

## A Divided Past for a Divided Future!? The 1992-1995 War in the Current History Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina\*

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**Abstract:** The paper problematises the issue of the current BiH history textbooks about the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a theme that has been reintroduced to the BiH curricula after 18 years. Different approaches in interpretation of the war, as well as in representation of war crimes and mass suffering, continues to deepen divisions among school children as well.

**Key words:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992-1995 war, history textbooks, war crimes, mass suffering

### Introduction

History curricula and textbooks that are implemented in three versions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, are the best example of the extent to which ethno-national divisions have enrooted themselves to the educational system(s) in the country. Different narratives on the events from the common past, controversial and sensitive topics are presented through a monoperspective. One's own people is presented as a victim, while representations of other peoples that have lived in the area for centuries have been left out, except for the cases when they were to be blamed or portrayed as aggressors, torturers, etc. Such narratives appeared in the public space and media in the period when it had become clear that Yugoslavia, the former common country, would fall apart, and they were used to spread hatred towards the other and the different through various examples from the past.<sup>1</sup> Not long after, in 1992, the war broke out and these narratives entered the teaching

\* The paper published as: Podijeljena prošlost za podijeljenu budućnost!? Rat 1992-1995. u aktuelnim bosanskohercegovačkim udžbenicima historije, *Radovi (Historija, Historija umjetnosti, Arheologija)*, 6 (1), Filozofski fakultet, Sarajevo 2019, 231-257.

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<sup>1</sup> Radušić 2015, 9-15; Torsti 2003, 148.

practice and textbooks, replacing thus the common approach to the study of history the aim of which had been to homogenise all peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now, the goal has primarily been one's own people, while the perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is mentioned as a starting point in all key documents in the field of education, has been almost entirely lost.<sup>2</sup>

The complexity of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects its administrative organisation. Education is in the jurisdiction of the entity structures – the Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH, i.e. cantons within the Federation of BiH, and the Department for Education of the Brčko District.<sup>3</sup> At each of these levels of authority there is a ministry defining the curricula and approving the textbooks for primary and secondary schools. There is no ministry of education at the state level, and its competences fall within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Civil Affairs; from 2008, at the level of BiH institutions, the Agency for preschool, primary and secondary education headquartered in Mostar was formed together with two branch offices in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, the purpose of which is to establish the “standards of knowledge and to evaluate the results achieved, to develop the common core curricula for preschool, primary and secondary education and for other professional affairs related to the standards of knowledge and quality evaluation that are determined by special laws and other regulations.”<sup>4</sup> Still, more important is the real division organised on the ethno-national principle, i.e. the existence of three educational systems based on the national identity, i.e. on the language in which classes are implemented – Bosnian (related to Bosniaks), Serbian and Croatian.<sup>5</sup> This division deeply stems from the 1992-1995 war, and the mentioned systems have continued to legally exist in peace, to this very day, in the territory where the aforementioned national groups are a majority.

The year 2018 was partly marked by changes in the curricula in BiH, which had been announced and commented through media. Introduction of themes such as the siege of Sarajevo the Srebrenica genocide and other war crimes, i.e. of BiH war themes in general was accompanied by strong statements, debates, commentaries, even hate speech, etc.<sup>6</sup> Regardless of whether it was because that was the year of

<sup>2</sup> Framework Law on Primary Education; The Common Core for Curricula Development; Guidelines for Writing Textbooks.

<sup>3</sup> Martić / Tutnjević 2018, 6-7; Forić Plasto 2018, 136-138;

<sup>4</sup> See more on the Agency website: [www.aposo.gov.ba](http://www.aposo.gov.ba).

<sup>5</sup> Soldo et al. 2017, 8-9, see footnote 1; Katz 2015, 52-53; Forić Plasto 2018, 136-138.

<sup>6</sup> Opsada Sarajeva, genocid u Srebrenici i etničko čišćenje uskoro u udžbenicima za 9. razred [The siege of Sarajevo, genocide in Srebrenica and ethnic cleansing soon in textbooks for 9th grade], <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/opsada-sarajeva-genocid-u-srebrenici-i-etnicko-ciscenje-uskoro-u-udzbenicima-za-9-razred/180327123>; Rat udžbenicima oko opsade Sarajeva i genocida u BiH [War of textbooks over the siege of Sarajevo and the genocide in BiH], <https://www.slobodnaevropa>.

elections or because there was a strong need for these themes, they were introduced to the curricula in 2018, and new textbooks were prepared, i.e. additional teaching materials. Since these themes had been in the focus of public attention even before they were published, we wanted to analyse the content of textbooks. The analysis focuses on the history curricula and textbooks for the final grades of primary school approved in 2018/2019 school year.<sup>7</sup> The research focused on the following questions: how is the 1992-1995 war in BiH characterised; in what manner have war crimes and mass suffering been treated; what content was selected to illustrate the aforementioned topics and who are the people mentioned as participants in the war. The approved 9<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks in Bosnian,<sup>8</sup> Croatian<sup>9</sup> and Serbian<sup>10</sup> have been analysed, as well as additional teaching materials used in the Sarajevo Canton.<sup>11</sup>

### **An Overview of Teaching about the 1990s**

Teaching about the 1990s, an era marked by bloody conflicts in the area of former Yugoslavia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, started, in fact, while the war was still raging. It is interesting to mention that in the neighbouring Croatia and Serbia the themes of war were introduced to the curricula as the war was unfolding. In Croatian textbooks, the war was introduced in 1992, while Serbian textbooks introduced the subject in 1993.<sup>12</sup> This digression is important since the aforementioned textbooks were used in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more precisely, the Republika Srpska imported textbooks from Serbia, while parts of the Federation of BiH with Croatian majority imported textbooks from Croatia. This practice lasted until 2000, when a decree was passed stipulating that, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, textbooks for the “group of the so-called national subjects” cannot be used if imported from abroad, i.e. from

[org/a/rs-skolstvo-istorija/28533893.html](http://org/a/rs-skolstvo-istorija/28533893.html); *Nastava historije-istorije-povijesti – ratovi iz 90-tih u školama* [Classes in Three Histories – Wars of the 1990s at Schools], <https://www.oslobodjenje.ba/o2/kultura/nastava-historije-istorije-povijesti-rat-ovi-iz-90-ih-u-skolama-367454>; *Sljedeće godine u školama o istoriji RS* [History of the RS Next Year at Schools], <https://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/obrazovanje/Sljedece-godine-u-skolama-o-istoriji-RS/472248>.

<sup>7</sup> Topics that concern the siege of Sarajevo, genocide in Srebrenica and crimes against humanity have been introduced to the curriculum in the Sarajevo Canton in 2017/2018, while the materials were prepared and published in January 2018. In other cantons where classes are conducted in Bosnian such content was introduced to the curriculum in 2018/2019 (for example, in the Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton, etc.). Also, the curriculum in the Republika Srpska saw changes for the school year 2018/2019, when themes that concern the 1992-1995 war were introduced.

<sup>8</sup> Šabotić/Čehajić 2012. The textbook was written in 2012 and is used in all cantons in the Federation of BiH, where classes in the Bosnian language are conducted.

<sup>9</sup> Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Bacrih 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Muminović et al. 2018.

<sup>12</sup> More on the issue in: Koren 2015, 47-51. Stojanović 2015, 44-46.

Croatia and Serbia, hence, those textbooks, modified to a certain extent and very similar content-wise, were published in Banja Luka, East Sarajevo, Grude or Mostar, instead of Belgrade or Zagreb.<sup>13</sup> History textbooks published in 1994 in the Bosnian language contained the content on the breakup of Yugoslavia and the war that followed. Those textbooks were used until 1998 when the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Office of the High Representative, the OSCE Mission and the Council of Europe started intense activities of reforming the national subjects, primarily history. All started by forming a committee for revision of textbooks in 1998, and by eliminating the offensive content.<sup>14</sup> In 1999, on the basis of the conclusions of the committee, the offensive content, containing hate speech or interpretations that were not in accordance with the opinion of the representatives of the other two peoples, was eliminated; such content was crossed out by red highlighters in the existing textbooks, since it was not possible to print new ones at the time. Also, the so-called neutralisation of content was conducted regarding the 1992-1995 war, since the Bosnian and Croatian textbooks marked the war as an aggression, while the Serbian language textbooks interpreted it as the civil war. These formulations were preplaced by more “neutral” names – the past war, the last war.<sup>15</sup> It is important to mention the recommendation issued by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in April 2000, advising to “temporarily cease the teaching about the 1992-1995 period in BiH, until historians – aided by international experts – determined a joint approach to teaching about this period at schools.”<sup>16</sup> This recommended moratorium, as it was frequently called, was to an extent implemented until 2018. Namely, textbooks issued after 2000 did not treat the 1992-1995 period, but only presented some brief facts with scarce information on the declaration of independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the beginning of war in April 1992 and its end by signing of the Dayton Agreement in November 1995.<sup>17</sup> Although the moratorium was in force, different analyses have determined that this most controversial and most sensitive subject was indirectly included to the textbooks and that those representations contained many open questions and hidden messages of hatred against other peoples.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Katz 2015, 53.

<sup>14</sup> Pingel 2009, 269-277; Torsti 2003, 162-258; Karge / Batarilo 2008a, 10-11.

<sup>15</sup> Pingel 2017, 238-239.

<sup>16</sup> Council of Europe Recommendation 1454 (2000), Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (April 2000)

<sup>17</sup> Karge / Batarilo 2008, 28-31; 2008a, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Karge / Batarilo 2008, 35; 2008a, 22-24; Katz 2015, 61-63.

## Curricula

The analysis will focus on the primary school curricula used in the Sarajevo Canton, as an example of the Bosnian language curriculum, as well as on the primary school curricula used in the Republika Srpska as an example of the Serbian language curriculum, and the curriculum in Croatian, used in the 9-year primary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Središnja Bosna Canton. The goal was to see how many contact hours treat the themes related to the 1992-1995 war, which units have been defined by the curriculum and in what way have the learning outcomes been formulated, i.e. whether or not we can find universal values in them.

The curriculum for history as a subject in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of primary schools in the Sarajevo Canton stipulates 68 classes annually, i.e. 2 classes a week.<sup>19</sup> The thematic unit entitled “Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century” defines lessons that concern the 1992-1995 war: “The Breakup of SFRY and the International Recognition of BiH”, “Military and Political Course of the War in BiH 1992-1995”, “The Siege of Sarajevo – A Military and Political Aspect”, “The Siege of Sarajevo, Everyday Life and Violations of Humanitarian Law”, “Ethnic Cleansing, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity in BiH 1992-1995”, and “Genocide in Srebrenica”. According to the curriculum, these lessons are treated in 6 classes, as well as in additional four revision classes. There is only one formulation in the learning outcomes: (Students) “Understand the causes of the breakup of the SFRY and the creation of an independent state. They analyse the victims, refugees and material damage in the 1992-1995 war”.

The curriculum for history as a subject in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of the primary school in the Republika Srpska stipulates 68 classes annually, i.e. two classes a week. The last thematic unit is entitled “Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Area in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, for which 7 classes are planned.<sup>20</sup> Themes such as “The Decline of Yugoslavia. Wars for the Yugoslav Legacy”, “Serbia and Montenegro in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, “Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995). The Creation of Republika Srpska” and “Republika Srpska in the Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina” should enable students, as the learning outcomes state, to “explain the causes of the breakup of Yugoslavia; to present the basic facts about the decline of Yugoslavia; to critically evaluate, by

<sup>19</sup> Nastavni plan i program. Osnovna škola, Historija, Kanton Sarajevo, Ministarstvo za obrazovanje, nauku i mlade [Curriculum. Primary School. History, Sarajevo Canton, Ministry of Education, Science and Youth], Sarajevo, August 2018, 25.

<sup>20</sup> Nastavni program predmeta istorija za 9. razred osnovne škole, Republika Srpska, Ministarstvo prosvjete i kulture, Republički pedagoški zavod [Curriculum for History as a Subject for the 9th grade of the primary School, Republika Srpska, Ministry of Education and Culture, the RS Pedagogical Institute], Banja Luka 2018, 1.

the use of the textbook, the representation of Serbs in the foreign public opinion; to present the main stages of the development of Serbia and Montenegro in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century; to name the most prominent individuals from the political, cultural, religious and sport life; to name the causes and consequences of the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina; to analyse the number and the position of Serbs outside Serbia and Republika Srpska; to present the similarities and differences of everyday life in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century with everyday life in the socialist period”.<sup>21</sup> It can be clearly seen that the accent is placed on the Republika Srpska and Serbs, as well as on political insistence on the organisation of the country in accordance with the Dayton Agreement that legitimised Republika Srpska. Learning outcomes on the anti-Serb representation in the foreign public opinion in which the conspiracy theory by western powers is suggested are especially interesting, while links with the Serb people in areas outside the Republika Srpska and Serbia appear to be anticipating the common space.

The curriculum for history as a subject for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of the primary school in Croatian treats the war through two themes: “Creation and Development of Independent Croatia” in which the explanatory note and keywords, as well as achievements take more space, and the “Creation and Development of Independent BiH”.<sup>22</sup> Within the latter theme, multiparty elections, independence and organisation of BiH, the War of Independence and the Dayton Agreement are defined as key terms that need to be focused on: “Multiparty Elections and International Recognition of BiH”, “29 February – 1 March 1992, the referendum for independence of BiH was called”, “7 April 1992, EU recognised BiH”, “22 May 1992, BiH becomes a UN member”, “October 1991, the first armed conflicts – the attack of Serb forces on the Croat village Ravno”, “Spring 1993 – the beginning of armed conflicts between Croats and Bosniaks in BiH”, “18 March 1992 – the Washington Agreement signed and armed conflicts between Croats and Bosniaks end”, “July 1995 – the so-called JNA and the Serb army occupy the UN-protected zones of Srebrenica and Žepa”, “1 – 21 November 1995 – the Dayton Agreement signed and the war in BiH ends”,<sup>23</sup> while the learning outcomes define that they (students) would be able to describe democratic processes, the war duration and the creation of an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the role of the neighbouring countries. It is interesting that, within the theme about the independent Croatia, the learning outcomes mention the “consequences of war in the territory of Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina: victims and material destruction, war

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>22</sup> The curriculum in Croatian for primary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Središnja Bosna Canton, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Središnja Bosna Canton, Travnik, 2009, 399.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

crimes, ethnic cleansing (Ovčara, Srebrenica) and displacement of people”, which is a far more humane approach to the theme of war and one can read between the lines the value of peace, unlike mere mentioning of dates and chronology of events in the BiH war. The curriculum does not mention the number of classes for these units, while the total number of classes for history as a subject in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade is 70, i.e. 2 classes a week.

As can be seen from the aforementioned, the span of themes is significant and opposites in the approaches to the teaching content are evident, primarily concerning characterisation of the war. War crimes and human victims are mentioned only in the curriculum in Bosnian and Croatian. The common trait is that the number of classes for the presentation and review of the aforementioned themes is approximately the same.

### **Textbooks**

Textbooks in primary schools are still one of the main teaching tools for history classes. They are, in a way, the main source of cognition for students and their content is a certain form of the absolute truth or canonised knowledge. According to the Guidelines for the Development and Assessment of History Textbooks, which is one of the core documents for writing and assessing the history textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, “the history textbook is the basic obligatory school textbook determining the level of knowledge within every topic from history planned by the curriculum”.<sup>24</sup> We have encompassed by our analysis three textbooks for history as a subject(s) in the three languages, as well as additional teaching materials used in the 2018/2019 school year.

The textbook by authors Izet Šabotić and Mirza Čehajić was approved by the Federal Ministry of Science and Education in 2012, which is the year when it was first published.<sup>25</sup> That was the first time that the policy of one textbook for one school grade was applied at the competition for the textbook manuscripts. Thus, this history textbook was, in fact, the only one at the market, for classes conducted in the Bosnian language, and since the procedure for publishing new manuscripts was not implemented, it is still the only history textbook in use. The unit “Breakup of SFRY and International Recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (179-183) explains the causes of war, briefly mentioning also the war in Slovenia and in Croatia.<sup>26</sup> The lesson “War and Post-war Period in Bosnia and Herzegovina” treats preparations for the war, the beginning of war operations, the Washington Agreement, the

<sup>24</sup> Guidelines for the Development and Assessment of History Textbooks, Article 3.15.

<sup>25</sup> Šabotić / Čehajić 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 181.

international intervention and the Dayton Peace Agreement, as well as the characteristics of the post-war period in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>27</sup> The textbook chronologically treats the period from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the outbreak of WWI to the year 2000 at 198 pages. The last chapter, “Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 20<sup>th</sup> century”, treats all phases of the country’s development within its state and legal framework. The textbook emphasises the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is in accordance with the legal framework, although the textbook at several places emphasises the representation of Bosniaks against other peoples.

The history textbook for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade by authors Stjepan Bekavac, Mario Jareb and Miroslav Rozić was published in 2015 by the Alfa publishing house in Mostar.<sup>28</sup> This textbook is mostly used in classes in Croatian. It is interesting that this textbook contains almost the same content and design as the one published a year earlier by the same publishing house headquartered in Zagreb,<sup>29</sup> but the difference is that the Mostar variant contains additional units that concern Bosnia and Herzegovina and the list of authors is expanded to add one more author who is from Herzegovina. The thematic unit “Creation and Development of Independent Croatia and BiH” contains five lessons: “Breakup of SFRY”, “Rebellion of Serbs in Croatia”, “From International Recognition to Victory in the War of Independence” and “Bosnia and Herzegovina – an Independent Country”. Most attention is paid to the Croatian path to independence and the War of Independence (149-176)<sup>30</sup> and the role of the Croatian people in general, while only three pages are dedicated to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the 1992-1995 war (177-180). Out of 202 pages of the textbook, 88 pages focus on the national history, i.e. 21 units – 20 of which focus on the history of Croatia and only one, aforementioned, on the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>31</sup> On this example, as well as on the example of some of the known history textbooks in Croatian, we see that the national history is understood and presented through the history of Croatia, and that very little content concerns the history of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the history of BiH as a country. There is a strong undertone of the national feeling, expressed through emphasising the unfavourable position of Croats in the former Yugoslav countries, and the development of the national feeling through empathy for victims of the War of Independence.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-189.

<sup>28</sup> Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Bekavac / Jareb 2014. Lessons about the war in Croatia (The War of independence) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be found on pages 155-176.

<sup>30</sup> Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić 2015. Lessons about the war in Croatia can be found on pages 155-176 and are completely identical to the textbook used in Croatia.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.



The third analysed textbook is also the newest. It was published in 2018 by JP Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva Istočno Novo Sarajevo [t/n: The Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Aids], edited by Dragiša D. Vasić, associate professor of the Department for History of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Banja Luka.<sup>32</sup> The textbook was written according to the curriculum for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade of the primary school in the Republika Srpska, adopted in early 2018. Not many topics in the textbook concern Bosnia and Herzegovina; the accent is placed on the presentation of Serbia and Serbs in the two World Wars, and their position in Yugoslavia, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and SFRY. The topics that do treat Bosnia and Herzegovina accentuate the examples from history of the Serbian people, while other peoples are almost not even mentioned. The unit “Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Area of Former Yugoslavia in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and Early 21<sup>st</sup> century” treats the following lessons: “The Decline of Yugoslavia. Wars for the Yugoslav Legacy”, “Serbia and Montenegro in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> and Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, “Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995). The Creation of Republika Srpska” and “Republika Srpska in the Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina”.<sup>33</sup> The approach is one-sided and extremely national. The Serb victims in all wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are emphasised with the aim of creating empathy with students and of developing the national sensibility towards their own people, while any kind of responsibility for the wars and sufferings is completely neglected, which will be seen from the analysed content. In terms of presenting other peoples, this textbook is characteristic by relativizing and expressing stereotypes for the purpose of justifying the position of one’s own people.

The last analysed content is the book entitled “Nastavni materijali za izučavanje opsade Sarajeva i zločina genocida počinjenog u Bosni i Hercegovini u period 1992-1995 u osnovnim I srednjim školama u Kantonu Srajevo” [Teaching Aids for Studying the Siege of Sarajevo and the Crimes of Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1992-1995 Period in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Sarajevo Canton], published in April 2018 by the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Sarajevo Canton, intended for the primary and secondary schools in the Sarajevo Canton that conduct classes in accordance with the Bosnian language curriculum. In accordance with the new Law on Primary Education and the new Law on the Secondary Education passed in May 2017, stipulating that the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Education, Science and Youth will enable students of primary and secondary schools to more intensively learn about the siege of Sarajevo and the 1992-1995 aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially crimes against humanity and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina in that period, the Ministry

<sup>32</sup> Bacić 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 177-191.

appointed a committee of experts that drafted the materials.<sup>34</sup> The published materials distributed to all schools, i.e. to all teachers, contain four teaching units with titles that are planned by the curriculum, as well as a methodological handbook for all teachers containing a proposal of implementation of the teaching units, as well as some additional materials for teachers. The four units contained in the materials (“The 1992-1995 Siege of Sarajevo – Military and Political Aspect of the Siege”, “The 1992-1995 Siege of Sarajevo – Everyday Life and Violations of Humanitarian Law”, “Ethnic Cleansing, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity in BiH, 1992-1995”, and “Genocide in Srebrenica in 1995”) provide a lot of factual, as well as source materials. As will be seen in the analysed examples, Bosniaks are here presented as victims, while the Sarajevo-centred perspective also characterises this approach because of the attention dedicated to the siege of Sarajevo, while other cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina that were also under siege during the 1992-1995 war (Bihać, Gorazde, Srebrenica, Žepa) are briefly mentioned.<sup>35</sup>

In the analysis, our goal was to find the terms that characterise the 1992-1995 war – aggression, civil war, etc., as well as the terms that signify and present the war crimes – genocide, war crimes, concentration camps, mass suffering, as well as the individuals that are portrayed and presented as the participants in the war and the way victims are presented.

### Characterisation of the War – Aggression or Civil War?

By an insight into the content of the analysed textbooks, we can establish that the terms aggression and civil war saw their great return after the offensive content, as we have explained earlier, was banished from textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the context of teaching about the 1992-1995 war. Interpreting the war in new circumstances again brought the two notions into opposition. We see the term aggression in textbooks in the Bosnian language. Thus, the textbook written by Šabotić / Čehajić reads: *After the incidents that lasted for over several months and inter-ethnic conflicts that took place throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 1 April 1992, paramilitary units from Serbia, the so-called “Arkan’s forces” occupied the city of Bijeljina. Five days later, i.e. on 6 April 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina became an internationally recognised country. On the same day, the JNA units in cooperation with the forces loyal to Radovan Karadžić’s Serb Democratic Party (JNA reserve*

<sup>34</sup> Muminović et al. 2018, 3. The committee of experts were: Azerina Muminović and Asmir Hasičić, authors of the learning materials for students; Melisa Forić Plasto, MA, the author of the methodological and didactic handbook for the teaching units for students; professor Zijad Šehić, PhD, Mesud Šadinlija, PhD and Jasmin Medić, MA, reviewers of the learning materials for students and authors of additional materials for teachers.

<sup>35</sup> Muminović et al. 2018, 12.

*forces, Arkan's forces, Šešelji's forces, White Eagles, etc.) attacked the capital – Sarajevo. That marked the beginning of the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina.*<sup>36</sup> The textbook used in the curriculum in Croatia also deems the war as aggression:

*The open aggression started in April 1992 by the blockade of Sarajevo and Mostar. Because of the prevalence in weapons and the JNA assistance, Serbs realised their military goals by mid-1992. The Bosniak leadership was indecisive at the beginning, while Croats resisted decisively. The prevailingly Bosniak army started operations not before the fall of 1992. By November that same year, Serbs captured about 70% of the territory while Sarajevo was held under siege from the onset of aggression.*<sup>37</sup> In this last case, we can observe an arguable generalisation “Serbs captured...” and “Croats resisted...” where the blame or the merit is ascribed to a people as a whole. That is why it is important to mention here the example of Croats who, following the attack on the village Ravno in eastern Herzegovina, recognised the danger and *for the purpose of the protection of the Croatian area established the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia (18 November 1991) and after that, for the purpose of self-defence, also the Croatian Defence Council*”.<sup>38</sup> Here we, in fact, witness a clear legitimisation of the act of separatism for which certain Croats would be prosecuted at the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia.

The word aggression is mentioned also in the additional material “On the Siege and Genocide”, in the introductory review questions at the beginning of the lesson: “Describe the preparations for aggression and war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (...) You have learnt that the attack on the capital city – Sarajevo – marked the beginning of an open aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina”, as well as the task which states “Recall with the help of the teacher the term aggression and the way in which it is brought into a connection with the term ‘civil war’ in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”<sup>39</sup> These are good examples of the application of multiperspectivity where students are told that there is also a different understanding of the nature of the war that took place in this period. Also, the term aggression is again mentioned in the lesson, in relation to the international recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 6 April, which is the date presented as the beginning of the aggression against the country.<sup>40</sup> The text underlines that the aggression, as well as the siege of Sarajevo, was perpetrated by JNA, the Serb volunteers and members of the illegal troops of the Serb Territorial Defence and Ministry of Interior.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Šabotić / Čehajić 2012, 183-184.

<sup>37</sup> Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić 2015, 178.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>39</sup> Muminović et al. 2018, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 8.

Civil war is the term we have already identified in the curriculum analysis for history as a subject in the Republika Srpska, as well as in the lessons contained in the textbook. The text mentions a disagreement between peoples regarding the future of BiH and its remainder in Yugoslavia, i.e. the declaration of independence. To quote the text: *The problem arose when Slovenia and Croatia declared independence and that is when the war started in the neighbourhood. The issue of the future of BiH arise. SDS party advocated the remainder in Yugoslavia. SDA and HDZ parties had attempted to avoid the will of the elected representatives of the Serb people in order to separate BiH from Yugoslavia, and in doing so, they failed to act in accordance with the acts of the then-constitution. That is why Serb representatives organised a plebiscite in November 1991, when a vast majority of Serbs voted to stay in Yugoslavia. On the basis of the plebiscite, the Assembly of the Serb People in BiH, declared on 9 January 1992 the Republic of Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina (from August 1992, it has been called Republika Srpska). In the meantime, Serbs organised autonomous regions in areas where they were a majority. The majority of Muslims and Croats voted for an independent BiH on 29 February and 1 March 1992.*<sup>42</sup> This example shows ascribing blame to other two peoples collectively, in relation to the beginning of the war. Emphasising the vast majority of Serbs opposite the majority of Muslims and Croats concerning the issue of remaining in Yugoslavia, i.e. proclaiming independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is also interesting. That too is a clear message for the students related to the role of one's own people, yet avoiding the fact that a significant number of Serbs also voted for the independent Bosnia and Herzegovina at the referendum. The blame for the outbreak of war is mostly ascribed to Alija Izetbegović, president of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina: *Alija Izetbegović, the leader of Muslims, withdrew from the agreement to the European Community's plan (the Cutiliero Plan) by which the war could have been avoided through decentralisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The USA and the European Community recognised the independent BiH in April 1992. Then, the war spread, carrying the characteristics of an inter-ethnic and interreligious conflict.*<sup>43</sup> The lesson continues so as to describe the nature of the civil war: *The Serb, Croat and Muslim (from September 1993 they have been called Bosniaks) armies were in conflict in the civil war in BiH.*<sup>44</sup> The text further explains the organisation and the structure of the three armies and their collaborators. Thus, HVO was aided by the Croatian Army, while the BiH Army received material and military assistance from the Islamic countries, including the engagement of the mujahedeen guerrillas, while

<sup>42</sup> Васић 2018, 185.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Serbs relied on the assistance from the SR Yugoslavia.<sup>45</sup> It is certainly necessary to mention the claim that the Serb army in Bosnia and Herzegovina was outnumbered, but was still superior in the beginning of the war because it had received the greatest share of weapons from the Yugoslav People's Army which had retreated from Bosnia and Herzegovina after May 1992, as well as because it also had trained officers,<sup>46</sup> which is aimed to cause a special empathy with students.

It is interesting that the lesson focusing on the breakup of Yugoslavia that also mentions wars in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina mentions that those were wars for the Yugoslav legacy, without providing an additional explanation as to what that legacy might be.<sup>47</sup> *The scope and the time of wars for the Yugoslav legacy was significantly controlled by world powers. After the conflict in Slovenia ended, the war broke out in Croatia in the second half of 1991. Then it started in BiH from 1992 to 1995. After that, the Albanians rebelled in Kosmet<sup>48</sup> and NATO launched an aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999. Finally, an armed conflict ensued between Macedonians and Albanians in 2001.*<sup>49</sup> This example shows the scope of what was asserted as wars for the Yugoslav legacy, but mentioning the term aggression is even more interesting in a completely different context: the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999. A significant amount of attention is paid to the event in the lesson about Serbia and Montenegro in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>50</sup>

## Crimes

Presenting crimes in textbooks is one of the more sensitive issues. In what way to present mass sufferings to children without initiating hatred towards the perpetrator, not only an individual, but the entire collective, the people, due to generalisations? Sadly, numerous examples through history have shown us that this very theme has frequently been a means of manipulation and abuse, especially in processes of ethnic and national homogenisations immediately before the 1992-1995 war.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 178-181.

<sup>48</sup> Translator's note: The Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, abbreviated form for which is Kosmet, as defined in the Constitution of Serbia.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 182-183. "A new temptation for the FRY soon after the wars ended in Croatia and BiH was the Albanian rebellion in Kosovo and Metohija (1996-1998). The FRY army and police quashed the rebellion. However, in early 1999, western powers demanded from the FRY to pull back the army from Kosmet and to distribute NATO armed forces. Having refused the ultimatum, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was attacked by NATO allies led by the USA, without obtaining the prior approval by the UN. From 24 March to 10 June 1999 (78 days), military targets were bombed, but also bridges and factories; numerous schools, hospitals and apartment buildings were hit..." p. 182.

In the Šabotić / Čehajić textbook, the notion of ethnic cleansing is presented, as well as concentration camps, shelling of Sarajevo and Tuzla and the Srebrenica genocide. The following is stated about ethnic cleansing: *In the initial phase, the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Croatian Defence Council acted together against JNA units that had become the Army of the Republika Srpska in May 1992. Owing to vast amounts of inherited weapons, that army conquered more than 60% of the territory in the first year of the war. In that process, it had ethnically cleansed all areas from non-Serbs, destroying cultural, religious and other historical monuments that confirmed their national identity.*<sup>51</sup> The textbook provides also the definition of ethnic cleansing – a systematic expulsion or killing of civilians in a certain area because of their religious or ethnic affiliation.<sup>52</sup> As far as concentration camps are concerned, the text reads: *Non-Serb population which had not fled on time or which had no money to buy freedom was most frequently sent to concentration camps. Concentration camps especially known for cruelty over prisoners were Omarska, Trnopolje, Keraterm and Manjača. Concentration camps for Bosniaks were formed also during the conflict between BiH Army and HVO, for example, Heliodrom near Mostar and Dretelj near Čapljina.*<sup>53</sup> Here too we bear witness to a selective approach to facts, i.e. a deliberate omission of mentioning the camps where Serbs and Croats were imprisoned by Bosniaks. The authors also mention the issue of the UN safe zones of Bihać, Žepa, Srebrenica, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Goražde: *The extent to which those zones were actually safe was shown by the 1995 events. Sarajevo had for months been exposed to continuous shelling, while 71 citizens of Tuzla were killed by the shell fired from Serb positions on 25 May. In July 1995, the RS Army and Ministry of Interior, under the command of Ratko Mladić, conquered the “safe zones” Žepa and Srebrenica, killing over 8000 Bosniaks. That was the greatest genocide committed in Europe after WWII, which was also confirmed by the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague in 2007.*<sup>54</sup>

The textbook in the Croatian language does not mention the crimes and concentration camps. Expulsion of the population is mentioned in one place: *For Bosniaks, the declaration of the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia (3 July 1992) was disputable, and Croats were of the opinion that the Bosniak leadership wanted to minimise the role of Croats in all spheres of life in BiH. In some parts of BiH (central Bosnia, Rama, Mostar), political disputes turned into an armed conflict that resulted in expulsion of the population and a significant number of deaths.*<sup>55</sup> Here we

<sup>51</sup> Šabotić / Čehajić 2012, 185.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 186-187.

<sup>55</sup> Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić 2015, 178.

see generalisation that leads to relativizing numerous crimes committed at several locations during that conflict. The subject is certainly too complex for a detailed analysis in a history textbook, but we again reflect on the amount of attention and teaching units dedicated to the issue of the War for Independence in Croatia compared to the issue of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. What is more, it seems that the Croatian War for Independence was presented affirmatively and indirectly glorified, which can certainly be ascribed to the position of the victor and the very victory that had brought the long-desired independence. Also, Srebrenica and Žepa are mentioned and the suffering of the population for which the blame is partly ascribed to the international community: *The international community showed a complete powerlessness in July 1995 when Serbs occupied the protected UN zones of Srebrenica and Žepa, without being punished. Upon the occupation, the biggest slaughter of civilians took place there after WWII. That is why numerous war crimes indictments ensued.*<sup>56</sup> As we can see, the statements here are imprecise, without mentioning the details, the qualification of the crime as a genocide, explaining who the victims were, which institution issued the indictments, etc., which can be understood as minimalization of the crime, most probably because it was not perpetrated over the Croat people.

The textbook in the Republika Srpska does not present the issue of war crimes separately in a lesson about the 1992-1995 war in BiH. Information about the killings and crimes are mentioned collectively in the lesson about wars from the Yugoslav legacy, i.e. in the section on the consequences of war: *It is difficult to determine the extent of suffering and material devastation in the Yugoslav wars. According to the UN data, from 1992 to 1995, 102 622 individuals perished in BiH, and 17 469 in Croatia. Wars for the Yugoslav legacy were national and ethnic conflicts. Mass war crimes were committed in: Srebrenica, Kozarac, Kazani, Kravice, Ahmići, Pakrac, Ovčara, Medački džep. Vukovar, Sarajevo and Mostar were most destroyed cities.*<sup>57</sup> Thus, the places of suffering and execution of the worst war crimes and crimes against humanity have only been mentioned without an elaboration on the perpetrators and the victims. This too can be viewed as a form of relativizing of all horrors of war by placing them to the same level, by which the author wanted to show that all parties committed war crimes and that the victims were members of all peoples. Srebrenica is mentioned on another place in the textbook, in connection with the end of the war in 1995, in a lesson treating the “Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina”: “A more determined approach of the USA and changes at the frontlines contributed to the establishment of peace. The RS Army conquered Srebrenica and Žepa in

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>57</sup> Васић 2018, 180.

July”.<sup>58</sup> What happened in Srebrenica and Žepa after that is not mentioned at all, which supports mentioning of Srebrenica in the aforementioned list of places where mass war crimes took place. The crime of genocide is not mentioned, meaning it is absolutely denied, which is in accordance with the ruling politics in the RS.

The text further mentions the term ethnic cleansing: *One of the more important consequences of war for the Yugoslav legacy is forced migrations, called “ethnic cleansing”. The population left their homes, fleeing the armies of the opposing peoples. Almost 450 000 Serbs fled and were banished from Croatia. According to the 1991 census, Serbs constituted 12%, while their number in Croatia according to the 2011 census was just over 4%. Over 1,2 million people of all ethnicities were displaced in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the (disputed) results from the 2013 census, Serbs constitute 2,3% of the population in the BiH Federation. In 1999, Serbs had to leave Kosmet after the Yugoslav Army and police retreated from the area.*<sup>59</sup> On this example, we again witness a selective, one-sided and simplified interpretation and presentation of facts. Equalising the term ethnic cleansing with the term forced migrations can even be signified as a distortion of facts, while the sentence stating that the population left their homes before the armies of the opposing peoples is a simplified presentation of a complex process implemented over the non-Serb population in the territory controlled by the Bosnian Serb forces. Concentration camps were not even mentioned. By presenting the data solely through numbers of the banished Serb population the aim is to increase the impression of the Serb sacrifice, without any explanation of when and why those people were banished, whether or not it was a forced migration, or who the perpetrators were. It is also interesting to mention the example of a historical text provided at the end of the lesson for an analysis by authors Čedomir Antić and Nenad Kecmanović, related to the total of 18 films about Serbs and wars for the Yugoslav legacy, filmed in the period from 1996 to 2011 by the Hollywood production, aimed at creating *a distorted image of Serbs as the only ones responsible for the war and its horrors, claiming that that show was in accordance with the politics of the then-centres of world power. (...) These films portray Serbs in three ways: as marginal freaks and villains, as exclusively negative characters, or as the manifestation of evil opposite the good neighbours, powerless to survive without foreign assistance.*<sup>60</sup> This carefully selected source corresponds to the attitudes expressed several times in the lessons about the role/the guilt of the international community in the process of the dissolution of Yugoslavia.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Васић 2018, 180.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 178, 179.



An entire lesson is dedicated to the ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity in the teaching materials for primary and secondary schools in the Sarajevo Canton.<sup>62</sup> The introduction contains a reminder of the consequences of WWII and the horrors that the Nazi regime perpetrated over the population in the occupied parts of Europe, especially Jews. The author mentions the terms holocaust and genocide, bringing them exclusively into a connection with Jews, avoiding to mention other peoples, more concretely, Roma, Serbs, etc. In relation to the notion of ethnic cleansing, the following is stated: *Ethnic cleansing is a consequence of the politics aimed at a forceful change of the ethnic structure in a certain area. It is implemented by systematic measures of denying civil and human rights to a section of the population, as well as through mass violence that includes persecution, destruction of personal property and cultural and historical heritage, unlawful arrests, torture and murder. The policy of ethnic cleansing was first implemented in the borderline areas of the country – eastern, northern and north-western Bosnia. The fact that ethnic cleansing was a political determinant of the RS political leadership can be clearly seen from the Decision on Strategic Goals of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 12 May 1992 (announced on 26 November 1993), passed by the Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*<sup>63</sup> The continuation of the lesson contains a facsimile of the order of Svetozar Andrić, commander of the Birač Brigade of the VRS, on how to treat the population in the area of the Serb Autonomous Region of Birač, which, among other, reads: “Execute the expulsion of women and children from the Muslim villages to Kalesija and Gračanica, and send the men to the internment camps”, and the task for the students is to analyse the sources with the help of the teacher.<sup>64</sup> The lesson also mentions numerous crimes: *Most crimes and the most severe crimes, including the crime of genocide, were perpetrated in the areas where an intensive ethnic cleansing had been perpetrated first, in the area of Bosanska Krajina and eastern Bosnia. In those areas, most mass graves have been discovered, such as Tomašica near Prijedor (...)* The consequence of the ethnic cleansing policy was also the formation of a significant number of concentration camps. The imprisoned people at the camps lived in inhumane conditions. Diseases, famine, maltreatment and murder was part of the daily life in the camps.<sup>65</sup> As an illustration, the map of mass graves in Bosnia and Herzegovina is provided. The author also stated the most significant concentration camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the information on who controlled them: *The biggest camps of the RS Army and police were in north-western Bosnia, such as Omarska, Trnopolje, Keratern and Manjača. Then followed the well-known camps*

<sup>62</sup> Muminović et al. 2018, 25-33.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 26.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 31.

such as Luka in Brčko, the Foča correctional facility, the “Vuk Karadžić” primary school in Bratunac, the Batković camp in Bijeljina, the Sušica camp in Vlasenica, and the Kula camp in the Sarajevo area. Large HVO-controlled concentration camps were Heliodrom in Mostar and the “Dretelj” military barrack camp. BiH Army kept prisoners in the internment camps for war prisoners, jails and other places of imprisonment (for example, Čelebići have been characterised by the ICTY as a prison camp).<sup>66</sup> Here we see a positive example of presenting the information on the camps controlled by all three armies, although it is not mentioned who was imprisoned there. We can mark as positive also the comprehensive explanation of the issue of processing the war crimes before ICTY; the explanation on the establishment and functioning of the court has been provided. As far as concrete crimes are concerned, the author attempted to present a multiperspective approach in presenting the judgement: *In accordance with the number and severity of war crimes and crimes against humanity, the biggest number of trials was conducted against political, military and police leaders of the Republika Srpska, as well as members of their military and police structures for crimes committed over Bosniaks and Croats. A small number of leaders and representatives of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) stood trial for crimes against Bosniaks and Serbs, as well as members of the BiH Army for war crimes over Serbs and Croats.*<sup>67</sup> This is amended by short information on some of the convicted war criminals from all three peoples, as well as materials for analysis and discussion that include examples of the acknowledgment of guilt by Biljana Plavšić and Dražen Erdemović.<sup>68</sup>

Still, most attention in this material is dedicated to the Srebrenica genocide. The total of 12 pages contain the chronology of the events in Srebrenica and eastern Bosnia (Bijeljina, Zvornik, Vlasenica, Bratunac, Višegrad, Foča, Rogatica, Rudo, Čajniče, etc.) from the beginning of the war to the fall of the enclave.<sup>69</sup> The text abundantly presents the facts for the purpose of presenting the horrors and the scope of suffering of Bosniaks exposed to ethnic cleansing by Serb forces in this area. The fact is that this sensitive topic is very difficult to present and bring to an optimal measure, but we are of the opinion that the amount of materials is not appropriate for the age of students, thus we wonder about the effect it would ultimately cause.

The most controversial presentation in this material would be images comparing the crimes in BiH with the crimes committed during the holocaust in Europe in WWII – the yellow stars of David and the white ribbons used to mark the Bosniak and Croat population in Prijedor, prisoners in concentration camps behind the barbed wire in Buchenwald and Trnopolje, as well as the images of mass graves in

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 30, 32-33.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 34-46.

Majdanek and in Pilica near Zvornik.<sup>70</sup> Such disturbing images, although important to present, are not suitable for textbooks, and if they are used in the teaching process, students need to be especially prepared. The second aspect is the comparison of crimes. The author, we assume, wanted to present the examples from history that students are already acquainted with, but the real danger is in the message that is being sent that brings to the same level the holocaust and the presented crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the purpose of increasing the significance of the victims of one's own people.

### **Wartime Personalities**

We have attempted to reflect upon the personalities that appear in the lessons about the 1992-1995 war, and the way their role is presented. We mainly see politicians from that period, war criminals and heroes. Different perspectives in the presentation of certain personalities are especially illustrative, and are, as such, worth analysing.

Alija Izetbegović is mentioned in almost all analysed textbooks. In the 9<sup>th</sup> grade history textbook in the Bosnian language, there are two photographs of Alija Izetbegović. The first photograph is a portrait with the comment that it was the first president of Presidency of the independent Bosnia and Herzegovina,<sup>71</sup> while he is seen on the other photograph with Franjo Tuđman and Slobodan Milošević after signing of the Dayton Agreement.<sup>72</sup> In relation to the latter photography, the students are given a task to pay attention to the people presented in the image and say who appears pleased and who is not, and to compare the photography with that of Dragiša Cvetković and Vladko Maček. The photograph of signing of the Dayton Agreement in Paris in December 1995, depicting presidents Milošević, Tuđman and Izetbegović together with presidents and representatives of the USA, France, Germany and Great Britain is presented in the textbook by Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić.<sup>73</sup> The description below the image does not contain names, nor does the very text of the lesson mention the names of politicians, generals, etc. In the history textbook used in the Republika Srpska, Alija Izetbegović is mentioned as the leader of Muslims, responsible for the retreat of the Cutilero Plan, and the following text is written under the photograph: "Alija Izetbegović (1925-2003), a jurist, Islamic theologian and politician. As a youth, he was active in a pro-Hitler organisation 'Mladi muslimani' ['Young Muslims'] for which he served time after the World

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>71</sup> Šabotić / Čehajić 2012, 185.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>73</sup> Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić 2015, 180.

War II. He wrote the Islamic Declaration where he advocated a state based on the Qur'an, which is why the communist authorities again put him on trial. He was the founder and the leader of the Party of Democratic Action and president of BiH Presidency.<sup>74</sup> Also, the textbook presents an image at the end of the lesson of signing the Dayton Agreement in Paris.<sup>75</sup>

The same textbook contains photographs and short biographies of Franjo Tuđman, Slobodan Milošević, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, which are especially interesting for comparison with the aforementioned biography of Alija Izetbegović.

*Franjo Tuđman (1922-1999), the first president of independent Croatia. In the Second World War, he was a partisan. After the war, he was promoted to the rank of a general of the Yugoslav People's Army. After he retired from JNA, he wrote historical papers in which he, among other, minimised the crimes against Serbs and Jews in the Independent State of Croatia. He was arrested and sentenced for nationalistic activities. He was the founder and the leader of the Croatian Democratic Party, the most significant political party in Croatia.*<sup>76</sup>

*Slobodan Milošević (1941-2006), president of the Republic of Serbia, and later also of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He was a jurist. Before becoming a politician, he was a banker. He was the leader of the Communist Party of Serbia and then the Socialist Party of Serbia. From 2001 to 2006 he was imprisoned at the International Tribunal in the Hague.*<sup>77</sup>

*Radovan Karadžić (1945), psychiatrist, poet, politician. As the founder and the leader of the Serb Democratic Party, his role in the creation of the Republika Srpska was highly important. Serbian authorities extradited him to the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague in 2008.*<sup>78</sup>

*Ratko Mladić (1943) had an important role as the colonel of the Yugoslav People's Army in the defence of Serbs in Croatia in 1991. From 1992 to 1996, he was a general and a chief of staff at the Republika Srpska Army. Serbian authorities extradited him to the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague in 2011.*<sup>79</sup>

It is evident that Izetbegović's and Tuđman's biographies emphasise their term in prison, as well as their negative role towards the past system and the Serb people. Opposite to that, two politicians and a general are presented in a more positive light.

<sup>74</sup> Васић 2018, 186.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 186. It is indicative that the photographs of Mladić and Izetbegović are placed one below the other.

The author makes interesting statements about how Serbian authorities extradited Karadžić and Mladić to the ICTY (which can be interpreted as assigning the blame on someone and emphasising the injustice) without stating the reason why they are there. First-instance judgements pronounced by the court in 2016 and 2017 are not even mentioned.

Data on the indictments, trials and judgements, as well as the warrant facsimiles containing a reward for information about Milošević, Karadžić and Mladić can be found in the teaching materials for the Sarajevo Canton.<sup>80</sup> These materials also mention other judgments of the Hague Tribunal concerning the siege of Sarajevo – Dragomir Milošević, Stanislav Galić; for crimes against civilians in Prijedor – Milomir Stakić; for crimes in Ahmići – Dario Kordić; for crimes in Čelebići – Esad Landžo<sup>81</sup>; as well as for crimes in Srebrenica – Radoslav Krstić, Vujadin Popović, Ljubiša Beara, and others.<sup>82</sup>

### **Victims – Human Perspective and Universal Values**

In abundance of factual evidence that present the events of the 1992-1995 war, we have attempted to find a human perspective. One would expect it to be sought through a description or through a story about victims. In the Šabotić / Čehajić textbook, victims are practically not even mentioned. The authors focused on presenting the chronology of events, which is almost completely dehumanised. The human perspective can be seen in a picture of starved and tortured prisoners from the Trnopolje concentration camp, standing behind the barbed wire, liberty taken away from them, and the questions for students follow: *What kinds of feelings does this photograph evoke in you? Why are these people behind the barbed wire? Why are they malnourished? What does that mean? Is there any justification for such a treatment of prisoners?*<sup>83</sup>

Such an example cannot be found in the history textbook by Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić. One sentence mentioning the victims is the one concerning the fall of Srebrenica and Žepa: *When the area fell, the greatest suffering of civilians after the World War Two took place.*<sup>84</sup>

In D. Vasić's textbook, victims of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina are invisible, but those that were killed during the NATO bombing are meticulously described: *From 24 March to 10 June 1999 (78 days), military targets were bombed, but also*

<sup>80</sup> Muminović et al. 2018, 29.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>83</sup> Šabotić / Čehajić 2012, 185.

<sup>84</sup> Bekavac / Jareb / Rozić 2015, 179.

*bridges and factories; numerous schools, hospitals and apartment buildings were hit. The aggressor was technically superior. He mainly attacked by missiles fired from the ships in the Adriatic and by aircrafts. Between 1200 and 2500 civilians were killed, including 88 children. Cluster bombs and those with depleted uranium were used, which killed and caused disease even after the war.*<sup>85</sup>

The best example of the impact of war to human life is the lesson “The Siege of Sarajevo, Everyday Life and Violations of Humanitarian Law” which describes the everyday life of Sarajevans in the period from 1992 to 1995.<sup>86</sup> Examples of nutrition, humanitarian aid, assembling firewood, finding water, etc. are suitable to develop empathy with students.

## Conclusion

The presented results of the analysis of textbooks for history as a subject in the final grades of primary school have again exhibited us the trend of a monoperspective approach to topics concerning the national history and themes relating to the past war. The textbook content is politicised together with the need of reintroducing it to the curricula and to the teaching practice, although it has never been eliminated. Starting from the viewpoint that the term national is interpreted differently, the expectation was that the interpretation of the 1992-1995 war would be different. Textbooks have been written in specifically designed curricula and they are trying to meet the projected learning outcomes which, sadly, do not contain universal values. By analysing the literature list used in writing of the textbooks, we have reached a conclusion that there are only several more recent bibliographical units<sup>87</sup>, as well as materials such as “Historical and Strategic Basis of the Republika Srpska” and “The Long Movement between Slaughter and Ploughing” by Milorad Ekmečić<sup>88</sup>. Such literature list is not provided for the history textbook in Croatian, while the Sarajevo Canton teaching materials contain over 130 different bibliographical units<sup>89</sup>, as well as the list of judgements from the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia at the Hague with links for access.<sup>90</sup>

Once forbidden and deleted offensive content such as aggression and civil war has been reintroduced to the textbooks without sanctions. The only change for the better is that the language of hatred and stereotypes such that once appeared in

<sup>85</sup> Васић 2018, 182-183.

<sup>86</sup> Muminović et al. 2018, 16-24.

<sup>87</sup> Šabotić/Čehajić 2012, 196-197.

<sup>88</sup> Васић 2018, 193.

<sup>89</sup> Muminović et al. 2018, 181-186.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 167-178.

textbooks in the 1990s are now not seen directly, but can be read between the lines, or through the silence about the events that should be part of an entire narrative. No wonder then that the authors of the textbook behave as if they are picking from a buffet, taking only what they like, i.e. that which is suitable nationally and politically, depending on the interests of their own people. What characterises the analysed content is a selective presentation of facts, emphasising one's own people as the victim, and minimising or completely ignoring the victims of other peoples, avoiding to mention the guilty individuals from one's own people, etc. The conclusion that the human perspective is almost completely invisible in the textbooks is a matter of significant concern. War as a phenomenon that completely dehumanises the society is not portrayed in that light, while the values of peace, freedom and cooperation cannot at all be read through the analysed content. And at this very place we need to ask the question of the message we are sending to the students and of the learning outcomes that result from the teaching about the 1992-1995 war.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the case countries mentioned in the Council of Europe's Recommendation on the history teaching in conflict and post-conflict areas.<sup>91</sup> Its very text is highly useful as a reminder of the role and the goal of history teaching: *history also has a key political role to play in today's Europe. It can contribute to greater understanding, tolerance and confidence between individuals and between the peoples of Europe or it can become a force for division, violence and intolerance... Therefore, history teaching can be a tool to support peace and reconciliation in conflict and post-conflict areas as well as tolerance and understanding (...)* *History teaching is a process in which teachers are consulted, trained, retrained, supported, provided with resources, encouraged and protected in the implementation of new approaches to controversial and sensitive issues. (...) Conventional history teaching stresses a single interpretation of events as being "the Truth", which is politically expedient. It is now internationally accepted that there can be many views and interpretations, which are based on evidence. There is validity in a multiperspective approach that assists and encourages students to respect diversity and cultural difference in this increasingly globalised world, rather than conventional teaching, which can reinforce the more negative aspects of nationalism. (...) Multiperspective history teaching will give students analytical skills, (and subject knowledge), that will help them to develop more critical minds. It is therefore a subject that can assist in a very vital part of a child's development in this era of changing dynamics.*<sup>92</sup>

By analysing the current history textbooks, excerpting relevant examples from the narrative and lining them up in a parallel succession, we have obtained a multiperspective image that is amended, inspected and complemented. What

<sup>91</sup> CoE Recommendation (1880)2009.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

is avoided in one is explained in the other textbook and vice versa. A consensus for determining a joint approach to the study of this period in history at schools by historians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as stipulated by the CoE Parliamentary Assembly, is still far away, appearing unreachable as long as the education at all levels in the country is organised in accordance with the ethno-national principle and as long as the learning outcomes about wars is hatred towards the other, the different, the aggressor, the one who had started the war, the one who caused and committed the crimes.

What is left is multiperspectivity. Experts who treat the issue of textbooks in divided and post-conflict societies, apart from the short-term measures such as the moratorium on teaching about the sensitive issues that concern conflicts, or the removal of offensive content from textbooks – all of which have been tested in our area – propose the joint long-term projects of developing textbooks such are the French-German or the Polish-German textbooks, as well as additional teaching kits prepared by the EUROCLIO and CDRSEE through different projects and by applying a multiperspective approach.<sup>93</sup> Dubravka Stojanović has provided an outstanding example of the approach to teaching about Srebrenica, through three different levels: 1. presenting the exact data (names, numbers, event), 2. cross-sectioning the historical sources (press – of different kind and from different time period; documents) and 3. using memories and witnesses.<sup>94</sup> That could certainly be a beginning. A step further would be a textbook in accordance with the Israeli-Palestinian textbook containing three parallel columns – left, providing narratives from the Israeli perspective, right – containing narratives of the same event from the Palestinian perspective, and central – an empty column where students themselves write their interpretations of the event.<sup>95</sup> In our case, it would certainly be a textbook containing several columns, but the effect would undoubtedly be better than divisions and manipulations of history that we see today.

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<sup>93</sup> Bentrovato 2017, 37-76.

<sup>94</sup> Stojanović 2014, 17-21.

<sup>95</sup> Adwan et al. 2003.



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