

**Crime against Humanity in the 20th Century**  
**Onur Kaya - Sabina Mujanovic (Dallas)**  
**Photographs: Jasmin Zeba**

Professor Emir Ramic delivered a speech on the Concentration Camps and Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dr. Esad Boskailo followed with a presentation about his new book, "Wounded I Am More Awake".

The recent event, organized by The Bosniaks Association Lily, began with opening remarks by the moderator, Sabina Mujanovic. She welcomed guests and presenters and gave a wonderful introduction to the audience of more than 100 people in Dallas.

Although the subject matter is extremely difficult and heart wrenching, it is exceptionally important to discuss and share. Many of the people in the audience lived through the most atrocious crimes that no person should ever have to hear about - let alone live through.

The event was important not only because the audience learned about the historical facts and cruelty that took place in the little country called Bosnia, half a world away from here, but also because they learned that evil has no regard for a child, a pregnant woman, an elderly grandfather, a newborn baby, or a young man. Evil has no regard for an institution, for a library, for a place of worship - evil destroys, it mutilates, it demolishes not only buildings, the economy and the society, but it hurts the souls of those that carry the most painful memories about the past.

However, this event showed that no matter how great evil may be, goodness in the end is by far more powerful and can lift you up to places you never even dreamed of ascending.

The people attending the event saw that it is possible to rise from the ashes no matter what your struggles are. The painful stories shared left us with courage and a desire to push through our own struggles and be appreciative of everyone and everything we have today.

In his speech Professor Ramic covered the impact of the genocide on the Bosniak people and its effects on the future, as well as how the genocide was planned and executed by the enemies of humanity.

The second speaker, Dr. Esad Boskailo, who survived six concentration camps in Bosnia presented his newly-published book, "**Wounded I Am More Awake: Finding Meaning After Terror**", which he co-wrote with journalist Julia Lieblich. The book covers the importance of dealing with trauma from concentration camps. Dr. Boskailo told stories about his experiences in the camps and how he survived. Time spent in the concentration camps was the

time that he showed true courage and the determination to survive even under the most adverse conditions.

Dr. Boskailo emerged from the camps with powerful new lessons for healing in an age of genocide. Despite his personal struggles in the concentration camps, starvation and the physical and emotional abuse he endured in Bosnia during the war as a prisoner, he is an amazing human, who did not turn to despair. Rather, he continues to work hard to improve his own life, the life of his family, and the community he lived in. While in the US, Dr. Boskailo unselfishly collected humanitarian aid for those that were still in Bosnia during the war.

During Dr. Boskailo's presentation, he displayed a photograph of Bosniak men in a concentration camp. The men stood behind a barbed wire fence, staring at the camera. They were so starved that their bones protruded. To its amazement, the audience recognized one of its members in the photograph. All this time he had lived among them, and they had no idea of the hell he endured. The gentleman stood up and the audience rewarded him with applause. He was invited to sit on the stage with the other honorable guests.

At the end of the program, moderator Sabina Mujanovic offered closing remarks and an interesting quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu who stated: **"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."**

Ms. Mujanovic continued her speech:

"Sometimes I feel that Bosniaks were unfortunately that mouse, and the heavy artillery and army of well-armed men were the elephant that were shelling and destroying our beloved country and killing the innocent children and civilians for years. The UN was neutral – we all remember them driving around in the big army vehicles around the towns doing absolutely nothing. They did not react to the screams and calls for help from those that were on the verge of starvation, hunger, or being near execution. Their response to the human who is about to die was that they are there to **keep peace** by remaining completely neutral and not taking sides. Many times this felt worse than being attacked.

Furthermore, Archbishop Tutu once stated, "Don't raise your voice, improve your argument". We need to actively speak intelligently not loudly in order to change this world for the better and fight for the justice and human rights everywhere in the world. Moreover, our religion Islam calls us to speak of crimes against innocence so that they would not return and be repeated. In our holy Book Quran (chapter 5, verse 82). It says:

**Those among the children of Israel who rejected truth were cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus son of Mary because they disobeyed and**

**committed excesses, because they did not forbid one another the wrongs they committed." (5:82)**

A similar point is made in the well known Hadith in which the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) is reported to have said:

**"If one of you sees something wrong, let him change it with his hand; if he cannot, then with his tongue; if he cannot, then with his heart and this is the weakest faith." Some versions add: "there is no part of faith behind that, not even so much as a mustard seed."**

After the program guests and audience enjoyed delicious authentic Bosnian food - Pita (Buker, Zeljanica, Sirnica), Beef Jerky (Suho Meso), Baklava - made by local Bosniak women.

As a small token of appreciation local Dallas artist Ismar Hasanovic presented two pictures to the speakers - a painting of his beloved Pocitelj for Dr. Boskailo and a painting of his hometown Prijedor for Professor Ramic.

Dr. Boskailo signed 50 copies of his book. Due to the level of interest, there were not enough copies to go around so he is sending more copies to be distributed.

### **Biographies**

Professor Ramic was born in 1959 in Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He graduated from the Political Science department at the Faculty of the Political Science, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1982. In 1988, he obtained his Master's Degree in Law from the School of Law in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is currently working on his PhD.

In Bosnia and abroad he held numerous positions as an educator and leader in secondary schools. He was appointed Director of the Bosnian International School in Bergneustadt, Germany as well as the Bosnian International School in Hamilton, Canada.

In 2008 he was elected President of the Congress of North American Bosniaks.

In 2009 he was appointed Director of the **newly-established** Institute for Research of Genocide of Canada which position he holds.

He also holds the position of Associate Professor for Peace Study at McMaster University, in Hamilton, Canada.

He is a political and educational voice for Bosnian Americans and Canadians and assists Bosnian Americans and Canadians in learning the cultural, economic, legal, political, and social systems of the United States and Canada.

He advises the United States and Canada about foreign policy in Balkans so that Bosnia & Herzegovina and its people will never again be the target of aggression and genocide.

Dr. Boskailo was born and raised in the city of Pocitelj, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He trained in Family Medicine in Bosnia and Herzegovina but his work as a physician was abruptly interrupted by the war. After the war he and his family came to the United States as refugees. Dr. Boskailo was able to go back to his love of medicine and worked as a physician in Chicago, Illinois. He later finished a residency in New York in the field of psychiatry. He is currently working as a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Arizona College Of Medicine – Phoenix and as the Associate Director of Psychiatry Residency at the Maricopa Integrated Health Systems. As a psychiatrist he has a unique gift to help those who are suffering from different mental disorders but especially those who are victims of different kinds of violence from domestic to war abuse.

**Wounded: I Am More Awake** was published by Vanderbilt University Press and is available on Amazon.com.

Link:

[http://www.amazon.com/Wounded-Am-More-Awake-Finding/dp/0826518265/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1330889267&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Wounded-Am-More-Awake-Finding/dp/0826518265/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1330889267&sr=8-1)

Please also see:

<http://www.vanderbiltuniversitypress.com/books/450/wounded-i-am-more-awake>

The book covers Dr. Boskailo's life from his early years under Tito through the wars when friends turned against friends. It documents his horrific experiences in the camps, where men he once joined for coffee murdered his best childhood friend. The book then follows Dr. Boskailo to the United States where he becomes a psychiatrist and helps survivors mourn their losses and find hope and meaning in the aftermath of terror.

### **Never Forget**

***During Dr. Boskailo's presentation, he displayed a photograph of Bosniak men in a concentration camp. The men stood behind a barbed wire fence, staring at the camera. They were so starved that their bones protruded. To its amazement, the audience recognized one of its members in the photograph. All this time he had lived among them, and they had no idea of the hell he endured. Sefik Hopovac stood up and the audience rewarded him with applause. He was invited to sit on the stage with the other honorable guests.***

**Interview with Omarska concentration camp survivor Mr. Sefik Hopovac, who living in Dallas, USA**

**Onur Kaya**

How did you survive?

**Sefik Hopovac**

It cannot be described in a few words. A person becomes num and acts on instincts. Eating rotten apples and most of the time not eating at all.

**Onur Kaya**

How do you feel after 20 years?

**Sefik Hopovac**

The more time passes by the more I have the memories of torture and concentration camp.

**Onur Kaya**

How did you feel during the event?

**Sefik Hopovac**

Num, hurt, exhausted, beaten, torched

**Onur Kaya**

What is your wish for the next generation?

**Sefik Hopovac**

Never forget what happened during the war and in the concentration camps. Remember so that it would not happen again. To tell the younger generation what has happened in detail. Here in the USA it will be forgotten if we don't. That is how culture/people melt in this pot and forget their roots. NEVER FORGET!