

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dayton's peace agreement fail

"The greatest failure of the West since 1930"

(American's secretary of State, Richard Hoolbrooke)

During World War II, Yugoslavia, that was composed of different ethnic and religious groups¹, was invaded by Nazi Germany and was partitioned, but a few years later the Communist Tito (Josip Broz 07/05/1892 - 04/05/1980 political member of the Communist Party of The Soviet Union and known Yugoslavian Dictator), who was a strong leader, reunified Yugoslavia under the slogan "Brotherhood and Unity," (*bratstvo in mir*) merging together Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia (the most multicultural country), Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, along with two self-governing provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. After the world war II, that slogan designated the official policy of inter-ethnic relations in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, composed by equal groups that coexist peacefully in the federation, where citizens were also encouraged promoting their similarities and interdependence in order to overcome national conflicts. In fact General Tito had the belief that the ancient nationalistic feeling within Yugoslavian territories amongst the populations would have been overcome in behalf of his idea of Socialism. He rebuilt the Serbian territory and redesigned the region both ethnically and religiously. The stability of his system allowed on the one hand the coexistence of different ethnic groups. On the other hand, the lack of freedom within a democracy and free cultural interaction.

After Tito's death in 1980 and without his strong leadership, Yugoslavia quickly plunged into political and economic chaos, so such a weak equilibrium collapsed with his death. Contrasting the authoritarian regime were only moderate forces backed up by The United Nations. These forces enhanced the inspiration of Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia itself, to fight for the independence from the central power. In this particular case, the International Community proposed a popular vote in order for the country to express their will for independence. Therefore, Bosnia/Herzegovina was proclaimed a sovereign and independent Republic embodied within The United Nations.

The war in Yugoslavia started when Belgrade refused to acknowledge the independence of Bosnia. The multi-ethnic feature of Ex Yugoslavian territories was processed and indicated in behalf of a national ideology meant to create "The Great Serbia". Secession ideas and projects of Serbians within Bosnia were favoured. Political programs and propaganda led into The Bosniac Crisis and a cruel war.

¹ Serbs (Orthodox Christians), Croats (Catholics) and ethnic Albanians (Muslims)

Ethnic Serbs, who opposed the breakup of Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, launched armed struggles to carve out separate Serb-controlled territories in both areas: a new leader arose by the late 1980s, a Serbian named Slobodan Milosevic, a former communist who had turned to nationalism and religious hatred to gain power; he had the ability to manipulate all the key institutions in Serbia like the academics, the media, the Serbian Orthodox Church and he had effective control of the federal army and police too. He was the main character in Bosnia war and, finally, unfortunately, in Dayton peace agreement too. Slobodan Milosevic was a politician and a man very strictly: he does not readily adapt to new ideas or people, and as a result may become inflexible, he is apt to be rigid and even prejudiced against those outside his "own circle" too; Milosevic often ignores or discounts feelings and the emotional reality of a situation, he's insensitive or uncaring to others and that influenced his political strategy during his governance: so Milosevic was pushing for what he called a "Greater Serbia" .

So on April 1992, the U.S. and European Community chose to recognize the independence of Bosnia but Milosevic responded to Bosnia's declaration of independence by attacking capital city Sarajevo², so on April 6, 1992, the Bosnian Serbs began their siege (for a time of three years people were cut off from food, utilities, and communication); Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and, following his example, Franjo Tudjman in Croatia, had turned their backs on the Yugoslav ideal of an ethnically mixed federal State and set about carving out their own ethnically homogeneous States so he can set Yugoslavia's ethnic and national groups against one another.

The bosnian serbs guerrillas and the special police units operated under the local leadership of Radovan Karadzic³, who had once told a group of journalists "Serbs and Muslims are like cats and dogs; they cannot live together in peace: it's impossible."⁴

Ethnic cleansing meant using violence and deportations to remove any trace of the other ethnic communities and to eliminate enough of the population who had previously cohabited with Serbs in the coveted territories. This "cleansing" was the goal of the war; in Bosnia cleansing clearly took the form of genocide by Serbs against Muslims: mass shootings, forced repopulation of entire towns, confinement in makeshift concentration camps for men and often it's mainly women who suffer from famine, they fooled by massacres, torture and systematic war rape (20.000 or 50.000);

² Sarajevo soon became known as the city where Serb snipers continually shot down helpless civilians in the streets, including eventually over 3,500 children

³ President of the illegitimate Bosnian Serb Republic

⁴ With references to *The History Place*, historical website

more specifically, rape and “ethnic pregnancy” was used as an instrument of war with the intent to destroy in whole the muslim targeted group.

Another kind of arm used by bosnian serbs guerrillas, police and, *in primis*, obviously by all of politician and public servant were mass media that are beyond big political messages: during the Bosnia conflict, as in the modern wars, they made not a propaganda policy, but a communication policy and that was often a top-down information. While political propaganda in Bosnia the information sector was in fact under siege. So mass media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for increased violence and racism. The journalists who opposed to Milosevic’s politic were fired and very often were killed. It’s very important the role of media in shaping modern conflict or how, with proper support, it can help create the conditions for peace⁵.

On 21 November 1995, the EU and US brokered the Dayton peace agreement, putting an end to the three and a half year bloody war⁶ in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Dayton peace agreement divided Bosnia into two semi-independent entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, inhabited mainly by Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats, and the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska (Serb Republic, or RS), each with its own government, controlling taxation, educational policy, and even foreign policy. Soon after the war's end, the country was flooded with attention and over \$14 billion in international aid, making it a laboratory for what was arguably the most extensive and innovative democratization experiment in history. By the end of 1996, 17 different foreign governments, 18 UN agencies, 27 intergovernmental organizations, and about 200 nongovernmental organizations (NGO) were involved in reconstruction efforts.⁷

However after above twenty years that therapy continue to fail.

The Dayton Accords (the western peace agreement on eastern land) imposed treaty by United States of America and Europe Union, ended the Bosnian war in an uneasy and unfair draw and left the country an ungovernable mess for fifteen year. That “Byzantine maze of backroom deals” are the crowning achievement of international bureaucracy. Dayton was built to fail, “a hasty bandage applied to a situation that had nearly bled out”⁸. The hope was that in time, as wounds healed, and with the political, military and economic support of the US and EU, a country that fully respected equality and other

⁵ *Conflict and the role of the media*, Andrew Puddephatt

⁶ *Too little to celebrate - Dayton Continues to Fail Bosnia’s Minorities*, Lydia Gall’s blog

⁷ With references to *The death of Dytton*, published by the Council on Foreign Affairs, Patrice C. McMahon and Jon Western

⁸ With references to *Built To Fail: Should The International Community Allow Bosnia To Dissolve?* Zachary Gallant, Cit

human rights would emerge, but now, while there is no war, the dream of a Bosnia that respects basic human rights remains sadly unrealized because the agreement failed to tackle the division that the war had wrought.

Thanks to Dayton peace agreement should be promote peace and stability in the region, instead the Bosnian government has failed to take these action because of deep divisions among its main political parties, largely divided along ethnic lines: the dysfunctional, paralyzed non-state created at Dayton, there is only poverty, strife and ethnic tension.

However the new democratic state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thanks to General Framework Agreement for Peace, made the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina <<based on respect for human dignity, liberty, and equality, dedicated to peace, justice, tolerance, and reconciliation, convinced that democratic governmental institutions and fair procedures best produce peaceful relations within a pluralist society, desiring to promote the general welfare and economic growth through the protection of private property and the promotion of a market economy, guided by the Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations, committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with international law, determined to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law, inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, as recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms and recalling the Basic Principles agreed in Geneva on September 8, 1995, and in New York on September 26, 1995.>>⁹

What about a good democracy can be realized in Bosnia?

The international community exported and imposed to the top down Western-style democracy saying that's only applicable and efficient to build a new pacific state where a lot of different ethnies lives. In general an empirical analysis found " the minimal definition of democracy suggests that such a regime has at least: universal, adult suffrage; recurring, free, competitive and fair elections and the two main objectives of an ideal democracy: freedom and equality. The fundamental presuppositions necessary for deciding on and realizing quality democratic are

⁹ With references: legislationline.org, preamble of CONSTITUTION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

freedom and equality, however they are understood, are necessarily linked to accountability and responsiveness; an effective rule of law is also indispensable for a good democracy. The rule of law (The minimal definition of the rule of law, suggested by Maravall (2002), refers to the implementation of laws that were enacted and approved following pre-established procedures; that are not retroactive..., but general, stable, clear, and hierarchically ordered....; applied to particular cases by courts free from political influence and accessible to all, the decisions of which follow procedural requirements, and that establish guilt through ordinary means.) is intertwined with freedom in the respect for all of those laws that directly or indirectly sanction those rights and their concrete realization; the principle subjects of such a democracy are the citizen-individuals, the territorial communities, and the various forms of associations with common values, traditions, or aims.”¹⁰

In an articulate and complex state like Bosnia and Herzegovina the procedural dimensions of a “basic” democracy can’t be realized; that’s a reason why Dayton peace agreement failed.

History in the Balkans does not follow a chronological path. However, it follows a circular movement which combines both past and present..

The war in Bosnia Herzegovina killed over 200000 people. 2million have been forced to leave their houses; in Sarajevo over 10000 people (of which 2000 were kids) were killed and approximately 56000 were wounded. From 5/04/1992 to 29/02/1996 the city was targeted with an average of 329 bombs. The peak of this bombing reached 3777 daily in July 1993.

The role of the international community can be analysed and discussed. In fact, just negotiating the peace with the chief of the Sniper, who normally looks for children on the streets, or with political managers who delegate the destruction of a city like Sarajevo or the Mostar, a symbol of multi-ethnic cohesion, is itself a criminal act.

Balkans have represented a part of "almost West" where with wild behavior international rights are continuously violated. Thank to these rights, the world tries to protect itself from the absolute and undiscussed enemy: the war.

The international Community throughout its policies and inactivity has contributed to another genocide. Each man, woman or child who were granted to live in a world where

¹⁰ Leonardo Morlino, *What is a "Good" Democracy? Theory and Empirical Analysis*

peace is established have contracted an enormous debt made of gratitude towards those man, woman or children that with time have been killed by wars which have led the society to be what it is fortunately.

We all continue to establish debts of solidarity towards other populations who are struggling with survival and try to improve their status.

It seems that in Sarajevo the last century, a short and intense century of political, social and innovative changes made of violence episodes towards humanity, it started and came to an end in the wrong manner....in Sarajevo.