

A wounded country

Serbia is still suffering from the consequences of the NATO-Bombardment and will not allow being drawn into warmongering against Russia

by Rudolf Hänsel*



Rudolf Hänsel.
(Picture Billion Photos/
Shutterstock.com)

“Where I feel well, there is my fatherland,” says a popular saying. For the author, Serbia has been his adopted country for years. Serbia has long been labelled a “rogue state” in the Western press. During the time of Slobodan Milošević, the Balkan state was con-

sidered an enemy country par excellence – now President Aleksandar Vučić is not sufficiently resolute in distancing himself from Vladimir Putin, refusing to engage in aggressive enemy rhetoric and instead calling for peace.

It is all the easier to regard Serbia as an enemy country the less you know the country and its people. The inhabitants are exceptionally warm hearted and helpful, as travellers can testify. Only one trauma still weighs heavily on their souls: the NATO bombing in 1999, which claimed the lives of around 3,500 people and left behind a terrible, carcinogenic uranium munition that the inhabitants still suffer from today.

Introduction

About two years ago, after a week-long visit to my former home country, I was asked the curious question “How was it?” in familiar company in my host country. I spontaneously responded:

“Where I feel well, there is my fatherland.”

The following comments are not an analysis of Serbia’s politics, but a subjective description of the impressions I gained as a German married to a Serbian ex-diplomat after more than four



Cathedral of St Sava, Belgrade.
(Picture AstroStar/Shutterstock.com)

years in the country. The impressions relate to both the capital Belgrade and a small town in the mountains of Sumadija.

I will only describe what I experienced in the years before and during my stay. Political events in which I was directly involved will also be mentioned. Otherwise, it is not appropriate for me to interfere in the political situation of my host country.

As the experiences described are predominantly positive, it would be desirable for them to be publicised, as Serbia and its citizens have been seen in the wrong light for decades. Added to this is political pressure from powerful states. As a result, serious prejudices have been deliberately kept alive and fuelled to this day. The people of Serbia do not deserve this.

In this sense, the following is to be understood as a clarification from an intellectual contemporary living in Serbia, which is intended to teach us what is truth and what is a lie.

Hospitality

The hospitality of the people in this country is an outstanding feature. You are greeted and welcomed everywhere in a friendly manner (“dobro dosli”) – even if you don’t speak the Serbian language. When people realise that you are German, they quickly try to speak a few words of German.

A moving example for me was the spontaneous help I received from two medical professors when I was suffering from the side effects of

* Rudolf Hänsel, born in 1944, holds a doctorate in educational science, is a former teacher and school counsellor, and a graduate psychologist specialising in clinical psychology, educational psychology and media psychology. He is the author of books and specialist articles on the topics of youth violence, media violence and values education.

new tablets. Both professors did everything conceivable to help me.

I mention this positive characteristic of “hospitality” because the behaviour shown is not a matter of course – considering everything the German governments and German soldiers did to the country during the Second World War and in 1999 during the NATO aggression.

Mutual, intergenerational help

The mutual help between the citizens of Serbia is another positive feature.

It never ceases to amaze me how not only members of my own family and close relatives are giving a helping hand as a matter of course at every opportunity. This can be financial support or ordinary help such as giving relieve from strenuous work. Nobody is left in the “lurch” (alone).

If a car breaks down on the road with any kind of damage, people driving past provide all the help they can. I am not familiar with this behaviour from my home country.

There was also a time when I was dependent on two walking sticks due to an unsteady gait. I will never forget that time.

Wherever I went – whether to a bank branch, a bakery or another shop – I was immediately offered a chair and priority in the long queue. Even at pedestrian crossings, most of all the middle-aged and older generation always let me go first; this behaviour surprised and delighted me.

Among the Serbian citizens themselves, I noticed that older people were usually always accompanied by a younger family member (son or daughter). The accompanying person then usually took care of the tedious formalities for the older person.

Now to a dark chapter:

A war that will not end

In March 1999, NATO attacked the former Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) unexpectedly and for no good reason.

The NATO states not only bombed the Serbian capital Belgrade and some areas of the country. They also used armour-piercing and internationally banned ammunition against the country in the form of *depleted uranium* (DU).

Not only the citizens of Serbia are still suffering from the consequences of these carcinogenic munitions today. The water, the atmosphere and entire areas of land were also contaminated or poisoned with unforeseen consequences.

In 2012, *Vladislav Jovanovic, Slobodan Petkovic* and Prof. Dr *Slobodan Cikaric* published the sensational book “Crime in War – Genocide in Peace” in Serbian and English with the subtitle “The Consequences of NATO Bombing of Serbia in 1999”.¹

10 years later (2022), two renowned experts, Dr *Zorka Vukmirovic* and Prof. Dr *Danica Grujicic*, published the book “The Truth about the Consequences of the NATO Bombing of Serbia in 1999”. The publisher is the “Serbian Society for the Fight Against Cancer”, whose president is Prof Grujicic.²

“The war that will not end” was the title of my article, first published in 2018 in several German and Serbian newspapers, describing NATO’s use of uranium weapons against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1999 and its consequences.³

Due to the use of highly toxic and radioactive uranium bullets, aggressive cancers among young and old have reached epidemic proportions. War with uranium weapons (weapons of mass destruction) is knowingly and willfully induced genocide, the worst crime in International Criminal Law.

The bombing of Serbia lasted 78 days. In addition to over 1000 soldiers killed; 2500 civilians died – including 78 children. In addition to projectiles containing depleted uranium, other explosive combinations and rocket fuels with certain chemical compounds were also used. Nobody was punished!

For a long time, the Serbian population was deliberately not informed by politicians.

However, the people have a right to the truth. Every citizen must be able to realistically assess the economic, social and political conditions in their country to be able to organise their own life and that of their family in a satisfactory manner.

Immense pressure from the NATO states

Finally, the enormous pressure exerted by the NATO states should be mentioned, because Serbia refuses to go along with Western sanctions or punitive measures against its old friend Russia,⁴ and because Serbia is not prepared to recognise Kosovo, a core part of the country, as a sovereign state under the aegis of NATO.

Source: <https://www.manova.news/artikel/ein-verwundetes-land>, 16 July 2024

(Translation “Swiss Standpoint”)

¹ Vladislav Jovanovic/Slobodan Petkovic/Slobodan Cikaric (2012). CRIME IN WAR – GENOCIDE IN PEACE. Bibliotheca Society and Science.

² Zorka Vukmirovic/Danica Grujicic (2022). THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE NATO BOMBING OF SERBIA IN 1999. Serbian Society for the Fight Against Cancer, Belgrade.

³ Rudolf Hänsel (2018). Uranwaffeneinsatz der Nato in

Serbien 1999: Ein Krieg, der nicht zu Ende geht. Global Research.

⁴ <https://de.rt.com/international/210655-serbiens-vizepremier-belgrad-verhaengt-keine/>