



*žene u crnom
beograd*



Report

**January, February,
March and April
2024**

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 2024

Report

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.zeneucnom.org or contact us by e-mail at: office@zeneucnom.org

Street actions:

Street actions: In this reporting period, we organized ten (10) 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:

Prijepolje, 27th February

Prijepolje/Serbia, 27th February "We remember victims of Štrpci **crime**" - in front of the memorial plaque in Prijepolje, the 31st anniversary of the crime in Štrpci was marked. Activists of the Women in Black Network from the towns of Priboj and Prijepolje, together with the families of the victims, paid tribute to the victims of crimes in Štrpci.

Tuzla (BH), 27th February

Tuzla (BH), 27th February – **Ramiz Berbić**, WiB Network activist, organized a vigil in the center of Tuzla on the occasion of the 31st anniversary of the Štrpce crime.

Belgrade, 23rd April

Belgrade, April 23rd "Why?"– on the occasion of the 25th 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, fourteen (14) activists participated of Women in Black Network (Beograd and Leskovac) as well as activists from BH (Srebrenica, Tuzla, Sarajevo, Foča) and from Croatia (Novska and Zagreb) 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, “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:

- 20. February – 7 persons;
- 20. March – 5 persons;
- 22 April – 25 persons; besides Women in Black Network activists from *Serbia* (Belgrade, Leskovac, Kraljevo, Kruševac), participated activists from *Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Bratunac, Đulići, Klisa, Foča/Sarajevo, Srebrenica); *Montenegro* (Pljevlja) and *Croatia* (Novska and Zagreb).

The following banners were displayed at the protest:

- *We trust Milena Radulović*
- *Justice for the victims – sanctions for the perpetrators*
- *They raped in war – they also rape in peace*
- *Rape is crime*
- *Solidarity*



Belgrade, 24th February



Belgrade, February 24 “Stop the war in Ukraine! Stop the war in the Middle East”– on the occasion of the second anniversary of the beginning of the Russian aggression on Ukraine, as well as the Israeli aggression on Gaza, Women in Black organized a vigil in mourning and silence in Knez Mihailova Street. About forty people (**40**) from the following countries participated in the anti-war campaign: Bosnia and Herzegovina (Foča, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Rudo); Serbia (Belgrade, Kruševac, Subotica, Valjevo, Novi Sad, Zaječar, Ruma, Leskovac) and from Croatia (Novska and Zagreb).



At the protest, the following banners were displayed in different languages (Serbian, English, Arabic, Hebrew, Russian):

- *Stop the occupation*
- *Stop the genocide in Gaza*
- *Stop killing Gaza*
- *Stop the war in the Middle East*
- *Stop the war in Ukraine*
- *Women in Black against the war*
- *Peace*
- *Putin – murderer*
- *Putin – a war criminal*
- *Alexey Navalny – We remember*



We also joined the ‘March of Solidarity with Ukraine’ on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Russian aggression, organized by the Russian Democratic Society in Republic Square.

Tuzla, 5th March

Tuzla, March 5 “Stop the killing of women and children in Gaza” – the action was organized by Ramiz Berbić, activist of the WiB Network.

Belgrade, 20th March



Belgrade, March 20 "Stop racism towards refugees!" – on the occasion of the International Day against Racism and Anti-Semitism (March 21), Women in Black organized a protest in Knez Mihailova Street in Belgrade.

The following banners were displayed at the protest:

- *Stop racism towards refugees*
- *A single race – the human race*
- *Solidarity with refugees*
- *Stop the war, not the refugees*
- *March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*
- *Map with 19 points of current armed conflicts*

Fifteen-odd (15) activists participated in the protest.

Tuzla, March 21



Tuzla, March 21 "Let's resist racism! Stop racism! A single race – the human race" – on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Ramiz Berbić, in coordination with Women in Black Belgrade, a vigil took place in Tuzla.



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).

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.zeneucnom.org and www.zenskisud.org or contact us by mail: zeneucnombeograd@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:

REGIONAL MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S COURT - A FEMINIST APPROACH TO JUSTICE, APRIL 20, 21 AND 22, 2024

At the nineteenth (19) regional meeting, held in Radmilovac near Belgrade, 25 women participated: witnesses, organizers, therapists, associates from *Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Bratunac, Đulići, Klisa, Foča/Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Tuzla); *Montenegro* (Pljevlja); *Croatia* (Novska and Zagreb); *Serbia* (Belgrade, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Leskovac) and *Poland* (Krakow). The program consisted of workshops, dynamic exercises, screening of documentaries, etc.

Here is a selection from the program:

About activities in the previous period (from the previous meeting in December 2022 to April 2024 (reported by: Staša Zajović, Mira Vilušić...)



The following women spoke about important developments in the field of justice:



Marica Šeatović, Novska/Croatia: 'At the end of 2023, the Republic of Croatia made the decision to write off court costs for family members of murdered and missing civilians. However, the decision also refers to the write-off of court costs for convicted perpetrators of war crimes. Marica believes that this form of 'justice' is mainly aimed at compensating those convicted of war crimes, while civilian victims are secondary: 'The focus is on war criminals, not victims. I paid court costs in the amount of my pension, and now the money I will receive (as compensation) means nothing to me. Nevertheless, the state has thereby admitted that I suffered an injustice'.



Suvada Selimović, Đulići/BH informed about new indictments for war crimes in Zvornik - at the end of 2023, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina filed an indictment against 11 persons of Serbian nationality for war crimes in the area of Zvornik. They have been accused of participating in the illegal imprisonment and inhumane treatment of 700 Bosniak men and boys in late May and early June 1992.



Halida Konjo Uzunović, Foča/Sarajevo: On February 27, the main trial in the criminal case of the accused Milutin Đilas and Rajko Vojvodić for a crime qualified as *'War crime against the civilian population - war crime of rape'* was held at the *District Court in Trebinje/BH*. At this hearing, Halida Konjo Uzunović from Foča (otherwise a witness at the Women's Court-Foča case) was heard as a witness, as well as Ema Kuprešanin from Foča. Both live in Sarajevo. WiB activists from Belgrade (Violeta Đikanović, Staša Zajović and Daša Ranković), from Kotor and Herceg Novi (Ljupka Kovačević and Ervina Dabižinović) and Amela from Mostar were not allowed to watch the trial because of the 'protection of morals and the democratic system', as stated the judge. Halida also said 'none of the associations of war victims from BH supported me at the trial and women's NGOs that address the issue of sexual violence in the war have no relations with the witnesses', and thanked WiB for their solidarity support. It was concluded that women's groups in the entire region, with some exceptions, do insufficient work on sexual violence both in war and in peace, and that violence against women is mainly confined to the family context.



During the discussion *about the fear of a new war in the Western Balkans*, the women stated that they have lived in fear ever since the beginning of the war (1992):

Intimidation of the Bosniak population by the Republika Srpska police: 'After the terrorist attack in Moscow, the Republika Srpska/RS police increased their presence in our villages due to the alleged fear of 'terrorists' and it all reminds us of 1992" (*Suvada*); 'Everything reminds me of 92', as Bosniaks we feel threatened in the RS, even more threatened than 92' we will be a target again (*Šehida*).

Provocations and war-mongering propaganda ahead of the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution on the International Day of Remembrance of the Genocide in Srebrenica: 'If that resolution is passed, we are afraid of the separation of the RS from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and all that has revived the war traumas *Šaha*); "I have terrible nightmares again about what happened in Foča. I constantly dream of detention and I am afraid that we will be too late to escape,

as happened in 92' (1992), I am terribly afraid and no one will dissuade me that there will be no war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now is the second phase - the cancellation of the RS' (*Halida*); "In Serbia, it is never time for a resolution on the genocide in Srebrenica, the regime is constantly spreading the narrative about the Serbian people as victims of a world conspiracy, i.e., external but also internal enemies and that is why we from the Children's Center in Zaječar and related NGOs are the target of regime attacks' (*Selena*).



Against women's quotas - women who are in power positions do not represent women's interests, but are exclusively guided by party interests and the instructions of party leaders, and that is why the effects of women's participation in positions of power are "politically insignificant", they are only a decoration and serve to satisfy formal standards, and female politicians who are in favor of women's interests were punished by the parties as 'disobedient'.

Relaxation exercise, shared joy, getting to know each other better – during the **Magic Shop** exercise, women mentioned those behaviors they mostly want to get rid of/sell, namely: rashness, timidity, anger, care for others, lack of care for oneself, empathy for others, lack of self-esteem, obedience in the family, helplessness, trauma, extreme openness, all the years of war, endless sadness – the darkness of the nineties, etc.

Values they want to 'buy': patience, composure, trust, freedom, justice, self-confidence, peace (mostly women opted for it). In the conversation after this exercise, it was concluded that women's qualities (especially caring for others) are socially unrecognized and undervalued, that women yearn for freedom and justice because they live in an environment of constant fear of war, uncertainty, impunity...

Women's raffle and interactive exhibition - it unfolded in an extremely pleasant atmosphere...

Women's Court - Foča case - public presentations will be discussed later in this report.



“Little Danube” - after the film, a joint visit to a green oasis, an aquarium, a settlement from prehistoric times... (next to the Radmilovac motel) was organized.



Women’s struggle for peace and justice - afternoon sessions

- **“Žanka”** – screening of the documentary film (25 min.); author: **Lina Vušković**; photos: Marija Vidić, Marija Arandjelović, Zoran Miljković; director of photography, editing and direction: Milan Nikolić; production Reconstruction Women’s Fund (2016). This documentary is about **Žanka Stojanović**, the mother of an RTS worker killed in the NATO bombing in 1999; the film testifies to **Žanka’s** fight for justice...
- **“Solidarity mothers for peace”** (32 min.): About regional meetings of mutual support of women - victims of the most serious war crimes from Srebrenica, Vukovar (Croatia), Bela Reka, Belgrade (Serbia). The film testifies to women who turned their tragedy and pain into a joint struggle for peace and justice. In this film, among other things, the participation of “Solidarity Mothers for Peace” in marking the anniversary of the murder of RTS workers in Belgrade is shown; the film was made by the WiB video activism group.



The women believe that the films showed “the greatness of mothers, the universality of mothers’ pain, the mutual respect of mothers - this is the true path of reconciliation from below”.

Celebrating women’s resistance: How did women in Poland vote en masse against the clero-nationalist government? – Speaker: **Magdalena Sztandara, Jagiellonian University, Krakow/Poland**

Magdalena spoke about the elections in Poland, held in October 2023: *“Women won in Poland, and otherwise a record turnout was achieved – 74% of the electorate.”* She spoke about the reasons for

the mobilization of women: *frustration and anger, the Law against abortion, high prices, etc. Then the organization. Women in small towns came out. The young generation went to the polls, mainly because of the ban on abortion*’.

On feminist ethics of care – Mira Vilušić facilitated the discussion about a joint women’s active vacation at the Seka house on the island of Brač.

Incorrectly entered – an interactive theater performance designed and led by **Selena Ristic**, drama artist, activist “Children’s Center”, Zaječar was performed after dinner. In the play, ten participants of the meeting presented texts about violence against women in various contexts, but also about women’s resistance, in an extraordinary way.

The final session was devoted to agreements on activities in the forthcoming period.

April 22 – Joint participation in the “I believe in Milena Radulović” protest (more in the ‘Street actions’ section) and **April 23** a participation in the 25th anniversary of the murder of RTS workers (more in the ‘Street actions’ section).

Feminist ethic of care and responsibility – visits of WiB activists to female witnesses (W’sC Sarajevo), peace meetings of exchange and cooperation in the region – support for victims:

– **January 28 and 29; March 5th and 6th and April 16th and 17th**
– meetings with women from the association of victims of genocide in Srebrenica from Tuzla and Srebrenica, who together with WiB activists followed the trial for the crime in Kravica.



– **February 11, Memorial Center Potočari/Srebrenica** – joint visit to the Memorial Center, meeting with the women of Srebrenica housed in the Center for the Elderly ‘Hatidža Mehmedović’, opened with the intention that the mothers of Srebrenica, who are left without relatives, will be cared for in their old age. About forty (40) people



participated in this meeting, mostly women: in addition to the women of Srebrenica (witnesses at the W'sC, etc.), WiB activists from Belgrade and Leskovac, women from the association 'Anima' Đulići/BH, as well as from Novi Pazar. Various activities were organized as part of the program: socializing, with a raffle in the Bosnian Room; presenting photo albums; joint reading of texts on women's solidarity; birthday celebration for Refia and Nura, etc.



April 18th. i 19th

– **April 18 and 19** - meeting with Mother Mejra Dautović from Bihać (BH), who is following the trial for crimes in the Omarska concentration camp (the 'Case of Milorad Kotur') in which her children (daughter Edna and son Edvin) were detained in Omarska/BH concentration camp, and then killed; Mother Mejra monitors the trial together with WiB activists.



April 26th, Bečej

– **April 26, Bečej** – solidarity visit to Julia Teleki, anti-war activist, participant in the process of organizing the W'sC.

Women's Court – Foča case – this event took place in **Belgrade, June 26, 2023** in Miljenko Dereta Space and was organized by: Women in Black and Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade in cooperation with feminist groups from B&H, Montenegro, Croatia, associates of Women's Court, as well as artistic-activist collectives:

Škart, Dah Theater, Belgrade and Art Clinic, Novi Sad.

Women's Court – Foča case – was dedicated to sexual crimes, because during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), Foča was a place of systematic sexual violence and rape. Based on Foča case, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia stated that sexual slavery is to be considered a crime against humanity.

Nevertheless, despite this historically significant verdict, some of the sexual crimes against women and men of Foča, unfortunately, have not been disclosed or acknowledged, but have been silenced and forgotten...

Women's Court – Foča case – is the continuation of struggle, together with the women and men from Foča to demand justice for victims of sexual crimes in Foča and beyond.

In *Women's Court – Foča case* - the following persons testified: *Ilvana Konjo, Zenija Hajdarević, Halida Konjo Uzunović and Kemalemir Frašto*, while W'sC associates interpreted the political context based on the testimony.

Public presentations Women's Court – Foča case: in this period five (5) public presentations were held:

The presentation of W'sC – the case of Foča consists of several segments:

- **What is the Women's Court/W'sC?** What is a feminist approach to justice? History, process of organizing Women's Courts (Sarajevo, 2015); activities in the continuation of the process, effects of W'sC; Women's Court – Foča case, 2023.
- **Women's court – Foča case** – screening of a documentary film (42 min.) directed by *Marija Aranđelović*, produced by Women in Black. The film is about the Women's Court- the Case of Foča, held in Belgrade (June 26, 2023)
- Witnesses talk about their experience testifying at the Women's Court in Belgrade (What did testifying at the Women's Court mean to me?)

Here are the dates and the venues of the Public Presentations in chronological order:

Đulići/BH, February 1th – 17 women from a dozen villages in the Zvornik area watched the film. Here are some impressions after the screening: *'Of all war crimes, rape in war is the worst form of violence against women, 'Rape is the crime of crimes'; 'We admire the courage of women to speak about it – because if we remain silent, it will never be exposed.'*

Then they spoke about sexual crimes during the war, especially in 1992 in the area of Zvornik: *Sexual crimes were suppressed and silenced, victims of sexual crimes were stigmatized by the family, the community – out of fear, the women did not dare to speak about it, even though*



they knew that many Bosniak women in the area of Zvornik were raped.

Belgrade, February 23th

Belgrade, February 23th – promotion of the documentary film *Women's Court – the case of Foča* in THE NGO HUB – premises of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in the presence of **55** people.

The witness *Halida Konjo Uzunović* said, among other things: 'I decided to speak, instilled with some force and inspired with people like you, who listen to our story with heart, empathy and respect. I did not speak because I was afraid of not being accepted in such a way. I was afraid that I would be further hurt by people who would pity me, who would not fully understand me. For this reason, I remained silent. It is a crime to cover up a crime. I'm proud to have brought it out. That truth freed me a lot, changed me. Now I am lighter in terms of that huge burden of injustice and humiliation and remorse and everything that I bore. The truth liberates and is the right path to a healthier coexistence.'

Novi Sad, March 2th

Novi Sad, March 2th – the presentation was held in the premises of the NGO '*Iz Kruga - Vojvodina*', organized by the *Center for Women's Studies and Research, Novi Sad* and *Women in Black, Belgrade*. **10** people from: Novi Sad, Subotica and Belgrade participated in the presentation.



The witness *Kemalemir Frašto, Foča/USA*, who joined us via Zoom, said, among other things:

It means a lot to me that you saw the film about our testimonies. After the age of 31, I decided to talk, to come to Belgrade to testify at the W'sC. We are not just victims but winners, precisely because of what we said in Belgrade. I have a feeling of sadness, but I'm happy because I started to put together the dice that were scattered. And I did that with the help of Staša and WiB'. Attendees also got involved with comments and impressions.



Belgrade, March 16th – **60** people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Poland, Georgia, and the Russian Federation participated in the meeting of the WiB Network

Kemalemir Frašto, spoke as a witness via video link about his experience testifying at the Women's Court in Belgrade: 'The very beginning of testifying was difficult, but now I have my own vision and my own path, which is to help future generations so that it is preserved from oblivion and that what happened to us should never happen again to anyone.'

Those pieces of terrible trauma were all around me. I was not able to collect them myself. I thought that an old wound should not be reopened. However, opening that old wound helped me.

My message would be that no matter what we are going through, through the economic situation, through the genocide in Gaza, that we should be united as a people.

I also thank you for allowing me to say what is on my heart and for





allowing me to be a part of this great organization, in which we work together and try to show the world how it should be done!

Halida Konjo Uzunović said in her letter: 'I would like to be a role model for other women, to open their souls and put in writing their living wounds. Because it will hurt them less... I know it myself...

I am with you and with the truth, a different ME...

Belgrade, April 22, Regional Meeting of the Women's Court – Feminist Approach to Justice with the participation of **25**

women - witnesses, organizers, therapists, associates from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bratunac, Đulići, Klisa, Foča/Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Tuzla); Montenegro (Pljevlja); Croatia (Novska and Zagreb); Serbia (Belgrade, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Leskovac) and Poland (Krakow).

Kemalemir Frašto via zoom: "Participating in the W'sC meant a lot to me: I'm glad that I came back for the sake of history, so that we leave this for posterity, so that younger generations can learn what happened before their eyes, which they knew nothing about." I wanted to give up testifying, and it's good that I didn't give up because I would have betrayed both myself and you. I want us to live with each other in BH, not next to each other. My mission is a peaceful message. That what we experienced should never happen again to anyone. Our peaceful message is a world without war' etc.

Halida Konjo Uzunović: 'The truth set us free and I became brighter and more beautiful because we broke the shackles. I had worn those shackles for thirty years, but with the support of WiB, we took them off. I was silent. I am extremely grateful that you helped me bear all that burden. I am a different person now. I know they did the right thing for the sake of those who stopped living before they died AND for the sake of future generations. And to be an encouragement to women who haven't done it yet'.

Zenija Hajdarević: 'If it wasn't for WiB, this would never have come to light. I am glad I did this and I would do the same thing again – to encourage others to speak up. I messed up my rhythm, but with this we can open someone else's eyes to get rid of the bitterness. I know that we will never free ourselves of the evil that they have inflicted on us'.

A feminist approach to the problem of sexual violence in war – for a culture of memory and responsibility

– was held on *February 23, 24 and 25* in Radmilovac near Belgrade. This educational seminar was attended by **31** people from **15** cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Foča, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Rudo); Serbia (Belgrade, Kruševac, Subotica, Valjevo, Novi Sad, Zaječar, Ruma, Leskovac) and from Croatia (Novska and Zagreb).

We highlight some segments of the program:

Transitional justice – feminist approach – basic terms, gender dimension of transitional justice – practices and models; after the interactive lecture held by *Staša Zajović*, the participants made a few observations and comments:

On the responsibility of perpetrators and commanders of crimes – on the complicity of the community:

“One should not distinguish between those who ordered and those who committed the crime. If there are no corpses then there is no crime, that’s what they said. The people who transported Albanian corpses from Kosovo (in 1999 in refrigerated trucks along the Danube) said that they did not know what they were transporting. They did what they were told, they could have refused to comply. The whole place knew what was happening...’ (*Katarina*); ‘Impunity prevails because we have not confronted the past, because we have not taken a stand on crimes – both at the level of the state and society’ (*Daniela*).

On the responsibility of the state, the academic community:

“I was failed by a professor at the Faculty of Law in the sociology exam because I said that genocide was committed in Srebrenica”; “The state supports war crimes and criminals” (*Andrijana*).

From “rewards to soldiers” to “crimes against humanity” – how the feminist movement changed the meaning and international regulation of rape in war: *Miloš Urošević, Women in Black.*

After the lecture, the participants presented their views, here are some of them:

Rape in war and sexual violence – attitudes of the participants:

Hatred of women – dehumanization of women and the entire social community: ‘Rape in war is a systematic way of killing women as individuals and personalities. This destroys a woman, kills her honor, personality, strength, everything that is needed to lead a family. It wasn’t enough for them to kill our husbands. The ultimate goal was to humiliate the woman so that she would be unable to move on through life, to raise her children’ (*Halida*).

Demonstration of male supremacy: ‘Men in war show their supremacy and women’s powerlessness. Rape in war is a powerful weapon’ (*Ljiljana*).

Women are the object of male patriarchal revenge (*Margareta*).

Rape is a form of organized crime: ‘Many men were instructed to rape’ (*Maja*).

Reward for soldiers: ‘Rape was once considered a reward for soldiers. They have a right to it. Today, we have documents and judgments about the fact that it is no longer a reward for soldiers’ (*Sanja*).

Woman's body = the enemy's territory: 'The woman is treated as territory and reduced to the status of an object. Men in wars assert their threatened masculinity. They treat women like a piece of land they have to conquer' etc.

Continuum of sexual violence - both in war and in peace: 'It's a continuum. In peace, to some extent, something works, in contrast to war. And the availability of women's bodies is what they want. It is the same in war and in peace. There were debates whether it was a crime against the nation or against women. It is both' (*Nela*).

Sexual violence during the wars in Yugoslavia – facts about the spread of the problem, patterns of perpetration and realization of the rights of survivors: Sanja Pavlović, Autonomous Women's Center – lecture

Roundtable discussion: **Sexual violence: former Yugoslavia**

Part I: Problems in the (non)prosecution of sexual violence in war before the courts in Serbia/Croatia/Bosnia and Herzegovina: speakers: Nela Pamuković, Mira Vilušić, Miloš Urošević.

Part II: Continuum of sexual violence in war and peace, speaker: Staša Zajović

Impressions, attitudes of women:

The impunity of violence in the so-called in the peacetime period, it discourages women and encourages abusers: 'Women are not encouraged to report violence because they go through hell through state institutions. This discourages women from reporting violence. Women give up and withdraw criminal charges' (*Ljiljana*).

Stigmatization of the war crime of rape – at the state and societal level: 'There are very few of us on the path of truth and justice. The minority is fighting. They told me to forget the past. I found refuge only with you' (*Halida*).

Screening of the Hague Tribunal film 'The End of Impunity' (about sexual violence in the territory of the former Yugoslavia)

The Return – a short feature film (20 min.) by the Kosovar director Blerta Zequri about how a woman who survived sexual violence during the war in Kosovo, which resulted in pregnancy and the birth of a child, and confronts her husband who has returned from a Serbian prison.

Impressions, evaluation: What do you take along from this session? Emotion, cognition, attitude? (*Sanja*)

The presence of young people: 'What lifted me up in all this was more than ten of these young people. It gives hope for changes' etc.

New knowledge, new friendships: 'I leave this place with much greater insight. I leave with a great deal of knowledge. I made new friends'; 'The feeling of camaraderie is what I carry the most', etc.

Trust, safe space, empowerment: 'Thank you all for your trust and safe space; 'I got strength'; "I believe in my dreams regardless of my age"; "I leave full of energy"; "I leave with the hope that we are empowered, wise, compassionate enough to continue to persevere and change" etc.

Responsibility: 'I felt the responsibility to be able to educate someone tomorrow'; "I carry with me from here a greater dose of responsibility for everything I want to do", etc.

Rovinj/Croatia 2-6 April: Working meetings within the regional project (Autonomous Women's Center, WiB and Youth Initiative for Human Rights) and women's groups from Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina *'Amplifying Voices by Women affected by war-related SGBV in the Western Balkans – For a culture of Recognition and Reconciliation*. The central theme of the meeting was 'Reflections on Feminist Dealing with the Past'. Staša Z. participated on behalf of WiB.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE CRIMES – THE PATH TO PEACE WITH JUSTICE: MONITORING THE TRIALS AT THE SPECIAL COURT

In this reporting period WiB attended following trials:

The trial of Milenko Živanović

The Prosecutor's Office for War Crimes of Serbia filed an indictment against the former general and commander of the Drina Corps of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) Milenko Živanović for war crimes against the civilian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995.

Živanović is charged with having ordered and participated in the forced relocation of Bosniak civilians from Srebrenica and Žepa in the east of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In March 1995, he issued an order to "create conditions of total insecurity, intolerability and hopelessness for the further survival and life of the villagers in Srebrenica and Žepa through daily planned and designed combat activities."

On July 12, 1995, he ordered the provision of 50 buses for the "evacuation of the civilian population from the Srebrenica enclave". On July 13, 1995, he issued an ultimatum to the Bosniaks that they had to leave, etc.

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

January 28 – at this hearing, and in the continuation of the evidentiary proceedings, the War Crimes Prosecution submitted two written pieces of evidence submitted by the International Residual Mechanism (Hague Tribunal) to the court for review:

1.) Act on providing fuel to the Drina Corps (from July 12, 1995)

2.) Act on the situation in the Žepa enclave (from July 13, 1995)

The defendant stated that his signature was on both documents, but he said that he hadn't signed the documents that day, because at that time he was no longer the commander of the Drina Corps.

April 12 – the witness Dragoslav Trešić was heard, who was a witness at the Hague Tribunal three times, where he testified as a defense witness in the cases brought by the Prosecution against Mladić, Borovčanin and Blagojević. He denied the charges against him by claiming that he had allegedly 'retired on May 1, 1995.'

Trial of Milorad Kotur

The defendant Milorad Kotur is a member of the reserve police force at the Bosanska Krupa Public Security Station. The indictment accuses M. Kotur of committing the following crimes from July 1992 to September 1992 in the Bosanska Krupa municipality:

1. In the second half of July 1992, **44** camp inmates, civilians of Bosniak and Croat nationality who were traveling in a minibus, were taken out of the Omarska camp (Prijedor municipality) for the sake of an alleged exchange that was supposed to take place in the Bosanska Krupa municipality. TAM 130 so that on the way to the alleged exchange, at the order of the accused, they were taken out of the minibus to Donji Dubovik, municipality of Bosanska Krupa, after which they were tied with wire, and then, at gunpoint of automatic rifles, they were taken together to the pit "Lisac" which was nearby and killed the **44** civilians of Bosniak and Croat nationality by shooting them. In the year 2000, during the exhumation in Donji Dubovik, municipality of Bosanska Krupa, in the "Lisac" pit, the bodies of the said civilians were identified.

2. At the beginning of August 1992, in Donji Dubovik, municipality of Bosanska Krupa, they intercepted 7 civilians of Bosniak nationality, who were moving from Prijedor towards Bihać: B.M., B.N., B.Nj., B.O., B.P., B.R. and B.S., whom they immediately shot dead. In the year 2000, during the exhumation in Donji Dubovik, Bosanska Krupa municipality, in the "Lisac" pit, the bodies of the aforementioned civilians were found and identified.

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

February 6 – three witnesses were heard: Ale Šivdevic, Sabahudin Mahić and Samir Gašević.

All three witnesses said that in everything they stand by their statements that they gave in the investigation, regarding the socio-political circumstances in Bosanska Krupa. All three witnesses spoke about the events of April 1992, in the area of Bosanska Krupa. They also said that they do not know the defendant, and that they have no knowledge of the events that he is being accused of.

April 19 – the witness Almir Krajišnik was heard, who stated that he does not know the accused and added:

“My brother and father were killed in the war. I left Kozarac on April 6, 1992, and the city was attacked on May 24, 1992.”

Trial for the crime in Bratunac

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, two **(2)** hearings were held:

February 26 – The main trial started again because the president of the court panel had changed in the meantime. The accused pleaded: “I am not guilty!”

April 10 – witness Dragan Petrović was heard. In a very “stingy” testimony, he repeated: “I don’t remember.” or “I heard, that’s what was said.” The witness knows the defendant, they used to be neighbors and that at the time of the events he has been accused of “he was living in Bratunac in an abandoned Muslim house.” Also, the witness said that the defendant killed his cousin, to which the defendant said: Yes. I was convicted of that murder before the military court in Bijeljina and spent three years in prison.”

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 period, three **(3)** hearings were held:

March 6 – The court panel stated that the lawyer of one of the defendants (Tomislav Višnjić) had died. Defendant Vidosav Vasić was offered a lawyer ex officio, which he refused, stating that he would find a new lawyer. The court panel told him that he must submit a power of attorney from a new lawyer by March 25, 2024. Defendant Aleksa Golijanin did not attend this hearing and his lawyer said that his client

“still has problems with hemorrhoids” and that on March 6 scheduled check up, about which he attached medical documentation. Due to the incomplete presence, the Trial Chamber decided to postpone the main trial.

The hearing lasted 18 minutes, and was attended by survivors from the association of victims of the Srebrenica genocide from Tuzla and Srebrenica (seven women), as well as four activists from Women in Black and activists from the Humanitarian Law Fund.

April 17 – due to incomplete presence, the court panel decided to postpone the main trial.

April 22 – at this hearing, the new defense attorney for the defendant Vidoslav Vasić requested that the main trial be postponed, because he did not have time to review the case files. A new defense attorney was appointed because the previous one had died. “I did not come into contact with the accused,” said the lawyer. The defense attorney of the accused Aleksa Golijanin, lawyer Goran Petronijević, submitted to the court the medical documentation for his client, which justifies his absences from the previous hearings.

It should be noted that this trial, which should have been the most important process in the Special Court because the crime was committed as part of the Srebrenica genocide, was accompanied by constant obstructions: postponement of the hearing, prolongation of the proceedings for completely unjustified reasons, additional insults and humiliation of the survivors of Srebrenica, which every they follow the hearing together with WiB activists.

*(Reports from the aforementioned hearings
can be found on the WiB website)*

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:

MEETING OF THE WOMEN IN BLACK NETWORK,

March 15, 16 and 17, 2024 – Radmilovac near Belgrade

The meeting was attended by **60 people from 25 cities: Bosnia and Herzegovina** (Sarajevo, Zvornik, Tuzla); **Montenegro** (Herceg Novi, Kotor); **Croatia** (Zagreb, Pakrac, Novska); **Serbia** (Belgrade, Priboj, Valjevo, Kruševac, Zrenjanin, Kraljevo, Novi Sad, Sombor, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Zaječar, Majdanpek, Bajina Bašta, Novi Pazar); **Poland, Georgia, Russian Federation, USA** (via zoom).

Friday, March 15

Report on activities in 2023 – handed out to the participants and then sent by email – the report was submitted by *Staša Zajović*, and then photos from the street actions were shown (*Miloš Urošević*).

Discussion corner: “Where and how next”

Reports from the field

Part I: Kristina Todorović, lawyer of the Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights/Yucom, **spoke about phantom GONGs**, and the debate was moderated by *Marijana Stojčić*, WiB, Belgrade.

What are GONGs/Government NGOs? How do GONGs work?

‘These are branches of the ruling structure, formally registered as citizens’ associations, made up of people close to the authorities. Since 2014, these organizations have either been registered a few days before the end of the competition, or have been re-registered. All those organizations that appeared in state calls for applications not only have no publicly published data, but can’t even be found – no phone, no address, no e-mail, no website, no information about how the funds were spent. Everything is fictitious..’

On the criminal charges against the GONGs:





In 2014 - we reacted when the first call for applications that was canceled appeared, we filed a criminal complaint, which was rejected. However, we managed to get the call for applications suspended.

In 2021 – we filed a criminal complaint, because every year a set of newly created organizations that have changed their activity participate in those state calls for applications.

From 2019 to 2022 – Civic initiatives and BIRN (Balkan Research Network) monitor the spending of state money on public tenders for media and public information, civil society, culture and youth with more than 2,400 public tenders for more than 50,000 projects with more than 187 million euros (*Danas, Nov. 23, 23*)

2023 – BIRN and Civic Initiatives in November published research, based on publicly available data, that a network of phantom organizations falsified reports and extracted millions from the budget of the Serbian state in public tenders intended for young people, families and women.



2023 – Filed by Yucom (November 2023) against former Minister Ratko Dmitrović due to abuse at calls for application aimed at young people, families and women.

What is happening with criminal charges?

Kristina stated that a criminal complaint was submitted to the Prosecutor’s Office for organized crime, but that the fate of that criminal complaint is questionable: ‘A few days ago, I went to the Prosecutor’s Office to see what had been done after six months. The procedure is still ongoing. There are people who need to be questioned’.

Obstructions in the judicial system, lack of political will to encourage impunity: ‘There is still no political will to carry out the entire procedure. The process is going very slowly, there are many witnesses, but no one has been called. The Prosecution is passive. We have over **25** defendants. They will be interrogated by the police, the Prosecutor’s Office, and the Court. If one of them fails to appear, the process is delayed. The Prosecutor’s Office can say that it has initiated the





process, but in fact they are counting on the Statute of Limitations’

Huge sums of budget/public money are being allocated by the state to phantom GONGs: ‘The most controversial of all is that, for example, in the 2021 competition, ‘phantom’ organizations received huge sums of money, which exceed the funds allocated by the EU. The state gave those organizations 8, 7, 9 million dinars each. It is from our budget, from our pockets. It probably went to the (ruling) party’.



Part II: Small steps – big feats - we value and celebrate persistent and ‘small’ struggles

Participants:

Martin Bežinarević, councilor of the citizens’ group Može, Majdanpek, environmental activist

Aleksandra Jevtić, Democratic Party, Valjevo

Aris Movsesijan, Vice President of the Movement of Free Citizens, Belgrade

Bratislav Bata Stamenković, activist ‘I Ja se pitam’, Leskovac

Tara Rukeci, Zrenjanin Social Forum

Vladimir Perić, “Zajedno” activist, Belgrade

Moderated by: Vlada Jevtić, WiB Network activist, Bajina bašta

Martin Bežinarević (online) – On the Starica (a mountain above the town of Majdanpek, eastern Serbia), mining began in 2022 by the Chinese company Zijin (Serbia Zijin company) for the exploitation of ore (primarily copper). The entire operation is carried out with the consent of the State of Serbia.

Martin spoke about all this:

About the demolition of the Starica mountain, the destruction of natural resources: ‘We heard that the Starica mountain was going to be demolished. Although they said they would not touch the mountain,





as soon as I left the meeting there was an explosion. We are near the National Park. There used to be wild animals on the mountain, which are no longer there. Animals have been expelled from here, plants have been eradicated. The Pek River is polluted, because sulfur was released into it. All the fish died... The entire expanse behind the mountain is now a mine. There is desolation around us..'

On resistance and repression: 'Then the protests followed. We pitched our tents on top of mount Starica. The first twenty days it was mostly activists. After a month, the police began to exert pressure, and then the private security company. *Then a conflict broke out between activists and Chinese citizens who had weapons with them. They were members of a military formation.* There were injured people on both sides. Activists were detained, and the police searched the apartment of those who protested on the mountain. This lasted for several months. Autumn set in, rainy, windy, bad weather. It was no longer possible to stay on the mountain. Activists spent a month and a half in prison in Negotin. Then they were placed under house arrest, and the trial continued first in the court in Majdanpek, and then in Negotin.



The activists were released, pressure continued in the form of organized crime from Chinese companies and SNS: 'We have a ban on approaching the mountain. They wanted to accuse us of racism because it is a Chinese company. I don't blame the Chinese company; I blame our government that decided to sell it. This was followed by further arrests in connection with other matters. Behind Mount Starica, a new settlement was built where Chinese workers live, which they cannot leave, because they are forbidden to do so. The whole of Majdanpek is located in that exploitation zone. There is no future here for anyone who does not want to work for one of the ten Chinese companies operating here or join the ruling party.'



There are alternatives – solidarity support: 'If all these laws are respected, if exploitation is reduced, things can return to normal. This requires political will, which does not exist.



We had tremendous support from people who came to camp with us on the mountain. I would love to host you all here in Majdanpek...'

Aleksandra Jevtić: Firstly, she referred to the preparations for the local elections (June 2, 2024) and the problems they face:

- *Insisting on 'technical' coalitions at the local level, while ignoring essential ideological differences:* 'It is considered that those programmatic ideological coalitions are not significant for us at the local level. There are almost all political organizations in Valjevo, as well as at the level of Serbia. Many of them are very problematic. For example, they made a petition for the demolition of the monument to Stevan/Stjepan Filipović, the NOB (National Liberation Struggle) anti-fascist fighter.
- *Serious moral dilemmas regarding coalitions with supporters of historical revisionism:* 'For example, a man who deals with historical revisionism, a historian, has been the director of the museum in Valjevo for many years. There you have a room related to the anti-fascist struggle, where you have partisans on one side, and Chetniks on the other – everything is equalized.'

Aris Movsesian explained his position against the election boycott: "The boycott (2020) led to the fact that all local parties lost their committees and we must not repeat the mistake in the elections on June 2." He also believes that the opposition (coalition *Serbia against Violence*) must stay together because "We don't have institutions, but we have a serious autocratic regime. Neither in Europe nor in the world is the situation in our favor. Everyone should cooperate. Horizontal communication is lacking, we have turned too much to ourselves'.

Vladimir Perić spoke about the strength of solidarity, about building alliances at the base: 'I am closer to activism than to political stories. We won a big victory. One is to prevent the eviction of one family. Ten of us can do that, those are big steps for society. We can do that only through solidarity. First, we need to establish human contacts and establish a consensus on what we want. We should not be pessimistic'.

Bratislav Stamenković emphasized the principles and also practices of civic activism through the experience of the association *I ja se pitam* (I also have a say):

- *Our mission is the participation of citizens in the decision-making process:* it is not for politicians to make decisions instead of citizens, but for citizens to have the opportunity to influence decision-making in their community; *through the citizens' association I also wonder if we deal with local problems; we made manuals for public discussion, for action planning:* we submitted 74 project proposals with a complete analysis. The city administration was shocked. They banned some people from communicating with us.





- *Cooperation with the Albanian community in the south of Serbia:* this year we did the *Get Out and Vote Campaign*. And owing to that campaign, Shaip Kamberi passed as a deputy and Albanians will have one representative. I worked in that territory for a long time. There was constant talk about the reintegration of the Albanian national minority into the institutions. I remember many politicians coming down. They visited the gendarmerie, but did not meet with the Albanian presidents of the municipality. They did not respect them because they are of a different nationality', etc.

Tara Rukeci spoke about the system of 'modern slavery': 'I will focus only on foreign workers (primarily Vietnamese and Indian workers) who are reduced to the position of modern slaves. And not only to those located in the Chinese factory Linglong, but also to those located throughout Zrenjanin in private companies. In them, no legal framework of our country is respected, the worker works ten hours a day, six days a week, overtime is not paid, they do not have health insurance, etc.

Modern slavery is maintained in cooperation with the state apparatus of Serbia and Chinese investors - workers have no protection other than the solidarity support of civil society organizations, such as the Zrenjanin Social Forum.

Part III: Feminist Endeavors

Nela Pamuković, Center for Women Victims of War and Marijana Senjak, feminist W'sC therapist and Women's Room, Zagreb spoke about the 'legal solution to the issue of femicide in Croatia: the following new criminal offenses were introduced (March 2024):

- *The new criminal offense is called aggravated murder of a female person, not femicide. Croatia is the fifth country in Europe, along with Cyprus, Malta, Spain and Belgium, to introduce the criminal offense of femicide;*
- *The sanction for rape in Croatia has been increased from 1 to 5 years to 3 to 8 years. There are three key measures to combat sexual violence: prevention and education, provision of available services, and deterrence from re-offending.*



The state of women's human rights in Montenegro in 2023: How do women and men see it?

Analysis by ANIMA – Center for Women's and Peace Education – Kotor

Reported by: Ljupka Kovačević and Ervina Dabižinović, Anima, Kotor



About the research on gender equality in Montenegro:

The questionnaire contained **78** questions. The sample was representative. Research was done by women from Women's Studies. We have covered a variety of topics. There were about **500** men and the same number of women.

Here are some of the research findings:

- Women change a little more, accept diversity a little more than men;
- There are changes in both men and women in relation to the topic of violence against women; Citizens recognize institutions as the place where this battle should be fought, but they do not trust institutions, but women's non-governmental organizations, etc.

Freedom is the essence of man – promotion of the book (2023) by **Slobodan Sadžakov**, professor of ethics at the University of Novi Sad and **Vladimir Marović**, professor of philosophy and civic activist, Kraljevo.

Moderated by: Fahrudin Klandičanin, Academic Initiative 'Forum 10', Novi Pazar



The texts of the book were commented on by activists, we convey some observations:

Thanks to the authors who made this book. While I was reading this text, it brought me back to the end of the eighties and the beginning of the wars in our former country' (*Violeta*).

"The book mentions the dismal position of education in this capitalism, the banality of the media, the spectacularization of reality" (*Tanja*).

The author analyzes psychological violence, through which citizens become insensitive. It is interesting that he talks about Vučić as a political entertainment figure and the creation of a personality cult' (*Nastasja*).

'I found the story about secularism interesting – about the crucifixion of secularism, as the author beautifully puts it. Before the war, 90% of people were atheists, and today the picture is reversed' (*Ervina*).

"I chose an article by Professor Vladimir Marović, called *The Evil of the Common Man*. The evil of the common man that the author writes about is both spatially and temporally universal. He interprets Hannah Arendt's famous thesis about the banality of evil, which she wrote about while following the trial of Eichmann in Jerusalem' (*Snežana T.*).

'I was overcome with such sadness while reading this. Everything is true, everything is reality, everything is familiar to me. Each text



took me back through what I went through. I am also grateful for the reminder of what art, theater, and songs meant in SFRY' (*Ljupka*).

I chose 'Memory of anti-war rock singer, poet Milan Mladenović and frontman of EKV. It really shook me, reminded me of the big anti-war concert 'Don't count on us', it was in Belgrade, on April 25, 1992, against the siege of Sarajevo, etc. (*Staća*).

' I chose the text of Vladimir Marović, *Zalud preti ponor Prajda* (*The Abyss of Pride threatens in vain*). The best part of the text is that it is agreed that the matter of Pride is not about the capitulation of the state, but the cohabitation of the state with hooligans' (*Miloš*).

'Everything was plundered on the battlefields, foreign currency savings, predatory privatization. Only the manholes and manhole covers are left for looting. I like the text that talks about it. That speaks of how much misery there was, how far we've come if we've gone anywhere at all' (*Snežana J.*).

'I was most interested in the text of *Student of Serbia*. It is about the blockade of the University (2011) with the request to reduce the tuition fees. It is devastating that the students failed to do so. The professor emphasizes the symbolic meaning of victory' (*Nikola*).

'I chose the text *There is something* because it talks about the mental decline of people, about why we stopped being citizens and turned into some kind of henchmen - it's a text that talks about the absence of interest and rationality' (*Tamara*).

The authors presented that the authoritarian character of the people in these areas has never stopped. Such a personality exploded in the nineties and is now maintained at a high level' (*Snežana O.*).

"The book sheds light and critically analyzes the genesis of the state in which the country found itself and in recent years, the state in which we've lived up to the present day" (*Lino*).

"I am really touched and impressed by our discussion. You spoke in an inspiring way and I had the impression that this book was getting its true meaning. Every author wishes for thoughtful and careful readers' (*Slobodan, one of the authors*).

Women's court – Foča case – Women's court – Foča case – On June 26, 2023, Women in Black and the Autonomous Women's Center from Belgrade, with the support of feminist groups from BH, Montenegro and Croatia, organized Women's Court - Foča case in Belgrade.

Women's Court – the case of Foča was devoted to sexual crimes because during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995),

Foča was a place of systematic sexual violence and rape during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia established for the first time in the Foča case that sexual slavery is considered a crime against humanity. Nevertheless, despite this historically significant verdict, some of the sexual crimes against the women and men of Foča, unfortunately, were not disclosed or acknowledged, but were silenced and forgotten... Women's Court – the case of Foča is a continuation of the struggle, together with the women and men of Foča for justice for victims of sexual crimes in Foča and beyond.

At the *Women's Court – Foča case*, the following witnesses testified: *Ilvana Konjo, Zenija Hajdarević, Halida Konjo Uzunović and Kemalemir Frašto*, while W'sC associates interpreted the political context based on the testimony.

The presentation of W'sC – the case of Foča consisted of several segments:

- **Women's court: a feminist approach to justice** (What is the Women's Court/ W'sC? What is a feminist approach to justice? Historical background, process of organizing the Women's Courts (Sarajevo, 2015); activities in the continuation of the process, the effects of W'sC; Women's Court – the case of Foča, 2023. (*Staća Zajović*, Women in Black and *Sanja Pavlović*, Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade)
- **Women's court – Foča case** – screening of a documentary film (42 min.) directed by *Marija Aranđelović*, produced by Women in Black. The film is about the Women's Court – the Case of Foča, held in Belgrade (June 26, 2023).

(The significance of the testimony was discussed by: Kemalemir Frašto (via video link) and Halida Konjo Uzunović, which was discussed in the column 'Public presentations: Women's Court - Foča case').

W'sC associates/experts: Marijana Senjak, W'sC feminist therapist, Zagreb and **Sonja Biserko**, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Belgrade

Sonja Biserko emphasized:

- *Women are the biggest victims of all conflicts, including ours;*
- *Transitional justice as a concept has not been fully conceived, it is a very slow process that very often depends on the character of the change, on the political will, not only of the elites but also of the society – there are great expectations from civil society, but the possibilities are limited;*
- *Women's courts are an important component of the process of transitional justice – regardless of the judgments made by the Hague Tribunal that rape is a crime, but the burden borne by women in all conflicts, especially women victims of rape, etc., is huge.*

Marijana Senjak reflected on a few points from the film:

- *Survivors' guilt:* 'The magical thinking of a child who thinks he can save the world is quite striking in Kemalemir's speech. That is, he blames himself for not saving his mother. We immediately try to explain to the victims and survivors that it is not their fault, that the perpetrators are responsible, that there is no justification for violence.'
- *Processes of suppression:* many elements of this are expressed in statements, because we live as if nothing happened. And terrible crimes happened.
- *Breaking the silence with the help of a solidary community:* it is the path of emancipation, openness and contribution to one's own recovery. Halida and others talk about the path of finding solidarity in the community. These are WiB and all our organizations that provide assistance and act as activists in our communities.

Courage is contagious - presentation of two books, published in 2023 as part of the edition published by CK13, Novi Sad:

- **Mary Daly, The Courage to Wake Up and Go**

The book translated and edited by Milena Milojević (Women's Solidarity) and Borislav Prodanović (CK13) contains texts and parts from the books of the American radical lesbian feminist, theologian and environmentalist Mary Daly (1928-2010).

- **Sojourner Trutt, I spoke only the truth and kept nothing silent**

The book of speeches by Sojourner Truth (born Isabella Baumfree, 1797-1883), traveling preacher, abolitionist and fighter for human and women's rights, was translated by Ivana Maksić.

Presented by: **Borislav Prodanović, CK13, who spoke about the edition:** 'We at CK13 wanted to launch the *Courage is Contagious* edition out of the need to get and share feminist texts that have the power to initiate women and men into feminism, into radical feminism, above all. *Courage is contagious* is a formula uttered by Mary Daly and it is about the phenomenon that when a woman encourages herself to an act of respect and love for herself, that is, to an act of resistance to a man, that very moment of her courage is contagious in the sense that it already gives birth to courage in another woman, even when she is not immediately there. It is in this sense that we have chosen two women of such extraordinary courage, *Mary Daly* and *Sojourner Trutt*. There is a 150-year gap between their lives, but it's amazing how similar they are.

Moderated by: *Miloš Urošević, WiB*

About the geopolitical situation in the world with a focus on the Middle East

Speaker: **Vuk Vuksanović**, senior researcher at the Belgrade Center for Security Policy, associate of the London School of Economics and Political Sciences/LSE

At the beginning, Vuksanović presented the genesis of the conflict in the Middle East, with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (power point).

In the continuation of the discussion, Vuksanović pointed out: 'One extreme always feeds the other extreme. The hard-core Israeli side was always matched by Hamas, because they could undermine El Fatah as the moderate Palestinian side that signed the peace accords. Israelis have always had the existence of Hamas as an excuse for the impossibility of forming two states. Iran and Qatar are the main sources of support for Hamas. Israel has funded Hamas for years. The only legally viable solution is the construction of two states for both Israelis and Palestinians, but that is now impossible.'

Field experiences

- **Where is Syria going?** – Speaker: **Zorica Skakun**, feminist activist

As of 2017, Zorica worked for two and a half years on humanitarian programs in Syria. She works for Oxfam, as a humanitarian worker dealing with gender equality. Here are some of Zorica's experiences on the field:

Syria – a country devastated by a civil war, devastated by the proxy wars of the big capitalist, world powers on its territory led by America, Russia, Iran, under the terror of the self-proclaimed Islamic State ISIS, etc. Syria is ruled by the totalitarian regime of Bashar al-Assad (armed forces, secret police, which controls all life 'every freedom of assembly is controlled by the regime'. There are ethnic, religious borders and divisions in the country, as well as a strong clan structure. 'Syria is now ruled by oligarchs and plutocrats same as here, as everywhere on the semi-periphery of capitalism'.

Zorica then spoke about the pitfalls of humanitarian aid: 'We struggle to integrate feminist principles in the distribution of humanitarian aid. Syria is a country where humanitarian aid is carried out under the control of the regime. Various types of abuses take place there, always to the detriment of women, there is always an increase in violence against women', etc.

Anti-militaristic/feminist alternatives

Desertion from the army of the Russian Federation – the problem faced by Russian deserters; Speaker: **Alexander Finiarel**,

Corresponding Member of the Global Academy/Russia Program at George Washington University.

“Before the war, there were **600** deserters annually, and now that number is **2,000 to 3,000.**” These are only registered cases that ended up in court. These are the people who were caught and they were prosecuted. The true number of people who deserted is not known. The problem for people who desert is that it is difficult for them to go somewhere safe, to another country. Only 30% of Russian citizens have a passport. Those who own a passport are mostly people who are more affluent, richer. And the people who mostly mobilize are from the poorer strata of society. When they are drafted into the Russian army, their passports are confiscated. Without that passport, one can only go to Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia with an ID card. Kyrgyzstan and Belarus are neither free nor safe countries for deserters from Russia, as they deport anyone the authorities want. The situation is a little better with Georgia and Serbia,’ Alexander said, among other things.

Sofia, co-founder of the *Feminist Anti-War Resistance* spoke briefly about the Russian feminist anti-war resistance: ‘The movement was launched in February 2022 as a sign of protest against the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In the first months, the movement managed to launch the fastest anti-war campaigns, attracting more than 26,000 followers. This movement brings together dozens of already existing feminist groups throughout the country – from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok; thousands of individual activists joined the movement.’

Art against Nazism, fascism...

Adolf, sit down! (13 min.) – screenplay and direction: Zoran Solomun; roles: Johannes Voelkel, Titus and Biene. A neo-Nazi from a village in Saxony/Germany named his dog Adolf and trained him to raise his paw at the command of ‘Heil Hitler’. The neo-Nazi was fined for it, and Adolf was sent to a dog shelter for re-education.

Activist overview of Violeta Đikanović, WiB, Belgrade, who participated in the **anti-fascist protests in Germany** (mass demonstrations across Germany against the ultra-right AFD party).

On the visit to the Jewish ghetto in Krakow: ‘One of the five ghettos that Nazi Germany created, it lasted from June 1941 to 1943. After that we went to Schindler’s factory. He saved a large number of Jews who worked in his factory,’ emphasized Violeta.

Sunday, March 17

International politics – internationalist corner

- **On political mobilization in Poland in the elections of October 2023** – Speaker **Magdalena Standara**, Jagiellonian University, Krakow/Poland. It was also discussed in previous sections.

- On the international feminist conference Filia in Glasgow, October 2023 – Speakers: **Nela Pamuković**, Zagreb and **Sanja Pavlović**, Belgrade (participants of the conference).
- **International news – newsletter from September 2023 – March 2024** (feminist, anti-war-anti-militarist/anti-racist; transitional justice, anti-fascism... *Staća Zajović*) – it was shared and sent by email.

Agreements on the activities of the Network in the following period – sent to the participants.

Evaluation: What do you leave with, what was the most impressive part for you? (*Tanja Marković*)

- **Most of the participants think that the program is very 'rich', well thought out – diverse, broadens horizons, encourages critical thinking, questioning, common resistance through solidarity, friendship, trust:** 'I was taken aback by the intensity of the program, it is loaded with content. Here, for me, it was a striking respect that everything was followed from beginning to end' (*Ivana S.*); What always strengthens me in a special way is the quality of the information I receive here. For me, this here is an oasis of knowledge devoid of formalities. I leave here with a sense of responsibility' (*Nikola*); 'There is a lot of learning, socializing and dancing here' (*Svetlana*); "For me, every WiB Network meeting is like a small tectonic disturbance because it causes movements, changes in different directions, shifts in an emotional, cognitive, intellectual sense" (*Snežana J.*); "It is an honor for me to be a part of this community both in a human sense and in every sense. This time I really couldn't single out, I would list everything' (*Mima*) etc.
- **International politics (Palestine, Israel, Syria, Russia, Poland...)** – information that we cannot hear in the domestic media; a report from the field in Syria; analysis – insight into the genesis of the conflict, into the complexity of the problem; resistance, especially of women to repression, dictatorships, militarism (Russian deserters) – encourage internationalist solidarity: "I'm glad that on the same day we can hear people from different meridians. We rarely get to hear people from outside: Magda's report on Poland; Zorica's presentation on Syria. Vuk's presentation' (*Slađana, Nadežda, Mima, Miloš, Ljilja, Lino, Ivana S.*); "I will take with me the courage of women to work and build bridges in the most dangerous areas, which is the work of Zorica Skakun (*Snežana O.*); "Zorica fascinated me, I can't wait to go with her" (*Selena*); "Zorica's presentation about Syria was the most important for me" (*Suvada, Slavica*); 'What I heard about the Middle East, Russia, Syria encourages me to take responsibility and action' (*Snežana J.*); "I am glad that these young Russians came to give us an echo of what is happening in their world (*Nastasja*); "I'm

glad we had the Russians. The rebellion of the people in the aggressor country is important' (*Gordana*).

- **Women's Court – the case of Foča – the witnesses' courage:** "The most impressive film for me is the film W'sC Foča" (*Ivana S., Nikola, Mirjana*); "The courage of the women to talk about what happened" (*Svetlana*); "I was moved by the dignity of the victims in the film" (*Staša*); "I admire female witnesses" (*Milka*), etc.
- **Promotion of the book 'Freedom is the essence of man' (a dozen people commented on selected parts) – innovative, inclusive:** 'The promotion of the book on Friday was a new kind of presentation and multiplication and sharing of that learning. A new way of reading' (*Manda*); "The presentation of the professor's book was done in the best therapeutic manner" (*Marijana*); "I found the promotion of Professor Sadžakov's book interesting. Everyone I listened to seemed to be talking about a different book. It's like the book is being reprinted. It's a good way to promote a book. Today, book promotions are less and less popular. Rarely do people attend them. It's a good way to get people involved' (*Selena*) etc.
- **The promotions of other books also attracted attention: Mary Daly, Courage to Wake Up and Go** (*Sanja, Ramiz, Nela, Marijana, Miloš*).
- **Small steps – big feats – testimony of persistent struggle in small communities, in local communities** (*Nadežda, Miloš*); "For me, small steps from Leskovac, Majdanpek, Zaječar were impressive, because I would not have heard them otherwise. I greatly appreciate that struggle that goes on every day' (*Marijana*), etc.

*(The integral report from the Network Meeting (35 pages)
can be found on the WiB website)*

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, PEACE GATHERINGS

in addition to the ones already mentioned, the following educational programs (women's peace activism, feminist discussion groups, peace gatherings etc.) were realized in this reporting period as part of the Network:

January 10, Zagreb/Croatia "War in the Middle East, with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: controversies among us; moral dilemmas, pacifist traps...! - keynote speaker: Staša Zajović, WiB, Belgrade; the debate was held at the Center for Women's Studies, 18 people from Zagreb, Pakrac, and Belgrade participated.

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, broader 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 1, Đulici (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – 17 women from a dozen villages from the Zvornik area participated in the thirtieth (30) cycle of Women's Peace Activism workshops. The film "Women's Court – the case of Foča" was shown, which was discussed in the section "Women's Court – feminist approach to justice".

The women spoke about the new indictments for war crimes in the area of Zvornik: The Prosecutor's Office of BH filed an indictment against **11** persons of Serbian nationality for war crimes in the area of Zvornik. They are accused of having participated in the 'illegal detention and inhumane treatment of 700 Bosniak men and boys' in late May and early June 1992. Since there are many relatives of the women present among the murdered, they expressed their willingness to testify before the court, hoping that preparations for testifying in the Court in Sarajevo will soon begin.

All the women agree that the International Court of Justice (The Hague Tribunal) committed a 'great injustice' towards the victims of war crimes in the area of Zvornik and in general eastern Bosnia, where the civilian population was exposed to war suffering for a long period of time (1992-1995). Everyone believes that genocide was committed in that area, but that the Hague Tribunal did not qualify it as genocide. They thereby produced a hierarchy among the victims...

Đulici Women's Library - In the second part of the meeting, the women commented on the literary works they had taken at the previous meeting, and they liked the books by feminist authors the most: Audrey Lord, Jasmina Tešanović, Radmila Lazić, etc.

March 25, Leskovac – meeting with NGO 'I ja se pitam' and NENA – group for peace and women's rights (4 WiB activists) – conversation with activists from Leskovac.

Ada, April 26, – We remember the anti-war resistance – a peace meeting in Ada/Vojvodina on April 26. Ten (10) activists from Sombor, Trešnjevac, Senta, Zrenjanin, Belgrade participated in this peace meeting.

The meeting was organized on the occasion of the second death anniversary of **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. "With this humble act, we pay tribute to Pišta and Vera, who left an indelible mark in our anti-war activism", it was said at this meeting.

About forced mobilizations, consequences and resistance in Vojvodina:

"Victims of mass forced mobilization in Vojvodina were mostly members of minority nations, anti-war activists and politicians" (Stiša). "At that time, about 200,000 summonses to the battlefield were distributed in Vojvodina, and over 100,000 men were sent to the battlefield" (Laci Bala). The brave anti-war resistance, at that time the strongest in Vojvodina, was recalled. There was also talk about the systematic attack on the multicultural character of Vojvodina – about ethnic cleansing, ethnic ghettoization, usurpation and looting of Vojvodina's natural resources by the war-profiteering regime structure, which led to a growing population outflow that continues to this day, etc.

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.

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:

Solidarity support and assistance to Palestinian refugees from GAZA: WiB has established contacts since March 2024 with refugees who arrived from this war zone:

March 22, visit to refugees from Gaza in Krnjača, near Belgrade – a Palestinian who came to Belgrade 13 years ago, completed his medical studies and managed to bring about (in the form of family reunification) the arrival of his two sisters and a brother with their children – a total of five children. They came from Gaza, via Egypt, in January, and the brother with his family in February. Most of the family remained in Gaza, and many were killed, as they testified to us. We brought modest humanitarian aid (Stiša and Violeta).

March 28 – visit to refugees in Krnjaca – Two WiB activists (Violeta Đikanović and Zorica Skakun) visited Palestinian refugees from Gaza in Krnjaca. In addition to emotional and moral support, they brought humanitarian aid. Solidarity aid and contacts continued.

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

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 from freedom.

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

In this reporting period, three **(3)** hearings were held:

February 20 – the main trial was not held because the defendant Miroslav Aleksić did not appear in court. His defense attorney, lawyer Zoran Jakovljević, told the court that the defendant is in poor health, that he had two major surgical interventions (the last one was on January 12, 2024). He suggested that the main trial be postponed until May, and he attached the medical documentation. The Prosecutor objected to this proposal and requested that the Court order a medical examination of the defendant in order to establish whether he is physically capable of following the process. The representative of one of the injured parties, lawyer Jugoslav Tintor, supported the request of the Prosecutor’s Office.

March 20 – The trial of Mika Aleksić was postponed, allegedly due to illness. The lawyer of the accused submitted to the Court a document which, according to the lawyer, shows that Aleksić is not capable of responding to the court. The prosecutors said that the attached document is inadequate, because it is actually the opinion of a general practitioner who is not competent to decide on the defendant’s ability to attend the trial.

April 22 – The trial was postponed because the defendant Miroslav Aleksić did not appear in court. The victim, Jefimija Vujović, attended the main trial. The judge said that a medical examination was done by the Institute of Forensic Medicine, in which it was stated that the accused is mentally capable, but not physically, to participate in the court proceedings. This hearing was attended by WiB activists, as well as participants of the Regional Meeting of the Women’s Court: Feminist Approach to Justice in *BH* (Bratunac, Foča, Srebrenica, Sarajevo, Zvornik); *Montenegro* (Pljevlja), *Croatia* (Zagreb, Novska), *Serbia* (Leskovac, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Prijepolje).

The trial for setting fire in the US Embassy building 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 died there.

A hearing was held on **February 13**: the Presiding Judge of the Trial Chamber, **Dušan Agatonović**, decided that the main trial be postponed and justified his decision by the fact that the defense lawyers who requested the postponement presented their main objections to the course of the repeated proceedings (repeated due to a change in the composition of the Trial Chamber and the Prosecutor). The lawyers insisted on the shortcomings of the indictment. Judge Dušan Agatonović accepted the proposal of the majority of the defendants' defense attorneys to postpone this main hearing. However, regarding the request for the Court to order the Prosecutor's Office to specify the indictment as a whole, he said that he believes that it is "a matter for the Prosecutor's Office" and that one part of the indictment has already been prepared.

(Integral reports from the aforementioned trials can be found on the WiB website)

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 **(12)** lectures, debates, book presentations, and film screenings were organized with the participation of **210** people.



January 17– "Mamula All inclusive", a documentary film directed by **Aleksandar Reljić**. The film was co-produced by *Al Jazeera Balkans, Greenfield and Core dox production companies, NGO Center for Civic Education*, and with the support of the *Film Center of Serbia*. The Mamula Fortress, on the island of Lastavica near Herceg Novi/

Montenegro, was a camp in the First World War, where Montenegrin rebels against the Austro-Hungarian army were imprisoned (1918). During the Second World War, during the Italian occupation, the Mamula island was a concentration camp for more than two thousand civilians, mostly women and children. Anti-fascist associations, together with the families of the victims, visited Mamula in memory of the sufferings. However, in 2015, the Government of Montenegro leased Mamula to an Egyptian-Swiss investor to turn it into a luxury hotel, *Mamula Island*, which opened to guests in 2022, despite opposition from anti-fascist associations. The film testifies to the erasure of the memory of the places of suffering for the purpose of profit. **12** people attended the screening and discussion.

January 31 – “War is the Greatest Evil” by Chris Hedges, published by Sandorf, Zagreb (2023). The book is a tribute to the peace policy, pacifism and anti-militarism of the American journalist, war correspondent and publicist, **Chris Hedges**, winner of the **Pulitzer Prize**. As a war reporter, Hedges reported from conflicts in the Middle East, the Balkans and Africa... Activists commented either on the book as a whole or selected parts of the book on Hedges’ approach to the topics of war and peace, the role of the US and the West in international politics and the resolution of war conflicts, the politics of the USSR and Russia, humanistic and Christian values that are of particular interest to this author – in the context of war and crime, possible similarities between the politics that were conducted in our conflicts in the 1990s and in other places in the world. **11** people participated in this event.

February 7 – “On the cultural practice of lamentation in Montenegro through a feminist perspective”. **Ljubica Duvnjak Đurđevski**, an ethnologist, explained that the research was the result of a European project in which female researchers from Belgrade, Vienna and Berlin participated. She also used the research as an empirical basis for her graduation thesis at the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, and that thesis was declared the best in 2023.





witnesses to that practice in Montenegro, it is one of the last opportunities to talk to women who are part of the traditional practice of lamenting, which is slowly disappearing,” said Ljubica. She explained that she used the methodology of reflexive ethnography, which is based on the formation of the common knowledge of the examiner and interlocutor, through the conversation process. Duvnjak-Đurđevski described the experience she had after researching and writing her thesis as “sad, cathartic, personal”. As her contribution to the subject of lamentation, she highlights the rarely used “feminist perspective”, research and reasoning. **23** people attended the presentation of the research and the discussion.

February 14 – “Homage to Neda Božinović” (1917-2001) – Before the Second World War, as a student at Belgrade University/BU, Neda was active in the student and women’s movement; during World War II, Neda was an anti-fascist fighter, active in AFŽ (Anti-fascist Women’s Front), in NOB, during the wars of the nineties, Neda was active in the Center for Anti-Rant Action, and is one of the founders of Women in Black. In memory of Neda, two documentaries produced by the WiB Video Activism Group were shown: “Neda Božinović Continuity of the struggle for peace and women’s rights” (17.15, min.) and “**Neda Božinović – from a partisan to an anti-militarist**” (15.45 min.) – documentary film, conversations with Neda B. about her participation in the Second World War, the causes of the collapse of the SFR Yugoslavia, etc. The publication “**History of Resistance - Neda Božinović**” edited by **Marijana Stojčić and Nađa Bobičić** (published by the Center for Applied History - CPI) was also promoted. **20** people attended the event.



February 21 – “On culture and the position of cultural workers in Belgrade”. Introduction **Ivan Srdanović**, the author of several prose works and the editor of memoir testimonies, emphasized the very difficult position of independent cultural workers, with state support only for ‘those who show loyalty to the parties in power’. According to him, there is a need for more independent and better work by critics and reviewers so that, free from the pressures of the executive power and powerful individuals, the work of those who deserve it the most



is materially supported, according to the criteria of artistic values and the quality of their work... Srdanović believes and that the material support of the artists selected in this way should exist throughout the entire period of their work on a certain work... At the end of the discussion about culture, its phenomena and the long-standing prevailing lack of recognition of the role of emancipatory culture for education and social development, the introducer Ivan Srdanović presented books authored by him or edited and edited by him. The conversation was attended by **18** people.



March 6 –“Govorila sam samo istinu i ništa nisam prećutala” (“Truth is powerful and it prevails”) a compilation of Sojourner Truth’s speeches (ed. CK13, Novi Sad, 2023), in the edition **Hrabrost je zarazna** (Courage is contagious), is the result of this organization’s interest in specific topics that, at the same time, are theological, pacifist and feminist relevant.

The presenter **Borislav Prodanović** (CK13) pointed out that Sojourner Truth was born **Isabel Baumfrey** (1797-1883) and lived in a dramatic period of US history when initiatives and movements to abolish the slavery of African Americans, to which Sojourner also belonged, were growing simultaneously with slave ownership. From a slave, she became an influential preacher, abolitionist and fighter for human and women’s rights during her - for that time and her position - long life. The opening act and poet **Radmila Lazić** dedicated one of her songs to Sojourner: “She really inspired me.” I found her name in one of our magazines. We all think that everything starts with us...” **19** people participated in the conversation.

March 13 – Interview with Alexander Finiarel, corresponding member of the *Global Academy* (Russia Program, George Washington University (Tbilisi/Georgia) and co-founder of the *Feminist Anti-War Resistance*.

Before the start of the conversation with the Russian dissident, conscientious objector **Alexander Finiarel**, a film about **Alexei Navalny** was shown, showing the most important details from Navalny’s life that, in a way, decided his tragic fate under the rule of **Vladimir Putin**. Particularly interesting is the presentation of the support system in Russia, which was quite successfully organized



Žene u crnom, 1999 →



by Navalny, using activists, volunteers, social networks and his own extremely popular blog. Navalny's organization had branches in a significant number of places in the interior of Russia, which probably distinguishes him from most other opponents and victims of Putin's regime. Finiarel mentioned other victims and explained the same matrix that Putin used in the cases of death and murder of his opponents: a very public disparagement of their importance and influence, calling them "unimportant", only to claim after their death or liquidation attempts that he had nothing to do with it no connection. Regarding the political exile in Georgia, Finiarel said that although people there are hospitable, they are not hospitable to Russian emigrants. "The population is divided. Half of them hate Russians, and the other half have fond memories from the time of the USSR. Neither Serbia nor Georgia are safe countries for us." The meeting was attended by **24** people.

March 20 – "Cynical Critical Theories, Helen Plakrose and James Lindsay" – presentation and discussion about their book *Cynical Theories – How activists in the education system reduced everything to race, gender and identity and why it hurts everyone*; *Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay: Cynical Theories – How Activists Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender and Identity – and Why This Harms Everybody*. We are broadcasting the first part of the conversation in which the activists commented on selected texts from this book. This is the first part of the conversation in which activists (**20**) commented on selected texts from this book.

March 27 – Presentation and discussion on the topic of *Cynical Critical Theories*, on the occasion of the book "Cynical Theories" by Helen Plakrose and James Lindsay (How activists in the education system reduced everything to race, gender and identity – and why it hurts everyone), part two in to which activists commented on selected parts of this book. **20** people participated in this roundtable discussion.



April 3 – One life (2023) – Director **James Hawes'** film "One life" (VB, 2023), is a biographical feature film about the British **Nicholas Nicky Winton** (played by **Johnny Flynn** and **Sir Anthony Hopkins**), a twenty-nine-year-old broker who, as an enthusiast and at the request



of a friend from the British Refugee Board, in December 1938, and just a few months after the signing of the Munich Agreement, leaves for Prague. Vinton tries to help the Jews who live in a kind of camp in inhospitable conditions – which especially affects children. Using his private connections and persistent lobbying through institutions in London, he manages to secure 669 passports for Jewish children and at the same time find them a place in British foster families (who undertook to care for the children until they turned 17). The showing of the film, which was followed with great attention at WiB, continued with a discussion about its content, with a bit of amazement: How is it possible that such a great humanitarian work was discovered only at the age of the main protagonist? Those present also recalled other biographical films about the “righteous among the nations” (“**Schindler’s List**” by **Steven Spielberg**, “**Wallenberg – the story of a hero**”, **Lamont Johnson**, etc. The screening of the film and the discussion were attended by 12 people.

April 10 – Different responses of the intellectual elite to crises in the state and society (especially in the media and the academic community); Who are intellectuals and who are just experts? Civic and/or political engagement?

Presenters: **Rade Veljanovski**, retired FPS professor, long-time journalist and editor, author of the book “Serbia” and **Đorđe Pavićević**, FPS professor, MP in the Serbian Parliament (Green-Left Front).

Veljanovski referred to the appearance of the political scene in the 1990s, when there was a wide range of political parties and organizations and when, within the opposition, different approaches to political problems were discussed: “Especially in liberal and left-wing parties such as *UJDI, Reformists, Civic Alliance, Social-Democratic Union...* Everything was done thoroughly, no topic was taboo... The book “*Kosovo Knot - Tie or Cut*” was published about the problem of Kosovo. Today, I’m afraid, we don’t have that. We have fan groups that have an ideology. Our pro-European parties hide their opinion on social problems and state politics. If you are part of the elite, there is no escaping the issue of Kosovo, the Franco-German agreement...”

He also referred to the political scene in the 1990s, when there was a wide range of political parties and organizations and when, within the opposition, different approaches to pressing political problems were discussed. Today, I’m afraid, we don’t have that. We have fan groups that have an ideology. Our pro-European parties hide their opinion on social problems and state politics. If you are an elite, there is no escaping the issue of Kosovo, the Franco-German agreement...’

Đorđe Pavićević responded by describing the atmosphere in the parliament where, as he said, there was a discussion about Kosovo more than once: “During the sessions, it is difficult to raise difficult topics. There was a report about Kosovo, with Aleksandar Vučić. We came out with the views that genocide was committed in Srebrenica, that we support the Brussels (“German-French”) agreement proposal for Kosovo, but the regime media always “blame” us: did we surrender





Kosovo, are the Serbian people genocidal ...” etc. The event was attended by **19** people.

April 24 – “Hunger strike as a means of political struggle in SFR Yugoslavia (20th century) and Serbia (21st century)”, as well as 40 years since the arrest of participants of the Open University (April 20, 1984) and the trial of the ‘Six’ - within the thematic cycle “(In)visible SFRY”.

Presenter: **Gordan Jovanović** made a historical cross-section on the global level of ‘**hunger strikes**’, their reasons, moral and political potential and reach. He also shared his personal experience: “I have the experience of going on hunger strike for seven or eight days (1984). It is the ultimate form of political struggle, most often in the most difficult conditions – in prison. Usually, they ask for something that is the good will of the prison administration – books, press, to see a lawyer... Such a strike has “blackmail potential”, because the responsibility for the eventual death of the person on hunger strike falls on the government. Such a strike is not embarked on if there is no access to the public. The moral judgment is what is decisive.”

Regarding the hunger strikes in *SFR Yugoslavia*, Jovanović made a short chronology of the hunger strikes:

1970 – miners’ strike (1970) in Kakanj (Bosnia and Herzegovina), who were on strike due to unpaid wages and poor working conditions. The strike lasted about ten days, and a couple of students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade went on hunger strike for seven days, supporting the miners.”

1975 – the participants of the so-called *Bar Congress*, mostly “Informbiro supporters”;

1982 – protest in Belgrade, a sign of support for Polish Solidarity, dissidents on strike in prison.

1984 – the police arrested (April 20, 1984) and interrogated **28** participants of the discussion at the Open University, where **Milovan Đilas**, the most famous dissident, spoke about solving the national question in SFRY, with special reference to the period when he was in power. A group of arrested persons went on hunger strike in the prison. Within this case, the state organized the trial of the ‘Six’, but due to enormous international pressure, most were acquitted. However, one of the participants of the rally in April 1984 (Radomir Radović) was killed and the state has not admitted responsibility to this day. Of the strikes in the 21st century, the most talked about was the strike of MP Marinika Tepić (December 2023) due to election fraud. This conversation was attended by **24** people.

(Integral reports from the mentioned circles (28 pages in Serbian) can be found on the WiB website)

PUBLISHING ACTIVITIES

In this reporting period, we published:

Women's Court – the case of Foča: a feminist approach to justice – about Women's Court held on June 26, 2023 in Belgrade. The book has four (4) chapters: *Introduction; We remember crimes – testimonies; Associates of the Women's Court – analysis of the context of testimony, Appendices and Afterword*. Edited by: *Staša Zajović*; associates: Maša Malešević, Sanja Pavlović and Miloš Urošević; reviewers: Svenka Savić and Rada Iveković; fold and design: Skart; print: Art print; the book has **159** pages.

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 war, against repression of political dissidents; over refugees.

Stop the war in Ukraine! Stop the war in the Middle East! – in a statement dated February 23, WiB sent requests to European institutions to opt for peaceful solutions and to advocate for:

- The immediate cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, a political and not a military solution to the war in Ukraine, the withdrawal of illegal Russian occupation troops from Ukraine,
- Suspension of military operations in the Gaza Strip,
- The release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, ending the siege and isolation of Gaza, free delivery of humanitarian aid and medical services to the Palestinian population,
- Recognition of the State of Palestine, ending the occupation and violence in the West Bank,
- Recognition of the right to asylum and protection of opponents of war, deserters, conscientious objectors, refugees, journalists, activists in all countries where they are victims of political repression, etc.

Free Aida Ćorović! – Former Member of Parliament and well-known activist Aida Ćorović, sentenced to pay a fine of 100,000 dinars because on November 9, 2021, she threw eggs at a mural of convicted war criminal Ratko Mladić, which is located on a residential building at the corner of Njegoševa and Alekse Nenadovića in Belgrade, must serve a two-month prison sentence. This proves that the captured state continues to persecute those who advocate for the respect

of judicially established facts, who are against the relativization of crime, advocating for a break with state-organized crimes. Citizens who think differently from the ruling regime are constantly qualified as traitors, foreign mercenaries and the greatest enemies of the state, their activities are criminalized and they are left at the mercy of the vengeful and bloodthirsty regime and its hired criminals, as well as various psychopaths. *We expect the judicial authorities – if there is even an grain of awareness left in them about the independence of the judiciary from the executive power – to immediately revoke the verdict against Aida Ćorović, as well as to take the necessary measures in order to prevent further glorification of convicted war criminals and other criminals,* the press release of 19 March of WiB, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia and the Academic Initiative "Forum 10" – Novi Pazar

Stop racism towards refugees! Stop racial discrimination of refugees! – on the occasion of March 21– the International Day against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Women in Black Belgrade and the WiB Network from all over Serbia, with the support of twenty civil society organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia, warned: 'The tragedy of refugees is compounded by their unequal treatment on the basis of their racial, ethnic, religious, gender and linguistic, as well as political affiliation. It is highly commendable that most EU countries are happy to accept Ukrainian refugees, but it is extremely immoral and unacceptable to simultaneously implement a racist discriminatory policy towards refugees from other war zones.

With this peace appeal, we express:

- *The sturdiest protest against the racist, xenophobic policy towards refugees;*
- *The demand to stop the war in Ukraine, in the Middle East and elsewhere – that accountability for war, suffering and destruction be borne by the most powerful countries of the international community, which are guided exclusively by geostrategic interests and arms sales;*
- *Rejection of discrimination against refugees on the basis of ethnic, racial, religious or cultural affiliation;*
- *The deepest indignation due to the closing of borders – persecutions, deportations, humiliation of the refugee population fleeing from war, misery, repression, etc.*

The Serbian Orthodox Church/SPC is on the front line of the struggle for the creation of a theocratic state – in a statement by WiB, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia and Women's Studies and Research - Novi Sad (March 31). on the occasion of the campaign for the repeal of the Law on Gender Equality led by the SPC, numerous state, as well as scientific institutions, it is emphasized: 'Gender-sensitive language and the so-called gender

ideology. In this way, they join the global offensive against “gender ideology” carried out by fundamentalists of all kinds along with right-wing and extremist political movements, who abuse religion, nation, tradition and cultural heritage in order to return humanity to medieval darkness. Regardless of whether they are Islamic, Christian (Evangelical, Catholic and Orthodox), Jewish or Hindu radicals (or neo-fascists and neo-Nazis), they all have a common model: the establishment of an order that will restore and strengthen patriarchal power relations, reduce women to their natural role of giving birth to sons for cannon fodder in future wars, and ostracizing those of different genders from society. Condemning the unacceptable and unconstitutional actions of the Church and its allies, we, together with other actors of civil Serbia, will continue to resolutely advocate for the preservation of the secular character of the state and society, opposing the interference of religious institutions in the sphere of education, human rights, and especially women’s human rights’ etc.

Appeal for freedom of public speech and critical opinion – on the occasion of harassment against independent media workers, WiB, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Alliance of Anti-Fascists of Serbia, the Civic Democratic Forum with the support of opposition public figures warn in a statement dated April 2:

‘In the regime’s reckoning with the opposition and critical part of society in Serbia, the propaganda of President Vučić targeted and exposed to an unprecedented chase, journalist and professor of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, **Dinko Gruhonjić**, and the president of the Independent Association of Journalists of Vojvodina, **Ana Lalić**. By faking and editing the footage and by the intensity of calls for lynching, their safety is seriously threatened. Lalić and Gruhonjić have been critical of the regime until now, but the latest targeting and calls for lynching served as a paradigm for silencing all opposition voices. The brutal and anti-civilization campaign against Dinko Gruhonjić and Ana Lalić resorts to Putin’s methods and threatens to escalate, because for the first time President Vučić is no longer sure of his position. For a whole decade, he enjoyed the support of the West, which enabled him to present himself to the public as an indispensable factor in the promotion of European Serbia. Now that policy is over, and increasingly critical tones from the West and Vučić’s turn to autocratic regimes will inevitably lead Serbia into a new isolation, which will intensify internal repression and terror towards all critically oriented individuals and opposition groups. organized campaign of hatred and calls for lynching against Dinko Gruhonjić and Ana Lalić, just the beginning of the scenario that follows as a result of Vučić’s increasing approach to the regime in Moscow.

Therefore, the signatories call on the international community to prevent President Vučić from carrying out internal repression and to make it clear to him that he will no longer tolerate violent and anti-democratic behavior, as well as that the continuation and deepening

of authoritarian practices will cause consequences for further relations **between the government and the democratic society' etc.**

We remember! – on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the murder of 16 RTS workers during the NATO bombing (April 23, 1999), Women in Black expressed their sympathy and solidarity with the families of those killed. They also reiterated their demands on the authorities of the Serbian state to compensate the families of the victims and to acknowledge their responsibility for this crime.

*Report prepared by: Staša Zajović;
in cooperation with: Miloš Urošević, Nastasja Radović,
Nataša Milanović, Stanislava Lazarević and Zinaida Marjanović.*

June 2024