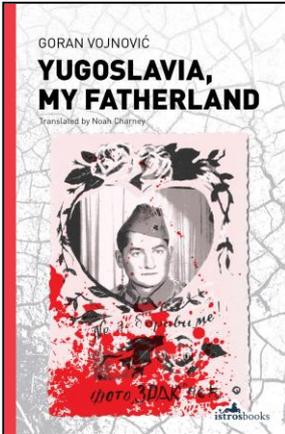


## ISTROS NEW BOOK: PRESS RELEASE

**This deeply moving and disturbing novel explores the legacy of The Yugoslav Wars through the eyes of a young man who discovers that his beloved father was a war criminal**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 5 OCTOBER 2015**

*"This is now no longer a cemetery, it's all together like one huge monument!" he said, but I didn't get what he was on about; all I could see were graves everywhere and not a monument in sight.*



# YUGOSLAVIA, MY FATHERLAND

by Goran Vojnović (award-winning Slovenian novelist & film-maker)

translated by Noah Charney

ISBN: 978 1 908236 27 2 Paperback 213 pages RRP: £9.99 5 OCTOBER 2015 Istros Books



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**Published in the UK to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of The Dayton Agreement (14<sup>th</sup> December 1995) that ended The Bosnian War, this novel explores the legacy of war-time atrocities and the lasting impact that the war crimes of fathers have on their own children**

When Vladan Borojević googles the name of his father Nedelko, a former officer in the Yugoslav People's Army, supposedly killed in the civil war after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, he unexpectedly discovers a dark family secret.

The story which then unfolds takes him back to the catastrophic events of 1991 that tore his family apart. He was just a child when his father was 'deployed' and disappeared (presumed dead) and, although he was too young to fully understand the reasons behind the conflict, he understood only too well the devastating effects on his abandoned mother and the family. On the night that his father was 'deployed' Vladan's idyllic childhood had ended.

*Mother finally broke down and collapsed on the floor ... I wanted to curl up to her and take away some of her pain despite not really understanding it, but she kept pushing me away ... She was a defeated woman who, at that point, probably finally realised she had been left alone in this story. I do not know whether she had a hunch that father would never return from the 'field', or that the 'state of emergency' would never end, but I do believe her sixth sense could feel the approaching horror ...*

Seventeen years later Vladan's discovery that he is the son of a fugitive war criminal sends him off on a journey round the Balkans to find his elusive father. On the way, he also finds out how the falling apart of his family is closely linked with the disintegration of the world they used to live in.

The story of the Borojević family strings and juxtaposes images of the Balkans past and present, but mainly deals with the tragic fates of people who may have managed to avoid the bombs, but were unable to escape the tragic consequences of the war.

### **What did you do in the war Daddy?**

**Author, Goran Vojnović (who was 11 years old when the Yugoslav Wars began in 1991) says,** *"I wanted to write a story about my childhood friends – the children of army men in Pula (Croatia) who, together with their families, moved out of the city overnight in 1991 ... We had played football together, gone to the beach ... all the things that kids do. I always wondered what had happened to them after they left? Where did their army fathers fight? Did any of their fathers commit war crimes? Are they hunted by the International Court in The Haag? And, if so, how are these young adults, my childhood friends, dealing with it? Can they cope with the wrongdoings of their once beloved fathers?"*

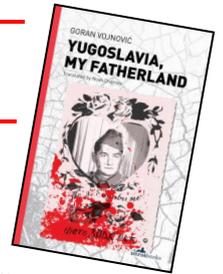


Further information about the author appears overleaf.

***please see over for further information >>>***

## ISTROS NEW BOOK: PRESS RELEASE continued

### YUGOSLAVIA, MY FATHERLAND by Goran Vojnović



*Amongst a barrage of juicy swearwords, words like Serbs, Croats, Slobodan Milošević, Kosovo, Ante Marković, Milan Kučan, the Yugoslav Army, plebiscite and lots more kept cropping up. I figured out that the more I understood what they were on about, the more these people seemed to shout and the angrier they seemed to get. I sat on the sofa terrified, clutching onto my mother ...*

#### Meet the author - UK Events:

- **7pm, Friday 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015: Waterstones Piccadilly** 203/206 Piccadilly, London, W1J 9HD  
'They F\*\*k you up your Mum and Dad' - The Writing Legacy of Yugoslavia  
[www.waterstones.com/events/they-f-k-you-up-your-mum-and-dad-writing-the-legacy-of-yugoslavia/london-piccadilly](http://www.waterstones.com/events/they-f-k-you-up-your-mum-and-dad-writing-the-legacy-of-yugoslavia/london-piccadilly)
- **4.45pm, Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 2015, Ilkley Literature Festival** St Margaret's Hall, Queens Road, Ilkley LS29 9TZ  
'Mothers and Fathers' - Writing Across Continents  
[www.ilkleyliteraturefestival.org.uk/events/208-mothers-fathers-goran-vojnovic-and-andrej-nikoladis-in-conversation](http://www.ilkleyliteraturefestival.org.uk/events/208-mothers-fathers-goran-vojnovic-and-andrej-nikoladis-in-conversation)



**Author: Goran Vojnović (b. 1980)** graduated from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana, where he specialised in film and television directing and screenwriting. The film *Good Luck Nedim* (he co-wrote the script with Marko Šantić) won the Heart of Sarajevo Award and was nominated for the European Film Academy's Best Short Film Award in 2006. He has directed three short films himself and his first feature film *Piran/Pirano* premiered in 2010. Vojnović is considered one of the most talented authors of his generation. Film magazines and newspapers regularly publish his articles and columns. His bestselling debut novel *Southern Scum Go Home!* (2008) reaped all the major literary awards in Slovenia, has been reprinted five times and translated into numerous foreign languages. A collection of his columns from a Slovene daily newspaper and weekly magazine have also been published as a book under the title *When Jimmy Choo meets Fidel Castro* (2010), which was translated into Serbian. His new novel 'Yugoslavia, My Fatherland' is one of this year's most eagerly awaited books amongst readers. Already published in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Sweden and soon to be issued in Germany and Macedonia, ISTROS Books are delighted to be publishing the English-language edition.

**Media opportunities:** Extracts/serialisation. The author and British publisher are available for interviews.

**Notes to Editors: The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dayton Agreement:** Formally known as 'The General Framework Agreement for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina', the Dayton Agreement was agreed at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio on **21<sup>st</sup> November 1995** – and formally signed in Paris on **14<sup>th</sup> December 1995**. The Dayton Agreement ended the three-and-a-half-year Bosnian War. **The Bosnian War** took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995 between the forces of the newly independent Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the forces of the Bosnian Serb groups (supported by Serbia) and Bosnian Croat groups (supported by Croatia.) The population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was, at that time, made up of: Muslim Bosniaks (44%), Orthodox Serbs (32.5%) and Catholic Croats (17%). **The Yugoslav Wars** (1991-2001) were the horrific ethnic conflicts following the Slovenian and Croatian secessions from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991 and leading to the break-up of Yugoslavia. The wars were a series of separate but related conflicts which occurred in most of the republics of former-Yugoslavia. They included: • War in Slovenia (1991) • Croatian War of Independence (1991–1995) • Bosnian War (1992–1995) • Kosovo War (1998–1999), including the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia • Insurgency in the Preševu Valley (1999–2001) • Insurgency in the Republic of Macedonia (2001). The wars mostly resulted in peace accords, involving full international recognition of new states, but with massive economic damage to the region. It is estimated that between 130,000 and 140,000 people died in The Yugoslav Wars.

**ABOUT ISTROS BOOKS** Istros Books trawl the wealth of Eastern European literature to offer the very best (in excellent translations) to a new audience of English speakers. Istros Books (which takes its name from the old Greek and Thracian name for the lower Danube River) believe that the finest writing transcends national interests because it speaks with the voice of human experience that resonates for us all, whatever our background and where ever we live. Istros Books offer all English-speaking people the chance to discover contemporary new writers and forgotten treasure from the rich and varied array of Eastern European literature.



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