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**The Image of Socialist Yugoslavia in Contemporary Museum
Representations**

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the image of socialist Yugoslavia in contemporary museum representations in Serbia. In wider sense it explores the role of the culture in the production of cultural memory of socialist Yugoslavia, by exploring specifically the politics of display of contemporary museums. The initial hypothesis is that there are two politics of display with inherent opposed values when presenting the image of socialist Yugoslavia in the museum exhibitions. One is located in the Historical Museum of Serbia and the other in Museum of Yugoslav History, therefore the question is what kind of image of socialist Yugoslavia the politics of display of these institutions present and (re)produce and if and how the politics of display are opposed.

The aspects of the analysis and interpretation are of interdisciplinary nature. Two profiles of the two institutions in question are to be taken into account, since the frame and the legacy of the institution often influence its politics of display. Furthermore, the choice of the topic of the exhibition, the material used in the exhibition and the display itself are analyzed. Finally, there is the analysis of the narrative of the exhibition, which does not refer only to the content analysis of all the printed and video material, catalogues, accompanying material, panels, titles, etc, but to the crucial aspect of the exhibition, which is the discourse of the museum (Mieke Bal). On the trail of Mieke Bal, the museum is seen as an attractive object of study because it requires interdisciplinary analysis, it has the debate on aesthetics in its core, and it is essentially a social institution.

In the first chapter the theories and the concepts that will be used as an interpretative context are introduced. In the first part, I explain the specificities of Yugoslav socialist heritage that Serbia shares with other former Yugoslav countries. Following Maria Todorova's theory, the conclusion is that socialist, Yugoslav heritage has crossed from the sphere of political power to the contemporary sphere of culture. The image of socialist Yugoslavia is created in culture and it can legitimize or delegitimize the actual political circumstances; that is why the analysis of culture is essential to recognize the meanings and the implicit messages produced in the cultural sphere in

connection with the contemporary politics. Culture is understood as a context in which the social events, behaviors, institutions and processes can be interpreted (Clifford Geertz). Therefore, the culture of postcommunism is defined by the postcommunist way of life and the meanings and values, but also the way institutions function in that society.

In the second part, the concept of revisionism, usually linked to the reinterpretation of the Second World War and the denial of Holocaust, is introduced. It is emphasized that revisionism is typically linked more to the context in which the debate about revisionism is held than to the historical period it concerns. The concept of revisionism is defined as exclusively negative notion which represents the invention of new interpretations of the past on the basis of no relevant scientific evidence. Historical revisionism is put in the context of Serbia as a post-socialist country and post-Yugoslav country, but also in the context of Europe.

Further on, since the topics of the exhibitions are the images of socialist Yugoslavia which existed in the past, one possible image of socialist Yugoslavia in contemporary historiography is presented - the book "Yugoslavia in 20th Century" by Marie-Janine Čalić. This book encompasses history of both "first" and "second" Yugoslavia, put in a wider historical context of the beginning of 20th century, Balkan wars and the First World War on one hand, as well as the breakup of Yugoslavia and the years after the 1991 on the other hand. While the histories written from today's national perspectives often disregard the existence of Yugoslavia and focus more on successor countries, Čalić emphasizes the originality of this state and openly questions the inevitability of the break-up. The focus is on Čalić's interpretation of the unification of Yugoslavia, the image of the Second World War, the context of total war and the partisan take-over, positive and the negative sides of the communist revolution and detachment of Tito's Yugoslavia from Stalin in 1948.

In the fourth part the focus is on the problem of nostalgia, more specifically Yugo-nostalgia. The main issue concerning nostalgia is whether it is reflective or restorative (Svetlana Boym). In other words, the question is whether Yugo-nostalgia is apolitical as is nostalgia film (Frederic Jameson), or is it nostalgia for unaccomplished potentials of something that was in the past and that later became a part of the contemporary culture (Branislav Dimitrijević). In the last part of the first chapter, the two institutions the politics of display are connected to – Historical Museum of Serbia and Museum of Yugoslav History – are described.

In the second chapter, there is the analysis of the two recent exhibitions set in the Historical Museum of Serbia concerning socialist Yugoslavia. The exhibition “In the Name of the People” is chosen because it provoked a lot of controversies in the public space, while the exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz” is chosen because it is a part of a very important international project and because of the faith that the image of socialist Yugoslavia is incomplete without the interpretation of the Second World War events in the territory of Yugoslavia. In the third chapter, four exhibitions from the Museum of Yugoslav History are analyzed. The first exhibition “Yugoslavia from the Beginning to the End” is chosen because of its pretensions to become the permanent exhibition, as well as the fact that it is done in cooperation between historians from former Yugoslav countries. The second and third exhibitions, “The Grand Illusion” and “They Never Had it Better?”, are analyzed from the perspective of Yugo-nostalgia, while the last exhibition, “Figures of Memory”, was chosen as the most interesting exhibition, set permanently in the House of Flowers.

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the production of images of socialist Yugoslav past in contemporary museum representations in Serbia. It explores the role of the politics of display of contemporary museums and in wider sense the role of the culture in the production of cultural memory of socialist Yugoslavia.

The initial hypothesis is that there are two politics of display with inherent opposed values when presenting the image of socialist Yugoslavia in the museum exhibitions. In my paper I will explore what kind of image of socialist Yugoslavia they present and (re)produce, if and how the images and politics of display are opposed and what the consequences of those kinds of representations are.

The examples of these two politics of display can be found in the most prominent exhibitions in two museums in Belgrade, one being *The Historical Museum of Serbia* and the other *The Museum of Yugoslav History*. Thus, the object of my research would not be these two institutions, but the politics of display of some exhibitions held in these museums in the last three years. My research also intends to question potential instrumentalization for ideological purposes in the present post-communist society that still goes through transition.

My aim is to interpret two qualitatively different politics of display and put them into a wider socio-political and cultural context, for the purposes of offering a new explanation regarding both of these politics of display. My hypothesis is that the two politics of display, one connected to the *Historical Museum of Serbia* and the other connected to the *Museum of Yugoslav History*, are two opposed politics of display, and that both are producing a problematic image of socialist Yugoslavia.

The more specific research questions are the following: What is the relation of these politics of display to the historical revisionism that has been happening in post-2000 Serbia? Whether and how it is related to rehabilitation of the people found responsible for the crimes during the Nazi occupation? Whether and how they aim to relate to the wider political context of the World War II in Europe? What kind of identity they are constructing? Are they problematizing the heritage of socialist Yugoslavia, and, if yes, in which way? Are they

canonizing the heritage of socialist Yugoslavia, and, if yes, in which way? Are they in any way passivizing or de-politizing the heritage? Are they presenting the socialist Yugoslavia as a totalitarian country? Are their exhibitions aiming to provoke nostalgic feelings? Are there any contradictions between the textual narratives of the exhibition and the exhibition itself? Is there any visible ideology behind the politics of display? What are the places of memory used in the exhibitions to commemorate past, and what places of memory are not mentioned at all? Are these exhibitions being critical to the past and are they being critical to the present? Finally, do these politics of display tend to connect the past with the present at all, and if yes, in what way?

In the first chapter I will introduce the theories and concepts that are important for interpretation of the two politics of display. I will start with the interpretational frame concerning three contexts that are important for the analysis. Those contexts are national (Serbian), supranational (post Yugoslav) and wider European contexts. Secondly, I will explain the concept of revisionism closely related to the previously mentioned context. Further on, since the topics of the exhibitions are the images of socialist Yugoslavia which existed in the past, I will present the historical context necessary for the reading of the exhibitions. I will also refer to the problem of nostalgia, more specifically Yugo-nostalgia. Finally, I will explain the contexts of the two politics of display, the two institutions they are connected to – *Historical Museum of Serbia* and *Museum of Yugoslav History*.

In the second chapter I will interpret the exhibitions “In the Name of the People” and “Final Destination – Auschwitz”, important for the politics of display of *Historical Museum of Serbia*, and in the third chapter I will analyze the politics of display of the *Museum of Yugoslav History* through the analysis of four recent exhibitions.

INTERPRETATIVE CONTEXT

YUGOSLAV HERITAGE IN POSTCOMMUNIST SERBIA

In order to be able to interpret the contemporary image of socialist Yugoslavia represented in culture, it is first of all essential to understand the context in which the image of socialist Yugoslavia is created and perceived.

Maria Todorova introduces the notion of “historical heritage” in her text “What is historical region?” with the aim of understanding regions better.¹ Concerning the problem of the Balkans as a historical region, she defines Balkans as a product of complex interactions of numerous historical periods, traditions, heritages.² At that point, Todorova makes an important distinction between tradition and heritage; according to that distinction, tradition represents a conscious choice of the elements that would be valued and perceived as traditional, whereas heritage is everything that is preserved from the past, whether it is wanted or not.³ Some of the heritages that define the Balkans are the following: Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, communist; Christian, Muslim, Judaist; heritage of constant migrations, ethnic diversity, late urbanization but also the continuity of urban life, etc.⁴ Until the 19th century, two fundamental political heritages in the Balkans were Byzantine (for ten centuries) and Ottoman (for five centuries).

However, when heritage of a more recent date is taken into account, Balkan countries are a part of a wider European space, Eastern Europe. Todorova claims that “Eastern Europe” as a whole is a socialist heritage, a formation of socialism in its essence.⁵ According to Todorova, period of socialism ended in 1989 and at that point in time it became heritage. In addition, Todorova perceives heritage as continuity and asks how that socialist heritage has reflected in spheres of politics, economy, society, etc.⁶ Todorova states that in the Balkans, heritage, or, more precisely, the perception of the heritage is very important because it is used as the essence of nationalistic discourse in the Balkans. It is also often used as a main argument for legitimization

¹ Marija Todorova, “Šta je istorijski region? Premeravanje prostora u Evropi”, in *REČ* 73.19, ed. Dejan Ilić (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2005), 86 (translated by the author)

² *Ibid.*, 87.

³ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶ *Ibid.*

of the actual circumstances in society, especially the national state. Concerning the communist heritage, she highlights that this heritage is too often disregarded, especially by those who like to indicate the durability of the heritage of the former empires.⁷ Finally, she points out that communist heritage is at the moment the most important historical context for the discussion about Balkans.⁸

If we follow Todorova's interpretation, we come to the conclusion that after the fall of Berlin Wall, Eastern Europe exists no longer as a political category, but as a heritage. Communist Eastern Europe therefore crosses from the sphere of political power in the past to the contemporary sphere of culture. The image of communist past is created in media, literature, theatre, films, exhibitions and culture in general. That image shaped in culture can legitimize or delegitimize the actual political circumstances. For that reason, the analysis of culture is essential because through the analysis of culture we recognize the meanings and the implicit messages produced in the cultural sphere in connection with the contemporary politics.

This theory encompasses Serbia as well. Serbia does not share heritage only with the Balkan and Eastern European heritage, but it shares a more specific Yugoslav heritage with the other former Yugoslav countries. In this paper, the accent will be on the heritage of socialist Yugoslavia and the way it is perceived today. In order to analyze the image of socialist Yugoslavia in contemporary Serbian culture (specifically contemporary museum representations), it is necessary to explain what kind of culture it is.

Serbia is a post-Yugoslav post-communist country. It is also a country that had a key role in the wars fought after the breakup of Yugoslavia. In addition, it is a country that had its version of "democratic revolution" in the year 2000, but also had its first democratic prime minister assassinated in 2003. Finally, it is a country that still goes through a transition from communist to democratic society. Transition in Serbia has been rather unsuccessful, and it was followed, among other, by the huge growth of unemployment, shutting of numerous factories and a highly problematic privatization.⁹ Serbian culture today is marked with this transition from communist

⁷ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹ In his text *Džaba nam tranzicija...*, Milutin Mitrović explains that Serbia is one of the countries in which transition has been "evidently unsuccessful", since the GDP is far less than in the year 1990 (the other countries in this group are Tajikistan, Bosnia, Moldova, Kirgizia, Georgia and Ukraine). (Milutin Mitrović, *Džaba nam tranzicija...*,

society to the democratic-liberal one. But what does it mean to be a postcommunist country, a country in transition?

Boris Buden gives a valuable explanation of the notion of postcommunism in his book “Zones des Übergangs”. He defines postcommunism as a unique *state of loss*, a realization that something essential is missing in our reality.¹⁰ Set between the communist past and neoliberal democratic future, the postcommunist reality is missing the fundamental experience of *social* that existed in communism. Today, we live in the time without *society*. What is the reality of postcommunism? Buden gives examples: a growing gap between the poor and the rich, dissolution of all forms of social solidarity, huge social injustice, widely spread social suffering, etc.¹¹ Even though this is the characteristic of all the systems, it is evident that we are witnessing the final dismantling of the welfare state. The welfare state meant social security that hardly exists today; cheap housing, free education, guaranteed jobs. As Buden highlights, in the social state the cause for inequality between people is not tracked to different capabilities of the people, but to society.¹² In postcommunism, that sense of being a part of society is lost.

Postcommunism is also a zone of transition to democracy. However, democracy can mean different things; it can mean the power of parliamentarism and democratic community that cures everything, but it can also mean self-regulating potential of market economy.¹³ Buden points out that communists who wanted reforms in 1989 saw in democracy a chance for a new beginning, while anticommunists often supported democracy, even though through democracy they asked for the freedom of their own nation, religion, god.¹⁴ An exclusive anticommunist standpoint, even the democratic one, does not, therefore, mean necessarily that it opposes the terror that followed communism, but that it opposes the idea of equality of the people, social security, and social responsibility. Buden reminds the reader of the breakup of Yugoslavia, where democratic

Peščanik, January 26, 2015) Mitrović in this text mainly leans on the Brussels think-tank institute *Bruegel*, which is, according to Mitrović, one of the most engaged institutes in the research of transition and convergence economic prospects. For more about (un)successful transitions in post-communist countries, see also Marek Dabrowski, “Central and eastern Europe: uncertain prospects of economic convergence”, *BRUEGEL*, December 10, 2014 (<http://bruegel.org/2014/12/central-and-eastern-europe-uncertain-prospects-of-economic-convergence/>), last accessed September 14, 2015) and Zsolt Darvas, “The convergence dream 25 years on”, *BRUEGEL*, January 6, 2015 (<http://bruegel.org/2015/01/the-convergence-dream-25-years-on/>), last accessed September 14, 2015).

¹⁰ Boris Buden, *Zona prelaska. O kraju postkomunizma* (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2012), 182

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 78

¹² *Ibid.*, 102

¹³ *Ibid.*, 37

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

will of the voters sent hundreds of thousands of people to death.¹⁵ Finally, if communism has to be judged for the terror and repression (which is certainly a legitimate call), the question is who will answer for the crimes of postcommunism – as Buden lists them: criminal privatization, impoverishment of the masses with all its social and individual consequences, nationalisms, racisms, fascisms, bloody civil wars, even genocides.

On the subject of the culture, the accent here is on Raymond Williams' social definition of culture, according to which culture *is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior.*¹⁶ Moreover, on the trail of anthropologist Clifford Geertz, culture is a *context* in which the social events, behaviours, institutions and processes can be interpreted.¹⁷ Therefore, the culture of postcommunism is defined by the postcommunist way of life and the meanings and values, but also the way institutions function in that society.

How is communism remembered in the culture of postcommunism? Once again, Buden adds a valuable thought to the possible answer to this question. In communism, hope of the universal emancipation was set in the social sphere; yet, with the loss of the social sphere, this hope moved from the social to *cultural sphere*. The most evident symptom of that condition is a well known symptom of nostalgia, idealizing gaze into the communist past. It is about often a kitschy fixation on the cultural elements and products of failed socialist everyday life or typical socialist cultural production. That is called cultural memory.¹⁸ In this sense, the loss of welfare state and social security (to put it briefly), as well as the possibility of universal emancipation, resulted in the phenomenon that what has become impossible in the social sphere is preserved in cultural memory.

Lastly, we come to the problem of museums. If social justice, social security and universal emancipation are banished to the cultural sphere, does it mean that thus the final loss of those ideas has been prevented, or that passivization of these ideas has made them even less imaginable? Does putting these ideas into a museum mean that they belong to the *past* and they

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 63

¹⁶ Raymond Williams, "The Analysis of Culture", in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A reader, 2nd. ed.*, ed. John Storey (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 48

¹⁷ Kliford Gerc, "Podroban opis: ka interpretativnoj teoriji kulture", in *Tumačenje kultura (1)*, transl. Slobodanka Glišić (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 1998), 23

¹⁸ Boris Buden, *Zona prelaska. O kraju postkomunizma*, 70

should stay there? The same questions can be asked concerning Yugoslavia. On the other side, Pierre Nora writes about democratization of history and the turn to memory.¹⁹ Nora's interpretation of this age as "age of memorialism" can be an introduction to the next chapter that concerns historical revisionism. In the beginning of his text *Reasons for the current upsurge in memory*, Nora says:

We are witnessing a world-wide upsurge in memory. Over the last twenty or twenty-five years, every country, every social, ethnic or family group, has undergone a profound change in the relationship it traditionally enjoyed with the past.

*This change has taken a variety of forms: criticism of official versions of history and recovery of areas of history previously repressed; demands for signs of a past that had been confiscated or suppressed; growing interest in "roots" and genealogical research; all kinds of commemorative events and new museums; renewed sensitivity to the holding and opening of archives for public consultation; and growing attachment to what in the English-speaking world is called "heritage" and in France "patrimoine". However they are combined, these trends together make up a kind of tidal wave of memorial concerns that has broken over the world, everywhere establishing close ties between respect for the past - whether real or imaginary - and the sense of belonging, collective consciousness and individual self-awareness, memory and identity.*²⁰

In conclusion, Nora is not optimistic: *To claim the right to memory is, at bottom, to call for justice. In the effects it has had, however, it has often become a call to murder.*²¹ Or, as Buden interprets Nora, to trust in a positive and emancipating potential of culture can be naïve, since the culture can become quite the opposite of that.²²

¹⁹ Pierre Norra, "Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory", *Eurozine*, April 19, 2002 (<http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2002-04-19-nora-en.html>, last accessed September 8, 2015)

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Boris Buden, *Zona prelaska. O kraju postkomunizma*, 204

CONCEPTS OF REVISIONISM AND TRANSITION IN SERBIAN, POSTYUGOSLAV AND EUROPEAN CONTEXT

A recent Collection of articles *Political Use of the Past*, edited by historians Momir Samardžić, Milivoj Bešlin and Srđan Milošević is valuable for comprehension of the concept of historical revisionism. In the text of introduction to this collection, Srđan Milošević points out that, when talking about revisionism, it is essential to precisely define the term every time. Since the 1950s, the term revisionism has been in historiography firmly linked to the reinterpretation of the Second World War and the denial of Holocaust.²³ Yet, revisionism is usually linked more to the context in which the debate about revisionism is held than to the historical period it concerns.²⁴

In my paper, I will treat the concept of revisionism regarding the last of three definitions of revisionism Milošević presents in his introduction.²⁵ Revisionism, hence, stands as an exclusively negative notion, and represents the invention of new interpretations of the past on the basis of no relevant scientific evidence, with the sole aim to discredit the dominant interpretation. The new interpretation is often in conflict with the important social values and it is often used to legitimate a certain political or ideological agenda.

With the crisis of socialism and after the 1989, historical revisionism has bloomed in post socialist countries such as Serbia. While the revisionism in the 50s was focusing mostly to the denial and relativization of the Holocaust and the fascist crimes, in the 1990s, and especially in the 2000s, discrediting communism was the second focus of revisionism. In contemporary discourse, socialist Yugoslavia is often blurred by the phenomenon of historical revisionism. Without a relevant scientific approach, history is reinterpreted and rewritten. In European context crucial and the most problematic events for interpretation of the socialist period are the Second World War (1939-1945) and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In the context of Serbian and post Yugoslav revisionism, the crucial events slightly change. Those are definitely the Second

²³ Srđan Milošević, „Istorijski revizionizam i društveni kontekst“ in *Politička upotreba prošlosti: o istorijskom revizionizmu na postjugoslovenskom prostoru*, ed. Momir Samardžić, Milivoj Bešlin i Srđan Milošević (Novi Sad: Alternativna kulturna organizacija – AKO, 2013), 12

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 13

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15-16

World War (1941-1945), Yugoslavia as part of the Soviet block (1945-1948) and Tito's detachment from Stalin in 1948. However, Serbia is not just a postcommunist, but also a post-conflict society, so it is important to always have in mind the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia and the civil wars in the 1990s.²⁶ Having in mind that after the wars in the 1990s in all the former Yugoslav countries *the nationalists* won, it is not strange that historical revisionism has an anticommunist, but even more anti Yugoslav essence.

In the article "Historical revisionism and transition: European context and local variations" published in periodical *Reč* in 2015²⁷, Milošević sets the concept of historical revisionism next to the concept of transition and puts them both in a wider European context and in the more narrow Serbian context. Transition is defined as changeover from one socio-political system to the other – from socialist to capitalist. In addition, Milošević points out that transition is also a category of value, since it often implies unconditional acceptance of liberal capitalism, with the denunciation of socialism.²⁸ The concepts of transition and historical revisionism are also connected to the concept of transitional justice, which is the endeavor to redress all the correctable injustice that the former (socialist) regime has gendered. However, the consequences of the exclusively negative approach to socialist past have (also) been the rehabilitations of those who had been exposed to repression in the socialist Yugoslavia due to their collaboration with the fascist occupation during the war. Along with that, there has been an impulse to positively perceive all the aspects of the pre-war Yugoslav society. For this reason, sentimentalization of the civil, bourgeois, royal Yugoslavia (and Serbia as a part of it), in which the communist regime is seen as the fatal system that destroyed that fine civil society, is omnipresent in today's mainstream Serbian culture.²⁹

²⁶ According to Nenad Dimitrijević and Dejan Ilić, the fact that Serbian society is a post-conflict society is essential for interpretation of the Serbian contemporary culture, because this culture is fundamentally marked by the crimes committed in the 1990s. Consequently, the contemporary culture should be analyzed from the perspective of moral responsibility for the mass crimes committed by the Serbian side in the wars of the 1990s, and through the concept of "transitional justice". For more about the concept of "transitional justice" and the use of this concept in the interpretation of culture, see: Nenad Dimitrijević, „Zločinački režim, njegovi podanici i masovni zločin”, in *REČ* 79.25, ed. Dejan Ilić (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2009) and Dejan Ilić, „Tranziciona pravda kao politika kulture”, in *REČ* 79/25, ed. Dejan Ilić (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2009).

²⁷ Srđan Milošević, „Istorijski revizionizam i tranzicija: evropski kontekst i lokalne varijacije“, in *REČ* 85.31, ed. Dejan Ilić, 2015, retrieved from <http://www.fabrikaknjiga.co.rs/rec-85-30/> (last accessed September 8, 2015)

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

²⁹ The most representative example of this sentimentalization is Dragan Bjelogrić's film *Montevideo, God Bless You!* (2010). The story of this film is set in the Yugoslavia in 1930, during the rule of king Aleksandar. However, the

There is one more important viewpoint that has to be taken into account when talking about the Yugoslav past and that is the multiplicity of nations living in the Balkan region. Even after the Balkan wars in the beginning of 20th century, intellectuals warned that it is impossible to establish national countries in the Balkans, since it would cause a lot of extermination, displacements and injustice. This was one of the reasons that brought up the idea of Yugoslav nation, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was established after the First World War. The “dream” of Yugoslavia ended with the bloody (civil) wars in the 1990s. Socialism ended with the ethnic twist and the nationalists won. Anti communist (in particular, anti Titoist) and anti Yugoslav sentiments prevailed, and the reconcilability with the ethnic twist that has happened is clearly evident.

Having that in mind, it is curious how communist liquidations and confrontations from the end of the Second World War are often seen as pure crimes (taken out of the context of the war and seen exclusively in the context of communist revolution), while the crimes committed during the wars in the 1990s are (from the nationalistic perspective especially) seen as inevitable and even natural. In that context, along with the rehabilitation of the king Pavle Karađorđević, Dragoljub Mihailović, etc. who had been seen as collaborators during the Second World War, we can notice the tendency to establish continuity of the present day (national) country of Serbia with the mixture of nationalistic and fascistic currents of occupied 1940s Serbia and the destructive currents of the Balkan wars.³⁰

In the wider European context, the two central discourses in post-war Europe are anti-Nazism in the West and anti-fascism in the East. Milošević names that the “anti-fascistic consensus”, which was a consensus that fascism was a unique historical experience and criminal system that caused the bloodiest war in history.³¹ However, that was the only consensus between the two (democratic and communist) blocks, while liberty, democracy and equality were

focus is on Serbia and the existence of Yugoslav state is ignored. Even though the film might appear as an apolitical film that presents how it was in the time when our grandparents (and the football) were young, this film reproduces the nationalistic stereotypes of the everlasting disagreement between Serbs and Croats, therefore it is a continuation of the nationalist politics from the 1990s and it rejects the legacy of socialist Yugoslavia. For a critique of this film from Croatian angle and for more about the controversies that followed this *innocent*, *apolitical* film see: Bojan Stilin: „Srbonostalgija u kopačkama“, *Supermen Portal*, March 18, 2011 (<http://supermen.tportal.hr/zabava/117389/Srbonostalgija-u-kopackama.html>, last accessed September 15, 2015)

³⁰ Similar tendencies are evident in Croatia, for example with the rehabilitation of Alojzije Stepinac.

³¹ Srđan Milošević, „Istorijski revizionizam i tranzicija: evropski kontekst i lokalne varijacije“, 171

differently perceived.³² In the East, anti-fascism has been strongly related to the achievements of communism, so after the fall of the communist regimes and the sudden rise of the anti-communist sentiments, a rise of the anti-antifascist sentiments has happened as well. In that wider context, there has been a change in ideology and the rise of nationalism in the countries in transition, as it has been mentioned in the example of Serbia. In Europe, anticommunism stayed in the sphere of ideology and public speech until it was in some respects *institutionalized*, first by the Council of Europe in 1996 with the Resolution for *Measures to dismantle the heritage of former communist totalitarian systems*, and then 10 years later, when European Parliament adopted the Resolution for *Need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes*.

The final stamp to the “criminalization” of the communist past was put in 2008, when European parliament decided to proclaim 23th August 1939 the **European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism**.³³ This meant not only criminalization of communism, but also equalization of fascism and communism. Milošević believes that by this decision, anti-fascism has been officially replaced with anti-totalitarianism, which is, as he indicates, intellectually less demanding and historically multiple problematic, since it reduces the history to the conflict of democracy and totalitarianism, thus neglecting the historical triangle of liberal democracy – socialism – fascism, and the subsequent polarization between fascism and antifascism.³⁴ When connected to the concept of transition, the result of this striving is political and economical, since it discredits the (leftist) *weltanschauung* that would question the omnipresent neoliberal concept. Even more negative side effect is relativization of fascism. In that way, fascism no longer remains in the sphere of unique historical experience in the culture of memory.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: YUGOSLAVIA

For understanding the image of socialist Yugoslavia represented in culture, it is also necessary to know historical facts about Yugoslavia, as well as the image of socialist Yugoslavia in contemporary historiography. Therefore, it is useful to take under consideration (at least) one

³² *Ibid.*, 172

³³ *Ibid.*, 173

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 173-174

contemporary historiography viewpoint on the history of Yugoslavia. The book *History of Yugoslavia in 20th Century*, written by historian of Croatian and German origin Maria-Janine Čalić, is one of the most representative books recently published on the topic of Yugoslavia. It was written in 2010 and translated and published in Serbia in 2013.

As the title suggests, this book encompasses history of not only socialist (second) Yugoslavia, but also the monarchy that existed between the two wars.³⁵ All historical events happen in a historical context and have numerous different perspectives – political, economical, social, cultural. In Čalić's book socialist Yugoslavia takes only one of six chapters. The chapters are the following: First – 'South Slavic movement and the establishment of the state (1878-1918)'; second – 'The First Yugoslavia (1918-1941)'; third – 'The Second World War (1941-1945)'; fourth – 'The socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1980)'; fifth – 'After Tito (1980-1991)'; sixth – 'Fall down (1991 – present). Even throughout the titles of the chapters, it is visible that Yugoslav state that existed since 1918 until 1991 is here put in a wider historical context of the beginning of 20th century, Balkan wars and the First World War, as well as the breakup of Yugoslavia and the years after the 1991 ('The war for heritage' and 'What has left from Yugoslavia'). Therefore, when socialist Yugoslavia is taken under consideration, it is often not enough to make interpretation only regarding the period between 1945 and 1991. It is essential to interpret it in the context of the events that precede socialist Yugoslavia and the events that follow its breakup.³⁶

In the introduction to the book, the first questions Čalić asks concern the reasons of breakup of Yugoslavia and the question whether its violent breakup was inevitable. She asks how

³⁵ The term 'the first Yugoslavia' refers to the countries The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1929), Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929-1941), while the term 'the second', or socialist Yugoslavia refers to the countries Democratic Federative Yugoslavia (after the liberation in 1945 until 1946, even though the first concrete draft of the establishment of this socialist country was made in 1943), Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1946-1963), and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963-1992). During the Second World War (1941-1945 in Yugoslavia), the Yugoslav country was occupied by Axis forces and fragmented into small territories.

³⁶ In a review of *The History of Yugoslavia in 20th Century*, sociologist Jovo Bakić positively evaluates Čalić's book. According to Bakić, to present all the benefits of Yugoslavia in relation to its predecessor and successor states is not at all an easy task having in mind the widespread conservative opinion that Yugoslavia was an artificially made state. In ethical sense, regards Bakić, Čalić makes a deflection from different 'academic' nationalists from the successor states, but also from a German imperialistic viewpoint. Bakić concludes that this historical synthesis is written clearly, impartially, systematically and minutely, and that with its philanthropic internationalism represents a challenge to both nationalistic and imperialistic interpretation of the end of Yugoslavia. (Jovo Bakić, "Mari-Žanin Čalić. Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku. Beograd: Clio" in *SOCIOLOGIJA, Vol. LV (2013), N° 4*, retrieved from http://www.komunikacija.org.rs/komunikacija/casopisi/sociologija/LV_4/05/download_ser_lat (last accessed September 14, 2015)

the country survived for such a long period, and whether the people were just the victims of nationalistic seduction.³⁷ In her study, Čalić puts Yugoslavia into a wider European context, from the perspective of great social, economic and intellectual changes in 20th century Europe, concerning the transition into a modern industrial and mass society.³⁸ She indicates that widely known Balkan intolerance and hatred between the nations are not to be blamed for the breakup of Yugoslavia, but the politization of the differences in modern mass society of the 20th century.³⁹ Čalić emphasizes in the introduction that the central question of the book is who has, under which circumstances and how made the object of conflict out of the ethnic identity and diversity. Histories written from today's national perspectives often disregard the existence of Yugoslavia and focus more on successor countries. While the relations with the neighbors often appear only in the form of the conflicts and wars, Yugoslav period is reduced to a short, though not completely insignificant episode of centuries old national history.⁴⁰ This viewpoint is completely in accordance with the introduced Todorova's arguments.

In the ending paragraph of the book, after explaining the probable reasons for the breakup of Yugoslavia, Čalić explains that Balkan traditions celebrating violence, bloody national epic myths, social cultural phenomena, media and nationalistic propaganda did in fact make an atmosphere of violence. Nevertheless, she adds that at any point of the historical development, every person has freedom to choose individually. Nobody can, she emphasizes, make an excuse for themselves on the basis of anthropology, structures, cultural and internal dynamics of the power, in order to distance themselves from the personal responsibility for the war and war crimes. Finally, Čalić concludes, nothing was irreversible, nothing was inevitable.⁴¹

In the analysis of exhibitions I will refer to Čalić's approach to the history of Yugoslavia when needed. I will refer to some of the most important Čalić's conclusions that will assist in the later analysis of the content and the narrative of the exhibitions.

First of all, I will turn to Čalić's interpretation of the unification of Yugoslavia. Čalić evaluates that the process of unification of Yugoslavia cannot be interpreted as an artificial state

³⁷ Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku*, trans. Ranka Gašić and Vladimir Babić (Beograd: Clio, 2013), 13

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 14

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 15

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 424

dependent upon the machiavellist interests of the grand forces.⁴² She locates some of the sources of the idea of unification, such as cultural similarities and intertwining of the composition of the villages, but also anachronistic, proud and antireform system of Habsburg Monarchy.⁴³ Still, even though the cause cannot be found in the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy, it definitely did drain all the alternatives of solving the national problem inside the Monarchy.⁴⁴ Čalić concludes this chapter with the thought that for many, Yugoslavia at that point became a symbol for a better life.⁴⁵

The second, 'socialist' Yugoslavia was established in 1945, right after The Second World War, which was for Yugoslavia a war for liberation, but also the period when, after the years of repression in Yugoslav monarchy, the communist party seized the political authority. The image of socialist Yugoslavia is dependent on the image of the Second World War. How did the partisan take-over happen? What is the context of its interpretation? Čalić indicates that strengthening of partisans and their take-over after the war can be understood only in the context of total war, that had dimensions of colonial, racist and civil war and that caused human tragedies and social earthquakes of tremendous proportion. Life on the edge of survival became a norm and therefore the social order, identities, hierarchies, and moral categories were discarded.⁴⁶ With the disintegration of Yugoslavia and occupation of the axis forces, there was a turn of the ideology, and the nationalistic ideas of identity prevailed. Along with the annihilation of Jewish and Roma people, there was an aspiration to make ethnically homogeneous states, which resulted in, as Čalić carefully say under quotation marks, 'ethnic cleansings'.⁴⁷

In this context, not only those of other nationality were in danger, but also those against homogenization, primarily partisans. Čalić gives example of Croatia ustasha movement, as most representative for the mixture of anti Serbian feelings and fascist ideology. The goal of ustashas was to reestablish supposed original state of ethnic composition from the times before the Ottoman conquest.⁴⁸ On the other side, some Serbs also dreamed of a homogeneous state. Čalić gives example of a memorandum written by Dragoljub Mihailović, titled Homogeneous Serbia,

⁴² *Ibid.*, 98

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 99

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 192

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 196

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

in which a plan is made to disperse more than 4 million people from the alleged territory of the future Great Serbia. 20th December 1941 Mihailović gives directive to clean the state territory of all the national minorities and antinational elements. Similar actions were conducted by Italians, Hungarians, Albanians and Bulgarians.⁴⁹ This was all so similar to the goal of fascist Germany.

Therefore the triumph of partisans after the war was not only the triumph over fascism, but the triumph over nationalism on Balkans as well. Čalić points toward the fact that the socialist revolution, that was supposed to transform Yugoslavia into an egalitarian state of free workers and farmers was legitimized by the national liberation struggle during the Second World War. Opponents to communism would say paradoxically, but communism actually brought social mobilization, emancipation, education, literacy to Yugoslav people. Unlike the previous parties, communists were politically well organized and were not at that point compromised as the king that was outside of the country. Partisans interconnected some of the most important problems that had plagued the people; social problems of workers and farmers, abolishment of exploitation and foreign rule, and finally national reconciliation through the formula of brotherhood and unity.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Čalić writes of both good and bad sides of the revolution. She does not fear to mention the terror and brutal liquidation of military and political enemies and the lack of remembrance of those crimes in the later period of communist rule.⁵¹ She also writes about non-democratic elections held in 1945 and one party system,⁵² industrialization that was supported by not so voluntary migrations of people from villages to the cities,⁵³ as well as collectivization in which the farmers were forced to give away most of their products almost for free.⁵⁴ On the other side, she also writes about positive sides, such as the fact that never before the country had invested in education as after 1945; elementary school was obligatory for everyone, public universities were founded, as well as the libraries and cultural organizations.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 199

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 208

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 216

⁵² *Ibid.*, 219

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 229

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 230

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 231

Importantly, Čalić dedicates a chapter to detachment of Tito's Yugoslavia from Stalin, which happened in 1948. After some misunderstandings with Soviet Russia regarding international relations with Greece and Albania, Communist Party of Yugoslavia put an end to the process of collectivization, which resulted in exclusion of Communist Party of Yugoslavia from international organization of communist parties (Kominform). The consequences of this were twofold. Around 5000 Stalin's supporters had to go to political emigration, while around 16000 people were arrested and sent to Goli otok, where they were interrogated and often tortured. On the other side, detachment from Stalin was a very smart political move, because Yugoslavia in that way escaped homogenization and sovietization that affected the Eastern block.⁵⁶ After the detachment from Stalin, the harmful collectivization was put to an end and a different kind of communist society was designed, in which the goal was to include the people into the economic and social flows.⁵⁷

According to Ranka Gašić's text in the end of the Serbian edition to the *History of Yugoslavia in 20th century*, Čalić gave an explanation of Tito's success and the legitimization of his regime, based on the liberation war struggle, detachment from Stalinism, policy of non-alignment, freedom of movement and modernization of the country.⁵⁸ Due to the objectivity and the period and information Čalić's history encompasses, this will be a guideline for analysis and comparison when needed.

THE PROBLEM OF YUGO-NOSTALGIA

As Branislav Dimitrijević remarks in his doctoral thesis "Utopian consumerism: The Emergence and the Contradictions of the Consumer Culture in Socialist Yugoslavia (1950-1970)", the image of socialist Yugoslavia today is perceived as either epoch of relative economic prosperity, or as epoch of ideological single-mindedness, non-liberty and economic

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 235-237

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 250

⁵⁸ Ranka Gašić, „Zajednica južnoslovenskih naroda kao istorijska pojava 20. veka“, in Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku* (Beograd: Clio, 2013), 482

unsustainability.⁵⁹ Furthermore, he highlights that during the 1990s, and especially in the first decade of 21st century cultural identity of Yugoslavia has never been abandoned, while recently it has been increasingly articulated in different forms of nostalgic memories of socialist Yugoslavia in the widest cultural sphere.⁶⁰ These different images of socialist Yugoslavia might be opposed and irreconcilable since neither of them encompasses the series of social, cultural and economic contradictions that were in the core of socialist Yugoslavia. There are many examples of contradictions of the socialist Yugoslav system and its contemporary representations. For instance, one of these contradictions and paradoxes in the context of Yugo-nostalgia is that in socialist Yugoslavia people wished for a better life and economic well-being that would be gained through transition into democracy, while today the basis of the nostalgic feelings for socialist Yugoslavia are in the lack of the economic well-being that existed in socialist Yugoslavia.⁶¹

Through the analysis of the Yugoslav cultural sphere and the contradictions of the consumerism in socialist culture, Dimitrijević's doctoral thesis contributes to understanding of the contradictions and the specificities of the Yugoslav socialist system. Dimitrijević opposes the thesis that consumerism was fatal for cohesiveness of the socialist idea, since his research shows that the changes and constant experiments in modification of the system resulted in impossibility to formulate a coherent image about this system.⁶² As he concludes, the main characteristic of the system were many different contradictions, while the emergence of the consumer culture (in a socialist society) is only one of them.⁶³ Having that in mind, when analyzing the image of the socialist Yugoslavia produced in contemporary culture, it is important to explore whether the image comprehends the contradictions immanent to the Yugoslav system, or it fails to observe them.

When it comes to the question of nostalgia, Dimitrijević uses Svetlana Boym's typology of nostalgia: restorative and reflective. According to Svetlana Boym, *restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition, while reflective nostalgia dwells*

⁵⁹ Branislav Dimitrijević (2011): (PhD dissertation), *Utopijski konzumerizam: nastanak i protivrečnosti potrošačke kulture u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji (1950-1970)*, Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu, 12

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13

⁶² *Ibid.*, 314

⁶³ *Ibid.*

on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt.⁶⁴ Moreover, on the topic of nostalgia Svetlana Boym notices that *the nostalgia that I explore here is not always for the ancient régime, stable superpower, or the fallen empire, but also for the unrealized dreams of the past and visions of the future that became obsolete. The history of nostalgia might allow us to look back at modern history as a search not only for newness and technological progress, but also for unrealized possibilities, unpredictable turns and crossroads.*⁶⁵ In that sense, Dimitrijević sees the current nostalgia for the epoch of socialist Yugoslavia as more than just nostalgia for a time that has passed, but as nostalgia for abandoned or unaccomplished potentials of something that was in the past and that later became a part of the contemporary culture.⁶⁶ As Dimitrijević summarizes, the reflective nostalgia can therefore have a certain potential of critique of contemporary economic, political and social relations, even though it is most usually manifested as apolitical.⁶⁷

Dimitrijević reminds the reader that Yugo-nostalgia is specific because it appeared as a neutral nostalgia for the past times, but right after the violent and horrifying breakup of Yugoslavia.⁶⁸ The apoliticalness of Yugo-nostalgia, Dimitrijević concludes, is a reflection of a cynical, post-utopian mind that does not care about the social relations but only about the possibility and reality of commodification.⁶⁹ In conclusion, the consumer culture in socialist Yugoslavia, being the sign of its progress and modernization, did not threaten the Yugoslav system, but it definitely affected the social passivization and made the society unprepared for dealing with crisis and disintegration.⁷⁰

According to Dimitrijević, the central aspect of Yugo-nostalgia is nostalgia for certain cultural forms that originated in socialist Yugoslavia that today become the signifiers of *a better*

⁶⁴ Svetlana Boym, *Budućnost nostalgije* (Beograd: Geopoetika, 2005) (The original text in English retrieved from: <http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/n/nostalgia/nostalgia-svetlana-boym.html>, last accessed September 15, 2015)

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Branislav Dimitrijević (2011): (PhD dissertation), *Utopijski konzumerizam: nastanak i protivrečnosti potrošačke kulture u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji (1950-1970)*, 15

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 15

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 314

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

time in the past.⁷¹ Dimitrijević gives two examples that illustrate these signifiers; one is the image of Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito, and the other is the domain of consumer culture.⁷² The same signifiers are noticed in contemporary exhibitions that have a Yugo-nostalgic touch. Therefore, one of the central problems to explore is whether the nostalgic images of socialist Yugoslavia produced in contemporary museum representations aim to be the critique of the present or not, or, in other terms, does Yugo-nostalgia in contemporary culture aim to rethink the potentials of the socialist Yugoslavia, or is it apolitical and impotent to use the knowledge of the past as a critique of the present?

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: *HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SERBIA AND MUSEUM OF YUGOSLAV HISTORY*

The aspects of my analysis and interpretation are of interdisciplinary nature.⁷³ Two profiles of the two institutions in question will be taken into account, since the frame and the legacy of the institution often influence its politics of display. Furthermore, I will analyze the choice of the topic of the exhibition, the material used in the exhibition as well as the analysis of the display itself. Finally, I will explore the narrative of the exhibition, which does not refer only to the content analysis of all the printed and video material, catalogues, accompanying material, panels, titles, etc, but to the crucial aspect of the exhibition.

According to Mieke Bal, the museum is an attractive object of study because *it requires interdisciplinary analysis, it has the debate on aesthetics in its core, and it is essentially a social institution.*⁷⁴ In her text “The Discourse of the Museum”, Mieke Bal presents three case studies,

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Dimitrijević’s example is *Leksikon YU mitologije*, in which objects of popular culture and consumer culture are the majority of the described notions “The central part in *Leksikon YU mitologije* is memory of popular singers, actors, sportists, popular songs, films, erotic magazines, but also brands of soap, refreshing drinks, sweets, chewing gums, cigarettes, jeans, etc.” in Branislav Dimitrijević (2011): (PhD dissertation), *Utopijski konzumerizam: nastanak i protivrečnosti potrošačke kulture u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji (1950-1970)*, 15-16

⁷³ More about interdisciplinarity and Mieke Bal’s *cultural analysis* practice see in Ana Kolarić, „Interdisciplinarnost u humanistici: putujući koncepti Mieke Bal“, in *REČ 81.27*, ed. Dejan Ilić, 61-90 (Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2012)

⁷⁴ Mieke Bal, “The Discourse of the Museum”, in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne, 145 (London: Routledge, 1996); In the introduction to her book *Double Exposures: the Subject of Cultural Analysis*, Mieke Bal explains: *Over the past twenty or so years, the humanities have developed an increasing awareness of their own limitations, which include the arbitrariness of their disciplinary boundaries,*

which can be applied to the two institutions it is here talked about. The first is the problem of the ownership, which can in this case be transferred into the difference between Yugoslav heritage and specific national, in this case Serbian heritage. The second is the political problem, which, according to Mieke Bal, even the art museums have. In the context of history museum, the political layer is therefore inevitable. Finally, Mieke Bal explains that the discourse of the museum is the core idea of the exhibition. Since the visit of the museum itself produces a narrative, having in mind that it takes place in space and time, through the analysis it is necessary to interpret that narrative in order to understand on one hand the discursive strategies put into place by the curators, and, on the other hand, the effective process of making meaning that these strategies suggest to visitors.⁷⁵ Additionally, in the introduction to the book *Double Exposures: the Subject of Cultural Analysis*, Mieke Bal clarifies that “discourse” of the museum should not be understood as another invasion by language: *on the contrary, using such a term for the for the analysis of museums necessitates a “multimedialization” of the concept of discourse itself. Discourse implies a set of semiotic and epistemological habits that enables and prescribes ways of communicating and thinking that others who participate in the discourse can also use.*⁷⁶

The first museum in question is the *Historical Museum of Serbia*, founded in 1963. The mission of this museum is to *collect, register, preserve, handle, study and exhibit the materials related to the Serbian people and Serbia from ancient times to the present, as well as to universally present rich and colorful history of the Serbian people.*⁷⁷ The beginning of the museum was connected to the historical topics of first and second Serbian uprising. In fact, the predecessor of the *Historical Museum of Serbia* is the *Museum of First Serbian Uprising* made in 1954. The exhibition made for the occasion of celebration of 150 years after First Serbian Uprising was afterwards transferred to *Konak kneza Miloša* building, which is still the main building of this museum. However, since 2005 this museum has got the second exhibition space, apart from that in *Konak kneza Miloša*. The new exhibition space is the one in Nikola Pašić

the often exclusionary assumptions involved in the aesthetics on which much work by humanists is based, and their separation from real social issues that were relegated to the social sciences. These three self-critical notes might explain why the museum has become an attractive object of study. Whereas self-criticism is perceived by some as dis-integrative, the museum requires integration. It needs interdisciplinary analysis; it has the debate on aesthetics on its agenda; and it is essentially a social institution. The museum appears as a suitable emblem of contemporary humanistic studies. Mieke Bal, *Double Exposures: the Subject of Cultural Analysis*, 2 (New York: Routledge, 1996)

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 149-150

⁷⁶ Mieke Bal, *Double Exposures: the Subject of Cultural Analysis*, 3

⁷⁷ Historical Museum of Serbia, <http://www.imus.org.rs/imus.php?id=67&jz=1> (last accessed September 14, 2015)

Square (ex Marx and Engels Square) in the center of Belgrade, which used to belong to the Museum of the *Revolution of Yugoslav Nations and Ethnic Minorities*. On a symbolic level, the history of a national country replaced a history of revolution of a supranational country.

The keywords for the web presentation of the museum are *roots, tradition, genealogy*; the biggest part of the presentation is dedicated to the *genealogy* and the *past* of the museum. This indicates that the museum might be a traditional national history museum dedicated to preservation and establishing of national identity. The museum preserves artifacts such as weapons, military uniforms, flags, etc. However, it is pointed out that this museum shows important processes in the uprising of Serbian people, especially the national *liberation*, which makes us wonder about the vision of the museum. When presenting the history of Serbian people, the website suggests that five different periods are divided in this museum – *Middle Ages, Period of the Foreign Governing, Period between 1804-1918, Period of National Liberation Movement 1941-1945*, and the *Development of Serbia after the War*. However, in practice, almost all exhibitions are connected to the history before the First World War, especially 19th century.⁷⁸

The question that arises is why the name of the museum relates to the whole history of Serbia, while in practice most of the exhibitions relate to the history of 19th century Serbia. It is also questionable why *Historical Museum of Serbia* rarely creates exhibitions about the 20th century Serbia. The answer to this question might be simple – it seems as if the *Historical Museum of Serbia* and the *Museum of Yugoslav History* “divided their responsibilities”; the *Museum of Yugoslav History* is in charge of period of Yugoslav history, and the *Historical Museum of Serbia* is in charge of the history before that.

However, as it will be shown in the further analysis, this question is not that simple, since dealing with the period of 20th century Serbia requires a clear standpoint, interpretation and valorization. For these reasons, an institution such as *Historical Museum of Serbia* might avoid to tackle the dilemmas of 20th century and cling to the today not-so-controversial 19th century. If a role of the national history museum is to represent national identity, what kind of national identity does the *Historical Museum of Serbia* represent? If the key events presented are the

⁷⁸ Some recent exhibitions are: “Serbia 1914: Digital Storytelling in Augmented Reality” opened in September 2014, “Serbs in Maghreb during the Second World War” opened in December 2014, “Nathalie Obrenović within the fund collected by Branko Stojanović” opened in May 2015, as well as two exhibitions opened in 2015 commemorating 200 hundred years from the second Serbian uprising.

events of the *liberation* of Serbian people, does it mean that the period when Serbia was a part of Yugoslavia was *not* a period of liberty for Serbian people? Is the history of Serbian country equal to the history of Serbian people, or is the history of other nations living in the territory of present day country of Serbia as important as the history of Serbian people living there? On the other hand, what identity does the *Museum of Yugoslav History* create? Are these two identities – Serbian and Yugoslav – antagonistic or complementary? And, finally, is Yugoslav identity *in the history*, does it live only in the memory of people or is it still living?

Consequently, we come to the central question, and that is the politics of display of *Historical Museum of Serbia* concerning socialist Yugoslavia. Merely two exhibitions are about (or connected to) the period of socialist Yugoslavia, thus they will be analyzed: the exhibition “In the Name of the People” and the exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz”.

The second institution whose politics of display is the object of this research is the *Museum of Yugoslav History*, founded in 1996. As it has already been mentioned, today’s majestic exhibition space of *Historical Museum of Serbia* used to belong to the *Museum of the Revolution of Yugoslav Nations and Ethnic Minorities* between 1961 and 1996. *The Museum of the Revolution* was abolished in 1996, along with the *Memorial Center Josip Broz Tito*; since then, the new institution, *Museum of Yugoslav History*, unites the two former museums. *The Museum of Yugoslav History* is now set in Botičeva street, in the complex that has three separate buildings: “The House of Flowers”, “Museum 25th May” and the “Old Museum”.

On the website of the museum, the function, mission and vision of the museum are presented. In the vision, one of the most attractive statements from the angle of this research is that the aim of the museum is to contextualize the issues and topics of socialist Yugoslavia in the current social, political and cultural circumstances of Serbia, the Balkans, Europe and the international community. This vision is in accordance with the idea that museum is no longer an untouchable mention of preservation, but a place of meeting, dialogue and debate, the place of education and the place of criticism of the world outside of the museum.

The *Museum of Yugoslav History* is specific because it is a museum of a history of a country that stopped existing in 1991. It is not a national museum and it does not have an equivalent in other former Yugoslav countries. It is also a museum artificially made by merging

different institutions; the *Museum of the Revolution* was a museum and it had a museum fund connected to the topic of revolution, while the *Memorial center* was not a museum, but an institution that preserved artifacts in relation to Josip Broz Tito, especially the gifts Tito had been receiving over the years. Furthermore, the name ‘The Museum of Socialist Yugoslav History’ might be more appropriate for the museum, since its content is mostly related to the socialist period of Yugoslavia.

The fact that Tito’s grave is in “Museum 25th May” is very important, since it ultimately attaches the museum to the personality of Josip Broz Tito. This detail greatly determines the audience of the exhibition as well. The audience of the museum mostly consists of people who come to visit *The House of Flowers* and Tito’s grave, and their main interest is to see the gifts Tito received. This is what one of the curators of the *Museum of Yugoslav History* called an ‘inherited’ audience.⁷⁹ On the other hand, the young audience (under thirty) is the audience that has not been growing up in Yugoslavia, so their interest might be to learn what Yugoslavia was like and to compare it to the contemporary society. But, according to Irina Subotić, the level of knowledge of the museum audience has to be developed and created.⁸⁰ Each museum offers its own unique object, and its own, unique interpretation and philosophy.⁸¹ Therefore, the museum could offer a unique interpretation of the socialist Yugoslavia, as well as a unique contextualization of the topics of socialist Yugoslavia in the contemporary society, and that could be its method of the audience development.

Even though Yugoslavia does not exist as a political category anymore, Yugoslav heritage is still existing and relevant. In relation to the politics of display, the question is how this museum presents Yugoslav heritage. Does it transform the socialist Yugoslav heritage into a series of artifacts? Does it contextualize socialist Yugoslavia within the contemporary social, political and social circumstances and are the present circumstances thought through the exhibitions or not?

⁷⁹ On an informal interview, the curator also mentioned that it is not easy to make exhibitions, since every time a part of the audience is dissatisfied; one part of the audience expects to see 'the gifts' displayed all the time, while the others seek for a more modern and innovative display and are not interested in viewing 'the gifts'.

⁸⁰ Irina Subotić, „Stvoriti i voleti publiku“ in *Muzej i publika*, ed. Klod Žilber (Beograd: Clío, 2015), 11

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 12

According to Boris Groys, “*the Museum is not secondary to 'real' history, nor is it merely a reflection and documentation of what 'really' happened outside its walls according to the autonomous laws of historical development. The contrary is true: 'reality' itself is secondary in relation to the Museum – the 'real' can be defined only in comparison with the museum collection.*”⁸² Due to uniqueness of this museum and the uniqueness of the country whose history it is supposed to represent, *Museum of Yugoslav History* bears the most responsibility when it comes to creating the image of socialist Yugoslavia, both in regards to its cultural, social, political, economic history, and in regards to its contextualization in today’s circumstances.

The exhibition that had the pretensions to become a permanent exhibition of this museum, presenting the complete history of Yugoslavia, ‘Yugoslavia from the beginning to the end’, will be mainly analyzed. Unlike the Historical Museum of Serbia, this museum’s exhibitions are all connected to the socialist Yugoslavia, in order to interpret the politics of display of *Museum of Yugoslav History* I chose to shortly analyze three exhibitions: “The Grand Illusion”, “They never had it better?” and “Figures of Memory”.

⁸² Boris Groys, *On the new*, as quoted in Branislav Dimitrijević, “A Magnificent Tomb. The Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum”, in *Agency, Ambivalence, Analysis: Approaching the Museum with Migration in Mind*, ed. Ruth Noack, *Melo books*, 2013 (Retrieved from http://zenodo.org/record/6974/files/MeLa_Book_06_SinglePages.pdf, last accessed September 15, 2015)

POLITICS OF DISPLAY OF *HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF SERBIA*

“IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE”

The exhibition “In the Name of the People: Political Repression in Serbia 1944-1953” opened in *Historical Museum of Serbia* on April 16th 2014. This exhibition is definitely one of the most controversial exhibitions opened in Serbia in the last several years, judged by the vast number of reactions in public space, as well as the fact that after its opening, the exhibition took place several times in different towns.⁸³ It was displayed for more than 3 months in *Historical Museum of Serbia*, and along the display of exhibition the program included debates, projections of documentary and feature films, etc. On the website of *Historical Museum of Serbia* there are no mentions of this exhibition. That might be because this museum supported the project “In the Name of the People” with the space for display of the exhibition, but the curators of the Museum did not actively take part in creation of the exhibition. According to the words of Srdjan Cvetković,⁸⁴ this museum was chosen primarily for its location; before 1996, this building used to be a building of the *Museum of Revolution*, and before that Central Committee and OZNA. Symbolically, this would be a perfect place for confrontation of the society with the past of political repression.

The exhibition is followed by a book *In the name of people: political repression in Serbia 1944-1953*. The opening has generated many reactions in the public sphere, while the exhibition was visited by thousands of people. Consequently, the exhibition, together with the following events, can be interpreted in the context of reexamination of the past and the historical revisionism that has been happening in the post-2000 Serbia, rehabilitation of the people who were found responsible for the crimes during the Nazi regime occupation, the questions of transition in post-communist countries (in this case Serbia) and, in wider European political context, the relation between anti-fascism and anti-communism.

⁸³ The exhibition was closed in the *Historical Museum of Serbia* on August 2th 2014, but the whole project *In the Name of the People* continued its practice and the exhibition has been since then displayed in National museums of Kragujevac and Kraljevo, in the city of Novi Sad, in Paris and in Pančevo.

⁸⁴ „Kad Ozna vodi kroz izložbu”, *Blic*, March 31, 2014

(<http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/453693/Kad-Ozna-vodi-kroz-izlozbu>, last accessed September 14, 2015)

During the exhibition, the author Srđan Cvetković made guided professional tours of the exhibition every day. Next to the analysis of the catalogue and the exhibition material, the analysis will also be based on one of these professionally guided tours of the exhibition, held in Pančevo on 18th May 2015. Regarding the guided tours of Srđan Cvetković, the focus will be on the things said on the tour that slightly differ from, or even contradict the showpieces and the narrative of the exhibition. Through my analysis, I will call attention to some of the problematic parts of both exhibition and the spoken tour.

When first announced in the media, the exhibition was advertised as *the first museum exhibition about decades long taboos; multimedia exhibition about the political repression in the period between 1944-1953; for the first time in Serbia, an exhibition about the topics that were for a long time not talked about*, etc.⁸⁵ It claims to be the first exhibition to openly talk about the victims of communist regime in Serbia right after the end of the WWII. In the book “In the Name of the People” which accompanies the exhibition, the whole project is described as objective and documented without censorship. Moreover, the author of the exhibition said that the goal of the exhibition was to talk about the topic in an objective way and to confront the society with a difficult heritage, not in order to start revanchism, but with the purpose of prevention of something similar happening again.⁸⁶ In many texts, it has also been indicated that the main goal of this exhibition is to contribute to the further democratization of Serbia through objective confronting with repression, totalitarian and non-democratic heritage from the time of revolutionary leavening, imposition of stalinistic model of society as well as political culture that marked every political opponent as someone who should be eliminated.⁸⁷ The whole project took place in the *Historical Museum of Serbia*, and the acting director of the *Historical Museum of Serbia* at that time, Miroslav Živković, said that the only condition he had for this exhibition to be held in the *Historical Museum of Serbia* was its utmost objectivity.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Some of the announcements can be found on the following links: „Izložba o žrtvama komunističkog terora u Istorijском muzeju Srbije”, *Blic*, April 12, 2014 (<http://www.blic.rs/Kultura/Vesti/457307/Izlozba-o-zrtvama-komunistickog-terora-u-Istorijском-muzeju-Srbije>, last accessed September 14, 2015) and „Ozna u ime naroda”, *Danas*, April 15, 2014 (http://www.danas.rs/danasrs/drustvo/terazije/ozna_u_ime_naroda.14.html?news_id=279872, last accessed September 14, 2015)

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ „IZLOŽBA U IME NARODA!!!”, April 16, 2015 (<http://www.borislavpekic.com/2014/04/izlozba-u-ime-naroda.html>, last accessed September 14, 2015)

⁸⁸ „Izložba o žrtvama komunističkog terora u Istorijском muzeju Srbije”, *Blic*, April 12, 2014

To summarize the most important parts of the announcements, this exhibition is supposed to, for the first time in Serbia, in an objective and well documented way confront the citizens of Serbia with its historical period of repression and totalitarianism, in order to prevent similar things from happening again and to further contribute to the democratization of present day Serbia.

Topic of the exhibition

The topic of this exhibition are decades long taboos: liquidation of the enemies of the people, political trials, Goli otok and other concentration camps, persecution of kulaks in the time of forced purchase and collectivization.⁸⁹ The subtitle of the exhibition is “Political repression in Serbia 1944-1953”. According to Srđan Cvetković’s speech on the guided tour, the topic of the exhibition is, in addition, the violations of human rights that happened in the period between 1944 and 1953.

The first difficulty for interpretation that arises is the way the topic of the exhibition was chosen. The topic is always chosen, as is the choice of the periodization. If the periodization is not clear enough, the author should elaborate why he chose certain periodization. It is a mistake to presuppose the universal significance of anyone’s choice. The exhibition deals with the political repression between 1944 and 1953 in Serbia. While presenting the political repression that happened in *Serbia*, this exhibition does not specifically reflect on the *different Yugoslavias* the Republic of Serbia, with its (at the time) autonomous provinces Vojvodina and Kosovo, used to be a part of. The problem that also arises here is how to talk about Serbia and Yugoslavia without explaining specifically the standpoint of interpretation. The exhibition opened in the *Historical Museum of Serbia* (not Yugoslavia), the topic of exhibition is political repression of Serbia, but in the period between 1944 and 1953 the country that existed was not *Serbia*, but *Yugoslavia*. When it comes to the problem of periodization, the period between 1944 and 1953 has been presented in the exhibition as complete and homogeneous. It was also not specified in the exhibition why these particular years were chosen. The reason for this choice is presupposed:

⁸⁹ More about the project “In the Name of the People” can be found on the official webpage: <http://newsite.uimenaroda.net/cr/articles/o-projektu/> (last accessed September 14, 2015)

that is when the political repression happened. To the question why the period encompassed by the exhibition started in 1944, even if the war ended in 1945, Cvetković answered that it is *because that is when the rule was de facto established* (meaning the communist rule).⁹⁰ This oral intervention, however, does not help the exhibition reach its goal of objectivity. Also, different important events were not underlined or explained, such as the Second World War (it was mentioned, of course, but the context was not given), alliance with the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin in 1945, the Yugoslavia-Soviet split in 1948. When mentioned, all of these events inevitably seek a specified approach and interpretation, regardless of the fact that the authors claim to be *objective*. The author of the exhibition needed to specifically explain his method and the reasons for choosing the country and the period he talks about, as well as to give a well elaborated historical context to the political repression he talks about.

What are the possible reasons of the absence of the context? If there is a lack of the context, there is a presumption that all visitors know details of this period and want to learn more. This presumption is problematic for several reasons, for instance the younger audience. High school students are 15-19 years old, which means they were born in the late 1990s, in other words after the break-up of Yugoslavia. Having that in mind, a specified historical context is needed if the young audience, that has only vague representation of Yugoslavia in their minds, is supposed to fully understand the message of the exhibition and confront with the past of their country, in order to prevent the crimes from happening again. It is very important to present true facts if one wants to be objective, especially when the goal of the presentation is to *confront* the whole *society with heritage of repression and totalitarianism*. It is important to talk about the crimes of all regimes, as well as the communist regime, but it is impossible to understand any crime without talking about the causes of the crime and the context. If the main goal is to prevent the crimes from happening again, all the facts should be presented and well elaborated.

The second possibility of the lack of the context on this exhibition is that the context might problematize or reduce the effect of the main thesis, which is that the period between 1944 and 1953 was simply the period of political oppression when many crimes happened and human rights were violated – nothing more, nothing less. If the second presumption is true, that is again problematic because presenting the thesis without a proper context creates the *black and white*

⁹⁰ Personal interview with Srđan Cvetković on a professionally guided tour held on May 18, 2015 in National Museum of Pančevo.

background for the reception of the thesis; either it is all true, either it is all false. This, actually, leads to the simplification of the thesis. If the confrontation of the whole society with the problematic past needs to happen, it requires a lot more than a simplified view to the past. On the contrary, simplified views on the past and present are easier to handle, and are often used in order to manipulate the widest audiences. Before any confrontation, there needs to be a minimal consensus about the historical facts and the period that is talked about. It may appear that the context is absent because it could be easily criticized, at the same time undermining the thesis's strength. Still, the analysis of the content of the exhibition may reveal an implicitly contained context.

Content of the exhibition

Analysis of the content of the exhibition will help us answer the question whether this exhibition was displayed in an objective and a well documented way. Apart from the book *In the name of the people*, a very important document for analysis of this exhibition is a research paper written by Milan Radanović, *House of Terror in Museum of Revolution*.⁹¹ The reason this text is relevant for the analysis is its strictly scientific approach and reasonable argumentation of Milan Radanović. Therefore, I will highlight some of the most important conclusions of this article, along with the interpretation of the exhibition.

In the book *In the Name of the People*,⁹² in addition to the exhibition, the sections are divided in the following way: 1. Liquidation of “public enemies” 1944-1945; 2. Political trials 1945-1953; 3. Hit the mob! Goli otok and other concentration camps; 4. Repurchase and collectivization 1948-1953; 5. Elections, cult of personality, ideology and propaganda. The period chosen for this exhibition (1944-1953) is distinctively contextualized. Instead of showing the historical context, for example the final years of the Second World War 1944-1945, the

⁹¹ Milan Radanović, „Kuća terora u muzeju revolucije”, *Peščanik*, June 2, 2014. (<http://pescanik.net/kuca-terora-u-muzeju-revolucije/>, last accessed September 14, 2015) (translated by the author) Milan Radanović is an independent researcher in the field of history, with many published scientific articles, with the accent on topics of victims of fascism in Yugoslavia, antifascism, as well as controversies about quantification and structuring of people killed in Serbia after the liberation 1944-1945.

⁹² Srđan Cvetković, *U ime naroda: Politička represija u Srbiji 1944-1953* (Beograd: Evro-Giunti, 2014) (translated by the author)

exhibition highlights this year as the year of the liquidation of the “public enemies” in Serbia. The thesis of this part is that along with the liberation of Serbia of fascism, there was a mass settling with the political and class opponents of the revolution. This process was operated *in a strict conspiracy by The Department of National Security (Ozna)*.⁹³ The message of this part of the display leads the recipient to think that almost all the people liquidated in 1944 were liquidated primarily for their anticommunist and antirevolutionary sentiments and not for their fascist engagement during the occupation.

Milan Radanović argues with this kind of subtle relativization of crimes of fascist collaborators in his text. Significantly, Radanović reminds the reader that the people who piloted this *terror of revolution* did not live in historical vacuum.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Radanović argues that it is a fact that not all the collaborationists deserved the death penalty, but, when talked about them, it is very important to have a constant reminder that these people were exposed to the anger of the winning side by their own engagement during the war.⁹⁵ At this point, Čalić’s description of “total war” can be of use. When confronting with this kind of the problematic past, it is very important for the beginning to make a clear division between innocently killed people on one side, and the collaborators and war criminals on the other. If we have in mind that Serbia was occupied by fascist Germany and that the government of Milan Nedić was a quisling government collaborating with the fascistic forces and is, together with the Axis forces, responsible for the sufferings and killings of the innocent people (mostly Jewish and Roma people), then some of the personas displayed on the exhibitions are problematically displayed.

Some of the examples are well elaborated by Radanović’s article. The first example is the three photographs among the hundreds of unnamed photographs from the photo archive of State Board for Secret Graves. Apart from being displayed on the exhibition, these photographs were printed as a design for the official invitation to the exhibition opening.⁹⁶ Radanović claims that among these there are photographs of both victims of after-war terror and the criminals and collaborators. Among them are Milan Aćimović, quisling minister of inner affairs, and two *Chetnik butchers*, Milisav Stojić and Previslav Milovanović Ebir (who, according to Radanović

⁹³ Srđan Cvetković, *U ime naroda: Politička represija u Srbiji 1944-1953*, 10

⁹⁴ Milan Radanović, „Kuća terora u muzeju revolucije”, 8

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Srđan Cvetković, *U ime naroda: Politička represija u Srbiji 1944-1953*, 18-19

and pro-chetnik sources he had found, killed 5 women, then his own fiancé and her mother, and, in the end, himself).⁹⁷ Those are only three examples of people who were responsible for deaths of other people, victimized by this exhibition.

Right next to these unnamed hundreds of photographs, there are 10 bigger photographs and short biographies of intellectuals and public personas. Most of these personas, some of them victims, some of them collaborators, were killed in Belgrade after the liberation.⁹⁸ Among them are Miloš Trivunac and Milan Horvatski, members of quisling government, and Krsta Cicvarić and Svetislav Stefanović, fascists and racists. Let us look more closely on two examples, and compare Cvetković's⁹⁹ and Radanović's approach.

Cvetković highlights that Trivunac was a *respected* European germanist, professor of German language, founder of the Cathedra for German Language and Literature of University of Belgrade. Cvetković closely elaborated where Trivunac went to school, what he did for his PhD dissertation, even the “numerous articles” Trivunac had published were mentioned. In the end, Cvetković's text concisely says that Trivunac was the minister of education in Nedić's government for more than a year during the occupation, and was arrested and shot because he had signed *Appeal to the Serbian People* in 1941 and publicly confronted bolshevism and partisan movement. It is apparent that this text selectively reveals the facts concerning Trivunac. We can conclude that more than half of the text is dedicated to detailed headlining of academic achievements of Trivunac, thus giving preference to his pre-war civic background. On the other side, Trivunac being minister of education in government of Milan Nedić is not problematized at all, and the recipient is not explained what signing the *Appeal to the Serbian People* meant (it appealed to the Serbian people to respect the German occupation and be against communist uprising against the occupation). Finally, the text offers interpretation that Trivunac was primarily shot because of his confrontation with partisan movement, which resembles the trend of the beletrization and romantization of the prewar civil Serbia.

On the contrary, Radanović adds the missing, contextual parts of Cvetković's passage, highlighting that Trivunac was a part of *quisling* government of Milan Nedić, which is

⁹⁷ Milan Radanović, „Kuća terora u muzeju revolucije”, 10

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Srđan Cvetković, *U ime naroda: Politička represija u Srbiji 1944-1953*, 24

responsible for operating terror over their own people and collaboration with German occupation. Radanović has a clear standpoint: those who were part of the quisling government cannot be held as victims. Moreover, Trivunac signed the *Statute on the Kangaroo Courts*, the statute in which, according to Radanović, it is highlighted that everyone who manifests communism in any way should be immediately sentenced to death, that all their movable and immovable property will be immediately confiscated, as well as the property of their concealers and collaborators;¹⁰⁰ this meant that the antifascist movement in Serbia was in danger. Concerning the *Appeal to the Serbian People*, Radanović highlights that not all of the people who had signed this Appeal were shot, and concludes that Trivunac was shot not because he was an anti-communist, but because he was a member of quisling government.¹⁰¹

Another is example of Krsta Cicvarić. Cvetković emphasizes that Cicvarić was *one of the most educated people of his own time*.¹⁰² *There are claims*, it is said in Cvetković's short text, *that Winston Churchill counted him among the best European journalists between two world wars*.¹⁰³ It is also emphasized that he was old and not so healthy during the Second World War, and that texts that he had been publishing in the journal *Novo vreme* had cost him his life. *Even though very sick*, he was arrested and shot without a trial. The text also says that he is *considered to be* founder of yellow journalism. In contrast, for Krsta Cicvarić, Radanović says that he was a personification of tabloid journalism and regime journalist. He also adds that Cicvarić published articles not only in *Novo vreme*, but also in notably fascistic journal *Srpski narod*.¹⁰⁴ Radanović gives example of Cicvarić's explicit anti-Semitic texts, in which he approves of German nationalists and claims that nationalists from all countries must be against the Jewish people. Radanović hereby proves that Cicvarić was shot because he was fascist and racist, not because he was an anticommunist.

According to the previous argumentation, the author has either disregarded the facts purposely in order to mislead the audience, or he did not do the research minutely. Both of these possibilities are problematic if the author of the exhibition claims to be objective and to have the goal of confrontation with a problematic past. While the sensationalistic tone of the

¹⁰⁰ Milan Radanović, „Kuća terora u muzeju revolucije”, 14

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Srđan Cvetković, *U ime naroda: Politička represija u Srbiji 1944-1953*, 26

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Milan Radanović, „Kuća terora u muzeju revolucije”, 14

announcement of the exhibition at first put the doubt in its scholarliness, the content of the exhibition deepens the problem of objectivity. Is the aim of the exhibition to present or to convince? Consequently, what is the final goal of presenting the alleged long kept secrets and taboos in such a way – to change how we perceive the past or to change the present?

Additionally, there is the problem of ethnocentric approach to the victims, which can also be called nationalistic. In April 2014, Radanović analyzed the register of the “victims of communism” in the State Board for Secret Graves and according to his findings problematized the exhibition from the aspect of ethnicity of the people executed after the war. Radanović gives us the ethnic structure of the executed 55 thousand people is the following: 49.42% Germans, 26.3% Serbs, 11.03% Hungarians, 2.45% Albanians, 1.72% Croats, and so on. Radanović criticizes the ethnocentric approach of the exhibition, saying that *the suffering of the non-Serbian population is therefore reduced to the level of a historical foot-note, while the suffering of the Serbian people is absolutized.*¹⁰⁵ If we remember that the topic of the exhibition is supposed to be the human rights violations that happened in the period between 1944 and 1953, a question rises why Cvetković applies the human rights mostly to Serbs of civil background.

Similar argumentation can be applied to many other examples of false use of display material. For example, Radanović claims that the photograph used in the exhibition to illustrate the political trial to Draža Mihailović was misused, given that the text underneath does not reveal the fact that the people in the picture were witnessing *against* Mihailović.¹⁰⁶ However, one of the worst manipulations with the photo material was the one with the photograph from the Buchenwald concentration camp used in the context of Goli otok sufferings.¹⁰⁷

After the analysis of the exhibition content, the conclusion is that the exhibition does not present the facts in an objective way. First of all, by displaying the photographs of the war criminals and the collaborators next to the after-war victims, Cvetković is not only relativizing the responsibilities of collaborators with the occupational German forces, but also diminishing the dignity of the victims of the after-war crimes. Secondly, by not mentioning the ethnic structure of those killed after the war, and by displaying almost exclusively Serbs who had been

¹⁰⁵ Milan Radanović, *Kuća terora u muzeju revolucije*, 20

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 38

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 53

killed, Cvetković is manipulating the audience into thinking that the number of Serbian victims was more than 3 times bigger than it was. Also, by selective approach to biographies of the victims and beltrization of the victim's lives, by covering the historical context and the guilt of many of those killed after the war, and by claiming that some people were killed for their anti-communist sentiments and not for their collaboration with the occupational forces, this exhibition strengthens the nationalistic stereotype that civil Serbs were the biggest victims of the after-war terror in Serbia. As Radanović claims, the results of the index of the State Board for Secret Graves confute the stereotype that the bourgeoisie and the rich farmers were the largest category of the victims, while the exhibition *In the Name of the People* reproduces that false stereotype.¹⁰⁸

Similar problems appear when content is analyzed from the perspective of symbolism. The exhibition does not communicate with the audience only by means of the chosen content, but also through the way that content is organized and displayed. Again, the question occurs if the variety of symbols used in the exhibition is used to present the facts or to convince the audience into something. When the visitor gets into the exhibition hall, the first thing she sees is a big red star with a hammer and a sickle. Even though this symbol in Yugoslavia was not just the symbol of communism, but the symbol of antifascist struggle during the Second World War, in the context of this exhibition which overemphasizes the atmosphere of repression, the red star is transferred into a symbol of repression and terror. For this example, Radanović states that it represents visual discreditation of the symbol of revolution and social emancipation.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, in the central part of the exhibition, there stands a huge map of Serbia which is surrounded with concentration camp wire and dry leaves. The message this exhibit is symbolically sending is, Radanović claims, that between 1944 and 1953 Serbia was a huge concentration camp.¹¹⁰

There are additional indicators that this exhibition is not as scientific as it claims to be. In the section dedicated to the first elections held after the Second World War, the newspapers titled *Democracy* are put on the floor. In such a way, people visiting this part of the exhibition will symbolically tread on democracy; the same way, according to the exhibition, Tito did when he organized the first elections after the war. One more example is the soundtrack played in the Goli

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 24

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 6

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

otok section, when the visitors can hear the uncanny amalgam of music, seagulls and, in the end, shootings. These examples illustrate how the author of the exhibition highlighted the alleged atmosphere of the repression.

In order to symbolically illustrate the repression even more, the exhibition presents two reconstructed rooms; a classroom from the times of the Tito's rule (on the blackboard it was written *Tito is our youth, we are Tito's youth!*), the other is the office belonging to OZNA's creator Aleksandar Ranković. In the guided tours, Cvetković insisted on the *originality* of all the material used in the exhibition.¹¹¹ However, to the question whether the office material really belonged to Ranković or not, Cvetković replied in an amused intonation that he *just put it there in order to show the audience how it all looked like in general.*¹¹² From this answer, we can conclude that this content did not have a goal to scientifically prove anything nor to present the *original* content, but to by symbolical display convince the audience that the time between 1945 was 1953 was merely the time of repression, and nothing more, especially not social emancipation.

Maybe the biggest intervention for the purpose of symbolic was on the improvised cells of Dragoljub Jovanović and Borislav Pekić where the massive leg chains were added, the purpose of which was to summon the atmosphere of torture and terror. The chains were borrowed from the prison in Sremska Mitrovica. However, Radanović underlines that there are no historical indicators that Jovanović and Pekić were exposed to such torture, but that the fact is those chains were used between the two Wars in the prison in Sremska Mitrovica to torture the prisoners, including a number of people arrested for being members of the communist movement.¹¹³ Also, Radanović quotes Dragoljub Jovanović, who wrote in his *Political Memoires* that in comparison to the treatment to those who supported Stalin and ended in Goli otok, the imprisonment of the civil society opponents was *a real heaven.*¹¹⁴ From the standpoint of 21st century, it is beyond any doubt that tortures of political opponents of any kind were wrong and they should not happen again. It is peculiar how Cvetković chose to focus more on the non-existent or mild tortures of democratic opponents than on the dreadful tortures of Stalin's supporters. The reason for that

¹¹¹ Personal interview with Srđan Cvetković on a professionally guided tour held on May 18, 2015 in National Museum of Pančevo.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Milan Radanović, *Kuća terora u muzeju revolucije*, 39

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 41

might be the fact that in 2015 we live in *democratic*, not *communist* Europe; therefore the torture of democratic opponents presents a fact that can be more easily perceived as problematic than the torture of Stalinistic opponents, after the detachment of Yugoslavia from Stalin's politics and the eastern Soviet block.

Final to this segment, I will comment on Cvetković's answer to one of the questions in the interview. Since the repression is one of the most common words for this exhibition, the question to Cvetković was whether he thinks repression exists today and if yes, what are the mechanisms of that repression. His answer was that there is no doubt we live in times of repression today and that the mechanisms of repression are as strong as in the communist times, but a lot more sophisticated.¹¹⁵ The question that occurs after that answer is, if we live in the time of democracy and the repression is as strong as in communist times, is the confrontation with the repression of a former country without connecting it to the present the way of preventing the repression from happening again?

Narrative of the exhibition

As a final point we come to the problem of the narrative of the exhibition. The context of total war, strivings to make ethnically homogeneous states, national liberation struggle and the detachment of Tito's Yugoslavia from Stalin in 1948 are important as a missing context to the exhibition "In the name of the people". Without this, the recipient can be manipulated into thinking that the general goal of communist Yugoslavia was not egalitarianism, emancipation and social prosperity, but merely extermination of the political opponents and innocent people. I will focus on three interpretative wholes: equation of communism and fascism and relativization of fascist crimes; criticism of the communist revolution; and the problem of truth and of reconciliation. I believe that these three problems are essential for interpretation of the narrative of the exhibition, as well as the exhibition in whole.

¹¹⁵ Personal interview with Srđan Cvetković on a professionally guided tour held on May 18, 2015 in National Museum of Pančevo. His example was the abolishment of the TV show "Utisak nedelje" in 2014. (translated by the author)

The guided tour of Srđan Cvetković appeared not as connected to the exhibition as it would have been anticipated. According to Cvetković's academic research, the thesis of the exhibition existed long before it was displayed, so we might wonder, having in mind the previously proven insufficiencies of the content, whether the exhibition was merely a medium to send the message to the public. The narrative had a little literal, but more symbolic connection to the content of the exhibition. On the guided tour, Cvetković said that in the exhibition he tried to present all the ideological imposition of the communist times, which were *the times of cult of personality, rally and labor actions*.¹¹⁶ In his opinion, these are all examples of manipulation and mistreatment of the people. To the questions why he marks labor actions as a negative ideological imposition, even though the country was practically rebuilt in this manner, and whether he thinks there were any positive achievements in this period, Cvetković's answer was:

*Well, of course there were positive achievements! Every historical period has good and bad sides. I have shown only bad sides because of my specific topic, which is the violation of human rights in Serbia 1945-1953. But there are good sides. Look, in Hitler's Germany there were also positive achievements. People got introduced with TV during Hitler's rule, and Hitler organized the labor actions to build the roads, and the highways that were built in Hitler's time are still functional today in Germany. Not that I am comparing Hitler with Tito, but... There are no absolutely bad regimes.*¹¹⁷

However, we can see that the author of the exhibition actually *was* making a comparison between Tito and Hitler, more precisely, between the regimes they represent. The narrative of the exhibition leads to the comparison between communism and fascism. From the historical perspective, this means that fascism remains no longer a unique experience in human history. As the final goal of fascism was the annihilation of certain (millions of) people, to say that there are any positive achievements of fascism is not only unscientific, but it is problematic in an ethical sense. In fascist concentration camps millions of people were killed; but, before being killed, they were being exploited as long as they were capable to work. While this regime exploited all the non privileged working people, and killed all those who are incapable of work, the labor actions

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

in communist Yugoslavia were organized with the goal of rebuilding the country practically destroyed by the war.¹¹⁸ Therefore it is genuinely wrong to make this comparison.

The comparison of communism with fascism discredits communism and it might lead to relativization of fascist crimes. Exhibition “In the name of the people” follows that trend as well. To the question whether all personas displayed on the exhibition were victims and innocent people, Cvetković said: *Well, there are, in my personal opinion, more than 98% innocent people, and some war criminals... You know... “War criminals”...*¹¹⁹ This comment can be described as rather subjective. In the exhibition, Dragoljub Draža Mihailović is put among the victims of the communist crimes. Cvetković commented on Mihailović’s rehabilitation that happened earlier in 2015 by saying that it was fair, since Mihailović was unfairly trialed and killed as an anticommunist, even though he was a leader of the other antifascist movement.¹²⁰

At this point, I will remind that the article of Milan Radanović title is *House of Terror in the Museum of the Revolution*. In this title, Radanović compares Cvetković’s exhibition with the Museum *House of Terror* in Budapest. Buden also mentions this museum, in the context of negative potential of the democratization of cultural memory. The idea of this museum is to present the political terror in Hungary in the second half of the 20th century, both fascist and communist. According to Buden, the goal is to *present objective judgment about the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, about communism and national socialism, in the perspective of the Hungarian national history.*¹²¹ After a short analysis, Buden concludes that this museum is a perfect example of posttotalitarian perspective from which fascist and communist crimes are the same.¹²² What is more, empathic feelings towards the sufferings of the victims of terror have a secondary, even imaginary function.¹²³ Buden concludes in his interpretation that this museum presents the story of two totalitarianisms from a particular and politically partial – Hungarian nationalistic – perspective, and he illustrates this with the example of Victor Orban’s speech at the opening of the museum in 2002.

¹¹⁸ The examples can be found in: Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku*, 227-230

¹¹⁹ Personal interview with Srđan Cvetković on a professionally guided tour held on May 18, 2015 in National Museum of Pančevo.

¹²⁰ More about ideological context of rehabilitation of Dragoljub Mihailović see in: Vesna Rakić-Vodinelić, „Rehabilitacija D. Mihailovića kao političko suđenje“, in *Peščanik*, May 15, 2015 (<http://pescanik.net/rehabilitacija-d-mihailovica-kao-politicko-sudjenje/>, last accessed September 15, 2015)

¹²¹ Boris Buden, *Zona prelaska*, 206 (translated by the author)

¹²² *Ibid.*, 209

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 210

The concept of historical revisionism has been put in a wider context in the introduction. Now it is evident that this exhibition is up to date with the European strivings to discredit communism. However, it is also up to date with the Serbian strivings. Srđan Milošević traces historical revisionism back to 1980s Serbia, primarily in rejection of Marxist paradigms and the growing presence of nationalistic paradigm. In 1990s, Milošević's regime used the leftist rhetoric and was paradoxically seen as the last communist regime in Europe, while the opposition used democratic rhetoric in celebrating nationalism; in that way, democracy was connected with ideology that glorified chetniks and rejected the socialist heritage. After the 2000s, the fall of Milošević's regime is perceived as the final fall of communism, and at last a space is made for revision of history. The socialist regime is since then described as totalitarian, and in view of the fact that it would be too false to deny the role of National Liberation Movement in the fight against fascism, two antifascist movements have been proclaimed. Cvetković's exhibition is a perfect example of all these strivings; it uses the narrative of democracy and human rights, it is ethnocentric (in this context, nationalistic), and it is accordance with the theory of two antifascist movements.

The second part of the analysis of the narrative concerns the rich accompanying program to the exhibition. On the supposedly original benches on which people were sitting when the political trials were organized in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, the audience had the opportunity to listen to different debates and watch various films. The films streamed for the audience are mostly films about revolution, Marxism, mostly black wave films, as Cvetković explained.¹²⁴

What is the reason for choosing the black wave films for the accompanying program of the exhibition? According to Kirn and Madžar, the black wave, this *seemingly unified film movement rather consisted of heterogeneous authors such as Dušan Makavejev, Aleksandar Petrović, Želimir Žilnik, Krsto Papić, Živojin Pavlović, Karpo Godina, Kokan Rakonjac and others.*¹²⁵ Given that the group of authors of this epoch is heterogeneous, what unifies this movement is not the shared ideological position of the authors, but its Yugoslav (not particular

¹²⁴ Personal interview with Srđan Cvetković on a professionally guided tour held on May 18, 2015 in National Museum of Pančevo.

¹²⁵ Gal Kirn and Vedrana Madžar, "New Yugoslav Film: Between Subversion and Critique", August 19, 2014 (<https://eefb.org/archive/august-2014/new-yugoslav-film-between-subversion-and-critique/>, last accessed September 12, 2015)

nationalistic) background, as well as the period the films were created in, which was a decade that started in 1963. *It was in the period of the next 10 years that many authors developed a specific filmic language that differs from both the previous and later Yugoslav films.*¹²⁶

Concerning the reception of the black wave films today, Kirn and Madžar mention two schools that interpret the black wave films differently. The first interpretative school *is very popular among those who strengthen and even mythologize the role of the filmmaker in his dissident struggle against the totalitarian state*, while the other interpretation *underscores the plurality of waves and what is known as Yugoslav film.*¹²⁷ The most probable reason the Black Wave films were chosen to be streamed along with this exhibition is because the films are interpreted as the dissident struggle against the totalitarian state. It is true that both the exhibition and the black wave films are somewhat critical towards the communist society.

Yet, to put the black wave film in the context of communism means manipulation of the meaning of those films. Interestingly for this research paper, Kirn and Madžar put the reception of the Yugoslav black wave films in the context of historical revisionism, marking that the Black Wave that emerged under socialist Yugoslavia *has not only been veiled in a dissident cloak, but furthermore “nationalized” according to the ethnicity of filmmakers.*¹²⁸ Kirn and Madžar offer their own reading of the Black Wave films:

Importantly, these films should not be perceived as dissident ready-mades that diagnosed the totalitarian nature of the state and prognosticated its inevitable decay. On the contrary, their political message often revolved around the dissatisfaction with existing socialist paths and the fading away of revolutionary ideals. The critique was not made for the sake of critique, or as a kind of ‘cheap’ anti-totalitarian gesture that spoke about the ultimate non-freedom of socialism. Not only that the very existence of such a variety of critical films itself accounts for the artistic freedom during Socialism. Also, socialist art did not see itself as exempt from these struggles. For many filmmakers, the critique in their

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

*films was made in order to re-impose a more egalitarian society and to strengthen revolutionary ideals.*¹²⁹

Similarly, in her recent text about transitional culture in Serbia, Jovana Đurović states that the criticism of the controlling dogmatism of the Communist Party is in black wave films artistically formulated from an authentically Marxist standpoint.¹³⁰ She claims that those films aim to show how the socialist organization and Yugoslav socialism alienate from the ideals of the revolution, and concludes that political messages of the black wave films are expressing a wish for a better socialist society.¹³¹

I will illustrate this example with the short interpretation of one of the black wave films streamed as a part of the program (and used in the announcement of the exhibition): Živojin Pavlović's film *Zaseda (Ambush, 1969)*. The main character in the film *Zaseda (Ambush)* is a young partisan, Ive Vrana, member of SKOJ (League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia), who looks at the revolution from the idealistic angle. In the film, Ive struggles with accepting the corrupted side of the revolution. He is an unwilling witness to the liquidations, a political trial and the destruction of the property of the convicts. He is also a witness of the corrupted and dishonorable behavior of some partisans higher in hierarchy. In the end, he gets not only disappointed by the revolution, but killed by his fellow comrades.

However, Ive Vrana does not die as somebody disappointed in communism, but someone disappointed in the scope of the corruption of the communist revolution. For that reason, the film cannot be interpreted as an anticommunist film, but as a film that expresses the disappointment in the revolution as it happened in reality and that demands a better, righteous and a *more authentically communist* society. What is more, in the book of interviews with Živojin Pavlović *Dva razgovora*¹³², Živojin Pavlović says that the film has been constantly subjected to

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ Jovana Đurović, „Kultura mladih u tranziciji: analiza filmova *Tilva Roš i Klip*“, in *Časopis REČ* 85.31, ed. Dejan Ilić, 2015, 201, retrieved from <http://www.fabrikaknjiga.co.rs/rec-85-30/> (last accessed September 14, 2015)

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Živojin Pavlović, *Dva razgovora*, ed. N. Pajkić, N. Polimac and S. Šijan (Beograd: SKC), 39

manipulations; *Ambush* has always been mentioned as an example of an anticommunist film.¹³³ *That is pure lie*, explains Pavlović, *I think that "Ambush" is a communist film.*¹³⁴

For these reasons, to put the film *Ambush* and the other Black Wave films in the context of anticommunism means either inherently wrong interpretation of the black wave films, or a manipulation of the (misinformed) audience. The end of the film *Zaseda (Ambush)* recalls Buden's conclusion regarding the image of the end of communism. Claiming that the image of the fall of the Berlin Wall has become an ideological kitsch,¹³⁵ he proposes the new illustration of the end of the communism. That is the key scene from Dušan Makavejev's film *W. R. – Mysteries of the Organism*, when the cut head of a (killed) young Yugoslav communist outspeaks with the words *Comrades! Even now I'm not ashamed of my communist past.*¹³⁶ Even when being familiar with all the terror that followed communism in reality, one should not reject the (utopian) ideas of communism. As Buden concludes, *a man should never be ashamed of his own fight for freedom.*¹³⁷

As a final point, it is useful to look again at the way this exhibition has been announced. The first part of the announcement says that this exhibition is objective and well documented. This proved to be incorrect after the analysis of the content of the exhibition. The other part of the announcement says that the goal of the exhibition is to confront the citizens of Serbia with its historical period of repression and totalitarianism, in order to prevent the similar things from happening again. The narrative of the exhibition "In the Name of the People" tends to delegitimize the after-war revolution and the Yugoslav socialist state by insisting on the terror that followed its establishment and the selective presentation of the historical context and information.

Along with the lack of the Second World War context, there is a lack of the context of the break-up of Yugoslavia. The question is whether the confrontation with the communist past is in any way positively relevant if the confrontation with the crimes and the nationalistic war that

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Živojin Pavlović: „Tim filmom je manipulirano do današnjih dana. Kad god treba nešto da se ispovrti, ZASEDA se pomene kao primer antikomunističkog filma. Što je čista laž. Ja mislim da je ZASEDA komunistički film. U onoj meri u kojoj o mitskoj dimenziji komunističkog pokreta tu može biti reči.“ More about the film *Ambush* in: Živojin Pavlović, *Dva razgovora*, ed. N. Pajkić, N. Polimac and S. Šijan (Belgrade: SKC), 34-39

¹³⁵ Boris Buden, *Zona prelaska*, 111

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 113

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 115

happened in the 1990s remains absent. In the summer of 2015, only several months after display of the exhibition “In the Name of the People” in Paris and in Pančevo, two significant twenty years commemorations have happened. The first was twenty years commemoration of the Srebrenica massacre, when around eight thousand Bosnian civilians were systematically killed and put in the mass graves by the Serbian army. The second is twenty years commemoration of operation “Oluja”, the operation that resulted in dislocation of more than 200.000 Serbs from Croatia. Both of these events were in both Serbia and Croatia used in daily political purposes. The inciting of the national hatred is (again) in the focus and the empathy with the victims is not noticeable. From this perspective, it definitely seems more important to confront the citizens of Serbia with the crimes that were committed *in the name of Serbia* in the 1990s than *in the name of the people* after the Second World War. Or, at least, to criticize the crimes of communism from a convincingly non-nationalistic, Yugoslav perspective.

“FINAL DESTINATION – AUSCHWITZ”

The other exhibition displayed in *Historical Museum of Serbia* is the exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz”, by the authors Dr. Milan Koljanin (Institute for Contemporary History), Dr. Olga Manojlović Pintar, Dr. Radmila Radić, and MSc Sanja Petrović Todosijević (Institute for Recent History of Serbia). The project has been coordinated by Slađana Bojković and Izabela Tomović Martinov (*Historical Museum of Serbia*).

The exhibition was open on May 15th and it was displayed until July 10th 2015. The accompanying program included professional guided tours by the authors of the exhibition and workshops for the students of elementary and secondary schools. In addition to that, six public debates were organized in the framework of the exhibition. The debates included conversations with the survivors of Auschwitz, and the topics such as how to write the history of Auschwitz, the narrative of the victim in post-socialism, and representation and education about the Holocaust.

This exhibition does not directly concern the period of socialist Yugoslavia. Yet, I have chosen to take this exhibition under discussion for two reasons. The first reason is the belief that

the image of socialist Yugoslavia is not complete without the interpretation of the Second World War events in the territory of Yugoslavia. The second reason concerns the comparison of the different approaches and the politics of display in this and the exhibition “In the Name of the People”. I will call attention to these differences along with the short analysis.

Firstly, I will highlight the important facts concerning the background of the exhibition. This is important since the exhibition is part of an international project. Secondly, I will comment on the content and the narrative of the exhibition. Finally, I will compare the politics of display of the exhibitions ‘In the name of the people’ and ‘Final Destination – Auschwitz’.

Background and the announcement of the exhibition

Exhibition is actually a part of a wider project called “Holocaust Education and Intercultural Understanding in South-East Europe: Renewing the Former Yugoslav Exhibition Space in Bloc 17 of the *Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum*”. The aim of the project is the restoration of the former Yugoslav Pavilion in the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the preparation of a new permanent exhibition.¹³⁸ The project has been conducted under the auspices and with the support of UNESCO’s Venice Office and the ‘Culture – a bridge to development’ global initiative.¹³⁹

According to the news article published on the official UNESCO website on May 23, 2012, the first international meeting of experts on “Holocaust education and museum development in South-East Europe: renewing the “Former Yugoslav” Pavilion in Auschwitz-Birkenau” was held in Belgrade on June 4th 2012. *This first meeting is taking place further to the willingness expressed by all former Yugoslav Republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia,*

¹³⁸ This has been explained in the preface of the catalogue of the exhibition: *Final destination Auschwitz: Catalogue of the exhibition*, translated into English by Slađana Bojković (Belgrade: Historical Museum of Serbia, 2015), 79

¹³⁹ This initiative aims at *promoting innovative and creative approaches which enhance culture as a bridge to sustainable social, economic and human development, and at better enhancing creativity, cultural industries and cultural heritage in all its forms as a powerful and unique tool for sustainable social, economic and human development, job-creation opportunities social cohesion, education and mutual understanding, thus bringing forth new opportunities for international cooperation*. More about the project can be found on the UNSECO official webpage: “Culture: a Bridge to Development”, *UNESCO Office in Venice* (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/venice/culture/culture-a-bridge-to-development/>, last accessed September 12, 2015)

*Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) not to divide the exhibit space of the Pavilion 17, closed in 2009, and to prepare a joint permanent exhibition, while establishing a regional working group.*¹⁴⁰

Pavilion 17 was the pavilion where the Yugoslav exhibition was housed from 1963 until 2009. The time for the renewal of both the pavilion and the exhibition finally came in 2012. The representatives of all the former Yugoslav Republics were invited and offered to divide the space and make national exhibitions. However, as the news article explains, the representatives of each former Yugoslav Republic expressed willingness *not to divide the exhibit space*. The reason for that was the belief of the representatives that the division would contradict the historical facts, since the countries that exist today did not exist during the Second World War (nor before or after).

Another interesting fact is that the first meeting of representatives was held in the *Museum of Yugoslav History*. The project has been initiated by the management of the *Museum of Yugoslav History* but, when the parts of the future post-Yugoslav (international) permanent exhibition in Auschwitz-Birkenau were to be displayed in the present-day countries, it has been decided to display the exhibition in the *Historical Museum of Serbia*. The idea behind that was to include national museums from all the former Yugoslav republics. Given that the *Museum of Yugoslav History* is unique and does not have an equal in the other former Yugoslav republics, the *Historical Museum of Serbia* seemed as a self-explanatory choice. Nevertheless, while the *Museum of Yugoslav History* was an initiator of the project, the *Historical Museum of Serbia* was merely a host to the authors of the exhibition; the curators of the museum, by their own decision, participated only in organizational part of the exhibition.

The two museums, therefore, deflected from their usual frameworks. Cooperation between the two institutions was indirect, but precious and both museums functioned in the wider scope that included the post Yugoslav (regional) museum network. The UNESCO's overall mission to promote Holocaust Education and the role of museums as tools for intercultural

¹⁴⁰ "Holocaust education. Renewing the *Ex-Yugoslav* Pavilion in World Heritage Memorial site of Auschwitz-Birkenau", *UNESCO Office in Venice*, May 23, 2012 (http://www.unesco.org/new/en/venice/about-this-office/single-view/news/holocaust_education_renewing_the_ex_yugoslav_pavilion_in_world_heritage_memorial_site_of_auschwitz_birkenau/#.VcY5Tfmqqko, last accessed September 12, 2015)

understanding, research and dialogue encompassed both institutions.¹⁴¹ Concerning the two institutions and their visions, it seems as if the *Museum of Yugoslav History* borrowed its vision to the *Historical Museum of Serbia*, which resulted in an exceptional exhibition.

The exhibition has been announced in media as a call to remember once again more than million and 100.000 people who were killed in Auschwitz, especially to introduce this topic to the younger generations who are often insufficiently informed about the great tragedy of Auschwitz, as well as the concentration camps that were open on the territory of Serbia and ex Yugoslavia. As it was stated in the press, the goal of the exhibition is to present the elementary facts connected to the existence of the concentration camps (the ideology that designed and formed them, the criminals and their accomplices) through personalization of the victims from the territory of Serbia and the presentation of their prewar lives, the ways they were discriminated, shut, transferred and destroyed in the concentration camps. Additionally, the exhibition shows how Auschwitz became an important place of the collective memory of the contemporary society, as well as the reasons and consequences of its denial. The exhibition, it is stated, represents an attempt to introduce the public in Serbia into a complex dialogue with the past by questioning the role of the observers of the crimes and those who have marginalized it in the present.¹⁴² If we look more closely to the description of the goals of this exhibition, it is an illustration of what a modern museum is imagined to be – a tool for intercultural understanding, research and dialogue. This exhibition is a complete opposite of the image of the museum that the visitor gets by visiting official museum website – it is much more than the traditional national history museum that preserves and establishes national identity. Through this exhibition, *Historical Museum of Serbia* becomes a place where historians debate, research, make interviews, present their findings, make connections and contextualize topics, periods and historical events, question the concepts, prejudices, causes of the past events but also the perception of those events in the present. Moreover, the museum becomes a place of a serious and complex confrontation with the past and, most importantly, the place for education.

¹⁴¹ “Renewing the “Ex-Yugoslav” Pavilion in Auschwitz-Birkenau: towards a common exhibition space”, *UNESCO Office in Venice*, April 12, 2013 (http://www.unesco.org/new/en/venice/about-this-office/single-view/news/renewing_the_ex_yugoslav_pavilion_in_auschwitz_birkenau_towards_a_common_exhibition_space/#.VcY5Tfmqqko, last accessed September 12, 2015)

¹⁴² This paragraph is mostly the translation of the announcement on the webpage: “Poslednje odredište Aušvic”, *Seecult*, May 15, 2015 (<http://www.seecult.org/vest/poslednje-odrediste-ausvic>, last accessed September 12, 2015)

Content and the narrative of the exhibition

The topic of the exhibition concerns the Auschwitz concentration camp, in which from April 27th 1940 to January 27th 1945 more than 1.1 people were killed. More than 20,000 people were sent there from Yugoslavia and more than 12,000 from present day Serbia. This exhibition, however, does not present only the crimes committed during the Nazi regime occupation. It does not give self-explanatory and simplified reasons for the sufferings in Auschwitz, but it aims to contextualize the historical period when it happened, to expose the mechanisms that lead to such horrible events, and to logically and scientifically problematize the causes of this unique historical experience and its relation to Yugoslavia.

The exhibition is followed by a catalogue that is completely in accordance with the display and the professionally guided tour, thus I will use the catalogue for interpretation of the exhibition. By presenting the chapters from the catalogue, I will illustrate a fine way of making a scientific historical exhibition and of contextualizing the main topic of the exhibition. The catalogue of this exhibition can also be read as a comment to the exhibition ‘In the name of the people’, even though that was not by any means its goal. I will mainly refer to some historical facts relevant for the image of socialist Yugoslavia that is represented through this exhibition.

The *story* begins with the chapter “Yugoslavia and Europe 1918-1941” and the Yugoslav unification in the The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It gives the facts about political, economical and social circumstances in the newborn country. The text gives information about the prohibition of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Moreover, it gives information about parliamentary disputes in this country, personal dictatorship of King Aleksandar Karađorđević, the repressive measures over the opposition, the leftists and the students, as well as about the Great Depression.¹⁴³ Furthermore, the association of the king Aleksandar is mentioned and the change of the foreign policy after Prince Pavle Karađorđević came to rule in 1930. This chapter is significant because it shows how the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was an unstable country with lots of political and national leavenings

¹⁴³ *Final Destination Auschwitz: Catalogue of the exhibition*, 82-83

and the rulers were prone to authoritarian ruling. The prewar events are crucial for understanding the events in the occupied and dismantled Yugoslavia during the Second World War. The same way the interpretation of the historical events regarding The Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Second World War are crucial in the process of construction of the image of socialist Yugoslavia.

The chapters “Jewish Community in the Yugoslav State 1918-1941”, “The rise of Nazis” and “Anti-Semitism in the Yugoslav state” give a picture of the prewar Jewish community in Yugoslavia and the beginnings of the discrimination of the Jews in Yugoslavia. The anti-Semitism of the Yugoslav state is claimed to be caused by different traditional attitudes toward Jews and the political relations in the country on one side, and the international circumstances in the 1930s. The project of isolation of undesirable groups in Germany started in 1933 – the first concentration camp in the Third Reich was in Dachau from March 22nd 1933. The first to be sent to concentration camps were political opponents (communists and socialists), Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals and the Jews.¹⁴⁴ That was followed by laws for employment in public service, changes in education, burning of unsuitable books, etc. *Over 250 laws, decrees, regulations and orders were passed and implemented by official state institutions in the Third Reich.*¹⁴⁵ In the 1930s, however, the world kept an eye on events in Germany without interference.¹⁴⁶

As for anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia, *although numerically almost invisible on the map of religious and ethnic communities, in the 1930s the Jewish population became one of the targets of the New Right, strongly influenced by Nazi and Fascist concepts.*¹⁴⁷ The evolving of anti-Semitism, however, did not differ much from the other countries in Europe. In the 1930s, anti-Semitism was in growth, and the strongest supporters were some representatives of Orthodox and Catholic churches and fascist movements (Ante Pavelić’s Ustasha or Dimitrije Ljotić’s Yugoslav National Movement). In 1940 Cvetković-Maček government issued three anti-Semitic decrees, thus institutionalizing anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁸ However, opposing this anti-Semitic right, there was the strengthening of the Left in Serbia and Yugoslavia. From these information, it is shown how at first marginalized fascist, right-wing, anti-Semitic movements, such as Pavelić’s

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 87

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 88

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

and Ljotić's, became less marginalized over the years. The left was growing as well, but their representatives were subjected to repression.

The following chapter gives information about the April War, occupation and dismantling of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia signed the Tripartite pact in Vienna March 25th 1941, but during the night between March 26th and 27th a coup d'état happened and the government Cvetković-Maček was overthrown. The coup d'état was followed by demonstrations against the pact with Germany. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was invaded on April 6th by the Axis Powers. The invasion lasted for 11 days and the country's government capitulated. Yugoslavia was divided between the Axis Powers.¹⁴⁹ In the chapter "Occupation and quisling administration in Serbia 1941-1944" it is explained how the quisling government supported the occupying regime. The repressive measures were implemented by the new institutions. Mass executions of civilians were conducted and the network of camps was built since 1941.¹⁵⁰

The central part of the exhibition is the Holocaust. The text of the catalogue explains all the important facts about the Holocaust in Europe, but then gives more specific information about the camps in Serbia (the German-occupied territory). The facts given are results of a research done by the authors of the exhibition. The exhibition shows mechanism how and with whose help the anti-Jewish measures that included registration, labeling, hard labor, expropriation etc. were introduced and conducted in German-occupied Serbia.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, it gives information about the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, about the transports to this camp including transports from Yugoslavia. A list of transports from Yugoslavia to Auschwitz-Birkenau is given. An interesting fact is that the first people to be deported to Auschwitz from Yugoslavia were volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War.¹⁵² As in Germany, the political opponents to the regime were the first to be destroyed.

Finally, the authors of the exhibition ask a very important question related to the memory and oblivion. In the socialist period, the specificity of the Jewish victims was rarely highlighted as a unique historical period. After some time, in the 1950s, the Jewish community had initiative to commemorate the victims. The Yugoslav state only indirectly supported the commemorations.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 92

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 99

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 107

Today, in Europe, January 27th is the most important date for remembrance of the Holocaust in Europe. January 27th is the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On that day in 2000, Göran Persson, the Prime Minister of Sweden, organized the today well-known Stockholm conference with the aim to discuss possible educational and cultural policies regarding the commemoration of Holocaust 55 years after the liberation of Auschwitz.¹⁵³ In the year 2000, remembrance of the Holocaust becomes an official cultural policy recommendation of more than 50 countries that took part in adopting this Declaration. After the war, both in Europe and Yugoslavia, the remembrance was at first, after the war, subjected to personal and individual memories of the people that actually remembered the war and all that happened in the 40s. Later, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the remembrance found its way to the widest cultural sphere, and was being realized independently of the (European) countries, through civil and cultural dealing with the memory. In the year 2000, with a seemingly honest approach and care, the Prime Minister of Sweden Persson indicated the importance of ever-lasting memory of this most dreadful event in the recent history.

Forgetting about the Holocaust could in effect mean its relativization, denial, or even repetition. However, constant rethinking of the modes of remembering is also necessary, since there are numerous threats that come with all the good intentions.¹⁵⁴ The exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz” and the project the exhibition originated from are in accordance with the EU recommendations concerning the memory, but also are aware of the importance of the (re)questioning the ways of remembrance.

¹⁵³ In the official The Stockholm International Forum Conferences paper, the initial idea was illustrated by Göran Persson: *Of course, what lay behind it was the alarming inquiry made among schoolchildren that gave me the impression that the memory of the Holocaust was beginning to fade, and that young people were unsure whether it had happened or not. So I initiated the Living History project to tell the story through resource packages for schools, through films, conferences, concerts, speeches in the Parliament and so on. And this turned into a broad popular movement in the classic Swedish mould.* On that very conference, Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust – Education, Remembrance and Research has been adopted. In the fourth paragraph of this Declaration it is said: *We pledge to strengthen our efforts to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust, both in those of our countries that have already done much and those that choose to join this effort.* *The Stockholm International Forum Conferences (2000–2004)*, ed. Eva Fried (Stockholm: Swedish Government, 2006), retrieved from www.government.se (last accessed September 15, 2015), 20

¹⁵⁴ See also: Alaida Asman, *Duga senka prošlosti*, transl. Drinka Gojković (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 2011); Huub Van Baar, “Cultural policy and the governmentalization of Holocaust remembrance in Europe: Romani memory between denial and recognition”, in *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2011, 1–17;

COMPARISON OF THE TWO EXHIBITIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

If the two exhibitions, “In the name of the people” and “Final Destination – Auschwitz” are compared more closely, it appears that they have many similarities. Both exhibitions are projects conducted by the historians and not the curators of the museum and were only logistically supported by the museum curators. The topic of both exhibitions is unusual for the *Historical Museum of Serbia*, since its typical focus is the 19th century Serbia.

The goal of both exhibitions is to present the facts in an objective and well documented way, to confront the citizens of Serbia with a trauma in the past in order to prevent similar things from happening again. Both exhibitions concern concentration camps, repression and the victims of one system. Finally, both aim to be the place of investigation, remembrance, and debate. The only difference, it might seem, is that one questions the communist repression and the other questions the fascist repression.

This comparison might seem like a comparison between fascism and communism as well. However, since this paper is not in accordance with the current trend of equation of communism with fascism, these two exhibitions are interpreted as essentially different and opposed. While the first exhibition lacks the context and explanations, manipulates the numbers of the victims from an ethnocentric approach, presents victims next to the war criminals, investigates superficially and remembers selectively, the second exhibition contextualizes the Holocaust both geographically and historically, personalizes the real victims, presents the list of 11,886 names of the people sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau from the territory of Republic of Serbia, investigates carefully.

Also, while the first exhibition is ethnocentric, the exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz” comprehends the importance of both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cooperation between the different nations on the Balkans, by presenting the results of the research in a way that does not disregard the historical Yugoslav actuality. In the time when the nationalistic hatred is once again in growth in the Former Yugoslav Republics, the representatives initiate willingly making of a joint exhibition. Moreover, the exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz” does not

fall into trap of comparing communism with fascism. For this reason, the narrative of the exhibition differs greatly from the narrative of the exhibition “In the name of the people”.

Regarding the image of socialist Yugoslavia, we come to the question of the politics of display of *Historical Museum of Serbia*. From the analysis of the two recent exhibitions concerning the period of Yugoslavia in this museum, I conclude that the politics of display of this museum is to merely host the exhibitions concerning the (socialist) Yugoslav period and not participate more significantly in its display. The focus, therefore, is apparently in accordance with the ideas presented on the museum’s webpage. Still, if a twist from the exhibition “In the name of the people” to “Final Destination – Auschwitz” has not been incidental, then the politics of display of this museum might be in a true quality increase.

Finally, I will turn to the problem of cultural policy in Serbia in the years when these exhibitions were exhibited, which is 2011 to present. Information about cultural policy in Serbia can be found on the Compendium website about national cultural policies in Europe.¹⁵⁵ According to the authors Milena Dragičević-Šešić, Goran Tomka and Hristina Mikić, regarding the cultural policy in Serbia the period between March 2011 and November 2014 is the period of turbulence and incoherent policy – *there was no coherent policy with clear priorities, which makes it hard to comment upon.*¹⁵⁶ From May 2012, when the new Minister of Culture from the Serbian Progressive Party was appointed, the authors claim that from the statements and some actions it can be concluded that the focus was on “*renationalisazion*” of Serbian institutions and on material material and immaterial heritage preservation and presentation.¹⁵⁷ In autumn of 2013, a new Minister was elected once again, but the cultural policy remained unclear and even inexistent.

“In the Name of the People” and “Final Destination – Auschwitz” are two exhibitions that follow completely different cultural models – the first follows the ethno-nationalistic model, while the other exhibition follows a cultural model that promotes universal human rights and that is in its essence turned to reconciliation of the peoples of former Yugoslavia. Both these

¹⁵⁵ Serbia Council of Europe/ERICarts, *COMPENDIUM Cultural Trends and Policies in Europe: Country Profile SERBIA, 17th Edition*, last updated February 2015, prepared and updated by Milena Dragičević-Šešić, Goran Tomka and Hristina Mikić (retrieved from <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/countries.php>, last accessed September 14, 2015)

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

exhibitions were supported by the Ministry of Culture and Information of Republic of Serbia, which is a confirmation of the claim that there is no clear cultural policy in Serbia. Additionally, both exhibitions follow different European Union trends – the first has been described as the trend of discreditation of communism, while the other follows Göran Persson’s Holocaust remembrance policy. Finally, *Historical Museum of Serbia*, the institution under the patronage of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Culture and Information, does not have its own projects, at least when the topic is socialist Yugoslavia, and it adopts different discourses from the other institutions, organizations and initiatives.

POLITICS OF DISPLAY OF *MUSEUM OF YUGOSLAV HISTORY*

“YUGOSLAVIA FROM THE BEGINNING TO END”

The exhibition “Yugoslavia: from the Beginning to the End” was exhibited in *Museum of Yugoslav History* from December 1st 2012 to March 3rd 2013.¹⁵⁸ The exhibition authors are curator Ana Panić, sociologist Jovo Bakić and historians Srđan Cvetković, Ivana Dobrivojević, Hrvoje Klasić and Vladimir Petrović. This exhibition was announced as a proposal of a concept, content and organization of a new permanent exhibition of the *Museum of Yugoslav History*. The object of my explorations is the image of Yugoslavia presented in this exhibition, as well as the reasons why this has not become the permanent exhibition. In my analysis, I will rely mostly on the texts and images in the catalogue, since they offer the most relevant information about the exhibition.

This exhibition is an outcome of a regional project “New Old Museum” whose background is the idea to overcome post conflict problems, critically question the past and raise awareness of the common positive and negative heritage, thus establishing and developing intercultural dialogue on the territory of former Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁹ The project has been conducted with the partners from region, so this exhibition is comparable with the exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz”, which was also realized in cooperation with experts from former Yugoslav countries, and the call to critically question the past and overcome post conflict problems resembles both “Final Destination – Auschwitz” and “In the name of the people”. What is more, the author of one part of the exhibition is Srđan Cvetković, the author of the exhibition “In the name of the people”.

The exhibition is divided into six larger parts, which are “Yugoslavia – ID”, “The Peoples of Yugoslavia”, “The Seamy Side of the Regime”, “Yugoslavia in the World – The World in Yugoslavia”, “Economy and Society” and “The End of Yugoslavia”. The four smaller parts, “Assassinations”, “Croatian Spring and Serbian Liberals”, “Bad Dept – the Agrokomerc Affair”

¹⁵⁸ On December 1st 1918 the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was unified.

¹⁵⁹ *Yugoslavia: from the Beginning to the End*, ed. Ana Panić, transl. into English by Jelena Bajić (Belgrade: Museum of Yugoslav History, 2014), 3

and “Neue Slowenische Kunst”, are supposed to, outside the main narrative, highlight the crisis situation thus pointing out to the permanent presence of destabilizing elements in Yugoslavia. However, what I find most important in this exhibition is the narrative that can be read out of the historical content chosen for this exhibition. The narrative can be anticipated from the introduction to the exhibition, in which the curator Ana Panić explains:

*The nature of our ambition, when preparing the exhibition was not encyclopedic – to include all aspects of the social system or to present all available data. The aim of the exhibition was to create a space that will introduce the visitors, in a modern, attractive and objective way, to one of the most interesting and most controversial state-building experiments in the 20th century, as part of a modular exhibition, which opens up possibilities for adding content, the creation of multiple perspectives and involvement of visitors.*¹⁶⁰

In the very beginning, the author defines the Yugoslav state as an interesting but controversial state-building *experiment*, thus questioning the legitimacy and verity of this state. This problematic statement will be one of the guidelines for interpretation of the exhibition narrative.

Moreover, in the introduction it is clarified that lot of the topics related to the Yugoslav legacy remain “sensitive” and controversial, that many wars are in people’s heads and some battles have not ended yet, while Yugoslavism in the public discourse is most frequently reduced to Yugo-nostalgia.¹⁶¹ As for the question of authors, it is explained that *although the exhibition and the texts accompanying the exhibits are a product of teamwork, personal views of the members of the team of authors differ on many issues.*¹⁶² The note about the different personal views of the authors reveals the fact that the exhibition itself might not be a common project, but a compromise between several different authors, all of which might be satisfied with their parts of the exhibition, but dissatisfied with the entirety of the exhibition. Therefore, if the whole picture of the Yugoslav history is to be perceived, what kind of picture would it be?

The reader is not intrigued with the information in the catalogue that this exhibition is a selection of information about Yugoslavia, since every presentation is a conscious choice of the

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 4

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

author. The chosen content is crucial for the analysis in every way. Finally, it is explained in the catalogue that the scope of the interest of this exhibition ends with the year 1991 because, even though the word Yugoslavia was used until 2003, it was no longer built around the idea of Yugoslavism.¹⁶³ Finally, the conclusion suggests that the visitors will be able to get the whole picture only after seeing the whole exhibition. This can be interpreted as a belief that the breakup of Yugoslavia is not the concern of this exhibition.

Basic information about Yugoslavia is given in the chapter “Yugoslavia – ID”. The most interesting information, however, concern the descriptions of Yugoslav unification, the Second World War, the change of the political system after the war, as well as the breakup of Yugoslavia. The image of Yugoslav unification this exhibition gives is in accordance with the description of Yugoslavia as an interesting but controversial state-building experiment: *The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed after the decision of the big powers, in the second half of 1918 that the Habsburg Monarchy was beyond hope.*¹⁶⁴ This imperialistic explanation of the establishment of the state in the very beginning undermines the importance and autonomy of such an original undertaking, especially when we remember Čalić’s evaluation that unification of Yugoslavia cannot be interpreted as the unification of an artificial state. While, according to Čalić, the unification of Yugoslavia for many people became a symbol for a better life, the narrative of this exhibition is in accordance with the end of a sentence that exclaims *thus began the troubled history of Yugoslavia.*¹⁶⁵ Yugoslavia is presented in negative light from the very beginning. Consequently, if the country was a simple experiment, it was bound to sooner or later break up. This kind of interpretation of Yugoslavia is ethically very problematic, since it does not only implicitly discredit the Yugoslav heritage, but it rehabilitates all those responsible for its bloody breakup and hundreds of thousands dead and dispersed in the 1990s.

The first sentence in the part titled “Yugoslavism” implicitly offers one of the explanations why this country was never to last. *The two versions of Yugoslavism, the Serbian and the Croatian one differed considerably from one another in the 19th and early 20th century, even becoming mutually opposed.*¹⁶⁶ The reason, this text implies, is the everlasting antagonism

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 7

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 13

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8

between Serbian and Croatian people. Accordingly, the idea of unification was described as a *desperate cry*, the consequence of *political weakness*, so a *campaign promoting cultural kinship* was conducted.¹⁶⁷ The interesting photographs presented, however, such as a photograph from the “Second Yugoslav Art Exhibition” from 1906, contradict the text because they illustrate a true connection between the artists in the Yugoslav art colonies and exhibitions in the very beginning of the 20th century. These photographs demonstrate that the cultural connection between the peoples of Yugoslavia was not generated, but natural and self explanatory, as it is today. Still, the antagonisms between Serbs and Croats are highlighted in the smaller parts of the exhibition as well, for example by emphasizing the importance of the Cvetković-Maček agreement and assassination of the Croatian leaders in the parliament.¹⁶⁸ In the chapter about the peoples of Yugoslavia, alleged disintegrative factors are overemphasized, for instance the differences between the different Yugoslav languages and the fact that *the situation was further complicated by the use of two scripts – Latin and Cyrillic*.¹⁶⁹ To say that the use of two scripts is *complicated* legitimizes the cultural wars fought in post Yugoslavia, the illustration of which can be the change of the script from Latin to Cyrillic in the Novi Sad public transportation in January 2013. Even when presenting the aspirations for reform in the 1960s, the text offers only examples of Croatian ‘Spring’ and Serbian ‘Liberals’, which again excludes the other nations out of the image.

In the text accompanying the exhibition, the Second World War was described as *the four-year chaos that followed was not only a war against the occupying forces, but it also had the features of a remarkably cruel inter-ethnic and ideological war where everybody fought everybody else and more than a million people perished*.¹⁷⁰ After the war, *the capitalist social system was replaced by the socialist one, while the monarchy was substituted by a federation consisting of six republics*.¹⁷¹ On page 14, antifascist demonstrations, capitulation of the country, genocide over the Serbs in NDH and Chetnik massacres are casually mentioned, while the National Liberation Movement and the establishment of the new state are mentioned in one sentence. In comparison to Čalić, who seeks for legitimization of the socialist system in the

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 10

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 20

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

National Liberation Movement, detachment from Stalin, Non-Alignment Movement and modernization of Yugoslavia, this text does not at all explain how the partisan take-over happened. On the contrary, seven pages of the catalogue of the exhibition are covered with the chapter “The Seamy Side of the Regime”. Part of this chapter presents the repression over communists and civil politicians after 1929, especially during the student demonstrations in 1936 and 1937.¹⁷² But, the parts titled “Stalinism in Yugoslavia”, “Repurchase and Collectivization”, “Political Oppression”, “Elections” and “Cult of Personality” are most definitely written by Srđan Cvetković, since they resemble most of the parts of the exhibition “In the name of the people”. This segment is ethnocentric, as is the exhibition “In the name of the people”. An uninformed viewer of the exhibition would, therefore, not understand how the take-over happened, and would get the image of socialist Yugoslavia similar to the one Cvetković offers in his latter exhibition.

The chapter “Yugoslavia in the World – World in Yugoslavia” gives an image of Yugoslav international position, as well as its culture, sport and tourism. Yugoslav position and its role during the cold war is described as *far greater than the country’s size and significance*.¹⁷³ Freedom of movement is also mentioned in a positive manner, but it was described as a sole consequence of the Cold War and Tito’s sly balancing between the east and the west.

The Yugoslav passport achieved legendary status for allowing its holders visa-free access to most of the countries around the world. But, this position of Yugoslavia resulted, to a large extent, from the bipolar context of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War found the country without a new concept. The crisis of the Yugoslav society that grew deeper and deeper after Tito’s death, eventually led to the disintegration of the country, its international isolation and the war after which all successor states have been striving, with varying degrees of success, to achieve the goal of EU membership and thus redefine their position in the world again.

As the unification was described in the beginning as a result of the international relations, in this paragraph the breakup of Yugoslavia is attributed to the crisis after the end of the cold war, which brings us back once again to the thought of the year 1989.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 24-25

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 30

It is very important to mention the style of the text. Every mentioned positive side of socialist Yugoslavia is followed by a sentence that relativizes the good sides of the legacy. I will give the example of the text about the women's emancipation, which I will, for the purpose of comparison, quote in whole:

*The process of women's emancipation began only after the end of World War II. Women received the right to vote (in 1946) and became increasingly present on the job market. In spite of the proclaimed equality, the situation of women in the first post-war years was far from idyllic. The dividing line between male and female work was disappearing, but still women earned less and were considered to be non-profitable and expensive labour which belonged in the home "since motherhood is also an important thing". Partial economic independence enabled women to become the initiators of divorce and take over sole care of the children. The number of extra-marital children was increasing, but pressure from the surroundings and the ruling morality in all republics except for Slovenia made young mothers "for the most part want to get rid of their children". Assistance from public institutions, on the rare occasions when there was any, in practice came down to "separating the child from the mother", not supporting and encouraging the woman to raise the child on her own. The 1960s and particularly the 1970s brought a major change. Patriarchal notions were slowly disappearing, and an increasing number of women graduated from secondary schools and universities and took on a more prominent role in society. However, up to the break-up of Yugoslavia, in the most cases women remained the lesser paid and lesser esteemed work force.*¹⁷⁴

On the contrary, Čalić gives a completely different image than this exhibition. She claims that socialist Yugoslavia brought the most emancipator changes to women; the constitution from 1946 for the first time guaranteed full legal, economic and social gender equality.¹⁷⁵ The girls, same as boys, had to go to elementary school, while the women were able to inherit and own private property, to vote and to act politically.¹⁷⁶ What is more, in the 1950s, the state guaranteed the legal equality of marital and extramarital children, divorce was liberalized, as well was the right

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 41

¹⁷⁵ Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku*, 268

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

to abortion.¹⁷⁷ Even though this might not have been in praxis 100% respected, due to the patriarchal traditions and *weltanschauung* even today widespread in the Balkans, to have a country that introduces this policy in the 1950s is positively emancipating and revolutionary. Therefore, the narrative of the exhibition that constantly reduces the emancipating legacy by giving the good examples in short, simple sentences and explaining all the negative sides minutely is incorrect. The ending sentence that states that *women remained the lesser paid and lesser esteemed work force* until the break-up is redundant because this is not the distinction of socialist Yugoslavia, but it is the characteristic of the former Yugoslav countries today, as well as, unfortunately, the most of the world.

One of the final texts concerns the end of Yugoslavia, which is once again seen in the international balance of power and the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also in the responsibility of some of the politicians, such as Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tuđman, who intensified nationalistic sentiments of the widest social classes. However, even more important is the ending text of the curator Ana Panić, titled “Conclusion, or who still remembers Yugoslavia and how?” The author concludes that it is essential to develop awareness of both positive and negative inheritance, in order to be able to deal with the problems that follow conflicts.¹⁷⁸ Still, the general impression is that the negative legacy is more represented than the positive one, so the representation of Yugoslavia in this exhibition is problematic. Yugoslavia is seen as an artificial country that was established and broken up because of the foreign international influence. Nationalism is represented as one of the reasons for the break-up as well, but it is justified through the whole exhibition by insisting on the inherent inability of the Serbs and Croats to live in the same country. This view is problematic because it eliminates responsibility from those responsible for the break-up of the war by laying all the guilt on the former, destroyed country.

Finally, it is not clear how the avoidance of all the disputable events, apart from the antagonism between the Serbs and Croats mainstreamed in the exhibition as it is in media and politics today, can solve any conflicts and open a dialogue. The thesis of the author is not clear at all, which brings the conclusion that the exhibition actually does not have an author, but is a compromise between several different authors. The curator Ana Panić calls for a dialogue through this exhibition. *The dissonance of memories is evident*, she writes, *which is why*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Yugoslavia: from the Beginning to the End*, 61

*polyvocality is the only right direction, along with establishing a dialogue and presenting different interpretations of the past. It is clear that personal memories, only when incorporated into a defined historical framework, based on relevant scientific research, can jointly paint a picture of Yugoslavia.*¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, even when the exhibition calls for a dialogue, it cannot be a dialogue itself, but it needs to have a thesis.

The visual structure of the exhibition most likely describes the core discourse of the museum: *The choice of material for the exhibition supports the basic idea of the display strategy. Thin wood laths, cardboard and brown paper are used to show the history of an ephemeral and controversial experiment that now exists on paper only, but has still not become sufficiently known or sufficiently clear, either to those who created it or those who lived it.*¹⁸⁰ After the analysis, I conclude that this exhibition is more of *an ephemeral and controversial experiment* and that it needs a lot of alter in order to become a permanent exhibition.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 61

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 59

YUGO-NOSTLAGIA IN THE *MUSEUM OF YUGOSLAV HISTORY*

If we remember the vision of the *Museum of Yugoslav History* presented on the website of the museum, the museum is supposed to contextualize the issues and topics of socialist Yugoslavia in the current social, political and cultural circumstances. Moreover, in that vision, the *Museum of Yugoslav History* becomes a modern museum, a place of meeting, dialogue and debate. Since most of the museum exhibitions have an accompanying program of debates and public talks, we can say that the museum is the place of dialogue and debate in some way. In the further analysis the focus will be not on the accompanying program, but on three different exhibitions, their concepts and narratives. The main question in this analysis is if and how the exhibitions contextualize the issues of socialist Yugoslavia in the present circumstances.

The focus will also be on the question of nostalgia, more specifically Yugo-nostalgia. In the light of Dimitrijević's mention of Yugo-nostalgia as nostalgia for abandoned or unaccomplished potentials of something in the past, I will explore the essence of nostalgia for socialist Yugoslavia, and question whether it fulfills the potential of critique of contemporary economic, political and social relations. I will also requestion Dimitrijević's conclusion that the apoliticalness of Yugo-nostalgia is a reflection of a cynical, post-utopian mind that cares only about the possibility and reality of commodification. Dimitrijević refers to two dominant images of Yugo-nostalgic touch. The first is the image of Josip Broz Tito, and the other is in the domain of consumer culture. Consequently, I have chosen to analyze the exhibitions "The Grand Illusion" and "They Never Had it Better?", because the first one has the image of Tito in its center, while the other exhibition, the topic of which is the everyday life in socialist Yugoslavia, touches the domain of consumer culture. Lastly, I will write about the exhibition "Figures of Memory", one of the most interesting exhibitions of this museum, set permanently in the *House of Flowers* in May 2015.

One of the exhibitions that puts Tito in the center is the exhibition "The Grand Illusion: Tito and 24 million meters of celluloid", curated by Momo Cvijović, museum advisor, and Marija Đorgović, curator of *Museum of Yugoslav History*. It was exhibited from November 11th until December 18th 2014, and it was open for visitors, unconventionally, only in the evening, with the idea of creating the impression of going to cinema. As the announcement of the

exhibition says, *this project is dedicated to the great passion of Josip Broz Tito for all forms of moving pictures – movies, newsreels and other film and documentary forms.*¹⁸¹ This project is, therefore, about Tito and films. It consisted of the exhibition and the screening of films every evening, which was integral part of the exhibition. The core of the exhibition is the insight into the filming of the documentary *Tito – Notes of a Cinematographer*, as well as a carefully kept book of record of films Tito has been watching almost every day and the reconstruction of the room where Tito and his wife Jovanka Broz watched films.

What is the connection between Tito and film? As the catalogue of the exhibition suggests, Josip Broz Tito was a grand admirer of films. *Between 1949 and 1980 he watched a total of 8,801 films, an average of 285 per year. As the usual length of film is 2,700 meters, this means that Tito, in the last third of his life alone, saw about 24 million meters of images on film.*¹⁸² Cinema was integral part of all Tito's homes, even his yacht "Galeb" and his carriage in the Blue Train.¹⁸³ The exhibition tends to explore Tito's role as a watcher of films, but also as an actor, shadow director and the most powerful producer.¹⁸⁴ The text in the catalogue also refers to Pula festival, where Tito was one of the most important guests. According to the authors of the exhibition Tito's relation to films was ambivalent; on one side, he liked to relax while watching films, especially the foreign ones, while on the other side he watched domestic films *with Leninisque awareness of film as the most important art.*¹⁸⁵ The films with the topic of National Liberation Struggle were seen as important places of remembrance, as well as the important segment of foreign policy, so Tito watched it together with his foreign guests. Additionally, it appears natural that Tito was so fond of National Liberation Struggle thematic, since he was an active participant in those events.¹⁸⁶ For Tito, film was also a powerful informative and educational resource.

¹⁸¹ "The Grand Illusion", *Museum of Yugoslav History*

(<http://www.mij.rs/en/exhibitions/240/the-grand-illusion.html>, last accessed September 12, 2015)

¹⁸² *The Grand Illusion: Tito and 24 million meters of celluloid, November 11th-December 18th, 2014*, *Museum of Yugoslav History*, ed. Momo Cvijović and Marija Đorgović, transl. Steve Agnew, 10-11 (Belgrade: Museum of Yugoslav History, 2014)

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 12

¹⁸⁴ "The Grand Illusion", *Museum of Yugoslav History*

(<http://www.mij.rs/en/exhibitions/240/the-grand-illusion.html>, last accessed September 12, 2015)

¹⁸⁵ *The Grand Illusion: Tito and 24 million meters of celluloid*, 12

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 12-13

The exhibition “The Grand Illusion” explores the relation between the illusion and reality. There are two different aspects of this exhibition. In both aspects the central person of the exhibition is Tito and, more specifically, the book with the record of the films he had watched. The first aspect encompasses the films that are in the book of record, which contains an amazing number of different films. The other, more important aspect concerns the image of Tito that can be constructed from a heterogeneous group of information (in this case, once again, this book of record). It gives the visitors possibility of interpretation of what kind of films Tito liked and enjoyed watching. The presence of the documentary *Tito - Notes of a Cinematographer* about Tito’s usual day, which includes the private parts such as a stroll with his wife, meetings and the inevitable film streaming, examines the possibility of ever understanding what the reality behind the delusional image of Tito constructed through various different sources is.

A look at the book of record does not tell the visitor anything special, except that valuable and interesting information can be found in it. This heterogeneous list can be a source of many different stories. Eight stories were offered to the visitors of the exhibition by the eight selectors who had analyzed the book of record and made a selection of five films each. These cinematic stories are the integral part of the exhibition. The eight selectors examine the list and attempt to conclude what Tito’s persona was like. What do they conclude?

In the selection of “Films he didn’t like”, selected by Momo Cvijović, there are different films of Yugoslav production Tito was not fond of. Among these films is a black wave film *Biće skoro propast sveta (It Rains in My Village, 1969)*, directed by Aleksandar Petrović. In the catalogue, Cvijović quotes Tito’s conversation with the film workers in 1969, when on the topic of black wave films he said: *Never mind that even I believe that there are certain negative things in our social reality, it is clear that these can’t be treated in the way they are treated in some films. Because they are treated as being hopeless, while our social practice is precisely that we try to eliminate negative things.*¹⁸⁷ The visitors have the opportunity to watch five films Tito did not like, and to wonder about the possible reasons of his dislike.

Another interesting selection is the one by Marija Đorgović, which brings five films directed by the artists decorated by Tito with the Order with the Yugoslav Star with the Ribbon and the Order of the Yugoslav Flag with Gold Wreath. From the narrative of this selection we

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 32-33

find out that some of the decorated directors were Charlie Chaplin, Laurence Olivier and Ingmar Bergman and that all of them were highly thankful to get an Order from *the great antifascist, one of the greatest fighters against fascism*, and from *Marshall*, whose rank is given not by decree but by the war against Hitler.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, Aleksandar Erdeljanović's selection consists of five movies from 1957, when Tito saw record 365 films. Erdeljanović concludes that *the founder of self-management and non-alignment, opposed to any kind of elitism, watched films both good and bad, from all around the world.*¹⁸⁹ Denis Savatić through his selection problematizes Tito's possible view on the counterculture of the 1960s, selecting the films *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), *Easy Rider* (1969), *Hair* (1979), *Zabriskie Point* (1970). In the end of his text, Savatić implies that *perhaps, from all this, it can be concluded that this was a revolution that Tito set through*, and that, even though he was not actively and willingly involved in it, *as a responsible statesman, in some sense he welcomed it.*¹⁹⁰

In all these selections, the constant is that they all open different topics, ask questions and wonder about the possible answers. Who is Tito, they wonder? Can we answer the questions that are implied in the narratives of the selections? The answer is – we cannot know. This exhibition does not present the image of Tito, but it presents an intersection of possible views people may have about Tito. The exhibition does not examine the verity of the image of Tito the visitors, curators and the public have, but it examines their everlasting desire to know more about Yugoslav president Tito. As it is explained in the catalogue, *the exhibition examines the obsession with Tito and almost fetishist approach to his life, the constant need to peer into his privacy*. This can be illustrated by the most interesting part of the exhibition, when the visitor bows in order to look through four keyholes. Through the first three keyholes the visitor sees cadres of three different films, one of which is *Pinocchio*, one of the last films Tito saw before his death. The fourth keyhole, however, surprises the spectator, since she sees herself bowing and watching through the keyhole, recorded from behind.

The title of the exhibition, “The Grand Illusion”, suggests that what we might think we know about Tito is a grand illusion, and that we can only be curious, but we can never find out all we ever wonder about him and his life and personality. “The Grand Illusion” tends to examine

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 37

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 41

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53

the image of Tito as a cultural representation and the visitor's relation to it. Also, it tends to repeat the ritual of the past, by streaming the films for the audience as they were once streamed to Tito, and to interact with the audience and their emotions, intellect, memory and affection in an interesting way. However, the exhibition in the end does not offer any interpretation or the narrative; it asks many questions, but the only answer it gives is that we cannot know the answer. Moreover, it offers to the visitors the possibility of ironic distance regarding their own presence in that museum and their own curiosity. In this new context, curiosity and fetishistic approach to Tito's life are no longer genuine, as they become a cultural phenomenon which can be reproduced while visiting the museum. In accordance with that, it can be said that, while fulfilling one part of the audience's genuine expectations, which to know more about Tito, the exhibition in a way produces those expectations for the other part of the audience, but this time with a touch of irony.

What kind of image of socialist Yugoslavia does this exhibition about Tito (and about our obsessions) create? Is the image of socialist Yugoslavia reflected in the image of Yugoslav president? In the end of the catalogue, director Rajko Grlić, the guest selector for "The Grand Illusion", after choosing five films explains: *Watching him (Tito) as an audience of these films would have helped me to understand earlier and better where I was born and the kind of country in which I have lived a full 44 years.*¹⁹¹ This sentence is an illustration of the frequent identification of socialist Yugoslavia with Josip Broz Tito, which is certainly a simplification. It is similar to the simplifications such is the commonly heard claim that the cause of the break-up of Yugoslavia was Tito's death. Even though it is not explicitly stated by the exhibition, the general impression is that the message this exhibition sends is that, like the representations of Tito's persona, socialist Yugoslavia is a not more than a grand illusion. Therefore, the politics of display is to *question*, but never *give interpretations*. This is comparable to Ana Panić's notice that socialist Yugoslavia is *an ephemeral and controversial experiment that now exists on paper only, but has still not become sufficiently known or sufficiently clear, either to those who created it or those who lived it.*¹⁹² Nevertheless, is it really true that a coherent story about socialist Yugoslavia cannot be told? Or the politics of display in the *Museum of Yugoslav History* is to avoid offering any kind of interpretation?

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 64

¹⁹² *Yugoslavia: from the Beginning to the End*, ed. Ana Panić, 59

In the mid 2010s, how do we tell a story about socialist Yugoslavia and how can we contextualize it in the present social, economic and cultural circumstances? I will return to some of the topics that the exhibition opens in the selection, but fails to contextualize. First of all, there is the selection “Films he didn’t like”, and the mention of the black wave film. In this segment it is said that Tito *did not like films of the black wave, that he often criticized them, describing them as harmful and politically inappropriate.*¹⁹³ By insisting on the claim that Tito *couldn’t stand* the films of the black wave, while he was very fond of the films about the war, especially the National Liberation Struggle, this segment implicitly supports the interpretation that the black wave was a part of a dissident struggle against the totalitarian state. This segment makes the visitor wonder why Tito disliked the black wave films, while the lack of context directs the visitor into thinking in *black and white* picture. In the search of the possible context, we might have in mind that the black wave directors are a heterogeneous group of authors, and that one of the common characteristics is the fact that all of them were produced in socialist Yugoslavia, as well as their aspiration for a better socialist society. So it needs to be highlighted that the black wave films were a specific product of socialist Yugoslavia, as well were the partisan war films.

In her comprehensive study *Coca-Cola Socialism: The Americanization of Yugoslav Popular Culture in the 1960s*, Radina Vučetić gives a lot of information about the Yugoslav film production in the 1960s. Vučetić puts the production of Yugoslav films in the context of the influence. On one hand, there is the American influence that was warmly welcomed by both the critique and the regime, while the regime did not look so favorably on the films inspired by French, Italian or Swedish films that showed reality in a critical way.¹⁹⁴ The black wave films were, of course, under the influence of the latter. It is a common opinion that many films were forbidden by the regime. However Vučetić states that *Grad* (1963), directed by Kokan Rakonjac, Živojin Pavlović and Marko Babac, was the only forbidden film in socialist Yugoslavia,¹⁹⁵ while, for example, Žilnik’s film *Rani radovi* (1969) was defended on the court and public streaming of this film was allowed.¹⁹⁶ Pavlović’s film *Zaseda* (1969) was even awarded for directing and got the diploma of critique “Septima” on the Pula festival in 1970, while the other films of the black

¹⁹³ *The Grand Illusion: Tito and 24 million meters of celluloid*, 32

¹⁹⁴ Radina Vučetić, *Koka-kola socijalizam: Amerikanizacija jugoslovenske popularne kulture šezdesetih godina XX veka* (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2012), 139

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 149

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 151

wave got many different international acknowledgements and simultaneously received more and more sympathy from Yugoslav critique and the audience.¹⁹⁷ Aleksandar Petrović's film *Biće skoro propast sveta* (*It Rains in My Village*, 1969) was named the best piece of republic production in 1969 by the Fond for advancement of Serbian cinematography, while the second and third place were taken by the films *Kad budem mrtav i beo* directed by Živojin Pavlović, *Podne* by Puriša Đorđević and *Nevinost bez zaštite* by Dušan Makavejev.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, in 1967, the black wave directors were chosen to represent Yugoslav country on a special two-week festival of Yugoslav film held in New York MoMA museum.¹⁹⁹

These are only some details that can be interesting in presenting the context and it would be valuable and informative if they were the part of the exhibition. The part of the exhibition dedicated to the black wave films lacks a variety of relevant information and it leans on the popular and simplified opinion that Tito disliked the black wave films because they were critical towards the socialist Yugoslavia and consequently the black wave films were forbidden. The fact that many black wave films won the awards on the Pula festival opposes the also popular belief that Tito was the one who chose which films can and which cannot be shown in Pula festival. Even if he had been the one who was to decide about the Pula festival, the fact that he openly disliked the films and nevertheless “let” them be shown on the festival and win the awards could tell us something about his personality. This is one possible context that could have been presented in the exhibition, and it is a disappointment that it was missing.

The other selection that I will contextualize is the one in which Denis Savatić problematizes Tito's possible view on the counterculture and the student protests in 1968. Savatić's remark is attention-grabbing, since it implies that Tito *sat through* this revolution, and that he *welcomed it* even though he was not *actively and willingly involved in it*. In June 1968 several thousand politically aware students demonstrated and blocked the building of University in Belgrade; the next day, demonstrations expanded to Ljubljana, Zagreb and Sarajevo. A lot of intellectuals and cultural workers supported the students.²⁰⁰ The protests were against “red bourgeoisie” and the demonstrators criticized the party, while asking for democratic rights, social

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 153

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 154

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 155

²⁰⁰ Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Istorija Jugoslavije u 20. veku*, 289

justice and improvement of the students' conditions.²⁰¹ Branislav Dimitrijević sees the happenings in 1968 as a consequence of the economic liberalization that was introduced through the Constitution from 1963 and economic reforms in 1965, which resulted with problems typical for any market economy – firing almost 13 thousand workers, the increase of unemployment, etc.²⁰² These are the years when significant social differences were becoming visible in Yugoslav society, so the students demonstrated against class stratification and advocated the return to the elementary principles of Marxism.²⁰³ This tendency is directly comparable to the black wave films which also in the 1960s expressed a wish for a better socialist society. However, for Dimitrijević these demonstrations were also an indicator that the new, radical cultural identities created in the 1960s in the west (in the domain of youth and alternative culture) were also decisive for forming the critical mind in political, social, psychological and cultural processes in capitalist, consumer societies.²⁰⁴

The best example for this western influence is the setting of Broadway musical *Hair* in Belgrade in 1969, while the preparation for this premier started only several months after the demonstrations in 1968. *Hair* is a typical product of the late sixties, a unique performing piece that engages the topics of hippy and antiwar movements, sexual revolution, protests and drugs. After the premier in Belgrade, one of the authors of *Hair* stated that he is against all bourgeoisies, wherever they can be found.²⁰⁵ Since *Hair* is one of the films Savatić's selection, it would have been interesting to get to know more about the context – the student demonstrations, the demand for the return to the authentic Marxist standpoints, the western influences and generally the leftist political aspirations that were happening in the end of the 1960s, and that are so evidently absent today.

What clearly misses in the exhibition is the political aspect that could be successfully imbedded into the narrative. The narrative about the late 1960s market economy problems and student protests is directly comparable to the present circumstances that could be problematized by this comparison. The level of unemployment and the average salaries in socialist Yugoslavia

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Branislav Dimitrijević (2011): (PhD dissertation), *Utopijski konzumerizam: nastanak i protivrečnosti potrošačke kulture u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji (1950-1970)*, 75-76

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 78-79

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Radina Vučetić, *Koka-kola socijalizam: Amerikanizacija jugoslovenske popularne kulture šezdesetih godina XX veka*, 273

and in today's Serbia could be compared, as well as the details about the social differences, etc. Thomas Picketty's research study *Capital in the 21st century* might be a good start for this comparison. Moreover, a comparison could be made between different student protests – in the 1960s, in the 1990s and today. Even without going into a deeper analysis about the student protests today, it is obvious that, unlike the protests in the 1960s that were openly political and pointed against the class stratification, and the student protests in the 1990s that were mainly pointed directly against the regime, the student protests of the 2010s are troublesomely apolitical, while the demonstrators are afraid of any requests that might be interpreted as political, let alone *leftist*. Instead of requesting free education for all, which would be an openly political act, the students demonstrate and ask for solving the particular and onetime problems of, for instance, the number and the cost of ECTS points, which is so complicated to explain that nobody is interested in listening to those problems. Nevertheless, the politics of display of this museum could be to compare the past politicalness and the present nonparticipation in politics, because in that way the nostalgia for the past could really be instrumentalized into positively changing the present.

This exhibition, as well as the others in the *Museum of Yugoslav History*, fails to do so. Instead of problematizing the present circumstances, they problematize the issues of socialist Yugoslavia in order to demythologize them. This is important for the problem of Yugo-nostalgia, but before referring to that, I will mention without a detailed analysis some elements of the exhibition “They Never Had it Better?”. The exhibition was curated by Ana Panić in collaboration with historians Igor Duda and Ivana Dobrivojević from December 27, 2014 to February 17, 2015. What is noticeable in the very beginning is the fact that the title of this exhibition is again *a question*. This exhibition is about the everyday life in Yugoslavia, but with the question mark in the title we can conclude that it does not only present, but it tries to problematize the image of everyday life in Yugoslavia.

In the introduction to the catalogue,²⁰⁶ it is stated that, according to a relevant research, almost 70% of people in Serbia regret that Yugoslavia stopped existing. Moreover, it is claimed that people have the right to their own memories even though those memories are romanticized and perhaps even politically ill-suited today. It seems as if the exhibition intends to question the “mythologizing” of socialist Yugoslavia by the people who in that country, as it is explained,

²⁰⁶ NIKAD *im bolje nije bilo? : modernizacija svakodnevnog života u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji*, ed. Ana Panić, 8-9 (Beograd: Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, 2014)

had free education, after that got employed, received the apartment from the state, had their health insurance paid by the state and go to vacation every year. Apart from the intention to demythologize the image of socialist Yugoslavia, it is stated that the aim of this exhibition is, paradoxically, to invite the audience to think about potentials of the Yugoslav society, since Yugo-nostalgia can be a productive analytical category and a way of mobilization of socialist heritage in political negotiation about the present and the future. In addition, it is written that this exhibition tends to oppose the exhibitions that aim to produce nostalgic memories for good old times, in which nostalgia is used merely as a powerful marketing instrument.

This introduction testifies that there is an awareness of the problem of the way nostalgia affects people, or, more precisely, the problem is that nostalgia is often apolitical. We have concluded that the exhibitions often fail to fulfill the potential of being straightforwardly critical and political, while they are often too critical to the issues of socialist Yugoslavia. This was the case of the exhibition “Yugoslavia From the Beginning to the End”. It appears that this exhibition also produces nostalgic memories for good old times, having in mind that the chosen showpieces were mostly consumer objects such as Iskra’s yellow telephone device, Centroproizvod’s coffee box, PKB’s Glass for Milk, many candy and chocolate boxes, followed by some statues and apparently inevitable prison chain from the prison in Sremska Mitrovica, mentioned already in connection with the exhibition “In the Name of the People”. The exhibition “They Never Had it Better?”, opened one year after the exhibition “Yugoslavia from the beginning to the end”, seems to be an improvement in comparison to the former exhibition, since it actually challenges the audience to requestion the socialist system with the interesting, yet slightly confusing and too detailed text that follow the photographs.

However, the multicolor, eye-appealing display outweighs the potential critiques of the present implicitly hidden in the exhibition content. The visitors are enchanted by a great number of interesting pictures and, while they are minutely introduced with all the problems of the socialist Yugoslavia (which, according to the curator of the exhibition, needs to be demythologized), the exhibition lacks political dimension and a more radical comparison with the present. In that way, even though the aim might have been different, the everyday life of socialist Yugoslavia is stored into a museum, detached from the real life and it does not encourage the visitor to rethink the present and future political system.

Branislav Dimitrijević suggested that Yugo-nostalgia might be nostalgia for the unaccomplished potential of something in the past. After the analysis, we see that this usually is not true, because Yugo-nostalgia is in most cases apolitical. The apoliticalness of Yugo-nostalgia might be, as Dimitrijević suggests, a reflection of a cynical, post-utopian mind that cares only about commodification. This explanation can be supplemented with Frederic Jameson's concept of nostalgia film. According to Frederic Jameson, nostalgia films in the postmodern times *restructure the whole issue of pastiche and project it onto a collective and social level, where the desperate attempt to appropriate a missing past is now refracted through the iron law of fashion change and the emergent ideology of the generation.*²⁰⁷ Jameson argues that the 1950s, as the lost object of desire - at least in American society - were the first historical period to be stylistically recuperated, followed by the *aesthetic colonization* of 1930s period in the contemporary culture.²⁰⁸ Still, nostalgia film reproduces the past merely in the domain of style, while it fails to be a representation of historical content by *conveying "pastness" by the glossy qualities of the image, and "1930s-ness" or "1950s-ness" by the attributes of fashion.*²⁰⁹ Yugo-nostalgia resembles nostalgia film a lot, as well as the current depoliticized retro trend in which, as one article suggests, the middle class uses working class culture to create new markers of distinction.²¹⁰ Judging by the analyzed exhibitions, Yugo-nostalgia might be more nostalgia for the form, for the image, than for the (historical and political) content of Yugoslav socialist past. In that way, the apoliticalness of nostalgia actually is only the care about commodification, since mainly the commodity and aesthetics is dominating, and not the political act.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 18 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991)

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ Sylvie Tussot's article titled *Mythologies of the Hipster* evaluates the current discussions about Hipster culture, suggests that *Hipsters have become a mythology in the sense that French linguist and critic Barthes spoke of: an ideological and depoliticized discursive construction, where privileged groups are invisible and the oppressed ridiculed*, and concludes that we should *make up new words that really account for class divisions. Because they are real.* (<http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2189-sylvie-tissot-mythologies-of-the-hipster>, accessed September 12, 2015)

²¹¹ Maybe the most interesting example of this apolitical Yugo-nostalgia and its connection to *nostalgia film* is occupation of the cinema "Zvezda" in December 2014 by the collective "Ministry of Space" and the students of Faculty of Dramatic Arts. In theory, this act had an enormous political potential of demanding for the end of criminal and devastating privatizations that have been happening in the 2000s, as well as the demonstration against the growing gap between the rich and the poor in Belgrade and in Serbia. Activists of the "Ministry of Space" have been preparing for this "occupation" for over a year, and have intended to act politically (as they do in their campaign *Ne da(vi)mo Beograd!*). However, the students of Faculty of Dramatic Arts, who joined the occupation of the cinema, stated that this should be an apolitical act where the aim is to remind the people of the cinemas that are today only in

If the *Museum of Yugoslav History* is to fulfill its vision of being a place of meeting, dialogue and debate, the place of education and the place of criticism of the world outside of the museum, its politics of display needs to be more radical in critique of the present and differently critical of the socialist past. The exhibitions need to be more political, the cultural artifact needs to become the object of political analysis and that can be reached through the smart choice of the context that would be presented. The social, cultural, political and economic story of socialist Yugoslavia must be presented in continuity with today's circumstances, because if the visitors are presented continuity and connections, their nostalgia might have become more political as well.

Finally, one exhibition stands out from the other exhibitions. The exhibition in question is a permanent exhibition recently opened in the *Museum of Yugoslav History*, "Figures of Memory". This exhibition, set in the *House of Flowers* and curated by Vesna Mikelić, senior curator at the *Museum of Yugoslav History*, Marija Đorgović and Radovan Cukić, curators at the *Museum of Yugoslav History*, was opened on May 25th 2015. The exhibition opening marked the 35th anniversary of the death of Josip Broz Tito and the 70th anniversary of the first baton relay race that happened on May 25th 1945.

The exhibition seems to be still in progress (the catalogue is not yet made), but the description of the exhibition opening on May 25th and the context the exhibition was opened in encompasses all the important aspects of this exhibition. As the text on the website of the Museum suggests, the aim of this exhibition was to show the mechanisms of collective memory, to offer an innovative way of interpreting the museum collections, archive material and documentary video material and to link them to the present moment. This exhibition appears very inventive if we have in mind the problematic of making any kind of exhibitions in the House of Flowers. *The House of Flowers*, the place where Josip Broz Tito (since 2013 Jovanka Broz as well) were buried, is a part of the museum that does not require an exhibition in order to be visited, especially on May 25th when thousands of people come every year.

the shopping centers, so the activists of the "Ministry of space" retreated. Apolitical Yugo-nostalgia can here be detected in the nostalgia for the *form* of socialist Yugoslav cinemas, but not for the general *context* in which and because of which these cinemas existed. On the cinema *opening*, there was a screening of Mina Đukić's film *The Disobedient*, a film that can be described as a *nostalgia film*; in the words of Frederic Jameson, *a missing past is now refracted through the iron law of fashion change and the emergent ideology of the generation*. In this case, the object of desire is the childhood of the generation born in the 1980s, and the film reproduces this past in the domain of the style and retro image, music and the appearance of the important 1980s childhood figure – Minja Subota. Nevertheless, this film is extreme in its lack of the context, both past and present, and the visible aim to be completely apolitical and not connected to the real world it was filmed in.

In socialist Yugoslavia, May 25th was Youth Day, a public holiday when Tito's birthday was celebrated and the baton relay races were held. Every year, Tito received many different batons, and around 200 of them are exhibited as a part of the permanent exhibition in the House of Flowers. A video installation of the archive footage of the Youth Day celebration followed this segment of the exhibition. This segment is in the first room, and it relates to the time when Tito was the leader of Yugoslavia, from 1945 to 1980. The second segment is dedicated to the year of Tito's death, more specifically the funeral. Grand photographs from the funeral are exposed, showing the number and the variety of people who came to the funeral. Finally, the third segment refers to the period after Tito's death. In the memorial books, kept from 1982 to present, citizens, groups of workers, associations and young people from the former Yugoslavia left notes and messages. These notes and messages were made into an interactive multimedia presentation and exhibited. The materialization of memories of Josip Broz and Yugoslavia began with the signing in the condolence book, set up in May 1980, on the occasion of Tito's funeral and continued through the entries made in memorial books and guest books after the founding of the Memorial Centre. The continuing tradition of leaving messages, which has been kept alive to this day and the changing nature of these messages, highlight their importance for the creation and maintenance of collective memory and the perception of Tito. Additionally, there was an *Open storage* segment, when the visitors had the opportunity to see the activities of the curators when taking care of the batons.

This exhibition appears interesting mainly for its interactivity with both past and present audience. The only constant in all of the parts of the exhibition is Tito himself, being the center of the exhibition both symbolically and literally. In the space around his grave, different messages in the form of batons, notes and condolence messages are exhibited. The messages were written, sent and left by various people that are different age and come from different parts of former Yugoslavia (and the world). So, the creators of the exhibits are thousands of different people who have been writing messages for Tito in different occasions since 1945. Having in mind the *Open storage* segment, the curators of the museum are those who catalogue and analyze the objects; literally, on the exhibition they catalogue and analyze the batons, but we can conclude that indirectly the curators in this exhibition analyze the audience that visit *House of Flowers* every year in May.

Unlike the previously analyzed exhibitions, this exhibition, even though it partly leans on the nostalgic cultural representation of Tito, has a touch of irony integrated in its discourse. Having in mind the mixed audience the museum has – the “inherited audience” mostly interested in Tito’s cult and the gifts Tito received, and the younger audience that might be more interested in the exhibitions and what Tito’s cult might culturally represent - this exhibition offers something to both sides of the audience. To the first, the exhibition offers a place of Tito’s eternal resting place and the gifts he had been receiving over the years (the batons). To the latter the exhibition offers a possibility of a postmodern ironic (re)examination of other people’s and their own relation towards the ritual from the socialist Yugoslavia, but also a certain kind of (re)contextualization of what Tito’s cult represents today.

On the walls surrounding the exhibition a time line that contextualizes Tito’s rule is drawn. In the first segment, basic information about the important events from 1945 to 1980 are displayed, giving a historical context about socialist Yugoslavia before Tito’s death. It non-selectively mentions many important events, mostly economic and political events, such as the Cominform Resolution in 1948, the legalization of workers’ self management in 1950, official visit to Belgrade by the Soviet delegation in 1955, a mass student protest in 1968, etc. However, the more interesting part is in the other room, where the information about the events after 1980 can be read and where some most general context about the breakup of Yugoslavia is given. Tito died in 1980, and in 1981 the event *Tito Even After Tito* was established, in which the baton was handed over to the president of the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia (until 1987). 1987 can be interpreted as a breaking year, since Slobodan Milošević practically came to power that year, while in Slovenia the *New Collectivism* scandal broke out in connection with the posters for the Youth Day. In 1990 the first multi-party elections were held (on which the nationalists won), in 1991 Slovenia and Croatia declared independence, in 1992 the war in Bosnia broke out. The Croatian operations *Flash* and *Storm* were mentioned, while there is an evident lack of the mention of Srebrenica massacre in the same year.

The breakup of the country is here directly connected to the rise of nationalism, while on the other hand the disintegration and the change in the institution of the museum can be followed as well. In 1996 the *Museum of Yugoslav History* was founded by merging the *Memorial Center “Josip Broz Tito”* and the *Museum of the Revolution*, while the rest of the building complex was,

as the text of the exhibition says, *assigned to the official residence of the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and separated by a wall*. The text implicitly explains that this institution is a *state* institution, and that it has been dependent of the different unstable countries it belonged to. As Yugoslavia became smaller, the museum was becoming smaller as well – and Slobodan Milošević is seen as one of the main actors in these violent actions. The assassination of the first democratically chosen prime minister of Serbia, Zoran Đinđić, was not mentioned, but there is one other fact that is – unexpectedly – present; the fact that the remains of Slobodan Milošević, who died in The Hague tribunal for the war crimes, were exhibited at the Museum in 2006.

Even though the statements are not put as directly as possible, it seems as if they create a relevant context and implicitly explain why it is not possible to be completely direct with the statements. It appears that the text suggests that this institution, the *Museum of History of Yugoslavia*, is an institution somewhat dependent of the state and the day-to-day political circumstances in the country, and consequently does not have the freedom to openly be critical towards the breakup of the country. The taking away of the part of the property of the museum by Slobodan Milošević, one of the most responsible politicians for the wars in the 1990s, and the fact that his remains were exhibited in the museum in 2006, six years after the alleged democratic revolution, all demonstrate that after the year 2000 a real discontinuity with the politics of the 1990s has not been made. This makes the visitor wonder about who were the people in the government in 1995 and who are the people governing now. The apparently neutral information about the remains of the former president Milošević in the museum actually explains why it is not written, for example, that in 1995 in Srebrenica around eight thousand Bosnian civilians were systematically killed and put in the mass graves by the Serbian army, or that Zoran Đinđić was killed in 2003 and that the political background of the assassination had not been revealed (yet).

This exhibition appears as both nostalgic and ironic, while the irony makes this nostalgia less *restorative* and more *reflective*. Linda Hutcheon connects nostalgia with irony in her text *Irony, Nostalgia and Postmodern*, and argues that

to call something ironic or nostalgic is, in fact, less a description of the ENTITY ITSELF than an attribution of a quality of RESPONSE. Irony is not something in an object that you either "get" or fail to "get": irony "happens" for you (or, better, you make it "happen") when two meanings, one said and the other unsaid, come together, usually with

*a certain critical edge. Likewise, nostalgia is not something you "perceive" in an object; it is what you "feel" when two different temporal moments, past and present, come together for you and, often, carry considerable emotional weight. In both cases, it is the element of response--of active participation, both intellectual and affective--that makes for the power.*²¹²

This comparison of irony and nostalgia is in accordance with both nostalgic and ironic feelings the exhibition “The Figures of Memory” provokes. As the detailed text on the website suggests, by interpreting the rituals from the era of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which survived to this day and the role that the written word, as well as the objects and facilities belonging to today’s *Museum of Yugoslav History* had in them, the exhibition explores the way in which different social groups create and maintain the memory of Yugoslavia and Tito. Therefore, every person who visits the House of Flowers (especially on May 25th), thus (re)producing the decades long ritual in a new political, social, but also cultural context, becomes the audience and the object of the exhibition.

Yugo-nostalgia hereby becomes less apolitical and more reflective, while the ironic touch gives this exhibition and the institution a changing perspective. This permanent exhibition, therefore, becomes a valuable and relevant starting point for the possible more relevant, critical, interactive stroll through the museum, which would motivate the visitor to see the socialist Yugoslavia from a different, critical and inspiring perspective.

In summary, for the interpretation of the politics of display of *Museum of Yugoslav History*, four exhibitions have been analyzed. The first exhibition, “Yugoslavia from the Beginning to the End”, was chosen because it was a part of a regional project and because of the pretension to become the permanent exhibition of this museum. The socialist Yugoslavia is in this exhibition represented as a *controversial, state-building experiment*, with the focus on destabilizing events and the relations between Serbs and Croats, while the interpretation of events that are problematic because of the current revisionist tendencies, such as the Second World War and the break-up of Yugoslavia, are avoided. Two exhibitions are analyzed from the perspective of Yugo-nostalgia: “The Grand Illusion” tends to represent socialist Yugoslavia through Tito’s

²¹² Linda Hutcheon, *Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern* (<http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp.html>, last accessed September 13, 2015)

personality, asks questions and problematizes the possibility of giving any answers, while the exhibition “They Never Had it Better?” de-mythologizes the image of the everyday life of socialist Yugoslavia. The fourth exhibition, “Figures of Memory”, is chosen as one of the most interesting exhibitions set permanently in the *House of Flowers*. This exhibition is nostalgic, but it appears that it is not completely apolitical and that the ironic touch makes this Yugo-nostalgia more critical towards the present social, economic and cultural circumstances – at least as much as a public institution financed mostly by the state can.

In most of the exhibitions in *Museum of Yugoslav History*, a political layer is missing. Unlike the exhibition “In the Name of the People”, which is openly political in an ethnocentric and explicitly anti-Yugoslav sense, in *Museum of Yugoslav History* revision is performed in a different way – through apolitical Yugo-nostalgia, compared in this paper with Jameson’s concept of nostalgia film. The cultural artifact is put at the place of political analysis, and the political analysis is in that way (perhaps unintentionally) eliminated. Finally, even though the proclaimed intention of most of the exhibitions is to de-mythologize the image of socialist Yugoslavia, to inspire the visitors to think critically and to differ from the exhibitions that aim to merely produce nostalgic memories, most of the time many unnecessary mystifications are made due to the avoidance of interpretation of some past events that are crucial for the creation of the image of socialist Yugoslavia.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I will refer to the main goal and the initial hypothesis set in the beginning of this research paper. The main goal was to explore the contemporary production of images of socialist Yugoslavia in museum representations in Serbia. The key motive was to coherently and comprehensively interpret the politics of display regarding the image of socialist Yugoslavia in two important public institutions - *Historical Museum of Serbia* and *Museum of Yugoslav History*, thus giving a new explanation of these two politics of display. My hypothesis was that the politics of display of the two institutions are opposed, while they are both producing a problematic image of socialist Yugoslavia. My research encompassed six carefully chosen exhibitions in the two museums. I explored what kind of image of socialist Yugoslavia they present and (re)produce, and I questioned potential instrumentalization of these exhibitions for ideological purposes.

Following Maria Todorova's thought, I have stated that socialist Yugoslavia exists no longer as a political category, but that it crossed from the sphere of political power in the past to the contemporary sphere of culture. However, the image of socialist Yugoslavia that is shaped in culture bears political potential and it can legitimize or delegitimize the actual political circumstances. For this reason, the analysis of culture is essential for understanding the implicit messages produced in the cultural sphere.

For understanding the image of socialist Yugoslavia (re)produced in contemporary culture, historical (Yugoslav) context has been taken into account, and some events - such as the unification of Yugoslavia, Second World War and the National Liberation Struggle - were more thoroughly described. These historical events are perceived in a different, contemporary context, which is post-Yugoslav, post-communist Serbia that still goes through an unsuccessful transition, that had its first democratically chosen prime minister assassinated in 2003 and that bears the key responsibility for the wars and crimes that happened in the 1990s in the territories of former Yugoslav republics.

After the analysis of the exhibitions "In the Name of the People" and "Final Destination – Auschwitz", I conclude that *Historical Museum of Serbia* has no coherent politics of display. Both of the exhibitions are projects that were not initiated by the museum. Even though it might

appear that the two exhibitions are similar, since they both tend to confront the citizens of Serbia with a trauma in the past, these two exhibitions are interpreted as essentially different. “In the Name of the People” and “Final Destination – Auschwitz” are two exhibitions that follow completely different cultural models – the first follows the ethno-nationalistic model, while the other exhibition follows a cultural model that promotes universal human rights and that is in its essence turned to reconciliation of the peoples of former Yugoslavia. Regarding the image of socialist Yugoslavia, *Historical Museum of Serbia* has no coherent politics of display. The museum hosts different exhibitions concerning the socialist Yugoslav period that are contradictory in their discourses and that are initiated by the people and organizations outside of the museum.

“In the Name of the People” is on the trail of historical revisionism, because it tends to revise the image of the beginning of socialist Yugoslavia using the information that is not objective or well-documented. It is in accordance with both European and Serbian strivings to discredit communism, by opposing liberal democracy to the “totalitarian regimes”, communism and fascism. This also means equation of communism and fascism, as well as relativisation of fascist crimes. In this context, the good legacy of socialist Yugoslavia, such as the welfare state and the “brotherhood and unity between peoples of Yugoslavia”, is discredited along with the negative legacy.

On the other hand, the exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz” is a project of international importance, done in cooperation between all former Yugoslav countries, whose representatives decided to work together in the time when the nationalistic hatred is once again in growth in the Former Yugoslav Republics. This exhibition is an example of a successful cooperation between the different nations of the Balkans because it does not present historical facts from the present, nationalistic angle. On the contrary, it recognizes the Yugoslav cultural space in the past, but even more importantly, acknowledges its existence and importance in the contemporary society.

This politics of display of *Historical Museum of Serbia* is in accordance with the Serbia’s cultural policy in recent years that has been described as turbulent and incoherent, even non-existent. Both these exhibitions were supported by the Ministry of Culture and Information of Republic of Serbia, which is a confirmation of the claim that there is no clear cultural policy in

Serbia. Nevertheless, these two contradictory discourses appear less contradictory and the cultural policy appears less incoherent if we have in mind that every recent government of Serbia has been, at least declaratively, pursuing the membership in European Union on one side, and clinging to the Kosovo narrative on the other.

On the other hand, the politics of display of *Museum of Yugoslav History* is interpreted in relation to the vision of the museum, according to which the aim of the museum is to contextualize the issues and topics of socialist Yugoslavia in the current social, political and cultural circumstances of Serbia, the Balkans, Europe and the international community. My conclusion is that even though this aim is visible in all the exhibitions, it is usually less fulfilled than intended. Other important characteristics of the politics of display are interactivity, inclusiveness, polyvocality and openness for dialogue. I have also concluded that the politics of display is to avoid offering any interpretations that might be easily criticized by those whose opinions are on the trail of historical revisionism and anti-Yugoslavism. The exhibitions are either apolitical, or they are polyvocal in the way of including contradictory narratives and opinions.

In this case probably more because of the differences between the curators employed in the museum, than because of the inexistent cultural policy of Serbia, the discourses of the exhibitions often tend to differ. “Yugoslavia from the Beginning to the End” is chosen for analysis as a project that was supposed to become a permanent exhibition, but also because it is regional project, so it is comparable to the exhibition “Final Destination – Auschwitz”, also a regional project about common history of Yugoslav nations. However, unlike “Final Destination – Auschwitz”, the exhibition “Yugoslavia from the Beginning to the End” fails to overcome the Serbo-Croatian conflict and makes a specific revision of history by the choice of the historical content and the (re)construction of the image of Yugoslavia as a controversial, state-building experiment.

Three other exhibitions have been interpreted in the context of Yugo-nostalgia, which rarely fulfills its potential of being critique of the contemporary social, economic, cultural and political circumstances and which is usually interesting, but apolitical. The exhibitions ask many questions, but never give answers. However, even the questions are often not political and provocative enough in order to inspire the visitors to think more about the past and the present.

Only one exhibition, “Figures of Memory”, appears to have a relevant historical context presented that makes the visitor wonder not only about socialist Yugoslavia, its legacy, the image of socialist Yugoslavia 70 years ago and today, but it also problematizes the institution this exhibition is permanently set in, the history of this institution as well as its potentials and possibilities in Serbia today. The declared aim of the politics of display of *Museum of Yugoslav History* is to de-mythologize the image of socialist Yugoslavia. Yet, too often the issues that need not be de-mythologized are presented as problematic, while some other issues are unnecessarily mystified.

The revision that occasionally happens in this museum is far more subtle than the one in the exhibition “In the Name of the People”; it puts the history of socialist Yugoslavia *in the history* and it detaches it from reality. This is problematic because it delegitimizes the extremely important contemporary Yugoslav cultural field, that is a natural everlasting connection of people from former Yugoslav countries that rises above nationalisms and the particular interests of the national countries.

The conclusion is that, in order to become a place of meeting, dialogue and debate, as well as the place where the criticism of the contemporary circumstances can be generated, the politics of display of *Museum of Yugoslav History* needs to become more openly political by presenting appropriate contexts of the cultural artifacts that are presented. Finally, the image of socialist Yugoslavia needs to be presented not in the historical vacuum, but as a historical period that preceded the bloody 1990s, the disappointing 2000s and the apolitical 2010s.

Finally, if we look back at the initial hypothesis, one part of the hypothesis – that both *Historical Museum of Serbia* and *Museum of Yugoslav History* are (re)producing a problematic image of socialist Yugoslavia – appears correct for the abovementioned reasons, whereas the part of the hypothesis might be more accurate if it is stated not that the two politics of display are *opposed*, but that they are both *contradictory*. The politics of display appears less contradictory if we have in mind the described cultural policy and politics of Serbia, but also the two European Union trends - discrediting of communism and the Holocaust remembrance policy.

In the end, I will mention one important day, which is November 9th. This is the day of remembrance of Kristallnacht, the night between the 9th and 10th November 1938, when the

pogrom against Jews throughout Nazi Germany and Austria happened. But, November 9th is also the date the Berlin Wall fell in 1989. In the recent years around the 9th November, in media and social networks much more attention has been given to the Fall of Berlin Wall (that in essence represents the fall of communism) than the Kristallnacht remembrance (that represents antifascism, which is the fight against fascism and anti-Semitism). In 2015, when the wires are set and the walls in Europe are once again built, it is more than ever important to remember the terror of Kristallnacht. In the Serbian context, the antifascism and solidarity as part of the socialist Yugoslav legacy might help with that.

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