



WESTERN BALKANS **YOUTH** TOGETHER FOR A SHARED **FUTURE**



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WESTERN BALKANS YOUTH TOGETHER FOR A SHARED FUTURE

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Dear readers,

The “Western Balkans Youth Together for a Shared Future” magazine in your hands contains memory and reflection pieces on the role of the historical past in the present in the Western Balkan region. These stories were collected and processed by talented youths from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Albania.

The premise of the project generously supported by RYCO organization is that young people from WB6 have inherited a hostile discourse for the neighbours from the past, which hinders their European aspirations. Through this project, we tried to bring young people in the Western Balkans closer together and further acquaint them with the consequences of totalitarian regimes in the WB than what is provided in the media and their history books, through guided study visits in former internment camps, former political prisons, labour camps, memorial places and museums, where they could learn from two perspectives, on one side that of first hand sources – contemporary witnesses, and on the other side that of the experts in the field or historians.

These reflections were intended to be exchanged between them, in the respective visits they would conduct in the Western Balkan societies to learn more about the past and the present history they deal with. Because of the inability to travel and visit these societies in person due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the youths travelled virtually through the culture and history of the neighbouring societies of which they had little or no information. During a virtual marathon, they exchanged tens of materials, videos, photos, stories and evidence, a select few of which can be found in this magazine. It appears as if, through the topics and characters they selected as authentic witnesses of the history of their societies, these young people are showing us that there can be no future without talking about the past. They focused on the stories of individual resistance during times of hardship, on injustice and violence against innocent victims, on places of memories and suffering, on special aspects of their societies or on the voice of youths, and on reflections on the challenges of the present and the future.

The inspiration that the youths choose to draw from several inspirational models of civic resistance or their condemnation of those responsible for crimes against humanity, make us hopeful that the future of the Western Balkans will be in the hands of more responsible individuals. As the philosopher Karl Jaspers wrote in his essay on “Guilt”: „ The individual is responsible for historical and political events, even if they only watched passively.“

As the youth society, all of these contracting parties see their future in the European Union. The EU is not only a union of societies but also a union of values that should be embraced by the political class of the Western Balkan societies and their respective societies.

Thus, for delivering the “Youth for a Shared Future” project, we embarked together on a common journey, and we very much hope that the familiarity of young people with the past of their region helped them to understand the nature of totalitarian regimes and to raise their awareness about the legacies and threats in present times. Only by knowing these tendencies better, they will be able to understand current developments in their societies and the reasons that hinder their EU integration.

On behalf of the leading group of this project, we wish you an enjoyable read!

IDMC & Partners

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.



ALBANIA

Albania came under communist rule at the end of World War II. The total isolation from the outside world, made it easier to install an oppressive apparatus that was without comparison in other Eastern European societies—so oppressive that at the end of the communist regime, more than one out of three Albanian families were affected by political persecution.

The society was turned into a large penitentiary - with 23 prisons and 48 labor camps. Over 59,000 people were banished to internment camps, 34,135 politically persecuted people ended up in prison, 1,000 of whom died. 5,487 people were sentenced to death. The clergy in general, and the Catholic clergy in particular, were killed, persecuted, or imprisoned until religion was finally outlawed in 1967.

INSPIRING INDIVIDUAL

during the communist period (1944-1991)



"I am not a Fascist. I am for a democratic culture. I am a follower of the venerable Sami Frashëri. I am not a Communist. It is something I do not understand."

Musine Kokalari was born on 10 February 1917 in Adana, Turkey, within a patriotic and well-educated Albanian family from Gjirokastra. In 1920, her family returned to Gjirokastra. Being the youngest child in her family, Musine was raised with special care and love. From an early age, Musine showed a distinctive passion for literature in general and for the national folklore in particular. She is also known as a journalist and activist in the politics.

In attempts to found the first Albanian Social Democratic Party (Partia Social Demokrate) in 1943, she has been arrested three years later for her political views and sentenced to 30 years imprisonment, of which she served 16. Musine Kokalari remains one of the brightest and most important writers in her society, the first woman to get published in Albania and an exemplary symbol of the repressions in the Enver Hoxha regime.

MUSINE KOKALARI

EDUCATION

“Venus” library, which was owned by her brother Vesim Kokalari, played an important role in cultivating Musine’s passion for literature. During the 1930-1937 Musine continued her education in Tirana, first at “Qiriazi” institute, later at “Nëna Mbretëreshë”.

In 1938, Musine Kokalari starts her higher educational studies abroad, at the Faculty of Modern Literature at “La Sapienza” University in Rome. In early 1942, Musine graduates from the university with distinguished remarks for her studies and research work. Also, during 1942, the name of Musine Kokalari is included in the Italian encyclopedia as a talented writer with a high creative potential.

MUSINE KOKALARI AS WRITER AND A POLITICAL DISSIDENT

In 1937, a number of her articles on social issues were published in the “Shtypi” newspaper under the nickname “Muza” (“the Muse”). In 1939, Musine Kokalari wrote her first professional work titled “Siç më thotë nënua plakë” (“As my Granma says”). This work was published around 1941 in Tirana as a collection of ten original prose tales mainly inspired from popular culture and folkloric roots of the region of Gjirokastra and composed in the Tosk dialect. At the center of this work stands the figure of the woman from Gjirokastra and her day-to-day struggles within a deep patriarchal society. “Siç më thotë nënua plakë” is considered as the first literary work written by a female in the history of the Albanian nation.

Starting from the early 1942, Musine Kokalari joined the antifascist and anticommunist movements in Rome and with the same political views returns to Albania. As part of the Albanian antifascist movement, she contributes to the publishing of the magazine “Gruaja Shqiptare” (The Albanian Woman) in June 1943, under the nickname “Tacitta”. In the same year, Musine Kokalari co-founds the political entity “Partia Social Demokrate e Shqipërisë” (“The Albanian Social Democratic Party”). She was the main voice and inspiring figure within the party. In addition to this political project, Musine Kokalari along with Prof. Isuf Luzi published on 1 January 1944 the first issue of the newspaper “Zëri i Lirisë” (“The voice of Freedom”). “Zëri i Lirisë” served as the official newspaper of the newly formed Social Democratic Party.

Throughout 1944, Musine Kokalari wrote a significant amount of linguistic studies. During the same year, through the Publishing House “Mesagjeritë Shqiptare”, that was also owned by her brothers, Musine published her own two books titled “Rreth Vatrës” (“Around the Hearth”) and “Sa u tunt jeta” (“How life swayed”). These works, composed as a collection of short stories or as folksy tales, were publicly recognized and endorsed from various writers in Albania and abroad. At the same time, the author continued her work in the field of folkloric studies by collecting a substantial amount of legends and fairy tales from many Albanian cities and regions notably from Gjirokastra, Tepelena, Vlora, Elbasani, Korça, Shkodra, and Shkupi.

Unfortunately, this productive time of literary work from Musine Kokalari was stopped from a tragic period affecting individual and social spheres across Albania. The communist forces in Albania would seek to diminish the contribution and efforts against the Italian and German invaders made by other non-communist Albanian groups. Coercive force was used against many intellectuals who did not share the communists' view on proper governing. This time marks a tragedy of its own in the life of Musine Kokalari. On 12 November 1944, the communist forces executed two of her older brothers Vesim and Muntaz Kokalari. The youngest of the brothers, Hamit Kokalari was spared solely because he was severely sick.

MUSINE'S TRIAL

Musine was involved in the Democratic Coalition, a political movement that supported the postponement of the elections and for multi-party elections. The 37 members of the Coalition were arrested and deemed traitors of the Albanian nation. Musine was one of them, who hoped that representatives (from the United Kingdom and the United States) would monitor the elections.

In 1946, Musine stood before the military court in Tirana. The authorities and bystanders threatened, intimidated and coerced her. Musine's trial was transmitted live via loudspeakers to the public outside. Her stoic stance is illustrated in a photograph taken by the Albanian Telegraphic Agency. In defiance she wore a mourning veil in memory of her executed brothers. Her image made the front page of the broadsheets two days running.

MUSINE'S IMPRISONMENT, EXILE AND LEGACY

During prison time, she endured other continuous forms of torture without sacrificing her progressive ideas. In 1962, she was transferred from the prison facilities to Rrëshen where she engaged in hard construction works in tough conditions, under the strict surveillance of the society security agents (SIGURIMI). The continuous persecution and lack of basic conditions affected directly into Musine's writing, which was brutally interrupted. After many years of suffering, in 1972 Musine was able to finish in secrecy her book titled "Si lindi Partia Social Demokratë" ("How the Social Democratic Party was born"). In this book she maintains the same anti-communist views and explains her progressive democratic alternative. She succeeded in secretly preserving this work by sending it to her nephew Platon Kokalari as part of a collection of writings under the subject "Të shpëtojmë sa të mundim nga vlerat morale" ("Let's save our moral values as much as we can.").

Musine Kokalari was diagnosed with cancer in 1980 but was refused the proper treatment and care from the personnel of the hospital. Left untreated and therefore uncured, under considerable pain, while also carrying the sufferings endured during the persecution, Musine Kokalari died in August 1983. The full isolation imposed on her during the years of persecution denied Albanians many qualitative literary works that, in other more favorable conditions, would have been created and published by Musine Kokalari.

The figure of Musine Kokalari represents the first Albanian woman dissident.

LIFE OF A SURVIVOR

Anyone who acted in opposition to communist ideology should be punished by that system. One of the forms of punishment was internment, which consisted of a prison camp for the confinement of prisoners of war, enemy aliens, political prisoners, etc. Valbona Çoku, now 76 years old is one of the people who has been forced to experience this form of punishment. Forced to grow up away from her parents and in very difficult conditions, she shares for us the story of her life.



Can you tell us about your family?

My name is Valbona Çoku. I was born in October 1944. My parents were Mentor Çoku, from Ohrid and Zenie Resuli, from Lushnja. As a young man, my father was elected Member of our Parliament representing Ohrid and Struga. So, he left on the last days of November 1944, one month after I was born.

He fought against communism regime in any way possible, for the unification of Albania, Kosovo* and Macedonia, through his entire life. My maternal grandmother used to tell me that I was a bad omen for them, since I was born in a difficult and destructive year for all of us. Maybe I was, I'm not sure. I hope not.

What happened then? How did the drama of your life begin?

My father left with the last group of nationalists who escaped from Shkodra by boat. He tried to take me and my mother with him, although I was so young, but unfortunately it was impossible to go further. It was very risky to escape with a baby, because the group consisted of people who risked being killed. They left to Italy, after major challenges, as Serbian partisan forces were in Ulcinj or Bar, whom they had fought with. I stayed with my mother and we returned to Tirana to my mother's parents.

She had problems with her lungs and my father's departure upset her a lot, so her health condition deteriorated. My uncle talked to Nako Spiro, because they had been high school friends, so he did him a favor by taking my mother to Italy.

She had problems with her lungs and my father's departure upset her a lot, so her health condition deteriorated. My uncle talked to Nako Spiro, because they had been high school friends, so he did him a favor by taking my mother to Italy.

This was when my mother left me. It was a terrible thing to leave a 6-7-month-old child, but she was on the verge of death. Luckily, she was cured, stayed in the sanatorium for about three years, and they saved her life. I remained here with my grandmother and uncle. Then my uncle got married and I stayed with his family. Everyone looked at me with both pain and love, each to their own.

My relatives kept reminding me of my mother, whom I did not know much about. I heard this every day, on my birthday, on parties... They would tell me: "We hope that next year you will be with your mother". So, while growing up, I would be withdrawn and I would cry in the corner because each previous year they would wish me to be with my mother on that year, but I wasn't.

In the meantime, did you communicate with your parents?

Yes, used to be in contact by writing letters to each-other. My father was a journalist and then became President of the Islamic Union for the West, headquartered in Rome. He had a good position, which provided him with connections to distinguished people, journalists, and politicians. This was probably what led to my internment; they could not bear that a fellow Albanian was an enemy, which he actually was. He wasn't an enemy of the society, because he loved his society so much, but he was an enemy of the system.

How do you remember the first day of internment?

I ran to get a blanket and some other belongings, and then I went on the carriage. The carriage stopped at the village road. It was a sectoral farm village. It was horrible. A girl, all alone, in a village I knew nothing about, with only one blanket. Now that I recall myself, I was so frightened and had very little food with me.

However, when I saw that horror... No matter what I say, you can never imagine what the barracks were like. On the windows, I saw people who became curious, wondering what a girl, all alone, was doing there. It had never happened before. There were hundreds and thousands of internees, but not one girl all alone. There were children with their mothers and grandmothers, because the men had run away and had left their families behind.

What happened next?

During the first year of internment, I went to high school, because they had allowed me to finish three years at the pedagogy school.

After that I had to work, there was no other choice. It was very hard labor, to be honest, and I was not used to it. I had to plough, to harvest and do similar agricultural work.

The girls I lived with gave me books to read and pass the time. I was reading David Copperfield in the yard once and I started laughing. All of them happily went to the windows looking at me because I was finally laughing, after crying every day.

You got married afterwards, what changed in your life?

I married Sokol, whom I got to know since the beginning of my internment and my daughter was born soon after. To be honest, my husband's family lived in extremely harsh conditions. We were from different cities too; they were from Puka, I was from a different city. However, I tried to fit in. They were very good people, but their problems were significant, to be frank.

Internment lasted for 4-5 years, and I had already given birth to my two oldest children. Then, there arrived an order to release all women. We were released, but we would still live in the same home as our husbands. We were released, but also banished.

Could you ever meet your parents?

In the beginning of the '90s people started getting fake passports. Those who worked in the intelligence services knew the tricks, so they provided such documents. I came to Tirana and one of my cousins provided me and my son with fake passports. I thought to let my son go abroad, as I could not believe it was over.

On October 10, I went to Italy to see my father only, because my mother had passed away two years prior, in 1988. My son and I felt strange, in an abnormal condition. We were both quite anxious. The thought that I left my daughters and my husband frightened me. What if the story would be repeated again, that the borders would close and I would never see them? So, we felt really terrible during the journey. I arrived in Rome in one hour. All my life, I had been one hour away from my parents.

How did the reunion happen? What were the emotions of realizing your dream of several years?

Think of our emotions, that we were finally seeing each other. He left me one month old and he was now meeting a grown woman with a son. So, I was finally looking at him. This is my father?! That night he was parking his car and I went upstairs with the people who had come to wait for us. He stayed downstairs on purpose, so that I could see my mother's photograph alone.

For me it was really painful to see my mother on that photograph, as she wasn't there. My father had placed flowers, a bunch of buds and a letter: "Welcome lady of the house!"

We both went to visit the cemetery. My cry was heard from everywhere, as well as the words I had waited all my life to say to them both. Part of my life had not been so horrible, but I had longed for my parents. I used to look forward to being alone and dream of them, of what they looked like and what they were going to say to me. I saw them in pictures, but that was not enough.

He told me that until her last breath, my mother would call my name with the little voice she had left: "Vali, Vali, Vali..."



MEETING WITH AN EXPERT

Dr. Jonila Godole, the director of “Institute of Democracy, Media and Culture” shares in this interview her experience in the difficult process of confronting the past, talks about the reasons why it is still so difficult, makes comparison with other societies such as East Germany, and discusses the challenges which continue to be so difficult and which will be in the future too.



JONILA GODOLE

1. Do you think that George Orwell's quote "Whoever controls the past controls the future. Whoever controls the present controls the past" has significance for the history of transition in Albania?

Orwell said this bearing in mind that whoever (deliberately) erases facts about the past risks creating a certain version of history through propaganda. Given that human memory can extend through time until a few generations later, whoever has control of the past can within a short time fabricate whatever kind of history to be sold as the truth to the generations who come after.

Communism claimed absolute truth and in the name of truth ruled like God over life, death, law and justice. Until now in Albania whoever had power in their hands also had the opportunity to manipulate history, to highlight some moments and to black out others, depending on the political agenda.

2. Why has Albanian society difficulties in confronting with the Communist past? Can you tell us the main difficulties and obstacles you have experienced throughout your journey on this difficult mission?

Our society raised walls so as not to shed light on the period of the dictatorship, because if we are going to do this we need to start with ourselves. To clarify who were the main people responsible for drafting policy which led not only to the economic destruction of the 'socialist society' but also to serious crimes against humanity. Repression, imprisonment and violent oppression of alternative opinion, especially in the years from 1940 to 1950, blunted resistance against the system, but we cannot just hide behind this argument. A dictatorship can't continue so long if it doesn't have support from its people. The spies, investigators and judges of the time were not aliens, but real people.

They were turned into murderers and persecutors because their selfish interests matched the interests of the Communist ideology to have total control over the individual, over history, over religion. Among them there were certainly sadists, but the regime needed them. When we discuss this subject in the meetings the IDMC holds around the society, the argument which dominates is that our capitalism since 1990 has produced more injustice than Communism.

People forget quickly! They forget that after the establishment of the Communist regime it was the unprivileged, poor part of the population which seemed to experience positive improvements, especially in the villages. But it wasn't long before collectivisation was embraced and land was taken which has still not been completely returned! They forget that part of the population took up the positions (and usurped the homes!) of those who were penalised as enemies of the system, most of all those who were educated abroad.

They forget that Communism planted fear in the soul of every Albanian and a lack of trust in people, in the society and in the law – distortions which will require much time to reduce. All the myths for the rehabilitation of Communism have just one aim: hiding its true criminal face.



3. Your journey has been long and you have to come across some very painful and emotional stories in this process. Which one stands out the most to you?

I have to say that it is one thing to know in theory that great injustices were committed, and it is something else to read or to hear them from the evidence of people who experienced them. If the crimes of the dictatorship were made public and were broadcast on screens at least once a week I am certain that the adoration and nostalgia for that time would markedly reduce. The stories of persecution can't compete for first prize with one another. Each of them is dramatic in its own way. The sufferings of women in internment, after the imprisonment of the men of the family, and their sacrifices to bring up and feed their children with work and dignity in those conditions have still not been given the attention they deserve. The mass deaths of children in the Tepelena extermination camp, their forced burial on the banks of the river so that their bones would be lost, and together with them, the traces of the crime against them — these are a dark stain which will have light cast on it very soon.

4. "Ask your Grandparents" is one of the most interesting projects that IDMC has created in the process of confrontation with the Communist past. How is this project organized and where does the contribution of young people consist in it?

Grandparents are a symbol, a reference point for the generations who survived the Communist regime in Albania. The fact that this year too the competition had an excellent following from high school students aged 15 to 19 (you can follow it on www.idmc.al) shows that something has moved at least a little. The quality of their work has risen year on year, and so has the level of their analysis of human rights violations, the loss of hope and

of freedom, the ban on religion, and the imprisonment of an entire society and its isolation from the world. This is the generation who will make the difference in the confrontation with the past and it needs our help, and motivation and inclusion in as many projects and awareness-raising activities as possible, for meetings with contemporary eyewitnesses, confrontation with historical documents and facts rather than the historical trivia that they are forced to learn and hear in school and in the media.

5. You have been organizing many activities, mainly to help young people acknowledge their communist past. Are they more aware of their past?

Of course young people may not consider it a priority to know about a past that they don't know, but as a society we must motivate them to do so. We who lived through the dictatorship know that even a democratic society does not offer a guarantee against totalitarian projects which the time and the context can nurture.

It is really this that I am aiming for in the work that I have been doing for years in the area of memory — reflecting on the dictatorship so that it cannot return, in other forms. It would be good to have more support for this from policymaking agencies such as the Ministry of Education, and for its priorities in this field not to remain only on paper.

For example, one priority ought to be ongoing training of history teachers on the way that the past should be dealt with in lessons, which aspects to choose, how to make students more interested in the subject and the issues, how to use archive documents in lessons, how to engage students across the society in discussions and interviews with eyewitnesses who are still alive and want to talk, and many other things. If we want to reach young people we have to go through teachers; they are the key to success or failure in this process.

6. How have you experienced the process of confrontation with the Communist past? What are the challenges, in particular the young?

The process of confronting the past is a marathon, where you have to pace yourself carefully if you're going to go the distance. We are still at the beginning of this marathon and the road will be long. How to work together to reduce the difference in opinions on our past? History is not black or white. I am aware that this will be a long and painful process. And it can be achieved through a more distant confrontation with the past: technical and scientific, based on facts and figures, and not on empty polemic. And through an increased transparency in the work of the official authorities for memory or in long-term policies which are adopted by the government and society institutions. Only transparency through facts can show the true face of the dictatorship, not to bring to light the absolute truth, but to encourage witnesses and the contemporary evidence to take an active role in confrontation with the past.

On the other hand it requires a greater engagement from interest groups, from the media and journalists and, above all, from long-term society policies. The reality shows that so far the work to shed light on the past is mainly supported by international institutions, who have not only put the area of memory on their agenda but have forced it also into Albanian politics. Reinforcing in this way the fact that our bitter past is a part of the history of Europe and should be dealt with as such. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation was one of the first initiators of this important debate within the society and abroad.

And in the end, the process of moving on from Communism will still be far-off if the political forces do not come together on this mission, if they don't establish a joint commission made up of people from parliament, independent experts from the academic world and civil society, to analyse objectively how the process has gone so far, and the responsibilities and tasks for the future.



SITES OF MEMORY



PRISON OF SPAÇ

This place was a political prison used during the dictatorship in Albania. It is located close to the city of Lezha, in a mountainous and isolated region in the north of the society, which is still hard to reach.

This prison was constructed by prisoners and was opened in 1969 with a capacity for **504 prisoners**. During the decades it was used as a prison, many of the convicts were subject to humiliation and violence; hundreds of people starved to death. The copper extraction from the nearby mine was handmade in really brutal conditions.

The former prison became a national monument during the 90s, but no steps forward were made since then to promote the site and its memories. Today there has remained merely the contaminating dust of a rude and tragic history.



IDMC Study Visit in Spaç Prison



Former Kitchen Hall in Prison of Spaç



SITE OF WITNESS AND MEMORY IN SHKODRA

This place had been used as a communist prison in 1946. For more than four decades, many political prisoners and opponents of the system were tortured and imprisoned within these walls. During communism in Shkodra **2890 people were prisoned, 601 people were killed** and **136 died from the tortures**.

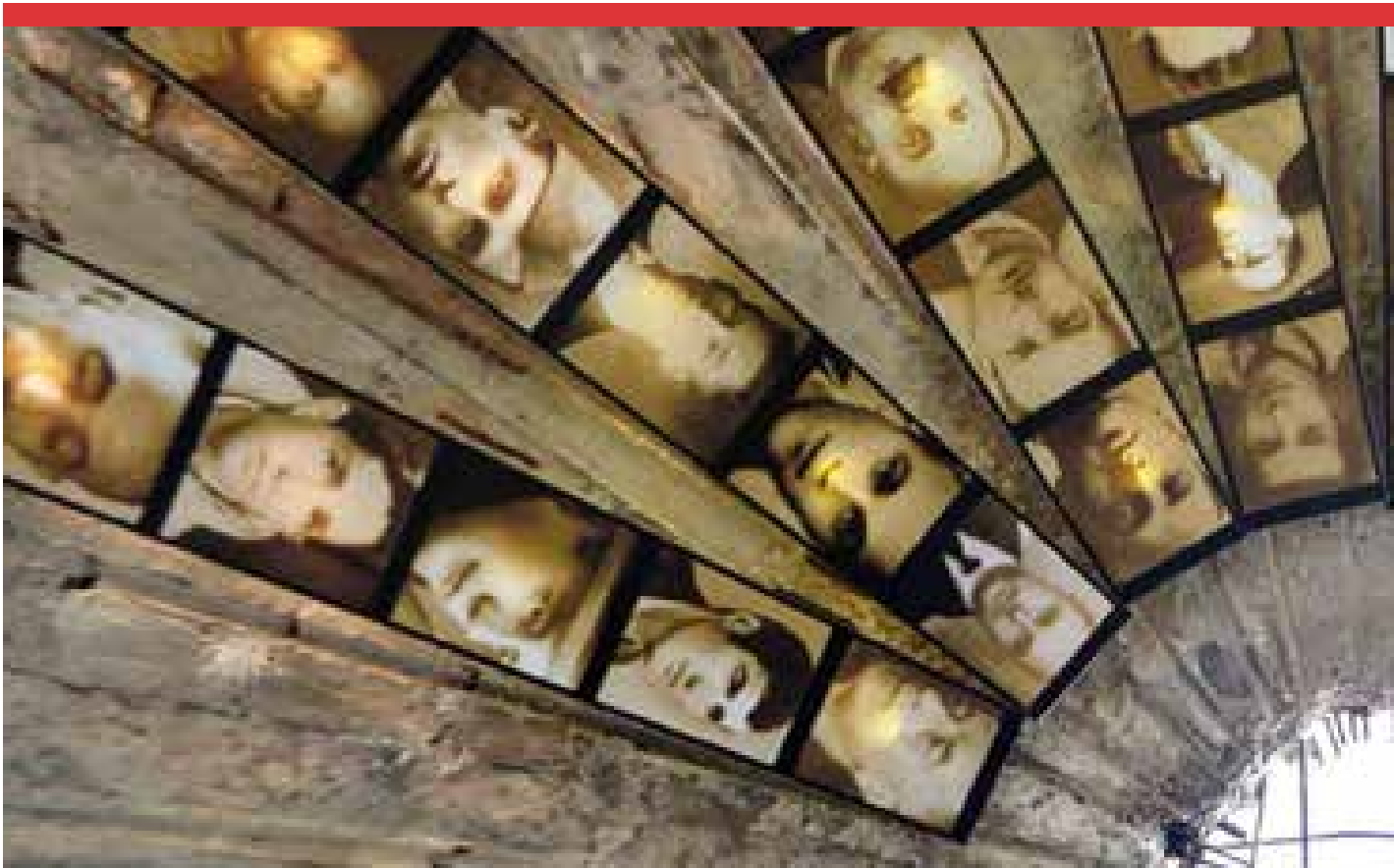
Visitors have the opportunity to look at the photographs and can learn the names of those who, in the city of Shkodra, have been either sentenced to a prison term, interned or executed by the communist system. Also displayed are objects used by the prisoners and also correspondences with their relatives and friends. A special focus in this museum is placed on the clerics who have been sentenced or killed by the system.



BUNK'ART 2

BUNK'ART 2 was inaugurated on the 19th of November 2016 in the capital center.

It reconstructs the history of the Albanian Ministry of Internal Affairs from 1912 to 1991 and reveals the secrets of "Sigurimi", the political police that was the harsh persecution weapon used by the regime of Enver Hoxha. Secretly built from 1981-86, beneath the Ministry of Internal Affairs along the city's main boulevard, the underground structure was given the code name 'Objekti Shtylla' (Object Pole) in order to keep its construction undetected. This structure was held as a "great accomplishment" by the Communist regime, focused on the protection of the society from the "foreign enemy".





Museum Entrance

Photo Credits: Spiro Frashëri



View from the inner dome of BUNK' ART 2



“HOUSE OF LEAVES”

The House of Leaves museum is located in the building of the same name in the centre of Tirana. Built in 1931, this villa started out innocently enough by housing the first private obstetrics clinic in Albania. The “leaves” and their now-notorious purpose would come later. The name of this house is not a metaphor, and nor is it a coincidence. The house was carefully hidden from the public by a dense layer of trees and leaves, a proven camouflage technique normally seen in warfare. But for the conspiring Communist leaders, it was deemed effective enough to keep the secrets of the house obstructed from public gaze. Located in the center of Tirana, the house has a total of 31 inter-connected rooms. The house was used by the Gestapo during the occupation of World War II. Afterwards, with the establishment of the Communist government, the house became the headquarters of the infamous Sigurimi, the Albanian secret service. In the early days of Communism, the house carried out the sinister tasks of torture and death penalties but in later years was solely used for communications monitoring.



IN FOCUS: CINEMATOGRAPHY

in service of propaganda

In 1952, Hoxha inaugurated the “Shqipëria e Re” Kinostudio (“New Albania” Film Studio) Complex, which produced 227 films, 1,145 documentaries, 1,006 chronicles and 122 cartoons. Since its establishment, “Kinostudio” had an average activity of 74 productions per year, 7 of which would definitely be films. Its most active period was during the ‘80s, when the production doubled. The regime at the time allocated considerable funds to the film industry at the expense of other economy sectors. “Debate over the films of the former “Kinostudio”. Propaganda or national treasure?

Study by the IDMC (2019)

Brief Background:

From 1953 to 1960, the enthusiastic return of technicians and producers was evidenced in the Albanian cinema. These were film production experts, taught and trained in the Soviet Union, a dominant socialist realism style. The first film produced in collaboration with the Soviets was “Skënderbeu” (Skanderbeg). We could say that the ‘60s mark the actual beginnings of the communist cinema, although the productions were limited to a few films and chronicles. The rise of the “New Man” in film productions halted in 1961 because of Hoxha’s spilt from Khrushchev, which propagandistically portrayed in the “Ballë për Ballë” (Face to Face) film as many other aspects of life.



After, the regime turned towards China and thus commenced the broadcasting of different films, such as 'Lindja është e kuqe' (The East is colored in Red) in 1965. The rupturing of the relations with China brought about the total isolation of the society, which required increased Albanian film productions to fully replace those foreign.

Watching a foreign film on TV could lead to imprisonment for watching foreign productions or for being affected by enemy propaganda.

Later, in 1967, Albania was declared the first atheist society in the world, with hundreds of mosques and churches subsequently destroyed in the process. Although in the first Albanian film "Tana" the two protagonists were from families of different religion and, in the end, their love conquered all, it bears saying that the purpose of such script was just to warm the hearts of Albanians a few years before the complete prohibition of religions would take place. It appears that Hoxha could not tolerate Albanians worshiping a God that was not him. The cinematography became another important means for "exercising" communism; the emotions transmitted through films were manipulated and turned against the clergy and religion, party spies and regime dissidents, by denigrating them.

From 1975 to 1980, the number of artistic films produced was considerable, approximately thirteen annually.



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Why films?

Because the propaganda spread through images is far more powerful than many other forms. The majority of people were unaware of what communism consisted of, they were unaware that as a doctrine it was in open contradiction with the Albanian's lifestyle traditions. In order for such a doctrine to become widely acceptable to the people, the regime developed a powerful propaganda that would serve the system and its purpose: creating the New Man. The New Man was extremely hungry, he was uneducated and lacked opportunities, and thus he was a "slave" to elements such as food and survival. He could not be creative or enjoy life; therefore, the most successful form of entertainment provided was film. This Man thought with the Party's mind, read propagandistic press and watched the same nationalistic films that molded the human mind by imposing historical monuments, being the foundation of the longstanding indoctrination.

The main idea conveyed was that of fostering a new cultural spirit in a new society, far from the previous feudal system. The broadcasted film productions, also known as "educational" productions for the new minds, aimed to communicate Marxist-Leninist ideas. The work, the screenplays and their selection were entirely centralized and controlled to the smallest detail.



Poster of the movie "Scanderbeg"

Most common themes:

War theme; foreign enemy; external enemy; concepts of ante-war and liberation; corrupt officials; irony towards the monarchy, etc.

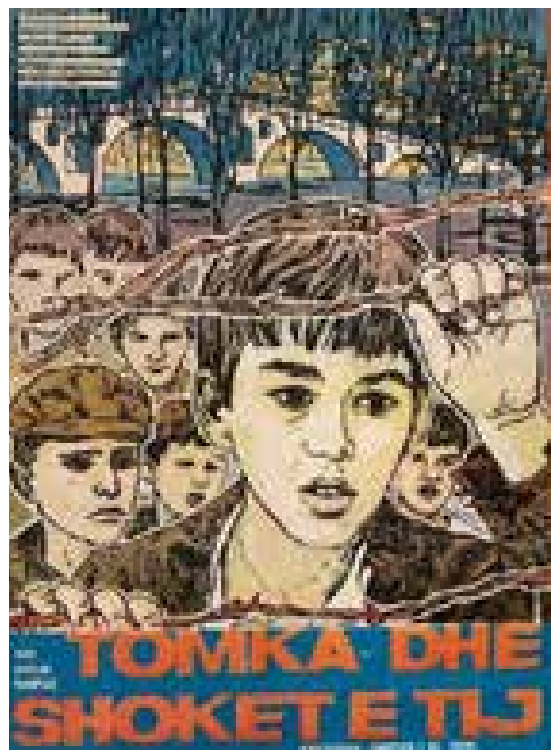
The fight against enemies was brutal, and children were also included. Films such as 'Tomka dhe shokët e tij' (Tomka and his friends); 'Balonat' (Kites); 'Nusja dhe shtetrrethimi' (Bride and the Curfew); 'Ngadhënim mbi vdekjen' (Triumph over Death); 'Fije që priten' (Broken Threads), etc. Film protagonists coped with life's difficulties during war, famine, and oppression from invaders and their collaborators. Rich merchants in the films were portrayed as negative characters with direct relations with the invaders and as helpful towards them for their own personal gain, aiming to increase wealth at the expense of the people. They were referred to as 'kulaks'. The regime aimed to create a collective negative perception of these figures by considering them as phenomena and excluding them from society. Therefore, the formation of this perception became more ingrained throughout the films.



Photo from the movie "The Overthrow of Idols" (1977)

The idea that there was an external enemy who wanted to destroy Albania spread at an extraordinary rate. It led to an ongoing panicked state. At the same time, this was further exacerbated by other phenomena within the society. The regime was aware of the existence of those who wished to benefit from their good job or political positions, or who received bribes, however, the regime also knew that the existing or future New Man would fight this phenomenon. This theme was included in films in such a way that everything became "brainwashing", with irony and corruption mixed into regular love stories, resulting in an easily digestible work for the viewer.

Another element that was subjected to irony was the monarchy era, when those in high and elite positions used their power to the detriment of the community, the people and the society, in a society isolated from the rest of the world. "Koncert në vitin 1936" (Concert in 1936).



Poster of the movie "Tomka and his friends" (1977)

Women in the New Society



Photo from the movie "Kapedani" (1972)

The role of women was of special importance to communism. Nothing symbolized the 'New World' and the 'Society of the Future' better than women and their emancipation in a traditional and patriarchal society such as that in Albania. Women were the perfect element for this social engineering project, as they were the individuals oppressed from the past, from patriarchy and poverty. The powerless position of women was transformed into emancipation, liberalization against norms and participation in public life. How was this conveyed? The movie 'Brazdat' (Grooves) is an example of a high ideological load, portraying a woman who wished to become a tractor driver. All backward voices fell on deaf ears, while she, fighting for equality, sped ahead toward emancipation.



Movie posters from "Kinostudio"

The emancipation of women occurred in workplaces that were dominated by men until then. Women worked in fields, agriculture, workshops, construction, as tractor drivers, etc., without intellectual development however, because this could become very harmful to the communist, as was the case for Musine Kokalari.

Another example is that shown in the film 'Kapedani' (The Commander), where the satirical dreams of the protagonist and the images of the emancipated woman at the time portray her participating in all jobs that were considered masculine. It showcased a strong attack against the traditional values of Xha Sulo (the protagonist), whose looks, with his characteristic mustache, symbolized the past that had become unacceptable in the new society, just as he was, considering it a remnant of the previous regime. He was viewed as a hindrance to progress, in need of re-education in light of the new communist spirit. The message communicated to him was that women and men were equal, and that women could perform the same jobs as men, which Xha Sulo would have to accept in the end.



The two-part film “Zonja nga Qyteti” (The Lady from the Town) and “Shoqja nga Fshati” (A Comrade Woman from the Village), was another propaganda message shown on film. This film tells the story of a lady who hated living in the village, as she considered it a place that lacked living conditions, but was forced to move there due to her daughter’s new job. The lady is regarded as an obstacle to the well-functioning system, a very tiresome person who insults and is rude to the village workers. However, the opposite takes place in the second part, as her mentality completely changed. She underwent the Party’s screening and her status changed from ‘lady’ to ‘comrade’, and she became fully integrated into the so-called ‘normal life’. She became an inspiration to everyone, because she ‘converted’.

The purpose of the system was consolidated and it could be deemed as effective because it managed to destroy many fundamental concepts, such as freedom and critical thinking, and cinema played a substantial role in this regard.

Images and their power:

The standard socialist realism scenes were characterized by a ‘play’ of colors of the wheat in the communal cooperative fields, of a tractor, old Albanian songs and rhapsodies that accompany such images, the same style of parents’ clothing, the nationalist elements and them calling out for war and liberation. Further, there also images such as those in the ‘Rrugë të Bardha’ (White Roads) film that portrays a telephone technician standing in a painful position on top of a telephone pole in the snow, trying to repair the line to maintain the telephone connection for the village inhabitants on the New Year. Doesn’t this movie try to portray and commend the great sacrificial willingness of one person for the whole community?



Poster of the movie “The Lady from the Town” (1976)

For those who grew up in Albania, such unforgettable scenes and scripts represent a complicated and emotional heritage.

Let us turn to the **audience**.

Being skeptical was harshly punished in a society where the economic and social life was controlled by the society, where you were told ‘do not do it or you will suffer consequences’, where you had to agree with what was said because there was no other way, nobody else acted differently, the New Man was described as being multidimensional, but everyone was the same and ethical dilemmas disappeared.

The majority of Albanians did not have a TV at home, therefore, a cultural expression such as cinematography, was the greatest attraction. Meanwhile, the development of the society, which resembles the opening and closing of an accordion, changed the melody, though the colors remained always dark. In the ‘60s, there was a boom of sarcastic films, which purposefully helped to keep the morale high and justify the society’s frequent isolation.

The quotes of these films, such as “gli italiani sono buoni, per mangiare maccheroni” (Italians are good at eating macaroni), managed to become easily ingrained in the collective memory and persist, indulging into some kind of weird nostalgia.

On the other hand, watching a foreign film on TV could lead to imprisonment for watching foreign productions and for being affected by enemy propaganda. Thus, each day focused on denigrating the dissidents and intellectual figures, the monarchical past, the religious believers and those who 'slandered' the regime or failed to idolize it sufficiently. The dissidents and intellectual figures who embraced the monarchy or who simply were not keen on communism, religious believers and those who supposedly 'slandered' the regime or failed to idolize it sufficiently were denigrated daily and punished.

Therefore, the psychosis was the same for everyone; while the excessive embellishment of the nation's history aimed to distract people from thinking that the communist program was developed for momentary goals and was based on nullity.

The discussion that needs to be held and that requires the involvement of everyone included in this program concerns the broadcasting of such films to this day and at such a high rate, and their consequences. Could they affect the education of children, of us as youths, considering the ideology they are rooted in and their content being just for manifestation, what messages do they convey, particularly if we consider the context provided above? This is still open for discussion.



Photo from the movie "The Toast to my Wedding" (1978)

YOUTH VOICE

We met some representatives of the Albanian young generation and asked them 2 questions:

1. How do you see Albania now?

A: -Well, I think Albania has still way to go before becoming a true Utopia and I think that the only way to achieve that is through youth. We are able to discern between the good and the bad, and if we collaborate with each other, we will be able to ensure a better future for Albania.

B: -In my opinion, Albania is a society that has many shortcomings and is far from ideal. However, considering what it has been through and how far it has come from what it used to be, I think that it has a bright future ahead.

C: -I see Albania as a developed society, with an activist, feminist and open-minded youth.

D: -Albania is my society and, as we all know, it is under continuous development. However, I think that it is taking firm and steady steps towards the western future.

E: -I want to see my society developing and becoming part of the European family. We have made a lot of progress so far, but we need to do better.

2 How do you want to see Albania in the future?

A: -I am a student abroad and I haven't been living in Albania for a long time, but I think that there is still a lot we can do in terms of development. I think Albania has a lot of potential. Albanian people also need to learn how to be more open-minded, because from my personal experience, people abroad are more flexible.

B: -The future I wish for Albania is that of a society with a different mentality unlike the one adopted until to date, with a greater political, cultural and economic progress. I think that Albania lacks people who are willing to work here, but I also see that there are young people who really want to be of help.

C: -The situation in Albania is alright, but I think it can be better and I really believe it will be.

D: -In the future, I want to see a hospitable, peaceful and amazing Albania that is always there to welcome others, maintaining its tradition and upholding the true essence of being an Albanian.

E: -"Motherland's the society where I first raised my head," as Andon Zako Çajupi has said. In my opinion, it is a society of great economic potential and we have made a lot of progress in the recent years, especially in the service sector. To my mind, it is the most beautiful society in the world because it is the society where I was born and where by beloved ones live.

FACT OR FICTION

1. During the communist regime, Albania became the World's first atheist society.
2. The dictator Hoxha considered himself immortal and invulnerable.
3. The dictator Enver Hoxha was an excellent student.
4. Literary works had to be approved before publication. But if in the content, those books had a quote written or said by Enver Hoxha, then the approval process became even easier.
5. The dictator Hoxha was very sociable, surrounded everytime by friends, relatives, colleagues, allies etc.
6. During communism, many educational reforms were undertaken, which significantly reduced the illiteracy of the population in the society.

1. Fact
2. Fiction
3. Fiction
4. Fact
5. Fiction
6. Fact





BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

INSPIRING INDIVIDUAL

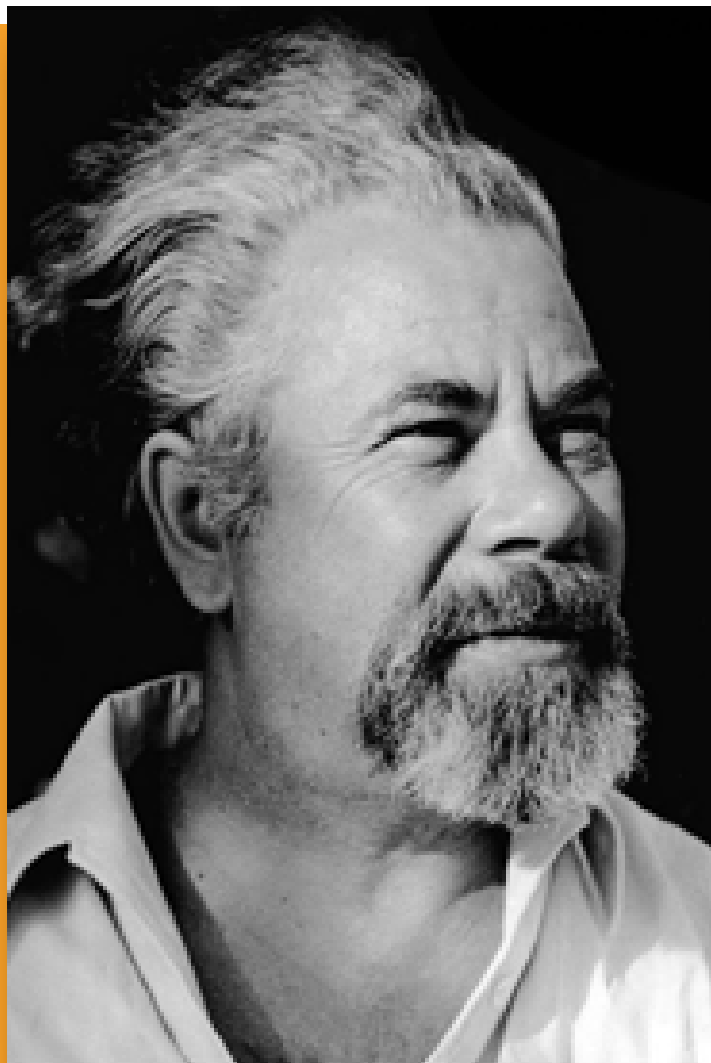
in BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Mehmedalija "Mak" Dizdar (1917 – 1971) was a Bosnian poet.

After the II World War, Dizdar was a prominent figure in the cultural life of Bosnia and Herzegovina, working as the editor-in-chief of the daily *Oslobođenje* (Liberation). He served as head of a few society-sponsored publishing houses and eventually became a professional writer and the President of the Writers' Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dizdar drew inspiration from pre-Ottoman Bosnian Christian culture, from the sayings of heterodox Islamic visionary mystics, and starting by the 15th century from Bosnian linguistic idiom. His poetry referenced medieval Bosnian tombstones ("stećci" or "mramorovi" - marbles) and their inscriptions on the ephemerality of life. Dizdar used the symbols and inscriptions on the stećci to give *Kameni Spavač* a historical point of view, by envisioning the world through the eyes of the medieval people buried under the stećci. Through the stećci, he discussed themes of the intimate life journey of origin, homeland or landscapes, sources of knowledge, experiences of the world, etc. His works "*Kameni spavač*" (Stone Sleeper) and "*Modra rijeka*" (Blue River) are probably the most important Bosnian poetic achievements of the 20th century.

There is little talk today about Mak's various interests and it is less known that Mak, in a way, revealed to the public of Yugoslavia the culture of medieval Bosnia. Even without any ethno-nationalistic pretensions, his work has been seen as a threat to some political currents of former Yugoslavia.



MEHMEDALIJA "MAK" DIZDAR

INTERVIEW WITH A SURVIVOR

1. How did you experience the beginning of the war and how old were you?

For me, the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was just a continuation of the already experienced wars in Slovenia and Croatia. I was 23 at the time and unfortunately, it could already be said that I was a veteran. The war situation affected my mental state by a large degree. The man saw that all his dreams and plans for which he was preparing during his schooling would be ruined. The process of schooling for a life vocation required a lot of sacrifices. These meant: hard work, numerous selections and tests etc. Bringing school to an end, the enthusiasm and self-confidence in us grew, plans for the future were slowly realized and everything seemed to go in a right direction. In mid-1991, that day finally came. I graduated from the Aviation Academy and got the title of the pilot I had dreamed of since my boyhood days. I finally got my independence and the status of a highly valued profession. A few days after that the euphoria stops in the most painful way possible. My homeland disappeared in flames. The war has begun and with it comes uncertainty, stress, suffering and everything else that war brings. At that moment, I found myself at a great crossroads of my life. Given the situation and the assessment of events, it was not difficult to conclude what will happen to the Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that we will face a difficult struggle.

2. Was it difficult to make the decision to join the forces fighting for BiH?

Making such a decision, from the aspect of a young man whose life and career were on a golden rise until a few months, was very difficult. All the postulates on which I

was brought up and for which I swore to defend, suddenly disappeared. All values such as the defence of the homeland, the fight against fascism and nationalism, brotherhood and unity have taken on a whole new dimension. Thanks to the persistence and help of friendly societies, the Society of BH managed to procure helicopters that will bring hope, joy and help to its afflicted people. The first tasks we had were to deliver food and medicine to the Srebrenica enclave. As a human being, it was a great honour for me to be able to give a glimmer of hope to my fellow citizens. As a professional, it was very difficult for me because I knew very well the abilities of the people and weapons of the opposing side, which initially reduced the percentage of successfully performing the given tasks and duties. The mere thought of having to cross the front line four times without any protection was enough to make a man freeze in fear.

3. Are there any specific memories from the war?

Of course there are a lot of them, that I try to forget, as well as beautiful and positive ones that confirm to me everyday that I made the right decision. I will never forget the gratitude in the eyes of the children and the elderly we reached and how we restored hope and faith, how we showed them that they were not forgotten. There are those who are willing to fight and us who are willing to defend them till our last dying breath. Although it was difficult, I am proud to have fought and to some extent helped in creating our new homeland. Not every generation has the privilege of creating their own society.

4. Do you feel disappointed when you see the current state of events in our society?

Considering the current situation in the society, I am quite disappointed because, as an officer, I thought that I should ensure the equality of all citizens with my struggle. I still believe that the struggle for the equality of citizens, against fascism and nationalism must continue no matter how difficult it may be. Nationalism has entered all segments of our society: education, police, science, art. . . Devastating statistics on the number of emigrants, in peacetime, from Bosnia and Herzegovina speak volumes about the current situation. This data gives me the strength and desire to continue the fight for us and the generations to come.

I believe that this society can be equal with all other democratic societies in the world, and not because of the will of individuals, be on the edge of the world events.

MEETING WITH AN EXPERT

ELMIR SPAHIĆ

Teaching assistant at the Department of Literature of the Nations of BH,
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo

1. Mak Dizdar is one of the most famous Bosnian or Bosniak writers of the last century? How important is the choice between these two adjectives?

In a Shakespeare's way of saying: "It doesn't seem - it is!", Because Mehmedalija Mak Dizdar is one of the most important authors of all Bosniak and Bosnian literature, like he belongs to the Bosniak and Bosnian literary canon (because one does not exclude the other), so the wrong choice was only in the case of non-recognition of one of the two adjectives. The Bosnian community is a specific set of national literatures and literary traditions of national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it is by no means a hybrid complex but an organic phenomenon; complex but actually complete.

2. We believe that Mak Dizdar is known to the Bosnian public as a poet of stećak tombstones, however, we also noticed that young people are less aware that in a way Mak Dizdar revealed the culture of medieval Bosnia to the Yugoslav public. How important is this information for the history of Bosniak or Bosnian literature?

Mak Dizdar was primarily a poet, but not (only) a poet of stećak tombstones, but also of the entire human existence or "delusion", as he himself said. His poetic opus since the first collection of poems „Vidovopoljska noć“ (1936) has been about Man himself. Finally, for the collection of poems „The Stone Sleeper“ (1966), in connection with the transcendental existentialist existence, he took over the motif of the medieval man of Bosnia. It was the archaic language of medieval Bosnia in the Stone Sleeper collection that greatly innovated, and in part made the poetic expression of this area astonishing, thus deautomatizing the literary and artistic reception of the time. Thus, choosing his own poetic language, with the help of literature as a very powerful medium, he presented the then largely forgotten past, like the culture of medieval Bosnia, and even moved the boundaries of the previous horizon of expectations in the reception of the literary work and, as Umberto Eco would say, he began to profile competent readers. In the bottom line - Mak Dizdar largely aestheticized both Bosniak and Bosnian literature, and his entire literary oeuvre covered the historical development periods of Bosniak and Bosnian literary creation from the time between the two world wars until the 1970s. However,

Dizdar did not affirm the Bosnian literacy and literature of medieval Bosnia only in poetry but also in a separate booklet „Stari bosanski epitafi“ (1961) and, finally, a synthesis of his entire research work on literacy, literature and culture of medieval Bosnia, in „Stari bosanski tekstovi“ (1969), where he emanated the specificity of stećak tombstones and their inscriptions, ie the whole phenomenon of medieval Bosnia, emphasizing that Old Bosnian epitaphs are crucial both from the point of view of general history and from the point of view of the history of language.

3. There are allegations that Mak Dizdar was a victim of the system in which he lived. The system, in which the idea of the existence of the Bosnian identity was seen as a threat, also saw Mak Dizdar as a threat, which is why he encountered many obstacles throughout his life aimed at obstructing his work. Do you think this is just speculation?

The publication of the poetry collection „Kameni spavač“ (1966) was accompanied by extremely tumultuous and discriminatory readings by anti-Bosnian spiders, which were especially loud after the publication of the book „Stari bosanski tekstovi“ (1969) and which, according to the then government, did not recognize Bosnian or Bosnian stability at all. It is more or less unknown to our public that one of the most vocal opponents of Mak Dizdar was Rajko Petrov Nogo, the then secretary of the Writers' Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who then rigidly oppressed inter-republican and interethnic relations. Advocating for the Bosnian language and proving its scientific foundations, which he wrote about in the essay „Marginalia on and around the language“ (1970) published in the magazine „Život“, in which he was also the editor, Mak Dizdar was exposed to threats day and night. On January 15th 1971, Mak Dizdar resigned as a member of the Management Board due to various irregularities in the Writers' Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which concerned unjustified spending of funds, arbitrary revision of the apartment allocation list, informal election of new members and others. Only a few months after the allocation of a larger apartment, he receives a blue envelope from the Executive Council of SR BH with the decision on eviction, immediately after reading its contents. This Bosniak and Bosnian poet only managed to tell his youngest son Murkel that his chest hurt terribly. Moments later, his head dropped on the typewriter.

SITES OF MEMORY

When it comes to the Bosnia and Herzegovina and its past, unfortunately the first thing that comes to almost everyone's mind is the war that took place in the nineties (1992-1995). One of the main reasons for the war was the ethno-nationalistic politics who were born many years before the war, but which escalated during the nineties. It's been only 25 years since its end and the consequences of the war are still very present in so many segments of our everyday life. Amongst others, physical traces are there to remind us of everything that happened. Some of the traces are part of many different initiatives started to honor the victims, to remember them and to remind us of what war can bring. .

Sarajevo Memorial for Children killed during Siege

Even though Sarajevo could be considered as one big place of memory due not only to the historical facts but also due to the numerous traces the war left. Everywhere one goes it's possible to notice that the name of some museum, monuments have war in their name. If one look close enough, one will see that even some of the oldest building or sites have some notes near them that probably tells the story of that place before and after this war. Still, in the center of Sarajevo there's one monument. It is dedicated to children killed during the siege of Sarajevo.

It consists of a glass monument surrounded by a water fountain and several small columns with the names of 521 killed children. It was erected in 2009, on one of the central places of Sarajevo, on the initiative of the "Association of the Parents of the Murdered Children in the Besieged Sarajevo 1992–1995".

Estimates of the number of children killed vary. The president of an association of parents whose children were killed during the siege, Fikret Grabovica, claims that about 800 more names are expected to be engraved after all relevant information and documents are gathered and their cases are verified. Some 10,000 civilians, including 1,500 children, were killed in Sarajevo during the 44-month-long siege, mostly by snipers and mortars fired from mountains surrounding the city.



СПОМЕН ОБИЈЕЋИЈЕ УБИЈЕНОЈ ДЈЕЦИ ОПКОЛЈЕНОГ САРАЈЕВА 1992-1995



WAR CHILDHOOD MUSEUM

This is a historical museum located in Sarajevo that opened in 2017. The main idea of the museum is to explore the experience of growing up during a war. It presents the experiences of children who lived through the war in Bosnia, told through objects, video testimonies, and excerpts from oral histories. The goal of the Museum of War Childhood is to become the world's leading archive on this topic in the next 10 years.

War Childhood Museum has developed a series of educational materials and workshops that promote the importance of peace and educate about the role of each individual in preserving and building peace. Every year, the museum cooperates with over 100 educational institutions from Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad, and annually works with at least 5,000 children.

One of the testimonials: The oven (Sanja Stevanović – Martinović, 1979.)

“We felt death. My brother went out to get some grass for our parrot when a sniper hit him right in the heart. He was only 10! We couldn't even go to his funeral. Our world than collapsed.

We felt life. My sister was born in the middle of the war. We lived in the basement and we haven't seen for months the sky, the sun, the rain... My sister was our salvation and our hope, a symbol of the victory of life over death.

We tried to survive. The symbol of the art of survival during war is also this oven. My father made in in Sarajevo in 1993. The main part is made of pressure cooker, the legs are made of the lightning rods, the tin door is made of gutters, which fell from the building during the shelling. We cooked on it beans, pasta, rice, lentils and bran bread. We used it to warm up and we used to burn on it various books, newspapers, parquet, shoes...

This all changed our lives forever. “



The memorial room: part of Srebrenica Genocide Memorial (Spomen soba)

The memorial room is a purpose-built, museum-style space in the former headquarters of the Dutch battalion from the peacekeeping forces that were deployed in the then so-called UN-protected zone. It is located opposite the cemetery in Potočari, where exhumed and identified victims of genocide are continuously buried. The memorial room uses a 30-minute film and a series of stories about the victims to portray the fall of Srebrenica and the desperate attempts of Bosniaks to find protection at a UN-flagged military base.

Photographs on the walls of the room testify to the genocide, the consequences of the genocide and the trauma of the disappearance, search, identification and burial of the killed Srebrenica residents.



HISTORY AND CULTURE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a society known mostly for its turbulent past. Unfortunately, we, the young people feel like it is not only the past that has been turbulent, but in some way, it feels like every moment we live is that turbulent moment. We chose to speak about Mak Dizdar and his destiny because we need and we want positive examples around us.

For a long period in Yugoslavia, every writer and not only writers, but scientist or anyone who wanted to be recognized for his or her achievements and he/she originated from the territory of Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, had to declare himself/herself officially either as being Serb or a Croat. Category of Bosnian formally didn't exist. That's why so many important personalities from the cultural or scientific history of Bosnia and Herzegovina appear in Serbian or Croat anthologies or history books. Even today some tend to continue the discussion on Mak Dizdar's ethnicity rather than speak about him from a scientific point of view. In times when even the idea of the existence of something like Bosnian identity was seen as a great danger for some political currents, Mak's work has been seen as an incentive to strengthen and affirm that identity, even though his intentions had nothing political in them.

Although there have long been debates in scientific circles about the medieval Bosnia and Bosnian kingdom, about the Bosnian church and stećak tombstones, as the unique monuments of that period, Mak Dizdar revived that period in a specific way. He pointed out the universal and timeless qualities of this culture. However, precisely because of his work and his deeds he suffered a long and silent tragedy during his life. Mak Dizdar was in a way a victim of all three systems in which he lived: censors of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia expelled half of the poems from his poetic debut *Vidovopoljska noć*, the Ustashas took his mother and sister to Jasenovac, and socialist Yugoslavia banned a very successful publishing house, "People's Education," in which he was editor-in-chief. This event was just the beginning of his troubles: he did not get a permanent job until the end of his life, he lived with his wife and three children in a small, unconditional apartment, and when he finally got a new one, he was handed an eviction letter, over which he died. In addition, as his manuscript legacy clearly shows, he received anonymous threatening letters, was publicly insulted and humiliated several times, and the value of his work was regularly questioned by fierce polemical texts. Although, he was not persecuted in the classical sense, it could be said that a partially spontaneously and partially organized „war“ was waged against him.

YOUTH VOICE

We have surveyed 30 individuals aged from 15 to 30 years old answering the following questions

Q: How would you solve the problems which hinder development of BH? (Some of the answers were repeated and not everyone had an answer to this question.)

A: This problem has been sown for a long time, it must be harvested for a long time. The solution is probably a change of generations or very big changes (not necessarily for the better, just let there be a feedback loop) in most spheres for which the mass is of course not ready.

B: By educating citizens about the importance of voting in elections and spreading awareness of our possibilities. Constitutional changes and by reforming the educational system.

C: Change the people in power or change and just change in everything.

One of the most dominant culprits one can notice through the answers are politicians and the system in which they govern. Here we have to remind of the Dayton Peace agreement previously mentioned and the complexity it has brought to our society which enables most of the stated issues. Firstly by dividing the society to Federation of B&H and Republika Srpska and then Federation further to cantones - with parallely giving each one independent government - administrative perplexity becomes unprecedented and not to mention unnecessarily costly. Each canton government has a right to shape its for example educational system individually so that many allow two schools under the same roofs and within each different history to be thought. Trilingualism mentioned through the Facts & Fiction quiz is also a direct consequence of the constitution in the 90s.

But the biggest issue arises upon facing any decisions, especially important ones - where the tri headed presidency is yet to act as a united group. It has to be mentioned as well that individual politicians' behavior is to blame as well, who successfully use all constitution loopholes for their own benefit.

Q: How would you work to develop the potential of BH?

A: Whatever I decide to do, I know that it will be hard.

B: Investing in young people, incentives and developing technology.

C: By acquainting residents with their rights, the importance of elections, the consequences of non-voting, the ambition for people to unite and fight for their society

D: First of all, I would stop building buildings and start building factories or some other places to work. I would work on improving the education of children, and providing the necessary funds for their education. Also, I would use natural resources within some sufficient limits, so that it would not damage nature, ... Namely, I would work on EXPORTING more than IMPORTING!

Q: What do you think: what is the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and what would you like it to be? (briefly describe)

A: Unless there is a change in the competence of decision-makers at the local and society level that affects all residents, the future will not be significantly different from the present. I want to see the encouragement of young people, investment in education and training and ethical conduct.

B: I do not think that the near future is much better than the current situation and of course everyone would like us to have a better education system, living standards, higher employment and environmental development.

C: We will feel gradual progress in some fields while we stagnate in many.

D: If we use the potentials of intelligent people that will change power, then we can do everything.

E: Depending on which people take over the society in the future and the attitude of the population, it would be best to fight together for progress.

F: Nobody can say exactly what the future of BH is. I would like us to find a way for the people to work here as well, and from that enable their family and themselves a good life. We have many potentials, but until someone begins to appreciate them, we will stand still or, in the worst case, we will fall.

G: None. Very ignorant and incompetent people are in power. A president who does not recognize the society is the president of the same. All said.

H: Overall hopes are not so strong but still potential is recognised and issues openly stated. It seems that we are pretty much aware how caged we are still by history and important must be to let go, to leave it be while taking only good lessons from numerous mistakes Balkan has seen and experienced. And if we finally move from words and statistics to action, the number of those willing to leave will most surely drop.

FACT OR FICTION:

Basic aim of this quiz was to firstly give a little break from the official topic since it is impossible for individuals to stay focused the whole time and secondly to use a fun concept which a quiz enables as a place to educate participants about B&H history. We would like to emphasise the second part since it created an opportunity to indirectly tackle topics of both Western Balkans similarity and difference, but also complexity of B&H as a society. Facts & Fiction quiz was consisted out of 10 questions:

1. What type of pie is burek?

- a. Anytype!
- b. A pie with cheese
- c. A pie with spinach
- d. A pie with meat

Definition of burek: Type of baked filled pastries made of thin flaky dough such as yufka - filled with anything. Originally part of Turkish culture.

3. Gavriilo Princip:

- a. Hero?
- b. Villain?

On June 28th 1914. Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were assassinated by Gavriilo Princip during their visit to Sarajevo. This event will mark the beginning of the WWI.

2. Sevdalinka is

- a. traditional genre of folk music from B&H
- b. type of flower.
- c. a synonym for a beautiful girl originating from Otoman period
- d. popular B&H folk music singer from the 20th century.

Word itself comes from turkish sevd a - black bile. Actual composers of many songs are largely unknown since it is folk music. Safet Isović, Himzo polovina, Božo Vreća and many others are popular performers - who perfectly deliver that universal feeling of longing, love and desire such songs have power to wake.

4. Which of these Nobel prize winners is/were born in B&H?

- a. Vladimir Prelog
- b. Meša Selimović
- c. Ivo Andrić
- d. Leopold Ružički

Vladimir Prelog, born in Sarajevo in 1906. received a Nobel prize for his work within the field of organic natural compounds and stereochemistry.

5. Who protects Sarajevo? *In the cult movie*

- a. Valter
- b. Sarajevo people
- c. Superman

1972 Yugoslav Partisan Movie, starring: Bata Živojinović, Ljubisa Smardžić, Rade Marković. This movie was such a great success in their society that people started naming streets and even their children by characters from the movie.

9. What is/are official language/s of B&H?

- a. Bosnian
- b. Croatian
- c. Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian
- d. Serbian

The B & H constitution (as part of Dayton peace agreement) does not specify any official language, but technically since it has been written in Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian (and English) - it is widely accepted that those are official languages.

6. What is ćef?

- a. Traditional womens belt
- b. Part of the house where food is kept
- c. Pleasure, enjoying moments and life

Maybe the best available definition is: "It means to live fully in time without getting lost in it." Ćef as a lifestyle is somewhat accepted by most B&H citizens. What is for Americans a chill - Ćef is for us.

10. Sarajevo is often called...

- a. Balkan Paris
- b. European Chicago
- c. European Jerusalem
- d. Balkan Rome

Such name comes from the religious complexity B&H capital shares with Jerusalem - which is best manifested through the following: within the 100m radius there is a mosque, orthodox and catholic church and synagogue. Through the old part of the town one can find: Begova mosque, Old Orthodox Church, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Ashkenazi Synagogue, Ferhadija mosque, etc. Large number of various different religious objects shows the presence of diversity and coexistence.



KOSOVO

Kosovo during the 1990s: A short history!

The 1990s

During 1990 Kosovo has met the most political and social changes after the Second World War. On March 23, 1989, the Assembly of Kosovo voted to revoke the political autonomy and to give the responsibilities to Serbia, which had the autonomous society status. A Swiss historian and scientist Olivier Jens Schmitt described it as an act of ending the Yugoslavian society in the final stage. On December 23, 1989 an intellectual group established The Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and Dr. Ibrahim Rugova was elected its President. On 2nd July 1990, 114 out of 123 Kosovo MPs appointed the constitutional declaration. It contained Albanian political rights, namely the equal statuses and the constitutive unification of the Federation of the former Yugoslavia. The constitutional declaration was followed by the appointment of the Constitution of the Society of Kosovo two months later, on September 7, 1990 in Kaçanik – a small border town in the south of the society, near North Macedonia (Former Yugoslavian Society of Macedonia). On May 24, 1992, Kosovars organized the first parliamentary and presidential election based on the Constitutions of the Society of Kosovo, appointed in Kaçanik. Ibrahim Rugova – a writer and classic literature professor, was elected as a President. “In March 1998, Serbian security forces attacked the compound of a leading figure in the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). That was in a wake of a series of attacks on police in the province with the majority of the population of Albanian origin. After three days of shelling, Adem Jashari, a founding member of the KLA, and more than 50 members of his extended family were killed. The only survivor was Jashari’s niece, Besarta, who was 10 years old at the time. She spoke to “Witness History” about the day she lost her family (BBC NEWS, 2015).

The KLA became another key factor in Kosovo society. It was a “guerrilla organization” created according to the principles of international law. There are five basic criteria that must be respected in order to accept a guerrilla as the subject of international law: having an identifying logo, possessing a political representation, having a central command, keeping the weapons publicly, and controlling a part of the territory. The 1990s ends with the NATO military intervention from March 24 to June 13, 1999, when the UN Security Council Resolution No. 1244 was adopted, by which Kosovo is set under interim UN administration. Currently, Kosovo has 1,932,774 inhabitants and Prishtina is its capital. Albanian and Serbian are official languages in the whole territory, as well as Turkish in Prizren.

INSPIRING INDIVIDUAL

in KOSOVO

Adem Jashari is the symbol of Kosovo's resistance against the dictatorial regime of Milosevic. He was a co-founder of KLA and the leader of armed resistance. Among Albanians, he is known as the legendary commander of KLA. Jashari was born in the village of Prekaz in Drenica, a central area of Kosovo, which became the main KLA region. His family had more than 50 members, whose head of the family was Shaban Jashari. He was the most "wanted" Albanian by the Milosevic regime.



ADEM JASHARI

The first and the second siege of the Jashari tower proved negative because the Serbs were not able to capture Adem. The third siege took place on 5-7 March and turned out to be fatal not only for him but also for his whole family. 53 family members were killed, except of the 10 years old daughter, Hamza Jashari.

Adem and his family resisted three day and this resistance is considered as a unique case in Europe of the XXI century.

According to experts, Adem Jashari represent a special case when, not only him, but whole the family was sacrificed for a national ideal. "Rare are those who sacrifice themselves for ideals, but people who sacrifice their family for ideals, there are no such people. At least I do not know people who have sacrificed more than 50 family members for an ideal. I think the whole world needs to learn about Adem Jashari. To sacrifice yourself for an ideal may be normal but he has sacrificed the whole family and this has been conscious, because no one in the family has left the house, not even the women and children. This deserves to be a part in world history as the only case of such a sacrifice. Everything done for him is not enough.

Why Adem is a symbol of 1990s? Oliver Jens Schmitt concluded that, the attacks on Jashari's family produces the social solidarity. On his book written in 2012, he confirms that the severe repression aroused a great solidarity of the Albanian civilian population with the uprising, especially with the Drenica region. And that Adem Jashari started to be seen as a martyr; thus the uprising was provided with a symbolic figure.

Even for young generation, who was not born in 1990s, Adem Jashari is a symbol of national resistance and central figure of the period. He symbolizes the resistance the national efforts for freedom. Therefore, young people compare him with the Gjergj Kastrioti — Albanian National Hero, Skanderbeg.

The Adem Jashari memorial complex in Prekaz nowadays is the most visited place in Kosovo. According to Murat Jashari, professor at the University of Prishtina, approximately 7 million people have visited the place. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, who served in UNMIK, Kosovo (1999-2001) said during his visit to the monument that the world started moving from Prekaz and that we became aware of a reality of sacrifices and struggles that were made, and if there is a Nobel Prize for Freedom, it belongs to Jashari family.

INTERVIEW WITH MAKI BEGOLLI

Maki Begolli is a survivor of the 1999 massacre in Dubrava prison, which was carried out by Serbian forces during Milosevic regime. Begolli recounted his experience, suffering and torture in a prison, which among Albanians is one of the most infamous.

LIFE OF A SURVIVOR

Where were you arrested?

Together with some friends of mine, after analyzing carefully the political and security situation in Peja, decided to join the war in May 1998. At the end of May, we went to the village Glogjan, area which was under control of KLA Dukagjini operational zone. Two months later, we were deployed to Peja with military duty. Our movement was spied by an Albanian agent, who informed the Serbian authorities about our activities. On August 24, 1998, we were arrested by the Serbian police. The Milosevic regime accused us for terrorism and illegal possession of weapon.

When did the court session take place?

The court session took place in October 1998, when I was sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment. Arsim Kullashi and others were sentenced differently, as the court deemed reasonable. Shortly after, they were transferred to Dubrava Prison.

May you describe the prison environment?

There were a large number of police guards and masked soldiers, where we stayed for six months. Seven or eight prisoners stayed in small rooms with toilets. There were approximately 1000 prisoners. At that time, I was only 21 years old, but there were also younger than 18 years of age.



Did you experience any abuse?

Tortures were unprecedented and therefore I felt that all Albanians were beaten. There were massive beatings, individual beatings, they entered in the rooms and took them to torture and constantly beat them. I cannot count how many times they were beaten. The tortures were of various forms. I was beaten by the team twice, a team that counted approximately 12 persons. They were dedicated only to beat the prisoners.

Did your family visit you?

First, I was visited by my family members but after NATO started with bombing, the contacts with them were prohibited.

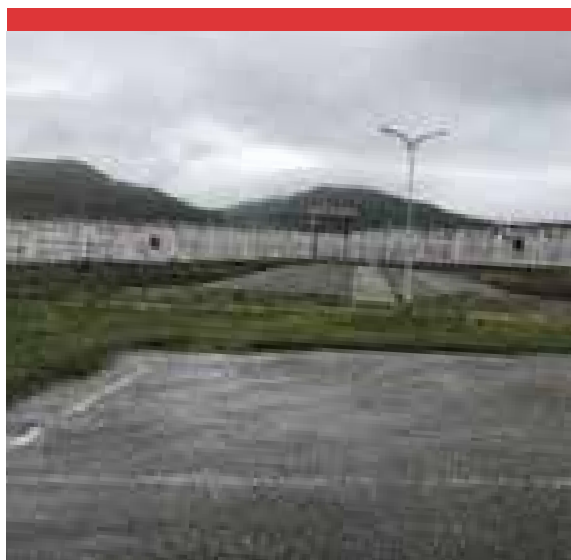
Have you met Ukshin Hoti?

Many political activists were imprisoned there, such as Esat Jaha, Avni Klinaku, Bislim Zogaj and Nait Hasani. The philosopher and political activist, Ukshin Hoti, was there as well.

How did police and guards behave when NATO started bombing?

Prisoners were counted every day at 21:00 hrs. When NATO started with bombing, no guards stayed in the prison, they got out because the prison was surrounded by two walls. They took the Serbian prisoners, mobilized them and couched for their own purposes. It was May 19 and the building C was attacked. Consequently, there were three victims. I was playing chess when the first bomb fell. We moved immediately to help the injured. A day later, Serbian police brought a special group from Gjakova during the bombing but nobody knew anything about them. We saw the tortures and beatings on them as they were being sent to the ward. In the evening, I and Blerim Krasniqi, known as Caki, went to the bakery which was located near Dubrava Prison. The salesperson was afraid to give them bread, he did not open the door, so together with my friends, got the bread through the window. We were noticed by the guards, who shot at

us, but fortunately we escaped. The next day, I and four friends carefully opened the door to the ward, where were located prisoners from Gjakova. The door was approximately 10 meters with the electricity. When it was opened, I saw many people, who were sent to the garden when the NATO bombed again. Three persons were severely injured, but one of them died. After my liberation, I found out that Serbian forces provoked NATO by special weapons just to bomb that place. Serbs forces fled when NATO bombarded but as soon as it stopped, they entered into the prison and executed prisoners. On May 23, all prisoners were lined up in the sports ward, where massacre took place.



What happened with the prisoners?

Approximately 155 people were killed by Serbian police and guards. My friend Napolon Guta from Gjakova, was wounded during the NATO bombing on his forehead. In the morning we found him executed by a bullet. Another prisoner is Muj Tafilaj, for whom I suspect that was killed by the nurse. Do you realize now with what kind of enemy we were dealing with?! The prisoner is guaranteed by international rights, but the Serbian system has installed violence on medical staff too.

“The salesperson was afraid to give them bread, he did not open the door, so together with my friends, got the bread through the window.”

I would like to point out that, there arrived two Greek journalists, but I cannot say much about their presence. Serbian police threw bombs and used snipers to kill people as much as possible. According to me, more than 100 prisoners were killed only in the sports ward. The following morning, other prisoners were transferred to Lipjan Prison, 15km from Prishtina. Me and friends stayed in the same small room, with 28 other persons until June 10. Then, they transferred us to Serbia.

Do you know policemen and guards who committed these crimes?

I know very well the criminals who were involved in the Dubrava massacre: Driton Spiro; Montenegrin ex-prisoner, Aca Pavicevic; the supervisor, Branko Komotina; Mitar Mance Kristic, Boban Bascevic, Miroslub Vidic, Aleksandar Vojislav Rakocevic and Zarko These are only few of many criminals who tortured and killed prisoners.

How do you feel now and what is your message?

I will not feel calm until I see that at least one of these criminals is sentenced for the Dubrava case. I want to emphasize that Serbia has to apologize in order to build new relations between two societies.

MEETING WITH AN EXPERT

BLERIM KRASNIQI

Since 1999, the international community invested a lot through different projects in Kosovo and other Western Balkan societies to maintain peace and political stability. The European Union (EU) is the foremost donor in the region mostly in terms of financial support. Also, it has successfully negotiated the ethnic conflicts of North Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Society of Macedonia) in 2001. Since its establishment in 1958 when the Treaty of Roma was signed, the Macedonian case is considered as the most successful Foreign Policy action that was taken by the EU. This is a serious obstacle that has impeded the Western Balkan societies to provide new relations based on the principles of reciprocal trust for the common interest.

How do you see the future in the Balkans, compared to the '90s?

I think life is cyclical. Based on your question, for me the 90s is the period that have brought change in the Balkans and around the world. Why and how? In the Balkans within the 90s, three wars took place in Croatia, BiH and Kosovo. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the USSR and many other events changed the course of geopolitics in the 1990s. Following the course of events in the region and in relation to forces such as the US and the EU, the period 2020-2030 will be the era of change - the same as in the 90s.

Now, what will happen in the Balkans? The relationship between Kosovo-Serbia, the BiH-Republika Srpska, the Albania-Greece, the Bulgaria-Macedonia, the Greece-Turkey must be resolved. What I mentioned are just the top of the iceberg, because there will be many other social, society and regional changes. The future should perception as a chance that brings perspectives.

During the 1990s in Kosovo happened many social and political activities, including the constitutional declaration, the referendum of 1991, founding the LDK and KLA. In your point of view, what is their importance for Kosovo history and historical memories of young people?

People who appointed the constitutional declaration should be considered as "nation fathers". The referendum is organized to determine the attitudes of the people towards two options and the referendum has given shape to an independent Society of Kosovo. LDK was the second political party registered in the former Yugoslavia after the Liga Komuniste (Communist League). It influenced a new environment of political thought and a different public opinion. When we look back at the events of 1998, 1999 we see that they were not wrong with the founding of KLA. Its founders were visionary people and had foreseen the situation in a correct way.

Could young Kosovars and Serbs provide the cooperation that will guarantee peace between two societies, as the previous generation failed to do it?

There are many cases of cooperation. Kosovo and Serbian journalists organizations have joint projects, artists have organized the festival “Mirdita / Dobar Dan / Good afternoon”. It is also worth mentioning that many conferences were held, with participants from the politics field in both societies.

Are there any principles that should be taken into consideration in order to provide the cooperation between societies?

For future cooperation a set of principles needs to be set in order to make self-regulation of different aspects between societies possible. Kosovars should take into consideration that Kosovo’s independence is an accepted reasonable reality. The model of reconciliation between Germany and France should be applied in case of Kosovo and Serbia.

What does the figure of Adem Jashari represent for the history of Kosovo today?

For the history of our society Adem Jashari is very important. Those who sacrifice themselves for ideals are found, but people who sacrifice their family for ideals are rare. There are no such people. At least I do not know people who have sacrificed more than 50 family members for an ideal. I think the whole world needs to learn about Adem Jashari.

In this case, what does it mean to sacrifice for an ideal?

The ideal is greater than the man, the ideal is the spirit that gives direction to your life. Adem Jashari has given direction to Kosovo, there have been armed and brave people even before, but he is a special case. He managed to stimulate people to fight not for the statues, but for the respect and love of the society. People who have known him say that Adem Jashari has been a supportive person for everyone, mainly for Albanians.



SITES OF MEMORY

Most monuments represent the headstones as a symbol of people who sacrificed their lives during the 1998-99 war. Kosovo does not have many monuments, which reflect the '90s. Some of them are below:

HEROINES

A memorial which is built by 20,145 medals to honor the versatile contribution and sacrifice of every Albanian women during the war in Kosovo.



Adem Jashari Memorial complex is located in Prekaz – Skenderaj.

There are all the graves of Jashari family members who were killed in March 1999.



New Born Obelisk

is located in the center of Prishtina, which represent the independence of the Society of Kosovo. It was designed by the former Member of Parliament, Fisnik Ismajli



IN FOCUS:

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

during the '90s

The consequences of the constitutional amendment in 1989 went beyond the political impact for Kosovars. The Milosevic regime expelled all students from Prishtina University and all high schools. Kosovo's education of young people was interrupted with this act. Consequently, Albanians established a parallel system of education.

Private houses were used as schools for Kosovo Albanians. This was an act of enhancing civil resistance.

Houses outskirts of the city were chosen for security reasons, mainly because they were located in less frequented areas. The rooms were turned into classrooms with approximately 45 students, whose safety was everyone's priority at the time. During the classes the homeowner stood outside as a watch keeper, just in case the police would come to control. If the police would come, the homeowner would run and hide children in closets of the house and the shoes would be placed in such a manner that the police would think that only the family was there. If the police found out the persons involved in this plan they would be arrested, physically, and mentally tortured, which also happened to some of the teachers.

On October 1, 1997 the Independent Students Union of the University of Prishtina (UPSUS) organized their first protests. Their main reason for the protest was usurpation of the University by the Serbian regime. Over 20,000 students went out in the streets and demonstrated without violence, but Serbian forces brutally intervened and arrested the leaders of UPSUP. Other protests took place in early 1998 and students became symbol of resistance to the Serbian regime's discriminatory policies. These protests had a positive effect because they got the attention of media all around the world.

YOUTH VOICE

Young Kosovars considered that the future of the society should be focused on different areas. First, knowing history is a precondition in order to build a better future. They know the history of Kosovo before and during the 1990s, and this historical memory will play a foremost role to plan the future of the society. Also, they emphasize enhancing the cooperation between different ethnic, gender or cultural communities in order to promote social integration. Lastly, they have a rational approach to considering the importance of social factors like education and health systems, economic development, and political stability for a better future.

What is your future vision?

Qendresa: My vision is living in a society of law and justice. I chose to study justice in order to become an independent judge, to serve my society and to contribute to building up an independent justice system.

What should the society do for a better future?

Qendresa: My society should be rising and creating activities for the groups of all ages, ethnicities, races, cultures, and other communities to improve the environment and the quality of life while increasing the participation in activities for a healthy mind and body. Founding these communities includes people who have stories to tell.

How can young generation in Kosovo built the future?

Diellza: Society awareness is the key to success, because complaints do not improve the situation. We should take real action in order to secure Kosovo a better future. Young Kosovars are too talented with purposes and dreams. Our society should do the maximum of its capacity to prevent the extinguishing of these dreams.

What should Kosovo address currently to build a better future?

Diana: The Kosovo of the future should be a society of consolidated justice, security, equality, and meritocracy. A society that ensures young people a good life, a successful education system, a quality health system, more employment, political and economic stability. Let us develop Kosovo in a society where you are not pre judged based on personal choices, where you are not discriminated against because of your gender, but you are respected for what you are.

How can we have a better future?

Diana: Our society can get forward only if it closes the wounds of the past. I think it is necessary to find out the missing people and to address every crime that has happened in Kosovo.

FACT OR FICTION

1. On December 14, 1998, two masked men entered into the Panda Café, located in the center of Peja, and a series of automatic gunfire killed five Serb high school's students and one student.



-Fiction
This is a fiction of story about a truth that was created by the Society Security Service (UDB – acronym) in order to accuse Albanians for terrorism.

2. Through the constitutional declaration of the July 2, 1990, Kosovars required the independence!



-Fiction
Kosovars required to advance the political status of Kosovo from Provincial Socialist Autonomy to the equal Society within the former Socialist Society Federation of Yugoslavia.

3. The referendum of September 1990 took place for an independent and sovereign society of Kosovo!



-Fact
Kosovars required to advance the political status of Kosovo from Provincial Socialist Autonomy to the equal Society within the former Socialist Society Federation of Yugoslavia.

4. Kosovo was part of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1997!



-Fiction
Kosovo was not part of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1997, where the Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Society of Croatia and the Federal Society of Yugoslavia were the parties of the agreement that ended the conflict.

5. The first attack against Jashari’s family happened in March 1998!



-Fiction
The first attack against Jashari family happened on December 30th, 1991.

6. The film “Shok”, was nominated for the Oscar best short film in 2016!



-Fact
SHOK got the best live action short film Oscar nomination 2016.



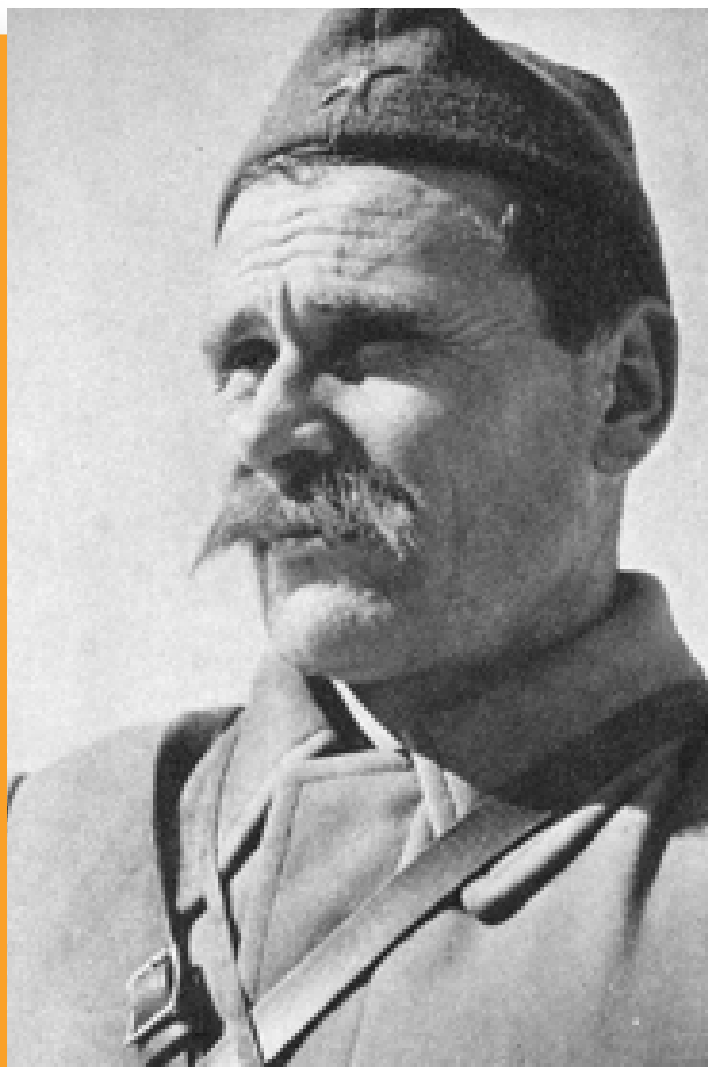
MONTENEGRO

INSPIRING INDIVIDUAL

in MONTENEGRO

He was born on January 25, 1905 in Nudol near Grahovo. He spent his childhood and most of the life in his hometown. Kovačević finished primary school in Zaslav because there was no school in Nudol at that time. He worked for an exploitation company forests in Bijela gora, in the Trepca mine, in a printing house in Belgrade and the construction of a new Sava bridge.

Due to his political activity, Kovačević was expelled from Belgrade and returned to his area, where he worked as a forest worker. Under the influence of his brother Nikola, a prominent communist, he was ideologically formed in his twenties. Then he becomes a member of the CPY. He used to read the political press, fiction, military and other professional literature. In the wood he necessarily carried an ax and a book and was a proponent of injustice and humiliation. Kovačević was a member of the District Committee for Niksic, member of the CPY for Montenegro, Boka and Sandzak.



SAVA KOVAČEVIĆ

He was arrested several times and people had no idea that it would strengthen instead of weakening him. Kovačević served his sentence in Grahovo, Niksic, Cetinje, Kosovska Mitrovica, Sarajevo, Belgrade and the concentration camp in Smederevska Palanca. He welcomed the war as an experienced and hardened political worker. He participated in the preparation of July 13th uprising. Under his leadership, on July 25, 1941, the Italian crew was defeated and released Grahovo. In May 1942, he was appointed a member of the Supreme Staff of the NOP of Yugoslavia. In fierce and incessant fighting led by his brigade repeatedly resisted with weapons and tanks not shying away from steel machines and pipes.

He was a mental, physical and moral giant. Where Sava was leading, there was security and he was considered the personification of the real military leaders. He also became a member of the Third Strike Division when it had the most difficult task to protect the Central Division hospital. Attempts have been made to find a suitable opportunity for a breakthrough. In the hard fighting on June 11 and 12 on Vučevo, near Maglič, near Borovno, on the right bank of the river Sutjeska, strong enemy attacks were repulsed, the hospital was saved and an attempt was made to form a bridgehead on the left bank of the Sutjeska. On June 13, the main forces divisions launched a general attack on the left bank of the Sutjeska - the division managed to suppress the enemy, but not to break his resistance to Koshura, the slopes of Ozren, Lastva, Kazan. At the most critical moment, Kovačević was decided to make a breakthrough with a new assault - with the accompanying company and a group of couriers, he broke out in the first shooting range machine, ordered an assault, and firing from a machine gun, went forward and fell mowed down by the enemy bursts.

By the decision of the Supreme Headquarters of the NOV and POJ, on July 6, 1943, he was proclaimed a national hero, among the first fighters NOV and POJ. By the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, he was awarded the Order Kutuzova. A memorial has been erected at the place where he heroically fell on Krekovi

above the Valley of Heroes. On the hill Umac in Grahovo, there is a memorial from where Sava and his comrades fired shots from a cannon left behind by previous wars on the Italians. There were written many stories and were conceived numerous legends in part of selfless sacrifice, courage, virtuosity and sacrifice both for the conflict with the fascists and for the care of to his comrades-in-arms. His name is still carried by many streets, squares, businesses and testifies what this national hero gave to Montenegro and the whole of Yugoslavia.

Caring of the monumental heritage of the heroic past of Montenegro, we also preserve the inalienable values of our cultural identity. Regardless of whether the memorials were created as an expression of the memory of a certain person historical moment, the actions of a prominent person or the great suffering of the people, the fact is that they represent an expression of the need of the community and individuals to remember and preserve inherited values as part of their own identity.

Numerous songs were sung about the heroism of Sava Kovačević, which were broadcast and sung in all of them partisan units throughout Yugoslavia, where partisan struggle was waged and the memory of his heroic death. Most of them are still passed down from generation to generation as the collective property of the entire nation.

In June 1943, the name of Sava Kovačević was given a mythical halo. He entered Sutjeska with his heroic death into legend and became one of the most beloved characters of the People's Liberation Struggle. That fateful date is and Sava's whole family fought in the partisans.

Together with Sava, his father Blagoje, brother Janko and fourteen-year-old nephew Dragan, who was Sava's courier, Sava's brother Nikola was a famous revolutionary, and Nikola's son Mitar is also declared a national hero.

LIFE OF A SURVIVOR

INTERVIEW WITH SLOBODAN MIRJAČIĆ

We had an interview with Slobodan Mirjačić, the president of UBNOR and the Anti-Fascists of Nikšić. He spent 15 years in the Marxist Center ` Nikola Kovacevic, then he was the secretary of the committee for two years. After that he was the vice president of the municipal assembly for 8 years, followed by the position of the director of the Employment Bureau in Niksic, where he stayed for 15 years.

What is your education story?

I am graduated sociologist. I was born 1946 in Brsno. After finishing the high school in Niksic, I went to Sarajevo to college and got the degree in sociology.

What do you think would be the characteristics of communism if there were no socialism?

Socialism was a transitional period from capitalism to communism, and that period lasted until the 1980s in the society. However, socialism as a social movement has not been completely implemented.

What made a big impression on you at that time?

The living was in harmony, not only in the family but in the society, as well. My village had a hundred households, which all breathed, as "one soul" and it was called Little Moscow.

Was it easy for young people to find a job?

Back then, there was no shortage of laborers, the villages flourished and people worked on their farms.

In the communist era, how pronounced was freedom of religion? Were all religions equal and how much was said about them publicly?

People did not pay attention to difference in religion. On the other hand, I studied in Sarajevo, and I had more Muslim friends than Serbs and Montenegrins.

Did they allow marriages of different faiths?

Yes, I attended a wedding, when a colleague from my college got married. He was a Muslim and he married a Serbian woman. People did not pay attention to a difference in religion.

We know that today's school system is significantly different from the Yugoslav one. Do you think that corporal punishment should still be a disciplined punishment?

There is a popular saying "Stick came out of heaven". I agree with it, because sometimes, some more serious educational measures must be taken. But I am not for violence at all.

Was there hatred between certain groups at that time?

No. There were those who were on one side, or the other, during the national liberation war, but it was not noticed.

What were the living conditions like?

There weren't many rich people, there were a few wealthier people, a bit richer. The basic things could be found in the village, like cereals, barley, oats, rye, wheat, corn, potatoes, onions, etc. There was a lack of money, but there was no shortage of food, because the one who worked had in abundance. At that time, municipality of Niksic only needed about 100 teachers. Professors used to be were like parents, they were the authority.

What was the position of Montenegro in that period?

Montenegro gained a status of a society. It was recognized as an Independent Society within Yugoslavia.

What would be your message for the end, some advice or recommendation?

Therefore, the more we love each other, the more we work, and the more we are equal. It is important that people don't hate each other. There you go, to make things short.



MEETING WITH AN EXPERT

Igor Radulovic is a professor of history at the high school Slobodan Škerović and a member of the Association of Historians of Montenegro. He explained Montenegro's role in the Federal People Society of Yugoslavia as well as the dark spot of Montenegrin history – gulag in Morinj.



IGOR RADULOVIC

1. Can you tell us more about the period of communism in Montenegro, its position and role in Yugoslavia?

After the end of the World War II, Montenegro became an equal part of the newly created society, and as such would participate in the community of equal peoples within the Yugoslav federal society. Despite the war events, which led to the death of a large number of Montenegrins, but also to severe material destruction, the new government worked diligently to rebuild the society and its integration into the newly created society. The creation of political authorities, primarily the People Government, created the preconditions for work on rebuilding the society. Montenegro position in the Federal People Society of Yugoslavia was defined by the Constitution adopted in December 1946, which proclaimed the republican system of Montenegro, but also the will of the Montenegrin people to unite with other Yugoslav peoples into a common federal society. This, in the opinion of a large number of historians, corrected the injustice inflicted on the Montenegrin people after the previous great conflict.

When it comes to the position of Montenegro within the newly created society, a clear parallel and comparison should be made in relation to the period before World War II. While before the World War II, Montenegro was a marginalized and underdeveloped part of the Yugoslav society, with many economic and social problems, in the period after 1945 there were fundamental changes. Although, practically, without any infrastructure and with a destroyed economy, with a population that fought for a bare existence, the new government immediately started the process of stabilizing the situation in the society. In that process, the Montenegrin (as well as the Yugoslav) authorities followed the example of the Soviet Union, expropriating land, but also collectivizing agriculture. Through a series of laws, the Montenegrin economy tried to get back on its feet, although often some of the ventures that were planned were unrealistic. The economic rise of the society had an upward trend until the break-up of Yugoslavia. The accelerated industrialization of space has also contributed to this, supported by the fact that in just over 40 years, the volume of industrial production increased as much as 123 times. The development of traffic infrastructure conditioned the development of tourism, which would become one of the main development branches in the society in that period. Never in its history had Montenegro experienced such rapid development.

2. What is the most important and most humiliating period of Montenegro?

The Mediterranean gulag is a place where Stalinist methods were used in the fight against Stalinism. This is certainly one of the episodes in the history of socialist Yugoslavia, which is not discussed sufficiently, and refers to the period of inhumane behavior and literal killing of people who were marked by the regime as enemies of the society. People who, as the government emphasized, “Deviated from the path” are permanently excommunicated from public life, but also classified as people who should not be trusted. The torture that was carried out on Goli Otok began in July 1949, when the first group of convicts arrived on the island. Over 5,000 people were arrested in Montenegro, the highest percentage in the entire society. Living and working conditions were appalling. Extracting sand from the sea in extreme cold was one of the common ways of punishing prisoners.

In addition to physical exhaustion, prisoners also suffered psychological torture. The beatings alternated with prolonged kneeling, because the guards did not allow prisoners to sit or sleep. The prisoners were literally lynched, and about 400 of them left their lives on Goli Otok and other islands. Goli otok still remains one of the darkest episodes of socialist Yugoslavia. Torture on Goli Otok was not recorded in the works of Aleksandar Solzhenitsyn either. On the other hand, a camp was opened in Montenegro during the wars of the 1990s in the town of Morinj, in the area of the Bay of Kotor, where a large number of Croatian men, mostly civilians, were interned during the war in Konavle and Dubrovnik. On the site of a former military, nearly 300 people were imprisoned in the Morinj center, and according to data 292 of them, precisely. In the period from October 3, 1991 to July 2, 1992, they were tortured, which is unprecedented in this area. Four former JNA reservists were sentenced to a total of 12 years in prison for violating the rules of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.

In addition, the society of Montenegro had to pay millions in damages to detainees. The terror that was carried out in the camp was described by the detainees in the book “Memories of the Dubrovnik Detainees 1991-1992”, which was witnessed before the Hague Tribunal.

Dealing with the past is a necessity of every society, and without dealing with the crimes in Morinj, there is no way of overcoming the ghosts from the previous war. On the other hand, what should be especially emphasized in regard to this period is the development of education and educational life. Unfortunately, the historical course has caused these areas to be severely neglected in Montenegro, to the extent that until this period in Montenegro the percentage of illiterate population was constantly higher than the percentage of literate ones. This is supported by the fact that there were no higher education institutions in Montenegro. I can freely say that this changed dramatically after 1945. First, it should be emphasized that the number of primary and secondary schools grew rapidly, which of course led to an increase in literate population, and then the fact that finally in 1947 the Higher Pedagogical School was founded in Cetinje. They are then incorporated in the institutions that we know of today, such as the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty of Philosophy, etc. Finally, in 1974, the University of Montenegro was founded, and two years later CANU. The revolution that I can freely say was achieved in this field, together with health policy, was one of the greatest achievements in socialist Montenegro.



3. Could you tell us more about the facts, but also illusions in Montenegro in the World War II?

Montenegro lost about 10 percent of its population during World War II, and according to official statistics, one third of the population is considered a war victim. The damage caused to it is estimated at tens of billions of dollars, but despite all these misfortunes, the people have risen, again. Montenegro's contribution to the victory over fascism is disproportionate to its greatness, because from the Thirteenth July Uprising up until the end of the war, Montenegrins resisted technologically superior enemy, which they eventually overcame with the help of allies. It is interesting to note that more than a third of the members of the Supreme Staff were from Montenegro, and almost half of the commanders of the Yugoslav troops at the end of the war were commanders from Montenegro. Without any doubt, this is one of the phenomena not only of Montenegrin, but also of world history.

SITES OF MEMORY



Monument to Ljubo Cupic

The monument to Ljubo Cupic, 2.20 meters high, 90 centimeters wide, was made according to the conceptual design of Mihailo Radojicic. The monument is located on the main square of Niksic.

“His smile” traveled the world and encouraged the Allies during the difficult period of the war to resist and strengthen the anti-fascist energy. Ljubo Cupic is a symbol and rightly got a place on Freedom Square, where he stands at the entrance as the host. He is a symbol of time and a reminder that the freedom we have is sacred and that when someone loves their homeland, then life is not lost in vain.

At the end of April 1942, after the battle near Nikšić, Ljubo Čupić fell into the hands of the Chetniks, who sentenced him to death by firing squad. After the verdict was pronounced, he was taken out of the courtroom, the building of the former theater, and then a photograph was taken that toured the world. His smile was immortalized by the official photographer of the Italian fascists, Karlo Ravnič, and the film was preserved by the famous Nikšić photographer Migo Zorić. He was shot on May 9, 1942, on Petrova glavica in the old cemetery, behind the church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and he was proclaimed a national hero on July 10, 1953.

In 2013, the Post of Montenegro issued a stamp with the image of Ljubo Čupić, and two years later playwright and writer Obrad Nenezić published the novel “Smile for Marija Mihailović”, inspired by the life of “the only Montenegrin who reconciles all differences, ideological, religious, national”, while the most famous Montenegrin singer-songwriter Miladin Šobić sang about Čupić’s smile.





MONUMENT TO THE FALLEN FIGHTERS NIKŠIĆ

The monument is located at the place below Trebjesa where the Italians shot 32 captured partisans. The monument to the Fallen Fighters near Trebjes was erected in memory of more than 1,500 people who died from the territory of the municipality of Nikšić during the Second World War, out of a total of about 11,000 who participated in partisan units. It was designed by Nikšić architect Ljubomir Ljubo Vojvodić, and was inaugurated on September 18, 1987, on the day of the celebration of the 43rd anniversary of the liberation of the city of Nikšić (September 18, 1944). The dominant central vertical of the monument is compositionally composed of two opposing elements, the central vertical which gives staticity and monumentality and two oblique elements which introduce distinct dynamics into the composition. The sloping elements carry a large ornamentally processed disk on which a five-pointed star can be seen as the basic geometric and symbolic motif. The disc is at the same time an abstracted geometry and a natural flower shape. The pronounced dynamics of vertical sculptural plastic, achieved precisely by the beveled elements that carry the recognizable concrete disc, is additionally emphasized by the grooves in the concrete. The entire composition, multi-layered in a symbolic sense, also offers an association with a bird with fluttering wings that failed to take off, symbolizing the extinguished lives of the dead..

The monument to the Fallen Fighters under Trebjes still represents one of the most important anti-fascist symbols of the city of Nikšić and the recent history of this area. It is on the List of protected memorials of the Administration for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Montenegro.

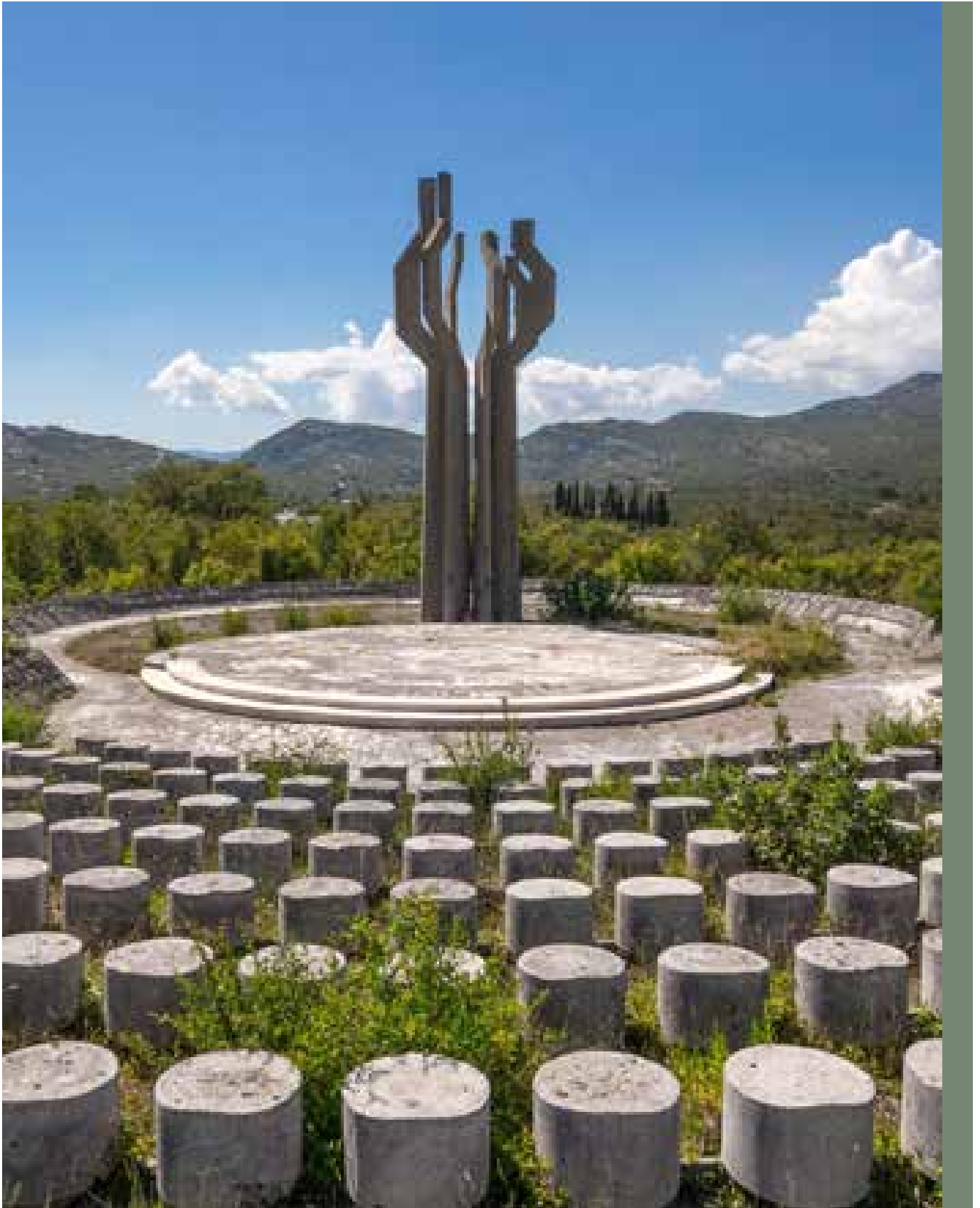


The monument of Partizan-Fighter

The monument of Partizan-fighter is probably the greatest achievement of the memorialization of the Second World War in the area of Podgorica. Although it was built back in 1957, this monument still stands today as a reminder of the efforts, but also of the life that Montenegrin patriots gave in the period 1941-1945. This memorial complex, located on the Gorica hill, not far from the very center of the Montenegrin capital Podgorica, was made according to the project idea of the architect Vojislav Dokić, who is the author of the complex and sculptor Drago Durović. Durovic is the author of several other monuments with similar themes, especially in the neighboring municipality of Danilovgrad. The memorial complex was opened on the Day of the Uprising, July 13, and 97 national heroes were buried in the mausoleum itself. As can be seen, at the very entrance of the Mausoleum, there are sculptures of two fighters, made by the aforementioned sculptor Durović. The complex is practically entirely built of white Montenegrin granite. The significance of this monument for the city itself in socialist Yugoslavia is also shown by the fact that it was located on the coat of arms of the city of Titograd. Fortunately, unlike many monuments in our municipality and society, this monument is an example of caring for the cultural and historical heritage of our society, and even today, during certain dates, primarily on July 13, delegations lay a wreath in honor of the fallen NOB fighters.







Barutana Memorial Complex

One of the most monumental monuments in the municipality of Podgorica is the Barutana Memorial Complex, which is located near the main road Podgorica - Cetinje. Built in 1980, as a result of a five year long efforts by the then authorities, it is the work of the most famous architect in this area, Svetlana Kana Radević, who is known to the local population primarily as the designer of the Hotel Podgorica. Recently renovated, and neglected for years, the memorial complex was built in honor of the inhabitants of Lješanska nahija, who died in three major conflicts in the twentieth century - the Balkans, the First, but also the Second World War. Therefore, when we look at this complex, three units are clearly distinguished.

The central element of the monument complex is 12 meters high set of thin concrete pillars that together form a tower. A large amphitheater for educational and political presentations was built next to the tower. Children from the local school worked on its maintenance for years, until after the war in this area, this monument became an object of oblivion. How much this monument means to the inhabitants of this part of Montenegro is clearly shown by the fact that the memorial plaque, which is located at the entrance to the complex, contains the names of almost 500 killed in Lješanska nahija, who gave their lives for the freedom of their society in the wars.





Monument of Josip Broz Tito in Podgorica

Another monument in Podgorica that is a representative example of post-war monumentalization of the World War II is the monument to Josip Broz Tito, made in bronze, located near the Blažo Jovanović Bridge and the Hotel Podgorica, two monuments that were also built during socialist Yugoslavia. The monument was restored and returned to the city that bore Tito name for 47 years almost two years ago. Of course, the very fact that the monument was removed for so long, but also that there were debates about whether the monument should be returned, speaks of the division of society when it comes to historical heritage, but also the treatment of certain historical epochs. Certainly, the fact is that the treatment of monuments speaks enough about the degree of historical and cultural awareness of a nation.

IN FOCUS:

WORKING VS VOLUNTEERING

today and yesterday

During communism time popular activities were work actions. It is something that we can consider as forerunner of today's voluntarism or voluntary actions.

Younger generations living in Montenegro are very familiar with the stories of their elders who spoke about participating in labor actions across the society, aimed at rebuilding the destroyed economy and the entire infrastructure during the Second World War. On the territory of Yugoslavia, including Montenegro, labor actions were organized over the course of time, and were mostly based on voluntary basis and aimed at improving the society and rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure. The labor actions were based on voluntary basis and solidarity, where empathy of our people was best expressed towards each other and the society. Nobody was obliged to go, just the ones that wanted so. Nobody paid for work but they had accommodation covered. It was usually in shared barracks. Day was starting with breakfast, 3 to 4 hours of work and then lunch. They even had fruits at the end of the meal. After lunch they had activities, dancers and who went to the dance and also various sports games. Jobs were mostly physical - someone was digging, someone was filling a cart, someone driving a wheelbarrow. It lasted for about a month. Some of the most known actions were near Niš in Baložište, then in Gevdelija, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Border with Austria. Usually they worked on building railways, roads and bridges. The most famous was working action for highway of Brotherhood and Unity.

When we talk about labor actions we inevitably talk about volunteerism. Most people in that period, and the period that followed, responded to such actions in order to help improve conditions and without asking for a gratitude or anything else in return. Although these types of actions are not common today, apart from the efforts of individuals, the idea of volunteerism that was developing at that time has made a great impact on today's generations.

Today, there is a large number of volunteering organizations, and some are associated with schools, which is a good way to promote volunteerism, as well as a large number of volunteer organizations and NGOs that promote volunteerism. If we draw a parallel between these two concepts, between labor action and volunteerism, we will come across many similarities. The fact is that volunteerism today primarily refers to the desire and aspirations of individuals and smaller groups and not the whole society as was the case in the previous period.

We met some representatives of the Montenegrin young generation and asked them a few questions:

Could you please tell us something about yourself?

A: I am Zlatica Nakić, 24 years old, student at the Faculty of Economics in Podgorica.

B: My name is Maša Dukanović and I am 15. I am student in the 10th grade of the High school Stojan Cerović in Nikšić.

C: My name is Maša Bulajić and I'm 17. I'm from Montenegro and I love my society.

D: My name is Anđela Vučetić, I live in Herceg Novi and I'm currently in high school senior year.

E: I'm Sara Kovačević from Montenegro. I'm 18, following high school for another year.

F: My name is Anja Bulajić and I'm from Montenegro. I'm 17 years old and a high school student.

important to me, said Zlatica Nakić.

C: I know a lot about history of Montenegro. Personally, I think history is very important and we can learn a lot from it, said Maša Bulajić.

D: History is very important to me. What people have done in the past has become a huge part of our identity, it can't be erased, it made us who we are today and I believe that history should be important to everyone, said Anđela Vučetić.

E: In my opinion, everyone should know the history of their society because it's our duty to know who we are and what we are if someone asks us. The more you know about your society, the history of your society, the more you're capable of interpreting others, so, we should know our past but our descendants should know it too, said Sara Kovačević.

F: Even though I'm not very interested in it, I can say that I know a lot about history of Montenegro, said Anja Bulajić.

1. How important is history to you and how much do you know about the history of Montenegro?

A: I think history is very important, because our future is built on that, so I know a lot about our history, said Maša Dukanović.

B: I believe it is extremely important for each individual to know the history of their society. I know the history of Montenegro well enough to be able conclude that is very

2. Do you think even though it is the past significantly sustains the society as we know it today?

A: I believe it does, said Maša Dukanović.

B: Certainly, the past influences the creation of the identity of each individual, and Montenegro as we know it today is in fact the product of a series of events from the past, said Zlatica Nakić.

C: I don't think so, because most people don't know enough about the history of their society, said Maša Bulajić.

D: It depends, because not everyone is guided by history, said Anđela Vučetić.

E: I think history affects the maintenance of today's society, said Sara Kovačević.

F: Few people are guided by history so that it does not sustain today's society, Anja Bulajić.

3. Are young people involved in decision-making related to them?

A: I think they are, said Maša Dukanović.

B: Not enough. They are involved through the activities student organizations, the student Parliament the Youth council, but it should be at a higher level and they should be much more involved, said Zlatica Nakić.

C: I think they are not involved enough, said Maša Bulajić.

D: They are not sufficiently involved in making decisions that are important to them, said Anđela Vučetić.

E: They are not enough, said Sara Kovačević.

F: The competent institutions decide instead of the young, said Anja Bulajić.

4. According to you, what was to be changed here in order for young people to be more interested in higher education?

A: I believe that the standard of living has to improve, which would consequently improve education and therefore the place of young people in society, said Maša Dukanović.

B: First, of all, the possibility of employment i.e. that after finishing school, young people will be guaranteed a job in their profession. Also, there is little space in dormitories which makes it impossible for young people with a bad financial situation to go to school, said Zlatica Nakić.

C: The conditions that young people can get after higher education in Montenegro should also be addressed. In my opinion, Montenegro should offer much more opportunities in order to keep young people, said Maša Bulajić.

D: There should be more opportunities for young people to get more education here, said Anđela Vučetić.

E: I think young people should be given more opportunities based on what they have completed, said Sara Kovačević.

F: In my opinion, more work should be done to improve the higher education institutions themselves as well as the conditions for later employment and life, said Anja Bulajić.

5. Do you believe Montenegro offers young people enough opportunities?

A: Do believe that it does, because many young people can find a satisfying job, said Maša Dukanović.

B: It doesn't provide enough. It could and should be much more because even when there are opportunities, they are limited to the number of participants. Usually, there are more applicants than places available, said Zlatica Nakić.

C: Montenegro does not provide enough opportunities for young people, as more and more people are going to study

abroad, said Maša Bulajić.

D: Unfortunately I can't say that our society provides many opportunities for young people, that's a part that should definitely change, said Anđela Vučetić.

E: I think I have enough opportunities for education, said Sara Kovačević.

F: There isn't enough opportunities for young people which is exactly the reason why many of them are leaving Montenegro, said Anja Bulajić.

6. Did you see yourself here, or in some other society?

A: I see myself visiting other societies, but returning and living here, said Maša Dukanović.

B: In the short term, I see myself somewhere else, where I can gain experience and knowledge and then I would come back here to continue with my life, said Zlatica Nakić.

C: I love my society, but I don't see myself here in the future, said Maša Bulajić.

D: I definitely see myself here, said Anđela Vučetić.

E: I see myself here in the society where I was born, said Sara Kovačević.

F: I see myself in another society, but I will always be happy to come back here, said Anja Bulajić.

7. Are you satisfied with the education system in Montenegro?

A: Honestly, I am very happy with the education system here, said Maša Dukanović.

B: Yes, with the fact that more practice work should be introduced in high schools and universities, said Zlatica Nakić.

C: I think it is necessary to work on improving all higher education institutions, said Maša Bulajić.

D: In part, said Anđela Vučetić.

E: I am satisfied with the education system here, said Sara Kovačević.

F: As far as I'm concerned, I'm satisfied, said Anja Bulajić.

8. And, where do you see yourself in 10 years?

A: Well, the way I see myself ten years ahead of now is, maybe, visiting other societies, said Maša Dukanović.

B: I see myself as a successful entrepreneur, said Zlatica Nakić.

C: 10 years from now I see myself with a family living in another society and visiting Montenegro very often, said Maša Bulajić.

D: In 10 years I see myself here in my home society, hopefully being able to contribute to society, said Anđela Vučetić.

E: Definitely in 10 years I see myself here, being independent and well educated, said Sara Kovačević.

F: In 10 years I see myself living in European society with family and job often visiting Montenegro, said Anja Bulajić.

FACT OR FICTION

1. Are Montenegrins known as hardworking people?

They are not. On the contrary, most jokes are about the laziness of Montenegrins and how Montenegrins do not like to work. In Yugoslavia this kind of jokes were made about all ethnic groups, and each group was made fun of, based on a different (negative) characteristic. In these jokes, Montenegrins were lazy.

2. Deepness of Tara canyon is around 1,300 meters (4,300 feet) deep.

Tara River Canyon is one of the deepest river canyons in Europe, and second in the world, after the Grand Canyon on the River Colorado. Known as the "Tear of Europe", the Tara River is 158 km long, has 14 different rivers flowing into it, 7 from each side and has 69 rapids on that path. Within Montenegro the canyon is protected as a part of Durmitor National Park and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

3. The longest beach on the Adriatic Sea ?

The longest beach lies in Ulcinj - the southernmost city in Montenegro, beautiful 13 - kilometer-long sandy beach, with winds almost every day during the summer, makes it an ideal place for kite surfing and other related water sports such as windsurfing.

4. Which ingredients are needed to make kacamak ?

Kacamak is a dish made of potatoes, different types of flour, and its uniqueness comes from the cheese and kajmak which are added at the end.

5. Which city has majority of Islamic citizens, over 80% ?

In Ulcinj live over 80% Albanians, where they have its own community. Population of Ulcinj by religion is: 80% Muslims, 10% Catholic, 10% Orthodox. Note: The data have not been updated officially - the census has not been conducted for many years.



NORTH MACEDONIA

The Socialist Society of Macedonia was one of the member societies of the Socialist Federal Society of Yugoslavia after the Second World War. Even though during the war it was occupied by several armies, there have been different efforts to create organizational order in this society. Either way, those that in the end were the strongest and won were the communist partisans. After the win of the communists, following World War 2, it was expected that a society with ethnic equality and political monopoly of the communists was to be created.

INSPIRING INDIVIDUAL

in NORTH MACEDONIA

The story of someone who wasn't afraid to be against the system

After the win of the communists, in the whole land violence in different forms was being used against all of those who opposed the idea of communist partisans, and also against those who supported independence. During this period those who thought different were being arrested, among them Sadudin Gjura. He worked in a lot of villages as a teacher until the year 1952 and was removed from the school to never be seen again by his students. The then regime punished him with 14 years of prison. According to the information from his family he lived for 8 years in the Yugoslav prisons in Idrizovo and Goli Otok. He was subjected to physical and psychological violence. The Idrizovo Prison and other objects in the society were nightmare places for the prisoners of that time. Numerous massacres have taken place within those prison walls. At those times it was said that if you got called to the object, that today the people refer to as the Monopoly object, it was known you wouldn't walk out alive from there. Sadudin Gjura was one of those who walked out from the prison psychologically ill from the violence inflicted and unable for life. Ejup Ajdini, poet, professor and scholar, tells us more about Sadudin Gjura.



SADUDIN GJURA

Professor, you have named Sadudin Gjura in your work as unfortunate. What do you mean by that?

The period after World War 2 brought tragedies one after another in the Albanian world here at what was the former Yugoslav Society of Macedonia. Sadudin Gjura was the first intellectual and nature made him fair and smart and the most educated on these sides. The government didn't reach their goal of turning him on their side and couldn't get him to agree with the Yugoslavian or the communist beliefs of that time, because the right of Albanians in Yugoslavia was generally diverted. Where they were the third biggest nation in numbers after the Serbians and Croatians, while every other nation who was in smaller population numbers than Albanians had tried their right of a Society/ a society like there were: Montenegrans, Slovenians, Bosnians, Macedonians etc. Whilst Albanians weren't being given the right to a Society, even separating them in some- except leaving some of them in their home society in Albania, they were also separated in some of the former Societies of Yugoslavia in Macedonia, Kosovo, Presevo, Montenegro. So Sadudin Gjura as a genuine intellectual of the time, that was seeing in depth these problems, raised his voice together with other intellectuals of that time not agreeing and opposing the system. So, as a result of this the sufferings from the Yugoslav communist system started to come one after another until the biggest tragedy possible for his life.

What about the educational issue of the time? It is known that it was very problematic, specifically education in Albanian language. What is your experience?

Exactly because he was an intellectual and was the first writer of that time, the government punished him with 14 years of prison. But after that, after he passes 8 years in prison in Golio Otok at the Yugoslavian barracks of the time, Sadudin Gjura is injured psycho-physically in the prisons. So, having no reason to keep him while sick they release him. Until that time Sadudin Gjura was a teacher in Shipkovitsa, then in Bogovinje and Pirok, and in other villages. During 1951/52 he became a professor of the Albanian and

Russian language in the Tetovo education system. He fought politically for the absolute natural rights of Albanians, but on the other hand he also fought with his writings which the government had completely seized, which after 60/70 years we have succeeded in looking for and finding.

So this is the reason, that it was some kind of punishment for none of his works to live, right?

After his physical disappearance, they punished him so much in prisons as they wanted to turn him into a Jean Valjean. When they saw how much the nation adores, loves and feels sorry for him, they take his dead body and throw him in the mountains in February of 1960. During spring the Sharr shepherds find his deformed body. Even then it wasn't allowed to give him a piece of land for his grave, but the imam of the village Hajji Muhammad and some of his family members went secretly and dug him a grave, put him in it and made his tombstone like that of a battle warrior. We had the luck that during studies from 1995-97 to look for his writings and to find them in Ohrid at imam Shazi and at some of his family members.

Beside his poems (about 100 verses) we have found only 2 dramas "Lalë Bajrami" (Uncle Bajram) and "Dasma Shqiptare" (Albanian wedding) and partly the drama "Fejesa në djep" (Engagement in the cradle), which we have found and published. Additionally for the other writings "Shqipja e Malit" (The mountain Eagle) and "Dervish Cara" we have no clues. Last year we understood from one of his family members, that in a rough psychological condition he wrote at night the drama "Njeriu i Ajdahut", for which we weren't able to find any materials.

And now they are published? Can they be read widely?

Yes, now we have published the dramas. The first drama "Lalë Bajrami" we published in '97 for which we had an appearance at a show too. Last year we have published our 300 pages study "Tragjikja jetësore dhe letrare e Sadudin Gjures" (The literary and life tragedy of Sadudin Gjura)

where we included all the problems, tragic sufferings. After we published the drama „Lalë Bajrami” the villagers, people, adorers of the arts and culture of our history, succeeded in making him a monument at the school. After 50/60 years were returned from the mountains and placed in his place of birth in Shipkovice, which now even has an epitaph and a honorable marble stone. Today Sadudin Gjura is a national and literary figure of ours, who will never die.

It is said that Sadudin Gjura was betrayed, was there the same fate for his cousin Xheladin Gjura who ran away to Albania?

His cousin Xheladin Gjura is a subject of discussion because he was not betrayed. Others maybe asked for forgiveness whereas Sadudin Gjura was strict in the belief that the Albanian lands should be all together under one society like all other nations. This is what he declared publicly at all his trials, as the original files show us. One of his friends, Xhevxhet Ameti in his book “Historia e pashkruar” (Unwritten History) published his file and the evidence is clear. Sadudin Gjura was convinced in his ideals and in the reality that all the nations of the world have the right of self-determination. This is what was declared in the Mukja Conference; and after the victory against fascism that all the nations would decide their own fate. This did not happen in the case of Albanian nation. The issue was betrayed from Yugoslavian politics of that time.

Sadudin Gjura didn't accept this and he sacrificed himself and his family for only one purpose, his love for his homeland and the desire for education.

In conclusion we can say even though his life was very tragic, his works are known very little, right?

Look, it was rough- but the memories were saved a lot, till late times. I remember when I was a kid hearing the story of Sadudin Gjura. There are also others, but as for Sadudin Gjura, the government didn't want to see him even as a biological being, as a literary creator, as nothing. So, the nation even during that violence, saved something from the literary and life work of his, that we titled “Tragjika jetësore dhe letrare e Sadudin Gjures”.

“Exactly because he was an intellectual and was the first writer of that time, the government punished him with 14 years of prison.”

An ex-prisoner that survived communism

Those who thought differently were punished in various forms by the political system of that time. Sentenced to 13 years in prison for distributing tracts with anti-communist content, Shpëtim Pollozhani spent 9 years in Yugoslav prisons. The tracts that caused his imprisonment were associated with the boycott of power, the boycott of ideo-political differentiation meetings. To incite fear and terror, back then, the best teachers were fired due to their political disobedience.



SHPËTIM POLLOZHANI

INTERVIEW WITH A SURVIVOR

When did you realize that North Macedonia needs a democratic system and what were your first steps in opposing the communistic system?

At a young age, I became interested in the events, happenings, and political developments in the society and realized that something was wrong. From an early age I read something about the theory of Marxism-Leninism, which defines that the communist system will progress in societies with developed economies, developed industries, with strong unions and a conscious middle - class.

All this was missing in former Yugoslavia and it was becoming clear that things were not right. The second element was the fact that with the establishment of the communist system all private property was confiscated. The aristocracy, which is the marrow of a nation, was degraded, imprisoned and ousted. Educated people began to be persecuted. We, the younger people, followed this model and this was the reason why I, along with thousands of other Albanians, entered the streams of national developments and movements in the society. As a first reaction we put up resistance during high school, i.e. at the age of 17. As high school students we staged a protest because they fired two of our best professors, Nuhi Vinca and Rahmi Tuda. So, me and my friends joined the movement for more rights, the movement for national unity.

What about others, did you get the support you needed when opposing the communistic system?

Everyone understood that something was obviously off, particularly concerning Albanians. It was very difficult for an Albanian to find a job, to obtain a business space in the city or buy a house. It was hard for Albanians to get society scholarships, as well as getting loans to build houses, since Albanians were unemployed. This added to the Albanian resistance against the former system, which was an absolute farce, a hybrid between capitalism and socialism as. In the year I was born, 1949, it is said that communism was overthrown, and part of the property was returned. Up to 10 hectares of property were returned to the former owners, while factories and various production units were kept unreturned. Summarized, this was a period of degeneration and destruction of the Albanian intellectual class. The majority, comprising almost 90% of educated Albanians, whether in the time of the Ottoman Empire, the Serbian kingdom or the kingdom of King Zog, were forced to move to Turkey. For instance, in my neighborhood alone, 8 houses have been vacated and bought by residents from villages around Struga. Villages that are Macedonian, but call themselves Albanians and Turks. This forced us to delve deeper into a conspiracy formation. Groups were emerging both in Kosovo and in Macedonia. There has always been a social movement, starting with the Albanian one, the League of Prizren, the First World War, the resistance against Serbian occupation, the Second World War; Shaban Polluzha, the group of Anton Sereqi, Metush Krasniqi, Adem Demaçi and many other activists.

With the opening of the University of Prishtina, communication became easier and thus paved the way for us to act as anti-communists, always based on the Albanian question. We read a lot of books to expand our horizon. We spread our anti-communist ideology even in our workplace. For this I was fired 3 times. First from the Inex travel agency here in Struga, then from the School for Adults AS

Makarenko where I taught English, and then from the high school in the village of Delogozda. Until I eventually got imprisoned.

What was the reason for imprisoning you? Can you tell us more about your experience in communist prisons?

I was imprisoned for hostile activities: demolition of the constitutional system, the well-known Article 137, as a member of a hostile group. The second charge was hostile propaganda. I was accused of distributing anti-communist and anti-governmental tracts on the night of November 28, 1981. Later of illegal shelter, of accommodating an illegal person who committed a criminal offense against the society. That person was Rafi Alili from Tetovo, whom I and my brothers sheltered in Struga several times. That was the basis of the accusation. Throughout the investigations, during which I went to hell and back, they dropped the charge of hostile group activity, because names had to be mentioned and I would have been ashamed for as long as I lived if I had talked. They saw that there was no way out. They had to either eliminate me or to drop accusation. They dropped the charge, but two criminal offenses remained: hostile propaganda - with a maximum sentence of 10 years, and illegal shelter 8 years. So, in court, I was sentenced to: 8 years for illegal housing and 7 years for hostile activities. However, according to the practice of the laws during that time, when there are more offenses, they are combined. Therefore, I was eventually sent to Idrizovo for 13 years imprisonment. But as I mentioned a little while ago, the prisons of Yugoslavia were hell. Dante's ninth circle of hell. Because Yugoslavia was the world's sweetheart. Tito resembled Nasradin Hoxha. Wherever he went, everyone was waiting for him, everyone was gifting him presents. He was seen as a king in the Arab societies, in the truest sense of the word. This love still lives through the Arab societies towards Serbia in particular. But the system was very fierce against its opponents.

How were they treating you in prison?

I served for some while in Ohrid, where all national and international human rights were violated. I spent 7 months in a 3 square meter cell without any light, without food. I was denied food from home, but the worst part, however, was the torture. Society Security (UDB), among various types of torture used one they called preventive torture on me. At the beginning of the imprisonment, 3 days and 3 nights, the beatings went on like crazy and most prisoners testimonies there. Some subconsciously, some deliberately. Following was the socialist torture. 3 days and 3 nights standing up. They changed shifts every 4 hours. Sometimes two inspectors, sometimes two law graduates, sometimes 3 people stay. For 7 months I was here in the Ohrid prison with Arif Vinca. The prison guards asked our family members to bring us what we wanted to eat. For example, they said: Shpëtim and Arif want roasted eel for tomorrow's next visit. While my family brought roasted eel, they were going through thousands of sacrifices, as they had all been denied employment. They were served roasted eels. After three days, they had said that Shpëtim and Arif were waiting for a roasted Koran fish, pita, baklava, pie, everything they wanted to eat.

Think of our emotions, that we were finally seeing each other. He left me one month old and he was now meeting a grown woman with a son. So, I was finally looking at him. This is my father?! That night he was parking his car and I went upstairs with the people who had come to wait for us. He stayed downstairs on purpose, so that I could see my mother's photograph alone.

After 7 months I came out disfigured to Court, so that even my mother did not recognize me. "No," she said, "this is not Shpëtim." From there I was sent to Idrizovo prison. There I met many friends. We formed a council, a defense group, a mutual fund. When the massacres in other Yugoslav prisons started, we began organizing an eventual prison explosion. The prison administration realized this and sent me to Kotor. I spent the last year in a cell in Kotor. Investigations were opened there. I did not open my mouth. No light, no books. The biggest punishment for me was that I didn't have a book. In Idrizovo prison I left no book unread. I might have read over a thousand and still many books were to be read. I can read Russian, Spanish, Italian and French. That's because I studied foreign languages. At the end of '89, a delegation from the Helsinki Committee came and said that these conditions for a prisoner are inhumane, out of all norms. And I was released by order of Raif Dizdarević, the then chairman of Yugoslavia. I do not have anything documenting my leave from the prison, but I received a confirmation from the Court Bitola that I had served 13 years in prison. That's the story.

They were very cruel, very harsh. There were many young people in prison, but all very proud. So, I'm proud of that period. It is the brightest part of the story of my life.

MEETING WITH AN EXPERT

A throwback to a communist Macedonia (a story explained by Qerim Lita)

The historian Qerim Lita explains that at the beginning of the 60s, in the last century, Macedonia as a federative unit of the then Federal Society of Yugoslavia or as a Society of one of the 6 constituent Societies of which the Communist Federal [Society] of Yugoslavia was made up of, was faced with a number of problems, mainly of the political, ethnic and economic character.



QERIM LITA

In the political aspect, he says, the main problem Macedonia had was the Albanian problem, which had started right after the end of World War II. Where it then had a lot of political prisoners and killed, shot victims and was reactivated in the beginning of the 50s during the last century, following the so-called Treaty of Alliance with Turkey that was signed in Split between the president of the Yugoslavian Federation Josip Broz Tito and the Foreign Affair Minister of Turkey Fuat Koprulu. According to this agreement in January of 1953, 400.000 Muslims moved from the then Yugoslavia to Turkey, mainly Albanians. Right after the registration of the population (1953), the vast majority of Albanians experienced political and physical pressure and were forced to declare themselves as Turkish, Lita explains.

We only mentioned the registration of 1953, but there is also the registration of 1948 that unfortunately, the Albanian and Macedonian historiography doesn't mention at all (like it wasn't even recorded). During the populous census of 1948 Macedonia from 1 200 000/ 300 000, around 750 000 were declared Macedonian, 205 000 Albanian, and 92 000 Turkish. Whereas in the registration of 1953 strangely the number of Albanians falls from 205 000 to 166 000, whilst the number of the Turkish goes up 92 000 to 204 000, or above a 100% raise. The Macedonian documents that were drafted during that time emphasize that this change of the national structure had a political character, that it had nothing to do with a big raise of natality but with the redeclaration of Albanians as Turkish.

Then there were the economic problems because till 1959 approximately 143.800 Muslim residents relocated from Macedonia, the majority of which were ethnic Albanians in the provinces of Kumanovo, Skopje, Tetovo, and Gostivar. During that time it was indicated that the move should be in these zones because of the disconnection between Albanians in Kosovo with the Albanians in the then Socialist Society of Macedonia.

About 11% of the population for 6 years were displaced and these economic problems were caused extremely but there were other problems as well (like educational problems, cultural problems, the development of Macedonia as it was one of the most economically poor societies and used the Federative Fund of Yugoslavia to develop underdeveloped areas). The most underdeveloped areas were mainly the Albanian ones where several objects were built, big factories like "Jugohrom", "Teteks", "Silika" in Gostivar and some other factories".

These factories were at least 80% occupied by Macedonians, even though the budget was from the Federative Fund meant to be used for the development of Albanian areas. So, it was not only a political discrimination, but political too. Then other processes happened. In 1963, the pressure that was coming from the Federation but also from Kosovo forced Macedonia to change its constitution. In the constitution of 1963, Albanians went from a national minority to being treated like a nationality - legitimate minority where they were also given some rights, mainly educational and cultural ones. And right after this, they started a movement in the aspect of opening some high schools because till this time in Macedonia there was only one school that was fully intended for Albanians.

Then later, Lita explains, after the fall of Rankovic, where it should be emphasized that Alexander Rankovic was the Serbian politician who was considered second after Josip Broz Tito, it fell in the fourth meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia which was held in 1 of July 1966 in Brijuni. In historiography this is known as the Brijuni Conference, in which conference the report of the commission named by Josip Broz Tito and lead by Krste Crenkovski was analyzed. At that time, he was president of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. There it was concluded that Rankovic with his accomplices, mainly Serbian, had misused the then

Yugoslavian secret service the Society Security Administration (UDB) for their own personal goals, Lita explains. Where it is emphasized that this mostly affected, the worst treatment was given to, the Albanians. The Affair of Arms of 1956 in Kosovo is mentioned, whose goal was, through this affair, to make the Albanians relocate, and they succeeded. According to some information till this time, until the year 1966, from Yugoslavia (including Kosovo) around 350 000 had moved. Which number was close to the one which was intended in the Brijuni Conference, 400 000 relocations Muslims till the year 1959. However, this process of relocation continues even later with a lower intensity.

Then other changes happened in term of education and employment. If Tetovo is 70% or 80 % Albanian, the employed both in society administration and in the public sector should be 70% Albanian. Things started to progress with the politics and also some demonstrations run that had a positive impact. So, immediately in January of 1969 the Constitutional Amendments were presented- the first amendments, which defined some rights in the ethnic, cultural and educational aspect of Albanians. For example, Albanians and Turks started to be treated like

nations not as national minority. Other advances happened particularly in the cultural and linguistic aspect, recognizing the Albanian language and alphabet. Then in 1972 this advancement progressed even further with 2 additional amendments which declared: "Macedonia is the society of the Macedonian nation and of the Albanian and Turkish nations, as well as of other ethnic groups."

It means for Macedonia the Albanians were made a society-forming element approximately equal, at least in paper. However, this made it possible that immediately after this a huge surge in the development of culture could be made. For example, we can look at the Theatre or the Albanian drama in the framework of the Theater of Nations that operated in Skopje. There were 6 premiers annually that had an enormous audience with tours around Macedonia and Kosovo. Then the Cultural Agreement was achieved with the Albanian society and a lot of cultural-artistic associations were created.

The education system during communism in Macedonia (nowadays: North Macedonia)

Issues with textbooks and curricula were just some of the problems that the education system faced during communism. But what were the most important problems back then? Xhelal Zejneli, professor of albanian language and literature describes that period of time.



XHELAL ZEJNELI

When we talk about the education system, can you describe what was the situation like in Macedonia back in the period of communism?

Education in the communist period, in Tito's or AVNOJ's Yugoslavia (Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia) as they call it, surely had its problems. Especially ones related to the curricula but also with the extremely limited and reduced number of students enrolled in high schools as well as universities; problems with textbooks, as well as teachers' suitability for the workplace. Meaning, the school curricula were controlled, supervised and censored by the authorities, the Serbs, as the center was in Belgrade, which was then reflected in Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo, where Albanians lived. The curricula, therefore, were controlled by them. Only those units, that had nothing to do with the history of the Albanian people, culture, tradition or music were included. Textbooks were exclusively compiled by Macedonian and Serbian authors and were then unprofessionally translated into Albanian. The curricula could not include teaching units that were being taught in Albania because they were considered harmful to the Yugoslav government and to Macedonia. On the other hand, enrolling Albanian students particularly in high school was a difficult process, as only a limited number of students were admitted. While in terms of university studies, Albanians in Macedonia have been included with only 1%, in the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, while 99% of the students were Macedonians.

There was a pedagogical high school in which almost all subjects were in Macedonian, a couple of subjects were in the Albanian language, while the school was considered as an allegedly Albanian school. The subjects, however, were in Macedonian language. To be employed as an education worker, teacher, educator or high school professor, you had to be a good fit for the communist regime.

What do you mean by good fit?

It meant that you were pro Yugoslavia, pro Macedonia, pro "Brotherhood and Unity" and you were against Albania and Kosovo. Only so you were suitable to work in education. Towards the end of the 90's, the phrase "mixed classes" was coined. This meant putting 2 Macedonian students with 35 Albanian students in one class. For the sake of these 2 Macedonian students, the whole learning process, from the first to the 6th hour, took place in the Macedonian language. This was an unprecedented discrimination in the history of mankind. It was a humiliation, that did not only clash with the democratic values, but with the basic human right to learn in one's own mother language. Albanian high school students and their professors resisted the so called 'mixed classes'. They often held meetings. Committees came to secondary and primary schools, put pressure on the education workers, and differentiated them. Who is pro Tito's Yugoslavia, for AVNOJ's Yugoslavia, and who is pro Albania. This was not about Albania, nor about Tito's Yugoslavia, it was about the job of a teacher and professor in the teaching process. It didn't concern Albania, nor Yugoslavia, nor politics or ideology. Education does not deal with these issues. But in order to give teachers a smack in the face and to weaken the Albanian school, they coined an expression "ideo-political differentiation". As a result of this differentiation, many professors, teachers and educators were fired. And they were forced to seek their existence in Kosovo. They traveled from Macedonia to Kosovo. They were employed there, because there was a different kind of spirit. And many teachers and professors, had to go to Switzerland and Germany to secure their livelihood. This was the ideo-political differentiation. It was a restrictive, repressive, discriminatory and deeply anti-Albanian policy. May that never happen again!

There have been books that have been burned.
What can you tell us about this?

This is a pertinent question. They raided houses. Society Security (UDB) used to enter. UDB is an abbreviation, an acronym of “Uprava državna bezvednost”, Society Security Directorate. They used to come with police and agents dressed in civilian clothes, they checked the private libraries of the Albanians. Especially intellectuals. Schools were considered the cradle of Albanian nationalism and Albanian irredentism. I would not say that they were the cradle of nationalism and irredentism, because Albanian teachers and professors here in Macedonia have worked with honor and conscience. They haven’t been political. They have carried out the educational process. The important historical dates of the Albanian people were left out of the educational curricula. Take the Albanian League of Prizren, the long-running anti-Ottoman wars of Gjergj Kastrioti, the resistance of Albanians over the centuries, including the resistance here in the Yugoslavia of the “Kings”- of Pašić and the Karađorđević, the resistance to Ranković’s policies.

Now let me get back to your question. Albanians hid them [the books] underground. Not in the basement, because in the basement they would easily find and take the book if it was published in Tirana. What books? A dictionary. For example a French-Albanian dictionary. You were not permitted to keep it at home, because the police, at that time called militia, accompanied by Society Security with Yugoslav secret service agents, would find that book and register it and include you in the list of ‘unsuitable’ people, enemies of the Yugoslav society, of the Brotherhood- Unity and Tito. Many other books were collected from homes, from private libraries of individuals, of intellectuals, as they were the ones that had books. They took them and sent them to different warehouses in different cities like Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Diber Kercove, Kumanovo, in all Albanian places in Macedonia. Many of them destroyed the books, burned them, threw them away, just so that the police would not find them. May that time never return!

Mr. Zejneli, does this mean that Albanian literature has been left without a large part of its wealth, due to communism? And what are the long-term consequences it has brought, that perhaps even today Albanian education, or education in general in Northern Macedonia is experiencing because of Communism?

Good question. Important historical events of the Albanian nation were not only excluded in history, but also in the subject of literature, where no teaching units, that the Macedonian and Serbo-Slavic authorities considered harmful to the Brotherhood-Unity for Tito and AVNOJ’s Yugoslavia, would be included. For example, you could not have Gjergj Fishta in the curriculum. Because he was considered a reactionary writer, decadent. The intellectuals here in Macedonia knew “Lahuta e Malsisë” by heart, because it circulated in secret. It is an epic historical poem. There is nothing wrong with that. It is literature, it is art. Art is a separate sphere from ideology and politics. A single copy secretly went around. The intellectuals involved and students from here to Prishtina knew the Fishtian verses by heart. Consequently, Fishta and his artistic creations were not included in educational units. And not just him, but many other writers as well. Those who were involved, were included to a minimal, shrinking and reduced extent. This, as you say, has had serious consequences on the Albanian education of that time. The Albanian youth, the primary school students, later on students at the University of Prishtina, who were studying abroad from Macedonia, were deprived of many important literary figures of our nation. The consequence is felt to this day. Let’s not forget, that Fishta and Konica were banned as well in Albania during the communist regime of Enver Hoxha. He was banned there too. That’s it regarding history, literature, but also music. The music textbook could not be one that had been published in Tirana. It had to be a book where the Albanian student had to learn Slavic music from, and not the autochthonous music of his predecessors.

YOUTH VOICE

How do those who have not lived through the communist period see North Macedonia today?

Macedonia is in an exceptional position before integrating into a larger, European family, where we are confronted with different cultures and mentalities and Macedonia must find its place in those integration processes. I think that the biggest burden falls on us young people to maintain the identity of this society, the identity of Macedonia, the Macedonian culture, multiculturalism, coexistence in order for Macedonia to survive in that bigger bubble of movement and communication.

– Riste Saveski (student and activist)

I do not see a future here, I do not see the future at all, because now in the current situation with the pandemic, we realized that some problems should be solved fast. But we cannot know, the future itself is uncertain. Therefore, by how the society itself deals with the pandemic and other human rights issues, it also tells me the very lack of interest of the society to deal with the youth and youth policy.

–Elena Saveska (student and activist)



What are your goals for the future in North Macedonia?

My goal for the future in this society is to make a change, that is, the status quo that we see now and currently live in, to finally see it change or see that something is changing. The driving force of the whole change should be the youth and they should show their strength. All politicians and actors, all that have a role in making policies and any laws should know that if they want to make a change they should first consult with young people, i.e. the change should start with the young people themselves.

–Elena Saveska (student and activist)

Summarized, all young people in Macedonia face a lack of capacity for both employment and other facilities necessary for the life of a young person. It is necessary for young people not to give up easily. There are countless examples where young people emigrate from the society precisely because of that lack of capacity. However, as they say, the world is left to the young. Young people should carry the changes of the society, even when there are problems and obstacles from a political aspect, or any other aspect in the lives of young people. I think that we as young people need to find solutions in order, as I said before, to preserve our distinctions.

– Riste Saveski (student and activist)

Are you ready to build a better future and how enthusiastic are you about this?

Ever since I started with youth activism, my goal has been to factor in the voice of young people, so that it can be heard in institutions, regarding any issue we as young adults have. I have the same goal and will continue to fight against the problems we have in order to solve them together with our society leaders. Another of my main goals, is to change the rhetoric of young people when we sit in a coffee to talk. Their vision is to go abroad, study and to not return. On the contrary we have to see the future, to experience our academic and professional development in Northern Macedonia as well. Because it is not like we have such a bad society, there are also much worse places and the most important thing is that the perspective should not always be seen abroad. We must see it in our society too, in order to prosper here but also to contribute to the improvement of every sphere of the society.

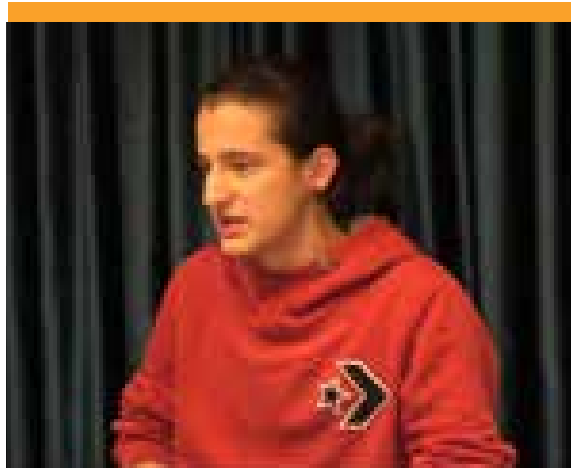
–Blendi Hodai (student and activist)

Well I am optimistic and enthusiastic. Although when enthusiasm and optimism collide with reality, they seem a little demotivating. However, I think that young people have the capacity to build a better future. Personally, I am ready to help building a better future for myself and the people around me. And I think that young people need to have that high spirit to build that better future, because tomorrow they will cover the positions of adults who today manage the institutions and the society, and they are the ones who will have to make the decisions that further will affect future generations.

–Riste Saveski (student and activist)

Which are the challenges/obstacles and opportunities that you face nowadays and which is their impact on your future?

There are many challenges now but there are also many opportunities. It depends on where and what you want to do. It is really important that young people first have a vision of what they want to achieve after 3, 5 or 10 years. Later on, opportunities are created and opened up by working to accomplish the things you have planned and want to achieve. Unfortunately, the vision of young people in North Macedonia recently has been to graduate and enter the society administration to work. But this is not a vision, it is a cliché that everyone has accomplished in recent years and should be changed. We should have young people who will create opportunities to develop “start-up” ideas in businesses that will help develop the society’s economy, innovation, technology. These are the opportunities that the trend of digitalization gives us, which young people should use. In terms of challenges, unfortunately, one of the main obstacles is that in our region, especially in North Macedonia, when a young person starts to raise his or her voice about a certain problem, to speak loudly about something that concerns them, there are always people that don’t agree and try to discourage you. In our society we have more demotivating than people who motivate and inspire the young generation to have even more courage and take further steps, to fulfill the ideas they have.



Not everyone can face insults and hate speech and other factors that demotivate you in taking initiatives to improve society. People who spend 8-10 hours in the office cannot create laws to improve the lives of young people. This would be paradoxical. But, the more we are part of the decision-making process, the better our society will be. Because a genuine and consolidated democratic system is where every actor in society is involved in decision-making, every group in society is involved in the processes that take place in the society. Thus, it is always important for us young people to be where we need to be, which is in the decisions that are made and that concern us.

– Blendi Hodai (student and activist)

The challenges I face may seem invisible but still systemic, because that is how the system was created and we still live in a “past tense”. We still think that we will go back to some period when things were perfect and should remain unchanged. However, human rights are subject to change and should be changed, according to era we live. When it comes to enthusiasm in this society, I can say that I’m 63% out of 100% enthusiastic, when I meet young people who like to stay in this society, to do something, to change something. But, we enter that labyrinth of the “system” and realize that it is not easy. Populism reigns in our society, especially in many politicians and they consider it a trend. Unfortunately, it doesn’t contribute much to the enthusiasm of young people to see the future in the society.

- Elena Saveska (student and activist)

Four years ago I started activities to raise awareness of youth activism, actualize student problems and strengthen the voice of young people. Although I have faced many challenges, they [the challenges] have encouraged me even more and have made me more enthusiastic too. As Winston Churchill once said: “You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks.”. Therefore, it is crucial to give a little hope and inspire others to take the initiative and do the things they have always wanted.

–Blendi Hodai (student and activist)

In your opinion which are the consequences of communism that the youth faces nowadays?

Although many believe that the period of communism is over and we have entered a type of democracy, I still think that some believe the old system was flawless. For me, that system collapsed because it was not successful. Now there are being formed new systems, new values, which make the young people hope the future may change and see some prosperity for the society itself. I think it is quite good to learn some lessons from communism, from the desire of coexistence, society and friendship. Because at the moment a new kind of communism is emerging, like socialism, which I think would have a very good effect on our society, that is already tired of that quasi-democracy and quasi-multiculturalism, because it is not multiculturalism with its true foundations as it should be.

–Elena Saveska (student and activist)

I concept the previous system as a valence, meaning it has two sides to it. The first side shows us a system and society with a greater understanding between the nations. On the other hand, in the education system there was learned respecting others, but today this value is found nowhere. There is no respect, no coexistence. Today we do not have any of those ethical norms to which today’s generation refers to, the generation that leads the society.

– Riste Saveski (student and activist)



How do you see the future in terms of multiculturalism in North Macedonia?

I consider multiculturalism to be one of the fundamental values, as it has a provision in the constitution. I therefore think that multiculturalism is one of the fundamental values of this society where several nationalities live in such a small piece of land. It bothers me a lot when people use the word tolerance because tolerance means I put up with you but do not really understand or live with you. I think that multiculturalism offers a lot, but above all, a lot has to be discussed in order for people to understand each other.

– Riste Saveski (student and activist)

While Macedonia continues its current behavior, it is commercialized or just wears the mask of multiculturalism and shows it to the people. However, there is a lot of work concerning multiculturalism. The past needs to be faced in order to have some communication between ethnic communities, so we can bring coexistence back. For sure politicians do not agree because they profit from that hatred itself. But, if people become aware of it, Macedonia could be multicultural in the true sense of the word.

–Elena Saveska (student and activist)

Although it has changed many names to date, the society of Macedonia was recognized after the 1990s as the Former Yugoslav Society of Macedonia. Until 2019, the Assembly voted to name it the Society of North Macedonia, as it is called today, due to the conflicts with Greece.

FACT OR FICTION

The main political problem after World War Second in Macedonia was the Albanian case.

FACT

The registration of population in 1948 was fabricated.

FICTION

In the constitution of 1963, Albanians went from a national minority to being treated like a nationality- legitimate minority.

FACT

The registration of population in 1948 was fabricated.

FICTION

In the constitution of 1963, Albanians went from a national minority to being treated like a nationality- legitimate minority.

FACT

The only high school in Albanian language until 1963 was "Zef Lush Marku".

FICTION

In 1972 the Albanian became society-forming element, approximately as the Macedonians.

-FACT-

Sadudin Gjura was punished with 14 years in prison by the regime.

-FACT-

Shpëtim Pollozhani was punished with 15 years of prison because of boycotting the regime.

-FICTION-

The school programs were controlled, supervised and censored by the Serbian authorities.

-FACT-

The Albanians and Macedonians were equally included in Universities.

-FICTION-

Alexander Rankovic fell off in 1st July 1965.

-FICTION-



SERBIA

(NON) INSPIRING INDIVIDUAL

in SERBIA



Zeljko Raznatovic Arkan was the founder and commander-in-chief of the Serbian Volunteer Guard (1991-1995). He began his long and successful criminal career at the age of twenty when he illegally emigrated to the west. He was convicted as an armed robber in Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. Before the disintegration of the SFRY in 1990, Raznatovic appeared as the leader of the "deli", a Red Star fan. In 1990, he was arrested in Croatia for carrying a weapon, and after 6 months he was released and returned to Belgrade.

ZELJKO RAZNATOVIC ARKAN

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The massacre in Bijeljina refers to the events of April 1, 1992, when Serb paramilitaries led by Arkan invaded Bijeljina and forcibly took power in that town. It is believed that this act started the war in BiH. During this takeover, about 48 civilians were killed and their bodies were left on the streets. In September, they decided to expel all the remaining Bosnians. A list of non-Serbs was compiled, and the guard then killed the citizens and threw their bodies into the Drina's water. Then the Bosnian-Herzegovinian government came to power, led by Biljana Plavsic, and proclaimed the "liberation of Bijeljina", which they annexed to the Republika Srpska.

Photographer Ron Haviv was invited by Arkan to photograph the "Liberation of Bijeljina", in fact the murder of people. Among those scenes is a Serb soldier hitting a wounded Bosnian woman and a man begging for his life as he is thrown from the fourth floor. Haviv managed to escape and publish the pictures, then Arkan came out with a reward for his head. It is estimated that about 10,000 Bosnians were expelled from Bijeljina in 1994. Arkan together with his guard committed many crimes, that can never be explained and justified. Hundreds of innocent civilians were killed because of their movement. After the war, the International Court of Justice in The Hague filed indictments against Raznatovic's "Serbian Volunteer Guard" for war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Arkan is accused of commanding the Guard, which was responsible for numerous crimes, serious violations of the Geneva Convention and the laws and customs of war. He rejected all these accusations. He briefly engaged in politics as a member of the National Assembly of the Society of Serbia and president of the Party of Serbian Unity, which he founded in the fall of 1993. Zeljko Raznatovic was killed on January 15, 2000, at the Intercontinental Hotel in Belgrade.

Could you describe yourself please?

My name is Janko Samoukovic. I was born and lived in Pazarić, about 20 km from Sarajevo, until the war. At the beginning of the conflicts, I was captured at my home, as a civilian, and taken to the Silos war camp in Tarcin, by the BiH Army.

Where did you stay during the war? How did you experience that situation?

As I said, I was captured at my home and taken to the Silos war camp in Tarcin, by the BiH Army. I spent 35 hellish days together with my father, who stayed over 1300 days in the same camp. Also one sister experienced the camp in Konjic.

How did these experiences during the war affect your life after it ended?

The experience of the camp and even the war itself, changed my life fundamentally, and thus me as a person. I was driven from the values of my home. My life was ruined in some social sense, because everything I had started and built up to then had failed. Again, as a human being, I often think, that I turned out better and more sensitive than I would ever have been without this experience. Fortunately, to put it mildly, the very ugly experiences of the camp did not make me a hater or a revenge-seeking monster, which in a way would be logical after all. Many could not resist. On the contrary, those experiences have drawn emotions and empathy from me for all people who have gone through similar, or even more difficult, experiences. I am full of understanding towards other people, especially the weak and helpless, which are still away from the victims of the war. Every story about the war and the camp brings the conclusion that it must never happen again. No matter what politicians say, no matter what information they listen to every day on the social media, my opinion is that peace has no alternative.

JANKO SAMOUKOVIC

LIFE OF A SURVIVOR

What gave you the strength and hope to move on even though the hardest?

During the war too, I realized that not all people are negative and that there are both on all sides, good and bad. So, I chose to put in the first place the right side. The only right and infallible side is to be a man who is incapable of wanting and doing evil to other people. Then, there are all the other affiliations, such as religious, national, which club I support, etc.

What would you say to young people today based on life experience that is related to the situation in the Balkans?

Life is short, try to spend it in love instead of hatred; believe that it is more beautiful, more interesting and healthier. A message for young people who fortunately do not have a personal experience with war and suffering, but already know about it from the stories of the elderly, not to listen to them much. Think with your head. The belief that the older one is smarter has been shattered. Smart is someone who knows how to think with his head and recognize what is better for him. Any war and conflict is certainly not an option. We seniors have nothing to be proud of, nor do we pretend to be smart, since we used to embark on and accept the war that was offered to us without any opposition. For every attempt to do so, our past denies us. You have the chance to go to school, love each other, travel, have fun, educate families, have children and raise them. Educate them so that they are people in the true sense of the word, who will never, in any option, support the war and the suffering of the Serbs themselves and, of course, other people.

MEETING WITH AN EXPERT JASMINA BORIĆ

1. Can you tell us something about yourself?

My name is Jasmina Borić. I was born in Sombor in 1965 and lived all my life in the vicinity of Sombor; as an unmarried woman in Beždan, as a married woman in the neighboring town of Kolut. When I finished high school, I enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, majoring in Marxism. After graduating and getting the title of professor of Marxism, I started working in several high schools in Sombor. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, social consciousness was slowly changing, and with one move during the summer vacation (without public debate and any preparation), I am left without the norm of classes, and thus without work. After that, I really wanted to return to education, but it took me 13 long years. In the meantime, I became the mother of one daughter and one son, engaged in various private legal and illegal (smuggling) jobs and dreamed of a new, better society. It was only in 2003 that I had the opportunity to return to high school, by introducing a new subject in all high schools - civic education. Since 2004 I have a full norm of civic education classes in my home school, the High School of Economics in Sombor.

2. What has been your contribution to politics?

I have always been curious, I read a lot and was interested in everything, especially politics. I was actively involved in politics as a member of the DS, then as a member of the municipal board in one term, and I deal with politics every day as an amateur listening, reading and following the events in our society and the world around us. The subject I teach is very closely related to politics in theory, because knowledge of civic education cannot be taught without examples from my own society or the world. Quite by accident, I was proposed by the staff of my school to be a teacher-leader of a group of students who were part of an exchange with an NGO from Bosnia. I met the whole project, which was then called "Vacation from the war", and was financed by the Committee for Basic Human Rights and Democracy from Cologne, Germany. The project seemed fantastic to me and was absolutely what is called humane and altruistic. Voluntary contributions, people unknown to us, finance a stay at sea for about 500 children, in five shifts, from June to August. For the children, it was an opportunity to spend 12 days at sea for free and to try to forget the consequences of the war that was around them. I liked the project, the people from the project liked it, so we've been hanging out since 2005. In the meantime, we voted to change the name of the project, we created a network of 5 participating cities, the host Tuzla, Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje, Srebrenica, Vukovar and Sombor. We called ourselves "Young People United in Peace" (YUPeace).

3. What topics were you dedicated to in the frame of Youth United in Peace group?

For several years, I dealt with the peace topic - women Nobel laureates. Afterwards, we agreed to meet in Tuzla, as the host city and to have a working weekend there, where the leaders would get to know each other better, exchange impressions, agree on conducting workshops (solo or in pairs) and better prepare for working holidays. In the meantime, a younger colleague joined me at school, with whom I immediately found a common language and interests, so the two of us are a long-time leading couple. The two of us designed special workshops that we did with the children we prepared for the stay at sea, and those workshops also included getting to know other, partner cities and their destinies. The actions of the war, the events and the fate of the divided cities were something that our young people from Sombor and the surrounding area did not experience. We felt that we had to inform them about it, that some stories that were not told in public had to be told. It was primarily an event in Srebrenica in 1995, the division of the town of Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje, the shelling of the Tuzlanka Gate and the siege of Vukovar. Since we were dealing with these topics, at these preparatory seminars we were suggested to try to present it to other children / young people. We slightly modified, adjusted, supplemented the workshops, so from the initial one or two, it turned into several. The goal of all workshops was to try to present as objectively as possible the events in all these cities, the war, the battles and the circumstances that led to a particular event. I think we succeeded in that, because those workshops were very successful, impressive. There was a lot of discussion and different opinions.

4. Can you share with us some information in relation of 90s?

The period we covered was pre-war in the late 80's, to post-war in the late 90's, concluding with the bombing of Serbia in 1999. I mostly represented the pre-war period (because I always spoke from the position of someone who experienced it, who actively followed the events, and I was the oldest in terms of years), and we actively cooperated with the leaders from those cities where the events were held. Quite by accident, we were on a trip to Dubrovnik at the exhibition of the world-famous photographer Ron Haviv. As a war reporter, who stayed in the Balkans, his photographs became world famous, so the opportunity was great.

After the exhibition, we wanted to say something more about some photographs, and so we decided to dedicate an entire workshop to Ron Haviv's war photographs. From that one workshop, with a small number of photos, we came to the concept of a great, serious, self-aware workshop that they remembered for years. Ron Haviv proved to be a fantastic example of a serious, conscientious and objective photojournalist, with a refined sense of moment and opportunity. The idea came to us by chance and we asked him something, we got in touch with him, he accepted the Skype vision with us and it was something we will all remember for a long time. He was thrilled to work with young people in that way, with the help of his photographs, with young people coming from the cities where he stayed and filmed.

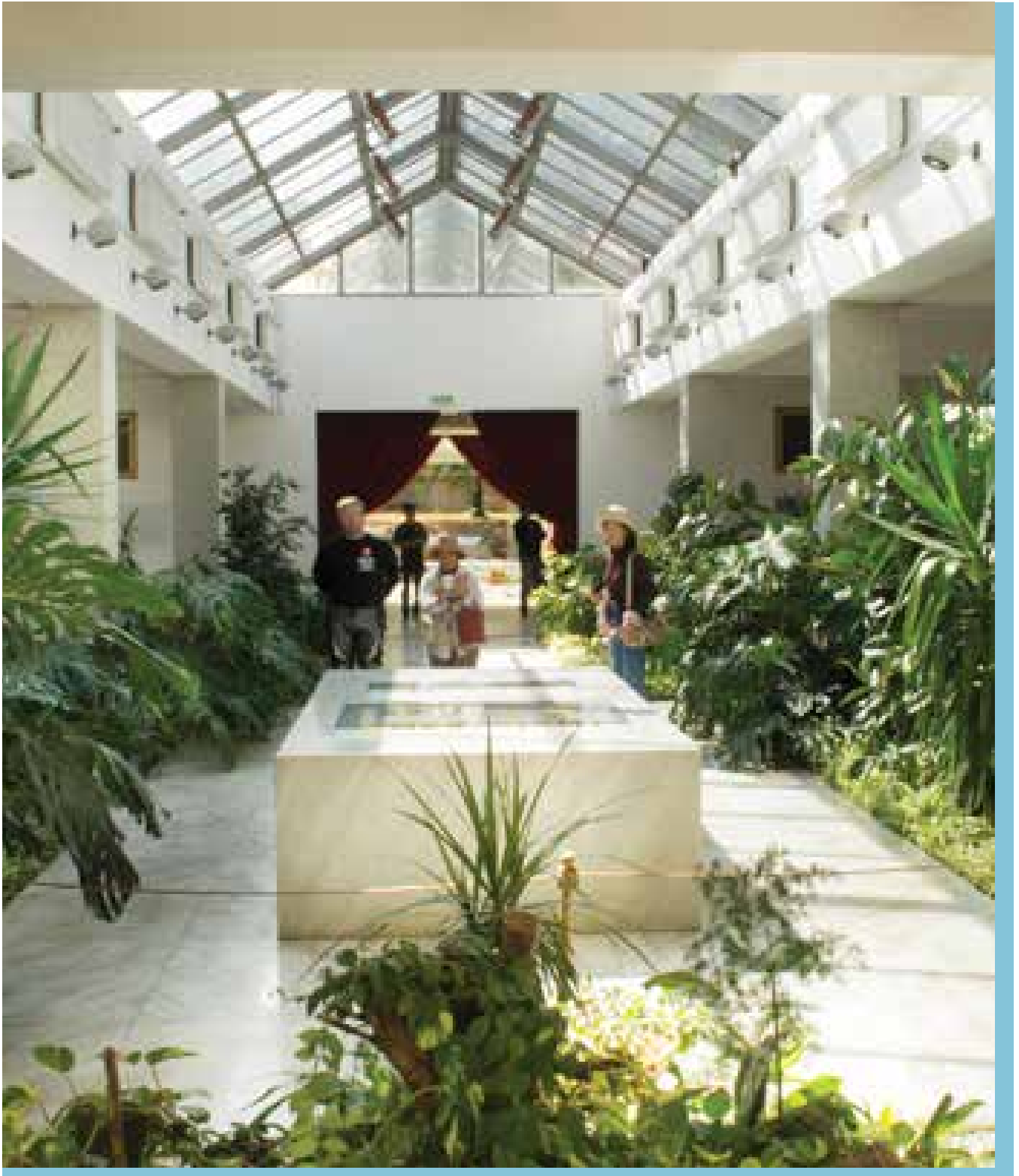
5. Can you describe us some characters from that period?

There are many characters from that period ... to my regret there are more bad than good ones. The central person we talked about a lot is Arkan (primarily because of Haviv's photos). They would start with a photo from Erdut Arkan with a tiger in his hand in front of the tank, with guys with phantoms. We really wanted to hear what impression Arkan left on Haviva, in those Skype conversations we had in the last couple of years. It was unreal to hear someone describe him as relatively polite (at the very beginning of his arrival in Erdut), and then that picture changed drastically, and in the end Haviv had to flee because Arkan openly demanded Haviv to be killed. Apart from Arkan, we talked a lot about the war presidents of our three societies, Ratko Mladic and the events in Srebrenica, the people who helped young people or their parents during the war, those good people in times of evil ... I especially mentioned and emphasized that there have been and will always be good people, those who are willing to make sacrifices to help someone. In that sense, whenever the opportunity arose, I mentioned the story of General Vlado Trifunovic and his notion of patriotism. I thought that a great injustice had been done to him and that our society, especially after October 5, had sinned against him and unjustly let him fight his own battle. Such a man, who showed that cared about the young soldiers entrusted to him, deserved better treatment, faster justice, more dignified retirement days. His character always served me to score when they wondered what a true patriot is.

5. What would be your message to youth?

I always tell to young generation to be careful while voting, to not be seduced by the intoxicating call of nationalism and chauvinism, to not allow themselves to be manipulated by any Balkan politicians. I say that at all workshops, in the classes. I say that at meetings of young people, formal and informal. Solidarity, prudence, fearlessness and always a dose of criticism, re-examination of everyone's attitudes, listening and other sides are what young people should pay attention today..


SITES OF MEMORY



HOUSE OF FLOWERS

The building known today as the “House of Flowers” was built in 1975, as a winter garden for the needs of the then President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito and was then called the “Flower House”. When Tito passed away on May 4, 1980, at the age of 88, just days before his May 8 funeral, the conservatory was converted into his final resting place. Then the fountain was removed from the central part and a tomb was built, which looks like a large brick underground room. Tito’s funeral itself, which was attended by 211 delegations from 128 societies around the world, was very complicated to perform due to the space where the then winter garden was located. As all delegations, due to insufficient space, could not attend the lowering of Tito’s remains into the grave, they were in front of the winter garden on an improvised tribune, while only the highest officials of SFRY, SKJ and JNA and family members attended the act of lowering the coffin. Also, during the burial, instead of a real marble slab, a so-called “marble mask” was placed over the grave, like a two-part slab that was only covered with marble and was much lighter than the real one. This was done because the funeral protocol ordered that after lowering the coffin, two officers each push these marble slabs over the grave. The real marble slab of white wedding marble was of enviable dimensions - 80 centimeters high, a meter and a half wide and two and a half meters long and weighing nine tons. The day after the funeral, she was placed over Tito’s grave with the help of special cranes. The replacement of the slab over the grave after the funeral, as well as the general rehearsal of the funeral, which took place the day before the funeral on May 7, caused controversy due to technical checks, as well as suspicion that Tito was buried there. The leadership of the SFRY and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia decided to call their political doctrine “Even after Tito - Tito!” After Tito’s death, it was inappropriate to call Josip Broz Tito’s last resting place a grave or mausoleum, the euphemism “House of Flowers” has already been established. This name became generally accepted, considering that Tito’s grave was surrounded by large flower bushes and remained even after the disintegration of the SFRY.





Monument to the victims of the war of the 90s in Sombor.

The monument was made as a mother crying with a child in her arms. At the foot of the monument are plaques with the names of some of the civilians and heroes who fought in the 1990s to save the people from soldiers who terrorized civilians.



IN FOCUS:

HUMAN RIGHTS

in Serbia during the '90s

Efforts in 1990 to reform and eliminate Titoism and the apparatus of the one-party society were mixed in many respects, overtaken by ethnic struggles. These conflicts did not only threaten the unity of the Yugoslav federation but also gave rise to severe human rights abuses, especially in the province of Kosovo, where the government of the Serbian Society is oppressing the Albanian population, which represents some 90 percent of the province's population.

Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo were arrested, beaten and in some instances tortured in prison and subjected to mass firings from their jobs solely on account of their ethnicity. Serbian police units repeatedly used excessive force in confronting ethnic Albanian demonstrators, killing more than 50 people in 1990 alone.

Security forces of the Serbian government attacked ethnic Albanian villages in apparent attempts at intimidation. The Serbian government suspended the Kosovo parliament and other institutions of government in which ethnic Albanians participated, shut down for extended periods the main ethnic Albanian daily paper „Rilindja“ and took all Albanian-language programming off Kosovo television and radio. It embarked on a program to disenfranchise and marginalize the ethnic Albanian population in ways constituting racism, impermissible ethnic discrimination, and grave violations of the rights of ethnic Albanians to free expression and equal political participation.

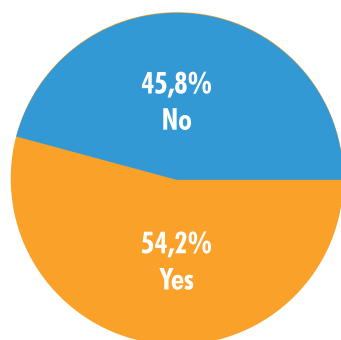
YOUTH VOICE

We surveyed 50 young people, of whom 22,9% are male and 77,1 % are female. Of the 50 respondents, 69,8% are living in the city and 31,3% are living live in the society-side. Young people were aged from 15 to 30 years. We asked young people from Serbia to answer the following questions regarding the quality of life of young people in Serbia. In the following lines we will present their answers:

Q: Describe the satisfaction with the quality of life of young people in Serbia in one word.

Answer: "Okay", "Medium", "Solid", "Dissatisfied", "Average", "Unfulfilled", "Bad", "Desperate", "Not bad", "No perspective".

Q: Do you see your future in Serbia?



Q: If the answer to the previous question is NO, in which society do you see your future?

Answer: "Any, as far away from here as possible", Qatar, Sweden, Slovenia, United Kingdom, Spain, Mexico, Austria, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, America, . . .

Q: What do you plan to do in the future?

Answer: Economy, Tourism, Exclusively economic affairs, I do not know, Audio and video technologies, Designing, Investing, Real estate, Stewardess, Medicine, Producing energy from renewable sources, Photo processing, Marketing, . . .

Q: What needs to be changed / improved in order for the life of young people in Serbia to be better?

Answer: "Give more opportunities to young people", "Education system", "Provide conditions for better jobs and higher salaries", "Salaries", "That there is a future that young people can look forward to here", "That young people decide on politics", "Change the mentality of the people and the overall structure of society and then maybe", "Listen to young people and their ideas, create more counseling for young people", "More jobs", "That everyone who has a college to get a job, to increase salaries", "More organized socializing in sports, entertainment and games." "Introduction of vocational orientation tests in secondary schools." "Access to quality and truthful information." "Bringing life back to the village", "Motivate young people to learn what they like and work on the issue of unemployment, financial incentives for young people\new entrepreneurs", "More jobs, more extracurricular activities", "Introduce free education and change the education system, deny the availability of alcoholic beverages for minors, invest more in sports and culture and thus motivate young people to lead healthier and more active lifestyle, slow down technology, abolish realities and reduce the influence of "celebrities" on young people, improve socialization, encourage them to think for themselves, not to be in the shadow of them, restore mutual respect and self-esteem and much more", "The possibility of free or cheaper education, how to work with young people, several workshop projects that would be interesting to everyone, not just a particular group".

Thousands of women took part in the wars in the former Yugoslavia, while some were convicted of brutal crimes. Yet the role of women who fought in those wars was often neglected. When women are mentioned in war, the first thought of most people is sacrifice. This is not entirely true, as there were many women who committed war crimes equally, and perhaps even more brutally, than the men themselves. Many also joined military units.

FACT OR FICTION: WOMEN AS WAR CRIMINALS

EXAMPLES:



Former Republika Srpska President Biljana Plavsic is the only woman indicted and convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). She was charged with genocide, complicity in committing genocide, extermination, murder, intentional deprivation of life and other crimes committed during the war in BiH. She is also remembered as a person who pleaded guilty to persecuting the non-Serb population on political, ethnic and religious grounds. She was sentenced to 11 years in prison.



The Belgrade High Court sentenced former Bosnian Serb member Ranka Tomic to five years in prison for participating in the July 1992 torture and murder of 18-year-old Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ABiH) Army nurse Karmena Kamencic during the BiH war. This case stands out in the sea of others because both the victim and the perpetrator were women.



Azra Basic, a former member of the Croatian Defense Council (HVO), was sentenced to 14 years in prison for crimes against Serb civilians in Derventa in 1992. During the war, Basic had two nicknames, "Azra Two Knives" and "Bloody Azra", which she received because of the cruelty of the crimes she committed. According to one witness, she incised the cross and the letter S with knives on the backs and foreheads of the prisoners, and then stabbed them with those wounds.



One of the few women to be tried for war crimes in Serbia is Nada Kalaba, who was sentenced by the Belgrade High Court to nine years in prison for crimes committed at Ovcara in Croatia. Kalaba was among 18 people accused of taking part in the killings of more than 200 Croatian prisoners at the Ovcara farm near Vukovar after the town fell to Serb forces in 1991.



The District Court in Vukovar also sentenced Ivanka Savić, who was herself a civilian, to four and a half years in prison for war crimes against civilians. According to the verdict, Savić was not a member of any armed unit, but in 1991 and 1992 she reported Croats to Serb military units and the JNA. She also actively participated in intimidation, abuse and persecution of Croats, which she had previously reported to Serb forces.



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