

TO REMEMBER...

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We have witnessed the brutality of war in Croatia which endangers not only people and their property but also the Nature. Directly or indirectly, all the regions of continental and mediterranean Croatia were brought into danger, especially those parts which, due to their specificity and sensitivity of ecosystem, were under a specific regime and protection. These are, first of all, national parks and natural reservations as well as waters and forests throughout the area which is being devastated by the war.

In the southernmost parts of Croatia i.e. in the surrounding country of Dubrovnik, the complete plant covering was deliberately and thoroughly burnt down. After shelling the Sisak industrial zone, the River Sava was reported to contain not only oil and its derivatives from the destroyed reservoirs but also cancerous chemicals. In the little town of Slunj, not far from the Plitvice Lakes, the Yugoslav Army and the chetniks, with granates and rockets, also pulled down travertine barriers, and according to their sources the same thing is most likely to happen to those in the Plitvice Lakes.

"Geološki vjesnik", together with a variety of other magazines, institutions and individuals, condemns aggression towards nature and natural beauties in Croatia. Among the prominent sights there are some which are worldwide recognized, and by geological specificities, they belong to protected natural monuments. We cannot remain passive and dumb when other important sights are in question. We can mention at least two of them: the National Park of the Plitvice and the arboretum of Trsteno.

The famous Lakes Plitvice are a natural, geological, geographical and biological phenomenon and the National Park which is recognized by UNESCO as a natural

monument of world's heritage. The geological preciousness of the Lakes is based on a millenary and recent interrelation of carbonate rocks and fresh waters. The result of this water phenomenon, today in the karst is 16 bigger lakes and some lesser ones that are separated by travertine barriers (Cratoneuron-travertine). They are equally present on Dogger and Malm limestone beds of Crna and Bijela Rivers on the Upper Triassic dolomites of the Upper Lakes or on the Upper Cretaceous (Senonian) rudist limestones in the Lower Lakes.

The arboretum of Trsteno was planted in the 15th century and in 1502 A.D., the park was completely shaped. This is the oldest arboretum in Croatia, and most probably one of the oldest parks in Europe. In October 1991, however, it was burnt down by the Army of Serbia and Montenegro during one of their brutal attacks on Dubrovnik. Hundreds of years old trees, which were brought from various parts of the world, were set on fire.

What is most tragic for the wider area of Dubrovnik is entirely devastated landscape, whose negative implications will be felt long in the future.

From the mouth of the Neretva River to Boka Kotorska, a very narrow coastal area (the one of Dubrovnik also included), is made of carbonate rocks of the Mesozoic age: limestones and dolomites of the Upper Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous and Paleogene and clastic deposits (flisch) of Eocene. Being left without plant coverings there is a danger of complete soil erosion from carbonates and very characteristic gullying and formation of landslide in flisch. This was probably the intention of the army pyrotechnists to throw phosphorus bombs in burning pine trees wishing to burn the stone itself....



Travertine barriers on the River Služnica - Rastoke in Slunj with houses and mills: mined and destroyed by the Yugoslav Army in November 1991. (Photo: S.Božičević).

Travertinske barijere na rijeci Služnici - Rastoke u Slunju s kućama i mlinicama: u studenom 1991 minirane i razorene od jugoslavenske vojske. (Slike: S.Božičević).