

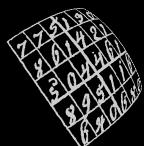


Nation
of
the
24-25 October 2013, Ljubljana, Slovenia
LEADERS

Univerza v Ljubljani



Univerza v Ljubljani
FILOZOFSKA
FAKULTETA



ARRS

24-25 October 2013, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Nation
of
the
LEADERS



Voditelji naroda

Program konference in knjižica povzetkov

Leaders of the Nation

Conference programme and book of abstracts

© ZRC SAZU, Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje

Uredili / Edited by

Jurij Fikfak, Dan Podjed, Božidar Jezernik

Povzetke prevedli / Abstracts translated by

Avtorji / Authors & Manca Berkopec

Oblikovala / Designed by

Monika Klobčar

Organizirata / Organised by

Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU,

Inštitut za slovensko narodopisje /

Scientific Research Centre of the

Slovenian Academy of Sciences and

Arts, Institute of Slovenian Ethnology

Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska fakulteta /

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts

Ljubljana 2013

*Konferenca je organizirana v okviru projekta
J6-5558 - Junaki in slavne osebnosti v Sloveniji
in Srednji Evropi, ki ga financira Javna agencija
za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije.*



LEADERS
of
the
NATION

24–25

October 2013, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Book of
abstracts

LEADERS

Schedule

Location:
Scientific Research Centre
of the Slovenian Academy
of Sciences and Arts
Geographical Museum,
Gosposka ulica 13, Ljubljana

THURSDAY, 24 October 2013

9:30 –10:00	<i>Registration & morning coffee</i>
10:00 –10:10	Jurij Fikfak Introduction
10:10 –10:30	Božidar Jezernik Presentation of the edited volume on heroes and celebrities in Slovenia
SESSION 1	
10:30 –11:00	Jurij Fikfak Leaders of the nation
11:00 –11:30	Ona A. Čepaitytė Gams Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland Jogaila: A contested place of memory in Lithuanian history
11:30 –12:00	Dagnosław Demski Jan Sobieski: The anniversaries of the 1683 Siege of Vienna (from 1783 to 1983 and 2013) and its historical imagination
12:00 –13:30	<i>Lunch break (Restaurant Pri Vitezu)</i>
SESSION 2	
13:30 –14:00	Božidar Jezernik Father Radetzky
14:00 –14:30	Meltem Turkoz Fathering the Turkish Nation: From Mustafa Kemal to “Atatürk”
14:30 –15:00	Sara Špelec The death of Alexander I of Yugoslavia from the perspective of Slovenian newspapers
15:00 –15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>



SESSION 3

15:30 –16:00	Vito Hazler Fighter for equality – Ana Dimnik from Trbovlje
16:00 –16:30	Marjana Strmčnik Mački Belič: Her heroic posture as the “glue” of anti-fascist resistance in Ljubljana
16:30 –17:00	Sandra Koštric In search of new heroes: Historical revision and revisionism of World War II in post-Yugoslav space

FRIDAY, 25 October 2013

8:30 –9:00	<i>Morning coffee</i>
SESSION 4	
9:00 –9:30	Jože Dežman Heroes of nonviolence
9:30 –10:00	István Povedák Forgotten and reinvented heroes
10:30 –11:00	Dan Podjed Ivan Kramberger – a clown or JFK of Slovenian politics?
11:00 –11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
SESSION 5	
11:30 –12:00	Saša Babič Rhetoric of presidential speeches at state celebrations
12:00 –12:30	Marina Vrhovac Female politicians as famous persons in Slovenia
12:30 –13:00	Tomislav Pletenac “A hero, not a criminal!”
13:00 –13:30	Concluding thoughts & discussion
13:30 –15:00	<i>Lunch (Restaurant Shambala)</i>

Jurij Fikfak

Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia

Leaders of the nation

Of the many perspectives included in discussions of heroes, saints and famous persons, three are particularly noteworthy; they have to do with power, a sense of belonging and with the need for someone who is larger than life. In examining these three perspectives, the author uses examples from Slovenia and Central Europe and relies on an analysis of the use and symbolism of space, i.e. of special memorial places through which the knowledge of heroes and other well-known people is conveyed. In order to address the question of power, it is necessary to analyse the individuals who gained a special, privileged position by wielding political or another type of power, or to whom later discourse attributed such a standing that they were granted, post festum/post mortem, a special position of authority by institutions of power (Prešeren, Ševčenko, Pučnik, etc.). The sense of belonging to a nation or a country, to a large family and its father or mother, was created mostly through media constructs. What drove that effort, however, was motivation, the frame, the recreation of the need for an ideal type model, for a person larger than life.

Jurij Fikfak, Associate Professor at the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and a Visiting Professor in Graz and Vienna. He has (co)organized several international scientific councils and edited several books and other publications. He is co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Traditiones*, of the series *Ethnologica – Dissertationes*, and the editor of the series *Opera ethnologica Slovenica*. He was co-director of the course Interpretation



und Verstehen at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik (2002-2010). His main research interests include ritual practices, the history of ethnology and cultural anthropology, and research methodologies (especially qualitative research). He is a member of different international ethnological, anthropological and sociological associations and a member of the Executive Committee of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS-AIS).

Ona A. Čepaitytė Gams

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland, Jogaila: A contested place of memory in Lithuanian history

Although Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland Jogaila (Polish *Jagiełło*, c. 1350–1434) is widely recognized as an important historical figure of late medieval Europe, in Lithuania he is stereotypically regarded as a controversial historical figure with a rather negative aura. While the heritage of the early period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has been of great importance for the Lithuanian national identity, his persona was never among the popular ones in the “Lithuanian pantheon of heroes”. This paper aims to analyse the phenomenon of Jogaila as a contested place of memory in Lithuanian history, tracing its origins to the late 19th century and following its development up to the present time. It is based on the theoretical concepts of *les lieux de mémoire* (P. Nora), collective memory, *cultural memory* (J. and A. Assmann), historical narrative and national identity.

Empirical research includes the analysis of the exhibitions of three Lithuanian museums presenting the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the National Museum of Lithuania, the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania and the Trakai History Museum - and the representations of Jogaila in history textbooks, literature (historical novels) and popular historical books from the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. The sociological surveys carried out by I. Šutinienė between 1991 and 2007 are used as additional material to help highlight today's public opinion on the topic. The findings of the paper reveal new aspects in the interpretations of the historical role of Jogaila in today's Lithuanian historical narrative; nevertheless,

these changes have not yet neutralized Jogaila's stereotype in the Lithuanian national imagination. The paper aims to determine what formed his stereotypical image – what kind of information and its interpretation – and how it changed through time.

Ona A. Čepaitytė Gams studied history at the Vilnius University and received her BA (2001) and MA (2003) in cultural history. In 2012 she received her MA in Sociology of Culture from the University of Ljubljana with the thesis *Past, Heritage and the Question of Authenticity: (Re)construction of the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania in Vilnius*. Her research interests include the social and cultural meanings of heritage, and the application of a heritage idea in social life. She published articles in the journal *Menotyra* and in the book *Cultural Heritage and Identity (Kulturna dediščina in identita)* in 2010.

Dagnosław Demski

Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw; Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland

Jan Sobieski: The anniversaries of the 1683 Siege of Vienna (from 1783 to 1983 and 2013) and its historical imagination

The aim of this paper is to present how the image of Jan Sobieski evolved between anniversaries of the Vienna battle celebrated in Poland from 1783 to 1983. Which figure was celebrated, memorized, and presented during these years? Still the same figure of the Father of the Nation, Saviour of the Nation and Christianity, Lion of Lechistan, Lightning of the East, Leader of the Nation? Or a forgotten figure of the past? How did the perception of memory of his persona and his deeds develop, depending on the changing context? How was the image of this extraordinary individual used in the process of making a memory?

Dagnosław Demski is an ethnologist. His research areas include ethnicity, border studies, folk religion and ritual studies, visual culture and humour, and cover two large field areas: Eastern and Central Europe (Baltic states, Belarus, Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, Balkan states), and South Asia (India, Pakistan). He is the author of the book *Images of Hinduism: Culture and Religion Through the Eyes of Rajputs and Shepherds* (*Obrazy hinduizmu: Kultura i religia radżputów i pasterzy*) and of many articles. He is also a co-editor of the series *Visual Encounters with Alterity and Otherness in Eastern Europe* (*Images of the Other in Ethnic Caricatures*, 2010; *Competing Eyes: Visual Encounters with Alterity*, 2013).



Božidar Jezernik

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

Father Radetzky

Field Marshal and Count Johann Joseph Radetzky (1766-1858) had close links with Slovenian lands. In 1798 he married Countess Franziska Romana von Strassoldo-Grafenberg, also known as Countess Frančiška Strasold, a native of Carniola. He also inherited considerable property there and thus acquired Carniolan citizenship in 1807. In 1852, he was named an honorary citizen of Ljubljana. *Oča Radecki* (Father Radetzky) was very popular with Slovenians who fought under his command in northern Italy and folk songs celebrated his exploits, for example:

*Radetzky is a real gentleman,
he will prevail every time, everywhere ...*

The city of Ljubljana erected two monuments dedicated to the famous field marshal.

Božidar Jezernik is a Full Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Ljubljana. He teaches Ethnology of the Balkans and has conducted extensive field work in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. From 1988 to 1992 and from 1998 to 2003 he was the Head of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. From 2003 to 2007 he was the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He has been in charge of the research program group *Slovenian Identities in European and Global Contexts* since 2004. He is currently heading two research projects: *Holidays and Constitution of Community in Slovenia* and *Heroes and Celebrities in Slovenia and Central Europe*.



Meltem Turkoz

İşık University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences,
Istanbul, Turkey

Fathering the Turkish Nation: From Mustafa Kemal to “Atatürk”

It is difficult to walk through Turkey's town squares without seeing a statue, bust or image of the nation's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Recent critical studies that explore the way in which the “father of the Turkish nation” has been memorialized in image, statuary and text have found that statuary in his image had already started before his death in 1938. Literary and historical studies by Turkish scholars have shown that, while Mustafa Kemal had come out of the War of Independence as the strongest figure, the solidification of a narrative about him as a generative single father figure was actively cultivated. In the 21st century his iconic signature has become a popular tattoo, and his portrait, material for graffiti. We still need more information about the ways in which he became, or becomes, incorporated into the consciousness of young people through the mediation of families and schools.

Meltem Türköz, Assistant Professor at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at İşık University, in Istanbul, Turkey. She completed her PhD at the Graduate Program in Folklore and Folklife of the University of Pennsylvania, completing a dissertation entitled, “The Social Life of the State’s Fantasy: Memories and Documents on Turkey’s 1934 Surname Law.” She has an MA from the University of Houston in Literature and Creative Writing, and a BA from Sarah Lawrence College. At İşık University, she teaches courses in Folklore, Cultural Anthropology and Community Involvement. Her ongoing research focuses on the politics of place in rural and urban Turkey.



Vito Hazler

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

Fighter for equality - Ana Dimnik from Trbovlje

For over two centuries, Zagorje, Hrastnik and Trbovlje were important centres of mining and also of economic and political life in Slovenia. Many important individuals came from this area. One of them was Ana Dimnik (1852–1921), who has a special place in history. She fought for the equality of Slovenians, who outnumbered the economically more powerful Germans. Born as Ana Pintar, she spent her youth in Hrastnik and most of her adult life in Trbovlje. Due to her kind-heartedness, patriotism and an open struggle for the establishment of Slovenians and of their language, she was given an honourable nickname “the Slovenian Mother” in 1887. Her work was presented in numerous newspapers and over 10,000 people attended her funeral in 1921. Although almost forgotten during socialism, the memory of “the Slovenian Mother” was revived after Slovenia’s independence – a museum collection was set up in her former inn.

Vito Hazler completed his studies in ethnology and art history in 1979 at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He finished his PhD studies in 1998 with the thesis *The Historical Development, the Analysis and the Model of Ethnological Conservation in Slovenia*. He was awarded the title Assistant Professor in 1999 and the title Associate Professor in 2005. He is a member of ICOMOS, the International Organization of Folk Art, the Slovenian Ethnological Society, the Slovenian Conservation Society, and of the Slovenian Archaeological Society. He lectures for the Ethnological Monument Preservation and the Culture of Living



and Architecture and holds seminars and exercises for both courses. On the postgraduate level, he holds lectures on selected chapters from the Ethnological Monument Preservation. His main fields of research are architecture, the culture of living, cultural heritage, ethnological regionalisation, the theory and practice in conservation, museum science, fields of architecture and others.

Sara Špelec

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

The death of Alexander I of Yugoslavia from the perspective of Slovenian newspapers

The aim of this paper is to present how Slovenian newspapers responded to the assassination of Alexander I of Yugoslavia in Marseilles and to analyse the predominating discourse in reports on his death and on the events that followed. The paper concentrates on the measures which were taken on Slovenian territory after his death, on the manner, fashion and places of mourning, on reports of the assassin and, last but not least, on the response of foreign political and public figures to his death. Concentrating mainly on the response of Slovenian newspapers to his death, the paper offers a Slovenian view of this important man and presents his impact on the lives of Slovenians. Alexander I of Yugoslavia was without a doubt one of the most important figures in the history of the Slovenian nation and his influence on the nature of the Slovenian national identity between the World Wars cannot be overlooked. Considering the reports on his death, it could be concluded that he was the father of the Slovenian nation.

Sara Špelec holds a BA degree in Russian Language and Literature and in Comparative Slavic Linguistics. Since 2012/13 she has been a postgraduate student at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, researching the life and reign of Alexander I of Yugoslavia. She is employed as a Research Assistant at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. During her graduate studies she was a co-editor and the head translator of the anthology of Russian folk poems

Blue Eagle and participated in a project called Two Pennies' Worth of Fantasy as a translator of Russian fairy-tales into the Slovenian language. Her paper on Russian and Slovenian fairy-tales was published in a collection for the Slovenian Slavistic Congress in 2012. A year later her paper on Kekc, a popular Slovenian literary and movie character, was published in an edited volume of Zupanić's collection dedicated to Slovenian heroes and celebrities.

Marjana Strmčnik

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

Malči Belič: Her heroic posture as the “glue” of anti-fascist resistance in Ljubljana

The Order of the National Hero of Yugoslavia was awarded to individuals, cities and political organisations that distinguished themselves by exceptional heroic deeds during World War II. Malči Belič's active participation in the Liberation Front movement led to her arrest. After several days of interrogation, she was tortured to death by Italian police for not telling them the names of other activists. She died on 31 January 1943. This brutal act was supposed to be kept secret by the Italian fascist government to avoid public unrest. Members of the Liberation Front discovered the true reason of her death and spread the news across Ljubljana. On the day of Malči's funeral, more than a thousand citizens of Ljubljana gathered to honour her sacrifice, despite a ban imposed by Italians. By doing so, they demonstrated the unity and the power of the resistance in the city occupied by the Italian army. Her act of sacrifice for others once again united the people in their relentless struggle for the liberation of Slovenia. Because of this, she can be named Mother of the Nation. She was acknowledged as a National Hero on 27 November 1953.

Marjana Strmčnik finished her BA studies at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, with a thesis on media representations. Since 2013 she has been a postgraduate student at the same department, researching the Order of the National Hero of Yugoslavia, and a Research Assistant at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, working



on a project on heroes and celebrities in Slovenia and Central Europe. Her research interests include: anthropology of war, anthropology of media, collective memory and human rights.

Sandra Koštric

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

In search of new heroes: Historical revision and revisionism of World War II in post-Yugoslav space

The legitimization of processes of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the creation of new nation states is characterized by the search for new historical narratives, new “big” stories, personalities and events of the past, by finding new heroes and forgetting or disqualifying the old ones. In the context of the perception and interpretations of the events of the Second World War (and over four decades of socialist regime) in post-Yugoslavia, the new reinterpretations of these historical events are not only the results of new scientific knowledge and the “deideologising” of history, brought about by socio-political changes (historical revisions), but also political and ideological attempts to change the image of the past in accordance with the tendencies and needs of the present (historical revisionism).

Sandra Koštric holds a BA in Sociology and is a doctoral student enrolled in an interdisciplinary doctoral programme in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, with Balkan studies as her chosen subject field. Her doctoral thesis examines the reinterpretations and revisions of the Yugoslav socialist past, specifically of the period of the Second World War and of the post-war socialist regime in post-Yugoslav space, based on museum presentations.



Jože Dežman

The Gorenjska Museum, Slovenia

Heroes of nonviolence

The monopoly on heroism, that the Communist Party tried to achieve by nominating national heroes, pushed many real heroes, who distinguished themselves in various military, espionage and other conflicts and conflict-related activities, from public memory. With regard to the rebellion the rebellion against totalitarian terror, individuals and models of resistance have slowly come to light, based not on revolution but on loyalty to a spiritual and civilizational heritage of nonviolence. E.g. Slovenian Catholics proved their dedication to nonviolence by forgiving and by being faithful to truth and justice. Of the Catholics, Lojze Grozde has already been beatified and Anton Volk is in the process of beatification as well. Another group that resisted militarization despite on-going punishments were Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jože Dežman is a Museum Councillor at the Gorenjska Museum in Kranj and holds a BA in history and philosophy. His fields of study are history and anthropology. He is researching the consequences of a racist division in Slovenian society in Titoism, the process of transitional justice. He has edited several anthologies of local histories, prepared more than 10 exhibitions and published several hundred articles in edited volumes and in scientific and popular press. He was the Director of the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia (2005–2010) and the Director of the Archive of the Republic of Slovenia (2012–2013). Since 2005, he has been leading the Commission on Concealed Mass Graves in Slovenia.



István Povedák

Hungarian Academy of Sciences;
University of Szeged, Hungary

Forgotten and reinvented heroes

The cultural transformation of Hungary after the political changes resulted in a transposal in the pantheon of heroes at once. While the cult of certain canonized identification models weakened, the importance of other, formerly less emphasized historical figures, strengthened, along with the reinterpretation of their historical role. Through the example of Saint Stephen (1000–1038), the founder of Christian Hungary, and Duke Koppány, his pagan rival, I will give an outline of these reinterpreting/reinventing processes and try to shed light on the social motivation behind these changes.

István Povedák, PhD, is part of a research group studying religious culture at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He used to be a Lecturer at the Department for Religious Studies and a Research Fellow at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Szeged. He is a member of several international associations, like SIEF, SIEF Ritual Year Working Group, EASA Anthropology of Religion Network, Magyar Néprajzi Társaság (Hungarian Ethnographical Society) Socialist and Post-Socialist Area Studies Section of the American Folklore Society; currently he is the president of the SIEF group Ethnology of Religion Network. His research focuses on vernacular religion, ritual practices, contemporary pilgrimage, celebrity culture, and bricolage religiosity.



Dan Podjed

Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts; University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

Ivan Kramberger – a clown or JFK of Slovenian politics?

“It is up to you to decide whether Kramberger is to become the father of the Slovenian nation or not!” In 1990, people were addressed with these loud words by a long-haired man, dressed in black, wearing a large hat and standing on the speakers’ podium on the main square in Sevnica. That year, Ivan Kramberger was a candidate at the first democratic presidential elections in Slovenia. Contrary to his main opponents, Milan Kučan and Jože Pučnik, who were both skilled political personalities, he was a self-made politician, a “man of the people.” He worked as a chimney sweep before moving to Germany, where he succeeded in patenting technologies for dialysis, which made him a fortune. After returning to Slovenia, he shared a good portion of his earnings with poor people, for which he became known as the Benefactor of Negova, who often appeared in public with a monkey, Ančka, sitting on his shoulder. His success at the elections – he won almost one fifth of all votes – was a surprise, especially due to his non-political background. In 1992, Kramberger announced that he would not run again for the President of Slovenia and that he would rather enter parliamentary elections with his own political party. That same year, he was shot to death during a political speech. The motive of the assassination was never clarified.

Ivan Kramberger was perceived as a clown of Slovenian politics – at the time, many people believed that he did not belong in the sophisticated political reality. From

today's viewpoint, it could be said that he was simply ahead of his time, since contemporary politicians use similar clown-like public appearances when trying to be perceived as "benefactors" and "men of the people." This paper describes Kramberger's public performances and attempts to define his status: was he a celebrity, a hero, or something in between?

Dan Podjed, Research Fellow at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and an Assistant Professor at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts. He has been a coordinator of the Applied Anthropology Network of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) since 2012. His current research interest include: contemporary celebrities, online networks, human-technology interaction and applied anthropology. He is involved in the research project on heroes and celebrities in Slovenia and Central Europe.

Saša Babič

Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia

Rhetoric of presidential speeches at state celebrations

Presidential speeches co-create the image of the president as a nation(al) leader. Through the paternity discourse they try to reach the nation and create their authority as the leaders and heads of the nation. This presentation reviews speeches from all four Slovenian presidents (Milan Kučan, Dr. Janez Drnovšek, Dr. Danilo Türk and the current president Borut Pahor) and identifies the typical language patterns that they used to create the image of a good leader and a nation-keeper, which made them historical personalities? them to historical personalities. The research was carried out on individual (differences in speeches between presidents as individuals) and on general presidential levels (similarities in speeches).

Saša Babič, PhD, is a Research Assistant at the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, SRC SASA, Ljubljana. Her research interests include literary folklore, especially short folklore forms (including greetings, curses, proverbs, riddles, charms, and prayers), and the methods of researching folklore and linguistic anthropology. She is interested in the influence of language and folklore on our everyday notions and thinking.



Marina Vrhovac

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Slovenia

Female politicians as famous persons in Slovenia

In this paper the author introduces female politicians in the role of celebrities in Slovenia. The construction of famous politicians is created in the media that tend to shape reality. All politicians aren't famous. The main element of today's media-produced fame is recognizability. Recognizability in the public sphere, whether negative or positive, has a profound influence on whether the person standing for elections is (re)elected. Political parties direct their political profiles and the members they would like to have. The authority, legitimacy and popularity of any politician must be gained through media representations again and again. We divide politicians into categories of ... levels based on their presence in the media and on their »visibility reach«. The author deals with the question of how famous Slovenian female politicians are and provides the manners in which they promote themselves.

Marina Vrhovac graduated in 2011 from the University of Ljubljana with a BA in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. Her thesis centred on gender equality and was entitled *Gender and the New Reproductive Technologies in Slovenia*. Currently she is a PhD student at the same university and her research is mainly focused on the representations of women in politics.



Tomislav Pletenac

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities
and Social Sciences, Croatia

“A Hero, Not a Criminal!”

It was in 2001 when Ante Gotovina, one of the Croatian generals in the Balkan war of the 1990s, became the subject of prosecution by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for war crimes committed during the last operation of the Croatian Army – the Operation Storm. Before that time, General Gotovina was just one among other generals from the war, not particularly exposed in discourse about the war. The indictment, however, made him an almost mythical person and, for a large number of Croats, a symbol of the Croatian nation. Instead of going to ICTY for trial, Gotovina fled and hid for the next four years until he was captured by the Spanish police in the Canary Islands. During his flight, various organisations openly supported him with huge public billboards and a slogan: “A hero, not a criminal!”

This paper will try to explain the underlying cultural mechanism which produced General Gotovina as a national hero through a process of foreclosure of the “Name of the Father” (Lacan).

Tomislav Pletenac, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb. The main topic of his research is the application of postcolonial theory in understanding Croatian society and the production of ethnological discourse. Throughout his work on various subjects such as fantastic creatures in Istrian folklore, the history of Croatian ethnology and various topics from contemporary popular culture, he uses Lacanian psychoanalysis and critical discourse analysis. He regularly publishes in regional

and international journals and attends conferences. Currently he is a researcher on the international project The Globalization and Politics of Cultural Difference (project leader: Senka Božić Vrbančić), studying the mechanisms of representation of cultural difference in public discourse, popular culture and music.







