

PART IV: THE NINETIES

The War and Post-War Period in Bosnia and Herzegovina

This Was Not Our War

This chapter will discuss the position of women in the period 1992-1995, focusing on their role in different fields of action, such as the military, civil defence, education, medicine, art, politics, and women as war criminals and victims of rape.

Context

The period covering the end of the eighties and early nineties of the 20th century was marked by socio-economic and political turmoil, and the transition from a socialist society to a *democracy* that is characterised by war and the division of the former Yugoslavia into nation-states. The dissolution of Yugoslavia affected all segments of society and imposed the question of ethnic division, which had a major impact on almost all spheres of society, including the issue of gender equality, women's representation in decision-making positions and other spheres of public life. The first democratic, multi-party elections were held in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990 and they brought to power the three major national political parties representing the three dominant ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs) and which were to organise the political life of the country. After the proclamation of independence of Slovenia and Croatia at the end of February 1992, a referendum on the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina was organised. On March 1, 1992 Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence, and immediately thereafter witnessed growing tensions, which escalated into war, which officially began in April 1992. Between April 1992 and December 1995, and until the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, there massive human rights violations took place in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (R BiH), including war crime, crime against humanity, murder, rape and expulsion. The homes of many became the frontlines and the population in many parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina was forced to leave.

The Bosnian Book of the Dead

According to the census of 1991 – which is still considered the latest one – out of a total of 4,377,033 inhabitants, women accounted for

2,193,238.³⁵⁹ *The Bosnian Book of the Dead* provides a statistical overview of the total number of the dead and missing victims of the war in all municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, registering 95,940 persons who were killed or missing in the period from 1991 to 1996. According to the gender breakdown, there were 86,039 men and 9,901 women killed. The same source reports that nearly two thirds, i.e. 5,873, women were killed in 1992, 4,848 between April and September 1992. This suggests that more women were killed over the period of four months in 1992 than during the entire duration of the armed conflict. When it comes to national structure, out of a total of 9,901 women killed during the war, 7,179 of these were Bosniaks and 4,411 were killed in 1992. There were 1,664 Serb women victims and the majority of these (928) were killed in 1992. Out of a total of 896 Croat women victims, the majority (446) were killed in 1992. There were also 182 women victims of other nationalities. For 288 women the exact date of death could not be established. Out of 9,901 women victims, 97.48% of women were killed or went missing as civilians.³⁶⁰

Women and War

War, as a male affair, is an activity in which women do participate in different ways. They usually remain on the sidelines or sometimes become manipulated for the purposes of the ruling political elites or in some cases they themselves support the ideology in some way. While, in violent conflicts, women are mainly considered within a victimising discourse, the roles of women in times of war vary. *The feminist movement in both Belgrade and Zagreb divided into anti-nationalistic and nationalist branches over the question of nature and scale of rape in the wars of the nineties in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and later in Kosovo.*³⁶¹

The symbolic function of a woman victim of war in the feminist literature of former Yugoslavia is not as simple as it seems at first glance. On the one hand, it is complementary to the concept of a woman peacemaker and activist, but at the same time it is contrary to its symbolic powerlessness and passivity. At the same time, it is also a symbolic contrast to the image of militant, warmongering maleness. Finally, a woman appears also as a semi-aware victim susceptible to war, nationalist and patriarchal

359 Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, 2010

360 Tokača, M. *Spolna i nacionalna struktura žrtava i ljudski gubitci vojnih formacija (1991-1996), prema Bosanskoj knjizi mrtvih*, IDC; source: <http://www.prometej.ba/index.php/home-4/1005-spolna-i-nacionalna-struktura-zrtava-i-ljudski-gubitci-vojnih-formacija-1991-1996> (June 10, 2014)

361 Svirčić, J. *Feministički raskol devedesetih: takozvane nacionalistkinje i samoproglašene antinacionalistkinje*; source: <http://stav.cenzura.hr/feministicki-raskol-devedesetih-takozvane-nacionalistkinje-i-samoproglasene-antinacionalistkinje/> (June 27, 2014)

manipulation. In all these cases, female social activity and female victimhood are mutually intertwining concepts, which generate one another, both intended as essentially different concepts from social activities and victimisation of men, especially in the war context.³⁶²

Women in war-torn societies are faced with various forms of sexual violence, which is sometimes perpetrated systematically to achieve military or political objectives. Collapse of infrastructure first affects women because they remain the sole care-takers of the family. According to the definition of Mary Kaldor³⁶³, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of the new, post-modern wars in which new methods of warfare were used and different types of crimes were committed. The new wars take place in urban areas and include the civilian population, i.e. people are no longer going to war, but instead, the war comes to them. Therefore, in the contemporary conflicts the majority of the victims are civilians, mostly women and children. The role of the mothers of soldiers is also emphasised in this period. Conflict can lead to the empowerment of women, causing structural and social transformations and producing new realities that redefine gender.³⁶⁴ Women are leaving their traditional roles in order to meet the social and economic demands of the war, and some, for the first time, become responsible for their families and take on leadership roles. One example of this is the women of Srebrenica who have distinguished themselves in the public sphere, both as victims and women who have lost their families, remained on their own and who are still struggling to return, fighting for their dignity and finding their missing ones. The women of Srebrenica were expelled and most now live as displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before the war, Srebrenica was a male dominated society where men were the heads of households. However, the war, and the period after the war, changed the role of Srebrenica women who were less educated than men and mostly housewives.³⁶⁵

Over the period of last two decades of the 20th century, four powerful currents intertwined, hence changing the direction of a steady, albeit slow, socio-political evolution of women. The first was the death of Tito in 1980, which provided the framework for the political disturbances and unrests throughout the region. The second was the collapse of Communism, which changed the social rules in this part of the world. The third was the birth of nationalism, which filled the vacuum created due to the first two

362 Drezgić, R., Žarkov, D. (2005) *Feminističke nevolje sa Balkanom* in: Sociologija, Vol. XLVII, No. 4, p. 298

363 Kaldor, M. (1999) *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

364 Meintjes, S., Pillay, A., and Turshen, M. (2001) *The Aftermath: Women in Post Conflict Transformation*, Zed Books, London, p. 6

365 Simić, O. (2010) *Rod, konflikt i pomirenje: Gde su muškarci? A šta je sa ženama?* Časopis za političku teoriju i istraživanja globalizacije, razvoja i rodnosti, source: http://postjugo.filg.uj.edu.pl/baza/texts_display.php?id=329 (June 27, 2014)

factors. The fourth was the war, during which women had to take over tasks that they did not expect, while at the same time, they were exposed to traumas and losses. A woman who tried to survive the fierce whirlpool of the four currents could hardly plan for the next day, let alone her life.³⁶⁶

The war has affected the demographic structure, not only because of the expulsion of population and the emergence of majority ethnic areas, but also in terms of gender structure, since the majority of casualties of the war were men. Carol Mann presented an interesting observation in her study of women of Dobrinja³⁶⁷, suggesting that women were the first refugees to leave Sarajevo while the men remained detained by military obligation. The main consequences of these departures were the creation of new communities and the rise of divorce.³⁶⁸

In the period of the war, women's issues were no longer just women's issues, but also issues of Bosniak/Muslim, Croat and Serb women. The war placed women in a specific position. They were losing the rights they acquired during the period of Socialism when the status of women was formally regulated in many ways, especially when it came to women's reproductive rights, collective rights, and social welfare institutions and when they managed to carve out higher visibility in society. *The rise of ethnic nationalism in the former Yugoslavia had 'grown' in parallel with misogyny, since it was based on distinctly heroic and masculine mythology.*³⁶⁹ The period after the war also showed that women are almost invisible in society, and mentioned only when celebrating anniversaries in order to demonstrate that there were women who participated in the defence – women fighters and heroines – or as female victims of rape. Unlike women who contributed to the National Liberation War and whose role was celebrated and marked after the war, the female participants of the 1992-1995 war remained invisible.

The war rapes in Bosnia and Croatia opened the door to Balkanistic discourses. In this way, the tradition, patriarchy and aggression (highlighted as “of a specific Balkan type”) represent the context not only for the feminist analyses in this area but also for reinterpretation of gender relations through the concepts of conflict and violence. Unfortunately, feminist works from the former Yugoslavia did not deal with theoretical considerations of the categories of nationalism, the Balkans and war violence before the collapse of Yugoslavia. This means that these categories appear as more or less self-evident and transparent, or have a teleological meaning, hence nationalism, war and the Balkans are considered to be the

366 Hunt, S. Ovo nije bio naš rat: Bosanke obnavljaju mir, Biblioteka Dani, p. 207, 208

367 See: Mann, C. (2006) *Kućne amazonke, otpor žena iz Dobrinje, predgrađa Sarajeva*, Svjetlost, Sarajevo

368 Ibid. p. 36

369 Hauser, M., Ne prestajati počinjati, p. 59, source: http://www.medicazenica.org/download/Monika_Hauser-Ne_prestajati_pocinjati.pdf (June 27, 2014)

same and the product of one another.³⁷⁰

Horrific examples of war crimes committed against women are largely focused on their rape stories - the role of women as victims. Women served as a means of marking territory - the demonstration of power. *Women have become differentiators on ethnic, cultural and political levels.*³⁷¹ During the war turmoil dual processes occur leading not only to the victimisation of women, but also to their empowerment as a result of the questioning of gender power relations at both the local and the wider international levels.³⁷² During the war women's organisations emerged, which primarily dealt with female victims of war and rape victims, thus empowering the civil sector.³⁷³ Since many men were prevented from moving freely or were engaged in military activity, the public space was left to women.³⁷⁴ Women were redefining the traditional roles that society prescribed for men and women, supporting a growth in woman's self-esteem. This gave rise to a large number of new and dedicated women leaders and many of these assumed leadership roles after the war.³⁷⁵ Darija Žilić, in her article *Gender Essentialisms*, writes about the ways in which women can be used to serve the nationalist agenda or to deconstruct *a national story*, yet, in both cases, they remain outside of history. She refers to examples of societies that emerged after the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ). When writing about the connection between gender and war, Nira Yuval-Davis, a theoretician, explains that the war is an experience that brings along exile, which is gender specific, since 80 percent of the total refugee population are women and children.³⁷⁶

War is often seen as a *male* thing, while women are rarely discussed in this, except as victims. The woman's nature is perceived as peaceful, unlike the fighting spirit of men. Therefore it is important to discuss nationalism, the attitude towards a woman as a victim, women fighters, women-rape survivors and women perpetrators of war crimes. In order to seriously consider the role of women in armed conflicts, it is necessary to explore the ways in which the gender dimension is involved in the social and political consideration of the armed conflict.

During the war, violence against women was manifested in numerous

370 Drezgić, R., Žarkov, D. (2005) p. 302

371 Žilić, D.: Rodni esencijalizmi, politizacija i mirovni aktivizam na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije, p. 230

372 Ibid.

373 *Žene u Bosni i Hercegovini između valova: može li specifično kontekstualni feminizam pomoći*, p. 85

374 Slapšak, S. (200) *Hunting, ruling, sacrificing: traditional male practices in contemporary Balkan cultures*, in: Breines, I., Connell, R. and Eide, I.: Male roles, masculinities and violence, A culture of peace perspective, UNESCO, Paris, p. 139

375 Simić, O. (2010)

376 Yuval-Davis, N. (2003) Nacionalistički projekti i rodni odnosi, Treća, Časopis Centra za ženske studije, broj 1-2 / vol. V, p. 208

ways, from the physical violence to which raped women were exposed to domestic violence. Women's organisations that emerged at the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, *Women for Women* in Sarajevo and *Women in Black* in Belgrade, studied the differences between the two sides of the frontline in which women happened to be. On the side of the Serbian Army, the rape committed on the frontline was continued at home *as if all the standards of permissible behaviour were cast away*.³⁷⁷ This was exacerbated by the loss of a clear distinction between civilian and military life, and alcohol was often one of the causes, especially among soldiers.³⁷⁸ During the war, especially after the summer of 1995, following the massacre in Zepa and Srebrenica, a large number of refugees came to Sarajevo and Dobrinja, mostly from rural areas. In most cases, these were women, children and elderly people who were supposed to get used to a new way of life typical of urban areas. For a large number of refugees this was their first time to be in an urban environment, and women, who were often dressed in traditional clothing, became victims of discrimination because of their specific way of life. The adjustment was very difficult, particularly for women and mothers who were emotionally connected to the hearth and home from which they were expelled and which influenced their identities as wives, mothers and housewives.³⁷⁹ Mann goes on to explain the position of women refugees who have settled in Dobrinja:

*The violent deaths of their husbands and older sons, disturbed relationships with other children they had brought with them and difficulties of daily survival pushed these women into irresolvable crises of identity, of which women of Dobrinja were spared.*³⁸⁰

There are few data on women who spent the wartime in Bosnia and Herzegovina and were involved in various segments of society and who became more visible in society due to their contributions. Nevertheless there are a large number of ordinary women, nameless heroines who fought, day by day, for survival. Women were burdened with the care for their families under unimaginable conditions. The story of each woman who had to feed her family, put her children through school, the story of each raped women, single mother, refugee, is a story for itself and which requires only time to be told.³⁸¹

377 Mann, C. (2006) p. 37

378 Ibid.

379 Ibid. p. 38, 39

380 Ibid. p. 39

381 See also *Ženska strana rata* published by Women in Black with 120 authentic stories, letter and memories of wars led in former Yugoslavia 1991-1999. Source: http://zeneucnom.org/pdf/zenska_strana_rata.pdf

Women, Rape Victims

The war in Bosnia was marked by mass crimes which initiated the debate on the establishment of international bodies for the prosecution of war crimes.³⁸² The rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina had its own local, regional and international dimensions. The experience has become relevant to women's history because sexual crimes were a part of the atrocities that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and as such they became an element of women's activism, which advocated the protection of women in armed conflicts and defining mass rape as a crime against humanity.³⁸³ Based on the reports of mass rapes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and information about rape camps, data were presented on how rape was used, systematically, as a weapon of war, especially for the purposes of genocide and ethnic cleansing. According to the findings of the Team of the European Community Mission to assess the situation in 1992, there were 20,000 to 50,000 women who were raped during the war.³⁸⁴

Of a large number of war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most shocking for international public were reports of the UN Fact-Finding Mission (Bassiouni Commission), as well as numerous media reports of ethnic cleansing, genocide, mass rapes, concentration camps, the siege of Sarajevo and the arbitrary killing of civilians.³⁸⁵

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina the female body served as a symbolic space. It was used as a strategy to overpower *the enemy* signified by the woman's body; therefore in 2006 rape was declared a strategy of ethnic cleansing.³⁸⁶ What eventually proved to be a problem was reflected in the so-called phenomenon of *the victim hierarchy*. Ethnically based rape represents a new and more severe category than *ordinary rape*, and as such is interpreted as a threat to the nation rather than as an assault against a woman.³⁸⁷ In 1993, the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna organised a forum, in which the war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia were discussed, especially those perpetrated against women. By signing the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which were adopted on 25 June 1993, 171 countries attending the World Conference acknowledged that *the violation of human rights of women in situations of armed conflict is in fact the violation of fundamental principles*

382 Mlinarević, G. et al. (2012) *Procesuiranje ratnog seksualiziranog nasilja na sudu Bosne i Hercegovine: šta se dogodilo sa interesom pravde? Analiza i preporuke u vezi sa rodno osjetljivim praćenjem suđenja za ratno seksualizirano nasilje u Bosni i Hercegovini u periodu 23. maj 2011. do 25. maj 2012.*, Sarajevo, 2012, ACIPS, p. 11

383 Bakšić-Muftić, J. (2003) *Zločin silovanja u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Odjek, ljeto-jesen-zima, <http://www.odjek.ba/index.php?broj=03&id=21> (June 10, 2014)

384 Mlinarević, G. et al. (2012) p. 11

385 Ibid. p. 11

386 Ibid.

387 Popov-Momčinović, Z. (2013) p. 111

of international human rights and humanitarian law.³⁸⁸

Since, in the 1990s, the atrocities committed against women during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (and in Rwanda) have become more visible and as a result of the pressure exerted by the feminist movements not only from the region of Southeast Europe, but also at the international level, rape was, for the first time in history, recognised as a war crime and a crime against humanity. The first trials for wartime sexual violence took place in the international arena, namely at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which was established in May 1993.³⁸⁹

During the war, women rarely had an opportunity to report rape because public services, the police and the judiciary were not functioning and perpetrators of rape were often members of the army and police. The situation was not any easier after the war, because some of the rapists got jobs in public institutions, and many women, afraid of being stigmatised in society – due to the patriarchal standard which imposed an obligation on women to *preserve one's face* – hesitated to report it. Suppressing a fact of rape was a new trauma for women victims of rape, which was not followed by sufficient psycho-social support. Therefore, it took a lot of effort, in particular by non-governmental organisations and individual peacemakers and humanitarians, to have rape declared a crime against humanity. According to the 2004 Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina largely influenced the reproductive and sexual health of women and girls, mainly due to rape, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy.³⁹⁰ One of the first women to speak out publicly about rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina was **Nusreta Sivac**, who devoted her life to achieving justice, which wartime victims of rape must seek through cooperation with the Hague, collecting testimonies about rape.

Public Space and the Beginning of Feminism in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Research on the role of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1992-1995 war is scarce, as is relevant literature that examines the experiences of war through a gender perspective. In addition to (a few) statistics on the participation of women in different segments of society during the war, especially women who directly participated in armed conflicts and military, one should also take into account the context in

388 Source: <http://www.minoritycentre.org/sites/default/files/becka-deklaracija.pdf> (June 20, 2014)

389 Mlinarević, G. et al. (2012) p. 11

390 *Izveštaj o primjeni Konvencije o ukidanju svih oblika diskriminacije žena u Bosni i Hercegovini*, (2004) Gender centar BiH, p. 5

which women happen to be, in a symbolic sense, and which impacted on their role in a new political and social order. When the war broke out, Yugoslavia became essential to the feminist issues worldwide due to the fact that the war provoked a reaction from many activist groups and academics, while Yugoslav feminism began to abate. War, nationalism, rape, women's rights, international law, have all become vastly researched topics, but that was not the case with Yugoslav feminism. Yugoslav feminists were first to deal with the issue of the impact of war on their identity and activism. Subsequently, analyses of the feminist movements in the region were carried out, but few dealt with the theoretical issues of feminism.³⁹¹

In the former Yugoslavia women were mainly involved in organising pacifist movements and humanitarian aid, but they were also war accomplices because of the system itself and its symbolic order, which supported the war agenda and favoured historically male-dominated groups. The war in the former Yugoslavia was, in every respect, a project of *the brotherhood*, not *the sisterhood*.³⁹²

A specific feature of the symbolic order and social relations is that every system of power takes as a model some of the previous systems of power, projecting itself on those models to the extent possible. Binary models - especially the binary gender model - are symbolic power systems through which this symbolic system operates and upon which it is projected. This projection *legitimises* the practices and dominance. Extreme cases of war and nationalism are particularly prone to arrogate and adopt models of gender differences, using them as fulcrums. They exploit and manipulate gender differences, using them and organising themselves around these axes.³⁹³

In the circumstances of a specific situation such as war, the role of women also becomes specific. According to tradition of Bosnian-Herzegovinian women, their primary role is in the family, as mothers, housewives and wives, while men occupy the *public* sphere. War is a public sphere in which women too participated, but their role was not as visible as that of men nor was it recognised in the same way. Swanee Hunt, in her book *This Was Not Our War*, describes discussions she had with women from Bosnia and Herzegovina:

And so, the discussions that follow - concerning education, career, social roles - may appear to be on a low level, until interpreted in the context of intense social changes. And it is these elements of a woman's life in pre-war Bosnia that will become the compass of their

391 Žarkov, D. (2001) *Feminism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia: on the politics of gender and ethnicity*, p. 1

392 Iveković, R., *Žene, nacionalizam i rat: Vodite ljubav a ne rat*, source: <http://www.zenskestudije.edu.rs/izdavastvo/elektronska-izdanja/casopis-zenske-studije/zenske-studije-br-2-3/274-zene-nacionalizam-i-rat-vodite-ljubav-a-ne-rat> (July 2, 2014)

393 Ibid.

post-war activities in reclaiming the country.³⁹⁴

In the foreword to the book *Somebody said Feminism?* Adriana Zaharijević says the following about the beginning of feminism in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

*While Druga žena [The Other Woman] was a crucial historical moment, which impressed the Eastern European feminisms into European feminist heritage, the feminist movement in this area emerged from the war-torn country and strong opposition to militarisation and nationalism on all sides. Duška Andrić - Ružić from Medica Zenica, described this succinctly through the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina: If it was not for the war, we would have never had this big women's scene, i.e. NGO sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina ... We started dealing with feminism out of necessity, not out of theoretical or practical consideration. We were driven into it by the need to heal the consequences of the war.*³⁹⁵

In the period that was marked by the war, women were caught in a twofold function. On one hand, they were the victims, while on the other they were caretakers of the family. Some women consciously advocated the better position of women during the war while some, under the circumstances, had to cope the best way they could to support themselves and their families. The word that best describes their lives in conditions of war is survival, which was expressed in the most creative ways possible. They survived with humanitarian aid, making up recipes that required minimum ingredients. Among the women who were devoted to *surviving* there were artists, actresses, musicians, singers, dancers, directors, poets, models, professors, teachers and others who, by survival in the circumstances of the war, resisted the destruction that the war brought.

In the book *Home Front Amazons*, which Carol Mann dedicated to women of Dobrinja, a Sarajevo suburb, one can read interesting stories of survival, improvisation, and life in a lopped off part of Sarajevo. At the same time, this is a study dealing with the issue of civil defence and the organisation of women in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A variety of war stories are corroborated by the story Stanojka Cana Tešić told in an interview for the book of Zilka Spahić Šiljak, *Shining Humanity*.³⁹⁶ Her story speaks of solidarity in difficult times and help, which is not just mere assistance but sacrifice, courage and selflessness. At the beginning of the

³⁹⁴ Hunt, S. p. 210

³⁹⁵ Zaharijević, A. (ed.) (2012) *Neko je rekao feminizam: kako je feminizam uticao na žene XXI veka*, Sarajevo, Sarajevski otvoreni centar, Fondacija Heinrich Boll, Ured u BiH, Fondacija CURE

³⁹⁶ This is a research about the lives of eleven women, leaders and peace-builders with different ethnic and religious, but also non-religious identities.

war, in order to help her Muslim friend, Tešić decided to risk the life of her own children by taking her friend to a safe place.³⁹⁷ This is just one of many stories in which women were champions, but at the same time one of the few that has been recorded. Every settlement, every part of the city, every town in Bosnia and Herzegovina has its own *woman's* story - a story that will take time and hard work to be recounted.

Women Combatants

One of the segments in which women stood out in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the wartime period was their participation in the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their motivation to take an active part in it varied, as did their forms of participation. Women were soldiers, doctors, journalists, and organisers of civil defence, helping refugees. Women held various positions and exercised several functions and some very interesting stories exist relating to their participation. One such story is about an army poster portraying the image of **Šemsa Kiselica**, with a rifle in her hand. Because of their bravery, women in the military were called Amazons.³⁹⁸

Women bore the brunt of the aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those who stayed at home with the children had an obligation to provide food and water. It was not at all easy to find wood to heat an apartment or house in the besieged city of Sarajevo. Also, they were taking care of men when they returned from the front lines. Their task was to provide water for them to take a bath, put food on the table and take care of the family, and all this on their own.³⁹⁹

The story of women participants in the Army of RBiH is different from the one that portrays women of Bosnia and Herzegovina as victims. Lejla Hadžiahmić, in her Masters Dissertation, which she dedicated to women combatants of the Army of RBiH - the combatants who defended Sarajevo⁴⁰⁰, raised, among other things, the issue of motivation which drove some of the Sarajevo women to join the defence of the city in the early months of the war. The author analysed in her work the image in which women combatants were portrayed in print media, dailies and weeklies, in the early months of the war. It appears that in the early

397 Spahić-Šiljak, Z. (2013) *Sjaj ljudskosti: životne priče mirotvorki u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevo, TPO fondacija, p. 169-172

398 Omanić, A., Serdarević M., Ovčina A., Omanić H., Omanić J., (2009) *Participation of Women in War in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995*, *Materia Socio Medica* 21.3, p. 175

399 Dautbegović-Bošnjaković, S. (2013) *Zaboravljena dimenzija rata u BiH - vojniki*, in: *Kojeg je roda sigurnost*, Sarajevo, Sarajevski otvoreni centar, p. 88

400 Hadžiahmić, L. (2010) *Women-combatants in Defense of Sarajevo: Agents or Victims*, Master's Dissertation, University of Sarajevo, CIPS, Master's programme in gender studies, Sarajevo

months of the war, the Army of RBiH was open to all equally, and that women combatants were portrayed solely as patriots. Later in the war, the picture changed and women began to appear increasingly as victims. Hadžiahmić showed in her work that women were not exclusively victims of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that such representation reduces the value of women's motivation to take on roles that were reserved for men only.⁴⁰¹

Women joining the Army did not eliminate the oppressive gender stereotypes according to which women are seen exclusively as victims. This is corroborated by experiences of many women combatants of the BiH Army who decided to take part in the battle, thereby assuming the role of a doer as opposed to a sufferer. Their choice was the total opposite to gender norms. The motive of women combatants to join the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as they explained, was their sense of personal responsibility and the need to protect the community, which was the target of the attack.⁴⁰²

It is important to note that in most cases women joined the army voluntarily, on their own initiative, while men were marshalled at the beginning of the war. Some of the women Hadžiahmić interviewed joined the Army out of a sense of the injustice of the war. Indeed, in some cases there were whole families that joined the Army, simply because their houses were located at the frontlines. As an example, Hadžiahmić mentions Sokolović Kolonija, a Sarajevo suburb located nearby the airport, where a group of women joined an army unit out of a sense of social responsibility.⁴⁰³

According to records⁴⁰⁴ from December 1995 there were 5,360 women in the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thirteen of these women were awarded the highest award during the war, *the Golden Lily*: **Fadila Bajrić** (1951, from Bosanski Petrovac, 502 VBBR of 5th Corps of BiH Army); **Zlata Gazibara** (1957, from Sanski Most, 108th Krajiška Brigade); **Dževada Tartaragić** (1964, from Foča, Reconnaissance-squad – Fikro, 4th Motorized Brigade); **Aida Zuko** (1970, from Sarajevo, 124th Light infantry brigade **Kralj Tvrtko**). This recognition was awarded posthumously to **Emira Bašić** (1969, from Bosanski Novi, 15th Motorized Brigade); **Mevlida Elčić** (1963, from Derventa); **Kornelija Jurić** (1972, from Sarajevo, **Kralj Tvrtko** Brigade); **Atifa Karalić** (1957, from Novi Šeher, Maglaj, 317th

401 Ibid.

402 Dračo, I. (2013) *Sigurnost za koga? Feminističko redefiniranje koncepta sigurnosti*, in: *Kojeg je roda sigurnost*, Sarajevo, Sarajevski otvoreni centar, p. 223

403 Hadžiahmić, L. (2010)

404 Data on women soldiers taken from: Round table *Uloga žene u odbrani Bosne i Hercegovine* (2013, Sarajevo), collection of papers, Udruženje za zaštitu istorijskih vrijednosti BiH Haber, Sarajevo; Omanić, A. et al. (2009); *Monografija Zlatni ljljani, Odlikovani pripadnici Armije RBiH 1992-1995*, Sarajevo, 2000, Dan štampe, Zenica; *Bosanske heroine: Žene koje su branile BiH*, source: <http://radiosarajevo.ba/novost/87876> (February 28, 2014)

Mountain infantry brigade); **Razija Merić** (1974, from Kalesija, Sabotage Independent Battalion *Black Wolves*); **Indira Pjanić** (1972, from Cazin, The Municipal Staff of the Territorial Defence of Cazin); **Nevzeta Sefer** (1952, from Travnik, 312th Motorized Brigade); **Fadila Odžaković Žuta** (1958, from Goražde, 1st Motorized Brigade; *Order of the golden coat of arms with swords and Golden Lily*); **Edina Čamdžić** (1972, from Kladanj, 121st Mountain infantry brigade; *Medal for Bravery and Golden Lily*).

In addition to the individuals positioned in different functions within the BiH Army groupings of women also existed. In August 1992, in Pofalići, a troop of girls called *Blue Birds* formed, operating under the command of **Sabaheta Ćutuk**. Members of this troop fought in Žuč, a hill near Sarajevo.⁴⁰⁵ In October 1994, members of the various units of the BiH Army formed an association of women members of the Army. There were about 30 women from Sarajevo and Zenica in the Association, who dealt with education, providing accommodation for women refugees and assistance to pregnant women. Without support of the BiH Army, the Association was deprived of funding, but owing to occasional donations, it continued to function until it was eventually closed down.⁴⁰⁶ At the beginning of the war, the Army of BiH announced a public call for women to join the army in logistics, communications, and administrative positions. Research by Lejla Hadžiahmić suggests that, while women were allowed to join the Army as volunteers in the early months of the war, and later, through public calls, they were not fully involved in the army orders. The post-war demobilisation process also showed that women were not perceived as an important factor, nor were their interests protected, because they were first in the line to be demobilised. Women began to return to family lives and private spheres, facing the reality of return home on their own, without any institutional assistance. In her work on women who participated in the Army during the war in Sarajevo, Sunita Dautbegović-Bošnjaković analysed the experiences of women combatants who were demobilised after the war and those who remained in military service. She interviewed women members of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁰⁷ As she pointed out, one of the problems faced not only by women soldiers but also many other women was neglect in the public sphere of life. Many women whose role was important during the war were essentially invisible and socially unrecognised in post-war society, while after they were demobilised they received no assistance in finding a job and returning to normal life.⁴⁰⁸ To date, women soldiers remain marginalised, and their needs neglected, even by institutions that promote

405 Bosanske heroine: *Žene koje su branile BiH*, source: <http://radiosarajevo.ba/novost/87876> (February 28, 2014)

406 Hadžiahmić, L. (2011) *Women-combatants in defense of Sarajevo: Agents or Victims* in: WBSO, Gender Identity in Security Vocations, NO 19 January-April, p. 43

407 Dautbegović-Bošnjaković, S. (2013) p. 84, 85

408 Ibid. p. 91

gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Stories of women who participated in the Army are various and numerous, but only few were documented. Data currently available only concern the Army of BiH, a small portion of which related to women's participation in the war.⁴⁰⁹

Civil Defence, Education, Science and Culture

In addition to women who actively participated and served in different functions in the Army, women also played an important role in civil defence. One of the few contributions that deal with this issue is a study by Carol Mann, who devoted her research to Dobrinja, a Sarajevo suburb that was, during the war, infrastructurally cleaved from the rest of the city. She wrote about women transforming a war space into a domestic and feminised space; a self-contained city, isolated and managed by women, which changed its weft to enable survival of the majority of its residents.⁴¹⁰ She referred to the women of Dobrinja as *Home Front Amazons* because it was they who saved this Suburb of Sarajevo.⁴¹¹ Dobrinja was administratively divided into sectors, each of which had its manager - mainly women - who were appointed by the chief commander.⁴¹² According to Mann, the core of civil defence in Dobrinja was women who were the second generation of WW II, aged 35-45, mostly middle class, educated, and speaking at least one foreign language. Mann writes about Emira, an architect from Dobrinja who managed to transform Dobrinja in only 14 months. Although a sniper killed her husband, she remained in the building with two children and three cats. She started a tailor shop and organised fashion shows. Later, she launched a printing company, in which she printed a cookbook, a manual for young photographers and a manual for installation of greenhouses. She then opened an architectural firm, developing designs and solutions for the reconstruction of the city.⁴¹³ Dobrinja was completely cut off from the city. It was a city within a city, which triggered the spark of resistance and the will for survival among its residents. This isolation forced the teachers who stayed in Dobrinja to organise schooling for children before anywhere else in the city, where schooling was organised in basements.⁴¹⁴

409 More about ARBiH members and their roles in: Round table *Uloga žene u odbrani Bosne i Hercegovine* (2013, Sarajevo), collection of papers, Udruženje za zaštitu istorijskih vrijednosti BiH Haber, Sarajevo

410 Mann, C. (2006) p. 5

411 Ibid. p. 54

412 Ibid. p. 33

413 Ibid. p. 48, 49

414 Berman, D. M. (2004) *Heroji Treće gimnazije: ratna škola u Sarajevu 1992 – 1995.*, Sarajevo, Institut za istoriju, p. 94

According to the 1991 census, women accounted for 50.1% of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They accounted for 48.55% of the population that held primary school education, 38.58% of the population with secondary school qualifications, 38.63% of the population with higher school qualifications and 37.18% of the population with a university degree.⁴¹⁵ Thus, these are the latest official data which changed significantly due to the war. Even at the beginning of the war, education had become a sensitive subject due to the fact that schools were divided and as such undermined the model of multi-ethnic life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Religion, which was banned in the previous system, was now introduced in schools and during the war proved a suitable means of manipulation based on national and religious affiliation. All of this led to a decentralised education system. Wartime schooling was affected by many constraints such as lack of infrastructure, teaching staff, textbooks, etc. Depending on the part of the country the teaching staff adapted to the circumstances. Schooling was organised in houses, basements, hallways, or in places spared of shelling, in school buildings that kept their original function. In some places, school buildings were turned into refugee camps, hospitals or military staffs.

*Who could have imagined that all this time the schools really functioned, that students actually attended classes and teachers kept record of student attendance and that exams were, in fact, organised at the University?*⁴¹⁶

War schools were part of the illusion of normality because they offered hope that one could live in impossible conditions. The educational process did take place on the basis of a reduced programme written by the Ministry of Education. In August and September 1992, for example, articles from Sarajevo daily newspapers show that between the beginning of the siege and the beginning of the 1992/1993 school year, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Physical Culture of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a resolution concerning the start of the school year. One of the articles from *Oslobođenje*, dated 10 September 1992, which appeared under the headline, *The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Instruction for Adaptation to Wartime Condition*, refers to the *Decision on the Registration of Students in Elementary and Secondary Schools and the Beginning of Instruction in the 1992/1993 School Year*.⁴¹⁷ As early as 3 May 1992, educators gathered at the Pedagogical Institute to confront the implications of the siege in educational terms. Two educators from the Pedagogical Institute, **Hajrija-Šahza Jahić** and **Melita Sultanović** assumed the task of conducting situation analysis of

415 Taljanović, A. (2010) *Žena u politici Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo, p. 72

416 Berman, D. M. (2004) p. 42

417 Ibid. p. 46, 47

elementary and secondary education to determine the specific needs of schools.⁴¹⁸ Both were involved in the reorganisation of the educational system and contributed to development of the prototype war school, the Bjelave School, which set the stage for development of war schools throughout the city. **Melita Sultanović** prepared a paper on the development of war schools in local communities.⁴¹⁹ The framework for the local community school concept was finalised in February 1993 at a Pedagogical Institute seminar on the organisation of war schools in the city, attended by 470 teachers.⁴²⁰

A woman who made a significant mark on wartime education was **Emina Avdagić**, the school directress of *Treća gimnazija* from May 1993. At the time when many teachers were leaving Sarajevo, and schools were taken over by the BiH Army, she had to find the way to organise schooling with a lack of premises and teaching staff. War schools were already functioning at the time, and Emina was responsible for opening new points – *punkтови* – and taking care of the teaching staff and for keeping pedagogical documentation with due regard to the students' and teachers' safety.⁴²¹

There are a few recognitions awarded to women teachers who contributed to schooling in war conditions, and no statistics on the number of women who managed to keep the school system running during the war. **Nadžida Šukalo** was a teacher in the Elementary School Edhem Mulabdić in Sarajevo during the war and class teaching advisor to the Ministry of Education. The President of the state at the time, Alija Izetbegović presented her the highest war recognition – *Golden Lily* – on 24 June 1993.⁴²² **Fatima Gunić** was a teacher who was killed together with her students on 9 November 1993, in the explosion of a grenade in the improvised classroom in which she taught. Today, a school in the Sarajevo municipality of Novi Grad, in which she taught, was named after her. **Meliha Alić**, directress of *Druga gimnazija*, won several awards at the international mathematics competition during the war. Another interesting story is the one about a scientific contribution of **Mirsada Hukić**, a microbiologist, who in Bosnia's poor laboratories, examined the causes and consequences of the HFRS (hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome), the outbreak of which affected many soldiers near Tuzla at the end of the war. Her discovery positioned Mirsada among the leading microbiologists in the world. Due to the discovery of the *Tuzla 43* virus she became the first woman from Bosnia and Herzegovina who to be a full member of the European Academy of Science and Arts. During the research she and her team addressed the World Health Organisation in partnership with the Swedish

418 Ibid. p. 49

419 Ibid. p. 24

420 Ibid. p. 50

421 Ibid. p. 136

422 *120 godina osnovne škole Edhem Mulabdić Sarajevo*, p 40

Institute for Infectious Disease Control.⁴²³

Among the women who contributed in the area of health⁴²⁴ was **Muamera Puška**, who visited the residents of Dobrinja, bringing medicines and other supplies that Dobrinja hospital needed. This earned her the name Mother Theresa.⁴²⁵ Nurse **Sadeta Dervišević**, her husband Sead Dervišević and physician Jusuf Hadžir founded the Dobrinja hospital. She was awarded the *Florence Nightingale*, a prize awarded to nurses. After one of her patients received an infusion, Dervišević decided to accompany her home across a meadow, which was under constant sniper fire where she was wounded. Her wounding was documented on video and aired in the world media. Subsequently, the video footage was used to make a documentary *Life for the Lives of Others*.⁴²⁶ Nurse **Avdija Čustović** and her husband worked in a military hospital on the Mount Igman. She was wounded and transferred to hospital in Hrasnica, and later in the Koševo hospital in Sarajevo. Once discharged from hospital on 23 February 1996, she returned to her unit, the 101st Mount Brigade. The Presidency commissioned her as captain and awarded her a clock with the inscription of the Chief Commander of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴²⁷ **Aida Volić** was an otolaryngologist who founded and ran, for two years, a hospital in Suhodol. At one point, she was the only doctor in the hospital responsible for surgeries for three months. She operated on the civilian population of the surrounding villages, delivered babies and treated the wounded. During operations, which sometimes lasted for hours, her nurses would give her something to drink as she operated, while others pedalled a bike to generate electricity needed for light. There is an interesting story about Volić who, on one occasion, treated a wounded soldier of HVO (Hrvatsko vijeće obrane - Croatian Defence Council), Darko from Kiseljak, who was left behind and alone at the front line. Physician **Silva Rizvanbegović** became known for issuing a public appeal over the media, asking for help for the Sarajevo Emergency Department. She was killed in an ambulance car while accompanying her patient.⁴²⁸ Pharmacist **Biljana Vejzagić** and her husband, Mirza, passed everyday through the Serb checkpoints – thanks to her Serb name – to get to Dobrinja.⁴²⁹ **Jasminka**

423 Đugum-Hukić, A. *Malo ko Akademiju nauka BiH doživljava kao svoju*, source: <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/huki%C4%87-malo-ko-akademiju-bih-do%C5%BEivljava-kao-svoju/25359646.html> (June 12, 2014)

424 Source: *Sumeja magazin za ženu i porodicu* No. 8-5 2002, No. 23-2007, No. 32, Tuzla: UGM, 2009; Omanić A. et al. *Zdravstvo u okruženom/opsjednutom Sarajevu. Dokumentacioni materijal istraživačkog projekta*. Medicinski fakultet Univerziteta u Sarajevu, Ministarstvo zdravstva Kantona Sarajevo; Sudjelovanje žena u ratu u Bosni i Hercegovini u razdoblju 1992-1995; Omanić, A. et al. (2009)

425 Omanić, A. et al. (2009) p. 176

426 Ibid. p. 177

427 Ibid. p. 177

428 Ibid. p. 177

429 Ibid. p. 178

Kovačević, an emergency medicine specialist, spent the war taking care of the Sarajevo Emergency Department.⁴³⁰ **Maja Jerković** was the directress of the Regional Hospital in Mostar. **Behija Akšamija-Rizvić**, a doctor of internal medicine, founded an infirmary during the war within the humanitarian organisation Merhamet. From April 1992 to December 1995, **Merima Pašić** was the Surgeon General of the 105th Motorised Brigade of Dobrinja. Professor Doctor **Nada Zjuzin** opened the first Centre for Paraplegia.⁴³¹

Among women who risked their lives to report on the events during the war were reporters who reported from the front lines. One of the most prominent names from wartime Bosnia and Herzegovina was **Arijana Saračević**, who had the most striking reporting experience during the war, reporting from the front lines. She filed over 2000 reports from the front line during the war. She was awarded the *Golden Lilly*, the highest military award for bravery, the first time it was ever awarded to someone who was not a member of the BiH Army. Arijana received the best war reporter prize *Crystal Eagle* by the *International Foundation for women*, at the ceremony in New York in 1993.⁴³² On 26 October 1993, in New York the *International Women's Media Foundation* awarded Arijana and **Mirsada Sakić-Hatibović** the joint *Courage in Journalism* prize for their fearless reporting during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She received also the annual award of the Association of BiH Journalists in 1992. Mirsada Sakić-Hatibović and Arijana Saračević were the second winners of the *Courage in Journalism* award, following Kemal Kurspahić and Gordana Knežević in 1992.⁴³³ Another war reporter was **Vildana Selimbegović**. In the book *Žene u BiH: Dolje ti rijeka, dolje ti je pruga*, she wrote about her war experiences, during which she produced over 1000 reports, records and interviews with members of the BiH Army on the front lines. One of her articles from that time, headlined *I mi konje za trku imamo*, was dedicated to members of the BiH Army who attacked civilians and prisoners of war.⁴³⁴ **Gordana Knežević** was, for a period of time during the war, an editor in chief of the daily newspapers *Oslobođenje*.⁴³⁵ **Snježana Mulić-Bušatlija** was the head of Press Centre of the Municipality of Novi Grad Sarajevo during the war. She and her team edited and issued the newspapers *Novi Grad*. She edited, printed and translated articles into French and

430 Čengić, E. (2008) *Metak u haljinici*, Dani, special issue, april/travanj, Civitas, p. 72

431 Omanić, A. et al. (2009) p. 217

432 Mehmedić H. (1995) *Corridor, list koji zbližava ljude*, No 3, 15. Sarajevo, p. 3

433 Source: Sakić-Hatibović, M. and Saračević, A. - 1993 *Courage in Journalism Award*, <http://www.iwmf.org/mirsada-sakic-hatibovic-arijana-saracevic-1993-courage-in-journalism-award/> (April 10, 2014)

434 Gavrić, S. and Stojić, H. (eds.) (2011) *Žene u Bosni i Hercegovini: Dolje ti Rijeka, dolje ti je pruga*, Sarajevo, Buybook, p. 147

435 Kurspahić, K. and Knežević, G. - 1992 *Courage in Journalism Award*, *Oslobođenje*, Bosnia and Herzegovina, source: <http://www.iwmf.org/kemal-kurspahic-gordana-knezevic-1992-courage-in-journalism-award/> (April 10, 2014)

sent them on CDs to St. Nazaire, whose citizens sent humanitarian aid to the Municipality of Novi Grad. A group of children from different schools of the Municipality Novi Grad went to France during summer break every year from 1993 and attended French language courses. She made a documentary film, *A Letter Recommended from the Heart*, about the life of children in Sarajevo during the war. The film was translated into French and aired in the local TV station in western France, after which much humanitarian aid was collected for children whose lives were shown in the film. Her second film *Orphans* is a story about a boy and a girl from an inter-ethnic, Croat-Bosniak marriage, and their life after their father, a Croat who served in the Bosnian Army, was killed. This film, which was aired on TV BiH during the conflict between Croats and Bosniaks, helped to calm tensions among children of different ethnic backgrounds. Mulić-Bušatlija was a founder member of the Women's Association *Bosančica*.⁴³⁶ **Nurdžihana Đozić** started a magazine *Žena 21*⁴³⁷, during the war.

In her book *Shining Humanity – Life Stories of Women Peacebuilders in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, **Zilka Spahić-Šiljak** presents the stories of women who were, in their respective communities, recognized as peace builders, humanitarian workers and activists who contributed to a post-war reconciliation. Some of these women engaged in activism during the war, in different places in Bosnia and Herzegovina and under different conditions. Zilka presents the stories of 11 women, including **Sabiha Husić** who, during the war, worked in Medica Zenica, providing assistance to women survivors of war rape⁴³⁸; **Jadranka Miličević** who, when the war broke out in 1992, left Sarajevo and went to Belgrade, where she joined *Women in Black* in protesting against war, providing assistance to women victims of rape and refugees, and in organising humanitarian aid that was sent to Sarajevo; **Lidija Živanović**, who spent the war in Banja Luka⁴³⁹; **Nada Golubović** who, during the war, engaged in peace activism and supported Serb refugees arriving from Croatia. She often used her name and the name of her husband to receive humanitarian aid, which they then forwarded to their non-Serb neighbours⁴⁴⁰; **Stanojka Tešić Cana**, who engaged in peace activism in 1992. Cana Tešić lived in Bratunac with her husband and two children. In the early months of the war, she transported people to different places, helping to save their lives⁴⁴¹; **Radmila Žigić**, twenty days before the war broke out, organised an anti-war meeting in a place where such an endeavour was quite risky. Žigić lived in Orašje and, as she claimed, was not part of either the SDS or HDZ party, which shared power there. Feeling insecure, she resigned from the position of editor

436 Source: <http://word.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/470> (April 10, 2014)

437 Hunt, S. p. 469

438 Spahić-Šiljak, Z. (2013) p. 30

439 Ibid. p. 110

440 Ibid. p. 140

441 Ibid. p. 166

in chief of the public radio station Orašje and returned to northeastern Bosnia, where Serbs/Orthodox made up the majority.⁴⁴² In 1993, Žigić, along with two other journalists, launched the magazine *Extra* in which they wrote about tyranny, profiteering and winning peace negotiations, aware that their writing about war crimes could, at any time, make they themselves victims⁴⁴³; **Galina Marjanović** lived in Banja Luka and, during the war, she and her husband helped the refugees who found refuge in Banja Luka. She founded the organisation *Duga*⁴⁴⁴; **Jasminka Rebac**, lived in Croatia during the war, where she, together with the Association *Povratak*, founded a school for refugee children who, at the time, did not have the right to attend regular schools in Croatia.⁴⁴⁵

Associations

The first peace initiatives in the region emerged in early 1991 and were launched by women. The organisation *Women in Black* from Serbia and women's group *Silence kills – Let's Speak for Peace* from Slovenia organised candle-lit vigils every night in the major city squares of Ljubljana and Belgrade. *Women in Black* came out publicly and spoke of their responsibility for the war in the framework of the collective responsibility of Serbia. They organised admission centres for women and children who fled from war affected zones. Other organisations that helped women refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina included: *Suncokret Centar za žene žrtve rata* [A Sunflower – Centre for Women Victims of War], *B.a.B.e. – Grupa za ženska ljudska prava* [Group for Women's Human Rights], *ZaMir* [For Peace] – *electronic network in Zagreb, Pakrac, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Priština*, through which women activists cooperated with each other.⁴⁴⁶ Women's groups from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia initiated the first women's peace talks and exchanges in 1993 in Zagreb and Geneva. At the time, such activities were seen as treacherous, because nationalist ideology did not want to see any kind of association among the states that emerged from the former Yugoslavia.⁴⁴⁷ The women's initiative *Pokret majki* [Mothers' Movement] emerged at the outbreak of the war in Slovenia, and spread its activities to war affected Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Mothers' Movement* in Bosnia and Herzegovina had only one demand, which was for their sons to be released from the Yugoslav People's Army. Over time, *the Mothers' Movement* was used to increase ethnic tensions.⁴⁴⁸

442 Ibid. p. 274

443 Ibid. p. 276

444 Hunt, S. p. 425

445 Spahić-Šiljak, Zilka (2013) p. 292

446 Dautbegović-Bošnjaković, S. (2013)

447 Ibid. p. 83

448 Source: <http://postjugo.filg.uj.edu.pl/baza/files/212/ratirod.pdf> (June 20, 2014)

Bosnia and Herzegovina was a unique case, because the peace movement in BiH was the strongest at the beginning. There were hundreds of people in Mostar, Banja Luka, Sarajevo and other places, protesting against war. At the time, the peace movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina was united. People acted together regardless of their ethnic differences, aware of the tragedy that would affect them if Yugoslavia fell apart.⁴⁴⁹

One of the first women's organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina was *Medica-centar za terapiju žena* [Medica-centre for women's therapy] in Zenica, established by Dr. **Monika Hauser** in 1993. Gynaecologists and psychologists from different ethnic backgrounds who worked in Medica provided assistance to women and children victims of rape and war.

*It is November 1992. The wild war in the Balkans has been ramping for already a year. In the heart of Europe. German media constantly write about it. They report on the situation in the battlefields and the waves of refugees. For months, however, one thing has been taken in silence – it is unclear whether this is so because the war reporters deemed it unimportant or because the victims themselves avoided the cameras and microphones of the world: in this war, women and girls are being raped. The rapes are systematic and massive; taking place after the conquest of villages, in the concentration camps, in special brothels with women – ‘the spoils of war’.*⁴⁵⁰

Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović, in her book *Women's Movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina – The Articulation of a Counterculture* suggests that the first formal women's group was formed, which applied and lived feminism through its dedicated work with women victims of violence.⁴⁵¹ Hauser's approach implied that the victim should be first brought to a state of stability, prior to undergoing any therapy and facing war experiences. This was achieved through various exercises aimed at reminding women of their internal strength.⁴⁵² Hauser and her team visited refugee camps, often crossing the territories controlled by different armies.⁴⁵³

Women also gathered around the *Association for Intercultural Activities and Preservation of the B&H Heritage – AIASN*, which was registered in October 1992 with aim to collect information about the destruction of cultural and historical heritage. Members initially gathered in the premises of the Municipality *Centar*, which was given to the International Centre for Peace, some members of which collected obituaries of children and of other citizens who had been killed, while other members – who would later establish AIASN – collected information about the

449 Ibid.

450 Hauser, M. p. 9

451 Popov-Momčinović, Z. (2013) p. 111

452 Hauser, M. p. 59

453 Ibid. p. 9

destruction of heritage. In February 1993, they organised the first symposium entitled *Historija zdravstvene i socijalne kulture BiH* [History of Health and Welfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina]⁴⁵⁴. The association *Mak Bosanka* brought together women academics who ran a media campaign for the acceptance of raped women and children born out of forced pregnancies. They organised lectures on different areas of health, education and culture. This association was founded by **Tatjana Najdhart**, **Mevlida Serdarević** and **Edina Vlašić**. As a part of the activities of this association, **Methija Maglajlić**, **Jasmina Musabegović** and **Mediha Halvo** organised the first exhibition on the suffering of women and children in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The exhibition was presented in the Gallery MAK.⁴⁵⁵

Hamijeta Ibričević and **Mevlida Serdarević**, as members of the association *MAK Bosanka*, participated in the activities related to reorganisation of the Islamic Community. Serdarević became the very first female Member of Parliament of the Islamic Community in its history.⁴⁵⁶ The associations *AIASN* and *MAK Bosanka* also organised lectures in mosques.

The Jewish community focused on the activities of the humanitarian organisation and association *Bohoreta*, led by **Sonja Elezar**. Women were involved in many other organisations, which were not necessarily women's organisations, but dealt mainly with humanitarian work.⁴⁵⁷ The association *Sarajke* was established by Bakir Nakaš, Director of Sarajevo Hospital General and **Jasna Hasić**, an attorney of the Ministry of Health. Members of this association were volunteers who cleaned, carried water and took care of patients, most of whom came to the hospital by foot. In memory of their engagement, the Sarajevo Hospital General erected a monument – a bicycle – because the bicycle was the most desirable, but yet unavailable means of transportation at the time.⁴⁵⁸ **Mirsada Hodžić**, **Aisa Maca** and **Pava Barišić** were founders of the parent's forum *Sve za sve*. They rescued children from the hospital in Cavtat and conducted activities, the aim of which was to get young draftees home from the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA).⁴⁵⁹ The international initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina *Biser* helped victims of rape in their re-socialisation. In March 1994, the organisation *Stope nade* established women's centres in Mostar, together with women from the local community. The aim was to bring together women and, after the war, to help refugees. During the war, the Swedish organisation *Kvinna til Kvinna* helped women and children

454 Lačević, F. (2008) *Uloga žene u odbrani Sarajeva: Duhovno-povijesne pretpostavke nezapamćenog otpora ženeopsadi i čudu snage u odbrani Sarajeva*, in: *Okrugli sto Opsada i odbrana Sarajeva: 1992-1995*, presented on November 23, 2005. *Godine-Sarajevo*, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta, p. 207

455 Ibid. p. 205

456 Ibid. p. 213

457 Omanić, A. et al. (2009) p. 210

458 Ibid. p. 178

459 Ibid. p. 177

refugees, especially those from Srebrenica who escaped to Tuzla, providing them with psychological assistance and helping them to stay close to their children.⁴⁶⁰ The association *Kakanjke Užok* was founded in 1993, with the aim to assist women in various segments of life in society. The association *Udruženje žena Tuzle* was founded in 1992 and *Žene sa Une* in 1994. One of the first associations established in memory of the first victim of the war in Sarajevo was the Association *Suada Dilberović*. This association worked in education and in gathering together children and young people. Similar activities were carried out in the Association *Fatma*, which was established in Sarajevo in 1993, but carried out its activities in several cities of the country.⁴⁶¹ Inspired by the initiative of MAK *Bosanke and Medica Zenica*, some women's organisations such as *Bosančica*, *Sarajka*, *Žena BiH*, *Žena 21*, *Biser*, *Sumejja*, etc. formed the Union of Women's Associations of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ŽAR). The first meeting of the Union took place in Tuzla, on 8 October 1994⁴⁶² and was attended by 38 organisations from all free territories, including the associations of women combatants.⁴⁶³ One of the most active members of the association of women combatants was **Zuhra Brkić**, who, prior to the war, worked as a judge in Živinice. It is important to note that most women's organisation took place in Sarajevo, since it was the capital of the country and, in a way, a symbol of resistance. In a meeting of the associations of women combatants it was agreed to focus all the activities in Sarajevo, regardless of the fact that these women were from Zenica, Živinice, Travnik, Bihać, Konjic and other places.⁴⁶⁴

Swanee Hunt also mentioned some of the organisations established during the war: *Kolo srpskih sestara* [Circle of Serb Sisters]; *Udruženje žena Hercegovke-borci* [Women's Association of Herzegovinian Combatants], the initiative launched in 1994 and officially registered in 1997; *Žena BiH* [Woman of Bosnia and Herzegovina], established in 1994 in Mostar, *Vive žene* [Vive Women], established in 1994 in Tuzla; *Žene za žene* [Women for Women], established in 1993; *Forum žena Gračanica* [Women' Forum from Gračanica], established in 1992; *Žena 21* [Woman 21], established in 1994; *Srcem do mira* [Through Heart to Peace], established in 1992 in Zagreb, originally under the name *Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, but later renamed *Through Heart to Peace* and continuing operations in Sanski Most; *Bosanska familija "Bosfam"* [Bosnian Family "Bosfam"], established in 1994 with support of organisation OXFAM.⁴⁶⁵

Members of the women's section of the Association *Bohoreta*

460 Source: http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/kvinna_tomakeroom-forchanges_2006.pdf (June 20, 2014)

461 Omanić, A. et al. (2009) p. 206

462 Ibid. p. 211

463 Ibid. p. 204

464 Ibid. p. 205

465 Hunt, S. p. 617-619

voluntarily visited the helpless, sick and disabled, bringing them water, humanitarian aid and medicines, and thereby helping them feel safe and secure, rather than alone and abandoned. In early 1993 throughout Europe sisterhoods of the *Association La Benevolencija* started emerging. As a result, a network of organisations called *Prijatelji La Benevolencije* [Friends of La Benevolencija] was established, which collected all sorts of assistance – money, food, medical equipment and medicines.

Women Symbols of Resistance and Many Other Nameless Heroines

Suada Dilberović, a senior year medical student from Dubrovnik. She studied in Sarajevo and was one of the participants in the first peace protests organised before the Assembly of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁶⁶ She will remain remembered as one of the first two victims of the war in Sarajevo, who were killed on the Vrbanja Bridge. The other was **Olga Sučić**, a clerk of the Assembly, who was 34 at the time. Sučić died on the way to hospital. On April 5, the central news reported news of Suada Dilberović, the first victim killed on the Vrbanja Bridge, while Olga Sučić was not mentioned. Both Dilberović and Sučić were buried in the Cemetery *Bare* on 8 April, however, while Dilberović's funeral was attended by hundreds of citizens and journalists, Sučić's funeral was attended only by the closest members of her family. On 6 April 1996 the Vrbanja Bridge was renamed the Bridge of Suada Dilberović. Gordan Trifković, Sučić's ex-husband, together with an *Oslobođenje* journalist, Edina Kamenica managed, after long efforts, to have her name inscribed on the memorial plaque only in December 1999. On 3 December 1999, the Official Gazette of Canton Sarajevo published the following: *At the site of the Vrbanja Bridge, the territory of Municipality Center, a memorial plaque will be placed in memory of Suada Dilberović and Olga Sučić, who were, on 5 April 1992, killed by paramilitary groups of SDS.* The old plaque was not replaced until 6 April 2001.⁴⁶⁷



A postage stamp *Jasnin encijan* [Jasna's Gentian or Gentiana jasnae] was named after **Jasna Šarić**, an assistant professor of the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, who was killed in 1993 while she waited in the queue for water in front of the Sarajevo Brewery. After her death, the endemic plant of Bosnia and Herzegovina was named after her – *Gentiana jasnae*. The postage stamp won first

466 Mulić-Bušatlija, S. (2008) *Vrbanja most, Trči, Nora, trči! O mostu, Suadi i Olgi*, DANI, special issue, Civitas, April, p. 33

467 Ibid. p. 33

place in China in 2011.

Kadira Mujanović is a woman who, in the first few months of the war, lived in the City Hall, until it was set on fire on 25 August 1992. Mujanović was an employee of the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and when the war broke out she moved in the City Hall, together with her family, in order not to risk her life walking every day back and forth from Bare, a Sarajevo suburb, to work. There were two another two families who lived in the City Hall for the same reason.⁴⁶⁸

In 1993, Miss Besieged Sarajevo contest took place in Bosnian Cultural Centre (BKC). The winner of the contest was **Inela Nogić**, who soon became a symbol of Sarajevo resistance. The girls participating in the contest sent a message to the world: *Don't let them kill us. Miss Sarajevo* became the single which the band U2 dedicated to Inela Nogić.⁴⁶⁹

In January 1995 a Roma Ball was organised, in which **Lindita Tatri** won the Miss beauty pageant.

Maja Đokić, an athlete, was only 17 years old when she was killed on 9 April 1995 in Sarajevo. Humanist Michael Mahoney established a fund in her memory.⁴⁷⁰

Kada Delić and **Mirjana Horvat** were the only women who qualified for the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. In their team were also **Mirsada Burić** (athletics) and **Anja Margetić** (swimming), and in the 1993 Mediterranean Games our women's basketball team won the first gold medal for Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the Olympics in Barcelona, Delić participated in the 1993 World Championship in Athletics in Stuttgart, the 1994 European Indoor Championship in Paris, the 1995 World Championship in Athletics in Gothenburg. **Bibija Kerla** was the 1992 national champion in doubles (bowling) and was invited to the national team of the former Yugoslavia that was supposed to compete at the World Championship. In 1994, in Ludwigshafen, she participated in the Bowling World Cup as a member of the BiH national team.

Cultural Life and Women

The war situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina required mobilisation of women and their submission to a higher state and national goals. However, there were several women's organisations operating in Sarajevo, and the cultural life of Sarajevo was largely run by women. Instead of

468 Haman, A. *Kadira Mujanović, žena koja je živjela u Vijećnici*, Front slobode, source: <http://www.frontslobode.ba/vijesti/drustvo/19963/kadira-mujanovic-zena-koja-je-zivjela-u-vijecnici> (June 10, 2014)

469 Source: <http://www.klix.ba/magazin/showbiz/miss-opkoljenog-sarajeva-za-klix-ba-na-izboru-za-miss-smo-porucile-da-je-duh-naseg-naroda-neunistiv/140608060#6> (June 9, 2014)

470 Omanić, A. (2009) p. 177

repeating the AFŽ model, a kind of spiteful insistence on urban identity of women emerged in Sarajevo.⁴⁷¹

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina a new generation of artists emerged whose personal and artistic maturing was determined by war experiences. Art was a way of survival and it created space for a creative approach to solving existential problems, which were not only a matter of physical survival.

Under the rain of ammunition flying over their heads, artists (not platitudes and it refers to the larger centres such as Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla, Zenica and other places), starving and frostbitten, went to rehearsals, and under candlelight and next to a wood stove - or in rare happy moments in Sarajevo, next to gas heaters - interpreted characters of Beckett, Sartre, Mrožek, Chekhov ... Indeed, there were some national patriotic themes, but classics and contemporaries focusing on existentialism prevailed. It appeared that after the pre-war national momentum and the *big* themes, which gave preference to collective over individual identity, during the war one began to think again about the meaning and meaninglessness of human existence, the individuals, both male and female, and their destinies, desires and fears. *Small people* and *ordinary stories* - as it is commonly termed in public discourse - become the centre of a war of meaninglessness. During the war, most of the artists thought and acted in this way, while rehearsing at basement stages and galleries. The basement space, in which art was both created and consumed, was paradigmatic.⁴⁷²

Gradually, in museums, galleries, archives and other cultural institutions remained mostly women, who organised the work of these institutions and rescued museum, archive, library and other material. In the National Museum, for example, of a total of 60 employees, only 18 remained, most of whom were women. **Azra Begić**, curator of the National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Behija Zlatar**, and many other women organised the rescue of material, and were also involved in rescuing the Gazi Husrev-bey Library. At that time women were not in managerial positions in cultural institutions. The only woman in a managerial position was **Dženana Gološ**, Directress of the Institute for Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of Sarajevo. **Lejla Gazić** became Directress of this Institute when the Oriental Institute was destroyed.⁴⁷³ Interestingly, during the war an art troop of the 1st Corpse of the RBiH Army formed, which brought together artists from various fields of art who contributed not only to the development of culture but also to resistance efforts. **Azra Begić** and **Nermina Zildžo**, art historians from the

471 Splapšak, S. (1996) *Žene i rat u bivšoj Jugoslaviji*, Ogladi, Republika br.145-146 1-31. August, source: <http://www.yuope.com/zines/republika/arhiva/96/145/145-16.html> (April 21, 2014)

472 Kaikčija, L. *Ženske/feminističke izvedbene umjetnosti u BiH 1990-2010: razvoj i kontekst in: Ženski glasovi u izvedbenim umjetnostima Zapadnog Balkana 1990-2010.*, p. 90

473 Ibid. p. 215

BiH Gallery, also made their contribution, as did **Mirsada Baljić**, who was the head of the visual art section of the *Art Troop* of the Army of RBiH from 1992 until 1995.

Then, there was **Alma Suljević**, a sculptress who reshaped a destroyed tram into an allegorical *Kentauromahia*⁴⁷⁴. Suljević was one of the participants in the peaceful protests at the Vrbanja Bridge, where Suada Dilberović and Olga Sučić were killed. She helped remove one of the victims from the crime scene, and only later found out that the victim was Olga Sučić. During the war, the Directing Department of the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo enrolled only two female students. In 1994, the Academy formed a Dramaturgy Department. During the war, many women from abroad visited Sarajevo, among them **Susan Sontag**, who in 1994 directed Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre. Sontag was followed by Liv Ullmann, Bibi Andersson, Joan Baez, Annie Leibovitz, Damian Cerne, Maria Black Belair, Anne Marie Bezdob, etc.⁴⁷⁵ The premiere of Sontag's play *Waiting for Godot* took place in Sarajevo on 17 August 1993, with actresses **Ines Fančović**, **Nada Đurevska**, **Irena Mulamuhic** and **Milijana Zirojević** starring in it. **Izeta Građević**, together with several artists, opened a gallery in the Obala Art Centre, which hosted numerous exhibitions of international artists during the war, among which was the exhibition of Annie Leibovitz in October 1993, *Sarajevo Portraits*.⁴⁷⁶ **Dalida Hadžihalilović** was a member of the design group Trio, who during the war designed numerous posters. They became known for their exhibition *Greetings from Sarajevo*, which was presented in many European galleries and on the pages of international magazines. On 17 May 1992 Sarajevo War Theater *Sartre* was established, but in August it was made a constituent part of the Regional Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. On 12 January 1993, by a Decision of the War Presidency of the Assembly of the City of Sarajevo, it was declared a public institution in the field of culture of particular interest for the defence of the city. On 10 January 1994, this theatre performed its play *Silk Drums* at the premises of the Surgery Department of Koševo Hospital. At the time, the members of the SARTR company were **Ines Fančović**, **Irena Mulamuhic**, **Lejla Pašović-Mustafić**, **Amela Vilić**, and **Mirjana Čistopoljski**. In 1993, Mess Festival grew into an international theatre and film festival. Members of its team at the time were **Lejla Pašović-Mustafić**, **Lejla Hasanbegović**, **Mirsada Bjelak-Škrijelj**, **Ognjenka Finci**, **Marijela Margeta**, **Nada Salom**, **Senada Kreso**, **Aida Čengić**.⁴⁷⁷ **Greta Ferušić** is a woman who survived both the Auschwitz

474 Abadžić-Hodžić, A. *Osvrt na neke aspekte umjetničke produkcije u BiH 1990-ih*, source: <http://behar.hr/osvrt-na-neke-aspekte-umjetnicke-produkcije-u-bih-1990-ih/#> (June 12, 2014)

475 More on war-time art in Sarajevo: <http://www.famacollection.org/bhs/>

476 Seksan, V. (2008) *Trijumf volje*, Dani, special issue April, Civitas, p. 131

477 Pašović, H. (2008) *Za šta smo se borili*, Dani, special issue April, Civitas, p. 136

death camp and the siege of Sarajevo, and whose life was presented in a documentary filmed in 1996 in Sarajevo, Auschwitz and Jerusalem.⁴⁷⁸

Nada Mehmedbašić worked as a TV reporter and producer. In the television festival in Japan, INICEF awarded her a *Prix Japon* for her film *Sarajevski spomenar* [Sarajevo Album], which she filmed during the war. Actress Liv Ullman herself appeared at the premiere of this film in Cinema Tesla, which was organised in the early days of peace. During the war she worked as a journalist and editor in various media. She also started a puppet theatre *Sun Side* [Sunčana strana], for which she wrote plays and songs. Her plays were often performed in basements and children's wards. In 2005, owing to her journalistic engagement, Nada was among seven women from Bosnia and Herzegovina nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and in 2006 she was included in the book *1000 Peace Women*, published in Geneva.⁴⁷⁹ The very first play of the newly established theatre SARTR, *Sklonište* [Shelter] was written for **Jasna Diklić**. Safet Plakalo and director Dubravko Bibanović chose Jasna Diklić to play the character of Mina Hauzen. This role won her the title of the Woman of the Year in art in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1997. **Nermína Kurspahić** was, during the war, the editor in chief of *Odjek* [Echo], the oldest magazine for art, culture, science, and social issues in BiH. **Amra Zulfikarpašić**, a graphic designer, having received a package during the war from a friend and colleague Mila Melank, organised a performance at the *Kamerni teatar 55*. She previously shared the cans of food she received with her friends, and Sarajevo culinary wizards made a big feast from these food shipments. The performance was called *Otvoranje Milinog paketa* [The Opening of Mila's package].⁴⁸⁰

Dubravka Zrnčić-Kulenović has lived in Sarajevo since 1965. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, Department for Theatre Studies and Comparative Literature in 1976, and since then worked as a dramaturge at the Puppet Theatre. After integration of the two theatres she worked as a dramaturge of the Puppet Department of the Youth Theatre, and later took over its Drama Department. During the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina she was a freelance artist in Croatia. In 1996 she returned to Sarajevo and worked as a dramaturge of the Sarajevo War Theatre. In 1997, with a group of artists she founded a Puppet Studio, as the first independent and informal school in Bosnia and Herzegovina for young artists and children, where she works as a pedagogue. As a dramaturge, she was involved in over one hundred plays, many of which she also directed.⁴⁸¹

Ljubica Ostojić (1945) was born in Belgrade. At the end of 1945 she

478 Ibid. p. 137

479 Biser, Internacionalna inicijativa žena Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, March 8, 2007

480 Source: <http://www.source.ba/clanak/8801413/> (July 14, 2014)

481 Source: <http://novovrijeme.ba/dubravka-zrnčić-kulenović-dramaturginja-i-rediteljica-neophodno-je-reorganizirati-institucije-kulture/> (July 2, 2014)

moved with her family to Sarajevo, where she currently lives and works. She graduated in visual arts from the Pedagogical Academy and majored comparative literature and theatre studies at the Faculty of Philosophy. She worked as a dramaturge of the Drama Department of the Youth Theatre and a long-time theatre critic for newspapers *Oslobođenje*, *Večernje novine*, *Odjek* and *Književna revija*. She is the editor of the documentary, experimental and poetic drama on Radio Sarajevo, and a dramaturge associate of the Mostar Youth Theatre. Since 1994 she has worked as a full professor of the Sarajevo Academy of Performing Arts where she teaches practical dramaturgy. She writes radio plays, TV dramas, screenplays, reviews and essays in the field of performing arts, literature and visual arts. As a dramaturge, dramatiser and adapter she has worked on many plays in contemporary theatre. Since 1974 she has been a member of the Writers' Association, and since 2007 a member of the P.E.N. Centre. She won many literary and theatre awards, including the *Grozdanin kikut* award for contribution to the development of drama teaching in 2000.⁴⁸²

Literature

The nineties, as the first decade of post-Yugoslav Bosnia and Herzegovina, were characterised by a period of war letters⁴⁸³ - writing as Derridian public mourning and bereavement, the war letters as a traumatic facing of the real horrors of war, war devastation and the vulnerability of the human body. Within these poetics, there is the woman's wartime letter - not only as an integral part of the poetics but also as a partial construct that implies difference - as a strategy that contrasts the heroic male figure and the sacrificial female figure. As a result of the break-up of Yugoslavia, the creation of ethnically clean areas and escalation of nationalist discourse, the patriarchal division of roles to male figures, who are portrayed as heroes or warriors, and female characters, portrayed as victims and guardians of the patriarchal home and order, imposed themselves as a dominant interpretation of the spook of war destruction. One of the most symptomatic interpretations is the analysis of *Hasanaginica*, the mythical character of South Slavic peoples, which appears in all literary history overviews of the region, in this case of Bosniaks, through which one can track all the changes that replaced Yugoslavianism by *awakening* homogeneous national awareness. In the SFRJ, *Hasanaginica* and her concept of so-called guilt - *but his wife, she could not, because of modesty* - was seen as a class dispute in the caste organisation of feudal society, while in the post-Yugoslav Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Hasanaginica* died as a Muslim, and *her shame is pristine and her tragedy inspiring. Nothing could have and*

482 Source: <http://www.bh-leksikon.ba/index.php?sid=879> (July 13, 2014)

483 See: Moranjak-Bamburać, N. (2004) *Ima li rata u ratnom pismu?* in Sarajevske sveske, 5, Sarajevo: Mediacentar, p. 79-93

should not have been otherwise.⁴⁸⁴ Both interpretations fit the ideological tendencies within which they were interpreted, except that the latter is related to the female figure portrayed as a sacrifice. Such a female figure, who sacrifices herself for the sake of home, husband, father or children is always needed in the process of awakening national awareness and promoting the nationalist rhetoric of liberation. In such circumstances ideologically imposed poetics subversive trends occurred among novelists such as **Ferida Duraković** (1958), **Alma Lazarevska** (1957) and **Jasna Šamić** (1949), as an attempt to denote differences in resistance against the hard core male discourse that finds its ultimate embodiment in a warrior discourse⁴⁸⁵, deconstructing the power structures, power and knowledge, which *inter alia* led to a traumatic encounter with the ghosts of war. As authors, they betray the dominant nationalist discourse by offering the unexpected narrative of war traumas, which abandons heroic figures in general, be it male or female.

Ferida Duraković in her – now iconic – collection of poems *Srce Tame* [Heart of Darkness] (1992), confronts the heroic figure of the warrior hero with the figure of a mother who demands the right to her story, the personal version of her war experience and history, devoid of anthologies, canonisation, and official trends. The figure of the mother as a lyrical subject in her poems leaves the role of victim determined by the circumstances of life and resists the structures, which reduce the mourning to a process of accelerated oblivion of loss and the past for the sake of formal reconciliation. Duraković, in her poems, deals with the concept of history, seeking to reduce the official historiography to a narrative – the narrative in which not everyone can participate, especially not those whose experience of war does not coincide with the official power and reconciliation structures.

Alma Lazarevska (1957) was born in Veles, Macedonia. She is a contemporary Bosnian author and publicist. She completed elementary and secondary schools in Sarajevo and graduated from the Sarajevo Faculty of Philosophy. She writes and publishes since 1981 and her works include fiction, essays and columns. She is the author of the collection of short stories titled *Smrt u Muzeju moderne umjetnosti* [Death at the Museum of Modern Art], which was published in 1996, and which deals with the siege of Sarajevo. Her bibliography includes essays *Sarajevski pasijans* [Sarajevo Solitaire] from 1994, a novel *U znaku ruže* [Under the Sign of a Rose] (1996), short stories *Biljke su nešto drugo* [Plants are a Different Matter] (2002). In 1986 Lazarevska won the Yugoslav Journalism Award *Dušan Timotijević* and the 1996 Best Book prize of the BiH Association of Writers.⁴⁸⁶ In the short story collection *Smrt u Muzeju moderne umjetnos-*

484 Šehabović, Š. (2004) *Mit o Hasanaginici, kulturalne matrice i rodna isključivanja* in *Razlika/Difference*, 9, Tuzla: Društvo za književna i kulturalna istraživanja, p. 283-291

485 Moranjak-Bamburać, N. (2003) *Signature smrti i etičnost ženskog pisma in Sarajevske sveske*, 2, Sarajevo: Mediacentar, p. 113-123

486 Hawkesworth, C. (2000); http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alma_Lazarevska; <http://www>.

ti (1996.), and her novel *U znaku ruže* (1996.) Alma Lazarevska is trying to save from oblivion and sudden abandonment the stereotypical heroic rhetoric, which many of us witnessed, but are reluctant to recall, returning slowly to the mainstream patriarchal views of the world.⁴⁸⁷ In a Proustian style of storytelling, completely innovative in the South Slavic inter-literary community, Lazarevska through the questioning of experience of pain betrays the readership by not giving them what is expected of a war narrative. *There are books talked about and talked to. Smrt u Muzeju moderne umjetnosti for me is the book with which I still have an open dialogue, and while I am diving into the associative vortex of the fluid storytelling, I can hardly define the ways in which it affects me.*⁴⁸⁸

Jasna Šamić in her novel *Mraz i pepeo* [Frost and Ashes] (1997) settles accounts with her personal areas of identity between the boundaries, i.e. our literature in exile. Her prose work represents a text in which the woman appears as a generator of meaningfulness, and where a whole series of cultural stereotypes such as the question of identity, nation and homeland, the issue of family and women's role in it, and above all, the position of women intellectuals in unstable times of political and ideological turmoil, demolition of one and the establishment of other "values" on the nationalistic grounds, are examined based on women's experience and from the female perspective.⁴⁸⁹ This novel, interpreted within post-structural theories and feminist critiques, represents a deconstruction of self-explanatory understanding of tradition, fragmented constructions of identity within them, the position of female characters as excluded, despised and rejected *others*, eligible only as vulnerable victims, mothers and guardians of patriarchal order. Confronting the big stories, this novel searches for the personal experiences of history, the attempts at reconstruction of the alleged official knowledge, because *when writing a history, one need not lie, just omit some things*, as one of the protagonists in the novel states.

All three authors articulate their poetics as a *feminist* type of text with a clear strategy of questioning the methods, objects, goals or principles of the main currents of patriarchal canons. Through the strategy of deconstruction they question the self-explanatory understanding of patriarchy and of the literature itself.

Women War Criminals

The first woman from Bosnia convicted of a war crime against humanity before the Hague Tribunal was **Biljana Plavšić**, a former President

penbih.ba/kojeko/lazarevska.htm (July 12, 2014)

487 Moranjak-Bamburać, N. (2003) p. 113-123

488 Ibid.

489 Denić-Grabić, A. (2010) *Bosanskohercegovačkih roman na kraju 20. stoljeća*, Brčko: Preporod

of Republika Srpska. She was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment, but was released after serving only two thirds of her sentence.⁴⁹⁰ The Hague Tribunal convicted Plavšić because, in the period from 1 July 1992 to 3 December 1992, *in concert with others in a joint criminal enterprise, Biljana Plavšić planned, instigated, ordered, assisted and executed the persecutions of Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Croats and other non-Serb populations in 37 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.⁴⁹¹ Plavšić voluntarily surrendered to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia on 10 January 2001. During her time in prison, she released a book entitled *Svjedočim I and II* [Witnessing I and II], revealing her vision of the war, the work of SDS, and relationships with then key politicians and with Arkan and the period after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement.⁴⁹² The first woman convicted of war crimes in BiH was **Rasema Handanović**. The Court sentenced her for the criminal offense of War Crimes against Civilians and War Crimes against Prisoners of War because she participated in the attack on the village of Trusina, Municipality of Konjic, on 16 April 1993, as a member of the Special Unit for Special Purposes, the *Zulfikar*, which was under the Supreme Command of the Army of RBiH. She was accused of participating in a firing-squad execution of prisoners of war and civilians. The Court sentenced her to five-and-a-half years in prison, after she struck a plea bargain with the Prosecutors' Office.⁴⁹³ From 1996 until her extradition she lived in the United States under a false name. **Albina Terzić** has been convicted before the Court of BiH and sentenced to five years in prison for war crimes against civilians on the charges that, as a member of the HVO, she participated in the inhumane treatment of civilians of Serbian nationality who were unlawfully detained in the elementary school in Odžak, and factory *Strolit* in Odžak in 1992. **Monika Karan-Ilić** was convicted of war crimes against civilians on the charge that she participated in torture, inhumane treatment and infliction of suffering on Bosniak and Croat civilians in the Luka camp and Brčko police station. Another woman accused of war crimes against humanity was **Marina Grubišić – Fejzić**, who, in the period from May until August 1992, as a member of HOS, participated in the crimes committed against Serb prisoners detained in *Dretelj* camp. This case is still in the trial phase.⁴⁹⁴ **Azra Bašić**⁴⁹⁵ was accused before the BiH Court of war

490 Source: <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Hronika/348783/U-BiH-pet-zena-osudjeno-zbog-ratnih-zlocina> (April 10, 2014) *U BiH pet žena osuđeno zbog ratnih zločina*, Tanjug | October 20, 2012

491 Court proceedings against Biljana Plavšić ICTY, case no. IT-00-39 I 40/1 (Indictment from January 10, 2001, judgment dated February 27, 2003)

492 Krupić, A. (2010) *Žene ratni zločinci: s posebnim osvrtom na žene izvršioce ratnih zločina u Bosni i Hercegovini 1992-1995*, Dobra knjiga, Sarajevo, p. 135-137

493 Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2137411/Rasema-Handanovic-guilty-war-crimes-Bosnia.html> (July 12, 2014)

494 Source: <http://www.sudbih.gov.ba/index.php?opcija=predmeti&id=698&jezik=b> (June 20, 2014)

495 Source: [http://www.lex18.com/news/croatian-living-in-kentucky-cleared-for-return-in-](http://www.lex18.com/news/croatian-living-in-kentucky-cleared-for-return-in)

crimes against Serb civilians in the war camp near Derventa. The local court in Belgrade sentenced **Nada Kalaba** to nine years in prison on the charge that she participated in the 1991 massacre in the eastern Croatian town of Vukovar. **Indira Kemerić** from Tuzla was accused of a war crime against the civilian population. The case is still in the trial phase.

So far a total of nine women were accused of war crimes committed during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In seven cases, the charges also included criminal offences of sexual violence (Albina Terzić⁴⁹⁶, Indira Kemerić,⁴⁹⁷ Marina Grubišić-Fejzić,⁴⁹⁸ Monika Karan-Ilić, Radmila Banjac, Bora Kuburić, Dragana Đekić). In various prosecutors' offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina investigations are being conducted against some 40 women suspected of involvement in war crimes.⁴⁹⁹ Almira Krupić conducted research on women war criminals and in her book *Žene ratni zločinci*⁵⁰⁰ [Women War Criminals], she portrayed women who were committing war crimes in Bosnia in the period of 1992-1995. She identified a list of twenty women who, according to the testimonies of the witnesses, were involved in the atrocities.

Women and Politics, 1992-2014

After the first democratic, multi-party elections, which took place in 1990, women in the Assembly of BiH held 2.92% of the seats, which was the lowest ratio of women's participation in the highest-level authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1946. At the local level, in the elections for municipal assemblies, they won 5.0% of the seats.⁵⁰¹ The lists were closed and the patriarchal environment and general re-traditionalisation of society had an impact on the structure of political parties and the defining of electoral lists.⁵⁰² Following a referendum in the spring of 1992, a new chapter in the life for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina was opened, marked by suffering, losses of families, property, dignity, in which women were not significantly politically involved. After the first post-war general elections in 1996, power was assumed by the leading national parties, the same parties that were in power during the war, which repre-

war-crimes-case/ (June 5, 2014)

496 Source: <http://www.justice-report.com/en/articles/albina-terzić-nagrada-za-silovanje> (June 5, 2014)

497 Source: <http://www.justice-report.com/en/articles/primoravan-da-udara-i-seksualno-zlostavlja> (June 5, 2014)

498 Source: <http://www.justice-report.com/en/en-audio/zelenika-et-al-forced-to-have-oral-sex> (June 5, 2014)

499 Source: <http://www.justice-report.com/en/articles/žene-okrutnije-u-zločinima> (June 5, 2014)

500 See: Krupić, A. (2010) p. 90

501 Taljanović, A. (2010) p. 73

502 See: Spahić-Šiljak, Z. (2007) *Žene, religija i politika*, IMIC, CIPS, TPO, Sarajevo

sented the three largest ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SDA, HDZ and SDS). In the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliament women accounted for 2.38 %, whereas they accounted for 5% and 1.89% in the House of Representatives of the Federation Parliament and in the National Assembly of Republika Srpska respectively.⁵⁰³ In the 1998 General Elections, women accounted for 26% of the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliament, 15% in the House of Representatives of the Federation Parliament and 22.8% in the National Assembly of Republika Srpska.⁵⁰⁴ In the 1997 Local Elections, women accounted for 6.15% and 2.4% in the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska respectively.⁵⁰⁵ In the 2000 General Elections, there was 4.76% women's representation in the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliament, 17.4% in the House of Representatives of the Federation Parliament and 14.86% in the National Assembly of Republika Srpska. That year open lists were introduced, which enabled an individual approach to campaigning.⁵⁰⁶ In the 2004 Local Elections women achieved representation of 18.1%.⁵⁰⁷ In the 2006 Elections, women accounted for 14.28% in the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliament, 21.42% in the House of Representatives of the Federation Parliament and 20.48% in the National Assembly of Republika Srpska.⁵⁰⁸ After the 2010 General and 2012 Local Elections, results⁵⁰⁹ showed that participation of men and women in legislative bodies at all levels were similar to the results of earlier elections. Currently, there is not a single woman in the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The House of Representatives of the BiH Parliament is made up of 33 men and 9 women, while the House of Peoples of the BiH Parliament comprises 13 men and 2 women. In the Council of Ministers there is not a single woman holding a ministerial position. The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina comprises 16 men and 1 woman (Ministry of Environment and Tourism), while Government of Republika Srpska comprises 11 men and 5 women. The first woman Prime Minister of the RS Government, **Željka Cvijanović**, was elected in March 2013 in the Fifteenth Special Session of the RS National Assembly.⁵¹⁰

The OSCE programme *Women in Politics*, along with the campaign *Nas je više* [We Are More] led by women's non-governmental organisations in 1998, before the General Elections, promoted a *women's quota*, aiming to increase the number of women elected to legislative bodies. Owing to their efforts, the gender quota was introduced in the interim

503 Taljanović, A. (2010) p. 80

504 Ibid. p. 80

505 Ibid. p. 81

506 Ibid. p. 156

507 Ibid. p. 81

508 Ibid. p. 156

509 See: http://www.oscebih.org/documents/osce_bih_doc_2012071212593128bos.pdf

510 Source: <http://www.narodnaskupstinars.net/> (June 15, 2014)

election rules of the Election Law. The BiH Election Law, introducing a quota of 30% of the less represented gender on electoral lists, was adopted in 2001. After the introduction of the quota some positive changes occurred and in even the 1998 Parliamentary Elections the number of women MPs increased from 2.7% to 27.64%. At the same time, however, open lists were introduced, which obstructed the functioning of quotas.

The important legal documents governing the issue of equal participation of women in political life in BiH are the Constitution, the Law on Gender Equality in BiH, and the BiH Election Law. The Gender Equality Law, adopted in 2003, is one of the most important legal documents that regulate the position of women in the country and guarantee gender equality in economic, social and political life. The BiH Election Law is also an important legal document that governs the political rights of women in the country. It regulates the distribution of male and female candidates on electoral lists. Article 4.19, Paragraph 4 of the BiH Election Law imposes a binding electoral quota. This law foresees sanctions for noncompliance of the stipulated order. In March 2013, the Law on Amendments to the Election Law⁵¹¹ was adopted, following a recommendation by NGOs in the Alternative Report on the Implementation of CEDAW convention and Women's Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010. The amendments concerned the provisions governing the election implementation bodies, as well as provisions governing the certification and nomination of candidates for elections, which incorporated the binding quota of 40% of the less represented gender.⁵¹²

In early February 2013, women MPs in the House of Representatives of the Federation Parliament established a Women's Caucus, which operates as an informal group. This initiative was launched by the International Republican Institute in BiH with the aim of enabling joint action of women MPs in advocating the initiatives within their respective parties and the government levels at which they operate.⁵¹³ Since then, this club of female politicians belonging to different political groups has made a significant effort in its organisational development and impact within the Parliament. To date, the caucus has worked with national NGOs to draft amendments to: increase sanctions against perpetrators of domestic violence and other criminal offences against women and girls such as incest, statutory rape, criminalised acts against maternity leave, change the age limit to be legally considered a minor, and harmonise compensation for maternity and paternity leave across the country.⁵¹⁴ As a part of its sup-

511 Law on Amendments to the Election Law BiH (Službeni glasnik BiH, no. 18/13), Articles 1 and 2

512 *Alternativni izvještaj, Dodatak 3, Alternativnom izvještaju o implementaciji CEDAW konvenciji i ženskim ljudskim pravima u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevski otvoreni centar, July 2013, p. 20

513 Ibid.

514 Garcia Fransioli, E. *Godišnji izvještaj o stanju prava žena u Bosni i Hercegovini tokom 2013.*

port for the EU integration process, and with assistance of the international community, BiH has, in recent years, launched a series of changes aimed at reforming the armed forces and police, the Constitution and other important areas of economic and political life.

In October 2013, 15 NGOs came together to create the Women's Platform for Constitutional Reform from a Gender Perspective. The Women's Platform prepared five demands to be included in the constitutional reform: application of gender-sensitive language in the Constitution of BiH, since the current constitution only uses the masculine gender, the introduction of affirmative action principles in the Constitution of BiH to work towards using the gender equality law to its full effect, amendments to the existing catalogue of fundamental rights, to include provisions with respect to common health care services, social and family care, affirmation of a higher level of judicial and legal protection of human rights and liberties, since the current constitution stresses the collective rights of constituent peoples (i.e. Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks) rather than the rights of the individual, the principle of direct democracy to be applied to the process of constitutional reform.⁵¹⁵

There are many barriers that keep women away from politics and decision-making in the public sphere. One such barrier is gender division of labour, according to which women are traditionally placed in the private sphere, which includes household chores or female tasks i.e. professions in the field of education. Political life is one of the segments in which women are under-represented. A reason for this is that society is imbued with traditional beliefs that women do not belong in the public sphere, influencing decisions on the issues that are relevant to the entire society. While women are formally and legally ensured equality and opportunity to elect and be elected, to participate equally in the distribution of power and decision-making functions, and to represent the government at the international level, they are still inadequately represented in the political life of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Open lists, many legal documents and recommendations of international organisations on the participation of women in politics favour of women's involvement in politics in BiH, but in practice, political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not treat women and men equally. Analysis of the position of women within political parties in BiH is a topic that deserves special attention, because political parties appear to be the main factors in positioning the candidates on the ballots and later, in allocating governmental posts after elections. Political parties often do not take into account specific women's issues, while at the same time, they deny women the opportunity to speak on behalf of the party or to represent the party. Women's branches of political parties often have no influence in the structures of their parties, nor do they participate in their policy-making forums.

p. 11

515 Ibid. p. 12

Among distinguished women who have marked political life during the war is **Tatjana Ljuljić-Mijatović**, wartime member of the Presidency and the only woman in a seven-member Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ljuljić-Mijatović was elected a member of the BiH Parliament as a replacement of Nenad Kecmanović, who left Sarajevo at the beginning of the war.⁵¹⁶ Ljuljić-Mijatović was one of the women mentioned in Swanee Hunt's book, *This Was Not Our War*. Before the war Ljuljić-Mijatović worked as a professor of horticulture, and during the war she was the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Ambassador to UN in Vienna. At the beginning of the war she was interviewed by a Vienna Television about the siege of Sarajevo. After this interview, Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs requested that she be appointed the BiH Ambassador in Vienna, and so it came to pass in 1993. After the war, Ljuljić-Mijatović remained in the Social-Democratic Party.⁵¹⁷ Another woman, who significantly influenced political life in BiH, was **Biljana Plavšić**. She was born in 1930 in Tuzla. Plavšić sat in the hierarchy of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) from its very establishment. She was a member of the Collective Presidency from 18 November 1990 until April 1992, and President of the Council for Protection of the Constitutional Order of the BiH Presidency and the first President of a Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, serving from 28 February 1992 until 12 May 1992.

Amila Omersoftić is a woman who left a significant mark on the media and political scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as co-founder of one of the three winning national parties, Party of Democratic Action (SDA), of which she was a member until 1996. Within the party, she served as the President of the Personnel Commission and a member of the Main Board⁵¹⁸, which meant that she was positioned at the top of one of the most powerful parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the period from 1994 until 1998 Omersoftić served as the Director General of the BiH Television (RTV BiH), as a direct appointee of the President Alija Izetbegović.⁵¹⁹ This is how Omersoftić described her appointment to the position of the director of National Television:

In February 1994, in the midst of fierce fighting of Serbs and Bosniaks on one side and Croats and Bosniaks on the other, in Sarajevo, showered by shells and sniper gunshots, five minutes before four o'clock, the phone in my office rang. I heard the voice of President Izetbegović, whom I have not seen or heard from for two months. "Amila, are you near a typewriter, he asked. Start writing your CV. Bega will be there

516 Pejanović, M. *Through Bosnian eyes*, p. 110

517 Hunt, S. p. 485

518 *Disciplinovanje medija BiH: Televizija u rukama Stranke demokratske akcije*, source: <http://www.aimpress.ch/dyn/pubs/archive/data/199405/40505-002-pubs-sar.htm> (April 10, 2014)

519 Ibid.

*in five minutes to collect it. The Session of the Presidency is about to start any time now and you will be appointed a directress of Radio-Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina". Before I managed to say "but Mr. President", he hung up.*⁵²⁰

One of the first dilemmas she encountered was a controversy about inter-ethnic marriages, which was discussed in the newspapers *Oslobođenje*, and which Omersoftić refused to report on in the news, despite the order received from Džemaludin Latić. Due to her refusal to air the requested response, she lost the support of the leadership of the SDA. *Soon we heard from Grand Mufti*⁵²¹. *He asked for 15 minutes in the News to say what he thinks of it. I turned him down, telling him that the maximum time log he could get was 90 seconds. Thereupon I lost the support of this institution as well.*⁵²² She was in conflict with the opposition parties and the then Prime Minister Haris Silajdžić, who for a brief period of time banned the presence of the TV BiH journalists in Government sessions. In the period from 1992 until 1993, Omersoftić was a manager of the governmental administration for refugees and displaced persons, and in 1996 she founded the political party *Stranka žena Bosne i Hercegovine* (Women's Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina), of which she was the President.⁵²³ In December 1995, when the Dayton Peace Agreement was about to be signed and a new chapter in political life of Bosnia and Herzegovina was to begin, no woman was involved in the negotiations. In June 1996, the first women's conference titled *Žene transformiraju sebe i društvo* (Women Transforming Themselves and Society) was organised in Sarajevo. As a part of this conference, a workshop about *Women and Politics* was organised in which the need for greater participation of women in political life was discussed, as well as women's contribution to qualitative changes in politics and the need to have a minimum 30% quota of women in parliaments, executive and judicial branches.⁵²⁴

Semih Borovac was the first woman Mayor of the City of Sarajevo. **Lamija Tanović**, a professor at the Faculty of Science and Mathematics, was the President of the Liberal Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2005. **Lidija Korać**, vice-president of SDP BiH, was a legal representative on behalf of SDP in all legal disputes filed before the Constitutional Court of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. **Borjana Krišto**, from HDZ BiH, was the first woman president of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Prior to this, she was Minister for Justice of HBŽ (Herzeg-Bosnia Canton), and then Minister for Justice in the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Currently, she is an MP in the

520 Source: http://www.sarajevskatribina.info/bos/konferencije/2004/govornici/amila_omersoftic.html, (April 10, 2014)

521 Reis Mustafa ef. Cerić

522 Source: http://www.sarajevskatribina.info/bos/konferencije/2004/govornici/amila_omersoftic.html, (April 10, 2014)

523 Ibid.

524 Taljanović, A. (2010) p. 74, 75

House of Peoples of the BiH Parliament. **Željka Cvijanović**, from SNSD, is the first woman Prime Minister of Republika Srpska. Before that, she was a Minister for European Integration. **Aleksandra Pandurević**, from SDS, since she was elected an SDS delegate in the BiH Parliament in 2010, has been the loudest and most distinct woman MP in the National Parliament. **Sehada Kolenović**, from SDA, is the Chief of Office of Sulejman Tihić, the President of SDA Party. **Azra Hadžiahmetović**, from SBiH, was one of the founders of Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (Stranka za BiH). She was a Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and is currently an SBiH delegate in the State Parliament.

Bisera Turković, was the first woman Ambassador appointed in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was Bosnian Ambassador to Croatia (1993-1994), Hungary (1994-1996), Permanent Mission to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Vienna (1996-2000), the United States, Mexico and Brazil (2005-2008). Currently she is Bosnian Ambassador to Belgium. From 2000 to 2001, Turković worked as the Minister for European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. From 2001 to 2004, she was Executive Director of the Centre for Security Studies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She was a member of the Executive Board of SDA from 1991 until 1996 and member of the Main Board of SDA from 1991 until 1997.

In 1992, **Ismeta Dervoz** initiated the participation of the Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (RTV BiH) at the Eurovision Song Contest and has been a long-time manager and executive producer of RTV BiH. She was awarded the Charter of International League of Humanists for her work from 1992 to 1996. To date, she is a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina on behalf of SBB BiH.

Besima Borić was President of the Municipal Committee of the Socialist Alliance in Vogošća from 1986 to 1990. After the war, she resumed the work of the municipal organisation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and in 1997 she was elected to the Municipal Council of Vogošća. In 1998 she was elected to the Federation Parliament. From 2001 to 2003 she was Minister for Labour, Social Affairs, Displaced Persons and Refugees in the Government of Sarajevo Canton.⁵²⁵ Currently, she is an MP in the Federation Parliament. Borić collaborates with many NGOs that promote women's activism and the political participation of women, and has contributed to the institutionalisation of women's human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Svetlana Cenić, an economist, was the Minister for Finance of the Government of Republika Srpska. During the war, she was the Cabinet Secretary of Nikola Koljević. From 2000 to 2005 she worked as a non-partisan advisor to Dragan Čavić. She performed several functions related to public finances, consulting, sustainable development and foreign trade affairs.

525 Spahić-Šiljak, Z. (2013) p. 190

General Note on this Chapter

In the most difficult existential moments during the war, women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in addition to suffering the misfortunes that affected all citizens, were also burdened by universal patriarchal organisation and compliance with certain ideologies. Today, when we talk about women in wartime Bosnia, we mainly talk about women rape survivors, the mothers of Srebrenica, some of whom still search for the remains of their beloved ones and who each year, on 11 July, remind Bosnia and Herzegovina and the world of these heinous crimes, which remain the most horrible legacy of the last war. This chapter does not offer a detailed overview of the role of women, for that would be impossible given the limited space and short time available for this research. This chapter on the nineties gives only basic guidelines that could lead to further research on the position of women during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it is important to note that the information currently available does not speak about all segments of society, nor on all the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina during wartime, or all the women who have marked this period of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also missing from this and the following chapter are the scathes from the lives of women whose fates represented a kind of paradigm of the time in which they lived. The reason for this is not because there were no such women. Quite the contrary, there were many. They played different roles during the war, but after the war they were left to the mercy of the ruling regimes and today, they are still struggling, risking a quiet life, to make change – political, economic, legal and cultural.