

**Chapter 33 Primary Source Activity**



The conflicts in Bosnia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia (textbook pages 870–871) divided neighbors and families who had once ignored their ethnic differences. In this article, a journalist talks with a woman from a Muslim family who is married to a Serb but who has lost other family members to Serbian guns. ♦ *As you read, try to imagine your friends and family in these circumstances. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

**A Family in Sarajevo**

**F**ida Karisik is a handsome woman with a strong, upright bearing who is now wound so tight inside that tears well uncontrollably at the mention of any of a range of subjects: the death of her nephew Muris Zecevic, the death of her sister-in-law Bisera Zecevic, the war, her children and husband in Belgrade, her future.

She works for the municipal administration and lives . . . in a spacious but shabby apartment a few hundred yards from Sarajevo’s Holiday Inn. “When Muris was killed, it was almost like losing my own child,” she says. “My brother came and said, ‘You know, Fida, there is no more Muris.’ No politics is worth all these young lives.”

She . . . continues: “I am completely divided inside myself. I feel very sorry about Muris and about Bisera, and I feel I must take care of Asim [her brother]. But, on the other side, my children are there in Belgrade [capital of Serbia]. I am being pulled in all directions. I cannot stand anymore to be separated from my children. I am not really angry with my husband personally because he did not take a gun. But the idea of Greater Serbia is in the head of all Serbs. Some are murderers, some are not, but all support the

idea. Slobodan looks very nice and honest, but who knows?”

Slobodan Karisik declined to be interviewed. A brilliant and introverted man, in the view of family and friends, he was a university professor teaching electrical engineering. . . .

His daughter Vesna says the war took him completely by surprise. The day the shelling began, she was out with her mother. . . .

“We were ordered to go home, but there was shooting on all sides and we could not pass the Holiday Inn,” Vesna recalls. “My mother threw me on the sidewalk and lay on top of me. Finally, we made it

home. My father was watching television. He was white, white. I had never seen him like that. . . .”

Less than a month later. . . Slobodan Karisik left Sarajevo for good and joined his daughters in Belgrade. The circumstances of his departure have become a subject of a venomous exchange [among family members] that illustrates how war destroyed the Zecevic–Karisik family and how truth changes on different sides of the lines.

Source: “A War in the Family,” by Roger Cohen (*New York Times Magazine*, Aug. 6, 1995).

“No politics is worth all these young lives.”

CHAPTER 33

**Questions to Think About**

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| <p>1. According to the article, which members of Fida Karisik’s family have been killed in the war?</p> <p>2. Why did Fida’s husband Slobodan leave Sarajevo and move to Belgrade?</p> <p>3. <b>Recognizing Bias</b> Notice what Fida Karisik says about the idea of Greater Serbia being “in the heads” of all Serbs. What belief does this</p> | <p>reflect? Do you think she would have made such a statement five years ago?</p> <p>4. <b>Activity</b> Make a map that shows the territorial divisions that have been made among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in what was once Yugoslavia. Use the most up-to-date sources you can find, such as newspapers, to show the lands held by or claimed by each group in the war.</p> |
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