



*žene u crnom
beograd*



Report

**January, February,
March and April
2023**

As before, we bring you a brief report on the activities of Women in Black in the mentioned period, and if you are interested in more information, you can find them on our website www.zeneucrnom.org or contact us by e-mail at: office@zeneucrnom.org

January, February, March and April 2023

Street actions: In this reporting period, we organized seven (7) events

and we also actively participated in other street actions:

- Commemorations/marketing important dates of crimes committed in our name;
- Feminist, anti-fascist, anti-war, anti-racist, anti-militaristic actions...

COMMEMORATIONS/MARKING OF IMPORTANT DATES OF CRIMES COMMITTED IN OUR NAME, AS WELL AS OTHER CRIMES AGAINST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, DURING AND AFTER THE WARS, IN THE TERRITORY OF FORMER YUGOSLAVIA:

Belgrade, 27th February

Belgrade, 27th February “We remember the crime in Štrpci” – commemorating the 30th anniversary of the crime committed in Štrpci, Women in Black organized a vigil in mourning and silence in Knez Mihailova Street in Belgrade.

The following banners were displayed during the vigil:

- 27th Feb. 1993 - Members of the Serbian paramilitary formation Avengers abducted Bosniak passengers from a train on the Belgrade-Bar railway
- The death train number 671 departed from Belgrade
- The train stopped at 3:48 p.m.
- The kidnapped and killed: names of the victims
- We remember the crime in Štrpci (27th February 1993-27th February 2022)
- 30 years of crime in Štrpci
- Solidarity





In this occasion Dah theater performed a part of theater play dedicated to Štrpci crime.

This vigil was attended by **20** activists of WIB, Humanitarian law center and Youth initiative for human rights.

Prijepolje, 27th February “We remember victims of Štrpci crime”

- in front of the memorial plaque in Prijepolje, the 30th anniversary of the crime in Štrpci was marked. Activists of the association of women Žene Polimlja from Prijepolje (Serbia) on behalf of the Network of Women in Black, together with the families of the victims, paid tribute to the victims of crimes in Štrpci.

Belgrade, April 23rd “Why?” - on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the murder of 16 workers in the Radio Television of Serbia/RTS in the NATO bombing (1999), as a sign of empathy and solidarity with the families of those killed in front of the monument called **Why?** in Tašmajdan Park, eight (**8**) activists participated of Women in Black Network (Beograd, Kraljevo, Leskovac, Pančevo, Vlasotince) in commemorative rallies on April 23rd (at 2:06

FEMINIST, ANTI-FASCIST, ANTI-WAR, ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-MILITARISTIC ACTIONS:

In this period, we organized the following street actions:



Belgrade, March 21 “Stop Racism” - on the occasion of March 21

- the International Day Against Racism, Women in Black in cooperation with the Women’s Roma Network organized a protest against racist violence against the Roma population. Namely, Aleksandar Šapić, the mayor of Belgrade, made racist statements against the Roma population on several occasions.



The following banners were displayed at the protest:

- One race – the human race
- March 21 – Day of the fight against racism
- Šapić = racist!
- Šapić = resignation!
- Racism is the heart of Serbia
- Stop racism!
- Stop racism against Roma men and women - solidarity and responsibility (in Serbian and Roma languages)

25 activists participated in the protest.



Belgrade, 2nd February "We trust Milena Radulović!" - Women in Black, the feminist initiative Verujem ti (I believe you), Women's Solidarity, CK13, and the Autonomous Women's Center organized a protest in front of the Palace of Justice on the occasion of the start of the trial of Miroslav Mika Aleksić, accused of raping and sexually abusing female students of the drama studio 'Stvar srca' (Matter of

the Heart), which he owned. The court proceedings against Aleksić began in February 2022. Women in Black has followed all the hearings so far, and organized a protest before each one. In this period, we held three (3) protests:

- *January, 31*
- *March, 3*
- *April, 11*

Three banners were displayed at the protest:

- *We trust Milena Ra dulović*
- *Justice for the victims – sanctions for the perpetrators*
- *They raped in war - they also rape in peace*

DEALING WITH THE PAST / TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE - A FEMINIST APPROACH

This is one of the most important activities of Women in Black. It consists of multitude segments: street actions, workshops, lectures, creation of different models of transitional justice from a feminist point of view, cooperation with related organizations in the form of joint actions (campaigns, consultative meetings).

Accountability for the crimes - the path to peace with justice: monitoring the trials at the Special Court

Trial for the crime in Bratunac II

The indictment charges *Goran Stjepanović*, a member of the Republika Srpska Army, with crimes against Bosniak civilians in early June 1992 and with raping A.A., a Bosniak woman. The main trial began in January 2021.

In this reporting period, one (1) hearing was held - on January 26. At today's main trial, a video conference connection was established with the Cantonal Court in Tuzla, where Edina Karić and Mustafa Ibišević testified.

Due to the sensitivity of the testimony, the president of the panel, judge Dejan Terzić, made a decision to exclude the public from the main trial.

Trial for the war crime in Štrpci

- **on February 27, 1993**, the train on the Belgrade-Bar railroad number 671 was raided at the station of Štrpci, when members of the military formation Osvetnici (Avengers), operating as part of the Višegrad brigade of the Army of Republika Srpska, abducted 20 persons from

the train (18 passengers of Bosnian nationality, one passenger of Croatian nationality, citizen of the Republic of Yugoslavia and one unidentified person), took them to the village of Mušići first, and from there to the village of Prelovo, in the community of Višegrad, where they were killed. So far, the remains of four persons have been found.

This trial began on March 4, 2019; the following persons were accused of this crime: Gojko Lukić, Ljubiša Vasiljević, Duško Vasiljević, Jovan Lipovac and Dragana Đekić.

Two **(2)** hearings were held:

January 17 – After the end of the evidentiary proceedings, it was time to present the closing arguments. *Deputy Prosecutor Vasilije Seratlić*, in his closing statement, requested a maximum prison sentence of 20 years for the accused Gojko Lukić, Mitar Vasiljević and Jovan Lipovac, while he asked for 10 years for the accused Dragana Đekić, since she was a minor at the time of the crime.

The representative of the injured parties, Marina Kljajić, joined the closing words of the Deputy Prosecutor and added: “The defendants acted as a group and as co-perpetrators.” It was a well-organized group where every individual wanted that act. Everything was done based on the division of roles: some killed and others kept watch. I suggest that the court finds them guilty, because the families have been waiting for justice for 30 years.”

The defendants’ defense lawyers: Željko Sanković, Nebojša Perović, Đorđe Dozet and Novak Ninić also presented their closing arguments. They said that they believe that during the evidentiary proceedings it was not proven that their defendants committed the criminal offense charged against them in the indictment. “The defendants did not commit any crime, they only “defended their region, their father, their mother, their people, their country that raised them”, said the lawyers.

At the end, the defendants: Gojko Lukić, Dušan Vasiljević, Jovan Lipovac and Dragana Đekić, also presented their closing arguments: they stated that the ‘whole state’ knew about that crime, but that they had nothing to do with it, that their ‘hands are clean’, etc.

February 6 – After several years of court proceedings, judge Snežana Garotić Nikolić announced the verdict. The accused *Gojko Lukić, Duško Vasiljević, Jovan Lipovac and Dragana Đekić* were found guilty and sentenced to prison terms of **10** and **5** years, respectively, for crimes committed against the civilian population.

Kravica War Crime – Eight members of the Special Brigade of the Republika Srpska Army have been charged with war crimes (the murder of 1,313 Bosnians, within the Srebrenica genocide, on July 13th, 1995).

(Let us remind: The Kravica crime indictment was brought at the beginning of 2016. This was the beginning of the most important

trial at the High Court in Belgrade / Special Court, the Srebrenica genocide. However, on 14 July 2017, the Court of Appeal ruled to annul the indictment for this crime, which is otherwise not qualified as genocide, since it was raised at the time when the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office did not have a Chief Prosecutor. The trial continued in November 2017, and the hearings are continually being delayed due to non-attendance of witnesses, inaction of the prosecution and the withdrawal of protected witnesses due to the threats they receive).

In this reporting period one (1) session was held:

January 27 - the presentation of written evidence continued at the main hearing.

WOMEN'S COURT - A FEMINIST APPROACH TO JUSTICE

We bring a brief report on the activities of Women in Black regarding the organization of the Women's Court - a feminist approach to justice in this period. Should you be interested in more information, you can find it on our website www.zeneucrnornom.org and www.zenskisud.org or contact us by mail: zeneucrnornombeograd@gmail.com

The first Women's Court in the territory of Europe was held in Sarajevo, May 7 to May 10, 2015, organized by 10 women's groups from the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Mothers of the Srebrenica and Žepa Enclaves, Cure Foundation, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Center for Women Victims of War, Center for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia, Center for Women and Peace Education Anima, Kotor, Montenegro, Gender Equality Council, Skopje, Macedonia, Women's Lobby, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Center for Women's Studies and Women in Black, Belgrade, Serbia). The Women's Court was attended by more than 500 people from all the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but also from Argentina, Algeria, Palestine, Israel, the United States, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, etc.

The final event in Sarajevo was not the end of the process, but on the contrary, an incentive to continue from the feminist perspective towards the creation of new models of justice. It is an obligation first of all to the witnesses, but also the expression of our responsibility towards the enormous burden of the recent past.

In continuation of the Women's Court, Women in Black, Belgrade coordinates the program and other activities, with the support of organizations: Anima, Kotor (Montenegro), Center for Women Victims of War, Zagreb (Croatia), The Foundation CURE, Sarajevo (Bosnia & Herzegovina).

During this reporting period, the following activities were organized:

Public presentation of Women's Court – Osijek/Croatia, January, 18



At the Faculty of Philosophy (Esthetic Laboratory), a public presentation of the W'sC was held, in the presence of about fifty (50) male and students. *Boško Pešić*, Head of the Aesthetics Laboratory and head of the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek, emphasized that the discussion about the Women's Court for the former Yugoslavia "should serve not only for the commemorative purpose of reminding the victims of violence, but as a living reminder - so that it would never happen again".



Organizers: *Nela Pamuković*, Center for Women Victims of War, Zagreb, *Marijana Senjak*, feminist therapist at W'sC from Zagreb, and *Staća Zajović*, WiB, Belgrade, spoke about the Women's Court, the feminist approach to justice, the history, the process of organizing and the effects of the W'sC.

Women's court – a feminist approach to justice (52 minutes)
- screening of a documentary film directed by *Filip Markovinović*, produced by Women in Black. The film is about the Women's Court held in Sarajevo (May 7-10, 2015).

Witnesses at W'sC spoke about the importance of W'sC for them and their struggle for justice:

Marica Šeatović, Novska, Croatia: "The Women's Court meant a lot to me. I went through all the state courts in Croatia, and I was never treated as I was at the W'sC in Sarajevo: there I had freedom of speech and great support from female activists and associates. The Women's Court greatly strengthened me. I am still active today." The trial for the murder of the closest family members of Marica Šeatović was held, but the defendants were acquitted. Only recently, thirty years after the crime, Šeatović exercised her right to financial compensation in accordance with the Law on Civilian Victims of War. "That is all my satisfaction for this fight of 30 years. But I will not surrender," said Marica.

Milica Miladinović, Zagreb: "The Women's Court strengthened me, it gave me strength and courage to persevere. For fifteen years I have been suing the state and the man who occupied my house, demanding that I pay him 40 thousand euros! In my case, the adage that justice is slow but attainable proved to be true. I got my home back. There were many difficult situations, painful, but it was worth it. Today, I am ready to help anyone"

Women's peace encounters - towards the organization of the Women's Court

Sarajevo February 17 and 18

This meeting held in Sarajevo on **February 17 and 18**, was attended by **29** women from 15 places, namely from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Foča, Sarajevo, Bratunac, Jablanica, Đulići, Tuzla, Višegrad, Bihać), Montenegro (Kotor and Pljevlja); Croatia (Novska and Zagreb) and Serbia (Belgrade and Prijepolje).

Initiatives related to transitional justice – regional and international level

RECOM - The experiences, challenges and obstacles of Rekom were discussed by: Nela Pamuković, Zagreb, Marica Šeatović, Novska, Sabina Talović, Pljevlja.

Commissions for truth, reconciliation, reparation in Latin America - the case of Chile (Stiša Z.)

Women's initiatives for peace in Africa (City of Joy - Congo) and Latin America - "Women's Commission for Truth and Memories in Colombia"
Mira Vilušić and Stiša Zajović.

On sexual violence - experiences from international conferences (London, November 2022, which was discussed by Nela Pamuković and Marijana Senjak, Zagreb.

Models of reparation for victims of sexual violence in war - a comparative overview: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo
(Marijana and Nela).

Feminist ethics of care: My sources of strength - a workshop moderated by Marijana Senjak.



Milk of Sorrow, (95 min.): a feature film by director Carmen Llosa about sexual violence against women during the internal conflict between the left-wing guerrilla *Sendero luminoso* and the armed forces of Peru; translation and subtitles by WiB.

On experiences of sexual violence in the war – testimonies by women from Foča, who live in Sarajevo.

About symbolic reparations - about the concept, content, practices... (Stiša)

Symbolic reparations with a focus on the war crime of rape - international and regional experiences in the field of engaged art and performances about those actions in: Kosovo, Colombia, South Korea, as well as documentaries about the street actions of WiB dedicated to women victims of sexual violence during the war are shown in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

PEACE ENCOUNTERS - JOINT REFLECTION ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE, WOMEN'S PEACE ACTIVISM, DISCUSSION CIRCLES, REMEMBERING THE RESISTANCE OF THE 90S

we single out the following activities, which we transmit chronologically:

January 12, Zagreb

January 12, Zagreb – “Ideological-political disputes and moral dilemmas related to the war in Ukraine”

The debate was held at the Center for Women's Studies, organized by: Center for Women Victims of War, Zagreb and WiB, Belgrade, moderated by: *Nela Pamuković and Stiša Zajović*, with the participation of **12** people - peace and feminist activists.

The issues addresses were disputes and dilemmas within the peace movement at the European and regional level; on media repression - unanimity; about the silence of the peace movement, in Europe and in Croatia, in relation to the war in Ukraine; about the right of the victims to defend themselves, but not only by armed means - why are non-violent struggles underestimated?' as well as about the absence of peace negotiations, etc.

January 14, Ljubljana

January 14, Ljubljana “Ideological-political disputes and moral dilemmas related to the war in Ukraine”

The debate was held in **PLAC** (Participative Ljubljana Alternative Zone), and over **60** people participated - activists from Ljubljana, Brazil, Chile, academic figures; the conversation was moderated by *Stiša Zajović*, WiB, Belgrade.

The discussion focused on the crisis of the left, which 'does not have the strength to articulate answers to the serious problems of today'; about the fact that the forms of resistance are reduced to the armed way/the answer 'non-violence is almost completely excluded'; on the absence of peace negotiations/diplomacy from below, on the absence of "participation of citizens in the negotiations", etc.

Women's Peace Activism, Đulici, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Educational program that the civic association "Anima" from Đulici and Women in Black Belgrade have been organizing since the beginning of 2016. Meetings within Women's Peace Activism are strengthening trust, mutual support and solidarity, wider areas of women's autonomy and self-confidence. This meeting is a continuation of many years of cooperation, friendship, mutual support and mutual cooperation of "Anima" and WiB.

February 11, 2023 in Đulici

February 11, 2023 in Đulici attended by 15 women from Đulici, Klisa, Šetići, Sapna and Belgrade.

Some of workshops were:

"How did we live through (survive) the year 2022?" What marked the previous year 2022?" - workshop

For all participants, the war in Ukraine marked the year 2022 for the following reasons:

It revived the traumas from the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina: "It brought me back to the war years"; "the war has never left my mind, it constantly haunts me, I dream of running away."; I am afraid that the war could spread to Bosnia'; 'I constantly remember our massacre, I remember Srebrenica' - the most common answer;

What struck me the most was the suffering of civilians, especially women and children, the destruction of places of life: 'women from Ukraine flee just like us during the war'; "demolition and destruction of cities and villages, that reminds me of what I lived through";

This is a war for territories: 'this war has shown that civilians do not matter'; 'they are just stockpiling weapons'; "I'm afraid that our sons who went abroad will be mobilized for the war - them first and all immigrants in Europe";

War-mongering propaganda: especially in the media in Serbia, the so-called analysts are the worst, they only incite war' etc.



Acceptance of Ukrainian refugees, but it is negative that other refugees are not accepted (Middle East, Africa...) but are most often discriminated against and persecuted...

Anti-war resistance in Russia - military refugees from Russia, they should be supported...

Women's revolt in Iran: 'We admire the courage of women to stand up against terror and violence'; "no one should force women to wear the hijab - it must be the choice of every woman"; 'covering women in the name of religion/Islam is unacceptable'; "I was afraid that it could happen in Bosnia" etc.

What to do?

Montenegro on April 7, 8 and 9

-the fifth roundtable discussion was held in Podgorica/ Montenegro on April 7, 8 and 9. in the premises of the Center for Civic Education, Podgorica.



This meeting was attended by **28** people from **9** cities - activists of civil society organizations, the media, the political scene, independent intellectuals from: *Montenegro* (Bar, Bijelo Polje, Herceg Novi, Kotor, Nikšić); from *Serbia* (Belgrade and Novi Pazar) and from *Croatia* / Zagreb.

This event was organized by: Women in Black, Belgrade with the support of: *Center for Civic Education, Podgorica, Anima - Center for Women's and Peace Education, Kotor and Academic Initiative Forum 10, Novi Pazar.*

We highlight the following from the debates:

Are left and right outdated concepts? Neither left, nor right - where? About the third way... - about the role of the contemporary left; about the third way; how to avoid the traps of false alternatives?

The lecture was given by: **Lino Veljak**, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb

At the beginning of the lecture, Veljak referred to the **value differences between the left and the right:**





“Rightists advocate the primacy of tradition, while leftists stand for modernity, modernization, for abandoning tradition.” Right-wingers are attached to the nation and advocate nationalism, which can even go as far as chauvinism, while leftists are those who advocate internationalism and cosmopolitanism. Right-wingers advocate racism or the theory of racial supremacy, most often the supremacy of the white race, leftists believe that people are equal and should be equal regardless of skin color and other characteristics. Leftists advocate the primacy of freedom, while rightists insist on authority. Right-wingers advocate the unquestionability of religion, which leads to religious stupor, religious fanaticism and even religious fundamentalism, in contrast to which leftists reject either religion as such (advocating atheism or agnosticism) or, in more moderate variants, reject a rigid interpretation of religion and the attribution of some essential importance to religion, or - minimally - considering religion as a private matter of the human individual. Leftists advocate sexual freedom, the right to choose. Right-wingers, on the other hand, advocate rigid patriarchal norms of sexual morality. Right-wingers believe that there must be a hierarchy in society. Leftists, on the other hand, believe that equality and equality should rule in society.”



The lecturer went on to present a modification of the scheme given by the Italian philosopher and political theorist Norberto Bobbio in his book *The Right and the Left*. He also referred to “authoritarian socialism or, to put it simply, Stalinism, that is, real socialism in all its variants, from the Soviet, to the Chinese, Albanian, and still living North Korean variants of “real socialism”.



“**The third way** is the concept developed by the British theorist Anthony Giddens in the seventies of the last century, according to which the idea of socialism should be reconciled with the idea of liberalism.” That position became especially relevant when classical liberalism, which was revived in the period after the Second World War in the model of the welfare state or welfare state, was replaced by neoliberalism, which was first implemented globally in the USA during the term of *Ronald Reagan*, and in Europe during the rule of *Margaret Thatcher*.

Regarding **Eastern Europe**, Veljak explained: "After the establishment of a multi-party system, the former communist parties reformed into social democratic parties and accepted, that is, took over the concept of the third way, so here we have a transition from authoritarian socialism to a combination of liberalism and democracy socialism with the absolute primacy of liberalism in its neoliberal form, which then leads to a distinct collapse of the social achievements of the socialist state, i.e. socialist society".

This process of transition from Stalinism to authoritarian neoliberalism is most visible in Hungary (Orbán), in the Russian Federation (Putin) and Poland, where the main role is played by the Catholic Church. Another more radical example of this transition from Stalinism to National Socialism is the Chinese example: China is an expanding country with a combination of authoritarian socialism, which, of course, is completely devoid of the idea of equality and is based on neoliberal politics," emphasized Veljak.

He then elaborated the thesis that **patriarchy is the root of authoritarianism** - based on the rule of the father, obedience and subordination of women and children. Then Veljak concluded: "Today, the left must insist on suppressing the authoritarian patriarchal element, a key constitutive element in this negative synthesis of Stalinism and fascism, but which is very present in the sphere dominated by the so-called non-liberal democracies, and especially when it passes, as in Poland or Hungary, into the sphere of authoritarian order. And somewhere there is a sphere in which one can, should, and I would say must, think about the necessity of renewing the potential of the left, and that means emancipatory theories and practices".

(The full lecture can be found on the WiB website)

Joint reflection on the current socio-political situation in Montenegro and Serbia

Daliborka Uljarević, Center for Civic Education believes that "the presidential elections (April 2, 2023) did not solve anything in Montenegro. At the moment, the most important question is whether the *Europe Now* movement and the three coalitions, which won the 2020 parliamentary elections, will have a two-thirds majority in the Assembly in the June extraordinary parliamentary elections. If that happens, it could happen that Montenegro goes in a direction that can be very dangerous, because the two-thirds majority allows the provisions of the Constitution to be changed, which define the character of the state".

Mira Asović, an activist from Nikšić, expressed her fear that after the presidential elections there will be a *strengthening of Serbian nationalism, embodied through the power of the Serbian Orthodox*

Church/SOC in Montenegro. This opinion is shared by many participants, considering that the SOC, especially after the political changes, has growing uncontrolled power.

Esad Kočan, editor-in-chief of the Montenegrin independent weekly Monitor: “The era of Milo Đukanović, who was defeated in the presidential elections, lived for thirty-five years” but also that “the opposition in Montenegro is bad, while the entire Montenegrin society is extremely violent and completely devastated” etc.

The participants expressed a critical attitude towards the EU, whose priority is not to solve problems in the country, but to establish stabilocracy. The Brussels administration is mainly interested in the following issues: NATO integration, independence of Kosovo, genocide in Srebrenica, and that is the end of Brussels’ understanding of the political reality in Montenegro.

One of the interlocutors (*Ervin Dabižinović*) pointed out that when it comes to the Western Balkans, the focus is on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia: “Unless Montenegro is also in the focus of the West, we will be in trouble.”

Clear critical attitudes towards the newly elected president Jakov Milatović were expressed:

Milatović acknowledges the decision of the International Court of Justice, but did not give his personal opinion on whether genocide was committed in Srebrenica.

One of the interlocutors (*Jovan Ulićević*) pointed out that Milatović represents “a typical neoliberal, i.e. a combination of banking and the church, which represents the worst option.”

The participants believe that the positive attitude of J. Milatović towards the **Open Balkans** initiative is a very negative political attitude indicating his closeness with the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić. “I am also concerned about the efforts of the American administration to promote the Open Balkans initiative at the cost of the fact that it can be harmful to Montenegro,” said one of the participants of the meeting (*Senka Rastoder*).

On the situation in Serbia

On the German-French agreement for the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo; about the growth of the right, about the People’s Movement for the State...

Fahrudin Kladničanin, Academic Initiative ‘Forum 10’ from Novi Pazar believes that a small part of the opposition believes that this agreement is important. Others believe that the agreement will

enable A. Vučić to have a long, absolute rule - full Western support for the autocrat Vučić, regardless of his corruption, destruction of the state and society.

As for the **Serbian Right**, Kladničanin believes that 'Vučić is faking a conflict with the right wing, because in the eyes of the international community, this positions him in the political center'. However, he points to the danger of the right as an "extended arm of Russia" that was "created by the Russian agents".

Kladničanin warned her about the danger of creating the **People's Movement for the State**, with whom Vučić intends to control both the government and the opposition. He announces that trade unions, employers, NGOs, various local initiatives are also joining this movement - this is a way to formalize the entire system of clientelism.

Staša Zajović, WiB activist, added that with the **People's Movement for the State** the regime aims to create a state/regime civil society even though there are a large number of GONGs. For the regime, the existing civil society is 'Western-oriented', 'insufficiently patriotic', 'anti-state'. That movement will propose laws, because it will "come from the people" and not from the party, which means it has greater legitimacy. That movement will be in the function of the 'Serbian world': as a 'people's movement', various pro-Serbian ultra-nationalist groups outside of Serbia - in BH, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo (Serbian list, etc.) are coordinated, concluded Zajović.

Mirko Medenica, lawyer, WiB activist, believes that the "atmosphere in Serbia is harmful to mental health" because of the permanent promotion of violence in all regime media, the glorification of war criminals, and threatens to escalate dangerously. Many believe that the dominance of the pro-Russian narrative and the activation of anti-Western forces in Serbia is only a strategy of the regime, which allows Vučić to maintain total control. "On many points, the opposition is worse than the regime - regarding the independence of Kosovo, the introduction of sanctions against Russia, the war in Ukraine... The regime produces its pro-fascist scarecrows, it always presents itself as the center - acceptable to the international community," Medenica stressed.

In the short lecture "**The Third Comparative**", **Milan Popović**, professor at the Faculty of Law in Podgorica, referred to the serious problem of real socialism marked by a "lack of critical reflection", that after the collapse of real socialism there was the rise of the peripheral capitalist system; that with the fall of the Berlin Wall came the triumph of liberal and neoliberal democracy. Among the alternatives in Europe, he mentioned the DIEM initiative, the socialist movement in the USA (B. Sanders), etc.

SFR Yugoslavia: a museum artifact of the past or an incentive to create an alternative?

The discussion was held at the suggestion of the participants of the previous roundtable discussion round (November 2022) and in the introductory workshop on SRFY, the most important associations are related to:

Equality - economic freedom, labor rights, education/schooling and health, travel, vacations; *security* - freedom of movement; *equality* - of nations and ethnic groups; *solidarity* - togetherness and empathy, camaraderie, sharing; *cultural policy* - culture centers, designed cultural policy; *emancipation of women* - massive participation of women in the sphere of work, *friendship* - companionship, laughter, joy...

In addition to the concrete experiences and achievements of the socialist period, a very negative legacy was also mentioned: repression - of the Albanians in Kosovo, self-censorship and censorship, verbal delict, the strengthening of nationalism in the 80s...

It was concluded that it is about "Yugonostalgia" - sentimental private memories, a kind of "comfort" in times of extreme economic and political instability.

In the continuation of the discussion, there were talks about the *positive aspects of the lived Yugo-experience* - about cultural, political connections and alternatives outside the institutional framework (Praxis, Korčula summer school, the first feminist autonomous initiatives, environmental, anti-militarism initiatives...).

The participants believe that instead of 'erasing/excluding the Yugo-experience and reducing it to a museum dimension', the discourse on the Yugo-past, as a selection of positive heritage, can be a 'contribution to the pluralization of ideas and discourses about Europe', etc.

Ada/Vojvodina on April 26

We remember the anti-war resistance - a peace meeting in Ada/Vojvodina on April 26

The meeting was organized on the occasion of the first death anniversary of **Istvan Vebel/Ištvan Pišta Vebel** (1945-2022), an anti-war activist. Together with his wife **Vera Vebel Tatić** (1943-2020), Ištvan Pišta Vebel initiated and organized anti-war protests during the 90s in Ada and in general in Potisje and Vojvodina. Their contribution was enormous in helping the rebels against the war (deserters, conscientious objectors, refugees and all others who refused to participate in the war). Istvan and Vera established bridges of peace and solidarity between citizens of all ethnic and national affiliations.

19 activists from Ada, Senta, Trešnjevac, Sombor, Novi Sad and Belgrade participated in this meeting. Reflecting on the significance

of the meeting, the participants said: 'this is an act of celebration of resistance and courage - a tribute to the invisible in Vojvodina (*Manda, Lino, Ivan*); "Remembering because silence about the anti-war resistance is painful" (*Gizela*); 'I will never surrender, I will always express my anger through resistance (*Darko*); "Celebrating Pišta's love for Vera and his support in the shadows"; "Most people will not remember Trešnjevac, that's why this act of remembrance is very important (*Laci*); "Unfortunately, now the spirit of the 90s (*Tamara*) has returned to Serbia, etc.

During this event was presented "**Against wars (brothers)"/ **Protiv (b)ratova**** - screening of the documentary film (40 min.) by Darko Šper (Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina). The film testifies to the rebellion against the mobilization in Trešnjevac, 1992, to the civil anti-war rebellions in Senta, Ada, and Zrenjanin, about civil anti-war uprisings in Senta, Ada, Zrenjanin.

During the debate "**War in Ukraine – anti-war non-violent resistance and peace activism**" **divided opinions were expressed:** on the one hand, 'The war is being waged between Russia and the USA; Russia's responsibility is not clear', and on the other hand, the majority's clear condemnation of Russia for the invasion and occupation, along with the withdrawal of Russian occupation troops from Ukraine, as a precondition for peace negotiations, etc. Possible international actors of peace negotiations were also discussed and the following were proposed: A. Guterres (UN); Pope Francis and German women - authors/initiators of the Appeal for Peace, etc.

April 27, Novi Sad - On feminist antimilitarism (concept, features, principles, tendencies/currents, etc.) - a lecture was given by *Staša Zajović*, in the premises of the CK13 Youth Center in the presence of a dozen people.

NETWORKS, COALITIONS - MUTUAL SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY

Women in Black are drivers or active participants of numerous regional networks, coalitions and associations, active participants in the activities of related organizations, in order to strengthen mutual support, solidarity, civil society and democracy in Serbia and the whole region. In this period, the following activities were realized:

March 31, April 1 and 2

MEETING OF THE WOMEN IN BLACK NETWORK, March 31, April 1 and 2, 2023 in Radmilovac near Belgrade

The meeting of the Women in Black Network/WiB was attended by **58** people from **18** cities: *Serbia* (Novi Sad, Novi Pazar, Prijepolje, Belgrade, Kruševac, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Pančevo, Priboj, Zrenjanin), *Croatia*

(Zagreb, Pakrac), Slovenia (Ljubljana), Montenegro (Kotor), Kosovo (Pristina), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Tuzla, Zvornik), Chile (Santiago de Chile), Ireland (Dublin)

Friday, March 31

Report on activities in 2022 (Staša Zajović); photos from street actions in the previous period and a screening of films by the Video Activism Group of the WiB



Dealing with the past/transitional justice – a feminist approach

“Transgenerational trauma: what traumas are we leaving behind?”

- continuation of the topic from the previous meeting of the Network (September 2022)



Speakers:

Nora Ahmetaj, human rights activist and feminist, Pristina/Kosovo

Venera Čočaj, PhD student at the London University for Economic and Political Studies

Sciences (School of Economics and Political Sciences) and Pristina/Kosovo

Ivana Žanić, Fund for Humanitarian Law, Belgrade

Moderated by: Ljilja Spasić, Civil Action, Pančevo

Venera Čočaj emphasized at the beginning that “although we have legal recognition in all countries, women do not speak publicly about their experiences”. She cited the example of Kosovo, when in 2018, *Vasvije Krasniqi Goodman* “broke her silence, after almost 19 years”. The political public characterized it as a ‘picture of Albanian suffering’, but Vasvije Krasnići is married to an American, and she is not a symbol of a typical woman, because she had the support of an American husband. That is the only public criticism she has responded to. She said that it is true that she has an American husband, but she also

has four Albanian brothers. If she didn't have their support and the support of her family, she would never have been able to speak,' said V. Čočaj.

Nora Ahmetaj cited a research/study conducted by KRCT - *Center for Support of Torture Victims* from Pristina, conducted on a sample of 120 women and children:

- it turned out that in 30% of the children who were the subject of this study, whose mothers were raped, cortisol was at a very high level. Cortisol is a hormone that increases in children of mothers who have been raped.
- it turned out that children who were older than 15 did not want to participate due to pressure from society.

She then referred to the problems in family therapy performed by KRCT:

- stigmatization has several levels: individual, family, collective stigmatization. Women don't want to talk about it, they are withdrawn,
- in smaller communities, where there were more conflicts, women do not have family support, not only raped women, but also women whose husbands have disappeared or been killed. We fight against that stigma. As soon as women do not have the head of the family as if they are not human beings, they have no rights to property or the right to social assistance,
- so far 900 women have received social assistance, not to mention reparation,
- very little attention is given to raped men because they feel pressured not to talk about it. The number of 40 raped men etc. is circulating.

Ivana Žanić spoke about various levels of trauma: individual, collective and transgenerational. *'Transgenerational trauma is the process of passing trauma from one generation to another. Family transgenerational trauma is perhaps the cause of that transgenerational trauma, because in patriarchal societies. The most unsafe place where various kinds of violence take place, where everything stays within the family circle, nothing goes outside because it's a shame. It is the woman who must be silent and suffer. Then children are brought up there, taught by the experience of their mothers, they are also taught to be silent and suffer. Then we have that second generation that is silent and suffers.'*

"Against wars (brothers) " - screening of a documentary film (40 min.). The film testifies to civil anti-war uprisings in Senta, Ada, Zrenjanin (1991), to the uprising against mobilization in Trešnjevac, 1992. Author of the film, *Darko Šper*, Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina. Numerous activists participated in the discussion after the screening.



Saturday, April 1



Saturday, April 1

Where is the left going? - joint reflection...

Staša Zajović briefly referred to the motives for organizing this debate: because it was proposed by the participants of the previous meeting of the Network; *because we encourage alliances, intersections and mutual support of different struggles (gender, class, social/class, ethnic/racial...)*; because the left in both the 20th and 21st centuries, at least in Europe, was *marked by deep upheavals and major defeats*, so we often do not see the emancipatory potential of the struggles on the left, both in the past and today; *that's why we don't want to lament about destroyed utopias and failed expectations, but to value and celebrate persistent and 'small' emancipatory struggles*; because *we learn together*, but we also *bring to light disputes* - on various levels regarding the left, but we have the need but also the obligation to create and expand the space for constructive and creative confrontation of opinions, etc.



The first session

The first session "Are left and right outdated terms?" - about the history of the concept; about the value differences between the left and the right; about the third way; about the role of the contemporary left - about false alternatives, etc. The lecture was given by **Lino Veljak**, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb.

(The full text of the lecture can be found on the WiB website - report from the Network Meeting).

The second session

Second session, From Neoliberal Capitalism to Corporate Neofeudalism...

Presentation of the concept through Yanis Varoufakis' book 'Minotaur...'

Moderated by: *Snežana Obrenović*, WiB Network, Kraljevo

Marijana Stojčić, sociologist and activist, explained the new phenomena:

The transformation of capitalism into techno-feudalism by means

of land. Two years ago, workers from Vietnam came to work on the construction of a Chinese factory. A journalist published a story about how Vietnamese workers live. They lived in camp conditions: their food was inadequate, they did not receive wages. They went on strike for five months. Vietnamese workers' passports were confiscated, they had no freedom of movement'.

She then referred to the *actions of solidarity with Vietnamese workers*: 'We organized the collection of solidarity aid for almost two years. We helped workers organize strikes. In support of the strikes, we used three types of combat:

Conventional - this is where the Astra organization contributed the most, which wrote memos, etc. It went through the institutions, through the media.

General strike - 500 workers managed to show solidarity, went on a general strike and forced the employer to make concessions.

Unconventional way of fighting - breaking the law, we invaded private property, I was beaten by private security, etc. We had good networks. This whole story wouldn't have worked if it wasn't for that part of the unconventional fight. Various anti-fascist groups participated there.

Branislav Markuš explained: 'We entered this fight with one goal - the fight for their rights is a fight for all workers. The fight for Vietnamese workers is a fight for us'.

T. Rukeci believes that an alliance cannot be built with the "liberal opposition in the city, because they have different values." They are ready to compromise with the capitalists' etc.

This caused a lot of reactions:

"We cannot afford the luxury of excluding liberals." If we want change, we have to make alliances. We have to negotiate our alliances. It is easiest to help those who are the same as us. We can always build alliances on values that can include great ideological differences. We have to be ready to fight more with those who say what we don't like' (*Staća, Marijana, Gordana, Tamara*);

'We have to be a little softer if we want changes. We should not accuse each other of being liberals, Stalinists, etc. We have to embrace different points of left identities within the left if we want to change something' (*Rada B.*);

"We have to be more flexible in order for some people to approach us and introduce our ideas into society. If we remain rigid, we remain in small groups' (*Biljana S.*);

"I am interested in issues of democracy, anti-militarism, anti-nationalism." These are the things where I find alliances with liberals, not communists. And LGBT rights are something on which they do not share the same views with me. Liberals are more flexible. People

from the radical left did not show solidarity with the workers of Linglong, as 'it is a good Chinese company' (Laura P.);

The fourth session

Fourth session "United right-wing anti-gender offensive against democracy, women's, LGBT rights – answers..."

With the participation of:

Nela Pamuković, Center for Women Victims of War, Zagreb - about the 'Kneeling' movement and feminists answers...

Biljana Stojković, Faculty of Biology, Belgrade - About the clerofascist offensive against textbooks of biology

Moderated by: Miloš Urošević, WiB

Biljana Stojković pointed out that the Ministry of Education ordered the Institute for the Improvement of Education and Training to form a Working Group to establish whether biologists "made a mistake" by writing biology textbooks. That followed after Patriarch Porphyry (Serbian Orthodox Church) asked to review the interpretation of sex and gender because they 'propagate homosexuality and transgenderism to minors'. The National Educational Council created a commission in which all the well-known right-wing, clero-fascists entered the list. There was not a single biologist. Of course, they decided that it should not stand there. We lost that battle,' said Biljana.

Nela Pamuković emphasized that there is a new movement in Croatia, *Be a Man/Husband*, and it was founded by the *Knights of the Fraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary*. "In the background of this is the ultra-Catholic association *Vigilare*, connected to the extremist organization *Ordo Juris* from Poland, which played a key role in the ban on abortion in Poland. Every first Saturday of the month, that association organizes public kneeling prayers - about a hundred or two hundred men kneel and pray in the main square. It is part of a wider movement of clericalization in Croatia, because it is happening in six to seven cities. They pray for men to become spiritual authorities in the family who will bravely witness and transmit the Catholic faith for a life of premarital chastity, for chastity in clothing, chastity in behavior, for the Catholic family, for putting an end to abortion'.

Their goal is to ban abortion, and twice a year, for forty days, they pray in front of hospitals, putting pressure on women not to have abortions, Pamuković emphasized.

Feminist organizations are resisting - by organizing protests in several cities in Croatia under the slogan *Without God, without masters*.

Ljupka Kovačević: 'There are two Orthodox churches in Montenegro: the Montenegrin Orthodox Church/MOC and the Serbian Orthodox Church/SOC, which aspires to enter schools even though religious education has not been introduced in Montenegro'. The MOC



had a certain influence until independence (2006), but now it has completely lost it, especially after the strengthening of clericalization through the so-called lithium (2020). In Montenegro, the Law on Partnerships of Same-Sex Couples was adopted (June 2020) and it works,' emphasized Kovačević.

Are there alternatives? - Resistance on the left - global, regional, local; Global South - the idea of revolutions comes from the South... - Latin America; the left in the region; alliances, intertwining, mutual support of different struggles - on the street, in institutions...

The first session

The first session "Left Theory in Critical Times: Crossroads of Different Struggles for Radical Equality"

Athena Athanasiou, professor of social anthropology and gender theory at the Department of Social Anthropology of Pantheon University in Athens, looked at different forms of resistance to the growth of neo-fascism, anti-feminism and capitalist injustice: engaged art, alliances and the intersection of feminist anti-fascist thought and struggle. "The mobilizing power of feminism throughout Latin America, but also in Europe and around the world, has become a key component of today's emancipatory and radical democratic politics. "Such powerful feminist movements deal with issues of gender, race and class at the intersection, thus opening a new perspective for collective mobilization and disobedience," Athanasiou stressed. She listed some of the movements opposing the rise of the global right and forces campaigning against so-called "gender ideology"; transnational and transversal feminist anti-racist non-violent resistance: *Black lives matter* in the US, *Ni Una Menos* (Not One Less) in Argentina; civil disobedience and the 'courageous advocacy of Women in Black and their perseverance and feminism in action (*Always disobedient!*).

The second session

The second session "Continuity of the struggle on the left in Latin America" - intersection of movements for social/ecological/gender... justice; meeting points of the 'old' and new' left; the rise of leftist governments; challenges and contradictions...

Speaker: Cristian Roman Huenufil, anthropologist, historian, activist of the urban indigenous movement, Santiago de Chile/Chile and Ljubljana/Slovenia

Moderated by: Staša Zajović

In the introductory part, **Roman** presented a brief history of the organized movement of the indigenous Mapuche people in Chile (from the period of Spanish colonization to the confiscation of the land from the Mapuche people (at the end of the 19th century), the mass emigration of that people to the cities, impoverishment, but also education and the creation of an intellectual elite indigenous population).

Roman went on to emphasize *the enormous importance of the left-wing government of S. Allende (1970-1973)*, when for the first time in the history of Chile the Law on the Indigenous Population was passed at the legislative level, the agrarian reform project was launched - huge land holdings (latifundi) were handed over to the indigenous people.

In the introductory part, Roman presented a brief history of the organized movement of the indigenous people.

Allende was assassinated on September 11, 1973 by the military junta. With the military coup of General Pinochet, everything that had been achieved at the institutional level was lost: the Law on the Indigenous Population was repealed, the Mapuche people's land was taken.

After the fall of Pinochet (in 1988) after the referendum, *the process of organizing the Mapuche people began - a variety of strategies in rural and urban conditions with the same goal - the right to self-determination:* "Our strategy was non-violent - step by step, little by little." That was the Mapuche movement, there are a hundred organizations in the base that form a kind of confederation. We want to internationalize our problem - we refer to the resolutions and conventions that the state has signed on the international level. For example, the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, or the International Labor Organization. It is a legal instrument, one of the ways of our struggle," explained Roman.

He then spoke about the *People's Uprising in Chile - 2019:* 'Millions of people throughout the country, especially in the capital, participated in it. It was a time of continuous protests because of the poverty in which the Chilean people live, because the same economic structure remained, based on the Constitution that Pinochet passed in 1980 - total privatization of the economy, health, water, education. That caused the people's dissatisfaction the most'.

The main actors of the uprisings in the streets were young people: the mobilization built different strategies: *occupying/occupying school institutions and premises; parliamentary way of working in schools* - the energy and enthusiasm of high school students is taken over by the university youth, that is the group that is in power now, *(Gabrijel Borić).*

New political parties were launched - which slowly gained power to take power in Chile and *create a movement to call a referendum* for the adoption of a new Constitution: 80% of the population was in favor of changing the Constitution. For the first time in the history of the country, there was an equal participation of the indigenous people to change the Constitution. It was an assembly: 157 people worked on changing the Constitution, and among them 17 were from the indigenous people. There was the creation of a multinational concept, gender equality, a feminist concept. 50% was of course intended for women at all state levels. We wanted to end private education, to create state healthcare'.

Referendum fiasco (September 2022): 60% of the population voted

against the proposal for a new Constitution. The process of amending the Constitution continued, but it is no longer the people who elect representatives to the Assembly, but political parties and politicians: *“Politicians and political parties suck the people’s energy and power to stay in power; they steal the political capital of the people. Mr. Borić is most responsible for that. He is the President. “Through various maneuvers, a large part of the right is returning to its old positions,” Roman believes.*

“For me, the left is everything that is at the base, social movements; the left in the institutions is not the left; we have learned a historical lesson - they steal our every dream and want to co-opt us... We want complete autonomy outside of political parties. There are progressive tendencies and space within the institutions. I have hope in the generation that is now 13 years old and in the student youth. It led to social movements. We need to find people in institutions and create spaces of trust. They should fight for the agreements that bind them to us, they have to be accountable to us, if they don’t fulfill that, we should immediately recall them,” concluded Roman.

The third session

Third session “A different power is possible...”

With the participation of:

Rada Borić, councilor/member of the City Assembly of Zagreb (Mozemo Coalition)

Nina Podržaj, feminist activist, Sestre, Ljubljana

Maja Ivačić, autonomous feminist, squatter, Ljubljana

Moderated by: Snežana Jakovljević, Peščanik Women’s Association, Kruševac

Rada Borić: *“I entered politics in 2017 during the local elections for the Zagreb City Assembly, which has 51 parliamentary seats. We are gathered in a small green-left coalition consisting of: Radnička fronta/Workres’ Front, Nova ljevice/New Left, Mozemo/We can (Zagreb is ours) and Za grad/For the City. There are now 24 of us in the Zagreb city assembly, in last year’s elections - we have a majority in the city assembly”.*

She then emphasized the importance of politics *from below*: *“Citizens are interested in politics from below, they are interested in local issues.” I see how movements are growing in BH and Serbia on various topics that bring citizens together”.*

Nina Podržaj explained the fight for the amendment of the Criminal Code of Slovenia, in connection with the crime of rape: *“I went to the parliament and talked to the members of the Left and testified there. Changes in the law took place in 2021 owing to the pressure of feminist organizations: ‘I found my sisters, a safe space, support and solidarity, with them I became stronger. Sisterhood is very important’.*

Maja Ivačić spoke about the importance of alternative cultural spaces: "1993. in the former YNA barracks in Metelkova, a street in the center of Ljubljana, we filled it with new content. It was an alternative cultural center.' Later, the social center Rog became an important place of anti-fascist resistance and solidarity with refugees, migrants...

Protests against the government and covid measures in April 2020 during the government of Janez Janša: 'Then the bicycle protests started, which lasted for two years, every Friday. Slovenia was one of the few countries where the protests were led by the left, not the right. That's when *The Left* party was formed, which went to the elections and Janša lost power. Now the *Sloboda/Freedom* party was born, which won the elections (2022).

Sunday, April 2

Sunday, April 2

Voices of disobedience - Ekaterina Yashchenko spoke about **the anti-war feminist movement in Russia in 2022.**

"The protest against the war exists throughout Russia and it threatens the government." During the year, 19,535 were arrested, and 5,601 persons were prosecuted for avoiding the army. Many Russian activists are leaving Russia and trying to protest from abroad," Yashchenko said at the beginning.

The position of anti-war activists in Serbia is very difficult: 'Most of the activists who came here are young. Many dropped out of college just to avoid mobilization. It is a big problem that there is no basis for obtaining a residence permit in Serbia. Many have to leave the country every month. The law does not allow you to get a permit because you are an anti-war activist,' Yashchenko stressed. She then pointed to numerous obstructions by the Serbian police in organizing protests against Russia's aggression against Ukraine: 'We wanted to organize a rally on February 24, the anniversary of the aggression against Ukraine. We informed the police about this a month before the gathering. A week before the protest, the police decided that we could not go out because of the game. We protested that day under the Branko bridge in the evening. We collected money for a hospital in Ukraine, which was in the territory liberated from the Russian army. We could not rebel because none of us have citizenship. They can tell us that we can always return to Moscow...'

Internationalist corner - international news (feminist-anti-militarist/anti-racist; transitional justice, anti-fascism...).

Evaluation – we list the most important impressions:

Common reflections on the left - the importance of common struggle; internationalism - the struggle of the left in Chile, in Zrenjanin, in Zagreb - all participants mentioned the importance of lectures and discussions about the left:

'These exchanges about *the left* filled me terribly. Getting to know people who work in other countries is very important to me. It is a great honor for me to participate with people who are fighting' (*Branislav*); "We all feed off each other because we feel that we have our own community, our left family, our family" (*Rada*); 'I have the impression Where is the left going? I read, I study and that's important to me' (*Ljilja R.*); 'We see what kind of world we live in. We have to fight for everything' (*Reiha*); Communication between us political emigrants and you is important. I am inspired. I see there is hope. There is hope' (*Ekaterina*).

Togetherness, solidarity, mutual support, the importance of creating a space of hope in circumstances of hopelessness, exhaustion, isolation, especially in smaller places...

'I am fascinated by how Women in Black has survived all these years as an island of hope. Every topic was well and receptively covered. WiB give importance to ordinary human courage from ancient times to today and document it. It is important that we know that there is a brave world. If they took everything away from us, they cannot take away our hope' (*Gordana F.*); "I come from a small environment where I was rejected by my family and friends. WiB is my family. It seems to me that each of the sessions leaves some kind of stamp and knowledge about the inexhaustible struggle for peace that we all spread' (*Svetlana Š.*); "I live the strength of togetherness and solidarity only here. My environment leaves the children with an evil that they will have to face at some point. I'm trying to find some steps of my own. There is hope, I won't give up. You are my community that I desperately need' (*Snežana O.*); 'I felt like a privileged person, and it is not a common situation that we work together and share experiences, to discuss how we will expand our circles' (*Nenad K.*); "We are all singled out as different and we live with that. It is a rare occurrence that we meet in one place' (*Gordana R.*) etc.

Transgenerational trauma - facing the past, but also the present in which we live...

'The most interesting thing for me was the conversation about transgenerational traumas. It is our responsibility to expand this circle of ours and to de-traumatize our societies' (*Nenad K.*); "I was most impressed by the session on transgenerational trauma" (*Violeta, Milka*); "We have a bunch of criminals living next to us. We have no possibility to do something to remove them from the street' (*Mirjana B.*).

The testimony about sexual violence and struggle touched everyone present: 'I was most moved by the courage of the girl from Slovenia and her struggle' (*Suvada*); "Congratulations to the girl from Slovenia for talking about what happened to her" (*Zinaida, Miloš*), etc.

Many participants emphasized the importance of new knowledge, information, informal conversations, but also the importance of nostalgic memories of life in the former Yugoslavia:

Many participants emphasized the importance of new knowledge, information, informal conversations, but also the importance of nostalgic memories of life in the former Yugoslavia:

'I belong to the generation that was born during Yugoslavia, but did not live in it. Your memories and your life and experience mean a lot to us younger people that you pass on to us' (*Azra*); 'I'm so happy that I feel like I'm back in Yugoslavia' (*Zinaida*); "The thread of nostalgia for the time that has passed always prevails in the network, and that is positive" (*Fahrudin*), etc.

(Integral report from the meeting (40 pages) Networks can be found on the WiB website)

SOLIDARITY IS OUR STRENGTH

Solidarity actions - with members of vulnerable and disadvantaged minority communities (social-class, ethnic-racial, sexual), citizens whose human rights (working, educational, cultural) are endangered.

I Solidarity with War Refugees: Women in Black addressed this situation in 2013, when solidarity campaigns against racist attacks were organized that culminated at the end of 2013, and since then, Women in Black has organized a lot of activities, about which you can find information on the WiB website. Solidarity activities are interconnected, at the same time, they include more dimensions - peace, humanitarian, artistic-activist, informative ...

Direct actions - solidarity assistance in the field:

I Solidarity support and assistance to Ukrainian refugees – since the beginning of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in February 2022, WiB has established contacts with Ukrainian refugees, providing humanitarian aid and support.

Vranje, March 24 and April 15 - Solidarity visit to the reception center for refugees in Vranje;

Activists of the WiB Network from Leskovac and Vlasotince (*Milka Rosić* and *Svetlana Šarić*) visited the refugees, humanitarian aid was distributed; There are 77 refugees in this reception center: mostly children (29) and women (44).

II Solidarity aid and support to anti-war activists from Russia in Belgrade from the Russian Federation, who sought refuge in Serbia, fleeing war or repression in Russia. Solidarity was manifested through support and participation in anti-war protests organized by the **RUBS** initiative (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Serbs together against the war); through involvement in various activities of WiB: protests, debates, gatherings, activist-art events, of which we single out the following:





Voices of Disobedience – The Russian Anti-War Feminist Movement in 2022

Within this program, the following activities were implemented:

I Engaged art against war, repression...

- **Testimony of anti-war activists in Russia (40 min.)** - screening of the documentary film, 13.3. in 2023
- **Concert of two violinists from Russia:** Andrey Timofeev and Olga Timofeeva, who played works by Bach/J.S. Bach/.
- **An exhibition of photos by Russian artists about anti-war resistance and the concealment of crimes from the past, about political prisoners in Russia;** the exhibition featured photographs by the following artists: *Boris Spiridonov, Aleksei Kuznetsov, Anna Shveigolts, Maria Kiseleva, Anna Budina, Tatiana Nikulina, Yanina Boldyreva, Georgy Keymakh, Olesya Gonserovskaya*; the exhibition was held in NGO HUB;
- **Exhibition “Repression. Torture. War. Russia. - 2022** - around forty works by artists from Russia are exhibited. These works were banned in Russia due to their anti-war content; the exhibition was held in NGO HUB from *March 13 to 20, 2023*.
- **“Prison for Peaceful Protest”** - mass repression after the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Aleksey Navalny, who is in prison - a documentary shown during the aforementioned exhibition.



II Lectures

- **Lectures and discussions on the historical and political context that led to the war in Ukraine** (February 21 and March 15, 2023) in the premises of WiB.
- **March 15 - Sofija Shirogorova**, historian, gave a lecture (in Russian) about the breakup of Yugoslavia in the presence of about 70 people.
- **March 16 - Ilija Zernov**, an activist who suffered persecution in Russia for refusing mobilization, as well as attacks in Serbia for anti-war protests, spoke about repression in Russia after February 24, 2022.
- **March 18 - Jasmina Lazović**, a political scientist from Belgrade, gave a lecture at NGO HUB about dealing with the past in Serbia.
- **March 19 - About the Women’s Court** - a feminist approach to justice, the lecture was given by Daša Duhaček from Belgrade, and on this occasion a documentary film about the Women’s Court was shown.



Activist Narratives from Russia/СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВА АКТИВИСТ ИЗ РОССИИ - publication (30 pages) in three languages (Serbian, Russian and English); promotion was held at the Meeting of the Women in Black Network on April 1, 2023.

Katya Khazina, coordinator of the entire program, activist of the

famous human rights organization 'Memorial' from Moscow, whose activities were banned by the regime, was forced to leave Russia and after arriving in Serbia, in June 2022, joined the Women in Black, said: "The aim of the exhibition is to deconstruct the image of Russia



in Serbian society and to share the experiences of activists from Russia who are facing a criminal regime and war. The exhibition is an expression of solidarity with their resistance, as well as those who had to leave Russia, continue to fight. The exhibition is an expression of solidarity with their resistance, as well as those who had to leave Russia, continue to fight against the regime and support Ukraine, demand freedom for all political prisoners and justice for all victims".

She emphasized that the mentioned activities aroused great interest among Russian active emigration and civil society in Serbia, that they strengthened solidarity between Russian and Serbian activists.

In addition to the above mentioned, in this period we monitored the following trials:

I Solidarity with the Milivojević Family from Lučani - The Ivanjica trials

Criminal proceedings against two executives of the Milan Blagojević-Namenska Arms Factory, Lučani. They are charged with 'committing a serious crime against general security' because on July 14th, 2017, workers Milomir Milojević and Miloško Ignjatović were killed after a gunpowder explosion.

They have been accused of "committing a serious crime against general security" because on July 14, 2017, workers Milomir Milojević and Miloško Ignjatović died after a gunpowder explosion. It should be noted that interest in this trial declined after the first defendant, *Radoš Milovanović*, died on April 21, 2022, which is why the proceedings against him were suspended. In this reporting period, three (3) hearings were held:

February 6 and March 22 - The trial continued with the examination

of the expert advisor and court experts by **Milovan and Nela Milivojević**, as well as **Mirjana Milivojević Tadić**. P. Bogdanović denied the responsibility of the factory management for the accident, while the members of the Milivojević family, as well as their lawyer, contested the findings and opinion of court experts.

April 11 - The Basic Court in Ivanjica sentenced Vladimir Lončarević and Romi Stojić, the managers of the 'MB Namenska' factory in Lučani, to 3 years in prison each as being responsible for the death of workers Milomir Milivojević and Miloško Ignjatović. Milovan Milivojević, the father of the victim Milomir, declared that "the verdict is miserable and minor". Lawyer B. Borović also believes that the verdict is "too lenient".

The first-instance proceedings before the court in Ivanjica ended with the pronouncement of the verdict. And if an appeal is filed, the High Court will decide on further proceedings.

II Trial of Miroslav Mika Aleksić for rape and sexual abuse

January 2021 – several former students of the "Matter of the Heart" acting school made accusations of rape and sexual abuse against their former acting teacher Miroslav Aleksić.

April 21, 2021 – an indictment was filed against Miroslav Mika Aleksić. He was arrested and spent eight months in detention, when he was released to defend himself.

February 2022 – the court proceedings against Aleksić began after several delays and final preparatory hearings.

In this reporting period, two **(2)** hearings were held:

March 3 – the testimony of the victim *Milena Ćosić* continued. "I don't trust the police or the judiciary, because I know I won't be protected." I have the impression that I survived incest, because Mika watched me from childhood." She then described the traumatic experience of sexual abuse: "I felt humiliated because someone in whom I had a lot of trust was doing this to me."

April 11 – the victim *Ivana Velinović* testified. Since the injured witness told the court that in everything she stands by her statement she gave to the police in January 2021 about the sexual abuse she and the other students of the acting school were exposed to. "I was abused." Yes, I think I was raped, because I didn't want it. He (M. Aleksić) took advantage of the trust I had in him," said I. Velinović.

III Solidarity with Maria Vihivska, a refugee from Ukraine -

Ukrainian citizen Maria Vihivska fled the war to the Czech Republic. In order to be with her Russian fiance, she moved to Serbia. Maria was accused of 'disturbing public order and peace' even though she was the victim of an attack. Namely, on August 12, 2022, in Vinča, near Belgrade, the neighbors broke into the apartment and beat her and her Russian partner, and instead of the thugs, Marija was accused of

“disturbance of public order and peace”. During the interrogation at the police station and before the magistrate, she was not provided with an interpreter and Marija was forced to sign a guilty plea without knowing what she was signing. The police wanted to arrest her fiance as well, but that didn’t happen because he had a Russian passport. It is obvious that this is a politically staged process, and that is why Maria rightly believes that the “attack is nationally motivated”, i.e. a consequence of pro-Russian/pro-Putin propaganda and demonization of persons with a Ukrainian name in the regime media.

In this reporting period, two **(2)** hearings were held:

February 6 – the previous hearing was held at the end of December 2022. Thanks to lawyer Čedomir Stojković, the first-instance judgment pronounced against Maria was annulled, and the Misdemeanor Appellate Court accepted all the lawyer’s appeals. At this hearing, the neighbors who attacked Maria and Yuri testified and their testimony was contradicted and illogical, contrary to Maria’s recording of the whole event; the video was submitted to the court by the lawyer. The police officers also testified, and when asked by the lawyer why a report was only filed against Maria because, allegedly, she, together with Yuri, was making noise, the police officer shrugged his shoulders: ‘I don’t know.’ The policeman also admitted that neither he nor any of his colleagues could understand Ukrainian, Russian or English. “We didn’t hire a translator at all, no one was questioned except for Maria!”

March 7 – Jurij Kuruchki, who lives in an extramarital union with the accused Maria, testified about the attack: “Marija recorded everything with her phone. When they realized that, they broke into our apartment.”

The judge kept interrupting the witness, which is why lawyer Stojković requested the disqualification of the acting judge, because “the judge does not allow the defense attorney to perform his duty of defense.” After that, the trial was interrupted.

IV Trial for setting fire to the house of journalist Milan Jovanović – Former president of Grocka Municipality (near Belgrade) *Dragoljub Simonović*, was accused of inciting the burning of the house of a journalist from the Žig info portal.

On 12/12/2018 somebody set fire to this journalist’s house, in which his house burned down. Former president of the municipality of Grocka, Dragoljub Simonović, was sentenced to 4 years and 3 months in prison while the other perpetrators of this crime: Vladimir Mihailović, Aleksandar Marinković and Igor Novaković were sentenced to several years in prison.

However, on December 24, 2021, the Court of Appeals in Belgrade overturned the conviction for setting fire to the house of journalist Milan Jovanović, returning the case to the Second Basic Court in Belgrade for a retrial.

After several delays, the repeated proceedings against four persons began (*Dragoljub Simonović, Vladimir Mihajlović, Igor Novaković and Aleksandar Marinković*).

In this period, four **(4)** hearings were held:

January 16 and 30 – The defense’s request to disqualify Deputy Prosecutor Predrag Milovanović was rejected; Judge Luka Pantelić rejected all proposals for new evidence and new witnesses proposed by the Defense to the Court, etc. The accused and the defense accused the Prosecution and the Court of illegal selectiveness of evidence.

February 20 – The closing arguments were marked by the insistence of the defendants’ defense attorneys that their clients were exposed to ‘the demonization of them in public, especially through the media and certain journalists’.

March 20 – *verdicts with a total duration of 17 years were pronounced:* Dragoljub Simonović, former president of the municipality of Grocka and formerly the director of Serbian Railways, was sentenced to five years in prison, *Vladimir Mihailović*, a former policeman, to four, *Igor Novaković* to three and a half, and *Aleksandar Marinković*, who was the immediate perpetrator of the arson and was tried in absentia, for 4.5 years.

This concludes the repeated first-instance trial and the Court of Appeal will decide on the appeals, but the case cannot be returned for a new trial.

V The trial for the burning of the US Embassy and the attack on the embassies of Turkey, Germany and Croatia – on February 21, 2008 (after the declaration of Kosovo’s independence), a group of hooligans attacked some embassies after the rally “**Kosovo is Serbia**”, organized by the Government and the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, during which the US embassy was set on fire and one of the attackers was killed there.

In 2019, the trial of the seven immediate suspects for these attacks ended with acquittals and conditional verdicts, which were later revoked. In October 2020, the retrial of five, at the time of the event, high-ranking officials of the Mol of Serbia began: **Slobodan Vukolić**, former Head of the Belgrade Police Directorate and his deputy **Zoran Rašković**, General **Stevan Bjelić**, then Chief of Police for the City of Belgrade and former Head of the Police Directorate of the Mol of Serbia, General **Mladen Kuribak**. **Bojan Marković**, at the time of the incident the Commander of the Gendarmerie platoon from Kraljevo, was also charged. They are accused of the crime of ‘serious crime against general security’, i.e. not taking measures within their jurisdiction to protect the US embassy. In this period, one **(1)** hearing was held - the continuation of the evidence procedure, the procedure was suspended against *Zoran Rašković*, who died.

VI Trial for the murder of journalist Ćuruvija – Slavko Ćuruvija, the editor of the opposition *Dnevni Telegraf* was killed on 11 April 1999, in front of the entrance to his building in the center of Belgrade. The trial for this crime began in 2015 and lasted 4 years. In April 2019, the defendants were declared guilty: Radomir Marković, former head of the DB and Milan Radonjić, former head of the Belgrade center of the DB were sentenced to 30 years in prison. Ratko Romić and Miroslav Kurak, as organizers, were sentenced to 20 years. In September 2020, the Court of Appeal in Belgrade overturned the verdict, pointing out that the first-instance panel exceeded the indictment. In this reporting period, four (4) hearings were held: on March 6, 8, and 28, and on March 29, the verdict was pronounced against the four defendants, who were sentenced to a total of **100 years** in prison.

DISCUSSION GROUPS, LECTURES, DEBATES IN THE PREMISES OF WOMEN IN BLACK “WEDNESDAYS AT WIB”

The practice of regular discussion groups, lectures and joint reflections on important social and political issues in the country and the world continued in this reporting period, in which eleven (**11**) lectures, debates, book presentations, and film screenings were organized with the participation of **180** people.

January 18

January 18 “UNSC Resolution 1244-reading and commenting, legal and political level”

Keynote speaker **Mirko Medenica** warned that more than 90 percent of citizens in Serbia do not know the content of this resolution, although it is often referred to in the public and public opinion: “It is considered that it is enough to say 1244 and justice is on our side.”



United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 was adopted on June 10, 1999, has 21 articles and annexes. “What significantly determines the position of the FRY and Serbia as its international legal successor

are the provisions from this Resolution, which state that the FRY is obliged to immediately stop the violence and repression in Kosovo," underlined Medenica.

Medenica drew attention to the meeting of the member countries of the G-8 group in Saint Petersburg on May 6, 1999, when it was decided that the army and police of the FRY and Serbia should completely withdraw from the territory of Kosovo - which is in Annex one of the Resolution. This means that the armed forces of Serbia cannot return to Kosovo, which is being manipulated by the Serbian regime.

Journalist and writer **Rade Radovanović** added some of his knowledge about the course of negotiations to end the bombing of FRY. "When our people refer to 1244, as a rule, they don't know what it says." Out of ignorance or a manipulative government structure, it is claimed that Resolution 1244 guarantees us sovereignty and territorial integrity. But that's not the case." Namely, according to the Kumanovo Agreement (after the end of the NATO bombing in June 1999), Milošević was allowed to remain in power, with the withdrawal of around 140,000 members of the army and police, etc.

The discussion, moderated by Miloš Urošević, was attended by **11** people.



January 25

January 25 "War is the same everywhere" – joint reading and commenting on the book by the Croatian writer Slavenka Drakulić.

War is the same everywhere (Fraktura, Zagreb, 2022), consists of 28 texts on the subject of war, written and published over a period of 30 years. In them, moderator M. Urošević said, she deals with the Second World War, the wars in Yugoslavia, the war in Ukraine, war crimes trials, *Radovan Karadžić*, *Ratko Mladić* and others...

The participants were previously given some of the texts from this book by Slavenka Drakulić, so now they presented and analyzed the received texts.

In connection with some of the topics covered by Slavenka Drakulić in this book, a conversation began about whether the children of war

criminals have some kind or degree of responsibility and whether it is okay to associate them with the personalities and misdeeds of their parents. The participants of this part of the debate at WiB believe that children have no responsibility and that they should not bear the social stigma of their parents' sins, but that they should ask them the question that young Germans asked their parents in the 60s: "What did you do during the war, Daddy?"

What makes this collection particularly interesting is the text about Slavenka Drakulić's personal attitude towards Serbia and Belgrade, 'Why haven't I traveled to Belgrade yet?' with his responsibility for the breakup of Yugoslavia and the start of the war.

What makes this collection particularly interesting is the text about Slavenka Drakulić's personal attitude towards Serbia and Belgrade, 'Why haven't I traveled to Belgrade yet?' with responsibility for the breakup of Yugoslavia and the start of the war.

February 1

February 1 "Toxic politics of the Serbian Orthodox Church - growing clericalization of public life - direct interference of the SPC in the education system; how and why the SPC is still the main lever of Greater Serbian nationalism; Why is Serbia not a secular state?



The introduction, **Slobodan Sadžakov**, Professor of Ethics at the University of Novi Sad, believes that in Serbia the cooperation of the state and the SOC is at work 'a kind of religious fundamentalism' because "The government's relationship with the SOC is a priority for it." Serbia is not a secular state because the SPC directly interferes in the education system, the direct interference of **Patriarch Porphyry** and the high clergy in decisions regarding the teaching of religious studies in schools, as well as the content of biology textbooks.

The SPC also interferes in making political decisions on the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo (EU agreement), which the SPC strongly opposes, etc. The discussion, which was attended by **17** people, was moderated by Staša Zajović.

February 8

February 8 "Lecture on the political novel and analysis of the novel "Pereira claims that..." by Antonio Tabuqui (Samizdat 1995).

Keynote speaker **Jelena Lalatović** (Institute of Literature, Belgrade) spoke in the introduction about the origin of the literary-theoretical genre "political novel", stressing that the political novel deals with "political ideas in terms of state organization, i.e. a certain political milieu sets the tone for the novel".

The contemporary political novel, said the introduction, deals with the themes of militarism, nationalism and resistance to fascism. There are, Lalatović continued, both utopian and dystopian political novels that, most often in allegories, rethink political ideas or systems. As a distinct example of a dystopian political novel, she cited "The Handmaid's Tale" by the Canadian writer **Margaret Atwood**.

Then the discussion began about the novel by **Antonio Tabucchi** *Pereira claims that...*, as a good example of a contemporary political novel, which is set in 1938, the time of the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal. Then there was a discussion about the part itself, about which part of the participants had already been informed by reading larger parts of Tabucchi's novel. **18** people participated in the conversation moderated by Miloš Urošević.

February 15

February 15 "How did we lived (through) 2022?" What marked the previous year?"

About the events of the previous year 2022, both of general importance and importance, but also that which marked our life in that year personally, in private frames - either positively or negatively - was discussed in a workshop in which **14** people participated.

Among the most important positive events are listed: environmental uprisings of citizens in connection with the mining of lithium by the Australian-British company Rio Tinto; making public accusations of rape and sexual abuse and starting legal proceedings.

Among the negative events, all groups mentioned the glorification of war criminals - murals with the image of war criminal Ratko Mladić.

February 22

February 22 "Voices of Disobedience - Russian Anti-War Feminist Movement in 2022"

A conversation (zoom) with one of the activists of the Russian anti-war feminist movement, Lyolja Novak, was moderated by Ekaterina Katyia Khazina.

About the operation of the movement: *"Our movement began on February 25, 2022, the day after the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In one year, we went from a small activist movement to a worldwide movement in various countries; the goal is to oppose Russian aggression and the war in Ukraine. In our manifesto, we call for the withdrawal of the Russian army from the territory of Ukraine, the return of all occupied territories to Ukraine, we express solidarity with Ukraine, we support the arming of Ukraine in order to defend itself."*

Novak talked about **anti-war activism** in extremely difficult circumstances: *"Our movement consists of participants who fled Russia due to political persecution, as well as those who stayed in the country to fight against the war. Our movement works in such a way that female activists who have left the country are always in contact with those in the country; share information through social networks. Unfortunately, due to today's political situation, female activists working inside Russia remain invisible for their own safety. That is why there is an illusion that there is no anti-war movement in Russia. They are hiding from the media."*

Regarding the **strategies of the movement**, Novak explained: *"During the first month of the war, almost every day there were some protests, or large or small stands. Because of police violence and arrests, we realized that this method of protest is not so effective, since they are not equal*

forces - police capacity and activists. One of the anti-war actions we did was the Women in Black action. We've been spreading the word about Women in Black on social media and it's inspired a lot of people to keep thinking about what to do next. We went out in black clothes with a white flower. The police found out about this method of protest, and started arresting people. At the end of May 2022, the number of people arrested from those anti-war protests was 15,000. Then we realized that there are two armies in Russia: the army that is at war in Ukraine and the army that is at war with citizens who want to express their opinion. After that, we realized that street protests do not work as they should, so the anti-war movements focused on anonymous and partisan actions."

On other activities of the movement: *fight against propaganda - information blockade of the Kremlin; dissemination of information through social networks, especially about what is happening on the battlefield; useful information on how to avoid mobilization, how to return mobilized people home, how to protect yourself from the police, etc.*

"We have 25 locations abroad where female activists work. Those from abroad help us fight against war, repression and Russian colonial policy, emphasized Novak.

On political repression in Russia: "We support political prisoners because their voices are not heard." "We try so that people don't forget about political prisoners and we cooperate with organizations that work with them".

Russian activists in Serbia: "Compared to Russia, we feel safe here." "In Serbia, we founded the Russian Democratic Society", etc.

"I went outside with a banner saying 'I am Russian and I am against the war.' If you agree with me, hug me." Many people came and hugged me. That is impossible in Russia. Either not many people would come to me or the police would come," said one of the participants.

March 15

March 15 "Testimonies about anti-war resistance in Russia"

- screening of the documentary film (40 min.) Author Katyia Khazina said that the film interviewed people-citizens of Russia, who resisted their country's aggression against Ukraine. In the film, activists from Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Saint Petersburg and Vladivostok speak. Those who are outside Russia testify in the film about their reasons for leaving Russia: police persecution, the declaration of partial mobilization, the impossibility of public protest and independent media, as well as the threat of long prison sentences, etc.

Those who came to Serbia believe that it is relatively safe for them, because there was no extradition to Russia. "But no country is safe. It's good here, but it's a little less risky in the countries of the Schengen zone." Those who came to Serbia are interested, they said, in supporting the anti-war protests in Belgrade against the war in Ukraine.

13 people attended the screening of the film and the discussion.

March 22

March 22 “Zoran Đinđić, Educator” - the topic of the conversation referred to the recently published book by Mijat Lakićević entitled *Zoran Đinđić, Educator*. This book is the latest in a series of works (among which Dragan Lakićević’s biographical monograph **Portrait of a Politician in Youth** and the chapter on Đinđić in Latinka Perović’s book **The dominant and undesirable elite**, later published as a separate edition) that try to critically evaluate theoretical and especially political works of Zoran Đinđić. He was the Prime Minister of Serbia from 2001 until March 12, 2003, when he was assassinated.

The presenters (*Dragan Lakićević, Lino Veljak*) pointed out that Zoran Đinđić challenged and rejected the utopia of the communist community (which he advocated in his early youth in an anarchist and unequivocally anti-Bolshevik version), replacing it with a realistic demand for the modernization and normalization of Serbia, which would be based on affirmation of the principle of responsibility.

Entering politics, Đinđić led a pragmatic policy and his pragmatism was based on the conviction that it was possible to normalize and modernize Serbia in this way because a significant part of society was not inclined to build institutions suitable for civil society. However, it was clear that strong institutions cannot be created on the foundations of a rural and patriarchal culture. This is the root of the tragic fate of Zoran Đinđić.

The discussion moderated by Tamara Spaić was attended by **28** people.

March 29

March 29 “Can you hear, can you feel –an activist fight for an activist fight for mental health” (*Psychosocial Innovative Network and Civic Initiatives*)

The keynote speaker **Dragoslava Barzut**, an activist of the Civic Initiative, presented the research about the position of activists in Serbia.

Barzut stated that the political context for activism is extremely unfavorable because activists are exposed to great pressures that come directly or indirectly from the political scene. Threats, calling them traitors, verbal attacks, attacks and comments on social networks and tabloids, more or less subtle systemic restrictions on work affect, Barzut said, their daily lives, relationships in the family, with friends, in the neighborhood; attacks generally do not have a judicial epilogue.

Barzut presented the data that, among the respondents in her research, 30% worked in organizations that dealt with human rights, LGBT and national minorities, 16% in social protection, 10% in the rule of law and 9% in ecology. As far as the educational profile is concerned, most of them had a university degree and a master’s degree, then only a diploma, followed by those with doctoral studies, and the least with secondary and higher education. Barzut concluded that these are “highly qualified personnel”.

Barzut also complained that donors ask activist organizations for too much bureaucratic work, which harms their activism. *"They act on the contention that Serbia is a democratic country. They burden us bureaucratically, so we lose the activist potential for change. Organizations lose touch with the base and become their own goal."*

This discussion was attended by **13** people.

April 12

April 12 "Controversies in gender-critical feminism" – Sanja Milojević, anarcho-feminist, London, emphasized the development of the category of equality in the legislation of the United Kingdom. According to the latest *Equality Law*, the categories of gender, race, sexual orientation and gender change are defined. She further explained why the gender category is important in the fight for equality in society. "I have always lived with people who are "gender non conforming", who do not behave as expected of them. I've always lived outside of those binary categories."

Milojević sees the importance of gender determination in specific life situations: lower incomes for women, the problem of health care: "It is not enough to just change the gender without providing adequate health care." The discussion moderated by M. Urošević was attended by **18** people.

April 19

April 19 "Homage to Dubravka Ugrešić (1949-2023), writer, scientist, publicist" –

The presenter **Azra Šeta Hadžić**, at the beginning of this conversation-tribute, reminded the audience of some important information from the biography of **Dubravka Ugrešić**, who recently passed away in the Netherlands. Ugrešić, she said, worked at the Institute for Literary Theory, while simultaneously writing some of her first significant works (*U raljama života*, *Forsiranje romana-reke*, along with several books intended for children). In 1988, she received the NIN award as the first woman writer for the novel *Forsiranje romana-reke/Fording the stream of consciousness*. She also dealt with the Russian avant-garde, essay writing, writing TV and film scripts...

This discussion was especially dedicated to the journalistic and social involvement of D. Ugrešić, for which she was declared by the Croatian public as one of the five undesirable Croatian intellectuals who were called "witches" in the weekly *Globus* in 1992.

The backbone of the tribute to Dubravka Ugrešić was a discussion about her book of short notes in the form of an essay *"The Culture of Lies"*, through which she presented her view of personalities and phenomena as a phenomenon of a time. "There was a call for people to mobilize. The first victims were women called witches. And then those "witches" are burned. That's how it used to be, and that's how it is today."

The screening of the documentary film about D. Ugrešić and the conversation were attended by **16** people.



CAMPAIGNS, APPEALS

In addition to the above-mentioned initiatives in this reporting period, we have also launched or actively participated in numerous campaigns, primarily related to demands for dealing with the past - responsibility for war crimes, violence against women, against repression of political dissidents; over refugees.

WE REMEMBER: 30 years since the crime in Štrpci - on February 27, 2023, three decades have passed since the crime in Štrpci. 30 years ago, members of the Army of the Republika Srpska (RSA), at the train station in Štrpci (BH), took 20 passengers out of a train traveling between Belgrade and Bar and then killed them. In the past year, courts in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have handed down three first-instance verdicts for this crime. However, the Humanitarian Law Fund (HLF), Women in Black, the Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights remind that the victims' families have not received justice even after 30 years.

On February 27, 1993, members of the Army of Republika Srpska (RSA) kidnapped and killed 19 citizens of the FRY and one foreigner. Of the citizens of the FRY, 18 of them were Bosniaks, and one was a Croat, all of them lived in Serbia and Montenegro - in Belgrade, Prijepolje, Bijelo Polje and Podgorica. The victims of this crime are: Esad Kapetanović, Iljaz Ličin, Fehim Bakija, Sečo Softić, Rifat Husović, Halil Zupčević, Senad Đečević, Jusuf Rastoder, Ismet Babačić, Tomo Buzov, Adem Alomerović, Muhedin Hanić, Safet Preljević, Džafer Topuzović, Rasim Ćorić, Fikret Memović, Fevzija Zeković, Nijazim Kajević, Zvezdan Zuličić and one unidentified person. The oldest victim was 59, and the youngest 16.

To date, the remains of only four victims have been found. The body of Halil Zupčević was found at the end of 2009 on the shore of Lake Perućac, and the remains of Rasim Ćorić, Jusuf Rastoder and Iljaz Ličina were found in the same lake in 2010.

For this crime, 14 people have been convicted so far, of whom only two sentences have been confirmed as final. Nebojša Ranisavljević, commander of the volunteer platoon called "Resovac" or "Skakavac", which was part of the Intervention Company of the Višegrad Brigade of the RSA, was sentenced before the High Court in Bijelo Polje (Montenegro) in 2002 to a prison sentence of 15 years. Mićo Jovičić, a member of the Višegrad Brigade of the RSA, against whom proceedings were conducted before the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, pleaded guilty in 2016 and was sentenced to five years in prison.

On February 7, 2023, the Special Court for War Crimes in Belgrade issued a first-instance verdict by which it sentenced the accused Gojko Lukić, Duško Vasiljević and Jovan Lipovac to 10 years in prison each, and Dragana Đekić to five years in prison, which are [lower sentences](#)

than those pronounced by courts in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina for the same crime. The amount of the sentence is not in accordance with the usual practice of the High Court in Belgrade regarding punishment for killing civilians during the war.

The families of the victims, most of whom are citizens of Serbia, have so far failed to obtain the status of family members of civilian victims of the war, which would allow them modest material support, as well as recognition of the suffering they endured.

The Humanitarian Law Fund, Women in Black, the Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights expect the Court of Appeal in Belgrade to accept the appeal of the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office against the verdict passed in February of this year and to sentence the accused to sentences that correspond to the severity of this crime, the statement emphasized.

The mayor must apologize to the Roma community! - in a statement dated *March 14*, Women in Black strongly condemn the statement of the mayor of Belgrade, Aleksandar Šapić, with which he insulted, humiliated and discriminated against one of the most marginalized communities in the society in Serbia - the Roma community. WiB joined the demands for the immediate resignation of the mayor of Belgrade.

Punish the perpetrators of the attack on Krokodil! - Women in Black condemned the series of attacks on the Krokodil association - writing hate graffiti on the building where the Krokodil association is located. These acts of violence are taking place in the climate created by the ruling Serbian Progressive Party led by the country's president, Aleksandar Vučić. They take place in the atmosphere of war-mongering politics in accordance with the continuous criminal policy of Russophilia and Putinophilia and have as their goal both intimidation and obstructing their making work. The attacks are taking place in a political context in which the authorities in Serbia need to accept the agreement on Kosovo and therefore need a scapegoat to divert attention. We demand that the competent institutions of the State of Serbia urgently find and prosecute these attackers, as well as firm guarantees from the representatives of the city government that they will create a social climate in which such attacks will not happen in the future, *reads the announcement of March 15, 2023.*

Against the persecution of FPS professors! - Women in Black condemned the manhunt against certain professors at the Faculty of Political Sciences/FPS of the University of Belgrade. "In front of the faculty building, posters with photos of Stefan Surlić, Marko Veković and Jelena Lončar with the inscription Traitors appeared. The Faculty of Political Sciences canceled the meeting that was supposed to take place - a meeting between the Faculty of Political Sciences in

Belgrade/Serbia and the Faculty of Philosophy in Pristina/Kosovo.

The regime in Serbia, in order to divert attention from the agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, is using the entire propaganda machinery against those who for decades have been pleading for good neighborly relations between Serbia and Kosovo and cooperation between the two countries at all levels, as well as for the recognition of Kosovo's independence.

Women in Black express their full support and solidarity with their political comrades and collaborators from the FPS, demanding the relevant institutions to stand in the way of the persecution of political dissidents, it was stated in the *announcement of March 17*.

We remember! - on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the murder of 16 workers at the Radio Television of Serbia/RTS in NATO bombing (1999), as a sign of sympathy and solidarity with the families of those killed and in front of the monument Why? in the Tašmajdan Park, activists of the Women in Black Network from Belgrade, Pančevo, Leskovac, Zrenjanin, Vlasotince, Kraljevo, etc. will participate in the commemorative rally on April 23 (at 2:06 a.m.).

On April 23, 1999, in the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Radio Television of Serbia building, in Aberdareva Street, in Belgrade, was also hit. At that moment, there were 16 workers in the building, who died on that occasion.

The responsibility for their death, according to the factual truth established by the court, lies with the former director of RTS, Dragoljub Milanović. Despite the fact that he had clear knowledge that the RTS building would be bombed, he did not inform his employees about it.

Dragoljub Milanović, as well as the entire regime of Slobodan Milošević, in which Aleksandar Vučić was the Minister of Information at the time, are responsible for the sacrifice of innocent people.

And on this occasion, a request was made to the authorities of the State of Serbia to compensate the families of the victims and to acknowledge their responsibility for this crime. (Announcement dated April 21.)

Stop the fundamentalist hatred towards women! Stop the attacks on human rights, the education system, democracy, the Constitution! - in a statement (April 24) regarding the request of the Serbian Orthodox Church/SOC that the Law on Gender Equality be repealed, WiB strongly condemned *the "dangerous and unconstitutional actions of the SOC, whose Information Service announced a few days ago the request for the repeal of the Law on Gender Equality (adopted in 2021). This was preceded by Patriarch Porphyry's dangerous attitudes against gender-sensitive language, church interference in the education system, attacks on LGBTQ+ people, etc. Such attitudes and demands represent a brutal violation of the*

Constitution (2005), according to which the state of Serbia is secular, and churches and religious communities are separate from the state.

The stated positions and demands are not an original invention of the SOC - it is an integral part of the global offensive against 'gender ideology' carried out by united fundamentalists - political movements of an ultra-right orientation that abuse religion, nation, tradition and cultural heritage both on a global and local level'.

WiB warns that the SOC is permanently running campaigns against women's reproductive rights, especially against abortion, campaigns to expel the theory of evolution from schools, like the darkest theocratic regimes; it provides shelter to pedophiles and sexual predators, and none of the priests - perpetrators of sexual crimes have been punished either before the state or the church court! WiB condemns the glorification of war criminals in both war and peace.

"Women in Black, as member of numerous anti-fundamentalist networks, and in accordance with feminist internationalist principles, will continue to advocate for the secular character of society: the non-interference of the church and religious institutions in the sphere of education, human rights, and especially women's human rights!"

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