



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

“The square in the eternal embrace of politics”
Ideologically oriented street and square renaming
in Zagreb

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien 2019 / Vienna 2019

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066810

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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Wien, 10.03.2019 Mirna Cipek

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ayse Caglar and Mag. Dr. Monika Palmberger for their outstanding supervision. Their patient guidance and constructive criticism have substantially contributed to the creation of this thesis.

Furthermore, I would like to thank all my research and interview partners for their willingness to support this paper and sincere sharing of their knowledge and experience with me.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their moral support, good advice and love and warmth that they bring into my life.

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1. Introduction

Ideologically and politically motivated renaming of streets and squares adds to the complexity of different interpretations of history. Shared memories of nations past and historical events can be emphasized or even altered by power structures in order to implement the desired official narratives. Street terminology is present in citizens' everyday life and can as such serve as a medium of communication and memory and contribute to the official interpretation of past events. The connectedness between collective memory, identity and urban space has been in the focus of anthropology and other social sciences since the 1980s. In this master thesis I will focus on the public spaces, such as renaming streets and squares in order to analyze collective memory in Croatia.

Although different understandings of political historical events are not uncommon, a particularly deep division of the historical interpretations has evolved in the post-socialist countries. With the collapse of socialism, the historical narrative introduced by communist states also lost its legitimization. Therefore, the new democratically elected political parties in power had the opportunity to define which narrative should be remembered and which should be forgotten (Velikonja 2010). Croatia, in its striving towards independence, chose, like other post-socialist countries, a "golden era" of pre-communist autonomy for rewriting history into a new political narrative (Radonic 2012). Restoration of pre-socialist names of streets and squares was one of the mechanisms and expressions of redefining history. By investigating the massive renaming of public space in the Croatian Capital of Zagreb one can analyze memory politics in Croatia. Naming and renaming of streets are an example of how political processes aim to influence collective memory. The names of the city streets and squares are the specific text of the national narrative; places where the structures of ruling ideology meet with the practice of everyday life. Naming and renaming one of the central squares in Zagreb, the Victims of Fascism Square in particular, demonstrates how this practice refers to the given / imposed / accepted national narrative, how the practice of everyday life adjusts to the national narrative of ruling ideology, and how it differs from it. While following the course of renaming this particular place one can observe the reevaluation of memorial legacy and the creation of a new identity in post-socialist Croatia.

This master thesis seeks to examine historical narratives and collective memory in Croatia during the transition from a Yugoslav single-party state to a multiparty democracy. This is done through the lens of the protests organized on the Victims of Fascism Square due to the removal

of the square name. The investigation and re-examination of many layers of history contained in this particular place contributes to understanding opposed narratives and politics of memory in Croatia.

The significance and powerful symbolism of the actual square reflects both official and unofficial memories and the main contradictory components of Croatian national identity. The main objective of this master thesis is to show the relationship between those two memory cultures and their different narratives. Based on the renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square, this work reconstructs the politics of memory of the Croatian left and the Croatian right, politics of symbols in post-socialist Croatia and its role in political legitimization which aims to contribute to a better understanding of the formation of narratives in politically deeply subdivided societies.

The investigation of two opposed memories that are visible in citizens' reactions caused by the renaming of the square, demonstrate that the memories of the past are relevant to the present happenings in the society. Protests caused by renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square in Zagreb indicate that the interpretation of the past is not only the result of the past events as such, but rather of their interpretation by current generations (PalMBERGER 2016). While researching the renaming of one particular place through history this work is trying to grasp the reaction and opposition of the citizens to the renaming and the (re-) interpretation of past events but also of dominant national narratives.

Hence, the main questions which are explored in this master thesis are: *“What is the role of street renaming in memory politics?”* *“How did the governing structures in Croatia use symbols as street and square names in implementing official narratives?”*, *“How are official memories constructed and what is the relationship between official and counter memories?”*, *“Why were citizens motivated to undo the name change of the Victims of Fascism Square?”*, *“What encouraged people to support some streets' and squares' changes and condemn others?”*

Following this introduction, theoretical considerations for this research will be discussed. The research is framed by some key theories within the field of memory studies. They will serve as "directions" in the interpretation of research data. Halbwachs seminal work on collective memory in which he elaborates that the memory of an individual is not only the content, but is made up of fragments which are shaped into logical units through the social environment and official institutions, serves as a starting point of the general anthropological thought on memory.

In addition, Norra (1989) in his reflections of sites of memories gives a framework for understanding why a place like the Victims of Fascism Square caused strong reaction among Zagreb's citizens. Kuljić's (2006) research continues to recount the importance of collective memory and its role in forming identity. Another important stronghold of this research is the symbolic significance of the city landscape, which is examined through work of Azaryahu (1990), who highlights the component of toponymy as a system of signs which empowers official history and collective identity of the city and represents the official history and the prevailing system of values in society. The relationship between cities and remembrance is not simple, just as humans have a substantial impact on the city landscape and are constantly changing it, so too does the city have a certain impact on humans. That impact of the city landscape on human life is used by certain power structures that control the public space and use it to express and amplify their beliefs and goals (Mitchell 2003). Those theoretical concepts are continued with insights into two dimensions of politics of history, based on the work of Đurašković (2016). Those dimensions are important for this study since they represent desirable official narrative, which is manifested through various national symbols such as, official commemorations, statues and memorials, history text books and the names of the streets and squares. By following the dimensions of politics of history one can notice which historical content is desired and approved by leading political structures and which one needs to be forgotten (Đurašković, 2016, 145). Furthermore, aspects of politics of history are creating an emotional attachment towards national identity through symbols which represent the nation, such as names of street and squares (Billig, 2009). This emotional attachment is best seen in the example of the Victims of Fascism Square.

Those theoretical settings are the basis for a further, more specified investigation of the post-socialist Croatian territory, since in that country, in terms of social memory, the situation is particular, due to the fact that it "has gone through the disruptive process of various transitions" (Velikonja 2010,30). This research is motivated by the transition and change of the socio-political system. The collapse of the socialist systems in Europe and the gradual transition to new social arrangements have led to significant changes in many segments of public life. Monumental heritage and names of squares and streets which remained from the formal socio-political system were the first and most obvious "victims" of transition. The texts by Croatian anthropologist Rihtman Auguštin (1992,1998,2000,2004), record the construction of Croatian identity and memory in the period of transition from communism to democracy and provide insights into the commemorative regime culture and official political narratives. Her work is of

great importance for my research, since Rihtman Auguštin observes revised historical narratives in the new Croatian state through the transformation of public spaces. Likewise, Radonjic (2011,2012,2013) deals with memory conflicts, history and politics in Croatia. These reflections should provide a better understanding of Croatian history and politics and will be the starting point for the analysis of the developments on the Victims of Fascism Square. Names of streets and squares represent the marks which are important for the orientation in the city as well as the bearers of the symbols which play a significant part in the city's identity. To grasp the controversy connected to this one particular place, it is important to illustrate the various aspects of the renaming in Zagreb in the post-socialist period.

Theoretical considerations are followed by a discussion of my research approach. My research is based on the qualitative data gained during a fieldtrip to Zagreb that took place from the beginning of July 2017 until the end of November 2017, with several additional visits in February, March, May and June 2018. In order to investigate the field of politics of history and memory various methods have been implemented. As my main method I chose the extended case method which applies reflexive ethnography "(...) in order to extract the general from unique, to move from micro to macro, and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on preexisting theory" (Burawoy 1998, 5). The extended case method offered an opportunity to explore one particular square in Zagreb and the memory politics in connection with wider political processes and global context. The research was characterized by two phases, in which the interchange of various tools and analysis influenced further stages of the research.

The first phase of my research was characterized by working in archives in order to gain insights into the manifestation of governing structures in post-socialist Croatia and the decision to retile the Victims of Fascism Square. In order to collect the material, it was not enough to conduct internet research but rather was important to visit and search through the National and University Library and the Croatian State Archive in Zagreb. Political papers regarding the renaming of the square in 1990 and newspaper articles from different Croatian daily and weekly newspapers including Jutarnji list, Večernji list, Vjesnik, Novi list, Danas, and Feral Tribune were essential for the research since they provided detailed knowledge about the field itself and the historical context of Croatia during the period from 1990 until 2000. The first phase of the research provided an analytical window into memory politics in Croatia and it revealed how the governing structures used symbols such as street and square names in order to implement the official narrative.

The second phase of the research was characterized by a deeper insight into one specific memory place in Zagreb and it focused on the question why were citizens motivated to undo the name change of the Victims of Fascism Square. The main methods of empirical research were formal and informal interviews. This choice was made due to its capability to give vocal data of different narratives and to collect various perceptions and interpretations of the subject by individuals (Bernard 2006). All interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. These included a basic set of central topics and in-depth questions, which were modified during data triangulation, depending on the interviewee and with the progress of knowledge. Apart from the interviews, other research methods were used in order to adequately answer the research questions. Participant observation of the recent protests on the Victims of Fascism Square, as well as the analysis of a video and art installations provided insights into current challenges and struggle between different narratives and values in Croatian society.

In the last phase of the research gathered data was examined with qualitative content and document analysis. Analyzed concepts and categories that have emerged from the data were linked and contextualized in order to comprehend different narratives and link them with the background information and theoretical context. The analysis was the final step in reaching the answer to the research question.

2. Theory

2.1. Memory, landscape and politics

2.1.1. How do societies remember?

At the beginning I want to highlight some of the key theories within a wide field of study of memories that will serve as "directions" in the interpretation of research data.

Although the syntagm "collective memory" was first used in 1902 in the work of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the first author who devoted systematic attention to this phenomenon was French theoretician Maurice Halbwachs. In the *La memoire Collective* (1925) Halbwachs states that the memory is:

to a great extent a reconstruction of the past by means of data borrowed from the present, moreover, a reconstruction that was created through the reconstruction of previous periods, in which the notions of the past have been altered (Halbwachs 2001, 75-78, in Velikonja 2010, 27).

In other words, according to Halbwachs, the events, persons and places that are the subject of memories are never available in their "original" form but are always interpreted in accordance

with some kind of idealized (or demonized) past or present that may or may not coincide with the official historical reports. It is also important to keep in mind that the bearers of the memories are not only individuals, but also groups, because

every recollection, no matter how personal (...), survives in relation to the entire ensemble of impressions possessed by many others: with persons, places, meetings, by means of speech, hence with the whole material and moral life of the society we are or were part of (Connerton 2004, 55).

Connerton, in his interpretation of Halbwachs, further states that the idea of an individual's memory which would be completely autonomous from social memory is "an abstraction that is almost devoid of meaning," since "the groups create the frame for an individual within which their memories are localized" (Connerton 2004, 56-57). Even though the individual has its own "memory", that memory is always collectively defined. Diverse groups remember different episodes from the past that matter to them and interpret them in accordance.

Jan Assmann points out that "the central issue around which a group is defined is that what the members of that group are not allowed to do, and that this determines the identity and self-perception of that group, therefore it also builds the memory community" (Assmann 2006, 47-48). Maja Brkljacic and Sandra Prlenda believe that the relationship between remembrance and identity is of a political nature, since each of the politically antagonized social groups "pushes" their public view of past times and events (Brkljacic and Prlenda 2006, 10). Therefore, it is vital to differ the concepts of remembrance and of historical reconstruction. Among the authors who devoted attention to the distinction of memory and history, Pierre Nora and his article "Between the Memory and the History: Problems of the Place" should certainly be mentioned. According to him, memory is always created by living human groups and is, by its nature, multifaceted and divided, collectively, plural and individual (Nora 1989, 24). History, on the other hand is an incomplete reconstruction of what no longer exists. The version of the past that history usually offers is not admitted (at least in its entirety) by any community which allows it to be perceived as universal. History is, therefore, only one in a series of numerous interpretations of the past that, which in modern societies, since it often involves a number of different and sometimes conflicting communities of memory, claims the objectivity of the statement and is offered as an official version of the past. Although, Nora's work has been challenged by many (Legg 2005), "the analysis of the realms of memory contributes to the knowledge of the connections between memory, forgetfulness, identity and the imaginary construction of a nation by means of its national memory" (Montaño 2008).

In the trace of this reflection of history and memory, there is also the concept of a memorial figure, which is elaborated by Jan Assmann in an article titled "Memory Culture". According to Assmann, in order to reinforce the memory of the group, the narrative must be presented as a concrete form of an event, person or place. They are converted into concepts and symbols of the community when they "enter" into memories, which Assmann calls the memory figures (Assmann 2006, 54). There are three main features of memory figures.

The first one is attachment to space and time. Memory figures "must be materialized in a given space and updated in a given time" (ibid 54), they must be spatially and temporally concrete.

The second feature is group affiliation, because "The group's general attitude is expressed through memory figures; they don't reproduce only the past of the group, but also define its being, its features and weaknesses" (ibid 55). These communities of memory preserve their past because of the two aspects: to emphasize their specialness in relation to others, but also to stress their own continuity and maintain "awareness of their identity through time" (ibid 55).

The third feature is the possibility of reconstructing past times and events in relation to the present. "The past in memory cannot be preserved simply as such. It is constantly reorganized through the changing relational framework of the present that moves forward" (ibid 56).

All three functions of memory figures are clearly visible in the example of the Victims of Fascism Square. The square is spatially and temporally concrete, the group which demonstrated on the square was determined to preserve their narrative which was opposed to the official one and the demonstrations straightened the identity of that group. The demonstrations also linked the past with the current problems occurring in Croatia and they served as a critique of the government at the time. Before further specific research of the very square it seems essential to look closer at the theories of the symbolic significance of the landscape and the relationship between city and remembrance.

In the terms of social memory, the situation of Yugoslavia is specific, since it "has gone through the disruptive process of various transitions" (Velikonja 2010,30). Therefore, I want to deal briefly with some comments on social memory within the framework of post-socialism. Although the post-socialist wave of transition in different countries took place in different forms and with different intensity, aggressive revisionisms which, at the time of the disintegration of former systems, affected all countries in transition, caused the crisis of human identity and "serious fractures, both personal and social, in their narratives of memories" (ibid 30). Nevertheless, these new progressive ideologies, set in the form of the ends of history or the

pursuit of the millennial desires, were functioning in two directions. On one hand, they create a new utopia in the present and the future, but on the other, they allow the creation of opposite, nostalgic discourses which interpret the past differently. "Nostalgia is (...) inversive and at the same time an integral companion of modern progressive ideologies, that is, commitment to the future" (ibid, 30). When talking about nostalgia, it is crucial to point out a few things. First, same as in other forms of memory as well, nostalgia never refers to a "real" past, but to some idealized images of the past. Another important thing is that nostalgia is not just a return to the past, but also a criticism of the present, since it is always a matter of irretrievably lost but better time, society, system, etc. Thirdly, although nostalgia can be collective, every nostalgic interprets the past in a unique way and longs for its different segments. On the basis of all this Velikonja defines nostalgia as a:

(...) complex, differentiated and changeable, emotionally charged, personally and collectively, (not) instrumentalized story that in binary fashion resembles the romanticized lost time, people, objects, feelings, fragrances, events, values, political and other systems, and at the same time - in sharp contrast to less valuable present - regrets their loss. Nostalgia is a remorse for the irretrievable loss of the past, the utopian desire for it, and wish to return it (ibid 31-32).

People relate to the names of streets and squares in a particular way, since they are a part of public space intimacy, of a local myth. Remembrance of historical events or people citizens experience personally. The names of streets and squares mean the presence of history in everyday life and as such they allow nostalgic discourses. Especially the Victims of Fascism Square stimulated not only the nostalgic images of the past, but also the criticism of the present.

2.1.2. City landscape and its symbolic

The relationship between cities and remembrance is complex. Just as humans have a substantial impact on the city landscape and are constantly changing it, so does the city have a certain impact on humans. That impact of the city landscape on human life is used by certain power structures which control the public space and use it to express and amplify their beliefs and goals (Mitchell 2003). The names of streets and squares which are a part of the urban landscape thus reflect the narrative that is imposed by the ruling government and not by the citizens. Those names affect the construction of identity of the citizens and the formation of cultural values, they serve as indicators of historical moments and people who are to be remembered as it has been manifested in the recodification of post-socialist Zagreb landscape.

As the national capital, Zagreb was “a point of ideological orientation” (Johnson 1995), which is saturated with messages that indicate official discourses that prescribe new rules for the reading of history (Stanić and Škaja 2017,153).

As a part of urban landscape, the names of streets and squares are also a part of citizens’ everyday life and are as such often not questioned (Palmberger 2016). Only in rare occasions do citizens reflect and remember what those names mean and rebel against them, which was the case with the Victims of Fascism Square. In order to investigate this particular occurrence, it is important to reflect upon the symbolic significance of the city landscape. This thesis aims to absorb the following approaches into a more comprehensive model which would investigate the symbolic significance of one particular memory place- the Victims of Fascism Square in Zagreb.

Apart from the prominent images of the present, cities also have the potential for a powerful projection of images from the past. We can observe them as bearers of memories of an imagined glorious past. The meanings given to particular places in the city depend on individuals, on its citizens.

Cities change their content and symbolism depending on the time and the groups that create them. They have the capacity to materialize and represent collective consciousness and memory. Considering this, the city can be understood as a text, or as a political polygon where politics is pursuing cultural and symbolic adaptations in accordance with the political and / or national imaginary (Potkonjak and Pletenac 2007,175).

In that sense a city can be observed as a text or a message which is made of combination of signs; and these signs can produce different meanings due to the interaction with the recipients of the message. City as a text represents political discourse that is constantly reproduced and transformed; it straightens and creates meanings connected to political sphere and collective identity (Duncan and Duncan 1988, Duncan 1990). It can also be seen as a conglomerate of signs which are constantly written, deleted and then reinstalled. Maoz Azaryahu sees city-text as:

a system of signs which empowers official history and collective identity into city Semiosphere, a system that is primarily made up of street names and other names in the public space, which represent the official history and the prevailing system of value in society. Therefore, they form an important component of official cultures (Azaryahu 1990, in Radović 2013, 12).

City- text is a kind of narrative, a symbolic statement of an ideological-political program. Every change in it is always a struggle for extinction and imposition of another memory, or a sign that

the new government has mastered the space. Azaryahu highlights the component of toponymy as a part of the city as a text, but he also emphasizes physical objects, monuments and other urban iconography which transform the city into a landscape of historical remembrance, cultural imaginary and political visions. To mark this totality of urban architecture and the text that signifies it Azaryahu uses the term *architexture*. Names of the streets and/or other public spaces are not only political symbols in urban environment. They form only one part of a branched system of political symbols which are expressed in public spheres and represent certain political, ideological and national values. Political symbols are not an indefinite or random group of symbols. They are rather a part of Polysystem and are partly overlapping but are functioning as one whole structure.¹ So does city toponymy function as an integral part of a wider Polysystem which is harmonized, coordinated and promotes certain political and national values. In city space, names of streets and squares function in coherence with other symbols, such as monuments, museums, architecture and similar. Complex urban interventions like monuments and memorials construction and other architecture also have a substantial impact on city texture and have as such often been the subject of scientific researches.² The city can be viewed as a group of signs (architecture, monumental heritage, streets, squares...) and public symbols which affect the construction of identity of the citizens and the formation of cultural values. Physical and social characteristic of the city are inseparable from its attributed cultural meanings. Nevertheless, in the pages that follow special attention will be given to street and square names, since symbolic “conquest” of the city meanings is most common and simple by renaming the public urban spaces.

2.1.3. Space and place

When researching city as a text and its symbolical meaning, it is advisable to look closer at the differentiation between “space” and “place”. “Space” represents a physical world that surrounds us, it is an abstract and doesn’t have any special meaning, whereas “place” is a socially constructed phenomenon, it is more than just a location. Place is filled with meanings and objectives by human experiences and can be therefore, used by certain power structures in order to ideologize the everyday life of citizens. With the ideological formulation of place, it comes

¹ I. Even Zohar, Polysystem theory, in *Poetics today* (1979): “A system of various systems, which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole” (after Azaryahu 1991, 21, in Rihtman-Auguštin 2000,38).

² Here, just a couple of examples: Bodan Bogdanović, *Urbs&Logos* (1976); Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the city: Inquiries toward An Urban Anthropology* (1980); Karen Till, *Places of Memory* (2003); Karen Till, *Political Landscapes* (2007).

to a displacement of spatial cognition from individual to collective knowledge, and with time and identity (Lynch 1960).

Different space politics directed by key actors of physical and symbolic design and space building, attempt to ideologically master the significant number of spatial mental maps in individuals with the aim of ideologizing the everyday life of citizens. (...) The creation of such visual indicators and constructions of symbolic narration act to naturalize ideologies and allow them to be accepted as "healthy reason", that is something which is normal and belongs to everyday life (Radović 2013, 24).

Henri Lefebvre (1991) differentiates between absolute space and social space; the first one represents the physical world and the second one represents a more complex world whose significance is socially conditioned. Apart from being a means of social production, space is also a medium of control and domination. Such understanding of space leads to concepts of cultural geography, where one of the central issues is the concept of place. Place is a product of experience and socially constructed phenomenon, a meaning attributed to a certain location. This concept is particularly important for this work since it investigates exactly the meanings attributed to one disputed square in Zagreb. The meanings which a person attaches to places are similarly influenced by personal experiences and politics. Individuals are "shaped by personal experiences of the different historico-political periods through which they live" (Schuman and Scott 1989; Borneman 1992; Rosenthal 2006, in Palmberger 2017, 171).

These experiences may show continuities and discontinuities and may agree or conflict with each other, but they have an impact on people's perceptions of their society and its past (Palmberger 2016). Although political changes may come about abruptly and radically, it would be inaccurate to assume that a society fully adapt to these changes, and even more inaccurate to imagine that such societal changes take place at the same speed at which political elites change (Palmberger 2017, 171).

Democratically elected political parties in power gave a meaning to this particular place when (re)naming it, but that place also comprised meanings opposite to the one created by the government, the individual memories and personal experiences of Zagreb citizens which united different groups and civil organizations in opposition towards official implemented memory reflected on the new name of the square. The Victims of Fascism Square is an example of how individual memories do not necessary fit into the officially promoted historiography. It also shows how different dimensions of one place are intertwined when constructing meanings.

While researching the renaming of public space it is advisable to revise how the political elites in power affirm national unity and use the urban landscape in the nation-building process. Geographer Yu Fu Tuan is addressing the question in what way and how a place is created by a national state, since the state is not experientially accessible to all its members. In order for the national state to become a concrete place with which people feel deeply involved, and not just as a political idea, symbolical means must be used. That can be accomplished through maps in atlas or books which represent state as clearly defined ethnicity (Tuan 1997).

Billig (2009) shows how nationalism is not a passing feeling or an exceptional phenomenon, but a routine experience that has an important function of affirming national unity. Rather than to conceive nationalism as a result of extraordinary circumstances that is otherwise on the margins of the political system, we should consider it as our 'permanent' integrative framework which tends to show the nation as something natural. One of the tools of this permanent framework are the names of streets and squares which emphasize the belonging to the nation in everyday life. That was manifested in the post-socialist Zagreb landscape references to Croatian tradition, ancestry and national features. The names of streets and squares carried old historic figures, as Croatian kings and dukes, which served as an indicator that Croatia had a long, "glorious" history, even before Yugoslavia and people were remembered of their belonging to this "great" nation.

Following up these understandings of the nature of (social) place, one can claim that the city is a construction made of words, and not just stone (Tuan 1997). Therefore, the city can be interpreted as a set of symbols with varying and non-definitive meanings. If the city is grasped as a discourse, then it would be a communication which is in most cases not comprehensible.

The meanings of space and location in the city are rather understood through a language for which each individual has its own dictionary. This individual's dictionary is constantly changing but it is despite that not spontaneous. It is determined by identity politics of different social groups. In that way the city as a text is building a collective identity (Radović 2013, 27).

Referring to the Lefebvre concepts one can claim that national state has a primacy in the social production of space and monopoly in the planning, mapping and public memorization of space, respectively in raising and designing of monuments and memorials whereby it enables its own reification and domination. In the modern age, this monopoly shrouded to a certain extent, national states are not so monolithic and authoritative as they used to be and the state in many of its basic functions are being disputed by capital, supranational and subnational entities, certain social structures and other components. Nevertheless, political place of remembrance is

still national, not transnational or global, since memory is inseparably linked to the national past (Huyssen 2003). This inseparable link is used by the national state which tries to keep predominance where control is most easily accomplished. And since labeling of public space, hence street and squares naming, and renaming is much easier than for example building a monument, naming of the streets and squares is often understood as a polygon for entering the past and the public manifestation of different memories (Radović 2013, 29).

2.1.4. National politics of memory

Resuming the previous theoretical conceptualization of the city as a text, this chapter will give an insight in the politics of memory and its relation to the citizens. Names of the streets and squares are one of the instruments of the national politics because they reflect official historical memory of the nation. Since the certain historical memories are shared by the citizens, the names of streets and squares can also serve to strengthen the collective identity. The interpretation of history has an undeniable political-legitimacy function at three levels:

First, shared memories of historical events and a certain image of nations history are often purposefully emphasized or even altered by power structures and have a integrative function for society; second, they have a constitutive function for the political system; and finally different interpretations of the historical events are legitimizing political action on the basis of history (Đurašković 2016, 145).

Historical memory is the conceptual core of any socially integrative thought, and, with the influence of general ideological assumptions, it forms and structures the idea of the future (Kuljić 2006, 274).

Issues related to historical memory are of great significance for the Southeastern Europe, since after the disintegration of socialism, in countries that have emerged from this system, a group of ethnic minorities and majorities was in search for a new common identity factors and a reference narrative that connects them (Dragićević Šešić 2012, 70). Therefore, the importance of memory for the constitution of collective identities is stressed. Pierre Nora (1996) discusses the encounter of places and memories and determines the concept of a memory place (*lieu de memoire*) which can be mythical or real in nature, whereby it becomes significant not because of its physical appearance but due to its symbolical function. This concept deals with the location of collective memories, a common place of historical consciousness that encompasses the symbolical space between historical events and contemporary memories, between history and its use. Under memory place Nora doesn't perceive just geographical places, but rather

significant locations with subliminal remembrance. Of course, places in a spatial sense commonly are memory places and the connection between the past and the present is the strongest when the memory place is a historical location with material remnants of the past. In that case the observer can see the material remnants in their original environment which can revive the past in the observer's eyes. However, the place of memory must not be identified with the past itself, as it is always a representation of the past, a particular play of the past. Such places that represent the past also represent a part of institutional remembrance which can be defined as:

The activities of political elites and their supporters to construct the meanings of the past and to propagate them widely and/ or impose on other members of society (Lebow 2006, 13).

Institutional remembrance is very close to the concept of cultural remembrance, as it is determined by Jan Assmann. Regarding Assmann there are two kinds of memory: one is the communicative memory which is transmitted orally and encompasses up to three generations. The second one is the culture memory in which the contents of the past are institutionalized in the objectified culture and survive much longer in time (monuments, holidays, museums) (Kuljić 2006, 82). City as a text, respectively the names of the streets and other public spaces also represent a part of cultural memory, with the ambition to stay present for a long time in the public space. Since street and square names represent everyday manifestation of the cultural memory, their potential audience are citizens. A social framework within which what should be remembered and what forgotten is regulated, can be defined as a "memory community" (Kuljić 2006, 82). Such community can be family, ethnic group, political party or similar, or it can, as in this case, be a memory community which has evolved from the group of protesters who were against the renaming of the square. But the central "memory community" in the last two decades is a nation. A nation can be defined as an "imagined political community" which is inherent, limited and sovereign. It is imagined because its members feel strong togetherness although they will never meet most of the other members of the same nation (Anderson 2006). With the formation of nations as the main memory communities, city and its elements became the perfect transmitters of new national ideologies (or cultural memory) in everyday environment of the members of a nation. Contents of both national identity and collective remembrance depend mostly on politics and strategies of the leading social layers (members) and the conceptual system they represent. Therefore, it is important to emphasize: "Contemporary memory culture is a politically instrumentalized past." (Kuljić 2006, 36).

The contents of the main ideology which is promoted in a society are mostly dependent on the politicians in power, who are crucial for the discursive shaping of identity, especially the collective identity. Rihtman-Auguštin notes that:

The renaming procedure is only a part of the effort to pre-embrace the nation, its ideologies, its culture- that is, our worldview- and are included in the contemporary “magical” procedures by which certain memories are wiped out and others are established (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000, 60).

The renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square is just one example of such “memory erasing” procedure. In this case, the actors of identity politics have been trying to make people remember the Croatian greats, rather than the victims of Fascism. On the trace of this concept is Katherine Verdery (1991, 1997) who notes that social and political power are expressed through control of history and spatial environment, whose connectedness is represented through street names. For that reason, naming and renaming as a constant transformation of physical surrounding represents one of the most powerful and controversial media of the politics of memory. Street names have a considerable importance in the constant contracture of the identity and can therefore serve as an indicator of ideology and society politics in a certain period of history.

2.1.5. Politics of history

Previous theoretical concepts have shown and emphasized connectedness of the collective memory and political instrumentalization of the past and its influence on identity. Due to this interrelatedness it is crucial to further explain the politics of history and its dimensions.

After the independence of Croatia, national and integrational identity process has been marked by the politics of history. New system of values has evolved around the legacy of the World War II and was reflected through construction and deconstruction of the symbols (Đurašković 2016). Newly constructed symbols, such as flag, currency, but also names of streets and squares, were representing an “old presence of Croats on today’s territory of the Republic of Croatia” and emphasizing the Christian tradition (Senjković, 2002, 21, in Đurašković 2016, 169), whereas the deconstructed symbols were those reminiscent of Slavism and socialist history. Politics of history were characterized by the national identity building process in Croatia. By revising narratives that have emerged from such politics one can follow the Yugoslav symbols which had to be forgotten (ibid). Removal of the Victims of Fascism Square was the beginning of a growing tendency of Croatian nationalism and the implementation of the official narrative of the Yugoslav past (as a negative reference). In order to grasp the full picture of the renaming of this particular square in Zagreb and the controversy related to it, it is

important to deal with the concepts of politics of history. After Đurašković, the implementation of politically instrumentalized past to the memory cultures and the transmitting of the national ideology can be divided in four sections.

1. The first section is related to the content that is taught in schools. It represents the politico-educational politics of history. The aim of this section is to implement the official narrative early on, so that the children would learn approved national ideology (Đurašković, 2012, 145).
2. The second segment of politics of history are national symbols, such as national flag, coat of arms, national currency and stamps whose idea is to create an emotional attachment to a national symbolic identity (Đurašković, 2012, 145).
3. The third segment is administrative dimension the politics of history, which focuses on the public spaces (streets and squares), memorials sites and institutionalized commemorations (Leggewie and Meyer 2002, in Đurašković 2016, 145). This aspect is focusing on the presence of official national ideology in the everyday sphere of citizens.
4. The last concept of the politics of history is the *Vergangenheitspolitik* (Politics of the past) which “aims at how democratic societies approach their felonious past on the political, judicial and cultural level” (Radonic 2012b, 204). “The term is was introduced in mid 1990s to describe the politics of dealing with the Nazi past on one hand and with the Communist past on the other” (Radonic, 2013b, 234).

This Master Thesis focuses on the last two aspects of the politics of history. There is a focus on the politics of past, since Croatia is s country that has greatly disregarded the process of coming to terms with the past and the removal of the Victims of Fascism Square is one aspect of such *Vergangenheitspolitik*. Moreover, the way in which Croatia has approached the past was influenced by the Homeland War and the unacceptance of the war crimes (Đurašković, 2016, 146). The politico-administrative aspect of the politics of history is also of importance of this study since it focuses precisely on the (re) naming of public space. This aspect shapes the adequate past through official commemorations and symbols in the public space, such as streets and squares, but also monuments, memorial sites, public holidays and it is typical for the societies which have gone through the processes of transition. (ibid, 145). This study is including the broader examinations of political culture and public discourse while analyzing the contested nature of the Victims of Fascism Square.

2.2. City toponymy

2.2.1. Street and squares names

On the basis of theoretical concepts on city-text, space, place, remembrance and politics of memory in the previous chapters, I would now like to specifically conceptualize the city toponymy (generally and distinctly in Zagreb). This will allow me to analyze the Victims of Fascism Square within the wider social context of Croatia and will help understand the role of new social formations in post-socialist societies. These two paragraphs first deal with other studies and theories on street and square renaming and then focus specifically on the history of street (re)naming in Zagreb.

Names of streets and squares represent both the marks which are important for the orientation in the city and bearers of the symbols which play a significant part in the city's identity. The research of naming and renaming streets and squares as both political and symbolic practices started in the seventies and eighties in Western academic communities. Especially in the recent years, the connection between urban space and memory has been explored (Rose- Redwood, Alderman and Azaryahu 2010, Light and Young 2010, Rose-Redwood, Reuben 2008, Till 2005). "Underlying most critical analyses of place naming is an understanding that the (re)writing of the toponymic landscape demonstrates the connections between cultural and political processes. In particular, it shows how power relations shape commemorative priorities and produce certain geographies of public memory" (Azaryahu 2011, 28). One of the most prominent authors in this area is a geographer Maoz Azaryahu whose theoretical methodological process has become the basis for future research of this topic (De Soto 1995, Jordan 2006, Clark, Wölfel 2011 et al). He began a systematic study of changes in the city's toponymy with the study of street names in Berlin in the 1980s³, while this subject in former Yugoslavia was initiated by the work of Dunja Rihtman Augustin on the example of Zagreb.⁴

³ Azaryahu approached the names of streets and squares, public institutions and state factories as a part of a polysystem of political symbols. In Berlin he saw the following stages of naming and renaming the streets: period of Weimar republic, The Third Reich, 1945-47, DDR, Eastern Berlin 1990-1991. In East Berlin the left government led the action of removing the memories radically. In the nineties, conservative oriented politicians, who sought to master the space, gave the incentive to change street names. Targeted removal and erasing of the socialist tradition from the legacy of DDR was carried out in that period. However, antifascist monuments made in the DDR were preserved. Nevertheless, in East Berlin it didn't come to Westernization, since the West was already present in the other part, of the now united city. Therefore, the author claims, in Berlin there are still two subtexts present. (Azaryahu 1991).

⁴ The work of Dunja Rihtman- Augustin "The streets of my city" has an analytical approach to the problem of identity and contemporary changes in urban terminology. The book shows interference of ruling ideologies in the architecture and was published in 2000. Apart from Augustin the works on urban terminology in Zagreb was explored by Spasić, Pavićević (1997); Hrženjak (2002); Marijanović (2007); Šimpraga (2012) et al.

Such studies which explore street names as system of symbols, suggests that the city's toponymy in an organized modern state "never constructs and changes spontaneously, but is usually dependent on political ideologies and political power" (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000, 48-49), and its aim, among other things, is to contribute to the creation of desirable political awareness among the population. Street names, on the symbolical level, represent conventional mechanism to implement the official version of history and identity into semiosphere. (Azaryahu 1990, 34) and thus constitute a component of official culture.

Commemoration in cities' toponomy, respectively commemoration names (of persons, geographical or general concepts) of streets, parks, squares and buildings, are writing history in city text by making it an integral part of citizens' everyday life. With the integration in everyday communication, names of streets and squares become active factors in the construction and perception of social reality and are therefore able to hide indicative and artificial character of implemented history. (Azaryahu 1996, 481). Consequently, city toponomy can be seen as a specific system of representations. The names of streets and squares are an active element of city's identity, since they present the places in relation to which people can position themselves. On the symbolic level, they represent the conventional mechanism of releasing the official version of the past and identity into semiosphere. These firm relations between urban spaces and official ideologies is emphasized by Daniel Milo (1996) who examines how the names of streets and squares in France gradually transformed from spontaneous organic systems into state-oriented systems which emphasize nation and history, following the trend of transformation of natural into historical memory. From the end of 19th century the naming of public spaces in most of the European countries is firmly connected to nation-building, and the same case happened in non-European, often small post-colonial national countries (Azaryahu 1996, 314-315). Therefore, city toponomy combines history and geography, the time and space components and in the background, they are writing the ideology which they promote in people's everyday life. It is closely related to ruling ideologies in the society, with the city of Zagreb not being an exception.

2.2.2. Zagreb's toponomy

Before the municipal administration included itself in the process of (re)naming the streets, the streets in Zagreb were named, like in other European Countries, by its citizens, mostly after the landmark- the prominent object situated in the street or on the square and they had the orientational character (Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 93). It was only in the second half of the

19th century did streets and squares began to have a commemorative character and the first official renaming⁵ involved two essential processes:

- a) Naming of hitherto nameless streets, stairs, roads and passages (which were mostly the streets outside the city center, commonly named after places, institutions, buildings, etc. that were placed there, for example: Railway street, Vineyard street or Courtroom street)
- b) Some streets and areas were renamed. The streets with orientation characteristics disappeared in favor of personal names, what was in accordance with the principles adopted by the City Council. Those were mainly streets in the city center or in the immediate vicinity of the city center.

From a map which was drawn up after the official renaming in 1878, one can track the process of politicization and nationalization of the Zagreb's landscape. Around 50 percent of the city's streets at that time carried the names of people valorized by public (political or cultural) engagement and contribution to national history and heritage (Bilić and Ivanković 2006). From that point on, the names of the streets in Zagreb and other elements of the urban landscapes function "as code programmes that constantly regenerate texts from the historical past" (Lotman 1984, 14 in Stanić and Škaja 2017, 150).

Street names become less local and they deliver to the city's identity (and therefore its inhabitants) the values which are formulated at the national level, whether ethnic, national or political. The marking of public space is a common practice in a nation-building process and the (re) naming of streets is not unique to the Croatian capital Zagreb (Stojanović 2007, Palmberger 2017). The dynamic nature of (re)inscribing the memory into the urban space can be drawn from three groups of socio-historical reasons:

First, the process of decolonialization and forming of new national states had an immense impact on the politics of space.

Secondly, ethnic-political conflicts between different ethnonational groups were the cause of symbolical intervention in public space in divided areas.

Finally, the change of socio-political system in former socialistic republics initiated severe changes of the names of space in these lands and the reevaluation of

⁵ The first lawful (legal) naming of Zagreb streets was carried out at the time of Mažuranić's reforms (1878). In the seventies of the 19th century, Croatian countries were still countries with many remains of feudal management. Therefore, the reforms were carried out by count Ivan Mažuranić (1873-1880) in order to manage the needs of citizenship and to modernize the country (Gregl, Ružić, Švab et al 1994).

memorial legacy of previous authorities and the building of a new identity (Radović 2013, 19).

With regime changes, renaming of the streets and squares becomes one of the first tools of rewriting the historiography and inscription of the new references (tradition, ancestry, national features...) into the urban landscape. Such change of the socio-political system led to two complementary processes: Commemoration, respectively marking spaces with certain terms and symbols; and decommemoration, meaning the removal certain concepts or symbols from space. These two processes are complementary and are a witness to identity politics of a certain age (Azaryahu 1990). The massive renaming of public space in the countries of the former Yugoslavia was primarily the result of the already mentioned framework of post-socialist transformation, similar to those in other countries of eastern and central Europe.

In this paper, research is motivated by the change of the socio-political system. The collapse of the socialist systems in Europe and the gradual transition to new social arrangements have led to significant changes in many segments of public life. Monumental heritage and names of squares and streets which remained from formal socio-political system were the first and most obvious victims of transition. Reconfiguration of national identity was rightly entangled with the reconfiguration of the city as a text.

3. Methods

3.1. Research approach

Methodological approaches which have been applied in this research will be discussed and evaluated in the following chapters.

The research is based on the qualitatively analyzed data gained during a field trip to Zagreb that took place from the beginning of July 2017 until the end of November 2017, with several additional visits in February, March, May and June 2018. In order to investigate the field of politics of history and memory various methods have been used. In order to connect multiple dimensions of the field and the actors involved, the study was characterized by combining observations, theories, methods and empirical materials. Qualitative formal and informal interviews, participant observation and the document analysis were central methods. Since the research searches to locate everyday life in its historical context it seemed important to connect social reality and theory. Therefore, I chose the extended case method which “applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from unique, to move from micro to the

macro, and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on preexisting theory” (Burawoy 1998,5).

Polanyi (1958) explains the reflexive science as “a model of science that embraces not detachment but engagement as a road to knowledge (...) in which the theory guides our dialogue with the participants” (Burawoy 1998, 5).

Reflexive science is premised upon our own participation in the world and it deploys multiple dialogues, between the observer and the participants, local processes, extra-local forces, and the theory itself, in order to reach explanations of empirical phenomena (Burawoy 1998, 5).

Use of multiple dialogues was important for the study on the remembrance politics due to its capability to embed everyday practices with broader political phenomenon.

Another characterization of the extended case method is to emphasize the role of theory as an analytical tool which gives a deeper understanding of the given subject and offers an opportunity to define the time and space frame that has served as a guideline for locating the process of renaming a particular square in Zagreb into a wider social, political and historical context. Although the role of theory is emphasized, the extended case method doesn’t exclude other empirical techniques such as qualitative interview, forms of observation as well as the document analysis, but is rather supported by these techniques in order to reach comprehensive analysis.

The extended case method is characterized by four dimensions which are all unified in the principle of dialogue (Burawoy 1998, 16). The first dimension is “the interview itself, (...) which is not simply a stimulus to reveal the true state of the interviewee but is also an intervention into the interviewee’s life” (Burawoy 1998, 14). The second dimension is engaging with the interviewer’s stimulus, since “(...) one can standardize the question but not the respondent’s interpretation of the question” (Burawoy, 1998, 14).

Reflexive science commands the observer to unpack those situational experiences by moving with the participants through their space and time (Burawoy 1998, 14).

Since there is no field which can be held constant, the third-dimension engages with the external field within which the interview occurs (ibid, 15). “It is important to acknowledge that study can be shaped by the external field of forces and we must therefore look upon the external field as the conditions of existence of the locale within which the research occurs. Hence, we must study the everyday life from the standpoint of its structuration” (Burawoy, 1998, 15). The fourth-dimension concentrates on the priority of the social situation before the individual one.

“Instead of interfering generality directly from data, we begin with our favorite theory but seek not confirmations but refutations that inspire us to deepen our theory. Hence, we elaborate existing theory instead of discovering grounded theory” (Burawoy 1998, 16). These four dimensions of the extended case method offered an opportunity for the research on the Victims of Fascism Square to examine joints and nets of social, historical and political processes and a wider global context, while exploring one particular square and the politics of memory connected to it.

The following paragraphs will discuss the significance of fieldwork and empirical techniques which were used in conducted research.

3.2. Fieldwork

The empirical data collection was gained during the field research which lasted from the beginning of July until the end of November 2017, with additional visits in February, March, May and June 2018. The research was characterized by two phases.

In the first phase I tried to gain insight into the decision of the authorities at the time, to rename the Victims of Fascism Square and the reaction of political parties in connection to the protests at the square, through investigation of policy papers in the Croatian State Archive. Research on politics and its processes provided thorough analysis of memory politics in Croatia. Since politics “can serve as instruments for consolidating the legitimacy of an existing social order and can provide the rationale for regime change and the subversion of an established order” (Shore and Wright 2011, 3), they have been an unavoidable part of my research. As I was investigating connectedness between identity, memories and urban space, the ability of politics of memory to reflect the instrumentalized past through national symbols and official narratives was helpful in dealing with the ideologically oriented street names. Additional research was conducted in The National Library and The University Library in Zagreb, where I explored different newspaper articles in order to gain better insight into the process of renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square and all the resistance and controversy related to it. The analysis consisted of articles from four different Croatian daily newspapers: Jutarnji list, Večernji list, Vjesnik and Novi list⁶ and it explored the period from 1990 until 2000. Hence, the analysis

⁶ “Vjesnik was founded in 1940 as a monthly publication by the League of Communists of Croatia. During World War II, it served as a publication of the Partisan resistance movement. In 1990, the state-owned newspaper came under the control of Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), the ruling Croatian party. Vjesnik took a pro-government editorial stance ever since. A linear drop in average daily circulation made it cease printing in 2012” (Radonic 2013b, 235). In 1990, Večernji list was separated from the Vjesnik house. At the beginning the paper was owned and controlled by the state. However, in 1998 the paper was taken over by Styria from Graz (publisher of Die

focused on the period of the first demonstrations until the Victims of Fascism Square gained its old name back. Apart from the daily newspapers a weekly political paper *Danas*, which was being published between 1982 and 1992, was of immense help since it closely investigated the renaming of the streets and squares in Zagreb after the disintegration of Yugoslavia and events in this particular square. Simultaneously, the current political events in Croatia, the renaming of the Marshal Tito Square in November 2017 and incumbent events in the Victims of Fascism Square were being followed and covered mostly by the critical journal *Novosti* but also by other Croatian media.

The second phase was characterized by finding access to the local authorities who were present at the demonstrations. Some of the representatives approached were chosen due to preceding research, others were found during the fieldwork itself. Using the expert interview to collect data allowed gathering of information from individuals and advocates who could provide different kinds of knowledge and perspectives. All formal interviews were semi-structured and conducted in Croatian and then translated into English. Expert interviews were conducted with organizers of demonstrations and heads of civil organizations. Other interviews were conducted with people who participated in the current demonstrations in the Victims of Fascism Square.

In the second phase of the research I began to access the field. Since I was born and raised in Zagreb, the process of “distancing myself from the research and the field was not without difficulties” (Van Ginkel 1994, 12). “For anthropologists doing field work abroad the problem is how to enter a culture, those conducting research at home may face the problem of how to get out in order to enable themselves to have an ethnographic gaze at familiar surroundings” (Aguilar 1981, 24; Lofgren 1987, 76, in Van Ginkel 1994, 12). Therefore, it was important, to look upon a city in which I grew up differently and make it unfamiliar in my own way. The main part of the research were the protests which took place 28 years ago and the long-time

Kleine Zeitung and *Die Presse*). *Večernji list* were very wide open for different attitudes, but they always kept the main texts on the line of HDZ's ruling politics. Today, the more liberal phase of the *Večernji list* has past and now the paper stands out with their far right-wing columnists, like Nine Raspudić and Milan Ivkošić. The first issue of the *Jutarnji list* came out on the 6th of April 1998 under the Europapress Holding (leading Croatian media company in Southeast Europe, whose owner is Ninoslav Pavić). *Jutarnji list* represents neoliberal, pro-American attitudes and they have very popular columnists, literates such as Miljenko Jergović, Ante Tomić and Jurica Pavičić (Gavranović 2007, 130). “Frano Supilo, a famous Croatian politician and journalist, founded *Novi list* in Rijeka in 1900. After some interruptions, the regional daily appeared again in 1947 and was privatized in the course of the breakdown of the Communist regime. In Rijeka, whose citizens were mostly critical of Tuđman, the members of the editorial staff affiliated with the Tuđman party did not manage to come out on top, so *Novi list* was the only daily newspaper that was privatized by being bought by its own editorial board, according to a privatization law from the end of the 1980s. Being the only independent daily newspaper transformed it from a regional newspaper into a nationwide oppositional medium. It lost this prominent stand after the liberalization of the media in 2000” (Radonić 2013b, 235).

span which elapsed between the protests and the investigation, helped achieve distance between me and the informants. Another factor that helped in undertaking fieldwork at home was interviewing my partners in places which were previously unknown to me. The advantage of conducting the research in Zagreb was easier communication with my informants, since there were no language barriers.

People from a group who opposed the protesters were contacted but not willing to participate in an interview. Therefore, their point of view is examined with other empirical methods; special attention was given to the videos of protests which were held 1998 and 1999, the analysis also included interviews and statements which were given to the news reporters. Participant observation was essential in reaching the answer to the research questions and was carried out in the Victims of Fascism Square and in the Marshal Tito Square. During the observations, informal interviews were conducted with the citizens of Zagreb of different ages and statuses. Current demonstrations in both squares were also directly observed.

Ethnographic methods used in this research will be further explained in the following paragraphs.

3.3. Ethnographic methods

The main techniques of empirical research were formal and informal interviews, whereas most of the formal interviews were conducted with experts (main organizer of the demonstrations on the Victims of Fascism Square, members of the “Action Committee for the Victims of Fascism Square” and a head of the association Documenta- center for dealing with past). Interviews with experts were essential in gaining the access to the organizational context of the demonstrations. Other formal interviews were conducted with the participants of the demonstrations on the Victims of Fascism Square and helped in understanding the motivation of citizens to protest due to the renaming of the square. All surveys were semi-structured and carried out in Croatian. They included basic set of in-depth questions which were formulated in advance and then modified depending on the interviewee and the flow of the conversation. Since the number of formal interviews was limited, they were supported by informal interviews as well as participant observations and data analysis in order to adequately answer the research questions.

3.3.1. Formal interviews

Semi-structured interviews were an important method for this research project. “Semi-structured, or in-depth interviewing is a scheduled activity. A semi-structured interview is open

ended but follows a general script and covers a list of topics” (Bernard 2006, 210). Interviews were based on an interview guide (a list of questions and topics) which were processed before the interview and then applied during the interview. Although the focus rested on the prepared guidelines, they were not constrained to a particular format. Enough flexibility was left for tailoring prepared questions depending on the interviewee, context and development of the conversation. In a dialogic-discursive process the interviewees had the opportunity to clarify their own statements explicitly and correct them if necessary. While conducting the interview it was important to link back to the main topic, which was possible through reflecting on the conversation and by asking comprehensive questions. Semi-structured interviewing is particularly helpful when one interviews elite members of a community— people who are accustomed to use their time efficiently. Exactly for that reason were semi-structured interviews used in this research (Bernard 2006). Experts, elite members of the Croatian community, those persons whose field-internal knowledge has a social and practical effect were of particular interest for this research. More specifically, “agents bearing specific functions within an organizational or institutional context,” who “(re)present solutions to problems and decision-making-processes” (Meuser and Nagel 1991, 74). In this case, experts have created the possibility, with their contextual knowledge, to enable access to information about decision-making structures and organizational knowledge of the protests caused by changing the name of the square.

Unlike other forms of open interview, expert interviews do not make the interviewee the subject of the analysis, i. E. the person with their orientations and attitudes in the context of the individual or collective life context. The context in question here is an organizational or institutional context which is not identical to the life context of the persons acting in it and in which they only represent one factor (Meuser and Nagel 1991, 442).

Meuser and Nagel (1991, 2009) distinguish two functions which expert interviews can adopt in a research design and they are both associated with different types of knowledge. As a target group of the investigation, they can provide information about their own field of action ("operational knowledge") or they can form an action unit complementary to a target group ("context knowledge"). For the research conducted it was important to perceive the experts as an action unit complementary to the target group, and the interviews had the task to provide information about the context conditions of the action of the target group - the protesters on the Victims of Fascism Square. The interest here derived from the research questions which could not be answered properly without expert knowledge. The expert interviews conducted were not concentrating on the individual itself but were rather interested in the social context, of which

this person is a part of. Hence, the interviews were orientated towards socially relevant problems in Croatia which are in connection with the memory culture and the renaming of one particular memory space. Although the expert knowledge of the social context was the main agenda of the interview, the subjective perceptions and problem views were also taken into count. In a dialogic process the interviewees had an opportunity to bring up their subjective perspectives, so the interviewing involved introducing the recalling of personal and family memories, which was possible through the semi-structured interview process. Since the interviewed experts incorporate public persons and already had experience with being interviewed and portrayed in newspapers but also in television reports, they did not want to be anonymized. All the surveys were conducted in Croatian and later translated into English. The knowledge of Croatian language was certainly an advantage in conducting the interviews.

However, the number of formal interviews was limited due to several reasons. The research subject is still a sensitive subject, politically and ideologically. This became especially clear while conducting one interview in public (a café in Zagreb's city center, near the Cathedral), during which a person sitting next to us started to yell at my interview partner, because of the difference in their opinions, culminating with the ending of the interview.⁷ Therefore, many people, were not prepared to talk about this subject publicly. People who were engaged in the organization of protests and or played an important role in the protests, hence people with expert knowledge, include publicly known people, who are not easy to contact and don't have a lot of time. Since the first protests on the square took place 28 years ago some of the potential interviewees have already passed away. It also proved to be problematic to get access to ideological opponents of the protesters who declined requests to engage in a dialog. Due to these limitations, complementary to formal interviews, I applied further research techniques. As mentioned before, I engaged in participant observation during which informal interviews were conducted.

⁷ The woman sitting next to us became very upset. She starts yelling: "How aren't you ashamed, doing such an interview in public, talking about the worst criminal (Tito). One cannot have coffee in peace anymore!" The interviewee ignores her and continues talking. However, the woman keeps muttering, even more distressed and she starts to raise her voice. It is impossible to continue the conversation, I stop the voice recorder, but the woman is still yelling. She turns to me: "And you, miss from Vienna, why do you come here, to our country if you think it is so primitive" and turns to my interview partner: "How dare you talk about such a criminal publicly!!" We ended the interview. Interview with S. Dvornik, March, 2018, 340-353.

3.3.2. Informal interviews

Informal interviewing was the method chosen in the beginning of the empirical fieldwork and was used during the participant observations in order to gain a better understanding on the topic. In this research, the process of participant observation was more than just observing, it also included natural conversations, informal interviewing and questionnaire. It therefore allowed me to gain different kinds of data and allowed the development of further research questions. Since the number of formal interviews was limited, participant observation and informal interviewing has proved to be an important method in understanding the difference between the official and unofficial memories connected to the renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square. Whereas formal interviews with experts were concentrating on the historical demonstrations due to the change of the square name and were oriented towards contextual knowledge of the protests, informal interviews were mostly engaged with present socially relevant problems in Croatia and the current demonstrations on the two squares in Zagreb. Special attention was given to the protest in and around Marshal Tito Square and protest in the Victims of Fascism Square: Return the Magnolia. Informal interviews are especially advisable for studying sensitive topics (Bernard 2006), like political conflicts in this case. Since many informants would not tolerate a more formal interview, exactly because of the sensitive political topic, informal interviews proved good for building initial rapport with people. Conversations were conducted with various age groups⁸, whereas the majority of informants were students in early/mid-twenties. Informal surveys concerned the knowledge of historical events on the Victims of Fascism Square and the controversy connected to it on one hand, and the motivation for the new protests on the same square on the other hand. Conversations helped to understand the symbolic of the square and comprehend how one square became the symbol of resistance against the extreme right. I was interested in the perspective of each research participant. As a native speaker and a person who comes from Zagreb I had no difficulties in gaining contact to people. Apart from the informal conversations concerning the Victims of Fascism Square, additional analysis was conducted in the form of a questionnaire with twenty people on the current renaming in Zagreb. The citizens were asked for their opinion concerning the name change of the Marshal Tito Square into the Square of Croatian Republic, which happened in November 2017. The questionnaire was conducted in March 2018 on the square itself and in

⁸ Age groups ranging from 20-70

the immediate vicinity of the square. Informal conversations helped me gain better insight into the topic and were recorded in the form of field notes.

3.4. Analysis

In addition to various data, in the research journal notes on scientific approaches, personal thoughts and designs for carrying out the methods were written down. Methodological notes helped record the course of field research methods and choose the suitable analysis approach, which will be discussed in next paragraphs.

3.4.1. Qualitative content analysis

For the evaluation of the gathered data, the qualitative content analysis with open and focused coding was adapted to the research interest of the present work. This analysis was applied in order to identify the concepts and categories that emerge from the text and link them. Krippendorff (2004, 18) suggests that content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts". Content analysis is dependent on "creating codes that can be applied to data in order to develop data into meaningful categories to be analyzed and interpreted" (Blair 2015, 15).

After the interviews were transcribed and studied, rough coding categories were formed. These were provided with anchor examples and definitions to differentiate other categories. The goal was to generate as many codes as possible, without thinking too much about how they may ultimately be put together. The transcriptions were printed out and marked manually with colored pencils. Each category with its subcategories was assigned different color gradations, after which the whole text was worked through. Some of the codes were more descriptive whereas others were more analytical. Both styles helped identify recurrent patterns, thematic dimensions and analytical categories. After this first step, the categories were reformulated, reassigned or defined more precisely. The research questions formulated at the beginning of the work served as a template for orientation in the analysis. This continuous revision of the categories and subcategories was finally formulated as follows:

- Historical background (Croatia / The Victims of Fascism Square)
- Political dimension (engagement/disregard/reaction)
- Symbolism of the square name
- Motives (general / personal)
- Protest course (program/slogans/changes)

- Media attention/International interest
- Meaningfulness and purpose/ethical dimension
- Effect and consequences (support/opposition)

Coding allowed comparing and contrasting but also comprehending the interconnected aspects of lived experiences of the interviewees. Analytical coding allowed linkage between the verbal data of different narratives to the additional, background information.

3.4.2. Document analysis

Since newspaper articles, political papers, photographs, videos of protests, art installations and projects were a meaningful part of the investigation, the document analysis was an unavoidable method of the conducted research. It was used as a supporting analysis technique in order to answer the research questions properly. Document analysis increasingly involves the gathering of relevant sources and includes a vast variety of material. In the research design of the present work, access to most documents was only possible through progressive participation in the field. In order to collect the material, it was not enough to do internet research but was rather important to visit, search and explore several libraries and archives in Zagreb. Political papers and newspaper articles were essential for the research since they provided detailed knowledge about the field itself and the historical context of Croatia. Due to the analysis of the newspaper articles and political documents, I was able to comprehend the official narrative of the leading structures about the street and square renaming and compare it to public opinion gathered from formal and informal interviews.

During the research process, I took into account a couple of art installations and projects dealing with public spaces. Although the art installations and projects had taken place prior to my fieldwork, they were included in the research since they focused on the controversial history of the Victims of Fascism Square and the Pavilion on the square. A scientific – research project *Mjesto izvedbe i stvaranje grada* (Place of performance and the creation of the city) which was conducted in 2016 by the Croatian Society of Fine Artists and the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, with the main idea to explore the role that art can have in the social production of public space, helped in the analysis of artistic intervention in the public space, the Victims of Fascism Square in this case.⁹

⁹ Sound installation *Laughing Butterflies*, made by Martina Mezak, was set as a part of the House of Croatian Artists, Meštrović Pavilion (Trg žrtava fašizma). With the sounds of laughter without a body, the author has introduced unmistakable astonishment as an urban space experience, playfulness, and excitement from the myth of the "laughing butterflies" of the American people of Pueblo in this multifaceted and repetitious place. The author

¹⁰ Another helpful project was *Kartografija otpora* (Cartography of resistance), conceived as an internet platform and representing an attempt to present the suppressed political dimension of anti-fascist struggle. The project shows the historic locations of Zagreb, on the map, which revisionist politics has squeezed out of public space. The forum is devoted to this historical period and the issues of contemporary forms of fascism. These projects offered a possibility to gain access to the history and symbolic power of the Victims of Fascism Square.

In the document analysis the origin of the document and the time context were taken into account (Mayring 2002). Reflecting upon images, projects, art installations and articles connected to the square made a great difference in empirical findings since they allowed for the development and comprehension of the aspects of interpretation that signify the broader means and representations of the square.

4. Empirical findings

4.1. Changing meanings: The Victims of Fascism Square through history

Throughout the previous chapters anthropological theories were used in order to illustrate various interrelated dimensions of memory, identity, politics of history and landscapes as well as their symbolical meaning. The statement which has been very theoretical up until now is going to gain better understanding of the process of naming and renaming of the Victims of Fascism square, and the political strategies of changing the meaning of the square will be examined and discussed within the following chapters.

The first part of empirical findings provides historical context for the location in which fieldwork has been conducted, one of Zagreb's central squares, the Victims of Fascism Square. In this section, ethnographic findings are generated through newspaper articles, work in archives, secondary literature, document analysis but also through informal interviews gathered during participant observation. The following paragraphs deal with renaming and changes undertaken at the Victims of Fascism Square in Zagreb before 1990 in order to gain insight into the process of forming a collective memory and politics of memory in Croatia. While following

invokes a subversive moment of the (non)order of historical, physical and symbolic interventions "from above" and "from below" in this area as well as their valuations(Source: <http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/etno/odsjek/znanstvena-djelatnost/>).

¹⁰ Another interesting art installation on the Square of the Victims of fascism was made by Igor Grubic. It deals with social changes. For the exhibition *The Salon of Revolution*, author reprinted the Joseph Beuys photograph *La Rivoluzione Siamo Noi* in life size, and attached it to a short stand. Grubic cut out a hole in the place of Beuys' face, so that visitors and passersby could peek through the hole and pose for a photograph in which their faces appeared inside Beuys' figure in movement (Grubić 2008/2009).

the course of the renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square one can notice how the dominant political narratives in Croatia were changing. Even a superficial insight into the history of city toponymy shows that the symbols in an organized modern state do not change spontaneously but are generally dependent on the political ideologies. Through naming and renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square, its constant transformation and changing of its meaning, one can follow the promoted ideology in the everyday life of the Zagreb citizens.

The main objective of the first part of empirical findings is to reconstruct the politics of memory in Croatia and position it in time and in relation to other places. The course of renaming serves as the basis for reconstruction of politics of memory and narratives of three different political orders: Independent state of Croatia (NDH), Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia. An overview of previous Communist narrative about World War II and the politics of past in the new formed Republic of Croatia seemed essential for the examination of the imposed official narrative during the Croatia's transition from socialist to new post-socialist, democratic state and of public debate about the square's new contested name, the Square of Croatian Greats, in that period.

4.1.1. The Victims of Fascism Square during the Independent State of Croatia (NDH)

The creation of Independent State of Croatia (hereafter NDH) on 10 April 1941 and the rise of Ustaša movement to power portended radical changes in toponymy of the city, as a clear marker of political (re)orientation. Politics of history introduced by Ustaša was characterized by their belief that the only purpose of Croatian people was to create NDH. Therefore, all the symbols had to be reminders that the Ustaša fulfilled the historic mission by creating the Croatian state. Names of streets and squares should honor them as creators and the passengers had to be reminded of the "glorious past" that is none other than the path towards an Independent State of Croatia. In Ustaša's interpretation, everything that happened in the past, all rulers, all events had only one purpose - to create NDH. Apart from functioning as a reminder of the creation of the NDH, another purpose of street and square names was to erase all traces of Slavicity in Croatia. The changes were undertaken at the streets which were linked to Karađorđević dynasty, the ones reminiscent of the territorial unity within Yugoslav state and the unity of Slavs. The squares and streets which were called by statesmen of the United States, members of the anti-fascist coalition and opponents of NDH in the Second World War were also renamed (Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 98).

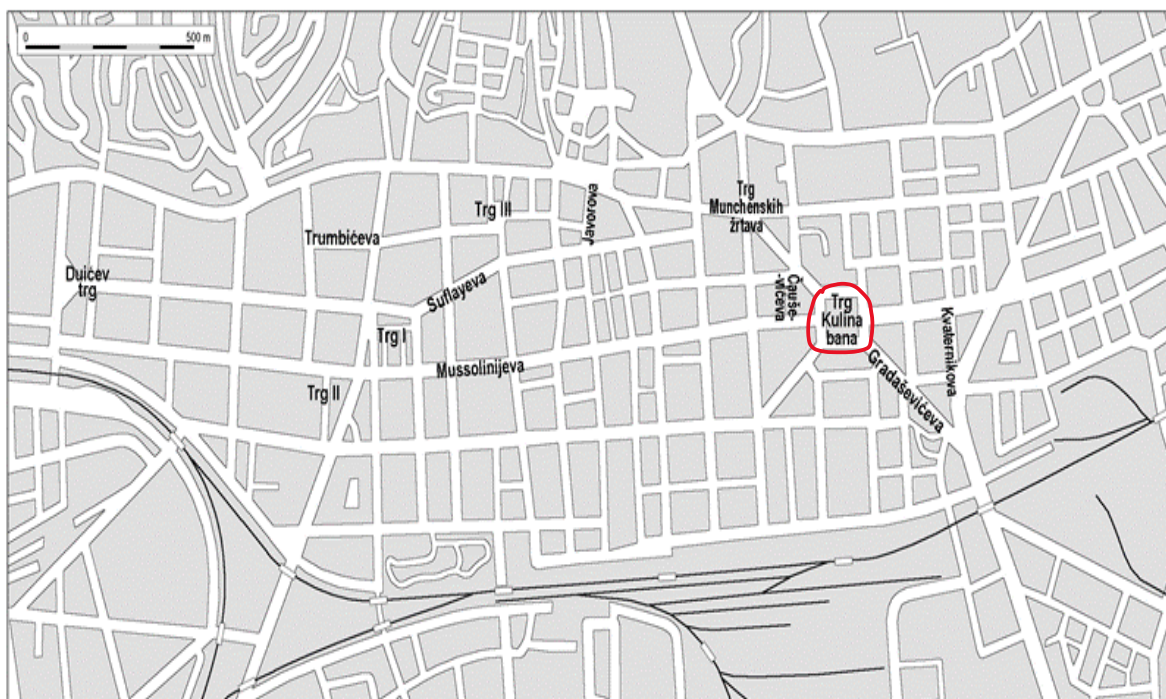


Figure 1: Streets and squares renaming in the NDH period (1944.)¹¹

These erased streets and squares gained a new meaning; they were mostly called after supporters of the Ustaša regime or after national legacy. Some streets and squares became the indicators of good relationships with other Nazi states and with Bosnia (ibid). However, some of the names abolished by new regime were not replaced with those who would fit better into its view of history but have rather remained unnamed.

One of these was also the Victims of Fascism Square which temporarily carried the name Square N. Despite its inessential name the square was already a powerful political symbol and as such caused a lot of controversy. Since 1938 the square was the site of a building that simultaneously served as an exhibition space as well as a monument to the first king of Yugoslavia (Pavlaković, 2012, 326).

¹¹ Legend: Streets in the NDH period / The Square of the Victims of Fascism is marked with red circle.
Source: Zagreb: popis ulica, 1938; Nacrt Slob. i Kr. glavnog Grada Zagreba, 1944, in Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 98.



Figure 2: Meštrović's Pavilion 1938.¹²

From the very beginning the building was intended to reinforce and symbolize the political system of the time, i.e., royal Yugoslavia ruled by the Karađorđević dynasty (Pavlaković 2012, 324). The building was designed by Ivan Meštrović¹³, a famous Croatian sculptor who made several Yugoslav monuments and it “was named after King Petar I. Karađorđević (known as the Liberator) who oversaw the unification of Yugoslavia” (ibid, 324). Although the main idea of the building was to contribute to the semiotic presence of the ruling ideology, the first art exhibition which was held in the building was “Half a Century of Croatian Art”, which undermined its initial purpose as an exhibition space of Yugoslav culture. That exhibition was a symbolic resistance towards the imposed Yugoslav identity. Nevertheless, that degree of resistance was not enough for the new ruling fascist ideology. After the square gained its insignificant name, the building became the Croatian House of Visual Arts thus gaining a new purpose of showing solely Croatian art.

NDH carried out a brutal terror against its perceived ethnic and ideological opponents. The regime targeted the Serbs, the Jews and the Romani as a part of a large-scale genocide campaign. Unlike other Central East European countries, NDH started running death camps on

¹² The Pavilion was built from 1934-1938. It was designed and constructed by I. Meštrović, with the collaboration of the painter J. Kljaković and the architects H. Bilinić, L. Horvat, D. Ibler, I. Zemljak, N. Molnar, L. Kalde and Z. Kavurić (Source : <http://www.hdlu.hr/mestrovicev-paviljon/povijest-zgrade/>).

¹³ Due to its designer, exhibition space is today popularly called Meštrović Pavilion.

their own territory already in summer 1941 – of course inspired by the National Socialists, but operated on their own (Radonic 2012a). The most notorious death camp in NDH was Jasenovac, which later became important for the historical narrative of the new state (Šikljan 2009). One can say that the terror and oppression were the only success of NDH. And the center of terror was today's Victims of Fascism Square. On the square itself and on the streets leading to the square (Račka and Zvonimirova) Ustaša and Third Reich's administrative bodies and prisons were situated.¹⁴ The offices of the Ustaša Control Service (UNS), which was "a supreme military and civilian authority within the Ustaša military and the main body of the Ustaša regime's special police" (Krizman 1980, 78) were situated in Zvonimirova Street. Apart from UNS, there were other administrative bodies and prisons situated on and around the square. Prison of Ustaša Constabulary was in the Račka street, whereas Gestapo prison and the Ustaša Control Service were situated on the Square N / Ban Kulin Square, in the basement of the JAZU (Yugoslav Academy of science and art)¹⁵.

The Victims of Fascism Square was not only the center of NDHs administrative bodies and prisons but has also functioned as a symbolical supporter of Ustaša politics and an indicator of the realization of the Great Croatian State. Since NDH lost much of the coast and the islands in favor of Italy, spreading to Bosnia was the only way to realize a myth of the Great Croatian State. The unnatural and violent division of Bosnia was guided by the overwhelming logic by which the Muslims were proclaimed to the Croats and considered to be the "flower of Croatian nation", who violently and unwillingly converted for Islam under the Turks. Since then about 45% of the population in Bosnia was Serbian, and that was the only way to legitimize the annexation of Bosnia.

¹⁴ Source: <http://www.kartografija-otpora.org/hr/>

¹⁵ "In the 1860s the bishop of Đakovo- Srijem county: Josip Juraj Strossmayer, initiated the establishment of the Academy in Zagreb (JAZU). In the 1860 the Academy was officially established under the leadership of Strossmayer and Rački (Croatian historian). Strossmayer called the Academy- Academy for South Slav in the desire to help the scientific and cultural upsurge of other South Slavic peoples (including the Bulgarians). However, the Academy was, from its beginning, both in terms of working membership and in their activities and work, solely a Croatian academy. In addition, shortly after the establishment of JAZU in Zagreb, the Serbian and the Bulgarian academies were founded, so the idea of the founder that the Academy should be and remain academy of all South-Slavic nations could not have been realized. All the scientific publishing activities of the Academy in Zagreb were permanent and primarily focused on research into Croatian history, culture, language and its natural heritage. During the period of The Independent Republic of Croatia (1941-1945), the Academy acted under the title Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Short Academy of Sciences- HAZU) and then again in the Socialist Republic of Croatia under the old name JAZU. After the establishment of the democratic Republic of Croatia, on June 26, 1991, the Croatian Parliament adopted a new Act on the Croatian Academy of Sciences (now called HAZU again) as the highest scientific and artistic institution in the Republic of Croatia" (Source: http://info.hazu.hr/hr/o-akademiji/osnutak_akademije/)



Figure 3: Building of the mosque (1941.)¹⁶

In order to support this politics, the Ustaša leader Ante Pavelić decided to alter the function of Meštrović Pavilion and rebuild it into a mosque. In 1941 the building of the Croatian Society of Visual Artists was evacuated, and the constructions began (Pavlaković 2012). Three minarets 45 meters in height were built together with an access space with stairs, benches and a round fountain, around the outside parts of the old Pavilion, according to the project of architect Stjepan Planić. The interior was also transformed into a fully functioning mosque according to the plans of Zvonimir Požgaj. Works on the mosque lasted until 1944.

During the works on the mosque, NDH was in an unfavorable economic situation, new money was being constantly printed and the two third of income were being paid to the occupying (German and Italian) armies. Because of the financial problems and growing resistance of the Partisan movement, the opening of the mosque was delayed until the 18th of August 1944. At that time the future of NDH was already questionable.

¹⁶ Source: <http://www.hdlu.hr/mestrovic-paviljon/povijest-zgrade/>



Figure 4: Mosque, 1944.¹⁷

In order to symbolically connect the mosque to the square, in 1942, the Ustaša authorities changed the name of the square to Ban Kulin square (Trg Kulina Bana), in honor of the twelfth century Bosnian ruler. However, the new name of the square was not used by the citizens, they rather called it after the newly built mosque- Džamija. The meanings the citizens of Zagreb attached to this square were not only influenced by the politics but also by personal experiences. State provided a new name, thus giving the square a new meaning. Nevertheless, the place held other meanings as well. It was namely the center of the fascist government, their constabularies and prisons and the new built mosque which was the symbol of the unnatural and violent division of Bosnia during the fascist NDH. Even today the square is commonly called Džamija, although a lot of citizens are unaware of its original function.

(...) we all called it the mosque because of what the Ustaša had made out of Meštrović pavilion, they made the mosque. And although the religious function of the so-called mosque was not only abolished but also forgotten, the name somehow stayed in an everyday conversation.¹⁸

“The mosque” remains in the everyday speech as the unofficial name of the square even today. The informal interviews with students on the square showed that even younger generations are aware of the square’s history exactly because of that “unofficial” name. The interviews were

¹⁷ Source: <https://www.hkv.hr/reportae/lj-krinjar/9562-egrt-hlapi-sruio-damiju-u-zagrebu.html>

¹⁸ Interview with S. Dvornik, March 2018, 6-9.

conducted mostly with the students of political science and journalism studies, since the Faculty of Political Science is in an immediate vicinity of the square.¹⁹ They were asked if they knew that the name of the square was changed in the 90ties, who changed it, and what the name of the square at that time was. They were also asked if they knew what the function of the Meštrović Pavilion was, and if they had some personal memory of that place.

Protests organized by the left for the rights of workers or certain minorities, for example Zagreb pride, but also the protests organized from the right begin symbolically from that square²⁰

I spent the first year of my life in Zagreb in a small apartment on the Victims of Fascism Square, today it is a place where young alternatives and skaters meet, but it is also well known as a starting point of many protests²¹

I do not have some special memory of that place, but I know it as a square where a lot of civil (antifascist) societies protest²²

I remember the beautiful magnolias that are being destroyed today, torn from the ground and the square is in memory as a place where young people meet²³

I remember the square after Gay Pride, where I participated couple of years ago. Apart from that I know it as a place where students from nearby high schools, skaters and protesters meet²⁴

The informants were often unaware of the previous name of the square and did not know who changed the name. However, almost everybody knew that the today's Pavilion, was once the mosque, suggesting that the function of the building on the square during the fascist NDH stayed in the memory of the people exactly because of the unofficial square name. Although none of the informants has actively engaged in the process of renaming of the square, since they were too young at the time it was renamed, a lot of them has engaged in the current protests on the square (mostly Zagreb pride) and have been aware of its today's function as a protest place. After asked about their personal memories of the square, they mostly described it as a protest place. Except as a gathering point of the different protest groups they remember the square as a place where young people, mostly high school students and skaters meet, drink and talk.

Although the mosque has remained present in the everyday speech as a name of the square, the mosque itself did not last for a long time. One year after the opening of the mosque, in 1945,

¹⁹ 35 students were interviewed in May 2018.

²⁰ Tin, 20, political science student

²¹ Tea, 21, political science student

²² Domagoj, 20, journalism student

²³ Kristina, 19, journalism student

²⁴ Božo Filip, 20, political science student

the Partisan troops marched into the Zagreb, the minarets which were built around the mosque were soon demolished, the building on the square altered its function and the name of the square as well as of other streets and squares which were introduced by Ustaša authorities were removed and a new history was written.

4.1.2. Historiography in Yugoslavia

In order to examine how the politics of the past changed after Croatia had gained its independence, and its connection to the Victims of the Fascism Square, a short overview of the previous Communist narrative about World War II seems essential.

After victory over fascism, the Communist Party in Yugoslavia was legitimized on the basis of three main strongholds in the politics of memory. One was famous Partisan struggle in World War II. Unlike in other Communist states, Yugoslavia's partisans had actually liberated its territory with almost no foreign support. Therefore, it was the *Narodnooslobodilačka borba* (Peoples liberation struggle; hereafter NOB) "(...) the clearest and the most legitimizing myth, (...) since Partisans were the only truly committed force dedicated to fighting foreign occupation forces; the true representatives of inter-ethnic reconciliation; and the most effective champion of the radical peasant masses who were largely excluded from the interwar regime" (Schöpflin 1993, in Palmberger 2006, 528). The Communist Party in Yugoslavia needed to unite different ethnic group into one single "new identity". And "great and glorious" struggle off all the ethnicities who participated in Peoples Liberation struggle in search for the better society served perfect in the construction of the new Yugoslav identity.²⁵ Remembering the anti-fascist struggle was shaped as an essential determinant of identity. The central legitimization, which turned into a myth, a partisan struggle, was very much present in the names of the streets and squares. This mythological struggle, the NOB, was legitimized with an ideology of "Bratstvo i Jedinstvo" (Brotherhood and Unity) which

²⁵ The partisan struggle also had its dark side. "The Bleiburg tragedy is a series of events in which the partisans committed mass murder after the II World War. In May 1945, soldiers of the German Wehrmacht, Croatian Ustaša, regular army members (Domobranci) and civilians, Serbian Četniks, Slovenian "White Guards," and others fled before Yugoslav Partisans, hoping to surrender to the British Army near the Austrian town of Bleiburg. The British refused the surrender and extradited most of these people from Yugoslav areas to the partisans" (Radonic, 2013b, 236.) After that they were subjected to hundreds of kilometers long forced marches which are nowadays called "way of the cross" or "death marches". "Although the number of the victims remains uncertain, the reputable demographer Vladimir Žerjavić presumes that during the battles with the partisans before the capitulation, as well as on the way back into the country on the marches, 45,000–55,000 Ustašas and Domobranci were killed" (Radonic 2013b, 236).

bound together (...) ethnically distinct groups, overcome their differences in language and dialect, religion, customs, mentality (...) emphasized the diversity (...) but taught the people, through patriotic education and rituals, that unity means freedom and prosperity (...) which brings all groups back into humiliation (Perica 2002, 100).

That slogan of Brotherhood and Unity was the core ideology upon which Titoist state claimed to be founded (Palmberger 2006, 529). It was “the nation’s civil religion” (Perica 2002, 100) whose purpose was to unite different ethnic groups of Yugoslavia into a single identity and memory and was promoting on one hand similarities and peaceful coexistence between nations and on the other hand their independence in order to avoid the conflicts. Throughout the unified state this slogan and leading myth was omnipresent- schools, streets, squares, factories, highways, ensembles, sport teams carried its name (Rithman-Augustin 2000).

Finally, the cult around the military and political leader of the Partisans, Tito, was the overarching narrative which bonded together all the different memories. Tito’s self-created myth was not only taken by communists but also internationally. He was credited for bringing peace and reconciliation to the region (ibid). Tito's way of governing Yugoslavia is often explained through the prism of a totalitarian dictator with a strongly expressed personal cult. The role of his cult of personality was twofold. Some believe that the cult reflected his arrogance and steady process that took place in all the countries of the socialist social order, while others emphasize its importance as the strongest political cohesion factor (Jakovina 2006). The images of both heroes - NOB and Josip Broz Tito- were excessively repeated and emphasized in daily newspapers, schoolbooks, movies and songs. After Tito’s death in 1980, the regime issued the parole: “And after Tito—Tito,” his pictures and busts boomed (Radonić 2013b, 238).

These three main narratives were the partisans answer on the task of first having to legitimize the very existence of a Yugoslav state, following a civil war that had pitted the Croatian Fascist Ustaša, Serbian royalist Četniks, and Tito’s partisans against each other (Radonic 2013b). A special challenge was the question of how to deal with the mass murder committed by the Ustašas. “In contrast to the situation in Romania, for example, where the collaborationist regime established camps in Transnistria, these camps—Jasenovac was the biggest—existed within the borders of Croatia” (ibid 237). The Communist Party in Yugoslavia decided to approach to the problem in a following way: the only fragment of history that should be remembered is the partisan struggle in II World War without its Bleiburg tragedy, of course. Therefore, no specific nation was considered guilty of or responsible for collaboration or mass murder, although the Ustašas operated death camps. Since common struggle against the fascism and the

“Brotherhood and Unity” of all Yugoslavian states were the key legitimization myths, the crimes were prescribed to the non-communist members and “equal” guilt of Ustaša, Četnik, and Slovenian, as well as Bosnian Muslim collaborators was indicated.

As Communist rule entailed the ideological control over the representation of the past, those horrifying events which would disrupt interethnic cooperation were not to be mentioned, except in collective categories, as all *victims of fascism* on the one side, and all *foreign occupiers and domestic traitors* on the other side (Denich 1994, in Palmberger 2006, 529).

Since one could not assert only Croats to the crimes which were committed in Jasenovac, it remained a public secret. The Communist party, but also the Yugoslav citizens, were aware of its existence, but the real issue for the Communist party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) was how to mark and define these concentration camps. The problem on one side, was a controversial increase in the number of victims by Serbian nationalists who raised and rounded the number of victims to 700,000. Whereas on the other side the number of victims was reduced to the 30,000-40,000 (Radonic 2012a, 166, Pauković 2012, 193). The right-wing groups and the first president of Croatia Tuđman brought arguments that the Jasenovac was also functioning as a labor camp and were relativizing the crimes committed by Ustaša (Radonic 2013a, Đurašković 2016).

Since the Ustašas had blasted away the concentration camp before the end of the war, and other remaining traces were removed for unknown reasons after May 1945, the estimation of the exact number of victims was even harder and it left place for a lot of (re)interpretation (Šikljan 2009). Today there is a list of victims with 83,145 names.²⁶ The memorial for Jasenovac victims was built only after ongoing demands from the survivors and victims’ families. “In 1966, Bogdan Bogdanović’s famous and giant flower monument was inaugurated, and a memorial museum opened two years later and which became a central site of memory for victims “of all Yugoslav nations,” a site with tourist infrastructure, souvenirs (postcards, pins, or key ring pendants), and other forms of kitsch, visited by 50,000 people in 1985 on the fortieth anniversary of the inmates’ attempted breakout in 1945” (Radonić 2013b, 238).

²⁶ “In the late 1980s, two demographers, Serb Bogoljub Kočović and Croat Valdimir Žerjavić independently estimated the number of the victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp to be around 80,000” (Šikljan 2009, in Đurašković 2016). This number became almost consensually accepted by non-partisan members of both the Croatian and Serbian scientific communities. It was proven to be valid in the 2013 when the Jasenovac Memorial Center made the official list of victims. The number of the victims was reached by using several various sources (books, documents, photographs, reaching the relatives and friends of Jasenovac victims, field investigations and photographs of monuments of the victims of Fascist terror). By comparing and retrieving the critical data for each sacrifice individually, a list of children, men and women killed in KCL Jasenovac was made, 169 of which are listed in the Clearance List of Victims of the Jasenovac Memorial Monument (Source: <http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6284>).



Figure 5: „Kameni cvijet “(flower stone) a sculpture made by Bogdan Bogdanović²⁷

The official narratives that celebrated NOB, brotherhood and unity and Tito, were strictly controlled by the Communist party of Yugoslavia. However, that doesn't mean that other private memories beside the official memory discourse could not exist. At least two processes within the politics of memory can be identified:

On a large scale we see the whole political process of mutual influence among shared memories, definitions of a future and collective action. At an increased magnification, we see the contestation that surrounds every effort to create, define or impose common memory (...) (Tilly 1994, 253, in Palmberger 2006, 528).

Such counter narratives developed in the circles of the defeated Fascist side, who denied their own and insisted on the crimes of the Partisan Party. The culture of memories that celebrates “glorious” Ustašas and NDH developed especially among members of Croatian political emigration. This emigration largely favored extreme right nationalism. In their main narrative the whole history looked like a struggle for an Independent Croatian state. That myth was suppressing all the other interpretations of history. Different memories of World War II and opposed narratives that have emerged from counter interpretations of war and war crimes have caused even more tension in the society after the breakdown of Yugoslavia. The next chapters

²⁷ Source: https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kameni_cvijet

deal with those counter narratives and their manipulation by national politics, especially the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and Tuđman in the 1990s. These memories are closely connected and are best reflected on the names of the streets and squares. Therefore, I will first explore the names of the streets of Zagreb during the socialist era.

4.1.3. Streets and squares name changes during socialism

Big projects of equal society did not circumvent Zagreb during forty years which the city spent under the socialist ideology. In this period names of the streets were not the only change in the city, the whole urban idea of the creation of "little Vienna", which ruled in the first half of the twentieth century, was quickly replaced by the ideas that emerged from the socialist ideas of inspired urbanism: large spacious alleys, massive block-built residential buildings and wide parks were build. This new urban space also needed the new names.

Like the Ustaša, the communist government was aware of the power of symbols in space. When they came to power the names of squares and streets were systematically changed (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000). These new names represented the new “better and equal” society. Renaming was carried out not just throughout Croatia. It was rather carried out in the entire Yugoslavia, with similar, often paradoxical effects on uniform urban landscape.



Figure 6: The Victims of Fascism Square during socialist period²⁸

²⁸ “The Croatian Society of Fine Artists (HDLU) is a non-governmental, non-profit and unbiased professional association of artists. The members of the association are artists of different artistic expressions and all generations.

In 1946, one of the first renaming's of streets and squares in newly founded Yugoslavia was the removal of the notorious Ban Kulin Square (Square N). Its name was introduced by the Ustaša power that was condemned and wanted to be forgotten. The disputed square was also “the home” of Ustaša prisons and offices and therefore, the midpoint of fascistic terror. In the memory of the victims of that regime the square was now renamed the Victims of Fascism Square.

This square was constantly changing its names, (...), so that communists did not force the new name, but ultimately there were gestapo and Ustaša offices and the prison (...), so that name had some sort of logic.²⁹

The Yugoslav authorities did not only change the name of the square, but it was also important to change the purpose of the mosque which was located on the square since 1944. The mosque was the symbol of the unnatural and violent division of Bosnia during the fascist NDH. The annexation of Bosnia during that period was in total contrast to the Yugoslav historical narrative of brotherhood and unity. Therefore, on November 21, 1948, the Fourth Exhibition of the Association of Fine Artists of Croatia was opened in the Pavilion. A couple of months later, in 1949, the three minarets which had been built around the Pavilion, were demolished. The building has become the Museum of National Liberation and was once again adapted.³⁰ Two galleries and staircases were added to the central hall, and the original daylight was completely depleted by covering the dome. In 1955 the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the National Revolution was officially opened in the building (Pavlaković 2012). The Pavilion functioned as the Museum until 1990 when it became the Croatian Association of Fine Artists (HDLU).

The aims and activities of the association are to encourage contemporary visual art, to promote and protect the freedom of visual arts, to organize exhibitions, to participate in the preparation of laws and regulations related to artistic creation and the protection of the rights of artists” (Source: <http://www.hdlu.hr/eng/home-hdlu/building-history/>).

²⁹ Interview with S. Dvornik, March 2018, 31-35.

³⁰ According to the project of the architect Vjenceslav Richter

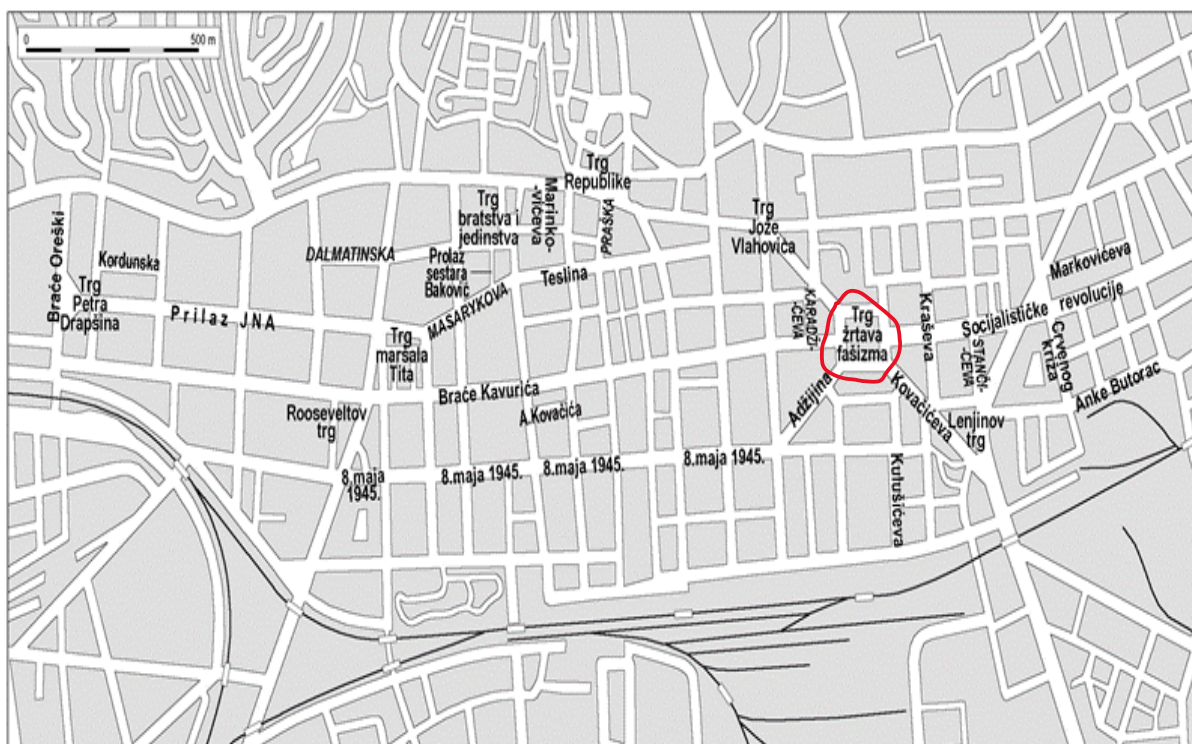


Figure 7: Streets and squares renaming in the socialist period (1990.)³¹

Not only did Ban Kulin Square gain a new name, but so did the other streets of the Lower Town in Zagreb. The renaming's were not only conducted in the streets that were reminiscent of Ustaša regime. Many streets and squares were named after new historic figures and events associated with workers and military heroes of the anti-fascist struggle, important dates for the creation of Yugoslavia as well as events and personalities related to the Communist Party. Many of the streets that had been carrying the names of significant Croatian intellectuals and princes became the bearers of the socialist symbolism embodied in the names of folk heroes (Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 99).

By reevaluating national history from the Lower Town, the streets of the kings of Zvonimir and Krešimir, the nobility of Josip Jelačić, and Peter and Thomas Erdödy, the Archbishop of Antun Bauer and the well-known 19th century merchant Nikola Nikolic were erased (Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 98). The renaming of Ban Jelačić square, which is until today perceived as the heart of the city, was most controversial. Ban Jelačić was proclaimed as “the servant of foreign interests”, in 1947 his statue was removed, and the square gained the well thought suitable

³¹ Legend: Streets and squares which gained new names (in small letters) Streets and squares which gained their old names back (uppercase). Source: Nact Slob. i Kr. glavnog Grada Zagreba ..., 1944; Plan grada, 1990; Jelić and Klemenčić 1990, 25, in Stanić Slavuj, Škaja 2009,99. The Victims of Fascism Square is marked with red circle.

name, the Square of the Republic. At the same time, the names of the streets were evaluated with a new history - from the communists, antifascists, partisan heroes (Anka Butorac, Josip Kraš, Ivo Marinković, Ante Kovačić, Božidar Adžija et al.) to Military Units (Appearance of the Yugoslav People's Army, Red Army Street) and fundamental events and ideas (Socialist Revolution street, 8th of May 1945 street, Square of Brotherhood and Unity) (Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 100).

During the socialist period in Croatia the names of the streets and squares in Zagreb displayed a bizarre combination of symbols of socialism and Croatian national history. That can especially be seen in the names of the main Zagreb Lower Town squares of the socialist era. From ten squares five were left with the names of Croatian historic figures (Mažuranić, Marulić, N. Šubić Zrinski, J.J. Strossmayer and king Tomislav), whereas the other five squares carried the names symbolizing socialist power (Marshal Tito, Joža Vlahović, Lenin, Square of the Republic and the Victims of Fascism Square). Although in the names of central city squares the Croatian historical symbolism was still present, the educational system and everyday newspapers had the merits of Marshal Tito and Lenin (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000).

Symbolism of street names is further highlighted by its position and length. Good positioning of the streets and squares must have contributed to the transmission of the symbols of the state at the time (Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 100). For that reason, the locations of the streets were carefully picked. One good example for that is the process of merging the four streets of lower town (Vukotinovićeve, Hatzova, Žerjaviceve and Trenkova, into the so-called "green valley") into one street named after the date of entry of the Yugoslav military units in Zagreb and the liberation from the Ustaša regime (8th of May). Merging as many as four streets in one stress the importance of the date which should never be forgotten (ibid).

The street topography was also reflected in the foreign relations of the new Yugoslavia. The common affiliation of the anti-fascist block in the Second World War affirms the names of Roosevelt Square, Generalissimus Stalin Square and Red Army Street. The two latter streets, however, changed their names very quickly after the Stalin and Tito relationship had cooled down. Changes of the Stalin Square to Lenin Square and the Red Army Street in the Street of the Socialist Revolution point to the distancing of the new Yugoslavia from the politics of socialist Russia, but not from the original socialist ideas (ibid 101).

With the renaming of the key points of the Lower Town center, the effect of the domination of the new socialist history of the nation was achieved, and the old citizens of Zagreb seemed to

live in a strange city, whereas the newcomers and the new generations were adapting slowly, until the new political “quake” at the beginning of the nineties did not disrupt politics of past and city’s toponymy again.

4.1.4. Croatian history politics in the 1990s

Post-communist transition process in the East European Countries was marked by the democratization and the national identity building, during which politics of history and memory were essential. Countries in transition commonly chose pre-communist autonomy as a positive reference in their new political narrative. Croatia however, unlike other post-socialist countries, has selected World War II and the fascist Independent State of Croatia as a period of “golden era” in the history worth being remembered.

Such politics of history and memory was shaped by the head of Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) Tuđman³², after he won in the first Croatian democratic elections in April 1990. One of the most important issues of the new elected president were politics of past and a new official narrative. In his understanding, Ustaša and partisans both fought in their own way for the Croatian cause in World War II. The two political antipodes, which had fought in the Second World War, were now presented in the sense of the Croatian cause as compatible (Radonic 2012b, 206).

The idea of the national reconciliation project was to point out that the Croats have achieved their independence themselves, for which they have strived for centuries. However, the character Independent State of Croatia seemed to be forgotten which has brought a stronger flirtation to fascists Ustaša and linked national reconciliation to the rehabilitation of a fascist state (Pavlaković 2008a, Silber and Little 1996, Hudelist 2004).

(...) the late President Tuđman, who actually allowed the beginning of the wave of revisionism, had an ambivalent approach, that is, anti-fascism in the Constitution on one hand, and proposing the mixing of bones in Jasenovac on the other, which was then inherited by his political heirs through HDZ representatives and is even more tangled since the current Prime Minister Plenković did not have the strength to remove the greeting “Za dom spremni” (For the homeland ready), which is equal

³² Franjo Tuđman was a Communist general in the Yugoslav army who had joined Tito’s partisans during World War II. During the 16 years he has spent in Belgrade he proved to be a committed Communist (Hudelist 2004, 193). However, after he left Belgrade in 1961, he changed his ideals and became a Croatian nationalist. In the 1973, he was even sentenced to prison for his contacts with the Croatian nationalists in exile with whom he even discussed about the positive aspects of Ustaša regime (ibid 197, in Đurašković 2016).

to the Nazi greeting, from Jasenovac but only moved that panel set by the HOS³³ to the nearby Novska (...)”³⁴

The emerging of nostalgia towards Ustaša legacy became very present in the political sphere and even in the everyday life through the Ustaša iconography and rhetoric (Đurašković 2016, 125). Such rhetoric was enabled through the Tuđman’s political stance and was mostly visible after his public speech on the First General Assembly in the February 1990, which was dominated by the right-wing fanatics holding Ustaša regime insignia (ibid, 113). At the Assembly Tuđman delivered following narrative

The supporters of hegemonic-unitary or Yugoslav statist view HDZ’s program goals as nothing more than a demand to re-establish the Ustaša NDH. By doing so, they are forgetting that NDH was not only a mere “Quisling” entity and a “fascist crime,” but also an expression of the historical aspirations of the Croatian people to establish their own state. It was also an expression of the understanding of international factors of Croatian aspirations and its geographical borders, in this case the government of Hitler’s Germany, which was, on the ruins of the Versailles order, building a New European Order [...] Therefore, NDH did not represent a mere whimsy of the Axis Powers, but also a consequence of distinctive historical factors (Đurić et al. 1990 75; Pauković 2012, 209, in Đurašković 2016, 114).

This speech shows that the memorialization of Ustaša have been given a new significance and meaning (Pavlaković 2008c). Such historical revisionism did not just emerge from the war but was supported by the right- wing political structures and even publicly commemorated, making Croatia more radical than other post-socialist Countries (Đurašković 2016). Consequence of the Ustaša memorialization was the suppression of the Croatian antifascist legacy which was also seen in the (re)named streets and squares in Zagreb (ibid).

Homeland War has emphasized the national reconciliation project of the governing structures during the Croatia’s transition and became a new funding myth of national state.

Croatian commemorations of World War Two, whether pro- or anti-communist, were often blended with more recent memories of Croatia’s war for independence and (...) are thus not simply historical debates, but an understanding of Croatian identity, interethnic relations between Serbs and Croats, the interpretation of the recent past, and a collection of symbols (both visual and verbal) that permeates popular culture, politics, and public space (Pavlaković 2008c, 13,14).

³³ Hrvatske obrambene snage (Croatian defense forces) were among the first organized military units that operated in the Homeland War. Official HOS marks content the greeting “For homeland ready”, some U-letter variations the Croatian emblem with the first white field and the names of the Ustaša commanders.

³⁴ Interview with V. Teršelić, March 2018, 134-139.

The process of coming to terms with past and revisionist politics in Croatia was greatly influenced by two factors. One was the role of the Catholic Church in the national identity building process. “The Church managed to build the image of an indisputable savior of the nation” (Đurašković 2016, 115) and its idea of Croatia as a part of Catholic and Western European Civilization which is more enlightened and progressive than the Orthodox civilization, was coincided with the governments politics of past (Perica 2002, in Đurašković 2016, 116).

The second factor was already mentioned Homeland War which straightened the role of Croatian Democratic Union and Tuđman as a defender of Croatian interests and determined Croatian interpretation of history (Pauković 2012). The Declaration of the Homeland war³⁵ confirms the war for independence as a identity factor for Croatians and sign of the peoples determination to establish independent, sovereign and democratic state, and it obliges all citizens of the Republic of Croatia to protect the fundamental values and dignity of homeland war as a pledge of Croatia’s civilization future.³⁶

Since the Homeland War was so closely connected with the national identity, the acceptance and processing of the war crimes has become an issue and “any intent by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Hague (ICTY) to the possibility of war crimes was depicted by the ruling party as an attack on Croatian statehood and independence” (Đurašković 2016, 156).

Such position of Croatian government has remained unchanged until today, and is being confirmed perennially. The event in which former commander Slobodan Praljak³⁷ drank a phial of poison while standing in the dock at a UN tribunal in The Hague, where his war crimes sentence of 20 years was upheld, showed again the unwillingness of Croatian government to change its attitude. After Praljak’s death was confirmed and reported on Croatian state TV, the Croatian prime minister Andrej Plenković offered his condolences to the family and commented:

His act, which we regrettably saw today, mostly speaks about a deep moral injustice towards six Croats from Bosnia and the Croatian people (...) The Government of

³⁵ The Declaration of Homeland war was made on 13th of October 2000 by the House of Representatives of the Croatian Parliament whose President at the time was Zlatko Tomičić (Source: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_10_102_1987.html).

³⁶ Source: https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_10_102_1987.html

³⁷ “In 2017 Slobodan Praljak was found guilty of committing crimes against humanity during his service as the Commander of the Bosnian Croat army (or the “HVO”) by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Hague (ICTY)” (Source: <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/prlic/acjug/en/171129-judgement-summary.pdf>)

the Republic of Croatia considers that this verdict wrongly alludes the role of the Croatian national top in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s. (...) We voice dissatisfaction and regret the verdict.³⁸

Croatian president Kolinda Grabar Kitarović also commented the verdict and Praljak's suicide:

No one else, nor even The Hague tribunal will write our history! We will fight with all legal and political means for truth and justice.³⁹

The position of the current government of the Republic of Croatia demonstrates the inability or unwillingness of coming to the terms with past and reflects the depth of war trauma and unacceptance of the war crimes (Pavlaković 2008b). Different remembrance and attitudes towards Yugoslavia, was based upon the war trauma, which have led to two opposed memories and narratives connected with anti-fascist or the fascist side in World War II (Šiber 1997).

Croatia Right was using the image of the enemy, which was consolidated due to the war, to support their politics of past and official narrative. That has created a certain "memory community", hence a social framework within which what should be remembered and what forgotten is regulated (Kuljić 2006). With the formation of the memory community, city and its elements became a perfect transmitter of new national ideologies. Revisionist politics of Croatian government which failed to come to the terms with past was visible in the public space. The new (re)named streets and squares reflected governing ideology and the official narrative.

³⁸ Kosanović, Saša, Novosti, Hrvatska je u Šoku! 8.12.2017.

³⁹ Ibid.

4.1.5 Forming new memories – The Republic of Croatia



Figure 8: Streets and squares in the post-socialist period (2008.)⁴⁰

As already stated in the previous chapters, reworking of Croatian identity during the post-socialist era and one of the aspects of the politics of history was the process of allocation of new street names in Zagreb, hence, (re)inscribing memory into the urban space. The current chapter will provide an overview of those transformations of the Croatian capital landscape.

Part of the renaming was related to the restoration of old, pre-revolutionary or even older names, making Croatia fully integrated into the process that took place throughout Eastern Europe, where the return of pre-socialist names was one of the mechanisms and expressions of redefining history. The lower town, which architecturally represents an important part of the cultural and monumental heritage of Croatia and the functional core of the city, was by default an important arena for the implementation of politics aimed at reconversion (Azaryahu 1999), for the restoration of old symbols and their reintegration into the canonical system. Therefore, Squares in Zagreb Lower Town gained back their pre-war names together with their

⁴⁰ Legend: Streets and squares which gained new names (in small letters) Streets and squares which gained their old names back (uppercase)/Source: Nacrt Slob. i Kr. glavnog Grada Zagreba ..., 1944; Plan grada, 1990; Jelić and Klemenčić 1990, 25, in Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 102. The Victims of Fascism Square/Square of Croatian Greats is marked with red circle.

corresponding historical symbolic values (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000, 45). One of the significant changes in Zagreb's Lower Town toponymy was the renaming of the Lenin Square in the Square of King Petar Krešimir and the returning of the Bourse Square which indicated a new/old economic orientation (Stanić, Škaja, Slavuj 2009). Another significant expression of redefining the history with old national symbols was the return of the statue of Ban Josip Jelačić, which was removed during the socialism (Pauković 2012, Đurašković 2016, Radoš 2012). "Re-installation of the statue in the (...) most central spot in the urban topography of Croatia's capital - was a symbolic act celebrating accomplishment of the dream of Croatian state" (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000, in Stanić, Škaja 2017, 158). The restoration of the statue was celebrated with a large ceremony (Mijatović 1990). President Tuđman's introductory speech at the ceremony honored the homeland and praised that this act has restored reputation to Croatia and announced a change of name to that square as well as other important squares and streets in the metropolis of all the Croats, including the deletion of the name of the Victims of Fascism Square (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000, 93).

Before debating the Victims of Fascism Square itself and the controversy connected to this particular place of memory, it is important to study in more detail various aspects of the renaming in Zagreb in the post-socialist period, since Zagreb as national capital is "a point of ideological orientation" and the names of its streets are indicating official discourses that prescribe new rules for the reading of history (Stanić and Škaja 2017, 153). Political symbols as names of streets and squares reveal the dominant ideology and its changes. The following graphs (Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009) should demonstrate the intensity of renaming in the Republic of Croatia but also how the ideology presented itself in the streets during the post-socialism, in order to examine the renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square in a broader context.

The following two graphs are presented:

1. Number and intensity of renaming in Zagreb since the collapse of Yugoslavia until 2007
2. Categorical renaming of the streets and squares in post-socialist period, hence the names with political-ideological connotations

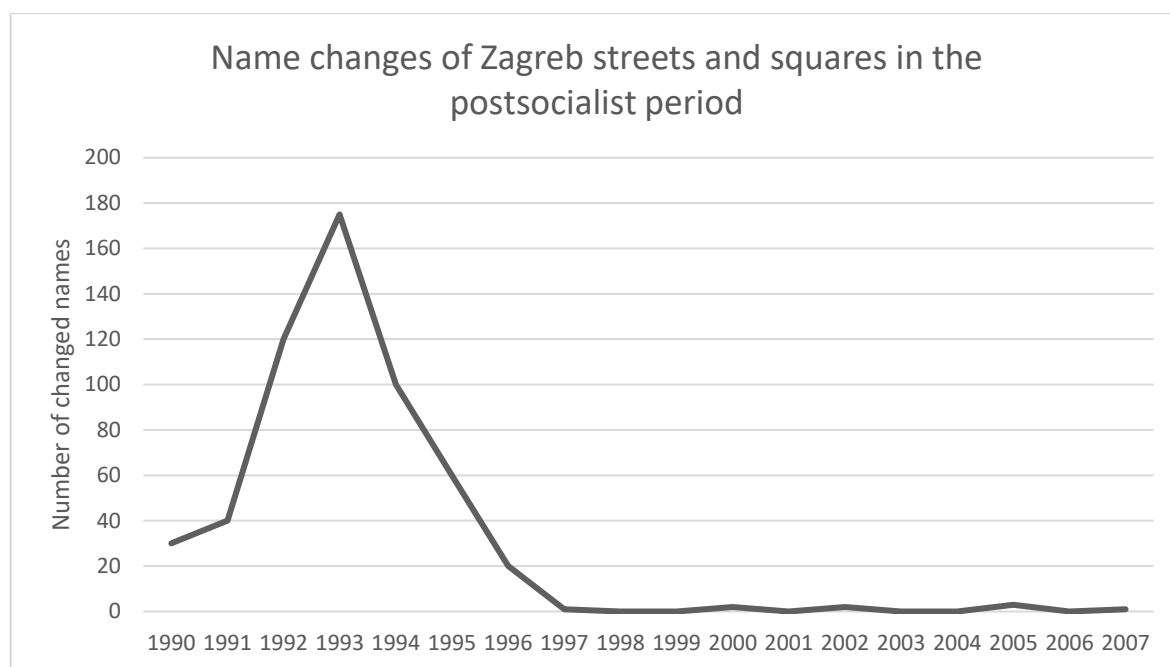


Figure 9: Name changes of Zagreb streets and squares in the post-socialist period⁴¹

The first graph shows that the highest intensity of renaming was in the years immediately after the creation of the Republic of Croatia. Politically motivated renaming began in 1990 and culminated in 1993. Thereafter, one can follow a gradual reduction of the renaming.

In 1996, the number is reduced to just a few renaming annually, and this trend continues to date. The end of the most intensively renaming coincides with the year when the last military and police actions in the liberation of Croatia *Bljesak i Oluja* (Flash and Storm) were carried out. It could be said that parallel with the actions of the liberation of the occupied areas of Croatia, in the urban fabric of the capital, the actions of implementing new political-ideological symbols and the creation of collective memory and identity were carried out (Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 106).

⁴¹ Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 104.

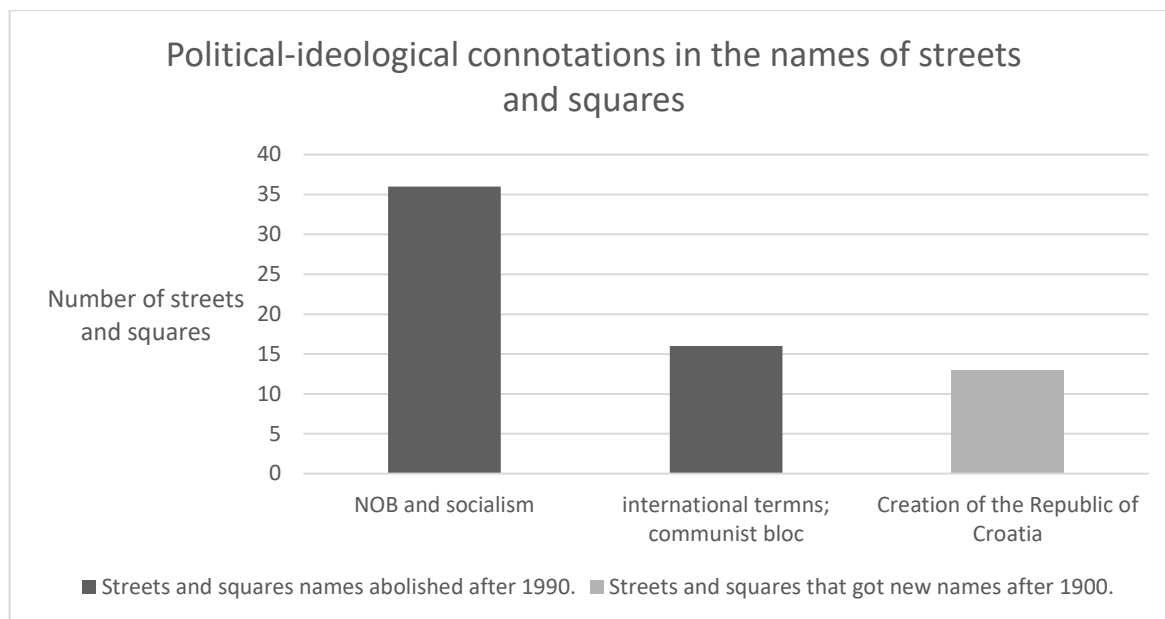


Figure 10: Political-ideological connotations in the names of streets and squares⁴²

Within the category *Names of political-ideological connotations* three sub-categories can be distinguished: 1. NOB and socialism, 2. International concepts and events related to Yugoslavia and communist bloc, and 3. Creation of the Republic of Croatia (concepts, events, military units, and similar).

Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja recorded large structural changes in the streets and square names with political-ideological connotations. Based on the street and square renaming one can read Croatia's foreign policy in the 1990s, which was based upon negative relation towards Serbia, Balkans, Yugoslavia and the international community of communists and revolutionaries (Stanić and Škaja 2017). Yugoslavia and communist block were the first negative referential factor in relation to which post-socialist Croatian identity was constructed. The symbols of the NOB and the international terms related to Yugoslavia and the communist bloc disappeared from the streets almost completely (ibid). Coming to terms with the communist past or de-communization was a usual issue in the post-socialist transition countries which signaled the break with the past. De-communization is consisted of dealing with the people who were repressors and were abusing their authority during the communist times. But it also includes dealing with the memories from that communist past which should be forgotten, hence it is consisted of destroying the memorials, forgetting the past commemorations and renaming of the public space (Đurašković 2016).

⁴² Stanić, Slavuj and Škaja 2009, 107.

Another negative reference in the process of post-socialist identity building of Croatia, as well as for other Central European countries was the Balkans (Todorova 1997). The role of the Balkans as a negative point of reference is more than obvious in the media and in the public sphere in general (Stanić and Škaja 2017, 156). The shift in the Zagreb's cultural landscape from the Balkans towards the Europe, has resulted in the affirmation of European multicultural values in the public sphere (ibid 155). In the period of post - socialism the streets and squares in Croatia's capital are renamed after the states of Central Europe as an indicator of the common cultural sphere of Central Europe. Furthermore, the number of streets referring to Croatian territory has increased- the names of cities, villages, rivers and regions have become very common street names. The shift towards long history, before Yugoslavia, has resulted in an increased number of streets carrying the names of Croatian dukes and kings, as well as old historical figures, but also scientists, writers, musicians, painters (ibid 158).

Politico ideological connotations in post-socialist Zagreb street and square names present Croatia's political aspirations to join the European Union, the role of the capital city of independent Croatia and the shift towards Croatian long history.

4.2. Conflicts around the Victims of Fascism Square

While previous chapter outlines Croatia's sociopolitical and historical context as well as street and squares renaming in Zagreb, this second and central part of empirical findings concentrates concretely on the conflicts around the Victims of Fascism Square in the period after the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the annual commemoration held at that place of memories every Year, from 1991 until 2001, on the Day of Victory over Fascism and Europe Day, May 9. This section presents ethnographic findings gathered through participant observation as well as formal and informal interviews with organizers and participants of demonstrations caused by the decision to rename the Victims of Fascism Square. Apart from interviews, the following paragraphs introduce other inquiry techniques, such as newspapers, political papers and protests videos analysis. This chapter thoroughly explores diametrically opposed narratives about the Croatian past through the lens of protests on the Victims of Fascism Square.

4.2.1. The Square of Croatian Greats

As has been outlined in the previous chapter, the most distinctive mark of renaming streets and squares after 1990s was the erasure of the Yugoslav history and memories. Disregarding of the anti-fascist memories was encouraged by the leading political structures and it did not only symbolize the break with the socialist past but also the rehabilitation of the Ustaša legacy (Goldstein 2001).

Streets named after prominent Croatian partisans were renamed in Zagreb and elsewhere in Croatia, with an exception of Marshal Tito Square⁴³ (Rihtman-Auguštin 2000, 47) which represented the removal of socialist symbols. Whereas at the same time the new names of some streets were reflecting the relativizing attitude towards Ustaša (Ivančić 2003, Banjeglav 2012, Đurašković 2016).

The decision to rename the Victims of Fascism Square into the Square of Croatian Greats was officially made on the fourth session of the municipal council, on the 21st of September 1990. That decision was verified on the 25th of September 1990.⁴⁴ An early proposal for the name of the square was Trg hrvatskih vladara (The Square of Croatian Rulers) since many of the streets branching out from the square carried the names of Croatian Kings, but this proposal was overruled, and the final decision was to rename the square into the Square of Croatian Greats (Pavlaković 2012). The President of the City Council at the time was Boris Buzančić, its secretary Tomislav Babić and President of the Executive Council was Mladen Vedriš. However, interviews and newspaper articles showed that majority was certain that the HDZ leadership, guided by president Franjo Tuđman was behind the decision to change the name of the Square.⁴⁵

Renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square into the Square of Croatian Greats was one of the first signs of the governments relativizing attitude towards the fascist Independent State of Croatia. This is especially visible in the speech Tuđman has delivered after the renaming:

if we keep the Victims of Fascism Square, then we should also have to have an equivalent Square of the Victims of Communism, since the latter are no less important than the former (...) Besides, we already made the decision to erect a monument commemorating all of the fallen, so as not to deepen the wartime and revolution cleavage, but to build spiritual unity in freedom and democracy instead (Tuđman 1992, 69, in Đurašković 2016, 173).

⁴³ Marshal Tito Square was renamed on the 1st of September 2017 into the Square of Republic Croatia, this decision will be dealt with later in the research.

⁴⁴ HR-DAZG-984-SZG-December 12, 1990.

⁴⁵ Vjesnik, February 23, 2000; Radoš 2012; Interview with Z. Pusić, S. Dvornik

The official announcement of the decision on the 10th of December 1990 immediately caused a strong reaction among the citizens, what did not go unnoticed among the administration and the City Council. Just three days after the decision, Zagreb City Council issued a proposal to establish a special commission for the naming and renaming streets and squares. In the explanation of this proposal it was stated: “Considering the remarks and protests on the occasion of renaming the Victims of Fascism Square, Zagreb City Council concluded that the naming and renaming of settlements, streets and squares should be decided by a special commission.”⁴⁶ After this proposal, the Council acted quickly and already after seven days a new *Commission for naming settlements, streets and squares* was founded on the ninth joint session of the Council of Associated Labor, Councils of Municipalities, and Socio-political Council.⁴⁷ The commission had a president and ten members, six of whom were selected from the ranks of counselors, whereas four were selected among professional and public workers. Selection of the members was carried out by the Zagreb City Council. Main task of the newly found commission was to, in cooperation with local communities, ministries and other institutions, professionally elaborate and propose to the Zagreb City Council the naming and renaming of settlements, streets and squares. But naming of the new commission did not help calm the opponents and reduce the protests. If there was an ongoing resistance to one of HDZ's decisions, then it was surely the resistance of the public on behalf of the Square of Croatian Greats.

4.2.2. Resistance

Even before the official decision to rename the square, in October 1990 when the propose of the city government to change the name of the Victims of Fascism Square to the Square of Croatian Greats was announced, groups of citizens, organizations and individuals had repeatedly opposed this act.

On the Human Rights Day, December 10, 1990, when the official decision to rename the square was made, an add requesting the annulment of the decision was published in newspaper Vjesnik. Over one hundred Croatian intellectuals (Pavlaković 2012, 335) signed an open letter of protest with the following argumentations against the renaming:

(...) The liberation and freedom tradition are threatened by new exclusivity, which, as the case of the victims of Fascism shows, encourages the forgetting of all the evil that fascism has done to fundamental human rights. The appreciation of the values of anti-fascism should not depend on party preferences. We are opposing the

⁴⁶ HR-DAZG-984-SZG-December 13, 1990.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

oblivion and disrespect for the victims of fascism, and victims of every political violence. That is why we ask the Zagreb City Counsel to change its decision to rename the square (...) ⁴⁸

A few weeks after the Zagreb city council announced its decision, human rights activist Zoran Pusić founded *Action Committee for the Victims of Fascism Square* with the basic task of preserving the memory of the victims of fascism with its public activity (Pavlaković, 2012, 336). It was this Committee, an example of one of the earliest organizations that emerged from Croatia's post-communist nascent civil society sector, that became the hub coordinating the annual demonstrations in front of the Meštrović Pavilion (ibid).

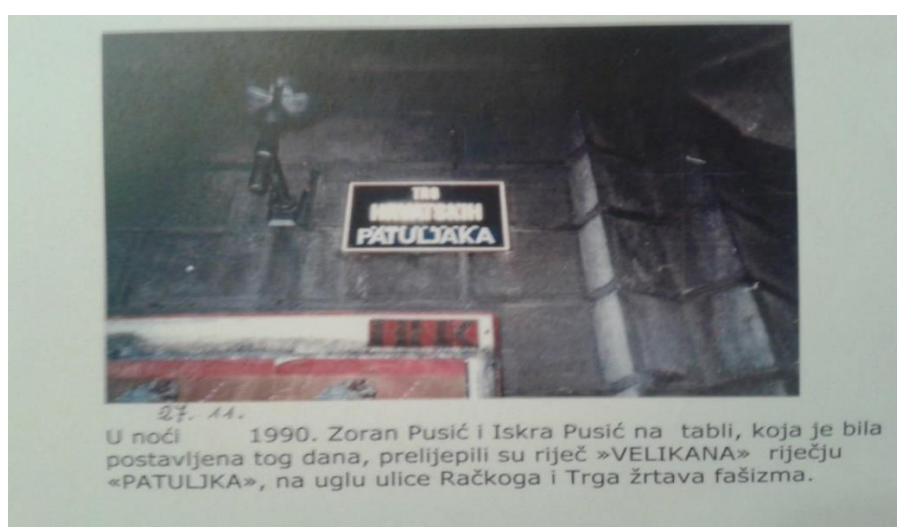


Figure 11: The Square of Croatian Dwarfs, November 27, 1990.⁴⁹

In a nutshell, when they changed the board on which it was written the Victims of Fascism Square with the Square of Croatian Greats, I went to the store which was on the corner of Palmotić and Ambrošić street where I bought a self-adhesive tape. And when I got out of the shop I met Slavko Goldstein, Slavko was dispirited and he told me, have you heard, they changed the name, it's all over now, and I said, listen Slavko, I think that now it all begins (...), and then I took the ladder from my grandmother and climbed to the top and managed to write the dwarves on the blue background of the board and pasted the dwarves on the greats, so that it was the Square of the Croatian Dwarfs, and that really is what it was, I thought the next day, then the city services changed the board again (...) I believe that somebody who does not show the least respect for the victims of fascism, not only towards

⁴⁸ Vjesnik, December 10, 1990, 6.

⁴⁹ Photo by the author (Z. Pusić): In the night (27.11.1990.) Zoran and Iskra Pusić have, on the table that was set that day, stuck the word „DWARVES“, over the word „GREATS“, on the corner of the Rački Street and the Victims of Fascism Square.

prisoners on the square itself, but also thousands and thousands of victims who ended up in Jasenovac, or in Auschwitz, that such person is actually a moral dwarf.⁵⁰

The renaming of the square which was referred to as “the mosque” among the citizens of Zagreb (and rarely by its official name), was what first encouraged people to remember what its name meant.

Simply put, it is human absurdity that someone is able to nullify something like the function and the meaning of that name. (...) Rada Iveković then wrote in a commentary for the newspaper: That square just got the name that they took away. Only now have we taken it seriously, only now have we thought about what it means, and were reminded of the events that happened on that square⁵¹

In contrast to other streets and squares renamed after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, its name was not just connected with socialist narrative but rather with the acknowledgment of sufferings and victims of fascist regime in Croatia. Memory is not just connected with the past, but also with the present and future. One also remembers in order to give meaning to the present (Palmer 2016) and remembering the victims of fascism is the foundation of civilized development in which we try to humanize relations between the living and the dead.

First press conference organized by *Action Committee for the Victims of Fascism Square* took place the day after the renaming announcement.⁵² One of the members of the Action Committee, Šime Balen⁵³ stated at that conference:

“Which Croatian Great would allow that his name changes the name of the fascism victims?”⁵⁴

The metaphor contained in this sentence is clear: In the history of a country, in front of all rulers and greats, should come those people, often unnamed, who came up against darkness and tyranny; those are the real Croatian great men (Pusić 1991, 16). This very sentimental statement is one of the indicators that the Victims of Fascism Square, hence its renaming, aroused strong emotions and convictions, such as belief in justice and injustice. Nevertheless, the renaming rather provoked different reactions. The attitudes of the citizens varied from disapproval, goodwill indifference to the strong agreement with the decision. However, a poll on the name

⁵⁰ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 56-66.

⁵¹ Interview with S. Dvornik, March 2018, 21-30.

⁵² Vjesnik, December 11, 1990, 2.

⁵³ Šime Balen was Croatian politician and publicist (Jablanac, 7th February 1912 - Zagreb, 16th April 2004). He was a member of Communist party of Yugoslavia from 1935. He was one of the initiators of the newspapers Seljačka misao (Peasant thought 1937) and Illegal Politički Vjesnik (Political News 1940). Balen worked as a publicist and translator and authored several books (Source: Croatian encyclopedia).

⁵⁴ Vjesnik, December 11, 1990, 2.

changes in Zagreb conducted by weekly newspapers *Danas* (Today) in October 1990 indicates that the majority was not satisfied with the decision to rename the square.⁵⁵ The questionnaire showed that Zagreb citizens support many changes. 74 percent wanted Zagreb's main square to be Ban Jelačić Square and not the Yugoslav-era Square of the Republic; 85 percent supported renaming the Lenin Square into Petar Krešimir Square; changing of the Brotherhood and Unity Square into the Preradović Square was supported by the 88 percent of citizens and even 90 percent supported the change of Socialist Revolution Street to King Zvonimir Street. Of the thirteen street and square name changes listed on the poll, only the renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square resulted in more negative than positive responses (57 percent of the questioned citizens opposed the name change, while 43 percent supported it) (Pavlaković 2012, 331).

Do you support changes of Zagreb streets and squares names?

THE FORMER NAME	THE PROPOSED NAME	YES	NO
The street of socialist revolution	King Zvonimir street	90	9
The Square of brotherhood and unity	Preradović Square	88	11
Karl Marx promenade	Sava promenade	88	11
Lenin Square	Petar Krešimir Square	85	13
Moša Pijade Street	Ribnjak and Medveščak	79	20
Voje Kovačević Street	Prince Višeslav	78	20
Vuk Karadžić Street	Prince Mutimir	75	23
Square of the Republic	Ban Jelačić Square	74	25
Božidar Adžija Street	Prince Mislav	71	27
Joža Vlahović Square	Bourse Square	67	31
Square in front of Cathedral	Alojzije Stepinac Square	64	35
Josip Kraš Street	Anton Bauer	61	37
The Victims of Fascism Square	The Square of Croatian Greats	43	57

The results are presented in percentages

Table 1: *Danas*, The square of the opposition's return, May 9, 1990.⁵⁶

The public perceived the renaming of the square as a warning sign of the radical revisionist politic of the new government.

(...) many things were worrisome at this time, but this part, that one relativizing attitude towards the Ustaša and the Ustaša past was very troubling to me and it seemed to me that if you were bothered by the victims of Fascism, that it meant, that you were craving/flirting with the ideas that brought to those victims.⁵⁷

Its renaming indicated the growth of nationalism and the beginning of brutal ethnic conflict which was about to engulf Croatia (ibid). Therefore, this turbulent site of memory became the mean for citizens critical of the new government, to oppose. This powerful place reflected two

⁵⁵ *Danas*, December 18, 1990, 67.

⁵⁶ The results of the public opinion poll, which was conducted by a research team of newspapers *Danas*, on a representative sample of 610 adults from Zagreb in the beginning of October 1990.

⁵⁷ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 28-31.

opposed memories that were building up in Croatia. Thus, the public debate considering the square name did not abate, on the contrary, each year the individuals demanding the return of its former name, gathered on the square in bigger numbers (Pavlaković 2012, 335).

4.2.3. Protests on the square

Action Committee for the Victims of Fascism Square organized protests on the square annually on the 9th of May. This date was chosen due to its symbolic power; it was namely celebrated in Western countries as a European Day to commemorate the initial moves in creating what is today European Union.⁵⁸ The collapse of Yugoslav state and its monopoly over the memory allowed creating of new, opposed collective memories. These opposed memories were reflected on the square itself, as well on the symbolic dates of the protests. While pro-Ustaša supporters commemorated 10th of April in a desire to restore the notorious NDH⁵⁹, the antifascists “took” the 9th of May as their legitimate Memorial Day (ibid 332).

(...) every year we organized a celebration, on the Day of Europe and the Day of Victory, and there were usually different speakers whose speeches were aiming for Croatia to become a member of the European Communities, i.e. after the 1992 European Union; that it is something that we think is in the interest of Croatia and that Croatian politics should go in that direction, and secondly that the European Union, regardless of coal and steel, actually came to the idea that war in Europe, war between Germany and France, must never happen again, so let's combine these strategic raw materials, build a unified Europe on the values in which the anti-fascism struggle was created.⁶⁰

The first demonstrations were held in 1991. Due to the situation in the country, the upcoming war and the bigotry, the main topic of the protest was nonviolence and tolerance. In a demonstration announcement, which was published in the newspaper *Vjesnik*, it was emphasized that one should come in peace, with love and without weapons.⁶¹ In newspapers it was stated that more than a thousand citizens gathered on the square, where they laid red carnations and lit candles in memory of the victims of fascism.⁶² However, expert interviews indicate that in first years of protest there were not so many people, only later, did more and more people start to join the demonstrations. Although the newspapers were reporting the

⁵⁸ “Europe Day held on 9 May every year celebrates peace and unity in Europe. The date marks the anniversary of the historical 'Schuman declaration'. At a speech in Paris in 1950, Robert Schuman, the then French foreign minister, set out his idea for a new form of political cooperation in Europe, which would make war between Europe's nations unthinkable” (Source: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day_en)

⁵⁹ 10th of April 1941 is the date of the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia.

⁶⁰ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 75-81.

⁶¹ *Vjesnik*, May 9, 1991, 8.

⁶² *Večernji list*, May 5, 1991, 11.

demonstrations, the reports were always small articles in which it was said very little about it, only in the end of the 90s, news reporters showed bigger interest for the demonstrations⁶³

In the beginning, it was very slow and very depressing (demonstrations). At first there was a group of just a few of us protesting (...) I do not know if only one newspaper reported about those protests. If they did, I do not remember it.⁶⁴

I remember, in the beginning, there were not so many people there⁶⁵

At first it was a small group, I have to say that it was a small group of middle aged and elderly people with the same mindset.⁶⁶

It was mostly ignored by the media, very little was said about it, it was considered somehow a garden of anti-state activity. And, say, in those years, 1991, there were still a lot of people, but after 1992, when the situation worsened because of the war, people were afraid to join, from year to year there was somewhere between 300-800 people who would gather on that plateau.⁶⁷

Due to the pressure of ruling structures and general situation in country, some people were scared and unwilling to join the demonstrations.

When I called people to join the demonstrations, there were a lot of people who said, I would, but I cannot, I'm the head of a project or a whole department, all of this, financing, approval, jobs, jobs of a few people depends on me, I do not dare.⁶⁸

Although, the number of protesters varied throughout the years, protests had a similar procedure; they would usually begin with the minute of silence for the victims of fascism, after which speeches and discussions would be held. Speakers would often demand respect for the dignity of anti-fascism and express opposition to the "forgery of innocent victims".⁶⁹ The protesters often emphasized that today's Europe is based on anti-fascist values such as freedom, humanism and equality.

In principle we had speeches, we had a program, recitals, sometimes music. Urša Raukar, Vili Matula and Alma Prica⁷⁰ often recited there, so they were among the actors who then recognized what was terribly abolishing, renaming the square of victims of fascism. And we came here, this was not a very colorful group, there were civil society organizations, women's organizations, peace organizations, an association of anti-fascist fighters who were later renamed into the federation of

⁶³ Novi list, Jutarnji list, Večernji list, Vjesnik

⁶⁴ Interview with S. Dvornik, March 2018, 56-59.

⁶⁵ Informal interview with Rada Borić, June 2018.

⁶⁶ Interview with V. Teršelić, March 2018, 53-54.

⁶⁷ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 82-85.

⁶⁸ Interview with S. Dvornik, March 2018, 87-89.

⁶⁹ Vjesnik, May 10, 1992, 21.

⁷⁰ Alma Prica (1962), Urša Raukar (1960), Vilim Matula (1962) are Croatian theater, movie and film actors. They are all known for their activism and engagement in preserving the anti-fascist values.

anti-fascist fighters and antifascists of the Republic of Croatia. And there were some professors who were not connected (to those groups) and there would be some students, but the crowds who stood and protested at the victim's square were actually the ones who were already engaged. I have forgotten the mentioned various human rights organizations⁷¹ that have already made some preconditions to stand there and protest for the return of the names of the victims of fascism, through their engagement in the protection of human rights, confidence building, peace activism, refugee support for Bosnia and Herzegovina and displaced persons from Croatia. So, this was the initiative sponsored and supported by the intellectuals in the first letter they send (to the newspapers), and I would say ideologically a rather wide spectrum.⁷²

The focus (of the protests) was always on that name. It never turned into something else, into another idea. There was a lot of talk about the mentality of that government. And a lot of talk about it, I think, people who were killed during the fascist NDH, many people talked about that in those speeches, they talked about who the victims were. Who the real people were, the victims of fascism. And that was the main point of the protests.⁷³

Action Committee for the Victims of Fascism Square invited the representatives of the political parties to join them and support their cause each year.

Every time we succeeded to motivate some people who were known in this society, to say something publicly on the protests. We did not just gather on the square, there were always some people who would read some texts, give a speech there (...) we did not have the prejudice and the restriction that a lot of activists have, from the early nineties to the present, that they don't want to mix and get involved with people from political parties. We always had the attitude, whoever wants to support the protests, from the liberal, the social democrats, the reformed communists, whoever wants to support it, absolutely yes. If they want to say something during the protest, great (...) we were happy when someone supported our cause. If there had been someone from HDZ we would have also been happy, but it never happened. But there were liberals, some people from SDP and from some other smaller parties (...) there were always a few people from different circles who publicly said why they thought it was a disgrace that the authorities did such a thing and naturally joined the request to return the old square name back.⁷⁴

Protests organizers have also turned to Simon Wiesenthal and Efraim Zuroff, who both expressed full support to their cause but were never able to come to the protests.

I went to Vienna and visited Simon Wiesenthal and we established a friendship, so that for a number of years, while he was alive, his wife had already begun to sicken,

⁷¹ Northern organizations

⁷² Interview with Teršelić, March 2018, 56-68.

⁷³ Interview Dvornik, March 2018, 125-127.

⁷⁴ Interview with S. Dvornik, March 2018, 106-113.

I visited his office in Vienna, where we talked, and he, because his wife was ill, he was no longer traveling and was not ... I called him to come, he was a world-famous personality, the media could not ignore him, and he absolutely gave us support.⁷⁵

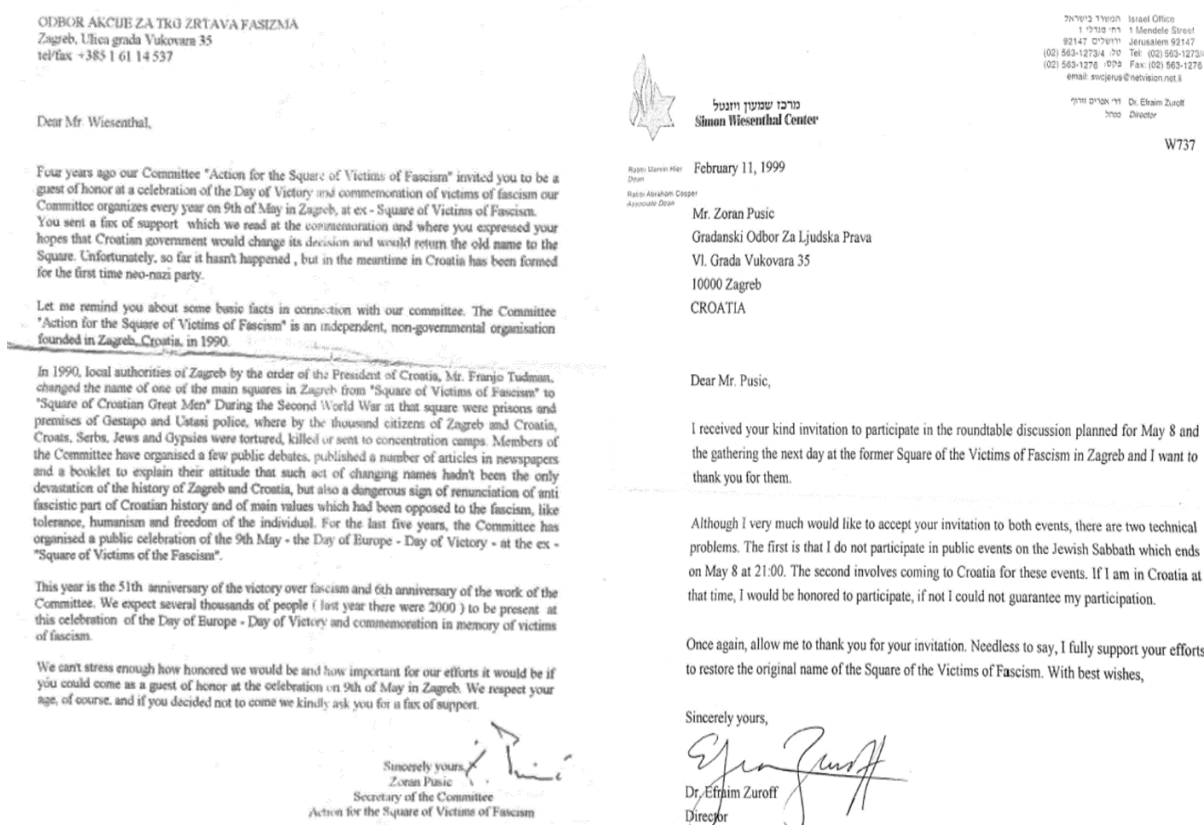


Figure 12: A letter to Simon Wiesenthal⁷⁶

Figure 13: A letter to Zoran Pusić⁷⁷

Throughout the year's demonstrations have become a platform for opponents of main politics and a stimulus for a younger generation to become politically active. The annual commemoration was regularly attended by the representatives of the antifascist organizations, opposition politicians, prominent Croatian intellectuals and human rights organizations (Pavlaković 2012, 337). Speeches which were held at the demonstrations mostly dealt with the importance of the anti-fascist values, the victims of the fascist NDH and were challenging new official narratives and contradicted the revisionist politics of the government in power.

⁷⁵ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 117-121.

⁷⁶ Written by: *Action Committee for The Victims of Fascism Square*, 1996.

⁷⁷ Written by Efraim Zuroff, Director of Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1999.

On the demonstrations that were held in 1993. Mirko Tripalo⁷⁸ said:

Regardless of the regime's change and the ruling parties, for us this will always be the Victims of Fascism Square. We cannot go to Europe with Pavelić and Ustašas, but only with partisans and anti-fascists.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, he stressed that: “anti-fascism cannot be identified with the rule of communism because of its inextricable connection with democracy and freedom.”⁸⁰

Over time, three main functions of the protests have been crystallized. The first one is closely related to the symbolic date of the protests and its purpose was to present a pro-European political platform. Another clear function was to oppose HDZ and its leader Tuđman. The third function can be directly deduced from Tripalo’s speech; to express a complete disapproval of the rehabilitation of Ustašas and use of their symbols.

The protest held in 1995 had a special symbolism since it was the 50th anniversary of the victory over fascism. For this particular occasion, the *Action Committee for the Victims of Fascism Square* had together with the members of Jewish community organized the laying of the wreaths for the victims of fascism in Jasenovac.⁸¹ During this protest Ivan Šiber⁸² stressed that: “We should most energetically condemn the individuals in Croatian ranks who glorify NDH” and added that the Victory Day should serve as a memory of the past but also as a warning for the future. On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Victory of the Anti-Fascist Coalition in Europe and the World, a solemn session of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia was also organized. However, the Croatian government used this occasion for their revisionist politics and for equalization of the fascism and communism. During the session it was highlighted that Croatia first wants to overcome the false legacy of the past centuries by determining the truth.⁸³ Nedjeljko Marinković stated: “Most Croats are equally offended and insulted by criminal fascism with a radical nationalist and racial ideology, as well as the demonic ideological sabotage of political tyranny of communism.”⁸⁴ Even the solemn anniversary of the victory

⁷⁸ Mirko Tripalo (1926-1995) is a Croatian politician; one of the leaders of the Croatian Spring, an advocate of democratization, and greater autonomy and equality of the republics of Yugoslavia. In 1990 he was one of the leaders of the National Coalition Agreement, and one of the founders of the HNS (Croatian National Party). Since 1993 he was a member of the Parliament and one of the founders of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights (Source: Croatian Encyclopedia).

⁷⁹ Vjesnik, May 5, 1992, 20.

⁸⁰ Večernji, May 5, 1993, 8.

⁸¹ Vjesnik, May 9, 1995, 20.

⁸² Ivan Šiber is Croatian psychologist (Zagreb, May 12, 1940). From 1965 until the retirement in 2010 he was a professor at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb, where he founded the courses of political psychology, political marketing and political behavior. He is the leading Croatian scientist in the field of political psychology (Source: Croatian Encyclopedia).

⁸³ Večernji list, May 9, 1995, 48.

⁸⁴ Večernji list, May 9, 1995, 48.

over fascism was used for the purposes of revisionism. The victory of the anti-fascist coalition was celebrated that year at least, since the practice was to ignore this one as well as other anti-fascist holidays, whereas Ustaša holidays were tactically tolerated (Pavlaković 2012, 338). The attitude towards condemnation of Ustaša's and communist crimes is best seen on the examples of Jasenovac and Bleiburg commemorations. "Annual Bleiburg commemorations under the patronage of the Croatian parliament always attracted more visitors and were broadcast live on television, despite the Ustaša insignia and symbols present throughout the site, while the Jasenovac commemorations have only been broadcasted regularly since Tuđman's death. The Catholic Church regularly dispatched priests to the much more visited commemorations in Bleiburg, while only once during the 1990s did a local Catholic priest attend a commemoration in Jasenovac" (Radonić 2013b, 245). Only after condemnation and pressure from the international community did Tuđman finally address the issue of Ustaša rehabilitation in 1997. HDZ issued a statement denying the rehabilitation of Ustaša in Croatia and distanced themselves from Hrvatska Stranka Prava (Croatian Party of the Right, hereafter HSP)⁸⁵, with which they had previously formed coalitions on local level (Pavlaković 2012, 339). The same year, in August, Croatia officially apologized to the Jewish people for the crimes committed in NDH (ibid). In 1998 Croatia asked for the extradition of an alleged World War II criminal Dinko Šakić, a former commander of concentration camp Jasenovac from Argentina (Radonić 2013b, 245). Although Croatia was the first post-communist country to make an extradition request of a war criminal, external factors prevailed as a motivation for the extradition (ibid). Šakić was put on trial for crimes against civilians but not for genocide, despite commanding a camp in which mostly Serbs, Jews, and Romani had been killed. Nevertheless, he got the highest sentence of 20 years and Efraim Zuroff, director of the Israeli branch of the Simon Wiesenthal center⁸⁶, stated that "Šakić's trial remains the most successful trial of this kind and the trial which has had the greatest impact on Holocaust consciousness in the post- communist world" (Simon Wiesenthal press release, 23.06.2008, in Pavlaković 2012, 341).

Despite these actions, denying the rehabilitation of Ustaša and trial, HDZ still refused to return the square its old name. Moreover, the annual demonstrations started to attract rival protesters

⁸⁵ HSP is a right-wing party, which is founded on February 25, 1990. In the first decade of their activity, HSP often invoked NDH; the leadership of HSP denies connection of Ustašas to fascism and Nazism and marks them exclusively as anticommunists and Croatian patriots. In the party's paper "Croatian Right", founder of the party Dobrislav Parga states that HSP "supports April the 10th as the date of the creation of the Croatian state, which was unfortunately destroyed in the Second World War. In that state there were also errors and unnecessary violence, but the Ustaša regime was not Fascist or Nazi " (Bosto, Cipek, Milosavljević 2008, 125).

⁸⁶ Simon Wiesenthal center is a Jewish international non-governmental organization founded 1977 and based in Los Angeles. Efraim Zuroff was the first director of the center.

from the extreme right, who also began using the occasion as their platform. Protest in 1997 was the first in which right wing supporters gathered and shouted fascist slogans during the speeches on the square. In 1998, one could hear the same fascist slogans, and the police had to interfere after one of the members of the organization *Association of Independent Volunteers* tore a canvas with “The Square of the Victims of Fascism”⁸⁷ written on it

The Victims of Fascism Square has become the object of anti-protest gathering, I would say for the first time in 1997 (...) They shouted paroles, mostly insulting people... 1998 was very fierce, they were organized, the different pro-fascist, actually pro-ustaša groups that came, (...) they were greeting with “Za Dom Spremni”, shouting, and they sang “Juru i Bobana.”⁸⁸⁹

The videos of the protests held in 1998 show the high tensions between two groups. One can see the anti-protesters disturbing the speeches and shouting insults. High tensions on the rally are illustrating the deep partition of two narratives of the World War II history. In May 1999 the tensions could not be suppressed, and the violence erupted on the Victory Day commemoration.

4.2.4. Bloody demonstrations in 1999

A few weeks before the 9th rally on the disputed square, Mladen Schwartz⁹⁰, an open fascist and founder of Nova Hrvatska Desnica (New Croatian Right), issued a call against “the red bandits” in print media and on his regular television program on the OTV channel.⁹¹ He called on: “all right-wingers, conservatives, rightists (pravaši), state-forming nationalists, and Croatian patriots not to forget their duty to Homeland” and come disrupt the commemoration (Pavlaković 2012, 342).

⁸⁷ Večernji list, May 10, 1998, 2.

⁸⁸ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 159-163.

⁸⁹ Jura i Boban is an Ustaša song which celebrates an elite unit of the Ustaša military formed during the Second World War. The commander of that unit was Jure Francetić and his deputy was Rafael Boban.

⁹⁰ Mladen Schwartz (1947-2017) was a founder and leader of Nova Hrvatska Desnica (New Croatian Right) from 1994-2003. As a politician and publicist, he represented a position close to the Conservative Revolution, the New Right and Neo-Fascism. He advocated the implementation of the national revolution and the introduction of radical nationalist dictatorship, and he also acted as apologist for fascist ideology and practice, especially national socialism and constitutionalism, denying the Holocaust, despite himself originally being a Jew. He has openly exhibited his political program in a series of books and scripts, specifically in his right-wing newspaper Ultimatum!

⁹¹ Novi list, May 7, 1999, 6.

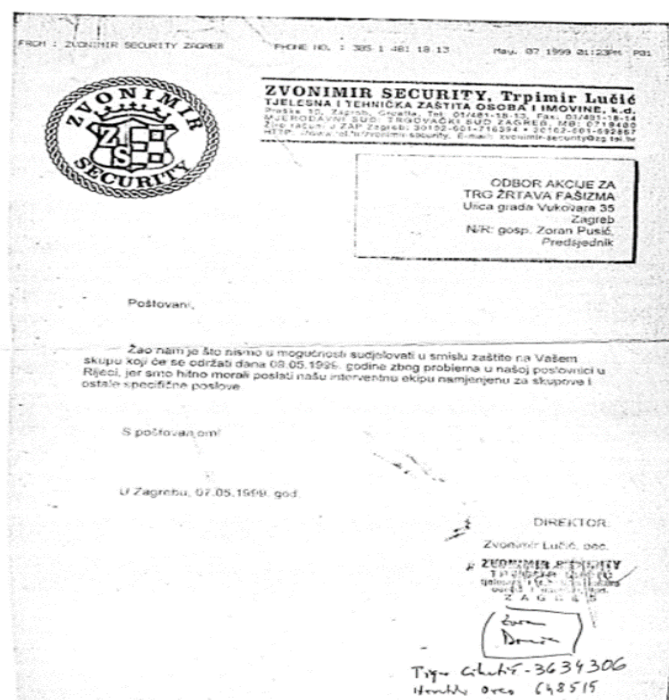


Figure 14 A letter from Zvonimir Security, 07.05.1999.⁹²

(...) 99 the big demonstrations were announced. We asked for security guards, we visited 6 security companies, they all denied us. We managed to arrange everything with this one security company from Karlovac, and on that day, that was always 9 May at 18:00 o'clock, they phoned us sometime around the afternoon, saying that something had come up and they could not come. No security company wanted us. And the police had been informed about the demonstrations, they came, but they released the colony of black s guys carrying banners with Bleiburg Victims, pictures of Stepinac and the like.⁹³

The announcement of Mladen Schwartz was ignored by the ruling party and the demonstration on the Victory Day - Europe Day was “opened and closed by shedding blood”⁹⁴ Half an hour before the commemoration began a group of youth attacked Zoran Pusić (knocking out one of his teeth) and Srđan Dvornik⁹⁵, a member of the Croatian Helsinki Committee.

⁹² We are sorry that we are unable to take part in the protection at your meeting, which will be held on May 5, 1999, due to some problems in our office in Rijeka, we urgently had to send our intervention team dedicated to meetings and other specific tasks; Director: Z. Lučić (Zagreb, May 7, 1999).

⁹³ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 178-182.

⁹⁴ Novi list, May 10, 1999, 2.

⁹⁵ Srđan Dvornik graduated philosophy and sociology on the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb and post-graduated on the Faculty of Political Science, also in Zagreb. He worked at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, in publishing company Naprijed- Forward (editor of social science and philosophical editions), in Open Society Institute - Croatia, Heinrich Böll Stiftung - as head of office and coordinator of democratization and environmental protection program and as executive director of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. He acts as an independent consultant, publicist, lecturer and translator (Source: fraktura.hr).

(...) Jagoda Milidrag Šmit objected to them (two anti-demonstrators) and they started hitting her. And then my friend, Srđan Dvornik, got involved and then the two started kicking him, and then I jumped and crashed one and I held him on the floor and for one moment I was careless and the other one, kicked my front tooth with his leg, then I jumped, and they moved away.⁹⁶



Figure 15: Novi list, 10-05.1999: „Na trgu žrtava fašizma prolivena krv“ (On The Victims of Fascism Square blood is shed)⁹⁷

Figure 16: Jutarnji list, 10.05.1999: „Skup protiv fašizma prekinut suzavcem, dvoje teško ranjenih“ (Meeting against fascism interrupted by tear gas, two heavily wounded)⁹⁸

As the commemoration officially began, stating once again the wish to return the square its old name, and as Zoran Pusić bespoke: “We should not allow people who are tempted by hatred and violence to provoke us. Let’s keep dignity and proudly mark this day”⁹⁹, the right-wing

⁹⁶ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 186-189.

⁹⁷ Novi list, May 10, 1999: „Na trgu žrtava fašizma prolivena krv“ (On the Victims of Fascism Square blood is shed)

⁹⁸ Jutarnji list, May 10, 1999: „Skup protiv fašizma prekinut suzavcem, dvoje teško ranjenih“ (Meeting against fascism interrupted by tear gas, two heavily wounded)

⁹⁹ Vjesnik, May 10, 1999: “Izgradi za vrijeme skupa na Trgu Hrvatskih Velikana”

group led by Schwartz, Vjekoslav Lasić¹⁰⁰ and Zvonimir Trusić¹⁰¹ started to shout insults and throw rocks and eggs at the crowd.¹⁰²

Videos of demonstrations held on 1999 and 2000 show gathered anti-protesters, situated behind the fences and the police who stands between two opposed groups, singing Ustaša songs, raising their right arm and shouting insults while the protesters held speeches. Anti-protesters were holding various banners: “Europe without Bolsheviks”, “We welcome a common struggle for Croatia for your children and ours”, “Partisans- we won’t forget your killings”, “Down anti-fascists”, pictures of Tuđman, Stepinac and similar.¹⁰³ Although more police came than the previous years, they did not do enough to stop provocations and even physical violence, they were merely being there. The atmosphere was tense, and paroles like “the red bandits”, “Tito is a criminal”, “Go to Serbia” and similar could be heard.¹⁰⁴

(...) then we began to mark and celebrate May 9, The Day of Victory and the Day of Europe, they (pro-ustaša groups) shouted, we were lucky to have sound system; that year couple of thousand people came, thousands of people, it suddenly became important (...) and on both sides there were a lot of people, the whole square and the other side, on the streets and they (pro-ustaša groups) shouted the most diverse things, mostly Nazi or Ustaša greetings, and then they started throwing stones and bottles, they broke the head of a colleague Zoran Oštrić and an elderly woman.¹⁰⁵

After the tear gas was thrown, the commemoration turned into a general chaos. The police was not able to separate both groups and people started fighting.

¹⁰⁰ Vjekoslav Lasić (1938) is a controversial Dominican father, known for his approval of NDH and Ustaša. Until today he is serving masses and commemoration ceremonies for Pavelić and Šakić. Statements as: "On April 10, 1941, the Ustaša movement renewed the Croatian state", "NDH is the foundation of today's Croatian homeland" and "Every Honorable Croat should be proud of Šakić's name" are only small part of the mass repertoire of the father Lasić on such commemorations (Slobodna Dalmacija, July 26, 2008). Despite of the outrage of the domestic and world community, father Lasić has not been removed from his duty. In 2015 he published a book *Zbivanja oteta Zaboravu: Nesporazumi s Crkvom* (Happenings kidnapped from Forgetfulness: Misunderstandings with the Church). After the “bloody” demonstrations in 1999. Nedeljko Pintarić, president of Zagreb's Archbishop's Public Relations Office, commented: “Father Vjekoslav Lasić does not personify the Catholic church in Croatia, (...) Obviously it is a private matter of those who took part in that event (...) it is his personal matter and it is unjust to accuse the church hierarchy for any event related to it” (Večernji List, May 11, 1999).

¹⁰¹ Zvonimir Trusić (1951) is since February 1993 president of the “Association of Croatian Volunteers of the Homeland War”. He was under investigation for the crimes against Serb population in the Pakrac battlefields, where he served under a war criminal Tomislav Merčep. He spent five months in an investigative jail. he founded the Movement for Croatian Truth and Justice, which is linked to right-wing circles. He was also active in the Action for Croatia “Libertas”, in which Dr. Zvonimir Šeparović also acted for whom he once said that he would like to see him on the position of the President of the Republic of Croatia (Source: Portal moj Zagreb, March 1, 2011).

¹⁰² Novi list, May 10, 1999, 2.

¹⁰³ Cameraman: Goran Morović/ Editor: Mario Marinić

¹⁰⁴ Novi list, May 10, 1999, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 193-199.

(...) they just came in between us and started to fight. When the cops separated them from our demonstrators then they threw a tear gas bomb. One of the guys in our demonstrations reacted quickly and threw that gas bomb back.¹⁰⁶



Figure 17: Protests in 1999.¹⁰⁷

(...) after that, the police took some of these young guys, including Dražen Bujas who returned that gas bomb that they threw on us. I did not know that, but on one side of that street, they attacked Stipe Šuvar who was at the rally, and in court they started a process against one of those young people who were at the rally and who stood there and listened to the speeches, I think that young boy was called Rimac¹⁰⁸, under the charge that they threw that tear gas bomb at themselves. And two policemen testified. And then they called me, the judge asked me how I interpreted it, so I told her what happened and she asked me how I interpreted the fact that my story did not agree with what the cops said. I said: “Very simple, because they lie.” I saw, not just me, dozens of people saw where the bomb went, it smoked through the air, everything was clear.¹⁰⁹

The vice president of the oppositional Croatian Peoples Party, Vesna Pusić, was punched in the face and Stjepan Mesić, who later became Croatia’s President, was attacked by a flag pole.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with S. Dvornik, March 2018, 135-138.

¹⁰⁷ Source: <https://www.portalnovosti.com/hasanbegoviu-je-mjesto-na-proustakim-okupljanjima>; The photo shows young man who threw back the tear gas bomb to the other side.

¹⁰⁸ The boy’s name was Rebac

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 210-218.

In the days after that physical violence at the square, all Croatian newspapers were full of articles covering the event and most of the public condemned the incident, what again spurred the discussions on fascism and antifascism.

(...) this actually brought media attention. Until then, there was a media that sympathized with us, like *Slobodna Dalmacija*, *Federal Tribune*, but the mainstream media only after 1999, after this violent attempt to disrupt, they were all actually on our side. Not everyone directly signed the request to return that name, but everyone had some understanding, and everyone showed that they understood that something was wrong, but in the sense that we were entitled to it (demonstrations), while the other side did not show any legitimate opposition attitude, but rather violence; it was clear to everyone.¹¹⁰

The organizers and the people who participated in the commemoration did not just blame the rightists but also the indifference of the police, who should have done more, as well as the ruling party who created such an atmosphere by permitting this kind of outcome. In the interview for the newspapers, Vesna Pusić said: “That was an act of political violence tolerated and approved by the police, that is, by the state. Political attitude cannot be a desire to kill someone, that is a crime punishable by law.”¹¹¹ Stjepan Mesić also commented on the incident: “One side was celebrating the Victory Day of the Fascism, whereas the other was just looking for blood.” He also pointed out that the Police protected the provocateurs and if something like that happened again the outcome could be even worse.¹¹²

The critique also came from the UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robison who was staying in Zagreb at the time the incident happened: “The Police failed in its mission to care for the safety of the demonstrators. Even though they were informed that the rally was taking place, they failed to take steps to protect the demonstrators and their right to protest. Therefore, this event awakens concern that this is a political lack of will.”¹¹³

“The organizers had arranged for plenty of police to secure the square during the commemoration because of the previously mentioned threats and increasing tension during the previous two years, but all media reports and eyewitnesses accounts seem to confirm that the police officers did not immediately react to the attacks made against the peaceful demonstration” (Pavlaković 2012, 344).

¹¹⁰ Interview with S. Dvornik, March 2018, 157-161.

¹¹¹ *Novi list*, May 11, 1999, 3.

¹¹² *Jutanji list*, May 10, 1999.

¹¹³ Source: <http://www.monitor.hr/clanci/trg-zrtava-fasizma-vraca-se-u-srediste-zagreba-odakle-je-prije-deset-godina-izbrisan/6168/>

The police were informed about the protest, they came, but they allowed the group of black-clothed guys carrying banners showing Bleiburg Victims, Stepinac and the like.¹¹⁴

HDZ's answer to the critique was equalization of the victim and the aggressor. Tuđman's long-time close ally Vesna Škare Ožbolt has qualified the events in the Victims of Fascism Square as hooliganism and savage behavior of "Black- fascist" and "Red-communists".¹¹⁵ She emphasized that the event on the Square of Croatian Greats was actually a political rally during which some extremists, both leftists and rightists, came to deliberately provoke, cause disorder and physically attack each other. The president of the Zagreb City Assembly Zlatko Canjuga also condemned violence "no matter where it came from, the left or the right, because I believe we live in a democratic society in which every political worldview can be freely stated"¹¹⁶, and added that "it would be better if some politicians, who contribute to a negative atmosphere, not to appear at such meetings. It is clear that the Mesić, Bandić¹¹⁷ and the company are hypocritical and responsible, because they first unnecessarily deceived people, stimulating an such outcome, and then fled the square."¹¹⁸ Zvonimir Trusić, a president of the veteran's organization *Association of the independent volunteers*, also gave a statement to the newspapers: "I consider nothing of great significance happened on the square of the Croatian Greats. We came there with banners clearly expressing our views. We believe that the blood that had been shed for this country is holy and cannot be trampled by anybody and that is why we come every year to such gatherings."¹¹⁹

The gained insights consequently indicate that the ruling party, and even more the rightist's group, who labelled themselves as "anti-communists", tried to undermine the significance of the events on the commemoration and denote it as a minor fight between two extreme groups with left and right political orientation. This attitude was one more reason for the Croatian civil society to continue their resistance. "With political opposition in Croatia being weak and ineffective during much of the 1990s, it was largely the actors of civil society— including the media, trade unions, and civic associations—who gradually managed to counter the "Nationalist" discourse with alternative narratives and strategies" (Fisher 2007, 150). The effort of the civil society to question the official politics of the ruling party made it easier for the

¹¹⁴ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 183-184.

¹¹⁵ Pressalije, Jelena Lovrić "Novi list", 16. svibnja: "Politički daltonizam: Suradnica za 'Ne vidim dobro'", 53

¹¹⁶ Novi list, May 11, 1999, 3.

¹¹⁷ Bandić (1955) is a Croatian politician and has been the mayor of Zagreb since 2000.

¹¹⁸ Novi list, May 1, 1999, 3.

¹¹⁹ Vjesnik, May 11, 1999, 3.

opposition to convince the majority of citizens that the Croatian Democratic Union should not rule anymore (Fisher 2007) which has led to their defeat in the parliamentary elections in 2000.

4.2.5. Change of the political scene

The public disenchantment with the ruling party was not just reflected in the civil society. There were several factors that have contributed to the defeat of the HDZ and to the change of the political scene in Croatia.

One strong factor that have contributed to the defeat of the HDZ was the death of their charismatic leader Franjo Tuđman, in December 1999. The party was largely determined by his authoritarian actions. Since Tuđman had always been more popular than the party, throughout its campaign in 2000 HDZ made use of Tuđman's legacy, equating him with the nation itself. "One of the party's main advertisements was a picture of Tuđman holding a young girl dressed in national costume, the slogan being "All for Croatia" (Fisher 2007, 161). With Tuđman gone, the party's main determination was also gone and HDZ failed to find the right replacement for him (ibid).

The second factor that contributed to the defeat of HDZ was the end of war. After Croatia had won in the defensive war, the nationalist rhetoric about the preservation of state and nation was no longer effective, namely, the state was preserved. Though Croatia did lead a defensive war and although it was not the most influential factor affecting its dynamism, the ruling party was far from reluctant to use the war in politics. War actions have been used on several occasions as a factor for dynamizing the domestic political life of the country and have undoubtedly influenced the outcomes of the political processes in which they were involved (Kasapović 1996). War, in principle, favors political right. The war brought the imbalance into the system of political values in the country. It contributed to the long-term political and moral delegitimization of the Left, which was the main promoter of Yugoslav ideas in Croatian history. Since Yugoslavia proved to be an ideological-political origin of resistance to Croatian state independence, and the present "third" Yugoslavia, with the main launch of military aggression on Croatia, the Croatian left was explicitly or implicitly considered controversial for such a development and was constantly exposed to suspicion that it was not state-building. War also served as an excuse for the economic crisis, but after it had finished, the economic and social problems surfaced. "In the late 1990s the government's economic and social politics caused a serious crisis with economic contraction, dramatically rising unemployment and declining social benefits - the war could not serve as an excuse anymore. Those elements

produced an acute legitimacy crisis for the regime” (Zakošek, 2008, 601). Majority of the population hoped that economic and social problems could be overcome by entering the European Union. Greater ability to negotiate with the EU was attributed to a left-center party led by the SDP, which were highly pro-European. Finally, SDP managed to gather a broad coalition of opposition parties which then managed to win the elections.

In short, after the end of the war, nationalist rhetoric ceased to exist because the economic problems caused by the transition came to the forefront. That was the main reason for the change in the political scene and consequently the destiny of the disputed square.

However, the victory of the SDP and coalition partners didn't mean, as many had hoped, that the name of the square would be immediately restored, and in May 2000 the Committee for the square organized the demonstration once more.

(...) Then there were elections where the coalition won, which could have changed everything within 6 months, but neither the issues of renaming nor war crimes have been solved (...) ¹²⁰

Nevertheless, the political atmosphere changed considerably since the last demonstrations, as the new president, “Stjepan Mesić, made commemorating and honoring Croatia's contribution to the antifascist struggle as one of the key elements of his mandate” (Pavlaković 2012, 346). On the 8th of May the Croatian Union of Antifascist Fighters marked the 55th anniversary of victory over fascism in the Lisinski Concert Hall in Zagreb. Mesić was the first Croatian president who participated in the Victory Day commemoration - he held a speech and greeted people "gentlemen and ladies, dear friends and comrades", receiving thunderous applause of approval. ¹²¹ The demonstrations, which were as always held on the 9th of May, one day after the official commemoration, were again visited by rightwing groups who shouted the usual insults while carrying pictures of Ante Pavelić. However, this time, the police acted quickly: “On Tuesday, on the day of victory over fascism on the square of Croatian Greats, another rally was held to return to square its former name- the Victims of Fascism Square. The rally was disturbed by shouting and provocations of the rightists. Police detained 22 people, but because of the incident misdemeanor charges would be filed against nine people. According to available information, two people were injured.” ¹²² This event demonstrated that, although the left option

¹²⁰ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 229.

¹²¹ Novi list, May 9, 2000, 3.

¹²² Vjesnik, May 9, 2000

won on the elections, the memory conflict was still present, and that the new political party in power still faced many challenges.



Figure 18: Celebration on the Victims of Fascism Square, 2001¹²³

The final round of polemics was played out in the fall of 2000 after the announcement that the Zagreb City Council would vote on restoring the name to the square.

(...) City assembly held a decision to restore the name, which was in Čiril-Metodska street, in the town hall, different issues were discussed during assembly, but most were completely irrelevant. This was a controversial point, and a known fact, that HDZ was naturally against the renaming and SDP for it. Then the vote came out and the result was very close, but it was decided to return the name the Victims of Fascism to the square and sometime towards the end of 2000 the square was renamed and we organized the last gathering in 2001. It was the end, those 11 years during which we had tried and fought to restore that name finally ended.¹²⁴

Four out of five board members voted for the restoration of the name, whereas only Vera Pivčević-Stanić was against the decision.¹²⁵ Arguing her opposition, she said: “the proposal to return the name to the square is the result of many years of persistence of a small group of

¹²³ Photo: Ivan Šebelja, Zlatko Kalle, Vjesnik, May 9, 2001. The small picture in the right corner shows the opponents of the new/old square name with the board: The Square of Croatian Greats.

¹²⁴ Interview with Z. Pusić, March 2018, 229-230.

¹²⁵ Jutarnji, October 24, 2000, 5.

people, not their numerousness.”¹²⁶ While the City Council discussed the decision, in front of its building a group of protesters from the associations *Society of Croatian Women*, *A Widow Community of Croatian War Veterans from the Homeland War*, *Croatian Association for Life and Family*, *Association of Families of Imprisoned and Missing Veterans during the Homeland War* and *Guardian Angels* gathered, carrying banners “The square of Croatian Greats is the square of my sons”¹²⁷, but they had a little chance in influencing the decision of the new left wing coalition. Members of SDP, HSLS and HNS could hardly wait for the decision and agreed that the ten-year-long injustice was corrected. The new president of HDZ, Ivo Sanader, used the same rhetoric as his predecessor: “(...) These two totalitarianisms (fascism and communism) were the greatest evil of the twentieth century. It was necessary to find a place for the Victims of Fascism Square, as well as for the Victims of Communism Square, and to leave the name of the Croatian Greats because they are victims of both communism and fascism.”¹²⁸ However, nobody neither could nor has denied the victims of fascism and HDZ didn’t render much opposition to the decision. Even the HSP didn’t oppose, the president of the party at the time Anto Đapić commented for the newspapers: “The citizens chose a coalition whose political program was to change the name of the square. Hence, the citizens of Zagreb got what they wanted. Croatia is burdened with more important problems than the names of squares.”¹²⁹ Zagreb City Council in its “belief that many people identify with the square of Croatian Greats”¹³⁰ did not completely erase the name of the square, it rather shifted it to another place (Trg Burze- Stock Market Square) which is situated near the Victims of Fascism Square.

4.3. How the square justified its name

Due to its turbulent history the Victims of Fascism Square stays a strong medium of memory politics even today. The name of that square, but also the square itself with all of its present meanings, from its history to the artistic and artificial objects situated on it, participates in an interpretation of history and collective memory that is not final. With its own appearance the square issues questions about coping, forgetting, forgiveness, reconciliation, freedom and credibility. Therefore, the square is often a host to various demonstrations, art installations and the like. The next chapter concentrates on the demonstrations which were held on the square after it had gained its old name back and presents the data gathered through informal interviews

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Večernji list, October 24, 2000, 11.

¹²⁸ Jutarnji, October 24, 2000, 5.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

with the citizens of Zagreb and document analysis. The following three paragraphs are outlining diverse art installations which took place on the square and three different protests which were held on the square: protest assembly *Jasenovac on the Victims of Fascism Square*, demonstrations for /against the renaming of the Marshal Tito Square and demonstrations *Return the Magnolia*, protest against the redesign of the square and of unobtrusive public space management.

4.3.1. Art installations and protests on the Victims of Fascism Square

The Victims of Fascism Square stayed a powerful memory symbol after it had gained its old name back and has developed into a protest place as a symbol of resistance against revisionist politics and extreme rightists. Informal interviews with citizens of Zagreb indicate that the majority are aware of its history and the square is a host to various demonstrations, art installations and the like even today.

In 2014, around the fountain on the Victims of Fascism Square, Zlatko Kopljars art installation K19 (columns of weeping) appeared. Columns of bricks from Jasenovac were brought to the square and symmetrically placed around the fountain (Srpsko narodno vijeće s.a.). The columns, together with the square, functioned as a memorial place where citizens brought flowers, marking the International Day of Remembrance of Holocaust Victims with dignity. Kopljars described the purpose of the installation:

The main purpose of the installation was to point to a painful past as well as to the worrying trends in Croatia and Europe in recent years. Also, it is important to face the past in order to secure a more open and safer future.¹³¹

¹³¹ Grakalić, Marijan, Radio gornji grad, 18.01.2014.



Figure 19: Zvonko Kopljars art installation K19 (columns of weeping)¹³²

Facing and coping with the past was also a main point of the Protest Assembly *Jasenovac on the Victims of Fascism Square*. The protest was held on the square in April 2016, as a result of the political and social controversy of commemoration in Jasenovac.

As a sign of their discontent with the government and the ruling institutions, the Coordination of Jewish Municipalities and the Serbian National Council did not attend the official commemoration in Jasenovac (which they had attended regularly until then), but rather held a symbolic commemoration *Jasenovac on the Victims of Fascism Square*.¹³³ These organizations represent descendants of people who were the victims of Jasenovac and other Ustaša regime camps during World War II only because they were Jews or Serbs. The gathering on the Victims of Fascism Square was organized by Antifascist league of Croatia, Serbian Peoples Council and Jewish communities (HINA 2016b; Resanović 2016, in Augustinčić 2016). The demonstration was organized as “an expression of memories of all Jasenovac victims of the Ustaša regime and of concern over the current revisionism tolerated and supported by the current Croatian government.”¹³⁴

¹³² Source: <https://snv.hr/galerija/zlatko-kopljar-k19>

¹³³ Since 2016 the representatives of Jewish, Serbian and anti-fascist organizations do not participate in official state commemoration in memory of the victims of the Ustaša camp Jasenovac because of the government’s positive treatment of and attitude towards Ustašas and a general revisionist attitude towards NDH.

¹³⁴ Source: <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/antifasisti-organiziraju-jasenovac-na-trgu-zrtava-fasizma-20160414>

In the same year another art installation found its place on this historic site. Laughing Butterflies, a work by Martina Mezak, commented on social, cyclical changes in human society. As one dimension of her work Mezak introduced the moment of problematization and criticism of the very history and the purpose of the Pavilion and its surroundings (Augustinčić 2016, 176).

An example of it (the impossibility of utopia's realization) is the proletarian, anti-fascist revolution that took place in these areas after World War II in whose memory the Meštrović pavilion was transformed into the Museum of Revolution in the period from 1945 - 1990 and whose values and methods are still being questioned today (Mezak, synopsis for Laughing Butterflies, in Augustinčić 2016, 176).

Just as the square (place enriched with meanings), where the author placed her intervention, contains controversial multilevel narratives, so was the intervention itself multilevel in its concept and performance; it is instructed towards and engages diverse types of audience. The sound installation was performed as an urban intervention in situ, where the passengers could hear the sound of laughter without the body. The work of Martina Mezak in her multilingualism themed, interpreted and communicated with complementary socially produced physical and socially shaped cultural and social characteristics of the Victims of Fascism Square.

Mezak's work was not the only performance with social-critical narrative situated around the Pavilion, the center of the HDLU. There were also other performances and art interventions¹³⁵, exhibitions¹³⁶ and retrospectives¹³⁷, which focused on and pointed out the controversial history of the square and the pavilion. Mission of such individual artistic interpretations is to disclose the historical "truths", rehabilitate the suppressed individual memories, and achieve a "post-ideological" deconstruction of the "totalitarian" politics of memory (Horvatinčić 2016, 36). Art innovations in the conceptions and formal aspects of remembrance solutions arise from the need to establish different relationships with the new generations of users, with the aim of successfully transmitting social memory in a predetermined socio-political context (ibid, 2).

¹³⁵ Kopljar's art intervention (2014)

¹³⁶ The 29th Youth Salon: The Salon of Revolution (2008) thematizes celebrations of the anniversaries of students' and workers' movements in 1968 and the history of the pavilion itself (Jureković 2008, in Augustinčić 2016). For the exhibition, Igor Grubić, reprinted the Beuys photograph *La Rivoluzione Siamo Noi* in life size, set it in front of the pavilion, and attached it to a short stand. He cut out a hole in the place of Beuys' face, so that visitors and passersby could peek through the hole and pose for a photograph. The work pointed to the idea that creative individuals joined together in a movement could lead to significant social changes (Grubić 2008/2009, 115).

¹³⁷ The Protestant Assembly *Jasenovac* on the Victims of Fascism Square was a result of the political and social controversy of commemoration in Jasenovac. It was held on 22 April 2016 in front of the Pavilion (HINA 2016b; Resanović 2016 in Augustinčić 2016).

Truth, guilty consciousness and forgiveness can open space for the freedom and the new beginning.¹³⁸

However, facing of the past and the guilty consciousness is still not processed by many citizens and the polemics over World War II are far from being over. One of the events that reflect this unprocessed coping with the past is the renaming of the Marshal Tito Square.

4.3.2. Marshal Tito Square

After the Victims of Fascism Square gained its old name back in 2000, the right-wing groups focused on their “old enemy” Josip Broz Tito, and the fight over symbols, hence the street and square names, continued. The radical community reduced the complex character of Tito, in who the statesman and the communist dictator overlaid, to a communist criminal. The Radical Right organized themselves forming the association *Circle for the Square*, which sought to change the name of yet another square: Trg Maršala Tita (Marshal Tito Square). For this purpose, the association organized demonstrations every year, being a strong indicator that the Croatian society is still deeply divided. And in such divided societies, the symbols and the identity can have greater power than rational politics that takes care of the public good and addresses economic and social problems. In Croatia, political action is reduced to the friend - enemy relationship. In the battle of symbols, compromise can hardly be achieved.

Civil society association *Circle for the Square* was founded in November 2008. On the official site of the association, “wish for Croatia without totalitarian symbols” is stated as the main reason for their action.

The Yugoslav regime, like all other communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, violated almost all human rights. The totalitarian symbolism is therefore offensive to all citizens, not just for the victims. We consider it a barrier to the development of a democratic environment and trust among people.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Source: <http://www.hdlu.hr/>

¹³⁹ Source: <http://www.krugzatrg.com/>



Figure 20 Demonstration for the renaming of Marshal Tito Square Circle for the Square in 2012.¹⁴⁰

Since the foundation of the *Circle for the Square*, eleven major demonstrations and several minor manifestations¹⁴¹ were organized with the demand that the name of the square should be changed into the Theater Square.¹⁴² At a public protest in February 2008, protesters covered the sculpture *Zdenac života* (Well of life)¹⁴³ and the space in front of the entrance to the Croatian National Theater with a black canvas, symbolizing the people Tito sent to death. In June 2009, the protesters highlighted large photographs of victims, regularly very young women and men, and featured their individual biographies.¹⁴⁴ During the demonstrations the confrontations between anti-fascist and pro-Ustaša movements never escalated beyond verbal exchanges, yet the polemics were reminiscent to the events in the 1990s. The last protest on the square was held on the 6th of May 2017. Among the speakers were Željka Markić, a member of the organizational committee of the civil society *U ime obitelji* (In the name of the family) whose main goal is to define marriage as a living community of men and women¹⁴⁵ and Zlatko

¹⁴⁰ Photo: <http://krugzatrg.com/index.php/fotografije/nggallery/page/2>

¹⁴¹ Source: <http://www.krugzatrg.com/>

¹⁴² The Croatian National Theater is located on the square.

¹⁴³ The Well of Life (Croatian: *Zdenac života*) is a sculpture by Ivan Meštrović placed in front of the Croatian National Theatre on (Marshal Tito) Republic of Croatia Square in Zagreb, Croatia. It depicts intertwined bodies of people, who represent and symbolize various phases of life, youth, and beauty (Source: <https://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/kultura/clanak/id/200337/zdenac-zivota-u-hnk-split>)

¹⁴⁴ Source: <http://www.krugzatrg.com/>

¹⁴⁵ Željka Markić is also active in other conservative, national civil society groups (Hrast, Grozd, Marijini obroci). Markić is known for her strong resistance and attempts to ban abortion. Her latest agenda is to prevent ratification of Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe convention against violence against women and domestic violence

Hasanbegović¹⁴⁶, who was Croatian Minister of Culture in 2016 and is a founder of a political party Bruna Esih-Zlatko Hasanbegovic: Neovisni za Hrvatsku (Independent for Croatia) whose main agenda was exactly the renaming of the Marshal Tito Square and other Yugoslav symbols, which is clearly stated in the program of their party:

Bearing in mind that Fascism and National Socialism in the Second World War experienced a justified military-political and a deserved irrevocable historical break-up, the Independent for Croatia, a strive to resolutely and unconditionally eliminate all those symbols and phenomena that seek to rehabilitate Yugoslav motifs and Yugoslavian underpinnings and to strengthen the communist ideology and to relativize its crimes both in Croatia and worldwide(...) In Croatia, even today, students of the younger generations are educated by people who are publicly proclaimed as Yugoslavs and communists; the cultural and social space is dominated by the celebrations of Josip Broz, Vladimir Iljic Lenin and the "brotherhood and unity", by the ones who proclaimed civil society and democracy as their mortal enemies. This (opposition to Yugoslav symbols and the people who nurture them) is necessary for the healing of Croatian society and for a systematic and rooted reform of Croatian political, economic and cultural life, based on the ethical values that originate from Croatian folk traditions and which are in line with European standards of business and living.¹⁴⁷

The Independent for Croatia have achieved their goal to rename the square on the 1st of September 2017. The City Assembly, that lasted six hours, made the decision to change the name of the Marshal Tito Square into the Square of the Croatian Republic. After the session of the Zagreb City Assembly, Hasanbegović proudly commented: "This is a historic moment! (...) I am sure that the Titoist majority will never again sit in this honorable home." Before the session of the Zagreb City Assembly, several hundred people were protesting on Monday night

which was opened for signature on 11 May 2011, in Istanbul, Turkey. The convention aims at protection of women against all forms of violence and contribution to the elimination of all forms of discrimination (Source: <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>). However, Markić wants to prevent it since she believes that the ratification imposes wrong gender ideology.

¹⁴⁶ Hasanbegović was allegedly a part of the ultra-right political organization "Croatian Freedom Movement" (HOP). During his tenure as Minister of culture he referred to artists as "exhibitionists" or "ridiculous street actors" and to anti-fascism as "empty phrase". He is internationally known for supporting the movie "Jasenovac- The Truth, focusing on the Croatian fascist WWII concentration camp at Jasenovac, to target the country's ethnic and religious minorities, particularly Serbs. Jakov Sedlar falsified the death toll at the camp, rejecting both memorial site numbers, as well as figures given by Yad Vashem center in Jerusalem, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Vienna and the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Hasanbegovic commented the film as the best way to finally illuminate the numerous controversial places from Croatian history"(Source: <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/07/15/croatian-director-reported-for-jasenovac-camp-film-07-15-2016/>)

¹⁴⁷ Source: <https://www.neovisni.hr/>

at the Victims of Fascism Square with the message that Zagreb must remain "a city that will not surrender" and preserve its anti-fascist values.¹⁴⁸



Figure 21: Protest against renaming of the Marshal Tito Square¹⁴⁹

But naturally, the protesters did not have any chance to change the decision that had already been made in advance. The mayor of Zagreb, Milan Bandić, who once demonstrated on the Victims of Fascism Square, needed another five mandates to remain in the parliament, which is exactly the number of mandates that the Independent for Croatia party had. In order to gain support from Hasanbegovic and Esih, Bandić gave up his own motion to solve the problem of renaming through a referendum and proposed to rename the Marshal Tito Square into the Square of the Republic of Croatia. Due to such "political trading", Bandić was harshly criticized but he remained firm in his decision, announcing it publicly in June and commenting: "(...) nobody normal in this country would oppose to such decision."¹⁵⁰

After that announcement, on the following city assembly, 29 members voted to rename the square, 20 were opposed and one was reserved. Representatives of the assembly majority defended this decision by evaluating that Tito, though anti-fascist, was a dictator, and

¹⁴⁸ Source: <https://net.hr/danas/hrvatska/prosvjed-antifasista-zbog-trga-marsala-tita-zagreb-je-nepokoreni-grad-a-takav-ce-i-ostati/>

¹⁴⁹ Source: <http://vijesti.hrt.hr/402653/prosvjed-protiv-preimenovanja-trga-marsala-tita>

¹⁵⁰ Source: <https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/milan-bandic-trg-marsala-tita-1178838>

representatives of minorities argued that he was the leader of the anti-fascist movement in Croatia and a great statesman of his time.¹⁵¹

The Marshal Tito Square was renamed during my fieldwork. Therefore, I have engaged with that memory place and initiated deeper examination of the newly renamed square. I observed that most of the people have engaged with this particular renaming, however, the renaming has only happened, it was discussed in the newspapers and television regularly and one cannot exclude that the renaming will be forgotten in couple of months or years. Informal interviews with the passerby on that square and in the immediate vicinity of the square have shown that the citizens have divided opinions towards the name change. For many, this territorial marker was a painful reminder of the revisionist politics of governing parties, since their belief was that communism cannot be equalized with the fascism.

*I am against the change of the name of the square, as Marshal Tito is a historic personality with the merit of resisting Fascism, and this gesture points to the strengthening of nationalism at a time when cultural Europe emphasizes tolerance and real human values.*¹⁵²

*Changing the name of Marshal Tito Square so many years after the Homeland War is a sad fact. The problem is in trying to emphasize anti-fascism as a totalitarian regime. This is a way for government to emphasize that we are opposing fascism, but communism was probably even worse.*¹⁵³

Whereas others oppose this and are satisfied with the name change. The argument brought forward was that the Tito Yugoslavia was a totalitarian and repressive regime which should be forgotten. The NDH was also such regime and one shall not make the difference between them.

*He was a celebrated tyrant and I think there are people who deserve to get a street, square name and the like more than Tito. I do not know much of the historical details and I do not know of course everything that happened at that time, but from what I heard in college and at home, it was not good.*¹⁵⁴

*I rather hear the name the Square of the Republic of Croatia, than the Marshal Tito Square. I do not have a positive opinion of the dictatorship he had carried out in Yugoslavia. Regardless of the sides, right or left- everybody is entitled to their opinion, but I believe that without freedom there is no progress and am therefore against dictatorship- both right and left.*¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Croatian Radio Television (HRT), 1.09.2017.

¹⁵² Sanja, 55

¹⁵³ Ljiljana, 56

¹⁵⁴ Antonella, 26

¹⁵⁵ Maja, 29

Although a lot of informants were engaged in this name change and were willing to give their opinion on that matter, a lot of them were emphasizing the existence of bigger concerns in Croatia and have therefore showed their indifference towards the new name of the square. My informants were often talking about the bad economic situation and believe that in such a situation one should not be concerned with the names of streets and squares.

*The renaming of the square is a simple parade to entertain the naive people with something seemingly important, while in the background they play much more important things and the state is falling apart.*¹⁵⁶

*The politicians are occupied with irrelevant things instead of dealing with relevant issues.*¹⁵⁷

*The issue of changing the name of the square is another proof of how much are Croats divided and stuck in the past. I do care which names certain streets and squares bear, but in a situation where the state is now, this is completely irrelevant.*¹⁵⁸

Younger generations were often unaware of the name change or have shown indifference towards it.

*I would not give any thought about it, I do not care about the past, just the future.*¹⁵⁹

*They have changed the name in the end? Oh, that is not important*¹⁶⁰

The renaming of the Marshal Tito Square, in 2017 was first and foremost signal a Croatian, but also to the international community which political direction Croatia is turning to. This suggests that different evaluations of political historic events are almost a rule and the memory culture conflict in Croatia is far from being over.

The renaming of the Marshal Tito Square is another sign of repression of anti-fascist tradition, especially in the Republic of Croatia (...) we are talking about a continuing controversy that even today is not final - the polarizations, especially on the ideological grounds in Croatia, are deepening. I would say that similar ideological polarizations are characteristic in other post-Yugoslav countries, the only difference are the responses of today's political elites, but the processes of confrontation are not over yet, and I have to say that it has nothing to do with the attitude towards Tito as the leader of the NOB, but rather with the opposing heritage.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Mislav, 26

¹⁵⁷ Ivan, 30

¹⁵⁸ Alen, 33

¹⁵⁹ Injo, 21

¹⁶⁰ Sonja, 19

¹⁶¹ Interview with V. Teršelić, March 2018, 115-130.

The Victims of Fascism Square and Marshal Tito Square were both supposed to keep the connection to the anti-fascist history of the city but also the anti-fascist worldview in general and have for that reason become a strong milestone between two ideologically opposed groups.

4.3.3. Protest assembly: Return the Magnolia

In February 2018 Zagreb Mayor Milan Bandić opened the constructions on the Victims of Fascism Square as a first phase of the project *Pedestrian Center of Excellence*, the aim of which is to redecorate pedestrian and green areas around the Meštrović Pavilion, illuminate the pavilion and the fountain and modernize the public lighting within the four months. The project has never been thoroughly presented to the public, except for a few shrewd information published in the media. During the execution of works on the green area, a magnolia tree was removed, causing a fierce reaction and resistance of the citizens who gathered in an initiative with the symbolic name *Return the Magnolia*¹⁶². The initiative demanded the urgent suspension of works, opening of a wide public debate and the changing of the project, which would include the protection of a healthy herbal fund and the pavilion area.

Apart from digging out the magnolia tree at the very beginning of the works, due to the negligent performers water was poured into the basement of the pavilion where the depot of the Croatian Historical Museum was located and water damaged valuable exhibits from the period of NOB. During the works, the stairs of the Meštrović Pavilion, which are made out of stone from island Brač¹⁶³ were also destroyed. The stairs are an integral part of the House of Croatian Artists, a Protected Cultural Property owned by the Republic of Croatia.

¹⁶² The initiative *Return the Magnolia* is made up of the *Croatian Society of Landscape Architects*, the *A kad će park* ("When will the park") initiative, *the Right to the City*, representatives of architectural profession, cyclist Union, tenants of the Square of Victims of Fascism, *Green Action* and *Onepercentforthecity* 1POSTOZAGRAD.

¹⁶³ Paladino, Zrinka, Telegram.hr, 20.04.2018



Figure 22: Constructions on the Victims of Fascism Square, April 2018.¹⁶⁴

In April the initiative *Return the Magnolia* organized its first protest assembly on the square with the main message: “Enough devastation and incompetent public space management”. Since the first protest in April the people were meeting on the square every Wednesday. The initiative warns that the social and professional evaluation and discussion is needed before such action is made, especially when it concerns such public spaces which are of importance to the historical urban legacy.



Figure 23: Protest Assembly *Return the Magnolia* ¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Photo: Borko Vukoslav/ Source: Telegram.hr: Jedan od bolnijih poraza građanstva

¹⁶⁵ Photo: Iskra Mandić/ Source: maz.hr: Filigranski pločnici, kuća puna baruta

Observations of the protests showed that participants of the protests were people of all generations, the gatherings were peaceful, every Wednesday speeches and concerts were held in front of the Pavilion. Participants of the protests posted messages on the construction site: “Stop the destroying”, “Where is the magnolia?”, “The city is more beautiful without the concrete!”, “Shame!”, “Give us Zagreb back!” and similar.



Figure 24: Honk (sound the horn) for the magnolia¹⁶⁶

Informal interviews indicated that the people who were engaged in the protest were aware of the turbulent history of the Victims of Fascism Square and believed that a place with such history is even more important to preserve. The protest also represents the critique of Milan Bandić, the mayor of Zagreb, and opposes the spatial management of ruling government, with the streets and squares renaming being a part of the spatial management. The protesters felt that they were fighting to build a better value in society and saw themselves as a part of an ethical act. Such protests are not value neutral but that they have an important function in building ethics. Observations suggests that although the renaming of the square and protest associated with it happened twenty-eight years ago, the history of the square has remained in the memory of the people and has therefore developed as a place of protest and resistance towards government politics.

¹⁶⁶ Photo by author, May 23, 2018.

5. Discussion

The role of the street and square names is twofold, on one level it serves as a landmark in the space, but it can also serve as a symbolic message and can propagate the ruling ideology. The streets belong to the everyday sphere of "ordinary" residents (Azaryahu and Kook 2002) and therefore characterize the ability to convey the ideological message in a very sensible, almost inconspicuous and subtle way. This place naming analysis tried to underline that the (re)writing of the toponymic landscape shows how power relations can shape certain public memory. This study has focused on the issue of street (re) naming as a strategy of imposing an official narrative. Renaming the streets during the periods of political changes is certainly one of the measures of historical revisionism. Through (re) naming one particular square in Zagreb this master theses attempts to account how the collapse of the political order and the state affected the memory of people as well as to rethink the relations between collective memories and contested histories.

By referring to the empirical findings, the following chapter will give the summary of the results and examine once again what encouraged the citizens of Zagreb to support some streets and squares changes and condemn others. It will deal with the citizens motivation to give the Victims of Fascism Square its old name back.

5.1. Summary of the results

This research and analysis of public political symbols has concentrated on the street and square names as a medium of memory politics. It was motivated by the change of the socio-political system in Croatia and it questioned politics of symbols in post-socialist states and its role to legitimize political changes. The study revealed the relationship of those symbols with the official and unofficial narrative by focusing on one particular memory place in Zagreb: The Victims of Fascism Square.

The analysis of the politics of memory in Croatia showed that the changed street names indicate the nationalist orientation of Zagreb, discarding and silencing its heritage of socialism and Yugoslavia. The first question addressed was how the governing structures in Croatia used political symbols as street and square names in the implementation of its official narrative. Research on the secondary literature, policy papers and newspaper analysis demonstrated that the idea of the new government was a national reconciliation and equalization of communist and fascist ideologies. Renaming streets and squares was one of the attempts to achieve that

idea. The politics of the renaming in the 90s was related to the restoration of old, pre-revolutionary or even older names, thus making Croatia fully integrated into the process that was taking place throughout Eastern Europe, when the return of pre-socialist names was one of the mechanisms and expressions of redefining history. The lower town in Zagreb, which architecturally represents an important part of the Croatia's cultural and monumental heritage and the functional core of the city, became an important arena for the implementation of a politics aimed at reconversion (Azaryahu 1999), for the restoration of old symbols and their reintegration into the canonical system. The gained insights consequently indicate that in October 1990, when most of the streets and squares were renamed, the citizens supported many of the changes (Danas, Trg povratka opozicije, October 9, 1990). Research showed that the removal of the street and square names representing the socialist past did not arouse a reaction of disapproval by the citizens of Zagreb (Danas 1990). Even the renaming of the streets named after national heroes (and Yugoslav politicians) did not provoke much disagreement. Only the renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square resulted in more negative than positive responses. Therefore, the questions were imposed: What motivated people to support some name changes and condemn others? Why were citizens motivated to undo the name change of the Victims of Fascism Square?

While conducting the interviews, the issue of the symbolism of the square name eventually came up. Unlike the other squares, its name did not just present the memory of socialism but rather the memory of antifascism. The Victims of Fascism Square was supposed to keep the connection to the anti-fascist history of the city and thus the antifascist worldview in general. Renaming that square, which represented the victims of fascism, was a symbolic milestone since it was one of the first indicators of the government's new revisionist politics which showed the relativizing attitude towards the Ustaša past. And secondly, because it had usurped two supporting elements which are contained in the name of the square: antifascism and victims. The antifascist tradition is a memory that people do not want to forget, it signifies a continuation of emancipation processes and respect for human rights and inclusive understanding. Preservation of the Croatian heritage certainly contains historical memory of the period of fascist Ustaša violence. Anti-fascism today, remembers the victims of the past violence, in order to actively prevent the violence, one witnesses today. The name of the square contained a connection to the pro-European, antifascist worldview and was therefore a much stronger symbol than the names of the other squares. The names of other streets and squares which were renamed were identified with the socialist Yugoslavia, but anti-fascism cannot only

be identified with the rule of communism because of its inextricable connection with democracy and freedom. The protests that were caused by the renaming were not just a question of the name itself, but rather of what it represented - it became a question about pro or anti fascism, pro or anti tolerance. Formal and informal interviews showed that the square was referred to as “the mosque” in everyday conversation rather than by its given name. Only after its renaming from “Victims of Fascism” into “Croatian Greats” did people think what this name represented. Further, it seems that only after the renaming of the square, people were reminded of the events that had occurred there. Hence, essentially, only after the renaming of the square, the square began to embody its official name.

The ongoing protests on the square are illustrating the moment when the new political elite crossed the boundary of what civil society would accept as revisions to the collective memory (Pavlaković 2012, 321). Expert interviews revealed that throughout the years three main functions of the protests were crystallized. The main function was to express a complete disapproval of the rehabilitation of fascist Ustaša and Ustaša symbols. The resistance of the citizens after the renaming of the square shows that they themselves wanted to represent their own history, identity and memory (Palmberger 2017). Another conclusion that can be derived from the interviews is that memories have not been only related to the past, but they rather depend on how the present and the future are understood. All interviewed demonstrators emphasized that they do not protest just because of the need to remember the past, but even more because of the future. They felt that with their attentiveness they can help build a liberal-democratic order. The protesters wanted to remember the antifascist resistance as a vital part of Croatian identity and have felt the need to affirm anti-fascism as a reaction to violence, to non-respect of human rights and to the growing exclusivity. Another clear function was to oppose HDZ and its leader Tuđman, since that political option allowed stronger flirtation with fascism and the subsequent suppression of the nationalized antifascist legacy in Croatia. The third function is closely related to the symbolic date of the protests, the 9th of May, which is celebrated in Western countries as Europe Day to commemorate the initial moves in creating what is today the European Union, but also as the date of the victory over fascism. That date was chosen due to its symbolic power and its purpose was to present a pro-European political platform. The protesters believed that orientation towards European Union is in Croatia's interest and that Croatia's politics should go in that direction.

While researching the protests on the Victims of Fascism Square, this study revealed two opposed narratives in post-socialist Croatian society which evolved around the question of how

Croatia ensued and on which values it should be founded. Politics of memory, which is, among other symbols, reflected in the names of public spaces, is used in identity building - it distinguishes one specific identity group from other, also specific, identity groups. Hence, common memory and identity support each other and straighten the group belonging. Moreover, they sustain subjective positions, social boundaries and power (Gills 1994). Protests in the Victims of Fascism Square were one of the first confrontations of the two groups with opposing narratives. Whereas the protesters on the square stand for antifascist narrative with the main message of equality and interpersonal respect, their opponents stand for equalization of communist and fascist regime. Data on the protesters' opponents' narrative was gained through video materials, newspaper analysis and interviews. Revisionist narrative is based on the belief that the fascist NDH was counterinsurgency state which did not use state terror to destroy predetermined ideologically defined enemies, but rather legitimately applied "reasonable" means of combating against armed rebel groups that were endangering the survival of the state. In addition, this narrative claims that there was no mass crime in NDH, let alone genocide, not over Serbs nor Jews or Romani peoples, but that the main victims of violence were relatively small Croat and Serbian Communists and Serbian Chetniks as political opponents of the regime and the state and that the Jasenovac concentration camp was not a death camp, but for that time, a usual working and gathering camp (Radonic 2013b).

The empirical findings made clear that the conflict over symbols and two different narratives is still far from over. Engagement in the demonstrations also gave insight into the ethical character of memories. Observations made clear that the memories are not value neutral but that they have an important function in building ethics. Participating demonstrators see themselves as a part of an ethical act that clearly highlights the difference between good and evil. Participant observation of the recent demonstrations on the square showed that the civil society still struggles to establish the dominant narrative and the values shared by the community.

6. Conclusion

In the times of intense social and political changes, streets and squares names are likely to be reconfigured, to spatially represent a space molded by a given local situation in a particular city and the wider social context. In Croatia, the new post-socialist government has shown a strong preference for the symbols which rely on national feelings and ideology of nationalism. In establishing the new state system in Croatia, the government has encouraged such symbols irrespective of war times and later of economic disadvantages.

It can be concluded that Croatian historical symbols have provoked and still do provoke a double echo: the enthusiasm for symbolizing the accomplished mythical national goals on one hand and the bitterness of them reminding us of crimes committed not so long ago. The names of streets and squares represent such political symbols which are part of citizens' intimate public space but also possess an ability for the governing structures to convey ideological messages in a subtle way. Although citizens are on some level aware of the historic events which occurred in some streets and squares, they mostly conceive the decision of renaming such places as something natural that should not be questioned. Therefore, in renaming city squares and streets, citizens only participate in specific occasions. The renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square was such a rare occasion which aroused strong disapproval and engagement of citizens. It announced unwanted political orientation, rehabilitation of the fascist NDH and usurped enlightenment and values of humanism. In recent years in Croatia, but also globally, we are witnessing the intimidating tendency that fundamental ethical values and acts such as anti-fascism are becoming more and more vulnerable and subjected to aggressive revisionism. An example of this is the renaming of the Victims of Fascism Square and the polemics which aroused around its name were just one of many symbolic struggles over the establishment of ruling narratives of the past and the values they are entangled with. In this ideological manipulation, which is becoming more present in public discourse, we are reminded that more than seven decades after World War II we are facing the general cataclysm of general values. However, civil organizations for human rights in Croatia are still engaged in keeping the humanistic values and antifascist narrative alive. I want to end this thesis with an impression of a memorial intervention in Park Dotrščina¹⁶⁷, a performance by Zoran Pavelić called *Sunlit Places*, taking place on World Peace Day, September 23, 2017. The idea behind the performance is quite simple, but it carries an extremely powerful symbolism: performers are park visitors who find little areas of sunlight in the shady forest environment - places where sun rays, through dense green webs, illuminate the dark forest ground. Visitors find such sunny locations, briefly pause and catch the light, then seek a new sunny spot, bright topographic points, all the way until the end of the performance.

¹⁶⁷ Park Dotrščina is the site of the largest mass crime in the modern history of Zagreb - from 1941 to 1945, at that location, fascist authorities have killed more thousands of citizens, mostly from Zagreb and its surroundings, but also from other places. According to the latest research carried out in 1985, more than 7,000 people, mostly antifascists, were executed in this forest, including about 2,000 members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) and the Yugoslav Communist Youth League (SKOJ). (Source: http://arhinet.arhiv.hr/details.aspx?ItemId=1_105512)



Figure 25: Performance *Sunlit Places* ¹⁶⁸

Leaving the shady place and moving towards the sun "emphasizes clearly opposing categories of light and shadow that speak of the general principles of human freedom." ¹⁶⁹ The contemplative moving towards the illuminated places brings up the memory of all those who might have stood in one of these places and were deprived of not only freedom, but life. Pavelić's performance is devoted to innocent victims in a subtle manner and carries a strong message of constant renewed need for the universal values of freedom, life and empathy. The artist uses the sunlight as a metaphor, as "a clear symbolic image that mingles with the meaning of space." I believe that such interventions are of great importance since they encourage the public dialogue on remembrance and preservation of Croatian historical memory which should help society move towards humanistic values and interpersonal respect. As "freedom is a choice of light"¹⁷⁰, so is coping and facing the past a choice for sustainable peace and development.

¹⁶⁸ Photo: Katarina Zlatec (Source: <https://cargocollective.com/zlatec/Osuncana-mjesta>)

¹⁶⁹ Saša Šimpraga, „Toponimi sigurne smrti (interview with Jadran Boban)“, in: Zarez, 373, December 18, 2013.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

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8. Annex

Abstract (English)

Ideologically and politically motivated renaming of streets and squares adds to the complexity of different interpretations of history and can be used by certain political structures in order to impose an official ideology and narrative in the public space. The aim of the following Master's thesis was to investigate the massive renaming of public space in the Croatian capital Zagreb and to analyze the politics of memory in Croatia with special focus on the Victims of Fascism Square. This research interest included the following questions:

How did the governing structures in Croatia use symbols as street and square names in implementing official narratives? What encouraged people to support some streets' and squares' changes and condemn others? Why were citizens motivated to undo the name change of the Victims of Fascism Square?

To investigate these questions, qualitative data, obtained through interviews, participant observation and document analysis during a research stay in Zagreb were used.

The empirical study showed that the Victims of Fascism Square reflects two diametrically opposed narratives about the Croatian past and the values they are entangled with. The renaming of the square, which represents the connection to the anti-fascist history of the city, was a symbolic milestone since it was one of the first indicators of the government's new revisionist politics. The antifascist tradition is a memory that people do not want to forget, it signifies a continuation of emancipation processes and respect for human rights and inclusive understanding.

Abstract (German)

Die ideologisch und politisch motivierte Umbenennung von Straßen und Plätzen erhöht die Komplexität verschiedener Interpretationen der Geschichte und dient den herrschenden Strukturen als ein Mittel, ihre Ideologien und Erinnerungen im öffentlichen Raum und damit auch in den Köpfen der BürgerInnen zu implementieren. Das Ziel der folgenden Masterarbeit war es, die massiven Umbenennungen des öffentlichen Raums in der kroatischen Hauptstadt Zagreb zu untersuchen und die Erinnerungspolitik in Kroatien unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Platzes der Opfer des Faschismus zu analysieren. Dieses Forschungsinteresse umfasste folgende Fragen:

Wie verwendeten die kroatischen Regierungsstrukturen Straßen- und Platznamen, um offizielle Erzählungen zu implementieren? Was bewegte die Menschen, die Veränderungen einiger Straßen und Plätze zu unterstützen und andere wiederum nicht? Was motivierte die BürgerInnen, die Namensänderung des Platzes der Opfer des Faschismus rückgängig zu machen?

Zur Untersuchung dieser Fragen wurden qualitative Daten verwendet, die durch Interviews, teilnehmende Beobachtung und Dokumentenanalyse während eines Forschungsaufenthaltes in Zagreb gewonnen wurden.

Die empirische Studie zeigt, dass der Platz der Opfer des Faschismus zwei Erinnerungskulturen und die widersprüchliche nationale Identität Kroatiens widerspiegelt. Die Umbenennung des Platzes, der eine Verbindung zur antifaschistischen Geschichte der Stadt herstellt, ist ein symbolischer Meilenstein, da er als einer der ersten Indikatoren für die neue revisionistische Politik der Regierung gesehen werden kann. Die antifaschistische Tradition ist eine Erinnerung, die viele Zagreber BürgerInnen nicht vergessen wollen, da sie eine Fortsetzung der Emanzipationsprozesse und der Achtung der Menschenrechte sowie des inklusiven Verständnisses bedeutet.