

WORKSHOP: Racism and Colonialism within Europe **by Marijana Ajzenkol, Serbia**

Abstract:

This workshop deals with the issues of colonialism, racism and their relevance from a Serbian perspective.

What is colonialism and how has it shaped the history of Europe?

How does racism manifest itself in Europe - and which events have contributed to its emergence and spread, especially with regard to anti-Eastern European and anti-Slavic racism as well as racism against Roma?

What role do church actors play?

How art could contribute to open this topic and to stress and focus on the situation (problem)?

What we could and should do?

These questions serve as a starting point for discussion and reflection in the workshop. They can help to develop a deeper understanding of this specific context of colonialism, racism and church actors and to look for steps of common action.

My working paper- words that should inspire and provoke group thinking and discussions

Although there are no reliable data that would indicate the beginning of the history of racism in a chronological sense (or at least I do not know), it can be safely said that racism, as well as slavery (racism has served as an apology and ideology for slavery throughout history) based on ethnic or religious criteria, is not an invention of the Western cultural and political circle and civilization, nor was “west” the only one to implement them.

Beginning with the ancient civilizations of Egypt, China, India, Mayan, Aztec, Greek, Judean, Mongolian and Ottoman empires, slavery and racism were one of the pillars of the social systems themselves, and they had a kind of theoretical-philosophical support. The roots of modern racism as an ideology and political practice (although they are often linked to creationism, Darwin's theory of evolution and social Darwinism) are found, above all, in the prevailing historical circumstances in Europe of the 17th century and early racial theories of the 18th century. Until that period, racist ideas were not particularly theoretically accepted or processed. The reasons are both in the mass medieval migrations and the mixing of different peoples and cultures, as well as in the appearance of Christianity and other world religions,

which without exception insisted on the equality of races and peoples, although there are different opinions on this issue.

Racist understanding and actions have been recorded in history since its beginning. Thus, the Aryan invaders of India considered the Dravidian peoples in the south to be inferior, while the Indian caste system has maintained the racial discrimination of the Tamils until today. And the ancient Chinese, Egyptians and Israelites considered themselves superior to other peoples. "Barbarians" are inferior in the image of the ancient Greeks and Romans about them and about themselves. (W. Durant, *Story of Civilization, The Age of Faith*, Copyright: Will Durant, London, 1960).

Aristotle, the greatest Greek thinker, theoretically shaped the understanding that people are unequal by nature, i.e. that people are born destined to be masters and others to be slaves - the basis of this division is innate physical differences.

There are opinions that the Christian church encouraged racist ideas with its myth about the origin of races from the biblical sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth. According to this myth, Japheth was the favorite of God and the progenitor of the white race, while Ham ("Curse of Ham") committed a terrible sin (he saw his father naked) was the progenitor of the black race (The First Book of Moses, chapter 9).

Ham- hamiti- black (Ham)

Jafetiti- white, people of Europe (Jafet)

Semiti- yellow- people from Asia (Shem)

Although the ideas of superiority of certain ethnic groups in relation to others have followed the human race since its very beginning, real racism, in which divided the human race into "higher" and "lower", came to full expression only in the age colonialism, when European nations enslaved most of the world and began to they use the natives as cheap labor, taking away their land, property, even their lives. Half a century after the discovery and colonial conquest of America (1492) and more than two centuries before the first racist, social Darwinist and eugenic theories, from the total indigenous only 12% of the population remained, while in Mexico only 4% remained. As according to historians, in less than a century after Columbus first set foot on the continent 95 million people were massacred by the colonialists. It's not only the indigenous population experienced genocide and the institution of slavery based on biological characteristics. Estimates are that it is from establishment of the institution of slavery in 1619, in America during the next three century there were over 15 million black slaves. During this period, Europeans were creationists - convinced believers that God created people exactly as they were described in the Book of Genesis, which justified race relations and discrimination on purely biological grounds, and only later, by shaping Social Darwinism and eugenics, racism also gained theoretical coverage in America.

Racism of the 21st century, which does not completely exclude biological racism component, is not a characteristic of only the English or German New Right, it already has its historical and international basis, that is, it forms part of a wider one intellectual and political movement. It is about the continuation of "racism in the era decolonization" as written by Balibar (É. Balibar). That kind of postmodern of racism "developed as an expression of the problem of cultural assimilation or integration of 'primitive' and 'backward' peoples into modern civilizations; immigrant wave which is spreading to France, as the 'land of human rights'". Such an interpretation of racism, Balibar points out, is particularly useful in explaining French colonial oppression of Muslims and contemporary Muslimophobia. About conception "new racism" based on a non-biological basis is also discussed by D. Goldberg pointing out that "since the Second World War, and especially in the last twenty years, the cultural conception of race is slowly overriding all others. It became paradigmatic." The conception of new racism is not based on physical characteristics, but there is the growth of anti-Semitism and especially of Islamophobia after terrorist crimes in the USA at the beginning of this century.

Some of the first researchers of racial discrimination in England during the sixties of the last century clearly indicated the existence of a connection between skin color and cultural components in racial discrimination. In the study devoted to interracial relations, Daniel (W. W. Daniel, 1968) writes: "The experiences of white immigrants, such as Hungarians and Cypriots, compared with black or brown (yellow) immigrants, such as West Indians and Asians, do not leaves doubt that the main component in discrimination is skin color."

In a study on racism, Gilroy (P. Gilroy) writes that it is still at work today racism based on cultural rather than biological differences. He believes that this new racism is closely related to "discourses of patriotism, of nationalism, xenophobia, militarism and gender differences". New racism, by Gilroy's opinion means that one can reliably determine who can be considered an authentic and legitimate representative of the "island race", and who he is an outsider. So-called "immigrants", most of whom were born in Britain, they are usually considered "outsiders", who are different because of their affiliation cultures are threatening the British way of life. Their diversity weakens homogenous British culture, which is believed to have given Britain its strength. That the representation of strength is emphasized in the glorification of military victories in the past, which was further, encouraged by the military intervention in the Falkland Islands eighties of the XX century.

In the context of considering the new, postmodern, i.e. post biological racism, it should be emphasized that cultural exclusivity does not appear only in context of racism nor that it should be renamed "racism". Ethnic-religious distance, stereotypes, claustrophobia or discrimination also exist in racial homogenous (all-white and all-black) societies, i.e. in societies in which groups are not differentiated by physical appearance. However, there is a high degree of probability that they will be racially persecuted ethnic or religious groups that have distinct cultural identities or life communities defined as "foreign", suffer from an additional dimension discrimination and prejudice. Today, racism based on cultural diversity, especially in societies with a high percentage of migrants, it is emphasized towards those minority communities who

want to keep some from elements of their culture or religion. If instead of hiding your diversity (except skin color) some ethnic group wants to express and defend its own difference in public or demand that they be respected just as they are, likely to provoke the aggression of the dominant culture. That's why it's for the assumption that over time social distance, tensions and even aggressiveness towards non-white minorities, when it comes to Western European cultural circle, will be especially intense and manifest if that minority sufficiently numerous to reproduce as a community and to have a distinct and whole value system. When it comes to modern post-biological racism, it is important to recognize that it creates discrimination and latent conflict not only against individuals but against communities and groups. The reason is that this type of racism most often produces a causality between the difference in physical appearance and the (perceived) differences in attitudes, behavior and group identity. Today, although that connection is not expressed as purely biological, there is a probability that it will be rooted on history, social structure, and norms of the group, its values and cultures.

***In post-socialist Eastern European societies, newly created an atmosphere of openness and freedom to make individual choices and follow them individual opportunities also had their dark side. She is on one side enabled the release of attitudes and feelings that had been under control for a long time authoritarian rule, while on the other hand it is cruel, almost kleptocratic the nature of the transition made most people feel socially isolated and excluded. Circumstances of extreme social and economic stratification, the growth of poverty and the appearance of misery produced growth right-wing and ultra-right ideologies, populist leaders and parties and blaming others and different for one's own plight and loss workplace. Rates of racial intolerance thus rose dramatically after the reforms of 1989, that some authors talk about "again the vampirization of racism on the soil of Europe." (Le Monde diplomatique, 4/2003.) Beating and even killing members Roma minority, break-ins in their houses and apartments are mostly attributed "skin-head" movement, (skinheads are members of a movement conceived in the 60s of the 20th century in the working-class districts of London. During the 70s there was an outpouring of negative reactions to influx of migrants from Asia. Right-wing organizations encouraged their expulsion Asians and Pakistanis under the pretext that they are stealing their jobs. Then many skinheads also direct their hatred towards members of the second and third generation of "coloreds". In the 1980s, the movement began to spread in Germany, where Nazi skins directed his racism against Turkish settlers; in Russia towards the Chechens and Afghans, in countries of Eastern Europe, mainly towards the Roma. Skinheads are not ideological either socio-politically unique grouping or movement. There are several different types that they differ from each other by the degree of radicalism and racism. The most famous are: Traditional skins; the racist Nazi skins group; Sharp skins; Rush skins; Gay skins) which systematically fights, and not without success, yes, also gains political influence. This movement functions relatively unhindered in many countries of Central and Western Europe, and enjoys support, or at least tolerance, of most governments. An even more worrying observation, based on public opinion polls of opinion which suggests that racial intolerance is by no means limited to "skin-head" movement. Some results of public opinion polls in the Czech Republic show that 80% to 90% of the total ethnic Czech population has ethnic and racial prejudices against various groups, especially against Roma. (Fatić, A.:

Crime and social control in Eastern Europe, IMP, Belgrade, 1997.) Neo-Nazi organization "Blood and Honor" is active in Poland, which caused public anxiety by posting it on its Internet in 2006 website of names and addresses of fighters for human rights and fighters against racism and xenophobia. Slovakia, according to the researchers' analysis, represents the country where racism, xenophobia and neo-Nazism are already present among students primary and secondary schools. ("We noticed racist tendencies already in thirteen-year-olds. It is in secondary schools that problem is even more noticeable", said the Director of the Center for the Slovak daily "SME", of environmental and ethical education Juraj Hipš). Skinhead movements are very active in the racist campaign against Roma and "colored" migrants throughout Western Europe, while the neo-fascist movement in Italy can hardly be called marginal. Extreme right - one of bearers of contemporary racism - arises as a product of that current in genesis liberalism, which increasingly subordinates freedom to profit and the state interests. (Right-wing extremism is an inconsistent, multidimensional pattern of right-wing attitudes of different nature formed depending on history, political culture and environment. It is directed above all against liberalism and socialist tradition, and it is at the center of it populist ethnocentric nationalism, to which all other values are subordinated. The leading principle of right-wing extremism is a hierarchically structured populist community, whose expression is a powerful authoritarian state with expansionist and revisionist foreign policy goals." Stöss R.: Bestimmungsfaktoren des Rechtsextremismus, in Klingemann, H. D., Erbring, L., Diedrich, N. hrsg. Zwischen Wende und Wiedervereinigung – Analysen zur politischen Kultur in West und Ost-Berlin 1990 Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag. 105-106.) At the end of the development path of that trend is the break with liberalism as such. For the ultra-right, liberalism will always be related to "communism" as the embodiment of social evil, even identical with it. Such and such movements they are far from giving a stamp to the entire system, but precisely to such Social forces arise from the socio-psychological and ideological basis militant and practically totalitarian, thus evoking memories of the dark side European history.

Conclusion

Modern biological racism arose from experiences, political ideas and the ideology of liberal capitalism, the conquest of colonies and the era of imperialism. A logical question arises: what to expect from a postmodern Western work the world at the turn of the millennium, which is marked by neoliberal capitalism; or from post-socialist countries that are reforming their systems through coupling tycoons and politicians, robbery and wild capitalism? In the spirit of humanism, of rationalism and spirituality that Europe gave birth to, it is to be hoped that European framework in the 21st century will be much wider to all its peoples. But, we must be aware that all divisions, contradictions and conflicts will not just happen to disappear and become a thing of the past and that the European integration of states and peoples is yet to come always far, further than what the intellectual and humanistic think or want to accept the spirit of Europe. There is an abyss between people with brilliant and clever ideas and people

of brutal acts and active bestiality, a gap (precipice) that no intellectual explanation cannot bridge.

It is likely that thinking in the categories of race, racism and extreme "mythological" nationalism based on "blood and soil" disappeared in its time, along with other irresponsible ideologies XIX and XX centuries, that the new era of imperialism and globalism did not expose Western humanity with new experiences. Imperialism would be necessary resulted in the invention of racism as the only possible "explanation" and justification for his actions, even if the theory of race never existed in the civilized world.

At the beginning of the XXI century, from the point of view of theoretical analysis (Institute for International Politics and Economy (IMPP) International Policy no. 1137, January–March 2010) it is possible that apparent colorlessness, nationality or confessionalism of cultural racism in practice to bring post-biological, post-national or post-religious racism cultural intolerance. In other words, even if biological, ethnic and confessional racism becomes negligible, it is possible to continue its own continuity with cultural racism. What is hypothetically possible today to assume is a circumstance in which biological racism becomes strong only in combined with cultural antagonism, stereotypes and prejudices. A development in which, perhaps, there will be discrimination based on skin color is not impossible either decrease, while ideologies that discriminate against collective cultures will of minority groups to grow radically and for united Europe to begin to divide along racial, cultural, ethnic and religious lines. So we can only hope that the postmodern Western world will find the strength to continue continuity the enlightened and humanistic spirit of several centuries ago and that it will not allow the dark periods of European history from the end of the 19th century to repeat themselves mid-20th century marked by racism and the Holocaust.

Talking about and from Serbia

While the United States is on the brink (edge) of a racial war, the people of Serbia are wholeheartedly on the side of black America. We are not racists - we beat ourselves up, even the famous Harvard has confirmed this in its research.

And then, only one statement and question of Rambo Amadeus (singer) caused a silence. He said: "Racism in the Balkans is not measured by the attitude towards blacks - because there are none here." It is measured by the attitude towards our brothers - the Roma. How many do you know personally? How many of them are you friends with?

Opera diva Nataša Tasić Knežević, who is Roma lady, confirms - Rambo is right.

"I can't say that I haven't encountered that discrimination, it exists, but the thing is that when someone asks Serbs whether they like African Americans or not, they see Will Smith, Morgan Freeman, Whoopi Goldberg, Beyoncé... OK. But when they mention the Roma, then it's different..."

"Serbia is not a racist country. Serbia is a country that has suffered tremendously, with all its peoples, all faiths and confessions living here. We eat the same bread together. When we start thinking about it in the way that all children are the same, that all children have absolutely the same rights that are guaranteed by law and by birth in a legal state, when we give all children the same chance, those children will one day become good people. And we now have a chance to correct some things that happened in the past because we were mistreated a lot throughout history. All of those: Jesenovac, Banjica, Staro sajmište, Niš camp... Full of cemeteries of Serbs, Jews and Roma who died in the First and Second World War, during the bombing, during the refugees from Kosovo. The Roma also fled from Kosovo together with the Serbs. Everyone suffered the same. The same," says Nataša Tasić Knežević.

Danilo Ćurčić, program coordinator of the Initiative for Economic and Social Rights A11, recalls the well-known Harvard study from a few years ago, according to which Serbia is the least racist country.

"Nobody is questioning whether or not Harvard did its research well, but in the context of Serbia, I don't think it is very applicable, because it refers to racism against African Americans." It is difficult to answer the question of whether there is racism in Serbia. It cannot be measured. But when you look at the individual attitude towards the Roma and the systemic issues, which it is clear would never happen to the non-Roma population, it is clear in which direction it is going," says Danilo Ćurčić for Nova.rs.

What is the road sign to a solution?

"First, to start talking about it. When you ask that question, everyone will say that there is no racism, that they had a fellow Roma with whom they sat in the classroom. But when you scratch a little under the surface, you see that it doesn't really have much basis in reality. The state doesn't do much to explain it either. One of the things that should be emphasized is that the state does not do enough to explain that the difficult situation in which the Roma live is not their choice. We have tens of thousands of people living in informal settlements without water or electricity.

Serbia has a huge number of Roma who escaped from Kosovo. Instead of receiving some incentives from the state to solve housing needs, they built houses themselves in locations that were already in old Roma halls or on the outskirts of the city. When these buildings are demolished, no one will wonder where these people will go. They will stay on the street. Then the state should say that they did not do it because they wanted to do it, but it is a consequence of systemic neglect and not dealing with the problems of the Roma. And the state is silent, does not say anything, but supports the narrative and prolongs the circle of relations towards the Roma, which is as it is", concludes Danilo Ćurčić

Can a museum of African art be anti-colonial?

The Anticolonial Museum exhibition in Serbia is an important attempt at self-criticism. How successful can he even be?

Ana Sladojević, actualizes the issues of colonialism, anti-colonialism and racism in the presentation of African cultural and artistic heritage both in our Belgrade museum and in similar institutions around the world, but also in the general perception of African heritage which is often colored by unconsciously accepted colonialist discourse.

The history of the formation of the museum as an institution in the abundance in which we know it today is inextricably linked with the notion of colonialism, given that the collections of some of the world's largest museums were formed precisely around artifacts brought from Africa to Europe in the early 19th century, mostly by illegal means.

The fascination of European peoples with Egyptian art from the beginning of the 19th century will soon be followed by an interest in oriental cultures, so that at the threshold of the 20th century, the art of the African peoples who inhabited the central and southern parts of the continent would enter the side door of the history of (Western) art as an excursion that turns a group of marginalized and avant-garde artists.

Eager to challenge, question and disrupt what can be disrupted in the hierarchical order of themes and motifs of academic painting, these still unrecognized but soon to be highly regarded artists such as Pablo Picasso or Henri Matisse will incorporate the themes, motifs, color and forms of African art into their works, making that in this way, African art reaches the exhibition halls of large museums, and that through a shortcut made possible by the signature of a "white" artist at the bottom of the canvas. It will be another century before the African elements in the works of African artists will have the opportunity to find themselves under the same roofs as their "replicas" that were made by Europeans a hundred years earlier, in the name of rebellion and punching in the nose of tradition, by traveling and staying in exotic black continent.

The presence of African elements at the beginning of the 20th century in European culture, both high and everyday, applied (furniture design or fabric ornaments) was also colored by a kind of racist viewpoints. Namely, it largely stemmed from the European man's insatiable need to escape from the harsh reality of industrial, capitalist society, and return to the roots, sources, the age of innocence and naivety recognized in the system of societies that were seen as primitive and underdeveloped.

The absence of that classic colonial policy in our region generally leads to the thought that colonialism in the Serbian or Balkan environment is a completely foreign concept. But that is also something that the Anticolonial Museum exhibition problematizes.

In the first decades of the 20th century, while Europe was still exploiting the resources of the African continent, admiring at the same time the bold form of Picasso's paintings inspired by African masks, the Serbian poet Ljubomir Micić created the idea of barbarogeny within the

avant-garde movement of Zenitism. Micić's barbarogenie is nothing more than that dreamed and long-awaited, raw and cruel, naive and simple Balkan "savage", unencumbered by the achievements of civilization and its moral restraints.

A few years later, in 1928 and 1929, the writer Rastko Petrović, himself a fan of innovation and experimentation with form, travels around Africa, during which write the book with the simple title - Africa, as well as many photographs that can be seen at the exhibition, was created. The writer's view of Africa, its inhabitants, culture and customs is far more naive than that of his Western colleagues, only slightly colored by colonialist consciousness, but it is still persistent and present in his vision. Regardless of the fact that he himself belongs to the barbarogenian people, who throughout history have themselves often been seen and considered different, skin color seems to be enough of a difference to take a privileged position in front of visually more obvious others.

There is a domesticated attitude in these areas, that racism is not so strong among us or even that it does not exist at all, and as one of the arguments, the post-war accession of Yugoslavia to an alliance with numerous countries of the third world, i.e. in the Non-Aligned Movement. And indeed, unlike the great world museums whose collections of works of African art arrived as textbook examples of colonial conquests, the basis of the Museum of African Art in Belgrade is the collection of Veda Zagorac and Zdravko Pečar, journalists and diplomats who received these objects as gifts during diplomatic visits. , and with the consent of representatives of the authorities of the countries from which they originate.

And yet, does such a specific historical situation make the Museum of African Art in Belgrade free from all constraints of colonialist interpretation and presentation of African culture as inferior? Certainly not, at least not completely. But all the same, it could be said that this Belgrade museum tries much harder than the big museums of the world to at least come close to that seemingly unattainable, ideal model: a thoughtfully conceived and carefully designed anti-colonial museum.

There are also some individuals as it was Branko Najhold and his spouse Bojana Ivanović, from Zemun. They made exhibition about Africa from their own collection made with a lot of love. Branko is not among us, but Bojana still in their apartment has room named Afrika.

There are some simple everyday but persistent steps of ordinary people that could contribute to these serious issues. Let us think and talk about it.

Marijana Ajzenkol