

REMEMBERING “THE FATHER OF THE CONTEMPORARY STATE OF CROATIA”

THE CELEBRATION OF TUĐMAN’S BIRTHDAY IN HIS BIRTHPLACE

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This article explores diverse strategies and mechanisms of remembering Franjo Tuđman, Croatia’s first president, after the country gained its independence in 1991. The authors discuss how Tuđman’s figure is constructed in contemporary Croatian society by focusing on its use in political discourse and in public space. The article’s central part deals with realms of memory in Veliko Trgovišće, Tuđman’s birthplace, on the ninety-second anniversary of his birth.

Keywords: realms of memory, Franjo Tuđman, Veliko Trgovišće, birthplace, birthday celebration, post-socialism

Razprava obravnava različne strategije in mehanizme spominjanja na Franja Tuđmana, prvega predsednika hrvaške države, ki si je neodvisnost pridobila leta 1991. Avtorici razpravljata o tem, kako je Tuđmanova podoba figure konstruirana v sodobni hrvaški družbi, pri čemer se osredotočata na njeno rabo v političnih diskurzih in javnem prostoru. Osrednji del članka je posvečen realnosti spominov v Velikem Trgovišču, Tuđmanovem rojstnem kraju, na 92.letnico njegovega rojstva.

Ključne besede: realnost spomina, Franjo Tuđman, Veliko Trgovišće, rojstni kraj, praznovanje rojstnega dne, post-socializem

INTRODUCTION

On July 21st, 2013 in the small Dalmatian town of Primošten, Franjo Tuđman Street was given back its old name of Mala Raduča. This was Mayor Stipe Petrina’s decision, who ranks first on the list of independent candidates, confirmed by the Primošten Municipal Council. At the renaming, Stipe Petrina stated that Franjo Tuđman, the first president of independent Croatia, had done nothing to deserve a street in Primošten or indeed anywhere else in Croatia because he had impoverished the Croatian people through the robbery of privatization and created a state in which only 200 families lived the good life. He said that Tuđman had been responsible for the fall of Vukovar and that his politics towards Bosnia and Herzegovina had been disastrous (Z. D. 2013): “The worst thing that Franjo Tuđman did was sow dissent among the citizens of this country, which will continue to destroy us for the next 50 years. He destroyed our future” (Petrina, cited in Klarić 2013).

Ante Kulušić, the president of the Regional Committee of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), the party that Tuđman founded and was president of for life, characterized the event

as a dangerous example of political exhibitionism and the most sinister barbaric act in recent Croatian history. Kulušić invited all non-governmental organizations, especially the associations of Croatian War of Independence veterans as well as all Primošten residents—"all those who have Croatia and its first president, Franjo Tuđman, at heart"—to become involved in the struggle for the return of Tuđman's name to the street, "who, together with the war veterans, created the independent and sovereign Republic of Croatia" (Odluka o ukidanju ulice ... 2013).

This event from Primošten paints a graphic and clear picture of the polarization surrounding the life, work, and legacy of Tuđman in contemporary political discourse in Croatia. The path of Tuđman's political life led from him being a communist as a youth, a Partisan political commissar and major general in the Yugoslav People's Army, to a political dissident, and finally the first president of Croatia. Since the 1990s, when he became president, this path has moved between two polarities: his glorification and "Tuđmanization" among his supporters, and sharp criticism and "Detuđmanization" among his opponents.

Franjo Tuđman was born in Veliko Trgovišće on May 14th, 1922. After attending secondary school, he joined the Partisan movement in northwestern Croatia from 1941 to 1945. From 1955 to 1957 he attended the military academy in Belgrade, and in 1960 he became a major general in the Yugoslav People's Army. In 1961 he decided to give up his military career to pursue a scholarly one. In 1965 he received a Ph.D. in history. He was the founder and the general director of the Institute for the History of the Workers' Movement of Croatia. He taught at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb. In reviewing Yugoslav and Croatian history, he sought to do away with the collective guilt complex that, in his interpretation, was imposed on the Croats by Yugoslav historians because of the formation of the Independent State of Croatia¹ during the Second World War and arguments about the number of victims at the Jasenovac Concentration Camp. As a result, he was expelled from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia. He was given a prison sentence twice for his participation in the Croatian National Movement and he was banned from public work during the 1970s and 1980s. During the 1980s the Yugoslav ideological consensus began to disintegrate, and new ideological concepts, mostly based on nationalism, were created (Pauković 2008: 14). On June 17th, 1989, Tuđman founded the HDZ, the party that won the first Croatian multiparty parliamentary election, whereupon he became the president of the presidency of Croatia on May 30th, 1990. At the time of the election, the HDZ led by Tuđman was:

the largest party with strong organizational cohesion, a clearly outlined platform, and the attribute of a populist and national movement. Its platform and election campaign emphasized Croatian sovereignty. ... The cult of the leader was established around the person of Franjo Tuđman, who used clear rhetoric to present the party's platform goals. ... The election results showed that HDZ managed to win the majority of the electorate by emphasizing the nation and the Croatian national question. It became a

¹ The Independent State of Croatia was a political creation, a member of the Axis powers. It existed from 1941 to 1945 and comprised all of modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, much of Croatia, a small part of Serbia, and a few villages in Slovenia. It was controlled by the Ustaša movement, headed by Ante Pavelić.

movement and remained one after the election. Since its founding, the HDZ was by and large perceived as a right-wing nationalist party and later often as radical and extreme. (Pauković 2008: 15–17)

Based on constitutional amendments, Tuđman was elected president for two terms, in 1992 and 1997. He remained in office until his death on December 10th, 1999. Under Tuđman's command, the Croatian Army led military campaigns during the Croatian War of Independence and liberated large parts of occupied Croatian territory in 1995. In 1997 by way of international negotiations Tuđman led the peaceful reintegration of the Danube Valley region, thereby achieving Croatia's political and territorial integrity. This is why he was credited with establishing Croatia within its internationally recognized borders and ending the war.

Tuđman's death brought citizens from all over Croatia to Zagreb. A 3.5 km procession of people came to pay their respects to the president, whose catafalque was displayed at the president's office. On the primetime news on December 11th, 1999, the Croatian National Television reporter Siniša Kovačić stated that "citizens have been waiting for several hours to pay their respects to *the greatest son of our people and the creator of Croatian freedom and independence.*" In the same report, an interviewee said, "We've lost a president and at the same time a *father.*" Correspondent Iva Gačić concluded the report: "Somebody said 'he was a historian that made history and now has passed into it'. The story of the Croatian state is the life story of its first president, Franjo Tuđman." Tuđman was buried in the prestigious section of Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb, next to the arcades and Christ the King Church.

Apart from providing insight into the political and social transformation that Tuđman witnessed and participated in, especially when he was given the role of "leader of the nation," the profile of Tuđman's work also allows us to tell another important "story of the Croatian state" by focusing on this historical figure: the story of Croatia today. This is the topic at the center of our research interest. We explore it by analyzing how the symbolic potential of Tuđman's figure has been realized fifteen years after his death. That is to say, we see Tuđman as a prism within which many different ways of interpreting the national past not only intersect, but also meet the heterogeneous and sometimes ideologically opposite interpretations of the Croatian present as well as various visions for its future. The contemporary use of Tuđman's name or image in political rhetoric, historiography, media, urban toponymy, popular discourse, and everyday practices reveals diverse needs that a society, in its heterogeneity, attempts to satisfy through these events. It also reveals the attitudes of various agents toward the historical legacy as well as the harmony, disharmony, and disruptions that occur when attempting to record this historical figure permanently in national remembering. This is the main impetus for examining the present ways of making Tuđman an integral part of social memory, which we approach as an attitude to the past that is created in the present (cf. Connerton 1989: 3–4). Our goal is to establish in which contexts, in what ways, and with which intentions the imagery connected with Tuđman is actualized today. We seek the mechanisms through which this figure is constituted and (re)valuated in Croatian society at the beginning of the twenty-first century in two intersecting spheres: by giving a short overview of how Tuđman is

used in political discourse and by locating his name or figure in public space. The central part of the paper focuses on the search for the places of memory created around Tuđman's figure in situ, at the location that has been the starting point of all of Tuđman's biographies regardless of their author or ideological viewpoint; namely, his native village of Veliko Trgovišće on the ninety-second anniversary of his birth. The analysis of the birthday celebration is approached from a cultural anthropological perspective, whereby we are interested in the fluent and fragmented character of the event, where one and the same situation can be given completely different content and interpretations, in accordance with the perspectives of each participant, his or her experiences, motivations, and worldviews, and his or her diverse cultures of memory.

TUĐMAN IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Since his death, Tuđman has remained "the father of Croatian democracy," "the father of the modern Croatian state," "our nation's son," and "the greatest Croat of the twentieth century" in the eyes of his supporters. These supporters are mainly gathered in the HDZ, the party that Tuđman personifies.

The current HDZ president, Tomislav Karamarko, emphasized that Tuđman's name was deeply ingrained in the HDZ, and that the present HDZ was following the path laid down by Tuđman's political program. In defining Tuđman's merits, the following concepts dominate: the creation of an autonomous and independent state, the idea of reconciliation and unity of the diaspora with Croatia as a homeland and all parties that wanted an independent state, protection of the rights of the Croatian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the success and value of the Croatian War of Independence, and protection of war veterans. If not all, then certainly some of these concepts are seen by Tuđman's supporters as points of dispute with their (that is to say, Tuđman's) opponents. For instance, on the ninety-second anniversary of Tuđman's birth, HDZ president Karamarko emphasized in his speech that there would never be reconciliation with those that denied the values of the 1990s, the casualties of the Croatian War of Independence, and Tuđman's great historical work: "This is our Croatian homeland. It was created by Tuđman and our defenders, and we shall not relinquish it." Tuđman's son Miroslav, also a member of the HDZ, said at the same event that there had been "a pandemic of amnesia" in Croatia since 2000:

Croatian collective, institutional remembering about Yugoslav communist totalitarianism, aggression against Croatia, and the Croatian War of Independence is systematically being erased by way of criminalizing the defenders by the state leadership, which accepted the collective indictments for Operation Storm and the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, [together with] the theses about a mixture of bad policies, Ustaša snakes in the Croats' hearts, criminalization of the party that created the Croatian state, and so on, with the overall goal of Detuđmanization and condemnation of the politics and work of the first Croatian president.

The term *Detuđmanization* began to occur in 2000, after Tuđman died and the HDZ

lost the elections. It is used to denote events and processes linked with reviewing its recent ten-year-long history. It seems that the term is used by right-wing parties when the actions and ideas of the left-wing parties are described. Thus the author and academy member Ivan Aralica, a member of the HDZ, stated that nobody among those advocating Detuđmanization had explained the meaning of the term, and so it could only be decoded according to the actions carried out. He defines the term as “a covert recurrence of communism and pro-Yugoslav leanings.” Bearing the brunt of “neo-communist” Detuđmanization is the national state as the utmost value; that is, “its altars, insignia, and existence,” as well as the constitution, which was degraded by actions, some of which “are so severe that they could constitute a coup d’état.” All of this, as Aralica explained, was accompanied by “an unprecedented defamation of the list of persons involved in Tuđman’s government” and by the degradation of institutions and political persons. Aralica also stated that Detuđmanization extended to Tuđman’s supporters as well, and that it was at its last gasp (Aralica 2002). Detuđmanization does not primarily denote “dismissing the dysfunction of the previous government, but is rather a thorough review of the entire ten-year-long history, including the creation of the independent Croatian state. As part and parcel of the project, there is systematic devaluation and criminalization of the Croatian War of Independence, unconditional cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague, and the announced court proceedings against the military and political leadership from that period” (Jović 2001: 6). Stjepan Mesić, who succeeded Tuđman as president of Croatia, is seen as the leader of the Detuđmanizers. Such an attribution addresses his turn in his relation to the Roman Catholic Church, which was favored until then, as well as his fight against the idea of partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina and against the demonization of the Serbs. Mesić’s moves most indicative of his Detuđmanizing tendencies are considered the compulsory retirement of twelve Croatian generals and the disclosure of a stenograph of Tuđman’s confidential conversations with his associates, which Mesić found in the presidential office after he assumed the presidency. A part of the stenographs was also sent to the Hague, which the right-wing parties interpreted as an act of high treason. Marinko Čulić, a press commentator and political analyst (who was, incidentally, taken to court because he opposed Tuđman’s idea about the method of bringing about the reconciliation of Partisans and Ustaša, and was acquitted in the end) stated that by doing so Mesić wanted to show

that state decisions were made in unconstitutional centers of power. However, it was clear that his ambitions aimed at much higher goals: namely, revealing that Tuđman’s administration had criminal intentions towards other nations and predatory ones towards its own, in order to cast a shadow on the charisma which had survived his death. (Čulić 2014)

However, as already stated by Aralica, Detuđmanization had been going on, albeit discretely, within the HDZ as well. Čulić stated that Detuđmanizers within the HDZ were his successors as leaders of the party: first Ivo Sanader, and then Jadranka Kosor. The aim of their program was to “modernize” the party, which meant distancing the party from the basic platform concepts of the HDZ as laid down by Tuđman. The current prime minister, Zoran

Milanović, stated that Sanader's political moves were good when it came to national minorities and that he and Jadranka Kosor genuinely believed in the importance of Croatia entering the EU; they worked hard on making this idea a reality and much credit goes to them for Croatia joining the EU (Milanović, cited in Butković 2012). One of the important pieces of evidence of Sanader's *Detudmanism*, as understood within the HDZ, is that Sanader's government had Ante Gotovina apprehended, a Croatian general whose Hague indictment had been assessed as rigged and monstrous by the hard-core right-wing circles of the HDZ. Milanović believes that Gotovina paid the debt of the entire system of that time (Butković 2012). Gotovina was acquitted of the Hague charges in 2013.

Karamarko, "that sudden admirer of *Tuđmanism*" (Čulić 2014), brought the party back to *Tuđman's* ideals, to "the primordial idea about Croatian freedom and populism," as his slogan "be honest, be patriotic" epitomizes (Karamarko on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the HDZ). Čulić believes that *Tuđman's* political legacy has survived his death,

not only in Karamarko's more or less folkloristic extensions, which are plentiful in his "Retuđmanization," but also, even more importantly, in the stances of almost the entire current politics of Croatia, including the current administration of Zoran Milanović and Ivo Josipović. Furthermore, this legacy, as I already implied, has undoubtedly survived because it was tacitly accepted by key members of the international community. (Čulić 2014)

On the other hand, opponents describe *Tuđman* as "a rigid dictator," "a presumptuous autocrat," "a fascist," or even as "a Croatian emperor accompanied by his personal Darth Vader from Herzegovina, Gojko Šušak"² (Sadkovich 2010). Dobroslav Paraga, a Croatian politician that belongs to the extreme right wing and entered a coalition with the HDZ in the first multiparty elections in Croatia in 1990, remarks in his overview of *Tuđman* and his politics:

The aged Croatian dictator is gone. He has joined Tito, his role-model, although he wanted to reign for a long time. ... When departing, he had a quarrel with God and a great part of this people, to whom he had referred and sworn so many times, while seizing incredible luxury and unlimited power for himself. In that way he deprived millions of their fundamental human rights, such as a decent existence, adequate payment, social and medical insurance. ... As an autocrat and dictator, who had meetings with the Balkan butcher Milošević over sixty times, as a narcissist and egocentric person that forged his CV and his doctoral dissertation, he reigned over Croatia like a nineteenth-century ruler. Thus he himself became the greatest burden to the country to which he had taken an oath of allegiance so many times while paving the way to democracy and a state of justice. Apart from massive corruption, nepotism, and debts, he has left the people in the lurch, and designed an uncertain future for Croatia. ... In the opinion of this autocrat past his prime, those that were not Croatian and Roman Catholics could not be good Croats, and those that were not with him and the HDZ were actually against

² Gojko Šušak (1945–1998) was one of Franjo *Tuđman's* closest associates, a vice-president and minister of defense during *Tuđman's* presidency.

sovereign Croatia. He has himself profoundly jeopardized Croatia's sovereignty through the systematic impoverishment of Croatia conducted because of his greed, ambition, and excessive luxury, but also through the systematic financing of corruption and nepotism. Because of him, Croatia has come under the hammer ... (Paraga 1999)

In short, Tuđman's opponents define the implementation of his political ideology as "the absence of any legal regulation, any rational economic politics, ethical grounding, and civil security. The state was structured as a family fief or a plundering Balkan tyranny," which "in the course of the nine years of Tuđmanism" made crime "an integral part of its social substance" (Jurđana 2002). Tuđman's politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina met more severe but not persistent criticism. However, there is a doubt whether the critics attempted to make a change at all because their arguments did not result in positive political consequences (Čulić 2014).

However, Tuđman was not subject to astute and loud criticism. His critics are few and isolated (Čulić 2014). The leader of the main opposition to the HDZ, current Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, is full of understanding when it comes to Tuđman's actions:

For me, he was primarily a war president. And the war was rough, bloody, arduous, and obviously inevitable. Looking at Tuđman from the war perspective, I think I can understand some of his dilemmas and actions better. ... I never voted for Tuđman, but I do not wish to underestimate him. I think that Tuđman's rule should be divided into two periods: the first five years, up to the liberation of Knin—the period of war; and the period from Operation Storm until the end of his life. Of course, in the second period one must take into consideration Tuđman's illness as an extenuating circumstance in many of the poor decisions he made. ... This war [in Bosnia and Herzegovina as an aggravating circumstance] was indisputably a mistake, a big mistake by Croatian national politics. However, today when one listens to and analyses the statements of the leading Bosnian politicians that were politically active then, such as Sulejman Tihić, it is apparent that their views of that war are no longer one-dimensional either. (Butković 2012)

At least for his supporters in contemporary Croatian politics, Tuđman's figure and name manifest significant symbolic capital in political narratives. In those narratives, Tuđman is presented as a person-idea (Jurđana 2002)—as a person that *sui generis* represents an idea of an independent and sovereign Croatia or, as emphasized by Karamarko on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the HDZ: "the name of Franjo Tuđman was deeply ingrained in the first and last name of this state." In that way, the state obtains a monument in the image of its "creator"—that is, of its "father"—while the figure and work of Tuđman are placed on the pedestal of the untouchable, holding a cult status. The scarcity and isolation of his critics or (mostly) restraint of his opponents confirm Tuđman's status of the untouchable, which shows that we are dealing with "a person-idea that is not advisable to confront even after death" (Jurđana 2002). Tuđman gains his capital political weight from his historic role in the creation of the Croatian state through his "war presidency." That still represents the main line of defense from those that choose to engage in polemics with problematic sides of his character, work, and legacy.

TUĐMAN IN PUBLIC SPACE

Inscribing Tuđman's name or image in public space is one of the political evocations of this historical figure. The localization of official history achieved by renaming the urban toponym, creating memorial sites, and erecting adequate monuments serves as a means of legitimization of the established social order (cf. Rihtman-Auguštin 2000: 35–60). However, it is also much more. In cases when the memory of Croatia's first president is anchored in concrete places, his figure becomes part of everyday life and an intersection of manifold cultural practices for all those that use the space. In this way, Tuđman gains a new social life: his materialized and spatialized actualizations become arenas for contemporary usages and alterations of his figure, as well as for the attribution of multiple meanings. From the very beginnings of the systematic study of social memory, the insertion of memory into space is considered one of the most effective ways to recapture the past and make it constantly present in the life of the community (cf. Halbwachs 1980 [1950]: 140). When transposing Tuđman's character from political rhetoric into public space, contests between different views and (often clashing) notions of his role in Croatian history and society become even more visible. Which spaces should serve as realms of memory named after Tuđman? How should they be rearranged? Which nomenclature should be erased from urban onomastics in that process? Where should monuments be placed referring to his life and work? What should they look like—and, finally, how should those spaces be used? All of these issues represent an impulse resulting in social polarization, re-examination, and confirmation of Tuđman's importance; sometimes, however, they can also be triggers of subversion and resistance to the dominant politics of remembering. Out of a number of such examples in Croatia, we briefly outline three—those related to spaces in Zagreb, Dubrovnik, and Split—in order to sketch some of the clashes caused by the resemantization of public space along the lines of the first president of the contemporary Croatian state.

The marking of an urban location with Tuđman's name that received the most media attention took place in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. Ever since Tuđman's death in 1999, suggestions for naming Tuđman Square, which should be prominent enough to reflect his historical and political significance, has been hotly disputed (cf. Stanić et al. 2009: 106–111). The most intense reactions, including rallies of support and protest, were prompted by initiatives to dedicate one of the town's central squares where the Croatian National Theatre is situated—the one that bears the name Marshal Tito Square—to Franjo Tuđman. Such renaming would complete a symbolic inversion of the political value system brought about by the fall of communism and the breakup of Tito's Yugoslavia, but has never been carried through. In public discourse various agents, such as associations of Croatian war veterans, representatives of political parties, local authorities, distinguished historians and town planners, members of Tuđman's family, and so on, have expressed diverse views on where Tuđman Square should be located and what it should look like. Mostly centrally located squares have been considered, such as British Square, Roosevelt Square, and French Republic Square, and then Kaptol as the seat of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Zagreb, St. Mark's Square, where the Croatian Parliament

and the seat of the Croatian government are located, the green area in front of the National University Library, where an extensive reconstruction carried out by the City of Zagreb has been underway, as well as Zagreb International Airport. At the same time, other social actors have dismissed all of these proposals, disqualifying them as “the conquering of someone else’s space” (Letica 2006). The confrontation of opposing attitudes towards the right spot for Tuđman in the urban matrix and in Croatian history did not cease with the local government’s 2006 decision to reserve an area in the city’s Črnomerec district, which until then bore no name, to honoring “the memory of the first president of the Republic of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, the statesman under whose leadership Croatia gained its independence and sovereignty” (Holjevac 2006). Even today demands are being made to transfer the name *Dr. Franjo Tuđman Square* to a more prominent location, away from the current inadequate space, from “the meadow” and “the promenade for dogs,” as some derogatively describe the square (Škiljić Ravenščak 2013).

The next realm of memory we depict is the bridge providing access to the town of Dubrovnik from the west. It was supposed to function as a reference to Tuđman and “the proud nineties,” as a result of the political elites’ intervention. Instead, it revealed the citizens’ reserve regarding politicization of public space. The bridge is sometimes defined as “the two-name bridge” because after it opened to traffic in 2002 it was marked with two bridge name plates. One, mounted in the middle of the structure, labeled it the Dubrovnik Bridge, and the other, on the side of the road, called it the Dr Franjo Tuđman Bridge. The chronology of contestation over the name of the structure was closely intertwined with tendencies of different political parties, at both the local and national levels, to claim their rights to the space. The main investor in the bridge construction was the state, so the national government led by Prime Minister Iвица Račan of the Social Democratic Party named the bridge after the nearby locality, analogous to many examples throughout Croatia. However, the local authorities, formed by members of the HDZ, felt that this symbolic bond of the Dubrovnik area with other parts of Croatia should carry Tuđman’s name and not that of their hometown. They tried to make the decision reached at the top of the political hierarchy ineffective, or less visible, by naming the street crossing the Adriatic Highway at the entrance to the bridge ‘Dr Franjo Tuđman Bridge. The street nameplate was placed on the bridge, and communal officers were engaged to prevent potential attempts to remove it. Nevertheless, this did not prevent subversive action by unknown perpetrators (“some guerrilla fighters”), who changed the first letter of the president’s name to the letter S.³ When the HDZ returned to power, the ministry in charge of transport and communications granted the request of the Dubrovnik Town Council to make *Franjo Tuđman* part of the bridge’s official name. However, in public discourse people still verbalize their uncertainty concerning the correct name of the bridge. On the streets of Dubrovnik and in the local media, contrasting views on which of the two names the bridge should carry are expressed to this day.⁴

³ After this, Tuđman’s first name was spelled *Sranje* ‘shit’.

⁴ The information related to (re)naming the bridge near Dubrovnik is primarily based on recollections by a prominent Dubrovnik journalist and a Zagreb student born in Dubrovnik.

One of the most recent realms of memory related to Tuđman, which has also raised controversy, is the monument erected in Split in 2013. It shows the statesman's figure in natural size, in a long coat, leaning over a cubic pedestal and gazing contemplatively towards the port of Split. This project was presented as the culmination of the political endeavors of Željko Kerum, the leader of the right-oriented Croatian Civic Party (HGS) and the mayor of Split at that time. Several other locations for the monument were previously considered, including several centrally positioned squares, Franjo Tuđman Square among others, and the Split Waterfront, which was proposed by representatives of the HDZ. The opposition in the town council took a stand against that solution, insisting that the waterfront should remain "depoliticized space"⁵ (Brajević 2011). The compromise location for the monument dedicated to "the Croatian independence and the first Croatian president, Franjo Tuđman" was finally found near the Bishop's Palace on top of the waterfront in Split. However, the articulation of clashing points of view regarding that historical figure has not ceased. Such differing attitudes became obvious during the unveiling ceremony. Kerum's exclamation "We've got Tuđman!"⁶ and speeches by prominent politicians and public figures were followed by heterogeneous practices of gathered citizens, which encompassed bringing flowers, saying prayers, touching the statue, and so on. However, the monument also triggered actions that had quite different connotations, with an aim to re-examine the historical and social values that Tuđman personified. During the ceremony, activists affiliated with the list of independent candidates The Other Face of Split put up a poster reading "Fly Tuđman fly," which provoked a quarrel among the participants (Matijanić 2013). A few days after that incident, several people defining themselves as a group of "dissatisfied residents of Split not affiliated to any political party" placed another banner in front of the monument. It bore the slogan "Tito 1962," alluding to one of Tito's historical speeches held there half a century ago. The group interpreted the placing of Tuđman's monument in that very same spot as "a silent attempt to revise the past." As they explained to the media, their intervention was a way to express dissatisfaction with the fact that in their hometown a monument was raised in honor of "a man that did his utmost to erase the identity of Dalmatia (that is why he renamed the region South Croatia), and who stood behind the cultural, economic and political devastation of Split in the 1990s," but also of Croatian society in general (24sata 2013). These actors responded with such arguments to the inauguration of a new realm of memory with their counter-memory, focusing on symbolically opposed historical segments and figures, and thus promoting alternative versions of the past that tend to deconstruct the existing relations between knowledge and social powers (cf. Foucault 1977). Because of these incidents, Tuđman's statue has been given police protection.

These three examples point to the fact that people invest space constructed in memory of

⁵ Fragment of a statement by Goran Kovačević, president of the Split branch of the Croatian People's Party (HNS).

⁶ Kerum referred to Tuđman's victorious speech after the 1990 elections: "We've got our Croatia, it's ours, and we will make it the way we ourselves want it to be, and we won't let anybody else tell us the way Croatia should be." In public discourse, this statement is frequently evoked in the abbreviated form "We've got Croatia."

the late president with varied understandings regarding the recent history of Croatia and the role Tuđman had in it. In the process of remembering Tuđman today, multivocality concretizes itself in a variety of lived experiences, tactics of spatial use, and senses of place. The actors involved in them take urbanist policies and official narratives that deal with Tuđman as their starting point. In some cases they confirm those policies and narratives as a relevant framework for their own actions; in others they contradict them, and in some cases they choose to ignore their political connotations. All of these provide an insight into current ways of remembering a political figure that eludes the possibility of uniform presentation and whose contribution, in some historians' opinion, is not viewed with sufficient spatial and temporal focus. We started from a concrete realm of memory, perceived in accordance with Pierre Nora's definition. For that author, a realm of memory is not solely a locality: it is "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community" (Nora 1996: xvii). In all these examples, debates on the *right way* in which the late Croatian president takes on his material and spatial form are actually concerned with the following questions: What is *the right space* for Tuđman in the urban landscape? Does that spot already symbolically belong to somebody else; is it sufficiently prominent or connected in any way with Tuđman's life and work? Is the relationship between the location and the historical figure *natural* and *authentic* enough for the place to be transformed into a realm of memory? In order to avoid dealing with a realm of memory constructed primarily in our own discourse, for our research we chose a locality that is clearly inextricable from Tuđman's biography.

TRACING TUĐMAN IN HIS BIRTHPLACE

We carried out our field research in Veliko Trgovišće, a municipality with just under 5,000 inhabitants,⁷ in the Zagorje region in northwestern Croatia (Buršič et. al. 2011: 36). It is where Tuđman was born in 1922. One can thus approach the legacy of Croatia's first president as a marker of local identity—or, more precisely, as an objective trait in the construction of community (cf. Čapo Žmegač 1997). Paying tribute to the memory of renowned historical figures in their birthplaces is one of the most common strategies for creating the realms of memory associated with selected episodes from national history (Watson 2006: 56). The motivation to brand the place with the image of Tuđman is described by the local authorities as understandable. For instance, the municipal webpage describes Veliko Trgovišće in a nutshell thus: "As a gateway to the tourist part of the Zagorje region, Veliko Trgovišće wants to change its appearance, to preserve its natural beauties and cultural heritage; as *the birthplace of Dr Franjo Tuđman, the first president of the Republic of Croatia*, it wants to stand out as a showcase of the implementation of democratic principles in life and work" (O našoj općini ...

⁷ The data are based on the 2011 census.

[no year]; the italicized phrase is highlighted in the original). However, creating a birthplace in accordance with the attribute "the Cradle of Genius," no matter how *spontaneous* and *natural* it may seem, necessarily "requires a substantial effort of the collective imagination" and needs to be observed in relation to the established politics of remembering and the hierarchy of power relations (Watson 2006: 57). Those are some of the processes we observe in Tuđman's birthplace by focusing primarily on materializations (realms of memory) and performances (commemorations and celebrations) of social memory imbedded in the place.

Regarding the timeframe of our analysis, we decided to examine the memory of Tuđman in his birthplace on the date emphasized in the municipality's calendar because it represents a reference to the late president's birth. Specifically, since the Municipality of Veliko Trgovišće was established in 1994, Municipality Day has been celebrated on the date of Tuđman's birth, May 14th.⁸ Robert Greblički, the municipality's current mayor, explains how the calendar of local celebrations and commemorations was established in relation to this historical figure's biography:

We thus mark Municipality Day purely because of the date on which Croatia's first president was born. Simply put, when you have a history like we have here in Veliko Trgovišće, I think that any other date would be practically meaningless; it would make no sense. Tuđman is Croatia's first president and the founder of the Republic of Croatia, and this is his home place."⁹

However, the choice of such a spatial and temporal framework, although essentially arising from the biography of the concrete person whose contemporary evocations we analyze, is also deeply connected with our previous research experience. Namely, our notions about mechanisms in which realms of memory related to famous historical figures are created and perpetuated, as well as about the demands of the phenomenological study of a political place, emerge from field research conducted in the birthplace of another distinguished "son" of the Zagorje region. We carried out a study in Kumrovec, the native village of Josip Broz Tito, on Youth Day, a former holiday celebrated throughout communist Yugoslavia as Tito's birthday (cf. Belaj 2008; Hjemdahl & Škrbić Alempijević 2006; Škrbić Alempijević & Hjemdahl 2006). In this study, the findings of the Kumrovec research were not used as a starting point for drawing analogies between the two birthday celebrations or the two birthplaces located in neighboring localities in Zagorje.¹⁰ We used that previous fieldwork experience of a political place as a source of inspiration in the methodological sense and in setting the focus. In our preparation for the field research, we found it important to locate Tuđman's multifaceted and dispersive existences in concrete sites, thus making them graspable through a case study, and then approach them at the moment when something was actually happening there.

We expected numerous reflections of the past related to Tuđman in Veliko Trgovišće on

⁸ According to data from officials in the Municipality of Veliko Trgovišće.

⁹ Interview, May 14th, 2014.

¹⁰ Such comparisons have not been rare in the media or in academic papers (cf. Žanić 2002).

the date designated (among other things) as the day of commemorating the late president's birth. Therefore, we focused on the several-day-long Municipality Day celebration, held from May 4th to 18th, 2014. Along with performances of a commemorative and celebratory character, we were especially interested in locations at the birthplace where revived memories of Tuđman become palpable.

Although the central square in Veliko Trgovišće is called Stjepan and Franjo Tuđman Square, after the politically engaged father and his even more engaged and distinguished son, three other spots represent principal realms of memory related to Tuđman: his birthplace, the school dedicated to him, and the monument in front of it.

The process of materializing the memory of Tuđman in Veliko Trgovišće was conceived with the reconstruction of his birthplace. Admittedly, although it is given such an attribute and although its current superintendent Antun Prekrat declares that is "precisely" where Tuđman was born,¹¹ this is actually the house where he spent his childhood and youth. Tuđman's father erected the building after his son's birth (Žanić 2002: 53). In 1947, the Tuđman family sold the house to the railroad (it stands near the rail station). In 1990, the house was bought back by Croatian emigrants, who planned to refurbish the edifice, thus abiding by the initiative of President Tuđman himself and the HDZ founders. Even though the house was meant to provide the ambience of a rural home, "the way it looked while he lived there,"¹² the furniture fashioned in the middle-class style of that period has given a general tone to the interior. Apart from two small bedrooms, where, in Prekrat's words, the beds and wardrobes are original, the rest of the inventory does not represent "an authentic ambience, it was not held in regard in the course of adaptation coordinated by Franjo Kajfež, Franjo Tuđman's advisor at the time" (Milas, cited in Igrac 2000). Prekrat nevertheless considers such a middle-class arrangement to be authentic and sees grounds for it in the role that Veliko Trgovišće played in this part of the Zagorje region, one of a marketplace (the name of the settlement, *trgovišće*, means 'trading place'), as well as in its proximity to Zagreb. Ivo Žanić notes that Tuđman himself initiated such a decoration in order to adapt his origins to the imagery of Croatia as a developed, urbanized, and modern Western European state "with a powerful and educated bourgeois class of refined tastes" (Žanić 2002: 54). This is why the house is covered with red tiles, and not with straw; the floor is parquetted, and not beaten earth; and the interior is embellished with art nouveau frames and chandeliers. Alongside the peasant-style bed in a tiny room where Tuđman slept, there is a highly polished bedside cupboard, as well as a stylish shelf with books in several different languages. Photographs displayed on the walls, taken from the Tuđman family album,¹³ follow Tuđman's childhood and youth, depicting him as a student but also as a ladies' man. The living room walls are decorated with photographs from the last ten years of Tuđman's political life. In the courtyard, on the right side of the house, there is a bust of Tuđman facing the road at the entrance to Veliko Trgovišće.

¹¹ Antun Prekrat, interview, May 17th, 2014.

¹² Antun Prekrat, interview, May 17th, 2014.

¹³ Antun Prekrat, interview, May 17th, 2014.

The house was inaugurated in a ceremony led by President Tuđman on July 1st, 1999. According to Prekrat, it was opened to the public in 2000, but could be visited only on weekends or by prior arrangement. Since 2004 visitors have been admitted to the house every day during its opening hours. Prekrat states that most of the visits to the memorial house are from spring to fall, and during summer it is mostly frequented by Croatian emigrants coming all the way "from Australia to Canada," many of whom "equate it with their own birthplaces because many of them had similar houses."¹⁴ The house is also visited by pupils on school trips arranged by tourist guides. However, as Prekrat remarks, they regularly view the exterior of the house, take photos, and move on.

Since it opened, the house has been managed by the Croatian Statehood Foundation, a political trust of the HDZ. In the catalogue of Croatian museums and collections (*Vodič kroz hrvatske muzeje i zbirke* 2011) the memorial house is defined as a private museum. "Indeed, it is simpler for the party to keep its part there than ... otherwise all bets would be off," Prekrat explains while defending the foundation's right to own the house rather than potentially placing it in the custody of the state.

Along with the birthhouse, some other sites are also established with the aim of reviving the memory of Franjo Tuđman in Veliko Trgovišće: namely, the Memorial School – elementary school he attended – and the monument erected next to it. In the mid-1990s, the building was donated by the Municipality of Veliko Trgovišće to the Croatian Statehood Foundation, which then assumed the commitment to restore this one-and-a-half-century-old edifice and put it to use again as a small center for cultural and other events organized in the municipality (Susović 2008). However, as stated by Zdeslav Milas, the former assistant manager of the foundation, when the restoration of the school (and of the birthplace as well) was planned, a much more important function was at stake for the foundation—that is to say, for the HDZ. A year after Tuđman's death, Milas cast some light on the plans for the school renovation: "Plans for the future are made to both renovate the school and turn Veliko Trgovišće into a center of 'the idea of statehood'" (Igreč 2000). The school edifice was renovated with the "generous help of donors" (Susović 2008). The Dr Franjo Tuđman Memorial School was opened by Ivo Sanader¹⁵ on May 14th, 2008, on the eighty-sixth anniversary of Croatia's first president's birth. During the opening ceremony, Sanader emphasized that the school would represent "a small memorial center, a memory of the late president" and added: "That is our gift to the municipality" (Susović 2008). It is not hard to notice that this speech by Sanader, a Detuđmanizer within the HDZ, does not promote the initial, more ambitious concept that implied the school's somewhat grandiose role of "a center of the idea of statehood." On December 10th, 2009, on the tenth anniversary of Tuđman's death, a library and a reading room were opened at the school. During the ceremony Branko Bračić, the HDZ secretary

¹⁴ Antun Prekrat, interview, May 17th, 2014.

¹⁵ Sanader was elected president of the HDZ after Tuđman's death. He served as prime minister of Croatia from 2003 to 2009, when he resigned. In 2010 his name was removed from the list of HDZ members. Sanader is currently serving a prison sentence for criminal offences and abuse of office and power.

general at that time, argued that the “HDZ as a modern Christian democratic party encourages lifelong political learning” and he expressed his confidence that “the school will become a meeting place for the inhabitants of Veliko Trgovišće and all people of good will” (Fuštin 2009). Along with the memorial classroom where Franjo Tuđman sat, the library, and the reading-room, the school includes a hall for larger gatherings.

In 2012, on the ninetieth anniversary of Tuđman’s birth, the Municipality of Veliko Trgovišće invited tenders for a sculpture dedicated to Tuđman, with the instruction that “the visual-artistic content immediately refer to and call up an association to the historical v to the Memorial school in 2013, in cooperation between the Municipality of Veliko Trgovišće and the HDZ. Its pedestal is made of stone from Herzegovina, “as a symbol of the homeland’s unity” (Kovčić 2013). The pedestal is rather high, which makes the roughly modelled and angular statue of Croatia’s first president inaccessible to visitors. The monument was unveiled by Ankica Tuđman, the late president’s wife, and then blessed. During the unveiling ceremony, the creator of the monument, the academy-trained sculptor Kuzma Kovačić, pointed out that he had designed the monument as

a spiritual and physical portrait of a man that had raised Croatian hope and accomplished the Croatian Dream, with the aim of nearly comparing him – by using the simplicity of a pose from antiquity: calm and internally dynamic at the same time – to that young Biblical hero, the symbol of the triumph of truth and love over brute force. (tportal.hr/Hina.hr 2013)

The unveiling ceremony was attended by members of the Tuđman family, HDZ representatives in the Croatian parliament, and numerous other party members. The current HDZ president, Tomislav Karamarko, was among the attendees, and for that occasion, instead of the usual brooch with the HDZ logo, he pinned Tuđman’s picture to his lapel. In the monument Karamarko saw “the story of a country, the suffering of its people for freedom, and the story about a man that brought the freedom,” and on no account did he find “political kitsch and idolatry” in it. He concluded his comment with the exclamation: “This is why we don’t give him away!” (tportal.hr/Hina.hr 2013). One of the participants in the ceremony was the first trumpet of the Mrzlo Polje brass band, Stjepan Greblički, who at that time was the Croatian Labor Party’s candidate for the local government and “a new political star of Zagorje” (Šimić 2013). A week later he won the local election, beating out the HDZ candidate, and he thus became the new mayor in the Municipality of Veliko Trgovišće.

In the case study we present below, we are interested in how sites produced with the intention of inscribing Tuđman permanently into national remembering are used and remade, how they evoke memories and what kind, which cultural practices are embodied there, and what meanings are attached to them. We observe how and to what extent the diverse, sometimes even confrontational, attitudes and perceptions of Tuđman’s character, work, and legacy are transposed from political discourse to concrete places by means of cultural practices. In this process, we ask whether a consensus was reached in Veliko Trgovišće or whether there are still ruptures in the use of Tuđman’s figure. As previously explained, we searched for answers to

those questions in the context of marking the ninety-second anniversary of Tuđman's birth, also celebrated as Municipality Day in his birthplace – an occasion whose character, content, and interpretations can clearly show how people reach for Tuđman's name or image. We bore in mind that Tuđman's birthplace and the Dr Franjo Tuđman Memorial School were restored and opened to the public at the initiative of Croatia's first president – that is to say, the top structures of the HDZ – and that they were the property of the Croatian Statehood Foundation. On the other hand, the current local government in Veliko Trgovišće consists of left-wing Croatian Labor Party representatives. This is why, before our trip to Veliko Trgovišće, we had expected various way of remembering Tuđman, or at least some differences in the political use of his symbolic potential when it comes to interpreting his role in national history and his legacy in contemporaneity. What we encountered during the celebration is a complete discrepancy between the municipal representatives and HDZ members in the ways they mark the day. It was a split celebration organized by these two key groups of actors: there were two parallel and disconnected celebrations on that day. The narrative by Robert Greblički, the head of the municipality, evinced that specific relationship among the two groups of actors in organizing and observing Municipality Day and Tuđman's birthday. He presented his point of view thus:

The municipality is always present there somehow, but they [the HDZ] also have their own way with it, they have their vision how to handle it. For instance, we previously agreed on everything for today, decided that we would mark the day and lay the wreaths together, but it's always hard to coordinate many people. ... Perhaps small tensions or something like that always emerge between different political parties, among many people. But the bottom line is that our aim is to encompass all of them, to make the celebration function as both Municipality Day and First President Day. ... We are making an effort in that direction. But look, one can always run into problems. ... See, that is ... today they practically organized the event for their own sake, and, as far as I know, it included the presentation of candidates for the EU Parliament. So, in fact, that was a part of their campaign.¹⁶

ETHNOGRAPHY OF PARALLEL CELEBRATIONS

As previously discussed, according to the head of the Municipality of Veliko Trgovišće, Tuđman's birthday is a milestone in the municipal calendar. His birthday, and at the same time Veliko Trgovišće Day, is celebrated by a several-day program attempting to mobilize the local community:

The program was made up to engage the people from our local municipality as much as possible. Specifically, it involves various associations and what you've seen, this exhibition [an ethnographic exhibition to celebrate Veliko Trgovišće Day in front of the

¹⁶ Interview, May 14th, 2014.

Veliko Trgovišće Cultural Center] and most of the program was planned to mobilize the associations active here, within the municipality.”

The 2014 program included many different events and diverse groups of performers coming from within and outside the community. It opened with an archery tournament purposefully held for Municipality Day, on May 4th. Mother’s Day, which happened to fall a week later this year, on May 11th, was also included in the program. On the following day, May 12th, a soccer match was held with representatives of the local and county government versus veterans of FC Dinamo from Zagreb, followed by a samples of wine and game dishes, and the opening ceremony of the Zagorje Children’s Soccer Tournament.

On Veliko Trgovišće Day—that is, on Tuđman’s birthday, May 14th—the opening of the Ethnographic Exhibition was planned at the Veliko Trgovišće Cultural Center, as well as a variety of events organized at a more formal level, such as laying a wreath at three memorial sites: the Second World War Victims and Fallen Croatian War Veterans’ Memorial at the central Stjepan and Franjo Tuđman Square, then near Tuđman’s birthplace, and, finally, in front of the Executed Croatian Second World War Home Guard Ossuary at the local cemetery. This was followed by a mass at the local parish church, and by a formal session of the municipal council at the cultural center. Two days later, on May 16th, the seventh research conference titled “Franjo Tuđman Days: Croatians throughout the Centuries” was held at the Franjo Tuđman Memorial School. Several events were planned for May 17th: the Small Children’s Fair at a location near the preschool, the Children’s Folklore Festival of Krapina–Zagorje County at the cultural center, and visits to the Veliko Trgovišće Pony Center equestrian association. The last day of the program offered sports events, such as the Veliko Trgovišće Crossbow Cup and Zagorje Cup Finals, as well as performances at the cultural center on the evening of May 18th to wrap up the multi-day celebration.

Having studied the program, we set off for Veliko Trgovišće on May 14th, the only day that promised direct engagement of the local community around Tuđman’s life and work. Although Veliko Trgovišće Day included a conference in honor of Tuđman,¹⁷ it was not meant to attract the local community, but rather strictly targeted a closed research community, primarily historians.

When we entered Veliko Trgovišće in the early morning hours, what struck us was its emptiness; the place showed no trace of a celebration. The crowds we had expected to meet in the street, perhaps a police car directing traffic, a bus filled with visitors, a welcome banner or two, flags or other symbols decorating the place, at least a few signs pointing to Tuđman’s birthplace—all of this was missing, and this is how we knew that the insight we had gained about marking Youth Day (Tito’s birthday) in Kumrovec would in fact be more of a hindrance than helpful for spotting analogies in our current research.

¹⁷ The conference has been held every year since 2008. For the occasion, an annual anthology of conference papers is published. All of the anthologies cover three topics: Croatian history since 1990 and the Croatian Independence War, Croatian history of the twentieth century, and Croatian history throughout the centuries.

Just before 10 am, the time scheduled for laying a wreath at Tuđman's bust at his birthplace, we were almost alone; we were expecting a municipal and county delegation at this memorial site. The silence was only broken by the odd car driving by. A couple of men putting on historical uniforms at a nearby parking lot were the only heralds of the imminent celebration. Fussing around the Tuđman house we found its manager, carefully lining up steel wreath stands, thinking out loud how the candles set out must not be lit too early because they would become too hot for the delegates' hands. A few minutes later, cars started arriving at the limited parking area and people inside were dropped off opposite the house, across the road. Past this handful of persons, a small group discretely walked by in silence, one of whom was the head of the municipality. Soon they were joined by the men in historical clothing; this was the ceremonial military unit of Krapina–Zagorje County, the Keglević Guard of Kostel, which usually escorts the county governor at all formal events. They approached the yard of the house, formed two groups (county and municipal delegations consisting of two or three delegates), collected the wreath and flower arrangements, and, followed by the honor guard, went across the yard to Tuđman's bust. After laying the wreaths and lighting the candles, they lingered by the bust barely a minute (Figure 1), only to retire from the yard as silently as they had come in and to drive off towards the center of Veliko Trgovišće. Meanwhile, standing by the fence, along with the two of us, there were no more than a handful of people, while the crowd across the road grew larger by the minute.

While the municipal and county representatives were laying their flowers and lighting their candles in front of Tuđman's bust, on the other side of the road, in front of the restaurant and in the parking area, a group of people stood ignoring the ceremony. They were looking at their watches and the cars driving by, and along with the hurriedness and excitement in their movements this gave the impression that they were, in fact, waiting for some other event or some other actors. Soon they made it clear that the main reason for their presence at Tuđman's birthplace was to honor his memory; their introduction was regularly followed by comments such as this:

I truly respect President Tuđman because, if it hadn't been for him, there would be no Croatia. We are very aware of this, although certain individuals ignore it and cannot accept certain truths. For the majority of the Croatian people, I think he was a great man. Although part of our history may be distorted, sooner or later things will fall into place and I believe even the younger generations will learn who Croatia's first president was.¹⁸

As we soon discovered, these people were waiting for *their own celebration* of Tuđman's birthday, one organized by the HDZ, which had nothing whatsoever to do with the municipal celebration. Coming to Veliko Trgovišće on this day was just one in a series of events organized by that political party during this period, including the popularly attended party convention at Zagreb's Cibona Hall on the eve of election for the EU Parliament. "This is in the calendar, this day that we all remember well and mark to honor the Croatian president," as explained

¹⁸ Interview with a woman in her early sixties from the village of Dubrovčan, May 14th, 2014.



Figure 1: A delegation of the Municipality of Veliko Trgovišće lays a wreath at the foot of Tuđman's bust next to his birthplace, May 14th, 2014.

by an HDZ representative in the Croatian parliament. Paying tribute to the party's founder in his birthplace still did not attract a significant number of visitors. Those that showed up said this was because the celebration was on a workday. By 11 a.m., when the program was to commence, no more than a couple dozen had gathered, mostly middle-aged and older men in formal suits and army uniforms: members of the HDZ, representatives of party bodies from the diaspora, members of the Tigers brigade and other army associations that had taken part in the Croatian War of Independence, a few people that made it clear they did not belong to any party but were instead admirers of Tuđman's work, and so on. The participants arrived in small groups in official or private cars; no bus transport was organized. The majority came from other places in the Zagorje region or from Zagreb, and some took the opportunity to honor Tuđman's grave at Zagreb's Mirogoj cemetery on their way to Veliko Trgovišće. The gathered group greeted one another like old acquaintances, with a smile and a firm handshake. Grouping up and mingling along the road before the ceremony began was interrupted at moments when high-ranking dignitaries showed up: Miroslav Tuđman and the current leaders and founders of the HDZ, such as Dubravka Šuica and Mirko Kovač. At such moments, the people would form a ring around the dignitaries in an attempt to welcome and start a conversation with them. The celebratory context was characterized as one of those arenas where the "old guard

gathered, to see that we are alive and kicking ... and not to forget."¹⁹ Several participants said they were motivated to attend the celebration by their desire to revive their memory, spurred by the belief that the 1990s events and their key actors were becoming a realm of collective amnesia in contemporary Croatian society. In their opinion, this also referred to the historic role of Franjo Tuđman:

There I am ... drinking my coffee and reading my *Večernji* newspapers today, looking for at least an article or two, thought I missed it ... but nothing, not a word. That woman, or man, whatever that bearded thing from Austria was that won the Eurovision, got two whole pages in the paper! If only I could find a word or two about President Tuđman. Then I ask a gentleman to take a look for me, I can't see well!²⁰

The media representatives turned up after all in Tuđman's birthplace, but not to turn in their report on the birthday of the first president of Croatia, but rather to obtain a statement from Miroslav Tuđman and HDZ leaders on current political issues.

Other attendees interpreted the commemoration in Veliko Trgovišće in light of the return to "true values," as an opportunity to express the "real truth" about recent Croatian history, which, in the eyes of the public, had been obscured in a process of Detuđmanization:

We find ourselves here today celebrating the birthday of Croatia's first president, Franjo Tuđman, who, whatever anyone might think of him, is the true founding father of the Croatian state and I honestly feel all sceptics will eventually come to see this. As of late the matter has been more openly discussed, and the citizens that fell victim to various media spins and stories about dictatorship, not realizing Tuđman's actual role in the nineties, are now, after having thought it through, reaching their own conclusions that all this was just media spin from God knows what source, that Dr Tuđman is truly one of the greatest Croatian men in our history, particularly contemporary history.²¹

The imminent arrival of the current president of the HDZ kept everybody on their toes. However, due to previous engagements, Karamarko had to miss this segment of party events in Veliko Trgovišće. Consequently, the ceremony was led by representatives of the party leadership and members of Tuđman's family. Walking carefully in groups of three to four across the road – which, by the way, was never closed to traffic – the HDZ delegation formed a short procession from the entrance to the house towards the president's bust (Figure 2), bearing wreaths and candles. Other participants gathered beyond the fence going around the yard of the house where Tuđman had been born. The program had a prominent commemorative character—in complete silence, with serious faces and dignified posture, Miroslav Tuđman and the party leaders laid their wreath at the foot of the bust and lit Croatian tricolor candles. After prayers, the group dispersed to their cars and set off for the next memorial site. Under Tuđman's bust there remained several floral arrangements and lanterns with dedications from

¹⁹ Interview (May 14th, 2014) with a member of the Tigers, the Independence War veterans that fought in Vukovar.

²⁰ Interview (May 14th, 2014) with a pensioner from nearby Zelenjak.

²¹ Interview (May 14th, 2014) with an HDZ representative in the Croatian parliament.



Figure 2: Representatives of the HDZ approach Franjo Tuđman's bust in the courtyard of his birthplace, May 14th, 2014.

the municipality, county, and HDZ. We were curious to know whether the visitors would come to Tuđman's birthplace to mark his birthday individually, outside of the political context, and whether these included locals. A participant that arrived in Veliko Trgovišće from a neighboring village shared her conviction with us that individual visitors (younger people and families) were yet to come to pay their respects that afternoon, after the official protocol ended. However, that scenario never transpired. In the afternoon, Tuđman's yard stood empty, and the number and distribution of wreaths and lanterns remained unchanged. The local inhabitants focused more on the afternoon program of Municipality Day (the ethnographic exhibition, a majorette performance, a formal session of the municipal council, and so on). Later, when asked if they were planning to visit Franjo Tuđman's birthplace, a member of the local folkdance group explained to us, "We've seen that and don't need to go again."

After the event at the birthplace, we joined the line of vehicles heading towards the center, to the school. In the area in front of the school there was a larger group of people than at the house, and the atmosphere was different, less commemorative, but still filled with expectation. The location allowed better interaction within the group, which broke up into smaller groups and fervently discussed political issues that they saw as the neuralgic foci of social life in Croatia. In doing so, they persistently stressed that the HDZ had the solutions,

many of which the late President Tuđman took credit for. Tuđman was, in fact, present in the narratives of our interviewees, but not in their practice; the statue at the entrance to the school was paid no attention to and included in no activity. When asked whether there was a special program for Tuđman's birthday organized by the HDZ, the visitors mainly answered that they were not familiar with the protocol of the day, but that they were informed that they would be addressed by the president of the HDZ at the formal assembly in Veliko Trgovišće.²²

Increasingly more well-known faces from the HDZ arrived in front of the school. Finally, Tomislav Karamarko appeared. His arrival was the cue to form a line and, in a dignified manner and whispering quietly, the participants entered the school's hall, greeted by another Tuđman bust. The hall, with a capacity of approximately one hundred, was soon filled to the last seat, and a number of visitors had to listen to the speeches on their feet, leaning against the wall. The assembly was opened by moderator Dinko Čutura, vice president of the HDZ Academic Community, who welcomed all attendees to celebrate together the "ninety-second birthday of Croatia's first president and the founder of the HDZ and the independent Republic of Croatia." The Croatian national anthem was played, sung by many in the audience, and a minute of silence ensued for all deceased "members of the HDZ and defenders that gave their lives for Croatia."²³

The next speaker was Miroslav Tuđman, who saw the "ninety-second birthday of Croatia's first president as an opportunity to pay our respect and gratitude, and reminisce about his political and historic legacy." In his son's narration, evocations of Tuđman's figure took on an active dimension in the present, and were supposed to give credibility to the party that Tuđman had fathered, serving as the pledge of a new party order in Croatia in the upcoming elections.

The next on the floor was Milan Kovač. His presence alone activated social remembering by going back to the beginnings of HDZ and the fight for Croatian independence, as he spoke from the position of the first man of the HDZ Founders Club. Kovač looked back on the founders' first steps and Tuđman's determination to create a party platform for realizing his main intention: a sovereign Croatian state. The legacy of Franjo Tuđman in this narrative was looked back on to give legitimacy to the current HDZ leadership and its ideological orientation. Kovač's speech created a continuity between the founder of the party and the state and its current administration because he defined their primary goal as a return to the "fundamental principles of the Croatian politics, these being the War [of Independence] and President Tuđman."

After this announcement, Karamarko addressed the audience. He first called to attention the need to cyclically and ritually mark the birthday of the founder of the HDZ at the roots he sprung from, in this "gentle region of Zagorje where the father of the contemporary Croatian state was born." He described Tuđman as one of the pivotal figures of Croatian

²² The invitation to the formal assembly was published on a commemorative HDZ website, where an address by the party leadership, wreath laying, and candle lighting at Tuđman's bust next to his birthhouse were also announced (Dr. Franjo Tuđman 2014).

²³ Address by Dinko Čutura at the formal assembly on May 14th, 2014.

history, who had left a far more powerful trace on Croatia today than the leaders of all other political parties since the 1990s. He continued by illustrating a specific value polarization, in which Tuđman was clearly a positive political figure, as opposed to some other well-known politicians from the past of this region:

Believe me, to devaluate Dr Tuđman, to degrade him to the role of a mere representative of other contemporary parties, would be to give room to Josip Broz. All that matters throughout history, our history, our short national and state history, can only be associated with one name – Dr Franjo Tuđman, not Tito or Pavelić!

Karamarko's speech kept referring to Tuđman for more than one reason. The intention of the claim that "the HDZ is going back to what it once was" was to strengthen the party from within by uniting members around the common "fundamental values"—values epitomized in the first party leader. Furthermore, Tuđman's name was also used in a symbolic face-off with the other parties, wherein the measure of political capacity was the contribution of individual parties to achieving independence of the Croatian state as well as the amount of love for and loyalty to the "Croatian homeland." Finally, by this narrative projection of Tuđman's figure at the assembly, a constant connection was made with the "proud nineties," to reinforce the spirit of victory among party members, primarily in face of the imminent elections:

It's election time, an opportunity to show them we are strong, to show them we intend to win this one, to show them that never again this kind of politics, the kind they are selling us, will pass in Croatia. ... We are headed this way because we owe it to our defenders and Dr Tuđman.

The first tones of one of the late President Tuđman's favorite songs, "Suza za zagorske brege" (A Tear for the Zagorje Hills), caused a commotion in the audience. Some visitors then stood up, but others remained seated asking: "Why stand up? It's not the anthem!" A cry: "It's the anthem of Zagorje!" by a man from the back settled the matter. All of the visitors stood up in unison and sang along, and with their right hands over their chests and their emotional interpretation concluded the assembly at the school. After a short lingering and chat at the exit, as quickly as they came together, the senior representatives of the HDZ left the birthplace of their founder. After a round of drinks at a local bar, other visitors followed in their footsteps. In the early afternoon, the central venues of the HDZ celebration—Tuđman's birthplace and the school—were left surprisingly silent and empty. Only the wreaths and candles at the foot of Tuđman's bust in the courtyard of his birthplace revealed there was something extraordinary taking place in Veliko Trgovišće on that day.

In the afternoon, we took a walk to pass the time before the mass at the parish church and the formal session of the municipal council. Again, with the exception of two locals in folk costumes that stood next to some traditional tool exhibits by the cultural center, the place had a usual workday air about it, without a hint of festivity. The traditional tools on display were part of the ethnographic exhibition arranged by the local folklore group, but it seemed to have no special appeal to the local inhabitants. One of the two men in folk costumes tried

to explain the scenes for Veliko Trgovišće Day and Tuđman's birthday by explaining that the local population lacked a definitive attitude towards this relatively recent introduction to the municipal calendar, pointing out, "We've been here for ages!" The only sign of the day's solemnity was the freshness of the rather small flower arrangements next to the statue at the central Stjepan and Franjo Tuđman Square and at the ossuary of the local cemetery.

The mass at the parish church attracted slightly more attention, mostly from the locals. Although the mass at which Tuđman's name was referenced a couple of times attracted no one from the HDZ leadership, the attendance of the head of municipality and several municipal councilors sitting in the first row at least partly justified the "solemn" attribute. After mass we joined the participants in the celebration at the culture center, where we were greeted by many children with their parents, relatives, and neighbors. There were majorettes and a brass band, whose performance was the only one that day that brought the locals together in large numbers. During their performance the local inhabitants were joined by their local political elite, and also the leader of the Croatian Labor Party, a leading party in Veliko Trgovišće, and the deputy minister of agriculture, who joined the formal session of the municipal council.

The session was in tune with the solemn attribute one would expect on a municipality day. It was opened by the municipal head's speech on economic successes, past and future infrastructure investments, and work in the municipality. This was followed by a welcome and affirmative speeches by dignitaries: by the county governor, the deputy minister of agriculture, the leader of the Croatian Labor Party and the heads of neighboring municipalities on good collaboration with Veliko Trgovišće and its administration, as well as their success stories. Municipal commendations and citations were awarded to individuals and associations for exceptional results in various areas of the local community. All of the speeches and awards gave a clear idea about what is important in this small Zagorje municipality. Nonetheless, by the close of the events, there was no mention of Tuđman. Furthermore, Veliko Trgovišće Day was in no way associated with his birthday. This clearly bothered one of this year's laureates, Mladen Cvetko:

I am happy to be here today to celebrate Veliko Trgovišće Day, and, by extension, the birthday of our first president, Francek Tuđman. I see it fit to mention his name today with great pride. And all of us Croatians, particularly from this part of Croatia, should avoid making up stuff that is not true and should still fight for truth today. We must fight for our men; they fought bravely for the truth, and Francek was one of them. We too are fighting for the truth. Thank you!

This was a reproach to this year's speakers by one of the laureates, finely wrapped in the hearty gratitude that concluded the formal session. Mingling continued informally, with lavish refreshments and in a joyful atmosphere. We left the gathering with many genial goodbyes and expressions of joy to be coming back again on Saturday.

There will be plenty of those [visits to the birthplace] on Saturday. But on Saturday the

motivation convention [of the HDZ] is also taking place in Zagreb. They're forcing me to go to Zagreb, but I can't because of the visits.

Those were the expectations of Antun Prekrat, the superintendent of the Tuđman memorial sites in Veliko Trgovišće, who had prepared for better attendance at the birthhouse on the weekend, since visitors failed to arrive on the anniversary of Tuđman's birth, allegedly because it was a workday. That is why we chose Saturday to pay another visit to Veliko Trgovišće. Before reaching the birthhouse as our main destination, we stopped by the preschool, where the local community was supposed to gather and attend an event called the small children's fair. However, we met nobody there; only a small piece of paper hung on the door waited for us, letting us know that the event had been cancelled due to bad weather. We headed towards the birthhouse, but there was nobody there either, apart from Prekrat, who cordially welcomed us and showed us around the house. He told us that was the place where Tuđman had been born, he explained that the middle-class style furniture reflected the circumstances in Veliko Trgovišće during Tuđman's childhood. He mentioned with pride that the house had been listed in the catalogue of museums and galleries in Croatia. Modestly, he expressed his satisfaction when we showed our intention to leave an entry in the book of impressions. "I'm not comfortable asking people to write something, you know. Sometimes they feel the urge, I can see they're hesitant, and then I ask for it. But in some cases they merely say 'goodbye,'" he said, replying to our comment that the book was not filled with many notes because the book's last pages bore the date of major public attendance during the weekend. Therefore, some of the general questions raised are: can Veliko Trgovišće as Tuđman's birthplace really be viewed as an effective realm of memory related to this historical figure, as a "natural" and "authentic" sanctuary of such memories? Can one actually feel Tuđman's presence there? In short, are efforts to attach memories of Tuđman to Veliko Trgovišće really working, in the sense that Croatia's first president obtained a new social life there? Above all, we encountered the issue of initial concepts underlying such memorial sites' creation; that is, of the way in which they are presented and meant to be used. What we met in Tuđman's birthhouse are indeed irreconcilably clashing initial concepts: the one stating what the authentic ambience of a family home in Zagorje should look like, and the other focusing on Tuđman's desired belonging to an "educated bourgeois class," and these are discontinuously and disconnectedly put together with a third concept that transforms the house into a memorial of his political life. Similarly, the Memorial School is also based on two different ideas. On the one hand, it was defined as a small center for cultural and other events within the municipality and as "a meeting place for the inhabitants of Veliko Trgovišće and all people of good will," and on the other hand it was perceived as "a center of the idea of statehood." As the practices and narratives have revealed, these initial concepts also unrelentingly oppose each other. The two memorial sites, the birthhouse and the Memorial School, designed as certain types of museums, do not offer a coherent narrative. Finally, the height and roughness of the monument – that is to say, its unapproachability and untouchability – do not invite visitors to touch it, and the lack of flowers and candles around it does not provide us with enough information to discuss

whether people recognize in it "the historical significance of Dr Franjo Tuđman in creating the Croatian state and his role in recent Croatian history" (HDLU 2012).

The absence of people that do not pin HDZ badges to their lapels from the memorial sites on the anniversary of Tuđman's birth can be explained not only as disapproval, but as the subversion of a political idea and of the values it stands for. Political opponents (and also the general public) do not deny Tuđman's historical role in the formation of Croatia as an independent state and his role as a "war president." Therefore, the mechanism of turning Tuđman into the personification of a political ideology remains the potential obstacle that prohibits the reviving of memory associated with Tuđman in Veliko Trgovišće. The HDZ manages those memorial sites, as well as the celebration of Tuđman's birth, as a limited-access zone. All of these memorial sites in Veliko Trgovišće are owned by the Croatian Statehood Foundation and, consequently, they are subject to intensive one-dimensional politicization. The superintendent of the memorial sites, Antun Prekrat, is aware of that process. He (just like the HDZ) supports the status quo because otherwise "all bets would be off." The question then arises to what extent these spaces are public at all. The current head of the municipality, Robert Greblički, confirms that the efforts to politicize (or Tuđmanize) the place are considered to be too rigorous, at least by the local community. He does not negate Tuđman's decisive historical role in founding the Croatian state. Moreover, he emphasizes a tight connection between Croatia's first president and Veliko Trgovišće, but perceives and presents it as a different kind of potential:

... regardless of political party affiliations and all the other matters, we have to know that man was our first president and the founder, and so on. So, this raises the question if ... he belongs to the party, to the HDZ. We have to draw a line there, like in the case of some other great men from the Zagorje region [Josip Broz Tito]. ... Here we have Francek. In former times we had a sports activity, the Marathon of Great Men from Zagorje.²⁴ I believe that we will manage to hold it [the marathon] again next year. ... All of us [within the local community] have the aim of bringing as many visitors to our place [Veliko Trgovišće] as possible. ... Look, that has some tourism potential. ... That is what makes this place different from all the others. But too little is being done, too little for sure. If it hadn't been the case, we would have already had plenty of content for visitors and tourists. An overall image of Trgovišće would have been created in a completely different manner.²⁵

Local strategy to turn the late president's name and figure into a tourism brand, to shift his position from the imagery of "the father" and "the son" to the attribute of "a great man from Zagorje," represents a mechanism in which the political concept personified in Tuđman's figure might be overlaid with a new dimension, important for the local community, which insists on downplaying this historical figure's party political affiliation. When one takes into

²⁴ The marathon was established around 2005. It started in Veliko Trgovišće, right next to Tuđman's birth-house, and ended in Kumrovec, near Josip Broz Tito's birthplace. There are plans to reintroduce this event and include a place connected with yet another "great man of Zagorje," Matija Gubec, in the route.

²⁵ Interview, May 14th, 2014.

account the alignment of the current mayor and the municipal leadership with a party different from the one promoted by Tuđman's present supporters, such plans can be interpreted as an attempt to Detuđmanize Veliko Trgovišće out of local (economic) interests, but also to Detuđmanize Croatian history, and the present and future, out of more general (political) interests. At least for the municipal leadership, memorial sites that honor Tuđman in Veliko Trgovišće do not solely represent the president himself, but instead they reflect the (political) act of those sites' construction, as well as those that constructed and inaugurated them, those being their political opponents. However, what we were especially interested in was the position "in-between," the heterogeneous "gray zone" between political acceptance and political refusal, which encompasses the local community and "all people of good will." Although on the surface the memorial sites in Veliko Trgovišće can give an impression of existing uniform public and common feelings, the absence of visitors and the lack of interest within the local community show that the values and ideals promoted at those sites, and the ways in which they are promoted, are not cherished by the entire community. It seems that a gaze at the past directed through these memorial sites is not met with a powerful response. Although silence and emptiness surrounding those sites may be associated with conscious attempts at forgetting (cf. Schramm 2011: 11), emptiness and silence of the space "in-between" encountered in Veliko Trgovišće offer only an abstract notion that is hard to grasp, the meanings of which can only be guessed at, if it is not related to "a person/idea that is not advisable to confront even after death."

The limited-access celebration of Tuđman's supporters, HDZ members, the barely noticeable laying of wreaths and candles at the bust next to his birthplace, which form only small bits of the complete Municipality Day protocol carried out by the municipal leadership, as well as the silence of the general public that surrounded the birthday of the state's first president and the founder of independent Croatia, reveal fractures in Tuđman's memory in Croatian society. In the Croatian public, quotes from a letter that the American diplomat Henry Kissinger sent to Tuđman are often revisited. Among other things, Kissinger wrote: "You'll be a great man of Croatian history, but not during your life, but when ratings will be made with cool heads" (Kissinger 2002: 141). What is certain for now is that realms of memory in Veliko Trgovišće do not prevent people from remembering as they wish to—to remember the recent past and Tuđman's role, which, in some historians' opinions, is not viewed from a sufficient historical distance to allow valid conclusions and form straightforward attitudes.

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SJEĆANJE NA "OCA SUVREMENE HRVATSKE" PROSLAVA TUĐMANOVA ROĐENDANA U NJEGOVU RODNOM MJESTU

U radu se analiziraju politike i kulture sjećanja na Franju Tuđmana, prvoga predsjednika Republike Hrvatske od njezina osamostaljenja 1991. godine. Cilj rada je utvrditi u kojim se kontekstima, na koje načine i s kojom nakanom imaginarij vezan uz Tuđmana aktualizira u suvremenosti, petnaestak godina nakon njegove smrti. Tuđmanov lik autorice promatraju kao prizmu u kojoj se ukrštaju raznoliki načini posredovanja nacionalne prošlosti, ali i raznorodne, ponekad i ideološki suprotstavljene, interpretacije hrvatske sadašnjosti te različite vizije njezine budućnosti. Osvjetljavaju odnos različitih aktera prema povijesnom nasljeđu, kao i višeglasja, nesuglasja i lomove do kojih dolazi pri pokušajima da se ova povijesna figura trajno upiše u nacionalno pamćenje. Mehanizme kojima se ovaj lik konstituira i (re)valorizira u hrvatskom društvu početkom 21. stoljeća autorice zahvaćaju u dvjema sferama: osvrtima na posezanja za Tuđmanom u političkom diskursu te na lociranje njegova imena ili lika u javnom prostoru. U političkim se narativima Tuđmanovi lik i ime pokazuju kao važan simbolički kapital, barem kad je riječ o njegovim pristašama u hrvatskoj politici. To su narativi u kojima je Tuđman predstavljen kao čovjek koji *sui generis* predstavlja ideju o samostalnoj i suverenoj Hrvatskoj. Država time dobiva svoj spomenik u liku svojega "kreatora", odnosno "oca". Malobrojnost i izoliranost njegovih kritičara ili pak (uglavnom) suzdržanost njegovih oponenta potvrđuju Tuđmanovu nedodirljivost, odnosno da je riječ o "čovjeku-ideji s kojim se ni nakon smrti nije uputno konfrontirati" (Jurdana 2002). Kad je riječ o upisivanju Tuđmanova imena ili lika u prostor, taj se lik ostvaruje kao točka društvene i političke polarizacije. Prostori posvećeni Tuđmanu postaju prijepornima iz više razloga: pojedini društveni akteri, iz redova Hrvatske demokratske zajednice, smatraju dodijeljene prostore previše marginalnima i nereprezentativnima da bi se u njih upisala Tuđmanova figura; drugi dovode u pitanje potrebu da se Tuđmanu daje prednost u urbanoj toponimiji u odnosu na druge povijesne ličnosti. Višeglasje pri prisjećanju pritom se konkretizira u življenim iskustvima, taktikama korištenja mjesta i doživljajima prostora.

U središnjem se dijelu rada autorice fokusiraju na traganje za mjestima sjećanja kreiranim oko Tuđmanova lika *in situ* – u Tuđmanovu rodnu mjestu Velikom Trgovišću, i to na 92.

godišnjicu njegova rođenja, koja se obilježava kao Dan Općine. Kao temeljna mjesta sjećanja na Franju Tuđmana u Velikom Trgovišću kristaliziraju se njegova rodna kuća, spomen-škola i spomenik uz nju. Autorice propituju kako se koriste i prerađuju ova mjesta nastala s namjerom trajne upisanosti Tuđmana u nacionalno pamćenje, kako i kakva sjećanja ta mjesta evociraju, kakve se kulturne prakse u njima utjelovljuju, kakva se značenja u njih upisuju. Zapažaju raskorak u obilježavanju ovoga dana između predstavnika Općine te članova HDZ-a, odnosno supostojanje dviju paralelnih i nepovezanih proslava. Obilježavanje Tuđmanova rođendana u Velikom Trgovišću nije zadobilo zamjetnog prostora u medijima, niti se ostvario veći posjet javnosti tom mjestu. Stoga autorice postavljaju pitanje jesu li nastojanja da se usidri sjećanje na Tuđmana u Velikom Trgovišću uspješna u smislu da je taj lik ovdje zadobio novi društveni život. No, ponajprije problematiziraju pitanje inicijalnih ideja pri oblikovanju ovih spomen-mjesta. Izostanak posjećenosti spomen-mjesta među onima koji nisu članovi HDZ-a, po mišljenju autorica, može se protumačiti ne samo kao protivljenje, već i kao subverzija jedne političke opcije i vrijednosti koje ona zagovara.

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