

CultureTalk Bosnia and Herzegovina Video Transcripts:
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War and the Post-War Sarajevo

Bosnian transcript in Latin:

Una: Jer naravno, devedesetih godina stvari su se malo promijenile.

Anida: Tada je počeo rat, u aprilu 1992. godine, i trajao do 1995. i ne znam tačno koliko hiljada ljudi je izgubilo živote jer je Sarajevo bilo pod opsadom preko tri godine.

Una: Što je najduža opsada u istoriji modernog rata. Duža od Leningrada, duža od Staljingrada.

Anida: I, naravno rat je bio velika katastrofa za naš grad, i nakon 15, 12, 13?

Una: 15.

Anida: 15 godina nakon rata se još uvijek oporavlja, još uvijek nije kao što je bio prije. Mislim da nikad neće biti kao što je bio, al'...

Una: Grad sam po sebi... Obično se ljudi iznenade ako nisu iz Sarajeva jer dođu pa kažu: „Pa ovdje ne izgleda kao da je bio rat. Fasade su vam divne, sve je lijepo, sve je očišćeno.“ Tu i tamo se vidi ostatak rata, ima par gelera, ostaci granata ali inače se ne vidi. Ali, ono što ne razumiju jeste da život grada, duh grada nije u fasadama, nije u zgradama, nije u investicijama i novim neboderima, nego je ustvari u ljudima i prava tragedija opsade, prava tragedija rata u Sarajevu jeste što je toliko ljudi... Ili su otišli zauvijek iz Sarajeva ili su poginuli za vrijeme rata i ustvari promijenilo se stanovništvo. I zato ustvari Sarajevo... Trebat će još dugo, dugo da se oporavi.

Anida: Da.

Bosnian transcript in Cyrillic:

Уна: Јер наравно, деведесетих година ствари су се мало промијениле.

Анида: Тада је почео рат, у априлу 1992. године, и трајао до 1995. и не знам тачно колико хиљада људи је изгубило животе јер је Сарајево било под опсадом преко три године.

Уна: Што је најдужа опсада у историји модерног рата. Дужа од Ленинграда, дужа од Стаљинграда.

Анида: И, наравно рат је био велика катастрофа за наш град, и након 15, 12, 13?

Уна: 15.

Анида: 15 година након рата се још увијек опоравља, још увијек није као што је био прије. Мислим да никад неће бити као што је био, ал'...

Уна: Град сам по себи... Обично се људи изненаде ако нису из Сарајева јер дођу па кажу: „Па овдје не изгледа као да је био рат. Фасаде су вам дивне, све је лијепо, све је очишћено.“ Ту и тамо се види остатак рата, има пар гелера, остаци граната али иначе се не види. Али, оно што не разумију јесте да живот града, дух града није у фасадама, није у зградама, није у инвестицијама и новим небодерима, него је уствари у људима и права трагедија опсаде, права трагедија рата у Сарајеву јесте што је толико људи... Или су отишли заувјек из Сарајева или су погинули за вријеме рата и уствари промијенило се становништво. И зато уствари Сарајево... Требат ће још дуго, дуго да се опорави.

Анида: Да.

English translation:

Una: Because, of course, things changed a little in the nineties.

Anida: That's when the war¹ started – in April 1992 – and it lasted until 1995. I don't know how many people lost their lives, since Sarajevo was under siege for over three years...

Una: ...which is the longest siege in the history of modern warfare. Longer than Leningrad, longer than Stalingrad.

¹ The speaker here refers to the Bosnian War. The Bosnian War took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina between April 1992 and December 1995. The main sides involved were the forces of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and those of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat entities within Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Herceg-Bosna, who were led and supplied by Serbia and Croatia, respectively.

The war came about as a result of the breakup of Yugoslavia. Following the Slovenian and Croatian secessions from Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991, the multiethnic Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was inhabited by mainly Muslims, Orthodox Christians and Catholics, passed a referendum for independence on February 29, 1992. This was rejected by Bosnian Serb (Orthodox Christians claiming roots in Serbia) political representatives, who had boycotted the referendum and established their own republic. Following the declaration of independence, Bosnian Serb forces, supported by the Serbian government of Slobodan Milošević and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) attacked the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to gain territory which was planned to be annexed by Serbia. At the same time, Bosnian Croats (Catholics claiming roots in Croatia) organized into military units in those parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina where they were a majority with a similar intent – to gain territory for Croatia. War soon broke out across Bosnia between the three sides, with the death toll estimated at 250,000 people, most of which were civilians. Most of Bosnia and Herzegovina also suffered catastrophic damage to its infrastructure and industry.

Anida: And of course, the war was quite disastrous for our city; and even after [the past] 15? 12, 13 [years]?

Una: 15 years².

Anida: ...15 years after the war the city is still recovering, but it's still not what it used to be. I think that it will never be like it was before, but...

Una: The city itself, yes... People who are not from Sarajevo are usually surprised, because they come and say: "Well, it doesn't look like there was a war here. Your facades are beautiful, everything is pretty, and everything was cleaned up." You can see the remnants of the war here and there: a couple of shrapnel marks, holes from shells, but otherwise it's invisible. But the thing that they can't understand is that the life of a city, the spirit of a city is not in facades or buildings or investments and new skyscrapers – it's in people; and the real tragedy of the siege, the real tragedy of the war in Sarajevo is that so many people... They either left Sarajevo for good, or they died during the war and the population has changed. And that's why Sarajevo... It will take a long, long time [for Sarajevo] to recover.

Anida: Yes.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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² Please note that this footage was filmed in 2008.