Original scientific article

READING THE STARS IN 1990: SERBIAN MEDIA AND THE RECONSTRUCTING OF THE CONCEPT OF HEAVENLY PEOPLE

Srdja PAVLOVIC¹

Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, University of Alberta Address: Edmonton, T6G 2H4 Alberta, Canada

Email: pavlovic@ualberta.ca

ABSTRACT:

The article points out several aspects of the political and media landscapes in Serbia in the last decade of the twentieth century, and offer an overview of strategies employed by the civilian and military structures of power in Serbia aimed at constructing enemies (both foreign and domestic) as well as legitimizing military intervention in neighboring countries in the early 1990s. Much has been written about the political developments in the former Yugoslavia, and the purpose of this paper is to shed additional light upon a few elements of the mechanisms of deception the government in Belgrade used in the war years and beyond (1990-2000). I wish to illustrate the construction of fear used by the political and military elites in order to rationalize the chaotic situation in the country and maintain their grip on power.

KEY WORDS: Serbia; Yugoslavia; 90's; Milosevic; Propaganda;

¹ Srdja Pavlovic: had earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1986 at the Department of Ethnology, Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade. He completed his Master of Arts in Ethnology degree in 1991 at the Mongolian State University in Ulaan Bataar (Mongolia), and earned his Doctor of Philosophy in History degree at the University of Alberta (Canada) in 2003. Dr. Pavlovic's areas of scientific interest include history, culture, literature, and politics of Modern Europe, the Mediterranean region, and the Balkans. His research focus is on modern political and cultural history of the Balkans with an emphases on the issues of nationalism, construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of national identities among the South Slavs. He authored historical monographs such as Balkan Anschluss: The Annexation of Montenegro and the Creation of the Common South Slavic State (2007); Prostori Identiteta: Eseji o Istoriji, Sjećanju i Interpretacijama Prošlosti (2006); Iza Ogledala: Eseji o Politici Identiteta (2004); Zapadna Ljuljaška (1997); Mongolski Piktogram (1989), and edited scholarly collections and literary anthologies such as Transcending Fratricide: Political Myths, Reconciliations and the Uncertain Future in the former Yugoslavia (2013) and Treshold: Anthology of Contemporary Writing from Alberta (1998). He also authored numerous scholarly articles in peer reviewed journals worldwide. Dr. Pavlović is an associate editor of Nationality Papers (Columbia University) and Treaties and Documents(University of Maribor), and was the North American coordinator for the research projects Direct Democracy and Active Citizenship: Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is a research associate with the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, University of Alberta, and is currently co-editing (with dr. Dejan Guzina) a special issue of the Canadian Slavonic Papers devoted to the theme of post-Yugoslav identities.

SAŽETAK:

Članak ukazuje na nekoliko aspekata političkog i medijskog pejzaža u Srbiji u poslednjoj deceniji dvadesetog veka i nudi pregled strategija civilnih i vojnih struktura vlasti u Srbiji u cilju konstruisanja neprijatelja (i stranih i domaćih) kao i legitimisanje vojne intervencije u susednim zemljama početkom 1990-ih. O političkim zbivanjima u bivšoj Jugoslaviji pisano je dosta, a cilj ovog rada je da dodatno osvetli nekoliko elemenata mehanizama obmane koje je vlast u Beogradu koristila u ratnim godinama i kasnije (1990-2000). Želim da ilustrujem konstrukciju straha koju koriste političke i vojne elite da bi racionalizovali haotičnu situaciju u zemlji i zadržali svoju vlast.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Srbija; Jugoslavija; 90-te; Milošević; Propaganda;