

Gazela Pudar Draško¹
Aleksandar Pavlović²
Eltion Meka³

Enmity and Politics: Reaffirming or Rejecting the Concepts?

People use politics not just to advance their interests but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against. (Huntington 1996: 21)

Invoking the politics of enmity *hic et nunc* requires a certain explanation. Why resurrecting this seemingly marginal political concept of enmity, instead of sticking to “usual suspects” like sovereignty, power, representation and so on?

For one thing, enmity remained understudied as a political concept. According to Gil Anidjar, “a cursory reading of Western philosophical and political reflections... quickly reveals that... ‘the enemy’ never becomes a basic concept, barely even a significant operative term”; notable exceptions are Carl Schmitt’s attempt to locate the decision concerning the distinction between friend and enemy as the precondition of the political and Jacques Derrida’s reflections on the enemy in the *Politics of Friendship* (Anidjar 2003: xxiii-xxiv).

1 Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

2 Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

3 University of New York Tirana

Schmitt remains especially instructive here insofar as he virtually establishes the concept of the enemy and makes approximation – if not equivalence – between the concept of the political enemy and politics itself. According to him, “the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy” [Schmitt, 1966: 26]. By making reference to Latin, Schmitt further distinguishes between the private or non-political aspect of the friend/enemy relation, on the one hand, and its properly political character on the other: “The enemy is *hostis*, not *inimicus* in the broader sense... The often quoted ‘Love your enemies’ reads ... ‘*diligite inimicos vestros*’. No mention is made of the political enemy” [1996: 28-9]. Schmitt considers the enemy only in his political aspect: “the enemy is solely the political enemy” [1996: 28]. Thus, only the concept of the political enemy belongs to politics and defines it.

Derrida himself, while making a valuable effort to re-configure the entire political field through the figure of friendship, worryingly recognizes that the enemy figure persists and, more so, remains somewhat constitutive for Europe, without which she would lose its political being (Derrida 1994; see also: Anidjar 2003: 49).

Hence, despite numerous optimistic prophesies and doubtless pacification that the EU brought to Western Europe at least (or at last), one is bound to agree with Schmitt that “rationally speaking, it cannot be denied that nations continue to group themselves according to the friend and enemy antithesis” (Schmitt 1996: 28). Thus, in current political discourse, one might ironically find the return of the banished Schmittian distinction with a vengeance. The growing reemergence of the nation and national within the EU itself, and of both internal and external clashes and antagonisms that it brings with it, are poignant remainders of the current need to conceptually rethink

enmity and hostility and its role in our political present. Did Europe ever truly cease to be confined by the national borders of its constituents? More so, is the EU itself becoming confined and locked by its borders, both internal and external ones? The question of the enemy and of the national sovereignty exemplified by border as the physical barrier, thus reemerges not only as the fundamental problem of European politics, but also as a poignant remainder of the still powerful identitarian potential of national sentiments and of mushrooming populism(s) that uses it to evoke such sentiments.

Politics of Enmity thus calls upon immediate thinking of Otherness – for enmity is inherently relational. We are easily caught up in between Scylla and Charybdis, seeking to reinforce, to reinstate our own group's existence by conflicting it with the Other. On everyday level, we witness the existence of different groups creating different Others: national Us, ethnic Us, municipal Us, neighbourhood Us, gendered Us, racial Us – they all call for a constitutive Other that resides in realities of our self-definitions. As mentioned, Schmitt emphasized the proximity between friend and enemy. Through the political, enemy becomes friend and vice versa. They assume each other and reinforce each other. It is precisely the relation of enmity that is political and epistemological simultaneously: it creates and revives political community of friends.

Throughout modern history, there was no better engagement of the concept of enmity as in nations and nationalisms. For, both are in many ways peculiar and elusive concepts that could easily be interpreted as being both 'banal' and infinitely complex; primordial and modern; imagined and real; they also have a great role in the politics of enmity. Since belonging to a specific national group can be seen as an important source of the collective strength for many, solidarity of these collectives may serve as the basis for action to further

strengthen these (imagined) bonds. The process itself, more often than not, assumes the existence of another, equally potent, equally solidary collective – usually irreducibly distinct from ours. This positioning which comes part and parcel with the idea of the nation – more so with nationalism – seems to centre around the idea of enmity: the antipode of solidarity among those who belong to ‘Us’. Enmity, as well as solidarity, is thus one of the cornerstones of the ‘practicing of a nation’, something which shapes and perpetuates a nation as political identity framework.

On the one hand, it is often argued that nationalism can be seen as the modern form of *Gemeinschaft* which answers ontological needs created by the uncertainties of modernity and its power structures. On the other hand, we witness a growth of a global society with an increasingly integrated system, primarily socio-economic, but also cultural and perhaps political. Globalisation creates opportunities, but also crises in which we have to remake our lives and identities (Giddens, 2000). At the same time, social relations continue to be governed and institutionalised in accordance with national temporalities and located within the spaces of the nation. The shift from national to post-national regimes cannot be established. Rather, what we see is the emergence of trans-border nationalism as a perverted adaptation of the nation-state model (Brubaker, 2015). The powers of the nation-state are increasing in spite of the global challenges of migration, opening the new perspectives on solidarity but also on enmity.

Bearing these issues in mind, this volume attempts contribute to the discussion about the nation, nationalism and its inevitable attendant, enmity. In what sense have friendship and hostility (Schmitt 1996, Derrida 1994, Bojanić 1995; 2015) gained new meanings, and what would those meanings be? Does nation-building always involve a common enemy one has

to fight? Or does it meet its limits with being a mere remedy for contemporary forms of inequality, or a tranquilizer for those unsettled by the complexity and insecurity brought up by globalized capitalism? These questions become increasingly important as we witness the crisis of the collectivity-building process of the European Union. Do the contemporary politics of difference contest the notion of enmity or, quite to the contrary, reaffirm it?

The volume opens with the section that considers economy of enmity within national identities. Through confronting the capitalism-based nationalisms and globalization, this section explores various aspects of the politics of enmity. In the opening contributions, Alpar Lošonc and Vladimir Gvozden discuss aspects between the dynamic of capitalism and the nationalized enmity-based relations. Pointing out the structural connection between capitalism and its effects on causing uneven development and national(istic) articulations, they pinpoint the fragility of the liberal account of the pacification of enmities, stating that the globalized-economized competition could not ensure the barrier against the renewed enmities. Hatice Hande Orhon Özdağ attempts to demonstrate the abrasive effects of globalization on the nation states of both the core and the periphery. She insists that spreading neoliberal and post-modern ideas and norms, and supporting conflicting identities in the periphery, incites ethnic, pre-modern identities, which in return negatively affect both the core and the periphery. While nation states in the periphery weaken because of the problems created or supported by mechanisms of globalization, the domination of the nation states in the core is reinforced. In the following article, Ercan Gündoğan returns to Lenin's and Stalin's conception of the national question and their nationality policy in the Soviet Union. Gündoğan shows that Soviet nationalities policies freed nations from the prison of the Tsarist Russia, but

failed to produce an effective socialist friendship-based model for the fusion of nations. In the final article of this section, Robert Gallagher utilizes the Aristotle's notion of εὖ ζῆν (to "live well") contrasting it to contemporary globalism and arguing for the friend-foe antithesis with the example of Ukraine.

The second section draws our attention to Central and Eastern Europe and its historical legacies of enmities. Olof Bortz writes on a renowned American political scientist Raul Hilberg, frequently called the founder of Holocaust studies. The article explores the role and significance of national stereotypes, as problematic and unresolved aspect of his work and, more so, of the German *Weltanschauung* altogether. National stereotypes and their extreme outcomes are the main focus of the following article, written by Andrej Kubiček. He explores the strategies of (self)excluding Roma, ranging from acceptance of pariah status to uneasy attempts to assimilate them in host people's nations; instead, he focuses on the third way – Roma nation building strategy out of different Roma communities. Finally, Irina Dusacova engages into one more case of the nation-in-the-making in the case of Moldova by trying to identify the symbolic Other for the Moldovan media. She argues that the distinction, or rather enmity between East and West, constitute the ultimate basis for Moldovans' ethnic identification.

The third section examines enmity and friendship in distinctive cases in post-Yugoslav space. Rastislav Dinić dwells into Gellner's and Cavell's interpretations of Wittgenstein channelling them into the political problems of community and nationalism. Starting from this distinction, Dinić poignantly emphasizes the meaning of Dušan Makavejev's films that show his vision of the Yugoslav identity and Yugoslavia as a political community, quite resembling the one of Cavell's. Reinvention of the community in Makavejev's case is thus based on popular culture that perpetually talks about its own community. In

the following contribution, Marko Kovačević brings in István Bibó, a prominent Hungarian political thinker and practitioner, making a parallel between his oeuvre and the processes in former Yugoslavia some 70 years after. The author argues that contemporary discourses of nationalism and identity politics can be seen as an instance of the Hobbesian culture of anarchy applied to Balkan contexts. Last, but not the least, article in this section is the one by Tamara Petrović Trifunović and Dunja Poletić Ćosić, examining the media discourse in Serbia during the “refugee crisis” in 2015/16 in the Balkans. Compared to overtly xenophobic rhetoric in many EU states, there was a predominantly sympathetic representation of refugees in the mainstream Serbian media; nevertheless, according to the authors, this sympathy was merely disguising the actual lack of services provided to the population in transit by the Serbian state.

The last section explores notions of Serbian-Albanian enmity, appearing almost primordial to ordinary person in Balkans. Božica Slavković builds her case of Albanian Other on the Albanian aspirations to realize the idea of the Greater Albania, supported by Great Forces of pre-WWI period. Ledion Krisafi provides new evidence on the Albania-Yugoslavia relations between the end of WWII and an Informbiro resolution in 1948 and questions the prevailing opinion (the “myth” as he calls it) about 1945-1948 harmonious relations between Yugoslavia and Albania. The article offers insights into the real intentions and fears of the then Albanian leadership, and Enver Hoxha’s intentions regarding Yugoslavia. Finally, Atdhe Hetemi constructs his article as a study of the (hostile) inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, that are very much based on the interpretation of the past given in own political/ethnic community.

The volume originated from the project *Figuring out the Enemy: Re-imagining Serbian-Albanian Relations* that aimed to challenge Serbian-Albanian hostility by reinvestigating events

and discourses, ideas and traditions that undermine the present enmity and promote *friendship*. In spite the overall tone of this volume that almost reinforces the inevitability of the enmity, we hope that it will contribute to a better understanding of ethnic enmities, especially between Serbian and Albanian communities, leading consequently to better conditions for εὖ ζῆν, or living a livable life in the crossroads of the Balkans and beyond.

References

- Anidjar, Gil (2003), *The Jew, the Arab: History of the Enemy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bojanić, Petar (1995), *Prijatelj – Neprijatelj: Carl Schmitt i Jacques Derrida* [Friend – Enemy: Carl Schmitt and Jacques Derrida], Novi Sad: Svetovi.
- Bojanić, Petar (2015), *Violence et Messianisme*, Paris – Milano: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin – Mimesis International.
- Brubaker, Rogers (2015), *Grounds for Difference*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Derrida, Jacques (1994) *Politiques de l'amitié*, Paris: Editions Galilée.
- Giddens, Anthony (2000), *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives*, New York: Routledge.
- Huntington, Samuel (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London: Simon & Schuster.
- Schmitt, Carl (1996) *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.