

REVIEW

Mile Nedeljkovic, Lexicon of the Nations of the World, Belgrade, Srpska knizevna zadruga: Sluzbeni list, 2001 - XXXIX, 376 pgs

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The need of lexicons and upgrading them through recent editions is an every day need. It becomes a provocation to buy a new lexicon, especially when the author is known as a precise and passionate collector of facts, as in the case of Mile Nedeljkovic, who received the Vuk award for his book "Annual customs of Serbs" (Belgrade, 1990). His latest work "Lexicon of the nations of the world" can make you think twice before you buy it due to its high price¹, however when you see the review of the well known scientist, Prof. Petar Vlahovic, that is a matter of an extraordinary work that will serve as an example for future investigations, you decide to take a deep breath and buy the lexicon. This was my story.

The rest comes later. And the "rest" is in fact a disappointment with the part that refers to the Balkan and the Balkan people and the ones that are "somewhere close" and who, rightly or not, do not consider themselves as Balkans, but still were, or still are, a part of the Balkan cultural history. For us, that live on this territory, the scientific objectivity related to nations and groups is a matter of life and death, much more than when it comes to some other very distant nations and groups in the world.

Since I have presented my opinion on the value of the "Lexicon" at the very beginning, it is my obligation to explain the reader how did I form my attitude.

It is a matter of a lexicon that carefully examines the nations and groups of South-East Europe, so that is logical and normal to first check if the author had a balanced and impartial approach towards their ethno genesis and culture. Due to these reasons, specimens for this kind of "check" were those entries about the nations and ethnic communities (groups) of the South Slavs and other nations and groups at the Balkan. Let's start with the analysis of the annex "maps" where among the limited number of maps of the world containing data on the nations and group, a whole map under the number of 22 is dedicated to the expulsion of the Serbs! This map which is signed by Mile Nedeljkovic, according to its content, techniques (no real system of markation), and other inaccuracies, separates totally, as a type, of the other maps, that have been taken from other authors, which could be seen from the author's names. Among other things, the above-mentioned map n. 22, resembles our school atlases of the time before 1999. One should note that Mile Nedeljkovic is also the one who "updates" the maps of S. I. Brook (let's hope that the original author had the chance to approve those "updates"). Anyway, this precedent already lowers the value of the "Lexicon" since the maps favour one nation on the behalf of others.

Immediately a suspicion arises that there is a similar inequality when the lexicographical entries are in question. Thus, the analysis of the "sample" shows that the biggest part of the lexicon belongs to the entry "Serbs", that in the past "the terms Serbs was used as a general name for all Slavs" and other similar ethnological myths. The author's attitude remained unchanged since even from the start he complicated things by the fact that he has put the Serbs in direct or close ethnic relation with a number of South-Slav nations and ethnic groups as well as certain non-Slav Balkan groups. This is the case with the "significant Serbian feeling" of the population of Monte Negro and all Monte Negro tribes, especially until 1943, when, according to the author, the politics of "dissolution" of the Serb nation has started (see: population of Monte Negro: Bjelice, Vasojevichi, Drobnjaci, Zagarach, Komani, Kuchi, Moracha, Nikshici, Njegushi, Ozrinici, Piperi, Pjeshivci, Ceklici, Cetinjani). The ones who are "suspected of being Serbs" are as well the Slovenians - the Belokranjci, while the Bojanci and the Marindolci are orthodox and they fell as Serbs, contrary to the Shoks (who are "Serbs" and originate from the old Serbian areas) and feel as Slovenians! (see Belokranjci, Shokci). Besides, the (the Slovenians should understand that) the population of Karantanija and Shtajerska are Austrian ethnic groups and that those names do not have to do anything with the Slovenians (see Karantanci, Shtaerci). The Croatians are a nation "closest to the Serbs", everyone from Lika is Serb, as well as the ethnic groups of Shokci and Bunjevci (see: Hrvati, Lichani, Bunjevci, Shokci). Otherwise, there is a lot of literature on the ethno genesis of these groups (Shokci and Bunjevci) which does not mean much except one possible theory of their distant origin, that , as usual, was mixed (m. S. Filipovic and other

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authors). The author builds his idea on the wide dispersity of the "Serbian feeling" through the unquestionable "Serbian origin" of the Bosnians. They, until 1878 were Islamised Serbs, since, as the author says, they are the closest ones to the "South-Serbian", and besides, the Mijaks are also Serbs, as well as the TORbesh population, the Gorans (the favorite ones of the Serbian Academy of Arts - as favorite as the population of Gorna Pschinja and the Monastery Prohor Pchinski). One could get an impression that the author is sorry because of the current situation of the Macedonians since they are now cut of the Serbian centre...Even the Juruks were populated in the Serbian lands, especially in Ovche Pole (see Makedonci, Mijaci, Torbeshi, Goranci, Juruci). However, in Macedonia there are no Brsjaks, and the Shopi are an ethnic group in Macedonia, since in Serbia the author treats them as a part of the Serbian nation and in Bulgaria they are not needed, "pomaks" are enough and they live, imagine that, "on the North-East and the South of the country" (see Shopi, Pomaci). In order to make the Macedonians even happier, he added to the number of 1.407.107 Macedonians in Macedonia, together with some provisional number of Macedonians in the neighbouring countries (without Bulgaria) and in the world, an extra number of 255.961 Serbs (see Makedonci, Srbi)!

The author does not say anything about an interesting problem of an "undefined mutual ethnic background" of the Yugoslavs who speak "Serbia" (see: Jugosloveni), so it remains unclear, especially for the foreigners, what was according to the author the politics of this group, that is, whether it was in a function of spreading or diminishing of the Serbian people? Otherwise, on other places the author does not forget to stress upon the anti-Serbian politics issue, that aims towards dissolution and decreasing of the Serbian nation. Thus, when it comes to the Serbian language, it is "an important world language", that is so called "South – Slav sub group of languages which consists of – Serbian ("upon the basis of which the newly constructed Croatian political language was created"), then Bulgarian, Slovenian, Macedonian" (Annex: Important world languages, 272). It does not really matter what the author says on another place: "...only Macedonians treasure a separate literature language, that differs from Serbian and Bulgarian" (see: Srbi, pg. 191). Who can remember everything that has been written?

This lexicon, that according to the Academician Petar Vlahovic presents an "enterprise worth of adoration", can serve as a basis of a small research on the relation of the author towards the neighbours of the Serbs and other more distant nations and ethnic groups of South-East Europe. I am not sure that one can calculate accurately how much humiliation and underestimation he invested while he wrote the parts about the Bosnians, the Macedonians, the Montenegrans, Albanians, Croats. Only the Slovenians and the Bulgarians were little bit privileged. But when it comes to Greeks, he was full of love and good will, since allegedly they were descendants of the ancient Greeks – nation that has founded the contemporary world civilizations!

Today, when through the Internet a huge number of information of a lexicographic type can be received, one wonders what would be the motif of the author to create such a lexicon. The question imposes itself as well after reviewing the bibliography (pg. 375) where one of the titles is the book written by Petar Vlahovic (Petar Vlahovic, *Narodi i etnicke zajednice sveta*, Beograd, 1984), which itself is a sufficient source of information of this type. In this sense one has to suspect that one of the motifs of the author was to "wave a war" with those nations and ethnic groups that he hates and underestimates, especially the ones who were ones part of the federal units in the ex-Yugoslavia, when, according to the author, the Serbs had an integrative role on the territory of the South Slavs, as well as the ones who were direct participants in the war events related to the Serbian people. Thus, one really questions the responsibility of the reviewer of the book, that is, how could professor and academician Petar Vlahovic, put his signature upon this luxurious and expensive lexicon, full of blurred points, inaccuracies and hatred towards certain nations and ethnic groups.