

UDC 930.85 (4—12)

YU ISSN 0350—7653

ACADEMIE SERBE DES SCIENCES ET DES ARTS

COMITE INTERACADEMIQUE DE BALKANOLOGIE
DU CONSEIL DES ACADEMIES DES SCIENCES ET DES ARTS
DE LA R.S.F.Y.
INSTITUT DES ETUDES BALKANIQUES

BALCANICA

ANNUAIRE DE L'INSTITUT DES ETUDES BALKANIQUES

XVIII—XIX



BELGRADE
1987—1988

BALCANICA XVIII—XIX, Београд 1987—1988, 9—453.



Dušan LUKAC
Institute for Balkan Studies,
Belgrade

SOME ISSUES OF ELABORATION OF THE TOPIC OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN THE BALKANS IN COURSE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

There exist ample archival sources concerning demographic movements in the Balkans in course of the Second World War, which refers both to materials originating and preserved in the Balkan countries and to the ones of German provenience. There exists also a considerable fund of collection of published materials covering the period of war for all Balkan countries as well as for great powers which were influential regarding these movements in the area. However, the quality of such sources is not equal, especially regarding some aspects of demographic movements. While, for instance, milder forms of genocide, such as resettlement of peoples from one country to the other, are represented in the documents of various kinds, the most radical and brutal form of causing demographic shocks among people — namely, physical annihilation of masses and individuals does not find its expression in written sources. The ones committing the genocide, the occupiers and quislings, have systematically destroyed, already in course of the war, and especially on the eve of the obvious defeat, all written sources and other material remnants which could be the evidence of their bestiality and the ground for their being brought to the international court of justice.

Deliberate destroying in the war and partly after it of relevant data and sources made possible various manipulations with the number of victims in post-war attempts to establish the truth concerning the perishing of millions of innocent people. The lack of key materials has left deepest traces in the literature on demographic movements during the war, especially in the Balkans. We are in possession of a number of books

describing and studying forced migration of peoples done by so-called new order forces and applied against racially «inferior» and discriminated nations — Serbs, Jews, Slovenes and Gypsies, and by the end of war also of literature concerning forcible migration of Germans who have lived in South East Europe. There also exist quite a number of books related to various forms of denationalisation of nations and parts of nations. Literature is somewhat more modest when it comes to the most cruel kinds of demographic movements — physical destruction of entire peoples, and it is also less reliable.

Already in the first stage of the attempt to elaborate the topic of demographic changes, it is possible to conclude that the Balkans, together with some adjacent areas, is a region of Europe with most intensive demographic processes throughout the history, and particularly during the last war. Balkan Peninsula has remained a source and an arena of rebellions, conflicts between peoples and nations of various forms, sufferings of innocent people and whole generations.

It is well known that these unusual and violent events have been caused, instigated and warmed up by uncoordinated and strained relations in the Balkans in almost every sphere of life, which applied not only to Balkan peoples but also to their relations with the rest of the world, and more particularly with big powers, which were always too much interested for the destiny of Balkan peoples. But also relevant for an analysis here are the factors which helped to create disturbed relations in the South East, such as the ones of geopolitical, economic and strategic natures. More than a hundred different peoples in the historical period have flooded the Balkans, including several universal empires, causing the clashes between cultures and religions. The result of these intensive developments has been the eternal conflict between the new which was coming, still incomplete and the old. Many invaders, tribes and hordes have thus imprinted their traces over this troubled region, always full of whirlpools and abysses.

Such a mood has prevailed in the Balkans also during the thirties of our century, when world theater was taken by darkest powers of human history — nazism and fascism, which announced their “new” world order with a sword and insanity. At that time there were in the Balkans some twenty different peoples, who were rather similar in terms of culture, habits and characteristics, while having in their souls and blood also something of the remaining eighty peoples whose name has disappeared in that region of Europe. They were divided into seven discordant small states by religious, cultural, economic, traditional und other barriers.

The subsequent course of events in the Second World War and large number of civilian victims in the Balkans have shown

that racist theories of the Nazis have found fertile soil especially in the Balkans. Due to historical discords, in spite of lack of sufficient support by the people, the measures of national purification have been primarily aimed against peoples who were declared unfit for the new order, against racially "lower" peoples and the ones which were opposed throughout the history to German penetration towards the East. These were the following peoples: Slovenes, Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. Therefore, the first blow of racial purifications has been aimed against the peoples of Yugoslavia. The methods included administrative inclusion of the ones which were "racially capable, or fit" into the new order, which meant also national, cultural and political transformation of such people into the "higher" race; deportation of those undesirable from their fire-sides and their being robbed of their property; physical liquidation of all those who showed even the slightest signs of opposition to the "new" order.

Denationalisation measures have been applied immediately after the beginning of the occupation and annexation of areas of Yugoslavia, the long-term plan being to enlarge them after the quick victory in the East.

The process of consistent denationalisation has been at first introduced by German Nazis in the occupied and annexed parts of Slovene territory. Out of 799.000 inhabitants of that territory, of whom only some 30.000 have been of German origin, the Nazis intended to denationalize about two thirds of the population, while the remaining part of those "undesirable" and unfit for being transformed into German race had to be deported. Parallel to administrative checking of racial "purity" of Slovenes, other measures were applied too, such as repressing the language, culture and tradition, which included monuments of national significance of Slovenia, and other measures.

Similar violence has been applied also by Italian fascists in annexed parts of Yugoslavia, but also in Greece and Albania. Bulgarian occupiers, too, in annexed parts of Macedonia, Serbia and Greece have done the same, which applies to Hungarian occupying forces in Yugoslav territories which were annexed by Hungary. They did the same also in the area of Erdel which was populated by mixed nations, and which was granted to them by the Vienna Arbitration by Rumania.

The failure of the *Blitzkrieg* in the East and the wide and organized national-liberation movement, as well as the actions of the resistance movements in the annexed areas of South East Europe prevented the denationalisation activity done by the occupation and satellite powers.

Second important factor in instigating and intensifying demographic changes in the Balkans during the war was the forcible deportation of individual families, but also of entire peoples from

their homes. These deportations were organized and effected by the occupier or his satellites with the intention to be permanent, and also spontaneous, since people in danger had to leave their homes temporarily, while reaching for the hills and woods.

Such kinds of movements were most frequent in Yugoslav territory and they were caused by repressive measures of the occupier and collaborationists against all those who were anti-fascists. This was, again, primarily aimed against Serbs, Slovenes, Jews and Gypsies. Some 1.400,000 persons have thus been driven over in Yugoslavia, while most of them had to flee from the so-called Independent State of Croatia, then from Slovenia, Batchka, Macedonia and Kosovo. Most numerous group of emigrees found shelter in Serbia.

Large-scale deportation and leaving of homes outside Yugoslavia has been in nationally mixed Erdel, in Rumania, where Rumanians have fled from the part which was granted to Hungary, while Hungarians from the part which was left to Rumania. The figure of emigrees amounts to some two to three hundred thousand.

Already during the war the Germans have begun to organize the resettlement of Germans in some areas of South East Europe, where they were isolated national groups, the intention being the creation of compact German areas. One of the cause for that action was also the fear from the national liberation movement, since Germans were opposed to it. Until the end of 1942 some 160,000 Germans have been removed from the South East, which included 18,360 persons from the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the uprising against the occupier has been strong from the beginning.

The plan of forcible removal of all Germans in that area during the final operations in the Second World War had not been effected due to unexpectedly fast penetration of the Red Army troops. Thus from Rumania only some 100,000 German inhabitants have been removed, out of approximately 500,000, while from Hungary that figure was 200,000, out of some 600,000. The figure for Yugoslavia was 330,000, out of 500,000.

Throughout the entire war period in the South East Europe there were temporary movements of population, particularly in the zones of war operations. People tried to escape to liberated territories, to save themselves from air-raids against the towns, but also to find refuge against constant pressure by the occupying and quisling forces. This included also the escaping from the moving front lines. Most intensive and large-scale movements of that kind have been in the territories with continued national liberation struggle — Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania. Thus, there are entire insurgents' regions in Yugoslavia where it is difficult to find a family which did not leave its home during

the war for short or long time. Altogether, it is safe to say that the majority of population of all the countries of the region was forced to leave their homes in course of the Second World War.

The cruelest and at the same time the most serious forms of forcible causing demographic changes are found in actions of the occupiers which wanted to exterminate the entire peoples. Although there are many monuments in Balkan countries dedicated to the victors in the war, as well as a rich literature concerning the information of war victims, the relevant data are not complete, clear and impartial, since there were no uniform and impartial criteria of classifying the victims. Official figures on fallen soldiers are not presented according to an uniform method, and they include mainly those perished in the struggle against the occupier and the quislings. Such figure for Yugoslavia is around 410,000 persons killed, and this figure includes partisan fighters which carried arms while working within the liberated territories. The number for Greece is some 20,000 which applies to the times until the British invasion in the Fall of 1944 and the beginning of the civil war in hardly liberated Greece. The figure for Albania is 28,000 killed partisans, while for Bulgaria — 22,000. The figure concerning Rumania is 520,000 but it includes the casualties fallen on both sides, and the same type of figure for Hungary is some 147,000. It is worthwhile emphasizing that Yugoslavia had more killed fighters against fascism than all the other countries of South East Europe, taken together. Although these figures are not ideally exact, since they express the phenomena of utmost sensibility during the war, it is possible to accept them as approximate, but with a correction as to making the discovery of figures of the other part of victims per contry, as well as that of making the distinguishing in the Rumanian and Hungarian figures.

Data concerning civilian victims are even less clear, except the ones related to Jews, since these victims perished under various circumstances, outside the front lines, and there was no recording or witnesses. Quite often the executors took care to destroy all relevant evidence as to their crimes, including written documents. Here, too, the victims were treated from the political standpoint, so that the ones which have fallen while serving the occupier, were not taken into account as war victims. Such methodology meant that no Balkan country has reliable data concerning civilian war victims, which includes Yugoslavia, which invested particular efforts in the war against totalitarian powers. True, the Yugoslav Commission for Determining the Crimes Committed by Occupiers and their Collaborators has notified, immediately after the war, the International Court in Nurenberg that the losses of Yugoslavia amounted to some one million and seven hundred thousand victims, which coincides with the calculation difference between the number of inhabitants in

Yugoslavia in 1945 and 1941. However, the following has been neglected, namely: losses of Yugoslav population among some 400,000 quislings who served the occupier during the war, then the migration by the end of the war of about 350,000 German nationals and of 30,000 Hungarians, who did not want to come back to Yugoslavia, as well as tens of thousands of prisoners of war and workers who did not return from Germany after the war, including some 100,000 of military and political emigrees who left Yugoslavia in the final stage of war, etc.

These inconsistencies were followed by the new ones as far as determining the number of civilian casualties was concerned (namely, victims of fascist terror). In Slovenia, however, the figures are rather precise. For instance, the disclosing of figures related to concentration camps, such as Jasenovac, reflects considerable differences regarding the evaluation. One of the first figures for Jasenovac — that of 400,000 victims, which was provided by making the list on the spot on the eve of the liberation, has been diminished by ones, while it was increased by others, which only reflected narrow-mindedness, petty politics and even nationalistic approach. Thus, some authors write about tens of thousand victims in the Jasenovac camp, although they knew about the authentic report and a diary of dr. Nikola Nikolic, who was the prisoner there and the camp physician. Dr. Nikolic provides for such details which express the bestiality of ustashas, such as Pudic, who killed ten thousand prisoners without making difference between communist par sans, workers, farmers, intellectuals, old people, and children, both born and unborn... Great Croatian patriot and fighter, dr. Nikolic lists many of these criminals who committed these atrocities, such as Roman Catholic priests Filipovic and Brkljacic, then Milos, Luburic, Vrban, Matkovic, Brzica, Maricic, Cupic, Picilija, Sliskovic, Kapetanovic.

At the same time lack of impartiality made some opposite assessments which increased the number of victims in the Jasenovac camp to some one million persons, which was nearly the figure for all civilian victims during the war, which was reported by mentioned Commission immediately after the war.

The situation is similar regarding the determination of the number of civilian victims in other Balkan countries. The exception is the case of Slovenia and the figures concerning Jews throughout the South East Europe. Owing to the efforts of Jews who have survived in these countries, these figures amount to some one million three hundred fifty thousand people — which was the number of Jews at the beginning of the war in Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary, out of which number some nine hundred and eighty thousand were killed, while only three hundred and seventy thousand survived.

Incomplete and mostly contradictory data on real losses during the Second World War in the Balkans and in the South East Europe in general, including all the above mentioned categories of victims, make difficult the establishing of figures relating to indirect losses, namely those connected with birth rate, increased percentage of death rate due to illnesses caused by war sufferings and relating to other types of losses, which were caused by intensive demographic movements and disturbances among the people of that part of Europe. These contradictory data on real number of victims has been one of the main obstacles for experts to depict the demographic picture and the one of ethnical movements in that region during the war.

This brief report indicates without doubt that a complete elaboration of the topic of demographic changes in the South East Europe is a difficult one for historical science, but it is also a debt owed to fallen victims and a lecture for future generations who should avoid the repetition of the tragedy of the Second World War. Scientific elaboration will be confronted with a series of difficulties which would be overcome only by arguments and genuine documents. On the other hand, the archival sources are not complete, since most important documents have been maliciously removed and destroyed. The relevant literature, on its part, is mostly superficial and not based on genuine facts and is rather guided by political motives. It would be therefore a task worth of trying to attempt an answer to many questions which go deep into mutual relations between peoples during the tragic period of large-scale genocide and annihilation of millions of innocent people, including deportation of many families and even entire peoples.

НЕКИ ПРОБЛЕМИ НАУЧНЕ ОБРАДЕ ТЕМЕ „ДЕМОГРАФСКЕ ПРОМЕНЕ НА БАЛКАНУ У ТОКУ ДРУГОГ СВЕТСКОГ РАТА“

Резиме

У прилогу су изнешена стечена искуства из вишегодишњих архивских истраживања грабе и података за ову тему. Сходно стварним токовима и у демографским процесима на Балкану у току последњег светског рата, нарочито оним који су били условљени геноцидним мерама фашистичких окупатора против појединих народа на Балкану, сачувани архивски материјали су релативно обимни. Међутим постоји велики несклад у обиму сачуване грабе за поједине врсте геноцидних мера, у односу на узрочнике снажних демографских промена. Док је за дугорочније и условно речено блаже мере геноцида над појединим народима сачувано прилично примарних извора, за радикалне и сурове мере, нарочито примењиване на тлу Југославије, ти извори су веома сиромашни.

Тако се за најраније примењивани облик демографских померања — исељавања појединих народа из једних земаља или крајева у друге,

на пример Словенаца и Срба у Југославији, Румуна и Маџара из Трансилваније, фолксдојчера из свих земаља Балкана итд. сачувало доста архивске и друге грађе. Ово је условило најбољу историографску обраду овога питања уопште а посебно у последњих неколико година.

И о другим дугорочнијим облицима денационализације, на пример, за административно превођење делова појединих народа у „расно“ чисти и виши народ, за културно однаробавање насилним мерама као што су биле, забрана употребе матерњег језика и удомаћеног писма, рушење и уништавање историјских тековина и остатка као што су споменици, књиге, верске институције, сви облици традиције и друго сачуван је одређен обим примарних извора. У овој области онајслабије стоје сачувани фондови о једном специфичном облику који је примењиван од стране римокатоличке цркве у Југославији, превођење Срба православне вере у католичку.

Најтањи су и садржински најслабије сачувани фондови грађе о најсуровијим облицима геноцида, физичкој ликвидацији и усмрћивању противника новог поретка нарочито оних који су активно и организовано деловали кроз Народноослободилачки покрет и покрет отпора и уништавање делова или целих дискриминисаних народа на целом подручју Јевреја, а у Југославији уз Јевреје и Срба, Рома и Словенаца. Крајње незадовољавајуће стање у овој групи грађе о геноцидним мерама и демографским променама на Балкану и нарочито на тлу Југославије последице су неколико чинилаца. Један од њих је систем убијања становништва који су проводили немачки нацисти и усташе над Србима без одговарајуће евиденције. Други, још важнији је уништавање свих трагова ових злочина већ у току рата. Ово брисање трагова злочина било је мање практиковано у првом периоду рата, у време када се очекивала победа снага „новог“ поретка. Међутим, после првих већих пораза Вермахта, а нарочито од пораза Немаца под Стаљинградом уништавање свих трагова злочина над појединцима и народима су постали стална брига извршиоца тих злочина. Слабењу и пропадању трагова ових злочина који су мученички преживели рат допринела је делимично, слаба брига појединих народа или установа да се ти знаци стравичних опомена будућим генерацијама сачувају. Један од примера у Југославији је стратиште око 20.000 родољуба у Јадовном на Велебиту којима није посвећена ни одговарајућа ознака на месту где су лета 1941. уморени од усташа најстравицијом смрћу.

Ово сиромаштво извора о злочинима над народом довело је у послератним годинама до нових проблема у питањима обраде података о палим жртвама, нарочито у Југославији, изузимајући Словенију. У проценама броја уморених у појединим логорима и стратиштима дошао се до несхватљивих несклада, на пример за Јасеновац ове процене се крећу од десетак хиљада до преко милион.

Имајући све ово у виду, аутор прилога је, указујући на значај целовите и научне обраде ове теме, указао и на тежину и одговорност овога задатка пред којим се стицајем околности нашао.