

INFORMATIONENABEND FÜR FRAUEN

KROATIEN - SERBIEN INITIATIVE FÜR DEN FRIEDENSIALOG

Seit einiger Zeit gibt es im
(mittlerweile) ehemaligen
Yugoslawien einen
Nationalitätenkonflikt.

Seit acht Monaten gibt es
Krieg.

Wir alle kennen die Bilder
dieses Krieges aus den Medien
und sind mit Informationen -
samt dazu aufgebauten
Feindbildern - konfrontiert.
Ein Dialog muß die Sichtweisen
beider Konfliktparteien
berücksichtigen, um Frieden
einzuleiten zu können.



An diesem Abend wird Fr. Dr. Melita Sunjic als Vertreterin der
"Initiative für den kroatisch-serbischen Friedensdialog"

- die Entwicklung des Konfliktes ,
- und die aktuelle Lage in ihrem Land schildern,
- die Initiative für den Friedensdialog vorstellen,
- sowie notwendige und effektive Unterstützungsmöglichkeiten für
eine Friedensinitiative aufzeigen.

Melita Sunjic lebt in Wien und ist bei der "Wiener Zeitung" als
außenpolitische Redakteurin (Spezialfach Osteuropa) beschäftigt.
Sie ist eine der InitiatorInnen der überparteilichen "Initiative
für den kroatisch-serbischen Friedensdialog".

ZEIT: Dienstag, 25. Feber 1992, 19 Uhr

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I recently heard Volodymyr Zelenskyy described in the US media as “Churchill with social media accounts.” That has been stirring in my head since, but the role of visibility that social media lends has certainly changed how we interpret war, violence, and information. I remember the images of the Yugoslav War in the US media. It was always a depiction of a poor, elderly woman in a headscarf and tattered clothes, crying in a pile of rubble. There were never any images that showed youth or life or resistance. These images perfectly fit the portrayal of being backwards and undeveloped. It was a legacy left by the Cold War and the war of images that branded former communist nations of a people that were primitive, because they were out of touch with the capitalist synchronicity of the “West.” The USSR certainly wielded immense oppression, but Yugoslavia was a whole other context. In the war of capitalist vs. communist ideology, non-aligned nations remained a blank space to be ascribed as fit the situation. And the war was no exception. The 1990s were a time when the West exploded in prosperity, when Reagan’s neoliberalism was in full bloom. So the idea that someone was “still stuck” in the backwardness of the Cold War legacy – which is how this region was portrayed – after the fall of the Berlin Wall made it easy for media accounts to be stained with ignominy and irrelevance. Certainly media accounts in different countries took different forms, but no doubt the US portrayal played a leading role in a global context at the time. And there was, of course, no social media for self-representation then.

The last time I saw Yugoslavia was six months before the event on this poster. I was a child. Other neighborhood children were talking about stories they heard from their parents and were “playing war,” the way that children play “cops and robbers,” running around shooting finger guns at other children impersonating airplanes. There was laughter and lightheartedness until we were interrupted by three loud fighter jets tearing through the sky overhead, followed by loud booms. The instantaneous shift from performing fighter jets to being huddled in the nearby bushes when we actually saw them, trembling in fear, was a reflex we didn’t know we had. I was scheduled to fly back to the US the next day with my mother. When we got to the airport, we were told we had been abandoned by our airline and all flights would be canceled for the foreseeable future. My first memory of Austria would be the next day when Austrian Airlines came to take all foreign citizens home who had been abandoned as a rescue mission. The rest of the reports of the war over the following months and years came through letters from family that had been opened and read by authorities that always arrived months later, if at all. We heard horror stories and it was hard to differentiate truth from fiction, because people were sheltered in their basements and would only exchange brief gossip when leaving to obtain necessities. Their media was corrupt and access to it was sparse. There was no internet or even the capacity to take photos easily as they’d have to be developed. So we were left with gossip and US media coverage – that spanned from stories of brutal torture to disrespectful indifference with little in between. Just a few years later, the world was transformed with the introduction of the internet and new digital

technologies. The uprisings of the Arab Spring credited cell phone communication for playing a key role in organizing protest. We can watch news live as it happens on the streets. And most recently we see a sea change in how Ukraine has been depicted – empowered and inspiring – almost the poster child for how to resist Cold War legacy.

Former Yugoslavia is now stained with PTSD, hyperactive turbo-capitalism, deep-seated corruption born in the 1990s, and a remarkable new tradition of forgetting and erasure. The current state of information in the media and in social media are aptly described as the “post-truth era,” so I don’t want to give them too much credit. But it wasn’t until this flood of memories that I remembered how intense the media propaganda was in the 1980s and 1990s and how much of it had to be supplemented by a strange perverse mix of precious oral histories and severely warped gossip. Fortunately, we have a handful of authors, artists, historians, and researchers who attempted to chronicle events and oral histories. Also the work of Women in Black cannot be underestimated and I will simply mention them here as a call to look into them and their radical feminist anti-war and anti-nationalist work that started in 1991 and continues to this day.



Foto / photo: Jakob Dietrich

ENTRÜSTET EUCH! [DISARM YOURSLEVES, GET OUTRAGED!], 2022

Sekretariat für Geister, Archivpolitiken und Lücken /
Secretariat for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps

In Zusammenarbeit mit / In collaboration with
Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, Lina Dokuzović, Margit Hauser und/and Sassy Splitz

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Fotografie / Photography
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im Kunstraum Memphis in Linz entwickelt (14. Mai - 8. Juni 2022).

The project was developed for the exhibition AGGRESSIVE PEACE
at Kunstraum Memphis in Linz (May 14 - June 8, 2022).