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REFLECTIONS ON
MARKO JAČOV'S SOURCE-BOOK

„*Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani durante la guerra di Candia*” (1645—1669),
„*Studi e Testi*”, n. 352—353, Biblioteca Ap. Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1992.
(*The Roots of Modern Ethnic Conflicts in the Balkans*)

Most of the ethnic conflicts on the Balkan peninsula until the end of the 17th century — declared Jačov — were rooted in the conflict between Islam and Christianity. The standard-bearer of Islam was the Ottoman army, which imposed this religion on the peoples of the Balkans by force.

The Christians of the Balkans who converted to Islam during the „fifteen-year-war” (1593—1606) were called „poturs”, that is, half-Turks, within their own country. The numerous Greeks, Serbs, Albanians, Bulgarians, Walachians, Moldavians, Croatians and Hungarians who converted to Islam and who fought in the Ottoman army during the war against Crete (1645—1669) and then, during the military expeditions of Vienna and the Peloponnesus (1683—1699), were called Turks. Jačov mentions that it was the first time when the status of religion had been identified with that of nationality.

As a consequence of the military expeditions of Vienna and the Peloponnesus — the author emphasizes — the conflict between religions was accompanied by the conflict of the different sects, that is, Catholicism and Orthodoxy. This is how the author explains conflicts that broke out later between Serbs and Croatians, basing his thesis on the well-documented example of the Court of Vienna identifying Serbs with Orthodoxy and Croatians with Catholicism only in the second half of the 19th century. However, previously there had been Catholic Serbs and likewise Croatian Protestants.

As the conflict between these two nations was regarded as the main reason of the contentions that broke out later, Jačov goes back to the 16th century in order to find those reasons that led to this total rupture.

As a matter of fact, the Ottoman Empire dominated every country of the Balkans in this period; including all the territories inhabited by Serbs and Croatians and two-thirds of the territory of the Hungarian State, while the remaining one-third became dominated by the Habsburg Empire. Only Zagreb and its neighbourhood remained in the possession of the Habsburgs from the countries that had belonged to Croatia.

Pasha Sinan, the Grand Vizier; when he was preparing for a new war against the Habsburg Empire (this war lasted from 1593 to 1606), promised to Sultan Murad to occupy not only the last remaining bit of Hungary but also Vienna together with Austria, and even the Imperial capital, Prague. Then he would have turned against Rome.

Pope Clement VIII, who was worried about the survival of Christianity in Hungary, organized and supported — both in financial and military senses — the resistance to the armies commanded by Pasha Sinan mentioned above. Hungarians from Transylvania, Saxons and Székellers, Walachians, Moldavians, Serbs, Croatians and Bulgarians joined the Imperial and Papal troops that marched to the military area of the Balkans, while some thirty thousand Greek, Serb and Albanian Christians were fighting together against the Ottoman army among the Montenegrin mountains. The Ottoman army consisted of Muslims mainly from Greece, Albania and Serbia in these parts. According to the sources quoted by Jačov those newly converted to Islam, called „half-Turks”, were even more violent than the Turks themselves when they faced their compatriots who had remained constant to Christianity.

Jačov states that Jován, the Patriarch of Serbs and Bulgarians, driven by religious interests, turned to Clement VIII, and promised to „place a hundred thousand or even more selected soldiers” at his service. The Pope responded to the Patriarch’s letter on 10 April 1598. The union of the Holy See and the Serb Patriarchate was declared three years later, on 6 May 1601.

As the attempt to liberate the Balkans from Ottoman domination with the help of the fifteen-year-war (1593—1606) failed, almost a hundred thousand Serbs moved from Turkish territories into Habsburg regions at the end of the 16th century, under the guidance of their own officers who depended on the military authorities appointed by the Court of Vienna. As these new soldiers were sent to war with the purpose of defending the border between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires, Emperor Rudolph II handed deserted land to them, including land in the neighbourhood of Zagreb.

These Serbs belonged to their national bishops from the point of view of religion and these bishops were consecrated in Rome according to the decree of Pope Clement VIII. His and his successors’ relationship with the leaders of the bordering bishopric of Zagreb, as is demonstrated by the sources quoted by Jačov, was friendly and fraternal. Their followers were good neighbours, too.

Turkey, after its success in the fifteen-year-war in Hungary, invaded also the regions dominated by Venice in 1645, more precisely Crete and Dalmatia. The former was occupied by Turkey, but they encountered resistance again in the Balkans.

In order to avoid persecution by the Turks, Jačov writes, almost forty thousand Christians of Serb and Croatian nationality arrived at Dalmatia dominated by Venice to settle down there. These new Venetian dependants expelled almost all those people who belonged to their own ethnic group but followed Muslim religion. These Muslims who did not want to leave their original homes in Dalmatia, although they were Serbs or Croatians, too, were accused by people of their own nationality of being Turks and for this reason they were exposed to cruel massacres. The author declares that this was the first religious purification in the Balkans made under the excuse of national status and aiming the absolute extermination of an other religion.

During the following war which is known by historians as the war of Vienna and the Peloponnesus (1683—1699), the Republic of Venice liberated not only Dalmatia and the bay of Cattaro but also most of Lica, Herzegovina, Bosnia and Montenegro directly or by

sending troops to these places. Many Christian Serbs and Croats moved from these territories to Dalmatia and the neighbourhood of the bay of Cattaro dominated by Venice. Those who could not escape were „put to the sword” by their compatriots now Muslim. According to Jačov this was the second religious „cleansing” action in the Balkans done on ethnic grounds.

At the battle between the imperial and osmanli armies on Kosovo plain on 2 January 1690, Albanians were divided according to their religious status, too. Christian Albanians were fighting with the Imperial army, while Muslims were on the side of the Turks and the Serb lands of Kosovo and Metonia were given to them in compensation by the Ottoman Porte. At the same time Christian Albanians divided the fate of Serbs: they escaped, together with the Imperial army and Serbs in the direction of Belgrade after they had been defeated. They were preceded and followed by some thirty thousand Serb families who settled down to the north of the Sava and the Danube.

As the Patriarchal Seat had to be replaced from Pec (on Ottoman territory) to Szentendre (belonging to the Habsburgs and close to Buda), Arsenije Čarnežoveć, Patriarch of Serbia and Bulgaria made efforts to maintain good relations with the Holy See following the example of his predecessors. Lipot I, however, disapproved of Patriarch Čarnežović's relations with the Pope because — as Jačov writes — he wanted to deprive Serbs of all international support, facilitating this way their integration into his own state.

The Court of Vienna prepared for extending borders on the Balkan peninsula starting from this political conception when the Turks were forced to give up their conquests in Europe and to retreat into Asia. At the same time it did everything — Jačov says — to conquer the Adriatic coast, and for this reason it kept generating discontent in Dalmatia belonging to Venice.

As there were no ethnic conflicts at all in Dalmatia, a new „nation” had to be invented, which was called „Catholic”. This is how Vince Zmaievich's work (he was the Catholic Archbishop of Zara), titled „Dialogo tra serviano e cattolico” was created. According to the sources of the Vatican quoted by Jačov, it is a dialogue between a Serb of Latin rite (Catholic) and a Serb of eastern rite (Orthodox). The population of Dalmatia, two Catholic Archbishops of Spalato, Stefano Cosmi and Stefano Cuppilli (both are Venetians), Stefan Ljubibratić Serb metropolitan and Alvice Mocenigo, Venetian vicar of Dalmatia and Albania (later became doge) were against this policy.

However, after the annexation of Dalmatia by Austria following the failure of Serenissima, the Court of Vienna made efforts to identify Orthodoxy (that is, the Eastern rite) with Serb nationality, while Catholicism (that is, the Latin rite) with Croats. This attempt was opposed by Catholic Serbs who often repeated in the contemporary newspapers: „We are Catholics but Serbs.”. And nationalist parties were born in the second half of the 19th century with the purpose of evoking ethnic intolerance: one party on the Serb and another on the Croatian side.

On the other hand, the Austrian authorities put strong pressure on Italians who had lived in Dalmatia before the settlement of Slavic people, especially after the establishment of Italian unity. The Italian schools, among others the famous secondary school of Zara, were obliged to study in Croatian and members of the Italian congregation were often

refused Holy Communion by Croatian priests. (This is what Giuseppe Praga states, too: *Storia di Dalmazia*, Milano 1981, 251.p). The conflict of Serbs and Croats in Dalmatia is rooted in this fact, in Jačov's opinion, while the situation in Croatia developed in a different way.

The Croatian and Serb troops that served His Imperial Majesty also took part in the suppression of the Hungarian revolt that broke out at the beginning of the 18th century. One and a half centuries later, in 1848, the Hungarian revolution was defeated by Austrian and Russian troops with the help of Serbs from Voivodina and Croats from Croatia. Serb Patriarch Josip Rajačić, who was seated in Sremski Karlovci at this time, enthroned Croatian governor Josip Jelačić, as a sign of this alliance and friendship.

However, the Serb—Croatian friendship might have been uncomfortable for the Monarchy under dual direction after the birth of the Austrian—Hungarian Monarchy. That is why they tried to do everything to set the two nations against each other. The historical sources quoted by Jačov do not write about conflicts between Serbs and Croats before this period. In fact, there are several examples of their peaceful life side by side and their common struggle against the Ottoman power.

It became an independent kingdom in the second half of the 19th century and intended to contact the Holy See again but the Court of Vienna made it impossible according to Jačov's research. He quotes a statement in this context, published by the bishop of Nis in 1882: „Austria will never endure the reunion of the churches because it would lose the only means to divide us: the difference in religion”. The Barnabian Cesare Tondini, who had been sent to the Balkans by the Holy See, informed Pope Leo XIII that: „The intention to identify religion with nation is far from the Serb government: students learn that the Serb nation can be divided into three sects: Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim.” „The identification of religion with nation — Tondini states in the text quoted by Jačov — exists only beyond the Sava and the Danube, and it is caused by the Catholic Austria. Austria tries to achieve the same thing in Serbia, which also signed the treaty in Berlin, to say to its confederates one day: Serbia, you did not keep your obligations accepted in the treaty signed in Berlin. The price of your independence was the formation of the equal protection of the laws of each sect in Serbia, too. As you continued identifying the Serb nation with Orthodoxy, you do not have any right of independence.”

On the other hand — as it becomes clear in Jačov's publications — the Russian delegate declared the right of his country to protect the Orthodox people of the Balkans, especially those who lived under Muslim domination. This was a clear sign of the intention that the Balkans would fall within the Russian borders in the event of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Russia behaved as the protector of Orthodox people, while the Habsburg Empire played the part of the saviour of the Catholics, but both — Jačov arrives at the logical conclusion — systematically destroyed the unity of the peoples living in the Balkans, most of all the peaceful and fraternal coexistence of Serbs and Croats, two peoples that spoke the same language and went the same historical and cultural way.

The great number of documents preserved in the different European archives and libraries and quoted or partly published by Jačov demonstrate that most of the ethnic

conflicts are rooted not in the lack of understanding among the peoples living there but in the opposing interests of the contemporary Great Powers, especially those of the Habsburg, the Ottoman-Turk and the Russian Empires.

Another fact is discovered, which must be emphasized: the large population of Jewish people living in the Balkans and in Hungary played a peacemaking role between Christianity and Islam. It is enough to remember the fact that Muslim, Christian and Jewish people of Sarajevo decided in 1668, when the Imperial troops marched into Belgrade, not to turn against one another ever. Regarding Jačov's historical impartiality, it would be advisable to dedicate a complete paper to this fairly significant question.

„It would be too easy — as Alberto Monticone, one of the outstanding European historian of our times says rightly — to draw a parallel to the present problems when speaking about these questions or others detailed in Jačov's other works. Not only the scholarly character of his publications but also the nations of the Balkans would be damaged because they would be bound to the fate of conflicts and suffering of centuries.” I totally agree with Monticone's evaluation according to which „Jačov's work, on the other hand, must be interpreted as a serious contribution to our objective, to examine the events in their historical context, opening the way for the free and critically valid study of the modern history of the Balkan peninsula.”

Finally I would like to underline the fact that Jačov did not devote any studies or books explicitly to the problem of the ethnic conflicts on the Balkans. He examines the question in the context of the modern history of the Balkans without any reference to the actual events.

Eördögh István

Reflexiók Marco Jačov szöveggyűjteményével kapcsolatban

„*Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani durante la guerra Candia*” (1645—1669),
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(*A Balkán félsziget újkori etnikai problémáinak gyökerei*)

Jačov szerint a Balkán félsziget etnikai problémáinak nagy része — a XVII. sz. végétől kezdődően — az iszlám és a kereszténység konfliktusában gyökerezik.

A Balkánon élő népek vallási hovatartozását meghatározták az ott zajló háborúk eredményezte kényszerhelyzetek. Ebből eredően súlyos konfliktusok származtak a hódítók hitére áttért „féltörökök” és a kereszténységhez hű honfitársaik között.

Súlyosbította a helyzetet a katolikus horvátok és az ortodox szerbek közötti ellentét, akiket, jóllehet ilyen etnikai és vallási besorolásban a XIX. század második felétől említ csak a bécsi adminisztráció, de mint a szerző szöveggyűjteménye bizonyítja, jelentős valláspolitikai tényezőként tartandó számon úgy a protestáns horvátok, mint a latin rítusú katolikus szerbek léte.

A sikertelen tizenöt éves háború után tömeges szerb kivándorlás indult meg a Habsburg tartományok felé. Zágráb környékén például a szerbek a Rómában felszentelt püspökük egyházi irányítása alatt álltak, és békében éltek együtt a horvátokkal a II. Rudolftól kapott területeken.

A Dalmácia térségében lezajlott startégiai változásokat követő és vallási hovatartozás miatt megtörtént első etnikai tisztogatások, öldöklések azonban egyszer s mindenkorra meghatározták a Balkán geopolitikai térségének békéjét.

A „Serenissima” bukását követően a bécsi udvar politikája nem kevésbé járult hozzá a már létező interkonfessionális feszültségekhez azzal, hogy azonosítani törekedett az otodoxiát a szerb nemzetiséggel, míg a katolicizmust a horvátokkal. Nem hiányzott Bécs részéről az őslakos latin dalmátok elnyomása sem.

A szöveggyűjtemény fényt derít arra a fontos tényre is, hogy a hódítások eredményezte tagadhatatlan felekezeti feszültségeken túl, az újkori Balkán legtöbb etnikai ellentéte mégsem az ott élő, sokszor emigrációra kényszerült népek közötti meg nem értésből származott, hanem az érintett népek tragédiáinak valódi okai a korabeli nagyhatalmak, különösen a Habsburg, az oszmán-török és nem utolsósorban az orosz hatalomnak a térséggel kapcsolatos érdekeiben keresendők.