

# Balkan

# HORIZONS

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER ON DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY ISSUES

Issue nr. 5, Winter 2000

## *One year on...*

A year after the NATO bombing, the Balkans are still in turmoil.

Once again it is proven that the NATO bombing of Kosovo, which was greeted with mixed feelings in the various Balkan countries, failed to provide a solution to the problems of this long-suffering region.

It is obvious that the Milosevic totalitarian regime led inexorably to the decision to bomb Kosovo. It is open to question whether the bombing has helped Yugoslavia to find its way out of the crisis.

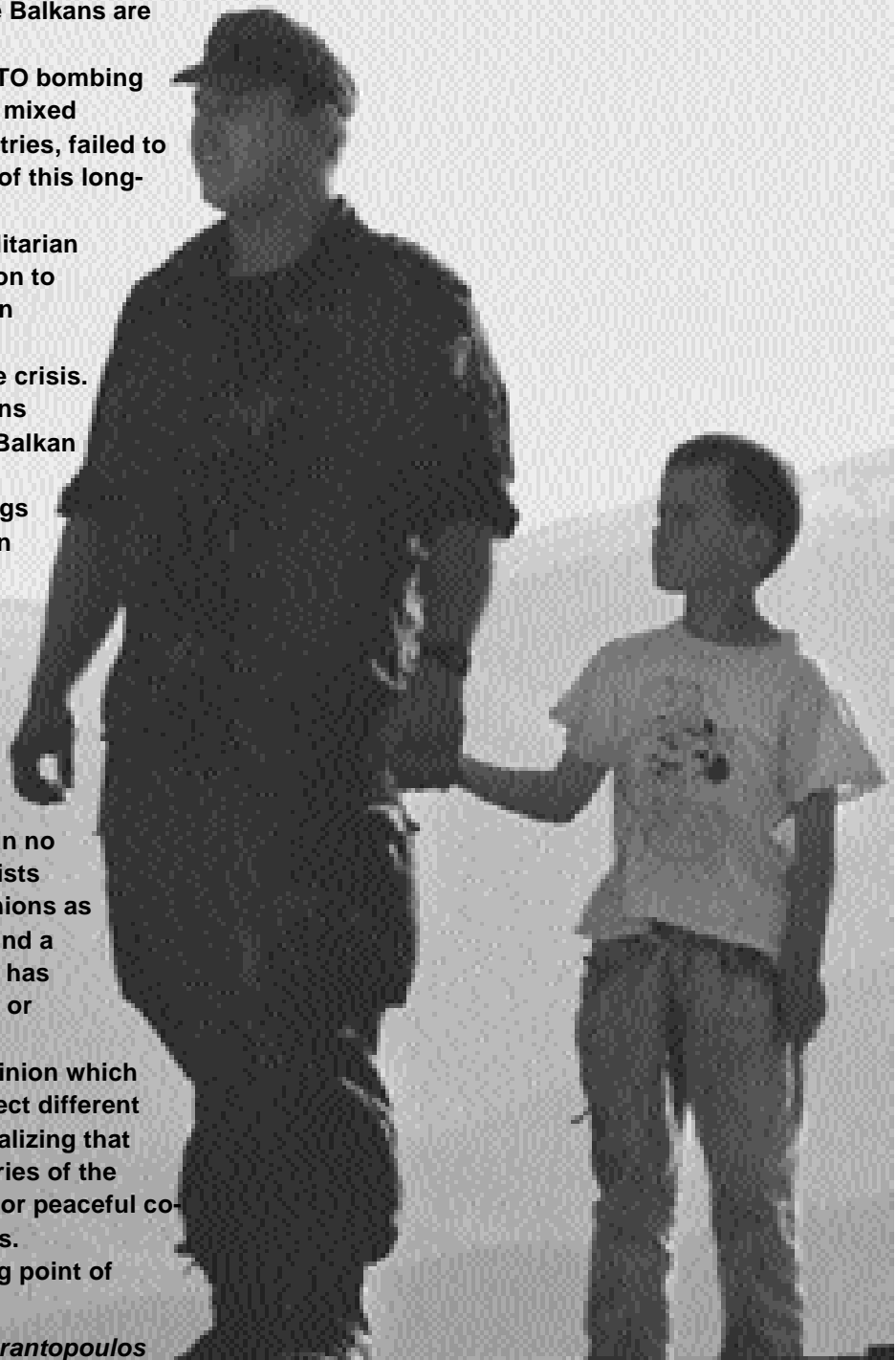
The present issue of *Balkan Horizons* takes a close look at conditions in Balkan countries one year after the NATO bombings. It is an issue which brings together the conclusions reached in talks between eight journalists, all members of the *Balkan Horizons*' editorial committee, who met in Thessaloniki in March 2000.

What is of interest in this exchange of opinion is the descriptive accounts of different experiences and different conditions in the Balkan countries. These accounts in no way inhibit the experienced journalists from expressing positions and opinions as to how the Balkans will be able to find a way out of the crisis, a crisis which has affected their countries to a greater or lesser degree.

It is a multi-faceted exchange of opinion which allows the discerning reader to detect different viewpoints while simultaneously realizing that more and more voices in the countries of the Balkans are expressing the desire for peaceful co-existence and respect of differences.

This is perhaps the most interesting point of the present issue.

*Petros Papassarantopoulos*



# Association for Democracy in the Balkans

## Balkan HORIZONS

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### **PETKO D. BOCHAROV**

A freelance newspaper columnist, TV and radio analyst of domestic Bulgarian and International events. He graduated law at the University of Sofia, then worked for more than 30 years in the Foreign News Department of the Bulgarian News Agency BTA. Now he is a commentator for the Sofia branch of Radio Free Europe with a regular 5-minutes in Wednesday's program «THE WORLD AT 13 H» and in Friday's afternoon program «STUDIO BULGARIA».

### **SELÇUK EREZ**

Writer, columnist, (lecturer on gynecology (university of Istanbul). Author of seven books on social and political matters and short stories.

### **LJUBISA GEORGIEVSKI**

Ljubisa Georgievski was born in Bitola in 1937. Film and theater director, writer, theater publicist and theorist, translator and journalist, professor at the University «Cyril and Method» in Skopje. He has directed in USA, Italy, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Slovenia, etc. He was Presidential candidate during the first democratic presidential elections in FYROM in 1994.

### **ZORAN MUTITS**

Publicist, translator. Born in 1951, graduated in English literature and Serbo-Croat Language, Sarajevo University. Studied for one year in the USA. Worked on the Radio Sarajevo Third Program until 1992. From then on he taught Modern Greek at Ljubljana University, Slovenia, and published a magazine for refugees there. Now works at Soros Media Center, Sarajevo. Translated some 30 books from English and Modern Greek.

### **IGOR GUZUN**

Born on September 12, 1968, in the village Recea, district Riscani, Republic of Moldova. Graduated from the Faculty of Journalism, Chisinau State University 1992. Director of the International department of «Saptamina» weekly, political commentator of «Momentul» daily, General Secretary of these publications. Author of «De azi intr-o saptamina» («A Week From Today») (poems).

### **FRROK CUPU**

Graduated from Tirana's University, Faculty of Political Science and Law, Journalism branch. Since 1974 has work for the mainly and daily newspaper "B;;;;;" and "Zerir Popullit" in Albania. On 1990 was among the first intellectual group initiator of political pluralism in Albania. 1991 - co-founder and the first editor in chief of the first anticommunist newspaper "Rilindja Demokratike". 1992 -general Director of Albanian International Center of Culture, Tirana. From 1993 Colommunist and editor in chief of the daily indihundred newspaper "Koha-jone". From 1997 an actually General Director of Albanian Telegraphic Agency. Author of Several articles, reportage, essays, author of three books Is Living in Tirana, Albania

### **PETROS PAPASSARANTOPOULOS**

Publisher and journalist. Director of «Radio Paratiritis», «Radio Anatolikos» and publishing house «Paratiritis».

President of the Greek Federation of Non-State Radio and TV Stations. For many years columnist and editor at Greek dailies. Translator and author of many books.

### **VELIMIR CURGUZ KAZIMIR**

Journalist and author from Belgrade, the works at the Yugoslavian Institute for Open Society. Author of seven books (stories, essays and novels), as well as a great number of articles on cultural and media issues published in newspapers and cultural journals.

# One year



*At this round table, which took place in Thessaloniki, March 2000, at Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeastern Europe, participated the following journalists:*

- *Octavian Andronic, Romania*
- *Petko Bocharov, Bulgaria*
- *Frrok Cupi, Albania*
- *Selçuk Erez, Turkey*
- *Ljubisa Georgievski, F.Y.R.O.M.*
- *Velimir Curguz Kazimir, Yugoslavia*
- *Zoran Mutits, Bosnia*
- *Petros Papassarantopoulos, Greece*

**Petros Papassarantopoulos:** *First question. How reacted the political forces, the political parties in your country to the NATO decision to bomb Yugoslavia.*

*We know very well that before bombing there were negotiations, which were not successful, and we know that there were many indications about Milosevic's ethnic cleansing policy towards Albanians. Velimir from Yugoslavia has to speak first.*

**Velimir Curgus:** I am in a position to speak firsthand because I spent all my life in a country that was under NATO aggression. It was one year ago but still even one year later, I'm not in a position to understand too many details, especially about secret diplomacy and secret politics.

So I'm a person that is not in charge anyhow and I can't represent the people from Serbia, especially not them, or some political parties. My point of view is absolutely individual.

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### ***Nobody likes to be bombed***

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I can also explain what kind of reaction our communities had during the war and especially after the war had finished. So, it's rather simple to say

*The reaction at this moment is that the majority of the Serbian society is tired of Kosovo not only as a geographical term but also as a, I'd say, political, human, economic and state problem*

that the reaction was negative, that nobody likes to be bombed, to be in a war, but that's the other question. The more important question is, one year after it had finished, how did the Serbian community and Serbian

society react to what had happened and do they understand the consequences and the reasons why it happened? For me that's the most important question. Are there connections between the causes and the consequences because of the war?

**P.P.:** *We're going to speak about the consequences in the second round.*

So, I'm talking about the reaction. The reaction at this moment is that the majority of the Serbian society is tired of Kosovo not only as a geographical term but also as a, I'd say, political, human, economic and state problem.

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### ***We want to forget Kosovo***

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It is a situation where people somehow want to escape from this problem, to forget this problem. Even the situation in Kosovo, the temporary situation, is very bad as you know and the pressure against non-Albanian people in Kosovo also ruined the normal process for understanding what's really happening.

I will explain that situation as some kind of psychopathological escaping from the problem, and because it's somehow impossible to find a solution. Everything mentioned about the history and the last ten years of oppression in Kosovo from the regime of Slobodan Milosevic is not enough to understand the deep roots and terrible consequences of the destruction of Kosovo society itself.

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### ***Big enthusiasm in Tirana***

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**P.P.:** *At this point it's much better to see the other side of the hill, to see how the Albanian public opinion and the political forces reacted to the NATO decision, how the negative feelings which exist in Yugoslavia were positive feelings in Albania. Frock Cuppi from Albania*

*will now speak.*

**Frock Cuppi:** Speaking about this moment of the bombardment, starting with the bombardment of Yugoslavia, I have to bring to my mind that night, the 24th of March, to be very realistic, in Tirana it caused a very big enthusiasm.

**P.P.:** *A totally different atmosphere in comparison with Belgrade.*

Yes, it was a very enthusiastic night.

*...starting with the bombardment of Yugoslavia, I have to bring to my mind that night, the 24th of March, to be very realistic, in Tirana it caused a very big enthusiasm...*

Especially for the politicians, for our governmental people. According to my duty and my position I was obliged to stay all night long and even for two months, and I followed everything.

You couldn't speak with anyone in a calm way. Everything was just like in the New Year. The New Year, the New millennium was calmer. Especially, the governmental people and the politicians.

As for the opinion of the population, nobody could check it, it's false to say that the general opinion was like that. Because in a few minutes in Tirana NATO was everywhere, it was returned as taboo.

Nobody could say something against NATO, nobody could say that NATO was doing something wrong. I was there, I was a witness there. And I read a lot of news coming even from NATO's headquarters, which was very particularly against NATO.

It was impossible to publish it. Everything was taboo. So, I think that

Looking for the reasons why it happened like that, I'm not sure that the Albanian people wanted the misfortune of the Serbian people. I'm not quite sure. I doubt it.

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### **The communist umbrella**

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I think that there are some other reasons. One reason, one very general reason is that the Albanian people used to be under the communist regime and pressure. They are used to living under this big umbrella, a strong umbrella, and for

*...Albanian nationalism played a big role in this age, in this time. So they started to think that now was the time when Kosovars were going to be released from the Serbs*

several years they were out of this umbrella and when they saw NATO's very strong hand coming from the sky, they said, «Now the umbrella is coming for us». That's a general reason for the Albanian opinion. This is the first. The second is that, being very realistic, Albanian nationalism played a big role in this age, in this time. So they started to think that now was the time when Kosovars were going to be released from the Serbs. It's a big propaganda from the communist field and for a long time. So, the common people couldn't think, «look, we're just one country, you know, we're Balkan», they only thought about freedom, which is very enthusiastic. Without knowing what's freedom and what's occupation. It's just a dream.

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### **Albania as paradise garden**

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The other reason, I think, is that NATO

by itself immediately made a very big promise to the Albanians «We'll build Albania, we'll construct roads, we'll construct infrastructure, we'll protect



*Petros Papasarrantopoulos*

Albania, Albania will be the paradise garden. So these are the reasons why Albania was in a very enthusiastic way. And now, one year later, it's just a year ago that the bombardment started, it's not the same situation.

People are more realistic, even the politicians, who are very young. If you want very young politicians come to Albania. You can find twenty-five year old Prime Ministers. It's a very young generation, without knowledge and experience. And the people that saw this are looking more carefully into this situation.

They have defeat in their purpose to build something else with NATO. They have seen Kosovars in Albania, they have seen the consequences of their deeds.

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### **500.000 Kosovars in Albania**

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It was a number of 500,000 Kosovars in Albania, and this is a very poor country and a very poor population. So, the economy is destroyed even by this event, it's not built up, it's destruction. It's a different view.

**P.P.: So far we heard two different**

**aspects. The situation in Belgrade and the situation in Tirana. The country that was closer to the centre of the operations was the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia. Liubija Georgievski from FYROM is going to tell us how things were in FYROM, how the public reacted, how political parties reacted and what the situation is now, one year later.**

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### **Neither war nor peace**

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**Liubija Georgievski:** As a matter of fact, just let me say at the beginning that I do not quite understand this act. What I think is that the war is not over. What I think is that the war has just started. Firstly, by the intensive ethnic cleansing of the Milosevic militia in Kosovo and, then, by NATO.

What we do have in Kosovo is heavily armed, massive and mass troops confronted politically, separated with some couple of miles. And we have all elements of possible war. I would call the situation in Kosovo neither war nor peace. As for the Macedonian reaction, what we have been afraid of before the war in Kosovo was the spillover of the war into our country which would have catastrophic

*...we were smashed by a stampede of refugees, of some nearly half a million refugees, and it's a miracle how our fragile government succeeded in managing this problem...*

consequences on the stability of the whole region.

Firstly we were smashed by a stampede of refugees, of some nearly half a million refugees, and it's a

miracle how our fragile government succeeded in managing this problem, in meeting the basic needs of these people, of course desperate, uprooted, and so on.

For all these efforts, we have been given very pejorative, I would say even very offensive reportages on CNN as to our treatment of refugees, as to the living conditions in their camps, as to their lack of tennis courts, etc. etc. If I say that Skopje disposed not more than 30 or 40 tennis courts built in the last two years for the needs of diplomats, we could not afford to build tennis courts for refugees.

Though we have been given a very huge, warm, cordial, brotherly hug, we haven't received substantial, financial help for this situation.

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### ***Some couple of hundreds of refugees***

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We were also very much disillusioned with the possibility of dispersing the refugees throughout European countries and elsewhere, which they acted as if they were caught by surprise, since in our opinion, they had to know what they were preparing. If you sell out a huge territory like Kosovo, you have to be much more

*...I asked an American journalist «How would the United States react if it met a stampede of 30,000,000 Mexicans?  
And he realised and understood all our problems at that moment...*

prepared to receive the refugees, which are nothing but the classic response to the situation, which is something we are used to from experience.

Nevertheless, the European countries and other countries took some couple of hundreds of refugees each. So the main part of refugees, about 250,000, remained in Macedonia for a long time. I will not speak here about the political effect and the economic effect, which is obvious.

I asked an American journalist «How would the United States react if it met a stampede of 30,000,000 Mexicans?» And he realised and understood all our problems at that moment.

But talking about the political problems, they were augmented very much because the reaction of our people was very dramatic on both sides. We have, as you know, about 23% of ethnical Albanians as citizens of Macedonia.

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### ***A classic inter-ethnic tension***

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They reacted, let's say, not as if it was a Christmas evening. They reacted very positively towards the NATO bombing. Macedonians reacted vice versa for several reasons, which are obvious and won't be mentioned here. A classic inter-ethnic tension effect was formed by this. So, part of Macedonia was for the solution that was proposed by several sides to create a corridor for Albanian refugees from Kosovo, to get them into Macedonia and to transform by this created corridor to Albania. This corridor was rejected for unknown reasons.

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### ***20.000 refugees in FYROM***

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I don't know the reasons why this was rejected, but the Macedonian citizens, the Macedonian ethnic group reacted very negatively to all this, since before that President Gligorov reassured that Macedonia is ready to receive some 20,000 refugees and to give them decent conditions of refugee living. So part of citizens for this Gligorov auction were mostly Macedonian and as for

the ethnic balance in Macedonia, they were severely and sharply against this. I will stress here the miracle of how our government succeeded in dealing with this problem and to keep Macedonia, i.e. the Balkans, stabilised enough.

***P.P.: Let's continue with the surrounding countries. Joran Mutic from Bosnia is going to tell us how***

*...some of the parties, like the Radical Party insisting on joining Yugoslavia, sending volunteers, while some other more moderate parties said that it should be on an individual basis...*

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***the political forces and public opinion reacted and what the situation is nowadays.***

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### ***Bosnia in divided***

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**Joran Mutic:** I cannot give a single answer to this because in Bosnia the situation is still raw and besides, the country is divided into two groups, which more or less coincide with the ethnic majorities. So, the NATO presence in Bosnia was reinforced on the eve of the bombardment.

Even what they did as a sort of preventive sign of warning, they inspected some army barracks in Republica Serbska, showing clearly that at the first sign of possible aid or co-operation with Yugoslavia, they would attack the barracks or bomb them or even destroy them.

The proof of this was sometimes in the middle of the war when one of the barracks, the Republica Serbska raiders were used to locate some of the low-flying aeroplanes, these raiders were immediately destroyed by

the same force.

Knowing how sensitive the question is of the relationship, especially between Republica Serbska and Yugoslavia, NATO didn't use the Sarajevo airport, except on two occasions where two aeroplanes returning from their missions, had to the airport temporarily. Now I'll talk about Republica Serbska. Especially in the first two-three weeks of the war there were continual sessions in the parliament of Republica Serbska, with most of the parties, and understandably so, supporting Yugoslavia, but also some of the parties, like the Radical Party insisting on joining Yugoslavia, sending volunteers, while some other more moderate parties said that it should be on an individual basis where we wanted to volunteer to go, because it was part of individual choice.

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#### **Verbal accusations against NATO**

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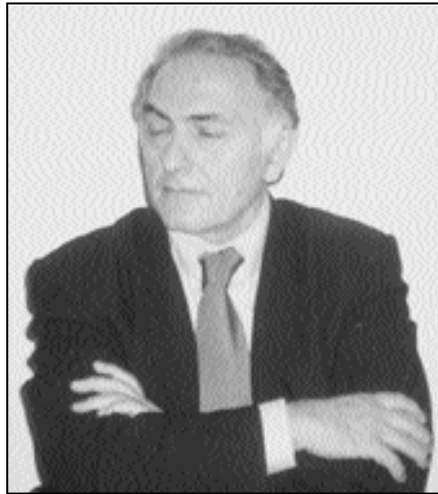
However, all this somehow were toned down, and more and more of these sessions were finished with verbal accusations against NATO, although the public opinion especially in the

*There were violent demonstrations, most of the international organisations' offices were destroyed, excepting the Red Cross...*

beginning, even in towns where the situation has changed dramatically has been more comparative with the international community.

There were violent demonstrations, most of the international organisations' offices were destroyed, excepting the Red Cross and some other organisations, even the international police

withdrew their forces from Republica Serbska, only the military presence was kept there in the first month. Afterwards they slowly started



*Ferroc Cupi (Albania)*

returning. Institutions like the branch of the British Embassy, the British Consulate, the British Council, the American Library, all these institutions from the USA, which had their offices open had to close them for a couple of weeks.

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#### **Augmented international aid**

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On the other hand, some other organizations functioned perfectly. We have a Research Foundation that has its media centre, which was opened two years ago with the co-operation of the Independent Association of Journalists in Republica Serbska and it not only functioned but in the heat of the war we organised some seminars for local journalists.

In the other part of the Bosnian Muslim and Croat Federation, it was very different and again you cannot specify it in a single sentence. I can say that generally the opinion just before the war when the first influx of refugees started coming, was positive. Of course there were always cries for augmented international aid, because Bosnia is still in a much worse position than any of the surrounding countries.

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#### **40.000 refugees in Bosnia**

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Still the consequences of the previous four-year war are felt everywhere. Still there are a lot of internal Bosnian refugees inside Bosnia, and now with the influx of 40,000 refugees it was really terrible in the beginning. Lately, however, another kind of shock, recently developed, maybe always latent xenophobia suddenly appeared, and of course, with such a huge group of 40,000 refugees there was a small percentage of those who used the opportunity to get from Kosovo and continue their criminal operations. They were a part of the Kosovo market.

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#### **Xenophobia in Bosnia**

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It started functioning immediately in Bosnia and since the international police and the international military presence is very active in Bosnia, they were soon caught and they got a rather good treatment in the domestic press, which contributed to the rise in xenophobia.

So, a lot of people who were initially sympathetic to the Albanian refugees, suddenly started using the same stereotypes they had some ten or fifteen years ago and saying that, you

*...a lot of people who were initially sympathetic to the Albanian refugees, suddenly started using the same stereotypes they had some ten or fifteen years ago...*

could even hear this among the Bosnian Moslems, things like «maybe the Russians were right», you remember in the beginning, ten years ago, when he abolished the autonomy

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of Kosovo, and «we should send them back», things like this.

It was not only on an individual level, it was some of the papers that gave such comments. They exist unfortunately. Political parties in the Bosnian Croat Federation also reacted in different ways.

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***Serbian aggressors got what they deserved***

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They all issued statements of sympathy, but on the other hand you could even hear it stated not only on TV with some sort of triumph that the Serbian aggressors finally got what they deserved. So, it was a sort of schizophrenic situation. Just about every statement from every political party could be supported and criticised at the same time as being at least non-politically correct, or even supporting some sort of a hate speech or nationalist hysteria.

The situation changed radically during the last year, but it is only because everything changes radically in Bosnia in a short period of time. I would say that only several months after the war, everybody forgot this war, because people are pressed with their everyday problems, and with survival from day to day and I don't think that most people even think of it or remember. You have to remind them and then they say «O.K.».

*...in Greece there is a kind of traditional pro-Serbian propaganda, which obliged many of our media not to refer at all to Milosevic's oppression in Kosovo.*

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***Pathological phenomena in Greece***

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**Petros Parasarantopoulos:** Let me say a few things about the public opinion and how the political parties reacted in Greece. There were some really pathological phenomena in Greece as our country is a NATO member and our government agreed in principle to the NATO decision, expressing some reservations about the way that NATO was going to execute its operations in Kosovo.

At the same time the public opinion in Greece was strongly anti-NATO and in my opinion there are two reasons for this. The first reason is that in Greece for historical reasons there is always space for an anti-American policy, as many Greeks conceive Americans as responsible for many of the Greek problems in our contemporary history, and also as in Greece there is a kind of traditional pro-Serbian propaganda, which obliged many of our media not to refer at all to Milosevic's oppression in Kosovo.

For many Greeks, for the average citizen, the Yugoslavian drama simply started in March '99. They could not understand and they could not realise that irrespective of whether they agreed with the NATO decision or not, there were a lot of decisions made by Milosevic, which created a totally unacceptable situation in Kosovo.

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***Communists and conservatives***

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So, we had the main mass media against the NATO decision, the public opinion strongly against, and we had many demonstrations, for which a paradoxical phenomenon was that at these demonstrations, the main participants were the Communist party members and also many conservative citizens, which were ideologically totally different from the communist party supporters.

We also had in Greece the strange

phenomenon that many people in Greece were saying «OK, the public opinion is against, but our government is reacting in a wise way, trying to keep some balances», supporting and not supporting exactly the NATO opera-

*...One year later it seems that everybody recognises that NATO's operation didn't have an exit strategy...*

tions and, of course, with the exception of some extremists, everybody recognised that Greece, as a member of NATO, had certain obligations.

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***Luck of exit strategy***

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We had a negative reaction from the public, we had a government that tries to balance things and we had some individual intellectuals who were, in principle, against bombing, who were also, in principle, against the Milosevic policy in Kosovo. But those intellectuals tried to understand, «OK, NATO has made this decision. Is this decision solving the problem?». One year later it seems that everybody recognises that NATO's operation didn't have an exit strategy.

As it seems that the problem has not been solved, that in Kosovo, Milosevic oppression has been replaced by the Albanian bands, which are terrorising the non-Albanian citizens. It seems that instead of having a tolerant and multinational society in Kosovo, we are facing phenomena of ethnic cleansing. What Milosevic failed to do in Kosovo, seems to be happening nowadays in Kosovo against the Serbians. So, nowadays, we feel, many people in Greece feel that we cannot foresee

any solution and many politicians and analysts fear that the crisis in Kosovo will continue and that we are going to have another kind of civil war in Kosovo, which proves that the NATO operation didn't have an exit strategy. It was just a decision which didn't count the consequences and which didn't have a perspective.

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### **Romanians against bombing**

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**P.P.: Let's continue with Octavian Andronic from Romania.**

**Octavian Andronic:** There was a strong contradiction between the population.

According to the polls more than 80% of the population of the Republic of Romania was against the attack. The political class engaged in the pre-

*...the Bulgarian government of Premier Ivan Kostov acted very courageously and very decisively, endorsing the line that NATO and the Western community took against Serbia...*

liminaries of the NATO mission, who fully supported the war, by public declarations by legal measures for access from the air, the traffic of the troops on ground.

Historically, the relationship between Romania and Serbia, especially Serbia, was excellent. They say that Serbia was during that time the only friend of Romania.

This is the main explanation of the public opposition to the war. Unfortunately for the political regime in Romania, this position has worsened its situation, completing the continuous

problems in the ruling coalition.

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### **...pushed in the corner**



Lubisa Georgievski (FYROM)

**P.P.: Let's continue with Petko Bocharov from Bulgaria, on public opinion and political parties reactions.**

**Petko Bocharov:** Now, as an introduction, there are two things I want to point out. The first is that I'm expressing my own opinion. I don't belong to any political party and I'm an absolutely independent freelance journalist. So, I'm pressured from now-here. The second thing I want to point out is that as a radio and TV journalist I'm aware of what such a conversation means. So I'm going to speak concisely and to the point.

I will not try to deliberate on the side effects of the crisis and the details because it will be too long a conversation. They're innumerable. So, to the point. What were the effects of the Kosovo crisis on Bulgaria? I shall divide this effect into three parts. The effect on the government political force, on the opposition and on the public opinion. The government political force, which is called the Union of Democratic Forces, was so to say pushed in the corner by the Kosovo crisis, with no choice of what

to do or where to go but to make a definite decision.

I must remind you that when this political force came to power a few years ago, it declared that one of the most important priorities of its foreign policy is to integrate into the European-Atlantic structures. It also declared not only its willingness but also its readiness to work hard to become part of the Western community, and more concretely to become part of the European Union and NATO.

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### **A courageous government**

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These were all declarations said in words, and when the Kosovo crisis came the government was faced with the choice either to be true to its words and follow them by deeds or just to be compromised before the Western communities and Western nations where we wanted to go.

I must say that the Bulgarian government of Premier Ivan Kostov acted very courageously and very decisively, endorsing the line that NATO and the Western community took against Serbia.

*...when the Kosovo crisis erupted, the opposition in Bulgaria saw its chance to make a big impression on the population, because this was really a very good chance for populism...*

Nobody loves war, nobody loves bombs to fall on children and women, but those people who think with their own head know that there are moments in history when you must just do something drastic in order to have

better times ahead. So, the Bulgarian government did just this. It endorsed the anti-Milosevic line of NATO, it didn't endorse the bombardment, but it said that this was the last thing that NATO had to do after all those warnings before, and that all other means had been exhausted before the war came. So, I would say that this decisive stand of the government gained it popularity among the common people.

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### **«Military disengagement»**

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What was the effect on the opposition? The opposition had the government of Bulgaria for seven years after the fall of the government then.

It's line of policy towards Western civilisation, culture and so on was shrouded only in words with no meaning behind these words. While governing, the opposition invented the term «military disengagement», which meant something like neutrality, but nobody explained what this means. As everybody knows, there are three kinds of neutrality: recognised, accepted and military neutrality. Anyway, so when the Kosovo crisis erupted, the opposition in Bulgaria saw its chance to make a big impression on

*...I will say this,  
that it is absolutely  
beyond doubt that  
the Kosovo crisis changed  
the political picture  
in Bulgaria profoundly...*

the population, because this was really a very good chance for populism. They mobilised all their forces: media, political persons and so on, to become prophets of doom, if I may say so. They predicted that the Serbs would

come to bomb the nuclear power station in Kozlodui, they predicted that from this moment on Bulgaria would be at war with Serbia.

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### **Wrong prophets**

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Well, as it turned out, all those prophets were proved wrong. And as an effect, the Kosovo crisis resulted in a profound change inside the opposition. A change that is coming out into the open just presently.

The so-called Socialist Party, which was for years and years dark red, not socialist, it was a hard communist party, the only party in south-eastern Europe that did not reform after the big changes in '89, began to realise that it didn't have any future after the victory of NATO in Serbia but had to make a change in its basic policy.

So that at the moment a debate is going on in their midst on whether the Socialist Party will have to endorse the membership of Bulgaria in NATO or not. Two things can happen.

Either the issue of membership in NATO will split the Socialist Party into the Social Democratic New Party, or the same party calling itself Social Democratic, and the rest will go to the small, still existing communist parties, or the whole party will endorse the new line of policy. Nobody knows which one of these things will happen.

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### **The majority against NATO**

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The effect of the Kosovo crisis on the public opinion was also profound, because when the crisis erupted the polls showed that the public opinion was in very great majority against. Not only against the bombardment, but against the line of NATO towards the Milosevic regime.

Now, the last polls show that this attitude has profoundly changed. Now, the majority approves the policy of

alignment to NATO and the problems which now engage the thinking of the common Bulgarian are not NATO anymore, neither Kosovo. There are other problems troubling the Bulgarian citizen at the moment. There are internal problems.

*...we were amazed  
at the support to Milosevic  
from Greece and  
at the tendency of our  
Greek friends to defend  
and to disregard  
his atrocities...*

**P.P.: Especially the economic crisis, the unemployment.**

**Petko Bocharov:** I will say this, that it is absolutely beyond doubt that the Kosovo crisis changed the political picture in Bulgaria profoundly. Aside of this political aspect of the problem, it had a profoundly negative effect on the Bulgarian economy.

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### **Turkish Press against Milosevic**

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**P.P.: Mr. Selcuk Erez from Turkey. You know the question, so I won't repeat it.**

**Selcuk Erez:** I shall do exactly what our dear friend and colleague Petko Bocharov has done. I shall not effect my own interpretation and analysis of the crisis, but I shall try to effect the Turkish press, the opinion of the Turkish people.

In the Turkish press the Kosovo crisis has been largely covered as a consequence of the ethnic cleansing of the Albanians by Milosevic's militia. The massacres and other reports of atrocities were transmitted from European and American mass media. We did, however, have reporters from

Turkish television stations and newspapers and these reporters were Kosovar Albanians fluent in Turkish. Hence, they were reporting the crisis from their points of view and thus, to a certain degree, affecting the opinion of the people.

The presence of a significant number of Albanians in Turkey since the Ottoman Empire and their acceptance by the people as standard Turkish citizens, from whom they cannot discern themselves, reinforced the negative public reaction to Milosevic.

*I can't say that the Kosovo crisis influenced the political field in Albania directly. Nobody won and nobody lost from the Kosovo crisis*

### **Greeks defending atrocities**

One of the conclusions I can draw is that, in our days people immigrate to countries they feel close to themselves. These immigrants and the immigrants' grandsons and granddaughters kind of act as a decisive agent for the subsequent crisis, when such a country is involved in such a crisis. What was previously carried out in Bosnia by Milosevic further preconditioned the public opinion that he would deal with the Kosovar with a style comparable to his previous campaigns and reports verified this impression.

At that period we were amazed at the support to Milosevic from Greece and at the tendency of our Greek friends to defend and to disregard his atrocities. However, we were impressed by the resilient reaction of Yugoslav people to the bombings, aimed to compel Milosevic to withdraw his army from

Kosovo.

### **Kosovars in Turkey**

I admit comparing in an article the panicky and disorderly behaviour of my



*Octavian Andronic (Romania)*

government and people during the earthquake disaster that happened on 17 August '99 to the seriously bombed Yugoslavs', the same people I am speaking about, brave and cool reactions to these bombings.

During the war we received a great number of Kosovars and tried to console them. But they reinforced what we had heard on the radio and saw on television. Economically, the impact of the Kosovo crisis had no tangible effect on Turkey.

**P.P.: We will start the second round of our conversation and I will ask Froch Cuppi from Albania to reply first. Please, state which were the consequences in your country after the end of the war in Yugoslavia, and also reply to the question that many Western analysts are posing, whether it's likely that we will have a new war in Kosovo.**

### **Heavy consequences in Albania**

**Froch Cuppi:** I think that the consequences of the Kosovo crisis in

Albania have been heavy. But not in a positive way. Even if I include the democracy that we are talking about today, the Kosovo crisis didn't influence that well.

I can even say in a destructive way, including democracy. I can't say that the Kosovo crisis influenced the political field in Albania directly. Nobody won and nobody lost from the Kosovo crisis.

Even the opposition, which is a deeply nationalist one led by ex-president Berisha couldn't gain in this very big game of the Kosovo crisis. I think that there have been some very important reasons why the nationalist opposition couldn't overcome these reasons. But according to the economy this has influenced us very badly.

NATO's weapons have destroyed much more than if they had been destroying the Albanian roads.

They occupied the air force and they remained in Albania for a long time and caused a big demise there. More than half a million people coming from Kosovo influenced the very weak Albanian economy very negatively.

### **Northern Albania out of control**

It has influenced it in such a way. The democracy has been influenced very badly, I'm very sure about this. During

*I don't fear a new war because of Kosovo. I agree with my colleague from Tirana and I see that there will be tension and conflicts, but not real war...*

the Kosovo crisis the northern part of Albania went totally out of governmental control. In this area groups

have been created that smuggled groups of weapons. These consequences exist even today. This part of Albania is a little bit out of government control even today.

We cannot say that democracy is supported by the crisis if some part of the country and population are out of government control. This is the first. The second is that the negative influences on democracy in Albania would disappear if the democratic principle was applied.

They are saying in Albania, even the opposition party, «we have no time to build the legal institutions, we have no time to take care of the Albanian population's health, we have no time to take care of the economy, we have no time to see the real governing problems because there is Kosovo».

Kosovo is there. That is not a problem for them. It is just a pretext. That's why.

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#### ***A new war in not likely***

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According to the second question of Petros I can just give my own opinion on a possible forthcoming war in Kosovo. I'm not a Kosovar. I live in Tirana. From what I know about Kosovo, I do not see a forthcoming war in the same situation of the last war. It

*...The two troublemakers are the totalitarian Milosevic regime and the UCK bands, which changed their name, and both troublemakers have as their main purpose to dominate Kosovo...*

would be a very bad situation, there would be tension but not a real war, because I do not see the conditions for war in Kosovo between Serbs and

Albanians. But what I see is what you mentioned before and which I liked very much. As I see it NATO and the international community didn't have an exit strategy. That's why.

They must apply a strategy to close this question of Kosovo. As long as they leave it open it's going to be very bloody for the people and it's going to cause more and more tragedy. But tragedy encountered usually, not just a war, just sharply.

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#### ***Tension and conflicts***

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***P.P.: Velimir Curgus. The consequences in Yugoslavia and if you fear a new war.***

**Velimir Curgus:** I don't fear a new war because of Kosovo. I agree with my colleague from Tirana and I see that there will be tension and conflicts, but not real war. Even on the borders, because now we are talking about the borders between Kosovo and Serbia, there are conflicts, especially in the southern part of Serbia where the Albanian population is.

There are conflicts and incidents but I think there won't be war because of Kosovo. Of course it's possible for a war to start, but that would be more of a general war inside Montenegro.

I feel that every kind of general small war inside Montenegro can produce some international intervention and somehow the regime of Slobodan Milosevic will use that kind of bombardment and intervention.

That is maybe the message of the Kosovo war and NATO intervention. If the goals of the war were to establish a multicultural society and democracy in Kosovo on the one hand, and on the other hand to establish democracy and bring down Slobodan Milosevic, the results are very bad, and I would say there are no results that way.

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#### ***Tragic consequences***

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On the other hand, I would say that the consequences inside Serbia are really tragic from an economic perspective because of sanctions, but also

*...what we badly need at this moment in order to avoid the spillover is the international recognition of our border with Yugoslavia...*

between 250,000 to 300,000 people are now refugees. So, isolation and the depressive regime against the democratic opposition and independent media is now very high.

The war in Kosovo and NATO intervention closed, I would say, the possibilities for peaceful transition and democratisation in Serbia for the next period. I'll just finish by saying that the consequences in Serbia are really tragic.

And I hope that we will see very soon how this situation will have some impact in the future. Right now, I'm a little bit afraid of the possibilities.

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#### ***I fear a new war***

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**P.P.:** Before giving the floor to Liubisa Georgievski let me express my opinion. I fear a new war in Kosovo as there are two main troublemakers and no serious peacemaking and peacekeeping force.

The two troublemakers are the totalitarian Milosevic regime and the UCK bands, which changed their name, and both troublemakers have as their main purpose to dominate Kosovo without having any perspective on co-existence and tolerance.

The international community not only

does not have any exit strategy but also does not understand that a realistic plan has to take into consideration that the reactive forces in the region are the two troublemakers.

The KFOR forces which are in the region are single observers, who are not able to impose elementary

*...Masses of Turks and Greeks had to be displaced, their populations exchanged, with all the dramatic consequences, all the social dramas, and the negative things associated with that.*

democratic procedures. For me an alarming point was that the governor of the region, Kusner, said that he felt abandoned and that he hasn't any money to pay even the elementary personnel. With an international community, which has so far left the post-war situation in Kosovo in a random procedure and with two troublemakers, I fear that we will probably see a new round of the civil war.

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### **Stability in the Balkans**

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As far as the consequences in Greece are concerned, apart from some serious consequences concerning the tourism from the Balkans, Greece has not had any serious economical consequences. But there was a very serious problem concerning the stability in the Balkans, which is a presupposition for prosperity in Greece.

Instead of having a stable situation, we are discussing even now, one year after the end of the war, a new potential war. Liubisa, your turn.

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### **Spillover from Kosovo**

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**Liubisa Georgievski:** As for the consequences, what we are afraid of is



*Selcuk Erez (Turkey)*

the spillover of the lawlessness from Kosovo into Macedonia.

This Kosovo lawlessness will in my opinion go on for a long period. What I think of the time it will take: ten years at least. How Macedonia could stop all possible leaks of this lawlessness with no internationally recognised border with Yugoslavia, which is more than two-thirds of the border with Kosovo. Let's for the time being conceive Kosovo as a territory.

We already do witness the spillover I'm talking about. The low efficiency in stopping the smuggling of drugs and arms stolen in Macedonian cars and sold in Kosovo, almost uncontrolled circulation of civilians, former or actual UCK members, etc.

Nowadays, whoever wants to destabilise the interethnic relations in Macedonia, which are very tense, could do it more easily than anything else, and of course, a destabilised Macedonia means nothing but definitely destabilised Balkans. Consequently, what we badly need at this moment in order to avoid the spillover is the international recognition of our border with Yugoslavia, which is

still strongly administrative. But this problem includes a steady political solution of the Kosovo problem. We will be talking about this later.

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### **Temporary separation**

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**PP:** *Let's continue with Selcuk Erez from Turkey. Do you, personally, or some political forces in Turkey, fear a new round of the war and what were the consequences in Turkey?*

**Selcuk Erez:** No. The first answer is no. The feeling about an imminent fissure of Kosovo in the Turkish public opinion is the following: An absolute need for at least a temporary separation of the two fractions is being researched, it will eventually have to be accepted. It's dramatic, but it will be accepted. The international pressure for them to co-exist in a civilised way, in a democratic way, is not to be realised very soon.

Hence, realistic plans for the coexistence and rejoining may eventually come in the future, but not now.

Inadvertently, one thinks about the Graeco-Turkish war just at the end of the First World War. Masses of Turks and Greeks had to be displaced, their populations exchanged, with all the

*No, I don't fear a new war, but in the discussion between specialist journalists and analysts the subject is there...*

dramatic consequences, all the social dramas, and the negative things associated with that.

### ***Coming together in future***

With the level of sophistication and the level of social reactions of the two communities, if they were left as they were the people would react to each other in a very negative way, the governments would react to the Greeks in Turkey and to the Turks in Greece in a very negative way. All these dramas had to be carried out. The same thing happened in Cyprus. Once there was comparable turmoil in Cyprus, the two populations had to be dramatically separated and this ended the hostilities. Time passed, quite a number of years passed.

Now they are gradually thinking about coming together. I'm sure in future that this will be realised. The teacher of time is needed. This is dramatic but is the reality.

Now about the effects of this campaign on Turkey. It has had an indirect effect on Turkish foreign policy. It did not have any effect as I told you previously on the economy.

### ***The only active force was USA***

Because it was realised that despite the propaganda reporting that the campaign has been one conducted and manned by allied forces and international forces, even the spokes-

*However, it is the realisation especially in Republica Serbska that they do not depend so much on Yugoslavia anymore, and this sort of divorce between their policy and the policy from Belgrade.*

man as you remember was not an American but a German. It was finally realised that the only active force was USA and all the campaign was 99% an

American affair with almost an infinitesimally negligible European contribution, despite appearances.

This caused the European Union members to realise very recently that they must revise their schemes to create a sole European force detached from the United States.

Certainly Turkey at present does not have any place in this army.

### ***A new European force***

But as European Union countries have practically nothing tangible but NATO to depend upon militarily they declared that this new independent European force would use NATO facilities if ever a military campaign was deemed necessary.

The proposition was opposed by the United States and Turkey, both members of NATO. The European Union officials had to revise their wishes to eliminate Turkey and to comply with the American and other different pressures to add Turkey to the list of potential members.

The European military dependence on NATO and the US will not end before a rather longish period of time and Turkish and European rapprochement during this phase is activated and can be achieved in rather incongruous ways and with further Turkish leading and compliance with US and European standards. This impact is already visible in Turkey.

### ***Blockage of Danube***

***P.P.: Let's continue with Octavian Andronic from Romania. First, do you fear a new war and second, what were the consequences in the Romanian society?***

***Octavian Andronic:*** No, I don't fear a new war, but in the discussion between specialist journalists and analysts the subject is there and some of them explain that there could be a new war as you said justly, and Milosevic and UCK need the war to sustain their activity.

About the losses, the consequences for Romania. There were many revelations. One of the last revelations was the blockage of Danube after the bombing of the bridges.

To Romanian carriers, carrier losses come to about 150 million dollars and these losses continue to grow.

*It had been proved that the Politburo of the Bulgarian communist party twice, not once, twice proposed to the Soviet Union that Bulgaria be incorporated as the sixteenth Soviet republic.*

Commercial and tourism exchanges between the two countries were severely reduced. Romania has had a great problem in the last ten years: the embargo toward Iraq and Yugoslavia caused great losses for Romania. In Iraq we have 1.7 billion dollars to recuperate and no one knows when or what. Yugoslavia was a main commercial partner among our neighbours. The worst thing is that assuming its international engagements to the international community, Romania didn't get any compensation till now for the losses and damages.

### ***Divorcing from Belgrade***

***P.P.: Joran Mutic from Bosnia. Same question.***

***Joran Mutic:*** First, regarding the consequences, I think for Bosnia there is an immediate consequence, which at first sight might not seem so immediate.

However, it is the realisation especially in Republica Serbska that they do not depend so much on Yugoslavia anymore, and this sort of divorce between their policy and the policy from Belgrade. They have finally come to the conclusion, even the conservative parties, which were not very

co-operative in the beginning, firstly that they are under the total control of the international community through the NATO forces on the ground. That's one of the things.

The second thing is that the more radical parties can realise the damage that Milosevic has done to the Serbian cause, that he has been doing during the last ten years. So there are more or less turning inwards. Otherwise I think that other consequences, especially regarding the economic ones, are irrelevant, because first of all there is almost no economy in Bosnia, so you cannot say that war damaged

*I think that the Kosovo crisis changed all this. The image of Bulgaria at once became another image in the eyes of the Western communities...*

anything or influenced anything here. Regarding the possibilities of a next war. I don't think that there will be a new war in Kosovo. One of the reasons, I am completely against the current administration, now Kusner is obviously not the right person, but it is not only himself, it's the entire paradox there.

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#### **International aid to Montenegro**

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I think the military presence of NATO forces there is quite strong enough to check everything, to control. It will be hard for any offender to escape control. But now it is not only the number of forces that have the possibility of bringing additional unrest once incurred.

I know that there will be some clashes there will be a lot of terrorist activities but I cannot say that a full-out war will be started.

Now it is Montenegro. With the blockade on the border between Monte-



*Joran Mutic (Bosnia)*

negro and Serbia, there will be international aid coming to Montenegro and slipping to Serbia or being prevented to enter Montenegro with the uncontrolled or maybe the unpremeditated interventions of the international community supporting, even encouraging, the separatist factions in Montenegro.

On the other hand, actually again it's just a game of power between other kinds of policy in Montenegro. I must say that most parties in Bosnia, and in general the administration, support this idea of an almost independent centre, of the secession of Montenegro. And there have been many new contacts on all levels: political, even whatever economy there is, it is mainly in the exchanges between Bosnia and Montenegro. And they are also in favour of Ducanovic's policy, which again I think is not very clear now.

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#### **Positive aspects of the crisis**

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**P.P.: Petko Bocharov from Bulgaria.**

**Petko Bocharov:** I personally don't fear any war in Kosovo. Not there. What I feel somewhat uneasy about is how and when Milosevic will be thrown out of power. How. This is very important, because if it turns out to be with internal strife in Serbia that will be a really bad thing. But if a bad thing ends with a good thing, I will approve of it.

Maybe it will sound paradoxical, but some of the consequences of the Kosovo crisis in Bulgaria were positive. A very positive consequence was the enhancement of the Bulgarian image abroad.

I must remind you that the image of the Bulgarian state was very bad for years and years in the past. It was associated with an attempt on the Pope's life. I would say that this suspicion of the Western powers towards Bulgaria was not unfounded, because the Western powers feared, for more than a hundred years, that Bulgaria is sort of client, first to the Czarist Russia and then to the Bolshevik Soviet Union as a stepping ground for the warm waters of the Aegean and the Mediterranean.

In this aspect these fears were not unfounded because it's true that Bulgaria almost denied its own sovereignty during the communist years.

It had been proved that the Politburo of the Bulgarian communist party twice, not once, twice proposed to the Soviet Union that Bulgaria be incorporated as the sixteenth Soviet republic.

The first time it was during Kruchof's years. The second time was during Brezhnev's years. The fact that

*something which seems like a nightmare for the surrounding countries, which is the vision of some Albanian fundamentalists to create a great Albania*

Bulgaria did not join the Soviet Union was not because we changed our minds but because the Soviets didn't accept Bulgaria, feeling that at that time it wasn't the proper moment for such a thing.

I think that the Kosovo crisis changed all this. The image of Bulgaria at once became another image in the eyes of the Western communities. And this, as

a consequence, led to the enhancement of the role of the Bulgarian diplomacy regionally and in a European aspect.

My opinion is that if this government of Bulgaria had real achievements, it was in the field of foreign policy. It was not a coincidence that Bulgaria was invited to negotiations with the European Union.

I would say that it was also not a coincidence that Bulgaria and Romania agreed to build a second bridge of Danube.

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### ***The water-way of Danube***

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**P.P.:** *These were definitely positive consequences. Were there any negative consequences?*

**Petko Bocharov:** Sure. Very strong negative consequences and implications, especially in the economic field and in trade. You see, we don't have another route towards Western Europe except through Serbia, except on the waterway of the Danube River.

All this was closed and the losses that Bulgaria suffered were enormous. They came on top of the losses that Bulgaria suffered from all those wars in the former Yugoslavia ten years ago. But the Kosovo crisis came on top very painfully.

*...the international community must decide, must have a very clear mind on its decision on what to do and on what status to give Kosovo...*

Just the other day, statistics showed that in '99 the deficit of the Bulgarian foreign trade came to 1 billion dollars. I won't say anything about the debt of Iraq to Bulgaria, which is not 1.5 as for Romania, but 2.5 billion dollars, which Bulgaria will never see again.

We have debts from Libya, also from the past, which has also not been returned. The most acute negative consequence was that the situation in Serbia prevented foreign investment from coming to Bulgaria.

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### ***Late true reforms***

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Because private capital never comes to a place where there is turmoil and where there is danger of losing ground.

Our interest, the Bulgarian interest is totally with the interest of the Serbian people. A democratic Serbia will open the way of Bulgaria for contacts with Europe. As long as Milosevic is in Belgrade, Bulgaria will just be paralysed economically. Maybe these consequences will topple the present government.

This will be a very sad event if it happens, but it may happen and the way things are going maybe it will happen with the parliamentary elections, which are one year from now.

Anyway, this government has achieved many things, which are very important and which cannot be denied, in only three years, because no reforms took place in Bulgaria before that.

The true reforms began three years ago and in this time, the financial situation was stabilised, inflation was stabilised, the banking system was stabilised.

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### ***Currency board in Bulgaria***

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Because in those seven years after '89 there was a barbaric plundering of whatever remained of the Bulgarian national wealth.

Credits were given to people without any kind of guarantee, millions of dollars. Now there are seventy-two criminal cases waiting to begin against bankers and people who have just taken money from the banks, all of them collapsed and bankrupt, which brought a bigger inflation in 1996.

The dollar costed 200 leva and in 5 months it reached 3000 leva a dollar. Now it has stabilised because the lev

was tied to the German mark. The currency board was established, the national bank cannot print any more

*the future of  
democratisation of Serbia  
is the main point  
for any future solution  
for Kosovo, Serbia,  
or this region*

money. The currency board means regulations. So that Bulgaria has changed in those three years, but the Kosovo crisis came as a very severe blow and I'm not sure whether it will be overcome.

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### ***The vision of Great Albania***

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**P.P.:** *We will continue now with the third question. What, in your opinion, could be the best solution for the Kosovo case. I'm asking about your opinion on the best solution, and I also ask you to describe if in your country there are some other opinions, and I would especially like to focus on something which seems like a nightmare for the surrounding countries, which is the vision of some Albanian fundamentalists to create a great Albania, which will contain the existing borders of Albania, plus Kosovo, plus the western part of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia in which Albanians are a majority. Let's start again with Froch Cuppi from Albania.*

**Froch Cuppi:** I will try to say something briefly on the best solution for the Kosovo question. I have three remarks, which are linked to each other.

First of all I think that the international community must decide, must have a very clear mind on its decision on what

to do and on what status to give Kosovo. That's the first point. In my opinion, what I think is the best status is independence, a kind of independence.

The second is that it's necessary and is just in time to make the democratic changes in Serbia. Not just because this influences directly the Kosovars, maybe the Kosovar Albanians in Kosovo and the other ones won't be

*...it's somehow very paradoxical, when you expect to hear in the year that elections are being prepared, for the Serbian opposition to declare «we give Albanians independence»...*

influenced at all by the changes in Serbia. But the international circumstances will influence directly the Albanians in Kosovo after this step.

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### **Coexistence in necessary**

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The third is that I think coexistence is necessary in Kosovo. I do not agree at all with Selcuk Erez that the Serbians and the Albanians in Kosovo cannot coexist anymore.

Maybe it's very difficult right now, but for fighters for humanity it's very accepted to do it and if we are going to say that they should not coexist anymore, we are going to create a very big gap between them. Without coexistence Kosovo will not find a solution.

In Albania the general opinion is focused on the independence of Kosovo, in general, as the best solution. According to some very bad voices of some Albanians, but there are more amplified than they are in reality in Albania about the great Albania, there are some poor people, but very few and very poor, without influence in Albania, who are asking for the break-

away. It's just a stupid and crazy estimation of this point. It's fake. It's nothing, really.



*Velimir Curguz (Yugoslavia)*

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### **Afraid of democratic changes**

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**P.P.: Let's continue with Velimir from Yugoslavia.**

**Velimir Curguz:** I will start with one statement, which the commander of UCK used a few weeks ago. That he is afraid of the democratic changes in Serbia because in that situation the Kosovo Albanians will be pressed by the international community to compromise and to find a solution together for the Kosovo status.

So, his fear is, I would say, something very realistic and it means for me that the future of democratisation of Serbia is the main point for any future solution for Kosovo, Serbia, or this region. I will say that for me, personally, and also in Serbia as a main thought among the people who are against Milosevic and now in the last research, about 70% of the people expect a change in this regime and new reforms and democratisation.

What does Kosovo in the future mean for these people and the political opponents of Milosevic? Of course, 99% are against the independency of Kosovo.

**P.P.: A totally different picture in**

### **comparison with Albania.**

**Velimir Curguz:** Yes. But people I would say, that even political leaders are more realistic in that way and they are talking about that kind of autonomy that would result in the end in some totally de facto kind of independence.

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### **Against independence**

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Nobody expects the borders of this region to change. I think that the democratisation of Serbia is in process at the same moment in Kosovo, because till now, as far as I know, there is no real political life on Kosovo. When democracy in Serbia becomes reality, I expect and I hope that very soon it will be reality in Kosovo. And in that moment, finding a solution for the status in Kosovo would be really something realistic. All questions from the Albanian sides to the Serbian sides were «Give us independence».

And they were somehow disappointed that the representatives of the Serbian opposition didn't agree with independence in a recent meeting Budapest. I think it's somehow very paradoxical, when you expect to hear in the year that elections are being prepared,

*...We cannot talk about solutions to the Kosovo problem as long as Milosevic is in power in Yugoslavia...*

for the Serbian opposition to declare «we give Albanians independence».

The question of independence is not just a political game for elections it's a much more serious thing and many more components and many more partners are in this game.

### **Carefully optimistic**

That's not only a game among Albanians and Serbs. It's a game for the whole region. That game involves Macedonia to a great degree. It's a game for Greece, Bulgaria, all the others. So, you can't expect an answer and reply from anybody, particularly not from the Serbian opposition or the Democratic leaders. So, I will say that I'm carefully optimistic for the future. The example of Cyprus, the example of Bosnia and Croatia is, I would say, very good that you need time to live in more or less peaceful conditions, to start solving these big problems.

Because I recognise how different it is with talks, even the different living conditions in Croatia after the elections and the Democratic opposition came to power. It's different now for Serbs who are refugees and now want to go back to Croatia.

*Deprived of Russian support, Milosevic's power will collapse much sooner and much better. From then on we can start to talk about the Kosovo problem*

I know that this wouldn't be so soon for Kosovo, but I can imagine that with a new democratic government in Serbia and a also new democratic government in Kosovo, the situation could be changing.

### **Huge investments**

#### **P.P.: Joran Mutic from Bosnia. Which could be a reliable solution?**

**Joran Mutic:** I would also agree that temporarily, peace heaping is a priority. The only solution I can see, for which nobody is preparing, is huge investments. Investments that nobody would

be ready to give.

If we say for instance now that we will give 1 million dollars to Kosovo now, and what is needed is 10 million, I would suggest 10 hundred million dollars. To invest. The Bosnian experience teaches us that the mandate to claim was that the military forces had to be changed. Not only numbers because I think temporarily there are none. There had to be an implementing force, which means to have the right to search literally every house to take away all the weapons, including penknives.

In this way to prevent terrorism, to create a temporary police state to control movement, temporarily this will serve just save some lives, and at the same time support those non-governmental organisations, and there is quite a number of them in Kosovo among the Albanians and among the Serbs.

### **Huge transmitters**

To support also the investment of huge amounts on propaganda. Yesterday, we were discussing some things on how to improve the information of the average citizen in Serbia in Kosovo.

To have huge transmitters. If you are forced to watch one TV station and to listen to one radio programme because all the others are simply blocked and the signal doesn't reach you, then you simply have to rely on one source of information, and this is what the majority of these people on both sides are doing.

Again, huge investments. In Bosnia it is working very slowly. It has been five years since the end of the war, but without these international forces, without these huge investments that, of course, other governments are more and more reluctant to give, especially because of corruption. All these are vicious circles, not just one vicious circle, but many of them. But, otherwise we would have had another war immediately after the great one. So, that is maybe a rather black picture, but I think it functions.

### **A perfect hero-victim**

#### **P.P.: Liubisa Georgievski from FYROM. Is there any solution?**

**Liubisa Georgievski:** We cannot talk about solutions to the Kosovo problem as long as Milosevic is in power in Yugoslavia.

*As for the Albanian «megali idea», I would say that in Macedonia this idea has relevant and important roots among the Albanian ethnicity*

The problem we are dealing with will remain unsolved. What I'm very worried about is that the efforts of the inter-national community to help the Serbian opposition to seize power in Yugoslavia are being kind of paradoxical.

Mainly, all problems which the international community tries and creates to try in order to overthrow Milosevic, are shaping out of him a perfect hero-victim, which everyone knows is nothing but the central value of Serbian mythology.

Thus, instead of diminishing the personal values of Milosevic, the international community, paradoxically enough, is building a cult figure out of him. In the meantime Milosevic is keeping the interests of the opposition in constant mutual conflict successfully enough.

The comeback of Putin is of great importance to the Kosovo problem, which implies all geostrategical problems in the Balkans. The international community has to convince him that the fall of Milosevic would not substantially harm the existing geostrategical balance in the way he could be afraid of.

### **Discouraging UCK**

By discouraging, for instance, UCK forces much more strongly by constantly stressing the principle of non-changing borders in the Balkans and even by negotiating, maybe.

Other solutions throughout other places were the opposite geostrategic interests between Russia, the United States and the Western European Union are incomplete. Deprived of Russian support, Milosevic's power will collapse much sooner and much better. From then on we can start to talk about the Kosovo problem.

As for the public and political opinions in Macedonia, there are unpleasantly clear.

*We are now trying  
to look to the future rather  
than to the past.  
Greater Albania, greater  
Serbia and so on...  
this is the mentality of the  
19th century.*

Namely, the Macedonian majority is strongly for the solution proposed by the United Nations, as Kosovo as a federal unit within the borders of Yugoslavia. The Albanian minority, to the contrary, is absolutely clear to be for Kosovo as an independent country. Now, what is interesting is that with the Macedonian majority, a huge majority is against Milosevic.

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### ***The democratic Yugoslavia***

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It's the democratic Yugoslavia with three units: Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro. There is also a small insignificant minority, two percent of Serbian minority in Macedonia, who are also strongly for Milosevic. As for the Albanian political parties in Macedonia, the party which is at the ruling coalition is absolutely clearly and strongly for the independent status of Kosovo. And the other Albanian party, which is in opposition, is kind of reserved towards

this, but still clearly for the independent status of Kosovo. As for the Albanian «megali idea», I would say that in Macedonia this idea has relevant and



*Petko Bocharov (Bulgaria)*

important roots among the Albanian ethnicity, especially in the coalition ruling party in the present government. That's a very clear and very unpleasant situation for me.

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### ***Americans do not understand***

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#### ***P.P.: Octavian Andronic from Romania.***

**Octavian Andronic:** In my country the main political topic about Kosovo is that the Yugoslav society must solve its own problems, and to reach a real democracy, that will solve their problem. There is also a conviction that the neighbouring country must contribute effectively to this process because America is far away. Americans do not understand what really happened here, the neighbouring countries understand. I sometimes ask myself if instead of forcing coexistence in Kosovo, the Cyprus solution would be the best for the moment, because real coexistence will improve only on an economic basis.

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### ***Separatomg Albanians and Serbs***

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#### ***P.P.: Selcuk Erez from Turkey***

**Selcuk Erez:** The solution to my mind is to separate the Kosovar Albanians and Serbs and to keep them apart. This is contrary to European and United States policy makers' tendencies, which is essentially to lead areas of a nation where a different ethnic entity lives, to remain within the boundaries and both the minority and majority members to display their cultural differences and coexist in a civilised way.

Officially, Turkey has declared to be against the separation of Kosovo from Yugoslavia and countries usually despise geographic separations, sometimes admitting that the same may eventually happen to their borders. Now, the international forces that maintain the police forces in Kosovo, will not be able to finance them forever. Hence, as all the tendencies have to be taken into account.

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### ***Maintaining channels***

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As ethnic entities, they have to be separated and kept apart not officially as definite nations, but in a sort of loose unifying definition. The time will come when these peoples and the administrations created will mature enough to be reunited. In the meanwhile, the international community and we, as simple individuals, have to be creative and not lose our faith in the

*if we manage to have  
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eventual outcome, which means we should help maintain certain channels of communication with the two opposing communities.

A number of Kosovars and Serbians, despite this very negative atmosphere,

should continue corresponding, exchanging in a discrete way maybe. May I remind you that China and the United States throughout a long period of time were officially enemies.

Through their representatives in Poland, even during these days, they maintained contact for the eventual positive outcome. The same was true for these and somewhere else. This kind of channel should be maintained and as an institution such as that one, it may have very positive work.

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### **Comprehensive autonomy**

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**P.P.: Petko Bocharov from Bulgaria.**

**Petko Bocharov:** The official position of Bulgaria on the Kosovo crisis has not changed from the very beginning. It is that Kosovo should have a comprehensive autonomy within the framework of Yugoslavia.

*I think that all Balkan countries wish to have peaceful neighbours but they are not so peaceful and this is the beginning of the problem.*

This position has been kept and is still the position of the Bulgarian state. We are now trying to look to the future rather than to the past. Greater Albania, greater Serbia and so on... this is the mentality of the 19th century. As the integrity of the integration of Europe progresses, with the same tempo the meaning of boundaries and sovereignty diminishes.

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### **Keeping them apart**

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So that this is a long process of playing down all those ethnic, religious and so on contradictions and animosities that exists in the Balkans. Of course, for the time being Serbs and Kosovars must be kept apart. That's what the peacekeeping forces

are doing. And this must continue until everything settles down. I mean, until the emotions settle down. This may take one or two generations but this must be done.

Bulgaria is against, and this is not only the official position, but an overwhelming majority of the Bulgarian people is against any changes in the boundaries of Europe at the present time. The statute law must be kept and developed further towards an integrated entity, which embraces the whole continent. This is our understanding of the problem.

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### **Opening Pandora's box**

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**Petros Papasarantopoulos:** Let me describe my personal opinion and the Greek official opinion.

As far as my personal opinion is concerned, I do believe that we have to combine two contradicting parameters. The one is that any change of boundaries is opening Pandora's box and creating a lot of problems, and the second parameter is that for the present day situation, the coexistence of Albanians and Serbs seems to be really very difficult.

How do we combine these two contradicting parameters? In my opinion, the key point is that if we manage to have democratic changes in Yugoslavia, which means that Milosevic is not in power any longer, this evolution will act as a kind of catalyst in the region.

As Milosevic's marginalisation or absence leads inevitably to the marginalisation of the Albanian fundamentalists, namely UCK leaders and bands. If Milosevic is not in power I think that wise voices in Kosovo among Albanians, such as the voice of Veton Suroi or Ibrahim Rugova will become stronger and stronger.

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### **Deeply divided opposition**

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Unfortunately I'm not very optimistic about such a solution, as I think that the Serbian opposition to Milosevic is not politically serious, it's deeply

divided and it did not convince Serbian people that it could be the alternative. If it happens, of course, it is welcome. But if doesn't happen, I think that the international community has an absolute priority to impose the rule of the law in Kosovo. I know that some Western

*It is estimated that from 35 to 50 billion dollars was spent on the military intervention of the peacekeeping forces in the Yugoslavian wars. And I ask myself, «To what purpose?» and even more, «For what reasons?».*

governments were very close or friendly with the Albanian extremists and I think that it does not create any positive evolution in Kosovo.

Only if Western societies, Western countries realise that when people are not ready for democratic institutions it is absolutely needed to impose some elementary rules, only in that case will all these extremist voices become marginal.

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### **Flexible cofederation**

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If we have such a kind of flexible federation or co-federation between Kosovars and Serbians in the framework of a state, then after some years, 10, 20 or 30, will both sides realise that their coexistence is an advantage as a multinational and multicultural state in the centre of the Balkans.

It is probably not functioning today, but for future generations it can be proved that it will be an advantage for the region.

Let's finish this very interesting conversation with the last question especially for the countries surrounding Yugoslavia, if what happened in Kosovo created problems in their European perspectives, if the vision of European integration became weaker or controversial after the war in Kosovo. Let's

start this round with Octavian Andronic from Romania.

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**80% pro-NATO in Romania**

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**Octavian Andronic:** A very short answer. There is another paradox, maybe. Despite the fact that the population was strongly against the bombing of Yugoslavia, the percentage of those who want Romania to integrate in NATO and the European Union is also very high, more than 80%.

*the sanctions of the European Union and Western countries against Milosevic are not so efficient because there are a lot of secret channels of the national mafia that support Milosevic*

**PP.: Did the event in Kosovo create in Bulgaria a reluctance to the European Idea and the integration of Bulgaria with the European Union?**

**Petko Bocharov:** There was no such influence on the Bulgarian public opinion. The Bulgarian public opinion, is at the moment very inwardly directed, not at what's happening in the outside world.

The Bulgarian people are willing to have peaceful manoeuvres. As long as we have this problem on our Western side and we cannot communicate with the rest of the world, Bulgaria will suffer. That's why I said that our interest is equal to the interest of the Serbian people.

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**Peaceful neighbours**

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**Liubisa Georgievski:** Well, let me express here the same opinion about Macedonia, I think that all Balkan countries wish to have peaceful neighbours but they are not so peaceful and this is the beginning of

the problem.

As for the concept of the vision of the European Union, let me tell you that my opinion is that the Kosovo and all Yugoslavian wars are strongly influenced divisions, which must become divided or collapse. It is estimated that from 35 to 50 billion dollars was spent on the military intervention of the peacekeeping forces in the Yugoslavian wars. And I ask myself, «To what purpose?» and even more, «For what reasons?». No reason was complete. No expected reason was complete. No mission was complete. And we now have to deal with the expense of 50 billion dollars.

Were half of this money invested to support the homeless and a really democratic leadership of this country, or in the infrastructure of this country, in the common economy development, which is undoubtedly the vision of the European Union, the results would have been, let me be a Nostradamus, at least not worse than the results we are facing nowadays.

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**We fight against Milosevic**

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**P.P.: Velimir Curgus from Yugoslavia.**

**Velimir Curgus:** I just want to say what we expect from our neighbouring countries, from this region in this situation.

I'm not talking according to the vision of Europe, I'm talking according to our reality. So, I think that that's the last time that the countries around Yugoslavia and from this region show the reality, such solidarity with the people who are fighting against Serbia, against the regime of Milosevic.

We are starting to work and to make co-ordinations with Hungary, which is not Balkan, but we have a very good communication and a working partnership. We also started with Romania eventually two weeks ago. We have very good communication and co-operation with Bosnia.

**PP.: What about Bulgaria?**

**Velimir Curgus:** Yes, we are working with Bulgaria. I'm talking about media support.

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**Fighting for change**

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You know, if tomorrow the Slobodan Milosevic regime tried to cut off all independent media, especially electronic media, we expect support from radio and TV stations from around our country with a message in our language and our programmes, and everyone to start fighting together for change.

I'll say that fighting for change is not just a decoration, it's hard and very often underground work.

We know that the sanctions of the European Union and Western countries against Milosevic are not so efficient because there are a lot of secret channels of the national mafia that support Milosevic, especially all around Yugoslavia. We expect that information about those channels and those people and companies that are supporting that way will be published. So, there are so many fields for supporting.

**P. Papassarantopoulos:** For the Greeks, there is a very small proportion, 5%, which is against the European Union, but the huge majority considers that the future and the perspectives of Greece are within the framework of the European Union and

*What's happening now in Yugoslavia is not on schedule anymore. The problem is the dismissal of Milosevic from power, nothing else*

also that this is the future of the rest of the Balkan countries. Is it the same in Albania Frrok?

### Waiting for the stability pact

**Frrok Cuppi:** What you see now on the table in Albania is what you see now in the framework of events in Yugoslavia, is a stability pact, everybody is talking about this.

What's happening now in Yugoslavia is not on schedule anymore. The problem is the dismissal of Milosevic from power, nothing else. As it concerns the European integration of Albanians, we are aware that it is far away.

It is a long process. So, we have our domestic problems, not because of the circumstances in the other countries and their neighbours, but just because of our domestic problems and we know it. Only those who are ignorant don't know what's happening in Albania, but I'm not talking about a few ignorant people.

### Cosmetic proposals

**P.P.: Let's finish this very interesting conversation with Joran Mutic from Bosnia.**

**Joran Mutic:** If the international community had invested enough in the Former Yugoslavia there would have been no war. Certainly I don't know what the moral could have been. Probably to support the government of Markovic and the reforms. I think

*If the international community had invested enough in the Former Yugoslavia there would have been no war*

regarding Bosnia what I can say is that all the political parties have it in their program to join the European Union. Some of the proposals are very positive, but I think that it is again rather cosmetic. I think that the

international community is in fact encouraging these changes in Bosnia, just trying to reorganise life by the promises of the European Union.

*according to recent polls from some of the universities in Bosnia, 9 out of 10 students who graduate from Bosnian universities don't see their future in Bosnia.*

Because on a larger scale you have a vast majority of people who, I really have to stress this again, who really have trouble surviving from day to day. You have about 100, maybe 1000, maybe 2000 people that travel almost daily or once a month, unfortunately I have to be one of them. It is maybe journalists, it is politicians, it is those lucky ones that are representatives of various NGOs who get invited to various conferences, but otherwise people just don't think about Bosnia, they think about themselves.

### No future in Bosnia

I don't actually know what to say here, because according to recent polls from some of the universities in Bosnia, 9 out of 10 students who graduate from Bosnian universities don't see their future in Bosnia.



They want to go to Europe, they don't care about their country, they want to emigrate and stay there. And 18 out of

20, which is again 9 out of 10, of the children of those who have emigrated or left Bosnia as refugees and have found temporary residence in some Western countries, whose parents are slowly returning to Bosnia, also don't want to return.

So, Bosnia is rapidly becoming the country of people where I am the youngest generation.

**Velimir Curguz:** Can I just say one sentence on that because I forgot? Four or five months ago in Serbia, there was a research on the public opinion. The question was, «Would you like to be unified with Russia, with Europe or with China?» And so, Russians got about 6%, China 2%, more than 60% was for Europe. Even after the events.

**Petros Papassarantopoulos:** I thank all of you this very interesting exchange of opinions

# *The fragile equilibrium in Kosovo*

BY L. GEORGIEVSKI

In the days immediately after the conclusion of the Balkan Wars (although one might argue that that conclusion has yet to arrive), in 1913, Leon Davidovich Trotsky, employed as a correspondent in the Balkans, wrote the following words: Serbia has greatly expanded her territory, annexing both Kosovo and Macedonia. The day will come when problems will arise from these territories.

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## ***A fundamental problem***

The fundamental problem of Kosovo lies in the following contradiction: on the one hand the Serbs possess all or most of the historical and cultural titles to this piece of territory, the cradle of Serbian orthodoxy and the root of the founding Serbian myth, without which the cultural existence of the Serbian people would have no meaning.

On the other hand, the Albanians, who comprise 92% of the overall population of Kosovo, own the titles to the actual land and the fields, in other words they own the land itself and hold the legal deeds to prove it.

We are thus faced with a contradiction and potential conflict in legal terms: on the one hand Kosovo, as a territory, belongs to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; on the other, as land under civil law, it is owned in practise by the Albanians.

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## ***The law of the sword***

In international law the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia thus has the right to regard Kosovo as its own territory, because, unlike the republics of the former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro) to whom the Constitution granted the right of self-

determination and secession from Yugoslavia, Kosovo, as an autonomous province of Serbia, had no such right, and indeed could not have such a right.

On the other hand, under Roman Law, known as the law of the sword, Kosovo belonged to the territory of several kingdoms and had been lost to military might, ending up as a part of the Ottoman Empire. In 1912, once again as a

*We are thus faced with a contradiction and potential conflict in legal terms: on the one hand Kosovo, as a territory, belongs to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; on the other, as land under civil law, it is owned in practise by the Albanians.*

result of war, it passed into the possession of Serbia, so that now, following the intervention by NATO and with the assistance of the so-called UCK of the ethnic Albanians, it is – essentially by the law of the sword – now as far as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is concerned a lost territory!

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## ***Historical complications***

As if all these national, historical and legal complications were not enough, there are also the political complications to consider: in neither of the two territories, Kosovo and Yugoslavia, can one speak of there existing any trace of any form of real democracy, while the ethnic hatred which has been fomented for centuries is now coming to a head. Thus Kosovo is turning into the true Balkan powder keg.

The EU and NATO intervention, aside from its military aspect, is bringing only meager consequences in the political

sector. The results are not meager only because of the exceptionally complicated political situation, but principally because of the absence of any political idea, and of the planning necessary to implement such an idea.

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## ***Reluctant for new borders***

The absence of a political idea is the product of an unacceptable situation: the international community is for many reasons, and quite justifiably, reluctant to see new borders drawn in the Balkans. On the other hand, it is faced with the brutal events in the region which speak eloquently, as they indicate the true forces at play in the region, in favour of Kosovo's secession from Yugoslavia!

Unless some solution is found which only leads, and rapidly, to even more appalling complications of the sort which no one wishes to see, then the solution proposed by the international community is easily perceived as the best available, yet sadly still very far from practical implementation in the region!

What must be done?

In politics, of course, things are never simple as they first seem!

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## ***The fall of Milosevic***

The EU and NATO see the solution in the democratization of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, i.e. in the fall of Milosevic as a prerequisite of that democratization. It has transpired however that Milosevic is a hard nut to crack.

From his point of view, supported as he is by the loyal and still powerful military and the highly efficient police force, as well as the bureaucracy inherited from the previous regime, he cannot afford the luxury of being deposed! If we add the fact that the

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# *The final phase of the decade-long crisis*

**BY VELIMIR KAZIMIR**

The decade-long crisis which began in 1991 with the break-up of the country now appears to be entering its final phase.

Relations between the two parties to the Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, have never been worse. Basically the federal state has not been functioning properly since the last presidential elections in Montenegro in 1998, won by Milo Tzoukanovic with his Better Life coalition. Since the war in Kosovo and the NATO intervention last year disagreements between Serbia and Montenegro arising from their different stance on the country's development and policies have grown ever more fierce.

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## ***Parallel Systems***

Apart from the Yugoslav army, under the absolute control of Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbian regime, there no longer exist any federal institutions with uniform authority across the whole country.

Instead, what we see are parallel systems in the economy and banking sector, education, the media, the health services, diplomacy and

*Apart from the Yugoslav army, under the absolute control of Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbian regime, there no longer exist any federal institutions with uniform authority across the whole country.*

industry.

The local elections in the two main cities of Montenegro, Podgoritsa and Herzegovni, due to be held on 11 June

2000, will be the best indicator of the current balance of power in Montenegro and the future steps to be taken by the republic.

The beginning of May saw the onset of dramatic social and political tensions and conflict in Serbia.

The regime of Slobodan Milosevic launched a vicious campaign against all its political opponents, especially the Popular Resistance Movement (Narodni Pokret Otpora), originally founded by students and which became in a very short time the most dynamic and best-organized political group opposing the oppression and dictatorship in Serbia.

There is evidence to indicate that some 50,000 people all across Serbia are members of the Movement. The traditional democratic opposition is still suffering from a lack of unity and effectiveness, which influences and reinforces the fierce oppression exercised by the regime.

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## ***Banning independent media***

One of the most obvious indications of this policy was the banning of the most powerful independent electronic media, especially the TV station Studio B and the celebrated radio station B92. The banning prompted the organization in Belgrade of demonstrations, which were broken up by exceptionally violent police action, resulting in huge clashes, casualties and the arrest of a large number of citizens.

For the first time these demonstrations were joined by supporters of the football team Red Star (the supporters are known as Delie, or bold, gallant young men) whose song "Slobodan Slobodan, save Serbia and then kill yourself" has become almost a national anthem of the resistance

against tyranny.

Although the last decade has seen the gunning down on the streets of Serbia, especially in Belgrade, of several dozen victims, some of whom

*One of the most obvious indications of this policy was the banning of the most powerful independent electronic media, especially the TV station Studio B and the celebrated radio station B92*

occupied prominent positions in political and economic organizations or in the police, the perpetrators have never been tracked down.

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## ***Law against terrorism***

But as soon as the murderers targeted Bosko Perosevic, a high-ranking official in the governing Socialist Party of Serbia, a political and media campaign was launched to secure the passing of a special law against terrorism in Serbia. (The murderer of Bosko Perosevic was arrested at the scene of the crime and the motives for the murder were clearly personal rather than political in nature).

This new law, together with existing legislation on the media and the university, will provide even more support to the anti-democratic tendencies in the Serbian political leadership. The law is primarily directed against the opponents and critics of the regime, first and foremost the Popular Resistance Movement.

Immediately following the cessation of hostilities in Kosovo and the withdrawal of military and police forces from the region, the democratic opposition demanded the calling of an

early general election.

The official government steadfastly refused such demands, claiming that there was no reason to hold an early election and insisting that the election would be conducted in accordance with the regular procedure.

All the relevant polls show a steep decline in the popularity of and the support for the governing coalition (SPS-JUL-SRS = Socialist Party of Serbia – Yugoslavian United Left – Serbian Radical Party).

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### **70% dissatisfied**

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More than 70% of Serbian citizens have expressed their dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs and

*What the regime requires is: new capital, a maintenance of the continuing political tension and fear among the citizens, and absolute control of the mass media and all other forms of information.*

their desire to see radical social and economic changes.

This was the reason why the regime has consistently rejected an early election.

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### **A propaganda slogan**

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What the regime requires is: new

capital, a maintenance of the continuing political tension and fear among the citizens, and absolute control of the mass media and all other forms of information.

The economic situation remains grave, but the regime has managed through a rigorous public revenue policy to avoid hyper-inflation.

The reconstruction of the country, which will be the most powerful propaganda slogan for the scheduled elections to be held by the end of this year, is concentrating primarily on the building or reconstruction of the bridge and road network destroyed by NATO bombing.

But it is hard to produce evidence of much real reconstruction of the major factories and industrial systems, from the refineries and the chemical industry to the ruined metal-working and engineering factories.

A particularly severe problem is caused by the generally backward state of the country's technology, the result of years of economic sanctions. It is therefore unrealistic to speak of any large-scale reconstruction or serious economic reform.

At the opening of the new Novi Sad bridge Slobodan Milosevic went so far as to criticize neighboring countries who have embarked on a course of economic reform and privatization, claiming that they have not only become dependent on foreign investors but have also destroyed their own

economies.

Thus the only way forward for the go-

*Serbia is entering the 21st century in a state of continually deepening crisis and destabilization, which may objectively lead to new conflict throughout the region.*

verning regime lies in continuing isolation and a rigorously controlled economy in which those companies under state control, and a number of well-known individuals, will become the owners of the largest companies and commercial systems.

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### **Continuing isolation**

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Serbia is entering the 21st century in a state of continually deepening crisis and destabilization, which may objectively lead to new conflict throughout the region.

Montenegro and Kosovo, where the international community has failed to realize its fundamental objective of creating a democratic, stable and open society, as well as the seething political tensions within Serbia herself, may very well prove the breeding ground for new tragedies to come.

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## **The fragile equilibrium in Kosovo**

+ From page 23

International Court at The Hague has proclaimed him a war criminal, Milosevic, confronted by the mild threats of the fragmented and ineffective opposition, has no reason to resign without some more pressing internal friction, which would make the already fragile equilibrium in the Balkans even more complicated.

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### **Luck of any sense for democracy**

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The alternative solution is the imposition of order in Kosovo through some form of democratization, an unlikely scenario if we take into account, besides all the other factors, the almost total lack of any sense for democracy among the rural Albanian

population.

In these circumstances the "Republic of Macedonia" is threatened by every new destabilization of Kosovo, and the same is true of all the Balkan countries, who might so easily fall victim to the dreaded 'domino effect'.

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## ALBANIA

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### **1. President Meidani hails all the people engaged in antifascist war**

May 9- Albanian President Rexhep Meidani hailed on Tuesday on the occasion of 55th anniversary of the victory over fascism all the people engaged in the antifascist war, the press department close to the presidency reports. "As Commander General of the Albanian Armed Forces, as Albania's President and as Albanian citizen, it is an honor, privilege and special pleasure to greet today all those who were engaged in the great antifascist war which brought the liberation of our precious Motherland and the victory of Allied Forces over the forces of Fascist Axis", said amid other things the Albanian President.

According to Meidani this date is for Albanians a commemoration date, because in this conflict our nation sacrificed over 28 000 people.

"May 9, said President Meidani is an appeal addressed to us region, to bring back the law of force, violence, regional and religious dissension, and ideological persecution".

### **2. Albanian is welcomed in European family**

*Ambassador Peretti* Council of Europe Chief of Mission in Tirana, in a festive ceremony held in the parliament hall on occasion of May 9, Europe's Celebration, stressed that Albania is welcomed in the European family.

"Albania has now its democratic institutions; it is on the road of difficult political and economic reforms, it has been recovered in the European family in which it is welcomed," he said. Mr. Peretti pointed out being announced as a candidate for the consolidation of its relations through an Agreement of Stability and Association, Albania makes another step towards its getting closer to Europe.

### **3. Aircraft-carrier Eisenhower (Adriatic sea)**

May 7- The aircraft carrier, the se-

cond for its size in the U.S. Navy "Dwight D. Eisenhower", on Sunday received on its board Albanian President Rexhep Meidani, U.S. Ambassador in Tirane Joseph Limprecht and Albanian Defence Minister Luan Hajdaraga. This aircraft carrier is currently on the Adriatic, on the international waters between Italy and Montenegro.

Meidani described his visit to this aircraft carrier as "a visit of courtesy in the context of Albania's cooperation with NATO, especially the United States".

Impressed by its proportions and state-of-the-art technology existing in this carrier, Meidani told ATA that: We saw a gigantic city in which dominated an extremely advanced technology but at the same time we saw a powerful force in defence of peace, stability and democratic development of the region and the world, in general."

Meidani considered this visit a further step in its cooperation with NATO, a cooperation "which is becoming more powerful with each passing day at Albania - U.S. bilateral level, but also at multilateral level, Albania - North Atlantic Alliance".

U.S. ambassador in Tirane Joseph Limprecht told ATA that "the visit of the aircraft carrier 'Dwight D. Eisenhower', is made in the context of Albania's preparation for its participation in NATO".

The aircraft carrier is 300 metres long and is the electronic brain for the 50 fighters, helicopters, radar-planes, electronic war planes and other types of planes the U.S. Air Force Possesses.

### **4. Visit of USA**

May 6. - Albanian President Rexhep Meidani on Saturday returned home after a visit in United States of America and one-day visit in Turkey, the Press Office close to President reported.

Before his visit in USA, President Meidani invited by his Turkish homologue Sulejman Demirel paid one day visit in Ankara meeting the Turkish

President Demirel, Turkish Premier Bulent Ecevit. The Talks were focused in Albanian - Turkish relations and both sides reconfirmed the willingness to increase the bilateral cooperation, mainly in economy.

President Meidani was invited in U.S. to attend the Conference organized by East West Institute, under the chairmanship of Former Finnish President, Marti Ahtisaari, on the topic "Road to a more integrated Europe, possibility for investment in Southeast Europe".

President Meidani met during this visit American Ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke, Special Adviser of U.S. President Clinton on Balkan Question Christopher Hill, Assistant of Under Secretary of State James Swagert, ambassadors of Security Council countries and Secretary General Kofi Annan, and others.

### **5. Sulejman Demirel arrives in Rinas Airport, Tirane**

May 10.-President of Turkey Sulejman Demirel arrived at the Albanian Rinas Airport on Wednesday at about 15.45. In Rinas Demirel was received by the Albanian President Rexhep Meidani. Turkish President will pay a short visit to Tirane invited by President Meidani.

Sulejman Demirel will be awarded the highest order of the Albanian State for foreign personalities. This ceremony will be held at the Palace of Brigades in Tirane. Turkish President last visited Albania on April 11, 1999, during the Kosova crisis.

The seven year mandate of Sulejman Demirel expires on May 16, 2000.

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## BOSNIA

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### **SOME PROGRESS IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

The major political event were municipal elections. This time it proved that Bosniaks (Moslems) were more mature than other two national groups. Namely, professor Lagumdzija's Social-democrats (SDP) won –

true, with a small majority – over Izetbegovic's SDA in most of the communities with predominantly Bosniak population. Although superficially this may not seem such a radical change, what Bosnian people actually need is getting used to the fact that nobody is irreplaceable. Obviously, the party that in the first democratic elections in 1990 won most Bosniak votes and led their people through the four years of war, has not fulfilled most of its promises, from then onwards. Also, war refugees, veterans, the unemployed and pensioners were tired of empty promises, corruption and general stalemate. It should also be stressed that the international community's favoritism of parties «bringing change» to the Bosnian political scene did help, as well as better electoral campaign of social democrats. However, in Republic Srpska victorious was the SDS, Karadzic's nationalist party – although they claim they have become moderate and have renounced their former leader, now definitely wanted for war crimes even by the FBI. Comments are that the arrest of Krajisnik (former president of Republic Srpska Assembly and Karadzic's right hand), which happened couple of days before the elections, actually enraged Serbs and made them vote for the SDS out of protest. Similar thing happened with the territories inhabited mainly by Bosnian Croats. Always staunch supporters of Tudjman –and supported by him in return– after his party, the HDZ, lost elections in Croatia proper and the winning center-left parties announced their withdrawal from such policies, Bosnian Croats reacted by voting once again for the same party. How co-operative with the international community and the new Bosniak leadership these nationalist (Serb and Croat) parties will be nobody knows, but it is almost certain they will not be as obstructive as earlier. If nothing else, they have become more pragmatic and realities of daily life have taught them that stubbornness does not pay: both international non-gover-

mental and governmental organisations are ready to support and give donations to those who are prepared to co-operate.

#### **IMPLEMENTING RESULTS OF THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

Following the latest elections, municipal councils are slowly being formed in the Bosniak-Croat Federation, although in some towns where Social-Democrats won the process is more than gradual due to procedural obstacles that the nationalist parties impose. On the other hand, several persons of rather high esteem in the SDA (Izetbegovic's party) are being treated as scapegoats.

This includes the omnipresent Ejub Ganic, president of the Federation, who refuses to resign although he no longer has the support of his party. To be honest, Bosnian Social-Democrats are not exactly the Titoist party – whose legal heir they claim to be – but their profile is still far from that of the parties with the same name in the West.

However, they have sympathies and sometimes more than open support from the international community, so that the SDA has threatened to abstain from the elections envisaged for this autumn. Maybe an echo of this is Izetbegovic's announcement that he will be withdrawing from political life by this autumn.

In the Croat-dominant part of the Federation removal of hard liners is continuing under various pretexts – from lack of co-operation with international institutions to the slow process of refugees return. Since they have been lacking assistance and understanding from Croatia proper ever since Tudjman died, it seems they are losing ground as well. Yet, we will have to wait for the elections to see the final outcome of their constant conflict with the OSCE and the Office of High Representative.

That things have changed radically and are still changing in the Republic Srpska is visible from numerous political and economic contacts their leadership is establishing all over the

region. But even more significant is Dodik's recent statement that they are ready to co-operate with the Hague Tribunal for War Crimes. To the question whether they would be ready to arrest Karadzic he shrewdly replied that they expect from the UN Stability Forces to do this within their mandate, obviously feeling that a positive answer could cost him dearly among the Serb population. However, even such an answer seemed improbable less than three months ago.

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#### **BULGARIA**

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– On May 21st in Pazardjik - a town in South Bulgaria, the Prime Minister Ivan Kostov called for a change in the Constitution for the third time. The amendment should give possibility to the local authorities more freely to define the amount of taxes and fees. Some time ago he had said that the Constitution should be changed so that it would allow foreigners buy land in Bulgaria and then he wanted restriction of the MP and magistrates immunity.

– Six months military service for University graduates and nine months for the rest voted the Members of Parliament, accepting at second reading the amendments in the Law of Defence.

– Only experienced Bulgarian computer specialists will have the chance to work in Germany, was announced by the Federal Republic. On July 14th the Government will vote the selection conditions for those candidates and then the Bundestag will give its confirmation.

– The Government of the United Democratic Forces and the Prime Minister Ivan Kostov have overcome the third censure vote since they came to power in 1997. The vote was initiated by the Bulgarian Socialist Party and the Euroleft. Nobody from the other parties supported the vote. Only 28% of the Members of Parliament voted for.

– Bulgaria has a new Embassy building in Brussels which is quite near

the European Union Headquarters. It will be only for administrative purposes and about 50 people will work there. It is on 108 D' Arlon street and is of 1367 m<sup>2</sup>.

– On May 14th the Constituent Congress of the newly formed political party – Liberal Union took place. The Party of Liberty and the Free Radical democratic Party united and elected its leader – Rumens Danov.

– A plane of Balkan, the Bulgarian Airlines, took off on May 11th at 5.30 pm after 10 days of pilot strike. The protest of the 260 pilots for bigger salaries was terminated after 90 hours negotiations in which representatives of Zeevi Group – the Jewish company, owner of the major part of Balkan shares, the pilots and the Government took part.

– According to Dirk Berlinhof, vice president of the German tour operator ITC if the scandal in Balkan had not been solved on time, Bulgaria would have lost 270000 foreign tourists.

– The National Bureau for fighting with the organised criminality has got a new boss –, colonel Rumens Milanov who was a director of the Road Police and had worked there for 22 years.

– If the design and construction auctions for Danube Bridge 2 are announced simultaneously, the procedures will be shortened with 9 months minimum said Evgeni Chachev, minister of Regional Development. Bulgaria and Romania have already agreed the new bridge over the river Danube to be built between Vidin and Kalafat. According to the minister the foreign interest is quite big and there is a strong support by the Greek Government and the businessmen as the bridge would open the way from Central and West Europe to Greece.

– A meeting "without ties" initiated by Bulgaria took place in the resort Hissaria. The Prime Minister of Yugoslavia's neighbouring countries stated that sanctions against Yugo-

slavia have a negative result for the whole region nevertheless they are an important political instrument. The European Union Supreme Commissioner Javier Solana and the vice general secretary Sergio Balanzino were present too.

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## **FYROM**

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– On 6th of June 2000, two frontier guards, members of the armed forces of the Republic of Macedonia, were fired on by snipers operating from the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo). One of the casualties suffered a bullet wound through the kneecap, while the other was injured in the elbow. Neither man is in a critical condition.

– The President of the "Republic of Macedonia", Boris Traikovski, will seek a meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss the ever more frequent incidents on the frontier with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo).

– The governments of the "Republic of Macedonia" and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have been bombarding one another with diplomatic representations.

– No progress was reported from the last meeting of the expert groups on defining the international borders between the "Republic of Macedonia" and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

– The President of Albania, Retzep Meidani, has conveyed a message to the ethnic "Macedonian" minority in Albania that the old nationalist and chauvinist prejudices must be discarded.

– The member of the "Macedonian Parliament", Stoyan Andov, is to propose a motion on the regulation of the rights of the Albanian ethnic minority in "Macedonia" and the "Macedonian" ethnic minority in Albania, in the form of a bilateral agreement between "Macedonia" and Albania.

– The Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts of the "Republic of Macedonia" has voiced its opposition to the decision by the government of "Macedonia" and Max van der Stuhl concerning the provision of further education to the Albanian ethnic minority in "Macedonia" by means of a college in which lessons would be taught in the English, "Macedonian" and Albanian languages.

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## **ROMANIA**

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### **LOCAL ELECTIONS 2000**

The electoral year 2000 started in ROMANIA with local elections.

17,6 million citizens having the right to vote have been waited on the 4th of June at those of 15.000 election stations in order to vote for nearly 3000 mayors for villages and towns from over 45.000 candidates.

Even if the opinion poll noticed a strong tendency of absence, the reality didn't surpass the provisions: only 45 per cent of the citizens having the right to vote exercised their right - this means less than 8 million.

The sharp dispute of a divided political field made that in more than 80 per cent of the electoral districts to be necessary a second ballot.

In Bucharest, a city containing more than 1,7 million voters it was a confronting in two ballots of the representatives of two important political formations: the party led by the ex-president Iliescu and a member of the alliance of the actual president Constantinescu. No less than 37 representatives go in for the start of this competition - among these may notice the ex-mayor of Bucharest, the Minister for Transports and some presidents of smaller parties.

In spite of the voter's lack of interest the Romanian political leaders watched very seriously this real test for the legislative and presidential elections which will take place in November.

# Culture in the Balkans: main events,

## Albania

### **"Gate Eva" in cinema Millennium**

The film "Gate Eva" was been shown this week in Cinema Millennium in Tirana.

The film, an Albanian - Russian co-production, was completed some weeks ago. It is directed by Albert Minga, the script written by Vath Koreshi, and produced by Alexander Mihajilov. "Gate Eva", which treats the tragedy of the traffic of prostitutes, has been realised by a film staff selected by the renowned Russina cameraman, Vladimir Shevcik, nominated four years ago for the Oscar Prize, the Russian composer Mark Minkov with the set by Arben Basha.

The three main actors of the film, the Polish Magda Vujcek, the Russian Ira Nijzina and the Albanian Ndrim Xhepa convey to the film viewers a real human history, each of them in his own language.

"Gate Eva" is expected to be shown in September this year in Russian cinemas, as a co-production between Albanian and Russian cinematography.

### **First International Choral Festival, arrives in Tirana**

On May, it was opened the first night of the First International Choral Festival in "Odeon" hall at the International Culture Centre.

Personalities from the field of music, organisers and supporters of this activity such as the president of this festival, vice mayor of Tirana as well as representatives of the European Union in Albania participated at this activity. It has not been a chance that the arrival of the choral music in Albanian coincides exactly with the dates set for this festival to be organised. Buron Kaceli, in his opening speech, has considered the organisation of this festival as a celebration of the 50-th anniversary of European Union's foundation. For the organisers, this activity has been considered as a good opportunity to collect a series of vocal groups of our country, starting from Shkodra, Korca, Tirana and so on up to high-level foreign groups thought to be a precious exchange of experience.

On the first night, it was performed a diversity of interpretations from several vocal groups. Due to this reason, the composer, Limoz Dizdari, has qualified

this festival "as an excellent organisation and an extremely good initiative undertaken by its organisers".

The First International Choral Festival ended after three nights running in the hall Odeon of the International Cultural Centre in Tirana.

A magnificent festivity which has crowned the success of some choral formations invited from all over Albania and from some countries of Europe. The choral festival was attended by senior Albanian personalities and representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Tirana, which in a wonderful organization have also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the creation of the European Union. The speech on occasion of May 9, Europe's celebration was held by Michel Peretti, chief of the Council of Europe Mission, who underscored the role of communitarian Europe and the success of the European Union in the past 50 years.

Europe's celebration, which closed in a perfect harmony was, for the first time, marked by a concert held by the Association "Seas Culture" with the assistance of the Tirana City-Hall and the European Union.

### **Bronze medal for Albanian students in Balkan Olympiad of Mathematics**

The Albanian students are awarded with the Bronze medal in the Mathematics Olympiad for the Balkan countries which is being organized in Moldavia, sources from the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science told on Monday. Rexhep Cuko, director of the high school education close to the Ministry of Education and Science, said that "the Albanian students exhibited a high scale of knowledge in the subject of mathematics during the Balkan Olympiad, held in Moldavia on May 6 - 9".

The Albanian students, participants in this Balkan Olympiad, are selected among the best students in the high schools of Tirane, Elbasan and Fier. They were proclaimed winners of the national Olympiad of mathematics.

### **"Miss Albania 2000" to wear the golden crown**

The crown which is the symbol of Albanian beauty for 2000 reaches a value of \$ 15 000, the organizers of Miss

Albania 2000" told.

Realized in 1998 by Piro Ruco this crown is made up of gold, silver and precious stones. Miss Albania '98 Aldona Elezi, was the first in the short history of Albanian Misses who wore a crown with real value. Elezi will hand over the precious crown to the Albanian beauty symbol of 2000 during a special spectacle which will be organized in the ancient amphitheatre of Butrinti on May 27 of the current year.

## Bulgaria

The Cinema Masters Martin Scorsese and Kostas Gavras support two projects of the Greek author Yoanna Karestianni which will be realised till the end of the year. The original Greek writer was in Bulgaria in May where she lectured to Greek Philology students at Sofia University.

– Poetry, essays and memories, dedicated to one of the greatest Bulgarian writers of the 20th century – Vesselin Hanchev (1919-1966) are collected in the book "The Ten Face of Happiness". The presentation was prepared by his daughter Elka Hancheva for the 30th anniversary of his early death. His works unknown till now are included in the book too.

– On May 15th Nikolay Giaurov was applauded ten times for his brilliant performance of "Songs and Dances of Death" by Musorgsky. The world famous bass was made Doctor Honoris Causa of the Musical Academy "Pancho Vladigerov".

– The big Bulgarian opera singer Anna Tomova – Sintova, world famous interpreter of Strauss, took part in his opera "Salome". Two concert presentations of this opera were included in the Easter Festival of Sofia Opera.

– Original graphics by Pablo Picasso, Dali, Sonia Delone, Jan Karzu, Max Papar and other European artists were displayed in the Art Gallery "Galev" in Sofia. The exhibition is a part of the "Art Dialogue" collection, whose authorised representative for Bulgaria is the artist Stoyan Stoyanov.

– A premiere of three works of the Hungarian writer Peter Esterhazy – "Auxiliary verbs of the heart", "A woman" and "The glance of Countess Han Han" published by three Bulgarian publishing houses took place in the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Sofia. The author was present

# concerts, festivals and performances

too.

## Bosnia

### JUBILEES WITH MUSIC

Lately the most significant cultural event probably was the concert of the BAND TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND, a British group of mixed musicians, mainly from England and Scotland, but also from African countries.

Ethno music performed on traditional African percussion and string instruments, reggae, rap, and other forms of combinations, accompanied by excellent female vocals, caused standing ovations in the audience. On the other hand, the majority of the Sarajevo public ignored Goran Bregovic's majestic return to his native town.

It is not so much the fact that during the war he refused to issue a firm statement against the killing of Sarajevo – after all, several months ago he participated in the jubilee concert that marked 35 years of one of most famous Yugoslav rock groups «Indexi».

However, this time Bregovic decided to «play it safe» and held the concert in the relatively small hall of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals, almost exclusively for the political elite.

One can remember tens of thousands of fans – from their teenage years to their late sixties – who more than two years ago swarmed for the concert of Djordje Balasevic from Novi Sad despite rigorous security measures (allegedly, because he was coming from Serbia!). This was a unique opportunity for Bregovic to win back his Sarajevo audience, and instead he failed them miserably.

### BOSNIAN OPERA

There have been several *cultural events* recently, most important of which was the 25th annual SARAJEVO WINTER. This traditional event started together with the XIV Winter Olympic Games in 1984 and continued – even during the war, although drastically reduced – until today. It is a three-month happening, which includes theatrical plays, concerts, exhibitions, performances, even small scale festivals: last year there was a festival of contemporary Greek film.

Another such event is the first post-war Bosnian opera, *Hasan-aga's Wife*. It is based on the folk poem recorded in the last century by Vuk Karadzic, which even Goethe considered one of the most beautiful pieces of popular narratives. However, immediately after the premiere

several scandals erupted: the amount of money which the composer received, as well as the fact that the State TV broadcasted the entire performance only two days after the premiere, although by the law – and by the contract it had signed with the National Theatre – it was obliged to wait for at least two months.

## Romania

### SHOW BREGOVICI IN BUCHAREST

The most important cultural event of this period was considered to be the concert of the famous composer Goran Bregovic born in Sarajevo, the sound track's author of some of Emir Kusturica's successful movies.

Bregovic concertized at the Palace Hall in front of more than 3000 enthusiastic spectators who payed about 35 dollars for one ticket (which means an enormous sum of money in Romania), in order to sing and dance together with the band of the famous musician for more than two hours.

Bregovic is well known and appreciated in Romania where his music is very well sold on cassettes and CDS, the Balkan spirit of his creation making him easily to be understood and loved.

A few months ago only, in the same hall Emir Kusturica had a concert with his new band after the Romanian first performance of his first movie made after the separation from Bregovic. ("White cat, black cat"), without the audience reaction reaches the enthusiasm noticed now.

BREGOVICI has already concertized in Bucharest in October 1998.

## Yugoslavia

In a society exhausted by political conflict, economic hardship and isolation, culture plays the role of a form of 'escape' or therapy.

Publishers' lists continue to be rich and varied, although the number of new books being sold is low. Cinema and theatre remain extremely popular; despite the international embargo the latest films, especially those from America, are quickly available in Serbia.

The beginning of May saw the holding of the 5th International Festival devoted to the new 'Ring-Ring' music, an initiative undertaken by Radio B92. The festival involved performances by groups and solo musicians from Finland, Russia, Mongolia, the Czech Republic and Japan.

The visit by the Portuguese group Madre Deus and the coming tour by Cesaria Evora have both generated considerable public interest.

A group of writers dissatisfied with the existing Serbian Writers Union has set up a Writers Forum which has been very active in campaigns to secure the release of imprisoned writers and intellectuals, especially the Albanian poet Fiora Borvina.

Unfortunately an ever-growing number of artists, especially musicians and painters, but writers as well, are leaving the country. Yugoslav culture abroad is becoming ever more varied and rich, a claim which unfortunately cannot be made for the domestic arts scene.

### Where to find "Balkan Horizons"

#### Albania

"Oxford Centre", Tirana  
Myslym Shyri Str., P47, SH1, AP4, Tel.-fax: 59259

#### Bosnia

"Soros Media Centre", Sarajevo  
3 M. Kantardzisa Str. Tel. (071) 207026

#### Bulgaria

"Oxford Centre", Sofia  
63, Gladston Str., Tel. (092) 9809015

#### FYROM

"LOGOS" Skopje  
Ivo Ribar Lola 59a/2-6, Tel. 220224

#### Greece

"Paratiritis Bookshop", Athens  
39, Didotou Str., Tel. (01) 3600658  
"Paratiritis Bookshop", Thessaloniki  
25, P.P. Germanou Str., Tel. (031) 264958

#### Moldova

"Educational Centre" Chisinau  
Ap 5,64, E.Eminescu Str., Tel. (032) 228987

#### Romania

"Educational Centre" Bucharest  
27, Biserica Amzei str., Flat 4-5, Sector 1,  
tel. & fax: 6502651

#### Turkey

Iletisim Yayincilik A.S., Istanbul Klodfarer  
Cad. Iletisim Han Cagaloglou, Tel:(0212)  
5162260

#### Yugoslavia

"Fund for an Open Society", Beograd  
5, Tolstojeva Str., Tel. (011) 660937



## Best selling books in the Balkans



### ALBANIA

1. "The last Town", written by Petro Marko, wellknown Albanian writer, has been published by "OMCA" Publishing House. This book has been considered by critics as "the first Albanian contemporary novel"
2. The handwriting "Secret diary" (1836-1837) written by Aleksander Pushkin, has been translated into Albanian by Rexhep Hidaand published by "Fan Noli" Publishing House This book has been translated in many world countries such as Italy, Germany, France, Japan and Greece. It made a big noise in the world and was considered for many years as bestseller.
3. "Strong as Death", by Guy de Maupasant, has been translated by Aristidh Ristani and published by "Elena Gjika" Publishing House.
4. "The teanager", the selected work of Dostoyevski, has been translated by Jorgji Doksani and published by "Uegen" Publishing House.
5. "Interview with myself", by Petro Marko, published by "OMSCA" Publishing House.

### BULGARIA

1. "Kera – Tamara" – by George Kostov. A historical novel dedicated to the daughter of the Bulgarian Tsar (King) Ivan Alexander who was given to the Turkish Sultan Murad by her brother Ivan shishman.
2. "Head or tail" – by Deyan Enev. A collection of short stories, a third one of this author. The first was "Man Hunter" and the second – "The killing of the cock"
3. "Arelia man" – by Thomas Wolf
4. "Alibi" – by Sandra Brown
5. "King Rat" – by James Clavel
6. "Glasspearls game" – by Herman Hasse
7. "100 days in the life of a superboss" – by David Freemantel

### BOSNIA

Books that have been sold as best-sellers are presented in two groups: first, those written by domestic authors (they include those from Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, because they use the same language). The translations into this language (Serbo-Croat-Bosnian-Montenegrin) are given as the second group. The third group is books in foreign languages. The information was obtained from the Sarajevo bookstore BUYBOOK, which sells books from all regions of former Yugoslavia, as well as foreign books.

#### 1. Ex-Yu authors:

– Miljenko Jergovic, "Mama Leone"  
 – Miljenko Jergovic, "Sarajevo Marlboro"  
 – Ozren Kebo, "Sarajevo for Beginners"  
 (Both are Sarajevo authors, but Jergovic has lived in Croatia for the last six years and has been widely translated into many European languages)

#### 2. Foreign authors (translations):

– Arundati Roy, "The God of Small Things"  
 – Paulo Coelho, "The Alchemist"  
 – Hanif Kureishi, "Buddha from the Suburbs"

#### 3. Foreign books

– Noel Malcolm, "Short History of Bosnia"  
 – Noel Malcolm, "Short History of Kosovo"  
 – "Books on Bosnia" (bibliography of books on recent Bosnian history published in Western European countries)  
 – Ivo Andric, "The Bridge on the Drina" (translation into English)

### GREECE

1. "A Suit on the Ground" – by Joanna Karystiani (Kastaniotis). A world built in America, a world forgotten in Greece.
2. "Alexander and Aspasia" – by Alexander Zaousis (Okeanida). A revival of one of the most popular romances of early 20th century Greece.
3. "I, Martha Freud" – by Foteini Tsalikoglou (Kastaniotis). What Freud's wife would say if she could speak.
4. "Stories of Sin and Sainthood" – by M. Karagatsis, with an introduction by Stratis Paschalis (Estia). A selection taken from the many short stories by the author of "The Great Chimera".
5. "The Journal of a Magician" – by Paolo Coelho, translated by Dina Sideri, (Livanis, 5.000 drs.). A journey to Santiago, crowded with supernatural phenomena and morals.
6. "Soul Mountain" – by Gao Xingian (Nobel Prize 2000), translated by Vicky Sidiropoulou (Livanis 5.500 drs.). The individual's desperate attempt to break the bounds of uniformity and homogeneity.
7. "Winter Solstice" – by Rosamund Pilcher, translated by Polly Moschopoulou (Okeanida, 5.900 drs.). Settled in the quiet refuge Elfreda chose to spend her years in, she is able to have the best Christmas of all.
8. "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" – by Joanne K. Rowling (Psychogios). Another adventure involving this best friend of children.
9. "Overturn" – by Nikos Themelis (Kedros, 6.000 drs.). Shortly before the

beginning of the 20th century. One woman and five men sketch the times.

10. "Before the End" – by Ernesto Sabato, translated by Angeliki Vasilakou (Govostis). Departed loved ones, the author's memories and concerns about science.

11. "The Parrot's Theorem" – by Denny Getz, translated by Tefkros Michailidis (Polis). A book with Paris, adventure and mathematics as its principal characters.

12. "Lotte in Weimar" – by Thomas Mann, translated by Theodoros Paraskevopoulos (Exantas). Lotte sets out to find the love of her youth forty years on.

13. "Growing Old Successfully" – by Giorgios Skambardonis (Kedros). The tale of an ordinary woman, recollections of her life and, simultaneously, the history of Greece during the last fifty years.

14. "The Pencil Factory" – by Soti Triandafillou (Patakis, 4.950 drs.). A story told against a background of historic events from the 19th and 20th century.

### ROMANIA

The most important fair book of the year took place in Bucharest at the end of May 2000 and it offered to the specialists the opportunity to make a selection of the most interesting books of the moment. Here is the selection made by "Sunday Magazine" a cultural supplement of the economical daily paper "Financial News".

1. Henry Miller: "Sexus" (East Publishing House)
  2. Paulo Coelho: "Veronica is going to die" (Humanitas Publishing House)
  3. Dan Petrescu: "Against the grain" (Nemira Publishing House)
  4. Petre Pandrea: "The memories of the wallachian mandarin" (Albatros Publishing House)
  5. Michel Onfray: "The belly of the philosophers. The criticism of the dietetical reason" (Emira Publishing House)
  6. Marie Kuhlmann, Nelly Kunzmann, Helene Bellour: "The censorship and the libraries in the XXth century" (Amarcord Publishing House)
- A real editorial event of the year is considered to be the Romanian version of the book "Imagining the Balkans" by the professor Maria Todorova, a book published in 1997 at Oxford University Press. The romanian version is made by Sofia Oprescu and Mihaela Constantinescu, the volume will appear at Humanitas Publishing House.

### TURKEY

**A new book on Kosova sells well**

### in Turkey

Spring and Summer in Turkey has witnessed dilution of the news and commentaries related to Kosova: Most of the elite reporters have returned and now-a-day, the new reflected from Kosova are just those translated from the European and American press.

In the past, dramatic events used to be followed by publication of memoirs and reflections, ofcourse, usually a certain time elapsed before these surfaced. that;s no more true and a book entitled, "I am missing your obour, Kosova" has been published by Intermadia in Istanbul (Aytar Cd. 161/11 Levent Istanbul) with no such a delay. It has been written by Burbuque Rushuti, a well known Albanian young women who has the NTV television station's reporter at Kosova.

Mrs Rushuti, was born in Pristina in 1961. She had studied Alanian and English languages and literature and after working in several newspapers in Kosova, she became a reporter fot the NTV.

Her book reflects many aspects on the Kosova Crisis in a rather eloquent style; details about Kosovar and Turkish reactions abound.

"Be honest to the Servians, but never trust them!": Her grandfather's advices are remembered on the shores of the Marmara Sea during her fights from Kosova where she was sought by Milosevic's police.

Her reminccences about Albanian students demonstrations in 1968 and 1981 and the Serbian harsh reactions, her encounter with Mustafa, her future husband are interesting.

During the early and relatively peaceful days of their marriage, they spend their summer vacations in Paralia, Greece.

The publications of the Serbian Memorandum in 1986 and Milosevic's ascent to leadership and his ultranationalistic attitudes resulting in the constitutional changes revoking the relative autonomy of the Kosovars and the enforced acceptnce of these changes by the parliament of Kosova are all well reflected.

Burbuqe and Mustafa had lost their jobs after the declaration of a new constitution by the Albanians of Kosova: Albanian schools are closed by the Serbes, Burbuque remembers her father's remarks, "The Serbians say, 'Tuchi, muchi, al ne daj da uchi' which means, 'Do not let the Albanians get educated; beat or fortune them if necessary'. Hense do whatever you can and study!"

Old mistrusts are rekindled and Albanian reaction became visible: Demonstrations were followed by armed resistance. Serbs were of the opinion that they could be subdued by attrition and terror... Mass

graves discovered after the NATO interference are from this period.

The resilience of Mother Theresa, an Albanian (her true name was Gonca Boyacivo) nun who was awarded the Nobel Perce Prize is the source of inspiration for Burbuque.

Informed about the Serbian search for herself, she decides to flee and after much ordeal, she reaches Turkey with her young son, whilst her husband remains at Kosova.

Her stay in Turkey, enables her to interview a great number of Kosovars who had taken refuge in this country and note down their sad stories; yet she misses Kosova; its hubub, odours and colours..

the book ends on June 20 1999 with a yearning for peace: One morning the rise early and observes a colourful sun-rise over the Sea of Marmara: the darkness is pierced and light prevails: Can the same happen in her native country?

This question is yet valid despite present enforced tranquility.

### YUGOSLAVIA

1. Slava Tzoukic, *The Bloody Serbian Fairy Tale*, pub. Samizdat Free B92, Belgrade, 1999. Top of the Serbian best-seller list for over six months, this account of Milosevic and his wife, the opposition and the people of Serbia is a remarkable study of the events which have determined the fate of millions of people in the former Yugoslavia.

2. Nadezda Tsetkovic, *You can do it, Vesna*, privately published, Belgrade, 2000. A book containing conversations with Vesna Pesic, former president of the Citizens Union of Serbia party, who has fought for years, as both intellectual and politician, against intolerance and violence in the former Yugoslavia.

3. Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, pub. Biblioteka XX vek, Belgrade, 1999. Certainly the most fascinating and comprehensive account of the Balkans, their secrets and secrecy, history, culture and people.

4. Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*, Pub. Plavi Jahac, Belgrade, 1999, translation from the English. An international success which is also notching up high sales in Serbia.

5. Terry Pratchett, *Wyrd Sisters*, pub. Laguna, Belgrade 2000, translation from the English. One of the Disc-World novels, whose numerous fans include many in the Balkans.

### Executive Director

**The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe** is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that has been actively fostering democratic and pluralistic values and encouraging reconciliation among the peoples of the region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, FYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and Yugoslavia. The Center is in the midst of several successful projects supported by multinational, public and private donor contributions. For complete information on the Center's activities, consult the web site at [www.cdsee.org](http://www.cdsee.org).

The administrative office is located in Thessaloniki, Greece, where the Executive Director is expected to reside.

### Duties and Responsibilities

The Executive Director will:

- Manage the Center, the staff, and day to day business with vision and enthusiasm;
- Take an active role with support of the Board in fund raising for both project and core funding from international and private sources;
- Define, for Board approval, project proposals and activities to be implemented by the Center each year;
- Prepare and negotiate approved project proposals with potential donors;
- Hold full responsibility for the implementation of all Center's projects;
- Hold full responsibility for the financial administration of the Center's office and projects, including composing annual and project budgets, administering the Center and the projects within the limits of the budget, and presenting financial reports to the Board and to donors;
- Promote the Center internationally;
- Maintain close contacts with institutions and NGO's in the region thus be willing to travel extensively in Southeast Europe and elsewhere as necessary;
- Communicate to the Board project progress, developments, and daily activities of the Center.

### Qualifications:

- University Degree;
- Very strong managerial and project implementation capabilities;
- Excellent strategic thinking and communication skills;
- In depth knowledge of the Southeast European region, particularly of other active NGO's;
- Experience with European Union Funding Programs;
- Excellent knowledge of English required; some knowledge of Balkan languages preferable

**Duration of Contract** 2 years with possible renewal.

**Full Benefits and Salary** depending on qualifications and experience.

To apply, please send full CV, two references, and any other support material by 28th February 2001 to the Center at:

**The Center of Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 9 Kripou, Thessaloniki 54636, Greece, Tel: +30 31 960820, E-mail: [info@cdsee.org](mailto:info@cdsee.org)**