

## Review Paper

# WE DID NOT TORTURE: MORINJ CAMP AND THE POSSIBILITY OF RECONCILIATION IN MONTENEGRO

Srdja PAVLOVIC<sup>1</sup>

Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, University of Alberta

Address: Edmonton, T6G 2H4 Alberta, Canada

Email: [pavlovic@ualberta.ca](mailto:pavlovic@ualberta.ca)

## ABSTRACT:

This paper examines the largely overlooked and deliberately obscured issue of the treatment of Croatian prisoners of war detained at the Morinj Camp in Montenegro during the Yugoslav wars, with particular focus on the 1991–1992 siege of Dubrovnik. The study explores the dynamics of selective forgetting in Montenegro and its impact on historical memory and reconciliation. Relying primarily on testimonies from former prisoners, limited official documents,

---

<sup>1</sup> **SRDJA PAVLOVIC:** had earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1986 at the Department of Ethnology, Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade. He completed his Master of Arts in Ethnology degree in 1991 at the Mongolian State University in Ulaan Bataar (Mongolia), and earned his Doctor of Philosophy in History degree at the University of Alberta (Canada) in 2003. Dr. Pavlovic's areas of scientific interest include history, culture, literature, and politics of Modern Europe, the Mediterranean region, and the Balkans. His research focus is on modern political and cultural history of the Balkans with an emphasis on the issues of nationalism, construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of national identities among the South Slavs. He authored historical monographs such as *Balkan Anschluss: The Annexation of Montenegro and the Creation of the Common South Slavic State* (2007); *Prostori Identiteta: Eseji o Istoriji, Sjećanju i Interpretacijama Prošlosti* (2006); *Iza Ogladala: Eseji o Politici Identiteta* (2004); *Zapadna Ljuljaška* (1997); *Mongolski Piktogram* (1989), and edited scholarly collections and literary anthologies such as *Transcending Fratricide: Political Myths, Reconciliations and the Uncertain Future in the former Yugoslavia* (2013) and *Threshold: Anthology of Contemporary Writing from Alberta* (1998). He also authored numerous scholarly articles in peer reviewed journals worldwide. Dr. Pavlović is an associate editor of *Nationality Papers* (Columbia University) and *Treaties and Documents* (University of Maribor), and was the North American coordinator for the research projects *Direct Democracy and Active Citizenship: Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. He is a research associate with the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, University of Alberta, and is currently co-editing (with dr. Dejan Guzina) a special issue of the *Canadian Slavonic Papers* devoted to the theme of post-Yugoslav identities.

and rare archival materials, it highlights the challenges historians face due to restricted access to sources and alleged destruction of key records. The paper argues that the systematic minimization or erasure of evidence by political and military elites still in power perpetuates a dominant narrative of Montenegro's marginal involvement in the conflict. This not only obstructs historical reckoning but also impedes regional efforts toward reconciliation. The case of the Morinj Camp thus serves as a revealing lens through which broader issues of post-conflict memory politics and transitional justice in the former Yugoslavia can be understood.

**KEY WORD:**

Morinj; Montenegro; Yugoslavia; Yugoslav wars; Prisoners of war; Historical memory;

**SAŽETAK:**

Rad se bavi pitanjem koje je u velikoj mjeri zanemareno i namjerno potiskivano – tretmanom hrvatskih ratnih zarobljenika u logoru Morinj u Crnoj Gori tokom ratova u bivšoj Jugoslaviji, posebno u kontekstu opsade Dubrovnika 1991–1992. godine. Analizira se fenomen selektivnog zaborava u Crnoj Gori i njegov uticaj na istorijsko pamćenje i procese pomirenja. Oslanjajući se prvenstveno na svjedočenja bivših zatvorenika, ograničenu službenu dokumentaciju i rijetke arhivske materijale, studija ukazuje na prepreke sa kojima se istoričari suočavaju zbog ograničenog pristupa izvorima i navodnog uništavanja ključne građe. Autor tvrdi da sistematsko minimiziranje ili brisanje dokaza od strane političkih i vojnih elita koje su i dalje na vlasti doprinosi održavanju dominantnog narativa o marginalnom učešću Crne Gore u sukobima. To ne samo da otežava suočavanje s prošlošću, već i usporava regionalne napore ka pomirenju. Slučaj logora Morinj tako postaje važna tačka za razumijevanje šire problematike politike sjećanja i tranzicione pravde na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:**

Morinj; Crna Gora; Jugoslavija; Jugoslovenski ratovi; Ratni zarobljenici; Istorijsko pamćenje;