

## **Nevenko Bartulin: “Boris Zarnik and his entry on race in the *Croatian encyclopaedia* (1942)”**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the short section on race theory found in the entry on ‘Man’ published in the fourth volume of the Croatian Encyclopaedia (the so-called ‘Ustaša’ Encyclopaedia) in 1942 and written by the Slovenian-born Croatian biologist Boris Zarnik. Since Zarnik criticised the idea of racism, or what he also termed ‘race theory’, in this entry, a number of historians and other commentators have claimed that Zarnik, and even the Ustaša government, were theoretically opposed to National Socialist racism. But through a close examination of both his pre-war articles on racial anthropology and the ideas expressed in his entry on race theory, this article will highlight that Zarnik’s position on race and racism was actually completely in line with the tenets of National Socialism.

Key words: racism, race theory, race laws, anthropology, science, Nordic, Dinaric

## Introduction

The fourth volume of the Croatian Encyclopaedia (*Hrvatska enciklopedija*) from 1942 included an entry on ‘Man’ (*Čovjek*), written by the Slovenian-born Croatian biologist, Boris Zarnik (1883-1945).<sup>1</sup> Zarnik was a Professor of Biology at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Zagreb. During the interwar period, he promoted the idea of Yugoslav racial nationalism, but in April 1941 Zarnik helped draft the race laws of the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* - NDH). An analysis of Zarnik’s interwar articles on race, biology and eugenics makes it clear that he was a committed proponent of racial anthropology who regarded the Nordic, Dinaric and (to a lesser extent) Alpine races as the best European racial types.<sup>2</sup> However, his entry on ‘Man’ in the *Croatian Encyclopaedia* included a short criticism of racism (or what he termed ‘race theory’) and this has led a number of historians and commentators to claim that, by 1942, Zarnik had substantially changed his earlier opinions on race. In his recent thesis on eugenics in Croatia, for example, Martin Kuhar argues that Zarnik’s section on race theory in the entry on ‘Man’ shows that he had “*rejected his own position from a few years ago*”, though he also writes that it is difficult to establish why Zarnik had so “*explicitly rejected any kind of racist conceptualizations and leant towards cultural relativism.*”<sup>3</sup> Other sources claim that Zarnik’s article apparently reflected the anti-racist stance of wartime Croatia’s intellectual elite and its opposition to Ustaša and National Socialist racism.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand,

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<sup>1</sup> Zarnik (1942): 346-66.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Zarnik (1927); (1930); (1931a); and (1931b).

<sup>3</sup> Kuhar (2015): 85.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Croatian Wikipedia article on the *Croatian Encyclopaedia*, it is totally unjustified to refer to the five volumes of the *Croatian Encyclopaedia* published during the NDH as an ‘Ustaša’ project. This can be proven, for example, “*by the very clear and detailed condemnation of racist theories as unscientific and unfounded*” in the entry on ‘Man’ in the fourth volume. This entry stressed that: “*in contrast to attempts at proving the superiority of a pure race, ‘one can frequently establish that prominent people are of mixed race.’ This was fairly courageous to publish in a state (NDH) which itself accepted racist theories (Croats as an Aryan race).*” It should be noted that the project for a *Croatian Encyclopaedia* was started

since Zarnik's criticism of racism was published in the so-called 'Ustaša' encyclopaedia, some historians have also asserted or implied that his criticism reflected the official standpoint of the Ustaša government, which in turn means that the Ustaše were actually opposed (at least in theory) to racism and National Socialism. Tomislav Jonjić thus refers to Zarnik's encyclopaedia entry as a "*powerful condemnation of racism and racist efforts in the most representative publication*" of the NDH.<sup>5</sup>

This article will highlight that such historiographical claims are highly misleading. While it is a fact that he specifically criticised the idea of racial superiority, Zarnik's entry also upheld the discipline of racial anthropology, the specific desirability of Nordic-Dinaric-Alpine racial mixing and the idea of racial separation, points which have been conveniently ignored by those historians and other commentators seeking to paint a picture of Zarnik as a principled anti-racist in the modern sense of the term.<sup>6</sup> This article will demonstrate that Zarnik's short entry on race theory was consistent with the arguments promoted in his interwar articles and, furthermore, was completely in line with his justification of the NDH's race laws in May 1941. Contrary to popular misconceptions, Zarnik's entry was also in line with the official pronouncements and works of leading National Socialists, racial anthropologists and race theorists in the Third Reich. Before examining Zarnik's explanation of race theory from 1942, it is necessary to provide a summary of his main racial arguments from the interwar period in order to highlight the continuity of his thoughts on this question.

### **Zarnik's articles on race in the interwar period**

Boris Zarnik was born in Ljubljana on 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1883, the son of a Slovenian lawyer and politician. He studied medicine and natural sciences at the universities of Jena, Cluj and Würzburg, also acquiring a doctorate

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by the writer and encyclopaedist Mate Ujević (1901-1967) in the late 1930s. See Wikipedija (2014).

<sup>5</sup> Jonjić (2012): 241.

<sup>6</sup> These specific points made by Zarnik have only been discussed (albeit briefly) in the works by Bartulin (2013): 66; (2014): 200; and Duić (2015): 446.

in zoology in Würzburg in 1904. In 1910 he gained his habilitation in zoology and comparative anatomy at the University of Würzburg.<sup>7</sup> Until 1915 he worked as an assistant lecturer at Würzburg's institute of zoology under the direction of the German biologist Theodor Boveri (1862-1915). After a stint as a professor in Istanbul, in 1918 he began lecturing in biology at the Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb (remaining in this position until late 1941).<sup>8</sup> Zarnik was deeply interested in the subjects of racial anthropology, eugenics and the theory of evolution and wrote about these subjects in several scholarly articles in the interwar period. In 1925 he helped to establish the Anthropological Section of the Sociological Society (*Sociološko društvo*) in Zagreb; this section collected material with the aim of studying the 'biology of the South Slavs.'<sup>9</sup> Zarnik was a committed Yugoslav nationalist who believed that racial anthropology could provide the basis for a common national identity for all South Slavs divided as they were by religion, culture and history.

Zarnik argued that the South Slavs contained a Nordic-Dinaric racial core that had preserved the key physical and mental or spiritual traits of the South Slavs throughout the centuries. In an article entitled 'The Racial Composition of the European Population', published in a Croat cultural journal *Hrvatsko kolo* ('Croatian Circle') in 1927, Zarnik argued that, "apart from Sweden, no other state in Europe has a population with such a relatively equal racial composition as our land, which ... shows everywhere the same Dinaric-Nordic core."<sup>10</sup> In line with the findings of all leading racial anthropologists, Zarnik made a strong distinction between people (*Volk*), defined as an ethnolinguistic and cultural group, on the one hand, and the anthropological-biological grouping of race (*Rasse*) on the other.<sup>11</sup> During the interwar period, the theoretical

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<sup>7</sup> Lorković (1945): 4.

<sup>8</sup> Lorković (1945): 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> See Lorković (1945): 7, and Zarnik (1927): 73-75. Zarnik was a great admirer of the English naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and the German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). See Zarnik (1932) and (1934).

<sup>10</sup> Zarnik (1927): 79-80.

<sup>11</sup> See Hutton (2005): 17-25.

distinction between people or nation and race was accepted as ‘academic orthodoxy’ by leading race theorists and racial anthropologists in Europe, above all in Germany.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Zarnik also stressed that the South Slavs, similarly to the Scandinavians, were dependent on a core racial population; he thus argued that a Nordic-Dinaric racial admixture formed the core of the South Slavs. Zarnik estimated that, out of a total of 48 chromosomes, the average or typical South Slav inherited 23 Dinaric, 15 Nordic, 7 Alpine, 2 Mediterranean chromosomes and 1 Mongol chromosome. This genetic structure, he noted, was similar to the average north Italian and south German.<sup>13</sup>

Zarnik noted that every race was marked by particular mental as well as physical traits. As Hans Friedrich Karl Günther (1891-1968), the popular interwar German racial anthropologist explained, “*a race shows itself in a human group which is marked off from every other human group through its own proper combination of bodily and mental characteristics, and in turn produces only its like.*”<sup>14</sup> For Zarnik, the Dinaric race was mentally or spiritually characterised by a “*fighting spirit, bravery and dedication.*” But, in spite of his consistent praise of the Dinaric and Nordic races, Zarnik pointed out that, with regard to the mental qualities of a particular race, it was “*very difficult*” to establish whether one race was “*more or less capable*”, especially in terms of producing “*creative work.*”<sup>15</sup> He noted that there were “*experts*” and “*semi-experts*”, such as Günther and the eugenicist Fritz Lenz (1887-1976) in Germany and the lawyer and eugenicist Madison Grant (1865-1937) in the United States of America who attributed to the Nordic race the highest qualities and stressed the need to preserve the Nordic race from mixing with other races. But, as Zarnik maintained, such arguments had not been “*particularly established*”, though he did point out that those who stressed the high qualities of the Nordic race also “*recognise the superiority of the Dinaric*

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<sup>12</sup> Hutton (2005): 23-24.

<sup>13</sup> Zarnik (1927): 71.

<sup>14</sup> Günther (1927): 3. Günther classified six main European races: Nordic, Phalian, Alpine, Dinaric, Mediterranean and East Baltic.

<sup>15</sup> Zarnik (1927): 64-65.

*race*” (especially with regard to ‘moral qualities’) over the other two main European races, the Mediterranean and the Alpine. If one observed the portraits and statues of great men, Zarnik argued, it would seem that: “*the great majority were of mixed race*”, such as Goethe and Schiller who “*are a combination of northern [Nordic] and Dinaric characteristics.*” To be sure, a “*certain number*” of great men bore predominantly Nordic features, but there were geniuses such as Luther, Balzac, Schubert and Beethoven who were of “*almost pure Alpine type.*”<sup>16</sup>

Despite his cautious rejection of the idea of Nordic racial superiority, Zarnik was convinced that “*race creates history*”, which had already been stressed by “*the ingenious French scholar*” Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau (1816-1882). Although Gobineau had, Zarnik noted, “*excessively*” stressed “*the characteristics of the northern race*”, this did not change the fact that “*the life of a people is an expression of its racial characteristics.*” To prove the historical validity of this claim, Zarnik used the example of the Persians to highlight the negative consequences of racial mixing. The contemporary Persians were practically worthless in comparison to the ancient Persians who had represented “*one of the most important factors*” in world history because the former were quite different to the latter in a biological sense. The ancient Persians bore “*strong Nordic admixtures*”, but after the gradual disappearance of the martial elite through continuous wars the people remaining mixed with “*various races of dark pigmentation*”, who adopted the Persian language but were completely racially different to the original Persians.<sup>17</sup>

Günther had also identified the Persians – along with the ancient Indians, Hellenes, Romans and Slavs – as racially Nordic, though he did not explicitly claim superiority for the Nordic race.<sup>18</sup> While Günther upheld a clear Nordacist position and was opposed in principle to racial mixing, he also had a very favourable opinion of the Dinaric race. The Dinaric race was strongly represented among the south Germans of

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<sup>16</sup> Zarnik (1927): 65.

<sup>17</sup> Zarnik (1927): 79.

<sup>18</sup> Günther (1927): 123-25, 140-92, 225.

Bavaria and Austria, but its greatest concentration, Günther noted, was found in the regions of the South Slavs and Albanians.<sup>19</sup> Similarly to the Nordic race, Dinaric mental/spiritual characteristics included such virtues as bravery in war, a “*warm feeling for nature*”, a “*strong love of home*” and a “*gift for music*”. On the other hand, the bold Dinaric man did not seem to possess the “*urge to conquest*”, which marked the Nordic racial spirit. Günther claimed that the Dinaric race was “*second among the races of Europe*” in terms of “*mental capacity*.” Thus, many of the greatest figures of European history and culture, particularly in the field of music, had shown “*a more or less strong Dinaric strain*”, including the ‘Nordic-Dinaric’ composers Haydn, Mozart, Liszt, Wagner, Chopin, Bruckner and Verdi.<sup>20</sup> Günther thus placed the tall, courageous Dinaric race above the Alpine, Mediterranean and East Baltic races in terms of its mental traits.

Other leading German racial anthropologists were generally more cautious than Günther in attributing all historical and cultural greatness in Europe (and the Near East) exclusively to the Nordic race, even though they still regarded the Nordic race as the most exceptional racial type. The anthropologist and anatomist Eugen Fischer (1874-1967), director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics (from 1927 to 1942), argued that the European peoples could be divided into four basic races: Nordic, Mediterranean, Alpine and Dinaric.<sup>21</sup> Fischer identified the Nordic race as the historical bearer of the Indo-European/Indo-Germanic languages, but he also asserted that the racial crossing of the Nordic type with “*closely related and equal races*” was able to produce the most gifted individuals and had created the greatest civilisations, such as ancient Greece.<sup>22</sup> Fischer maintained that the Nordic race was the leading racial component in the German people, but that the survival of German culture depended upon the “*racial combination*” of the Nordic race with the Alpine and Dinaric races, two races which were well represented in Germany and were, to an extent, the equals of the Nordic

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<sup>19</sup> Günther (1927): 89, 92.

<sup>20</sup> Günther (1927): 58-59.

<sup>21</sup> Hutton (2005): 118.

<sup>22</sup> Hutton (2005): 146.

leading race.<sup>23</sup>

In his article entitled ‘Race and Mental [Spiritual] Productivity’ from 1931, published in the Croat scientific journal *Priroda* (‘Nature’), Zarnik presented his theory on the connection between race, mental characteristics and cultural abilities. He argued, like Fischer, that there were four primary European races concentrated in four main regions: the Nordic race in northern Europe, the Dinaric race in Yugoslavia, the Alpine race in central Europe and the Mediterranean race found along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea (with the exception of the eastern Adriatic coast).<sup>24</sup> These races were, however, found all over Europe, so that all European peoples contained a mixture of these races in varying proportions.<sup>25</sup> Races were not only marked by external physical characteristics but also by differences with regard to internal organs such as the brain. Since mental characteristics were linked to the brain, and also ‘inherited’ in the same manner as physical traits, it was clear that there were mental as well as physical differences between the races. Mental differences were most obvious through a comparison of the white European races with the black race. Zarnik used figures obtained from the intelligence tests of army recruits in the United States to argue that blacks were intellectually inferior, since they scored considerably lower in these IQ tests than white recruits. He also observed more extensive racial differences in mental capacity amongst other racial groups including the “*passivity of the Chinese, the deficient originality and great ability of imitation among the Japanese, the complete mental dullness of the Australian (Aborigines)*”, all of which could be attributed to “*the effects of their race.*”<sup>26</sup>

With regard to the question of racial differences in Europe, Zarnik noted that most Europeans (90% in fact) could count members of all four European races among their ancestors. Furthermore, there was no direct

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<sup>23</sup> Hutton (2005): 148.

<sup>24</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 129. A slightly different version of this analysis of Zarnik’s article can be found in Bartulin (2014): 85-89.

<sup>25</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 129-30.

<sup>26</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 130-32.



correlation between the genotype and phenotype, so that it was possible for someone to simultaneously possess external Dinaric features and a Nordic brain.<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that, by the 1920s, new developments in the science of genetics had highlighted the “*increasing uncertainty about the status of anthropological features such as hair colour and skull shape.*”<sup>28</sup> Under the influence of Mendel’s laws of inheritance, many scientists and anthropologists began to view race as a “*set of hereditary features*”, which were inherited independently of one another so that there was no necessary direct correlation between the observable physical and behavioural characteristics of a person (phenotype) and the sum of the inherited genetic constitution of that person (genotype).<sup>29</sup> Zarnik noted, however, that it was more likely that an individual who possessed all the physical characteristics of a particular race would also possess the ‘psychic’ characteristics of that race. He remarked that, presently, one could only make general conclusions about the mental characteristics of the four main European races. Although he stated that this incomplete mapping of the psychological characteristics of the four races could lead to ‘subjective’ ideas among anthropologists and biologists, Zarnik stressed the fact that the perceived mental characteristics of the Dinaric race were “*very favourably judged*” by racial anthropologists. Citing Eugen Fischer and Hans Günther as sources, Zarnik outlined the characteristics that the Dinaric race was supposed to share with the Nordic race: a developed sense of fantasy, great talent for art and music, a considerable degree of intelligence, great sense of self-confidence, courage, and a sense of heroism, though the Dinaric man lacked the gift for organisation and had a carefree attitude toward life.<sup>30</sup>

Zarnik addressed the important question as to whether the Nordic race was the only truly creative race. Like Fischer, Zarnik accepted the theory that the Nordic race was “*the creator of the Aryan or Indo-Germanic languages.*” The fact that contemporary peoples of other races,

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<sup>27</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 133.

<sup>28</sup> Hutton (2005): 25.

<sup>29</sup> Hutton (2005): 31-32.

<sup>30</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 133.

such as the Persians, Armenians and Indians spoke Indo-European languages could be explained by the hypothesis that “*people of Nordic race, as warriors, subjugated peoples of foreign races, and then as a ruling layer slowly imposed their language upon them.*”<sup>31</sup> In the specific case of Europe, Zarnik argued that “*Nordic tribes, especially the old Germanics and Slavs conquered the whole of central and southern Europe.*” The proto-Slavs had thus been predominantly of Nordic race; the graves of the old Slavs had revealed dolichocephalic (or long-headed) skulls “*that could not be distinguished at all from old Germanic (skulls).*”<sup>32</sup> But despite its undeniably exceptional qualities, the Nordic race could not, argued Zarnik, claim a monopoly on cultural creativity. While the ancient Indian, Iranian, Greek and Roman cultures could well be described as the “*spiritual product of the Nordic race*”, one could not deny the fact that other high cultures had existed, such as the “*Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian and other Eastern cultures*”, in which the Nordic race had not played a part at all.<sup>33</sup> The Jews, who possessed “*hardly a 10% Nordic admixture*”, were also “*extraordinarily agile in the intellectual field*” and had made great contributions to human progress. Zarnik argued that racial mixing was actually beneficial in the case of the mixing of the Nordic race with other races, for it “*creates the conditions for great mental productivity.*” If one observed the “*physiognomy*” of great historical figures one would find that the great majority were “*mixed types*”, including Socrates, Leibniz, Kant, Goethe, Schiller, Voltaire, Dante, Caesar, Napoleon, Michelangelo and others. With some “*small exceptions*”, these geniuses bore “*various Nordic characteristics*”, but also the traits of other races, “*especially the Dinaric*” (e.g. Goethe, Schiller and Voltaire), which led Zarnik to conclude that “*the Nordic-Dinaric mixture produces the most excellent qualities.*”<sup>34</sup>

To support his argument, Zarnik remarked that, according to the German writer Kurt Gerlach (1889-1976), the great majority of birthplaces of the most distinguished German poets, artists, doctors, mathematicians

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<sup>31</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 134.

<sup>32</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 135.

<sup>33</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 134-35.

<sup>34</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 135.

and generals could be found in the areas of the greatest mixing between the Nordic, Dinaric and Alpine races.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, the areas in Germany with a relatively pure Nordic population, namely in northern Germany, had produced few great cultural figures.<sup>36</sup> Zarnik also pointed to the findings of the German psychiatrist Ernst Kretschmer (1888-1964) who argued that racial mixing, particularly between the Nordic and Alpine races, had led to great cultural creativity in both ancient Greece and modern Europe.<sup>37</sup> According to Kretschmer, racial mixing (in the case of the Nordic and Alpine races) often led to the “*continuous tension between individual mental qualities*”, which created the dynamic or “*demonic*” nature so common to men of genius. But, as Zarnik cautiously noted, not all race mixing produced great geniuses. It was thus necessary for “*selected types of two races to come into contact with each other*”, in other words two individuals who possessed exceptional qualities of both races. Consequently, the uncontrolled racial mixing that occurred in large cities only led to “*sterility*” and not the “*production of ingenious people.*”<sup>38</sup>

While the Nordic race was not exclusively responsible for all high cultures, Zarnik still regarded the Nordic race as possessing exceptional mental gifts, for one “*cannot ignore the fact that the Nordic race is a component part of the population in almost every (area) where new cultures and great cultural accomplishments appeared.*” The examples of ancient India, Iran, Greece and Rome highlighted how great cultures developed, and “*the first consequence of the Nordic penetration*” is the appearance of an Aryan/Indo-European language. Zarnik remarked, however, that after two to three centuries of great cultural achievements, there follows a period of intellectual sterility, which can only be surmounted by a fresh wave of Nordic conquerors or settlers. The best historical example was medieval Italy: although the old Roman culture eventually disappeared, early medieval Italy was invaded by “*half-barbarous Nordic Germanic tribes.*” These tribes were “*mentally sterile*”

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<sup>35</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 136. Also see Hutton (2005): 151.

<sup>36</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 137.

<sup>37</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 138, and Hutton (2005): 127.

<sup>38</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 138-39.

but after interbreeding with the “*equally sterile Roman population*”, the conditions were set for the appearance of the “*extraordinary mental productivity*” of the Italian Renaissance.<sup>39</sup>

Zarnik emphasised that “*the Nordic race has certain foundations which, through mixing with other races, incite the development of particular intellectual qualities.*” However, only some races, expressly the Dinaric and Alpine races, were able to contribute to the development of intellectual abilities through interbreeding with the Nordic race. Therefore, racial mixing between, for example, the Nordic Dutch and Hottentots in South Africa, or between the Nordic Anglo-Saxons and blacks in North America, produced mixed individuals of “*very weak mental capabilities.*” In the case of Yugoslavia Zarnik was confident that the South Slav nation contained both “*Nordic and Dinaric elements, thus races that produce very good combinations, so that we can in this respect look toward the future without concern.*”<sup>40</sup> It is important to note that Zarnik reiterated his argument on the benefits of Nordic-Dinaric (and Alpine) racial mixing in his entry in the Croatian Encyclopaedia from 1942.

### **Zarnik and the NDH’s race laws**

Sometime after the proclamation of the NDH on 10 April 1941, the Ustaša minister Milovan Žanić (1882-1946) and the Ustaša ideologist Ivan Oršanić (1904-1968) sought the advice of Boris Zarnik with regard to the drafting of the NDH’s race laws. Zarnik had been recommended as an expert on racial questions by the noted physician Đuro Vranešić (1897-1946). According to Vranešić, Zarnik “*revised and expertly improved*” into a “*polished version*” the initial draft of the race laws submitted to Vranešić by Žanić and Oršanić.<sup>41</sup> According to the oration given by the biologist Zdravko Lorković (1900-1998) at Zarnik’s funeral in January

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<sup>39</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 139.

<sup>40</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 139-40.

<sup>41</sup> Cited in Goldstein (2001): 581. At his interrogation by the Yugoslav communist authorities in September 1945, Vranešić stated that Žanić and Oršanić had explained to him that the Ustaša *Poglavnik* Ante Pavelić had himself drafted the initial race laws.

1945, Zarnik had “*sincerely desired the new order*” in April 1941 and had begun to “*cooperate on some laws*” but was soon forced into retirement.<sup>42</sup> Zarnik’s cooperation with the Ustaša authorities on the drafting of the race laws did indeed reflect his sincere commitment to racial politics. Although he was a proponent of racial Yugoslavism in the interwar period, Zarnik evidently saw no problem with accepting a Croatian nationalist regime that propagated the Aryan and Nordic-Dinaric racial identity of the Croatian people, which was obviously an idea similar to Zarnik’s own concept of South Slavic racial identity.<sup>43</sup> Zarnik was not, however, entirely trusted by the Ustaše precisely because of the fact that he was an ethnic Slovene and had been a Yugoslav nationalist and (probably) a Freemason.<sup>44</sup> As a result of his ‘dubious’ background and past, Zarnik was dismissed from his lecturing duties in late 1941 by the Minister of Education, the Croatian writer and leading Ustaša Mile Budak (1889-1945).<sup>45</sup>

But despite Ustaša objections to his political pedigree and his own displeasure at being forced to retire, Zarnik continued to conduct research at the Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb and worked as an editor for entries on biology in the *Croatian Encyclopaedia*.<sup>46</sup> More importantly, he continued to play an important role in the development of the NDH’s racial policy. He had already been appointed a member of the Racial-Political Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (along with Zdravko

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<sup>42</sup> Lorković (1945): 8. Tomislav Jonjić erroneously notes that Lorković’s article in the scientific journal *Priroda* was published after the fall of the NDH in 1946, even referring to *Priroda* as a “*Yugoslav communist journal*”, Jonjić (2012): 240. Numbers 1-3 of Vol. 35 of *Priroda* (which included Lorković’s article) actually covered the months of January, February and March of 1945.

<sup>43</sup> See Bartulin (2014): 152-53.

<sup>44</sup> See Kuhar (2015): 85 and Jonjić (2012): 240.

<sup>45</sup> Lorković (1945): 8. Budak’s decision was apparently not only based on the fact of Zarnik’s undesirable Slovenian descent, but also because of his inappropriate ‘affairs with women’. See Mile Budak’s dossier in the archives of the German police attaché in the NDH, Hans Helm: *HDA*, fond 1521, Archive of Hans Helm, box 27: Dr Mile Budak. While Slovenes were formally accepted as Aryans in the NDH, they were generally mistrusted as being politically pro-Yugoslav. For more on the Slovenes in the NDH, see Jelić-Butić (1977): 169.

<sup>46</sup> See Lorković (1945): 8.

Lorković and Đuro Vranešić).<sup>47</sup> The Committee was an agency established by the government in early June 1941 in order to: “*prepare proposals and drafts of laws, law decrees and regulations that [concern] the area[s] of racial biology, racial politics and racial hygiene or eugenics.*”<sup>48</sup> Zarnik also lent his expertise in racial matters to other state projects. At the end of March 1942 the NDH’s Ministry of Education sent an internal letter addressed to a select range of professional employees of the state, including teachers, doctors, philosophers, nurses, lawyers and journalists, notifying them of a two-week theoretical and practical ‘Racial-biological course’ to be held between 13 and 30 April 1942 in Zagreb. This course was intended to “*draw attention to the laws of inheritance*” and “*practically enable one part of the attendees in the exercise or supervision of anthropological and psychometric examinations*” to be conducted in the NDH.<sup>49</sup> The course included a series of lectures by Zarnik on the subjects of Mendelian laws of inheritance, anthropometric and physiological differences between human beings and a study of the human races, including the topic of the “*racial elements of Gypsies and Jews.*”<sup>50</sup>

The Jews and Gypsies represented the main non-Aryan racial minorities in the NDH. The Law Decree on Citizenship promulgated, and signed by the *Poglavnik* Ante Pavelić (1889-1959), on 30 April 1941 defined a ‘citizen’ (*državljanin*) of the NDH as a:

“... *state national of Aryan origin who by his actions has demonstrated that he did not work against the liberation aspirations of the Croatian people and who is willing to readily and faithfully serve the Croatian people and the Independent State of Croatia.*”<sup>51</sup>

The concept of Aryan racial identity was further legally enshrined in two racial decrees also issued (and signed by Pavelić) on 30 April: The Law

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<sup>47</sup> Polšek (2004): 133.

<sup>48</sup> Anonymous (1941d).

<sup>49</sup> Polšek (2004): 133-34.

<sup>50</sup> Polšek (2004): 134.

<sup>51</sup> Anonymous (1941a).

Decree on Racial Affiliation and The Law Decree on the Protection of the Aryan Blood and Honour of the Croatian People.<sup>52</sup> According to the first racial decree, an individual of Aryan descent (*arijsko porijetlo*) was one “*who descends from ancestors, who are members of the European racial community or who descends from ancestors of that community outside of Europe.*” The first decree defined a person with at least three Jewish grandparents as a racial Jew; a grandparent was defined as a Jew or Jewess if he or she belonged to the ‘Mosaic faith.’ The first decree also defined the Gypsy as an individual who had two or more grandparents who were Gypsies by race. The sixth article of the first decree further gave the Head of State (Ante Pavelić) the right to grant all legal rights that belong to individuals of Aryan descent to non-Aryan individuals (together with their spouses and children) who had proven themselves “*meritorious for the Croatian people, especially for its liberation*” before 10<sup>th</sup> of April 1941, when NDH was proclaimed. Accordingly, a small minority of Jews in the NDH attained the legal status of so-called ‘honorary Aryans.’<sup>53</sup> Quarter-Jews (with one Jewish grandparent) and certain half-Jews (with two Jewish grandparents) were also able to legally acquire Croatian citizenship. The second racial law decree on the protection of Aryan blood and honour prohibited marriages between Aryans and racial Jews (including other persons of non-Aryan descent).<sup>54</sup>

On 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1941, an anonymous article – in all likelihood penned by Boris Zarnik – appeared in the main Ustaša daily *Hrvatski narod* (‘The Croatian People’) entitled, ‘Interpretation of the Racial Law Decrees.’<sup>55</sup> It declared that the NDH “*is a national state and only Aryans have the right to occupy responsible positions in it and direct its fate.*” A nation was defined as “*a group of people with a common tradition, common spiritual goods and the will for the common promotion of those goods*”, while a race was “*a group of people who correspond in essential hereditary*

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<sup>52</sup> Anonymous (1941b).

<sup>53</sup> For more on the Jewish ‘honorary Aryans’ in the NDH, see Bartulin (2013): 61-83.

<sup>54</sup> Anonymous (1941b).

<sup>55</sup> Anonymous (1941c).

*characteristics.*” The nation also possessed its own spirit and “*spirituality has its source in the psyche of the individual, which is to a large degree the expression of his hereditary mental characteristics.*” Hence, the “*spiritual essence of the nation is therefore mainly a function of its racial structure.*” A nation that desired “*to preserve its national individuality cannot grant to individuals foreign by race the same rights that it gives to individuals who are of the same origin and racial structure.*” Therefore, an Aryan nation could only assimilate foreigners who belonged to another Aryan people.<sup>56</sup>

The Jews and Gypsies were identified as being essentially different to the Croatian people in terms of their ‘racial components.’ The Jews were not defined on the basis of their ‘Mosaic faith’ but according to their “*racial structure and biological heritage.*” The article claimed that the racial decrees were not based on the idea of racism, according to which one race was superior to other races and called by destiny to rule over them: “*Such an understanding has no basis in biological facts. Biological science does not differentiate at all according to values but only states the existing facts.*” As the racial law decrees were not based on racism, they were clearly not in conflict with the teachings of the Catholic faith, which was “*one of the foundations of Croatian spiritual culture.*”<sup>57</sup> Every race was thus equal in the sense that each one had biologically adapted to its own particular environment and ‘living conditions.’ The article further noted, correctly, that there was not a trace of ‘Nordic racism’ – the idea of

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<sup>56</sup> Anonymous (1941c).

<sup>57</sup> The article specifically stated that many people “*frequently speak about racism as a doctrine that is contrary to the understanding of the Catholic faith and as such is contrary to one of the foundations of Croatian spiritual culture*”, Anonymous (1941c). As John Connelly (2007: 818) points out: “*the Holy See, contrary to what is often written, never forbade racist thinking. It never issued explicit instructions on how race was to be understood – that, after all, was a question for sciences other than theology. In 1938 Pope Pius XI issued a set of instructions on the dangers of racism that are often cited. What is less often noted is that these instructions forbade ‘extreme racism’ but not recognition of the existence of races or assessments of their relative value. Just as nations were thought of as an undeniable aspect of creation, and thus an undeniable part of God’s plan for salvation, so were races.*”



a superior Nordic race destined to rule the world – in the German race laws, but laws were needed to prevent a foreign racial minority, such as the Jewish race in the German Reich, arrogating for itself “*leadership in the (German) culture and economy.*” It was in fact the Jews who had developed ‘real racism’, since their ‘religious books’ defined the Jews as God’s chosen people and thus destined to rule over all remaining peoples. The NDH’s race laws were justified as “*only an expression of the aspiration that the Croatian state, its fate and spiritual and economic culture be administered in the national spirit and for the exclusive welfare of the Croatian people.*”<sup>58</sup>

Although the NDH’s race laws were “*prepared according to the German law decrees*” (i.e. the Nuremberg laws), the Reich government employed the term *deutsches oder artverwandtes Blut* (‘German or kindred blood’), while the Ustaša government used the term *arijsko porijetlo* (‘Aryan descent’) since “*blood in a biological sense actually has no connection with heredity at all.*”<sup>59</sup> There was no such thing as a separate Croatian race, for “*the Croats, as all European nations in general, are a mixture of the Nordic, Dinaric, Alpine, (East) Baltic and Mediterranean races with small admixtures of other races.*” The European racial community was classified as “*a group of those races that have for centuries been mixing with one another in Europe: Nordic, Dinaric, Alpine, (East) Baltic and Mediterranean.*” In contrast, the Jews and Gypsies had historically remained outside the European racial community because of Jewish “*religious and racial exclusivity*” and the low Gypsy “*social position*”. The Jewish racial composition consisted of the “*Oriental and Near Eastern races with admixtures of the Mongol and black races*”, while the Gypsies were “*a mixture of the Indic and Iranian races with palaeo-Negroid elements (and) with Oriental and Mongoloid*

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<sup>58</sup> Anonymous (1941c).

<sup>59</sup> Anonymous (1941c). As Hutton (2005: 90) notes: “*laws passed in the early years of the Nazi regime used the notion of ‘Aryan descent’, but exclusively in its negative form, so that those ‘of non-Aryan descent’ were excluded from different aspects of public life.*”

*admixtures.*”<sup>60</sup>

Both the Jews and Gypsies possessed, however, a 20% admixture of the European racial community, which thus gave article six of the first racial decree a ‘biological’ justification because it was possible that an individual (and exceptional) Jew, who had proved his worth in the struggle for Croatian independence, might actually possess, through a chance combination of genes, a more dominant European racial strain. The “*cross-breeding of races and the further breeding of hybrids*” thus led to all manner of “*possible combinations of hereditary factors*”. The article in *Hrvatski narod* used the example of randomly taking out 48 pellets (representing a person’s 48 chromosomes) from a container including 20,000 white and 80,000 red pellets to highlight the chance combinations that could occur genetically. For example, if one was to take out 48 pellets a thousand times and lay each group of pellets out on a large table, then one would find in the majority of cases a group consisting of 40 red and 8 white pellets. However, one might also end up with a small number of groups with more white pellets and maybe even once randomly end up with 48 white pellets:

“... if the red pellets represent the non-European admixture and the white pellets the Aryan admixture of the Jewish racial community, then those groups of 48 pellets show the distribution of these characteristics amongst individuals within the Jewish community.”<sup>61</sup>

In his article in *Hrvatsko kolo* from 1927, Zarnik had similarly used the example of randomly selecting differently coloured pellets representing 48 chromosomes to highlight the possibility of a South Slav exclusively inheriting 48 Nordic or 48 Dinaric chromosomes, even though the majority of South Slavs would contain an average mixture of Nordic and Dinaric chromosomes.<sup>62</sup> If one also compares other points made in the article in *Hrvatski narod* (such as the criticism of racism) with the arguments made

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<sup>60</sup> Anonymous (1941c).

<sup>61</sup> Anonymous (1941c).

<sup>62</sup> Zarnik (1927): 72.

in the *Croatian Encyclopaedia* in 1942, then one could conclude that it is highly probable that Zarnik, as the NDH's leading racial expert, wrote the 'Interpretation of the Racial Law Decrees.'

### **Race theory or racism**

Zarnik classified and described the human races in his entry on 'Man' (*Čovjek*) in the fourth volume of the *Croatian Encyclopaedia* published in 1942. His entry included a short section on 'Racial theory' (*Rasna teorija*).<sup>63</sup> Zarnik argued that 'racial theory or racism' was a teaching or doctrine that had developed independently of racial science at the end of the nineteenth century and that the 'essence' of racism was the idea that a certain race was "*the best and most capable*" one of achieving superiority over other races due to its "*mental capabilities*". Accordingly, that race was "*chosen by God*" to rule the world and other races. While there were several types of racism, there existed a great deal of literature on 'Nordic racism', which had been founded by Arthur de Gobineau and further developed by the French racial anthropologist Georges Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936) and the Germanophile English writer and racial philosopher, Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927). Zarnik noted that, in "*observing the historical development of the cultures of the Indo-European peoples, Gobineau finds that people of the race which we today call Nordic contributed a noticeable part in the creation of those cultures*". Zarnik conceded that this argument was "*very probable*" but that one could not therefore conclude that the Nordic race "*is the only race capable of creative élan*" because it had not been proven that other races were incapable of achieving similar creative successes '*under suitable conditions*.'<sup>64</sup> Zarnik had previously noted both the 'excessive' praise of the Nordic race on the part of Gobineau (in his article in *Hrvatsko kolo* from 1927) and the equal ability of each race to adapt to its own environment (in the article in *Hrvatski narod* on the race laws from

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<sup>63</sup> Zarnik (1942): 355.

<sup>64</sup> Zarnik (1942): 355.

1941).<sup>65</sup>

Zarnik continued to defend the discipline of racial anthropology and the idea of social ‘attractiveness’ based on race:

*“It is certain that there are differences in both somatic and mental characteristics between the races, although there are not many exact facts on the latter question precisely because it is difficult to isolate the influence of external factors on mental traits. However, if there is a difference between the races in their mental style (duševni stil), this still does not (allow one) to say that some race is more valuable than another. Every man will find the mental style of his race (to be) subjectively the closest, (and) the most valuable, and so he will be attracted to people of his race, and thus social connections between people of the same race will be easier to develop than between people of different races. However, such subjective factors cannot be a basis for determining the objective values of a race.”<sup>66</sup>*

And, as Zarnik noted, science was not concerned with “*determining values*” but only with establishing the facts on “*existing phenomena and studying their causes*.”<sup>67</sup> It is quite clear that, although Zarnik was willing to concede that external or environmental factors could influence mental traits, races were nonetheless differentiated by both physical and mental/spiritual traits, a tenet which was accepted by all racial anthropologists. Zarnik was also essentially justifying the social separation of different races by arguing that social ties could be more easily established amongst members of the same race on the basis of the subjective preference for the ‘mental style’ of one’s own race.

Zarnik further observed that racism sought to preserve the purity of the race that was considered the most capable in terms of cultural progress. However, there were facts that could lead one to different interpretations,

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<sup>65</sup> See Zarnik (1927): 79 and Anonymous (1941c).

<sup>66</sup> Zarnik (1942): 355.

<sup>67</sup> Zarnik (1942): 355.

namely that the “*mixing of some races accelerates the development of those mental forces which lead to cultural progress.*”<sup>68</sup> Zarnik then mentioned the fact that Eugen Fischer<sup>69</sup> had once declared his support for this thesis (though Fischer had in fact been a fairly consistent supporter of the idea of the beneficial mixing of closely related European races). The idea of beneficial racial mixing was especially supported by Ernst Kretschmer, while Kurt Gerlach had collected data to show that most German poets and artists had been born in the zone of the greatest mixing between the Nordic, Alpine and Dinaric races. Zarnik conceded that Gerlach’s argument was not conclusive proof that the:

“... *creative strength of these cultural workers was precisely the consequence of the mixing of races, because there are other things that could come into consideration, but certainly these facts allow for Gerlach’s interpretation and in no way speak in favour of a ‘pure race’.*”<sup>70</sup>

What is important to note is that Zarnik cited the same three Germans in his article in *Priroda* from 1931<sup>71</sup> and that his defence of the benefits of racial mixing only applied to “*some races*”,<sup>72</sup> meaning the Nordic, Dinaric

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<sup>68</sup> Zarnik (1942): 355.

<sup>69</sup> In April 1942 Fischer presented a lecture in Zagreb and also “*advised the Croatian minister of education on the organization of an academic chair for anthropology and race hygiene.*”, Kühl (2013): 129. It was not until early 1944 that the Ustaša government announced the establishment of an Anthropological Institute under the direction of one of Eugen Fischer’s doctoral students, the Croat anthropologist Franjo Ivaniček. See Yeomans, (2013): 224. In 1944 a German anthropological journal published an article by Ivaniček on the ‘anthropology and racial history of the Croats’ in which he argued that the Croat population of the NDH was predominantly of Dinaric racial type, which included a sizeable minority of blond Dinarics (probably the descendants of Slavs or Antes and Goths), while the Orthodox Serb minority largely belonged to the dark-skinned Near Eastern race. See Ivaniček (1944): 177-92. For a discussion of this article, see Bartulin (2014): 179-81.

<sup>70</sup> Zarnik (1942): 355.

<sup>71</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 133, 136-38.

<sup>72</sup> For some reason, the word ‘some’ is absent from the translation found in the article by Tomislav Jonjić (2012: 241): “*There are, however, facts which may be interpreted*

and Alpine races.

Zarnik briefly discussed the anthropological research on the skulls of the most distinguished figures of German history. The skulls of the greatest Germans, such as Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer and Goethe were brachycephalic (actually - 'hyper-brachycephalic'), which was a characteristic trait of both the Dinaric and Alpine races. Beethoven had a typical Alpine face with black hair, while Goethe had brown hair and eyes with a predominantly Dinaric face and a yellowish complexion that tanned brown under the sun. Zarnik concluded by stating that these examples made it clear that scientists were far from "*directly connecting somatic racial traits with some specific mental characteristics and capabilities, so that racist endeavours do not have the backing of racial science.*"<sup>73</sup> One should recall that Zarnik had already (in his article in *Priroda* from 1931) accepted the prevalent idea that there was no direct connection between the genotype and phenotype.<sup>74</sup>

Zarnik thus made a clear distinction between racial anthropology and race theory (or racism). This distinction has been ignored by those Croatian historians who have only cursorily discussed Zarnik's entry in the *Croatian Encyclopaedia*; they have misunderstood Zarnik's criticism of the idea of racial superiority as a blanket condemnation of 'racism' in the widest possible sense of the term.<sup>75</sup> As has been thoroughly demonstrated

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*in the opposite sense; that, in fact, the mixing of races impels the development of those spiritual forces which lead to cultural progress.*" Jonjić's mistranslation implies that Zarnik saw no problem with the indiscriminate mixing of all and any races.

<sup>73</sup> Zarnik (1942): 355. Among others, Zarnik cited the anthropological research carried out by the German Jewish palaeoanthropologist Franz Weidenreich (1873-1948). Although he was a Jew, Weidenreich "*did not deny the existence of racial types, nor of racial superiority and inferiority, but rejected what he saw as the dogmatism of much contemporary racial theorizing*", Hutton (2005): 126. Also see Kohn (1996): 66.

<sup>74</sup> Zarnik (1931b): 133.

<sup>75</sup> The only Croatian historian to mention the distinction made by Zarnik between 'race theory or racism' and 'racial science' is Višeslav Aralica, who made this observation in one sentence in a footnote in his PhD thesis on the construction of

in this article, Zarnik's arguments found in the section on race theory in the entry on 'Man' were consistent with the earlier ideas on race that he outlined in his articles published in 1927, 1931 and 1941. To be sure, there does appear to be one major change in Zarnik's thinking on race; as Martin Kuhar notes, in his entry from 1942 Zarnik did not claim that blacks were intellectually inferior to white Europeans, an idea that he had presented in his article in *Priroda* from 1931.<sup>76</sup> But Zarnik had already questioned the idea of a racial hierarchy based on mental traits in his article in *Hrvatsko kolo* from 1927.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, his views on the question of intellectual differences between the races were not entirely consistent prior to 1942. Furthermore, in his article on the racial law decrees in *Hrvatski narod* from 1941 (assuming that he was indeed the author of that article), Zarnik accepted the idea of the equality of human races, which he defined as the equal ability of races to adapt to their specific environments.<sup>78</sup>

On the other hand, Zarnik clearly thought that there was something exceptional about the Nordic race, and while it could not claim a natural racial superiority over all other races, its contribution to the development of Indo-European/Aryan cultures was paramount. Zarnik did not argue in favour of Nordic racial purity, but the only beneficial racial mixing was that which occurred between the Nordic, Dinaric and Alpine races (all of which belonged to the same European racial community). It is therefore

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Croatian identity, but he does not mention Boris Zarnik by name or discuss his entry in any detail. See Aralica, (2011): 358.

<sup>76</sup> See Kuhar (2015): 84 and Zarnik (1931b): 131-32.

<sup>77</sup> Zarnik (1927): 64-65.

<sup>78</sup> See Anonymous (1941c). Although 'biological racism' (usually based on Mendelian genetics) was more prominent in National Socialist Germany, there also existed a 'Lamarckian' or 'environmental racism', more popular in Fascist Italy, which stressed the influence of the 'natural environment and geography' on modifying the 'hereditary racial characteristics' of a particular race. Lamarckianism refers to the evolutionary theory of the French scientist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829). He postulated that organisms could pass characteristics that were acquired under environmental pressures onto their descendants. His argument led to the development of a race theory based on the significance of the environment to racial evolution, Gillette (2003): 21-22, 110-11, 187. One could conclude that Zarnik's racial arguments contained elements of both biological and environmental racism.

quite clear that Zarnik's criticism of race theory or racism does not represent an "*explicit rejection of any kind of racist conceptualizations.*"<sup>79</sup> While Africans might not be intellectually inferior, Zarnik was certainly not advocating the benefits of racial mixing between Europeans and non-Europeans. The question then arises as to whether contemporary historians should define Zarnik's article in the *Croatian Encyclopaedia* as 'racist' despite his own specific rejection of the idea of racial superiority.

A clarification of precise terms is in order here. Racial anthropology postulates that human races possess distinct physical as well as mental/spiritual traits, which is something that Zarnik clearly agreed with, while race theory presents a racial interpretation or philosophy of history and culture à la Gobineau, which might or might not include ideas of racial superiority. The American historian Aaron Gillette defines racism as "*any theory or belief which asserted that one race was superior to another, or that cultural traits were the product of the biological characteristics of a population.*"<sup>80</sup> The French philosopher Alain de Benoist makes a distinction between 'racism' and 'racialism': the basic difference between the two is that "*in general, whereas racialism emphasizes the decisive importance of race, racist ideology emphasizes the importance of a particular race ...*"<sup>81</sup> Accordingly, one might define Zarnik's encyclopaedia entry from 1942 as an expression of 'racialism' because Zarnik recognised the existence of different races with distinct physical and mental traits and, furthermore, argued that all people were mentally or spiritually attracted to their own race which then provided the basis for the establishment of close social connections. But Zarnik's entry could also be viewed as 'racist' because it still emphasized the significance of a particular race and/or races, in this case, the Nordic, Dinaric and Alpine races. Zarnik's arguments could even be described as a 'race theory' because he more or less agreed with Gobineau's basic thesis on the decisive importance of the Nordic race to the historical development of

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<sup>79</sup> Kuhar (2015): 85.

<sup>80</sup> Gillette (2003): 188.

<sup>81</sup> Benoist (1999): 22.



Aryan cultures. Furthermore, if societies were subject both to the influences of a particular race's 'mental style' (*duševni stil*) and a certain amount of beneficial racial mixing, then that surely must have had an influence on the history and culture of that race; this could lead one to conclude that Zarnik himself was offering a racial interpretation of history and culture or 'race theory', despite his claims to the contrary.

This analysis would be incomplete without a brief examination of National Socialist *Rassengedanke* ('racial idea'). While the idea of Nordic racial superiority and/or exceptionality was certainly not absent from German National Socialism,<sup>82</sup> it is also a fact that the National Socialists frequently rejected international accusations that their ideology was based on ideas of racial supremacy. In fact, National Socialist ideologists, racial anthropologists and race theorists active in the academic and cultural life of the Third Reich considered the division of humanity into distinct racial units as part of the natural order. As one German race theorist argued in 1936, "*every race, every people is an idea of God's made flesh, which we must nurture. It is our task to protect their distinctive nature.*"<sup>83</sup> It should be pointed out that almost all scholars in the German Reich in the fields of racial anthropology, biology and human genetics were monogenists who "*recognized the biological and genetic unity of the human species.*" It was precisely the fact that human races belonged to one species and could therefore interbreed that had led to widespread concern amongst Europeans about the need to preserve their racial purity, which in turn led to the introduction of anti-miscegenation laws in the German Reich (as well as in the United States).<sup>84</sup> Contrary to popular opinion, Christopher Hutton argues that National Socialism was ideologically opposed, not to the idea of 'difference', but to the idea of 'assimilation.' The National Socialist Reich thus "*shared conventional European racism directed at 'inferior peoples', but it also 'dreamed of an unlimited horizon for the*

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<sup>82</sup> Notions of racial superiority were mainly applied in the German war against the so-called *Untermenschen* (i.e. the Jewish-led, racially mixed Mongol-Slavic masses) of the Soviet Union. See Aly & Heim (2003).

<sup>83</sup> Cited in Hutton (2005): 16.

<sup>84</sup> Hutton (2005): 77.

*unfolding of difference’.*<sup>85</sup>

The American political scientist A. James Gregor pointed out that, in general, National Socialist race theory eventually rejected the Nordacist position of German racial anthropologists and theorists such as Hans Günther who had limited the great cultural accomplishments of world history to the work of the Nordic race (though Günther was what one might term a moderate Nordacist who “*limited his racial analysis only to peoples of Indo-Germanic speech*”).<sup>86</sup> By the late 1930s the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) and an increasing number of German racial anthropologists and race theorists had thus begun to reject the extreme forms of Nordicism, though they continued to regard the Nordic race as the leading race of the Germans and other European peoples. As Gregor observed: “*here is an entirely different racism, an entirely different Nordicism than that of Guenther and his followers. Here there was no question of general inferiority – it was a question of maintaining an ideal as an archetype for an entire civilization.*” In other words, “*Germany had a Nordic archetype*”, as well as a Nordic form of art, literature, philosophy and music. The Nordic race was the ideal type and “*each German was bequeathed this patrimony from the original racial elements, now inextricably mixed into the German Nation, among which the Nordic predominated.*”<sup>87</sup> The concept of an ‘ideal type’ had been promoted by German race theorists, who “*utilized both Plato and modern sociology*” in order to construct an ideal racial type: “*Not everyone possessed all the Aryan (ie. Nordic) characteristics but all Aryans possessed at least some of them and together they formed an ideal type.*”<sup>88</sup> Similarly, in the NDH all Croats were supposed to be linked by the dominant and ideal Dinaric race, which also contained a strong Nordic admixture.<sup>89</sup>

In 1939 the head of the Race Policy Office of the NSDAP, Walter Gross (1904-1945) stated that:

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<sup>85</sup> Hutton (2005): 16.

<sup>86</sup> Gregor (2009).

<sup>87</sup> Gregor (2009).

<sup>88</sup> Mosse (1961): 360.

<sup>89</sup> See Bartulin (2014): 169-81.

*“we appreciate the fact that those of another race are different from us ... Whether that other race is ‘better’ or ‘worse’ is not possible for us to judge. For this would demand that we transcend our own racial limitations for the duration of the verdict and take on a superhuman, even divine, attitude from which alone an ‘impersonal’ verdict could be formed on the value or lack of such of the many living forms of inexhaustible Nature.”<sup>90</sup>*

In the same year, Gross outlined the official position of the NSDAP on ‘German racism’:

*“For example the whole world of the Far East remained for a long time under the impression that the Germans ... had designated them as non-Aryan, and as non-Aryans inferior rabble – (that the) Germans had designated (them) unworthy, second class humanity and that the Germans imagined themselves as the sole bearers of culture ... What could we say to those who saw in German racism a fundamental defamation of men of other races? We could do nothing other than, with patience and conviction, repeat that German racism does not evaluate or deprecate other racial groups ... It only recognizes, scientifically, that differences exist ....”<sup>91</sup>*

## **Conclusion**

Zarnik’s explanation of race theory in the *Croatian Encyclopaedia* was completely in line with the official position of the NSDAP. It was also completely in line with the race laws and prevailing racial ideology in the NDH<sup>92</sup> and Zarnik’s own articles on race published during the interwar

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<sup>90</sup> Cited in Gregor (2009).

<sup>91</sup> Cited in Gregor (2009).

<sup>92</sup> For more on the significance of the NDH’s race laws, see the recent article by Vladimir Geiger (2016). Geiger’s article is a welcome response to those Croat historians who have tried to claim that the NDH did not have ‘race laws’ but only ‘racial law decrees’, which did not possess the legitimacy of laws passed by a

period. Zarnik's position on race was an example of German-style 'racial relativism', according to which "*there was no universal framework within which to judge the worth of a particular race, and each Volk would see foreign (artfremd) racial elements as less valuable than its own compatible (arteigen) ones.*"<sup>93</sup> One could – with some qualification – still define Zarnik's position outlined in 1942 as a type of 'racism' (for lack of a better word) based not on the idea of racial superiority but on the recognition of racial differences.

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parliament and, therefore, the NDH cannot be defined as a true racial state. But as Geiger points out, a decree issued in the NDH on 20 October 1941 declared that decrees issued by the *Poglavnik* also included "*law decrees, which have the character of laws.*" In other words, the NDH did have 'race laws'. In some publications, and on various internet websites, one can find the claim that there were '28 Jewish generals' serving in the armed forces of the NDH, which is also meant to highlight the supposedly non-racial character of the NDH. This claim, along with a list of names, is found in Goluža (2006): 240-41. Such an assertion is completely unfounded and is not found in any serious historiographical work dealing with the NDH. Furthermore, most of the listed generals and admirals, such as Josip Metzger (1883-1945) and Nikola Steinfel (Steinfl) (1889-1945) were of German ethnic origin. While some high-ranking officers were married to Jewish women, there were no 'Jewish' generals in the NDH. A meeting of Ustaša deputy party leaders on 22 November 1943 called for the need to dismiss the 12 General Staff officers of the NDH's Home Guard who had Jewish and Serbian wives. See Jareb (1976): 174.

<sup>93</sup> See Hutton (2005): 135-36.

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### Sažetak

Ovaj rad raspravlja o natuknici 'Čovjek' (uključujući i znanstveni studij o rasama i rasnoj teoriji), koja je objavljena u Hrvatskoj enciklopediji iz 1942. godine. Natuknicu je napisao dugogodišnji profesor biologije na Medicinskom fakultetu na zagrebačkom sveučilištu Slovenac Boris Zarnik (1883-1945). Tijekom međuratnog razdoblja, Zarnik je napisao nekoliko znanstvenih članaka o rasi, rasnoj antropologiji, eugenici i teoriji evolucije. U ovim raspravama Zarnik je naglasio pozitivne odlike nordijske, dinarske i (do manje mjere) alpske rase, što je bilo potpuno u skladu s teorijama nekih značajnih njemačkih rasnih antropologa poput Eugena Fischera (1874-1967). Zarnik je posebno istaknuo vrijednost rasnog miješanja između nordijaca i dinaraca. Iako je bio nacionalno jugoslavenski orijentiran u međuratnom razdoblju (te čak član masonske lože), Zarnik je ipak ostao u Zagrebu nakon proglašenja Nezavisne Države Hrvatske te je, kao stručnjak za rasnu antropologiju i rasna pitanja, savjetovao ustašku vladu pri donošenju rasnih zakonskih odredbi, odnosno rasnih zakona, na kraju travnja 1941. godine. Iako je Zarnik ubrzo prisiljen poći u mirovinu, ostao je voditi istraživanja na Medicinskom fakultetu te je držao predavanja o rasnoj antropologiji i biologiji sredinom 1942. godine u sklopu ustaške rasne politike.

Zarnik je napisao dužu raspravu o rasnoj antropologiji u svojoj natuknici 'Čovjek' u tzv. 'Ustaškoj' enciklopediji iz 1942. godine. U posebnom odjeljku, unutar ove natuknice, Zarnik je također dao

svoje tumačenje o rasnoj teoriji, odnosno rasizmu. Zarnik je zapravo kritizirao rasizam, odnosno ideju o superiornosti jedne rase nad drugim rasama. Prema Zarniku, nordijski je rasizam, odnosno ideja da je nordijska rasa jedina rasa na svijetu sposobna za kulturni napredak te pozvana od Boga da vlada svijetom, znanstveno neprihvatljiva. Prema brojnim povjesničarima i ostalim komentatorima ova kritika bi trebala biti dokaz da je Zarnik radikalno odbacio svoje prijašnja stajališta o rasi i rasnom pitanju te se priklonio kulturnom relativizmu. Prema ovakvom tumačenju, Zarnikova kritika predstavlja odbacivanje nacional-socijalističkog rasizma. Nadalje, prema nekim povjesničarima, budući da je Zarnikova natuknica objavljena u 'Ustaškoj' enciklopediji, tako se njegova kritika može tumačiti čak kao službeno stajalište same ustaške vlade (dakle i ustaše navodno odbacuju, barem u teoriji, nacistički rasizam). No, ovakva historiografska stajališta su pogrešna jer potpuno ignoriraju ostatak Zarnikove rasprave o rasnoj teoriji. Dakle, iako je Zarnik kritizirao rasizam, on je i dalje zastupao gledište svih rasnih antropologa da svaka rasa ima svoje fizičke (somatske) i duševne osobine i da je svakom pojedincu 'duševni stil' njegove vlastite rase najvrijedniji i najbliži. I što je još važnije, Zarnik je i dalje naglašavao vrijednost rasnog miješanja između nordijaca, dinaraca i alpinaca (dakle zagovarao je vrijednost miješanja između bliskih europskih rasa).

Ovaj članak pokazuje da njegova natuknica iz 1942. godine stoji u kontinuitetu s njegovim prijašnjim stajalištima o rasnim pitanjima. Ovaj rad također pokazuje da je Zarnikova natuknica zapravo potpuno u skladu sa stajalištima nacional socijalističkih teoretičara i njemačkih rasnih antropologa u Trećem Reichu. Suprotno od prevladavajućih historiografskih stajališta (naročito u hrvatskoj historiografiji), njemački nacional socijalisti su odbacili međunarodne optužbe da je njihova ideologija utemeljena na idejama o nordijskoj rasnoj superiornosti. Naprotiv, oni su isticali da njihova rasna ideologija samo priznaje rasne razlike ali ne vrednuje ljudske rase kao 'bolje' ili 'niže.' Dakako da su nacional socijalisti često govorili o tzv. židovsko-mongolskom podčovjeku tijekom njemačkog rata protiv Sovjetskog saveza, ali, barem u teoriji, njemački nacional socijalisti i rasni antropolozi su naglašavali 'jednakost' među ljudskim rasama ili svojevrsni 'rasni relativizam.'