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Review article

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Culture cannot be inherited, it must be conquered.

André Malraux

Problems of the Bosnian society in new millennium

When discussing the character and position of a specific society, it is necessary to explore its cultural context, which consists of elements that when examined, can help explain in a deeper way how members of that society understand their roles and positions. In the context of the various modern global crises, the crisis of culture should be discussed as a repressed matrix that reflects the deep causes of the overall crisis in the world. The question to be asked before the specific analysis of the Bosnian context for cultural research is: whether the concept of culture in the postmodern world corresponds with the theoretical determined essential determinants of the term 'culture', which may have plural forms but retains the basic meaning: conceptualization of human lifestyle, humanization and emancipation of human existence.¹ The other question that needs to be addressed is how understand how constant and rapid global changes are reflected in Bosnian society, from the aspect of culture. In many spheres patriarchal, and under a complex political arrangement, the Bosnian society encountered the task of accepting the accelerated process of development, in which it is difficult to reconcile the "spirit of a small place"² with the immediate development of the postmodern society today. Thus, Bosnia and Herzegovina has also found, and is still located in multiple confusion, under the pressure of the need to move in a different - and still for many completely unknown - way, as evidenced by today's political, social, cultural and economic situation in our society.

If we add to this the significant presence of the authoritarian syndrome in the mechanisms of life management, in interpersonal relations, culture of communication, everyday life and the relationship of the individual towards society and the state (from which respect for human rights is required), but individuals renounce their own responsibility and duty in this transformation of an old authoritarian society into a modern and democratic one³, one can more clearly understand that Bosnia and Herzegovina has been going astray for a long time. This is the result of the lack of transformation in the broader framework of the socio-political system, which has had a strong impact on the field of culture and cultural life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1 Golubović, Zagorka (2011), *Kako kalimo demokratiju – šta nismo naučili.* (How we temper democracy - what we haven't learned), (Belgrade: Albatros Plus) p. 162.

2 See more in: Konstantinović, Radomir (1981), *Filozofija palanke* (Small place philosophy), (Belgrade: Nolit)

3 David, Filip (1997). *Jesmo li čudovišta* (Are we monsters), (Sarajevo: Bosanska knjiga)

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One of the most serious problems when it comes to culture is its politicization, which is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, serves as an integrator of concrete, collective, ethnic and religious identity. The politicization of culture aims to achieve the integration of “members” and their separation from “non-members”. It is important to emphasize that precisely such an understanding of culture negates the reality, which warns that members of the same ethnic group can have different cultural characteristics, needs and tastes, even if they live in different environments and under different cultural, economic and social conditions. In this way, the original meaning of culture and its fundamental meaning are impoverished, and on this basis, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues the policy of inter-ethnic confrontations and cultural ghettoization.

While the alleged cosmopolitanism and openness is “proved” through the encouragement of mass culture, more specifically its kitsch and junk elements, the alleged ethnic identity is created and strengthened through the foregrounding of traditional and folkloric content. Since the concept of culture, in this context, is reduced to the concept of ‘cultural industry’ or ‘industrial culture’, defined as a culture of easy non-committal entertainment, forcing imitations and reproductions within the mass spectacles of ‘turbo-folk culture’⁴, suppressing ‘high culture’ in the so-called intellectual ghetto and everything under the slogan ‘let’s get crazy’ - there is no doubt that one of the most important elements of culture, its humanizing aspect as Marcuse’s “second human nature” is being lost. Because of this, the consequences are a dominant and extremely low level of political culture, and culture in general, which is reflected in the devastation and poverty of language and expression, in the disobedience to elementary rules of behavior in everyday life, but also in the lack and decline of quality when it comes to different cultural content and cultural manifestations.

In this regard, many relevant aspects of the social life of individuals, not to mention the hidden private sphere, many aspects of social interaction which cannot be reduced only to institutionalized forms, many aspects of everyday life which make up the real, concrete life of every citizen have so far been rather neglected by researchers, although they form an indispensable part of the analysis of cultural life and social relations.

“For most people, everyday life is life,” Agnes Heller once wrote. Therefore, it is necessary to provide at least a partial contribution to the rare cultural research on what takes place in everyday life, even if it is an incomplete analysis of the way or quality of life in order to “descend” to the level of practical reality itself, which provides a much more realistic picture of the real life conditions of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina than the institutional and structural-dynamic results

⁴ Golubović, Zagorka (2011). Kako kalimo demokratiju – šta nismo naučili. (How we temper democracy - what we haven’t learned) (Belgrade: Albatros Plus)

other analyses provide. In other words, according to Abdulah Šarčević⁵, it is not possible to separate the meaning of culture, humanity and everything that exists in it: that which surpasses the system of self-preservation of the human race, which represents a critical moment against the ruling, managed world and its institutions - it is not possible to separate it from the conscious and free shaping and directing human affairs. If, on the other hand, culture is neutralized in the system of cultural goods, if it becomes independent against the social ties of life, then it is disguised as a lie and untruth. According to Šarčević, the separation of “spiritual” culture from real life relationships and possible practice, the independence of the spirit against society, is the reality of the contemporary historical-civic survival of civilization.

Although everyday life is the level at which the “average” needs and capabilities of the members of a society are manifested, that does not mean that this level, in terms of dynamic potential, is at a lower level than the institutional level. Moreover, innovations and changes always begin in informal spheres, and in that area, those forms and contents of human activities that are limited at the institutional level, have a greater possibility to appear. That is why cultural research into everyday life reveals what is not institutionally accepted or integrated into the social system. A greater diversity can be discovered than that proposed by the social system model, since the analysis at that general level reveals, first of all, structures and moves away from the everyday and the individual within which “real life” takes place.

Furthermore, the problem of Bosnian society in the new millennium, is reflected even more in the general hiding behind the simulation of the so-called modernization of society and accepting from the postmodern concept of culture its most superficial and banal aspects. In doing so, it is evident that those challenges in culture that could lead to major changes in society are avoided, along with the re-examination and revaluation of the basic principles, meanings and values of cultural policy. In this context, the media and the education segment have the greatest role and responsibility when it comes to the marginalization of culture in the true sense of the word.

According to Paić’s criticism of culture in Croatia, we will easily find similarities with the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina society:

“As every form of estradization of culture necessarily acquires its own theatrical caricature, the genre of farce is no longer an appropriate name for what has already happened. Why talk about it anymore when the scandal in its media obsolescence is something seemingly unimportant. Isn’t the real problem in the misery and desperation of survival of the Croatian society, which is irresistibly stratified into a small number of elite new bourgeoisies

5 Šarčević, Abdulah (1981). *Iskustvo i vrijeme* (Experience and time), (Sarajevo: Svjetlost)

and the largest part of the poor on the edge of survival? The paradox is that precisely such a social image requires the continuous production of culture as entertainment for the powerful, rich and empty-headed. The tabloids put both in the same place. Ethical fraud always happens at the end of the year when the same people act in media-sponsored humanitarian circuses. The perversion is total. Culture as a spectacle scene is financed by corporations that make the biggest profits precisely in the countries of Southeast Europe in the telecommunications sector. The media is an inexhaustible source of extra profit because it is a mirror of social differentiation. Poverty is a virtue, but only for Christmas.”⁶

When applying this critical way of thinking to the contemporary moment in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we end in disappointment and disbelief in the possibility of changing the existing situation. The reason for such an answer should be sought in the fact that their approach position and initial assumptions remain limited by the boundaries of the social and political status quo in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Actualization of the position of culture and cultural policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Any cultural policy that strives to be guided by the principles of democratization of culture implies designs and implements cultural actions that aim to enable the greatest number of citizens to satisfy their individual cultural needs. The state, as the bearer of such a cultural policy, enacts laws, establishes institutions, and introduces planning and programming methods of cultural guidance, which not only make cultural content easily available, but at the same time influence the formation of awareness and behavior of potential consumers through their content. The ways of creation and development of cultural needs, i.e. the socialization/’culturalisation’ of personality, most reliably reveal how the political system perceives man, i.e. how this perception is politically imposed on him. Through the social process of forming and satisfying the needs and tastes of citizens, the inseparable relationship between the individual and the state is established. According to Throsby, social circumstances at the economic and cultural level determine the type and extent of needs, and create the taste of citizens, and such a trend affects the continuous development of a social system.⁷

6 Paić, Žarko (2011). „Poredak lakrdije” (“The order of farce”), ZAREZ. dvojtjednik za kulturna i društvena dešavanja, (ZAREZ. magazine for cultural and social events), January 8, 2., 9., XI, no. 247/8, . pp. 8-9

7 Throsby, David (2012). *Ekonomika kulturne politike* (Economics of cultural policy), (Belgrade: CLIO), p. 90

Throsby believes that the creation of cultural needs and tastes is realized in the name of a planned goal, which is again understood as a space of endless and accessible cultural needs. The political parties in power in every state, that is, in the group that exercises power on its behalf, glorifies the present, extant value system, its truth and norms as eternal, imposing respect for all that on its citizens.⁸ That is why the research of culture or sociocultural reality of a certain historical time, from the point of view of sociology of culture and political history, is inseparable from the study of all economic, social, institutional, sociological and psychological, but also political aspects.

The problems within Bosnia and Herzegovina's society are a good example of the consequences of not being able to manage the various tendencies that characterize contemporary processes in culture. Difficulties will not be found only in the complicated political organization of the state, different ideological burdens or different political preferences. They will also be found in dealing with the consequences of the war, the poverty of a large number of the citizens, economic and cultural backwardness, illiteracy, and the fear of the 'other' and the 'different,' all of which further complicate the not-at-all simple cultural context. Most of the culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily the commercial segments of culture, create an atmosphere without permanent cultural meaning and without the development of cultural awareness.⁹ This kind of atmosphere, artificially induced and artificially maintained, blurs and devalues authentic cultural values, and without spiritual risk and creative responsibility, appears as the cultural horizon of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The war and post-war years were marked by a kind of "cultural cataclysm", whose dimensions and long-term catastrophic consequences should still be seriously examined and researched. Various analyses and researches that have been conducted mainly included, first of all, the political and economic crisis, war events and social implications, while the collapse of the cultural system and its values was neglected. It is characteristic that many 'analysts' have closed themselves in their national frameworks, and because of this, the true extent of the loss of the cultural capital of the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be observed.

⁸ Manipulation in the formation of needs and tastes in socialist countries was more noticeable and harmless than the manipulation of needs and tastes in highly developed capitalist countries. According to B. Doknić, socialism, due to its low economic power, was forced to dose the amount of needs (both cultural and other) that left the individual room to agree or disagree with them. Capitalism, in contrast, due to its economic supremacy, expanded the number of needs, creating a consumer personality, which was again the ideal of every average socialist citizen (B. Doknić 2013: 173)

⁹ Bakić, Sarina (2013). *Kulturna politika u Bosni i Hercegovini - Mjesto susreta države i kulture*, Sarajevski žurnal za društvena pitanja (Cultural policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Meeting place of state and culture, Sarajevo Social Science Review), Volume II, Issue 1, Spring/Summer 2013, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo

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Although in a broader context, the entire region of the former Yugoslavia was marked as a “field of general crisis,”¹⁰ it is not correct to say that the crisis of huge proportions, which is still ongoing in the entire region, was dealt with in the same way. What is at stake are the differences in its character and depth, especially the transformation and preservation of the cultural system of each individual society.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country characterized by the destruction of the entire institutional cultural system, and the current socio-political situation in which the country is, still does not provide the possibility of creating a truly new cultural concept and cultural policy. As a country in transition, Bosnia and Herzegovina was ‘forced’ to implement a large number of systemic changes relatively quickly, but it still lacks the mechanisms and personnel capacity to monitor the implementation of various measures and predict concrete results. Particularly aggravating circumstances stem from the fact that the social consequences of these changes are very negative (high unemployment rate, social marginalization of once respected individuals and groups, increase in pathological social behavior), and it is important to emphasize that the measures are implemented by an economically underdeveloped state. However, it is not only political and economic factors which serve as the reasons for the impossibility of introducing new concepts to cultural policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Essential problems arise from the fact that simultaneously, with the cessation of state influence on culture within the former SFRY¹¹, state concern for culture also ceased, so that cultural institutions and cultural workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina were directed to a market that in fact still does not exist, and that the audience’s interest in culture decreased, and in some cases it completely disappeared. In other words, it is a “crisis in cultural subsystems in post-socialist countries”¹², where “the privileged cultural subsystem [had] lost its position and was essentially questionable”. In the previous system, it primarily fulfilled the ideological and legitimizing task, and that is precisely why in certain countries, its sustainability as a segment of the primarily public sector was seriously questioned.¹³

In the specific context of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s contemporary cultural policy, one of the most transparent ‘issues’ in its creation is the issues posed by the interference of the public sector and the results of public sector policies. Most often, this refers to unprofessional administration, the creation of development poli-

10 Dragičević Sešić, Milena; Stojković, Branimir (2007). *Kultura – Menadžment, marketing, animacija* (Culture – Management, marketing, animation); fifth amended and supplemented edition, (Belgrade: Clio)

11 Cultural policy in that period represented a very diverse and branched system of planned actions and intentions for stimulating, directing and coordinating a huge spiritual and material cultural space, with complete subordination to the factor of political management (Doknić 2013: p 315).

12 Dragičević Sešić, Milena; Stojković, Branimir (2007). *Kultura – Menadžment, marketing, animacija*, p. 25

13 Ibid

cies that exclude culture and cultural workers, the introduction of a liberal model of cultural policy, which most often leads to inadequate privatization and weak coordination between subjects in culture (that is, inconsistency in activities and actions).¹⁴ This problem also arises when talking about the position of cultural institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their social role, and it is reinforced by insufficient emphasis on personnel development, which inevitably leads to unprofessionalism. This develops as a consequence of a lack of knowledge, especially in relation to the requirements and trends of the European and world market and new relations in culture. Furthermore, the underdevelopment of mutual relations and cooperation between the public, private and civil sectors is very significant, which is also interpreted as a consequence of the underdevelopment of civil society. This usually implies non-transparent and unequal conditions of existence of all cultural institutions, absence of mutual dialogue and a ‘dialogue culture’ as well as the absence of public control of cultural policy. At the same time, this kind of situation makes the development of cultural entrepreneurship (of any type) very difficult. Practically, this means that, as noted by Sešić and Stojković: “until there is a change in the socio-economic and political culture - which refers to the totality of values, beliefs, ways of behaving - there can be no creation of new formats in certain sectors, no strengthening of the civil and private sectors for which is necessary to introduce new values of entrepreneurial culture (taking risks, mobility, innovation, competitiveness, attitude towards money and wealth).”¹⁵ What is not only characteristic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but is very visible elsewhere, is the crisis in the cultural market itself, which occurred due to the lack of interest by the potential audience, which is faced with (in the context of the entertainment market and mass culture in general) the offerings of the wider world, which resulted in large oscillations in the domain of taste and artistic and aesthetic values and criteria. The lack or absence of interest in cultural goods and cultural content, especially when it comes to smaller communities, further deepens the crisis of cultural institutions and organizations, and cultural policy as a whole.

In the planning of every cultural policy, including the one in Bosnia and Herzegovina, all social, political and ideological contradictions emerge to obstruct each other. The goals of social development and political struggles are reflected, the overall position of freedom and creativity of each individual is reflected, and everyday life is reflected in many aspects. Each government creates its own cultural policy, through which it ensures the flow of its political orientation, directing culture financially, politically and ideologically. Such a cultural policy starts from

14 Bakić, Sarina (2013). *Kulturna politika u Bosni i Hercegovini - Mjesto susreta države i culture*, ibid

15 Dragičević Sešić, Milena; Stojković, Branimir (2007). *Kultura – Menadžment, marketing, animacija*, p. 24

the interests of one class, which inevitably leads to the narrowing of some aspects of cultural activity in favor of others.

In this regard, we will agree with Lepenies when he says that cultural policy is formed at the border of politics and culture and their influence is mutual on the entirety of social life. Through its ideological-political apparatus, the state “introduces culture as a politically and educationally desirable content from the outside into the living and working environment and fully decides on every percentage of material expenditures for culture”¹⁶. Culture, thus becomes an unavoidable factor in the transformation and direction of the entire society, planned within the framework of cultural policy, which serves as a management system for a specific cultural area. Cultural policy, as a conscious and planned intervention of the state (in Bosnian society it is mainly the intervention of entities and cantons), becomes an extremely important part of comprehensive political leadership. In this way, politically defined cultural policy ensures the complete stabilization of the political reality, where culture completely serves to preserve and justify the existing state.

This model of cultural policy with the concentration of economic, ideological and political power in the hands of the cultural-political apparatus, but without a clearly defined program, creates an ideologically suitable culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a result of the dominant role of party ideologies, affects overall cultural events and prevents free and independent cultural and artistic creation. In other words, “the great paradox of ‘cultural survival’” is that only free individuals can use their imagination to keep a culture alive, expand its horizons, participate on its behalf in dialogue and cultural interactions.” A culture without free individuals, without recognized individuals at all, is a chimera, a “‘fossil’ ripe for archiving and preservation”¹⁷.

On the other hand, if we look at the problem and the place of culture from the neoliberal position, it is shown that “culture loses its exceptionality again and becomes more and more only one of the sectors of the market and consumption, entertainment and restraint, and not a real ascent of the spirit.”¹⁸ These authors point out that this situation affects the status of the new norm of public policies, including cultural ones, in the context of the accelerated globalization of economies and societies.¹⁹ As a matter of fact, the 20th century was marked by the affirmation of cultural policies at national levels. Contrary to that, the national

16 Lepenies, Wolf (2009). *Kultura i politika (Culture and politics)*, (Belgrade: Geopolitika), p. 54

17 Mujkić, Asim (2007). *Mi građani etnopolisa (We the citizens of ethnopolis)*, (Sarajevo: TKD Šahinpašić), p. 109

18 Bonet, Lluís, Emmanuel, Negrier (2007). *La politique culturelle en Espagne*, (Paris: Karthala), p. 123

19 Ibid

character of cultural policies²⁰, as they were previously created and developed, is being questioned today. The relationship between culture, globalization and public policies has provoked an interdisciplinary discussion²¹ about the nature of the ongoing changes: what is globalization from the standpoint of cultural policies? Does it represent a “Trojan horse” of market standardization or a new approach to politics and identity issues in general? In other words, contemporary cultural production basically appears as commodity production in the sphere of spirit, regulated by supply and demand, which is not only directed by economic but also political means. The concern of culture is no longer the creation of a ‘new man’, but the creation of special consumer of a special kind of goods - cultural products. What should be of particular concern is that the nature of that dominant culture remains beyond serious criticism, which, if it does appear, does not find valid footholds and foundations, but remains in the position of criticism. The crisis of critical culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina society, which once had European and even global reach, has led to the fact that today, as Filip David claims, “the real silence follows great and fateful changes in the entire sphere of spirit, education, cultural and artistic life.”²²

Furthermore, apologists for neoliberalism and mass culture usually point out as an argument that there is an objective mood of the masses that seeks and demands this kind of culture, from which comes the popularization of culture and its democratization, followed by its ‘confusion’ with leisure and pure entertainment. “It is said that the standards originally arose from the needs of consumers: therefore, supposedly, they are accepted without resistance”²³. However, at the base of such a point of view, lies the assumption that the masses, whose mood speaks for the need for a mass consumption of culture, for the “devouring consumption

20 In the analysis of the so-called “the end of national cultures” Bonet and Negrier contrast two positions. The first assumption speaks of the end of a historical cycle in which the states in most large sectors of public policy, and therefore cultural, had a central place in defining, implementing and managing the sources of public participation. In the second assumption, we are talking about defining a new character of state participation in such an environment that actually deprives the state of the power it had before. In this way, the “end” can be understood in two ways: as the result of a historical role and as the end of public intervention/participation in the broadest sense, i.e. as the emergence of new paradigms of public policies, including cultural policy, which face the issue of cultural diversity (Bonet, Emmanuel 2007: 132–133). It can be concluded that Bonet and Negrier consider the “end of national cultures” as a challenge for cultural policy, a challenge to adapt to the pluralism of cultural practices, cultural expressions, which today mark the world in which we live.

21 Bonet, Lluís, Emmanuel, Negrier (2007). *La politique culturelle en Espagne*, p. 131

22 David, Filip (1997). *Jesmo li čudovišta, (Are we monsters)* (Sarajevo: Bosanska knjiga)

23 Horkheimer, M., Adorno, Theodor W. (1974). *Dijalektika prosvjetiteljstva, Filozofijski fragmenti (Dialectic of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments)*, (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša), p. 127

of gigantic proportions”²⁴ for mass consumption of art, styles, history, entertainment, that is, culture as a whole - are something that exists by itself. Numerous sociological studies on taste, for example in the United States of America and Israel²⁵, note that the neoliberal concept of mass culture is constantly imposed, whilst justifying popular culture, and such considerations are spreading to Europe, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, what is neglected, and needs to be emphasized, is that culture and reflections on the state of culture should still be seen in the context of a specific society.

Instead of a conclusion

The search for the new, however, requires a lot of deprivation and renunciation, which often cannot be achieved, even with the best will and best intentions, first, in the field of culture, by rejecting a priori adherence to the concepts of culture from which it follows that man is a “creature” of culture and its eternal objectifications. Instead, to begin with, we should ask ourselves again what culture is, and in what relation it stands today to man as its sole creator. We should also ask ourselves what are the factors and the social and historical situations in our society that lead to the fact that today’s culture, appears to man as a world of ideal objectifications, opposed to his real life and independent of it? Why is it that most people simply do not understand and do not seek to understand these cultural objectifications? Is it a natural state, immanent in today’s mass culture as the “absolute” of the human world, or is it the result of social relations and the democratization of culture as a whole? The democratization of education, the media, culture and the democratization of the public as a leitmotif of a large number of researches in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently dealing with the phase of the complete ‘kitschization’ and ‘clichéization’ of this topic, and such research can rarely give immanent answers since they do not start concretely with the aim expressing the experience of their own environment, thus bringing the richness of an environment, a cultural environment and immediate experience. In an attempt to remove such doubts, in the end, I believe that culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of all possible angles of observation, has remained marginalized, reduced to a bare minimum to which, eventually, some codes of practice are added, or on the other hand, it is left to a free journalistic and populist treatment without any criteria, let alone real criteria, both in considering its role in society, as well as the reception and understanding of its contents and cultural practices.

24 Lefebvre, Henri (1988). *Kritika svakidašnjeg života*, (Criticism of everyday life) (Zagreb: Naprijed)

25 Hughes, Michael, Peterson Richard, A. (1983). “Isolating Cultural Choice Patterns in the US Population”, *American Behavioral Scientists*, 26, (459–487); Yaish, Meir; Katz-Gerro, Tally (2008). “Cultural Capital: Between Taste and Participation”, *Consumers, Commodities and Consumption*, Vol. 9, No. 2, University of Haifa.

What should Bosnia and Herzegovina's cultural policy be today? It is more than evident (looking at different 'attempts' at cultural policy and cultural development strategies) that culture is officially understood exclusively through the prism of its institutional aspect as a kind of regulation of the relationship between cultural institutions and the state, that is, entities and cantons. Furthermore, even when we understand culture in only a narrow sense, exclusively in the context of art, even then it is not about the improvement of artistic creativity and results in the field of art, but about the institutional organization of artistic associations and the regulation of rights from artistic activities. The subordination of artistic activities to political influences and decision-making is striking, whether it is about management positions in cultural institutions, the allocation of financial resources for various cultural projects. This control is further revealed in examining the authority of the ministry's authorities in the composition of various commissions and councils, which create and approve programs and projects of cultural and artistic contents. From this comes the conclusion that there is no will or interest to improve the cultural and artistic situation in the form of a coherent program to encourage the democratic development of Bosnian society (which is urgent), given the fact that growing populism threatens to destroy even further the universal postulates and values on which cultural societies are based. These are ethical and humanistic principles without which one cannot distinguish and separate non-culture from culture.

For these specific reasons and explanations, it is important to re-introduce concepts such as value systems, tastes, cultural needs, ideas, imagination, vision, and a kind of desire and will to release 'hidden' possibilities by critically thinking and questioning what has been done, in order to overcome and change. Without these dimensions of general meaning, understanding and reception of culture, the world of our citizens (and man in general) becomes impoverished and cannot become either more humane, or more civilized.

The current global political and economic crisis means we should increasingly favor such reflections, but we still hear one-way demands when it comes to changing the situation (exclusive economic, profitable discourse), while not realizing that those are only partial solutions and partial ideas that will not be able to lead to the solution of one of the most difficult world crises in the history of mankind. In other words, even in the changed rhetoric of the main factors of the crisis, both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond, the word culture is not mentioned.

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BOSNIA  N
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ADNAN DŽAFIĆ

**NEZIR KRČALO

Dialogue – Coupling of Nations

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Summary

As members of various social groups, we regularly practice communication and we confidently think that as human beings, we have an inherent ability to communicate in language. However, communication too often fails us: incomprehension and misunderstandings are present in all of life's situations, in all aspects of the life of an individual, but also of the social community. It seems that we talk a lot, but talk to each other little, or not at all - so it's becoming more obvious that we need serious help to master the art of talking/negotiation and discussion.

Formal linguists consider language a mirror of the mind, and it should be described independently of its use in communication. Language serves to express thoughts, and every human being has an innate ability to acquire language. The basic function of language is not only communication, but to equally and freely express thoughts. Functional approaches however, focus on communication as one of the most important functions of language in society, and meaning plays a major role in this. In this approach, the expediency of language activity is highlighted. Language is not a mirror of the mind, but a tool with which we communicate, so language structures can be described from the point of view of the functions they have in language. Within the functional paradigm, language is conceptualized as an instrument of social action between human beings, and it is used with the intention of establishing a communicative relationship.¹

Keywords: Dialogue, Speech, Comprehension, Coupling, Culture, Society

Speech - the link between things and language

Human speech can be observed from the point of view of the speaker - which is the expression. For the one to whom it is communicated - it is the message, and viewed from the aspect of the thing in question - it is the meaning of the thing. Meaningful speech is the one that has some meaning, and its truthfulness is reflected in the agreement of the speech with what is being talked about, i.e. "things". Therefore, Plato insisted, if things already have names, that they should be named by the wisest people, because the name carries the meaning of the thing. If we want to bring matter, thought and language into a correct and understandable relationship, it is a condition that things are properly named. A wrongly named thing results in wrong contents of consciousness and misunderstanding among people.

¹ Borucinsky, Mirjana, Sandra Tominac Coslovich, Formalno i funkcionalno u jeziku (Formal and functional in language), FLUMINENSIA, year 27 (2015), no. 2, p. 11-29

According to Focht, the word connects the being of the soul with the being of things.² In mythical thought, there was an indisputable unity of words and things. Only later did the thing as a thing lose its power, and the word became a sign. The space between things and language belongs to speech, which can be a "connector" or a "divider" between things and language. According to Ricoeur, Aristotle uses the term *symbolon* to denote the expressive power of consonant sounds to express the state of the soul prompted by cognition.³ This means, if the soul is capable of knowing the (symbolic) language of things, then the task of speech is to express the state of these things in language. Ultimately, speech reveals or conceals a multiplicity of meanings regarding the state of things.

Clarifying the phenomenon of speech (consonants), Heidegger refers to Aristotle and his work *On Interpretation*, in which the relationship between things, soul, speech and language is explained as follows: "What happens in the production of consonant sounds is the showing of what exists in the soul as passion, and what is written is a display of consonant sounds. And just as all people's handwriting is not the same; the consonant sounds are not the same. On the other hand, what is first shown through them (sounds and handwritings) - are the passions in the soul of all people, and the things - whose likenesses are the passions - are also the same".⁴ The same author concludes that language, like speech, remains hidden, because letters show consonants, consonants show passions in the soul, and passions in the soul - the things that arouse them.

How the essential in language is seen in speech, Humboldt explains as follows: "Conceived in its real essence, language is something permanent and at all times transitory. Even his maintenance by writing is always only incomplete; the mummified preservation that is needed if one tries to sensibly re-present living speech. Language itself is not a work (*ergon*), but an activity (*energeia*). Therefore, his true definition can only be genetic. Language is the eternally repeated work of the spirit, in order to prepare the articulate consonant to express a thought. Directly and strictly speaking, it is the definition of every speech; but, in a true and essential sense, the totality of that speech can, in a way, be considered a language".⁵

Dialogue as a flow of meaning

The etymology of the Greek word *dialogos* ((διά)λογος) shows that it is a compound word. The word *dia* (διά) means mutual relationship, movement, etc. The

2 Focht, Ivan, (1972), Uvod u estetiku, Sarajevo, Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika (Introduction to Aesthetics, Sarajevo, Institute for Textbook Publishing), p. 115.

3 Ricoeur, Paul (2005), *On Interpretation: An Essay on Freud*, Impressum, Zagreb

4 Hajdeger, Martin (1982). *Mišljenje i pevanje* (Opinion and singing), Belgrade: Nolit., p. 88.

5 Humboldt, V. fon (1988). Uvod u delo o Kavi jeziku i drugi ogledi (Introduction to the work on the Kavi language and other essays), Novi Sad: Dnevnik., p. 114

word *logos* (λόγος) comes from the verb *legein* (λέγειν) (to collect, to gather, to sum, to speak, to say, etc.) and basically has two meanings. One is in the semantic range - word, decision, discourse, evidence, etc. The second meaning concerns the mind, i.e. reason (reasoning, evaluation, presentation, etc.). The term *dialogos* comes from the verb *dialegomai* (διαλέγομαι) which means to think, to judge, to calculate, to discuss, to speak. The key in dialogue for the ancient Greeks was - purpose. Their conversations had two general purposes: the first was truth, if it was a theoretical dialogue, and the second was agreement on the common good.⁶

Whenever one tries to explain the word dialogue etymologically, Heraclitus' thought about the logos in the world that it "neither hides nor reveals" comes to the fore. The term *logos* includes at least two groups of meanings related to mind and speech. The simplest interpretations speak of dialogue as a "conversation between two". That interpretation, however, is too modest, because it in no way shows in what sense the dialogue would then have exclusivity (which is normally attributed to it) in relation to other forms of conversation. "Theoretical dialogue" should be aimed at bringing the interlocutors closer to the truth about the concept around which the dialogue is conducted. Finally, if we want to interpret the word logos in the most comprehensive way, it is necessary to unite the component of speech and the component of mind. The closest to this is Aristotle's understanding of logos as "rational speech", as opposed to "*barbaros*" (chatter).⁷

If we take into account the different aspects of dialogue and the linguistic means inherent in some of those aspects, then we can talk about dialogic types. Thus, in the first type of dialogue, the one that concerns the relationship between the participants of the speech event, emotional or volitional moments are often emphasized. The most extreme type of such dialogue is a quarrel, as a dialogue that is characteristic of less cultivated societies and environments. Another type of dialogue, in which the attachment of the interlocutor to the situation in question is in the foreground, is represented by various "working conversations". Such conversations, if they do not turn into discussions, are devoid of stronger emotional coloring and tension between the interlocutors because they are more focused on the situation itself rather than on the mutual relationship between the participants of the speech-act. The third type of dialogue, related to the permeation or changing of contexts, is based on reinforced meanings, and is neither personal (like the first type) nor situational (like the second type). The ultimate form of such dialogue is the one in which the play of meanings is insisted upon, on paying special attention to the dialogue itself. This type of conversation is characteristic of dialogue which is to some extent a purpose to itself, which is devoid of imme-

6 Laušević, S. „Dijalog o dijalogu“ (Dialogue on dialogue), (in) Mala čitanka o dijalogu (A small reader on dialogue), Nansen Dialogue Centre, Podgorica, 2005., p. 10.

7 Lojančić, G. „www.dijalog.com“ (in) Mala čitanka o dijalogu (A small reader on dialogue), Nansen Dialogue Centre, Podgorica, 2005., p. 78.

diate usefulness, which represents a cultural achievement, in which people often speak for the sake of speaking, for people to socialize with each other, respect each other, play, have fun, etc.⁸

We consider the thought about the inherent dialogic nature of every text to be worth mentioning. Dialogicity is confirmed in situations in which there is a speaker and an interlocutor (or more of them), i.e. at least two interlocutors (voices). Implicit dialogicity is a property of every text, even one that is a monologue in a strictly formal sense - all of these are messages addressed to real or imagined recipients. Thought is by its nature dialogical, and monologue is only a conventionalized form of its expression. Finally, each text establishes relations with other, already written texts (intertextuality).

Furthermore, the attempt to define the term 'dialogue' is based on theoretical reflections on the nature and functioning of language. For David Bohm, dialogue is communication that acquires some special, higher qualities. In dialogue, "two people do something together, i.e. together they create something new".⁹ Dialogue, emphasizes Bohm, is "the flow of meaning through us and between us, which enables the flow of meaning in the entire group, and from which a new understanding can emerge."¹⁰ The main value of the dialogue is the creation of new meaning, which means that the participants of the dialogue are ultimately enriched with some new values and new knowledge. Important differences between dialogue and communication as a broader concept are recognized in these qualities.

According to M. Bahtin, every statement is built between two socially organized people, and if there is no real interlocutor, then he/she is assumed in the person of a normal representative of the social group to which the speaker belongs. Each word is therefore addressed to the interlocutor, the word is essentially a bilateral act or, metaphorically speaking, it is a bridge built between me and the other; if he leans on me with one side, he leans on the interlocutor with the other side. Finally, the real unit of language-speech is not an isolated monologue statement, but an interaction of at least two statements, i.e. dialogue.¹¹

Spiritual stages of dialogue

The world is becoming increasingly complex, and the potential for misunderstanding of one another increases with this complexity. We will need something more than simple conversation to live in harmony with each other. This harmony

8 Badurina, Lada, Ivo Pranjković (2014), O dijalogu, Sarajevski filološki susreti II: Zbornik radova, knjiga I (About dialogue, Sarajevo philological meetings II: Proceedings, book I), p. 216-226.

9 Bohm, David (2009), O dijalogu (On dialogue), Zagreb: Foundation Jesen-ski i Turk., p. 23.

10 Bohm, David (2009), Ibid, p.28

11 Badurina, Lada, Ivo Pranjković, Ibid, p. 222.

would have to include not only the human but also the natural world, that is, the mutual improvement of the relationship between man and the earth, if we want to survive in the future. Now is the time for a new conversation, intentional and skillful, that will take place between individuals and communities, across sectors, across gender, race and religion; and even between species.

Like spirituality, dialogue has its stages of development. Most often, we communicate in ways that reflect the fragmentation that characterizes the world. In this world, where the individual is dominant and competition is the driving force, there is little cooperation. People tend not to listen to each other, so there is not much mutual understanding. Instead we operate according to mental models that we have developed from our inherited assumptions and values: models of what things mean and what people should be like. There is little creativity at this level. However, once we engage in the intention to act differently, a process begins that can lead to the building of trust and the development of new attitudes and values that can be the foundation for a different way of being together. When we do this, we create from the spiritual world a real world that is created from these new attitudes and values within which we can begin to communicate more positively. When we add skills like listening and inquiry, the dynamic can change almost immediately. If we discipline ourselves in this practice, we can reach deeper and richer stages of encounter. Over time, we learn to build together from a common consciousness, overcoming our differences, however great, to participate in the emergence of a new meaning that belongs to all of us. Finally, we reach a place where we have become fully present to each other in an experience of unity that continues and allows us even to enrich our differences.

Finally, when dialogue takes place, the participants themselves experience transformation. This happens because one's opinion or open attitude is expressed and explored at a level that makes it real, even against another who has a similar attitude. When this happens – to the extent that it happens – these fundamental, internal relationships are also transformed and attention is thus focused on them. Levels of reality actually happen in dialogue: first, something new is born as an idea or a relationship; second, the things themselves are open to examination at the level of the relation that changes their existence; third, the virtual source of things and the interaction between them, is changed in the sense that it manifests as a new material form. This is because good conversation is so energizing: life has evolved into existence, touching everything in its emergence.¹²

12 Banathy, B; Jenlink P.M. (ed.) Dialogue as a Means of Collective Communication, Danny Martin, Dialogue and Spirituality: The Art of Being Human in a Changing World, 2005., New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, p. 78.

Dialogue and identity

The fundamental path towards the coexistence of the modern world and society is the disappearance of borders between different cultures. Developed communication cancels distances and redefines space and time. Ubiquitous globalization has become a producer of “hybrid cultures”, in the sense that it relativizes the usual notion of identity. It is practically unimaginable to live one’s cultural tradition in some isolated world. The situation in contemporary European society is also characterized by, among other things, strong waves of immigration that in a short time and somewhat unexpectedly modify the demographic, ethnic, cultural and religious context of Europe. Because of this, European society is somehow forced to think about the development of its own future, in which multiculturalism and multi-religiousness occupy a special place. Migration waves are practically unstoppable, strengthened by the process of globalization, but also by economic, political, cultural imbalances and deep differences between north and south, east and west. All these phenomena require the finding of new forms of coexistence in both today’s and the future European environment.

The fundamental assumption underpinning the need for new forms of coexistence in a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious environment is the readiness for dialogue. The goal of dialogue should not be the “victory” of one side over the other, but openness to the other and establishing a relationship with the other. Such dialogue includes respect for the other, for his identity, for how he (the other) defines himself and what he says about himself. We cannot reduce the other to a mere stereotype. Equally, we cannot reduce it to me, nor to a diversity that is so different that we cannot establish some kind of relationship. Therefore, the two extremes that most often create a problem and oppose the establishment of a dialogical relationship are: a) the temptation to reduce the other to our own image, without listening to him with respect; b) the belief that the other is so different that he has nothing in common with us, that nothing connects us, so that it is impossible to establish relationships, understand each other or live together.¹³

The question of identity (one of the topic that has been discussed a lot in the last ten years) reveals one dimension of the deep crisis (especially the crisis of morality/ethics) that characterizes contemporary (European) society. This crisis cannot simply be attributed to cultural and religious pluralism; it can also be seen as a fear of “losing ourselves”, and then also as an instrument to defend one’s own diversity. Identity is often defined starting from others who strive to remain other (different). Thus, the person (I) renounces any attempt to be other (different) and closes himself in his own identity, considering it absolute and definitive. Today,

13 Karlić, I., Identitet i dijalog u suvremenom europskom kontekstu, „Filozofska istraživanja“ (Identity and dialogue in the contemporary European context, “Philosophical research”), 124, Vol. 31 (2011) Vol. 4 (751–764)

one of the biggest temptations lies in overemphasizing the absolute primacy of national and religious identities, that is, in absolutizing the identity of national, religious and cultural affiliation, and in closing others because they are different. Such attitudes can easily lead to serious conflict situations.

Differences between people due to affiliation or origin should never be reasons or opportunities for creating conflict situations, but for mutual enrichment, because any individual, member of a group or nation, cannot possess the real “truth” about the other; therefore, no one can claim to possess “absolute and definitive truth” about, for example, lifestyle and life goals. One of the integral components of identity is certainly religion, because every religion or religious movement proposes a certain identity. Modes of religious proclamation and religious practice can construct very different identities. The public space in which people live is not empty, on the contrary, it is filled with many things, and even religions do not want to be invisible in it or to close themselves in “privacy”; they want to be present as an integral part of the human’s life and culture; this is possible only if all of them give up “occupying space” only for themselves, at the expense of others. Specifically, this primarily means rejecting any form of religious fundamentalism, which throughout history, and in recent times, has proven to be a great and serious threat not only to inter-religious dialogue, but to any form of coexistence, reconciliation and dialogue in general. A religion that wants to make its contribution to solidarity and peaceful coexistence cannot reconcile with any form of fundamentalism; it must advocate for tolerance among different people, for building authentic peace and reconciliation between people and nations, both in everyday life and in international relations. The peace we are talking about here is not the result of a “clash of civilizations, or cultures, or religions”, but the result of their “cultural disarmament”. It is therefore necessary to renounce everything that absolutizes ethnic, cultural, religious and other affiliation; this is not about renouncing one’s own identity, but about its absolutization. This leads to mutual trust.

Dialogue of cultures

As a result of reflection on life in relation to strategies for the transformation of institutions that shape culture, Swidler sets ten basic rules for good and successful dialogue.¹⁴ The first rule stating the primary purpose of dialogue is learning, which means being open, changing habits and perceptions in understanding reality. The second rule dictates that dialogue should be a two-way process, both between different communities and within them. According to the third rule, each participant should enter the dialogue with full sincerity, assuming that all other partners have

¹⁴ Swidler, Leonard (2012), *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding. Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p. 112.

a similar attitude. The following rule emphasizes that the comparison should not only involve comparing our ideals with the practice of our partners, but instead of comparing our ideals with the practice of our partners, it is necessary to compare ideals with opposite ideals and our practice with the practice of our partners. The fifth rule states that each participant must define his own attitude. However, since dialogue is a dynamic process, then each participant needs to see what needs to be changed in self-determination. The sixth rule emphasized, that each participant needs a dialogue without hard and fast assumptions, especially when we come to points of disagreement. The following rule emphasizes that dialogue can only occur between equals who come together to learn. The eighth rule emphasizes that true dialogue takes place only where mutual trust is present. The ninth rule assumes that people enter into dialogue with a dose of self-criticism, that is, that they are not subjugated to their own ideological tradition. Finally, the tenth rule for dialogue instructs each participant to try to experience the partner's culture from the inside.¹⁵

Thanks to new concepts of culture that do not accept traditional views on culture as a closed, static and self-sufficient system that does not touch others, there is also a shift in the multiculturalist perspective. It is considered that cultures are open and dynamic, and their processes never end, but are constantly mixed and permeated in the sense of hybridization or hybridity. In this way, there is a mutual mixing of cultures, but also a mutual enrichment. The constant movement of people and their mobility leads to the movement of cultural symbols that enrich cultural forms that were once considered timeless. The way in which this mixing happens is not assimilation or adaptation, but just an ordinary interaction of cultures where old cultural patterns can be upgraded with parts of various other cultures, which does not change the existing cultural patterns beyond recognition. In this way, the hybridization of culture occurs.¹⁶

Mixing leads to cultural heterogeneity, but culture can also be more or less homogeneous, which depends on the strength of the symbols that connect its members. Cultural homogeneity is necessary for culture at a certain level, but this does not exclude heterogeneity at a lower level. Due to the existence of different cultures in the world and their intermingling, homogeneity becomes questionable. In addition, every culture is homogenous to some extent. What is a problem is that cultural imperialism (or the creation of a monoculture) in the sense that one dominant culture becomes the leading culture that slowly grows into a single culture of humanity and thus stifles diversity.

15 Healthy Cultures: New Challenges for Interreligious Dialogue, SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA 63 (1/2017) pp. (109–120)

16 Mesić, M., (2006) Multikulturalizam - društveni i teorijski izazovi (Multiculturalism - social and theoretical challenges), School Book, Zagreb, p. 43.

Globalization opens the door to cultural hegemony in the sense that cultural globalization spreads from the west to the east and represents a tendency to establish cultural imperialism, preparing the ground for economic and technological dominance that ultimately ends in control. The significance of cultural globalization lies in the generalization of cultural orientations towards the establishment of a single cultural horizon that crosses the borders of national states and, like capitalism, becomes boundless. The force of heterogeneity that occurs under the influence of globalization can actually lead to a completely reversed process of a kind of homogenization in the sense of the creation of one culture that would represent world culture, and would be made up mostly of Western culture that would form the core. Homogenization in this sense would refer to the process of connecting different cultures into a project of modern culture that would impose itself on all others with its powerful means of dissemination.¹⁷

We attach special value to the diversity of cultures because it means diversity of experience and cognition, avoiding political monopoly and enabling the harmonization of culture. In order to preserve the diversity of cultures, the cultural tradition should be preserved first. Cultural tradition is not limited to folklore and ethnological heritage, but must have its values affirmed in the modern life of its members. The diversity of cultures goes in that direction, because the vision of the future in which there is a diversity of cultures guarantees a world community that has the possibility of multidirectional development, in contrast to cultural imperialism, which has a unidirectional development. It is believed that we have entered a multicultural, interdependent world based on plurality - even though it is threatened by cultural hegemony and imperialism. It is necessary to protect the right of every culture to survive and recognize common values in different cultures, through different theories such as multiculturalism, in terms of progress towards a community characterized by cultural diversity.

Multiculturalism, first of all, means a type of obligation, primarily of cultural and educational authorities, towards the creation and definition of policies, measures and actions, and initiatives by means of which attempts are made to enable the coexistence of different cultures on the same or neighboring territory with other cultures within a certain country. In addition, the term also means ensuring social and cultural opportunities for all cultures that make up a country, with the fact that, according to some proponents, multiculturalism is a dynamic approach that can primarily be defined as a process, a kind of exchange of cultural values and achievements of various cultures. This means that the term multiculturalism means the existence of a large number of cultures in a certain geophysical

17 Cifrić, I., (2008), Imperij ili zajednica? Homogenizacija i raznolikost kultura u kontekstu globalizacije i identiteta, Društvena istraživanja (Empire or Community? Homogenization and diversity of cultures in the context of globalization and identity, Social Research), 17, (4-5): 773-797.

and sociocultural space.¹⁸ In the discussion of multiculturalism, the possibility of distinguishing between two basic approaches to the concept is emphasized. The first approach is the one that tends to promote diversity as a value in itself, while the second approach is the one that focuses more on the freedom of thought and decision-making, but also on the glorification of cultural diversity in the sense that people go after it to choose it as much as it is legitimately possible. Through cultural diversity, people try to expand their own horizons but also push the limits of their identity.

The way to a successful society

“Today, throughout the world, dialogue represents a kind of “categorical imperative”, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where several religions and nations exist in the same space, where either the basis for mutual tolerance or the basis for mutual extermination is created. Mutual tolerance is a necessary condition in a society of religious and national diversity. A dialogue that does not mediate between the real and the possible is not present, and has no fuller significance for the culture to which it refers. In society, there is a need to replace the culture of speech, which includes concepts such as hierarchy, necessity, coercion, power, despotism, structure, dogma, with a culture of conversation characterized by the concepts of freedom, equality, cooperation, discovery, pluralism, choice. In a society where only speeches are given and not conversations are held, we have power relations, not cooperation relations. When conversation replaces speech in a society, it is a sign that society is moving from necessity to freedom, from structure to culture. The transition from one way of thinking to another is closely related to abandoning one way of life in favor of another.

Since the culture of dialogue requires not only the culture of the interlocutor, but also a progressive democratic consciousness, a developed environment and the habit of checking everything that is assumed or guessed, it becomes clearer why dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina is mostly pointless because it had no other ambitions than monologizing. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it has been a long time since one interlocutor acknowledged the superiority of one argumentation over another. In situations where there is no dialogue as an active awareness, there is no progress in social and cultural life. Being ready to hold a conversation means rejecting any thought of violence, and non-violence, given its goal, implies hidden power. Interpersonal relations can be observed from two aspects: as power relations or as cooperation relations, that is, the conversation can be conducted either from the position of power or from the position of equality in the conversation.

¹⁸ Sablić M. (2014), *Interkulturalizam u nastavi (Interculturalism in teaching)*, Naklada Ljevak d.o.o., Zagreb, 2014., p. 62.

On the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, tolerance indeed represents the only way forward, and it is inseparable from freedom and autonomy, which can only be truly realized in dialogue with others. In multicultural and multi-national societies, which are neither nationally, nor religiously, nor culturally homogenous, the issue of tolerance is essential. Hence the demand for tolerance across the entire social life, politics, ethics and social criticism. Bearing this in mind, tolerance is beginning to be understood as endurance and suffering in human common life, which is related to a person or community, to the opposite belief, statements and actions of certain people and groups. All areas of social life and different values are taken into account - religion, a world view, science, art, politics and customs. Any community that does not look forward and does not instill and develop in its younger generations the need for conversation and the habit of tolerance towards the other and different, has no prospects for the future. It will have it if it directs the upbringing and education of its young members towards dialogical thinking, advantages and values that arise from differences. The new cultural diversity represents a much more direct challenge to traditional culture and education, and tolerance and dialogue is a new way of presenting the issue of pluralism and cultural diversity".¹⁹

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BOSNIA  N
STUDIES
SARAJEVO
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Dehumanization and Organization:
Steps in the preparation of genocide

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Summary

The genocidal campaign against Bosniak Muslims that began in the spring of 1992 required organized institutions and agencies to jointly implement this criminal project. That process was reflected in the Serb Democratic Party's, establishment of parallel government structures at the local and regional level throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the eve of the aggression against RBiH in 1991. They planned the way these so called institutions operated in places where Serbs were both majority and a minority.

What connected the perpetrators of genocide is, among other things, the ideology of "living space", according to which those who do not fit into a certain space racially, religiously and ideologically should be eliminated. The genocide was preceded by the dehumanization of Muslims from the beginning of the 80s of the 20th century, in which the anti-Muslim narratives of earlier Serbian writers were evoked, as well as Serbian mythology. In 1992, previously formed autonomous areas were constituted to create the Serbian Republic of BiH, on whose territory plans were prepared and criminal genocidal ideas were to be implemented.

Keywords: Genocide, dehumanization, propaganda, para-institution, Serb Democratic Party

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze the individual steps in the planning and organization of ethnic cleansing and genocide against Bosniaks, and thus to point out the role of Serb institutions, bureaucracy and academics had in that criminal enterprise.

The main thesis of this paper is that Serbian political institutions (through planning and logistical support), as well as orientalists and historians (through dehumanization and spreading propaganda), played a role as equally important to that of the military and paramilitary formations in the preparation of the genocide against Bosniaks.

In this paper, we will analyze the ideological and logistical basis of the genocide, looking at: the role of the SDS in establishing parallel structures of government at the local and regional level; the anti-Muslim campaign from the 80s of the 20th century; the dehumanization of Muslims, and the establishment of a para-state on the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Underpinning this is an examination of the role of Serbian political parties, bureaucracy and orientalists in planning and preparing ethnic cleansing and anti-Muslim sentiment. .

***HIKMET KARČIĆ**

Dehumanization and Organization:
Steps in the preparation of genocide

Year of Intention – 1991

The famous American academic Raul Hilberg wrote one of the most complete histories of the Holocaust under the title *The Destruction of European Jews* in 1961. He based his research on German/Nazi documentation, and his main thesis was that the Holocaust was a complex bureaucratic process in which various state institutions and agencies participated, that is, that they were the main bearers of the genocidal project. Hilberg thereby laid foundations for future research into the Holocaust, as well as other genocides by defining an approach that based its analysis on the need to understand the initiators and perpetrators of the crime.

Following on from this, it is important to understand that the genocidal campaign against Bosniak Muslims that began in the spring of 1992 required the organized cooperation and participation of not only armed force, but a whole range of civilian, bureaucratic institutions and agencies to implement the criminal project.

The proclamation of the *Srpska Republika Bosna i Hercegovina* (Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina) on January 9, 1992 was the result of an active process and preparation led by the leadership of the (Bosnian) Serb Democratic Party (SDS), which had lasted at least a year.

This process was extended via the establishment of parallel government structures at the local and regional level throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the highest levels, decisions were made in Belgrade, at the macro level; decisions were made by SDS leaders and ideologists: Karadžić, Krajišnik, Koljević, Plavšić and others. At the local, micro level, the key structure was the crisis headquarters, while at the regional meso level there were the Serb autonomous regions.

The process of establishing parallel structures began in February 1991, with the announcement by the Banja Luka board of the SDS that it would form the Union of Municipalities of the Bosanska Krajina – UMBK.

In the same month, more precisely on February 23, 1991, the SDS issued a strictly confidential instruction on “The actions of municipalities in the conditions of the cessation of functioning of republican administrative bodies”.¹

In BiH, the SDS worked according to the same principle as their sister party in the SDS Croatia had already done. In June 1990, the Croatian SDS had formed the Association of Municipalities of Northern Dalmatia and Lika in Croatia. In August 1990, the Serb autonomous region of Kninska Krajina was formed – a series of parallel Serb institutions within Croatia itself. The Bosnian Serbs hoped to reproduce this model.

¹ SDS top-secret instruction on “Operation of municipalities in conditions of cessation of functioning of republican administrative bodies”, February 23, 1991.

The leader of SDS Croatia was Jovan Rašković, who, among other things, advocated theories that Serbs were created “to be rulers”, Croats were “bound to castration” stated that Muslims were stuck anal fixation stage of their psychological development², implying that mean they were liable to be fanatics, and to gather wealth.

The initial argument for the establishment of these Unions of Municipalities in Bosnia, was the establishment of some kind of unique economic and cultural zone for Bosnian Serbs in Krajina. The Serb autonomous regions were to be made up of SDS members or sympathizers who were politically elected subjects and employees in the authorities. They were to have the character of mini-states and to act as such. This is best seen in the example of SAR Hercegovina.

In Trebinje, on May 12, 1991, the Assembly of Communities of the Municipalities of East and Old Hercegovina was founded, which brought together SDS representatives from Trebinje, Gacko, Bileća, Ljubinje, Kalinovik, Čajniče, and Rudo. Božidar Vučurović from Trebinje was elected president, and Milorad Vujović from Bileća and Duško Kornjača from Čajniče were elected vice-presidents.

When the SDS realized that Bosnia and Hercegovina would go on the path of independence, ‘plan B’ was launched - the formation of the SAR Hercegovina on September 12, 1991, the Autonomous Region of Krajina (ARK) on September 16, 1991, the SAR of Romanija on September 17, 1991, and the SAR Birač-Semberija on September 19, 1991.

These SAR immediately started to operate in parallel in their real regions, acting as a certain regional authority. For example, On September 21, 1991, the Serb National Reading Room was established in Bileća, which was an integral part of SAR Hercegovina, and according to ‘Javnosti’ paper, the establishment of the reading room marked the beginning of “cooperation between Bileća and Nikšić, that is, Montenegro and SAR Hercegovina”.³

A few days after the resolution on the sovereignty of BiH was adopted, on October 24, 1991, the Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Hercegovina was formed, composed of representatives of the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) and other Serbs who were elected to the Assembly of Bosnia and Hercegovina in the November 1990 elections.

The first move of the Assembly, that same day, October 24, 1991, was the organization of a plebiscite of the Serb people in Bosnia and Hercegovina, which was

2 Weine, M. Stevan. (1999) When history is a nightmare: Lives and memories of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Hercegovina. (New Brunswick, NG: Rutgers University Press) p. 99

3 “Uskoro Srpska narodna čitaonica“ (Soon the Serbian National Reading Room), Javnost, September 21, 1991, p. 2

held on November 9 and 10, 1991, which related to the Decision of the Assembly of the Serb people to remain in Yugoslavia.

After the plebiscite, on November 21, this assembly passed the Decision on the Verification of the Proclaimed Serb Autonomous Regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This initiated the process of uniting the SARs into one single supra-parallel structure. And on the same day, the Decision on the recognition of the Republic of Srpska Krajina was adopted. The establishment of assemblies of the Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina was primarily related to municipalities where Serbs were the majority. However, on December 11, 1991, the Assembly made a decision to form parallel municipalities in already extant Bosnian municipalities where “decisions contrary to the interests of the Serb people are imposed by over-voting”, that is, where Serbs were in the minority.

The crisis headquarters established at the municipal level were supposed to serve as a coordinating body at the micro -level and to cooperate with the police and the army, as well as with the crisis headquarters at the SAR level as well as with the highest bodies of the SDS, i.e. with the Presidency. At the SAR level, “coordinators” were appointed as the link between the municipal crisis headquarters and the regional crisis headquarters with the SDS supreme authorities.

The final institutional preparations were made on December 19, 1991 in Sarajevo at the Holiday Inn Hotel, where the Instruction of the Main Board of the SDS on the organization and operation of the bodies of the Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina in extraordinary circumstances (variant A and variant B)⁴ was adopted. According to this document, the president of the crisis headquarters was the president of the SDS municipal board.

Variant A meant the takeover of municipalities where Serbs were the majority and its implementation began immediately, while Variant B referred to municipalities where Serbs were not the majority, and its implementation began after the declaration of independence. The preparations for January 9 were completed by the Decision on preparations for the formation of the “Republika Srpska Bosnia and Herzegovina”, which was adopted on December 21, 1991.

The establishment of this parallelism facilitated the planned takeover in local communities, i.e. the execution of the coup, which was planned after the declaration of independence. The institution of the crisis headquarters was crucial to achieving the overall project of establishing a new Serb state. They acted as a body to coordinate the police and military forces with political bodies at the local and regional level, with the consent, instructions and coordination of the higher party leadership.

4 ICTY, Prosecutor v. Milomir Stakić, Verdict, Case no. IT-97-24-T, July 31, 2003, p. 7

Thus, the crisis headquarters of the SDS initially acted as a shadow government that then took over from the legal authorities. The greatest activity of the crisis headquarters lasted from April to June 1992, when they finally took full control over the municipalities.⁵

For example, in Sanski Most:

“The Crisis Headquarters fired many Muslims and Croats, including judges and directors of social firms, local radio and the Health Center, while others were deterred from going to work because of how they were treated there, and were replaced by Serbs. Serb directors who allowed Croats and Muslims to work in their companies were also fired. SDS president Vrkeš, accompanied by members of SOS and the Serb police, expelled the director of SDK, a Croat, and appointed a person of Serb nationality in her place.”⁶

In December 1991, Vojo Kuprešanin, President of the Autonomous Region of Krajina, said at one of the SDS meetings in Sarajevo: “I personally think that our living space and the territory where we live and work are threatened...we must prevent Muslims to enter our territory and our space”.⁷

This statement perhaps best describes the intention of the leadership at that time, because the term “living space” that Kuprešanin uses is actually German in origin - Lebensraum - which was coined in Imperialist Germany before the First World War, and became one of the key geopolitical goals of the Nazi regime during the Holocaust.

The proclamation of the Republika Srpska on January 9, 1992 was only a formal and ceremonial act. By then, all preparations for the takeover and establishment of the new state had already been completed. 1991 was the year for the preparation of the genocidal policy that was activated and implemented in 1992.

Miroslav Deronjić, president of SDS Bratunac, described the pattern of the crimes committed in Podrinje and throughout the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina:

“There was a certain chronology, a certain order in that sequence of events. Similar things happened in Bijeljina, Zvornik and, to an extent unknown to me, in Višegrad. First, volunteers would arrive in a certain place, and then the rest would follow: murders, liquidations, intimidation of residents, panic and so on. Then, after that, the army would arrive, the Yugoslav People’s Army with the apparent intention of restoring order. However, all

5 ICTY, Prosecutor v. Milomir Stakić, Judgment, Case no. IT-97-24-T, July 31, 2003, p. 21

6 ICTY, Prosecutor v. Momčilo Krajišnik, Judgment, Case no. IT-00-39-T, September 27, 2006, para509

7 Donia, Robert. Excerpts from speeches in the Assembly of the Republic of Srpska, 1991 – 1996, sorted by topic. Prosecutor against Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović. (ICTY, Case No. IT 03-69), p. 161.

this would cause intimidation of the inhabitants, Muslims, which would be followed by ethnic cleansing. The fact that the army arrived in Bratunac two to three days after the volunteers arrived indicates that the same scheme of events should have taken place in Bratunac as well."⁸

The overarching framework set out by Belgrade for the break-away of the regions desired by Serb nationalists in Croatia and Bosnia was known as the RAM plan. Though its contents have remained secret for many years, some insight was given when, in late 1991, Italian journalist Giuseppe Zaccaria published details from a transcript of the agreement on the RAM plan made by high-ranking Serbian officers in the Yugoslav People's Army. RAM represented the elaboration of a strategy that would later become known as "ethnic cleansing".⁹

The intercepted telephone conversation between Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić, conducted on July 8, 1991, also contains this dialogue:

MILOŠEVIĆ: *"It is of strategic importance for the future RAM, do you know what RAM is?"*

KARADŽIĆ: *"Yes, I know everything, I know everything."*

MILOŠEVIĆ: *"For the Banja Luka group to be capable and mobile."*

KARADŽIĆ: *"Ok."*

MILOŠEVIĆ: *"That's why you have to, one, ensure that it is capable and mobile and that it doesn't have any problems. And, two, contact Uzelac in one hour with an invitation to make an agreement."*¹⁰

James Gow states that *"under the name of RAM - the Serbian word for frame - a frame was established around the periphery of the country where the Serbs excluded non-Serbs and disloyal Serbs from the occupied territories; it was ethnic cleansing."*¹¹

Prelude to genocide

The key moment that marked the beginning of the demolition of the foundations of Yugoslavia and that preceded all that came above, was the publishing of the

8 ICTY, Case Milošević (IT-02-54), Statement of Miroslav Deronjić. Available at: https://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosevic/proswitness/bcs/mil-wit-deronjic.htm

9 Allen, Beverly (1996). *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina*, (Minneapolis, Minnesota University Press) p. 56.

10 RAM - CODE OR PLAN?, Sense Agency, 10.04.2003, [http://www.sense-agency.com/tribunal_\(mksj\)/ram-sifra-ili-plan.25.html?cat_id=1&news_id=1211](http://www.sense-agency.com/tribunal_(mksj)/ram-sifra-ili-plan.25.html?cat_id=1&news_id=1211)

11 Iverson, M. William, (2014). *Mass Rape in Foča: The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia vs. Dragoljub Kunarac*, (Boise: Boise State University), <http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1908&context=td>

Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) in 1986. The memorandum, written by leading Serbian scientists and intellectuals, contained several important allegations and arguments that came to define Serbian politics for the next decade:¹²

- a) Disturbed balance between the Yugoslav principle of unity and the principle of autonomy. This imbalance denied the Serbian nation its own state; This claim resulted in the counter-call for “all Serbs in one state”.
- b) Consistent discrimination against the Serbian economy: “in the context of the political and economic dominance of Slovenia and Croatia”;
- c) Vengeful policies towards Serbia have recently strengthened - even to the point of genocide. The memorandum claims that the constitutional division into three administrative branches is “the worst historical defeat in peace imaginable”;
- d) Most importantly, the Memorandum highlighted the [alleged] physical, political, legal and cultural genocide of the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija as the worst defeat that ever happened to Serbia, the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Turks, to the 1941 Uprising.

As always, Kosovo proved to be the match that lit the fire. The Kosovar Albanians living in Kosovo, who had been systematically and brutally oppressed by the Serbs started student protests in 1981, which soon grew into a movement for autonomy. They demanded that Kosovo become equal to other federal republics in Yugoslavia. The police responded with force and the protests turned into riots. These riots presented the power-hungry Slobodan Milošević with the chance to profile himself as a leader by using Serbian nationalist rhetoric. The Belgrade media supported Milošević and created an atmosphere in which Albanians were demonized.

Milosevic's key moment came in 1987. During a visit to Kosovo, Serbian activists directed a gathering of dissatisfied Kosovo Serbs who claimed to be oppressed by Albanians. Milošević addressed the crowds with the words: “... You should stay for the sake of your ancestors and your descendants. You would disappoint your ancestors and disappoint your descendants...”. This event in Kosovo Polje was covered by television cameras and caught the now famous scene where an elderly Serb approaches Slobodan Milosevic and claims that he was mistreated by the majority Albanian police. Milošević then replies “No one is allowed to beat you”.

On Vidovdan, June 28, 1989, the commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo was held at Kosovo Polje. This was one of the key moments for the mobilization of the Serbian masses in Yugoslavia. Slobodan Milošević, then president of the Presidency of the SR Serbia, gave a speech in which he said the

12 Kurspahić, Kemal (2003), *Crime Prime Time*, (Washington: US Institute of Peace Press), p. 31

now infamous sentence: “We are again facing battles and in battles. They are not armed, although such have not yet been ruled out.”¹³ As can be seen from this episode, the role that academics played in helping create and fuel Serbian nationalism was vital to its war.

Dehumanization of Muslims

Beyond the allegations of genocide against the Serbs, it became necessary to Serbian nationalists to sharpen, clarify (and even to a certain extent, reify) their hatred of their Muslim neighbors. Key to that were the efforts to dehumanize them. Dehumanization means the removal of human characteristics from a certain group based on their racial, ethnic, religious or other affiliation. When a certain group is dehumanized, the hostile population becomes indifferent to that group and its fate. The process of dehumanizing Muslims in the former Yugoslavia began with anti-Muslim rhetoric, primarily with anti-Albanian rhetoric that emerged most strongly during the riots in Kosovo in the early 1980s.

Michael Sells explains the anti-Muslim orientation of Serbian nationalists in detail. For him, the key factor was the arrival of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the process of conversion to Islam. Serbian historiography believes that the original Bosnian Church (that preceded the arrival of Orthodoxy) did not exist and that it was Orthodox Serbs who converted to Islam, thus becoming Bosniak and thereby betraying their original, true religion. Thus, they became traitors, that is, murderers of Christ.¹⁴ The mythology that grew out of the Battle of Kosovo contained the seeds of later Muslim hatred.

*“The portrayal of Lazarus as Christ, Kosovo as the Serbian Golgotha and Muslims as the breeding ground of the evil of the ‘damned Hagar’ was found in sermons and chronicles. However, the Kosovo legend, as a story that will define Slavic Muslims as murderers of Christ and traitors to the race, has not yet been realized.”*¹⁵

This concept was later fully ‘realized’ by the Montenegrin Prince-Bishop Petar Petrović Njegoš (1830-1851) however. His work “Gorski vijenac” (Mountain Wreath) is a central work in Serbian literature, and in it, as Sells highlights, Muslims were established in the Serbian popular literature as: Christ killers, “blasphemers,” and “spitters on the cross.”¹⁶ Njegoš’ work was also the most responsible for preserving and spreading the myth of the *poturica* (a colloquial, derogatory

13 Slobodan Milošević’s complete speech available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdU6ngDhrAA>

14 Sells, Michael A, (1996). *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*, (Oakland, CA, University of California Press), p. 45

15 Ibid., p. 39

16 Ibid., p. 60

tory term for a convert to Islam during the Ottoman Empire). “Gorski vijenac” describes the “investigation of poturica”, i.e. the extermination of Muslims in Montenegro during the uprising at the end of the 17th century. Using the term poturice, Njegoš emphasizes that by converting to Islam, Slavic Muslims have, in fact, changed their race as well.¹⁷

In the run up to the wars of the 90’s and the genocide, the main leaders of Serbian anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim rhetoric can be classified into three groups: the Serbian Orthodox Church; historians and orientalists.¹⁸ Historically, the Serbian Orthodox Church has always paid great attention to Serbian mythology, namely Tsar Lazar and the Battle of Kosovo in its teachings. This obsession boiled over during the 80’s and 90’s, when the Church felt it was under attack from the Kosovo Albanians. Second, the Serb elites used the myth of the Battle of Kosovo to intensify anti-Ottoman, anti-Muslim sentiment, even though the Ottomans had departed the Balkans almost a century before.. For example, it was not until 1913, that June 28 was declared a national holiday. But from that moment, even though the Ottomans were no longer in the Balkans, it was clear that the commemoration of June 28 - the Battle of Kosovo and Vidovdan - in which the Church plays a major role - was aimed at the cultural heirs of the Ottomans - the Balkan Muslims. Historian Miodrag Popović states in his book *Vidovdan i Časni krst* (Vidovdan and the Holy Cross):

*“According to the myth, Vidovdan was a day of heroic confrontation, victory, and triumph over evil. In the new cult, created under the pressure of the political and economic imperatives of the Serbian citizenry, the penetration to the south and the conquest of Kosovo, Vidovdan is above all a symbol of bloody, merciless revenge against everything that is Turkish, Muslim in general. In such a modified myth, already at the very beginning, there is an internal stratification of the Kosovo myth, whereby it poetically gives way to concrete national politics.”*¹⁹

Much of the leg-work for this re-conceptualisation was done by Serb academics. The key orientalists who made themselves available to Serbian anti-Muslim propaganda efforts in the 80’s and the 90’s were Aleksandar Popović, a Serbian orientalist with a Paris address, Darko Tanasković, a professor at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade and Miroljub Jevtić, a professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences. Through their writings and public statements, they contributed to the dehumanization of Muslims and thus prepared the atmosphere for the crimes that would be committed. Soon, terms like *counter-revolutionaries* and *irredentists*

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 41

¹⁸ Karčić, Fikret, (2015). *The Other European Muslims: A Bosnian Experience* (Sarajevo: Center for Advanced Studies).p. 185

¹⁹ Popović, Miodrag, (1998). Quoted from: http://www.yurope.com/zines/republika/arhiva/99/222/222_29.html p. 167-172

were replaced by the terms *mujahideen* and *fundamentalists* to denote enemies of the state.²⁰

Norman Cigar in his work “The role of Serbian orientalists in justifying genocide against Muslims” analyzes the writings of these orientalists and states:

“Instead of promoting an atmosphere of coexistence and peaceful solutions, Serbian orientalists played a significant role in adding fuel to the fire and raising fear and hatred among their fellow Serbs. Long before the actual breakup of Yugoslavia, these scholars began to form a stereotypical image of Muslims as a foreign, alien, inferior and threatening factor, and helped to create a situation of artificial paranoia among Serbs regarding Muslims, while defending a harsh policy in dealing with the Islamic community. In the preparatory phase, the creation of that anti-Islamic atmosphere took place, which enabled the latter to slide into genocide after the open conflict broke out in April 1992 in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

These academic deliberations were eagerly seized upon by Serb politicians. At the beginning of 1993, the status of Muslims was discussed in the Assembly of Republika Srpska. Momčilo Krajišnik spoke:

*“Okay, gentlemen, let’s conclude. The Assembly took the position that Muslims are a communist creation and that they represent a religious group of Turkish orientation... They are infidels, a nation that is not a nation, that is, a nation that wants to be a nation and has no arguments for a nation... We do not accept that artificial nation. We believe that Muslims are a sect, a group of Turkish orientation... Who is in favor? Anyone against? Restrained? Gentlemen, thank you, we adopted the conclusions unanimously”.*²¹

Establishment of a para-state

In March 1991, a meeting between Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tuđman was held in Karadorđevo, Serbia, where the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina was agreed upon. The Serbian side gave a clear message that they want a homogeneous Serbian territory regardless of the different religious, ethnic and cultural communities that lived there. The Croatian side responded logically: if the Serbs

20 Karčić, Fikret, (2015). *The Other European Muslims: A Bosnian Experience*, (Sarajevo: Center for Advanced Studies) p. 191

21 Srebrenica Memorial Center. *Transkripti genocida*. 24. sjednica Narodne skupštine Republike Srpske. Magnetofonski snimak XXIV sjednice Narodne skupštine Republike Srpske, održane 08.01.1993. godine u Bijeljini., p. 77, <https://srebrenicamemorial.org/app/tg/transkripti-genocida.html>

can, then the Croats can also have their own homogeneous territory too.²² Although Serbian and Croatian officials deny that any agreement was reached in Karadžorđevo, several participants in the meeting confirmed these allegations. Ante Marković testified at the Hague Tribunal that at that meeting, Milošević told him that “Bosnia is an artificial creation of Tito and cannot survive” and that the Muslims are Orthodox Christians who have accepted Islam.²³ Franjo Tuđman’s advisor, Mario Nabilo, confirmed to British journalist Tim Judah that secret negotiations are being conducted in order to “resolve the Yugoslav conflict by reshaping the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and establishing an Islamic buffer zone between them.”²⁴

In the same year, in municipalities geographically and demographically important for the Greater Serbian idea, the SDS began to obstruct the work of legally elected bodies. There was the formation of autonomous areas throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina where there was a significant Serb population. This was done according to the same principle as in Croatia in 1990. In Krajina, the Serb Autonomous Region (SAR) of Krajina, i.e. the Autonomous Region of Krajina, was formed. In the north SAR Semberija, in the east SAR Romanija and in the south SAR Herzegovina. On January 9, these SARs united and formed the Srpska Republika Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On December 11, 1991, the Assembly of the Serb People in BiH voted for the recommendation to establish special Serb municipalities. The openly declared goal of this decision was “to destroy existing municipalities where Serbs are not in the majority”. On December 19, 1991, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) issued “Instructions on the organization and action of the Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina in extraordinary circumstances”, which served as a blueprint for taking over power in the municipalities.²⁵ The instruction contained two variants: variant A (municipalities where the Serbs are the majority) and variant B (municipalities where the Serbs are the minority). Both variants also contained instructions that the municipal SDS committees should form a crisis headquarters and that “tasks, measures and other activities” would be carried out exclusively by order of the President of the SDS.

SDS leaders were well aware that taking over municipalities and creating homogenous Serb communities would lead to the worst possible scenario. Radovan

22 Magaš, Branka, and Zanić, Ivo, (2001). *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991-1995*, (London: The Bosnian Institute) p. 138

23 “Marković explains how he started” *Sense Tribunal*. October 23, 2003.

http://www.sense-agency.com/tribunal_%28mksj%29/markovic-objasnjava-kako-je-poceo-rat.25.html?cat_id=1&news_id=1703

24 Tim Judah, 1991, in *The Times*, cited in : Magaš and Zanić, 2001, p. 138

25 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brđanin*, Judgment, 3 April 2007 (, IT-99-36-T) <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/brdanin/tjug/bcs/040901.pdf> p. 28 p. 28, <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/brdanin/tjug/bcs/040901.pdf>

Karadžić announced at the 4th Session of the Assembly of the Srpska Republika of BiH, held on December 21, 1991:

*“As reasonable beings, we can know what civil war means, and we can see exactly what happened to us from our experience in Croatia. In the civil war in BiH, in addition to several hundreds of thousands of people dying, in addition to the fact that several hundred cities would be completely destroyed, there would also be massive and accelerated relocation of people, homogenization.”*²⁶

In the meantime, the Assembly of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina made a decision to call a referendum on independence. The referendum was held on February 29, 1992, and was boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs. The vast majority of people voted for separation from Yugoslavia and for independence. On the day of the referendum and after the declaration of independence, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina worsened. Explosions and killings took place, as well as the setting up of barricades appeared throughout the country.²⁷

On March 27, 1992, the Assembly of the Srpska Republika Bosnia and Herzegovina established the (Bosnian) Serb Ministry of Internal Affairs. On April 16, 1992, the Ministry of National Defense of the Republika Srpska BiH decided that the Territorial Defense represents the armed forces of the Republika Srpska BiH. The TD is commanded and managed by the municipal, district and regional headquarters, as well as the headquarters of the TD of the Srpska Republika Bosnia and Herzegovina. By the same decision, the Ministry of National Defense declared an imminent danger of war and ordered the general mobilization of the TD across the entire territory of the Srpska Republika of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A year after the Agreement in Karadžorđevo, on May 6, 1992, Serb representatives in BiH Radovan Karadžić, Momčilo Krajišnik and Branko Simić along with Croatian representatives in BiH, Mate Boban and Franjo Boras met in Graz, Austria - without Bosniak representatives. There they discussed the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Karadžić and Boban discussed the country's divisions based on the borders of 1939, and called for general peace in the country. No official agreement was signed, but the further course of the war suggests that the said meeting was of great importance to both sides.

In July 1992, Mate Boban proclaimed the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna, which had thirty municipalities and whose capital was Mostar. Croatia's policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina was contradictory, that is, they formally and

²⁶ Ibid., p. 28, footnote 129

²⁷ Sudetic, Chuck, (01.3.1992). “Deaths Cast Shadow on Vote in Yugoslav Republic”, *New York Times*, Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/01/world/deaths-cast-shadow-on-vote-in-yugoslav-republic.html>

publicly advocated alliance and support of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but in reality they had already planned its division.

Conclusions

The genocidal campaign against Bosniak Muslims started in 1992, after the institutions and agencies to implement the criminal project were organized. The institutions in charge of implementation were extended to the municipalities at the local level, the SAR formed in 1991 at the regional level, and finally, the formation of the Srpska Republika BiH at the macro level on January 9, 1992. At the beginning of 1991 - a year before the beginning of the aggression, the municipalities received instructions on “*procedure in the conditions of the cessation of functioning of the republic’s administrative bodies*”.

Testimonies in numerous cases, some of which have been listed above, prove the same patterns in the preparation and implementation of ethnic cleansing: the task of the institutions established at the time, was to remove Bosniaks (and Croats in those municipalities where Croats also lived) from public and business life, using intimidation and violence. Ultimately, this was to result in the ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs.

The anti-Muslim campaign, started in the 1980s, evoked Serbian myths and the Greater Serbian and anti-Muslim rhetoric of earlier Serbian writers. These have now been taken over primarily by the Serbian Orthodox Church, historians and orientalists. The dehumanization of Bosniaks included accusations that Bosniaks were: poturice; traitors to their faith and a foreign body in Europe.

The formation of the Srpska Republika BiH (but also Herceg-Bosnia), the subsequent ethnic cleansing, deportations, mass murders and, ultimately, genocide, all proceed from the execution of previously planned and prepared instructions and policies.

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BOSNIA  N
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SARAJEVO

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Bosanska Krajina in the Bosnian
Serb's demographic projections of
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Summary

For Serb nationalists, the region known as Bosanska Krajina was of identified, in the run-up to the war as being of special strategic importance, primarily due to the need to establish a corridor through it, to the Kninska Krajina. The paper provides a brief analysis of how important the demographic composition and forecasts of this part of Bosnia and Herzegovina was for that policy; what kind of elaborations were created and what their ultimate goal was regarding the Bosanska Krajina - whether as a separate administrative unit within the “the truncated Yugoslavia” or as part of the Serb state west of the Drina river. The common goal of the protagonists who contemplated both of these options was for the Bosanska Krajina to be predominantly Serb and with only an “acceptable number of non-Serbs”.

Since the focus of the work is on the projections made before the outbreak of aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we will also refer to the actions of the Serb governing structures in solving the “demographic issue” in the Bosanska Krajina.

Keywords: Demography, Bosanska Krajina, Autonomous Region of Krajina, Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, projections, crimes

Introduction

After the death of Josip Broz Tito, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ), entered a phase of political (and economic) instability prompted by the reawakening of Serbian nationalism, and then, as a reaction to it, nationalism among other nations. After Slobodan Milošević came to power, Serbia started the process of homogenizing the Serbian people in those Yugoslav republics where Serbs represented a significant political and demographic factor. The reawakening of Serbian nationalism was a direct threat especially to Bosniaks, Croats and Albanians in the areas that would become of exceptional importance for Serbian nationalist politics. For this reason, the issue of demographics was already significant by the end of the 1980s.

The Bosanska Krajina had already become a war zone with the outbreak of the war launched by the Yugoslav People's Army's (JNA) against the Republic of Croatia. The demographic composition of most of its municipalities did not favor the Serbs, and provided the reason for their need to re-draw new ethnic borders in Yugoslavia.

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“Demographic Difficulties” Facing Serbian Intellectuals During The 1980s In Yugoslavia

In the years running up to the war, Serbian intellectuals in Yugoslavia began to highlight demographic issues, with a special focus on the issue of Muslims, their past and their interpretation of Islam. In 1982, Vuk Drašković, published the novel “Knife” in which Bosnian Muslims are stereotypically portrayed as traitors and cold-blooded killers.¹ One of the problems for Serbian nationalist positions in socialist Yugoslavia was that the demographic composition of certain parts of their hoped-for country were places where Muslims were in the absolute or relative majority. As Serbian intellectuals warned, Muslims “*due to their birth rate could in the future represent a ‘demographic problem’ for the Serbian population because with a ‘lower birth rate’ the Serbs would become a minority*”. For Serb nationalists, the number of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo represented a direct danger to the Serbian people, who would need to be suppressed and turned into a national minority.²

In a similar vein, demographer, Serbian demographer Miloš Macura presented the thesis that “*Muslim demographic goals, which are essentially no different from those of the past, obviously also stem from some contemporary aspirations*” and that “*the pre-Islamic, pro-natalist ideology has the strong support of Islam*”, which means “*that the pro-natalist consciousness is supported by religious elders, imams and parents, so that behind abundant and uncontrolled births are the three most important institutions of traditional society: brotherhood and tribe, Islam as an organized religious community and the family as an important institution of society*”.³ As Serb nationalist fervor reached its peak, there appeared (alongside the portrayals of impending demographic disaster), articles published in the daily and magazine press by leading Serb academics portraying Islam and Bosniaks as inferior, backward, and violent and presenting Bosnia and Herzegovina as an impossible country where there has always been hatred between its peoples.⁴ Academics such as Miroljub Jevtić portrayed painted dark scenarios for

1 Sonja Biserko, „Srpska elita i realizacija srpskog nacionalnog programa“ (“The Serbian elite and the implementation of the Serbian national program”), in: Kovanje antijugoslovenske zavere, Knjiga I, Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava Srbije (The Forging of the Anti-Yugoslav Conspiracy, Book I, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of Serbia), Belgrade, 2006, 39.

2 On demographic structure of Kosovo, see: Momčilo Pavlović, „Kosovo za vrijeme autonomije, 1974-1990“, Zbornik radova Suočavanje s jugoslavenskim kontroverzama (“Kosovo during the period of autonomy, 1974-1990”, Collection of works Facing Yugoslav controversies), Buybook, Sarajevo, 2010, 59-62.

3 Ibid., 39, 40.

4 Ibid., 39, 40; According to Esad Zgodić, these and similar theses in which the emphasis is on the dehumanization, specifically of the Bosnian Muslims, were taken from the Serbian geographer Jovan Cvijić, who in his works accuses Bosniaks as being “fanatical religious, idle, weaned from thinking, ignorant, spiritually sluggish, uncritical and naive and lead an unproductive histori-

the Serb people, with Jevtić claiming that the numerical superiority of Muslims represented a danger not only for Yugoslavia but also for Serbia. According to him, the Muslim minority in Serbia would serve as a foothold for the “*complete Islamization of Serbia*”. He announced that Muslims would want places to build mosques, and after that they would look for places for Muslims to settle around the mosques. “It wouldn’t take much for this to lead to the emigration of non-Muslims, first voluntarily, and then under pressure. The plan is to settle the Muslim population in those regions, to force the birth rate and thus gradually lead to a numerical advantage...”, Jevtić ‘prophetically’ announced.⁵

From a literary point of view, Drašković became one of the leading revisionists of the events of the Second World War; while Macura, Tanasković and Jevtić reduced their knowledge of Islam to a distorted interpretation of this religion.

To Muslims, these ideas had no scientific basis. Bearing in mind that in Serbia (with Kosovo and Vojvodina) according to the 1981 population census, Serbs made up 66.4%, of the population in Serbia. When Serbian academics expressed fear for their future demographic majority, the question arises as to how much the Serbs were actually ‘endangered’ in those parts of Yugoslavia where they did not form a two-thirds majority? Taking Yugoslavia as a whole, Serbs made up 36% of the total population. It was a large enough segment of the population to destabilize Yugoslavia, but not to dominate it.⁶

It is important to emphasize that not a single Muslim (Bosniak or Albanian) official, scientist, intellectual, nor politician from the government or the opposition, ever indicated that Muslims should aim to dominate a certain territory because of their numbers. On the other hand, when it came to the Bosniaks as a people in the multi-year process of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, they were only recognized by the Croatian and Serbian national elite as a confessional, but not as national, political or state-building.⁷

cal life”. Esad Zgodić, *Ideologija nacionalnog mesijanstva* (Ideology of national messianism), Council of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals, Sarajevo, 1999, 219.

- 5 Norman Cigar, *Uloga srpskih orijentalista u opravdanju genocida nad Muslimanima Balkana*, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, Bosanski kulturni centar (The role of Serbian orientalists in justifying the genocide against the Muslims of the Balkans, Institute for the Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law, Bosnian Cultural Center), Sarajevo, 2000, 46.
- 6 Andrew Wachtel, Christopher, Bennett, „Raspad Jugoslavije“, *Zbornik radova Suočavanje s jugoslavenskim kontroverzama* (“Disintegration of Yugoslavia”, Proceedings Dealing with Yugoslav controversies), Buybook, Sarajevo, 2010, 38; Stjepan Šterc and Nenad Pokos, „Demografski uzroci i posljedice rata protiv Hrvatske“, *Društvena istraživanja: časopis za opća društvena pitanja* (“Demographic causes and consequences of the war against Croatia”, Social research: magazine for general social issues), Vol. 2, br. 4-5, Institut društvenih znanosti „Ivo Pilar“ (Institute of Social Sciences “Ivo Pilar”), Zagreb, 1993, 305-307.
- 7 Šaćir Filandra, „Nacija ili zajednica – Protivrječnosti bošnjačkog nacionalnog razvoja“, *Godišnjak*, br. 1, Fakultet političkih nauka (“Nation or community - Contradictions of Bosniak

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In the reawakening of Serbian and Croatian nationalism and big-state aspirations, the priority problem vis-à-vis Bosniaks was their numbers in strategically important areas of the Yugoslav state. Rarely did anyone point out how little political power Bosniaks had, but chose instead to continue to denigrate them, filling media, school textbooks and other magazines with lies about them

In the various demographic analyses and projections for the future carried out at the time, each region of Bosnia and Herzegovina was treated separately. The ethnically mixed and strategically important Bosanska Krajina received special attention in the elaborations of Serbian intellectuals in their future projections about the Serbian state.. The question arose as to how to solve the “Bosniak issue” in this region.

Three policies towards the Bosanska Krajina

Leading Bosniak political representatives rejected any of the Serbian proposals on the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Priority was given to the viewpoints of the survival of Yugoslavia within its historical borders - from Vardar to Triglav. The alternative was an independent and sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina with all its citizens living as three equal nations. As the politics, personified by Alija Izetbegović, was based on the introduction of civil democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, its leadership never produced any form of report on the Bosanska Krajina or other regions, considering them inalienable parts of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In other words, the policy of the leading party among Bosniaks (SDA) was that no part of Bosnia and Herzegovina could be exclusively mono-national, which Izetbegović particularly emphasized.

The political leadership of Croatia was interested in expanding its western borders. In terms of priorities for Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, annexing Cazin region came right after western Herzegovina. The problem for Tuđman’s large-state policy was the percentage of Croats in that particular part of the Bosanska Krajina, was not above 10% in any municipality. Alternatively, but still with the Bosanska Krajina as one of the priorities, Tuđman was offered another option.

Since local patriotism was particularly conspicuous in Cazinska Krajina, and that it often had important individuals in representing it at the top of Yugoslav politics throughout its past, Tuđman looked for a person in Bosanska Krajina who would be an opponent of the President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegović and the republican authorities. In essence, they were looking for a person (in this case, Fikret Abdić), who would deepen the antagonism between Sarajevo and Bihać, while at the same time enjoying a great reputation among the Bosniaks of the Bosanska Krajina. Tuđman hoped that Bosniaks from the Cazin

national development”, Yearbook, no. 1, Faculty of Political Sciences), Sarajevo, 2006, 197.

region - at war with the Serb aggressors and abandoned by their compatriots from Sarajevo - would voluntarily aspire to become part of the Croatian state. Tuđman believed that Croatia could be a “straw of salvation” for the Bosniak population of Cazinska Krajina.⁸

In contrast to Croatian and Bosniak politics, Bosanska Krajina was the focus of action for Serb politics and aggression due to its demographic structure and its geostrategic importance. Due to the strategic interest of Serbian politics, several studies were made with an emphasis on the demographic structure of the Bosanska Krajina. Ivan Stambolić’s testified that academic Vasa Čubrilović told him how “a whole group of ‘immortals’ has been digging over the maps of Bosnia for years, trying to discover even a goat path that could be used to walk from Belgrade to Karlovac, passing only through Serbian villages and towns...”⁹ Finding such a route would serve as an excuse to annex land to the proposed Serbian state. Thus, Serbian policy was directed towards the acquisition of that part of Bosnia and Herzegovina where the Serbs represented the ethnic majority and those Bosniak and Croat areas that “stand in the way” of the creation of a compact Serbian territorial unit.¹⁰ “Digging over the maps of Bosnia” and trying to “discover the goat trail” was the plan presented to Stambolić before 1990.¹¹ It was only a matter of time when that route (between Belgrade and Karlovac) was said to be found, and all that was said would be implemented.

Projections from 1991 and 1992

Due to the “emphasized centralism” and “neglecting the development of border areas” supposedly emanating from Sarajevo the Economic Institute in Banja Luka published in March 1991, a project assignment on the possibility of forming a region of 24 municipalities in northwestern Bosnia “according to modern European standards”. This would mean that this region would encompass 31.1%

8 Immediately after the outbreak of aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, president Franjo Tuđman, provided help and support to Fikret Abdić and his separatist policy. For more information on the political path of Fikret Abdić, see: Mujo Begić, *Nastanak i djelovanje Autonomne pokrajine Zapadna Bosna* (The origin and operation of the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia), Institute for the Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo, 2021.

9 Ivan Stambolić, *Put u bespuće: odgovori Ivana Stambolića na pitanja Slobodan Inića* (The road to nowhere: Ivan Stambolić’s answers to Slobodan Inić’s questions), Radio B-92, Belgrade, 1995, 126.

10 Saša Mrduljaš, „Prostorno-demografski rezultati srpske velikodržavne agresije u Bosni i Hercegovini krajem 1992.“, *Časopis za savremenu povijest*, no. 1 (“Spatial-demographic results of Serbian state aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of 1992”), *Journal of Contemporary History*, no. 1), Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb, 2009, 246.

11 For a complete interview about the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) and the attitudes of certain academics towards it, see: Ivan Stambolić, *Put u bespuće* (Road to nowhere), 117-132.

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of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and would constitute 25.2% of its total population. In addition to the optimal regional aspect, it would also have its own historical aspect. As an example, the Vrbas banate from the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was taken, but in relation to the borders of this banate, the municipalities of Gradačac, Gračanica, Maglaj, Doboje, Teslić, Derventa and Dvor na Uni were excluded.¹² This would make northwest Bosnia ethnically predominantly Serbian, with Kupres and Teslić as majority Serb municipalities. Jajce, Donji Vakuf, Bugojno and Gornji Vakuf, as potential parts of the Krajina region, were municipalities where the Bosniak population was the majority, but not to such an extent that Serbian demographic dominance would be threatened. The “introduction” of these municipalities would not significantly change the ethnic image of Bosanska Krajina as a “Serbian region” (Serbs 45.6%, Bosniaks 37.5%, Croats 10.3%, Yugoslavs 4.2% and “Others” 2.4%). In the context of the possible regionalization of the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosanska Krajina would be a region dominated by Serbs, while Bosniaks would make up the majority in the Sarajevo and Tuzla regions, and Croats in the Mostar region.¹³

The alleged fear of the predicted numerical dominance of Bosniaks was the reason for the elaboration of the study on demographic trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1961 to 1991 and the forecasts for the year 2021. The emphasis was placed on the possible consequences for the Serbs. It was pointed out that in the last 30 years, the position of the Serbian people had been permanently deteriorating, with the potential danger of being reduced to the status of a distinctly minority nation. Individual analyses of the regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, divided the Bosanska Krajina into the regions of Bihać and Banjaluka. It was emphasized that the Serbian people in both regions experienced a demographic decline (greater in Bihać than in Banja Luka), and that there was a significant increase in the Bosniak population, especially in the Banja Luka region, where the number of Bosniaks increased by 119,066 in the previous 30 years. In percentage terms, the Serbian population in the Banja Luka region had decreased from 67.3% to 56% in the last thirty years.¹⁴

Bosanska Krajina was viewed as a region where there was a possibility that it could remain dominantly Serbian, because all the other analyses and other as-

12 Uslovi i mogućnosti uspostavljanja regionalne prostorne organizacije Bosne i Hercegovine i stvaranja regije sjevero-zapadna Bosna (Conditions and possibilities for the establishment of a regional spatial organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the creation of the North-West Bosnia region), Ekonomski institute (Institute of Economics), Banja Luka, March 1991, 6-17.

13 Ibid., 18.

14 ICTY, Neki osnovni pokazatelji demografskih kretanja u Bosni i Hercegovini u periodu 1961.-1991. godine sa prognozom kretanja do 2021. godine i uticaj tih kretanja na položaj srpskog naroda (Some basic indicators of demographic trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period 1961-1991, with a forecast of trends until 2021 and the impact of these trends on the position of the Serb people), Sarajevo, June 1991, 2-9.

sumptions indicated the “danger” of Bosnia and Herzegovina being a Bosniak national state. Forecasts predicted that, if this demographic trend continued, Bosniaks would already have the majority in 2021 and make up 63.4% of the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serbian and Croatian people would be in continuous demographic decline, and in 2021, Serbs would make up only 19.2% and Croats 11.6% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁵

During the dissolution of Yugoslavia, proposals for the formation of a single (Serbian) Krajina administrative unit within Yugoslavia were constantly discussed. One of those proposals was the proposal of Jovan Rašković (the first SDS president in Croatia) to establish the first state after the breakup of Yugoslavia, which would be called “Demokratska Krajina”. Whether prompted by Drašković’s proposal or because of the emphasized “Krajina regional identity”, one study in which this possibility was considered was dated from December 1991. According to its findings, Kninska Krajina, Lika, Kordun and Banija would be included in the composition of the “Krajiška State” in addition to the Bosanska Krajina. It would encompass a geographically and ethnically homogeneous area of about 28,000 km².¹⁶

The roots of this idea go back to June 1991, when the representatives of the self-proclaimed Union of Municipalities of the Bosanska Krajina (ZOBK) and the Serb Autonomous Region (SAO) Krajina, in order to “unify Serbia as an imperative”, brought a declaration on the unification of these two unilaterally declared entities.¹⁷

It is important to emphasize that in every projection created for the needs Serbian nationalism, the Cazin Region was a part that did not necessarily need to belong

¹⁵ Ibid., 18-21.

¹⁶ Nijazija Maslak, “Bosanska Krajina kao ‘kontitutivni činilac nove jugoslovenske’ iz 1991. godine”, Zbornik radova Zločini u Bosanskoj krajini za vrijeme agresije na Republiku Bosnu i Hercegovinu 1991-1995. (“Bosanska Krajina as a ‘constitutive factor of the new Yugoslavia’ from 1991”, Proceedings of Crimes in the Bosanska Krajina during the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995), Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo, 2011, 110-119; According to Anto Nazor, western Slavonia and Banovina would have been part of the “United Krajina”. Together, Knin and Bosanska krajina would occupy 30,354 km², and 1.6 million people would live in that area, which would have access to the sea south of Zadar. See Ante Nazor, „Kontinuitet velikosrpske politike i uloga Hrvatske u obrani BiH od velikosrpske agresije i spašavanju Muslimana u BiH 1990-ih, na primjeru Bihaća“ (“Continuity of the greater Serbian policy and the role of Croatia in the defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina against Greater Serbian aggression and the rescue of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s, on the example of Bihać”), National security and the future, Vol. 19, No. 3, Udruga svetog Jurja, Zagreb, 2018, 61.

¹⁷ Jasmin Medić, “Demografska slika i političke koncepcije etno-teritorijalne organizacije Bosanske Krajine 1991. i 1992. godine, Godišnjak 2018, Bošnjačka zajednica culture “Preporod” (“Demographic picture and political conception of the ethno-territorial organization of the Bosanska Krajina in 1991 and 1992”, Yearbook 2018, Bosnian cultural community “Preporod”), Sarajevo, 2018, 260.

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to the Serbian state. The reason for such a relationship was best described by Vojo Kuprešanin, one of the most prominent representatives of the SDS from Bosanska Krajina and an official of the self-proclaimed Autonomous Region of Krajina (ARK).¹⁸ At the third session of the self-proclaimed Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he said: “We can simply lock them in that ring and it does not suit us at all if they join us. It even suits us that they should be a separate region, the Cazin region, which will be economically dependent on us. Every square meter of Serb land will have an astronomical high price in a very short time, and we absolutely must bring them to such a situation with our policy.”¹⁹ At the end of December 1991, Kuprešanin presented a summary of the actions of political representatives towards Cazin Krajina in the last year. So, the fact that the demographic outlook of these four municipalities (Velika Kladuša, Bihać, Cazin, Bosanska Krupa) in which, as he himself emphasized, there were between 250,000 and 300,000 Bosniaks in one very small area, could threaten the Serb ethnic dominance in Bosanska Krajina.

The final analysis was closely related to the already implemented “saoization” of Bosnia and Herzegovina and indirectly indicated the justification of the formation of the Serbian Republic of BiH.²⁰ The reasons were, as stated in this analysis, the change in the demographic structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina over the previous 30 years. The “numerical danger” of Bosniak predominance was again pointed out even in those municipalities where the Serbs were the majority, because Bosniaks were the majority in the cities (Bijeljina, Gacko, and from the Krajina in Bosanska Gradiška, Bosanski Novi, Bosanska Dubica and Bosanski Petrovac). The authors saw the reason for such fear in the danger of Bosniaks buying up the greatest value of capital in the process of transformation of social property because Bosniaks were “*significantly more organized and solidified than Serbs*”. The solution considered favorable to the Serbs was the division of social property based on the national structure of employees. In addition, it was emphasized that those economic capacities that were of primary importance were

18 The Autonomous Region of Krajina (ARK) was proclaimed by the unilateral decision of SDS officials from the area of Bosanska Krajina on September 16, 1991. The municipalities in which the Serb people were in the majority and in which the SDS was in power were provisionally included in its composition. For more on the origin of ARK, see: J. Medić, “Demografska slika i političke koncepcije” (“Demographic outlook and political concepts”), 256-276.

19 ICTY, Skupština srpskog naroda u Bosni i Hercegovini, Stenografske bilješke 3. sjednice Skupštine srpskog naroda u Bosni i Hercegovini (Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Stenographic Notes of the 3rd Session of the Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sarajevo, December 11, 1991.

20 About regionalization in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the declaration of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, more in: Jasmin Medić, “Politička i nacionalna polarizacija u Bosni i Hercegovini: Projekti ‘regionalizacije’ 1991. godine” (“Political and National Polarization in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Projects of ‘Regionalization’ in 1991”), Appendices, no. 50, University of Sarajevo - Institute of History, Sarajevo, 2021, 283-313.

in the parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina where the Bosniak population was the majority, and that they would become a means of political power.²¹

Given that the unilateral regionalization of Bosnia and Herzegovina was being carried out at the time of the analysis, the implementation of such a policy was considered “*an element of protecting the interests of the Serbian people*”, though mechanisms for a better status of the Serb population should still be developed. Since 600,000 Serbs remained outside the “Serb autonomous areas” and were therefore “*in danger of being reduced to a national minority*”, the following was proposed:

1. Ethno-territorial rounding up of regions where the Serbs would constitute the majority;
2. Decentralization of money flows and creation of regional funds
3. Finding a suitable method of transformation of social property.²²

In the study, the regions were considered with particular emphasis, including Bosanska Krajina. That part of the analysis mentioned the 20 municipalities of the Bosanska Krajina that then, by unilateral decisions of the municipal organizations of the SDS, had joined the ARK. These were: Bosanski Novi, Bosanska Dubica, Bosanska Gradiška, Srbac, Prijedor, Laktaši, Prnjavor, Sanski Most, Banjaluka, Čelinac, Kotor-Varoš, Skender-Vakuf, Bosanski Petrovac, Ključ, Mrkonjić Grad, Drvar, Bosansko Grahovo, Glamoč, Šipovo and Kupres. As we can see from this, municipalities from the Cazinska Krajina were not included, which should be interpreted in the context of Kuprešanin’s statement that their inclusion would threaten Serbian dominance in the Bosanska Krajina. Also, two municipalities (Prijedor and Sanski Most) had a relative Bosniak majority, but they became part of ARK without the consent of this majority.²³ According to the 1991 census, 817,307 inhabitants lived in these 20 municipalities. Serbs were a majority in ARK, numbering 486,905 inhabitants. Bosniaks numbered 195,372, Croats 70,723, and “Others” 64,257 inhabitants.²⁴

It was concluded, according to the projections, and the position of the Serb nationalists, that the ARK was the optimal solution for the Serbs in the Bosanska Krajina. The Serbs had an absolute majority in it and there was no possibility of losing it, in a demographic sense. They did not intend to include the predominantly Bosniak Cazinska Krajina in the ARK because of “too many Bosniaks”, but they could keep it surrounded and cut off from central Bosnia.

21 ICTY, Regionalizacija – demografsko-ekonomski i drugi bitni aspekti (Regionalization – demographic-economic and other important aspects), Sarajevo, January 1992, 10-29.

22 Ibid., 41-45.

23 Ibid., 45, instr. 2.

24 Ibid., 41-45

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All mentioned demographic analyses were aimed at finding the most expedient way to declare Serb autonomous areas, and any other type of secession from Sarajevo, as well as finding a solution to the possible out-voting of the Serbs, despite the fact that no political option (Bosniak or civil) in Bosnia and Herzegovina had advocated for this.

Agency for emigration and population exchange opportunities: unit for the persecution of Bosniaks and Croats

During the commission of the greatest crimes against Bosniak and Croat civilians in ARK, this region, as the only one within the self-proclaimed Srpska Republika Bosnia and Herzegovina, formed a body responsible for the “emigration” of the non-Serb population from its territory. More precisely, “emigration” from those municipalities that the Serbs considered strategically important in securing the corridor between the Banja Luka region and SAO Krajina by establishing, in that way, permanent ethnic dominance. In official documents, they used the term “emigration”, although, as has been proven in a series of cases before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), what took place was in fact mass atrocities and the systematic persecution of Bosniaks and Croats.

In addition to the two corps of the ASRBiH (1st and 2nd Krajina Corps), Banja Luka CSB, SDS, the activities of the ARK Headquarters were of particular importance in Bosanska Krajina. This body had 17 members, and Radoslav Brđanin was appointed as its president.²⁵ It was established primarily to ensure cooperation between political authorities, the army and the police at a regional level, with the intention of coordinating the implementation of the Strategic Plan by various authorities. The Crisis Headquarters (later renamed the ARK War Presidency) became the highest authority in the region.²⁶

A special element of its activity was the coordination of the policy of expulsion of the non-Serb population from the region and the settlement of this area by Serbs.

Such a conclusion, which led to the formation of such a body, was made at a meeting held on May 29, 1992, where an “offer” was presented to “allow Bosniaks and Croats who wish to emigrate from the area of the ARK, but under the condition that Serbs settled outside the Serb autonomous areas and regions, should also be allowed to resettle to the territory of the Srpska Republika Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. the ARK. In this way, the population exchange, or more

25 ICTY, Autonomna regija Krajina, Izvršno vijeće, Odluka o osnivanju ratnog štaba Autonomne regije Krajina (Autonomous Region of Krajina, Executive Council, Decision on the Establishment of the War Headquarters of the Autonomous Region of Krajina), Number: 03-285/92, Banja Luka, May 5, 1992.

26 ICTY, Case: No. IT-99-36, Before Trial Chamber II, Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brđanin, Verdict, paragraphs 191, 192.

precisely, its relocation from one to another part of the former Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, would be carried out in an organized manner.”²⁷ For this purpose, a body was established - the Agency for the relocation of the population and the exchange of material goods for the ARK.²⁸ It had its representatives in the ARK municipalities in charge of implementing the Agency’s policy in the municipalities and reporting on it.²⁹

At the level of ARK municipalities, similar agencies were established with the aim of emigrating Bosniaks and Croats from that area. They were in charge of determining the procedure for resettlement. To obtain permission to leave the territory of the ARK, they had to “de-register” from their residences and “voluntarily” transfer all their property to the Republika Srpska BiH without compensation or, in a smaller number of cases, exchange their property for property that was located outside the territory of the new Republika Srpska. Decisions on resettlement ensured the permanent removal of the non-Serb population from the territory of the ARK, which was in accordance with Brđanin’s statement that in the future Serb state they would be able to make up no more than 2% of the total population. To achieve Serbian ethnic dominance and reduce the number of non-Serbs, Brđanin advocated three phases of “cleansing” the area:

1. Creating impossible conditions due to which they would leave the area on their own, including tactics of pressure and intimidation;
2. Expulsion and exile;
3. Killing of the remaining ones that would not fit into his (Brđanin’s) concept.³⁰

For the implementation of the plan to resettle the non-Serb population, this ultimately meant that deportations and persecution, and finally the killing of those who remained, were to follow.³¹

²⁷ Ibid., paragraphs 248, 249.

²⁸ ICTY, Autonomna regija Krajina, Krizni štab, Odluka o osnivanju Agencije za preseljenje stanovništva i razmjenu materijalnih dobara za Autonomnu regiju Krajinu (Autonomous Region of Krajina, Crisis Headquarters, Decision on the Establishment of the Agency for Population Resettlement and Exchange of Material Goods for the Autonomous Region of Krajina), Number: 03-579/92, Banja Luka, June 12, 1992.

²⁹ ICTY, Case: No. IT-99-36, Before Trial Chamber II, Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brđanin, Judgment, paragraph 250.

³⁰ ICTY, Case: No. IT-94-1, Before the Trial Chamber, Prosecutor v. Duško Tadić, Judgment, The Hague, May 7, 1997, paragraph 89.

³¹ Zijad Šehić, Eksperiment u svjetskoj laboratoriji Bosna: međunarodna diplomatija u vrijeme disolucije SFRJ i agresije na Republiku Bosnu i Hercegovinu (do Vašingtonskog sporazuma 1994) (An experiment in the world’s laboratory, Bosnia: international diplomacy at the time of the dissolution of the SFRY and aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (until the 1994 Washington Agreement), Dobra knjiga, Sarajevo, 2013, 127.

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In some cases, the Agency or its municipal branches would sign a contract with another company that would oversee the transport of the population.³²

For the SDS, it was an acceptable alternative to Brđanin's concept of three phases, that is, a potential consensual exchange of population, if the Srpska Republika BiH remained within the borders as foreseen by this party when declaring this republic. For the SDS, the question of the future demographic outlook was among the most important. This is evidenced by the meeting of its prominent officials from Bihać, Bosanski Petrovac, Bosanska Krupa, Sanski Most, Prijedor, Bosanski Novi and Ključ held in Sanski Most on June 7, 1992. One of the decisions made at this meeting, which was addressed to the authorities of the ARK, was: *"All seven municipalities of our subregion agree to evacuate Muslims and Croats from the territory of our municipality to a degree where each of these municipalities can maintain and achieve an effective Serb government on its territory"*.³³ Blackmail was also presented as a possible strategy. In other words, if the request to evacuate were not met, *"Muslims and Croats from the territory of these seven municipalities will be escorted to the center of Banja Luka under military escort"*.³⁴

Although the ARK's decisions called for voluntary consent and reciprocity,³⁵ the resettlement of Bosniaks and Croats was primarily a consequence of the intolerable conditions imposed on them by the municipal and ARK authorities, which included shelling, looting and destruction of towns and houses of non-Serbs, dismissal from work and other criminal acts committed against non-Serbs as part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.³⁶

De facto, the Emigration Agency was a synonym for the persecution of Bosniaks and Croats from the area of the ARK. That solving the 'problems' posed by the demographic structure of the ARK was a political priority for the ruling structures of the ARK, is evident from a series of documents of its Crisis Headquarters, which emphasize the introduction of reciprocity, i.e. the demographic filling of the places from which the Bosniaks and Croats were expelled by the settler Serbs.

32 Thus, in one document, it is stated that the convoy is organized by the Agency, and the transport is organized by a company from a certain place, such as the company "Domet" from Zagreb. ICTY, Agency for Assistance in Population Resettlement and Exchange of Material Goods, Agreement on Cooperation, Banja Luka, August 29, 1992.

33 ICTY, Srpska demokratska stranka, Opštinska organizacija Sanski Most, Zaključci sa sastanka SUB REGIJE (Serb Democratic Party, Sanski Most Municipal Organization, Conclusions from the meeting of the SUB REGION), Sanski Most, June 7, 1992.

34 Ibid.

35 ICTY, Krizni štab Autonomne regije Krajina (Crisis Headquarters of the Autonomous Region of Krajina), Number: 03-329/92, Banjaluka, May 18, 1992.

36 ICTY, Case: No. IT-99-36, Before Trial Chamber II, Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brđanin, Judgment, paragraphs 254, 255.

Conclusion

Immediately after the death of Josip Broz Tito, anti-Muslim propaganda gained increasing salience in the public space. Among its propagators were nationalist Serbian writers, demographers, political scientists, Orientalists, and others who created a “scientific” basis for redrawing ethnic borders in Yugoslavia and changing the demographic picture of certain regions. In the last phase of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, several studies were carried out in 1991 and at the beginning of 1992 with the ultimate goal of justifying the creation a single-national region in northwestern Bosnia, i.e. Bosanska Krajina. To dominate the larger part of it, and to establish permanent ethnic dominance in the other, Serb political and military officials set out to make the Bosanska Krajina a Serb region. It was among the priorities for Serb interests, primarily due to the fact that it had a significant concentration of Serbs and that it was served as a geographical corridor between the self-proclaimed SAO Krajina and Semberija. In order to implement such a plan, mass atrocities were committed against the Bosniak and Croat civilian population in 1992, which resulted in a complete change of the ethnic make-up of those municipalities where the SDS BiH held or took over power in the first half of that year.

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BOSNIA  N
STUDIES
SARAJEVO
1

MUAMER DŽANANOVIĆ
Institutional denial of
genocide against Bosniaks
and discrimination against
returnees in Republika Srpska

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Review article

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Summary

Amending the criminal law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which banned the denial of genocide and the celebration of the war criminals, did not stop these occurrences. Intensive drawing of murals, sharing of flyers, photographs and other similar ways of glorification and celebration of convicted war criminals have continued strongly. Recently, the engagement of the official bodies of Serbia have been noticed to be giving their full support to the negation of judicially established facts and the revision of history, as well as the protection of convicted and accused war criminals. Also, authorities of the Bosnia and Herzegovina entity, Republika Srpska do not accept the fact that Bosniak and Croat minorities live in "their" large-state territories. Those authorities, acting in according to the instructions from Memorandum 2 (It is the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) 2, which is based on the Great Serbian policy of "blood and soil", according to which Serbia is where the Serbs live), act in every way to send a message that there is no possibility of common life and that they do not want reconciliation. They continue to further dismantle Bosnian society and constantly aim for the secession of the smaller entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Obviously, they have developed a strategy in that field as well, in which coordinated action is taken at the local, regional and international levels. With this work, we want to highlight the latest phenomena of institutional denial of the genocide against Bosniaks, and the continued occurrence of violations of basic human rights of Bosniaks and Croats living in Republika Srpska. Therefore, the criminal ideology that led to aggression and genocide was not abandoned but is merely carried out in other ways, which we will discuss in more detail later in the paper.

Keywords: Serbia, Republika Srpska, Genocide, Negation of genocide, returnees, discrimination, segregation

Introduction

More than thirty years have passed since the beginning of the aggression against the independent and internationally recognized Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina by both its eastern and western neighbors. The implementation of the "greater state" goals was carried out via the commission of the most monstrous crimes, primarily against Bosniaks. Before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice in The Hague, as well as before German courts, the crimes committed were adjudicated, among other things, as genocide against Bosniaks. Almost the entire political and military leadership of the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska was sentenced before the International Tribunal. Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić were, given life sentences for genocide against Bosniaks (as well as other crimes). Before the In-

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ternational Court of Justice, Serbia was adjudicated as co-responsible because it did not prevent the genocide of Bosniaks in and around Srebrenica in July 1995.

Unfortunately, thirty years later, “Greater Serbia’s” aspirations to expand its borders in the areas west of the Drina River have not stopped. Also, the genocidal process has not stopped either, and is in its last phase - the phase of denial. Huge resources are invested in the very process of denying the genocide against Bosniaks. Genocide is denied at local, regional and international levels. One must not ignore the fact that Gregory Stanton emphasizes, i.e. that denial is among the strongest indicators of the following genocidal massacres.

Lately, there has been a strong, coordinated engagement of individuals and various authorities in Serbia and the Bosnian entity, Republika Srpska (RS), which in different ways are fighting to change the narrative about the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against the Bosniaks. The engagement of Serbia’s official bodies, which support efforts aimed at denying judicially determined facts and revision of the past, as well as the protection of convicted and accused war criminals, is noticeable. Serbia has taken a leading role in denying the genocide in public discourse. The adoption of the Decision by Valentin Inzko, the then high representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which passed the Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina in mid-2021, which, among other things, prohibited the denial of genocide and the celebration of convicted criminals, unfortunately did not stop the practice of these phenomena. Glorifying war criminals and stimulating denial of the genocide committed against Bosniaks is the policy of the ruling and dominant majority of the opposition government structures in Serbia and RS. Those authorities obviously cannot accept the fact that in RS, on “their” defined greater-state territories, smaller parts of the Bosniak and Croat minorities live.

The last stage of the genocide against Bosniaks is still ongoing

Genocide against Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992–1995 was a crime realized through several stages. According to the ways and methods by which the genocide against the Bosniaks is denied, it can be said that it goes beyond what Stanton, as well as other theorists of the crime of genocide, stated when they explained what constitutes the last stage of the genocide.¹

From the moment the law was changed, direct denials of genocide have continued, but it is noticeable that they occur on a reduced scale within Bosnia and Her-

1 On the denial of genocide against Bosniaks, for example, see - Suljagić, Emir, (2022). Denial of Genocide and Other War Crimes Committed in Bosnia as a Form of Collective Memory, *Bosnian Studies - Journal for Research of Bosnian Thought and Culture*, (Sarajevo, Preporod) Vol. VI,6, No. (1) <http://www.ibs.preporod.ba/bosnian-studies/index.php/journal/article/view/61>. pp./2022, 54-23.

zegovina, especially in public discourse.² More intensive drawing of murals, distribution of flyers, photographs and other similar ways of glorifying and celebrating convicted war criminals have come to the fore, however,³ and has especially intensified in Serbia.⁴ The glorification and celebration of Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, as well as other war criminals, is still distinguished. The celebration and glorification of convicted war criminals led to the naming of this current stage of the genocide against Bosniaks as *triumphalism*. Triumphalism, according to Hariz Halilović and Hikmet Karčić, has become part of popular culture, especially in Serbia and among the Serbian diaspora. This is reflected through state and academic institutions and church institutions, but also mainstreamed through music, television shows, fan groups, etc. Thus, the glorification of crime has become part of everyday life.⁵ The latest event in connection with the mural of Ratko Mladić in Serbia has just shown that the triumphalism regarding the genocide against the Bosniaks is something that is of strategic interest to the Serbian leadership. The “defense” of the Mladić mural by the Minister of Police of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vulin, proved how historical revisionism and denial of genocide is still an important segment of Serbian politics.⁶

Regardless of the numerous verdicts of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, as well as the verdict of the International Court of Justice, which absolutely proved the execution of genocide against Bosniaks, the political authorities in RS, whose military and police forces committed the genocide, are trying in every possible way to minimize these crimes. With this goal in mind, the Government of RS formed two separate “international commissions” that were supposed to audit the facts about events in Sarajevo and Srebrenica during the war.

It is ironic that the same RS Government, with international pressure, previously formed the Commission to investigate the events in and around Srebrenica from July 10 to 19, 1995, which absolutely confirmed, in its Report from 2004, that the

- 2 For more detailed indicators, see the report of the Srebrenica Memorial Center on denial of the genocide in Srebrenica for the year 2022. Pećanin, Senad (ed.), (2022) *Report on Genocide Denial in Srebrenica 2022*, (Srebrenica, Srebrenica Memorial Center). Available at: https://srebrenicamemorial.org/assets/photos/editor/_mcs_izvjestaj_BOS_2022_FINAL_ko.71.pdf
- 3 Džaferagić, Nejra (2021) Bosnian Authorities Fail to Remove Murals of War Criminals, *BalkanInsight.com*, Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/11/15/vlasti-u-bih-nisu-uklonile-murale-ratnih-zlocinaca/?lang=sr>
- 4 Mišić, Goran (2022). Murali i grafiti koji veličaju Mladića kao paradigma Srbije, *AlJazeera Balkans*, Available at: <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/opinions/2022/1/31/murali-i-grafiti-koji-velicaju-mladica-paradigma-srbije>
- 5 Karčić, Hikmet (2021), “An Erased Memorial, a Rape Motel, and a Nationalist Disneyland: Bosnian Genocide Denial and the Fight for Memory in a Bosnian Town”, *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 22 (2), pp 2021, 167-173. doi:10.1353/gia.2021.0025.3
- 6 “Vulin zabranio okupljanje”: Mural Ratka Mladića u Beogradu neće biti ukolnjen (2021) *NI BiH*, Available at: <https://ba.n1info.com/regija/vulin-zabranio-okupljanje-mural-ratka-mladica-u-beogradu-neze-biti-ukolnjen/>

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military and RS police forces had committed genocide. Today, among the genocide deniers are the most influential politician from RS, Milorad Dodik, as well as the mayor of Srebrenica municipality, Mladen Grujičić, which shows the vertical consistency of genocide denial, from the lowest to the highest political level among Serb political representatives in RS.⁷ Support for the activities of genocide deniers on an international level is also increasing. The rise and affirmation of radical right-wing ideas in Western societies in recent years has seen the affirmation of negating ideas and praiseworthy writing about Great Serbian ideologists.

Before the funeral of the victims of the genocide in Srebrenica and on July 11, 2022, a way was found to try to insult the families of the victims and the victims of the genocide when photos of “allegedly killed VRS fighters from the last war” were placed next to the road that leads from Bratunac to the Potočari Memorial Center – a key site in the Bosniak commemoration of the genocide.⁸ Allegedly, they were installed on the initiative of veterans’ organizations and Bratunac’s local authorities.⁹

In this regard, the Government of RS invests considerable effort and large resources in quasi-scientific research. This is supported by the publication of the mentioned reports which deny the genocide in Srebrenica and exaggerate the suffering of the Serbs in Sarajevo.¹⁰ Also, significant budget funds are allocated for revisionist content that is shown on the RTRS TV channel (based in Banja Luka) and more widely on YouTube platforms that “bombard” the public. They highlight the heroism of members of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) and the Bosnian Serbs Army (VRS) during the genocide of Bosniaks. In addition to the screening of documentaries in prime time, there is talk about the liberation of cities and reports on the commemoration of the anniversaries of the army and the police, which were branded as perpetrators of the genocide against the Bosniaks

7 Grujičić o genocidu u Srebrenici: Ne mogu negirati nešto što se nije desilo (2017), *Faktor.ba*, Available at: <https://faktor.ba/vijest/grujicic-o-genocidu-u-srebrenici-ne-mogu-negirati-nesto-sto-se-nije-desilo-244182> ; Flego, Miroslav (2014), Dodik: I danas ću reći da u Srebrenici nije bio genocid, *Večernji List*, <http://www.vecernji.hr/svijet/dodik-i-danas-cu-reci-da-u-srebrenici-nije-bio-genocid-950065>

8 N1 saznaje detalje postavljanja fotografija na putu ka Potočarima (2022), *N1 BiH*. Available at: <https://ba.n1info.com/vijesti/n1-saznaje-detalje-postavljanja-fotografija-na-putu-ka-potocarima/>

9 See: Шарац, Гвозден (2021) Прича о Вишеградској и Горажданској бригади ВРС, Мисија (ПТПС) Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgeyPOnyTUU>

10 Look at some of the reactions that indicate what kind of fakes they are:

Košuta Zilha M, (2021), “The report does not contribute to clarifying the events and fate of the Serbs in Sarajevo”, (Izveštaj ne ide u prilog rasvjetljavanju događaja i sudbine Srba u Sarajevu), *historiografija.ba* Available at: <https://historiografija.ba/article.php?id=502&fbclid=IwAR064qU3cxD4wMg4NkFS4POjwHXatg8nellQf-3xxrdJFDaE7ovmmk7yZA> ;

Babić Merisa K (2021) Izveštaj ima cilj da se izbjegnu suštinska pitanja o stradanju Srba u Sarajevu (“The report aims to avoid essential questions about the suffering of Serbs in Sarajevo”), *historiografija.ba*. Available at: <https://historiografija.ba/article.php?id=499>

before the international courts in The Hague. For example, at the beginning of May 2022, RTRS reported on the “liberation of Doboj”. Also, in 2022, the thirtieth anniversary of the formation of the VRS was marked in Doboj. Doboj is the place where crimes committed against Bosniaks before the German judiciary were characterized as genocide against Bosniaks.

Indeed, the first verdict for genocide against Bosniaks was confirmed by the European Court of Human Rights in the Jorgić case, which involved the massacre of Bosniaks in Doboj.¹¹ The media from the RS has never reported on this, however.

In the RS media, there is talk of the “heroic” role of the Birčanska Brigade of the VRS during the period of aggression.¹² The commander of that brigade was Svetozar Andrić, who issued orders in which he demanded the imprisonment of the remaining Bosniaks in northeastern Bosnia, primarily those in Vlasenica, Osmaci and Zvornik. The consequence of such orders was the expulsion, killing and torture of thousands of Bosniaks. The crimes committed against the Bosniaks of Osmaci (by the VRS) were also adjudicated as genocidal before the German judiciary. Andrić also ordered the establishment of the infamous “Sušica” concentration camp in Vlasenica. Although the Humanitarian Law Fund filed a criminal complaint against him for crimes against Bosniaks in the War Crimes Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Serbia in 2018, there has been no reaction to this day. Andrić holds high political positions in Serbia,¹³ and in 2022 he was elected member of the Belgrade City Council.¹⁴

The latest in the series of creation of numerous revisionist content is the documentary film “*Republika Srpska: Struggle for Freedom*” by Boris Malagurski. Significant financial resources from several institutions were invested in its creation. Draško Stanivuković, the mayor of Banja Luka, boasted about his financial support for this project.¹⁵ Incidentally, three years ago, Malagurski spoke in a shameful way about the genocide against Bosniaks, that is, about July 11 and the commemoration in Potočari, stating: “To the team that gathers every year in

11 Dedić, Adem (2021) Dželati naroda mog : Nikola Jorgić osuđen za adaster u Doboju, *Inat.ba*, Available at: <https://inat.ba/dzelati-naroda-mog-nikola-jorgic-osudjen-za-genocid-u-doboju>

12 See: Милутиновић, Љубиша (2022) 1. Бирчанска пјешадијска бригада [YouTube Channel] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-NoIHCeSsg>

13 Krivična prijava protiv Svetozara Andrića (2018). *Fond za humanitarno adas*. Available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=34855> Trivić, Branka and Bajramović, Alen (2020) U poslaničkoj klupi Skupštine Srbije sa krivičnom prijavom za ratne zločine u BiH, *Slobodnaevropa.ba*. Available at: ; <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/svetozar-andric-skupstina-srbija-vojska-rat-bih/30771761.html>

14 Stojanović, Milica (2022). Komandant VRS-a izabran za člana Gradskog vijeća Beograda uprkos krivičnoj prijavi za ratne zločine, *detector.ba*. Available at: <https://detector.ba/2022/08/18/komandant-vrs-a-izabran-za-clana-gradskog-vijeca-beograda-uprkos-krivicnoj-prijavi-za-ratne-zlocine/>

15 Stanivuković, Draško (2022) Stanivuković na Premijeri Filma “Republika Srpska: Borba Za Slobodu” *Draško Stanivuković* [YouTube Channel] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liYBhtc6t-o>

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Potočari near Srebrenica, the term ‘memory of crimes’ is, in fact, a synonym for ‘maintaining hatred’, i.e. the war psychosis with which the elites stay in power.”¹⁶ Malagurski, (who has also produced similar Serb nationalist propaganda pieces on Kosovo and Montenegro) seeks to present the creation of RS and its continued existence as a “struggle for the freedom of the Serb people”. This is not much different from his earlier views or the views of numerous genocide deniers and truth haters. In a statement to the media before the premiere of the mentioned film, the mayor Stanivuković talks about the “Republika Srpska as a symbol of the first Serb statehood on this side of the Drina River”.¹⁷

Instead of thinking about how to contribute to the return of elementary human rights to the small number of Croats and Bosniaks in the RS, who survived the genocide and monstrous crimes, he expresses views similar to those, for example, by Kertes, Deronjić and Zekić at a secret meeting in 1991 in Belgrade, where they arranged the distribution of weapons to the Serb population in Srednje Podrinje region. Kertes back then said that “50 km west of the Drina River will be all purely Serb.”¹⁸ Objectively, the narrative in the film and the current views of Stanivuković and numerous politicians in RS on the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina can be compared to those held by Karadžić and other war criminals who, among other things, were convicted of genocide against Bosniaks.

Bosniak returnees to RS, are constantly provoked and threatened, reminded of the crimes committed against their relatives. Let us take actions such as the parading of members of the Chetniks Ravnogorski Movement or the marking of the ‘day of Russian volunteers in Višegrad’ as some of the examples.¹⁹ This is one of the ways in which criminals are actually celebrated, which, in such a way, tells the returnees that there is no place for them in the territory of the RS. Open discrimination and dehumanization of Bosniaks is carried out in other ways as well. Their basic human rights and freedoms guaranteed by numerous international and domestic acts are being violated.

After holding the unconstitutional *RS Day* celebration on the streets of Banja Luka on January 9, 2022, with a parade of police forces and other RS police for-

16 Malagurski Ukratko: Srebrenica (2019). *Slobodna Televizija*. [YouTube Channel] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-t_LC9q0lk

17 Stanivuković, Draško (2022) Stanivuković na Premijeri Filma “Republika Srpska: Borba Za Slobodu.” Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liYBhtc6t-o>

18 On this, see the testimony of Miroslav Deronjić before the ICTY in Case no. IT-01-51-I, Prosecutor against Slobodan Milosevic, transcripts from the trial, 27 November 2003, <http://www.hlcrdc.org/Transkripti/Milosevic/Transkripti/Transkripti%20sa%20sudjenja%20Slobodanu%20Milosevic%20%2843%29/Transcript%20sa%20sudjenja%20Slobodan%20Milosevic%20%2027.%20novembar%202003..pdf>

19 About this, see: Džananović, Muamer and Kuka, Ermin, “Genocide against Bosniaks and demographic changes in the area of Višegrad 1991-2013”, in “Historical Views”, Center for Research of Modern and Contemporary History Tuzla, Tuzla, Vol. 5, no. 7, 353-378.

mations etc, in 2023, Milorad Dodik moved it to the streets of East Sarajevo on January 9, 2023. During the commemoration of the “RS Day” in 2023, Dodik, among other things, honored Putin with the award of RS. In doing so, he showed how strong the bond between RS and Russia is. Dodik views Russia as a strategic partner that will help achieve his separatist goals, which the RS authorities are not giving up on. Organizations from Russia also participated in the celebration. The fact that the marking of “9th of January” was moved near Sarajevo, to locations from which Sarajevo was destroyed and its citizens killed during the aggression was extremely provocative.

Although several criminal charges were filed against persons who denied the genocide in various ways, after the amendment of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there hasn’t been any reaction or follow-up from the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Unfortunately, the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not file indictments either for denying the genocide, although several criminal charges have been filed, or for violating the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the context of marking the unconstitutional day of RS.²⁰ The role of the OHR and the High Representative is even more worrying, considering that when it comes to RS, it is only ever punished with mere ‘warnings’. In the context of “9th of January” Christian Schmidt only warned that “commemorating the Day of the RS may have consequences”. If the relationship in which the OHR, the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other institutions do not react to the unconstitutional actions of the political leaders of RS continues, it will lead us to pushing of limits of “activities that undermine the building of trust and are incompatible with the European values of inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity

²⁰ “The request of nine delegates of the People’s Council of the Republika Srpska for the review of the constitutionality of Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Law on the Day of the Republika Srpska (“Official Gazette of the RS” number 113/16) is approved. It is established that Article 2, paragraph (1) of the Law on the Day of the Republika Srpska (“Official Gazette of the Republika Srpska” No. 113/16), which reads: “Based on the confirmed will of the citizens of the Republika Srpska, January 9 is established as the Day of the Republic” is not in accordance with Article I/2. of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Article II/4. of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in connection with Article 1.1. and Article 2.a) and c) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and Article VI/5. of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Article 2, paragraph (1) of the Law on the Day of the Republika Srpska (“Official Gazette of the Republika Srpska” No. 113/16), which reads: “Based on the confirmed will of the citizens of the Republika Srpska, January 9 is established as the Day of the Republic” is repealed in accordance with Article 61, paragraph (2) of the Rules of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Constitutional Court of BiH, https://www.ustavnisud.ba/uploads/odluke/_bs/U-2-18-1133275.pdf

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and non-discrimination,”²¹ as Schmidt described them in his reaction to the latest commemoration on January 9.

The role of the investigative and judicial bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Serbia in the attempt to change historical facts

Taking into account that 30 years have passed since the first crimes were committed, and how many indictments have been filed, it can be concluded that the way these judicial institutions are working is, as well as minimizing the truth about the crimes committed during the aggression, an additional insult to the victims and relatives of the victims. Members of the ARBiH are massively interrogated, indicted and judged before domestic authorities, while for numerous mass crimes against Bosniaks neither investigation investigative actions have been carried out last for several years and for most, there are no concrete results.

In contrast however, for example, twenty-two indictments were brought against the ARBiH defenders of Goražde, and eight of them were sentenced to eighty-nine years in prison, and they are still being interrogated and detained “every day”. It is concluded that the strategy of the judicial authorities, which are focused on possibly committed crimes by members of the ARBiH is “unclear”. We support that everyone should be held accountable for the crimes committed regardless of its dimensions and regardless of the perpetrator’s national, religious or any other affiliation. However, the paradox is that, when it comes to Goražde, as well as other areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the focus of investigative bodies and the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina are not numerous mass crimes committed against the values protected by international law against civilians as protected persons. There is no doubt that the indictments brought in these cases are in a huge imbalance in relation to the war crimes committed during the period of aggression. The above contributes to intensified revisionism and attempts to change historical facts.

It is an inevitable conclusion that by indicting and prosecuting the political-military officials of the legal bodies of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they want to try to create a balance in what is called the judicial truth about the events during the aggression and try to change the facts that have been proven to a significant extent before international courts. The “Dobrovoljačka”²² case, in which the first accused is Ejup Ganić, a member of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, personifies the desire to prosecute the political elite and to add the political elite to the list of numerous suspects and prosecuted members

21 <https://faktor.ba/vijest/adaste-o-obiljezavanju-neustavnog-dana-rs-a-postupci-i-aktivnosti-vlasti-republike-srpske-mogu-imati-posljedice/186381>

22 More on the case: <https://sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/2275>

of the ARBiH, which would give the entire process of relativizing history an additional dimension.²³

Serbian officials tell us every day that their greater-state ideology has not been abandoned. Genocide deniers are primarily leading Serbian politicians.²⁴ For Duško Kornjača, who lives in Serbia, against whom the BiH prosecutor's office brought an indictment for the crimes committed in Čajniče,²⁵ Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, a genocide denier,²⁶ publicly announced that he would not extradite him.

This supports the fact that the president of Serbia does not respect the victims and the authorities and the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁷ It is also clear from this that the Serbian judiciary is politicized. With that act, he sent a message to the members of the RS army and police, suspects and accused of war crimes, that Serbia is a safe haven for them. That message was adequately understood and followed by those who commanded and committed crimes against Bosniaks. They live freely and enjoy freedom, instead of being in the docks of the Bosnian judiciary. The cases of Milomir Savčić, the former commander of the 65th Protective Motorized Regiment at the Main Headquarters of the VRS and one of the closest associates of the war criminal Ratko Mladić, who fled to Serbia after the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina ordered his detention, or Brano Petković, the commander of the self-proclaimed TD "Serb Municipality Goražde", who was indicted for war crimes in Goražde, but who lives in Serbia and is unavailable to the local authorities, are just some examples.²⁸ In 2019, the indictment against Marko Kovač, commander of TG Foča of the Herzegovinian VRS Corps, was confirmed before the domestic judiciary as having crimes committed against

23 <https://ba.n1info.com/vijesti/ganic-o-dovorlovackoj-sve-je-iscrpno-pokriveno-u-izvjestajima-haga/>

To this day, no one has been held accountable before the domestic judiciary for the siege of Sarajevo, the killing and wounding of tens of thousands of civilians. The commanders of the Sarajevo-Romanija Corps of the VRS in Belgrade are living to old age and dying, while domestic investigative authorities do not react to the criminal charges filed against them more than ten years ago. The most recent example is the case of "Tomislav Šipčić". <https://stav.ba/vijest/nevjerovatno-tuzilavstvo-bosne-i-hercegovine/11298>; <https://stav.ba/vijest/umro-tomislav-sipcic-general-koji-je-ubijao-sarajevska-djecu-spalio-vijecnica-i-tvrдио-da-muslimani-bacaju-srbe-lavovi-ma/11399>.

24 https://srebrenicamemorial.org/assets/photos/editor/_mcs_izvjestaj_BOS_2022_FINAL_ko.71.pdf

25 More detailed on the case at: <https://sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/1049>

26 <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/29886434.html>

27 <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/aleksandar-vucic-necu-izruciti-duska-kornjacu-nemozete-mi-nista683803>

28 <https://radiosarajevo.ba/vijesti/bosna-i-hercegovina/tragom-raspisivanja-potjernicemilomir-savcic-pobjegao-u-srbiju/426778>; <https://www.faktor.ba/vijest/sud-bih-naredio-raspisivanje-potjernice-za-branetom-petkovicem-optuzenim-za-zlocine-kod-gorazda/168730>

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Bosniak and Croat victims from the Foča region.²⁹ He was also not extradited and lived freely in Serbia until his death.³⁰

The best example that demonstrates how in Serbia, the “previously established practice of revisionism of the wars of the 1990s continued by ignoring and minimizing judicially established facts, promoting war criminals, making film and TV production, ceding public spaces and state resources for the publication and promotion of books by convicted war criminals,”³¹ is the case of Novak Đukić.³² War criminal Novak Đukić enjoys his freedom in Serbia, even though he was sentenced before the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the crimes at the Tuzla’s “Kapija”. There, 71 young people were killed, and more than 140 were wounded, from a shell fired from the VRS position in Panjik (Ozren) on May 25, 1995.

The Serbian Ministry of Defense has supported and financed the holding of expensive experiments on its own training grounds, where it tries to deny the responsibility of the Serb army for firing missiles and the possibility that so many civilians at the “Kapija” were killed and wounded by them.³³ This is the basic motive and source of data for the publication of documentary films and two books by Ilija Branković in which the crime is denied.³⁴ The acts of other war criminals are being promoted in Serbia and the RS, and Orthodox priests are among the promoters as well.³⁵

29 More detailed on the case: <https://sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/1527>

30 <https://radiosarajevo.ba/vijesti/regija/preminuo-marko-kovac-optuzenik-za-ratne-zlocine-u-fo-ci/439804>

31 <https://balkaninsight.com/sr/2022/05/06/fhp-ekstremno-neefikasan-rad-tuzilastva-za-ratne-zlocine/>

32 Novak Đukić was sentenced before the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina to a prison sentence of 20 years. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison, but after that the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted the Appeal of Novak Đukić, due to the application of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina instead of the law from the former Yugoslavia. Đukić used his release to escape to Serbia, the sentence was reduced, and Đukić’s lawyer informed the Court that Đukić went to Serbia for treatment. More about the case: <https://sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/56>.

33 <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/rekonstrukcija-zloina-na-kapiji-novo-poigravanje-sa-zrtvama/26563091.html>

34 <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/opinions/2022/5/25/nema-pravde-za-zrtve-masakra-na-tuzlanskoj-kapiji-general-mrtve-mladosti>;

Special efforts were made by the RTRS to deny the crimes committed. About the Tuzla’s Kapija, see the negating report: <https://lat.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=342224>;

Ilija Branković was convicted as one of those responsible for war crimes in the area of Zadar (Croatia). <https://warcrimesmap.balkaninsight.com/verdicts/momcilo-perisic-milic-potpara-ili-ja-brankovic-stojan-vuckovic-nikola-germanac-spasoje-cojic-dusko-gojkovic-predrag-tasic-zeljko-batinic-sasa-djurovic-senaid-grbo-mile-rudic/>

35 One of the convicted criminals responsible, among other things, for the burning of over 120 Bosniak civilians alive in Višegrad is Milan Lukić. He was sentenced to life imprisonment before the Hague Tribunal. His book of confessions was promoted in the temple of St. Sava in Belgrade, where the promoters of the work were also priests. Promotions of these works are organized throughout Serbia and RS.

The request of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the case of Novak Đukić should be answered by the High Court in Belgrade, before which Đukić should appear in order to make a decision on extradition to the authorities of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sessions of the judicial council of the War Crimes Department of the High Court were however, “postponed ten times in the procedure regarding the recognition of the judgment of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past three years, due to the alleged poor health of the convicted.”³⁶

The work of the High Court in Belgrade is debatable, especially regarding the trials against members of the ARBiH who were in the docks.³⁷ In this regard, the case of Ilija Jurišić, where they wanted to prove his responsibility for the attack on the “Tuzla column” in every possible way, is particularly interesting. After the verdict and a 12-year trial, Jurišić was acquitted before the Appellate court.³⁸ Arrests of members of the ARBiH in Serbia continue.

If one goes into a deeper analysis of the proceedings the Serbs have conducted against members of the VRS, members of “volunteer” units or political leaders of certain self-proclaimed “Serb” municipalities before the judiciary in Serbia, one can doubt their sincere intentions, given the manner in which the proceedings against them are conducted. For example, it was shown during the proceedings that numerous witnesses for the defense were actually themselves perpetrators of crimes against innocent civilians, primarily Bosniaks. The punishments for individual criminals are small and the fact that some suspects have been acquitted is incredible. In this sense, an adequate example is certainly the case of the members of the “Simo’s Chetniks” unit, who are responsible for the crimes in Skočić against Zvornik’s Roma population. They were ultimately released from responsibility for the crimes committed, regardless of the large amount of evidence and the testimony of surviving witnesses, many of whom were eyewitnesses to the crime.³⁹

Zorić, Ognjen (2011) Ratni zločinac Milan Lukić u knjizi negira zločine, *Slobodnaevropa.ba*, https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/srbija_milan_lukic_knjiga_promocija_ratni_zlocini_visegrad/24288165.html ; Sveštenici u Hramu Svetog Save promovisali knjigu koja veliča zločinca Milana Lukića (2011), *banjalukain.com* <https://banjalukain.com/clanak/48673/svestenici-u-hramu-svetog-save-promovisali-knjigu-koja-velica-zlocinca-milana-lukica>

36 Humanitarian Law Fund, Analysis and recommendations for the improvement of regional cooperation in the prosecution of war crimes, Belgrade, 2018, 4.

37 Džaferović o presudi Mujanoviću: Srbija nastavlja progon državljana BiH (2022), *Slobodnaevropa.org*. Available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/dzaferovic-presuda-mujanovic/31841459.html>

38 Huseinović, Samir (2016). Pravda za Iliju Jurišića, *dw.com*. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/hr/ilija-juri%C5%A1i%C4%87-oslobo%C4%91en-optu%C5%Bebe-za-tuzlansku-kolonu/a-19095967>

39 Komarčević, Dušan (2018), Žrtva oslobođenih ‘Siminih četnika’: Za sud ja nisam živ, *Slobodnaevropa.org*. Available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/oslobodjeni-simini-cetnici-zrtva/29336429.html>

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Institutional denial of genocide against Bosniaks and discrimination against returnees in Republika Srpska

There are a number of other activities that try to relativize the aggression, change the character of the war, reduce and minimize the crimes against Bosniak civilians, and exaggerate the crimes against the Serb population.

Discrimination of Bosniak returnees - continuation of the genocidal policy

Obligations from the Dayton Peace Agreement, such as Annex 7, (i.e. the agreement on refugees and displaced persons), which guarantees every resident a safe return and return of property, has not been respected at all. The killing of returnees, insecurity, frequent physical attacks, threats and discrimination in various fields, especially in the denial of Bosniak identity and the RS's constant propagandistic dehumanization have a negative effect on the already small number of returnees. The ban on conducting classes in the Bosnian language and challenging the rights of Bosniak returnees to have their language called Bosnian in one part of their country are just some of the consequences of the war and post-war events.⁴⁰ Schools in the RS, which during the aggression often served as places of detention, killing and torture of Bosniaks, have become places where members of the Serb army are glorified. Memorials are being built for them in schoolyards and memorial rooms in schools.⁴¹ Orthodox iconography dominates in RS schools, and the structure of employees, school board members and school directors does not correspond to the structure of the student bodies in schools. For example, Orthodox priests welcomed children in Vlasenica at the beginning of the school year, despite there being a large percentage of Bosniaks in the school and such a practice is carried out throughout the RS.⁴²

One of the specifics of the genocide against Bosniaks, which is also important to point out, is the continued attempts to prevent a culture of remembrance of the genocide from developing. In most primary and secondary schools of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the exception of certain cantons of the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Greater Serb aggression and genocide against Bosniaks are insufficiently studied. At universities, the study of subjects dealing with the genocide against Bosniaks is a rare phenomenon.

Therefore, the harassment of returnees has continued in various ways until today. For example, the case of the intrusion of Vlado Ristanović (accused of war

40 See more: Liplje (Zvornik): Nastavak borbe za Bosanski jezik (2021), *podrinjemedia.ba* <https://podrinjemedia.ba/2021/09/20/liplje-zvornik-nastavak-borbe-za-bosanski-jezik-video/>

41 Besić, Vesna (2022) Nekad mjesta susreta: Škole i domovi adaste u BiH poprišta egzekucija, *AA.com* Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/ba/balkan/nekad-mjesta-susreta-%C5%A1kole-i-domovi-kulture-u-bih-popri%C5%A1ta-egzekucija/2611206>

42 Dautović, Miralem (2017) Salkić pozvao OHR I OSCE da spriječe diskriminaciju Bošnjaka u RS-u, *rtvtk.ba*, Available at: <https://rtvtk.ba/salkic-pozvao-ohr-i-osce-da-sprijece-diskriminaciju-bosnjaka-u-rs-u/>

crimes before the Bosnian judiciary), and his lawyers into the village of Jusići in Zvornik, is the latest in a series of attacks on the dignity of the surviving victims and relatives of the victims, that is, returnees to their homes. In 1992, Jusići was the site of several crimes committed against Bosniaks. Ristanović arrived in the village, accompanied by his lawyers, allegedly to inspect the houses, cellars, stables and other locations mentioned in the court process. The families who were exposed to the unannounced “visit” and who were traumatized by that act blocked the lawyers and the accused from entering the village. They subsequently received calls from PS Kozluk (MUP of the RS – ministry of the interior) to testify against charges for disturbing the peace and order, which traumatized them even more.⁴³

It is also important to emphasize the fact that the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the equality of peoples across the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina have not been implemented substantively in RS, merely formally. “Bosniaks and Croats do not have constitutional and institutional protection in RS like Serbs in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These asymmetric solutions in the competences of the House of Peoples and the Council of Peoples, as well as the president and vice-president in both entities should be eliminated if we are talking about real equality,”⁴⁴ emphasizes Ramiz Salkić. He called on Schmidt to take steps to eliminate asymmetric solutions in the constitutions of the entities, and systemic discrimination carried out by the government of RS, which has drastic consequences for those Bosniaks living there today compared to the number of Bosniaks who lived in this entity even ten years ago. Salkić notes: “The goal of the government in this entity is to realize war goals and ethnically cleanse the entity of the RS in the next ten years through silent persecution and turn it into a purely Serb territory. That is why they carry out systemic discrimination by preventing Bosniaks from being employed in public institutions, entity and local bodies, which prevented between 10,000 and 15,000 Bosniaks from obtaining employment in these institutions.”⁴⁵ Although the focus of the new high representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina is clearly on the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it should definitely be on RS.

The adoption of various unconstitutional laws in the National Assembly of RS, including the law that punishes those who speak the truth and facts about the crimes and genocide underpinning the creation of the RS, crimes and genocide, “further deepens the gap between the authorities in this entity and those who ad-

43 Incident u Jusićima: Mještane isprovocirali advokati optuženih Srba za ratne zločine u ovom selu (2022) *Klix.ba* Available at: <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/incident-u-jusicima-mjestane-isprovocirali-advokati-optuzenih-srba-za-ratne-zlocine-u-ovom-selu/220721149>

44 Ramiz Salkić uputio pismo visokom predstavniku Christianu Schmidtu (2021) *NI BiH*, Available at: <https://ba.n1info.com/vijesti/ramiz-salkic-uputio-pismo-visokom-predstavniku-christianu-schmidtu/>

45 Ibid

vocate truth and justice, and that are above all victims of brutal crimes throughout this entity.”⁴⁶ The High Representative is obliged, and his mandate also obliges him, to react to occurrences that violate the Dayton Peace Agreement and threaten the peace.

In addition to a series of other occurrences, it is also important to point out that the returnees in the RS are living the new “agrarian reform”. The authorities of the RS want to complete the genocidal goals by “confiscating Bosniak land from the territory of the RS from which the Bosniaks were expelled, based on the 2018 *Law on the Survey and Cadaster of the RS* by which the Serbs are now trying to erase from the land registers Bosniaks as the owners of the land, and their property to be registered to the Republika Srpska”.⁴⁷

The latest cases of pressure on returnees and the messages of the discriminatory idea that an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. Republika Srpska belongs only to Serbs and Orthodox - and that there is no place for others - is gaining in importance and institutional support. The planting of bombs on the properties of Bosniak returnees in Foča supports this.⁴⁸

Conclusion

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, even in peace, the “breaking” of the state and society is continued by other methods: various forms of political pressure, discrimination and segregation. Adding particular pressure is the continued falsification of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the denial of its statehood and the denial of Bosniak national identity. Convicted war criminals are celebrated, hatred for the country where young people were born develops, and loyalty to Serbia and Croatia is glorified and expressed. There are constant provocations by political leaders who threaten secession, and the special ties of Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats with Serbia and Croatia are developing. Among other numerous occurrences, it should be emphasized that there are frequent threats on social networks, usurpation of private Bosniak property, the impossibility of employment in the public sector for Bosniaks, obstacles to Euro-Atlantic integration, etc.

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Salkić, Jakub. (2021). Etničko čišćenje iz zemljišnih knjiga, *Stav*, Available at: <https://stav.ba/vijest/etnicko-ciscenje-iz-zemljisnih-knjiga/4577>. See also: Dozić, Faruk (2021), “The principle of registration and the principle of trust in the process of establishing the real estate cadaster in the Republika Srpska”, in: *Proceedings: Genocide against Bosniaks, Srebrenica 1995-2020: Causes, scale and consequences*, (Sarajevo-Tuzla, Institute for Research on Crimes against Humanity and International Law UNSA, UNSA, UNTZ, Institute of History UNSA), Sarajevo-Tuzla, 2021, pp. 869-886. “adaster”.

⁴⁸ Foča: Ervin Kiselica došao brati šljive, komšije Srbi mu postavili bombu (2022) *Faktor.ba*. Available at: <https://www.faktor.ba/vijest/foca-ervin-kiselica-dosao-brati-sljive-komsije-srbimu-postavili-bombu-/172337>

Driving these efforts is a strong coordinated engagement by both private individuals and the authorities in Serbia and the RS, who in different ways lead the fight to change the narrative about the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against the Bosniaks. The Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina certainly contributes to this, which seems to have focused on filing as many indictments as possible against members of the ARBiH. For numerous mass crimes against Bosniaks remaining to be investigated, no investigations carried out, or those that are last for years - and for most of them there are no concrete results. At the same time, the engagement of the official bodies of Serbia, which support the efforts aimed at denying the facts established by the courts, is noticeable. Serbia, which has become a safe haven for persons suspected and accused of crimes against Bosniaks, has also taken a leading role in denying the genocide in public discourse.

We believe that it is important that those who follow or believe in the ideology that led to aggression and genocide as the correct path, need to begin to examine their own views on the events that took place. After that, it is important to fundamentally and completely reject this evil ideology, accept and recognize the court verdicts and scientifically established facts about the crimes committed in the name of this evil ideology, which actually represents the only way to true reconciliation. Everything else is in favor of that Great Serbian ideology, which is very much alive.

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*SAIMA LOJIĆ – DURAKOVIĆ
Contributions, No. 50

*University of Sarajevo - Institute of
History, Sarajevo, 2021, p. 464*

REVIEW

pages 84-88

The leading institution of scientific research in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Institute of History, which is in the forefront in every aspect compared to other institutions. According to its work, the Institute as an institution that deals with the study and promotion of Bosnian historiography is recognizable not only in the region but also in the world. The Institute has achieved numerous successes in the publishing business. One of the greatest success is certainly the journal *Contributions / Prilozi*, which in the process of being published went through thorny paths in order to finally establish itself as the most important historiographical journal in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Proof of many years of dedicated work is the fiftieth jubilee issue of the journal *Contributions*, which was published by valuable employees and associates of the Institute of History, for whom the famous saying “no pain – no gain” counts. This issue is dedicated to the late Kemal Bašić, who was an employee of the Institute. The fiftieth issue of the *Contributions* consists of 10 articles, 2 professional contributions, 7 reviews and the column *In Memoriam*.

In the first paper entitled *Poznanovići nobles of Trebinje*, the author Esad Kurtović discusses the Poznanovići, Trebinje nobles, of which special attention was paid to Duke Vukoslav Poznanović. Although the knowledge of him is quite scarce, a thorough review of historical sources still gives us some information about this important nobleman. The most significant members of this aristocratic family were Poznan and his sons Vukoslav and Ostoja Poznanović. Vukoslav was first mentioned in 1397 and last in 1419. The author of the second article entitled *Ottoman Military Cemetery in Malta - a contribution to the study of monuments of Islamic civilization* is Irena Kolaj Ristanović. The author writes about an extremely interesting topic pointing out the necessary protection of the Ottoman immovable cultural heritage. The Ottoman military cemetery was built by Sultan Abdelaziz in 1874. It is common knowledge that tombstones are traditional memorials in Ottoman and Islamic civilization. The author concludes that the Ottoman cemetery in Malta is a unique expression of an artist whose inspiration lies in the magnificence, beauty, harmony and orderliness of Muslim traditional architecture.

Nakazava Takuja is the author of the article *The Eastern Question through the lens of the Far East: Japanese Views on the Uprisings in Herzegovina (1861-1878)* in which he analyzes Japanese geographical books, newspapers and travelogues and discusses their views on Herzegovina and the uprising against the Ottoman Empire. Although Europe was unknown to Japan, they began to receive information through certain media about what was happening in Herzegovina. The Japanese thought of Herzegovina as a model of their colonial rule in Taiwan and Korea, and viewed it in the light of their situation as they wavered between the idea that Japan was a powerful country and the idea that the Japanese were a small oppressed people like those in the Balkans. The author of the next article entitled *Waqf Orphanage in Sarajevo from its Founding to the end of the First*

World War is Mehmed Hodžić. Based on archival material, the author shows development path from the idea to the realization of the establishment of an orphanage that aimed to care for poor Muslim orphans, as well as how the orphanage functioned. He provides information on the organization of life in the orphanage, whose main goal was to create moral and noble people who would be of benefit to the wider social community in the future. He concludes that the *Waqf-Maarif / Vakuf Mearif* administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by establishing the Orphanage, showed that it was ready to deal with the problems of the wider community.

Muhamed Nametak is the author of the next article entitled *The Question of Responsibility for the Outbreak of the First World War in World Historiography* in which he discusses the views of warring countries on the question of responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War. Nametak believes that the First World War is the greatest topic on which historians could not agree, because there are always too many questions that cannot be answered. Milorad Ekmečić believed that the historical cause of the war should be sought in the aggressive policy of Austria - Hungary in the Balkans, and admitted that deeper causes should be sought in the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its annexation. However, Nametak concludes that historians probably will not reach consensus on the issue of responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War. Aleksandra Pijuk-Pejčić is the author of an article entitled *Infectious Diseases in Sarajevo (1918-1928)*. Due to the consequences of the First World War, the population of Sarajevo suffered from various diseases that often turned into epidemics. The author states that the city population worked on controlling diseases, while in the countryside this was not the case. In general, the work was hindered by a very low sense of hygiene of the residents, because lack of it was one of the main causes of the disease.

The next article in the jubilee issue of the journal *Contributions* is *Culture for the people and / or for the government. Establishment and activity of the Cultural Association of Muslims 'Preporod' with special reference to the work of the Main Board and the Local Board of Sarajevo in the period 1945-1949* and the author is Semir Hadžimusić. Based on historical sources, the author examines the activities of the Cultural Association of Muslims 'Preporod', but also touches on the state of society and the attitude of the communist regime towards national associations in the period 1945-1949. He points out that everything was subordinated to the communist government, including cultural associations. For all activities, the leaders of 'Preporod' had to send requests to the communist government. The government considered such associations unnecessary, which eventually led to their extinction. Antonio Pehar is the author of the next article entitled *On the Characteristics of National Ideologies as Factors in the Political and Social Development of Bosnia and* in which he states that three ideologies have been

identified in BiH: Serbian appropriating ideology, Croatian sentimental ideology with expansionist elements and Bosniak defensive ideology. He believes that opposing the national ideas and goals is of decisive influence on social and political relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The next article is entitled *Political and National Polarization in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Projects of 'Regionalization' in 1991*, in which the author Jasmin Medić analyses the processes of declaring illegal autonomous regions and communities. The last article of the jubilee fiftieth issue of the *Contributions* journal, and no less important than the others, is the article by Ermin Kuka entitled *The role of the Serbian Democratic Party in the occupation of Višegrad in 1992 and committing of crimes against Bosniaks*. In this article Kuka states that the political and military activities of the Serbian Democratic Party were aimed at breaking up Bosnian society from within, which resulted in committing the greatest crimes in Europe. Everything was done in a planned way in order to create ethnically pure Serbian areas on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The jubilee issue of the journal also contains a section of professional articles with two papers. The first work is by Omer Merzić entitled *On the occasion of the 50th issue: bibliometric analysis of the journal Contributions of the Institute of History (No. 1-49)* in which he analyses 49 issues of the journal by the following parameters: volume of each issue, frequency, number, scope and type of papers, editors-in-chief, editorial boards and authors of papers. The second paper entitled *From traditional print to digital form: digitization of the journal Contributions of the Institute of History* is by Anida Ibrčić. She discusses the digitization of the journal, emphasizing the need for digitization because it is easier to search and cite while respecting rights of authors and publishers.

This issue contains 7 reviews of recent historiographical editions. These are: Panos Sophoulis, *Banditry in the Medieval Balkans, 800-1500*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, 201. (Almir Peco), Enes Pelidija, *Osmanisti Bosne i Hercegovine do kraja 20. stoljeća – biografski i bibliografski podaci (The Ottomans of Bosnia and Herzegovina until the end of the 20th century – biographical and bibliographic data)*, vol. 1; *Osmanisti Bosne i Hercegovine do početka 21. stoljeća – biografski i bibliografski podaci (The Ottomans of Bosnia and Herzegovina until the beginning of the 21th century – biographical and bibliographic data)*, vol. 2. Mostar: Federalno ministarstvo obrazovanja i nauke (Federal Ministry of Education and Science), 2019 and 2020, 237 and 469. (Adis Zilić), Mario Katić, *Domorodci i gospodari. Historijsko – antropološka studija stvaranja bosanskohercegovačkog grada Vareša (Natives and masters. Historical - anthropological study of the creation of the Bosnian city of Vareš)*. Sarajevo, Zagreb: Buybook, 2020, 144. (Mirza Džananović), Dominique Kirchner Reil, *The Fiume Crisis: Life in the Wake of the Habsburg Empire*. Cambridge: Belknap press of Harvard University press, 2020, 312. (Mitsutoshi Inaba), Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Jugoistočna Evropa: globalna*

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We would like to express our sincere congratulations to the editorial board, publisher, authors, contributors and all those who worked on to the journal *Contributions*. It is worth noting that this large number of journals is a legacy and endowment to us young historians to follow in the footsteps of valuable scientists from the Institute; to work, read, research and write because the word that is remembered disappears but the word that is written remains forever.

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*ALEN NUHANović
Historical searches, No. 20

*University of Sarajevo – Institute of
History, Sarajevo, 2021, p. 492*

REVIEW

pages 90-95

We really don't need to dwell on a short review dedicated to the scientific reputation of the Institution that published not only this historiographical periodical, but also numerous other scientific publications, because whoever is professionally engaged in historical science or seriously monitors historiographical production in the region, Europe and the world, or at least the Bosnian bibliography of historiographical works, knows how much contribution in the field of historiography has provided and continues to provide the Institute and its scientific research sector, which in the form of research archives as well as writing and publishing all kinds of works from almost all historical periods, broadens the horizons of the audience interested in its products, and especially stimulates academic circles by contributing its historiographical results to the further development of historical science and related sciences and disciplines. Therefore, we will try to present the contents of this fresh historiographical publications in the most transparent way possible.

The editor-in-chief of the 20th issue is Dr. Dženita Sarač-Rujanac, senior research associate at the UNSA Institute of History. What makes special this jubilee issue, but also the Journal in general, among other things, is the International Editorial Board, composed of eminent experts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Turkey. "Searches" in this issue consistently remain in the positive tradition of publishing scientific and professional papers in English by authors from the Western Balkans, enhancing its academic visibility and resulting in promotion and affirmation of the results of the academic historiographical community of Western Balkans in a broader academic community.

When it comes to the conception of the Journal, it consists of the well-established Editor's Word and two basic sections. The first section is *Articles*, whose content is the most extensive, while the second section, *Reviews*, is smaller but not less important when compared to the first part. *Reviews* present recent BiH historiographical achievements. There are ten articles in the Articles section, as many as eight original scientific papers, one review paper and one reprint of a scientific paper. The *Reviews* section contains five professional papers. The authors are diverse, so this issue of the Journal was created and enriched with the works and articles by scientists and young researchers from primarily Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia, i.e. from the Western Balkans. The topics covered by the authors and the results of these researches sent to the address of the Editorial Board of "Historical Searches" for publication are also diverse, so there is something for everyone, from medieval to modern history. This is one of many positive features of this renowned historiographical journal.

The first paper in the *Articles* section is the original scientific paper *Kudelinović nobles of Trebinje* (pp. 11-65), by university professor Esad Kurtović. It is a small

study in which the author through historical sources (mostly unpublished archival material of Dubrovnik origin from the State Archives in Dubrovnik (DAD), published first-class sources of Dubrovnik and Ottoman origin and relevant historiographical literature) recognizes the Kudelinović family as significant nobles in the Trebinje area and follows its development during the 14th and 15th centuries, or, as the author states, through three generations. Located in the area of Trebinje's Površa next to the Dubrovnik Parish on Dubrovnik territory, they controlled part of the main road from Dubrovnik to eastern Bosnia and Nikšić, which they exploited in various illegal ways (according to Dubrovnik sources, most of the road robbery is linked to Kudelinović's representatives). Also, at the end of the paper, the author presents the genealogical tree of the Kudelinović nobles of Trebinje.

The next work is by Valentina Šoštarić, categorized as an original scientific work due to the abundant use of unpublished and published archival material from the State Archives in Dubrovnik, as well as historiographical literature in the form of books, articles, unpublished doctoral dissertations, etc., entitled *Dubrovnik diplomatic gifts sent to High Port 1430-1458* (pp. 67-114). This paper, roughly speaking, is a story or analysis of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Dubrovnik and the Ottoman Empire in the specified period of the 15th century. More precisely, the first diplomatic contact with the Ottoman Empire was established by the Republic of Dubrovnik in 1430 by sending its first official diplomatic mission to Istanbul. This link between two countries would become an intensive routine until 1458, when a tributary relationship was established. At the end of the paper, the author presents detailed tables listing gifts, i.e. details of diplomatic gifts exchanged in that period. This paper aimed to point out the importance of gifts as a means of nonverbal communication, because it was a social or diplomatic phenomenon, which in the sphere of diplomacy had significant consequences for achieving current or future goals of the Republic, greatly influencing further historical development.

In her work *Icons by Boka Kotorska Masters in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (pp. 115-142), Ljiljana Stošić writes about the autochthonous Risan or Boka Kotorska school of painting, which, according to Stošić, is "one of the lesser-known Western European cultural and artistic phenomena". Prior to the publication of this paper, which is an analysis of a scattered collection of 25 icons by iconographers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, many icons of the same painting school from Serbia, Croatia and Northern Macedonia were much better known. Thus, the icons of masters Dimitrijević-Rafailović and Maksim Tujković from BiH, according to the author, are "a link ... missing from the fragmented and insufficiently studied icons in galleries, museums, monasteries and church treasuries of Montenegro *in situ*". The author expresses hope that more works by Risan masters will be found in BiH and that this almost two centuries old, largest regional collection of icons

in the Balkans will be completed. The author's work actually follows the 180-year continuous activity of five generations of painters from the Dimitrijević-Rafailović family from Risan (1680-1860).

In his paper entitled *Trade Disputes in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Review of Courts, Parties, Cases and Documents of the Early Post-Ottoman Period* (pp. 143-171), Mehmed Bečić analyzes certain legal documents and writes about, according to the author, insufficiently covered topics in the existing legal literature, i.e. the transformation of the commercial judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the second half of the 19th century. The author monitors and sheds light on the situation in the jurisprudence of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the last decade of the Ottoman rule and the five-year post-Ottoman period through legal documents and laws.

Ajdin Muhedinović contributed to this jubilee issue of the Journal with his work *The Attitude of the Authorities of the Independent State of Croatia towards the refugees in Sarajevo during 1941 and 1942* (pp. 173-198), in which he writes about the specific case of Sarajevo during the Second World War. More precisely, Muhedinović analyzes the attitude of the local government of the Independent State of Croatia in Sarajevo towards the large number of Muslim refugees in the period from the autumn of 1941 to the middle of 1942, when the *Alipašić Most* camp was founded. This camp was supposed to solve all the new problems related to refugees, however, it turned out that it was not even close to an ideal solution, because inhumane living conditions prevailed in it, causing a general crisis and struggle for mere survival of people. It is a well-known fact that the Muslim inhabitants of eastern Bosnia were forced to migrate to "more peaceful" areas in BiH due to brutal and mass violence and crimes committed against them by the *Ustashes*, and later the members of the *Ravna gora movement* or *Chetniks*.

The next paper is by Sanja Gladanac-Petrović entitled *Life in Sarajevo under the Anglo-American Bombs (1943-1945)* (pp. 199-258), and the first thing we notice is that the topic of the paper is related to Sarajevo again in the whirlwind of World War II, with a difference in the processed period and the author's focus, which is set on the life of Sarajevans under Anglo-American bombs. Gladanac-Petrović writes about the difficult war experience of Sarajevo in the Second World War, and the Anglo-American bombing of Sarajevo and its surroundings in the period 1943-1945. Although Sarajevo was not the primary target of Anglo-American aviation, the bombing significantly affected the daily lives of Sarajevans.

Nikica Barić, mostly using first-class archives from the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb, writes about the Bosnian town of Odžak during World War II in his paper entitled *A Contribution to Knowledge of Odžak's History in World War* (pp. 259-296). At the beginning of the paper, the author emphasizes that he doesn't offer a complete overview of the history of Odžak in the War. However, through

the example of Odžak, he made an attempt (quite successfully) to supplement the existing research and literature on this topic, but also to contribute to a better understanding of the Second World War in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This paper greatly contributes to breaking down some stereotypical and romanticized depictions, created in the part of Croatian journalism after 1990, related to the war in Odžak, which presented some events as “the struggle of the Croatian people for their survival”. Barić’s work, based on archival material, proves just the opposite, i.e. the participation of the those “struggle bearers” in the crimes committed against Serbs, Croats and Muslims, i.e. Bosniaks.

Siniša Lajnert in his paper *A Contribution to the Knowledge of the Organization of the German Railway Traffic Protection System in the Independent State of Croatia with Special Reference to Bosnian Railways (1941-1945* (pp. 297-337), mainly based on unpublished archives from the Croatian State Archives, and published first-class sources, press and scientific literature, writes about the organization of the German railway traffic protection system in the Independent State of Croatia, and especially about the Bosnian railways in the Independent State of Croatia during World War II. In addition to the organization and operation of the German railway protection system in the Independent State of Croatia, through the sources Lajnert monitors and presents everyday problems and difficulties related to mostly successful and devastating attacks by the People’s Liberation Army on railway infrastructure. Consequently, the German army sought to establish stronger control over the railway system in its area of interest, but, in the long run, to no avail.

Meldijana Arnaut Haseljić in the section *Articles* with the work *Minutes of the Supreme Defense Council (VSO) 1992 - 1993 - Evidence of aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (pp. 339-393), based on the Minutes of the Supreme Defense Council (VSO), writes about indisputable participation of The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the aggression against the sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, and about the crimes committed against humanity and international law. By analyzing the documents, i.e. the minutes from the sessions of the VSO, the author Arnaut Haseljić proved the aggression by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period 1992-1993.

Muhidin Pelešić concludes the *Articles* section in the Journal “Historical Searches” for 2021 with a reprint of his significant scientific work, this time in English, entitled *Bosnia and Herzegovina manipulated by the Serbian Historiography* (pp. 395-443) in which Pelešić convincingly and, of course, substantiatedly writes about the continuity of “ignorance and conscious distortion of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina by most Serbian historians... with the absence of their desire and lack of intellectual ability to really get to know it”.

The part *Reviews* in the jubilee 20th issue of “Searches” contains five reviews of recent historiographical publications, mostly from Bosnian historiographical production. This time, younger authors from Bosnia and Herzegovina contributed to the creation of this segment of the Journal.

It is certain that this issue of “Searches” also has a lot of quality content, and that it did not fail with the offered historiographical reading for professional and ordinary readership. All in all, the 20th issue will inevitably be used within historiographical scientific circles. Accordingly, congratulations can be extended to the UNSA Institute of History for its unwavering publishing and other scientific work, which in a very important way improves not only Bosnian historiography, but also encourages neighboring and other historiographers to further research certain topics and problems, as well as participate in development of historical science in general.

