

Labour Focus on Eastern Europe

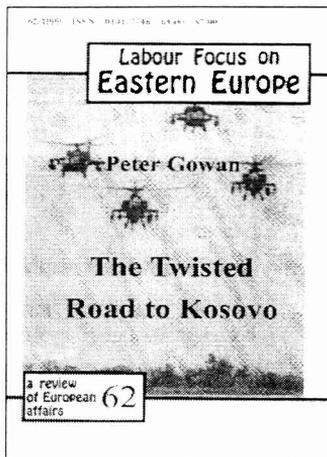
**NATO's
UNJUST
AND
ILLEGAL
WAR**



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Peter Gowan

The Twisted Road to Kosovo

An incisive account of the Euro-Atlantic origins of the NATO attack on Yugoslavia, exposing the key role played by American strategy for the domination of Europe in the post-Cold War period.

Diana Johnstone

Notes on the Kosovo Problem and the International Community

Outside Intervention

At news of violence in Kosovo, the main question immediately raised in the European Union (EU) and the United States by editorialists, commentators and politicians has been, “what can, what should we do about it?” Outside intervention in the Balkans is a very old story. However, its recent revival in terms of a universal moral imperative owes much to two recent developments:

- Television coverage focusing especially on violent manifestations of problems, creating the impression, or illusion, that “everybody knows what is happening”.
- The existence of a single world superpower, the United States, with its extensions in NATO, “the West”, the “international community”, and the organisations it dominates (usually including the United Nations, not to mention the OSCE, the World Bank, the IMF, etc.). Such concentration of power creates the impression that “the international community” is potentially able, through use of primarily American

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military power, to achieve by force whatever it decides to do. The corollary of this assumption is that people, or at least governments, which fail to interfere are “guilty” of complicity in the “crimes” being committed.

This mixture of image and power has radically devalorised the role of discreet diplomatic mediation, which is by nature neither visible nor forceful, and is easily portrayed as craven and lacking in moral resolve. The issue for the international community is presented in terms of wielding “carrots” and especially “sticks”, rather than in terms of understanding and reconciling the fears, interests and possibilities of the populations directly involved.

A third development, which follows naturally, is the deliberate political exploitation of the first two - the media coverage and the potential of the U.S. and its subsidiary allies to intervene militarily. It is now possible, notably, for a secessionist or irredentist movement to hope to achieve its aims primarily, if not solely, by mobilising these two forces. This is a lesson of the Yugoslav situation.

Regarding Kosovo, the basic political issue is the status of the province of Kosovo-Metohija as a part of Serbia (in turn a part of rump Yugoslavia) or as an independent State free to become part of a Greater Albania.

The two sides in this political conflict have opposing strategies which are totally and intimately linked to the issue of international intervention.

* The entire strategy of the ethnic Albanian side in the past decade has been based on mobilising international support, first political and eventually military, on behalf of Kosovo’s secession from Serbia. This is an elaborated, long-term strategy with clear aims and clear methods of achieving them. It is vigorously supported by the Albanian diaspora, notably in Germany, the United States and Turkey. The ethnic Albanian demand for secession is not at all, as commonly portrayed, a reaction to repression by Slobodan Milosevic. It was there first. It draws on a century-old nationalist movement which from its inception has turned to outside powers for decisive support in the realisation of its objectives. This aspiration, like all the other centrifugal forces let loose in former Yugoslavia, received major encouragement from the international

community's recognition in the winter of 1991-92 of the right of Slovenia and Croatia to unnegotiated secession as independent, essentially ethnically defined, States.¹

In 1988 and 1989, Yugoslavia and Serbia made constitutional changes revoking the extremely extensive autonomy accorded the Autonomous Province of Kosovo by the 1974 Constitution. The international community has uncritically condemned these changes, accepting their characterisation as an instrument of Serbian oppression. Three factors have been commonly ignored: however unwelcome to the ethnic Albanian leaders, these changes were widely supported in Serbia as necessary to enable the realisation of the economic liberalisation reforms; they were enacted legally; and they left intact the political rights of ethnic Albanians as well as a considerable degree of regional autonomy. One can only speculate to what extent, without the prospect of decisive outside intervention on their behalf, the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo might have tried to make use of the existing legal framework. They could, for instance, have voted to fill 42 of the 250 seats in the Serbian parliament with their representatives.

Instead, boycotting participation in the institutions and political life of the Serbian State has led the ethnic Albanian population into a sort of internal secession, denounced to foreign sympathisers by those who have instituted it as "apartheid".

Meanwhile, the successful boycott of the Serbian schools has produced a generation of ethnic Albanians whose educated members speak English better than Serbian and are thus much better prepared to win international support than to communicate with Serbian neighbours.

* The Serbian government, in contrast, has had no visible strategy other than to keep the international community at bay by insisting that the Kosovo problem is an "internal affair". This is too static a policy to deserve to be called a strategy, in fact. Milosevic has used the ethnic Albanian boycott of Serbian elections to bolster his party's parliamentary majority with the Kosovo seats, but this is no more than a short-range political advantage. The fact that in all the other conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia, the international community has taken the anti-Serb side, and that even after Dayton the "outer wall of sanctions" was maintained only against Serbia, ostensibly as pressure to "solve the Kosovo

problem”, is enough to convince Serbs that however little they have to hope for from Milosevic, they have nothing to hope for from the “international community” either.

* The nature of these conflicting strategies leads to a structural bias in favour of the ethnic Albanians on the part of the international community, that is, of its influential components: the United States government first of all, which is virtually invited by ethnic Albanian leaders to come in and take over; NATO, whose new mission can be practised and enhanced; and all the numerous governmental and non-governmental organisations which find in the troubles of former Yugoslavia a perfect laboratory and justification for the extension of their own operations.

What is actually being done by the international community in regard to Kosovo resembles very much what was done in the first stages of the wars of Slovenian and Croatian secession. At first, the United States took the position that it opposed the break-up of the existing nation of Yugoslavia, but rapidly added the proviso that it would oppose any use of force by that nation’s armed forces to prevent the break-up. These contradictory signals both gave the green light to Belgrade to reject secession and encouraged the secessionists to go ahead with their plans, while the resulting confusion, and hesitancy, within the Yugoslav Armed Forces, hastened desertion by both officers and soldiers and the formation of irregular armed militia along ethnic lines.

The same pattern is being repeated in regard to Kosovo. The U.S.-led international community is officially opposed to independence for Kosovo, but is also opposed to use of force by Belgrade to disarm the increasingly violent secessionists. While ostensibly accepting Belgrade’s sovereignty, this ambiguous position has encouraged secessionists to provoke armed encounters which are promptly and vehemently blamed on the Serbs.

Serbia has for years been subjected to extremely severe sanctions - economic and even cultural - continued to this day by an “outer wall” (unilaterally imposed by the U.S. with European consent) that keeps it out of international organisations. Serbia is an international pariah, its people largely invisible except for the glimpses selected by unsympathetic international news media. Since compromises are most easily made from positions of strength, the continued pressure and threats

weakening Serbia are scarcely conducive to largesse.

The occasion statements by U.S. officials reproving “violence” on the part of Albanian Kosovo separatists are toothless and in no way balance the demands on Belgrade to solve the Kosovo problem “or else”. It takes two parties to reach a compromise. When pressure is put only on one side to compromise, there is absolutely no incitement to the other party to do so. At present, the Albanians can be reasonably sure that if the situation is allowed to deteriorate, the inevitable Serbian repression will only strengthen their position vis a vis the international community.

At present, the ethnic Albanian nationalist leaders are demanding international intervention sight unseen, convinced as they are - and with good reason - that they have won the international community to their side. Serbs reject it for essentially the same reason.

Certainly nothing could be more welcome than a truly fair and unbiased international mediation. An even better solution would be the emergence in Serbia of leaders from both the Serbian and ethnic Albanian communities with the ability to reach out to each other in the manner of a Nelson Mandela. Unfortunately, there is as yet no sign of the triumph of such wisdom. ² If anything, the bullying pressure being applied on one side only, combined with a deliberate impoverishment of the country which leaves no margin for generosity, works against such a dynamic.

Who belongs in Kosovo?

The presumed fact that 90 per cent of the population of Kosovo is ethnic Albanian ³ is increasingly cited as an implicit justification of their separatist demands by people in Europe and America who would never draw such a conclusion regarding the presence of large ethnic concentrations in other countries, starting with their own.

The fact that Kosovo was the cradle of the medieval Serbian kingdom is noted without sympathy as a quaint archaism by Western commentators who seem more impressed by the claim of ethnic Albanians to be the successors of the ancient Illyrians who recently have even been adopting ethnic Albanian place names and terminology.⁴ Albanian nationalists cherish identification with the unknown Illyrians because they feel it gives them a stronger right to be there than the

Slavs who settled there as farmers in the 6th century. Serbian historians regard the Albanian claim of descent from the Illyrians as plausible but irrelevant, inasmuch as both Serbs and Albanians have inhabited the area for many centuries.⁵ Historians readily acknowledge that Albanian feudal lords, who at the time were Christians enjoying equal rights within the Serbian medieval state, fought alongside Serbian knights at the battle of Kosovo in 1389.

The conflict between Serbs and Albanians developed three centuries later, following the mass exodus from Southern Serbia in 1690 of Christians (including Albanians), who were resettled by the Habsburg monarchy in its border lands, the Krajina, as a result of wars between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. The mountaineers who resettled the plains of Kosovo in the 18th century were actively converted to Islam by the Turks, who regarded their Christian subjects, not without reason, as potential subversives in alliance with the Catholic Habsburgs.⁶ From that time on, various outside powers have found it in their interest to accentuate differences and conflicts between ethnic Serbs and ethnic Albanians.

The ethnic Albanians who had converted to Islam by the 19th century gained privileges (to bear arms, serve in the administration and collect taxes) denied the Christian population. Such privileges stood in the way of development of an Albanian nationalism parallel to the 19th century Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian national liberation movements. When Albanian feudal lords did revolt, it was rather to try to retain these privileges than to achieve an independent State of equal citizens. This historic difference has had ideological consequences. Because they were deprived of equal rights under Ottoman rule, the Serb leaders adopted an egalitarian political philosophy borrowed from France as appropriate to their national liberation struggle in the 19th century. This meant advocacy of a state of equal citizens enjoying equal rights. The practice certainly did not always live up to the principles. But there is a significant and practical difference between a nation that proclaims principles of equal citizenship and one that does not. The tradition is there to be encouraged - which is not accomplished by dogmatically denying its existence.

The coexistence of Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo raises the question of the terms of a multi-ethnic state. The Republic of Serbia

defines itself, in Article 1 of its Constitution, as “a democratic State of all the citizens who live in it”, without reference to ethnic identity, in contrast to Croatia or Macedonia. Serbia is in fact the most multi-ethnic State in the Balkans; one third of its citizens are non-Serbs, with rights equal to all others. Serbs from other countries cannot automatically claim Serbian citizenship, in contrast to Croats living in Bosnia, for example, who vote in Croatian elections. Formally at least, the ethnic Albanian residents of Kosovo have more citizenship rights in Serbia than the many ethnic Serb refugees who have flooded into Serbia from Croatia and Bosnia since the collapse of Yugoslavia. But they refuse to exercise them. Rights that are spurned wither away.

The fact that Serbia is suffering from international sanctions is an incentive to leave it. Montenegro, a country historically “more Serb than Serbia”, has elected (admittedly with votes of ethnic Albanians) a new President who is taking his distance from Belgrade, to the applause of the “international community” which dangles the prospect of lucrative investments before a government which might deprive Serbia of its last access to the Mediterranean. The desire to escape from the hardships visited on Serbia is even strengthening separatist impulses among the Serbian ethnic majority in Voivodina. In short, the policy of punishing Belgrade is leading to the further disintegration of the last truly multi-ethnic country in the Balkans - all in the name of “multi-ethnicism”.

This centrifugal movement can only produce endless conflict and flight from the troubled region.

What is the danger of “ethnic cleansing”?

Given recent precedents, international armed intervention is most likely to be drawn into Kosovo by public perception that Serbs are engaging in “ethnic cleansing” and must be stopped and punished.

Such a perception has been being anticipated and prepared for years. The preface to a 1993 book ⁷ predicted that:

One can expect that ... the Belgrade regime, frustrated but not thoroughly defeated in Bosnia-Herzegovina, will be tempted to open up another theatre of war, most obviously in Kosovo, which would become one more victim of military aggression and ‘ethnic cleansing’.

Five years later, Madeleine Albright was saying substantially the same thing. At the 9 March London meeting of the “Contact Group”, Ms Albright compared Serbian police actions in Kosovo to “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia and declared: “We are not going to stand by and watch the Serb authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia”.

The logic of such predictions is neither political nor strategic, but psychological, of a Manichean type: the wicked “greater Serb” will take out “frustration” suffered in Bosnia by inflicting “ethnic cleansing” on Kosovo. This is the type of reasoning that flows naturally from ethnic stereotypes, in which one ethnic group is demonised, that is, is portrayed as enjoying evil action for its own sake.

Given the widespread adoption of that stereotype concerning the Serbs, there was always a great probability that the inevitable clashes in Kosovo would be interpreted by international media as yet another instance of Serbian “ethnic cleansing” of non-Serbs. Still, it was surprising to see how quickly a police action - brutal but limited - targeting armed rebels was characterised as “ethnic cleansing” and even “genocide” by editorialists and politicians.

Ethnic cleansing and the “Memorandum” of the Serbian Academy

The various ethnic separatisms that have won their pieces of former Yugoslavia have found it useful to blame the wars of secession in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina on a supposed deliberate project to create a “Greater Serbia”. Under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic, this “aggression” is said to have followed a program for ethnic cleansing set out in a 1986 Memorandum written by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade. The notion that the Memorandum was a sort of *Mein Kampf* of “Greater Serbia” has received such acceptance that it even shows up in a French text-book for advanced high school students:

Ethnic cleansing: theory elaborated [mise au point] by members of the Belgrade Academy of Sciences and advocating ethnic homogenisation of the territories of former Yugoslavia inhabited by Serbs, by using terror to drive out the other populations to

allow definitive annexation of these territories by Serbia. (Pierre Milza & Serge Berstein, *Histoire terminale*, Hatier, 1993, p.330)

It is therefore relevant to look at the passages in that infamous but largely unread Memorandum which deal with Kosovo and which include its only references to “ethnic cleansing”. They also are the passages which go farthest in what could be considered “Serbian national pathos”, the earlier part of the document consisting of a more prosaic analysis of Yugoslavia’s economic problems.

In its most controversial section, the draft document (the Memorandum was published in draft form by its political enemies in 1986, the better to denounce it) took up recent complaints by the dwindling Serbian minority in Kosovo that they were being driven out of the province by acts of hostility from the ethnic Albanian majority, which at the time enjoyed political control. The Memorandum denounced what it called “the physical, political, legal and cultural genocide of the Serbian population of Kosovo and Metohija”. It described the Albanian nationalist demonstrations which began in 1981, a year after Tito’s death, as the declaration of “a very special but total war” against the Serbian people.

The Albanian nationalists, the political leaders of Kosovo, with well-defined tactics and a clear objective, have begun to destroy inter-ethnic relations founded on equal rights, for which Serbs had fought hardest in Kosovo and Metohija. The autonomous region, at the favourable moment, obtained the rank of autonomous province, then the status of ‘constituent part of the Federation’ and benefits from greater prerogatives than the rest of the Republic to which it formally belongs. The next step of the ‘escalation’, the Albanisation of Kosovo and Metohija, has been prepared in perfect legality. In the same way, the unification of the literary language, of the name of the nation, of the flag and of the schoolbooks with those of Albania following Tirana’s instructions, was done in a way quite as open as the border between the two countries. Plots which ordinarily are carried out in secret were fomented in Kosovo not only openly but ostentatiously.

The Memorandum predicted that unless a fundamental change

was made meanwhile, in ten years there would be no more Serbs in Kosovo, but rather “an ethnically pure Kosovo”. If, it warned,

genuine security and equality under the law for all peoples living in Kosovo and Metohija are not established, if objective and lasting conditions are not created favouring the return of the people driven out, that part of the Republic of Serbia will become a European problem with very grave consequences. Kosovo represents a key point in the Balkans. Ethnic diversity in many territories of the Balkans corresponds to the ethnic composition of the Balkan peninsula and the demand for an ethnically pure Albanian Kosovo is not only a heavy and direct threat to all the peoples who are in a minority there but, if achieved, it will set off a wave of expansion threatening all the peoples of Yugoslavia...

However excessive this description of the situation may have been, it clearly was not the elaboration of a “theory” advocating ethnic cleansing of other peoples by Serbs, but rather the expression of a fear that Serbs would be “ethnically cleansed” from Kosovo by the Albanian majority there. The political conclusions that could be and in fact were drawn from the arguments put forth in the Memorandum were quite simply the constitutional changes enacted two years later to revoke the extreme autonomy granted in 1974.⁸

Whether they are described as “terrorists”, “freedom fighters” or, more neutrally, guerrillas, it is undeniable that armed bands exist in Kosovo, have carried out armed attacks and have declared their intention to carry out more. There is no government in the world that could stand back and allow such groups to operate unhindered.

Sympathisers with the ethnic Albanian movement commonly present it as an exemplary non-violent resistance to oppression, in the tradition of Gandhi, and explain the recent turn to violence by impatience resulting from the failure of the international community to reward the peaceful leadership of Ibrahim Rugova’s Democratic League of Kosova (LDK). This is of course an idealised over-simplification of a more complex and ambiguous situation. It is indeed true that Mr. Rugova has opted for non-violence, as a part of his strategy of winning international support. However, it is not true that the turn to violence is only a recent

development. First of all, in a region prone to violence, the Albanians have traditionally been even more associated with recourse to arms than any of their neighbours, excepting perhaps the Montenegrins. Non-violence is thus perhaps too recent an innovation to be totally credible, especially since the contemporary movement itself, before producing Rugova's LDK, had already begun in a more militant mould. The guerrillas of the "Kosova Liberation Army", the UCK (Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves), are a continuation of a decades-long underground movement.

"The roots of the underground groups reach far back to the sixties and seventies", according to an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* by Stephan Lipsius.⁹

The oldest of the organisations currently active both in Kosovo and abroad is the 'Kosova People's Movement' (LPK). It was founded in Germany on 17 February 1982 as the 'People's Movement for a Kosova Republic' (LPRK). This was not a new founding, but rather a merger of the following four previously independent underground organisations: the 'National Liberation Movement of Kosova and of the Other Albanian Regions of Yugoslavia' (LNCKVSHJ), the 'Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Kosova' (OMLK), the 'Communist Marxist-Leninist Party of the Albanians in Yugoslavia' (PKMLSHJ) as well as the 'Red Popular Front' (FKB).

The political goals of the LPK include unification of all Albanians in former Yugoslavia, that is in Kosovo, Macedonian, Montenegro and South Serbia, in a common State. Contrary to the non-conspiratorially active Kosovar parties headed by the LDK, the LPK does not basically reject violence as a means of political conflict. The LPK calls for political and financial support to the UCK, but so far does not take part in armed ambushes or bomb attacks.

UCK communiqués and announcements are published in the LPK paper *Zeri i Kosoves*, leading to speculation that the LPK is the political arm of the UCK, according to Lipsius.

Next to the LPK and the UCK is a third underground organisation

in Kosovo. Least is known about this one. It is the 'National Movement for the Liberation of Kosova' (LKCK). It was founded on 25 May 1993 in Pristina. Some founding members of the LKCK had left the LPK out of political differences or personal animosities with the LPK party leadership. Officially the reason for the split was the growing programmatic rapprochement between the LPK and the LDK. Contrary to the strictly non-violent policy of the LDK, the LKCK demanded militant action against the Serbian rulers. In addition the LCKC is for a State unifying all Albanian-inhabited regions of former Yugoslavia with Albania, that is for construction of a Greater Albania. The LKCK does not support the existence of the self-designated 'Kosova Republic'.

The LKCK has a political and a military arm, the so-called 'LKCK Guerrilla'. Contrary to the UCK, the LCKC Guerrilla has not yet undertaken military actions or attacks. The reason is that for the LKCK, the time for application of the entire Kosovar military potential has not yet come. The second general assembly of the LCKC proposed a Four-Phase Model for the 'Liberation of the occupied areas'. The first phase is marked by political education work in the population and structural preparation. In the second phase begin armed individual actions, while the third phase will see the unification of the LKCK, the LPK and the UCK as the 'National Front for the Liberation of Kosova'. The joint military actions undertaken in the third phase should lead in the fourth phase to popular uprising and total mobilisation of all forces. According to information from LCKC circles, we are now in the second phase.

And meanwhile, thanks in part to the collapse of order in Albania last year (1998), the Kosovar rebels are better armed than ever. There are unconfirmed rumours that the guerrillas of the "Kosovo Liberation Army" (UCK) in the Drenica region are threatening aircraft with stinger missiles, and that this is why the police undertook to try to recapture control of the region in the first days of March. If the UCK do not yet have "stinger" missiles, put into general circulation by the US via Afghan Muslim guerrillas in the 1980s, they soon will have. It is well-known that the Albanian irredentist movement is financed not only by taxing its own people but also by drug-smuggling through the Balkans, notoriously in the hands of ethnic Albanian clans.¹⁰ Buying light arms is no problem.

While Rugova travelled freely between his Pristina headquarters and Western capitals winning support for his non-violent struggle, the violent phase of the struggle got underway. In 1996, there were 31 political assassinations in Kosovo. The targets were Serb officials but also ethnic Albanians condemned as “collaborators” - the better to destroy the last bridges between the two communities. The pace quickened in 1997, with 55 assassinations. While Rugova was claiming that the UCK was a figment of Serb propaganda, guerrillas raided eleven police stations in co-ordinated attacks in September 1997 before making a first public appearance, armed, uniformed and masked, before a crowd of 20,000 at a funeral on 28 November 1997. In January 1998, a UCK statement issued in Pristina announced that the battle for unification of Kosovo with Albania had begun. The number of killings escalated, with 66 killed before the massive Serbian police operation against guerrilla bases in the Drenica region in early March 1998.

No government on earth could be expected to remain passive in the face of armed bands that have claimed 152 lives in a little over two years - least of all the government in Washington. It would be hard to find a precedent for the United States’ threat to impose heavy sanctions and freeze the foreign assets of the legitimate government of a country faced with such an armed insurgency unless it withdraws its police forces and leaves the rebels unmolested.

What is “ethnic cleansing”? While everybody is against it, few seem interested in understanding its real meaning and causes as the basis for combatting it. The prevalent attitude, in the depoliticised public consciousness of the 1990s, is to see it as a sort of pure evil, an expression of racist or ethnic hatred which surges from “the darkness of the human soul” (rhetoric of a speech by U.S. Vice President Albert Gore) for no reason. The only remedy envisaged is punishment.

In the Balkans, “ethnic cleansing” is rarely a proclaimed policy. A notable exception is the Croatian Ustasha movement’s deliberate policy of eliminating Serbs and other minorities from the lands of Croatian “historic rights” which it controlled during World War II. Croatian extremists in the Ustasha tradition have taken up both the theory and the practice in Tudjman’s Croatia. The Tudjman regime has not openly adopted the theory but has tolerated the practice, with the result that Croatia has in fact been “ethnically cleansed” of the vast

majority of its Serbian population in the most thorough and successful operation of the kind in the former Yugoslavia. The international community has not punished Croatia. On the contrary, the Zagreb government has been substantially rewarded by membership in international organisations and foreign investment, both denied Serbia.

In general, ethnic cleansing, that is, the expulsion of members of a different ethnic group from a disputed area, arises from fear that their presence will serve to justify rival claims for political control of that territory. Nothing is better designed to stimulate such fears than the prospect that from now on, an ethnic group claiming a local majority represents a threat of secession from the country in which it finds itself.

Once the international community gave its assent to the unnegotiated disintegration of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia into ethnically-defined States, the struggle was on for control of territory along ethnic lines. In this struggle, Serbs, Croats, Muslims, and Albanians have all accused their territorial rivals of “genocide”. These accusations reflect both genuine fears and political calculation, and outsiders should be prudent in echoing such inflammatory terms. In the West, emphasis on “genocide” by analogy with totally different historic situations has obscured the primary political cause of “ethnic cleansing”: fear that the presence of members of a politically organised ethnic group will be used to support territorial claims.

The presence on the small territory of Kosovo of two armed camps indeed threatens to lead to a bloody and terrible conflict. In the propaganda skirmishes leading up to such a conflict, the Serbs have once again lost the labelling battle. Their label for their armed adversaries, “terrorist”, has been reluctantly endorsed by US proconsul Robert Gelbard, before being dropped as soon as Serbian authorities acted accordingly. On the other hand, the ethnic Albanian label for Serbian actions, “ethnic cleansing”, has been taken up at the highest level of the international community, as well as by a chorus of commentators and petition signers.

The notion that early denunciation of ethnic cleansing will help to prevent massacres is probably dead wrong. On the contrary, such highly-charged overstatement contributes to emotional polarisation, to mutual fear and suspicion, to suppositions about NATO intervention, and above all to the sort of desperation on both sides that can lead

people to commit desperate and terrible acts.

Leaders of both the Serbian state and the ethnic Albanian nationalists have proclaimed their willingness to accept cohabitation between the Serbs and ethnic Albanians. The wiser course is to accept this declaration of principle on its face value and to consider any acts contrary to this principle as deviations from mutually accepted principles.

Are the Serbs willing to compromise?

Dobrica Cosic, Serbia's leading novelist, often characterised as the spiritual father of the national revival, proposed partition of Kosovo-Metohija as a way of solving the conflict between Serbs and Albanians.¹¹ As President of Yugoslavia in 1992 and 1993, Cosic raised the possibility on various occasions, such as when speaking to the foreign affairs committee of the European Parliament in Brussels on 30 March 1993, without arousing any interest.

Cosic described Kosovo as

a European question of the first rank.¹² Nevertheless, up to now, neither the European Community nor the CSCE have found the right way of helping to resolve the Albanian-Yugoslav and the Albanian-Serb problem.

He attributed this to "the fact that the problem of Serbo-Albanian relations has been misrepresented and reduced to a problem of human rights."

This meant that "the central factor" was being "studiously overlooked: the aspiration of Yugoslav Albanians to unite with Albania and create a 'Greater Albania'." The secessionist ambition of the Albanian nationalist movement is the very essence of their human rights demands. From that ambition flows a behaviour of obstruction in every sphere of social life: politics, culture, public education, the economy, media. For the problem is not that the Albanians are deprived of cultural, political or other rights; the problem is that they have these rights but refuse to exercise them. They boycott en bloc the society in which they live; they do not recognise it. The issue is not about opening the schools: they are open. The issue is that they insist that the curriculum in those

schools be borrowed from the Albanian State and that they issue diplomas in the name of the 'Republic of Kosovo'.

I consider as a great misfortune the fact that the Albanians have excluded themselves from political life and that they do not take advantage of their autonomy. They have all the civil and political rights needed for constituting themselves as an autonomous community. That is officially guaranteed.

The whole world, all the human rights champions are saying that the Albanians have been banned from the schools. That is a pure lie! They are the ones who refuse to attend the schools governed by the program of the Serbian state, which nevertheless guarantees them courses in Albanian history and culture and the use of their language. They insist on schools paid and maintained by the Republic of Serbia but where the curriculum and schoolbooks come from Albania and the diplomas would bear the heading, 'Republic of Kosovo'!

The human rights argument is no longer anything but an ideological weapon used by the secessionists and their foreign protectors in view of realising their national ambition: the union of all Albanians in a single State. And so long as they will not have achieved that end, the question of human rights in Kosovo-Metohija will continue to be heated up and Serbia will remain indicted by the international community. It will not do us a bit of good to point out that the Albanians benefit from national and human rights such as no other national minority enjoys. [...]Kosovo will be Serbia's malignant tumour which will exhaust her economically, block her development and threaten her territorially by demographic expansion.

The military dangers were clear five years ago. Cosic was aware of "precise information on the existence of 60 to 70,000 Albanians organised in paramilitary units in Kosovo. This is an army ready to go to war the day when Mr. Rugova, Mr. Berisha or some other Albanian is through with the soothing rhetoric that they serve up to the CSCE." Yugoslavia was even then being isolated and crushed by sanctions, and

even threatened with military intervention if they “commit aggression” in Kosovo - that is, on their own territory. If the Serbian army should move to oppose secession, Cosic wondered: “will they send missiles to raze our cities and airports?”

In such a dilemma, Cosic concluded it was necessary to satisfy the national aspirations of both the Serbian and Albanian peoples by a “peaceful and fair territorial division”.

This offer having found no takers on the Albanian side, there is no present sign of its being actively pursued by the Serbs either. In itself, it may well be a fair proposal. However, it encounters two types of objections.

* The Western “international community”, starting with the United States, has vetoed it for reasons of analogy and precedent. Partitioning Kosovo would go contrary to the policy adopted to justify recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, considering ex-Yugoslavia’s internal boundaries as inviolable. This policy is the very basis for branding Serbia as the “aggressor” in Croatia and in Bosnia and therefore cannot be easily abandoned. Moreover, if Kosovo were partitioned, why not Macedonia, where Albanians are concentrated in the Western areas and would also demand to join “Greater Albania”?

* The danger of setting such a precedent also worries Serbs. Suppose ethnic Albanians, thanks to their much higher birth-rate, attained a majority in some other part of Serbia. Would they demand secession there too? The “Greater Albania” project includes more than Kosovo. Where if ever would it all end?

Privately, a number of Serbs would welcome some sort of negotiation which would “save the monasteries” and cut losses. But how?

Various compromise proposals have been put forth by independent Serbian intellectuals. One such proposal is published in *Dialogue*. In another, Professor Predrag Simic of the Institute of International Politics and Economics in Belgrade has suggested that the Autonomy Statute of Trentino-South Tyrol in Northern Italy, long a scene of irredentist unrest among the German-speaking, formerly Austrian inhabitants, could serve as a European model for resolving

the Kosovo crisis.

This and other independent proposals could be considered “trial balloons” which could be taken up at the official level should they ever meet with the slightest sign of interest on the Albanian side. So far, however, this has not been the case. Encouraged by their image as victims of Serbian oppression, enjoying strong support from Western governments and human rights organisations, Kosovo’s ethnic Albanian nationalists have no incentive to settle for anything less than their ultimate goal: Greater Albania.

Human rights

The attitude of the international community toward the Yugoslav disaster has been characterised throughout by confusion between national rights and human rights. It is unclear to what extent this confusion is accidental or deliberate in Western countries, where the concept of “national rights” is variously appreciated according to political tradition (with significant differences between the United States and Germany, for instance). The readiness in the United States, in particular, to consider denial of separatist ethnic rights as violation of human rights represents a mutation that may not be unrelated to the confusion in the American left, in particular, resulting from the critique of universal values and the rise of “identity politics”.

Regarding the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo, what sort of civil society is being built in the context of the long militant nationalist struggle? Some positive effects may be assumed. Literacy has certainly been vigorously encouraged by a movement which, since its inception in the late 19th century, has been led by literature professors looking for a country to go with a language only recently transposed from the oral tradition. The rise in general literacy must also be beneficial to the status of women. On the other hand, this is a society closed in on itself, obsessed with its own identity. Its human rights organisations are concerned with the human rights of ethnic Albanians. All questions of democratisation and political direction are put off in expectation of the “independence” that is supposed to solve them all.

The political modernisation and democratisation of the Albanian people in the Balkans remains a legitimate and unfulfilled aspiration. Had they used their political rights under the Serbian Constitution, they

could have elected an important number of representatives to the Serbian Parliament, and altered the political balance of power in Belgrade. Instead, they have missed out on contributing to the beginnings of multi-party democracy in Serbia and seriously crippled its development. Massive ethnic Albanian abstention has ensured Milosevic's party of a majority it might otherwise have lost. It is highly doubtful that holding parallel elections for ethnic Albanians only, resulting in unanimous election of an unchallenged leader, Ibrahim Rugova, and of election of a "parliament" which has never functioned, provides a better initiation into democratic political practice than could have been gained by using the official elections to further the interests of the Albanian people of Kosovo within the Serbian Republic.¹³

The situation of ongoing ethnic hostility is bad for all sides. Each is likely to care less and less about what happens to the "others".

In early March, the Serbian raid on the rebel base at Prekaz had not ended before the Clinton administration announced measures to "punish" Belgrade for its "violence" and began to pressure other governments to join in imposing new economic and diplomatic penalties on Yugoslavia. Given the absence of similar reaction to, for instance, Turkey's use of "disproportionate force" in its raids against Kurdish rebels, such reprimands can carry little moral weight with Serbs. How many innocents perished in Panama in the United States extraterritorial raid to arrest a foreign head of state in his own country? How many women and children died in Waco, Texas, in a police raid on a group which was armed, but which had not - in contrast to the ethnic Albanian guerrillas in Prekaz - claimed dozens of assassinations?

The double standard employed is so blatant, that the uniquely severe reaction of the international community cannot appear to most Serbs as an expression of genuine deep concern for human rights, but rather as part of a long-standing political campaign to isolate and fragment their country.

Nevertheless, regardless of any and all hypocrisy and ulterior motives on the part of outside accusers, it is more than likely that acts of police brutality occurred in the course of that and related raids on guerrilla bases, if only because acts of brutality are all too usual in such circumstances.

Unfortunately the chorus of indignation and calls for punishment

led by Madeleine Albright can only make it harder for Yugoslavs who are concerned about high standards of respect for human rights to demand an accounting from their government. Nevertheless, some have done so.

Following its own investigations in the Drenica region in early March, the Belgrade-based Humanitarian Law Centre (HLC) reported that its findings “contradict Serbian police reports on the number of dead and the locations and circumstances in which they were killed” and urged the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs to give reporters and representatives of humanitarian and human rights organisations access to the area and thereby enable the public to be provided with full, accurate and timely information. “The indications that the persons killed, wounded or arrested were connected with the attacks on police must be presented to the public”, the HLC stated in a communiqué, pointing out that it is “in Serbia’s best interest to immediately institute an inquiry” into the circumstances of the death of Kosovo Albanians in police actions, including exhumation of the remains for forensic examination.

It would be in keeping with traditional practices for human rights advocacy groups in other countries to support such demands from local Serbian organisations, as a means of strengthening democratic civil society and the rule of law.

This is in fact the sort of work done by Amnesty International, whose own reports from Kosovo in early March 1998 were reasonably precise, factual and balanced, relating charges made by both sides and noting which had not been substantiated or confirmed.

The reactions to events in Yugoslavia display a major difference of approach to human rights questions, of considerable political significance.

What can be considered the traditional Amnesty International approach consists broadly in trying to encourage governments to enact and abide by humanitarian legal standards. It does so by calling attention to particular cases of injustice, excessive severity or violation of legal norms. It thereby participates, through outside moral support, in various internal struggles for the advancement of humanitarian legal standards, in alliance with whatever local forces are engaged in such combat.

The approach of Human Rights Watch and above all of its affiliate, the Vienna-based International Helsinki Federation for Human

Rights, is quite different. Aaron Rhodes, executive director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, displays none of the scrupulous concern for facts which is the hallmark of Amnesty International. He deals in sweeping generalities. In a column for the *International Herald Tribune*,¹⁴ he wrote that Albanians in Kosovo “have lived for years under conditions similar to those suffered by Jews in Nazi-controlled parts of Europe just before World War II. They have been ghettoised. They are not free, but politically disenfranchised and deprived of basic civil liberties”. The comparison could hardly be more incendiary, but the specific facts to back it up are absent.

At least in the case of Yugoslavia, the Helsinki and Human Rights Watch approach differs fundamentally from that of Amnesty International in that it clearly aims not at calling attention to specific abuses that might be corrected, not at reforming but at discrediting the targeted State. By the excessive nature of its accusations, it does not ally with reformist forces in the targeted country so much as it undermines them. Its lack of balance, its rejection of any effort at remaining neutral between conflicting parties, contributes to a disintegrative polarisation rather than to reconciliation and mutual understanding. It therefore contributes, deliberately or inadvertently, to a deepening cycle of repression and chaos that eventually may justify, or require, outside intervention.

This is an approach which, like its partner, economic globalisation, breaks down the defences and authority of weaker States. Rather than helping to enforce democratic institutions at the national level, it carries the notion of democracy to the largely abstract level of the “international community”, whose sporadic and partial interest in the region is dictated by Great Power interests, lobbies, media attention and the institutional ambitions of “non-governmental organisations” - often linked to powerful governments - whose competition with each other for donations provides motivation for exaggeration of the abuses they specialise in denouncing.

The readiness of distant observers to accept the most extreme allegations serves to discredit and ultimately disempower all State authority in former Yugoslavia. This “international community” may indeed be serious when it warns Ibrahim Rugova and his followers that it does not want an independent Kosovo, much less a “Greater Albania”.

The logic of its actions is to reduce the entire region to an ungovernable chaos, from which can emerge no independent States, but rather a new type of joint colonial rule by the international community.

Notes

1. "Ethnically defined" because, despite the argument accepted by the international community that it was the Republics that could invoke the right to secede, all the political argument surrounding recognition of independent Slovenia and Croatia dwelt on the right of Slovenes and Croats as such to self-determination. Claiming that it was impossible to stay in Yugoslavia because the Serbs were so oppressive was the popular pretext for the nationalist leaders in power in the Republics to set up their own statelets. Recognition of the administrative borders was a de facto support for the non-Serbian nationalisms - in the name of anti-nationalism. No other single act has been more decisive in determining the subsequent fate of the region. Countless books, articles and declarations blaming the wars in Yugoslavia solely or primarily on one nationalism, Serbian nationalism, and on one man, Slobodan Milosevic, have deflected attention from the responsibilities of all the other internal and external actors, not to mention crucial economic and constitutional factors. An outstanding exception to this chorus is the careful account of these factors by Susan Woodward in *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, Brookings, Washington, 1995.
2. The separatist positions of Adem Demaqi are proof that it takes more than years in prison to make a "Mandela".
3. The fact is "presumed" because ethnic Albanians boycotted the most recent census in 1991.
4. The generally well-documented 1998 *Spring Report* of the influential International Crisis Group (ICG) comments on its decision to refer throughout to ethnic Albanians in Kosovo as "Kosovars" as follows: "Serbs living in Kosovo are also sometimes called Kosovars. In this report, however, 'Kosovar' always means ethnic Albanians from Kosovo. Serbs use for ethnic Albanians, either 'Albanci' or the derogatory term 'Siptar'..." First, by giving the ethnic Albanians, and not the Serbs, a name attached to the region, the implication is established that the ethnic Albanians really belong in Kosovo, whereas the Serbs are outsiders. The same was done earlier by adopting the terms "Bosniak"

and even “Bosnian” exclusively for Muslim inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Kosovo the appropriation of the place name is even more questionable, in view of the circumstance that a large but undetermined number of Albanian “Kosovars” have immigrated into Kosovo quite recently, whether during the wartime fascist occupation or afterwards, when the ethnic Albanian Party leaders tolerated illegal immigration from Albania itself. There is no mention in the long ICG Report of this clandestine immigration from Albania into Kosovo.

The statement that “Serbs use... the derogatory term Siptar” is equally biased. The Albanian word for Albanian is precisely Shqiptar, written in Serbian as Siptar. That is how the Albanians have always called themselves; it means “eagle men” and is scarcely derogatory. No mention is made of derogatory terms used by the Albanians to designate the Serbs...

At the very start of the ICG report, mention is made of the importance of Kosovo for Serbs and for “Kosovars”. Speaking of the importance for Serbs, the paragraph begins: “According to Serb mythology, Kosovo is the cradle of their nation...”

Speaking of the importance for Kosovars (i.e., Albanians), it begins: “As descendants of the ancient Illyrians...”

Thus the thoroughly documented history of the Serbian kingdom is described as “mythology” while the Albanian supposition is accepted as fact.

With a board of directors including George Soros and prestigious political figures including Shimon Peres and the crown prince of Jordan, financed by both governments and private sources, the ICG is the perfect “think tank” for the “International community” at its highest levels.

5. Radovan Samardzic et al, *Le Kosovo-Metohija dans l’Histoire Serbe*, published by L’Age d’Homme in Lausanne in 1990; and Dimitrije Bogdanovic, *Knjiga o Kosovu*, Serbian Academy of Sciences and the Arts, Belgrade, 1985. Serbian historians point out that the two ethnic populations co-habited the region in the Middle Ages, but were differentiated in their economic activities. Place names, legal texts and tax documents indicate that in the thirteen century, the Serbs were tillers of the soil, centred in the plains, whereas Albanians (and Vlachs) were herdsmen who moved through the mountains according to grazing seasons. Another interesting instance of ethnic specialisation is the

immigration of Germans from Saxony to work the important gold and silver mines at Novo Brdo near Pristina during the height of the Serbian Kingdom. Such occupational distinctions have of course been lost in modern times. See Samardzic, 1990, p.30. See also Georges Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans*, Fayard, 1991, p.66.

6. Castellan, pp 211-214.

7. Branka Magas, in the introduction to *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, London, Verso, 1993.

(8) Susan Woodward points out that the same Serbian liberal leaders who attempted to denounce the intellectuals' nationalism by leaking the incomplete "Memorandum" wanted to reduce Kosovo's autonomy for purely economic reasons but saw no way to do it. The ex-banker Slobodan Milosevic found the political excuse to do so by defending the Kosovo Serbs: the political trick that built his power base. *Ibid*, p. 78.

9. "Bewaffneter Widerstand formiert sich", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 March 1998. It may be noted that the FAZ is the last newspaper in the world that could be accused of being pro-Serb.

10. *La Dépeche Internationale des Drogues*, Paris, No 57, Juillet 1996.

11. "While he was president of Yugoslavia in 1992 and 1993, Dobrica Cosic made discreet contact with Kosovo Albanian leaders. He wanted to discuss the territorial division of the province, with the Albanian part, except for a number of Serbian enclaves, leaving Serbia. This was rejected by Albanian leaders." Tim Judah, *The Serbs*, Yale University Press, 1997, p.307.

12. Cosic's analysis of the Kosovo situation, as expressed before and during his term as President of Yugoslavia (cut short in mid-1993 by Milosevic, who perhaps concluded that his domestic prestige was not exportable and thus of no use), is to be found in a 1994 collection of his writings published by L'Age d'Homme under the title *L'Effondrement de la Yougoslavie*.

13. Ibrahim Rugova and his Democratic League of Kosova (LDK) are described as follows by Tim Judah in *The Serbs*, Yale University Press, 1997: "The party is led by Ibrahim Rugova whose father was executed by the communists when they restored the region to Yugoslav control. His trademark is a scarf worn at all times. The LDK brooks little dissent and those that challenge it are howled down in LDK publications and

can even be ostracised in the tight-knit Albanian community. Kosovo is odd because, despite constant police repression, Albanian politicians have held semi-underground polls, have declared Kosovo 'independent', have set up a parallel education system, and have hailed Rugova as president of the Republic of Kosova. Woe betide any Albanian family or shop or businessman who will not pay his dues to Kosova's tax collectors. In his capacity as president, Rugova sweeps out of his headquarters, a ramshackle wooden building, hops into a limousine surrounded by aides and bodyguards and drives about Pristina just like a real Balkan president. A government-in-exile complete with ministers commutes between Tirana, Germany and Skopje. Rugova travels abroad to lobby for international recognition for his phantom state, but despite the odd hassle over his passport he has not been arrested since challenging Serbian power in such a blatant fashion."

14. *International Herald Tribune*, 18 March 1998. Two months earlier, Mr. Rhodes hastened to address a letter to the same newspaper vehemently attacking Jonathan Clarke, who had had the temerity to write a balanced column entitled "Don't Encourage Separatist Aims of Kosovo Albanians". Mr. Rhodes accused Mr. Clarke of echoing Belgrade propaganda and of seeming to "favour appeasement in the face of murder, torture and the total denial of the human rights of Kosovo Albanians". ●

Diana Johnstone

NATO's Humanitarian Trigger

From James Rubin to Christiane Amanpour [chief foreign correspondent for CNN], the broad range of government and media opinion is totally united in demanding that NATO bomb Serbia. This is necessary, we are told, in order to “avert a humanitarian catastrophe”, and because, “the only language Milosevic understands is force”... which happens to be the language the U.S. wants to speak.

Kosovo is presented as the problem, and NATO as the solution. In reality, NATO is the problem, and Kosovo is the solution.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO needed a new excuse for pumping resources into the military-industrial complex. Thanks to Kosovo, NATO can celebrate its 50th anniversary next month by consecration of its new global mission: to intervene anywhere in the world on humanitarian grounds. The recipe is easy: arm a group of radical secessionists to shoot policemen, describe the inevitable police retaliation as “ethnic cleansing”, promise the rebels that NATO will bomb their enemy if the fighting goes on, and then interpret the resulting mayhem as a challenge to NATO's “resolve” which must be met by military action.

Thanks to Kosovo, national sovereignty will be a thing of the past - not of course for Great Powers like the U.S. and China, but for

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weaker states that really need it. National boundaries will be no obstacle to NATO intervention.

Thanks to Kosovo, the U.S. can control eventual Caspian oil pipeline routes between the Black Sea and the Adriatic, and extend the European influence of favoured ally Turkey.

Last February 23, James Hooper, executive director of the Balkan Action Council, one of the many think tanks that have sprung up to justify the ongoing transformation of former Yugoslavia into NATO protectorates, gave a speech at the Holocaust Museum in Washington at the invitation of its “Committee of Conscience”. The first item on his list of “things to do next” was this:

Accept that the Balkans are a region of strategic interest for the United States, the new Berlin if you will, the testing ground for NATO’s resolve and US leadership. [...] The administration should level with the American people and tell them that we are likely to be in the Balkans militarily indefinitely, at least until there is a democratic government in Belgrade.

In the Middle Ages, the Crusaders launched their conquests from the Church pulpits. Today, NATO does so in the Holocaust Museum. War must be sacred.

This sacralisation has been largely facilitated by a post-Communist left which has taken refuge in moralism and identity politics to the exclusion of any analysis of the economic and geopolitical factors that continue to determine the macropolicies shaping the world.

Jean-Christophe Rufin, former vice president of “Doctors Without Borders” recently pointed to the responsibility of humanitarian non-governmental organisations in justifying military intervention.

They were the first to deplore the passivity of the political response to dramatic events in the Balkans or Africa. Now they have got what they wanted, or so it seems. For in practice, rubbing elbows with NATO could turn out to be extremely dangerous.

Already the call for United Nations soldiers to intervene on humanitarian missions raised suspicions in the Third World that “the humanitarians could be the Trojan horse of a new armed imperialism”, Rufin wrote in *Le Monde*. But NATO is something else. Rufin wrote:

With NATO, everything has changed. Here we are dealing with a purely military, operational alliance, designed to respond to a threat, that is to an enemy. NATO defines an enemy, threatens it, then eventually strikes and destroys it.

Setting such a machine in motion requires a detonator. Today it is no longer military. Nor is it political. The evidence is before us: NATO's trigger, today, is... humanitarian. It takes blood, a massacre, something that will outrage public opinion so that it will welcome a violent reaction."

The consequence, he concluded, is that

the civilian populations have never been so potentially threatened as in Kosovo today. Why? Because those potential victims are the key to international reaction. Let's be clear: the West wants dead bodies. [...] We are waiting for them in Kosovo. We'll get them."

Who will kill them is a mystery but previous incidents suggest that "the threat comes from all sides." In the middle of conflict as in Kosovo, massacres can easily be perpetrated... or "arranged". There are always television crews looking precisely for that "top story".

Recently, Croatian officers have admitted that in 1993 they themselves staged a "Serbian bombing" of the Croatian coastal city of Sibenik for the benefit of Croatian television crews. The former Commander of the 113th Croatian brigade headquarters, Davo Skugor, reacted indignantly.

Why so much fuss? There is no city in Croatia in which such tactical tricks were not used. After all, they are an integral part of strategic planning. That's only one in a series of stratagems we've resorted to during the war.

The fact remains that there really is a very serious Kosovo problem. It has existed for well over a century, habitually exacerbated by outside powers (the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Empire, the Axis powers during World War II). The Serbs are essentially a modernised peasant people, who having liberated themselves from arbitrary Turkish Ottoman oppression in the 19th century, are attached

to modern state institutions. In contrast, the Albanians in the northern mountains of Albania and Kosovo have never really accepted any law, political or religious, over their own unwritten “Kanun” based on patriarchal obedience to vows, family honour, elaborate obligations, all of which are enforced not by any government but by male family and clan chiefs protecting their honour, eventually in the practice of blood feuds and revenge.

The basic problem of Kosovo is the difficult coexistence on one territory of ethnic communities radically separated by customs, language and historical self-identification. From a humanistic viewpoint, this problem is more fundamental than the problem of State boundaries.

Mutual hatred and fear is the fundamental human catastrophe in Kosovo. It has been going on for a long time. It has got much worse in recent years. Why?

Two factors stand out as paradoxically responsible for this worsening - paradoxically, because presented to the world as factors which should have improved the situation.

1) The first is the establishment in the autonomous Kosovo of the 1970s and 1980s of separate Albanian cultural institutions, notably the Albanian language faculties in Pristina University. This cultural autonomy, demanded by ethnic Albanian leaders, turned out to be a step not to reconciliation between communities but to their total separation. Drawing on a relatively modest store of past scholarship, largely originating in Austria, Germany or Enver Hoxha’s Albania, studies in Albanian history and literature amounted above all to glorifications of Albanian identity. Rather than developing the critical spirit, they developed narrow ethnocentricity. Graduates in these fields were prepared above all for the career of nationalist political leader, and it is striking the number of literati among Kosovo Albanian secessionist leaders. Extreme cultural autonomy has created two populations with no common language.

In retrospect, what should have been done was to combine Serbian and Albanian studies, requiring both languages, and developing original comparative studies of history and literature. This would have subjected both Serbian and Albanian national myths to the scrutiny of the other, and worked to correct the nationalist bias in both. Bilingual comparative studies could and should have been a way toward mutual



Kosovo Albanian leaders Rugova ad Thaqi at Rambouillet

understanding as well as an enrichment of universal culture. Instead, culture in the service of identity politics leads to mutual ignorance and contempt.

The lesson of this grave error should be a warning elsewhere, starting in Macedonia, where Albanian nationalists are clamouring to repeat the Pristina experience in Tetova. Other countries with mixed ethnic populations should take note.

2) The second factor has been the support from foreign powers, especially the United States, to the Albanian nationalist cause in Kosovo. By uncritically accepting the version of the tangled Kosovo situation presented by the Albanian lobby, American politicians have greatly exacerbated the conflict by encouraging the armed Albanian rebels and pushing the Serbian authorities into extreme efforts to wipe them out.

The “Kosovo Liberation Army” (UCK) has nothing to lose by

provoking deadly clashes, once it is clear that the number of dead and the number of refugees will add to the balance of the “humanitarian catastrophe” that can bring NATO and U.S. air power into the conflict on the Albanian side. The Serbs have nothing to gain by restraint, once it is clear that they will be blamed anyway for whatever happens.

By identifying the Albanians as “victims” per se, and the Serbs as the villains, the United States and its allies have made any fair and reasonable political situation virtually impossible. The Clinton administration in particular builds its policy on the assumption that what the Kosovar Albanians - including the UCK - really want is “democracy,” American style. In fact, what they want is power over a particular territory, and among the Albanian nationalists, there is a bitter power struggle going on over who will exercise that power.

Thus an American myth of “U.S.-style democracy and free market economy will solve everything” is added to the Serbian and Albanian myths to form a fictional screen making reality almost impossible to discern, much less improve. Underlying the American myth are Brzezinski-style geostrategic designs on potential pipeline routes to Caspian oil and methodology for expanding NATO as an instrument to ensure U.S. hegemony over the Eurasian land mass.

Supposing by some miracle the world suddenly turned upside down, and there were outside powers who really cared about the fate of Kosovo and its inhabitants, one could suggest the following:

- 1 - stop one-sided demonisation of the Serbs, recognise the genuine qualities, faults, and fears on all sides, and work to promote understanding rather than hatred;
- 2 - stop arming and encouraging rebel groups;
- 3 - allow genuine mediation by parties with no geostrategic or political interests at stake in the region.

March 24, 1999

Gilbert Achcar

Where the Humanitarian Supporters of the NATO Onslaught get it Wrong

Countless comments have stressed that the ongoing NATO war against Serbia restores the medieval notion of a “just war.” This is not very accurate, since the notion of a “just war” has been adapted many times throughout history to differing sets of values and ideas. Since the 18th century, it has been used to justify wars for independence as well as revolutionary wars, by currents ranging from liberalism to communism through nationalism, or any mixture of those and other ideologies, including typically medieval ideologies. One should not forget, for instance, that the famous “jihad,” about which we have heard so much in the last few decades, is nothing but the Islamic version of a “just war.” It could be that some commentators just wanted to hint at the fact that there is now a renewed version of the Western Christian version of “jihad.”

This would be illustrated by the convergence between the discourse of Western governments and the support given to the NATO onslaught by numerous left-wing intellectuals or progressive political figures in the name of Human Rights. These intellectuals would be playing the role religious authorities used to play in previous centuries.

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In Britain, reality came even closer to the historical model: the Archbishop of Canterbury himself has blessed the NATO bombing.

Whatever one may think of this historical analogy, there is at least one benefit to be drawn from it: a re-examination of the medieval debate on war. Every student of international public law knows that as early as the Middle Ages there existed a very sophisticated body of discussion and jurisprudence in this field. Standing out as the most rationalist of all are the views laid down by Thomas Aquinas, and particularly his definition of a “just war.” In his huge and famous *Summa Theologiae*, the great scholastic theologian and philosopher formulated three criteria for defining a war as just.

These were:

- 1) the war should be declared by the legitimate authority (the prince), and not by any private person;
- 2) it must pursue a just cause, like self-defence or the fight against injustice;
- 3) it must stem from a right intention (doing good), meaning that cruelty in war is illegitimate.

The last criterion has been reinterpreted by later rationalist philosophers, so that it has been split into two considerations:

- 1) the war must be fought by just means (which repudiates the famous dreadful dictum according to which “the end justifies the means”);
- 2) its consequences should not be worse than what it sought to repair (thus abiding by what Max Weber called an “ethic of responsibility”).

Let us examine the ongoing war against Serbia in the light of these four criteria. First, the authority: no one can put into question the fact that the NATO onslaught has been launched in violation of the UN Charter, the highest source of present international public law, which the *Preamble* to the North Atlantic Treaty itself proclaims its faith in. The first rationalist criterion of the “just war” is thus obviously breached, since the only authority holding the right to declare war legitimately, aside from situations of legitimate defence, is the UN Security Council. Now various supporters of the war have justified this violation of international law by the fact that the humanitarian stakes (the just cause) were too high to accept Russia’s veto.

This is a very dangerous argument, leading to a complete devaluation of international legality and its institutions. It opens the

way to a generalised rule of arbitrariness in international relations, a return to the state of war. Since John Locke at least, we ought to be conscious of what he stressed in the second of his *Treatises of Government*, namely that

whatever form the commonwealth is under, the ruling power ought to govern by declared and received laws, and not by extemporary dictates and undetermined resolutions, for then mankind will be in a far worse condition than in the state of Nature if they shall have armed one or a few men with the joint power of a multitude, to force them to obey at pleasure the exorbitant and unlimited decrees of their sudden thoughts, or unrestrained, and till that moment, unknown wills, without having any measures set down which may guide and justify their actions.

To be sure, the legitimate authority embodied in the UN Security Council is not above criticism or infallible - like any legitimate authority, other than the Catholic Pope in religious matters. But to grant NATO, of all intergovernmental organisations, a moral right to intervene militarily by its own unilateral decision amounts to granting the world's wealthiest and most powerful nations a right which is denied to the poorest and weakest. This would not be establishing a Lockesian state of nature, but a Hobbesian one, presided over by a Western Leviathan led by the USA. That some people on the left with anti-imperialist credentials have got to the point of losing sight of the nature of NATO is a clear sign of the amplitude of the ideological landslide to the right in this last decade of the 20th century.

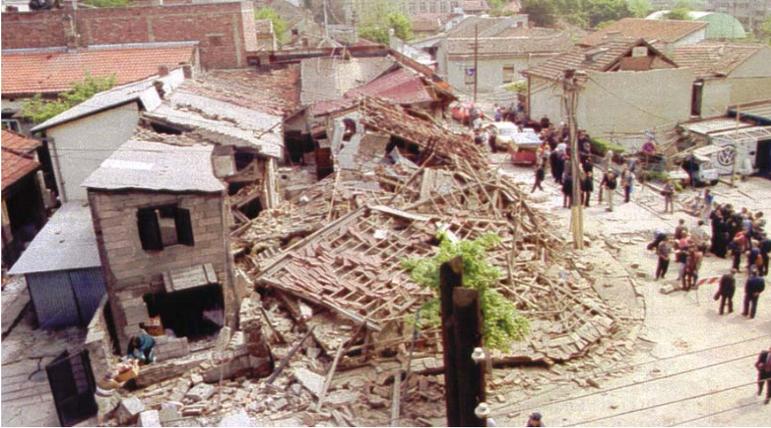
The first criterion intersects here with the second: as has been said, left-wing supporters of the war have mainly invoked the righteousness of the cause to justify violation of the legitimate rules. One is thus led to assess the former after having recorded the latter. Is the cause pursued a just cause? If we were to take for granted the official discourse of the NATO governments relayed by some left-wing intellectuals, the answer would be almost unhesitatingly: Yes! But that is where the shoe pinches: no reasonably intelligent person can, for one second, accept at their face value the statements of the masters of the world. Their record is so heavily loaded with Machiavellian speeches and deeds that one would have to be utterly ignorant or naive to listen

to them without regarding their statements with great suspicion.

The very fact, for instance, that 11 F16s from the Turkish air force are currently taking part in the bombing of Yugoslavia - in the name of a people's right to autonomy and its defence against the chauvinistic government that oppresses it - constitutes by itself a refutation of NATO claims. The fact that the same NATO powers actually backed the treatment inflicted by Franjo Tudjman on the Krajina Serbs, which was not in the least worse than the one inflicted by Slobodan Milosevic on the Kosovo Albanians, is another refutation. The fact that William Clinton himself, not long ago, came out openly in support of the treatment inflicted by Boris Yeltsin on the Chechens, which was actually worse than anything Milosevic had done to the Kosovo Albanians prior to the NATO war, is still another refutation. The list could go on almost ad infinitum, as everyone knows.

But then - "humanitarian warmongers" would say - the fact that the NATO powers have behaved wrongly in the past is not evidence of their wrong behaviour now. Well, even if we were to accept this peculiar logic, which declines to give any weight to the lessons of the recent past (whereas its holders justify the onslaught in the name of the lessons of a more remote past), we should then consider the real, concrete context of the present onslaught in order to judge its objectives. One should never confuse the reasons why one believes an action ought to be supported with the actual motivation of those who have undertaken the action. Factually speaking, the war against Serbia has not been launched for the sake of peoples' right to self-determination; it has not been launched for the sake of human rights. It was launched as a feat of "coercive diplomacy," in reaction to Milosevic's rejection of the crucial point of the Rambouillet dictate: NATO's tutelage over Kosovo and its regal rights in the rest of Yugoslavia.

One then has to assess the whole process which led to the ongoing war, keeping in mind the most famous precept of Clausewitz's *On War*: that war is the continuation of politics by other means. Is the strategy that led to Rambouillet and the war dominated by some kind of pure "humanitarian" motivation, or is it determined by the Machiavellian desire of the Clinton-Albright administration to marginalise the role of Russia and the institutions of which it is a pillar, like the UN and the OSCE? Or, to put it in other words: Does the war against Serbia fit in



Bombed residential site in Belgrade

with a general framework of humanitarian politics of NATO, its member states and its US hegemon? Or does it rather fit in with a pattern of US interventions, like the recent attacks against Iraq, Sudan and Afghanistan, in which the US rulers believe that since no power is able to stop them from undertaking any such actions, they can pursue “at pleasure the exorbitant and unlimited decrees of their sudden thoughts, or unrestrained, and till that moment, unknown wills, without having any measures set down which may guide and justify their action”? These are the real questions.

Let us move now to the third criterion: the nature of the means. On the face of it, the NATO onslaught has been mainly resorting to “surgical strikes,” thus limiting the number of direct civilian casualties and the extent of “collateral damage.” However, as any person having a minimal knowledge of military affairs (their technical as well as economic aspects) could easily guess, and as US Deputy Defence Secretary John Hamre put it recently:

“In an operation like this, you use more of your precision munitions - cruise missiles and laser-guided smart bombs - in the very early days of the operation.... Later on in the operation, of course, it’s what we call ‘dumb bombs,’ you know, it’s gravity

ordnance or semi-aided devices, and that's largely what we're using now." (Quoted by Fred Kaplan, *Boston Globe*, 20 April 1999).

Can anyone on the left avoid the questions that the right-wing columnist Charles Krauthammer put brilliantly in the *Washington Post* (23 April 1999):

But if your ends are humanitarian, you are obliged to supply the means to save those you propose to save. It is not enough to salve your conscience with the plea of NATO's secretary general that "we have shown we have the will to try," while the very people we are supposedly defending are terrorised, killed or driven from their homes.

The single most remarkable fact about this "war" is this: Not one allied soldier engaged in this operation has even been seriously injured in the first four weeks. Has there ever been such a war anywhere? What kind of humanitarianism is it that makes its highest objective ensuring that not one of our soldiers is harmed while the very people we were supposed to be saving are suffering thousands of dead and perhaps a million homeless? President Clinton defended the accidental bombing of a column of refugees in Kosovo by saying, "There is no such thing as flying airplanes this fast, dropping weapons this powerful, dealing with an enemy this pervasive who is willing to use people as human shields, and never have this sort of tragic thing happen. It cannot be done."

Mr. President: Why then have you chosen to fight this war with precisely the means - flying airplanes this fast, dropping weapons this powerful - that you admit will inevitably kill the innocent and that your own generals have publicly said cannot prevent the very ethnic cleansing that moved you to start this campaign in the first place?

NATO is not even willing to air drop desperately needed food and medicine to the tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of uprooted Albanians still trapped in Kosovo. Why? Because the planes would have to fly low and might be shot down. You can be sure that if there

were a single platoon of allied soldiers marooned behind enemy lines, NATO would take the risk. But in the moral calculus of these humanitarians, a thousand Albanian lives count for far less than a single one of ours.

The truth is that, with every further day of bombing, Yugoslavia comes closer and closer to the fate suffered during the Gulf war by Iraq, whose infrastructure has been reduced to the “Stone Age” according to the UN envoy’s report in 1991. With every further day of bombing, the number of future casualties of the NATO onslaught grows inexorably, according to the same principle that Jessica Mathews aptly named in 1991: “Bomb now, kill later!” (By the way, has anyone forgotten that the “humanitarian” powers attacking Serbia are currently maintaining, for the eighth year, an embargo against Iraq which kills tens of thousands of people, mainly children, each year, while the Baghdad tyrant has not lost any attribute of power?) Can one say therefore: we support the war, but not the means that are being used? This amounts to believing that there are two separate sets of values, one governing the conduct of the war politically and the second governing it technically: in such cases, the incoherence is usually not in the real world, but in the minds that assess it.

Let us come finally to the fourth and last criterion: are the consequences brought about thus far by this war better than the evil that it was supposed to remedy? The answer is obviously and overwhelmingly: No! On the contrary, and in addition to the very severe harm inflicted upon Serbia, the fate of the Albanian people of Kosovo has been very seriously aggravated, with the prospect of their Palestinianisation looming on the horizon. Moreover, it is not exaggerated to say that the outlook for the 21st century has become much bleaker and gloomier with this war: it is dangerously deepening the animosity between Russia and the West, threatening more and more to turn what has already become a “cold peace” into a renewed “cold war.” NATO has very seriously fanned the blaze of the very nationalist feelings it was supposed to quell.

The ground offensive that “humanitarian hawks” are advocating is not only based on a total disregard of the military and logistical conditions of such a war, but would lead to the direst consequences, if it were ever to happen, magnifying the multi-faceted disaster that has

been created so far to much greater proportions. This is a typical case of what Max Weber called the “ethic of conviction”, in which the believers pursue an action justified by the set of values to which they adhere notwithstanding the consequences brought about by their action. Several well-intentioned intellectuals, motivated by very noble values and desires, came thus to blindly support and advocate actions leading to catastrophic results. The road to hell, as is well known, is paved with good intentions.

Not even one of the four criteria of a “just war” is met by the ongoing NATO onslaught, whereas the verification of all four taken together is the condition for considering a war as legitimate. Despite this fact, we are been told daily that this war is the equivalent of World War II for our generation. Well, if it is true that this is the first generation holding the reins of power and ideological influence that has not gone through the experience of World War II, the fact is, on the other hand, that this generation has probably seen too many Hollywood representations of WWII - to the point of suffering from a “WWII syndrome.” This has unfortunately replaced the “Vietnam syndrome” smashed by the Gulf war in the minds of many members of this generation. (Actually, the analogy between Milosevic and Hitler is only a remake of the analogy between Saddam Hussein and Hitler.) The gravest problem with this “WWII syndrome” is that it threatens to set the world on a course leading to World War III. ●

Michael Barratt Brown

A Briefing on Kosovo

It is impossible to tell what the situation in Yugoslavia will be in weeks or even days. But there are certain facts which one can be sure of from knowledge of Yugoslav history and of the Serb people in particular, knowledge that none of the leading protagonists in the United States or European Union governments appear to have troubled to acquire. We are being told that Milosevic and the Serbs in a mad project to create a "Greater Serbia" set out to destroy Yugoslavia, first forcing out Slovenia and Croatia, then dividing up Bosnia, finally expelling the Albanians from Kosovo. They should have been stopped, it is said, by resolute international intervention in the first place. Belatedly, but most certainly, as Hitler should have been stopped in Spain before the holocaust, so now Milosevic must be stopped before the Serbs effect the genocide of all non-Serbs in the region. It is a travesty of the truth, as I shall seek to show, because it ignores the long history of foreign interventions in the Balkans which have left a complex structure of states, each containing a patchwork of different nationalities. Any changes in one must result in the instability of all. But the element of truth in it is that the latest

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United States policies in assisting the break-up of the old Yugoslavia and supplanting the United Nations with its own NATO force has created a monster of nationalism throughout the Balkans, of which Milosevic is the worst expression.

Where is the truth?

The first casualty of war is the truth. Reports are censored and information is managed as propaganda. Since the bombing began we cannot know how selective the stories are that come through the media to us from the front in this war. The bombing of Pristina is a case in point in the propaganda war. No one looking for refuge outside Kosovo in NATO patrolled camps is going to say that they are fleeing from NATO bombs. This is not to say that the Serb paramilitaries in Kosovo have not been guilty of appalling atrocities and violent deportations. Wars give cause for violence and scope for violent people. The Serbian soldiers and para-militaries and the Kosovo Liberation Army have been for some time fighting fierce battles with no olds barred for what each side regards as their own country.

The story from the British government appears to change from day to day and will no doubt change again, as the need for forces on the ground becomes evident. In particular, the aims of the war have changed. Originally, it was to protect the Albanian Kosovars from Serb violence and a "humanitarian disaster". Then, when the bombing had the opposite result, of only increasing the violence and forcing still more thousands of Kosovars to flee from their homes, it was according to Mr Blair, "to get in and hit Milosevic and his murderous thugs very, very hard", presumably with the aim of dislodging him and them from Kosovo. In the end the Albanians are to be returned to where they came from, and their safety guaranteed by NATO. These are the war aims, but it has never been made clear what the "accords" of Rambouillet implied for the future status of Kosovo in relation to Yugoslavia and to Albania; and that is where the central problem left by history resides.

From the beginning we were told by General Wesley Clark that it was going to be a long business. The exodus of Albanians from Kosovo must surely have been expected and the ultimate use of ground forces, when the bombing had cleared the ground for Albanian Kosovars to return. It must have been clear that this would mean a NATO occupation

force in Yugoslavia. The response to all Milosevic's offers of a cease-fire was bound to be rejection. Anyone with any knowledge of the Serbs would know that they would fight on. With the first air strikes, all the opposition to Milosevic collapsed and those arguing for peace were crushed. Their tragic appeals for an end to the bombing and resumption of negotiation are disregarded in our media where all Serbs are demonised.

There is an implication in NATO thinking that Milosevic and the Yugoslav Army could be forced to surrender unconditionally, like Hitler and the German armed forces in 1945, or that there would be a successful army revolt with popular support, unlike the unsuccessful German Army plot against Hitler. A little knowledge of history would have told NATO planners that bombing does not divide people from their rulers. Dissent is the second casualty of war; national unity takes its place. And in the case of Yugoslavia, Serbian nationalism is enshrined in the memory of the history of Kosovo. So what are the facts of Serbian and Yugoslav history that those who have unleashed this war and those who are supporting the bombing need to know?

Twelve facts of history

The *first fact* is that, apart from the Albanians in Kosovo and Hungarians in Vojvodina, all the peoples of former Yugoslavia were Slavs (Yugoslav means southern Slav) with similar languages but different histories, according to the different non-Slavic rulers to whom they fell victim. The Slovenes nearest to Austria came for long under Austrian influence. The Croats had a kingdom from 900 to 1100 which was rival to Venice on the Dalmatian coast, until they were conquered by Hungary. Bosnia had an independent kingdom during the 11th and 12th Centuries, but came under Turkish rule. The kingdom of Serbia survived from 1168 to 1496 and maintained the longest and most ferocious resistance to the spread of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Their most celebrated battle with the Turks took place on the field of Kosovo.

This is the *second fact* which is needed to explain why the Serbs will never give up the field of Kosovo, after which the province is named. If Tito could not persuade them to give Kosovo the status of a full republic in the post-war Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, bombs will not persuade them to grant autonomy today. The reason is dismissed

by many outsiders as absurd. Can it really be just because in 1387 a Serbian King Lazarus gathered a great Christian army from Serbs and Bulgars, Bosnians and Albanians, Poles, Hungarians and even Mongols, but no Latins or Greeks, to resist the westward advance of the Ottoman Turks? They did not even win a great victory. What happened was that on the field of Kosovo in 1389 they were defeated and one by one South Slavs came under Turkish Muslim rule for over 500 years, but Murad the Grand Vizier fell on Kosovo field by the hand of a Serbian patriot, and the Serbs could recall for ever their day of heroic resistance. 600 years later that memory can still stir Serbs to action.

The *third fact* is that it happens that over 80% of the people of Kosovo are (or were) of Albanian origin, not therefore Slavs, and also that most of them have retained their loyalty to Islam, to which the Turks converted their ancestors together with many of the South Slavs in Bosnia and Southern Serbia some 500 years ago. If you think it absurd for religion to continue to divide people against each other, think of Ireland. Consider the response in Ulster today to the Irish Fenians' claim to Derry, where in 1689 the forces of Protestant King William emerged victorious from a long siege by Irish Catholics under the leadership of the deposed catholic king James II. The parallel is not perfect, but no amount of arms from France or Spain would have dislodged the Protestants then or later and we may be glad that the American never proposed to bomb Ulster. So, the apprentice boys of the Orange Order will this year as always celebrate with drums and marches the relief of Derry on July 30th , 1689, and the final Battle of the Boyne on July 1st., 1690. In Ireland we have tried of late to make peace and not war; it may have failed, but the attempt has been made.

The *fourth fact* is that Kosovo did not cease to be a battlefield in 1389. It was fought over again and again. On the same field in 1448 the Hungarians, who had stopped the advance of the Turks outside Vienna, were defeated by the Turks, and the Balkans became a part of the Ottoman Empire for another 400 years. Belgrade in the Sixteenth century was a Moslem city. The Slavs were divided with Hungarians lying between the Northern Slavs - the Poles, Czechs and Russians - and the Southern Slavs - the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. Hungarian rule replaced Turkish rule in parts of the south from the Sixteenth Century. The Slavs were then further divided in both the north and in the south not

only by geography but by religion - Catholics to the west, orthodox to the east - and in the south the Moslems in between the two.

When the power of the Turks waned in the Nineteenth Century and the imprisoned Greek and Slavic nations rose in revolt, they were once more divided and conquered by outside powers, this time from the west. Austria occupied Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Austrian rule was only ended in the founding of Yugoslavia after the First World War, which had begun with the assassination in Sarajevo of an Austrian prince at the hands of a Serb patriot. Turkish rule was ended a little earlier. In 1912 Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Greece united to drive the Turks back from Kosovo to Constantinople. They succeeded beyond their expectations, but in a second war in 1913 the Bulgarians sought to take more of Macedonia than the Greeks and Serbs would permit, and Romania entered the fray to seize Bulgarian lands where Romanians lived. The Bulgarians armies besieged on all sides were heavily defeated. Greece and Serbia divided up Macedonia between them. Albania, which had been occupied by both Greece and Serbia was declared by the great powers to be an independent state, and the Greeks and Serbs had to leave, but Serbia kept Kosovo and only a third of all Albanians were left inside the new Albanian state. The rest found themselves in Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro, tinder for a future conflagration, whose time has come.

The importance of all this is that the Yugoslav question cannot be answered by a NATO agreement with the Serbs, let alone by their defeat. Not only Serbia and Bosnia but all the countries of the Balkans are composed of mixed populations, of different nationalities and religions, where the balance is crucial to their peaceful coexistence. Peace when it comes will have to be a Balkan peace settlement acceptable to all involved or it will not last. And all involved will have to include the Russians, who have a long historical association with their fellow Slavs. Milosevic comes from Montenegro. Ask a Montenegrin how many Montenegrins there are and he will answer, "We and the Russians are 200 million." This is the *fifth fact* to be learnt from history.

At the same time, it has to be recognised that the Serbs will be prepared to die for their country. They proved this in full measure with Tito's partisans, who for once united all Yugoslavs in the struggle against the occupation of their lands by Germans, Austrians, Italians and

Bulgarians in World War II. Any one who takes on the Serbs in battle should remember all this and recall that war naturally brings out the fighting spirit in nations and encourages the men of violence. Those who call for putting in troops on the ground should learn from the experience of the Germans and Italians fighting against the Yugoslav Partisans in the mountains of Montenegro in the 1940s. Better arms and air power did not then suffice to defeat a determined force fighting a guerrilla war in mountainous terrain. It will not help them this time. This is the *sixth fact* of history.

The *seventh fact* of history concerns the making and the breaking of Yugoslavia - the country of the southern Slavs. Despite their differences in national histories and in religions, they sought to form a united state in 1918 under a Serbian king, then to protest together in 1938 against royal dictatorship, and finally, despite every attempt by the Germans to divide and conquer including the encouragement of Croat massacres of at least 200,000 Serbs, possibly half a million, they fought side by side under Tito's leadership against the Axis invasion and formed in 1945 the Federative Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia. This formulation implied that, although there were six separate republics in the federation, it was a federation of peoples and not of states. Each republic consisted of a mix of peoples and a quota was applied for official positions. In Bosnia-Herzegovina no people had a majority. Indeed only in one Bosnian district was there any single people with an absolute majority - a fact which those from outside who made plans for Bosnia's partition failed to recognise, with disastrous results. And in no case, except in the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina, where there was a large Hungarian population and in Kosovo with its majority of Albanians, were these ethnic differences. All the others were Slavs.

The *eighth fact* is that the break-up of former Yugoslavia cannot be blamed primarily on Milosevic and the Serbs, or indeed on any of the other national groupings. The break-up followed upon the collapse of the economy, with an inflation rate exceeding 100% a month in 1989. This was due to the demands of the international bankers that Yugoslavia's debts should be paid up by expanded exports, which left no goods in the shops for internal consumption. The poorer southern republics had always produced the raw materials and foodstuffs to pay for imports and cover the foreign debts, but when the prices of these

commodities collapsed in the 1980s and interest rates rose, the richer northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia had to export their manufactured goods to meet the bill. They had always resented having to support the poorer republics whom they thought of as backward and lazy and complained of the Serbs who stood in between the north and the south and held the capital Belgrade that they benefited unfairly from their preponderance in key posts of the army and government.

This widening gap between the north and the south was exploited by the German government with its own interests in Yugoslav industry, which it sought to advance by encouraging the secession of the two northern republics. This had the support also of the United States which had always hoped to reduce the power of a Communist Yugoslavia astride the Balkan peninsula. As the break-up of the federative republic became inevitable, nationalist leaders appeared in each of the member republics -Milosevic in Serbia and others in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, each seeking to use the nationalist appeal to bolster their power and privileges.

The fight was on to redraw the boundaries to maximise the number of Serbs in “Greater Serbia”, Croats in “Greater Croatia” and Bosniaks somewhere in between. Once the nationalist genie was out of the bottle, there was no controlling the terrible things that were done in its name - murder and rape, the destruction of national monuments - Sarajevo’s library, the bridge at Mostar, the walls of Dubrovnik - and the deportation of whole populations including the 500,000 Serbs forced by the Croat Army out of land claimed by the Croats. When Bosnia was partitioned by western intervention, it was obvious to all that the next flash point would be Kosovo.

The attempt by the United Nations to respond to a Yugoslav civil war was vitiated from the start by the fact that UN forces do not consist of officers and men and a military command owing allegiance to the United Nations, but of contingents from national armed forces temporarily seconded to the UN and wearing blue berets, but subject to their own national authorities. This became increasingly obvious in the Bosnian war as United States air forces under NATO command were drawn upon to support the UN forces on the ground. The Serbs in particular saw NATO as an agent of the United States policy of dismembering Yugoslavia, and without any involvement from Russia,

the natural historic ally of Serbia. The failure of the United States in the case of the fighting in Kosovo to get UN Security Council approval with Russian support before acting through NATO and the withdrawal of the UN monitors only confirmed the Serbian government view.

The *ninth fact* is that Kosovo was and is an integral part of Yugoslavia. Kosovo did not have the right to secede, as the other former republics of Yugoslavia had. Of course the Kosovars could and did proclaim their right to greater autonomy within Yugoslavia, as the Irish, Scots and Welsh peoples claim today within the United Kingdom. There were many peaceful protagonists of Kosovan independence, such as Ibrahim Rugova who was for a time the President and might have negotiated a way out of the present conflict. But the Kosovo Liberation Army, armed from outside, is just as illegal as the IRA and is unhappily inspired by a number of terrorist organisations, with links to fundamentalist Islamic groupings.

The *tenth fact* concerns the character of the Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, and his relation to the Serbian people. Milosevic has not been a popular dictator, despite his electoral victories, and has from the start of his rise to power used the Kosovo card to enhance his popularity. He has had to strike a balance between appearing to play the card too hard so as to frighten his people and lose the support of his generals and dropping it and thereby losing all popular support. Steadily escalating action against the Albanian Kosovars has brought the pressure upon him by the West - the USA and the European Union - and provided him with a perfect hand. The more they intervene and now the more they bomb, the stronger is the support for him and the more heroic he appears. After the NATO air strikes began, the growing opposition to Milosevic and the whole Serbian peace campaign have been crushed, and one of its leaders shot.

The *eleventh fact* is that there is no legal ground for the assault on Yugoslavia, either under the United Nations charter or under NATO's own charter. Yugoslavia is a sovereign state and the challenge to Belgrade from Kosovo is an internal matter, in which other states have no legal right to intervene, except with the explicit authority of the Security Council. The implications for other states and their alliances of a rupture of international law are obviously extremely serious. The argument that the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights over-rides the United

Nations Charter and permits intervention to prevent a “human rights disaster” is a false one. If, moreover, it were to be judged by precedent, there was no intervention from the United States to prevent the massacre of a million people in Indonesia or in Colombia or to prevent the expulsion of a million Kurds from Turkey, although in these cases the governments of Indonesia, Colombia and Turkey were armed and supported by the United States. Nor, perhaps more tellingly, was any action taken against the Croats when they expelled the half million Serbs from the Croatian borders of Bosnia.

The *twelfth fact* relates to the nature of the war that is being fought. The American and European governments are most anxious not to lose any of the lives of their forces. The same is not so true for Milosevic. Body bags coming back in any numbers to Washington would soon end the war. The Serbian dead can be quietly buried in Yugoslavia, although it is a much more open society than Iraq. Most of the population of Belgrade can receive CNN, BBC World and Sky News on satellite. Milosevic has more to fear from his generals than from the deaths of large numbers of Serbs turning the population against him, so that he has been noticeably careful about committing his forces to a major confrontation. At the same time, he has been quite prepared, as should have been obvious from the start of the bombing, to step up the action against the Albanian Kosovars with the aim of clearing them out of as much of Kosovo as possible, so as to establish a *fait accompli* of “ethnic cleansing” in Kosovo, as was done so horribly effectively by both Serbs and Croats in Bosnia. It seems to have been largely done now and no amount of bombing of Yugoslavia will get people back to their homes. That will require a Balkan peace settlement.

The main clearances in Kosovo, it must be understood, followed after the bombing started; they did not, as Mr Blair claims, precede them, although there were vicious Serb attacks on villages supposedly held by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The KLA has guerrilla training and knows the terrain. It is being given strong support by NATO and would give a ground force from outside its best chance of surviving with limited casualties. But reconquest with a KLA spearhead would leave no possibility of Serbs and Albanians ever living together again. If Kosovo has in the end to be divided like Bosnia on ethnic/national lines, this could have been achieved from the beginning when

it would have avoided all the destruction of the bombing and the misery of the refugees. Indeed the results of the bombing of chemical plants and of the use of uranium tipped bombs may have made large parts of Kosovo and much of Yugoslavia uninhabitable for many years to come. There will be just nowhere to go back to.

The *thirteenth fact* is that, short possibly of what General Wesley Clark calls “the ultimate destruction of Yugoslavia’s capacity to make war”, a necessarily very distant and dreadful end, Milosevic will not accept an unconditional surrender dictated by NATO. He has the support of the Russians, not only in words but arms and battleships, which might in certain circumstances make the conflict into a European war, and of the Chinese, who will probably do nothing. There will be growing pressure for an armistice and peace negotiations, as public opinion in Greece and Italy and elsewhere in the European Union begins to tire of the war. Already the alliance is showing signs of breaking up at the prospect of a protracted land war.

The Russians may hold back from direct intervention on behalf of their Slav brothers, but voluntary forces will join the Serbs in a land war, and with rather better equipment than the Serbs can deploy. Moreover, the Russians will not allow NATO to pretend to be both a military force and a peace-keeping force. The Clinton-Blair or Albright-Cook insistence at Rambouillet on NATO monitors for a peaceful settlement and on an occupation force in Yugoslavia ensured that Milosevic would not accept it. He might have accepted neutral monitors. The bombing must surely put to an end the fancy ideas promulgated by Martin Woolacott, Polly Toynbee, Mary Kaldor and some enthusiasts for a “European” defence policy of promoting NATO to a peace-keeping role. It was not the NATO air strikes that got the Dayton agreement on Bosnia, as some believe, but Milosevic being allowed to appear at home as the great saviour of peace.

This cannot be repeated but more bombing and even an invasion force will not defeat the Serbs though it may destroy them. Invasion can create a desert, though the invaders may call it peace.

The *final fact* is that the United Nations has in effect been ruled out of the framework of international law and replaced by NATO/US dictation. A new world order will now have to be built by the world’s peace groups, human rights organisations, environmentalists and others.

The take-over of UN functions by the USA has been insidious. There has never been a UN force, only national and mainly US forces with temporary UN insignia. Even the monitors in Kosovo, which were withdrawn when the bombing began, were headed by the same General Walker who had financed the contras in Nicaragua. If the USA can act without UN sanction, and with US and UK actions in Iraq and Yugoslavia as precedents, what is there to prevent a government like that of Indonesia continuing to wipe out its non-Indonesian populations? US intervention is evidently highly selective. All the patient work since the Second World War to build some system for the peaceful settlement of disputes cannot simply be abandoned, and yet that is what is now threatened.

What should now be done?

So what do we do now? In answer to that question, Noam Chomsky, writing on March 28th., recalled the words in the Hippocratic oath "First, do no harm!" and went on "If you can think of no way to adhere to that elementary principle, then do nothing. There are always ways that can be considered. Diplomacy and negotiations are never at an end." In the case of the fighting between Serb paramilitaries and the Kosovo Liberation Army, instead of withdrawing the UN monitors, these could have been enormously strengthened with armed forces under a UN command that included the Russians. It has become somewhat belatedly obvious, after thousands of deaths, millions of people forced from their homes and the destruction of Yugoslavia's industry and infrastructure that no final solution to the problem will be reached without the Russians. Doing nothing harmful does not rule out doing a hundred things that may help to advance a peaceful solution, responding to the remaining opposition in Serbia for one thing.. This is once again where Mr Blair is mistaken. It may be impossible for Serbs and Albanians to live side by side in Kosovo again, but as many as possible should be kept alive. Bombing them only kills more and threatens the future of others. When people ask the old question "What do you do when you find someone raping your daughter?" is the only answer to try to kill him and his family?

To help the Kosovars immediately, it is necessary to provide the refugees with safe havens out of the war zone, in countries that can afford to accommodate them in civilised conditions and to relieve the

pressure on the neighbouring countries, where their presence can only exacerbate existing tensions. Massive aid must be offered to the poor countries on Kosovo's borders, which have borne the brunt of the Albanian exodus, but the refugees cannot stay there. To insist on their staying and thus destabilising an already complex society of many nationalities in Macedonia and Montenegro is quite simply to ensure that the violence will spread and a third Balkan War will be unleashed. Occupying Albania or Yugoslavia as a United States base in the Balkans can only arouse resentment in the long term.

The cost of this war begins to be astronomic. One F117 bomber brought down was worth \$43 million, equal to the total annual income of 60,000 Albanians. 12 of these planes would pay for the whole Albanian health service. Launching the cruise missiles costs \$2.5 billion, the same as the whole national income of Albania. The main demand must be that at least as much is spent on relief and rehabilitation as is spent by NATO on the war. Mr Blair says that he will authorise £20 million for relief of Kosovans. That is the cost of less than half of the cruise missiles he has just dispatched into Yugoslavia, not to mention the cost of Tomahawks and Harriers and all the rest of the weaponry let loose. Relief must be the condition of continuing participation in the campaign. The only obscene compensation for an extended war is that a massive injection of public spending, albeit for destructive ends, could, as so often before, halt the slide of capitalist economies in the United States and Europe into a deepening slump. A similar level of spending on relief and rehabilitation would serve the purpose far more constructively.

Mrs Albright, the US Secretary of State, once averred that the death of half a million children from the bombing of Iraq was a price worth paying for victory in the Gulf War. But no child's life should be put at risk by continuing this war. The bombing has done no good. It must stop. The destruction of chemical plants has caused an environmental disaster that may have long-term consequences. If it is true, as is widely reported, that uranium tipped bombs are being used in Yugoslavia as in Iraq, the spread of cancers and foetal malformation from the release of alpha particles will imply an insidious genocide that will overtake by far all the killings for which Milosevic has been responsible. A cease-fire of both the bombing and of the fighting on the

ground is the only way to stop the exodus from Kosovo. Milosevic has made at least some preliminary moves, first with the ex-President of Kosovo who was unseated by a nationalist government deploying the Kosovo Liberation Army armed from outside, and most recently with a top Russian delegation. A ceasefire could lead to the start of peace negotiations involving not only the belligerents but representatives from throughout the Balkans including groups that have always opposed Milosevic, as well as those from neutral nations. Relief must be stepped up and massive aid supplied for the rehabilitation of the refugees and the countries which are harbouring them.

The ultimate implication is that we must end our commitment to NATO and since the United Nations has been usurped by United States actions and cannot now be restored to its rightful role as the world's peace keeper, we shall have to build a new framework of international law from the peace movements of the world and from all those organisations dedicated to the defence of human rights and to the protection of the planet from environmental destruction. It may be difficult to reach agreements with the Russians and the Chinese, but they cannot be permanently side tracked because of current American military superiority without storing up the most serious problems for the future. The Russians will be particularly sensitive to the establishment of a permanent United States base in a destabilised Balkans, with Yugoslavia reduced to Third World status. If the aim of the United States through NATO is to have powerful forces on hand near to Russia in the event that Yeltsin's successor should turn out to be a nationalist with Communist support, they are doing their best to ensure that eventuality. There is no new world to be discovered by NATO bombs but only the old world that will be that much harder to rebuild.

Immanuel Wallerstein

Bombs Away!

When I was young, I saw many a war film in which the heroic American pilot, flying over hostile territory, shouted “bombs away!” The enemy was destroyed, and peace restored. The good guys won. President Clinton sent U.S. and NATO pilots on just such a mission against the Yugoslav government and its leader, whom Clinton compared to Hitler. When a war breaks out, and this is a war, there are three levels at which to judge it: juridically, morally, and politically.

Juridically, the bombing is an act of aggression. It is totally unjustified under international law. The Yugoslav government did nothing outside its own borders. What has been going on inside its borders is a low-level civil war into which the U.S. and other powers intruded themselves as mediators. The mediation took the form of offering both sides an ultimatum to accept a truce on dictated terms, to be guaranteed by outside military forces. At first, both sides turned this down, which upset the U.S. very much. They explained to the Kosovars that they couldn’t bomb the Serbs unless and until the Kosovars accepted the truce terms. The Kosovars finally did so, and now the U.S./NATO are bombing.

National sovereignty doesn’t mean too much in the real world

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of power politics. The U.S. is not the first nor will it be the last state to violate some smaller country's sovereignty. But let us cut the cant. Doing so is aggression, and illegal under international law.

The juridical situation tells us nothing about the *moral* situation. The U.S./NATO have justified their acts by asserting that the Yugoslav government is violating fundamental human rights, and that they have a moral duty to intervene (that is, to ignore the juridical constraints). So let us talk about the moral rights and wrongs.

I have no doubt myself that the Yugoslav government has been guilty of atrocious behaviour in Kosovo, as they has been previously, directly or via intermediaries, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. To be sure, their opponents, the Kosovo Liberation Army in this case, and the Croatians and Bosnians in the previous war, have also been guilty of atrocities. And I for one am not going to do the arithmetic to figure out who has done more atrocities than the other. Civil wars bring out the worst in peoples, and the Balkan wars of the last five years are not unusual in that respect. But it does weaken the moral justification for intervention when the immoralities are not one-sided.

Furthermore, if Serb behaviour in Kosovo is to be reprimanded, then the moral authorities who take it upon themselves to enforce moral law must explain why they have been unwilling to intervene in Sierra Leone or Liberia, in northern Ireland, in Chile under Pinochet, in Indonesia under Sukarno, in Chechnya, or even for that matter in the Basque country. No doubt each situation is different from the other, and perhaps of different dimensions, but civil wars abound and atrocities abound. And if we are to take moral enforcers seriously, the least one can ask is that they are minimally consistent and minimally disinterested.

So, in the end, we are thrown back on a *political* analysis. Who did what for what reasons, and how much do particular actions aid in the reasonable solution of the disputes? Let us start with the local participants in the conflict. In the geographically and ethnically intertwined and overlapping zones of the Balkans, the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was probably the optimal structure to ensure not only internal peace but maximal economic growth. But it came apart.

This was not inevitable. There were some key turning-points. One was in 1987 when Milosevic decided to build his political future

on Serbian nationalism rather than on Yugoslav nationalism/Communism and moved within two years to suppress Kosovo autonomy. This gave the excuse for, and perhaps instigated, the wave of successions: Slovenia, then Croatia, then Bosnia-Herzegovina, then the attempted secessions within Croatia and Bosnia by the Serbs, then the Kosovars. No doubt, non-Balkan forces also played a role, especially Germany in supporting, if not more than that, the idea of Croatian independence.

Still, Milosevic's initial moves were a grievous long-term political error. We now find ourselves in one of those nasty, violent struggles in which everyone is afraid, paranoiac, and unwilling to contemplate any sort of real political compromise. And the fascist Ustashi in Croatia and Chetniks in Serbia are once again a serious political force. Nor will it end soon. The war in Northern Ireland went on for over twenty years before anything was possible. The war in Israel/Palestine has gone on even longer. Sometimes a civil war just has to exhaust itself before any one is rational.

But what about the politics of the U.S.? Why has the U.S. government singled out this civil war for active intervention? In the case of the Gulf War, there was at least the rationale of the importance of oil (and the defence of an invaded sovereign state, Kuwait). But in economic terms, the Balkan zone is marginal. Nor can it be argued that there are immediate geopolitical concerns, such as shoring up an area politically so that some other power cannot take it over. This was the rationale, or at least one rationale, for the U.S. support of South Korea. Behind North Korea, argued the U.S., lay China or the Soviet Union. The rationale was that of the Cold War.

But Yugoslavia has no oil, and there is no longer a Cold War with the Communist world. So why doesn't the U.S. ignore the situation the way it ignores the Congo (at least these days)? To be sure, the U.S. doesn't really ignore any country, but it does not intervene militarily in most situations. A curious argument has been made in the last few months. It has been said that the U.S. had to bomb the Serbs, or else NATO's credibility would be undermined. This is a curious argument because it is circular. If NATO threatens something, and then doesn't do it, of course its credibility would be undermined. But it didn't have to make the threat in the first place.

Or maybe it did. Perhaps the political issue for the U.S. is

precisely the need to justify the very existence of NATO, which no longer has an obvious role as such now that the Russian army seems to be so much weakened. But why would the U.S. want to have NATO at all? There seem to me to be two main reasons. One is that its existence in turn justifies the current military expenditures and indeed build-up in the U.S., which has economic and internal political advantages for the government. The second is that NATO is necessary to prevent the West Europeans from straying too far from U.S. control and above all from establishing an autonomous armed structure separate from NATO. The Yugoslav imbroglio seems ideal for both purposes.

But will it work? If the Yugoslavs hold fast, and it seems likely they will, further military action would involve ground forces. Can the U.S. afford a second Vietnam? It seems doubtful. And will the West Europeans really continue to play the game? There are rumblings in the NATO ranks already, and the war is only a week old.

We have all entered the bramble bush. The Yugoslavs will be bombed until it hurts. The Kosovars will be driven out of their homes. Many will die. Neighbouring countries may be drawn into the armed conflict directly. And if the war is prolonged, there will be internal social turmoil in the U.S. and western Europe. "Bombs away" may have been worse than a crime; it may have been a folly. ●

Boris Kagarlitsky

The Effects of the NATO War in Russia

Russia is a strange country where impending coups d'état are discussed in public, and their dates are all but officially set. In the spring of 1993 Yeltsin promised to carry out a coup the following autumn, and he kept his word. On the latest occasion, Yeltsin kept silent. But from early May the Moscow press was full of forecasts of a coming coup, and in the pages of the newspapers, influential politicians were discussing when it would take place. The well-known right-wing politician Alexander Shokhin even named a date: the government would be dismissed on May 13.

Formally speaking, the reason for the crisis was the debate in the State Duma on whether to impeach President Yeltsin. But in reality, everyone understood perfectly that under the present constitution, removing the president from office was for practical purposes impossible. But by raising the question of impeachment, the Communist majority in the Duma gave Yeltsin a pretext to launch a political counter-attack.

Primakov called on the deputies to reject a vote on impeachment, or to transfer it to another date, as had already been done once. But by this time the deputies, and in particular the fraction of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, found that retreat was

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impossible - if they tried it, they would simply seem laughable. Moreover, a section of the leadership of the Communist Party was clearly ready to abandon the Primakov cabinet. The premier's quickly growing popularity was irritating not only to the Kremlin, but also to many leaders of the opposition.

Yeltsin's cronies had long dreamed of getting rid of the Primakov cabinet. Strictly speaking, the Kremlin insiders had never regarded this government as their own. The appointing of Primakov had been a forced measure adopted during the catastrophic crisis that gripped the country in August. The problem was not simply that at that point none of the liberal politicians had had enough support to take over the running of the government. The main thing was that no-one wanted to take on the job. Ministerial candidates were regarded as political suicide cases.

Over several months, the Primakov government managed to limit the acuteness of the crisis. The threatened catastrophe did not occur; hunger was avoided; the ruble was stabilised, and the economy even began to record a little growth. Wages began to be paid more promptly. Even though the government was systematically slandered in the press, its popularity increased steadily, as even Primakov's opponents were forced to acknowledge.

Precisely because of this, the determination in the Kremlin to be rid of the premier began to grow. The government's popularity was not only posing a threat to the Kremlin, which was losing control of the levers of political power, but was creating conditions in which Primakov could take more decisive steps. Talk began to be heard of nationalising part of the oil industry, and a number of large enterprises themselves asked to be taken back into the state sector. At the same time, moves were made to halt the plunder of the country's resources by the oligarchs who controlled most of the private sector.

Foreign policy and the NATO war

Changes were also seen in Russia's foreign policy. Primakov's determined gesture in turning his aircraft around while over the Atlantic, and cancelling a visit to the US, won massive support. The war in the Balkans revealed the scale of anti-American feeling in Russian society, especially among younger people, whom Western journalists from inertia

were continuing to describe as supporters of liberal reforms. The reason did not lie in solidarity with “brother Slavs”, and still less in the Orthodox faith - most young people in Russia do not even know how to cross themselves properly. The war in Yugoslavia simply gave them the chance to express what they had already been thinking for a long time. For a decade Russia had been making one-sided concessions in exchange for promises that it would be accepted into the “civilised world” (as though we had previously been savages and barbarians). In return for this we received poverty, humiliation, and economic collapse. Everyone here remembers the role the West played in Yeltsin’s coup of 1993. People also remember the role of the US in the shameful elections of 1996, which became a cynical travesty of democracy. For young people, liberal reforms mean a shortage of good jobs, expensive but nevertheless third-rate education, the impossibility of economic growth and the lack of career prospects. Most importantly, people are sick of constantly being humiliated.

The rotten eggs and paint bombs that splattered the building of the American consulate in Moscow signalled that a psychological turning-point had been reached. People in Russia had grown tired of feeling helpless, of being ashamed of themselves. They wanted to act, to do something they could feel proud of. The failures of the Americans in the Balkans became the subject of jokes; previously, people in Russia had only joked about their own government. Russian hackers began systematic assaults on official sites in the US, to the accompaniment of sympathetic reports in the youth press. The tabloid press is a powerful indicator of public opinion. One of the tabloid dailies devoted its front page to portraits of Clinton and Milosevic, with the caption “A prison cell is hungry for them”. Another even published a puzzle in which readers were required to determine, on the basis of egg stains, which of the windows of the US Embassy was in the cross-hairs of a gun-sight. A correspondent in the Balkans for the liberal *Novaya Gazeta* admitted that he dreamed of the Russian Black Sea Fleet sailing to the Adriatic, even though he acknowledged that this would mean war.

The Primakov government caught the change of mood expertly. It rested on the managers of military-industrial enterprises that had remained within the state sector, and which therefore had not collapsed like privatised industry. Meanwhile Primakov, who earlier had been a

well-known specialist on the Arab countries, was the first of Russia's prominent politicians to be conscious of the significance of the Third World. In practical terms this means that by taking its distance from the US, Russia could win the support of the majority of humanity. In conducting negotiations with the IMF on writing off part of Russia's debt, the Primakov government created an important precedent for debtor countries. Developing cheap but effective armaments and supplying them to developing countries, the Russian military-industrial complex not only earns hard currency for the state, but also gives poor countries a chance to resist aggression from the West, wealthy and spoiled by high technologies.

Russia is no longer a super-power or a world empire, but precisely this fact gives it huge advantages. From now on, the countries of the Third World will be able to talk with Russia on equal terms. Ceasing to be an empire, Russia has not only rid itself of the guilt complex that weighed on whole generations of our educated people, but also became far more attractive as a potential partner for the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. We are no longer capable of imposing anything on anyone, but we can collaborate successfully and help solve common problems. Of these, the most important is to ensure real independence of the West and of the US.

The Russian financial oligarchy, that survives by plundering its own country, is simply unable to find a place for itself in this new situation. In recent times, the elite that has taken shape during the years of Yeltsin's rule has felt ill at ease. Every success recorded by the Primakov government meant increased fears for the oligarchs. In the Kremlin, leading officials of the presidential apparatus understood perfectly that the existing situation could not continue. The situation of dual power had to be brought to an end. The government of the left-centre had done what it was charged with doing; now the time had come for it to depart.

The role of Chernomyrdin

It was at precisely this moment that Chernomyrdin reappeared on the political scene. Formally speaking, his role was that of President Yeltsin's special representative on Yugoslavia. Why such a representative should be needed is not altogether clear. The entire foreign ministry is now

occupied almost exclusively with the Balkan crisis. Foreign Minister Ivanov, like Primakov, is an experienced diplomat with an intimate knowledge of the situation. By contrast, Chernomyrdin has never had anything to do with the Balkans, and has no diplomatic experience; even when prime minister, he showed little interest in foreign policy,



Milošević & Chernomyrdin

which was handled by the president's team. Meanwhile, Chernomyrdin has a solid reputation in Russia as someone who invariably brings ruin to any enterprise in which he becomes involved - though not, it is true, without benefits for himself.

From the first, cynical Moscow observers viewed the appointment of Chernomyrdin as simply an attempt by the Kremlin to sabotage the work of the foreign ministry and to undermine the Russian effort at mediation (at the same time playing into the hands of friends in Washington). But on closer examination, it turns out

that Chernomyrdin has been assigned other tasks as well.

As the bankruptcy of US strategy in the Balkans becomes obvious, the US leaders are beginning to feel an increasing objective need for Russian help in extricating themselves from the mess they have got themselves into. Chernomyrdin, unlike Primakov and Ivanov, is completely loyal to the interests of the US, though the same cannot be said of his attitude to the interests of his own country. Both he and Yeltsin, however, also have their own interests. To all appearances, these interests are being discussed as well.

Chernomyrdin is the only candidate for the post of new president of Russia who is acceptable both to the West and to Yeltsin's associates. The trouble is that he is totally unacceptable to the population of his own country. He can return to power only if the rules of the game are dramatically transformed. For a time, democratic procedures will have to be sacrificed.

On May 12, precisely in line with the plans published in the newspapers, the Primakov government was dismissed. The Duma was urged to confirm a new candidate - Sergey Stepashin, interior minister and head of the country's police. Chernomyrdin is being held in reserve, and the deputies are being reminded that if they fail three times in succession to pass a vote of confidence in the new cabinet, the government will be appointed in any case, and the Duma dissolved. The opposition promised street protests, began discussing impeachment, which the deputies knew perfectly well could not succeed. It is not hard to understand the deputies thinking; they are not only scared that the Duma will be dissolved, but also that opposition parties will be banned, and that the electoral laws will be changed to ensure that no-one from among the Kremlin's dangerous opponents will make it into the new parliament. Under Yeltsin's constitution, this can be done quite legally. In effect, the constitution gives the president the right to carry out a coup d'etat once every two years. These plans have been discussed quite openly and sympathetically in the press. The Russian liberal press adores coups d'etat and reprisals against dissidents.

Chernomyrdin really has had things to talk about with the United States. The American administration must somehow extract itself from the Yugoslav crisis without losing face. The Kremlin can put pressure on Belgrade, trying to make the Yugoslav leadership more compliant, at least to the point where Clinton has something to present to public opinion in his own country. Chernomyrdin and Yeltsin need guarantees that the West will help solve their own problems. After all, things do not always happen as simply and smoothly as you hope. Mass disturbances and even uprisings may occur; the deputies might refuse to disperse. Force might have to be used. It is essential that the democratic world should approve and support all this, while providing as much material aid as possible.

The Primakov government

The eight months of Primakov's rule have now come to an end. During this period Russia for the first time had a government that could seriously be described as social democratic. It was social democratic not in the manner of Blair and Schröder, but in the traditional sense. In technical respects, this government was competent and effective, but politically it suffered a complete debacle. Following the August crisis, when the oligarchs were demoralised and on the verge of bankruptcy, their power could have been undermined, and the oil companies and banks nationalised. Primakov could have used his time in office to broaden his government's political base, and to mobilise its supporters. Nothing of the kind was done.

On the contrary, the government began to retreat as soon as it felt itself under threat. The most amusing prospect was that in principle, the Primakov cabinet might have forced through the Duma a number of draft laws designed to gratify the IMF. For the sake of keeping a left-centrist government in power, the parliamentary majority was prepared to sacrifice even the interests of the people who had elected it. Primakov in turn would have had to take responsibility for unpopular measures implemented under IMF pressure. The Western bankers were demanding increases in the tax burden, which already had almost crushed the Russian economy, and cuts to social welfare. The areas to fall victim to the cuts were to include education, medicine, culture, and even assistance to people made invalids by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The Kremlin's wish to be rid of the "left" government, however, began even to outweigh its desire to please the IMF. Meanwhile, as compensation for the ousting of the "leftists" from power, the IMF for its part might have made various concessions, softening its demands.

Now that Primakov has been sacked, and will not get to perform the "dirty work" of impoverishing his own population for the benefit of the IMF, the population will be left with the myth of an upstanding left-wing government that tried to defend the interests of the people, and which was thrown out of office as a result. Like all myths, this one does not correspond completely to reality. It was created, however, by Yeltsin himself.

If Primakov remains among the heroes, the Communist Party, which could not and did not wish to defend the "government of the

left”, will be still more discredited. Even before Primakov was sacked, his prestige was significantly greater than that of the deputies and party leaders. Now the gap will become still greater, and the Communist deputies will sooner or later have to answer unpleasant questions from their electors. The promised street protests never happened, and the impeachment failed. Primakov was abandoned. Conceivably, this could mark the beginning of a new epoch for the Russian left, with the political monopoly of the conservative and opportunist Zyuganov leadership of the KPRF finally ended.

Yeltsin, meanwhile, has not won a great deal. As usual, he has defeated his rivals, but what is to happen next? The new government will either have to continue with Primakov’s policies out of inertia, or turn the wheel to the right. In the latter case, we can expect the social crisis to become dramatically worse, along perhaps with a repetition of the August financial crash. This is hardly likely to strengthen the positions of the IMF substantially.

The agreement on Yugoslavia adopted by the foreign ministers of Russia and the G7 countries did not solve anything either, but gave the West a chance to retrieve its position. The Kremlin now had the opportunity to exert pressure on Belgrade without provoking too much displeasure within Russia itself, since in formal terms the agreement provided a certain role both for the UNO and for Russia itself. The document also spoke of preserving the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. Everything, however, was spoiled by the NATO pilots who with three well-aimed salvos blew up the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. A wave of anti-American protests rolled across China, and anti-US moods again became inflamed. Most importantly, it was once again clear to everyone that, as people say in Russia, “the devil is not as fearsome as he is painted.” The US, with all its might, has been unable in the space of two months to deal with tiny Serbia. At the same time, the US - to quote one of the liberal (!) Duma deputies, has shown “total irresponsibility and incompetence.” So why, then, should we in vast Russia be so scared of the Americans? Until recently, we in Russia considered muddle-headedness and incompetence to be our unique national traits. Now we see that the world leader is no better. Consequently, we find cause to regard ourselves with more self-respect.

If the Kremlin analysts are wondering how to help the US

escape from its Yugoslav crisis with the least possible losses, Russian public opinion wants to see the US punished for treating international law with contempt, and simply for its arrogant, high-handed behaviour.

The trouble is that the time of Yeltsin and his cronies is coming to an end. Here we are not talking merely about his presidency, which is supposed to last until the year 2000. His term in office can be prolonged. Nor does the problem lie in his declining health, though sooner or later nature will exact its due. The trouble is in the complete bankruptcy of the neo-liberal economic model, in Russia and throughout the world. The resources needed if the extravagant neo-liberal policies are to be persisted with simply do not exist. It was the forced recognition by the Kremlin of this fact that brought Primakov to power last September. Now an illusory normalisation has appeared, but a return to the old policies will very quickly lead to a repetition of the same crises.

Finally, the mood in the country has changed. People are no longer willing simply to be victims. The deputies, learning from the experience of 1993, will most likely not put up any particular resistance. The government has submitted to the president's decision. But millions of people in Russia are little concerned with the constitutional powers of the president. They simply hate Yeltsin and his American protectors. As a result, events could take an unexpected turn.

Many revolutions have begun with attempts by the old authorities to replace a moderate reformist government. The upshot has then been that society has relatively quickly acquired new leaders, far more radical ones. Yeltsin's associates are taking account of this as well. This is why they are not finding it easy to move decisively. The Clinton administration is another matter entirely. Here, any determined moves by Yeltsin will certainly find support. This administration is used to acting without hesitation - in Somalia, in Iraq, in Yugoslavia, and in Russia. Unfortunately, this kind of decisiveness must sooner or later be paid for. ●

László Andor

Some information on Hungary's Response to the War in Yugoslavia

In 1456 the Hungarians defended Belgrade against the Ottoman Empire, an event which was commemorated by the midday bell rung by the pope in Rome. Much of post-war Yugoslavia used to be part of the Hungarian Kingdom until the first world war.

In 1941, prime minister Count Pál Teleki committed suicide when German troops invaded Yugoslavia through Hungary. He had signed a friendship and nonaggression agreement with Yugoslavia. Following the invasion, Hungarian troops occupied Vojvodina and murdered scores of thousands of Serbs and Jews. In 1944/45 the Serbs took revenge.

In the 1980s, some 500,000 ethnic Hungarians lived in Yugoslavia, predominantly in Vojvodina, the northern province of Serbia bordering on Hungary. Until the end of the 1980s, Vojvodina enjoyed autonomy within Serbia and the Hungarians enjoyed adequate minority rights.

Soon after the war began in the Summer of 1991, prime minister József Antall said that “after world war one, Vojvodina was given to Yugoslavia, and not to Serbia”. However, territorial revision has never

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been an official policy of the major Hungarian parties. István Csurka, leader of the far right extremist MIÉP, however, always claimed that the Hungarian government should bid for the reacquisition of Vojvodina.

In May 1999, Zsolt Lányi, head of the defence commission of the Hungarian parliament and a member of the Smallholders' Party, the junior party of government, hinted that Vojvodina could well be an independent state when the war ends. The government, the Free Democrats and the Socialists, rejected Lányi's idea.

In 1997 Hungary was invited to join NATO, and in a referendum, the Hungarian population decided by an 85 per cent majority that Hungary should join (50 per cent of the electorate participated). In 1998 and 1999, the parties in the Hungarian parliament accepted that NATO could use Hungarian airports without limitations.

When the bombing began, leading progressive intellectuals (Csaba Tabajdi, George Konrád, Tamás Krausz, Erzsébet Szalai, etc.) protested against the policy of NATO. Socialist MPs with constituencies in the south sought restraints on NATO activity in the region (e.g. Tabajdi, Suchman).

When the bombings began, the Left Alternative Association condemned the intervention and demanded that NATO stop the aggression. The policies of Milosevics were also condemned. A few weeks after the war began, a Movement for Peace in the Balkans was formed by socialist and liberal intellectuals and some trade union leaders. They organized a protest march in Budapest.

In May 1999, the Hungarian Socialist Party demanded that parliament renegotiate the unlimited use of Hungarian airports by NATO. The Hungarian Socialist Party also wanted guarantees that Yugoslavia would not be attacked from Hungary, neither by land nor from the air. In 1994-98 the Socialist-Liberal government of Hungary was criticized by the rightwing opposition for not taking care of the Hungarian minorities in the neighbour countries sufficiently.

In April 1999 the leaders of the Vojvodina Hungarians protested when Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán, claimed that it is not only power that is on NATO's side but historical justice as well.

May 1999



The capital of Vojvodina is **Novi Sad.**, one of the most heavily bombed cities in Yugoslavia. The bombing of the bridges in Novi Sad broke one of the main links between Western and Central Europe and the Balkans.

Hungarians are the majority in **Subotica**, near the Hungarian border. The mayor of Subotica is Hungarian. Subotica has also been heavily bombed.

At the beginning of May 1999, over 30 000 Hungarians from Vojvodina had fled to Hungary, most of them to Budapest. According to a report in the German weekly *Die Zeit* (12 May 1999), a majority of the population of Hungary oppose the Nato attack on Yugoslavia.

Michel Chossudovsky

Lawyers Charge NATO Leaders Before War Crimes Tribunal

A group of lawyers from several countries has laid a formal complaint with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia against all of the individual leaders of the NATO countries and officials of NATO itself. The group, lead by professors from Osgoode Hall Law School of York University in Toronto - where Tribunal prosecutor Louise Arbour was also a professor before becoming a judge - have charged Bill Clinton, Madeleine Albright, Javier Solana, Jamie Shea, Jean Chretien, Art Eggleton, Lloyd Axworthy and 60 other heads of state and government, foreign ministers, defence ministers and NATO officials, with war crimes committed in NATO's six-week old bombing campaign against Yugoslavia.

The list of crimes includes

wilful killing, wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, extensive destruction of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly, employment of poisonous weapons or other weapons to cause unnecessary suffering, wanton destruction of cities, towns, or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity, attack, or bombardment, by whatever means, of undefended towns,

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villages, dwellings, or buildings, destruction or wilful damage done to institutions dedicated to religion, charity and education, the arts and sciences, historic monuments and works of art and science.

The complaint also alleges “open violation” of the United Nations Charter, the NATO treaty itself, the Geneva Conventions and the Principles of International Law Recognised by the Nuremberg Tribunal (the latter of which makes “planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances” a crime).

Under the Statute

a person who planned, instigated, ordered, committed or otherwise aided and abetted in the planning, preparation or execution of a crime shall be individually responsible for the crime

and

the official position of any accused person, whether as Head of State or Government or as a responsible Government official, shall not relieve such person of criminal responsibility or mitigate punishment.

The complaint points to the bombing of civilian targets and alleges that NATO leaders

have admitted publicly to having agreed upon and ordered these actions, being fully aware of their nature and effects” and that “there is ample evidence in the public statements of NATO leaders that these attacks on civilian targets are part of a deliberate attempt to terrorise the population to turn it against its leadership.

The complaint cites a recent statement of the President of the Tribunal, Judge Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, urging that:

All States and organisations in possession of information pertaining to the alleged commission of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal should make such information

available without delay to the Prosecutor.

The complaint also cites a statement of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, in which she says that:

large numbers of civilians have incontestably been killed, civilian installations targeted on the grounds that they are or could be of military application and NATO remains sole judge of what is or is not acceptable to bomb... In this situation, the principle of proportionality must be adhered to by those carrying out the bombing campaign. It surely must be right to ask those carrying out the bombing campaign to weigh the consequences of their campaign for civilians in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Under the Statute, the Prosecutor is bound to

initiate investigations ex-officio or on the basis of information obtained from any source, particularly from Governments, United Nations organs, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations [and to] assess the information received or obtained and decide whether there is sufficient basis to proceed.

Upon a determination that a case exists, the Prosecutor is bound to

prepare an indictment containing a concise statement of the facts and the crime or crimes with which the accused is charged under the Statute and transmit it to a judge of the Trial Chamber.

The complaint asks Judge Arbour to “immediately investigate and indict for serious crimes against international humanitarian law” the 67 named leaders and whoever else shall be determined by the Prosecutor’s investigations to have committed crimes in the NATO attack on Yugoslavia commencing March 24, 1999.

Copies of the charges have been sent to the accused. Participating in the action are 15 lawyers and law professors as well as the American Association of Jurists, a pan American organisation of lawyers, judges, law professors and students, with membership in all countries of the

American Continent from Tierra del Fuego to Canada, an NGO with consultative status before the Social and Economic Council of the United Nations.

Professor Michael Mandel, spokesman for the group of complainants, said in Toronto today:

The bombing of civilians is not only immoral, it is criminal and punishable under the laws governing the Tribunal. You cannot kill a woman and child in Belgrade on the theoretical possibility that it might save a woman and child in Pristina. Even in a legal war you cannot kill civilians and destroy an entire country as a military strategy. But this is an illegal war and the NATO leaders are acting like outlaws. So far they have risked nothing by sending others to do their killing and destroying. We believe that if they are held individually responsible, as the law requires, they won't feel so free to spill other peoples' blood.

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7 May 1999

UK and International Appeal

An Open Letter to the Heads of NATO Governments

We, the undersigned, wish to call for an end to the NATO military action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In particular we note the following:

- 1) Many other cases of repression in the outer parts of Europe and beyond have been conveniently ignored and thus the humanitarian principles which NATO espouses in this case are hypocritical.
- 2) The legal basis for this action is highly problematic and NATO has violated both the UN's and its own charter.
- 3) The intervention of a supposedly defensive regional organisation within a sovereign state sets a dangerous precedent in international relations. The constitutional situation of Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia cannot be compared to that of Bosnia and Herzegovina - indeed Kosovo is an integral part of Yugoslavia and NATO's actions seem designed to encourage possible (although illegal) secession from Yugoslavia.
- 4) The action has alienated a number of states in eastern Europe, including Russia. Many of these states have been in dialogue with the West about joining or associating with NATO or the EU. This may have serious consequences for these organisations and the UN.
- 5) The dominant West European and US view of the region is rooted in outdated 19th century notions of the 'nation state' and hangovers of 19th century prejudice which considers the Balkans as a 'powder-keg' containing people possessed by 'ancient hatreds'. The EU and NATO are in part responsible for the dissolution of former Yugoslavia and several EU states actively encouraged the succession of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina from the Yugoslav federation. The current military action may well encourage further fragmentation in the region at the cost of political, economic and social stability.
- 6) The withdrawal of the monitors from Kosovo followed by air strikes has encouraged the repression of Kosovo's Albanians.
- 7) US policy towards the region has been contradictory at best -

supporting democratic negotiations and then abandoning them. Military action has effectively ‘pulled the rug’ from under the democratic representatives of the Kosovo Albanians and instead given support to the unconstitutional and illegal Kosovo Liberation Army with the effect that NATO is now for all intents and purposes the air force of the KLA.

8) NATO’s actions have unified support behind President Milosevic of Yugoslavia and recast him in the role of ‘defender of the faith’. What opposition remains has now been sidelined or repressed. The increased control of the universities and closure of independent media organisations are symptomatic of this hegemony. The use of German forces in the attacks is particularly insensitive given Yugoslavia’s experiences under Nazi occupation.

9) The flood of refugees fleeing Kosovo threatens the stability of the whole region. Many thousands have now crossed the Yugoslav borders into FYR Macedonia, Albania and, within Yugoslavia itself, Montenegro. In the short term, none of these regions will be able to deal with such large numbers (for which the West has been singularly unprepared). In the longer term, some states will experience severe difficulties. FYR Macedonia, in particular, is highly likely to witness an increase in nationalist sentiment which could well lead to an extension of the war.

Signed

Michael Barratt Brown, UK

Rt. Hon. Tony Benn MP, UK

Tam Dalyell MP, UK

Denis Healey, House of Lords, UK

Alice Mahon MP, UK

Nemanja Marcetic, Editor, South Slav Journal, London, UK

Bill Michie MP, UK

Margaret Middleton, Local Government Officer, UK

John Pilger, London, UK

Dusan Puvacic, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London,

Senator Douglas Roche, Senate of Canada

and numerous others

Appeal by French Intellectuals

Stop the bombings, self-determination

We do not accept the following false dilemmas:

* Either support the NATO intervention or support the reactionary policies of the Serb authorities in Kosovo!

The NATO bombing raids, which made necessary the withdrawal of OSCE personnel from Kosovo, created more favourable conditions for a ground offensive by Serb paramilitary forces, rather than preventing it; they encourage the worst forms of ultra-nationalist Serb desire for revenge against the Kosovar population; they consolidate the dictatorial power of Slobodan Milosevic which has muzzled the independent media and succeeded in uniting round it a national consensus which must, on the contrary, be broken if a path to peaceful and political negotiations on Kosovo is to be opened up.

* Either accept as the sole possible basis for negotiation the “peace plan” drawn up by the governments of the United States and of the European Union or bomb Serbia!

No long-term solution to a major internal political conflict can be imposed from outside by force. It is not true that “every attempt was made” to find a solution and an acceptable framework for negotiations. The Kosovar negotiators were forced to sign a plan which they had initially rejected after they were given reason to believe that NATO would become involved on the ground in defence of their cause. This is a lie which fosters a total illusion: not one of the governments which have supported the NATO air strikes are willing to wage war against the Serb regime to impose independence for Kosovo. The strikes will perhaps weaken part of the Serbian military machine, but they will not

weaken the mortars which are being used to destroy Albanian houses, nor the para-military forces which are executing UCK (Kosovo Liberation Army) fighters.

NATO is not the only, nor above all the best, foundation on which to base an agreement. It would have been possible to find the conditions for a multinational police force (including Serbs and Albanians) within the framework of the OSCE which would oversee the application of a transitional agreement. It would above all have been possible to enlarge the framework of the negotiations by including the Balkan states destabilised by this conflict: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania... One could at the same time have defended the Kosovars' right to self-government of the province and protected the Serb minority in Kosovo; one could have sought to respond to the aspirations and fears of the different peoples concerned through links of cooperation and agreements between neighbouring states, with Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania... No such attempt was made.

We do not accept the arguments with which it has been sought to legitimate the NATO intervention:

* It is not true that the NATO air strikes will prevent the spreading of the conflict to the region, to Macedonia or Bosnia-Herzegovina: they will on the contrary encourage this. They will further destabilise Bosnia-Herzegovina and no doubt endanger the multinational forces responsible for enforcing the fragile Dayton Agreement. They have already fanned the flames of conflict in Macedonia.

* It is not true that NATO is protecting the Kosovar population or their rights.

* It is not true that the bombing of Serbia is opening the way to a democratic government there.

The governments of the European Union and of the United States perhaps hoped that this demonstration of force would force Slobodan Milosevic to sign their plan. Does this reveal on their part naïveté or hypocrisy? Whatever the case, this policy is leading not only to a political impasse, but also a legitimatisation of the role of NATO outside any framework of international control.

For this reason, we demand:

- * an immediate end to these bombings;
- * the organisation of a Balkans conference in which representatives of the states and all the national communities in these states would participate;
- * the defence of the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, on the sole condition that this right is not obtained to the detriment of another people and through the ethnic cleansing of territory;
- * a debate in parliament on the future participation of France in NATO.

Pierre Bourdieu

Suzanne de Brunhoff

Jean-Christophe Chaumeron

Daniel Bensaïd

Robin Foot

Philip Golub

Paul Jacquin

Bernard Langlois

Pierre Lantz

Catherine Lévy

Patrick Mony

Catherine Samary

Pierre Vidal-Naquet

Pauline Boutron

Noëlle Burgi-Golub

Thomas Coutrot

Daniel Durant

Ana-Maria Galano

Michel Husson

Marcel-Francis Kahn

Ariane Lantz

Florence Lefresne

Jean-Philippe Milésy

Aline Pailler

Rolande Treppe

Le Monde, 31 March 1999

Appeal by Serbian Non-Governmental Organisations

Deeply disturbed by NATO destruction and the ordeal of Kosovo Albanians, we, the representatives of non-governmental organisations and trade union “Nezavisnost” (Independence), strongly demand from all those responsible for this tragedy to immediately create ground for the renewal of the peace process.

The most powerful military, political and economic powers of the world are for two weeks incessantly killing people and destroying not only military but also civilian objects, blowing up bridges and rail tracks, factories and heating plants, warehouses and basins... At the same time, in fear of the bombing campaign and military actions by the regime and the KLA, hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians are, in an unprecedented exodus, forced to leave their devastated homes and look for salvation in the tragedy and uncertainty of fleeing.

It is obvious that this is a road to catastrophe, and the peaceful and fair solution to the Kosovo problem through international mediation we have supported for years, today seems more distant than ever.

The past activities of our organisations in the field of democratisation, development of a civil society and acceptance of FR Yugoslavia into all international institutions have been under constant pressure and intimidation by the Serbian regime.

We, as members of civil society associations have courageously and rationally fought against war and nationalistic propaganda and in support of human rights. We emphasise that we have always raised our voices against the repression against Kosovo Albanians and demanded the respect of their liberties and guarantees for their rights. We have also requested the return of the autonomy of Kosovo. We stress that the only connection and co-operation of Serbs and Albanians during all these years has been preserved among civil society institutions.

NATO military intervention has undermined all results we have

achieved and endangered the very survival of the civil sector in Serbia. Faced with the tragic situation we have found ourselves in, and in the name of human ideas and values, as well as in accordance with all our past activities, we are demanding:

- * immediate stop to the bombing campaign and all armed movements;
- * resuming of the peace process with international mediation at the regional Balkan and European level, as well as in the framework of the United Nations;
- * share of responsibility between the European Union and Russia and their contribution to the peaceful solution of the crisis;
- * end of the ethnic cleansing process and immediate return of all refugees;
- * support to the citizens of Montenegro to preserve peace and stability, solve serious consequences of the refugee catastrophe and resume with the democratic processes that are underway;
- * we demand that the Serbian and international media inform the public in a professional manner and not spur media war, incite interethnic hatred, create irrational public opinion and glorify force as the ultimate accomplishment of the human mind.

We cannot meet these demands by ourselves. We expect from you to support our demands and in your initiatives and actions help their implementation.

Belgrade, April 6, 1999

- * Association of Citizens for Democracy, Social Justice and Support to Trade Unions
- * Belgrade Circle
- * Centre for Democracy and Free Elections
- * Centre for Transition to Democracy-ToD
- * Civic Initiatives
- * European Movement in Serbia
- * Forum for Ethnic Relations, and Foundation for Peace and Crisis Management
- * Group 484
- * Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia
- * Student Union of Serbia
- * Union for Truth about Antifascist Resistance
- * United Branch Trade Unions NEZAVISNOST
- * VIN-Weekly Video News
- * Women in Black * Yugoslav Lawyers Committee for Human Rights

Appeal:

Serbia Threatened with Ecological Disaster

NATO intervention in Yugoslavia is increasingly gaining a dimension of retaliation. The number of civilian casualties rises every day. The destruction of economic sites has long term dramatic consequences for civilian population and puts cities, country and the entire region under serious danger.

The bombing of the chemical plant in Pancevo, near Belgrade, has already caused severe ecological damage and seriously threatens to turn into an ecological disaster. In the last fire that broke out in the refinery and factory producing artificial fertilisers, only the favourable direction of the wind prevented the whole city and all its inhabitants from suffering much more serious ecological and health problems. In the last few days, chemical plants in Novi Sad and Belgrade have been bombed. Their destruction could lead to the tragedy exceeding the one in Bhopal, India.

Stop the brutal and senseless bombing. Those who are making the decisions must be aware of the effects of their actions. No subsequent apologies, or calling upon “collateral damage” could justify this action, the consequences of which could lead to the permanent destruction of civilian population and their natural environment. In the name of the people and in the name of Nature we demand that the use of force stops immediately and a solution is found to use negotiations for solving the difficult crisis facing Europe and the world.

Association of Citizens for Democracy,
Social Justice and Support to Trade Unions
Belgrade Circle
European Movement in Serbia

Civic Initiatives

Centre for Transition to Democracy-ToD

Centre for Democracy and Free Elections District 0230 (Kikinda)

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia

Women in Black

Students Union of Serbia

VIN-Weekly Video News

Group 484

Yu Lawyers Committee for Human Rights

Foundation for Peace and Crisis Management

Urban Inn (Novi Pazar)

Union for Truth about Antifascist Resistance

Forum for Ethnic Relations

United Branch Trade Unions NEZAVISNOST

Belgrade, April 19, 1999

Oskar Lafontaine on the War in Yugoslavia

[Oskar Lafontaine, who resigned from his post as finance minister in the German government at the beginning of March, made his first public appearance following his resignation at the May Day rally organised by the DGB (German Trade Union Federation) in Saarbrücken. We print below extracts from his speech that dealt with the war in Yugoslavia. The original was published in the German daily, Junge Welt, and the translation is by Gus Fagan.]

In taking a position on the war in Yugoslavia today, I would like to remind ourselves that this is not the only war in our world. Poverty and misery, death and expulsion are sadly present in quite a few countries: I'm thinking of Africa, of Algeria, Ethiopia, Sudan, Rwanda, the Congo. I'm thinking of Asia and of the persecuted Kurds in Turkey, a member state of NATO. I'm thinking of Tibet, Afghanistan and of many other countries where we find gross injustice and large-scale human misery.

But it is of the war in Yugoslavia that I want to speak today. I don't want to simplify because none of us have simple answers. But what has to stand in the forefront of all our thinking is, in my view, this: How can we alleviate, as quickly as possible, the suffering of the people there? How can peace be established as quickly as possible? And the issue is not one of saving face, as some suggest it is. The sole issue is the suffering of people and the preservation of human life.

Of course, all of us are concerned about the people of Kosovo who are being expelled and killed. We are also concerned about the people in Serbia who are afraid and who are suffering from bombardment. We are thinking of the people in Serbia who have been the victims of the bombing. And we are thinking of the deserters from

the armies who are also persecuted and who are suffering because they don't want to take part in the war. As I have already said, there are no simple answers to these terrible events. And I don't want to give the impression that I have any simple answer. And I would like, right from the beginning, to distance myself from the placard against the Chancellor. This style of argument leads nowhere. The issues that we are facing are too serious for this kind of argument.

We know now that mistakes have been made with respect to Yugoslavia and some of these mistakes were made some years ago. I often hear it said that Germany shouldn't go its own way, but I must remind you that, at the very beginning of all this, Germany did indeed go its own way in pushing through the official recognition of the independence of Yugoslavia's constituent republics, against the resistance of Paris, London and Washington, and on the basis of a false understanding of the concepts of freedom and self-determination. Freedom and self-determination are not compatible with national exclusion and ethnic exclusion. Freedom and self-determination are only imaginable and can only be lived and experienced when they are linked with solidarity and human fellowship. That's why it was wrong to give recognition to this small-state nonsense (*Kleinstaatererei*) based on ethnic differences. It was also a mistake when NATO bombardment made it possible for Croatia to drive the Serbs from Krajina. I want to bring this to your attention today when we speak about the war in Yugoslavia.

It would be a mistake to believe that only one of the nations in the multi-national Yugoslavia suffered expulsion. The Serbs have suffered expulsion. I'm saying this because it is important that we don't adopt a one-sided view. I believe, I am firmly convinced, that that we can not advance one step when we demonise one particular national group and see the others as the good side. The reasonable thing to do is to recognise that there are many people in that country, and not just people from one group, who have suffered unjustly, who have been unjustly persecuted, and it is therefore false to divide the people there into good and bad national groups. Peace will never be achieved in this manner. Serbian men also have wives and children who weep for them, they also have friends who weep for them. We shouldn't forget this. We too have had our experience with dictatorships and we know that many

soldiers follow orders but their hearts are not in what they are doing. We know that and that's why I mentioned the deserters.

With regard to the present situation I want to distinguish political from military considerations. First, the political reasoning of recent weeks and months. There is no doubt whatever that Milosevic is pursuing a criminal policy that we must all condemn. And



Oskar Lafontaine

there is also no doubt that we must do everything possible to bring this criminal policy to a halt. And we should recognise that the Western states did attempt to do this, that they did make this effort, but in spite of this we still are obliged to consider critically whether the decisions made up to now have been correct.

With respect to the decisions of recent weeks and months, two serious errors have been made that will have long-term consequences. Firstly, the UN was pushed aside. That was a serious error that we have to learn from. If we want peace, then we have to strengthen the law. And if we want international peace, then we have to strengthen international law. There is no other way. And international law can be constituted only by the United Nations, not by any other bodies that are self-mandating. It is good, therefore, that an attempt is now being made to bring in the United Nations. We can learn from our mistakes and we should learn from this one, and here I appeal not just to the German government. I appeal to the European governments. We have to make clear to our American allies that pushing the UN aside was a mistake, that, in the long term, we can have a politics that is reasonable and right, just and peaceful, only if we base ourselves on the rules of international law, however difficult that may be in any particular case.

The second big mistake, and here I appeal to the governments of

Europe to take a stand against it, was to take advantage of the present weaknesses of Russia in order to exclude her. We can not achieve peace in this world without Russia. And we can not bring about peace in Europe without Russia. And we Germans should never forget what Gorbachev did for this nation, for Germany. We have a duty to be fair to Russia, to bring Russia on board, and I welcome the fact that the attempt is now being made to involve Russia more strongly.

Sometimes the organs of the UN and the Security Council are justly criticised when what is at stake are proposals that we consider right but, in this respect, I would like to remind you that some very good proposals have been put forward for the reform of the UN. The UN, created after the war, is in need of reform today. The right of veto over international law enjoyed by certain individual powers is questionable. So let us reform the UN but let us not push it aside.

It isn't possible today to pass judgement on whether everything was done to use peaceful means to achieve a solution and to stop the killing and the exclusion. I wasn't part of many of the negotiations and, as I have said, these efforts and decisions go back over many years. I would like to make clear, however, how the recent decisions were arrived at: following the victory of the red-green coalition last year, and at a time when the Schröder government had not yet been formed, the Kohl government invited us to find out if we could agree with a decision of the German parliament, the old German parliament, that in the event of a state of alert (*Alarmbereitschaft*) for the NATO allies, German troops would be made available.

I feel it is my duty here today, once again, to point to the fact that, as leader of the German Social Democratic Party in these negotiations, I posed the question whether such a decision of the German parliament and the German government would set an automatic process in motion which would require no further consultation before a military attack. The answers given by the defence and foreign ministers of the then government were not consistent. I got a written confirmation from the foreign ministry at that time that a positive decision by the German parliament would not set an automatic process in motion[speech interrupted by medical emergency in the audience] As I was explaining, the decision of the German parliament in October [1998] did not set up an automatic process; it would be possible beforehand, before any

military attack, to enter again into a political discussion in which a decision would be made, a political decision, about whether the state of alarm would lead to a command to intervene militarily.

On this basis I gave my agreement as leader of the German Social Democratic Party because it would not have been responsible, after all the preparations, and after all that had been achieved by the governments of Europe and by the United States, to stop it or even to change it in just a few days. However, I insisted in the cabinet, during the days of the Rambouillet negotiations, that before the cabinet came to a decision that would involve German approval of a military intervention, that there would have to be a detailed discussion of the military plans because it is my view that it is not possible to agree to a military intervention without knowing and carefully considering the plans and their effects.

Up to the time of my resignation as finance minister, there were no further discussions on the military question, so I can only judge after the event. It is my view that the present military operation could only be justified if the goal were, following these attacks, to get Milosevic's signature to an agreement to end the war, as happened a few years ago. Only if there were solid reasons for believing that this would happen would the military attacks be justified and understandable.

If, however, there were no firm reasons for believing this, if, as the later discussion indicated, the most important goal of the military intervention was the protection of the Kosovo population, then the military intervention plans were not justifiable from any point of view.

Every metaphor limps. But what would we think of a police force which, discovering that a group was on the way from A to B in order to expel and murder the people at B, decided to bomb the bridges, refineries, railways, etc in A? A country would not accept for a minute this behaviour on the part of the police. I know that things are not as simple as the metaphor suggests. But it does make clear that the military planning was inadequate because it did not take into its calculations the possibility that Milosevic would not capitulate and because it is now, in my view, in a dead end street.....

Regardless of what army generals or politicians may say, bombing is a form of collective punishment. All the talk about systematic attacks on the enemy, about degrading his capacity, about wearing him down and eventually destroying him, only serves to cover over the fact

that the innocent are also being hit. This is the problem that the bombing has led us to: increasing numbers of innocent people are the victims of our bombs. And that is why today, here from the Deutsch-Französischer Garten [in Saarbrücken], I call on the responsible authorities to call a halt to the bombing, and to find a way at the conference table to end the killing and expulsions in Yugoslavia, by bringing in the United Nations and Russia and also by consulting with the Chinese....

I welcome the fact that the Chancellor has brought a Marshall Plan into the discussion and that some thought is being given to the reconstruction of what has been destroyed. But when we look at the television in the evening and see the bridges that have been destroyed and think how they will now need to be built again, we ask ourselves what is the sense of this bombing, what is it leading too, and in what kind of reason is this activity based. What is needed is a lot of diplomacy, not megaphone diplomacy because, as all of us familiar with international mechanisms are aware, this only creates resistance. I hope that the European governments and, following the decisions of the American Congress, the Clinton administration will recognise that they have reached a dead end and that what they have to do is return to the negotiating table.

I hear it said quite often now that NATO can't lose face. It has no choice; it has to win. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche wrote, 'Let your peace be a victory'. In the present case I ask, whose victory would the victory be? And what does victory mean in the context of the human suffering from this war? The important point is not victory or face-saving, the important point is saving lives and ending the misery in Yugoslavia...

No one can offer simple solutions and no one is in the position today to offer a solution that is guaranteed to take us out of this situation. But we should hold on to what we have achieved over many years. And I say this to my friends in the German Social Democratic Party, what we need to do is to carry on the peace and détente policies of Willy Brandt, the best tradition of social democratic foreign policy since the war. ●

Elmar Altvater: Letter to the German Greens

To: the Greens, Berlin-Spandau

Like so many others I was deeply disappointed by the decision of the Bielefeld Special Conference on 13 May 1999. More, I was appalled. It is nothing more than support for a foreign policy which is responsible not only for an illegal war but which approves and supports crimes against humanity. With the other NATO states it pursues a war aim which rejects any diplomatic solution: either the capitulation of Yugoslavia, as contained in the Rambouillet Diktat (political culture prohibits one from describing it as a treaty), or the destruction of the country and culture of Yugoslavia and possibly even beyond.

The justification of the Bielefeld Resolution in terms of the foreign minister's peace initiative is laughable, if a manifestation of stupidity, or cynical if we assume that these people really know what they're doing. NATO's war aim excludes any diplomatic solution and that's why all initiatives, regardless of where they come from, have always been rejected: the goal is quite simply capitulation, so the bombing will continue to the bitter end, regardless of the damage done, especially to the civilian population.

Quite a few Greens interpret criticism of NATO policy as a departure from political realism. No, it is those who defend the Bielefeld Resolution who have rejected politics and submitted themselves to a military logic whose criteria of success is the destruction of Yugoslavia.

Theirs is a realism which makes it possible for them to take part in government, but at what a horrible price. What happens if the Greens

*Elmar Altvater, one of the most prominent intellectuals on the German left, is Professor of Political Science at the Free University of Berlin. He is editor of the journal, **PROKLA**, and author of many books on capitalist development theory, theory of the state, the debt crisis and the links between economy and ecology.*

are no longer in a position to pay this price, if the Greens, as a result of this kind of “realo politics”, are no longer a political power factor?

The criminal features of this NATO war could also be seen as a continuation of foreign policy decisions since 1991, in which Germany played a major role: the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the premature recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, without any attempt to preserve the integrity of the Yugoslav Federation. It would have been possible to stop Milosevic then. Instead, [the West] preserved Bosnia Herzegovina as a mini-Yugoslavia, while at the same time actively supporting the now almost forgotten ethnic cleansing of the Serbs from Krajina. The first maps of Bosnia Herzegovina drawn up on the basis of ethnic criteria were made by EU representatives. In 1992, at a peace conference in Sarajevo, we all laughed at the apparent stupidity of the EU in attempting to draw ethnic partitions among the nationalists on all sides. Sadly, it became deadly serious business.

Even until today no serious attention has been given to the advice which the then UN General Secretary, Perez de Cuellar, gave to [the then German foreign secretary] Genscher: No one group should be favoured, a plan for the whole of Yugoslavia needs to be worked out which all minorities are able to accept. That should still be a goal today, also for Kosovo. An internationally guaranteed protection zone would have to be part of this, not under NATO but under the OSCE and/or the UN. A Balkan Conference could only hold out hope for success if the horrific bombardment were stopped immediately. Otherwise they are simply planting the seed for further misery, flight and war. The Bielefeld Resolution is therefore at best inconsistent.

But since the bombing continues and is being increased, it would seem that NATO aims to dominate the entire Balkan area. This is politics enabled by military criminality: geo-politically extending its arm towards Russia, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Central Asia. Can Green foreign policy take part in this or silently accept it as part of the deal?

Such a policy, even if only implicit or as yet unformulated, is one which political realism leads me to totally reject - because of the smell of burning that it carries with it, because of the dangers it represents for the project of a peaceful Europe. We've had enough of these “good days” of the contemptible NATO spokesperson reporting on the hundreds

of bombing missions. I came back from Brazil yesterday and people there are outraged at the way in which NATO deals with its “mistakes”.

I have not mentioned “human rights” etc. and in future I will be very cautious in doing so. The Fischers, Sharpings and Schröders have spun such a web of deception in recent weeks with their human rights rhetoric that one has to be very careful with this discourse. Otherwise we may end up like them, defending human rights by killing humans...

What’s to be done, when a red-green government supports an illegal war? A conservative government wouldn’t have been worse. My conclusion: I will not immediately leave the Green Party in which I have been a member since 1979 (AL) but I will immediately cancel my membership dues. I will use the money to support Yugoslav groups that have to suffer the horrific consequences of this Green policy. And I wouldn’t object if the party expelled me for not paying my dues. If it turns out that the Green majority continues its war policy then I won’t stay in the party, even if they haven’t expelled me.

This decision is not an easy one for me. Work on this Green project has taken too much of my life energy for me to dismiss it lightly. But the Rubicon does exist and the majority of delegates at the Bielefeld Conference have now crossed it.

With sad greetings

Elmar Altvater
Berlin, 18 May 1999

German Greens, Special Party Conference 13 May 1999

Resolution on the War in Yugoslavia

*[The following extracts were published in the **Süddeutsche Zeitung** on 14 May 1999. Translation is by **Gus Fagan**.]*

“The UN and its monopoly of force have been severely damaged... The initial hope that a humanitarian catastrophe could be avoided has been dashed. NATO clearly made a false estimate with respect to the length of the war and the effects of the bombing. The humanitarian catastrophe was intensified, it became even worse than most had feared, and it still continues... We are still critical of the fact that NATO has not exhausted the political opportunities, in particular, a pause in the bombing.

To improve the political opportunities that now exist, NATO should declare a temporary halt to the bombing. During this pause, Yugoslavia must stop the expulsions and begin to withdraw its armed forces [from Kosovo]. The bombing pause could be extended if the leadership in Belgrade complied with these demands... The crucial point for ending this war is the restoration of the UN monopoly of force. The monopoly of force in Kosovo must be delegated to neutral peace troops mandated by the UN...

In view of the need and the existing opportunities to find a political solution to the Kosovo war by means of negotiations, the Federal Assembly of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen calls on the German government to support

- that NATO should declare a unilateral pause in the bombing of Yugoslavia to bring about the beginning of a withdrawal of Serbian units from Kosovo and an immediate monitored truce on all sides;
- that a mediator acceptable to both sides should begin negotiations with Yugoslavia on the basis of the peace plan of Joschka Fischer and Kofi Annan;
- that the return of the refugees be secured in co-operation with the UN and in accordance with the Agreement of the G8 Foreign Ministers Meeting, by means of an international peace keeping force mandated by the UN;
- that the use of ground troops continue to be excluded.” ●

German PDS, Peace Plan for Yugoslavia

*[In a letter to individuals and left parties in the EU and in Eastern Europe, PDS leaders Gregor Gysi and Lothar Bisky proposed the following PDS Peace Plan in April 1999. The translation is by **Gus Fagan.**]*

“In view of the intensification of military operations against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the immense suffering the war is causing to the civilian populations on all sides; in view of the hardened position of NATO against any attempted political solution, it is our view that the European Left must present its ideas to the international public and contribute towards finding a way out of this unbearable and unacceptable situation.”

PDS Peace Plan

“1) The NATO war against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the military actions of the Yugoslav army, police and security forces in Kosovo should stop immediately;

2) The Yugoslav army as well as police and security forces should withdraw from Kosovo to the extent agreed in the Milosevic-Holbrooke Agreement of October 1998. The Yugoslav government and the UCK should call an immediate ceasefire.

3) The 2000 OSCE observers already agreed on should return immediately to Kosovo and their number should be raised if necessary;

4) Under the authority of the General Secretary of the United Nations, direct and immediate peace talks should be begun between both parties with the understanding the UN Security Council has taken responsibility for achieving a just settlement and that the Security Council is responsible for the manner of its implementation;

5) NATO and the EU should work out a common plan for undoing the damage caused to the federal Republic of Yugoslavia by the bombing and for financing reconstruction. This would include the support for refugees. Until all refugees have returned, the EU will provide financial help and other assistance to the countries that have taken or are still taking refugees.”

Document

The Rambouillet Agreement

Appendix B

Status of Multi-National Military Implementation Force

[The proposed Rambouillet Agreement played an important role in the public perception of the events leading up to the NATO attack on Yugoslavia. It was Yugoslavia's refusal to sign what Elmar Altvater describes in this issue as the "Rambouillet Diktat" that provided another justification, alongside the humanitarian one, for NATO's bombing. Critics of the Rambouillet "negotiations", in which both sides were not permitted to negotiate directly with each other, have pointed to the fact that the proposed Agreement would give NATO the right of unimpeded access to the whole of Yugoslavia, effectively a military occupation of the Yugoslav sovereign state. Since it was known in advance that the Yugoslav government would never agree to this, the whole Rambouillet process only served to provide another dubious pretext for war. The relevant part of the Agreement which deals with this aspect is Appendix B, which we reprint below.]

1. For the purpose of this Appendix, the following expressions shall have the meanings hereunder assigned to them:

[There then follows the legal definitions of such terms as "NATO", "Authorities in the FRY" [Former Republic of Yugoslavia], "facilities", etc.]

2. Without prejudice to their privileges and immunities under this Appendix, all NATO personnel shall respect the laws applicable in the FRY, whether Federal, Republic, Kosovo, or other, insofar as compliance with those laws is compatible with the entrusted tasks/mandate and shall refrain from activities not compatible with the nature of the operation.

3. The Parties recognize the need for expeditious departure and entry procedures for NATO personnel. Such personnel shall be exempt from passport and visa regulations and the registration requirements applicable to aliens. At all entry and exit points to/from the FRY, NATO personnel shall be permitted to enter/exit the FRY on production of a national identification (ID) card. NATO personnel shall carry identification which they may be requested to produce for the authorities in the FRY, but operations, training, and movement shall not be allowed to be impeded or delayed by such requests.

4. NATO military personnel shall normally wear uniforms, and NATO personnel may possess and carry arms if authorized to do so by their orders. The Parties shall accept as valid, without tax or fee, drivers, licenses and permits issued to NATO personnel by their respective national authorities.

5. NATO shall be permitted to display the NATO flag and/or national flags of its constituent national elements/units on any NATO uniform, means of transport, or facility.

6.

(a) NATO shall be immune from all legal process, whether civil, administrative, or criminal.

(b) NATO personnel, under all circumstances and at all times, shall be immune from the Parties' jurisdiction in respect of any civil, administrative, criminal, or disciplinary offenses which may be committed by them in the FRY. The Parties shall assist States participating in the operation in the exercise of their jurisdiction over their own nationals.

(c) Notwithstanding the above, and with the NATO Commander's express agreement in each case, the authorities in the FRY may exceptionally exercise jurisdiction in such matters, but only in respect of Contractor personnel who are not subject to the jurisdiction of their nation of citizenship.

7. NATO personnel shall be immune from any form of arrest, investigation, or detention by the authorities in the FRY. NATO personnel erroneously arrested or detained shall immediately be turned over to NATO authorities.

8. NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded



Albright at Rambouillet

access throughout the FRY including associated airspace and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac, maneuver, billet, and utilization of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operations.

9. NATO shall be exempt from duties, taxes, and other charges and inspections and custom regulations including providing inventories or other routine customs documentation, for personnel, vehicles, vessels, aircraft, equipment, supplies, and provisions entering, exiting, or transiting the territory of the FRY in support of the Operation.

10. The authorities in the FRY shall facilitate, on a priority basis and with all appropriate means, all movement of personnel, vehicles, vessels, aircraft, equipment, or supplies, through or in the airspace, ports, airports, or roads used. No charges may be assessed against NATO for air navigation, landing, or takeoff of aircraft, whether government-owned or chartered. Similarly, no duties, dues, tolls or charges may be assessed against NATO ships, whether government-owned or chartered, for the mere entry and exit of ports. Vehicles, vessels, and aircraft used in support of the operation shall not be subject to licensing or registration requirements, nor commercial insurance.

11. NATO is granted the use of airports, roads, rails, and ports without

payment of fees, duties, dues, tolls, or charges occasioned by mere use. NATO shall not, however, claim exemption from reasonable charges for specific services requested and received, but operations/movement and access shall not be allowed to be impeded pending payment for such services.

12. NATO personnel shall be exempt from taxation by the Parties on the salaries and emoluments received from NATO and on any income received from outside the FRY.

13. NATO personnel and their tangible moveable property imported into, acquired in, or exported from the FRY shall be exempt from all duties, taxes, and other charges and inspections and custom regulations.

14. NATO shall be allowed to import and to export, free of duty, taxes and other charges, such equipment, provisions, and supplies as NATO shall require for the operation, provided such goods are for the official use of NATO or for sale to NATO personnel. Goods sold shall be solely for the use of NATO personnel and not transferable to unauthorized persons.

15. The Parties recognize that the use of communications channels is necessary for the Operation. NATO shall be allowed to operate its own internal mail services. The Parties shall, upon simple request, grant all telecommunications services, including broadcast services, needed for the operation, as determined by NATO. This shall include the right to utilize such means and services as required to assure full ability to communicate, and the right to use all of the electro-magnetic spectrum for this purpose, free of cost. In implementing this right, NATO shall make every reasonable effort to coordinate with and take into account the needs and requirements of appropriate authorities in the FRY.

16. The Parties shall provide, free of cost, such public facilities as NATO shall require to prepare for and execute the Operation. The Parties shall assist NATO in obtaining, at the lowest rate, the necessary utilities, such as electricity, water, gas and other resources, as NATO shall require for the Operation.

17. NATO and NATO personnel shall be immune from claims of any sort which arise out of activities in pursuance of the operation; however, NATO will entertain claims on an *ex gratia* basis.

18. NATO shall be allowed to contract directly for the acquisition of goods, services, and construction from any source within and outside

the FRY. Such contracts, goods, services, and construction shall not be subject to the payment of duties, taxes, or other charges. NATO may also carry out construction works with their own personnel.

19. Commercial undertakings operating in the FRY only in the service of NATO shall be exempt from local laws and regulations with respect to the terms and conditions of their employment and licensing and registration of employees, businesses, and corporations.

20. NATO may hire local personnel who on an individual basis shall remain subject to local laws and regulations with the exception of labor/employment laws. However, local personnel hired by NATO shall:

(a) be immune from legal process in respect of words spoken or written and all acts performed by them in their official capacity;

(b) be immune from national services and/or national military service obligations;

(c) be subject only to employment terms and conditions established by NATO; and

(d) be exempt from taxation on the salaries and emoluments paid to them by NATO.

21. In carrying out its authorities under this Chapter, NATO is authorized to detain individuals and, as quickly as possible, turn them over to appropriate officials.

22. NATO may, in the conduct of the operation, have need to make improvements or modifications to certain infrastructure in the FRY, such as roads, bridges, tunnels, buildings, and utility systems. Any such improvements or modifications of a non-temporary nature shall become part of and in the same ownership as that infrastructure. Temporary improvements or modifications may be removed at the discretion of the NATO Commander, and the infrastructure returned to as near its original condition as possible, fair wear and tear excepted.

23. Failing any prior settlement, disputes with the regard to the interpretation or application of this Appendix shall be settled between NATO and the appropriate authorities in the FRY.

24. Supplementary arrangements with any of the Parties may be concluded to facilitate any details connected with the Operation.

25. The provisions of this Appendix shall remain in force until completion of the Operation or as the Parties and NATO otherwise agree. ●

Humanitarian Intervention? Joschka Fischer Has Lied.

**Documents prove that the German Government
deceived parliament and the public.**

*[On 24 June the German left-wing daily, **Junge Welt**, published documents of the German foreign ministry and from various administrative courts during the winter/spring 1998/99 giving their view on the situation inside Kosovo. These documents were needed by the courts in determining the status of Kosovo refugees. The documents seem to show that, contrary to its public statements, the foreign ministry did not believe that ethnic cleansing was taking place in Kosovo. We reprint here the **Junge Welt** introduction to these documents from 24 April 1999. The translation is by **Gus Fagan**.*

*Following the introductory article, we print the excerpts from the various official documents as they were published in **Junge Welt**. The translation of these texts is by **Eric Canepa** and they were published in Znet at <http://www.zmag.org/ZNETTOPnoanimation.html>]*

The [German] federal government and especially the foreign minister Joschka Fischer have deceived the German parliament and the German people in a serious manner. Previously unpublished documents of the foreign office in Bonn prove that, in March 1999, there was no reason and no justification for Fischer's or Chancellor Schröder's "humanitarian intervention" of NATO against Yugoslavia. The Kosovo Albanians were not threatened with ethnic cleansing by the Serb-dominated Yugoslav state before the NATO bombing that began on 24 March. What is clear [in the documents] from the Fischer foreign ministry is that the measures of the Yugoslavian security forces were directed against the UCK [KLA] and "not against the Albanians as an ethnic group".

Excerpts from the official documents which prove this were obtained by the organisation ILANA (International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms) and given to the media. These are

internal documents from the [German] foreign ministry sent to various administrative and higher administrative courts in the winter/spring of 1998/99 and up until just before the beginning of the war in March 1999.

These official documents prove that it was the view of the German foreign ministry that, between November 1998 and March 1999, there was no fundamental change in the situation in Kosovo. In a “Situation Report” of 18 November 1998 it is stated that:

In Kosovo itself the difficult humanitarian situation has relaxed somewhat. The conditions for caring for those in need has improved... Fighting in Kosovo between both sides is carried out by military means, whereby the security forces on the Serb-Yugoslavian side use heavy weaponry in their capture of locations. With the re-entry of security forces into re-captured locations, there were attacks on the remaining inhabitants. The reports in the mass media on “massacres” and “mass graves” have caused a lot of anguish among the refugees, but international observers have been unable to confirm these accounts. (This “Situation Report” is numbered 514-516, 80/3 YUG.)

In an official report of 28 December 1998 to the Lower Saxony Administrative Court, the foreign ministry wrote:

According to the information of the foreign ministry the measures of the security forces are directed primarily at the UCK which uses terrorist means to fight for the independence of Kosovo



**Joschka Fischer
attacked with ink
at Greens Special
Conference in May**

and, according to statements from UCK official spokespersons, for the creation of a “Greater Albania”.

As late as 15 March 1999, nine days before the beginning of the NATO attack, the foreign office reported to the Administrative Court in Mainz:

As laid out in our Situation Report of 18 November 1998, the UCK has resumed its position following the partial withdrawal of (Serb) security forces in October 1998 so that it now again controls large areas in the conflict zone. Before the beginning of spring 1999 there were still clashes between the UCK and the security forces although these are by no means as intense as the battles of the spring and summer of 1998.

It is the view of the ILANA that the documents, as well as the massive increase in refugees after 24 March, prove that “the ‘humanitarian catastrophe’ for the people in Kosovo and in the neighbouring states began following the start of the NATO air attacks”.

Documents from the German Foreign Ministry on Kosovo 1998/99

I: Intelligence report from the Foreign Office January 6, 1999 to the Bavarian Administrative Court, Ansbach:

“At this time, an increasing tendency is observable inside the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of refugees returning to their dwellings. ... Regardless of the desolate economic situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (according to official information of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 700,000 refugees from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina have found lodging since 1991), no cases of chronic malnutrition or insufficient medical treatment among the refugees are known and significant homelessness has not been observed. ... According to the Foreign Office’s assessment, individual Kosovo-Albanians (and their immediate families) still have limited possibilities of settling in those

parts of Yugoslavia in which their countrymen or friends already live and who are ready to take them in and support them.”

II. Intelligence report from the Foreign Office, January 12, 1999 to the Administrative Court of Trier (Az: 514-516.80/32 426):

“Even in Kosovo an explicit political persecution linked to Albanian ethnicity is not verifiable. The East of Kosovo is still not involved in armed conflict. Public life in cities like Pristina, Urosevac, Gnjilan, etc. has, in the entire conflict period, continued on a relatively normal basis.” The “actions of the security forces (were) not directed against the Kosovo-Albanians as an ethnically defined group, but against the military opponent and its actual or alleged supporters.”

III. Report of the Foreign Office March 15, 1999 (Az: 514-516,80/33841) to the Administrative Court, Mainz:

“As laid out in the status report of November 18, 1998, the KLA has resumed its positions after the partial withdrawal of the (Serbian) security forces in October 1998, so it once again controls broad areas in the zone of conflict. Before the beginning of spring 1999 there were still clashes between the KLA and security forces, although these have not until now reached the intensity of the battles of spring and summer 1998.”

IV: Opinion of the Bavarian Administrative Court, October 29, 1998 (Az: 22 BA 94.34252):

“The Foreign Office’s status reports of May 6, June 8 and July 13, 1998, given to the plaintiffs in the summons to a verbal deliberation, do not allow the conclusion that there is group persecution of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo. Not even regional group persecution, applied to all ethnic Albanians from a specific part of Kosovo, can be observed with sufficient certainty. The violent actions of the Yugoslav military and police since February 1998 were aimed at separatist activities and are no proof of a persecution of the whole Albanian ethnic group in Kosovo or in a part of it. What was involved in the Yugoslav violent

actions and excesses since February 1998 was a selective forcible action against the military underground movement (especially the KLA) and people in immediate contact with it in its areas of operation. ...A state program or persecution aimed at the whole ethnic group of Albanians exists neither now nor earlier.”

V. Opinion of the Administrative Court of Baden-Württemberg, February 4, 1999 (Az: A 14 S 22276/98):

“The various reports presented to the senate all agree that the often feared humanitarian catastrophe threatening the Albanian civil population has been averted. ... This appears to be the case since the winding down of combat in connection with an agreement made with the Serbian leadership at the end of 1998 (Status Report of the Foreign Office, November 18, 1998). Since that time both the security situation and the conditions of life of the Albanian-derived population have noticeably improved. ... Specifically in the larger cities public life has since returned to relative normality (cf. on this Foreign Office, January 12, 1999 to the Administrative Court of Trier; December 28, 1998 to the Upper Administrative Court of Lüneberg and December 23, 1998 to the Administrative Court at Kassel), even though tensions between the population groups have meanwhile increased due to individual acts of violence... Single instances of excessive acts of violence against the civil population, e.g. in Racak, have, in world opinion, been laid at the feet of the Serbian side and have aroused great indignation. But the number and frequency of such excesses do not warrant the conclusion that every Albanian living in Kosovo is exposed to extreme danger to life and limb nor is everyone who returns there threatened with death and severe injury.”

VI: Opinion of the Upper Administrative Court at Münster, February 24, 1999 (Az: 14 A 3840/94,A):

“There is no sufficient actual proof of a secret program, or an unspoken consensus on the Serbian side, to liquidate the Albanian people, to drive it out or otherwise to persecute it in the extreme manner presently described. ... If Serbian state power carries out its laws and in so doing

necessarily puts pressure on an Albanian ethnic group which turns its back on the state and is for supporting a boycott, then the objective direction of these measures is not that of a programmatic persecution of this population group ...Even if the Serbian state were benevolently to accept or even to intend that a part of the citizenry which sees itself in a hopeless situation or opposes compulsory measures, should emigrate, this still does not represent a program of persecution aimed at the whole of the Albanian majority (in Kosovo).”

“If moreover the (Yugoslav) state reacts to separatist strivings with consistent and harsh execution of its laws and with anti-separatist measures, and if some of those involved decide to go abroad as a result, this is still not a deliberate policy of the (Yugoslav) state aiming at ostracizing and expelling the minority; on the contrary it is directed toward keeping this people within the state federation.”

“Events since February and March 1998 do not evidence a persecution program based on Albanian ethnicity. The measures taken by the armed Serbian forces are in the first instance directed toward combatting the KLA and its supposed adherents and supporters.”

VII: Opinion of the Upper Administrative Court at Münster, March 11, 1999 (Az: 13A 3894/94.A):

“Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo have neither been nor are now exposed to regional or countrywide group persecution in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.” (Thesis 1)

