



Summer 1997

SANE News

SANE at SUC Annual Convention in Milwaukee

The Serbian Unity Congress held its seventh annual convention in Milwaukee on Sept 19-22, 1996. It was an exciting, enlightening and very successful affair highlighted with a live television address by President Biljana Plavsic from Pale and a keynote address from HRH Prince Tomislav both echoing the perennial need for Serbian unity. Whereas there was much lamenting of the continuing injustices being compounded upon the Serbian people there was also hope, expressed well in messages from Crown Prince Alexander and Radovan Karadzic who spoke of democracy and freedom.

There was also a panel discussion moderated by Ron Radakovich featuring several prominent activists including Miodrag Perisic, Vice President of the Serbian Democratic Party in Belgrade Nikola Kostich, Secretary of the Serbian-American Bar Association Beba Bjelopetrovic, President of Kolo Srpskih Sestara of New Gracanica Dragan Marin, Vice President of Shearson Lehman Slavisa Rakovich, Economist from Republika Srpska Dr. Ljubisa Stankovich representing Serbian Physicians Chapter and our own Gordana Todorov, President of SANE.

Gordana gave a presentation of the activities of our organization which was very warmly received and she expressed our wish to work more closely with SUC in the future. (This resulted later in our cooperation with SUC in welcoming the leaders of the Belgrade student protests.) Although many were surprised at the successes of SANE, Gordana was most impressed with another organization, the Women's Caucus represented at the convention by Mirjana Samardzija, which had been instrumental in bringing to justice some of those who had committed war crimes against the Serbs. •

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On Serbia-Israel Relations

by Igor Najfeld

Mr. David Sasson, the new Israeli ambassador to Yugoslavia (the first one after the 30 years break in diplomatic relations), gave an interview in Belgrade, in January 1997, explaining the current Israeli position towards Yugoslavia and the other newly created countries. The discussion that followed his statements prompted me to write a few personal recollections, since I believe there are many SANE members who would like to hear from someone who grew up in Serbia, was educated there, and spent 5 years in Israel.

I visited Israel for the first time in the summer of 1962, to see my only surviving uncle, travel a bit, and then work in the kibbutz, which is Israel's variation on a kolhoz theme. There is another kind of an agricultural organization, called moshav, which resembles the old Serbian seljacka zadruga (meaning peasant collective). There were at least three Yugoslav kibbutzes, and at least two Yugoslav moshavs. I visited Kibbutz Gaat and Kibbutz Shaar-Haamakim. It was a pleasant surprise to find that more than 60% of

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SANE Annual Meeting

On February 28, 1997 the General Assembly of SANE convened in the residence of our president, Gordana Todorov.

The many activities of SANE throughout the past year were summarized by the members of the Board.

Gordana Todorov gave a detailed report on our humanitarian efforts and the very successful 4th of July 1996 fundraiser at Branka Milosevic's residence. She also reported on her trip to the Serbian Unity Congress meeting in Milwaukee and to the State Department.

Michael Pravica again overwhelmed us with his plethora of letters to the editors and he also discussed his most recent visit to the State Department on February 24, 1997 where he was told that the US supports democracy, a free market economy and the independent media in Serbia, but does not recognize the plight of Serbs in Krajina and is still unwilling to lift the "outer wall of sanctions" on FR Yugoslavia. Mike concluded that there was a positive sign in the State Department's willingness to listen to Serbian-Americans.

Mimi Gregory summarized the events in the NASSS panel discussions at the AAASS Conference.

There was much lively discussion about the visit of the student demonstrators from Belgrade on January 22, 1997. These rather colorful characters were perhaps not exactly what we had expected, however they were warmly received at the prestigious Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and embraced at a party at the elegant home of Stojan and Mirjana Maksimovic in Nahant. Mimi Gregory reported that the students had left a very positive impression in Washington. (Mimi Gregory, Michael Pravica and Gordana Todorov had all attended high level meetings in Washington throughout the year.)

Treasurer Kiyoshi Igusa reported on the very healthy financial situation of SANE with a surplus of \$3,500 in unrestricted funds.

Next, there was a discussion about the future of SANE. Many ideas were presented for possible new endeavors for the organization.

Gordana proposed that we continue our humanitarian aid but at a reduced level.

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Annual Meeting

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Kiyoshi proposed that we form a "Balkan Research Group" to analyze and prepare for events before they occur.

Steven Gillies proposed to set up an inter-university center in Belgrade similar to the one in Dubrovnik.

Michael Jovanovic suggested that we consider adding a double eagle and crown to the SANE emblem.

Mike Pravica presented a proposal for a Serbian radio program. WUNR would broadcast our shows for \$100 per hour.

Several members were enthusiastic about the idea of a SANE web page, in particular Mike Pravica, Ana Mitrovic, Bane Andjelic and Marko Kocic. Kocic had already prepared a small page about Serbian refugees for which Bane Andjelic offered to provide the server.

Sasa Velickovic proposed that SANE should sponsor cultural activities similar to the Ruzica Sokic event that he and a small group from Boston had attended in New Jersey.

Finally there was an election in which the current Board of Directors was given a renewed mandate to continue its leadership for the next four years. •

Memories of Yugoslavia

Author, musicologist and pianist Inja Stanic's new CD "Memories of Yugoslavia" is an inspiring collection of romantic piano music by Yugoslav composers that embodies an essential part of the Balkan music and heritage. This recording is sponsored by Balkan Express, a nonprofit organization devoted to the plight of homeless children in Yugoslavia, however the proceeds will benefit SANE.

Call (617)928-1235 to learn how to get this recording.

Banja Luka - Visit with Rajko and Stojan

By Kiyoshi Igusa

Last summer I went to Bosnia with Gordana's brother Sava and Nebojsa to visit Stojan Kojic and Rajko Simeunovic, two of the boys that had come to Boston for medical treatment as part of the IOM-SANE program. I am planning to visit them again this summer. Here is a condensed version of two letters that I faxed to a friend in Newton:

We just got back from Banja Luka. It was a very successful trip. Everything went according to plan, more or less. We met Mike's cousin Milorad in Bijeljina, we picked up Stojan Kojic near Brcko and the four of us went to see Rajko Simeunovic. Stojan went with us to Banja Luka. We visited Rose's cousin Milorad Radisic. We found the place where you used to live and we did our best to find Branka's house.

Rajko je pozdravio Rose Kurtigian, Slavko Stojanov, Mirjana Kondic i Ljilja Grkovic. Jana speaks English and sends her regards to Aunt Ruzica.

There are refugees living in the house where you used to live in Banja Luka. In fact the entire Muslim sector of Banja Luka is full of refugees. We got lost several times and whenever we asked anyone in that area they had no idea. Some didn't even know the name of the street that they lived on. One girl said "Don't ask me I'm from Lika." Nebojsa said "Gde su Banja Lucani?" When you see the videotape you will see that we were driving around in circles. But in the end we found everything.

Let me start the story with Stojan. When we got to Obudovac we stopped and asked people do they know Stojan Kojic the boy who lost one leg and one eye. Everyone knew Stojan and they told us to go back and turn here and there and eventually we found his house. Stojan is the same as always, sweet and laid back. His father and mother are also very nice. From talk-

ing to Stojan's father on the phone I imagined him to be strong and rough but instead he is skinny and gentle. Stojan's mother served us lunch but she didn't set a place for herself. After lunch Stojan drove us in his car to Rajko's house. He shifts gear without any trouble with only one leg.

Rajko lives in Slatina or Gornja Slatina and of course everyone in his village knows him. When we got there Rajko was not there. He went somewhere in his car. It was about 3pm on Tuesday. Rajko's father was being the jovial host serving us drinks while we were waiting for Rajko. He and I drank almost the whole bottle of sljivovica before Rajko arrived at 4:30. Rajko's mother has very dark hair and looks a lot like Rajko. She always has a sad face. There were also two aunts and several other relatives and neighbors. They said that Rajko very often could not sleep at night because he was in constant pain.

When Rajko finally arrived we were very pleasantly surprised at how cheerful he was. He had a big smile and he was really happy to see us. We gave him the medical stuff and the letter from Father Seraphim and then he had a troubled look in his face. Father Seraphim sent him a cross and asked for something from Rajko to remember him by and Rajko couldn't think of what to send him. He finally said he would drive to Novi Sad before we leave to see Gordana and then he would bring something to take back to Father Seraphim.

I asked him how he drives and he said in English "Come on Kiyoshi" and he took me and Sava for a ride. I tried to help him but he can get in and out of the car by himself. He has two big long sticks with natural hooks on the end. He used these to push down the clutch and brakes with his hands. He put his right foot on the gas

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Humanitarian aid

In a successful joint effort of St.Sava Serbian Orthodox Church of Boston and SANE, our relatively small community sent 23,993 pounds of humanitarian aid during the 1996 year. All our aid was sent through the Church Relief Program of the Eastern American Diocese of Serbian Orthodox Church headed by the Committee Chairman, Prota Dragoljub C. Malich and under the guidance of His Grace Bishop Mitrofan, except the medicine which was bought with the money from the two successful Fundraisers organized by Branka Milosevic. This medicine was directly delivered to "Dom Zdravlja", Pale.

The relief goods were first taken to a port in New York, then by ship to Thesaloniki, Greece and finally by overland transportation to the Patriarchal relief Committee in Belgrade. Most of the time the containers were not unloaded in Belgrade, but transported intact to Banja Luka, Pale, Bijeljina or other destinations in Republika Srpska.

Further distribution of the goods was often done through Kolo Srpskih Sestara in each of the Parishes.

In an independent conversation with Mrs. Krajinovic, an American who had spent a lot of time in Republika Srpska helping refugees, Gordana mentioned that she was from Boston. "Oh, I remember Boston boxes, when I was helping with the humanitarian aid in Banja Luka", was the reaction.

So, as a Boston group we can be happy that in some way we helped our people and that our aid got where we wanted it to go.

From the "1996 Church Relief Committee Report of the Serbian Orthodox Easter American Diocese" it follows that we are the third parish by the amount of goods that we sent: after Aliquippa, PA (29,804 pounds) and St.Sava, NY (26,993 pounds). As a result of that, the Church Relief Committee in their 1996 Report recognized the successful effort of our Boston community.

Our new quite large Spring 1997 shipment is in the process of being prepared right now. •

SANE Spring Picnic at Auburndale Park

The Spring picnic was a huge success thanks to Igor Najfeld who orchestrated the event recruiting a host of volunteers who prepared a ton of food, including wonderful Serbian delights such as pita, gibanica, the best prebranac and delicious desserts. We were particularly elated with the pljeskavica artfully prepared by Vera and Pero Velickovic, Bata and Olga Mucic, Miljana and Rasko Ojdrovic and Srba and Dragica Mijailovic and with the other meats brought by Bane Andjelic. Bata Mucic and Zoran Coric manned the grills and we should thank Steva Jordanovic for bringing the coal and cooking tools as well as plenty of Iggy's delicious bread. Charles Jevremovic brought the drinks, including a delightful assortment of the most exotic cold beers and wine. It was just right for a pleasantly hot day, especially for those playing soccer! Srdjan Nickovic organized the game which ended rather diplomatically in a tie, Boston - Portland 3:3. The Auburndale Picnic grounds, along the picturesque Charles river was the perfect place. About a hundred of our people, mostly of the younger generation, enjoyed each other's company throughout a balmy afternoon which ended with live music, which had been



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arranged by Sasa and Pero Velickovic, to which some of us danced and even joined in the singing! Finally we should thank Sasa Lekic who tirelessly and meticulously collected and counted money all afternoon. We ended up with \$440 for our humanitarian fund as well as several carloads of clothes and food. This will be used shortly in our next shipment. •

On Serbia-Israel Relations

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the founders spoke fluent Serbian, a bit old-fashioned, the way it was spoken between the two world wars in the cities. They were all quite proud of coming from Yugoslavia not only because Jews from Yugoslavia were considered among the most respected groups of immigrants (as judged by criteria of work habits, reliability, education, etc.), but also because a large percentage of the Yugoslav Jews who came to Israel had been the partisans in the Yugoslav Resistance Movement (YRM). They will never forget that they had been given the only chance - equal to any other ethnic group who joined YRM - to fight for their freedom and lives against Nazis and Ustashes. Very, very few Jews elsewhere in occupied Europe have been given such a chance. Considering that over 90% of partisans have been Serbs (at least in the period from summer of 1941 until autumn 1943, which was a turning point in the war because of the capitulation of Italy and the defeat of the German army on the Russian front, especially at Stalingrad and Kursk, the events that 'reminded' certain small percentage of Ustashes and Domobrans quickly to convert into partisans), there was no doubt in their minds, as they told me so many times, who they were fighting with, against whom and for what.

Another relatively large group of Yugoslav Jews came to Israel before WWII. These were and still are the left-oriented Zionists who believed that the solution to anti-Semitism, poverty and the persecution of the majority of Jews in Europe and elsewhere lay in Israel and its socialist system. The rest of Yugoslav Jews, a very small percentage indeed, are survivors of various concentration camps in Croatia, Austria, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Italy. Not only do they fondly remember Serbian friends and partisans, but they were looking with genuine interest at Yugoslavia's emerging new economic and political system after the split with Stalin. In addition, I did encounter a very small group of older Serbian Jews who fought with the Serbian Army throughout WWI. This means that they survived the long and terrible retreat through Albania, recovery on the island of Corfu, reorganization in Thessalonica, followed by a stunning string of bloody battles in which the Serbian Army, with the help of the Allies, defeated combined Austrian-German-Bulgarian forces in 1918.

I should also point out that during WWII many Jews in British Palestine joined the British war efforts as volunteers, mostly in north Africa. There were a number of young Yugoslav Jews who, because of their language, knowledge and military skills, were sent back to Yugoslavia. Some, like Hanna Senesh, were captured and murdered by fascists. The others fought behind the enemy lines and provided linkage between partisans and Allies. The book "Cafe Berlin", published in the early 1990's, is one of the most exciting testimonies by a foreigner of what happened in Bosnia during WWII. It reads better than the best of sex, spy and war stories, because rarely

can a fiction imitate such an incredible life story. I won't spoil your fun reading this book, except to mention that it involves Syrian Jews from Berlin, belly-dancing, a Sarajevo Jew as a British special agent in Bosnia, Gestapo plans for the Handzar division in Palestine, the Serbian partisans, and a real-life love story. I am really surprised that it has not yet been made into a movie. On the other hand, considering the propaganda effect of such a movie I am not so surprised.

I visited two museums. The first one is Yad Vashem, the central archive and the museum of the destruction of European Jews. When one enters the main building one finds only an eternal candle-flame and the names of the main extermination/concentration camps where the Jews were murdered. The name of Jasenovac is located immediately to the right of Auschwitz-Birkenau. There is also an exhibition space devoted to the destruction of about 60,000 Yugoslav Jews (out of about 75,000), which includes photos from the camps Jasenovac, Gradiska, Djakovo, Sajmiste, etc., with virtually the same historical and statistical data that I already knew from the book published in 1952 by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia. (This book is the result of investigation, started immediately after the war, by the special commission led by Prof. Albert Vajs on the crimes of fascists against the Jews of Yugoslavia).

By all accounts from the survivors that I read and talked to, Jasenovac was the most terrible among all the extermination camps, if one is allowed to make such a comparison. Jasenovac is located on the river Sava, on the boundary between northern Bosnia and Banija, a region in Croatia, and was run by Croatian Ustashes independently of the German SS. Unlike Auschwitz, which was run as an industrialized death factory, Jasenovac was run as a manual labor death production where Serbs, Jews and Romanis (the name Gypsies prefer to use) were slaughtered by Ustashes using special knives, or murdered by hammer blows, hang in masses, drowned in the river Sava in masses, burned in crematoria, or just left out to freeze (as happened to a group of Romanis who happened to arrive there in the winter). I should also mention that there was also a relatively small number of Croats and Muslims who opposed the Ustashe's puppet regime. These were mostly intellectuals and/or communists, and they were murdered in the same way as others. To this day the Serbian people have not been allowed to complete the scientific assessment of all the people murdered there, much less to conduct their proper burial. However, on the entire territory of the so-called Independent State of Croatia, it is by now quite well established that at least 700,000 Serbs (mostly from Bosnia, Croatia and the Serbian region Srem), 30,000-35,000 Jews from Bosnia, Croatia and Srem and at least 25,000 Romanis have been murdered.

Near Yad Vashem is a memorial forest where those Gentiles (meaning non-Jews) who

personally saved Jews during WWII, are honored by the state of Israel and the World Jewish Organization by a little monument. I found names of many Serbs there, as well as the names of a few Croats and Muslims.

The second museum I visited was a small one, consisting of only 6-7 rooms and is located in Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot (meaning Ghetto Fighters), north of Haifa. It is devoted to the preservation of the memory and documents of all the Jewish resistance movements in Europe during 1939-1945. When I said I was from Yugoslavia the curator immediately showed me the room devoted to YRM with pictures of partisans, names, some history and statistics. The extent to which Israel tries to remember and document these things left a lasting impression on me. The inevitable comparison to how much Yugoslavia did, or did not do, for its perished people kept me pondering some of the history lessons that we see repeated today.

Overall, my impression from a two month visit in 1962 was that Israel and Yugoslavia, in particular Serbia, were not all that different, when viewed in the light of the shared WWII experiences, the desire to (re)build a new state and a socialist society where a chance for repetition of such horrors is minimized by relying on a strong army for all able bodied men (in Israel women too), a good educational system, full employment, and rapid growth of the industrial sector. There were, naturally, plenty of differences, but I was impressed by the unexpected number of similarities. For example, I found the spirit of work in kibbutz very similar to one I had in work actions (radne akcije). That also includes the way both peoples played soccer, organized picnics, and discussed movies. Tragically, both countries underwent rapid political, economical, national, and social transformations into something neither of them really wanted. Today, for example, the kibbutz movement is slowly disintegrating, and many of Israel's safety nets for its citizens are rapidly eroding.

I came again for a summer visit in 1966. Apart from learning more about archeology (a national passion of Israel), and meeting more people, my impression had not changed much, except that this time there was a bit of economic downturn.

At the end of 1970, after completing my military service in Yugoslavia, I came as a graduate student to Israel and stayed until 1975. Thus, I was in a position to observe the key events of that period:

- the rapid influx of large amounts of financial, economic and military aid from both the US and variety of Jewish organizations, following the 1967 war and the war of attrition with Egypt,

- new waves of immigration, mainly from the US and Western Europe and the beginning of building of the settlements on the occupied

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Banja Luka - Visit with Rajko and Stojan

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peddle and pushed down on his leg with his hand to go. After driving us around for a while he asked if we wanted to go visit the Muslims. I said sure. Rajko's house is the last house on the street before the (new) border. When we came to the end of the road we turned right. There was noone living here and Rajko said this road is the border. The Federation is on the left side and Republika Srpska is on the right side. Then we came to the Muslim village. As far as I could see every house was destroyed. Rajko said this used to be ours but the Dayton plan gave it back to the Muslims. The Muslims, he said, were upset because their houses were all destroyed.

Rajko said "I don't know why they are upset. It was war. I am not angry with them for what they did to me!" He was speaking in a mixture of English and Serbian.

Later, Stojan also took us across the border into Federation territory. He drove us going 120 km/hr on the highway to Tuzla and Sarajevo until we came to the American IFOR checkpoint. I asked for permission to videotape and they said sure as long as I stay inside the car. We zigzagged through the checkpoint and the IFOR sponsored black market ("Arizona Market") was on the other side. Here Serbs, Muslims and Croats came from different



Rajko with the entire family

parts of Bosnia to trade. I saw mostly Muslims. It was 8pm and very crowded. (Stojan said that during the day it is impossible to park the car.) I talked to one Muslim man sitting at a cafe with three friends. While I videotaped him he said that one of his friends was a Serb, the second was Croat and he and the last were Muslim. (Later he said the first man was Croat and the second a Serb!) He said something like because it was just business and no politics they could be friends there. Stojan told me that these were all four "Balija." He could tell, he said. Also Stojan knows all the Serbs at the market.

There were three kinds of license plates at this pijaca: Republika Srpska with their shields, Muslim with their fleur-de-lis shields and Croats with their Sahovnicas. I assume that OR with a checkerboard means Orasje. I wonder how they crossed the corridor to get to the market.

The next morning at 8am Stojan joined us and the four of us left for Banja Luka. Derventa was on the way so we decided to drive through the center of town. When we drove over the bridge which was a little bumpy something fell out of the car and it broke down. Fortunately there was an auto mechanic 2 kilometers up the road. Unfortunately

the car wouldn't go uphill with the four of us in it so we let Nebojsa go by himself and the rest of us walked. Stojan had no trouble walking. There was a military base along the side of the road and I asked Bata to tape us as we were walking. Two policemen stopped him and asked what he was doing. His licna karta was in the car and so was my passport. But Stojan came to the rescue. He told them that we were his guests and there was nothing for them to be worried about and I heard him repeat the story of how he had come to America and stayed in my house for two months while he was getting medical treatment. Even though there were two policemen Stojan addressed them as "ti," saying "Ne moj da se sekiras." He showed his licna karta and they recorded the incident in their book.

The auto mechanic fixed the car pretty quickly. The engine block was loose and it just had to be bolted down. He was cursing the US and Germany as he was working. He was also unhappy with the peace agreement. So that I don't have to repeat this, these feelings are universal.

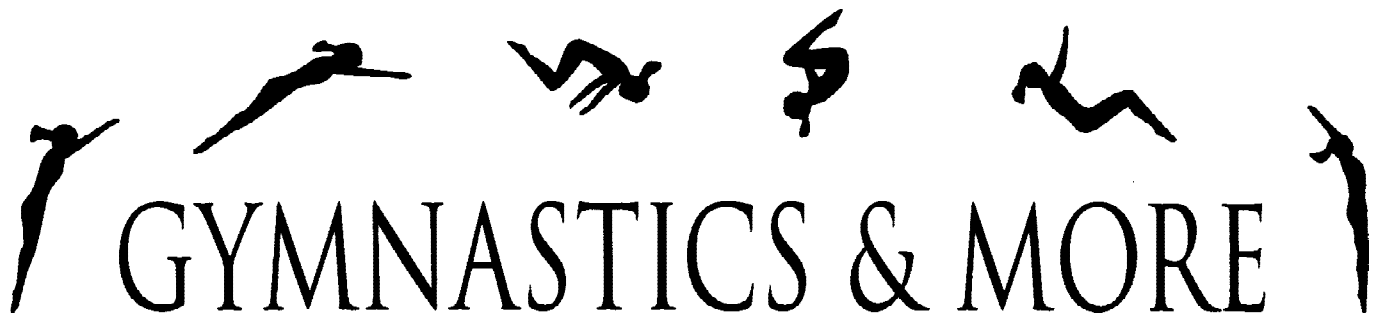
We arrived in Banja Luka at about noon. Bata found a street map of Banja Luka and we used it to find the refugee center at a school which was closed for the summer. This part was not very pleasant. I had my videocam on almost all of the time. About 100 refugees (counting beds) were living in miserable conditions. The men were out (This was around 4pm) and there were mostly women, children and older people. The children were very cheerful and everyone wanted to know who we were. They surrounded me and Stojan. Stojan did all of the talking. He explained how he had been in our house for two months and he asked all the right questions. Bata and Nebojsa waited outside. Basically the story is that they get clothes from America and food from the European Community.

Having seen all the people we wanted to see, we stopped at a restaurant (a grill) and ordered dinner. I got "cevapcici" which came in three long pieces on wooden skewers in-between two pieces of greasy fried bread. It looked delicious but I just couldn't eat. Bata couldn't eat anything because of his special diet. When we finished Nebojsa and I both tried to pay but Stojan insisted on paying saying, "This is my country and you are guests!" At another table I heard a man speaking English without an accent.

Finished with our business we went back to Obudovac the next day. We dropped Stojan off, ate dinner and then got back to Novi Sad by 9pm on Thursday. This time we went through Ruma. We took the Brotherhood and Unity highway from Raca. It was completely empty of traffic. •



Stojan with father, mother and Kiyoshi



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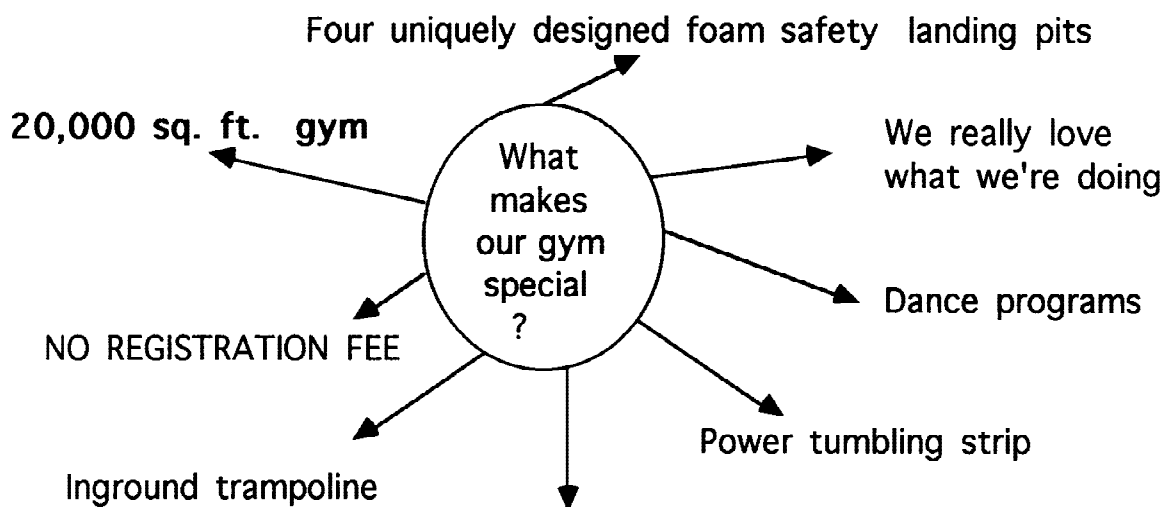
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From Belgrade to Boston: "Ours is a humanistic revolution"

By Ana Mitrovic

On 22 January 1997, Boston, a city hailed as a cultural and educational center of the United States, welcomed the students from Serbia. Serbian student representatives, Dusan Vasiljevic (23), Daliborka Uljarevic (21), Dragan Pecinar (23) and Aleksa Grgurevic (20), delivered their message to a diverse forum of students, professors, journalists and other respected citizens of the Boston area at a lecture organized by the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, a renowned graduate school for international affairs at Tufts University.

"Something strange is happening in Serbia... a real failure of democracy," exclaimed Dragan Pecinar, a fourth-year student of Medicine at Belgrade University, in an attempt to explain to his Boston colleagues why he and the other students have been protesting in the streets of numerous Serbian towns for over nine weeks. Dragan read the student's "Declaration of Decency," claiming that the students' demands were

little, and that all they asked for were basic human rights. After this touching introduction, the audience saw a film showing the first days of the protests and the disruption of Radio B92's emissions. This informative documentary had been produced by Radio B92 itself, the only independent radio station in Belgrade which had recently received an international award for its courageous, truthful broadcasting.

Many questions ensued after the short film, mainly centering on the future goals of the students. Dusan Vasiljevic, the official students' spokesperson, answered most of these questions. He depicted the students protest as a "protest for human dignity." Respecting the students' non-political alignment, Vasiljevic referred to elaborate on the choice of a new political leader. Instead, he stressed the importance of a valid democratic procedure in Serbia and urged its economic development. Some were unsatisfied with this answer, expecting a stronger political attitude on the part of the students, but the majority rewarded

it with big applause.

Indeed, many of the lecture participants expressed gratitude for the students' visit. Serbs studying in the United States and the Serbian-Americans were especially thankful to the students for giving back face and honor to Serbia and its people. Professor Elaine Babbitt of the Fletcher School elegantly brought the comfortable atmosphere to a close, supporting Serbian student protesters in their efforts to enhance democracy in Serbia: "We salute your courage. We support your declaration and hope that you're successful."

The student representatives are now back in Serbia, back on the streets, facing water cannons and police clubs. These brave young people deserve all our support and admiration, especially now, after taking time to respond to the call of the Serbian Unity Congress and other Serbs from America, to transfer some of that atmosphere and spirit here.♦

SANE in the Press

SANE in Newton Tab

"A 'SANE' return to peace - Newton resident helps refugees in war-torn Yugoslavia" This is the title of a very friendly article which appeared on December 17, 1996 in our local paper the Newton TAB. The article recounts the story of how our president Gordana Todorov, touched by the misery and misfortune of the refugees she had encountered in Yugoslavia, spearheaded the efforts of SANE to bring clothes, medicine and food to these suffering people.

"One man, with a flatbed full of children, left with not one personal belonging, desperate to gather all the children from the village before they would be caught up in the fighting," the article explains, "Another old man, alone, stared off in the distance as he arrived in town as a new refugee Đ hat in his hand, holding the only possession he managed to bring, one plastic bag."

"Ōthose people left a clear image in my mind ..., Todorov said, Ōpeople are living in refugee centers ... desperate for food and clothing. They seem to need just about everything."

The TAB article concludes with an appeal for donations to SANE.♦

If you have a letter or an article that was published, let us know and we'll reprint it in our next newsletter.

The North American Society for Serbian Studies Comes to Boston

By Mimi Gregory

The NASSS meeting was held in Boston this past November 14-17 at the Park Plaza Hotel. Among the many panel offerings, the "Serbian Cause" was widely discussed, lecturers including professors: Milan Protic, Institute for Balkan Studies in Belgrade; James Lyons, UCLA; Sava Bosnitch, University of New Brunswick; Ljubisa Adamovich, University of Florida; Zoran Hodjera, IMF; Zeljan Suster, University of New Haven; and Audrey Budding, Harvard University.

While many ideals were discussed there were some salient points underlined:

* "The peaceful disintegration" of Yugoslavia used communism as a basis for division and was a sequel to the revolution of communism.

* The collapse came about from internal dissent.

* Outside influences felt that the system could be easily converted to a market economy.

* The disappearance of the Soviet Bloc gave reason for Yugoslavia's dissolution as Serbia lost her patronage from previous supporters, i.e., Russia.

* Failure by Serbian leadership to recognize the power of the media.

Some facts on Serbian economy and daily life were also presented:

* Imports have decreased by 3.9 billion, exports have decreased by 4.1 billion.

* Yugoslavia's inflation of 1992-1993 was hyper at 313 million % per month. Inflation lasted 25 months, the longest in history, surpassing that of Germany in the 1930's. Recently in-

flation has crept up to 119% even after the introduction of the dinar/DM tie.

* The possibility of sanctions being re-imposed has discouraged foreign investment.

* Unemployment continues to rise. Personal disposable income has plummeted. Pressure is on to improving work habits.

* Consumption has increased with the influx of refugees while supply has decreased. Prices have skyrocketed.

* Population growth has plummeted. Thew national birth rate is down 11%. Serbia has the highest abortion rate in Europe. Day care is no longer free and barely available. It takes one month's wages to feed a family of four.

* Yugoslavia has a total debt of 15 billion and 75% depreciation of equipment. They need to return to the world market as 55% of their GNP is made up of foreign trade.

* Education is no longer free. Health care has decreased by 32%. Violence in domestic relationships has increased and the death rate at birth has increased by 183.3%

While these are depressing statistics, the recent events in Serbia give hope for true reform and economic recovery.

The meeting was pleasantly capped by a party at Gordana and Kiyoshi's where ideas and friendship were exchanged, great food was consumed and a new video documentary about the old women of Montenegro was presented by filmmaker Mark Milich. Finally, NASSS donated \$300 to SANE.♦

On Serbia-Israel Relations

Continued from Page 4

territory,

- the October 1973 war with Egypt and Syria, the near defeat, with relatively large numbers of dead and wounded,

- Judicial process (The Agranat commission) of key government officials for failures in the 1973 war.

Up until this war, Israeli students had been largely dormant, politically speaking. The 1973 war shook them. A large number of leftist, centrist and rightist parties sprung like the springs from a torn mattress. Even some of my professors suddenly became politically active in various parties. But there was a dramatic difference between Israeli professors, who completed army service, and US professors who never experienced the bitterness of war. As a small example, I recall attending the morning lecture by an erudite scholar, full of science and wisdom, while in the evening the same person would produce complete politico-ideological-nationalistic babble.

Needless to say, I got involved in some of the discussions and it was in these discussions that I started to get some flak for being a Yugoslav. This came about when it was published in the Israeli press that Tito allowed large air and rail transports of Soviet military aid through Yugoslavia to Egypt and Syria. Also, Tito's policy of supporting Arab countries, regardless of how nonaligned or misaligned they were, and protecting of certain Palestinians that Israel was after, didn't agree very well with the ordinary Israeli citizen. Nevertheless, the common attitude is that he was doing it as part of the nonaligned or communist block interests in the Middle East, and not because he was an anti-Semite, and so the warm feeling for Serbs and their WWII resistance persisted.

In any case, I don't think that some

of the American Jewish organizations and even some political parties in Israel ever forgot Tito's policies towards Israel from 1967-1980, specially since many of these policies continued unchanged even after his death in 1980, specifically those that dealt with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the support of the Arab countries. It is therefore not too surprising, I believe, that revenge played some role in the formation of the negative public attitude of some Jewish organizations and a group of prominent Jewish individuals towards Serbia in the 1991-1995 wars, regardless of the fact that Serbia, much less individual Serbs, were not responsible for these policies. The feeling of revenge, naturally, can not be expressed too overtly in the press or media, but they can be sensed by considering the entire text, in the way adjectives are used, like "hard-line communists", "non-western", or "continuing old policies" etc. Of course, there is more to the explanation of why some American Jewish organizations, but not the state of Israel, joined, or were directed to join, the propaganda war that, I think, was initiated by US foreign policy goals. This however, will be subject of many future articles and books.

The above mentioned events and history are well known to most older Israelis, and those Jews and their families who survived WWII. However, this history is by and large unknown among US Jews and younger Israelis. It is this knowledge gap, I believe, that allowed propaganda lies about WWII to flow unimpeded, in addition, of course, to the chronic unpreparedness of successive Yugoslav governments and their unwillingness to confront the issue of two Serbian genocides, first in WWI, the second one in WWII, both conducted by Croatian and muslim political leaderships.

There is one more observation that I think is important: the Serbs of Serbia and Montenegro had a considerably different WWII experience from the Serbs of Bosnia, Croatia and Srem. One may say that there is an emotional gap in the visceral understanding of the meaning of Serbian genocide(s), and therefore the gap in the meaning of the current wars in Croatia and Bosnia. This gap, which is the consequence of Tito's deliberate policy of burying the crimes of Ustashes and their collaborators is, I believe, behind many discordant, conflicting, and downright damaging decisions and attitudes among the Serbs. I do think that had the Serbs and their political leaders been really united, from the beginning, just on this single issue, this third genocide in the last 80 years to eliminate Serbs west of the Drina and Danube rivers at the request of foreign powers would have ended quite differently.

Finally I want to mention one more thing in connection with Ambassador Sasson's remark about Israeli-Croatian relations, where he said that:

" Israel had made it clear that it would not establish diplomatic relations with Croatia and wishes to have no contact with its President Franjo Tudjman, as it does not accept any playing with history as Tudjman had done in his book on the plight of Jews, Serbs and Romanis in the Jasenovac concentration camp. There can be no clearer stance than that taken by Israel towards Tudjman and Croatian's attitude to historical truths".

The Yugoslav Jews in Israel have an organization called Hitahdut Oley Yugoslavia, which helped and is helping the new immigrants, publishes bulletin, organizes charity work and maintains information network. I do know that it is this organization that strongly advised the government of Israel not to recognize Croatia, in spite of the pressure from the US, and foolish attempts by Tudjman to modify the second English edition of his book " Wastelands of Historic Reality " in order to appease Jewish organizations. Needless to say, he only modified those parts that dealt with the murder of Jews.

Unfortunately, the state of Israel is today almost completely dependent on the US, and its foreign policy is necessarily synchronized with that of the US, no matter how independent they try to appear, or how justified it is. That means that an Israeli Ambassador may be perfectly friendly and sympathetic to Serbian grievances and causes, and may even have relatives who perished in Jasenovac, yet he has to do his duty, and this may be quite contrary to Serbian interests, especially as long as this is also a US's foreign policy. The Serbs had similar disappointments with the Russian and Greek governments, and not only in this war, but not with the Russian and Greek peoples. •

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