the people, as these were based on an uneven relationship between 'the educators' and 'the masses' and on a false understanding of 'the people's culture'. In his view, the Romanian masses needed their own culture, but this was neither a replica nor thinned down version of high culture, but an original, new product of the people themselves.

To create new forms of culture, Gusti emphasised the agency of the villagers in their own cultural awakening, through the concept of the villages' 'right to culture', which the government and society had a duty to satisfy. Rejecting other philanthropic initiatives of 'spoon feeding' the people with 'the cultural values of the time', he affirmed cultural activism as the fulfilment of a social right.[41] Framed as a civic responsibility, his projects revealed both modern aspirations and a direct attachment to the authority of the state. Again, this placed Gusti within an international trend that emphasised social over individual rights and proposed society as the main unit for the state to operate with.[42] In this context, culture, like education, was meant to become a 'right' of the masses and therefore had to be nurtured by specialists.

In his cultural politics, Gusti drew inspiration from a wide variety of regional, national and international initiatives in Romania and abroad. Inside Romania, the work of ASTRA and of the *Liga Culturală* (Cultural League) stood as examples of significant achievements in the field of culture.[43] As many of his peers, Gusti also appreciated foreign institutions like the Scandinavian popular universities, the German and Austrian *Volksheim* as well as other cultural programmes in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Turkey and Italy.[44] This wide spectrum of influences should not surprise us, as Romanian social reformers had cultivated direct contacts with international forums, publications and organisations, in an effort to synchronise the Romanian state and society to the most successful contemporary trends.

Carol II, King of the Peasants

In the mid 1930s, as the ethos towards mass organisation grew across Europe, Gusti was able to marry his politics of culture with those of the monarch, who appreciated and supported his ideas. In Carol's own words, rural cultural work was 'a way of offering the peasantry a better standard of living, a better understanding of their needs and obligations'.[45] In this he acknowledged the importance of the rural masses both as a political power and as crucial to the state's future. In contrast with the 'bad dusty roads, ditches with stale water, no bridges or flower gardens in front of any houses' of Romanian villages at the time, his vision for the future was one of a countryside totally transformed both externally and internally, in the spirit of modernisation and progress.[46] His wish was that villagers be taught the value of cleanliness, order, and beauty. 'Your duty is to teach everyone that fresh air is a friend, not an enemy', he said to the student teams; 'we need to teach them the simplest rules of physical and moral hygiene', he continued. 'Regarding agricultural work, and home management, there are few villages where you find a single chicken coop. All the fowl are out in the street, [often] run over by motorcars (...) This can be easily avoided through the building of small coops so that the chickens are fed in the yard, not in the street'.[47]

Beyond this generic modernising agenda of transforming the rural world, the monarch's interest in mobilising the countryside was also driven by the socio-political context of the 1930s, a time of economic downturn, of mass social dissent and of political extremism. Thus, Gusti's new cultural initiative served King Carol's more immediate political goal: to counteract the Legion of the Archangel Michael by using its own tools.[48] The fascist organisation had become the King's number one competitor for the engagement and transformation of two main social groups: the youth and the peasantry. It appeared to hold the patent on the work camp as a means of bringing urban intellectuals to the countryside for the purpose of creating a 'parallel society' based on new social values and bonds.[49] The first Legionary work camp was organised at Ungheni in 1924.[50] The camp already exhibited the core ideas that underpinned those of the next decade. Re-launched in the 1930s, these had become a successful means of recruiting and spreading the Legionary's ethos.

In this context, Gusti's project was part of a wider initiative to redirect or prevent youth and intellectuals from joining the Legion. From 1934, the Royal Student Teams coexisted and collaborated with *Straja Ţării,* Carol's own youth organisation introduced by the newly elected liberal government in the same year.[51] Fashioned on the model of the Scouts and inspired by similar youth organisations in Italy and Germany, *Straja* imitated the Legion in rituals, symbols and denominations.[52] Yet, the *străjeri* did not succeed in competing with the Legion whose appeal sprung mostly from its opposition to the state, its grass-root communitarian precepts, and its religious mysticism.

Gusti's project of cultural work was aimed at university students, graduates and young professionals, offering them a state-supported form of activism that combined intellectual and manual work.[53] At the same time, it also facilitated the cooperation between the two organisations, the *Străjeri* and the Royal Student Teams, who worked together on development projects (building roads, repairing churches, planting trees, etc). Like the Legion, the Royal Foundations proposed an organised way of 'going to the people', giving the participants the opportunity to do their bit for the countryside, work in teams and get their hands dirty, therefore appealing to the same psychological factors as their competitors: young, sacrificial heroism and the will to change the nation's future. This was spelt out in the King's address to the teams:

> It is true that this work requires sacrifices, but you have to be convinced that it will be deeply fruitful and useful to our country. You are not going there to do work just for show; instead you are going to those remote areas of the country to undertake a painstaking, meticulous labour, yet one that must have a sound effect for each village. My wish is that, on the teams' departure, the village be - as much as possible – transformed. Transformed both externally and internally.[54]

The Theory of Cultural Work through the **cămin cultural**

Cultural work was therefore not invented under the political demands of the moment, but was already present in Gusti's earlier sociological theories and in his political activity in the realm of education, public administration and the media. It is important to note that in this period many intellectuals from Gusti's generation occupied places both in academia and in public administration or governance, a fact that explains the greater advocacy for the practical application of scientific research. After serving as Minister of Education for only one year under the Peasantist administration in 1932-1933, Gusti was offered the leadership of the non-governmental FCR-PC where the monarch gave him a free hand to implement his vision of rural reform.

Until Gusti's arrival, the Foundation's achievements were rather limited. According to Henri H. Stahl, Gusti's close collaborator in the realm of cultural work, at the root of its failure lay an antiquated agenda and an old-fashioned establishment working according to the principles set out by the educationalist Haret in the previous century.[55] Considering culture as a top-down 'process of disseminating high culture to rural areas' for the purpose of improving the spiritual well-being of the masses, the Haretist model employed 'cultural missionaries' meant to bring culture to the countryside, published various educational papers and magazines for the villagers, and encouraged the production of village monographs written by local intellectuals. Although somewhat valuable, according to Stahl, 'the Foundation lacked a scientific grounding of their activities, a systematic record of the social problems of the village (...) that could only be studied by highly qualified specialists'.[56] The new leadership and administration of the Foundation appointed by Gusti was instead made up of such experts: the sociologists Stahl, Golopenţia, and Gheorghe Focşa, the writer Bucuţa, and the journalist Neamţu were recruited to manage the new projects of FCR-PC. They were joined in their mission by some of the existing members of the institution, Victor Ion Popa, Alexandru and

Lascarov-Moldovan, who were not trained sociologists, but had an interest to adopt the scientific ethos proposed by the new director.[57]

The village hall (1934 – 1939) as the embodiment of a new vision of social reform

Cultural work in the countryside was based on a detailed reform plan centred on four main areas of change – the body, work, the mind and the soul. These branches corresponded to a set of 'ills of the countryside' diagnosed by academic experts and debated in the political and intellectual spheres of the time: (the body) rural-specific diseases (syphilis, pellagra, tuberculosis, malaria), malnutrition, hygiene, infant mortality; (work) agricultural backwardness, land fragmentation; (mind and soul) rural illiteracy, 'social diseases' (alcoholism, prostitution and cohabitation) etc.[58] The teams reflected these areas of action being typically formed of: a doctor, a physical education teacher, an agronomist, a vet, domestic scientist, a priest, a teacher, and a sociologist. This assignment of duties combined the cultural agenda of 'civilising' the peasantry with the new scientific vision of preserving, purifying and moulding the rural population as a social, economic and biological asset of the nation state. Moreover, this also confirmed the role of sociology as a discipline able to elaborate a synthetic vision of social reality.

Within this new initiative, the hub of cultural work was the *cămin cultural,* described as 'a meeting place of the people called to work and realise the holistic cultural programme for the villages' and 'the new house of the village', alongside the 'school, the church and the local council' where 'people (locals) would join forces and work together for the interests of the community'.[59] Its educational role was also clearly stated: the *cămin* would be 'the school for the youth (...) and for all the smallholders of all ages (*gospodari și gospodine*)'. In the Foundation's vision, this new institutions was to be led by local intellectuals, wealthy and diligent villagers or by the 'sons of the village' (*fiii satului*), a group made up by people who had left the village and had succeeded in educating themselves. This reflected the project's underlying agenda that proposed a transfer of culture according to an existing hierarchy of education. However, the regulations for the set up of a house of culture stipulated that of the seven to twenty-one members of the board, at least four had to be peasants. Unlike urban socialist houses of culture in Western Europe, that represented the working class culture and promoted education as a tool to criticise and fight the existing social and economic order, these rural institutions sought to 'uplift' the rural masses with the help of the elites, bringing them up to higher standards of education and thus appease them by creating social consent. This new initiative however moved away from the earlier less organised romantic ethos that represented the Foundation spirit of the 1920s to a more technocratic and social one that sought to use top-down expert knowledge to create a solid educated social base in the countryside. The opposition culture-nature was totally dismissed as Gusti and his collaborators admired rural culture and understood the complex processes of change that affected the rural world.

The four-fold agenda of cultural work (body, work, mind and soul) was clearly reflected in the principles according to which the *cămin* was to function.

In the area of culture of the body, its role was 'to improve the physical well-being/health'; in the area of work, it was meant to 'improve work practices to increase productivity'; in the areas of the mind and soul, it was meant to 'uplift the spirituality of the community' (*înălțarea sufletească a obștei*). These goals did not differ much from the earlier attempts of civilising the villages before the war and in the early 1920s. However, the vocabulary and set-up reflected a paradigm shift from an earlier missionarism to an interest in the welfare of the social body (of which the peasantry represented the largest part) and in the bureaucratisation and centralisation of rural development. The 'culture of the body' reflected this most clearly. The project of cultural work placed the countryside at the core of the social hygiene agenda, making the peasant body – both individual and social – central, as the repository of genetic information, biological strength, sexual potency and racial purity of the nation.[60] This was not surprising and should not be interpreted in the narrow comparison to German extreme racial theories and practices. Instead, the Romanian vision was inspired and shared many features with similar successful projects in other Eastern European countries such as the Yugoslav rural health centres initiative. In practice, the health and hygiene agenda meant incorporating a pharmacy, public baths and sports facilities into the *cămin cultural* both in the construction of the building itself and in its work agenda.

The programme regarding 'the culture of labour', as clarified in the *Îndrumător*, included: 1) agriculture, viticulture, and forestry; 2) zootechnics; 3) labour associations; 4) women's domestic work; 5) civic work. Encompassing both paid and unpaid, productive and non-productive labour activities, this reflected the holistic definition of and approach to 'work' in the countryside and the trust that all these areas could and should be rationally improved. Translating this agenda, the practical activities of the *cămin* encompassed mainly educational activities, including lectures and practical lessons on topics that ranged from agriculture to domestic duties and to projects meant to improve the facilities of the local community. The area of domestic work revealed the project's gender dimension that saw the peasant woman both as an agent of change for her entire family, as well as a guardian of rural customs and traditions.[61] Thus the domestic science lessons held at the *cămine culturale* were a spill-over of a world-wide interest in regulating the private family life of the lower classes, guiding them onto a pathway towards a healthier, rational and moral future.

In the area of the mind and the soul, the role of the *cămin* was to host a variety of social and cultural events as well as to sustain and encourage various folk groups and performances. This agenda reflected the morality the project sought to inject into rural communities – a combination of religion, cleansed of its mysticism and esotericism, of respect for the nation and of preservation of local cultural customs and traditions. The importance of nurturing and preserving local customs was explained by Stahl who, aware of the erosion of traditional culture, noted: 'it is true that a part of the old peasant culture is disappearing fatally, under the influence of urban influences and that a new culture will be born out of somewhere', yet he held that 'we cannot expect the student teams to create this new culture'.[62] Their role was only to try to revive and revitalise old artistic traditions. It was up to the village itself to develop their cultural future with the guidance of local and national organisations like FCR-PC. Most of the newly built *cămine* would therefore have halls able to house a choir, folk dancing and other such performances.

Also as part of the culture of the mind, the *cămin* was to incorporate a village library and to promote reading groups. In the theory of cultural work, village libraries could not be simply a repository of random books, but had to be carefully organised according to the villagers' literacy levels, their own needs and taste.[63] As the textbook explained, 'where you find 50-60 percent illiteracy, you will know straightaway that the villagers' interest in learning is much lower than that of a population with less than 20 percent'.[64] The village library was planned to contain sixty percent books for peasants ('*plugari*'), thirty percent for village intellectuals and the remaining ten percent for children.[65] The first category was to be filled with 'predominantly religious books and literature (stories and *taclale*[66]), then history, economics, etc.'[67] Gusti himself was fully aware and spoke against the idea that simply giving books to a village would lead to people reading them. Instead, like many of his peers, he supported the production and dissemination of books that were specially designed for rural people, books that would be written in a simpler language, would contain educational messages and would be cheap and attractive at the same time. Since illiteracy was one of the most urgent problems of the countryside, village libraries and reading events were greatly promoted. A short article in the review *Căminul Cultural* gave us an insight into the lesser-known aspects of how people used a local library. The author explained that people's interest in reading was tuned to their work cycles, with a complete halt in reading in the summer during the most intensive agricultural duties. Also, maybe against the project's expectations, locals preferred to take books home rather than staying in a reading room. This was justified by the fact that often people would stumble over longer words and try to read them aloud and that, actually, most reading was in groups rather than individual and private, with one person reading aloud to a group of villagers. Another important observation was that people read for pleasure and ignored more specialised books about agronomy, veterinary medicine, health, etc.

Apart from the library, the programme encouraged the set up of a local museum and the purchase and use of a radio where possible. The local museum was obviously meant to reinforce the interest and the pride in local culture, be it in terms of an ethnographic, a historical or archaeological leaning.

In 1934, out of the 889 *cămine* that existed across the country, only 349 were active and even amongst these only 194 were considered to 'stand out'. The vast majority of their leaders were school teachers (104) and in only 3 peasants were in charge. In terms of housing, most of the *cămine* did not have a building of their own (only 19 did), being mainly housed in schools.

Cultural work benefitted the *cămine* and their development, although its scope was initially quite reduced. The overall project did not involve great numbers of people, but participation grew steadily from 1934, when only 12 villages were visited by 98 students assisted by 56 technicians, (i.e. professionals from the designated domains), whereas, in 1937, when a total of 407 students and 404 technicians worked in 75 villages. In

1938, the programme listed 471 students and 397 technicians working in 63 villages. Over these five years, 114 villages were visited once or repeatedly across all Romanian regions.

In 1938, the first year of the royal dictatorship[68], Gusti was able to transform his project of student voluntary activism into the Social Service, a programme of compulsory work experience in the countryside for all university students, graduates and civil servants. The Social Service Law, passed in October 1938 and revoked exactly a year later, made the 'reorganisation of the countryside' a matter of state, both by mobilising the entire student population to work in rural areas and by placing the leadership of the Service at the heart of the new government; the president of the Social Service was to hold a ministerial position and the running of the project was to involve 'almost the entire cabinet'.[69] The law stipulated that all university students would obtain their graduation certificates only after completing a period of social service in the countryside of up to a year. Similarly, one could not hold a public position and could not obtain a certificate of professional practice without undergoing this formative experience. In a strong 'high modernist vein', the project meant subordinating the intellectual elites to the state's goal of refashioning the countryside, thus turning them into specialised social servants. With regards to the modernisation of the rural world, the programme continued the same type of cultural work, further stressing the importance of the *Cămin Cultural* not only as the new centre of village life, but also as 'the main executive body' of the Social Service, constituting a 'work unit formed and led by the locals – peasants, intellectuals and 'sons of the village' - meant to 'help, strengthen and deepen the work of the Church, the School and the State Authorities'.[70]

With the introduction of the Social Service, the project for the *cămine* became even more ambitious, aiming to found one in every Romanian village and town. Furthermore, the *cămin cultural* became the local enforcer of the Social Service Law and the local intellectuals (priests, school teachers and local administrators) were obliged to contribute to its activities.[71] As part of this ambitious plan, the state launched a programme of building new *cămine culturale* across the country, continuing the activity of the student teams on a much larger scale. These new multifunctional buildings were designed to serve the wide range of activities related to cultural work with its four aspects: health, work, mind and soul. Whilst being functional and cost-effective, the architectural style of these new buildings was meant to communicate the importance, progressive spirit and cultural roots of this institution.[72] The plan for the *cămin* in the model village of Dioşti provides a perfect example of this wider trend as the standard for all other such institutions across the country. The *cămin cultural* in Dioşti was a two-storey U-shaped building comprising of four main sections. Occupying the front section of the ground floor was the concert hall (*sala de festivităţi*) where various community and cultural events were organised (concerts, conferences, film showings, etc). The east and west wings were designated respectively for economic and health purposes. The first included two workshops, a kitchen and bakery, a shop and storerooms. The second was comprised of showers with changing rooms, a room for delousing, three doctors' and nurses' consultation rooms and a doctor's office. Finally, the first floor was devoted to the village's museum and library. Fifty metres long on each side, the building had a total area across all floors of about 2000 square metres.

In Dioşti, the *cămin* dominated the new village civic centre, in which architectural forms articulated the relations of power between the citizens and the state or local authorities. It was placed at the centre of this square and was surrounded by the other main institutions of the village: the local Council and the *gendarmerie* (police station), the church and the school. The *cămin* therefore an embodied of the School's own vision of cultural modernisation that placed the community and its vital functions (education, economy and health) at the heart of the village itself, all part of a secular system of values meant to represent the nation and the state.

Although the Social Service was interrupted in 1939, the Royal Foundations continued their work in the field of rural development. After Carol II was forced to step down, the official name of this institution became the 'King Michael Royal Cultural Foundation', but the interest in setting up and maintaining the work of the *cămine* continued.[73] The 1943 guide to cultural work showed this most clearly. Whilst the student teams disappeared from the programme, the structure of cultural work, with its four main directions (body, work, mind, and soul) remained unchanged.[74] Clearly, due to the war and the ambiguous situation between 1945 and 1948, the activity in this field remained weak.

In 1948, the Foundation was taken over by the new regime. Although the personnel was dismissed, it was not closed, but the offices and their bureaucratic apparatus were simply transferred into a new model of rural development. In the initial transition phase, between 1948-1950, the new Ministry of Arts and Information, the Section of Cultural Institutions (Secţia Aşezămintelor Culturale) took over the Foundation's premises, publications and the entire network of houses of culture.[75] This showed that this project of cultural work fitted - at least in form - to the new model of rural modernisation.

Conclusions

Overall, the new initiative was imbibed with a desire to systematise and rationalise village culture on the one hand and to preserve or revive a sense of tradition and solidarity within communities. Like houses of culture in many other countries, these were new social spaces that grew at the borders between the private and the public spheres. Specifically in the Romanian case, these were justified from above rather than from below, as rural communities already had social spaces and practices of their own. In this sense, unlike houses of culture in towns, where people did not know each other or had no designated place to meet and exchange ideas or simply eat together and feel less lonely, village life had age-old rules and customs that were hard to transform by simply setting up a new institution. However, the leaders of this programme were fully aware of these issues, as they were social researchers who had spent time in villages and had come to understand how rural life worked. At the same time, the *cămine* were also spaces where a specific model of modernisation could be introduced into village life in a managed and controlled way. The new practices pioneered by this small institution were seen as necessary for the progress of the nation as a whole: education, health, labour and beliefs were all becoming matters of state interest as the idea of society expanded further, to include even its most marginal groups. The *cămine* were therefore to be standardised, kept in line and made compliant to the ideas at the centre, although local variations and initiatives were warmly welcome. This was realised though inspections, publications and congresses that connected and allowed local leaders to exchange ideas but also be kept in line and under control. Finally, this reflected the desire to create a cultural bureaucractic machine, an initiative which the communist state easily took over and redesigned for its own purpose.

It is not within the scope of this article to explain what happened after 1948, but rather to argue that the institution of the *cămin cultural* constituted one of the many bridges that connected the regimes before and after 1948. There is no doubt that the ideas and ideology behind the institution changed to fit the dominant Soviet model. One explanation for this is that the general goal, i.e. rural modernisation, remained the same for the Romanian state and its intellectual elites although the way this was imagined changed. Another explanation is that the Soviet Union had also developed their own houses of culture and that, although there were many aspects that differed between the two, this made it very easy for the new regime to simply adapt these institutions to fit the Soviet model.[76]

NOTES

[1] I paraphrase Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Chatto & Windus, 1979).

[2] The term 'civilising process was coined by Norbert Elias who argued that the creation of modern nation states in Western European relied on an ongoing process of transforming societies through changing 'constraint by others into an apparatus of self-restraint'. This concept has been successfully applied to the processes of 'inculcation of disciplines that proceeded without recourse to open violence or terror', which accompanied the more coercive methods of rural modernisation, subsumed under the Stalinist '*kul'turnost*' policies in Soviet Russia, analysed by V. Volkov. See Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 1978); V. Volkov, "The Concept of Kul'turnost': Notes on the Stalinist Civilising Process," in *Stalinism: New Directions* (London, Routledge, 2000), 210–30.

[3] A study on the current state of Romanian *cămine culturale* has been done by the Research and Consultancy Centre in the Field of Culture (*Centrul de cercetare și consultanță în domeniul culturii*). The summary of this study indicates some of the interesting fates of these institutions after the fall of communism. Centrul de cercetare și consultanță în domeniul culturii, *Institutia caminului cultural - o vedere de ansamblu*, n.d., http://www.culturadata.ro/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=105:institutia-caminului-cultural-o-vedere-de-ansamblu&catid=42:patrimoniu-si-turism-cultural.

[4] J. Burchardt, "Reconstructing the Rural Community: Village Halls and the National Council of Social Service," *Rural History* 10, no. 2, 1999, 193–216.

[5] S. Bozdogan, *Modernism and Nation Building : Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2002).

[6] A. Brauman et al., *Maisons du peuple: architecture pour le peuple*, Bruxelles (Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1984); B. Donahoe and J. Otto. Habeck, *Reconstructing the House of Culture : Community, Self, and the Makings of Culture in Russia and Beyond* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2011).

[7] Katherine Verdery remains the main scholar who has dedicated a great part of her work to the experience of Romanian peasants throughout the twentieth century, including the collectivization and the de-collectivization processes. K. Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers. Three Centuries of Political, Economic and Ethnic Change* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983); G. Kligman and K. Verdery, *Peasants Under Siege : the Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011); K.Verdery, "Seeing Like a Mayor. Or, How Local Officials Obstructed Romanian Land Restitution," *Ethnography* 4, no. 11, 2002, 5–33. Another piece of work that offers the villagers' direct experience of the communist 'coerced modernisation' process is A. Mungiu-Pippidi, *A Tale of Two Villages : Coerced Modernization in the East European Countryside* (Budapest, CEU Press, 2010).

[8] Brauman et al., *Maisons du peuple*, 8.

[9] A. Brauman and Brigitte Buyssens, "Victor Horta et la maison du peuple de Bruxelles," in *Maisons du peuple,* Bruxelles, Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1984, 10–33; B. Buyssens, "Inventaire visuel des maisons du peuple en Wallonie et à Bruxelles," in *Maisons du peuple:*, Bruxelles, Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1984, 33–63.

[10] B. Podrecca, "'Le savoir est pouvoir', les maisons du peuple à Vienne," in *Maisons du Peuple,* Bruxelles (Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1984), 125–141.

[11] J-L. Cohen, "Les bourses du travail au temps des loisirs...les avatas de la sociabilité ouvrière (France, 1914-1939)," in *Maisons du peuple: architecture pour le peuple,* Bruxelles, Archives d'Architecture Moderne, 1984, 159–185.

[12] Brauman and Buyssens, "Victor Horta et la maison du peuple de Bruxelles," 34.

[13] Burchardt, "Reconstructing the Rural Community: Village Halls and the National Council of Social Service."

[14] A. White, *De-Stalinisation and the House of Culture : Declining State Control over Leisure in the USSR, Poland and Hungary, 1953-1989,* London: Routledge, 1990; B. Grant, *In the Soviet House of Culture: A Century of Perestroikas,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995; B. Grant, "Epilogue: Recognizing Soviet Culture," in *Reconstructing the House of Culture : Community, Self, and the Makings of Culture in Russia and Beyond,* New York, Berghahn Books, 2011, 263–276.

[15] Grant, "Epilogue: Recognizing Soviet Culture."

[16] F. Caprotti, *Mussolini's Cities: Internal Colonialism in Italy, 1930-1939,* New Jersey, Cambria Press, 2007; Bozdogan, *Modernism and Nation Building.*

[17] V. DeGrazia, *The Politics of Leisure: The Dopolavoro and the Organization of Workers' Spare Time in Fascist Italy, 1922-1939,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

[18] Z. Ornea, *Viaţa lui Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea* (Bucharest: Ed. Compania, 2003).

[19] N. Marin-Dunăre, "Hasdeu şi satul model," *Căminul Cultural* V, no. 5, 1939: 409–10; Spiru Haret, "Chestia ţărănească," in *Operele lui Spiru Haret,* vol. VIII, XI vols. (Bucharest: Ed. Cartea Românească, n.d.).

[20] Haret, "Chestia ţărănească."

[21] A. Drace-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture. Literacy and the Development of National Identity* (London; New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 150.

[22] I. Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930,* Cornell University Press, 1995, 202.

[23] The term *neoiobăgie* (neoserfdom) was coined by the Romanian socialist Constantin Dobrogeanu Gherea in his theory, inspired by the works of the Russian populists and by Marxism directly, posited that the penetration of capitalism in the Romanian Principalities in the second half of the nineteenth century had the unexpected consequence of enserfing the peasantry who,

although *de jure* free, became dependent *de facto* on the large landowners. Gherea's term has been broadly used by historians to analyse the processes of economic, political and social modernisation in Eastern Europe. The best analysis of the Romanian successive land reforms is still D. Mitrany, *The Land and the Peasant in Rumania: The War and Agrarian Reform (1917-21)*, New Haven; London: Yale University Press; O.U.P., 1930. The same author discussed the end of neoserfdom in Eastern Europe after the First World War and its consequences in D. Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant: a Study in Social Dogmatism*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1951.

[24] K. Hitchins, A Nation Affirmed: The Romanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1860-1914, Bucharest: Encyclopaedic Publishing House, 1999, 49.

[25] One of the important forums of these debates was the Romanian Social Institute that held public conferences on the most important topics of the day and published the prestigious *Archive for Social Science and Reform.*

[26] Goldiș V. *Discursuri rostite în preajma Unirii la Asociațiunea Culturală "Astra"*, Bucharest: Cultura Națională, 1928, 147.

[27] The most recent work discussing the history of this organisation is Zoltán Rostás, "Fundația Culturală Regală 'Principele Carol' sau mișcarea Echipelor Studențești Voluntare," in Z. Rostás, *Strada Latină nr.8, monografiști și echipieri la Fundația Culturală Regală "Principele Carol",* 11–23, Bucharest, Curtea Veche, 2009. Also see D. Gusti, *Les Fondations Culturelles Royales de la Roumanie*, Bucharest, Union des Fondations Culturelles Royales, 1937.

[28] Z. Rostás, "Fundația Culturală Regală 'Principele Carol' sau mișcarea echipelor studențești voluntare," in *Strada Latină Nr.8. monografiști și echipieri la Fundația Culturală Regală "Principele Carol"*, Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2009, 11–23.

[29] *Fundația Culturală Principele Carol 1922-1925*, Bucharest: Fundația Culturală Regală "Principele Carol," 1926.

[30] Gheorghe D. M, Crainic, N. and Voiculescu, V., *Căminul cultural: îndreptar pentru conducătorii culturii la sate,* Bucharest, Fundația Culturală Regală "Principele Carol," 1924, 8.

[31] Ibid., 32–54.

[32] For the work of the Foundations in these early years, see *Fundația Culturală Principele Carol 1922-1925.*

[33] *Îndrumător al muncii culturale la sate: 1936*, Bucharest, Fundația Culturală Regală „Principele Carol', 1936, 29.

[34] D. Gusti, "Introducere în cursul de istoria filosofiei grecești, etică și sociologie," in *Sociologia Militans,* Bucharest, Fundația Culturală Regală "Regele Mihai I," 1946, 30–47.

[35] In 1919, the Association was transformed into the Romanian Social Institute (*Institutul Social Român*). D. Gusti, "Aniversarea Institutului. Zece ani de la înființare.Cuvântarea Președintelui Institutului Social Român, D-l Dimitrie Gusti," *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială* VIII, no. 4 (1929): 527.

[36] See R. Muşat, "Sociologists and the Transformation of the Peasantry in Romania, 1925-1940" (unpublished PhD diss., University College London, 2011).

[37] D. Gusti, *Sociologia militans,* Bucharest, Fundaţia Culturală Regală "Regele Mihai I," 1946.

[38] D. Gusti, "Cultura poporului," in *Opere.3.Politica,* vol. 3 (Bucharest, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania, 1970), 229.

[39] D. Gusti, "Politica culturii şi statul cultural," in *Politica culturii. 30 de prelegeri şi comunicări organizate de Institutul Social Român*, Bucharest, 1933, 484.

[40] D. Gusti, "Idei călăuzitoare pentru munca culturală la sate," in *Îndrumător al muncii culturale la sate : 1936*, Bucharest, Fundaţia Culturală Regală „Principele Carol', 1936, 27.

[41] Ibid., 29.

[42] Rabinow, *French Modern*, 168–210.

[43] ASTRA was founded in 1861 by Romanian intellectuals in Transylvania and functioned as a privately funded cultural and educational institution for the Romanian community. One of ASTRA's most important goals was the 'enlightening the peasantry' through education and knowledge. After the 1918 Unification, ASTRA remained one of the most important cultural institutions in the area up to the end of Second World War. V.Moga, *"Astra" şi societatea: 1918-1930*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2003. On the eugenicists involved in ASTRA, see M. Bucur, *Eugenics and Modernization in Interwar Romania* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).

[44] Gusti, "Politica culturii şi statul cultural," 478–479; D. Gusti, *Un an de activitate la Ministerul Instrucţiei Cultelor şi Artelor: 1932-1933*, Bucharest, Tipografia "Bucovina," 1934, 537–539.

[45] *Cartea echipelor*, Bucharest: Fundaţia Culturală Regală "Principele Carol," 1937, 14. Od. 1935

[46] Carol II, "Cuvântarea Majestăţii Sale Regale Către Echipele Studenţeşti," *Căminul Cultural* I, no. 1, November 1934, 3.

[47] Ibid., 2–3.

[48] Rostás, "Fundaţia Culturală Regală," 16; Gh. Lăzărescu and Z. Rostás, "'Ni s-a făcut o primire sărbătorească' – Gh. Lăzărescu. (interview 2006)," in *Strada Latină Nr.8. monografişti şi echipieri la Fundaţia Culturală Regală "Principele Carol"* (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2009), 60; C. Marinescu and Z. Rostás, "'Partea forte a gustismului' – C. Marinescu," in *Strada Latină Nr.8. Monografişti Şi Echipieri La Fundaţia Culturală Regală "Principele Carol"*, Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2009, 158–159.

[49] The most recent work on the Legion's work camps is R. Haynes, "Work Camps, Commerce, and the Education of the 'New Man' in the Romanian Legionary Movement," *Historical Journal* 51, no. 4, 2008, 943–44.

[50] M. Polihroniade, *Tabăra de Muncă* (Bucharest: Editura Ziarului "Universul," 1936), 1; A. Heinen, *Legiunea "Arhanghelul Mihai"*, Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006, 210–214; 260–263; Haynes, "Work Camps," 946.

[51] Manoilescu Gh., Nedelcu C., and Sidorovici T., "Straja Țării," in *Enciclopedia României*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1938), 485.

[52] The word *strajă* is a synonym of *garda* ('guard') and the denomination of the levels of the organization also reflected further similarities. As in the Legion, the smallest unit of the *Străjeri* was a *cuib* (nest), whereas the largest was a 'legion'. Ibid., 488.

[53] As Haynes has shown, 'beyond the practical aim of the work camp, there was also an "educational mission" which was to "ennoble manual work". Through this, the Legion sought and partly succeeded to erase the shame attached to intellectuals doing manual work, bridging the gap between classes and professions by co-opting them to work together for the creation of a new social order. Haynes, "Work Camps," 946.

[54] Carol II, "Cuvântarea Majestății," 3.

[55] Henri H. Stahl, *Amintiri și gânduri*, Bucharest: Ed. Minerva, 1981, 279–283.

[56] Ibid., 282.

[57] Z. Rostás, *Monografia ca utopie. Interviuri cu Henri H. Stahl (1985-1987)* (Bucharest: Paideia, 2000, 197.

[58] All of these issues were summarised in a publication prepared for the 14th International Congress of Sociology meant to take place in Bucharest in 1939. D. Gusti, N. Cornatzeanu, and G. Banu, *Rural Life in Rumania. An Abridged English Version of a Monograph "La Vie Rurale En Roumanie"* (Bucharest: Fourth International Congress of Sociology, 1940). Another comprehensive study of the rural world and its 'ills' is George Banu, ed., "Problemele sanitare ale populației rurale din România," *Revista de Igienă Socială* X, no. 1–6, 1940.

[59] *Îndrumător al muncii culturale la sate: 1936* (Bucharest: Fundația Culturală Regală „Principele Carol', 1936), 30.

[60] Bucur's book discusses this new paradigm in depth with reference to Romanian eugenics. Bucur, *Eugenics.*

[61] *Îndrumător 1936*, 325.

[62] H.H. Stahl, "Experiența echipelor studențești la sate," *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* 2, no. 1–3 (January 1935): 146.

[63] *Îndrumător 1936*, 354–5.

[64] *Ibid., 348.*

[65] More details about how books should be divided between different sections. Ibid., 373.

[66] *Taclale* is translated in all Romanian dictionaries as 'conversation', 'chit-chat'. However, in this context, the *taclale* appear to be folk conversations or dialogues that were collected alongside other forms of folklore (stories, legends, poems, etc). D. Furtună, ed., *Cuvinte scumpe: taclale, povestiri și legende romănesti*, Bucharest: Librăriile Socec, 1914.

[67] *Îndrumător 1936*, 366.

[68] The Royal dictatorship, announced in February 1938, represented Carol II's attempt to deal with the internal threat of the Legion and externally to prepare for the advent of war. Marking the shift from a constitutional to an authoritarian regime, the King dissolved the parliament and the 1923 Constitution, instituting his new 'government above the parties' and a new corporatist Constitution. See K. Hitchins, *Rumania: 1866-1947* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 420–423; H.L. Roberts, *Rumania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State*, Yale, London: Yale U,P; Cambridge U.P, 1951, 206–222; F. Nedelcu, *De la restaurație la dictatura regală: din viața politică a României 1930-1938*, Cluj: Dacia, 1981; Gheorghe Savu, *Dictatura regală (1938-1940)*, Bucharest: Ed. Politică, 1970.

[69] "Proiect de lege pentru înființarea Serviciului Social," incorrectly filed as 1923, FCR-C/1923/46/64-75, Arhivele Naționale (ANIC); "Organizarea Serviciului Social," incorrectly filed as 1923, FCR-C/1923/46/75, ANIC; D. Gusti, *Principiile și scopurile Serviciului Social* (Bucharest: Fundația Culturală Regală "Principele Carol', 1939); Z. Rostás, "Serviciul Social sau obligativitatea muncii culturale," in *Strada Latină Nr.8. monografiști și echipieri la Fundația Culturală Regală "Principele Carol"* (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2009), 228–230.

[70] "Proiect de lege pentru înființarea Serviciului Social" FCR-C/1923/46/64-75, Arh. Naț.

[71] *Căminul cultural. întocmire și funcționare*, Bucharest: Fundația Culturală Regală "Principele Carol," 1939, 7.

[72] Most of the projects for cămine culturale show a faith in a modern functional style with traditional and classical additions. A counter-example that reinforces this preference was the design of the Cămin Cultral in Drăgănești, Olt, which was rejected because of its overly ornate style. "Various Architectural Plans Including Plans for the Model Village Dioști," 1936, FCR-C/1936/21/39-49, ANIC, 38.

[73] The Royal Cultural Foundations kept detailed records of each *cămin cultural* in their jurisdiction. See *Fondul Fundației Cultural Regale – Cămine* at ANIC.

[74] *Îndrumător al muncii culturale la sate: 1943*, Bucharest: Fundația Culturală Regală "Regele Mihai I," 1943. This can also be seen in the Foundation's archives, that maintain uninterrupted files on the *cămine* until 1948.

[75] The archival documents of this institution are held at ANIC in *Fondul Ministerului Artelor și Informațiilor*. After 1950, these where subsequently transferred to the Ministry of Culture.

[76] Grant, *In the Soviet House of Culture: A Century of Perestroikas*; S. Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992; D. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003; T. Starks, *The Body Soviet Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009.

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FACING THE PAST IN SERBIA AFTER 2000

Introduction

Following the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia took what was probably one of the most eerie paths into transition. It disintegrated by way of what was basically a civil war, which generated the most appalling atrocities committed in Europe since the Second World War. The seventh successor state, Serbia, in the 1990s, undertook its transition fully laden with this war's legacy, one being transposed in a mélange of war crimes, ethnic nationalism, corruption and propaganda[1]. The broad criminalization of the society has additionally damaged the outlook of a post-socialist juridical system, one that already had a shady track record. All the round tables and debates taking place in other countries – lustration, condemning the former communist leaders, opening the archives of the communist secrete services, any other means of dealing with the past[2], were consistently avoided in the post-Yugoslav landscape in the light of a bigger injustice – that of the war crimes[3]. The inability or incapacity in dealing with this issue still holds the region in quasi-isolation in spite of both the European Union's free line signal for integration and the publicly assumed willingness of the successor states to pursue this goal. A certain number of juridical institutions, both national and international[4], do have the capacity of investigating and judging war perpetrated crimes, thus eliminating this obstacle from the European future of this region. However, their precise impact in bringing back trust in the political order still has yet to be fully assessed[5].

The overall purpose of the article is to interpret the framework inherent in such a concept as "transitional justice".[6] The term in itself designates a set of policies concerning the administration of the past from a double perspective: committing the act of justice and the consolidation of the newly gained democratic order. The precise policies can be categorized according to the nature of the juridical means at stake: penal or civil ones (see Claus Offe[7]). Although the most spectacular ones are those penal actions embodied in trials against the agents of the former regime, there are still other means. I am referring to the acts of "juridical remission": amnesty laws, reprieve decrees, anticipated prescription of deeds, restrictive laws limiting the indictments and so on and so forth. Other mechanisms, civil or administrative, may include purging the state's apparatus, juridical rehabilitations, property restitutions, remedies for the victims, truth (or reconciliation) commissions, historical research institutes, museums, memorials and so on.

Still, implementing transitional justice policies tremendously depends on the nature of a particular transition but above that, on the former regime's repressive nature. When talking about Milošević's regime (generically), it appears clearer that transitional justice in the Serbian Republic after 2000 is highly connected with and dependent on the international community's pressure towards the implementation and practice of human rights. The newly empowered political establishment also depends on the policies of justice to be applied. They determine the magnitude and the nature of such consequential measures.

Significance

The collapse of communism and the subsequent transition to democracy of the Central and South-East European countries have been characterized by a dynamic approach towards their recent past[8]. In the countries that pursued some legal and extra-legal remedies (ranging from criminal trials and truth commissions to lustrations, parliamentary inquiries, compensations, restitutions or governmental based investigations), the transitional dynamic generated a massive amount of academic literature. Such clear "signs" as carried out measures and their nature are the sheer evidence of some shaken order and of the attempt on re-establishing social trust. The juridical paths of confronting the past in the former Yugoslavia are undoubtedly part of this trend. Former Yugoslavia shows up as an atypical case of a complete collapse of the social order brought about by the regime's breakdown, the state's dismantlement and by the atrocities of war. Both authority and social trust were questioned through the extensive ability of committing evil, wide spread denial, political temporization and distrust in the juridical actions within successor states. In this context, the acknowledgement of past crimes became highly important for annealing those societies and their position into the global community. The analysis of the legal aspect of social change potentially reveals alternative concepts that are used in the juridical reading of the past. The article will thus shed light on the tension between global and local legal perspectives, thus underlining the reconstruction of authority and of social trust.

Ultimately, the role of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in making transitional justice work within the Serbian Republic is a crucial point for any analysis. If it was Nuremberg enshrining for the first time the fact that national legislation cannot be used as an excuse for government committed abuses over its own citizens, it is not less meaningful that the crimes against humanity began being legally invoked and trailed regardless of the fact that they were "working or not as violations of the national legislation in the countries were they were committed"[9]. Since Nuremberg to present, national legislation does not protect anymore individuals who are committing gross violations of the human rights regulated by international conventions or agreements. Subsequently, international humanitarian law outweighs national laws and policies. The excuse that national legislation did not ban or even encourage the crime does not hold anymore. The same applies with the argument of "obeying an order" of a hierarchical superior[10]. However, a universal jurisdiction towards condemning any violation of the human rights remained more an ideal during the Cold War. After 1990, by establishing the International Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda (including the apprehension of Augusto Pinochet in London, in 2002), it became possible to pursue with this essential transition towards a universal jurisdiction on the violation of human rights. Although still sluggish, the work of the International Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda took Nuremberg as a precedent and decreed upon the idea that human rights are a fundamental and intangible principle of the civilized world. In this regard, one might argue that the international penal justice can be an answer to the political interference in the national justice concerning former totalitarian or authoritarian leaders.

The article's brief excursion into the inland of those mechanisms of dealing with the past it is at a pinch a refinement and an improvement of this research question. No matter whether it is about reassembling in a historical context the atrocities of the Nineties and the contextualization of the "facing the past" process after 2000, or about defining such process and describing/naming the international and national actors who participate in it, or even about the avatars of the classical means in doing transitional justice, all of these produce one common conclusion. That is, the international criminal justice is the only existing mechanism by which the past of the Serbian Republic can be settled on some objective grounds, both from a theoretical/academic and an effective transitional perspective.

Facing the past

With this fundamental political change in mind (in 2000) and the new democratic path that the Serbian Republic has taken ever since, everyone is talking nowadays about the necessity of "facing the past". Nonetheless, this is a very broad concept that has explanatory roots in many areas and fields of expertise (from political science to psychology and so on). In the present article, we will use the terminology "facing the past" without neglecting, however, other related idioms (such as "dealing with the past", "mastering the past", "coming to terms with the past"). We believe that this terminology is more comprehensive and meaningful due to its vast semantic content and its important psychological facet. Within this perspective, the *social body* is seen as an *individual body*, sort of a patient willing to confess to some psychoanalyst doctor: "Nations, like individuals, need to ***face up to*** and understand traumatic past events before they can put them aside and move on to a normal life."[11] The motivation behind such an approach is a consequence of an apparently simple observation. The Serbian Republic is a country in transition, coming out of a belligerent decade, an authoritarian government, and an implicit international reluctance. Therefore it is presumably correct to assume that it will carry on political based action programs towards its recent past. The primary logic assumes that such a country, whether a candidate for the "post-conflict" or "post-authoritarian" category, must necessarily address its troubled past in order to progress and build a European future. This kind of "addressing" is usually recognized in the literature as the "facing the past process". In other countries, facing the past took the form of legal tribunals or of "truth commissions." Both these types of institutionalized past addressing have operated in Serbia but none of them managed to involve the Serbian public opinion so deep in a self revaluating process. This is something that will be detailed along the project altogether with highlighting possible interpretations for the failure of the afore-mentioned administrative "tools".

Once the choice of terminology accomplished, one would naturally ask ‘Why is the task of facing the past so vital in a transition period from an oppressive rule?’ There are many answers, most of them plausible, but I am stressing one in particular: for sustainable peace! Such a long-term commitment to peace cannot function without a deep process of reconciliation based on ***justice*** and ***healing***. Seen as a mechanism to create a single historical narrative about the past and for clarifying collective responsibility and the leaders’ individual guilt, justice can be done through finding out the truth (correcting the officially manipulated history), through the punishment of perpetrators (retributive justice), the rehabilitation and compensation of the victims and through means of restorative justice. Furthermore, to avoid the reoccurrence of human rights violations, educational measures, reforming political institutions and consolidating the democratic culture are all of maximum importance. It is also highly significant to succeed at all levels because human rights violations may occur even in a democratic political system (due to the differentiation between a *democratic culture and a democratic set of rules*).

What does facing the past really mean?

German is the only language with a specific expression for the sophisticated phenomenon of the so-called “facing the past process”: a composite word Vergagenheit – past and Bewältigung – management, coming to terms with, mastering → Vergangenheitsbewältigung! The best translation of this German expression into English would probably be “struggle to come to terms with the past”. At its origins, the term refers both to the responsibility of the German state and that of simple German individuals for what happened during the Third Reich. In this respect, the term focuses on the process of learning, or on, in philosopher George Santayana’s words, “those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it”. The term effectively came into being as a natural evolution from denazification (firstly under the Allied Occupation of Germany and then through the Christian Democratic Union government of Konrad Adenauer). In the Fifties and Sixties the aim of liberal Germans was to deal with and learn from their recent past. Vergangenheitsbewältigung implies the admission of the fact that a particular vicious episode of the past did exist and therefore, acknowledging it and learning from it, one (a group) can step forward into the future.

At the same time, Theodor Adorno discussed in his famous essay (Was bedeutet die Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit? *What does coming to terms with the past mean?*[12]) about the term "auferbeitung," by which he meant: a). the personal and painful character of the consciousness that must emerge from Germany's "Zero Hour"; b). the psychoanalytic effort in confronting and "working through" the memory of offence and catastrophe; c). the convergence (however distinctly) of "Aufarbeitung" and "Aufklärung" (enlightenment, clarification); d). a critique of the parallel notion of "mastering the past" (Vergangenheitbewältigung), which seems to be tainted (at least verbally) by the idea of some ultimate repression[13]. Adorno was of course referring to national-socialism and he was ascertaining the fact that its legacy lingered long after the Nazi regime. He questioned whether the latter was just a ghost of past's abomination that never died along with Hitler himself or it never really died, or if the people's inclination for indescribable actions persisted in themselves and in the surrounding social conditions. He also noted that "democracy" was just a "working proposition" in post-war Germany. Collective narcissism never ceased to exist after the formal collapse of National Socialism and subconsciously the defeat was as much admitted as the one in 1918[14]. Adorno also assumed that the recognition of what happened in the past must work against an oblivion which readily accompanied justifications about what had been forgotten. Parents for instance, those who have to cope with their children's uncomfortable questions about Hitler and then to exculpate themselves from, were talking about the good side and how it had not been so bad after all.

There is a broader conclusion here: for mastering the past in a proper manner, turning it into some efficient political education capable to facilitate the transition and the implementation of new democratic values, it is absolutely imperative to *educate the educators*! Coming to terms with the past in a way that aims towards its cognizance consists essentially in the particular way of turning one's face to the subject: supporting self-consciousness and thus a meaning of the self. This should be accompanied by the good knowledge of some immutable propagandistic practices (?) which are familiar particularly to that psychological predisposition resting inside people (since these artifices are so rigid and numerically limited there is no insurmountable burden in isolating them, making them well known and using them as sort of a vaccine). Theodor Adorno concluded by inciting people to remember the most basic things, namely that open or hidden re-emergences of fascisms would led to war, suffering, poverty under a coercive rule (such examples could have a more profound impact over people than say simply referring to ideals or even to the ordeals of others).

Facing the past also implies the acknowledgement of the historical episodes that marked a particularly society. Many key words are of most relevance to this *acknowledgement function* – among them: understanding[15], assuming[16], confronting[17], reconciliation[18], responsibility.[19]

Once the necessity of facing the past settled, it becomes even more important to understand **who is conducting this process**, which institutions or actors. Societies regularly tend to produce two kinds of frameworks in order to deal with their recent violent history. First, a *court system* that tries those responsible for committed crimes and a truth commission (or any other denomination involving the *truth*) and renders both the perpetrators and victims' side of the story. Post Milošević's Serbia has it all! But these – the Tribunal and the Truth Commission – did not manage to provoke any wide discussion about the recent past. And second, the NGOs[20] that have some relevance when talking about giving a profound meaning to civic responsibility. The NGOs' weapons were mainly the documents they published and comprehensive, open, public debates that they organized. And they even started to bring some new perspective on the Serbian's conscience as early as the 1990s. We will discuss below these ultimately converging paths in distinct sections.

The issue of willingness in the process of facing the past

It is of maximum importance to know who has exactly the ***willingness*** to engage in facing the past no matter the chosen paths. So we come to another relevant actor for the facing the past process in former Yugoslavia, that is the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Suggested by the ex German foreign minister (Klaus Kinkel) and officialized through the *Resolution 827* of the United Nations' Security Council (25 May, 1993), the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has been a major achievement of the international perspective over the violence against civilians during war times. The Geneva Convention (1949), for instance, did not foresee any international coercion mechanism. The Helsinki Treaty in 1975 was only a coercion mechanism on paper. Until 1990, those judicial acts could not be used to condemn crimes against civilians in countries such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Uganda, Argentine, East Timor, Iraq, or El Salvador. The creation in 1992 of the court and prison systems to enforce humanitarian law was thus a serious advance of the legal ideal. It was the first significant return to the post-World War II norm that violence against civilians in the context of war is criminal. Therefore, the Yugoslav wars of secession (as of 1992) existed within a relatively new international frame.

It may be true that the issue of "willingness" is of maximum relevance when it comes to facing the past. It seemed not always the case when the Serbian state did prove the willingness in dealing with its recent history and in spite of all the delusive struggles or even meretricious attempts in doing something still, a real facing the past process yet has to come on the surface and be conducted with full support. One of the so-called hard-line advocates who are directly dealing with this everyday struggle for making truth about the past accessible – Sonja Biserko (head of The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia) expressed his personal position on the matter:

> *I think Serbia at this moment doesn't show any willingness nor has the political consensus to face the past. On the contrary, there is… how should I say… a strategy promoted by political, intellectual and cultural elites to relatives responsibility… and this has been very skillfully – how should I say – operated on different levels by them. The Tribunal [ICTY, a. n.] is also used as an instrument. As you know, the anti-Tribunal sentiments here are rather great and especially Milošević's trial was also an instrument to this because Milošević represented himself (not legally, rather politically). And through his witnesses, the chosen witnesses – the academicians who apparently… wrote the contemporary national program that was promoted by them. They have defended the program by the same arguments in the court, the program that was transmitted, as you know, in 1992. None of the commentators of media ever argued or made a comment against such interpretation. In fact, this is some kind of cementing the interpretation of the wars behind us and introduction into this strategy or in a way confirmation of the strategy which is going on for 7-8 years… this is our democratic government which more or less shares the same position and this is something which is now official and informalized as well. So it's not about the facts because the facts are displayed in front of this Court [ICTY, a. n.] but it's rather about the interpretation and deep denial. And I could say also that the more evidence is, the wider denial is in a way. So I think there is… it would be very difficult to make Serbia come to reconcile, to read this past… first of all it is a very small society… they still live with*

> *the illusion of the unification of Serbian lands, hoping that international constellations will change. And the more it is so, the potential for facing the past decreases. And what is the biggest problem of all is that the young generations are growing up with this interpretation and it's very hard to have their own interpretations. In ten years we will have a completely new generation, which will more or less rely on this interpretation, which has been organized, by the state.*[21]

On the matter of answering the question of expansive should this past that is up for debate be, exactly which period of time should be apprehended, the same source gives some coordinates:

> In my view, I think it is not possible to understand what happened if you only begin with the 1990s. I think it's extremely important to understand the background and the political context in which Serbian leadership and intellectual cultural elite started the project, exactly as I said, refusing the idea of transformation of Yugoslavia along federal lines. And this – I would say – has started in the 1970s when apparently they were preparing for Tito's legacy and, the moment he died, they started to promote this project. They usually start analyses from 1991 or 1987 when Milošević was installed… he was installed by people that are still on the scene (see the Academy, churches and so on – they didn't change the course)… so it takes at least 20 years of analysis to understand what has happened. Otherwise what happened in the battlefield is not enough. So this is why the Serbs are trying to equal sides: they are saying: «Yes, we have committed crimes but the others as well. And the Tribunal is anti-Serbian because there are mostly Serbs in there». So it is important to understand why the Serbs were choosing this program that brought Serbia here.[22]

The aspect of the deep continuities at the level of elites belonging to the former and new regime is also brought into discussion. This element is an additional explanatory reason for the slow progress of the current process of facing the past process in the Serbian Republic:

> I think what is important at this point is how we feel as a group, first of all to compile documentation and public books which give different highlight of what has happened and also help to create a nucleus of young intellectuals and young elites, we'll be able to initiate such a process later on. I think to expect bigger results is too early… you know all those people who are now involved in the political life or in any other segment of the public life were mostly involved in the project, they are defending their own lives,

> careers, positions and in a way I think we missed the opportunity to start the process of lustration. Koštunica apparently continues the Milošević's policies [interview from November 2007, a. n.]; Đinđić's short excursion into policies oriented toward the past was brutally stopped. Đinđić's case will be more and more important because it shows that Serbia is not ready for this kind of reform. Because it's not simply an assassination, it really illustrates this deep anti-western and anti-reform ashtray. We still deal with the same people. It's only Milošević who is out and a few guys are in Hague, but the rest are here.[23]

From this point of view it seems that the Serbian state (including here all the representative institutions, whether economic, cultural or just political) is expected to be the least cooperating actor in dealing with the past, given its cadres and their personal links with the complicated unsolved past. Turning back to the concept of "willingness" it appears that most of the significant and valuable actions in the field of facing the past are highly dependent and related to political will. In the absence of it, there will only be defeatist views to describe the Serbian public interest in such matters[24]. So if the facing the past process does not seem to be a political approach, what is it then? What kind of approach is necessary to fulfill the huge task that is before the Serbian society as a whole? The head of The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia concludes by raising this issue:

> I think is both moral and psychological [approaches, a. n.] because without this approach of a long run Serbia will not be able to re-establish the value system, which will recommend it to the European family. I understand that EU and European states want to see Serbia in a way attached to the European family because Serbia as it is now doesn't... hasn't reached the political consensus on the European option... it's EU which is mobilizing on this option with support of certain segments in the society. Most of the citizens when being asked about Europe they are pro (70% of them) and which reflects their hope that their life standards will change (economically). But on the other side we have this resistance to hard work, discipline and certain standards...[25] things that I also think will be hard to achieve in a society which is morally devastated. And of course one has to remember that Serbian anti-European crusade started in the eighties in a moment when Yugoslavia was one of the countries which was expected to have most of the transitional perspectives of all these post-communist countries.[26]

Ivana Dobrivojević from the Institute for Contemporary History advocates a slightly different approach[27]:

> When you are looking things from Belgrade they can be a little different because you don't have access to full documents about the court in The Hague. And then all you can use is press and it's quite hard to have an objective view. As a historian it is probably too early to deal with such topics because you don't have relevant sources; but then again, you have to start someday, so this is just like a starting point and then within ten-fifteen years we would have better perspective on that.[28]

She also stressed the fact that there is a difference between people who are interested in political sciences and war… but when one is a historian, somehow s/he does not deal with the present. Concerning the Serbian state's efforts towards revealing the truth of the nineties, the same source admits that there was a proposal for a Truth Commission, which should have brought together several experts who would somehow investigate what happened during the 1990s. And she also says that for the last four or five years she has not heard anything about it so she was unsure if the Commission still exists. As about the Serbian people's willingness, Ivana Dobrivojević thinks that most of the people were supporting NATO[29] until two or three months ago (date of interview: November 2007) and then the Kosovo crisis broke out.

Furthermore she believes there is a consensus that all war criminals (like Ratko Mladić and many others) should go to The Hague. But still there are some people who think they (the Serbs) should do it just because they have to do it and that is it. According to the same source there are about 30-40% of people who believe that those are war criminals and they should be trialed accordingly. Although there are still many who think that maybe it would be better if they could trial the perpetrators in Belgrade. Finally, Ivana Dobrivojević confesses that it has never been officially *their war*. Yes, they had UN embargo and economic depression and so on and times had been really harsh in Belgrade (when everyone was suffering from an economic perspective). But she thinks they did not really feel the war (wars before the NATO bombing in 1999) and for that matter people did not really care about it during the 1990s. They had queues in front of the supermarkets, they had Slobodan Milošević in power, and they just did not care what was going on outside the capital. She also admits that they did not know much about the events because of the strong censorship but then again there were several independent media. The latter themselves, according to the same opinion, were not much interested in the events either. The subject tried to emphasize the fact that this does not mean the society did not have any empathy with the war's victims. But everyone thought of it as a civil war in which all sides were suffering and in this respect it is a tough task measuring the amount of suffering on each side (the Bosnians might think it was Serbian aggression but from the Serbian perspective it was merely a civil war based on arguments like "how can anyone be an aggressor toward parts of his own country?").

At the same time, the Serbian media at the start of the new millennium was bringing into the open all of these sensitive issues, once Milošević had been disembarked:

> […] there is a difference between ethnification of criminals and ethnification of crimes. […] and if you think that Serbs should apologize to Croats/Bosniaks/Albanians, then you forget that it would be tantamount to smearing blood from hands of criminals onto the whole nation. Thus you perpetuate the thesis of Slobodan Milošević that his war was in fact an all-out popular war. […] I don't contest the assertion that S. Milošević, R. Mladic and R. Karadžic are Serbs (even they don't deny that) but they still don't represent all Serbs.[30]

The features of victimization within the process of facing the past

Among these important hot topics there was also the one of the "guilt" and of the many "features of victimization". Debating around such sensitive topics was not only the appendage to the work of the Truth Commission but also of the general public debate carried out through the media after the year 2000. For instance, one of the Commission's members (former coordinator for the Yugoslav Truth and Reconciliation Commission) was publicly assuming his personal guilt, a responsibility of consciousness sort of speaking, for not acting against a war and atrocities that he was presumably against all the way:

> […] speaking as coordinator of the Commission [the Truth Commission] at the opening of a round table on the program of the Commission, by mere coincidence – as if I have anticipated this polemic and its topics – I had expressed my opinion on all the topics which have been touched in

> this polemic. Today, only for the purpose of illustration, I will say that on the topic of collective guilt and collective responsibility I said that Serbian collective guilt and responsibility, (of course not in the meaning of criminal law but in the same meaning as Srdja Popovic is speaking about it – moral and political responsibility), is the starting ground of the work of the Commission, the main topic that the Commission is dealing with. Furthermore, I am of the opinion that we have the duty to speak about civil law responsibility of our state for compensation of damages to the victims of Milošević-Seselj regime, the topic which has been totally ignored so far. I was also speaking about my personal feeling of my own guilt and responsibility, that I am facing with every day since 1991, when I emigrated from Serbia because I have decided not to get involved in a war which I was against, with all my being: "Therefore, I think that our collective non-interest for long lasting suffering of Sarajevo, or non-sufficient engagement on preventing this, is the darkest spot of consciousness of each of us individually. Nothing can be compared with Sarajevo sufferings and nothing can wash this huge dark spot of our conscience that is something I am convinced of".[31]

Of course, this sort of positioning was made as a personal statement but it could not remain so as long as it dealt with collective responsibility and overall assumptions. The retort to mister Lojpur's confession was therefore not only an isolated polemic within a newspaper but it did stress out in fact the discomfort and burden in dealing with susceptible matters such as "victimization" and "responsibility":

> Mr. Lojpur mentions one of his speeches in the Commission for Truth in which he said that the suffering of Sarajevo is a blemish on conscience of all of us. I disagree with him. I don't deny the terrible fate of Sarajevo but don't understand why it should constitute a blemish on conscience of us all, I assume, of all Serbs? The fact is that the FRY helped Republika Srpska, and that some individuals from Serbia and Montenegro of their volition took part in fighting on the RS side, but why it would taint our conscience. In early 90's Yugoslavia fell apart because its ethnic components did not want any more the joint Yugoslav identity, but were bent on having their own identities. In the light of those developments it was only natural for Serbs to help their own, notably civilian Serb population in Republika Srpska. Other communities also value solidarity and manifest it both towards members of their own tribes or religion, and also towards foreign countries which they found congenial.[32]

The process of facing the past has many aspects to be taken into account. But one of the major issues is that of the features of victimization at the level of collective conscience. As a Serbian researcher argues[33] (and we shall subscribe to this objective opinion and its pertinent content), such features are indispensable to a further reconciliation process in the area:

> 1. "Many people were victimized by different perpetrators, who belong to different communities and ethnic groups (e.g. Serbian refugees from Croatia, who were later living in Bosnia and then Kosovo)"; 2. "Many people are multiple victims, even with memory of victimization in previous wars, or with war trauma passed to them by their parents or other relatives (e.g. Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia, now living in Serbia whose family members were killed by members of other ethnic groups during second world war, or Serbs whose family members were killed during and after second world war by other Serbs who belonged to different political/military group)"; 3. "There are conflicts and divisions among Serbs themselves which are connected to their belonging to different political and other social groups, differences in their war victimization and other factors (for example, between communists and anti-communists, between supporters of Milošević/other nationalist leaders and their opponents, between Serbs from Serbia and Serbs from other parts of the former Yugoslavia, between refugees and local population, war participants and those who did not participate in war etc.)"; 4. "A large part of men were forced to participate in wars as soldiers or their national sentiments and their families traumatic experiences from earlier wars were abused and manipulated to convince them to fight, so that victimization of this part of population is important to be considered in truth and reconciliation process as well"; 5. "Wide structural victimization".

So, there are two types of violence that have to be confronted: the violence among Serbs themselves and that of the Serbs against other ethnic groups. Furthermore, the denying discourse is similarly two-directional: the denial of the Serbian committed crimes and the denial of the Serbian suffered crimes.[34] Both perspectives being well represented in contemporary media, political and civic statements were driving the main task of facing the past in some no man's land. Someone could have hardly found a more moderate position in this Manicheist scenario. But the main issue still remained. We believe that the proper approach is to encompass all the victimization features presented above and not to talk further about any particular denial or specific responsibility. That is because the image is so much heterogeneous for someone to choose a perspective or another. Just the complexity of truth and an objective narrative on recent history – that should be enough to avoid unidirectional approaches. Acknowledging the fact that there were victims, perpetrators and circumstances of great variety could help the Serbian society step into the future. After 2000, part of the Serbian civil society took as a given the international community's message about the so-called truth: the Serbian atrocities[35]. But the other side of the coin was quite neglected: the Serbs as victims of a political violent system.[36]

When the willingness in facing the past seems bleak something else intervenes

According to the Dayton Agreement (also known as *The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina* – 1995), "all countries of former Yugoslavia are duty-bound to cooperate with the ICTY and should for example collect and keep evidence, conduct investigations and forensic work, hear and transfer witnesses, and arrest and detain war crimes suspects"[37]. So the *process* of *facing the past* seems to be an external imposition, at least to a certain extent. Bosnia and Herzegovina was the first to respond to the ICTY's indictments by extraditing Bosnian Muslims in May 1996. Croatia followed the same path in 1997. Meanwhile, the Serbian Republic has been extremely reluctant to the ICTY even though a recent popular movement (starting with 2000) successfully brought into power a new government a coalition of entirely different political character compared to the previous regime. Though the new government would fully cooperate with the ICTY without jeopardizing any of its members, the question of whether or not to extradite the indicted former president Slobodan Milošević to The Hague entangled Serbian politics for about one year (between 2000-2001). The failure to deliver Milošević was at the beginning surprising to the Western policymakers, who in the end forced Belgrade to deliver Milošević by conditioning monetary aid on cooperation with ICTY demands[38]. The decision of such a delivery in June 2001 became a hot "potato" for the Serbian coalition government and it turned out to be a harsh dispute between the President Vojislav Koštunica and Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić. The main bone of contention was not Milošević's extradition itself. Rather, the issue rested on the legal requirement to go through the country's Constitutional Court (dominated by Milošević appointees) to achieve an extradition order, as against an argument that delivery to a United Nations body does not require true extradition. So at the level of "willingness" it seems that the process of facing the past appears more as an imposed imperative within any kind of contacts and negotiations between successor states of the former Yugoslavia and Euro-Atlantic institutions or parties.

Facing the past through courts: domestic or international?

Another debatable point unveils itself this time on the ground of the legal philosophy. What kind of prosecution is more desirable: domestic or international? One juridical concept is decisive in this matter: *bona fide*! Thus, the ICC (the International Criminal Court, governed by the Rome Statute which was ratified on 1st July 2002) seems to fulfill this hiatus by preferring domestic courts only if they develop procedures in a *bona fide* way.[39] At the end of World War II, domestic courts did not prosecute perpetrators even when the Tokyo and Nuremberg Tribunals were coming to a close. The history was the same until the ICTY and ICTR were created. Until that particular moment, everyone thought that international courts were the victors' justice. The African courts seem nowadays to have fallen back onto this idea. ICTY and ICTR are probably "responsible" for the new development in criminal law (by their statutes, rules and judgment). The result is a substantial jurisprudence that was lacking in the past.[40] It is supposed that the collaboration between recently added ICC and local prosecutors will go on a mutual agreement – whether the national courts would want to try it domestically, or would want to go forward before the ICC, if the situation might seem too hard for a local solution.[41] A sort of a *complementarily rule*!

Legal scholar Jonathan Charney argued: "in most situations states find it more desirable to resolve a matter domestically than to surrender responsibility to an international body."[42] It is an almost clear future perspective that states will try to carry out criminal procedures in *bona fide* way just not to be subject of ICC jurisdiction, so the ICC would serve mainly "as a monitoring and supporting institution"[43]. And according to the same author, "this is perhaps the best outcome, for the purpose of establishing the ICC is to eliminate impunity for international crimes."[44] The fact is that the ICTY and the ICTR are still restrained in their work by a limited jurisdiction. The ICC was conceived as the embodiment of the idea that domestic courts will prosecute crimes against humanity under national law[45]. But things are not that clear as we might think. Let us take for instance the "Mejakic case", a perpetrator initially indicted by the ICTY and then transferred to the Bosnian courts. On a side note, one needs to specify that the ICTY retained primacy over national courts. Nevertheless, the Tribunal through its prosecutor requests periodic reports on the progress of the investigation within domestic courts. In spite of this, it turned out that the Bosnian court was composed of national and international judges working with both international and domestic law instruments[46] (article 180/para. 2 of the BiH Criminal Code provides for command responsibility in the same form as article 7(3) of the ICTY Statute[47]). It seems that the end result is a process of continuous negotiation between international and national level of law whilst the field has not fully redefined its boundaries yet.

Trial ethics in the name of facing the past

In spite of being a piecemeal approach into dealing with the problem of the role of criminal trials in social engineering, we thought Mark Osiel's work[48] would be a good starting point for encompassing the diversity of the Serbian way of facing the past. According to the author the main goal of this kind of trials is to develop a coherent collective memory about the painful past and therefore, by doing so, the whole society can be oriented to a more liberal and open paradigm. Although Osiel's approach is an eclectic one, using moral and political philosophy allusions, historiography, law, sociology and even literature and theatre, we shall use only his preliminary concerns about the possibility of using the criminal legal prosecutions in shaping collective memory:

> 1. "… such efforts can easily sacrifice the rights of defendants on the altar of social solidarity"[49]

Many scholars furnish the field with suggestive examples for this sort of assertion: Eichman's trial for instance – seen as a one-way purpose of rendering the Jewish voice. In this scenario the defendant does not really count, he only stands there as a puppet within a show. But let's take for one second the easiest and non-dubitative idea of the victor's trial perspective of the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials. Is it a similar case in nowadays' Serbian Republic? Whether we speak about ICTY or Serbian national Courts, are these embodiments of victor's justice?

We need to consider two major perspectives. First, the one of the Serbian public opinion: it is commonly recognized that the Serbs (in their overwhelming majority) still see ICTY through anti-western, anti-liberal glasses, whether we speak about media, political, economical and cultural elite or any other symbolic and relevant societal players (we shall take the above mentioned NG actors[50] as the notable exception). From this point of view the ICTY acts as a victor's instrument (e.g. the suspension of different international financial aids for non cooperation with the Tribunal[51]). Various international actors – whether states or institutions (represented mainly by United States), are forcing Serbia[52] to cope with this kind of criminal prosecution by using economical and political imperatives/ arguments. The second perspective is that of the international institutions and states dealing with international justice. For these players, the ICTY and the ICTR (and others) are just embodiments of the rule of law (in this case – the international criminal law). Normally, an objective mind not being biased in any way should notice that the law confined in the "rule of law" is not a matter of privileges for some and punishment for others. The law acts as a generally against any transgression against forbidden limits. Then why the same *law*, in an axiological neutral perspective, is seen different from these two perspectives? The defendant's story certainly makes compelling reading. The society's healing would only progress on the basis of a shared understanding of what went wrong. And there might be the case in here (with the Serbian Republic) of a deep lack in this kind of *sharing*. There is not a mutual collective agreement between Serbs that certain individuals should be *defendants* in the law's idiom. For all above mentioned, the defendant's rights seem more as a moral expression[53], because only the *morality behind indictments* can be debated and not that of the *indictments* themselves.

2. "...they [the legal attempts, a. n.] can unwittingly distort historical understanding of the nation's recent past"[54]

The general apprehension nowadays is that criminal judgment and historical interpretation cannot be reconciled or, at the very best, these two distinct attempts can only produce "poor justice or poor history, probably both".[55] Moreover, the truth is that within every transgression from an oppressive rule to a more liberal one, everyone expects "a new

Nuremberg", sort of a "trial of the century" to signal out the true criminal nature of the old regime and to delegitimize it for good. But one shouldn't expect too much from the legal attempts to pedal on the historical understanding and fulfill some kind of a master narrative about the recent history. The real vocation of the trials is to render proper punishments for those responsible of all the abuses of the former regime, to restore justice, and to prevent the re-ignition of such deeds. Even if the legal perspective does provide a more or less objective narrative about the recent past, this is more like a secondary effect and one that is also implicit. The adversaries (?) of these legal mechanisms acknowledge the fact that because it is such a harsh task that of objectively establishing the hierarchy and the causal chain in transmitting orders, the legal approach inevitably operates with a selection of defendants and facts. Important scholars such as Bruce Ackerman or Jon Elster resent this second category of scholars who consider legal anatomy arbitrary and unjust.[56] In other words, if not all the guilty ones can be trialed then every attempt should be aborted (this view has been accused of "moral perfectionism" by authors like Eric Posner or Adrian Vermeule,[57] whereas they consider the transitional processes as simple ordinary trials). We consider that both angles can be pertinent with the only difference that instead of not doing anything at all based on ethical principles, it is preferable to do something at least, no matter how imperfect and selective that is. The degree of distortion in transitional justice's attempts is something less harmful than a propagandistic wrangle over the past.

As related to the concept of "historical distortion", things can get even more complicated:

> The notion that memory can be «distorted» assumes that there is a standard by which we can judge or measure what e veridical memory must be. If this is difficult with individual memory, it is even more complex with collective memory where the past event or experience remembered was truly a different event or experience for its different participants. Moreover, where we can accept with little question that biography or the lifetime is the appropriate or «natural» frame for individual memory, there is no such evident frame for cultural memories. Neither national boundaries nor linguistic ones are as self-evidently the right containers for collective memory as the person is for individual memory…[58]

The historian's conclusions therefore determine how the story about that certain collectivity is configured. The same author reasonably concludes that memory is distortion indeed and remembering is also a way of forgetting.[59] For other authors dealing with the topic of "memory", the latter is constituted at the interaction between *deleting* and *preserving*. Once settled that no one can absolutely recompose the past in its entirety, it becomes obvious that memory equals selection (no one questioned the way Nazism or Stalinism engaged some elements of the past to the injury of some others, but the way they took total control over the selected elements)![60] Sometimes inquiry in the past is displaced by the agreement of the majority. Obviously, not all past references are being deleted, but it is allowed to contest tradition in the name of the general will.

Science is a good example of how the gradually absolution from memory's fosterage has been achieved (the sequential waiving of the Antiquity's acquisitions *versus* the scientific boom). Memory is rejected to the detriment of observation, experience, and rationality. Still, when it is embraced, memory is rather tamed, de-energized and set aside. However, memories can be misused. One of the Serbs justifications for their aggression against the other Balkan Slavs made reference to suffering in the past (World War II, the battles with the Ottomans and so on…)[61] In Jacques Le Goff's words, "commemorating the past reaches its climax in the Nazi Germany and fascist Italy" (plus in the Stalinist Russia).

At the end of this short elucidation, one could rightly wonder which are the *good* usages of memory and which are the *bad* ones? Which are the criteria employed to discriminate? Todorov offers us a useful approach: a). questioning the outcomes: ***peace*** vs. ***war***; b). there are many forms of remembering: ***literal*** or ***exemplary***! Of course, it is preferable to encompass exemplarity, filtering this memory through analogy and making it an ***exemplum*** that can be applied to some new actors, circumstances and so on. The literal utilization of this practice enslaves the present to the past. Another example of exemplarity is to hyperbolize your own victimization. "If nobody wants to be a victim, all instead want to have been without really being one; they aspire to the victim status".[62] The allegation is even stronger for groups. This reality can provide them with special rights, inexhaustible advantages (e.g.: "Others have suffered, and me, due to the fact that I was their descendent I took all the moral benefits […] My ascending line made me the concessionaire of genocide, the witness and almost its victim […] By contrast to such an investiture, any other honor seemed to me deplorable or derisory"[63]).

In the end, almost anything can unwittingly distort historical understanding. We shall only take a last variable into consideration and draw a line. To be able ***to influence*** (a broader sense of distortion), "prosecutors must discover how to couch the trial's doctrinal narrative within «genre conventions» already in place within a particularly society".[64] That is also probably and instinctively why facts should be disputed in domestic courts.[65] If there is an inextricable distortion within transitional justice, no matter the paths to be followed, then let us make it acceptable![66]

> 3. "…they may foster delusions of purity and grandeur by encouraging faulty analogies between past and future controversies, readings of the precedent that are often too broad, sometimes too narrow"[67]

There are several questions arising from this assessment. How do past representations influence the present (policies, everyday life, everything…), whether in good or bad? And, how exactly could the future be addressed starting with the experience of the past and its legal interpretation? There are voices contesting the exemplarity of a memorial episode, saying that the particular event is singular (e.g. the Soah). However, how can anyone suggest the uniqueness of an event if it was never compared with anything else? Comparing means ***resemblances*** and ***differences***, not to mention that comparison does not mean "to explain" (or "to excuse").[68] This is indeed the gist of the precedent in legal approaches towards the past's violent episodes. The ICTY for instance, as shown earlier, took the Nuremberg trial as a precedent and decreed upon the fact that human rights are an intangible principle. In brief and in accordance to the *827 Resolution* (through which the ICTY was established), the main goals of the Tribunal were:

- To bring to justice persons responsible for violating international humanitarian law
- To provide justice for victims
- To discourage further perpetration of crimes
- To prevent revisionism, contribute to establishing peace anew and encourage reconciliation in the region of the former Yugoslavia[69]

"Fostering delusions of purity and grandeur" is absolutely something not stipulated in the Tribunal's Statute, but nevertheless there are just people behind the overall transitional process – those conducting the trials and prosecutions or even those composing the new regime or political elite – and of course that "in deciding how to deal with wrongdoers and victims from the earlier regime, the leaders of the incoming regime are often influenced by their ideas about what is required by justice"[70] and "the normative conceptions of justice held by the agents of transitional justice can enter into the explanation of the decisions they reach".[71] Instead, the only abstract criteria to distinguish between just concern and any other opaque motivations, is represented by the concepts of ***impartiality*** and ***universality***. Elster, for instance, refers to this set of criteria as ***reason***.[72] So when debating about what stays behind a "too broad or too narrow reading of the precedent" we might as well appeal to another concept: ***motivations***! As there is and always was a hierarchy of such motivations, it is only the order that varies.[73] Are there such motivations behind the prosecutors of the ICTY as in the ancient Greece? Are there any within the domestic tribunals? These are questions that cannot be answered decisively. It may not be the case with the jurisdiction of the international courts but the interpreters (judges) might have certain motivations (and there is nothing pejorative behind this assertion). All in all, we believe that the analogies with past examples (precedents) are sought mainly to create jurisprudence, and secondly, to assert that the only *motivation* is the *universality* of the principles that are about to be applied and fostered.

> 4. "…they may fail by requiring more extensive admissions of guilt, and more repentance, than most nations are prepared to undertake. This is because efforts at employing law to instill shared memories sometimes require substantial segments of a society to accept responsibility for colossal wrongs and to break completely with cherished aspects of its past"[74]

It is generally assumed that condemning yesterday's oppressors does not only serve the purpose of the rule of law but also to publicly admit the perpetrated facts and assuage the victims' distress.[75] This should remain the main goal and task of the criminal prosecutions as related to the concept of responsibility. We believe that if it would be such a harsh task for a society to accept responsibility for colossal wrongs then that society must have pertained at least to its leader's volition and thoughts in farthest degree. That is really something one cannot evaluate as such. Statements like that of Stacy Sullivan from *The New Republic* are eloquent for the issue in stake – "Whatever else we do in Kosovo, we must face the fact that, to all intents and purposes, many ordinary Serbs are – to paraphrase Daniel Jonah Goldhagen – Milošević's willing executioners."[76] Only if we accept this picture as being true we could fear about the great task that lies ahead as criminal proceedings might produce some outcomes for which the Serbian society is not well prepared.

Furthermore, those who do indeed talk about the Serbs' *collective denial* (e.g. *collective guilt*) are also using ordinary Serbs' opinion on certain events (thru polls and so on): "As one illustration, according to research by the Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute in Belgrade in April 2005, 74 % of the 1,205 respondents said that the Serbs had carried out fewer crimes than the Croats, Albanians and Muslims during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, of whom 24 % also thought that Serbs had perpetrated fewer crimes than the Slovenes."[77] And thus, those who bend their opinion to pointing out the Serbian deep denial and opacity are satisfied to some certain extent. Still, the criminal prosecutions are not going to commit an act of justice for a society that is not yet prepared to cope with the past, because as we previously ascertained, within the *criminal frame*, particular agents cause all problems. No one in The Hague will ever conclude that all the Serbs are guilty and they should recognize it as such, although "so many international magazines, from «Time» to «Nouvelle Observateur», in order to bring war to their customers, set up «the Serbs», far and near, large and small, as the evildoers and «the Muslims» in general as the good ones."[78] If we make an appeal to Sigmund Freud's "screen memory," we might as well infer that people are rather willing to raze traumatic experiences from their minds.[79] Nevertheless, no matter the society's demands or needs, there will always be someone else to pursue with the meta-narratives of that particular polity. But if we read the big-picture in psychoanalytic terms, then it might be preferable for a society to directly face the past experiences and thus move forth.[80]

I will conclude this section by arguing that it always depends on which framework one society would resonate to. For instance, and according to some meaningful liberal principles, the national story should always encompass the harm that the nation had done to others.[81] In contrast, the communitarians argue that the significance of such a narrative matters more for its tellers and listeners.[82] Liberal constitutional patriotism holds that "states should be composed of equal citizens whose ties to one another are purely «civic» in the sense that each acknowledges the authority of a common set of laws and political institutions" and this civic notion would "bracket off questions about shared history and common culture and…

claim that the basis on which citizens associate is purely political."[83] Whether the "newly refreshed" Serbian Republic would follow a liberal path or, alternatively a communitarian approach, it is something that has yet to be estimated and evaluated as such.

5. "…legal efforts to influence collective memory may fail because such memory – almost by nature – arises only incidentally; it cannot be constructed intentionally"[84]

For Michel Foucault, whoever controls people's memory basically controls and administrates their societal dynamics.[85] This assumption must not be taken *ad litteram* but it should suggest a link between memory and its source or creator[86]. But at the interface with any distorting idea about criminal proceedings we consider that another risk is at stake. Mark Osiel's trial hypotheses do indeed have some relevance but in a flawed way. The memory of administrative massacre can really turn out to sometimes be a strategy of electoral legitimacy for the newly installed power[87] or even vindictive acts perpetrated under the smokescreen of a legal trial[88]. So often these breaking up rituals are intended just to obscure guilty continuities between representatives of the former and new regime, not to mention the rigid ties between the past and the present. It always depends on the perspective one might prefer or not. For instance, French historian Henry Rousso sees this memory (i.e. result of transitional justice) as simply the product of propagandistic twists and turns, political instruments intended to legitimize some or by the contrary delegitimize their opponents in a purely emotional, Manicheistic way.[89]

Sometimes this memory can indeed be constructed intentionally (the history of transitions has offered many examples). And even if it is not always the case, the role of criminal investigation over the past atrocities should be sought after somewhere else. As previously stated and following Tzvetan Todorov's narrative, *memory* is a complex process in which *selection* plays a highly significant role. Being an *act of selection*, it can also refer to the subjective pattern of the one (whether human, institution, or court) who is doing the selection. Who decides which elements will become public remembrance and which should be discarded? That the memory of some particular aspect and shape may arise from this "laboratory" without being consistently intended as such by the creator is something also possible. In the process, things can be both intentional[90] and unintentional, whereas some "vernacular memories" of major events could remain quite different from the official historical commemoration.[91] No matter the perspective, memory becomes ever clearer and sustainable as "international memory" of major events. The aftermath could be that facing the past in the Republic of Serbia, as a foreign driven experience (thru ICTY at least), can become such an international story. Still troubles erupt when one has to overlap these international narratives with the local perception over a particular episode. That is why, more than ever, "trialing at home" is a "message" that deserves more consideration and thought in respect to all those afore mentioned.

6. "…even if collective memory can be created deliberately, perhaps it can be done only dishonestly, that is, by concealing this very deliberateness from the intended audience"[92]

We concluded before that the criminal approaches towards a troubled past can or cannot deliberately create a collective memory or the constituent elements of it. This process depends on a variety of factors from the newly empowered elites' willingness and purposes to a more administrative endeavor of those dealing with the effectiveness of trialing. We also concluded that the element of "deliberativeness" can or cannot occur on a background of dishonesty. The intentionality of an act could have something to deal with ethics only when it is presumed that an universal set of rules or values are to be applied on a particular case of transitional justice. Instead, this set of ultimate rules is constantly fluctuating and changing, especially when talking about international criminal law and the use of precedents. In more philosophical terms, "a trial in the aftermath of mass atrocity, then, should mark an effort between vengeance and forgiveness. It transfers the individuals' desires for revenge to the state or official bodies. The transfer cools vengeance into retribution, slows judgment with procedure, and interrupts, with documents, cross-examination, and the presumption of innocence, the vicious cycle of blame and feud."[93] So at least within this perspective, criminal prosecutions tend more to alleviate the Jacobin tendencies existing in any spin-offs of major political upheavals.

Nevertheless, "admitting the influence of power and self-interest upon how a story is being told undermines its persuasiveness, its asserted claim to represent impartial truth, its «truth-effect» in postmodern idiom. It was sheer power, after all, that permitted the Allies to narrow the narrative frame of the Tokyo and Nuremberg trials, excluding the substantial record of war crimes by the accusers as legally irrelevant. And it was precisely the recognition of this power, of how it thus shaped the story, that led to the lingering charge that the trials were no more than «victors' justice»"[94] In this respect, is the ICTY an instrument of the victors' justice? Will these international prosecutions be recognized as a historical episode imposed by power and political indictments? This is something yet to be considered but there is still some evidence about public perception on this issue: a significant percent of the Serbs (might) show aversion towards the ICTY. By 2002, the Strategic Marketing agency presented the following results: four-fifths of the public surveyed felt that the Tribunal was biased against Serbs in general (and nearly forty percent believed that Milošević was acting in defense of Serbia and the Serbian people at his trial in The Hague).[95]

Facing the past remains a complex pattern of different strategies. Its impact on a society and upon the latter's collective narratives is still something to be reconsidered at any point. The present article was an attempt to evaluate such impact in relation with the case of Serbia. The ICTY will conclude its activity by the end of 2014, thus the overall process of transitional justice will be considered closed and complete. In this scenario it seems solely up to the Serbian society whether it chooses a continuation of the internationally triggered facing of the past or it will fall back on more or less comfortable international narratives. In this context, the process appears as an open work in Umberto Eco's coinage, meaning that it allows multiple explanations. However, future researches and publications upon this particular topic should at least rekindle a bit more some healthy impartial debate about this still blurry past of the region…

NOTES

[1] Mary KALDOR, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999.

[2] Tina ROSENBERG, *The Haunted Land*, New York: Vintage Books, 1995; John BORNEMAN, *Settling Accounts. Violence, Justice and Accountability in Postsocialist Europe*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997.

[3] Aleksandar JOKIC, *War Crimes and Collective Wrongdoing*, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2001.

[4] Rachel KERR, *The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. An Exercise in Law, Politics and Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[5] Aleksandar FATIĆ, *Reconciliation via The War Crime Tribunal?*, Brookfield: Ashgate, 2000; Iavor RANGELOV, "International Law and local ideology in Serbia," in *Peace Review*, 16:3, September 2004, 331-337.

[6] The field of transitional justice is still under expansion, especially after 1990, once the communist regimes of Eastern Europe have collapsed. Coming up in the 1980s, this literature began developing, especially under the task of some normative recommendations encompassed in the reports belonging to several international organizations – such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch –, which were evaluating the transitions in Latin America. In the Nineties, this issue is explored as public policies in *transitological studies* which established typologies and made predictions based on some general criteria: Samuel HUNTINGTON, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991; Juan L. LINZ & Alfred STEPAN, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996; John ELSTER, "Coming to terms with the past. A framework for the study of justice in the transition to democracy," in *Archives européennes de sociologie*, nr. 39/1998; John MORAN, "The Communist Torturers of Eastern Europe: Prosecute and Punish or Forgive and Forget?," in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, nr. 27/1994; Herbert KITSCHELT, Zdenka MANSFELDOVA, Gabor TOKA, *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation and Inter-Party Competition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. During the whole period, the term of "transitional justice" is consecrated in various works, such as the ones of Neil KRITZ (*Transitional Justice*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1995) or Ruti TEITEL (*Transitional Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Starting with 2000, the transitological approach towards transitional justice lost ground in favour of detailed studying of each and every country, the specific factors of each transition being considered more relevant than the transitological categories.

[7] Claus OFFE, "Disqualification, Retribution, Restitution: Dilemmas of Justice in Post-Communist Transitions," in *Journal of Political Philosophy*, vol. 1, nr. 1/1993.

[8] See also Vladimir PETROVIĆ, "Gaining Trust Through Facing the Past? Prosecuting War Crimes Committed in the Former Yugoslavia in National and International Legal Context," in *CAS Working Paper Series* No. 4/ 2011.

[9] *The Statute of the International Military Tribunal* – London Convention from 8th of August 1945, Art. 6, lett. C.

[10] *Ibidem*, Art. 8.

[11] Tina ROSENBERG, *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1996, p. xviii.

[12] Working with the English translation from Theodor Adorno('s), *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10, pt. 2, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977, pp. 555-572. This original essay was firstly published in 1959. The translation copyright belongs to Geoffrey Hartman (1986).

[13] Editor's notes, *Ibidem*.

[14] See the Serbian superiority complex amongst the other Slavs in the Balkans.

[15] It involves the willingness to inform upon and the objectiveness (some kind of axiological neutrality) in rationing the information.

[16] It implies choosing the perspective of criminal framework, which is one of the two responsibility patterns: Within the criminal frame, problems are all caused by particular agents, acting in either international or neglectful ways to produce certain outcomes. Or, in the context of war, problems can be ascribed to such extra-agent factors as ancient ethnic hatreds, economic crisis, crowd madness, or irrational bloodlust. The natural consequence would be that most individuals (besides those that are directly involved in the international justice prosecutions) might prefer the criminal framework, the only one that allows exoneration at a collective level. Still, the Serbian case seems to produce, by opposite, precisely the rejection of the criminal interpretation.

[17] The lack in confronting the past's atrocities made the Yugoslavs nurture and mythologize these horrors, "so much so that when the deadly calls of nationalism were sounded in the early 1990s, people responded". See Elizabeth NEUFFER, *The Key to My Neighbor's House: Seeking Justice in Bosnia and Rwanda*, New York: Picador, 2001, pp. 364 – 365.

[18] "Most truth commissions are created at a point of political transition within a country, used either to demonstrate or underscore a break with the past record of human rights abuses, to promote national reconciliation". See Priscilla HAYNER, "Fifteen Truth Commissions – 1974 to 1994: A comparative Study," in *Human Rights Quarterly*, November 1994, vol. 16, no. 4, John Hopkins University Press, pp. 597 – 655.

[19] It goes complementary with the assuming process.

[20] The oldest Serbian NGOs are the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC – founded in 1992: www.hlc-rdc.org) and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (HCHRS – founded in 1994: http://www.helsinki.org.rs/). Although younger, other relevant NGOs are: Belgrade Center for Human Rights (Belgrade Center – founded in 1995: http://www.bgcentar.org.yu), the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (Yucom – founded in 1997: www.yucom.org.rs) and Youth Initiative (YIHR – founded in 2003: www.yihr.org). These are the most important civic players but this not excludes the existence of some other NGOs: The Documentation Center (a project of Serbian media package B92: radio, internet, TV) – it's more like an archive institution about de 1990s events; the Center for Cultural Decontamination (it's not quite a human rights NGO) and so on. These two and many others are acting more as cultural activists. Here are some representative public figures leading the activity of these non-governmental bodies: Nataša Kandić (HLC), Sonja Biserko (HCHRS), Vojin Dimitrijevic (Belgrade Center), Biljana Kovačević-Vučo - (Yucom), and Andrej Nosov (YIHR).

[21] Sonja BISERKO, interview by author, (Belgrade: November 25, 2007, tape recording).

[22] *Ibidem.*

[23] *Ibidem.*

[24] "In the answer to the question of «Who is supposed to look after the documentation linked to the wars in the 1990's», the voice from Serbia is sharp, warning and decisive: «Not the state, by no means! Exclusively the non-governmental sector». The gap between human rights organizations in Serbia and the post- Đinđić Serbia is huge, confidence in the institutions of state (unchanged since Milošević's rule) is nonexistent" – see Goran BOŽIČEVIĆ, "Is Dealing with the Past Slow and Difficult in Our Regions?," in Helena Rill, Tamara Šmidling, Ana Bitoljanu (eds.), *20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change*, Belgrade-Sarajevo: Centre for Nonviolent Action, 2007, p. 131.

[25] To grasp what really is the "European family" and the "required standards", Zbigniew Brzezinski maybe found the most telling formulation: "House has architectural implications. Home has relational implications. The first implies a structure; the second implies a family" (it's all about such concepts like "European house" and "European home"). The first implies the "hard" task of the "catching up" process (frameworks in the economic, legislative, administrative etc. areas) whilst the second one implies the "soft" imponderables (interpersonal bounds, loyalties, values, networking). Sonja Biserko seems to be referring to this particular aspect. This one is much more problematic and harder to be achieved – for further considerations on the compounding elements of the "European home" (*enterprise culture, civic culture, discoursive culture, everyday culture*), see Piotr Sztompka,

"Civilizational Incompetence: The Trap of Post-Communist Societies," in *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, Vol. 22, 1993: 85-95.

[26] Sonja BISERKO, interview by author, (Belgrade: November 25, 2007, tape recording).

[27] This is an institution founded in the 1960s, dealing with the modern history research (twentieth century); in 1960s and 1970s the emphasis was mostly on the WWII period; In 1980s a new generation of historians appeared and since then the Institute's researchers have focused on various topics: history from 1918 and the unification of Yugoslavia to 1990s recent history (still the 1990s were not that prolific since there have been problems with sources and so on and so forth). At the moment, basically, researchers from this Institute are dealing with the socialist period. The Serbs also have *the archive rule of thirty years* (for classified documents).

[28] Ivana DOBRIVOJEVIĆ, interview by author, (Belgrade: November 02, 2007, tape recording).

[29] The subject talks about a poll (2007) where 50-60% of the Serbs thought that Serbian should join NATO.

[30] Aleksander VASILJEVIĆ, "Two Important Letters" – Letter to the Editor, in *Vreme*, Belgrade, November 21, 2002.

[31] Aleksandar LOJPUR, "Kostunica's Commission" – Letter to the Editor, in *Vreme*, Belgrade, October 10, 2002.

[32] I. LUKAČEVIĆ, "Who Should Be Ashamed" – Letter to the Editor, in *Vreme*, Belgrade, October 17, 2002.

[33] Vesna NIKOLIC-RISTANOVIC, "Specificities of socio-historical context and victimization in Serbia and their impact for the creation of the model of truth and reconciliation", in *Temida*, 4, 2002; Vesna NIKOLIC-RISTANOVIC, "Possibilities for Restorative Justice in Serbia", in L. Woldgrave (ed.), *Positioning Restorative Justice*, Devon: Villain Publishers, 2003.

[34] Vesna NIKOLIC-RISTANOVIC, "Truth, reconciliation and victims in Serbia: the process so far," in Paper presented at the New Horizons for Victimology, XI th International Symposium on Victimology, Stellenbosch, South Africa, 13 – 18 July 2003.

[35] *Ibidem*.

[36] "The largest criticism Serbs have of Facing the Past is that it is too absolute in its condemnation of the nation, particularly in comparison to its treatment of other post-Yugoslav and Western states. Serbs also suffered during the conflicts, and the critics resent that Facing the Past does not acknowledge this. The project is seen as a unilateral, one-sided condemnation of the Serbs, which places the entire blame for the wars on Serbs shoulders (Dacić). Serbs must be counted as victims too, and «as much as victims as are Muslims of Srebrenica, citizens of Sarajevo, Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo» (Dacić). Facing the Past seems to its critics as a black-and-white exercise in which the Serbs are always located in the black, though many deserve sympathy

much more than condemnation" – Margaret DARIN HAGAN, *Facing the Past in Post-Milošević Serbia. The Public Relations of Post-Conflict Human Rights Activism*, Master of Arts thesis, Budapest: CEU, 2004, Chapter V, note 5; with quotes from Dr. Živojin Dacić, "Legitimate Denial" – Letter to the Editor, in *Vreme*, Belgrade, September 19, 2002.

[37] Natascha ZUPAN, "Facing the Past and Transitional Justice in Countries of Former Yugoslavia," in Martina Fischer (ed.), *Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ten Years after Dayton*, Münster: Lit Verag, 2006, p. 328.

[38] In 2002 ICTY has already indicted thirty-two persons of which almost half were believed to live in FRY. The cooperation with ICTY, taking steps with the Dayton Accords concerning the end of Serbian support to Republika Srpska and respecting human rights and the rule of law, were the major conditions in order to get any financial support from the U.S. Thus, in April 2002 "the FRY Parliament passed a law allowing extradition of indictees to the ICTY […] On May 21, Secretary of State [Colin] Powell certified that the FRY was cooperating with the ICTY, principally «on the basis of new laws that have been passed in Belgrade, voluntary surrenders that have taken place, and indictments that have been issued to those who remain still outside the jurisdiction of the tribunal»" – "U.S. Pressure on Serbia to Transfer ICTY Indictees," in *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (Jul., 2002), pp. 729-730.

Such monetary conditionings were being used quite often to compel Belgrade on permanent cooperation with ICTY. For example, "on March 31 [2004], Secretary [Colin] Powell declined to certify that Serbia and Montenegro had met its obligations with respect to the ICTY, thus blocking the disbursal of about $26 million (the sanction does not apply to certain kinds of assistance, such as that for humanitarian purposes or to promote democracy in municipalities). In particular, the State Department called upon Serbia and Montenegro to arrest and transfer to the ICTY Ratko Mladić, the former Bosnian Serb army commander." – "Suspension of U.S. Aid to Serbia and Montenegro for Noncooperation with ICTY," in *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 98, No. 4 (Oct., 2004), pp. 850-851.

[39] Jonathan I. CHARNEY, "International Criminal Law and the Role of Domestic Courts," in *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Jan., 2001), p. 120.

[40] *Ibidem*, p. 122.

[41] *Ibidem.*

[42] *Ibidem.*

[43] *Ibidem*, p. 123.

[44] *Ibidem.*

[45] Gerry SIMPSON, *Law, War and Crime. War Crimes Trials and the Reinvention of International Law*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007, p. 50.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 53.

[47] *Ibidem*, note 20 (Chapter 2), p. 183.

[48] Mark OSIEL, *Mass Atrocity, Collective Memory, and the Law*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publ., 1997.

[49] *Ibidem*, p. 7.

[50] See note 27.

[51] See note 47.

[52] By "Serbia" we understand the Serbian political leadership – as a national decision-making corpus. In this perspective even if the rest of the Serbian polity would have been – let's say, pro-Western, still the political leadership should be entitled to be referred to when talking about the Republic of Serbia (as the agents of an independent state in the international arena). No one should see Serbia apart from its leaders. That is because they act in the name of Serbia and even more they were elected through legal democratic procedures. So, more or less, they represent the will of Serbian people (how Serbs are being manipulated by media, how their perceptions are constructed in a more complex network of different variables – this is the concern of a distinct analysis).

[53] Both the ICTY and the ICTR are operating with the *presumption of innocence* and the representatives of the same institutions are willing and impelled to take into account even those illegally apprehended indictees (see "Todorovic" or "Barayagwiza" cases: Thomas HENQUET, "Accountability for Arrests: The Relationship between the ICTY and NATO's NAC and SFOR," in Gideon Boas & William A. Schabas (eds.), *International Criminal Law Developments in the Case Law of the ICTY*, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003, pp. 113-155). So these two courts are not acting in a Jacobin spirit or manner. Everything is about procedures, documentation, proofs and so on. Therefore defendants have juridical rights as in common courts.

[54] Mark Osiel, *Ibidem*, p. 7.

[55] *Ibidem*, p. 80.

[56] Bruce ACKERMAN, *The Future of Liberal Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 69-99; Jon ELSTER, "Moral Dilemmas of Transitional Justice," in Peter Baumann & Monika Betzler (eds.), *Practical Conflicts: New Philosophical Essays*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 302.

[57] Eric Posner & Adrian Vermeule, "Transitional Justice as Ordinary Justice," in *Working Paper nr. 40*, University of Chicago Law School, March 2003, p. 40, apud.....

[58] Michael SCHUDSON, "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory," in Daniel L. Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 347, *apud.* Mark Osiel, *Ibidem*, p. 83.

[59] SCHUDSON, *Ibidem*, p. 348.

[60] Tzvetan TODOROV, *Abuzurile memoriei*, Timișoara: Amarcord, 1999, passim.

[61] *Ibidem.*

[62] *Ibidem*, p. 55.

[63] Alain FINKIELKRAUT, *Le Juif imaginaire*, Paris : Seuil, 1980, p. 18.

[64] Mark OSIEL, *Ibidem*, p. 85.

[65] See note 51.

[66] "Every society… has its own stock of substantive narratives, which represent typical human behavior patterns known and understood… This is the form in which social knowledge is acquired and stored, and which provides the framework for understanding particular stories presented to us in discourse" – see Bernard S. JACKSON, "Narrative Theories and Legal Discourse," in Christopher Nash (ed.), *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy and Literature*, Routledge, 1990, pp. 23, 30.

[67] Mark Osiel, p. 7.

[68] Tzvetan TODOROV, *Ibidem.*

[69] Nenad VUKOSAVLJEVIĆ, "One Injustice cannot be Made by Causing a New One," in Helena Rill, Tamara Šmidling, Ana Bitoljanu, *20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change*, Belgrade-Sarajevo: Centre for Nonviolent Action, 2007, pp. 149-150.

[70] Jon ELSTER, *Closing the Books. Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 80.

[71] *Ibidem.*

[72] *Ibidem.*

[73] E.g. "motives" in ancient Greece: the good of the *polis*; taking revenge on an enemy; pursuing the self-interest; envy…

[74] Mark OSIEL, p. 7.

[75] Frédéric GROS, "Les quatre foyers de sens de la peine," in Antoine Garapon & Frédéric Gros & Thierry Pech, *Et ce sera justice: punir en démocratie*, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2001, p. 107.

[76] Stacy SULLIVAN, "Milošević's Willing Executioners," in *The New Republic*, 220:19(1999): 28.

[77] Janine Natalya CLARK, "Collective Guilt, Collective Responsibility and the Serbs," in *East European Politics & Societies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2008, pp. 671-672.

[78] Peter HANDKE, *A Journey to the Rivers: Justice for Serbia*, New York: Viking, 1997, p. 76.

[79] Mark OSIEL, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

[80] See the note XIX.

[81] Mark OSIEL, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[82] *Ibidem.*

[83] David MILLER, *On Nationality*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995 (p. 189), *apud.* Mark Osiel, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[84] Mark OSIEL, p. 7.

[85] *Ibidem*, p. 210.

[86] *Ibidem*, p. 212 – Note 13 (Chapter 7): "Fifteen U.S. states, including California, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Florida, have legislation mandating or strongly recommending instruction concerning the Holocaust in their public schools".

[87] See the Romanian transitional case – Ceauşescu's almost sketchily retribution to death penalty!

[88] Claus OFFE, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[89] Henry ROUSSO, *The Haunting Past: History, Memory and Justice in Contemporary France*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, p. 38.

[90] See also the case German Democratic Republic where the communist officials had constantly and progressively affirmed that their citizens bore no responsibility for the Holocaust (whilst capitalism and fascism are to be blamed).

[91] Mark OSIEL, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-222.

[92] *Ibidem*, pp. 7-8.

[93] Martha MINOW, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness,* Boston: Beacon Press, 1998, p. 26.

[94] Mark OSIEL, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

[95] Bojan TONCIC, "Serbia: Milosevic Trial Grips Nation," in *IWPR Balkan Crisis Report # 318*, 15 February 2002.

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Editura Academiei, București, 2010
City Lights. Despre experiență la Walter Benjamin, Humanitas, București, 2014

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS AND OLD PHOTOS. *IMAGE* IN WALTER BENJAMIN'S WORKS

Introduction

There are very few places where Walter Benjamin makes direct references to Hieronymus Bosch. Apart from an excerpt from *Pariser Brief II* (*Malerei und Photographie*) (1936) and another from *Passagen Werk* (on Baudelaire), other notes only appear in his drafts and annotations on his essays about Kafka and Flaubert, the latter never completed. Even so, his works evoke the figure of the Dutch painter many a time in his writings. The first instance regards the physiognomic representation in caricature:

> So ist es bei den großen Karikaturisten gewesen, deren politisches Wissen ihrer physiognomischen Wahrnehmung sich nicht weniger tief eingesenkt hat, als die Erfahrung des Tastsinns der Raumwahrnehmung. Den Weg haben Meister wie Bosch, Hogarth, Goya, Daumier gewiesen.[1]

Then, Flaubert refers to Bosch and the way he grasps "der Anheimfall des Lebendigen an die tote Materie."[2] Finally, there are other two places where Benjamin mentions the painter in order to justify his representation of *monstrosity*: James Ensor's mask "chamber" and Kafka's "demonology."[3]

In the following, we will attempt a discussion on the manner in which Benjamin construes *image* in some of its more important occurrences: on the one hand, illustrations in children's books, and photography and moving pictures as benchmarks of mechanical reproduction, on the other. Of course, these cases are not direct references to Bosch. In a subjective reading though, Benjamin meets the Dutch painter. The following lines give the key to this possible reading. It does not aim to identify traces of 15th century artistic imagination in the illustrations Benjamin mentions and analyses. Also, it does not aim to investigate the technique of baroque painting in contrast to "mechanically reproduced" art. Rather, the similarities between Bosch's work and the pictures Benjamin is studying belong to a metaphysics of representation and its theological stakes. In attempting such a reading, we assume that this metaphysics of image involves a critique of idolatry and thus a reappraisal of materiality as an ultimate, irreducible reference of Creation. The metaphysics of representation we will explore below entails a theological amendment to traditional theories of aesthetics.

It is important to make a methodological note. The present approach is not strictly historical, nor systematic. It starts from an imaginary interaction between two interpretations of art: the one by Marin Tarangul on Bosch,[4] and Benjamin's notes on the illustrations in various editions of children's books (together with his opinions on photography in *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie,* 1931). Apparently, there is an underlying principle of "critique" in both cases, which Benjamin formulated in a 1933 preface to *Kunstwissenschaftlichen Forschungen* (Berlin, 1931) and which revisits an issue raised in *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften* (1922):

> Sie hätte mehr von der Erkenntnis zu erwarten, daß der Bedeutungsgehalt der Werke, je entscheidender sie sind um desto unscheinbarer und inniger, an ihren Sachgehalt gebunden ist.[5]

The attention given to the insignificance of the object (*Andacht zum Unbedeutenden*) becomes essential: it is the only way of understanding the relationship between its material constitution and its historical expression. To Benjamin, it is important that meaning, in the former case, and the messianic power, in the latter, do not lend themselves to sight, but rather lie in the shadow of the detail or in the dormant content of memory.[6] This is important because of the way in which the aesthetic object is assumed, but also as an issue in the philosophy of history. It is the *power of the detail* that will make both interpretations possible and interconnected.

Marin Tarangul about Hieronymus Bosch and the naturalness of the fantastic

According to Tarangul, in Bosch's work the expressiveness of the fantastic resides in the fact that, despite his "intention" of denouncing the moral (even ontological) decay of the world, he does not employ obvious, elitist artistic means, with generalizing symbols or direct references:

> Bosch does not attempt to present the concept of death or the idea of ruin; he shows what causes death, the ways in which one can die, or the visage of destruction and the human deeds that make of it a tangible experience.[7]

Fantastic creatures, improbable characters springing from all around the painting, do not embody metaphysical typologies, which annuls any pattern of allegorical interpretation. Still, we do recognize a moral thread in the composition, it does reveal the corruption of the world, the lack of meaning in a sinful existence. How is a representation possible under the circumstances? Tarangul suggests here that generality possesses a certain type of physiognomy perfectly recognizable through its mundane elements but at the same time foreign to this world:

> With Bosch, the creatures that appear are fantastic only because they have no visible counterpart. But they have a real counterpart; for though not seen it is imagined by all our senses concomitantly.[8]

Thus, a new domain of visibility opens before us beyond the physical one. Artistic representation as Bosch envisages it is conditioned by the possibility of fall, of history as erosion and vice. In Tarangul's view, the real but invisible nature of Bosch's characters comes not from their morphology, but their syntax, i.e. the way in which composition is negotiated. In a traditional metaphysical language, Bosch's creatures are fluid syntheses of various *determinations* which give the *general* various *individual* forms and turn the law into recognizable matter: "we recognize the material form of the law."[9]

It is difficult to define the theoretical basis of such a representation. Tarangul succeeds in describing it as a process of cooperation among many "material qualities" of objects and characters while their "metabolism" takes place on a spiritual level. But the material and the spiritual are not connected in an alchemic or esoteric manner. Neither is it psychological or drug-induced, as some commentators suggested. The real nature of the passage between the two ontological levels can be observed through a gazing technique ("the rapid movement of perceptions"[10]) where perceptions become less random and their fluidity is perceived as a transcendental support of matter (its spiritual metamorphosis), or through a magical "reasoning" (revealing the lack of meaning in the world and the fantastic nature of existence found in the reversed logic of carnival). The transcendental and the law are thus well represented in their very absence: the ruin of matter, the frenzy of forms and the disorder of forms depict a world where meaning is missing.

An illustrative principle of composition is found in Bosch's late works. In *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (aprox. 1500), now at El Escorial, Tarangul notices that "Christ no longer forms the centre of attention. Each passion seems to spend itself separately, isolated from centre, and Christ in the centre is only a reminder of the theme. The characters independently satisfy the hubris that possesses them. Christ, His face not very prepossessing as if belonging to that negative world Himself, is surrounded by people turning their face away from Him."[11]

The evil becomes syntactically radicalized precisely through the indifference the characters display towards Him – the assumed source of meaning. Tarangul comments: bestiality is represented through the very absence of its intentionality, as it does not aim at a specific target, but proliferates from its own nature. The man in the top left corner (Bosch's self-portrait, according to both Jan Mosmans and Tarangul) contemplates the evil in its glory while keeping the key of interpretation: he looks on the mad show where the Meaning is crowned with thorns, but his look pours melancholy, not understanding.

Bosch's painting technique, according to Tarangul, allows the representation of oddity lurking behind any natural form ("weird, but natural") as it loses its meaning and original imprint of divinity. Such a composition is based on the transfer (as Benjamin will call the principle of such a physiognomy) of determinations, and on the flow of matter in invisible patterns and directions. Indirectly, these patterns of meaning and directions in Bosch's paintings become characters in their own right. The image is but a ruin and, in order to decode it, we first need to decode this aspect, but not in the sense of looking for a transcendental meaning or law in a symbolic-allegorical representation, but rather by looking at the frantic materiality of its characters, the "natural" deconstruction of nature herself. Bosch's monsters are not symbols because they are organic constructs. The circus of their interaction resists any "suspicious" reading. Thus, it would be a mistake to hastily identify a list of concepts and meanings in his painting.

Having in mind a later reference to Benjamin, this is a good place to draw two conclusions. First, the meaning of a painting resides in the quality of the detail ("minute precision of the detail") and not in the whole, the characters, or the composition. As Tarangul remarks, Bosch uses the technique of *framing* used nowadays in cinematography in order to emphasize the detail, the play and dual character of determinations. Secondly, the metaphysics of such a drive begets a world where the evil, abnormality, oddity, or vice are not negative counterparts of a heavenly world, but result precisely from the way the latter functions. Excess corrupts the principle of creation to the point of monstrosity: "Nature is denuded into skeleton-like forms as if it had been buried. There is a massive, unruffled stillness everywhere, like a graveyard recalling the passage of death. In other words, the demoniacal is a secretion of nature in its abnormality."[12] In the same way, the fantastic world Benjamin creates will not originate in a world different and estranged from ours, but from its very recesses that deconstruct its forms, outline, and all recognizable boundaries.

We will briefly stop at another moment in the history of art in anticipation of Benjamin's vision. It is necessary to tackle the issue of the place the subject has in such a metaphysics of image. The ontology of ruin is found inside an experience, and thus in relation to a subject who is not just the poor character accountable for the damage his sin is causing the world. His place is well defined in the painting, he is present in the story to which he gives a dialectic incipit. As we have mentioned, at least in *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, Bosch's self-portrait embodies an onlooker in melancholic contemplation. In other paintings, as Tarangul argues, it is the fool who announces the madness of the picture. It does not only present the reality of cosmic decay; at the same time, it reflects the conscience of the person who confesses this truth. Whether it is the painter himself, or the viewer, he is involved in the cosmic drama narrated in shape and color. Otherwise Bosch would be reduced to a mere aloof moralist who happens to use the language of painting. But if the metaphysical perspective were to be taken as such, then his paintings do more than just communicate something about the world: they create this world. The traditional difference between subject and object subsides in an experience whose setting is the painting itself.[13]

Victor Ieronim Stoichiță explains this starting from Manet's work.[14] Beginning with the 17th century, he argues, the *gaze* becomes an important theme in painting. If before this point we can only speak of "assisting/echoing characters" designed to guide the perception of the painting towards its main focus, Caravaggio's *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* (1608) brings forth the secondary elements. The onlookers become participants in the plot. Impressionism will exploit this thematic reorientation to the full. In *The Railway* by Manet (1872-1873), "the viewer eclipses the character; the latter is only a representative, a mere figure, of the viewer."[15] The character facing the iron rail, the girl peering through the thick steam, is a transposition of the viewer. The observation point for this painting is no longer outside it, but included in it. Stoichiță concludes that "We now have a definite specular experience where the representation as a whole is mirrored."[16] Manet's *Self-Portrait* (1879) is a clear illustration of such a mirroring since we find in the painting the filter of the mirror that makes representation possible.[17]

The painting is thus "speculative" as it describes not an object, but an experience, a relationship between a subject and an object. This aspect is present in Benjamin's work as well together with other elements depicted from Bosch's fantastic ontology. These two hallmarks in the history of art, which Benjamin nearly overlooked, will provide an interesting starting point in our metaphysical discussion of image as announced above.

Illustrated books. The child's metaphysical gaze

To Benjamin, the child represents a separate metaphysical "character". His experience illustrates a privileged experience of the world and historical assertion: "Benjamin sees the child as having a privileged proximity to, and special tactile appreciation of, the urban environment. The child sees the city 'at first sight', with a gaze unencumbered by the tedium of familiarity and habit, with a receptivity and acuity the recovery of which occupies Benjamin in *One-Way Street* and in his later reflections on Berlin."[18] Childhood has a magical way of relating to the world and activates a mimetic function of knowledge where objects lose from their evident, functional appearance and engage in unusual relationships that are foreign to adults. That is why the illustrations in the children's books preserve a familiarity with other areas of daily life such as the attic with its old treasures, the complex mechanisms of glorious 19th century technology, or construction sites. In the latter case, the adult "learns" to see beyond them: the useless junk of the past, the technological progress or the final stage of the construction, the building "as it should be" and which obliterates the construction process as an *an und für sich*. Adults are only able to look hastily, in a reductionist manner and driven by the Hegelian strive for concepts (*Bestrebung des Begriffs*). But children have a candid gaze, sensitive to surprising familiarities and a syntax that marks the path to the Motherland, the origin of all things.[19] Childish perception comprises the entire "ontological" construct that supports the old magic and its power.[20]

Moreover, from a historical point of view, children have been seen by Benjamin as saviors of the past. A series of fragments from *Berliner Chronik* and *Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert* illustrate this. It's the manner in which historical monuments are perceived, e.g. Siegersäule or Friedrich Wilhelm's statues in Tiergarten. Monuments freeze historical time and represent symbols of oblivion, not memory. The victory of Prussia over the French army, immortalized in the Victory Column, becomes an irony after the Versailles treaty.[21] Inscriptions in the urban blueprint, the monuments are what writing is to the truth-searching soul: a vehicle and a way to forget. The child does not recognize the significance of historical events. To him, the pedestal is more important than the very statue as the former comes first before his eyes. Material details such as the soldiers' uniforms or the bishops' vestments in the background, as well as the swarms of visitors fill the perception of that moment. Thus, in the absence of an abstract meaning or a precise historical reference, the child's gaze focuses on the reality of the monument as ruin and not as celebration of history. The historicity of the world is recognized unconsciously but genuinely, as an ontological decay, as a sign of wear or punishment and not as a principle "reifying" the past. Children, more than revolutionaries or dreamers, know how to wait among the ruins for the coming of the Messiah.

In this context, children's books are complex historical and metaphysical exercises. Given that Benjamin views children as embodying a magical experience, the books written for them are in fact phenomenological descriptions of this universe of spirit. The child's play, mentioned above only in passing, is aptly illustrated in these books. But another consequence of these illustrations is that they pose a radical problem about the very idea of representation. The question at this point is not *What can be represented in children's books?*, but *What is representation so that it may find a place in these books?*.

The first precaution Benjamin takes is not to read children's literature with the adult's concern for meaning. In a 1924 text, *Alte vergessene Kinderbücher,* following a review to the homonymous book by collector Karl Horbrecker, the author mocks one of the most widespread genres of the so-called children's literature – the fable. An educational and moralizing text, the fable is the favored didactic instrument during the Enlightenment. However, children seem to show very little interest for it, which indicates a pedagogical failure as Horbrecker shows:

> Wir dürfen auch bezweifeln, daß die jugendlichen Leser sie der angehängten Moral wegen schätzten oder sie zur Schulung des Verstandes benutzten, wie es bisweilen kinderstubenfremde Weisheit vermutete und vor allem wünschte. Die Kleinen freuen sich am menschlich redenden und vernünftig handelnden Tier sicherlich mehr als am gedankenreichsten Text.[22]

The miracle is not in the meaning just as, to children, stories are not episodes in the history of spirit, or instances of universal wisdom, but rather the ruin and debris of it (*Abfallprodukt*). Specialization, i.e., the intention of writing for children only, of conveying a message designed to "come to their level" is misguided from the beginning:[23] play, amateurism, hazard, or sometimes the author's melancholy can make a book more than childish – i.e., authentic in its address.

Illustrations and children's books have parallel histories. In anticipation, we may say that, while the story evolves away from the authorial moralizing intention, the picture is freed from its representational status and its largely pedagogical function of revealing reality. Illustrations in children's books can be somewhat "inauthentic" in that they are subordinated to, and mimic the word. Benjamin mentions, among others, Comenius' *Orbis Pictus* (1658) and *Bilderbuch für Kinder* (1792-1847) by F. J. Bertuch. It is in the 19th century that the picture gains its independence of the word and, consequently, of the world:

> Die Kinderbücher dienen ja nicht dazu, ihre Betrachter in die Welt der Gegenstände, Tiere und Menschen, in das sogenannte Leben unmittelbar einzuführen. Ganz allmählich findet deren Sinn im Außen sich wieder und nur in dem Maße wie es als ihnen gemäßes Inneres ihnen vertraut wird. Die Innerlichkeit dieser Anschauung steht in der Farbe und in deren Medium spielt das träumerische Leben sich ab, das die Dinge im Geiste der Kinder führen.[24]

What comes to the forefront now is color.

To Benjamin, color is the means used to translate the world into children's imagination. Here, things are visible not in their traditional definitions, but in the scope of their potential and surprising relationships they create outside their technical physiology. Absolute color (*absolute Farbe*) provides images with an indefinite outline as the border between two colors is not discrete but rather continuous, with hues leading from one color into another:

> [die kindliche Auffassung der Farbe] sie erhebt diese Bildung zu einer geistigen, da sie die Gegenstände nach ihrem farbigen Gehalt anschaut und folglich nicht isoliert, sondern sich die zusammenhängende Anschauung der Phantasiewelt in ihnen sichert.[25]

The knowledge the child acquires through color resembles heavenly knowledge in its intricate pattern of original connections between things. In the following, we will try to show how this reference becomes a modality of memory and of positioning in history. For the time being, from an "epistemological" point of view, this is a special relationship between subject and object which Benjamin invokes in other texts as well (e.g. the hashish-induced perception, or the so-called "physiognomic" knowledge typical of *flaneur*) – the transference/colportage (*Kolportage*). Thus, traces and determinations migrate from one thing to the other with a deconstructive effect on their identity which results in an ontological continuity. This process enables us to contemplate the world as a receiver of revelation. As revelation cannot be contained in distinct things taken separately, it resides in the space between things, in their differences, in the intrinsic negativity of the world. The original wholeness of revelation[26] is recaptured by a contemplation at the surface of the world, which bears the traces of the divine unity of forms: "Denn nirgends ist so wie in der Farbe die sinnliche Kontemplation zuhause."[27] A vivid illustration of this is the magical topography in *Abendländischen tausendundeinen Nacht* by J. P. Lyser, where a fantastic Europe is suggested by a collection of obscure tiny German towns.

For the time being, we need to mention one more text to support the metaphysics of this image: *Der Regenbogen* (1915),[28] a fictional dialogue on color and the "epistemological mechanisms" of fantasy. Benjamin defines the role of color in the perception of innocence (*Unschuld*) of the world by putting aside the boundaries and singleness of things which are justified in a metaphysics of substance. Color is not substance (*Substanz*), but mere characteristic (*Eigenschaft*), or infinite determination. More than that, through color, the world gives itself to a receptivity unlimited by some form or intellectual law:

> Diese Empfängnis aus Phantasie ist keine Empfängnis des Vorbilds sondern der Gesetze selbst. Sie würde den Dichter seinen Gestalten selbst vereinigen im Medium der Farbe. Ganz aus Phantasie schaffen, hiege göttlich sein. Es hieße ganz aus den Gesetzen schaffen, unmittelbar und frei von der Beziehung auf sie durch Formen.[29]

Thus, if we put aside the synthesizing functions of the intellect and so convert the concept into a mere effect instead of principle of knowledge, then we open the way to a strange Neo-Platonism: color appears as simplicity of origin and its infinite multiplication. Emanation is now a hue movement, a varying intensity, a deviation from the initial order of the rainbow. Moreover, color guides the gaze on finite things: color gives them a face, a physiognomy. It is not the outline that gives things their face and identity, but the contrast against a background.[30] Thus, their identity is spatial and exclusive. The line separates and identifies. By contrast, color shows the object and brings it to the foreground. Color does not delineate, but gives shape to a face. It is an innocent appearance, devoid of intentionality that might disrupt the primordial harmony. Children's books, as Benjamin suggests at the end of the dialogue, are the solid proof of this innocent nature,[31] just like their magic games which, in fact, belong to the same metaphysics of color, faces and hues.

If, to a child, the color of illustrations translates a metaphysics of the original continuity of the world, black and white illustrations play a complementary epistemological role: "Das farbige Bild versenkt die kindliche Phantasie träumerisch in sich selbst. Der schwarz-weiße Holzschnitt, die nüchterne prosaische Abbildung führt es aus sich heraus."[32] Color entails a sensitivity for a "pure receptivity" of the world, whereas black and white illustrations draw the viewer right into the universe of the image. As Benjamin notes in his piece *Aussicht ins Kinderbuch* (1926), the incompleteness of these illustrations calls for an imaginative addition to them: they invite the word, or rather it invites the gazing child to the word. As the illustration in the book needs its word (*Aufforderung zur Beschreibung*), it can be compared to a hieroglyph. Some considerations in *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1925) are illustrative. In the section regarding allegory, Benjamin considers hieroglyphic writing as the most evident link between modern people and the ancient: the enigmatic writing of the Egyptians inspires in the Romantic soul a "mysticism of nature" where writing is not related to the sounds the words are made of, but to the very things. The hieroglyph is an image of things (*Dingbilder*) after being an image of the divine logos thousands of years before (*Abbild der göttliche Ideen*). To understand the unchanging and eternal character of the world is to have access to the secret knowledge of sacred art. This revelation though does not come in the form of a statement or spiritual symbol, but it deconstructs either of these:

> Das Bild im Feld der allegorischen Intuition ist Bruchstück, Rune. Seine symbolische Schönheit verflüchtigt sich, da das Licht der Gottesgelahrtheit drauf trifft. Der falsche Schein der Totalität geht aus. Denn das Eidos verlischt, das Gleichnis geht ein, der Kosmos darinnen vertrocknet.[33]

Hieroglyphic image does not contain a symbolic, but an allegoric message. In other words, it requires going through an infinite network of encryption and reference that comes from the power of a meaning and is part of the world of magical similarities. With black and white illustrations, the child is awoken to these allegorical similarities of the world and the magical reading of the runes.

Illustrations, both color and black and white, form a separate universe of childhood, albeit a separate metaphysical instance where things exit their daily "reified" functional routine so that they can speak of their own origin. Thus, the child's knowledge becomes a form of memory. In *Zu einer Arbeit über die Schönheit farbiger Bilder in Kinderbüchern* (1918/1921), Benjamin equates reading illustrated children's literature with Platonic anamnesis: "Sie [die Kinder] lernen in der Erinnerung an ihre erste Anschauung."[34] The transferral of perception coming from pure color on the one hand, or the network of allegorical similarities of monochrome images on the other, enable the child to gain knowledge of a part of the world by generalizing on significant detail. In his imagination, a cloud is recognizable because of its shape which, just a minute ago, was running in the field as a rabbit, while the cold hues in the big urban buildings are seen every time in a different manner: now in strong contrast to a spring view, then in a grey monotony of winter. All these modalities of looking cause a deconstruction of the conceptual identity of things and a reconstruction of their appearance as a face saturated with fluid features. The child's memory-based knowledge does not seek (*sehnsuchtslosen Erinnerung*) the field of ideas or primary knowledge. Memory is a continuous flow of knowledge. The child's experience (*Erfahrung*) reflects this continuity in the way he reconstructs disparate details into a physiognomy. It is not immediate, nor is it a form of synthesis. In this sketch, Benjamin notes that one of the important principles in the analysis of children's literature by Heinrich Hoffmann is "[die] Ablehnung jedes synthetischen Prinzips,"[35] or the absence of the concept as principle in learning about the object. Also, the immediate character of the experience is denied because, in both cases, the experience of memory is compressed in its final point – the awareness of an end-result reached too soon and, "therefore" so to say, too slowly. In children's experience, just like in the case of the idler[36] (mentioned in another place), there is no rush for the end-result. Memory unfolds the world in an authentic, unlimited manner, comparable to another example of waiting: the waiting for the coming of the Messiah is just as genuine when people are not constantly watching for signs or maintaining a hysterical fear about the end.

If we translate this into a theory of image in children's books, we may say that such a theory implies a modality of deconstruction of representation, a mechanism of identification/separation of objects and, at the same time, their symbolic character. Outlines, color, and forms are reconstructed by the laws of nuances and similarities, and the reader is, in a "real" way, a character in the image. We will come back to show how hyper-reality[37] as it is reflected in children's literature goes beyond the idolatrous representation of the world and enables a fantastic universe not strange to the one in Bosch's paintings.

Another example of Benjamin's theory on image is photography. The main concern he expresses in his discussion of photography though is different from his views on children's literature. In this case, it is not about constructing a face of the world, but rather of assuming its memory. The political implications of photography will be left in background for the benefit of its historical status. The main question becomes now, *How can memory be represented?* Finally, another path will take us from this answer back to Bosch: experience itself, and not the idea of it, is under scrutiny because of the relationship between photography and reality.

Photography. On memory and aura

Published in *Die literarische Welt* in 1931, the piece *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie*[38] announces some of the important points in *Passagen-Werk*, as well as his far more famous article *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (1935/1939). In this position, the small account on the beginnings of photography presents an important thematic node regarding the relationship between art and technology, image and its reproducible character, and the political relationship between the "new" arts and their public.

For the current approach, it is important to remember an observation Benjamin makes at the beginning of the text. It is about the difference between the way we perceive the subject of a painting versus the subject of a photograph. In the former, the interest for the represented character fades in time. The painter's art will remain with the public, and painting testifies of this art, and not of its own subject. But in photography, its subject transcends the artist's technique:

> in jenem Fischweib aus New Haven, das mit so lässiger, verführerischer Scham zu Boden blickt, bleibt etwas, was im Zeugnis für die Kunst des Photographen Hill nicht aufgeht, etwas, was nicht zum Schweigen zu bringen ist, ungebärdig nach dem Namen derer verlangend, die da gelebt hat, die auch hier noch wirklich ist und niemals gänzlich in die *Kunst* wird eingehen wollen.[39]

Unlike Beaudelaire, in the early days of photography, Benjamin believes that technology can create a magical impression of reality and a depth that painting is unable to convey. Photography is the image of a past captured in the contingency of an instant. The optic unconscious of the image (*Optisch-Unbewußten*) generates the future fascination for the represented fragment of life. The detail becomes more significant than the whole, the insignificant instant more relevant than the one carefully chosen to immortalize history. Benjamin questions the debate on the relationship between photography and reality as making/taking even before it is clearly formulated. Photography creates a world which is real and imaginary at the same time, like in dreams just about to break into waking (*Wachträumen*). Benjamin uses the same comparison to describe one of his central concepts – dialectic image[40] (*Dialektisches Bild*). Even in the early days of photography, the magical effect (which will disappear) is given by the ephemeral captured for eternity, the central detail, and the unveiled anonymity. In the anonymous picture (1850) selected by Benjamin, the folds in Schelling's coat are immortalised for eternity together with the coat's owner.

Early photographs, such as those of David Octavius Hill, preserve this role of magical revelation of traces, details, gazes of the past. The slow technology and long exposure time contribute to the "fantastic" effect of representation because of a visible continuity in the nuances of light, "absoluten Kontinuum von hellstem Licht zu dunkelstem Schatten,"[41] a reminiscence of the *mezzotint* and premise for the aura effect (auratische Erscheinung). The advancement of photographic technology will eliminate this effect. An example is the studio photograph of the child Kafka.

The studio creates an artificial setting and proposes a fake photographic intention, which results in a less-than-real impression upon the viewer. Its stillness and conventionality display a search which reality can no longer match but technology tries to. Commercial/advertising photography, just like its programmatic opposite "art" photography, eliminates the auratic effect of reality: the former falsifies it, the latter refuses it.

But how is this effect to be understood? "Aura" is difficult to define in an unvarying manner in Benjamin's writings. As Miriam Bratu Hansen notes,

> Benjamin's deployment—and remarkably longtime avoidance—of the term *aura* is informed by the very field of discourse from which he sought to disassociate the term.[42]

We will refer to the meaning of the term in relation to *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie*; more specifically, as a possible representation of memory. Here Benjamin defines aura as "Ein sonderbares Gespinst von Raum und Zeit: einmalige Erscheinung einer Ferne, so nah sie sein mag."[43] So, initially, the aura represents the unique quality of photographic representation, its irrepeatability and thus its invisibility to ordinary perception. The infinite reproduction of commercial photography leads to a loss of the aura just because it is repeated for the sake of the disposability. Of course, even in reproducible art technology can forge an aura; but even this case it must be denounced as a mere ideological product. As long as the aura is an integral part of representation, it is legitimate to inquire into its sources. Bratu Hansen supplements this definition with another one from *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire* (1939): "Die Aura einer Erscheinung erfahren, heißt, sie mit dem Vermögen belehnen, den Blick aufzuschlagen."[44] The two, the author argues, meet in a third in *Passagen-Werk*: "meine Definition der Aura als der Ferne des im Angeblickten erwachenden Blicks."[45] So, the aura can be defined in the light of Benjamin's later texts as a singular point of contact between the past and the present contemplated by the viewer or reader. The interest for the particulars of the characters in the picture is not just a curiosity of the present, but a reply to a call from the past.

According to Bratu Hansen, a first consequence is that the aura is not emanated by the represented character or thing, but comes from the environment, the magical interval connecting the two gazes:

> In other words, aura implies a phenomenal structure that enables the manifestation of the gaze, inevitably refracted and disjunctive, and shapes its potential meanings.[46]

Just like language, thought or memory, she argues, the "auratic" environment of the represented gaze is the intermediary space which constructs and conveys meaning. The camera as a technical object that reflects this gaze immortalises it, transmits it and thus enables the present response of the viewer. What is said in the text about Beaudelaire becomes of essence. In Section XI, Benjamin understands the aura as the entire universe of representation (*Vorstellungen*) with which involuntary memory surrounds the perception of an object.

The reference to involuntary memory in the description of the auratic medium indirectly suggests another point of interest in Benjamin's texts: the modern positioning in history as a form of Messianic wait. In Benjamin's view, the Messianic wait is distorted by the ideology of progress and by a form of historicism forever looking towards the future. But the angel of history, an image long discussed in *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* (1940), only looks back towards the past. In other words, the Messianic calling does not come from a present time heading towards an "empty" future, but from an endangered past calling for its salvation. In the case of the aura seen as involuntary memory, the Messianic calling represents a warning to the present to beware of oblivion. The temporal aspect of aura becomes of essence as now we can answer the original question, *How can memory be represented in photography?* It is not by capturing a souvenir, a moment or thing the photographer wants to remember. Memory is not represented as intention, but as an invisible interpellation of the picture, as an experience of a world it reveals where the character's gaze and the viewer's answer are magically included.

The text about Beaudelaire denies the auratic value of photography, considering it just a matter of technical reproduction designed to satisfy the subjective need of memory. Other texts mentioned here though, such as the one about the history of photography, admit this value in its early days. But fashion imposes that the aura be simulated, which turns it into a commodity. We do not intend to explain this distinctions here.[47] But at least from one point of view, image can hold a magical function of triggering involuntary memory and giving the viewer a mediated, mirrored encounter with his own self "separate from and outside our waking, everyday self."[48] This encounter is an experience in its own right:

> Wo Erfahrung im strikten Sinn obwaltet, treten im Gedächtnis gewisse Inhalte der individuellen Vergangenheit mit solchen der kollektiven in Konjunktion.[49]

As Benjamin shows further below, experience comes from the very interpellation, not from intention, from the calling of the past and not from the intended action of the present.

In a short text about Proust quoted by Bratu Hansen – *Aus einer kleinen Rede über Proust, an meinem vierzigsten Geburtstag gehalten* (1932) – Benjamin compares involuntary memory to our dreams in which we participate, or to the quick succession of images from our own life when we are facing death. The strangeness and familiarity meet in the same act of perception, like meeting one's own pre-historical origin (*Urvergangenheit*), or like crossing the Mothers' land – which Benjamin often invokes, thinking of Goethe.

The optic unconscious of photography redefines subjective perception. Benjamin describes perception not as an empirical reconstruction of the object's identity, but as the development of its own determinations (traces and features) that compose a face. He often chooses to recall Novalis' words: "Die Wahrnehmbarkeit [ist] eine Aufmerksamkeit." Attention, similar to the "monastic"[50] character of the gaze, is already an important concept in *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* (1919) from an ontological point of view. It refers to the speculative character of nature seen as reflexivity:

> kann doch jene Aufmerksamkeit auf den Sehenden sinngemäß nur als Symptom für die Fähigkeit des Dinges, sich selbst zu sehen, verstanden warden.[51]

The metaphysical theme of subject-object opposition is first tackled in Hegelian philosophy, and then in Romanticism. Benjamin explores this critique of representation and, in his early texts, views it in connection with a philosophy of nature before he turns back to art. Involuntary memory is the "medium" of reflexivity, the aura of the work of art. In memory, the object speaks to a subject which recognizes and defines itself in this "dialogue." The experience of such an object becomes a messianic crossing of memory.

In *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie*, photography is the star of such an experience. The representation it contains is not of an abstract and artificial image (*Vorbild*) of the world but, as Bratu Hansen notes, an original image thereof (*Urbild*) which can transmit the calling of the past. The original/authentic character of the historical world, which is persistent though invisible, forms the content of a photograph, its initial message.

The negative connotation of the aura in *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, or the simplification of photography down to reproduction technology we find in Baudelaire's essay, can be explained starting from the fact that Benjamin took a new interest in the archaeology of modernity and its theory of representation. For the purpose of present enterprise two main aspects of this archaeology are important. First, it is the impossibility of experience caused by the hysterical novelty of modernity which brings the "form" of shock. Then, it is the decline of the aura through ideological forgery which determines political changes in the status of art. In the following, we will deal with the first aspect. For the time being, we can only give a brief account of the second without losing sight of the initial question about the representation of memory.

In the essay about Beaudelaire, Benjamin defines the impression of modernity as "die Zertrümmerung der Aura im Chockerlebnis."[52] Here, as in the other text about the reproduction of art, aura has a new meaning: it is still a gaze, an interpellation of the object, but at the same time it indicates the inclusion of a work of art in a tradition. The aura of a historical object, unlike the natural object, indicates its worship value. The disappearance of ritualistic art (including the secularized form of aesthetic contemplation) causes the destruction of the aura, especially by technical reproduction. On the one hand, it tears the artistic object out of its meaningful and unique context:

> Die Kathedrale verläßt ihren Platz, um in dem Studio eines Kunstfreundes aufnahme zu finden; das Chorwerk, das in einem Saal oder unter freiem Himmel exekutiert wurde, läßt sich in einem Zimmer vernehmen.[53]

On the other hand, it is taken out of the viewer's reach, which gives it a significant political function. Last but not least, in photography and cinema, attention (*Aufmerksamkeit*) goes to detail and aspects which escape ordinary perception. The new status of art is secular, public and "materialistic."

In modernity, the aura – ideologically mimicked in fascist art – is rapidly fading away in order to make room for the "new" image liberated from the brutal status of uniqueness, from the ritualistic function it is prone to in the political religions of the century. In this political confrontation between various statuses of art, memory gradually becomes a simple recollection, a souvenir, because it no longer implies the authentic calling of the past, but pinning it down forever. The "aesthetics of the political," as fascism shaped it, implies an artificial ritualism of memory and a hyperbolized view of total destruction. But we still have to ask whether the communist politicization of art,[54] which Benjamin substitutes for this disintegration of image, has resources for recovering the "truth" of art. The answer is negative, and Scholem draws attention on that. Instead, there are a number of alternatives for reassuming an experience scenario, such as the restoration of the narrative in *Der Erzähler* (1936), or even the discussions on caricature in *Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und der Historiker* (1937), albeit indirectly.

This approach can be further explained with Susan Buck-Morss' text *Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered.*[55] The author describes the modern strategies of defence in front of the shock caused by novelty and the disappearance of the requisites for experience, e.g. memory:

> Under extreme stress, the ego employs consciousness as a buffer, blocking the openness of the synaesthetic system, thereby isolating present consciousness from past memory. Without the depth of memory, experience is impoverished. The problem is that under conditions of modern shock-the daily shocks of the modern world-response to stimuli without thinking has become necessary for survival.[56]

Daily automatisms, drugs, or entertainment show how the thing becomes a phantasmagoria, a veil of verisimilitude. At least theoretically, and Benjamin's text about the reproduction of art allows this reading, there can be dramatic consequences.

How can modern humanity, in full crisis of experience, look upon its own destruction with content?, Buck-Morss echoes Benjamin's question. Her reply starts from a 1936 conference Lacan held in Marienbad. The fact that a child aged between six and eighteen months can recognize his own reflection and, in his imagination, identifies himself with it is explanatory:

> This narcissistic experience of the self as a specular "reflection" is one of mis(re)cognition. The subject identifies with the image as the *form* (*Gestalt*) of the ego, in a way that conceals its own lack. It leads, retroactively, to a fantasy of the "body-in-pieces" (*corps morcelé*).[57]

Infant narcissism can be used as an analogy to the historical perception of Nazism and its specific construct, i.e., the image of a strong, mechanical, apparently invincible body, created in response to the phantom of the "dismembered body." Its aesthetics, Buck-Morss argues, serves to anaesthetize the perception of pain and shock in front of an estranged modernity. At this point, with a narcissistic projection in mind, Benjamin's theory of aura takes a dramatic turn. When aura disappears from the image (at the onset of critical and political photography), it activates the mechanism of this phantasmagoria which veils the utter degradation of reality and, in the end, our own body. Criticism keeps aesthetics away from its anaesthetic effect, and the disappearance of aura becomes the typical deconstructive act. The futuristic motto *fiat ars – pereat mundus* illustrates the preference for a destructive image which is not based on experience but emanates pure ideological violence. In such an aesthetic context there is no room for memory. As we tried to show, it does not reside in the content of representation, but in the space which separates and connects representation and viewer, i.e., the experience of image.

Interpretation: experience and trace

This study is based on two ways of understanding the conception of image. First, in Bosch's painting, based on the outstanding interpretation of Marin Tarangul. On the other hand, the magic in the illustrations made for children's books, as viewed by Benjamin, completed with the magic in old photographs. As we stated at the beginning, there are few direct connections between these two hallmarks in the history of image. And yet, they cannot be overlooked. The "physiognomy of the General" in Bosch's paintings, the reality and peculiarity of his characters are also found in the illustrations made for children's books as performances of color rather than lines. The fluidity of determinations transferred into Bosch's compositions, instrumentally joined by perception as "reading method", is related to Benjamin's metaphysics of color and the photographic representation of the "optic unconscious." The two interpretations of image share the view of material ruin and the hieroglyphic value of detail.

Another short text by Benjamin, *Malerei und Graphik* (1917), can suggest an interesting approach to both painting and illustration/photography. The author notes that, as a rule, the painting is exhibited for viewing in a vertical position, whereas in the case of graphics, drawing or mosaic, the picture is laid horizontally. The different positioning is more than a circumstantial difference, it suggests different ways of reading and ontological responses to the world: "Man könnte von zwei Schnitten durch die Weltsubstanz reden: der Längsschnitt der Malerei und der Querschnitt gewisser Graphiken."[58] At the crossing point between these two planes, so to say, we find the gaze of viewer who plunges into the image and is drawn by it. In other words, this is the very point for a dialectic of image as experience, its dual condition. The brief account of Manet's potentially speculative painting indicates one such prerequisite for this experience. Another one is suggested in Benjamin's imaginary dialogue between the child and the illustration, or the fascination triggered by David Octavius Hill's photography. In fact, in both situations, experience implies an availability for the invisible through image. In conclusion, we will try to outline an aesthetical-metaphysical reading, at least in Benjamin's case, of the idolatry ban.

"Experience" is, like most others Benjamin explores, a plural concept.[59] This becomes manifest especially where priority is given to the modern crisis of experience rather than the concept itself, i.e., its conversion into a mere lived experience (*Erlebnis*), due to a more profound crisis of memory. The essay about Beaudelaire is of essence here because Benjamin understands modernity both as a loss of the sense of history, and as a crisis of perception or the political coming of a new subject – the urban masses. Experience has a different meaning for each of these three. There are three issues on the matter of image discussed here.

One of them is a specification of experience in *Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie* (1918). In a fascinating critique to Kant (seen as a source of any "future philosophy"), Benjamin separates the concept from the limits of knowledge on nature so as to extend it to other domains the philosopher denied a scientific approach: religion, history, language. When Benjamin defines experience as "die einheitliche und kontinuierliche Mannigfaltigkeit der Erkenntnis,"[60] he assumes it unifies the system of disparate areas of knowledge. This merge occurs when the object is perceived through its divine (later, historical) origin and the world of the intellect itself appears as a whole. Thus experience gets a first "epistemological" meaning: the perception of the object not as related to a subject's intention, but as an ontological wholeness visible through its origin.[61] Later texts such as *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* (1920) or *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1925) follow this idea and shape the experience as a Platonic salvation (*Platonische Rettung*) of the thing in its divine idea, principle, or origin.

In other texts, later on, Benjamin focuses on the object in its historical placement. He undertakes a noticeably theological-political approach grounded in the issue of Messianism. Here, experience is an act where the "historical index" of the thing is released from the reification of the present. This historical index is in fact the messianic calling of the past: "Die Vergangenheit führt einen heimlichen Index mit, durch den sie auf die Erlösung verwiesen wird."[62] In other words, historical experience means a realization of all the possibilities of the past in danger of extinction. To Benjamin, an illustration of historical experience is the patcher who (*Lumpensammler*) collects the junk left behind by technological progress in order to put it to a new use. The ruins of things, Benjamin shows, have a weak messianic calling, a need to be remembered and to realize lost possibilities. The answer to this messianic calling is the meaning of historical experience: two gazes meeting, one discarded from the past, the other saving from the present. Involuntary memory is their meeting point. In this context, the present moment bears the supreme responsibility of unexpectedly welcoming the Saviour. Benjamin calls this present of responsibility the "now" of recognition (*Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit*).[63] So, historical time is not the empty and homogeneous time of historicism – see *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* (1940) – but turns up during the experience as a pregnant time of Messianic wait. Benjamin's theological discourse has political implications too. The messianic present is a prerequisite for the revolution that saves the "tradition of the oppressed."[64] Once again, experience shifts meanings in terms of political context of this discussion. In fact, chronologically speaking, the political meaning prevails in Benjamin's preoccupations. In 1913, the *Anfang*, the press voice of the movement Freie Studentenhaft headed by Gustav Wyneken, Benjamin publishes the article *Erfahrung* intended as a programme of (ideal) renewal. But the political meaning of the concept is only visible after a theological re-reading. In this text, it represents an attempt to deconstruct the present, to break the continuity and the generalizing instances of history; it fights against ideology and the noisy domination of the winners. But keeping in line with the theology of the concept, Benjamin indicates as agents of such an experience those figures rejected by the professional fighters of early 20th century, i.e., the "pub revolutionaries" that Marx loathed. Theologically speaking, the endless chat seems to have more relevance than fighting proper or the planning thereof.

These meanings of experience can also be found in the experience of image. In fact, as Martin Jay shows in a European synthesis of the concept of experience, *Songs of Experience. Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*,[65] Benjamin's interest for experience grows in the same time as his preoccupation for the metaphysics of color. Howard Caygill, in *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience*, radicalizes this hypothesis. On the one hand, it is Benjamin's understanding that, in children's eyes, color comes before forms: in fact, the mixing of colours gives distinct individuality to objects and characters. On the other hand, children's play represents an implicit critique of school Kantianism in that it is a (secularized) reiteration of the original mimetic ability, of the confusion between magic and the real thing,[66] which is more than a mere reduction of knowledge to phenomenon and the hazy subject–object distinction in Western metaphysics. In the illustrations for children's books, as well as in children's play, historical experience (which Benjamin attributes especially to the idler, collector or story-teller) plays the role of aura in the perception of color. As for early photography, experience acquires various values depending on memory as a meeting point and speculative mediation between subject and object. The intrinsically narrative character of experience described in *Der Erzähler* refers to the consistency of this medium:

> By *memory . . . not as the source but as the Muse*, Benjamin seems to have meant a mode of relating to the past that did not claim the ability to recapture retrospectively the entirety of what had preceded the present as if it were a single coherent plot.[67]

Thus, the image experience is nothing more than sensing a double invisibility: that of color continuity of the world, and that of the calling from the past to the arrogant present. To catch the invisible gaze of the thing, the refined perception of the child or the materialist historian is in fact a double act caused by the invisible interpellation: to deconstruct the conceptual identity of the visible, and to reconstruct its face. The hard identity of things is deconstructed by halting perception at the surface of the world with respect for its concealing veils:

> Not surprisingly, Benjamin would once again invoke Goethe's concept of "tender empiricism," the non-dominating relationship with objects that he had employed in his analysis of mimesis, to characterize the work of one of his favourite Weimar photographers: August Sander.[68]

In the end, experience may be restored (now, as an aesthetic experience) in the context of its modern decline in the act of reading the image by simply sensing the surface. Where man lacks the magic mimetism of yore and is incapable of a real and ritualistic identification with the world, he has a perceptual identification in its own right. We need to mention another important concept in Benjamin's view, even if in passing. The trace (*Spur*) is the antonymic counterpart of the aura (*Aura*):

> Spur und Aura. Die Spur ist Erscheinung einer Nähe, so fern das sein mag, was sie hinterließ. Die Aura ist Erscheinung einer Ferne, so nah das sein mag, was sie hervorruft. In der Spur werden wir der Sache habhaft; in der Aura bemächtigt sie sich unser.[69]

The two engage in a dialectic conflict when the face of things is reconstructed. The photographic aura implies that the picture itself gazes from afar in the direction of the viewer. The two gazes meet in the space of memory as they reconstruct the face of the past and the experience of recognition. Involuntary memory releases the features of this face in the form of traces and floating determinations (e.g. perfume or taste in Proust's writing) which are then transferred and reconstructed with each realization of the possibilities of the past:

> *Erfahrung,* in contrast, involved the ability to translate the traces of past events into present memories but also to register the temporal distance between now and then, acknowledge the inevitable belatedness of memory rather than smooth it over, and preserve an allegorical rather than symbolic relationship between past and present (and thus between present and potential future).[70]

The connection between interpellation and recognition describes the experience of image as possibility of deconstruction of identity and of releasing the singularity of the face.

We can illustrate this with a fragment, already mentioned above, from *Berliner Kindheit um 1900* where Benjamin speaks about the Victory Column, Siegessäule, in Berlin. In children's perception, there is no significance attached to the monument. Erected in the glorious memory (albeit ironical after the Versailles treaty) of Prussian victories, in children's eyes it is not perceived by its traditional symbolic representation. There is no connection between object and its significance. What children understand is the way lesser details of the monument come to the forefront:

> dann wandte ich mich zu den bei den Vasallen, die zur Rechten und Linken die Rückwand krönten, teils weil sie niedriger als ihre Herrscher und bequem in Augenschein zu nehmen waren.[71]

The portico surrounding the base of the Column magically resembles the hell previously seen in an illustrated book. Similarly, the people on top appear as tiny dots on a cardboard (*Klebebilderbogen*). The characteristics of the monument are detached from the block of stone and transferred to foreign areas in play or dreams. The symbolic identity of the column becomes a face which can be recognized independent of its significant pedestal.

In these examples, image recreates things in a similar manner. In the end, we will try to look at this condition of representation in a more precise theological context, as an aesthetic interpretation of the idolatry ban. Benjamin does not manifest this intention explicitly. His texts show surprising inter-relations every now and then, so that some themes come back in different guises in other parts of his writing. In *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (1921) we find a theory of non-idolatrous representation. Without going too deep, we can notice that divine and absolute violence beyond legitimacy (similar to God's violence in the Old Testament) is invisible:

> die entsühnende Kraft der Gewalt für Menschen nicht zutage liegt. Von neuem stehen der reinen göttlichen Gewalt alle ewigen Formen frei, die der Mythos mit dem Recht bastardierte.[72]

The invisibility of the power-holders in Kafka's novels is also an example of forbidden representation. In its ruined state, the world cannot host, or even mirror its origin. But it can be made visible at the edge of things, in the space separating and differentiating them, not in the things as such. Benjamin's texts about image are based on the same truth.

In the following, we will start from the concept of idol from a metaphysical point of view. In a strictly religious context, Alain Besançon,

> God is not unrepresentable because of his nature, but because of the relationship he wishes to maintain with his people. (…) The (concealed) plans God has about this people justify the interdiction.[73]

This observation gives idolatry a context confined to theology and politics. Still, a complementary remark about the original Judaic choice leads to a metaphysical discussion: a theophany denied to sight is available to hearing. Without showing himself, God generously talks to people. The "logic" of the revelation of the word is different from that of plastic form and remains fundamental regardless of later history (often tolerant of image). "The most metaphysical of senses" as it was called, hearing implies a type of perception of a distinct dialectical form unlike optic representation. In a certain aspect of image, Benjamin finds this specific domain that transgresses form and guides the gaze towards a subtle ontology of color.

Apart from this historical and cultural point where idolatrous representation is banned, Benjamin adds a second reference point. We can trace it in Jean-Luc Marion's work *L'idole et la distance*.[74] The author notes:

> Le propre de l'idole tient donc en ceci: le divin s'y fixe à partir de l'expérience qu'en fait l'homme qui, pregnant appui sur sa meditation, tente d'attirer la bienveillance et la protection de ce qui y paraît comme dieu. (…) Elle [l'idole] se caractérise seulement par la soumission du dieu aux conditions humaines de l'expérience du divin.[75]

The idol is not a deceiving representation, it is not insincere. But, before the interpellation of the divine, it is tailored to man's liking, not the god's. The problem is that the idol, though not false, is accessible, " [elle] manque la distance qui identifie et authentifie le divin comme tel."[76] In Benjamin's terms, the god is a representation of the divine minus the aura, the distance that enables the two gazes to meet or, as Besançon argues, the verbal address. As Marion shows, the concept is an idol: it intermediates the possession over the thing, it makes the thing available (it objectifies it, in Kantian terms). The metaphysical representations of the supreme being are thus idolatrous, and Nietzsche puts an end to it.

A first way to step outside idolatry, according to the French philosopher, is the icon – an image whose intuition saturates the viewer's intentionality. It certifies and melts the separating distance between the divine and the human:[77] it allows the eyes to meet. Then, we might ask whether Benjamin's discussion about image is in line with this approach. There is a fragment at the beginning of his book that gives such a hint. It is a comparison Marion makes between icon and idol, starting from a metaphor.[78] The idol can be seen, analogically, as a "mirror topology," an authentic but close image of our own experience of the divine. Conversely, the icon is like a prism that breaks white light into its component colours, a prerequisite of any sight. The invisible becomes visible across the prism.

For example, the colours of the icon do not resemble the colours of the real thing; their liturgical justification and coherence are strictly codified. The icon colours are a prismatic decomposition of the blinding light of the invisible.

Benjamin used the prism metaphor almost literally:

> Der historische Materialist, der der Struktur der Geschichte nachgeht, betreibt auf seine Weise eine Art von Spektralanalyse. Wie der Physiker ultraviolett im Sonnenspektrum feststellt, so stellt er eine messianische Kraft in der Geschichte fest.[79]

The historical experience is spectral because objects are not seen in their conceptual identity, but in their material texture, in the seemingly insignificant detail that give them a face. The state of ruin tells more about the thing than any encyclopaedia, and a spectral analysis makes this material face visible, historical (ephemeral, like any living reality) beyond its conceptual identity. Benjamin speaks in many places about how, in the trembling light of gas lamps, we see the city better than in the persistent brightness of electric streetlamps. In the same way, the moonlight makes a child's room come alive, with animated things, details and shapes which would go unnoticed in broad daylight. So, historical experience is not a matter of clarity of perception, but rather of shade, transferring features and effects of the surface rather than identities, details rather than the whole, color and sound rather than form.[80]

The image experience is in turn related to the historical experience. In Marion's terms, it walks the infinite distance between the image and the viewer, between the visible representation and the thing which "narrates itself" through it. It is not an immediate aesthetic lived experience (*Erlebnis*), or an instantaneous reception of image by a subject, but a mediate crossing. In photography, involuntary memory fills the space where the two gazes meet. In book illustrations, the magical effect of color guides the view beyond form, towards its original continuity. In Benjamin's terms, the auratic image is (as mentioned before) an "Urbild," not "Vorbild," meaning that it is banned as idolatry, it does not represent the invisible dialogue of the eyes, but only makes it possible. Here, the history of image, its memory, occurs at the same time as post-history – i.e., the "realization" or the recognition of this memory.

Sound, voice, as an unseen and ineffable sign of an absolute presence, has a match in the magic of the illustrated books for children, or in the old photographs: they all speak of interpellation, distance, hearing, sobriety, and decisive answer. With Benjamin, the interdiction of divine representation in Biblical Judaism becomes an interdiction of seizing in the image an outlined form, concept, or intellectual meaning. The perception of auratic image implies an ontological order where form, conceptual identity and message are mere abstractions.

What is this order? In fact, it is the same order that includes Bosch's fantastic creatures: "authentic" but unrecognizable, real but invisible, syntactically bound but individually evasive. The answer comes from an old spiritual tradition – *mundus imaginalis*, where the thing and its perception mirror each other.[81] Image is the face of this world, the face of the things that can be seen only here. Once freed from conceptual synthesis, determinations can be magically recombined in epidermic identities which communicate with each other in infinite patterns. Only the moonlight or the gas lamp can give access to this realm. Just like the memory in *Berliner Chronik* (1932): when he was a child, one night, as he was walking with his mother in the snow-ridden city, little Walter had a revelation. The streetlamps made the Hallesches Tor, or the Belle Alliance square look like a postcard he had at home. The light, the magical colours, recombined into a face that stayed in his memory and later became decisive. The uncertainty of present perception is an undoubted sign of its "truth":

> Vielleicht war an jenem Abend die Oper, auf die wir uns hinbewegten, jene Lichtquelle vor welcher die Stadt mit einem Mal so sehr verändert strahlte, vielleicht aber ist es auch nur ein Traum, den ich später von diesem Wege gehabt habe und von dem die Erinnerung sich an die Stelle derer gesetzt hat, die vordem Platzhalterin der Wirklichkeit war.[82]

NOTES

[1] Walter Benjamin, *GS III*, p. 506.

[2] Benjamin, *GS V*, p. 448.

[3] Benjamin, *Möbel und Masken. Zur Ausstellung James Ensor bei Barbazanges, Paris, GS IV*, p. 479, and a note in *GS II*, p. 1198.

[4] Marin Tarangul, *Bosch*, Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1974, pp. 5-25.

[5] Benjamin, *GS III*, P. 367.

[6] See Ioan Alexandru Tofan, *City Lights. Despre experienţă la Walter Benjamin*, due for publication, Chap. I.

[7] Tarangul, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 6.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 5.

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 15.

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 21.

[12] *Ibidem*, p. 18.

[13] Hegel's definition: "Diese *dialektische* Bewegung, welche das Bewußtsein an ihm selbst, sowohl an seinem Wissen als an seinem Gegenstande ausübt, *insofern ihm der neue wahre Gegenstand* daraus *entspringt*, ist eigentlich dasjenige, was *Erfahrung* genannt wird. " (G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1998, p. 71). His *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Science of Logic* can be read as attempts to surpass traditional metaphysics. Hegel considers the latter, a philosophy of representation (*Vorstellung*), as a privileged example of abstract and finite thinking where the subject-object opposition is a premise of certainty. Speculative/concrete thinking goes beyond the opposition and changes representation into concept (*Begriff*). Taken in this sense, experience is the movement of a conscience which, knowing the object, knows its own self and finds itself as object. We will attempt to find the same speculative function of experience but without using Hegel as a direct source. The Romantic philosophy of nature, somewhat indebted to speculative philosophy, has the stronger influence in Benjamin's theory, in terms of both theme and concept.

[14] Victor Ieronim Stoichiţă, *Vezi? Despre privire în pictura impresionistă*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2007.

[15] *Ibidem*, p. 21.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 55.

[17] See Stoichiţă's analysis in *ibidem*, pp. 61-64. Another interesting comparison is between Manet's and Degas' mirrors. Stoichiţă shows that, to Manet, the mirror is the medium of "self-representation," whereas to Degas it is the space where the subject disappears.

[18] Graham Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin. Critical Constelations*, Blackwell, Cambridge, 2002, p. 95.

[19] See Ioan Alexandru Tofan, *op. cit.*, chap. IV.2.

[20] The child is a magician, and the game hide-and-seek is a magical ritual of transformation. Benjamin's description in *Einbahnstrasse* (*GS IV*, p. 116), and in *Berliner Kindheit*, is endearing: "Das Kind, das hinter der Portiere steht, wird selbst zu etwas Wehendem und Weißem, zum Gespenst. Der Eßtisch, unter den es sich gekauert hat, läßt es zum hölzernen Idol des Tempels werden, wo die geschnitzten Beine die vier Säulen sind. Und hinter einer Türe ist es selber Tür, ist mit ihr angetan als schwerer Maske und wird als Zauberpriester alle behexen, die ahnungslos eintreten."

[21] See Gilloch, in *Myth and Metropolis. Walter Benjamin and the City*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1996.

[22] Benjamin,*"Alte vergessene Kinderbücher"*, *GS III*, p. 17.

[23] See the 1929 text, *Kinderliteratur (Literarische Rundfunkvorträge)*, *GS VII*, pp. 250-257.

[24] Benjamin, *"Alte vergessene Kinderbücher"*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[25] Benjamin, *Die Farbe vom Kinde aus betrachtet* (1914-1915), *GS VI*, p. 110.

[26] See Tofan, *op. cit.*, chap. II. Here, a discussion on the sources of Benjamin's view on history gives prominence to the 16th century Lurianic Kabbalah. In the philosophy of history, the recovery of the entirety of revelation is the task of memory. From an epistemological point of view, the transference of determinations can replace the Messianic role of memory. In the case of the hashish consumer (whose experience is basically theological, as Benjamin shows), or the child, the transfer is not in danger of subsequent conceptual re-formulation or forgery.

[27] Benjamin, *"Alte vergessene Kinderbücher"*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[28] Benjamin, *Der Regenbogen. Gespräch über die Phantasie*, *GS VII*, pp. 19-26.

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 24

[30] See *Über die Malerei oder Zeichen und Mal* (1917), *GS II*, pp. 603-608.

[31] "Das Bunte und Einfarbige, die schöne seltsame Technik meiner ältesten Bilderbücher. Weißt du, wie dort überall die Konturen in einem regenbogigen Spiele verwischt waren, wie Himmel und Erde mit durchsichtigen Farben strichhaft getuscht waren! Wie die Farben geflügelt immer über den Dingen schwebten, sie recht sehr färbten und verschlangen." in Benjamin, *Der Regenbogen*, *ed. cit.*, p. 25.

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 20.

[33] Benjamin, *Ursprung des Deutschen Trauerspiels*, *GS I*, p. 352.

[34] *Idem*, *Zu einer Arbeit über die Schönheit farbiger Bilder in Kinderbüchern*, *GS VI*, p. 124.

[35] *Ibidem*, p. 125.

[36] See Tofan, *op. cit.*, chap. 3.

[37] Concept also found in G. Steiner, "To speak of Walter Benjamin", *Benjamin Studien* 1/1, 2002. See I. A. Tofan, *op. cit.*, Introduction.

[38] In *GS II*, pp. 368-385. A few translated fragments are in Anca Oroveanu, *Rememorare și uitare. Scrieri de istorie a artei*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2004, pp. 232-235. Also see Baudelaire Arnheim's texts, in *Antologie*, and Anca Oroveanu's discussion on the relationship between photography and "reality".

[39] Benjamin, *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie, ed. cit.*, p. 370. It is a photograph by David Octavius Hill, *Newhaven Fishwife*.

[40] Benjamin defines dialectic image in *Passagen-Werk*: "Das dialektische Bild ist ein aufblitzendes. So, als ein im Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit aufblitzendes Bild, ist das Gewesene festzuhalten." (*GS V*, p. 592) The complex of meanings in this concept is in constant change. So do the interpretations thereof (also see Tofan, *op. cit.*, chap. I.2). But the strategic role of "dialectic image" in discourse can be reduced to two main functions: to recover a past, in conflict with the present, by a necessary calling and a Messianic wait; and to deconstruct the dominant ideological and reifying instances of the present to make room for memory. In other words, the noise of the present needs to stop so we can hear the silence of the past. Among the metaphors used for this concept, Benjamin often invokes the boundary between dreaming and waking. It is Adorno's main objection regarding a subjective understanding the dialectic character of history, to which Benjamin replies in letters, insisting on the receptive role of the subject in this historical time.

[41] Benjamin, *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie, ed. cit.*, p. 376.

[42] Miriam Bratu Hansen, "Benjamin's Aura", *Critical Inquiry* 34/2008, pp. 336-375.

[43] Benjamin, *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie, ed. cit.*, p. 378.

[44] Benjamin, *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire, GS I*, pp. 646-647.

[45] Benjamin, *Passagen-Werk, GS V*, p. 396.

[46] Bratu Hansen, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

[47] Bratu Hansen's text is brilliant in this sense.

[48] Bratu Hansen, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

[49] Benjamin, *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire, op. cit.*, p. 611.

[50] One of the most frequently invoked texts on attention is the essay about Kafka: "Wenn Kafka nicht gebetet hat - was wir nicht wissen - so war ihm doch aufs höchste eigen, was Malebranche *das natürliche Gebet der Seele* nennt - die Aufmerksamkeit. Und in sie hat er, wie die Heiligen in ihre Gebete, alle Kreatur eingeschlossen." (*Franz Kafka. Zur zehnten Wiederkehr seines Todestages*, 1934, *GS II*, pp. 409-438.) To Malebranche, prayer implies receptivity, receiving the grace or the unilateral act of the infinite upon the finite open to receive it. As a form of attention, prayer has the same receptive and unintentional character: binding the detail, the object's feature, is free listening to it and to the story it tells. Another text, *Gewohnheit und Aufmerksamkeit*, in *Denkbilder* (1933, *GS IV*, pp. 407-408), is a dialectic completion to the theory on attention: the latter has meaning when it

permanently claims its space (das Feld bestreitet) from habit (Gewohnheit). Benjamin describes the permanent oscillation between the two, listening and reply, or between strangeness and familiarity, in several paradigmatic situations such as the urban perception of the child, the physiognomy of the idler or the detective's investigation.

[51] Benjamin, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik, GS I*, p. 56.

[52] Benjamin, *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire, ed. cit.*, p. 653.

[53] Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (dritte Fassung), GS I*, p. 477.

[54] See *Ibidem*, p. 508: "Das ist offenbar die Vollendung des l'art pour l'art. Die Menschheit, die einst bei Homer ein Schauobjekt für die Olympischen Götter war, ist es nun für sich selbst geworden. Ihre Selbstentfremdung hat jenen Grad erreicht, der sie ihre eigene Vernichtung als ästhetischen Genuß ersten Ranges erleben läßt. *So steht es um die Asthetisierung der Politik, welche der Faschismus betreibt. Der Kommunismus antwortet ihm mit der Politisierung der Kunst."*

[55] Susan Buck-Morss, "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin'sArtwork Essay Reconsidered", *October*, 62/1992, pp. 3-41.

[56] *Ibidem*, p. 16.

[57] *Ibidem*, p. 37. In what follows, we remain close to the author's considerations.

[58] Benjamin, *Malerei und Graphik, GS II*, p. 603.

[59] See Thomas Weber, "Erfahrung", in *Benjamins Begriffe*, ed. M. Opitz and E. Wizisla, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2000. In Tofan, *op. cit.*, we tried to integrate these starting from the three-dimensional character of the concept: epistemology, theology and politics are the main bases for the meanings which Benjamin attributes to experience.

[60] Benjamin, *Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie, GS II*, p. 168.

[61] Gershom Scholem, in *Walter Benjamin – die Geschichte einer Freundschaft* (Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1975, pp. 73 și urm.), remarks Benjamin's prolonged interest in the meaning of philosophical reflection as *Lehre*, in a traditional Judaic sense: "Unterweisung nicht nur über den wahren Stand und Weg des Menschen in der Welt, sondern über den transkausalen Zusammenhang der Dinge und ihr Verfasstsein in Gott." Experience is, Scholem shows, an occupation whose object is spiritual order (geistige Ordnung), which it positions in place of the Kantian discussion on concepts. But spiritual order must not be seen as a spiritual model, nor essence, but the divine origin of the world which contains an absolute hierarchy of species.

[62] Benjamin, *Über den Begriff der Geschichte, GS I*, p. 691. Werner Hamacher also comments on this understanding of the historical index of the world (in *Walter Benjamin and History*, ed. A. Benjamin, Continuum, London, 2005): "The true historicity of historical objects lies in their *irrealis.* Their un-reality is the store-place of the historically possible. For their *irrealis* indicates a

direction through which that which could have been is referred to those *for whom* it could have been and for whom it is preserved as a – missed – possibility."

[63] See note 40 for one such famous occurrence of this concept.

[64] See *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, section VIII. Also, Jacob Taubes, *Eschatologia occidentală*, TACT, Cluj, 2008, on Israel as "place of revolution."

[65] Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience. Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2005.

[66] In *Einbahnstrasse* (1923) and then in *Berliner Kindheit um 1900* (1934), Benjamin gives a fascinating description of the mimetic "logic" of the hide-an-seek game: "Das Kind, das hinter der Portiere steht, wird selbst zu etwas Wehendem und Weißem, zum Gespenst. Der Eßtisch, unter den es sich gekauert hat, läßt es zum hölzernen Idol des Tempels werden, wo die geschnitzten Beine die vier Säulen sind. Und hinter einer Türe ist es selber Tür, ist mit ihr angetan als schwerer Maske und wird als Zauberpriester alle behexen, die ahnungslos eintreten" (Benjamin, *Einbahnstrasse, GS IV*, p. 116).

[67] Jay, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

[68] *Ibidem*, pp. 338-339.

[69] Benjamin, *Passagen-Werk, GS V*, p. 560.

[70] Jay, *op. cit.*, p. 340..

[71] Benjamin, *Berliner Kindheit um 1900, GS IV*, p. 241.

[72] Benjamin, *Zur Kritik der Gewalt, GS II*, p. 203. Benjamin Morgan comments, in his article "Undoing Legal Violence: Walter Benjamin's and Giorgio Agamben's Aesthetics of Pure Means", *Journal of Law and Society*, 34/1, 2007, p. 52: "Where the recursive visibility of mythic violence offers a criterion for understanding it as its own end, the *in*visibility (sic!) of the ends of divine violence allows it to appear as pure means."

[73] Alain Besançon, *Imaginea interzisă. Istoria intelectuală a iconoclasmului de la Platon la Kandinsky*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1996, p. 79.

[74] Jean-Luc Marion, *L'idole et la distance*, Grasset, Paris, 1977.

[75] *Ibidem*, p. 23.

[76] *Ibidem*, p. 25.

[77] *Ibidem*, p. 277. Here, Marion starts from L**é**vinas' considerations in *Totalité et Infini: essai sur l'extériorité* (1961). It does not refer to the icon directly. Other texts, e.g. *De surcroît. Études sur les phénomènes saturés* (2001) or *La croisée du visible* (1991), allow a parallel reading of these discussions.

[78] An almost literal translation.

[79] Benjamin, *Paralipomena* to *Über den Begriff der Geschichte, GS I*, p. 1232.

[80] In the Afterword to *Walter Benjamin, Vise*, Art, Bucharest, 2012, Burkhardt Lindner notes the presence of this preference for detail especially in the

narration of dreams: ″The details are extremely clear and narratively closed; many a time, the colour and sound of the dream are specifically emphasized″ (p. 136). The same can be said about historical experience which, in Benjamin's view, is intimately bound to dreams. See Tofan, *op. cit.*, section *Istoricul ca ″Lumpensammler″/″chiffonier.″*

[81] See Andrei Pleșu, *Despre îngeri*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2003, especially pp. 69-70.

[82] Benjamin, *Berliner Chronik GS VI*, p. 507.

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ALTERNATIVE CULTURE AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN TITOIST AND POST-TITOIST YUGOSLAVIA (1945-1991)

This project proposes in the first place to trace, by a few significant moments, the evolution of alternative culture in former Yugoslavia in the period 1945-1991 and secondly, to outline the correspondences and influences between such evolution of the alternative culture and the recent history of ex-Yugoslavia.

The main focus in my research will be to identify the cultural codes and contexts of the Yugoslav totalitarian regime, in close connection to a phenomenon for which the political regime was not actually ready and for which the Leninist and Stalinist theses did not provide any answers. The situation of Yugoslavia should be so much the more interesting as we think that the Titoist communist regime broke up with Moscow in 1948 and developed a theory and a practice different than the usual ones seen in the East Europe.

The second focus of my research will be to investigate the importance of the alternative culture within the much larger framework of the general culture, and also to fight against the preconception of the existence of two cultures: an "elitist", performance culture for the intellectuals, and a "vulgar", consumer one for the uncultivated masses. Insofar as it generates an original creation, culture is one, and counter-culture, despite that after the collapse of communism ended in entertainment, was by the time I will speak of able to assume, throughout the various critical moments of the political and cultural evolution of ex-Yugoslavia, intellectual and civic missions of great responsibility.

Unlike the research on alternative culture in Western Europe, the status of research in this particular field of Yugoslav culture is not very advanced. We need a theoretical grounding, able to accredit for the presence of the forms and manifestations of alternative culture in a totalitarian regime, and also a synthesis of the few histories and monographs dedicated to phenomena and personalities of the Yugoslav counter-culture: the *pop art* phenomenon, the last avant-garde movement called *Klokotrism*, the rock band Bijelo Dugme, the musician Goran Bregović, the film-maker Emir Kusturica or the visual artist Olja Ivanicki.

As for current bibliography, there is even a research – unfortunately biased and far from the academic neutrality required – dedicated to the relation between the music of Riblja Čorba band and the Serbian politics during the 1980s-1990s. I could also find useful remarks in the books and studies of some contemporary Balkans specialists such as Stefano Bianchini *(La Questione Jugoslava)* or Barbara Jelavitch *(History of the Balkans).* Yet, this study attempts to sketch the hallmarks of a new synthesis.

I. Counter-culture, alternative culture. Moving concepts

If we stick with the theory of counter-culture as presented in the classic book of Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (1969), the very existence of some phenomena such as *alternative culture, counter-culture* or (in the lingo of ultra-conservatory theorists) *infraculture* seems difficult to accept in the context of a totalitarian regime of the Socialist type, as it was the political regime established in 1945 in Yugoslavia and in all the other East European countries.

One explanation would be that the birth of counter-culture, in the classic theory of Theodore Roszak, is closely related, first of all, to a political context of democracy and to the idea of developed capitalist societies, as in the world of the United States of America or in certain countries of Western Europe like France, Germany of Great Britain at the beginning of the decade 1960-1970. The origins of counter-cultures are also accompanied by the manifestation of major political and social crises like the Vietnam War or the Civil Rights Movement. This is the background against which, according to Roszak, "only a strict minority of young and a handful of their adult mentors"[1] can raise their voices, as the only people responsible in the construction of a counter-culture. They perceive themselves by the time as the saving solution to preserve humanism and civilization, threatened by "what anti-utopians like Huxley and Orwell have forecast".[2]

The inexistence or the poor development of any of the said elements could raise questions on whether we should speak of counter-culture, or not. In countries like Spain or Portugal, for instance, although capitalism was sufficiently well-developed, until 1975 and 1974 respectively, right-wing, catholic and conservatory dictatorships existed, which, through the agency of almighty repression mechanisms, prevented the countries from the emergence and development of contesting cultural structures, and most especially from the appearance of a young generation with a political and cultural consciousness that we could call anti-system.

On the other hand, in Latin America there were quite a few democratic regimes, but the poor development of the capitalist social and economic structures did not permit the emergence of a coherent form of counter-culture. Against the background of a volatile *establishment* and given the enhanced permeability of the social strata, Latin America could not develop conflicting cultural structures where a technocratic ossified majority may be challenged and opposed by a humanistic and dynamic minority: at the south of Rio Grande, *right* and *left* are actually notions of quite relativity.

Finally, in countries like Japan or South Korea there existed both democracies and open-market economies, but the cultural Asian-like autarchic systems made that, despite such favorable premises, counter-culture could not be yet developed but only eventually, much later after becoming official in the European cultures (at the beginning of the 1980s), and solely in the form of the industry of entertainment.[3] Most particularly, these Asian gerontocratic cultures did not allow the development of a political consciousness to the young Asian generations of the 1960s and 1970s, whose revolutionary potential was unfortunately symbolized only by the hideous Maoist "Cultural Revolution". (Note that a superficial Western reading of the 1960s-1970s apparently identified it as counter-culture, while, as a matter of fact, the only common point it had with counter-culture was the violence showed in the deconstruction of any antagonizing paradigms).

Besides, should we abandon the somehow triumphalist perspective of Theodore Roszak and of other theorists of the counter-culture,[4] we shall notice that not even in democratic states with highly-developed capitalist systems did counter-culture operate without facing reactions from the *establishment*. Such reactions usually restricted its scope by the use of legal means (and, first of all, by resorting to public policies and budget instruments[5]). Jean-Michel Djian, in an *avant-propos* to the anthology of studies *Vincennes. Une aventure de la pensée critique*, emphasized the very contradictory element that existed in the French social environment of the 1970s between contestation and the sphere of political power:

> La pensée contemporaine visionnaire y trouvait (at Vincennes – my note / R. V.) un territoire de prédilection, et les intellectuels une sorte de havre en ébulition. C'est une authentique société en miniature qui en jaillit, peupleé de milliers de non-bacheliers, de travailleurs, d'étudiants de toutes origins géographiques et socials, d'enseignants cooptés. Elle vit de maîtres interdisciplinaires, des assistants émancipés, des gourous pénétrés, des visionnaires improbables dispenser un corpus de conaissance si audacieux qu'il suscita l'emoi: chez les récipiendaires comme dans les hautes spheres du pouvoir terrifié à l'idée que l'on puisse, *in situ*, réinventer le monde. De là est née une culture. De la contestation, de la liberté, de l'innovation, de la transgression, de l'exigence, le tout porté par une certain idée de la pensée.[6]

Even when it was born within a legitimate structure and had a fundamental academic dimension, as it was the case with the University of Vincennes, counter-culture raised, according to the specialists, numerous concerns and replicas from the power, which was very sensitive to the development of sciences with a critical potentiality such as philosophy, urbanism, social sciences, etc. The destiny of the experimental University of Vincennes tells much in this respect: after a series of scandals produced by the Police, the University was forcibly moved to Saint-Denis,[7] and the old buildings bearing the visual signs of the critical spirit in action were demolished in 1980, even before the new University site was to be built. Nowadays, Université Paris VIII – Vincennes – Saint-Denis is a large but marginal university, open to students from the Third World, and with an excellent potential of academic research and an elite teaching body, but completely deprived of the potential spirit of social criticism which made it famous about four decades ago.[8]

Let us note, nevertheless, that although it seems that, in order to speak of counter-culture or alternative culture, we should be able first to identify the existence of democracy and capitalism, elements of counter-culture have existed in all the other areas of the world where there was no democracy at all, or which had economies far from the stage of highly-developed capitalism. Early or derived forms of counter-culture appeared even in places where the political power fought a sustained and explicit battle against them. We should reflect upon the case of Brazil, where at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s – which makes it quite relative synchronical with the Western cultures – the phenomenon of *Tropicalism* was born, whose concepts were closely related to specific ideas of the *beat* generation. The Tropicalist Revolution was equally a reaction against the Brazilian society and a post-colonial reaction that asked for the abandonment of the Western cultural patterns and the enactment of local ones, fed from the very roots of the pre-colonial indigenous culture. The outstanding members of the Tropicalist Revolution, like Joao Gil or Caetano Veloso, were forced to choose the exile, and their music and texts were banned by the military dictatorship, which still could not prevent Tropicalism from resisting as an *underground* phenomenon, until the return of Brasil to democracy.

The element that makes the existence of certain counter-culture elements possible in hostile social-political environments is the appearance of *minority phenomenon* of the counter-culture. As a minority phenomenon, counter-culture may avoid censorship and even repression more easily, by taking refuge to *underground* or closed-circuit environments. It may even dispense with the official institutions, by operating in private areas difficult to control, however tough the political regimes may be.

One little example that combines all these evasive constituents of counter-culture is Club "A" in Bucharest, which belongs with the "Ion Mincu" Institute of Architecture. Established in 1969, as a closed-circuit institution, accessible only to students that studied Architecture and officially registered as members, the club hosted numerous artistic manifestations opposed to official art, and which had an obvious content of social and political criticism. Such existence was possible thanks to its ambiguous statute: the club existed socially as a public institution, with an officially registered seat, depended administratively on the "Ion Mincu" Institute of Architecture but operated in a private way, due to its closed circuit, accessible only for its members and only once a week for one guest of each member. The private operation of the club kept the censorship (unfortunately, not also the police, or better say the former communist Militia) away from the club. On the other hand, it is not less true that *all* the public manifestations of Club A that were carried out outside the confined space of the institution – and more particularly, the Club A Festivals – were censored.[9]

In order to have an alternative, we definitely need that the mere *idea* of alternative should be accepted at the level of the current political practices. However "liberal" they may be, communist regimes were not famous for accepting alternatives, even the most innocent ones: on the contrary, their history is a long repertory of repressive actions, starting from the most insignificant deviations from the official line of the political party and which could occasionally affect even the regime officials or the people aligned to the party's ideology. The alternative was not theoretically accepted even within the limits of the official culture. The much-acclaimed "cultural resistance", if not a *post factum* compensatory concept, consisted of a bunch of disparate facts, and not in a coordinated strategy with clear objectives. And most especially, it was not the expression of the consciousness of a young generation, eager to save the humanist values from the pressure of the technocrat society and did not have a global amplitude either: not a single act of creation that we could include in the phenomenon of "cultural resistance" equaled the power that we could actually see in Western acts of counter-culture. The acts of "cultural resistance" were strictly subsumed to the mission of preserving a minimum of normality in a politically subordinated cultural climate.

In practical terms, it we take the case of Romania, we could identify in the communist period not less than four consecutive ideological movements, all of them imposed to the culture and society as the only ways of literary creation: 1) proletcultism (1948-1949), 2) socialist realism (1950 – about 1964), 3) socialist humanism (1968-cca 1971) and 4) protochronism (1977-1989).[10] Three of them even contained in their titles roots or sounds that referred to their communist nature, while the fourth represented the "original" ideological contribution of the Ceausescu regime: a mixture of socialist realism and nationalism, of proletarian sequels of the '50s and cult for our "Thracian" origins, of primitivism and autarchy. There were short periods of ideological confusion between them that were caused by the political evolutions, but not even once did the ideological confusion bring the freedom of creation or expression in the Romanian public space. Censorship was a constant trait of the entire communist period, and its role was not only to *preserve* the ideological purity of the art works, but also to *guide creation* and *rewrite the past.*

In such a cultural and social system that drastically sanctioned any trace of individuality, original expression or manifestation of diversity, counter-culture could not get coagulated into open institutional forms, but functioned solely in private or closed environments (see the aforementioned case of Club A in the Romanian capital city).

This is why, should we limit strictly to the description of counter-culture as performed by Theodore Roszak – the new revised edition of 1995[11] did not bring any change of view, but only a few supplements and updates of the information –, we should be very cautious when we leave the territory of the rich and democratic societies of Western Europe and dare to venture in the world of the communist societies of Eastern Europe.

Let us say that Roszak's theory is already 44 years old: it has been recently subject to direct or indirect criticism right from the viewpoint of its own evolution, which changed 1) how we understand counter-culture today, and 2) how counter-culture should be placed among the cultural practices of humankind ever.

For instance, in a recent book, Steven Jezo-Vannier speaks of counter-culture not as a historical phenomenon, possible to be located in time in a specific age. Counter-culture is, according to the author, an *eon*, namely a permanent reality of cultures, starting from Ancient times through the ages and up to the present:

> Contestations, contre-cultures, dissidences, hérésies, désobéissances, insurrections, séditions, pirateries... l'histoire est jalonée de mouvements d'opposition au système dominant. Avec plus ou moins de radicalité, souvent à contre-courant de leurs contemporains, des individus se sont positionnés en rupture avec le monde, le temps et la société qui les on vus naître.[12]

Jezo-Vannier obviously puts a stress on the contents of the political and social contestation in counter-culture, also achieving a "release" of the concept from the temporal and ideological frontiers set by Roszak – the 1960s, the *beat* music and the *hippy* movement, the anti-Vietnam contestations and the Civil Rights Movement. This enlargement of perspectives results in a kind of counter-culture "sans rivages" that hallmarks the entire history of humankind and which could be logically opposed by an official culture of repression and conformism, originating also in the Ancient times (let us imagine an episode of that in the accepting act of Socrates of drinking the coniine), and up to our times.

In reality, should we consider a gain the fact that there is a counter-culture/ counter-cultures also outside the frameworks outlined by Theodore Roszak, the risk that Jezo-Vannier's viewpoint exposes us to would be to extend the limits of culture and politics altogether. Not every contestatary practice should belong with culture, just as not all non-conformist acts of culture should have a political content. To say that everything is culture is as risky as it would be to say that everything is politics.

A better conception of a new theory of counter-culture(s) can be found in the volume *Contre-cultures!*, brought out under the coordination of Christophe Bourseiller and Olivier Penot-Lacassagne.[13] The authors of this collective volume also consider counter-culture a way of living in culture and not a historical phenomenon, and they therefore approach themes like: 1) the avant-garde and counter-culture, 2) the relation between the cultural and political revolution, 3) the counter-culture of the 1980s (*New Wave, Black Generation*), etc. As resulted from the very title of the book, the somehow triumphalistic perspective of Roszak was left behind in favor of a pluralist perspective, which advocates for a world full of counter-cultures and for a contemporary culture actually composed of several counter-cultures.

Should we read in that that we cannot use freely the classic concepts of the theory of Western counterculture when we analyze the ways this has manifested in communist countries? Do we need new, hybrid concepts just like the manifestations of counter-culture, concepts liable to describe phenomena and personalities that combined contestation and a semi-official or even official existence, the free culture with the totalitarian institutions of validation and the democratic thought and action, free of any constraints, with the living within the strict confined frontiers of totalitarian institutions?

More particularly, the recent criticism on Theodore Roszak's theory provides us with a few working instruments that are more appropriate to the cultural context of the Titoist and post-Titoist Yugoslavia.

One accomplishment would be to reveal first of all, as Steven Jezo-Vannier did, the connections between the literary bohemianism and the counter-culture:

> La contestation artistique, reprise par les beatniks puis le mouvement hippie, se place dans la filiation d'une longue tradition, sans cesse renouvelée, qui a traversé le Xxe siècle. En gagnant la France, les auteurs américains des *beat* et *lost generation* ont cherché à nouer des liens avec les bohèmes parisiennes des XIXe et Xxe siècles, celles de Montmartre, de Montparnasse et de Saint-Germain. La bohème n'a rien d'un mouvement organisé, théorisé et cloisonné, elle se définit uniquement par l'attitude commune et la mode de vie des artistes parisiens qui la font vivre. Elle se caractérise par la marginalité et l'anticonformisme de ses artisans, qui font le choix d'une esthétique à contre-courant de la mode bourgeoise, et s'opposent à la vague romantique qui séduit l'aristocratie. Familiers des cabarets et des cafés d'artistes des quartiers populaires, ils mènent une vie

> communautaire, se retrouvant quotidiennement por partager rires, alcools, drogues et plaisirs charnels. Cette vie d'excès, refusant la dogme du travail, est tempérée par la pauvreté des bohèmes, qui vivent maigrement des fruits de leur art et de quelques boulots sans lendemain.[14]

The homologies between the artistic bohemianism and the counter-culture are truly numerous and easily discernible, despite the fact that the first does not have an organized character, while counter-culture is doubled by theories and, in the end, by institutions that get it structured and give it the offensive character toward the technocrat society. But the refusal of conformism, the violent anti-bourgeois aesthetics, the dismissal of the protestant spirit read in the "cult of labor" supported by the capitalism, as well as the community spirit make the artistic bohemianism the place of first choice when we study counter-culture. In Western Europe, the bohemianism of the 1950s was the first cultural space where certain changes of paradigm could be sensed, which announced the future break-ups and were about to make the second half of the past century so renown.

The second valuable idea would be the organic connection that exists between the avant-garde and the counter-culture, an idea proposed in the study "Vol au dessus d'un nid d'ignus: surréalisme et contre-culture" by Jérôme Duwa, a study included in the volume coordinated by Christophe Bourseiller and Olivier Penot-Lacassagne.[15] In the words of the author,

> Pour reprendre les distinctions introduites par Alain Touraine dans un article de 1974, le surréalisme n'a pas de rapport avec les *drop-out* Beat dans le style de «refus» de la société; il n'est pas non plus attiré par une recherche mystique à base de philosophie zen fondant de nouvelles communautés; il n'accorde aucun intérêt à la musique pop et très peu au jazz; il est fort éloigné sociologiquement de la réalité de la vie étudiante, qu'elle soit celle des facultés parisiennes ou *a fortiori* des campus américains. En revanche, ce que Touraine nomme «contestation culturelle» et pas seulement «nouvelle culture», «refus», «culture parallèle» ou «rupture culturelle» est un terrain commun entre la tradition surréaliste et les mouvements d'opposition mis en effervescence par la guerre du Vietnam (1959-1975).[16]

In other words, the sociological status and the surrealist themes may be very different from those of counter-culture, but the *grammar* of the forms remains the same.

However, an easier attempt to define alternative culture in the communist space will be to define it by what it is *not*, rather than by what it actually is, or by what the Western canons tell us that it should be. There is an infallible symptom provided to us by the very censorship and communist propaganda, and with the help of which we could rapidly identify the creations of counter-culture. This will, in the language of propaganda and official criticism, the accusation of *decadentism*, *moral degradation* or *unhealthy condition*, with respect to the works and/or artists in question.

Totalitarian regimes basically rely on the idea of *salvation*, of *redemption*, applied to nations. In this sense, art works do not divide any longer into *aesthetically valid* and *without value*, respectively, but into *healthy* and *unhealthy* ones, meaning that the healthy ones are obviously those devoted to the regime, while the others will be the independent or antagonizing creations. Whenever we meet this hygiene-sanitary criterion instead of an aesthetic one, we can be sure that the judgment will attack the contestatory work created outside the principles of the official canon. In the period 1948-1960, this accusation usually regarded the political contestation disguised into works of art and generally all the creations that were not based on the dominant ideology. After 1960, the accusation of *moral and/or artistic decadentism* regarded solely the creations of counter-culture, to whom the official propaganda opposed a healthy, namely a controlled "counter-culture" (like in Ceausescu's Romania, with the case of the „Flacăra" Circle).

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In the Titoist and post-Titoist Yugoslavia, counter-culture originated and lived from: 1) the older Yugoslav avant-garde that – through artists and writers like Dušan Matić, Oskar Davičo, Moni de Buli, Milan Dedinac – continued to influence the contemporary letters and arts (the most illustrative example will be that of the poet Vasko Popa, the most important modern Serbian poet); 2) from the literary and artistic bohemianism, which was very much evolved, and 3) from a series of phenomena such as *Pop Art*, the rock music and the *hippie* lifestyle, that gradually appeared in the cultural life of Yugoslavia once the communist regime became more liberal and opened itself to Western Europe.

II. A different type of socialism

The Titoist and post-Titoist Yugoslavia fortunately make an exception in the East-European picture of the repression of alternatives.

The Yugoslav socialist regime was not one to admit the right or need to have alternatives, in any field of activity at all. But the specificity of the Yugoslav communism, together with the different geopolitical context in which Josip Broz Tito placed himself after his break-up with the Comintern (1948), made that the existence of one or several alternatives in several fields would be tolerated and even discreetly encouraged. Small and medium private agricultural property, private trade and most especially the full freedom of circulation of the Yugoslav citizens – that is, the famous "red passport" – took to a more varied image of the socialist society of Yugoslavia than in the other states blocked behind the Iron Curtain.

Joint properties in agriculture, to take one example, were subject to a mere experiment in Yugoslavia, unlike in the other communist states, where the land reform and the cooperativization took out the land cultivation from the authority of the legitimate land owners and placed it under the authority of the State.(For, even if theoretically the plots subject to cooperativization remained legally under the peasants' ownership, their cultivation did not depend on them anymore. Both with the help of the laws – which imposed to the joint owners a lot of obligations and restrictions –, and also through the agency of some abusive bodies, private property upon the land became fictitious.)

Nevertheless, this was not the case with Yugoslavia. Here the Soviet solutions were not applied *ad litteram*, and the best example can be found right in the field of agriculture. At the end of 1948, promptly after the break-up with Moscow, the Yugoslav regime decreed the beginning of cooperativization in agriculture, taking after the Soviet model.[17] Only that the reaction of the peasants – which represented almost 63% of the population –, was very rough, which made that as early as from 1949 the authorities would start to give up on the idea,[18] and in 1953 to even abandon the idea in its entirety and give back the lands to their owners.[19] This is the only case of the type in the entire communist system.

The same difference can be reported also at the level of the industrial policies. The first five-year plan, commenced in 1946, got profiled from the very beginning as a failure, much aggravated by the economic embargo imposed by the Soviet Union upon Yugoslavia at the beginning of 1949.[20] Because of this, on the 27th of July 1950, the Yugoslav regime adopted the economic system of self-management,[21] which turned the centralized and bureaucratic system of the Soviet type into a decentred one, whereby the decision-making did not lie any more with the minister on top of the respective industrial domain, but with the economic units themselves. Subsequently, the state property resulted after nationalization was turned into a *social property*, within a system where all the employees were co-interested and involved in the decision-making process: in exchange, the state apparatus was to a big extent released from the burden of this economic bureaucracy. In the decade 1950-1960, which was marked by serious economic problems in all the socialist countries, the result of the aforementioned measures took to one of the most rapid rhythms of economic growth of the entire world: 11% in 1953, 14% in 1955, 10% in 1955, 17% in 1956, and in the period 1956-1960, the average increase came to the amazing percent of 45.6%, as compared to 1956.[22]

We cannot definitely speak of capitalist economy in Yugoslavia, but of a social economy where the weight of private initiative and of private property was considerably larger than in any other socialist states. At the same time, prosperity was also neatly superior, both for the State (which fulfilled many investments in infrastructure), and for the citizens, as well. This prosperity did not mean an equalitarian leveling ordered by the top management of the Communist Party, but the maintenance and even the formation of distinct social strata where the middle class became the most important class of the society. This middle class – with many bourgeois elements in its constituency –, was an eminent product resulted from this type of socialism, and was to become the element of stability of the Yugoslav regime, and also the target group of the artistic contestation of the 1960s and 1970s (like in democratic regimes).

A special discussion should be borne on the political regime that the Yugoslav communism imposed upon its own citizens, and which deserves a more distinctive approach than the appraisals or undifferentiated criticism, respectively, that were expressed after the disintegration of the federal state. This is because 1) the Yugoslav regime was part of a world system of power, which most often caused in medium and small countries favorable or unfavorable evolutions, and 2) the personality of Josip Broz Tito is still set up in lights and shadows more than in the case of any other communist dictator.

In general terms, one may say that there existed three distinct ages in the Yugoslav domestic policies: 1) 1945-1948, when both the Soviet policies and the post-war policies peculiar to the countries occupied by the

Nazi Germany were applied (see the deportation of the Swabians from the Banat and the repression of the members of pro-Nazi guerrillas in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia and Serbia); 2) 1948-1954, the most radical period, when the open conflict with Stalin allowed Tito to liquidate, through a system that was similar to the Soviet concentration camps (on the Goli Otok island, in the Adriatic Sea), any real or alleged political enemies, and 3) 1954-1991, years of progressive civil liberalization, when Yugoslavia turned into the most liberal communist state of the world. Mention should be made that one of the basic instruments of personal freedom in that world, namely the tourist passport, was established by the Constitution of 1945, and the access of any citizen to such passport was never restricted, not even in the periods of maximum political strain. The right to circulation remained, throughout the entire communist era, at maximum parameters in Yugoslavia, and this unrestricted right produced effects not only upon the domestic regime, but also upon the development of culture and counter-culture themselves.

The only field where the Titoist Yugoslavia chose to align to the policies of the other communist states was *religion*. Religion was both repressed and isolated on a large scale, even on a scale larger than what happened in Romania over the same years. However, Tito's rationale was different than the idea of replacing religion with the Marxist-Leninist "people's opium": the Yugoslav Federation was a multi-religious state, where Christian Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Islamism and Judaism coexisted, not to mention other smaller religious cults. The official atheism was also a way to reduce the "asperities" between the Yugoslav peoples and to maintain political stability, as well.

In conclusion, there was repression in Yugoslavia,[23] but to a more reduced extent as seen in other communist countries and within a shorter period of life (which unfortunately does not change too much the overall picture, for we consider irrelevant whether a political system imprisoned 200.000 persons for political causes, like in Romania, or "only" 32.000, like in Yugoslavia). All types of limitations of political and civil liberties that were criticized in the totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe existed in former Yugoslavia, too – except for the freedom of circulation that all the population enjoyed –, although these limitations were applied on shorter periods and at different degrees of intensity. However, the regime was perceived both in the inside and from the outside as the most liberal one of all the communist regimes.

III. Internal contradictions and Tito's solution

Another element that differentiates communist Yugoslavia from other countries of the former Soviet bloc is its ethnic diversity, translated in administrative terms into a federal structure.

Both the USSR and Czechoslovakia were federal states. But the federalism of the Soviet Union was only apparent, if we think of the powerful Russian hegemony, visible in the very statute of the Russian language, which was the official language of the entire Union, and last but not least at the level of every individual republic. In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, we had a sort of "dualism", translated into a partnership between two republics that were closely similar in size and also ethnically and linguistically similar.

In Yugoslavia, this kind of diversity was straightforwardly disconcerting for the Westerners, who were confronted with six republics – Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovenia and Montenegro – plus two autonomous provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo-Metohija, both in Serbia), and all were inhabited by about 26 ethnic groups. Except for Slovenia, all the other 5 republics were actually an ethnic mosaic whose cohesion was ensured by acceptable standards of living and, paradoxically, by Tito's absolute power, who would forbid any kind of nationalist movement with separatist goals.[24]

One of the causes of the differences between the Yugoslav communists and Moscow, which eventually took to the 1948 break-up from Moscow, was represented by the very particular structure of the Yugoslav federation, which did not permit the application as such of the formulas and solutions imposed by the Soviets to the other communist countries. The reconcilement of the small nations that formed the Yugoslav federation, each with its own traditions and aspirations, and each with its particular expectations from a regime created through a legitimate war of independence from the German occupation (1941-1944), was much more difficult than governing through terror, as Stalin used to do in the USSR. The formal cause of Tito's break-up with Stalin (or better said, of his excommunication by the latter) is known for a fact: the Yugoslav leader refused to take part in the great Balkan federation that Moscow was preparing,[25] and that was for obvious reasons. The existence of some differences with Bulgaria in the issue of Macedonia, as well as in the Albanian problem from Kosovo, made Tito very reserved to the question of such political projects, which risked to destabilize Yugoslavia, a state where the interethnic balance had been seriously jeopardized during the war, and trust was so difficult to be gained back. Tito preferred to look for his own way to build the socialist society and for his "own way to the communism", which was motivated both by his wish to remain the only master over Yugoslavia's fate and by the multi-ethnic and multicultural specificity of the country, which imposed to the leader from Belgrade much caution in adopting the Soviet solutions and suggestions.

IV. The roots of the Yugoslav communism

Communism also had in Yugoslavia more powerful origins than in other East European states, some of these roots even preceding the communist movement from USSR.

First of all, it was the *zadruga* concept, which was a form of organizing the community in the villages form the West Balkans, from the Middle Age and up to the dawns of modernity, with the only exception provided by the Slovene villages.

Zadruga was an organization that comprised from a few individuals up to 70-80 people, interrelated through direct kinship or in-law associations (marriage, god-parenting). These people had joint ownership upon the important property – lands, production means, meadows, orchards, lakes, etc. – and private property was reduced only to some personal stock of each individual. Labor was equally divided, but according to everyone's capabilities: the children were responsible with herding the cattle, the women and the elders dealt with household activities, easy agricultural works were assigned both to adult men and women, while the hard works were only assigned to men. The community was ruled by an old man, called *domaćin*, who had domestic administrative and legal duties, as well as responsibilities in exerting the (Ottoman and Habsburg, respectively) state authority, according to the area. There was also a mistress of the *zadruga* that was called *domaćica*: she had to take care of the children's and young girls' education and of the cultivation of folk arts.

Several *zadruga* used to form a village, which at a larger scale would reproduce the same community structure, with joint ownership and exploitation through labor division, but in equal proportions. All the *domaćins* would form a *village council*, which had increased competences in deciding upon the rotations in using the lands, mills, ovens, wells, woods, maintenance of roads. This council was also the community's tax collector, which they further delivered to the tax authorities of the village, and they were also granted legal powers and moral censorship.[26]

Zadruga left deep marks in the collective mentalities of the ex-Yugoslavs and, even if the official propaganda has always denied that, this form of organization also hallmarked the original solutions of the communist regime, such as in the theory of self-management and in the respective administrative practices, which always emphasized the community's roles and the autonomous decision-making.

Beside *zadruga*, which anticipated certain forms of communist social organization, the Yugoslav communism was also rooted in another domestic reality that was both powerful and prestigious.

This is the former Austrian social democracy from Slovenia, Croatia and the Serbian Banat. The Socialist Party of Austria, one of the most powerful parties of the ex-Austro-Hungarian Empire was increasingly heading towards Marxism in the eve of the First World War. Tito himself had begun his political career in this party, first as a trade union activist (1910), and then as a full member. In developed industrial regions like Vojvodina (north of Serbia), Slovenia and Croatia, the ideology of the left had profound roots, and the future Yugoslav Communist Party many times came and took advantage of these pre-existent structures that were trade unionist and party-like, and which were remnants left from the extinct Socialist Party of Austria.

The post-war political polarization in former Yugoslavia therefore occurred on other criteria than in the states of Central and East Europe, and the repression, despite playing its part in the Yugoslav society, was more limited than in the so-called "popular democracies". The reality is that the communist regime was perceived as a legitimate one by a large majority of the population, as well as by the intellectuals, unlike in the other East European countries, where this regime was the unfortunate result of the Soviet occupation and of a distribution of the "spheres of influence" from Yalta.

This legitimacy of the political regime, although it was about to fade away at the end of the federal state, nevertheless it was about to give a particular direction to artistic contestation.

V. An open and varied cultural system

The inevitable cultural diversity of the Yugoslav federation was to be stimulated by the very Titoist communist regime, both as a form of consolidation of his personal power (Tito being a ruler as authoritarian as any other communist leader),[27] as well as a way to consolidate the common state of the six republics.

If we pursue the relationship between the federal power and the powers of the each republic, between 1945 and 1974 – the date of the first communist Constitution and, respectively, the year of the last substantial amendment of the same – we can easily notice that the permanent tendency was to *diminish the functions and power of the federal structures,* in parallel with an *increase of the republican and provincial ones.* Practically, apart from the army, the police and external representation, which were all under the power of Tito himself, the other functions of the state (including the monetary issues[28]) passed, one by one, to the power of the constituent republics.

Most especially, education and culture were domains exclusively under the power of each republic, which – considering the constitutional provisions that were favorable to the minority languages and cultures – could not take but to a *space of cultural diversities* within the Yugoslav space. Unfortunately, as we shall see, the socialist illusion prevented them from doubling this *space of cultural diversities* with a *culture of the diversity itself*: since nobody dared to challenge the communist nature of the state or the unity of the federation, the Communist Party considered that socialism and its myths was sufficient to make the Yugoslavs live together in harmony. The absence of a culture of diversity, tolerance and political compromise was to appear as fatal in 1991, when the collapse of communism and the falling apart of the federal state were accomplished by means of a series of bloody civil wars. Unfortunately, as we shall see, the *critical and contestatory action of counter-culture did not suffice to build a culture of diversity and tolerance.*

The stimulation of cultural diversity and the protection of the specificity of each of the six republics that formed Yugoslavia, despite the merciless political calculations that stood behind it, finally took to the establishment of a Yugoslav cultural system more open and varied than in other socialist states. This opening could not be but favorable to counter-culture, which was thus able to express itself in Yugoslavia with more freedom than in any other socialist state.

Within this system, alternative culture appeared earlier (and in better articulated forms) than in the remaining communist world, and was massively affirmed in the 1960s and 1970s, became dominant in the 1980s and left its imprints upon the political and cultural context of the last decade of the federation.

A favoring element was the heterogeneity of censorship, which was caused by the decentralization and the increased transfer of prerogatives from the centre toward the republics and provinces. This is why censorship in Yugoslavia was an institution that had very different aspects from one republic to another, and from the federal to the republican level. More severe in Belgrade – where the federal structures were located, together with those of the largest republic, Serbia –, censorship was more permissive in other republics, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina or Croatia, a fact that explains the more rapid developments of some counter-culture genres– and the rock music, first of all – at the margins, and not in the centre. However, there were also some contrary situations, especially close to the end of the communist regime: small local tyrants, ruling with their cultural and public order prerogatives, and who, in the name of decentralization, censored some rock shows, which, for instance, in Belgrade had been quite free to perform.[29]

Within the Yugoslav alternative culture, there were similar genres to those that could be seen in Western Europe, but – given the cultural richness of a multiethnic society as the Yugoslav one – certain original ways also developed, which answered the public's expectations and got adapted to the particular context of the Yugoslav society.

VI. The political constituency of the alternative culture

The political constituency of counter-culture was recognized even by its first theorist, Theodore Roszak, despite the fact that he put an emphasis on the social and cultural dimension of the new structure appeared at the beginning of the 1960s. Late research has insisted, nevertheless, more than ever on the political role of counter-culture and on its commitment(s) to that effect.

For instance, according to Steven Jezo-Vannier, the political constituency, that of *opposition* and *contestation*, is essential in defining counter-culture. It actually links the various historical forms of counter-culture:

> La dissidence contre-culturelle este une lame de fond qui traverse les époques. Ses racines sont nombreuses et pongent profondément dans le passé, convergeant chaque fois vers des mouvements plus anciens. Les référents sont plus ou moins directs, mais permettent de dessiner les contours d'une tradition de la dissidence, voire, quelques fois d'une véritable lignée, d'une chaîne continue. Ainsi, on peut observer que al contestation des *sixties* a nourri les élans qui lui ont succédé, des punks au hackers; tout comme elle a elle-même puisé dans ses prédécesseurs: beatniks, situationnistes, surréalistes, bohèmes, s'inspirant même parfois d'expériences tirées d'un passé beaucoup plus lointain.[30]

However, in a communist regime one must make a difference between *mere contestation* and *counter-cultural contestation*.

And this is why we say that there was an implicitly contestatory side in any valuable work of art that managed to be brought out in a communist regime. Any valuable work is by itself a testimony of the false equalitarian theories, and acts against the moral and intellectual proletarization that is the ultimate goal of any communist regime. It is not about this type of implicit contestation that we speak here. Counter-cultural contestation always implies *an explicit and public gesture of fighting the officials*, of open confrontation with the various bodies of the propaganda and repression (from mass media to various party organizations).

The political constituency of the Yugoslav alternative culture was from the very beginning visible and assumed by its representatives. As from its early age already, when it had not yet parted with the scholarly culture proper (in the 1950s), alternative culture has been established as a way of contestation of the communist regime, more precisely of the socialist realism as the unique cultural way.

As a matter of fact, socialist realism, as performed in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania and the other socialist states, did not represent the main target of the Yugoslav contestation of the 1950s. And this was because from this viewpoint, as well, the Titoist communism was also different, as it did not introduce the socialist realism as the unique method of creation, as it happened in the remaining communist world.

I have spoken before of the roots of the Yugoslav communism. They made that, in the inter-war period, quite a large number of valuable intellectuals, especially young ones, were to enlarge the lines of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, now still illegal. Tito himself had a close collaborator in the person of the surrealist artist Moša Pijade (1890-1957), who would become in the Second World War the founder of the Tanjug

Press Agency and the informal leader of the propaganda.[31] Pijade was a cultivated man, even refined, and that is why the application of the party policies in the propagandistic and agitatoric work, especially after the break-up with Moscow, were to move away more and more from the Soviet patterns. Pijade did not encourage purges, interdictions and physical repression against the intellectuals that were not aligned to the Communist Party and neither did he ask for the organization of Party cells within the artistic Unions, which thus remained politically independent throughout their entire life.

Pijade did not agree either with the introduction of the socialist realism in the letters or visual arts. He first encouraged a few dogmatic artists, but when confronted with the opposition of some genuine men of letters– like Vasko Popa, Miodrag Pavlović –, the Party executives did not make any interventions in favor of dogmatism, and the socialist realism eventually disappeared as fast as the cooperativization in agriculture.

However, although the socialist realism did not strike roots in Yugoslavia, the disputes around it at the beginning of the 1950s maintained quite a dogmatic *climate*, aggravated after the unexpected death of Moša Pijade, in 1957. The most prestigious victim of this *dogmatic atmosphere* was Branko Miljković (1934-1961), considered by the critics as one of the most talented young poets affirmed after the Second World War.[32]

The personality of Miljković, a spectacular and troubling poet, reunited, in fact, two contestatory sides: that of the inter-war Yugoslav avant-garde and that of the artistic bohemianism from Belgrade.

The first side produced the novelty of his poetic formula, which in all that concerned themes and style was breaking up not only with the Party's poetry (very fashionable by then, just like the regime), but also with an entire lyrical and classic-like tradition of Serbian poetry. Not by a simple coincidence the consecration of Miljković was to be jointly connected with the avant-garde that was still active in Belgrade in the 1950s: although, as a student at the Faculty of Philosophy, he had refused to join the Party, the poet became famous after the publication of a volume of poems in the influential literary magazine *Delo* (in 1955), whose editor-in-chief was the great Serbian surrealist artist Oskar Davičo. Though a communist, Davičo did not feel outraged by the anti-system attitude of Miljković, and saw in him the post-war continuator of the big break-up operated by the poetic avant-garde in the inter-war period. More aged than Miljković, the older "heretic" Davičo was to repeatedly protect his younger and trouble congener.[33]

When the young poet was only 19, the Miljkovićs moved from Niš to Belgrade, and their son started to attend to the bohemian circles of Belgrade. He was definitely an adorer of Bacchus' liquor and he liked marginal milieus. The traditional pubs of the Yugoslav capital city were an environment where unpoliticised artists, sports people and intellectuals used to meet,[34] very close to interlopes and losers, anonymous people and the few opposers of the political regime. The opposition of Branko Miljković to the system was due more to the restrictions imposed to him by the editorial system, which directly hit him as the uncommitted poet and "rebel" that he was, against a Serbian poetic tradition that was very convenient to the regime. After a few conflicts with the public order bodies, the poet got arrested for several times and was even publicly denounced on the cover of *Duga* (1957), in a discreditable photograph, which showed him blind drunk. Later on, Miljković chose this very magazine *Duga* to announce his readers, by means of a letter sent from Zagreb, that he refused the October Prize from Belgrade on 1960: an official prize of big prestige that was meant to celebrate the city's independence achieved in 1944 by Tito's partisans and the Soviet army. The refusal of this prize raised a new wave of hostility towards him from the regime, as it was interpreted as an open gesture of opposition to a political power that still enjoyed an immense, internal and external, popularity.[35]

The case of l Miljković does not illustrate only the convergence of the avant-garde and bohemianism with the counter-culture, but also the particular way of operation of censorship in Yugoslavia, which was more severe in the capital city and less strict in the constituent republics. In 1960, fed up with the permanent editorial harassment and the continual fights with the activists and the Police from Belgrade, Branko Miljković surprisingly moved to Zagreb, where he got a job in the cultural show broadcast at the local radio channel. At Zagreb, a little bit further from the vigilant eye of his censors and from the radicals of the political regime, the poet knew a short period of relative peace. And then, in the night of the 12th to 13th of February 1961, he was found hanged in a distant park from Zagreb. His death, which was officially qualified as suicide, is still a mystery today.[36]

Almost concomitantly to the poetic experience of Branko Miljković, another group representative of the early counter-culture manifested their art in the Titoist Yugoslavia: the *Mediala* group.

The members of this group first met in 1953, at an exhibition that was celebrating the art of Le Corbusier and had been organized by two students at the Faculty of Architecture, Leonid Šeijka and Siniša Vukotić. Other two artists came to this exhibition, too: Dado Đurić and Uroš Tošković. The four of them discussed about the works of Le Corbusier, his urban style and the newly formed group further got enlarged step by step, until, in 1957, the first semi-official nucleus of *Mediala* was formed by a group of friends under the name of *Baltazar*. Beside the aforementioned artists, we could also mention Miro Glavurtić, Mišel Kontić, Peđa Ristić, Vukota Vukotić and Olja Ivanjicki as part of this group nucleus. The name *Mediala* was taken in the following year, when the group exposed part of their works (Olja Ivanjicki, Leonid Šejka, Miro Glavurtić and Vladan Radovanović) under the title *Media research*. This was the first multimedia exhibition in Yugoslavia, which reunited paintings, objects, photographs, texts and sounds. The group members published programmatic texts first in the review *Vidici (Horizons)*, and then in their own review entitled *Mediala*, which was brought out starting from 1959.[37]

Ideologically speaking, during its first years *Mediala* was not a group hostile to the Communist Party. On the contrary, the first programs and debates, which approached the problems of modern urbanism in the wake of the ideas expressed by some left-wing architects like Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Oscar Niemeyer, raised the interest of the state rulers, who were interested both to rebuild the country after a tough war and to "upgrade" the patriarchal Yugoslav society. However, with the passing of time, the manifestations of this group grew to conflicts with the officials because of the artistic liberties they increasingly indulged to. *Mediala* gradually abandoned the urban experiments and developed rather a theory of its own on modern art, which totally contradicted the Marxist aesthetics. The very name of the group contains a destructive, disobeying and dissident core: *med* meant *honey*, but *ala* was the scary *dragon.*

Two of the personalities of *Mediala* are particularly important for the theme of this study: Olja Ivanjicki (1931-2009) and Milić od Mačve (1934-2000).

Olja Ivanjicki was probably the first *Pop Art* artist of East Europe, in a period when this art movement was still at its beginnings in the United States. A chance made that the young female artist, a fresh graduate (1957) of the Academy of Fine Arts, could win the first scholarship awarded by the Ford Foundation in the East Europe, so that she went to study art in the United States in 1962. She soon arrived in Los Angeles, the epicenter of *Pop Art* painting of California, in the very years when artists like Edward Kienholz, Wallace Berman, Edward Ruscha or Mel Ramos, expanding the openings of inter-war avant-gardes, managed to "assimilate advertising, the conventions of commercial art and their own techniques into specific forms."[38] Olja Ivanjicki developed her own style, which mixed up cultural allusions and the flamboyant style from Hollywood, by emphasizing (more than her American art fellows) the sexual element and the challenge of the bourgeois morality. In a Yugoslav communism that was as prude as any other of East Europe, her pan-sexuality, erotism and lack of inhibitions drew the attention of some young rock musicians who shared similar ideas. The pictural style of Olja Ivanjicki decisively influenced the stage style of the Bijelo Dugme band, the most influential rock band in the history of Yugoslavia.

Much more collusive was to be the contact of artist Milić od Mačve with the authorities. If Olja Ivanjicki was only criticized now and then, in marginal propagandistic publications, by dogmatic critics left behind by the art history, on the other hand Milić od Mačve directly experienced censorship. In 1963, when he still signed as Milić Stanković, on the occasion of an exhibition organized at the Museum of Šabac, the authorities mistook letter „ć" of the Serbian Cyrillic alphabet, found in the end of the artist's surname and name („ћ"), for an allusion to … the cross. Although a liberal one, the communist regime was atheist. Since the religious orientation of Milić od Mačve's art was more and more visible – though a mixture of pre-Christian Balkan paganism, Orthodox Christianity and esoteric spiritualism –, the pretext of his allusion to the Christian cross was enough for the exhibition to be closed, and the artist to be criticized in many Party meetings in Šabac, his native region. The artist was saved when he went on a tour in Western Europe (Italy, Switzerland, France), where he scored a considerable success of press, criticism and public, and thus could go back to Belgrade somehow "protected" by this international success. Nevertheless, the attention of the authorities stayed close on him, and the label of "religious artist" continued to make him a suspect in the eyes of the authorities. The edition of 1 September 1965 of the newspaper *Večernje novosti* denounced him for the only reason that Patriarch Gherman of Serbia had bought two works of his new collection:[39] that was a clear invitation for the authorities to stay vigilant toward this artist who was liked by the ultimate provider of the "people's opium", as the Patriarch was perceived.

The 1960s also brought in the Yugoslav cultural world a phenomenon that was to report a rapid and spectacular development, and then escalate the world of counter-cultural manifestations, by guiding them to a direction very similar to that of Western counter-culture. This was the ***rock music***.

The Yugoslav rock was born in Sarajevo, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This fact may seem strange to the people who only know the today's Sarajevo, a city to a much extent Islamized due to the ravages caused by the war, and very far away from the cultural brilliance it had during the second Yugoslav age (1945-1991). The actual truth is that, at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, without being a cultural capital greater than Belgrade or Zagreb, Sarajevo was still a place where the artists enjoyed much freedom, and censorship was even more relaxed than in the first two cities of the Federation. Besides, Sarajevo, as a result of its tumultuous history, was equally an environment with a pronounced multiethnic and multicultural character, where the Muslim influences (much reduced by the official atheism) were counterbalanced by the Western influences, in the wake of the Austrians and the Germans.

The first rock band officially recognized in former Yugoslavia was founded in 1962 and was named Indexi: it was the same year when the Beatles were founded and one year before the Rolling Stones. Two years later, in 1964 – maybe influenced by the film *The Young Ones*, considered to have influenced even the appearance of some rock bands in Romania –,[40] a festival unique in the East Europe started in Belgrade: it was entitled *Gitarijada* and was meant to stimulate the bands of "electric guitars" (as they were called by the time), and also to discover and propose the future leaders of this musical genre. Indexi reported a long success, and in 1967, influenced by the Beatles' album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, they adopted the psychedelic style in music, clothing and lifestyle, being the first promoters of the use of narcotics as means of releasing the creativity.[41] Indexi actually gave a signal for the alignment of several other bands that were at the beginning of their careers, and the musicians grown in this band – Ranko Rihtman, Kornelije Kovač, Davorin Popović, Ismet Arnautalić, Milić Vukašinović, Kemal Monteno – are now some of the most remarkable voices of the musical stage in the current states of ex-Yugoslavia.

The end of the decade 1960-1970 marked the generalization of a new form of musical expression. Tens of rock bands were born in all the Yugoslav regions, encouraged by the cultural decentralization, the tourism opening of the country and, of course, by the freedom of circulation of the Yugoslav citizens, which allowed them to get informed in due time about everything that was new in the Western culture and to procure the instruments, equipment and facilities that were missing in other socialist countries.

Nevertheless, the end of the decade did not find Yugoslavia in good peace. On the one hand, the young people's dissatisfaction toward the ossification of the regime grew, and on the other hand, new nationalistic outbursts could be seen in Croatia and Slovenia[42]– against the background of remarkable attempts of economic and political liberalization.[43] Old by now, Tito seemed to face the challenges with much difficulty. But the year 1968 proved that "Stari" ("The Old Man"), as he was called, had enough hat tricks left.

VII. Alternative culture and the Yugoslav cultural canon after 1968

In the history of contemporary civilized world, 1968 is a year of student revolutions that started in Paris and continued in Great Britain, Federal Germany and even in Franco's Spain. The youth got out in the streets on barricades and expressed a left-wing ideology that was most of the time unclear. What is certain, however, is that they asked for profound reforms in education and society. Analyzed today from a conservatory perspective, 1968 was a year of absurdities, for the young contestatory Westerners asked to their rulers to become communists, while preserving all their liberties, which seems simply impossible in theoretic terms. Now we know that the communist regimes are always based on the same poverty that numbs the good senses, initiative and critical spirit, thus reviving the equalitarian tendencies, but also leaving the power to suppress any freedoms.

However, something was true in the anarchic outcome of those Western young people. The Western society truly needed some reforms if it wanted to arise from the "technocratic slumber" and from the convenient belief that it was "the best world possible". More flexibility, more care to the disadvantaged, a polycentric cultural perspective were undoubtedly necessary in Western Europe.

Unlike in other socialist countries, the young Yugoslavs were in a paradoxical situation. They were living in a totalitarian communist regime, but also in a prosperous society that had produced – as predicted one decade before by the dissident Milovan Djilas[44] – its own privileged and middle-class. In all the communist countries, the contestation of the young came from the right wing. In Yugoslavia, this contestation came, just like in the Occident, from the left wing: in July 1968, the students from Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Novi Sad, following the model of their Parisian colleagues, got barricaded in the universities and, through *sit-in*s, *teach-in*s, meetings and *samizdat* publications, protested against the hypocrisy of the regime, against stagnation, corruption, poverty and inefficient educational methods. Glad that, unlike the Westerners, the Yugoslav students did not contest the communist regime *de plano,* Tito personally showed up on TV and, by a strategy typical to the great political actors, took over and appropriated their claims.[45] He used them only to distract the people's attention from the rebirth of nationalism in Croatia, Slovenia and Kosovo-Metohija, on the one hand, but also to fight his war with the "young wolves", as they called the reformists on top of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

As a matter of fact, with the unexpected help of the students' contestations, Tito prepared the land to make his hits in 1971: that is, to end up with the liberals of the Communists' League and liquidate the Croatian nationalism now in full force. However inappropriate this contestation *from the left* of the Yugoslav socialist regime may seem today, it however revealed the weak points and hypocrisy of the communist regime from Belgrade and provoked profound political and constitutional changes. The amendments to the Constitution of R. S. F. Y., produced in 1968 and 1974, consolidated the prerogatives of the constituent republics and weakened the authority of the central government from Belgrade – thus preparing the premises for the future collapse of the communist regime and disintegration of Yugoslavia – and all of these can be said to have been direct consequences of the 1970s contestation.

This was also the time that marked a breaking point in the transformation of the alternative culture – rock music, unconventional theatre, *happenings*, *entertainment*, and avant-garde cultural manifestations such as *Pop Art* or modern art – from a marginal phenomenon to a central one that retained the entire public and undertook the fundamental themes of the social dialogue, in an opposition more and more obvious to the public policies of the current regime. The counter-culture artists – either rock stars like the Bijelo Dugme band, or the artists from *Mediala*, or the young nonconformist writers that made their debut now – all became much respected and influential names of the proper culture.

The best proof of this fact will be the exceptional career of the rock group Bijelo Dugme (meaning The White Button) and of his leader, the famous musician Goran Bregović.

Just like Indexi, Bijelo Dugme was founded in Sarajevo (only in 1974) and was, throughout its entire life, a multiethnic group, with Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Jews etc.[46] We can trace three periods in the life of this rock band: 1) the period of imitation of the great Western rock bands (1974-1975); 2) the ethno-rock period (1975-1981), and 3) the period of open political commitment (1981-1989).

During the first two years after formation, Bijelo Dugme tried to imitate the sound, appearance and behavior of the great Western rock bands, and the most probable musical pattern used was that of the English band Deep Purple. Sometimes they took over and adapted unconsciously certain hits of these bands, and their outfits and equipment were created to fit those patterns. Bijelo Dugme was the first Yugoslav band that understood the need to go out from singing in clubs and start to give concerts in large open spaces (the concert in Hajdučka ćesma, in 1977 being a reference point in this respect).

During this first period, the band didn't experience any problems with the censors and was neither restricted in any way in any of its activities. After the constitutional reform of 1974, Yugoslavia had found its stability for the moment, and earned a new tranche of the international funding. The country seemed to regain its exceptional rhythm of economic growth. The Titoist regime was not troubled at all by the huge volume of decibels that Bijelo Dugme, taking after Deep Purple, would throw in the ears of their listeners: it was only some good evidence that the regime was capable to resist well to its ideological enemy behind the Iron Curtain.

The problems and confrontations with the official ideology started to appear after the second album, *Šta bi dao da si na mom mjestu/ What would you give to be in my shoes* (1975), recorded in London. With this album, the band was not satisfied only to follow a Western pattern, but it also looked for a source of inspiration: the rich Yugoslav folklore. The members of the band understood that the Western rock music contained quite a big amount of folklore, either Afro-American (the *blues*) or Anglo-Saxon (the *country*). Therefore, since folklore was a legitimate component of this music, an original music could have been produced if they replaced the elements of the foreign folklore with autochthonous ones. (Such thing had already happened in Romania with the music of Phoenix, who started to do that as early as in 1971, and the results were remarkable.)

With Bijelo Dugme, the ethno-rock synthesis brought a considerable change of terms for the rock music of Yugoslavia. Until then, with all the development reported in the previous decade, the rock music was still an urban business, reserved to the public of high cultural level. But now, ethno-rock was a language accessible to anyone. This fact turned Bijelo Dugme from a very good band into a symbol of the young generation, who now found themselves – regardless of the region, education or ideological sympathies – in the songs of Goran Bregović and of his rock fellows.

This statute also brought the band members under the press spotlights and aroused repeated conflicts with the authorities. The cover of their third album, *Eto! Baš hoću!/ Be my guest! I really want it!* (1975), which was a processed image of a debatable *Pop Art* painting of Olja Ivanjicki, was considered sexist, pornographic and provocative. If the alcohol addiction of the vocal Željko Bebek did not actually bother anyone – in a country where the consumption of alcohol was quite high –, the consumption and even (according to some rumors) the traffic of drugs of the drummer Ipe Ivandić called the attention of the Police. The artists' non-conformist outfits were tolerated on the stage but they were more difficult to be exposed in television studios. At the same time, as an "official" band, with hundreds of albums sold every year and frequent appearances on radio and television, Bijelo Dugme, just like many other artists, was supposed to make a contribution to Tito's personality cult: with much ability, Goran Bregović avoided, until the band's break-up, not only to sing a single song of propaganda, but even to utter the simplest sentence that could have been interpreted as in favor of the regime. Eventually, the band raised a big question mark to the official ideologues when they collaborated with the poet Duško Trifunović, a former political prisoner at Goli Otok, whose lyrics for the songs of Bijelo Dugme were many times considered to challenge the regime.

The method by which the officials tried to restrict the Bijelo Dugme phenomenon was very surprising, at least for someone who is not familiar with the world of the communist East. Strictly speaking, they used the so-called *mandatory military service.* Yugoslavia was very reliant on its army, which, after the country's independence from the German occupation, enjoyed very much the respect of the population. Irrespective whether they were students or not, the young had to undergo the military service, which lasted not less than two years. The rules were very strict, there were no favors for anyone and, besides, the army was used also as a means of ethnic homogenization, so that the chances to perform your service close to one's domicile were actually none. According to the well-documented *Ex-Yu Rock Enciklopedija,*[47] in the period 1975-1981 the Bijelo Dugme band was literally harassed by its members leaving to the army, a fact that produced an almost uncontrollable fluctuation of performers in the band's composition and a slow-down in the rhythm of their tours and recordings. Every time the enrollment in the military service of a Bijelo Dugme member used to be a result of a particular confrontation with their censors or authorities. And then, two songs of the band put an end to this situation, whose visible aim was actually to destroy the band. In 1980, in the album *Doživjeti stotu (Long you may live for one hundred years!),* there was a song entitled *Pesma mom bratu (A song for my brother),* which allusively but intelligibly to everyone, approached for the first time the issue of the violence in the Yugoslav army. In 1983, too, disguised in a children's song, *A milicija trenira strogoču/ The Militia makes you "stronger"*, the band ironically accused the brutality of the Militia forces. Only after these proofs that the counter-culture artists can answer back in subtle but influential ways, the officials ceased to harass the band with the military service.

As liberal as they may have been, we cannot say that the Yugoslav officials did not do anything they could against the pressure of counter-culture, especially that this pressure was continually growing and threatened to become the real culture of the young generation. Just like in other countries, they first tried to prevent counter-culture from full affirmation, and then to control it. Since they did not manage to do it – Tito's showing up on TV as a spokesman of the students' claims also had this result: it was a hard blow for the institutional authorities –, then they tried to detour it: to create something that looked like counter-culture but was ideologically favorable to the regime. The Romanian phenomenon of the "Flacăra" Circle was represented in the Titoist Yugoslavia by a few artists, some of them honorable, who interpreted folk-rock songs on propaganda texts. For instance, the Rani Mraz (Early Frost) band, led by Đorđe Balašević, the author, in 1978, of the song *Računajte na nas/ You can rely on us,* was for a few years the official hymn of the communist youth movement, and even the great artist Zdravko Čolić interpreted the song *Druže Tito, mi ti se kunemo!/ Comrade Tito, we swear faith to you!* The paradoxical outcome of these songs is that they were actually very popular and sung by many young people in informal contexts,[48] which proved that, turned into rock music, even the propaganda paradoxically became an act of counter-culture.

The death of Tito was to be strangely preceded by the launching of the most contestatory band of the post-Titoist decade. In 1979, at Belgrade, in the same *Šumatovac* restaurant where Nichita Stănescu wrote the volume *Belgradul în cinci prieteni* (*The Belgrade of Five Friends*, brought out in 1972, but written one year before), the *Riblja čorba (Fish Sour Soup)* band laid its foundations.

VIII. Agony, dogmatism, open political opposition

The death of Josip Broz Tito (in 1980) opened the way to a fundamental relocation of the Yugoslav communist regime, which, on the one hand, reaffirmed a more radical form of Titoism than during the dictator's life (and launched the slogan *Tito after Tito*), and on the other hand questioned a lot of the Yugoslavia's taboos, of which the first was the organization of the federal state.

During these debates – which started calmly and unfortunately ended in the blood bath of the civil war of 1991-1995 –, alternative culture occupied a foreground position.

But the unity of the 1970s, by then nourished from the opposition to the political regime, was now to break up to pieces at the end of the 1980s, when we see, for instance, the Bijelo Dugme rock band and the singer Đorđe Balašević taking explicit pro-Yugoslav positions (against the separatist tendencies of the six republics), the Bosnian singer Dino Merlin taking a spiritual refuge in the Islamic fundamentalism, or the rebellious rockers from Riblja Čorba adopting a bohemian contestation of the regime, which anticipated in a strange way the attitude of the Serbian nationalism of the 1990s.

After a decade of confronting the official authorities, Bijelo Dugme got out from that stronger than ever. The popularity of the group members was equal to that of famous football players, and the transfer of one of their performers – Laza Ristovski – from Smak to Bijelo Dugme was front-page news. But, on the other hand, the band risked to be ruined by scandals, the most serious of them being the accusation of drug traffic. The group drummer Ipe Ivandić was even sentenced to prison for drug consumption (and was about to die in Belgrade of an overdose, in 1996), and the second vocal, Mladen Vojčić-Tifa, was finally forced to stop his music career in this band in 1985, because of his involvement in a drug traffic network from Sarajevo. The Ivandić and Tifa cases, so tragic in fact, showed how far this idea of the drugs as means of creative liberation had gone: what in the counter-culture of the 1960s used to be a way to part with the artificial barriers of the bourgeois society, now in the post-Titoist Yugoslavia, just like in Western Europe in general, had become a disaster.

Besides, Bijelo Dugme got politically engaged in a way that had no precedents in the Yugoslav rock. Practically, the band sensed ever since the beginning of the decade, the centrifugal tendencies that threatened the federal state and urged by reborn nationalistic movements, and the last four albums of the band are like the gradual steps of an explicitly pro-Yugoslav political program, played with the instruments of the rock music.

The fist of them, *Uspavanka za Radmilu M./ Lullaby for Radmila M.* (1983), the last one having Željko Bebek as vocal, includes a song entitled *Kosovska*, which is interpreted in Albanian together with the Berisha brothers, famous musicians of Kosovo. This was the beginning of a demonstrative plan of ethno-rock synthesis that started from the music of all the important ethnic groups of Yugoslavia. It was obvious that this song stirred the Serbian feelings, and was considered insulting to the suffering Serbs of Kosovo, not to mention a support to the Albanian separatists.

It was definitely not so, which was to be proven by the following album, a nameless one,[49] but that everyone knew as the album of *Kosovka djevojka/ The Maiden from Kosovo*, after the classic painting of the Serbian artist Uroš Predić, who proposed a romantic interpretation of the myth of the battle from Kosovo Polje (1389). The folk music orchestra of the Skoplje television, as well as the renown Serbian and Macedonian interpreters, cooperated in an ethno-rock synthesis that was strongly influenced by the Serbian songs from Kosovo. Furthermore, an ironic interpretation of the state hymn *Hej Sloveni/ Hey you, Slavs* called the people's attention on the rebirth of nationalisms and on the separatist tendencies of the Croats and Slovenes.

The most radical pro-Yugoslav album was *Pljuni i zapjevaj, moja Jugoslavijo* (1986). The cover texts were written both in Latin and Cyrillic alphabet, and the folkloric inspiration came from Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia, while a prophecy line of Branko Miljković, "Ko ne sluša pjesmu slušaće oluju"("He who's not listening to my song will hear the storm") was warning the people against the dangers of the nationalist discourse in Yugoslavia, which was now also facing an economic crisis. (As an irony of the fate, the operation of the Croatian army that in 1995 was to entirely purge the Serbs from Croatia got to be named *Oluja - The Storm*).

This album brought a big scandal in the nationalist circles of all the Yugoslav republics. During a television show on the Sarajevo Television in February 1987, a rock journalist from Belgrade, Dragan Kremer, ostentatiously tore to pieces the album cover and stirred the biggest media scandal of Yugoslavia until then.[50]

Finally, the last studio album of the band, *Ćiribiribela* (1988), came with a new challenge: the *Đurđevdan* song, in translation *Saint George's Feast*, a very popular folkish song which eventually came to be considered genuine folk. Nevertheless, this was entirely cult, with lyrics written by Đorđe Balašević on the music of Goran Bregović! We should say that this was a most rare performance, to provide for the folklore with cult products, which proves how deeply spiritual counter-culture may be some of the times. However, it was not *Đurđevdan* that was subject to scandal, but a song entitled *Ljepa naša.../ Our beautiful...*, where Bregović simply mixed up the nationalist Croatian hymn *Ljepa naša domovina / How beautiful our country is!* with the nationalist Serbian hymn *Tamo daleko/ Far away, over there*!

And yet, it was not Bijelo Dugme who were to head the bill of contestation over the last decade of ex-Yugoslavia, but the new avant-garde movement entitled *Klokotrizam* and the rock band Riblja Čorba.

The *Klokotrism* was founded in 1979 around the personalities of the poets Adam Puslojić, Aleksandar Sekulić and Ioan Flora. We cannot assign to it a specific place of birth, for it was from the very beginning meant to be a pan-Yugoslav movement, subsequently joined by creators from Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and even Slovenia. It did not have acknowledged headquarters, a fact that followed the tradition of the avant-garde ever. Klokotrism did not propose to rebuild any connection with the inter-war Yugoslav avant-garde. They were rather a genuine avant-garde, a spiritual and not a bookish one. It is true that they were strongly influenced by Western counter-culture, for its main form of manifestation were the *happenings*. Of the Klokotrist artists there were some famous names from the ex-Yugoslav cultures, such as the poets Ivan Rastegorac, Predrag Bogdanović-Ci, Goran Babić, Nikola Šindik, the prose writers Moma Dimić and Ratko Adamović, the sculptor Kolja Milunović, and so on. The Klokotrist *happenings*, entitled *situakcija*, were assisted even by prestigious writers like Alan Ginsberg or Nichita Stănescu.

But these *situakcji*as were not actual *happening*s but only in what concerned their improvisation aspect. They were performed in large public squares, in spaces of symbolic value (like on the place of the former Nazi camp from Belgrade, on the shores of Sava), in front of an impressive number of viewers. Their improvisations did not regard only the interpretation, but also the creation itself: artists from various genres and arts would spontaneously create a new complex and syncretic artistic object, which was also ephemeral and always had a moral meaning.[51]

Klokotrism strangely anticipated, by its *situakcjias* on the communication crisis, the rewriting of the collective memory and of the story of degradation of human condition after the tragedy of break-up of Yugoslavia. It was not a coincidence that some of them, like the Croatian poet that Goran Babić, fell victims to the nationalistic fury and had to get exiled from Croatia and live until today in Belgrade.

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The rock band Riblja Čorba, founded by the musician and poet Borisav-Bora Đorđević in 1979, became not only the most popular, but also the most "hunted" by the authorities because of the behavior of his members outside the stage, and also because of its challenging texts for the regime. In a paradoxical way, Riblja Čorba also illustrated the collapse of counter-culture, which, pressed by the commercial and financial success, was prepared to become, at the end-'80s, mere entertainment. In a much more liberal Yugoslavia, whose economy underwent a public-private regime, this process was much more rapid and visible than in the other communist countries.

The music of this band is not extremely complicated. As confessed by its leader, it was from the very beginning meant to be a music more accessible than the progressive and intellectual rock of the '70s.[52] And yet, under their vulgar-commercial appearance, the texts are full of irony toward the official hypocrisy or, on the contrary, make clear testimonies of the misery and dullness that could be found behind the shining polished front of ex-Yugoslavia. If, musically speaking, Riblja Čorba is one of the first *New Wave* bands of East Europe,[53] with its texts we can read pages of postmodernism. On the one hand, this is because the texts avoid the "high" style, big themes and rather focus on trivial, marginal and everyday things, while on the other hand, it was because Bora Đorđević had an enormous propensity for parody and pastiche, which went up to creating cult texts written in a folk manner.

It will be hard to make a top of the scandals raised by this band. Their first albums (*Kost u grlu/ Bone stuck in your throat*, 1979, *Pokvarena* *mašta i prljave strasti/Shattered dreams and dirty passions*, 1981, *Mrtva priroda/ Still life*, 1981) are real inventories of the social problems about which the official Yugoslav discourse did not speak a word: the break-up of families, poverty, alcoholism, materialism, indifference, intolerance, de-spiritualization. The music of these years was tough, almost brutal, only in order to highlight the message of protest and to oppose the lyrical, entertaining music created after the officials' heart and tastes.

A wave of protests from the communist organizations of pensioners, partisans and conformist young people could be heard to the song *Na Zapadu ništa novo/ Nothing new in the West*, whose lyrics denounced, point by point, the much larger gap in the everyday's life between the Titoist communist ideals and the realities of the Yugoslav society. Without being properly censored, the band was harassed by the authorities and its leader almost got arrested.[54] He was even summoned for trial in Montenegro, in a law suit that he won most probably because of his popularity and the authorities' fear for riots if Bora Đorđević had been imprisoned.

In 1987, the song *Član Mafije/ Member of the Mafia* also stirred a storm of protests from several communist local and national organizations. The poet Bora Đorđević, who had refused to become a member of the Party while performing his military service,[55] simply associates the League of Communists of Yugoslavia with the Mafia. It was only the serious crisis that the federal state was now facing– only four years before its falling apart– that made this serious offence not to be punished mush harsher than with the actual verbal sanctions from the newspapers.[56]

IX. Weak points of alternative culture. The absence of the civil society

Any yet, why was not counter-culture capable to prevent the blood bath that marked the end of the communism and of the Yugoslav federal state?

A relative and handy answer would be that counter-culture – and, more precisely, its critical spirit and the cult for individual freedom – marked its own weakness, in the dispute with the reborn nationalisms. It was not actually the communist regime that destroyed the counter-culture (the regime only undermined it at the very most), but the violent assertion of the Balkan nationalisms. Neither the critical spirit, nor the cult for individual freedom was liable to encourage the predilection of counter-culture to the spirit of partnership. Or, in the absence of such spirit, there is no civil society and, should they not have one, who could take over the burden of so much diversity hidden under the tight uniform of the communist regime?

Even Edvard Kardelj, an official economic ideologist of Tito, had understood in 1977 that the old social communist pattern of equality and pauperism did not correspond any longer to the actual image of the Yugoslav society, which was now facing "a plurality of self-managed interests", after the economic growth that "provoked radical transformations in the social stratification, through a diversity of professions, productive businesses, and the sector of services."[57] Unfortunately, counter-culture only managed to emphasize the cracks appeared in the social body, together with the dysfunctionalities and dangers, and could not provide any solutions to that. Is this, perhaps, because this was not its part to play from the very beginning?

The absence of an organized civil society – destroyed after the removal of the liberals from the top management of the Communists' League of Serbia in 1971 – aggravated the weakening process and the force of civic persuasion of the alternative culture, and prevented it from exerting the role of mediator in the society, a fact that was about to further escalate violence and intolerance in the future disintegration of ex-Yugoslavia.

NOTES

[1] Theodore Roszak – "Preface", in *The Making of a Counter Culture*, Anchor Books/ Doubleday & Co. Inc, 1969, p. XII.

[2] *Ibidem*, p. XIII.

[3] Except for some extreme manifestations of the political counter-culture, such as the AUM sectarian group, responsible for many terrorist attacks.

[4] Roszak affirms that "the alienated young people are giving shape to something that looks like the saving vision that our endangered civilization requires" (*Ibidem*, p. 1).

[5] See "Lettre ouverte sur Vincennes", in *Vincennes. Une aventure de la pensée critique*, sous la direction de Jean-Michel Djian, préface de Pascal Binczak, Président de l'Université Paris 8, Flammarion, Paris, 2009, pp. 153-154.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 3.

[7] See chapter "Histoire d'un transfert", in *Vincennes. Une aventure...*, ed. cit., p. 185, as well as the letter addressed by the Rector Pierre Merlin to the Senate members, at p. 186.

[8] See the slogan "From a critic of the University to a critic of the Society", revealed in the photograph at pp. 22-23 of the anthology *Vincennes. Une aventure de la pensée critique*, ed. cit.

[9] For more information, see Doru Ionescu – *Club A – 42 de ani. Muzica tinereții tale* (Club A – 42 years. The music of your youth), with a foreword by Emil Barbu Popescu, Casa de pariuri literare, Bucharest, 2011.

[10] See Răzvan Voncu – "Falsa legitimare. Discursul naționalist în literatura deceniului 1980-1990" (False Legitimation. The Nationalist Discourse in the Literature of the Decade 1980-1990), in *Zece studii literare* (Ten Literary Studies), Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest, 2010, pp. 135-137.

[11] Theodore Roszak – *The Making of a Counter-Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*, California University Press, 1995.

[12] Steven Jezo-Vannier – *Contre-culture(s). Des Anonymous à Prométhée*, col. „Attitudes", Editions Le Mot et le Reste, Paris, 2013, p. 7.

[13] Christophe Bourseiller, Olivier Penot-Lacassagne (sous la direction de) – *Contre-cultures!*, CNRS Editions, Paris, 2013.

[14] Steven Jezo-Vannier, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-131.

[15] *Contre-cultures!*, ed. cit., pp. 33-46.

[16] *Ibidem*, p. 34.

[17] Stefano Bianchini – *La questione jugoslava*, Giunti Editore, Firenze, 1999 (quoted after the Romanian edition: Stefano Bianchini – *Problema iugoslavă*, translated by Luminița Cosma, All, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 87-88).

[18] *Idem.*

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 100.

[20] Barbara Jelavich – *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press (quoted after the Romanian edition: Barbara Jelavitch – *Istoria Balcanilor. II. Secolul al XX-lea*, translated by Mihai-Eugen Avădanei, Afterword by I. Ciupercă, Institutul European, Iași, 2000, p. 296.

[21] Stefano Bianchini, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

[22] *Idem.*

[23] The Western large syntheses published before 1991, such as the one of Barbara Jelavich, do not even mention it. Other monographs that are more recent, such as Stefano Bianchini's, only mentions it in passing (ed. cit., p. 89), and without specifying the number of victims. The explanation of such omission does not reside in any secrecy that may have wanted to hide the tragedy of the Goli Otok island, but in the favourable image that Tito enjoyed in Western Europe, after the break-up with Moscow (1948) and the liberal measures that followed it;

[24] On the repression of the "Croatian Spring", see Stefano Bianchini, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

[25] Barbara Jelavich, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-294.

[26] Stefano Bianchini, *op. cit.*, p. 12 and 14.

[27] "The charismatic figure and the enormous political influence exerted by the old marshal made any intervention of the same decisive in any field and at the same time also provided a crucial reference point to anybody." (*Ibidem*, p. 130; my translation / R.V.).

[28] *Ibidem*, p. 117.

[29] Bora Đorđević, the leader of Riblja Čorba band, tells such a case in his autobiography. Once, in a music tour, the Riblja Čorba band were asked by the local cultural competent bodies of Sarajevo not to either sing the song *Na zapadu ništa novo (Nothing New in the West)*, or "skip" the lines that the local authorities considered as an insult to the Yugoslav communism. In the end, under the pressure of the ten thousand spectators in the concert hall, the authorities were pushed to give up. See this episode in Bora Đorđević – *Šta je pesnik hteo de kaže (What the Poet Meant)*, Novosti, Belgrade, 2011, p. 55.

[30] Steven Jezo-Vannier, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

[31] Barbara Jelavich (*op. cit.*, p. 346) erroneously considers him responsible for the legal issues. As a matter of fact, Pijade only dealt with the legal acts of punishment applied to collaborationists and with the indemnification of the people who suffered in the Holocaust occurred in the Yugoslav territories.

[32] Miloslav Šutić – *An Anthology of Modern Serbian Lyrical Poetry (1920-1995)*, Relations/ Serbian Literary Magazine, Belgrade, 1999, p. XIII.

[33] Jovan Deretić – *Kratka istorija srpske književnosti*, BIGZ, Belgrade, 1983, p. 268.

[34] A very plastic description of these pubs, even if from a period subsequent to the death of Miljković, can be read in the autobiography of Bora Đorđević (*op. cit.*, pp. 38-47), who was also a regular customer of these establishments;.

[35] Jovan Deretić, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

[36] Z. Radisavljević – "Kako je stradao Branko Miljković", in *Politika*, 11.II.2011, p. 17.

[37] Irina Subotić – *Od Avangarde do Arkadije*, Klio, Beograd, 2000, p. 16.

[38] Dan Grigorescu – *Pop Art*, Meridiane, Bucharest, 1975, p. 189.

[39] See the full text of this article in Milić od Mačve – *Slovar o Odšelniku*, vol. II, Miličevo zdanje na Zvezdari/ Kula na sedam vetrova, Belgrade, 1996, p. 500.

[40] Oana Georgescu – *Fugaru prin lumea muzicii* (Fugaru in the World of Music), Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune (The Romanian Radio Broadcasting Company), Bucharest, 2004, p. 20.

[41] Petar Janjatović – *Ex-Yu Rock Enciklopedija*, drugo dopunjeno izdanje, Čigoja Štampa, Belgrade, 2006, pp. 105-107.

[42] Stefano Bianchini, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

[43] *Ibidem*, pp. 110-112.

[44] See his reference volume: Milovan Djilas – *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*, Brace Harcourt, New York, 1957.

[45] Stefano Bianchini, *op. cit.,* pp. 109-110.

[46] Petar Janjatović, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[47] The chapter on Bijelo Dugme can be read at pp. 31-36.

[48] According to the story of Bora Đorđević, a former member of the Rani Mraz band, in *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[49] In the official discography, it is named *Bijelo Dugme*; see Petar Janjatović, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[50] *Ibidem*, p. 34.

[51] See the monograph of Brana Dimitrijević – *Odgonetka Klokotrizma*, Sinteza, Kruševac, 1983.

[52] Bora Đorđević, *op. cit.,* p. 22.

[53] On *New Wave* as a form of counter-culture, se the study of Christophe Bourseiller – "La *New Wave*, une «réaction» culturelle?", in *Contre-cultures!*, ed. cit., pp. 235-238.

[54] A presentation of the long story of this song, see in Bora Đorđević, *op. cit.,* pp. 48-56.

[55] *Ibidem*, p.127.

[56] The story of this song can be also found in the author's autobiography, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-129.

[57] *Apud* Stefano Bianchini, *op. cit.*, page 134.

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