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REFLECTIONS ON THE CURRENTS OF CROATIAN NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN ISTRIA

Today, when we have our own independent state, the need grows for knowledge of the complex process of Croatian national integration, which gathered the Croatian lands over a long period in a national and state whole. Croatian historical science has until now attached definite attention to knowledge of this process, including Istria. Knowledge of the Croatian national integrative process is closely tied to knowledge of the political, national and statehood ideas of the Croats, as well as of the process of the modernization, democratization and socialization of Croatian society. In this respect, the book by Ivo Perić, *Hrvatska državotvorna misao u XIX i XX stoljeću* ('The Croatia Idea of Statehood in the 19th and 20th Centuries'),¹ which approaches this important question from Croatian history as a whole and what is most important, in continuity, deserves particular attention. Recent books researching this process among the Croats that cannot be ignored and should be mentioned also include Perić's monographic work, *Hrvatski državni sabor 1848-2000* ('The Croatian State Parliament 1848-2000'),² and the book by Josip Vrandečić, *Dalmatinski autonomistički pokret u XIX stoljeću* ('The Dalmatian Autonomist Movement in the 19th Century'), which, in a distinctive way, spoke of the characteristic disintegrative process during the course of Croatian national integration in Dalmatia – of the autonomist movement of that place.³ It is also worth mentioning the book by Marijan Diklić, *Pravaštvo u Dalmaciji do kraja Prvoga svjetskoga rata* ('The Party of Right in Dalmatia until the end of the First World War').⁴ In this respect the book by Nikša Stančić, *Hrvatska nacija i nacionalizam u 19. i 20. stoljeću* ('The Croatian Nation and Nationalism in the 19th and 20th Centuries'),⁵ and the book by the Austrian historian, Arnold Suppan, *Oblikovanje nacije u građanskoj Hrvatskoj (1835-1918)* ('The Formation of the Nation in Civic Croatia, 1835-1918') are both very essential.⁶ At any rate, one book by Mirjana Gross and Agneza Szabo, *Prema hrvatskome građanskom društvu* ('Toward a Croatian Civic Society'),⁷ the book, *Hrvatski pokret u Istri* ('The Croatian Movement in Istria') by Dragovan Šepić,⁸ and the book by Nevio Šetić, *Naša Sloga" o povezanosti Istre s ostalim hrvatskim zemljama 1870-1915* ('Our Concord" on the Connections between

1 | Ivo Perić, *Hrvatska državotvorna misao u XIX. i XX. stoljeću*, Zagreb, 2002., 521.

2 | Ivo Perić, *Hrvatski državni sabor 1848-2000*, sv. 1-3, Zagreb, 2000.

3 | Josip Vrandečić, *Dalmatinski autonomistički pokret u XIX stoljeću*, Zagreb, 2002, 331.

4 | Marijan Diklić, *Pravaštvo u Dalmaciji do kraja Prvoga svjetskoga rata*, Zadar, 1998, 552.

5 | Nikša Stančić, *Hrvatska nacija i nacionalizam u 19. i 20. stoljeću*, Zagreb, 2002, 255.

6 | Arnold Suppan, *Oblikovanje nacije u građanskoj Hrvatskoj (1835-1918)*, Zagreb, 1999, 371.

7 | Mirjana Gross/Agneza Szabo, *Prema hrvatskome građanskom društvu*, Zagreb, 1992, 626.

8 | Dragovan Šepić, *Hrvatski pokret u Istri*, Račice, 2004, 590.

Istria and the Remaining Croatian Lands 1870-1915').⁹ The cited books deepen knowledge on the problematic both substantially and methodically.

After the Second World War, and until the democratic changes of 1990, research on the process of Croatian national integration was not sufficiently carried out nor taught in our primary, middle and higher schools. It simply stood in opposition to Yugoslav ideology, which imposed itself on us during the course of the socialist-communist order, and especially because the end aim of the national integrative process of the Croatian nation was and remained the creation of a modern Croatian nation and an independent state. Truly, this was a process that enabled the growth of ethnic into national consciousness and the linking of the national area into a united whole. However, the earlier movements in the Croatian historical area were in deep opposition with Yugoslav reality from, respectively, 1918 and 1945, to 1990. Nevertheless, and in these conditions Croatian scholars wrote important works. I will mention some monographic works, the book, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda g. 1860-1914* ('The History of the Croatian Nation from 1860-1914'), whose authors are Šidak – Gross – Karaman – Šepić,¹⁰ the anthology of works, *Hrvatski narodni preporod u Dalmaciji i Istri* ('The Croatian National Revival in Dalmatia and Istria'),¹¹ the anthology of works, *Dalmacija u narodnom preporodu 1835-1848* ('Dalmatia in the National Revival 1835-1848')¹² and the anthology *Hrvatski narodni preporod u Splitu* ('The Croatian National Revival in Split').¹³ In this respect, the studies published by Ivo Perić, *Ante Trumbić na dalmatinskom političkom poprištu* ('Ante Trumbić in the Dalmatian political arena')¹⁴, *Pero Čingrija* ('Pero Čingrija')¹⁵ and *Dubrovčanin Niko Nardelli kao austrijski namjesnik u Dalmaciji* ('The Ragusan Niko Nardelli as Austrian governor in Dalmatia')¹⁶, Mirjana Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije* ('A History of the Ideology of the Party of Right')¹⁷ and *Počeci moderne Hrvatske* ('The Beginnings of Modern Croatia')¹⁸, Nikša Stančić, *Hrvatska nacionalna ideologija preporodnog pokreta u Dalmaciji* ('The Croatian National Ideology of the Revival Movement in Dalmatia')¹⁹, Mirko Valentić, *Vojna krajina i pitanje njezina sjedinjenja s Hrvatskom 1849-1881* ('The Military Frontier and the Question of its Unification with Croatia 1849-1881')²⁰, Petar Korunić, *Jugoslavizam i*

9 | Nevio Šetić, *Naša Sloga o povezanosti Istre o ostalim hrvatskim zemljama 1870-1915*, Zagreb, 2005.

10 | Jaroslav Šidak – Mirjana Gross – Igor Karaman – Dragovan Šepić, *Povijest hrvatskog naroda g. 1860-1914*, Zagreb, 1968, 352.

11 | Zbornik *Hrvatski narodni preporod u Dalmaciji i Istri*, Zagreb, 1969, 498.

12 | Zbornik *Dalmacija u narodnom preporodu 1835-1848*, Zadar, 1987, 692.

13 | Zbornik *Hrvatski narodni preporod u Splitu*, Split, 1984, 446.

14 | Ivo Perić, *Ante Trumbić na dalmatinskom političkom poprištu*, Split, 1983.

15 | Ivo Perić, *Pero Čingrija*, Dubrovnik, 1988.

16 | Ivo Perić, *Dubrovčanin Niko Nardelli kao austrijski namjesnik u Dalmaciji*, Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti IC JAZU u Dubrovniku, br. 34-35, Dubrovnik, 1987, 235-260.

17 | Mirjana Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije*, Zagreb, 1973, 453.

18 | Mirjana Gross, *Počeci moderne Hrvatske*, Zagreb, 1985, 521.

19 | Nikša Stančić, *Hrvatska nacionalna integracijska preporodnog pokreta u Dalmaciji*, Zagreb, 1980, 397.

20 | Mirko Valentić, *Vojna krajina i pitanje njezina sjedinjenja s Hrvatskom 1849-1881*, Zagreb, 1981, 360.

federalizam u hrvatskom nacionalnom preporodu 1835-1875 ('Yugoslavism and Federalism in the Croatian National Revival 1835-1875')²¹, etc, are very important.

The question of Croatian national integration belongs among the most existential questions of our modern and most recent history, as it is precisely for these values that the Croats have survived and today are restoring a modern Croatian society and state. On this, Petar Šegedin wrote in 1970: 'The Croatian national question is an eminently humane matter, for it deals with, without regard to what some think and how they would like to conceal it, Croatian national existence. Naturally, not about any sort of existence, but rather of that which nations today consider their natural right, the right that enables human dignity'.²² All those who today do not recognize and appreciate this problematic, or push it aside and do not wish to understand it, have simply fallen in the opposition of the past, whose sources one should seek in the ideologies of the 20th century, and especially in those which produced two totalitarian regimes – fascism and communism. Such views are not in harmony with the aspirations of Croatian generations, who wished to be themselves on their own, which means that such views are not in harmony with the high ethical and national rights of every nation to self-determination, thus that which Europe and the world holds to be a high civilizational attainment. For an understanding of these processes, an immensely important contribution was given, as a historian and statesman, by dr. Franjo Tuđman, who discussed, in particular, the national question in contemporary Europe, but also the position of Croatia in Yugoslavia, and the rights of the Croats to self-determination, national individuality, freedom and one's own state,²³ alongside directly leading the defence, liberation, establishment, international recognition and construction of a modern Croatian society and state.

Today, when the national integrative process among the Croats is finished, I see one of the largest specificities of the Istrian peninsula in the fact that it geographically is found within the framework of three independent, sovereign and internationally recognized states. Its largest part is in the framework of the Republic of Croatia, a smaller part in the framework of the Republic of Slovenia, while the smallest, almost insignificant part in the framework of the Republic of Italy. This is how it is, first of all, because of the ethnic representation and the activity of three national revivalist and statehood ideologies, three national integrative processes among these three nations, which have lived in Istria together for centuries.

It is worth stressing that the area of geographical Istria, during the time of national integrative processes, and particularly between the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, was known as an area of conflicts, intolerance and lack of understanding. And during

21 | Petar Korunić, *Jugoslavizam i federalizam u hrvatskom nacionalnom preporodu 1835-1875*, Zagreb, 1989, 250.

22 | Petar Šegedin, *Svi smo odgovorni?*, drugo dopunjeno izdanje, Zagreb, 1995, 15.

23 | For more on this, see: Franjo Tuđman, *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Evropi – Državnost nacija ključ mira Evrope*, Zagreb, 1990, 325; *Hrvatska u monarhističkoj Jugoslaviji (1918-1941)*, Zagreb, 1993, sv. I i II, 581, 540; *S vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku*, Zagreb, 1995, 478; *Usudbene povjestice*, Zagreb, 1995, 777; *Velike ideje i mali narodi*, Zagreb, 1996, 399; *Povijesna sudba naroda*, Zagreb, 1996, 522; *Misao hrvatske slobode*, Zagreb, 1997, 567.

this time, to be true, there were attempts at a mutually harmonious and tolerant life. This all occurred during the course of a tenacious struggle between the three nations for their own rights to self-determination and their own states. Miroslav Bertoša noted it well: 'in the second half of the nineteenth century, the centuries old 'long duration' began to crack, not only in the economic, but in the first place, in the political, cultural 'mental' sphere'.²⁴ Indeed, it was a difficult and complex task in the Istrian region to affirm the values of the nation and the national culture, ethnic presence and diffusion as the basic measure for national and statehood orientation. The theory of the sovereignty of the nation was long disputed in this region.²⁵

Today, the majority of European nations in their modern and most recent history take note and inherit the process of national integrations, all thanks to the process that freed the European medieval nations in their ethnic regions, which deepened their consciousness of their own identity and connections of their ethnic region, made them nationally conscious, free, enterprising and capable of creating a political community, i.e. the state. Indeed, all these processes are similar for in the end they enabled the establishment of independent and sovereign states, but they are different according to time and manner, dependent on when and how these states were established. This is directly confirmed by our Croatian experience. On the whole, this process brought progress to Europe and the world. From the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s of the last century, after many decades of disintegrative processes, the closing phases of these processes are unfolding in the entire East European post-socialist area, all the way from Slovenia to the Ukraine and from Macedonia to Estonia. This process, in some way, has once more revived, after the Berlin Wall was physically destroyed in 1989 and after the re-unification of Germany on the 3rd of October 1990,²⁶ and especially after the collapse of the Soviet, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak federations and the restored independence of states in those regions. It was in that context, that the independent, sovereign, democratic and internationally recognized state of Croatia emerged, or better said, was restored.

The independence of the Republic of Croatia was proclaimed on the 25th of June 1991 by the *Sabor* (parliament) of the Republic of Croatia, having brought the constitutional decision on the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Croatia, in which it was confirmed that with this act, the Republic of Croatia 'initiates a course of action of disuniting from the other republics and the SFRY (...) initiates a course of action to attain international recognition'.²⁷ In the course

24 | Miroslav Bertoša, *Etos i etnos zavičaja*, Pula-Rijeka, 1985, 153.

25 | For details, see Bertoša, *n. dj.*, 151-176.

26 | Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Sjećanja*, Zagreb, 1999, 565. Genscher's book very precisely bears witness to his struggle, as well as to the struggle of the German people for re-unification and the restoration of a modern German state, i.e. of realizing the basic right, the right of the German nation to self-determination. All this after, what, for the Germans, but also for many other nations, were the very erroneous and fatal politics led by Adolf Hitler from 1933 to 1945. After the re-unification of Germany (1990), a new process was opened in European, and I would say world, history and reality, and particularly in East European reality. The process of realizing the right to self-determination was accelerated, in other words the process of restoration and establishment of independent states that had still not been completed in some nations.

27 | Narodne novine, broj 31 od 25. lipnja 1991.

of the war of the greater Serbian aggressor against the Republic of Croatia, the Croatian *Sabor* dismembered all state-legal ties with the then still existent SFRY on the 8th of October 1991, while in the middle of January 1992, the Republic of Croatia was internationally recognized as an independent and sovereign state, and on the 22nd of May 1992, Croatia became a member of the United Nations.²⁸ Many books²⁹ bear witness to what sort of political forces predominated in south Eastern Europe at that moment, especially in the area of the former Yugoslavia, but many more books need to be written.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we can reliably say that the dynamic process of the identification and formation of national differences and the definition of different national identities on the greater part of the European continent has been completed. However, not only is it finished, but it has entered a more modern and mature European national and even post-national phase, especially in that part of the European continent that Fernand Braudel called the Protestant or Catholic.³⁰ There are still some difficulties there, as shown by the example of Ireland in the United English Kingdom or again, the Basque Country in Spain.³¹ The completion of national integrative processes is spreading, as we can follow in these years, to the third, Orthodox, part of Europe, but the process of the emergence of contemporary nations and modern states there is significantly lagging behind and has difficulty maturing, as well as in the region where it touches upon or overlaps with the Catholic world.

Therefore, with the beginning of the third millennium in Europe, the long process of creating independent states, the process of creating equal and sovereign nations, initiated, after all experiences, to mutual dialogue, co-operation, appreciation and trust, is almost complete. In fact,

28 | Perić, *n. dj.* 504.

29 | See: Warren Zimmerman, *Izvori jedne katastrofe*, Zagreb, 1997, 310. The memoirs of the last American ambassador in Belgrade Warren Zimmerman begin very symbolically: 'this a story about scoundrels – the scoundrels guilty for the collapse of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia'. This book shows the relation of the great powers, particularly the USA, toward the processes of the 'resurrection' of the national states in the area of the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of the democratic changes and the duration of the war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It also additionally draws attention to the obstacles, led by the world powers that the nations of former Yugoslavia, especially the Croats, had to overcome to achieve ultimate independence. In that context, the book by Alois Mock, *Dossier Balkan i Hrvatska*, Zagreb, 1998, 223 is also very interesting, but also the book by Margaret Thatcher, *Državničko umijeće*, Zagreb, 2004, 414. It is worth particularly observing the eight chapter – Wars in the Balkans, 244-276, where Thatcher, among other things, underlines that: 'The West, at the end of the day, did intervene so that it could attempt to keep the old Yugoslavia together, and carried out great pressure on those who were bold enough to wish to leave it. The Western states, among other things, imposed an embargo on the import of weapons, whereby the aggressor was placed in an incomparably advantageous position, and this induced the aggression. Finally, the West mediated in a number of ceasefires (which were not respected) and sent a number of threats (which made an impression on nobody). (...) It is always dangerous to allow a shameless aggression, even if its direct consequences seem insignificant, because of the precedent that it sets. This is by far even more valid when that aggression occurs in a region that historically belongs to Europe, is in the neighbourhood of NATO and is in itself, markedly unstable.' (245).

30 | Fernand Braudel, *Civilizacije kroz povijest*, Zagreb, 1990, 304.

31 | In 1872, *Naša Sloga* wrote: 'And in the English nation, there is resistance, in its own way, to the English parliamentary civilization. It has been read, that in Belfast, in Ireland, Catholics and Protestants or Lutherans have held some sort of processions in order to declare their dissatisfaction. However, the worst thing is that on this occasion they argued amongst themselves so that it came to bloody heads and bare hats'. See, *Naša Sloga* (dalje NS), br. 17, Trst, 1. IX. 1872, 65.

they have all realized their right to self-determination! However, it is worth stressing that before this process is totally complete, there has began a new process in Europe of integrating independent states in a common system of values, that of the European Union, which the countries of the so-called new democracies that have sprung up before our eyes, now wish to join. They are doubtless attracted to the EU by the values of modern civilizational acquirements and its heritage, such as the right of every nation to self-determination, the rights and duties of developing democracy and democratic processes, the rule of law and pluralistic relations, civic freedoms, particularly the protection of human and minority rights, the environment and above all else the protection of peace, security and prosperity. In that, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia have already succeeded, while Croatia became a candidate for membership in the European Union in 2004 and in the spring of 2005, talks on association will begin.

In researching the history of Istria in the 19th and 20th centuries, I have observed that during the course of that period, in spite of the most varied forms of stagnation and frustrations, rises and falls, the Croatian national integrative and statehood idea of the Istrian Croats was certainly constructed as a part of a uniform Croatian process. The crown of those efforts was the historical decision on the state-legal unification with the remaining part of the Croatian national area, brought in September 1943, as a result of the penetration and fruit of the direct co-operation and participation in the process that unfolded in the wider Croatian national area. The results of research by Croatian historical science attest to this, and particularly what has been written in Istria since the period of the Illyrian movement, the Croatian national revival or the still more complex reflections in the framework of the process of integrating Istria into the complete Croatian national area. The same is valid for works that study the interwar period, the period of Italian administration (1918-1943) or the period of fascism in Istria, the period of the Second World War and the national liberation struggle, in other words the anti-fascist struggle, which in a political sense extended to some of the post war years and in some way has extended up until our own days. This is confirmed by research on the contribution of individuals, societies, organizations, and generally on economic, cultural and other social endeavours, as well as the thus far modest research that discusses the connections of Istria to the remaining Croatian lands during the course of national integration, all in the sense of a complete interpretation of our modern and most recent past.

In the context of this research, themes concerning the complete connections of the Istrian Croats with the remaining parts of the Croatian national area during the course of the process of Croatian national integration, when, alongside other things, the transformation of Croatian society and the merging of Croatian differences was unfolding, have remained unexplored until today.

It is a great historiographical and methodological challenge to deal with such a complex problematic as the process of the Croatian national integration in Istria, first of all, because we have still not done enough preliminary research, nor have we constructed a complete historiographic

model, which would enable it to be dealt as a uniform whole with different recognizable stages, which it is according to all of our knowledge. For now, one observes, with crude estimation, three larger entities. One encompasses the period from the beginning of the 19th century until 1918, the second, from 1918 to 1945 and the third, from 1945 to 1990, in other words, until our time. The social layers that, in Istria and generally in Croatia, set out onto the path of their political, economic, cultural, social and national transformation and mutual connection in the first decades of the 19th century, have only in our own time, after a row of integrative and disintegrative experiences, with the establishment of the independent Croatian state, completed in some way their path. It is worth knowing that here in Istria at the beginning of the 19th century, there set out on the challenge for such a contemporaneity some 130,000 people. Indeed, everyone who researches and writes on the process of Croatian national integration in Istria is confronted with methodological difficulties in the defining of such complex themes, particularly with regard to the unequal level of the analysis of the archival material of particular stages and their insufficient mutual connections. In dealing with the fate of the Istrian Croats in Croatian historiography, there is felt, alongside the turning point of 1945, a particularly strong political and social turning point in 1918, when after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the unsuccessful attempt to have all Croats continuing to live in the same one state, the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, the largest part of the Croats continued to live together in the so-called first Yugoslavia, while Istria, Rijeka, the Kvarner islands, Cres, Lošinj, Vele i Male Srakane, Susak, Ilovik and Unije, the city Zadar, Lastovo and Palagruža continued to live separated from their motherland.

I hold that an important goal of today's Croatian historical science is to create a complete model of research on the process of Croatian national integrations. Reviewing and appreciating that which has already been done, I hold that one has to carry out such research that would bring a complete knowledge of the national integrative process from the initial to the finishing phases, figuratively said from the Illyrian movement to the emergence of the modern state of the Republic of Croatia.

The process of the national integration of the Istrian Croats is based first of all, on the experience in the everyday life of the people, on its customs, culture, and tradition, which preserves the natural linguistic affiliation and the affiliation to a region, as well as the entire scholarly heritage, which the Croats in Istria created with their activity. It is also based on the consciousness and conscience of Croatian priests who cropped up in the region that they were prepared to protect, to build and stress the national identity and interpret the whole development of the Croatian national area, in other words, it was based on the sponsorship and conscience of the Catholic Church. The first torch-bearers of these ideas among the priests were Petar Studenac, Nedeljko Berković, Jakov Volčić, and later Juraj Dobrila, Vjekoslav Spinčić, Matko Mandić, Luka Kirac and many others. I have emphasized only a few, but we could enumerate until our own day, to Miroslav Bulešić, Bože Milanović, Zvonimir Brumnić, Antun Hek, Josip Pavlišić and many others who worked and work steadfastly in their time in that idea. To these belong a list of other intellectuals, such as Dinko Vitezić, Matko Laginja, Benjamin Deprato, Ante Mandić, Dinko

Trinajstić, Đuro Červar, Ivan Rabar, Mijo Mirković, Mario Kalčić, Zvane Črnja and many others, but also many merchants, craftsmen, sailors, officials, members of other free professions, labourers, such as Anton Milovan from the village of Režanci or Joakim Rakovac from the village of Rakovci, today Karlo Legović from the hamlet Tadina in Kaštelir, etc. Precisely thanks to such processes and people Croatian national consciousness lives today 'silently in the life of the people and speaks awakened through every individual', as was nicely emphasized by the Croatian pedagogue, Marija Bratanić in her book, *Paradoks odgoja* ("The Paradox of Education"), adding alongside this, that today, 'the subtle process of awakening national consciousness, which rests on love for the birthplace, begins in the family and continues in school'.³²

The organized activity of the National party or the Croatian party, or, as it was also called, the Croatian-Slovenian national party, had a particular importance in the development of the process of national integration of the Istrian Croats from the end of the 70s of the 19th century. In fact, unanimous and united political activity in the national movement was of particular importance. The national movement in Istria was based on three important principles, the political unity of all Croatian social layers and groups, the common political struggle of Croats and Slovenes with the Italians in the region, and the deep links and reliance on Croatia and Slavonia and the other Croatian lands. From the year 1874, there is the important activity of the Confraternity of Croatian People in Istria, from 1893, the Society of St. Cyril and Methodius for Istria, while a particularly important role in this sense was the opening of the first Croatian gymnasium in Pazin (1899), as well as the starting of the Political Society for the Croats and Slovenes of Istria in 1902. In fact, in this period, *Naša Sloga* and its editorship, which, through 45 years of systematic publication from 1870 to 1915, grew into one of the most important modern monuments of the Istrian Croats, had the most important role in the national integrative process, representing the strength and the phenomenon of national survival. *Naša Sloga* bears witness first of all, to the struggle of the Croats for basic human and national dignity, for basic political, cultural, educational, economic, social and other rights, in a word – to the struggle for survival. In fact, the writing of that paper attests to the position of the Istrian Croats at that time. Already at the beginning of publication, the following was written: 'it almost pains my soul, that in general I do not see in the Istrian patriots that liveliness, which we should be able to hope for. It is as if we Istrian Croats do not care for what is happening around us. Croatia is heroically fighting for its survival, but that doesn't seem to offer us life. On the other hand, Slovenia is rising, but we act as if we cannot see it. It is true that the greater part of the educated are foreign to their race, since they are raised in the Italian spirit; but for all that, there is a nice number of those, who could also do a lot for our Slavic people. Among these patriots, there belongs the greater part of the young generation, who drew their national spirit from neighbouring Croatia, indeed in the schools over there'.³³

32 | Marija Bratanić, *Paradoks odgoja*, Zagreb, 2002, 22.

33 | *NS*, br. 21, Trst, I. XI. 1872, 81.

Historical science usually holds newspapers to be a second-rate original material. However in the conditions of life and events in Istria, today one should, without exaggeration, hold and proclaim *Naša Sloga*, as a first rate original material because, for the Croats and Croatia of Istria at that time, it signified the voice of a people pushed aside and deprived of its rights, a people that entered into a political and cultural struggle for its own survival and progress. A row of editor's comments published in *Naša Sloga* is a unique source for identifying the political and cultural history of the Istrian Croats of that time.

In 1918, Italy occupied Istria, Rijeka, Zadar and the islands, and then acquired them with the peace conference; this postponed the aims of the national integrative process, while the national and statehood idea, although crudely pushed aside, was even more firmly established in the Croatian man of Istria. Despite the fact that its continuity was interrupted by force, the Istrian Croats displayed a rebellious strength and, as is well known, it was precisely in Istria where the first physical resistance to the fascist repressive movement in Europe was offered in 1921, during the Proštinska rebellion. In the same way, the Istrians, with arms in hand, liberated themselves from the occupiers during the national-liberation struggle and in September of 1943 with the people's will, legally unified Istria with the mother Croatian homeland, as is nicely stated in the well known proclamation of the national-liberation council for Istria, 'Istarski narode', from 13. September. 1943: 'Istria joins the mother country and proclaims unification with our remaining Croatian brothers'.³⁴ This was a plebiscitary and, in its own way, multi-party national decision: although the only politically active organization among Istrian Croats at that time was the Communist Party of Croatia, the nationalists also gave their vote 'for' unification. In reality, this was a decision of all social layers in Istria: from peasants to learned people, priests and politicians, who formulated that proclamation, while the people supported it by plebiscite and with great enthusiasm. Hodimir Sirotković, a capable Croatian state-legal historian says of that proclamation: 'In the annals of our history, this document of our existence and our continuous struggle for national identity in these areas has remained noted as the Pazin decision on unification with the homeland. In the middle of the storms of war, Istria, through members of its regional NOO, proclaims to the world its Croatian and Slovenian national identity. The Pazin decision remains a political basis for all further state-legal decisions which followed it, were added and supplemented'.³⁵

The Istrians displayed that they were in favour of an independent and sovereign Croatian state by voting in the referendum held on the 19th of May 1991, when 94%, from the 85% of citizens who came out for elections, voted 'yes' for independence.³⁶ Precisely on that spiritual and politi-

34 | Nevio Šetić, *Istra između tradicionalnog i modernog ili o procesu integracije suvremene hrvatske nacije u Istri*, Pazin, 1995, 100.

35 | Hodimir Sirotković, *Državno-pravno značenje odluka Okružnog NOO-a za Istru, ZAVNOH-a i AVNOJ-a o sjedinjenju Istre s Hrvatskom i Jugoslavijom*, Pazinski memorijal, sv. 12, Pazin, 1983, 23.

36 | In connection with the unraveling of the state crisis of the SFRY, the president of the Republic of Croatia, dr. Franjo Tuđman brought the Decision on the proclamation of a referendum in the Republic of Croatia for the 19th of May 1991, on the 25th of April 1991. At the referendum, citizens of the Republic of Croatia brought the following decision:

cal vertical the process of the integration of Istrian Croats was complete. With that was opened a new period in the development of the Croatian state and nation, a period of modernization, democratization and socialization of Croatian society, as well as integration into the West European system of values, which our diversity will, I am deeply convinced, enrich with its values and in that way remain the continual wealth and heritage of Europe, as it was for centuries. We have belonged to Europe from times immemorial, building a common spiritual, artistic, scientific, cultural, economic and inheritance from the pre-Romanesque, the early Medieval times, as well as during the time of Croatian national rulers, and particularly during Humanism, the Renaissance, Protestantism, Baroque and long-lasting common so-called West European civilizational values, to which the results of the most recent world deliberations have drawn attention, including Samuel P. Huntington in his book, *Clash of Civilizations*. In global proportions, Huntington very precisely draws attention to the reach of national identities integrated in civilizational entities, according to which the return to an original ethno-cultural identity and the drawing near to those similar is the essence of our times and the model of survival in the 21st century.³⁷ In another manner, Herando de Soto in the book *Il mistero del capitale* ('The Mystery of Capital'), draws attention to the important capability of creating a well organized society, capable of creating values, in fact, of 'producing one's own life'.³⁸

The process of the national integration of Istrian Croats, as part of the uniform Croatian national integrational process, has brought us through almost two centuries until the final result of a restored and integrated, free and democratic, civic and social, in a word, a modern state of Croatia, compatible with other European countries, as well as with the restoration of national states in eastern Europe. Indeed, the Italian politician and historian Sergio Romano rightly writes that in the year 1989 national states were resurrected in Eastern Europe.³⁹ The process in that part of the world was completed somewhat later, in contrast from the countries in Western Europe, but it is entirely clear that this is a uniform phenomenon, which one should research, observe and represent as such, and one should also continue to trace the things common to all citizens, which defines and brings together every individual nation, in fact, to continue to trace and explain the 'mystery of national identity', as Margaret Thatcher points out in her book.⁴⁰

The complex process that integrated and freed the Croatian nation and also brought the establishment of the Croatian state, is a lasting and unspent value not only of the Croatian nation, but of

³⁷1. The Republic of Croatia, as a sovereign and independent state, which guarantees cultural autonomy and all civic rights to Serbs and members of other nationalities in Croatia, can enter into an alliance of independent states with other republics. 2. The Republic of Croatia will not remain in Yugoslavia as a united federal state'. 84,94% of registered constituents in the Republic of Croatia voted in the referendum. From that 93, 94% of constituents voted in favour of independence. See: Narodne novine, broj 21, od 2. svibnja 1991 i br. 24 od 27. svibnja 1991, Smiljko Sokol i Branko Smerdel, *Ustavno Pravo*, 1995, 58.

37 | Samuel P. Huntington, *Sukob civilizacijai preustroj svjetskog poretka*, Zagreb, 1997, 430.

38 | Herando de Soto, *Il mistero del capitale*, Milano, 2001, 277.

39 | Sergio Romano, *Disegno della storia d'Europa dal 1789 al 1989 – trionfo, morte e resurrezione degli stati nazionali*, Milano, 1991.

40 | Thatcher, *n. dj.* 16.

the entire modern world. Therefore, this social process, which flows for more than two centuries, is not only a Croatian or European process, but also a world process. It is completely clear that today's cultural or ethno-cultural diversity defines that feeling most strongly, that pride, and that basic human and national right.⁴¹ In the same way, I hold that one should especially research the most diverse specificities that appeared on that path, particularly those with disintegrative characteristics. For generations of Croatian people are meritorious for its life and realization, for the realization of the process of Croatian national integration, the establishment and restoration of the modern Croatian state, such as today's generation, which resisted the aggressor in the Homeland War and created the state through military victory and the plebiscitary will of the people. Today, all Croatian citizens have the possibility to democratically and in peace develop Croatian society and state, above all on the basis of their own, but also progressive, European and world values and knowledge. Croatian historical science also has the opportunity, and I would say duty, to research that process in its entirety, from the initial to the final phases of Croatian national integrations, which practically means during the course of the last two centuries.

Dr. sc. Nevio Šetić

Sveučilište u Puli

Razmatranja tijekova hrvatske nacionalne integracije u Istri

Hrvatska historiografija posvetila je mnoge radove istraživanju hrvatskih nacionalno-integracijskih ideologija, što je postalo naročito zanimljivom temom nakon osamostaljenja hrvatske države. Istra predstavlja specifični slučaj, s obzirom da je podijeljena između triju država, a da je sukob triju nacionalnih integrativnih ideologija dovodio do konflikata i netolerancije tijekom 19. i prve polovice 20. st. Ocrtavajući okolnosti u kojima je Hrvatska stekla neovisnost, autor upozorava na paralelnost procesa najnovijih nacionalnih integracija i integracija država u Europsku Uniju. Privlačna moć EU sastoji se u vladavini prava, demokraciji i pravu nacija na samoopredjeljenje. U slučaju Istre, kruna integracijskih procesa s Hrvatskom bila je odluka o sjedinjenju Istre s maticom zemljom u rujnu 1943. Autor upozorava na teškoće s kojima se susreću istraživači procesa nacionalne integracije u Istri, kako zbog neistraženosti pojedinih problema, tako i zbog stanja izvora. Pred hrvatsko historiografijom stoji zadaća stvaranja modela istraživanja nacionalno-integracijskih procesa u Istri. Pritom valja pažnju posvetiti povijesti svakodnevice, ali i utjecaju Crkve i inteligencije. Taj proces je nužno promatrati kao dio sličnih pojava u drugim državama u istočnom dijelu Europe, ali je nužno razabrati njegove specifičnosti.

41 | Nevio Šetić, *Istarski razgovori*, Pazin, 1999, 13.