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FACTORS OF MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS OF POPULATION OF MONTENEGRO IN XIX CENTURY

ABSTRACT: The paper deals with conditions of migration movements from, within and in the Montenegro during the XIX century. Although more population left to settle in other countries, Serbia in the first place, Montenegro was also on the receptive side – providing home for emigrants – refugees – from other parts of the Balkan Peninsula fleeing from the Turkish terror.

KEY WORDS: Montenegro, migrations of population, 19th century.

The geographical position of Montenegro and influences of the oldest civilisations and cultures of Southern Europe had a crucial impact on early settlement of the territory of the present-day Montenegro as well as on the level of mobility of its population. The entire Montenegrin history is characterised to a high degree by migratory movements of various peoples from prehistory to the recent times. In this respect, particularly significant was the migration of the Slavs, whose migratory domination marked the end of the Roman and the beginning of the Slavic rule. After the Great Migration of peoples, broader-range migratory movements in the Balkans were recorded in the time of Turkish conquest of these area. Part of those migratory waves was the migration of Christian population (Serbs) from the areas of Kosovo and Scutary (Shkoder). Fearing the Turkish reprisals, people fled towards Zeta and the Seaside. Started in the late 14th, this migratory process continued through the 15th century.

However, as of the late 15th century, migrations of the Montenegrin population also started so that in this respect Montenegro represents a truly metanastatic (migratory) region from which, in all periods, more people would move out than in. This continuity of emigration has been conditioned

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primarily by poverty and backwardness of Montenegro, that in the extremely unfavourable conditions could not provide even a minimum for a normal life. Namely, in the past the sub-Lovćen Montenegro was the rockiest and the poorest part of the present-day Montenegro. In this area, the core of which was barren karst, there has been no boundary between living and non-living: these two were tightly interwoven. Such natural conditions and certain social factors resulted in migratory movements that have lasted for centuries. Constant emigrations of the Montenegrins have made Montenegro to become a unique instance in the Balkans – both in respect of emigration of individuals for the reason of earning, and emigrations of families in search of better living conditions. In this "karst fortress", as metaphorically was said in the book by Dr Pavle Radusinović, "two exceptional energies have confronted one another: one had been born out of the long-lasting and high drama of the history, and the other by meagre and morphologically isolated specific natural environment... Their effective unity has typified here such an anthropogeographic and sociological reality that provides for a deserving distinguishing of Montenegro as a striking regional environment".

All the migratory movements of the population, except in the times preceding wars with the Turks, the state considered a regular and necessary phenomenon since emigrations were one of the forms of survival of the Montenegrin people.

The hard living conditions were brought about by certain natural circumstances and social factors. Those natural and social circumstances presented two major factors that were the crucial agents of migratory movements.

Natural factors as agents of migratory movements

Emigration of the population from the karst areas of Montenegro was particularly facilitated by the effects of natural factors, whose influence was mostly expressed in the 19th century. Among the natural factors, to be particularly emphasised are the Montenegrin karst and natural disasters.

Montenegrin karst

The territory of Old Montenegro, comprising four *nahijas* (districts) – Katunska, Lješanska, Riječka and Crmnička – was by the 16th century covered by vast forests. However, in the 16th and 17th centuries exploitation of forests took place the consequence of which was the creation of vast bare ar-

Dr. Pavle Radusinović: Naselja Stare Crne Gore (Human Settlements of the Old Montenegro), Beograd, 1985, p. 98

eas. And just as once huge water precipitate had contributed the creation of wooded cover, so large volumes of unevenly distributed precipitation contributed a rapid creation of new karst areas. Thus the soil was becoming thinner: the percentage of arable land in Katunska nahija was only 3. It was similar in other nahijas. And it was because of the low percentage of arable land that many were forced to leave for other parts and there find means for survival. But despite the difficult circumstances, constant migrations and the higher level of mortality, the number of population was increasing all the time because every family had 15-20 members. Besides, the instances were not rare of older men marrying young women, who would give birth to at least five children².

Due to this, the number of inhabitants in the 18th century was doubled. It is verified by the data that from 15,000 by late 17th century³, the population in the Old Montenegro increased to 40,000 by the end of the 18th century⁴. But, as the number of inhabitants was growing, the sizes of arable lands were stagnant or diminishing due to partition or erosion.

The growth of population in the same areas of arable land presented a great difficulty. Therefore by way of emigration of the multiplied population a balance between the harvest and the number of inhabitants who were staying on such small stretches of arable lands was kept⁵.

By victories over the Turks in 1976 and the achievement of factual independence, the Old Montenegro expanded its boundaries by first incorporating the regions of Brda, Bjelopavlići and Piperi, and then Morača and Rovca in 1820. However, despite the territorial expansion the insufficient surfaces of arable land continued to present a strong stimulus to migratory movements.

With the stretching of country's boundaries after the demarcation in 1859, the size of arable lands was somewhat increased, but primarily on account of the needed grazing lands and forests⁶.

After The Congress of Berlin in 1878 a new phase in the history of the Montenegrin struggle for physical existence started, both in the former and in the newly liberated parts of the country. Although by the resolutions of The Congress of Berlin Montenegro was enlarged by 5,150 square kilometres⁷, it

² Jovan Cvijić: Balkansko poluostrvo (The Balkan Peninsula), Beograd, 1966, p. 152

³ Dr. Pavle Radusinović: *Naselja Stare Crne Gore* (Human Settlements of the Old Montenegro), Beograd, 1985, p. 108

Group of authors: *Istorija Crne Gore* (The History Of Montenegro), Titograd, 1976, Book 1, Vol. III, p. 495

⁵ Đorđije-Đoko Pejović: *Iseljavanje Crnogoraca u 19.vijeku* (Emigrations Of The Montenegrins In XIX Century), Titograd, 1962, p. 14

⁶ Ibid, p. 58

⁷ Ibid, p. 247

did not mean that the enlargement itself provided for better living conditions for the majority of the Montenegrin population, since neither in the mountain villages was it much better than in the sub-Lovéen (Old) Montenegro; in this area, too, the process of division of households was taking place which resulted in the parceling out of anyhow small estates.

The difficult situation of the agricultural segment of the population was considerably contributed by poor agrarian policy of the highest bodies of the administration of the enlarged state. Namely, the largest and best parcels have been allocated for the Prince and leaders, who were given several hundreds of acres of the best land without regard of how the issue of the landless people would be resolved⁸.

After the liberation of Podgorica and Zeta, the abandoned estates had to be shared to the poorest households and individuals. However, by settling Zeta and the closest surroundings of Podgorica the needs of the impoverished population of the Old Montenegro and Brda could not be satisfied. It was greatly facilitated by the fact that certain portions of land were proclaimed the state property and distributed at the Prince's discretion - from case to case. Similar was the situation with the allocation of land in Kolašin and Polja.

Having all this in mind, it is quite understandable why the migratory movements were so explicit – either of families settling in the surrounding countries or individuals for earnings in foreign lands.

Natural disasters

The basic agents of migratory movements of the population of Montenegro were natural factors – primarily the topography and the climate standing in direct interlink: the geographic position of the Old Montenegro is matched by a characteristic clime – mild winters and hot summers.

The uneven distribution of precipitation over the year was leaving serious consequences on the life of the people of the region. In no other place are the draught years so lean as in the karst areas since the rainfalls rapidly drain down the underground canals, the rivers peter and the vegetation dries up. Therefore draught as a natural disaster in Montenegro constituted one of the main causative agent of intensive emigrations of the population. And these resulted in demographic vacation of certain areas, particularly the karst regions of the Katunska, Lješanska, Riječka and Crmnička districts, then of Piperi, Kuči and Bratonožići tribal territories. This wave of migratory movements was particularly strong in the 19th century.

⁸ Ibid. p. 251

⁹ See V.Gluščević: Migracije stanovništva Crne Gore u XIX vijeku (Migrations Of The

During¹⁰ the 19th century almost every third year was lean and hard, and there was even a period of several consecutive hungry years – mostly because of draught. Due to the draughts of 1814, 1815 and 1816, and long-lasting rain in the following year, the year 1817 is remembered by the unprecedented hunger, with people feeding on roots of various grasses for months. It was not only the Old Montenegro that suffered from hunger, but the Brda as well. Therefore numerous families were compelled to flee to the pashaluk of Shkodër, that is, to Turkey¹¹.

The year 1847 was recorded as one of the hardest in the first half of the 19th century, although virtually every other year has earned evil reputation. A testimony to this is the letter by Jakov Daković from the village of Grahovo addressed to Sima Milutinović. Among other things the letter read:

"...some hard and hungry year has come. Since the time of Christ, our Saviour, men of letters could not find such a year in our parts as this one that befell us, in which not only of humans but of animals as well very few managed to escape"12. As before, in the said year, too, the Montenegrins and the Brādans found salvation from hunger in "fleeing" to Serbia.

Great hunger found its place in the cycle of lean years – 1887, 1888, 1889 and 1890¹³; 1889, together with 1847 and 1822 (that was the seventh successive lean year), was one of the hardest in the modern history of Montenegro. In that year 10,924 emigrants moved to the neighbouring and other countries of the world. Just how massive the demographic vacating was could be seen when one takes into account that in early 20th century the population of the Old Montenegro was only around 50,000¹⁴.

Social factors as agents of migratory movements

In respect of migratory movements, in its past Montenegro made a rare example: natural and social factors were productive on its territory in their full complexity which was characteristic of the entire 19th century. And along this area they had been interweaving so complexly and so frequently to cause the origination of "the always boiling source of migration".

Montenegrin Population In XIX Century), Podgorica, 2000, pp. 32-52

¹⁰ Petar Popović, Stanko Stijepov Petrović: Godišnjak (Almanach), Filozofskog fakulteta, Novi Sad, 1956, p. 52

¹¹ Dušan Vuksan: Petar I Petrović Njegoš i njegovo doba (Petar I Petrović Nyegosh And His Age), Zapisi, 1937, XVIII, No. 4, p. 260

¹² Risto Dragutinović: Nekoliko dokumenata iz zaostavštine Sima Milutinovića (Several Documents From Sima Milutinović's Legacy), Književnost, 1995, p. 9

¹³ Milan Savić: Migraciona kretanja u nikšićkoj oblasti (Migratory Trends In The Nikšić Region), Deseti Kongres istoričara Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1998, p. 227

¹⁴ Pavle Radusinović: Naselja Stare Crne Gore (Human Settlements Of The The Old Montenegro), 1985, p. 116

Among the social factors that were agents of migratory movements we could accentuate *vađevina* – a form of usury, then (individual and/or tribal) conflicts, that were the cause of blood feud, and Turkish terror as the third factor.

Vađevina (usury)

The lack of arable lands, frequent lean years, together with the lack of opportunity for other earnings, effected in the early 19th century Montenegro the phenomenon of *vadevina* – a form of usury, that is, giving loans at a high interest. This phenomenon was most directly linked to grains, that very often had to be imported to Montenegro¹⁵. Considering the indispensability of this basic foodstuff, as well as the low creditworthiness of the major part of the population, *vadevina* was mostly practiced in the trade with grains.

Since all until the 20th century there were no pecuniary earnings in Montenegro, the only option for a poor peasant was some form of loan, as the only chance to come in possession of some money. Loans were a form of the increased trade capital since the lenders were lending with the hundred-percent interest.

If fields failed to yield enough to repay the debt, poor country people had to take a new loan and add it to the old debt. Taking a new loan plus the interest thereon would take the debtor to a difficult situation, due to which he was compelled either to transfer the land to the creditor or to sell it. And the sale of land meant going out into the world.

With the increase of trade and usury-based capital, the process of proprietorial differentiation of the population was accelerated thus bringing about the ever faster emigration of the completely impoverished population. This was particularly characteristic of the late 19th century¹⁶.

Internal conflicts

Difficult socio-economic conditions in which the Montenegrins lived have significantly reflected on the formation of their mentality, that was particularly demonstrated in their mutual relations. The great shortage of arable land, grazing grounds and water has resulted in even small disputes about cattle-made damage or boundary marks, would often result in murder, that according to the customary law – the legislation of a backward people – had to be avenged.

¹⁵ Đorđije-Đoko Pejović: quoted work, p. 284

¹⁶ Detailed in V.Gluščević: quoted work, pp. 54-55

Socio-economic conditions in which the blood feud originated and persisted were driving towards a special form of emigration (of individuals or the murderer's relatives), particularly observed during the hungry years, since hunger, that was raging all over the country, was causing frequent conflicts and blood feuds.

The revenge in blood, characteristic of very backward social relations in Montenegro, resulted in serious clashes between tribes. The intertribal conflicts led to one tribe not allowing the other(s) to tile their lands or would even set fire to their harvest, so that due to the lack of foodstuffs the population had to migrate generally to Serbia. Sometimes the tribal conflicts were so fierce to cause the emigration of some and spreading of other clans and tribes. Because of the fear of blood feud numerous individuals, and even families, headed mostly towards Turkey, not far from the border, where they would feel safer.

With the consolidation of the central state authority, this social phenomenon would be considerably restrained. Nevertheless, even later there were conflicts and blood feuds but not to the extent that whole clans or tribes would be compelled to migrate¹⁷.

Turkish terror

The long lasting, centuries-long migratory processes in Montenegro are just a confirmation of the hard living conditions of its populace, particularly in the time of Turkish rule. The areas of the Old Montenegro and Brda (Highlands) have always been subject to emigration – whether caused by hunger or by terror. In addition to the hungry years, that had been a regular phenomenon in Montenegro, the pressure by the Turks was increasingly apparent so that at times the Turkish oppression was even more difficult to bear than hunger. Most frequently the tyranny was demonstrated in setting fire to houses, stables or hay stacks in the wintertime, to winter crops at the ripening stage, and in cutting down corn, grapevines and mulberry trees; then, banning the purchase of grains, driving away cattle, killing shepherds and other forms of torture.

In combination with other migratory factors, the Turkish terror had an even stronger reflection on both internal and external migrations of the population, although there were great migrations that could be directly attributed to the Turkish suppression.

Clashes with the Turks and the devastation they were leaving behind, as well as the general insecurity of the population, had as a consequence

¹⁷ Detailed in V.Gluščević: quoted work, pp. 56-57

migratory movements, that were generally directed towards Serbia. There are numerous instances that the clashes with the Turks preceded emigration of smaller or larger numbers of people. This is particularly evidenced by the campaign conducted by Omer-pasha Latas against Montenegro in 1862 when the Turks inflicted extensive material damage, particularly by felling mulberry trees and thus ruining the export of large quantities of silk, which was produced by breeding silkworm (cocoons) on mulberry leaves¹⁸. Besides, cattle was destroyed and homes burned. In the Piva region only, 500 houses out of 600 in total were razed to the ground by fire¹⁹. Left without anything, many families were forced to move to Serbia to resolve the issue of survival.

The said forms of suppression were practiced all until the gaining of independence of Montenegro.

Religious allegiance

Migratory movements of the population as a result of religious affiliation (or loyalty) date to the time after the war against the Turks in 1876-1878. Namely, with the liberation of Nikšić, Spuž, Podgorica, Zeta, Bar, Ulcinj and Kolašin from the Turkish rule, numerous Muslim families left their estates unable to accept living in a state with predominant other religion, in which another rule was in place, other schools, etc. Leaving the liberated areas, the Muslims emigrated to the territories still under the Turkish rule: Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Pljevlja, Skadar (Shkodër) and others.

With the leaving of Muslim owners of large estates and deserting their houses, conditions were created for immigration of new settlers and resolving the existential issues of the needy part of the Montenegrin population. Then there was the descent of people from the mountainous and highland areas into the plains and river valleys, while the liberated towns and cities, that the Muslim families were increasingly leaving, were settled by the Montenegrins and the Herzegovinians who were involved in crafts and trade. Thus the Muslim population was being gradually replaced by that of Christian origin. The major part of Muslims left Nikšić and its surroundings: out of 410 homes, that existed at the time of liberation of Nikšić, only 19 did not leave, and Prince Nikola (Nicholas) made efforts to keep them there guaranteeing them equality, religious freedom and full right of use of their entire property²⁰.

¹⁸ William Denton: Several days in Montenegro, Zapisi, 1937, No XXVIII, p. 214

¹⁹ Đorđije-Đoko Pejović: quoted work, p. 205

²⁰ Milan Savić: Migraciona kretanja u nikšićkoj oblasti (Migratory Movements In The Nikšić Region), Deseti Kongres istoričara Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1998, pp.223-225

With the emigration of the Muslim land owners conditions were created also for a certain agrarian reform. In the Nikšić Polje (field, plain) and its surroundings, the land was distributed to the seven battalions of the Katunska (district) brigade. In addition to the Katunjans, the Nikšić area was also settled by people from other parts of Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, and Austria-Hungary²¹.

After the liberation of Spuž, Podgorica and Zeta, several hundreds of Muslim families emigrated to Turkey. Thus a rooms was made for the settlement of numerous Montenegrin families from the surrounding areas. Due to its position as well as to its fertility, the mostly immigration-bound was Zeta, from which a massive emigration of Muslims was recorded after 1878 of which the majority settled in Skadar and a smaller part in Podgorica²². With this emigration, the immigration of a large number of Montenegrin families, primarily from the surrounding areas, was made possible.

Migrations in both directions were taking place also after the liberation of Žabljak, Bar, Ulcinj and Kolašin.

Thus, the emigration of Muslims from the said places, that were attached to the independent state of Montenegro, were conditioned generally by religious affiliation but also by the overall backwardness, since every norm introduced by the state which did not fit into their conservative frame of mind would provoke reactions, which would then initiate new waves of emigrants.

Political motives

Besides, the process of consolidation of the central state power in Montenegro also resulted in a certain extent of emigration. Due to political reasons, individuals and sometimes whole families were sentenced to *izgon* – ostracism, expulsion from Montenegro. That was one of the most severe sentences for a Montenegrin that was pronounced during the time of Prince Danilo's reign. At that time there were expulsions even without any political reasons – sometimes just because of someone's hurt vanity whole families or individuals had to leave Montenegro²³.

Consolidation of the Prince's power and the situation created by the conflict between the Prince and a group of chieftains/popular leaders had as a consequence the creation of the first mass Montenegrin political emigra-

²¹ Ibid

Detailed in Nada Tomović: Ekonomske migracije Crnogoraca krajem XIX i početkom XX vijeka (Economic Migration Of The Montenegrins In Late 19th And Early 20th Centuries),
Deseti Kongres istoričara Jugoslavije, Beograd, 1998, p. 248

²³ Simo Popović: *Memoari* (Memoirs), Podgorica, 1995, p. 455

tion²⁴. The most massive emigration for political reasons came at the time of the political struggle of Montenegro for international recognition. Namely, the Prince's orientation towards France generated great discontent in Montenegro. Therefore the Senate President, Đorđije Petrović, became an uncompromising opponent of Prince Danilo. Together with a number of headmen, he contrived a plot against the Prince - which resulted in numerous emigrations. Thus in May 1860 there were around 400 political emigrants from Montenegro in Austria²⁵.

Considering that since the beginning of Prince Danilo's rule a number of prominent Montenegrin emigrants were staying in Austria, it was constantly using them for its own purposes aimed at stirring up unrest in Montenegro. The Viennese administration has armed several of these emigrants, who, in Boka Kotorska (The Kotor Gulf) organised the plot to assassinate Prince Danilo, Duke Mirko and a number of senators. The plot failed, but the following year (1860) Todor Kadić (one of the conspirators) managed to kill the Prince on 1 August in Kotor²⁶. According to Maksim Šobajić, in that year 300 persons emigrated from the region of Bjelopavlići²⁷.

Later, in 1863, Duke Mirko (Petrović) ordered that all those who were in kinship with Todor Kažić leave their estates. Then a number of the Bjelopavlićs moved to Lower Vasojevićs region²⁸.

Former political opponents of Prince Danilo refused to accept Prince Nikola (Nicholas) as his successor, so that rebellions were fomented in some of the tribes but Duke Mirko managed to win over all of the tribal leaders – by hook or by crook – which led to all the tribes recognise the new Prince in 1860.

Although Prince Nikola was different from his predecessor, during his absolutistic rule scandals and processes – particularly in early 20th century – were also recorded. That had a negative effect on migrations, specially towards Serbia.

In addition to the above said factors, that facilitated migratory movements of the Montenegrin population, one should also point to personal motives that instigated individuals to move to other parts of the world. One of them was education, while illusions that somewhere over there a better and nicer life was lived could not be excluded.

²⁴ Đorđije-Đoko Pejović: quoted work, p. 206

²⁵ Petar Popović, Nikanor Ivanović: Njegoš (Nyegosh), Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta, Novi Sad, IV, p. 91

²⁶ Jagoš Jovanović: *Istorija Crne Gore* (History Of Montenegro), second edition, Podgorica, 1995, pp. 263-264

²⁷ Maksim Šobajić: *Mladi Crnogorac* (Young Montenegrin), Beograd, 1873, p. 73

²⁸ Risto Dragićević: Stare srpske novine i časopisi o Crnoj Gori i Crnogorcima (Old Serbian Newspapers And Magazines On Montenegro And The Montenegrins), Zapisi, 1941, No XIV, p. 26

Education

Montenegrins were not only "braves who lived on rifle and blade", neither "their only occupation was warring and battle their only entertainment": in addition to battle and warring they were always demonstrating a feeling for and great interest in education. This somewhat unusual interest of the Montenegrins could be followed throughout the 19th century.

After the expansion of the state a need was felt for educated people in the administration and with for those knowledge more profound than that they could gain in the elementary school. This need started growing since the 1880's to be even more express in the first decades of the 20th century. At that time the Theological-Teachers College was satisfying the needs of the state administration, and when there was need for highly educated staff, Prince Nikola would send young men to acquire education abroad. In the beginning these were the youngsters that the Prince would choose at his own discretion from the houses of military and tribal leaders as well as of close relatives of the Petrović dynasty. These young men would leave for schooling to Serbia, Russia, France, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and other countries where, at the expense of the governments of those countries, they would complete secondary schools, colleges and higher schools. Since the second half of the 19th century all until 1918, several young men from Montenegro would be educated in almost all European countries either at the expense of the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs of the Princedom of Montenegro or at the expense of their own parents. In the period between 1848 and 1918, about 3,500 students were educated in secondary, college and higher level schools throughout Europe²⁹.

Thus, after the glorious victories on the military plane, Montenegro began to achieve significant results in the educational and economic fields which as a consequence had migratory movements both within the state and outside it, particularly in late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The above said natural and social circumstances resulted in making Montenegro a unique migratory example – a historic destiny of a people in its struggle for mere existence. Considering that frequent migrations were conditioned also by the terror of invaders, the outside factors, with manifestations of permanent repression, initiated a social phenomenon that to a large part was shaped by specific geographical factors. Namely, in the self-defence from the outside assaults ever more present were the impulses for

²⁹ Momčilo Pejović: Školovanje crnogorske omladine u inostranstvu u Periodu od 1848 do 1918 (Education Of The Montenegrin Youth Abroad In The Period 1848-1918), Prosvjetni rad, No 11 (15th October) 1993

expansion of human settlements, since in the reproductive respect the population was generally in the state of growth recording explicit progression in certain periods.

Thus, Montenegro was capable of regenerating the most vital part of its population even in the hardest conditions, but not of providing for all the elementary living conditions befitting man.

This social phenomenon also provided for a massive warring mobility and migratory trends that were mostly express during the 19^{th} and in early 20^{th} centuries.

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FACTORS OF MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS OF POPULATION OF MONTENEGRO IN XIX CENTURY

Summary

With regard to migratory movements, Montenegro has made a specific example in its history. Combination and complexity of natural (arid karst, disasters resulting in hunger), social (religion, expulsion, debts by way of usury, invaders' terror, education) and various personal factors have exerted their influence and intermingled to create a permanent migratory "boiling pot", particularly in the 19th century.

Although more population left to settle in other countries, Serbia in the first place, Montenegro was also on the receptive side – providing home for emigrants – refugees – from other parts of the Balkan Peninsula fleeing from the Turkish terror.

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