



JOURNAL OF LITERATURE AND CULTURE
year 9 | december 2016 | book 16 | issues 29 and 30

29/30

The main editorial principle of the Journal “*People Say*”
is *aesthetic, ethical and spiritual unity*.

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literature
01

MILOŠ BOJOVIĆ
Still life,
oil on panel

Novica Tadić
Serbia

Toys, dream

Tonight my mother was born

Her infant cry
filed our house
at the outskirts

bathed and so clean
I wrapped her
 in a diaper
and laid her in a crab

from the corner I brought
toys
 blew twice
into a small plastic trumpet

Made the black wooden horse rock

Translated by Charles Simic

A feather plucked from the tail of the Fiery Hen

literature
poetry

Let them rest peacefully in ice.
I'm never coming back
to my native mountains
trees, mists.
I don't give a damn about
forest clearings, mushrooms, wise weasels,
ditches full of last year's snow.

I don't care about wild pigeons.

I'm the Fiery Hen,
I sing at mid/day
lost in the crowd on the square.

My long pole is my home.

Lord, I'm so glad
to be so rich,
to be so ridiculous.

I see everything with my round eyes.

Oh I'm both dread and happy disposition,
conflagration over all things.
Under my fire/wing
lies the mad world.

I'm the fire that gives the Egg its shape.
I'm the fire that shapes.
I'm fire.

I'm the fiery scold.
The first monster.
The queen of terror
on whose every feather
burns one living
monstrous image.
Queen of dread.
Fear at mid/day,
scream,
panic and flutter.

Cramp and light.
Between tearing sounds
the one tearing sound.
The deaf and mute sign
on the frightened mouth.
Golden talon,
golden will,
golden beak.
A beak
that nightly
drinks the slumbering
brains.
Feathers, bones,
and blood that
flies.

*novica
tadić*

Song to the lamb

literature
poetry

Lamb indestructible lamb
You who loaded with crystal crossed mountain
Lamb from the most distant cave
Lamb who peed on the black stones
Yo-yo turning on the highest rock
Lamb with fleece of bones
In the deepest night
You who beat among the oldest trees
Lamb who remembers
Lamb grazing and browsing the human brain
Lamb who imagined the blue sky
Lamb of all the firmaments
Lamb who makes the open eyes open again
Lamb with deepest waters
In your burning eyes
Lamb indestructible lamb

Lamb of dark forest
With a wreath of needles in your fleece
Lamb of juniper bush
With a purple berry in your hoof
Lamb with snowballs of last year snow on your back
Lamb with white teeth O long-logged Lamb
Who will kill me

Terrifying lamb
You dug for me tonight an appropriate grave
in the midst of the world
Where you'll settle down finally settle down
The way your tongue settles down between my jaws
Accurately settles down

Antipsalm

*novica
tadić*

Disfigure me, Lord. Take pity on me.
Cover me with bumps. Reward me with boils.
In the fount of tears open a spring of pus mixed with blood.
Twist my mouth upside down. Give me a hump. Make me crooked.
Let moles burrow through my flesh. Let blood
circle my body. Let it be thus.
May all that breathes steal breath from me,
all that drinks quench its thirst in my cup.
Turn all vermin upon me.
Let my enemies gather around me
and rejoice, honoring You.

Disfigure me, Lord. Take pity on me.
Tie every guilt around my ankles.
Make me deaf with noise and delirium. Uphold me
above every tragedy.
Overpower me with dread and insomnia. tear me up.
Open the seven seals, let out the seven beasts.
Let each one graze my monstrous brain.
Set upon me every evil, every suffering,
every misery. Every time you threaten,
point you finger at me. Thus, thus, my Lord.
Let my enemies gather around me
And rejoice, honoring You.

I ask

is the
dinner
ready

I ask
someone who
behind my back
in the nonexistent room

rearranges
the plates

Translated by Charles Simic

literature
poetry

Ricardo Rubio

Buenos Aires

The reason is blind when a prism is stirred

*ricardo
rubio*

Any word is not your word;
isn't yours the child's voice
 with throat of thunder,
neither the colour of tulip nor the southerly breeze.
That shield does not save you from your fear,
your armour does not prevent the entrance of arrows.
Sometimes, the light is scattered
 leaving a confusing hollow
 in the men's eye.
When forests in untold lands
 didn't imagine their foliage,
when the sun was a point
 with all the points turned on,
when the stars were fragments
 from a single, incomprehensible and crazy star,
and the atom vibrated in insistence,
 the scribe was already part of a memory
 in matter,
and though his eyes were not in spirit
 nor bone, nor heat, nor weather,
in its inertia, life planned laughter of passion
 and the darkroom of science.
Then, a man saw the chafing, the fissure,
the broken muscle for the simple dissolution
 of frankness,
and moaned.

The spinning wheel

literature
poetry

There is a logical claim
lost in the back of the wind,
a claim for space and science
in the infinite wisdom of the rocks.
As a crystalline nave,
time covers the beautiful nakedness of land,
and the ancestors' sons paint themselves with colours
and dress with never seen mirrors.
And there are many other ways to flee.
There is a green weeping
caressing the calmness of the mountain,
From there comes the ore with his truth on his back.
Someone decomposed those seeds
and, believing himself wise, gave them a number,
and number and letter formed a strange parasite of paper
that does not quench our thirst of guests without gift.
The clearness rises from old philosophies still not written,
the stars know nothing of pigeons or creeds,
but the land has given flowers and insects,
and without counting us, wraps us, and we return to silence.
There are many other ways to flee.
Objects of great thinkers
with large brains and fortunes,
and prophets, magicians, monks and engineers.
Objects of useless footsteps, of invasions, of colonization,
of intrepid journeys around what or who,
of shapes and drawings, of forced changes,
and atomic rains that know nothing about core or atom.
Thus the land holding us is not thirst but is shelter,
However, the moaning rises in the desert
and the scream in the volcano.
Who will give me a clam and a bucket of sand?
Who will teach me how to know nothing?
And many other ways to flee.

In the most absurd manner, mind plays to victory

novica
tadić

I advance without knowing, groping,
forgetting that I think, that I breathe,
I omit the beginning and the reason for the dilemma.
Even when taking fate with temperance
obstacles arise, frequent friction,
with simple things, with such ease.
I fight to get voice,
for to plant jasmine flowers in the memory;
I do not mind the modesty,
I do not die by tumbling.
My desire knows no rest.
It is late when it warns that the feat
conspires, shakes up, fatigues,
tries to mute the light that shines
 in the heat of a sincere food,
 in the whisper of a child,
 in front of the woman I love.
In the house, you dream with a chorus of joy,
with the brightness of the light that she lights,
with the children that rehearse juggling.
On the street, the ferocity never sings,
it revels in stalking, betrays,
and twirls the world.
There are no cardinal numbers in the cosmos,
so return is not defeat.
I leave the shield, I take off the harness,
I drink thirst and I shake the thunder of the night.
(inedit)

Burning ruminations facing the nature of things

literature
poetry

Against forgetfulness, time in me
claims his share, his revenge;
warns that I have forgotten the great destiny
in the hands of a fleeting smile
or in the gaps that history undresses
at every cycle.
Against forgetfulness — like the flowers say —,
every touch was a foreigner vibration.
Perhaps desires are only in the present
and they paint a future with dreams
or with a hug that will redeem.
But then come the voices and lamentation,
unsuspected corridors,
ashen infamy.
Perhaps the cries are part of those dreams,
of that vibration that cannot be stopped.
In the wind of time, air, earth,
trees and rivers, all nature
weaves laws that numb piety,
all nature reject the forgiveness of the weak,
that sow the verbs of punishment,
that seek the fight.
Now, my hands deny the fencing,
condemn the weight of the sword
to a distant memory in space
and they do not want to think of the epic.
The loud story undresses
and who I was when I was not
wanted to win the battle of the righteous,
fighting the burning flames,
shine a light on the rationale,
Meanwhile, fate laughed like today,
with his eternal drunkenness.

Translated by outer

I Told Her Naught About You

I couldn't tell you anything about me, my dear,
Except that through the open doors of my sorrow
dark travelers of the night enter freely.
I stand, welcoming them at my doorstep,
hoping one day you will come as well...
(from the poem *Walls hungry for your love*, by G. Lučić Lalić)

Yesterday we gathered, after so long, at a place hidden from mankind,
me and my friends: Love, Happiness, Sorrow and Loneliness.

Love said:

– I know how to trick people, and once again I wanted to fool you,
but your pure heart defended you once again. I know how to change
people, but your soul doesn't let me change you. Sometimes, I bring
goodness to people, but you... Never knew how to recognize the good.
You haven't got but an ounce of common sense and you cannot stop
me. We aren't best friends, you spend more time with others.

Happiness grinned:

– I know how to fool people, too! Forgive me, for I have fooled you
as well, at least for a short while. I know how to change people, but you
are so stubborn, too set in your own ways. I know how to give myself
freely, but you keep looking for me in other forms. You don't know
how to meet me half-way, to greet me, you simply don't know what to
do with me. Sorrow and Loneliness are your best friends, and I won't
spend my precious time on you anymore.

Sorrow was delighted:

– I know how to come when you least expect me, to reach you when
you aren't hoping you'll see me. I know how to make your every pore a
home. I spend most of your time with you, because you offer yourself
so freely, like no other in the whole world. You receive all the Danaans'
gifts I bring. I know how to kill, but I keep you alive so that I could live
too, for I endure inside you the most. I would gladly be your best friend,
you hardly break free from me as it is.

Loneliness looks at me, offended:

– I am your best friend, even though you betrayed me so many times
before. You left my side and went to people just to be hurt, and then
you would come back crawling, waiting for me to heal you, why you
squirmed with your open wounds. I directed your thoughts, taught
you not to fall again on the same spots, suckled you with the strength
for the new tomorrow, left you road sign all over, yet... Whenever I
would heal you, you would leave me again. You are not a loyal friend,
the others are much closer and so often fonder than me.

I kept quiet. I didn't justify my actions; I didn't even want to explain. I just whispered them your name. I opened the doors and bid them farewell, sending them into the night.

I really missed my best friend. She would always arrive late, but she was there even when I had hurt her, betrayed her, uncovered the secrets we had shared... She was there whenever I was joyful, tearful or on the run from the people. Nobody could understand me like she did. She was by my side, unconditionally, in all the moments that were the most precious to me. With utmost fear and the great respect, even Love, Happiness, Sorrow and Loneliness gave way and retreated. Actually, she had this amazing power to birth them or annihilate them.

She didn't say a thing, because she didn't have to... Even now she is by my side, my best and dearest friend – Silence. I told her naught about you, I withheld your name... She understood...

literature
prose

Translated by Tihana Lalić





fine arts

02

MILOŠ BOJOVIĆ
Old fisherman,
oil on canvas

The Artist Miloš Bojović, Toronto

This is how Milos Bojovic titles himself. This is an odd title for someone that finished his “formal” art schooling over thirty years ago. Born in Serbia in 1960, Milos completed his art studies at the Fine Arts Academy in Serbia. However since then he has never stopped intensely studying the techniques of the Old Masters. Milos is constantly searching for and reading anything he can get his hands on that refers to the Old Masters. Constantly seeking any arcane tip that will further expand his skills. Using information found in his searching Milos has learned many tips and tricks that enhance his already fantastic talent. Milos has one of those talents that appear natural or God given. This may be true but he daily works at improving his craft. It is rare to find him without a pencil, charcoal or paint brush in hand.

fine arts

Milos honed his talent throughout the streets and galleries of Europe. Since then Milos has established many collections around the world, and continues to explore the emotional boundaries of representational expression in contemporary art culture. Milos is a master of capturing character and imbuing life into his subjects. Whether it is a portrait of an individual that looks to have a blood flowing under the skin or a teacup that looks as if it could be lifted from the surface of the canvas. Having full confidence in Milos talents and Abilities. Milos is truly a passionate modern master.

Radovan Gajic

Toronto

The “Warrior-Veteran” from Aesthetic Combats

Judged by the amounts of his works Milos Bojovic is a prolific painter. But viewed through the prism of formal expression Bojovic’s works are heterogeneous to the point that some of them are on the edge of being controversial to each other.

On one side of the created opus, which artist Milos Bojovic realized through twenty six years of his artistic work as immigrant, sit the perfect detailed paintings of everyday scenes from the life of animals as well as the scenes of “*still life*”. On the other side are the paintings with scenes of sadness, or the other ones representing a post-apocalyptic toppled down civilization in which we live. This last group of paintings anticipate the possibility of an unavoidable disastrous ending of a utopian project to which mankind devoted itself once it became driven by its globalist impulse. These paintings connect Milos Bojovic to the small but important group of contemporary world artists already set in the folder of art historians as “*after the end of World art*”.

Bojovic’s creations of the animal’s world, as well as his *still life*, at some points excide photography or hyperrealist execution. With these the artist tends to reconstruct the structure of the real, painted object into the macro details. He uses his palette in such a manner that he recreates the texture of bark, skin, fur, fabric... His palette is here a tool with which he creates the illusion of a third dimension in the painted detail. His paint is here the sculptural element with which he re-constructs the living in order for it to be alive and live on in the paintings.

Bojovic’s genre motives are dominated by sadness, such as the paintings *Friends* and *Old man*. These are executed in *sfumato*, a technique of displaced or nonexistent focus by which the artist emphasizes a particular sentiment. Bojovic successfully avoids polemics on the social moment and immortalizes sadness and blues at a universal level. The artist then calls for the universal presence of these feelings in the viewer. He aims to touch and impact the viewer with soul.

Bojovic is a visual story teller and he openly admits it. He summarizes his own tractate on painting almost in a slogan by saying, “*What words would do I say it with colours through paintings.*” Yet the most is “*said*” by the artist in his compositions which are not clear “*rewritings*” of reality or nature but are formulations of his thoughts and experiences of the world. The painting *Self Portrait*, with incensory in front of yole log, awakes hope. His work *Angel* states and foresees fear. Recalling ichnographically the vision of the fresco of the White angel from Mileseva monastery in Serbia, to which parishers had sent their prayers through centuries, with soft irony in facing the opposite – the agitated space of godless masses against the waste peace of the sky an-

gelized by ancient fresco motive - Bojovic points to the only way of salvation, to the love of God. Similarly but with less drama in telling the story, Bojovic executes his painting *Diversity*, in which a fairytale kind of gathering of emigrants takes place under the lighthouse. This representation is more of a presentiment than the reality.

Confronting the mentioned artistic models to one another is what makes inner life of the artist Milos Bojovic. As much as his heterogeneity represents one prevailing model over the other, it also represents the change of shifts of the artist as a “warrior-veteran” from aesthetic combats. He relieves himself while drawing notes through the scenes of nature, in order not to forget the technique and technological process of expressing himself, before he heads into a “new battle” – into the execution of the next painting in which he will again rise up with result of his spiritual warring. Such is the result with the painting *Bison*, in which the animals – whose natural colour is the artist’s favourite tone – paradoxically goes through an artistic change: through the coloristic scheme of the totem pole native tribes of western Canada on one side, and the *vangogian* formulation of almost cubist masses. We accept these bison as more alive than the real bison of the prairie. With this painting the artist commemorates about sixty five million bison killed by white hunters on this continent in only 150 years. The artist saw the sad images of the slaughtered animals and presented them in a monumental gothic cathedral build of light.

These are the secrets of the artistic approach of Milos Bojovic to a white canvas. His approach makes his art cross many boundaries.

fine arts





museum

03

MILOŠ BOJOVIĆ
Lenity,
charcoal on paper

Museum activities of Serbs in Canada

Museum activities of Serbs in Canada is a subject that has not been interesting to the broader range of our public in Canada or in Serbia. The care for the Serbian cultural heritage, through time and through places where Serbs lived, has slowly developed, then disappeared due to wars and economic crises, only to be re-established in the changed and adapted format. This rhythm could be better monitored in the mother country, where the museum activity is stronger, better expressed, and then more strongly researched. In the Diaspora, the story is quite different. This paper will explore the definition of cultural heritage and museums, followed by cultural activities and documentation efforts among the Serbian communities in Canada. Significant achievements and individuals who have fought for these successes will be examined. Furthermore, an objective picture of the current state of Serbian cultural heritage will be presented, illustrating it through its expression and individuals who maintain it alive through their creativity. Finally, this paper will explore ways in which the care for the cultural heritage, through the museum activities, may continue, expand and establish itself in this region.

Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

The tangible cultural heritage includes outstanding buildings, secular and religious, monuments and material works of art. This definition is recognizable and acceptable to the public, and almost all our collective attention is focused on care of such expressions of Serbian cultural heritage. Since there are more examples of such material cultural heritage present in Serbia, we often forget the presence and importance of our intangible cultural treasure. Such form of Serbian culture is more widespread and more often practiced due to historical circumstances of settlers living in isolation from the mother country

Serbian material culture in diaspora, Canada specifically, is more or less confined to the sacral architecture which, except for a few examples, is newer, but it is extremely important and visually impressive. The oldest Serbian Orthodox municipality in Ontario was established in 1913 in Hamilton, and the first temple, the church of St. Nicholas, was built in 1917. The church no longer exists, and the temple was moved to a new location on Barton Street. The oldest Serbian Church in Canada is the church of the Holy Trinity in Regina (Saskatchewan)

¹ During the preparation of the previous issue 27/28 of the magazine "People Talk", the Editorial Board has omitted to indicate the name of the author of this text which was published in Serbian language. We are publishing the same text in English for the current issue and thereby confirm the authorship of Tanja Zec-O'Neill for this article. The Editorial Board apologizes to Tanja Zec-O'Neill for the previous error.

written heritage is channelled and diversified through the opening of several weekly newspapers in Toronto, such as; weekly *Newspaper* (Toronto); monthly *Easterly* and *Messenger* (both church newspaper in Toronto) *Umbrella* (Vancouver), *Letter* (Kitchener), *Tesla Magazine* (Toronto), followed by monthly bilingual newspaper *Voice of Canadian Serbs*, also from Toronto, bilingual magazine for literature and culture *People Talk* (Toronto) and the *Canadian Srbobran* (Hamilton), *Serbia* (Hamilton) and others.

The literary activity in the Canadian diaspora was intense in earlier periods (1934-1983) and most publicized through newspaper *Voice of Canadian Serbs*, where the prominent names such as Desanka Maksimovic, Milos Crnjanski, Slobodan Jovanovic appeared as well as many other notable authors. By moving the *Voice* to Toronto in mid-1980s and the establishment of *Serbian National Academy of Canada* there, the literary activity becomes even more intense through organizing literary evenings, book club meeting, bringing famous Serbian writers to lecture and interact. Since the mid-1990s, few writers from the former Yugoslavia populate Canadian cities and continue creating and publishing in Serbian language, and the number of literary enthusiasts who maintain the production of self published poetry and prose grows.

Visual art is also on the rise due to the influx of many talented Serbian immigrants to Canada, who continue to create, initiate mutual cooperation and exhibiting more in local and less in the Serbian owned galleries. Of course, this brief overview is a general picture of Serbian creative impulses in the material cultural expression in the last 50 years, and deserves a more detailed review in another work. For the sake of illustration, here are mentioned only the most visible and the easily recognizable examples to our public.

Educational and documentational are contrasting cultural impulses the previous creative ones. Many will, by the term 'educational' immediately think of religious education and Serbian language schools which exist and work consistently for a hundred years in all Serbian communities in Canada. The best example is Hamilton, where the church of St. Nicholas on Beach Rd, was consecrated on 19 December 1917. and a religious and Serbian language school started working almost at the same time. In the past seventy years, schools all across Canada competed in educational category through cultural programs offered at Serbian Day at Niagara Falls, organized by the Serbian National Defense, Drazha Day in Bimbrook and Winona, and Diocesan Days at Serbian monastery in Milton. Tremendous achievement in preserving Serbian language and Orthodox religion among the Serbs in Canada, claim the schools of Serbian language and religion are the churches in Hamilton, Toronto and Windsor, numbering hundreds of students. The only school that has hundreds of students today is the Serbian school "St Sava" in Kitchener, which operates within the Canadian system of primary and secondary schools for different ethnic groups. It is also notable the ten-year long operation of Dr. Radomir

Baturan's private school of Serbian language in Toronto, which opened classrooms in smaller neighboring towns and organized regular summer and winter camps. Numerous educational programs and activities in choral singing, folklore, music, theater, painting icons, visual arts, traditional handicrafts and cuisine were always well attended, greatly successful and very valuable in safeguarding the cultural heritage. An excellent example in choral singing education is the first children's choir in Canada founded at St. George Serbian Orthodox Church in Niagara Falls early as the mid 1950s. A few years later in Toronto the first children's choir, the first children's folk group, the first children's tamburitzza orchestra were organized at the church of St. Sava. Over time, these activities have varied in intensity and distribution in different Serbian communities across Canada, given the public interest and /or the existence of teachers and instructors. Culturally most active communities since the end of World War II were: Windsor, Toronto, Hamilton and Sudbury which, through their own efforts, were successfully showing the Serbian culture to other more dominant communities.

museum

Documentation impulse of the Serbian community reflects a very strong need to store, at first the family articles of sentimental value, but also the storage of the archives many athletic, humanitarian, cultural and religious organizations and societies that existed, have been extinguished and re-established over time. There exists a necessity for an organized approach to documentation of life and activities of a century long of existence of Serbs on the territory of Canada. This organized and defined process of documenting the lives of people in the community falls under the museum activity.

The Basic Functions of the Museum

Museums are centers for conservation, study and reflection on heritage and culture. Today museums are defined as institutions which are not oriented to profit, are in the service of society and its development, are open to the public, which collect, conserve, research and exhibit, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment of the material evidence of human being and his/ her environment. They maintain a link with the past, which returns the value of the material traces of our ancestors and, thus, play a key role encouraging social cohesion. The main purpose of the museum is to protect and preserve the heritage as a whole. It also carries out scientific studies needed to understand and determine its purpose and type. But the educational mission of a museum, regardless of its nature, is as important as its scientific work. (see more at <http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>)

The basic functions of the museum are: 1. storage – collection and protection of heritage, conservation of articles from destruction, damage and theft; 2. scientific functions – facilitating and performing scientific research (history, art history, archeology, biology, chemistry, documentation); 3. exhibiting function – the presentation of the artefacts to the public, thus enabling access to the collection; 4. animating

function – organizing interdisciplinary animation of visitors, active participation in public life of community (smaller / more frequent exhibitions), animating the public (children and foreigners, above all), holding of thematic concerts, organizing lectures, art workshops, maintenance of great PR and active work on obtaining financial support.

The collection of museum objects is one whole, small or large in scale, mainly related by material, processing, or purpose. Throughout history, collections have changed as was changing the appetite of collectors – they expanded the knowledge about items they own. Collections were becoming larger, more precious and more valuable.

Collections were increasingly formed by deliberate program of acquisition and its systematic realization. In Europe in the XVII century begins more serious formation of the collections. They are collected because scientific and historical significance, information, and also for of curiosity, a passion for the past, religious motives (cult objects), pride (a desire for possession), markets (resale), etc. The so called Cabinets of Curiosities were a catchall, while wealthy people, patrons of the arts, acquire the exquisite art collections.

Museum collections are defined by the thematic division into general and specialized, and then by geographical, in terms of geographical area they represent. Museums are further distinguished by the form and status. Division of collections by form, in the classic sense mark the artistic and historical museums. In contrast, many museums were founded as a negation of that classical form. Museums in the open are national parks and reconstructed the historic villages, such as the Old Village on Zlatibor mountain, then there are fortresses and archaeological sites of towns, baths, monuments, such as are Lepenski Vir and Gamzigrad, for example.

Classification by status should also be mentioned, because it clarifies the management of the collection and the museum itself as an institution. Accordingly, the museum can be national (state owned) and local (municipal) and the so-called organizational (association, or even corporation) which can also partly be under the control of regional authorities (for example, the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation) in order to survive as a non-profit institution. More recently the digital age allows for newer forms of museums and dissolves, to some extent, strict distribution by status. Which means that the birth of dozens of virtual museums in the last 10 years, allow such an institution freedom in the choice of location, exposure, contact with the public, form of research and storage of collections. Such a form of the museum is still in its infancy, but it is very interesting. In the coming years of intensified digitization of collections, one will notice the increase in number of such virtual museums.

The Museum Activity of Serbs in Diaspora

The guardians of the tangible heritage, in Serbian lands before the 19th century, were the monasteries and, to a small extent, private collectors. Formal museum activity in the Kingdom of Serbia started quite late compared to Europe, with the opening of the National Museum

in Belgrade in 1844 by a decree of the Minister of Education Mr. Jovan Sterija Popovic. The primary focus of the collection was archeology and numismatics that over time has significantly evolved into a very rich collection with over 500 inventory units that it counts today.

At first, the National Museum was more of a closed archive, and only with the establishment of the museum guard position by the edict of Prince Alexander Kradordevic in 1853, the museum opened to the public and began to exhibit the collection. To date there are 144 museums open to the public in Republic of Serbia which form a very nice network of regional museums and legacies across the country.

The first museum with the distinction of a museum of Serbian cultural heritage outside the borders of Serbia, opened in 1964 in Szentendre, Hungary. The idea to establish the *Museum of Serbian Orthodox Diocese* of Budapest was born between the two world wars. However, its realization occurred only in 1964., when the first permanent exhibition opened with artefacts that were transferred to the seat of Diocese for their physical protection. Following years were dedicated to extensive field research, under the direction of academician Mr. David Dinka under the auspices of the Gallery of *Matica Srpska*, crowned by the 1973 exhibition and book entitled "Icons Serbian churches in Hungary", which for the first time brought forth the most important works of sacral art from the area Buda Diocese (<http://www.galerijeimuzeji.com/lat/izlozba/22/srpska-crkvena-umetnost-umadjarskoj>).

This museum is very significant not only because it is the first museum outside the boundaries of Serbia, but because it has a library of about 9400 ancient and valuable books, and is also proud owner of extensive archive documenting life of the Serbian community in Szentendre and other parts of Hungary. The museum is primarily conceptualised as a museum Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Buda concentrated on the sacral artistic treasure of Serbs in Hungary, but it is not passive in its activities. Exhibits rotate, and travel not only to the National Museum of Serbia in 1990, but also to Brussels in 2011. Extremely valuable and mostly religious collection is still trying to depict centuries of life of Serbs in Szentendre, their social achievements and the legacy they left behind. An art historian, Mr. Kosta Vukovic, is the current curator of the museum and is an amazing guardian of the collection.

In recent years, Serbian cultural organizations in Budapest were finally gaining visibility on Internet. They have invested in the construction of representative websites where you can keep track of creativity and efforts of keeping an extremely rich Serbian cultural heritage in Hungary.

Another amassing example of the museum Serbian heritage outside the current borders of Serbia, worthy of note because of the incredibly long struggle for its existence and the priceless treasures that it holds, is the Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church within the city walls of old Dubrovnik. It is also the building of the Serbian Orthodox Church Parish Dubrovnik, close to the Serbian Cathedral of the Annunciation. The church was built in 1877, in the address Od Pucha St. 8, on the purchased land. The museum is small, but spacious enough to hold a very

museum

important library of old and rare books, and a substantial collection of icons, mostly of Boka Kotorska fresco painting school. Finally, it kept documents about the Serbian community, which existed in Dubrovnik and around it, and stubbornly persisted for centuries. (<http://www.bokokotorskasklikarskaskola.rs/dubrovnik-muzej-spc/dubrovnik-muzej-spc-muzej/>).

The first Orthodox chapel was opened in 1790, in a town house of Petrovic family, the descendants of Count Savo Vladislavljevic at the top of the Posat St, just outside the city walls. Literary historian of Dubrovnik Dr. Irena Arsic tells us that the house had a beautiful garden which was used as a small cemetery, but was not allowed to have any religious symbols. This house is still in good condition. The priest was coming from monastery Duži near Trebinje. With the fall of the Republic in 1808, the French authorities recognized the Orthodox faith as an equal to the Catholic, and so rich Serbs had purchased Boninovo land for their new cemetery, and later in 1837. Have built a new church of St. Archangel Michael. Why is this example of a museum, important? Because even though it is a museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, it is actually more important as an archive of history of the Serbian community in Dubrovnik, and is independent from the state run Dubrovnik Archives.

There is a number of treasure troves of Serbian material heritage, in the form of museums, archives and libraries in Australia, America and Canada. Museum of Sydney, Australia, under the name of the First Serbian Museum and Library, was founded in the late 1970. It is very small and mostly heritage character, in terms of documentation of history of the Serbian community of Sydney. The collection is small, and in recent years the museum is less active, but community elders have plans for revitalization.

In United States there exists a Hilandar Research Library (HRL) which, although not registered as a museum, houses the largest collection of medieval Slavic manuscripts on microfilm in the world: millions of pages of manuscripts in micro format from more than 100 different private, museum and library collections from many countries, is used by scientists from around the world. The collection includes several thousand Cyrillic manuscripts on microfilm, with more than 1,200 manuscripts from several monasteries on holy Mount Athos, in Greece, including the entire collection of manuscripts from the Serbian monastery Hilandar. The Hilandar Research Library also contains a large collection of specialized reference collection, in print and micro format, as well as a growing collection of original manuscripts and artifacts from the medieval Slavic countries.

Hilandar Research Library (HRL) is located in the Thompson Library, of the Ohio State University and shares space with the Research Center for Medieval Slavic Studies (RCSS). Archpriest stavrofor, prof. dr. Mateja Matejić, is the founder of this library and its treasures of Cyrillic handwriting. He was also a professor of Slavonic studies at the State University of Ohio, from 1968 to his retirement. Dr. Matejić is a

renowned translator, anthologist of the medieval poetry and poetry in foreign languages, and an author of several books on medieval Serbian literature. His son, dr. Predrag Matejić, following the footsteps of his father, received his doctorate in Slavic languages and literature at the same university. For many years, Dr. Predrag Matejić is the director of the Research Center for Medieval Slavic Studies (RCMSS) and curator of the Hilandar Research Library (<https://rcmss.osu.edu/>). Although this institution is not a museum but a library, it is immensely valuable collection is a superb example of collection building in the Diaspora.

museum

There is another notable example of museum collections on North American soil that many, at least in Canada, do not know about. Serbian National Federation of Pittsburgh, as an institution with a long history, had its own large collection. It grew and nurtured the immigrant history of the Serbs in the United States. The collection contained rare books, printed in English and Serbian, at the beginning of the 20th century, flags, records of numerous branches of the Federation, artistic works in oil, busts of prominent Serbs etc. However, for various reasons SNF has gifted the entire collection Senator John Heinz History Centre in Pittsburgh. One part of the collection belongs to Mr. Leland Anderson, who was a long time admirer of Nikola Tesla and who collected a very large number of files, correspondence and information about our scientist. The collection is in good hands, although, unfortunately, no longer in Serbian.

Serbian Heritage Museum of Windsor (Canada)

Serbian Heritage Museum in Windsor is the only such registered Serbian museum in Canada that is still actively working. It was founded in 1987, when the expansion of the Serbian Centre was completed, and from then until now occupies seven rooms in the same building.

The history of this museum is very dynamic, as is the history of the Serbian community in Windsor, which has been around since the early 1920s. Stories about the origin of the museum and the Serbian Heritage Women Association are inseparable. The Association commenced its operations on July 3, 1972. Initially, it consisted only of five ladies, under the leadership of Mrs. Stanislava Marković (former deputy director of the City Public Library in Windsor). The Association initially considered the possibilities of its organization and then has set its performance targets. Members of this society first started with organizing an elegant annual Saint Sava Ball, which continues to this day, followed by concerts of Serbian classical music performed by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Windsor, the same year. Finally, the Association initiated the Serbian classics of theatre, performed by the Academy of Drama at the University of Windsor (in English language) in 1974. All their projects were very successful and well attended. Encouraged by this success, the Association initiated the idea of Serbian heritage museum in 1975. Serbian community has responded quickly and generously donated a large number of artifacts, documents, photographs, hand-crafted traditional costumes, rare books and newspapers from private

collections. Each family wanted to leave a mark of their arrival and presence in Windsor. In 1976, most of the artefacts were exhibited at Hiram Walker Historical Museum in Windsor, and for four months had been seen by a large number of citizens. The success of this exhibition was so great that the Association had strengthened its intention to expand, strengthen and form a serious museum collection. It was a large and complex undertaking.

At the same time, the Association has organized many interviews with older members of the Serbian community who have narrated the beginnings of a community in Windsor, through their biographies. This enormous amount of knowledge is recorded and stored in the collection. In 1987, the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture of Ontario awarded a large grant to Serbian community in Windsor for the expansion of the existing Serbian Cultural Centre. The condition for obtaining the grant was that Serbian Cultural Centre should provide space and work for the heritage museum.

The Association has formed a task force that would ensure the adequate space for collection storage, office, workshop, library and exhibition space is provided. The same grant provided for the purchase of necessary equipment for the museum. Finally, the Association's objective was fully achieved when the new Serbian Cultural Center opened its doors on August 27, 1987. The ceremony was attended by representatives of the City of Windsor: Mr. Howard McCurdy and the Minister for Culture and Citizenship Ontario Ms. Lilly Munro. They congratulated the Serbian community in Windsor on the incredible success in promotion of its own cultural heritage and enrichment of the city of Windsor.

Since then the museum has been very active in forming the collection, preservation and proper storage of museum exhibits, organizing the existing library into a serious research one that will work systematically to collecting all the newspapers and magazines that are published by Serbs throughout the Diaspora, creating a database of all Serbian entrepreneurs and famous ids within the community, networking with all the cultural organizations of Serbs in Canada and America. The director of the museum in this very active period, was Mrs. Staslava Markovic who established a museum, but also for years successfully secured funding through a number of grants. Ms. Svetlana Miskovic who followed, has often collaborated with the *Serbian National Academy of Canada* from Toronto and the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Toronto. Mr. Allen Kelly focused more on the inclusion of the citizens of Windsor in various projects, recruiting volunteers from high schools and so on. Mrs. Dragica Stojančević has initiated major projects to mark very important dates in Serbian culture, as was "800 Years of Monastery Hilandar" exhibit, then mapping of all the Serbian Orthodox churches across Canada and America. Mr. Bogdan Chuk turned focus more to complete refurbishment of the interior, donations to the collection and the stabilization of museum's finances. Mrs. Angie LaMar and Mrs. Anne Dube belong to the 'newer' generation of museum directors from 2013 to the present.

Revitalization of the museum was launched in 2013 when the museum received a prestigious grant from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sports of the Province of Ontario. The idea of digitizing a portion of the collection was born at the 25th anniversary of the museum celebration. The director Mr. Bogdan Chuk, Mrs. Anna Dube, a long time associate of the museum, Mr. Brian Owens, chief archivist at University Library in Windsor, and several other people came together to formulate a project to the smallest detail. Cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Culture and its local representatives brought fruitful grant to the museum, which was then able to start the project in the spring of 2013.

museum

The material selected from the collection for digitization referred only to written heritage. Selected were all anniversary books ever written in Serbian language and published in Windsor, all the newspaper articles written about the local Serbian community, all newspapers that have been written and issued in the city, such as the *Democratic Thought* from 1955 and 1956, the *Voice of Canadian Serbs* from 1945 to 1983, then all the books written by local writers in Serbian language and published the Windsor. Monthly reports from Yugoslav Canadian Association of Windsor (which later merged with Serbian National Shield Society), Sokol Society documentation, the church Record of Births, Marriages and Deaths from 1946 to 1970 in the area of Windsor were also included. When selection was completed, there was approximately 25 000 titles that had to be digitize following the highest standards of digital conservation.

During a year long project many activities were completed such as; creating biographies of 20 local writers and editors of the newspaper *Voice of Canadian Serbs*, analyzing their texts and literary and political activities, exploring the establishment and operation of publishing houses Avala Printing and Publishing Co. (Property of the Serbian National Shield Society of Canada), Mistic Printing and Perun Press. Those publishers have issued newspapers, books, promotional material for social gatherings and festivals and contributed greatly to creating documents of pretty much all faucets of the community. Research has opened a number of excellent topics in the history and culture of the Serbian community of Windsor, as well as the history of cultural, humanitarian and religious societies and associations in Windsor and their collaboration with other communities in Canada, the United States the world. The project has spawned a new website with great review of digitized material, representative parts of the collection in all categories and a virtual library of digitized texts (www.serbianheritagemuseum.com).

Parallel to the project, under the leadership of the museum Board of directors and the president Mrs. Angie LaMar, the community has enthusiastically organized donor events that have provided financial support for the museum. By the mid 2014, when digitization project was complete, museum has also able to renew its exhibition space, found a group of permanent volunteers, develop a new administrative committee that successfully promoted museum activities. In 2014 the

project of digitization, cataloging and identifying a large number of photographs from the museum permanent collection was completed, and in 2015 its entire collection inventory was reviewed and documented. The year 2015 passed focusing on raising and changing the profile of exhibitions, therefore, connecting the museum with a wider cultural community, such as, an exhibition covering the topic of the centenary of the Great War, which was marked by many other communities around the world.

The current president of the board of the directors Mrs. Anne Dube began her mandate before the end of 2015 in close cooperation with the curator of all recent exhibitions Mrs. Julka Vlajić. The cycle of exhibitions dedicated to *Serbia in the First World War* began in August 2014, when the museum was the host and organizer of unveiling a memorial plaque on the occasion of 100 years of internment of Serbs in Canada in conjunction with the Ukrainian community across the country, as well as programs of lectures by Dr. Marin Mandres and Mrs. Draga Dragašević. Newspapers *Voice of Canadian Serbs* recorded the story of this event and exhibit in the September issue of 2014. The second exhibition with the same theme started in April 26. 2016 under the name of *Great Serbian Golgotha 1915-16 (Voice of Canadian Serbs, January 2016)*. The cycle ended with an exhibition of the latest in a series titled *Heroine of the First World War*, which opened in autumn 2016. During the summer 2016 there were two short art exhibitions; the first opened mid-May and the second in mid-July, which invited two painters from Serbia, Sunčica Markovic and Zoran Milosevic. This is a fine example of cooperation that should be followed.

The current state of cultural and museum activities in Canada

The awareness about preservation of Serbian cultural identity outside of Serbia is very strong, but it is usually manifested only through a narrow spectrum of activities. Among them, folk dance and music have the most dominant place, in terms of the concert and direct performance. It is evident that the Serbs love to dance, but what is the reason for its dominance among other Serbian cultural societies in Canada? Perhaps the answer lies in a number of skilled and dedicated choreographers, or efficiently organised independent cultural societies (SCA Oplenac and the Academy of Serbian Folk Dances “Miroslav Bata Marčetić”), or the great possibilities and opportunities for performance or popularity among the youth. Most often is the case that many communities across Canada have their folklore companies active within church congregations under the auspices of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Folklore sections very often visit each other during the holidays or important competitions, so their communication is intensive. The most successful and most visible folklore dance companies have the opportunity are able to best represent Serbian culture to the general public in the Canadian context.

Literature is the next dominant cultural activity among the Serbs. For several decades now Toronto is dominating in this area in On-

tario and beyond. The bookstore “Serbica”, Serbian National Academy of Canada, Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Canada publishing house “Istocnik”, the Association of Writers “Desanka Maksimovic”, the club of the magazine “People Talk” and the Serbian Benevolent Association “Jovan Ducic” usually organized literary evenings, promotions of new books of poetry and the local Serbian prose writers and enthusiasts. Recently, Serbian General Consulate also started to offer opportunities to many writers to showcase their achievements. Many names can be counted, to most of them are primary impulse is writing as a creative expression through which they keep Serbian language and alphabet and create opus of modern literature in Serbian language in diaspora. This is certainly a feat that is not easily accomplished.

museum

Visual art is also an active branch of tangible cultural heritage which is very attractive to creative Serbs across Canada. The majority of them is somehow centered in Toronto where they exhibit in a variety of exhibition spaces. Serbian National Academy in Canada is a leading showroom space in Toronto, although spatially small, it has managed over time to attract about sixty icon painters, designers, painters and sculptors, presently its permanent members and exhibitors.

Speaking of the creative impulse and cultural achievement, it is important to mention significant projects initiated independently by historians and filmmaker enthusiasts. There are two recent projects which are very important for the history Serbian community in Canada. The first project was completed on August 20, 2014 when two commemorative plaques were uncovered for Serbs imprisoned in the Canadian work camps during World War I, one in Windsor and the other in Niagara Falls. The initiator of the entire project is the Ukrainian community that was able to press Canadian government to accept and recognize the existence of the process of internment of its undesirable immigrants in the First World War. The initiator of the same project for the Serbian community was Mrs. Draga Dragašević, who was able to shed light on this part of history of Serbian community in Canada after six years (2008-2014) of painstaking and detailed research. Her efforts have resulted in a museum exhibition entitled “100 Years Since the Captivity in the First World War,” at the Serbian Heritage Museum in Windsor (<http://www.serbianheritagemuseum.com/category/exhibitions/>). The article in the *Voice of Canadian Serbs* in September 2014 issue and an essay for the journal *People Talk*, No. 23/24, followed by a lecture at the Serbian National Academy in October of the same year, which was recorded by Serbian television Toronto. Perhaps the research continues, but we now have a well-documented period, little known to Serbian history in this region. Otherwise Mrs. Draga Dragašević is a librarian by profession, who began her career with now famous Mrs. Stanislava Marković at the City Library in Windsor. She then moved to Toronto and worked as co-host of Serbian radio program “Šumadija” with her husband Mr. Boro Dragasevic for almost 40 years. In its heyday Radio “Šumadija” was the most listened to radio program of Serbian community locally and globally and had a huge impact on the

Serbian community, because of various programs, because of loyal support, and the desire to raise community awareness on the need to preserve and promote their culture. Mrs. Dragasevic was also very successful editor of the English section of the monthly magazine *Voice of Canadian Serbs* since 1983 when the newspapers moved from Windsor to Toronto, until 2005. Her knowledge, experience and successes are indeed numerous.

Another independent project, is a documentary video project titled *Royal Army: The Culture of Remembering* that represents a sort of chronology of memories “DPs” (displaced persons) who, in the twilight of the Second World War, surrendered their arms and fled to Italy. This is a story about the suffering of their families, of war crimes against the Serbian population and about the days spent in Italian prison and civilian camps. This is also the story of an uncertain road to freedom, upon which will the fates of people who have built what today represents the Serbian community in Windsor, would cross. Documentary film is a work of a longtime journalist Zoran Kljajić and under the auspices of Serbian Heritage Museum of Windsor. The film became available in “free share” format for downloading at the museum’s website in early spring of 2016. *Royal Army* – Written and directed by Zoran Kljajić; Production and editing: Meg Roberts; Consulting: Bob Brkovic; Artistic realization: NeDa Studio; Production: Aleksandar Media. Participants in the film: Zarko Vucinic, Anka Obradovic, Milorad Gaćeša, Milan Keča, Anda Stipić, Danica Pavlica, Djordje Dobric, Gruja Stevanov Lala, and Soka Diklić (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjYNDGqOlyc>). This is another feat that will go to the museum. Certainly there are many interesting projects undertaken by many across Canada and the world.

Zoran Kljajić began working in radio journalism in 1986 at the Yugoslav National Broadcaster, Radio Sarajevo. He worked for a large number of top alternative and independent radio and television broadcasters in the country, covering a wide range of social, political and cultural issues. The beginning of the war in Yugoslavia he has spent in Slovenia. In the period between 1991 and 1992 Zoran Kljajić makes numerous reports and stories for BBC World Service program (Yugoslav branch) regarding the “conflict within the brotherhood and unity” between the Serbian and Croatian diaspora in Brazil and South America. For a short time, he reported on the beginning of the war in Bosnia Hercegovina, and later led the first private radio station in Serbia, in the period from 1994 to 1998, just before moving to Windsor. He is a freelance journalist active in the Serbian community of Windsor-Essex County and is an avid photographer. He is also a former editor of News for Windsor CJAM News (CJAM 99.1FM Windsor-Detroit) Public Radio.

In Ontario, there are twelve museums registered as heritage or local history museums to date. Except for the Serbian Heritage Museum of Windsor and Josef Schneider Haus Museum in Kitchener, all others are located in Toronto. This is partly because the largest number of various ethnic communities, and partly because of more available re-

sources. Beautiful examples of museums of this type are Lithuanian and Ukrainian in Mississauga, followed by Nikkei, Japan's Cultural Heritage Museum and Estonian Museum in Toronto.

I mention these four museums because they have large collections, they invested the most money and spatially are relatively large. All others are much smaller, with a small collection and mostly located along the cultural center of a community they represent. It is often the case with such small museums is that is run by one person, and governing board is committed for the promotion and donations. The Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport, through its Museum Services department, is trying at leased to provide useful information to small museums, if grants are not always available. Serbian Heritage Museum of Windsor is an exception in many ways, but it should not be the only one in Canada.

museum

A good example of safeguarding Serbian cultural heritage is visible in the monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Milton, where a modern library was built ten years ago ten years ago. It hosts important cultural activities. Serbian communities around the country are generally organized around the Serbian Orthodox Church, in a networked system of congregations. The Serbian Orthodox Church is very much used to provide encouragement and venue for varied cultural activities, and monastery in Milton is not an exception.

This recipe for such an organization has so far proven to be successful, however such a structure should be used a bit more practically. Each administration of Serbian congregations could start work on the documentation of life in their community, gathering as much information and items for the future collection or archive. In many cases people bequeath old books, correspondence, family photographs, evidence of its successful life if they are entrepreneurs, etc. The gathering of collection is easier than one might think, because there is always some space available, where the archiving is possible, even under not the most ideal conditions. Even the existing challenge of finding staff that would adequately and professionally deal with and the care of such a project, it is possible to overcome it with the practical training that would ensure appropriate work. The inspiration to start documentation and archival activities of a community, which later grew into a museum, came from the contacts with the Jewish, Ukrainian, Hungarian communities and through exploring UNESCO documents and conventions on safeguarding the cultural heritage.

Documentation of social and cultural life of Serbs across Canada were conducted mostly within congregations, whose archives are quite extensive, through the publication of anniversary books written by the Circle of Serbian Sisters, by parish administrators, by church choirs, and humanitarian, athletic and cultural associations. Many archives of various organizations are often in the private hands of its former members of the Management Board or a person of trust that has some kind of storage capacity. In a way, a private storage of social organizations' archives can be disadvantageous because it is often thought to

have been lost, or because the depot space can sometimes be harmful to the material that stores. Similar project of collecting the documentation about the origins and history of the Serbian community in Toronto was initiated, for now, in a modest format (www.facebook.com/heritagegeeks). The newspaper *Voice of Canadian Serbs*, in December 2015 issue has an article where it was mentioned. In parallel with this project, there is another one which is meant to record and document tangible Serbian heritage in Canada, following the example of the UNESCO Representational Lists. Such an inventory would help to understand the true picture of Serbian culture and its achievements in Canada. Then it would be easier to claim a grant for any kind of activity – from the conservation of important old buildings, proper storage of mobile property, founding a library or a collection, registration of all our cultural workers and artists. Out of these, a detailed formulation of our cultural identity can be achieved and a strategic plan can be created for its safeguarding and promotion under international UNESCO guidelines.

It is often the case that any community organizes itself mimicking or in contrast to its source culture. This is a spontaneous process that often placed diaspora on the margin of evaluation in any sphere of life. It is acceptable to look for role models in the source culture where the system of cultural values and its authorities have already been established, and where institutions and organisations already operate successfully. However, one should take into consideration that the diaspora develops according to the established patterns of the source culture, but in different dominant cultures that set their own requirements and challenges. In the past, these challenges were the lack of access to information via the media and Internet, lack of communication with cultural institutions and even political isolation in some cases. The lack of frequent exposure to their own culture has accelerated a natural process of assimilation into the dominant culture and the development of remaining traditions and collective consciousness in a specific way. The older the Serbian community exist in another more dominant culture, the more pronounced will its specific characteristics be. Timisoara and Arad in Romania, Budapest and Szentendre in Hungary are good examples where the Serbian community exist more than four centuries, and are quite different from those that existed only a century in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Hamilton, Toronto, Sudbury, or even very small and young communities in Botswana and Libya, Saudi Arabia and the like. When the specificity of the cultural development of any Serbian community in Diaspora is well defined, its characteristics will be of greater value to itself and to the source culture. That is to say, Diaspora does not have to be culturally inferior to its source culture, just because the conditions for its development are different, and the challenges and obstacles far greater. Many will recognize more entrenched stereotypes that Diaspora only listens to folk music, or likes to watch comedy theater, or considers folk art as high art. These stereotypes are quite humorous and only occasionally true.

The responsibility of documenting the existence of Serbs in the diaspora lies with Serbs individually and their institutions and organizations collectively. Serbia may offer an example, resources, perhaps occasionally some financial assistance. It would not be fair to the cultural development of the diaspora anywhere to seek help praise only from institutions from Serbia. Serbian cultural organizations in Canada have a duty and a social responsibility to enrich and promote their cultural heritage, and to safeguard it for future generations in accordance with the guidelines of Canadian cultural institutions that will be able to support them better. In conclusion, the creation and preservation of Serbian cultural heritage is our collective responsibility, raising awareness and education is the responsibility of our organizations, a clearer definition of cultural matter and formulation of an effective system of support and networking is a need that can not be further neglected. A concrete plan for the near future can begin now. Congratulations to all who have safeguarded Serbian cultural identity for many years through selfless efforts, and who have enriched it by their creativity. Serbian cultural identity in diaspora will continue to be replenished and guarded well.

museum

Medieval Serbian Coins

The fundamental symbols that characterize the origin and nature of a medieval European state are far better encapsulated through an analysis of its art forms than one of its legislative proceedings. Some of the strongest of these basic national attributes can be found in a nation's coins and can give valuable insight into its political, culture, economic, and military history and traditions.

Of early medieval Balkan societies, it was only Serbs, along with Bulgars and the Byzantine Empire, that took part in the creation of their own metal currencies. While this practice would become far more standardized in the periods to follow, some Balkan societies would wait as long as the early twentieth century before fully engaging in it.

Throughout the middle Ages, several distinct Serbian states were formed. Some coexisted during similar time frames, while others existed exclusively on their own. Among the longest lasting and most influential of these states were: Duklja (Zeta), Travunija, Hum and Zahumlje, Paganija, Raska, Bosnia and Srem. Byzantine coins were used and present in many of these territories; a common regional phenomenon considering the long held dominance of the Byzantine Empire throughout most of the Balkan Peninsula.

Historically it was assumed that the smelting of domestic metal currency began in Serbia during the reign of its first king, Stefan II Nemanja, sometime in the very early 13th century. Recent research suggests that the process of making a unique domestic currency did not begin until the reign of his son, Stefan Radoslav, somewhere between 1227 and 1234.

Looking towards to the Byzantine Empire for example, King Radoslav of Raska began the creation of the first silver and copper coins. These early coins were concave in shape, had text in Greek (rather than in Serbian, which was still literarily young at the time), and remain today only in incredibly small quantities. Interestingly, they are also the only medieval Serbian coins ever made from materials besides silver alone, namely copper and gold. A high regional abundance of silver ores forced subsequent monarchs through this transition.

Depending on the state in question and time period, Serbian coins throughout the middle ages went by two different names: the Dinar and the Perper. The former has its origins from the old Roman coin, the "Denarius", meaning "Tenth", whilst the perper is of Byzantine origin. While the dinar remains a traded currency to this day, the perper ceased to be produced with the dissolution of the Kingdom of Montenegro in 1918.

Records tell us that King Stefan Uros Dragutin, in 1276, near an old mining town in what is now northern Montenegro, produced an unusually pretty silver coin that resembled the Venetian Matapan (a form of Venetian currency). As more of these Serbian “Matapans” entered production and circulation, they quickly became a popular coin, seeing trade all throughout the Mediterranean, and as far away as mainland Spain.

The usage of these coins became so widespread, so as to cause one of history’s earliest negative demand shocks to competing currencies. Venice, which was a dominant trading Republic of the time, was especially unsatisfied with this arrangement, and in a bid to eliminate Serbian coins from the international market, decreed their use illegal and undertook significant measures to see the destruction of these coins. This early Serbian currency posed enough of a nuisance, even threat, to the Venetian authority that it receives mention even in Dante’s “Divine Comedy”,

“And Portugal should be held in blame, with Norway and the Rascian who laid his eyes on Venetian coins and forged his own ill-fame.” (Dante Alighieri, Paradise, Canto XIX, Eagle speaking)

It is of particular interest that Dante placed this detail in the realm of heaven.

Legend has it that the source of many early Rascian coins, the town of Mojkovac, got its name from an amalgamation of three words: “**Moj**” meaning “My”, “**Kovani**” meaning “forged”, and “**Novac**” meaning “coins”. While never truly verified, the likelihood that this is the authentic origin is rather high, especially considering the close proximity of several old silver mines and mints. Indeed, the practice of naming location based on their service to the king is not exclusive to this location. The monastery “Naupare” in central Serbia was once the king’s own treasury and money vault. On way to combat enemies in the area, it is said that Czar Lazar (1329-1389) looked in the direction of the monastery and proclaimed that “they [the enemy] have arrived ‘Na um pare’, ‘to our money’”.

Although early ventures into domestic minting were very conservative, borrowing heavily from Byzantine and Venetian models, later Serbian coins would be shaped (literally) to best suit the needs and demands of the domestic economy and authority. Rulers and Saints were the most common depictions on these coins, while accompanying texts were done in a variety of languages including Latin, Italian, Greek, and old Serbian.

The minting of coins in medieval Serbia was first set to written law as part of a much larger codex in 1354. This codex is one of the earliest attempts at a universal and an all-encompassing list of laws in Europe following the collapse of the Western Roman state. Casually translated, the first law pertaining to the smelting of coins stated: “Those involved in the minting of coins in the dukedoms and lands that belong to the Czar may only do so in those cities which the Czar has assigned for this purpose”.

museum

The creator of the aforementioned law codex, and the most notable of medieval Serbian autarchs, Stefan Dušan, holds particular importance to the evolution of Serbian currency. Throughout his reign as king (1331-1346) and later as Czar (1346-1355) the production of currency in Serbia would surpass even that of its strongest neighbors. Whether in terms of number, variety, or aesthetic beauty, this period in the development and production of medieval Serbian coins is regarded as the greatest. The minting of domestic money was continued in Serbia by subsequent leaders right up until the fall of the despotate in 1459.

Following the Turkish conquest of the Serbian state in the 15th century, the production of domestic currency ceased. Instead, Ottoman currency prevailed, and remained as the sole legal tender of Serbian lands until well into the later half of the 19th century.

The First Modern Dinar

Following Serbia's defacto independence in the early 19th century, and in the time preceding the foundation of a single national currency, a wide variety of European and Turkish coins were used in domestic commerce. Records indicate that at least 43 different forms of foreign currencies were employed in Serbia, 10 of which were gold, 28 silver, and 5 copper. At a conference held in 1868, in the city of Kragujevac, it was decided that a new, exclusively Serbian currency would be formed. These early coins were minted in Vienna, Austria and came in copper divisions of 1, 5, and 10 "para". They featured the image of prince Mihajlo Obrenovic; the head of state at the time. What makes these early Serbian coins especially unique and collectible is the appearance of an occasional spelling mistake. Some coins, of the 1 Para denomination, featured on their obverse side the correct phrase "Obrenovic III Serbian King", while others featured the same phrase with an incorrect spelling of the word "Serbian".

The "dinar" was chosen as the national monetary unit while the "Para" was designated a subunit, in much the same way as the cent to the dollar. The name "dinar" was chosen for its obvious historical significance to medieval Serbian states. This position was advocated by the minister of foreign affairs, Cedomir Mijatovic, who is consequently regarded as the godfather of the early dinar. The first silver dinars were minted in 1875, whilst the first gold domestic coins were minted four years later, in 1879, and came in denominations of 10 and 20 dinars. The 20 dinar coin was nicknamed the "Miland'or", after king Milan Obrenovic, Mihajlo's successor. The 5 and 10 Para coins were also colloquially (and respectively) nicknamed "Marijash", and "Gosh".

The last coins to include the image of a head of the Obrenovic dynasty were minted in 1897. They featured the image of King Alexander I Obrenovic and came in 1 and 2 dinar denominations. A violent change in dynasties in 1903 brought with it a change in the appearance of the domestic currency. From 1904, onward to the dissolution of the Kingdom of Serbia in 1918, all domestic coins were minted with the image of the successor king, Peter Karadordje.

In 1904, a silver 5 dinar coin was minted in celebration of the 100 year anniversary of the First Serbian Uprising. The obverse of the coin featured King Peter I (the reigning monarch) and Karadordje Petrovic (leader of the 1804 rebellion against the Ottoman).

Silver coins minted in the image of King Peter I continued to be made until 1915. The last Kingdom of Serbia coins were minted in 1917, one year prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. This marks the end of a violent and tumultuous chapter in the history of the Serbian nation and its national currencies.

[museum](#)





the benefactor's
story

04

MILOŠ BOJOVIĆ
Marked,
oil on canvas

This is the story of mam, dad and their countrymen

Dragan Zaklan was a shepherd boy who arrived in Vancouver in the year 1911. He was born in Lika, Korenica, (Military Region) in 1893. At that time Lika was within the territory of Croatia, a region under the jurisdiction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose Habsburg dynasty emanated from Vienna and Budapest.

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Most of the South Slavs were orthodox Serbs (orthodox Christians). Tragically, the South Slavs became a splintered society. The Austrian dynasty pursued a standard imperial policy of encouraging dissension within their conquered lands. They coerced (rewarded or punished) orthodox Serbs to force a change of their faith. Their newly catholicized adherents (Ustasha) were nurtured to become intolerant and often vicious attacking those who chose to continue their orthodox faith. The Ustasha organization was universally regarded as brutal.

By way of background, the people of Military Region (Vojna Krajina) were given special designation by the Habsburg emperor Leopold. They were invited, en mass, to settle this military frontier in order to defend the region from Ottoman Moslem banditry and incursions. As reward, they were granted special status by the emperor. Their language, laws, religion were thus guaranteed. Their added role was to provide the Empire with professional soldiers. These soldiers were more less trained 'shock' troops. When the battle reached critical stage, these troops were expected to turn defeat into victory. They had a well-deserved reputation. They had achieved a military legacy. Interestingly, many of my American relatives had made the military life their profession.

Both quality of life and security under the Habsburgs, were demanding and affected stability. They were also referred to as 'granicars' (monitors of the frontier).

Although Dad's village was located close to the birthplace of Nikola Tesla (One of the most significant intellects of the modern world), yet Dad, as so many of his villagers, was deliberately denied the benefits of educational enlightenment. Regardless, this region produced a plethora high profile alumni. In addition to Tesla, there was the famous Field Marshal Borojevic (Top strategist of WW1, General Bogdanovic (Napoleon's opponent), Many generals (some with the Zaklan name – the list also included doctors, statesmen and educators.

As an illiterate shepherd boy, dad found passage to New York and the entrained to Chicago to join his brothers Tode and Mican, both of whom had found work building new railway lines. Theirs was a typical

story working as navies in building the new nation's transportation, all the while sending remittances to their homeland families. They did not forget their roots

By the 1913. Dad's two brothers, Tode and Mican, returned to Serbia, where they were immediately involved in the Balkan Wars. Both sustained serious injuries. Like so many of their countrymen, they had become part of a huge migration to the newly industrializing, America. New York, Chicago, Cleveland was a typical destination on their itinerary.

Many returned to their home in Military Region, relating their new experiences. With their 'windfall' monies, they made impressive purchases, thus triggering significant excitement amongst the more adventurous villagers.

It was not long before dad joined this exodus. Later, via New York and Chicago, (a major Yugoslav destination, he came to Vancouver in 1913. A year later, the First War began.

Dad had enlisted in the Canadian Army but was subsequently rejected because he was classified as an "alien" since he was still an Austrian by citizenship. He was accepted into the Vancouver Department but again he was suspended because he was categorized an "alien". He then found work at the huge sugar refinery in Vancouver. He enjoyed his Vancouver bachelor life.

In 1929, Mom arrived in Vancouver. Mom was from Zumberak, a widow and she joined her married older sister, Tonika, who had a boarding house and Mom came to help. There she met Dad, an eligible bachelor. There was a chemistry and they decided to marry.

Life on the farm in Surrey

Purely, by chance, Dad had acquired, sight unseen, some Surrey property. At that time, Surrey's population was sparse. Roads were few, trails were common. There was one local rail line connecting Vancouver to Chilliwack and it passed through Surrey. When transportation is weak, distance is indeed greater. No one could have guessed the forthcoming developmental changes. Upon first seeing this remote and empty property, Mom immediately began to persuade Dad to build and move. She wanted to raise her children on a farm. That was important to her. Dad was reluctant, Mom was determined and the rest 'was history'. Dad was a Licanien, as such preferred social interaction, fine clothes, a little whiskey, some gambling and urban conditions. His interest in gardening, milking cows, fencing, hay meadows, tending chickens did not fit in with his 'hero-conceptual' background. But Mom made certain that he had ample opportunity to visit his Vancouver friends, to dress well and to frequent good restaurants. It was a workable arrangement.

So our family went on to enjoy continual residence on this farm property for a century. We were amongst the first to arrive and to look as if we would be the last to depart. We were witness to extraordinary sociological changes – in every field. Surrey was transformed from a

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primitive, isolated subsistence farming, and a sprinkling of Aborigines, to the current modern urbanization. Our property value went from the initial ten dollars and acre to the current three million. (Some change can be attributed to inflation- but mostly the rule of supply/ demand prevailed.

Our road, (132 St.), initially called Roebuck, had had a huge number of Yugoslavs. They were compatible, worked well together, socialized and helped each other when larger project required many hands.

Yugoslavs had been subordinated residents within the Austro-Hungarian Empires. Imperial policy did not encourage subservients to receive education or be decision makers or to be enlightened. (For special reasons, Nikola Tesla was a unique exception). Dad's villagers clearly demonstrated inherent ability, yet rarely had access to schools. As an example, Dad never attended any school of any kind. Mom had four years and attended only during the warmer seasons. Yet they seem to have possessed enough 'village smarts' to survive quite well. Interestingly, my continual educational involvement never seemed to interfere with my relationship with them. They seemed to adjust readily to my academic/social changes.

Most domestic social conversations tended to deal with family, friends, farming, community, childhood memories, and 'old country' reminiscences. Since the skill level of the immigrant was marginal as was their academic, they often were the last to be hired, the first to lose their jobs while receiving a modest pay. But because they were persevering and diligent workers, they usually remained on job.

Mostly, this social group shared subordinated social roles -serving foreign empires – so they tended to be somewhat paranoid toward authority. Some of our Surrey neighbours were English. (This country had been conquered by them and their people tended to receive better jobs, have finer homes and enjoyed a superior life style). They were

Surrey's gauleiters. Consequently, many had an ambivalent attitude toward them. On one hand, there was a measure of subservience. On the other, suspicion. The English were referred to a 'chuvars' (someone who invigilates and informs. But it was in school, that the immigrant began to establish a stronger role. They tended to have few problems with competing. Our genetics were qualitative; we learned to be successfully competitive. Some of Surrey's finest students were of Balkan stock. Of course, their strong work ethic helped.

Surrey was an empty frontier. The roads were dirt and gravel, open ditches. The neighbours were distant. Electricity, tap water, furnaces, indoor plumbing were just beginning to appear. Schools were distant. Teachers were marginal, a paucity of libraries, and three small high schools that served the needs of the entire municipality. Social conditions were such that little education beyond elementary school was considered meaningful. One needed neither Shakespeare nor algebra to split wood, milk cows or to hoe the garden.

Dad's (Dan Zaklan's) family was amongst the first of our community's Yugoslav settlers. Some thirty families settled, largely along

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Roebuck Road (132 St.). Over the years, their ranks have conspicuously thinned. Gradually, the 'old timers' sold their land to developers and used the monies toward retirement, purchase of new homes and travel. Unfortunately, economics compelled them to work beyond the age of 65; they retired and shortly they faced serious health issues that abbreviated life. Penicillin, dentists, optometrists, surgeons, safety equipment were either unavailable or in short supply. Leisure and 'recreational' activities were considered a luxury. Further, they had little 'leisure-oriented experience and were little prepared to enjoy even a short retirement.

Theirs was an era that preceded labour unions and 'social justice'. Work involved long hours, six days a week and in unsafe, unhygienic environments. The justice system favoured the Anglo: this included the police, the press, the courts and promotion.

Today, ours is one of the few original families remaining.

The times have changed. Life has become rather hedonistically indulgent. Our purchases are made less on affordability and more on whim and research... We are now considered to be "the region's pioneers".

Of course it's hard for youth to understand the conditions as they had existed. What is currently available was not always thus.

The regional general store carried a little bit of everything. Today's super-markets, filled with goods from floor to ceiling, was unheard of. Poor people have simple demands and their empty pockets allowed to buy only basic goods. All sales were cash. Credit was unavailable.

As economics improved, so did the social system. Recreation, education, transportation improved. Those, even a few years older than I, had received just enough formal education that allowed them to become literate and to do basic calculations. Recreational, non-productive activities were generally frowned up. They were expensive, time wasting and non-productive. The popular adage was; Use your time usefully and tangibly.

Positive changes came slowly, but they did come. Surrey had no hospitals. I was born on our farm: a neighbour's lady, Mara Kekich, served as a midwife. All went well. Mom was a full-time housewife; She managed the children and the farm. Dad worked in the lumber mill and in mines.

Many of us knew little English. We learned at school and on the school grounds. Often our language consisted of a Yugoslav-English blend, a sort of jargon. But we survived.

There was an elementary school, about two miles from home. We walked along the trail, then along railway tracks, and to the two room, wood-frame, grey-coloured school. It had not central heating, no electricity and no indoor plumbing. It was hard to get any teachers. Good teachers were scarce. But it was good to be alive; the economic depression was ending.

We had loving parents. They were faced with a huge adjustment – social, linguistic and cultural. In the house, we were Serbians. On the street, we were Surrey residents. Life was simple, but good.

Being of Serbian legacy was, at first, a little ambivalent. A small nation, secreted in the middle of Europe, with a language and an alphabet that was different. It did not seem to have much to commend it. But I found the Serbian psyche to be strong and proud. The more I studied this culture, the more reason that I found that there was much justification in their *raison d'être*. They were tough, able and intelligent.

They fought the Turks (a huge monolithic empire), with success. They challenged the Austrian Empire and acquitted themselves well. We know of Prince (Krajlevic) Marko, Sultan Murat, the gushers and Serbian heroes.

The world also knows of Nikola Tesla. This Serbian improved the lot of every world citizen. Very few in the annals of human history can make such a similar claim.

Our home was an extension of a Serbian village. Our diet was that of a Serbian. Potatoes, cabbage both fresh and sauerkraut. Our bread was home baked and coarse. The laundry was hand scrubbed. Our household language was 'village' Slavic. We had cows and drank raw milk, raised chickens and pigs. Every autumn, we would process the pigs, make blood sausage, smoke sausage, bacon and ham. By November, the smokehouses would be curing the pork. For the initiated, sauerkraut, smoked ham, bans, home-made bread provided staple and quality food. We really purchased very little food, yet no one was hungry.

The result is that the next generation can claim a part of early Surrey. It is easy to sell, it is difficult to buy.

Again, life quality improved because of better transportation, communication. Homes became more comfortable. New roads appeared. Entertainment, health facilities, access to government, equity before the law, security, dissemination of knowledge were upgraded. For example, the dentist really improved life quality as did the services of the teacher the doctor, the engineer, etc.

'Dolce vita' had arrived. And it was good!

The future remains enigmatically interesting. The leadership in the world is in a state of flux and challenge. China is burgeoning, USA seems to be diminishing, India is maturing, Russia is recovering, Europe is showing signs of disorientation – and Canadians are the recipients of such change.

I suspect that our children will be subjected to substantial adjustment.

It is easier to transition from rags to riches, rather than the reverse.

Contacts with the "Old Country" – Nightmares of ethnic cleansing

Our ethnic group had had sporadic contact with 'Stari Kraj'. Letters, and 'word of mouth' provided the main communication. Wars, social upheaval, weak economics prevented and reduced travel. Newspapers, such as 'Novosti' and 'Srbobran' provided some highlights and insight. Balkan conflict was frequent. There was much disruption of communication. We had heard of 'Mein Kampf' and of the 'super-race' postulation. Religion led to many of the South Slavic tragedies. Yugoslavia was historically Orthodox. But Moslem incursions came into Bosnia and Serbia. Austrian-Hungarian dominated Croatia and Bosnia

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introducing Catholicism and bitter dissension in Croatia and Slovenia. Sadly, no cruelty equals factionalism generated by religious differences. Priests can convert normality into fanaticism – especially among the newly converted. Nightmarish ethnic cleansing occurred. In many instances, those who impose change claim that “the genocided committed the genociding”. The involved Pope pontificated while his followers slaughtered. Jasenovac was kept secret until The Red Army stormed it and exposed the cruelty of the extermination camps: Aushwitz, Treblinka, Maindek, Jasenovac. The world finally saw what had happened behind the barbed wire. Catholics quickly worked to deny and to destroy the evidence. Only the Red Army’s efforts prevented the camps disappearance. So evidence remained. Sixty years later, the USA backed neo-fascist regime has successfully bulldozed all evidence. Only written records and some museum artefacts remain. Balkanization has its painfully ugly aspects. This butchery killed millions and needed telling. The victims of these camps were Slavic intelligentsia, (including Russian) the Jews and gypsies. The strong were sent to slave labour, the pretty girls were sent to the invader’s military barracks. It was ironic that the Croatians were involved, since they too, are simply Catholic converted Serbs. The power of religion and the bigotry of the newly-converted is most compellingly powerful. Inferiors tend to attack the superior - surreptitiously and violently. And that tends to reflect the psychology of the Catholic Croatian.

Yes, we read about these events. We remember. Some of us were lucky to have had many visits and see these sites ‘first hand’.

In Surrey, we learned slowly of these terrible atrocities. Eventually the truth did surface. Surrey Slavic Catholics, at first, were embarrassed. Then they went into a state of denial. How could the pious Franciscan Cardinal Stepinac have advocated or have had a part of this bestial persecution? Even the Pope went on to deify Stepinac and recommended his sainthood. Catholics had no choice. Horrible events had happened; there were too many witnesses. The USA became involved —the worst of the Catholic Ustasha miscreants were given free and protected passage to America. “Operation Gladio”. American McCarthyism promulgate that: If the victims were suspected communists, they were disposable.

Even the Jews were offended since they too shared similar brutal treatment. USA welcomed fascists... The other were denied.

When I visited the Old Cathedral in Zagreb, I happened to ask adherents, one by one, “Who was this Stepinac?” Whose “body” lies conspicuously. They all denied any knowledge of this person. Finally, as I was leaving, an old man stated: “He was a great man: He killed Serbs”. Such denial of truth reflects ignorance and prejudice.

We knew that divisiveness is potentially common in every world nation; every nation has its closeted issues – everyone. Nationhood is a fragile concept. No one knows that better than the coup-inspiring USA hegemonic regime. The USA had itself experienced the pain of a civil war. Yet the prevailing neocon hierarchy, effectively controls and

directs public opinion. The American public is sympathetic, but their administration has been completely usurped by Wall Street, the military corporations and at the CIA (much of whose financing originate from Afghanistan drop (opium) sales... For them, continual war is endemic. The public knows this but their resistance has been rendered impotent by the omnipotent media.

Dad would often speak of this Balkan(ization) dilemma. His Military Region had endured centuries of conflict, challenging Moslem Turks. Then the Moslem hegemony was replaced by the Austro-Hungarian incursions.

Which was the worse – having Moslem overlords or Germanic-Hungarian Catholics in control?

Take your pick. Both intruders contributed to Balkanization, aided and abetted by intolerant Catholics and militaristic Moslems—all who infused deadly conflict upon the established Christian Orthodox. But, in the history of mankind, only the Catholics had introduced factory-like killing centres. Only the Catholic's mentality was able to countenance and foster such malice.

Every school boy knows of the Serbian, Gavrilo Princip and the Bosnian (Sarajevo) assassination. This triggered a war that consumed more than thirty million lives and went on to change Europe.

In April, 1941, the Serbs challenged the Third Reich and were the first European nation to launch an open insurrection of defiance. This challenge forced the Germans to delay operation Barbarossa by more than a month. By the time the reorganized Fascists arrived at Moscow, winter had set in and the attack that was intended to totally destroy was blunted. Russia survived the onslaught and went on to destroy the destroyer. It can be said that the Serbians saved Russia.

In 1999, Serbia was bombed by the Americans for three months because they refused to accept American hegemony. The whole world watched as the American 'superpower' bullied little Serbia. While Serbia was extolled, the Empire of Chaos was besmirched and their image was tarnished. Russia and China were restrained. (That might not happen next time.)

Serbia produced outstanding patriots and leaders. Whereas many of their contemporaries produced Quislings and the likes of Joseph Tito and their capitulators.

The more one knows of Serbia, the more one has reason to be proud of this legacy and of their historic role.

The world is in desperate need of intelligent, rational, reasonable and tolerant leadership

Society remains in flux. Empires come and go. Technology improves. But new technology facilitates greater destruction. A Russian rocket can be launched from a submerged submarine and hit a target 2000 Km. distant and the accuracy is within two meters of target. Civilization sits on the edge. Perhaps these 'check and balances' will provide some assurances of peace. Any opportunistic attack could very well doom the attacker.

These are some types of problems that my parents, born in a distant village had never had a need to face.

The world is in desperate need of intelligent, rational, reasonable and tolerant leadership.

Classic concerns continue. – when the invader comes, what can a peasant (seljak) do? Run? Fight? Or Collaborate.

This is the story of Mom, Dad and their countrymen.

Over time, many of the Yugoslav immigrant descendants joined Canada's mainstream. They pursued higher levels of learning, entered the trades, commerce and politics. The 'smarts' were there and they were utilized. Some, such as myself, have continued with multi-linguistics, their extended families' and their acquired culture. Doing so rendered a feeling of privilege.

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North America was distant from the European conflict. Sadly, Europe's conflict nurtured North American industry. While Europe burned, America prospered. Cynicism? Canada shared much of this fortune. We had space, resources, a work ethic and security. (The Atlantic and the Pacific served as huge protective moats). We could sally forth, seize and return safely to our fortress.

You'll notice that the Americans rather enjoyed fighting from the air. Their bombers would sow destruction, come home and the crews could enjoy their "wine, women and song".

USA received immigrants from all over the world. Some came by choice, many came as slaves. The original peoples were genocided. The most prolific immigrant was the English and the German. Both coveted Russia's vast expanses and diverse resources. Both worked to seize this wealth. Both failed but both continue to aggressively pursue this plan. The English (American)-German media constantly demonize and denigrate Russia and Russians. Their long-term military continues to aim at Russia and its destruction. The rise of China is altering the equation.

The defenders had 'their boots on the ground. They fought, suffered, and resisted. Attacks on Russia involved total war. Men, women, children and old folk were victims and these people also defended. It was ugly. Civilians were not respected by the invaders.

I spoke to a Russian general. He casually mentioned that they were compelled to defend and defeat the invaders on many occasions. He felt that the threat will end only when their enemies are totally defeated. Our land never had these concerns. We seem to little understand our good fortune. And when we become profit-motivated involved in another's military ambition, there is much reason to sober up and clear our brain. Currently, the Canadian government is considering adding troops to bolster the American goals in Latvia. Latvia? What injury have they ever inflicted on us? Remember Operation Belgtation? Not user-friendly.

In the end, me and my family

Being raised in remote Surrey, working land that had never in the history of mankind had 'ever been touched by anyone else,' was a privileged role. Over the years, the demand for land escalated. Success and profits came readily. Luck was the significant requisite. Skill, knowledge and perseverance helped.

I found that I was one of the community's first who had access to and wanted to attend university. There was only one provincial university (UBC); the enrolment was relatively small. It would appear that I was lucky to have access to some twenty years of formal education. Following secondary school, I was one of the first in our community to attend university. It was socially and academically challenging but worth the effort... I managed to earn several degrees. In spite of the formal education, I managed to do the physical work required in maintaining a farm, the fences, the fields, the berries, dairy, chickens and garden. As a result, we managed to keep the farm and all the related buildings: house, barn, garage-even the outdoor toilet. No other similar farm remains. – This was a very diverse life. Finances earned through teaching and administration enabled me to invest in real estate. This, I managed and used the profits to further acquire additional revenue-generators.

The result is that the next generation can claim a part of early Surrey." It is easy to sell it is difficult to buy."

Personally, I have enjoyed sports. Football, basketball, volleyball, swimming, golf, etc. are media that I participated in and coached. I had experienced both piloting and parachuting. Both involve a fulfilling challenge.

I have had an interest in travel as well as the opportunity. Frankly, there is not a country or a region in this world that I did not visit, to studied, or enjoyed -at least once.

My children are professionals, married, have their own homes and involved in research, management, technology, teaching. Our family has some fourteen teachers.

My wife is a very special person attending to the needs of family, possessing social skills, academic insight and a good grasp of property management.

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history
05



MILOŠ BOJOVIĆ
Buffalo,
oil on canvas

The memorials built to fallen Russian volunteers in the Serbian - Turkish War in 1876, in Aleksinac and its surroundings

history

In 1876, Serbia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey in order to liberate the Serbian regions that were still under Ottoman rule. A large number of volunteers came to help Serbia. They were from various countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Norway, Great Britain, France, Greece, Montenegro, Italy, followed by Serbs from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, but by far the largest number of volunteers arrived from Russia.

The invitation, which was printed on the occasion of the consecration of the monument to the Russian volunteers on Rujevica near Aleksinac 1880, states:

“The main leader of Russian volunteers in 1876, Mihail Grigorijević Černjajev, has the honor to humbly ask to dignify the unveiling of the monument to his countrymen who have fallen in battles for the independence of Serbia.

Three thousand volunteers, it is true, could not outweigh the scales of victory in the war in 1876 on the side of their brethren; but in the valleys of the Timok, Morava, Ibar and Drina and the peaks of Aleksinac and Đunis more than half of them testified with their blood the sacrifice to the full commitment to the Serbian fraternal issues and their love to the Serbs.

The monument was erected in the center of the difficult struggle in Aleksinac.

The consecration of the monument and the memorial to fallen soldiers are going to be conducted by His Holiness Metropolitan with hierarchs and higher priesthood on 8 November this year, at 9 o'clock in the morning.

September, 1880,
In Aleksinac”¹

¹ Miodrag Spirić, The history of Aleksinac and its surroundings III, Aleksinac 2006.p. 70.

This document, which was created less than three years from the above mentioned event, shows that a large number of Russian volunteers sacrificed their lives in the struggle for freedom and independence of Serbia. Most of them died in the valley of the South Morava River, in the vicinity of Aleksinac and in its surroundings because this was the place where the greatest battles were fought in the First Serbian-Turkish war in 1876. These battles include the battle of Šumatovac, Gornji Adrovac and Đunis.

Among the casualties were Russian volunteers who died of the gained wounds in Jagodina and Paracin hospitals. Their names are inscribed in church protocols of the deceased in Jagodina and Paracin churches and they are published here for the first time.²

The protocol of the deceased at the church of Sv. Archangel Michael in Jagodina, no 13 and 14, which is kept in the Historical Archives of Jagodina the following persons were listed:

1. Dimitrije Bogdanov, captain, Odesa, 35., 20.09.1876.
2. Belovecki Roman soldier, Odesa, 29, 09.29.1876.
3. Nikola Nijenović, soldier, Pirpos, 10.22.1876.
4. Petar Moloc, soldier, Rid, 23, 22.10.1876.
5. Nikifor Suprinov, soldier, 32, 23.10.1876.
6. Jakov Tetirovski, soldier, village Šepiljče, ujezd Radomirskoja, Kiev, 19, 10.23.1876.
7. Jevrem Gubankov, soldier, Zagubljanje, 25, 26.10.1876.
8. Vertljevič Sakharov, lieutenant, 26/10/1876.
9. Mihail Jovančetič, soldier, 28.g. Grodoslavljanska governorate, 06.11.1876.
10. Simeon Petrovich, soldier, Vitevska governorate, 30, 11.06.1876.
11. Rivers Ivanov, soldier, 35, 13.11.1876.
12. Vasilije Parelénov, soldier, 38 g, 11.16.1876.
13. Nikola Rayevski, soldier, Nizhny Novgorod governorate, 23, 11.18.1876.
14. Aleksandar Averujnov, soldier, 26.11.1876.
15. Radovan Devjatski, Cossack, 47, 14.01.1877.

The protocol of the deceased at the St. Trinity Church in Paraćin, no. 12 held by the Municipal Assembly of Paracin lists the following persons:

1. Konstantin N. Bogdanov, captain, Kazan, 32, 08.22.1876.
2. Nikolaj Čirkunov, lieutenant, Odesa, 28, 21.09.1876.
3. Paul Nikolaevich Oryahovo, Captain, Moscow, 32, 05.10.1876.
4. N. Čerkunov, soldier, 30 21/09/1876.
5. Pavle Orekov soldier Moscow, 30, 04.10.1876.
6. Aleksandar Mantorov, soldier, 10.09.1876.
7. Ivan Banderenko, soldier, 10.19.1876.
8. Kemkin Petrov, soldier, 20.10.1876.
9. In addition to Petrov Veselov, soldier, Moscow, 11.07.1876.

² Ninoslav Stojanovic, a historian from Jagodina, delivered the information about the deceased to the author

At the end of a Serbian - Turkish wars many memorials were built in their glory and in glory to all other Russian volunteers who were killed. These memorials are the subject of this paper.

The monument to Russian volunteers at Majeвица (Brdjanka) near Aleksinac

The monument to Russian volunteers at higher Rujevica was unveiled on 8 (20) November, 1880. Today, there is a park called Brdjanka surrounding the monument. The monument was built in the redoubt (trench) no. 4. It was named "Aleksinac redoubt".

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"This monument was built at the height Rujevica near Aleksinac of beautiful stone that was found in Ozren near Aleksinac spa. The monument is a pyramid-shaped and it is 12 meters high, decorated on top with crosses made of white marble on all four sides, and at the bottom (the socle), there are four marble boards with inscriptions in Serbian and Russian language."³

The marble slabs on the socle are inscribed with the following text (the east in Serbian, and the west side in the Russian language):

"The monument to the fallen Russian volunteers
who came in 1876 to help the Serbs during their
unequal struggle against the Turkish Empire"

"No one has greater love than this one,
To lay their soul for friends"

There is following text on the marble slabs on the socle in the southern and northern side "Built by their compatriots in 1880." (the south side is inscribed in Serbian, and the north side in the Russian language.)

The monument was built on the basis of the project designed by engineer František (Francis) dutting Heinrich (1828-1896), the Czech who upon arrival to Serbia in 1878, received the Orthodox faith in 1891 and he was given a new name – Radovan.

A large number of citizens from all over Serbia responded to the invitation of General Chernyayev to attend the consecration of the monument responded to Thousands of guests came to Aleksinac to attend the consecration of the monument. The representative of His Highness Prince was his adjutant, Major G. Aleksandar Simonovic and the representative of His Majesty the Russian Emperor Aleksandar was his minister resident in Belgrade, Mr Persiani with his secretary, Mr Girs.

The representative of the government was Minister of Education, Mr Stojan Novakovic, on behalf of the Armed Forces, the military deputation led by General Belimarković and Colonel Bogicevic attended the ceremony. The representative of the Serbian Learned Society was Mr Milan Milicevic; the representative of the High School was Mr Milan Kujundzic.

³ The Celebration of monument consecration at Rujevica near Aleksinac on 8 November 1880 to the killed Russian volunteers in the Serbian-Turkish war in 1876, Belgrade 1881 III

Aleksinac was ready to solemnly celebrate the consecration of the monument to Russian volunteers. The path that leads through the park Brđanka to the monument to the Russian volunteers was adorned with numerous flags, and both sides of the road were decorated with green garlands (decoration of flowers and twigs in the shape of a wreath). Three triumphal oak gates were erected along the way to the monument to Russian volunteers.

The inscription on the first gate
“Welcome brothers”

The inscription on the second gate
“No one has greater love than this one,
To lay their soul for friends”

The inscription on the third gate
“Harmony and Brotherly Love”

On the day of the monument consecration (8 November), the citizens of Aleksinac and many guests headed to the church in Aleksinac where the commemoration to the Russian volunteers killed in the Serbian-Turkish war was to be held. The Liturgy and holy commemoration were served by the Metropolitan Mihailo. After that ceremony, Metropolitan Mihailo consecrated the memorial and laid two wreaths on it: his and the wreath of Ms. Novikov, the sister of the courageously killed Russian officer Kirjeeva. Russian minister resident in Belgrade Mr Persiani and general Chernyayev were the next to lay the wreaths.

During the commemoration to the killed volunteers, the consecration of the monument and the laying of wreaths, a battalion of infantry and artillery battalion were paying tribute to the memory of fallen volunteers by firing volleys.

After the laying of wreaths, Metropolitan Mihailo gave a speech commemorating the Russian volunteers.

“Upon the end of the monument consecration, the foundation of the church was consecrated, The church will be built near here to celebrate the memories of Russians and Serbs who died together in war, in 1876. for freedom and independence of Serbia. Their names are to be written on marble slabs of all the church walls.”

Due to the conditions that occurred in Serbia in the late 19th and throughout the 20th centuries, unfortunately, this church was never constructed.

Memorial Church to Russian colonel Raevski In Gornji Adrovac

Colonel Nikolay Raevsky was a Russian volunteer who came to help Serbia in its heroic struggle for the liberation of Serbian land that was ruled by the Turks in the summer of 1876. He died on August 20 (September 1) in 1876 in the Battle of Gornji Adrovac.

The place where Colonel Rayevski was killed was originally marked at the beginning of August, 1887 with a modest cross made of sandstone with engraved words:

“Russian Colonel Nikola Rayevski against the Turks died at this place on 20 August, 1876”.

More than a decade ago, this was the only mark that is reminiscent of the legendary hero. The wish of the family of Colonel Rajevsi to mark the place of his death with the church was realized later.

Today, there is a church dedicated to the Holy Trinity Church dedicated to Colonel Rayevski.in Gornji Adrovac.It is a village about twelve kilometers southwest of Aleksinac.

The church is situated on one striking elevated plateau that dominates the entire landscape.This area used to be called "Golo Brdo".

The area around the church is filled with trees .The road to the entrance to the church is framed by linden trees that were brought from the village Razumovka in Ukraine from the former estate of the Rayevski family.

There is the inscription on the church wall:

“This holy temple was built due to efforts and supervision of Bishop of Nis . Mr Nicanor Ružičić,but at the expense of the noble lady founder Mrs Mary Rayevska The temple was consecrated on 2 September 1903.”

The “Rayevsky Church” was restored in 2001. A plaque with the following text was placed on the church wall :

“MEMORIAL CHURCH OF ST. TRINITY
THE MONUMENT TO RUSSIAN-SERBIAN
BROTHERHOOD IN ARMS RENEWED TO CELEBRATE
THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF
RUSSIAN COLONEL NIKOLAI. RAYEVSKY
AT THE INITIATIVE OF RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR
IN BELGRADE V. JEGOŠKIN
AND WITH THE FUNDS OF THE
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF RUSSIA
RUSSIAN AND YUGOSLAV ORGANIZATIONS
WITH THE BLESSING OF BISHOP IRINEI FROM NIS
AND THE SUPPORT OF THE MUNICIPALITY ALEKSINAC
2 September ,2001. ”

There are many works published on this subject and due to this reason, this work will not deal with it any further.

MEMORIAL PLATE AT THE ORIGINAL GRAVE OF
COLONEL RAYEVSKY IN THE MONASTERY ST. ROMAN

Battery Commander Lieutenant Kosta Šamanović in whose hands the colonel exhaled, handed the dead body of Colonel Rayevsky to paramedics. They took him to the background hospital which was located near the church of St. Petka, near the village Trnjane.

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The body was handed over to the General Headquarters with the analysis of doctor Hadan. On the next day, ie. August 21, the Colonel's body was transferred to the St. Roman monastery near the village Praskovče. It was buried in the monastery courtyard southeast of the altar.

His body rested here a few days, namely until 1 September when it was transported to Belgrade and then onwards to Russia. The initial temporary grave was marked by a sandstone with no name and no any other signs until 2008. The grave was maintained as a great asset. The nuns of the St. Roman monastery continuously planted seasonal flowers around the grave

According to a legend, Colonel Rayevsky's heart was buried in the churchyard and his body was transported to Russia. However, there is a possibility that this is indeed a historical fact. In order to transport the body of Rayevsky to his homeland, his body was dug up and then embalmed. The surgery was performed by the Bulgarian volunteer doctor Molov. The body was laid in an oak coffin, then in the other – a lead, and finally transported to Belgrade. The process of embalming, as it is known, involves extracting the internal organs, which may have remained at the site of the first burial, so the grave in St. Roman is not empty.

Memorial plaque with the inscriptions in Serbian, Russian and English was placed in 2008.

“Nikolay Raevsky – Count Vronsky
August 21, 1876
Here eternally rests the heart of
volunteer of Imperial Russia
Nicholas Rayevsky for freedom of the
Serbian people,
Thankful descendants of Serbian patriots from
Patriotic Serbian-Turkish War
of 1876
14.07.2008.”

The Cross in the churchyard of ST. Nestor church in Vitkovac

The Church of the Nativity of the Holy Virgin, popularly known as Saint Nestor is located in the village Vitkovac, which is 20 kilometers northwest of Aleksinac. It was rebuilt in 1871 on the foundations of an older temple. The final battles of the 1876 war were fought on the “Bed” and Đunis plateau in the immediate surroundings of the church. During the battle led on the “Bed”, the Russian-Serbian Brigade that was commanded by Colonel Meženinov had big losses, 21 officers and 588 soldiers. The majority of the killed Serbs and Russians was buried in the grave next to the church on its northern side. Immediately after the liberation wars, tomb in the shape of a cross was designed and wooden cross was put in the middle. In 2006, the wooden cross was replaced by concrete cross coated with fine marble. Its height is 1.5 meters and there is the inscription – 1876.

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polemics
06

MILOŠ BOJOVIĆ
Memory,
oil on canvas

Stephen Karganovic
Banja Luka (Republic of Srpska)

In the crosshairs: Serbia and The Republic of Srpska

I. SERBIA

polemics

Background. The current political system in Serbia was instituted after the October 5, 2000, coup that deposed President Slobodan Milošević. It was carried out using methods of what came to be known as “colored revolution.” The methodology developed by Western hybrid warfare specialists became a pattern that was subsequently repeated in a number of other countries. The local Serbian group that spearheaded the operation, known as “Otpor,” soon was professionally reconfigured and renamed “Canvas” (Center for non-violent alternatives). It went on to perform major hybrid warfare subversion tasks outsourced to it by its Western intelligence trainers and paymasters: in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), Moldova (2009), and again Ukraine (2014), to mention a few.

After the imposition in 2000 of a pro-Western system in Serbia, regimes and ruling coalitions appeared to vary but the basic thrust of government policy invariably remained the same, following the directives of Euro-Atlanticist power centers, often conveyed quite brazenly by their resident ambassadors in Belgrade. A major political shift favoring Western control of Serbia and consolidating the system that was set up to obediently serve Euro-Atlanticist interests was the split provoked in 2008 in the ranks of the Serbian Radical Party, at the time the largest single political group and main anti-globalist political force in Serbia. Carefully disguising initially the length to which they were prepared to go in championing policies which up until shortly before they were denouncing bitterly, and deftly modulating their rhetoric under the guidance of Western PR consultants, Nikolić and Vučić formed their own political organization, the Serbian Progressive Party, taking with them the majority of the former Radicals. As a result of that intrigue, and two successive electoral victories based on promises they had no intention of keeping once they gained office, Nikolić is now Serbia’s President and Vučić is the Prime Minister.

Key issues.

Kosovo: The resource-rich south Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija (Kosovo, for short) holds special significance in the eyes of the Serbian people as the historical cradle of their civilization and spirituality, the central and quintessentially Serbian land which defines the national identity of the Serbs. It plays for the Serbs essentially the same role that Jerusalem does for the Jews. As a result of the NATO attack on Yugoslavia in 1999, precipitated by the alleged mistreatment of the Albanian minority, which by that time had gained the upper hand

demographically in Kosovo, the province was occupied by a NATO-led international force. In violation of UN Resolution 1244 guaranteeing Kosovo's status as an integral part of Serbia, in 2008 Albanian authorities in the province unilaterally declared independence with the tacit encouragement and support of the United States and major Western governments (although five members of the EU still refuse to recognize that act officially). Ever since, the thrust of Western policy has been to pressure Serbia to "normalize" its relations with Kosovo (a euphemism for legally accepting the secession) in return for being allowed to open negotiations on Serbia's accession to the European Union.

The carrot of EU membership, with its imagined economic benefits, has been a major tool in persuading Serbian public opinion to tolerate successive governments' gradual surrender of *de iure* sovereignty over Kosovo. As things stand presently, Serbia has agreed to the establishment of what by all accounts is a state, as opposed to merely provincial, border with Kosovo, including customs duties and other characteristics of frontiers separating the territories of sovereign countries. Serbian administrative, judicial, and educational institutions in Kosovo that remained after NATO occupation in 1999 have been relentlessly and effectively dismantled with the consent of successive Serbian governments and the remaining Serbs (after about 250,000 had fled the NATO onslaught in 1999) now live in small, scattered, and insecure enclaves frequently subjected to Albanian harassment.

The European Union. As a result of somewhat improved information from abroad, combined with the palpable fallout of the global economic crisis whose effects are by now acutely felt in Serbia, and the rise of a visible alternative in the form of a trading block led by the Russian Federation, enthusiasm in Serbia for joining the European Union has been dampened. However, its attraction still holds sway over a sizeable, although decreasing, portion of the Serbian population. The goal of joining this vaguely known utopia is treated by Serbia's political elite as an unquestionable political axiom which requires neither the dissemination of accurate information nor a thorough public debate, let alone an informed popular vote.

NATO. Neutrality is officially enshrined in Serbian law, which would seem to preclude joining any military blocks. Yet the fact that the preamble to the Serbian constitution states that Kosovo is an inalienable part of Serbia has not prevented successive regimes from steadily whittling down their country's effective and *de iure* presence in the disputed province. Legal obstacles have not been known to discourage Serbia's frivolous political elite. The neutrality law notwithstanding, Serbia is a member of the NATO "Partnership for peace" program, it recently signed the ominous Status of Forces agreement granting NATO troops unlimited access to the country's facilities and NATO soldiers immunity for any acts of personal wrongdoing, and NATO personnel currently sit ensconced in the Serbian Defense Ministry, presumably engaged in "cooperation" and giving "advice" to the military of the country they ruthlessly and illegally bombed 16 years ago.

As might be expected, NATO membership is opposed by a stratospherically elevated percentage of the population. However, numerous well-financed pro-NATO “NGOs” and lobbying groups are working overtime in Serbia to paint a positive picture of the alliance and the supposed benefits that await Serbia upon joining it.

The stealth, no advance notice, no public debate procedure by which the Status of Forces agreement was recently adopted by the Serbian parliament is probably the model which will be followed to give a fig leaf of legality to Serbia’s eventual membership in NATO, notwithstanding the fact that it is an idea abhorred by as much as 90% of the population.

The Migrant crisis and its implications. The influx of hundreds of thousands of migrants from the Middle East and Africa, fleeing from Western unleashed wars and mayhem and understandably seeking opportunities for a safer if not more prosperous life, has placed an enormous strain on Serbia, which geographically is an unavoidable corridor for their passage to what they believe are wealthy Western European societies. To make Serbia’s position even more precarious, in 2007, when the human tsunami sweeping the continent could not even be imagined (at least not by Serbia’s short-sighted rulers) the Serbian government carelessly signed a Readmission Agreement with the EU. In consequence, a legal basis was established eight years ago for the repatriation today of masses of migrants not wanted by EU countries to the last non-EU country from which they crossed over into Union territory, and that country just happens to be – Serbia.

In addition to an accumulation of severe problems of its own, Serbia will very likely be cajoled into playing host to a huge number of culturally and linguistically unassimilable migrants who keep arriving in a steady stream from the south and will be reinforced by additional tens of thousands from the north that will be expelled by Germany, France, and Holland and dumped into impoverished and devastated Serbia.

The strain that will be placed on Serbian society and economy by the inundation of such huge numbers of foreigners is frightful to contemplate. Sporadic conflicts between groups of migrants from diverse countries as well as assaults against locals are already taking place in Serbia, although most media strive to circumvent and outright suppress this politically “incorrect” topic. The initially widespread sympathy for these victims of Western-inspired upheavals is rapidly eroding as the sheer magnitude and cost of the hosting operation, foisted upon a poor and helpless country incapable of meeting the basic needs of its own masses of underprivileged citizens, are beginning to sink in. The potential of the migrant crisis to engender ugly internal conflict and debilitating destabilization in Serbia is rising steadily.

Relations with Russia. Unalterably warm sentiment toward Russia is one of the few bright spots on Serbia’s otherwise dismal psychological landscape. There is plenty of evidence on the Russian side that these feelings are amply reciprocated. Leading Russian public figures and intellectuals, as well as ordinary citizens, have voiced deep affection for Serbia and clearly consider these emotions fully requited by the “little

Russians” (as the Serbs are sneeringly known by the ever suspicious West) in the Balkans. The Russian Federation was the guest of honor at the prestigious Belgrade International Book Fair in October 2015 and in an interview given to the mass circulation weekly “Pečat” distinguished Russian historian and cultural figure Natalia Narochmitskaya confessed that “I often ponder the similarity in the fates of our two peoples...”

There are at least two abiding mysteries in Serbia today. One is the apathy of the destitute and futureless population, apparently incapable of self-organizing to demand even a modest improvement in its condition. The other is the equally puzzling indifference of Russia to the vast social reservoirs of good will and support for it in Serbia, stubbornly preferring to conduct largely useless interactions with the governing elites to a direct dialogue with the people.

II. Republic of Srpska

Key issues: NATO and EU push for centralization. In the final months of 1995 the war in Bosnia was concluded by a peace treaty negotiated with US assistance by the parties in Dayton, Ohio. Under the Dayton Accords, as that became known, Bosnia and Herzegovina was organized as a loose confederation consisting of two largely autonomous entities, the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Republic of Srpska.

As one of the chief American negotiators in Dayton, Richard Holbrooke, subsequently revealed, autonomy was merely a device to stimulate the parties to stop the fighting, but the real ultimate goal was to reconstitute Bosnia as a centralized state, with most powers concentrated in Sarajevo.

That arrangement suited the Muslim side fine, the Croats not much, and the Serbs not at all. With the deterioration in relations between the West and Russia, absorption of the Republic of Srpska within a Western-supervised and Muslim dominated central government in Sarajevo became a major item on the Western agenda. The reasons were of a clearly practical, geopolitical nature. Should conflict break out with Russia or tensions rise to a dangerous level, even without a major war, just like Hitler in 1941 the West now does not want to have a highly autonomous pro-Russian Serbian state deep in the rear of its anti-Russian operations.

After 2006 centralization pressures were strongly resisted by the new Republic of Srpska prime minister, now president, Milorad Dodik. Dodik was considered a pro-Western politician during his first mandate in the late nineties, but by the time of his reappointment in 2006 he came into office with an almost diametrically opposite agenda, including close ties with Russia. That immediately put him on the black-list of Western policymakers and relations with the West have been unfriendly ever since.

Power transfer to Sarajevo. The slow but steady erosion of constitutional competencies from the Republic of Srpska to the increasingly bloated central government in Sarajevo came to a head in 2006, when Dodik refused to abolish the Republic of Srpska police authority and

merge it with the central law enforcement institutions in Sarajevo. In fact, close to 80 specific powers had by then been transferred from the autonomous to the central government level, in contravention of Bosnia's Constitution which was, actually, Annex 4 of the aforementioned 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement. Dodik decided to draw a line in the sand and vowed to restore the lost constitutional powers. While Western spokesmen insisted on the "spirit of Dayton," suggesting that a centralized – or as they prefer to put it, functional Bosnia – was implicitly envisaged all along, to the great annoyance of their Western interlocutors Dodik and the Republic of Srpska have been steadfastly insisting on a strict interpretation of the "letter" of the Dayton Agreement.

A hugely complicating factor has been the claim of the Western-appointed High representative to be invested with the so-called "Bonn Powers," or authority to dismiss public officials he considers unsuitable and to override the decisions of democratically elected local assemblies. The political stance of Bosnia's High representatives has been invariably to advance Western political agendas in the country. That has found some support in the Muslim community, but encounters only vehement opposition in the Republic of Srpska.

The current High representative, Valentin Inzko, has threatened but never used his questionable "Bonn Powers." While publically calling for the removal of President Dodik, he never quite summoned the courage to test his effective ability to actually achieve that goal. It seems clear that the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia is past its apogee and that its prestige and authority have been steadily eroded by Dodik's and Republic of Srpska's determined and successful opposition to virtually all its initiatives.

Relations with Russia. In what seems like a natural process, given the known sentiments of Serbs everywhere, in its foreign relations the Republic of Srpska has gravitated steadily toward Russia. The result of that has been Russian investment and, more importantly, palpable political support in international institutions where the Republic of Srpska has had to fight its battles.

Srebrenica. One of the politically thorniest issues affecting the perception of the Republic of Srpska world-wide has been the nasty Bosnian wartime propaganda accusation of complicity in the genocidal killing of about 8,000 Muslim prisoners in July 1995 near Srebrenica. Over time, Srebrenica was raised to the level of a global moral issue, supposedly illustrating lack of Western resolve to protect threatened populations. By the end of the 90s it morphed into the rationale for the "Right to Protect" doctrine (R2P) supposedly conferring upon Western powers the right to intervene in the affairs of sovereign countries to right severe wrongs in the conduct of their internal policies. The new Srebrenica-inspired doctrine debuted with Kosovo in 1999, followed by Iraq, Libya, and Syria. With the refrain that a local dictator insubordinate to Western interests must be disciplined "for killing his own people," these "humanitarian" interventions are estimated to have cost close two million lives worldwide, far in excess of the alleged 8,000 in Srebrenica. And, ironically, these victims are also Muslims for the most part.

Serbia, and by association the Republic of Srpska, were on the verge of being censured for complicity in genocide in Srebrenica under a British-proposed UN Security Council resolution in 2015. It was discarded when vetoed by the Russian Federation, a clear dividend of close relations that President Dodik has cultivated with that country.

Color revolution attempt. In an unmistakable sign that the West was unwilling to tolerate Dodik's independent policies and friendship with Russia, a standard, playbook "color revolution" attempt was mounted in the Republic of Srpska by Western agents around the time of 2014 elections. However, the attempt failed rather miserably, and although President Dodik was barely re-elected by about 8,000 votes, the well-financed and logistically well-equipped campaign for his removal did not achieve any of its major objectives. It served as a warning, however, that the Republic and its President were in the West's crosshairs, just as similar recent provocations in Serbia against Vučić who, ironically, has made some timid moves to cozy up to Russia suggest that he is being set up for similar treatment.

The last parliamentary elections in the Republic of Srpska a few months ago must have been an immense disappointment to Dodik's Western ill-wishers. His coalition was resoundingly victorious and, judged by purely democratic criteria, his government's stability would seem assured.

But, of course, at the end of the day it is not democratic criteria but the machinations of *realpolitik* that rule. Western political operatives have drawn the correct conclusion that stirring up a Fifth Column street movement to overthrow the government in Banja Luka, at least in the short term, will not work. Instead, economic pressure and financial strangulation are in the cards, coupled with the destabilizing activation at the opportune moment of jihadist elements which are rife in Bosnia, and finally the use of possibly the strongest card of all – the corrupt elements within the government itself to undermine it, leading to President Dodik's political elimination.

Appearances notwithstanding, the geopolitical moment is extremely dangerous for both Serbia and the Republic of Srpska. The specifics vary, but the fundamentals are strikingly similar. The Western alliance is keen to install compliant, subservient regimes throughout Europe's – in Churchill's famous words – soft underbelly, the Balkans. Geopolitics has never been a friend of the countries that inhabit that space, and in particular it is not now. Nor will striving for independence and the preservation of cultural identity on their part be viewed with favor by Western hegemony.

For both Serbia and the Republic of Srpska the worst times may not be over and there is a rocky ride ahead.

Falsification of the history of the Artsakh Meliqdoms by Azerbaijani historiography

polemics

The history of the Meliqdoms (Principalities) of Artsakh constitutes an important part of Armenian history. In the absence of an independent Armenian state, in the 17th-18th centuries the Artsakh Meliqdoms remained the only power, which could potentially serve as a basis for the resurrection of the Armenian state.

Since the Soviet period, for decades in spite of the historical reality Azerbaijani historiography has spared no effort to falsify and present in a distorting mirror the history of Armenia and everything that is Armenian. In this context, Armenian Artsakh – its past and present – remains the primary target of the Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructions. There is not a single period in the history of Artsakh, which would not be purposefully falsified by Azerbaijani pseudo-historians. One of main topics of their falsifications is the history of the Meliqdoms of Khamsa, which in reality were a manifestation of the Armenian statehood in Artsakh. The “studies” are published in Azerbaijan and other countries in which the Meliqdoms of Artsakh are falsely presented as “Albanian” formations in sharp contrast and contradiction to numerous historical sources and original documents of the time. The Azerbaijani state-sponsored propaganda translates these pseudo-scientific “studies” into various languages and disseminates them around the world.

The present article focuses on two such pseudo-scientific publications, namely by O. Efendiev, Corresponding Member of the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences¹ and G. Mamedova, PhD of History². Their articles were included in a collection of articles entitled “Garabag: Kurekchay – 200” published by the A. Bakikhanov Institute of History of the NAS of Azerbaijan on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the Treaty of Kurakchay. Although we have addressed our response to the above-mentioned authors, it is also addressed to the other authors falsifying the history of the Meliqdoms of Artsakh.

At the beginning of his article of O. Efendiev writes: “In Armenian historiography the Meliqdoms of Garabag are unconditionally considered Armenian: their origin from Caucasian Albanians is completely ignored”³. For anyone more or less familiar with the history of Artsakh it is clear that this unsubstantiated announcement by the Azerbaijani historian has nothing to do with reality. On this occasion,

¹ Эфендиев О., Еще раз о так называемых «Гарабагских меликствах», «Гарабаг: Курекчай - 200», Баку, 2005, с. 85-90.

² Мамедова Г., К вопросу о христианских меликах и меликствах Северного Азербайджана в XVIII в., «Гарабаг: Курекчай – 200», Баку, 2005, с. 68–84. The fraud is seen from the title, because artificial “Azerbaijan” did not exist before the middle of 1918.

³ Эфендиев О., *op. cit.*, p. 85.

we would like to remind O. Efendiev and his fellow scribblers of the following well-known lines written by Russian Tsar Peter the Great in the edict of November 10, 1724 in response to the petition of the Meliqs of Artsakh: “This Armenian people We received under Our particular Imperial mercy and protection”⁴. We believe that no reasonable person would think that Peter the Great did not know which nation he was taking under his protection. This fact is enough to destroy the above mentioned false thesis of Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructors. It should also be mentioned that in the Russian documents of the Armenian national liberation struggle’s period of the 1720s the system of the Armenian defence known under the name of the “Armenian sghnakh”⁵ was simply translated into Russian «Армянское собрание» (“Armenian Assembly”).

There are a great number of similar facts the credibility of which is beyond doubt. Here we would like to refer to an extract from the “Description of countries and cities neighboring Georgia” by the Georgian king Heraclius II, dated 1769, where he writes about Artsakh: “Khamisa is a principality... **the whole population of which are Armenians** (this and the further underlines are ours – A. M.)... The Armenian patriarch (the Catholicos of Gandzasar – A. M.) is there ... The Armenians have a great fortress, forests, as well as fertile fields. Two thousand five hundred Jivanshir people will enter the battle and four thousand five hundred Armenians. The Armenians of Khamisa are very brave fighters”⁶. No one can accuse the Georgian king of partiality or moreover, of not knowing his neighbors well. We think that G. Mamedova, O. Efendiev and their fellow scribblers will also agree with us that Heraclius II simply could not fail to know or could not confuse the nationality of the Meliqs of Artsakh who he was in immediate relations with.

The Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructors should know that the Meliqs of Artsakh considered themselves “**the heirs descending of the noble military men of the Armenian kings**”⁷. Lord of Dizak principality Meliq-Yegan, the great prince of the Meliqdoms of Khamisa in the lapidary inscription at the entrance of his chamber clearly mentions: “**I did not allow that people from Armenia be taken captive**. Shah Nadir from Araghi came with his troops and took the country from the hands of Osmanlu. And I was of so much service to him that he appointed me *khan* (landlord)⁸ and *beklarbek*⁹ (governor) of

⁴ Эзов Г., Сношения Петра Великого с армянским народом, СПб., 1898, док. 255 и 257, с. 395; Армяно-русские отношения в первой трети XVIII века. Сборник документов, т. II, ч. II, под ред. А. Иоаннисяна, Ереван, 1967, док. 293 и 294, с. 210.

⁵ Sghnakh – a defensive stronghold.

⁶ Грамоты и другие исторические документы XVIII столетия, относящиеся к Грузии, т. I, под. ред. А. Цагарели, СПб., 1891, с. 434-435; Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке. Сборник документов, т. IV, под ред. М. Нерсисяна, Ереван, 1990, с. 94-95.

⁷ Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке, т. IV, с. 179.

⁸ “The word khan has roots in Sanskrit and Persian and Sogdian languages; word khana or khanva meaning chief and khan in Persian means landlord and chief of town” ([https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Khan_\(title\)#Etymology](https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Khan_(title)#Etymology)).

⁹ Bek (beg<old Persian бага) – master, commander, head of the family (с. 22-23)

the Christian nation's 6 *mahals*¹⁰ (gavars) – Talish, Charaberd, Kha-chen, Varanda, Qochiz and Dizak: he did a favor”¹¹. Meliq-Yegan, the renowned governor of Dizak Meliqdom died in 1744 and was buried in the vestibule of the church of the village Togh where the ancestral cemetery of Meliq-Yeganyans was located. His tombstone bore the following verse epitaph:

“This is the courageous prince’s grave,
Yegan the name of great Melik,
Who is the son of pious
Vardapet by name Ghukas.
Being beloved by everyone and
The shah by name Nadir.
He ruled in the land,
The province of Aġuank,
He was greatly honoured by the Persian nation,
As the prince of the Armenian country.
Armenian calendar ՌՃՂԳ – 1193 (1744)”¹².

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As it is said in such cases – comments are unnecessary. It is no coincidence that renowned Persian historian **Muhammad-Kyazim** mentions Meliq-Yegan as a wise man gifted with exceptional abilities characteristic of a delicate politician who enjoyed Nadir Shah’s great love and trust. By analyzing the situation in Transcaucasia in 1723, Muhammad-Kyazim gives first place to Melik-Yegan among the leaders of the Armenian military men¹³.

On the tombstone [which is in the church vestibule of the monastery Kusanats Anapat (Virgins’ desert) in the village Avetaranots] of **Meliq-Husein Meliq Shaynazaryan**, a contemporary prince of Meliq-Yegan, the following is recorded:

“This is a tombstone of Meliq Shahnazar’s son Meliq Husein of 1736, I will speak words of praise to Meliq Husein, writing them on this tombstone. He was the lord of the land of Varanda, 35 villages, he was a man with a table full of bread, had mercy upon everyone, his image was worthy of praise, he did not pay tribute to the king, he was a strong wall of the country, **the Armenian nation’s crown and pride**, he struggled against the Ottomans and beat the Turks”¹⁴.

The latter was proclaimed **the Armenian nation’s crown and pride** by his contemporaries for the victories against the Ottoman Turks.

Here we should like to bring the example of **Meliq-Adam (Hatam) Meliq-Israyelyan**, the renowned lord of Jraberd gavar (district), who

¹⁰ From Arabic محال (mahall, “place”) – a territorial division (<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/mahal#Etymology>) corresponding to the Armenian gavar (district).

¹¹ Փափազյան Հ., Մելիք-Եգանի ընդունարանի մուտքի վիմագիր արձանագրությունը, ԼՂԳ, 1985, N 5, էջ 77:

¹² Դրվան Հայ վիմագրության, պր. Վ. Արցախ, կազմեց Ս. Բարխուդարյանը, Երևան, 1982, էջ 178; Магальян А., Арцахские меликства и меликские дома в XVII–XIX вв., Ереван, 2012, с. 201–202

¹³ Հայ ժողովրդի պատմություն, Բ. IV, Երևան, ՀՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ., 1972, էջ 181:

¹⁴ Դրվան Հայ վիմագրության, պր. Վ. Արցախ, էջ 149:

addressing the envoy of the Russian court in July 1783, before his death, said: **“Do not let the possessor of these places, the Armenian nation, lose hope”**¹⁵. It is evident that only a person greatly dedicated to his Homeland and gifted with a high sense of national selfconsciousness could leave such a testament on his deathbed.

G. Mamedova, who with one stroke of the pen was trying to “Albanize” the fullblooded Armenian meliqs of Artsakh, had to know this and numerous other such facts, not to mention the fact of her adverting to them in her amateur text. To give an idea of her “professional” preparedness it should be mentioned that the latter considers Lori a district of “Albanian” Syunik¹⁶. The Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructor did not even bother herself to look at the map before writing this nonsense or, which is more likely, relied on the readers’ ignorance.

The reason for G. Mamedova’s behavior is evident: since she could not succeed in “Albanizing” Armenian Lori (a gavar of Gugark - the province of Great Armenia¹⁷) and the Armenian meliqs part of which originated from there, she decided to “solve” the problem in a specific way – including Lori in Syunik¹⁸. Well, such behavior is only worthy of a sneer.

G. Mamedova’s next announcement that Meliq-Haykaz¹⁹ of Kshatagh was also “Albanian” is nothing but utter nonsense. Here the Azerbaijani falsifier ignores the wellknown fact that **the meliq’s name itself – Haykaz, means Armenian (hay, haykazun) and clearly testifies to his nationality**. Besides, according to the famous Armenian historian Arakel Davrizhetsi, whose work is known to G. Mamedova as well, among the authorities that went to Iran’s Shah-Abbas I in 1603 to ask him to save them from the Ottoman despotism there also was **“from the Armenian nation... Meliq Haykaz from the country of Kshatagh, from the village Khanatsakh”**²⁰.

Another unsubstantiated allegation of G. Mamedova that “Albanian” Meliq-Haykaz also contributed to the cultural uplift of the “incomer” Armenians, building for them the Armenian school of the monastery Syunyats Mets Anapat (Great Desert of Syunik)²¹, is just a simple deception by which the falsifier unconsciously betrays herself. First, it is unclear why someone “Albanian” would build an Armenian school, especially for incomers. And then, an eulogy starting with the line **“Blessed Lord Jesus the Savior”** has been preserved, which was written by one of the first pupils of the same school, the renowned Armenian poet Nerses Mokatsi and was devoted to the foundation and founders of the monastery Syunyats Mets Anapat, where he writes about Meliq-Haykaz:

¹⁵ Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке, т. IV, с. 250.

¹⁶ Мамедова Г., *op. cit.*, p. 76-77.

¹⁷ Երեմյան Ա., Հայաստանը ըստ «Աշխարհացոյց»-ի, Երևան, 1961, էջ 109:

¹⁸ Syunik was the 9th provinces of Great Armenia, according to “Ashkharatsuyts” (Ibid., p. 109).

¹⁹ Мамедова Г., *op. cit.*, p. 77.

²⁰ Առաքել Դարիժեցի, Գիրք պատմութեանց, աշխ. Լ. Խանկարյանի, Երևան, 1990, էջ 63:

²¹ Мамедова Г., *op. cit.*, p. 77.

The Persian king Shah Abas who dominated in the Eastern domain
 Selected the regiment of the Aryans of Persia and came against Osman.
 One of the selected was of Christian faith,
 A mighty, brave, rival of many in front.
 The king liked and praised him before the multitude,
 Then revered with guileless love his valour.
 Appointed him the prince of the land, rendering homage to him
 And honoring him greatly called him his favorite
 His father Hakhnazar named him
 Haykazn in the likeness of **Haykazn Tigran**...²²:

polemics

It's quite obvious that the Armenian meliq who was dedicated to his Homeland and whom the poet compares to Haykazn Tigran, opened a school for his compatriots. This is the unpleasant reality for G. Mamedova.

As to O. Efendiev's unsubstantiated allegation that according to his observation the Meliqdoms of Artsakh did not have boundaries²³, this is nothing but self-deception or a result of not knowing the topic of his own "composition". In order to get acquainted with the boundaries of the Meliqdoms of Artsakh, O. Efendiev and those thinking like him should get acquainted with the work "**Truthful story**" by the Armenian historian Mirza Yusuf Nersesov (Hovsep Nersisyan) the translation of which into Azerbaijani was included in the book "Гарабагнамелер" (Garabagnameler)²⁴ published in Baku in 1991. In one of the chapters of the work, namely "Khamisa mahals of Gharabagh and the origin of their meliqs" there is detailed information on the boundaries of the Meliqdoms of Artsakh²⁵. Chapter eight of the same work which is entitled "About the historical past of the Armenian kingdom, the mahals of Khamisa and Zangezour, the origination and lineage of the local meliqs and khans" starts like this: "**The land of Gharabagh is one of the Armenian territories**"²⁶. It is said clearly and precisely...

This issue was absolutely rightly presented this way also by **Abbas-Kuli-gha Bakikhanov**, who wrote in his work "**Gyulistan-Iram**" ("**Heavenly flower garden**"): "Judging from various circumstances and the information given by historians it can be assumed that the right bank of Kur up to the place of confluence with Arax comprised a part of Armenia"²⁷. In another place of the same work we read: "Panah khan, gaining more power day by day, subjected to his power the Armenian meliqs"²⁸. In fact, for the employees of the Institute of History

²² Ներսես Մոկացի, Բանաստեղծություններ, աշխ. Ա. Դրուխանյանի, Երևան, 1975, էջ 46-47:

²³ Эфендиев О., *op. cit.*, p. 87.

²⁴ Garabagnamələr (книга составлена и подготовлена к печати Н. Ахундовым), II kitab. Bakı, 1991, s. 5–92.

²⁵ The Armenian translation see Միրզա Յուսուֆ Ներսեսով, Ճշմարտացի պատմություն, թարգմ. բնագրից, ներածությունը - ծանոթագրությունները Ք. Կոստիկյանի, Երևան, 2000, էջ 39-44: About the Meliqdoms of Artsakh see also Магалиян А., Арцахские меликства и возникновение Карабахского ханства, «Русский сборник», том VIII, Москва, 2010, с. 9.

²⁶ Միրզա Յուսուֆ Ներսեսով, Ճշմարտացի պատմություն, էջ 35:

²⁷ Бакиханов А., Гюлистан-Ирам, Баку, 1926, с. 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

of NAS of Azerbaijan named after A. Bakihanov his famous work is «unknown».

Now let us see what the Caucasian Tatar historians (considered by present Azerbaijanis to be theirs) write about the Meliqdoms of Artsakh. In his work “The history of Gharabagh”, which by the way was written by order of Colonel Shamirkhan Meliq-Beglaryan²⁹, a representative of the Gyulistan meliq family, Mirza Jamal Jevanshir, the vizier of Gharabagh³⁰ khanate, writes: “During the reign of the Safavid kings of Iran the Gharabagh vilayet³¹, the ilats (nomadic tribes – A. M.), the **mahals of Armenian Khamsa**³² comprised of the mahals of Dizak, Varanda, Khachen, Chilaberd (Jraberd – A. M.) and Talish, were subject to the beklarbek of Gyanja (Gandzak – A.M.)”³³. Another Muslim writer, Mirza Adigyoal-bek, in his work, “**Gharabagnameh**”, writes that Nadir Shah releases the meliqs of Khamsa from the rule of Ziadoghli khans of Gandzak and takes them under his rule³⁴. In fact, the Tatar historian informs about the formation of the autonomous Armenian principality by Nadir Shah, independent of the Gandzak beklarbek’s governance. This fact is quite rightly presented this way in the academic volume “История Азербайджана” (The History of Azerbaijan) published in 1958 by the Institute of History of Azerbaijani SSR as follows: “**The Armenian Meliqs of Gharabagh** – of Varanda, Jraberd, Gyulistan, Dizak and Khachen – were ordered not to obey the beklarbek of Gyanja”³⁵. And finally, it should be mentioned that the other Tatar historian, Ahmed-bek Jevanshir in his work, “**On the political situation of the Gharabagh Khanate in 1747-1805**”, clearly mentions about the Meliqoms of Artsakh: “**the meliqs of Armenian Khamsa**”³⁶. Thus, **all the historians of «the Gharabagh Khanate» unanimously present the Meliqdoms of Artsakh as Armenian principalities.**

It turns out that G. Mamedova, O. Efendiev, F. Mamedova and other contemporary Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructors deliberately “forget” about these testimonies. The facts stated above put in a laughable situation the Azerbaijani falsifiers that have lost the feeling of time and space and testify to the loss of memory of the historians of that country. How is it that several decades ago the Azerbaijani historians (even titular academicians) knew nothing about the so-called

²⁹ About him see Մաղալյան Ա., Արցախի մելիքությունները - մելիքական տները XVII-XIX դդ., Երևան, 2007 էջ 96-97:

³⁰ Its Russian form is “Karabakh”.

³¹ The word vilayet originated from Arabic wilāya(t) 'government, administrative district' (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/vilayet>).

³² Five Principalities.

³³ Мирза Джамал Джеваншир Карабагский, История Карабага, Баку, 1959, с. 65. In the Russian translation: «армянские магалы Хамсе» (р. 65), in the Azerbaijani translation: «ермэни Хэмсэ магаллары» (с. 13).

³⁴ Мирза Адигезаль-бек, Карабаг-наме, Баку, 1950, с. 48. See the Armenian translation Մաղալյանի արամ, ձեռ. N 4463, էջ 3ա:

³⁵ История Азербайджана, т. I, Баку, изд. АН Азерб. ССР, 1958, с. 319.

³⁶ Ахмед-бек Джаваншир, О политическом существовании Карабахского ханства (с 1747 по 1805 год), Баку, 1961, с. 70. In the Russian version: «армянских Хамсемеликов» (р. 70), in the Azerbaijani translation: «ермэни хэмсэ мәликләриндэн» (с. 19).

“late Albanians”, and the contemporary Azerbaijani falsifiers are just “discovering” them. What “Albanians” are they that the Caucasian Tatar historians did not know them? Against such a background we can only add that the writings of contemporary Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructors are actually nothing but a **unique display of immeasurable cynicism**.

To make the picture more complete we should bring a testimony worthy of attention from the work “**Tarikhi Chelebi-Zade**” by Ismayil-Asem Efendi Chelebi-Zade, the 18th century Turkish official (assigned by the state)³⁷ historian. Depicting the 1726 attack of the Ottoman army on Artsakh in one of the chapters of his work, namely, “The annihilation of the Armenians of Sghnakh” he writes: “Although **the Armenians of Sghnakh** for more than 15 years had been in a state of revolt and had been destroying the Ghzlbash villages in their districts, had shown obedience after the conquest of Genje (Gandzak) and gained peace and security owing to the Ottoman government, again started guerilla activity and caused damage to some places near their region... The Chief of the Sghankhians, an Armenian named Avan, had come and established himself on Sghnakh with a cannon and խումբարա. The victorious (Ottoman – A.M) army with his commander came to the Shushi village which was under the fire of Sghnakh and by a sudden attack bombarded the Sghnakh with several cannons till evening. That night the Sghnakhian escaped with several Armenians that were at his disposal”³⁸. Then Chelebi-Zade tells with delight about the marauding and killings made by the Ottoman army: “The next day the Islamic soldiers seized their property and belongings and murdered 400 unbeliever escapee Armenians”³⁹. The hostility of the Ottoman chronologist praising the murder of Christian Armenians by the “victorious” Ottoman army is more than evident. **The mentioning of Armenians in the work of the Turkish official historian cannot be denied even by the most fanatic contemporary Azerbaijani court historian.**

In the middle of the same 1720s in the work, “On the histories of the land of Persia”, translated into Armenian from “Hollandizi kazet” (Dutch magazine) (which is now kept in the Matenadaran named after Mashtots) we read the following about the heroic struggle of the sghnakh of Artsakh against the Turkish troops: “Once again the Ottoman wishes that the Armenian centurions obey them, but they do not, because the fortress of Shushi⁴⁰ is with them, especially that their place is very strong. Many times numerous Ottomans attacked to defeat them,

³⁷ In the Ottoman Empire chronology writing had become a state position. The chronologists were appointed by the sultan, often from among high officials and people famous for their writing skills.

³⁸ Թուրքական աղբյուրները Հայաստանի, հայերի - Անդրկովկասի մյուս ժողովուրդների մասին, հ. Ա., կազմեց Ա. Սաֆրաստյանը, Երևան, 1961, էջ 158-159:

³⁹ Ibid., p. 159.

⁴⁰ This fact once again proves that the fortress of Shushi existed at the beginning of the 18th century (see also Армяно-русские отношения в первой трети XVIII века. Сборник документов, т. II, ч. I, под ред. А. Иоаннисяна, Ереван, 1964, с. XLI).

but with the blessing of God they have not succeeded. But **many a time the Armenian Avan khan has fought against the Ottomans together with a lot of Armenian troops and he always wins; because of such deeds the Osmanlu retreated from the Armenian sghnakh and is scared. They no more send the troops against them and the Armenians of the sghnakh all remain fearless**⁴¹. So this was a piece of information on the nationality of the sghnakians of Arshakh translated from the European “Hollandizi kazet”.

Now after these testimonies we would like to discuss the information on the Meliqdoms of Artsakh rendered by Russian state and military figures. So, in his papers the Russian general Aleksandr V. Suworov (1730-1800) wrote about the Meliqdoms of Khamsa: “Of the great Armenian state (Great Armenia – A.M.), after Shah Abbas, during two centuries the province of Karabakh remained self-governing. Now there are five meliqs there (meliqdoms - A.M.)⁴². The Russian state figure, prince **Grigory Potemkin** gave the following assignment to his relative, general Pavel Potemkin by the decree of April 6, 1783: “Ibrahim khan of Shushi must be overthrown, since after this **Karabakh must be an independent Armenian district subject to no one but Russia**⁴³. These Russian figures were key players in the Armenian Russian relations of the 1780s⁴⁴ and their records have great importance. It is not accidental that the Azerbaijani authors tangled in the web of pseudo-history construction persistently avoid referring to the information they rendered.

As far as it concerns the works of the Russian historians of the pre-Soviet period, the picture is more than clear. The renowned historian, academician **P. Butkov** wrote the following about Artsakh: “Kharabakh is a country between the left bank of the river Arax and the right bank of the river Kur, up the Mughan plain, in the mountains. **Its main inhabitants are Armenians** who are governed by their 5 meliqs or ancestral princes according to the number of sghnakhs or provinces: 1. Jraberd, 2. Igirmidort (Gyulistan – A.M.), 3. Dizak, 4. Varanda, 5. Khachen. Each of them can field 1000 soldiers. Upon the decision of Nadir Shah those meliqs directly depended on the Shah⁴⁵.

Another famous author, the military historian V. Potto on the very first page of his work, “**The First Volunteers of Kharabakh**”, wrote: “From the pieces of once great Armenian kingdom (Great Armenia

⁴¹ Մատենադարան, ձեռ. N 9648, էջ 33ս, published in Նադիր շահի դարաշրջանի պատմագրական հուշարձանները, աշխ. Ա. Մաղալյանի, Երևան, 2010, էջ 59-60:

⁴² Нерсисян М., А. В. Суворов и русско-армянские отношения в 1770–1780-х годах, Ереван, 1981, с. 135.

⁴³ Армяно-русские отношения в XVIII веке, т. IV, с. 239.

⁴⁴ About the Armenian liberation struggle of 1780s see Иоаннисян А., Россия и армянское освободительное движение в 80-х годах XVIII столетия, Ереван, 1990.

⁴⁵ Бутков П., Материалы для новой истории Кавказа, с 1722 по 1803 год, ч. I, СПб., 1869, с. 385; Нагорный Карабах в международном праве и мировой политике. Документы и комментарий, т. I, составитель Ю. Барсегов, Москва, 2008, с. 73-74.

– A.M.) only Kharabakh belonging to Persia, has preserved as monuments of the past greatness, those ancestral estates of the Armenian meliqs – the whole territory that stretches from Arax to Kurakchay⁴⁶. The same picture can be seen in the works of other Russian authors⁴⁷, but not to abuse the volume of our article we will be limited to this much.

It is clear for any reasonable person that in regard to the nationality of the meliqs of Artsakh this great number of Armenian, Russian, Georgian, European, Persian, Turkish and Caucasian Tatar figures and authors could not be simultaneously wrong, giving the “laurel of truth” to the contemporary Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructors whose “works” in fact speak about the death of historiography in that country.

Thus, *the falsifications of the Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructors about the history of the Meliqdoms of Artsakh of the 17th-19th centuries are unmasked through references to numerous authentic facts and the failure of their spurious “theories” is shown on the basis of scientific literature.*

At the end we would like to refer to another ghastly article in the same compilation authored by Farida Mamedova, a notorious Azerbaijani history thief. The latter “reveals” in her article why their furious attacks were aimed especially at the Armenian liberation movements of the 1720s and the Armenian Meliqdoms of Artsakh. “There is nothing else but the history of those meliqdoms in the historical arsenal of the Armenian history of the 18th century⁴⁸, – opens her cards the experienced history thief in a conceited manner⁴⁹. But before writing her article the Azerbaijani pseudo-history constructor who recognizes no limits had to realize that if the history stolen from the natives of Armenia – the Armenians and the neighboring nations that lived in the territory of present Azerbaijan is returned to their real owners, there will be nothing left from artificially formed Azerbaijan’s “history”; only pseudo-history invented under presidential supervision of the Aliyevs will be.

*Translated from Armenian by
S. E. Chraghyan*

⁴⁶ Պոստոլ Վ., Ղարաբաղի առաջին կամավորները, Երևան, 1974, էջ 5:

⁴⁷ By the way, this indisputable fact is also accepted by G. Mamedova in despair (see Мамедова Г., ук. соч., с. 73).

⁴⁸ Мамедова Ф., Истина о Гарабагской проблеме, «Гарабаг: Курекчай - 200», Баку, 2005, с. 50.

⁴⁹ The criticism of the falsifications of the latter see Ավագյան Հ., “Ուշ աղվանների” առասպելը, Վեմ, 2009, թիվ 3, էջ 129-140:

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