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### Cvitkovic's "Konfesija u ratu (Religious Confessions in Wartime)" - Book Review

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The book is also a great source for the examination of several other sub-themes. Among them are the role of the Orthodox Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic ( who lived after World War II in exile) and the theologian Justin Popovic (who lived in house arrest in a Serbian monastery) who fueled an anti-Western near-fundamentalist Orthodoxy that influenced an entire group of contemporary Serbian Orthodox bishops. Another is the Macedonian Orthodox Church schism and the American diocesan schism under bishop Dionisije, and finally the role of the Serbian Orthodox church in prodding the Serbs to an awareness of the fate of the Kosovo Serbs that eventually fueled Serbian nationalism to a frenzied state by the use of Kosovo mythology.

On the Catholic side the author deals with the Alojzije Cardinal Stepinac controversy and its role in solidifying Croat nationalist feeling behind the Catholic Church and the very skillful navigation by the Catholic hierarchy of anniversary celebrations of Marian and Eucharistic congresses that brought a mass influx of people back to the Church as an expression of their ethnoreligiosity. Buchenau also examines briefly the support by the Catholic Church leaders of the rising movement of Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union) under the leadership of Franjo Tudjman. Buchenau raised the question of Serbian Orthodox victims to *ustasha* genocides during World War II and the Catholic hierarchy's unwillingness to express apologies or regrets which Orthodox hierarchs frequently requested of them. Only Bishop Alfred Pichler, bishop of Banja Luka in Bosnia-Herzegovina, issued a statement of regret. I am somewhat surprised that Buchenau did not press this issue but did engage in a short discussion whether the number of claimed victims during World War II by the Serb side is exaggerated and concludes that the much smaller numbers proposed by some Croats is more accurate. That may well be so, though more work is necessary to establish the extent of the World War II genocides. But the question is, what made the Catholic bishops so unwilling to condemn the genocides, their Catholicism or their Croatianism? There are a whole slew of other topics to be found in this extensive treatment: the role of the association of priests, the use of punitive taxation by the state to control non-cooperative priests, the role of the Concordat between the Vatican and the Yugoslav state, and so forth.

In my opinion no serious scholar of religion of the former Yugoslavia will be able to by-pass this book without seriously impairing her/his ability to understand this complex issue. It would be highly desirable to have an English translation of this book in order to make it available to a wider circle of readers. The question only is its marketability as its readers would be primarily graduate students and scholars in the field. It would fit well the mission of a university press.

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Ivan Cvitković, *Konfesija u ratu* (Religious Confessions in Wartime) Sarajevo: Svjetlo riječi, 2004. Softcover 191 pp. Summary in English. Bibliography. Index. Reviewed by Jim Satterwhite.

Written by a sociologist of religion who teaches at the University of Sarajevo, in the School of Political [Social] Sciences, this work grows out of the author's attempt to come to grips with the role played by the various religions in the Bosnian war of 1992-1995, but it also attempts to examine the larger issue of the interrelationship of religion and war.

As a sociologist Cvitković begins with an observation about religion in Bosnia and Herzegovina that sets the stage for the entire analysis to follow. Among the various factors that differentiate people in Bosnia and in other parts of Europe – traits such as religion, culture, traditions – in most of Europe language is the most important factor in defining national differences. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand, where linguistic differences are not significant, religion plays the largest role in social differentiation. Furthermore, "it is on this basis that the consciousness of the fundamental identity between religious affiliation and ethnic group is formed," even though in other parts of the former Yugoslavia the connection is not as close (9; all translations by reviewer).

The layout of the book follows from this initial observation. Cvitković begins by looking at different religions/confessions before the war, and then examines the role of religion in situations of social conflict. Several chapters are devoted to methodological questions before he once again

examines the issue of religious identification and “confessional homogenization” in wartime. After a brief look at kinds of participation in religious practice, Cvitković gets at the heart of his topic by devoting several chapters to moral questions: “What was the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina like?” “Is killing as a part of military actions moral?” “Is retaliation for killing justified?” He concludes his study by again examining some more general sociological concerns, such as the impact of war on forms of religious expression, the question as to whether during the war there was any sense of fighting for some “true faith,” and inter-religious relations during the war.

Even when he is dealing with theoretical issues, such as that of “sociological models of religion regarding war,” Cvitković does not neglect the moral dimension. He notes that “even the Bosnian-Herzegovian war provided an extreme example of how a religious community can lose the feel for its function, its mission. It is difficult to be simultaneously on the side of God and guns, the Bible, Qur’an, and shooting, symbols of faith and gun barrels...In this way religion and faith are transformed into a means for conducting war” (40; see also 140 ff., 187). He continues in this vein in his discussion of the war itself, stating that in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina ethnic conflict took on the characteristics of religious conflict inasmuch as the “enemy” belonged to some other denomination, or even another religion altogether. Consequently, “even if religions and denominations were not [in themselves] the cause of the outbreak of war in Bosnia/Herzegovina, they provided the pretext and context for the war” (64). This discussion in turn raises another issue: if crimes were committed as part of the war, and these crimes were sometimes perpetrated using religious symbols, then to what extent are religions themselves culpable? Cvitković states that these “crimes were the result of extremist, destructive national consciousness,” and we have already seen that in this context religious and ethnic identities were closely intertwined (114).

Here the issue of “collective responsibility” is raised. Cvitković writes that the basis of the idea of collective responsibility can be found in religious consciousness. Collective responsibility is not necessarily the same thing as collective guilt – in a situation such as that which pertained in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, though, crimes committed in the name of an ethnic group point the way to an understanding of collective responsibility [116/117].<sup>1</sup>

This subject is related to the section where Cvitković looks at inter-religious relations during the war. If religious identity is closely tied to ethnic identity, then a corollary is that “in wartime a sense of belonging to a particular confession is constructed in relation to other confessional groups, and not on the basis of adhering to the same set of beliefs,” and the emphasis on confessional groups becomes the primary locus of identity (135; see also 107). Here Cvitković enters into an overview of Muslim-Christian relations in Bosnia/Herzegovina, and the way each of these religious communities perceived the other, before going on to examine the interrelationships and perceptions among and within the other major religious communities as well (Chapter 13, 135-182).

At the heart of the conflict was a crisis of identity stemming from the post-socialist society in the former Yugoslavia. “The war showed that in a multi-confessional society, inter-confessional relations have an impact on the way people think about interpersonal relations, about the processes of social communication and (dis)integration.” The “others” (those belonging to different groups) were characterized negatively, and the premise became one of incompatibility and the impossibility of life together (184). Cvitković goes on to ask rhetorically whether the war did not demolish the myth of a Bosnia and Herzegovina as a model of a multicultural, multi-religious, and multiethnic society whose people get along well together (184). This type of society cannot come into being without the growth of important elements of political culture. “The construction of a system of common values in a multi-confessional, multiethnic environment such as Bosnia and Herzegovina is a precondition for an open society” (185). The essence of such a society has to be pluralism, which cannot rest on the negation of others. It would be tragic if this system of pluralism was to be regarded as the enemy, but it is also the

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<sup>1</sup> for a similar discussion, see this reviewer’s discussion of Jan Tomasz Gross. *Sąsiedzi: historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka*. Sejny: Pogranicze, 2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Hardcover, 163 pp. [Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland. Princeton Univ Pr., 2001. Hardcover - 216 pp., \$19.95] Review in *The Slavic and East-European Journal* (Spring, 2002).

case (as demonstrated by the war) that religious pluralism by itself does not automatically carry with it an openness to religious difference (185). All of this brings to the fore again the nature of the relationship between religion and politics, and the question as to the true mission of religion (187ff; see 40, 140ff).

The book is well written, and has a wealth of survey data to illustrate and support the arguments Cvitković makes. It is informative and thought-provoking, and deserves a wide audience.

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