

# Minority Rights in Yugoslavia

AN MRC INTERNATIONAL REPORT • MINORITY RIGHTS IN YUGOSLAVIA



## MINORITY RIGHTS IN YUGOSLAVIA

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## MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP INTERNATIONAL

MRG works to secure rights and justice for ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. It is dedicated to the cause of cooperation and understanding between communities.

Founded in the 1960s, MRG is a small international non-governmental organization that informs and warns governments, the international community, non-governmental organizations and the wider public about the situation of minorities around the world. This work is based on the publication of well-researched Reports, Books and Papers; direct advocacy on behalf of minority rights in international fora; the development of a global network of like-minded organizations and minority communities to collaborate on these issues; and **the challenging of prejudice and promotion of public understanding** through information and education projects.

MRG believes that the best hope for a peaceful world lies in **identifying and monitoring conflict** between communities, **advocating preventive measures** to avoid the escalation

of conflict and **encouraging positive action** to build trust between majority and minority communities.

MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and has a worldwide network of partners. Its international headquarters are in London. Legally it is registered both as a charity and as a limited company under English law with an International Governing Council.

## THE PROCESS

As part of its methodology, MRG conducts regional research, identifies issues and commissions Reports based on its findings. Each author is carefully chosen and all scripts are read by no less than eight independent experts who are knowledgeable about the subject matter. These experts are drawn from the minorities about whom the Reports are written, and from journalists, academics, researchers and other human rights agencies. Authors are asked to incorporate comments made by these parties. In this way, MRG aims to publish accurate, authoritative, well-balanced Reports.

*Train from Pec to  
Pristina which Serb  
police regularly board.  
The police often  
intimidate Albanian  
passengers or  
confiscate their market  
purchases.*

MELANIE FRIEND

# Minority Rights in Yugoslavia

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## **Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities**

(Adopted by General Assembly Resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992)

### **Article 1**

1. States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.
2. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.

### **Article 2**

1. Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.
2. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.
3. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation.
4. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain their own associations.
5. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group and with persons belonging to other minorities, as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

### **Article 3**

1. Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights, including those set forth in the present Declaration, individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination.
2. No disadvantage shall result for any person belonging to a minority as the consequence of the exercise or non-exercise of the rights set forth in the present Declaration.

### **Article 4**

1. States shall take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.
2. States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards.
3. States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.
4. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.
5. States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country.

### **Article 5**

1. National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

2. Programmes of cooperation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

### **Article 6**

States should cooperate on questions relating to persons belonging to minorities, inter alia, exchanging information and experiences, in order to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

### **Article 7**

States should cooperate in order to promote respect for the rights set forth in the present Declaration.

### **Article 8**

1. Nothing in the present Declaration shall prevent the fulfilment of international obligations of States in relation to persons belonging to minorities. In particular, States shall fulfil in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties.
2. The exercise of the rights set forth in the present Declaration shall not prejudice the enjoyment by all persons of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.
3. Measures taken by States to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights set forth in the present Declaration shall not prima facie be considered contrary to the principle of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4. Nothing in the present Declaration may be construed as permitting any activity contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

### **Article 9**

The specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles set forth in the present Declaration, within their respective fields of competence.

## **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948**

### **Article 1**

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

### **Article 4**

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

## **Geneva Conventions 1949 (Humanitarian Law)**

### **Article 3 (Common to all four Geneva Conventions)**

In the case of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the High Contracting Parties, each Party to the conflict shall be bound to apply, as a minimum, the following provisions:

1. Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.

To this end, the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:

- a) Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture.
- b) Taking of hostages.
- c) Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.
- d) The passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples.

# Preface

**M**inority Rights Group International (MRG) publishes this Report at a time when the future of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) is uncertain, further internal political conflicts could develop and inter-communal tensions remain dangerously high. These are circumstances that have been exploited time and time again by President Milosevic.

The Report is also written at a time when the new regional stability pact for South-East Europe has, amazingly, given only tokenistic attention to minority rights, civil society and inter-ethnic cooperation. History has shown that these are central issues for stability in the region; they are not peripheral issues.

The 1999 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention in Kosovo/a was controversial; some human rights organizations argued that much earlier intervention should have been taken. Others argued that it was wrong for NATO to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. MRG had pressed for earlier action by the international community to prevent escalating violence. This call emerged from a conference that MRG co-sponsored in the European Parliament in February 1993. Even then the evidence showed that since the rescinding of the autonomy arrangement in Kosovo/a in 1988, minority rights abuses had grown relentlessly and peaceful protests had had no positive effects. Indeed since then, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) consistently argued that much more should be done by the international community to reinforce civil society and democratic focal points in Yugoslavia. They criticized the reliance on external political and military pressure on President Milosevic.

The issues here have taken on major importance in the United Nations (UN) and the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, stated at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in April 1999:

*'No government has the right to hide behind national sovereignty in order to violate the human rights or fundamental freedoms of its peoples. Whether a person belongs to the minority or the majority, that person's human rights and fundamental freedoms are sacred.'*

However, as Kosovo/a fades from the headlines there is a real danger that the situation of vulnerable minorities in Yugoslavia will be neglected and inter-communal tensions will be exploited. The risk of future conflict remains, even after the most recent atrocities in Kosovo/a. There is growing militarization in the Sandzak, increasing disquiet in Vojvodina, sporadic violence continues in Kosovo/a, while Montenegro seems set on a path towards independence.

It is for these reasons that MRG has worked quickly to commission, research and publish this new Report, *Minority Rights in Yugoslavia*.

This Report has also been called for by our partner

organizations in the region. It is hoped that this Report will be of use to all those who are working to develop the civil space, to open dialogue between ethnic groups, to promote human rights and to promote peace in Yugoslavia. MRG hopes that this Report can provide some of the much-needed information to counter the disinformation or lack of information on the horrors of Kosovo/a and of the worrying levels of ethnic tension which exist in many parts of Yugoslavia. In a climate of fear and distrust, our aim is to support those who are working to promote inter-community cooperation with a rights-based approach.

*Minority Rights in Yugoslavia* has been researched and written by Jan Briza, a human rights specialist and journalist, and member of the Serbian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Yugoslavia. MRG has taken the decision to publish on this issue quickly. It has therefore not been possible to give every subject area the fullest attention in this Report. Some readers will, no doubt, find a relative absence of information on the most recent population movements, on internally displaced people and refugees, for example. Given the difficulty of conducting research on minority rights issues at the present time, where access to information is a serious concern in the region, we have decided to publish this Report acknowledging some of the gaps in its coverage. This Report acts as an early warning to the international community and provides information on what has happened and, indeed, what could happen again.

While this Report is forward-looking, *Minority Rights in Yugoslavia* contains a balanced and accessible account of the region's history, for herein lies the key to understanding today's tensions and most recent conflicts. The Report stresses that Yugoslavia from its creation has always been a multicultural entity – indeed it is one of the most diverse regions within Europe in terms of religion and ethnicity – and the author examines this diversity as a positive force within Serbia and Montenegro. The author goes on to give an informed and considered analysis of the possible outcomes of existing tensions in particular regions – in Kosovo/a, Sandzak and Vojvodina in particular – and also of the tense relationship between Serbia and Montenegro, the two Republics of current-day Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the author discusses the minority rights situation in general and focuses on several vulnerable groups in particular – the Bosniaks (Muslims), Roma (Gypsies) and Vlachs.

The Report concludes with a short collection of recommendations aimed at both the FRY and the international community. These call for the promotion and protection of the rights of all the minorities of Yugoslavia; for an end to the violence and the reprisals, the fear and the hatreds; and call for a new beginning for all the peoples of the region.

**Alan Phillips**  
Director  
December 1999

# The land and its peoples

## Introduction

**T**he territory of the former Yugoslavia has been the scene of three of the bloodiest armed conflicts in Europe since the Second World War. In brutal engagements and ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo/a,<sup>1</sup> about a quarter of a million people were killed, twice as many injured and at least 3 million people were forced to leave their homes.<sup>2</sup>

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe have been undergoing a systematic transformation. The aim was to consolidate democracy and to build market-based economies. This has had varied degrees of success. The collapse of the old system has also led to a rise in nationalisms. Now the international community appears to have decided to dismantle the Balkan ‘powder keg’, whose explosion in 1914 in Sarajevo provoked the First World War. However, in 1999 the crisis in Yugoslavia escalated to such an extent that peace and stability has been jeopardized throughout Europe and beyond.

The NATO military intervention in the Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic’s, regime was the first step towards a dismantling of the ‘powder keg’. The second, much subtler, step is a Stability pact for South-Eastern Europe, called a ‘mini Marshall Plan for the Balkans’ by many. Its purpose is to encourage the political and economic development of the region, and to prepare for its integration with the rest of Europe, thereby eliminating, or at least neutralizing, some of the fundamental reasons which have generated the permanent crisis in the Balkans – as one of the least developed parts of Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The focus of this Report is on minority rights in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The Report examines the relations and interactions between different ethnic and confessional communities in a highly diversified society in which the oppression of minorities by the majority, or by the government, is commonplace.

Of all the national minorities in Yugoslavia, the attention of the international community has been drawn to the atrocities committed against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo/a. This Report will also give consideration to other minority rights questions, those concerning, for example, some of the most vulnerable but rarely examined groups such as the Roma (Gypsies), Bosniaks (Muslims) and Vlachs.

To understand minority rights issues in Yugoslavia, it is essential to understand Yugoslavia’s historical, political and social context. While there have been numerous civil wars between different ethnic communities, the history of the Balkans is not just one of violent conflicts; it is also a history of peaceful coexistence of majority and minority ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. This Report examines both sides of the Balkan ethnic reality.

This Report focuses primarily on Serbia and the position facing minorities in the republic, while also dis-

ussing the position within Montenegro and its relationship with Serbia inside the FRY. In addition, the key regions of Sandzak and Vojvodina are analysed, given the potential for future conflict and human rights violations within the region.

## The FRY

**T**he Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), consisting of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro, was proclaimed by the FRY Constitution on 27 April 1992, after the collapse of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).<sup>4</sup> However, the new Yugoslav federation has not been formally recognized as the continuation of the SFRY by the international community. It believes that the SFRY has dissolved and that none of the successor republics represents its continuation.

The FRY Constitution is the supreme law of the land and it takes precedence over the Constitutions of Serbia and Montenegro. It sets minimum domestic standards for human rights. The FRY is bound by all of the international human rights treaties ratified by the SFRY. Indeed, Article 16 of the FRY Constitution specifies that international treaties take precedence over domestic laws.

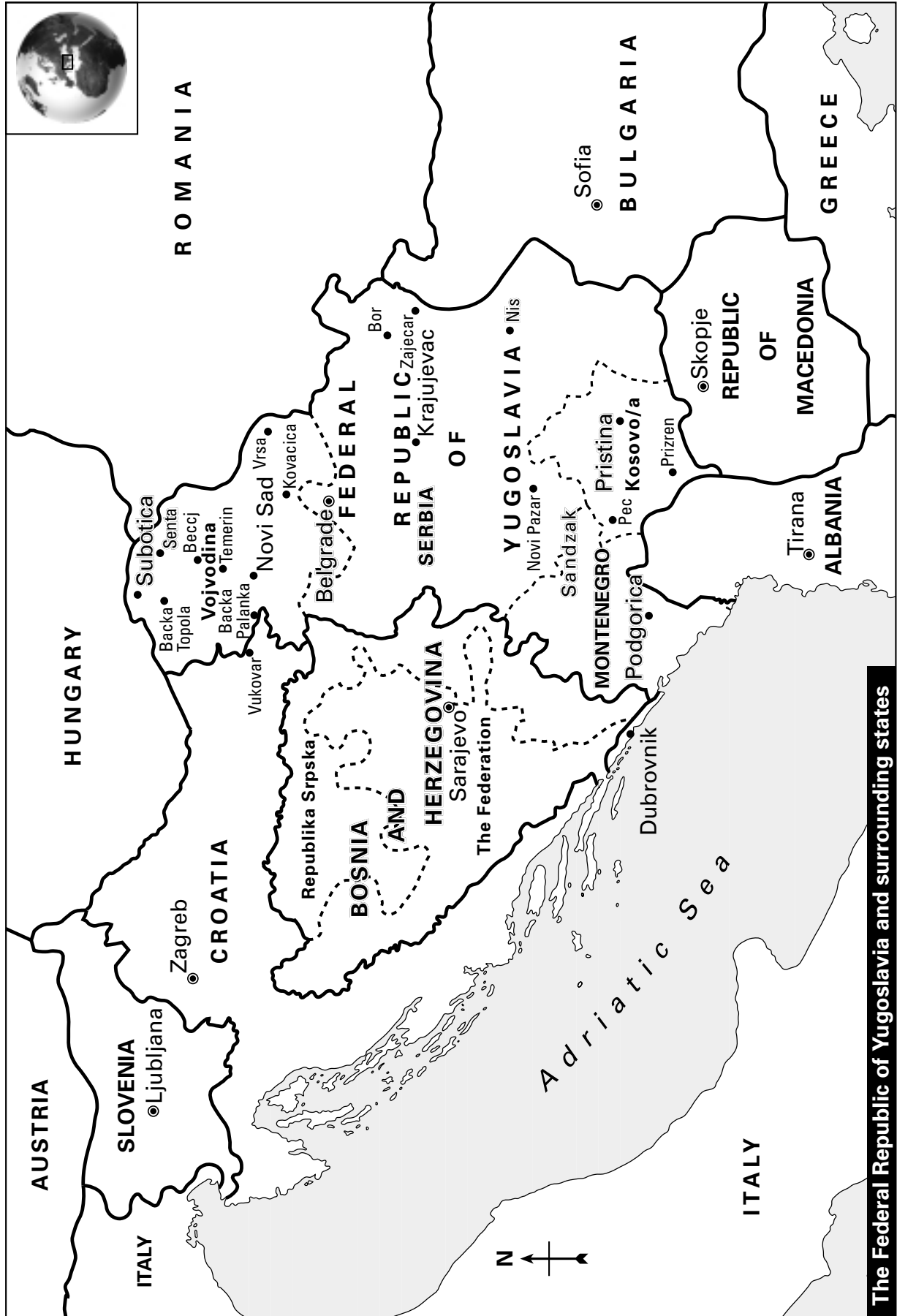
The FRY is located in South-Eastern Europe and covers 102,350 sq. km (Serbia is 88,412 sq. km and Montenegro 13,938 sq. km). It is bordered by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia and Romania. According to the 1991 census<sup>5</sup> the population is 10,394,026 (Serbia 9,778,991; Montenegro 615,035). However, many thousands have since been killed or displaced.

Administratively, Yugoslavia is divided into two republics (Serbia [capital and national capital, Belgrade] and Montenegro [capital Podgorica]) with two nominally autonomous provinces – Kosovo/a and Vojvodina (both in Serbia).

Slobodan Milosevic is the Head of State (since 23 July 1997); Milan Milutinovic is the President of Serbia (since 21 December 1997) and Milo Djukanovic is the President of Montenegro (since 21 December 1997).<sup>6</sup>

The legislature is a bicameral Federal Assembly which consists of the Chamber of Republics (40 seats – 20 Serbian and 20 Montenegrin) and the Chamber of Citizens (138 seats – 108 Serbian and 30 Montenegrin). The Chamber of Republics last met on 24 December 1996 and is due to meet in 2000. The Chamber of Citizens last met on 3 November 1996 and is also due to meet in 2000.<sup>7</sup>

The swift collapse of the SFRY in 1991 was followed by civil war and the breakup of important inter-republic economic cooperation and trade. Economic output in Serbia and Montenegro dropped by half in 1992–3. UN sanctions and hyperinflation in 1993 helped to destroy the Yugoslav economy and led to a new currency unit in June of the same year. The last and the most destructive strike



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on the Yugoslav economy was the NATO military intervention in 1999. The unemployment rate in Serbia after the NATO bombing is more than 50 per cent. The average monthly salary in Serbia is under US \$50. In 1995 GDP was estimated to be US \$2,000 per person.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the social welfare system has been severely disrupted: benefits have been cut and payments are irregular.

## Multinational, multiconfessional and multicultural community

The FRY is a multinational, multiconfessional and multicultural community of peoples. According to the 1991 census, in addition to Serbs and Montenegrins, some 16 minority communities represent 33.7 per cent of the population.<sup>9</sup> According to the same census, the Republic of Serbia has 9,778,991 inhabitants of whom Serbs account for 65.92 per cent, Montenegrins are 1.42 per cent of the population and the rest are members of ethnic minorities. The Republic of Montenegro has 615,035 inhabitants of whom 61.86 per cent are Montenegrins, 9.34 per cent Serbs and the rest are members of ethnic minorities.

Albanians are the most numerous ethnic minority in Serbia. According to the 1991 census they make up 17.12 per cent of the population. (It is important to note that ethnic Albanians boycotted the 1991 census, so this figure is an estimate.) Hungarians account for 3.52 per cent of the population, Yugoslavs for 3.31 per cent, Muslims for 2.52 per cent, Roma for 1.43 per cent and Croats for 1.08 per cent; while Bulgarians, Czechs, Germans, Jews, Macedonians, Romanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Slovenians, Turks, Ukrainians, Vlachs and others each account for less than 1 per cent of the population. These ethnic minorities tend to live as a group in the same area. Several of the larger minorities constitute a majority population in those areas. For example, Serbs are the most numerous ethnic group in Serbia, but they constitute a minority in Kosovo/a and in some municipalities of north Vojvodina and Sandzak. The political situation is made more complex by the fact that some national minorities – for example, Albanians, Bulgarians, Croats, Hungarians and Romanians – are frequently concentrated close to the border areas of their ‘kin states’, whereas the Roma, for example, are dispersed throughout the FRY.

An analysis of censuses indicates that the number and percentage share of most minorities in the overall population of Serbia has declined, with the exception of Albanians, Macedonians, Roma and Yugoslavs.<sup>10</sup> The various minorities’ situations will be discussed in detail later in this Report.

The war in the territories of the former Yugoslavia has had a drastic impact on the number of inhabitants in the FRY and its ethnic structure. This is especially true of Kosovo/a, Sandzak and Vojvodina. The most dramatic changes took place in Kosovo/a, where casualties among the population caused by inter-ethnic conflicts, ‘ethnic cleansing’ and forced migrations reached disastrous pro-

portions. As this Report discusses, the casualties first occurred among the ethnic Albanian population and afterwards among the Montenegrins, the Roma and the Serbs.

The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and the war in its former republics have greatly reduced the political, economic, social and psychological space for meeting the needs of national minorities. The weakening of the federal power and the strengthening of Serbia’s nationalistic and centralist faction in the political leadership have further reduced that space.

## Religion

In official statistics it is difficult to determine the percentage of the population belonging to different religions, or those who are atheists. Censuses, birth registers, etc., whether in Tito’s Yugoslavia or today, have not usually asked for data regarding religious affiliation. According to earlier censuses, as well as recent research by ethnologists and sociologists, there appears to be a congruence between national and religious affiliation. However, there is also a strong diversity of thought within various minority groups and within the majority population.

Serbs and Montenegrins are usually members of the Christian Orthodox denomination. Most Kosovo/a Albanians, as well as those living in Montenegro, follow Islam. A small number of ethnic Albanians are Roman Catholics, fewer still are Orthodox.

Regarding the Muslims, there is a curious trait in the usage of this term in Yugoslavia. The word ‘Muslim’ may denote a follower of Islam, regardless of their ethnic background, but also a member of an ‘ethnic’ group – Muslims – regardless of their religious affiliation. The Muslims in the region of present-day Yugoslavia appeared after the Turkish conquest of the Balkans and ruled the region for almost 500 years. They belong to various Balkan peoples that converted to Islam. In the course of time, alongside their religious awareness, some developed a national awareness and began to consider themselves to be an ethnic and cultural entity. In Tito’s Yugoslavia, by constitutional changes in 1968, such Muslims were given the opportunity to declare themselves to be members of a nation. Previously they had declared themselves to be members of other ethnic groups. With these changes Tito had hoped to neutralize ethnic and religious tensions, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina,<sup>11</sup> where there was traditional rivalry between Serbs and Croats. In today’s Yugoslavia the greatest concentration of Muslims as an ethnic group is in Sandzak.

Croats generally follow Roman Catholicism, just as the Serbs are Orthodox. The Hungarians of Vojvodina are mainly Roman Catholics and a minority of them are Protestants. The Slovaks of Vojvodina are mainly Protestants, while the Bulgarians, the Romanians and the Vlachs are Orthodox. The Ruthenians belong to the Uniate Church (Greek Catholic). The Roma are usually either Orthodox or Muslims. Roma’s religious affiliation is almost always congruous with the Orthodox or Muslim surroundings in which they live. There is a tiny Jewish community in Yugoslavia. There are also small religious communities or sects which are mostly in Belgrade and Vojvodina.



# Historical background

The tragedy of ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Kosovo/a and in the other territories of war-torn former Yugoslavia has been mirrored throughout the history of the Balkans and in the wider European region, to include ethnic intolerance, bloody conflicts and mass migration of peoples. The massive population movements have been a recurring factor for a variety of reasons, including competition over territory, regime consolidation and economic migration. A brief look at the history of the Balkans and the former Yugoslavia may show the genesis of the current ethnic conflicts in the region, particularly in Kosovo/a.

## The first Yugoslavia

The first Yugoslavia (1918–41), as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, was created after the First World War following the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The new state, proclaimed on 1 December 1918, comprised of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. The Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Montenegro had existed as independent states before their unification into this first Yugoslavia. After their liberation from the Ottoman Empire they were recognized as independent states at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Vojvodina were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the First World War. Kosovo/a and Metohija<sup>12</sup> and Macedonia belonged to the Ottoman Empire until the Balkan Wars (1912–13), after which they were annexed to the Kingdom of Serbia.<sup>13</sup>

The countries that joined the first Yugoslavia in 1918 had different historical, political, social and economic levels of development. Croatia, Slovenia and Vojvodina were the most developed parts of the new state, whereas Kosovo/a (including Metohija), Macedonia and Sandzak were the least developed, and retained characteristics of the Turkish feudal system until the mid-twentieth century. Neither the first Yugoslavia nor its successors managed to create a political model that could reconcile such different historical legacies and safeguard the basic preconditions for the survival of the multiethnic and multiconfessional peoples of Yugoslavia.

The first Yugoslavia was ruled by Alexander Karadjordjevic. The Serbian King and the state met with resistance from Croatia and Montenegro from the beginning. The supporters of the overthrown dynasty of Petrovic in Montenegro could not accept the loss of the Montenegrin statehood and its amalgamation into Yugoslavia. The Croats felt the new state to be a ‘Greater Serbia’ in which they did not feel they were treated as equal citizens.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, Serbs in Vojvodina raised their voices against the regime in Belgrade.<sup>15</sup> It should be borne in mind that

many Serbs had fought for their ‘ethnic kin’ outside of Serbia and had lost their lives. The seeds of mistrust had been sown with the growth of Croat and Serb nationalism and enmity between Serbs and Croats.

Immediately upon the creation of the first Yugoslavia there was fierce ethnic competition in occupying the key official positions in the state apparatus, in the multiethnic army and education system, as well as in the state-controlled services, such as the railways and the postal system. The Serbs quickly came to hold the most prestigious positions in the state hierarchy and to control the economy.

The culmination of ethnic tensions between the two major ethnic groups in the Kingdom – the Serbs and the Croats – was reached in the summer of 1928, when a Serb MP, Punisa Racic, assassinated the most influential Croatian politician, Stjepan Radic, his brother Pavao and the MP Djuro Basaricek. King Alexander’s response to this crisis was to introduce his dictatorship.<sup>16</sup> In such a state not even the Serbs were free citizens, not to mention the Croats, Slovenes and other ethnic groups. The King was assassinated in 1934. The assassination was planned by Croatian nationalists, and the executor was a Macedonian nationalist.<sup>17</sup>

The first Yugoslavia collapsed during the Second World War in 1941. Its territory was unravelled and divided among the Axis members and the Allies. In the independent state of Croatia, which was proclaimed with Berlin’s blessing and included a large part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jews, Roma and Serbs were systematically killed and displaced. According to Serbian sources, the Ustashi (fascistic) regime of Ante Pavelic liquidated over 700,000 Jews, Roma and Serbs in the concentration camp of Jasenovac. Croatian sources tend to reduce this figure to several tens of thousands of victims. No one, however, can deny that Jasenovac was the largest concentration camp in this part of Europe and that systematic genocide against the above-mentioned ethnic groups took place there.<sup>18</sup>

Jews, Montenegrins, Roma and Serbs were exposed to violence and genocide in Serbia and Montenegro as well. They were not only persecuted by German and Italian fascists, but also by Hungarian fascists in Backa, Bulgarian fascists in eastern Serbia and Macedonia, as well as by extremist Albanian nationalists in Kosovo/a.

## Tito

After the Second World War the Communist leader, Tito, who had come to power in Yugoslavia, was determined to restore the country. He attempted to placate ethnic tensions with a complex ethnic-polycentric state structure based on national and historical ethnic group characteristics. The government existed in Belgrade, but also in Ljubljana, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skopje and Zagreb. Vojvodina and Kosovo/a also had high levels of autonomy.

Tito understood the dangers of nationalism and chauvinism, which he persistently suppressed by the means of his one-party state. Under Tito a policy of 'full ethnic equality' was proclaimed and quite successfully implemented. Some political and cultural rights of ethnic minorities (especially in the field of education, the media, the official usage of languages and alphabets in the administration and the judicial system, as well as the equal participation of ethnic minorities in public services and political institutions) were well respected, especially in Kosovo/a and Vojvodina.

## The rise of Milosevic

However, Tito's state was neither democratic nor ruled by law. As soon as Tito died in 1980 the ruling Communists grouped themselves into national camps and Yugoslavia began to disintegrate. Serbian Communists led by Milosevic quickly replaced the Communist ideology with Greater Serbian nationalism. Unlike in the Czech Republic, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland, no social and intellectual elite emerged that could represent the ideas and values of a state ruled by law, a market economy, individualism, democracy and human rights.

Thus, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Serbia and Montenegro responded to the challenges of democratic transition by returning to the past and reinstating the policy which had led to the collapse of the first Yugoslavia. This opened the path for the disintegration of SFRY and the brutal civil war.

The resistance which arose towards the creation of a unitary and ethnocentric state – Greater Serbia – was characterized by Milosevic and his supporters as an attempt to 'unravel Yugoslavia' and as a 'conspiracy against Serbia and the Serbian people'. Milosevic's propaganda machinery systematically created the feeling of there being an overall threat to the Serbian nation and to the people.<sup>19</sup> The 'enemy' and the 'conspirators' were everywhere. The media constantly repeated that the ethnic Albanians endangered the Serbs biologically and physically (due to their high birth-rate and the violence perpetrated against the Serbs in order to expel them from Kosovo/a). The Slovenes endangered the Serbs economically and politically (via commerce, exploitation and subversion). The Croats were said to simply hate the Serbs and were trying to exterminate them (by denying Serbs' rights in Croatia and through forced assimilation). The West, particularly the Germans, the North Americans and the Vatican, presented a cultural, political and religious threat. The conspiracy is, therefore, universal and overwhelming. And such a conspiracy should be confronted by all available means.<sup>20</sup>

Once this propaganda had started, it was only a matter of time before the verbal war would turn into a physical war and the 'protection' of the 'endangered' Serbian people would be guaranteed through the building of a national state – or Greater Serbia. In this Milosevic had the support of the nationalists among the Serbian intelligentsia and one faction in the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The conflict in Slovenia in June 1991 (between the federal Yugoslav army, Slovenian police and Slovenian nationalists) was of low intensity. There were no dis-

putable territories there. The conflicts in Croatia (1 May 1991 – 4 August 1995), Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 April 1992 – 21 November 1995) and Kosovo/a (beginning in early 1998) were fierce and bloody, with battling over territories and 'ethnic cleansing'. There were victims on all sides. In Croatia several tens of thousands of people were killed, in Bosnia and Herzegovina almost 250,000 were killed and while no one yet knows the real costs of the conflict in Kosovo/a, nearly 1 million were estimated by the UN to have fled their homes. During the NATO campaign c. 10,000 Kosovo/a Albanians are estimated to have been killed. From figures recently made available for the last six months of 1999 (from 12 June to 4 December 1999) in Kosovo/a, 414 people were killed: 150 Albanians, 140 Serbs and 124 'others' (non-Albanians). During the same period, 153 people were kidnapped: 83 Albanians, 43 Serbs and 27 'others'. In addition, 50,000 houses were destroyed and 60,000 damaged in Kosovo/a.<sup>21</sup> (See also the Kosovo/a section of this Report.)

# Minority rights – *de jure* and *de facto*

**T**he status of national minorities in FRY is regulated under one federal and two republican Constitutions, and the statute of two nominally autonomous provinces in Serbia (Kosovo/a and Vojvodina). In addition to these documents, some of these rights are regulated by laws and other statutes. The status of minorities is essentially regulated through freedoms and rights of the individual members of minorities; the status of minorities as collective bodies is generally not recognized. The federal and republican Constitutions' regulations on the status of national minorities have not been harmonized. FRY is bound by international treaties including the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

## The Serbia case

**T**he implementation of human rights varies throughout Serbia. For example, in Vojvodina ethnic minorities generally enjoy both *de jure* and *de facto* the greatest collective rights in Serbia. There are still discrepancies, however, between what is proclaimed by the Constitution and the law, but these are generally less problematic in Vojvodina than in other parts of Serbia.

### Education

**M**embers of ethnic minorities in Serbia are entitled to education in their first or own language from primary school to university level. This right is guaranteed by all three Constitutions.

During the academic year 1990–1 the Serbian government adopted various decrees and acts to implement a uniform educational programme and curriculum throughout the Republic of Serbia. As a result, a number of educational facilities and institutes in Kosovo/a were closed. More than 18,000 teachers and other staff of Albanian-language classroom facilities in schools and university departments were summarily dismissed when they rejected the textbook of the new uniform curriculum. Kosovo/a Albanians responded by opening schools in their homes. This marked the beginning of the development of a wide parallel school network by the ethnic Albanians.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast, primary and secondary schools in Vojvodina offer instruction in Serbian (which is the language of the majority population) and in four minority languages: Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian. Since 1998 some

primary schools in Vojvodina have voluntarily introduced instruction in the Roma language. There are no primary or secondary schools in central Serbia which teach in minority languages.

### Official use of the language and alphabet

**T**he official usage of languages and alphabets is regulated by the Constitutions of the federation and republics, and various laws and statutes. Official usage of the languages and alphabets of ethnic minorities is allowed in the regions inhabited by them, however this is not always adhered to in practice.

In Article 10, point 4 of the Statute of Vojvodina, for example, it is stated that apart from the Serbian language and alphabet, official usage in the province should include the Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian languages and alphabets, as well as the languages and alphabets of other ethnic minorities as prescribed by the law. However, the Law on the Official Usage of Languages and Alphabets leaves municipalities to determine which minority languages are in usage in their area. Out of the 45 municipalities of Vojvodina, only 35 have the official usage of minority languages and alphabets of ethnic minorities regulated by their statutes. Therefore municipalities have a lot of independence and freedom of decision on these issues. For example, the Ruthenian language is in official usage in Novi Sad although the Ruthenians make up less than 1 per cent of the municipality's population. In the municipality of Temerin, where ethnic Hungarians make up almost half of the population, while the Hungarian language is formally in official usage, the local authority, consisting of extremist Serbian nationalists, is trying to suppress it wherever possible.<sup>23</sup>

The situation is worse still in central Serbia, for example, for ethnic Bulgarians in municipalities such as Babusnica, Bosilegrad, Dimitrovgrad, Pirot and Surdulica.

### Media

**U**nder the media law of the Republic of Serbia and the Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the Assembly of Vojvodina is obliged to provide media in Hungarian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serbian and Slovak. In accordance with this, the Assembly of Vojvodina has founded news publications in these languages. The publications are subsidized by the provincial budget yet they are under the total control of the ruling party of the Assembly of Vojvodina.

According to the media law in Serbia, all radio broadcasting which is significant to the Republic is operated by

the organization Radio-Television of Serbia, which is under the total control of the regime. Serbia has a strict Public Information Act (1998) which limits the freedom of expression in order to protect Serbia's 'national interests'. There are independent local radio and TV stations, but the licensing of radio frequencies and TV channels is under the total control of the regime in Belgrade.

Until 1989, those media publishing or broadcasting in minority languages had enjoyed strong political and financial state support, in compliance with the 1974 Constitution of the SFRY. (This had enabled the local authorities in the two autonomous provinces [Kosovo/a and Vojvodina] to draw up a series of collective rights intended for minorities, including the right to information in their respective first languages.) After 1989, when the 1974 Constitution was suspended and Serbia centralized (and the autonomies of Kosovo/a and Vojvodina were stripped down to a form which was void of political and economic content), minority media lost its state backing. Journalists and other professional staff were reduced on political grounds and through emigration during the wars on the territories of the former Yugoslavia.

The cooperation between the Serbian-language media and that of the national minorities has all but died out. In keeping with the new policy of the state, the minority media often turned to reporting on cultural events only.<sup>24</sup> In Vojvodina, the notion of 'intertwining cultures', which had been fostered for centuries, began to fade. In general, neither the media nor the wider public have a good knowledge of the cultures of 'others': the state-controlled media has also frequently used hate speech to incite hatred of 'others'. The media has changed and so has the educational policy.

## Religious rights

In Yugoslavia the church is separated from the state. Its legislation classifies religious rights among human rights. Positive norms from Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 20 of the ICCPR have been incorporated both in the federal and the republican legal systems. These documents proclaim the freedom of religion and prohibit any dissemination of religious intolerance, discrimination or violence.

In Serbia a new republican law on religious communities is currently being promulgated. The new law is to regulate the activity and status of religious communities. At present there are no legal statutes in Serbia regarding the organization of religious communities; no state interference in the internal issues and activities of religious communities is allowed. The draft of the new law on religious communities has not yet been made available to the public. Speculation about its content ranges from statements that it is a progressive law to suspicions that it favours the Serbian Orthodox Church as a kind of a 'state church'.

The Serbian Orthodox Church started to actively participate in the political life of the country after the introduction of the multi-party system. Church leaders, nationalist-oriented political parties and intelligentsia, and Milosevic's regime played a very significant role in the strengthening of Serbian nationalism. The priests who took part in this also participated in carrying the remains

of King Lazar (the Serbian ruler who was killed in the battle of Kosovo/a) at the 600th anniversary of the battle in 1989 across the 'historical and ethnic territories of the Serbs' in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia. It was a way to mark the 'Serbian territories' outside Serbia, which were later the site of the brutal inter-ethnic war, accompanied by ethnic and religious 'cleansing'.<sup>25</sup>

The Serbian Orthodox Church is very active in Kosovo/a today. However, it has distanced itself from the regime of President Milosevic and accused him of the destruction of the Serbian state and of the loss of Kosovo/a. The Church now represents the main stronghold of the remaining Serbian population in Kosovo/a. It also has the respect of many ethnic Albanians whom it helped during the war.

The Serbian Orthodox Church actively follows and attempts to influence the relationships between Serbia and Montenegro. It participates in discussions on whether the Montenegrins are a nation in their own right and is strongly opposed to the autocephaly of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church.

## Employment

Despite the law regarding equality and employment, ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as the majority population. Various examples of sackings of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo/a and of other minorities in FRY are given in this Report, however, the case of senior official positions in the state administration is also instructive. Ethnic minorities are also discriminated against regarding the executive positions in state-owned companies. This has considerable consequences now, as state-owned companies are being privatized and executives have enormous economic advantages. Thus the Serbs and the Montenegrins, who are in the key posts of almost all the large state-owned companies in Vojvodina, for example, are profiting from the economic transition, while less senior staff, many of whom are minorities, are not.

In 1997 the main political party of Vojvodina Hungarians, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, carried out research into the number of national minorities in executive posts in education, the judiciary, the largest publicly-owned companies and the police in municipalities with a Hungarian majority.

This research<sup>26</sup> showed that in Subotica, for example, where ethnic Hungarians account for 42.5 per cent of the population, Serbs and Montenegrins for 16 per cent, Croats and Bunjevci<sup>27</sup> for 22.5 per cent and others for 19 per cent of the population, the situation is as follows.

The chief of the police is a Serb, and so are most police officers. The heads of all of the courts are Serbs, as are all the public prosecutors, with the exception of the Economic Court, which is headed by a Yugoslav. While members of national minorities account for more than 70 per cent of Subotica's population, national minorities make up less than 40 per cent of its judges.

Of 14 managers of the most important state-owned companies and banks in Subotica, only one is a Hungarian, five are Croats or Bunjevci, and nine are Serbs or Montenegrins. In 17 of 23 elementary schools in this municipality, the principals are Serbs or Montenegrins, four are Hungarians, and two are Croats or Bunjevci. In seven sec-

ondary schools, three have a Serb as their principal, three a Hungarian, and one has a Croat. This situation is mirrored throughout Vojvodina.

### Ethnic and religious tolerance

According to the 1991 census the percentage of ethnically mixed marriages in Yugoslavia was high, with almost one in three marriages in Bosnia and Herzegovina being ethnically mixed. The smallest practically negligible percentage of ethnically mixed marriages was recorded in Kosovo/a. This information can be interpreted in different ways; however the percentage of mixed marriages does mirror the degree of ethnic tolerance.

The media, particularly the media in Belgrade controlled by Milosevic's regime, played a major role in poisoning inter-ethnic relations and in preparation for the bloody inter-ethnic clashes in the region. Once the clashes in SFRY had started, there was a negative shift in ethnic tolerance and in peoples' belief in the use of democratic procedures to resolve conflicts.

In 1998, the independent research agency Scan, based in Novi Sad, conducted a public opinion poll in Yugoslavia (excluding Kosovo/a). Its representative sample included 2,200 adults in 90 settlements throughout Serbia and Montenegro. One of the poll's goals was to ascertain the attitude of Yugoslavia's population to the methods of resolving the Kosovo/a crisis.

The research results showed that 28.5 per cent of those interviewed thought that the problems in Kosovo/a should be resolved by peaceful means; 15.7 per cent answered that military force should be used. Some respondents said that 'the Albanians should be exterminated', 'crushed' or 'hit with an atomic bomb'; that 'all Albanians should be isolated', or that 'a camp should be set up for all national minorities'. If to this group we add the 17.4 per cent of respondents who believed that the problems in Kosovo/a could be solved by sending the ethnic Albanians into exile, the number of adherents to repressive methods reaches one third of all the interviewees, outnumbering those who favoured negotiations and compromise.<sup>28</sup>

A peaceful resolution of the Kosovo/a crisis was mostly advocated by the inhabitants of central Serbia and Vojvodina. The most radical in recommending the use of force were the inhabitants of Belgrade. The inhabitants of Montenegro and Vojvodina were the least enthusiastic about the use of military force. In that respect, the respondents from Belgrade were again the most vociferous.

Similar results were obtained by a research team headed by renowned Yugoslav psychologists, professors Miklos Biro and Dragan Popadic. Their poll was conducted on a sample of 400 people in Serbia (excluding Kosovo/a) in the middle of 1998.

The results of the Biro-Popadic poll showed the prevalence of nationalist and xenophobic attitudes in Serbia. For example, 34.8 per cent of those interviewed approved of the statement: 'We should tend, at any cost, to preserve the ethnic purity of every nationality.' Such ideas were rejected by 57.5 per cent. No less than 64.1 per cent of the respondents agreed with the more 'softly' formulated statement: 'One should always be cautious with other nationalities, even when they are friendly to us.' It was rejected by 31.8

per cent of the respondents. On Kosovo/a, 41.8 per cent of the survey found that the solution to the problem lay in ethnic Albanians enforced or 'peaceful' exile.

The Biro-Popadic poll also surveyed Serbia's inhabitants on their attitude towards other nationalities and ethnic minorities. The Serb respondents considered the Albanians to be 'dirty', 'uncivilized', 'stupid' and 'hostile to other peoples'. Negative remarks were also made about Muslims and Croats, while the most positive comments were saved for themselves. Second to the Serbs on this 'quality list' came the Hungarians, followed by the Macedonians and the Slovenes. It is striking to note that the Montenegrins came in fifth position only.

Biro and Popadic found that the most negative responses were made about those peoples against whom Serbia has had armed clashes and who are systematically satanized in the Milosevic regime-controlled media.

# Kosovo/a

According to the official census carried out in 1981<sup>29</sup> (the 1991 census was boycotted by the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo/a, Kosovo/a had 1,584,440 inhabitants of whom 1,226,736 were ethnic Albanians, i.e. 77.4 per cent of the population; 220,947 or 13.2 per cent were Serbs, while national minorities made up 10 per cent of the population. In addition, there were 58,562 Bosniaks, 34,126 Roma, 27,028 Montenegrins, 12,513 Turks and 8,718 Croats.

This data was not accepted by the representatives of the aforementioned peoples; all of them claimed that they had far larger populations. (It is interesting to note that the authorities often willingly accepted the figures put forward by the representatives of the minorities, as such claims led to the formal reduction of the percentage share of Albanians living in Kosovo/a.)

## Background

Kosovo/a has been inhabited by a mixed population for centuries. In the memory and historical awareness of the Serbian and Albanian people the region of Kosovo/a occupies a special place and significance. This is where the first Serbian state was founded, reaching its zenith in the fourteenth century during the reign of King Dusan, who subdued a large part of the Balkan peninsula. It is also where the medieval Serbian state collapsed. After the battle in the plain of Kosovo/a in 1389, where the Turkish army defeated the Serbian army and the Serbian Prince Lazar was killed, Serbia was under the domination of the Ottoman Empire for almost 500 years.

The Albanian settlement of Kosovo/a was a result of many economic, historical and political factors. The Turks encouraged Albanian settlement since most Albanians had adopted the Islamic faith. Kosovo/a is also where ethnic Albanians' sense of national consciousness emerged.

Kosovo/a has been a characteristic symbol of Serbian spirituality. The ancient seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church – the Patriarchate of Pec – is situated in Kosovo/a.

In Kosovo/a, large Serbian migrations started during the Turkish domination. The major migration took place in 1690 after the Serbian support of Austria's unsuccessful attempt to suppress the Turks from the region. About 37,000 Serbian families fled from Kosovo/a to southern Austria-Hungary under the Patriarch Carnojevic, as well as many Roman Catholic ethnic Albanians who had also supported the Austrians. The Serbs who left Kosovo/a at this time were among the most educated, the wealthiest and the best entrepreneurs. This was a serious blow to the Serbian national entity in the region. According to the historian Johann Mueller, quoted in the book *Great Albania*,<sup>30</sup> the Serbs made up the majority of the population in Kosovo/a until the mid-nineteenth century. He states that

in 1838 the Serbs were the majority population of Metohija (now in Kosovo/a). In Pec they made up 92.09 per cent of the population and 73.68 per cent in Prizren, while in Djakovica the Albanians and the Muslims were a majority of 80.76 per cent, with 18.05 per cent Serbs.

After the Balkan and the First World Wars, when Kosovo/a first became a part of Serbia and Montenegro, and then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Albanian population from the region was suppressed. Between the two World Wars, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia settled 10,877 Serbian families (or about 60,000 colonists) in Kosovo/a.<sup>31</sup> The land allotted to them was taken from Turkish feudal landowners, and 330 new settlements, 46 schools and 32 churches were built. This was land that the Albanians believed to be their own. During the Second World War, first under Italian occupation (1941–3) and then German occupation (1943–5), 10,000 Serbs and Montenegrins were killed in the region, while 70,000 were expelled to Montenegro.<sup>32</sup> The Albanian settlement of Kosovo/a continued.

After 1945, there were significant demographic changes in Kosovo/a due to the high birth-rate of the Albanians, combined with the emigration of Serbs and Montenegrins. The percentage of the Serbian and Montenegrin population in Kosovo/a was reduced from 47 per cent (171,911) in 1948 to 14.8 per cent (209,498) in 1981. At the same time, the percentage of Albanians rose from 51 per cent (498,242) in 1948 to 77 per cent (1,226,736) in 1981.

Between 1971 and 1981 over 30,000 Serbs and Montenegrins left Kosovo/a because of the ethnic tensions and for economic reasons.<sup>33</sup> They complained of physical attacks and of intimidation by ethnic Albanians who by now not only demographically dominated Kosovo/a but also dominated in some neighbouring areas of southern Serbia proper. At the same time, large numbers of ethnic Albanians were also emigrating, mainly because of the poor economic situation. However, according to the censuses from 1948 until 1991, the number of Albanians in Kosovo/a trebled.

For the first time, ethnic Albanians were recognized as a distinct national group in Tito's Yugoslavia. They were allowed to use their language and gained the right to have education in that language. In the 1974 Constitution the province of Kosovo/a and the province of Vojvodina gained autonomous status.

Massive unemployment, acute poverty in Kosovo/a and rising Albanian nationalism, led to demonstrations by Pristina University students in 1981. The main demand was for Kosovo/a to be made a full republic. The demonstrations were put down by Serbian police forces with many killed or arrested. Following this, ethnic Albanians' rights were systematically eroded. During the 1980s, many Kosovo/a Albanians were imprisoned for activity in support of republican status. Some called for unification with Albania.

In the mid-1980s, more and more media reports of ethnic Albanians attacking Serbs were featured and influ-

enced the mainstream of Serbian public opinion. Serb nationalism was rising. The 'Kosovo myth' – that of 'Heavenly Serbia'<sup>34</sup> – and the glorification of the nation-state were actively promoted by prominent Belgrade intellectuals and some religious leaders. Meanwhile, in Serbia, the Serb Communist Party led by Milosevic was also changing. The powerful mix of myth and religion, alongside the reports of Albanian attacks on Serbs, was manipulated by politicians and helped to produce an aggressive nationalist Greater Serbia ideology.<sup>35</sup>

The rise of Milosevic, riding the upsurge of aggrieved Serb nationalism, caused a fundamental change in policy toward Kosovo/a. In 1989 the province was stripped of its autonomy. This was followed by systematic oppression in the province, and flagrant violations of ethnic Albanians' human rights. The Belgrade regime suspended Kosovo/a's legally-formed Parliament and government, closed Albanian-language schools, and sacked Albanian workers in state institutions and state-owned enterprises.

Initially the Albanians responded to the repression with peaceful resistance. This peaceful resistance movement was led by Ibrahim Rugova and the Democratic League of Kosova (LDK). Ethnic Albanians expressed their desire for Kosovan independence in the 1991 referendum. Out of those eligible to vote in Kosovo/a (estimated to be 1,051,357), 914,802 voted in the referendum, i.e. 87 per cent. Out of this number, more than 99 per cent voted for independence. That same year the Kosovar Parliament declared the independence of Kosovo/a. In 1992 the Albanians held elections in which they chose their leadership and formed a parallel government. Also, ethnic Albanians set up a parallel school system in private homes, in which during the academic year 1992–3, for example, 274,280 pupils attended primary and 63,340 pupils attended secondary school classes. That year, the Serbian police raided these facilities, detaining teachers and seizing classroom rosters.<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, there were many signs of the impending war – from rampant hate speech in the media to growing inter-ethnic tensions on an everyday basis. Yet the international community remained passive, ignoring all of the early warnings of war.

In early 1998 the Serbian government began police and military actions against the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) – a guerrilla movement which emerged after it became apparent that the peaceful approach was ineffective in the face of the Belgrade regime and the indifference of the international community. Serbian security forces conducted a 'scorched earth' policy in Kosovo/a, raising villages to the ground, creating an exodus of over 250,000 refugees and internally displaced people, and committing atrocities against unarmed civilians. At this time the international community became involved in attempts to resolve the Kosovo/a crisis. Following the failure of the Rambouillet negotiations to reach a compromise between the Milosevic regime and the Kosovo/a Albanians, NATO – without the explicit approval of the UN – began a 'humanitarian' war against Milosevic's regime.

The UNHCR has estimated<sup>37</sup> that as many as 10,000 Kosovo/a Albanians died during the period of the NATO campaign (24 March 1999 – 9 June 1999), and that thousands are still missing. There are no reliable figures on

the number of rapes and other atrocities committed but it is known that many women and men were raped during the conflict.

With the NATO air strikes, close to 1 million people fled from Kosovo/a (mainly ethnic Albanians, but also Roma, Serbs and others). With the establishment of the UN forces known as KFOR, well over 770,000 people (mainly ethnic Albanians) returned to Kosovo/a by 1 September 1999. Montenegrins, Roma and Serbs became the victims of ethnic Albanian revenge. Since June 1999, according to the UNHCR, 164,000 Serbs have fled Kosovo/a. There is little reliable information on the Roma, but it is known that significant displacement has taken place.

Ibrahim Rugova, the president of Kosovo/a's leading parliamentary party, the LDK, has stressed that the Kosovo/a Albanians must guarantee full safety to the Serbs. This has also been repeated on numerous occasions by the leader of the KLA, Hasim Taci. The protection of all of the peoples of Kosovo/a, including Serbs, Roma and other non-Albanians was to be guaranteed by KFOR. However, none of them have been able to prevent the violence of some Kosovo/a Albanians.

There have been numerous reports of violence (including expulsions, murders and rapes) against the Serbs and the Roma in Kosovo/a after the withdrawal of the Serbian forces and the arrival of KFOR.<sup>38</sup> The systematic attacks on Serbian settlements, often with weapons and explosives whose usage requires military expertise, indicates that these are not merely 'spontaneous' acts but require deliberate and careful organization. Muslims from Bosnia – Bosniaks – have also been victims of Albanian violence.<sup>39</sup>

During the NATO air campaign and the operations carried out by the Serbian army and police, almost the entire rural population of Bosniaks was forced into exile from Kosovo/a. After the withdrawal of the Serbian forces and the arrival of KFOR in Kosovo/a, the urban Bosniak population became KLA targets. A small number of Bosniaks remained in Pristina, and an even smaller number in Mitrovica and Pec. No more Bosniaks remain in Djakovica, Prizren, Suva Reka or Urosevac. Their total number in Kosovo/a now is c. 10,000; before the exodus they numbered c. 70,000.<sup>40</sup>

After the NATO bombardment ended and the peace agreement was signed Milosevic claimed a great victory for his campaign. He stated that the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo/a was a temporary measure on behalf of peace in the region. Many Serbs believe this, but not all. The political opposition in Serbia believe that Milosevic's actions have been reprehensible and Serbian independent thinkers feel that the Milosevic era is over. They also understand that Serbs must learn to free themselves from the burden of history and the destructive desire to recast it over and over again.

## Bosniaks

According to the official 1981 census data there were 58,562 Bosniaks in Kosovo/a, 3.7 per cent of the population. The Kosova Party of Democratic Action maintains that in this province, before the crisis flared up and a new wave of emigration started, there were between 100,000

and 120,000 Bosniaks, making up 5 per cent of the Kosovo/a population.

There are two main groups. The first is made up of Muslims who came from Bosnia, Montenegro and Sandzak who had settled in Kosovo/a in various periods after 1878. The other group has lived in the Prizren region for centuries.

## Croats

Kosovo/a Croats were particularly pressurized to leave the region – with only 2,000 remaining out of an original 8,000. Croats in Kosovo/a – named Janjevci, after their village – had settled there from Dubrovnik several centuries ago.

In 1991 and 1992 Serb attacks on Croats and their property increased. This prompted their large-scale emigration, which has continued, and now only a small group of Croats live in Kosovo/a.

## Roma

Roma in Kosovo/a live in settlements around Kosovska Mitrovica, Pec, Pristina and Prizren. According to the last census in 1991 there were 45,745 Roma in Kosovo/a. Activists of Roma organizations state that the population is far larger. Roma in Kosovo/a have tended to have a much stronger sense of national identity than Roma elsewhere in the region.

Although there are some cases of Roma declaring themselves to be Albanians or Serbs, in this province some Roma have also declared themselves to be Egyptians. Political representatives of Egyptians deny their Indian-Roma origins; they have been very loyal to Belgrade and critical of the Albanian parties.

Roma began settling in Kosovo/a and in other parts of Serbia in the fourteenth century. While Roma in central Serbia mainly speak Gurbet dialect and are Orthodox Christians, the majority of Roma in Kosovo/a are Muslims. The latter group speaks Arli dialect, which is strongly influenced by the Turkish and Albanian languages.

Roma began emigrating from Kosovo/a several decades ago. The reason for emigration was initially primarily due to economic hardship, however now Roma are moving elsewhere because of political instability and fear of persecution. After the NATO military intervention, most remaining Roma fled Kosovo/a as soon as the Serbian forces left.

Some ethnic Albanians associated Roma with the oppressors and claimed that Roma had collaborated with Serb forces during the 'ethnic cleansing' campaigns. Roma who fled Kosovo/a report<sup>41</sup> that they were targets of revenge attacks and that KFOR did not provide effective protection. Most Roma deny involvement in 'ethnic cleansing', while some state that they were forced by Serb troops to collaborate.

The Board for the Protection of Human Rights of the Roma in Yugoslavia said that before the NATO military intervention there were about 150,000 Roma living in Kosovo/a, while by mid-July 1999, just 10 per cent of that

population were left.<sup>42</sup> The statement adds that over 90,000 of the Kosovo/a Roma fled to Serbia and Montenegro, while c. 30,000 found refuge in Western Europe.

## Turks

Although Turks are the smallest ethnic group in Kosovo/a they were among the earliest settlers in the region. Their settlement in Kosovo/a began with the Turkish occupation in 1389. After the collapse of Turkish rule and withdrawal of the Ottoman army, the majority of ethnic Turks left Kosovo/a and moved to the present-day Republic of Turkey.

Today there are c. 15,000 Turks in Kosovo/a. They live in Prizren and in the neighbouring villages (some of which are 'purely' Turkish, such as Mamusa; similar villages are found in the vicinity of Gnjilane). Some ethnic Turks also live in Pristina.



# Vojvodina

## Background

**V**ojvodina is one of the most multiethnic regions of Yugoslavia. The province of Vojvodina is in northern Serbia, bordered by Croatia, Hungary and Romania. Vojvodina became part of the first Yugoslavia in 1918. Under the Serbian Constitution of 1974, Vojvodina was guaranteed a high level of autonomy, enjoying almost all of the prerogatives of a state. Members of national minorities were represented in the government and in almost all public institutions. This practice was abolished in 1988 when the new FRY and Serbia Constitutions to all intents and purposes put an end to Vojvodina's autonomy. While both of these Constitutions guarantee a broad range of human and civil rights to national minorities, their implementation is often at variance with the official proclamation.

## Croats

**T**he collapse of the former Yugoslavia called into question the status of some peoples – including the Croats, who were the autochthonous peoples of the newly-formed states. The status of ethnic Croats in FRY has still not been resolved and many believe that this is a deliberate policy. In contrast with several other minorities in Serbia, Croats have not been able to exercise their collective rights – such as the right to education and information in their first language and the cultivation of their culture. They have been prevented from doing this by Serbian nationalists. Moreover, the current questions over their status exacerbates their insecurity. Furthermore, they are not officially recognized as a national minority.

Most Croats are Roman Catholics and are therefore an ethnic and religious minority. Facing growing pressures from Serb nationalists, many have quietly but steadily moved out of Yugoslavia. Their numbers have been declining since the end of the Second World War. According to the census of 1991, 105,406 (1.08 per cent) of the Serbian population were citizens of Croat origin. The largest number of them live in Vojvodina. Accurate figures are not available but it is estimated that c. 30,000 Croats have left Vojvodina in the last five years.<sup>43</sup>

The problem of their nationality could be solved through dual citizenship. The FRY government proposed an agreement with Croatia on dual citizenship, primarily relating to eastern Slavonia. However, Croatia rejected the proposal. Due to their unregulated status, there have been instances of Croats being forced out of their homes, even though they are lawful tenants. Their flats have been taken over by, among others, refugees. The authorities react slowly and the court proceedings take a long time. So far nobody has been brought to justice, let alone convicted, of an attack on Croat property.

## Hungarians

**E**thnic Hungarians are the largest non-Serb ethnic group in Vojvodina. According to the census of 1991, they numbered 339,491, or 16.86 per cent of Vojvodina's population. Regionally speaking, 75.63 per cent of Vojvodina Hungarians live in Backa, 21.56 per cent in Banat, and 2.81 per cent in Srem. Ethnic Hungarians form a majority in seven municipalities (Ada, Backa Topola, Becej, Ilok, Kanjiza, Mali Idjos and Senta). Vojvodina Hungarians speak Hungarian. Approximately 80 per cent of them are Roman Catholics; a minority are Protestants. They are officially recognized as a national minority.

According to the Democratic Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (DZVM), there are currently just over 300,000 ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina. This drop from the 1991 census figure is probably due to emigration, with an estimated 35,000–38,000 Vojvodina Hungarians having left since 1991.<sup>44</sup> Many have gone to Hungary or Western Europe. Reasons for the emigration are: the continuing fear of war and mobilization, a feeling of insecurity in an environment of 'quiet ethnic cleansing' of national minorities in Serbia (under the pressure of extreme nationalists and the regime's passive attitude to it) and economic problems.

The emigration of Hungarians and other national minorities has been given a new impetus with the strengthening of nationalistic forces in Serbia; notably the success of Vojislav Seselj's Serb Radical Party (SRS), at the last parliamentary and presidential elections. Where the SRS is in power in Vojvodina municipalities, there have been conflicts with representatives of Vojvodina Hungarian parties. Some DZVM and Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM) deputies claim local authorities are using the refugees to exacerbate inter-ethnic and social tensions and to change the ethnic composition of the population.

## Education

**H**ungarians are entitled to education in their first language from primary school to university level. This right is regulated by various laws on education. However, fewer members of national minorities including Hungarians are attending classes in their first language. At its session of 20 May 1997, the Committee for Education, Science and Culture of the Assembly of Vojvodina concluded that this decrease was not a 'rights' issue. It felt that it was due to the falling birth-rate in Vojvodina, the options chosen by children and their parents, and broader educational possibilities at different faculties. Representatives of national minorities do not share this view.

In May 1997, Sandor Egeressi and Tibor Pal, members of the Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations of the Assembly of Vojvodina, raised several points regarding the right of ethnic Hungarians to education in their first language.

Egeressi proposed a review of the curriculum. He also proposed sending mandatory questionnaires to parents whose children want to attend school in their first language. Pal said that there should be more flexibility over the law which only permits classes in the languages of national minorities when there are at least 15 pupils. He also raised the issue of the shortage of teachers and textbooks for instruction in Hungarian in some technical subjects in schools.

### Official use of the language and alphabet

The official use of the Hungarian language is established in 29 Vojvodina municipalities. However, it is not enforced in all of them. The Assembly of Novi Sad, for example, decided that regulations and other enactments establishing the rights and duties of citizens should also be published in Hungarian, Ruthenian and Slovak, but this has not been done.<sup>45</sup>

### Political life

There are currently six ethnic parties of Vojvodina Hungarians: there is little political unity among them. Most have emerged from conflicts within the Democratic Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (DZVM), the first political organization of the Hungarian minority, founded on 31 March 1990. In June 1994 the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM) was founded. That same year, the Civil Movement of Vojvodina Hungarians (GPVM) was founded. In the beginning of 1997, a further split took place in the DZVM, forming the Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians (DSVM). The Demo-Christian Movement of Vojvodina Hungarians (DPVM) was founded in 1998 and the Demo-Christian Block was founded in the same year.

In the first multi-party parliamentary elections in Serbia in 1990, DZVM won eight seats in the republican Parliament. It scored even better in the 1992 elections, when it won over 140,000 votes and took nine seats in the Assembly of Serbia. It was the only political representative of Vojvodina Hungarians at that time. The decline began with the first serious conflicts within the party. At present SVM is the strongest party of this national minority and the only one with deputies in the republican Assembly. In the federal elections in 1996, SVM won only three seats in the Assembly of Yugoslavia. In the republican elections, they won 50,960 votes and four seats in the Serbian Assembly. In the Assembly of Vojvodina, with 120 seats, SVM has 13 deputies, and DSVM one. In the local elections in Serbia in 1996, SVM managed to hold the local government in Subotica, and has a majority and mayors in Backa Topola, Becej, Kanjiza, Mali Idjos and Senta.

### Cultural life and media

The cultural life of Vojvodina Hungarians is contingent on modest resources. Almost all forms of public financing from provincial, republican and federal sources have been cut back. This includes the funding of important cultural institutions such as Ujvideki Színház (Novi Sad Theatre), Nepszínház (National Theatre) in Subotica and the Cultural and Artistic Society Petofi Sandor in Novi Sad.

The biggest publisher of books in Hungarian is Forum in Novi Sad. It currently publishes c. 40 books a year.

In Vojvodina, publicly-owned media is under the complete control of the Belgrade regime. Minority-language media is, generally speaking, no exception. This control is particularly strong in electronic media.

Representatives of Hungarian parties in the Assembly of Vojvodina have objected to the content of radio and television news programmes. They feel that these only serve the Belgrade regime's propaganda needs. Many Vojvodina Hungarians follow foreign, notably Hungarian, broadcasts.

The newspaper *Magyar Szó* (Hungarian Word) has a major influence on the public opinion of Vojvodina Hungarians. It is the only local daily in Hungarian and has a wide readership. *Magyar Szó* is under constant scrutiny by Milosevic's regime.

### Hungarian autonomy – a proposition

Political parties representing Vojvodina Hungarians have put forward several models for the regulation of their status in Serbia. The most recent document of this kind, *Agreement on the Political and Legal Frameworks of Autonomy of Vojvodina and the Ethnic Communities Living in Vojvodina* was written at the beginning of 1999 by the SVM. The document not only addresses Vojvodina Hungarians, but also the other ethnic minorities living in Vojvodina, calling for their inclusion and support.

The document calls for changes to the Constitutions of Yugoslavia and Serbia, demanding autonomy for Vojvodina. It proposes a bicameral Assembly of Vojvodina. It would consist of the Assembly of Citizens (lower house) and the Assembly of Ethnic Communities (upper house). The members of the lower house would be elected on the principle of 'one citizen, one vote', whereas the members of the upper house would be elected by members of each ethnic community. Issues connected with the preservation of ethnic identity could only be decided by the Assembly of Vojvodina with the approval of the representatives of ethnic communities in the upper house. (A similar model existed previously in the Assembly of the former Yugoslavia.) It also proposes that the Government of Vojvodina would have at least one member from each ethnic community with a delegation in the Assembly of Ethnic Communities.

Another significant element of this Agreement is the introduction of personal autonomy, which would encompass the preservation of the ethnic identity of all of the ethnic minorities in Vojvodina. This covers the preservation of national languages and the development of culture, education and media in the national languages. This would be overseen by Ethnic Councils and funded by the Vojvodina government.

The third important element of the Agreement – which is politically the most sensitive – concerns the introduction of Hungarian regional autonomy in the regions where the Vojvodina Hungarians make up the majority of the population. The seat of this 'Hungarian region' would be Subotica. This would have a large degree of authority with, for example, a police force whose composition would reflect the ethnic composition of the municipality.

The Agreement confirms that minority communities acknowledge the legislative system of Serbia, but calls for

a special law which guarantees full equality of the official usage of minority languages, including its usage in the courts, with a proportionate number of ethnic minorities in the legislative bodies. The appointment of ethnic minority judges and prosecutors would be subject to approval by the Assembly of Ethnic Communities.

The text of the Agreement has been forwarded to all the Yugoslav political parties and state bodies, and it has also been promoted internationally. It was immediately supported by Hungary, and it was also praised by the US Secretary of Defence, William Cohen, in July 1999. The Serbian authorities have not reacted to this document.

## Romanians

According to the 1991 census there are 42,331 Romanians in Serbia. Of these, 38,832 live in Vojvodina and the rest are mostly in Belgrade. They account for 1.93 per cent of the Vojvodina population. They do not form a majority in any of Vojvodina's municipalities. They are mostly concentrated in Banat.

Census data show that the number of the Banat Romanians and their share in the Vojvodina population has declined. Their number almost halved between 1921 and 1991. This decline was particularly evident in the wake of the Second World War, from 3.53 per cent of the Vojvodina population in 1948 to 3.37 per cent in 1953; 3.09 per cent in 1961; 2.71 per cent in 1971; 2.32 per cent in 1981 and 1.93 per cent in 1991. This is due to migration, which has considerably altered the ethnic structure of Vojvodina, to their low birth-rate and their gradual assimilation.

The Vojvodina Romanians are officially recognized as a national minority. They speak the Banat variant of the Daco-Romanian dialect and are predominantly Orthodox.

### Education

The Vojvodina Romanians have access to instruction in their first language from primary school to university levels.

### Official use of the language and alphabet

The Romanian language is in official use in 10 out of 11 Vojvodina municipalities with significant Romanian populations. The only exception is Novi Sad.

### Political life

Vojvodina Romanians do not have any ethnically-based political parties.

### Cultural life and media

In accordance with their national minority status Banat Romanians enjoy the right to cultivate their national culture. The most important organization in this regard is the Community of Romanians of Yugoslavia based in Vrsac, with a number of subsidiary branches in other places. It has commissions on the arts, education, infor-

mation and science, and works with schools with instruction in Romanian and with the Novi Sad University. The organization also cooperates with the Movement of Romanians-Vlachs of Yugoslavia and the Cultural Forum of Vlachs in Bor.

Like all the other national minorities, the Banat Romanians have an institutionalized system of public information in their first language: this is state-funded. There are also private newspapers.

### Economic life

According to a poll conducted by the Novi Sad branch of Radio-Television Serbia's Public Opinion Survey Centre,<sup>46</sup> 34 per cent of the ethnic Romanian respondents were farmers; 31 per cent housewives; 10 per cent workers; 5 per cent civil servants; 3 per cent executives, professionals and artists; and the rest were pensioners, students, etc. The survey showed that only 41 per cent had completed primary education, 35 per cent had completed secondary education, and 11 per cent had completed higher education.

## Ruthenians

According to one view, Ruthenians originate from the Ukraine, while another theory claims that they are a distinct Carpathian-Ruthenian people without a kin state. They live mainly in Vojvodina, in central Backa, western Srem and eastern Slavonia. They identify themselves as Ruthenians or Rusins. They began to settle in Vojvodina 250 years ago.

According to censuses of 1948, 1953 and 1961, Ruthenians and Ukrainians were registered jointly. According to the 1948 census there were 22,690 Ruthenians in the SFRY, of whom 22,083 lived in Vojvodina. Of 18,099 Ruthenians registered in FRY in 1991, 17,887 lived in Vojvodina, mainly in Backa and Srem. Ruthenians account for 0.89 per cent of the total Vojvodina population and do not constitute a majority in any Vojvodina municipality. However, Ruski Krstur is an almost exclusively Ruthenian locality. The Ruthenian language is spoken there, instruction at primary and secondary school level is imparted in the Ruthenian language, and the most important institutions of the Ruthenian culture are located there. Ruthenians also live in larger towns such as Kula, Novi Sad, Shid, Sremska Mitrovica and Vrbas.

In the period 1971–91, the number of Ruthenians in Vojvodina fell from 20,109 to 17,887. In the same period the number of Ukrainians fell from 5,653 to 5,090.

Vojvodina Ruthenians speak the Ruthenian language and use the Cyrillic alphabet. Most are Roman Catholics, and a minority are Orthodox.

### Official use of the language and alphabet

Ruthenians are officially recognized as a national minority and, as such, are guaranteed the use of their language and alphabet, instruction in their first language, preservation of their national culture and a host of other collective rights.

## Cultural life

The cultural centre of Vojvodina Ruthenians is Ruski Krstur. The town has important Ruthenian educational institutions, Ruthenian museums, printing presses, publishing companies and theatres. Ruski Krstur is also the Ruthenians' religious centre.

## Economic life

There is no reliable information on ethnic Ruthenians' economic situation.

## Slovaks

According to the 1991 census there are 72,032 Slovaks in Yugoslavia; 63,941 in Vojvodina. They form a majority in the municipality of Backi Petrovac, and form substantial populations in many municipalities in Vojvodina, accounting for 3.18 per cent of the total population of the province.<sup>47</sup>

The first group of settlers came to Backi Petrovac and Kulpin from central Slovakia in 1745. Later groups settled in several localities in Banat and Srem. The Slovak population in Vojvodina has decreased in the past few decades both in actual numbers and in their share of Vojvodina's population. According to the 1948 census, Slovaks represented 4.48 per cent of Vojvodina's population; in 1953, it was 4.18 per cent, in 1961, 3.98 per cent, in 1971, 3.73 per cent, in 1981, 3.42 per cent, and in 1991, 3.18 per cent.

This decrease in the ethnic Slovak population was caused by several factors, including a low birth-rate and a high level of assimilation. Children from mixed marriages, particularly those who do not live in a Slovak environment, or whose other parent is a Montenegrin or a Serb, often declare themselves to be members of one of the 'state-forming' nations or as Yugoslavs. During the wars and in the current economic crisis, a number of Slovaks have emigrated. However, there are no reliable records of the number of Slovak emigrants.<sup>48</sup>

Vojvodina Slovaks speak the Slovak language. The majority of them belong to the Slovak-Evangelical Church (a branch of Lutheran Protestantism), a minority (10 per cent) are Roman Catholics.

Slovaks in Serbia are officially recognized as a national minority and therefore are guaranteed a range of collective rights. However, the implementation of these rights is often at variance with the officially proclaimed principles.

## Education

Slovaks in Vojvodina have education in their first language from primary school to university level.

## Official use of the language and alphabet

The Slovak language and alphabet is officially used in 13 Vojvodina municipalities inhabited by a large number of Slovaks.

## Political life

Slovaks in Yugoslavia have no ethnically-based political parties. While the Vojvodina Assembly has no data on the national origin of its MPs, Slovaks are heads of the Assembly's Information Secretariat of the Executive Council and of the Department for the Exercise of the National Minorities' Rights.

There are 71 MPs of Slovak nationality in all the Vojvodina municipal assemblies and they make up 4.14 per cent of the total number of MPs. Their representation in municipal assemblies is slightly larger than their share in the population of the province. Slovaks account for 2.94 per cent of the total number of employees in all Vojvodina municipalities, and this share is smaller than their share of the total population of Vojvodina.

## Cultural life and media

The centre of ethnic Slovaks' cultural life is Backi Petrovac. This is where the institute of the Slovak Mainstream is located. It has 12,000 members and 26 branch offices. It was founded in 1937 and is Slovaks' most important cultural organization. Among its main activities is the staging of the Slovak Folk Festival in Backi Petrovac. This festival attracts ethnic Slovaks from many countries and it has, as one of its aims, the goal of preserving the Slovak identity in Yugoslavia. In addition, there are municipal and folk song festivals in Backi Petrovac, the 'Selenca-Petrovac' festival and an annual Vojvodina Slovaks' Amateur Theatre Festival. Another important Slovak cultural institution is the Slovak Society of Vojvodina.

The Kultura publishing house in Backi Petrovac publishes books in the Slovak language. Radio Novi Sad broadcasts Slovak language programmes. In Backi Petrovac Slovaks have a local television station broadcasting in the Slovak language. There are 12 Slovak-language daily and weekly newspapers.

## Economic life

There is no reliable information on Slovaks' economic position. However, many Slovaks are craftspeople and farmers.

# Sandzak

**S**andzak is a region within Yugoslavia that straddles Montenegro and Serbia. It is a territory of 8,678 sq. km with 11 municipalities: six in Serbia and five in Montenegro: Nova Varos, Novi Pazar, Priboj, Prijepolje, Tutin and Sjenica in Serbia; and Berane, Bijelo, Plav, Pljevlja, Polje and Rozaje in Montenegro. It has an important Muslim (Bosniak) minority who are vulnerable to human rights abuses and who suffered various violations during the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the region's majority and minority populations have previously coexisted peacefully for centuries.

According to the 1991 census, the Serbian part of Sandzak had 267,849 inhabitants and 162,000 in the Montenegrin part. Bosniaks are the most numerous ethnic community in Sandzak with a population of 228,400, or 54 per cent of the total inhabitants of Sandzak, according to the same census.

The territory of Sandzak has generally been thought by many commentators to be at risk from a possible outbreak of armed conflict. The region has been spared from direct war operations to date. However, Sandzak has undoubtedly suffered from the wars nearby, especially those in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo/a. For example, there have been numerous migrations from Sandzak caused by direct or indirect pressures by the Belgrade authorities.<sup>49</sup> Over the past nine years, more than 80,000 Bosniaks have left Sandzak, which is nearly one third of its total population and one quarter of the total number of Bosniaks living within Yugoslavia. This population decrease has significantly reduced the political potential of Sandzak's demands, which have ranged from autonomy to the status of a federal unit.

A second point of importance for Sandzak lies in the changes that have taken place in Montenegro. Bosniaks from the Montenegrin part of Sandzak have subordinated their ethnic interests to the interests of Montenegro. They have largely given up their political campaigns on an all-ethnic level for the sake of supporting the reformist government of President Milo Djukanovic of Montenegro that ensured – at least at the start – their physical protection after years of persecution and repression. Thus, politically speaking, for the Bosniaks of Rozaje, Podgorica (i.e. Montenegro) became closer than Novi Pazar (i.e. Serbia), although Novi Pazar is known as the cultural, political and economic centre of Sandzak. The delimitation between the two parts of Sandzak has grown ever stronger. The stronger Montenegro's aspirations for political and economic independence, the weaker the idea of Sandzak as a geopolitical/territorial entity has become. Some public opinion polls have shown that the Bosniaks in Montenegro are more enthusiastic adherents to the idea of an independent state of Montenegro than most ethnic Montenegrins. The proclamation of Montenegro's independence would *de facto* mean the reduction of Sandzak to just three municipalities, those of Novi Pazar, Sjenica

and Tutin; for in the other three communes in the Serbian part of Sandzak the Bosniaks (especially after the latest migrations) have become an almost absolute minority.

Judging by the Belgrade regime's actions after the Kosovo/a crisis, the political course towards Sandzak may take an acute form. The police have increased pressure on politically active Bosniaks and their organizations; and the independent *Parliament* magazine from Novi Pazar has been fined 65,000 dinar.<sup>50</sup> This was preceded by a judgment against *Sandzacke Novine* (Sandzak Newspaper), so much news is being spread by word of mouth. During the three months of NATO bombardment, the authorities dismissed over 2,000 Bosniak workers who had fled from Sandzak – on the basis that they had failed to come to work for three days in succession, which is the legal limit. For example, in the Priboj vehicle factory, 227 workers were fired – 225 Bosniaks and two Serbs. In Novi Pazar, notices of dismissal were given to 62 teachers and a considerable number of doctors and paramedics.<sup>51</sup> Considering Sandzak's deficiency in highly trained/educated employees, many are questioning how these posts will be filled. The 'solution' may be an inflow of the Serbs fleeing Kosovo/a, further altering the already changing ethnic structure in Sandzak.

While many analysts expect Sandzak to become a new area of crisis and possibly of armed conflict, the Milosevic regime has tended not to fight on more than one front at a time. Currently Milosevic has got two fronts to fight on – Serbia's opposition rallying in the streets demanding his resignation on the one hand, and Podgorica's moves towards 'dissociation from the larger federal unit' on the other. Serbia is potentially threatened by a civil war from within and a Serbo-Montenegrin war from without. In case of Serbo-Serbian conflict, Sandzak would still have a chance to survive without any large-scale disorder for the conflict would probably take place primarily in Belgrade and other major cities. Yet any conflict between Serbia and Montenegro could not fail to involve Sandzak. It could become the epicentre of a Serbo-Montenegrin war. However, KFOR officials have repeatedly stated that they will not tolerate any military adventures by Belgrade in Montenegro.

Yet Sandzak could potentially face conflict. When the former Yugoslav army was retreating from Croatia, its troops were stationed across Bosnia and Herzegovina; likewise, the army withdrawn from Kosovo/a has been stationed in Sandzak and Montenegro. In the town of Novi Pazar, the factory premises of the Raska Textile Combine have been adapted for some army units of the Pristina Corps.<sup>52</sup> Parts of the police force formerly deployed in Kosovo/a have also been installed in various parts of Sandzak. By intensifying the militarization of Sandzak, Belgrade is making an additional impact on the changes to its population structure. As the Serbian troops are coming in, the Bosniak civilians are leaving.

# Minorities in central Serbia

**M**any minorities live in central Serbia – i.e. the regions not specifically covered under Kosovo/a, Sandzak and Vojvodina in this Report. This section features Bulgarians, Roma, Vlachs and Yugoslavs, yet it should be borne in mind that there are also communities of other minorities – notably ethnic Albanians.

## Bulgarians

According to the 1991 census there are 26,922 ethnic Bulgarians in Yugoslavia. Almost all – 26,876 – live in Serbia. During the armed conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo/a and Slovenia, and the breakup of Yugoslavia, several thousand Bulgarians emigrated. According to the 1948 census there were 61,140 Bulgarians in Serbia, while the next census (1953) put the figure at 61,708. A decline in their number continued from 58,494 (1961) to 26,876 (1991). This decline in the number of ethnic Bulgarians can be explained by several factors: a low birth-rate, continuing migration due to social and economic reasons, natural assimilation through mixed marriages, and compulsory assimilation (for administrative and electoral purposes).

Bulgarians have lived almost exclusively in five municipalities of eastern Serbian, in the border area with Bulgaria, i.e. in Babusnica, Bosilegrad, Dimitrovgrad, Piro and Surdulica. Bulgarians are the majority population in Bosilegrad and Dimitrovgrad. It is noteworthy that a large number of ethnic Bulgarians (22 per cent in Dimitrovgrad in the 1991 census) declared themselves to be ‘Yugoslavs’. It is thought that this was an attempt to ensure a better status for themselves.

The Bulgarian ethnic minority in Serbia speaks Bulgarian. The Municipal Committee for the Protection of Human Rights of Bulgarians in Dimitrovgrad, a body of the Democratic Alliance of Bulgarians in Yugoslavia, is concerned about the forceful assimilation of Bulgarians.

Bulgarians are officially recognized as a national minority. The areas in which they currently live were taken away from Bulgaria and annexed to the first Yugoslavia after 1918. These territories covered 1,545 square km and had, according to Bulgarian historical sources, a population which was over 90 per cent Bulgarian. Almost the entire ethnic Bulgarian minority population lives in these areas in Yugoslavia today. On these territories were 45 Bulgarian Orthodox Churches and shrines. Many have since been damaged or torn down. Churches are now under the jurisdiction of the

Serbian Orthodox Church and the rites are now officiated mainly by Serbian priests who do not speak Bulgarian.

## Education

**E**thnic Bulgarians, like members of any other national minority in Yugoslavia, are legally entitled to receive education in their first language. However, there are no schools in Serbia with Bulgarian language classes. There are only classes in colleges in which Bulgarian pupils are taught their first language, but these are called ‘social environment’ classes, which virtually translates as ‘foreign language’ classes.

Bulgarian parents do not register their children for Bulgarian classes, hence none of the schools attended by ethnic Bulgarian pupils has Bulgarian classes. Parents fear that if they called for Bulgarian-language schools and classes, that there would be recrimination from the authorities. Parents also believe that education in Serbian could provide their children with better employment and education opportunities.

The Committee for the Protection of Rights of Bulgarians has protested that the authorities’ polling of ethnic Bulgarians as to whether they are in favour of Bulgarian language education is an attempt to place the parents in a difficult position in which they could be stigmatized or intimidated. The Committee has called for an end to such ‘polls’ and for the state to hold classes in Bulgarian. It is difficult to say how justified ethnic Bulgarians’ fear of intimidation is. But the level of ethnic tolerance in eastern or central Serbia is far lower than in Vojvodina, for example.

## Official use of the language and alphabet

**T**he Bosilegrad and Dimitrovgrad municipal statutes recognize the ‘official use of the Bulgarian language, in addition to the Serbian language’. These statutes are, at best, only partially enforced. Judicial proceedings in the aforementioned municipalities in which the use of Bulgarian is legally guaranteed are conducted exclusively in Serbian; an interpreter is hired when the defence counsel demands that the defence be conducted in Bulgarian. However, Bulgarian is used in communications between citizens and municipal authorities.

The names of official institutions, squares and streets are in Serbian, contrary to the legal provision. Most official stamps bear only the Serbian language inscription. The Municipal Committee for the Protection of Human Rights of Bulgarians in Dimitrovgrad has warned that ethnic Bulgarians’ names are being ‘serbianized’, for exam-

ple, women's surnames are not being written in accordance with the Bulgarian linguistic system.

### Political life

The Democratic Alliance of Bulgarians in Yugoslavia (DSBJ) is the only political party of this national minority. It has taken part in local and municipal elections, but without success. The DSBJ leadership considers 'its satanization in the state-controlled media, and notably in the Bulgarian language ones' as the main cause of its electoral failures. In the regime-controlled media the DSBJ has been labelled as the 'intelligence centre of Bulgarian politics' and accused of nationalism, chauvinism and separatism.

### Cultural life and media

The cultural centre in Dimitrovgrad is the ethnic Bulgarians' principal cultural institution. A smaller centre also exists in Bosilegrad. However, according to the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights of Bulgarians, these centres' activities are tightly controlled and they claim that the Dimitrovgrad centre is run by local Serbs and, allegedly, that not a word of Bulgarian can be heard there. Public information in Bulgarian is under the complete control of the regime. There is no independent media in Bulgarian.

### Economic life

Eastern Serbia, in which the Bulgarian national minority lives, is one of Serbia's least developed regions. The economy in Bosilegrad and Dimitrovgrad is on the brink of collapse, and workers' wages are among the lowest in Serbia. There is no asphalt road connecting the two municipalities. Several villages in Bosilegrad have only one telephone. There are no veterinary stations in larger villages in the area, although the people subsist on cattle-breeding.

## Roma

According to the 1991 census (there are no more up-to-date figures), there are 143,519 Roma in Yugoslavia (1.38 per cent of Yugoslavia's total population), of whom 140,237 live in Serbia (1.43 per cent of its population). Of this figure, 45,745 Roma live in Kosovo/a and 24,366 live in Vojvodina. According to the census, the largest numbers are in the South Morava and Nis regions (4.2 per cent and 1.4 per cent of the total populations respectively). In some municipalities in these two regions they account for one third of the population: in Bojnik, Bujanovac, Surdulica and Vladicin Han. These regions and municipalities are among the least developed in Serbia.

Special attention needs to be drawn to the major fluctuations in the demographic statistics on the Roma. The 1948 census gave a figure of 72,736 Roma; in 1961, there were only 31,674; but in 1971 the Roma reached 78,485; and 168,195 in 1981. It is thought that the steep decline in their number in 1961 was due to the Roma's hesitancy to

define themselves as Roma, and that the steep increase in 1971 and 1981 was due to the more favourable political and social climate in which Roma felt able to identify themselves as Roma.

Therefore, the census figures on the Roma are not considered to be reliable. The president of the Roma Congress Party (RKS) Dragoljub Ackovic says: 'Our research shows that the statistical data on the number of the Romany, obtained in the census, are four times lower than in reality.'<sup>53</sup>

The Roma cultural institute in Yugoslavia, Matica Rom-ska, estimates that there are between 600,000 and 700,000 Roma in Serbia and Montenegro. If these figures are accurate, the Roma would represent the third largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia, after the Serbs and the Albanians.

Regardless of all the reservations concerning the census data, it is clear that the numbers of the Roma in Serbia have been rising steadily. This is partly due to their high birth-rate and to their growing ethnic self-awareness.

The Roma have migrated to the Balkan peninsula since the fourteenth century.<sup>54</sup> The first group of 'Turkish Gypsies' reached Serbia from Asia Minor. Their religion was Islam and in addition to Romany, they also spoke Turkish, but in time, many embraced the Eastern Orthodoxy and the Serbian language. The second group comprised of 'Wallachian Roma' who arrived from Romania. They live throughout Serbia, but in greatest numbers in north-eastern Serbia and Vojvodina. They began to arrive in large numbers at the beginning of the eighteenth century, cannot speak Romany, and have 'Wallachian' (Romanian) as their first language. They are Orthodox by religion. The third group arrived in Serbia from Bosnia and Herzegovina. They speak only Serbian (Ijekavski dialect) and are Muslims. There are major differences in the customs, dress, language, professions and way of life between those who speak Romany and declare themselves to be Roma, and those who do not know the language and do not identify as Roma.

In Yugoslavia there are two Romany dialects: Arli and Gurbet. Arli is spoken by Muslim Roma, most of whom live in Kosovo/a. This dialect developed under the strong influence of the Albanian and Turkish languages. Gurbet is spoken mainly by Orthodox Roma in central Serbia and Vojvodina, and is strongly influenced by the Serb language. The differences between the Arli and Gurbet dialects are so substantial that mutual communication is very difficult. It is exacerbated by the fact that within both linguistic groups there are smaller groups, using their particular vernacular.

In the FRY the Roma have the status of an ethnic group. They are demanding recognition as a national minority, as this would provide the legal basis for a series of rights which they lack at present – notably the right to education and information in their first language, and the right to cultivate their culture.

The Roma have approached the Serbian Parliament and the Federal Constitutional Commission on several occasions regarding a change in their status in the republic. So far these efforts have not been successful, although many human rights specialists affirm that the Roma meet all the necessary conditions to be granted national minority status.

In Yugoslavia most Roma are Orthodox (especially in central Serbia and Vojvodina) or Muslims (mainly in

Kosovo/a). The Serb Orthodox Church recognizes Romany and it can be used in worship.

## Education

There are no schools with instruction in Romany in Yugoslavia. Roma attend schools with teaching in Serbian or national minority languages. An overwhelming majority of Roma children, however, fail to complete even primary school. According to Matica Romska, more than 80 per cent of Roma cannot read or write.

According to the 1991 census, 47.3 per cent of the Roma population over 15 years of age have not attended school or only attended one to three grades of primary school, 29.4 per cent have finished four to seven grades, and only 17.2 per cent have completed eight years of schooling. A mere 0.2 per cent have completed higher education. Between 1965 and 1985, no Roma undertook postgraduate studies. During the same period of time only one Roma obtained a doctorate.<sup>55</sup>

In Serbia, the Roma generally live in the poorest municipalities, often in separate localities on the outskirts of towns and villages. They have little contact with other people. Roma children have few opportunities to learn any other language but their first language. Thus, they start school without any, or with very inadequate, knowledge of the language of instruction. According to research, only 7 per cent of Roma children are thought to attend pre-school institutions; as many as 37 per cent do not know any Serbian prior to school, whereas 46 per cent know 'a little'.<sup>56</sup>

Many Roma children are put into classes for children with learning difficulties, despite the fact that they have no intelligence or psychological problems. Therefore these children's chances of further education or training are seriously impaired. Roma children, as a result, frequently drop out of schooling. Poverty is also a factor, because Roma parents often cannot afford school supplies, adequate clothing, etc., as is discrimination within the mainstream educational institutions.<sup>57</sup>

In April 1995, Novi Put (New Road) began a project to prepare Roma children for school, and in January 1996 a day care centre for Roma children was opened. There are 50 children, aged 3–5 at the day care centre, and 45 children, aged 5–7 at the pre-school establishment. These children get clothing, food and school aids and are looked after by six educators. The project aims to teach Roma children Serbian and to prepare them for school in that language. The Roma children participating in this project have scored excellent results in tests prior to their enrolment at school. This is the only project of its kind in Serbia.

The most successful attempt to introduce optional instruction in Romany began in 1998 in Vojvodina, in primary schools in Obrovac and Tovarisevo. There are two lessons a week in 'Romany Language and National Culture'. The classes are attended by 72 pupils from the first to the eighth grade. The curriculum derives from the model used for the optional instruction in the national minority languages in Vojvodina. Textbooks have been reprinted and teachers of Romany have been hired. It is expected that other primary schools across Serbia, where there are significant number of Roma pupils, will follow this example.

## Political life

Most Roma have never had a real chance to take an active part in Yugoslavia's political life. Yet they have been intimidated, manipulated and wooed for their votes.

Several Roma political parties were founded after the introduction of the multi-party system; however, authentic Roma parties are not represented in the Parliament and exist on the fringes of political activity.

The Roma in Yugoslavia have long been active internationally. Due to pressure from Roma in Yugoslavia, and from other states, the First World Congress of the Roma was held in London on 6 April 1971. It set up the International Organization of the Roma (Romano internacionalno jekethanibe). Three of the Congress's elected presidents were Roma from Yugoslavia: Slobodan Berberski, Sait Balic and Rajko Djuric.

## Cultural life and the media

The most significant Roma cultural institution is Matica Romska. It was founded in Novi Sad on 5 June 1996, with a view to preserving the Roma's ethnic identity and championing their collective interests, particularly in the field of the arts, culture, education, information and science. Its main projects are the standardization of the Romany language in the areas covered by the Arli and Gurbet dialects, and the organization of the instruction of Romany in primary schools. However, it is questionable whether it will be able to complete such an ambitious and complex project without the financial, professional and technical assistance of relevant state agencies.

Matica Romska also engages in publishing, and in cooperation with the Serb Orthodox Church, it has published the *Pentateuch*, and with the Vojvolina Society for the Romany Language, a book in Romany and Serbian *The Traditional Romany Literature in Vojvodina*.

Another important society is the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights of the Roma in Yugoslavia, whose president is Miroslav Jovanovic. It was founded in August 1997 and is based in Kragujevac.

Information in Romany is poorly developed. The main problem is that the Roma have not been accorded the status of a national minority and are not legally entitled, therefore, to institutional forms of minority information. Second, they do not live in one area, as a compact community but are dispersed throughout the FRY. Most radio and television programmes as well as publications in Romany are based in Kosovo/a and Vojvodina.

In 1992 Radio Belgrade began to broadcast an hour-long bilingual programme *Romano Them* (The World of Romany). It is now broadcast by the Associated Radio Stations of Serbia, yet in Belgrade and in much of Serbia the reception is extremely poor. Some local radio and television stations in Serbia also have programmes in the Romany language.

The first newspaper for Roma appeared in 1985. It was for children, published in Romany and Serbian, and called *Chavrikano lil* (Children's Newspaper). It was short-lived, but is now back in production. In Belgrade there is also a privately-funded monthly *Romano lil* (Romany Newspaper), and the paper published by the



Federation of Rom Societies of the Republic of Serbia, *Nevipe* (News), financed by the Serbian Ministry of Information. In Novi Sad there is a scientific magazine *Romologija*, and a monthly for culture, arts and social issues of the Romany *Alav e Rromengo* (The Romany Word). Both are funded from the Vojvodina budget and are published by the Vojvodina Society for Romany Language and Literature.

### Economic life

Economically and socially speaking, Roma are the most vulnerable people in Yugoslavia. In comparison with other socially vulnerable families, Roma families are larger, their members have less access to education and fewer of them are employed. As a rule only one member of the family has a full-time job, usually the husband. Moreover, where Roma can find work, it is in the lowest-paid jobs: auxiliary workers in factories, cattle hands, cemetery workers, street sweepers, etc. The Roma are also the most numerous beneficiaries of social welfare.

According to the Study on the Social Integration of Roma,<sup>58</sup> just 5 per cent of Roma (men and women) work in the Serbian publicly-owned enterprises. Virtually no Roma are in executive posts.

The highest-ranking among the traditional Roma occupations is the musicians' trade. It is still highly profitable and Roma children are often trained in music. Many Roma families used to have market stalls, but recently they have been squeezed out by refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia.

There are well-off Roma, too. In some Banat villages, Roma are among the richest and the most prestigious families.

Throughout Europe, the Roma have only been allowed to settle with reluctance on the part of the majority population. Even then, these settlements have been in specially assigned areas. Yugoslavia has been no exception. Many Roma settlements are 'illegal' with little electricity, sewage systems and no water supply. The isolation and ghettoization of Roma settlements makes their residents feel 'different' and their neighbours also see them as 'different'.

Many Roma families' diet falls below the recommended dietary requirements. Consequently, many Roma, especially children, are undernourished. A poor diet, coupled with poor housing conditions, has led to Roma suffering from diseases associated with poverty: alcoholism, intestinal problems, lung diseases, malnutrition, skin and skeletal diseases, and tuberculosis. There is also a high mortality rate among adults and children. In some parts of Serbia the average Roma life expectancy is 29–33 years, a damning indication of the very poor living conditions of this population.<sup>59</sup>

To a large extent, the low social status of the Roma is due to the discrimination which they face. In addition to being portrayed as 'dirty', 'lazy' and 'prone to fraud and theft', Miroslav Jovanovic, president of the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights of the Roma in Yugoslavia, cites instances of villagers refusing to allow Roma to bury their dead in Serb cemeteries; or of being banned from some pubs in Raska (in central Serbia) and that in Leskovac, parents refused to send their children to day care centres with Roma children. Miroslav Jovanovic

says that Roma are not just victims of violence committed by racist 'skinheads', but also of police ill treatment.<sup>60</sup> He divulged this information when a 13-year-old Roma, Dusan Jovanovic, was beaten to death in October 1997 in Belgrade, in a busy area. The perpetrators were later sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.

The murder of Dusan Jovanovic was followed by a series of incidents in which Roma were beaten and their houses were set on fire. On the walls of three schools in Kragujevac was scrawled 'Death to Gypsies'. In its issue of 29 October 1997, after the murder of Dusan Jovanovic, the daily newspaper *Nedeljni Telegraf* published an article, entitled 'We Shall Expel the Gypsies, Negroes, Gays and Junkies and Create Great White Serbia'. The text quotes the words of Novi Sad skinheads, who threatened to beat and expel all 'coloureds', Jews and Roma, and the whole 'unclean' part of the Serb nation.

'Gypsies, beat it from Serbia!' is the message of graffiti written in large red letters on the building of the subsidiary of the National Bank of Yugoslavia in the very heart of Novi Sad. For over two years this graffiti has been facing the building of the Executive Council of Vojvodina across the street and, as of December 1999, it is still there.

The president of Matica Romska, Trifin Dimic, says:

*I think it is less of a problem that some hooligan wrote this message of hate, than that it does not seem to bother anybody.*<sup>61</sup>

## Vlachs

There has long been argument over the Vlachs' origins. According to some, Vlachs are Romanians and according to others, they are Serbs who simply happen to speak 'Wallachian'. The 'Vlach issue' gained political topicality once again when the Movement of Vlachs and Romanians of Yugoslavia (subsequently the Movement of Romanians-Vlachs in Yugoslavia) was founded in 1991. In 1993 it submitted a request for national minority status. The authorities ignored this and the Movement accused them of attempts to assimilate Vlachs just as it says all the former regimes have done ever since part of Vidin Pashalik (part of which was formerly in Bulgaria) – where Vlachs were the autochthonous population – was annexed to Serbia in 1833.

Vlachs are thought to be descendants of the original Balkan population 'romanized' during the rule of the Roman Empire; the language they speak is also thought to be akin to Romanian. The majority of eastern Serbian Vlachs also speak the Banat variant of the Daco-Romanian dialect, like the Banat Romanians in Vojvodina. In the Vlach variant there are a number of words used of a largely Slavonic (not only Serb) origin. The Vlachs of Timok Krajina speak the Munten variant of the Daco-Romanian dialect, which has been adopted as the Romanian standard language. However, it is a modification of the dialect due to the influence of Slavonic and other languages. Neither of these two Romanian variants could be said to be a separate 'Vlach language'.

According to the Movement of the Romanians-Vlachs of Yugoslavia, eastern Serbian Vlachs live in 328 villages

and 20 towns along the Danube Valley. They are often the majority population in villages while their share in the urban population is much smaller.

The 1991 census states that there are 17,807 Vlachs in Serbia. The Movement of the Romanians-Vlachs of Yugoslavia, however, believes that the census results are highly unreliable and that in eastern Serbia their number ranges between 200,000 and 300,000. It refers to the research conducted by Dr Dragoljub Petrovic, professor of modern Serbian history, who affirms that there are about 220,000 Vlachs in that region.

The reservations voiced by the Movement regarding the official data are supported by enormous fluctuations of their numbers from one population census to the other. In 1948, the census showed 102,953 Vlachs and shortly afterwards – in 1953 – only 28,074. In 1961 their number dropped to an improbable 1,368. At the time of the next census – in 1971 – the number of Vlachs increased to 14,724 and in 1981 to 25,596. The last census, taken in 1991, showed a drop to 17,807.

These ‘appearances’ and ‘disappearances’ of Vlachs have no demographic explanation, especially if one bears in mind that there were no major migrations in that part of Serbia during this time. On the other hand, the Movement has claimed that pressure was frequently brought upon the Vlachs to identify themselves as Serbs and that they often did this, fearful of problems they might have if they said they belonged to a people who are – according to the Movement – ‘not recognized here’.

That the whole matter is political can be inferred from the manner in which censuses were conducted. In 1953, for example, on the census form (Form PS-1, item 11 ‘Ethnic origin’,) Vlachs were not listed as an option. They were put on record as Vlachs only if they insisted on it. It is also worth noting that large ‘disappearances’ of Vlachs coincided with particular periods in Yugoslavian history: after the Cominform Resolution of 1948 when Soviet tanks were deployed along the Romanian border, and after the so-called ‘Anti-bureaucratic Revolution’ of 1988, which inaugurated the concept of ‘national homogenization’ and the creation of a unitary, centralized national state.

### Legal status

In eastern Serbia Vlachs have the status of an ethnic group. Since 1992 the Vlachs have repeatedly requested national minority status. In 1993 the Movement of Romanians-Vlachs in Yugoslavia sought the ‘recognition of the status of the Romanian national minority’ for the Vlachs. The request was substantiated by the claim that Vlachs were Romanians and that the Banat Romanians enjoyed national minority status. The text of the request stated:

*‘We have traditional relations with the Banat Romanians, speak the same language, belong to the same creed and it is a true wonder how they – the Romanians in Banat – enjoy all the rights and we the Romanians south of the Danube (so-called Vlachs) who are much more numerous than they and are separated only by the Danube have no national rights at present.’*

The government did not respond and the Movement applied to it once again on 29 January 1996. Yet again, the government failed to respond. Meanwhile, the Movement has undertaken other steps in pursuit of its goals. The ‘Vlach question’ has been internationalized. On 3 May 1997 the Prime Minister of Romania, Victor Ciorbea, received delegations of Vlachs from Bulgaria, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. The Romanian Prime Minister promised to notify the Council of Europe of the issues and to try to help them to upgrade their status, particularly in education in Romanian.

The Romanian Foreign Minister met in Vrsac with the former Yugoslav Foreign Affairs Minister and with the President of the Community of Romanians in Yugoslavia. On 3 November 1997, in the course of the Balkan summit on Crete, Yugoslavia’s President Slobodan Milosevic met with the Romanian Prime Minister Ciorbea. The Romanian Premier raised the question of the Yugoslav Vlachs and inquired about the possibility of providing them with education in their first language. The ‘Vlach question’ has thus been raised to the highest Yugoslav-Romanian level.

The Vlachs enjoy the support of eminent intellectuals among the Banat Romanians with regard to their culture, language and national minority status. However, this support is not always overt. It might be stronger if they were not afraid that their own positions might be threatened as a result.

### Education

The Vlachs have no schools with instruction in their first language. Since October 1995, the organ of the Movement of the Romanians-Vlachs of Yugoslavia, *Vorba noastră* (Our word), has been carrying various contributions acquainting the readers with their first language. On 1 September 1996 the Movement launched courses in Romanian at its headquarters in Zajecar.

Earlier attempts to provide alternative education in Romanian met with the fierce resistance of the authorities. In a letter to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (14 August 1996) the Movement of the Romanians-Vlachs of Yugoslavia says that the ‘police prevent the importing of school books in Romanian’. It continues:

*‘In August 1993 in the village of Slatina near Bor, a Bor police patrol seized 515 children’s primary readers intended for our members. It was a gift from a humanitarian organization in Romania; the books were burnt.’*

### Official use of the language and alphabet

The Romanian language is not in official use in any eastern Serbian municipality with a Vlach population.

### Political life

The Vlachs began to organize on an ethnic basis in post-Titoist Yugoslavia, and in particular, after the so-called Anti-bureaucratic Revolution in 1988 when the ‘national homogenization’ of the majority population entailed the national homogenization of minority peoples. Vlachs’

attempts to organize themselves politically were repressed. On 19 May 1988 the Municipal Court in Zajecar sentenced the president of the Movement of the Romanians-Vlachs of Yugoslavia, Dimitrije Kracunovic, to 15 months' imprisonment for the 'dissemination of falsehoods'. This was how the court qualified the 'presentation of false facts about the allegedly inferior status of the Vlachs' and 'comparison of the Timok region with Kosovo/a'.

The introduction of the multi-party system provided the legal basis for the Vlachs' political organization. The Movement of the Vlachs and Romanians of Yugoslavia was founded on 10 December 1991. Under the new name – the Movement of the Romanians-Vlachs of Yugoslavia – it was registered as a political organization on 1 July 1996. The change of name was motivated by the desire to stress the Vlach affiliation with ethnic Romanians in Yugoslavia.

The party programme specifies that its main objective is to gain 'national minority status for all Romanians (Vlachs) in the Republic of Serbia and FR Yugoslavia' so that they can enjoy the same rights as 'other national minorities'. The programme emphasizes that its request for the recognition of Vlach national minority status is not motivated by any aspiration for autonomy.

The Movement of the Romanians-Vlachs of Yugoslavia has its District Committee for Banat with headquarters in Kovacica. It cooperates with various community and cultural organizations, of particular importance is the cooperation with Astra Romana in Timisoara, which organizes annual symposia for Romanians outside Romania. The National Autonomous Party of Vlachs with its headquarters in Kladovo is of a local and marginal nature.

### Cultural life and media

The Movement sponsors programmes aimed at promoting the Romanian language and culture. However, its financial resources are very limited. The most important activity in this area is through the newspaper *Vorba noastra* and the organization of Romanian proficiency courses.

There are cultural and artistic societies and institutions geared to preserving and promoting Vlachs' cultural heritage. They participate in various local music and folklore events and the annual contest of the Bor municipality villages called From May to May. Cultural-artistic societies from eastern Serbia also participate in Romanian music and folklore festivals in Vojvodina.

The Movement has repeatedly asked Radio-Television Serbia and the authorities in Belgrade to help the publication of *Vorba noastra*, to introduce Romanian programmes on Radio Zajecar and other local stations in areas with a Vlach population, and to ensure the reception of Novi Sad TV programmes in Romanian. In response, the regime-controlled media launched attacks against the Movement accusing it of nationalism and separatism.

### Economic life

The Movement claims that the Vlachs are the poorest segment of the eastern Serbian population, due in part to economic discrimination against them.

# Other minority groups in Serbia

## Germans

According to the 1991 census there are 5,387 Germans in the FRY. Germans were the largest ethnic minority in the first Yugoslavia. According to the 1921 census the new state had a total of 12 million subjects, of whom there were 577,000 Germans. The collective punishment of Germans following the role of Nazi Germany in the Second World War included the forcible emigration of members of this minority in 1952–63. Today Germans do not constitute a majority population in any municipality in Serbia.

There are no German schools, media or political parties. There is a cultural association, however, the Danube German Club, in Novi Sad.

## Jews

According to the 1991 census there are 1,230 Jews in the FRY. Before the Second World War there were 75,000 Jews throughout the former Yugoslavia. Some 15,000 Jews in Yugoslavia survived the war and Holocaust. After the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 the Jewish population in Yugoslavia was halved, with 8,000 Jews emigrating to Israel. Just before the disintegration of the SFRY, the Alliance of the Jewish Communities had 6,000 registered members.

Today there are no Hebrew schools, media or Jewish political parties.

## Macedonians

According to the 1991 census there are 48,437 Macedonians in the FRY and 47,577 in Serbia. Of the total number of Macedonians in Yugoslavia 16,642 or 37 per cent live in Vojvodina, mostly in urban centres. Compared to the previous censuses the number of Macedonians has increased due to a positive migratory balance, i.e. their continual settlement in Yugoslavia and Serbia. Macedonians do not constitute a majority in any municipality.

There are no Macedonian schools, media or political parties.

## Yugoslavs

The ethnic category 'Yugoslav' was recognized in the 1991 census. Previously the categories 'Yugoslav' and

'nationally undetermined' were taken to mean the same thing. Thus in the 1961 census, for example, those who declared themselves as 'nationally undetermined' were placed in the group 'Yugoslav, nationally undetermined'. In the 1971 and 1981 censuses those who declared themselves as 'Yugoslavs' were included in the group 'nationally undetermined'. Since the 1991 census the answer 'Yugoslav' was no longer treated as 'nationally undetermined'.

According to the 1991 census, 349,784 citizens or 3.37 per cent of the total population living in the territory of Yugoslavia declared themselves as Yugoslavs. The figure for Serbia is 323,625 Yugoslavs or 3.31 per cent of the population. The largest numbers of Yugoslavs live in Vojvodina – i.e. 174,295 or 8.65 per cent of Vojvodina's population. Many Yugoslavs are registered in the areas heavily populated by ethnic Bulgarians.

'Yugoslavs' do not constitute the majority population in any municipality. The largest share of Yugoslavs in a municipality is in Dimitrovgrad where they account for 22 per cent of the population.

It is assumed that Croats, Serbs, peoples from mixed marriages, as well as members of small and dispersed ethnic groups, declare themselves to be Yugoslavs. It is also thought that this kind of ethnic declaration is motivated by a desire for assimilation with a view to achieving better social integration.

A political organization of Yugoslavs, called the Party of Yugoslavs was registered in Belgrade. It is a non-parliamentary and very marginal party.

# Minorities in Montenegro

**T**he Republic of Montenegro is Serbia's partner entity in the FRY. The Republic is governed by the FRY and Montenegro Constitutions. The FRY Constitution is of a higher legal order than the Constitution of Montenegro.

## Constitutional guarantees

**T**he FRY Constitution provides minimum domestic human and minority rights standards, and Montenegro – as part of the Federation – is bound by all the international standards ratified by the SFRY and the FRY.

The Constitution of Montenegro, unlike that of Serbia, provides additional minority rights protection to that which is in the FRY Constitution. The Constitution of Montenegro – like the Constitutions of Serbia and the FRY – guarantees the right to use minority languages before the organs of the state, and the right to education and information in minority languages. The Constitution of Montenegro – and the FRY Constitution – guarantees the right of minorities to establish and maintain contacts with their kin state. However, unlike the FRY and Serbia Constitutions, the Constitution of Montenegro states that persons belonging to national minorities have the right to apply to 'international institutions in order to protect their rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution' (Article 44). It also guarantees minorities the right to 'establish ... educational and cultural associations, financed voluntarily; the state may help such organizations'. Uniquely in the FRY, Montenegro's Constitution guarantees the right of members of national and ethnic groups to a proportional representation in public services and in the state organ (Article 73). These provisions result in a higher level of minority rights protection in Montenegro than in Serbia. Furthermore, in Montenegro there is a Council for the Protection of Rights of the Members of National and Ethnic Groups, which is guaranteed by the Montenegro Constitution. Its mandate is to preserve and protect the rights of minorities and it has a multi-ethnic membership.<sup>62</sup>

## Background

**M**ontenegro is a small country. Its territory of 13,812 sq. km has 615,035 inhabitants. According to the 1991 census, the population consists of a majority of Montenegrins (61.86 per cent) along with Bosniaks (14.57 per cent), Serbs (9.34 per cent), Albanians (6.57 per cent), Croats (1.01 per cent) and others. The majority of the population belongs to the Orthodox Christian tradition (Montenegrins and Serbs). Yet there is also a large Muslim population and a minority of Roman Catholics.

In Montenegro there has been significant progress towards democratization which, in turn, has improved the

status of the ethnic minorities living in the Republic. As proof of this, during and after the armed conflicts in Kosovo/a, approximately 70,000 ethnic Albanians, 10,000 Roma and a number of Serbs fled to Montenegro,<sup>63</sup> where they evidently felt safer. Roma refugees remain in Montenegro. Currently – at the end of 1999 – there is very little international aid for these refugees. This is partly because Montenegro is within the FRY and partly because most aid was for ethnic Albanian refugees, many of whom have returned to Kosovo/a. This limits the help available for Roma refugees and puts a strain on Montenegro's resources.

On a positive note, the situation has changed for minorities on a formal level. Numerous representatives of ethnic minorities participate in the government organs of the republic. For example, the Minister for the Rights of National Minorities and Ethnic Groups is an ethnic Albanian. Ethnic Albanians have been granted a special status so that they participate in the government organs of the republic in a greater proportion than the electoral results of their party the Rights of the Albanian Minority (DUA) would allow.

At the level of the Republic, the Bosniaks participate in the government with two ministerial and two vice-presidential seats, one in the government, the other in the Assembly. Bosniaks also have three assistant seats in the ministries and four delegates in the Assembly. In the first convocation of the Assembly, the predominantly Bosniak party (Party of Democratic Action – SDA) had nine delegates but no ministerial or vice-presidential seats either in the government or in the Assembly.

Despite these steps towards democratization, it still cannot be claimed that the position of the ethnic minorities in the republic has changed dramatically. None of the Bosniaks who are in the government have raised any of the current questions regarding their ethnic community. Such issues are, however, numerous and some of them are very serious, such as: the question of the return of the Bosniaks who were allegedly exiled from 28 villages in the municipality of Pljevlja; or the need for an investigation into the case of Bukovica where Bosniaks were allegedly kidnapped, murdered and robbed; or into the alleged kidnapping and murder of 19 citizens at the railway station of Strpci; and the alleged confiscation of a complex of forests in the municipality of Rozaje, where the majority of the population is Bosniak, and its allocation to the municipality of Berane, where the majority of the population is of Montenegrin ethnic origin.<sup>64</sup>

Ethnic minorities' access to employment has hardly changed in comparison with 1992–3 when Bosniaks and other groups such as Croats came under severe pressure from Montenegrin ultra-nationalists.<sup>65</sup> In the local government bodies, and especially in the municipal authorities, as well as in the courts, health system, police, public institutions and schools, Bosniaks are extremely under-represented (if at all). The only exception to this is in Plav and

Rozaje, where Bosniaks make up an absolute majority of 90 per cent of the population.

## Education

Ethnic Albanians in Montenegro are entitled to instruction in their first language from primary to secondary school level. There are six elementary schools in the municipalities of Plav, Rozaje and Ulcinj, and three secondary schools in Plav, Tuzi and Ulcinj.

The structure of schools and the school curriculum has not been adapted to the needs of Bosniaks.

## Media

The media in Montenegro is less controlled than in Serbia. In Montenegro there is no equivalent to the restrictive Public Information Act – which limits the freedom of expression – and was adopted in Serbia in 1998. This space creates conditions for diversity of opinion, a more favourable portrayal of minorities in the media, and increased minority access and provision. Montenegro TV broadcasts a daily 30-minute information programme in Albanian. There are also daily radio broadcasts in Albanian on the state radio. The Albanians in Montenegro also have a private radio station that has all-day broadcasts in Albanian.

The government of Montenegro finances a supplement in Albanian in the weekly *Polis* (Town). The Albanian association, Fati, finances a monthly magazine *Shpresa* (Press). Bosniaks in Montenegro have a cultural magazine entitled *Almanah* (Almanac) which is published twice a year.



# Outlook

In the twentieth century two Balkan and two World Wars have been waged, and in the last decade there have been as many as four wars in the region of the former Yugoslavia. Yet not one territorial or minority conflict has been definitively solved in the region to date.

One of the aims of the stability pact for South-Eastern Europe is to integrate the region into the rest of Europe. However, the stability pact has decided to leave Yugoslavia out of the pact 'until its present regime is not in power'. There is no certainty that the current regime will fall as soon as some are expecting, and second, who can guarantee that a new government will be more acceptable than the current one? One thing, however, is certain: until Serbia is stabilized economically and politically, there will be no true peace in the Balkans.

It is therefore necessary, without delay, to help Serbia to achieve democracy, to establish a civil society and a state ruled by law, and to carry out necessary economic reforms. This is possible even while the present regime is still in power – without letting it use these changes for its own survival.

However, many issues remain within Yugoslavia as a whole. The question of its borders is still open and so is that of its system. The autonomous province of Kosovo/a, which remained *de jure* in the FRY has been *de facto* placed under a UN protectorate after the NATO military intervention.

It is crucial that the rights of all the communities in Kosovo/a are protected. The key issue remains, what will be the final outcome of the Kosovo/a events? It is not out of the question that this province, populated by over 90 per cent of ethnic Albanians, could become, in the not too distant future, an independent state. The same applies to the future status of Montenegro. The leadership of this Republic has made it clearly known to the regime in Belgrade that its desire to remain in the Federation with Serbia is not at any cost. Montenegro is insisting on an equal status in the FRY. Otherwise, a plebiscite has been announced in which the people of Montenegro will determine the status of their Republic. That might, of course, mean its independence and its abandonment of the federation with Serbia.

A redefinition of relations in Serbia is also being requested by political parties in Vojvodina, the northern Serbian province. Many, including ethnic Serbs, consider Serbia, as being too highly centralized and are demanding a higher degree of political, cultural and economic autonomy for Vojvodina. The Vojvodina Hungarians, representing 17 per cent of the provincial population, are calling for a 'Hungarian autonomy', which also implies territorial autonomy in a 'Hungarian region' in northern Vojvodina, where they are a majority. The Bosniaks in Sandzak are also highly dissatisfied with their status and are advocating their rights in what could be a highly volatile region. There is evidence that the rights of Bulgarians, Roma,

Vlachs and others are being violated. Should ethnic tensions continue to increase, the FRY and even the Republic of Serbia could be seriously threatened with disintegration.

Radical economic, political and social reforms, carried out in former socialist countries in Europe, have generally not even begun in Yugoslavia – or at best they have only just started. This is particularly the case in Serbia, which lags behind in the transitional processes and has lost its step with the rest of Europe. The reluctance of the Belgrade regime to conform to the inevitable changes also encourages the disintegration processes. To make matters worse, the wars of the 1990s and the NATO bombing destroyed the Yugoslav economy and its infrastructure, exacerbating Yugoslavia's beleaguered economic position. According to the assessments of Group 17 – formed of eminent, independent Yugoslav economists – the total damage caused by the NATO bombing amounts to US \$29.6 billion.<sup>66</sup> Should Yugoslavia, alone, without the help of the international community, have to rebuild what has been destroyed, it is estimated it will take 15 years just to reach the pre-bombardment level, and a further 25 years to reach the 1989 level of production.<sup>67</sup>

Without the economic aid of the West, Yugoslavia is condemned to poverty. However, the West has made clear its determination not to invest a cent in Yugoslavia until Yugoslavia begins to carry out radical economic, political and social reforms and while President Milosevic, who is indicted by the Hague Tribunal on suspicion of being responsible for war crimes, is in power. Furthermore, Yugoslavia's civil society is isolated from international support. Yet, the regime of President Milosevic does not show the slightest sign of its readiness to yield power. On the contrary, it is resisting the efforts of the opposition to introduce democracy and to decentralize the state. The conflict between the regime and opposition has become more intense and has moved from the Parliament to the streets.

The combination of rising ethnic, political and social tensions risk drawing Yugoslavia into a new civil war. In it, like the past conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, minorities would, undoubtedly, suffer most.

# Recommendations

## To the FRY government

### 1. International human rights standards

**T**he SFRY had ratified numerous international human rights treaties, among them: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The FRY, as one of the successors to SFRY, automatically inherits the responsibility to uphold these international commitments. Suspension from the UN has in no way relieved the FRY of its international legal human rights obligations.

MRG urges the FRY to respect these obligations, and to recognize the authority of the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination to receive complaints by groups and individuals, by making the declaration provided for in Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

### 2. Recognition of national minorities

**T**he recognized status of 'national minority' provides the legal basis for a range of fundamental rights, both individual and collective. MRG urges the FRY to implement and adhere to these minimum standards.

The government of the FRY is also urged to recognize Croats, Roma and Vlachs as national minorities.

### 3. Participation and effective equality

**I**t is of paramount importance to highlight the need for the effective implementation of a policy of non-discrimination regarding all peoples, as laid down in the FRY Constitution (Article 20), with the objective of upholding international law obligations, preventing marginalization and nurturing the languages, religious beliefs and cultures of minority groups.

It is strongly recommended that action is taken to secure greater minority participation and employment in both the public and private sectors, and in public life. Support should be given to programmes which encourage the effective participation of marginalized minority groups with the essential aims of building confidence in the rule of law and in promoting peaceful coexistence.

### 4. In the aftermath of war

**M**RG calls for people indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to be

brought to trial in order that steps may be taken to address the horrific crimes committed against civilian populations and to facilitate the process of reconciliation.

The FRY must find non-violent means of addressing ethnic tensions. It must also create the necessary conditions for the peaceful return of refugees and internally displaced peoples.

### 5. Strengthening the independent media

**G**iven the role the state-controlled media has played in fuelling ethnic conflict and the vital importance an independent media plays in the establishment and maintenance of a democratic society, MRG stresses the immediate need to support widespread and independent media in all its forms. A media needs to be fostered which provides balanced information and represents all the peoples of society: it should give serious attention to programming and reporting in the languages of minority groups.

### 6. Ombudsman

**T**he institution of an Ombudsman on human rights, should be established.

## To the international community

### 7. Strengthening civil society

**T**he international community must ensure that it does not isolate FRY's civil society. It should make funds available to support local government and NGO initiatives which promote peaceful coexistence, human rights, local media and minority-language education. It should also support regional inter-ethnic programmes to enable the peoples of Yugoslavia to learn from what has happened in the region in the last decade.

### 8. Early warnings

**M**RG urges the international community to act once it has received warnings of potential conflicts in the FRY. MRG calls on the international community to carefully monitor the position of minorities in Yugoslavia and to pay particular attention to the build up of militarization in Sandzak, the potential for conflict in Montenegro and Vojvodina, and to continued tensions in Kosovo/a.



- 1 This Report uses 'Kosovo/a'. The Serbian authorities refer to Kosovo and Metohija, the Serbian people generally use Kosovo and ethnic Albanians refer to Kosova.
- 2 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimate.
- 3 The FRY is not a signatory to the stability pact.
- 4 The SFRY was comprised of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.
- 5 Obviously there have been many population displacements and changes since this census, and also census figures in general do not usually give a good reflection of the real number of minorities in a given population. The 1991 census was boycotted by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo/a, therefore the data for ethnic Albanians in 1991 is estimated. However, these figures still show the multiethnic nature of Yugoslavia.
- 6 The next presidential elections should be held in 2001.
- 7 These parliamentary bodies still exist but have not met due to the tension between the leadership of Serbia and Montenegro.
- 8 See South Slavic Service information.
- 9 See the official census figures, vol. 3, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Belgrade, 1993.
- 10 *Report on Human Rights in Serbia for 1997*, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 1998, pp. 42, 84 and 122–4.
- 11 At this time, Bosnia-Herzegovina was one republic. Today it is referred to as Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- 12 Kosovo and Metohija was the official name of the province; as mentioned earlier, it is generally referred to in this Report as Kosovo/a (with Metohija forming part of Kosovo/a).
- 13 Pertanovic, B., *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1978* (History of Yugoslavia 1918–78), Belgrade, Nolit, 1980, pp. 29–35.
- 14 *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* (Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia), vol. V, Zagreb, Leksikografski zavod Jugoslavije, 1971, p. 118.
- 15 See the magazine *Zastava* (The Flag), Novi Sad, 18 November 1919.
- 16 For more on King Alexander's reign see *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, vol. I, p. 125.
- 17 Boskovic, M., *Sesta Kolona* (The Sixth Column), Zagreb, Birotehnika, and Novi Sad, NISSRO Dnevnik, 1985, p. 66.
- 18 *Istorija Jugoslavije*, 1918–1978, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
- 19 Letica, S., *Cetvrta Jugoslavija* (The Fourth Yugoslavia), Zagreb, Centar za informacije i publicitet, 1989, p. 211.
- 20 The Milosevic regime can do this because of its control of much of the media in Serbia. Many Serbs are still really ignorant about what is happening in their own country. *Ibid.*, pp. 212 and 242–54.
- 21 *Report of the Human Rights Commissioner on the Situation of Human Rights in Kosovo*, UNHCR, September 1999, and information provided on 10 December 1999 in Pristina by the UN mission in Kosovo/a.
- 22 *Human Rights Violations in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia 1991–1995*, Humanitarian Law Centre, Belgrade, 1997, p. 62.
- 23 *Report on Human Rights in Serbia for 1997*, *op. cit.*
- 24 Valic-Nedeljkovic, D., 'Richocheting words', *Media*, Belgrade, 1997, p. 18. A notable exception is the strong political role played by the Albanian minority media in Kosovo/a.
- 25 The political activity of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the support of Serbian nationalism were especially strong in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the regime of Radovan Karadzic. Even after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, sections of the Church continued to give support to extremist Serbian politicians.
- 26 *Report on Human Rights in Serbia for 1997*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–2.
- 27 Bunjevci are a national minority in Serbia. They live in northern Vojvodina and came from Dalmatia (Croatia) and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the seventeenth century. Many declare themselves to be Croats, others believe that they are a separate people.
- 28 Scan's poll results were reported in *Nasa Borba*, 1–2 August 1998, Belgrade.
- 29 See the *Federal Bureau of Statistics*, vol. 3, Belgrade, 1993.
- 30 *Velika Albanija* (Great Albania), Belgrade, Institut za geopoliticke studije, 1998.
- 31 Nedeljkovic, M., *Kosovo i svetski rat* (Kosovo/a and World War), Belgrade, Verzal Press, 1999, p. 219.
- 32 *Ibid.*, pp. 172–3.
- 33 *Zaduzbina* (Endowment), no. 45, Belgrade, June 1999.
- 34 In Serbian national mythology the dominant myth is that of the Battle of Kosovo and 'Heavenly Serbia'. This myth attributed the Serbs' defeat by the Turks (in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389) and the loss of the Serbian medieval state to the Serbs' preference for moral salvation (the heavenly kingdom) over military victory. According to Dr J. Maric, *Kakvi smo mi Srbi* (What we Serbs are like), Belgrade, Slobodan Jervic, 1998, p. 149, the Kosovo myth and a faith in 'Heavenly Serbia' are romantic glorifications of the past and of the Serbs' superiority over other peoples. Maric concludes that this is a dangerous illusion for the Serbs.
- 35 *Srpsko-Albanski dijalog* (Serbian-Albanian Dialogue), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 1997, pp. 53–4.
- 36 See *Human Rights Violations in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia 1991–5*, Belgrade, Humanitarian Law Center, 1997, pp. 62–3.
- 37 UNHCR, September 1999, *op. cit.*
- 38 For further information, see that provided earlier in the text and referenced under note 21.
- 39 For further documentation of the violence, see the report by the OSCE *Kosovo/Kosova, As Seen, As Told*, Warsaw, ODIHR, 1999.

- 40 See articles by S. Alomerovic in *Danas*, Belgrade, 9–26 August 1999.
- 41 See reports by the European Roma Rights Center.
- 42 Statement made at a press conference on 23 July 1999 at Kragujevac.
- 43 *Human Rights Violations in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia 1991–95, op. cit.*, pp. 9–12.
- 44 See *Nasa Borba*, 15–16 August 1998.
- 45 Information on the Enforcement of the Law on the Official Use of the Language and Alphabet in the Municipalities in the Territory of Vojvodina, adopted by the Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina on 5 February 1997.
- 46 *National Minority Members on their Status and Ethnic Relations in Vojvodina*, 1994.
- 47 1991 Census.
- 48 *Report on Human Rights in Serbia for 1998*, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade, 1999.
- 49 See *Human Rights in Violations in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia 1991–95, op. cit.*, pp. 15–17 for examples of abuses.
- 50 This represents c. US \$6,000 (official exchange rates) or less than US \$2,000 (unofficial rate).
- 51 See S. Alomerovic in *Danas*, 9–26 August 1999.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 *Romologija* 2, Novi Sad, April 1997.
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- 55 Simic, D., *Studija o socijalnoj integraciji Roma* (The Study on the Social Integration of Roma), Association of Rom Societies of the Republic of Serbia, Nis, 1993.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 For further information on the Roma see Liégeois, J-P and Gheorghe, N. *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority*, London, MRG, 1995.
- 58 Simic, *op. cit.*
- 59 *Ibid.*
- 60 *Blic*, 10 November 1997, Belgrade.
- 61 *Nasa Borba*, 5 August 1997, Belgrade.
- 62 For further analysis see *Human Rights in Yugoslavia 1998*, Belgrade, The Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, 1991, pp. 169–74.
- 63 UNHCR, September 1999 and European Roma Rights Center, July 1999 figures.
- 64 *Human Rights Violations in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia 1991–95, op. cit.*, pp. 35–44.
- 65 Ultra-nationalist paramilitary forces under the control of Chetnik Vojvoda Milika – 'Cebo' Dacevic. Members of his group were charged with terrorism; although convicted Dacevic received a suspended sentence. *Ibid.*
- 66 Group 17, *Annual Balance Sheet*, Belgrade, Stubovi kulture, June 1999.
- 67 *Ibid.*
- of the anti-Yugoslav fascist emigration), Zagreb, Birotehnika and Novi Sad, NISSRO Dnevnik, 1985.
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