



Premio Internazionale Carlo Scarpa per il Giardino

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Osmače and Brežani

Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstracts and short notes on the speakers at the seminar on Saturday 10th May 2014
in programme order

Muhamed Avdić and Velibor Rankić, *Our work in Osmače and Brežani today*

Muhamed Avdić was born at Osmače, a village in the municipality of Srebrenica, in 1981; he lived there with his family until 1992, when at the age of eleven he had to leave because of the war. Until 1993 he lived in Srebrenica as an evacuee, then as a refugee in Tuzla until 1996; he subsequently moved to Sarajevo, where he graduated in criminology. After temporary returns in March 2002 and October 2003, he decided to go back to live in Srebrenica, where he now works for the municipal administration. Since 2008 he has been a member of the Adopt Srebrenica group and in 2010-2011 he was the leading promoter of the project to grow buckwheat in Osmače and Brežani. His father, who died in 1995, was a teacher and principal of the local school. Muhamed is married and his wife gave birth to their first child a few months ago. At Osmače he has a new house and land to cultivate; he plays a particularly active role in his community and in the Adopt group, including the International Week of Memory

Velibor Rankić. My name is Velibor and I was born in Srebrenica in 1987. In 1992 we left Srebrenica for Serbia because of the war and spent several years there: three in Pančevo and three in Arandelovac. In the summer of 1998 my brother, my sister, my parents and I returned to Srebrenica. Once there we didn't waste a moment: we started straight away to clear away the rubble from the house and the weeds from the fields. Since then we have done many things in the village and we also spend all our free time there. In 2006 I enrolled in the Faculty of Traffic and Transport Engineering in Belgrade; I graduated in 2010 and in 2012 I completed my Master's degree at the same university. I had two job offers in Belgrade but I decided to go back to Srebrenica. I worked for two years for the municipal authority of Srebrenica and now I am working on a project being run by a Dutch company to reduce leakage from the system supplying drinking water to Srebrenica, Bratunac and Milići. I am not married but I have a fiancée.

Filippo Giannone and Luca Michieletto, *Sowing the return. Not only buckwheat*

Any agricultural activity will naturally be influenced by the soil characteristics and climate of the area in question. The families in Osmače initially formed themselves into an ad hoc group but were then organized officially in the *Sedlari* Association, and this made it possible to overcome the problems that arose from the limited availability of land of the individual family farms. The fact that bigger areas are now being managed means that the agricultural approach can be more rational: crops are chosen according to soil characteristics and exposure and this has positive repercussions for crop yields. Careful assessment of land types is the key to high quality agricultural output. Collaboration between the families also enables the rational use of the resources available in terms of machinery and labour, especially as regards product transformation. The involvement of Architects *sans frontières*/Architetti Senza Frontiere will help to create a processing plant for the products of the association.

Filippo Giannone, agricultural expert.

Luca Michieletto. The design of a cultivation plan for a farm is based on an analysis of its market of reference. In this case, however, the usual approach has been completely overturned because we are dealing with land enriched by two decades of non-cultivation, which risks ruin within a few years if unsustainable methods and techniques are applied to it. The lack of a market and the absence of an “agricultural memory” constitute a tempting challenge for planners, but one which is shot through with dangers for those left behind to pay the price of over-hasty and simplistic planning decisions. To explain that there is no future in exploitative agriculture in a remote village in the Balkans might seem anachronistic, but it represents a concrete commitment to helping those there now and those who may come in the future, to live or simply as tourists wishing to explore an area where the scars of war have not stopped it producing good healthy food and opportunities for a dignified life.

Luca Michieletto, agricultural expert.

Valentina Gagić and Nemanja Zekić, *A Srebrenican dialogue: memories and plans*

Valentina Gagić will talk about the following topics:

a short introduction to the activities and projects that have assisted the return, rebuilding confidence, trust and reconciliation in Srebrenica;

Adopt Srebrenica: activities and projects, transforming an idea into concrete reality (the group, constructing a network, the Week of Memory, the documentation centre, the Skype centre, buckwheat, study trips, exchanges, debate);

the key problems and the most significant results so far achieved;

collaboration with groups and individuals in Italy, the support of the international community;

plans for the future.

Valentina Gagić was born in Zvornik (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 1973. Her early childhood was spent in Šekovići, a small town in Eastern Bosnia. After completing a diploma in electrical engineering in Sarajevo, she attended the Institute of Business Studies in Belgrade. During the early days of the conflict she was in Slovakia (Bratislava), where she remained from April to September 1992. She arrived in Srebrenica at the end of 1995 and there began her commitment as an NGO activist. In 1999 she co-founded the Sara-Srebrenica Association, of which she is now the director. She has been a member of the informal Adopt Srebrenica group since 2005. She plays an active role in activities designed to help create a local reserve of social capital, to rebuild trust and peace in multiethnic societies. She is a volunteer member of several partnership groups working to produce strategy documents at local and regional levels. She believes passionately in young people and what they can achieve and actively supports positive projects in Srebrenica and Bosnia. Valentina has two children: Nikola, aged 20, and Nikolina, now 17, whom she likes to describe as her driving force and an inexhaustible source of energy. She now lives in Bratunac.

Nemanja Zekić, Dialogue, memory. Srebrenica is a small town in Eastern Bosnia. Today, as a result of its troubled past, Srebrenica is a centre of negative energy; and the same can be said not just for the town itself but also for the entire area. Every day the picture that emerges from the media is one of a deeply divided town. But this image is not a true reflection of the reality. The division of Srebrenica is imposed on it from outside, whereas its inhabitants live together in the town with more or less positive results; they go to work and, most important of all, to school, together. Much more serious than division are the problems caused by the depressed state of the economy and the lack of future prospects;

these are the reasons why the population of Srebrenica is continuing to decline. There are now scarcely more than 5,000 inhabitants, while before the war there were seven times as many.

Nevertheless, for Srebrenica to return to being an attractive place to live, the divisions we mentioned do still have to be overcome. The road to achieving this is through dialogue, which offers a different way of becoming acquainted with that which is different and helps to get rid of prejudice. A dialogue of this kind must necessarily be followed by a dialogue on the recent past. Without this, there can be no hope of constructing a sound future. It is a dialogue that has to take place between ordinary people, not at an institutional level. The only road to complete reconciliation is one that involves the destruction of the myths and illusions of a recent “glorious” past that everyone has got.

Though what I most long for is that this dialogue should take place in Srebrenica, the process is one that necessarily has to occur in all societies that have lived through a conflict.

Nemanja Zekić. My name is Nemanja Zekić I was born in Srebrenica on 3rd February 1988. After living in various places, mainly in Serbia, I returned to Srebrenica in 2001 and finished my secondary school education there. I then went on to study economics at the University of East Sarajevo and graduated from there in 2014. I started working in the NGO sector in my teens but had to give it up while I was at university. I joined the Adopt Srebrenica group in 2011, mainly because I shared their ideas and because I am convinced that the values that underpin the group are true and necessary for our society. I have been an active member ever since. In 2013 I was chosen as the president of the Youth Council of Srebrenica. I have coordinated festivals and other projects for young people and, as a member of Adopt, I have taken part in and helped with the organization of activities associated with facing up to the past in the pursuit of reconciliation.

Irfanka Pašagić and Andrea Rizza, *Twenty years after in Eastern Bosnia*

A couple of weeks before the fall of Srebrenica, in his appeal at Cannes – a call that remained unanswered - Alexander Langer wrote that «Europe will die or be reborn in Sarajevo». Fifty years after the end of the Second World War, Europe was witness to a shocking series of crimes against humanity, culminating in the genocide perpetrated in Srebrenica. All the “never again” rhetoric lost all meaning after the 11th July 1995. The atrocities committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular the genocide in Srebrenica, are above all examples of ideological genocide, generated by a political-ideological system, disseminated by mass media and subsequently transformed into “collectivized atrocities” (severally justified by the cultural violence that created the preconditions for the direct violence during the conflict). What we witnessed without lifting a finger during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, raises serious questions concerning the validity of the Western/European cultural model of which we are part.

Irfanka Pašagić. Born in Srebrenica, she graduated in Medicine in Sarajevo in 1978 and went on to specialize in Neurology and Psychiatry in Zagreb in 1985. From 1979 to 1986 she practised as a doctor in Srebrenica and from 1982 to 1992 as a psychiatrist. She was forced to leave the town at the beginning of the war following the first wave of ethnic cleansing. She moved to Tuzla, where she founded a group to provide assistance to women refugees who had suffered traumatic experiences. She has devised numerous projects designed to assist the victims of traumatic experiences and in 1996 she founded the association Tuzlanska Amica. She has been president of the association since 1999 and has

taken part in numerous international initiatives to provide help and support to trauma victims. She was awarded the International Alexander Langer Prize in 2005.

Andrea Rizza Goldstein, Alexander Langer Foundation, Bolzano, coordinator of the Adopt Srebrenica project.

Šimo Ešić, *Books and children*

Mobile library and Bookmetre. "Book in and read out" travelling books. And a Bookmetre roads to a reader's heart. Proposal for partnership and cooperation

Location: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska.

Publishing house *Bosanska Riječ/Das Bosnische Wort* ("the Bosnian word") is one of the first cultural institutions established in exile in 1993 in Wuppertal (Germany). Ever since that time works on affirmation of BiH literature and cultural connection in Europe. The establisher and the editor is the famous BiH writer for children Simo Esic.

A special role *Bosanska Riječ* played on the international field of cultural linkage and affirmation of Bosnian language and culture, especially in recognizing Bosnian literature and presence of Bosnian books on the shelves of European and American libraries. The house has published more than 150 headlines for youth and children that includes translations of many famous international writers. Following the initiative of *Bosanska Riječ* it was create was the association of friends of books and Literature "Association Little Prince". I was established in 2003 and ever since that time it organized numerous inter-ethnic and cultural programs, festivals and manifestations focused on youth and school children. The main objective is to connect youth, school children, teachers and parents in cultural activities and to motivate the habit of reading and of creativity. This association organizes the international festival for youth and children "The Bridge of Friendship" that connects youth, writers and teachers from four countries of the region, speaking the same language; the backbone of the event is the award for the best book for children in the region.

With the same mission, of promoting reading and good cultural habits, connecting writers, children and teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina still visibly and invisibly divided, we would like to focus our activities on *Mobile Library*, that should connect children, parents and teachers in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska and that could unite population in a good thing: reading. The objective is to provide a van and supply it with all necessary books from the official school programme (books that pupils are required to read during a year time), due to the fact that school libraries are poor with books and other necessary materials. The van would visit areas in Republika Srpska and in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and it would "cover" around 50 schools in the area, providing more than 3.000 pupils with books useful for reading and normal mental and cultural development. The van should also be equipped with mobile cinema (laptop, projector wide screen) and in such way it would give a chance to children and teachers to teach and learn about media culture (also obligatory part of the programme).

Each school would also be presented the *Bookmetre* project: one metre long box with 10 little books from the obligatory curriculum, made specially to attract children's attention and motivating them to read and compete in reading project. The Bookmetre "measures" how many metres their imagination has grown and motivates for critical reading and for take part in the project.

Simo Esic, born in Breze, Tuzla, on 6th February 1954. Started to write at the age of 14 when he published his first book. After that, he wrote 27 books, and numerous theatre and radio plays and dramas. His books have been translated in more than 15 languages and he has been awarded with all regional awards for literature and for his cultural contribution to

the development of culture. He worked as a radio editor, and later established his own publishing house Bosanska Riječ in Wuppertal (Germany) and in Tuzla. He was also nominated for world famous Astrid Lindgren award for the children's literature.

Alma Omeragic, born on 8th December 1966 in Tuzla. School teacher for Bosnian Language and literature. Worked as simultaneous and consecutive translator for more than twenty years. She worked in the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague, Office of the Prosecutor, as an assistant and translator. In last ten years she worked as assistant editor, lector and concealer and as coordinator and manager of all cultural projects in Bosanska Riječ and Mali princ association.

She will present the literature and the library situation in Bosnia and the mobile library project, as well as the BookMetre project that we have just begun a few months ago.

Luigi Barbieri and Anna Brusarosco, *Solidarity and support*

Solidarity, above all in the sense of co-operation or working together, starting with the human relationships that our contact with Bosnia has enabled us to establish. This is the underlying sense of what we are trying to do in Srebrenica and Osmače/Brežani. A twenty-year-old story of friendship and support which commenced with the twinning of Venice and Sarajevo back in 1994, when the conflict was still at its height: a gesture of fellowship between communities which for many citizens became a concrete commitment. A story that continued, from 2010, first with the participation of a Venetian delegation in the Week of Memory organized by the Alexander Langer Foundation and then with the creation of the Buongiorno Bosnia Dobardan Venecija Association, set up specifically to foster and reinforce the relationship of friendship and exchange that had developed between young Venetians and the Adopt Srebrenica group. And this in turn led to the "Sowing the return" project at Osmače and Brežani, based from the beginning on the idea of working together towards a shared goal.

Luigi Barbieri, after several years working as a professional in the field of Social Services, has been in charge of the municipal Centro Pace in Venice since 2002. The Centro Pace is a public service which devises projects for and supports activities driven by the principles of pacifism, solidarity, eco-friendliness and multi-culturalism. It works together with the Venetian network of associations, official bodies, self-governing centres, cooperatives and educational institutions, in the conviction that this is one of the best ways of promoting a sense of citizenship and social responsibility amongst the younger generations. Since 1983 it has acted as an information centre for all the actions of peace and solidarity organized and put into practice in Venice, both in order to publicize them through its network of members and associated volunteer social workers and also to communicate examples of good practice at the national and international levels. Its goals of peace and solidarity are intended, in short, to offer a compass reading for those seeking to ponder, understand and share the anguish that war produces, but also to rediscover reasons for hope, to be able really to imagine that "another world is possible".

Anna Brusarosco. I first got to know of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2006, as a volunteer working for the Idemo association in Mirano (Venice), which is member of the Committee of support for peace initiatives in the Province of Padua. My interest in the country led me to make it the subject of my research doctorate in the Department of Geography at the University of Padua, where I studied the role played by Italian cooperation in the reconstruction of the Bosnian countryside after the war. From 2010, I also worked with the Balkans and Caucasus Monitoring Unit and, since I finished my PhD, I have been involved in devising projects for various NGOs. I met Muhamed Avdić and learned of his project for

Osmače through the Centro Pace in Venice and the Buongiorno Bosnia Dobardan Venecija Association. This led to my helping to create the working group that devised and now runs the “Sowing the return” project.

Antonella Schiavon and Gianbattista Rigoni Stern, *Agricultural, forestry and stock-breeding experiments in the Drina Valley*

The case of Bratunac, a municipality in the Repubblica Srpska. When they returned to Bratunac from the refugee camps after the war, the women and old people asked for help to start earning their living again. From the outset, they were clear that the most promising way of doing this was through agriculture, and especially the cultivation of soft fruits.

The Zemljoradnicka Zadruga Insieme Bratunac (Agricultural Cooperative Insieme of Bratunac) was set up in Bratunac in May 2003, on the lines of an idea of ICS Bosnia and of the Forum Žena Bratunac, with the support of the Associazione di Cooperazione e Solidarietà, an Italian NGO working with two other associations (Agronomi e Forestali Senza Frontiere and Associazione per la Pace) and Ilario Ioriatti, an expert in the cultivation of soft fruits and in the management of producer cooperatives.

The members of the Cooperative currently include Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Muslim men and women producers; its objective is to contribute to the economic revival of the Municipality of Bratunac and the neighbouring towns as a pre-condition for the reestablishment of dialogue between the two communities living there. The Cooperative is already capable not just of growing soft fruit but also of processing it into jams and fruit juices.

Antonella Schiavon, Agronomi e Forestali Senza Frontiere.

The case of Sućeska. Sućeska, Zedanjsko, Gunjaci, Opetci and Bukovica are some of the over thirty districts in the municipality of Srebrenica involved in a solidarity project that began in 2009. The area lies in upland hill and mountain country in the north-west part of the territory administered by Srebrenica. It is still all too clearly scarred by the damage suffered during the fratricidal war of 1992-1995: houses and barns burned down; meadows and pastures infested with bracken, and the few returning survivors, after almost a decade as refugees, were mostly widows. The action taken was to bring in Rendena heifers and milch cows from the Trentino mountains with the dual objective of recovering fodder-yielding surfaces for animal feed and of supplying the farmers with enough milk and meat for them to be able to sell what they didn't use. The 137 animals introduced were purchased by the Province of Trento and distributed amongst 81 farmers. Appeals accompanying projections of the documentary *La transumanza della pace* [The transhumance of peace], which documents the transfer and introduction of the animals in 2010, raised the funds needed to create three depots for the equipment and machinery needed to cultivate fodder.

Gianbattista Rigoni Stern was born in Asiago in 1950 now lives there. He first qualified as an agriculturalist and then graduated in Forestry Sciences in Padua in 1975 with a dissertation on mapping forestry eco-systems. He taught at the Istituto Tecnico Professionale per l'Agricoltura in Castelfranco Veneto from 1975 to 1980 and worked as an official of the Comunità Montana Spettabile Reggenza dei Sette Comuni in Asiago from 1980 to 2008, with special responsibility for the management of 77 collectively owned *malghe* covering over 8,000 hectares of pastureland, and for felling and maintenance of the woods under the authority's jurisdiction. From 2005 to 2009 he headed the Departments of Public Assets and Ecology for the Municipality of Asiago. He is the author of *La via delle malghe*, GAL, 2001; of the chapter entitled *Le malghe dell'Altipiano*, in *Altopiano dei Sette Comuni*, CIERRE edizioni, 2009; of various articles in «Annali di San Michele» published

by the Museum of Traditions and Customs of the Trentino people and in «Quaderni Sozooalp», published by the Society for the Study and Promotion of Alpine Zootechnical Systems. He has co-supervised over twenty degree dissertations at the Universities of Padua, Milan, Turin and Trento.

Edi Rabini, *Concerning the importance of brokers, bridge-builders, wall-leapers and frontier explorers*

On 3rd July 2005 Irfanka Pašagić was awarded the International Alexander Langer Prize. A few days later she took a group assembled by the Foundation that bears her name to Srebrenica. And from this visit Adopt Srebrenica was born. For those travelling the same bumpy road the process offers mutual learning opportunities which should expand over time.

Providing help and light along the way are the *Ten points for inter-ethnic living together* by Alexander Langer and the far-sighted contents of the appeal *L'Europa nasce o muore a Sarajevo*, which he and other MEPS delivered at the Heads of State Summit Meeting in Cannes on 26th June 1995.

The South Tyrol and Bosnia and Herzegovina have much to learn from each other in order to overcome constitutional situations that have fostered increasing separation between the more nationalistic sections of the governing groups.

(summary of the address scheduled to be delivered at the Carlo Scarpa Prize award ceremony in Treviso on Saturday 10th May 2014).

Edi Rabini was born on 20th February 1943 in Bolzano/Bozen to a German-speaking South Tyrolean mother and a father with origins in the Veneto. From 1965 he promoted and played an active part in associations, conferences, periodicals and political movements whose aim was to foster cooperation between the different language groups in the South Tyrol. He worked as a school secretary from 1964 and in addition became a trade union official from 1979 to 1989. He assisted Alexander Langer at the European Parliament from 1989 to 1995. With Adriano Sofri he edited the book *Alexander Langer. Il viaggiatore leggero*, published by Sellerio in 1996. He is the current president of the Alexander Langer Foundation.

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