

MUNICH, 19 February 1968 (CAA) -- Under the title "Farewell To Dr. Janez Pacuka -- Matija Beckovic Answers M. Protic," the Belgrade weekly Svet of January 27 published a letter to the readers by Matija Beckovic, 27. Beckovic [Bech-ko-vich] in July 1967 courageously raised his voice against the leaders of the Belgrade TV and Radio stations, accusing them of treating him unjustly. Beckovic ridiculed the claim made that he and two of his friends were CIA agents. After two Serbian authors, B. Crncevic [tsrn-che-vich] and D. Radovic were accused of making TV programs following CIA instructions, Beckovic said: "I consider the programs that Crncevic and Radovic have presented on TV to have been high points. If what is being said about the CIA is really true, then I propose that this efficient service be engaged again for our TV programs so that we can see something good..."² Miodrag Protic is a dogmatically-minded Serbian author with Zhdanovite ideas.

Dear readers,

You will not read articles by Dr. Janez Pacuka in this column any more. This is the last one.

Dr. Janez Pacuka does not exist. I chose this pseudonym because of those who were annoyed by my real name.

Under my full name I am saying good-bye to my column and to my pseudonym.

This decision was prompted by a contribution in Belgrade Radio Cultural News Broadcast on January 23, which also dealt with this column. The full text of that contribution can be read on this page. Its author is editor of Belgrade Radio, Miodrag Protic.

I am not doing this because of Miodrag Protic, but because of those who enabled him to judge me and literature from such a place, in such a broadcast, from such positions, with such arguments, and at this moment, and with such freedom.

It is unbelievable that similar obsolete, defeated, condemned and ridiculed views of literature and art are presented as the official attitude of Belgrade Radio.

I withdraw in face of that fact.

Miodrag Protic is not guilty. He has betrayed, insulted, accused and dishonoured literature many times, because it seemed to him, when frightened, that he would thus prove his loyalty. Those who had accepted him took full responsibility for stupidity of that humbleness. They are to blame.

When I was still a child, Miodrag Protic had troubles because of political attitudes for which he is accusing me today. I am innocent even today, and Miodrag Protic is seeking refuge from his own memory and remorse. To save his soul he is sacrificing me.

Miodrag Protic wrote and told millions of listeners: "Beckovic himself sticks to an experience which sees all the evil of this world in living revolutionaries."

Miodrag Protic lies. I did not write what he alleged I did. Belgrade Radio announced his lie to its audience and I retreat

¹ See RFE Research paper "Serbian Poet Settles Accounts With Leaders of Belgrade TV and Radio," 26 July 1967, by s.s.

² Knjizevne novine, Belgrade, 22 July 1967.

before this kind of support of lie and slander.

Miodrag Protic has to date condemned works by many writers, starting with Jovan Skerlic, through Dane Zajc to Aleksandar Popovic, for serious political crimes against the State and the nation. Anonymous, untalented, and insignificant Miodrag Protic is enabled to slander values which will outlive him and his backbiting.

Many writers have been executed on the small guillotine which Miodrag Protic cultivates in the Belgrade Radio daily news broadcast by his blind fear not to be mistaken, the fear which must compromise every freedom.

I do not court my society out of fear and servility. I am not frightened. I am not afraid of expressing doubts, I am not afraid of asking, I am not afraid of not knowing something and of not understanding. I am a poet.

Miodrag Protic's fear should not venture to judge freedom of others.

The whole world literature abounds in questions, dilemmas, doubts, indecisions, the tragic nature of human existence. Thoughts which Miodrag Protic quotes from my article are mere commonplace of all meditations which deal with revolutions, ideals, heroes, sacrifice, and true sense of struggle. Had he opened any book, or any page, from Homer to Oskar Davico, he would have read what he found so disgusting in my article.

There is no really good book which can be described as politically good by the shameful, vulgar, illiterate, policing, mediaeval standards used by Miodrag Protic. Mere existence of Miodrag Protic is reason for being a pessimist and for writing tragic books.

Miodrag Protic is a metaphor. For many thousand years mankind has been fighting against similar persons.

A Miodrag Protic exiled Ovid to a desolate island, sent Petar Kocic into an asylum, dismissed Djura Jaksic from service, liquidated Pilnak and Babel, shot a bullet through Mayakovsky's head, hanged Branko Miljkovic, and arrested Theodorakis.

In face of this kind of curriculum vitae of miodrag protic and in face of the support given to him, Janez Pacuka is withdrawing to save the soul of Matija Beckovic.

Thank you.

Matija Beckovic

(MORE)

M. PROTIC ON THE PLAY "CHE GUEVARA"

(Svet, Saturday, January 27, p.20, c.1)
 Belgrade Radio, in the daily news broadcast of January 23, 1968,
 announced a review by M. Protic of excerpts from the play "Che
 Guevara" which have been published.

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In tzarist Russia the regime had a famous aphorism -
 "A revolutionary is good only when dead." When we know what a fear
 revolutionaries aroused among the supporters of the regime, we
 should see in the quoted sentence an expression of bitter
 experience of the latter. Matija Beckovic with his article in
 the latest issue of Svet reminded us of that old aphorism. In
 the column whose editor he is under the name of Dr. Janez Pacuka,
 this time he wrote about dead and alive revolutionaries, leaving
 no possibility to doubt that, in his opinion, only the dead
 are good. According to Matija Beckovic, this is so because
 dead revolutionaries have remained faithful to their ideals
 while the alive revolutionaries have betrayed them. The article
 deals with Che Guevara, but this was only an incentive for
 producing a thesis that a revolutionary deserves respect only if
 he does not live long enough to see the victory of the revolution.
 M. Beckovic called the text an excerpt of the drama, but, judging
 the article itself, it is only an ordinary newspaper article;
 if it really were a play, whose characters and viewpoints cannot be
 shown in an excerpt but only in the whole work, it is nevertheless
 characteristic that Beckovic chose for his column in the newspaper
 a text which ascribes total defeatism to a guerrilla comrade of
 Che Guevara. Che's companion addresses Che's executioner: "You
 did not allow him to live long enough to see freedom which has
 disillusioned many fighters for freedom." In a long monologue
 Matija Beckovic, as a matter of fact, lends his own words and
 thoughts to that companion of Che Guevara: "Only those who
 are dead now really fought for their people. Those who are
 living - fight for themselves, too. The guerrilla said to
 Guevara's executioner: "You knew that it was not worthy of a hero
 to survive. Thank you for killing him. Thank you for not allowing
 him to sell his honour cheaply." Beckovic adds to this rhetoric the
 philosophy: "Life is an animal category. It has compromised
 all the ideals, it has corrupted all the ideas, it has betrayed
 every single aim. Many heroes who outlived their heroic deeds
 succumbed to life."

There are revolutionaries who have "succumbed to life",
 as the author points out, but can it be a reason for asserting
 that life is simply an animal category? In the name of what
 moral principle has Matija Beckovic, contrary to the highest
 ethic obligation that revolutionaries should constantly provide
 more evidence of their revolutionary spirit, - and a majority

(PTO)

of revolutionaries does it really - appeared with his general disqualification ?

These ideas, very dismal in essence, are not, however, Beckovic's discovery. On the eve of General Franco's rebellion against the Spanish Republican Government, a follower of him shouted: " Long live death ". Many people only saw an unusual paradox in these words, but a great Spanish philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno, an aged man at that time, noticed that the slogan sounded morbid and forewarn that it meant the eclipse of humanism which has had a long tradition in Spanish culture. Who would have said that after more than thirty years our writer would give us a similar example of eclipse ?

Many are inclined to see mere eccentricity in Matija Beckovic's articles; but this eccentricity has its moral and ideological points. The point in this article is clear: revolutionaries should die as soon as possible; they are good only when dead. In the latest contribution to his regular column Matija Beckovic presented a thesis against human experience from a standpoint which can only be named as agnosticism, and which is, according to that, not only opposite to the spirit of socialism but is also opposite to that of entire modern science: according to him, experience is only a burden ; it is only harmful, instead of being useful. In this most recent article, however, Beckovic, in turn, associates himself with an experience, the experience according to which all the evil of this world is derived from living revolutionaries.