

TIME OF DISINTEGRATION*

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The main reason for writing this paper is the brutal war started by Serbian-Montenegrin coalition on the territory of what once was Yugoslavia and the inability of the West, especially Europe, to stop it.

Having allowed the Serbs to continue the aggression against the Croats, Muslims and other non-Serbian nations with no end in sight, Western politicians made a great mistake the consequences of which are to be felt in Europe for generations. If we take a look at the cultural and historical circumstances in Europe, we shall always find examples that depart from moral and ethical rules. We can always talk about oppression of the freedom of think and speech. According to the Indian system of philosophy, our planet is entering a period of spiritual disintegration and collapse. The collapse of the whole of European continent takes place on the battlefields of the Balkans, entering step by step the sphere of our spiritual being.

Many scientists, writers and politicians have tried their hand at the search for the roots and causes of the war waged in the region of the Balkans. Though the result has been approximately successful, it has never been definite. The question "Why?" has always evaded explanation. Ethnologists and anthropologists are expected to give their contribution to the search for the answer, too. A war is, unfortunately, an "uncultural" phenomenon that, partly, belongs to the events on the cultural level. Ethnology is a science concerned with the nations as the carriers of culture and, in the course of studying of these cultures, with the reconstruction of ethnic history (Belaj, 1989). Some answers to war events on the territory of former Yugoslavia can be reached by the interpretation of phenomena concerning cultural and ethnic history of this region and the people inhabiting it.

* This paper should have been read at the 13th international IUAES congress, held from 29th July till 5th August 1993 in Mexico, as part of the IUAES commission on the Study of Peace (COSP) under the title "Global Change and the Prospects for Peace: Anthropological Contributions, in the first part called Hateful Memories: Ethnic Conflict and the Prospects for Peace." Due to the authors inability to attend the congress himself, the paper was presented in written form.

If we look at the cultural and historical circumstances in Europe, we shall always come across the examples that depart from morality and ethics. There has always been violence for the sake of freedom, violence for the sake of love, Christianity has been preached with the sword in hand, the freedom of think and speech has been oppressed. The European culture set out on the way of intellectual development but the intellect was disseminated and developed with no consideration of the ethical meaning of its activity (Capra, 1986). A European cultured man discovered lethal weapons, computer and precise medical instruments equally easily. The European culture started with the life of a savage, it seems that it took this kind of life as a pattern and started to develop it further without considering its moral value. A prehistoric man used to break the head of his enemy with an ordinary club. We have, however, for the same purpose invented very sophisticated devices, capable of breaking hundreds and thousands of heads at once. While the material culture of the mankind developed rapidly, its spirit changed slowly or not at all. At this point we could even simplify and say that the mankind reached its human pinnacle during the Neolithic period which was afterwards followed only by decadence.

According to Indian and some European schools of philosophy, our planet passes through the era of spiritual decay, split and disintegration. The first split took place with the disintegration of the Roman Empire into the Eastern and the Western part, with the split of Church into the Orthodox and the Catholic and the separation of European culture from the Asian while both of them had belonged to the same whole and had had a common history. This separation can be compared to the separation and the coming into being of continents in the early phase of the formation of the Earth surface. Unfortunately, or fortunately, we are all witnesses to this split taking place in the heart of Europe, in the Balkans. This war is the final act of that disintegration after which the East and West will hardly be one while ever again. At the moment this split still takes place on the battlefields but we should be aware that it slowly, whether we like it or not, enters the sphere of our spiritual being. The anthropologists and ethnologists, as well as other humanistic intellectuals, cannot remain silent in the face of these events. It is clear to all of them that the answers should be sought in the political, economic and military spheres, as well as that it is more or less known who is to be blamed for the war. The war in former Yugoslavia was initiated by the Serbian-Montenegrin coalition headed by the Yugoslav National Army. Having allowed the aggression against Croatian, Muslim, and other non-Serbian peoples to continue with no end in sight, the carriers of Western politics made a mistake the consequences of which are to be felt in Europe for next generations.

Several important facts which have engulfed Europe in the last years should be kept in mind: the collapse of Communism, the emergence of fascism and nationalism in several countries, in particular in Serbia, and the attempt to create a united Europe.

On the other hand in the course of horrible events which are taking place, the basis of European civilization, culture and spirituality has been run down. This is best

reflected in the fact that the Croats and Muslims, due to the imposition of the embargo on the import of weapons, have been denied the right on self-defense. Taking this step the international community sided with the Serbian aggressor, who owns the arms which used to belong to the former YNA, the third force in Europe, according to the amount and complexity of equipment. The inability of the EC, the UN and the Security Council to stop the war is evident; these institutions are silent witnesses of the events who satisfy the public opinion and their bad consciences sending humanitarian relief to the people dying from shells and bullets. While the world community has sworn that borders cannot be changed by force they are right now being changed in Bosnia while "Great Serbia" is being created. For Serbia a divided Europe has become a cover for the achievement of Serbian arms. The events in former Soviet Union reflect on the events in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, too. The world community should pamper Russian interests in the Balkans in order to preserve peace in Russia from becoming endangered. This short-term politics cannot give results in the long range since unfairly solved ethnic conflicts can break out in a few years time. To deny the nations the right on self-determination and self-defense and to allow the ethnic cleansing to proceed endangers the basic human rights. European public rightly becomes more and more worried at what is happening in the heart of Europe. In the ethnic conflicts taking place along the line leading from Sarajevo to Caucasus and Cabul ethnic, religious, economic, political and geostrategical interests are visible. It is nowhere possible to give the answer taking into account only one point of view.

New coalitions are being created in Europe: on the one hand Great Britain, France and Russia have similar interests and views on the solution of the crisis in the Balkans while on the other hand Germany, Italy and Turkey have their own views on the same matter. Due to the events concerning World War Two the breakthrough of Germany, across Central and Southeastern Europe to Turkey and Islamic countries in Asia, is opposed to the interests of a certain group of countries. Because of this there have lately been certain conflicts, aimed at the destabilization of the countries belonging to the second group. It is particularly evident in the persecution and terror over foreign workers in Germany, a phenomenon attributed to the emergence of Neonacism, then in the destabilization and corruption of the Italian Government and the outbreak of ethnic conflicts between the Turks and the Kurds in Turkey. One of the reasons for the postponing of the solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the fact everybody is aware of - that in the new world order Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and most probably Macedonia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Albania and Greece would be oriented to the second group of countries, thus opening the way for spreading of German capital and influence to Asia and Africa.

It seems that the war in Southeastern Europe serves to some European circles as a testing field for the research into the psychology of warship. To have such a situation it is important to create the so-called turbulent field achieved by the conflict among various national groups. It is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Croats,

Muslims and Serbs fight each other. In such conflicts and after them people are completely psychologically destroyed. Genocide and ethnic cleansing, carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and previously in Croatia by Serbian side, lead to a sort of psychocide over the people in these regions. After such a state is achieved it is possible to impose political control over the region. These pessimistic expectations are possible from the point of view of the site of fire in the Balkans, in particular after the conscience of the whole of cultured world has failed. Thus, justice, cosmopolitanism, and philosophy of good seem very far away from here. The main cause of this tragedy is the recurrence of Communist way of thinking, melted into nationalism and fascism, in Belgrade.

If we want to find a case similar to the war which has been waged against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, we must remind ourselves of the country from the top of the world, namely of Tibet. The struggle for the independence of Tibet has been present in the history for centuries. China, a large neighboring country, has always wanted to get its hands on Tibet. The latest invasion of the Chinese into Tibet took place in the late 1940s when a horrible, bloody and unjust war broke out. After the war Tibet was, unfortunately, divided and two eastern provinces became part of China while Peking proclaimed the western part of Tibet an autonomous province. Numerous Tibetans fled abroad, mostly to India and other European countries. There is large first hand evidence on the crimes of the Chinese army in Tibet: Tibetan Buddhist shrines, monasteries and sacred places (some of them situated at the height of over 5.000 meters) were indiscriminately shelled by the Chinese Communist army from a "decent distance" while the Tibetans had no arms to respond to the attacks. They had no choice but flee, be destroyed or reconcile with their destiny or karma. The conquerors believed that they would thus break the belief, spirit and identity of Tibetan people. But it has never happened since the spirit and belief do not reside in the stone sanctuaries and places of worship are built of but rather somewhere else, in the hearts of people.

Unlike Tibet, Croatia has gained its sovereignty and autonomy and we hope that its entire territory will soon be returned under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Croatia. In order to understand better the situation in the

Balkans, where, besides other peoples, Croats and Serbs have lived beside each other and to facilitate the search for the roots of Serbian aggression on Croats and Croatian ethnic area it is necessary to present several facts of cultural and historical nature. Among all the Slavic nations there are great similarities and differences, which are evident among South Slavic nations as well. Several Croatian ethnologists (Bratanić, 1939) provided indirect evidence supporting the thesis that the Slavs did not settle the present day Balkans and surrounding area at the same time, that they neither came by the same way, nor from the same native country. It means that, since they had not had the same primeval homeland, they first found themselves in the same area with the arrival to the Balkans where they started to mix up and influence each other. This fact is important to the ethnologists not to approve, but rather to understand, the ethnic

intolerance between the Croats and the Serbs who are by some Western scientists considered to belong to the common branch of peoples. Such considerations led to the statements about "tribal war" in the press and media, which are in bad taste, since the Croatian nation is among the oldest in Europe. The roots of bad understanding and Great Serbian aggression against the Croatian people might be found in these theories. The Croatian people are not for the first time in their history exposed to such danger and they have always come out stronger. We hope that this is the last of great trials. Nevertheless this war strengthened our consciousness of belonging to the Croatian nation and contributed to its growth.

If we take into account how complex and tragic are the late events in the Balkans, it is impossible to imagine some new, more human world order. The perspectives for peace in Euro-Asia, from the Balkan point of view are scarce unless certain important changes on the international political scene take place and the pressure of the public opinion in influential countries brings about the positive turn in the international politics.

Each culturalogical phenomenon emerging at any point of the world should be considered both locally and globally and we cannot turn our heads in the face of the phenomena, war being a greatest among them, which could lead to the disaster in global terms.

The research of the subjective attitude of an individual to the war in which he took part, either as a soldier or a spectator before a TV screen, is imposed on us as a separate field of ethnological research. Exact sciences, and ethnology is one of them, can hardly find their way and answers to the sphere of the subjective.

Translated by Snježana Veselica

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VRIJEME RASPADA*

Sažetak

U članku autor analizira uzroke i posljedice rata koji se još uvijek vodi na prostorima bivše Jugoslavije, te pokušava dati neke etnološke, kulturološke, političke i psihološke odrednice. Također daje objašnjenje zašto su političari Ujedinjenih naroda i Europske zajednice dozvolili da se na kraju drugog tisućljeća, u srcu Europe mogu mijenjati granice silom, provoditi genocid, kulturocid i etničko čišćenje. Nesposobnost da se spriječi velikosrpska agresija na Hrvatsku, kao i na Bosnu i Hercegovinu, pokazuje da još nije sazrelo vrijeme za Novi svjetski poredak i Ujedinjenu Europu. Autor smatra da jedan od uzroka za rat između Hrvata i Srba leži u etno-kulturološkoj razlici koja proizlazi iz vremena od doseljenja Slavena na današnje prostore. Na temelju nekih etnoloških pokazatelja (npr. tipologija rala, dijalektalna nomenklatura) može se pretpostaviti da Slaveni koji nastanjuju danjašnje prostore jugoistočne Europe, nemaju zajedničku pradomovinu, nisu se doseljavali niti istim putovima niti u isto vrijeme, već su dolaskom u današnje prostore počeli utjecati jedni na druge. Postojala su najmanje dva vala doseljanja Slavena; prvi, stariji, koji su činila obiteljska plemena kajkavskog i čakavskog narječja; ta su plemena nastanila čitav prostor od Alpa do Sredozemlja, i drugi, noviji val u kojem dolaze nosioci centralnog tipa rala i štokavskog narječja kod Hrvata i Srba. Hrvatska plemena zarano su prešla na katoličanstvo i prisvojila tekovine zapadnjačke kulture i civilizacije, dok su se Srbi organizirali u okviru pravoslavne vjere i naslijeđa Bizantskog carstva. Također su asimilirali veliki dio starobalkanskog vlašskog stanovništva. Te kulturološke razlike dovele su do različitog svjetonazora u čemu leže korijeni rata. Ako svjetski čimbenici ne iznađu ispravno rješenje i ne kazne agresora, perspektive za mir na prostoru Euro-Azije su veoma male.

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