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Miroslav Akmadža: *Krunoslav Draganović – Iskazi komunističkim istražiteljima* [Krunoslav Draganović – Testimony to Communist Interrogators] (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest. Podružnica za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje, Slavonski Brod, 2010), 285 pp.

Although he never held any higher posts in the Church hierarchy, there is no doubt that Krunoslav Stjepan Draganović (Brčko, 1903 – Sarajevo, 1983) would have a distinguished place in any list of the most important Church-affiliated personalities in the Croatian lands of the twentieth century. And if controversy were a specific factor in such a list, then Draganović would be on the short-list for first place. The reasons for this lie more in his engagement in wider social events, scholarship and writing and, especially, politics, than in his narrower clerical and pastoral vocation. Therefore it comes as no surprise that this colors the general impressions of Draganović, and even technical lexicographic works (such as, for example, the Croatian Biographical Lexicon) describe him first as a historian and politician, and only then as a priest.

This assessment is neither coincidental nor erroneous: even when he operated as a priest, Draganović left the impression of a politician. Moreover, one may say without exaggeration that his texts on church history, demographics, historiography and popular history – even when they were exceptionally well-fortified in the scholarly and professional sense – were always an expression of Draganović's national and political convictions, and without exception they furthered his political objectives and his specific political struggles. This process led to Draganović's not particularly fortunate participation in the Croatian National Committee, one of an increasing number of Croatian political émigré organizations, which fragmented along ideological and organizational lines in the postwar years, even though they remained permanently and almost without exception dedicated to the same strategic aim: the restoration of the Croatian state. This fragmentation most notably beset that portion, certainly predominant, which grew out of the Croatian nationalist or Ustasha movement and which, after wartime defeat in 1945, the collapse of the Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945) and the renewal of Yugoslavia, sought new avenues for action.

Draganović never actually concealed his desire to be involved, and even to participate in decision-making in major national/political upheavals, so it is therefore unusual (although probably psychologically understandable) that in the last years of his life he was bewildered that anyone would think he was anything but "a humble servant of Christ." And just what were Draganović's views and politics? His enemies and opponents spoke more of this than Draganović himself.

In Yugoslav communist circles, he was never forgiven not only for being an anti-communist, but also an advocate of Croatian independence. The many decades of Draganović's activity peaked in Rome in the last days of World War II with his efforts to convince high Church circles to back the survival of the Independent State of Croatia, followed by his tireless work to save the Croatian refugees who fled from the restored Yugoslavia and its communist regime. He was also accused of playing a significant role in saving a series of Nazi leaders and arranging their transfer to South America. Not a single piece of evidence for this has been proffered to this day, but as an effective accusation it has functioned exceptionally even in more recent historiographic and current affairs debates and in politically-motivated pamphlets often disseminated from recognizable ideological circles against the Croats and, without exception, against the Catholic church as an alleged participant in the concealment of Nazis.

Draganović's views and actions were denounced by the Yugoslav communists as the most nefarious clericalism, or even "clerical fascism." On the other hand, those exceptionally politicized clergymen who favored pro-Yugoslav positions were declared "progressive" and "positive." However, among the Croatian Catholic clergy in the twentieth century there were many others who declaratively and effectively proclaimed the national liberation of the Croatian people and the creation of a free and independent state the most vital earthly goal, but among those not elevated to the status of bishop, and even among most bishops, there were few whose influence or identification with this goal could measure up to Draganović. And if the pro-regime propaganda of communist Yugoslavia had wanted to depict the embodiment of their mortal enemy, it is easy to imagine that this character would have many of Draganović's qualities.

However, on the other hand, among those who may provisionally be referred to as Croatian nationalists, Draganović was not generally accepted nor was his activity necessarily met with approval. Among these circles, he was often accused of intrigues, countless contacts with all manner of intelligence agencies and secret operatives of all types (without which, to be sure, Draganović would not have been able to perform many of the feats ascribed to him, especially after World War II), and he was often faulted for aspiring to place under his supervision the widest possible circle of people and the largest sums of money. These contours of his image, even more than his "schism" and public estrangement from the former state leader of the Independent State of Croatia, Ante Pavelić, and the movement the latter symbolized, led to the fact that to Pavelić's people, Draganović's name had become a red flag in the full sense, nothing less than a synonym for perfidy, already by the end of the 1940s.

None of this altered the fact that it was precisely Draganović who gathered a multitude of testimony and documents on the horrifying massacres of Croatian soldiers and civilians at the end of the war and afterward perpetrated by the Yugoslav Partisans, i.e., the Yugoslav Army. For Draganović himself em-

bellished his rift with Pavelić and the Ustasha – perhaps motivated by other reasons and not just the awareness that new times require new leaders and new forms of political struggle – with such characterizations of his former idols that at first glance it is possible to recognize them as fabrications, retrospective conjecture and exaggerations. The retaliation was equally underhanded, with insufficient willingness to confront the past and assess accomplishments and successes, as well as failures and mistakes, with anything akin to dignity.

Besides human weakness, this airing of dirty laundry undoubtedly contributed to the hardship of émigré life, which the Croatian political émigré communities confronted in probably an even more drastic form than the emigration of most other subjugated nations. For after the Second World War, proponents of Croatian state independence had few allies, and there were even less who adhered to the ceremoniously proclaimed principles of democracy and human rights in the Croatian case. And despite his very widespread charitable and social work (or perhaps precisely because of it?), on several occasions Draganović almost naïvely found himself in the epicenter of political/espionage scandals that had far-reaching repercussions for the overall activities of Croatian political émigré communities, and for the formulation of Croatian national objectives.

For example, during the 1950s, the advocates of Bosniak Muslim national emancipation around Adil Zulfikarpašić and Smail Balić accused him, quite falsely, of proselytizing among and converting Croatian-oriented Muslim political refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. This scandal was kept alive and overblown for years, and an entire school of political thought and action took root in this “soil,” a school which, contrary to Croatian Rightist and even Ustasha tradition, ultimately led to the de facto, if not ideological, identification of Croatian nationalism with Catholicism. Draganović also took under his wing Miroslav Varoš, perhaps the most successful secret operative of the Yugoslav intelligence services (who was later uncovered).

Finally, Draganović’s appearance in Yugoslavia in September 1967 was an event that gave birth to a veritable plethora of mysteries, speculation, suspicion and accusations. This return came at an exceptionally vital moment, not long after the signing of the “Protocol on Talks between Representatives of the Holy See and the Government of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” (Belgrade, June 25, 1966) and in the context of renewed diplomatic relations between the Vatican and communist Yugoslavia. Based on the fact that Draganović was never taken before a court, and that the regime obtained from him some insufficiently clear assessments and public declarations, speculation arose as to whether he returned to Yugoslavia voluntarily (at his own behest or within the context of some sort of arrangement between the Vatican and Belgrade), whether he accidentally wandered into Yugoslav territory and was arrested, or whether he was abducted and coercively returned to Yugoslavia. (The Yugoslav communist regime did engage in abduction of political adversaries,

but much more rarely than the more standard method of simple assassination; later, however, it did resort to abductions – as illustrated by the case of Vjenceslav Čižek in 1977.)

This guesswork and speculation were exploitable for both political and espionage purposes, and more than lucrative in the commercial sense. This is why the “Draganović case” was recycled from time to time among Croatian political émigrés and even more so in communist Yugoslavia. This saga was intellectually, ideologically and politically intriguing as few others were. This is why all of those who pondered and wrote about this “case” deemed it proper to believe that the minutes to Draganović’s interrogations conducted by the Yugoslav State Security Service would reveal some spectacular secrets. Fragments of these statements and (re)interpretations of Draganović’s return to Yugoslavia began to appear in earnest after the collapse of the communist regimes in Croatia and Serbia, while in recent years these have become increasingly ambitious and extensive.

These were probably the reasons that prompted Miroslav Akmadža to edit and publish the available portions of Draganović’s testimony in the first half of 2010. If not for the time constraints (and distribution in newsstands, which in Croatia’s impoverished publishing industry and decimated book retail network is increasingly imposing its own bookselling and even scholarly standards), Akmadža’s introductory remarks (pp. 7-79) would certainly have been more thorough and precise, while the collected and published documents (pp. 81-251) would have been more comprehensively and systematically annotated. But even with these shortcomings, Akmadža’s book is invaluable not only to any analysis of relations between the Church and the regime, but also to any study of the activities of the Croatian political émigré communities, while some of its parts, i.e. some of the observations from Draganović’s research studies, may usefully serve as a much-needed supplement (by bringing it into sharper focus) to the impressions of the Catholic Church’s activity in the Independent State of Croatia.

Akmadža certainly notes that all of Draganović’s statements given to interrogators, and other documents and studies were not available to him and that he is not even aware of their full scope; furthermore, he is not even certain of their exact whereabouts. Even in the case of the documents incorporated in this book, there is no way of being certain if these are complete and comprehensive. At some places it is obvious that the texts end abruptly and unnaturally. This is why it is important to underline that the book largely does not consist of classic minutes nor testimony, which is otherwise suggested by the book’s title.

What the editor refers to as “Draganović’s statement to communist interrogators on 26 September 1967 with appendices” (pp. 81-135) is actually an investigative study on specific topics. Insufficient data preclude any conclusion

on this, for these are topics which Draganović himself deemed important, or he selected them at the order or request of his interrogator. It is unfortunate that Akmadža did not provide enough information on the form of the document he has made publicly available: was it a handwritten or typed original, or a transcript or photocopy? Such facts are vital to verify its authenticity. A more attentive reader will, for example, note that Draganović, who said of himself that he had a solid grasp of German, twice (pp. 82 and 83) made gross errors in stating the title of his doctoral dissertation, which was published in the German language, that he confuses the titles of journals that he had edited for years (on p. 94 he even rechristens the journal *Croatia Sacra* to *Scientia Sacra*), etc. These may be unintentional oversights caused by haste and the mental turmoil Draganović was undergoing, but they may also have greater significance, bringing into question the authenticity and reliability of the document itself. For the doubt remains: is this a text written by Draganović himself (as suggested his apparent signature at the end) or simply a compilation of his oral statements put together by his interrogator?

The other document, “Draganović’s statement to communist investigators on ‘the Croatian emigration and clergy’” (pp. 135-197) is actually testimony given to interrogators, i.e., a transcript of questions and direct, oral responses. Akmadža says that this is a transcript of an audio recording, of which the transcripts are held in the Croatian State Archives. Illegible places and interruptions are denoted in the text, and the transcript ends abruptly, meaning that it is quite probably incomplete. Akmadža quite helpfully points out that the (Serbian) language and style of this transcript need not correspond to the way Draganović actually spoke (meaning that the audio recording is unavailable!), but this should be supplemented with the following observation: the quality and substance of minutes of this type depend not only on the willingness of the subject to be “honest,” but also on the expertise, knowledge and technique of the interrogator. The fact that the role of the transcriber is not insignificant is reflected in the fact that many names are misspelled in the transcript.

The third document, which the editor entitled “Draganović’s statements of 26-27 October 1967” (pp. 197-236), and which he states are “transcripts of recordings of testimony” stored in the Croatian State Archives, are once again not “testimony” (a combination of questions and answers), but rather an uninterrupted text which, like the one already mentioned from September 26, 1967, is most likely the interrogator’s summary or some form of compilation of audio recordings of the interrogations. Any law student knows that this form of summarizing and interpretation of witness testimony, even given the maximum meticulousness and impartiality of the interrogator, is necessarily riddled with inaccuracies, and sometimes even serious errors. Whether there are any here, and how many, cannot be stated with certainty without a comparison with the audio recordings.

The fourth and final document included in the book, “Draganović’s testimony to interrogators on 29 October 1967” (pp. 236-251), is also based on an audio recording, while the available and published transcript is, it would appear, composed of classic investigative minutes and an interrogator’s compilation of Draganović’s responses to previously posed questions. The transcript of this document, like the preceding one, ends abruptly, which indicates that these are not minutes to an entire conversation between Draganović and his interrogators.

Nonetheless, even more important than the technical data on the documents published in Akmadža’s book is the fact that Draganović’s statements and testimony do not contain any spectacular revelations nor vital information that may have been previously unknown to the Yugoslav communist authorities. This must be kept in mind in any assessment of these documents, together with that time-honored caveat: testimony delivered before police or investigative bodies or in the defense proceedings at the main hearing in a court trial in a totalitarian state must always be taken *cum grano salis*. Rare are the situations, and even rarer the individuals who can resist all temptation and withstand psychological and physical coercion. This is why one’s own role in traumatic events are regularly diminished or embellished in such testimony, or attempts are made to find, at a minimum, some compromise with the principles advocated by the interrogator.

At this time, nothing is known of the fate of the remaining documentation of Draganović’s interrogations conducted by the Yugoslav authorities, nor of his journal, which was seized by his interrogators. Moreover, nothing is known of the period this journal covers, nor when the Yugoslav authorities seized it. Like many circumstances surrounding Draganović, this detail provokes a number of logical questions which are not, however, followed by logical answers. If the Yugoslav intelligence agency had stolen his journal earlier, why did Draganović never mention this anywhere? If, on the other hand, this journal came in Yugoslav official hands at the same time as the man who wrote it, why would Draganović have been carrying his journal with him in September 1967 during an ordinary outing?

All of this indicates that a some discretion must be exercised when considering Draganović’s statements, which made their way to Croatian political émigrés for years by mysterious channels, as well as some of his until recently unknown testimonies which Akmadža mentions and cites extensively in his introduction. One must also view with caution the assessment made by Yugoslav intelligence officers that “Franjo” (the codename for Draganović) was “rather candid” in his conversations with interrogators. It will only be possible to assess the degree of this “candor,” i.e., his readiness to cooperate, after much more time has passed and based on the potential repercussions of Draganović’s interrogations. However, the fact remains that after his return to Yugoslavia,

Draganović became a person whom the Church hierarchy treated with utmost reserve.

The data which Akmadža cites show that both the Vatican and the Church hierarchy in Yugoslavia were relieved by the regime's decision to refrain from placing Draganović on trial: this course would have undoubtedly placed a heavy burden on relations between the state and the Church during a period when both sides deemed these relations exceptionally vital. However, the circumstances surrounding his appearance in Yugoslavia – about which even Akmadža remains puzzled – demonstrate that the Church ultimately found a solution which best suited it and Draganović himself at that time: Draganović forever left the political scene and dedicated himself to his scholarly work and writing. If anything surrounding Draganović is certain, then this is certainly that Croatian scholarship gained much more than Croatian politics lost.

Tomislav JONJIĆ

Benedikt Kotrulj, *Libro del arte dela mercatura – Knjiga o vještini trgovanja*, Zdenka Janeković-Römer, ed. (Zagreb-Dubrovnik: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, Zavod za povijesne znanosti u Dubrovniku: Hrvatski računovođa, 2009), 510 pp.

Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences has recently published the newest critical edition of Benedetto Cotrugli's outstanding work *Libro del arte dela mercatura*. In his manual for merchants written in 1458, this 15-th century merchant from Ragusa Dubrovnik was the first to codify the general rules of double-entry bookkeeping, the technique that even modern accounting is based on.

The book begins with a 100-page study of Cotrugli's life and work by the editor Zdenka Janeković-Römer, based on sources from the archives of Dubrovnik and Naples, where Cotrugli spent a part of his life and where he even wrote his *Libro del arte dela mercatura*. History of the Cotrugli family, Benedetto's merchant adventures, his rise and fall in the Ragusan Republic are all presented in detail, as well as a thorough investigation of the *Libro* itself, Cotrugli's sources, style of writing and mentality.

As we find out from the introductory study, *Libro del arte dela mercatura* was printed only in 1573 by the renaissance philosopher Frane Petris in Venice under the title *Della mercatura e del mercante perfetto*. Nine years later it