

WHOSE TRUTH? Operation Storm and the Battle for Vukovar¹

ANNEX 1: Student handout 1

GROUP A

Below is a text written about the author's experience in Sarajevo during the conflicts in Bosnia & Herzegovina in the 1990s. You have also been provided with some background information.

Discuss the following questions within your group and be prepared to tell the rest of the class about the text and your thoughts on it.

Before reading the text itself, read the author's name and the background information about him/her. What can you predict about the text, knowing something about the author? Do you expect him/her to be an independent observer? Do you think he/she will be biased? Why? Why do you think he/she wrote this article / report?

II-55. An article by Slovenian reporter Ivo Štandeker, killed in Sarajevo, 1992



The Slovenian reporter Ivo Štandeker died in besieged Sarajevo on 16 June 1992, after being severely wounded by the explosion of a grenade fired from the Serbian lines. This is the last article he wrote. The beginning of the article, in which he predicted a long war that would badly affect all citizens –Muslims, Croats and Serbs – is marked by his most famous sentence: "I like cities and I hate when someone is attacking them."

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Now take a look at the article below, written by Ivo Štandeker. Identify specific vocabulary that can help you assess his point of view. Does he use neutral words to describe what he experiences, or does he use value-laden words to deliberately give the reader a specific image and convey a particular point of view? What is the style of the writing and what is the author's purpose? Is it a comprehensive series of facts designed to give an overview and information? Is it a personal account of selective experiences?

¹ All texts and images in Annex 1 are sourced from:

Teaching Contemporary Southeast European History. Source books for Teachers; Volume 2 'Wars, Divisions, Integration (1990-2008), 2016. Eds: Koulouri, C. & Repe, B. Series Editor: Koulouri, C. Copyright, CDRSEE. All JHP I and II materials are reproducible.

<http://cdrsee.org/publications/education/volume-2-wars-divisions-integration-1990-2008>

Is it written to convey sentiment and provoke a response? What do you learn about Sarajevo from this article? What do you feel when you read it?

What is left of Sarajevo

"The Bosnians were not crazed by a holy war, instead they were crazed by a holy anger" reports Ivo Štandeker from the besieged capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina

I like cities and I hate when someone is attacking them.

In the eastern part of Sarajevo, in the direction of Vogošća, there is an old Turkish graveyard and beneath it is an enormous cave which used to serve as a shelter during the Austro-Hungarian period. Thousands of people from the city, including the nearby villages, have spent most of the time in the safety of the old cave, while their houses and their city were destroyed. [...]

A friend of mine, Medina, told me that she did not want to stay in Sarajevo after the war. There is nothing left. No more buses and no more trams. Broken power cables lying in the streets, surrounded with demolished cars and piles of glass. Every mosque or church has been shattered or destroyed. The buildings which used to shape the city are devastated or burnt to the ground. There are no more bars and coffee shops where people used to meet. There are only clearings and gaps where you are shot at from the edges of the city if you try to get to "Alipašino Polje" [a neighbourhood in Sarajevo], which is the only place where you can buy some onions, spinach and milk. "Remember your neighbours," Artije Raguš told me, a vice-president of the liberals. "Houses that I have been passing by all these years are now full of people who shoot at me with mortars, rockets and machine guns." [...]

No one has it easy at home, not even those who predicted the war. Selam Abdić, the head editor of Sarajevo's best newspaper *Slobodna Bosna* [in English: Free Bosnia], which published a map of the city's siege last year, is now wandering about due to the lack of printing paper. Mithad Ajanović, a sketcher, has also stayed. His comic strips, however, are no longer funny at all. When I saw Alija Izetbegović, he told me he was very grateful that the refugees from BiH were looked after very well in Slovenia. Then he even added: "This is going to be a long war."

Ivo Štandeker: "Kaj je ostalo od Sarajeva? [What Remains of Sarajevo?], *Mladina*, 23/1992, pp. 1-3.

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GROUP B

Below is a text written about the author's experience in Sarajevo during the conflicts in Bosnia & Herzegovina in the 1990s.

The author worked for the International Committee of the Red Cross – an organisation dedicated to assisting all victims of war, regardless of which 'side' they were on.

Discuss the following questions within your group and be prepared to tell the rest of the class about the text and your thoughts on it.

Before reading the text itself, think about who the author is (a representative of an independent, international organisation). What can you predict about the text, knowing something about the author's professional affiliation and the capacity in which he is writing? Do you expect him/her to be an independent observer? Do you think he/she will be biased? Why? Why do you think he/she wrote this article / report?

Now take a look at the text below. Identify specific vocabulary that can help you assess the author's point of view. Does he use neutral words to describe what he experiences, or does he use value-laden words to deliberately give the reader a specific image and convey a particular point of view? What is the style of the writing and what is the author's purpose? Is it a comprehensive series of facts designed to give an overview and information? Is it a personal account of selective experiences? Is it written to convey sentiment and provoke a response?

What do you learn about Sarajevo from this article? What do you feel when you read it? Are you surprised by the language used here? If so, why?

II-56. “In Sarajevo, the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] Feels Like Being Back in the Days of [the Battle of] Solferino”

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there are no holds barred. The symbol of the Red Cross is not respected; it is even used for military purposes. The ICRC tries to act throughout the country with only 60 representatives.

[...]

“We have launched a daily press campaign, on which a person is working full-time; we are broadcasting messages by television and radio to call for respect of humanitarian values, and to remind people who has the authority to bear the emblem of the Red Cross.” A drop in the ocean of wild propaganda produced by the two sides: they are broadcasting “appalling images for hours and hours, with a morbid insistence and complacency” and generate reflexes of “vengeance and hatred” even among children, whom the images affect deeply. [...]

Estier, 9 May 1992, p.6.

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GROUP C

Below is a text written about the author's experience in Sarajevo during the conflicts in Bosnia & Herzegovina in the 1990s. You have also been provided with some background information.

Discuss the following questions within your group and be prepared to tell the rest of the class about the text and your thoughts on it.

Before reading the text itself, read the author's name and the background information about him/her. What can you predict about the text, knowing something about the author? Do you expect him/her to be an independent observer? Do you think he/she will be biased? Why? Why do you think he/she wrote this article / report?

II-57. Christiane Amanpour, a CNN journalist, describing her experience as war correspondent in Bosnia



In 1992 Amanpour went to Bosnia and Herzegovina to cover the outbreak of violence that she thought would become "my generation's war." Her reporting was credited with bringing the savage nature of that conflict to the attention of the world, although some criticised her for what they thought was her tendency to editorialise rather than report, claiming that she was clearly biased against the Serbs.

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Now take a look at the article below, written by Christiana Amanpour. Identify specific vocabulary that can help you assess his point of view. Does she use neutral words to describe what he experiences, or does she use value-laden words to deliberately give the reader a specific image and convey a particular point of view? What is the style of the writing and what is the author's purpose? Is it a comprehensive series of facts designed to give an overview and information? Is it a personal account of selective experiences? Is it written to convey sentiment and provoke a response?

What do you learn about Sarajevo from this article? What do you feel when you read it?

[...] The war in Bosnia is a war that is being fought against civilians, in the cities, people's homes, not on the battlefield. The United Nations has said that there has never been a war in modern times that has affected so many children. It's horrifying, and savage... I keep going back there because I cannot believe this is being allowed to happen. [...] Just walking from the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo, where journalists stay, is dangerous... I was asleep one night last fall when I heard this awful whistling noise near my room at the hotel. It was a 105-millimetre mortar shell from a howitzer, apparently mis-aimed. It landed in a room two doors down from mine – but it didn't explode, although it demolished the room from the sheer impact. If it had exploded, it would've been over for me.

http://articles.latimes.com/1993-07-14/entertainment/ca-13112_1_christiane-amanpour, accessed on 4.01.2016.

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GROUP D

Below is a text written by a Swiss journalist (and head of a press organisation) about the NATO bombing of Serbia.

Discuss the following questions within your group and be prepared to tell the rest of the class about the text and your thoughts on it.

Before reading the text itself, think about who the author is. What can you predict about the text, knowing something about the author's professional affiliation and the capacity in which he is writing? Do you expect him/her to be an independent observer? Do you think he/she will be biased? Why? Why do you think he/she wrote this article / report?

Now take a look at the text below. Identify specific vocabulary that can help you assess the author's point of view. Does he use neutral words to describe what he experiences, or does he use value-laden words to deliberately give the reader a specific image and convey a particular point of view? What is the style of the writing and what is the author's purpose? Is it a comprehensive series of facts designed to give an overview and information? Is it a personal account of selective experiences? Is it written to convey sentiment and provoke a response?

**II-59. “A Brief Manual of Misinformation”:
journalist Guy Mettan, executive chair-
man of the Swiss Press Club, comments
on information spread about the NATO
bombing**

[...] The NATO aggression against Yugoslavia degenerates into a real war not only because of the huge armada that was mobilised to annihilate this country under a flood of bombs, but also because of the psychological war that is waged with regard to international public opinion in order to win it over to the warmongering cause.

In other words: the novelty of this conflict, apart from deadly weapon testing, is the campaign of misinformation conducted by the United States and NATO on a planetary scale. So, how does one recognise misinformation? How does it differ from simple propaganda? [...]

Mettan, 24 April 1999.

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What do you learn about the issues from this article? What do you feel when you read it? Are you surprised by the language used here? If so, why?