

Call for Proposals

Trauma, Memory and Healing in the Balkans and Beyond

TPO Foundation and her distinguished partners are pleased to invite proposals for an international conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 12-14 July 2016, which seeks to create an interdisciplinary archive of knowledge and opportunities for the healing of memories and trauma in the Balkans and beyond.

In a region which experienced the immense violence of three wars in the last century, the scars of trauma are deep and overlapping. Multiple memories are not simple stories of suffering, but play into socio-political agendas through competing victimization narratives. From a historical perspective, the experiences of pain and great loss on all sides in these armed conflicts and repressive regimes means that whole communities carry the all-encompassing impact of trauma in their very anatomies and psyches, which call out for recognition and healing. This reality, mixed with the instrumentalization of suffering into victimhood, creates a social dynamic lacking the trust, acceptance, understanding and empathy conditional for collective healing. It may also lead to future conflict, through the perpetuation of vicious cycles of violence and victimization. In order to open a process of recovery or 'de-traumatization', toward a more just, peaceful and stable society, the society must first recognize the presence of its trauma. A social environment is needed that positively confirms the authenticity of individual victims' trauma/s as well as the credibility of the traumatic narratives of groups.

This conference is a joint effort of scholars and practitioners/activists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad, across a broad spectrum of disciplines. Its first aim is to create an archive of knowledge through a grounding analysis for trauma healing work in the Balkans, which can serve as the basis for strategic recommendations for organizations and governmental agencies. Bringing together local and international expertise, its second aim is to build a network of activists and scholars who share 'best practices' for psycho-social trauma recovery and the healing of memories.

Through these two goals, the conference hopes to provide the following results. It seeks to produce (a) interdisciplinary learning that goes beyond regional group divisions through examining the existing truths constructed by previous generations and to broaden these into new possibilities for collective healing. Another outcome is (b) raised awareness of this ubiquitous facet of post-war life: the on-going, trauma-related circumstances, from local to global historic, economic, political and cultural realities. Further it seeks to (c) open a process of psychosocial healing and the re-energizing of dignity as part of the healing process. Such healing requires public deliberation, a conscious decision plus political will on all levels of society (government, local communities and individuals), a common and critical rethinking the deeper roots of social trauma as well as sharing the experiences of these phenomena and expertise about their mechanisms. Finally, the conference will facilitate the (d) development of just and non-harmful cultural memories, social solidarity and collaboration across the Balkan region. The role of non-Balkan scholars and practitioners is to incorporate thematic expertise and input that will assist this process through its comparative, outside perspective.

The conference will include an excursion to Srebrenica and the Potočari Memorial Center, as a local case study of the themes considered in the conference.



We welcome proposals that explore any of the following (sub)topics:

1. Recognizing and understanding individual and collective trauma

- diagnosing individual and collective trauma: symptoms, descriptions, categories, reactions
- trans-generational trauma & the paradox of bi-directional cultural and national remembering
- trauma from sexual and gender-based violence
- collective trauma: causes and consequences
- moving beyond medicine: understanding trauma through alternative frames

2. Memory politics, chosen trauma and strategies of remembering

- instrumentalized memories and victimization
- foundation myths and chosen traumas that construct social meaning
- the construction and imaginative projection of memory through:
 - language (e.g. as an identity marker) and narratives (in the media, literature, through interpretation, political rhetoric/discourse, etc.),
 - images and the arts (film, performance, photography, painting, sculpture, literature, etc.),
 - symbols (religious, national, mythic, etc.)
 - history-telling (in segregated education and textbooks, through memorials and commemorations, etc.)

3. Healing, resilience and meaning

- personal testimony as a tool for healing: facts and feeling
- the relationship between personal and communal healing – e.g. how social and legal justice can provide or hinder clinical and personal healing
- the interface between psychosocial trauma interventions and peacebuilding for healing and social change
- journalism and social media: from aiding violence to advocating or facilitating just-peace
- conditions for healing: acknowledgement, mourning, apology, response and the ‘re-energizing of human dignity
- contextualized sources, strategies and practices for coping, resilience and recovery: religion, spirituality, rituals, symbols, etc.
- the expressive arts and body-mind healing as critical elements of getting ‘unstuck’.



Application process

The submission deadline for proposals is 15 December 2015. Proposals should include a title, an abstract (max 300 words), and bio (max 300 words) and emailed to Julianne Funk (juliannefunk5@gmail.com) and Anja Maksić (assist3@tpofond.org). Notification of accepted proposals shall be made by 31 January 2016 and submission of complete papers is expected by 15 May 2016. The conference will take place 12-14 July 2016 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Conference will take place in the premises of the Catholic School Center.

Address: Mehmed-paše Sokolovića 11, 71 000 Sarajevo.

A volume of the most outstanding conference papers will be assembled and edited immediately following the conference for prompt publication.

Scientific Board & Partners

Zilka Spahić Šiljak, Stanford University and TPO Foundation (organizer)

Julianne Funk, University of Zurich and TPO Foundation (organizer)

Barry Hart & Katie Mansfield, Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University

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Shelly Rambo, Boston University

Srdjan Sremac, Center for the Study of Lived Religion, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vesna Teršelić, Documenta, Center for Dealing with the Past

All interested people willing to learn, hear or say something about this issue* can submit their applications until **July 1, 2016**. All the other information can be found below as well as the registration form.



REGISTRATION FORM

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "TRAUMA, MEMORY AND HEALING IN THE BALKANS AND BEYOND"

Name and surname:

Organisation (if applicable):

Telephone number:

E-mail address:

Location:

Sarajevo

Venue:

The Catholic School Centre "St. Joseph"
Mehmed – paše Sokolovića 11, Sarajevo

Participation fee*:

50 BAM/25 EUR

Please submit your payment to TPO Fondacija.

IBAN: BA391611000001608512

SWIFT CODE: RZBABA2S

Purpose: Conference "Trauma, Memory and Healing"

Application deadline:

July 1, 2016

Apply to:

assist3@tpofond.org

Official languages:

B/C/S languages

English language

Duration:

3 days

Please note bank fees need to be paid separately from the participation fee amount. If you opt for online payment, please choose option **OUR (you pay the transmission expenses). If you opt for payment in the bank (at the counter), you also pay bank fee separately from the participation fee amount.*

Participation fee includes lunch for three days, coffee breaks and conference material.

***Number of seats is limited.*



MORE INFORMATION ON THE CONFERENCE VENUE

The Catholic School Centre “St. Joseph” is located in Mehmed – paše Sokolovića 11 and it takes only a few minutes of walk to come to the heart of the city, Baščaršija. Due to the fact it is the very centre of the city the abundance of cultural heritage and availability of various facilities are at your fingertips.

How to get there? If you need to reach the Catholic School Centre from the airport, you may take the cab and in 20 – 22 minutes you will be there.

Cab prices: When it comes to Sarajevo cab which has its cab stand at the airport, you will have to pay 25 BAM/12, 50 EUR (initial price) and there is no bargain. If you find this too much, you may call other cabs and their names and numbers are following:

Crveni taxi (Red cab) 033 760 600 or 033 468 728

Kale taxi (Kale cab) 033 570 900

Paja taxi (Paja cab) 033 15 22

Žuti taxi (Yellow cab) 033 663 555

Samir & Emir taxi (Samir & Emir cab) 033 15 16

