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KAPIJA

A case study of a Bosnian community’s initiative for re-building peace

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
Social Anthropology

at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

Bernard Jervis

2007
ABSTRACT

During 1992-95 the Serbian establishment in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina executed a policy of ethnic-cleansing against the Muslim and Croat population in Bosnia-Herzegovina. On 25 May 1995 the town square in Tuzla was shelled by a Bosnian Serb artillery unit killing seventy-one people and injuring many others. The aim was to divide the Muslim, Croat and Serb community of Tuzla into taking sides in a conflict that saw atrocities committed on a scale not seen in Europe since the Second World War. This study is about peace and conflict and gives some insight into how this community dealt with violence. The decision to bury those killed together in a common burial site irrespective of ethnic background was made in the face of external religious and political opposition. In taking this action, these families reinforced the long-held tradition in Tuzla of being a tolerant multi-ethnic community. Those buried together were buried as friends not divided by religion and nationalism. As such, the burial site is the single most important symbol of peace in this community.

Other key findings from this study show the enormity of personal loss and grief for the families of those killed; the impact of this incident on the whole community; questions about justice; trans-generational trauma; ethnic identity; mixed-marriages; and a changed demographic make-up of the town’s population due to an increase of displaced persons.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study could not have been undertaken without the agreement and co-operation of those people I interviewed during my periods of fieldwork in Tuzla during 2004 and 2005. For the families, community and religious leaders, and others who recalled what happened in Kapija Square on 25 May 1995 it was a painful memory. Often the interviews were very emotional and upsetting and I was mindful of this at all times. Therefore I am grateful to these people for giving me their time and stories which I hope in some small way may have served some cathartic value for them. They seemed to be appreciative of me talking to them about what had happened and the value of the research. I was mindful, too, of the stress that this could put on the two interpreters I used, Eldin Omerović and Amira Kovčić, without whom I could not have conducted the interviews. In addition, valuable assistance was provided by Jasmina Redžepagić at Peace Flame House and Maida Berbić from the local radio station, Kameleon Radio. Their local contacts and networks made my task a lot easier. Other valuable information within the national context was provided by Mirsad Tokača, the President of the Research and Documentation Centre, in Sarajevo.

Ethical approval for my research was obtained from Massey University Human Ethics Committee, and the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand Inc.

I am grateful for the financial contribution provided by the School of People, Environment and Planning and the Doctoral Committee of Massey University that allowed me to complete my fieldwork.
KAPIJA

Composed by Asim Horožić

Dedicated to those killed and injured in
Kapija Square, Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina
on 25 May 1995

Sarajevo Philharmonia
Playing time: 10.24 minutes
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CHRONOLOGY

BOSNIA AND SERBIA

6th-7th Centuries
Ancestors of South Slavs enter the Balkans (from Poland and the Ukraine)

869
Death of Saint Cyril, symbol of the Christianizing of the South Slavs:

[a] Dalmatia and Croatia came within the domain of Charlemagne’s Roman Catholic Frankish Empire

[b] Serbia and Macedonia came within the Byzantine Empire and Orthodox Christianity

10th Century
_De Administrando Imperio_ first mention of Bosnae, as part of Serbia

1159
Stefan Nemanja founds Serbia as an independent kingdom

Late 12th Century
Independent state of Bosnia

1219
Saint Sava becomes the first Archbishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church

1235-1265
War with Hungary. Bosnia defeated.

1346
Founding of the Patriarchate of Serbian Orthodoxy

1353
Trvčko is crowned King of Bosnia, Serbia and the Western Lands (extended to Serbia and the Dalmatian coast)

1389
Death of Lazar at the battle of Kosovo (Serbia defeated by Turkey)

1453
Ottomans take Constantinople and change its name to Istanbul

1459
Last Serb stronghold at Smederevo falls to the Ottomans (Serbia now part of the Ottoman Empire)

1483
Ottomans take control of all Bosnia and Herzegovina
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1531</td>
<td>Gazi Husrev Beg Mosque constructed in Sarajevo, the major mosque in Bosnia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1551</td>
<td>Coloured Mosque of Foca is constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1556</td>
<td>Construction of the great Mostar bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1557</td>
<td>Construction of the Drina River bridge at Visegrad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Karadjordje’s revolt against Ottoman rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Assassination of Karadjordje by rival Miloš Obrenović, founder of the first modern Serbian dynasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>Treaty of Adrianople: Serbia gains autonomy under Miloš Obrenović</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Njegos publishes <em>The Mountain Wreath</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Death of Vuk Karadžić, collector of Serb poetry and lore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Treaty of San Stefano: Ottomans cede Bosnia to Austro-Hungarian Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Descendants of Karadjordje establish a new dynasty in Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>First World War commenced following the assassination of the Grand Duke of Austro-Hungary by a Serb nationalist in Sarajevo. Serbia joined Great Britain, France and Russia against Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire of which Bosnia was a part, and Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Union of South Slavs is declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>End of First World War: Germany, Austro-Hungarian Empire and Turkish Ottoman Empire defeated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later to be called Yugoslavia) is established under the authority of King Peter I of Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Yugoslavia reorganized: Bosnia divided between Croatia and Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Second World War commenced: Great Britain, France and Soviet Union (formerly Russia) against Germany, Japan and Italy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1940 Yugoslavia occupied by Germany

1940 Independent Croatian state declared with German ‘puppet’ government established

1945 End of Second World War: Germany, Japan and Italy defeated

1945 Tito declares a federation of Yugoslavia with 6 republics and 2 autonomous regions within a socialist ideology (Communism)

1981 Marshal Tito dies

1990 Slovenia breaks away from Yugoslavia

1991 Croatia-Serbia war

1992 Secret agreement between Serbia and Croatia to attack Bosnia and divide the country between them within a policy of ethnic-cleansing

1995 Dayton Peace Agreement brokered by the United States ends the war in Bosnia. The country is partitioned into two entities determined by majority ethnic identity (i.e. Federation of Muslims and Croats, and the Republika Srpska)

1999 Death of President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia

2003 Bosnia applies for membership of the European Union

2003 Death of President Alija Izetbegović of Bosnia-Herzegovina

2006 Death of Slobodan Milošević, former President of Serbia from a heart attack while in custody at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia at The Hague on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity

2006 Referendum in Montenegro votes for independence from union with Serbia

2006 Serbia’s application for membership to the European Union is presently suspended

Source: Michael A. Sells (1996), The Bridge Betrayed (Religion and Genocide in Bosnia), University of California Press.
Additional material from 1992-95 onwards: Bernard Jervis.
ILLUSTRATIONS


KAPIJA SQUARE 2004. Photo: Bernard Jervis

MEMORIAL IN KAPIJA SQUARE. Photo: Bernard Jervis

PLAQUE MARKING WHERE THE SHELL EXPLODED. Photo: Bernard Jervis


INDIVIDUAL GRAVE IN ALEJA MLADOSTI CEMETERY. Photo: Bernard Jervis

THE GRAVES. Photo: Bernard Jervis

ALEJA MLADOSTI CEMETERY. Photo: Bernard Jervis

10TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS 2005. Photo: Bernard Jervis

REMEMBRANCE WALL FOR ALL 800 PEOPLE KILLED IN TUZLA DURING 1992-95. Photo: Bernard Jervis

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1 Translation of poem on Memorial:

‘One does not live here only in order to live
One does not live here only in order to die
One dies here in order to live.’