

MASTERING THE PAST AND POTENTIALS FOR OVERCOMING INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN VOJVODINA

Introducing

The main project goal was examination of models for overcoming the burdening of the past and inter-ethnic conflicts in Vojvodina, among members of the most numerous ethnical groups, aiming to minimize the possibilities of nonproductive conflicts and strengthening cooperation and understanding in Vojvodina.

It should be underlined that Vojvodina and its potentials for conflicts are disregarded comparing to Sandžak, Kosovo and Presevo valley. The opening of Pandora's box has already started in media, political parties practice and in the mind of population but often in nonproductive and in potentially conflictive way. Under superficial ethnical peace there is a boiling political radicalism: some ethnic Germans and Hungarians were physically attacked (as at Knićanin), there were verbal insults of ethnic Hungarians (as at Elemir and Debeljača), gatherings and informal, confined and ethnically based political meetings (in the region of Potisje), establishing a union of municipalities by ethnical criteria (as in northern Bačka), emigration of various ethnic groups from settlements where they represent ethnic minority (as in southern Bačka and middle Banat), drastic decline of real estate prices in these regions and there are some indications of emigration of ethnic Serbian population from northern Bačka. The aim of this project was to come up against the past burdening and the possibility of using social reminiscence to cause or to calm down conflictive potentials. It also included research of existing knowledge, models of reinterpretation and ability to face Hungarian war crimes against the Jews and Serbs in Bačka in 1942, Serbian crimes against the Germans and Hungarians after 1944, Serbian crimes against the Croats between 1991 and 1993 in Srem and south-western Backa and systematic persecution of the Albanians from Vojvodina in 1999. Generally speaking, it was necessary to make presumptions for facing the truth and influencing public attitude in the atmosphere which has burdened by latent inter-ethnic tensions and increased possibilities for maximizing the autonomy of Vojvodina. Theoretical as well as methodological models are numerous and rich. It should be mentioned the numberless bibliography, the works of Cseres, Mesarosz and Kasaš and previous research of Ilić and Samardžić.

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:

- A significant change in the attitude towards collective rights of the minor communities in the political and informal appearances of the relevant factors, including also the preparation of the legal and administrative solutions on several levels, a campaign for their passing and a fight for sharing the loot among the participants who determine the inter-ethnic relations and the entire social life in Vojvodina in the changed circumstances.
- Existing of the latent but potentially different radicalization of the inter-ethnic relations in the Province.
- Apparent normalization of the broken nationalistic program of the Great Serbia associated with the minor ethno-nationalisms.
- Tensions between Great Serbian ethnic-nationalistic parties and informal groups and radicalized demands of the minorities.
- Activities of the interest groups and coteries connected with different economic interests.
- Polyvalence of the local participants on the party level: Alliance of the Hungarians of Vojvodina (VMSZ) is flirting with the autonomy pleaders (LSV and RV), DS and DSS; autonomy pleaders with VMSZ and DS; DS with the before mentioned and with DSS; DSS with DS and with VMSZ.
- Exterior context: further homogenization / fragmentation of the Balkans and the South Pannonia in its ethnic limits.
- Considering separation of Kosovska Mitrovica in the circles in the international community as a compensation for independence of Kosovo.
- Specific context of Vojvodina: forming the temporary national councils elected by the electors (exclusively from the ethnic parties and organizations); demands for physical separation of the pupils in schools according to the criteria of the teaching language; demands that at least half of the contents of the humanities be of the “national character”. Fear among smaller minor communities (e.g. Bulgarians or Slovaks or Croats and Romanians in Vojvodina) of the consequences of the agreement between the Serbian and minor ethno-nationalists.
- Increasing the number of the interethnic incidents; dividing the society according to the ethnic principles; rapid assimilation of the members of the minor communities where they are in minority regarding the total population; inviolate migrations (followed by a drastic decrease of the prices of the real estate), further marginalizing of the civil option. On the whole, radicalization of the inter-ethnic relations, fortunately without chances of a new war because of the pressure of the environment.

METHODOLOGICAL REMARK

The following steps were made in implementation of the project:

Two questionnaires were made, one for the asked members of the Serbian ethnic group and one for the asked members of the Hungarian ethnic group. 500 members of each Serbian ethnic group of both natives and colonists and 500 ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina (the total of 1500 respondents) were questioned within the fieldwork during collecting the data.

We carried out the logical controlling of the collected empirical evidence, transforming data from qualitative into quantitative form, coding and input the data and the analysis as well.

The research was done in those places in Vojvodina, which were the most burdened by the past, like various crimes over the Serbs, Hungarians and former German population. The fieldwork was carried out in Debeljača, Šajkaš, Čurug, Lazarevo, Ravni Topolovac, Lukićevo, Mihajlovo, Senta, Mol, Ada, Žabalj, Titel, Mošorin, Budisava and Knićanin. The respondents of the last mentioned place are over presented in the realized sample because there was the biggest concentration camp in Knićanin (Rudolfsgnad) after the Second World War. Different dimensions of the modifications of the past were researched and their use in the contemporary formation of the inter-ethnic relations and their potential for overcoming the inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts in Vojvodina. As for the methodological point of view, we widely used the methods of Cristopher Reinprecht who carried out the similar research in the Czech Republic and Hungary. We examined the historiographic and journalistic writings on this phenomena including the papers of Silagyi, Czeres, Kasaš, Mesarosz, Ingrao and Vrkić. The methodological innovations were applied in using widely open-ended questions above all, which solely can break through the barrier of conformism in the conscience of the respondents. The contents of the questionnaires made for questioning the ethnic Serbs and Hungarians overlap greatly in order to achieve the comparability of the evidence of these two groups of the respondents. On the other hand, the parts of the questionnaires meant for the asked Serbs and Hungarians differ among themselves since some questions about fulfilling the collective ethnic rights are more interesting for the Hungarians as members of the minor community while they are less relevant for the ethnic Serbs. In observing the attitude towards the Tribunal in The Hague, the ethnic Serbs were asked more questions than the ethnic Hungarians expecting that the responses of the Serbs could be more discriminative concerning this subject.

The use of open-ended questions was quite justified on the epistemological plane, as answers to them are so rich in quality that they can influence and guide elaboration of survey and suggest changes and modifications of the initially conceived survey framework. To put it simply open-ended questions bring more information and knowledge and do not reduce the survey to mere checking of previously developed assumptions (Ragin 1989). This advantage is particularly important in examination of topics insufficiently researched in theory. Our topic belongs to the previously mentioned category. Recent

findings of other researchers differ from ours because of the aforementioned methodological reasons and some specific research solutions to be discussed in subsequent comparison of results.

Regarding getting casual explanations by applying qualitative approach, the following fact should be kept in mind. Cases usually support several possible explanations and researchers support their own explanation by using surrounding factors. A specific openness to particular cases creates a rich dialogue between a researcher and the evidence. The research did not begin by developing good elaborating hypotheses. There is no scientific theory, which could be specified as a usable directive standpoint for directing a comparative research in the Balkan states. Hypotheses are made in the course of research and they are modified through a dialogue with the evidence; this is the way to remove common sense prejudices and to correct a non-reliable previous knowledge about the studied societies. This is a big advantage of the applied approach.

Research consequences of such an approach are very serious. The problem of description is not an isolated problem in a methodological sense. The theory of scientific information, which covers the area of description, is a special methodological theory. However, it is strongly and actively related to the theory of sociological explanation. A correct description is sine qua non the good explanation. A particular social phenomenon could not be explained without a correct description. In this sense, the first theoretical task in the field of description is creating such criteria, which specify relevant factors in these states clearly and precisely.

This weakness in the operational carrying out of researches is partly explainable by the aptitude towards using as short questionnaires as possible due to financial reasons, and partly by insufficient theoretical knowledge of social phenomena because the lack of this kind of information from the universe of indicators makes it difficult to select the most relevant ones. The numerous attempts of a strict application of scales of the Bogardus's and Likert's type made unreliable empirical evidence. At the same time, neglecting a qualitative approach suitable for knocking down the barrier of conformism in the data given by the asked persons could be seen. This empiricism is used for ideological purposes by various orders of researches.

The methods aimed towards gathering the data in their qualitative form have greater heuristic strength and bring more new knowledge. They are more open towards the stimuli from experience. Their role is not only to check previously made hypotheses, which is their fault; apparently, the methods aimed towards gathering the data in the quantitative form are weaker in making the way towards acquiring new knowledge, but they enable testing several rival hypotheses, while qualitative methods are aimed to an exploratory research or to a research led by a hypothesis which is modified and reformulated in the contact with a variety and amplexness of the data in their qualitative form.

All the time we tried, despite repeating earlier survey solutions, to effect formal rather than essential standardisation of the very procedure. On the additional methodological problems concerning the examination of our main topic can be said the next: the problems appear in the analysis of data as

well. Anyway, before any analysis it is necessary to have detailed conversations with the assistants who collected the data and if there is enough time, it is desirable that we take part in data gathering or conversations as well. These conversations will lead us to the conclusion regarding not only the number of the cases of refusals to cooperate, but we will see the profile of those who refused to talk (sex, age, nationality, type of settlement, social status, financial status). We will see where the instrument failed to work adequately in spite of all our preparations, i.e. which questions caused doubts, which questions the respondents felt restrained to answer, etc.

It is understood that while constructing the instruments we got the clue answers by the indicators which indirectly testify about the state of inter-ethnic relations and about the problems which appear in these relations. We will not talk about the constructing of the indicators here except the note that we always must use the past experiences as much as possible, because the possibility to compare the data above all and because of the awareness that future researchers will rely on some elements of our and the past researchers. We should not be too strict here to include necessarily some questions that are not indeed actual.

There are, however, such questions that have become usual in the researches of inter-ethnic relations and which none who is seriously involved in this kind of analysis can ignore. It is, above all, Bogardus's scale of ethnic distance. This scale informs about the degree of inter-ethnic distance. Nevertheless, it should be borne in our mind that this scale can mislead inexperienced researchers, or at least those who have not studied the historical and actual context where a particular research is being carried out. Thus, when the inter-ethnic relations are severely disturbed, like in the whole previous Yugoslavia during the last decade, we can find ourselves in the situation where the attitudes which are lower at the scale give a better picture of the state of inter-ethnic relations than those which are higher. The reason for that lies in the fact that the scale is constructed for a context of relatively stable inter-ethnic relations which change slowly. However, in the situation where the inter-ethnic relations are being suddenly disturbed it is possible to have more answers showing the readiness to get married or to allow the children to get married with the members of other ethnic communities than to make friends with the members of different ethnic communities. The reason for this is relatively simple. It is likely that with the past experience of relatively harmonious inter-ethnic relations, people have experienced - personally or in the case of their relatives - the examples of harmonious inter-ethnic marriages and that fact can not be neglected when answering these questions. On the other hand, the actual situation of not so close inter-ethnic relations - makes a barrier towards other ethnic groups and people simply do not want to initiate any new contacts with the members of other ethnic communities. There could be other reasons, too. If it is the case of an extremely prevailing ethnic group, a marriage can be seen as one of the rare ways of social mobility which gives the opportunity for promotion to the members of a marginal ethnic group, so it can be considered desirable, while making friends or other forms of informal contacts can bear the influence of a national pride. It is similar when it comes to the

answers to a question about working with the members of other ethnic communities. In this case the dimension of interests can be a more important criterium for defining a readiness for a certain activity than a quality of inter-ethnic relations. The elementary condition in these cases is a careful original interpretation of gathered results especially if they differ from the anticipated ones or if they are apparently illogical.

The other important set of questions that every research of inter-ethnic relations deals with is a problem of prejudices toward other ethnic groups as well as the questions regarding autostereotypes. Anyway, in our researches we are going to meet the cases where the system of values shows according to all indicators a tendency to change in a particular direction which, theoretically speaking, implies a change of quality of ethnic relations towards tolerance with the data showing a completely opposite thing at the same time. In other words, we can find an actual system of values which is rather a mutant of the actual values we are familiar with than a part of them.

We can add that the study of subject-matter involves certain risks. For a long time, our scientists, studying nationalism or generation and dissemination of national ideas, had to compete with the official single-party ideology. The communist ideology promoted a simplified version of the theory of modernisation and covered practically the whole field of the social thought on nationalism. Little room was left for empirical research. Another reason why it was difficult to conduct a serious research into the subject of nationalism, rests with the fact this is, subjectively speaking, a very delicate topic. Namely, it is difficult to address the national question without emotion and when there is emotion, there can be no differentiation or sense of nuance, which are a *sine qua non* of scientific description and a prerequisite for impartial analysis. The wide-spread parochial frame of mind of majority of our researchers has been due, above all, to their inability to take a detached look at politics in earlier times, while today it derives from their inability to view with detachment the intellectual experience on the other, notably Western, side. The study of nationalism is thus often politically-coloured or characteristics of a provincial and selective reception of solutions, applied in scientifically more advanced countries.

The application of solutions successfully used abroad, but unadjusted to our milieu, entails unfavourable research consequences. It is worth mentioning numerous attempts at strict application of Bogardus scale or Likert scale which led to findings full of indiscriminate and politically interesting, but non-substantive contents of conformist orientations. This phenomenon leads to a distorted picture of genuine opinions of some groups, whose members feel insecure. Some surveys related to foreign media monitoring by national minorities yielded very convincing results. In order to avoid this weakness in this survey we used the little-applied solution, that is, we widely applied questions with open-ended answers. Their successive posing greatly reduced possibility of conformist answers, and use of a good plan of cross-examination of answers represented an Generally speaking in examinations of vulnerable groups, for example minorities the usage of open questions is usually avoided on

financial and expert team grounds (desirable engagement of professionals with high skills, expertise and know-how is very costly). However one should not idealise any form of applied research approach.

THE REALIZED SAMPLE

The list of the localities that were included in the research has been given; it should be repeated, perhaps, that we deliberately chose the settlements where Horthy's crimes over the Serbs and Yugoslav-communist "vendetta" over Hungarians were committed. Some remarks about the structure of the realized sample should be set forth. Since two separate questionnaires – for ethnic Serbs and Hungarians – were applied, these remarks have to be set separately, too.

979 out of 1002 questionnaires, filled up by the questioned Serbs, have passed a logic control. 497 questionnaires, filled by the Serbs colonists and their descendents, and 482 filled by the native Serbs, have been treated. 54% of the questioned Serbs were men, 6% of the examinees were born in 1930 or before.¹ They are relatively conscious persons who have direct experience of World War II. 29% were born between 1931 and 1950. They spent the best part of their active lives under the communist rule. 42% of the examinees of Serbian nationality were born between 1951 and 1972; they remember well the time of one-party rule but after 1990 they have to get used to the fact that an important or even the most important part of their lives would passed by under quite different circumstances than were those which they have been prepared, educated and socially programmed for. 23% of the total number of the examinees of Serbian nationality were born in 1973 and later. They represent a generation that hasn't got any life experience of the one-party system and which, by concurrence of events, was pushed into a new social surrounding, which is the only one they know for. All the examinees were of full age at the time of data collecting.

22% of the questioned Serbs are skilled workers, 17% office workers or technicians, 15% retired people, 14% experts with college or university degree, farmers and students, by 8% each, unskilled workers (including agriculture workers) and housewives by 5% each, 4% unemployed and less than 3% people with indefinite jobs. When educational structure is considered, the dominants are those with finished trade schools (39%) and schools for industrial workers (20%). 79% of the questioned Serbs live in villages, 26% in small towns and 4% in cities.

Among 504 questionnaires, which the examinees of Hungarian nationality filled in, 486 passed logic control. 59% of the examinees are men. 4% of the examinees were born in 1930 and later, 42% were born between 1931 and 1950. There are 28% who were born between 1951 and 1972 and 26% is the youngest. Considering their profession, skilled workers are also dominant (27%), 20% are retired, 13% office workers and technicians with finished secondary school, professionals (8%), unskilled workers (7%), unemployed (5%), farmers and housewives (4% each), students (3%) and 9% are those

¹ The percentage is rounded off to whole numbers for easy reference.

who couldn't say clearly what their jobs were. Considering educational structure, dominant are those with finished secondary trade schools (44%) and schools for industrial workers (18%). The majority of the examinees live in villages (51%); 27% live in small towns and 22% in cities.

In general, the samples are comparable in extent in which aimed, deliberate samples could be compared. Overrepresentation of urban population among the questioned Hungarians, comparing to the Serbs, is because of the places where "vendetta" took place. The good educational structure of the examinees is understandable because the relief in Vojvodina had enabled fast and cheap transport from homes to schools before the UN embargo. The same is valid for professional structure: workers in Vojvodina, including technicians with finished secondary schools, mainly live in villages and commute to work every day. This double position, which includes life in villages and work in towns, helped people in their struggle for existence during the hard times. Partly because of these reasons there aren't many "real" farmers; however, this number should be increased by the majority of housewives and a large number of persons without job who are, in fact, not registered village servants.

A very small representation of old people represents a bigger problem, concerning the realization of the sample. This problem couldn't have been solved. A really small number of old people, their distrustful attitude, sometimes poor knowledge of the language or their hesitation to use it, as well as interfering of younger family members and even endemic alcoholism with its consequences prevented interviewers from fulfilling the quota. On the other hand, there is a lot of people, in both samples, who are older than 60 years of age, that is insufficiently old to have relatively definite personal experience about the events from World War II, but nevertheless they were born before the war and exposed to direct experience of that time, not reshaped later by their families. In any case, the applied and realized method of making samples is considerably stricter than Reinprecht's, whose researches served as a model.

Religiosity of the examinees was observed by using two indicators, a weak and a strong one. When asked if they believed in God, the questioned Hungarians answered affirmatively in 70% cases, 16% were indecisive and 14% said that they didn't believe. The results of the questioned Serbs were similar: 69% said that they believed in God, 13% were indecisive and 18% didn't believe. But, when asked if they believed in life after death, the Hungarians answered affirmatively in 28% cases, the same percentage was indecisive and 44% said they didn't believe. The percentages of the questioned Serbs were 21%, 21% and 58% respectively. Somewhat bigger real religiosity of the Hungarian examinees was noticed.

The examinees' standard of living was measured by two indirect indicators, which had proved to be good in the previous researches. When asked "if your family had to collect a large amount of money (for example, about 2000 DM) for a week, how would you manage it?", the questioned Serbs said in 15% cases that they had such savings, 43% said they would have to borrow the money, 19% would sell something from the house and 23% couldn't collect the mentioned amount of money in any

way. The answers to this question don't speak directly about material reserves of households, but also about their involvement in the network of relative and familiar ties, as well as about earlier collected reserves that could make possible their survival in hard times. The natives appear here as somewhat richer than the colonists do: 18% of them have savings in size of the mentioned amount, while the relating percentage of the colonists is 13%. On the other hand, among those who couldn't collect the mentioned amount of money in any way, the difference between the native Serbs and the colonists and their descendents can't be noticed.

When the Hungarians were asked the same question, 18% of them said that they had such savings, 33% would have to borrow the money, 30% would sell something from their house but 19% couldn't obtain the mentioned amount of money in any way, even if they really needed it. According to the answers to this question, both native Serbs and Hungarians appear as a whole somewhat richer and more ready to bear incidents of reforms than the colonists do. This fact one should have in mind later when explicitly present procommunist orientation of the colonists will be analyzed.

The examinees were also asked "what did you, or the members of your family, have to give up during the last years?" This question much more directly expresses a real quality of life than the questions based on self-estimation of the examinees. The examinees of Hungarian nationality in 19% cases say that they didn't have to give up anything, 49% of them gave up luxury needs, 18% gave up non-vital everyday needs, but 14% of them had to give up some vital needs such as qualitative food or medicines which they couldn't buy. Among the questioned Serbs the relating percentage is 16%, 49%, 25% and 10%, respectively. If the native Serbs and the colonists are mutually compared, it can be seen that 13% of the first and 19% of the second group didn't have to give up anything; 55% of the natives and 42% of the colonists gave up luxury needs, 25% of the natives and 26% of the colonists gave up everyday needs and 8% of the first and 12% of the second had to give up real vital needs. There are apparently more rich and poor people among the colonists than among the natives, but a high allotment of the poorest people is noticeable among the Hungarians. No matter this sample doesn't make possible estimation of entire populations, a bigger portion of those who didn't have to give up anything is noticeable in all groups, comparing with the results of recent researches, done on the probability samples whose main group was adult population in Serbia. On the other hand, the portion of very poor people is big. The attention should be paid to the observations of Mesarosz about committers of crimes that were recruited among Hungarian poor villagers. They had been deprived of their large estates, which were later given to the Serbian colonists, on the basis of agrarian reform. Generally accepted idea in political theory is that poverty is favourable to development of extremism. Economic dimension of inter-ethnic relations is often neglected both in researches and in practical political activities, not only in Vojvodina.

MASTERING THE PAST AND ETHNIC HOMOGENIZATION IN VOJVODINA

43% of Vojvodina citizens, who according to the 1991 census, belong to minorities, mostly fear the possibility of Vojvodina being turned into an ethnically homogenous area. But it is a real trend with possibly fatal consequences. According to available information Srem and Southern Banat have become nearly ethnically homogenous areas, and Southern Bačka and Central Banat face similar prospect in the short run. Assimilation of ethnic minorities and minority groups results from several objective factors, and not from designs of former and current authorities. There is a conspicuously unequal birth rate among different minorities. Then as regards education in minorities languages, relatively high census for formation of mother tongue classes is required. Added to that minorities face serious dilemmas whether to allow their offspring to assimilate fully and consequently stand better career changes by learning the majority language, or to insist on preservation of their ethnic identity by enrolling them on minorities mother tongue classes. In this regard situation was much better twenty years ago. Members of minorities are underrepresented in state and administrative bodies. This indicates a strong discrimination. Status of information in mother tongue has worsened in the past decade due to lack of funds, and rise of unemployment stepped up ethnic labour competition. Due to a prolonged eruption of Serbian nationalism the number of minority emigrants and migrants rose. Many went to neighbouring countries or re-settled in Vojvodina areas populated by their fellow-nationals.

Without intending to engage in moralising discussions, we shall touch on the issue of the right to criticism of nationalism, in view of mutual accusations of members of ethnic communities living in Vojvodina. We can furthermore draw a parallel with an episode from the history of Serb-Hungarian relations, or relations between the two most numerous ethnic groups in Vojvodina, which have a major bearing on full understanding of the issue. But such parallels are always risky, for it is difficult to find the right analogies which don't neutralise the approach to key problem. In 1942 several thousand Serbs were killed by representatives of Horthy regime in Bačka. A Hungarian MP, Endre Bajczy Zhilinski, protested against that atrocity in the Pesta Parliament. Three years later in retaliation partisans killed a large number of Hungarians, notably in Bačka. Number of reported Hungarian casualties varied, as is characteristic of ethnically-charged historiography of countries of South East Europe. Silagyi and Cseresz put that figure at over 40,000 victims. There were no protests by prominent Serb public figures. Hungarian author Cseresz Tibor wrote a novel in 1960 on crimes committed by Hungarians in 1942. The novel was also a clear condemnation of Horthy's regime. Many years later ereš wrote a book about Yugoslav crimes against Hungarians in 1944 and 1945. When Serbian nationalists in Vojvodina condemned the book, some backers of Cseresz retorted that the author first condemned the crimes committed by members of his own nation. The right to criticism of other people's nationalism can be acquired only after criticism of chauvinism of one's own nations is effected. One can gain moral right

to criticise nationalism of other nation, of crimes committed by members of other nations, or stances espoused by them, only if one does not minimise crimes committed by members of one's own nation. On the contrary one tends to embrace nationalism and every nationalism tends to minimise the role of executioners of its own fellow-nationals and to exclusively portray its nation as a victim. Whenever one analyses stands of Vojvodina ethnic minorities on refugees, one should remember that that Serbs became ethnic majority in the province only after WW2, and that the population set-up was radically changed after arrival of about 300,000 refugees, of mostly Serb descent and emigration of about 100,000 young people of mostly Hungarian descent (Boarov, 2001:218).

Search for historical truth evolves on the degenerated model of the transitional justice, adequate to a stage of transition from an authoritarian to a democratic society (Sklaar 2000). Serbia belatedly enters what Huntington would term 'the third wave of democratisation' (Huntington 1991), that is, yielding to civilisational trends.

E. Đuliman notices that in 1943 even innocent Germans felt guilty. Does anybody in Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia feels guilty? (Đuliman, 2000: 341). Đuliman exaggerates when speaking about the German feeling of guilt, but correctly indicates the absence of that feeling among the South Slav peoples. Everything said before is also valid for Vojvodina. Even in this 2002. year interethnic disputes are being held on the occasion of commemoration to the 1942 raid victims; the same counts for the protests during regular visit and laying flower wreaths on the monument of general Kis, one of the "Arad martyrs" and 1848-revolution hero. Interethnic disputes are followed by intraethnic ones: on 23rd Jan. 2002 two separate commemorations to the 1942 victims were held in Novi Sad, because representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, supported by the members of the Jewish community, didn't want Nenad Čanak, the president of the Assembly of Vojvodina, to be present at their commemoration ("Danas" 24th Jan. 2002). It was claimed that the crimes were committed by "Hungarian fascists" that is, historically speaking, rather imprecise (ibid.). On the other hand, some things are changing for better. There are no more verbal provocation on the occasion of laying wreaths on the general Kis' monument at Elemir, but representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, Hungarian national associations and the Embassy of the Republic of Hungary are received by local community representatives. It should be mentioned that Mr. Laszlo Fuks, the vice-president of Zrenjanin Municipality and the member of the managing board of the Centre for Development of Civil Society, was among them. Knićanin (Rudolphsgnad) is a village which had the biggest prisoner-of-war camp for the Danube Schwaben (Germans) after the World War II and which was later settled by people from the south of Serbia. In October 2000 the villagers called police to intervene on the occasion of commemoration to German war-victims and the filming of the chapel at the German graveyard by TV Duna from Budapest. In Oct. 2001 the representatives of Knićanin local community were at the commemoration, together with descendents of the Danube Schwaben. However, the fear of the German return is still obviously present among the settled people.

Nationalism is spawned by interests; no wonder that the grave WW2 crimes against Serbs were committed by Hungarians stripped of their land under the agrarian reform of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. That land was given to Serbian colonists in Vojvodina. Similar to Kosovo, Vojvodina had gone through experience similar to the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, or as Woodward says: "war became an opportunity for manifesting revolt of the underprivileged or deprived, opportunity for personal enrichment, for political aspirations, and retribution for Communist regime acts. Character of the fighting is best explained by social-economic descent of those engaged in that fighting as soldiers" (Woodward, 1997: 266). Intellectuals with monopoly on the skill of symbolic expression, in this regard are the best generators or disseminators of chauvinist ideas. History of Danube countries in the Nineteenth century to a large extent is history of an uphill struggle of peasants' sons of various descent to gain monopoly on positions in the state apparatus and sinecures (Tylor, 1990); see Ilić, 1997, on the Serbian nationalistic intelligentsia): It also bears mentioning the long-standing dispute on official language of the Hungarian state railways in Croatia in the Nineteenth Century.

After many years of the Serb nationalistic radicalisation in Vojvodina other ethnic groups were engulfed in it, notably the Hungarian one; the strongest nationalistic Hungarian party VMSZ, joined the ruling post-Socialist alliance of nationalists in Serbia, measures are taken to boost integration of municipalities in which Hungarians make up an absolute (like in Subotica) or relative majority of population, which is tantamount to laying the groundwork for the territorial ethnic autonomy, conservative nationalistic solutions are pursued including demands for a soft variant of apartheid in education that is "kindergarten-to-university" education. Moreover demands are voiced for establishment of the Council of Nationalities in the provincial assembly, which is tantamount to revival of all methods of solution of national issues in the Habsburg Monarchy from Meternih to Genz, from Lamasch to Redlich, along with bringing back more recent memories of mechanism of ethnic segregation present in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Over two-fifth of ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina which in case of success of the aforementioned program would find themselves marooned as a small minority in the ethnic Serbian sea outside the borders of demanded territorial autonomy, are now wooed by prominent Hungarian public personalities to render support to this program. They are promised autonomous offices, jobs and computers, as means which strengthen currently latent, but an ever more certain radicalism. Our analysis on the ground indicates an increased number of closed and semi-closed political meetings of prominent people from the most numerous ethnic group in Vojvodina, as Serbian chauvinism which essentially influenced radicalisation of the Hungarian demands is preparing new manipulations. Radical wilding in Srem and persecution of Srem Croats in 1991-1993 attests enough to dangers of any radicalisation of ethnic relations in Vojvodina. One need not focus on distant past to boost awareness of this kind of risk. "Policy of the past" (Offe 1993) is at play. It differs very much from already seen East European patterns of "identity makeovers" characteristic of the post-Berlin wall developments.

Makeover of the past is one of the research topics brought into prominence in recent years. Revision of the past is both an attempt to amend old values and different individual, institutional and group samples, in an inevitable search for fine-tuning group identity to conditions and imperatives of the new times, and to justify different shifts and practical conduct of protagonists. The Serb ethnic nationalism in its most simplified re-interpretation of the past sometimes resorted to glorification of expressly narrow-minded contents, and even dared to use as paragons fascist or fascisoid sources such as D.Ljotić and M. Nedić. M. Nedić was recently included in the official list of 100 greatest Serbs in entire history of Serb people. But different ways of makeover of the past carried out by intellectuals close to dominant political forces must take into account factual basis of some images, which can be differently emphasised, even ideologically distorted, but cannot be totally ignored, as well as, often underdeveloped receptive ability of target groups. 15 years of ethnic-national revision of the past extremely reduced demands on this plane.

We can repeat something what was already underlined: T.Kuljić stresses that every organised makeover of history is an attempt at justifying something contemporary. Legitimacy of selectively chosen past events becomes part of a nucleus of social-integrative knowledge which guides different interests, creates a collective identity, protects from the external world, mediates a solidarity feeling among different members of society, helps structure a complex milieu and makes it transparent through a series of more or less exclusive stereotypes about itself and foreigners and images of public friends and foes (Kuljić, 2000). Makeover of the past on the cognitive plane expresses influence of a lasting political culture, and on the practical plane serves to justify shifts and new courses of action in the current policy. According to Kuljić, some changes can be effected only by the young with new experiences. Political institutions change relatively quickly, while political culture changes relatively slowly.

The current position on Fascism in Germany, was initially reduced to condemnation of a 12-year long non-Christian tyranny, later took shape of a radical showdown, and in the past 15 years saw the emergence of different forms of rehabilitation of Fascism as an allegedly necessary reaction to a communist danger from the East (Kuljić, 1999). Anti-Western mood in Serbia in the past decade played the same role which anti-Communism had in Germany after Bitsburg reconciliation. After installation of the new government in October 2000, the dominant Serbian pattern of makeover of the past grew closer to the one applied in Europe. But the question is how much this elite-sponsored attempt corresponds with the popular mind-set. In Serbia there is no shock therapy in the shape of documentaries from Omarska or Keraterm, and a large part of population thinks that Srebrenica is a city in Republika Srpska. Furthermore there is no generation gap regarding the makeover of the past, barring the one conditioned by real interests of some biologically and educationally unequally competitive groups on the market. There are no films on holocaust to split the families. There are no

provocations, like the early Nineties Goldhagen book, and there is unison silence instead of a Serb-style Historikerstreit.

But what about countries with similar historic fate? C. Reinprecht, the book of whom was one model for this research, carried out his project in Prague and Budapest. (Reinprecht, 1994; Cf. Ilić, 2001a) As both milieus were marked with several decades of Soviet occupation they had to find a basis for a new identity in the past. In the Czech past quelling of the Prague Spring and non-selective banishment of the Sudet Germans featured prominently, while the Hungarian history was marked by the 1956 Budapest Uprising and to a certain extent by authoritarian Horti and the Nazi Salaszi regime, the latter being heavily involved in the Holocaust. In contrast Serbia has never been occupied, but in past decade tried to occupy the others. Hence Serbia is weighted down by experience of fratricide wars, and not by the one of Soviet occupation. But all three countries must take a stand on their past and face their collective traumas. Czechoslovakia for example took a more radical approach, including adoption of so-called Lustration Act in 1991. (This Act was not enforced in the Republic of Slovakia). According to Reinprecht findings massive exile of Germans from Czechoslovakia is seen as a consciously accepted burden. In Czechoslovakia the old regime was more sharply condemned than in Hungary; while Czechs are ashamed of their collaboration with Soviets, Hungarian are proud of their survival ability and have more benevolent stand on their old communist elite. Does this smaller aptitude for self-criticism imply that Hungarians are bigger nationalists than Czechs? On the plane of personal preferences from the past Czechs most frequently chose Masarik, Karl XIV (founder of a famous university), Jan Hus and Jan Amos Komensky. Hungarian favourites are Szechenyi, Matyas Korvin and Kossuth Lajos. Ties between past and present in designing or shaping of a new identity are generally stronger in Budapest than in Prague. Both nations give a wide berth to post-war personalities, like Dubček, Beneš, Kadar and Nagy. With certain reservation Czechs place their golden age in Czechoslovakia between the two World Wars, while Hungarians extol either the era of Austro-Hungarian dualism or the golden Seventies of Janos Kadar's rule. In contrast to the Czech excessive shame over alleged collaboration with Soviets, Hungarians demand re-evaluation of Horthy's regime, are obsessed with Trianon and are much more nationally self-conscious. Reinprecht in his 1994 survey established that attempts to 'cleanse' authoritarian, anti-Semitic and collaborationist Horti's regime had its specific function in what he termed "the post-totalitarian" regime. He concludes that while in Hungary the national myth has a central value, in Czechoslovakia there is not enough nationalism and national self-confidence.

Since Reinprecht's poll (1993) things have changed greatly in the observed countries. But let us go back to Serbia. Is it more similar to the then Hungary or Czechoslovakia? All in all, population of Serbia tends to normalise the past through semi-conscious oblivion preceded by selective observation. Nationalist intellectuals resort to intentional 'normalisation of nationalism' which Judt (Judt 1992)

would term as cynicism in reinterpretation of history. We can say well in advance that the Serbian pattern of makeover of the past is more akin to the Budapest, than the Prague one.

CONTEMPORARY SERBIAN NATIONALISM

On the contemporary Serbian nationalism as the dominant one in Vojvodina it should be say the following: the nationalism represents a fertile ground for the emergence and development of exclusive ethnic positions and militant chauvinism. What is characteristic of chauvinism is that it treats as its bigger or priority foes not its ethnic rivals but rather the "estranged" members of the nation proper. Every nationalism is not chauvinism; by extension it can be said that nationalism need not morph into chauvinism. Specific characteristics of territory and periods of time to a great extent determine the level of threat, that is whether benign forms of nationalism will turn into narrow-minded ethnic chauvinism. Nowadays different extremely reactionary racist and chauvinist efforts exhaust themselves in anti- American and anti-Arab sentiments in today's Western Europe. Chauvinist advocate "Europe to Europeans," and launch reactionary calls that "the European spiritual unity" be renewed and "new kingdom of Charlemagne" be established. Opponents of such Western European chauvinism are the global and the US-led trends, as well as the foreigners - migrants in Western European countries. In the Balkans things are different: here chauvinism presupposes a developed, ethnic-exclusive position, "ousting" approach towards "foreigners" in the country proper and a great risk of fascization.

Difference between the slogan "Europe to Europeans" and concerted efforts to create "ethnically homogenous states" represent the key difference between contemporary European and the Balkan chauvinism.

Nationalism in Serbia, including Vojvodina, has two dominant present forms: liberal and conservative ones. The key thesis of liberal nationalists was that nationally heterogeneous societies could develop a stable democracy only under exceptional conditions. Hence the representatives of this variant of Serbian nationalism were compelled to accept -some markedly conservative ideas in order to reconcile their position with their vision of realization of the national interest. They continued to adhere to their liberal rhetoric in order to stay in harmony with the prevailing spirit of the time and to have more maneuvering room for promotion of their views. They deny the possibility of existence of consocietal democracy in a multinational country, by arguing that it can survive only until the first, major. crisis emerges. They often cite the ideas of conservative authors, notably Carl Schmitt, a classical anti-liberal author close to the ideas of nazism. He is popular among our chauvinist liberals because of his views on political homogeneity which provides the basis for advocating exclusive ethnic (or) racial rights. Liberal nationalists consider that the state is the most important prerequisite of democracy. They think that consocietal democracy is ineffective and incapable of understanding the

importance of irrational aspects of political life, such as the communal feeling, identical spirit etc. Serbian nationalist liberals complement this anthropological pessimism, more characteristic of nationalist than liberal position with their advocacy of ethnically homogenous states, that is, division of states or separation between ethnically opposed groups, This is due to their opinion that ethnic diversity is dangerous for democracy. Ideas on the division of Kosovo and early advocacy of division of Bosnia are based on this inclusion of conservative ideas into liberal-nationalist standpoint, whereby liberal nationalist are often unaware that the concept of homogeneity was originally determined by biological, blood and racial propinquity, at the time when attempts were made to justify Nazism in the sphere of legal and political theory. It is noteworthy that the very Schmitt after the WWII abandoned this position and never again mentioned racial kinship as the prerequisite for any successful policy. Our liberal nationalists, who urge ethnic homogenization for the sake of promotion of democracy, overlook the fact that any nationalism in the Balkan has today potentially more fascism-making elements than in any other European country. To put it simply, the idea of ethnically homogenous state as a fundamental prerequisite of democracy in the Balkan is like playing with a burning match close to the powder keg.

The example we have just given you is very instructive, as it indicates all difficulties which the liberal thinking encounters in its attempt to build democracy in semi peripheral countries of mixed ethnic set-up and undemocratic political culture.

Alike in the case of -Germany, politically fragmented throughout its modern history, except for the 1871-1945 period (its aspiration to national homogenization was strengthened during the Cold War division of the country) the current division of the Serbian people objectively strengthens aspirations to homogeneity both in practical policy and political theory. But while in the Western Europe ethnicization of politics is mainly reduced to open hatred of foreigners, in the Balkan it presupposes the acceptance of a very high risk of instigation of new wars between akin ethnic groups.

In contrast to contemporary European extreme right- wingers, which oppose Americanization and Islamization of Europe, and deny cosmopolitanism and alleged decadence of the Modern times, considering them enemy of Europe rather than enemy of particular ethnic identity, domestic conservative nationalists favor myth and tradition of the Pre-modern times, ethnicize their politics and advocate militant East Christian views, along with pronounced affirmation of exclusive (and not humanizing and or enlightening) cohorts of Orthodox religion and St. Sava tenets. This selective use of domestic heritage is linked to the denial of entire modern West European tradition, which is viewed only as materialism of the West not germane to the Serbian national being. Their chauvinism is devoid of the state vision, and it ranks as its number one enemy either communist internationalism or "mondialism." This denotes major lagging behind, as the European extreme right ten years ago completed its criticism of communist internationalism and focused on resistance to "Americanization" of Europe. Hence it turns out that the domestic conservative nationalism has a parochial character, and

is intellectually inferior to its European counterparts led by Le Pen and Anri de Benoix. Its vision of self-sufficient Serbia befits the vision of right-wing provincials.

Public appearances of conservative nationalists are characterized by emotionally-charged terminology. They tend to demonize any kind of cosmopolitanism and their enemy-bashing and labeling is similar to the practiced in the Stalinist stage of Communism. They view national enemies as homogenous entity, backed by a unified front composed of United States and representatives of communist internationalism and Catholic Church. Zionists are occasionally mentioned as exponents of this conspiracy, One gets the impression that this criticism of internationalism has been taken over from the past. The same applies to understanding of politics: domestic conservative nationalists view politics as "sheer force" unadorned by phrases. In contrast the European extreme right-wingers eliminated its "tribalism" approach and were compelled to adopt parliamentary and human and civic rights rhetoric

This project has been realized in such an ideational context. Previous remarks relating to predominant forms of Serbian nationalism don't grant amnesty to modern Hungarian nationalism in Vojvodina, which appeared as a partner of Belgrade authorities in alliance of different nationalism which are present in Serbia nowadays. DOS, which is so heterogeneous that almost all political ideas are represented there except those of S. Milošević and R. Karadžić, has the political power in today's Serbia. The leading part of these power-holders supported R. Karadžić much longer and with less restraint than S. Milosević. Later, they have changed the side and the cash-box and let the West bring them to power. In this context the speech of hatred endures and dies away, retreats and seemingly normalize, in the same time. It is finished with massive repression over ethnic minorities, which even during previous period of time had unequal intensity. While the Albanians, Moslems (Bosnians) and Croats were physically tortured, even killed, some other minor communities had education in their native languages even if there was only one such pupil in a village.

Serbia is nowadays tired both of extreme nationalism and of critics of nationalism. There is even less energy in Vojvodina, despite seemingly radical rhetoric of some public factors. The proponents of autonomy of Vojvodina, as well as Hungarian ethnic parties, compete one another and let Belgrade arbitrate as much as Belgrade authorities are really independent political factor. Verbal radicalism is sometimes used only to hide the lack of real independence. Hungarian and "autonomy" parties reduce price to one another by mutual dumping. When confidence of the president of the Assembly of Vojvodina is put to a vote, the ministers from Association of Vojvodina Hungarians", Mr. Bunyick and Mr. Korhecz, always vote in behalf of democrats and against their autonomy allies. The Minority Law is made by informal groups and interest cliques. Here, nationalism won't be able to develop into violence soon, because it is in contradiction to wishes of the Western countries and domestic politicians are only their pawns today. Certainly, the West isn't unanimous and they are still searching for their politics towards new Serbia. However, nationalism has become the part of official

culture and it has entered all segments of social life in such a degree that it is almost unrecognizable. On the other hand, the more spread nationalism is, the weaker and less convincing it becomes.

Intellectual élite has deceived not only the people but itself as well; it is confused now and would only like to be let alone. This has become easier for them because the civil option has been put on margins and deprived of unquestioned foreign support, can't hang-on Milošević anymore and, finally, its proponents are satisfied with sinecure in distribution of pray. The burden of the past is enormous but open confrontation with it can't be expected because that doesn't suit those who have enough influence to perform such a confrontation.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS HAGUE TRIBUNAL

It is reasonable to start with observing the relation towards recent burdening of the past in the form of responsibility for massive crimes on the ethnic basis and then to consider the attitude of examinees towards more distant crimes. It has already been said that the problem of the attitude towards Hague Tribunal was questioned in more detail in the case of ethnic Serbs, while the ethnic Hungarians were asked fewer questions about this topic. Results have proved justifiability of such research orientation.

Positive attitudes towards Tribunal have 64% of the questioned Hungarians, 16% have negative attitude and 20% of them are indecisive. When asked to explain their attitude, the questioned ethnic Hungarians gave answers such as “those who committed crimes ought to carry responsibility”, “everything that happened should be revealed”, “they are trying to find out the truth”, “the Serbian judicature isn't qualitative”, “war criminals ought to carry responsibility for their action”, “Hague Tribunal is legitimate for these processes”, “Hague Tribunal regulates peace in the world”, “the guilty should be punished”, “they are just”, “all those who are guilty should be punished”, “if we can't do anything there is an international court”, “those who are guilty must be responsible and carry responsibility”, “our courts are not able to carry out these cases”, “those who killed ought to be punished”, “Milošević deserved everything he had got”, “I like the way they treat Slobo – he deserves that”, “he should serve as an example to everyone who tries to do something similar”, “serious mistakes were made, it should be found out who is responsible” and similar. Negative attitude is expressed by statements like “they don't administer justice to criminals from developed countries”, “the states from ex-Yugoslavia are in better position than we are”, “this court is only a screen”, “it isn't just”, “they don't know what they want for, if they knew, they wouldn't draw all this for years”, “people should have examined mistakes and Slobo fought for the people” and similar. Indecisive attitude can be seen in statements like “they work too slowly”, “a court for war crimes should exist but I'm not sure that it is really impartial”, “it's high time to pass the law” etc.

On the other hand, the questioned ethnic Serbs had positive attitude towards Tribunal in a little bit more than 11% of cases, negative in more than 74% and indecisive attitude in a little bit over 14%. These results are considerably worse than those got by questioning adult population of Serbia in Jan. 2001 on appropriate multi-stage probability sample (Ilić, 2001). The results of the mentioned own research are almost the same as results which SMMRI carried out in Apr. 2001 for the needs of Veran Matić's conference about the truth and responsibility. The difference in the type of samples in these two research projects ought to be mentioned. In the research whose results are being analyzed now the applied sample doesn't enable evaluation; besides, this research has deliberately included ethnic Serbs from the regions burdened by World War II crimes, no matter whether they are natives or colonists.

The reasons that the examinees use to explain their rejection of the Tribunal are worth analyzing. Colonists and their descendents say for the Tribunal "it isn't a court, it's a kind of reprisal against Serbian people", "the prolonged arm of NATO and their hirelings", "they try only the Serbs", "negative attitude towards the Serbs", "it isn't objective", "partial court", "they take away only the Serbs and no one else", "they punish only the Serbs", "it is founded by aggressors and the court works for them", "it is reprisal", "the aim of the court isn't justice but justification of wrong actions of international community", "the court against the Serbs", "it is politically disposed, not legally", "we shouldn't extradite them because the majority of extradited persons are the Serbs", "the others should also be extradited, not only the Serbs", "it has been founded by powerful countries in order to justify what they are doing" and similar. Some more moderate attitudes are expressed by statements like "it isn't fair, no doubt we are guilty, but it seems that we are the only ones who are guilty, but they are always two sides in a fight" or "all who committed crime ought to be punished" or "all who are guilty ought to be punished".

The natives of Vojvodina have more favourable attitude towards the Tribunal. Among them 16% have positive attitude towards The Hague Court, 66% have a negative one while the corresponding percentage among the colonists and their descendents are 6% and 82%. The natives express their negative attitude towards the Tribunal through statements like "the Serbs are foredoomed", "I can't understand them", "every country should solve its problems on its own", "it is the court without proves", "they attack only the Serbs", "there is no legal foundation for that court", "political institution", "the Serbs aren't the only who are guilty for the war", "it is clear that it is hostile towards the Serbs", "this court is partial", "criteria aren't the same for the Serbs, Moslems and Croats", "it doesn't include criminals from all countries", "it's only for the Serbs", "every country should decide about its criminals", "we have never been aggressors", "it is a political tribunal", "it is unequal and it serves to hide NATO crimes", "it is a political court which USA and NATO founded" etc. More moderate and positive attitude of the questioned natives towards the Tribunal is expressed by statements like "necessary evil", "the court we must cooperate with", "they all ought to go to Hague", "war criminals ought to be tried", "this is the only way to pay for committed crimes", "our judges are

not competent enough for such trials”, “they all have to pay for what they did”, “those who are guilty ought to be punished”, “everyone ought to be responsible for their misdeeds” and similar. It is obvious that there are differences between the natives and the colonists, not only concerning the percentage that expresses their attitude towards the Tribunal, but also concerning their statements. It stands to reason that the colonists, who have strong ties with their countrymen involved in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, feel the pressure of the Tribunal in larger extent than the native population in Vojvodina.

As it was said before ethnic Serbs were asked a range of additional questions about their attitude towards the Tribunal. When asked “which are, in your opinion, the most drastic examples of crimes over civilians in the last wars?” in most cases the examinees mentioned all killings of civilians equally (24% among colonists and 44% among natives), then crimes over Serbs (29% in both groups) etc. NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was mentioned by 16% of colonists and 11% of natives. Without any intention to minimize painful effects of NATO bombing over the population of FR Yugoslavia, emphasizing NATO bombing as the most drastic crime in recent wars confirms the old rule that the disaster which someone experiences oneself is interpreted as worse than some really more horrible disasters experienced by others. Crimes over Moslems are mentioned as an example for the worst crimes by approximately 5% of both natives and colonists, crimes over Albanians a little bit more than 1% of the former and less than 1% of the latter, while 3% of natives and none of colonists stated the crimes over Croats as the worst. It is interesting that bombing of FR Yugoslavia by ammunition with depleted uranium was stated as the most serious example of war crimes by nearly 3% of natives and by negligible percentage of the questioned colonists.

When they were directly asked to state the most serious crimes during recent wars, the examinees from both groups most often mentioned Goražde, Bratunac, “Oluja”, “Bljesak”, Gospić, bombing of Yugoslavia, Vukovar, Srebrenica and Markale. There are noticeable differences in relation to the answers to the same question which were given by examinees in the probability sample from the whole Serbia (except Kosovo), in Jan. 2001 (Cf. Ilić, 2001). In this research answers to the question “Which in your opinion are most drastic examples of crimes over civilian population in the recent wars?”, were the following: crimes over Serbs (30%), NATO bombing of the FRY (23%), all killings of civilian population in equal measure (22%), use of uranium-charged ammunition (3%), crimes over Albanians (above 1%), etc. NATO bombing is slowly falling into oblivion and a certain sign of sobriety would represent more frequent mentioning of all crimes over civil population as examples of the most serious crimes in relation to the crimes committed over Serbs. However, we mustn’t neglect non-correspondence of samples that makes proper comparison harder.

When asked “who committed the crimes and why?” the examinees mentioned the USA and NATO (together 20%), then crimes committed by Croats (19%), members of all nationalities equally (16%), “leaders, politicians” (11%), “nationalists” (10%), Moslems (6%), Albanians (3%), even Hungarians (about 1%). There is almost no difference between natives and colonists in mentioning the

most serious war crimes. Formulations of their answers to the question “why were war crimes committed?” indicate that ethnic nationalism still exists: “NATO, because they didn’t like the governing regime”, “Moslems over Serbs (national intolerance)”, “foreign hirelings”, “Croats, because of their intolerance towards Serbs”, “Croats, because of their religious intolerance”, “Tuđman, because he wanted to get the Serbs out”, “foreign powers, in order to pay back their debt from 1945”, “Moslems, in order to lay the blame on Serbs”, “NATO, for their own interests”, “USA, because they hate Serbs”, “NATO, because of their power and wish to prove that they could do everything, that they are the world’s policemen”, “Albanians – they want Kosovo only for themselves”, “Albanians, because we are Serbs”, “NATO, but I don’t know why”, “Germans and NATO criminals – because they are genocidal people”, “international community, because of some great powers’ interests”, “Croatian extremists under the leadership of Mirko Norac, because the Serbs were killed” etc.

In the previous research the following reasons were got as answers to the same question according to them NATO crimes were mostly motivated by economic reasons ("West did it because of money", "US government, increase in military output", "NATO –economic reasons", "US to be rid of obsolete weapons", "US to tap into wealth of our occupied country"), motives of ethnic rivals for crimes over Serbs are thus explained ("Croat hatred towards Serbs", "Croats have always hated Serbs, Croat authorities wanted to create one-nation state", "Shiptari wanted to cleanse Kosovo of Serbs and have it for themselves", "Shiptari because they are Muslims"). It is obvious that stereotypes are still present, even after the change of ruling authority in Belgrade and that they are still directed both towards ethnic rivals and the Western countries, which established at least partial stability in the Balkans.

When asked “which public figure, institution or political party, in your opinion, expresses the most appropriate attitude towards the problem of war crimes?”, the questioned Serbs most often mentioned Yugoslav President V. Koštunica and other politicians from DOS (29% altogether), different radical (15%) and socialist (3%) politicians. 17% of them said that there was no one in the country who expressed appropriate attitude towards to problem of war crimes, 2% decided on persons from NGOs, less than 2% were for representatives of “autonomy” option etc. The differences between the questioned inhabitants of so called colonist’s and native’s villages, concerning answers to this question, are interesting. The former hardly ever mentioned persons from NGOs, while the latter did the same with S.Milošević and other politicians from Socialist party. Radical politicians, as those who express the most appropriate attitude towards the problem of war crimes, were mentioned by 20% of the former and 11% of the latter, while politicians from DOS were mentioned by 24% colonists and their descendants and by 35% of native population.

In previous research when asked "which public personality, institution or political party in your opinion best expresses an adequate position on the issue of war crimes?", 35% of respondents opted for parties and personalities from the Democratic Opposition of Serbia, 10% maintained that such a

public factor did not exist, while 8% maintained that the Serbian Radical Party had the best stance on that issue. Other public options were mentioned rarely, including the one espoused by the dominant left faction within the former authorities, including its leader S. Milošević (only 4% of total answers). In their answers respondents rarely mentioned most prominent advocates (institutions and individuals) of the pro-Tribunal policy. (Ilić, 2001)

The similarity of results is noticeable, even in addition to the difference in the type of applied sample; overrepresentation of radical politicians in the latter research can be explained easily by large participation of colonists among examinees, for the settled areas in Vojvodina represented a permanent and a very strong base of Serbian radicals during the last decade.

Both extreme options in political life of Serbia are present among the answers of examinees concerning their attitude towards the Hague Tribunal. Among those who express their attitude towards the Tribunal most appropriately are mentioned, though rarely, V.Dimitrijević, Amfilohije Radović, Goran Svilanović (more often than all “autonomy” politicians), as well as publicist Drecun, D.Kalajić and even Radovan Karadžić. When asked “do you think that the guilty ought to be punished, no matter who committed crimes?”, examinees behave like conformists and they give affirmative answers in 87% of cases, with no significant difference between natives and colonists. It is interesting that disagreement with cooperation with the Tribunal coexists with the attitude that all war criminals ought to be punished. This result, partially derived from the very contents of the question, indicates existence of preconditions for a practical action, by which the work of the Tribunal would be demystified in the eyes of public opinion in Vojvodina. Predominant negative attitude towards the Tribunal should not be taken for granted and it is obviously changeable under the influence of different factors such as education, corruption and others.

When asked if they thought that our forces had committed war crimes, the examinees of Serbian nationality answered explicitly affirmative in 51% of cases and in 29% they chose the alternative answer “yes, they probably did”. In the previous research when had asked "Do you think that our forces committed crimes in the past wars?", 55% respondents answered affirmatively, less than 9% answered negatively and 26% said "probably". When compared to the Croatian survey findings, results of our survey speak of a more critical stand of respondents on crimes committed by members of their own ethnicity. But it bears stressing that we have probably taken to a stricter tack on formulation of answers, which by extention accounts for enormous differences between the share of answers "probably yes", "yes" or "most certainly" in the Croatian and our survey. Psychology of victims of so-called "Homeland war" cannot account for this difference, as Serbian respondents also had enough reasons to feel like victims, notably after a state of war during the NATO air strikes. But differences can be partially explained by the fact that public at large in Croatia believe that they have won the war, while it is widely thought in Serbia that the country lost its wars.

According to the poll results conducted by the Zagreb –based "Jutarnji list" and "Media metar" agency (sample of 800 respondents) it turned out that 90.8% of the polled think that perpetrators of war crimes had to be punished. Even 65% think that Croatian forces probably committed crimes, and 4.3% is quite sure of that. However the majority of respondents about 53.5% are disgruntled with the current position of the Tribunal on Croatia, and almost a fifth of respondents did not want to voice their position on the Tribunal (Glas, 19 April 2000).

When asked "who is, in your opinion, most guilty for suffering of people in the latest wars?" examinees of Serbian nationality mentioned "politicians" in 40% of cases, "the West and NATO" in 21%, "Milošević" in 12%, "nationalists" in 9% and "ethnic rivals" (most often Croats and Moslems) in a little bit over 5%. The differences between the examined groups are noticeable, since the colonists more often mention "the West and NATO", as well as "Croats and Moslems", as those who are most guilty (23% and 7%, relating to 19% and less than 4% among natives, respectively), while the natives more often mention "Milošević" (16%) and "nationalists" (12%) than the colonists (8% and 6%, respectively).

In the earlier research the following answers were got to the same question: Most respondents blamed 'politicians' (about 25%), Western countries (25%), S. Milošević (21%), ethnic rivals, that is leaders of Croats and Muslims (total of 4%), nationalists (2%). (Ilić, 2001)

If the results of these research works were completely comparable, one could talk about the increase of rationality and decrease of manipulation with citizens during the last year. However, the differences in structure of applied samples shouldn't be neglected. It is obvious, in any case, that anti-Western attitude and aptness for transferring responsibility to a small number of people is still enduring. Anyway, a different attitude might be strange.

A real readiness for resistance to the demands of international community, concerning cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, was also observed in this research. The examinees were asked to answer the question "would you support rejection of the Hague Tribunal's pressure for a period of several years, at the price of further pressure on Serbia, until the circumstances in the world changed and we got stronger, foreign allies?" 29% of them answered affirmatively, the same percentage answered negatively, 19% were indecisive, while the rest gave several different answers which couldn't be classified. There were more colonists than natives who would be ready to accept further isolation and deprivation (31% in relation to 27%). On the other hand, 34% of natives and 24% of colonists stated their definite rejection to expose themselves to further foreign pressure, concerning this problem. It is obvious that colonists are more decisive in their resistance to cooperation with the Hague Tribunal and that they are willing more often to pay for their choice. In the earlier research, when asked the similar question "if they would be ready to suffer further foreign pressure on Serbia, in a few-year-time", 22% of the examinees answered affirmatively, while 15% were indecisive. To a more suggestive question "would you support non-acceptance of the Hague Court pressure in a longer

term, at the price of continuing foreign pressure on our country, during the further 20 years?”, less than 14% of examinees gave affirmative answer. It was concluded, then, that Serbia was tired of giving resistance to globalization. On the other hand, settled population in Vojvodina appears to be one of the massive bases for resistance to cooperation with the Tribunal, which clearly shows the burdening of the past and how historical experience influences the present behaviour of people living in Vojvodina.

KNIĆANIN: A PHENOMENON IN ITS DEVELOPED FORM

Knićanin is a village that was populated by Germans until World War II; after the war it was colonized by people from southern Serbia. For years there was a big camp for German civilians, right next to the village. During the last decades many articles about the camp, written by Germans from Vojvodina (who either lived after the war or still live in Germany and Austria), appeared in various publications. In recent years, a series of texts has been published in Croatia, too, and among them those signed by V. Gajger (Geiger), a young historian from Zagreb, are most influential. Newly founded national associations of Germans descending from Vojvodina have also started the theme of Knićanin; the Serbian-German Friendship Association from Belgrade, led by Prof. Z. Žiletić, has had an important role in breaking through the wall of silence.

Knićanin was not a dead camp but it was certainly a camp where German civilians were collected and where many of them died, due to illness and starvation, more than in any other place in Yugoslavia. Older inhabitants of Knićanin and of neighbouring village Perlez, mention here and there, in informal talks, really inhuman conditions under which the imprisoned Germans were living and dying in the years that followed the war. At the level where sociology and ideology adjoin one another, the civil victims from Knićanin represent a continual subject matter of a “crime arithmetic”, by which particular political actors tend to reach their aims. It is sure that the silence of Yugoslav communist historiography about this theme, lasting several decades, has principally contributed to overestimation of the number of victims. This silence has only mystified the camp and increased possibility for political manipulation. On the other side, it is quite indisputable that the vast number of innocent civilians died in the camp. In these terms, Knićanin is a very expressive story about the price that was paid for communist’s victory over fascism and for half of century of peace and non-killing on the western Balkans. Imprisoned Germans were treated much more differently than members of other ethnical groups in Tito’s Yugoslavia.

Understanding of Knićanin, its today’s significance for the “policy of the past” in Vojvodina and for different current political projects can’t rely only upon informal narration of inhabitants or upon articles in emigration or Croatian newspapers. It has been already said that the inhabitants, comparing with 2000 year, principally changed their bearing and attitude towards the visitors of the German graveyard in 2001. But facts obtained through the research, in which Knićanin was

deliberately over-represented when the sample structure is concerned, are quite different from the contents of informal narration of inhabitants of Knićanin and neighbouring Perlez and from scientific and political texts about this theme.

Today's inhabitants of Knićanin tend to ignore the fate of their predecessors. When asked "have you heard of any crimes which were, by some assertion, committed by communists and if yes, then what ones?" they only once mentioned "cleansing Serbia from Germans" (an expression which is itself very indicative) and in most cases, as an example of communist crimes, they mention "Goli otok", which is, in fact, more an example of retribution among communists themselves. Other examples of communist crimes, found in answers, are: "they slaughtered those who fed them (the rich people) and threw them into wells", "Informbiro", "confiscation", "I haven't heard – except that they punished other communists", "Beli dvor", "dispossession of land", "Lepoglava", "Sremska Mitrovica" and similar. Sometimes they claim that "communists didn't commit any crimes" or "they certainly committed some crimes but it's been hidden too well". Here and there, some common arguments of Serbian ethno-nationalistic critics of communists, such as "breaking through the Srem front-line", are mentioned. Some notoriously false answers are very common, such as "I can't remember", "I haven't heard", "I don't know" or, more naive one "I haven't heard – even if they talk about them, it's not true". However, it is quite indisputable that in the camp near Knićanin an enormous, almost five-digit-number of civilians of German nationality dies. The Germans from Vojvodina experienced the same fate, which many different ethnic groups passed through during the XX century – retreat of an army includes implicitly suffering of civilians. Serbs from Krajina (1995) and from Kosovo (June 1999) could clearly make sure of that fact. This rule certainly doesn't justify any war crimes committed over civil population, no matter what nationality they belong to, but the rule should be taken into account when someone explains either reinterpretation of the past or its influence over today's shaping of inter-ethnic relationships.

When asked "what nationality, in your opinion, suffered most in Vojvodina during World War II and in what way?", the examinees from Knićanin, who were settled in Vojvodina after World War II, mainly mentioned killings of Serbs, committed by Germans and Hungarians: "Serbs were thrown under the ice in the Danube and the Tisa", "Serbs – thrown into the Danube and the Tisa", "Serbs, killed by Hungarians", "Serbs – by shooting", "Serbs – killed by Hungarians in Bačka, by Ustashas in Srem and by Germans in Banat", "Serbs and Romanians – volunteers of the first colonization". The Jews and Roma are, except the Serbs, very often mentioned as the victims of this war, while the Germans and Hungarians are mentioned quite rarely. According to the opinion of the majority of examinees, the war was obviously finished in 1944, by retreat of the German army and oblivion of war crimes, committed as revenge, represents predominant phenomenon. When a more concrete question was asked "what nationality and in which way suffered most in Vojvodina during the communist rule?" the answers were somewhat more differentiated. The majority of examinees still mentioned

suffering of Serbs from communists, expressed like “Serbs – by confiscation”, “the rich Serbs – by confiscation”, “Serbs were expelled from work and deprived of their property”, “Serbs in Vojvodina suffered from communists”, “Serbs – by nationalization”, “Serbs suffered indirectly – politically”, “Serbs – Titel, Žitiste, Alibunar”, but different answers were noticed, too, like “national minorities – Germans in Knićanin were expelled and tortured”, “all people suffered because of confiscation”, “Germans and Serbs are natives”, “Germans – because they chose the wrong side”, “all the opponents to the regime”, “all nations”, “all people equally” and similar. It is of less importance here the confirmation of an old methodological rule, according to which the instrument itself, i.e. the formulation and “emphasizing” of the asked question in this case, influences the results; it is more interesting the way in which anti-communism influences a more tolerant attitude towards recognition of war crimes, committed over population of other ethnic groups. On the Balkans, anti-communism mainly appears in the form of ethnic nationalism and chauvinism, but, as it often happens in politics, the common enemy (communists in this case) can sometimes ease attitude towards ethnic rivals. It is also important to underline accentuation of the Germans as those who were on the wrong side, as a cause of their suffering. The German civilians certainly didn’t participate directly in Wehrmacht war undertakings, but a relative constant of the Balkans history of XX century – according to which the defeat of an army is inevitably the cause of civilians suffering – manifests itself quite clearly in this case.

A more precise question “what do you know about war crimes which were committed over some members of national minorities in Vojvodina after World War II?” brought, among the others, the following answers: “I wasn’t there then”, “we came here in 1965, after the colonization”, “deportation of Germans”, “Knićanin was collecting centre for Schwaben and they died there but it was a result of poverty they caused (typhus)”, “everyone who wasn’t alike was put away”, “there were crimes at both sides”, “revenge”, “deportation”, “innocent people suffered a lot”, or a range of answers like “I don’t know anything about that”, “I don’t know”, “there were crimes but I don’t know precisely”, “there were but I don’t know much about them” and similar. The existence of a relativistic attitude towards the crimes over members of ethnic minorities is obvious and is identified in mentioning of revenge or in stressing that population of Knićanin was settled later and had nothing with it; but, the cases of admission, which include implicit condemnation, are also noticeable. The population of Knićanin is much less reserved towards reconsideration of the past than one could conclude on the basis of such a superficial research. This result has, certainly, more practical than cognitive significance. The village of Knićanin deserves to be treated separately within this project, particularly because of the fact that an enormous number of German civilians, who suffered in this village or in its surroundings, doesn’t represent only a terrible human tragedy but it also opens a possibility for radical practical activities, directed towards productive overcoming of the past. The fact that the villagers themselves didn’t take part in killing could this effort make easier.

THE CRIMES OVER MINORITIES FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF NATIVE AND COLONIZED SERBS

The results obtained in Knićanin indicate a wider understanding of crimes over members of minor communities, which is present among Serbs in Vojvodina. It is reasonable to begin with an extensive interpretation of this problem, having in mind the aim of the project.

When asked “have you heard about any crimes, which are claimed to be committed by communists and, if yes, which ones?”, the examinees of Serbian nationality either say that there weren’t such crimes (35%) or they mention crimes committed during fights among communists, within their own ranks (35% too, of the total number of the examined Serbs). 9% of examinees mention the crimes against non-communist political opponents, and a bit over 3% the crimes committed against the ethnic minority groups. The Serbs among colonists most often than the natives (41% to 31%) declare that there weren’t such crimes or that they didn’t hear of them. That could be explained by greater integration of colonist population in communist authorities; such an explanation is probably true but one should always be cautious of “cultural racism”, which is present in Vojvodina public and which reveals itself when characterizes colonists as “naturally” more inclined to communist rule and as less capable to change their comprehension or attitude. The natives more often than the colonists (38% to 31%) mention inter-communist conflicts or the crimes against non-communist political opponents (11% to 6%). On the other hand, the colonists more often than the natives mention the crimes against the members of ethnic minorities (4% to 2%). Formulation of the answers in both groups of examinees are similar and there is no need to quote them separately: “Goli otok”, “deportation of the Germans to the camp in Knićanin and their torturing”, “killing of Montenegro chetniks in Slovenia and Croatia in 1945”, “killing of chetniks' families in Hercegovina”, “communists are guilty for killing people in Kragujevac, committed by Germans, because they forced people to kill the Germans, though they had known for the revenge”, “shooting of chetniks”, “yes, we have heard, especially in Montenegro and after World War II, i.e. in order to defend the power they had taken away by force”, “against the politicians who were not Tito’s sympathizers”, “their biggest crime was that they killed the God and forced people to reject the God; this is the cause and the rest are consequences”, “Bileća”, “Srem front-line”, “Batina battle”, “revenge over civilians, over their own people who had different political ideas”, “communists attacked and caught Hungarians, burnt wheat!”, “Zelengora 1945”, “yes, they killed Draža Mihailović”, “persecution of Hungarians from Čurug”, “5000 of Germans (women, children, old people) were killed in the camp and buried in Knićanin, near Titel, in the park and men were taken to camps in Russia”, “I’ve heard about crimes in 1945 and 1946 but don’t know what exactly they were”, “nationalization, dispossession of property and ‘obligations’ for farmers after the war”, “I’ve heard about the crimes on Goli otok”, “cleansing in Belgrade in 1944” etc.

When asked “which nation, in your opinion, most suffered in Vojvodina during World War II and in what way?”, the examinees of Serbian nationality most often mention Serbs as the greatest victims (77% from the total number of questioned Serbs), then Jews (3%), Germans and Hungarians (a bit less than 2% for each group), Roma (1%) etc. There are no significant differences in the answers given by the colonists and the natives, except that the answer “I don’t know” is more often found in the colonists’ group; this makes sense because the colonists didn’t live in Vojvodina at the time the question is related to. Nevertheless, the answers are interesting. As the greatest victims, mentioned by the colonists, are “Serbs and Hungarians in battles and in mutual conflicts”, “Serbs in battles”, “Serbs, they were thrown in the iced rivers by Hungarians”, “Serbs, the raid against intellectuals in Novi Sad (thrown into the Danube)”, “Serbs, in the Srem front-line”, “Serbs and Jews – killed and thrown in rivers, Germans – expelled” etc. The natives mention the following: “Gypsies, because they were killed in great number”, “Serbs – because of terror”, “Jews – in raids”, “Serbs – under occupants and communists”. In their answers, as the greatest war victims are also mentioned “Serbs until 1944 and after that the others as well”, “Serbs in raids”, “Germans, because they were expelled and everything was taken away from them”, “Serbs and Hungarians – by killing”, “Serbs, by extermination – ethnic cleansing”, “Serbs in raids”, “Germans – by raids, displacement”, “Serbs, they most suffered”, “Serbs – thrown under the ice in Bačka in 1942, massacres in Srem 1941-1943” etc.

When asked “which nation, in your opinion, suffered most in Vojvodina during communist reign and in what way?”, the examinees of Serbian nationality most often give answers in which they mention suffering of Serbs (40%), many of them say that “all equally” suffered (12%), some mention Germans (5%) or Hungarians (4%), then Roma (less than 1%). The colonists much more refused to give answers (12%) than the natives (2%) did, which could be indicative for their relationship towards the communist rule. Serbs, as the greatest victims of communist rule in Vojvodina, are mentioned more often by the natives (43%) than the colonists (37%); Hungarians are mentioned slightly more by the colonists than by the natives (5% to 4%), while it is quite reverse when they mention Germans – they are more often mentioned as victims by the natives than by the colonists (6% to about 1,5%). These results are understandable, not only because the previously given remarks about the colonists who are more than the natives inclined to an undivided rule, but also because the natives didn’t directly benefit from German deportation, like the colonists who were settled in German villages and on German estates and therefore are less apt to remember this aspect of the past. On the other hand, a multiple reflection over the way the answers on this question were formulated doesn’t reveal crucial qualitative differences between the natives and the colonists.

When asked “what do you know about the crimes, which were committed over members of national minorities in Vojvodina after World War II?”, 58% of the examinees of Serbian nationality explicitly claim that there weren’t such crimes, 20% say that they “don’t know” the answer to this question and the next 20% quote concrete examples of crimes over member of minor communities in

Vojvodina. The difference between the questioned Serbs colonists and natives are rather obvious. 61% of the former and 55% of the latter state that there were no such crimes; 24% of the colonists and 16% of the natives claim that they don't know about them. The last difference in the answers can probably be explained by the fact that they didn't live in Vojvodina at the time when the greatest crimes were committed, especially the crimes against the members of Hungarian community; the colonists were really settled later. The examples of crimes are given by 12% of the colonists and 29% of the natives among the examinees. The colonists really had less opportunity to notice certain crimes, especially those committed over ethnic Hungarians. On the other hand, they (older people, at least) were witnesses of the way the Germans from Vojvodina were treated – if not of killings like those in Bavanište or Lazarevo, committed immediately after liberation of Vojvodina in 1944 and when the colonists hadn't been settled yet, then they could witness maltreatment of the imprisoned Germans in Vojvodina in the following years.

Formulation of the answers given to this question expresses a recognizable attitude towards the crimes committed by communists, members of “their own side”: the colonists say “I don't know about them except, of course, that they forbade religion”, “I don't know anything about that”, “I don't know anything about those crimes” and similar. The natives often give the answers such as “Hungarians and Germans were expelled”, “there were minor reprisals but they were covered-up”, “there were crimes, they were all consequences of revanchism”, “I heard about revenge, but I don't know about the details”, “they were under economic and psychological pressure”, “I think that they were not organized crimes”, “deportation and banishment of Germans and Hungarians”, “war-camp for Schwaben in Kničanin”, “there were some in Bačka but they were results of the revenge for Christmas 1942”, “persecution, killings, ethnic cleansing”, “there were some unjustified crimes” and similar. The colonists appear as a target group, which know little about war crimes and which, seemingly, doesn't want to get more information about them; therefore it is more necessary to try to inform them better.

Beyond all expectation, young people among the questioned Serbs are more inclined to confess the existence of crimes against the members of minority communities, comparing to older people who lived then. 25% of the examinees of Serbian nationality, born in 1973 or later, quote examples of crimes against national minorities, relating to approximately 19% of those who belong to older generations. It reveals that the consciousness about the crimes exists, having been transmitted by inter-family communication channels; the youngest among examinees, being conscious that they are not responsible, are more inclined to speak about this phenomenon more openly. That result is favourable, in terms of practical consequences, for it confirms emancipation from the burdening past among the youngest generation of Serbs in Vojvodina. At the same time, the result warns that older examinees are reserved and not ready to talk openly about phenomena which burden inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina. It is obvious that dimension of the described difference in answers of the youngest and other examinees of Serbian nationality doesn't represent a generation shock as it was in the 60-ies, in

the case of young Germans' attitude towards the crimes whose contemporaries were their fathers. But, as it was said before, this result has practical and cognitive significance.

Why is, in this analysis, so much attention paid to the settlers in Vojvodina and their descendants, when it is clear that ideas of "cultural racism" in Vojvodina – which emphasize supposedly crucial differences in comprehension and behaviour between the natives and people who were settled after World War II and their descendants – are not accepted? Even some authors from abroad treat the colonists as an element that is less inclined to autonomy of Vojvodina than the Serbian native population. Thus, T.W. Waters (Waters, 2001:80) thinks that the Hungarians, the native Serbs and others had in mind historical heritage as a basis of their requests directed against centralization of Serbia. L. Vrkatić (2001:40) considers the modern history of the Serbian people as a dispute between its two parts, the Serbs from Serbia and from Vojvodina, i.e. between two ideas derived from different custom heritage. In a distinctive, by regionalism marked way, Vrkatić uses an old motive of one's own group as a victim, claiming that the Serbs from Vojvodina were the greatest victims in Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Ibid:39) and mentioning some explanations based on facts, which seem serious but whose adequacy won't be examined here.

Writing about the origins of Milošević's authoritarian rule, Vrkatić mentions, as one of the factors, too fast and frivolous vertical social movability, underestimating the influence of international factors and claiming that in the base of that authoritarian form of rule was a conservative political idea, which could sooner understand national minorities than the Serbs in Vojvodina. Those who remember the proposal of DEPOS for regionalization of Serbia, which was made in 1992 by D.Sc. Koštunica and Prof. Ljušić and Čavoski, won't hesitate to agree with that attitude. When we take the basic theme of this project as the point of view, Vrkatić's attitude is more interesting; according to him, "there are three ethnical entities in Vojvodina, which aren't completely differentiated, particularly because of mixed marriages and a short historical reminiscence. They are domicile Serbs (those who were settled earlier), colonized Serbs (settled later) and other nationalities (settled in different periods and occasions)". Though he talks about native and colonist Serbs as about different "ethnic" elements, Vrkatić doesn't share the standpoint of "cultural racism" in Vojvodina, according to which the colonists and their descendants are not able to change themselves or to "become civilized". He thinks that "the native Serbs, though most delighted by the possibility of autonomy of Vojvodina, would accept social changes that this autonomy brings in the most difficult way. This ethnic element will be successful in the future only if it abandon its ideas of rural, at the first place, and then petty bourgeois conservatism of XIX century and its nostalgia. The colonized Serbs are, certainly, socially more successful than domicile Serbs but they represent a bigger obstacle in establishment of autonomy of Vojvodina, which doesn't mean that they won't be its supporting element when it comes into life."

In any case, the colonists are numerous and unavoidable "element" of the present and future social life in Vojvodina. They were settled during the colonization in 114 villages and 14 new villages

were built (Boarov, 2001). Being deprived in relation to the rival native cadre in the period of autonomy of Vojvodina, they took over the governing positions in the period after the suspension of the provinces' autonomy, with the help of their domicile connections. The authors Kerčov, Radoš and Raić (1990) say that nationalistic meetings in Vojvodina in 1988 were organized in 29 colonized villages and only in 2 villages with majority of native population. By mentioning that fact, Boarov reminds that, according to the census of 1981, 451000 people, born in other parts of Yugoslavia, lived in Vojvodina (Boarov 2001). This author says that, after the "anti-bureaucratic revolution" in Vojvodina, 40000 political officials, high state officials, judges and head policemen, directors and managers of educational institutions and medical centres, informational and cultural institutions were relieved of their posts. According to him, 80 out of each 100 company managers were also relieved of their posts. In the meantime, about 300000 Serbs refugees from Croatia and Bosnia came to Vojvodina and at least 100000 people emigrated (Boarov agrees with this estimation), mostly Hungarians and young conscripts (who ran away from the duty to answer a military call to go to the war). (Cf. Silagyi, without the year, published: 96) Problems linked with the colonist' element are additionally strengthened by a conviction that refugees from the latest wars, who have close native and relative ties with them, were "excessively settled in certain multinational regions". (Korhecz, 1999) This opinion isn't well founded, since the refugees were disproportionately in small number settled in the county districts where the members of minor communities make a majority of population; nevertheless, the very prevalence of this opinion doesn't contribute to improvement of inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina.

After 5th Oct. 2000, during extortion for post-Milošević pray, preference was again given to cadres who are natives by their origin, in relation to colonists' cadres. Considering these characteristics, the colonists deserve to be treated as a really autonomous social group. For all that, it is important to underline that former research (Ilić, Cvejić 1993; Ilić, Cvejić 1997) found out that the nationalism among the colonists isn't bigger than among the native Serbian population. But, considering that they were settled in earlier German villages, the colonists have special reasons for somewhat different attitude towards the process of overcoming the past. On the other hand, they are free from burden of "autochthonous" inter-ethnic conflicts and crimes in Vojvodina, such as the raids in Novi Sad and Šajkaška area in 1942 or communist "vendetta" in 1944; that fact should always be taken into account, in analysis as well as in practical activities.

THE CRIMES OVER HUNGARIANS

Since there were crimes over minorities the consciousness of the questioned Serbs from Vojvodina differs principally from the reality. Since Vojvodina, in 1918, became the part of the state, which would be later named Yugoslavia, members of minorities were exposed to unequal repression of different intensity. We spoke earlier about the repression during the last 10 years; it is worth seeing the study of M. Samardžić here (Samardžić, 2000). D. Boarov mentions some physical attacks against the leaders of Germans from Vojvodina at the elections in 1925. At the same time, as mentioned by Silađi, came the revision of master's certificates of non-Serbian craftsmen, annulment of trade licenses, embargo on their companies' export and import activities. Boarov reminds that Hungarian occupation authorities ordered eviction of about 150000 people from Delvidek (Vojvodina), while the real number of evicted persons was about 20-30000 (Boarov, 2001). There were about 4000 victims of Serbian, Jewish and Roma nationality in Novi Sad and Šajkaš raids in January 1942. According to K. Silađi, about 20000 people were banished and imprisoned in war-camps in April 1941. In January 1942 (according to Silađi, too) about 2500 Serbs and 750 Jews were killed in Novi Sad, Srbobran, Bečej, Čurug and Žabalj. Boarov says that, according to the official figures, about 30000 people were killed in Vojvodina during occupation. The same author notices that in 1944 about 200000 Germans from Vojvodina retreated with Wehrmacht and that next 140000 of them were imprisoned in camps. According to Rudolf Weiss, president of German National Association, about 100000 Germans died in camps or in some other way. Boarov notices that demographers have found out that at the first post-war census in 1948 the number of Hungarians increased by 48000, which means that many Germans declared themselves as Hungarians. Something similar happened again at the census in 1991 when many Croats declared themselves as members of other nationalities, afraid of possible persecution in the wars that would follow. The property of all 400000 Germans in Yugoslavia was confiscated, except small number of those who took part in the partisan movement. Boarov writes that the leaders of communist party in Vojvodina advocated emigration of Hungarians and Germans but that it was rejected by Tito who had in mind the future control of Soviets over socialist Hungary.

The number of the Hungarians who lost their lives during "vendetta" in Vojvodina, not limited only to Bačka (that's why Debeljača has been included in this research's sample), is differently estimated. Boarov quotes different sources, which operate with figures from 4000 to 40000 killed, noticing that the number of 20000 is most often mentioned, supposedly because it is equal to the number of killed people in Vojvodina – Serbs, Jews and Roma - during the occupation. Silađi is less reserved and he says that several tens thousand people were killed during 1944 (Silađi, without the year). In bibliography, the following places, where the most massive crimes over Hungarians were committed, are mentioned: Bezdán, Sombor, Sivac, Subotica, Bajmok, Kanjiža, Senta, Bečej, Temerin, Novi Sad and Debeljača. The only "Serbian" author who dealt with this question more seriously, A.

Kasaš (Kasaš, 1996), estimates the number of killed Hungarians at about 5000. Šandor Mesaroš has estimated the number at about 30000 and the well-known Hungarian cardinal Jozef Mindszenty at as many as 50-60000. Jasenovac-like “crime arithmetic” has obviously extended to Vojvodina; manipulation with victims and their numbers is the basis for justification of current political demands and makes us feel uneasy, for it resembles to the similar cultural-political events that prepared the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, in 80-ies and 90-ies.

What is the attitude of the questioned Hungarians like, regarding the crimes committed over the members of their nationality and the suffering of people of other nationalities? When asked “which examples of crimes over Hungarian people at the end of World War II are you most acquainted with?”, the examinees of Hungarian nationality the most often mention – at the first range of choice – the crimes committed over the Hungarians at the end of World War II (38%) and then crimes over the Hungarians without specifying the exact time (11%). 20% of the Hungarian examinees stated that they knew nothing about them and 5% that they didn’t want to talk about that. Generally speaking, the examinees are well acquainted with the concrete crimes: along with the mentioned 38% of the first range, the additional 12% of the Hungarian examinees in the second and 6% in the third range, speak about concrete crimes, specifying place and time of their occurrence.

Among the answers are “killings in Temerin in 1944”, “maltreatment, killings, taking property away by violence”, “in 1945, around Novi Sad, several thousand people were killed”, “crimes around the Tisa river”, “World War II – killings of Hungarians by Germans and communists”, “liberators killed innocent people under the pretext of being collaborators”, “in 1941 Serbs killed Hungarians”, “individual cases of murders by political reasons”, “partisans killed common people”, “shooting in Temerin”, “war-camps”, “in Senta”, “in Novi Sad”, “in Kanjiža”, “Temerin”, “Čurug”, “in 1945 there were 44 days of killings in Mol”, “shooting in Senta (my grand-grandfather was shot)”, “Žabalj – deportations caused by bad relations among people; some were liquidated but it wasn’t a massive occurrence”, “Hotel America”, “massive shooting in Temerin”, “killings in Subotica and Senta”, there was a chaos in Senta – Serbs and Hungarians killed one another” or “in 1918 land was taken away from Hungarians”.

When asked “who is, in your opinion, the most responsible for the crimes over Hungarians in World War II?”, the examinees of Hungarian nationality most often mention the then communist rule (25%), then fascists and their collaborators (18%), other factors (12%), Serbs (3%), while 26% of the examinees say that they don’t know who was responsible. No doubt these answers seem conformist-like. Accentuation of communist rule is historically acceptable but mentioning fascists and their allies seems so self-critical that it appears to be insufficiently convincing. The enormous number of those who answered “I don’t know” also seems unreal and mentioning the Serbs in so minimal percentage represents a clear sign that they don’t want to tighten the relations with the biggest ethnic group in Vojvodina.

Among the guilty persons the examinees mention “politicians who led such a politics (who exactly? they don’t want to say – examiner’s remark)”, “partisans”, “Tito – the most”, “communists”, “chauvinists”, “local Serbian officers”, Germans and communists”, “Russians and Serbs”, “the then authorities”, “Germans”, “Italians”, “the then leaders of partisans”, “Serbs-communists”, “the then authorities (Tito, Ranković, communists), “the leaders”, even “Hitler”.

When asked “in what way do the crimes over Hungarians, committed during World War II, burden the present life of our people?”, the examinees of Hungarians nationality claim in absolute majority (55%) that those crimes don’t burden at all the life of people in today’s Vojvodina, 10% of them say that memories, fear and distrust are still present and only a little bit over 3% say that hatred and a wish to revenge have remained until these days. The answers are as “they are mentioned enough”, “they burden both sides because they both committed crimes at some time (one side at the beginning and the other side at the end)”, “perhaps they wouldn’t be mentioned if this last war didn’t happen”, “those crimes don’t burden us but these new crimes do”, “older people remember more”, “they burden inter-ethnic relations”, “they aren’t influential”, “it has been forgotten”, “people dare not to talk about that”, “I’m not burdened but I hope it won’t come again”, “unless the whole truth is revealed the tension will be present”, “older people are burdened because they dislike Serbs”, “we want to forget and wish them never to repeat, but these things are burdening us”, “it is far away, you should ask those who lost someone”.

It is reasonable to make a comparison here. When asked “in what way do the crimes, committed over the Serbs during the World War II, burden the lives of our people today?”, the questioned Serbs in Vojvodina claim that those crimes do not burden a social life in 16% of cases, in 38% that they cause fear, distrust and recalled memories and in 22% that they initiate hatred and revenge. The differences in relation to the answers of the questioned Hungarians are drastic. The question is what caused, among Serbs, such a considerably stronger reminiscence of that kind: their participation in the latest wars, experiences with the crimes over the Serbs committed outside Vojvodina (not committed by ethnic Hungarians) or something else? The first explanation can’t be accepted, since the Hungarians in Vojvodina were caught by the latest wars equally as the Serbs, though not always in the same way (we think about a great number of Hungarians who emigrated to avoid mobilization). The second explanation could be checked by comparing the colonists’ and the natives’ answers to this question. The first weren’t exposed to the crimes committed by ethnic Hungarians because at that time neither they nor their ancestors lived in Vojvodina, while the natives did. The analysis of statistical data of SPSS shows that there are no significant differences between the colonists and the natives. But, certain formulations of the answers to this question reveal the differences between the colonists and the natives. Among the first (colonists) there are answers like “no matter how much we want to forget, we have never forgiven and that deepens the gap and ‘nourishes’ the stereotype: Serb = victim”, “there is a great distrust”, “people are afraid of possible

repetition”, “yes, because they cause intolerance”, “they burden us because the unsettled accounts always come back”, “yes, instigation of nationalism and a wish to revenge”, “they cause intolerance among the people”, “historical resentfulness”, “revenge”, “it wasn’t settled then and this problem has been inherited”, “some lost their parents”, “the crimes have never been forgotten; hatred still exists”, “origin”, “heritage”, “quilt” and even “Hungarians remained in Vojvodina”. The last answer is particularly important from the standpoint of the aim and theme of the project.

The natives’ answers are more moderate, according to their connotation, although these distinctions don’t allow different classification and can’t be recognized in a statistical analysis: “our memory don’t allow us to forget”, “distrust and fear”, “memories are still alive”, “hate still exists”, “many generations will pass away until people forget and overpower them”, “strengthening of nationalism is their result”, “everything happened again” revenge was painful”, “memories remain”, “there is hate among nations”, “distrust towards representatives of nations who committed crimes”, “reminiscence of those events and the fact that guilty people weren’t punished”, “the past can’t be forgotten”, “they remember, they see monuments and then hate each other”, “people are not able to forget”, “fear that crimes committed in the past will be repeated”, “there is a wish for revenge”, “the very thought on evil deeds spreads nationalism”, “they burden relations with Croatian and Hungarian minority” etc.

It is obvious that the historical reminiscence is still vivid and that it heavily oppresses the consciousness of population in Vojvodina today. Such reminiscence bears in itself destructive potentials, which doesn’t mean they will become active for sure. The peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups in Vojvodina, which has been lasting for several decades, confirms that in the best way.

When the answers to the question “In what way do the crimes, committed over the Serbs, during World War II burden the lives of our people today?” are crossed with the age of the questioned Serbs, very unusual results are got. The oldest examinees, born up to 1930, are the least burdened by the past – 25% of them say that they aren’t burdened by these crimes at all. The same feel less than 11% of those born between 1931 and 1950, 18% of the middle-aged born between 1951 and 1972, while 15% of the youngest examinees aren’t burdened by the mentioned crimes at all. The last result is particularly disturbing because it shows a great impact of the past on the consciousness of the youngest examinees of Serbian nationality – right those who ought to build common life in multi-ethnic Vojvodina in the following period. On the other hand, the results have shown that the youngest questioned Serbs are most conscious of the crimes committed over the members of ethnic minorities. Thus, the youngest generation of Serbs in Vojvodina represents a group which is at the same time exposed to big temptation and which could reach such a level of consciousness that will direct their behaviour towards common, relatively harmonious life with members of other ethnic groups in Vojvodina.

When we consider the results obtained when the answers to the same question were crossed with the age of the questioned Hungarians, we can see that they are totally reverse. All questioned Hungarians, born up to 1930, think that the crimes committed over Hungarians in Vojvodina burden the social life of our people. The same answer was given by 63% of somewhat younger examinees, 55% by the middle-aged and 50% of those born in 1973 and later. Those who experienced “vendetta” at the age of 14 and more remember it very well, although it seems that they don’t talk about it even in their own families and that they unwillingly carry those memories on their descendants. The primary experience of the researcher proves this result; the silence wall has been building for decades even against their own descendants and that wall still exists. The difference between the questioned Hungarians and Serbs is very important and it shows a different relationship towards national martyrdom at inter-family level. It is obvious that, in Vojvodina, the relationship of an ethnic group towards its own victims is essentially different from the relationship, which was the subject of numerous researches carried out in Germany. Members of majority groups in Vojvodina, Serbia and other Balkan countries involved in recent event don’t face the past in general, which completely differs them from German relationship towards the holocaust.

When directly asked “have you heard about any crimes, and what specific ones, claimed to be committed by communists?”, the questioned Hungarians in 40% of cases say that they haven’t heard about such crimes, in 18% they mention the crimes over ethnic minorities, in 5% inter-communist fights and crimes against political rivals etc. It is obvious again that the silence wall exists and that only by asking different questions about that theme one could start breaking it. The answers given to direct questions clearly show that the examinees’ consciousness about “vendetta” is more vivid than the quantitative data reveal: “killings in Temerin”, “confiscation”, “tortures”, “killings of civilians in Temerin”, “Žabalj and its surroundings”, “I have heard but I don’t know which ones; ‘cleaning’ of lofts, bad things happened, property was taken away”, “in 1945, around Novi Sad – partisans”, “murder of the priest and some others”, “kidnappings and killings of civilians”, “murder of the priest and some important people in Debeljača”, “when partisans killed ordinary people”, “yes, I’ve heard, shooting as a reprisal”, “I’ve heard but I lived well then – my father was a partisan”, “they tortured my grandfather, took property away”, “they were killing Hungarians because they didn’t like them”, “Temerin, Čurug”, “shootings in Senta”, “killings in Mol”, “I know that partisans gathered Hungarians who were their political opponents and killed them”, “killings in Senta, Čurug, Novi Sad”, “killings in Čurug, Žabalj, Mošorin, Senta”, “massive killings on national basis”, “taking property away, killings of Hungarians”, “in 1944 Hungarians were killed in Vojvodina (near Novi Sad)” etc. These answers show that the memories of “vendetta” are considerably more lively than one could conclude if separate answers to individual questions were statistically reviewed. When such statements are examined, the claims of Silađi and Čereš seem much more as well measured ones. Otherwise, they could be understood as anticommunist, ethno-nationalistic revanchism. The problem of property requisition is

especially interesting because it is mentioned in the answers of both the native Serbs and the questioned Hungarians. Critics of communism unite, at least occasionally and in some aspects, ethnic rivals. This can also be seen in the present union of Serbian and minor ethno-nationalistic parties, which rules the country nowadays. Half-century-long successful communist cooling of nationalism (Gellner) was, at the beginning, based on massive crimes.

When asked “which nation, in your opinion, suffered most in World War II and in what way?”, the examinees of Hungarian nationality most often give a conformist answer “all of them, equally” (40%), 14% mention Hungarians, 8% Jews, 7% Germans, 2% Serbs, 1% Roma etc. Misrepresentation of history and the existence of nationalistic stereotype according to which the one’s own group is always (and the greatest) victim and never a torturer, is quite obvious here. Sufferings of Jews and Roma under the Nazis, Ustashas and Salasists – considering the number of members of these ethnic groups - undoubtedly surpass those of Germans and Hungarians. The communists planned physical elimination of the Germans (and of the Hungarians, too, if we can believe Boarov) but not their physical extermination. The motives of polemics among Germans about the responsibility for the past are quite clear here. On the other hand, the predominant attitude that “all equally” suffered is, at one level, the expression of conformism and wish not to provoke inter-ethnic divisions and, at the other, the expression of their wish to avoid responsibility. The destiny of the Jews under Salaši’s rule quite clearly speaks about the then Hungarian State’s participation at the holocaust. However, it is understandable that one neglects the crimes committed against other groups, when has in mind the crimes which others committed against their group, often against neighbours, relatives or ancestors. It is hard to believe that members of any other ethnic group on the Balkans (South Panonia is a part of the Balkans, when political culture is in question) would give different answers.

When asked “what nation in Vojvodina, in your opinion, suffered most during communist rule and in what way?”, the 40% of the examined Hungarians (the same percentage as at the previous question) answered: “all nations equally – because of communism”; then they mentioned Hungarians (7%), Germans (5%), Serbs (4%) etc. The neglecting of suffering and crimes which the German civilians undergone during the first years of communist rule is obvious. On the other hand, the fact that the members of their own national community are considerably less mentioned as those who suffered most during the communist rule than when asked about the victims of the World War II, indicates and indirect confession that the communists had symmetrical attitude towards the members of different nationalities. In most cases, the formulations they used affirm the demonstrated interpretation: “all suffered equally”, “all nations, except the Serbs, were banished and killed”, “no one particularly”, “where were no exceptions”, “Hungarians – they couldn’t find employment”, “Hungarians – by property confiscation and killing”, “both Hungarians and Serbs but I have only heard about it”, “all nations suffered”, “all equally”, “all ideological enemies suffered equally”, “no nation was particularly

ignored”, “it wasn’t done on the national basis”, “Hungarians were the poorest because their land was confiscated by nationalization”, “they didn’t suffer equally but not because their nationality” etc.

When asked “what do you know about the crimes, committed over the Serbs in Vojvodina during World War II?”, the examinees of Hungarian nationality in 68% cases mention the examples of those crimes, 14% say that there were no such crimes, 12% that “they don’t know” etc. The result is contradictory to the widespread opinion that Hungarians, comparing to other nationalities in Vojvodina, suffered most during the World War II. However, it is much more important that absolute majority of examinees knows about the crimes over the Serbs. This level of information is, as a rule, partial; the answers are most often formulated like “there were crimes; they all suffered”, “there were some crimes, but I don’t know which ones”, “I know there were some crimes, but I can’t give a precise example”, “I don’t know concretely, but there were some”, “there were, for example in Novi Sad”, “I’ve heard about some, but I can’t say which ones”, “there were some in 1944 – Hungarians did something so there were reprisals in 1945”, “taking away to war camps”, “there were some but I can’t say exactly”, “there were but I can’t give examples”, “throwing of the Serbs into the Tisa, slaughtering”, “the Serbs were killed by Horthy’s units”, “I have heard something about that, but those were individual cases”, “there were, shooting in Novi Sad”, “surely there were crimes, but I can’t say precisely”, “they were committed by Hungarians – Horthy’s units”, “I have heard but can’t mention where they were”, “I know there were some”, “when the Hungarians came in they made massacres”, “when the Hungarians came, they committed crimes over the Serbs”, “there were, I can’t say precisely – they were drawn in the Tisa” etc.

It is necessary to give several remarks here. A widespread opinion about the existence of Hungarian crimes over the Serbs during World War II represents a solid basis for building a healthy relationship of Hungarians in Vojvodina towards members of the most numerable ethnic group in the province. The Hungarians are far more conscious of the crimes that their fellow-countrymen committed over the Serbs and they are much more ready to admit it that it is the case with the Serbs’ attitude towards the crimes over Hungarians. This ought to be especially emphasized. The absence of knowledge about the details and dimensions of this phenomenon demands propaganda action which would prevent either minimizing the past events or, even more important, the attempts of political manipulation with them which additionally misrepresent the past. For example, there was in Hungary a trend of apparent “normalization” of Hungarian nationalism at the beginning of 90-ies, which showed tendency to give amnesty to Horthy’s regime and to lay the responsibility to Salaši, on the model of similar attempts in Germany to rehabilitate Wehrmacht by laying responsibility to the Party and SS units. But it is very important that this trend hasn’t had any stronger influence over the Hungarians in Vojvodina. Anticomunist stereotypes are, of course, used wherever it is possible; both the Serbs and Hungarians used them neglecting a half-century-long inter-ethnic peace under authoritative communist rule, which committed numerous crimes over ethnic Germans and Hungarians at the end of World War

II and also over the Germans in Vojvodina in the years that immediately followed. The Hungarians in Vojvodina most often link their problems, relating to survival and development of their ethnic community, with communism. The eminent author Laslo Vegel (2000:25) warns that considerable demographic movements in Vojvodina happened after 1945. The present Secretary of Education in Vojvodina, Zoltan Bunjik (2000:27), also links “violent moving of population” with the second half of 20th century. Olivera Radovanović (2000) speaks about the trend of the present spatial ethnic homogeneity in Vojvodina (the trend which was mentioned in the introduction of this research). She lives in Telep (Hungarian quarter in Novi Sad) where only Hungarians lived until recently, but since recent time a lot of Serbian refugees have been settled there. Speaking about “reminiscence praxis” Alpar Lošonc (2000) warns that there is a history image according to which the minorities haven’t existed at all and that only the presence of minorities brings disturbance in the reminiscence regime.

In general, the mentioned domestic authors are surely right. But, in Hungary – which could have been seen from the results of Rainprecht research – there is considerably more radical reinterpretation of the past than the one noticed in the consciousness of the questioned Hungarians in Vojvodina. The rehabilitation of Horthy’s Prime ministers Teleki and Kallay has taken massive dimensions. It is enough to take a look at the works of John Lukacs, Kristof Kallay and Antal Czettler (all:2000) in which an open apologetics of Kallay and covered, but clear, defense of Horthy are given, because of the protection of the Jews and the war against the USSR. Herewith, Nolte’s thesis from the mid 80-ies about fascism as a legitimate (and provoked from outside) defense against the danger coming from the East - are completely and in an unoriginal way varied. In an interpretation of anti-Semitic laws introduced in the 20-ies but strengthened in the 30-ies of 20th century, it is emphasized that the conservative Hungarian anti-Semitic rule avoided pogrom of the Jews. There isn’t any word in these analyses about Hungarian large estates as a relict, which made Hungary different from the rest of the 20th century Europe. Members of Horthy’s party are described as “representatives of Christian civilization”, who managed to keep parliamentary form of ruling and fight decisively against bolshevism. Emphasizing the Christian character of Horthy’s rule resembles the first stage of reinterpretation of fascism in Adenauer’s Germany, when it had been interpreted, first of all, as a non-Christian regime - until it came to much radical facing the past. Nevertheless, the authors remind of Kallay’s refusal of German requests in 1942 for Jewish segregation and obligatory wearing of yellow bands; they also mention that in 1943 Horthy refused Hitler’s requests for more radical solution of the Jewish problem and that cardinal Szeredy openly denounced Nazi ideas. In his critics of communist historiography Czettler writes that Hungary, just like Finland, saved its parliamentary system because of its Christian religion and that its politicians thought it would be useful when the Allies arrived. In the manner of *streitbare Demokratie* (Jaschke, 1991) this author says that the fight against communism may justify all the sins from the past and in that sense he criticizes American illusions about Staljin, who had ordered banishment of millions of Ukraine peasants and who was nicknamed Uncle Joe.

Czettler criticizes Roosevelt because of his naive liberalism and pro-Soviet attitude, mentioning constitutional structure of Horthy's Hungary and its human politics towards Jews, forgetting its anti-Semitic laws (Czettler, 2000:99). In this context, Kallay's "self-sacrificed heroic effort" to save Hungary for Christian freedom-loving West is particularly emphasized. This pattern of remodeling of history irresistibly reminds of recent inserting of Serbian quisling Milan Nedić among 100 most outstanding Serbs in the history of Serbian people. Some historians also spread the apologetics of Kallay to Istvan Bethlen and even to Horthy. The examinees questioned in our research have different opinion, since Horthy and the politicians who were connected with him appear really rarely on the list of their individual preferences. Despite of all sufferings that Hungarians in Vojvodina were exposed to from 1944 to 1945, because of the communist rule, the experience of recent wars has enabled them to consider the past with more sobriety than some historians. This observation can be applied *mutatis mutandi* to the Serbs in Vojvodina, comparing them to ethno-nationalistic excess of some Belgrade historians, who, unlike their Hungarian colleagues, had prepared – in idea – the wars in Croatia and Bosnia.

The question of responsibility is too important to be left only to historians. C. Ingrao (2001:23), similar like Czettler, thinks that after 1945 the indulgence towards the USSR led to deportation of 14 million Germans, including almost 5 million from nationally mixed areas from the ex-Habsburg Empire. According to him, about 2 million people died in the biggest banishment of humans in the world's history. 45 years of Soviet hegemony over the eastern half of Europe followed. Ingrao notices that, as the Hungarian realized in 1956, a cold war diplomacy of the USA, first of all, dealt with peaceful dissuasion of the Soviet Union and not with freedom of enslaved peoples of the Middle Europe. In these presented contemplation Ingrao is close to the attitude of Hungarian revisionist historians. A special research of ethnic elite in Vojvodina which the Centre for Development of Civil Society in Zrenjanin is carrying out these days, will show how much these ideas imbue consciousness of Hungarian cultural and media elite in Vojvodina. "Ordinary" Hungarians in Vojvodina have, as it could have been seen, considerably weighed and less distorted attitude. They are aware of the price which members of some ethnic group have to pay when "national aims" ought to be realized. They didn't show any sympathy for the American plan to overthrow Milošević by opening "the northern front-line" in the summer of 1999, according to which they would serve as "infantry" of globalization. (Cf. Minorities in Serbia, 2000) It seems that they are aware of the fact that ethnic solidarity doesn't exist, which they could have seen when they were faced with the destiny of Serbian refugees from Krajina and Bosnia. Ingrao notices that similar to 14 million German exiles, who paid the price of Hitler's dream of Great Germany, there are nowadays 2 million Serbian refugees from Croatia, Bosnian Federation and from Kosovo, who are living in horrible misery with the small number of foreign promoters of their interests and with little hope for coming back home. (Ingrao, 2001:27)

In general, realistic attitude of the questioned Hungarians in Vojvodina, in relation to the crimes which were committed over Serbian and Jewish people by their compatriots, represents for Balkan and Panonian conditions unusually favourable occasion for further development of peaceful common life of different nationalities in Vojvodina. This favourable opportunity should certainly be used but the burden of facing the past disproportionately falls on the Serbs in Vojvodina, who are much more partial and, considering the contents of their consciousness about the past, much more indoctrinated.

ONE-PARTY SYSTEM AND MASTERING THE PAST

The communist attitude towards the inter-ethnic relations should be observed in a multiple way. During the World War II the communists made a base for continuing the federative Yugoslavia as a community of equal peoples and by doing so they ceased the Serbian hegemony. At the end of the war and immediately after it, they took a wide collective revenge on the members of the German and to the less extent, the Hungarian minority. For numerous crimes and for systematic violence of human rights there can be no excuses, although in interpretation of these phenomena one must take into consideration the standards of an intolerant period of time when the winner treated the civil population in a way quite unacceptable to our present standards. In a post-war period, the communist authorities greatly improved the status of the ethnic minorities and set the new standards on a level of promoting the ethnic rights. Thus, they made a combination of political means like repression, corruption and education. It was the irony of history that Yugoslavia would, after the collapse of an unshared power, become a cause of developing new mechanisms of protection of collective rights during the 90s just to prevent repeating of bloodily experiences of the newest Balkan wars.

The respondents were asked about the good and bad sides of the one-party system that was in Yugoslavia until 1990. 20% of the asked Serbs think that the communist system did not have any good sides. Even 41% of the respondents of the Serbian nationality emphasize a good standard of living and a social security of the citizens as a good side of this system, and 11% the fact that the country was open to the world at that time and that it was relatively democratic comparing to the other socialist countries. Differences between the natives and the colonists are rather noticeable: the opinion that the communist system did not have good sides share 26% of the former and 14% of the latter. The absence of nationalism as the best side of the communist regime mention 4% of the respondents, a bit less than 3% of the natives and over 5% of the colonists. The colonists, whose relatives and fellow-countrymen have directly suffered because of the recent wars, show more sense for observing this result of the communist power. However, as in the previous researches, the main advantage of the socialist period is related to the social security of the majority of citizens, which was then assured. (Cf. Ilić, 2000) Formulations of the responses were very distinctive: “illusion that we live in paradise”, “loans”,

“standard”, “brotherhood and unity”, “democracy and self-managing”, “one-party system that kept the country together, and the multi-party one destroyed it (SFRY)”, “freedom to move”, “possibility for all to get a university degree”, “higher standard of living”, “it provided freedom to people in every way”, “a stable country”, “workers’ self-managing”, “security in every way”, “care for the old, children (social questions)”, “peace”, “there were no disputes, people getting apart from one another, different opinions”, “declared rights”, “safety of the citizens”, “equality of the nations”, “a well-off middle class”, “many lived a good, normal life (had a job, traveled)”, “equality”, etc.

When asked about the greatest defects of the one-party system, the asked Serbs relatively most often mention the absence of democracy (34%), and more rarely the economic troubles (8%), restriction of the national feeling (some more than 4%), social differences (2%), repression over the church (less than 1%), etc. The natives appear to be more critical than the colonists when it comes to the communist restriction of the national feeling (6% of the former versus 2% of the latter) and the economic trouble in socialism (11% of the former and 3% of the latter). The responses are not less eloquent than in the former case: “there was no freedom of speech”, “centralism”, “impossibility of choice”, “totalitarianism”, “absence of democracy”, “there was no freedom of speech, opinion”, “non-discipline”, “relation towards the social property”, “forbidding of freedom of opinion, gathering”, “thieves were at power”, “chauvinism (between the republics)”, “Goli otok (serving a sentence for trifles)”, “tyranny, violence”, “getting poorer”, “a constant getting into debts”, “indebtedness”, “suppression of the Serbian population”, “suppressing of individuality”, “it destroyed our economy”, “forbidding of religions”, etc.

The asked Hungarians claim that the one-party system did not have good sides in 17% cases, 42% underline a good standard of living and a social security, 9% self-managing and a relative democracy, 5% the openness of SFRY towards the world and the foreign affairs, 3% the openness of the frontiers, 4% absence of nationalism, etc. The example for the Hungarians in Vojvodina was the communist Hungary in many ways with its repressive policy in the years after 1956 and with the “Goulash socialism” of the 70s and 80s. The formulations of the responses about the good sides of the one-party system given by the Hungarians are not uninteresting: “we all lived well”, “good jobs and salaries”, “we had money and the people lived no matter which religion or nation they were”, “the life was better”, “the passport with which you could travel”, “education for everybody”, “there were no political conflicts”, “social security”, “Tito kept Yugoslavia together”, “we could go everywhere”, “brotherhood and unity”, “there were loans”, “there was peace”, “there was no Serbia but Yugoslavia”, “we lived peacefully”, “we could travel and earn money”, “open frontiers”, “greater harmony”, “Tito had an international credibility”, “there was no chauvinism”, “harmony within the party”, “the idea of equality”, etc. It is noticeable that the asked Hungarians, with the necessary calling for the economic and social security, which makes them similar to the Serbs, give more attention to the openness of the country and the policy of the national equality which was carried out mainly in the communist period.

The openness of the country has a special significance when comparing the life of the Hungarians in Vojvodina to the one in Hungary of Kadary, and the communist affirmation of the national equality must have made the impression on the members of the nationality which lived to see the aggravation of its position in the years of Milošević's neo-socialistic power which brought the introduction of the multi-party system.

When asked about the worst sides of the one-party system, the Hungarians most often mention the absence of democracy (34%), repression over the church (over 4%), suppression of the national idea and the social differences (over 3%), etc. It is observed that among the Hungarians the communist repression over the church was judged mostly as more important than among the Serbs. It would be worth here to take a look at the declared religiosity of the respondents by the national criteria. To the question if they believe in God, 70% of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality answered affirmatively, with 16% of those who said they were not sure. To the "stronger" question if they believe in life after death, 28% of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality answered affirmatively, while 27% were not sure. The asked Serbs with almost the same percentage (69%) say that they believe in God, along with 13% of those who are not sure. However, to the question if they believe in life after death, 21% of the respondents of the Serbs answer affirmatively with the same percentage of those who say they were not sure. The asked Serbs are, all in all, less religious than the Hungarians. It should be borne in mind the important role of the religion and church for keeping the ethnic identity of the group, which represents the minority of the whole population, regardless of the fact that it is not religiously homogenous (among the Hungarians in Vojvodina along with the dominant catholic population there are Calvinists and other). (Here a short digression can be made: among the Serbian respondents, the natives are more religious than the colonists: 74,5% of the former claim they believe in God, 64% of the latter, and in life after death believe 26% of the former and 16% of the latter). Anyway, it is worth looking at the formulations of the answers with which the asked Hungarians point out to the worst side of the one-party system: "we worked a lot (agriculture) but we couldn't earn a lot", "not accepting the church", "discrimination of those who were not the members of the communist party", "pushing the people who were near the party", "neglecting the church as an institution", impossibility of the political promotion of those who were not in the party", "there was no democracy", "taking away", "uniform mindedness", etc.

The attitude towards the past explains the observations of the present and the visions of the desirable future. Idealization of one period in the past as a rule points to the contents of the past time, which different groups want to include in the developing of what is to come. Idealization of a more distant past means more conservative attitude than the glorification of the more recent one. Idealization of a very distant past, the one that was typical for the pre-social period of the human development, was the characteristic of the most reactionary ideologies and social movements, like fascism. In accordance

with these points, the answers to the next question aimed to the research of the other side of the same phenomenon should be observed.

When asked “When was, in your opinion, the promising direction of development deserted and which is the biggest mistake that has been done so far?” the respondents of the Serbian nationality in 50% of the cases underline Milošević’s coming to the power, 7% introducing the communist authorities and Tito’s death in 1980, 5% introducing the multi-party system, 2% the changes of the Constitution in 1974, etc. At the same time the natives show a more anti-communistic and anti-Milošević attitude than the colonists. Underlining the coming of the communists to power as a turning point towards the regressive development can be observed in 9% of the responses of the former and in 5% of the latter, and Milosevic’s fatal overtaking of power in 56% of the natives and in 45% of the colonists and their descendents. It is obvious that the troubles of the present life incline to be related to the previous regime. The colonists are in that more devoted to that regime than the natives. Anyway, they benefited, in fact, from the communist authorities, by collective moving into richer regions, and recently, as it was said, they have been deprived in the period of the developed autonomy of Vojvodina and favored in the period after its limiting, and again deprived after the changes of the 5 October. In formulating the answers, the colonists point out more often than the natives “multi-party system”, “multi-party elections” and more often the Constitution of 1974 (e.g. “forming the country from the republics (Constitution of 1974)” as a source of the evil. The natives more often stress the mistakes of the communists (e.g. “as soon as Tito died came the disintegration of SFRY”, “after Tito’s death when every year there was the president from the other republic – this enabled snatching”, “tendency to communism”, “after the Second World War – unreserved believing”, “destroying the Serbian national entity since 1945”, “deserting the capitalistic and introducing the socialist system”, “1945 communism”, “period of the Marshal’s plan”, etc.

The respondents of the Hungarian nationality connect the turning point towards the regressive development with the Milošević’s coming to power at the greater extent (69%). It should be borne in mind that the position of the minorities in Serbia was aggravated during the years after the Eighth session of the Central committee of the Communist League of Serbia (1987) although unevenly. Tito’s death as a turning point is mentioned in 6% of the responses of the asked Hungarians, and the introducing the communist authorities, only in 2%. According to the asked Hungarians in Vojvodina, the declination began with the policy that came into force at the end of the 80s. They give preference to the communist Yugoslavia of Tito over the communist Hungary of Rakocy or Kadar Janos. Naming Milošević and not Tito as being guilty, somewhat explains the attitude towards the crimes that the communists committed over the Hungarians in 1944, but they were pushed back by the troubles that the Hungarians in Vojvodina faced after the drastic limitations of the autonomy of Vojvodina, by beginning new wars and provoking the economic collapse. The arguments of the Hungarians are very much different from those given by the asked Serbs. As the biggest mistake done in our policy, the

Hungarian respondents mention “nationalism”, “wars”, “inspiring the hate between the nations”, “political centralization at the beginning of the 90s”, “provoking the inter-national intolerance in 1991”, “neglecting the human rights”, “not giving the economic and other aspects of independence to the states of the SFRY and disintegration of Yugoslavia”, “repeal of the autonomy and disintegration of the former Yugoslavia in 1989”. They also gave the answers like “15 years ago people started to get less paid”, “taking the economic provisions from the citizens”, etc.

Underlining the nationalism, depressing the autonomy and disregarding the human rights in the responses of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality is generally characteristic for the members of the minor, threatened groups; the ethnic majority does not have to consider these phenomena and so they are not mentioned. The asked Serbs blame Milošević’s regime, but they do not criticize the nationalism he used and by which he manipulated and at the same time, got manipulated.

When directly asked “Which is in your opinion the best period of our country’s past?” the respondents of the Serbian nationality most often mention Tito’s period (45%), 22% mention the 80s as the “golden period”, 5% the ancient period of the Nemanjić’s state, 4% each the period of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (Yugoslavia) and the period of ruling of Ante Marković, etc. There cannot be observed a slight difference between the natives and the colonists. “The best period” or “the golden period” as it was later called is sometimes connected to the “independence of Serbia as a state”, sometimes explicitly and openly to “the one-party system”, or sometimes they emphasize a later charismatic moments of the social stability (“during the king’s reign when we had the strongest currency”) or a real or alleged good position of the country abroad (“the period between the two World Wars when we had friends in the East and in the West”). Idealizing of the Tito’s times is motivated by the reasons of economic security. However, repressing nationalism through a specific communist combination of repression and education of the population is not almost at all mentioned as a reason why the respondents of the Serbian nationality consider the period of Tito’s ruling as “the golden period”. Idealization of the distant past of the Nemanjić’s state shows that the respondents generally are not familiar with the national history. However, other researches also supported this fact. Although the modern Serbian nationalism is mainly based on a forced resurrection and forging of the history, the one that was set forth in media appearances of their protagonists, as a rule did not overcome the level of stereotypes suitable for nationalistic mobilization and did not contribute to the better knowledge of the past among the wider groups in the population.

How do the asked Hungarians define “the golden period” in the past? When asked about the best period in our country’s past, they choose Tito’s time with a relative majority (42%), then the 80s of the 20th century (22%), then the time of Ante Marković’s government in 1990 (11%). It is obvious that in deciding about this issue they do not go as far as the more distant past: Trianon is still a watershed that affects the forming of the social consciousness of the Hungarians in Vojvodina and they are aware that after it they became the minority in Vojvodina. The absence of underlining the

Kingdom of Yugoslavia is more than understandable since the books of Sandor Meszaros clearly speak of the systematic discrimination that the Hungarians were exposed to during the time of this state. There can be observed a great similarity in the answers of the asked Serbs and Hungarians to the question that is being discussed. The communist vendetta was in the social recollection of the Hungarians in Vojvodina very much shaded by the policy of the inter-national tolerance that was carried out during decades. The absence of the direct experience of the events like the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956 could only strengthen such a tolerant attitude towards the period of Tito's ruling. Anyway, according to the New Democracies Barometer of R Rose, over one half of the Hungarians in Hungary approve of the period of the Soviet occupation, which does not mean they are willing to vote for the communists. We could see that Reinprecht comes to the similar findings in his research in Budapest.

Comparison of the results of the two researches (if we abstract the difference in the way of sampling) shows a big growth of the anti-Milošević tendency. The media campaign of the new government from January to December 2001 undoubtedly had to leave trace in the respondents' conscience all the more it was mainly based on new contents. In difference to the more varied answers given almost a year before, the respondents in our research connect the beginning of the social collapse in the absolute majority to the beginning of the national program that led Serbia into the latest wars and into the economic and moral nightmare. This growth of rationalism presents a phenomenon that should be particularly underlined.

It can be seen that the diachronic comparison of the respondents' answers (if we again abstract the differences in the way of sampling the importance of which cannot be enough emphasized) shows, together with the spread condemnation of Milošević's government and policy carried out during the past fifteen years, a more approving attitude towards the communist government of Tito and his epigones. This is understandable also as a consequence of a later view to the old times of the normal life from the point of view of today's economic insecurity, approaching mass job losing and poverty of the major part of population, but also as a result of a long-term observed rule that the past times shine with the glow they actually did not have. From today's gloomy perspective, the past seems to be brighter than it really was. Regardless of the fact that the communist period is idealized in the answers of the major part of respondents, and especially of those of the Serbian nationality, because of the financial security that was provided at that time and not because of the good inter-ethnic relations, there should be kept in mind that this glorification of the period of the unshared ruling can be used in a practical action as well. Apparently, the economic standard that existed at that time was mainly the consequence of the absence of the ethnic conflicts and repression of the ethnic nationalism, as well as the open relation of the country towards the world. Tito and his immediate successors very skillfully manoeuvred in the foreign affairs and suppressed the nationalism. The task of a practical action is to show the connection between these characteristics of the former communist policy and good material

standard of living of the citizens and to show the way these experiences can be used in different conditions.

When asked to determine the worst period in the history of our country, the Hungarians mainly choose the period of Milošević's ruling (54%), then the present period (10%), the period of the communist vendetta and the communist period (2% each) with a great number of various answers. It strikes again that the recent troubles shaded the more painful ones from the period half a century ago. This is understandable although it points to the one of the ways in which the past is unconsciously forged. According to what can be found out, the Hungarians in Vojvodina were in a worse position right after the Second World War than in the years of Milošević's ruling, when almost only the Croats and Albanians in Vojvodina were exposed to the physical violence. It is obvious that they were doing well since the end of the Second World War to the turnover of the Serbian policy marked by the Eighth session. The formulations of their answers to the question about the worst period in the history of our country are not very eloquent: "after the 5 October", "91-92", "hyperinflation in 1993", "the First and the Second world war", "since 1989", "Milošević's period", "during occupation", "since 1990", "after Tito", "1993", "after 1993", "from 1945 to 1950", "from the period of Ante Marković until 5 October", "when Milošević came to power", "during the war", "the last 10 years", "the last 5 years", etc. Neither the period of the Yugoslav Kingdom where the Hungarians were exposed to the ethnic discrimination is mentioned, nor the one during the Second World War prior to the communist vendetta. The recollection obviously works, we saw that the crimes committed over the Hungarians are memorized; however, the new troubles constantly suppress the old memories and twist the image of the past by overstressing the more recent ones.

How do the respondents of the Serbian nationality answer to the same question about the worst period in the past of our country? 53% choose the period of Milošević's ruling, 24% the actual moment, 3% the communist period, 1,5% the Second World War, 1% the period of the Turkish ruling, etc. The differences in the answers of the colonists and the natives are not at all insignificant. The former determine Milošević's time in 41% of the cases, the latter in 65%; the former in this sense point to the period of the communist ruling in a little more than 1% of the cases, and the latter in a little less than 5%. The present post- 5 October period as the worst period is determined by 28% of the colonists and their descendents and by 19% of the natives. The spread discontent with the actual ruling is clearly seen and again the colonists show themselves to be more inclined to socialism than the natives. On the other hand, the Serbs natives appear to be greater anti-communists who look at the Tito's period with nostalgia. In the answers of the colonists we come across the formulations like "present situation", "now", "after the NATO bombing", "all I can remember", "it still is", "the coming of DOS", "since Sloba came to power", "right after the Second World War; inflation between 1988-1999", "during Broz, during Milošević and during Đinđić", etc, in determining the worst period in the history of our country. As for the natives, characteristic formulations are "1941-2001", "the beginning of selling our

people and our country”, “during Milošević”, “after SFRY decomposed”, “since 1990”, “during reconstruction after the Second World War”, “now it is the worst period for me”, etc.

In former research answers to the question "Which is the worst period in history of our country?", were less surprising: Milošević's era (54% of respondents), the post-WW2 period under the Communist rule (only 6%), World War 2 (2%), and Turkish domination of Serbia (over 1%). (Ilić, 2001b)

Glorification of the period of undivided power was based on social security, which respondents remember and in retrospect probably overestimate. Realistic achievements of that period on the plane of preservation of civil peace, curbing lethal ethnic nationalisms and deft pursuit of foreign policy are less noticed in processing of history by citizens.

Our analysis comes to a very important question of the effect of egalitarianism on forming the ways of modifying the past, the ethnic consciousness and perception of the inter-ethnic relations. Egalitarianism is measured through only one, but strong indicator, the attitude towards the desirable proportion of the salaries. Among the asked ethnic Serbs, the attitude that everybody should have approximately the same salaries had 11% of the respondents, 26% were for the proportion 1:3, 15% accepted a bigger proportion, and 33% said that the proportions should not be limited. The finding is similar to the findings of a number of researches carried out in the last year on the probability samples where the respondents in Serbia mainly in one third expressed an explicit egalitarianism and in one third an open pro-market orientation. The respondents of the Hungarian nationality show an expressed pro-market orientation. 6% of them are for the pure leveling of the salaries, 30% are for the proportion of 1 to 3, 16% accept bigger proportion, and 41% think that the differences in salaries should not be limited. It must be said here that, considering the goal of the project, our research was mainly carried out in villages, and that the features of the structure of the sample regarding the occupation of the respondents, as well as the prevailing type of the places in this research, determine the percentage of the egalitarian orientation. It is surely less among the urban population. However, this finding is much more important than the mere stating the fact that the majority of the respondents was distinctly egalitarian-oriented. In the country which lost four wars, went through embargo of the European Community and the United Nations and which faces the inevitable but painful economic and social breaks and approaching mass job losing, egalitarianism appears as a joint part of a wider xenophobic syndrome. Or to make it simpler, the ethnic nationalism and egalitarianism in Serbia mutually support and enforce each other, which is understandable not only because of the population's shock caused by the late and therefore more painful transition, but because of really lessened resources for which the competition that can be given an ethnic attribute, is getting more intensified. The state reminds of the one Susan Woodward once wrote about in connection with the socialist Yugoslavia, although the circumstances today are more unfavorable in an economic and social sense, and as for the foreign affair aspect, more favorable than twenty years ago thanks to the fact that the western forces are now

more interested in stabilization of the Balkans and the South Pannonia. Anyway, the egalitarian orientation of the majority of the respondents does not only explain their attitude towards the one-party system and the time of unshared power, but it presents one of the moments that should be kept in mind when analyzing their attitude towards the members of other ethnic groups. The latter appear to be rivals in the competitions for the resources; according to the theory of the ethnic competition (Ragin,1979), the ethnic competence leads to the inter-ethnic conflict providing that the real ethnic inequalities find their way to the consciousness of the respondents and bring an organized political action.

The provisional conclusion is that unlike the Hungarians in Vojvodina, many of the asked Serbs in Vojvodina, sharing a favorable attitude towards the period of the one-party power, do not manage to explain it as historically at least relatively successful authoritative-educational repressing of the ethnic nationalisms and creating a high degree of equality for all ethnic groups in Vojvodina. Instead, they understand it as a non-democratic utopia of social security, which disappeared in the past. The communist period demands a subtler reconsidering in the expert circles and in modifying of the past that is being carried out by the population in Vojvodina, so its mechanisms of protection of the ethnic rights could be included in a more productive way in the new liberal model of society building in Vojvodina. On the other hand, the spread egalitarianism appears as a potentially dangerous ground for combining with different chauvinistic contents. Therefore it is necessary first to examine the satisfaction of the asked members of the Hungarian nationality with the degree of respecting the collective rights. Then to see the responses of the respondents to some of the solutions offered on the politically very turbulent ground of Vojvodina, beyond which, fortunately, still exists one level of social life where there is an undisturbed everyday communication of the people of different ethnic backgrounds. It is supposed that egalitarianism in this poor country can have a specific analytic and practical importance at this point.

COLLECTIVE RIGHTS

Historical introduction

Condition of inter-ethnic relationships considerably depends on respect of ethnic minorities' collective rights. For all that, nations which represented majority or minority in Vojvodina were not always the same during the history: the Serbian ethnic majority was established only by census in 1948, after a massive banishment of six-digit number of the Germans ("Danube Schwaben") and after "vendetta" over the Hungarians. There is a tendency nowadays towards idealization of Austrian and Austro-Hungarian rule. One should be cautious here. Austro-Hungarian Empire was a state where an ethnic majority didn't exist but which practiced very uneven policy towards minorities. Supranational,

dynastic-catholic identification of that monarchy sometimes sought the main enemies among the so called “leading nations” (Germans and Hungarians; the authors such as Tylor tend to add Italians and Polish people as well) and that’s why Viennese court from time to time encouraged and even financed the awakening of minor ethnic groups’ nationalism. One should remind of Metternich’s relationship towards Lj.Gaj and V.Karadžić. On other occasions the central government favoured “leading nations” and formed alliances with them. These alliances, as it happens in politics, were regularly against “the third side” and they lasted until the first change of force balance among the factors concerned, which were alternately partners, as well as rivals. When the Hungarians had comprehended too seriously their partnership in the ruling Austro-Hungarian coalition, the court temporary abolished their half-statehood at the beginning of 20th century, suspended their constitutional system and brought to rule a military regime of the general Fehervary. All in all, during the last decades of its existence, Austro-Hungarian Empire was simultaneously suppressing national awakening of “inferior nations”, guaranteeing a minimum of ethnic rights (for example, Franz Joseph himself opposed several times anti-Semitic behaviour of Viennese inhabitants during elections) and it gave rise to many ideas which would influence the modern attitude of ethnic equality achievement. Austro-Marxist school was the bearer of only one of these ideas; while the problem of multiculturalism - although the term is in use since recently - engaged many wits, from Genz to Redlich. Austro-Hungarian Empire treated ethnic minorities unequally. In the Austrian part of the monarchy they were in better position than in Hungary, already because they were taken into account as a countenance in the struggle against the pretension of the German Second Reich. The condition of minorities in Hungary changed from decade to decade. Soon after the Agreement in 1867 that condition was solved in a very tolerant way for that time, so that Silađi has right to talk about educational and cultural autonomy that was partly a territorial autonomy, as well: municipalities decided, on their own, about the language in which they were going to keep records and proceedings within their competence. The very end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century were marked with a wave of strong “Hungarization”, which didn’t come across a successful resistance. The so-called lex Apponyi from 1907 considerably strengthens this trend. Later, in the Kingdom of SCS (Yugoslavia), the minorities were discriminated, as much as they could and might be, considering the control of the League of Nations; however, this control was mainly ineffective. Besides breaking the rights, which are today known as the rights to be educated, informed and organized politically in one’s native language, an ultimately unjust procedure within agrarian reform was of particular significance; the land which belonged to large-estates wasn’t distributed to Hungarian landless peasants but to the settled Serbian colonists. Mesaroš will later find there the roots for massive crimes in South Bačka, in 1942, but a similar phenomenon is very characteristic for Kosovo as well.

The real everyday social life of ethnic groups at the territory of today’s Vojvodina has been running beneath the surface of publicly expressed relationships. C. Ingrao (2001:191) rightly warns

that it has been written a lot about bloody conflicts which marked the period of the Civil War from 1848 to 1849, but that nobody is nowadays engaged in studying the harmony of life which exists or existed in that region among the Croats, Hungarians, Germans, Romanians, Serbs and other ethnic groups.

The reflection of Austro-Hungarian past is nowadays essentially determined by education of today's inhabitants in Vojvodina, by family tradition and media propaganda. As a reaction to many decades' one-side identification of Austro-Hungarian Empire with a "prison of nations", a trend has appeared in the world's historiography (this could be seen in the works of Ingraio, Vrkić and Banac, 2001) that leads to another extreme that more tacitly than explicitly idealizes the period of Habsburgs' rule in the middle Danube basin. Vrkić writes that it is "very difficult to defend the thesis that the Dual Monarchy was the prison of nations. Most of these nations which didn't have the dominant position within the monarchy, had more favourable development than they would have had as independent nations" (Vrkić 2001:119) These extremes are understandable and they speak about politicization of historical science which was and is still being used for theoretical organization of practical political actions and for political mobilization of population. Vrkić himself writes that there were only 7 judges of Serbian nationality, out of several thousand in the whole Hungary in 1914 and they were all far away from Vojvodina.

One should see the way the examinees in this research consider the distant past; their attitudes towards modern attempts of regulating inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina could be more thoroughly interpreted in this way.

When asked, "how, in your opinion, did the Serbs in Vojvodina live during Austro-Hungarian rule?", one third of examinees of the Serbian nationality admitted they didn't know the answer; it is understandable, considering the distance from the time in question. Relative majority (41%) thinks that the Serbs were oppressed, but a large number of the questioned Serbs thinks that the Serbs lived quite well in Austro-Hungarian Empire. The differences between the colonists and the natives are noticeable in relation to this question: 47% of the first think that the Serbs were oppressed in Austro-Hungarian Empire, comparing to 35% of the second. 27% of the natives and 17% of the questioned colonists and their descendents think that the Serbs lived relatively well in Austro-Hungarian Empire. These answers of the examinees represent a specific rehabilitation of Habsburgs' period; one should have in mind that this period is evaluated afterwards, from the perspective of today's nightmares of instability and ethnic conflicts and that Austro-Hungarian Empire was, in fact, a modern, cultural and legal though non-democratic state. The examinees of Serbian nationality were also asked to answer this question: "how did, in your opinion, the Serbs in Vojvodina live during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia?" The majority of them (59%) said that the Serbs in Vojvodina lived relatively well at that time, a little bit over 10% think that they were oppressed and with "I don't know" answered somewhat smaller number of examinees than in the case of the previous question. Actual texts that favour autonomy give different

factual data. Vrkatic reminds that, in the given period, 22 prefects in Vojvodina, out of 24, were from other parts of Serbia (Vrkatić 2001:186). According to him, “the descendants of Austro-Hungarian Serbs still have a vivid reminiscence of a very rational and successful community called Austro-Hungarian Empire. The same could be said for other Slavic peoples, as well.” (Ibid:119) This thesis was considerably confirmed by the presented results of this research. Speaking about the Kingdom of Yugoslavia this author claims that the Serbs in Vojvodina were markedly the greatest victims of that community’s deformity and imprudence (ibid:186). Varying a motive of the victim and the guilty, which is well-known in politics, Vrkatić claims that “the attempts of the Regent and Serbian conservative political idea to impose their authoritative will upon the others, poisoned relations on the Balkans in such a degree that the future big war crimes, committed in World War II, were richly caused by these reasons. The Regent and Nikola Pasić were investors of Jasenovac, and Ante Pavelić and Ustasha’s movement were only executors.” (Ibid:167) Vrkatić and those who share his ideas formally resemble here the circle around E.Nolte from Historikerstreit. Like these latter, who tended to explain fascism as an almost natural and primarily reactionary defense from communist danger coming from the East, the modern autonomy writers find the cause of all evil in Belgrade centralism. A specific nostalgia for big multi-ethnic states, such as Austro-Hungarian Empire, is more important; this nostalgia corresponds with occasionally active interests of political circles in the West, frightened by strengthening of either Germany or Russia (or, earlier, the USSR). The very experience of the latest ethnic wars can only strengthen this kind of direction; the present integrational trends in Europe, as well as disappointment in Yugoslav idea, are favourable to it. But it should be considered now how the examinees of Hungarian nationality see the position of their ethnic group in Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

When asked “how did, in your opinion, the Hungarians in Vojvodina live during Austro-Hungarian rule?”, the relative majority of Hungarian examinees gives insincere and conformist answer “I don’t know” (45%), 29% answered that Hungarians in Austro-Hungarian Empire lived relatively well, 18% that they were oppressed etc. When asked “how did, in your opinion, the Hungarians in Vojvodina live in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia?”, the examinees of Hungarian nationality answered “I don’t know” in 50% cases, even 32% say that the Hungarians lived relatively well, 15% say they were oppressed etc. Insincerity of the examinees is quite obvious; if relatively large portion of those who express dissatisfaction with the life in Austro-Hungarian Empire could be explained by enormous social inequalities which were characteristic for Hungary until 1945, then the pretended satisfaction with the position of their group in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia of almost one third of the examinees seemed quite unconvincing. Besides, the questioned Hungarians don’t consider the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as the best period in their history. An enormous number of “I don’t know” answers to the last two questions is still less convincing, having in mind to what extent Trianon was and still is painful for the cross-border Hungarians. The answers to those questions speak about the fear among

Hungarians in Vojvodina to talk freely about their past trauma; this observation should be applied to estimation of their verbal statements' verity, regarding some other questions, but the very existence of that fear speaks about and is justified by the reality of the Hungarians position in today's Vojvodina. The Hungarians don't feel secure and it is quite clear.

Satisfaction with respecting of collective rights

The members of both ethnic groups were asked: "Members of national minorities at the territory of Vojvodina are complaining about their position. Do you think they should be given some new, additional rights along with those they already have?" A relative majority of the examinees of Serbian nationality (42%) think that some additional collective rights should be given to minorities, 35% think that all civil rights should be provided, 15% think that minorities have too many rights etc. These results essentially differ from the results of the research of adult Serbian population attitudes, at a probability sample (consisted of 86% of the ethnic Serbs) which was carried out in January 2001 (Ilić, 2001). It was then found out that a relative majority of examinees thought that members of ethnic minorities in Serbia had too many rights (43%), a little bit over one third thought that people should be provided with usual civil rights (35%) and about 12% of the examinees accepted the idea of providing separate collective rights for ethnic minorities. Drastic differences in the present research are partly caused by the fact that the research is carried out in Vojvodina and not in the whole Serbia and could be explained partly by the influence of the instrument itself (in other words, asking a series of questions about inter-ethnic relations during the interview modifies examinees' attitude), but the differences are at least partly the result of the real change in attitudes between January and December 2001. A consciousness about new European standards of collective protection of minorities (which were mostly made because of tragic Yugoslav events) was spread by media, which are under the control of the new government and it probably influenced the attitude of the Serbs in Vojvodina. T.Korhecz (1999) convincingly explains in detail the necessity for positive discrimination of minority members if there is a real wish to provide a true equality for them. The results obtained by this research show, at least when the attitudes of the Serbs in Vojvodina are concerned, a significant improvement.

Drastic differences between the colonists and the natives are noticeable in relation to this question. Only 24% among the first and 61% among the second think that minorities should be given additional collective rights; at the same time, 26% of the colonists and only 3% of the natives think that ethnic minorities already have too many rights. It would be irresponsible to underestimate the significance of these results. At the same time, it would be also highly irresponsible to stigmatize the colonists and their descendants as a group, which is, according to definition, less tolerant or less modern than the Serbian native population. Different researches of this problem (Cf. Ilić, Cvejić, 1993. Ilić, Cvejić, 1997) convincingly show that, in general, the colonists aren't greater nationalists than the

native Serbs. The presented result speaks about their more frequent underevaluation of other ethnic groups' collective rights; some other results have shown that they are more disposed to equality than the native Serbs. Instead of stigmatization and isolation it is necessary to think about a range of programs for practical activities. It is worth mentioning Vrkatić's belief that "although most pleased with the possibility of Vojvodina autonomy, the native Serbs will hardly accept social changes which such an autonomy bears. This ethnic element will be successful in the future only if it leaves behind its way of thinking, first of all its rural and then its petty bourgeois 19th century conservatism and nostalgia. The colonized Serbs are certainly socially more successful than the natives, but they also represent a bigger obstacle towards the establishment of Vojvodina autonomy, which doesn't mean that they won't be a supporting element in the period when the autonomy comes to life". (Vrkatić 2001:205)

What is the attitude of the questioned Hungarians towards this question like? Their answers are mainly insincere: 65% say that all civil rights should be provided to ethnic minorities but only 23% plead for separate collective rights, giving a large number of the answers of "I don't know" kind. In order to shed light to the problem, it is necessary to see how the examinees of the Hungarian nationality consider the level of satisfying of certain collective rights at the given time.

The respondents of the Hungarian nationality were asked the four questions that were crucial here. When asked "Do you think that all bigger national groups in Vojvodina have satisfactory possibilities for being informed in their mother tongue?", the respondents of the Hungarian nationality answered affirmatively in 76% of the cases, in 23% expressed dissatisfaction with the possibilities of being informed in the mother tongue, and in 3% the answer was "I don't know". In the research carried out in 1995 (Ilić, Cvejić, 1997), 36% of the asked Hungarians expressed dissatisfaction. As for the question "Do you think that all bigger national groups in Vojvodina have satisfactory possibilities for education in their mother tongue?" the respondents of the Hungarian nationality gave answers where they expressed satisfaction in 49% of the cases and dissatisfaction in 43%. In the earlier research the dissatisfaction was in 49% of the answers of the Hungarians. "Do you think that there is an equal possibility of employing for the members of all bigger national groups in Vojvodina?" the respondents said that such equality existed in 58% of the cases and in 30% that it did not. When asked the same question earlier, in 40% of the asked ethnic Hungarians they said that there was discrimination when it came to employing. When asked "Do you think that there is an equal possibility to get a managing position for the members of all bigger national groups in Vojvodina?" the respondents in 43% of the cases answered that there was no discrimination, and 50% thought that there was (with 7% of the answers "I don't know"). In the earlier research 55% of the asked Hungarians believed there was no ethnic equality in that.

Common denominator of every nationalistic ideology is the position that its ethnic group is discriminated. Ethnic groups are always viewed as victims, and never as executioners. When there are

no open inter-ethnic conflicts, nationalistic disputes focus on distribution of resources, for example natural riches and prestigious positions, and not only on the territorial issue and number of casualties. Inequality is conditioned by a large number of factors, from an absolute number of members of an ethnic group, or birth rate to intentional actions at the state or local level leading to unequal distribution of resources. In drastic cases we can witness so-called cultural division of labour, that is distribution of certain jobs to determined ethnic groupings and consequently their subordinate positions in social structure (Hechter, 1978).

What was the general position of members of the polled ethnic groups on meeting their vital group needs according to the previous research, in March 2001? When asked "Do you think that major ethnic groups in Vojvodina have satisfactory possibilities for information in their mother tongue?" 3% of Serb and 31% of Hungarian respondents replied negatively. 29% of Hungarian and 11% of Serb respondents were dissatisfied according the previous research results with a range of possibilities for education in their mother tongue. Serbs obviously had in mind economic problems related to schooling of their children. 26% of Hungarians and 9% of Serbs were of opinion that in the Vojvodina employment policy and labour market there was rampant discrimination. But answers to the next question might shed more light on the pertinent issue. When asked "Do you think that an equal opportunity policy is pursued in appointments to the top managing positions in Vojvodina?", 47% of Hungarians, and 16% of Serbs replied negatively.

How can these findings be commented? First of all, it is obvious that the dissatisfaction with fulfilling some collective rights exists and that it is spread out. The very existence of this dissatisfaction points to the presence of the real problems; people do not protest when nothing bothers them, and besides, the Hungarians in Vojvodina are a group which in these researches as a rule shows conformism (which could be seen in earlier interpretation of some other findings) so there are reasons to believe that the dissatisfaction regarding the collective rights is bigger than the findings reveal. The numerousness of the Hungarian ethnic group in Vojvodina, and it is, along with the Serbian one, the only one big enough to overtake an independent political mobilization and to influence the inter-ethnic relations and the entire social life in Vojvodina, raises at a certain extent the level of the demands in fulfilling collective rights. In the earlier research (Ilić, Cvejić, 1997) the asked Hungarians as a rule showed more dissatisfaction than the members of the less numerous and for an independent political action objectively incapable Slovakian and Romanian group, which also had as many or even more reasons for dissatisfaction. But, to which point are satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the Hungarians in Vojvodina with the fulfilling of their collective rights really based on the facts?

It is the most difficult here to judge the question of respecting the rights to be informed in a mother tongue. The fact that the electronic media from Hungary are greatly listened to and watched, only to a certain extent can compensate the lacks of the informative system in Vojvodina, or better, that part of it performed in Hungarian language. The issue of the right to be educated in a mother

tongue is very complex and it would demand a special study to be presented entirely. The Hungarians in Vojvodina have been educated in their mother tongue for years in spite of a drastic narrowing of the institutional base for this education which Milosevic's government carried out at the beginning of the 90s. It is not less that 80% in primary schools and 70% in secondary schools. (Samardžić, 2000) Anyway, the Hungarians in Vojvodina have a much better education in the mother tongue than the Francophone Canadians who live outside Quebec. On the other hand, education is one of the most important ways of preserving either the ethnic identity or the ethnic assimilation. Disintegration of the educational system in the mother tongues of the ethnic minorities in Vojvodina, which has begun at the beginning of the 90s, seems to be an unceasingly steady trend. When in one place or in one part of a town the education in a mother tongue is repealed, as a rule it is not introduced again so the children are quickly assimilated. Even starting the classes with the education in the mother tongue of the ethnic majority in the ethnic homogenous minor or the ethnically heterogeneous place as a rule leads to disappearing of the education in a mother tongue. As a reaction to these trends, there is a demand of the ethnic political party VMSZ and today's Provincial secretary for education Mr. Bunyick for education in a mother tongue "from kindergarten to university", where very often it is understood that the education in the mother (Hungarian) tongue should be in a special school buildings. This presents a sort of a creeping apartheid. On the other hand, insisting on a true application of the principles of multicultural society such as understood by numerous representatives of the ethnic majority, leads to a fast assimilation of the minor population where it presents a minority regarding the total population. Multicultural characteristic is in reality turned into pro-Serbian assimilation, while the languages of the minorities disappear not only from education. A special dimension of the problem is an objective dilemma between attending classes in the mother tongue, which assures preserving the ethnic identity, and occupying as successful a position as possible for starting a social competition, which means to begin attending classes in the language of the ethnic majority as early as possible. It seems that the minor communities are objectively split between a social promotion of its members, which means assimilation and preserving an ethnic identity by tying their members for the very bottom of the social structure, and what is called "a cultural sharing of work". (Hechter, 1978)

What can be said for the attitude of the respondents towards the (un) equality regarding the possibility of employing the members of the different ethnic groups in Vojvodina? It is perhaps too much to expect that introducing a market economy can solve this problem since the starting positions of the members in the competition are not equal when it comes to the professions that demand a certain level of general culture or skill (it should be taken into account a small possibility to be educated at the university in the mother tongue). However, the only area of a drastic discrimination of the members of the ethnic minorities in Vojvodina, including of course, and maybe above all, the Hungarian group as well, is a possibility to occupy managing positions in the state administration, economy, health care, media, education and judiciary. This is the area where there are the most important and passionate

political conflicts on the local level and at the same time where the discrimination was, and after the 5 October maybe still is more than obvious. The members of the ethnic minorities were not seen to occupy the managing positions. (Cf. Samardžić, 2000) Joining the Hungarian ethnic political organizations into the coalition with now ruling Serbian nationalists somewhat lessened this a little. In the previous period the Hungarians could, like ethnic Serbs, become managers if they joined the ruling parties, SPS, JUL. They were not very much interested in that, although in two municipalities with the ethnic majority (Čoka and Ada) the extremely left-oriented JUL was at power from 1996 until 2000. At the same time in a very important municipality of Subotica the coalition of the Hungarian ethnic party VMSZ and the extreme left-oriented parties, which were under Milošević's control, were at power. Along with it, the information shows (Samardžić, 2000) that the Hungarian personnel were not so common in the managing positions.

The largeness of the sub-sample of the asked respondents of the Hungarian nationality is sufficient to observe the possible influence of the factors like material standard or education on their satisfaction in respecting their collective rights. The standard is operationalized through a rough and at the same time strong indicator formulated in the question "What did you or the members of your families have to deprive yourselves of in the last year?" This way, four "classes" regarding the material standard were obtained, which can be understood as "social classes" only in a literal and not in social-theoretical sense. With the realized right to be informed in the mother tongue are satisfied 69% of those who did not have to deprive of anything, 76% of those who had to deprive of the luxurious needs, 81% of those who had to deprive of everyday needs and 77% of those who deprived even of a part of vital needs. According to the crossings, we could have the impression that the most demanding are the richest ones, which would be understandable. However, when the above-mentioned indicator of the material standard is crossed with the attitude, which expressed (dis) satisfaction with the existing possibilities for education in the mother tongue, it can be seen that there are 33% of the dissatisfied from the richest group, 50% from the second, 49% from the third and 26% from the poorest group, respectively. All the groups are numerous enough for the statistic observation, and here we should remind that the attitude towards education in mother tongue could be taken as an indicator of the fear of ethnic assimilation. As it can be seen here, the richest and the poorest are the least afraid. The data about the attitude towards the equal possibilities to be employed are not discriminative if regarded in relation to the material standard of the respondents. The dissatisfaction with the possibility of occupying managing positions, or better, with the point where the discrimination in Vojvodina is the most stressed (beside Croatian and Albanian group which were the only exposed to the mass physical violence and the systematically deprived Roma group), shows that 46% of the richest are dissatisfied, 56% of those from the second and the third group and 29% of the poorest. The richest among the ethnic Hungarians have, it seems, more than others passed the limit behind which preserving the ethnic identity or joining the competition for occupying the prestigious positions are very important, and the

poorest have not even reached it, since occupied with their survival and not joining the competition for the prestigious positions (for which objectively they do not have any chance), nor preserving the ethnic identity. This is also obvious if the social position of the respondents is operationalized through their education for this opportunity (which is theoretically clearly incomplete) and crossed with the answers to the question about (dis) satisfaction with the possibilities to be educated in the mother tongue. In this respect, 34% of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality who finished primary school as the highest level of education are dissatisfied, 48% of those who finished the workers school, 42% of those who finished vocational school and/or grammar school and 53% of those who finished college or university. The level of education of the respondents obviously affects the developing of the sensibility for the importance of preserving the ethnic identity and for the role of education in the mother tongue.

The choice of the places, which were included in the sample, is determined by the basic topic of the project so it is not worth making a crossing according to the type of the place. However, we can conclude that on two most important levels of (not) respecting of ethnic rights, e.g. regarding the right to be educated in the mother tongue (which is the other name for the issue of assimilation) and the equal share in having managing positions (which is the other name for the issue of discrimination of an ethnic elite and sub-elite), the exponents of the ethnic consciousness and demands for implementation of today in the world acknowledged collective rights, are, above all, the people who do not belong to the poorest nor the richest groups, but to the main corpus of those who take part in the social competition, and that the consciousness of the need of preserving the ethnic identity develops along with the level of education. In this regard the charismatic role of preserving the identity of an ethnic group attributed to the educated middle class, shows itself as being real and important.

Generally, the Hungarians took atypical mature attitude towards their own past regardless of the fact that they come from Hungary or Vojvodina. In the majority of other East European countries, this maturing is slower and followed by bigger amplitudes and straying into extremities. The pragmatic modification of the past, typical for Western Germany in the mid 80s, motivated by a tendency to free this country of the constant stigma of nazism an holocaust, or an open glorifying of general Antonesku in Romania in the 90s, are mostly different from the relations towards the past discovered by Reinprecht (1994) or which was established by this research.

According to T. Kuljić (2000) the revisionism in Hungary originated from the top, it did not provoke a greater interest of the public and broad masses like in Romania, nor there were tendencies for a radical mastering the communist past. The changing of the system was not being carried out as a mass rising or through a “coup de court”, but was a result of the compromise between the communist and neo-communist intelligence (Schauschitz 1996,33). The Hungarian public was not very much interested in revealing the communist past of the new politicians (as for example in DDR) nor there was revenging for the events in 1956. Kuljić, however, notices, relying on Reinprecht (1994) that the majority in Hungary is in favor of revising the judgments about Horthy, not because they consider him

a positive person, but because they have doubts about the communist propaganda. On the other hand, according to his own words (Kuljić, 2000), “Hungarian Archipelago Goulash” has its national myth about Trianon – as a central value, patriotism is a democratic virtue of the urban parts, and nationalism is the ethnocentric rural resistance”. Among the Hungarians in Vojvodina there is no glorification of Horthy almost at all, and the importance of Trianon for modification of their present awareness about the past can be determined only when their answers to the questions about the events preferences. On the other hand, fear and insincerity of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality, and this issue will be later discussed as well, mainly affect the content of their responses. The respondents of the Hungarian nationality do not apply any of the most often used ways of modifying the past in the East Europe. They do not deny the crimes over the Serbs, Jews and Roma. They do not try to question them, which is a usual model in Serbian – Croatian polemics, where the crimes “of their own” are indirectly justified by calling for those committed by the members of the opposite side. Their relations differ not only from the Serbian but from the Romanian as well. By calling for Totok, Kuljić writes that “ in the heart of the Romanian revenge there is a demand for rehabilitation of marshal Antoanescu. For about ten years there has been a fierce so-called Antoanescu-debate permeated with the mixture of questioning, justification, fascism, revisionist argumentation and anti-Semite excesses (Totok 1998). The revisionists claim that Antoanescu was a great Romanian patriot who was close to Hitler out of need, wishing to take back Besarabia, and was a leader of the fight against atheistic bolshevism. There is a demand for the revision of the process against marshal, who, as Hitler’s ally, ruled from September 1940 until August 1944, and then, in 1946, was shot. Marshal is celebrated as a “rescuer of the nation” from communist and Hungarian revisionism. In 1919 he marched into Pest and showed the Hungarians what awaited them if they suppress the Romanians (Totok 1998). However, in his regime during the anti-Semite Romanization about 100.000 Jews died, which is denied by the contemporary revisionists. After the fall of Chaucesku, Antoanescu’s name was given to streets in many Romanian towns, his supporters pledge for putting a monument to the memory of the marshal, newspapers write about his “holly anti-bolshevist war” on Hitler’s side, and in June 1991 the members of the Parliament paid their respect by a moment of silence (only the Hungarian deputies left the room). In 1996 the public prosecutor of Romania took proceedings for rehabilitation of six Antonescu’s ministers”. (Totok 1998, 47; Kuljić, 2000).

Selective memory and selective oblivion

The very manner of changing the social system in Serbia affected a lot the manner of modifying the past. Regarding this, there have already been considered the particularities of the manners of mastering the past in Hungary in relation to Germany, Check Republic and Romania. (Kuljić, 2000; Reinprecht, 1994; Totok, 1998) The reforms were started by the previous, Milosevic’s very much socialistic government, and a dominating pattern of modifying the past in the past decade of

the initiated and at the same time stopped transition, was treated in the former researches (Ilić, Cvejić, 1997; Ilić, 2001 b). This present project was carried out at the time when the population found out that the consequences of a sudden acceleration of the changes brought by the 5 October were also very big ones, and at least in a relatively historic sense, irreversible. However, in order to envisage the relation towards the past in a more complex way, we should first say something about how the respondents from both sub-samples observe the present state and problems either of the country or of their ethnicities. It should be stressed that the changes in Serbia, including Vojvodina, were carried out by a strong influence of a foreign factor and that the awareness of the country's dependence on western forces during 2001 more and more strengthened among the population. Arresting Milosevic and the extradition to The Hague Tribunal could only catalyze this strengthened awareness of the changed position of the country in the foreign affair policy.

It should be given here, above all, how the respondents see the present state of the country.

PERSONAL PREFERENCES

Personal and development-related preferences represent those contents of social awareness which serve as a link with the past of one's own ethnic group, and whose continual re-formulation makes possible their perpetuation, and frequently their future development. Such re-interpretations are usually carried out by specially trained people, called intellectuals; they are influenced by changes in real social life, but also by demands of centres of power bent on strengthening a weak policy of a concrete group or amending it. Readers in Yugoslavia are well aware of massive re-interpretation of the Serb national history effected in the late Eighties, which was intended as a justification of a radical change of political course, that is replacement of the Yugoslav program by Serbian nationalism. Neighbouring countries faced a similar problem several years later, when the old social and economic system collapsed and the need emerged to devise a new political and social course. Eruption of nationalism was by and large avoided by Eastern Europe, although it did not remain immune to sporadic nationalistic outbreaks and attempts to re-assess national past in order to gain legitimacy for new distribution of resources. After recent political changes, which essentially mark the end of Serbia's resistance to globalisation, it is necessary that such re-examination of the past be carried out in our country too. Yugoslavia's multi-ethnic character promises several different patterns of possible re-examination of the past, the more so because of good representation of minorities political organisations in the new authorities and their attempts to maximise their share in power. National cultural elites play a special role in re-interpretation of the past in the ethnic mind-set of their groups. But they also have their specific interests in re-shaping the past, for this could help justify special social rewards for minorities intellectuals, in the shape of memberships in different national councils, posts of editors in the print and electronic media and publishing houses, posts of advisers in ethnic

political organisations, scholarships, grants, paid trips, and different kinds of sinecures. It was noticed long time ago that ethnic nationalisms in Eastern Europe are to a large extent a consequence of ambitions of frustrated intellectuals, whereby the rewards they expect and/or get, can be not only of financial, but also of "moral", psychological character.

The perception of the state, problem and personal solutions

As the most important problems our country meets today, the asked Serbs most often point out those of the economic and social nature (62%), then the political instability (20%), moral crisis and corruption (11%), etc. The Hungarians gave somewhat different responses, although they also put the economic and social problems in the first place by far (54%), political instability has greater percentage (27%) than among the Serbs, moral crisis and corruption are more rarely mentioned (2% on the first level of the choice) and they also mentioned nationalism as a prior problem (4%) which practically does not exist among the Serbs.

As the biggest obstacles in solving those problems the respondents from both ethnic groups most often mention disagreement and poverty in the country; the Serbs more often mention the pressure of the international community (with 6% on the first level of the answers versus 2% among the asked Hungarians), while the Hungarians mentioned the burdens of the past (with 9% on the first level of the choice versus 5% among the Serbs).

When asked whom they can rely on in solving those problems, the respondents of both nationalities give very different answers, where almost half of them do not have hope in anybody. When directly asked which historic character they considered able to solve the actual problems if he were alive, the asked Serbs pointed out Josip Broz Tito with the frequency of 29%, followed by Tsar Dušan (7%), Miloš Obrenović (6%) and Nikola Pašić far after Tito, etc.

In the answers of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality Tito was also in the first place by far (with the frequency of 25%), while other answers were very varied.

When asked about the most significant persons from their national history, the Hungarian respondents on the first level of the answers most often named different old Hungarian rulers with the total frequency of 28%, and then classic writers and scientists with 12%, etc. Kossuth Lajos was chosen by 6% of the respondents while Horthy Miklosz and the politicians connected with him were mentioned in an irrelevant number of cases although mentioning of Teleky and the similar politicians shows the "normalization" of the nationalism among the Hungarians in Vojvodina.

The asked ethnic Serbs mentioned Tito with 9,5%, Karađorđe with 8%, Miloš Obrenović (6%), Saint Sava (5%), etc. Classic writers and scientists have the total frequency of 22% in the answers of the respondents, the rulers from the Nemanjić dynasty 10% in the total, those from the Karadjorđević dynasty (not including Karađorđe) 7%, etc. Contemporary persons from the political and cultural life are practically not chosen by the respondents regardless their nationality.

When asked which persons they considered the most significant contemporary representatives of their nation, the asked Hungarians generally mentioned Joszef Kasza (31% on the first level of the answers). Tibor Varady, Andras Agoszton, Tamas Korhecz and the persons who are not involved in the political life are more rarely mentioned. It is very interesting that, like in the previous researches, Nenad Čanak was again mentioned with 10% as the choice of the most significant Hungarian in Vojvodina. A high political mobilization of the Hungarians in Vojvodina is confirmed by a very low number of the persons employed in the culture in the answers to this question. The asked Serbs, on the other hand, as the most important contemporary representatives of the Serbian nation most often mentioned the actual politicians at power, like Koštunica (23% on the first level of the choice), Đinđić (11%), Milošević (8%), etc. Dobrica Ćosić had a smaller frequency of 4% when compared to the previous researches and Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić had a lower total frequency of 2%, which shows the weakening of the military version of the Serbian ethno-nationalism and giving way before the pressure of the encirclement.

On the other hand, this weakening of the Serbian ethnic nationalism is connected to its modifying which enables its lasting. The finding where only 10% of the asked Serbs pleaded for tighter integration of the Republic of Srpska into Bosnia and Herzegovina while 46% of them were for its uniting with FRY and 32% were for its stronger integration with Yugoslavia shows that the ethno-nationalism is not getting tired yet. In the interpretation of this finding we should bear in mind that approximately one half of the respondents of the Serbian nationality is made of the colonists and their descendants. We have seen the structure of the realized sample partly explains an extremely unfavorable attitude of the respondents of the Serbian nationality towards the Tribunal in The Hague; it should be repeat that positive attitude showed 11% of them, a negative 74% and an indecisive 15%. This finding is much more unfavorable than those of the previous researches; however, the structure of the sample was planned regarding the basic topic of the project, and not to enable making the estimations. The asked Hungarians showed, as it was expected, greatly different attitude towards the Tribunal; 64% of them had a positive attitude, 16% a negative and 20% an indecisive attitude. Even this summarized finding shows the lack of readiness of the Serbs from Vojvodina to radically define themselves in relation to the responsibility of their own nation for the events from the recent past.

The respondents estimate the position of their own ethnicity in Vojvodina in a very similar way: as “good” position of their group the Serbs see in 53% of the cases and the Hungarians in 48%; as “bad” both the Serbs and the Hungarians see the position of their group in 22%. 7% of the Serbs and 10% of the Hungarians claimed that the position of their nation is worse than the position of other nations. This finding shows one of the reasons for the absence of the open inter-ethnic conflicts in Vojvodina.

The given findings of our research offer a few phenomena, which deserve a more detailed comment and illustration. First of all, the asked Serbs do not see the nationalism as a problem; in spite

of lessening the xenophobia they consider the pressure of the foreign countries a bigger problem than the burden of the past. As for the asked Hungarians, it is quite the opposite.

It is very interesting to see the spread preference of Marshal Tito as a historic figure, believed to be able to solve the actual problems if he were alive now in a relative majority among the both asked ethnic groups. The respondents were above all bothered with the question of surviving and here the results of our research correspond to the findings of a number of other researches. However, Tito was not only the symbol of a decent life from the point of view of the material standard and social security, but also a factor of integration on the above-national grounds in a rather long-lasting period. The respondents do not see clearly a connection between suppression of nationalism, the reputation of the country in the world and a good material standard; but they feel that these phenomena are not isolated. Each practical action that will be directed towards lessening the potential for inter-ethnic conflicts in Vojvodina will appear to be not enough founded if it does not take into consideration the experiences that earlier authoritative communistic suppression of ethnic nationalisms left in the conscience of the population. The period of the developed autonomy of Vojvodina, from 1974 until the end of the 80s, enabled the different ethnic groups to lessen the feeling of insecurity, characteristic for the members of the ethnic minorities on the Balkans and South Pannonia. We should always have in mind that the communists in their suppression of ethno-nationalism did not use only the education but also the force, so in this sense those among the intellectuals from the minor communities, who crossed the limit of the permitted, were exposed to different sorts of repression. The cases that happened around the church in Kanjiža or the editorial staff of the magazine “Simposion” were in this sense well known to the public in Vojvodina. However, the successful promoting of the multi-cultural principle and suppressed destabilizing potentials on the level of development of the inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina, surely needs a differentiated attitude towards the policy which was applied towards the ethnic problems in the period of the developed autonomy of the Province. It is very important that Tito is “popular” among the Serbs and Hungarians although he was a non-Hungarian and a non-Serbian, so in this sense he is a symbol of the above-national integration. It is clear that the present needs implementation of the new models, and that they can be successfully developed only on the base of the differentiated approach from the previous period.

It could be seen that Tito was the most repeated person of the history of Serbian people in the first level of answers. In the answers of the respondents of Hungarian nationality Tito was also the most often mentioned person (with the frequency of 25%), while other answers varied. In the previous research of the Serbian national cultural elite, the most significant person from the past was Saint Sava followed by Karadjordje, Njegoš and Vuk Karadžić (Ilić, 1997). According to the results of this research, Saint Sava is not seen as a symbol of the ethnic identity as much as before. This is understandable since after the lost wars and the final giving way before the wave of globalization, the “national” problems were replaced by the problems of surviving and social insecurity. In this sense the

present official promoting of the spirit of Saint Sava and the orthodox Serbia performed by today's government has a ritual and symbolic character rather than a real active one. It is an effort to compensate a real and total subordination of the country to the trend of globalization by a forced refreshing of the symbolism of the past, which was present for at least a short time at the beginning of the 90s when the ethnic nationalism was more glowing.

Among the most important persons of the Serbian national history that the respondents cited were, as it is expected, the Nemanjićs, Njegoš, dukes from the First World War, the rulers of the Karadjordjević dynasty, the scientists like Tesla and the authors like Andrić, V. Karadžić or D. Obradović. The persons of the Vojvodina surrounding were very rarely cited with the exception of D. Obradović and the scientist M. Pupin, as it was the case in the previous researches. The politicians like Svetozar Miletić or Jaša Tomić were very rarely mentioned. A few respondents mentioned the patriarch Arsenije Černojević. However, more of them mentioned the earlier politicians who were not primarily tied to Vojvodina and certainly do not belong to the most important persons in the history of the Serbian people, like Draža Mihajlović, Milan Stojadinović, Aleksandar Ranković, and even among the extremely party-oriented respondents, the contemporary politicians like Slobodan Milošević and Živadin Jovanović or V. Šešelj. The finding of the previous research was again confirmed: the personal symbols of the ethnic identity of the Serbs in Vojvodina are mostly outside Vojvodina. The respondents, of course, know history very badly (the characteristic is the answer "the last king – I can't remember his name") and sometimes they are aware of the way of its ideological modifying ("only Tito, everything else is history forgery"). The fact that the respondents of the Serbian nationality do not choose the contemporary persons from the political and cultural life any more can be explained by the thesis that after a series of lost wars and the years of fast events, they do not think any more that they live in a big historic moment. This is at least partly connected with the feeling of the national defeat and a previously observed considerable fatigue of the Serbian people.

The answers of the asked Hungarians about the most important persons from their national history include mainly the Middle Age rulers and the persons from the time of the Hungarian revolution of 1848 or the classic Hungarian writers. Here are the most often cited personal preferences outside Vojvodina, too. The respondents from both ethnic groups see themselves as peripheral parts of their nations.

It is understandable that the preferences of the contemporary representatives of their own nations differ a lot from those of the history. The Hungarian major preference for the politicians of the VMSZ shows a great political mobilization of the members of this ethnicity in Vojvodina. If it had been used a sample of a different type, there could have been made estimations about influence of some political parties on the Hungarians in Vojvodina. There could be believed that a geographic region affects a lot of party preferences. Apparently, the VMSZ, as the most influential party among the Hungarians in Vojvodina, stands for the interests of those members of this ethnicity who live in the

surroundings where the ethnic Hungarians make a majority of the total population. It is worth mentioning that together with the politicians from the ethnic parties and with Nenad Čanak, in the respondents' answers we can meet also the politicians from the Republic of Hungary as the most important contemporary representatives of the Hungarian nation in Vojvodina as it was the case in the previous researches, too. Some respondents when answering this question say they would choose "nobody (they are bad)", "not significant", "politics does not interests me, and Kasza sold us", "nobody is different enough to be a support of such a political moving", "no adequate representatives' and so on.

It was said that the respondents of the Serbian nationality as the most important contemporary representatives of their nation very rarely cited R. Mladić and R. Karadžić, unlike the researches carried out a few years ago. The patriarch who was chosen as the most important living Serbian among the national intellectuals, is not at all mentioned in the answers of the respondents (at this point we have to remember the share of the declared and real believers in the realized sample). On the other hand, it is obvious that the Serbian ethnic nationalism found its leader in Dr Koštunica. He alone in the first level of the answers to the said question has a twice as big frequency than the total frequency of the nationalistic oriented scientists and artists cited in the previous researches like D. Čosić, Slobodan Selenić, Borislav Pekić, Mića Popović, Vasilije Krestić, Mihajlo Marković, Milić od Mačve, Dušan Kovačević, Momo Kapor or Milorad Pavić.

The previously mentioned weakening of the militant version of the Serbian ethno-nationalism and giving in to the pressures of the surroundings does not mean giving up the ethnic nationalism. It is rather its apparent "normalization", leaving the compromised allies and the attempt to please the West and to enter the European integrations and at the same time to retain the Serbian individuality and the main features of the applied national program. The opinion about The Hague Tribunal and the status of the Republika Srpska explicitly speak of a persistent ethnic nationalism in the minds of the respondents. The choice of Dr Koštunica and Dr Djindjić, the allies of Dr Karadžić and his policy, who changed the side and with the help of the Western forces replaced the former regime, is not less indicative in this sense than some previous and apparently more extreme choices. The civil option is quite neglected in the answers of the respondents of the Serbian nationality to the question about the actual personal inter-ethnic preferences, although some of them mention G. Svilanović, and almost nobody N. Čanak not other autonomy-oriented politicians. It is understandable because the many of its representatives are in a close relation with the ethno-nationalists who buy them by sinecures. All in all, judging by the answers of the respondents, the Serbian nationalism is surviving, adjusting necessarily to the demands of the west and giving up a part of its too much compromised protagonists.

With the preciously cited results regarding the indicators of the attitude towards The Hague Tribunal and the future of the Republika Srpska, it is worth mentioning the answers of the respondents of the Serbian nationality to the question "Which solution of the problem of Kosovo and Metohija

would be acceptable in your opinion?”. The return of our police and army pleaded 39% of the respondents, giving a real autonomy to Kosovo 25 %, dividing Kosovo and Metohija 19%, Kosovo as a republic would be accepted by 11% of the respondents of the Serbian nationality, Kosovo as an independent country less than 2%, etc. Regarding the variety of the types of the applied samples, we cannot make a precise comparisons to the former researches of this issue, but it is obvious that a dominant unrealistic view of the “milder” solution to the Kosovo problem begins to prevail in the minds of the respondents. It should be repeated that according to the results of the research, the Serbian nationalism still lasts and accustoms to the changed circumstances after the final giving in of Serbia before the wave of globalization.

Observing the preferences in events gave a following result according to the answers of the respondents:

EVENT PREFERENCES

When asked about the most important events in the history of the Serbian people, the respondents of the Serbian nationality distinguish the Battle of Kosovo in the great majority (42% on the first level of answers with 13% more in the total on the second and third level), then The First World War and uniting of today’s Vojvodina with Serbia (11% on the first level), The Second World War and coming of the communists to power (8% on the first level of answers), 5 October 2000 (6%), etc. The NATO bombing is almost forgotten if observed in this context: it was the choice of only 2,5% of the respondents on the first level.

Some of the answers refer to the direction of thinking of the respondents, which is in a direct connection with the main topic of the research. (For example: “the agreement of S Lazarevic with the Hungarian king after the Battle of Kosovo”, “the second day of Christmas – the raid and bringing people to the ramp and throwing them into the Tisa”, “persecution of the Hungarians from Čurug in 1945”, “killing in 1941 – the Hungarians”, “the revolution in 1848”.) It should be borne in mind that the question that is being observed was asked at the beginning of the questionnaire so the topic itself of the research could not affect the answers of the respondents at a great extent. There are no significant differences in the answers of the colonists and the natives. It is interesting that the most important wave of a new Serbian settling in today’s Vojvodina (“migrations of the Serbs”) on the first level of the answers was the choice of less than 3% of the respondents. A big proportion of the Battle of Kosovo is not historically unfounded: in this case it was really the event not only burdened with the many centuries long mythological modifications, but it was also a crucial moment which meant separation of the main source of developing of the Serbian ethnic group from the streams that dominated in Europe. As for Vojvodina, the First World War was undoubtedly more important than the Second one, considering the geographic and political changes in them caused by the ethnic changes

that happened here in 1918 and the years after. Thus, the answers like “the First World War, the war with Austro-Hungarian empire for freedom”, “the assassination in Sarajevo”, “Gavrilo Princip’s act of assassination”, “Unity of Vojvodina and Serbia”, or “Vojvodina’s joining Serbia”, and “the unfortunate unification in 1918” are not surprising. The Serbian-Hungarian bloody clashes in 1848 and 1849 seem to disappear from the historic consciousness of the Serbs in Vojvodina. No wonder, since considering the consequences, the Serbs got as a reward what the Hungarians got as a punishment from the Austrian court, according to the spread opinion of the historians. It was not until 1918 that Vojvodina became a part of Serbia (or better, the kingdom that would be called Yugoslavia): the respondents are well aware of this. However, a distinct preference of the Battle of Kosovo as the most important event in the history of the Serbian people confirms the conclusion that the basic ideological and symbolic foundations of the ethnic identity of the Serbs from Vojvodina can be found outside the Vojvodina region, geographically speaking.

The respondents among the Hungarians in Vojvodina, on the other hand, did not forget the year 1848. It is the most important historic event on the first level of answers in 18% of the cases, with another 8% on the second and 4% on the third level. The said revolution did not only present the beginning of making modern Hungary, but a situation where different ethnic groups in Hungary killed each other on behalf of smaller groups in their ethnicities or on behalf of the Austrian Court. The answers of the asked Hungarians vary. By collecting the answers on all three levels, we find out that the raising in 1956 was estimated as nearly as important as establishing the Hungarian state and as more important than acceptance of Christianity in Hungary. On the other hand, Trianon is mentioned in 10% of the total answers on all three levels: it is about an insincere attitude towards the Hungarian loss of two thirds of its territory and of half of its population in 1918-1920. Trianon affected a lot the fate not only of the Hungarians in Vojvodina, but also of the whole nation. It resembles somehow the Dayton agreement, but it had more serious consequences on the Hungarian nation and state. This event and its consequences have not yet exceeded the field of forbidden topics for most of the respondents. This is bad for several reasons, one of them being, but not the least, the fear of mentioning Trianon which not only prevents the talk about its consequences, but also about its causes. Without mentioning the questions of previous changes of the borders with the use of weapons there can be no open talk between the members of different ethnic groups in Vojvodina. There is no real reason to hide these wounds of the past, regardless the difficult question of possible further geographic reduction or reorganization of Yugoslavia and Serbia regarding Montenegro, Kosovo, autonomy of Vojvodina, the problem of Sandžak, etc. Speaking double-dutch as a rule provokes more dangerous and long-lasting consequences than the open talk which needs arguments and listening to the counter arguments. Some of the respondents say they are not interested in the history of the Hungarian people, others say they do not know it. There are answers they have not been in the situation to learn this part of the history. Some answers show that they do not know enough of the national history, and so the raising in

Budapest is believed to be a year before or after 1956, and Trianon in 1919 or 1921. The leaving of the Soviet army left a striking trace in the historic consciousness of the respondents and the Battle of Mohac, although found in the answers, cannot be a match of the Battle of Kosovo, not only because it is less present but because the whole Hungarian state was never under the Turkish domination, or outside Europe, if we may say that for the centuries of the Turkish ruling. 5 October 2000 is almost never mentioned in the answers of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality; there is an impression that although the voting of the majority of the Hungarians is known, it was experienced as an internal Serbian matter. On the other hand, opening the Hungarian Consulate in Subotica, which is obviously not one of the most important historic events in the history of the Hungarian people, was cited in the answers of the respondents.

Which results were obtained in the previous researches of this last question? In the research carried out in 1995 (Ilić, Cvejić, 1997) the respondents were asked to name the most important events for their ethnic group in the history of Vojvodina. In this research the question referred to the history of the whole Hungarian and Serbian people. The respondents of the Hungarian nationality most often mentioned Trianon, then the Second World War, and then the Constitution in 1974. The asked Serbs, on the other hand, cited unification in 1918, then “the fall of the autonomy-oriented government”, etc. Comparison of the answers shows that they are caused by the formulation of the questions. On the other hand, a very frequent mentioning of Trianon in the previous research, questions a formerly given judgment on insincerity of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality in the present project. It is certain that in 1995 the Hungarians in Vojvodina were more frightened than today. There is an impression that the respondents of the Hungarian nationality consider the year 1848 as important for articulation of the modern Hungary, and that they attribute to Trianon a “differential” significance, or better, a different significance for Hungarians from Hungary and cross-border Hungarians. In the earlier research carried out in 2001 (Ilić, 2001b) it was observed that the Hungarians relatively often mention the year 1945 as one of the most important events for the history of Vojvodina, while Trianon was almost never mentioned in the answers of the respondents. The interpretation of this was that in the course of time, which brought the change of the government in Hungary and its unambiguous joining the European integrations, the scar left after the Trianon wound was put aside from the main streams of reflections. On the other hand, it was estimated that mentioning of the vendetta was passing from one traumatic story into the field of approved speech and that as such opens quite opposite perspectives on the level of common reformulating the past which is imposed as a must to all citizens of Vojvodina. The findings of this research do not annul the given interpretations, but they show that this issue is much more complicated than it might look.

To the question about the most important institutions of the Hungarian nationality in Vojvodina, the respondents of the Hungarian nationality answered schools and different educational institutions and the theaters, which in Subotica and Novi Sad put the plays in Hungarian in 19% of the

cases each on the first level of answers, 12% mentioned church, 3% for each electronic media in mother tongue, the publishing house “Forum”, different newspapers and cultural-artistic societies, 2% political parties, etc. Some said they could not pick out particular institutions by their importance, but they thought important “all institutions which take care of the Hungarian language”; while others said that “no institution was representative enough”. It is unusual that the Department for Hungarian language and culture at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad was mentioned rarely in this context. The experience from the field tells that the teachers who work there are famous and respected among the Hungarians in Vojvodina, and the said finding refers to the conclusion that the Hungarians in Vojvodina are quite aware of the importance of taking care of the national identity. The disharmony between personal and institutional preferences is striking among the respondents of the Hungarian nationality. While among the former we can find politicians most often, among the latter, parties are rarely mentioned. The impression is that the Hungarians in Vojvodina are not only politically motivated, but they are quite aware of the importance of the institutional and organizational ground for satisfying collective ethnic needs and that in this sense they show an extraordinary maturity.

The respondents of the Serbian nationality, on the first level of answers to the question about the most important institutions of their own people in Vojvodina, most often cited Matica Srpska (no less than 42%), then Serbian Orthodox Church and its different institutions (14%), provincial administration (11%), etc. Emphasizing Matica Srpska or the institutions like Karlovačka gimnazija (Grammar school in Karlovci) or the monasteries on Fruska Gora reminds of the findings of the research carried out in 1995. However, it is unusual that the respondents of the Serbian nationality as the national (meaning “ethnic”, which was suggested with the question) institutions cited also the Parliament of Vojvodina, The Museum of Vojvodina, Courts, etc. The findings from 1995 show that at least one part of the respondents does not understand the word “institution” or “the most important institutions of the Serbian people in Vojvodina”. On the other hand, reading the answers refers to the interpretation that at least one part of the respondents of the Serbian nationality sees the institutions of Vojvodina as the Serbian ethnic institutions. Having this in mind, it is easier to show understanding for the attitude that is among the Hungarians in Vojvodina according to which the question of Vojvodina is ‘Serbian-Serbian’ question. It is also easier to understand pleading for making separate ethnic systems for satisfying collective needs of education, being informed, etc.

The question “Which are, in your opinion, the three most important events for the history of Vojvodina?” had the answer unification with Serbia (17%) on the first level of answers among the respondents of the Serbian nationality, then obtaining a developed autonomy of the Province in 1974 (11%), migration of the Serbs and the events in 1848 and obtaining a temporary territorial autonomy from Austro-Hungary (10% each), annulment of autonomy during Milošević’s ruling (4%), colonization and liberation in 1944 (3% each), etc. The differences between the colonists and the natives are visible: the latter cite more often the events concerning their ancestors who lived in

Vojvodina even before the First World War. In this sense, the migration of the Serbs as the most important event (only the first level of the answers is observed) can be found in 12% of the answers of the natives versus 8% of the colonists and their descendants, the events in 1848 and forming the Vojvodstvo (dukedom) of Serbia in 14% of the former versus 6% of the latter, and the liberation from the fascism in 4% of the answers of the natives and in 3% of those of the colonists. The natives seem to have forgotten the colonization: less than 1% of them mention it versus 6% of the colonists and the unification with Serbia chose 19% of the former versus 15% of the latter. Milošević's suspension of autonomy of Vojvodina as the most important event for the history of Vojvodina chose 4% of both respondents, but making a developed autonomy in 1974 mentioned no less than 18% of the natives versus not even 5% of the colonists. According to these answers, the autonomy of Vojvodina is still considerably more important for the natives than the colonists; this conclusion, as well as before mentioned Vrkatic's thesis, is supported by behavior of the Serbian population in Vojvodina during elections, if observed on the level of homogeneous local colonists' and natives' communities. On the other hand, we should remember the support that the extreme right wing ethnocentric Serbian radical party had on the elections in 1997 in the homogeneous natives' ethnically Serbian environment. 5 October 2000 is not almost at all mentioned; it should be stressed that collecting of data took place before the Omnibus law was passed in the Serbian parliament. Some answers are characteristic for natives ("yogurt revolution", "establishing university", "establishing Matica Srpska", "Svetozar Miletić 1848", "when we first got autonomy", "expelling of the Horthy supporters", "building the Žeželj bridge", "peace in Karlovci", "rebuilding the bridges", "migration in 1690". "destroyed bridges in Novi Sad", "period of Mary Therese", "migration in 1690", "triumph over the Turks at Petrovaradin", "battle of Batin", "1 February 1748", "gathering in 1848", "general redistribution of land", "network of channels", "raid in Čurug", etc. Others are much more typical for the asked colonists: "joining the mother country", "8th offensive, colonization", "work of Svetozar Miletić for unification of Vojvodina and its joining Serbia", "colonization of Vojvodina after the Second World War", "liberation from Austro-Hungary", "green plan (agricultural reform in the 70s)", "joining Serbia", "foundation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (great session)", "when Vojvodina united with Serbia", "beginning using machinery in agriculture" and so on. It should be stressed that the intention of presenting these examples is not to separate the colonists and the natives, or any other group, by pointing out to the differences. The very material in its qualitative form through repeated reading suggests this sort of illustration.

How did the respondents of the Hungarian nationality answered to this question? 25% of them took the suspension of the autonomy of Vojvodina as the most important event during Milošević's ruling. 21% chose getting autonomy in 1974, and Trianon and its consequences mentioned only 5% of the respondents, the events in 1848, 3% of them, etc. The formulations of the answers of the asked Hungarians with more than frequent mentioning of "yogurt revolution", where they point to the Serbs

natives, sometimes also express the contents or at least connotations which are almost absent in the answers of the asked Serbs: “decentralization”, “the fall of Austro-Hungary”, “emigration of the young population”, “the young perished in the wars in the 90s”, “that the Hungarians lost Vojvodina”, “mobilization in the 90s”, “Trianon”, “unification in Yugoslavia”, etc. The obtained finding is very interesting; it confirms that autonomy of Vojvodina for the asked Hungarians is not only “Serbian-Serbian” matter, but a very relevant question for their group and their members, too. Moreover, when we consider the total of the answers of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality on all three levels, we can see that the autonomy in 1974 as one of the three most important events is mentioned in 36%, and its suspension in the same percentage of the responses. Regardless the fact that the probability sample was not used which could enable to make estimations for the whole population (and besides, it is not known which data to take for defining the basic set eleven years after the last census), the Hungarians in Vojvodina are certainly not the population uninterested in the question of autonomy of the Province. Their mostly independent political mobilization and organization originate from other cause but essential disagreement with the basic political idea of the autonomist political parties in Vojvodina.

The Hungarians are at the same time completely aware of the importance of satisfying collective ethnic needs and they are open regarding the autonomy of Vojvodina. The asked Serbs, on the other hand, suggest with their answers that many of them see Vojvodina as (more or less autonomous) the Serbian (or “of Serbia”) Vojvodina. The question of ethnic and civil relation is undoubtedly very important in the context of the general topic of the project. In none of the researched groups the extreme nationalists does not dominate; however, the ethnic nationalism survives, if judging by the results of the research and not only by them. Before the analysis focuses to the question of nationalism and inter-ethnic relations, it is worth looking at the attitude of the respondents towards different forms of super-national integrations. This question is very important; it does not arise from the everyday life but it affects it a lot. In the sense of the ethnic structure, Vojvodina has become dominantly Serbian only after the Second World War. Until very recently it was included in the super-national state products in which no ethnic group had absolute majority in the population. This also goes for the period of Austro-Hungarian authority, not only regarding the ethnic structure of the whole Monarchy, but if only regarding its Hungarian part within the borders which include Croatia and Slavonia. (Cf. Taylor, 1990) It was seen earlier that the asked Serbs all mainly unfavorably estimate the position of the Serbs in Vojvodina in the period of Austro-Hungarian ruling, while the Hungarians hesitate to express their opinion. On the other hand, a considerable number of respondents of the Serbian nationality, especially the natives, have a favorable opinion about this period. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia is considered mostly a fatherland of their ancestors among the asked Serbs, and the answers of the Hungarians should be taken with a considerable amount of skepticism. Idealizing the period of Tito is quite obvious in the earlier given answers of the respondents. Here the questions of

ethnic and social rights are close enough again: today autonomy-oriented movement in Vojvodina particularly insists on this key point in its different variations and forms of organizing and also the organizations of the members of the ethnic minorities. Not only Kasaš, but other writers also, like Stevan Pavlović who was more inclined to the kingdom of Yugoslavia (Pavlović, 2002:386), speak of the importance of the agricultural reform when the Slovenes all over Yugoslavia were favored at the expense of the minorities. It is worth reminding of the behavior of Albanian and Hungarian extremists in the Second World War who were very often found among the people without land and who were especially bloodthirsty towards previously privileged Serbs – colonists. A new wave of colonization that followed in 1945 had in this sense also a clear ethnical characteristic. A changed ethnic structure of Vojvodina, where the Serbs only after the Second World War made an absolute majority of the population, under the surface again had a redistribution of the resources on the grounds of the ethnic discrimination, which did not strike only the exiled Germans. Something similar was in the period that followed the real suspension of the autonomy of Vojvodina under Milošević's ruling. On the other hand, the last period was characterized by the ethnic discrimination on some levels of social life, but also by the absence of a mass physical violence over the members of minor communities (with the exception of the Albanians and Croats who were systematically violated in some shorter periods) and a relatively high degree of respecting the most of the rights of the minorities. It is even more important that in the 90s for the first time after several centuries, the region of Vojvodina found itself in the state clearly characterized by the absolute (not only) numerical domination of the members of one ethnic group. The period of the super-national integration, whether performed on dynastic and partially on religious legitimate contents (Austro-Hungary) or on those of the class character (socialist Yugoslavia), appears to be the past, retrospectively at least sometimes lighted by the glow of the old gold, but still without return. The trend of the ethnic homogenization, which follows the dissolution of the empires, certainly does not suit the minor communities or their members. (Ingrao, 2001 Cf Brubaker, 1995) The ethnic nationalism, which in the 19th century was a union of religious nationalism and peasants' hunger for land, in the 20th century was the fight for the ethnic monopoly over distribution of the positions and sinecures in the state administration and in public services, assumes more modern forms at the beginning of the 21st century without losing its basic narrow and exclusive essence.

The population itself was inclined to multinational states: it could be seen that the asked Hungarians had favorable judgments about the Yugoslav Tito as a symbol of authoritarian but a super-national relatively recent past, and Austro-Hungary almost until the end enjoyed the loyalty of its subjects. Pavlovic notices that "in spite of the tensions and crisis, the Habsburgh monarchy was intact on the eve of the First World War, with a hardly weakened people's devotion to the dynasty", and that in 1914 some of the divisions that began the attack on Serbia had more than 50% of the Croats and 20-25% of the Serbs. (Pavlović, 2001:246,306) It is a very complex question which of the two forms of

super-national integrations that were during the last hundred years in Vojvodina was historically superior. Not only did the historians like Taylor (1990) notice the continuity of the two states, seeing the last of the Habsburgs in Tito, but the writer also, like Pavlović, warned that after the beginning of Yugoslavia many considered this state not only a widened version of the pre-war Serbia, but an improved form of Austro-Hungary. It is very shallow to judge the said states only by the fact that they disintegrated. Austro-Hungary arose mainly from the consequences of the bloodily fight between the Hungarians and the ethnic minorities in 1848-9, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was succeeded by the Horthyian killing in Novi Sad and Šajkaš and the communist vendetta, not to mention the crimes of the Ustašas, and Tito's Yugoslavia was succeeded by the bloodily wars around Serbia, the rise of the ethnic tensions in the country and the Kosovo war. Besides all that and the ethnic discrimination, which was in different degrees present in different times, these states enabled the experience of a peaceful common life of the members of different ethnic groups for decades. Austro-Hungarian model of integration of Podunavlje, which is present today in different variants of the "Middle-European idea", and the Yugoslav model of federation of the South Slaves with the toleration for the non-Yugoslav communities, are undoubtedly very different from each other. However, not only did they both present solutions that were not among the worst of objectively possible ones, but they both have some similarities. First, the idea of Yugoslavia is necessarily anti-Hungarian in a way by the very definition because it is south-Slavonic, as the Middle-European idea is in a certain sense pro-Hungarian, and because it is focused to Budapest as to the natural center of the region under the Danube and because stressing the cultural similarity meaning the belonging of the majority of those this idea applies to, to the catholic civilization instead of the cultural similarity on the base of the languages where the idea of Yugoslavia relies upon. On the other hand, both ideas overcome the reality of the Balkan ethnic particularities and ethno-nationalisms, which almost go as far as tribalism. There is an objective tension between the idea of Yugoslavia and Middle-European one, which was most clearly practically expressed in 1918. For the fate of that which is called Vojvodina this year alone was the most important and its outcome essentially defined the social and especially ethnic movements in the following decades. However, the tension between the cited ideas can be even fertile: except for the big historic events, the everyday life, especially if it passes in peace and tolerance, enables achieving a level of civilization and opens the possibility of new creative synthesis. The experience of the Habsburg period of the law state and the Titoistic respect of the so-called nationalities with the application of the national key and the positive discrimination, do not present something that exclude one or the other on the level of making a new model of organizing inter-ethnic relations, not only in Vojvodina. But, before engaging in these reflections, it is necessary to have a reliable knowledge of the state of the ethnic relations in Vojvodina. This state is defined mainly by two most numerous groups, Serbian and Hungarian.

ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

It was seen that the respondents estimate the actual position of their own ethnicity in Vojvodina in a similar way: “good” position of their group the Serbs see in 53% of the cases and the Hungarians in 48%. Both the Serbs and the Hungarians see the position of their respective groups as “bad” in 22% of the cases, with 7% of the Serbs and 10% of the Hungarians who claimed the position of their nation worse than the position of other nations. This finding refers to one of the reasons of absence of the open ethnic conflicts in Vojvodina.

Vojvodina avoids the most important theories of ethnic relations, developed to explain these relations using the experiences of Wales, Canada, Baskia and other countries and provinces. The previous researches tested the theory of the ethnic competition, the theory of modernization and of reactive ethnicity. (Ragin, 1979; Sekulić, Massey, Hodson, 1994; Hodson, Massey, 1994; Belanger and Pinard, 1991; cf. Ilić, Cvejić, 1997) It showed that each of them was explanatory acceptable on a certain level of generality, but neither one can explain the complexity of the ethnic relations in Vojvodina. It was seen that the respondents of the Serbian nationality in this research mostly support ensuring collective ethnic rights for the members of the minor communities. This finding is new, because the researches on probability samples carried out last year on the population of Serbia revealed an explicit anti-minorities attitude. On the other hand, among the respondents of the Serbian nationality in this research, an explicit chauvinistic attitude according to which the members of the minorities now have too many rights is present in 15% of the answers. This evaluation is based on the untruthful assumptions. A very relevant difference between the natives and the colonists was noticed regarding this question. On the other hand, the answers of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality, who mainly support acknowledging the civil but not collective rights, were obviously insincere. The respondents of the Hungarian nationality showed to be very aware of the importance of the right to be informed, educated, to preserve the ethnic identity, etc. Neglecting collective rights would mean supporting their own ethnic assimilation, which seems unconvincing. The very existence of this insincerity shows that the members of the Hungarian community do not feel free enough in Vojvodina to be able to support demands, which coordinate with the standards of our time and for the fulfilling of which there are historic precedents. On the other hand, it is obvious that in the series of researches, including this one, we come across the dissatisfaction of a considerable part of the asked Hungarians with the possibility to satisfy certain needs. It is certain that the discrimination exists, at least on the level of a possibility to occupy managing positions. However, it is more important that there is a spread awareness of discrimination. This awareness itself is a real social fact, regardless its factual base. According to the authors like Ragin, the ethnic conflicts occur when there is a coincidence of the objectively existing ethnic discrimination and the awareness of it. Ethnic minorities rarely have aggressive demands, except in specific cases: chauvinism as a rule implies force or its

illusion and minorities become more chauvinistic when they become majorities (like after changing of borders) or in the case of territorial fragmentation of a community on the ethnic grounds. It should be repeated that the very feeling of discrimination is an indirect but strong indicator of unequal position of the ethnic groups in Vojvodina. Equality between the groups unequal by the resources they dispose of, very often leads to assimilation of those among them which are less numerous. That is why different mechanisms are searched for to guarantee special collective rights.

The respondents of the Hungarian nationality were asked to answer the question “How do you see the perspectives of the Hungarians in Vojvodina in the near future?” The findings partially remind of those obtained by asking the question about estimation of their actual position, but on the whole they are more favorable. The opinion that there is no perspective for the Hungarians as a group express 9% of the respondents of this nationality, the opinion that their position will stay the same as it is today have 12%, and even 59% explicitly express different optimistic expectations. It is apparent that the changed relation towards the ethnic minorities is seen in the expectations of the respondents. The optimistic attitude is expressed by the formulations like “they will fight for the preserving national identity”, “this will be settled and they will be equal with the others”, “if it goes on like this, then it’s all right”, “I hope for the better future regarding education, employment”, “I believe it will be better – I hope they will open schools in Hungarian”, “if it goes on like this, it’s all right”, “what Kasza does is good”. Pessimistic expectations express the formulations like “in 100 years time there will be none of us in Vojvodina”, “there is a tendency to aggravate our position”, “it will not be O.K.”, “I don’t see any bright future”, “it will be bad as long as the crisis continues”, etc.

These answers should be compared to the formulations of the answers to the question “How would you describe the actual position of the Hungarians in Vojvodina in short?” Here we had answers like “the same as other nations – they are not threatened”, “the position of the Hungarians is positive (there are elementary rights, especially the right to be educated and acceptance of the Hungarian language), “it is improving with the new authorities”, “there is no pressure, of course”, “the position is excellent”, “the position of the Hungarians is good”, “very good”, etc. However, there are answers like “we have all the rights, education and newspapers, but we are not equal”, “there is fear of assimilation and we feel more and more unequal with other people (we do not have our identity)”, “the media, the schools are not available”, “we have seen better times”, “they are not in the best position, you cannot speak your own language freely”, “it could be better”, “it is not so well”, “they should also have some positions”, “we live badly, we have politicians but they all lie”, it is not so well, there is no money”, “uncertain – because in the state the problem of minorities is not solved”, “we have no rights we should have”, “it is not the best because minority is always in the worse position”, “in the crisis it is worst for minorities”, “the Hungarians are not appreciated enough”, “it is difficult- there should be more independence in the schools in Hungarian”, “we are not satisfied with the situation in which we are because of the non-employment, but I haven’t noticed any inter-ethnic conflicts”, etc.

Apparently in the estimation of the actual state, the respondents cite quite concrete segments of social life in which they feel unequal. We should not forget that during Milosevic's ruling the position of the ethnic minorities in Vojvodina (with the exception of Croatian, Albanian and Roma) according to many "solid" indicators fulfilled the world standards of the beginning of the 20th century. In the course of the last decade the standards changed too (mainly on the basis of the most recent South-Slavonic experiences) and expectations. We should add here quite augmented expectations caused by the change of the regime in 2000, when in Serbia started a scramble for the loot, which did not leave aside any social group. Along with all that, although the convincing relative majority of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality the position of their group in Vojvodina see as basically good, and even more of them express optimistic expectations, a feeling of insecurity and an idea of discrimination are apparent. Different researches (Cf. Samardžić, 2000) showed that this idea is at least partially founded, which makes new problems, both analytic and practical ones.

National consciousness by rule regards its own group as more homogeneous than it really is; otherwise, ethnic mobilization could not be carried out. It is because the consciousness of differential functionality of such a mobilization for particular wider or narrower groups inside ethnicity would hamper inter-ethnic integration which is always carried out partly according to the real common ethnic interests, and partly according to the particular interests of certain groups inside the ethnicity. The opinion that today the position of the Hungarian nationality in Vojvodina is bad support farmers and students more than the respondents of this nationality from other socio-professional groups. However, it should be kept in mind that the number of the respondents in these groups is hardly enough for statistic conclusion. If regarded by education, the answers of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality show that there is more than average proportion of those who consider the position of their ethnic group bad only among the respondents with schools for skilled workers and comprehensive schools. Both among those with finished primary school and among those with secondary school, college or university degree, this opinion can be found below the average. If we abstract the respondents with the finished primary school, we could conclude that the estimation of the position of their own ethnic group depends on the educational preparation of the respondents to take part in the market competition which is inevitable in the future period. Those with the finished comprehensive school have no particular skills, and for decades, the criteria of the teaching and evaluating in the three-year schools for skilled workers in Vojvodina and Serbia has been such that only those who do not want to finish them really cannot finish them. The respondents from the villages have much more favorable view to the present position of their ethnic group in Vojvodina (63% of them say it is good) than those from towns and cities (25% and 52% respectively). The villages, where the research was carried out among the Hungarian population, are ethnically rather homogeneous, so the ethnic competition is less felt. (Here Debeljača should be excepted where the members of the Serbian ethnic minority made riots and tried to make ethnically parallel organizations of the local administration in

the mid 90s). In bigger places the competition over the resources was more openly done, and besides, there are more resources that the ethnic groups fight for inside and between them. When the socio-demographic characteristics cross with their answers to the question “How do you see the perspectives of the Hungarians in Vojvodina in the near future?” it can be seen that pessimistic expectations express 33% of the farmers, 10% of skilled workers, almost as much of the students of the Hungarian nationality (15%), etc. Pessimism is found below the average among the professionals, clerks and technicians (10% each) and, surprisingly enough, among the unemployed (9%), while among the unskilled workers it is not present. Regardless very pessimistic expectations of the asked farmers of the Hungarian nationality, pessimism regarding the expectations of the future of their own ethnic group in Vojvodina is much more spread among the respondents from the cities (23%) than from the towns (9%) or from the villages (7%). Assimilation in the cities, even in such as Senta, with a distinct Hungarian ethnic majority, is much more obvious than in the ethnically homogeneous villages.

The respondents of the Hungarian nationality were asked, “Which kind of division inside the Hungarian nationality would you pick out as the most important?” 2,8% of them said, “there are no divisions” among the Hungarians in Vojvodina. In the research realized in 1995 on the quota sample, this attitude expressed only 5% of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality; 50% of them emphasized political divisions, 15% economic and 8% regional divisions. In our research political divisions dominate (3,2%), while the regional ones (4%) and economic (3%) are very rare. In this comparison we should point to the differences in planning the samples where, regarding the aims of the project, there is a big proportion of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality from the places where the ethnic Hungarians form majority in the local population. We should remind that approximately 58% of the Hungarians in Vojvodina live in the regions where their ethnic group has majority and that in the realized sample they are in a big proportion. The formulations of the answers point to the already known division of the supporters of different Hungarian political parties, but also to the differences between the Hungarians from Hungary and the Hungarians from Vojvodina (Delvidek): “there are no divisions; the only division is according to the chances of promotion in society”, “division into numerous parties on the political grounds”, “explicit nationality among some people”, “on the political basis”, “conflicts on the political basis”, “I don’t like Hungarians who live in Hungary (division between the Hungarians in Vojvodina and those in Hungary)”, “political – Hungarians from Hungary and from Vojvodina”, but also “we should have more cultural connections with Hungary”. Noting and even grading of nationalism among the members of their own ethnic group show a high level of rationalism of some respondents (“nationalists (extreme ones) – moderate”). Any noting of the inter-ethnic divisions is by rule unknown to the chauvinistic consciousness, especially nationalism in their own group; grading nationalism means an extreme approach to the ethnic consciousness.

The respondents of the Hungarian nationality show a very explicit non-clerical view to the desirable role of the Catholic Church as a dominant one among the members of this ethnic group. The active role of the church is supported by only 2%, and even 65% explicitly demands the church to be separated from the state. The typical answers to the question “What do you think, what role should the Catholic church have in our country?” are formulated as “only religious, it should not interfere into other spheres”, “to occupy itself with religion, not with politics”, “it’s good as it is now (freedom of choice)”, “not to interfere into politics”, “the same role it had during Tito’s ruling”, “church is a church, a place for religion, nothing more” “to be out of any party”, etc. Sometimes there are answers where there is a criticism of the past communist period “that believers can go to church”, sometimes there are those which point to an illusion of conversion characteristic for the countries in transition (“they have an exaggerated role, and the communists are the biggest believers, this is not good”), and very rarely can we find support for a politically active role of the church which is most often explained by the principle of reciprocity (“to have the same role as the Orthodox church – what is allowed for the Orthodox church should be allowed for the Catholic church”).

It would be good to take a look at how the respondents of the Serbian nationality answered to the above-said questions. The active role of the Serbian Orthodox church support even 30% of the respondents of the Serbian nationality, 21% of the colonists and 39% of the natives. It was seen before that the asked Serbs were in any way more religious than the respondents of the Hungarian nationality. Supporting the active role of the church is explained in the following ways: “the role in the uniting the Serbs”, “introducing it into schools”, “uniting and leading of the Serbian people”, “the main role to unite all the orthodox Serbs”, “it should be a pillar of the state”, “the biggest and the most important role”, “it should be more aggressive”, “it should enable reuniting of the whole nation around one idea”, “they should be a significant support for the people and the government”, “the significant role, not the crucial one”, “the Serbian country was born within the altar of the Serbian Orthodox church – meaning, the same as till now”, etc. Among the relative majority of the respondents of the Serbian nationality who are for separation of the church (47%) we find the statements like “not to interfere into politics”, “when the priests interfere into the state matters, there comes war straight away”, it should not interfere into the politics”, “none, let it leave the people alone – it is a burden of monarchy”, “not to interfere into politics and to serve God”, “the same it has always had, now it exaggerates – it should keep away from the politics”, “less important than it got with introducing it into school”, etc.

The following significant difference should be borne in mind. At the beginning of the 90s, the first Hungarian national party, VMDK, in its attempt to enter completely the social life of the Hungarians in Vojvodina, tried to infiltrate into the Catholic church, which provoked justified reactions of the church hierarchy. Among the Serbs, on the other hand, the church became a compensation for the unrealized geopolitical goals after the lost wars. In the situation where the applied national program was defeated, what failed in reality was attempted to be achieved in culture.

Thus, supporting the active role of the Orthodox Church is a compensation for realizing of the national program which failed.

It was seen that there were no bigger differences between the asked Serbs and Hungarians regarding judging the actual position of their ethnic groups in Vojvodina. There were no relevant differences observed, either between the attitudes of the colonists and the natives. In describing the present position of the Serbian people in Vojvodina, the respondents sometimes notice that the minorities are in a worse position (“they are least threatened in this part of the country”); however, it is worth focusing on those characteristic answers which have the feeling of the ethnic threat for the Serbs in Vojvodina; “the position is worse because they demanded autonomy for nine municipalities in the north”, “in some places it is good and in some it is not”, “the Serbs are in the same position with the rest of the minorities”, “the Hungarians live better”, “we are minority”, “underestimated”, “there is a big pressure on the Serbs more than on the minorities”, “the endangered sort”, “they have fewer rights than the minorities”, “it is bad, the minorities are more progressive than the Serbs”, “they are threatened”, “it should have more equal relation regarding other nations, the Serbs have somewhat fewer rights”, “the position is equal to the other national minorities”, “bad position, national minorities have supremacy”, it is under strong pressure and it will be brought into a position of a minority in its country”, “the Serbian people are neglected in political and economic sense”, etc. Objectively, the ethnic Serbs are not in any way threatened as the ethnic group, but as individuals, as much as the transition affects the members of other nationalities. However, the feeling of being threatened and the psychology of the victim open a wide space for extreme manipulation. It is worth mentioning the answers of the asked ethnic Serbs to the question how they look at the perspectives of the Serbian people in the near future. Pessimism in this sense show 44% of the respondents of the Serbian nationality, optimism 43% of them, with only 2% of those who think that the conditions in this region will not change. Pessimism is more expressed among the colonists (48%) than among the natives (39%). It is very interesting how the Serbs, who belong to the major ethnicity in Vojvodina, show a greater sense of the ethnic threat than the ethnic Hungarians who, as the members of a minor community, are objectively threatened. The respondents of the Serbian nationality give the following statements and explanations regarding the expected trends of development: “no perspective”, “I’m not sure there will be any future for the Serbian people”, “bad for ten years more”, “doesn’t think it will be better”, “has doubts in better future”, “in 100 years time the Serbs will disappear as a separate nation (emigration, low birth-rate,...)”, “they have a perspective if they have more children”, “I fear that the Serbian people will lose their identity”, “if we are together, everything will be all right”, “unity, harmony-this is the only way we can make progress”, “there will still be poverty and undeveloped technology, until a real change of relations in the world”, “it will be good for us only in unity”, etc.

The feeling of being threatened is accompanied by demands for additional ethnic homogenization. According to the given formulations, we have the impression that the Serbs in

Vojvodina see themselves as guardians of their own nation; it is even more unusual because not only that more than half a century has gone since the beginning of the absolute Serbian domination in Vojvodina, but because in demographic sense the Serbs gained advantage with the coming of the great number of refugees and emigration of the members of the minor communities also during the last ten years. Anyway, as unreal as it could seem, this feeling of being threatened among the considerable number of the respondents of the Serbian nationality presents a dangerous explosive potential for the future of the stable ethnic relations in Vojvodina. Insisting on the necessity of the ethnic unity is related to the answers to the question about the most important divisions within the Serbian people. In the answers of the respondents dominates referring to political divisions (29%) and to regional divisions and divisions by origin (with the stress on the divisions by the criterion natives-colonists) (16%). 19% of the natives and 13% of the colonists stress the latter. After 5 October changes, the natives' officials rush into periodically renewed inter-ethnic snatches for the resources between different homeland groups. With political-party divisions and those by the criterion: colonists-natives, the respondents select ideological divisions ("on communists and other", "good and bad Serbs"), religious "on believers and non-believers, i.e. Orthodox and atheists", "religious, it should be the Serb=catholic=the Serb=Muslim=the Serb=orthodox", "religious-because of the sects") and those by the difference between the Serbian population of Vojvodina and Serbia itself ("the Serbs in the central Serbia-the Serbs in Vojvodina").

THE ETHNIC DISTANCE

It has already been said that Bogardus's scale of the ethnic distance occurs as almost unavoidable means of studying mutual relations of different ethnic groups. We also said something about why this scale was insufficiently suitable for studying the ethnic closeness in Vojvodina. Having in mind all its imperfections for research in a particular region, we still asked some questions in the form of items of the decomposed Bogardus's scale.

To the question "What nationality would you like to be your immediate superior?" the respondents of the Serbian nationality in 56% of the answers said it was not important for them; among the asked Hungarians the same answers was in 91%. To the question "What nationality would you like to be you closest neighbors?" the asked Serbs answered it was not important for them in 63% of the cases, and Hungarians in 92%. To the question "When choosing the godfather for you or your child, what nationality would you like him to be?" the respondents of the Serbian nationality said that nationality of the godfather was not important to them in 36% cases, and to 64% of the Hungarians. To the question "If you could choose a husband/wife for your child, what nationality would you like him/her to be?" the asked Serbs answered in 43% cases that the nationality of a potential husband/wife was not important, and the asked Hungarians gave the same answer in 76%. Bogardus's scale

measures the ethnic distance, and not the ethnic nationalism. However, these two phenomena are very closely related. On the other hand, it should be taken into account that in specific circumstances in Vojvodina, the answers to the questions from the decomposed Bogardus's scale do not have to be an adequate indicator of the real distance: in the analysis of the data of one research carried out on the probability sample in 1990, the asked Slovaks in Vojvodina denied in a great majority the importance of national belonging of the people they had more or less close contacts; here 85% of the respondents were married to the Slovaks. Despite that, the spread nationalism of the Serbs in Vojvodina is fairly clearly visible. It is, when measured over the items of the Bogardus's scale, somewhat more expressed among the colonists than among the natives. The national belonging of the superiors is unimportant for 54% of the former and for 58% of the latter, of the neighbors for 61% of the former and 66% of the latter, of the godfather for 36% of both groups, and of a possible husband/wife for 37% of the former and for 49% of the natives. The last two questions, and especially the one referring to the national belonging of the godfather, do not speak only of the ethnic, but also of the religious distance considering the fact that the majority of the Serbs belong to the eastern Christian, and the Hungarians mainly to the Catholic and partly to the Protestant tradition, which, in the conditions of the revival and seemingly revived religiosity is not without significance. In any case, with all previously expressed reserves, the answers of the asked Serbs are in the practical sense unfavorable, since they show that the ethnic belonging of their neighbors is very important to the great part of them. Obviously, the finding is not likely to please, but it should not only be cited, but stressed also.

Ethno-nationalism and insecurity of the Serbs are seen in the answers to the question about the perspectives of the Serbian people. The Serbs have survived their Trianon for many times, from Dayton and Kumanovo to the solutions for Montenegro and Kosovo that lay ahead. This is reflected in Vojvodina, too, which is more and more understood as a border, with intolerant mentality of Krajina. Reducing the differences between the natives and the colonists and their descendants is a clear answer to the situation in which the Serbian national program has experienced heavy defeats. However, every inter-ethnic homogenization in a multi-ethnic environment (although not only in it) means big risks. In the Balkans, which includes South Pannonia for many reasons, there is no benign nationalism: until recently, and even today in Kosovo and Macedonia, nationalism has proved itself many times here in killing.

VIEW TO THE DESIRABLE INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

When asked, "How would you in one sentence express your view to the desirable inter-national relations?" the respondents of the Serbian nationality in a great majority (78%) give the answers in which they affirm tolerance and equality between the members of different ethnic groups. Less than 3% of them think that it is necessary to make difference between the position of the members of the

major nation and the members of the minor communities. A dominant, tolerant attitude support 85% of the natives and 72% of the colonists in Vojvodina and their descendants. The attitude, which openly supports discrimination, is present in 2% of the former and in more than 3% of the latter. The respondents of the Serbian nationality are not, unlike the activists of the NGOs, burdened by the critic of nationalism of their own nation. In the answers to the said question, this can be found. The answers of the respondents are sometimes very thought over (for example “a harmonious life with support for differences, in the best sense, and the agreement on this common life, where everybody should know the level of responsibility of all participating”, sometimes are very condensed (“putting on a higher level, so we don’t burden ourselves with this question any more”), sometimes express a summarized shrewdness of common people (“like interpersonal relationships, inter-national ones should be the same”). There are formulations, which rather directly correspond with the actual state in Serbia and the sharing of the loot between nationalistic elite with a mutual (for now) tolerant exclusion (“let everybody live his own life”).

Typical answers express support for “appreciation of minorities and their respecting the state in which they live”, “appreciation of national differences”, “not bringing into question the inter-national differences”, or “constructive beauty of differences through tolerance”. Sometimes, although rarely, the ethno-nationalism is clearly seen (“national minorities should be loyal, self-critical and tolerant with the others”, or “I don’t care about the relation towards other nations, I’ve had enough of them”), which is from time to time followed by xenophobia (“let nobody interfere, let us solve the problems between us, alone’)? To the more precise question, which is more political by its character, for it includes an idea of a public enemy, and which is formulated as “Which are the biggest obstacles for establishing such inter-national relations?” the respondents of the Serbian nationality often mention “nationalism” (24%) as a main obstacle without attributing it to any particular group. The conduct of the national minorities as the biggest obstacle cite 6% of the respondents of the Serbian nationality, the burdens of the past 7% and the absence of democracy in the country 3%, or less than those (4%) who, in the nationalistic manner, as the biggest obstacle in establishing desirable inter-national relations see an insufficiently developed national consciousness of the members of their own group. It is very interesting how the respondents see nationalism as the main enemy of the peaceful living together, but in recognizing this obstacle they do not go as far as tying nationalism to their own group. Among the factors which present an obstacle in establishing desirable inter-national relations we sometimes find “foreign forces”, “policy of the West”, “supporting national minorities not to respect the country by some countries”, “international community”, “foreign countries which conspire”, “let nobody interfere, let us do everything alone, together” and so on. Nationalism is, generally, in today’s Serbia mixed with xenophobia; however, the findings show that the respondents of the Serbian nationality principally condemn it, not being able to recognize it in their own group. The burdens of the past are, as it was

Vojvodina”, ”history”, “troubled past”). Some of the respondents point to the economic factors which spoil the inter-ethnic relations (”general bad situation in the country’ or “lack of money, bad life affect those relations”), while some point to the closeness of the ethnic minorities (“they close themselves up, think they are better than we are”) while some think that the situation will improve if the ethnic communities develop one beside the other, and not in a continuous mutual permeating (“the Serbian unconsciousness of its own tradition, nation and identity and the consciousness of all others (Matica Slovačka, for example)”. Nationalism balances between a mutual exclusion and desire for assimilation, and the post-5th October trends rather suggest modification in the first of the said directions. However, in general, the asked Serbs in Vojvodina (and we must always emphasize, the population of the natives’ places where in the last world war the ethnic Hungarians committed crimes, and the colonists’ places where the Germans, over whom the crimes were committed, had lived) do not tend to spoil the present situation in the inter-ethnic relations.

How the respondents of the Hungarian nationality see the desirable inter-national relations? Tolerance and equality of different ethnic groups as a desirable state see the same percentage of the asked Hungarians (78%) as the Serbs. The rest of the answers are too much varied to present them statistically. Some of them speak of the present experiencing the ethnic discrimination (“let us not think about the nationality”), others concretize this experience (“let it be equality among the people (ignoring priorities when employing)”), others call for the recent authoritarian but for the Balkans-Pannonia circumstances, decent past (“brotherhood and unity”), some indirectly express a fear of aggravating (“I have not noticed that there are bad inter-national relations (they are the same as they were till now)“), some mention the burdens of the past (“let’s not dig in the past”), while according to some, the political enemy is clearly marked: “let Serbian nationalists calm down, let them stop dreaming about Great Serbia”. In their answers to the question “Which are the biggest obstacles in establishing such inter-national relations?” the respondents of the Hungarian nationality most often mention nationalism (21%), then the burdens of the past (7%), the existing discrimination and behavior of the members of the major nation (total of 7%), absence of democracy (1%), absence of the developed national consciousness of the Hungarians in Vojvodina (much below 1%), with even 14% of those who obviously give a insincere answer that there are no obstacles to this issue and a great number of varied answers. Practically a complete absence of pointing to the “bad Hungarians” as a main problem speaks of a very low degree of chauvinism of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality. However, not even among them can we see mentioning of the critic of nationalism of the members of their group as a condition of establishing desirable inter-national relations. It is interesting that the same percentage of the respondents in the Hungarian and Serbian group choose the burdens of the past as the biggest obstacle in establishing desirable inter-ethnic relations. A small percentage of the answers in both groups in which the perspectives of good inter-ethnic relations are related to further democratization of the society are understandable if we have in mind that the respondents lived

in actually good inter-ethnic relations even under authoritarian regimes. In the Balkans, it seems, democratization is not a universal solution for all problems (we should remember the first multi-party elections in Bosnia), and its connection with the growth or weakening of the ethnic nationalism is very complex. Aleks Grigorievs notices that after establishment of democracy in Lithuania and Estonia one third of population was disenfranchised (Caplan, Feiffer, 1996). The author assesses that liberal and democratic values are no longer sacrosanct and that Eastern Europe is entering an era of inter-ethnic and ideological turmoil. Irrespective of absence of any pro-secession programs in Serbia, or at least in its northern part, experiences of similar countries are not encouraging.

Among other answers of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality there are policy of today's government ("the biggest obstacle is the actual policy", "policy of the top"), economic problems of the country ("financial conditions", "there are few free positions"), some prominent Serbian ethno-nationalists ("Šešelj, Drašković"), as well as the case of ethnic discrimination ("discrimination in all segments (for example "when cable television was being installed in Senta, they did not allow Hungarian channels"). It is very important that many of the respondents note the effect of the economic poverty and insecurity on weakening the possibility to make the optimum of inter-ethnic relations. This is again about one, in fact, rational approach, to which a stable state of the relations between the two most numerous ethnic groups in Vojvodina can only do good.

It is worth seeing the answers of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality to the question "What would you like the Serbs in Vojvodina, as the most numerous nation, to change in their behavior so you could feel better?" 25% of them say they do not ask the Serbs to change anything; this percentage obviously expresses that part among the asked Hungarians who are either pleased with the present position of their group or think that any change can make it only worse. 30% of the respondents explicitly say they would like nationalism of the Serbs to weaken, 7% ask from the Serbs to enable using collective rights of the minorities, and only rarely the asked Hungarians suggest the members of the major group to learn Hungarian language. The rest of the answers vary, in some of them we find Vojvodina as a goal which the Serbs have to share with the Hungarians ("to agree with the autonomy of Vojvodina"), some are historically wrong and ideological ("there were no national issues in Vojvodina until coming of the communist"), some are naively nationalistic ("to be more pleasant, more polite, to be as good as we are"). Other answers are unpleasant but unfortunately at least partly true ("they are very arrogant and don't have any reason to be such and they can't stand the Hungarians"), and there are answers which show a really one-sided consciousness of the ethnic Serbs of their own or common history ("to look more objectively at the historic facts").

To the same question ("What would you like the Hungarians in Vojvodina, as the most numerous minority, to change in their behavior so you could feel better?") the respondents of the Serbian nationality in 29% of the case say they would not want any changes (again a striking similarity to the corresponding frequency among the asked Hungarians); 25% of the asked Serbs would like the

Hungarians in Vojvodina to use more “the Serbian” (Serbo-Croatian) language, and the same percentage would like the Hungarians to reduce their demands. The rest of the answers vary. It is noticeable that the findings are practically unfavorable, for the use of Hungarian language in Vojvodina is constantly reducing and insisting that the ethnic Hungarians in a mixed society do not speak Hungarian among them, is directly aimed against the principles of multi-cultural society. It is interesting that the natives here occur as greater ethno-nationalists than the colonists: 26% of the former and 32% of the latter have no demands for the Hungarians to change their behavior, the use of the Hungarian language equally bothers both. For 18% of the colonists and 32% of the natives the demands of the Hungarians in Vojvodina present something that should be changed so the respondents of the Serbian nationality could feel better. According to these findings, the Hungarians in Vojvodina have a reason to complain about the attitude of the major ethnicity towards their rights. Without any intention to support anti-Serbian attitude, we should openly cite some of the formulations, which are not untypical: “to use more Serbian language”, “when the Serbs are present to speak Serbian”, “speaking Hungarian when others are there”, “not respecting the state and the Constitution, as the country where they live”, “they should accept they are minority”, “not to speak Hungarian in a public place”, “to speak the official language when in public places”, “to show more respect for the country (attitude towards the military service)”, “to reject the idea of making a territorial autonomy”, “to reduce pretensions for autonomy”, “demands of the Hungarian political elites for such a degree of territorial and other autonomy”, “the consciousness of where and under which conditions they live, i.e. this is not Austro-Hungary any more, and it is not Hungary and if God wants it, it won’t be”, “to be less Hungarians”, “to recognize the fact that this region is not under their ruling any more”, “not to ask more than they have”, “to adjust more to the country where they live”, “to calm down and not to ask for secession”, “to realize that Serbia is their mother country”, “to be satisfied with what they have”, “their behavior towards the Serbs as their neighbors, they like to show off, to boist”, “to behave better towards the Serbs”, “to respect more the Serbs”, “I would like them not to make such a fuss about their rights, when it is clear that they have the same rights as other citizens”, “not to insist on their rights, still they are minority”, etc. Except for expressing different degrees and forms of ethnic nationalism, chauvinism and xenophobia (and especially hungarophobia), the given opinions speak about a bad knowledge of the Hungarians in Vojvodina and their political behavior and standard on the level of protection of collective rights present today in Europe.

COLLECTIVE RIGHTS AND POTENTIAL CENTRES OF CONFLICTS

The inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina are now focused on several important issues. Some of them are lighted in the recently cited answers of the respondents of the Serbian nationality. The issue of democracy development in Serbia is often, as it was shown in the introductory part of this study, related to the exclusivistic relationship towards the minority communities. The respondents of the Serbian nationality were asked “What do you think, would democracy advance in a better way if it were not for national minorities?”. With this extremely exclusivistic attitude would agree 22% of the respondents of the Serbian nationality, with 4% of the indecisive. There were 28% of the asked colonists who answered affirmatively and 16% of the natives.

To the question “What do you think about the idea suggested by some politicians of forming two chambers in the Parliament of Vojvodina, the Chamber of representatives and the Chamber of national communities?”, 14% of the asked Serbs answered affirmatively, 52% answered negatively, 16% were indecisive and 18% did not know the answers. Among the asked Hungarians the corresponding percentages are 34, 13, 26 and 27. To the question “Do you agree with the idea that education in the mother tongue from kindergarten to university should be assured for the national minorities in Vojvodina ?” (which is the official demand among the Hungarians in Vojvodina who belong to the most influential party, VMSZ, (cf. Korhecz, 1999:239; the same in Bunjik, 2000:52), the coalition partner of the former Milošević’s authorities in Subotica and which, like the actual authorities in Belgrade, mainly assembles the ex-Milošević’s and Dr Karadžić’s allies), 69% of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality answered affirmatively, 19% negatively and 9% were indecisive. The corresponding percentages among the asked Serbs are 37, 52 and 6.

It is visible that among the respondents of the Serbian nationality there is a great part of those who are willing to hand the ethnic groups in Vojvodina over to the national elites. The demands for separate education go as far as the demands for separate school buildings and mean separating children by the ethnic origin, i.e. a crawling apartheid. The provincial secretary for minorities, Dr Korhecz, writes that “it would not be too exaggerated to think about reseparation of the schools, into those where the education is performed in Serbian language and the schools where the education is performed in the language of the national minority, especially in the places where it would be factually easily solved (where there are enough pupils, members of the national minorities for economic functioning of the school). “The Provincial Secretary for education claimed “education and upbringing, the aim of which is preserving the identity, are possible to be realized only by having independent educational institutions in Hungarian language, from kindergarten to university”.

On the other hand, Intellectuals from minority communities are right to warn that in our territory multiculturalism was just another name for assimilation and that it was reduced to one-sided adoption of the majority culture. The same phenomenon was registered elsewhere. Kiznie warns of this

asymmetry: in 1979 only 3% of Russians in the Soviet Union spoke other languages, while there were 53% of bilingual Ukrainians, 7% of Belorus and Lithuanians and 52% of Latvians (Kiznija, 1996). According to him, acculturation was turned into de-culturation, and loss of ethnic identity. This largely applies to our country. In other words radicalism of some minority elites, can be explained by their jockeying for power, but cannot be reduced to them.

To the question “What do you think about introducing territorial autonomy for the members of the national minorities where they are majority of the total population?” the following answers were obtained. The asked ethnic Serbs are against this idea in 86% of the cases, with 6% who were indecisive. On the other hand, the asked Hungarians support this idea in 43% of the cases, with 21% of indecisive answers. There is an impression that the centers of the possible ethnic conflicts are already determined. The favorable circumstance is surely a calming influence of the surrounding, which weakens the demands in the situation when the ethno-nationalists from the major and minor ethnicities agree on territorial divisions on the ethnic basis, which presents a relevant attribute of the nationalism in Gellner’s sense, and which is unusually similar to the forming of the Serbian autonomous regions in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina that were prior to the most recent south-Slovene wars.

On the other hand, to the question “Would you agree that your children learn, as one of the subjects at school, one of the languages of the national minorities in Vojvodina?”, the asked Serbs answered positively in 34% of the cases, with 7% of indecisive answers. The positive answer to this question give 27% of the asked colonists with 42% of the natives. There are considerable divisions among the Serbian group, especially if considering the radical answers cited at the end of the previous paragraph. At the same time, this means a supplementary challenge and a possible risk and a possibility of forming different plans for practical action.

The respondents poorly know the bright sides of the common life of different groups on the territory of today’s Vojvodina. This can be partly explained by the absence of the spread sensibility for inter-cultural society. To the question “Are you familiar with some examples of the historic collaboration of the Serbs and Hungarians?” the asked Serbs answered positively in only 21% of the cases. The positive answers give 16% of the colonists and 27% of the natives, which shows the importance and the influence of the family channel in modifying the past. As the examples, the colonists cite the wars against the Turks, ties and alliances of the Serbian despots with Hungary, as well as the “welcoming” the Serbs in 1690 to the territory of Hungary, not knowing that the Austrian Court and not the government of the apostolic Kingdom of Hungary made the decision. The natives more often mention the joint fight against the Turks, Janos Hunyady, the protest of Bajczy Zhilinski against the raid and killing of the Serbs, Jews and Roma in 1942, as well as the everyday neighbor and trade contacts. The respondents of the Hungarian nationality show in their answers a much better knowledge of collaboration of the Serbs and Hungarians in the course of history; not less than 56% of them can cite concrete examples. With very often citing of the wars against the Turks and the

Hungarian defense of Belgrade in 1456, (it is understandable, considering the usual stereotypes in modifying the past, that the respondents do not know that, except against the Turks, the Serbs and the Hungarians went from time to time in wars together on the side of the Turks against the Habsburgs also). They cite that “the Matica Srpska was founded by the Hungarians”, that the Hungarians and the Serbs “always collaborated in Debeljača”, they mention the migration of the Serbs, granting the political asylum in 1956, the common fight in 1941, 1945 (which the asked Serbs don not notice at all), and even the revolution in 1848, forgetting the terrible Serbian-Hungarian killing at that time and emphasizing the role of the Serbs in the rising against Vienna. These differences between the Serbs and the Hungarians in knowing the brighter side of the common past obviously are not only the consequence of being better informed in the case of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality, or better, this is the consequence of the position of the minor group which has at least (but not only) psychological interest not to insist on the conflicts in modifying the history nor in the real life. Regardless of the cause, the very consciousness of the collaboration and the peaceful common life, presents an important fact, which has an important significance in planning and undertaking of the practical actions.

The number of Hungarians in Vojvodina is reducing. The respondents from this ethnic group were asked to answer the question “How do you explain the trend of demographic declining of the Hungarians in Vojvodina?”. As the most important, the relative majority (30%) cited economic reasons, then the recent wars (23%), assimilation caused by multinational marriages (8%), the Serbian nationalism (4%), “dictatorship” during the previous regime and allegedly intended settling of the refugees in the places with Hungarian ethnic majority (2% each), and the great number of the answers was extremely varied. Some answers seem extremely pessimistic (“everybody is leaving, everybody has left”, “the young have gone, only the old stay”), others are focused and clear (“settling the Serbs to assimilate the Hungarians “, “refugees”, “Šešelj”, “because of Milošević’s extremely nationalistic policy”, “there is no money here”, “people have run away because of the war”), and some include several factors (“because of the politics, lack of money, jobs”, “because of the war and difficult economic situation many people have run away”, “multinational marriages, dictatorship, poverty”, “because of the war, cultural assimilation”).

The findings show that a significant number of the asked ethnic Serbs, especially among the colonists, see the minority communities as an obstacle for developing of the Serbs. This is even more understandable (and practically more significant), if we have in mind that the previous researches (Ilić, Cvejić, 1993; Ilić, Cvejić, 1997) showed that there were no relevant differences in intensity of the Serbian ethnic nationalism between the natives and the colonists. As if after the lost wars and a great flow of the refugees, started an extra radicalization of the settled Serbian population, or that it started to detach itself by a greater ethnic nationalism regarding the Serbs natives among whom the ethno-nationalism weakened. The idea that each ethnic group should be conducted by its ethnic elite and that

the members of different groups should live peacefully one next to the other and not together and in mutual permeating, is accepted by a considerable number of the respondents who belong to the major ethnicity, or at least they are not opposed to it. The former inter-nationalism and later, intolerant ethnic nationalism have been greatly replaced by accepting a very undetermined and, here, a very risky idea of alliance of the nationalisms. The civil option, which promotes the inter-cultural society, is rarely seen among the respondents. This can explain faintly expressed signs of radicalism among the members of the largest minority community in Vojvodina.

On the other hand, the idea of “everybody to be master on his own land”, i.e. that the ethnic elite dominate in the places where they have majority over their elites, is risky for many reasons. Not only does it affect those members of the ethnic groups who in their local communities make a minority in the total population, but it also supports the already existing migration of these people towards the parts of Vojvodina where the members of their ethnic group make a majority. This way, without blood indeed, a Bosnian scenario is repeating and the members of different ethnic groups who would, because of their interests or out of beliefs, like all the groups to be equal in the whole territory of Vojvodina, pay the price of it.

The concept of territorial autonomy is one of the legitimate political options in a democratic society. When we take into consideration the answers of the asked Serbs to the question “What would you like the Hungarians in Vojvodina, as the members of the largest minority, to change in their behavior so you could feel better?” this concept seems more comprehensible than when compared to the principles of inter-cultural society or civil liberalism. On the other hand, a very striking intolerance of the respondents of the Serbian nationality towards this concept refers to the risks, which its realization would imply. Those among the Hungarians in Vojvodina who live in the places where the ethnic Hungarians make a minority of the total population, show their disapproval of this concept in two ways: by their behavior in voting, giving a disproportional support to the parties like the one of Mr. Agoston or Dr Pal in comparison with VMSZ, but also by their financial losses in selling their estates, which always goes together with ethnic migrations. The consequences that endure the inhabitants of Telep, Mužlja, Temerin, Torda or Bačko Gradište in this sense present a most severe critic of the cited concept.

A great part of the asked Serbs are ethno-nationalists; on the other hand, among them, and especially among the native population, there are those who would agree that their children learn the language of the ethnic minorities. This is practically a very significant opening towards real multicultural society, the one, which implies as its consequence pervading and mutual developing of many cultures and traditions, and not a concealed assimilation of minority cultures and ethnicities. This finding is especially important if we have in mind that the respondents of the Serbian nationality or the colonists from the places of the middle Banat where there are few members of the ethnic minorities (once ethnically homogeneous German places) or the inhabitants of Šajkaš, a dominantly

Serbian place and burdened by the Hungarian crimes in 1942 and older, indirectly obtained memories of killings on the ethnic basis in 1848 and 1849. Among the asked Serbs in Vojvodina there are a lot of ethno-nationalists and people completely influenced by the propaganda, which, in the course of a decade and a half, overflowed Serbia. On the other hand, repeating of a usual mistake of identifying the citizens who belong to an ethnic group and their opinion with their leading ethno-nationalistic intellectuals and their opinion would be extremely wrong. After ten years of wars and economic misery, it is much clearer to the citizens that every intolerant ethnic program in this area means paying an uneven price and above all, a big price (although not exclusively) of material compensation for a great number of those who show themselves as protectors of their nation. The inner-ethnic solidarity has weakened among the population in Vojvodina and it is at the same time understandable and in a way, good, however it may not seem pleasant. We should remember the attitude towards the refugees which, clearly shows that in this area there is no more of the ethnic solidarity (as a feeling liable to manipulation in the situation where there are a lot of proved and potential manipulators) (Ilić, 2001b) and that it may not be, because there are no necessary conditions for it. The international community can support or slow down the citizens' coming to their senses, further rationalization of their consciousness and developing the sense of repel towards ethnically exclusivistic programs. It can do that not only with its relation towards the autonomy of Vojvodina, but also with its relation towards the ethnic-territorial divisions of Bosnia and Kosovo, which could serve as unproductive and dangerous precedents.

CONCLUSION

Mastering the past is spread over many other problems in today's Vojvodina. Some of them are common, as it is the case with (in Yugoslavia postponed) a transitional shock in all East-European countries. The same goes for the burdens of the past, not only those manifested in the need to overcome the heritage of the authoritarian regimes, but also made even more complex by the history in which there were periods of mutual abuse, discrimination and pursuit of different ethnic groups. However, in the case of Vojvodina, all that is connected with the problem of assimilation of the minority population as well, which is obvious and which, despite relatively high and until recently, additionally modernized standards of protection of collective rights, at least seemingly follows the trend of the ethnic homogenization of the Eastern Europe, i.e., one process of a longer lasting, accelerated by paroxysmal emptying of nationalism in the recent south-Slavonic wars. Beside all that, the main process is going on in the conditions of stable inter-ethnic relations, which made Vojvodina the only part of the former Yugoslavia that stayed multiethnic.

Mastering the past is related to the considering the responsibility of the own group and their members. This considering is insufficient, or it takes place by a degenerated scheme of transitional

justice, adequate for changing from authoritarian to democratic society. (Sklaar, 2000) The changes are, however, noticeable; the attitude of the respondents towards the crimes that the members of their ethnic group committed over the Hungarians and Serbs respectively is more open and less partial when compared to the one which the adult population of Serbia have regarding the crimes committed in Bosnia and Croatia. (Cf. Ilić, 2001a) The population of Vojvodina is mainly tired of ethnic nationalism, although its greatest part, at least it is the case with the asked Serbs, is too tired of experiences of the passed years to be ready to criticize nationalism. The Hungarians are here more critical, which is understandable considering they experienced, as the members of the minority group, more damage that nationalism brings to these groups. However, the respondents in their opinion about burdens of the past in many ways are ahead in relation to the considerable number of politicians and intellectuals, who are less inclined to face the facts. This may be the result of the fact that the ordinary people are less responsible for inflaming the inter-national hate.

The citizens should not be underestimated or regarded as mere receptors of the ideas spread by ethno-nationalistic circles. If it seemed so, we could not search for possibilities of changes to better or it would not make any sense organizing different practical actions aimed to make a more rational view to the past and the present of the inter-ethnic relations. On the other hand, it is clear why the citizens hesitate to take this part of the responsibility, which is actually theirs. When asked, “Do you feel any responsibility for the situation in which our country is now?” only 14% of the respondents of the Serbian nationality and 13% of respondents of the Hungarian nationality can face a certain dose of their own responsibility. This attitude presents one of the bad consequences of many decades long communist ruling, which tried to keep the population out of the politics and decision making. This is how the communists prevented the population to get overwhelmed by nationalism, but on the other hand, it greatly discouraged the people in their civil relation towards the politics, and obstructed making a civil society. This minority of the respondents which recognizes its own responsibility in the past events, most often gives the answers like “I have been enduring and silent too long”, “I was passive”, “we were not loud and resolute at the right time”, etc. Very rarely did we meet different explanations of the feeling of their own responsibility (for example “I had negative feelings towards other nations – intolerance”, “because I belong to the generation that contributed to it”, “I feel a collective responsibility”, etc). The great majority of the respondents think they are responsible for nothing. They often say they did not make decisions and were not holding responsible positions (it is worth mentioning some of the answers of the respondents of the Hungarian nationality: “because I didn’t lead this country into war, because I have always did my job and I did not interfere into politics”, “I was not in the position (except voting) to make decisions about anything, “ or “it didn’t depend on me, as for myself, I educated well the children”, or the most focused and very frequent “because the politicians are to blame”). The answers of the respondents of the Serbian nationality are very similar, although there are among them here and there an intended honest admitting of their own

egoism or at least civil passiveness (“because I worry about myself”); otherwise the most often are typical answers and excuses for Vojvodina, common to the Serbs as well to the Hungarians: “I did my job honestly”, “an individual has not much influence on society”, “the individual reaches are small”, “I wasn’t personally involved in creation of this situation”, “I’m not interested in politics”, “who asks me”, or “because it is not us, the farmers, who are responsible”, “I am guilty for nothing”, “I didn’t take part in anything”, “I love my people and country and respect each party”, or “I am not a direct participant in the events that brought this situation”.

Some groups are particularly delicate. The fear of returning of the Germans in Vojvodina is quite apparent among the colonist population. This group is characteristic by its firmer egalitarian orientation of its members than it is the case with the Serbs natives or with the asked ethnic Hungarians. Egalitarianism is related to the ethnic nationalism, they strengthen each other thus making a xenophobic syndrome, and coming of a great number of refugees to Vojvodina, who are by their origin very close to the colonists, additionally enlarges the irrationality in the view to other ethnic groups. The example of Knicanin, with its population not related to the recent refugees by their origin, but which tries to ignore the fate of their precedents, fearing, at the same time, the coming of their representatives, and being obliged to welcome them in the changed circumstances, is in this sense indicative.

The new danger in otherwise stable inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina presents today dominating liberal nationalism, which was much considered in the introduction, and which implies either exclusion and tearing apart of the community on the basis of ethno-territory (where everybody would be subjected to its ethnic elite) or assimilation of minority groups, the individual civil rights of which are recognized, but not their collective rights. (It is worth repeating here some typical statements like: “I would appreciate they didn’t make such a fuss about their rights when it is clear they have the same rights as other people”, “not to ask for too many rights, after all they are a minority”).

The findings of the research do not need a dramatic approach, but a measured one with a tendency that they serve as an impulse for undertaking practical actions. A negative attitude towards the Hague Tribunal among the asked Serbs is nothing new. In our research, important differences between the colonists and the natives concerning the attitudes towards the members of the second largest ethnic group in Vojvodina and, at a smaller degree, towards the past, are noticed for the first time. Insincerity of a significant number of the asked Hungarians in the answers to some of the questions is an indicator, which by itself speaks a lot about their feeling of being threatened. In the methodological sense, asking a series of similar questions about actually the same topic solved this problem. On the other hand, there is a fainter aversion towards the ethnic concurrence among the asked Serbs than in the previous researches, and moreover, we should always have in mind that the types of applied samples disable strict and rigorous comparisons.

The natives are as a whole more anti-communistic oriented and at the same time more open towards coexistence with the members of the minorities than the colonists and their descendents. Nevertheless, in order to be really productive, a tolerant attitude of the asked Serbs-natives needs to be combined with some of the solutions applied in the time of the unshared power (as with the one concerning the priority of the fight against chauvinism inside the own group). All the more so, the respondents from both observed ethnic groups have a very favorable opinion of the period of unshared power. This retrospective revision and a subsequent embellishment of the past, which certainly was not ideal, cannot only be explained by a difficult life of the population in Vojvodina in the last ten years, but also present, on a practical level, a part of a common ideological base that can be used for improving the inter-ethnic relations. The communists can be criticized for many things, but it is true that they cooled down the ethnic nationalisms by combining the repression and education, and that the burdens of the past related to the period of the new authorities in Vojvodina as well as in the former Yugoslavia, did not originate from the ethnic discrimination, except for expelling of the Yugoslav ethnic Germans and the serial crimes committed over them and the vendetta in Bačka and Debeljača. It should be repeated that this glorification of the period of the unshared power, which is spread among the population, could be used in a practical action also on the level of improving the ethnic relations in a liberal way. Apparently, the economic standard, which existed in the period of Tito, was in its great part a consequence of the absence of the ethnic conflicts and turning down the ethnic nationalism, as well as the open attitude of the country towards the world. Tito and his immediate successors were not xenophobic and they controlled nationalism. The task of the practical action is to show the connection between these characteristics of the earlier communistic policy and the former good material standard of the citizens and to point out to the way these experiences could be used in the changed circumstances, with a full respect for the individual and collective rights in a democratic society.

The asked Hungarians in many ways show the psychology of the threatened group. They do that mainly in a non-aggressive way; generally speaking, few open anti-Serbian attitudes were observed among the asked Hungarians. According to their statements, it is partly because when they find themselves in Hungary, they feel an inner-ethnic distance towards themselves. It was seen that the historic memory is vivid and it firmly pressures the consciousness of the present population of Vojvodina. It brings destroying and distractive potentials, but it does not mean they must be activated. The asked Hungarians are far more aware of the crimes, which their compatriots committed over the Serbs, and much more ready to admit them, than it is the case with the attitude of the Serbs towards the crimes over the Hungarians. This is very important. The Serbs in Vojvodina are the largest ethnic group in the Province and it is necessary for them to abandon a usual nationalistic myth according to which the own group is always a victim, never the executor. It should be also said that the paroxysm of the Hungarian chauvinism in Hungary at the beginning of the 90s passed without any visible

consequences in Vojvodina. Istvan Curka is not interesting for the local Hungarians. The same goes for Horthy and their collaborators.

Both the Serbs and the Hungarians notice a disastrous Milošević turning point in leading the ethnic policy in Yugoslavia in the 80s and they see it as very important. However, unlike the asked Hungarians, the respondents of the Serbian nationality more often in Milošević policy criticize the nationalism. When asked what they would like the Hungarians in Vojvodina to change in their behavior, the respondents of the Serbian nationality often gave the answers that really meant that the Hungarians in Vojvodina did not bother them as people, but they bother them because they are Hungarians. The change of the spirit of time overwhelmed the consciousness of the respondents in the sense that they respect the individual human rights. But, a great part of the asked Serbs in Vojvodina see asking for collective rights, those that prevent assimilation, as something unacceptable. This intolerance was clearly noticed in the analysis.

This question is perhaps more complex than it may seem. When asked directly, the respondents of the Serbian nationality in a relative majority think that extra collective rights should be assured for the members of the minorities, many think that they should have all civil rights, and not an insignificant minority think that the members of the minorities have too many rights, etc. These findings are much better than those got by the probability sample in January 2001. They are also in opposition to the clearly expressed frequent demand addressed to the Hungarians in Vojvodina to abolish or limit a public use of mother tongue, which presents a very explicit arguing for discrimination and ethnic-nationalism. The point is that there is confusion about collective rights in the conscious of the asked Serbs and their attitude towards the individual rights and that this problem is a crucial point for a wide practical action.

We should also mention some other questions important from the point of view of realizing the aims of this project. The spread feeling of discrimination of the asked Hungarians is an important fact even when it has no real grounds, and especially when it has it, as it is the case with some areas of social life in Vojvodina where there is really the ethnic discrimination or where there are efforts to prevent it from being discontinued or lessened. What is more, if judging by the contents of the answers of the respondents, regardless of the considerable part of those who say they are willing to let their children learn the language of the ethnic minorities, the Serbs in Vojvodina obviously do not separate multicultural society from the idea of it by the Serbian scheme, with the tolerance for the minorities. In these conditions the members of the minorities sometimes rightly see assimilation behind promoting multicultural society and they look for an escape in ethno centralism through which they offer themselves to the control of their ethnic elite, but which promises more in preserving the ethnic identity.

The observed attachment to the autonomy of Vojvodina among the asked Hungarians is very important. Without any intention to advocate for any of the autonomy-oriented standpoint, it seems

that the autonomy presents a basis for creating trust. It is clear that the Hungarians have an aversion towards Serbian Vojvodina, as well as fear of “the Serbian multicultural society” for the same reasons, but they have a good experience with super-national Vojvodina. This observation is only marked. Its elaboration would need a separate discussion. Nevertheless, the real autonomy of Vojvodina is a real alternative to the ethnic territorial autonomy, especially there, where the ethnic Hungarians are in minority; anyway, they manifest it by their behavior in voting. The future constitutional rearranging of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Vojvodina is something that undoubtedly must be done, but also something with which we should be careful: possible centers of the conflicts are connected with the redistribution of corresponding competences and the corresponding resources. Regarding the experience, with pre-composition of different civil options and institutions we should expect also a strong involving of the ethnic dimension.

In a wider context of the project, a special problem is a permanent motive of feeling of threatening for the nation, whether it is about reinterpretation of the past, or a real or alleged threatening for the own ethnicity at the right moment. Some moments here have bigger significance than the others. The feeling of being ethnically threatened among the Serbs in Vojvodina is sometimes explained by the demand of a part of the Hungarian party circles for territorial autonomy in nine municipalities in the north in Vojvodina. (In seven of them the ethnic Hungarians have absolute majority; the whole area has less than three fifths of the ethnic Hungarians who live in Vojvodina, and the Hungarians made, according to the most recent census, 57% of the population; Cf. Samardžić, 2002) The views like the one that “there is a great pressure on the Serbs, more than on the minorities”, which is by experience quite a groundless idea of prevailing of the minorities over the Serbs in Vojvodina, and often related to the dissatisfaction of the Serbian aspirants with the share in dividing the loot after the change in 2002 in some parts, express not only the ethno-nationalism but also the insecurity of the Serbs. The answers to the questions about personal and event preferences point to the interpretation that the seat of the Serbian ethnic consciousness, as well as the one of the Hungarian too, is outside Vojvodina. The Serbs in Vojvodina in their considerable part feel threatened although they have fewer reasons for that than the members of the ethnic minorities, but this feeling alone appears as a real social fact. The feeling of belonging to the ethnic periphery of their own group additionally strengthens the intolerance. As Todor Kuljić writes, “the nation’s feeling of being threatened is a basis for making excuses for the process of enforced national reviving where the dark sides of their own past are suppressed, hushed up or relativized. Only those feelings, which suit enforcing national identity, are intentionally taken care of (the bright imperial past, perishing of their own people, worshipping the cult of the rulers and cultural representatives, and so on). They try to suppress genocide and fascism of their own nation, provincial backwardness, political short-sightedness of the aggressive chauvinistic policy, etc” This feeling of one part of the Serbs in Vojvodina is supported not only by the ethno-nationalistic propaganda of influential intellectual circles from Belgrade and the ones in Vojvodina

close to them, but also the defeats in the most recent wars, the economic collapse of the country, social panic provoked by the forthcoming mass firing, which must enforce the ethnic competition, as well as the objective semi-peripheral position of the country. The consciousness of the asked ethnic Serbs is greatly one-sided. On the other hand, it is liable to change. The Serbs natives were exposed to a striking communistic repression in the years after the Second World War. (Cf. Boarov, 2001) They have not forgotten it (we should remember here their answers to the relevant questions) but generally, they have a favorable opinion about their position during Tito's and his epigones' ruling. A peaceful common life of the ethnic Hungarians, Serbs and members of other nations followed the raids of Novi Sad and Šajkaš and the vendetta in Backa during half a century. Although the respondents, especially those of the Serbian nationality, do not know well even their own national past, let alone the examples of the historic collaboration of the people of different ethnicities on the territory of today's Vojvodina, they understand the groundlessness of a big lie about inner-ethnic solidarity and the feeling that they ended better than their former fellow-citizens from Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

The social issue is very important for articulating the rational and productive relation towards the past which could be adjust to the trends of developing inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina. The absence of deep property differences and a sufficiently high lower limit of the standard of living, growth of education of the population that is otherwise among the most educated on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, peaceful outside conditions and the absence of war danger, present conditions hard to attain but not unrealizable for a desirable and really possible future of Vojvodina, its citizens and ethnic groups that live in it. Beside the mentioned social issues, which are still an unrealized wish of the greatest part of the population, and those institutional, which are being gradually realized, it is very important that when articulating the approach to the basic problem, we have in mind a critic of the chauvinism of the own group as an unavoidable ideological factor which proved to be the best means for rational modifying the past, and at the same time, for a productive effect on shaping modern future inter-ethnic relations. It is very important that the findings of the research showed that the respondents from the two largest ethnic groups in Vojvodina, at an uneven degree, liable to nationalistic manipulation, but also not inclined to accept, for the chauvinistic policy of memory, a characteristic moving of the stress in interpretation of the crucial events in the past and its cynical-pragmatic modification attributed to politicians and nationalistic intellectuals. To put it in a simple way, the asked Serbs in Vojvodina, and at a less degree the Hungarians, incline to see themselves as victims and to oversee the responsibility of the members of their own ethnicity for previously committed crimes or for discrimination on the ethnic grounds. But, they are willing to change their perspective, which is very important. It is good that the ethnic groups in Vojvodina today do not face serious threats, which means they do not turn towards an unsolid inter-ethnic homogenization and exclusion of other. Although after 5 October 2000 in Serbia prevailed the alliance of the ethno-nationalists and not civil option, it accelerated the development in a favorable way in this regard.

The phenomena about ethnic relations, whether it be the reinterpretation of their past or their modern or desirable future state, should be regarded from different points of view. The social life often brings unintended but necessary consequences together with the voluntary and desired ones. Even the ethnocentric parties, which introduced a large population into politics and exposed it to the nationalistic stupefying and inflaming of the hate towards the other and the different, introduced so-called ordinary people into politics. (the part of which is “the politics of the past”) while the communists kept them beyond it. The communists let the ordinary people into politics only during the chauvinistic episodes like the Croatian one in 1971 or the Serbian one that came after 1988. The right-extremist voters had their first contact with the actual politics through their votes or by their feet while they were marching in the volunteers (para)units. They are undoubtedly ideologically poisoned, but we must take them into consideration if we do not intend to undertake the solutions impossible today and to introduce the authoritarian regime against the spirit of time and the imperative of the surroundings. The ethno-centric parties in this area use the parliamentary phrase because the surroundings make them do that; this way they survive, but perceptively, also undermine their support. Sooner or later the voters desert them through the process of rationalization of the social consciousness, which advances slowly and in a contradictory way, but which cannot be held back. The ethnic parties are at least a temporary inevitability, and the foregoing social troubles will tempt the skillfulness of the civil option to direct new paroxysms of dissatisfaction and different frustrations. Democracy must count on today’s voters of Seselj as a part of its mass support. The struggle that those who consider scramble for the loot finished, on a deeper level is just beginning. The basic ideological instrument of the European right extremity is denying the holocaust, while here, as by analogy, there are war crimes committed by the members of the own group. The crimes were, as by the definition, always committed by others.

Ethnocratic liberalism, which according to the western authors, had its purest example in the south-African apartheid, is not unknown to the numerous ethnically very heterogeneous representatives of the actual authorities in Serbia and the political life in Vojvodina. However, it is known in a much softer form of supporting the separate ethnic educational systems and a parallel and not common life. Restrictive forms of liberalism present the grounds of right-extremist strivings; in Russia in 1993 one quarter of the voters voted for the anti-Semite Zirinovski and his pervert form of ethnocratic liberalism. Should we remind the readers of the absolute number of votes that Šešelj got once?

The chance for surviving of the ethnocratic liberalism is a transition; deprived of the perspective, the workers in the out of date technologies in the East of Europe take over the role that once had the old middle-class, now overwhelmed by a social panic, which was once in the service of the jeopardized gross capital and its fascistic program. In this regard the preserving and developing the social rights in the countries of transition are the strongest structural obstacle to enforcing ethno-nationalism and the potential arising of fascism. However, in the present circumstances too, the

starting points for rational reinterpretation of the past and for minimizing the possibility of breaking out of the open inter-ethnic conflicts in Vojvodina are not too bad. The very tradition of a peaceful common life is not the guarantee against repeating the Bosnian scenario. For the Hungarians in Vojvodina, Trianon is a painful wound, but they are quite aware there is no way back to pre-trianon time. The Serbs in Vojvodina now have their “Trianons” like Dayton and Kumanovo; the research showed very different and often opposite contents of their consciousness, understandable regarding the influences they were exposed to before and after Milošević took over the power and 5 October 2000, as well as the experiences acquired between the two mentioned points in time. The essential difference in relation to the ethnic Hungarians is that the Serbs in Vojvodina stayed within the borders of their mother country; they showed less inter-ethnic solidarity than the Hungarians regarding “their” refugees in the years after the dissolution of Austro-Hungary. The last thing that the Serbs and the citizens of Vojvodina need is a new revisionism or appearing of a new “larger fatherland maker” as it was once Horthy among the Hungarians. The issue of minimizing the possibility of inter-ethnic conflicts in Vojvodina is not only the matter of effort towards a true and rational reinterpretation of the common past nor is it only a problem of creating social conditions which will guarantee Vojvodina a real equality of the citizens and the ethnic groups they belong to. The greatest part of responsibility lies undoubtedly on the direct protagonists, i.e. the citizens and other public subjects active in Vojvodina. The burdens of the past are for them objectively an aggravating circumstance, and morally, they can be an extenuating factor, but never an excuse for choosing the wrong solutions. However, much responsibility lies upon the international community. Like the conditions made at the end of the 80s by suspension of the autonomy of Vojvodina and eruption of the Serbian chauvinism without which the war in Bosnia would have been impossible, the same way the direction of the further development of the inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina depends a lot on the attitude of the international community towards different demands, hidden by liberal phrase, for further ethnization of the policy in Serbia and in the surrounding countries and territories like Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo.

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