

POLITICAL MYTH OF NATIONALISM AND ANTINATIONALISM – A CHALLENGE AND A CONTEMPORARY THREAT TO SECURITY

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Summary: The issues of nationalism, ethnic affiliation and political myths related to them continue to represent an inexhaustible sociological, political science and security issue in the 21st century in the same way as in the previous century. In their complex nature these issues appear as topics of many debates and interpretations, but these debates are often ideological in their contents. This is also confirmed by the interpretations of the events at the end of 20th century when the Balkan part of Europe became an area of the collapse of law and order, the creation of new states and alliances, national and religious extremism, ethnic conflicts and ethnic cleansing, as well as the incapability of the UN to solve the bloody local conflicts.

This paper attempts to show the roots of nationalism and national conflicts in the Western Balkan political area in the course of the last decade of the last century. At the same time the field of analysis is directed towards the functional dimension of political myths and stereotypes in the subsequent political consolidation of newly created national identities explained at the examples of nationalism and antinationalism within the context of origination of synthetic nations at the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

Key words: conflicts, nationalism, antinationalism, political myths, stereotypes, Serbia, Croatia.

1. Introduction – about Nationalism and National Conflicts, Stereotypes

Integration and disintegration are dominant processes that mark the development of human civilization and the future at the intersection of two millennia. While the integration involves processes of globalisation and democratisation, the disintegration refers to the collapse of sovereign states, the

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emergence of parochialism and as a consequence tribalism mythomania and stereotypes related to the growing ethnic nationalism¹. Therefore, nationalism emerges as the most powerful movement in today's world, a movement that exceeds the boundaries of many social systems. (Gardels, 1991)

That nationalism is a potential security threat, there is the fact that after World War II, the multi-ethnic states often fought civil wars caused by ethnic and racial hatred in which millions of people were killed, to confirm it (Kegl, Wittkof, 2002). 90% of all the killed were not combatants, they were mostly unarmed civilians, women and children which shows the extremism in these conflicts. (Sivard, 1999).

The danger of national extremism, ethnic conflict and violence in the twenty-first century, and assess Kegl and Vitkof, stood over the whole world. Mankind lives in fear of terrorist aggression against neighbouring states, and even aggression against their own government that is prone to discrimination against its citizens because of their nationality or religion. National and international security will not be easy to reach even in the XXI century. Millions of people are victims of aggression, and even millions of them have been forced to go into exile.²

Hence, the most important national conflicts in recent history are social conflicts whether the interstate or internal conflicts are in question. In its devastating force, present violence and consequences, they represent the most serious forms of confrontation between social groups. Their dynamics and outcome often culminate in war confrontations, mass casualties, and crimes committed in the name of national goals and interests. National conflicts are directly related to nationalism as an ideology, policy and doctrine to prepare and justify them. However, one should mention that nations and national issue, besides their historical, structural and social rootedness can also produce as a kind of important "strategic and political goods and currency in the struggle for planetary dominance and the redistribution of world power" (Vidojević, 1993). Therefore, national conflicts are far from their extinction, as seen in the planetary scale and scope of multinational companies taken separately. After 1989, for which some assume that means "the end of history" there was a sort of "re-birth of geography" according to which it was claimed that the world relations are much more influenced by deep ethnic and cultural differences clearly divided by regions than under the influence of powerful political or ideological factors. (Bracewell, Durres, 1999).

National conflicts have their conceptual, ideological and political preparation that creates an authoritarian government, populist leaders, the circle of extreme right-wing intellectuals close to the authorities and parts of the clergy. Wider social

¹ Nye, JSJr., Believes that these processes converge to transnationalism and nationalism – two competing forces in the world after the Cold War. *Understanding International Conflicts Affairs*, Longman, New York, 2002.

² Between 1945 and 1981, there were 258 cases of ethnic wars. In early 2002, the world's 35 civil wars were raging with ethnic background, either due to the efforts of minority ethnic groups to establish an independent state or because of failed states policy of national government collapsed and produced a conflict of rival ethnic militias and paramilitary. It is estimated that approximately 26,759,000 refugees fled from 50 ethnonational conflicts that have been led in 1993–1994 to each of them there was an average of 80,000 killed. Kegl, CW Jr., Raymond, GA: *Exorcising the Ghost of Westphalia: Building World Order in the New Millennium*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002, p.575.

basis of national conflicts are serious economic and social crisis, and sharp political conflict among classes and within classes, mass poverty, social and state disintegration. However, such a surface is not always sufficient for the development of inter-ethnic conflicts. Their occurrence in a society requires certain social and psychological background. So, national conflicts arise largely from a state of "collective spirit of a nation that is produced and marked by defeat or destruction of the traditional humanistic values as well as the loss of detailed marks of its own identity and morality. From such a spiritual climate, the authoritarian social consciousness is arisen, social majority, psychology of nihilism and all the permissions where force is replaced by the right" (Vidojević, 2006). And the authoritarian conscience becomes not only the base, solid base and a companion, but a necessary factor in national conflicts, nationalism and national chauvinism. Such a spiritual and social climate in particular are characterized by "people and 'not before hot' nations" of the Balkan cultural and political circles, who have in the last decade of the twentieth century, as well as half a century earlier, set up their principles through a national, "blood and soil" ethnic cleansing.

2. Nationalism and political myths

Research (from political science and general security point of view) of mythological areas of social consciousness and cultural patterns soaked with myth content has always presented an interesting scientific engagement and effort of penetration of the tough and resistant tissue of mythological plays and patterns. This effort is especially difficult when political mythology is researched, because it is for its vital and existential capacity eternal "living" and active play about selves, our collective destiny, a place on the stage world history identity, historical task and religious mission to be processed, the "sanctity" of the space to be saved, about a dangerous enemy who threatens us and many other more or less commonplace in the political mythology of every nation (the nation).

Unlike theogony myths, or myths of cosmogony or of anthropological character, which thematise divine, cosmological or anthropological dimensions of human existence, political myths tend to shape the value system and beliefs of people, their perception of the political system, social relations that govern it, the character of state, political authority, hierarchy of power, the nature of political power, membership of national identity and the like. Political myths play a particularly important role in creating a political base, the basis of creation and the establishment of a political community. These so-called founding myths become such an indispensable part of any awareness of the constitution of every national political system regardless of its size and character. In layered structure of political culture and culture in general myths are the main base and prototype of political myths are so-called founding myths, that is, myths of origin and the rise of certain state and political community. Without the founding myths no political culture is completed, nor can the state itself be more firmly established by an ideological point of view and beliefs of its members (Matic, 1998).

Scientific research of political mythology must come from the need to investigate and to present the position of the political ideology behind political myths (in particular it is important today in modern times when the importance of political ideology has become so large and the consequences of their practical activities in many cases devastating), its need to build a perception of political reality and enrich mythological plays and their own ideological messages to make accessible for a number of political consumers, creating a false consciousness that their new ideological content is already known and accepted. There is often religious phenomenon hidden behind ideological content, which at first glance seems benign and distant from the ideological sphere calculation. "If we look at the matter from the historical perspective of the twentieth century as a century of ideological wars, we can say that "the miracle" in Medjugorje encouraged both Croatian nationalism and anti-Communist struggle. It appeared soon after Tito's death, on the territory which was the stronghold of anti-communist and ethno-nationalist, the Axis supporters from the time of the Second World War" (Peric, 2006).

Our study of political myths in the former Yugoslavia, especially those related to the Serbian political mythologisation, will try to point out one dimension of political myths, which in its (manipulative) basis wants to distort more than to hide some important facts from the political reality and especially the political history of Serbs. But the function of political myths that was observed by Ernst Kasirer and that is about their pragmatic role to strengthen social solidarity, make a community stable, particularly to establish its cracked and historical continuity which was politically difficult and continuous task of several generations back for the Serbs. Also, "Kasirer (Cassirer) in his analysis of the techniques of modern political myths clearly pointed out the fact that political myths are the fruits of imagination to grow freely." These are artificial products created by very skilled and cunning craftsmen... (Matic, 1998).

We will point out the political dimension of the seductive mythology, which can easily establish a personal relationship over bribery and consumer, for its emotional dimension, which makes imaginative mythological thinking and drinking as opposed to the strict forms of discipline and dry rational thinking. For all of dramaturgy, which brings the mythical stories, the simplified representation of the conflict of good (to me) and evil (the other), order (order) and chaos (opposition) divine (own religious-confessional form), and demonic forces (other religious and confessional form), friends and enemies (opponents). "That's what is best evidenced by the fact that the use of myth in ideological and political sphere is still showing as a means of most existence funds of functionalism and instrumentation of human behavior. Myth here can constantly change, transform and adapt and that just because it remains the same, eternal" (Tripković 2006).

For sociologists, historians, political scientists, anthropologists, myth is almost always the story of the past. Insufficiently precise and accurate but consistent with the needs of today by interpreters, designs, builds and is sympathetic. Myth is the story of how this reality was created, why it is so important to our lives, and why you should accept it as your own. Political myth is all listed, but even more than

that, it imagined an upgrade, biased and inaccurate observation of reality and history. The myth is paraphrase F. Fire, contamination of the past needs of our reality, but also the vision of today's polished image of the "heroic" past. "As religious myths, political myths also have a characteristic fluidity – impermanence, the changing, flexibility, limit, their content is vague and subject to change. What is a relatively stable characteristics of the functional incorporated, is the ability to maintain their usefulness and timeliness. Neither the internal contradiction of meaning and incoherent can harm their credibility. Even the issue of conspiracy is not only negative: for a counterweight to the holy of cabal to devils plot. If there are threatening powers of darkness, there is darkness that is protective: the sons of night lights often choose to lead their fight. It seems that a response to a conspiracy can be another conspiracy" (Girard, 2000).

Knowledge on the use and abuse of religious myths for the regime of nationalism in the former Yugoslavia has almost become commonplace in social science. We should, however, point out the connection (the fact) because it is widely used for daily political purposes, often at the symbolic level as a part of the propaganda war in the field of arts and culture (film, music, painting, etc.). "After winning the elections in 1990, the nationalist regime in Croatia exploited the popularity of the Medjugorje cult. In 1995 a movie titled *Our Lady* was recorded in the Croatian-American co-production directed by Jakov Sedlar, the official propagandist of the regime in Croatia. (...) The Croats were presented in the film as devoted Catholics and peaceful people, eager to join the western democratic world, but that was prevented by the Orthodox Serbs and communists" (Peric, 2006).

The collective anxiety of the community for its existence is in deep mythic structures of each performance. Myths thrive in turbulent times, when historical events accelerate, when the collapse is not only in political and economic framework of the life of a political community but also the ideology that held it together and was often represented only by connective tissue that permeated the structure of the entire national community enlarged with its own contradictions. The area of the former Yugoslavia was a fertile ground for the development and being of various myths. The former Yugoslavia was a complex and contradictory structure – historical, cultural, religious, confessional, national, state, legal, economic, political, linguistic, etc. – this fact made it possible for mythologization to never stop, if there is something in the region that had its continuity it is certainly that of pacifism (of mythology) a practice that has fed the political and cultural differences maintaining a small community "awake and together". And during the breakup of Yugoslavia, and after it, this area has still been burdened with the mythical vision of reality; it is in direct proportion to the amount of the deficit which burdened the newly formed small communities. This is the deficit of civic political personality, continuity of legal and political sovereignty, economic development, civil political culture, democratic pluralism, rule of law, individual perspectives of identity, religious and confessional tolerance, ethnic tolerance and cultural, linguistic-language construction and the like.

So this is probably why the rare attempts to demystify one's own political reality that come with the elementary stage of calm or volatile political ground in this region, infamously ended without any tangible results. As to any attempt of rational demystification of the current political reality and the past, there is fierce resistance and even some new mythical processes. To any such attempt descends the avalanche of new myths as if it never reached the end. And successes need myths, and just as good nice for defeat, and neutralize the collective feelings of guilt.

3. Nationalism and Antinationalism – Serbia and Croatia as a paradigm

In retrospective representation of their own history (and historiography), the Serbs often show themselves as victims of history. "However, the concept of martyrdom nation is not resorted only by the Serbs but also by the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims" (Perica, 2006). How this myth is widespread among the Serbs is contributed by the fact that it did not let the roots only among the people and folk epic tradition, but in scientific circles as well. One part of the Serbian social sciences and the Serbian academics was inclined to reproduce this myth, and feeds it to new examples of Serbian suffering both in historical perspective as well as current events of that period (1990s). To illustrate just one short clip from the prevailing attitudes of Serbian academics at the time: "The trouble in which the Serbian people is today is a deeply upsetting confirmation of our repeated and useless sufferings for freedom in this century. The only difference is that our present calamity is much more ominous and much more hopeless than all the previous ones, since the sky above us has never before been emptier than it is today. The world in which we live has long been caught by frantic devastation, so it is a real wonder that there is still any life left in it. This is why this suffering should not affect us that much so that we fail to see much greater and worse trouble in which all nowadays wretched Europe is, which would like to punish us savagely under the knout of America because of our courage to oppose it." (Djuric, 2003). Such examples were particularly characteristic of the period of the former Yugoslavia, but then it was the play of the Serbs as victims of Bolshevik-Communist ideology, of personification form the Tito regime in power.

There is a similar performance in Croatia of a modern version of the 20th century history. This image is often adjusted to the needs of the current government both as a justification for breaking the then state-political community and for the legitimization of political regime and the emerging emphasis on national peculiarities of new synthetic identity. "View from the Balkans shows that they are not new, they are also, or perhaps above all 'most modern' and that the modernist project of creating national states still plays an important role in the word" (Dejzing, 2005). Although delayed, and according to the Western models (national state in the West were formed back in the nineteenth century), the newly-formed state in the former Yugoslavia expressed a high degree of political enthusiasm in order to establish a new national identities and give them a clear state and institutional support.

Dominant myths – stereotypes, which were used by the Serbian political regime of 1990s at the height of war conflicts and the civil war in the territory of former Yugoslavia, had been theses about the Serbs as historically and politically scattered people looking for their gathering and the place that belongs them as the most numerous people in this area. There was also the thesis highlighted of the so-called political and economic inequality of the Serbian people in the former Yugoslavia (Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences). There was then the stand of political ingratitude and incorrectness of other former Yugoslav nations for the victims which Serbia and the Serbian people suffered in both wars (I and II world war) for the creation of the Yugoslav state. “Ever since the beginning of the Yugoslav state, the historical farce was played the scenario of which was perfectly described by the old Slovenian clericist Korošec in his words testifying about thoughts of the creation of the ‘common state for specific purposes’: We got on a good horse, and we’ll return them a worn-out horse.” (Matic, 1998).

Political myth of the so-called Greater Serbia and a number of political mystification and ugly, ugly interpretation of “Načertanije” as the Greater Serbia’s national program, which expanded and promoted both one part of the extremely right-wing political parties in Serbia, and the political propaganda of the opposing sides, even one part of the media in the West, in order to get the media war in this region. Here are two typical examples: 1) “Negative connotations related to the myth of a Greater Serbia was decisively contributed by the Habsburg monarchy, Vatican and Germany, giving explicitly aggressive dimension to the expression (Great Serbian), colored by the symbols of force and militant seizures (Great Serbian hegemony). (Jevtovic, 2008) 2) “New Croatian historiography portrayed the Serbs as a belligerent nation whose leaders forged a secret plan of genocide against the neighboring nations back in 1840s” (Perica, 2006). The thesis of deliberate Serbian national and state disintegration should be added to that series of unrealistic political mystification on the Serbian side (the existence of two autonomous provinces within Serbia, and in particular the problem of Kosovo and Metohija), as well as the projected plot of Tito’s regime for state-legal chaos in Serbia.

On the list of political regime-constructed myths the myth of the Serbs as heavenly people takes the most prominent place. In those pre-war and war times the Kosovo myth was also encouraged. This myth is – as a part of the cultural, historical and ethical identity of the Serbian people – was roughly displaced from its epic and religious-historical context, and moved into the field of the darkest propaganda abuse. This myth was so misused that not only some newly created war commanders and politicians compared themselves with the Kosovo heroes but also the people from the underworld who had rather an obscure past.

“Like their counterparts in Serbia the Croatian nationalists of various colours resorted to religious, Catholic and rural romantic motifs, although the latter were not exaggerated, because the Croats at the same time wanted to be modern, the real Europeans. Tudman’s government developed a discourse within which the Croatian was constituted in opposition to others, primarily to the Serbs/Yugoslavs who hinder the true development of the Croatian people.” (Jansen, 2005) “Adhering

to the political amnesia, which was already perfected by the nationalists in other post-socialist countries, the Croatian nationalists interpreted the previous communist system as something imposed to the Croats from the outside – by the Serbs, in this particular case, not by the Russians. Thus, the collective nationalism freed the Croats from all traces of collaboration and conformity in their everyday life: innocent since the birth, the Croats were forced to enter into Tito's Yugoslavia, which was an impossible combination of clashing cultures, where it was awful for them the entire time. Then the war, which is officially called the war for the homeland, in fact, was not only a necessary evil, which was imposed by the Serbs, and it will eventually lead to independence, but it was also the culmination of a thousand-year-long dream that was dreamt by the entire Croatian nation – dream of their own country. Indeed, the breakup with the Yugoslav past was radical: it was a specific combination of catharsis and exorcism.” (Jansen, 2005: 26)

In the case of Serbia as well as in the case of Croatia, through political and historical amnesia (more precisely, a selective approach to historical facts, choosing those that are favourable and be silent on those which are not) the nation's past and present, and each individual members of the nation could be reformulated so that it is in harmony with the new political and nationalistic practices of the authoritarian regimes of both Milosevic and Tudjman. Like the system of communicating vessels both regimes fed their authoritarianism and autocracy by new-old political myths and stereotypes, helping one another to survive in power (new historiography of the period begins to reveal examples of active cooperation and help of the two regimes during the entire war conflict. Exactly the same pattern and methodology of political conduct in both cases was largely using the political myths and stereotypes, even with the same shape/content, changing only the national sign. “The Balkan wars of the 1990s were fought among the several united ethno-nationalist fronts and each of them sought statehood and nationality and each challenged the limits, myths and identities of the opposing group.” (Peric, 2006).

Political exodus of the Serbs in Croatia was also linked with the political myth of the rectification of the so-called historical injustice on both sides. Under the neologism “constitutional nationalism” (or constitutional patriotism), which was supposed to be a founded call to dominant national groups on both sides to square their national and political accounts in relation to the members of minorities on their respective territories, the process of ethnic cleansing went on. The researchers noted that “after winning the elections, the HDZ went to work to correct what was considered a historical disorder. By the series of overtly or covertly discriminatory measures, the constitutional guarantees given to the Serbian minority soon became nothing but a form in the general atmosphere of retaliation, and then in violent conflicts, further inflamed by the propaganda of both sides. Thus, almost all the inhabitants of Croatian nationality were first expelled from the Serbian Krajina, a para-state which separated from Croatia in 1991. Then in return the Croatian army expelled almost all the Serbs in 1995. Neither in Serbia or in Croatia, nationalist discourses have remained unchanged during the war years, but the logic that existed in the foundation of the Croatian nationalism was to correct historical errors. War

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operations and discriminatory measures went on together with countless examples of symbolic confirmations of the Croatian nation.” (Jansen 2005).

In the report which an independent research team – led by the leaders of the project a historian from Belgrade, M. Bjelajac and a sociologist from Zagreb O. Žunec – published concerning the causes and nature of the war in Croatia 1991–1995, on page twenty, the above thesis is confirmed that one of the main reasons for the revolt of the Serbs, among other reasons, was overemphasized constitutional nationalism of the Croatian regime. The new Constitution of the Republic of Croatia was fully deconstitutionalized Serbs, and turned them from an equal and constituent nation (legal and political status from the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia) into a minority, with plenty of threatening messages and symbols of nationalist-chauvinistic characters which aroused fears and unpleasant memories of the Serbs of the terrible bloodshed from the time of the Cyril NDH regime. “The war has often been the engine of nation-building, and it appears that the Balkans is no exception. In short, the war that was fought in the former Yugoslavia, and the processes of national homogenization and “ethnic cleansing” that followed it were, as it seems, primarily motivated by the need to create a simple and unambiguous identity of the population that is very mixed and diverse in origin, and to delete a mixture of elements, “pollution” and uncertainties that have hindered the newly created national government. It seems that violence in the former Yugoslavia at the end not only resulted from the opposite and incompatible identities, but to even greater extent, it was the means to produce them.” (Dejzings, 2005)

If it can be argued that the raw nationalism of the regime was at the core of all political regimes (referring to the territory of former Yugoslavia) and their political programs of separation, then it can be vouched for the anti-nationalist movements and practices in both Serbia and Croatia that culture – urban culture was put into the foundations of their “political alternatives” nationalism regime (“culture” was collectively sanctioned construction contrary to “non-culture” of primitive natio–nalism). Political alternatives were built on the attitude of opposing and conflicting of rural and urban principles, while according to their understanding the rural should be recognized as primitive, oriental, behindhand, violent, and urban as cultural, progressive, modern, and non-violent. Therefore, the same mechanism of political mystification and the use of stereotypes were hiding in both theory and practice of anti-nationalist movements or more precisely, of civil initiatives of this type, as well as in the methodology of the nationalism of the regime. The statement of the anti-nationalists that the regime of nationalism had the largest number of supporters in rural and suburban areas, with less educated population is true, but it is also true that a large part of urban population was filled with strong nationalist feelings and attitudes. To build the anti-nationalist alternative on urban – rural dichotomy, i.e. cultural – noncultural is not only politically wrong but also ethically unfair.

The Western analyst, Stef Jansen gives evidence of this political misconception and the inclination to mythologization and stereotypes of the Post Yugoslav anti-nationalists. “Irritated by the fact that people who are fighting against

discriminatory discourse which permeated their society also deal with stereotypes so openly, at first I tried to confront standard left-wing arguments about tolerance – without any success, so I had to get used slowly to the fact that some Orientalism directed against the farmers is an important determinant of a daily routine of many people who regard themselves as urban people, and that it also sometimes represents the main mechanism of anti-nationalism discourse. In fact, linking nationalism and rural backwardness was perhaps the most important item in an attempt of the Post Yugoslav anti-nationalists to maintain the "continuity of normality, especially in everyday life" (Jansen, 2005). "In accordance with the consensus that reigned among urban opposition, these people blamed nationalism primarily for the "situation". Such anti-nationalist interpretation has four main theses:

1. The wars that led to the breakup of Yugoslavia were the nationalist wars, in which
2. the politicians keen upon power used nationalism as a tool.
3. Nationalism, again, is primitive, rural discourse, and
4. massive support that the rural population gave to nationalism is a consequence of the peasant primitivism." (Jansen, 2005: 113).

In the anti-nationalist discourse a special place was taken by the criticism of war destruction of cities, which not only stressed its military component but rather the destruction of urban life and all that cities as symbols of urbanity symbolize. This, according to them, was an open attack on modernity and urban multiple nationality and multiculturalism. Belgrade anti-nationalists often pointed out that there was so-called urbicide, the killing and destruction of urbanity as such and not just the physical destruction of parts of the urban environment. "As far as the Croatian nationalism is concerned, it called upon rural somewhat vaguely, since it at the same time insisted on the integration of Croatia into modern Europe, but, on the other hand, rehabilitated the Catholic Church as well and its conservative-patriarchal views, which were closer to rural population than to the population in towns." (ibid., 113) "Therefore, in the cities of former Yugoslavia, the main criterion of social differentiation had oriental character of culture, urbanity, Europe, cosmopolitanism, the West, knowledge, manners and civility on the one – no culture, rurality, region, provincial, underdevelopment, backwardness, primitivism and the impoliteness on the other hand." (Ibid., 117) The anti-nationalist discourse in former Yugoslavia, the same stereotypes that have been heard in one part of the Western media and publicity war against the Milosevic regime in power were being repeated, and they related to the notions of Balkan, Oriental, Bolshevik-communist and the like.

How much the urban-rural dichotomy was exploited is also supported by the fact that despite the fury of the conflict and strong nationalist homogenization that has dominated the warring societies in those years, the members of anti-nationalist initiatives used the slogans that implied a higher degree of solidarity with the rival nation if before the war its members belonged to the urban part of the population, as opposed to rural population of their ethnic groups. In Zagreb, there appeared the slogan "Return us our Serbs, we are giving back your Herzegovinians." In this urban

segment, Zagreb and Belgrade were the cities which mafia of newly-come peasants held under the political and economic occupation and imposed their own primitive nationalism. Thus, we come to cultural factors in the idea of invasion: to the assault of primitive people on the "culture" of everyday urban life. (Ibid., 122nd)

In those years the Serbian antinationalists brought back in the memory of a town man the book written by R. Konstatinović "The Small-Town Philosophy" using it as a favorite reading for explaining how the character of the current government, as well as the nature of the petty-bourgeois mentality that dominated in small urban units (small towns) of Serbia according to them. "The Small-Town Philosophy" in their interpretations was the extension of the rule of Orientalism, traditionalism and authoritarianism that was characteristic of the Balkan man. Political myths and stereotypes of the Post Yugoslavian anti-nationalism were thus built on the belief in modernity and culture, the principle of urban citizenship that is in counter-position to rural and patriarchal which carry the mentality of a subject.

4. Post-Yugoslavian National Stereotypes and Myths

Political myths and stereotypes about the clash of urban and rural principles (pattern) were valid not only for the manifest part of the nationalist struggle and anti-nationalism within a nation – state. They were often used in real everyday conflicts of two nationalisms, Serbian and Croatian, in particular in the sphere of media and political propaganda war of the two authoritarian regimes. "Tudjman's nationalists represented Croatia as a bulwark of European modernity that was infested by the Serbian barbarians, but in addition, as we have seen, and the former Yugoslav state was also represented as a Balkan creation imposed to the Croats by the Serbs. The Orientalist definition of Croatianship as something that is opposite to the Balkans Serbian or to Yugoslav was a repeated story of Tudjman's regime. (...) The Balkans was made equal to Yugoslavia, with Serbia or just with all that was non-European, not modern, uncivilized. (...) The Balkans Cinema in Zagreb changed its name into Europe." (Ibid., 134) However, it is worthwhile to point out some differences that existed in the use of these stereotypes and political mythologisation. While this method was popular in Serbia within the circle of the antinationalists, in Croatia it worked equally well in both nationalist and anti-nationalist circles. The conflict of Balkan and European principles was brought to absurdity and enabled its heirs the supposed and desirable identification both before their own supporters and the foreign factors for the favor and patronage of whom they fought desperately and flatteringly both the nationalists and anti-nationalists, almost equally.

The stated nonsense of the stereotypes described is supplemented by another, and it is connected to the presumed poor educational structure of the rural population. In addition to all the bad characteristics they were attributed illiteracy and low educational level as dominant social characteristics. "Then the man really does not need to be imaginative in order to conclude that nationalism was so popular because it enjoyed the support of old, illiterate and uncultivated farmers." (Ibid.,

147) Therefore, Stef Jansen has the right when he makes a conclusion about the essence and character of anti-nationalism movement at the post-Yugoslavian territory with almost ironical tone: "Ultimately, it is not clear at all and does not matter much whether this town of self-aware, educated, European and civilized people has ever existed. It is important to comment on a painful "situation" in which everything turned upside down. That is how the man could partially maintain the sense of continuity of the story of himself. You could always say 'All right, it is true that my town is occupied by peasants, but I have remained urban' or 'Well, the world around us may be balkanized, but I am still a European', and then 'Well, it is true that primitivism is all around me, but I have remained cultured'." (Ibid., 166) The myth of one's own belonging to culture and civilization, as opposed to rural primitiveness of the nationalists, was as effective on their successors as their unfounded belief that they are the holders of progress and modernity. Fighting against one type of mythologization and misuse of myths for political purposes, the anti-nationalists have fallen into the trap of mythologization of their own position, using negative stereotypes on others (peasants) and idealisation of themselves as citizens.

Observed from the aspect of comparative analysis, post-Yugoslav nationalism – both Serbian and Croatian (and this also applies to the mythological matrix for the other state nationalisms at the territory of former Yugoslavia), used abundantly the same methodological but also mythical matrix for their political and national objectives. In all cases, their own nation was portrayed as an innocent victim and sufferer and the opposing party as a brutal criminal and executioner. Their own national objectives were presented as holy and justified (often as modern and European) and the objectives of the rival nations as oppressive, invasive, and unjust. Every nation and ethnic group in former Yugoslavia had its own list (often in the literal sense of the word) of casualties, atrocities, destruction and injustice suffered, but it seems that none is able to appeal because of injuries inflicted to others.

In his book dedicated to Kosovo, G. Duijzingz analyzes the role of political and religious myths observing them in their identity perspective. At the end of the book, Duijzingz also mentioned the mistakes of the West when the Balkan nations were in question and on the part of political myths and stereotypes that the West produced and used in the analysis of the Yugoslav transition and war drama. The first problematic view according to the author is the view of the West on former Yugoslav conflicts as exclusively ethno-national, while he believes that the problems of formation and change of identity were more complex and should not be reduced to this level only. But what Duijzingz especially criticized the West for is the fact that violence and war were viewed solely as a result, backward tribal and irrational perspectives ascribing to political actors senseless acts contrary to Western rationalism and democracy. He believes that the Yugoslav war drama actors expressed the same political rationality as on similar occasions expressed by their Western counterparts, because they certainly acted within a rational paradigm of the modern nation-state that is in the West in the phase of its expansion of manufacturing the same or similar consequences. "The third message that deserves attention is that the violence in the Balkans should not be viewed as something

irrational, tribal and archaic, as something that is rooted in the culture and psyche of the Balkan inhabitants; in my opinion, that violence has profound rational dimensions and it is primarily of "European" origin: the nation-state is European ideal, and it is the nation-state that was the cause of all kinds of violence, "ethnic cleansing" and other forms of "ethno-demographic engineering" that were applied in all parts of former Yugoslavia." (Dejzing, 2005) In the opinion of this author, political myths do not have only a negative side and they are not characteristic for semi-peripheral and peripheral societies in order to compensate for the perspective of development, they exist in Western societies as well, even in stable and prosperous times creating ways and new horizons to the future developments. "Fertile ground for the creation of myths of nationalism should be sought in both European countries and the United States at the end of the 18th century, when the rebellious bourgeoisie that dominated the world economy, but not the government, needed the myth around which to gather broad masses and on which to establish a new faith in a new form of state." (Gavrilovic, 2006).

5. Instead of Conclusion

The end of the 20th century, as well as its beginning, confirms the warning experience that social crises transform national emotions, myths and stereotypes of nationalism that are easily transformed into national-chauvinism, terror, genocide and war. However, renewed topicality of the "national" is not just a phenomenon of underdeveloped European territories at the turn of epochs but it is possible under the conditions of a postmodern society. (Offe, 1999) This is supported by the fact that in the 21st century, although there are powerful trans-national integrations in the field of economy, the cultural and spiritual plane is maintained and emphasizes ethnic particularities. These states of social awareness, E. Smith today recognizes in the hectic ethno-nationalist "quest for a homeland", followed by "the most intense conflicts and terror", positioning them in the broader context of "global movement of ethnic mobilization" or reactivation of ethno-nationalism on the planetary scale (Smith, 1998).

The Balkans, in particular nation-states created on the ruins of the second Yugoslavia, as well as some former real socialist countries in southeastern Europe, starting from the fall of the Berlin Wall, were characterized by the social structure in which there was no entrepreneurial class or modern civil society as a dam to stereotypes, myths, nationalism, national chauvinism, political extremism and authoritarianism. From such a social structure and its properties emerges dominance of "culture of violence" and glorification of violence. Violence in the name of "general goals", primarily the creation of independent nation states, is spreading on the political psychology of all social classes and strata, as well as on rhetoric and political agendas of leading political parties and movements. Fascination with violence in the name of national historic goals or national "purity" overwhelmed also a circle of right-wing intellectuals who glorified it and made apology but also catharsis by crimes committed in the name of the nation. The crimes committed to

other nations or religions then get a halo of heroism and patriotism. This is where “nationalism in its euphoria, cruelty and militancy is transformed into chauvinism. This feeling can no longer be recognized at those “others” and “elsewhere”, but at all and everywhere” (Bozovic, 1998). It is here exactly that the roots and supports of a significant social-psychological phenomenon of creating an authoritarian charismatic leader and “father” of the nation can be found. Along with the growth of crisis and growing social decay the pre-political mentality and idolatry to the leaders of the nation grow that over time get transcendent (divine) features in the collective consciousness.

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to present future and possible challenges, threats and dangers, since political myths and stereotypes associated with nationalism and national chauvinism are the culmination of a long-lasting process of the 19th century until today. From a general angle, the policy, obviously, has not completely disappeared even today, at least when it comes to Western-Balkan cultural and political circles. Those who survived the horrors and sacrifices of World War II and those who have survived the subsequent Serbia-Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo-Metohia conflicts all remember and do not have the right to be cheated again and to hold harmless what can end in terror, crimes and extermination³. Especially today, if we take into account the sharply polarized social structure (the ultra-rich, the poor and pauperised)⁴, underdeveloped institutions of civil society and government control.

6. References

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³ After the conflicts of 1990s in the region where it once lived Serbian population in Croatia and in the southern Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohia there is a negligible number of returnees.

⁴ In the Western Balkans, between 20% and 30% of the population lives in absolute poverty – less than 2 USA dollar a day, from 10% to 30% of the population is unemployed; GDP in the majority of them are still below the one from 1989. Source: CIA World Fact-www.worldfact.cia.com// 18/3/2006.

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POLITIČKI MIT NACIONALIZMA I ANTINACIONALIZAMA – IZAZOV I SAVREMENA PRETNJA BEZBEDNOSTI

Rezime

Pitanja nacionalizma, etničke pripadnosti i političkih mitova u vezi s njima, u XXI, kao i u prethodnom veku, predstavljaju neiscrpnu sociološko-političko-kološku i bezbednosnu temu. Zbog svoje kompleksne prirode, ta pitanja se javljaju kao predmet brojnih rasprava i tumačenja, no, te rasprave često imaju ideološki sadržaj. To potvrđuju i tumačenja događaja pred kraj prošlog veka, kada je balkanski deo Evrope postao prostor sloma zakona i poretka, nastanka novih država i saveza, nacionalnog i verskog ekstremizma, etničkih sukoba i „etničkog čišćenja“, kao i nesposobnosti UN da reše krvave lokalne konflikte. U radu se nastoji ukazati na korene nacionalizma i nacionalnih konflikata u zapadnobalkanskom političkom prostoru tokom poslednje decenije minolog veka. Istovremeno, polje analize se usmerava ka funkcionalnoj dimenziji političkih mitova i stereotipa u naknadnoj političkoj konsolidaciji novonastalih nacionalnih identiteta ekspliciranih na primerima nacionalizma i antinacionalizma u kontekstu nastajanja sintetičkih nacija na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije.