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GLOBALIZATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

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Summary

Is it today possible at all to have a realistic and critical approach to reality, or is it possible to transcend the prevailing conformism and the avalanche of the political phrase and kitsch to reach the level of intellect worthy of the 21st century? Is there a sentiment that overcomes the crisis and that can introduce us to a new practice, completely different from the one we, unfortunately, were the witnesses of in the last decade of the second millennium? Or, perhaps, this question that has been asked for thousands of times through history is completely superfluous since it failed to draw any serious and permanent moral.

The tragedy of opinion is that, in case it foreshadows and warns about an oncoming crisis, it is anathemised and rejected. However, if it occurs *post festum*, it is accepted as a renaissance, an ethical relief for the wounds the cruel events reality left behind.

Moving smoothly between these two extremes of a tragic gap between the opinion and reality are the different forms and degrees of conformism and subordination to the ideology and political establishment in force.

This the broadest area, a whole ocean, which is populated by science, culture, art, education, public communication, the production of ideas and thought in the widest sense, or anything else that in some way composes the spiritual component of our life. This ocean of conformism and lethargy is producing a system of values in which all elements are turned upside-down or displaced.

That system of values is not founded on the criteria of humanity, the criteria of the values of human lives and the potential that every individual hides, but is composed of greed, egoism, hatred, worshipping the authority, subordination, etc. On spear poles of such a system of values we can find human heads, whole classrooms of girls and boys, or a whole generation of young people.

The above-mentioned gap in Bosnia and Herzegovina was tragic indeed since it left behind countless dead and incalculable material damage.

If there were any anticipatory critical thought that indeed had warned about the great crisis of the society and the dreadful consequences that an oncoming nationalism might give, it was perceived as a relapse of an obsolete attitude and a great obstacle to new democratic processes.

Its reaffirmation during the war was slow and rough-going in the, so to say, impossible conditions, so that any kind of its participation in shaping a new reality was marginalized *ad hoc*.

Even now, among independent intellectuals it occurs as an ethical correction of a rough practice and as a critical thought and consciousness that cannot move the stern of the “cursed ship” for a single millimetre at the moment. It is as a compass needle that twitches to the opposite direction to which bewildered helmsmen pay no attention to. Such a ship never reached “the new world”.

In that context, there is a question as to whether it is possible to reaffirm some values that are *conditio sine qua non* of the future common life in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole political, economic, cultural and civilization sphere. On the one hand, in the form of the political phrase, there is a quest for reaffirming the multi-cultural frame of life that has been present for centuries in these regions. On the other hand, there is, basically, an effort to further defragment and completely destroy such a concept!

Here we come across a paradox that the intellectual circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina should pay much attention to. In short, that long-built multicultural concept that in Bosnia and Herzegovina was *sui generis* indeed, passed through all the shapes of despotic and autocratic systems, from the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, The Yugoslav Kingdom, to the Stalinist type of former Yugoslavia, but was in no circumstances radically put in question. Even during the period of great despotism, it was most encouraged and developed. At the time when

Bosnia and Herzegovina started being ruled by “democracy”, that pattern of a common spirit completely dissolved.

This claim is, of course, sad but true. Although more or less strong despots came to rule the Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina, strong multicultural streams created a foundation for a unique spiritual ground of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, democratic processes did not come here through the democratic movements that would use this pattern of life as a basis and a stepping-stone for the development of a democratic society, but came with strong national options to which such a pattern could represent only an obstacle and a stumbling-stone in realising narrow-minded interests.

The national options got the “first democratic elections smoothly” not because they offered some better perspective since they, in fact, cannot be founders of democracy in a multi-national society as the democratic movement cowardly signed a complete capitulation. It became equal with the theoretical concept that abdicated in favour of the new national theories (and theorists) that designed new maps of a disintegrated Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that way, the paradox becomes clear, and all its consequences have their logic.

That logic implies further divisions, and they are, so to say, inevitable. The system of education got its turn when it became clear to the establishment that it is a “dangerous chain” in connecting the disintegrated spiritual space. Namely, the pattern of a new civilization and cultural life of Bosnia is being created right now, since the method used to educate young generations is going to determine the nature and quality of the future cultural and civilization pattern in these regions.

Therefore, the system of education is attempted to be divided, in institutions or backstage, according to the national criteria that are not clear even to its creators. Some fields of science got very strong national colours that enable one to get a completely different understanding of history, philosophy, society, language, even geography, etc. Here, we are not talking about different interpretations, but fundamental errors whose consequences are immeasurable. Of course, the existence of three philosophies, sociologies, geographies, etc., requires three classrooms that would acquire the content separately. It is logical that if one level of education insists on split and projected views, then it is impossible to correct this mistake on other levels of education as well.

For this reason, curricula and syllabi are made on all levels, textbooks are being published, and there is a mass production of books that already buried Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multi-cultural sphere. In this way, of course, what is really valuable in the national cultures of Bosnia and Herzegovina is being devalued, the priceless treasure of the different ethnos and their traditions, the richness of languages, art, customs, etc., that are actually possible to result in a unique multi-cultural pattern of living. Those students that will be offered with fragments of this unique model will not be able to understand the value of the multi-century culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina, nor be able to create a unique B&H spiritual sphere in the future.

Temptations of B&H Culture

The terms “multi-culture”, “multi-culturalism”, multi- this, multi-that ... are, one could say, overused in politics today. Multiculturalism has become a part of a general phrase that, allegedly, helps the relationship among cultures, nations and denominations in Bosnia and Herzegovina easier to explain. The constant insisting on multiculturalism, without knowing what the basic pre-conditions for its existence are, seems like a rigid political kitsch set in overwhelming primitivism that smells of some times passed, or like our recent delusions about a “democratic culture”, a delusion behind which were the lowest criteria and basic impulses.

What is, in fact, multiculturalism, or did we ever understand the criteria for understanding this phenomenon and applying it? Is there a model of multiculturalism in the world, so that we can compare our ideas of this term, or our B&H culture to that where we could find some common elements?

The complexity of these questions needs thorough and precise answers, since it is high time that some delusions, both theoretical and practical, be finally made broken.

Let us start with the first question. Let us assume that the ambiguous and layered term “multiculturalism” in its ideal version means the highest level of co-existence of elements that come from different types of culture in the presence of integration processes that transcend particularity and the narrowness of nationally oriented cultures.

The roles of elements of individual cultures in the single cultural pattern are significant, or, maybe it is better to say, great. There is no

limit as to how big these roles and inputs will be. Such a defined model of “multiculturalism” is in reality never defined in its clean form. However, there are numerous deviations registered in history of cultures so far. Therefore, often, the term “multiculturalism” means parallel existence of different types of culture one *next to* the other with modest or no input into the single pattern of culture.

Sometimes there is a “forced” drawing the different cultural types nearer in which, in the new cultural pattern, we recognize only the characteristics of the dominant cultural type. There are also deviations of the ideal pattern in which we recognize a very different “readiness” of different cultural types to invest the elements of their own culture into the single cultural pattern. In that case, one type of culture invests everything into the single pattern, even if it means its own assimilation, whereas the other types of culture are partially or completely resistant to such processes. This “readiness” for a complete input into a single cultural pattern was usually, throughout the history of cultures, paid by the price of complete assimilation and merging in the other cultures. It is evident that the nature of a culture encourages both mutuality and accumulation, as well as distancing and choice. Numerous sociological, anthropological and cultural studies show that every single cultural type is composed of additive and substitutive components. The additive component encourages communication, harmony, and accumulative cultural progress. The substitutive component forms a certain type of culture, encourages exclusivism and sets the tone of Darwinistic evolution to the cultural development.

All the registered deviations from “multiculturalism” in its clear form diminish the additive component, or, in different ways give way to the substitution component that, like the other one, springs from the very essence of culture. Therefore, there is a question as to whether the term “multiculture” is *contradictio in adiecto*? Or, is perhaps, multiculturalism the greatest cultural achievement? In order to answer these questions, we need to conduct numerous cultural studies, compare integrated cultural patterns and analyse the content.

What is the case with Bosnia and Herzegovina in this sense? What is actually the cultural pattern or type of B&H and in what way can it be defined? Some elements of B&H culture show that this is a specific type of multiculturalism, or a model we previously mentioned when defining possible deviations from multiculturalism in its clear form.

The basis for this claim is the fact that several civilization spheres, four religions and four national cultures with a high level of tolerance and chance of integration, existed and mixed on the B&H territory. These processes were quite expressed in greater urban centres, but there are also examples of co-existence of numerous national cultures in smaller communities as well. However, this model cannot be applied to rural parts of B&H because of a significant geographical distance among them and because of the image they convey, that of unapproachable patterns of national cultures. In these areas, the process of integration, merging or investing into a common cultural type is practically non-existent, and there were no prerequisites for that.

The current B&H tragedy explicitly warns that the substitution processes in the B&H culture are extremely strong and that the illusion of “multiculturalism” was created on a very weak basis of urban cultural centres in which, over a long period of time different modes of cultural exchanges and integrations took place. Obviously, that was not enough for the formation of a unique B&H cultural pattern in which all the cultures would invest a maximum of their cultural values and cultural characteristics created through history. In the past, what took turns were epochs of parallel existence of different cultural types and periods of assimilation of the then “weaker” cultures, as well as the epochs of eliminating all the specific characteristics of a cultural type. All of that resulted in a tragic war whose deep-rooted causes should be sought in the substitution character of the culture.

So, observed objectively, a destructive process that carried elements of rural exclusiveness and multiple layers of primitivism overtook with its force the fragile forms of unripe multiculturalism that was not ready to fight the power of such an invasion. It conquered people and their deeds, since the object of destruction were exactly those people and those deeds that encouraged any kind of common life and common culture.

The goal of the dreadful pursuit were even those deeds and those values that had characteristics of certain cultural types in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but whose level of tolerance towards the others was extremely high and whose readiness to invest into the common cultural pattern of life was evident. The world obviously did not realise how severely this weak embryo of “multiculturalism” was defeated. It also did not react to

that defeat in a right way precisely because no case of victory of barbarism over culture served as a strong moral.

/History is a teacher of life but it never had real students/. That world, also, never in itself experienced a true pattern of “multiculturalism” that would give enough stimulation to protect what in B&H had the potential of the multicultural model. If B&H had such a chance, then it was a sole example that stuck out of everything known to the cultural history, and, therefore, had to be left to oblivion and destruction. The indolence when it comes to the destruction of the B&H embryo of multiculturalism is the greatest tragedy of all. That indolence is a gloomy sign that the culture of the 21st century is not turned towards creating a general system of multiculturalism, but towards a new barbarism. Therefore, *per definitionem*, the B&H “multicultural type” never grew larger than an embryo.

If it had existed in its real form with a high level of input of every culture into the common cultural life, most probably the tragedy of war would not have happened.

It only existed in the form of a rough political phrase and kitsch that is a counterpart to the same political and ideological persuasion about things that never existed and that we were trying to get used to for not less than 50 years. Therefore, “multiculturalism” in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be built with new people, with generations to come, and with completely new pre-requisites.