

HISTORICAL SAYINGS: A CHRONICLE OF THE BREAKUP OF YUGOSLAVIA

VILKO ENDSTRASSER

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb

The text gives an analysis of the use of the phraseological corpus of the Croatian language. The meaning of the phrases explains the newly created social situation in that the phrase becomes its metaphor, implying that original events expressed by a phrase are repeated in the new situation.

Und nun steht der mythenlose Mensch, ewig hungernd, unter allen Vergangenheiten und sucht grabend und wühlend nach Wurzeln...

(Nietzsche 1980a:146)

Aber es ist krank, dieses entfesselte Leben und muss geheilt werden. Es ist siech an vielen Uebeln und leidet nicht nur durch die Erinnerung an seine Fesseln - es leidet, was uns hier vornehmlich angeht, an der historischen Krankheit. Das Uebermaass von Historie hat die plastische Kraft des Lebens angegriffen, es versteht nicht mehr, sich der Vergangenheit wie einer kräftigen Nahrung zu bedienen.

(Nietzsche 1980b:329)

Creation of the World i.e. the myth about creation of the World, represents the archetype for all human creativity. Cosmogonic myths tell of how the universe came into being. They are accounts of the primary event, accounts of the Creation. The Myth uncovers the pre-historic state of Humankind which was still so close to that event that it knew that the World was completed in every individual moment and was drawing to its end.

History believes in the process, in the efficacy, and is nothing more than a collection of those effects, a group of *karmic* consequences whose causes are lost in the dimness of the past - in the unhistorical. Historic knowledge conceals the darkness of the beginnings with a veil of concepts and abstractions. A culture of aggregates, a decorative culture grows from such knowledge, the objective being to fill the mind with a huge number of concepts which are extracted from indirect knowledge of times past, and not from direct observation of life. Moreover, such culture - to a greater or lesser extent - chokes off Humankind's yearning to experience something directly

and to feel within itself a vital and connected system of its own experience (comp. F. Nietzsche 1980b).

History has engorged the *Myth* and it continues to exist only as a memory of the dawn of Humankind whose journey through time, determined by history, moves - some say - towards its end. The Myth came into being in the bowels of history which digest it, and excrete its mythical form, through a body of phrases, quotations and stereotypes.

Phraseology is precisely that part of language which expresses today's Myth, or, more precisely, what is left of the Myth - the *mythical*, and shows the undigested remnants of the Myth in the bowels of history (cf. Barthes 1979).

That mythical element no longer points to the lost entirety of the Myth, but shows the historic with the intention of explaining it. Historic events are explained with a body of phrases, quotations and stereotypes which show the unknown quantities of reality as a function of the relations in a fictional, but better-known field - the field of phrases and stereotypes, the field of the mythical. In this way, the Myth comes back to life again. But it is so frail that it is almost inconspicuous, like the shadow of moonlight, because the intestinal uvula of history have extracted its vital energy, transforming it into a crutch for crippled culture allowing movement through historical time.

Ideology has endeavoured to be a remedy for historic ailments. The ideologues of Communism looked back on the past and discerned insanity, injustice, blind passion and the entire terrestrial horizon in darkness. They resolved to say No to history. Their criticism gave birth to an ideology whose task was to exterminate injustice. But this ideology did not lead to action but only to new criticism which was again ineffective and itself only experienced criticism anew (cf. Nietzsche 1980b). The concept - - which thrust the culture of many nations into the limited horizon of ideology - foundered. It tried to empty the consciousness - aware of the overload of historical knowledge - and to reduce such knowledge to the essence. It narrowed its own horizon utilising the propensity to forgetfulness and the ability to forget, clearly described in the figure of the piglet which climbs the ladder every night to the place on the wall where the revolutionary slogans of Napoleon's companies are scrawled, and then alters them.

From its limited horizon, ideology merely misrepresented history and thus became its caricature. When the World came tumbling down, the flood of history broke through. The person of ideology started to drown in the nightmare of history which, in time, began to transform into the Dead Sea of Historicism and Pseudo-history.

Newspapers and the other mass media have become the dominant force in society and it is precisely that field that most clearly reflects this roughly outlined opposition between Myth and History.

The reference in newspaper texts comes from various aspects of reality - politics, culture, sport; its function is to clarify complex events in such a way that the unknown quantities of reality are shown in the function of the relation with known linguistic structures. The sense of the relation expressed by a linguistic symbol is transposed to an actual phenomenon.

In this article, I have focussed my attention on the mythical in newspaper texts, on the use of the phraseological corpus by which unknown reality is transformed by the mechanism of metaphor into known history, outlined in mythical strokes. The meaning of the phrase explains the newly arisen social situation by becoming its metaphor, implying that the original, even expressed in the phrase, repeats itself in the new situation.

The charm of this procedure was also felt by journalists themselves. For some journalists, the saying - one of the phraseological genres - is the linguistic form which most clearly amplifies relations in society: "The people say: (lit.) *He who itches, scratches [One acts to protect one's own interests]*. The saying best explains the Serbian reaction to the recent report by the American Senate delegation after their visit to Yugoslavia" (*Vjesnik - Panorama subotom*, September 8, 1990).

But there are others who are less fond of the use of sayings in newspaper texts: "While waiting for the latest news, we are making a list of people whose euthanasia would not greatly damage the genetic merit of the nation." Among others, the list includes "columnists who use folk sayings such as (lit.) *If the goat lies, the horn doesn't. [An archer is known by his aim, not his arrows.]; That's a bit much, even from so-and-so*, and so on (*Danas*, August 28, 1990).

The Berlin Wall came down in 1989. The one-party Communist order collapsed: the establishment of parliamentary democracies was set in motion in the former Communist countries. The last bastions of Communism were Romania, Albania and Yugoslavia, from which some journalists constructed the anagram Raj, which means Eden in Croatian.

The Latin sentence *Historia est magistra vitae* appeared in modified form as the title of an article in the July 25, 1989 issue of *Danas*: [*The Party est magistra vitae*]. This modified saying condensed the essence of the text which dealt with the political reality of Yugoslavian society. Two concepts - History and the Party - were linked analogically. The modified saying denoted that particular moment in the life of the state community in which one political group had taken the place of history as the teacher of life, reducing "the richness of historic events mainly to the class struggle between the exploiter and the exploited" (quoted from the article in question).

In the countries of *Eden*, the political crisis was so profound that it caused graver metaphors. Speaking of the political upheavals which were convulsing Eastern Europe, the Romanian dictator Ceausescu said that the

changes wanted by the reactionaries would come about when *grapes grew on the willow and pears on the poplar tree*. The morning news in Bucharest on the morning of December, 1989 carried the bulletin that some of the city's poplar trees had appeared decked in pears, which had to be removed by the police.

Referring to the political situation in Albania, a writer of one of the letters to the editor (*Danas*, January 30, 1990) forecast events in that state with a variation of the above saying: "It is expected that *Albanian olive trees will bear oranges* soon, just as the *Romanian poplars bore pears*."

There was no lack of those who tried to defuse the Yugoslavian crisis. For some, the objective was to preserve the federal state, for others, the formation of a confederation, and some saw the creation of a unitarian state as the solution. The power institutions no longer functioned and the country began to crumble.

Ante Marković, the federal prime minister, definitely belonged to the group which tried to solve the crisis by preserving the federal state. His statement that "Yugoslavia will continue to function with or without the League of Communists of Yugoslavia" became a slogan. There was a joke about Branko Mikulić, Marković's predecessor, that he had invented a device for speedy solution of the YU-crisis - the internal combustion engine. Yugoslavia really burnt out under the pistons of "Mikulić's engine" and, by 1990, only its outer borders continued to give it any illusion of a whole (*Danas*, September 11, 1990).

The chief of the Central Committee of the Croatian Communists, Stipe Šušar, put forward an astonishingly simple solution. The crisis would be solved by (lit.) *calling a broad bean a broad bean, and a priest a priest [Calling a spade a spade...]*. This saying became linked into the chain of communications and its use led to the sense and meaning being added to, from text to text.

Namely, on the eve of the 20th meeting of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Stipe Šušar announced that he was preparing to *call a broad bean a broad bean, and a priest a priest*. Šušar gave a long interview to *Vjesnik*, part of which was carried by *Danas* on December 5, 1989. He explained the context of the saying: "I believed that one should go to the 20th Meeting prepared for open discussion and the naming of individuals, [Party] leaders and circles, which are responsible for the worsening of the political situation."

According to the press, Šušar's intention did not meet with success because of the deficient political organisation of society: "The state of anxiety has been aggravated even more - but for domestic reasons: the continual promises and the continual evasion by leaders of the Republic to really *call a priest a priest, and a broad bean a broad bean* (*Danas*, September 5, 1989).

Or *Danas* earlier on November 7, 1989: "There should be no doubt that this is the last warning from the Split ship-builders, directed not to those Communist leaders who have completely loosened the bonds of national mythomania in their own environments, or have found themselves in direct Party-memorandum [positions] or similar coupling with them - - the logic of the communique has already dealt with them - but with those who have squandered their promises about *the broad bean and the priest* and allowed matters to continue along their perilous course."

And this is what happens when someone really manages to *call a broad bean a broad bean, and a priest a priest*: "But let us return to the main theme: the renewed mud-throwing at and defamation of Dobroslav Paraga. Doesn't it seem completely logical to our rulers that a man who spent the flower of his youth in jail just because he saw the light politically a few years before others did and *called a broad bean a broad bean*; consequently, that such a man would also try to publicise the inhuman methods by which they tried to break him as early as in pre-trial detention" (*Danas*, September 28, 1989).

The saying was treated with irony in the humourous "letters" column, "Between Us", in *Vjesnik* of January 28, 1990: "Comrade Editor: I have been reading the statements and comments of our politicians after the breaking off of the congress in Belgrade. It hurt me most when I read Suvar's statement. He says, I am sorry that the Slovenians walked out, because he was just planning to say something to them. Now I find this terribly intriguing: just what was it that Suvar wanted to say? Was it something important? Why didn't he want to tell them until now? Tell me quickly what it was that he wanted to say to them!" Password: "All children eat their revolutions." The editor's answer: "Grounds for suspicion that he wanted to say: *Broad bean, you are a broad bean, priest, you are a priest!*"

Why did Suvar's scheme *to call a broad bean a broad bean, and a priest a priest fail*? The answer is very simple. Because the Communist régimes prohibited freedom of speech. The institution of the verbal offence was sanctioned by the criminal code and entailed the institution of criminal proceedings in which (lit.) *the qadi prosecutes and the qadi judges [a kangaroo court]*.

In 1990, Croatia became a parliamentary democracy within the framework of Communist Yugoslavia. Such a paradox could be settled only by a parting of the ways. The Croatian *Sabor* [parliament] voted in the Constitution which established the foundations of a state with the rule of law, and was incompatible with the Communist Constitution based on revolutionary rights. That conflict of interests is denoted by the saying *The qadi prosecutes, and the qadi judges*.

During the time of *isolation* (a pseudo-legal device used in the Kosovo province to keep troublesome dissidents out of public life) of certain members

of the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo, some of the isolated Albanians sought legal aid: "Does the constitutional formulation also mention how those who are isolated should be treated, are details given of the procedure which such persons are to undergo? Bahrija does not know. So he goes to a lawyer ('He told me that there is nothing to gain, that it would be better not to waste time and not to sue, because the rule here is that *the qadi prosecutes, and the qadi judges*')" (*Vjesnik*, June 11, 1989).

In an interview in *Start* magazine (August 19, 1989), a lawyer was asked about the institution of court experts, which, if uncontrolled, can easily be abused. He incorporated the saying in his answer: "It cannot be said that those bodies [of the Ministry of Internal Affairs] are not sufficiently competent or professional, but the very possibility that *the qadi prosecutes you, and the qadi judges* you imposes a dilemma about the institution of court experts".

The "Diary" column in the *Danas* weekly (October 24, 1989) drew attention to manipulation of the terms "enemy" and "counter-revolution": "This long-term Stalinist manipulation of the concepts 'enemy' and 'counter-revolution' has today become not only a worn political anachronism, but also a real farce. If you are a contra-revolutionary today (as Vllasi is now), then it is essential to find out something about this. Where is that revolution and where are those who can be called our revolutionaries today, in relation to whom someone could possibly become - a counter-revolutionary!? Consequently, this is more than a mere political farce, because when *the qadi both prosecutes and judges* no good can come of it."

In *Vjesnik's Panorama subotom* (February 17, 1990) one finds an article which explains the actual reference of the saying in such a manner that the qadi has transformed into the Party: "They can lament their second-rate position in the society in which the Party has *prosecuted and judged* over the last 40 years, that the same Party still does not allow them access to the official media, to information, and that they are not on an equal footing with the Communists."

Stories and anecdotes are present in all the major newspaper texts, and the basic function is almost always description of an unknown segment of life by an already known - story, anecdote, saying or some similar form.

The question of the future of the country and the outlook for superseding the crisis was often present in the instability of Yugoslavian politico-economic life. In the chaos which ruled the "market of ideas" there were few who could find a reasonable basis as a starting-point for solution of the problems. This situation could be parodied by the story:

"The matter concerns a village celebration in a neighbouring place to which a recently grown-up young man - who has let his moustache grow and is very important in his new national costume - is planning to go for the first

time for a night out with the boys. Full of himself as he his, aware of his youth and strength, he reaches a spot near the village where the large three-day fair will be taking place, and suddenly a small, black dwarf jumps out of a bush in front of him and says: 'God bless, young man,' he greets him, 'where are you off to?' But the young man only weighs him up in passing and cuts him off arrogantly with 'Off with you, what business is it of yours where I am going'. Somewhat offended, the little man gives a start. 'Wait, young man', he warns him, 'be polite'. 'I am no ordinary fellow but a sorcerer. If you are going to be insolent, I shall turn you into a frog which will croak right through the three days of the fair.' But even this does not help. 'Who cares about you,' says the young man, 'be off with you!' The sorcerer gets angry and in a trice turns the young man into a frog. And he croaks in the gutter for three whole days. Then he goes home. He can hardly wait for the year to pass. Then he again sets out to the same fair in the same village. And again the same little man jumps out of the bush. 'God bless, where are you off to, young man?' - he asks the young man pleasantly, believing that the youth has learned something since last year. And the young man replies: 'You can f--k off, and I'm going to start croaking'" (*Vjesnik, Panorama subotom*, November 11, 1989).

An article carried in Zagreb's *Vjesnik* newspaper (January 4, 1989) which had first appeared in the Sarajevo *Oslobođenje* had a saying in its title - *The smaller the cake - the greater the demand* - and the text itself is full of formulative expressions. The text is a good example of how sayings influence sentence formation and the structuring of the text as a whole - - on the basis of syntactic-semantic parallelism. (lit.) *The wolf cannot be satiated, and the goat kids all accounted for. [You can't please everyone.]* Yugoslavia cannot be ideally rounded out, so that everyone can keep what he has and be his own boss. The crisis cannot be overcome, without new conflicts being formed. The satisfaction of the majority, with due respect to the minority, cannot be achieved without crushing narrow-mindedness, selfishness and swagger of all types."

The first sentence is a variant of the saying *The wolf satiated, the goats (kids) accounted for*. The sentences which follow are constructed on the basis of that sentence - its linguistic pattern and grammatical-semantic structure. It is the same in the continuance of the text: "*The smaller the cake the greater the demand for it*. That's the way it is with us: The more wretched and miserable we are, the more acrimonious and violent our arguments."

This next sentence (*Vjesnik* October 16, 1989) also provoked a stormy reaction: "*Snow does not fall to cover the hill, but so that every beast leaves its trail behind*". Now, isn't that witty? Besides threatening with rifles and war cries - the president of the Presidency of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Montenegro, Comrade Momir Bulatović, uttered this folk saying when addressing the gathered work-force of the 'Radoje Dakić' Work

Organisation. For which reason, and at whom the allusion is aimed - obviously no comment is necessary."

Despite the fact that the first paragraph of this lengthy letter published in the "Your Letters" column ended by saying that no comment was necessary, the writer constructed the further course of the letter in such a way that it is a comment on this saying, and explanation of its context. This paragraph also describes the situation of interaction - Momir Bulatović is speaking to the workers. By an analogical process this reality is applied to the reality of the focal current event in the Yugoslavian community at that time, the conflict between the Slovenian and Montenegrin Party leadership regarding amendments to the Slovenian Constitution. If I have understood it correctly, the amendments to the Slovenian Constitution are the snows which will reveal the trails i.e. the intentions of the Slovenian leadership to withdraw from the Yugoslavian state community.

But on two occasions the saying was attributed the meaning of the actual situation in the saying i.e. its literal meaning. The first article titled "Why is the Snow Falling?" was published on October 3, 1989 in *Danas*. "Shouldn't the Montenegrins who have very nearly taken up arms against Slovenia at their meetings, in which there has been manipulation with the justifiable displeasure of the people and its concern for the future and integrity of Yugoslavia, proud as they are, reject the financial support of those who they feel to be enemies, and whom they have honoured with such unheard of insults such as, for example, the one in which the author, the young Montenegrin leader, Momir Bulatovic, drew the parallel with the beasts who had left their trail in the snow? Should one be surprised if the Slovenians be more and more inclined to see the solution on the other side of Šentilj [the Slovenian border crossing into Austria] if they continue to be referred to here as beasts?"

The second example shows an intentional, literal comprehension of the same saying, aimed at irony. The weekly *Danas* of October 10, 1989 printed a photograph of two highly placed Slovenian officials (S. Kraigher and A. Marinc) taken as they came out of a building while snow was falling. The photograph was accompanied by the words: "We had better hurry so that Momo does not pick up our trail."

One also finds ironic and sarcastic use of the same saying in an article by a film critic in the October 24, 1989 issue of *Danas*. "Among the scripts which have arrived by the closing date of the contest, attention is drawn to a horror [movie] about a Snow-Man, a Yeti, somewhere in Sandžak. The Creature could well have made up the saying about the *snow not falling to cover the hill, but so that all the beasts show their trails*, and frightens the inhabitants of both town and village with its great footprints."

This is a clear example of how diverse contextual situations are built up upon one and the same saying, while the following example shows how a completely neutral situation of interaction - the January 27, 1990 weather report following the "News" on TV Zagreb's First Programme - - can be semantically coloured with previous contextual situations which were denoted by the same saying. Speaking of the weather throughout the country, the weatherman said that *so little snow had fallen* that in some places *it did not even cover the hill*.

The phraseologism (lit.) *Blow for blow* [*Getting your own back*] denoted a particular mode of behaviour which rested on the law of action and reaction, and even political programmes were explained by this saying: on December 2, 1989 in Knin, a highly placed official in the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (Ante Milović) said that politics cannot be conducted, as the people say, *blow for blow* (reported in the TV Zagreb's second "News" programme of the same day).

The characteristic political activities of various people throughout Yugoslavia was also indicated by this phraseologism: "The new round of political *blow for blow* was the assassination of King Aleksandar, successfully carried out by the action of Ustashi and Macedonian terrorists in Marseilles" (*Danas*, March 27, 1990).

It was also used to denote the more recent processes of national homogenisation. Thus, in reference to an article about the Muslim religious festival of Bayram, a reader asked: "What's going on now? Exclusively religious customs, tradition, or a response to some other religious (national) homogenisation [processes]! Does one nationalism give birth to another? *Blow for blow?*" (*Danas*, Readers' Letters, August 22, 1989).

The president of the Presidency of the Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, J. Kostić, responding to the insistence by the leaders of some of the republics that other republics apart from Serbia create constitutional possibilities for the founding of autonomous provinces, said it was a question of "an everyday political *blow for blow*". "And although Kostić admitted at the meeting of the provincial assembly that what was in question was an everyday political *blow for blow*, or, in other words that this initiative arose as a reaction to the proposals from Slovenia and Croatia and some other parts of the country that, in future, Vojvodina and Kosovo [the provinces of Serbia] should not be represented directly but through the bodies of the matrix republic, Serbia - this idea should not be rejected a priori" (*Nedjeljna Dalmacija*, November 11, 1989).

The phraseologism denotes the negative consequences of such behaviour, while in order to start working towards improvement, such conduct would have to cease. "At a time of great expectations and great undertakings without which, distressed as we are, we shall never cross over to

the green side of the hill, it is necessary, first of all, to calm these mutual, unprincipled broadsides [fired off] in the *blow for blow* manner" (*Danas*, July 11, 1989).

"In other words, what is needed is action which will show Europe that here it can find a reasonable and constructive partner. Everything else is mere Balkan *blow for blow* with consequences for our own acceptability in Europe" (*Nedeljna Dalmacija*, November 11, 1990).

After the armed uprising in Knin, Cardinal Kuharić gave a sermon in Nin, and his talk was commented up in *Danas* (January 16, 1990): "Cardinal Kuharić spoke in Nin of the healing of the family, of the Christian vision of the family. After Knin, we had Nin. Many were shocked because they wanted to hear *blow for blow* from him at that time. But the Church owes its durability to its capacity to refrain at such moments from incompetently adding fuel to the fire."

So we arrived at the paradoxical Yugoslavian situation in which some yearned for secession, while others for annexation. It reminded one "of that already so overworked joke that we can unhesitantly tell it once again, concerning a man who, seeking a divorce, cites as grounds his complete lack of agreement with his wife: "I want a divorce, while she on her part, doesn't" (*Vjesnik*, July 12, 1990).

In all that chaos, war was threatened. The arming of the ethnic Serbs who live on the territory of the Republic of Croatia was initiated with growingly frequent claims that they were under threat from their neighbours. "The claims that the Serbs in Croatia are under threat multiplies like mushrooms after prolonged thunder and copious rain" (*Danas*, September 12, 1989).

In an interview by the Belgrade newspaper *Borba*, carried by Zagreb's *Vjesnik*, Stipe Šuvar finally said *broad bean to the broad bean, and priest to the priest*. But it was already too late. "Ruffians are, as a rule, harmonious brothers (the saying lit.: *Harmonious brothers get the house built [elements of both United we stand, divided we fall, and, Birds of a feather stick together]*), and it is difficult to say who is the most deserving. But the ruffian *kolo*-dance (round dance) was led off by the Serbian-Montenegrin Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution" (*Vjesnik*, May 7, 1990).

The Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution blazed through Serbia under the slogan "Serbia will be united, or there will be no Serbia at all" which transformed in a more advanced stage to "Yugoslavia will be to the measure of Serbia, or there will be no Yugoslavia at all" (*Danas*, December 12, 1989).

The idea culminated in a mass meeting at the mythical Gazimestan (the scene of the Serbian defeat by the Ottomans in 1389). "In a complex community such as Yugoslavia and such as Serbia, calls for national reconciliation from the Gazimestan speakers' platform, and the toleration of

flags without socialist emblems and the Chetnik cockades on Gazimestan field in fact represent a declaration of war, they do not help wounds to heal, but again rub salt into them" (the saying: *Rub salt into a wound*) (*Danas*, July 11, 1989).

"That day there were many of them at Gazimestan, today or tomorrow they plan to find themselves in your flat (*Danas*, January 2, 1990). This was a variant of the rhyming saying which had accompanied Soviet intervention in Afghanistan: *Today in Afghanistan, tomorrow in your flat*.

Speaking to a Reuters newsagency reporter, Slobodan Milošević interpreted relations in Yugoslavia by the use of a Serbian folk saying - - otherwise in use more and more. The saying goes (lit.): *When there's a fight, you don't waste time choosing weapons!*" [*The end justifies the means.*] (*Nedjeljna Dalmacija*, November 19, 1989).

The ongoing armed revolt in Knin raised the question of the way to squash it. "Should Knin be fought with Knin?" read the title of an article in *Vjesnik* (October 13, 1990) The sound association between the name of the town of Knin and the Croatian word for spike (klin) lead to an intertwining of meaning which suggests that the problem should be solved on the model of the saying in Croatian corresponding to *You have to fight fire with fire*, or One spike drives out another (Knin/klin).

"While the Osijek textile workers follow the thread without which their machines will stand helplessly idle - like the trains at Knin Station [an important railroad junction in Croatia, linking the north and south of the country] - and who knows how long they will be waiting, there are growingly loud demands that *Knin be fought with Knin*. If fire is most easily fought with fire, does the same prescription apply when Knin is in question? The Croatian authorities has shown sufficient wisdom to date not to reduce their policies to the level of the folk saying: *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*."

The writer concludes: "If it manages to emerge without stains and scars from this cunningly placed trap, Croatia will prove in European terms that the peaceful transfer of power from the one-party system to multi-party democracy was not just mere chance, but [an indication] of the high level of its civilisation and maturity. For this reason alone, *Knin should not be fought with Knin*" (*Vjesnik*, October 13, 1990).

After the dam broke, suppressed history came rushing in. Suddenly we were drowning in the flood of history and the entire culture seemed to want to feel only historical: "A return to the past, as something fairly well known, presented itself as the first solution to eschewing "feelings of aggressiveness". Consequently, many returned, and many are still returning to roots and the past. They become over-sensitive and sentimental or even rigid and cruel, incomparably more receptive to that Balkan [saying] *We'll bleed you a little, my hawk*" than to Voltaire's "What you are saying disgusts me, but I will

always defend your right to say it. Contemporary times frighten Yugoslavia, but also challenge her. So her tomorrow may be either tomorrow or yesterday" (*Danas*, January 16, 1990).

Croatia has crossed the Rubicon (*Danas*, June 5, 1990). It was with this sentence that a journalist described the first multi-party elections in Croatia. The border had been crossed dividing the one-party from the multi-party system. Croatia had become a parliamentary democracy. That happened in May, 1990.

The Rubicon was the name of the river marking the border between Caesar's province and Italy, crossed by Caesar's army in its campaign against Rome, to confirm the disintegration of the existing state order and the establishment of the new.

The Rubicon represents a border in time, a junction between the end of the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the beginning of the creation of the Croatian state. The reasons were discussed in the press both at home and abroad, politicians had their say as did experts on South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans, but it still remains unclear how the new order should be established.

The dice has been thrown and is still spinning, but the gamblers still cannot weigh their losses and winnings.

The social event of entry into the multi-party system is denoted by the saying which originally marked a well-known event in Roman history. The unknown quantity in Croatian reality is described as a function of relation to the story from Roman history which has become a metaphor for Croatia. The course of events has shown that the metaphor has fully become fact. Crossing the Rubicon, we went to war.

"The war is still not over, and has already appeared in print hundreds of thousands of times, already offered to the jaded palates of those who yearn for history as the very newest stimulant" (Nietzsche 1980b:279).

(Translated by Nina H. Antoljak)

REFERENCES CITED

- Barthes, Roland. 1979. *Image, Music, Tex*. Glasgow: Fontana - Collins.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1980a. *Die Geburt der Tragödie* [Birth of Tragedy]. *Sämtliche Werke, kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden, Band 1*. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. Berlin - New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1980b. *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* [On the Benefit and Detriment of History to Life]. *Sämtliche Werke, kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden, Band 1*. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari,

eds. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. Berlin - New York: Walter de Gruyter.