

## KRLEŽA'S *DISCUSSION ON BREST-LITOVSK (1918)* AS AN APOLOGIA FOR OCTOBER REVOLUTION OR THE POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP

(Translation)

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*In the paper I shall endeavour to identify Krleža's antithetical carousel (to use Stanko Lasić's term), with regard to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in Krleža's written entries, specifically a polemical dispute titled Discussion on Brest-Litovsk (1918). In fact, from the perspective of 1918, Krleža defined the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 3, 1918) as the anticipation of "the international solidarity of the European proletariat", i.e. a political manoeuvre pro futuro (BD2, 180). However, in the footnote to the text, written from the perspective of 1967, Krleža suggests, as a correction of his own interastral rhetoric, that "any Moscow illusion about general strikes in the area of central government, particularly in Berlin" dissipated under the "terror sewing military hordes" in February 1918, and "the Leninist concept of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ended up in a cul-de-sac" (BD2, 188).*

**Keywords:** Miroslav Krleža, *Bygone Days*, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, WWI, literary and political anthropology, the politics of friendship

*A number of porcupines huddled together for warmth on a cold day in winter; but, as they began to prick one another with their quills, they were obliged to disperse. However, the cold drove them together again, when just the same thing happened. At last, after many turns of huddling and dispersing, they discovered that they would be best off by remaining at a little distance from one another (Sigmund Freud: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 1921)*

I shall be considering Krleža's reaction to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (2 December 1917 – 2-3 March 1918), a peace treaty signed on

March 1918 between Soviet Russia and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey – Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria) (cf. Mombauer 2014:57; Crutwell 1982:479), in the context of his diary-memoirist entries titled *Bygone Days*<sup>1</sup> as the only Croatian literary journal from WWI (namely, I do not refer to other Croatian journals from WWI with literary determinants, as observed by Marijan Matković, but rather to a *literary journal*) (Matković 1985:188).<sup>2</sup> Milan Vlačić (1963:588) believes that any “discussion on Miroslav Krleža should (...) begin with *Bygone Days*” or a tautology according to which *all* Krleža's works had been hinted at in his WWI journals, which particularly refers to the “river novel”, his last novel *The Banners* (ibid.:588–589).<sup>3</sup> Hence, Aleksandar Šlivarić suggests that if one was looking for the “embryonic beginning, a date of birth for the *Croatian Rhapsody (Hrvatska rapsodija) (Savremenik, 1917, 5)* then they would do well to look at the Zagreb – Nova Kapela Batrina – Požega route at the beginning of April 1917” (Šlivarić 1957:1011), which was recorded in *Bygone Days* for the mentioned year.

In the interpretative niche of literary and political anthropology, given that (auto)biographical contextualization, both centripetal and centrifugal,

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<sup>1</sup> When quoting from the second edition of *Bygone Days (Journal 1914–17: Bygone Days I, Journal 1918–22: Bygone Days II)* from 1977, I will be using acronyms BD and BD2. Diary-memoirist entries by Miroslav Krleža (*Bygone Days. Entries 1914–1921*, Zagreb 1956; *Journal 1–5*, Sarajevo 1977) span the period from 1914 to 1969, ergo 55 years of the author's life.

<sup>2</sup> I wrote this paper as a sort of *reinterpretation* of my own interpretation from 2005 (Marjanić 2005), prompted by the necessity of introducing certain additions from a vantage point of almost 11 years in hindsight, in the context of re-performance and performance *reinterpretations* which were provided by Marina Abramović in her project *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005).

<sup>3</sup> In this regard, parallels can be drawn between a historical and a political horizon in the three of Krleža's works: *Bygone Days: 1914–1921/1922* (second edition extended by the political and historical horizon of 1922), *Ten Years Soaked in Blood. Reflections between 1914–1924 (1924/1937)* and *The Banners (Forum, 1962–1968; Zagreb – Zora, 1967; Sarajevo – Oslobođenje, 1976)*. Ivo Frangeš identified *The Banners* as Krleža's most autobiographic work (Frangeš 1977:340). Political anthropologist Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin provided the first interpretation of Krleža's anthropology of the Balkan characters and mindsets, emphasising that in *Banners* Krleža succeeded in providing an anthropological study of *the Balkans* both as a metaphor and as a stereotype (Rihtman-Auguštin 1997:32).

has become unappealing to many, due to its stylistic and narratological interpretations, so much so that there were no Krleža's biographies before Lasić's *Chronology* (1982), I will be contextualizing the first year of war (1914) through Krleža's biographical chronology – Krleža was (only) 21 when the first diary entry dated 26 February 1914 in his literary journal *Bygone Days* contained a fragment of *Salome*<sup>4</sup>, which together with the play *Legend* (printed in Marjanović's *Literary News* the same year) belonged to Krleža's first dramatic texts.

### THREE WARS AS KRLEŽA'S RITE OF PASSAGE

It is noticeable from the psychobiographical niche that apart from the given historical and global apocalyptic circumstances, Krleža began to write *Bygone Days* after having gone through his personal calvary. Namely, the year of 1913 is crucial for delineating his life itinerary because it is the year when the idea about escaping the Hungarian Ludovica Military Academy matured. Krleža had been undergoing the military drill in Hungarian military academies for five years, namely from 1908 to 1913, from the age of fifteen to twenty, first as a cadet at the Hungarian Royal Officer Cadet School in Pecs (1908 – 1911), and then at Ludovica (1911 – 1913) (cf. Zelmanović 1987).<sup>5</sup> In addition to the idea of escaping Ludovica, realizing in these formative years that the military was not his calling, in 1913 Krleža

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<sup>4</sup> It is no coincidence that Krleža opened *Bygone Days* with a fragment from the legend about Salome in which he unmasked the enthroned Yugoslavism prophet John the Baptist (Johanaan), aka Ivan Meštrović and his model of the *Vidovdan Temple* (1907–1912). The play, a legend with anti-Wildean inspiration, in which the Eternal Feminine triumphs over the virile desire for power, was published (*Forum*, 10, 1963) 49 years after the first journal entry that opened *Bygone Days* (cf. Marjanić 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Another private calvary preceeded Krleža's military anabasis; namely, due to the conflict with his classmaster Dragutin Müller (Lasić 1982:62–64) at the Royal Grammar School in Zagreb's Lower Town in 1906, he transferred to the Royal Grammar School in the Upper Town. However, he continued to get into trouble with the teachers there, too, which led to his decision, when he was in the fourth grade, to continue his education in a military school. Hence, in 1908 he left for a military school in Hungary (The Royal Hungarian Officer Cadet Academy in Pecs) – in order to avoid Zagreb as an environment in which he felt humiliated and offended having *failed* three subjects in the fourth grade (Čengić 1985:276).

also began to develop an ambivalent political position, which was in line with his *antithetical carousel*<sup>6</sup> i.e. a paradoxical mixture of Starčević-esque love for Croatia and a sentimental vision of South Slavic unification (Lasić 1982:102). Thus in April 1913 Krleža left Ludovica Academy in keeping with the vision of South Slavic unification and reached Paris from where he continued on to Skopje via Marseilles and Thessaloniki, with the intention of enlisting in the Serbian Army as a volunteer at Bregalnica (Lasić 1982:104), just before the war between Serbia and Bulgaria started. To be exact, at the time of the Balkan wars (The First and Second Balkan War 1912 – 1913) Krleža attempted to enlist in the Serbian Army twice, however in 1912 he was rejected and in 1913 he was suspected of being an Austro-Hungarian spy and subsequently returned to the Austrian authorities in Zemun.<sup>7</sup> The latter escape almost resembles the sequences from an adventure novel, whereas the attempt to join the Serbs at Bregalnica bears a resemblance to Melanija's voyage with Novak the *cavalier*, to put the mentioned anabasis in the context of the fictional world of Krleža's first novel *The Three Cavaliers of Miss Melanija: An old fashioned tale from the time when Croatian Literary Modernism was dying* (1920/1922). Krleža's experience at Bregalnica brought about his disillusionment with the political concept of the South Slavic unification prevalent at the time, which was to be implemented by Serbia – Piedmont: as he realised that the

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<sup>6</sup> Namely, Stanko Lasić defines antitheticity as a constructive principle underlining Krleža's literary opus, but also his personality (Lasić 1989:39–40, 343; 1982:102).

<sup>7</sup> In an attempt to complement Lasić's and Zelmanović's explorations of Krleža's double escape to Serbia during the Balkan wars, Danko-David Slović points out that this is not only about a legend, but rather about a spying operation in which Krleža was involved by Maximilian Ronge, an intelligence officer. Among other things, he claims: "To this end multiple interviews were conducted with Krleža regarding intelligence training" (Slović, 2014, [http](http://)).

One of the reviewers of my paper underlined the need for a revision of Krleža's *voyages*: "Oldfashioned, historiographic, I must say that sooner or later there will come a time to examine Krleža's statements in connection with 'Bregalnica' by critically reviewing the sources. Firstly, he went to 'Bregalnica' in the situation when WWI had practically been at an end, i.e. in the situation when it was more or less certain that Balkan League would collapse and a conflict would ensue among its allies. Therefore, it must be asked why he went there in the first place when he could anticipate what could happen? The question to follow is why did he want to join the Serbian Military under such circumstances?"

battle of Bregalnica was “perhaps disproportionately an event more tragic than this war, because at Bregalnica Dostoyevsky’s prediction came true for the second time: that all these Balkan peasants would slaughter and kill each other to extinction if they could lay their hands on cannons!” (BD, 248). Thus Bregalnica destroyed all Krleža’s ideas, *illusions* about the Illyrian Movement and, unlike the Austrian Algeria, he came to know the South Slavic, Serbian Algeria, as an expansionist national force (Lasić 1989:104). In short, in June 1913, after two months of travelling, he reached Bregalnica where he was awakened from the South Slavic concept of unification under the Yugo-Royalist views of the Karađorđević dynasty, which was monumentalized by the Meštrović’s *Vidovdan Temple Model*.<sup>8</sup> Namely, at that time Meštrović’s wooden *Vidovdan Temple Model* (1907 – 1912) appeared as the first artistic visualization of the Kosovo Myth with political subtext of the royalist *Yugo-mythos*.<sup>9</sup>

Hence, in 1913 Krleža returned to Zagreb as a deserter and a definite rift between father, a clerk in Austria-Hungary (Miroslav Krleža *senior*) and son (Miroslav Krleža *junior*) ensued. To his father Krleža was “a deserter, a nobody, a crying shame” (1982:109). It is from this position of

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<sup>8</sup> It is in a way a romantic and political mixture of Starčević-esque love of Croatia and a sentimental vision of South Slavic union shaped by Ivan Meštrović’s *Vidovdan Temple* concept (Yugoslavism under Karađorđević dynasty), which he experienced at Bregalnica in a chronotopical parallelism as the *Bengal lights of the illusion of Yugoslavia* (BD, 248). It seems that the battle of Bregalnica in 1913 was crucial to Krleža’s disillusionment with nationalist and illusionist ideology, which he remembered later on and wrote about in his novel *The Banners*” (Vučković 1979:133–134). To sum up, 1913 was in a way a liminal year of Krleža’s psychological biography due to the Bregalnica experience – Krleža’s participation in the Balkan wars which infamously ended his voluntary going to the front and turning away from the nationalist and towards the socialist ideology, which resulted in a dramatic collapse of the ideals of youth, as Zlatko Sudović emphasised in a documentary about Miroslav Krleža (1978).

On Krleža’s negation of the messianic illusions of Meštrović’s art at the time cf. Marjanić 2005:58–64. In the above mentioned book cf. i.e. the chapter “Literary speech on Scheherazade, Heliogabalus, and Zarathustra-Meštrović”.

<sup>9</sup> Stanko Lasić adds in the first volume of *Krležology* that there are few references in literature to Krleža’s *Yugoslavian* national rebellion which disappeared right after Bregalnica “as he wished to convince us many times. Krleža’s collaboration with the *Hrvatska njiva* (Croatian field) and *Književni jug* (Literary south) periodicals in the crucial years of his definitive shaping of ideas” is all too often overlooked (Lasić 1989:104).

global and personal calvary that Krleža began to write his diary-memoirist entries titled *Bygone Days* as a “drama with a thousand faces” (Matković 1985:187) – at the age of 21 in the apocalyptic year when WWI began.

Apart from 1913, the year of 1914 proved in many ways to have been a *crucial turning point* in Krleža's life: the beginning of war and the collapse of the International which vanished “like an apparition from a spiritualist séance” (BD2, 283). Let us dwell on the collapse of the Second International. The beginning of the WWI and its infernal simultanism marked the absolute loss of faith in the Second International on Krleža's part – “a monumental marble goddess who, according to Marx, was intended to save Europe from capsizing” (BD, 417) – which, instead of promoting internationalism, accepted the policy/strategy of defending the singular, national interests. Therefore, Stanko Lasić interprets the mentioned excerpts as a crucial turning point in shaping Krleža's viewpoints, within which he accepts the Leninist version (Lasić 1982:115, 118) of the *interastral barrages* (DD, 356; 201).

Let us also dwell on Krleža's life chronology during the apocalyptic year when WWI broke out. In August 1914, he received a conscription notice from Austria-Hungary military authorities asking him to register for recruitment. Since he weighed only 46 kilo, he was rejected (*Krležijana* 2::562), an event that Ranko Marinković preserved in literary memory in a scene depicting Tresić's recruitment in the novel *Cyclops* (1965). Nevertheless, in December 1915 Krleža was conscripted and sent to the Officers' School for reservists (25th Home Guard regiment). The barracks were situated in the former school building in Krajiška Street in Zagreb (Lasić 1982:123, 125). To continue with Krleža's war biography, which is here mentioned in fragments according to Lasić's *Chronology* (Lasić 1982), he spent 1916 on the Galician Front as part of the cannon fodder mass (BD, 126; cf. diary entry dated 17/1/1918) during the first Brusilov's offensive. During those Galician months, which are not mentioned in *Bygone Days*, Krleža had potassium cyanide pills with him that he procured in Lovran “from an apothecary with whom he became friends, with the intention of taking them in case he was badly wounded or got in some other kind of trouble” (Visković 2000:152). From the fragmented information on Krleža's life before 1916, it is quite certain that he was influenced by these three wars (metonymy for “The Grand Master of All Scoundrels”): First and

Second Balkan Wars (1912 and 1913) and WWI, which he often mentioned himself.

In essence Krleža's *Bygone Days* can be defined as activist *factual literature* on the wartime *Odyssey* and *Penelopeiad*. Hence, I am using the feminine-masculine war binomial from Krleža's *Novella Motif* (from *Bygone Days*) about a girl – who acts as “a kind of Penelope” and realises that all her suitors are pigs – and her court trainee (cf. BD, 31–32), particularly according to the entry from the essay *Behind the Scenes in 1918*,<sup>10</sup> in which he stated that *our* Penelopes – who are not warriors, but are waging war nevertheless – do not think that “their Odysseus could return one day, wearing his laurel wreath” (BD2, 132).

Therefore, while 1913 is a crucial year regarding the rites of passage, provided we apply Van Gennep's three phases of rites of passage rituals, Stanko Lasić documents that 1914, i.e. the collapse of the Second International and the loss of Krleža's faith in Ilica 55 (social democracy as expounded by Vitomir Korać), is in fact the crucial turning point in shaping Krleža's *worldview*.<sup>11</sup>

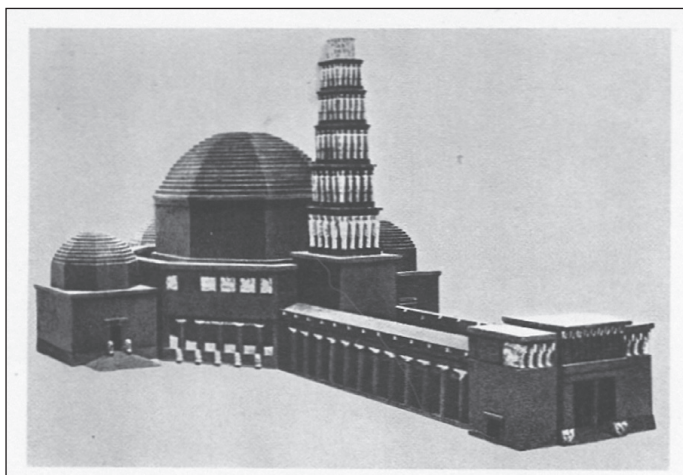


Photo 1: Ivan Meštrović: wooden Vidovdan Temple Model (1907–1912).

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<sup>10</sup> The entry from *Behind the Scenes in 1918* (*Republika*, 1967, 7–8) was included in the second edition of *Bygone Days* by Krleža (*Bibliografija* 1999:145).

<sup>11</sup> On giving up all worldviews, in the context of Krleža's dispute among left wing intellectuals, because “even moonlight can be a worldview”, cf. Marjanić 2015.

After providing the context above, I will move on to the interpretation of Krleža's *Discussion on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk as a political manoeuvre pro futuro*, from the perspective of 1917.

### **BREST-LITOVSK DISPUTE: LENIN – TROTSKY**

The entry *Discussion on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918)* (first published in *Republika*, 1967, 7–8) was defined as a polemical dispute, which Krleža was having “with a typical hanger-on from the Croato-Serbian coalition”,<sup>12</sup> who nevertheless later emerged “in one of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes cabinets as a Minister” (BD2, 179), was encrusted in diary-memoirist entries of *Bygone Days*, more precisely in its second edition, as Krleža's apologia for peace, i.e. a treaty which Lenin's Russia had signed with the Central Powers in order to *preserve* the October Revolution. In those bygone days, which were to result in approximately 20 million dead soldiers and civilians (“WWI”, [http](http://)),<sup>13</sup> Krleža truly believed in Lenin's interastral barrages, asymptotes of Slavianism (BD, 356; 201)<sup>14</sup>. He pointed out the Russian politosphere, which was the first to *refuse knives* (BD, 280–281), as an *ethical* and worthy gesture of heritagization, and from

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<sup>12</sup> The description “a typical Croato-Serbian coalition hanger-on” denotes Vitomir Korać's role as one of the champions of the Croatian Social Democratic Party and Slavonia on which the counter-revolutionary politics of the Croato-Serbian coalition rested, suppressing revolutionary movements in Croatia, which emerged under the influence of the October Revolution. The phrase “within less than a year, the gentleman in question would emerge in one of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes Cabinets as a Minister” unmasks Vitomir Korać's role as a Minister for social policy in Stojan Protić's Cabinet at the time of Diamantstein trial, namely the events of the summer of 1919, when the police arrested communist leaders accusing them of cooperating with a Hungarian commune with the intention of overthrowing authorities in Yugoslavia.

<sup>13</sup> On the number of casualties per country cf. Ferro 1973:251.

<sup>14</sup> I quoted one of Krleža's statements from *Bygone Days* about Columbian *optimal projections into the future*: “In the name of the legions of the dead, only one man speaks in the world today and that is Lenin and Lenin alone” (BD2, 80). Also, in the entry under 20 December 1917 he wrote that a book *should* be written about *millions of discussions about the revolution and capital, and that is why*: “(...) I dedicate this poem to you, Great Columbus! I bid you farewell into oblivion!” (BD, 360), which is a metaphor for the expressionist search for the impossible (Lauer 2013:40). On the parallelism, historical analogy Columbus' *winged ship* – Lenin's “Aurora” cf. Marjanić 2005.



the perspective of 1918 identified the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (3 March 1918) as an anticipation of “the international solidarity of the European proletariat” given that the mass strikes started in France and in Berlin (BD2, 188), as a *political manoeuvre pro futuro* (BD2, 180).

However, in the footnote to the text, written from the perspective of 1967, Krleža suggested, as a correction of his own interastral rhetoric, that as early as February 1918 “any Moscow illusion about general strikes in the area of central government, particularly in Berlin” dissipated under the “terror sewing military hordes” in February 1918, and “the Leninist concept of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk ended up in a cul-de-sac” (BD2, 188). Therefore, there are two perspectives on Brest-Litovsk, one from 1918 and the other from 1967, the latter came about on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution, namely in the year when Krleža signed the *Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Literary Language* (published in a *Telegram* weekly on 17 March 1967), after which he submitted his resignation from the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia subsequently withdrawing from public life (Lasić 1982:403).<sup>15</sup>

It is also possible to corroborate the above mentioned double vision (1918 – 1967) on the basis of Krleža's expressionist play *Christopher Columbus* (first published under the title *Cristobal Colon* in 1918 as part of the book *Croatian Rhapsody*, Đorđe Čelap publishing, Zagreb 1918, together with the eponymous text and a play *Kraljevo*) which he originally dedicated to Lenin only to erase the inscription later on.<sup>16</sup> Namely, he wrote the mentioned one-act play, which discusses the following parallelisms, spiritual and historical analogies, almost in the sense of Oswald Spengler's morphology of the world history: Columbus – Lenin; Santa Maria – Aurora, at the time of the October Revolution in 1917. A year later, when it was published, he erased the inscription from it. In the *Annotation to Cristobal Colon* (*Književna republika*, 5–6, 1924) he explains that at the time of

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<sup>15</sup> On this occasion in question there was no signing of the *Declaration* but a vote by the raising of hands at the premises of the Croatian Writers' Association. Hećimović, 2013, URL.

<sup>16</sup> In a polemic, Josip Bach reproached Krleža for denying “Christ like Peter” – Lenin or Trotsky, to whom *Cristobal Colon* had been dedicated in his manuscript (*Krležijana* 1:495–498).

writing the one-act play, a legend, he perceived Lenin in the light of Max Stirner's (individualist anarchism) and Mikhail Bakunin's (collectivist anarchism) two anarchist ideas, which he thematized, for example, in the play *Golgotha* (1922) where he demonstrated the disintegration of the *politics of friendship* within the workers' movement. Hence, the Crowd that attempts to kill a Columbian Admiral performatively elaborates: "We aren't anarchists like you. We can only be saved by the organization of work! The Taylor's system!" whereby the author ironizes the one-dimensional, cyclical worldview.

Perhaps, he erased the inscription within the context of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty out of which the Lenin – Trotsky conflict arose.

In this regard, Krleža's initial perception of Lenin from 1917, when he included him among the solipsistic views of Stirner and Schopenhauer, is close to Krleža's imagination in *Salome*, from the first diary entry in *Bygone Days*; Columbus' winged ship and his voyage along the tangent into oblivion, towards the stars, without a compass or a globe, is similar to Salome's astral strategy – "A woman's complexion is of the smallest importance! What's important are the stars" (BD, 11), or Columbus' performative utterance: "The new cannot exist in a circle. The new cannot be about going back", regarding the perennial Faustian search for the meaning of human existence.

## **TWO IDEAS OF SLAVIANISM – YUGO-ROYALIST AND LENIN LEANING COMPONENT**

The introduction to the *Discussion on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk* contains Krleža's observation of the Coalition's state of mind in the period 1914–1918, which corroborates that the Brest-Litovsk Treaty had caused political dramatization (and) personal friendships to *dramatically disengage* "which would in the next few months become visible in an irreconcilable struggle and go on to passionately continue through decades" (BD2, 179),<sup>17</sup> and as an illustration of the schism, the bipolarization of

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<sup>17</sup> On the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the *dramatization* among domestic Entente-phile circles, on the conflict between the two ideas of Slavianism – Yugo-Royalist and Lenin leaning components cf. Marjanić 2005:293–332.

the Croatian social democracy to the faction which emphasises “Russian Slavianism” of ideologue Kerensky, the Prime Minister of the Russian Provisional Government in 1917, and the “Lenin leaning” faction, he wrote a *dialogue – duel* with a typical coalition hanger-on. In a nutshell, the mentioned entry confirms Krleža's private dispute with Vitomir Korać, whose politics of Yugoslav social democracy frequently abandoned the demands of the proletariat and agreed to cooperate with the authorities out of interest (Visković 2001:145).

In his introduction Krleža ironically acknowledges the “success” of the Croato-Serbian coalition in preventing the introduction of a military commissariat in Croatia (in the period 1914–1918), due to its loyal politics towards Hungarian Government, under the protectorate of the “Hungarian Prime Minister, count István Tisza” (BD2, 177), given that it had voted for Tisza's war budget (cf. BD2, 178, 190). However, the real background to Krleža's irony was the discovery that the coalition managed to reap significant profit from the chaos of war for itself, and in order to cover it up as best it could, it protected “a whole host of secondary citizens' rights, which was manifested in the relative freedom of the press and of assembly, which later took on the form of often challenging anti-Austrian colluding” (BD2, 178).<sup>18</sup>

In a footnote to the *Discussion*, written from the *retro* perspective of 1967, uses a predatory zoo-metaphor to corroborate the Central Powers' politics of cynicism and Machiavellianism which led the concept of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty *into a cul-de-sac*: “Turkish, Romanian, Bulgarian, German, and Austro-Hungarian generals landed in Brest-Litovsk like ravens on the carcass of the Russian Empire, to *snatch* Moldavia, the

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<sup>18</sup> The opposing hanger-on defines the Russian politics ideosphere by using Hamlet's political and psychological statement: “(...) something is rotten in your state of Denmark, too” (BD2,185), thus comparing Russian politics “with the politics of count Czernin and Prussian Junkers” whose goal it was to *deliver* Austria (BD, 184–185), and describes the politics cinically as a *historical role of Shylocks* ([Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*] BD2, 187) who “sold Ukraine to the Germans”: “(...) while the Emperor stood with the Japanese in a life or death fight, the gentlemen rebelled, and now the same gentlemen would recognize the Japanese authority not only over Manchuria, but also over the Amur Oblast and Vladivostok. Well, this is selling out the Russian land, *all gone*, once and for all, *there*, this is the historical role of your Shylocks, them fighting Tsarism, *that's simply ridiculous*, don't you see that they sold the Ukraine to the Germans?” (BD2, 187, italics S. M.).

Caucasus, Courland, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Finland from the imperial body” (BD2, 188, italics S. M.).<sup>19</sup> Towards the end of the discussion, he condemns the results/agreements under the Geneva Convention, by counterpointing the case of Odessa where “our prisoners were being shot because they did not want to swear allegiance to the King”, while the coalition hanger-on describes Krleža's counter-arguments using a political syntagm *Viennese room*. In doing so Krleža poses a critical (probing) *question*: “Could it perhaps be black and yellow, perhaps I was bribed by Czernin?” (BD2, 191).

The “typical hanger-on of the Croato-Serbian coalition” who remains nameless by the rhetoric of persuasion and teaching, unintentionally uncovers the politics of cynicism, *macaronic* and *compromising* politics of contradictory ideologues: as an Entente-phile (Entente-phile Constituents: Lloyd George, Raymond Poincaré, Georges Clemenceau [cf. BD2, 183]) negates the *Junker* politics. Nevertheless, he thinks in line with *their* logic (Prince Leopold von Bayern [cf. DD2, 182]) apropos the *Russian* Bolshevism. As a democrat, he pointed out the champion of the revolutionary democracy Kerensky, who had the Emperor killed (BD2, 182), however, he did not understand that Kerensky could never have dealt with “Kornilov had he not been aided by the revolutionary masses; without the Bolsheviks, Kerensky would have gone to hell in a handbasket”<sup>20</sup>; and defines Russian Bolshevism as *death of democracy*.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The comment given in a footnote was written by Krleža from the perspective of 1967 when he wrote the introduction to the *Discussion on Brest-Litovsk (1918)* which provides “historical background to dialogues such as this” (BD2, 177).

<sup>20</sup> “That is how Kerensky – a Kornilov supporter, incidentally parted ways with Kornilov, and went on to form the most intimate of alliances with the other Kornilov supporters’ –Lenin wrote” (Bosiljčić 1966:76). Ideologues of the nameless Croato-Serbian coalition hanger-on and his performative power constellation, within which he mostly strategically opts for *argumentum ad hominem* in relation to the interlocutor Krleža, by which he accuses the Soviets that by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, with Austria-Hungary among others, they recognised *its right to exist as a state* thereby denying the principles of their own revolutionary struggle, *primarily the right of a nation to self-determination*, which were defined as ideologues in the literary work of Dostoyevsky as well as in Andreyev's *The Red Laugh* (1904).

<sup>21</sup> In the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which the Government of the Soviet Russia concluded with count Ottokar Czernin, Soviet Russia agreed to *pay* six billion marks in pure Russian gold to Germany (BD2, 181). It is within the context of the mentioned

The mentioned conflict between the two ideas of Slavianism – Yugo-Royalist and Lenin leaning components – Krleža shows that for example Zofka Kveder and Juraj Demetrović shared Korac's ideas, too (cf. Visković 2001:145) so in *Bygone Days* in 1917 he wrote:

What do I do with these (Zofka Kveder and Juraj Demetrović etc.) when they curse the Russian Revolution? Everybody loves the Russians, but nobody has a clue about Russia. None of us have a clue about Russia, and how could I explain what I mean when even I have no clue? (Krleža, according to Čengić 1982:126).

Zofka Kveder played a very important role in Krleža's retrospective memoir *A Drunken November night 1918*, where he from the perspective of 1942 transformed the characters of Salome and John the Baptist (Johanaan). Through a referential verification in reality Salome became "a good Croatian woman and a distinguished lady yesterday, a Yugoslav democratic woman today, with only one ideal of Karađorđević dynasty wearing pastel colour lipstick on her lips, from the tea party this evening until the day after tomorrow", and John the Baptist (Johanaan) represents a *bloody metonymy* for beheaded Home Guard soldiers (BD2, 149). Namely, with Salome, as she was interpretatively contextualized in a memoir *Drunken November night 1918*, Krleža *exposes* the role of "the three faeries of the Kingdom of SCS" (BD2, 142) – Zofka Kveder-Jelovšek-Demetrović, Zlata Kovačević-Lopašić and Olga Krnic-Peješ – who *on the drunken November night* in question (13 November 1918) "excommunicated him from the commons" (BD2, 163) – "In the note to the mentioned text he depicts them as a triad of political attributes – "three Queens of Spades of our Union in 1918 with three different names. Three faeries of the Kingdom of SCS: a Slovene, a Croat and a Serb woman" – who had welcomed "Aleksandar Karađorđević for years on the Zagreb Station with their protocol proscribed [derrog.] Slovene-Croat-Serbian nose-gays" (BD2, 142; Marjanić 2005:101–140).

In conclusion, regarding Krleža's *Discussion on Brest-Litovsk (1918)* I would like to add that in a footnote to the *entry* Krleža gave an

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historical fact that Krleža's interlocutor speculates: "gentlemen 'purists' are paying twenty billion marks to Germany, and in pure gold, I'll have you know, *carissime*, in pure Russian gold, twenty billion" (BD2, 181, italics S. M.).

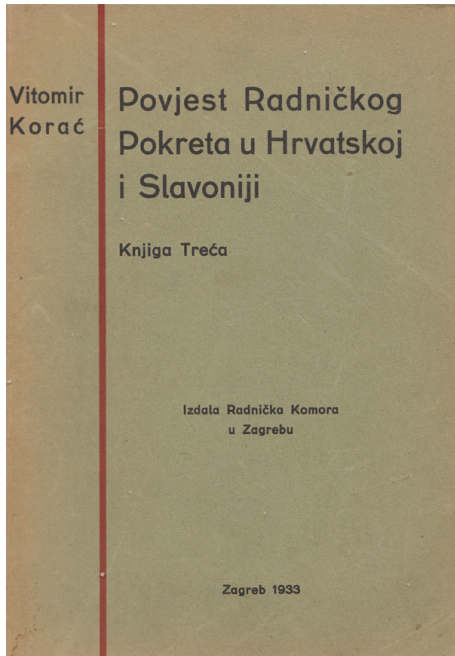


Photo 2: Cover of the book on workers' movement by Vitimir Korać: *The History of Workers' Movement in Croatia and Slavonia. From the beginning to the abolition of these provinces in 1922. Zagreb: Workers' Union for Croatia and Slavonia in Zagreb (Radnička komora za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju u Zagrebu), volumes 1-3, 1929, 1933.*

Josip Horvat) – Đuro/Đuka Cvijić, Kamilo Horvatin, and August Cesarec (Čengić 1982:128; Očak 1982:28–29), who impressed him because they executed the assassination of count Cuvaj in 1912 under Luka Jukić's leadership, which is an introduction to the fictional world of his last novel.<sup>22</sup>

interesting psychogram of Alexandra M. Kollontai, writing that at the time of voting on *whether or not to conclude a peace agreement with the German General Staff* Mrs Kollontai, whose nerves gave out on her, “spoke against Lenin using a whole array of coarse verbal affronts” (BD2, 186–187).

The above mentioned quote on Alexandra Kollontai can also be contextualized in Krleža's love for her, which is confirmed by e.g. Irina Aleksander, who said that Krleža had been in love with six women, stating the names of only three: Alexandra Collontai, Bela, and herself (Aleksander 2007:294) and emphasised that she occupied the sixth, i.e. the last position.

Furthermore, Krleža came into contact with Korać's Social Democratic Party (HSSDS) thanks to the revolutionary trio, “the rebelling youth” (as they were described by

<sup>22</sup> We were reminded of his by the play *Cefas* (2010.) by The House of Extreme Musical Theatre (Kuća ekstremnog muzičkog kazališta) (D. B. Indoš and Tanja Vrvilo), which began, as Tanja Vrvilo said on one occasion, by consulting the data from Josip Horvat's book *The Youth's Rebellion* (2006). In the book the prominent journalist and politician discussed four assassinations, from 1911 to 1914, of which two were executed, felicitously performed in the context of Austin's theory of speech acts, that is to say felicitous vs. infelicitouperformative utterances. In the mentioned play Tanja Vrvilo combined the

Soon after that Vitomir Korać invited Krleža to collaborate on his socialist newspaper *Sloboda (Freedom)* (Očak 1982:29).

I've been reading V. Korać. Our shoemaker from Šid will turn out to be the only historian (not to use the Croatian synonym 'povjesnik' (chronicler), which would, in the case of Korać's Historical Short Stories (Povjestice), be more accurate) of the Croatian Social Democratic Movement. (...) It may well be that Korać's biased scribbles remain the only comment of those days, in truth all of his blather should be refuted from beginning to end (Krleža 1977b:479–480).<sup>23</sup>

### **KRLEŽA'S *POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP***

While Krleža focused on the conflict between the Entent-ophile intelligentsia in the *Discussion on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk*, in the play *Golgotha* (1923) he focused on the conflict within the *politics of friendship* (cf. Derrida 2001; García-Düttmann 2003), in the workers' movement itself. Using a free interpretative web of significance we could say that both Krleža and Derrida were interested in the interpretation of the vociferation "O, my friends, there are no friends", which he also depicted in his last novel – a great friendship between Kamilo Emerički, jr. and Joja.<sup>24</sup>

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first assassination performed by Luka Jukić with the activities of a revolutionary and anarchistic group Cefas, which was founded in 1900 by Janko Polić Kamov, while he was still a fourteen-year-old Sušak Grammar School student in Rijeka. Namely, the first assassination by Luka Jukić had an intense impact on Tanja Vrvilo's director's vision precisely because of the theory vs. practice debate. To be exact, the organisers of the Assassination had amongst themselves found a practitioner – Luka Jukić volunteered and decided to be the practitioner (Indoš, Vrvilo, according to Marjanić 2014:833–839).

<sup>23</sup> This is the journal entry from 21 December 1968 in which Krleža wrote in parallel about the arrival of Kamilo Emerički in Vienna (he was working on *The Banners*), and about the Saturn V rocket burning its fuel beneath Apollo 8 – "(...) the fact that a machine was invented that could guarantee this rocket would not miss the Moon gravity's magnetism, fills the mind with strange fear" – and about the world becoming a barracks where "even girls become cadets", modern Penthesileias.

<sup>24</sup> On the motivation for the escape to Duga Rijeka, following the experience with the National Council, Vitomir Korać and others, etc., which was the source of material for the play *Wolfhound*, Krleža inter alia mentions: "This is where I, a young man of twentyseven, more or less a whippersnapper, discovered that there were mean people such as these, that there were scoundrels, ruffians, brigands..." (Krleža, according to Čengić 1990:71).

Krleža's play *Golgotha* (1922) designated the first genre-based framework of his distinctly political dramaturgy, which is implied in its dedication "To the shadows of Richmond and Fortinbras", Shakespeare's characters who bear the torch of resistance to violence (Gašparović 1989:70–71). Nikola Batušić was the first to warn that the original motto in the magazine edition of *Golgotha* contained the dedication "Agnus Dei! Qui tollis peccata mundi! Ora pro nobis", which was missing from all subsequent editions. The phrase in point is the author's version of the words uttered by a priest while breaking the bread in a Catholic mass which, as the mentioned theatrologist confirmed, shows that Krleža "did not ask from the Lamb of God either to have mercy or to grant peace, but to pray for us" (Batušić 2007:231).

Therefore, in the entry titled *Premiere of "Golgotha" 3 November 1922 (Manuscript from 4 November 1922)* (BD2, 381–392)<sup>25</sup> Krleža mentioned Zofka Kveder-Demetrović characterizing her as a *wife and a poetess* married to Juraj Demetrović, "a well-known Marxist ideologist and leader, present today in the capacity of the Royal commissar with the former Province Government", who was convinced that *Golgotha*, which was premiered in Zagreb on the above mentioned date at the Croatian National Theatre, directed by Gavella, was written as a "pamphlet against him personally as a socialist renegade".<sup>26</sup> In the note to the journal entry Krleža describes the context of the rumour: "A rumour has emerged by itself, circulating around the city as such rumours are known to do, that lurking under the mask of Kristijan was Juraj Demetrović and he himself was convinced of it" (BD2, 384).

It is worth noticing that in the *Drunken November Night 1918* Krleža sarcastically depicted Zofka Kveder-Demetrović as one of the three-colour

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<sup>25</sup> Entry on the *Premiere of "Golgotha" 3 November 1922 Manuscript from 4 November 1922* (BD2, 381–392) rounded off the journal entries of 1922 (second edition of *Bygone Days*), which were later followed by the *Supplement to Bygone Days*. The entry about the mentioned premiere was first published in *Borba* daily (1, 2, and 3 May 1965), whereas Krleža introduced it in the second edition of *Bygone Days* (*Krležijana* 2:232).

<sup>26</sup> Dunja Detoni Dujmić indicates that in the *final spectacular fervour* of Zofka Kveder for Yugoslavism and Greater Serbia hegemony was helped by the marriage to Juraj Demetrović, "a politician and a provincial commissioner for Croatia, who vehemently advocated the ideology of a united Yugoslavian nation" (Detoni Dujmić 1998:195).



faeries of the Kingdom of SCS, while in the entry about the *Golgotha* premiere he clearly connected her husband Juraj Demetrović with the *yellow* negation of Christ. Namely, *Golgotha* dramatizes the conflict within the workers' movement – between the *red* workers' movement *line* (Pavle as a refigured Christ) who follow the ideas of the October Revolution, and the *yellow*, opportunist workers' line (Kristijan as a refigured Judas) whose only aspiration, like the Columbian crowd, is to have better material life.<sup>27</sup> *Golgotha* was written between 1918 and 1920, at the time when Krleža was actively engaged in the Socialist Workers' Party of Yugoslavia – SRPJ(k), later Communist Party of Yugoslavia, and often spoke at the gatherings (*Krležijana* 1:301).<sup>28</sup> It is precisely the journal entry from 23 April 1920, *Kraljevica, Shipyard (Scene at the Kameral – Moravitz Station)* that Nikola Batušić identifies as the contextual framework to Act Three of *Golgotha* (Batušić 2002:114). Apart from this, Krleža mentions in the entry about the *Premiere of "Golgotha" 3 November 1922 Manuscript from 4 November 1922* that he had written *Golgotha* in *Kraljevica* in 1920 (cf. BD2, 384).

To sum up, *Golgotha* thematizes the state of play in the European workers' movement after the October Revolution, the conflicts and schisms in the Second and Third International. As was highlighted in the introduction, the Second International had a disillusioning impact on Krleža whereby the calvary problem in *Golgotha* features as an ethical problem of betrayal (Vučković 1986:161). The Biblical archetype also spreads out to the example of Ksaver (refigured into Ahasver) who at the critical moment did not come to Pavle's aid (refigured Christ) like Ahasver, who according to a Mediaeval legend, when Christ asked for water on the way to Golgotha, refused to give him any (Vučković 1986:163; Matičević 1996:129). This yields the following parallelism: Pavle – Christ, Kristijan – Judas, and Ksaver – Ahasver with Andrej taking over the role of Christ after Pavle's death, which indicates that *Golgotha* functions not only as a political drama but also as a *bleak human existence drama* (Gašparović 1989:80), within the contextualization of the politics of friendship.

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Kristijan's negation of Bakunin's direct action (whereas he defines his own concept by Marxist ideologues) and Pavle's anarchistic and individualist action (Krleža 1988:249, 281).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Krleža's entry *Kraljevica 18 April 1920, from the speech at Hreljina Fort* for the year of 1920.

## CONCLUSION ON KRLEŽA'S DOUBLE VISION OF THE TREATY OF BREST-LITOVSK

Krleža's *Bygone Days*, diary-memoirist entries encompass, therefore, the cancerous period 1914–1921/22, “when the Angel of Death flew over this entire muddy landscape” (BD2, 22), when people *babbled* about “sharp knives as if they were most ordinary things” (BD, 262). Thus in the historical essay *Thirty years ago (1917–1947)*,<sup>29</sup> which he added to the first edition of the journal-memoirist structure of *Bygone Days* in 1956, Krleža discovered that there were *no* (Croatian) annals on WWI (BD, 398), because, as he wrote in the entry from 15 September 1916, this was the period when *all thinkers failed*, having resigned to the ethically indifferent silence (BD, 219). He believed that the *deeper* meaning of these (*bygone*) days was possible only in retrospective (BD2, 39), retro-discourse of the neutralized, *cooled* history. Through his double vision of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk Krleža indirectly demonstrates that which Annika Mombauer evinced in her research of the WWI - i.e. that “history is always just an interpretation of events, formulated within the context of political circumstances” (Mombauer 2014:259). Concluding with her final historian's discovery:

History is not an objective, factual representation of events in the way that they took place, historical analyses are to be read with clear understanding of their origin. History is prone to bias, falsification, and intentional wrong interpretation by individuals, even professional historians, as well as the censorship of the authorities – in case the results of historical research are too unpalatable or adversely reflect the present. For the students of history this is perhaps the most important conclusion in this book (Mombauer 2014:259).

In a journal entry from 28 October 1915, where Krleža diagnosed Jules Messenet's instrumentations with Goethe's motifs as not having been unmasked as absurdity, when he wrote an apocalyptic vision of history: “While in fact history has never seen such a miscreant, criminal,

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<sup>29</sup> Historical and phenomenological essay *Thirty years ago (1917–47)* was published in *Republika* periodical (1947, 11) accompanied by *Notes to the essay: Thirty years ago*, and Krleža introduced it on the pages of *Bygone Days* (first edition 1956) (cf. *Krležijana* 2:235–236).

perverse, sick civilization before. None of them were torn apart by such contradictions” (BD, 57).

In the context of the above mentioned double vision regarding The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, I intended to document Krleža's vision of friendship, too. While in the *Discussion on Brest-Litovsk (1918)* Krleža showed that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk caused political dramatization (i) in personal friendships, a *dramatic separation* of Croatian social democracy into a faction that emphasizes “Russian Slavianism” as propounded by ideologue Kerensky, the Prime Minister of the Russian Provisional Government in 1917, and a “Lenin leaning” faction; in the play *Golgotha* (1922) he depicted the dissolution of friendship within the workers' movement itself, which brings me back to the introductory remark on the politics of friendship as exemplified by Freud's Porcupine's dilemma from 1921.

In general, there are two attitudes to Krleža's documentarism of WWI, mostly from the perspective of his short story collection *Croatian God Mars* (1922) as well as his wartime plays – *Galicija* (1922), *Golgotha* (1922) and *Vučjak* (1923). While some, like Filip Škiljan, whose opinion I share, feel that Krleža painted an accurate picture of WWI, others dwell on *ethos*. Namely, Filip Škiljan emphasizes that the novella *Three Home Guards* (1921) gives a realistic depiction of the way in which people from Croatian Zagorje perceived going to the front and getting a possible leave of absence (Škiljan 2014:68). However, Vlasta Horvatić-Gmaz believes that Krleža shaped a literary stereotype<sup>30</sup> of a Home Guard from Zagorje who was conscripted by force in order to die in vain for the Emperor and the Monarchy in desperate circumstances in the trenches of Galicija; that Home Guards from the novella *The Battle at Bistrica Lesna* (1923) have become a myth about “non-belligerent, illiterate, and resigned Home Guards from Zagorje, powerless to change their position” (Horvatić-Gmaz 2014:16).

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<sup>30</sup> Regarding *stereotyping*, it should definitely include the issue of (re)presentation in literature, which was problematized by Darko Suvin for example, in the article *Can people be (re)presented in literature?* Namely, since narrative space and narrative time most often represent a transposition of extraliterary concepts of space and time, the narrative figures most often represent extraliterary notions about people. Briefly, in the interpretation of psychemic narrative figures we should, as Darko Suvin continues to underline, bear in mind that they are literary simulacra of people (Suvin 1988:97).

Namely, the author concludes that Krleža radicalises his anti-Monarchy beliefs and personal animosity to Austrian military organization.

I shall dwell on the positive and qualitative definitions of Krleža's WWI representation regarding his creative freedom in choosing the given perspective. Thus Zvonimir Freivogel points out that until recently relatively little was known or written in Croatia about the Austro-Hungarian military troops, "because the knowledge, as well as participants' remembering were systematically 'erased' from the collective consciousness and from history which was 'composed' by the winners. One could find out more about the Austro-Hungarian military from fiction, i.e. Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk* or Krleža's *Croatian God Mars* than from professional literature about the period, which practically did not exist before Croatia's independence" (Freivogel 2014:9).

Irina Aleksander, who is often perceptibly characterized by the phrase "controversial friend of Miroslav Krleža", was one of the few experts on Krleža who underlined that Krleža had gone to war as an ordinary soldier and rejected a promotion to the rank of officer – "He goes to war shoulder to shoulder with these peasants who were ripped out of their native soil in the name of someone else's war, with these 'candidates for a glorious, Royal, Hungarian Home Guard death'" (Aleksander 2007:195). Ivo Štivičić believes that Krleža's *Royal Hungarian Home Guard novella* was the best screenplay written according to the same template that Americans had been exploiting for fifty solid years, which is all about how to train somebody to become an obedient killer. "All those" – as Štivičić puts it from a screenwriter's perspective – "exercises that involve running over tree trunks and into water, through mud". All this was written by Krleža in the *Royal Hungarian Home Guard novella* (1921) which is "a complete script, conveying one of the most remarkable and most horrible stories about how to destroy and torture a human being" (Štivičić 2013, URL).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Marc Ferro points out that since 1880 numerous articles and books were published about what war would be like, however, only H. G. Wells (David Icke would add for Wells – the writer of the Fabian Society), designer Albert Robida, and a Russian theoretician Ivan Blok claimed that war would be industrialized with millions of casualties and mobilizing entire nations. The papers on war became even more proliferate after 1906, towards the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war. "People were mentally prepared" (Ferro 1973:30). It is known that until the end of 1914 almost half the students in the Austrian part of the

In conclusion, I would like to mention that Velimir Visković, in the preface to the book *Krležology Fragments*, pointed out Krleža had consistently rejected “the offers to become a professional politician (including one made by Korać in 1918, when he was to become one of the leaders of the Croatian Social Democrats, and the one made by Broz after 1948)” (Visković 2001:6), which is unfortunately often forgotten today or omitted for the sake of a certain *worldview* (which Krleža's Doctor from the novel *On the Edge of Reason* would abhor). It can be seen just how important *politics of friendship* were to Krleža from Vaništa's records from November 1981 when Krleža, a month before his death, told him: “I had few friends, very few in comparison to the great number of people I knew. They were Kamilo Horvatin, Cesarec, Vaso Bogdanov, Krsto (Hegeđušić, AN)”, which brings me back to the motto of this paper – porcupines which, according to Freud, can recognize the true boundaries of friendship.

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Monarchy volunteered to join the army, hence the members of cultural elite such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Oskar Kokoschka, also voluntarily joined the war and fought against Russia (Stevenson 2014:431–432).

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