

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE NATO BOMBING OF YUGOSLAVIA IN FOREIGN ARTISTIC AND MASS MEDIA TEXTS: UNJUSTIFIED WAR OR JUSTIFIED INTERVENTION?

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Abstract

In addition to scientific and historical accounts, artistic and media texts also construct stories of significant events, thus constructing ideologically charged narratives of present and past events. These narratives can become official versions of the past that shape collective memory and identity. Unlike history books, which are written with a greater time distance, media and artistic texts directly influence the formation of narratives about current events and therefore the self-confidence and self-understanding of the collective. Based on an interest in the question of how identity is formed in today's Serbia, this article deals with media and artistic texts that speak about one of the most significant events in Serbia's recent history - the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Opinions about this event are divided, and the totality of information about the bombing seems unknowable. To establish a more objective approach to this issue, the images of the bombing created by foreign media and artists are analyzed from the point of view of Memory Studies and through theories of arts and media (Assmann, Hartman, Felman, Laub, Kuljić), primarily using content and linguistic discourse analysis (Foucault, Spitzmüller, Warnke). The analysis has shown that most of the analyzed media texts justify the bombing, while all artworks criticize and condemn it. This has led us to the conclusion that the bombing wasn't justified, and that media texts on the subject served as political propaganda. In other words, artistic texts have a greater potential for social and political criticism than the media.

Key words: NATO bombing of FRY, arts and media, memory studies, German press, humanitarian interventions.

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РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЈА НАТО БОМБАРДОВАЊА ЈУГОСЛАВИЈЕ У МЕЂУНАРОДНИМ УМЕТНИЧКИМ И МЕДИЈСКИМ ТЕКСТОВИМА: НЕОПРАВДАНИ РАТ ИЛИ ОПРАВДАНА ИНТЕРВЕНЦИЈА?

Апстракт

Поред историјских, уметнички и медијски текстови стварају приче о значајним догађајима и производе одређене идеолошки обликоване наративе који постају значајне верзије прошлости. Те верзије обликују колективно сећање и идентитет. Док су историјски удбеници писани с већом временском дистанцом, медији и уметнички текстови формирају наративе о недавним догађајима и зато утичу на тренутно саморазумевање колектива. Полазећи од интересовања за питање формирања колективног идентитета у савременој Србији, овај чланак се бави медијским и уметничким текстовима који говоре о једном од најзначајнијих догађаја у њеној новијој историји – НАТО бомбардовању Савезне Републике Југославије. Мишљења о овом догађају су изузетно подељена, а бројне чињенице о бомбардовању су и даље непознате. Да би се успоставио што објективнији приступ теми бомбардовања и питању његове оправданости, у раду су анализирани инострани медијски и уметнички текстови о бомбардовању. Показано је да већина анализираних медијских текстова оправдава бомбардовање, док га већина уметничких текстова критикује и осуђује, што не доводи до закључка да је бомбардовање оправдано, него да су медијски текстови служили у сврхе политичке пропаганде. Другим речима, показано је да уметнички текстови имају више потенцијала за друштвено-политичку критику од медијских. У раду се анализира приказ оружаног напада НАТО-а на Савезну Републику Југославију 1999. године са становишта студија сећања и теорије уметности и медија (Асман, Хартман, Фелман, Лауб, Куљић), и то путем анализе садржаја и лингвистичке анализе дискурса (Фуко, Шпицмиллер, Варнке).

Кључне речи: НАТО бомбардовање Југославије, уметност и медији, студије сећања, немачка штампа, хуманитарне интервенције.

INTRODUCTION

The NATO bombing of Yugoslavia is a very significant event in the recent history of Yugoslavia and Serbia, however - due to many factors (and primarily due to confusing interpretations and the current process of Euro and NATO integration of Serbia), it has been suppressed by “policies of forgetting” (Conerton). There has been no

(...) serious public problematization and critical analysis of this stage in recent history. While the victims of the bombing seek at least "recognition that we were at war" because they believe that this fact is being denied, society is taking no serious action on the issue. The exact number of victims is unknown, and no scientific research has been done to address the economic, psychological and any other consequences” (Mihaljinac, 2019a: 47).

Apart from the lack of an official list of casualties, there is no consensus on whether the victims can be referred to as collateral damage. On the other hand, numerous participants were accused of the crimes – Mi-

lošević, Clinton, Serbs, Americans, the European Union, NATO countries and the economic elite, which means that no party claimed responsibility for the bombing. Thus, neither victims nor perpetrators are defined by any legal process. Therefore, the bombing does not have a clear status, and based only on the range of titles used to denote the 1999 airstrikes - from military aggression to humanitarian intervention - it can be concluded that there are conflicting opinions and interpretations. There are multiple (official and unofficial) answers to the question of who is responsible for the intervention and several explanations of what the real cause of the bombing was: for example, preventing Milošević from committing crimes or introducing capitalism into a socialist country that resisted economic changes. Sadly, it is currently impossible to access all the relevant facts and comprehensive data about the bombing and make it public.

To examine this topic in greater detail and maintain an ongoing debate, this paper addresses the issue of the justification of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. In addition to that, it deals with the question of the reliability of sources from which one can gain some insight into various arguments on this topic. When it comes to current events, these are primarily media and artistic texts, as well as public speeches by intellectuals (which are usually conveyed through media). That is why this paper is a continuation of two studies completed in 2019; one dealing with the topic of the representation of the NATO bombing in the arts, and the other dealing with the representation of the NATO bombing in media. The first one is a doctorate thesis by Nina Mihaljinac, which analyses about 160 artworks on the topic of the bombing whose authors are both artists from Serbia and abroad (*Arts and Politics of Remembrance: the trauma of 1999.*), and the other is a research done by Andjela Vujošević, which analyzes the image of Serbia during the NATO bombing period in the German and Serbian media, more precisely in the Serbian weekly magazine *NIN* and the German magazine *Spiegel* (*Serbia in the German and Serbian press - linguistic discourse analysis*).

Media and artistic texts have been treated as historical sources, and the subject of the analysis is limited to foreign authors – both artists and journalists, in order to ensure a more objective approach. The paper has two goals – the first one is to present and analyze the content of selected texts on the topic of justification for the bombing (for which discourse analysis methods have been used); the second is to explore the critical potential of media and art texts as historical sources, i.e. sources through which the events they deal with can be critically and objectively viewed (for which theoretical analysis has been used in the field of memory studies). The hypothesis states that the bombing was neither legally nor morally justified, however, the foreign (German) media predominantly produced an affirmative narrative about it, as opposed to artworks – which

not only criticized the bombing, but also pointed to the problems of media propaganda and the media war that has been waged on this intervention.

*WHO CAN TELL:
UNJUSTIFIED WAR OR JUSTIFIED INTERVENTION*

The justification of the so-called humanitarian interventions is debated not only in the case of the NATO bombing of the FRY but also in other cases. For example, Fajri Matahati Muhammadin in an article on intervention in Libya states:

The legality of humanitarian intervention has been debated for a long time, both on the level of scholarly works and inter-state politics. Most of the debates surround the sources of international law (international conventions, customary international law, etc.) or functions of the UN or the politics or a combination thereof' (Muhammadin, 2018, p. 70).

In our language, the lexeme “responsibility” is primarily defined as a sense of obligation and an awareness of duty (Dictionary of the Serbian language, 2011). This issue is inevitable when talking about the NATO bombing of the FRY because the intervention was carried out without the consent of the UN Security Council, and it represents a violation of the NATO charter, which states that NATO interventions are justified only if one of the NATO countries is attacked. The bombing is also considered unjustified because of negative consequences such as civilian casualties, destruction of military and aerospace industries in Yugoslavia, displacement of peoples, and danger to human health.

NATO, on the other hand, made its official statement, i.e. that the bombing was justified because of the threat to peace in the region. Just War theory of St. Augustine lays down certain principles about the ethics of war, above all that the achievement of peace is the only justifiable goal of war (Kremlj, 2004, p. 36-37). The bombing act was justified by stating that it represented the prevention of a humanitarian catastrophe, genocide, and ethnic cleansing, the protection of human rights and minorities, as well as the removal and abolition of the regime of Slobodan Milosevic.

By filing a lawsuit with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in Hague, the Serbian side tried to prove the guilt of the instigators of the action and seek them to take responsibility for their actions, especially for the civilian casualties (RTS bombing). However, the court (whose work is also largely questioned) rejected to investigate this case, therefore neither side has officially taken responsibility.

Code-named *Operation Allied Force*, the campaign resulted in the deaths of approximately 500 innocent civilians while injuring more than 800 others. Both the number of casualties and the

circumstances in which they occurred gave rise to the question of whether NATO forces had committed war crimes and should be held criminally responsible for their actions before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia ("ICTY"). Many viewed the incidents as sufficiently serious for an investigation to be conducted by the Tribunal. However, on June 2, 2000, after considering her team's assessment of NATO's conduct in the campaign, the Prosecutor of the ICTY, Carla del Ponte, who had taken over for former Prosecutor Louise Arbour on September 15, 1999, concluded "that there [was] no basis for opening an investigation into any of the allegations or into other incidents related to the NATO air campaign. While conceding that some mistakes were made by NATO, the Prosecutor nevertheless announced that she was "satisfied that there was no deliberate targeting of civilians or unlawful military targets by NATO during the campaign." 5 The decision by the Prosecutor of the Tribunal not to investigate, while favorably welcomed by NATO members and some writers, 6 generated strong and persistent criticism from the majority of scholars, 7 who questioned the Prosecutor's impartiality and expressed their suspicions that political rather than legal considerations, had influenced her decision" (Massa, 2006: 611).

Accordingly, popular views, views of citizens, politicians, artists, scientists, and other public figures were divided, both in Serbia and beyond. For example, on one hand, when asked: Was the NATO intervention in Kosovo and Metohija justified? Google's search engine provides the answer:

Yes, NATO's defense of Kosovo was long and costly, but it was certainly justified. ..."The first [myth] is that, in Kosovo, war constituted a morally simple conflict, between aggressive Serbs and victimized Kosovar Albanians" (Google Answers, 30.03.2011.).

On the other hand, according to Noam Chomsky, one of the most important contemporary thinkers, there are no doubts about the true causes and responsibility for the deed, and he states that all evidence can be found in the official documentation to claim that

(...) the real aim of that war had nothing to do with worry for Kosovo Albanians. The real reason is that Serbia did not carry out the required social and economic reforms, which means that it was the last corner of Europe that did not obey US-led neoliberal programs, so it had to be removed" (Chomsky, 2006).

The whole issue of divided opinions was written in the magazine *Vreme* under the heading *Why we quarreled about the bombing (Zašto smo se posvađali oko bombardovanja, Vreme, 2009)*.

Which or whose version of the bombing will be remembered is uncertain. However, in a time of different struggles for memory, where mul-

tiple groups of participants take part in this process, “writing history today is understood as a process of constructing collective identities in which all can participate equally, so this field has been found alongside historians other “memory actors” - artists, journalists, curators, social activists, cultural policymakers, foreign policymakers and others” (Mihaljinac 2019a: 30). Artists and works of art that bear witness to important political and historical events such as wars have the chance to open up new, alternative, critical versions of memories over official ones. According to one of the leading memory theorists, Geoffrey Hartman, intellectuals and artists a special kinds of witnesses whose professions involves them raising and debating issues of public importance:

I believe that literature and art have always served to create forms of representations that open the blocked paths of truth transmission hidden in memory” (Hartman, 2006, p. 2).

The artistic intellect, associated with the testimonial imperative, plays an extremely important role in the recording and transmission of traumatic experience. Traumatic experience needs a medium that will provide a longer duration of memory than the human mind can provide. Art and communicative memory in interaction can achieve this goal.” (Hartman, 2006: 4).

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub advocated the idea that trauma deconstructs the typical distinction between fiction and facts, insisting that the (distorted, imprecise, constructed) “truth” of the artist-witness is a legitimate (and perhaps more significant) historical statement (Felman, Laub, 1992). On the other side, Hayden White in the book *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination of Nineteenth-century Europe* writes that any text of a historian can be read as fiction (White, 1975).

In addition to artists, contemporary theorists have recognized journalists as intellectual witnesses. Sue Tiat, in the article *Bearing Witness, Journalism and Moral Responsibility* writes that journalists have to respond and convey testimony about traumatic events (Tiat, 2011).

MEDIA TEXTS

There has been much debate about foreign media coverage of the NATO bombing and the attack of the media, creating the first internet war based on public discord and scientific analysis. Nikola Živković in his book *How Do Others See Us? The Image of the Serbs in the German Media 1990-2000* (2003) thematizes the presentation of the civil war in Yugoslavia in the German press, radio and television, and the dissertation of Stefan Krempel: *Media, Internet, War: the example of Kosovo* (2004) deals with the analysis of the role of the media in the Kosovo war in articles by the German magazine *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the *New York Times* and the public discourse of the *nettime* mailing list. Slobodan Vukovic in

his book *Serbs in the Narrative of the West* (2018) portrays a negative image in the public discourse about the breakup of Yugoslavia and its epilogue in the form of the NATO bombing, using excerpts and illustrations from the British, German, Austrian and American press, and explains that this negative image has been used to justify NATO aggression against FRY. *Staging a Justified War? Intellectuals, Media and the Kosovo War 1999* (1999) is a book by historian Kurt Gritsch in which the author problematizes the war in Kosovo and Metohija and characterizes it as a turning point after 1945, when Germany was involved in combat operations outside its area for the first time. In his book *War of Words - Power of Images: Manipulation or Truth in the Kosovo Conflict?* (2001), Walter Jertz's focuses on NATO's bombing of the FRY, highlighting the importance of the media and the Internet contemporary conflict. "The Kosovo conflict became the first Internet war, with all aspects of disseminating information and propaganda through e-mails and websites" (Vallen, 2007). According to Mitrović and Miljković:

in addition to turning to the Internet for propaganda purposes, it also served for carrying out operations in cyberspace in the form of distributed denial of Service attacks (DDoS)" (Mitrović, Miljković, 2018, p. 1367).

This paper focuses on the reporting of the German media, more specifically the German magazine *Spiegel*, which is considered one of the leading media outlets in Germany with a very strong international reputation and reach. This magazine and the German-speaking region were chosen first because Germany, as the richest European country, had a strong political influence and, consequently, did much to form the public opinion in Europe. Also, the German authorities were then tasked with getting their public to participate in the NATO aggression (Vuković, 2018, p. 177–183), which was not easy since the participation in the NATO bombing of FRY was the first military intervention by German forces since World War II. This paper analyzed thirty-nine thematically relevant newspaper articles published during the period of the NATO bombing. Founded in 1947, *Spiegel* magazine published articles in defense of German foreign policy and their involvement in the NATO aggression against the FRY, despite the personal attitude of the Editor-in-Chief Rudolf Augstein who judged and criticized this action. The loudest advocate of the NATO bombing at that time was the magazine's cultural editor, Reinhard Mohr, and despite the disagreements, approval by the intellectual majority and justification of the bombing by representing supporters of the intervention and their views were realized in *Spiegel* articles.

The magazine selected as the subject of the paper discusses Germany's foreign policy and its role in intervention. Kurt Gritsch (2010) lists the names and reasons for and against the bombing, as well as a quantitative view of the *Spiegel* magazine interviews, which noted that

intellectuals and journalists did not support the NATO aggression, while politicians with their various arguments did. He cites some of the reasons for the bombing: protection of Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija, intervention against extreme nationalism, the necessity of NATO intervention over failed Rambouillet negotiations, as well as some of the reasons against NATO bombing: ambiguity of the political goals of the intervention, interference with the internal politics of a sovereign state or violation of international law (Gritsch, 2010, p. 84–91).

Article 26 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany of 1949 states that all acts which hinder the free life of the population, such as the preparation and execution of a military attack, are unconstitutional and punishable. (Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1949). By participating in NATO's military intervention, Germany as a member of the NATO forces violated their constitution, but the German media reporting on the "new Holocaust" in Kosovo and Metohija, compared Milošević with Hitler and Stalin and wrote about the collective guilt of the Serbian people, equating the people with the president Slobodan Milošević. All of this contributed to the formation of a collective consciousness that Serbia's intention was the destruction of the Albanian population. German public opinion was therefore based on an analogy between Serbs and Nazi Germany, that they fought against another Hitler (Glišović, 2001, p. 192–197).

The image of Serbia as the enemy was constructed in the German press for a long time before the NATO bombing of 1999, where it had been portrayed as the aggressor, enemy and trigger of the conflicts in the Balkans (Vuković, 2018, p. 20–25; Vujčić, 2019, p. 353–355).

In the following examples found in *Spiegel* magazine we can see the argumentation both in favour of and opposed to NATO bombing:

Approval of NATO bombing

– “We have no choice but to end the killing in Kosovo, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder defended the military punitive action, like most of his Social Democrat counterparts in the squadron of the Falcons.”¹
(*Spiegel* 13/99 – Alle Serben im Krieg)

– “Scharping: Everyone in the government had scruples. However, to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo, we had no other choice.”²
(*Spiegel* 13/99 – Alle hatten Skrupel)

¹ „Wir haben keine andere Wahl, um das Morden im Kosovo zu beenden, verteidigte Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder die militärische Strafaktion, wie die meisten seiner sozialdemokratischen Amtskollegen im Geschwader der Falken.“ Translated by the authors.

² „Scharping: Alle in der Regierung hatten Skrupel. Um eine humanitäre Katastrophe im Kosovo zu verhindern, blieb uns jedoch keine andere Wahl.“

– “*Not for territory, we fight for values*, said British Prime Minister Tony Blair.”³

(*Spiegel* 17/99 – Krieg für das gute Gewissen)

– “Solana: *This is not a war in the classical sense. We do not want to occupy the land, secure raw materials or open up new trade routes. This war is about values and about the moral constitution of that Europe in which we will live in the 21st century.*”⁴

(*Spiegel* 18/99 – Wir sollten stolz auf uns sein)

– “But the intellectuals were silent - except for Günter Grass, who greeted the NATO attack in a few words, but at the same time criticized it as half-hearted and belated.”⁵ (*Spiegel* 15/99 – Krieg der Köpfe)

NATO bombing in selected *Spiegel* articles is realized as an action to prevent the Serbs from exterminating and killing Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija and is therefore justified. The conflict in Kosovo and Metohija in 1999 and the activities of the Serbian army are compared to the events during the regime of Adolf Hitler, and are used to justify the bombing, characterizing it as a positive action to prevent the situation from worsening. Justification is also claimed by citing Javier Solana and Tony Blair's views on the bombing as being part of a war being fought over values and morals; preventing the killing, extermination and genocide by Serb forces. In this way, a message was sent to readers that the bombing was an inevitable action to improve the situation in Kosovo and Metohija.

Disapproval of NATO bombing

– “It was also a turning point for German foreign policy because, for the first time since the end of the Second World War, German soldiers participated in an attack on another state with their Tornados. And this, of all things, in the Balkans, where especially the Serbs associate their worst memories with the invasion of Hitler's troops.”⁶

(*Spiegel* 13/99 – Alle Serben im Krieg)

³ „Nicht um Territorium, um Wertekämpfen wir, formulierte der britische Premier Tony Blair.“

⁴ „Solana: *Dies ist kein Krieg im klassischen Sinn. Wir wollen kein Land besetzen, keine Rohstoffe sichern oder neue Handelswege öffnen. Dieser Krieg wird um Werte und um die moralische Verfassung jenes Europas geführt, in dem wir im 21. Jahrhundert leben werden.*“

⁵ „Die Intellektuellen aber schwiegen - mit Ausnahme von Günter Grass, der den Nato-Angriff in knappen Worten begrüßte, ihn aber zugleich als halbherzig und verspätet kritisierte.“

⁶ „Es war eine Zäsur auch für die deutsche Außenpolitik, denn erstmals seit Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs beteiligten sich deutsche Soldaten mit ihren „Tornados“ an einem Angriff auf einen anderen Staat. Und dies ausgerechnet auf dem Balkan, wo sich besonders bei den Serben mit dem Einmarsch von Hitlers Truppen übelste Erinnerungen verbinden.“

– “According to Belgrade, the result of this criminal NATO aggression by the end of last week was more than 1,000 dead and 4,000 seriously injured civilians and the destruction of 7 bridges, 22 cultural monuments, including a monastery, 9 railway stations, 7 airports, several thousand factories, and residential buildings. Total damage: over 180 billion marks.”⁷

(*Spiegel* 16/99 – Ziellos und traumatisiert)

– “There are only two written exceptions to the oath of war codified at the end of World War II: the right of an attacked state to defend itself and the military compulsory measures against peace hunters to protect world peace by order of the Security Council.”⁸

(*Spiegel* 17/99 – Krieg für das gute Gewissen)

The disapproval of NATO bombing in selected articles is realized by stating the consequences and results of the bombing, such as civilian casualties or infrastructure. Thus, in the minds of the readers, NATO bombing is realized as a negative action. It then points out that war is justified only in two cases – either as the right of the attacked state to defend itself or measures of military coercion undertaken to protect world peace at the behest of the Security Council. Since the bombing is neither of these two cases, it should be considered unjustified and condemned; the Milošević regime did not aim at genocide or endangering world peace, so the comparison of the Kosovo war with World War II is exaggerated.

ARTISTIC TEXTS

According to the research *Art and Politics of Remembrance: the Trauma of 1999*, which mapped over 150 artworks on the subject of the NATO bombing, about 40% of the authors cited came from countries outside Serbia (Mihaljinac, 2019a, p. 240) which shows that the bombing was an almost equally relevant topic to artists from the international community as it was to those from Serbia. When looking at the corpus of these artworks, it is easy to conclude that the dominant position of the international art community was a critical orientation towards the bombing, and most often at the same time against the policies of NATO and Milošević.

⁷ „Laut Belgrad waren das Ergebnis dieser kriminellen Nato-Aggression bis Ende voriger Woche über 1000 Tote und 4000 Schwerverletzte unter der Zivilbevölkerung sowie die Zerstörung von 7 Brücken, 22 Kulturdenkmälern, darunter ein Kloster, 9 Bahnhöfe, 7 Flughäfen, mehrere tausend Fabriken und Wohngebäude. Gesamtschäden: über 180 Milliarden Mark.“

⁸ „Von dem am Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs kodifizierten Schwur „Nie wieder Krieg“ gibt es nur zwei geschriebene Ausnahmen: das Recht eines angegriffenen Staats auf Verteidigung und die militärischen Zwangsmaßnahmen gegen Friedensstörer zum Schutz des Weltfriedens auf Anordnung des Sicherheitsrates.“

The largest international art project-reaction to the bombing and the war in Kosovo and Metohija, entitled: *Stop the Violence*, came from Western Europe. It was an initiative from the professors of the Vienna Academy of Arts Carl Pruscha, Michael Benedict, Gerhard Botz, Gerda Buxbaum and Leopold Specht, which brought together more than 30 artists from Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Hungary, Austria, the Scandinavian countries, USA, Australia and other countries in the world (among them Robert Adrian, Dara Birnbaum, Manfred Butzmann, Gunter Damisch, Gjelosh Gjokaj, Jenny Holzer, IRWIN group, Robert Jankuloski, Svetlana Kopystiansky, Brigitte Kowanz, Visar Mulliqi, Oswald Oberhuber, Raymond Pettibon, Nancy Spero, Klaus Staeck, Zaneta Vangeli, Lawrence Weiner, Otto Zitko). An exhibition of anti-war posters was organized in cooperation with the Austrian Museum of Contemporary Art MAK and the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade. It was staged in Vienna, Belgrade, Tirana, Sarajevo, Budapest and Berlin. Expressing concern that "every new day of the war will harm Europe's cultural self-understanding and understanding of its fundamental assumptions" (Pruscha, 1999), a group of professors at the Academy of Arts in Vienna decided to make a public request

(...) to immediately suspend the expulsion of the Albanian population from Kosovo, unconditionally interrupt all aspects of the war and launch peace agreements at the UN level" (Pruscha, 1999).

Artworks produce a large spectrum of narratives - from accusations and ironical statements to narratives of anxiety and apocalypse to pacifist narratives with universal symbols of peace. A key focus of the *Stop the Violence* project was its commitment to respect human rights, which were under threat by the false rhetoric of the humanitarian war and its deadly outcomes.

In addition to this project, the reaction of one of the world's most famous curators, Harald Szeemann, was significant for stimulating public debate on the subject of the NATO bombing in international artistic and wider circles. Szeemann included in the international selection of the Venice Biennale in 1999 videos by two female Serbian artists dealing with the trauma of war and the bombing (*To Be* by Tanja Ristovski and *Wash Me and I'll be Whiter than Snow* by Vesna Vesić). Two years later, on the occasion of the opening of the Real Presence exhibition in Belgrade, Szeemann said:

While preparing for the 1999 Venice Biennale, I remember that the bombing of Belgrade stopped the night before the opening. We were all relieved. Now that I'm participating in the opening of Real Presence ... I saw what intelligent and stupid bombs did to the city in 1999" (Szeemann, 2001).

The motif of the destroyed city is also present in the video titled *Bouncing Skull* by the famous Italian artist Paolo Canevarri, which was

presented in the international selection of Venice Biennale in 2007. The video shows a teenager playing with a human skull in the middle of a bombed-out building of the General staff in Belgrade, as he would with a regular ball in an ordinary yard. According to the artist:

The NATO bombing represents a wound in Europe; it was absurd that NATO countries decided to bomb the city. I visited Belgrade after the bombing and was shocked by the ruins and the fact that the destroyed buildings looked like monuments in the middle of the city” (Canevarri, 2014).

Since it represents a metaphor for the NATO bombing, a war taking place on the European land, the dazzling image of a boy kicking a skull instead of a ball and doing it on the rubble instead of in the yard - can be interpreted as a vicious picture of only a seemingly peaceful and stable Europe.

One of the most well-known contemporary Albanian artists, Anri Sala, also reacted to the bombing with a video named *Natural Mystic* (2002). The work raises the subject of ideological repression and biopolitics, i.e. practices of subordination and disciplining of the body in the modern technocratic society. The work shows a studio recording of a man who, with astonishing accuracy, almost mysteriously and uncannily imitates a “Tomahawk” missile sound. This is a man who survived the NATO bombing and who materialized the trauma of survival in sound. To be able to reproduce the sound of a Tomahawk, he had to be continuously exposed to the sound of the bomb, which means he was in a life-threatening position. Thus, the sound appears as a traumatic element of reality, an element that creates a sense of fear; that mobilizes and subjugates the body. From the point of view of Foucault's biopolitical theories, and especially from the point of view of the term *panopticon* (a type of prison with an “all-seeing” central position from which the guards can supervise prisoners while they cannot be seen from below), the bombing is shown as a force that subjugates people. According to the theorist Patricia Clough, “this sonic waste of war has been imposed as a form of rhythmic violent bio-control by the bodies of citizens” (Clough, 2013, p.10).

Another prominent Albanian author, Sokol Beqiri, has also produced artwork on the subject of the bombing called *When Angels Are Late* (2001). The theme of the work is Albanian and Muslim casualties, and the work deconstructs the propaganda discourse of the rescue mission of the bombing as the action of a guardian angel, accusing NATO of “delaying” intervention. A similar thesis about the delayed reaction was elaborated by Žižek in the text *Not yet ENOUGH Bombs and they are TOO LATE*. According to art historian Boynik,

Western intervention, which brings freedom and saves Kosovars from trauma, is portrayed in Beqiri's work as an angel, which is actually an ironic name for NATO intervention, always presented within the religious discourse of war between ultimate evil and good" (Boynik, 2008, p. 29).

Artworks produced in neighboring countries often deal with the relationship between Western countries and Eastern Europe, so they can be situated in the fields of geopolitics, post-colonial criticism and criticism of nationalism and Balkanization. This paradigm of art is visible in *Landing* by Dan Perjovschi, one of the most significant contemporary Romanian artists. He realized his artistic engagement as a series of fast reactions (drawings) to a variety of socio-political events in Europe, mainly on the subject of the Red Scare (fear of communism), so that the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia has become one of the themes of his works. A drawing from the Landing series, called *I was bitten by a Serbian Mosquito*, created in 1999, was published during the bombing in the local Serbian newspaper *Danas*, as well as in Luxembourg's *Land - Luxemburg* weekly, and was subsequently included in the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade. As Perjovschi states:

It was important for me to blame the Milosevic regime, but also the EU, and not just concentrate on the US. I was also interested in how someone who went deep into the war on (Muslim) terror could be on the side of Muslim Kosovo ... My (very ironic) question was: If a Serb mosquito bites me, do I immediately become a villain? I think the EU is pretty fucked up, and the fact that Serbia is not an EU member today is unacceptable" (Perjovschi, 2015).

Because Perjovschi's works often "focus on contradictions in sociopolitical metamorphoses" (Babias, 2015), the drawing *I was bitten by a Serbian Mosquito* critiques the dual repressive ideological action of the Milošević regime and the foreign Western policy regime towards Serbia.

When looking at the corpus of artworks by foreign artists, it can be concluded that they have been extremely critical of the bombing, pointing to the unwarrantedness of the intervention, with some - such as Beqiri - pointing to the false rhetoric of rescuing Albanians. It could be said that the bombing was a shock to the Europeans and the international community - who could not understand that at the threshold of the 21st century such a war was going on in Europe.

It should also be noted that many artists reacted against media propaganda during the bombing, and in Serbia there even occurred a movement called *media activism* which used the new media - Internet to deconstruct and criticize the language of old media - television.

Internet art production in Serbia in this period can be described as media activism, that is, as activism against official (old) media discourse, through the use of a new media." (Mihaljinac, 2019b, p. 892).

NARRATION AND CRITICAL CULTURE OF REMEMBRANCE

Communities narrate and retell past events to establish shared values and shape collective identity. Nevertheless,

(...) in a global society where dominant narratives of the past and shared memory are tailor-made according to the needs of global transnational centers of power, especially thanks to global media services and platforms - the role of the state and its institutions in underdeveloped countries is greatly reduced. (Mihaljinac, 2019a, p. 30).

This also refers to individual critical voices. In other words, those with political power also have the power to impose official versions of the past in a top-down manner. As the old saying goes - history is written by winners. As this research has shown, the media play a very important role in this process when it comes to imposing narratives on the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

Still, opportunities for resistance and activism always exist. As long as practices of producing narratives of the past involve and reflect the struggle of many different voices, then one can speak of a critical culture of remembrance (Kuljić, 2006, p. 282), which is present in the case of the bombing. In other words, as long as "bottom-up memory" (Asman, 2011, p. 36) is produced, there is a chance to maintain the struggle for the past. Crucial actors in producing this memory are private individuals, especially those who are or put themselves in a position to publically raise their voices. Hartman calls these individuals intellectual witnesses, referring to the academic community and artists. Intellectual witnesses have to speak for those who are killed, oppressed or silenced. When it comes to the NATO bombing of FRY, it was precisely the artists who took the role of witnesses; who critically discussed official versions of the event which were constructed by media. According to Felman and Laub, in the circumstances of an outbreak of collective trauma, artists can take on "the role of a doctor who heals the history, which occurs in a form of an illness" (Felman, Laub, 1992, p. 45). Art can help by retelling stories from the past and placing them in a new context, which can prove to be a healing process. This is the basic postulate of narrative therapy. Narrative therapy assumes that the identities of individuals and collectives are formed through dominant stories about them, and the healing process involves rethinking old ideas, deconstructing the represented discourse, and constructing narratives that impede the healthy development of (collective) identity.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no consensus in the international community concerning the responsibility for the NATO bombing of FRY; which reflects the Hague tribunal's decision not to consider indictments against NATO for civilian casualties. The NATO interventions that followed the bombing of Yugoslavia also raised these issues - however, the centers of political power established the narrative that all these actions were legitimate missions for peace and stability.

In this paper, artworks on the topic of the bombing, done by international artists, as well as articles published by the leading German magazine Spiegel on this subject were analyzed. Of the 54 analyzed artworks by foreign artists - all have criticized the NATO bombing of FRY, calling it an unwarranted attack; an action that used the false rhetoric of humanitarian intervention but did not resolve internal conflicts. On the other hand, of the 39 articles in Spiegel that were published in the period between the 24 March to 10 June 1999, 65% of them justify the bombing by designating it as a humanitarian intervention. Despite the personal views of some journalists that the bombing was not justified, the media still overwhelmingly reported the justification of the intervention. This points to the fact that a great political influence was exerted on the media during the bombing. In other words, the Western media was a means of political propaganda during the bombing, and censorship as an instrument of media policy was predominant. Only the voices of individuals - academics, artists and individual journalists (on alternative media channels), as well as some politicians (though we did not deal with this in the paper), took a critical view of the bombing. This leads to the conclusion that the texts of the official state media, which support politically determined versions, cannot and should not be trusted until the voices of individuals - intellectual witnesses - have been taken into consideration. According to these voices, the NATO bombing was not a justifiable act.

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РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЈА НАТО БОМБАРДОВАЊА ЈУГОСЛАВИЈЕ У МЕЂУНАРОДНИМ УМЕТНИЧКИМ И МЕДИЈСКИМ ТЕКСТОВИМА: НЕОПРАВДАНИ РАТ ИЛИ ОПРАВДАНА ИНТЕРВЕНЦИЈА?

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Резиме

НАТО бомбардовање СРЈ посматра се као заокрет у савременој историји Србије, догађај након којег су уследиле демократске промене, али и догађај с којим се повезују многе моралне дилеме о исправности и оправданости, што води ка различитим ставовима и виђењима бомбардовања. Мишљења о овом догађају изузетно су подељена, а истина о бомбардовању делује несазнатљиво. Да би се успоставио што објективнији приступ теми бомбардовања и питању његове оправданости, у раду су анализирани инострани медијски и уметнички текстови о бомбардовању и приказани су резултати два истраживања: Србија у српској и немачкој штампи – лингвистичка анализа дискурса (Вујошевић, 2019), Уметност и политике сећања: траума 1999. (Михаљинац, 2019). За потребе овог рада одабрани су немачки медији јер су немачке власти тада имале задатак да придобију своју јавност за учешће у НАТО агресији, што није било једноставно с обзиром на то да је учешће у НАТО бомбардовању СРЈ била прва војна интервенција немачких снага после Другог светског рата. Упркос личним ставовима бројних новинара да бомбардовање није оправдано, медији су ипак доминантно извештавали о оправданости интервенције, будући да је тај наратив подржавао званичне ставове политичара. То значи да су западни медији у рату били средство политичке пропаганде и да се доминантно користила цензура као инструмент медијске политике. НАТО бомбардовање у одабраном немачком медију окарактерисано је с једне стране као ак-

ција спречавања истребљења и убијања косовских Албанаца од српске стране, па се самим тим оправдава Сукоб на Косову 1999. године и деловање српске војске пореди се са дешавањима током режима Адолфа Хитлера, што оправдава бомбардовање као акцију која је извршена у циљу побољшања тадашње стварности, карактеришући је као позитивну акцију у циљу спречавања погоршања ситуације на Косову. С друге стране, у мањем броју текстова се наводе последице које је земља претрпела због бомбардовања, као што су цивилне жртве или инфраструктура. Када је реч о уметничким радовима иностраних уметника на тему бомбардовања (уметника Анрија Сале, Сокоља Бећирија, Дана Пержовског, Паола Каневарија, групе кустоса и уметника окупљених око пројекта Бечке академије уметности Стоп насиљу!!!) – сви критикују бомбардовање као неоправдан, насилан чин који користи лажну реторику хуманитарне интервенције. Дакле, показано је да већина анализираних медијских текстова оправдава бомбардовање, док га сви уметнички текстови критикују и осуђују, што доводи до закључка да уметнички текстови имају више потенцијала за друштвену критику од медијских. Уметници и уметничка дела која сведоче о битним политичким и историјским догађајима попут ратова имају шансу да отворе нове, алтернативне, критичке верзије сећања у односу на званичне.