
Interview: Msgr. Dr. Zelimir Puljic

Peace in slavery cannot be true peace

Msgr. Dr. Zelimir Puljic is the Bishop of Dubrovnik, Croatia. The questions were submitted in writing by Elke Fimmen on Sept. 12, and answered on Oct. 5. Translation from the Croatian was provided by Steven Corkovic.

EIR: How do you see the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the NATO air strikes?

Monsignor Puljic: The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina had been difficult before the air strikes, as it was after the air strikes. Of course, certain things changed after the air strikes, on the political scene as well as strategically. But, the changes did not occur only because NATO forces carried out air strikes against Serbian positions. These changes occurred, in the first place, because Croatian forces had liberated western Slavonia and the so-called Krajina. After the agreement between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in Split, territories held by Bosnian Serbs in Bosnia began to be liberated.

I would not want to belittle the role of the air strikes around Sarajevo carried out by NATO; in any case, that action came too late. If something like this had happened in 1991, when Vukovar was dying under Serbian Army aggression, hundreds of thousands of victims would have been spared in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. If NATO had shown any kind of readiness and "audacity" to get involved in protecting the people and the culture, especially when Dubrovnik moaned under the siege and when Serbian and Montenegrin armies and paramilitary troops were destroying the cultural monuments, there would have been no destruction of these monuments, no "culture-cide." The political leadership of European countries failed completely at that time. They were clearly indicating, in two ways, that they do not wish to get involved in protecting the "weaker and endangered peoples":

- On a daily basis, leading European politicians declared that Europe would not intervene, i.e., would not disturb the Serbs in their genocide.

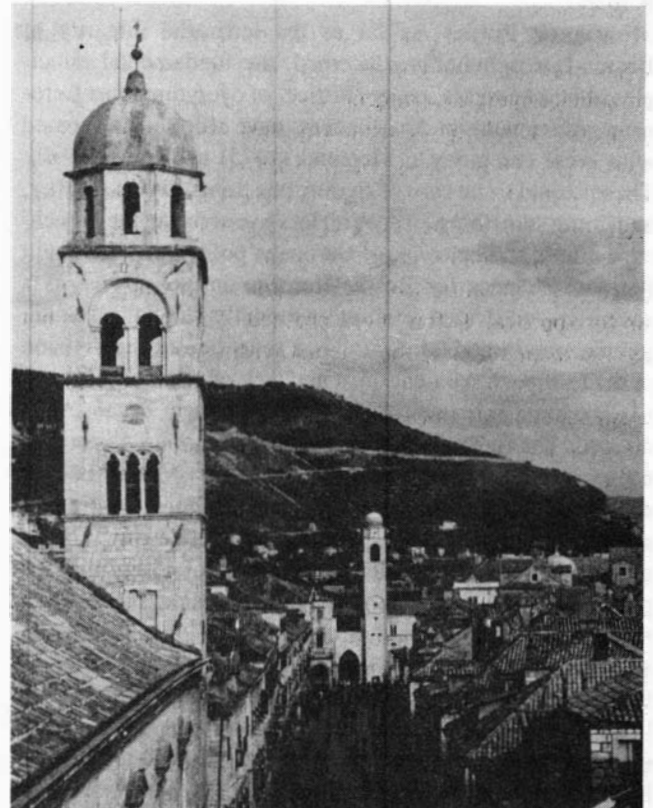
- The victims of Serbian aggression would not receive weapons from Europe to defend themselves. In this way, Europe grants the most comfortable conditions to those murderers of children and defilers of women.

If European governments had shown a little more courage in the very beginning of the aggression, in defending the

oppressed and expelled people, if they had wanted to arrest "the hand that kills"—and they had the capability—everything would have turned out differently. That is why one can justifiably say today that Europe is dying in Bosnia (in Banja Luka and Sarajevo), in the same way as yesterday it was dying in Croatia (in Dubrovnik and Vukovar). I am afraid that European governments, in exhibiting their coldness toward innocent victims of terror, as well as their tacit support of violence, chose the "law of the jungle," chose Darwin's survival of the strongest.

A few years back, European politicians fell for rumors (or maybe they themselves spread them) of "a strong Serbian Army," which is capable with its missiles of endangering peace in Europe. That was the reason for taking a "non-involvement" stance in the face of the war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Today European politicians are trying hard to spread the "second European truth": that peace can only be achieved through negotiations and there must not be "the victors and the vanquished."

Is this true peace, if one accepts the principle of the right of the stronger; if one equates the aggressor with the victim; if one recognizes the conquests of the aggressor and denies defense to the victim? Peace in slavery, cannot be true peace.



Dubrovnik before the war. If NATO had acted decisively when Dubrovnik first came under Serbian assault, says Monsignor Puljic, much of the suffering that has occurred since then could have been prevented.

Peace which is built on the right of the stronger, cannot be true peace. Peace of injustice, cannot be true peace. One has to fight for just peace, and this peace includes in it all the values: freedom, security, a dignified life, and human rights for every human being, every nation, and for the minorities of the nation. In the world of today, one talks a lot about peace and about human rights. Unfortunately, there is no peace in many parts of the world, and human rights have been trampled upon to such an extent, that the weak ones are left to the mercy of the strong ones without real protection.

EIR: What does the situation look like in Dubrovnik?

Monsignor Puljic: This summer again it was dangerous in Dubrovnik, because of Serbian mortars from eastern Hercegovina [in Bosnia-Hercegovina]. A large tract of forest around Dubrovnik has been burned down. There was material damage and human victims. Since the NATO forces' air strikes on certain Serbian positions around Sarajevo, mortar attacks on Dubrovnik have stopped. That just goes to confirm my argument, that the "hand that kills" could have and must have been arrested. I hope it were not too late to do it now.

EIR: Which steps would be necessary to ensure a unified Bosnia-Hercegovina in its internationally recognized borders?

Monsignor Puljic: As far as the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Hercegovina is concerned, the fundamental principles of human rights, peace, justice, of everything that European governments and parliaments have affirmed and signed with great ceremony in Helsinki (1975) and Paris (1990): There should be no case of signing one thing, saying another, and doing something else. With less hypocrisy in the speeches, actions, and behavior of European politicians, there will be more chances for Bosnia-Hercegovina to survive as a sovereign, undivided, and internationally recognized State. Its uncertainty and "division" is a reflection of the division of the European political spirit and lack of principles.

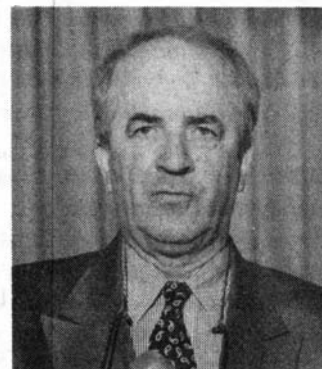
The very existence of Europe is in danger because it is divided. The Berlin Wall was a visible sign of its "disunity," a sign sticking out until recently as a "tombstone of Europe deceased." Its demolition, which came "suddenly," brought a confusion among the "weavers of human destiny" on the old continent. I am not discounting the possibility that the planners of Greater Serbia found this confusion a convenient moment to start their march of conquest on Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Hercegovina. It appears that certain forces find the reunification of Germany, the economically and politically strong Central Europe, as not in their best interest; the same goes for the creation of the "United Europe" from Portugal to the Urals. There is this conflict of interests, and the weakest and defenseless suffer because of it. Bosnia-Hercegovina is a classic example. That's why I am convinced that Bosnia and Hercegovina will survive if the idea of the creation of the "United Europe" survives.

Obituary: Safet Hidic

Bosnian leader fought for peace and justice

by Elke Fimmen

Parliamentarian Safet Hidic passed away in September, the victim of a heart attack. He died at age 62, leaving his wife and two daughters. Hidic represented the region around Bihac, which was besieged by Serbian Chetnik forces for over three years, for the ruling SDA party in the Parliament of the Republic and of the Federation of the Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina. He was also a member of the Constitutional Commission, and the Counsellor for Economic Questions at the embassy of his country in Croatia. He was among the first Bosnian parliamentarians to support the exoneration of Lyndon LaRouche.



Hidic visited the United States, together with his fellow parliamentarian Mrs. Razema Mehadzic-Cero (Banja Luka), on the invitation of the Schiller Institute, in July 1995, right after the horrible sellout of Srebrenica. He impressed on those with whom he met, the reality of the war in a very personal way. He made many of them, if not all, ashamed of the inaction of the "West," by telling them that he can look them straight in the eye, while they will have difficulty doing the same to him, if they do not act decisively. Even some "hard-nosed" politicians had tears in their eyes, when told the true stories of the suffering of the people of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Only two weeks after his visit to the United States, the fight for the liberation of the Croatian Krajina, and with it, the Bosnian border city of Bihac, started, and was completed in a short time. Hidic was finally able to visit his people again, those whom he had represented during the whole time of troubles. He himself had participated in building up the defense of Bihac, together with his friend, the murdered foreign minister of Bosnia-Hercegovina, Dr. Irfan Ljubljankic. For Hidic, it was unthinkable that this city would ever surrender, and he was firmly convinced of the ultimate liberation of his country. Those who met him will grieve the death of a very courageous man, who, having seen a great deal of evil, did not lose his sense of humor or his belief in "the impossible": the victory of the Good.