

# The Use, Interpretation and Symbolization of the National

## Croatia 1990/92

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The author seeks to answer questions concerning the process by which a national identity was built in Croatia from 1990 onwards. She analyses visual messages of different kinds, stating that these phenomena can not be measured by numerical interpretation of the data. Therefore she selects the most prominent signs and symbols by which an image of the new Croatia was constructed and the war was continuously interpreted and follows their flow through different levels of culture giving a description or interpretation of the context.

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It seems that during the last few years, political and social events have happened faster than ever before. The stories of Eastern European countries leaving “The Soviet Block”, as well as the tragic story of what has happened (and is still happening) in the territory which used to be called Yugoslavia, are neither new nor sensational any longer. National identity has become a topic for numerous newspaper and scientific articles, debates and round tables.

The chronology of war in Croatia, including its causes and the motives by which it can be explained began before 1990. Yet what strikes us most is the spring of 1990 and the first democratic elections since the Second World War. At that time, not just the government but the whole governing ideology changed.

Relevant literature shows that a change of government and a new political system may be symbolized by the abandoning of old national symbols and the creation of new and different ones. Former communist countries adopted new symbols. To mention only a few of the most well-known examples, the same thing happened a few decades earlier, when communism wielded power also in Germany after the Second World War and in France after the French Revolution.

Symbols representing new authority may be newly invented or the old, previously existing symbols may be used again, sometimes redesigned and redefined.

The Polish author, Zdzisław Mach, in his “National Symbols in Politics: The Polish Case” confirmed that, after a radical change in a political system, new political elites usually claim a continuation of what they regard as good, just and progressive elements of the past of the nation, and refer to them in the construction of the new symbolic structure of the state. In the case of a political conflict or even a war, national symbols may integrate the nation. They harmonize the diverse motivations of individuals and, thus, make collective action possible. Also, it is well recognized that the same symbols may communicate different values to different people. So, when national symbols representing the state stand for the ideas and values proclaimed by the leading majority or a dominant group, they may not be generally accepted (Mach 1992: 89–90).

The ethnographic material which was the basis of this paper most often could not be collected or enumerated. This was due to its immensity and

because it was usually impossible for a researcher to go to the war zones to collect it. These limitations inevitably reduced my insight. On the other hand I gathered new insights from the media. The problem to be solved was the lack of comfortable scientific distance. It seemed that the possible conclusions could not be tested. However, what appeared “scientific enough” was to go in quest of the symbolic and of the senses, insisting on the experience of culture as a sensemaker.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, my paper does not “measure” the phenomena. Rather, I pick out the most prominent signs and symbols by which an image of the new Croatia was to be built and the war continuously interpreted. I follow the changes in their meaning and the variations in their form. Where it is possible, I give a description or interpretation for the context.

## The first elections

The early spring of 1990 brought the scent of a multi-party system quite convincingly to Croatia. Parties taking part in the elections, including a partially reformed Communist party, discarded the five pointed red star, and appealed to values unallied to communist internationalism. They proclaimed that their primary goal, which was to be reached after they eventually won an election, was the welfare of the nation.

Apart from using the concept of the nation and, with a number of negative attributions, communism, the parties employed the concepts of democracy, autonomy, economic prosperity and orientation towards Europe. Visual symbols on posters searched for continuity with the pre-communist era. The parties struggled to identify themselves with the national symbols, either pre-communist ones or ones which had been only partially overlaid by communist symbolism after the Second World War.

The signs/symbols which shaped the compositional structure of the logotypes of the new parties, or that just appeared on representational posters and leaflets, were dominated by the rhetorics of the coat of arms built up of alternating red and white squares,<sup>2</sup> the Croatian red, white and blue flag from which the five

pointed red star had thankfully been removed, and *pleter*. The *pleter*; a kind of interlaced ribbon pattern, is an ornament “borrowed” from thousand-year-old monuments of Croatian sacral architecture.

The party which succeeded the former Communist party, at that time called The Social-Democratic Party/The Party of Democratic Changes, claimed credit for its role in making a peaceful transition possible. Posters representing Ivica Račan, the leader of the party and a candidate for president, were overloaded with textual messages: “We stopped autocracy, brought about democracy. Croatia is making her choice freely”, “Račan says NO to autocracy”, “We think seriously”, “Reformers we know”. By the slogan “Remember January 22, 1990, the day when democratic Croatia was proud,” they alluded to the last meeting of the Yugoslav Communist League where the final split occurred between the Croatian and Slovenian communists on one side and the Serbian and Montenegrin communists on the other. The designers of the posters, who were hired in neighbouring Slovenia, painted the squares from the party’s visual-presentational material in the red colour of its ideology, the green of ecology and liberalism and added the national blue of Croatia.

The intellectual profile of the Coalition of National Agreement prompted them to put together nine polychromatic squares (one for each letter of the first word in the name of the party) suggesting the notion of a chess-board by scattering chess pieces all around it. They were insisting on the credit their leaders gained during “The Croatian Spring” in 1971.<sup>3</sup> When they appeared on the political stage once again, they announced: “For radical change without extremism. We are referring to your sense and to your memory; We are bringing the Croatian Spring after 20 years of winter”.

On the other side, more populist parties exhibited the national symbols explicitly and unequivocally. The herald-like emblem of the Croatian Party of Rights was burdened with the double use of the Croatian flag, a segment of the Croatian coat of arms and a *pleter* which “crowns” it. The Croatian Peasant Party envel-

oped the coat of arms with two Croatian flags.

The Croatian Democratic Union, front-runner in the poster war and subsequent winner of the election, “distilled” the original look of the flag, the coat of arms and the *pleter*. They kept their visual signals half-way between the extremes of the intellectual connotation and the illegible overcrowding that the denotative messages often failed to escape. They hit the mark with a simple slogan *Zna se* (It is known). Among the posters this party used was a large one depicting a smiling Franjo Tudjman and a smaller one of a young woman, emerging from the darkness of the background, wearing a dress which looks like a national costume of some kind but does not suggest any particular region of Croatia, and holding the luminous logo of the party in her hand (fig. 1).

The visual pre-dispositions and semantic potential of the “Croatian squares”, the Croatian flag and the *pleter* emitted their message signalling the features, magnitude and intensity of the goals of the players in the electoral process. The motives/symbols of the flag and the coat of arms indicated an intention to maintain the continuity of Croatian statehood, while the *pleter* functioned as an indicator of the magnitude of the parties’ ambitions in maintaining the continuity of Croatian culture.

The Faculty of Political Sciences in Zagreb carried out an empirical study of the Croatian elections in 1990. 2,608 citizens from all over the country were questioned. The results showed that 83.26% of the people questioned made an early decision to vote and 66% decided more than ten days before the elections who they were going to vote for. At the time the survey was going on, which was also the time of the most intensive campaigning, not more than 13% of those who had decided to go to the polls were uncommitted.

The conclusion suggested by the authors of the book which presented the results of the questionnaire was that at a time of dramatic decisions there could be no uncommitted majority. The results indicated that the majority of voters was retrospectively orientated, evaluated the heritage of the past years negatively and voted in favour of change. The majority of those

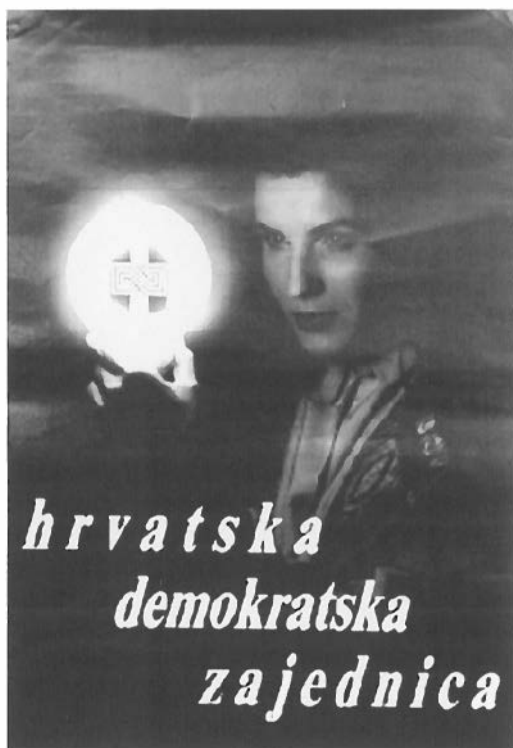


Fig 1. A promotional poster of the Croatian Democratic Union, Spring 1990.

questioned stated that their main reason for voting for a specific party was that party’s programme. Also, the research showed that most of the knowledge about the offered programmes was gained by following the election campaign through the media (Grdešić et al. 1991).

The streets of Croatian towns were swamped with new products soon after the election results were made public. T-shirts, caps and scarfs, cups and saucers, badges, pencils, pendants, lighters and labels, candles and even children’s shoes showed the Croatian coat of arms, the Croatian flag, or a Latin cross “made” of the *pleter* and “pinched” into the three-coloured (red, white and blue) heart. These articles, sold in the streets or in the shops and competing for public attention, contributed to the increasing popularity of the “new tradition” (fig. 2).

Sometimes they were accompanied by the



Fig. 2. Selling "the new identity" at makeshift stalls, Ban Jelacic Square, the centre of Zagreb, Spring 1990.

text "I love Croatia", "Croatia, my homeland" or something similar, written either in Croatian or in English. At other times they showed reproductions of well-known monuments of Croatian culture, like Prince Višeslav's font dating from the early Middle Ages, or images of some of the prominent individuals from Croatian history.<sup>4</sup>

Simultaneously, two of the signs, a coat of arms and a three coloured flag, became the motifs for graffiti and children's drawings. Adolescents drew them on their school bags and jeans in places where they usually put the

names of their favourite musicians, their friends' names or some slogan. The main graffiti producers were Zagreb's football fans, the Bad Blue Boys and secondary school leavers who, at the time of the first elections, were celebrating the end of their schooling in the way each earlier generation had done, by marching through the town, dressed in odd costumes, singing songs and shouting. At that time, graffiti were simple in form and meaning and celebrated the fall of communism and the birth of the young and promising state.

## The war

The political enemy, clearly defined by spring of 1991, declared that this framework for building a symbolic picture of the new Croatia was the most obvious indicator of Croatia's political aspirations. The coat of arms, the red, white and blue flag without the five-pointed red star and the *pleter*, the leitmotifs of the image of the new Croatia, were last seen, claimed the other side, during the rise of the pro-fascist Independent State of Croatia.

In the "accusation with symbols" which filled the pages of daily newspapers and occupied a great deal of television's political broadcasts for weeks, the argument about the appearance of the new Croatian coat of arms (which was still to be legalized) figured prominently from the very beginning. This undefined appearance, even after the establishment of the elected government, left a space for making "historical parallels".

Historians have shown that, during the long existence of the symbol, "the first square" (in the upper left angle) had changed its "colour" (red and white, i.e. silver). But "the first square" of the coat of arms of the Independent State of Croatia was white, while the coat of arms of the Socialist Republic of Croatia "started" with a red square. This colouristically-ideological antithesis, originating in this century, became an incubator for suspicions and expectations which preceded the official proclamation of the "new-look" of the Croatian coat of arms.

How those arguments were interpreted by the man in the street may be demonstrated by quoting a 45-year old man from Vukovar, one of our interviewees: "Really, what's come over these people? I think they let themselves be talked into it. These local Serbs have lived here for hundreds of years and have no reason to run away. A flag won't bite them" (Čale Feldman et al. 1993: 187).<sup>5</sup>

The war multiplied and semantically unified the meanings of the visual production at all levels. Daily political actions directed the image of reality promoted by the mass media. They presented and demonstrated "images of the war" and repeated the "images of identity".

University graduated visual artists began to produce *war art*. Many poster designs were produced by using the communicative power of simple, expressive, and legible rhetorics. These included the Croatian coat of arms, its three-coloured flag, the Latin cross, the sign for a shelter, the sign for the protected cultural monument and also the swastika, the Serbian coat of arms, the hammer and sickle, and the star, either blue, red or yellow. Soon after being promoted in the galleries, some of the proposed designs turned up in the streets of Croatian towns pasted onto walls or shop-windows, thus becoming a "common visual-art folk treasure".

Different organizations, involved mostly in humanitarian work, produced posters and leaflets announcing their activities and asking for help. For this purpose they invented signs in an attempt to condense the meanings they wanted to explicate. Most of them were not designed professionally.

I will describe just two of them, emphasizing the overlapping of meanings which seems to be their fundamental characteristic. One of them accompanied written material asking for help for the town of Vinkovci. The sign was of a red apple with a bite taken out of one side.<sup>6</sup> Red drops fell from the bite-mark. A visual message on the posters which announced the humanitarian concert "For Gradiška, new again", held at the beginning of 1992, was a cross enveloped with red and white checked fabric. A photograph of a church was marked with the sign of a protected cultural monument and nailed to the intersection of the limbs.

From such offerings the man in the street picked up verbal and visual messages to which he could relate and reshaped and adopted them. But again, the three symbols dominated. In addition, one could often see the sign of a heart accompanying written messages, as in the case of the numerous graffiti which suddenly seemed to crop up in the streets at the time of the fall of Vukovar. It was written: "Vukovar, Croatian (heart)" or "The Croat's (heart) is beating for his brother. Vukovar", to mention just two of the examples. A new "picture of identity-in-time" was built. The visual began to speak through the rhetoric of war.



Fig. 3. Graffiti taken in the Zadar area, Spring 1992. A transformation of the Croatian coat of arms.

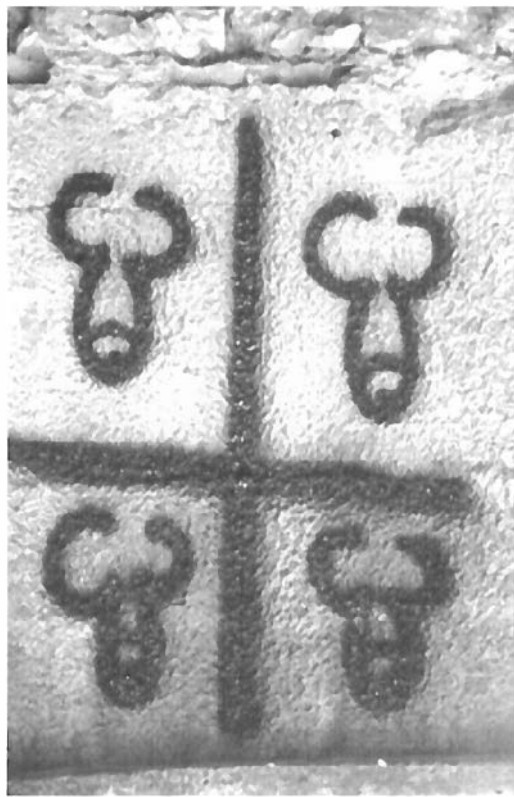


Fig. 4. Graffiti, Zadar, Spring 1992. An allusion to the Serbian coat of arms.

We can presume that young people's attitudes towards politics changed in 1990, and afterwards. During the previous decade, sociological research has shown that, in spite of its dominating influence in society at that time, the majority of young people in Croatia considered politics an activity of second-rate importance. Political and social changes from 1990 onwards increased young people's willingness to participate in politics. As an extraordinarily dramatic and important social occurrence this war, just like any other, further influenced and changed people's attitudes and values.

Here one can discuss the question of national identity in the light of theories proving that autoidentification depends upon a context. Specifically, that the picture of other nations and the notion of diversity are among the main components in building up one's own national identity.

The symbols that accompanied the establishment of the elected government and the constitution of the Republic of Croatia assumed new functions. Especially on the battlefield, the coat of arms sketched out with spray paint on a wall functioned as a denotation of the space and was often accompanied by the text: "This is Croatia". This was perhaps meant as an answer to the "This is Serbia" graffiti, which were no more than written forms of an exclamation that could be heard at gatherings organized by Serbian leaders at the start of the war and, even before that, on various other occasions in Kosovo and Croatia.

Apart from being denotators of space, graffiti have also been used as a kind of communication medium. They communicated in a specific way: to a friend a message of confidence that the situation was under control and encouraging him, and to an enemy a threatening declara-

tion. Even the other side, as evidenced by colleagues who went to the battlefields with their cameras, used the Croatian coat of arms when leaving their graffiti messages. They loaded its fields with *ocilos* (fig. 3).<sup>7</sup>

While official visual messages were calling for help, applying the formula "Stop the war in Croatia" and at the same time trying to explain what was going on by showing ruins of houses and churches, the drawings on the walls almost looked as if they were repeating ancient Paleolithic cave rituals. The image of a *chetnik* was that of a male face with unkempt beard, hair covered with a sort of cap called a *shaikaca* and signified by a cross and four *ocilos* on the cap. He carried a curved knife in his hand or between his lips. This kind of representation was frequently crossed out in much the same way as the five pointed red stars, the hammers and sickles and the abbreviation JNA for Yugoslav National Army had been crossed out before the beginning of the war. Additionally, some of the most prominent Serbian politicians, such as Slobodan Milošević, were drawn accompanied by visual attributes selected from a pile of sexual symbols and with swear-words added.

The cross with four *ocilos* could quite easily be visually transformed in various ways. The signs of *ocilos* were replaced by twisted lines of excrement, the representation of a penis, or the word "*ha*", a common imitative word for laughter (fig. 4).<sup>8</sup> A similar mode was used to transform the five pointed red star. The swastika was placed in its centre as an adjective. The places where these messages were recorded, such as dustbins and the doors of public toilets, became the bearers of additional meaning.

## The iconography of war

When writing articles, some of Croatia's most prominent intellectuals attempted to show the difference in the outlook between Croatian and Serbian soldiers. Even here images were either totally black or totally white. The Serbian soldier was "stinking in medieval darkness", toothless and sloppy, apparently drunk. The Croatian, on the other hand, was seen as the representative of a generation growing up with rock 'n' roll music and ideology, shipshape and strong, wear-

ing a modern hair cut, Ray Ban glasses, a black ribbon round his forehead, an earring and a little cross on his necklace and singing not patriotic songs but Brothers in Arms (by Dire Straits).<sup>9</sup>

The sign of a cross one and a half year after the establishment of a multi-party political system became the connective tissue for a complex system of ideas and meanings, a unifying symbol for widely divergent elements of culture.<sup>10</sup> The meanings which the Latin cross embodies have effectively "launched" it ahead of all the other signs and symbols of war in Croatia. It has become the leitmotif of Croatian war iconography (fig. 5).<sup>11</sup> It is possible to "read" this compact symbol as a sign of Catholicism opposed to Orthodoxy or as a symbol of martyrdom and resistance, but most commonly it was used as a lucky charm. Even priests gave gifts of rosaries in order to shelter soldiers from danger.

It is particularly important to mention that the same iconography was partially accepted by the older generation as well. In a pre-war context, most of the mentioned youthful manifestations were condemned as signs of rebellion and lack of acceptance of social standards but, in the context of war, they gained new and completely different meanings.<sup>12</sup>

Even though this is merely a partial picture of the phenomena, it can be a motivating starting point for exploring a theme entitled "The Iconography of War". Such a discourse could begin with a description of the insignia stitched to the sleeves of uniforms and worn by a group of combatants.

From the very first days of the Croatian Army, during the "romantic phase" of the war, an old practice of signifying military units by visual symbols started. The Croatian coat of arms was the basis for the first insignia the Croatian volunteers wore. Together with it, signs/badges appeared showing eagles, crossed swords or rifles, variations of American and German military signs. The Croatian army started to use the same signs when it emerged under the name of "the National Guard".

As the Croatian army grew, there appeared to be a need for a different sign for each military



Fig. 5. The insignia of the "Martyrs", 3rd unit of the 101st Brigade, Zagreb, designed in Zagreb in April 1992. The background is red, white and blue.



Fig. 6. The insignia of the "Alligators", 3rd platoon, 1st unit of the 56th Croatian Army Brigade, Ivanić-Grad, designed in Zagreb in December 1991 by Mario Laušin.



Fig. 7. The insignia of the 100th Croatian Army Brigade, Zagreb, designed in Zagreb in 1992.



Fig. 8. The insignia of the support - "back up" - unit of the 121st Brigade, Nova Gradiška, designed in March 1992 in Nova Gradiška by Mato Slišurić.



unit. Thus, several hundreds of these appeared during the war. The names of the units were invented during a rest period, were gained in battle or simply seemed to happen. Tigers, Thunderers, Terminators, Gladiators, Storms, Daltons, Rain-worms... The signs were partially designed by the soldiers and can therefore be considered as folk war art. Many of them show well-known characters from comic books or cartoons, such as Small Flying Bears, Tom the Cat and Jerry the Mouse, Garfield or Bob Rock, Smurfs, the Blue Racer, Caspar, Biscuits, Superman, Baron Münchhausen, and various others (fig. 6).

There are also other signs drawn in a cartoon manner, such as the symbol of an American basketball team, "The Chicago Bulls", an image of an American Indian, or the two fingers raised as a sign for victory. Signs such as these, taken from the stockpile of American symbols, are not surprising since Croatian youth culture has been based for decades on the model of Western and especially American youth culture. What seems new in recent Croatian youth culture iconography is the large number of insignia repeating the repertoire of national signs: the Croatian flag, the *pleter* and the Croatian coat of arms with numerous variations or some of the other Croatian historic coats of arms, such as that of Slavonia with a marten, of Dalmatia with lions, or Istria with a goat. The units identified themselves by images of saints, important characters from Croatian history and figures of fantastic animals and mythological beings taken from Croatian heraldry. There were also emblems of Croatian towns and images of the cultural and historic monuments of a town or region.

In addition, there was a large group of insignia showing images of domestic and wild animals such as eagle, hawk, owl, crow, sparrow or seagull, wolf, bear, fox, rabbit, rat, bat, snake and scorpion or spider. And from the group of exotic animals and reptiles tiger, lion, leopard, rhinoceros, cougar, giraffe, zebra, kangaroo, camel, black mamba snake and even a monkey were encountered. These symbolized different characteristics pertaining to a particular unit, or the ones they wanted to possess, or a quality reminding a unit of its purpose.

A very few insignia have slogans added: "For the Homeland!", "For Home and Croatia!", "Everything passes but the people of Zagorje!", "Call, just call us!", "Forward, our bombers!", "Our beautiful homeland Croatia!", "Pro Patria!", "Viribus unitis!", "In hoc signo vinces!", "Veni vidi vici!", "Mens sana in malvasia Istriana!", and others. Just a few carried messages for the other side, as the one exhibiting a fist with its middle finger raised, and saying: "FUCK YU", where YU stands for Yugoslavia.

The three signs which were pointed out as being most significant, namely, the Croatian coat of arms, the Croatian flag and the *pleter* appear on the military units' insignia in a variety of modes. The coat of arms appears mostly in its official form, as a part of the insignia. However, as the alternation of red and white squares is a promising model for variation, a large number of signs play with its predisposition. Thus the cock, one of the signs of the town of Koprivnica, appears carrying a sword while standing on a floor made of red and white tiles. A unit from the town of Sisak created a heart out of red and white squares. For a unit from Kutina, the squares were used to build a pyramid in front of the camel which represented the unit. One of the tank units from Zagreb decided to modify a turtle by moulding the turtle's carapace out of the red and white fields.

Otherwise, the red and white squares often serve as the background or part of it. A quite similar interpretation of the background is frequently obtained by using the colours of the flag.

Sometimes the colours of the flag and the squares from the coat of arms are used to colour the name of a unit written on the insignia. The *pleter* is used only rarely as a dominating motif on the military signs (fig. 7). Mostly, the motif of the *pleter* is a ribbon underlying or bordering the sign. Very few of the insignia fail to include national or local symbols in their composition (fig. 8).

## Conclusion

When considering the questions of using, interpreting and symbolizing the "national" in

Croatia from 1990 onwards one of the most intriguing problems encountered is influence of the mass media and the other influences from the political elite. It is obvious that no empirical research could give definite answers to it. However, each attempt at unveiling the direction from which ideas were flowing would comprehend the notion of an interaction. Almost half a century of exclusive ideology, a one-party system and insistence on the formula "brotherhood and union of the nations and ethnic groups of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia" spoke against any statement of a particular national character. The new government persisted in its national and populist image to the satisfaction of majority who voted for it. Although some intellectuals wrote articles and organized round tables suggesting a different interpretation for a flag and a coat of arms, shaped by the principles of modern design, the old/new symbols were widely accepted. They were literally used everywhere. The beginning of the war enriched those symbols with new meanings and gave them new visual interpretations. Many other signs and symbols were introduced, mostly at the negative pole of meaning. They were often used as signifiers. The war united Croatia's citizens in their fears and hopes. The government was seen as defending their interests. The conglomerate of impulses "from the above" and "from beneath" became inextricable.

At about the time the immediate danger from the war ended, "the speech of symbols" also decreased. The thirst for independence was allayed by the international recognition of the state. The frustration with the imperative of the a-national was healed by the discovery and production of an old/new identity.

The stress and strain diminished, the rhetoric of the media softened and the level of adrenalin fell. People returned to their everyday lives, and the story went on as usual. They became careworn living life through from day to day but still, somewhere in the background and on TV-sets, the well-known war went on. Routine is far from being established. In addition, refugees and displaced people brought their own local identities with them. They are dislocated, uprooted, most of them hopeless and

disorientated. The process of building a national identity goes on.

## Notes

A shorter version of this article was originally prepared for presentation at the SIEF Congress in Vienna in September 1994. It has been somewhat revised and extended for this publication.

1. At the beginning of 1993 the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb published the book *Fear, Death and Resistance (An Ethnography of War: Croatia 1991-1992)* which is, in fact, a collection of "research papers on war" written by ethnologists and folklorists. When selecting the papers, the editors aimed at covering the whole range of methodological as well as theoretical problems which had emerged and tried to show some of the discovered needs and possibilities (from gathering testimonies given by displaced persons and consulting the archives, to recognizing the subject of research in the symbolic resistance and in the distorted image of reality in the war).
2. In a historical sense it should be noted that the concept of a Croatian coat of arms includes more than one. However, the most prominent and the most used one is that of the medieval Kingdom of Croatia, the coat of arms in whose escutcheon red and white (silver), i.e. white and red squares alternate one after another in the ordinary patterning (4x6, 5x6, 6x6, etc.). Its origin is currently unknown, but in a search for the first Croatian coat of arms of this type the literature usually quotes the escutcheon with 25 "squares" (the first "square" being raised, i.e. "red") of the Eucharistic star from Split's 11th century baptistry, or the coat of arms built into the bell-tower of St. Lucy's church in Jurandvor on the island of Krk, which dates from the Middle Ages. Anyway, the Habsburgs gained the right to use this coat of arms on January 1, 1527, when Ferdinand I became King of Croatia. That was the first time it was used for diplomatic purposes. The coat of arms of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, registered and described in the Constitution of the National Republic of Croatia on February 18, 1947, contained in the article of the Constitution in which the coat of arms is defined as the symbol of the state, and repeated in 1965 and 1974 in the two later Constitutions of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, was most probably designed by Belgrade graphic designer Đorđe Andrejević-Kun. Article 6 of the Constitution from 1974 describes it as follows: "The coat of arms of the Socialist Republic of Croatia is a field surrounded by two sheaves of golden wheat. At the bottom of the quarter shaped field there is an iron anvil above

- which the open sea rolls. From the open sea the historical Croatian coat of arms is raised and above it the sun rises. At the bottom, the sheaves of wheat meet and interlace, braided all around the anvil. Between the peaks of wheat there is a five pointed red star with a golden border the lower limb directed into the quarter of the field."
3. The movement was led by two of the most influential Croatian politicians of the time, Savka Dabčević-Kučar and Miko Tripalo. They demanded greater economic independence for Croatia, asserting that the greater portion of Croatian profits (mostly from tourism) was sent to the central state treasury and was thus spent outside of Croatia. Tito and the Yugoslav political leadership judged this movement, which was supported by Croatian students, as nationalist (in the political discourse of that time, this was the most negative label) and forced the leaders to remove themselves from public life. Massive police persecutions against the participants in the movement followed. Many received long prison terms while a large number left the country.
  4. One of these was Stjepan Radić, leader of the Croatian Peasant Party and the leading Croat political figure of his time, who died in 1928 from the injuries he sustained after a Montenegrin, Puniša Račić, shot at the representatives of the Croatian Peasant Party from the podium of the Belgrade Parliament. Another was Baron Josip Jelačić, chosen as Croatian Governor in 1848, who broke off political ties with Hungary, organized an independent government and abolished servitude.
  5. The Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb initiated a scientific project in 1991 to consider the problems of war and exile. At the beginning it gathered testimonies from displaced people who were at that time trying to organize their lives in refugee camps.
  6. The town of Vinkovci is situated in the region of Slavonija, where an apple is a synonym for beauty.
  7. *Ocilo* is an element from the official Serbian coat of arms and looks like the letter C.
  8. These examples were taken from the area around Zadar. I thank my colleague, Arif Ključanin, for them. He spent two years on the battlefields as a Croatian Army volunteer and took more than a thousand slides of great value.
  9. The obvious popularity of Ray Ban glasses and the mask uniform probably came from the image of an American soldier as represented in the "Desert Storm" operation, or in numerous motion pictures such as "An Officer and a Gentleman", "Top Gun", and others. The black ribbon was seen in the American movies "Rambo" and "Deer Hunter". Some of the soldiers wore a so-called Iroquois hairstyle which originated in punk.
  10. Placed in the main squares of Croatian towns, on the chests of Croatian soldiers or on the rearview mirrors of cars, as well as on political posters and those giving information about humanitarian activities, it was also a mark of two and three dimensional works of "high art", and the focal point of theatre sets. The poster design for the Rampart of Love, an organisation originally founded by mothers of Croatian soldiers held in the Yugoslav Army against their will, shows Jesus crucified across the map of Croatia.
  11. This was only the culmination of a trend which started with the inauguration of Franjo Tuđman as the President of The Republic of Croatia. This event pulsed with associations of the mythological scene of the salutation accorded to the arrived (and democratically elected) Messiah. The vision of the martyr and of resistance had been strengthened by the dissident charisma of the President and many members of the government with their political burial in the tormented 70s and their resurrection by the will of the majority.
  12. Perhaps the best example is an earring worn nowadays by both five-year-old children and their grandfathers.

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