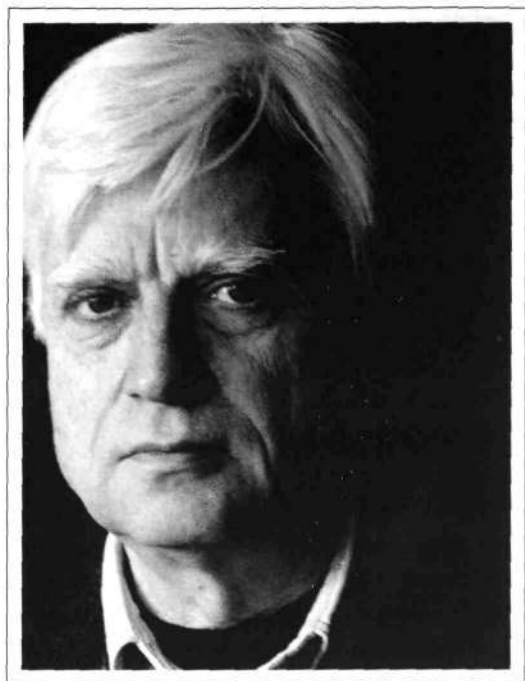


## ČOLOVIĆ, Ivan



**Ivan Čolović**, born in Belgrade in 1938, graduated and received a master's degree from the Faculty of Philology, and a Ph.D. from the Faculty of Arts, University of Belgrade. He works for the Institute of Ethnography at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He has published numerous books of essays, including *Literature in the Graveyard*, 1983, *Time of Signs*, 1988, and *Brothel of Warriors. Folklore, Politics and War*. Some of his books have been translated into German and Italian. He was the founder (in 1992) of the Association of independent intellectuals, "The Belgrade Circle", which organised numerous discussions about the crisis and war in former Yugoslavia. He won the Herder award in 2000.

**Ivan Čolović** je rođen 1938. godine u Beogradu, gdje je diplomirao i magistrirao na Filološkom, a doktorirao na Filozofskom fakultetu. Radi u etnografskom institutu Srpske akademije nauka in umjetnosti. Objavio je više knjiga studija i eseja, koje su prevedene na njemački i talijanski jezik. Najpoznatije su *Književnost na groblju*, 1983, *Vreme znakova*, 1988 i *Bordel ratnika. Folklor, politika i rat*, 1993. Bio je osnivač (januar 1992) Udruženja nezavisnih intelektualaca Beogradski krug, koji je organizirao brojne razgovore o krizi i ratu u bivšoj Jugoslaviji. Dobitnik je Herderove nagrade za 2000. godinu.

IVAN ČOLOVIĆ

## *Bursting with health*

In the last few weeks, the reports and testimonies about the war in Bosnia often mentioned sickness and health. We heard the distressing news about an outbreak of typhoid and cholera, and the scary prognosis that a possible epidemic might take even more human lives than the killing, cold and famine taken together. We read and listened about the situation in the Sarajevo hospital, where surgeons – in their efforts to save as many lives as possible – were forced to amputate arms and legs in the cases where under normal circumstances the limbs could be saved; about the maternity hospital where, in the last few months, women sought help almost exclusively because of miscarriages. Those reports and testimonies also mention the shattered mental health of the people in war-ravaged Bosnia, whose lives under siege, in cellars of the demolished towns, in camps and forests, were turning into an agonising and uncertain struggle for mere survival. Željko Vuković, correspondent of *Borba*, who until recently shared the fate of the besieged Sarajevo inhabitants, called what was going on down there “desintellectualisation”. “Life in a cellar kills any initiative, motive, humanness,” says Vuković. “The simulation of life soon starts killing ... Sarajevo is turning into a huge psychiatric waiting room” (*Borba*, 26 November 1992).

Alongside with the reports there emerged in the media the descriptions of war circumstances in Bosnia, and portraits of some of its main protagonists, which imply that some people down there not only managed to preserve their physical and mental health, but also improved it, so that today they – as we say – are in roaring health. The first to try to demonstrate it with her story and her appearance (on NTV “Studio B”, 8 November, and in *Borba* on 14 and 15 November) was Sonja Karadžić, a graduate in medicine, born from the marriage of two doctors, now in the position of Head of Office in the Ministry of Information in the so-called Republika Srpska, at Pale near Sarajevo.

"I come," she said, "young, healthy, smiling and communicative, from a healthy environment, where we make war and work ..."

But Belgrade, as it seemed, was not very impressed by this cheerful and vigorous war-maker, who – as she said – "loves Belgrade" but found it "very disappointing": "I'm deeply disappointed in Belgrade and the emphasised žliberalism' of the capital of my homeland ..." Another name for the emphasised Belgrade liberalism in inverted commas is disease, and Ms Karadžić was soon to tell us its two fundamental causes. The first was that in Belgrade "there are people of all classes who fled from Sarajevo, while their relatives down there are perpetrating genocide on the Serbs," and the second that Belgraders were thinking about political changes in Serbia. "People are thinking about it only in Belgrade," said Sonja Karadžić. "In the central parts the young people are much healthier, less burdened."

Simultaneously with Sonja Karadžić, the columnist and painter Dragoš Kalajić – "exclusively from the battlefield" – reported on the health and beauty of the Serbian nation demonstrated by their leaders in Republika Srpska (*Duga*, 7 November 1992). He took to the battlefield a group of Russian opposition leaders and reporters of the so-called "Russian patriotic media" headed by the retired General Filatov. In his case as well, Belgrade is excluded from the praise of Serbia and the Serbian nation, because – says Kalajić's guest Jurij Loščić – "the Serbia I love and admire isn't Belgrade, but the nation heroically fighting alone against everybody."

Loščić, too, believes that Serbs (Belgraders excluded) are endowed with extraordinary vigour, but this vigour – in his interpretation – has almost mystical significance. To Kalajić's question: "What is so extraordinary and unique in Serbs?" his guest replied: "The light that radiates from their looks and faces, the light of unsubmitive and invincible vitality..."

Three radiant figures, three impersonations of the invincible vitality of Serbian warriors in Bosnia are described by Kalajić in his report. The first is General Mladić, in whose look the author discerns the "sparkle of unsubmitive determination of the combative spirit ... the steel glitter acquired through terrible experience and realisations, breaking through the ultimate barriers of fear of death." Kalajić was even more impressed by Radovan Karadžić, whom he described as a "personality composed of the supreme material of Serbian ethnos and ethos", as the national leader whose power radiated "holy terror".

However, Kalajić found the most prominent and beautiful example of physical and mental strength among the Serbs on the Bosnian battlefield in the person of Biljana Plavšić, whom he depicted as the "great figure of living legend of the Serbian struggle". Contemptuously, Kalajić rejects any possible comparison between this new Serbian legend and *La Pasionaria*, the legend of the Spanish Civil War. "First of all," Kalajić says, "Dolores Ibarruri was a very ugly woman, a physical and moral monster – while Biljana Plavšić is an impersonation of European beauty and *magnitudo animi*." Her very look

miraculously removes fatigue from Kalajić's body, so that he – on his own example – discovers the “power of Dr Biljana Plavšić to invigorate even the most tired”, and this power bestows on her indestructible strength and beauty. “I clearly see,” continues Kalajić, “that she's as strong and beautiful as if she'd just got up from a long rest.”

Not long ago, in a TV report (TVB, 12 November), yet another painter and writer admired the healthy beauty of Serbian leaders at Pale, namely Momo Kapor. He “found” the type of pure-blooded Serbian hero embodied in Radovan Karadžić and Nikola Koljević, and juxtaposed it to the type of Muslim from Sarajevo, who – in his opinion – was characterised by stupidity, a smell of tallow and a criminally distorted face. Kapor's “examples” of this miserable human variety are Alija Izetbegović and Juka Prazina. Kapor completed his anthropological observations by the conclusion that Sarajevo was an “unnatural creation”, and that the city in fact “collapsed upon itself out of evil and hatred”.

I'm not quoting these latest instances of glorification of the health and beauty of Bosnian Serbs involved in the war, and particularly of their leaders, in order for us to laugh at all sorts of stupidity, affectation and exaggeration, and thus free ourselves from the mixed emotions of disgust and concern, which listening to such stories inspires in one alongside with a desire to laugh.

I believe, in fact, that these and similar stories about health and sickness, which nowadays go hand in hand, deserve our serious consideration. Every one of them, in this way or another, in whole or in part, conveys the same message. It's the message of the unrestrained, arrogant force. This force, through the mouths of reporters and writers mesmerised by it – among whom it managed to find adherents in the past as well – is boasting with its health and its cruelty towards anything standing in its way. Furthermore, it communicates to us that is it the only law, the only faith and the only truth of human life.

This arrogant force is above all telling us that a truly healthy, invigorating life guided by vital instincts, uncorrupted by the sick European civilisation, that is life in harmony with the mystic power of blood and religious orthodoxy, can most fully be realised in war, at times when people merrily and freely abandon themselves to destruction, plunder, torturing and killing other people, thus proving that the murderous passion they're possessed with has no limit or direction. It is whispering to us that health is necessary for war, and that war is even more necessary for health – the physical and mental health of a nation and its leaders. Thanks to the war, these leaders have shining steel looks, invincible sturdiness, freshness of the morning dew or heroic robustness. Which one of those war-encouraged, enthusiastic authors of the above-mentioned stories and their semi-godly heroes could sincerely wish that the life-inspiring killing and devastation should stop? I can hear them telling each other: “Let it last!”

These – seemingly – amusing and stupid tales about the healthy warriors contain a determined, threatening declaration of enmity towards the freedom,

thinking, peace, wellbeing, and the people's communities, the values which were proclaimed to be sickness and shit; they contain a declaration of war on the places where these sick, unnatural and dirty phenomena are most widespread – on the big and old cities. Their destruction and the crushing of their inhabitants, both underway, are presented as if they'd been a long yearned for – and for nature and healthy life inevitable – sanitary-hygienic operation. This operation almost succeeded in Dubrovnik, was happily terminated in Vukovar, and had good prospects for total success in Sarajevo and many other towns of the so-called ex-Yugoslavia.

And Belgrade? A few days ago the head of a patriotic party, whose name I can't remember, appeared on TV; I can still picture his healthy appearance: a fat neck under the closely cut hair, a trimmed black moustache, and – to make the picture complete – a greyish shirt with a tie. He said: "Belgrade is an anti-Serb container."

Does this mean that all this "health" will eventually back-fire on Belgrade? Instead of giving an answer – in fact I don't have an answer – let me quote a sentence by David Ruse, the only motto appearing in the book by Hana Arendt, *Totalitarian System*. "Normal people," says Ruse, "don't know that all is possible." This – at first glance inconspicuous, but in fact terrible – sentence now seems to me the most concise and accurate description of our situation, the situation of the people who – in a kind of charmed stupor and without any guarantee that they will ever be better off – wait to see what the increasingly angry and healthy warriors are capable of doing.

*Translated by Lili Potpara*

IVAN ČOLOVIĆ

# Pucanje od zdravlja

Poslednjih nedelja se u izveštajima i svedočenjima u ratu u Bosni često govorilo o bolesti i zdravlju. Čuli smo i zabrinjavajuće vesti o pojavi tifusa i kolere i poražavajuću prognozu da bi zaraza mogla da odnese čak više ljudskih života od ratnog ubijanja, hladnoće i gladi zajedno. Čitali smo i slušali o prilikama u sarajevskoj bolnici, gde su hirurzi prinuđeni, da bi spasili što više života, da pribegavaju amputacijama nogu i ruku i tamo gde bi ih inače u normalnim uslovima mogli spasiti, o tamošnjem porodilištu gde poslednjih meseci žene dolaze skoro isključivo radi pobačaja. U tim izveštajima i svedočenjima upozorava se i na uzdrmano mentalno zdravlje ljudi u Bosni zahvaćenoj ratom, čiji se život pod opsadom, u podrumima razrušenih gradova, u logorima i zbegovima, pretvara u grčevitu i neizvesnu borbu za goli opstanak. Željko Vuković, dopisnik *Borbe*, koji je donedavno delio sudbino opsednutih Sarajlija, nazvao je to što se tamo događa »raspamećivanjem«. »Život u podrumu ubija svaki moral, motiv, ljudskost«, kaže Vuković. »Simuliranje života vrlo brzo počinje da ubija ...Sarajevo postaje velika psihijatrijska čekaonica« (*Borba*, 26. novembar 1992).

Uporedo s tim pojavili su se u našim medijama opisi ratnih prilika u Bosni i portreti nekih od njihovih glavnih učesnika, iz kojih proizlazi da tamo ima ljudi koji su ne

samo sačuvali fizičko i mentalno zdravlje nego su ga čak toliko učvrstili da danas, štoto se kaže, pucaju od zdravlja. Prva nas je u to, svojom pričom i svojim izgledom (na NTV 'Studio B', 8. novembar, i u *Borbi* od 14 – 15. novembra), pokušala da uveri Sonja Karadžić, apsolvant medicine, rođena u braku dva lekara, sada na dužnosti šefa Kabineta Ministarstva za informacije tzv. Republike Srpske, na Palama više Sarajeva.

»Dolazim« izjavila je Karadžićeva »mlada, zdrava, nasmijana, komunikativna iz jedne zdrave sredine, gde se ratuje i radi ...«

Ali Beograd izgleda nije bio naročito impresioniran ovom veselom i krepkom ratnicom, što je nju koja, kako kaže, »voli Beograd«, »jako razočaralo«: »Ja sam jako razočarana Beogradom i naglašenim 'slobodarstvom' prestonice moje matice ...« Drugo ime ovog beogradskog naglašenog slobodarstva pod znacima navoda je bolest, a Karadžićeva će nam odmah otkriti i dva osnovna uzročnika te bolesti. Prvi je u tome što u Beogradu ima »ljudi svih fela koji su izbegli iz Sarajeva a njihovi bližnji dole vrše genocid nad Srbima«, a drugi što Beograđani razmišljaju o političkim promenama u Srbiji. »O tome se razmišlja samo u Beogradu«, kaže Sonja Karadžić. »U unutrašnjosti je omladina daleko zdravija, neopterećenija«.

U isto vreme kad i Sonja Karadžić, kazivanja o zdravlju i lepoti srpskog naroda na primeru njegovih vođa u »Republici Srpskoj«, doneo je »ekskluzivno sa ratišta« i ( u *Dugi* od 7. novembra 1992) objavio publicista i slikar Dragoš Kalajić. Tamo je vodio grupu šefova ruske opozicije i izveštaca takozvanih »ruskih patriotskih medija«, sa penzionisanim generalom Filatovom na čelu. I ovde se iz pohvala koje se izriču Srbiji i srpskom narodu isključuje Beograd, jer, kako kaže Kalajićev gost Jurij Loščic, »Srbija koju volim i kojoj se divim nije Beograd već ovaj narod ovde što se herojski bori sam protiv svih.«

I po Loščicevom sudu, Srbi ( ne računajući Beograđane) obdareni su izuzetnom vitalnošću, ali ta vitalnost u njegovoj interpretaciji dobija mistično značenje. Na Kalajićevo pitanje:

»A što je to tako izuzetno i jedinstveno u Srbima?« njegov sagovornik uzvraća ovim rečima: »Svetlost što prosijava iz pogleda i lica, svetlost nepokorive i nepobedive životnosti ...«

Tri svetla lika, tri oličenja nepobedive životnosti srpskih ratnika u Bosni opisuje Kalajić u svojoj reportaži. Prvi od

njih je general Mladić, u čijem pogledu pisac vidi »sjaj nepokolebljive odlučnosti borbenog duha ... čelični sjaj stečen kroz neka strašna iskustva i saznanja, probojima poslednjih barijera straha od smrti«. Još jači utisak na Kalajića ostavlja susret sa Radovanom Karadžićem, kojeg opisuje kao »ličnost sazdanu od najboljeg gorštačkog materijala srpskog etnosa i ethosa«, kao narodnog vođu čija moć zrači »svetim užasom«.

Ipak, najupečatljiviji i najlepši primer fizičke i duševne krepkosti među Srbima na bosanskom ratištu našao je Kalajić u liku Biljane Plavšić, koju je predstavio kao »veliku figuru žive legende srpske borbe«. Kalajić s prezirom odbacuje mogućnost poređenja ove nove srpske legende sa La Pasionariom, legendom španskog građanskog rata. »Pre svega«, objašnjava on, »Dolores Ibaruri je veoma ružna žena, fizička i moralna nakaza – dok je Biljana Plavšić oličenje evropske lepote i *magnitudo animi*«. Sam njen pogled na čudesan način odstranjuje umor iz Kalajićevog tela, tako da on na sopstvenom primeru otkriva »moć dr. Biljane Plavšić da okrepi i najumornije«, a ta moć i njoj samoj daje neuništivu krepkost i lepotu. »Opažam, glasno«, nastavlja Kalajić, »da je ona krepka i lepa kao da je upravo ustala iz dugog poćinka«.

Nedavno se, u jednoj televizijskoj reportaži (TVB, 12. novembar), zdravoj lepoti srpskih vođa na Palama divio još jedan slikar i pisac – Momo Kapor. Tu je našao tip čistokrvnog srpskog gorštaka, oličen u Radovanu Karadžiću i Nikoli Koljeviću, i suprostavio ga tipu muslimanskog čoveka iz Sarajeva, kome su, po njegovom nalazu, svojstveni tupost, vonj i loj i zlikovački izobličeno lice. Kaporovi primeri tog bednog ljudskog varijeteta su Alija Izetbegović i Juka Prazina. Svoja antropološka zapažanja upotpunio je on ocenom da je Sarajevo »bilo »neprirodna tvorevina« i da se taj grad zapravo »urušio sam od sebe, od zlobe i mržnje«.

Ove najnovije primere veličanja krepkog zdravlja i lepote bosanskih Srba zaokupljenih ratom, a posebno njihovih vođa, ne iznosim ovde tek zato da bi se nasmejali tu prisutnim svakojakim stupidnostima, prenemaganjima i preterivanjima i tako se oslobodili one mešavine osećanja odvratnosti i zabrinutosti koju slušanje ovakih priča u nama stvara zajedno sa željom da im se nasmejemo.

U stvari, mislim da ove i njima slične priče o zdravlju i bolesti, koje danas jedna drugu stižu, zaslužuju da se nad njima ozbiljno zamislamo. Jer u svakoj od njih je, na ovaj ili



onaj način, delimično ili u celini, formulisana jedna ista poruka. To je poruka razularene, bahate sile. Ona nam se, kroz usta njome opčinjenih novinara i pisaca, među kojima je i u prošlosti umela da nađe svoje žrece, hvališe svojim zdravljem i svojom okrutnošću prema svemu što joj stoji na putu. Uz to nam poručuje da je ona opet jedini zakon, jedina vera i jedina istina ljudskog života.

Ova bahata sila hoće naročito da nam kaže da se zdravi, okrepljujući život vođen vitalnim instinktima, neiskvaren bolesnom evropskom civilizacijom, to jest život u harmoniji sa mističnim silama krvi i pravoverja, najpotpunije ostvaruje u ratu, u vremenima kad se čovek s radošću i slobodno prepušta razaranju, pljački i mučenju i ubijanju drugih ljudi, pokazujući da ubilačka strast koja ga tad ispunjava nema granica i premca. Šapuće nam i to da je zdravlje potrebno za rat, ali da je još više rat potreban zdravlju, fizičkom i mentalnom zdravlju naroda i njihovih vođa. Zahvaljući ratu, oni imaju sjajne, čelične poglede, nepobedivu krepkost, svežinu jutarnje rose ili gorštačku žilavost. Ko bi ratom obodrenih i oduševljenih kazivača ovde pomenutih priča i njihovih polubožanskih junaka mogao iskreno poželeti da to životodano ubijanje i razaranje prestane? Čujem ih kako jedni drugima govore: «Samo da potraje!»

U ovim na izgled šaljivim i glupim pričama o ratničkom zdravlju sadržana je odlučna, preteća objava neprijateljstva slobodi, misli, miru, blagostanju, ljudskom zajedništvu, vrednostima koje su proglašene za bolest i đubre, odnosno objava rata mestima u kojima su takve bolesne, neprirodne i prljave pojave najrasprostranjenije, velikim i starim gradovima. Njihovo razaranje i satiranje njihovog stanovišta, uveliko u toku, predstavljeno je kao odavno priželjkivana, prirodni i zdravom životu neophodna sanitetsko – higijenska operacija. Ta operacija je zamalo uspela u Dubrovniku, srećno je okončana u Vukovaru, a ima dobre izgleda na potpuni uspeh i u Sarajevu i mnogim drugim gradovima takozvane bivše Jugoslavije.

A Beograd? Pre nekoliko dana na televiziji je govorio šef jedne redoljubive partije, čijeg se imena ne sećam, ali pred očima imam njegovu zdravljem nabijenu pojavu: debeli vrat ispod kratko podšišane kose, štucovani crni brčići i, da bi slika bila potpuna, sivkasta košulja sa kravatom. Rekao je: «Beograd je antisrpski kontejner.»

Da li to znači da zaista postoji pucanje od zdravlja na Beograd? Umesto odgovora na to pitanje, jer ja zapravo odgovor i ne znam, navešću ovde jednu rečenicu Davida Rusea, jedini moto u knjizi Hane Arend *Totalitarni sistem*. »Normalni ljudi«, kaže Ruse, »ne znaju da je sve moguće.« Ta naoko obična, a u stvari strašna, rečenica danas mi se čini kao najsazetiji i najtačniji opis naše situacije, situacije ljudi koji u nekoj vrsti glupe opčinjenosti i bez ikakvog jemstva da se mogu nadati nečem dobrom čekaju da vide šta će još uraditi sve ljući i sve zdraviji ratnici.