

MAXO VANKA'S COLLAGE "WORLD WAR II" IS
A BRILLIANT GEMATRICAL COMPOSITION

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in memoriam:
HENRY A. CHRISTIAN
1931 - 1997

The American-Croatian painter Maksimilian Vanka,¹ 1889-1963, or Maxo for his friends, composed together with his American wife Margaret, her father Dr. Stetten DeWitt and his friends Louis and Stella Adamic, his most enigmatic work, the "WORLD WAR II" collage.²

The collage originated at the reunion of Maxo Vanka, his wife Margaret, his friends Louis and Stella Adamic, with Margaret's father Dr. Stetten DeWitt, after his return from Europe at war. The party was exhilarated with Dr. Stetten's safe escape from Korčula (Dalmatia) to Paris, Le Havre and on board of the French liner Ile de France to New York, and preoccupied with the imminent World War. They discussed Nazism, Fascism and anti-Semitism, Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito and their emblems, swastika, fascio and the rising sun. They debated about the activity of the Nazi agent Chandler, exposed to Washington by Dr. Stetten.³ They marveled about the luck of the MS Ile de France, her departure from Le Havre on the first day of war and arrival to New York, on September 9, 1939, about a week after the passenger ship Athenia was torpedoed by a German submarine, on September ³. They remembered The MS Lusitania sinking by a German *U-Boot* in the WWI.

Louis Adamic⁴ was additionally concerned about his native Praproče, the Adamic Family House in the Old World, and remembered the rosary lines about "plague, war and hunger", prayed in his youth every evening prior to go to bed by all his family, mother and father, sisters and brothers.

Dr. Stetten pondered about war, terror, Satan and God and quoted Sir Edward Gray's pessimistic sentence, "The lamps are going out all over the World; we shall not see them again in our time."

Maxo Vanka was convinced the World War was coming and transformed the discussed topics in visual symbols for his collage. The Ile de France assumed on his picture the shape of the Parisian island Ile de la Cité, the sinister emblems became germ-like dots scattered over his composition, but the candle is still

optimistically lighting. The names of persons and places and ships have been pasted or painted by Vanka on his collage.

Besides, Vanka has built the key subjects of the party's discussion into the gematrical numbers. Gematria⁵ is a Hebrew word meaning the translation of words in numbers and vice versa. Letters, or better, ciphers, are not only symbols for sounds but simultaneously also symbols for numbers. Letters in various alphabets (Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Arab, etc) have their specific numerical equivalents. In the Western Latin alphabet A equals 1, B 2, C 3, D 4, E 5, F 6, G 7, H 8, I 9, J 10, K 11, L 12, M 13, N 14, O 15, P 16, Q 17, R 18, S 19, T 20, U 21, V 22, W 23, X 24, Y 25 and Z 26. Thus, the word **WAR** equals $23 + 1 + 18 = 42$. But in gematria, a number, 2-, 3-, 5-, 7- ... times larger or smaller, retains its gematrical meaning. The manifold meaning of numbers is still echoed in our words, like **one** pair (= **2** things or **2** beings), **one** quadriga (= **4** horses), **one** week (= **7** days), **one** decade (= **10** years), **one** inch (= **12** lines); also in the belief that the **3** divine persons, the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, are but **one** God.

The party translated the topics of their conversation into gematrical numbers. I believe they enjoyed their *mathesis* as I am enjoying my deciphering of their cryptograms. Their gematrical translations were not only a pastime, but also a documentation of their messages. With the selected gematrical numbers, Vanka defined

1. dimensions of his collage (width, height, diagonal);

2. inscriptions of names (L. Adamic, M. Vanka, Chandler, Hull, Jehovah, Satan, L. Athenia, Ile de France, Korčula, Belgrade, Paris, Washington, and also the ominous words **TERROR** and **WAR**);

3. the three musical notes⁶ in the sector 8 of his collage.⁷ See TABLE I: **Gematrical Numbers in Dimensions, Musical Notes and Inscribed Words.**

The gematrical numbers in Maxo Vanka's collage are **2, 3, 5, 7, 13, 19, 21, 23, 35, 41, 42, 43, 88**. Among them, there are four groups of synonymous numbers:

$2 = 42 = 88$;

$3 = 21 = 42$;

$5 = 35$;

$7 = 21 = 35 = 42$.

See the TABLE II: **Gematrical Numbers on the Maxo Vanka's Collage "World War Two" Deciphered** with the cryptograms hidden in numbers **35, 13, 21, 23, 7, 41, 42, 43, 88** and **19**.

The built-in messages are mainly in English, but also in Hebrew, Croatian and Slovenian. Among them are the title of the Collage and its author's signature, names of persons, places and ships, names of inimical movements and their emblems, sayings, quotations and prayers.⁸ The key-word **WAR**, written 10 times on the composition, is also gematrically pointed out in four languages, in English, Hebrew, Croatian and Slovenian.

Notes

- 1 Prpić, G. J., Maksimilijan Vanka. - *Hrvatska revija*, 8, 1958, 129-160.
- Vidan, I., Maksimilijan Vanka i Louis Adamič. - *Forum* (Zagreb), 1-2, 1984, 385-411.
- Adamic, L., *The Native's Return*, Harper, N. Y., 1934, 161-164, 279, 296.
- idem, *Cradle of Life*, Harper, N. Y., 1936. (The book is dedicated to Vanka)
- 2 Christian, H. A., Kurent, T. T., Reading a Painting: Maxo Vanka's Collage: "World War II". - *Two homelands* (Ljubljana), 8, 1997, 89-105.
- idem, Kolaž Maksimilijana Vanke, videnje druge svetovne vojne. - *Zbornik občine Grosuplje XVIII* (Grosuplje, Slovenia), 1994, 221-224.
- idem, Louis Adamič in Maxo Vanka proti antisemitskemu propagandistu. - *Dvatisoč* (Ljubljana), 96-97, 1997, 235-240.
- Kurent, T., Vankov in Adamičev Chandler: dogodek iz njune borbe proti nacizmu in antisemitizmu. - *Zbornik občine Grosuplje* (Grosuplje, Slovenia), XIX, 1996, 209-210.
- Puhar, A., Med tovarišem in gospodom je velika razlika. - *Delo*, 3. 9. 1998.
- 3 Adamic, L., *My Native Land*, Harper, N. Y., 1943, 359-360.
- 4 Louis Adamic, 1899-1951, Slovenian-American writer, reformer and spokesman for immigrant America, an important figure in the cultural and political movements of the period 1930-1950.
- *Louis Adamic: An International Symposium on his Contributions to America*. - University of Pittsburgh, June 1981.
- *Louis Adamič, Symposium*, Univerza Edvarda Kardelja, Ljubljana, September 1981.
- *International Conference: 100th Birth Anniversary of Louis Adamic - Intellectuals in Diaspora*. - Scientific Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and The Institute for Slovene Emigration Studies, Portorož (Slovenia), September 1998.
- 5 More about gematria in: Kurent, T., The Gematric Cryptography in the Art. - *Acta Neophilologica*, XXIX, 1996, 89 -107.
- 6 Professor Christian told me Dr. David Hoddeson (Department of English, Rutgers University, Newark, N. j., U.S.A.) and Miss Judith A. Christian are interested in the three musical notes, perhaps expecting that I will find a solution. But I was able to offer only the explanation of two gematrical cryptograms, hidden in the height and width of the collage. Only later, I have deciphered other gematrical messages. Too late to make my friend Henry happy.
- 7 The location of collage's elements is best found by use of the Division by Three System: The composition is divided vertically and horizontally into thirds. The resulting areas are numbered left to right as 1 to 9, the center of the collage thus being number 5. The musical notes are situated in the rectangle 8.
- 8 In gematria, a quotation is signed by its author and by the gematricist, except proverbs, sayings, prayers and lines from the Bible.

Illustrations

1. Maxo Vanka's collage "World War II", 11" 6" by 17" 6", New York, 1939.

2. TABLE I: Gematrical Numbers in Dimensions, Musical Notes and Inscribed Words.

3. TABLE II: Gematrical Numbers of the Maxo Vanka's Collage "World War II" Deciphered.

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TABLE I

Gematrical Numbers in Dimensions, Musical Notes and Inscribed Words.

Dimensions

Width = 11" 6"^{'''} = **23** half-inches,
Height = 17" 6"^{'''} = **35** half-inches = **210**" = **2 x 3 x 5 x 7**"^{'''},
Diagonal ≅ 21" = **42** half-inches (in whole numbers).

Musical Notes

The names of the three notes in the sector 8 of the collage are **DO** on the lower, **SOL** on the middle, and **RE** on the upper line of the staff. Their gematric value: **DO SOL RE = 19 + 46 + 23 = 88**.

Inscribed Words

WAR = 23 + 1 + 18 = **42**.
L. ADAMIC = 12 + 1 + 4 + 1 + 13 + 9 + 3 = **43**.
(+C) HULL = (3) + 8 + 21 + 12 + 12 = 56 = 8 x 7 (The monogram **C** is not written on the collage)
CHANDLER = 3 + 8 + 1 + 14 + 4 + 12 + 5 + 18 = 65 = 5 x 13.
BELGRADE = 2 + 5 + 12 + 7 + 18 + 1 + 4 + 5 = 54 = 6 x 9.
PARIS = 16 + 1 + 18 + 9 + 19 = 63 = 3 x 21.
WASHINGTON = 23 + 1 + 19 + 8 + 9 + 14 + 7 + 20 + 15 + 15 = 130 = 10 x 13.
(+ MS) ATHENIA = (13 + 19) + 1 + 20 + 8 + 5 + 14 + 9 + 1 = **90** (The abbreviation **MS** is not written on the collage)
ILE DE FRANCE = (9 + 12 + 5) + (4 + 5) + (6 + 18 + 1 + 14 + 3 + 5) = 82 = 2 x 41.
WAR = 23 + 1 + 18 = **42**
(- M) VANKA N Y = (22 + 1 + 14 + 11 + 1) + (14 + 25) = **88** (The Author's signature on the collage reads "M. Vanka N. Y." With the omission of the initial **M**, the signature equals **88**)

TABLE II
Gematrical Numbers of the Vanka's Collage "World War II" Deciphered

- 35 x 13 = 455 = THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WORLD WAR BY MAKSIMILIAN VANKA.**
- 35 = MV**, initials of **M(axo) V(anka)** and **M(arget) V(anka)**.
- 35 x 3 = 105 = NEXT WAR.**
- 13 = LA**, initials of **L(ouis) A(damic)** and of **L(usitania) A(thenia)**.
- 13 x 5 = 65 = CHANDLER.**
- 13 x 30 = 390 = ADOLF HITLER, BENITO MUSSOLINI AND JAP MIKADO.**
- 13 x 3 = 39 = RAT (= WAR, in Croatian)**
- 13 x 10 = 130 = WASHINGTON.**
- 13 x 32 = 416 = THE LAMPS ARE GOING OUT ALL OVER THE WORLD.**
- 13 x 22 = 286 = SWASTIKA - FASCIO - RISING SUN.**
- 13 x 6 = 78 = VOJSKA. (= WAR, in Slovenian)**
- 13 x 2 = 26 = ך ם ן ן (He Vau He lod) = 5 + 6 + 5 + 10 = 26 (JEHOVAH)**
- 13 x 4 x 7 x 1 = 364 = ך ם ן ן (Nun Teth Shin He) = 50 + 9 + 300 + 5 (= SATAN)**
- 210 = KUGE, VOJNE IN LAKOTE... LA. (= PLAGUE, WAR AND HUNGER... LA, in Slovenian)**
- 21 x 3 = 63 = PARIS.**
- 21 x 3 x 5 = 315 = DOLAZI NOVI SVJETSKI RAT. MV (= NEW WORLD WAR IS COMMING. MV; in Croatian)**
- 23 x 4 = 92 = VANKA FECIT.**
- 23 x 8 = 184 = DEWITT STETTEN.**
- 23 x 9 = 207 = WORLD WAR MV.**
- 23 x 4 = 92 = ז ם ן ן (Zain He Phe) = 7 + 5 + 80 = 92 (= TERROR)**
- 23 x 12 = 276 = HITLER - MUSSOLINI - HIROHITO.**
- 23 x 2 x 7 = 322 = FASCISM - NAZISM - ANTI-SEMITISM.**
- 23 x 4 = 92 = PRAPROČE. (The Praproče House is Adamic's birth place)**
- 23 x 4 = 92 = ILE DE FRANCE.**
- 23 x 15 = 345 = KORČULA - PARIS - LE HAVRE - AND NEW YORK.**
- 7 x 10 = 70 = STELLA A.**
- 7 x 10 = 70 = 3 + 9 + 19 + 39 = 3. 9. 1939. (Date of the Athenia sinking)**
- 41 x 2 = 82 = PEGGY V.**
- 41 x 6 = 246 = LUSITANIA - ATHENIA - ILE DE FRANCE.**
- 41x 3 = 123 = ך ם ן ן (He Mem Cheth Lamed Mem) = (WAR, in Hebrew)**
- 41 = ם ז ן (Lamed Vau He) = 30 + 6 + 5 = 41 (= TERROR)**
- 42 = ן ן ם ן (He He Lamed Beth) = 5 + 5 + 30 + 2 = 42 (= TERROR)**
- 43 = L. ADAMIC.**
- 43 x 4 = 172 = WORLD WAR TWO.**
- 88 = DO SOL RE.**
- 88 x 10 = 880 = THE LAMPS ARE GOING OUT ALL OVER THE WORLD. WE SHALL NOT SEE THEM AGAIN IN OUR TIME. SIR EG, SDW.**
- 19 x 10 = 190 = KUGE, VOJSKE, LAKOTE... (PLAGUE; WAR; HUNGER..., Slovenian)**
- 19 x 5 = 95 = VOJSKA BO... (= THERE WILL BE WAR... , saying in Slovenian)**
- 19 x 4 = 76 = 9 + 9 + 19 + 39 = 9. 9. 1939. (Date of the Ile de France arrival in N. Y.)**

