

# SUMMARY

On November 13 and 14, 2014, in commemoration of the fall of the city of Vukovar (November 18, 1991), the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences in Zagreb and the Regional Center in Vukovar organized the seventeenth in a series of scientific conferences, Vukovar '91: Twenty-Three Years Later, on the topic *What Is Vukovar to Croatia and Europe?* We hereby present these proceedings to the academic and general public in the belief and hope that the truth must not be silenced, the past must be correctly assessed and the story of Vukovar must continue to be a subject of our scientific and human interest. The conference assembled fifteen eminent scholars and experts, who addressed the role, position and far-reaching significance of Vukovar '91 in the Croatian and European social, cultural and political contexts. In these proceedings, we are publishing 11 papers, of which one is in English and one is in German.

The first paper, *Vukovar 2014: Hat der Friede eine Zukunftschance?* [Vukovar 2014: Does Peace Have a Chance for the Future?], was written by Heinrich Badura. Twenty-three years have passed since the terrible, inhumane occurrences in Vukovar during 1991. Despite this, the world has not learned anything, has not become better or safer and, indeed, is becoming increasingly dangerous. The number of wars continues to grow and brutality has experienced a renaissance. The peace in Vukovar is presented by the media as unstable. Tense relations between Serbs and Croats continue. Nonetheless, unlike in 1991, as of July 1, 2013, Croatia is a member of the European Union. What does this signify to the national peace and, thereby, to Vukovar? Have the chances for the subsequent gradual building of peace in this country and this tormented city improved? Peace has certainly not occurred automatically. Why? Because the millions sent by the European Union as stimulus do not have the power to create peace. Although the general welfare of the population, social justice, rule of law, human rights and civil rights are undoubtedly important for a general and multipolar peace, peace is not an economic category, albeit the economy is one of the indicators of peace. Peace is a mirror of the inner attitude of each individual. Social love is not a product of trade-offs but a basic human mental state. This paper presents possible measures for arriving at a constructive response to the fundamental question of whether peace has a future.

The paper by Sanja Špoljar Vržina, *Between the Anthropology of Vukovar and Anthropology of Law: Answering Finkelkraut's Question About Being a Croat*, is, according to the author, a long awaited response to an author who, back in 1991, analytically positioned the consciousness of Europe for *Le Figaro* in a response with an exclamation

*Ave, Europa, morituri te salutant.* Those days, when, parallel to a meeting of the Twelve, where they „were discussing the future of Europe in Maastricht, Croatians were authorized to have their protest against the Serbian aggression in a stadium on the outskirts of Paris.“ For Finkelkraut, this was confirmation that there were two types of peoples in the post-communist Europe: „the legitimate peoples who make history“ and are entitled to freedom and the „useless peoples“ who are even forbidden access to their own tragedies, in which they cry out for freedom, and are relegated to protest in a stadium. Today, twenty years later, it is necessary to ask what has changed in regard to outcries for freedom and admissible history, except that today, in the long hoped for European manner and bound by inhumane legislation, we deny Others, the right to cry out for freedom. In addition to the ambiguous symbolic designation of the „stadium,“ in the past several years it has been shown that in this denial the most zealous are those whose militancy shows that the post-communist period is only an imaginative lexical prefix – everything has remained the same. Unacknowledged ethnocide. Memoricide. Culturocide. Ecocide. Genocide in the process of presenting evidence. Forbidden history. In a word, (mere) negationism, which has become unsustainable but already, by virtue of its language, is schizoid in form. The paper examines this reality and asks crucial questions. What happens when a subject does not achieve the opportunity to be the object of his own activities? What is the destiny of a people among whom individuals live according to scenarios written in centers that are „permitted“ history and freedom? Translated into more scientific language, this is a key place for current neuralgic discussions on self-determination, sovereignty and overall identities, as opposed to the overall neo-racist terror of the (neo)liberalisms of the Great. Anthropology goes a step further and speaks of the *right to an identity*, which is part of the conscious ethical canon that says that *social responsibility is diminished by the distance between the observer and the analyst*. From the vantage point of Berlin and London, Damascus and Baghdad are synonyms for the same geographical destination. From Brussels and Zagreb, is Vukovar as if it never occurred? More precisely, what kind of world would exist/remain if it were directed by those globally unaware of Hiroshima?

*Vukovar i Hrvatska između ratnog i političkog razaranja* [Vukovar and Croatia between War and Political Destruction] by Renato Matić discusses the continuity of the destructive activities that have been either directly aimed at Vukovar or implemented with regard to it. The starting point is based on the experience that the majority of these activities have had negative or directly destructive effects and that the devastation of war has continued through the postwar political activity that has been systematically carried out in the Croatian society and which is largely responsible for today's reality. The objective is to clarify and present the various forms of „peacetime criminal

activity," which, in addition to measurable economic indicators of poor and destructive management, are reflected in the inefficiency of the executive and judicial authorities through the obstruction of the process of „clarifying the past," especially when it comes to Vukovar, in terms of determining the fate of the missing and enforcing the law against the perpetrators of various forms of crime, which applies to the Croatian society as a whole and, in turn, affects the Vukovar region as well. The paper also discusses other political activities, primarily from the perspective of moral entrepreneurship, by which tensions and conflicts are maintained and produce a climate of profound divisions and distrust. Ultimately, it is also a process of the „destruction of the future," which is already apparent because it has dramatically altered the lives of those generations who are in no way responsible for causing or committing crimes during and after the war.

Andrija Platužić and Ozren Žunec in the paper *Inverzna geometrija i Bitka za Vukovar* [Inverse Geometry and the Battle for Vukovar] point out that during the Battle of Nablus in 2002, there was recognition of the impact of the conceptualization of urban space during officer training on the concrete activities of the Israeli army. In statements by the commander of the elite paratrooper unit that conducted the operation, a theory of „inverse geometry" is outlined. Various forms associated with the microtactic approach called „mouse-holing" in current tactical manuals have been used from the Peloponnesian Wars to the recent operations in Afghanistan. Vukovar 1991 is a representative battle of urban warfare in which this tactic was applied but, unlike the operations in Nabus, it was used by defenders unencumbered by doctrine, spontaneously and under the pressure of the situation.

*Vukovar – hrvatski i europski grad 21. stoljeća – pod cenzurom* [Vukovar: A Twenty-First Century Croatian and European City, under Censorship] is a paper by Ante Nazor and Ana Holjevac Tuković. The authors consider Vukovar in the context of a city with a legacy of severe wartime destruction and suffering. However, Vukovar should also be viewed through the process of peaceful reintegration, in which, through the activities of the Croatian returnees to the city from which they were expelled in 1991, it has demonstrated its great civilizational potential. Even after the serious crimes perpetrated by the Serbian forces against its people and defenders, Vukovar has preserved multiethnicity and multiculturalism. The United Nations and the international community have deemed the peaceful reintegration of Croatian Podunavlje (Danube River Basin) as a positive example of the restoration of peace to this war-torn region but, also, as an example for future missions in the world. The peacekeeping mission of the United Nations in Croatian Podunavlje is the only successful UN peacekeeping mission and Croatia is presented as a rare state that ended a war in a peaceful manner

after successful military campaigns. In other words, despite marked military superiority over the enemy forces who perpetrated brutal aggression and expelled the non-Serbian population from Croatian Podunavlje, it agreed to allow the remaining occupied territory to be returned through a process of peaceful reintegration. With Croatia's accession to the European Union in 2013, some of the Croatian representatives to the Parliament of the EU requested the Croatian Memorial-Documentation Center of the Homeland War to help them prepare an exhibition about Vukovar. The exhibition was supposed to present the causes of the war and suffering during 1991 in Croatia, together with the peaceful reintegration and reconstruction of Vukovar, i.e., they wanted to show what Vukovar means to Croatia and, in this context, also to Europe. During the work on the exhibition, a Parliamentary commission in Brussels decided that some of the photographs of the destruction of Vukovar were „difficult“ and it was not necessary to emphasize the role of the „Serbian forces“ or Serbia as the aggressors against Vukovar and Croatia. Can Vukovar, as a Croatian and European city in the twenty-first century, be merely a city that symbolizes postwar peacemaking and coexistence without mentioning who attacked and destroyed it? Does such an image of Vukovar suit Europe? Is it acceptable to avoid or mitigate the facts about the causes of the war in Croatia or suppress the truth about the crimes committed and their perpetrators when it is known that such an approach can only intensify the trauma in the society and lead to new conflicts? Or does Europe have to accept and present the historical facts in their entirety so that such crimes will not be repeated?

In the paper *Zašto se 1918. može smatrati prekretnicom u razvoju europskog identiteta Vukovara?* [Why Can the Year 1918 Be Considered a Turning Point in the Development of the European Identity of Vukovar?], Petar Elez and Henrik Ivan Damjanović have focused on the development and fundamental determinants of the Central European cultural identity of Vukovar during the eighteenth century and, especially, during the nineteenth century. In light of the dramatic social and political events of 1918 and the ensuing turmoil in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Croatia and Vukovar, the authors have attempted to determine how these events heralded the „Balkanization“ and „provincialization“ of Vukovar and its radical break with the European civilizational heritage it had previously cultivated, which ultimately culminated in the destruction, genocide and culturicide perpetrated in Vukovar in November 1991.

In the paper *Obvezujuće vukovarsko mirotvorstvo* [Binding Vukovar Peacemaking], Vine Mihaljević and Ivana Bendra point out that peace has an essential role in all religions and ethical systems. Peace is invoked in special peace rituals in natural religions. Peace is revealed in the benevolence that the Buddha finds in every living being. The word „Islam,“ which means submission to God, implies peace, as does Gandhi's nonviolence

from Hindu tradition. In the ancient Egyptian religion, the soul enters the city of peace. In the Greco-Roman religion, peace is the goal of religious rites. *Shalóm* is peace in Judaism, Christ's beatitude of peace in the New Testament. *Shalóm* does not only mean peace but also the fullness of life, satisfaction, comfort, happiness, fertility and blessing. *Shalóm* is not only the fullness of life for the individual but also for the people of God, who have inherited the peace of the covenant. This is the message of the biblical peace, which is the message of salvation. Peace is a promise and essentially religious category that is achieved through righteousness in the New Testament. The Gospel is the message of peace that is fulfilled in the risen Christ. Peace is the gift of the blessing given to the members of the first community, who need to act ethically and be at peace, not only with the members of their own community but also with all people. Peace, together with justice and joy, is the kingdom of heaven. Peace, in the wake of the devastating wars of the twentieth century, has become the center of contemporary ethos, which is promoted by many lay peace movements and the Catholic Church in the documents *Pacem in terris*, *Gaudium et spes* and other papal encyclicals. The peace of the human suffering of the defenders, wounded and civilians in the devastated Vukovar during Serbian aggression; the peace of the hearths, altars, burning remains of the city where the last human cries and prayers disappear; the peace of the exiled people and communities of Vukovar; the peace of the returnees; the peace of encounters with the ghosts of the city that has disappeared; the peace of prayers in the silence of the roofless temples and homes; the peace of spiritual and material renewal and reconstruction; the peace in the Memorial Cemetery of the remembrance of those who were tortured and murdered; the Velepromet and Ovčara concentration camps; the peace of prayer in an atmosphere of the love of the Cross and new life; the peace of forgiveness and reconciliation; the peace of the righteousness, trust, joy and friendship of all people today in Vukovar — this peace is a profoundly anthropological, existential and transcendental experience, a binding human, social and religious need and value.

In the paper *Obilježavanje i sjećanje. Značenje 18. 11. u godinama progonstva i vremenu nakon povratka* [Commemoration and Remembrance: The Significance of November 18 in the Years of Exile and after the Return], Krešimir Kufrin and Mateo Žanić analyze the ways in which November 18 was commemorated during the years of exile and after 1998, when there was a massive return of displaced residents to Vukovar. In the first part of the paper, based on the available media reports and commentaries, the authors reconstruct how the commemoration was organized in exile and after the people returned to Vukovar. They then present the results of a qualitative study conducted in Vukovar in 2014 through semi-structured interviews, on the basis of which the dominant significance attributed to the commemoration

is reconstructed as well the differences between the commemorations held in exile and those in Vukovar.

Mirjana Semenčić Rutko, Sandra Cvikić, Dražen Živić and Sanja Špoljar Vržina are the authors of the paper *Vukovarska ratna i poratna pobolna zbilja – apel na moralnu obavezu djelovanja* [The Painful Wartime and Postwar Realities of Vukovar: An Appeal to the Moral Obligation to Act]. The paper analyzes the causes for the sharp rise in the number of persons suffering from cancers in the territory of Vukovar-Srijem County. Based upon outpatient data and data obtained from 19 family clinics in the area from Vukovar to Ilok, a significant rise in the number of persons with malignant diseases during the period from 2008 to 2012 can be confirmed. The paper examines the reasons for ignoring the statistical and exact data for two decades, (which were not unknown, as evidenced by papers and doctoral dissertations), and the political and civic neglect of this epidemiological but primarily ethical and humanistic problem. The ultimate objective of the paper is to raise consciousness among the general public and appeal to the consciences of the competent institutions to conduct further research focused on determining the causes of such a situation, followed by preventive activity, although not through palliative solutions or profit-making ventures, as has been the case.

Vlado Iljkić, Neva Mihalić, Dražen Živić and Josipa Iljkić are the authors of the paper *Projekt 'Vukovar – mjesto posebnog pijeteta'* [Project Vukovar: A Place of Special Piety]. In Vukovar, there is not a street on which someone did not die or was killed during the war and occupation, there is not a neighborhood in which mass or individual graves of the victims of aggression have not been found, there is not a family in which someone did not suffer severely, was not forcibly abducted, imprisoned or is still listed as missing. In some parts of town (Velepromet) and the immediate vicinity (Ovčara), the most monstrous war crimes were committed, with elements of genocide. Approximately ninety percent of the city was razed to the ground, set on fire and looted. For years, the survivors and exiles could not find out what had happened to their loved ones. The lack of piety for the victims, those who are deceased and those who are still missing, but also the lack of understanding for the surviving victims who live in Vukovar, Croatia and the world, and the lack of understanding for the martyrdom of Vukovar throughout its territory, are especially traumatic for the majority of the of the direct victims, war veterans and their families, and other citizens of Vukovar and Croatia. Therefore, the authors consider it legitimate and indisputably morally justified to demand that the entire region of the city of Vukovar, owing to the immense human suffering endured, be proclaimed *A Place of Special Piety*, for which particular standards of conduct would be applicable. Supporting this demand

would show the Croatian public and citizens of Vukovar that there is a high degree of awareness of what actually happened there. It would show that the immense heroism and sacrifices endured here that went into the creation and defense of the Croatian state are appreciated. Vukovar is a generally accepted symbol of victory but also of suffering in the Homeland War and should continue to remain as such for all future generations.

*Ratne slike Vukovara – dokumenti zločina i čuvari sjećanja* [War Images of Vukovar: Documents of Crimes and Guardians of Memory] is a paper by Dražen Živić. The armed Serbian aggression waged against Vukovar and the years of Serbian occupation left deep and lasting consequences on the tangible and intangible heritage of this city, especially on its people, because human suffering and demographic losses are irrecoverable. Investigations have demonstrated that during the aggressive attack on the city and the many years of neglect by the occupying Serbian authorities, numerous crimes of urbanicide, memoricide, culturocide and ethnic cleansing were perpetrated against Vukovar, many with the very clear and distinctive contours of genocide and/or genocidal practices. Owing to postwar reconstruction, the wartime image of Vukovar is somewhat fading and being replaced by new images of the restored buildings, streets, thoroughfares, parks and promenades. However, the war images, preserved in photographs, are still valuable and irreplaceable reminders of all the drama and horror of the war years and occupation. Moreover, the „Vukovar war album“ will prevent the distortion and/or programming of the truth about Vukovar '91.