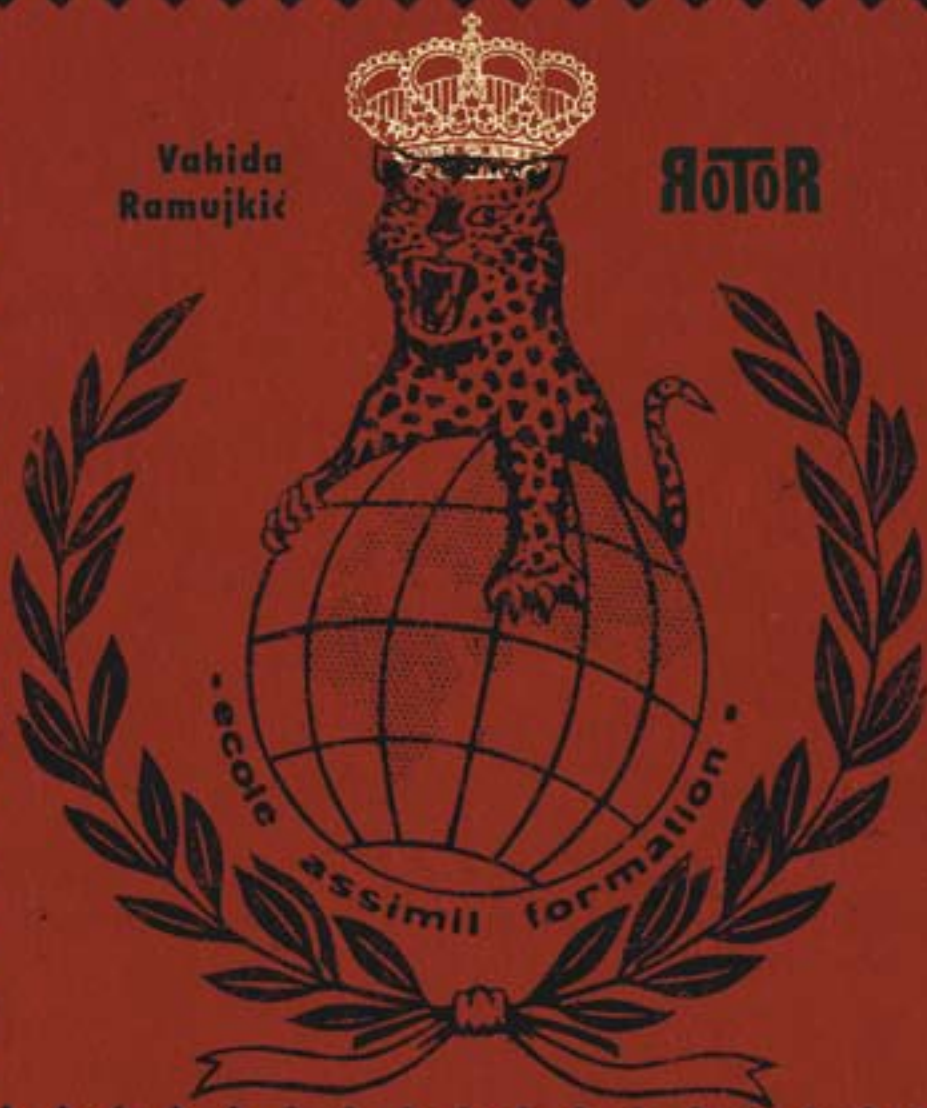


COMPANION
TO ALTERNATIVE READER

Vahida
Ramujkić

ЯТОР



PASAPORTE



- 1 Apellidos / Name / Efternavn / Nom / Επώνυμο / Surname / Sioinne /
Cognome / Naam / Apelido / Sukunimi / Efternamn
- 2 Nombre / Vornamen / Fornavne / Prénoms / Όνομα / Given names /
Réamhainm (neacha) / Nome / Voornaam / Nomes próprios /
Etunimet / Förnamn
- 3 Fecha de nacimiento / Geburtsdatum / Fødselsdato /
Date de naissance / Ημερομηνία γέννησης / Date of birth /
Dáta breithe / Data di nascita / Geboortedatum /
Data do nascimento / Syntymäaika / Födelsedatum
- 4 Lugar de nacimiento / Geburtsort / Fødested / Lieu de naissance /
Τόπος γεννήσεως / Place of birth / Áit bhreithe / Luogo di nascita /
Geboorteplaats / Lugar do nascimento / Syntymäpaikka / Födelseort
- 5 Sexo / Geschlecht / Køn / Sexe / φύλο / Sex / Gnéas / Sesso /
Geschlecht / Sexo / Sukupuoli / Køn
- 6 Nacionalidad / Staatsangehörigkeit / Nationalitet / Nationalité /
Ιθαγένεια / Nationality / Náisiúntacht / Cittadinanza / Nationaliteit /
Nacionalidade / Kansalaisuus / Nationalitet
- 7 Número de identificador / Persoelijke Identifizierungsnummer /
Personnummer / Identifiant personnel / Προσωπικός αριθμός
ταυτότητας / Personal Identifying Number / Uimhir aitheantais
pearsanta / Numero di identificazione personale / Persoonsnummer /
Número de identificação pessoal / Henkilötunnus / Personnummer
- 8 Oficina expedidora / Ausstellende Behoerde / Udstedende myndighed /
Administration ayant délivré le document / Γραφείο έκδοσης /
Issuing office / Údarás / Ufficio emittente / Instantie / Entidade
emissora / Myöntävä viranomainen / Utfärdande myndighet
- 9 Fecha de expedición / Ausstellungsdatum / Udstedelsesdato /
Date de délivrance / Ημερομηνία έκδοσης / Date of issue /
Dáta eisiúna / Data di rilascio / Datum van afgifte / Data da emissão /
Myönnetty / Utfärdat
- 10 Fecha de caducidad / Gültig bis / Gyldigt indtil / Date d'expiration /
Λήγει στις / Date of expiry / As feidhm / Data di scadenza /
De geldigheidsduur van dit paspoort eindigt op /
Este passaporte é válido até / Viimeinen voimassaolopäivä /
Sista giltighetsdag
- 11 Firma del titular / Unterschrift des Passinhabers / Indehaverens
underskrift / Signature du titulaire / Υπογραφή του κατόχου /
Holder's signature / Síniú an tsealbhóra / Firma del titolare /
Handtekening van de houder / Assinatura do titular /
Haltijan nimikirjoitus / Innehavarens namnteckning

1.

Then, in December 1998, it was madness in my country. The only way to get out was to get a ticket to some Third World country, and then stop by and ask for asylum if you were ready for it. So I got a ticket to Kenya, because you don't need a visa. But I had to buy a return ticket. Mostly people would go to some Western European country and then just ask for asylum at the airport. But I decided as I bought the ticket, to go for a holiday in Kenya and see Africa, because I hadn't been there. So I had a nice holiday, seven or eight days, and then came back to Amsterdam. Well I hadn't made a decision about whether I was going to ask for asylum or not. I just stayed for nearly a day at the airport, went for a few drinks, had a few meals and slept in a few places, and the police noticed that. So they just arrested me in the middle of the airport, thinking that I was a suspicious kind of person. They were really nice, that surprised me. They put me in a kind of detention for about five days. They took us to a hotel in Nordwick, by the sea... Nice accommodation. They gave us a meal every day, some money... And I was asking, "What's going on? It's heaven... I'm going to ask this a few times".

But you know...



2.

Afterwards they moved us to the Refugee Centre in Laiden and that was really shit. I had problems there because I was the only Serbian. There were, let's say, about a hundred Albanians there from Kosovo at the time. It was a really bad place, cockroaches all over the place, no toilets and the food was shit. It was really bad. And I had a problem because the Albanians didn't like me. I was the only Serbian and I didn't have anybody. So I slept outside and didn't go to the refugee camp. They kind of promised me they were gonna kill me...

All my documents were taken from me by the Dutch authorities, and from then on all my documents were gone. Everything was gone. All my luggage went to Budapest with a plane. Disappeared. Contacts, telephone numbers, everything...





3.

But something strange happened as I went to talk with my parents. Going out to the phone box I had a number in my head. And I dialled it and there was my friend from England answering the phone. And so they came to see me. They brought their son's passport, who is blond with blue eyes.

We left Holland for England. Crossing the Channel, the Dutch customs officer took my passport, looked at it, and gave it back to me saying, "Have a nice trip". We were travelling for a couple of hours and my friend made a sort of cage in the car, out of wood and a lot of camping equipment, tents and things. As we entered England and the ferry stopped I got inside the cage and closed the door. So he drove me out. Nobody checked. The thing is, it's very absurd, if you are white and you have a passport from the European Community or an English passport, nobody checks you. My friend is fifty years old, he's my friend's stepfather, it would've been ridiculous to have checked him - he wouldn't smuggle anything. But if he had been black, from India or Pakistan he would've been stopped for sure.



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УЛ 28. 12. 2004

BIJELOVARINA

REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA

УЛ 10. 01. 2005

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4.

I tried to go to the Seychelles when I went to Nairobi, when I was in Kenya, but they found me twice on the boat because I was smuggling myself to go to the Seychelles without papers. I didn't make it because they had just one boat every day that was able to travel, and it was very controlled... I didn't get there and it was a shame because I wanted to go. Once I got there, but they sent me back to Mombassa.

I went to the National Park to see giraffes and elephants, a proper environment, which was nice, made me feel like a tourist...



5.

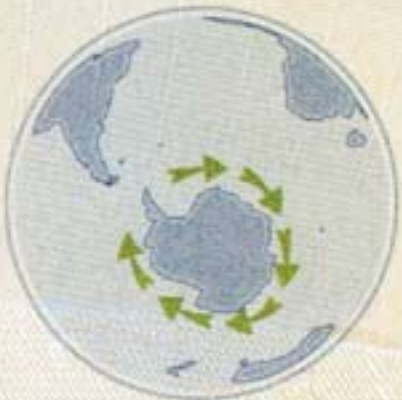
Well, on my way to Spain I got a passport from my friend. He gave me a jacket and a passport as a gift, like so I wouldn't have problems. On the way out of Britain they don't control anything because they don't care who's leaving. You can't come in but you can go out whenever you like. The customs officer was sitting in the cabin and he said to us, "Do you have passports and tickets?" We said, "Yeah, yeah", and he said, "OK, have a good one", and that was it.





6.

When we arrived in France, nobody was there, we just drove in. We went to Normandy for ten days on holiday with friends. Visited a few nice places and then went by train to Barcelona. Again I was lucky because at Port-Bou there were, I think, some policemen and customs officers dressed in plain clothes. They were taking people that looked like North Africans, Moroccans or Algerians, checking their papers and everything. The customs officer was looking at me and I was playing the guitar and singing, and he was just laughing, probably because I was playing the guitar very badly. But they didn't say anything, probably because I looked European; they left me alone.



7.

I've been arrested in every country. In Spain there is still a chance left. But it's all right. Because of a Human Rights Act in 1998. I took the time to get a booklet on Human Rights in Europe, read everything, and then see what rights are mine and what obligations. And see what I actually can do. And I don't believe that anyone can actually kick me out. It's not possible if you know that, but you have to sit down and learn. And what happens is that people just don't know this so they end up in the hands of some country-men that use them for very cheap labour or drug dealing, or things like that, which I don't like to do. Because I want to have a normal life—without papers. Because I don't believe I need them. At the moment I'm trying to make my own passport, which is going to be a Terrain Passport (Terraē lat. Earth). I'm going to make my own and that's going to be my identification. I believe I have the same rights as any inhabitant of this planet.



8.

I finished military school when I was nineteen having spent four years there. At that time we started a sort of separation, because I was brought up in Yugoslavia, which was my country, where everybody was equal and didn't have religious problems. "Where are you from?" That was not the question. The question was: "Where are you going? What do you want to do with your life?" Then when I was nineteen things started changing. At military school we were divided between Muslims, Serbians and Croatsians. And that to me was too hard to deal with. So I decided to leave, I left before I had finished.



9.

For me this was a disaster because it was not my choice. I just discovered that everybody under the right circumstances can find an evil part within themselves. I saw with my own eyes the people that I knew from the beginning, really kind of nice and easy-going and very peaceful, changing. They started actually blaming people because they had different religions, or different names or were from different parts of Yugoslavia. This went together with a policy that was coming from Belgrade at the time—the nationalist group of people who actually opened the door for evil to come to Serbia. And everything went mad. And I've seen people changing. Coming back from the war with necklaces of human ears and eyes, talking about how many people they killed and how. It was a real disaster, it was bad. I was in Serbia, but they were coming from Bosnia at that time.

I left school and had a problem. I escaped for two years to Greece at the time of Croatian and Bosnian war in 1994 and 1995. The Military Police were hunting us: "You are gonna go fight and defend your country". "I'm not gonna fight for anybody, I don't care". After the war there were just statistics, who survived and who died, and a few people ended up being rich. And that's it. The rest of the people fucked up. So I didn't want to be in any of these groups and I left.



10.

We ended up going to Greece through an agency. We travelled on an exactly full bus. The trip leader would come and collect all the passports, take them to the customs officer, where he'd check to see if they were right. But as me and my friend didn't have visas we didn't give the passports. And the customs officer didn't know how many people were on the bus. So we just went to Greece.

We chose the place on the map in Crete, in the southeast, a small bay, lovely. So we went there and stayed for two years. Which was very nice. With no people... In Greece it's very easy to find a job if you don't have papers, especially in tourism. You work as a waiter, it's just fine... Nobody checks you out. It's good money as well.



11.

There were sort of dealers in front of the Greek embassy in Belgrade at the time. A visa was around 30 DM (Deutsche Marks) and you had to pay the dealers 300 DM to get a visa. The dealers worked with people from the embassy, the Greek people, and they shared the money. There were so many people that wanted to go to Greece. They were putting the price up, up, up and up. Many people were going to stay there but lots of people actually went just to smuggle things, things that they could sell back in Serbia.



12.

You could easily get any boat and go anywhere in Europe. That was before the Schengen agreement. So people used to go on boats and go anywhere in Europe. It was easy in the Mediterranean Sea to go anywhere you wanted. Fishing boats were the best. If you go from Greece on a fishing boat, a Greek fishing boat, they can go into international waters. And then you have an Italian fishing boat fishing there as well. You just go from a Greek to an Italian fishing boat, and when you finish you go to Italy. Nobody checks you, there is no customs officer because they are Italians. As a friend of mine used to say, "Enjoy the flight or why the fuck did you buy the ticket?"



13.

People like me and there are a lot of them... If you read Das Kapital by K. Marx the last stage of capitalism is actually shifting classes into nations. So the class system in one nation will start to disappear. And then the class system will be divided between countries, which is now happening, because we have now third world countries, countries in transition and developed countries... People like me are actually modern slaves. They come around, they don't have papers, they do really shit jobs for no money. They kind of survive, they keep their money, and then go home, and then "life is better after ten years", they buy a house or build a house... That's how it goes, which is a real shame. And the politicians now, they try to tackle the refugees, the illegal immigrants problem but they can't, because it's a part of their country's economy. It's not possible because without these people everything would be more expensive. And living standards would suddenly drop because they would need to get, let's say, Spanish people to do the jobs that really are not well paid. And they would need to insure them, to pay taxes, and nobody is going to do that.



14.

Like in London. In London you can't find a plumber. You have to make an appointment three months in advance. And plumbers are mainly Eastern Europeans who don't have papers. So everybody is getting into information technology, management, or some kind of art, things like that. That's a shifting of classes. But I'm not part of that, again, I'm on my own.



15.

I was proposed to a few times in England, to get married and everything. But I was with girls that were really good people. And I liked them, but I wasn't sure if I would stay with them when I got the papers. I didn't want to break someone's heart because of papers, and be a real shit in the end, saying after three years, "Listen, I'm gonna go to South America now.". when she'd maybe planned all her life with me and everything... and I don't believe in marriage. To me it's an institution. That's how I think about it.



16.

The only day when marriage really exists on paper is when somebody dies, so they can actually divide everything that is left after that person is gone. For example, if you're not married to someone and that person leaves something behind it's open for everybody. But marriage actually gives you a pension, properties, bank accounts... It's the only purpose, if you look around... I can't get married now because they have my papers. If I go to the office to get married I can't prove who I am. I have so many that know me; it's hard. Getting married is a good solution because you get out of this world of problems. You get papers and nobody hustles you any more. But I'm kind of used to it, now. It's fun. I'm out of the system.



17.

I used to look for them when I was a kid, for insects, ants. Their nest, I used to destroy half of the nest. Bring a big glass and put it on it and there's great confusion. Suddenly they start making big roads and you have motorways, you have the small roads, you have things where some ants stay, you have everything... And I like watching people as well. If you look around, people behave exactly like ants. Insects. I never wanted to be an insect, honestly. "Wake up, 9 o'clock you need to be there. Work all day long... Five days more... And at the end of the week I have dinner with my family, on Saturday. And then we're happy. And on Sunday we go for a picnic, round and round, and fine". After fifty years you turn around and ask yourself, "Where the fuck have I been?" Well I don't want to ask myself that question.



18.


I'm going to make my documents. I'm going to make my own. Which is what I have every right to do. Who gave to someone the right to claim, "This is my piece of planet? So now you're gonna behave like this"? I can say, "This planet is mine as well". There is a bit of hypocrisy on my behalf because I have documents that are not mine. So it's easier for me. It's going to be like a passport, for example if aliens came they could take me away, because I have a proper document. It's a Planetary Document. It's not a piece of land that says your country. So I can go and I really can't wait for it... I'm going to make it possible for myself to give passports to other people. And anybody who receives the Passport is capable of giving it to other people. And that's going to spread I believe. One day we're going to conquer the planet. Viva!



19.

The legal part is irrelevant. For example, let's say, abortion was illegal, now it's legal, Let's say in my country Yugoslavia I had a passport, I was official, now if you have a Yugoslavian passport it's not official, because that country doesn't exist anymore. So, it's irrelevant in time scale. A Spanish passport could be irrelevant in few years, maybe it's going to be a European passport. So now I can shift myself through time as well. It's another skill I have learned on my journeys.





nobody is illegal, or we all are

(papeles para todos o papeles para nadie)

'Extra-comunitarios', or citizens of non-European countries, have the 'extra' bureaucratic task of changing their status, to one that will allow them to move and work 'freely' within the European Union. The length and complexity of this process can vary depending on the type of 'extra-comunitario' in question.

Almost everyone agrees that bureaucracy is as boring as it gets: it's boring for those who have to navigate their way through it, and for those who regulate it. But documents can suddenly become imbued with power and begin to tell the story of a person's life, down to the most subtle details, feelings, disappointments, hopes and despair. Technical terms written in upper case become charged with meaning: Student Visa Application receipt, Return Permit: DENIED, Document REMOVED, LOST....

If you had ever thought that all humans are endowed by nature with the right to move freely and the right to work, and that these rights should be above any 'earthly' law granted and regulated by political bodies, bureaucracy will, in practice, show you that the opposite is true.

The things reserved for our innermost selves, the way we explain ourselves to ourselves and question the nature of life and the whole world – *Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? How big is space and how long is time?* – lose their transcendental nature and begin to refer exclusively to a limited universe much closer at hand, ruled by legal regulations that have their limits within political borders.

So then – *Who am I?* The way in which we search for and construct our identity becomes a question of social objectivity, the need to acquire a status that gives us the right to be somebody in the current social system. To have an official ID number, a social security number, to make social security contributions, to be a taxpayer...

Space is basically defined within two incompatible realities: the one back there and the one yonder. The one I come from and the one I'm heading to. Each closed to the other, thereby condemning the person trapped in between to wander aimlessly through the transition space between them, coming up against obstacles to participating in either of the two worlds.

Time gets its meaning in the indefinite periods of waiting – *Transit Time*. Time that isn't considered to be part of living, but an interference, daily life put on hold for an unknown period, with the hope that, when it's all over, it will be possible to take up 'real' life again as though nothing had ever happened. But this 'interference time' is increasingly becoming a constant element of life, and if a person does eventually manage to reach her goal, she may have changed so much that her interests and physical and mental state may no longer be the same.

A card with a number on it becomes the object of anxiety and a daily nightmare. A card with a number is much more than a card with a number (and perhaps a hologram, magnetic strip, microchip...). This card with a number is the key to freedom of movement and the job that you want, a synonym of freedom. And the desire for it grows stronger as the bureaucratic process, transition, irresolution, legislative limbo or whatever becomes longer and more convoluted.

If it's true that we learn from life by living it, what can we do with what we learn in this case? Queue better? Be more severe, obedient, or lie to the authorities better? Do we learn that it's our own fault for having desired something? Or expand our vocabulary with words that we don't even know in our native language, such as appeal, allege, authorisation...? If so, what kind of school is this, and what method does it use? And what is the paper that will make us free?

1998



2005

ECOLE ASSIMIL-FORMATION

مدرسة أسيميل - التكوين

SCHENGEN
SANS EFFORT

BRUXELLES / BARCELONA

2005



Vahida Ramujkic

interview with Justin

plz. George Orwell, Barcelona

March, 2004

SERVICE DE TRADUCTIONS

Nuria Rodriguez / Sabina Girau

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Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

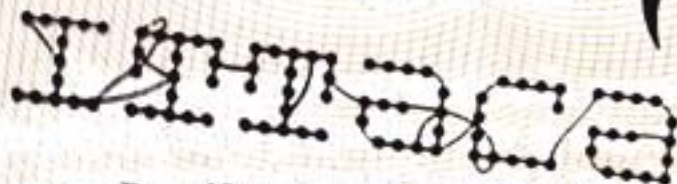
ROTOR

CASINO



LUXEMBOURG
Forum d'art contemporain

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