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## CONTENTS:

GEOPOLITICAL IMAGINATIONS OF RUSSIA IN THE REGION OF THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE <b>Nikola NOVAK</b> .....	7
CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND EQUALITY IN NATIONAL SYMBOLISMS AS ONE OF THE STRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF EASTERN POPULISM <b>Luka FILIPOVIC</b> .....	29
MONTENEGRO BEFORE THE MILITARY DEFEAT (1915-1916) <b>Milan SCEKIC</b> .....	59
BOKA KOTORSKA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20th CENTURY <b>Ivan TEPAVCEVIC</b> .....	101
MONTENEGRO'S LAST BATTLE-DIARY OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN GENERAL STJEPAN SARKOTIĆ <b>Zeljko KARAULA</b> .....	115
<b>REVIEWS:</b> .....	143
NEW RESEARCH STAGE - Book review: Marko Attila Hoare, Bosanski Muslimani u Drugom svjetskom ratu <b>Dino DUPANOVIC</b> .....	145
THIRD ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE KING ALEXANDER - Book review: Čedomir Antić, Kralj Aleksandar <b>Milan SCEKIC</b> .....	149
ANGLE OF OUR REALITY - Book review: Živko Andrijašević, Balkanski ugao <b>Nada TOMOVIC</b> .....	155
IN MEMORIAM - Radoje Pajović (1934-2019) <b>Marijan Maso MILJIC</b> .....	159
<b>INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS</b> .....	163

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## **SADRŽAJ:**

GEOPOLITIČKE IMAGINACIJE RUSIJE U CENTRALNOJ I ISTOČNOJ EVROPI <b>Nikola NOVAK</b> .....	7
KULTURNA PERCEPCIJA DEMOKRATIZACIJE I RAVNOPRAVNOSTI U NACIONALNOM SIMBOLIZMU, KAO STRUKTURNI ELEMENT ISTOČNOG POPULIZMA <b>Luka FILIPOVIĆ</b> .....	29
CRNA GORA UOČI VOJNOG SLOMA (1915-1916) <b>Milan ŠČEKIĆ</b> .....	59
BOKA KOTORSKA NA POČETKU 20. VIJEKA <b>Ivan TEPAVČEVIĆ</b> .....	101
POSLJEDNJA CRNOGORSKA BITKA-DNEVNIK AUSTRO-UGARSKOG GENERALA STJEPANA SARKOTIĆA <b>Željko KARULA</b> .....	115
<b>PRIKAZI:</b> .....	143
NOVI ISTRAŽIVAČKI TALAS - Prikaz knjige: Marko Attila Hoare, Bosanski Muslimani u Drugom svjetskom ratu) <b>Dino DUPANOVIĆ</b> .....	145
TREĆI ATENTAT NA KRALJA ALEKSANDRA - Prikaz knjige: Čedomir Antić, Kralj Aleksandar <b>Milan ŠČEKIĆ</b> .....	149
UGAO NAŠE STVARNOSTI-Prikaz knjige: Živko Andrijašević, Balkanski ugao <b>Nada TOMOVIĆ</b> .....	155
IN MEMORIAM - Radoje Pajović (1934-2019) <b>Marijan Mašo MILJIĆ</b> .....	159
<b>UPUTSTVA ZA AUTORE</b> .....	165

**Review**

CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND EQUALITY  
IN NATIONAL SYMBOLISMS  
AS ONE OF THE STRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF EASTERN POPULISM

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**ABSTRACT:**

Populism in the Balkans and Eastern Europe has unique structural basis that have arrived from specific social, political and cultural characteristics of these regions. Social perception of the ideas of democratization and equality, through its historical evolution in the West has been starting a kind of unique evolution in the East, where the social perception of the same ideas, passing through the sphere of cultural structures and incorporating itself in the unique mechanisms of social dynamics was creating many new historical phenomenon. These processes have created foundations for the future social and historical development of political and cultural structures of Eastern populism.

By using relatively young methodological principals of socio-cultural analyses of the symbols, which are in modern social sciences equally used by the schools of neo-structuralism and post-modern symbolism despite their theoretical differences, this text will try to offer a modest contribution to the enlightenment of long-term social and historical processes which have created modern Eastern populism, and at the same time shaped its mechanisms of evolution and self-preservation. And, by connecting historical evolution of the cultural symbolisms with the evolution of social structures, this text will try to give its contribution to the process of discovering patterns in the network of causes and consequences that we understand as our past, and of the ways in which these patterns transcend into the outer manifestations of long-term historical processes, which we comprehend as our political reality.

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**KEY WORDS:**

Democratization; Equality; Populism; Culture; Symbolism.

**SAŽETAK:**

Populizam na Balkanu i u Istočnoj Evropi karakterišu jedinstvene strukturalne osnove nastale iz društvenih, političkih i kulturnih posebnosti ovih regija. Društvena percepcija ideja demokratizacije i jednakosti kroz svoju istorijsku evoluciju na Zapadu pokretala je svojevrsnu evoluciju na Istoku, gde je društvena percepcija istih ideja prolazeći kroz posebnu prizmu kulturoloških okvira i inkorporirajući se u jedinstvene mehanizme društvene dinamike stvarala mnoge nove istorijske fenomene. Ovi procesi istovremeno su stvarali strukturalnu osnovu za docniji društveno-istorijski razvoj političkih i kulturoloških okvira Istočnog populizma.

Oslanjajući se na relativno mlade metodološke principe analize kulturoloških sadržaja i simbola, koje u savremenim društvenim naukama uprkos teorijskim neslaganjima podjednako primenjuju neo-strukturalizam i post-moderni simbolizam, ovaj tekst će pokušati da da skroman doprinos rasvetljivanju istorijskih i društvenih procesa dugog trajanja koji su doveli do nastanka savremenog Istočnog populizma, istovremeno izgrađujući mehanizme njegove evolucije i samoodržanja. Povezujući istorijsku evoluciju kulturoloških simbolizama sa evolucijom društvenih struktura, ovaj tekst pokušaće da doprinese otkrivanju pravilnosti u uzročno-posledičnoj mreži događaja koju shvatamo kao svoju prošlost, i u načinu na koji se one prenose na spoljašnje manifestacije istorijskih procesa, koje koncipiramo kao svoju političku realnost.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:**

Demokratizacija; Egalitarizam; Populizam; Kultura; Simbolizam.

## 1. Introduction - The story of *Eastern democracy*

At the beginning of Early Modern History, and even before that, during the late Middle ages, towns of the Western Europe went through many social, historical, economical and cultural processes that formed the structural foundations not only for the future political and social philosophies and ideologies, theoretical and political structures of what was to become the wide specter of ideas and values that forms the basic concept of *democracy* (Baudelot, Establet, 2009), and also other political and socio-cultural concepts which form the structural tissue of modern geo-political thought, such were the concept of *equality*, rule of law, division of powers, social justice, etc; not only for the future changes in the structures of societies that gave birth to the first institutions that were created to embody that same concepts that are, according to Pierre Bourdieu, the very „stone upon which lies the Western Civilization“ (Bourdieu, 2018), but also for the great changes in the deepest structures of culture of those same societies.

As the historical experiences of post-Meiji Japan and China after the late Ming dynasty failed attempts of reforms have showed us (Stojanović, 2015), the „great tides of history“, as Fernand Braudel would call the long-term historical and social processes, (Braudel, 1995) can not be „tamed“ by the mire political decision, especially the one that spreads from „top-to-bottom“ in the over-centralized social and economical mechanism, no matter how powerful the institutions of that society are.

Those same social and historical processes that shaped the long path for the evolution of all the different phenomenon that we oversimplify with the generally conventional concept of “Western Democracy”, die to historical circumstances, either arrived in the Eastern Europe „far too late“ from the progressive scientific point of view, or have never arrived at all (Stojanović, 2017).

And that is roughly the complete „main stream“ story of the „late democratization“ of the Eastern Europe, as it is told by school text books and teachers all around „young“ Eastern democracies. But what is left out as a unique form of both political and historical „taboo“ (Stojanović, 2017) is the longer story about the social perception of those political and cultural influences that did find their way through the „barriers of time and politics“, which almost always prove to be much „looser“ from the historical perspective than they were in the eyes of the people who lived with them (Hobsbaum, 2014). The story of misunderstanding, misus-

ing and manipulating these same processes that were, in most cases, implemented in the sphere of political and intellectual debate with the ever-lasting „promise of progress“ in the East, but the question of whether they just stayed an abstract concepts for the majority of the people through history, or they really became part of structural evolution of culture and society, is the completely different question.

All of these historical processes created new concepts in the sphere of national symbolisms that had transcended through the changing times and cultures to this day, and which still represent the important structures of national myths, and which became especially important factor in the rising of the contemporary wave of populism in the Eastern Europe (Mosimann, 2018).

In order to comprehend that change, we can look toward the cultural mechanisms and symbolisms, structures that were created unconsciously by the same changing society and try to see the „glimpses and shadows“ of the historical processes which we are, by the lack of time, sources, resources and mostly, via the structural limitations of our thought and our mortality, bound to never fully understand.

## ***2. Democracy as a betrayal of social habitat behind the betrayal of tradition***

In the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, and other great authors of Russian realism, we can see the structural shape of one of the greatest historical and political dilemmas of their time, the big question of „temptation“ of the „*Russian soul*“ (Hutchings, 2004). This symbolic “temptation” is both ethical and religious matter, while at the same time, it is the political and social matter of modernization, one of the greatest causes of human fear during the whole history of mankind (Hobsbaum, 2014). A fear of modernization have shaped countless historical processes since the beginnings of the Early Modern History, and it is still „the great silent power“<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In order to explain the structural role of the fear of modernization positioned in the centre of social sub-consciousness in these historical processes, we could compare the symbolism of the fear of modernization with the symbolism of the most powerful „ancient god“ in H.P. Lovecraft`s mythos, „the Blind Idiot God“. This ancient deity that is sleeping in the middle of the universe and influences the world by its dreams has the roll of the creator in the Lovecraft works of existential horror, which were highly influenced by the fear of the modernization of American society during twenties and thirties and by themselves represent the „sum of historical fears“ of the American old middle class now shaken whit the great social changes, and that`s why Lovecraft`s mythology is full of racism, xenophobia, homophobia and misogyny, which plagued the author, and which he unknowingly transformed into monster-god`s in his work. This omnipotent, blind idiot, „God of all god`s“ doesn`t

beneath the surface of the social and cultural reality and the sphere of historical events that we know as classical, political history. Only in the light of the events that „shocked the world“ during the last few years, the „Trump`s election“ and „Brexit“ we can see the true power of that historical fear, incorporated deep into the cultural structure of society, and also the fact that there is no human society immune to it. And the fear of modernization is just one social factor that made the concept of “unique national” soul so attractive to the people of the “age of nationalism” and that made it popular again in the Eastern Europe in the post-cold war era (Hobsbaum, 2014). Claude Lévi-Strauss thought that it is through such cultural symbolism`s that we can clearly see the structural tensions of one society (Lévi-Strauss, 1952).

That symbolism of unique “Russian” soul already presumes a certain amount of social and cultural distinctions. It goes further than the main question of ”national mentality” in the era of the European nationalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, further than the distinctive function of underlying unique ethnical, religious and cultural features. Such symbolism assumes the cultural role of the heterogeneous sphere of *distinctions and presumptions* (Lévi-Strauss, 1952) which can not exist without their opposites. For example, the idea of “genetically” and “culturally” uncorrupted, naively sincere, modest and pious Slavic peasant (Stojanović, 2017) is deprived not only of its great propaganda power, but from its very existence in its 19<sup>th</sup> century concept without it`s opposite, usually a corrupt and evil Western politician, soldier, or most commonly, merchant (Dwart, 1954).

The symbolism of “Russian soul” slowly evolves into the concept of „*Slavic soul*” both in literature, political philosophy and popular culture towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hutchings, 2004), with the spreading of pan-Slavic movements and ideas (Banac, 1988). As the „century of nations” reached it`s climactic political and cultural end in the shape of First World War and Russian Revolution, the main ideas that followed that symbolism have already been deeply incorporated in the basic structures of social thought all around Eastern Europe.

interfere with the „world of men“ directly, but through the army of its „offsprings”, just like the everlasting fear of modernization is not present in our lives as a political question or a social and historical „theoretical entity“ by itself, but it is rather the „main ingredient“ in the structural foundations of modern conceptions of social Darwinism, racism, fascism, neo-pietism etc...and also, the main force behind the great propaganda power of these ideas, that had, during the last two centuries, a constant tendency to remind the man-kind of its existence during the times of economic and social crises and political turmoil, especially in the moments when „civil society” finally makes itself believe that it has been „pushed under the rug” forever.

But the cultural and social roots of that symbolism are going far deeper into Russian history. They have only been “re-discovered”<sup>3</sup> in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as it was also the case with the medieval „national” mythos (Smith, 2010), which was and still is a great “subtle power” behind many political and cultural processes especially in the Eastern Europe, because there, the age of „national discovery” didn’t pre-date the discovery of romanticism and social and political philosophies (Dwart, 1954) that accompanied age of legitimism in the East. The structural roots of that “Slavic soul” symbolism (Banac, 1988) were created in another historical context, the time of the Peter the Great’s reforms of the Russian society. The class of Boyar’s, and the „nobility of the church”, which opposed the reforms that were designed to „politically” implement into the structures of Russian society those same processes that started in Western Europe in the beginning of the Early Modern History, and were initiated by the laws of market, society and its culture, then assumed for itself the „historical“ roll of the „defender of what is uniquely Russian“ (Duncan, 2005). The social classes that felt economically and politically threatened by the reforms then started to create historically unique „alliance of the elites“ (Fišer, 1985) whit the protagonists of the social forces that arose as a reaction to the cultural influences of the reforms, mostly the ones that came from the poor but very influential local clergy (the traditional representation of some groups of that clergy has within itself the structural patterns for key distinctions incorporated in the basic concepts of many Slavic *national* cultures, such as the concept of „*divine irrationality*”)<sup>4</sup>, and

3 The need of the new ideology that was born in the 19th century, nationalism, to give itself ethical, political and historical foundations in the mythos of the previous historical eras, predominantly Medieval times, is the force that can not be underestimated in history. By comprehending the mythos of the previous times from the perspective of their own time and marking it as being „national”, or at least „ethnic”, from its very beginnings, the first national ideologists have created the structural patterns for many future misconceptions.

4 We could take for example the symbolical structures behind the main characteristics of the traditionally very popular group of Russian rural, ascetic monks, so called „jurodivi”. These monks were usually the main „intellectual” and spiritual protagonists of the „eternal conflict” between good and evil, East and the West, and tradition and modernization, in both national mythos, literature and cultural symbolisms, since the times of the 19th century nationalism, to this very day. They lived almost completely isolated in the rural areas, practicing the unique theological and spiritual practices that represented the special forms of Eastern orthodox mysticism, and that were sometimes either part of the occult or too similar to distinct from it, with the various belief systems that trace their roots back to the old pagan traditions and the locally popular systems of magic and shamanism. They weren’t always sanctioned by the official church, but they were, especially before the reforms of Peter the Great, a great social and political force due to the great influence they had in their local communities. Rasputin is the example of one of these men rising to the greatest heights of power although never being a part of the hierarchy either of the state or the church. These “holy man from the woods” were known in Russia by many names, most common being the popular “jurodivi”, the name under which they appear in the classical literature, but many regions of the Eastern Europe had their own versions

the conservative intellectual circles. Interestingly, during the birth of modern nationalism, it is not the nobility, nor bureaucracy, that represent the social background for the protagonists of the “soul” defending narrative. The main “defenders” of the “Russian mentality” against the “corrupt Western influences” became the serfs, peasants and the lower middle class craftsman and merchants from the towns (Dwart, 1954).

of “jurodivi” monks. Some versions of these monks are still present in many rural parts of Eastern Europe, and they still represent the local social force that shouldn't be underestimated.

All the presumed characteristics of the person who is “jurodivi” are not reserved for the monks and lower ranks of clergy. They were also commonly recognized with the ordinary people, although interestingly, ordinary “jurodivi” were never able to achieve the level of social influence that “jurodivi” monks could, because it was harder to establish a sub-conscious connection between them and the idea of “irrational divinity” that was crucial in creation of both political power and social influence of these monks.

The cultural concept of the “jurodivi” monks has the crucial symbolic distinction, which would later become of the utmost importance for the creation of most popular misconceptions about democratic ideas in the Eastern Europe. These monks had two main characteristics, they were at the same time viewed as “crazy” and “wise and holy”. That contradictory by itself is the structural foundations for many future commonly expected political contradictories in the East. The concept of “holy fool” is not historically new phenomenon, but the unique sort of the distinction this concept has among the cultures of the Eastern Europe is. Not only does it draw connection between the irrational and “holy”, it also implicates the distinction between the “holy” and rational. In theological teachings of the Eastern orthodox churches, it is connected with the basic logical concept of the old traditions of mysticism, and with the whole philosophical system that begins with the same concept, completely opposed to the theological traditions of Augustinian epistemology and neo-Platonic gnoseology, which started to be viewed as “Western” in the Eastern churches after the “schism”. That concept arrives from the simple logical presumption -If God is all-powerful and all-knowing, and the mortals can't understand the divine plan, then, it is a sign of betrayal to the concept of faith to even try to put the man-made ratio into theology, a sign of pride and vanity, and so a sin by itself.

And while in the both Western and Eastern main-stream teachings that concept was connected with the theological problem of doubt, in the Eastern mysticism the doubt by itself is a sin, as it is anything but the blind faith. And so by the public display of what would be perceived as “madness” by the main cultural standards of society, the “holy fool” is in fact displaying its great faith and holiness, connected with the ancient notion of connection between divinity and insanity. Therefore, the “holy fool” is not only free from vanity and filled with faithful devotion, it becomes the personal embodiment of the concept of overcoming the „rational” reality and transcending to the sphere of the divine irrationality. The most important social context of any political debate is a „frame” in which it is taking place. The „frame” consists of the set of presumed logical, social and cultural „rules”, premisses and presumptions. The unique cultural symbolism behind the concept of the „divine irrationality” is not used in political propaganda only to counter the „rational” argumentation, but to dismantle and displace the very frames of the basic questions and their logical patterns. What is „historically viewed” in the East as the „Western” patterns of political and social thought begins with the Montesquieuan formulation of the human rational mind as both the main political protagonist and the symbolic entity which holds jurisdiction on the „higher”, and „common” good. This and similar teachings of the 18th century enlightenment philosophy has been the foundation of the basic ideas behind the democratic concepts in their modern formulation. But the concept of „divine irrationality” is not only the logical counter to the enlightenment's philosophy „rational deity” concept, it represents a critical denial to the question of divinity by itself. And also, as a denial of the cultural „frame” in which the mankind can create and debate all the basic political and philosophical functional components present in the modern concept of democracy, such as the question of human rights, law, welfare, jurisdiction, people, institutions, human freedom and the state.

It is there that we can see the first “reflections“ of historical patterns of the future right-wing populism in Russia. That was the crucial moment in the development of the unique structural foundations of the future unique characteristic of the *Eastern* populism. The future propaganda machines of right-wing populism in the Eastern Europe will not only work to create an image of their leaders as the “defenders” (Mosimann, 2018) of the “poor” and “weak”, referring to the lowest social classes, but also as the defenders of the “national” tradition, and in that concept, defenders of the people from the ideas of democracy, portrayed as corrupt, weak, and “foreign” to the concept of what is “uniquely” Slavic, orthodox or national.

That sort of “national” cultural symbolisms which were deeply incorporated into the main political ideas and concepts since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to now days, are a very common thing with the unique propaganda power in the Eastern Europe. They are connected with many popular “themes” of the national mythos, first of them being the “dying and rising victims” (Hutchings, 2004). This particular theme was of immense importance for creating the main political themes that accompanied the formation of the concepts of national self-awareness in the East. For example, we can find such symbolic connections in the famous Serbian „*Kosovo Mythos*” (Čolović, 2017). The strength of that national mythos is more in the themes of sacrifice, than in the themes of heroic actions, although the two are inseparably intertwined, and reveal many historical phenomenon through the evolution of the cultural conception of that very connection. That problem deserves a whole book for itself, and that is why it won't be a part of this text any further, but it was also the primal pattern for the development of cultural legacy of the concept of “betrayal” in Serbian national culture. The theme of “sacrifice” wouldn't be so powerful without the symbolism of it's opposite, the “betrayal” (Čolović, 2017).

Although the “betrayal“ historically never occurred during the battle of Kosovo (Ćorović, 1997), and although the mythos related to the battle wasn't created until the few generations after the battle (Čolović, 2017), that symbolism was kept alive for centuries because it was of the crucial importance not only for the preservation of some aspects of the “cultural mentality“ (Lévi-Strauss, 1952) as the main-stream school's of thought in history and anthropology believed, but also because it was of crucial importance for preserving the social structure. Every “bright” example needs it's “dark” counterpart in order to achieve it's full social and political power.



Typically for this pattern of epic symbolism, which is largely spread especially in the “re-discovered” national myths throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe (Smith, 2010), while the protagonists of the “national story” have to possess all the traditional “hero qualities”, like unquestioning loyalty and obedience to the authority of ruler, church or the state, and a specific concept of bravery that transcend from that conceptual limitation of “chained masculinity”<sup>5</sup>, a concept that is in it`s structural essence very similar to the concept of *divine irrationality*, the antagonists of the same story have to, by their very personalities, symbolically represent the *disobedience* towards that same cultural and traditional authority that is crucial for the ethical determinations of the story. But in this case, the specific pattern is needed to connect the concept of “betrayal” to the concept of “stepping-out“ of the traditional “frame” of values.

And that is why, in many folk stories of the re-discovered Eastern national mythos, the characteristics of *rationality* in what is largely viewed as their “*foreign*” concepts are implemented to create that fundamental symbolical “bridge” between cultural and political differentiations of the concept of “betrayal”. The symbolism of foreign influence that counters the concepts of *divine irrationality* is the unique phenomenon in the Eastern European national mythos that gives it`s cultural legacy such a great propaganda power to be misused by populism up to this very day.

And the structural historical interpretation of these concepts is unique for almost the whole European history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and also very simple and begins with the most important question – which social groups were seen to be the protagonists of the “cultural betrayal” of “national and traditional values” in the

5 That particular concept is of the fundamental importance for understanding the psychological factor of these processes, that is often disregarded by the main stream historical and sociological direction of thought. What happens is that the mostly male protagonists of the re-discovered national mythos have a tendency to strive towards what is intended to be perceived as hegemonic sexuality patterns in their behavior, but they are often limited by the strength of many social, religious and cultural authorities that they had to be subordinated to. Their personal will is sometimes so incorporated into the cultural patterns and reduced to the mere search for the best way to serve all of these abstract authorities which can sometimes even contradict each other, creating a series of non-personal dilemmas for the protagonists of the national story, that if being left without the concept of a bigger purpose, the heroes of the national mythos would seem psychologically castrated. Their masculinity is their fore re-invested into the concepts of the bigger purpose, and re-shaped to represent the masculine qualities of the standards of the time that weren’t seen to be contradictory to the rule of the authority that the protagonists must serve. In that concept of a bigger purpose, a key element is again the motive of sacrifice, a willingness to consciously reject not only one`s one personal motives, but also the personal power, strength of one`s will and character, vanity and most importantly for the concept of chained masculinity, a personal authority, and willingly subordinate that authority to a higher, usually abstract one.



main epic and political narratives created during the age of legitimism, anti-revolutionary reaction and romanticism? Those same structures that opposed the social order and demanded reforms. The social order of the age of legitimism in post-Napoleonic Europe was depending on the very frail “alliance” of the old aristocracy and rural population, opposed by the large heterogeneous sphere of the urban social groups, most notably the financial and intellectual elites, “working poor” classes, and the proletariat, as the theoretical concepts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would define those social groups. It is, ironically, in the same social groups that the notion of the “nationality” in its modern interpretation and the modern concept of *nationalism* were born (Schroeder, 1994). During the revolutions of 1848/49, in most parts of Europe, the *national* and *social* agenda of the revolutionary policies were inseparably intertwined (Smith, 2010). And that is why the concept of *betrayal* was so important to the narratives created by the crumbling and changing social order (Duncan, 2017) – it is the key conceptual “stone” placed in the foundation of both cultural and political division of social from national revolutionary ideas.

But in the countries in which revolutionary, and among them democratic, ideas were not part of the intellectual “home made product”(Mosimann, 2018), there is not only the aspect of “foreign” and “anti-national” labels being placed on them, but it was also the question of who, and how powerful were the social groups that strived to reform the East? Because the Eastern Europe was “lacking” the same long-term historical processes that changed the urban societies of the Western Europe during the course of centuries (Schroeder, 1994), the social “protagonist’s” of the “new” ideas were not nearly as politically and economically powerful and numerous as they were in the West, and the lack of institution, and the very “culture” of institutions (Duncan, 2017), prevented them to represent a formidable social force, end usually even to enter the “high circles” of political life. But why are then the same patterns of national propaganda more extreme in the East? Because, they were not used primarily, to counter the new social classes on the rise, but to fight the competition within the ranks of aristocracy and bureaucracy (McCaffray, 2015).

In Russia during the “fight over the question of the Serfs”, all of the political struggle was conducted between the two powerful aristocratic fractions in the Emperor`s inter circle (Moon, 2002), and the question hardly ever left the royal court and the ministries, composed mostly of clients and relatives of the court aristocracy, and for the small part of the time it did. It was debated between the intellectual

elites in newspapers with very limited audience and with no effect on the struggle that was taking place behind the closed doors of the palaces, over a question which was more the matter of personal prestige and political influence, and of the state's foreign policy, than it was the internal question about the position of the Serfs, which were owned by everybody who participated in the debate about their rights, but were hardly ever seen in real life by the same people (Hock, 2005).

So, in the East, the concept of national betrayal also takes within itself a concept of "social" betrayal, the betrayal of one's own "social habitat", its interests and cultural norms. But the new ideas, and new social, political and cultural movements in Western Europe, first of enlightenment, then of nationalism, liberalism, and most importantly, the first notions of what could be called the first concepts of *democracy* in its modern ideological and theoretical form, were not the "new force to change the society and political order", but the new propaganda weapon to be used in the struggle between the old centres of power.<sup>6</sup>

And one of the main historical characteristics of all the cultures that inherited so many cultural, social and institutional concepts from the Byzantine em-

<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, many voices were raised in the urban intellectual minority in Russia after the revolutions of 1848/49 that demanded the „more humane“ social and political position for the serfs that comprised the majority of the population and for the many other groups of very complex Russian urban minorities. Yet there were very little "noise" about the concepts of parliamentary democracy and civil rights, which were the very ideological „heart“ of the revolutions in the Western Europe at the time. Democratization of the Russian society through the „freeing“ of the serfs was a mire political act that was never fully implemented in the rural areas of Russian Empire, consisted mainly of the acts that basically represented the formal recognition of the serfs as „human beings“ in various the cultural interpretations of that concept in Western Europe at the time, and not only that it didn't change much in the lives of ordinary serfs, also the great majority of them were never informed that their masters now no longer held the „power of life and death“ over them, but „only“ get to keep them in economical and cultural serfdom, and no longer in the political concept of serfdom.

And the notion of „more humane“ conditions was acceptable for the Russian society of that time, because it could be related to the concepts of Christian „mercy“, which were very popular in whole Europe during the rise of neo-pietism in Europe, because they also served to legitimize the social order in the face of the era of enlightenment, and were especially popular in the orthodox East because the concept of the Christian, „wise“ and „divine“ mercy were more connected to the social order of absolute monarchy than it could ever be to the parliamentary democracy, or the parliamentary monarchy. In the wisdom, divinity and mercy of the "crown" (In the Eastern Europe, the very concept of the "crown" is different, while the "crown of France" since the time of king Philip IV starts to represent more the concept of the institution of the „crown“ than the person who holds it, which is another historical process that arrived in Russia only after the Reforms of Peter the Great, but was never fully accepted.) as a symbolical representation of the personality of the ruler, and a historical and cultural pattern of legitimization not only of that's person's absolute power, but of the whole social hierarchy. That concept survived to this very day in its various aspects, for example it can be seen in the Jordan Peterson's teachings about the "natural hierarchy" in the conceptional symbolism of a "pater familias" in the traditional patriarchal family as the "wise king".

pire is that *Emperors* can change, but the concept of *the Empire* can change very little. And even when it does, the change that occurs in its socio-political context doesn't have the same *historical dynamics* as the change of that same concept in its cultural context. The same goes for the social structures of power, they can be re-named, replaced, and rebuild but the main cultural mechanisms which give them power can't be so easily replaced (Lévi-Strauss, 1952).

And when the modern concepts of democracy which were constantly influencing the East during the course of two centuries, while they were themselves changing (not suddenly “appearing” from nothing after a political decision as the classical historiography represents that process), in all of their variations and differentiations were officially introduced to the political life of the Eastern Europe, weather it happened through the concepts of enlightenment, parliamentarianism or liberalism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, immediately after gaining independence, or through a long historical process of change, or through the late 20<sup>th</sup> century conceptions of democracy that came after the period of transition and *modernization* of the East after the fall of Berlin wall, they were up to the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century first accepted by the ruling elites, weather they were feudal, communist, financial or bureaucratic aristocracy.

Consequently, the changes of *democratization* always, until the revolutions of the 90's, came from “top to bottom” in the East (McCaffray, 2015). There are of course exceptions, as in any law of social movement, but they are always the exceptions of political phenomenon, not the cultural one (Duncan, 2017). Even thou the old hierarchy of feudal aristocracy or communist bureaucracy no longer exist, it still influences the social and political structures of the Eastern Europe through it's immensely powerful cultural legacy (Mironov, 1996).

Also, because the acceptance of some parts of the large sphere of democratic concepts was historically much more often linked to the conflicts of power within the ruling social classes, not with the challenging of the social hierarchy itself, the very concept of accepting the “new *foreign* ideas” was both much strongly connected with the cultural motives of betrayal, than it could ever be the case in the West. At the same time with the disappointment, anger and frustration of the oppressed social classes, for those same ideas that benefited them were presented to them by the concepts, symbols and culture of the same social groups against whom they had generations of accumulated historical and cultural resentment, and the future

populist propaganda in the East would benefit greatly from the strength of that connections.

The cultural mechanisms have their own *historical life* (Lévi-Strauss, 1952), that has a great deal of autonomy from the “political” history (Hobsbaum, 2014). Additionally, they also possess a certain power of “natural selection” towards the new and the “foreign” concepts, a selection which is performed by the contemporaries but unconsciously, under the incorporated psychological and social patterns created by those same cultural mechanisms (Brodell, 1995). While the process of *democratization* in the Western Europe challenged the cultural mechanisms of keeping the social order, as well as the political and economical interests of the social classes that represented the ruling elites and had interests of preserving those cultural mechanisms, in the Eastern Europe the same process was for the most part of the history only a “top to bottom” process, which had the power to change the economical and political structures, but was highly impotent towards the cultural structures.

That is why, so many times in the last few centuries, concepts of democracy were politically adopted in the Eastern Europe, but culturally incorporated into the same cultural machinery that functions independently from the generations of its creators which it had historically outlived for centuries but with the same initial purpose of keeping the status quo in the social structure of power. Some of these concepts that were originally considered foreign, such were for example a new, 20<sup>th</sup> century forms of humanity, were more easily incorporated in those cultural mechanisms, because they could potentially be used in their preservation, but the ones that necessarily contradicted them, such were the various forms of the concepts of democratization, were therefore rejected by the same cultural mechanisms.

### **3. *Unjust equality as the justification of the traditional social hierarchy and progressive anachronism***

We don't need to go as far as Said, to the far Orient, to see how the same concepts are differently incorporated in other cultures (Said, 2006). Sometimes it's enough to go from England to Russia. The reason why modern thought had evaded going “to far” in that experiment is the same old *fear of similarity* (Said, 2006). Even though, in the last few decades we begun to question our anthropological, sociological and historical approach to the cultures of the far East and Africa, to

acknowledge the existence of the enormously thick layer of prejudice, stereotypes and misinterpretations on our “glasses” of culture (Palavestra, 2011), which have always existed, just “changed the colours” through history, and to understand that the very direction of our thoughts is culturally directed and defined, we are still “slow” to comprehend the truth about that same directions, which are still present in our thoughts today. Though we were ready to acknowledge that the “Western” modern thought had treated peoples of Asia and Africa and their cultures as an “experimental rat`s of the mind”, we are still not ready to admit that for the same reasons, we were never ready to apply the same experimental logical concepts when thinking about the white, Caucasian Christians, and the cultures that are “just beyond the corner” (Hač, 1979).

Main stream direction of thought in classical history, sociology and anthropology treated the cultural mechanisms as part of the traditions (Palavestra, 2011). But the tradition, while possessing micro-cultural mechanisms within itself, is also a part of the many macro-cultural mechanisms.

In nature, micro-systems much often survive the changes than macro-systems do. But in society, micro-systems can only continue to live as incorporated and dependant parts of macro-ones. Once one socio-cultural purpose for the existence of micro-system disappear, the other can take its place, but only if it follows the evolution and change of the macro-structures.<sup>7</sup> The similar pattern is taken by the historical processes, which shape these changes. While micro-structures can reveal themselves through the historical events or the connections of their causes and consequences, the macro-structures can be revealed only through the historical processes themselves, and causes and consequences between them, for what is a historical event to a historical process in micro-structure, the same is that historical process itself in the macro-structure. Also, there is no clear border between the two, despite our cognitive systematizations that are bound to strive for one, for the difference between them is only in the relative human comprehension of the sizes and time.

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<sup>7</sup> To give the simplest example possible, the system of facial and body expressions, the Western handshake or the Eastern bow, no longer posses the cultural meanings and purposes they had when they were created, as nether cultures or societies which created them no longer exist, but the socio-cultural needs and purposes for their existence obviously still exist, only in the different cultural and social concepts. The concepts behind those gestures, as well as their meanings, have changed, but their structures remained the same, not because humans still need the same micro-expressions, but because the macro-social structures have need for these expressions.

To return to the main theme of this text, the national symbolisms about the many ideas and concepts that were connected with the concept of democratization and modernization, especially the negative ones, which were created in the time of 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism, were incorporated into the cultural mechanisms of social-structure preservation. Although conceptually changed, they have structurally survived many historical changes and are re-appearing in the Eastern Europe especially as the contemporary social and historical processes of the era of democratization and modernization that began after the Cold War were slowed down by the global economic crises and the new geo-political circumstances.

In order for tragically-heroic parts of the re-discovered medieval myths to have the political power it did during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has to have already distinct and popular “self-victimization” theme (Čolović, 2017), deeply structurally connected with the “self-sacrifice” theme (Čolović, 2017), but it also needs to have a “*phoenix*” theme, the story about the “re-birth” that was crucial for the time of the national rebirth. These stories trace their basic structural patterns back to the middle-ages *martyrium*’s (Antonović, 2007), but in the Eastern Europe they are also connected with the great Byzantine “death and re-birth” historical narrative, which is especially important because it transforms the main concepts of a *martyrium* to the story about the whole nation, faith and state. The key concept in such narratives is the concept of *historical justice*. That justice is usually the part of the “*heavenly justice*” transcended to the earth in medieval concepts, but since the time of the creation of the modern concepts of nations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it becomes the concept of “*earthly*” justice, much more dependant on the human, and consequently *national* actions, and through that, a part of “*duty*” in the sphere of traditional values and the source of national pride.

The concept of *historical obligation of vengeance* which follows that particular, fundamental pillar of nationalism is still a dominant political force up to this day. For example, during the wars in the states of former Yugoslavia, both Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic ethnicities experienced the re-discovered forms of propaganda that arrived from that principal. And were structurally the same as they were during the national re-birth of these ethnicities and national entities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which again had the same social and political purpose to offer a *historical justification* for the present actions through the concept of *national obligation* to avenge the past injustices, and which was the main propaganda force for the wider

acceptance and also for the very creations of some of the most important ideas and *national goals* in both newly created and re-discovered forms of the fundamental nationalism.

But that concept is only the “most extreme of the *phoenix mythos* children”. The more moderate concepts which also arrived from that national mythos are deeply incorporated in every-day politics and more importantly, into the socio-cultural patterns. One of the fundamental concepts that arrived from the 19<sup>th</sup> century re-discovered national “phoenix” mythos is the concept of *unjust equality*.

This concept arrives from the idea of the historical circumstances, usually foreign invasions or cultural influences, disrupting the social order and hierarchy, connected with the notion of *national wellbeing*, and with the abstract concepts of natural order and natural hierarchy, which is again deeply intertwined with the concepts of *divine order* and *divine hierarchy*, with the latter arriving from the uniquely orthodox elements of the ever-present traditional connection of the *hierarchy of haven* and *hierarchy of the state*.<sup>8</sup> And there lays the connection between

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8 The concept of the connection between the hierarchy of the state (by that concept considering all the possible social orders and organizations) and the hierarchy of heaven (by that concept considering all the possible notions of higher hierarchies, from the tribal hierarchy of natural spirits to the Christian hierarchy of the saints in haven) is as old as organized society itself, and it is since then one of the key factors connecting the tradition and culture with the social order. But uniquely Orthodox and Byzantine legacy in that concept in the Eastern Europe is the strive to connect the hierarchy of the state with the hierarchy of the world.

It is similar to the ancient Chinese concept of the Empire in the center of the world. In the society of ancient China there was the Omni present idea that the Emperors rule their own lands by the rights given to them through the concept of mandate of heaven, a perfect model of an cultural concept for the explanation of the connection between the maintenance of the social and the natural order (when the floods and economic crises causes rebellions, the rebels always getter around the idea that the emperor, who would otherwise be considered *sacro sancti*, lost the mandate of Haven), but also the idea that the rest of the rulers in the world are subordinated to the one that has the mandate of haven. A similar concept existed in the culture of the old Byzantine Empire, and was deeply connected with the concept of the Eternal Empire, a heir of *Orbis Romanum*, etc. But the Byzantine Empire took that concept further by establishing so called “family tree of rulers“, in which every ruler in the orthodox, and sometimes known world, to whom the empire had relations of some greater importance, was placed in that family tree as a relative of the “roman” emperor, and given position that suited the importance of his realm and personality to his “divine” patron. According to the traditional patriarchal concept of family, Emperor of the romans was the father, the “*pater familias*”, and other rulers could be, depending of their considered importance, his sons, his nephews, his younger cousins, even his younger brothers, but never his equals, even if, which often occurred, they were much more powerful in the “real world” than the Byzantine Emperor. And in the world of the nations highly influenced by the Byzantine culture, it was considered to be the greatest honour for the ruler to even be present in such a family tree.

So what is known to medieval historians as a Byzantine imperial ideology created probably one of the first global concepts. It wasn't enough to establish a connection between the earthly rule and hierarchy of the realm with the hierarchy of the heaven; it was also the primary objective of the imperial



the idea of re-instituting the old social hierarchy and with it the archaic cultural mechanisms and patterns of the old social order being an act of patriotism, and an act to preserve the *national wellbeing*.

That connection arrives from the time of the national liberation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Dwart, 1954), when some nations of the Eastern Europe created their independent states, and again later, when same structural processes took place after the peace in Brest-Litovsk, and they returned again, adopted in different political and economical situations from which they were originally initiated and in a different “cultural suits shaped of different historical circumstances” (Palavestra, 2011) after WWII or the fall of the Eastern Block (Duncan, 2005).

When the first successful national revolutions took place in the Eastern Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, carried on the wings of socio-economic strives and romantic nationalism in its earliest forms (Banac, 1988), the first question the new young states faced was the one of self-governance. Having acquired now their own, *national* royalty, and with it, the national nobility (or at least foreign nobility that could fill the structural role of the nobility in the political and cultural perception of

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propaganda to establish a cultural system in which the same hierarchy would be seen to apply to the whole world. And the cultural legacy of what could be considered to be one of the most efficient and most sophisticated propaganda machineries in all of the human history was immense. Even when the Empire was nothing more than the few villages surrounding Constantinople and the Emperors went to humiliate themselves begging European rulers for help for one court to another, many Byzantines still thought of themselves as the subjects of the “ruler of the world”.

And through the cultural influences, especially through the influence of the orthodox church, which was inseparable from the state, and also, from the concepts of ethnicity and the first concepts of nations, both in the Empire and in the young medieval states of the East that built their first institutions and formed their first Christian socio-cultural structures under its influence, that particular Byzantine „obsession” with earthly and heavenly hierarchies, that interestingly grew stronger with the weakening of the Empire, transcended into the formation of the ruling ideologies of the first dynasties of those states, and was also incorporated into the many institutional and cultural structures, and also the cultural mechanisms that outlived the society that created them.

But here we must look at another phenomenon. While the real power and importance of the Empire was fading away, the abstract concepts of power it presented became stronger. Especially during the time of the Byzantine renaissance, all of these concepts of connections between the heavenly and earthly hierarchies became more and more sophisticated and more connected with the new orthodox religious philosophies on the rise, especially with the mystical ones such as isihasm. Interestingly those same philosophies that later gave birth to the main ideas of the divine irrationality concept were created to provide a comfort and explanation in the times of the “demise” of orthodox world in front of the foreign conquests and the internal strives, which main-stream orthodox teachings couldn't. These new religious ideologies, which provided the fatally important structural foundation for the connection between the notion of the divine irrationality and of the heavenly hierarchy were swiftly incorporated into the both main-stream religious practices, local religious movements and socio-cultural structures of the Balkans in the time of the Ottoman Conquest, and in Russian Principalities in the time of the “Mongol yoke”.



the time, and take symbolic resemblance of the idealized medieval structure), was seen as a *national progress*, as well as having the new social classes that arrived from the new financial opportunities. But this was also seen as a return of the old social hierarchy, especially from the perspective of 19<sup>th</sup> century national romanticism and so it became through the cultural symbolism connected with the re-discovered medieval mythos. It largely helped in the justification of the rising social inequality. For we must always remember that the main “strength” behind the *national* revolutions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century comes from them being the social revolutions as well. But after the *national liberation*, the social revolution factor was pushed aside in the new set of *national goals* that were largely set by the same social groups with the potential to replace the old social structures and the ruling elites of the old hierarchy which by that time existed only in the medieval mythos. That is why the connection between the notion of progress and the rising social inequality was so important. The concept of *progressive anachronism* also arrived from these attempts to establish both the abstract hierarchy of values and believe systems from the medieval mythos which was largely miss-understood by the contemporaries. Yet, in a way that suited the dominant social and political forces of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the “real” social order that would have the most resemblance to what was thought to be the medieval, the *naturally* national and traditional, and in the newly found religiousness of the time, risen from the combination of neo-pietism and the re-discovered traditionalism, which was becoming ever more *national*, and ever less *universal*, the “*heavenly*” social system. The newly discovered freedoms and the creation of national identities were symbolically connected with these attempts, and they became inseparable from what was the notion of progress as understood by the culture of the time (Smith, 2010).

And that is where the systematization of the human minds played its critical roll. While under the foreign rule, the nations of the Balkans, under the Ottoman rule, or the nations of the Eastern Europe under the rule of the Russian Empire, didn't have too much of the class diversity or the structural social complexity.<sup>9</sup>

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9 Here we must add an important distinction. Even though some of these national and ethnical entities were largely incorporated into the economical and political life of these empires, they didn't come to possess the same social complexity in their own social habitats. We could take for example the Serbs in the Ottoman Empire. Although the Serbs were much more incorporated into the structures of the Ottoman empire than the Serbian national historiography would like to admit, of which we see clear evidence in many grand-viziers coming from prominent Serbian janissary families, and the Serbian language being the fourth official language of the Empire, it was only the privileged minority of the Serbs that became incorporated into the structures of empire, but the vast majority of the Serbian

Even these two empires, which were the slowest to reach industrialization and modernization among the European family of empires, didn't have much social complexity even among their main national ethnicities (Hanioglu, 2010). But after the age of *national liberation* begun, many nations of the Eastern Europe started to develop new social classes and more complex social, and consequently cultural systems (Hobsbawm, 1984). In some cases, as a consequence of gaining independence or coming under influence of the "Western" technologies and ideas, or in other cases as a consequence of the same two empires beginning the process of the industrialization and consequently social and cultural modernization, and in most cases, as a consequence of the combination of the two. As the newly found social complexity was seen as a sign of progress, the newly created social inequality that came as its natural consequence also followed. The connection between the two entered not only the unconscious directions of socio-cultural development, but also the direction of thought which transcended in the basic structures of many new national ideas and ideologies.

The dominant national entities of the two empires possibly experienced the most extreme forms of the same process, because the idea of necessity of modernization was contradictory to the direction of the set of social and cultural values behind their already formed national identity, and because it was force upon them by the defeats that they suffered from the imperial powers that went through the industrialization and modernization (Hobsbawm, 1984). It diminished a factor of a great historical power, the "picture of the nation itself", it went along side the already formed set of the *imperial fears*,<sup>10</sup> and it created a waves of boiling resent-

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people continued to live in rural areas and engage only in very simple forms of agriculture for the time.

10 The imperial fears were, beside being the one of the crucial factor that led to the first world war, beside being the most important motive for the second phase of the imperialism, in which the costs of the expansions were much greater than the potential gains, were also one of the most powerful factors in strengthening the ever growing fear of modernization, especially in the "three eastern empires", the Habsburg, Ottoman and Russian Empire. Contradictory, but most importantly, it was associated with the lack of progress. The imperial fears of Britain, and later of Japan, were based on the existential fears, and because of that contributed to the processes of industrialization, urbanization and modernization. When the large heterogeneous sphere of many different imperial fears was primarily oriented around the fears that concerned the basic survival of the population, like it was the case with Britain and Japan, situated on the islands with very little agricultural potential and poor basic resources, that constant threat of existential catastrophe forced the development of the same interests, professions, investments, orientation towards the development of trade, craftsmanship, increased militarization, especially in the sector of the navy power, and colonial expansionary policies, and many social and cultural processes that lead to the accumulation of wealth and development of new technologies, which led to the industrialization.

Japan is the perfect example of how these existential fears worked very well along side the other

ment and hatred that took their mark on the structures of societies and cultures which still can be seen today.

Hence, the previous equality in the very poor society, which relayed heavenly upon the integrated poverty social systems, was comprehend as backwards (Hač, 1979), and mostly, contradictory to the ideals of *national* liberation (Smith, 2010), upon which the new generations which defined the modern concepts of nationalisms were raised, in times that were, as many romantic and patriotic poets of the time would put it “filed with the notion of progress which could be felt in the air“. Also, those same social structures of integrated poverty were destroyed by the ever increasing social inequality, which was justified by the great economic progress of the first years and decades that new young European countries experienced immediately after gaining independence. But the benefits of these economic progresses were mostly limited to a very narrow and privileged groups at the top of the social hierarchy, and was hardly felt by the majority of the population which still lived of the basic concepts of agriculture.<sup>11</sup>

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powerful social and cultural fear, the fear of the other. Feeling endangered by the technological and military power of the Western states, Japan was very fast to take the popular “Western vaccine”, and achieve probably the fastest entry into the “age of industrialization and modern imperialism” in the history of mankind.

But the same thing didn't worked out with the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Russian empire, although the fear of the other was the major factor in firing up the fear of modernization of their societies. Among the many other factors, the already existing empire, the multinational and multiethnic structures of these empires, the less powerful existential fears, there was also another crucial factor. Japan was only able to achieve the industrialization and modernization so fast because of the radical and violent breakaway from the old social structure, and old cultural hierarchies. The forces of self-preservation of the social order were to powerful for imperial fears to overcome.

11 Contrary to what some of the often very bias national historiographies present us, those new states and their societies and many ethnicities were very poor, even by the standard of their age, and the economic progress didn't lasted long enough for the capital to „trickle-down” in order to create even temporary welfare or at least investments in development and modernizations of the economic structures that were further down the financial ladder than the very top of the urban population, and certainly not enough capital to move upwards and cause more investments. The purchasing power of the agricultural classes almost didn't exist (in some parts of these rural economies, not only the monetary system, but the trade conducted in some other form than the simple exchange was an abstract concept), and the mostly circular economies of the rural world didn't posses any cultural interests for new, especially industrial products. As any culture of the economy that reached simple regenerative stability, it heavily defined the very concept of change. That was almost certainly a firm economical guarantee for the failure of any attempt of industrialization, if the lack of the accumulation of wealth in those few social groups that benefited temporarily from the new trade opportunities and foreign investments, and an even greater lack of knowledge and interest in the industrial investment wasn't enough. And even if the economies of the young Eastern European nations and of the old Empires could somehow potentially enter the „full swing” of the industrialization, there could hardly become any competition for the already developed western industries in the global market that was slowly developing its modern concepts, and which was predominantly under the influence of 19th century economical liberalism, and usually protectionist for those particularly agricultural sectors of trade, only ones in which these young states could potentially take participation.

But even though actual economic progress was very limited and short, the *notion of progress* was very strong and even more strongly connected with the ideas of *national liberation* (Hobsbaum, 2014), and through that connection, with the return of the romantic idealisations of the „glorious“ medieval past (Schroeder, 1994) that required the preservation of old social hierarchies and even the creation of new ones in order to be “re-created“ in the present (Dwart, 1954). Because it suited the interests of both the already existing social groups at the top of that hierarchy, as well as the one`s on the rise, and it was also crucial for „taming“ the revolutionary movements by the re-directing them from the *social* towards their *national* ideologies, so that they could be used to preserve the social order and potentially increase the power of the ruling structures on power, instead of destroying it. Those same social groups were the dominant ones in the construction of the new national cultures, and all of these new concepts, including the *progressive anachronism*, were incorporated into the structural tissue of the newly formed national symbolisms and cultural mechanisms.

When the new modern political, social and cultural concepts of equality as both an ideal and as a social policy reached the nations at the time of their liberation or even before that, they were largely, by the same socio-cultural mechanisms, associated not only with the negative presumptions of the *foreign* concepts, but also with the symbolisms and motives that were contradictory to the notion of *national* progress. Regarded as a socially destabilizing factor, they were pushed aside, for there was no practical interest in accepting them into the sphere of national ideologies that were becoming more and more separated for their social component. Especially from the perspective of the newly formed elites and in the mostly agricultural economies with the average 90% of the rural population that was not only deeply incorporated into the cultural structures of the traditional values and strict social hierarchies, but lacked the fundamental educational and financial potentials to ever come close to these ideas, or the cultural or practical interests to do so. When those ideas that were the crucial ideological foundations of the structure of the European enlightenment finally reached the few social groups that could be interested in them, mostly the intellectuals and the urban poor, the cultural mechanisms that defended the ruling social hierarchy were already established, and more importantly, the age of revolutions in Europe had passed.

But there is even more important structural connection that was formed during these processes and lasted through its functionary components up now

days. The most important economical and political interest of the newly formed national elites, the separation of the national and social agenda of the revolutionary movements, couldn't be completed without an ideological, religious and cultural *mechanism of justification*, which was found in the conception of *unjust equality*, a notion that economical, social, political and cultural concepts of equality contradict the concept of *natural* order and hierarchy, and further of the *heavenly* one.

The experiences of Bulgaria, Serbia, Moldavia, Romania, and partially Greece are typically 19<sup>th</sup> century representatives of this phenomenon (Singleton, 1985). After the peace in Brest-Litovsk in 1918, nations of Eastern Europe and the Baltic, that were under the rule of the Russian Empire, experienced the same process, although in Ukrainian case that process was very short lived, and that is part of the reason for the later fast expansion of Ukrainian nationalism, similarly to the Croatian case (Banac, 1988) – the social and cultural process that included formation of many key national concepts, ideas of modern nationalism and most importantly socio-cultural incorporation of those ideological structures that began, didn't have the necessary time to express itself on the political and “historical” surface, so the social pressure that it created accumulated over the years. The similar thing happened to the Polish experience is uniquely interesting, for we can follow the two separate phases of that same process – one that came with the creation of Duchy of Warsaw and other that came after the peace in Brest-Litovsk.

However, the Russian experience is the archetype of these processes, only with one small, but very important difference – the motives of national liberation was in the Russian concept of this process replaced by the motives of the imperial progress (Duncan, 2005). That is one of the “unseen” factors that made the defeat in Russo-Japanese war such a turning key point in the outbreak of the Revolution. It wasn't just the Russian imperial pride that was lost at Port Arthur; it was the powerful motive of the promise of progress that was crucial for the strength of nationalism, and for the political and cultural legitimism of the ruling social hierarchies.

#### ***4. Conclusion - Re-discovery of the old cultural mechanisms during the “age of populism”***

The Russian empire isn't taken as an archetype of these historical processes that changed the socio-cultural structures which further influenced the tides of history because of its great influences to the development of socio-cultural structures through the Eastern Europe (Duncan, 2005), not because of its political and cultural pretensions to achieve the position of the heir to the Byzantium in the orthodox world (Johnson, 2004), not because of its unique position of the deep structural connections of the intertwined development of the nationalism and imperialism (Schroeder, 1994), but because of the unique mechanisms and patterns by which the new social and political ideas of nationalism were either disregarded or incorporated into the cultural structures of the old legitimism, mysticism, and the order of the social hierarchies, and because their further historical development have showed how impotent is the power, of one of the most, if not the most powerful centralized state that ever existed to inflict changes into the cultural structures which determinate the acts, will and direction of thoughts of even those same people who contradict them by their political decisions.

All of the cultural symbolisms and mechanisms that were previously discussed and were created under the empire didn't automatically cease to exist after the revolution. Contrary, revolution only made the connection between them and the nationalism more powerful over the decades of suppression. But the structures that created those same symbolisms and mechanisms couldn't be suppressed by the ideological imperatives (Hobsbaum, 2014). Further more, in their simple, technical forms, they easily found their way into the structures of the new political order, the simplest example being the need of the communist technocracy and bureaucracy that replaced the imperial technocracy and bureaucracy to control and use the same mechanisms of power, facing similar social problems, and overtime establishing the structurally similar patterns of self-preservation of hierarchy, and becoming the same structure of power (Ryavec, 2003). The improvements of the mechanisms of power that were possible under the new ideology made those same mechanisms even more efficient and more powerful. And consequently it made possible the new expansion of the centralized power of the state, techniques of surveillance and control (Foucault, 1975), methods of disregarding the official policies and laws, and creation of even more dominant centre of absolute power, etc. In

their more complex, abstract form of these structures, that transcended from the simple inheritance of the cultural mechanisms, influenced the very same people that applied the new ideology to the sphere of physical reality, directed their choices, their interests, and the very directions of their thoughts, proving yet again that the structures of ideology are incorporated into the structures of culture, and not the other way around.<sup>12</sup>

After the fall of the Soviet Union, two ends of the nationalism that existed separately, started to merge, as the nationalist structure beside the “communist patriotism” became more intertwined with the “traditional” national structure, that was boiling under the surface of the ideological imperatives, that hadn’t, and couldn’t be suppressed even by the most ruthless of the purges and brutalities, but had rather flourished feeding of the frustrations that they had accumulated over the decades, and developing the ever stronger structural connections, more sophisticated symbolisms and mechanisms, and at the same time, simpler and more efficient tools of propaganda, learning from both the soviet and old imperial experience, and becoming ever more inseparable with the structures of orthodox religion.<sup>13</sup> The

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12 As humans have the natural tendency to think otherwise, because it gives us the notion of greater independence from whatever abstract concept that we tend to see as both the greatest motivating cause of our actions and the jugmental authority for them, whater it is God or gods, social forces, biological needs, natural processes, subconscious felings, cultural sistematizations of our mind, or all of them, because the notion that we can achive even the slitest controle over them gives us both comfort and power, both the sence of achievement and the sence of overcoming the mortality, both fear that is our greatest motivator and hope which is our species colective opium, for the notion that we can by our own desicions overcome the strucures that lay in the essence of those same desicions can be a purpose enough even in a world without one, which is a very attractive tendency, without which the existance of human potential for creativity would not be possible, but also a very lethal tendency, as it is only one step away from disregarding ethics as a lower urge forced upon us, and only two steps away from acting God.

13 Although the progressive systematizations of our mind and the cultural dominance of our zeitgeist often make opposite perspective “sound” logical to us, the nationalism and the modern concepts of religiousness have far stronger structural connections now than they had during the 19th century. The disappearance of “socially mandatory religiousness”, mostly through the new processes of democratizations in the West, and the dominance of the ideologies based on 19th century progressivism in the East, as well as the technological advancement and the new cultural needs, have made possible both the formerly described misconception and the strengthening of the connection between religiousness and nationalism. Yet the primal factor in that process was the search for the cultural identity in the modern plural world, and the need of the new nationalism to find its traditional roots, just like the one of the 19th century have found them in the re-created and re-shaped medieval mythos. Especially after the rise of the “new-right” and the new economical order, and later in the aftermath of the world economic crises, and under the influences of the aroused fear of modernization, post-modern thought and the “end of history” narratives, complemented by the development of the new technological and cultural phenomenon that started in the 90`ts, the new nationalisms became even more oriented to the past, and to what it comprehended as its historical roots. And just like romanticism shaped medieval mythos to fit the new conceptions of the predominant social ideology, the



merging of the two “trees” of the structures of nationalism was completed by the history’s most often condenser of changes – the economic crises.

Frustration that was caused by the crises of the period of economical transition merged with the *national* frustration that was caused by the sense of defeat after the Cold War. This “merging of anger“ helped to ease the merging of the two structures of nationalism (Duncan, 2005). The decade after the “historical reconciliation“ of the structures of nationalism, they were ready to be taken over by the rising force of right wing populism (Mosimann, 2018).

The cultural mechanisms that were formed during the age of 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism were then ready to be adopted to the changed social structure, with the power of their symbolisms unharmed and the “historical” potential of their structures to expand to the new ideological and political reality and to re-shape themselves to serve the needs of the new forms of propaganda untouched by the most turbulent century in human history, and ready to be used today, especially to accompany the rise of the new form of leaders and policies (Stojanović, 2017).

The rise of the power and prestige of Putin’s administration in Russia have set a pattern for the techniques of acquiring both popular support that arises from the new national ideologies that are gradually shaping themselves in the present, new form of political power that arrives from the new form of populism that arises from the exploitation of post-transitional anger, resentment and uncertainty caused by the age of transition and new mechanisms of cultural dominance of the new national ideologies that arises from the force of culturally directed social stigmatization and re-integration of the archaic symbolisms and mechanisms of their connection, that are incorporated into the structures of the re-discovered nationalism (Johnson, 2012).

This phenomenon has set a pattern for the future rise of similar forms of populism that emerged on power in the Eastern Europe after the period of transition. New dominant social groups that replaced the old communist participacy in the Eastern Europe after the age of transition had two primary objectives. First, the new social hierarchy, especially its new semi-democratic political elites, needed

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19th century nationalism, in our time religiousness is shaped by the neo-traditionalism, mostly under the influences of the culturally (because in such a culturally plural society of fragmented traditional class structures, a cultural structures are the ones that take the place of the primal integrating factor) predominant ideology, neo-liberalism.



political stability in order to solidify the gains made during the transition, and second, the newly created social groups in the high structure of power, mainly the new financial elites, needed social legitimacy for their newly established positions. In order to achieve both of these objectives, they relied on the old ideas, old structures of nationalism and the cultural mechanisms that they have inherited.

We could easily distinguish two political ages, two historical periods in that process, divided by the two main ideas that drew the new social hierarchy toward achieving stability and self-preservation in post-socialist era. At first, those same ideas that transcended from the re-discovered nationalism stood in odds with the dominant “idea of progress”, based on the conceptual connection between the economic progress and the processes of democratization and modernization, but as economic crises appeared, those two pillars of power of the “idea of progress“ in the East started to separate, and as they did, they opened the space for the ideas of progress to be re-connected with the ideas of nationalism, and also for the rise of populism.

Unlike the Western populism, that represents a new historical phenomenon with the old structures, and which has only risen to significant power after the great crises of 2008; the Eastern populism, on the other hand, represents an old phenomenon in the new historical circumstances. And only because of its deep structural connection with the cultural mechanisms and symbolisms that were created during the era of the 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism, and also because some of the same cultural mechanisms are deeply incorporated into the historically young and politically weak democratic institutions, Eastern populism is able to achieve much greater political and propaganda power and influence over the whole society that Western populism could ever hope to. Eastern populism is thus able to cross more social and cultural “borders” and to expand the sphere of “socially acceptable” actions by far greater extent, to set more political and historical precedents, and most importantly, to discard the large parts of what is considered to be the very structural core, the heart of the democratic values.

Western populism has to “convince” the public that it is the “giving up” of the democratic traditions (which are represented as weak, corrupt, morally decadent, inefficient, etc...) that is in the interest of the ideals of social equality, while the Eastern populism has a much simpler task. For the populism of the Eastern Europe, social inequality, and sometimes social injustice is just the old class system reborn, a system justified by the concepts of the will of heaven and *will of history*, and by the concept of *higher justice*. “It was *always* like that“, and “that is like that because *it should be*” are more and more popular phrases in the contemporary structure of

the political debate in the East, arriving from the basically populist need to adjust to the common language, but also from the need to give the represented belief systems a historical, religious and ethical legitimacy, a need which has spilt over from the positions of right wing populism and became an imperative for the whole political spectre. Also, social inequality becomes associated with the idea of the return of the old *national* hierarchies, and thus with the idea of national liberation and consequently with the idea of progress itself, thus creating the concept of *progressive anachronism*, which also existed in some Western forms of enlightened legitimism, but is largely marginalized in the modern forms of nationalism, while in the East, that concept serves as both the structural connection of the idea of progress and the idea of national liberation, and the fundamental pillar of the social legitimacy of social groups that strive to represent themselves as the old hierarchies reborn, a hierarchies with the traditional, national and most importantly, ethical justification of their ever growing power, especially after the rise of Eastern populism.

As for democratic institutions themselves, they are also much easier targets for the Eastern populism, that it could ever be the case in the West, and not just because they are historically young and weak, and not enough structurally incorporated into the society and culture, but because they are, and have been for roughly two centuries, shaped by the need to adjust to the same cultural mechanisms, mainly the ones of social stigmatization and disregard. The problem with the “democratization of the East” (to use the popular term from the age of transition) is not the political one, but the one of the social and cultural, structural nature. Arriving from the wars of power of the high layers of the social structure, being used as a political weapon, and then transcending to the cultural “world” of ordinary people by a political decision, and by “top-to-bottom” principal, the democratic ideas themselves were blended in the cultural spectrum of common understanding being already deeply connected with the traditional concepts of betrayal and “foreign” influence which were incorporated into the structure of nationalism. This was mainly because of the ever-lasting interest of the self-preservation of social hierarchy that had to place a “dividing stone” between the social and the national agenda during their political evolution in the concepts of modern nationalism. Social tensions, especially sparked during economic crises, were thus the primary “fuel” in the “forging” of cultural mechanisms which gave birth to the stereotypes about those same ideas, which were so strongly connected with the structure of modern nationalisms in the East that they transcended from the age of national liberation into the age of transition, and are now serving the political needs of the expansion and growing power of the Eastern populism.

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