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Capitalization of Nationalism: Consequences of Abuse of Public Spirit in Serbia

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THESIS PROPOSAL
CAPITALIZATION OF NATIONALISM: CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE OF PUBLIC SPIRIT IN SERBIA

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Abstract:
Since the time when Serbia was one of the six republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ), the country has been through very difficult cultural, political and ideological challenges and changes. While the dominant socialist ideology in former Yugoslavia, organized around Tito’s idea of “brotherhood and unity”, helped to pacify and diminish differences between various ethnic and religious groups, Serbian society during the period of the Milošević regime has deployed different ideological patterns characterized by national pride, territorial integrity, and the policy of “all Serbs in one country” politics. These ideas were brought together under the banner of securing national and cultural identity, as well as territorial integrity.

When discussing dominant political discourses, contemporary societies in the Western Balkans are characterized as societies „in transition“, moving from socialism to capitalism and liberal democracy which is often equated with the path to the European Union. If we’re to discuss the new geopolitics of Western Balkans, we cannot avoid discussing the nationalism and it’s own rigid framework formed during the eighties and all the consequent mutations thereof. The direct corellation between nationalism as an ideology and it’s applications either through policy or actions of relevant actors is something that has been forming not just the public space in Serbia for the past thirty years, it has been forming the geopolitical space as well.

My research topic will be concerning the question of the mechanisms which are used by the political and social elites in order to transfer the ideology of nationalism to nationalism as praxis, and what are the goals of the ruling elite(both cultural and political) that are attempted to be achieved, and whether they are ideological or practical in nature.

Background information: key concerns

On 26\textsuperscript{th} May 2011 Ratko Mladić, accused of the war crime in Srebrenica characterized by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in Hague as genocide, was arrested by Serbian authorities. The president of Serbia characterized the arrest as a part of his government to: “release ourselves from the demons of the past”.\footnote{http://www.b92.net/video/video.php?nav_category=1285&nav_id=514688, Boris Tadić’s speech on 28.5.2011.} On the 29\textsuperscript{th} on the demonstrations supporting Ratko Mladić in Belgrade organized by the Serbian Radical Party, violence erupted and almost two hundred people were arrested.
Dealing with the past and searching for *the self* has become an increasingly important topic in ex-Yugoslav countries. The burden of ethnic cleansing, war, bombings still weighs heavily on the minds off all peoples of the Western Balkans. One of the topics lying in the heart of this search is the question of language and the way a common language became a tool of war. In the mid-eighties elites across Yugoslavia started resurrecting the language of the past, Serbs started calling the Bosniaks and Albanians “balije”, the Croats “ustaše”, while the Serbs were called “četnici”. These terms were echoes of crimes committed during the Second World War by the nationalist and chauvinist forces under the same names. These kinds of terms, and many others were pushed into the spotlight by the media, and repeated until they became an everyday phenomenon. The elites created the language, the media machinery perpetuated it, and the people used it to distance themselves from each other. And the model was very successful, and we feel its effects even today.

With the change in government in Serbia in 2000, the rigid frame of nationalism changed shape and the fiery speech from the nineties seemed to slowly go into history. But, what is interesting is that the nationalistic narrative is ever-present, especially when Serbia deals with the triad of Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. There the old imperial model of behavior always re-emerges and it seems that the *national question* is always raised when the political class is endangered, and ultimately the nation is equaled with its state.

Through attempting to observe Serbia’s relationship with its’ closest neighbors, the state’s relationship with the church, and the churches influence in the government, the state’s relationship towards history and education, the state elite’s relation towards its culture of memory, especially concerning the recent wars; all of these elements are necessary in order to deconstruct a huge organism such as is the case with nationalism. Only through the analysis of these and similar practices will it be possible to delve into the mechanisms that function as channels through which nationalism is inputted from above.

**Aim and objectives**

**Research aim**

The aim of this research is to deconstruct the ways in which nationalism as ideology is used in order to achieve political and economic goals by the political elite of Serbia, and how it
correlates with the recent geopolitical changes in the region, and in what ways it still stays a permanent issue within Serbia and without.

**Research objectives**

- Research nationalism as an ideology: what is the structure on which nationalism is built (the role of victim, the mixing of the border between culture and ideology, the culture of memory, relation towards tradition, ...)
- Research of the neuralgic points within the social system through which ideology is produced and spread such as state policy, the education system, the media system, etc.
- Try to explore how these representations correlate with the situation ‘in the field’, meaning within the framework of the society and how the society responds to these representations.
- Explore the concept of the *national question*, and in which ways it fits into the coordinate system of nationalistic politics, the political force in power, and its use in an internal or international crisis.
Methodology

This research will be carried out using multiple approaches to data collection. Data will be gathered using various sources both electronic materials and books related to my topic, as well as sociological data collected over the period of thirty years, from the eighties up until now. Secondly, I will use media material of the time to identify key topics around which nationalism is commonly mobilizing from.

1. Literature review

The first stage in the research process will be a literature review of previous research conducted on the topic of identity and nationalism in Serbia, starting with the ending years of Yugoslavia in the mid-eighties ‘til today. Respective literature written or published in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, the United States, Great Britain, etc. will be reviewed. The literature will be assessed for quality and evaluated on its methodological rigor.

2. Media review

Research of the media from all domestic actors will be analysed, and common topics will be found. This material will be then used as a support for the statements given in the primary literature.

3. Sociological review

In order to better support my research, sociological reviews will be used to attempt to figure out the mutations in the social sphere as a consequence of nationalistic policies, and what were the intended, and what were the unintended circumstances during the past thirty years.

Structure

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   a. Geopolitics of Serbia, the Kosovo-Montenegro-Bosnia triangle

2. Section 2 – Nationalism
   a. Theories of nationalism
   b. The manufacturing of the ‘national question’
   c. Nationalism and its’ role in the politics of Serbia

3. Section 3 – Serbia
   a. The political elite and their channels of control
      i. The military
      ii. The church
iii. The economy and corruption
iv. The media outlets
v. The purpose of nationalism

b. The expressions of nationalism
i. Tradition
ii. Culture of memory
iii. Identity of a victim
iv. Vojvodina and Kosovo

c. The consequences of nationalistic policies
i. Serbia and Kosovo
ii. Serbia and Montenegro
iii. Serbia and Bosnia/Republika Srpska
iv. The sociological situation within Serbia in 2012
v. Two revolutions after: the question of authoritarianism in Serbian politics

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, based on the sources and literature listed in the appended bibliography. This thesis as submitted is 149,318 keystrokes long including spaces, i.e. 83 manuscript page.

Damjan Malbašić,

In Prague, January 2013

Signature
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I would like to thank Filip Tesar for His great help, patience and understanding in the realization of this thesis. I would also like to thank professor Marketa Zidkova for putting me on the right path, and most of all I would like to thank dearest Bessie and my father for their wisdom and support, as well as Ivana, Milena and Luka, whose love made this entire endeavor possible.
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The past is never dead. It’s not even past.

William Faulkner,

Requiem for a Nun

1. Introduction

One might wonder why I start my thesis with a famous quote by William Faulkner from his brilliant book about Temple Drake. The reason for this is the underlying theme of the book, where the protagonist has to face the ghosts of her past, which is embodied in that short quote about the passage of time. The general understanding of this quote about the passage of time is, and I apologize in advance if this reading is overly banal, that your past always comes back to haunt you in life. For the purposes of this paper I propose a different reading of this particular quote. I argue, rather, that Faulkner’s quote may be read in a different fashion, where the emphasis turns from the first sentence to the second and to the statement that the past is rather a perception of past events from a current perspective, rather than a wholesome record of what happened before.

The question of history in the Balkans represents one of the key points around which national ideology is formed. Vojin Dimitrijević, an expert on international law and international relations, and one of the preeminent contemporary Serbian thinkers once said that he witnessed a statement by the representative of the Romanian Academy of Science (at that time still Causescu’s government) to UNESCO, in which he stated, as a given fact, that the teaching of history and the citizen’ perception of history does not in any way correspond to any scientific research, but it rather represents a form of national
upbringing which should create good national and class-aware people (Dimitrijević et al, 2010, 7). What is interesting about this statement, according to Dimitrijević, is that this perception of history and historiography has been almost uncontested in most real-socialist states of the time. What makes this anecdote even more dramatic is the fact that manipulation of historiography has become modus operandi in most post-Yugoslav countries not just for ‘nation-building’ and alienation from the common Yugoslav historiography, but a way that nationalist ideology is reproduced and national strife is explained.

Modern historiography accepts these ‘invented traditions’ as a given and analyzes the use of history in the coordinate system of nation states, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of new, liberated nation-states. As Hobsbawm, in his book on The Invention of Tradition wrote: ‘...they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. It is the contrast between constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant...’ (Hobsbawm, Ranger, 1983: 2)

I’d like to return to the quote from the beginning of the text and pose another question: what is the use of the past? Is history a tool for explaining the contemporary situation, or is it rather a tool of justifying the acts of certain groups and individuals and the tool for creation of a new ‘national man’.

This is where the creation of a new nationalist view in post-Yugoslav countries and the consequent mutations of this view come as an excellent example of this second use of history, as an ideological tool. The dissolution of the common state brought with it the need
for a construction of a new past. As Stojanović states in her book, Yugoslav peoples started the urgent ‘production of history’ (Stojanović, 2010: 126). The need for a delineation of the state along ethnic and religious boundaries also brought with it a need for a proof of the historical right of states over a certain territory, as well as the morality of actions of national leaders and the evildoing of members of the neighboring states.

These ‘games with history’ as Stojanović calls them were essential in order to represent the war aims of the governments as the logical conclusion of deep gaps between national beings of the warring communities and as the correction of ‘historical injustices’. In this manner the war in Croatia was, by invoking the memory of the genocide committed by Croats against the Serbs during Second World War, justified as a faux prevention of genocide. (see Popov, 1996)

Towards the end of the eighties, the appearance of historians on television shows on a daily basis became commonplace. For example, these historians, often well connected with the ruling elite in Belgrade spoke in detail about the Ustasha genocide over the Serbs, often overstating certain details to create a vision of the Serbs as victims of historical injustice. This kind of dramatization of historical events consequently brought about a clean sleight for Serbian leaders to implement the project of creating a new, ethnically cleansed Great Serbia (about which there will be more detail later), all the while invoking the devastation of the Serbian national being through history. Similarly, the war in Bosnia was also put in this framework, where instead of creating ethnic tension, the goal was to create a religious one. Bosniaks, the Slavic Muslim population living in Bosnia were represented as Turks, thus invoking the memory of the late middle Ages and the Turks who were ruling over Bosnia at the time. It is a well-documented fact that Ratko Mladić spoke in an interview
after the ‘liberation’ of Serbian Srebrenica, as he called it, about how ‘...remembering the uprising against the Turks, time has come to take revenge on the Muslims.’(Youtube, 2008).

This alchemic approach to history brought about a change in the perception of what historiography is, instead of describing past reality, it appropriated an engaged function of creating a completely new reality based on certain, hand-picked past events. The goal was the utter destruction of the Yugoslav concept of ‘brotherhood and unity’ and the creation of a reverse image of history where the Yugoslav nations lived in a permanent conflict, with Yugoslavia being the ‘dungeon of peoples’. That was the only way that the wars that ensued could be explained as a logical consequence of these long lasting tensions.

The model of creating new historical amalgams came as a need of the new, nationally-aware governments to first change the national memory, obfuscate and modify history in order to create space to create divide amongst neighbors and then intervene in a justified manner in the present.

By using this model and through the use of para-historiography, the media, the Serbian Orthodox Church and through the aggressive use of rhetoric in public life, Serbian conflict with everyone became faux ‘well-documented’ fact, and thus easily explained.

In this manner the manufacturing of history and the ‘uncovering’ of deeply seeded tensions amongst the Yugoslav constitutive nations became not just popular, but fully supported by the government. Towards the end of the eighties these propagandist views were spread around through the use of the media sphere, public gatherings, political speech, scientific meetings and they trickled down into the history books. (Stojanović, 2010, 125-127)
These kind of violent, shattering narratives recreated the former Yugoslav space in many ways, and these narratives fit nicely into the larger narrative of what *Balkan ethnic nationalism* is, and the foundations it is built on. But one of the questions I’d like to propose is whether nationalism in former Yugoslavia in general, and in Serbia in particular, presented and still presents such a powerful force years after the conflict, and in what ways did the narrative adapt to a new environment of European integration. To achieve this, two separate analyses will be conducted, first an attempt to first describe the width and breadth of the Serbian national myth and then move on to how nationalism is produced and reproduced in contemporary Serbian society, and try to measure how deep the mark that nationalism leaves in today’s Serbia is, through the analysis of discourse of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

But to answer these questions I first need to review and criticize some relevant literature on nationalism in order to create a framework which should open a space to deconstruct the nationalist ideology in Serbia after the fall of Milošević and the *modus operandi* thereof.

1.1. Balkans and Nationalism

When we look from a purely empiricist perspective, it would seem that this ethnic form of nationalism is prevalent in Serbia in the past twenty five years. I would like first to try to criticize this view from the perspective of the binary opposition of ethnic vs. civic nationalism. As Hans Kohn defined this opposition in his book *The Idea of Nationalism*, ethnic nationalism is, in a broad sense, connected with the individual belonging to a national community through belonging i.e. genealogical belonging to a group (often
connected with the Germany in Europe). The civic or territorial nationalism is at times connected to the French, because according to definitions it integrates a society on the basis of common beliefs and sets of rules. (Kohn, 1944:18-44)

When observing the way this construction is fitted in the Balkans, the only logical explanation for the violence in former Yugoslavia seems to be ethnic nationalism, the blood ties that bind. But where does this concept come from? It derives its roots from what Balibar calls hierarchical understanding of European history which puts forth the historical experience of Western European countries as the right path of development. (Balibar, Wallerstein, 1992, 37) Since this binary opposition speaks of the ways that nations and nationalisms came into being, I’d rather leave these ‘fixities’ behind and rather focus on the way that the myth of nationalism is constructed, and in what way it reproduces itself. The reason for this is fairly simple, if we look into the ways that nationalism is reproduced in Western Europe, we will come to the conclusion that the ways it perpetuates is almost identical to the way nationalism perpetuates in the Balkans, for example, and it gives a better outlook at how nationalism functions as a series of mechanisms.

Another problem that arises with the mention of the word ‘ethnic nationalism’ is mentioned, and that is the perception of what is the solution to the problematic of ethnic nationalism. Pavlos Hatzopoulos, in his book The Balkans, Beyond Nationalism and Identity mentions two ways of dealing with ethnic nationalism through the example of Bosnia in the mid-nineties and the solutions to the problem of whether to divide the state or to keep a common entity, the two groups being, in a comedic fashion, called the ‘carve up to save Bosnia’ and the ‘save Bosnia’ bunch. The first position, proposed by John Mearsheimer, an ‘offensive realist’ was that Bosnia should be divided along ethnic lines and that,
consequently, people from mixed marriages would have to choose their ethnicity at one point and follow the path of their new compatriots. This thesis understands ethnic nationalism as a force superior to all others in the Balkans, it dominates the past, the present and obviously the future, and it is something that needs to be accommodated in order to be appeased. Hatzopoulos strongly disagrees with this thesis and invokes Etienne Balibar’s critique from his book *The Limits of Democracy*, where Balibar states that analyzing Eastern Europe through the looking glass of nationalism is a purely ethnocentric view.

The other position, the one of the ‘save Bosnia’ bunch looks at the problematic of ethnic nationalism as a virus that needs to be treated in order to be cured. This position claims that in order to overcome ethnic nationalism, the lies that it is based on need to be uncovered and disproved in order to cure the virus. Only by curing the virus will the utopian pluralistic society exist in Bosnia, and more widely in the Balkans.

This kind of view, Hatzopoulos argues, broadly connects nationalism and its ideology to the concept of false consciousness, and that by uncovering the falsities, a society will be cured of the disease. (Hatzopoulos, 2008, 14-16)

Both of these points of view fail to comprehend ideology as an organized system with its functions and defined goals. They also come from the idea that nationalism comes from false beliefs and that it may or may not be overcome through either total appeasement or the ‘revelation of the truth’. Ethnic nationalism is neither a permanent characteristic of the region, nor is it a virus that needs to be treated; it is an ideological construct that needs to be analyzed as a system.
This statement evokes Louis Althusser and his State Ideological Apparatuses and the concept of interpellation. I will attempt to, through this reading of the nationalist ideology in Serbia, analyze three different aspects of it: the ideological constructions on the level of the myth in order to uncover the ways in which these myths correspond to one another and how they all correspond to the Ideological Apparatuses which procreate these myths and perpetuate them through their own channels, and finally if and in what extent did this ideological construct, through the process of interpellation, create the ideological subject within the post-20th Century Serbian society.

1.2. Discussion of Ideology

In order to form a new framework through which Serbian nationalism is viewed, it is necessary to discuss a Marxist approach to the problematic of nationalism as such. Of course, this does not mean a Marxist reading of nationalism, but rather an attempt at reading of Marxist texts in order to deconstruct what ideology and nationalism as an ideology mean and the way they work.

Antonio Gramsci was the author who observed ideology as more than a simple set of coherent political ideas. For him, ideology is much more, ideology constantly shapes and reshapes our beliefs and practices on the level of the individual, which in turn gives ideology an ‘organic’ element which allows ideology to reproduce the state’s social structures in a way that they ‘organize human masses and create the terrain on which they move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.’ (Gramsci, 1971, 337)
Louis Althusser, almost always mentioned alongside Gramsci in this sense, took the debate further. His work in part dealt with the question of how ideology manages to create this link between itself and the subject and how it becomes intertwined with the living experience and where it becomes internalized in political action.

In April 1970 Althusser wrote a paper under the title ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)’ and made a distinction between State power and what he called State apparatuses. State apparatuses function, for him, in the confines of the state only alongside State power, and whoever controls it. On the other hand, these apparatuses always exist and function regardless of who controls the state (he mentions bourgeois revolutions of the 19th and coup d’etats in the mid-twentieth century as examples of forceful reshaping of states in which state apparatuses were affected or modified, but still remained as outlets of ideology). He describes the institutions of police, the Army, court, prisons as repressive state apparatuses, which lean on the side of State power, but he also defines certain ‘realities’ a part of a much larger, ideological construction within the state, and those are Ideological State Apparatuses, or ISA’s for short. For him, ISA’s consist of: religious (the church), political, educational (schools), legal, cultural (art), communicational (press, TV), etc. By using these outlets, ideology manages to input itself into our daily lives. It is this way of forming our practices on a daily basis through which ideology organizes practices and beliefs of an unaware audience and through the public domain manage to affect our lives and create support and sometimes even belief in it. (Althusser, 1971)

Balibar continues this discussion and points out two such ideological institutions that played a key role in the production and consequent reproduction of nationalism as an
ideology, one being the school system, and the other family as an organic community. (Balibar, Wallerstein, 1992: 154-159) For Balibar, the school represents the nation as a linguistic community, and the family creates the representation of the nation as a *racial* community. This key note means that through our lives we are constantly responding to the call of ideology through the process of attending school and being members of a nationalized family. To act or not to act according to the call of ideology means that the subject has or has not been affected by the ruling ideology, and has in turn been affected by another set of ideas that may or not correspond with what the ruling ideology states.

This is an important point that has to do with the material existence of an ideology as such. Being or not affected by a certain ideology refers back to Gramsci and to the idea of ideology that draws its strength from the perception of a material reality, and not just a certain set of ideals. If we look at Althusser’s writing on Ideological State Apparatuses, and his description of the material grounding of ideology, the view that ideology comes from distorted perceptions on the level of the subject no longer holds true. The conclusion that derives from this view is that ideology does not reshape the way we think, *au contraire* – it works through shaping what we do.

If ideology functions on the level of the individual and it is grounded in material reality and the acts of the subject, then it is wrong to claim that ‘truth will set us free’, in an ideological sense. It is rather a reversal of the thesis, social reality cannot function without an ideological structure, and that is why it is important to stay away from binary oppositions of truth and lies and reality and illusion, and rather find a critique of the notion of ideology on another side.
1.3. *The Call of Ideology Beckons*

When we’ve looked at the material grounding of ideology within a society, it is now important to see how ideology materializes within the framework of practice and how it shapes the actions of individuals. Here Althusser mentions and describes the process of *interpellation*, as a call of ideology to the individual, a direct link between ideology and the subject. He states that ‘the category of the subject is constitutive of all ideology, but at the same time and immediately I add that the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as subjects.’ (Althusser, 1971) So, according to him, ideology functions as the tool of constituting subjects, but what does this process look like?

The original example of the process of interpellation is Althusser’s example of what he called ‘little theoretical theatre’. Althusser defines the process of interpellation as a *hailing* of individuals by ideology. In his example, he imagines a normal city street in which someone hails a person in this street. The called individual will then turn, and by doing that he will become a subject, in the sense of being *subjected* to the call of ideology. The question that derives from this example is how the individual knows that it is *he* who is the one who is called, how does one recognize the call? Althusser explains by stating that ideology hails the individuals, as a particular kind of subject, and it assigns a place for this subject, describes it and it demands a certain set of rules to be obeyed by this subject. But this process is not forced, it is subtle and it leaves the illusion that the individual chooses his place ‘freely’. Interpellation is exactly this illusion formed by ideology which makes the individual answer the call ‘freely’ and thus becomes its subject. This recognition is in fact
the designation of the subject and his function within the confines of the State, and its perception of itself. In another one of his works Althusser described ideology as bypassing consciousness and prescribing behavior, rather than belief, and thus being ‘profoundly unconscious’. (Althusser, 1970:233)

One other key point about the process of interpellation was made by Ernesto Laclau. In his work Politics and Ideology in Marxist theory Laclau states that the process of interpellation unifies all political ideologies as the main organizing principle, regardless of their political philosophy.(Laclau, 1977:101) For Laclau ideology functions not on coherent political thoughts, but rather is organized around a series of different interpellations that are put in one discursive field. To quote him:

In what way is one interpellation articulated with another, that is to say, what is it that enables them both to form part of a relatively unified ideological discourse? By unity we must not necessarily understand logical consistency - on the contrary, the ideological unity of a discourse is perfectly compatible with a wide margin of logical inconsistency but the ability of each interpellative element to fulfill a role of condensation with respect to the others. When a familial interpellation, for example, evokes a political interpellation, a religious interpellation, or an aesthetic interpellation, and when each of these isolated interpellations operates as a symbol of the others, we have a relatively unified ideological discourse. (ibid.)

What about nationalism? Balibar explains that the key interpellative element of nationalism as ideology is the creation of a ‘national man’(Balibar, Wallerstein, 1992:142)

The reproduction of the nation is based on the process of identification of individuals as national subjects and their consequent acting out of their nationality in an already defined set of practices. Why his position is interesting is precisely because he puts the emphasis of
identity on the level of the individual rather than the collective. For Balibar every identity is first and foremost individual, but this individual identity is formed within a field of, as he states ‘social values, rules of behavior and collective symbols’. (ibid: 144) The question of this paper will then be to track the way nationalism in Serbia reproduces and how the sets of beliefs and practices that this form of nationalism is consisted of are constructed through discourse as a strategy.

2. Nationalism as discourse, a review of methodology

In order to better portray the institutional (mis)use of national sentiment within the Serbian society starting from the end of the eighties until today it is necessary to first observe the mythological framework in which this sentiment was built, and then analyze the public speech and media discourse through which this framework has been perpetuated.

2.1. Methodology: The Myth

As Ivan Kovačević (Kovačević, 2006:48-51) says in his anthropological analysis of the myth in art:"The myth is a tool of manipulation, a tool for creating representations, a product of interest. As long as there exist interests, and those are eternal, the people that have those interests will want to fulfill their interest – and myth is going to be one of the tools in achieving these goals." The myth as a form is thus a permanent category in human society, given the fact that the distribution of power within society is always in question, and the
struggle between different social groups will always call upon a creation of a common bond, often portrayed through the perpetuation of myths. But myths are not just simple manipulation tactics used by a certain group to maintain and achieve certain social goals; it is also a cry of the weak (ibid.), of those groups that find themselves in a submissive status within society, unable to fulfill the same social goals. Thus, if we view myths as a category, they are always called upon, either by the strong as a method of control, or by the weak, as a form of rebellion. As long as there is a social struggle, there will be myths. An analysis of mythological discourse might not give us an outlook into the future, but it certainly gives us, if properly ‘decoded’ or deconstructed, a better overview of the current state of affairs in a certain social reality.

When analyzing a particular myth, attention must be given to the process of deconstruction – for a myth holds within certain ambivalence. When attempting to rationally analyze a certain myth, it is always the case that another myth is being constructed at the same time, very similarly to, as mentioned before, the problem of ideology and the analysis thereof. Thus ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ don’t in essence work as opposites in this case. To clarify, myths have a primary role that is constructive and progressive in human society. They use supra-rational (or irrational) mechanisms in order to create a primary cultural systematization and stabilization, they work with basic existential questions of a certain society, or society as a whole. It is a completely different matter when we analyze the myth in these terms, and when we use the term ‘myth’ in modern society, particularly when we speak of its use in the world today. The term is often (mis)used in order to portray a spectrum of different social issues, and it often becomes a rather disruptive element used by the social structures (or ideological apparatuses, as Althusser would say) in order to
create boundaries and perform control of the cultural and social life. This dualism needs to be taken into account when deconstructing myths, so as to have a better overview of what is its particular use in a certain situation, if deconstruction is possible at all.

But what kind of narrative can we name a myth? A good overview of the kind of narratives that will be used in this paper has been done by Saša Nedeljković in his book 'Honor, Blood and Tears: Essays on Anthropology of Ethnicity and Nationalism' (Nedeljković, 2007:38, 39). He differentiates between six uses of the term ‘myth’, of which four will be discussed in this paper, because of their relevance to the topic in question.

1. The term ‘myth’ is used to signify narratives which are a part of oral tradition and represent traditionally accepted stories which relate to the formation and designation of certain groups or individuals.

2. This term can represent an entire cultural complex which encompasses a system of stories or songs connected to the material and spiritual culture of a certain people or an entire civilization (Nedeljković mentions two distinct myths, the Christian myth and the Kosovo myth).

3. Myth can be perceived as a signifier for different types of social construction (in this, the myth relates to something unreal, unproven, impossible to prove, untrue, manipulative, or a cliché).

4. Important events (long past) and individuals (often dead or untouchable) often get an aura of a myth.

The first usage of the term, according to Nedeljković, and the second (up to a point) refer to an 'objective', static, essentialistic, even primordial cultural complex, the root of which is lost in the mists of time. The third and the fourth usage relate closely to the term
‘mythologization’, because they point to a certain process, something active, modern and constructed. According to the author, and quoting Berdyaev, the in the first use of the term, ‘myth’ is almost synonymous to the term ‘history’, in the second – to the term ‘tradition’, in the third one it relates to the term ‘stereotype’ and in the fourth – ‘legend’, or even ‘icon’.

Nationalism represents the embodiment of these uses of the term ‘myth’, for it requires martyrs and stories which create the foundation for further reproduction of itself through this ‘lens’. Of course, nationalism is not the only ideological construct that uses myths in order to better position itself in the political spectrum.

This framework will be used further in the paper where the analysis of modern Serbian mythology takes place, but the goal of this thesis is not just to portray a set of stories used by the elites, but rather to first clarify their content and then see the ideological input which perpetuates these myths and creates the political reality in Serbia. In order to achieve this, a corresponding methodology will be used to unravel the media, educational and religious frameworks that have successfully shaped the reality in the past twenty years.

2.2. Methodology: The Discourse

In order to portray a better picture of the case study of Serbia in the framework of nationalism, a methodology of critical discourse analysis will be used. Critical discourse analysis represents a type of research that analyzes social and power abuse and the ways inequality is enacted, reproduced and resisted through text and talk in the social and political context, as Teun A. van Dijk states in his paper under the title ‘Critical Discourse
Analysis’ (Van Dijk, 2001:352-371). CDA does not represent a quantitative or a qualitative research method per se, does it rather enable the reading of what stands ‘behind’ the text, what are the hidden motivations of a speaker in a certain time. CDA represents a critical reading, which cannot in itself give absolute answers to specific social or political problems, but it can still enable the researcher to clear the debris of ideology and clarify the particular goals that a certain speaker, as a part of a certain interest group is trying to achieve through a certain social or political action.

Post-structuralist approach to scientific research makes a break with the modernist notions of scientific research based on the concept of ‘objectivity’, where the position of the scientist is an instance higher than the topic he researches. This means that the results of a certain observation are by their nature objective, because the researcher is bringing no interest to mind while conducting the practice of uncovering the ‘truth’. This approach is considered impossible by postmodern theories and practices, because all humans are bound to certain value systems and perspectives, thus all research will be focused with regards to a certain personal perspective. The assumptions that this approach begins with are that knowledge as such is not reliable, the perception of the world is historically and culturally understood, social practices remain the basis of knowledge and that knowledge and social action are inherently bound together. These ideas belong to, first and foremost, to the French structuralist and post-structuralist tradition (such as Foucault, Derrida, Barthes, Althusser, De Saussure), and they have been adopted by authors researching identity, the public sphere and power-relations (such as Fairclough, Billig, Dyk, Holloway). According to these authors, the notion of discourse relates to a group of meanings, metaphors, representations, stories, statements that bring to a wholesome explanation of a
certain event, or narrative. Thus, all human action can be seen as part of a certain discourse. Deriving from this, the analysis of discourse is in nature subjective and interpretative, and represents a certain type of deconstruction (Derrida, 2007).

Consequentially, post-structuralism observes how the signifiers (words) do not have an essential meaning to them, but the meaning changes with the change in context. Words mean different things, depending on who ousts them, when they are used, and all in all other aspects that define context. With regards to identity, this school of thought demarcates many different discourses that form an individual, meaning that the identity does not come from an individual, but rather comes from the discourses and discursive practices that an individual finds him/herself in. This also means that discourses do not just present abstract concepts, but they play an important role in the formation of the self.

Foucault and his work present an excellent study of how language and power represent two very much connected entities. In his work (1979), he describes the concepts of ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ through the practices of power (power meaning the control of social reality, history, social relations that describe what we feel as ‘reality’). For Foucault, knowledge is inherently connected with power, because all social action enables a certain group to position itself in a privileged position towards other groups and marginalize the ideas of others. Power, in this sense, is a form of ‘ownership’ which is available to some, and to others not – power derives from discourse. The construction of a world where some are ‘sane’ while others are ‘insane’, some are ‘true to faith’ while others are described as ‘traitors’ is a world where inequality is defined by positions of power. Knowledge represents the power to redefine the Other.
Through the analysis of state narratives, media material, rhetoric, sociolinguistics and other texts and their mutual seen or unseen links, or intertextuality, critical discourse analysis attempts to understand the modes of power and discourse structures within society and the ways that these modes and structures are enacted and reproduced, and the ways that society might be in elements fighting it.

In this particular case, the method of critical discourse analysis will have an important role, given the fact that there will be focus on the religious aspects of nationalism, in particular the practice of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the close ties between religious and political aspects in public speech in the framework of nationalism. To achieve this, the revision of history, seen through the process of revitalization of a controversial religious figure, Nikolaj Velimirović, and his canonization in the Serbian Orthodox Church will be analyzed in order to present the way how collective forgetting of anti-Semitic and fascist leanings of this Metropolitan, and the rhetoric of negation of the Other by the Church formed a strong anti-EU and anti-western bloc in the modern Serbian society. The power of this bloc relates directly to the political structures, and their own leaning, which has been more and more focused on the concepts of universality and nationalism, meaning that this structure is a strong influence on the formation of a new Serbian identity in the twenty first century.
3. The Geopolitics of Myth

3.1. The Roots of Serbian Conservative Thought

Instead of a historical overview of the events that took place in the past twenty something years in the region of former Yugoslavia, this paper will rather focus on the history of nationalist ideology in Serbia in the past century and the formative experience of state elite and the ideological consequences that appeared at the end of the eighties. Serbia, in the beginning of the 21st Century finds itself in a vortex of a nationalistic sentiment, and its’ roots do not seem to be that transparent, its’ origins obfuscated by the rhetoric of popular politicians and a sense of defeat which is all-encompassing. In order to dissect the rhetoric of politicians and intellectuals of recent years, it is necessary to step back into the nineteenth century, into the time of the ‘founding fathers’ of Serbian nationalism, and there find the roots of questions that Serbia faces even today from a nationalist point of view, such as the nineteenth century belief that a small state does not have the conditions to advance itself, and that without imperial pretenses it cannot survive. Also, the mythology of the nineteenth century nationalism based itself around the ‘historical consciousness’ of a greater heroic time in history, myths revolving around the greatness and strength of past times, which were reflected in the submissive political positions of the state of those times, from which arose the need for a future embodiment of these past times, and the unrealistic visions of a greater state. The period of the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, all the way to the First World War is key to the primary formation of nationalist myths that will later be used by many authors as explanations for historical and ethnic rights of Serbs to territories of Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and parts of Croatia.
These myths were perpetuated by individuals, and at times entire elites who used these narratives in order to mobilize people for achieving certain political goals, and even at times stimulate the nation to go to war. In this use, we can discuss the first two uses of the term ‘myth’, as myth being equaled to the term 'history', as well as the term ‘tradition’.

According to Olivera Milosavljević, a professor of sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade in her book 'In the Tradition of Nationalism' (Milosavljević, 2002:61), nationalism never interested intellectuals in Serbia from a theoretical point of view, but from a point of view of national identity; thus the question of nationalism in the frame of national program was always in focus. What does this mean? Prominent thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth century were always reflecting on the current state of social affairs and from that point viewed the question of national self-realization. Hand in hand with the idea of a national program, an idea of a 'nationalized state' always emerged. Milosavljević in her book (Milosavljević, 2002:64) defines the mythology of unification of all Serbs in one state as a sentence with three distinct parts which can be formulated as so – All Serbs (ethnic right) in one great state (historic right) with their own sea (state right).

One of the first, if not the original national political program of the nineteenth century was the 'Outline' (or Načertanje), written by Ilija Garašanin in 1844. As Mojmir Križan states in his paper 'New Serbian Nationalism and the Third Balkan War', the Outline was: 'a secret project of expansion of Serbia at the cost of its western neighbours and the Ottoman Empire. He justified this expansionism by a "holy historical right" of the Serbian people and by the splendour of medieval Serbia, and proposed that the new Serbian state reassume this old

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2 Ilija Garašanin(1812-1874) was a Serbian politician and statesman, considered the first Serbian politician with a real political program. During his life he was the Minister of Interior of Serbia, as well as the Prime Minister(1861-1867). For more information see Načertanje (Garašanin, 1991:65-77).
spirit after an interruption of 500 years, and continue its expansionist work.' (Garašanin, 1991) But the story about Garašanin and the Outline is a strange one, because it was kept a secret for decades, and had only emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century (Milosavljević, 2002: 68), so Serbian politicians could refer to this paper only from this time. When speaking of 'all Serbs in one state' ideology during the nineteenth century, Vladimir Jovanović demarcated the boundaries of the future Serbian state as the boundaries of 'Serbian spirit' claiming that 'the railroad through which Marko (Kraljević, a Serbian hero from the Kosovo myth) from Prilep over Belgrade and the Danube flies to Varadin; or the one which goes through Kosovo and Pazar over Serbia and over the Sava soars to Karlovci (in then Austro-Hungary), to show the Magyarin how the Serb is always his own, that railroad can be explained as a current of national spirit' which the 'force of the Magyar and his brother the Turk or any other force cannot cut or break'. (Jovanović, 1870: 91-92) The Serbia that Jovanović described was the Serbia that geopolitically encompassed today's Kosovo, central Serbia (or Old Serbia, as it is called) and Vojvodina, but this kind of drawing of borders was very popular at the time, and many authors had very different takes on where the boundaries of 'Serbdom' should be drawn.

One of the most prolific times for the defining the Serb national program was the time of the Balkan Wars. Stojan Protić claimed in 1912 that the goal of Serbs is not the creation of Serbs where there are none, but claimed that the life question is 'the liberation and the unification of Serbs' and that if anyone 'takes away our brothers, we will with pain in our

3 Vladimir Jovanović (1833-1922) was a Serbian philosopher, economist and political theorist. He worked as the minister of finance in Serbia and was the President of Serbian Scientific Society.
4 Then used term by Serbs to refer to Hungarians
5 Stojan Protić (1857-1923) was a Yugoslav politician, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918, 1919, and 1920. In the time of writing the book from which this excerpt was taken he was performing the role of Minister of Finance of Serbia.
souls and with trouble be against him. That needs to be known by our cousins and uncles, so as not to touch those sensitive strings', because Serbia of those days was 'small and weak', an 'apple in which every glutton will easily bite' (Protić, 1912: 33-35).

Jovan Radonić, for example, in those days claimed that 'in the first times' there existed a 'strive of the Serbian tribe to put under its' flag close Slav tribes and create an exit for itself to the Adriatic Sea' (Radonić, 1912: 4) According to a quote from Milosavljević's book, Milan Andonović complained about 'brothers' and neighbours stating that 'all peoples have their spheres of interest and only Serbs cannot have them! – nowhere and on no sides! Serbs need to forget their brilliant past, their future, and only then they will become the best people in the world today'. He spoke of today's Macedonia as an integral part of old Serbia stating that 'according to history, language, customs, folk poetry, national sentiment, even 'national consciousness' it is old Serbian soil' in which 'only Serbs and Serbian tribes are natives and that is their land! – all other nationalities are newcomers and can only be tolerated'. He claimed that 'it is an unforgivable sin and injustice of all our and foreign writers when they call us chauvinists, because we defend and ask only for what suum cuique unquestionably belongs to us', and finishes his book by calling upon his 'shackled brothers' who 'lay their prayers at the foundations of Great Serbia' – 'God is fulfilling their pleas and hopes, and Great Serbia already rises' (Andonović 1913, 20-24, 107).

The problematic of the Serb exit to the sea is a constant through the formative years of the modern Serbian state. In the days of the beginning of the twentieth century, this need was reflected in rational political interests of the state to ensure economic prosperity and

6 Jovan Radonić(1873-1956), a prominent serbian historian, a professor of the University of Belgrade and a member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

7 Milan Andonović(1849-1926) was a professor of Belgrade University and a member of the Serbian Scientific Society
political independence through establishing itself a coastline – but in the rhetoric of nationalistic politicians and intellectuals it was represented under completely different terms. This state goal was granted a mythical dimension with regards to the 'shackled brothers' who were always represented as such whenever the state took interest in a certain region.

After the penetration of Serbian forces to the harbor of Drač in Albania in November 1912\(^8\) during the First Balkan War, and the consequent return of Serbian forces under international pressure (especially by Austro-Hungary and Italy) in April 1913, Tomo Oraovac\(^9\) wrote a romantic description of the Serbian right to the sea in Albania by writing: 'Does anyone know how the Serbian soldier managed to get to his sea? Can anyone dare follow him down that road, down which that new Obilić\(^10\) (sic!) ventured going to the Serbian sea?[...] Happily, singing and fighting the Serb saw that wished for sea and came to Drač and Lješ, bowed to the graves of Serbian rulers, the Serb jumped, sword in hand and came to the sea and abluted his manly face with the sea, raised his hands to the sky, thanked God for his aid and swore to God, in front of himself, in front of men and in front of the world that no-one will ever separate him from the sea again.'(Oraovac, 1913; 48-49)

North Albania quickly emerged as a part of the 'Serbian right', and the question of the 'Albanian right' was non-existent (Milojević, 1871:126). According to authors of those times, the idea of creation of an independent Albania was perceived by the Serbian elite as an 'anti-Serb action' proposed by Austro-Hungary in order to disturb the 'correct solution

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\(^8\) For the analysis of the entire geopolitical problematic of the Serbian exit to the sea see: Petros Sioussiouras, 'Geopolitical Designs and Realities in Yugoslavia’s Foreign Policy: The Issue of Access to the Sea', Journal of Political and Military Sociology; Winter 2005; 33, 2; Research Library, pg. 141

\(^9\) Tomo Oraovac, a Serbian historian, writer and politician, author of a famous book from 1913 under the title 'The Arbanas Question and the Serbian Right'

\(^10\) He is referring here to Miloš Obilić, one of the greatest heroes from the Serbian Kosovo myth – a man who allegedly, at the peak of the battle struck down the Turkish sultan
of the Balkan question’ by preventing Serbia from getting access to the sea, as quoted in a book by Jovan Radonić\textsuperscript{11}(Radonič, 1912; 27).

Expansionistic tendencies which were backed by leanings towards economic prosperity and their connecting to the principle of nationality created a link between history, the national ‘spirit’ and the exit to the sea. Interestingly enough, in modern times politicians and intellectuals of the late twentieth century observed much more moderately these pretensions of their predecessors, but this model of expansion through the matrix of nationality still remained a key element, which will be seen later in this paper.

3.2. The Ethnic and Historical Question

The question for all members of elites with expansionist pretensions is how to explain their contemporary political goals using national (or ethnic) historical right as a rational or even scientific explanation.

For Serbian authors the ‘ethnic right’ automatically meant the ‘national’ absorption of all Orthodox believers in Serbia proper, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and lastly all ‘convertites’, or those members of ethnic groups whose ancestors at some point changed their religion to either Catholicism or Islam. By using this simple method, Serbian elites managed to expand the Serbian ‘national space’ to the far west and south of Serbian borders.

Using the ‘historical right’ meant at times the explanation that all Slav population that arrived to the Balkan Peninsula, regardless of the historical changes was considered Serb,

\textsuperscript{11} Jovan Radonič(1873-1953), a Serbian historian, a member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences and a librarian of Matica Srpska library.
or the boundaries of states during history, no matter for how short a time they existed – were used as comparison to current state of affairs.

This kind of use of ‘ethnic’ or ‘historical’ right can only be defined by its’ use, rather than by some kind of theoretical discussion – because this use was defined by the daily political motions of the state elite, rather than some kind of a general heading of the nation during history. This led to the use of different methods of explaining expansionistic tendencies at different times. Depending on where the current conflict took place, different aspects of given ‘rights’ were employed as ideological constructs in order to justify expansionism.

Exemplary is the completely opposite explanations for expansion at the beginning of the century (when the explanation that Serbs, according to their historic right should have lived all in one state, and how cities and entire states belonged to the organic Serb nation), and the end of the century when the ethnic model took over and dominated the nationalistic discourse in politics, especially with regards to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, less so in Kosovo.

Good examples of this kind of explanation for ‘unification’ were given by several authors at the beginning of the century, particularly prominent diplomats and historians.

Tomo Oravac\textsuperscript{12} wrote in his book on the eve of the First World War about Dubrovnik as 'Serbian Athens', about Montenegro as 'chivalrous and invincible Serbian Sparta' which 'clearly proved that the Serb is not dead and cannot die' and the clear political goal that he defined was that Albania, old Serbia and a part of Macedonia were Serbian lands and desperately stated how the Russian Tzar could not 'spout a single word – 'may there be
Great Serbia' so then there could be Great Serbia; and Great Russia could then have Great Serbia as a natural and constant ally of all-mighty Russia, which would be connected with blood and faith, oath and blessing'(Oraovac 1913: 26, 44, 81)\textsuperscript{13} The invocation of the city of Dubrovnik in Dalmatia as 'Serbian Athens', when this city clearly belonged to a different state with a majority Croat population, and the mythological construction of invoking 'Serbian graves' in order to create a direct link between the dead and living clearly shows how history represents an important narrative in the creation of nationalist ideology after the Balkan Wars.

On the other hand, different authors took a more 'theoretical' approach to explaining this 'historical right', by using the past, present and future in one temporality and thus creating a stasis in which all Serbs exist at the same time. The first Serbian encyclopedist, Stanoje Stanojević\textsuperscript{14} in his early work developed a theoretical idea of so called natural and artificial states, and according to his views the first type of states are 'national', based on language and customs and the other type are 'multiethnic, anational or even antinational'. The first appeared 'even on the lowest levels of development of culture' and the others were created by historical development 'contrary to the most elementary principle of national freedom'. That is why Stanojević found it important that Serbian states in the past worked on

\textsuperscript{13} Oraovac claimed that small peoples should have 'only that which according to God's justice is theirs to claim, and that is that they can live their lives not asking for anything but what is theirs [...] Can anyone think that Arbania (today’s Kosovo and Albania) could be abandoned by the victorious Serbian army? Are not many and glorious Serbian graves of brave Serbian warriors found in Arbania, who call upon all Serbs, folk, soldiers and brave officers to, alongside Serbian right keep, defend and maintain them, not waver in front of new casualties and new graves over which our holy and historical Serbian right must be maintained [...] that chivalrous ancestor of today’s avengers of Kosovo took a club in his hand and with this bare club hit the glorious Sultan, master of the East and West on his brilliant crown and with this superhuman blow slay the Sultan and from the crown took the most beautiful alem stone, and that is today’s Serbia, which with chivalrous deeds of its unbreakable soldier and avenger glistens among other peoples' (Oraovac, 1913, 45)

\textsuperscript{14} Stanoje Stanojević (1874-1937) was a Serbian historian, encyclopedist, a member of the Serbian Royal Academia and a professor at Belgrade University.
'gathering around them and creating a singular community of all other areas in which Serbian folk lived', so even if the strive for national unity was not expressed explicitly 'it was still shown in all Serbian states'. He concluded that 'in the Serbian people it was always known and felt that the free Serbian state takes care of those Serbs that are enslaved, that it always worries about them and will work on setting them free', and claiming that the Serbs in Austria need to be freed because 'they are slaves, as Serbs in Turkey are'(Stanojević, 1915: 3-8, 11-16)

Immediately before the Second World War, the 'historical' explanation started giving way to the 'ethnic' explanation, so at the beginning of the Second World War, in 1942, Jovan Dučić wrote the book 'Sporna pitanja kraljevine Jugoslavije' ['Debatable Questions about the Kingdom of Yugoslavia'] in which he disputed the Serbian idea of unification with other Yugoslav nations in 1918, stating that it was up to the Serbs to 'create state borders for themselves in a way that they would reach two thirds of former Yugoslavia! And that state of united Serbdom no-one could deny, both ethnically and historically'. For him the state represents 'a spiritual term and a great spiritual creation' and therefore if the state is not national 'it represents just one large company, but not a state'. He was one of the authors who questioned why 'the entire united Serbdom' didn't create one 'huge and ethnically homogenous group, and consequently a large state' in 1918, but instead accepted the borders of Yugoslavia. ‘The state of United Serb States, and not just the little Serbia that existed then encompassed high and wide territories with a view of our ethnic question! And our Serb right as victors gave us reason to solve our problem by a strike of a sword on the map. He concluded that 'we should solve our Serb fate with one single blow of the

15 Jovan Dučić (1871-1943), a Serb poet, writer and diplomat, his most prominent position in diplomacy was that he was positioned as the first ambassador of Yugoslavia to Romania in 1937.
sword and save our ten century old monarchy, our endangered glorious dynasty, our numerous Serbian credits among all nations’ (Dučić, 1942(repr. 1990); 82-86, 200, 251) The Second World War brought with it a great suffering for all nations that will later become the constitutive nations of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, thus becoming the epitome of the clash of nationalist ideologies. During the war, all sides that were represented by national leaders attempted to create ethnically clean zones of influence, in Serbia it was Milan Nedić, who was the appointed ‘President’ of Serbia under occupation, in Croatia it was Ante Pavelić, who was the leader of the Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska or NDH), and so on. The Second World War represented not just a war of independence from the occupying German forces, but also it took on a shape of a civil war – especially in Serbia and in lands where ethnic Serbs lived, because there were two major organizations who were vying for influence in these areas. One was the monarchist and nationalist military organization of Draža Mihailović, who was the leader of the Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland (or in Serbian Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini) or Četniks, and the other was the People’s Liberation Fight (or Narodno Oslobodilačka Borba) or the Partisans under Josip Broz Tito. Tito’s partisans were organized with an emphasis on creating a new post-war socialist order, regardless of national determination of their members, while the Četniks were a nationalist organization who in their chapter fought for the maintenance of the old monarchy and the creation of a Great Serbia. One of the more problematic elements of the Četnik movement was given in the Instructions, a document that appeared in Montenegro in December of 1941 on the desk

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To see more about the Četniks and their national program see: Jozo Tomašević, The Chetniks, War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945, Stanford University Press, 1975.

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of Captain Pavle Đurišić who was a subordinate of Draža Mihailović. The document prescribes cleansing of non-Serb elements from the Četnik zone of influence, but it is unclear whether this particular document was actually written by Draža Mihailović, or it was a forgery made by Jurišić himself, because he was unable to contact Mihailović in the winter of 1941. The heterogeneous national structure of Yugoslavia and the mass crimes that were perpetrated by all sides drove the majority of the population, regardless of their national sentiment to Tito’s partisan movement, and this movement managed to emerge victorious at the end of the war. The new Yugoslav government ruthlessly eliminated all those who fought against it during the war, and in the creation of the new socialist Yugoslavia, national pretensions of the constitutive nations was put aside and referred to as ‘reactionary’ and ‘contra-revolutionary’ (Đorđević, 2003, 11) by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

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17 Jozo Tomašević actually gives a detailed account of the instructions which were:

1. The struggle for the liberty of our whole nation under the scepter of His Majesty King Peter II;
2. the creation of a Great Yugoslavia and within it of a Great Serbia which is to be ethnically pure and is to include Serbia [meaning also Vardar Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srijem, the Banat, and Bačka];
3. the struggle for the inclusion into Yugoslavia of all still unliberated Slovene territories under the Italians and Germans (Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, and Carinthia) as well as Bulgaria, and northern Albania with Scutari;
4. the cleansing of the state territory of all national minorities and a-national elements [i.e. the Partisans and their supporters];
5. the creation of contiguous frontiers between Serbia and Montenegro, as well as between Serbia and Slovenia by cleansing the Muslim population from Sandžak and the Muslim and Croat populations from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

18 Whether this was a forgery or not meant little after the war, because this document was clearly not planted by the opponents of the Četniks, and thus still remains a clear and definite proof of the intentions of at least a part of the Četnik movement during the war and the formation of a post-war Serbia, as Noel Malcolm writes in his book ‘Bosnia: A Short History’, New York University Press, 1994, p. 179

19 One of the events that happened at the end of the war portrays this best, it was the capture and mass killing of columns of members of the Army of the Independent State of Croatia, remnants of the Četnik movement and members of the Slovene Home Guard who attempted to surrender to the British Army at the border town of Bleiburg, at the Slovene-Austrian border on the 15th of May 1945. Quoting Jozo Tomašević: ‘The partisans, fearing that their enemies might escape to Austria and unsure of what would happen then, strove hard to surround and destroy as many of them as possible. There is also little doubt that four years’ worth of accumulated hatred against the Ustashas now came to a head. In effect, closing actions of the war on the Yugoslav-Austrian border were operations of destruction and annihilation and thus very costly in lives’ (Jozo Tomašević, War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration, Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 762)
Putting the question of nationalism aside and the recreation of the Yugoslav state on the foundations of real-socialism meant, from the position of its leader, Josip Broz Tito, that the question of nations within Yugoslavia has been solved\textsuperscript{20}, but the ideology of nationalism appeared once again quickly after his death, and in a form much more dangerous than anyone could have imagined.

3.3. The Revival of the National Idea

According to Križan – the Yugoslav and Serbian politicians found themselves unable to respond to the challenges set forth by Tito’s death, given the fact that in 1981, Kosovo Albanians protested in the streets and demanded the same treatment as other Slavic nations in Yugoslavia which led to ‘a permanent ethnic poisoning of the political atmosphere in Serbia’ (Križan, 1994, 10). This political tension built up and after a couple of years a number of texts and prominent figures arose as the carriers of ideas on how to mend the situation in Kosovo. Križan differentiates between two texts that represented the Perhaps the first important document to announce future development of the ideological framework was the petition ‘Against the persecution of Serbs in Kosovo’\textsuperscript{21}, which was published on January 21\textsuperscript{st} 1986, and was signed by 212 Serbian intellectuals and sent to

\textsuperscript{20} Josip Broz Tito’s views on Yugoslavia and the national question were published in a collection of his speeches and papers by Kasim Suljević in ‘Nacionalno pitanje i revolucija’. In one of his speeches in 1976, Tito claimed: ‘We also managed to stop nationalist forces in their attempts to undermine our community. No matter if it appears as unitarianism, separatism, or irredentism, nationalism always attempts to [...] endanger the existence of our multinational community. [...] That is the confirmation of the correctness of the politics of the LCY[League of Communists of Yugoslavia][...] as well as the cohesion and stability of our community as a whole [...]. We should remove all aspects of closing, localism and particularism from our practice, which is present [...] and on the level of the republics. (Suljević, 1977:530-532)

\textsuperscript{21} Kosovo represents a focal point in modern Serbian nationalism, being seen as the heartland of the medieval Serbian kingdom. In 1981, according to official census, the Albanians represented a majority of 75 percent in Kosovo, and with the wide autonomy that it achieved with the liberal Constitution of Yugoslavia in 1974, conservative politicians saw this as an opportunity to attack the reformist positions, supported by conservative Serbs in Kosovo, who were being replaced by ethnic Albanians in the party and government functions. (V.P.Gagnom, 1995, 147)
both parliaments of Serbia and Yugoslavia. The signatories of the petition and their positions pointed in the direction of, as Križan states ‘the centers of the imminent Serbian nationalism: the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Writers Union’. The petitioners demanded a ‘radical change of the situation in Kosovo and Metohija’, because the Serbs were being endangered by Albanians attempting to achieve an ‘ethnically pure’ Province of Kosovo. The petition formed a monolithic picture of the Serbs who ‘fought also for the Albanians; with their unselfish aid since 1945 and up to present day, they have given sufficient proof that they care for the freedom, progress and the dignity of the Albanian people’. Of course, for the petitioners the Albanians forced the Serbian people ‘to an exodus from its’ ancient hearths, and by the fusion of tribal hatred and genocide masked by Marxism, and an age-long ‘destructive genocide on European territory.’

In order to fight this ‘genocide’ the petitioners demand ‘decisive measures in order to stop the Albanian aggression in Kosovo and Metohija’ (as seen in Križan, 1994).

Another document which showed the ideological direction that Serbia was going to take in the following years was the ‘Memorandum’ published by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which was published unofficially in 1986, where, apart from the description of the position of Serbs in Yugoslavia from the eyes of the Academy, a portrayal of the ‘enemies’ of Serbs was also present. The part of the ‘Memorandum’ titled ‘The Position of Serbia and the Serbian People’ describes how ‘the expulsion of Serbian people from Kosovo’ represents ‘a spectacular testimony of its historical defeat. In the spring of 1981 a truly special, but open

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22 The Belgrade-centered group of intellectuals and politicians that perpetuated this story stated how the Serbs were victims of genocide by an Albanian majority who, in their attempt to create an ethnically clean state, turned to rape of nuns and children, destruction of Serbian monuments and other methods of repression, thus enabling a mass exodus of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo. More on the topic of the charges and how questionable they were, and a strong rebuttal by an independent commission see Srđa Popović, Dejan Jancić and Tanja Petovar, ‘Kosovski Čvor, drešiti ili seći?’ (Belgrade, Chronos, 1990).
and total war has been declared on the Serbian people, a war which was prepared during the diverse periods of administrative, political and legal changes.’ The authors claim that the responsibility for the economic failure of Serbia lies in a bias of the economic system which favored the economically stronger republics of Croatia and Slovenia within Yugoslavia, which created an ‘anti-Serbian coalition’, which was supported by the Communist International. Their call, as nationalist ideology always does, goes out to all Serbs to ‘recognize their own economic and national interests’ by establishing ‘the full national and cultural integrity of the Serbian people, without regard to republic or province of residency[...]’ Attainment of equality and an independent development for the Serbian people have a deeper historical sense’ (Memorandum, 1986).

Križan describes the second part of the ‘Memorandum’ as ‘dull attempts to resuscitate the mythical history of Serbia lacking any method or criterion, arbitrary theories of conspiracy, a corresponding extended list of ‘enemies’, plaintive and penetrating self-pity because of the historical failure of Serbia, and finally the hardly concealed revaluation and legitimization of war as means of forging the interests of ‘Serbian people” (Križan, 1994: 59).

The ‘Memorandum’ represents an interesting document, which appeared alongside an official protest of the Academy with regards to its’ publishing, but it still resonated within the Yugoslav society, because it was not repudiated, nor was it published afterwards officially, as a final official version. Nevertheless, the points that were made in the document stayed within the Yugoslav debate until its end.

When Slobodan Milošević came to power in 1987, it was evident that nationalism might be a strong tool in achieving political goals. With a broad support of Serbian intellectual elite
and representing the ‘Serbian people’, Milošević tried to reshape Yugoslavia according to a ‘Serbian model’. The ideology behind this move is best described by Križan who states ‘their ideological products can be subdivided into three categories: justifications of the Serbian nationalist project, efforts to reanimate Serbian myths, and warmongering’. (Križan, 1994, 60) Events around Milošević’s coming to power and achieving more and more influence had to do with a power struggle within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, as well as the struggle for the shape of Yugoslavia in the future which was called the ‘Anti-bureaucratic revolution’. The evolution of the conflict within the Yugoslav power structure quickly escalated from a clash within the party with regards to the reform of the state to a conflict between states themselves. As Milošević’s influence within Serbia proper rose, and the war itself became an evident solution for the power vacuum that was created, the idea of ‘all Serbs in one state’ became more and more popular. The argumentation for the war was a simple one: because Serbs are in danger from all sides, with many plotting against them, they have to fight in order to survive – and compared to their enemies and their aims, which is the destruction of all Serbs, Serbs have every right to use whatever force necessary to achieve their own goal. So, as one author put it ‘the Serbian nation must not be a minority anywhere, because thereby it would lose its soul and its honour’ (Marković, 1992:7).

The revival of the national myth came, as we can see, as an excellent tool in the disintegration of the former state, and the terminology of the ‘glorious past’ was used both

23 Milošević took power in Serbia and soon consolidated conservative control over the Serbian republic party organization through a series of rallies and press manipulation. Conservative editors aligned with Milošević took charge of the largest printed editions in Serbia and proceeded with manipulating the public opinion in Milošević’s favor. As Milosavljević describes, the Anti-bureaucratic revolution was a process of changing the leadership within the Serbian party and the revoking of autonomy of the two Serbian provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, which achieved broad autonomy with the constitution of 1974, with the use of nationalism as a key element. (Milosavljević, 2000, 335)
by politicians and intellectuals, as well as writers, poets and journalists in order to create a climate where war would be possible and *justified*. An excellent example of how politics used the aforementioned myths of greatness in order to create a certain atmosphere was the rally on Kosovo Polje, where according to newspaper reports from those times, around one million people gathered to celebrate the 600 year anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo. On 28th of June 1989, Slobodan Milošević spoke in front of the crowd, declaring that Serbs on that day recovered their state and dignity for the first time in six hundred years. Interestingly enough, by referring here to the ‘Anti-bureaucratic revolution’ that he conducted, he set aside six hundred years of history of the Serbs, thus connecting the Serbia of that time directly with the ‘glorious past’ of medieval Empire of Serbia, read by some authors as even going so far as ‘announcing his imperial ambitions’ (Križan, 1994:61). A prominent member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences and a well-known poet wrote that day that ‘six hundred years ago nothing more significant than the Battle of Kosovo Polje happened on the globe. Today, six hundred St. Vitus-days later, there is nothing more decisive for the destiny of Serbian people than the ongoing battle of Kosovo and for Kosovo. The outcome of the Battle of Kosovo, both the ancient and the present one, is not yet known. From the beginning two realities and two truths persist. They make no concessions to each other. As time passes, one knows less and less whether the wound of Kosovo will bring us to heaven or devour us. Kosovo is dawning every morning. Every day is a jubilee and a requiem. Today, as on St. Vitus-day 1989, one can see there again ‘who is faith and who is faithlessness’. As if the Serbian people were fighting only one battle, as if it were dying in one fight and on the same field, enlarging the Kosovo-
morgue, ‘adding one sobbing to the other,’ new martyrs to the martyrs of Kosovo.’ (Bećković, 1989:1)

One side-note, if one views the video material from the rally at Kosovo Polje, according to the account by sociologist of religion Mirko Đorđević, it was the first time when the flags of the Serbian Orthodox Church, as well as other religious symbols (such as icons) appeared alongside the symbols of communism at a mass public gathering. Đorđević’s explanation is that the Church in those days presented to the leading intellectuals its own ideological frame, which was at that point publicly accepted, with the Church authorities openly standing side by side with new nationalists. (Đorđević, 2005)

In a paper written in 1993, Nebojša Popov, a Serbian sociologist describes the events of 1989: ‘with the disappearance of Broz’s ‘cult of personality’, and after all efforts to keep it alive, the last two levers of central authority were the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav National Army. With an already nationalized economy (closing within republic borders) the ruling party started nationalizing itself (by getting stronger within the republics while weakening in the federation)[...] with the reality of the system of ‘real socialism’ collapsing where it existed for decades encourages the creation of political parties in Yugoslavia. However, instead of proponing the rights and freedoms of individuals, the largest number of parties put collective national freedoms as the first thing in their programs’. (Popov, 1993:15,16)

With the dissolution of the monolithic structure of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the ‘spiritual creators’ of Serbian nationalism, as Popov calls them, appeared and with them the idea that without a national state Serbs were doomed to disappear. This kind of rhetoric of fear was common among many ‘nationally aware’ authors, among them Matija
Bećković, in who, in his now famous text in a prestigious Belgrade literary journal in 1989 referred to Serbs in Croatia as ‘remnants of a slaughtered people’ (Bećković, 1989:3).

Popov discerns among these spiritual creators a few authors which had a key role in the formation of the modern Serbian idea of national unity. Among them is Dobrica Ćosić, an influential Serb thinker who reached national acclaim ‘through decades; as a volunteer in the war, among veterans; as a dissident, among dissidents and the opposition; as a national fighter, among nationalists. And with writing his monumental historic novels, Ćosić became a figure of authority in explaining the history of Serbs, reaching an ever widening audience dissatisfied with an ideologized past.’ (Popov, 1993: 16) With this kind of biography, Ćosić was popularly named the spiritual ‘father of the nation’, and even became the head of state for a time.

His literary work aside, Ćosić’s vision of the new Serbian identity was intertwined in all of his work. At the beginning of the war in Croatia, in an interview in Belgrade’s oldest newspaper, he attacked Croatian fascists, and condemned the actions of a modest peace movement formed at the time in Serbia because of their ‘pacifist rhetoric’, and proclaimed their actions treacherous and cowardly. On the other hand he demanded ‘the self-determination of citizens and the people’ by ethnic delimitation in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Ćosić, 1991)

Ćosić’s colleague and the ideologue of Milošević’s Socialist Party of Serbia, Mihailo Marković also justified the actions in Croatia by saying:

‘It is our vital interest that the Yugoslav Peoples’ Army conducts the defense of Serbian people in Croatia, which is its duty according to our laws and international standards[...]. The point is that it is an aggressive war, conducted by Croatia against the Serbian people in
Croatia[...]
The only way out of the Yugoslav crisis which we have to prevent at any price is the conservation of Yugoslavia as a league of states in its existing borders. This would mean delivering the plagued and decimated Serbian people in Croatia to the grace and disgrace of the Ustaša.' (Marković, 1991)

At a speech at the 20th session of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević spoke of the solution of the problems of Yugoslavia:

'The solution will not be brought about by any procedures, with their little and big traps, their intrigues and ridiculous insignificances. The solution will be brought about by politics supported by the majority of the people of this country, and this will be done institutionally and outside of institutions, statutorily and extra-statutorily, on the street and in the official bodies, in a populist and in an elitist way, with and without argument.' (Milošević, 1991)

At the high-watermark point of his rule, just before the beginning of the bombing of Vukovar and the start of the war in Croatia, Slobodan Milošević put this ideology explicitly:

'If we have to fight, by God we will fight. But I hope that they will not be crazy enough to fight us. For even if we do not know how to work well and make gains by working, we will at least know how to fight well.' (Milošević, 1989)
4. War in Discourse

Observing the production of ideology in Serbia from the beginning of the twentieth century, and the vision of history from the Balkan Wars onwards, one can find that war represents a key notion in the perception of intellectuals, and all the conundrums that are connected with it presented in a few key concepts that are discursively perpetuated through history up until today.

War has been, through the perception of intellectuals in Serbia often understood as a legitimate method of achieving ‘national interests’ and as the only possible way of facilitating ideals, with a deep belief that arms solve everything and that the ‘right of sword’ is the strongest right. One of the strongest elements in this belief are the auto-stereotypization by Serbs, as well as other Balkan nations of themselves as heroic, courageous, willing to fight (Milosavljević, 2002, 84). Another key element was the idea that all wars were ‘liberating’, meaning that nationalism perceived all of its interests as an idea of a certain liberation, whether it was the question of a seaboard, the liberation of ‘brothers’ or the liberation of historic territories. This kind of belief mutated into a constant which lead to the understanding that all wars were wars of defense, whereas all wars taking place on the territory of the state proper were always aggressive. These stereotypes can be seen through two distinct of discursive practices:

1. Serbs win in wars, but lose in peace

2. All wars Serbs led were just and fought in self-defense
4.1. ‘Winners in war, losers in peace’

Speaking of this syntagmatic phrase, examples of it can be easily found in contemporary public speech as well as in history. One of the more emblematic variations of this standard is the sentence ‘we have lost enough in peace, time has come to win in peace’, spouted by Serbia’s Prime Minister Ivica Dačić. This kind of stereotype has been characteristic in Serbian politics for many years, one of the authors stating this position was Velmar Janković in 1938, when the contemplation of the winners and losers in wars was popular, where in a published book he said, and I quote: ‘It is easy for us to be heroes on the field of battle. Now it has come a time of honor without a battlefield’. Observing the differences between ‘Serbians’ (Serbs living in Serbia proper) and ‘prečani’ (Serbs living in Vojvodina, as well as abroad), he claimed that it was needed for a ‘Serbian’ to be a hero and even in peace to be ‘as good as an administrator as he was a warrior, and to sacrifice himself equally in peace and war, and to maintain all qualities that the ‘prečan’ western imagination thought up for him as its’ better part. Out of war he found himself a common man like any other’, and concludes that the Belgrade man, as a victor has been taken by a disease that turns victories into losses, a ‘malady of life without effort’ and whenever he

24 This sentence comes as a part of his speech given in commemoration of the signing of the peace treaty in World War One, where among other things, the Prime Minister said that ‘he is not sure whether the decisions made after the signing of the treaty, meaning, he creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians advanced the national interest of Serbia much […] and that is why World War One should be a great wisdom that one should think well of what he will do in peace. […] Serbia was on the side of the winners in World War One, unlike the other peoples that we have made the new common state with, from which they left bloodied in the nineties’. (Dačić, 2012) This kind of consequent evaluation of historic facts represents a veritable feast for historians, especially because it creates the common problem that nationalist ideology creates, which is that it creates a single temporality in which Serbia today is equalled with Serbia in 1918. Another problem is that Serbia was not ‘dragged’ into a common state, it was actually the one who proclaimed the creation of a common state as one of its war goals in 1915 in Niš (as a part of the Niš Declaration, signed by the then Prime Minister of Serbia, Nikola Pašić, referring in the text to Croats and Slovenes as ‘chained brothers’ (Pašić, 1915)).

25 Vladimir Velmar-Janković (1895-1976) was a Serbian writer and a secretary of the Ministry of culture of the Serbian quisling government under occupation during WWII. After the war he escaped to Barcelona, where he lived until his death in a car accident.

Among modern authors, this idea that Serbs lose in peace is often attributed to Dobrica Ćosić, a very important figure in the post-Tito era of Serbian life, and ‘the father of the nation’. Whereas Ćosić is not the originator of this thesis, he did repeat it often, especially when wars broke out in former Yugoslavia. His thesis was that Serbs were ‘good and brave soldiers, winners in wars, but bad and scared citizens, weak builders of life’ and that the ‘hero in war for freedom became a coward in peace and freedom’, how ‘for Serbs, the fatherland exists only in war’ and that ‘bravery and sacrifice in war were left unappreciated and disrespected in peace’ (Ćosić, 1992a: 106, 86). Mihailo Marković, one of the ideologues of Slobodan Milošević’s party, a prominent Serbian philosopher and intellectual questioned ‘how is it possible that in the hardest situations we manage to make impeccably responsible and ethically lofty choices, so we could in much easier situations, when high morals are no longer required, but a certain amount of common sense – make cathastrophic mistakes’ and thus ‘our heroic choices by rule lead to enormous sacrifice, suffering and destruction. After that long periods of enervation and unimaginable passivity ensue’ (Marković, 1994: 367).
4.2. All Wars Serbs fought were fought in self-defense

The perception of war in modern Serbian historiography, as well as in the eyes of the intellectual elite during the twentieth century was that all wars that Serbia participated in were fought solely as a defense of national interests and as wars of liberation, never as wars of aggression. This is inherently linked with the common stereotype which defines ‘us’ as just, impeccable warriors of good. These key ideas of historical identity through the idea of historical justification can best be seen in the analysis by Dubravka Stojanović about the historical textbooks in Serbia at the turn of the century.

The idea of Serbian historical identity as just represents an important element of all ideologizations of historic consciousness. Comparative analysis of Serbian textbooks of history for elementary and high schools (with references to historic textbooks since 1920) has shown that the attitude towards war changed according to the role that Serbia had in those wars. Whilst World wars were shown in an objective manner, with analyses of the causes and interests during those wars, the causes of wars that Serbia started have been shown in an obfuscated manner, often without any explanation – and even by blaming the other side for starting the conflict. Examples of this are the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885, or the aforementioned military action of Serbian forces in northern Albania during 1912 and 1913. (Stojanović, 2008)

This stereotype, perpetuated through modern Serbian historiography has been often used during times of crises. During the tumultuous time before the start of the war in Croatia, Radovan Samardžić, a Serbian historian and a member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences wrote how ‘the common villager would tighten his peasant shoe and grab his rifle and then go to war to avenge Kosovo and liberate brothers from strangers’ because Tsar Lazar
became ‘for all times’ the carrier of the oath that ‘choosing between slavery and an honorable death, one must choose death in order to resurrect’, so ‘dying for earthly matters and choosing the kingdom of heaven means staying on the barricades of freedom’. (Samardžić, 1989: 25, 32, 54).

The ordained members of the Serbian Orthodox Church also gave their influence to the reproduction of common myths under the banner of the nationalism of St. Sava26. One of the ideological programs of the Church that was published immediately after the war in Bosnia and Croatia was ‘The Lamb of God and the Beast from Beyond – A Philosophy of War’, published by the Church in 1996 and written as a report from a symposium in which a number of the clergy attended as well as some political figures, such as Radovan Karadžić, whose talk at this symposium is also a part of the book. Atanasije Jevtić, a Metropolitan in the Serbian Orthodox Church wrote a paper in this book under the title ‘The Worst of All Possible Wars’. At the beginning of his discussion of the topic, he writes how all wars began with the battle between God and Satan, and describes how the war that just ended was started by the same devilish forces that start all wars, and notices how Serbs have nothing else to do but to ‘fight and defend ourselves. Our, Serbian wars have always been to defend ourselves’. For him the most recent war was also a war of defense, because ‘Serbs didn’t go into foreign territories’. (Jefić et al, 1996: 70–71)

According to Dr. Mirko Zurovac, a professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, in the same book, the war in Bosnia created Karadžić and Mladić as ‘mythical figures through which one endangered people attempt to be understood in their heroically-tragic situation’ because through them ‘speaks the purest and the most glorious that one people could show

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26 A particular kind of nationalism thought up by Nikolaj Velimirović, a bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church before the Second World War, of which there will be more elaboration in the case study that follows.
in a just battle for their bare existence'. In the matter of national survival, Zurovac argues ‘saints become warriors’ (Jefić et al., 1996: 83–84). The thought of one of the authors of the book goes in the direction that the Serbs are called upon to ‘testify to the truth of the Holy Book and to carry through history the flag of battle Orthodoxy’ and to remind the world ‘of the universal spiritual meaning of war for The Honorable Cross and Golden Freedom’.

Because evil attacks first, it can be fought against only ‘through the force of just resistance and defense’ and in a defensive war ‘there is no sin and evil’ so – the ‘Orthodox acceptance of war means fighting in a just war for a just cause’. The author continues to develop his idea of ‘the holy Serb warrior’, whose task is to participate in war ‘raising it by personal heroism or martyrdom to the level of a war for the oath’ which ‘mystically speaks in our bones even before we come out of a mother’s womb’. He concludes by mentioning the spiritual meaning of war, of God saving his people from historic and spiritual apathy, of ‘the war in Republika Srpska and Krajina’ that purified the national soul and showed ‘the right Serb Orthodox way’ and how ‘no-one won a Christian fatherland war by being for peace and godless peacemakers and their attempts for making ‘peace’, because the Golden Freedom has always been won with the Honorable Cross and by force’. (Jefić et al., 1996: 225–235).

These stereotypes and their constant presence through the past century represent one way of looking at how ideology reproduced itself by its’ use by intellectuals in forming what has been defined by them as ‘national interests’. Another way of looking at the way in which

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27 The phrase ‘For the Honorable Cross and Golden Freedom’ comes from the nineteenth century and it represents the call to arms that was connected with the duchies of Serbia and Montenegro, which connected their mythology to the ‘Kosovo oath’, which speaks of Knyaz Lazar (later renamed to Tsar Lazar), the leader of Serb troops in the Battle of Kosovo who chose the kingdom of Heaven instead of the kingdom on Earth by refusing the Ottoman offer to become a vassal. The phrase was also later used during the Second World War by the Chetnik movement as their motto.
ideology functions would be to take an example of a particular institution and see how it ideologically relates to the state on the one hand, and society as a whole on the other. The institution in question in this paper is the Serbian Orthodox Church, which – during the time of the fall of Yugoslavia reshaped itself into one of the more important factors first in the time of the wars, but especially later, with the fall of Milošević in 2000 and the shift in course by the Serbian republic.
5. Critical Analysis of Discourse, Case Study of the Serbian Orthodox Church

5.1. Introductory remarks

The goal of this analysis of discourse is to attempt to portray the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church (or SPC) as an institution and individuals as its members and functionaries in the creation of the new Serbian identity. It is necessary to ascertain to which level did indeed the church perpetuate and even at times create the discourse of nationalism starting from the period of the emerging nationalist doctrine in former Yugoslavia at the time of its dissolution, and the influence it had on the real events taking place in Serbia from that time.

Mirko Đorđević, a prominent Serbian sociologist of religion claims that the SPC through historic analysis, through the eyes of its own historians sees itself not just as a religious entity in the Balkans, but rather as the 'carrier and the guardian of Serbhood through history'(Đorđević, 2001). This kind of 'revision' of the role of the Church in history and the consequent positioning of the Church in the matters of history and ethnicity, matters political lead to the analysis of the 'geopolitics of Orthodoxy'(a title of a book by Francois Thual).

Đorđević, quoting Thual, speaks how the events surrounding modern Orthodoxy in general – especially after the collapse of communism have to do with the 'crisis of identity' that arose from the clash of Orthodox Christianity, and Christianity in general with the challenges of modernity. The role of the Church as 'carrier' of national identity through history cannot be put into question, given the fact that they are indeed historical facts, but
the question that arises is why the Church has the need to explicitly state this in modern times, with the emergence of a modern secular state based on the separation of church and state? And another question that arises is how will the Church, and will it indeed manage to cope with the challenges set forth by modern times? According to Đorđević, Orthodoxy has during history closed itself within its dogmas and represents a 'mental frame’ that resists changes. The problem, according to him is the problem that the explanation of historical circumstances for these thinkers ends with the 'national question' seen narrowly ethnophilatelistically. (ibid.)

That is why a critical analysis of such a 'mental frame’ as Đorđević puts it is required in order to ascertain the width and breadth of the influence that the Church has on current political matters in Serbia.

5.2. General setting of the analysis

The President of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolić met with the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church Irinej and two Metropolitanans, Amfilohije Radović and Irinej Bulović on the 30th of November 2012 in the residency of the President and spoke of the problems that Serbia faces in Kosovo. After this meeting the President stated that ‘the state is completely open for the active participation of the Church in finding the solution for the fateful problems Serbia faces in Kosovo’\textsuperscript{28}. This statement came under attack by a number of non-governmental organizations stating that in a secular state such as Serbia, crossing the divide between the church and state remains a breach of the Constitution.

\textsuperscript{28} As seen in Balkan Post, 30.11.2012, accessed 15.12.2012
This state of affairs represents a typical state of confusion for post-socialist societies, where the role of religious communities in new political environments is not yet clearly defined. This new status of religious groups in Balkan states, and Serbia in particular allows them to comment and act on different social queues and deal with state and social issues, which was not the case in socialism.\textsuperscript{29} This kind of change in posture towards the Church draws with it many important questions – what are the social issues that are of interest to the church and its’ constitutional limitations? How ready are religious communities to deal with the problems that they face and in what capacity are they appearing when dealing with these issues? What is the vision of modern society from the eyes of the Church? What is the relationship of the Church towards civil society, and does the Church position itself as a member of the civil society? In the time of socialism, the state one-sidedly decided to form its’ relationship with religious communities. After 2000 and the failure of Slobodan Milošević’s ideology, the question of the position of the church changed. It came as a reaction of long-lasting state pressure on religion, and gave ground to an opposite extreme, a revival of religion with many ‘new believers’ appearing, the increased presence of religion and religious topics in media, whilst the social impact of the Church increased significantly. Also with this increase in influence, religion encroached upon the ‘public’ consciousness, acting out its’ dogma, which was implausible two decades ago. (Avramović, 2007, 599)

\textsuperscript{29} The Art. 174 paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of 1974, as well as the later art. 41, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of Serbia of 1990 used the same, neutral, phrasing with regards to churches: “Religious communities shall be separated from the State and shall be free in the conduct of religious affairs and performance of religious rites.” Worth noticing is also that the very word “church” or “churches” was not used all through the constitutional texts. According to Avramović, this kind of legal expression represented the fundamental constitutional role which shaped religious freedom issues in the country. This, for him, represented more than a strict division of the two social spheres, the church and the state, but more like a hostile separation, because the state took a posture of proclaimed atheism. (Avramović, 2007, 599)
In the period after the 5th of October revolution, the political forces that brought down Milošević, because of their heterogeneous political interests, engaged in a prolonged political struggle that ended with a tragic event of the slaying of the pro-EU Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in March 2003. The transformation of a post-socialist society brought with it a change in the inherent values based in the system, alongside the economic and political changes that occurred. The changes in the system take time, and they require the focus of ideological apparatuses in order to give these changes shape. One of these structures, the SPC, represented an important factor during the time of poverty, war and general social crisis of the 1990s. The regime of Slobodan Milošević enabled the Church to spread its influence amongst citizens, even though the state still maintained an atheist outlook. The connection of the state with the Church reflected in the actions of several prominent members of the clergy (such as the leading Metropolitan of the Church – Atanasije Jeftić, Amfilohije Radović, Artemije Radosavljević, Irinej Bulović, Lavrentije Trifunović and Filaret Mićević), through the process of encouraging the ‘great Serbian’ nationalism. This privileged position allowed the Church more influence in the matters of national identity, creating a space for this religious institution to move towards becoming a greater influence in the political sphere as well. The period of a blocked transformation of the ‘90s, the Church’s influence in the public sphere was also narrowed. After the relative stabilization of political affairs after the revolution in 2000, the transformation of the state according to an Orthodox model could start and in March 2001, the Church’s periodical Pravoslavije quotes how an initiative for the redefinition of the relationship between the Church through the talks between the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Vojislav Koštunica and
His Holiness, the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church Pavle has started taking place. (Pravoslavlje, 2001, no. 815)

The SPC started giving more and more shape to the ideological construction of the new state, starting with November 2000, when the Holy Assembly of Metropolitans of the Serbian Orthodox Church, among the decisions it made, created a platform for the instating of religious education in elementary and high schools (SPC, 2000). In July 2001, the Government of the State of Serbia passed the Decree on organization and realization of religious instruction and of an alternative subject in elementary and high schools. This decree was used as interim legislation so the religious education might start in the school year 2001/2002, and later in 2002 two laws were passed that defined the position of the religious education in schools, and these laws are in power to date. When the question of constitutionality of religious education in elementary and high schools was put forth by a number of NGO’s in Serbia, the SPC responded with a statement that this question represents ‘the fear of Satan and his followers in the past six decades – manifested in every place under the sky of a country that represents only by name what Serbia means as a wholesome meaning of that term’. (Novosti, 24.11.2000).

30 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 46/2001 of 27 July 2001. According to the Decree, parents and other legally recognized representatives decide whether their children will attend religious instruction in primary school or not. Pupils in secondary schools (starting with the age of 14 or 15) decide for themselves on religious instruction class enrollment. Attendance is mandatory for the current school year. If the pupil does not attend religious education, he or she shall instead attend classes in a new subject named “civic education.” Pupils may also opt out altogether. Classes in religious instruction or civic education are scheduled only once per week. Pupils are not to be graded in the same way as they are for other subjects, but will be given only a descriptive mark that does not affect their final grade point average.

31 Law on amending the Law on Elementary School (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 22/2002 of 26 April 2002) and Law on amending the Law on High School (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 23/2002 of 9 May 2002). The main modification was that religious instruction and alternative subject have obtained the status of elective courses. Pupil has to choose one of the two subjects but cannot opt out altogether. The subject is laid down within the curricula of elementary (eight years) and high schools (four years). Evaluation of pupils is descriptive, differently than in other subjects, and the marks do not influence pupils’ average grade. Classes are held once a week (36 hours per year). (Avramović, 2007)
relationship between the state and the church continued in December 2000, when the directorate of moral of the General Staff of Army of Yugoslavia held a round table discussion\(^{32}\) about re-integration of Orthodox priests as officers in the army corps. The official statement of the army was that ‘military priests of Orthodox denomination need to be a part of the Army of Yugoslavia’ because ‘although they are equal before the law, the religions in our society are not equal when our national culture and history are in question. In other words, they have not made an equal contribution to national culture and the preservation of the national authenticity and state independence of the Serbian people.’” (in Vukomanović, 2005).

Thus the army, formed in the same ideological matrix as the former socialist Yugoslav People’s Army, found a new ideological framework in Orthodoxy and with it a new cultural-historical mission.

According to some authors, these changes took a dramatic step forward after the assassination of Zoran Đinđić in 2003, when the church and state reinstated a ‘symphonic’ relationship, which was a characteristic relationship in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Duchy of Yugoslavia before that. One of the ways this relationship was enacted was that the Serbian Orthodox Church was regarded as the national church, and the state of those times only recognized seven other ‘traditional’ religions. (Đorđević, 2004)

Hence, the new law on religious freedom that was enacted after April 2006 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 36/2006), brought about a heated debate on the contents of the law. The debate lasted for almost two years, and the law was passed after passing of

\(^{32}\) For more information on the results of this discussion between the Army and the SPC, find ‘Army and religion : collection of works from the round table on the subject “Regulation of religious issues in the Yugoslav Army’, Beograd, Novinsko-informativni centar Vojska, 2001
five different draft. According to Vukomanović, the state initially anticipated great concessions for the Church, including the immunity of the clergy before public law. In the first draft, the author defined the SPC euphemistically as ‘primus inter pares relative to other religious communities’, and defined the Ministry of Religious affairs as ‘almost like an external government ‘service’ of the SPC’. The language of the draft itself represented a problem terminologically, because it used a theological narrative. As Vukomanović states:’...the words bogoslužbeni (God-serving), bogomolje (places of worship), sveštenoslužitelji (servants of the church), verski dostojanstvenici (religious dignitaries), žarišta duhovnosti (focal points of spirituality), duhovna misija (spiritual mission) all come from the Orthodox vocabulary rather than from the civic one.’(Vukomanović, 2005:7) Interestingly, many of these terms stayed in the final version of the text of the law.

Several controversial topics came into focus of the public, especially the position of the so-called ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ religious communities. In Articles 10-15, the status of traditional churches and religious communities is defined by ‘a several century old continuity, and whose legal subjectivity has been obtained on the basis of particular laws, and those are: Serbian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church, Slovak Evangelist Church, the Protestant Christian Church and the Evangelist Christian Church’, as well as the Islamic religious community and the Jewish religious community. The list of traditional religious communities was thus ethnically bounded, and every traditional religion thus defined was rounded on the ethnic model. The position of traditional churches, under the law, is discriminatory with regards to non-traditional religious communities, first because they are initially registered in the national registry in the Ministry of Religion, while other, non-registered churches have to go through a complicated procedure to be actually recognized
by the state; second, the benefits of being a registered religion means that under the Article 30 of the law, a registered church can be exempt from paying taxes. Thus, the law on taxes on property of Serbia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 26/2001) exempts all registered churches from paying taxes on property in its' Article 12, but the law on VAT in Serbia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 86/2004) – corr. 61/2005, 65/2007 and 93/2012) lists only traditional churches as exempt from taxes on imports and services in Article 55.

The minister, Milan Radulović, who proposed the law regulating the position of the church in the Republic of Serbia spoke at a symposium of the SPC in 2005, and referred to the draft of the law by saying:

'...it is not a problem that they (referring to small religious communities) get that freedom, the problem is that they deem that the SPC must be taken to their level, to be equal to them. All discussions that we have are revolving around how we need to prove to them that all are equal in Serbia, but not all are alike, they cannot be. That is not allowed by tradition, the people won’t allow it. We cannot now satiate the will of the two percent of the believers in new faiths, while aggrieving the ninety eight percent of the population who belong to traditional churches. That is the see-saw we find ourselves on, but the core of the argument is such: this government is decisive, at least I am decisive, that no law will be brought about that will not recognize our tradition, that won’t recognize the SPC as a carrier of the state and cultural consciousness of the Serbian people and that we will enact a law that will create continuity between the laws of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and this modern law, and that we won’t accept what everyone accepted, even the Russians – a law on religions that has been dictated by the Americans'
(Radulović, 2005).

When this law was passed, the Venetian Commission, as a part of the Council of Europe responded by saying how the standards of that of that institution were not held and sent a recommendation to Serbian authorities to narrow the responsibilities of the ministry of Religious Affairs, to enhance the freedoms of non-registered religious communities and to precisely define the extent and breadth of canonic laws (according to State Department (2007)).

The new Constitution of Serbia introduced a different tone, in 2006. Article 11 of the Serbian Constitution proclaims in the three paragraphs that: ‘The Republic of Serbia is a secular state; Churches and religious communities shall be separated from the state; No religion may be established as state or mandatory religion’. Interestingly enough, the Constitution, which was enacted after the law has been implemented, also states in Article 44 that ‘Churches and religious communities are equal and separated from the state’. (Constitution, 2006) As can be seen, the law and the Constitution do not agree on these terms.

5.3. Critical analysis of discourse, results and observation

In order to better understand the relationship between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the state of Serbia, it is necessary to first examine the foundations of traditionalism and conservatism of the Church, and how it reshaped itself from an isolated religious
community in an atheist state of SFRY into the ‘mother-church’ it is considered in Serbia today.

During the time of the French Revolution, in 1789, counter-revolutionary thinkers such as Javier de Maistre, appalled by the terror of the Revolution wrote how ‘the natural order of things has been disrupted’ (Đorđević, 2003:8). ‘The natural order of things in the world’ has been endangered by atheism, the alliance between the throne and the altar has been broken, but de Maistre is not just worried about this factual turn of events; he was afraid of whether the ‘abstract metaphysics of human rights’ would be properly understood by the ‘hurt and humiliated’ of the world. This idea that the word of God has shaped power relations within societies, and that the rule of law is intricately connected with God’s own is predominant in the writings of all organicist thinkers who find ‘a Satanized state of human society’ in democracy (Đorđević, 2003:9).

When discussing the Serbian organicist thought, there are certain terminological conundrums that need to be seen first as to better understand the debate. Theological terminology that found its way into socio-political debates via the use of right-wing politicians and groups, or by the church authorities themselves revolves around the terms Svetosavlje (the cult of St. Sava\(^{33}\)), and sabornost (universality). Nikolaj Velimirović, a Serbian religious thinker from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century brought in his writing theological terminology when speaking of the socio-political context in Serbia of the time. His writing became quite popular amongst his followers at the end of the twentieth century.

\(^{33}\) Saint Sava, born Rastko Nemanjić (1174-1236) was the first Archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Church, recognized in 1219 by the Patriarch of Constantinople.
Velimirović, at a lecture held at Kolarac People’s University describes the ideology of Svetosavlje, he calls it ‘our national ideology’, and bases it on ‘evangelical nationalism’, given to Serbs by St. Sava, who he regards as the establisher of the first nationalist doctrine in Europe. The aforementioned terminological conundrum with regards to the concept of Svetosavlje lies in the connection between the philosophical and religious elements on which this ideology was based; the proposed strong link between St. Sava and his importance to old Serbs must endure through generations. For Velimirović, the basis of the Svetosavlje nationalism is the following institutions: *the peoples’ church, the peoples’ dynasty, the peoples’ state, the peoples’ education, the peoples’ culture and the peoples’ defense* (Velimirović, 2003) (interesting how these proposed foundations exactly replicate in the discussion of ideological apparatuses by Althusser). With the rise of the influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church in social milieus of the end of the twentieth century, the concept of Svetosavlje, as an example of discursive practice, became an important element in the formation of a new Serbian identity, meaning that Svetosavlje was taken as a specific discursive practice, independent of the individual, and adhering to its own laws. Rastko Nemanjić, a popular religious leader of his time and his values are reconstituted in the religious discourse within a movement of Nikolaj Velimirović, the subject is constituted anew and discerned in a more traditional and conservative light. Here it can be said that the order of discourse defines the subject, and certainly not the way around.

Another important character in the story of the constitution of the new Serbian identity through the theology of the Church is Justin Popović. For Popović, the glorification of the nation as an entity does not constitute a primary function, but his thinking still remains within the confines of what can be defined as organicist thought. The concept of *sabornost*
(or universality) is a focal point in his writing, where the universality represents gathering within the faith, love and freedom. The Church is a unified entity and cannot be divided, because in it is Christ, according to him. Today, the idea of universality is usually connected with the idealization of the rural patriarchal community in which the proponents of universality see the perfect social structure. Today, also, according to Đorđević, this idea of universality represents an ideological frame intended to protect the idea of one-mindedness in socio-political relationships (Đorđević, 2004). The idea of Svetosavlje and the idea of universality represent discursive units which form other discursive practices. An illustration of how these practices are formed can be seen just by looking at Orthodox ‘universal’ (or saborne) organizations formed under the banner of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Dveri srpske and Obraz, who, in their political proclamations (or as they call them, Načertanija(sic!)) refer to these concepts of one-mindedness by describing their goals which are: the rebirth of Orthodoxy (in love of God and in love of country), the renewal of the household, Serbian education, of the parochial community and the church-national councils, the apocatastasis of the monarchy, the Serbian village and the national economy, while the external relationship towards foreign elements has been described as ‘cooperation without assimilation’.34 Today, Svetosavlje and universality proposed by Metropolitans of the Church tend to lean towards the defense of one part of the territory, Kosovo. Because the ‘Church is a spirit that revives the entire peoples’ organism, warming and unifying by faith, one hope and one love’ (Velimirović, 2003:58), the defense of Kosovo becomes a spiritual process. On February 21st 2008, the Church organized a moleban, imagined as a mass gathering for prayer for the

34 The proclamations of the Dveri srpske and Otačastveni pokret Obraz have been taken from their respected websites: www.dverisrpske.com and www.srb-obraz.org
‘salvation of the Serbian people of Kosovo and Metohija’, as a part of a larger state political rally in front of the National Assembly, after the self-proclamation of independence of Kosovo. This event illustrates particularly well the political use of organicist thought. The keynote speech was held by Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović, an influential figure in the Church hierarchy: ‘we must maintain, brothers and sisters, Serbian feet in Kosovo and Metohija, the terrible place in which we were created as a people, as God’s people. Because of that we carry the Kosovo oath of our ancestors as a tale knowing that the lost is only what we relinquish’. This ‘tale’ that Radović is referring to is the tale of the Battle of Kosovo, perceived as the crown jewel in modern Serbian mythology, without which Serbs cannot survive. That kind of concept of history presents some events as necessary, such as: ‘Lazar had to die in Kosovo because he chose the fate of Christ and the kingdom of Christ. He had to die for truth, so he could resurrect in glory’ (Velimirović, 2003a:42).

At the political part of the rally, the cries of universality were very much present also, with the president shouting from the stage: ‘as long as there are a Serbian people, Kosovo is Serbia!’ (Koštunica, 2008) By invoking this statement, the author obviously brings into rational real-politik a notion of an unchanging, conservative essentialist determination of forever.

One other essentialist argument that is an undercurrent in this event, based on the idea of universality is the conception that all Serbs belong to the Serbian Orthodox mother-church,

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35 This attitude of universality became a very popular kind of viewing of politics from the side of the political elite in Serbia. Statements calling the unity of ‘all Serbs’ under a certain banner, or just a proclamation of universality, such as the recent statement by President Nikolić who, in an interview for Corriere della Sera stated how: ‘no Serb admits that there was a genocide in Srebrenica, so I won’t as well’ (Nikolić, 2012a). By this statement, President Nikolić disqualifies those who admit that there was genocide in Srebrenica as not being Serbs, even though this event has been qualified as genocide by the Tribunal in Den Haag.
and there can be no other religious affiliation, but the choice of ancestral religion, because the church represents a national religion.

The concept of universality and viewing of the nation as ‘one body’\textsuperscript{36} presents a new way of looking at life, which surpasses every democratic system, and this call for unity is seen as a bypassing of democratic processes. This call presents an even bigger challenge for transitional societies, such as Serbia, because in the loss of any other concepts of reality, the organicist approach to social relations takes hold in socio-political relations.

5.4. Revision of history, collective forgetting as a way of reconstituting identity

A wave of historical revisionism appeared after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and this kind of trend appeared in Serbia as well (Kuljić, 2002). Even though this revisionism did not happen at first with the support of the state, through the actions of the national (and nationalistic) institutions such as the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Writers Union and the Serbian Orthodox Church, the representations of certain members of nationalistic groups that collaborated with the Germans in the Second World War started changing (examples being Draža Mihailović, the leader of the Četnik movement, Milan Nedić, the President of Serbia during occupation, Dimitrije Ljotić, a leader of a Nazi paramilitary formation in Serbia during the war). (Popov, 1993)

This context of historiographical revisionism is mutually supported by all institutions that deal with the process, given the fact that without the ‘peoples’ religion’ a concept of a

\textsuperscript{36}This perception can be seen in many ideological texts published by the Church in their own magazine \textit{Pravoslavlje}, where one author states how: ‘the spirit of a real community built on a mutual recognition, identification, and above all else, a mutual belief that they belong to the same cultural, national, civilizational and spiritual body, built on the inside by the links of sacrificial love.’ (Živković, 2008:14)
nationalist right-wing in Serbia would not be possible in this shape, as well as how the Church could not stand so strongly on its’ nationalist positions without the support of right political parties. The root of this revisionist movement lies in one of the earliest revisions started by the Serbian Orthodox Church at the end of the 1980s, and finished in mid-2000s.

Nikolaj Velimirović, according to an in-depth study done by Byford in 2005, is perceived in Serbia today as a person held in highest regard by the majority of believing Orthodox population in Serbia, as a saint and one of the greatest Serbian Orthodox writers and philosophers since the Middle Ages. During the time of communism, Velimirović was perceived mostly as an anti-Semite, a traitor and a fascist, because of certain statements that he proposed in his writing in the 1930s, but the Church canonized him on May 19th 2003, by the decision of the Holy Synod, and proclaimed him a saint. The name of the Metropolitan of Ohrid and Žiča was entered into the Church calendar twice (and not once, as it is tradition), so the Church commemorates two dates – the 18th of March, the day Velimirović died in exile in United States in 1956, and 3rd of May, the day when his earthly remains were brought to Serbia in 1991, and buried in his village of Lelići.

The following analysis of discourse will be an attempt to track the life and work of St. Nikolaj, and to ascertain the spiritual and religious values held by the Metropolitan and his followers, which represent a foundation on which the political visions of the Church are grounded in today.

Velimirović appeared among the Serbian Orthodox clergy in a time when Serbian priests were recruited from the poor and uneducated layers of society. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the perception of the people towards the clergy was mostly that it
represented a ‘bed of provincialism, ignorance and corruption’ (Byford, 2005). Velimirović represented a new generation of priests who could transform the Church and its’ traditionalist views on the world. But Velimirović witnessed a deep personal change during a short time living with Bogomoljci\textsuperscript{37} in Ohrid, thus reforming himself into a conservative character (Byford, 2005). His respect for the Western tradition and sympathies for the ecumenical movement that he had during his youth were replaced with clerofascism and populism (Popov, 1993). He then started proposing the unity of church and state, the specific Serbian model of a Christian nationalism and monarchism, as well as an idea of a society based on the tenets of an Orthodox Christian tradition. By mid-1930s, the fight against Western ideas became a sort of an obsession for Velimirović. His life was focused on warning the Serbian people of dangers that it faces from the west and its’ cultural traditions (Byford, 2005).

The controversy around Velimirović started when the communist authorities in post-war Yugoslavia attempted to marginalize the right-wing elements of the Serbian Orthodox Church, especially the people that belonged to the populist tradition of the thirties, who were under the influence of Velimirović’s idea of clerical nationalism. The controversy can be encompassed in three key aspects: the anti-Semitic statements made by the Metropolitan, the glorification of Hitler and the links with the Nazi movement Zbor, whose founder was Dimitrije Ljotić. The coming of new authorities to power on the 5\textsuperscript{th} of October 2000 gave space for new right wing politicians to appear in the political arena, and with it came the intensive relativization of the key problematic questions surrounding the

\textsuperscript{37} Bogomoljci were a reactionary evangelist movement that appeared within the confines of the Serbian Orthodox Church at the end of the First World War, whose goal was the stopping of further dissolution of the Serbian Orthodox flock, and Velimirović represented one of their leaders and most prominent members
Metropolitan and his life, all along the lines of relativization of the anti-fascist movement in Yugoslavia in general.

In his writing, Velimirović perceived Yugoslavism as the biggest mistake of the Serbian people, and a humiliation to boot. For this kind of ‘dissolution of Serbdom’ he blamed partisanism, and this partisanism he described in four different aspects: intellectual, moral, political and economic. He ascribed to this partisanism a strong Western influence: ‘Serbian sons went to the West, to ask what is just and what is not, they went to learn how a state and society is to be governed and came back quarreling and divided into parties, just like the western peoples, without Theodulia’ (Velimirović, 2003b:40).

Velimirović describes theodulia as reflected as an opposite towards western European type of medieval feudalism, or theocracy. According to him, the difference between theocracy and theodulia (of St. Sava) is the difference between ‘a forced upon master, and a willing servant’ (Velimirović, 1996:35).

Theodulia in this sense, for Velimirović, represented the character of the old Serbian state, where the ruler first came as a servant of God, and the subjects, the villagers, lived in theodulia as their liege did. The Serbian village spoke to himself: ‘when our kings and our tsars served God Christ, why should I seek a better host to serve?’ (Velimirović, 1996:35).

But, the problem of Velimirović’s point of view has to do with an idealized relationship between the Serbian villager and his liege, and their relationship to god. Given the fact that hierarchy of this ideological frame is that the ruler is first turned to God, and only then is the religious belief of the servant spoken of, as a consequence of the former. Thus, if the
Serbian people were servants of God by proxy through their leaders, rather by their own volition – this speaks more of theocracy then theodulia (Bremer, 1997).

For Velimirović, the relationship between state and church is based on the idea of the nationalism of St. Sava, meaning that the church and the state take the same place in social hierarchy. Velimirović’s position on the unity between church and state can be seen well in his work *Srpski narod kao teodul*: ‘Serbian history knows not of the fight between church and state. It is explained by theodulia. Where-ever the church was separated from the state it created a sick state of either the church or the state or both. A separated church and state – it means the serving of two different masters. And given that there is only one real Lord, who can be served with awareness and honesty, meaning Our Lord God, means that one of the combatting and separated institutions, either the church or the state, must serve the opponent of God, Satan.’ (Velimirović, 1996:18)

As can be seen the only type of state organization for Velimirović is the Christian state, and any other shape or form of a state must represent a Satanistic or ‘sick’ state. Velimirović’s anti-democratic attitude derives also from his attitude towards the October Revolution, as well as the tradition of the French Revolution, because these two revolutions declared war on religion. Speaking of the revolutionary tradition, Velimirović considered it atheist, and without Christ: ‘there can be no brotherhood. Brotherhood can only happen if we have the same Father – it is hypocrisy to speak how we are all brothers if we have not the same father’. Thus democracy as a whole in his writing has been designated as: ‘invented by Satan in the goal of humiliating Christ and denying him’. (Velimirović, 2000:200)
Hence, Nikolaj Velimirović leaves it to the Serbian people to choose whether they will pick the ‘dark and stinking Europe or Christ’. Still, he bounds this statement in an interesting way, which can be seen in political proclamations written by his followers many years later by saying: ‘Serbia is a neighbor of Europe, but Serbia is not Europe. May it help Europe, if it can or wants to, but let it not mix with Europe and lose itself in it.’ (Velimirović, 1996:42)

In his own words, Velimirović concluded by setting forth tenets of what he deemed as the right way of organizing a society by:

1. Throwing away all, and emancipating oneself from all non-Orthodox ideologies and foreign influence in any branch of people’s life
2. Accepting serving Jesus Christ by all generations, and according to our ancestors, as a way and meaning of the church and of the state and of the education and all national institutions, as well as family and personal life.
3. A clear vision of the kingdom of God as a highest goal in our earthly existence as servants of God, both by the people and by the individual. (Velimirović, 1996:43)

This way, Velimirović attempts to present Serbian Orthodoxy as the ‘gatekeeper’ between East and West, where the Balkans represents ‘one healthy man between two sick ones’, and because of this the Balkans is neither West nor East, nor something in between, but is placed ‘above’ both of them.

The canonization of Nikolaj Velimirović represents a key notion in the formation of empirical reality of Serbia. The first informal canonization of Velimirović happened in 1987, thanks to his nephew and priest in the eparchy of Šabac and Valjevo, Jovan Velimirović and Amfilohije Radović. An unofficial canonization was commented by
archimandrite Atanasije Jeftić who said that it was true to ‘the centuries old tradition of the Serbian Orthodox Church’, because it helped promote, institutionalize and up to a certain point – ratify the proclaimed cult that surrounded the name of Velimirović. (Byford, 2005a) This represented the first move that was supposed to put pressure on church authorities to consider what was identified by its’ proponents as the ‘will of the people’ and later formally pronounce the Metropolitan Nikolaj a national Saint.

An interesting twist in the rhetoric about Nikolaj Velimirović in modern time has to do with the time he spent in Dachau extermination camp. According to Byford, in September 1944, when German troops started their retreat from Serbia in front of the Red Army, Velimirović, alongside the then Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church Dožić sent abroad, first to Austria, then to Germany. In the end they ended up in Dachau, where they were kept as ‘honorary prisoners’ (Ehrenhafling) for about three months; quoting him: ‘the question why Velimirović and Dožić were set free in December 1944 is a question without a final answer even today. Even though, historical proof point to the fact that these two religious figures were used by the German authorities as a trump card in negotiations with Serbian nationalists and collaborators, such as Dimitrije Ljotić and Milan Nedić. The liberation of Velimirović and Dožić from Dachau was a part of a bargain between Ljotić and Nedić and the German liaison Hermann Neubacher’ (Byford, 2005:35)

For the proponents of Velimirović’s ideas, Velimirović is presented as a martyr, who spent time in the hands of Nazis and this argument is used to create political and moral
credibility for his ideas, as well as to attempt to disregard his obvious sympathies for Nazism and his connection to the nationalist leaders of war-torn Serbia.\textsuperscript{38}

Today, the followers of the idea of Velimirović hold important positions within the church, and openly support right-wing nationalist engagement and populism, and represent as well the spiritual leaders of today’s nationalist orientation. For example, when President Vojislav Koštunica held his inauguration speech in 2000 he proclaimed that he was ‘proud to belong to the Serbian people and its church’, and in response to the Patriarch’s letter in which he congratulated Koštunica he said that as President he would ‘act responsibly, always keeping in mind thoughts from the New Testament’, and that he will take Patriarch’s advice as quote ‘fatherly’ and ‘precious’ in solving important state issues (Koštunica, 2000:1).

\textsuperscript{38} Velimirović spoke at the now famous lecture in 1935, where he proposed the foundations of his ideology of nationalism of St. Sava, and among other things, in transcripts of his lecture this quote is found: ‘acknowledgment must be given to the current German Leader, who, as a common handyman and a man of the people saw that nationalism without faith is an anomaly, a cold and insecure mechanism. And here, in the twentieth century he had an idea of St. Sava, and as a layman started the most important job amongst his people that is only characteristic for an enlightened, genius and a hero’ (Velimirović, 1937)
5.5. *The Church in the framework of nationalism*

With certain specifics aside, the transitional processes that took place in Eastern Europe also took place in Serbia. Although the process of the revival of religion and religious organization started in Serbia before other states, during the 1980s, as has previously been shown, after the fall of Milošević, when not just anti-communist politicians came to power, but also declared church-goers, the relationship between the church and state changed rapidly. From a highly secularized society, Serbia became a state with a large percentage of those who claim that they are religious, and religion took an important place in the public sphere. (Blagojević, 2008:81-115)

According to Radić (2010), religion took place of ideology up to a point during the past years, because it appeared as a fresh spiritual and emotional surplus in a time when society as a whole crumbled and the value system in Serbia was at an all-time low. The authorities needed the church as a source of legitimacy. According to her ‘the church was seen as an efficient instrument of management and social control (as confirming authority of a leader and asserting a dictate of morality), as a reservoir of cultural values and collective memory and a symbolic strength necessary to build new national, group and individual identities.’ (Radić, 2010:107)

This privileged position of the Serbian Orthodox Church arises as problematic in many ways when it comes to the question of the direct acts of the church with regards to important social and daily-political issues. The discourse of the clergy that resonates with the words of Nikolaj Velimirović that often appears in the media, and can be systematically shown through a frame of topics that the Church deems important: Statements made with
regard to Kosovo as a ‘Holy Land’, and the Kosovo Oath\textsuperscript{39}, expectations and a relationship with ‘brotherly Russia’, explicit anti-European and general anti-Western statements and statements deeming certain individuals and groups as ‘traitors’.

1. When asked about public remarks concerning its’ image of the Church as an institution more interested in politics than religious affairs, certain Metropolitan answer that the Church only ‘takes care only of national work and the good of the people and the Church’ (Radosavljević, 2004). The fulfillment of that task in part has to do with taking care of the people, and one of the ways to do that is to engage in discussion about people in Kosovo. Statements from church functionaries like: ‘Serbia cannot and must not ever give up Kosovo under no conditions, nor for any price’, and that ‘Kosovo is the Serbian Jerusalem, an eye nerve and something that shaped their mind, people, soul and culture’ (Radović, 2007) are often heard. In 2003, the Serbian Orthodox Church published a document under the title ‘The Memorandum on Kosovo and Metohija’, which has been declared an official document on the position of the Church towards Kosovo. In it, Amfilohije Radović is quoted and it is said that:

‘This is our holy, martyred Kosovo and Metohija, our Holy Jerusalem, the soul of our souls, our honor, the root of our being, our fate. Without it, we would cease to be what we are because it is in Kosovo and Metohija that we became a mature and historical

\textsuperscript{39} According to Đorđević, the Kosovo myth is shaped according to a paradigm of the New Testament: in its center is a just man (Lazar Hrebeljanović) surrounded by followers – apostles with the important figure of Judas – traitor, personified in the figure of Vuk Branković. The martyr chooses the kingdom of Heaven and thus the real defeat is taken to the plane of tales and myth, or legend. This myth appeared late and was founded by Mavro Orbin in his work The Kingdom of the Slavs (1892). It appeared many years after the battle of 1389, but it persists as a cultural creation and according to the ‘logic’ of a myth that achieved its historic function according to need. In politics, this myth is unusable, but it is still used and even abused (Đorđević, 2010:13)
people and, in the words of the Holy Great Martyr Lazar of Kosovo, chose once and for all times, the Kingdom of Heaven.' (Memorandum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, 2003)

This kind of discursive practice of speaking exclusively about Serbian Kosovo, and marginalizing and forgetting of all other peoples living in the region, and touching upon only the victimization of the Serbian people in the province became quite commonplace, both among the clergy and the Prime Ministers, as well as the ministers regarded as responsible for solving the ‘Kosovo Knot’ (Đorđević, 2010:16). One other important part of this document is the first of the six demands to the state made by the Church concerning Kosovo:

‘That the position of the Serbian people and Church be confirmed, and also incorporated in the new Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, that no one has or will ever have the right to relinquish Kosovo and Metohija, an inalienable part of the territory of the Serb people, the Republic of Serbia and the Serbian Church founded by St. Sava; furthermore, that the principle of inviolability and unchangeability of state borders be fully honored, as guaranteed by internationally recognized constitutional legislation, as well as by UN Security Council Resolution 1244, guaranteeing the integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija.’ (Memorandum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, 2003)

This part of the document has been taken in an almost unchanged form as the preamble of the new Serbian constitution in 2006, regarding Kosovo and Metohija an integral part of Serbia.
According to Ramet (2005), when speaking of politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Church sees itself as a symbolic victim, and thanks to the ideological model handed down by Velimirović and Popović, which insisted on the fact that the Church was being victimized, and reshaped this model to fit in modern times, turning thus the rhetoric from the suffering of the Church to the suffering of Serbs as a nation.

2. The Church’s relationship with the Russian state is problematic, from the point of secularity, because the Church is often involved in ‘diplomatic’ talks, for example expressing ‘hope’ that Russia will not change its’ position on the Kosovo problem (Radosavljević, 2006), and the protection of the people is seen in the statement by one of the Metropolitans who said: ‘we have to announce that Serbia will buy the most modern battle systems from Russia and other states, who recognize its’ integrity and international law and to call upon Russia and other states to set up a military presence in Serbia and send volunteers, in order to help in our just fight’ (Radosavljević, 2008). This statement comes as a reflection of the ‘brotherly’ relationship that the Church maintains with Russia, where for example, the director of Lukoil for Europe, Nikolaj Timofejević Čorni came to visit the Patriarch and hand him an icon right before the opening of the tender for the sale of NIS – Jugopetrol (the largest oil producer in Serbia), in May 2005 (Pistolova, 2005).

3. At the wake of Prime Minister Zoran Đindić, Amfilohije Radović, a member of the Synod of the SPC, the Metropolitan of Montenegro, who was the acting priest at the wake referred to the deceased by saying how he ‘at the moment of the greatest humiliation of his people stretched a brotherly hand to Europe...and was killed by
brotherly hate and short-sightedness – blindly disregarding that who grabs the sword might die of the sword as well’ (Radović, 2003). This kind of discourse derives from the writings of the aforementioned thinkers such as Velimirović and Popović, particularly from their writing about western churches. These authors discussed western churches and ecumenism, which they called ‘pseudo-Christianity, for pseudo-churches of Western Europe’. A similar notion is to be noticed among today’s clergy, but perhaps with a stronger tone: ‘from the Vatican we cannot expect anything good, nor have we ever got anything good through history! Their goal is to dull the edge of Orthodoxy and to show how the differences are minimal, even though they are not. The Vatican wants to see the Orthodox consciousness necrotized and narcotized’. (Radosavljević, 2007).

Besides having theological misunderstandings with western churches, the way that institutions of the European Union are spoken of also gives us a view of the antagonism between the Church and these institutions because, as one Metropolitan stated: ‘The intention of the European standard...is to enslave people, to make them featureless and to erase states in order to create a hegemony of one world clique of several large world trusts or these international companies, several states that want to rule the world and to stomp on others and humiliate them.’ (Jevtić, Dveri Srpske, 2003)

The EU is presented as the ‘crumbler’ and the destroyer of the Serbian identity in different statements (Radosavljević, 2007). The critique of the ‘godless’ west goes so far that when Rolling Stones were playing in Belgrade in 2007, Amfilohije Radović
found himself called upon to state that quote: ‘members of the band Rolling Stones are godless and they sing Satanic songs’. (Radović, 2007a)

Interestingly enough, this kind of a harsh way of looking at the west suddenly changes sometimes, example being the official visit of the Serbian Orthodox Church to the Vatican in February 2003, when Irinej Bulović and Amfilohije Radović went to Rome and in his opening statement Amfilohije Radović referred to the Pope as ‘Your Holiness’, and referred to the place he found himself in as a ‘Church’. Thus, it can be seen that these extreme views can, sometime, change according to the situation that the clergy finds themselves in. (Roudometof, Agadjanian, Pankhurst, 2005:80)

4. Derived from the relationship that the Church forms towards the EU, it is interesting to observe how the Church forms its discourse towards domestic elements that work on the joining with the EU, who are often quoted by the Church as ‘euro-slime’, ‘new-agers’, ‘heretics, paid by Soros’, or even ‘traitors’ (Mićević, 2005: 16). On the other hand, certain highly positioned Metropolitans speak of the ‘patriotic bloc’, formed by organizations such as Obraz, Dveri srpske, Garda cara Lazara and other right-wing organizations that defend the ‘Kosovo oath’. This is why, for example, when Radovan Karadžić’s mother died (Radovan Karadžić being the Bosnian Serbian politician, now interred in Den Haag, accused of ordering the Srebrenica genocide, among other things), Amfilohije Radović spoke on her wake and referred to her as the ‘immortal mother’ who ‘taught her children that there is nothing holier than faith and serving God and his people. Glad is the people that have mothers like that’. (Radović, 2005) The wars of the 1990s, and Church’s
activities appear as a part of the same discursive practice of a ‘war of defense’, where the Serbs fight for God and land, choosing the kingdom of Heaven.

The religious recovery that started from the 1980s and gained strength after 2000, made the Church into ‘a permanent public voice and a strong protector of religious solutions to different civil questions’. Religion again became the constitutive element of Serbian nationalism, but the ideology which is credited by Nikolaj Velimirović and the like, moved the Church from the position of the minder of the flock to a political figure. The Serbian Orthodox Church is still in a position that is considered a grey area with regards to the state and the public sphere, because even though the Church finds itself in a privileged position, and an institution in the formation of the new Serbian identity, the state at the same time attempts to limit the influence of the church as a potential rival. (Bogomilova, 2005:1-20)

Research done by a group of authors concerning the knowledge of citizens about religion in general and the Church itself have shown that, according to the authors, the Serbian Orthodox population is quote ‘belonging without believing’, meaning that they regard their religious confession as Orthodox, even if not being religious at all, given that the Orthodox religion is the faith of their ancestors. (Radić, 2010:107) The results of their research showed that beside the increase in religious feeling amongst the populace40, there is not much more to this kind of denomination except for the ethno-national element of identification, and that it is more of a consequence of an ideological and political climate and conformism, rather than being a reflection of deeper beliefs and values meaning that ‘new faithfulness remains usually untouched by Christian teachings’ (Radić, 2010:126)

40 According to the official census of the Republic of Serbia in 2002, of the 7,498,001 citizens living in Serbia, 95% of them regarded themselves religious (85% Serbian Orthodox, 5.5% Catholic, 1.1% Protestant, 3.2% Muslim, 2.6% Atheist, and 2.6 of those that did not publicly proclaim themselves). (Census, 2002:12)
6. Conclusion

The dual analysis of both the mythological framework in which the Serbian national idea developed and the discursive analysis of the actions and positions of the Serbian Orthodox Church, showed that anti-individualism and militant nationalism are characteristic of the positions that Serbian leadership took during the twentieth century. I would say that rather than nationalism, ideology presented the key in the matrix of historical events that took place in Serbia since the beginning of the twentieth century. The material grounding at the beginning of the century, with Serbia pressed on all sides by great empires brought about it the birth of the idea of unification. This expansionist idea morphed from foreign policy to myth; with the help of historiography, the justification of such actions was not just explained through history, but also through important elements of the Serbian national complex (such as the Kosovo myth), and through this process of mythologization there appeared a distinct perception of history, where the misperception of the self and the misconception of the Other created distrust towards the Other. Umberto Eco once said that ‘there is a neurosis, a sickness that kills the human’, called the ‘syndrome of distrust’. Life faced with this syndrome becomes surrounded with eternal conspiracies, a chain of conspiracies. (Eco, 1989:1, 2) This distrust was easily used by the national elites throughout the length of the twentieth century, which used their control of discourse to shift perceptions of the Other, and later even turn states on each other and push them into a war. This is why the analysis of discourse presents itself as one of the most important analytical approaches to the question of nationalism in the Balkans, because the grievances of nations are an ever-present fact of life, given the tumultuous history of the region, it is
rather that these grievances are (mis)used at times by elites to fulfill their own political aims.

Through the process of collective forgetting and selective remembering, during the period since the 1980s, Serbia distanced itself from its’ communist past and recreated itself into a new, national state according to an ethnic model, where Serbia would become, yet again the state in which all Serbs will live. With the coming of the twenty first century, and the failure of the politics of expansionism, new views of the Serbian national identity emerged on the foundations of the Milošević’s state ideals, but there emerged a new element, which was not there in Milošević’s views, and that was the distancing from communism, and the repatriation of Orthodoxy as a founding idea of the state. This motion of political reality brought with it the resurgence of the Serbian Orthodox Church as one of the key elements in the formation of the new Serbian identity. Given their new discursive power, the Church used its’ influence to present ideas that justified the actions of the recent past through a frame of old resentments, which originated before the Second World War. That is why the figure of Nikolaj Velimirović is important, not just because he was the ideologue of the Church; it is also because his vision of Serbs and their ‘national right’ justified the actions conducted during the wars of the 1990s, under the word of God.

The period of the Second World War in history presents a key notion in the new national ideal of the Serbian elite. The historiographic attempt to reshape the narrative of the Second World War from a war in which all Yugoslav nations fought against an invader (which was the perception during communist times), into a narrative where Serbs were fighting a civil war against surrounding nations which wanted to destroy them altogether,
resonates of the events of the recent past. This motion is dangerous, because it enabled the resurgence of collaborators of the Nazi German regime as figures of prominence.

When speaking of Nikolaj Velimirović and the Serbian Orthodox Church, it represents a micro-plane in which the much larger problematic of Serbian identity, and the confusion thereof can be analyzed. The discussion about the Serbian Orthodox Church as one of the institutions that cares for ‘public well-being’, and the viewing of separate statements by individuals can only go to show the manifestations of a certain discourse, but if seen through the lens of *intertextuality*, the texts resonate with references to *times of old*, and mythological constructions created for a purpose a century ago. Even though Nikolaj Velimirović as a figure is used primarily by the Church in order to justify its often hostile actions towards the Other, his ideological positions, and consequently those of the Church have much to do with the larger frame of what the great Serb idea of nation-state meant in the profane world. The statements made by prominent members of the clergy often have a sense of a pretentious and unsystematic approach to teaching, given the fact that they often disregard real circumstances and rather put certain narratives in a mythological context and pursue that narrative through the lens of the myth. Interestingly enough, even with this kind of a very problematic approach to political affairs, according to polling in Serbia, the Church appears as one of the most trusted institutions41 for many years in a row, thus giving it an even more of a reason to remain within the confines of this kind of mythological thinking.

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41 According to a poll done by CeSID in Serbia in 2011, the majority of the polled population trusted the Church the most (59%), while on the other hand only 16% of the polled population stated that they trust the Parliament, 18% trust the justice system, and only 9% trust the political parties. (CeSID, 2011:18)
The discursive analysis of the teaching of Nikolaj Velimirović is important because right-wing politics lean on these tenets, among others, when forming their idea of a new Serbian identity in times of crisis. This kind of a vision of identity is highly conservative, built on the past and selective remembering, and one might dare say even anti-modern, but it certainly has no inherent value to it in an ever-globalizing world. The production of such an identity keeps in power the structures that tend to act in an often destabilizing manner with regards to foreign politics as well as domestic politics. The proponents of this kind of ideology are at the same time proponents of isolationism, and isolationism appears as one of the greatest dangers for a state in transition.

It is obviously going to be quite difficult to overcome the issues of identity that Serbia faces today, especially given the burden of the recent past, isolation and the lack of will to face the loss of territory as well as war crimes committed in its’ name, but before there appears a transformative element that will allow the creation of a different identity built on the idea of economic progress and facing the past, there will not be much motion in the way that Serbs perceive themselves and their surroundings, as a hostile and strange place filled with threats.
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