



Notes from Bosnia

Written by Vladan Lausevic

Free book

*Photo: [Yu Siang Teo](#) via *Unsplash**

Notes from Bosnia

I am writing this book based on my memories and experiences during childhood in Bosnia 1995-2003. The main reason I decided to call my work here as “Notes from Bosnia” is one of my earliest memories after moving to Sweden when I wanted to write down on paper about my painful and stressful experiences mostly based on my experiences from my birthplace Teslic. Today I still remember that in 2004, I wrote around six to seven pages in a Microsoft Word document about my agony with happenings during and after the war.

Sadly, I have not been able to find this document since then and I do not remember all the details. What I remember is that parts of the text were about what I perceived as human stupidity and primitive behaviours. For example that many people, as in Teslic, saw the current convicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic as a “war hero” and a “saint” despite everything that happened during his regime, as mass killings and crimes against humanity plus all economic damage and psychological problems as direct results of his radical nationalist politics.

Already at that time in my early teenage years, I was angry and disgusted by how many people, including persons I knew personally, could behave in such stupid and dehumanising manners by directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, on purpose or through the banality of evil being in favour of poverty, destruction and disorder. For example when my primary school teacher once told us in the classroom how Karadzic, also convicted for genocide, was “our first president of the Serb-Republic”.

By writing this book, I want to do something similar as I tried in my teenage years, but this time it will be more spontaneous as I am daily following what is happening in Bosnia, the Balkans, Europe and the world via Twitter. I want to write new notes from Bosnia and not only from Bosnia but also in the sense of a mirror or reflection of larger contexts and developments. I am making this decision partly because much of my personality has been shaped by my experiences during and after the war in Bosnia and also because I feel a sense of duty to all people who have shaped my personality and behaviours, especially towards my parents, their friends and colleagues who were there for me during many hard and ugly moments as during the end of 1990s.

Also, I want to dedicate my book to our global civilization and humanity divided by nationalism, geopolitics, intergovernmental conflicts and lack of human solidarity and empathy.

Vladan Lausevic

Stockholm 2021-08-30

2020-09-15 Banality of evil and Facebook paradox

Today I saw a post on Facebook made by my former schoolmate during the 1990s in Teslic. The post was representing a politician from the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), one of the oldest parties in Bosnia. It is a party of Serb nationalism, corruption and war crimes. A party that is democratic in name only, and in reality a party for ethnocracy similar to the current development in Eastern Ukraine.

During the war in Bosnia 1992-95, the SDS was the main creator of the Serb Republic as one of the few ethnocracies in Europe. Several party members have since 1995 been sentenced for war crimes, including genocide, as in the case of famous war criminal Radovan Karadzic. In Teslic, several thousand individuals, mainly ethnic Bosniacs and Croats, were exposed for human rights abuses via “ethnic cleansing” and forced confiscation of property. Several hundred were killed or tortured in Teslic during SDS rule.

Even many Bosnian Serbs were mistreated and oppressed by the SDS because they refused to participate in and follow SDS dirty and inhumane politics. Others who were not killed or tortured were subjected to discriminatory and other inhumane behaviours. Like my parents and grandparents, my own family members were submitted to discrimination and abuse by being forced out of their jobs.

The SDS is still one of the main parties in Bosnia, together with the Croat Democratic Party (HDZ) and Party of Democratic Action (SDA) who are Croat nationalist and, respectively, Bosniac nationalist parties. These parties are in different degrees directly responsible for the war in Bosnia, where the SDS played a bigger and critical role by cooperating with the undemocratic and nationalist regime of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia. Serb nationalists in Serbia and Bosnia were planning for the war already from September 1991, almost eight months before the war in Bosnia started via aggression from Serbia.

At the same time, these parties are still popular among Bosnia’s citizens (or people in general) because the mentioned parties are playing on fear, mythology and nationalist identity politics. Such parties behave as if they have a monopoly

on collective identification, making their myths and symbolism powerful. And the sad thing is that most of their voters from the largest ethnic communities are still supporting these parties despite aspects such as war crimes, crime, corruption, abuse of power, economic and psychological damages, bad policies etc.

Bosnia is a modern historical case of how human nature can operate in very brutal, perverse and dangerous terms. People are ready to reward inhumane and destructive behaviours, even poverty, in the name of identification. The banality of evil is also the case with human complexity, or better said, a lack of it on an individual level. We can be morally good and bad at the same time depending on our local environment, our parents, psychological well-being etc.

Sometimes I can feel myself wishing that I did not have Facebook and thereby avoid seeing posts reminding me of Bosnia in the 1990s. But there is also one paradox. Facebook is a global community, and in the future, humans will need even better social platforms and global communities to solve common problems around climate change. So not even those who are authoritarian and extremists are abstaining from being part of something equal to community building beyond the idea of the nation.

2020-09-20 Death of Krajisnik

One of this week's main news stories from Bosnia is the death of Momcilo Krajisnik, one of the leading SDS members in the 1990s and a convicted war criminal. Krajisnik died because of Covid-19. Some weeks before his death, he was in the media to state that he, as a "creator of Serb Republic," should receive 600 Bosnian marks (300 euros) extra per month. In 2012, he was released from jail. He was brought to Bosnia with a helicopter by RS authorities, and hundreds of people gathered in his village to celebrate him as "a hero". One less war criminal makes our world better.

2020-10-07 Death of Alija

My last post was about war criminal Momcilo Krajisnik and how he is still seen as a war hero. Today I am reading about young people giving a “dova” (Muslim prayer) for Alija Izetbegovic, who was Bosnia’s first president. Izetbegovic is famous for many things, including for promoting Islamism and Bosniak nationalism while at the same time communicating about “civic Bosnia ” as a state and society.

Izetbegovic is seen as a national hero and a person who defended Bosnia during the war. His party, SDA (Bosniac nationalists), is still one of the dominating forces in Bosnian politics and is still famous for corruption and other misdeeds. I understand the fact that Izetbegovic was not among those who planned the war in Bosnia but Izetbegovic was not some liberal or conservative nor a person who believed in universal values of freedom and human rights.

For example, he accepted Islamist ideas and wanted Bosnia to be more oriented towards “Muslim countries” rather than being a part of Europe. In Bosnia, it is still common to celebrate people whose political behaviours resulted in misery and destruction.

2020-10-11 From Balkans to Caucasus

During the last two weeks, I have been following the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, called the Nagorno-Karabakh war. I follow it via Twitter, so it is easy to have “live coverage”. Besides what is happening in Ukraine, this is one more war in Europe based on nationalism and politicised religion.

The first war took place in 1992-94, while the conflicts and violence between nationalist Azeris and Armenians started during the 1980s while the Soviet Union was still in existence. In several ways, both the former and the current war reminds of the war in Bosnia and other wars in ex-Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

People are once more blindly and undemocratically fixed to different symbols such as national flags, political leaders, religion and territorial maps. I feel sorry for human suffering while at the same time feeling angry when I read and hear statements such as “we will fight to the death” or “our sons are brave and going

to war”. Such statements are made by individuals who do not understand how they are manipulated by nationalism, authoritarianism and mythology. Many Azeris and Armenians accept such behaviours instead of making demonstrations and revolts against corrupted, anti-democratic and warmongering politicians. As a humanist and a democrat, I do not feel sorry for those who have chosen to support criminal and inhumane behaviours.



2020-10-20 Fake business, fake news

From time to time, I am listening to news from Bosnia via different YouTube channels. One of them is Alternativna Televizija, based in the Serb Republic. Alternativna Televizija means Alternative Televisions, and indeed, it used to be an alternative in a more positive sense as during the 2000s before it was bought by people with connections to the former prime minister and now president of Serb Republic Milorad Dodik, one of the most corrupted, disgusting and populist politicians in the whole Balkan region.

Like many other channels in Western Balkans, Alternativna has a section called “Biznis vijesti” (business news). When listening to such videos, I almost never hear something about private companies and entrepreneurs. Mostly it is about some minister, politician, public company or government spending. Keywords: state-capitalism and ethno-capitalism.

2020-10-28 “Enter ethnocracy”

Via Twitter, I am reading information from BIRN BiH, Balkan Investigative Report Network, a media NGO based in Sarajevo, which specialises in monitoring and reporting on war crimes trials, corruption, organised crime and terrorism cases. This time, they are writing about a company called “New Energy”, linked to Russia based militant and nationalist organisation called Night Wolves, famous for expressing support for Vladimir Putin and their performance during the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

BIRN reports that the company co-owned by Goran Tadic who has not respected the agreement deadlines regarding the construction of a mini-hydro plant in Han Pijesak in their agreement with the Serb Republic ministry of energy and mining. In the case of Tadic, he also works as a driver for Petar Dokic, a minister of energy and mining in the Serb Republic. Corruption in Bosnia is very open at this kind of level. And it is not surprising because the Serb Republic itself was created via corruption, crimes and concentration of misused power. Dokic has been a politician since the 1990s and is used to corruption and criminal behaviour.

2020-10-31 Genocide Street

On Twitter, I am following Bijeljina city’s official account. Among other things, Bijeljina is known for that before the war, a larger part of its population was Bosniacs (Bosnian Muslims as they were called). Large-scale atrocities were committed in the city during the spring of 1992. For example, the famous photo by photo-journalist Ron Haviv was taken in Bijeljina, who witnessed how the Belgrade government-sponsored paramilitary group “Tigrovi” (Tigers) led by Zeljko Raznatovic “Arkan” famous for war crimes as in Croatia.



The famous photo taken by Ron Haviv

In today's tweet, the city informs that a new street will be called "9th January" also known as the "Serb Republic day". City's mayor Mico Micic had stated that "9th January" was the day when the Serb Republic started." Such an important date deserves to be in the name of a city that we are going to build together with the government (RS)".

This statement is perverted and disgusting. It basically means that the city of Bijeljina is glorifying the creation of the Serb Republic based on crimes, corruption, human rights violations, "ethnic cleansing", rapes etc. Also, this is not the only problem.

An additional problem exists, concerning constitutionalism. Celebrating 9th January as "Serb Republic National Day" is against the decision of Bosnia's constitutional court, which is the highest court in the country.

Therefore, it would be more suitable to call this street with some of the following names:

- Genocide Street
- Victims of War Crimes Street
- Anti-Corruption Street

For more information about nationalist identity politics in Bosnia and what happened in Bijeljina during and after the war, I recommend reading historian Edin Hajdarpasic's text.

2020-11-06 Sarajevo officially a “mine-free” city



Toby Vogel @tobyvogel · 22h

...

25 years after the end of the war, [#Sarajevo](#) is now free of landmines. Spare a thought for the 600+ civilians and 50+ professional deminers who were killed by landmines across [#BiH](#) *after* the war.



Grad Sarajevo je nakon 25 godina od rata konačno oslobođen od mina
Više od šest miliona kvadratnih metara sumnjive površine sada je
sigurno za sve stanovnike i posjetioce Sarajeva i okolnih planina, ...

[klix.ba](#)

During my last year of high school in Sweden, I attended life-science lectures where we as students were learning about aspects such as labour laws, sexuality, social skills etc. One of my classmates asked me if we had anything similar in Bosnia. My answer was no, and I explained that I emigrated from Bosnia after finishing 7th grade, and that as a pupil I had mine-awareness education. If I remember right, it was already during 4th grade when mine experts came to my school to teach us about risks for mines that were still existing around Teslic due to the war.

Living with an awareness that anti-personnel, anti-tank, and other anti-human mines were existing around you was not easy and felt horrifying. For me, it was about feelings that Bosnia was destroyed and socially poisoned by such equipment and that we as kids and other inhabitants were limited in our freedom of movement. Thinking about the mines often made me nervous and afraid. Also, one day I and my classmates were shocked by the news that the school's maintenance man was killed by a mine when he was gathering firewood in one forest at one of the hills.

Also, I remember that at the beginning of the 2000s, it was stated in politics and media that Bosnia would be “mine-free” before 2010. Now it is 2020, and that is still not the case. But at least Sarajevo is.

2020-11-16 “Burning down the house”

The six-week war between Armenia and Azerbaijan has finished. And as usual, most losers are on both sides among the civilian population. There are many aspects from the whole situation that remind me about Bosnia and other parts of Yugoslavia. During the last few days I have read several tweets about ethnic Armenians who are burning down their houses before leaving villages and towns that will now be part of Azerbaijan.



Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty @RFERL · 9m

Azerbaijanis who fled the Nagorno-Karabakh region during the 1990s conflict with Armenians are now looking forward to returning to their home villages. But as Armenians left, they were burning their **houses** and ripping down electricity poles.



Similar scenes took place, for example around Sarajevo as in the area of Grbavica after the war. During the war, Grbavica was under control by Bosnian Serb armed forces and in accordance with the Dayton peace agreement, it was reintegrated with Sarajevo. Before many Bosnian Serbs left the area, several buildings, houses and other objects were set on fire. When it comes to Armenia and Azerbaijan, this is one more example of human stupidity, uncivilised and primitive behaviours.



SniperAlley.Photo @SniperAlleyPhot · Nov 13

Da dopunimo radi konteksta.

[#Grbavica](#) 1996

Photo © Mark H. Milstein



2020-11-18 A university with a genocidal certificate

In Bosnia, the city of Pale is famous for many relevant things for the war period 1992-95. Among other things Pale was the original “capital” of the Serb Republic. More about what happened in Pale during the war, you can read in a book by Mladen Vuksanovic, who Serb nationalists terrorised in the spring and summer of 1992.

Since a few years back, there is a student home in Pale called after Radovan Karadzic, a convicted war criminal including for genocide in Srebrenica. Despite all war crimes, corruption, and other criminal behaviours, Karadzic is still seen as a hero, more or less by most Bosnian Serbs. Often, Karadzic is presented as “the founding father” or “the first president of the Serb Republic”.

Dodik popustio, studentski dom više se neće zvati „Radovan Karadžić“. Nego „Ratko Mladić“!

TWITTER IZ DANA U DAN: Ako je Peđa Kojović četnik zbog 1991., šta je onda oficir JNA Nedžad Ajnadžić? Je li Republika KCUS čestitala Bidenu? Šta je Josip Grubeša uradio Marku Radiću? Šta Sarajevo poručuje Vijećnicom u bojama američke zastave?



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by Analiziraj.ba | posted on November 11, 2020

Zašto Nedo Lepir želi Puhalovu njonjaru učiniti većom?
by Srdan Puhalo | posted on November 2, 2020

Via portal Analiziraj.ba.

The photo of the Student Center in Pale where the student home is called “Dr Radovan Karadzic”. In the photo, one can see Milorad Dodik, Karadzic’s wife and daughter. And the students made a statement proclaiming that: *the thought of Radovan Karadzic will live forever through all residents of Serb Republic, especially through us students who will for every respect and remember him.*

This statement was a “reaction” against Valentin Inzko, the international community’s high-representative in BiH. One does not have to be a rocket scientist or a student to realise that Bosnia residents will not have a wealthy, peaceful and democratic future with such students.

2020-11-20 Elections 2020

One of the absolute highlighted news today is that Joe Biden won the presidential elections in the USA. After all, the whole world is being affected by policies and decisions made in Washington. Hopefully, things could improve in a more democratic and globalising way now that Trump will leave the presidential office.

Biden has many problems, such as around the military-industrial problematic policies concerning global governance and American federalism. At the same time, choosing between Biden and Trump, as for Europe, was not a choice between cholera and plague, as liberal intellectual Ilya Somin puts it regarding immigration and mobility.

Biden is also famous for his actions during the war in Bosnia, where he supported the Bosnian government led by Bosniak nationalist president Alija Izetbegovic. It cannot be said that Biden supported Izetbegovic’s ideology, but supported Bosnia as a country. Still, Biden supported that the Bosnian government should receive support from the USA rather than support Islamist regimes like Iran. Therefore, Biden was also in favour of military intervention in Bosnia.

For that history and many other reasons, there are different reactions towards Biden in Bosnia. Positive reactions are often found among Bosniacs, while negative reactions are found more often among those individuals who are Serbs. One of those who is not happy is the member of BiH presidency from the Serb

community Milorad Dodik, who, like other “mini-Trumps” in Western Balkans, endorsed Trump during the elections. And currently, corrupt and primitive politicians such as Dodik are not happy because of the latest Bosnian local election results.



Jasmin Mujanović ✓

@JasminMuj

Then Sen. Joe Biden in Sarajevo, April 9, 1993, during possibly the most difficult year of the siege. Biden was on the right sight of history in Bosnia. He understands the stakes in the region and Europe, as a whole. A lot of cautious optimism tonight in BiH but also Kosovo.



I do not follow the elections in Bosnia because things take place as “same as usual” where etno-nationalist parties are dominating. However, the recent elections have been more different and include some new aspects compared to the former ones. I want to take the following examples from Sarajevo and Banjaluka.

In Sarajevo, the election winners were a coalition consisting of social liberals and social-democrats. At the same time, the losers were Bosniac nationalists from the SDA party, the same party that Izetbegovic created. Now one has to keep in mind that all parties in Bosnia are more or less corrupted and have different problems.

In contrast, the victory of parties such as Naša Stranka (I used to be a member there during 2015-16) sends new signals, symbology and sessions around democratic, civic and universal values. One new mayor of Sarajevo’s municipalities will be Srdjan Mandic, Serb, and the mayor of Sarajevo city will be Bogdan Bogicevic. The latter is a Serb and mostly famous for being the last member of the Yugoslav intergovernmental presidency from Bosnia. He opposed Slobodan Milosevic's plans for war and Great Serbia.

In Banjaluka, Dodik’s party lost the elections and thereby lost their mayor's office. The new mayor is going to be a young politician called Drasko Stanivukovic. Keeping in mind all the corruption, ethnocracy and bigotry in the Serb Republic, Stanivukovic is seen as one of the few “real” opposition figures famous for his anti-corruption stances.

However, at the same time, Stanivukovic is not free from nationalist and even far-right behaviours. For example, he is not admitting that what happened in Srebrenica in July 1995 was genocide, and he is proud of having the name of his uncle who “gave his life for the Serb Republic”. If he really thinks so personally or that he has to behave like that to be in politics and make a difference, the question is if he really thinks so personally or that he has to behave like that. I would say that both aspects are the case.

Izbori u Bosni: Konobar uspešniji od političara, Dodik kaže da Banjaluci ništa neće faliti

Marija Janković
BBC novinarka

16 novembar 2020

Ažurirano 18 novembar 2020



Via BBC

2020-11-22 Dayton 4ever

There is a city named Dayton in the US state of Ohio. It is a city that is known in principle by every Bosnian and many Serbians, Croats and others in the Balkans. Twenty-five years ago my father took me to his friends so we could watch a TV-news together. The war in Bosnia had just ended and we were about to hear about the peace agreement. Watching TV felt like a luxury because power shortages were part of everyday life.

That night in November, it was the first time I remember seeing Milosevic on the TV-screen and I was happy about meeting with my father because most of the war period I spent in Banjaluka with my father's relatives. At that time I knew that my father was happy because he hated the war and all the politics around it.

All generations of Bosnians born after 1995 have grown up in what is called "Dejtonska Bosna" meaning "Dayton Bosnia". Dayton agreement, written at the US Air Force military base, brought peace because it functioned as a fire extinguisher. However, the war "continued via politics". After the war, my parents hoped that people in general would realise that nationalist politics were horrible and that Bosnia needed a civic and European future. Soon, they as many others became disappointed to realise that things will not go in that direction.



New York Times OTD @OnThisDayNYT · 45m

The front page #OTD in 1995. The Dayton Agreement is initialed at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, near Dayton, Ohio, ending three and a half years of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. #nytimes

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The New York Times

Late Edition
New York, Tuesday, November 22, 1995
High 45. Tonight, partly cloudy, chilly. Low 33. Tomorrow, mostly cloudy. High 48. Yesterday, high 54, low 43. Details are on page B16.

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**ACCORD REACHED TO END THE WAR IN BOSNIA;
CLINTON PLEDGES U.S. TROOPS TO KEEP PEACE**

**All Sides Make Concessions
To End 4 Years of Conflict**

By ELAINE SCHOLINSKY

DAYTON, Ohio, Nov. 21 — The presidents of three rival Balkan states agreed today to make peace in Bosnia, ending nearly four years of bitter and ethnic-killing conflict that have left a quarter of a million people dead in the worst war in Europe since World War II.

The leaders — Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia, Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, and Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia — initialed the peace agreement and it assumes in a hastily-arranged ceremony in the same conference room at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base where they opened their talks 21 days ago.

The agreement is to take effect when it is formally signed by the parties in Paris in mid-December. Unlike previous peace accords that have collapsed, this one was endorsed by widespread signing of a pact that the signatories would pull their people from their homes and stop the war with scenes of harrowing atrocities, and by the promise of enforcement by United Nations troops. President Clinton, having the agreement in a White House room

the accord — "it offers tangible hope that there will be no more days of deluge, no more winters of freshly dug graves, no more years of isolation from the outside world."

But underneath the self-congratulatory of today's ceremony was a grim realization that the peace terms the parties failed to settle before the war remain: Can Bosnia, with its mutually suspicious populations of Muslims, Serbs and Croats, survive as a single state? What degree of self-government should be given to the Serbs living within its borders? And does Mr. Milosevic have the power to force the Serbs of Bosnia to do what he says?

Today the Bosnian Serb representatives who served in a delegation headed by Mr. Milosevic did not show up for the ceremony to initial the various annexes that affect the Serbian part of Bosnia.

The Bosnian Serbs were particularly upset by the military annexes in the agreement, which they charged essentially made NATO an occupying force. American and European negotiators said.

Study Finds Doctors Refuse Patients' Requests on Death

HIGHLIGHTS

TERRITORY Bosnia would maintain its current borders, but be divided into two.

SERBIA Slobodan Milosevic, President

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA Alija Izetbegovic, President


CROATIA Franjo Tudjman, President

UNITED STATES Warren Christopher, Secretary of State

Dayton is still keeping the peace but also led Bosnia to become one of the most corrupted and complicated political entities in the world. Bosnia has three entities with respective governments, 14 cantons, three presidents and the majority of people who wish they could leave somewhere else. Switzerland is a federation as well but at least has a well-functioning democracy, a single government and also a globalised country.

An interesting thing is that Dayton is not an “American” nor “Western creation”. The fact is that a similar system existed when Bosnia and Herzegovina was a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, in accordance with the 1912 constitution. At that time, most of the members in the Bosnian parliament were Serbs/Orthodox Christians because almost one half of Bosnia was populated by Serbs.

Twenty-five years ago, I was listening to criminals and disgusting politicians. Tonight I am going to listen to the Swedish PM about the Corona situation. Such a flashback.



Remembering Srebrenica ✓ @SrebrenicaUK · Nov 21

25 years ago, the **Dayton** Peace Agreement was reached ending the brutal war and genocide in Bosnia. While it brought peace to the region, the growing rise of nationalism continues to cause issue in the progress of the country. The work for a better and multi-ethnic BiH must go on.

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A/50/790
S/1995/999
English
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Annexment

GENERAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR PEACE
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (the "Parties"),

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive settlement to bring an end to the tragic conflict in the region,

Desiring to contribute toward that end and to promote an enduring peace and stability,

Affirming their commitment to the Agreed Basic Principles issued on September 8, 1995, the Further Agreed Basic Principles issued on September 26, 1995, and the cease-fire agreements of September 14 and October 5, 1995,

Making the agreement of August 29, 1995, which authorized the delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to sign, on behalf of the Republika Srpska, the parts of the peace plan concerning it, with the obligation to implement the agreement that is reached strictly and consequently,

Have agreed as follows:

Article I

The Parties shall conduct their relations in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter, as well as the Helsinki Final Act and other documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. To

A/50/790
S/1995/999
English
Page 5

DONE at Paris, this 21st day of November, 1995, in the Bosnian, Croatian, English and Serbian languages, each text being equally authentic.

<p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">For the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 10px 0;">A.D.</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">For the Republic of Croatia</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 10px 0;">H</p>	<p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin: 0;">For the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; margin: 10px 0;">S</p>						
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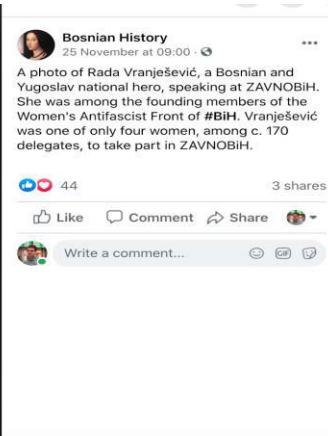
2020-11-20 “Republic days”

Today is Republic day, or better said it was the republic day of Yugoslavia. My grandfather from my father's side used to love this day because of his membership in the communist party and loyalty to the state and because it was his own birthday. Sadly, my grandfather spent most of his adult life as a person with authoritarian values and as a supporter of Serb nationalism despite that it was officially forbidden in Yugoslavia, especially within the communist party.

For example, despite living in Bosnia, my grandfather, in principle, always listened to the news and read newspapers from Belgrade and Serbia, instead of those from Bosnia.

One of the many reasons why Yugoslavia collapsed is because most of the politicians, as members of the Yugoslav Communist League and communist parties at republic and provincial levels (since the Yugoslav communists had a decentralised organisation) were something else than communists and mostly ethno-nationalists. Yugoslavia was seen as the only functional federation without democracy during the Cold War period and was never organised as an open society, civic state with human rights, or even as a state with the rule of law. Similarly to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia started as a backward and poor agricultural society and was dissolved as a backward and poorer industrial society.

Four days ago, the Bosnian statehood day was celebrated. However, this day is only celebrated in the Federation of BiH entities and not in the Serb Republic. The statehood day anniversary shows the problematic and dysfunctional reality in Bosnia. And from my point of view there is an additional problem. Bosnian statehood day is celebrated more often by those who have universalist and civic values, affections and behaviours such as social-democrats. However, it is important to remember what really happened on 25 November 1942 in the town of Mrkonjic Grad. Communist led anti-fascists and partisans in Bosnia had a meeting where they, among other things declared that Bosnia and Herzegovina will be a part of communist Yugoslavia and be a state/country for Serbs, Croats, Muslims (used before the term Bosniac) and others.



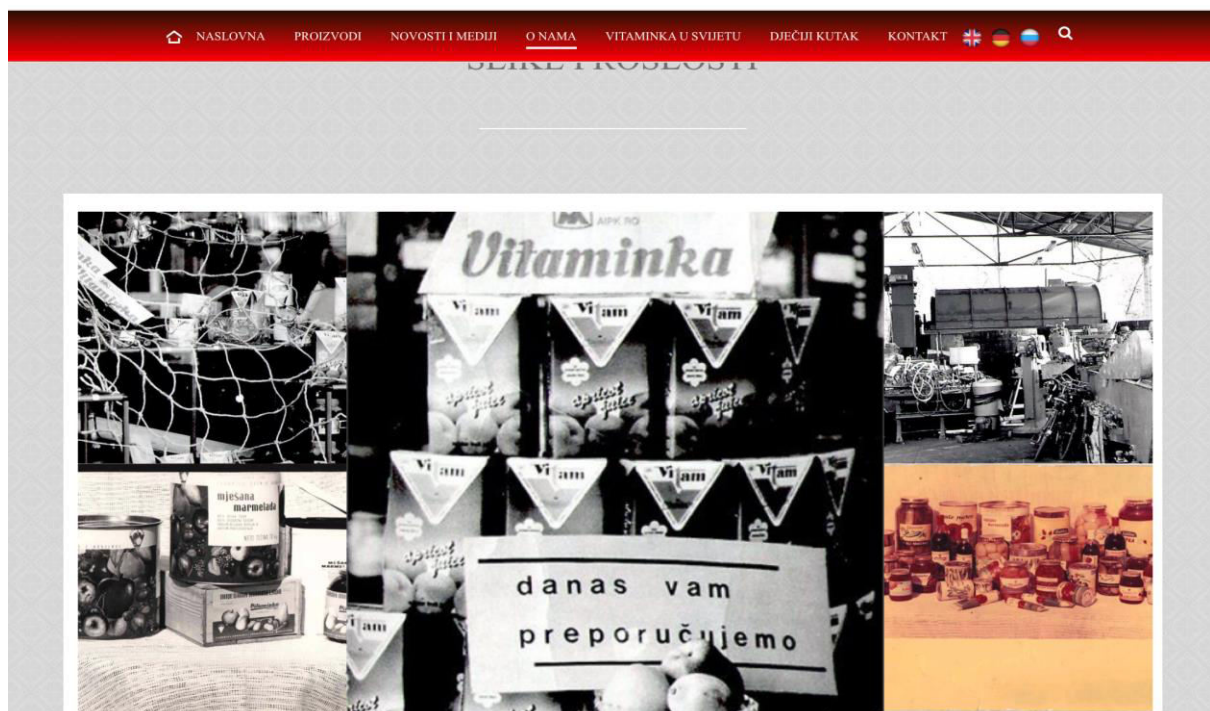
This famous event called “ZAVNOBIH assembly” (Assembly of people's anti-fascist movement for the liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) is often used by, for example, left-wing oriented Bosnians as a sign and proof that people and Bosnia can live together in the same country and not be divided as they are today.

But the celebration of 25th November is not only about celebrating togetherness and tolerance. It is a celebration of dictatorship, authoritarianism and collectivism. It is not a celebration of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. For such reasons, my opinion is that the statehood day should be changed to another day, for example to 6 April when the war started in order to remember the horrors of the war.

2020-11-27 “Vitaminka blues”

Today I was in my local food store in the Näsby park area, part of Täby municipality. I searched for some jam, and one of the products I saw was made by Vitaminka, a Banjaluka based food producer. For a moment, I stopped just to take a closer look at Vitaminka jam because this moment resulted in several memories being activated:

- Vitaminka was one of the more famous food producers during Yugoslavia and part of “buy American” style popular culture (“kupujmo domaće” - buy homeland made). For my grandparents, who were very loyal to the Yugoslav communist system, Vitaminka was a part of their national pride.
- Personally, I used to buy and consume Vitaminka products, including jams, in my childhood. When I came to Sweden in 2003, I wondered if one could find any products from Bosnia or ex-Yugoslavia in food stores. The only product I remember finding at my local food store in 2003-04 was Argeta chicken paté produced in Slovenia. During the last 5-8 years, I have noticed more “Balkan products” being sold in “regular” stores in Sweden, not only in some speciality stores or in smaller food stores in Stockholm’s suburban areas where higher numbers of the population are born outside of Sweden.
- When I was in lower primary school, I remember having an assignment during social science class to make a collage with labels from different producers, mines and factories in the Serb Republic. The funny thing I realised at a later age is that by mapping factories, we as pupils were doing the same thing as it was done in the Yugoslav industrial society. The difference this time was that nationalism replaced communism.



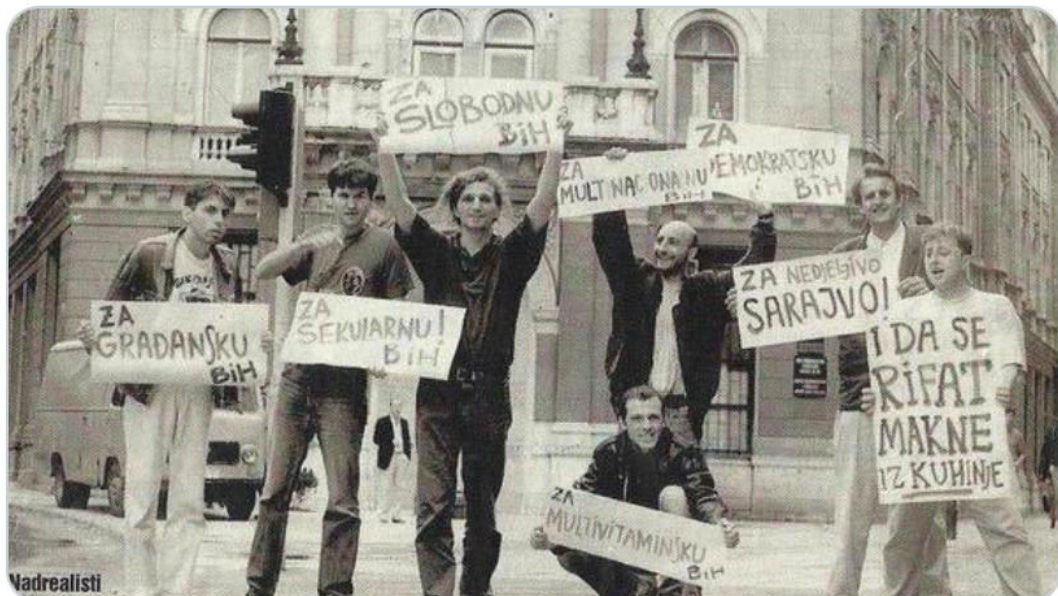
Yugoslavia never developed during the era of globalisation and information society. During and after the war in Bosnia, a common practice was to “take over” existing factories for corruption, criminal clans and special interests leading to several factories being misused and mismanaged. I do not remember how things used to be with Vitaminka after I left Bosnia. Still, one thing I learned afterwards is that Vitaminka managed to continue thanks to an investor from Switzerland called Kreiss-Industriehandel AG.

Also, there is one more thing I am thinking concerning Vitaminka. Before the war started, a famous comedy group called “[Nadrealisti](#)” (The Surrealists) were famous for their presentations of absurd social realism situations and their satire about the political tensions and the upcoming war. One of the terms they used was “multivitaminka BiH” as “multivitamin Bosnia and Herzegovina” as a proclamation of being in favour of a pluralistic and multiethnic society.



Jasmin Mujanović @JasminMuj · Mar 1, 2019

March 1 is Independence Day in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although what followed was nearly four yrs of aggression by Milosevic regime, this iconic 1992 photo of the Sarajevo “Surrealists” captures the spirit then & now: for a civic, secular, free, multinational, democratic BiH. ✨



2020-12-14 “Pada tabla”

During the middle of November, I wrote a post about the scandalous and disgusting behaviour of having a student dormitory called after the war criminal Radovan Karadzic. Recently, something “impossible” happened - the plaque with Karadzic's name was removed. Now, the question is why?



Jasmin Mujanović ✓
@JasminMuj

...

After weeks of increasing pressure on the ultra-nationalist @SNSDDodik by the international community, incl the @OHR_BiH, a plaque commemorating genocidaire Karadzic has been removed from a dorm in the town of Pale. Symbolic but more proof that Dodik will bend when made to do so.

 **Istraga.ba** @IstragaB · Dec 10

Skinuta ploča sa Studentskog doma na Palama. Ime Radovana Karadžića ukinuo domar. Foto: BN



4:36 PM · Dec 10, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

One reason is the pressure from the international community and Bosnia's high-representative Inzko. Another reason is that the director of the student dormitory in Pale, an SNSD (Dodik-party) member made a new decision after he got new orders from the party. A third and probably his main reason is that Sonja Karadzic-Jovicevic, the daughter of Radovan Karadzic and vice-president of the Serb Republic Assembly for the SDS party (Serb nationalist party started by Karadzic), said that the plaque should be removed because "the name of her father is being misused".

Sonja's reaction is in several ways perverted and also bizarre. Because Sonja always supported him during the war and claimed things such as that systematic sexual violence and rapes against Bosnian Muslim women were "fabricated". What Sonja means is that a rival party "misused" her father's name. And it is also important to remember that that was not her original stance as in 2016. The funny thing is also that Dodik as during the 2000s, was famous for criticising Karadzic and recognising the genocide in Bosnia. But in order to stay in power, he changed his story just as Sonja did.

Pale: Na studentskom domu otkrivena tabla sa imenom Radovana Karadžića (VIDEO)

Predsjednik Republike Srpske Milorad Dodik otkrio je danas na Palama tablu sa nazivom Studentskog doma "Dr Radovan Karadžić", nakon čega je posjetio moderno zdanje izgrađeno u skladu sa najvišim evropskim standardima.



2020-12-17 “We and Russians are 300 million!”

When I was growing up as a child there was an expression “nas i Rusa 300 miliona ” meaning “We and Russians are 300 million”. This expression was used during the war because Serb nationalists in Bosnia and Serbia were promising fantasies and myths about how Serbs and Russians are “brothers” or “orthodox brothers”, and that Russia will come to support the Serbs as against Bosniacs and Croats. Such things were propagated despite the fact that the Russian Federation during 1991-1995 was a government and society dealing with enormous social, economic and political problems such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic transition and poverty, the collapse of state institutions, social unrest and anti-democratic behaviours.

Also, despite the “300 million” rhetoric, Russia was during the 1990s doing many opposite things compared to what Serb nationalists were expecting. For example, Russia recognised Bosnia as a sovereign state and imposed sanctions on Milosevic’s regime. Another important thing to understand is that “the West” or better said, the USA and EU countries, has Germany had a bigger impact on popular culture, social inspirations and soft power methods on Bosnia and Serbia.

This is something I mention in my memory book, “A CHILD OF GLOBALISATION -about being a global citizen, through ideas, symbols and affections” about growing up among individuals who hated the USA but loved to listen to MTV and watch NBA. My original idea was to call my book “German porn is stronger than Russian literature (or tanks)” also as a mimic of “better Russian shit than American pie” that was popular during 1950s Yugoslavia.

In Bosnia, the Russian minister of foreign affairs Sergej Lavrov was on his visit. While Russia was not so present with soft power and geopolitical interests in Western Balkans as during the 2000s and the beginning of 2010s, the geopolitical struggle between Russia, the USA and the EU has intensified for the last several years. For more information about such developments, I recommend Jasmin Mujanovic’s book “Hunger and Fury”, about how such

things in the Balkans are similar to the situation before World War I. But concerning Lavrov's visit, here are some "fascinating" things to know:

- Lavrov was officially visiting Bosnia but in practice only visited the Serb Republic because he only met with the Presidency member from the Serb community - Milorad Dodik.
- Other two members Sefik Dzaferovic (Bosniacs) and Zeljko Komsic (Croats), boycotted the meeting because, according to different information, they knew that this was a Russian soft-power action towards the Serb Republic because the first meeting took place in Eastern Sarajevo (known as Serb Sarajevo during the war).
- Dodik gifted Lavrov with an Orthodox Christian icon that later was recognised as coming originally from Ukraine, the Lugansk region. Now, the Ukrainian government is claiming the icon back as cultural heritage. It is known that individuals from Bosnia with Serb ethnicity have been fighting in Ukraine with pro-Russian forces.



Aleksandar Brezar @brezaleksandar · Dec 16

...

Russian FM Sergey **Lavrov** was gifted a 300-year old never-before-seen Ukrainian Orthodox icon during his visit to Bosnia this week.

No one knows where Milorad Dodik, a member of the Bosnian Presidency, got this rare artefact thought to be from Luhansk.



Skandal na pomolu: Ukrajina tvrdi da je Dodik poklonio Lavrovu iko...
Ambasada Ukrajine u BiH obratila se Ministarstvu vanjskih poslova
BiH i zatražila informacije o pozlaćenoj ikoni koju je predsjedavajući...
[klix.ba](https://www.klix.ba)

This is not the first time such things are happening. For example, last year, when the Serb Republic was celebrating its “nationhood day” on 9th January, the only foreign ambassador was the Russian one. Also, Russia as a state has been sponsoring actions neglecting the genocide in Srebrenica. Serb nationalists and extremists still believe in fantasies that “mother Russia” will come and “save us”.



SniperAlley.Photo @SniperAlleyPhot · 22h

...

From Russia with Love

[#Sarajevo](#) 1994

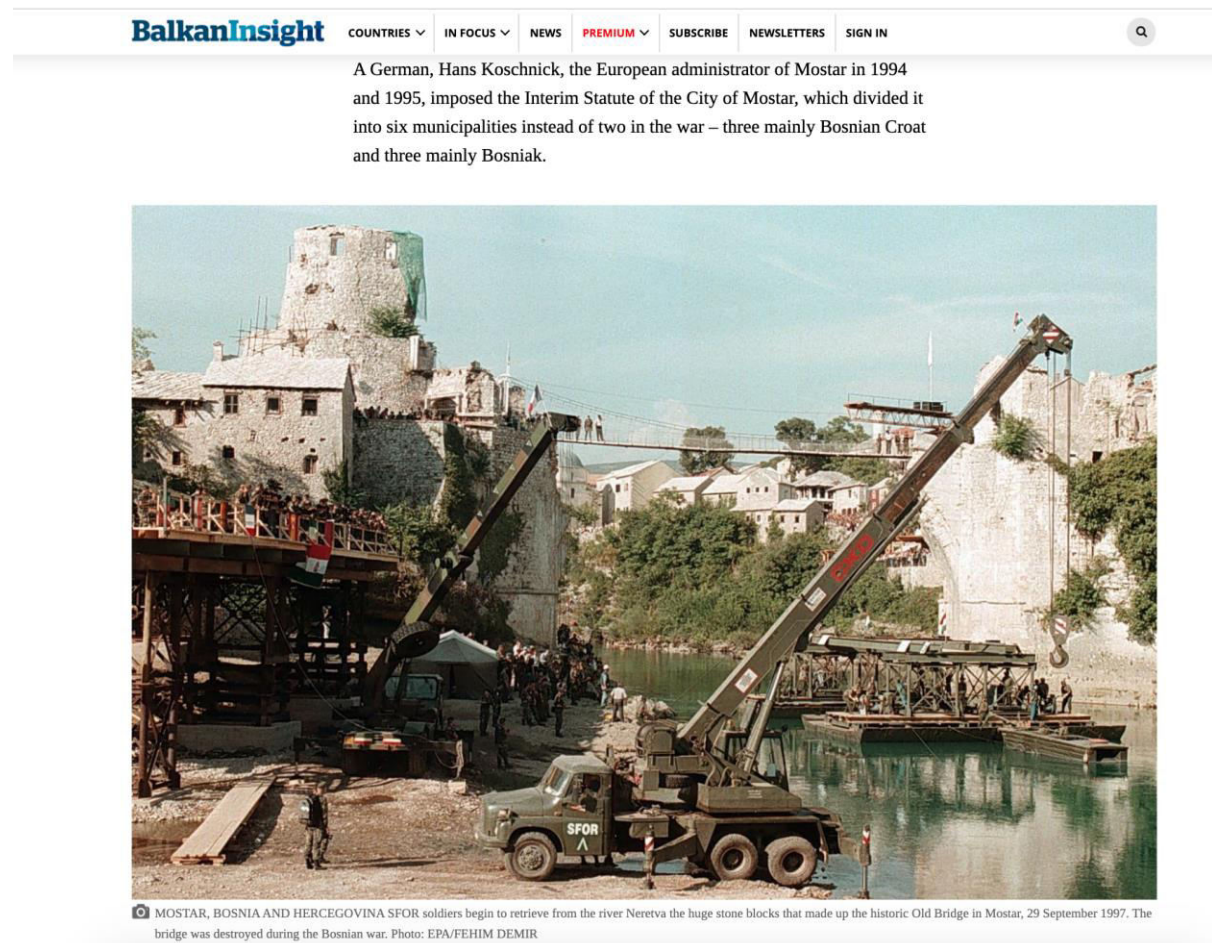
Photo © Vladimir Velengurin



2020-12-23 Mostar elections

I have never been to Mostar, but there are two interesting things I know about the city besides the historic bridge, the former SOKO military-industrial complex and wine production. Mostar was also known as Bosnia’s “Yugoslav city” where almost one-third of the inhabitants identified themselves as Yugoslavs. The second thing is that Mostar was even proposed to be the capital somewhere during the 1990s. This article from [Euronews](#) sums it up:

“Before the war, ethnically mixed couples made up 10 per cent of all marriages in Mostar, and the city was markedly cosmopolitan. During the war, Croats moved to the western side and Bosniaks to the east. Since the fighting stopped, the city has had two post offices, two electricity and water suppliers, two phone networks, two public hospitals, and more — one crumbling set for each ethnic group.”



During the war, Mostar was much destroyed, including the destruction of the historical bridge. After the war, the city has been divided between the “Croat” and “Muslim” parts. Besides such ethnopolitical and nationalist conflicts, the city has been under democratic problems. The last time there were local elections was in 2008 and when Bosnia’s constitutional court declared local election rules discriminatory and ordered them changed.

The latest elections, the first one in 12 years, mean a victory for the nationalist parties, Croat and Bosniac, and that civic parties who are multi-ethnic will have a place as kingmakers. However, it has to be noted that many people did not vote at all, which is an additional problem in Bosnia.

N1 BIH ENG

NAJNOVIJELOKALNI IZBORI 2020KORONAVIRUSVIJESTICRNA HRONIKASVIJETBIZNIS...

Slaven Raguž za N1: Hrvati u BiH nisu HDZ, ja sam živi svjedok

VIJESTI

22.12.2020. | 18:46 | 11

Slaven Raguž za N1: Hrvati u BiH nisu HDZ, ja sam živi svjedok

N1

AUTOR: N1 BIH

Podijeli:   



/pq5hx5yhkpqvc6

And there is also one more interesting thing. The Croat nationalist HDZ party, the same party which due to its nationalist politics was directly responsible for the war in the 1990s, is famous for presenting itself as “the Croat party” or the party for all Bosnian Croats. However, this is not the case because many Bosnian Croats, sadly, do not vote at all or vote for other parties, including the

Croatian Republican Party, which is a right-wing conservative party. Its leader in Mostar Slaven Raguz stated that:

“Mostar has become a paradigm of Bosnia, in which ruling elites have tailored society according to their needs, living off taxpayers’ money and not showing any responsibility towards the people they are supposed to represent”

Raguz stated, among others, that “Croats in Bosnia are not HDZ; I am a witness of that”. Thereby, there are some political trends in Mostar remind of what recently happened in Sarajevo.

2020-12-26 Refugees Unwelcome

From time to time during this and last year, I have been following the situation with refugees and migrants who are experiencing troubles, problems and hardships in north-western Bosnia in the area of Bihac, Cazin and Velika Kladusa. There are several problems and also pure dehumanising behaviours that have been taking place since 2019:

- Insufficient help and assistance for humans in need, where there also has been a lack of coordination between state and local (cantonal) levels of governance.
- Humans are being exposed to harassment and violence by law-enforcement institutions such as the border police. For the most, this has been the case in [Croatia](#), where border police officers have been using violence and other illegal behaviours against refugees and others who have been trying to cross the border into the EU.
- Politicians are using hostile, racist and xenophobic rhetoric against people while the EU institutions are assisting institutions under the control of the same politicians as Dodik. And while several media portals, including more “normal ones”, are reporting about the “migration crisis” as if the migrants or, better said, humans seeking refugees and fleeing from bad conditions themselves were the crisis or causing it.

- Despite the fact that “everyone” in Bosnia has or knows someone who has been a refugee during the 1990s, many Bosnians are behaving rude, racist and horrible towards individuals who are in similar situations as their friends, relatives and others have been during and after the war. One can really speak about hypocrisy and double standards.



Peter Van der Auweraert ✓
@PeterAuweraert

...

The humanitarian disaster in [#BiH](#) [#Bihac](#) continues: pictures from former camp “Lipa” now. Snow has fallen, sub-zero temperatures, no heating, nothing. This is not how anyone should live. We need political bravery and action now. [@UNmigration](#) [@UN_BiH](#)



 IOM Vienna Regional Office

The sad thing is that innocent people have been suffering because of inadequate and insufficient responses by public institutions and a lack of help from European authorities. I will not say that there have not been any problems caused by individual refugees, such as stealing and violence. Still, such problems occur when there is a lack of organised management by local authorities and comprehensive solutions. What has been happening in north-western Bosnia since 2019 is not only a shame for Bosnia concerning history but also a shame for Europe.



BHRT @MultimedijaBHRT · Dec 24

...

Požar u kampu Lipa

Ilustracija Edin Šahinović

[#bhrt](#) [#migranti](#) [#lipa](#) [#bihac](#) [#bih](#)



2021-01-08 Cult of personality

Three days ago, I got a message from my father, who posted several photos of Dodik and slogans created for him. Both private actors and public institutions have established billboards, posters and similar aspects by showing Dodik support and wishing him a “fast recovery”. One could say that the message is - Dodik is our God/Saint/Great Leader/Pope etc.



At the end of December last year, Dodik contracted Covid-19. Dodik is popular because there is a legacy of a “personality cult” where many people in Bosnia, regardless of ethnicity, think that having a “leader” is important. This legacy goes back partly to imperial times as during the Austria-Hungarian empire, later on to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, then to Tito. When Tito died in 1980, it was a common phrase in Yugoslavia that “we need a new Tito”. When Slobodan Milosevic came to power in Serbia, he was also called and nicknamed “Little Tito”.

This kind of legacy still exists in Serbia when it comes to Aleksandar Vucic. When it comes to Bosnia, the case is that such legacy, ideals and behaviours lead to bad and undemocratic results in combination with other legacies and factors such as that Bosnia historically was not a democratic state and society. Despite many people knowing that Dodik is corrupt, criminal and crony, they will still neglect or ignore that as for personal gain (getting a job) or because of fear of repression (losing a job).

22. decembar/prosinac,
2020.

Dodik pozitivan na koronu, sa upalom pluća u bolnici

Podijelite



Odštampaj



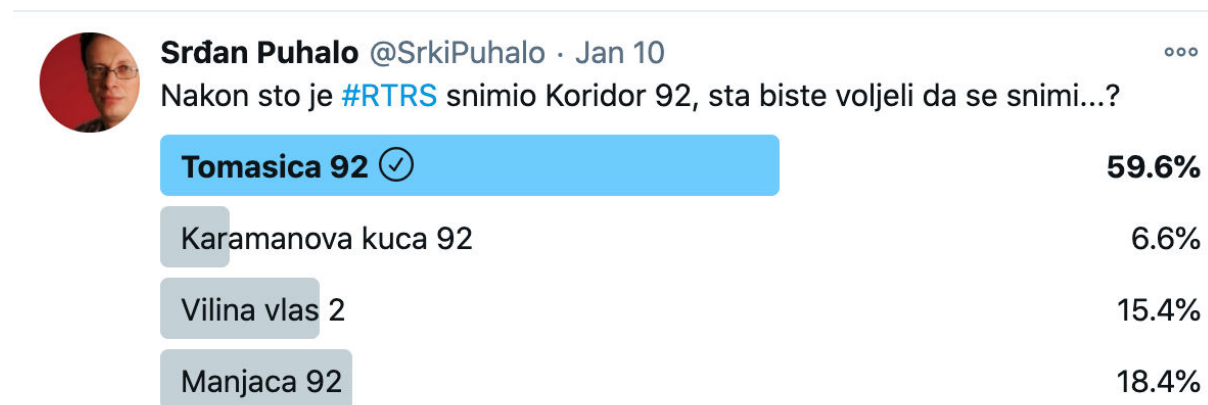
Zdravstveno stanje Milorada Dodika je stabilno, kažu ljekari

Agencija Fena (©)

2021-01-11 Day of Crimes and Genocide

Two days ago, it was “9. Januar” the day of the Serb Republic. Often presented as RS statehood day in English, despite that Serb Republic is not a state, nor will it ever be one. But the sad, horrible and terrifying facts are that celebration of it really means celebrating things as murders, concentration camps, sexual violence, forced evictions, corruption, crime and other disgusting things.

I will not write so much about what happened and why this day is celebrated because there are many books, articles and texts describing what happens between 1992-95 in Bosnia.



The day after the illegal anniversary, I saw this poll tweet by Srdjan Puhalo, who is a social psychologist and one of the most popular “tviteraš” in Bosnia. What Puhalo is asking here is, “Since RTRS (Serb Republic public service) made Koridor 92 (Serb nationalist military operation ending with war crimes), what would you like to be filmed?”. My choice was Tomasica 92 since it is the biggest mass grave in Bosnia.

2021-01-18 Rapes and ropes

METROMAHALA

SHARES: 14 KOMENTARA: 3






FOTO: Arhiv/Jasmina Ahmetspahić




Shares: 14



!! Kada će Beograd "ustati na noge" zbog Jasmine i hiljada žrtava silovanja iz BiH?

18. 01. 2021. u 14:00:00 Radiosarajevo.ba

OSTALO IZ RUBRIKE



Beograd je na nogama! Nakon što je prije nekoliko dana glumica **Milena Radulović** prijavila reditelja **Miroslava Miku Aleksića** da ju je silovao, policija je brzo reagirala i uhapsila poznatog nastavnika glume i "vatreneog Arkanovca".

When I was a child, a popular joke in Bosnia was that “everything invented in the West comes to us ten years later”. There is still some truth in that. For example, in 2015, I was in Teslic and learned about the popularity of Somersby cider. At that moment, Somersby was more or less seen as a new product in the

town, while I had it for the first time in Stockholm already at the end of the 2000s.

Now, you probably have heard about the #metoo movement that started in the USA. It started with a more famous actor called Milena Radulovic, reporting the director Miroslav Aleksic for rape and sexual assault. A similar situation is now taking place in Serbia. What is being reported now in the media in Serbia is that Miroslav Aleksić has raped several of his students before.

The good thing is that “the people” in Serbia are not supporting Milena Radulović and condemning sexual violence. Therefore, one could speak about a metoo similar situation taking place in Serbia. At the same time, large parts of the Serbian public are still more or less unaware or have little knowledge about the sexual violence in Bosnia during the 1990s war.

One famous victim is Jasmina Ahmetpahic who was 24 years old when she committed suicide after being raped on several occasions at a hotel called “Vilina Vlas” in the Visegrad area where around 3000 Bosniaks were killed during the war. One can say that Jasmina threw herself for the hotel in order to show resistance against her killers.



Peter Maass @maassp · Dec 2, 2019

...

I also found out that during a 1998 visit to Bosnia, Handke stayed in a hotel, the **Vilina Vlas** in Visegrad, that had been used as a rape camp by Serbs during the war. It seems likely that Handke knew of the hotel's history.



The Nobel Prize, a Rape Camp in Bosnia, and Peter Handke
When Peter Handke visited Bosnia in 1998, he stayed at a horrifying landmark: a hotel used by Serbs during the war as a rape camp.
theintercept.com

“Vilina Vlas” still exists as a hotel and a tourist attraction. And since Bosnia is not famous for dealing with past processes and social psychology, it is not a place where one could go to a museum with collective remembrance focusing on the victims. Last year during the pandemic period, Vilina Vlas was promoted for domestic tourism, including by Serb Republic authorities, leading to condemnations and shameful behaviours.

Around 50 000 women were raped in Bosnia during the war by police and military units, where most of the victims were Bosniak women, and most of the perpetrators were members of Bosnian Serb military and police units. The ICTY stated in its judgements that sexual violence was not something sporadic and spontaneous locally but centrally used by Serb military institutions as a weapon and in order to confirm their superiority and victory.

2021-01-29 Cult of personality again



Posters, billboards and other presentations in support of Dodik are still visible in the Serb Republic. This photo is from Teslic, taken at the main square. On the pictures, it says:

“May you return with a smile and health, from the heart wishes you Teslic town. Continue where you have stopped, thank you for all the help you have given to us”.

Similar messages and pictures are made in other towns around Bosnia. The real question is how many people really like Dodik and many of his policies, and how many like him because they depend on jobs that are created by his party through corruption and other more or less criminal procedures such as public projects and putting “right people” in company boards.

2021-02-01 Remembering Srdjan Aleksić

S radiosarajevo.ba

VIJESTI BIZNIS **METROMAHALA** MAGAZIN KOLUMNJE SPORT AUTO-MOTO MULTIMEDIA INFOGRAFIKE

METROMAHALA SHARES: 2373 KOMENTARA: 0





Foto: Historija.ba/Srdan Aleksić



Shares: 2373 **Ja mislim / Dragan Bursać: Autošovinista Srdan Aleksić**

The first time I heard about Srdjan Aleksic was somewhere in 2013, partly because of the movie “Circles” (Krugovi) that was made about him. And quickly, I was disgusted. Not because of Srdjan, who was a hero and made the ultimate sacrifice to protect his fellow human, but because of how Srdjan was celebrated and mentioned in Serb nationalist media.

One thing with nationalism is to “care about your own people”, regardless of whom they are as individuals, as regarding war criminals and racists, and what they have done in life. Therefore, a nationalist will “care” about you as long as you “belong” to the same group, tribe or community. They will care about you even if you oppose nationalism in favour of something universalist and larger, such as by being cosmopolitan and rejecting hate, intolerance and authoritarianism.

In Srdjan’s case, what happened in the case of Srdjan was that he, as a mobilised soldier in the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS), defended his neighbour Alen Glavovic. The latter was threatened and attacked by BSA soldiers because Alen is from a Bosnian Muslim family. Srdjan was murdered by the soldiers whom he knew. Alen managed to get away and get refugee status in Sweden.

This happened in the town of Trebinje in south-eastern Herzegovina, which during the first months of the war became a “Serb city” by forced evictions and other human rights violations and war crimes. During and after the war, Srdjan was in a popular sense seen as a traitor. However, many nationalist Serbs realised that there is a better tactic and social approach - presenting Srdjan as a soldier hero of the Bosnian Serb Army by showing that Srdjan “proves that BSA soldiers were noble and humane during the war”.

Srdjan died carrying out his human duty. But in Trebinje, there is no street called after Srdjan. At the same time, the Serbian government gave him a post-military medal that was given to many others during the 1990s, including those who committed war crimes. Why? Partly because Srdjan is not an excellent example of being a human but an excellent example of being a Bosnian Serb Army soldier, in nationalist eyes.

Srđan Aleksić Срђан Алексић



Obituary

Born	Srđan Radov Aleksić May 9, 1966 Trebinje, SR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia
Died	January 27, 1993 (aged 26) Trebinje, Republika Srpska
Cause of death	Murder
Nationality	Bosnian Serb
Other names	Srđo
Occupation	amateur actor, prospective swimmer, and soldier in the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS)
Known for	being killed while defending an ethnic Bosniak, his friend, who was attacked by a group of VRS soldiers

In one of his recent articles, famous columnist [Dragan Bursac](#) writes among the following:

“Srđan’s street cannot be under the mural of Amfilohije (orthodox patriarchy), the same person who called Bosniacs and Muslims as “false people with a false belief”. Nor can it be under Mladic’s billboard, whose soldiers killed him. Nor can Aleksić have his body on a t-shirt in the same printing shop as those with titles “knife, barbed wire, Srebrenica”.

2021-02-09 Olympics nostalgia



Jean-Louis Falconi  @FalconiJL · 6h

Le monde entier à **Sarajevo**, les peuples réunis, l'esprit olympique de saine émulation et compétition... le monde d'avant les guerres qui ont déchiré l'ex Yougoslavie 😞



Bosnian History @BosnianHistory · 16h

The opening ceremonies of the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo.



Before I left Bosnia in 2003, one of my memories was the story about how Sarajevo could have the winter Olympic Games in 2010. Even if such a vision and proposal was dubious and questionable, I remember that it resulted in the sense of pride and optimism, especially in Sarajevo.

The 1984 Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo can still be described as a part of identity politics in Bosnia. I am not against it because those that are highlighting the 1984 games often have civic, pro-European and more forward-looking agendas, affections, and values. At the same time, it is a shame that many objects used during the Olympics are still destroyed, half-destroyed or simply not being taken care of.



Nermin Tulic
@NerminTulic



[#Sarajevo](#) Olimpijski kompleks Zetra (ZOI '84)



The games are still seen as an important social achievement in Bosnia's and Sarajevo's history. At the same time, I am sure that many people in Bosnia would not be delighted and impressed by the whole history, such as concerning economic and political corruption during the preparations.

One of the more funnier parts of this history was the case of Jure Franko, a skier from Slovenia, who took the gold medal in slalom. Due to his surname, "sarajlije" (residents of Sarajevo) were cheering him by saying "Volimo Jureka, više od bureka" meaning "We love Jurek more than burek (börek pie)".



Ignacio Hutin @iehutin · 13h

Me gusta pensar que los Juegos de **Sarajevo** fueron una fiesta de despedida, con toda la parafernalia y emoción. Pronto vendría la guerra, la ciudad sería sitiada, Yugoslavia se desmoronaría y buena parte de las sedes sería abandonada o destruida.



2021-02-17 Organised fascism in Bosnia

‘Their goal is reviving Greater Serbia’



Chetnik rally in Visegrad in March 2019. Photo courtesy of Fokus.ba.

During the spring of 1992, my father’s uncle was asked by some local and nationalist Serbs from his village Cecava to assist them in shaping a military formation. My father’s uncle was asked this because he spent almost all of his working life in the Yugoslav People’s Army as a technical officer. But he refused for two reasons. He did not view the proposal as a serious one and considered the proposed military formation a group of armed peasants.

The primary reason for refusal was due to his personal history. During World War 2, his parents and other family members who supported the communist-led partisan movement were murdered by chetniks, members of a Serb extreme-nationalist movement with goals such as creating an “ethnically clean Greater Serbia.”

When I was a child in Bosnia, I came several times to conflicting narratives about chetniks, including when being in school during history, or better said national mythology lessons. One part of the narrative was that chetniks are heroes because, as communist partisans, they also fought against fascism and for the Serbs. The second part of the narrative, as in my family, was that chetniks were traitors who cooperated with the Nazi-German forces and committed crimes as against Bosnian Muslims and Catholics.

There are many good history books and articles about such topics concerning the history of the chetnik movement. One problem when it comes to history is that a popular myth among many Serbs is that Chetniks were anti-fascists. But such myths are about confusing fascism with Germans.

It is true that during some periods of WW2, members of the chetnik movements (and different groupings) did take action against the Nazi-German units and occupation forces. But in comparison to Yugoslav partisans, chetniks never fought against fascism when it came to ideology. Partly because the ideology of the chetnik movement was extreme and genocidal Serb nationalism was aiming for creating a new nation where only “real Serbs” would live. Even my Serb ancestors were seen as “unreal Serbs” simply because they opposed the Chetnik movement and other contemporary right-wing extremists.

For me personally, what feels disgusting and horrible is that history or better said human nature and stupidity, is repeating itself. What chetniks did during 1941-45 as in Eastern Bosnia where many areas had Muslim-majority populations were more or less the same things as what chetniks did during 1991-95. As this recent article via Detektor.ba and video via BIRN are showing, modern chetniks are not only dangerous in their agenda but also often enjoy popular support and political support even as in the Serbian government:

By analysing hundreds of pages of documents from the official court registrations of all 16 associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina whose names include the terms ‘Ravna Gora’ or ‘Chetnik’, BIRN has established that some of them have strong connections with war criminals.

The documents revealed that a number of individuals from these associations have either been convicted or are currently on trial for war crimes in Bosnia

and Serbia. Most of them are former members of the Bosnian Serb Army. One prominent Chetnik was convicted of manslaughter in Serbia.

BIRN has also discovered that Bosnia's State Investigation and Protection Agency is monitoring associations whose names contain the words Chetnik and Ravna Gora because of suspicions that they are propagating extremist ideas.

Other extremist connections that Chetnik associations have cultivated were revealed when a Bosnian citizen was prosecuted for going to fight for pro-Russian separatist forces in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. At the trial, the Bosnian state court heard how the Ravna Gora Movement from Serbia was funding Serb volunteers to travel to the Ukrainian conflict zone.

2021-02-25 Balasevic's death



Dnevni list Danas  @OnlineDanas · 37m
Dorđe Balašević 

...

[#Corax](#) [#karikatura](#) [#Danas](#)

 danas.rs/corax/



Last week, one of the biggest news stories in the Western Balkan region and on the Serbo-Croat speaking Twittersphere was the death of Djordje Balasevic. It is confirmed that he died of the Covid-19 virus.

I cannot say that I am a Balasevic fan since I never listened to his music in everyday life or in a more routine-based way. But for me, he was one more important symbol of being pro-human and pro-democracy and against fascism and ethnonationalism in ex-Yugoslavia.

One song I remember by Balasevic is “Samo da rata ne bude” (May it never be war) from 1990. I cannot find the original video spot, but there are several covers, modern versions and Balasevic later performances on YouTube. The first time I heard the song, my mother told me that the tragic thing was that it was played just before the war. One year before the war started in Croatia and two years before it started in Bosnia. In the original spot, children are singing in the video while one can see young men in uniforms.

During my life in Bosnia and during visits to Bosnia after emigrating to Sweden, I have seen Balasevic performing via television and other videos. Now on Twitter, I can see manifestations and commemorations in his name being held in cities such as Novi Sad, Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo etc. One can say that “Yugoslavia made a farewell to Balašević”.



Arnesa Buljušmić-Kustura  @Rrrrnessa · Feb 19

Absolutely shattered to hear about the passing of one of my favourite Yugoslav artists, Djordje **Balasevic**. He was a giant in song-writing and took the brave stance of being anti-war and anti-Milosevic. The first Serbian artist to perform in Sarajevo after the war and genocide.



Of course, and sadly as with everything else in ex-Yugoslavia, things are politicised in the worst ways. Many Serbs cherish Balasevic due to his anti-war stances, while others see him as a traitor. Many Croats cherish him because of his stances against Serb nationalism and war politics, while others dislike him because he was a Serb. Many Kosovo Albanians also remember that Balasevic endorsed and supported Slobodan Milosevic at the beginning of his nationalist.



Petrit Selimi ✓
@Petrit



Well this specific song is part of vicious anti-Albanian nationalist propaganda launched by Belgrade powers to be, stupidly picked up by Balasevic in late 1980s, building momentum to annul Kosovo autonomy. Rest is history, including his belated subsequent opposition to Milosevic.



Florian Bieber @fbieber · Feb 19

RIP Đorđe Balašević
youtube.com/watch?v=QrrFiR...

I personally think that he made a banal mistake, as did many other Serbs who wrongly believed that Milosevic wanted to “save Yugoslavia”. The important thing is that he, in general, was a person of principles and humanism. RIP

2021-03-01 1 Mart

Today is the [day](#) when many things happened around the world in 1992. In Bosnia, this day is contested because it represents statehood’s date after a referendum held at the end of February about Bosnia’s future status as a state and country.

During the end of 1991, both Croatia and Slovenia were recognised as sovereign nation-states by European Community members and other UN-states. In February 1992, Yugoslavia was formally still in existence. This meant that Yugoslavia lost two of its six republics and thereby officially around one-fourth of its population.

In 1992, two referendums were planned, one in Bosnia and the second one in Macedonia. There was also a referendum in the Serbian province of Sandzak with Muslim and Bosniac majority population, however, it was never recognised internationally.

In the case of Bosnia, things became very bloody. Before the referendum, several killings and violence took place. Also, there were higher levels of inflammatory, hateful and hysterical political rhetoric and communication. The Serb nationalist party SDS boycotted the referendum and discouraged Serbs from participating. The Bosniac nationalist party SDA and Croat nationalist party HDZ encouraged their voters and ethnic communities, in general, to vote in favour of independence and sovereignty. As reformed communists and social liberals, civic parties encouraged their voters and all citizens of BiH to vote in favour of Bosnia as a sovereign state.

In the end, around 63% of the BiH voting population participated in the referendum, and the absolute majority of them voted in favour of independent BiH. This referendum is often presented as a Muslim-Croat referendum. However, it is worth noting that the referendum in BiH was also successful because a considerable number of pro-Bosnia Serbs voted in favour, as in cities such as Sarajevo, Tuzla and Banjaluka.

The outcome of the referendum is also used as an explanation for why the war in Bosnia started. The 1 March is also seen as a special day for many Serbs after the so-called “Krvavi svatovi” (Bloody wedding) incident when a Serb groom was killed during his wedding party in Sarajevo by the Bosniac nationalist. For many Serbs, this incident was the reason why the war started.

However, despite the personal tragedy, this incident was turned into a myth because the war in Bosnia and against Bosnia was planned during the summer and autumn of 1991 by the Yugoslav People’s Army, which became more and

more Serb-dominated under the control of Slobodan Milosevic. Before the referendum, preparations for the war or some kind of armed conflict were taking place “on all sides.”

The Serb nationalists initiated such behaviours through military and para-military preparations during 1991. Basically, the war in Bosnia was planned already 5-7 months before the referendum even took place.

Personally, I am not in favour of 1 Mart celebrations. Partly because another day as 25 May could be used instead when Bosnia became a UN member. And partly because it is also about celebrating bad ideas such as ethnocracy and anti-secularism.

Neither is Bosnia an independent nor fully sovereign state. Not only concerning Bosnia’s status during and after the war in relation to the Dayton agreement and the supervision of the international community as UN and European institutions. But also because of the fact that globalisation in an economic, cultural and political sense has resulted in nations and states today being more “dependant” and “sharing sovereignty” rather than being “fully” independent and sovereign.

After all, globalism and cosmopolitan ideals are present in free, open and democratic societies. In contrast, “sovereignists” and obsession with national independence ideals can be found in places such as North Korea and Turkmenistan.

2021-03-11 The High Commissioner drama

For me, there is something special with the term “the high commissioner”. Being born in Bosnia, that was one of the first terms I learned, just as most of the other kids in the country. “Visoki predstavnik” is called, and the abbreviation “OHR” stands for the Office of the High Representative.

Already during the 1990s, it felt special and unique since I was not able to find the term high commissioner in any other part of the world except Bosnia. Later at an older age, as when I read David Chandler’s “Bosnia. Faking democracy”

after Dayton”, I realised that my experience in Bosnia was the experience of one of the most famous cases of internationalised governance of a country in world history.

In practice, the high representative acts as a president with direct powers and a strong mandate from the United Nations and the international community in general. This is also because the high representative can override decisions and other institutional behaviours that he (so far no women have been exercising this position) interpreted as being against the Dayton agreement and will of the UN. It has to be noted that this position is supported by among other “P-5”, that will be permanent members of the UN - USA, UK, France, Russia and China.



I still remember Wolfgang Petritsch, the third high representative. Petritsch was from Switzerland, a nation that through history used to be a confederation, later on, a federation based on one of the most organised and respected federalism systems globally. Switzerland has around 26 cantons, is multilingual and a very open and globalised society. Bosnia is monolingual and has ten cantons, two entities and one district city (Brcko), and is seen as a very closed and protectionist society.



OHR BiH @OHR_BiH · Mar 11

...

OHR response to inquiries about the 10 March RS National Assembly session / Odgovor OHR-a na upite o sjednici Narodne skupštine RS od 10. marta

**Office of the
High Representative**

The RS National Assembly (RSNA) is free to hold sessions on any matter it deems necessary. However, it is the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board that decides on the closure of the OHR. It has set as a precondition for closure the fulfilment by the BiH authorities of the 5+2 Agenda (amongst others, a “positive assessment of the situation in BiH”).

Besides, the High Representative derives his authority not only from the Dayton Peace Agreement, but also from the UN Security Council resolutions. Accordingly, the authorities of the High Representative are matters arising

At the moment, there are discussions about who is going to be the next high representative and if that even would be necessary? The current high representative Valentin Inzko from Austria has been serving for 12 years and is seen as one of the less popular and respected ones as compared to Petritsch. Interesting is that Inzko has been serving longer than almost all other high representatives.

The current candidate for the post, a politician from the CDU party in Germany, called Christian Schmidt. The EU wants Schmidt to be the last high representative. Dodik and other Serb nationalists are demanding the succession of the Serb Republic. Even Croat nationalists but also many moderate politicians with Croat nationality are against the process. Schmidt's candidature is mostly supported now by Bosniac nationalists and moderate politicians with Bosniak nationality.

The whole OHR situation and interests of the EU, the USA and others such as Russia are also affecting the process of Bosnia joining the EU (if it ever takes place in 30 years). Also, Russia is supporting Schmidt's candidature, which is a blow to Serb nationalists. Basically, it is all a big mess.

2021-07-31 Notes from Arholma

Today is the last day of July. I am sitting in my cottage on the island of Arholma. It is a warm and hot summer day. One reflection I am having in mind is how things used to look differently 30 years ago. For example, in July 1995, people in Europe had very different life experiences. Many Germans and Swedes went to Spain and Portugal for vacation. Many young Europeans like in Paris, Rome, and Vienna went out to relax, swim, and drink. In Bosnia, the Srebrenica genocide took place while millions of Bosnians lived in poverty and agony. Many Russians and Ukrainians were experiencing recent political disorders and breakdowns of older institutions.

While many “Western Europeans” were enjoying life and freedom many “Eastern Europeans” remembered how they were able to go to the seaside and have a salary before the 1990s, before the war, before the collapse of communism. Today, economic, social, and political differences in Europe are much smaller than in the 1990s, but different problems, challenges, and risks still exist for the Balkans. For example, all former Yugoslav republics and provinces that have not joined the EU are now aiming for joining the union. At the same time, the same ideas and behaviours that led to wars in former Yugoslavia are still present and dominating in public discourse, especially in Bosnia.

After moving from Bosnia to Sweden, there were several moments when I was hoping and thinking that things, in general, could change in Bosnia for the better. But despite certain improvements regarding the economy, everyday politics and social development still remind me of the 1990s. One can say that Bosnia as a society is still stuck in 1990s rhetoric, politics and ideas. A paradox is, for example, that young people can be more extreme and hateful in their values and opinions compared to older generations that have experienced war. Bosnia is still one of Europe’s poorest and less developed countries.

By writing this short book, I wanted to express my views, reflections and experiences about different aspects that I care about, remember and often think about. When asked about my identification, I usually say that my childhood remains in Bosnia while my adult life remains in Sweden. After the pandemic is over, I hope that I will have a chance to visit Bosnia again and be engaged in different activities such as promoting ideas of liquid and decentralised democracy. After all, I became interested in democracy as an idea due to my

experiences in Bosnia after the war when the first elections were taking place. I feel obliged to try to make a difference.

As a writer, I do not believe that books should cost and be sold at the market. This is partly because I think that the future should be digital, decentralised and distributive where every human has as open and free access to education and information as possible. Thank you for reading. If you would like to support and reward my writing, you can do it via:

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Tezos—tz1QrRzkTAKuPKF8dmGW6c1ScEHBUGvoiJBM

A special thanks to [Phelix Odiwuor Obar](#) from the [SEEDS](#) community for his assistance with grammatical checking.