

Serbia Between Two Worlds

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Introducing Serbia

SERBIA with MONTENEGRO are the two republics of the former Yugoslavia, which still together form a federation. At the dismemberment of the former Socialist Federated State of the six Socialist Republics, Serbia had an estimated 10 million population with Belgrade as capital (also the capital of the present Federation). A complex of ethnic minorities, divergent religions, historical particularities are the basic elements which fashion the Serbian nation, explaining also its close ties with Byzantium and “Greek” orthodoxy. Cyrillic alphabet and Byzantine art denote its rich Byzantine spiritual legacy. A long, painful, heavily paid resistance against barbarian hordes from Central Asian steppes—the Ottoman Turks—weave the History of this Balkan people up to the 19th century. The national renaissance starts at the beginning of that century; first in the form of an autonomous Serbia, eventually acceding to the status of an officially recognized independent state. The national consciousness of Serbs is permanently exalted at the memory of great moments and past historical events. The medieval empire of Douchan, the wars of independence, the heroism of the Serbian people during the two World Wars, make of Serbs a nation to which no one may remain indifferent, but may inspire a well deserved admiration.

Lately in the Balkan Peninsula Serbia has made the headlines again; it “enjoys” the unfortunate privilege of drawing the interest of military strategists and political analysts, rivaling each other in exhibiting “*their politically correct*” conclusions from pretentious new discoveries they make, illuminated by their biased anti-Serb mood. Undoubtedly those political pundits have not taken the right direction either in analyzing the situation or in offering solutions which commend themselves. Given their small knowledge of the early history of the people and thick ignorance, or even the disdain felt for the ethnic idiosyncrasy of this Balkan nation, I remain thoroughly skeptical of their competence in dealing with realities and offering correct interpretations. Rather, I hear ad nauseam partisan information about the late developments in this ethnically and politically volcanic European subcontinent.

The main question is: What are the roots of the “Serbian Problem”? Any attempt to approach it on a merely journalistic level and describe the past and present realities with ad hominem arguments, with no concern to understand the root of the “problem”, will fail

to do justice. On the contrary, false witness will harm a people with its peculiar moral and spiritual qualities. Do we understand “Serbia between two worlds”? If not, I doubt that an honest and accurate account of the tragic errors which unjustly, and in the most revolting manner, hit the Serbian nation, will be presented. The unified front this people formed at a time of National crises of such magnitude, opposed as one body to NATO, earns them the title *People of Colossus*. For it required the guts of such a people to say NO to sordid and barbarian aggression. During those fateful seventy-eight days and nights of air strike, I came to the conclusion that we were witnessing the spreading all over the moral and spiritual planet of ours, the repulsive geopolitics of utter darkness. The war against Serbia ended forever the era of noble and humanitarian just wars; the aim sought of was nothing but, by demonizing a people, such as old and new dictatorships have always done, be it Nazi Germany in the recent past or A White House and 10 Downing street in the present, with propaganda machines, at the expense of decency, democracy, harmony, to concur in and confirm the rule upon this earth of the Prince of Lies. In a most dramatic manner, though almost unbelievable, we have come to realize that indeed evil is alive and well. The hypocrisy of with which NATO conducted its war in such a fashion that it lost not a man, while the Serbs suffered thousands of casualties—“American pilots got up in the morning in their ranch homes in the Midwest, went to their bases, flew halfway around the world, and indiscriminately dropped bombs on Yugoslavia from their planes flying miles above the ground, safely out of range of any weapon the Yugoslavians had for their own defense” (Liberty, August 1999)—inaugurated the new era of anti-eschatology; soon it will force all of us, Western “marching morons”, infantized by TV, (“do dictators today need tanks to establish their rule”, writes a British paper, “when the masterly perfected propaganda machine of CNN and TV achieves it successfully”) to acquiesce to the *fait accompli*. Our irresponsible carelessness has thrown us, without our knowledge, inside the Realm, subjected to the Rule, accustomed almost to, the Reign of Terror of the Total Darkness.

A mere journalistic account of the events, if it dismisses Serbia moving between two worlds, ignores its particular tragic age long history at the crossroads, between two borders, interprets The Serbian conflict as news in brief and will totally miss the point. For the historical element and the element of ethnic psychology are paramount and have to be taken into serious account. The journalist may applaud the miscalculated politico-militarist strategists. However, if he does not consider that element we are underlining here, he will not have a whole picture of Serbia, and will prove incompetent to evaluate the special place of Serbs and their unique role among European peoples. The past for Serbs is not dead; on the contrary it is dramatically present in their collective memory, though at times it may cast its shadow heavily, even dangerously, over the future.

Serbs are the people between two worlds; they form a Human wave constantly moving between two borders as whirling, walzing winds of European history causes them to alternately emigrate and immigrate. It is imperative to approach the Serbian problem with these elements in mind; it may correct prejudices and clear lenses, instead of cynically looking at them.

Origins Fourteen centuries ago, one of the last great emigrations of barbarian tribes was taking place in Europe. Slavs were one of the largest family among them invading the plains of Eastern Europe; they undertook a massive, even an adventurous emigration towards the South, the Balkan peninsula. Among them, Serbs settled in the valleys of the North-Western Balkans, a region exactly on the crossroads; on the Eastern side the zone of influence of Greek-Byzantine orthodoxy; on the Western, Latin Catholic Christendom. The geographical position thus chosen made of Serbs a people of two worlds. However, they also had to determine precisely for which side they would opt for political and spiritual allegiance; they chose Constantinople as spiritual mentor, turning their back to Rome. This choice proved to have a costly price up to the present. Unforgiving Rome, with her almost instinctive memory of a mule, would never forgive such a lese-majesty.

Between Morava and the Timok, over the high chains of Balkan and the Rodope Mountains, on the fertile valleys lie the natural borders of the Republic of Serbia, chosen as home somewhere in the 6th century A.D. They expelled former populations known as Vlaks and Arnaouts. Later, they advanced towards the Adriatic coast. The earlier history of Serbs is lost in a mist like so many other Slav and European populations. At the early stage, Serbian tribes did not have a central unified state. They were ruled by regional or local joupans—chiefs. In fact they were almost subjected to the Byzantine empire, though often threatened by neighboring Bulgaria also. Serbs often engaged in bitter resistance against both of them. A date of total independence may be considered following the death of the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon (12th century). However, they have never been safe from threat from the same neighbors. Despite the founding of some kingdoms, Serbs were obliged to recognize the sovereignty of these powerful neighbors. Their contacts with them will leave an indelible mark upon their national history. They often turned to Byzantium for protection. Zeta (present day Montenegro), became the actual center of the country. Later, the kingdom of Slavons comprised that which is known as Herzegovina. By the end of the 9th century they got rid of the Byzantine yoke and enjoyed relative freedom, though in a tumultuous national existence. This state of things lasted until the brutal conquest of the country by Ottomans, ending the Serbian Kingdom.

The Christianization of Serbs had started early and was completed by the end of the 9th century. Their choice of Byzantine Orthodoxy created a bitter rivalry between the two arrogantly dominant Christendoms of that period: the Western and the Eastern. The Roman Christianity gained mainly at the southern coast; Eastern Christianity was heavily concentrated in the interior. The disciples of Cyrillus and Methodius, the Greek missionaries of Slavic populations, introduced the Greek-Slav liturgy, the Cyrillic alphabet, and the possibility of a national unity later. Christianity offered to Serbs the possibility of deep social transformations. Feudalism was prevalent instead of the more powerful Joupans, who tended to declare themselves hereditary princes. During this period, closer ties with Rome was also established, though the allegiance to Constantinople remained unquestioned. The title of King was obtained through Byzantian court recognition. Practically, Serbs had to deal with a policy of balance between East and West. At one time an attempt to conquer even Constantinople failed. Besides their early original foyer—Zeta and Raska—Serbian tribes spread farther to the west, towards

Bosnia and Dalmatia—as well as east of the Morava. However, before long the historical circumstances forced them to refold.

The real emergence of Serbia as an independent Kingdom was the work of the Nemanides, a dynasty founded by Stepan Nemanja of the Raska, in 1159. Taking advantage of the internal Byzantine strifes and encouraged by Venitians and by Barbarosa, Stepan N. shakes off the Byzantine sovereignty and succeeds adding Zeta to his land. His son was the first crowned king of Serbia, the crown being received from Rome, notwithstanding faithfulness to Greek orthodoxy. From now on the orthodox Serbian Church became a decisive and inseparable component of the national conscience. Medieval Serbia attained its height during Duchan's reign—1331-1355—its borders extending as far as the Corinthian gulf in southern Greece. In 1346 the archbishop of Pec—the See of the Church—was elevated to the rank of patriarchate, while Duchan himself was crowned emperor of Serbs and Greeks in Skopije, the new capital. His death did not allow the conquest of Constantinople as he had planned. That might have certainly changed the course of history entirely, at least for that part of Europe. The 13th and 14th centuries are considered to be the golden age of Serbia.

The frequent military interventions of Normans, Austrians, Hungarian-Magyars, in addition to Bulgaria and Byzantium, highlights this period also. Intricate dynastic problems of succession, overthrowing of princes—joupans—and palace assassinations characterize the history of medieval Serbia. Soon the empire of Douchans was broken up, abetted by the intrigues and progress of feudalism, while the threat of the Ottoman Turks made itself extremely serious. The internal anarchy eventually favored the Ottoman expansion. In 1389 Prince Lazare was defeated and killed in Kosovo (which means so much to Serbs of today as the symbol of national identity). From then on Central Serbia was under Turkish rule, as rivaling Serb princes accept Turkish suzerainty.

Under Ottoman rule, Serbs knew different fates. Bosnia, under the Nemanides runs a rather independent course, as it became home for the Bogomile heresy, who, instead of resisting the infidel Turk accepted Islam as their religion. The true motivation of the massive conversion was the fear of invasion by catholic Hungary. Hungarians in the North and the advance of Ottoman tribes now forced Serbs to gather again around the original foyer, in Kosovo, which for some time, in the 13th century as we mentioned, had become the center and cradle of their civilization. Kosovo thus becomes for a very long phase of the national history, generator of conflict and litigious relationships as well as the high symbol of Serbian national identity. Until the end of the 17th century it remained the See of Orthodox patriarchate. During the Austro-Ottoman confrontations in the 17th and 18th centuries, Serbs were once again caught in the eye of the cyclone. They chose their battlefield at the side of the Hapsburgs, again paying heavily the price of an unreliable alliance.

The Time of Emigrations.

With the terror-domination at the end of the 14th century the period of massive

emigrations towards Hungary starts. The upper classes, the aristocracy, was decimated during fierce resistance. Though the Principality of Montenegro was founded, the emigration towards the countries on the shores of Danube and the Save continued, especially from Kosovo towards the Danube region. Great mass movements took place especially in 1690 and 1743. Under the leadership of the Patriarch, hundred of thousands of Serbs left Kosovo to settle in the north, in Vojvodine, Slavonia, Banija, Lika, all under Austrian rule. By the end already of the 16th and the beginning of 17th centuries, Serbs in revolt welcomed the Austrian armies who advanced up to Kosovo. However, each battle between the superpowers ended with identical results for Serbs. The North of Serbia was annexed by the Hapsburgs of Vienna. Belgrade, liberated by Laudon (1789) had to be returned in 1791. The Kosovo valley, almost abandoned by its population is now populated by Islamized Arnauts. As the Serbs despaired of Austrian support they turned towards their Orthodox counterpart Russia, and welcomed them at the end of the 18th century as a natural protector. Serb immigrants become precious to the Hapsburg army as they prove to be the fiercest fighters against the already declining Ottoman empire. They functioned as a living and vibrating shield against Islam, thus preventing Ottomans from expanding further. Naturally, this massive movements of voluntary displacement signaled the beginning of the end of preponderant Serbian presence in Kosovo, the holy cradle of Serbhood. Nevertheless Kosovo never stopped as an integral part of the Serbian territory. *It never became Albanian*, notwithstanding historical falsifications and distortions invoked. Here then lies the origin of the present day Kosovo problem. During this period, the former Zeta played the role of a natural fortress against Turkish advance; it maintained its independence under the leadership of its bishop-prince.

Serbia itself never experienced a massive conversion to Islam. However, the yoke weighed heavily under various forms: taxation, severe treatment by Turkish spahis, and the most cruel oppression exerted by Janissaires. Serbian cohesion was not broken, the Church maintained its existence, the Pec patriarchate suppressed at the end of the 15th was reestablished a century later. Serbs continued to resist the Ottomans. Individual resistance by out-laws as well as a collectively organized one, started recurrent insurrections, especially from 17th century on, when almost all the subjected Christians under the same domination, encouraged by Western powers, started harassing the decadent Ottoman empire. The Austrian armies made several incursions in territories occupied by Turks. Another form of resistance was renewed flight of Serbs towards Hungary and Austria. The North of Serbia enjoyed relative calm, and even economic development. Ottomans during this period abolished the Orthodox Patriarchate of Pec again, under the pretext that it is serving as a stronghold for Serbian nationalism.

The massive resistance and uprising will tried to shake off the tyranny. The worst form of it was inflicted by the Janissaires, as the central government and its authority is declining, these legions took advantage by exerting an inhuman rule of their own. The savagery of Janissaires needs not to be retold. Their history is one of the best known and not only in the Balkan peninsula. To this already tragic situation must be added the policy of the Hapsburgs on Serbian territories also. German-Hungarians established themselves in Serb territories while Serbs emigrate towards Ukraine.

Modern History

The history of modern Serbia starts with the above mentioned events. The war of independence was especially the work of Karageorges, who gained decisive victories over the Sick Man of Europe (the Ottoman power). Once again the excesses of the Janissaires forced Serbs to revolt, and they were encouraged by the newly emerging Russian power on the international scene. For some time, Russia supported Serbian insurrection. Yet, involved in the Napoleonic wars it soon forsook the Serb independentists to their fate. Karageorges, (Black George), the liberator of Belgrade, proclaimed himself hereditary prince, but was obliged to flee, when the Russians having signed a treaty with the Sublime Porte abandoned the Serbs. Eventually the national hero was assassinated by a rival who successfully called for the withdrawal of Turkish Spahis and obtained six new districts, added to the Belgrade principality. In 1817 Turks accepted the formation of a vassal principality of Serbia. The Firman declared autonomy to the pachalic of Belgrade. Difficulties waited the newly established state as Turks refused to recognize the borders of the independent Serbia. During the 1878 Berlin Conference, Russia intervened again and Serbia was now officially recognized as an entirely independent State; four years later it became a constitutional monarchy. However, seizure by Austro-Hungary weighed heavily upon both the political and economical situation of Serbia during the last years of the 19th century. (If Bosnia-Herzegovina are added to Serbia, the Hapsburgs succeeded in infiltrating between Montenegro and the Novi Pazar, by planting German immigrants and even further into Macedonian territory). Serbia resisted to this insidious political and economical imperialism by the uprising of 1903, enjoying the blessing of Russia. But Bosnia-Herzegovina had been now annexed by the Hapsburgs, and, like Russia, Serbia submitted to the iniquitous fait-accompli. The Hapsburg feared that the indomitable Serbs may create a major power in the Balkans, therefore, like the present day US administration, spared no effort to subdue germinating ambitions.

In the 20th century, under Russian pressure Serbia joined the Christian coalition in the Balkans and attacked Turkey (First Balkan War); then, due to Bulgarian ambitions, with the remaining other two—Greece and Romania—fought Bulgaria (2nd Balkan war). The story of the assassination of the Austrian Archiduc François-Ferdinand by a Bosnian is familiar so there is no need for the story to be retold here. Suffice it to remind that, one bullet, as it has been said, killed as many as six million Europeans, (not counting the one and a half million Armenian victims of the Genocide, another direct outcome of the First World War, undertaken by the Young Turks enjoying the blessing of Germany).

WW I imposed heavy sacrifices on Serbia. If Serbia resisted the offensive of Austro-Hungarians, the intervention of Bulgaria at the side of the Central Powers in 1915, seriously endangered the safety of the kingdom. The collapse of the Hapsburgs now raised the problem of a Slavic Monarchy. It could have been feasible to envisage the creation of Greater Serbia, with Montenegro, Bosnia, Vojvodina, and eastern Slavonia. The trend of pro-Yugoslavs (Slaves of the South), was majoritarian. However, one of the main difficulties was the rivalry, dating from the previous century, between the two dynasties, each one claiming the right to the crown. An inexpiable hatred had ruled

between them since the assassination of the Serb hero. At last, the crown went to the first dynasty. At the end of WW I, Peter the First was on the Serbian throne; soon he would be the last king of Serbia, as a new state called Yugoslavia is born, with Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia as partners. Serbs were accused of leading a politics of hegemony by means of centralization. The conflict between Serbs and Croats, during and after the WW I became extremely violent. In 1932, while visiting France, King Alexander Karadjordjevic was assassinated in Marseille by an anarchist. After WW I the Federation of Yugoslavia was once again reconstituted under the leadership of the Croatian Tito.

(2) IDENTIFICATION OF A NATION

A Greek journalist diagnoses “*the plethora of History (Winston Churchill) as the plethora of ethnic phantasmas*, of national holy places, even of national myths, which constitute the fabric of the collective conscience of nations on the Balkan peninsula. Balkan nations have chosen their phantasmas among their endless dramas and unspeakable of tragedies, and made of them their ultimate ethnic refuge, where traumas are gathered and conserved, unrealized dreams or unfulfilled ambitions are precious, almost *religiously* conserved, as constituting elements of past grandeur, or present-day rights. Each one of the much suffering peoples in the Balkans has been caught in the dazzling whirlwind of an often idealized past.”

Yioryios Stankos, in the Greek review AVATON, expresses himself in this respect more critically than I tend to, about the ethnic psychology of Balkan nations. For part of this section I am indebted to his essay. For decades, even from the very beginning of the Independence war in 1821, Greeks cherished and maintained the myth of the Great Idea, which lured the promise of the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire. This however engaged them in adventurous, long, vain, and ruthless wars with their hereditary enemy, Turkey. The disillusioning outcome of it was the end, the final death, of the Byzantine dream. More tragically, in the Twenties, came the forced and humiliating exile, a true ethnic-cleansing of more than one million Greeks from their ancestral homes in Asia Minor—where they had been settled for more than three thousand years.

Bulgarians clung to their utopian vision of Great Bulgaria in such an irrational way that they got involved in constant conflicts and warring adventures with their immediate neighbors. The result was not only the loss of territory, but more seriously the loss of dignity. Modern Bulgaria is still paying for the geopolitical mistakes committed in the beginning of the century.

Serbs, at first striving for the idea of Yugoslavia, attempted to synthesize inside the meager vestiges of the former Federation, (abandoning the Federative policy, they undertook to create a great Serbian State). However, they got involved in bitter and bloody conflicts with their former partners and raised self-righteous and hypocritical indignation of the international community. Naturally the Balkans are not the unique soil watered by floods of nationalistic ambitious dreams.

Recently, another *epidemic* is spreading over the peninsula: that of the conviction that they are the very indigenous people of the territories they have occupied for many centuries, and not just later settlers. An atavistic incitement urges each Balkan nation to believe that it, and it alone, is the genuine native population of the soil it treads upon. Greeks are the first on the list: at least a significant part of them. They refuse to consider themselves a genus-branch of the Indo-European nations! They trace their origins back to the Pelasgians, the natives of the Greek Peninsula, a people lost deep in mist of age old centuries. On the other side of the Aegean Sea, their most hated enemy, the Turks, with the slightest sign of shame, claim to derive from 200 lions (Aslans) who came to Asia Minor, from the far Touranian steppes. (This explains the resurgence of modern Turkish pan-touranian ambitions). Digging into several other utopian theories, they claim their Hittite legacy, pretending to derive from this almost paleontological population of the Anatolian plateaux. Bulgarians do not easily admit their slavo-mongolian descendents; they flirt with the idea that they are the generation of old Thracians, something which grounds their rationale to claim the political heritage of those archeological tribes. Croatians attempt to distinguish themselves from other Slavs ; they pretend to be the descendants of Old Celts and Goths; they were, they insist, substantially Slavisized Germans. No wonder the particular ties between them and Germans, so obvious and malefic, since the Nazi regime. Romanians are persuaded to be the offspring of Daces; the undeniable Slav influence over them being denied. Arnaouts (Albanians), based upon some 700 foreign words of their vocabulary, believe that they are the eagle-men, a generation of old Illyrians, a people as old as the Greeks. Macedonians , the new independent republic, reject any Slav link, claiming their legacy of old Macedonia and looking to Alexander the Great as *their* national hero. Serbs figure on this list too. Among them are those who pretend Serbs to be the mother-people of all Indo-Europeans. Ultrationalist Serbs claim even to be *theophoroi*, God-bearing people. Not only are they natives of their territory, but even more they have been entrusted with a most holy and noble mission, that of keeping the sacred lamp of saintliness during their national tribulations and stormy phases of their existence.

Let us be cautious not to dismiss altogether some of the Serbian claims; undeniably a noble element permeates it from end to end. To understand recent events, at least since the end of the dismembering of the greater Federation, we need the lights of national psychology over them, and as impartiality as possible, discern Serbian identity, without delivering ourselves to the enjoyment of gossiping at their expense.

The author I am quoting refers to the complex of the Suffering Servant which characterizes the Serbian people. He quotes the famous Memory of the Academy of Science and Arts of Serbia in 1986: "Seeing that it—Serbia—has to count his future in the family of civilized and educated peoples, the Serbian people must have the possibility to recover itself and become a historic object, regaining the conscience of its historical and spiritual existence; study with clarity the political and economical interest, fashion the contemporary social and national program with which it will have to train young generations of today and of the future". This document was also alluding to the politico-civilizational genocide to which Serbs in Kosovo have been the victim. The Kosovo

problem served as the catalyst of the Serb national conscience after the dismemberment of the Federation. It urged them to re-nationalization. We need to understand that, what happened to Kosovo is a deadly wound inflicted upon Serbian national identity; Kosovo, the heart of the Serb Kingdom in the past, the cradle of their Orthodox civilization, was being *albanized*; an orthodox land was in the process of being islamized. Up to this hour, before the Kosovo problem, Serbs would still consider themselves Yugoslavs. Before long, they regained an acute conscience of their national identity as the Serb People. This re-Serbization was accompanied with the dramatic and painful feeling that they have been the remnants of a “Massacred People”.

One of the most surprising features of the regained national identity is to witness how Serbs can be proud of tragedies befallen upon them, and for victims-martyrs for a noble cause. A Serb author has written that there is no other people as proud of its victims as the Serbs (he must never have heard of Armenians!). Despite their failures and losses in wars, Serbs are convinced to have always been worthy of their historic destiny. The Kosovo battle in the Middle Ages, where 30,000 Serbs fell, is commemorated as the battle to defend the Homeland and even more was the battle fought for the sake of Christianized Europe, against barbarian Muslim hordes. The “Knez” Lazare, the Prince who fell in that battle has been elevated to the rank of a Historical symbol. A shallow intellectualist appreciation of this reality, almost condescendingly, qualifying it the Complex of the Suffering Servant is improper, unqualified, to commune with the spiritual, the noble, the Right, the Just. We are not allowed to forget that there is a Genius which the rationalist mind will never grasp, and if it did, it would despise. Such a mind deals with highest virtues, be them individual or collective, with vulgarity, total cynicism, most likely like swine treading on Pearls. There has been a persecution, a massacre, an attempt of genocide of which Ottoman Turks, and their modern day epigones, have acquired the mastery against all Orthodox Christians. (Recently the imbecile managers of the UNESCO were ready to celebrate the 700th anniversary of that hybrid civilization. Thanks to some intelligent lobbying, the attempt was thwarted).

However, let us not charge only Muslims with *all the sins of Israel!* Roman-Catholicism inflicted on Balkan and Byzantine Orthodoxy a most indignant treatment; she has to be counted in great part for the dramas and tragedies befallen the Balkan Peninsula. Serbs have good reasons to remember that, added to the political persecution they suffered, not less ignominiously, a religious one, from others than the Infidel Turk.

A Serb metropolite—diocesan bishop -- has written; “Over the shoulders of the Serbian people cross each other lightnings and thunders of Roman-Catholic and Protestant West, as also the Agarenian Islamic Middle East. The fate of this God-bearing people”, says this bishop, “is that of the 'Crusader' , who effectively, and not symbolically, bears the real cross. A Sacrifice was offered to preserve holiness. This is an incentive enough for Serbs to die for such a cause. Serbs must be willing and ready to fight for maintaining this ideal. Thus they will honor their destiny.” Serbian identity is thus glorified, because of its suffering. To the Protestant theologian this may appear odd—both theology of the Cross and Theology of the Glory. Nevertheless, whether Protestant theologians appreciate it or

not, such is the reality. Materialistic, mean cynicism such as the one prevailing amidst us, both apostate Protestant and perverted Catholicism, will not succeed to get rid of such deeply felt national conviction. It has become integrally the constitutive part of the people. Serbs, be it with their admirable patriotism or at times some ethnic phantasies, despite weakness, despite suffering, despite losses, jealously maintain the high idea of their national destiny. This is a grandiose conception of realities which naturally are not quoted on the market of morally bankrupt and vulgar transactions. A Serb patriot is convinced that Serbs are the special creation of God; I know some other people with the same conviction; I confess, I am moved at the spiritual strength it exhibits. According to this person, the measure of the greatness of Serbs is the hatred of its enemies.

Serbs believe themselves the victims of a metaphysical injustice inflicted by the Vatican, the Comintern, Islam, and now NATO. A Serb writer says "Since the whole world is fighting Serbia, a biblical catastrophe will hit the world, except the small Great Serbia." If you belong to the cast of positivists and are classified into the genus of insensitive rationalist Westerner, you may laugh at such aphorisms. I will advise like the old Wise Greek: *Strike, but listen.*

Kosovo has been the founding Event of Serbia. It has a huge emotional value for Serbs. In the 13th century the Serbian kingdom considered itself as the worthy successor of the decadent Byzantine empire. On the tragic battlefield upon the hills outside Pristina, in June 28, 1389, the day of the Saint Bitovdan, thousands fall as defenders of a Christian tradition. Had the Roman Church at that time supported Serbia instead of abandoning it into the hands of the Asian Barbarians, turned Muslims, because of Serb allegiance to the Oriental Christendom, the fate, not just of Serbia but of entire Europe might have been different. Who will measure the inauspicious role of Roman Christianity, not only in Byzantine disputes but also for Western geopolitics? I understand well the terrible judgment of an impious Voltaire: *Ecrasez l'infame* (Crush the infamy). However, the defeat has not been felt as a humiliating fact but engraved in their collective memory as the triumph of a just cause over evil powers. On that battlefield a deep conviction was acquired according to which Serbs fought and sacrificed themselves for the sake of the Christian faith. Some may cynically smile at such naivete; I, for my part, am deeply moved, the child of a people, Armenians, which has borne a similar fate. Do you know many Western peoples, Roman or even Protestant, (French Huguenots excepted), to have reached such a height of moral conscience? Kosovo is like Jerusalem for Jews. The immortal popular epic following it, gave birth to what is known the "The Cycle of Kosovo", an almost equivalent of a Serbian Iliad. Heroes chose to fight and die for the Heavenly kingdom rather than live in humiliation under the infidel Turk's cursed *yataghan*. The battle of Kosovo has been seen as an ethnic national crucifixion; sealing forever the national memory, preventing the Islamization of Serbia. To correctly evaluate its significance, one will remember that Serbian history is divided between Before and After Kosovo. It is parallel to the capture in 1453 of Constantinople. In the national conscience of Serbs, Kosovo has become a Holy Place, at times compared to the Crucifixion on the Calvary, with the hope of a Final National Resurrection. In my opinion, Serb reading and interpreting of their history is indeed Religious, a Christian

Philosophy of History. Whatever the weakness, it is admirable; the sensitive observer will only Salute! Serbs. An inexhaustible popular tradition, sometimes unavoidably mixed with mythical elements, has been created around the Kosovo battle. Kosovo is the cradle of their civilization, the arena where an indomitable faith resisted to the last drop of blood against the ungodly; upon that altar an uncalculated heroic sacrifice was offered. Kosovo is the center of the holy Serbian geography; Pec is the mystical center of the Serbian nation. A vertical and horizontal line of spiritual energy has been drawn on that spot. It carries the meaning of an invaluable weight for the Christian history of Serbs. These two lines, one vertical one horizontal form the crossroad of the sanctified Serbian geography. Kosovo is the mystical mother of Serbs. Any attempt to destroy that value, is a violator, a moral and psychological rapist. Such has been the case of Ottoman Turks, but not least of a Western Christendom turned apostate, flirting and fornicating with that same infidel.

For the majority of Serbs the loss of Kosovo is equivalent of the loss of their national identity. This loss is a preparation for the near or distant future, an enormous complexity of seething in rage, the outcome of which myopic pachydermatous politicians are unable to foresee. Kosovo means Byzantium and Byzantium is the cultural and spiritual mother of Serbs. A Serbia without Kosovo will be in constant conflict with its past, will constantly urge her to redefine its national identity. Without Kosovo, Serbia is terribly lessened, unjustly impoverished from her spiritual values. Serbs become orphans.

A question related to this Complex of Suffering People may arise in the mind of the Protestant Christian. Does it mean that a human, even in this case the ethnic suffering may become the prolongation of the Unique sacrifice of the Savior? Are Serbs right speaking of their crucifixion for the cause of their, and our, faith? To this question I will answer with another one, also legitimate. Did my Protestant fellow ever considered seriously in the canonical Gospels and in the canonical writings of the New Testament, the call, to give up one's life for the sake of Him? Why should not that exhortation be addressed also to a nation, and be obeyed by a an entire people? I hear ad nauseam the boring clichés which is the catch word for evangelical boasting: "I am a born again-Christian". I would ask my Protestant friend: Are you also a dying again Christian? If not please, please, do not tire me more. The Gospel does not invite us to the sacrifice of saliva babbling! The question asked above is decisive: what is constitutive of Serbian ethnic psychology? How can we, and ought we respect its historical consciousness? I intend not to offer any panacea. I only point out that the Serbian question has become one of the two major international events of 1999, signifying the inauguration of the New anti-eschatology. The shelling of Serbs means for the observer of the recent events and to the reader of the Holy Scriptures much more than a war to be reported in a news in brief.

(3) THE NEW ANTI-ESCHATOLOGY

Suddenly, the Hurricane burst; millions of Westerners, stultified in front of their TV, witnessed a huge geopolitical explosion, stunning the citizens of the free world. NATO-crates had ushered in their new anti-eschatology. A universe of anti-justice, anti-truth, anti-ethics was called to exist. The *tohu-bohu* were its constitutive material. Nearly three

months of a cataclysmic shelling followed the sovereign FIAT of the NATOnians: let darkness be, and the Darkness prevailed over our skies. The Lord God had created ex-nihilo; the new sorcerer's-apprentices ordered the chaos to come out from the existing order. Never before has humanity experienced on such a immense scale so many and so brutal, such a brusque catastrophe in its past history. It will take a long, long time before humanity, waking from its deep spiritual lethargy if still not totally stupefied, realizes the extent of the damage. Did you call it "collateral"? No, but a deep, hurting, unattainable crime against a defenseless people striving to maintain intact its national identity, imbued with an old age spirituality, albeit to the taste of some, despised just as Byzantine, clinging with determination to a civilization worthy of its name, of which it had been the guardian during its past centuries. The effort displayed in order to reach the aimed goal spared nothing. It had been infallibly organized; the beastly thirst to annihilate has now been assuaged; the addiction to establish the NEW WORLD ORDER by means of the most horrendous military weaponry and the propaganda-machine (which had Goebels had at his disposal today we would all speak German), was inerrantly calculated and faultlessly implemented on the soil of a European sovereign country. A totalitarianism of cosmic dimension successfully imposed itself among us. The three horsemen of The Apocalypses have trodden again over the continent.

From now on our spiritual calendars will date the new eschatology from the end of March 1999. The benefits you and I may get will be the satanic promise for more material gratification, the triumph of the fittest to survive, the interests of the dinosaurs on free markets, the rule of pachyderms as princes. However, remember: Woe to the NEW ORDER whose prince is a prolonged teenager.

March had been preceded by February, a month which witnessed another ignominious and impervious deed in modern times, the arrest of the Kurdish Ocalan; with the complicity of almost all free states, Europe not excluded, Syria and Greece included, naturally, for how it could been otherwise, the superpower US and the super-mind Israel. The axis Israel-Turkey-USA is a wonder of interaction; the coming Millennium will be placed under its banner.

Don't be mistaken; the arrest of Ocalan and the conditions by which it has been done, forecasted the anti-eschatology we are speaking of. It was foretelling the inauguration of the era of another total terror. Not a single spot upon the good earth of the Lord served for the Kurdish leader as a "city of refuge".

Serbia was the next to be found in the eye of the cyclone. An international organization, NATO, with no legal mandate, launched its deadly strikes on a country with the most revulsive hypocrisy; it lured us to believe that it was in the name of humanitarian noble cause. However, NATO trespassed the rights of three other legal institutions: The United Nations, the Security Council, the European Union. Now, no internal conflict and crisis required such a mobilization of gigantic military force of the nineteen Western countries involved in the Kosovo war. This intervention remind us of some famous precedents. The famous EMS telegram in 1870, when the Prussian State by underhanded practices

succeeded to provoke and assault France. A US periodical reminds us of the maneuvering of the American McKinley, under a false pretext, attacking the Philippines and leaving on the ground 200,000 slaughtered natives. The shelling of Serbia, and not just its military structures, was a kind of replica, of an incident related to the heretical Albigenses in the 13th century. As the latter had taken refuge in the city of Beziers, south of France, Simon de Monfort in charge of the operation, asked for advice from the Bishop: What to do, they are mingling with the local catholic population? "Kill them all", answered the Man of the Church, "God will recognize his own". NATOnians may have been familiar, and instructed by that lesson.

I will not deal extensively with the aftermath of NATO's humanitarian operation. The Machiavellian princes boasted having won a battle; they certainly lost the War and more, their credibility as human creatures.

That this War was planned before March is not a secret. The Rambouillet meeting was a fake peace-talk; an occasion to give a true ultimatum to Serbia. "The USA can bomb any one into submission that it wants, provided it minimize (or, better still, eliminate) American casualties" (*Liberty* August 1999), ought to become obvious to any lucid observer. "From New-York to L.A. the Media went on into a state of excitement for the forty-five dead Albanians, allegedly 'civilians butchered in cold blood' by Serbs. An American diplomat, WILLIAM WALKER on mission in Kosovo, blamed the Serbian Police. Belgrade's claim that the 45 were in fact KLA guerrillas killed in a fire fight was scornfully rejected as Serbian propaganda. No attempt to objectively report in Racak was made by any of the major dailies in the USA. But the French *Le Monde* was questioning: 'Were the dead in Racak massacred in cold blood?' Walker and the Albanian side gave a version of this event which does not answer any questions." The Italian *La Repubblica* concluded at that time that the KLA guerrillas will continue their attacks in an attempt to draw NATO into the fighting. The guerrillas are financed through an intricate network of Albanians who control the drug market all over Europe (see the French *Le Point* July 1999). Turks are now welcome as the liberators of Kosovo by their old allies the Arnaouts. Now, let it also be clear that "Kosovars" is a new invention, for the Muslim inhabitants of that region have always been known as Arnaouts. "For all the hysteria over Kosovo, where 2,000 Serbs and Albanians had killed each other in the two years before the NATO assault, the real land without justice would seem to be the USA where ethnic cleansing, mass murder, and a cynical contempt for human life are an everyday reality in cities..... unlike Serbs and Albanians, who retain a rudimentary sense of right and wrong, Americans do not even share a common conception of justice." "Any loss of life is regretted", announced Col. Manfred Freytag, after a NATO pilot fired a missile about ten miles out of Pristina. This is the official language of the New Order, also called the repulsive "collateral damage". "Mistakes were made", chirped the First Family in its first term. "I want to underline that we did not bomb that bus." Similarly we did not bomb the Albanian refugees", insisted Jammie Shea, who also said that we were not going to bomb Serbian television. Bombs be praised, the NATO empire has given us a complete grammar of lies. "For the first time since 1945 a European sovereign state has been bombed by a military alliance under American command, with total contempt for the

rules of international law and in breach of the UN charter. NATO's aggression against Serbia is unacceptable and will only worsen the conflicts it is supposed to resolve. The victims of the bombing are the Serbian and Albanian people, whom NATO apprentice-sorcerers are pretending to help.”

Let us admit it at the outset. The recent two months of bombing of Serbia, has signaled forever the end of all just wars. Western powers, arrogant, brutal, strong with their outrageous militarism, (the Prophet Habakuk calls it “Behold, his god is his strength”), shamelessly, inhumanly, with the slightest justification possible except a new brand of Machiavellianism, engaged in a criminal act, for which the The Hague International Court is incompetent to pronounce any judgment. The Higher Court of Heaven will utter its striking ultimate indictment and irrevocably condemn that action. For HE does not allow criminals and butchers to despise His Holy and normative commandment. The morally crooked princes who rule over us will have to render an account Him. Kosovo, the former Serbian Holy place, has now turned into a sacrilegious sanctuary, the unholy see of drug dealers, engaged in the ranks of KLA, transiting their Mana from Turkey and flooding Europe's narcotic markets. For, as you know, the new sacramental element of the New Order community, in this era of anti-eschatology is the drug, and its high priests officiating the KLA Maffiosi-bandits. A widening sewer of cultural, moral, and spiritual collapse is opening its nauseabond mouth. The scato-culture of the eschatology has its promoters and “oracles”.

The fundamental issue at stake is in Kosovo; a leftist internationalist conspiracy to destroy the nation-state and thereby the very concept of a nation. The 68'ers were vociferating thirty years ago: make love, not war. Now, they have discovered that doing both is such an enjoyable hobby. "Among the charred corpses and smoking ruins of Kosovo there lies an unreported casualty. It is not one in of the hundreds of physical victims of NATO's bombs but instead a metaphysical one. In 1999 and in 1389, the Blackbird Field has witnessed the defeat of the spiritual body of values which.... used to be known as the West... The war is being fought to destroy the very principles which constitute the West, namely the rule of law. Unlike in 1389 however, the enemy is not the (Ottoman) Sultan but rather the leaders of Western nations themselves... The bombing started because Milosevic refused to allow hostile foreign troops on to Yugoslav soil. Overturning this refusal remains NATO's overriding purpose. Yet this demand is completely incompatible with the logic of a system of sovereign states, which for the past 350 years has formed the basis of Western liberalism and the rule of law", wrote John Laughland in *The Times of London* (quoted in *Chronicles* (July, 1999). The Serbs know that they are no match for the American-led technology armada. Serbs believe in the powers of their destiny-absolute, unyielding, powerful and so human. "Americans are now entering a wholly different era of society and culture, one that the world has never seen before,... a 'post Human Era'. where all aspects of social life are streamlined and rationalized and all shades of human relations and nuances simplified into manageable routines and procedures." Listen to the following.

In this way there is little energy or passion that is wasted in dealing with

human relations in society, now mostly done as paperwork by paid specialists like lawyers and counselors and bureaucrats. It is no wonder that the post-human citizen can totally, utterly concentrate its energy and ingenuity in leading the world with its technological, cultural economic and military superiority. This post-human West is light years away from Serbia which is still in the Dark Ages (note the terminology), for all its thoughts and actions that bear no resemblance to modernity. "My historical hunch is that Americans are the future prototype-humans and Serbs, an atavistic holdover from a bygone era. The post-human America will dominate the coming century, precisely for the reason that its energy and passion is wholly devoted to the singular task of expanding information technology elaborating popular culture, dominating economics and finances, and contributing military hegemony the world over....in the long run the world belongs to the kind that is committed to extending the technological frontiers and thinking with economic calculus not ethnic nationalism. It would behoove the Serbs to recognize this inevitable development of history and join up with what will be, not what was or should be".

This is unbelievable, yet true. If you remain "atavistic" don't be surprised to welcome another 37,000 shellings and air strikes. The old Procrustean bed is now hanging over our heads in the air. The legendary Greek bandit must be in admiration seeing what his offspring with such sophisticated torture instrument can do on a massive scale. But the principle and the method are identical; "Either you match the dimension of my bed, or if shorter we elongate you; if longer, we know how to amputate your member to fit our custom tailored World Order Plan."

Serbs, you, I, are retrogrades out of touch with present realities. Such a world view barely hides the face of the worst fascism we have ever known. A fascism which seeks to alienate the psychology of men and of nations; for the sake of a total and totalitarian domination. Any culture and civilization resisting this pan-worldism are doomed to be irremediably crushed. Those despots will not recognize exclusive civilizations, specific cultures, particular to each human entity. Their internal weapon is to rush in, and flood their putrefied information, with no other aim than annihilate what ever is spiritual and deprive life of its substance. Military machines mass destructive arms are profusely used to make permanent the fake New Times.

"The brutal statement quoted above indicates that Kosovo truly is the definitive moment of our civilization and the test of its chances for survival in the next century. Between the rational post-human era epitomized by our Tyrants, and the atavistic irrational, merely human Serbs, we can only hope that the latter will prevail" (*Chronicles*, July 1999). The famous Pascalian distinction between the geometrical mind and the spirit of refinement comes to mind. Serbs, in the course of their history exhibited the latter, in the context of their Byzantine spirituality. The modern Westerners are heading us towards the Dark Ages, while we have been drafted and join the sheepish concert of the masses and utter our stupid Meeeee!

Why qualify this whole situation as anti-eschatology?

It is obvious that NATO is the new Beast raising its monstrous threatening head from land, sea and air. Any nation refusing to bear its insignia on its forefront is doomed to pay the price. Logistic interests, stock exchange transactions, bank activities, more and more Black Gold, imitating the “American Model”, are a few of the major eschatological signs of our times. All those facts combined have constituted the greatest crisis humanity has ever experienced, crises which are not merely political and economic, but ethical and spiritual. This is the crisis with no foreseeable solution or healing for the very existence of the human race as a viable humanity. The world view is one of worldwide interest, profit, and hegemony. The New World Order steadily and with mastery is upgrading its totalitarianism. Its model or paradigm is the mere economical success, a model in which any national, cultural, spiritual and religious consideration find no place; they are bankrupt concepts. A nation—the Serb, the Kurd, the Palestinian, the Armenian—is a mere anachronism.

The language used is that of “simulacras”. I came across the rich and wide meaning of this word in Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*. The words used are familiar, the meanings have changed. They cover a totally false concept. “Something having merely the form or appearance of a certain thing. A mere image, a specious imitation or likeness, of something.” (*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). I take the freedom to speak even of simulacr-isis. For what we are witnessing now is not mere simulacras; we are experiencing a wholesale involvement into a simulacrisis of Civilization, Culture, Justice, Truth, Freedom, and Democracy. Thus, the most intelligent weapon forces us to a pragmatistic retrogradation towards the Middle Age; in truth into a totally new Dark Ages.

The new dogmatic ideology proclaims the technical progress, enjoys the vertigo of speed, which materializes each and all human vanities, furnishing lavishly the feed to the society of consumption. The new society is worshiping itself while securing its unprecedented material prosperity. No hindrances whatsoever on the horizon to the covetousness of interest, gain, success, political unlimited hegemony. Iron-made demons fly invisible over the firmament to impose terror; war industries are exalted, intoxicated as they are by their newest invention sowing death and accumulating heaps of incalculable destruction. The submission of natural powers brings forth showers of fire from heaven. In this anti-eschatology whatever is and shall be is not of supernatural nature. Mother nature has been domesticated, been cultivated, born to the state of unlimited fruition to produce not thorns or thistles but poison for all living creatures. Old Descartes had proclaimed it: We are meant to be the masters and owners of the earth. For what purpose, please?

Harold Brown was recently reminding us of an old Jewish legend telling the story of the prophet Jeremiah who created an artificial man, the GOLEM. On its front he wrote: Emeth, God is living. As soon as the Golem started to breathe and move he erased the letter E, leaving instead Meth, God is dead! Indeed, "Who is God whom I shall mind of, and the children of God whom I shall spare" is the iniquitous assertion. Science will

conquer and go on conquering. But the new pseudo-god of material achievement foretells an ultimate material catastrophe also. The Infallible Dogma of this religion of eschatology is to wipe out from human consciousness all religion, all ethics, the least sense of decency. "As the majority of our contemporaries have lost the capacity of discernment between the right and the false, good and evil, just and unjust, truth and lie, that religion will expand year in year out." However, like the Desert of Sahara which also expands each year, nevertheless it never flourishes an inch. This is the greatest achievement of the totalitarian New World Order. Pachydermatous European and insensitive North-American reactions to it prove the success of the arrogant inhuman treatment of Belgrade. Fraud, duplicity, trickery, illusion have been the means to implement it. Before the true face is unmasked it will lead astray the world public opinion, thanks to a gang of politicians, philosophers, even religious leaders; the aim being the distortion of all sound thinking, and reduce to powder—pulverize—any vestiges of ethical value. A formidable implosion is taking place in the human conscience. Satan is indeed the prince upon this earth. His chains have been loosened for some time. Now, we need not inquire into an abstract metaphysical problem: How many angels can dance on the tip of a pin? Rather, share the nightmare of an existential destiny, trembling and sighing: How many demons will dance over our heads? Self proclaimed political saviors, their lackeys and servile acolytes, offer to the morons of the end of the millennium what a cunning French doctor early this century was offering to gullible French: "A bottle of de-hydrated water, for one Franc!"

The emperor is naked. But different from his Andersonian prototype, who was of a decent type; as he eventually ran to his palace, he fired the crooks and ordered a true tailor. Hans Christian did not foresee the imitators of his naked emperor would act otherwise—with the slightest shame possible, glory in their nakedness. And not only glory, but force the crowd watch their parade. They shout the order: "Thus saith the (anti)-lord: BE NAKED, FOR I AM NAKED".

A new ethnic cleansing is taking place in Kosovo at the expense of Tsiganes and Serbs, under the nose of the NATO peace keeping forces. The infiltration of Muslims in the heart of Europe is interpreted by several European observers, to have been invidiously conceived by the US administration. The USA seem almost threatened by a possible European Union, which eventually challenges its undisputed world hegemony; therefore let Muslims invade the old continent; They may prove useful some day! Alas, three times alas, in my old beloved Europe there are no more Charles Martels to thwart Islamic invasion, no Jean d'Arcs to expel the Perfidious Albion, not a Charles de Gaule to shout "Vive l'Europe Libre". Instead miserable servile lackeys and acolytes of the new unique superpower. Read what follows: "From the White House office of the press Secretary: Warm greetings to Muslims across America and around the world as you mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan and celebrate the festival of Id al Fitr. The month of fasting that you have just completed demands discipline and a spirit of sacrifice. But it also delivers a profound reward: the opportunity to show people of every faith what is precious about Islam, its charity, its generosity, and its essential humanity. All people in the world are moved by your observance of Ramadan and by the devotion and dignity that

make Islam one of the worlds greatest religions. As you welcome the appearance of the new moon and the close of Ramadan Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a memorable celebration and for peace, health, and prosperity in the year to come.” (President Clinton, quoted in *Chronicles*, April 1999).

A deep grief in the heart for what happened to Serbia, dictates my article. The shame I feel as part of the Western world is deep. We committed an inexpiable crime. I almost feel guilty for being a Protestant, a member of that sick, degenerate, apostate body called Western Protestantism. It would be ludicrous for me to go to Serbia and evangelize them ; with my handy *Bible for the Lazy Minister*, or catechize them with my *Four Spiritual Laws*. Humbly I will need to beg forgiveness. If not, the sentence of the Lord of all Missions will vehemently resound in my ears: “Hypocrite, you cross lands and seas to proselytize, and make them worse than you”.

Had I had the courage—which I did not have—I would have gone to Serbia while the cataclysmic shower of fire and shells was relentlessly pouring from their sky, and hands in their hands, an empathetic look into their pain stricken eyes, witnessing to their suffocating with pain hearts, I would have said: “Serbs, my Brothers in Christ, I am solidarity with you; I came to identify myself in your ordeal”. I know ONE who was present on Serbian soil. On that Good Friday when the Serbian Church was commemorating his Crucifixion, while iniquitous pagans were bombarding them, HE was present. Once again he showed His pierced hands, and bruised body. He is always, unmistakably, present wherever suffering asphyxiates; where people are tortured, His followers are defenseless, His just Order despised, Martyrs appear on the first row. Indeed, the Crucified Lord of Humanity will be always present, faithful to his Redemptive ministry, until the end of History.”

During the seventy-eight days when a horrible crime was being committed by the Western world I was inconsolate. I recalled the Serbs of 1941. Born and raised in a neighbor country, in Athens, I was witnessing at the age of ten their resistance to the Nazi invasion; they fought bravely, as always. Thus, they delayed the invasion of Greece, for more than a month; they offered the possibility to the British army stationed in the Balkans to flee from the face of Germans, and take refuge in Egypt. Serbs had no other choice than fight. They did not possess an imperium where to flee. They fell heroically like on those memorable days of 1378, on the sacred soil of Kosovo, the cradle of their nation, the heart of their Byzantine spirituality. As I conclude my article, I would like to repeat for their sake that which some time ago, I have written for my Armenian people.

... I have a certainty anchored deep in my soul. And a question to ask the world: Tell me, I pray what is true victory? Where is real grandeur? How do you evaluate Power? Lo! Big powers exhibit their deadly weapons and arrogantly exercise their brutal force. Yet they are vulnerable, fragile, devoid of virile courage. They are already fading away, decaying mortal powers, which soon will disappear in the dust; the dust tainted with the blood they shed during their ephemeral history. Notwithstanding their iron rule they dominate, they will end up into the heap of ashes they accumulated.

The history they wrote with golden characters belongs only to this side of earthly vanities. Not so with my people. With bare hands and a courage rarely equivalent they know to resist and not give up. Fight without losing heart, fall but never surrender, lose even, but with valiant hearts. Their struggle is for a cause which is beyond their own cause, they pursue an objective other than puerile nationalism. In times of acute crises they have taken sides with the Beyond, where eternity pronounces its verdict upon all futile passion. History may qualify their fortune as tragic; the eyes of faith illuminated with the light shining from above, will transform it into a blessedness for those who suffer for Justice's sake. And that beatitude is what abides forever when the most solid human buildings crumple...I like to understand that destiny only *sub specie aeternitatis*. For, in the national tragedy.... I perceive something of the Pauline hermeneutics: When I am weak I am strong, the implementation of a genuine Gospel ethos. Therefore also I consider my patriotism (and that of Serbs) to be a sanctified one, a charisma received from above.