

# SELECTED ESSAYS (1)

by young authors



Helsinki Committee  
for Human Rights in Serbia  
Belgrade, 2004

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This is the first collection of selected essays by the authors who attended the courses and seminars the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia organized in 2004.

Within the three-year project “Building up Democracy and Good Governance in Multiethnic Communities” that is being implemented with the assistance of the European Union, twelve 5-day “schools of democracy” and eight 3-day seminars under the common title “Life and Living in Multiethnic Environments” were held in 2004 in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac and Novi Pazar. Over 500 trainees attended these courses and seminars.

The project is aimed at capacitating young people – by the means of attractive and interactive courses of training – not only for a life in multiethnic communities that are particularly burdened with the adverse experience of the recent past, mutual distrust and stereotypes, but also for a life in the conditions that mark a modern democracy and reflect its standards. An objective as such implies, among other things, rational perception of notions, developments and trends that are in Serbia still blurred, marginalized and subject to relativism or, moreover, to various and even misleading interpretations. The Helsinki Committee’s experience testifies this is all about a process that takes time but is worthy of effort – the more so since young people, as evidenced by the selected writings as well, fully perceive it as an imperative need of their own.

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**Selma Dolovac**

(Novi Pazar)

## **IN THE ARMS OF VICIOUS REALITY**

Let me introduce myself – my name is Child.

Surname? Well, Child.

Nationality, religion? Again, Child.

Age? Newly-born Child, living in...well, in the world of children.

I beg your pardon? How come I'm here? Well, it wasn't my will. And, believe me, nobody asked me anything. I even resisted for nine months. They were a little rough and, against my will, I simply stepped into this... no, I fell into this world. And, believe me, I met with problems immediately – I didn't hear quite well, especially with my left ear. Probably due to many rifle salvoes, fired as a salute to me. Or, perhaps, to get me accustomed to that terrible music. It's probably a sign that they already have one person more. God, I'm going to be a real hero! What then, I ask myself, being as lonely as I am, and left to to my own thoughts, while I watch them with open eyes, so drunk and dazed. They were probably celebrating my appearance, but again without me or my assent. I remebered. Oh, my God, what crowd and noise! They could barely agree about my name. But they could simply leave me with my own, as if there was a much nicer one. How happy they were from some drunken madness, as if they had forgotten about me. They almost don't take notice of me.

But I can see them, and watch them more and more. I notice that they are getting ready for somewhere. Well, yes, I feel a presentiment already, for I am a clever child. But I'm not sure whether it will be a khoja or a priest, church or mosque, that will determine my official name, nationality and creed. I know, without even consulting me, as if it weren't my life.

To my great astonishment, I understood I wouldn't be Child any more. My thoughts were not all right, or that's what it looked like to me. As if to agree with me, they rushed so fast and wandered somewhere in front of me. I would have caught up with them, but my legs didn't listen to me all that well. I set down and let them guide me. And they...well, what thoughts, it was a real film tape, the whole television series without an end! So many toys and kisses...What a sweet child I was...And food...fruits, vegetables, sweets...so much so that I began to walk. And I gained weight...becoming a plump thing really. Not so much time elapsed, and I found myself surrounded by many kids. An auntie, they told me she was a teacher, was with us, probably instead of mama. God, how many fairy tales and stories have I heard from her! I met a child there, and we became pals.

One day, auntie embraced all three of us, and looking at me said: "They are refugees. Their parents were killed in a war in some country." She mentioned the name of that country, but being moved too much by that story, I didn't remember the name. Out of a child's curiosity perhaps, and perhaps not, I asked her: "Are there any more children like that?" She caressed me and answered: "Yes, unfortunately, there are many children like that." "But, ma'am, did their parents die from a rifle?", I asked, and heard the same shots from my birthday celebration.

As I have already said, the series goes on, follow up after follow up. And here I am again, in the arms of an uncle. I looked back, and saw more children in the laps of other uncles. Standing on some boards, all of them told me this was a rostrum. And with so many people in front. I tried to count them, but I knew how to only up to a hundred. Soon, my problem was solved by the uncle who held me in his arms. I heard him say joyfully, looking at the mass: "So help me, there is more than five thousand." And then he took a microphone, and such a loud voice was heard from it that it gave me the creeps. He became very noisy, building the houses and roads, putting the streets and hospitals in order, promising *dženet*, or if you like a paradise in this world. And they replied in chorus, approving of all those constructions, all that prettiness, as if they had been participating in them.

They feel the machines humming, and the heat of the new asphalt, the fragrance of the flowers just planted which intoxicates. And again, from the top of their voices: "Leader, leader...!". And he winningly extends one arm, barely supporting me with the other. God, when he lifted me, he shouted: "We gathered here so that this child and all children would be better off. To secure a happy childhood for them, to provide them with education and keep them away from drugs and other vices. In a word, to let them enjoy all rights stipulated by the international conventions and resolutions on children's rights."

Darkness fell in front of me, from which shadows of people who lost their heads appeared, and lots of banners in children's hands. I cuddled up in my uncle's arms and, frightened and crying, I said: "I want to go home to my mummy!"

How the time flies! I started going to school. And here I am, in the second grade, and making plans for the future. I have really grown up, and I'm entering slowly into the reality which surrounds me. The time has come. Some elections again. Columns coming up from all sides. They called them the "party columns of supporters" of a certain party. Each had its own direction of moving toward the place of certain party's meeting. I got a banner and some money, becoming thus a part of these columns. I stood on the roof of a car which was running at full speed toward a party's destination. The largest part of the column were the kids of my own age and younger. How many of these columns there were, every single one having its leader, banners, direction and destination! As well as the stand at the destination, from which the well know voices reverberated, which the mass rewarded with shouts: "Leader, leader!" In a trance, from the roof of the car, I waved "my" banner with all my might, shouting words which even I didn't hear, due to engine noise. I looked forward, along the road we were racing down, and I thought we were going toward the fulfillment of my dreams. I looked back at young people everywhere, at children in the prime of their lives. What strength it was, simply hurrying up to "its" goal by the sheer force of youth. Unrestrainable, it seemed to me. At some crossroads of our lives, we have suddenly met,... us and them. Is it really so? It has rather been an encounter of us with ourselves and of them with themselves.

I heard a shot, the same as the one which announced my arrival into this world. I was glad that some child was coming. There will be more

of us. And then – the second and the third shots, and darkness fell in front of my eyes. But they kept shooting, or it was maybe us. The silhouettes keep emerging in human form, holding weapons in their hands. Chaos began. The screams of the children, mixed with curses and shots, made a frightful noise. A wail was heard: “They killed a man or a woman,... or maybe a child.”

I was alone again, left to myself and my fear.

Everything calmed down and the dead silence fell. I went slowly forward and was horror-stricken. I saw a pool on the asphalt. It was a man’s blood. A little bit further - the same, but a woman’s. Neither he nor she had been in the columns, but were simply going their way, down their and our street. I closed my eyes and leaned on the wall which happened to be there unexpectedly, and sank into darkness which was again around me and in front of me. Suddenly, that uncle appeared in the darkness with a child in his arms, and then another one. I saw in front of me the whole choir which started singing at the top of their voices a well rehearsed song, which I thought I had heard before. The humming of the mass was heard again: “Leader, leader!” They were probably cheering the director, or the conductor of the choir.

As if I had a bad dream, I heard a child’s scream: “Don’t do it to me!” I opened my eyes and looked for the child, but I was alone. Leaning on the wall, staring into the distance and looking for the columns which passed by, ours or theirs, no matter whose. I got scared again and rushed home by a shortcut, stopping in one of the poorly lit passages. The night was falling already. In semi-darkness, I saw human shadows again and approached them quietly, meeting with a terrible sight. There were three children of approximately my age. One of them was holding a syringe. He approached the second kid with the needle, for he had rolled his sleeve already. But then, having seen me, he called me to join them. With his hand held out, he went toward me and took hold of my arm. “No!”, I screamed and desperately took to my heels through the darkness. The more and more inaudible and vague voices were left behind me, as well as an almost insane laughter of the kids. Carried by the intoxicating aroma of the drug, they have already wandered into some world of their own.

Life went on. One day, I don’t know how, I found myself in a well furnished, big hall, full of nice people. They let me pass through and to the first rows where the children were. And again, the sight which I had



already witnessed. The voice was heard, familiar to me. I looked forward and saw him. He was at the speaker's rostrum on the stand, the very uncle who used to hold me in his arms once.

He was formally dressed this time, addressing the mass in a somewhat subdued tone of voice: "We must do everything to secure a happy childhood to our kids. Bearing that goal in mind, and abiding by the international conventions and resolutions, we must secure the application of all children's rights which are guaranteed by these regulations. Aiming at that," he said, watching the mass somehow exaltedly, "we must, and I herewith emphasize this, prevent any abuse of the children to political purposes. We all know it too well that children have guaranteed rights to play and go to school. In other words, to be just Children. Furthermore, we must protect the children from the use of drugs and other intoxicating substances, as well as from any misuse by us, their parents. Children are our treasure which we must take care of and rear...", and all that in the same veneer. "Hear, hear!", the roar of the mass was heard again. And I heard a shot again.

The darkness fell in front of me again, in which I saw a man lying, with blood around him, and that boy again. Holding the syringe, smiling, he approached the man. He rolled up his sleeve and injected the fluid, so that the man wouldn't feel any pain. "Not me!", my own shriek echoed again. Frightened, as if in a trance, I rushed to the entrance and tried to run away from it all, carried by an incredible strength. I looked back and saw children running after me. I noticed the columns of children running from all sides, ours, theirs, all children. And then the columns poured into a vast river of childhood and youth. Carried by youthful strength, they rushed off by some new road to reach their goal, to their own world which they would build by themselves and be happy in it, without the uncle who liked to hold Child in his arms.

**Višnja Bacanović**  
(Novi Sad)

## **SNOWBALL FIGHTS**

*The worst places in hell are reserved for those  
who, in time of moral crisis, hold on to their  
neutrality.*

Dante Alighieri.

**A**t the meeting of sociology students from South-Eastern Europe in Ljubljana, in 2002, the representatives of each country were asked to present their homeland. Lacking inspiration, but of the mind that we had to do something about it, the students from Croatia and we, the students from Serbia, have decided to make, I dare say, a performance. We went out and had a snowball fight. Croats against Serbs (or the other way round). As soon as we had finished our snowball fight, we set down to the table to have more fun. We don't know even now if our colleagues from Bulgaria, Romania or Moldavia were fully aware of our intention, but we were. The talks we had then were very important for each of us.

As an individual building her own social network, it was the first time I had an opportunity to actually see a man who grew up and had

been living all these years on the other side of the river. These encounters, as well as many others which followed, made me try to discover my own truth about the space I lived in, people who lived there with me, and about myself. Without getting into a philosophic discussion on the possibility of objective knowledge, I do not pretend to claim that my truth is the only valid one, or that I am the only one who has to be right, or that what I have found out is necessarily objective, truthful, and right. It has more to do with an attitude, based on knowledge, and, most of all, with setting up a base from which I start on my next journey. Together with my student colleagues, as well as with other young people who are not, I shall live in some future Serbia, truly ours. To be that, like an ancient, derelict house inherited from ancestors, Serbia has to be renovated, in a way to become sufficiently light, comfortable, spacious and dry, so that life here could be of high quality.

We must resolve our relationship with the past, but not staying in it forever, nor giving it up. We cannot give it up, for we have existed in it, and sometimes we cannot even if we haven't. Each and every one of us is responsible, if not for anybody else, then at least for himself, when choosing where and how he wishes to live. Responsibility means readiness to bear the consequences of our actions, even if we had not foreseen them well enough before acting. For "the road to hell is paved with good intentions". Responsibility turns up when we have a choice. Being subjects in a society, we have a possibility of choice, except in the case of tyranny. It is said that Milosevic was a tyrant. Yes, but only later. At the beginning, whether or not we want to admit it, He was a response to the wishes of citizens (or the "people") at the first multi-party elections in Serbia. That can be explained: confusing the levels of building up a state, and the principles by which this was being done. The principles of "statehood" (ideal type:USA), and of ethnicity (ideal type: Germany), were intermingled in the SFRY, so that the ethnicity, the national identity, was mixed up, like religion, with ideology. At the very moment when people couldn't base their identity on ideology (i.e. that they were Yugoslavs, communists, brothers and equals), they had to found it firmly in the ethnos. Based on this, the development of national states began. This is why (although not entirely due to that), and because of the past which had not been overcome and which had been lying dormant "under the carpet", the process was so bloody.

Dusting the room by pushing dirt under the carpet has never been an efficient method in the long run, but we still have to bear in mind "the long term" (Brodell). This is, of course, only one aspect of the matter and quite a simplified explanation, probably even reductionism, but the point is in something else. Everything can be explained theoretically and analytically, but it doesn't mean that, if something is expected or "normal", it should be taken as inherently positive and sustained in its origin and development. Nazism in Germany of the thirties was explicable by social conditions of the time, but that doesn't imply it was the right way in solving such problems.

On the practical side, the demand for overcoming the past appears as an operational one because of the demand for cooperation with the Hague Tribunal. We should set ourselves that task in the domain of its essence, its point, its idea. It's clear that the decisions in that respect are made on the level of political institutions, but it's also clear that, even in this quasi-democracy, some ordinary people decide what these institutions are going to be like.

Unfortunately, overcoming the past is more often than not being reduced to the question of the number of dead who are so lightly compared, or of arguing which side had more compatriots killed (and without any notion about a single man on either side being one too many), or of having "ours" and "theirs" as regards the numbers, history, and all the rest. It's obvious that this leads us nowhere. We must also halt and at least try to understand; comprehend when a young man, who was sixteen when he went to the front, cannot sit at the same table with me, a Serbian woman; when people return from front (half)mad due to all the horrors they had been witnessing. Crime cannot be explained nor whiped off by reasoning, but can be prevented by the latter. These people have to be helped in a way, but also all the others who had been watching frontline battles, even from an armchair. This cannot be achieved by "An eye for an eye" logic. The message of Dostoevski, that there is no idea in the world which is worthy of a single child's tear, has always been closer to my heart. An attempt to excuse ourselves by getting equal with the evil does not lead us to a catharsis which we need. If I put to fire somebody's holy object because he had done it to mine, I have no right whatsoever to pass judgement on him, without doing it on myself. Simply, the logic of the "sum zero" (a concept in transactional analysis, the creator of which is

considered to be Eric Burne; it stands for an attitude of a person in conflict, i.e. that he can be right only when his "adversary" is not right in anything) is not the logic which appears to be effective even in individual conflicts.

Similar attempts to establish "who started it" are even more absurd. When I, as every honest traitor, stayed in Vienna during the air-strikes against FR of Yugoslavia, a certain lady reproached me, as if I were an emissary of Milosevic, for "starting it" in Kosovo. I didn't defend myself, but rather said that it couldn't be important who had started it and was, in fact, a "dead end". There is no place for determinism in this. We must put the stoppers on this and admit our mistakes to ourselves, so we wouldn't make them any more. For that is not only irresponsible, but stupid, too. The contemporary persecution mania in Serbia is also quite inefficient, being manifested in the conspiracy theories which imply that everything has been devised by somebody else (be it free masons or similar phantoms), so as to act maliciously toward us. Mr Miroslav Toholj claims in a television programme, and I paraphrase, that a new concept of genocide has been devised, in a way to accuse a hero, a war invalid, for liberating Srebrenica. I ask myself how far the freedom of speech reaches in Serbia today.

As soon as we are ready to think and talk, we'll have become ready to stop killing each other and let Eros in all of us kill only Thanatos; to accept the differences in a way to become citizens, for they can differ from each other in every respect except in the fact that they are all citizens, and free at that, to an extent in which their freedom does not mean slavery of others.

There is a consensus in contemporary Serbia that we should "go into Europe", that this should become a civil state, and alike. However, the ideas about the way this should happen are totally divergent (according to some, one of the ways is for whole Europe to become Serbia), as well as about the very meaning of the civil society. What is clear at an acoustic level is that the civil society is tied to the city as a space. A city appears with market economy and the need for a place for exchange of goods. Notions closely tied to the concept of civil society are liberalism, human rights, and market economy. Among other things, the latter, in accordance with liberal ideology, means equality, but not the collectivistic or mechanical one (Emile Durkheim), but the equality in the sense of equal market situation (Max Weber) or, more exactly, equal starting position from which we move

into a market and social contest. Integration and collective consciousness can be preserved and can exist at different levels. The division into public and private sphere is also crucial. It is understood that between our four walls we can be whatever and however we want to be, but in the public sphere, “in the market”, we are only citizens, although “in the urbane, the differences are known, recognized, accepted and marked” (Henri Lefebvre). We don’t have to like each other, but we must respect each other. Also, we don’t have to think as one, but we must be able to hear everyone’s opinion. According to some people, I have been “imbued with western, Serb-hating ideology”, “a chauvinist toward her own people”, and the like. As for myself, I would always estimate my “chauvinism” as a “constructive critique of the extant situation”. I accept that, due to my youth, I am now a prompt, manipulated revolutionary, but I hope not to become a conservative in my old age. Without getting into the authenticity of such a claim, my ideology isn’t destructive. This is the only important matter for me. If ideology means an attitude, an idea, or readiness to act for the sake of carrying out the idea, then I’m all for it. I want to realize my basic human right, the right to live, in Serbia, where all of mine has been and is being created. I don’t want to give it up for the sake of golden cutlery at the court of Emperor Dušan’s, which means very little to me if I don’t have anything to eat with it, for the “roots” which were mentioned and promised a long time ago could be eaten with hands only.

If we understand the non-hatred toward others as the chauvinism toward ourselves (and ours), we commit a dangerous substitution of thesis. Here, nationalism, as distinct from chauvinism, is taken as something positive. By its very suffix, *-ism*, nationalism is one-sided. It should not be made equal to the awareness of national identity which is, willy-nilly, built into our personal identity. Similarly, nationalism is identified with patriotism, while anti-nationalism is identified with a drive to destroy one’s own nation. The awareness of national identity has to be built, like any identity, with regard to the Other, but not in conflict with that Other. Striving for the survival of a nation is one thing, while striving for hegemony is quite another.

Due to all this, I shall carry on admiring my Croat friend from Croatia who comes, according to his own definition, from an *ustashi* family, and has survived the war, suffering from its consequences. As a young boy, he used to count yule logs in front of the houses after Christmas to

see how many Orthodox people there were, but he allowed his experience and knowledge to change him. From him, I have had one of the warmest embraces of my life.

I have not understood well my own life nor somebody else's  
And secret things are taking place in me now  
I have left people to be a complete man  
From childhood I only knew how to dream  
And tell myself look at this world  
Isn't it nice I say to myself  
Have a look who you are your time has already come  
You were a boy now you are not any more  
You were afraid and now you are not  
There is a passionate confusion inside  
Clear and quiet like no confusion  
Oh how nicely I ride my bicycle

Vujica Rešin Tucić

**Taufik Abul Suud**

(Novi Sad)

**THE TITLE IS IN YOUR MIND,  
IN YOUR HEART, IN YOUR SOUL**

The very moment I got it,  
I knew I had to put it on paper.  
I was given a T-shirt red,  
with short sleeves  
and an inscription in black:  
*FREE PALESTINE.*

I had to put it on paper,  
for the wrath in me was getting  
bigger and bigger every day,  
which none of my pals,  
that T-shirt,  
see the way I see it.

Each of them said:  
*GET ONE FOR ME TOO, I AM ALL FOR THAT THING  
OF YOURS.*

And I,  
I have only nodded affirmatively,  
smiled,



and, burning inside, asked myself:  
WHOSE, PRAY, IS THAT THING?  
It's neither a thing of some people there who call themselves  
the Palestinians,  
nor a thing of some people there who call themselves the Jews,  
it is the thing of all humankind.  
Because, for me, there are no Palestinians,  
there are no Jews,  
there are only people for me.  
And now, my brother, you are asking yourself  
why am I telling this to you,  
because all that has nothing to do with you,  
while I am telling you again that it does.  
Recall, my brother,  
recall the times passed.  
Both you and me,  
and the whole bunch,  
my brother,  
had been watching for decades on that wretched box  
how they killed each other,  
how they cut each other's throat,  
how they shed blood;  
in our madness,  
we have been watching the suffering and the pain  
in that far-away country.  
And we are watching today.  
And even in the days long gone,  
some people thought seriously about it,  
some did not,  
and some never would.  
And then,  
for us who live in the beautiful Balkans, it was our turn.  
Us, who had been watching all that,  
but did not begin to see on time.  
Water was boiling for a number of years,  
and then somebody boiled coffee in it,  
so we all drank that bitter coffee together

and did not fall asleep for a number of years.  
After we drank it, we went off in three directions,  
and lived all those sleepless years  
on our own side of the street.  
On the first side were those who  
roused themselves from coffee  
and tried to do something,  
but there were only a few of them, too few,  
and their strength was slight,  
hence their mission failed.  
On the other side were those who  
didn't do anything.  
I was amongst them, too.  
On the third side,  
on the third were the canibals.  
I don't know, my brother, if you remember,  
but I do,  
and can't ever forget that sight.  
He had a blue collar  
and was strangling that poor devil,  
that soldier, on the tank,  
while his helmet was sliding slowly from his head.  
Yes,  
it was us who had let him,  
us, who didn't do anything.  
Yes, we  
let that canibal go.  
We let all the canibals  
run in all directions in the beautiful Balkan fields,  
in the fields of green,  
in the fields of bliss.  
We have let them go.  
In the name of some Croatship,  
in the name of some Serbianship,  
in the name of some Moslemship,  
with their damned flags,  
to cut throats,

dig up eyeballs,  
shed blood,  
blow winds of horror  
and sow graves.  
So, here we are today.  
When all those atrocities had already been done,  
not many years had passed,  
and, just because not many had passed,  
I cannot believe my own eyes  
that, after all this, there is still a crowd  
which barks,  
which croaks,  
which yelps like old machine-guns.  
Just because of all that, my brother,  
which I have told you in confidence,  
I pray to Him,  
I pray for me,  
I pray for you,  
I pray for all of us,  
and that's why I beg of you  
to pray for yourself,  
to pray for all of us.  
For only in this way,  
if all of us prayed together,  
with our prayers,  
our thoughts,  
our words,  
our acts,  
only thus would we set off on the roads  
from which we wouldn't have to remove the rocks,  
for they would be removed by themselves.  
We shall sprinkle these roads  
with human goodness,  
human happiness  
and love,  
yes, my brother,  
with human love.

*P.S. The lines in which the three damned words are mentioned,  
These words I had to arrange somehow  
in a way to put them in my poem,  
although all three are equally distasteful to me.  
And you, my brother,  
if their order is essential to you,  
you are, my brother, still far away...*

**Andreja Vražalić**

(Belgrade)

## **DEMOCRACY AND PROSPERITY: A DIRECT OR A REVERSED PROPORTION?**

*Democracy is the worst system...  
Except all others.*

Winston Churchill

**T**he prevailing intellectual climate is a total belief in democracy. The more one country is “democratic”, the better for it. Democracy and economic prosperity are thought to be linked to one another. With its welfare state, Swedish social democracy is considered (at least here, in Serbia) to have the highest level of democracy. The equation says: more political freedoms = richer country. If only we became democrats, the economy would flourish.

Well, it wouldn't.

The USA and the West European countries are not the only examples of democracy. There was the one of Athens first, and then many

democracies of the “Third World”: India, Israel, and many Latin American ones. But they are not so well known. Why?

Liberal economists (see, for example, Prokopijević, *Konstitucionalna ekonomija*) have a clear view that the political and the economic freedom are two different things. A country can be democratic but poor, like India or Israel, or a dictatorship with strong economy (Chile, The Asian Tigers, China). It's for the best when the two freedoms are joined together, but this is quite rare. Modern examples are Switzerland, Estonia, the USA, but they are not perfectly free economically, For example, the USA have a progressive income tax.

India and the Latino-American democracies are not so well known because they are poor and burdened with internal strife. They are democratic states. They have free elections, institutions, distribution of power. They don't have only one major item: the wealth.

## Democracy

Some logic says that, if democracy is the rule of all, the authorities should try to secure the functioning of economy for the well-being of everyone. Why isn't there, then, a clear correlation between democracy and wealth? Perhaps the answer should be looked for in the very nature of democracy. It is thought that a society can have two goals: freedom and equality. These two goals are mutually contradictory. The more freedom there is, those more capable will be better off, so that the disparities occur which are an eyesore for the less able; the more equality is enforced, the capable will be more restricted and society will stagnate. The matter of social goals and perceptions is now questioned: which is better? The socialists' argument is that re-distribution and stability are better. The liberals say that growth is better, and in the long run, an increase of prosperity for all. In practice, the exactness of liberal arguments has been proved. All countries which are rich today, such as the USA, the Western Europe, or the Commonwealth countries, had a period of free market, but this was during the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century, when some of them were not democracies. How comes that democracies, more often than not, opt for socialism? One should only look at one of the first known democracies, in Athens of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. One of the pillars of Solon's reforms was the writing off of the debts. Where would you find more socialism? When

democracy was re-established by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, steps were taken, little by little, with the aim to help the poor and the not-so-poor citizens. It's possible to make a certain parallel with Europe of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The state intervention and social measures became more frequent. Although their failure has been clearly demonstrated, with communism having collapsed – the state interventions are still not given up.

### Wherein the “Error” Of Democracy Lies?

The answer would be: in the balance of power. Democracy is definitely considered the best type of governmental structure (absolutely correct), while it is thought that voters don't make mistakes (absolutely incorrect). As if the people, in the fair and democratic elections of 1933, didn't give most seats to nazis and communists (for those who don't know: Hitler was nominated the chancellor to prevent communists from taking over the rule. He succeeded, but...). What nonsense did the Parliament of Athens pass during the Peloponnesian War (violation of of truce, execution of competent generals...). Chaves was elected in fair elections. That's what democracy is: the rule of the people. Problem with democracy (as well as with any other regime) is in absoluteness of power. There are many similarities between unlimited tyranny and unlimited democracy. Lord Acton said: *Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely*. If there is no effective means of restricting the rulers, they will naturally tend to exercise power (only) to their own benefit. Democracy is the most honest way of passing decisions , for the opinions of at least a majority of citizens is respected. Since people rule in a democracy, it means that the half+1 of citizens can enforce their will onto others. If there were no limitations, they could compel those others to forced labour or put them in prison, and everything would be democratic. Since it's a natural fact that there are fewer rich than middle-class people, and the latter often fewer than poor people, it's no wonder a government rules in accordance with the will of economically weaker majority. Majority naturally asks to make its political power into an economic one. And there you have a social democracy. It is a natural product of democratic policy. The poor majority doesn't want to wait for the whole economy to develop, so that its standard of living could be raised too. But why wait, when one can get everything through social

transfers (i.e. pillaging of the rich) and help of the authorities? Of course, that's all democratic, for the people doesn't make mistakes.

However, everyone does, and so does the people in question (Milošević was democratically elected...the first time). Power corrupts. No one is immune to the attacks of jealousy or selfishness, everyone has a bad day sometimes...But how to resist if it happens to the whole people? Certainly not by introducing a dictatorship? No way! Two nations, heirs to a long and glorious tradition of protecting the rights, found a solution: a system of brakes and balance. Division of power between the Prime Minister, the Parliament and the Judiciary. The first two are not overmuch immune to the pressure of the people (voters). The last, the Judiciary, are.

### *Who Protects Freedoms?*

Finally, we come to an answer to the question what does the strength of economy correlate with? Prosperity depends on the level of economic freedoms. Freedoms that are threatened by none else than our democratic state. It wouldn't do that power is immune to malpractice just because it is democratic. However, it is not omnipotent. The greater the strength of institutions, the Judiciary in particular, in relation to the Parliament and the Cabinet, the economy will be stronger. No one but the Supreme Court could resist Roosevelt's ideas. Who is really creating the united European Market? The court with its verdicts, while the states try in every possible way to curb the free flow of people and commodities...This is why the Great Britain was the foremost country in the world during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was in no way democratic, but still free, because there was a court which protected the rights of the people, without giving full rein to the authorities to take liberties. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the British government was completely democratic, although it went into a catastrophic socialist experiment after the II World War.

### *How the Freedoms Are Taken Away?*

How to prevent attacks by democratic authorities on the freedoms of men? First and foremost: one should recognize that democratic power, like any other, is a threat to freedom. However, it is difficult to realize it. For democracy is the rule of the people, and I am a part of the people.



Certainly, but only a “part”. It’s quite possible for one part of the people to terrorize the other. Democratically. But in its open form, it’s a rarity. The enemies of democracy practically never take power in fair elections. However, the hidden attack on democracy comes from other quarters: interventionism. Under the disguise of leftist ideas of “justice” and “social equality”, it interferes into all aspects of life. It’s more difficult to resist, because it’s hidden and comes from “our” authorities. It’s not noticed that this intervention has as its goal the help to certain social groups (farmers, organized workers, local manufacturers). The astonishing fact is that the tax-payers seem to be unaware of being robbed. And not according to that: I grab from the rich, to give to the poor.

Re-distribution draws more in the direction of “I grab from the poor to give to the poor.”

### *Is Democracy a Threat To Prosperity?*

Judging by all mentioned above, it seems this statement holds water. The examples are a problem: at our disposal, we only have the Athenians, and the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Roughly speaking, the 19<sup>th</sup> century is an age of economic freedom, and the 20<sup>th</sup> of state intervention and “flourishing” of democracy. Liberal reformists can be counted on one’s fingers. They (Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Regan) did wonders and made the collapse of communism possible, but their heirs disowned them very hastily. There is a bureaucratic conglomerate now, called EU, where the problems arising from state intervention are solved with more intervention, and where pages and pages of laws, regulations and acts exist.

It is a problem of perception: Europe of today is rich, as compared with the rest of the world. If it carries on with intervention, that will change. Regardless of democracy and civil rights.

**Emina Grbo**

(Kragujevac)

## **YUGOSLAVIA - MYTH ABOVE MYTHS**

**I**n bygone days, in an impossible age, there existed a nice country. That nice country had a nice name: Yugoslavia. People who lived there were fine and honest people. They worked according to their abilities, and took according to their needs.... The most important thing was that they all liked and respected each other, and they liked their ruler.

Well, that ruler was strange, because he was different from other people. In that distant past, everyone who was even slightly different was ignored as dangerous for the society, or left in some land of no-return to crush rocks. However, things were different with this ruler. To the surprise of the whole world, he was generally accepted. They say he had some strange power over people: he could persuade them to do, say or accept anything. Everyone fell into a prone position in front of him. While he lived – the country lived. While he lived – people lived. While he lived – nobody witnessed any conflict. While he lived – all were brothers. And then he died. From some terrible disease which makes you forget everything you have known till then and all you have ever been. His rule was long. For some, too long. A power-hungry mass aspired to his position. Bearing in mind they were hungry for a long while, they became greedy and unscrupulous by now. They finally grabbed something they had been daydreaming about, but it wasn't enough. They wanted more. They fought and grabbed so much

that their obsession grew into a disgusting, infectious disease. To make the chaos worse, the weather was terribly bad in those days, and a horrible wind blew which managed to carry off the bacteria of severe disease around the whole country. All the adults got sick.

And then “something” began. That “something” could be defined like this: everyone who had knowledge, skill and right to take the power, didn’t have the will to do it. The ones without a single marble in their heads had. And they took power. Then everybody asked himself: “Well, if he can do it, so can I, probably, for I’m more able?!” A class of “superior” people began to stand out. Those who were left out didn’t accept to be the opposite of the “superior people”, who made their own class of the “more superior people”. And so everyone followed, claiming his class with his ideas was “the most, the most – ...”. And then they began to tear up the map of pretty Yugoslavia by creating their own history, geography, faith, language, culture... However, there was still some mysterious thread which linked them together, something reminiscent of a pretty country which they couldn’t remember, but which had some nice name, which they couldn’t remember either. And some strange emotion which used to make them feel tenderness toward all people, but which they couldn’t share any more.

This was still not so bad. A new period began, with gales which transfer the disease, now modified, all around the world. This modified disease made people on all sides of the globe get interested in other people’s affairs. It wasn’t only an unhealthy curiosity of the crowd – they really interfered in other people’s affairs. Well, now the problems began.

The interventions of foreign powers make a ruler turn against his subjects, and the subjects against their ruler. Brother turns against brother, father against mother, mother against children, child against the whole world... Friends kill each other, enemies like one another, mice chase cats, and hot snow falls in the hills. Barbarians become gentlemen, gentlemen become cutthroats; educated people are persecuted, uneducated greatly respected. Everybody thought he had the right to everything his heart craved. But no, there was no anarchy. There was a “demo”-something. That “demo”-something meant: if you are bothered by something, go out into the street and bother someone else; if you don’t like someone, eliminate him with an illegally acquired weapon; if you like someone, strike him with a club and drag him into your cave; if you need a tank, there is no problem, just take it; should you need money, take it from the people’s cashier; if

you want power, here you are, begin ruling. Such a definition of “demo”-something stems from uneducated people who wanted not only the rule and the power, but also the money which was not around (or at least that’s what everyone thought). Such a definition has not been created by accident. It was supposed to trick the people, providing its creators with a good excuse for pillage and exploitation. Suddenly, all remembered the fact (which has never been disputed, but people believed, due to “reasons unknown”, that it has) that all of them have their rights and then rushed to achieve them. The “realization” of their rights meant looking down on everybody else’s. And so the slaughter began.

Conflicts of “all against all” begin. Everybody wanted a slice of territory for himself, claiming his special rights to it. The meaning existed where there was none, and didn’t where it should have been. One (and I’m referring here to the *homo sapiens*) would have thought that – from so many newly declared believers with metaphysical responsibility – some would resolve the conflicts without so much bloodshed. In this situation, however, hardly anybody could remember some of the Ten Commandments, like “Don’t kill”, or to “turn the other cheek”. People actually liked to terrorize, and everyone had to let himself “have the last word”. Suddenly, it was quite funny if the family of your neighbour was slaughtered, and he himself tortured and left alive only to suffer and listen to you rejoicing.

Was it amusing for you to have the innocent people evicted from their homes and forced to beg for their naked lives? Were you enjoying yourself while listening to a mother who was crying her eyes out over her dead children whose graves were not known any more? And what is more horrifying here: a few of those who terrorize, or the whole world watching the terror and persistently turning a blind eye, calling the terrorists – barbarians? How is it possible that no one had guts to calm the situation down, but stirred up conflicts and made new ones instead? Why, damn it, so many mighty people who had tasted power, suddenly turn everything over into their own benefit and create an even greater chaos? Why nobody assumes responsibility for his acts, but puts the blame on someone innocent?

There is a rational conclusion: due to the muddle of comets, asteroids, planets and other trinkets, as well as to the collision of different forces and energies in cosmos, the whole planet Earth began to move in a direction in which it had never moved, and with such speed, that people on it started behaving like animals, while the animals became the only

rational beings. "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than the others".

There is something else that I forgot to mention: there was a little chatterbox called Fenix, who enjoyed, without a virus, meddling into other people's affairs. That little babbler found out that somewhere in the world existed a certain Godot who wandered around the world in search of Holy Grail, while helping people understand the truths of life. The idea of the babbler has been for Godot to drop by to this country too, and help it reach the higher goals. The whole country agreed and decided to wait for Godot, so that he could resolve all of its problems. Something that the little babbler didn't know (or purposely overlooked in a way to create a bigger muddle) was that Godot had decided not to tour the world and enlighten people, believing that everyone must find his own path and his own truth.

People believe that the situation is now improving. This isn't true. They have lost their memory again, because of a virus in some wind. The smell of blood is in the air. It is. Even planktons feel it. The world turns its head still.

P.S. It says in the law books: *The first element of legal consciousness is the knowledge of law, that is to say the consciousness about the existence of law and about its content... For a legal norm to be respected, it has to reach the consciousness of the subject in the first place, i.e. to become known. There is a rule that, in breaking a norm, nobody can be excused for his ignorance of it (ignorantia legis nocet). The subject is obliged to get to know a norm, but if he doesn't, and if he commits a violation due to ignorance, he is responsible for it as if he had known.*

The problem of that distant, nonexistant and imaginary country was that the bearers of state authority were unprofessionals who didn't (and never would) know the law, let alone the fundamental civil rights. So much so that, be it in a nightmare or a coma, if you got lost in a dimension in which this fictitious land exists, and in case of your being a special or unique individual, you might be mistreated or even imprisoned. Just because you were different, and the executive authorities were bored, they decided to have some fun by arresting you temporarily. It's really funny. Makes you drop dead with laughter. Furthermore, if you know your rights and try to explain to them that they can't do anything to you without reason, you are in for trouble. Therefore, here is a piece of advice to possible tourists: be a conformist sheep, and you will fare well.

**Farkaš Ištvan**

(Novi Sad)

**The Germans In Sombor And Its Neighbourhood:  
PEOPLE NOT TALKED ABOUT,  
BUT AROUND US**

*- Just Forgotten, Or Consciously Hushed Up? -*

I have a lot of friends, chums and acquaintances among the Germans in Sombor. I'm not even aware how many. There are, perhaps, many more, but I have never managed to find out. Finally, only a few years ago, I have become somehow aware of their existence next to us. I have even known more about the Jews, maybe the least known of our neighbours, than about the Germans. I knew better the Moslems, the *Vaishnavas*, the Poles and the Czechs, so rarely present in my immediate surroundings. I "studied" them to a certain extent. Not that I didn't know that two or three German families lived in my street, some of them being good friends of mine. Not that I didn't know that a couple of Germans were my classmates, and that some of my teachers were of German extraction.

However, for better or for worse, those were the times when ethnic affiliation couldn't be discerned at all. It was considered of no importance, except in the case of the Romanians, and perhaps a little bit in the case of the Jews and the Hungarians. Namely, the Hungarians had their classes in their native language, the Jews their religious red-letter days, and the Romanians stood out with their complexion. Not more than that. We have never looked into the origin of names,

or the language spoken at our friends' homes, or into history and culture. We didn't deem it necessary, we didn't know or even suspect it could be important. Just a few years ago, I have heard of the Association of Germans, existing in Sombor, and that the Association in Apatin (near Sombor) was very active, as well as of some citizens in Subotica, Novi Sad and several other cities in Banat, who openly started expressing their *Germanhood*. They were asking questions about persecution of German families in Vojvodina after II World War, about confiscation of property, de-nationalization, and about returning property to their original owners.

Only then, as a man/citizen of the minority background, I started discerning the need to learn more about them and initiating the solutions to our common problems, trying to refresh what was left of my knowledge of German language. It was only then that I realized that we, the Romanies, were not the most deprived minority group in this country, or the most suppressed. Neither the Jews were, but some others, better to say a lot of others, even the aforementioned Poles, Czechs, Moslems and *Vaishnavas*, and also the Bulgarians, Russians and Germans. The Germans even more than the others. For we didn't know about the others, and we did know about the Germans. They were all around us, but we consciously/unconsciously denied that.

As a lesson well learned, we used to mention them only as the people who had attacked "freedom-love" in the early/middle forties of the 20th century. They looted, murdered, tortured and robbed...While doing so, we have used the terms which signify the name of the nation, the nation as a whole, such as "Germans, Boches, Fritzes...", and not the names of individuals. We haven't said a word neither about what had happened before those war atrocities, nor afterwards, or that after the war they were themselves looted, murdered, tortured, robbed, exiled. We also haven't talked about what had happened during the war. Many Germans saved a lot of Serbs, Hungarians, Jews and Romanies from extermination. Here, in the immediate neighbourhood.

The topic of a special edition of "Informator", the paper issued by The Centre for Multicultu-rality in Novi Sad, are the Germans in Vojvodina. I was encouraged to look backwards at "our" Germans, and say to the world that they are here, that they exist and survive. It wouldn't be right for me to speak about them, or instead of them, but for them to talk about their lives. Therefore, when I started preparing my text about the Germans in Sombor, I tried to contact Mr Anatol Beck, Chairman of The Association of the Germans in Sombor, Mr Robert Hauck from the Association in Apatin, a very prominent person of German

extraction, and my ex-classmates and teachers who are now my friends. I haven't succeeded in this endeavour, the reason being my temporary physical distance and the lack of means of transportation. But this is of no consequence now. It is important that I haven't given up, that I am going to find them at first opportunity, in a way to ask them to introduce themselves in detail, so that some of my perplexities and half-knowledge could be done away with, or deepened and expanded. For the time being, I must satisfy myself with some semi-information and personal foresight, arranging them in subject drawers and groups in my subconscious.

At present, the number of Germans in Sombor and its neighbourhood is quite unreliable. It is very difficult to establish it exactly, despite all existing statistical data and several monographies, and in spite of the evidence of associations in Sombor and Apatin. Namely, a lot of German families resorted to total mimicry after the war till the point of assimilation, so as not to get into difficulties like their compatriots in Vojvodina. The consequences were emphasized in time, and the national consciousness of this people appeared again as late as in recent years. However, it is often so unsure of itself and so feeble that it is restricted to internal use. The mimicry has assumed several directions: some families have decided to disguise themselves as members of ethnic majorities of the time, i.e. the Serbs and the Croats. However, I know of a family whose members declared themselves as the Slovenians. The others remained a minority, declaring themselves mostly as the Hungarians. Naturally, this has brought to the loss/denial of rights to display natural culture, language, education, etc.

Thus, the common language of the Germans in Sombor and its neighbourhood became Serbian or Hungarian. They used these languages in public. German language was more and more neglected in the families, and for them it finally became the language of origin, but not the mother tongue. That's why they attended the elementary schools in Serbian or Hungarian language, taking over the cultural characteristics and customs of Serbian or Hungarian nationalities, getting to know their history, arts, and scientific achievements thoroughly. They were getting just an inkling about Germany only through the teaching material of general education, and even that only until the time of Goethe. Wagner has already been in the dangerous area, the Olympic games in Berlin were only known by scandals. Einstein, the Serbian son-in-law, has not rejected (mind this!) the idea of nazism, but the German citizenship. Geography of Germany was exhausted by mentioning numerous factories in the area of Ruhr, the river Rhine, and the Berlin wall. The history of Germany was reduced to the



Prussian history, to Kaizer Vilhelm, declaration of war to Serbia, annexation of the Czechoslovakian Republic and Austria, and the bombarding of Belgrade. That's what happened in the elementary school. The secondary school and university students used to study less and less in Hungarian, and more and more in Serbian, and only a few of them managed to reach the universities of Vienna or Berlin. German language teachers were considered foreign language ones, even though a teacher and a student to whom he was giving lectures were both German. And what about German language with the elements of national culture as a teaching subject? Not even as an optional course, not a bit of it even nowadays....

For whom such teaching would be organized? We could find out by names, if the names were typically German. But the names are mostly international, or Serbian, Croatian, and Hungarian, reminiscent of German origin only by pronunciation. Neither the family names are clearly distinguished from the family names which are common nowadays, or from the names taken in ancient times from the Hungarians, Croats, or Jews. Who is a *Šmit*, *Ric*, *Vajs*, *Bek*, *Fernbah*, etc.? Is he German, Hungarian, Croatian, or Jewish? One is still between two minds when these names are written as Weiss, Beck, Hauck, Buchwald... And if we say *Weiss Ivan*, is he a German for sure, or a *Šokac*? Is Baumgartner Julijana Jewish, Hungarian, or German, if she speaks Hungarian?...

Displaying the traditional and cultural achievements, telegraphically said: till recently, just in the kitchen (read: traditional dishes), or not even there; since recent times, perhaps a little bit more, thanks to the Associations, but unfortunately, as far as I know, not in public. The history of the Germans in the western part of Bačka goes back to the sixteenth century, according to the archive data. There is a lot of data worthy of attention, but also insufficiently known or inaccessible. Bright or dark, this is a history of a people. And now, I'd like to discuss briefly the contemporary geography and history of the 20th century, at least as much as I succeeded to learn about the subject.

Till the World War I, a lot of settlements in this area were inhabited either entirely by the Germans, or the German population was a majority in them. For example: Apatin, Prigrevica, Kljajićevo, Kolut, Stanišić, Gakovo, and a settlement the name of which I keep forgetting, but I'd like to point at it later, because there is a special reason for that. In the cities like Sombor, Kula and Odžaci, there were a lot of Germans.

Between two world wars, in the process of colonization, newcomers were accepted by the Germans, friendships were forged, and mutual helping out took place. Then the Germans became a minority in these

settlements, but it didn't bother them. The "new arrivals" didn't mind the "Fritzes" either.

And then came the II World War. The mutual helping out continued and the protection too. In Kljajićevo, for example, the Germans have been hiding the Serbs from fascists, and have put up a cordon around Serbian houses with their own bodies. In Stanišić, the Germans kept protecting (and feeding) the Serbs, Hungarians and Romanies both from fascists and partisans. In Apatin, they cared for the Jews.

In return, after the war, the village mentioned above was wiped out. Neither I, nor the huge majority of the citizens of Sombor, can remember its name without difficulty. It was Kruševo, between Rastina and Stanišić. And, to repeat for the umpteenth time, even its name was rooted out. The graveyard at the far end of the village disappeared for ever and is still impossible to locate. The inhabitants had been displaced either to Germany, or to the camps, and neither they, nor their descendants, ever came back. This happened in 1946/47 – I'm not sure. However, why am I digging into the old and mostly healed wounds, when there happen to be so many fresh ones?

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, computer hardware and online access were given as a present to the library in Sombor by the Goethe Institute. Sponsors and donators from Germany have helped the development of communities in Western Banat area, thanks to the descendants of ex-fellow citizens, among others. A reply followed: the German graves in Prigrevica graveyard were ruined and desecrated. Authorities and media mainly kept silent, so we got to know only bits and peaces....

*I am flying around at random, not knowing where to land or what else to say. Everything mentioned above demands a more thorough approach, an approach of investigative reporting, but the evidence is quite scarce. Those who could provide data are accessible only with difficulty or by chance. Until recently, there hasn't been anybody at all. Admittedly, the Associations of the Germans in Sombor and Apatin came into being only a few years ago. Somewhere at the beginning of this paper, I remarked that one should contact them in order to make them talk about these issues which I have merely tackled, and in regard of the present time of these people in this area, but most of all about their Associations. They should talk about what and how could be done, so that the Germans cease to be foreigners, capitalists who exploit us, poor Yugoslavs, fascists, oppressors, taboo subject, and game players in a "blind man's buff". They ought to become what they really are: friends, neighbours, associates, our unknown side that we get acquainted with day by day and accept it such as it is.*

**Tijana Milošević**

(Belgrade)

## **ETHNO-SYMBOLISM AND CLASSICAL MODERNISM IN THE STUDIES OF NATIONALISM**

The topic of nationalism attracts a lot of attention, especially in the Balkans, where it is quoted as one of the main causes of war in former Yugoslavia. Among different approaches to the studies of nationalism, the two are dominant – modernism and ethno-symbolism. The description and the analysis of the debate between these two dominant approaches make the subject of this essay. The statements of Ernest Gellner, a representative of modernism, and of his disciple Anthony Smith, a spokesman for ethno-symbolism, are in the focus of discussion. This essay will try to present and compare critically the main points of disagreement between the two approaches, which are: the cause of creating the nations and of the appearance of nationalism, as well as the modality and the timing of their origin. There will also be talk about the relevance of the term ethnic group for comprehending and the origin of the terms nation and nationalism. Today, a standpoint has been mainly accepted that the ethnicity is relevant for nationalism, particularly after recent conflicts on ethnical basis in former Yugoslavia and in the USSR.

Contemporary discussion between these two approaches, and the two authors mentioned above, revolves mostly around the role of the ethnic origin in the creation of a nation, of nationalism as a movement, and of a modern national state.

The key definitions of the terms to be used should be given firstly. The meaning of the term ethnicity isn't completely clear and precisely defined still, but it could be defined as a kinship by origin, or a common culture of a group of people. Smith gives the examples of symbolic elements of the ethnic origin, such as: kinship patterns, physical likeness, religious connection, connection by language, phenotypical characteristics and similar.<sup>1</sup> In his studies, he is particularly focused on the emotional strength and the historical inheritance of ethnic groups. An important point of Smith's argument is that nationalism draws strength from the "internal sources", such as history and culture.<sup>2</sup> Also, according to Smith, the ethnicity relies mostly on myth, values and recollections, as the symbols in which myths are in fact stories which are generally believed, and which connect the present and the past of a community. Exactly through this symbolism, myths join the classes, spreading the ethnic culture. Consequently, Smith defines an ethnic group as a population which shares the myth of common origin, common memories and elements of culture, as well as the link with historically important territory or homeland. He claims that the common ethnic origin is necessary for the cohesion of a group, as well as for the awareness of belonging to the group.

The second key point in Smith's argument is that the concept of ethnic identity is crucial for an explanation how and why the nations originated. Smith says that a nation is a community of common myths and memories, just like an ethnic group is. Therefore, he suggests that there is a continuity between ethnic groups and modern nations, in the sense that modern nations inherit the cultural basis shared by the ethnic groups. That is to say, Smith defines nations as a population which has common homeland, myths and memories, mass culture, common economy and rights and obligations. In a way to prove his thesis, Smith gives the examples of Britain and France as the first nations which have been formed just around a dominant ethnic group. Smith says that only a few cases, such as America and Australia, make an example of the reversed process: the formation of a state precedes the origin of a nation which has been created without a common basis. He therefore claims

that a common ethnic origin is necessary for the forming of a nation and of a national state, mostly because it is quite difficult to preserve the community which doesn't have a coherent mythology, history and culture. Contrary to Smith, Gellner has defined nations as "groups which aspire to survive as a community".<sup>3</sup> The origin of these communities can come about "by voluntary identification, loyalty and solidarity, but also fear and coercion".<sup>4</sup>

Gellner claims that a nation depends on the political and intellectual elite which imposes a common culture to the population on a certain territory, particularly through the national educational system. In this way, all members of a nation have a maximum of flexibility while playing different roles which are necessary in a society. Gellner claimed that only the national state is an ideal political organization which is a foundation of a creative cultural energy and economic welfare. People are not loyal to the ethnic group, but to the national group, while nationalism is the one that creates the concept of a nation and aspires to its fulfillment. A common preceding ethnic origin, and a feeling of ethnic belonging, according to Geller, are not necessary for the creation of a nation and of a national state.

To understand the arguments of these two authors, it's necessary to justify the relationship between terms of ethnic origin, nation, and nationalism. Under nationalism, Smith understands an ideological process aiming at the reaching of, and keeping up, the autonomy, unity and identity of a certain population for which some of its members think that it represents a nation.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Gellner claimed that nationalism is a "new form of social organization, based on the deeply internationalized high cultures which depend on education, each of them protected by its own state."<sup>6</sup>

Gellner and Smith give two different "diagnosis" of the causes of nationalism. Gellner quotes specialization within the framework of a society as the main cause of nationalism, while Smith focuses on ethnic causes. Gellner's theory divides the history of human development into three stages<sup>7</sup>: pre-agrarian society, in which the groups were too small for the political differentiation to exist; agrarian society, in which only a small part of population was specialized in the field of economy, politics, army or religion; industrial society, in which the state protects the community, and in which distinctive factors exist, such as universal literacy.

Nationalism couldn't develop in pre-industrial societies, because the society was so small that the differences couldn't be noticed, and were not considered ideal frontiers for potential states. Also, people were too busy with survival and with fulfilling their basic needs, to think about cultural and political homogeneity. Therefore, Gellner took it that nations and nationalism were modern phenomena which came into being after the French Revolution, as a consequence of industrialization and new circumstances.

On the other hand, Smith identified the following aims of ethnic national movements: creation of a literate, high culture in the communities where it didn't exist; creation of a culturally homogeneous "organic nation"<sup>8</sup>; securing a homeland and, possibly, an independent state for the community; transforming an until then passive ethnic identity into a participant of history. In other words, according to Smith, nationalism is a politization and territorialization of the former ethno-centrism. The main difference between Gellner and Smith therefore is in their statements on the cause of nationalism. On one hand, Smith supports the ethnic origin of nationalism and nations, claiming that nationalism is the desire of an ethnic community for independence. Gellner, on the other hand, claims that nationalism is an attempt at creating a new social organization dependent on high cultures. That is to say, Gellner claims that nationalism creates nations, while Smith states that nations have an ethnic basis and are the cause of, and the stimulus for, nationalism.

Gellner said that the basic prerequisite in explaining the connection between ethnic origin and nationalism lies in the fact that ethnic boundaries should not cross political ones. He claimed that ethnic origin enters into the political sphere as "nationalism" when the economic conditions demand the cultural homogeneity. If the class differences are not ethnically coloured, they can be tolerated. However, when tied to the cultural inequality, the class differences become intolerable.<sup>9</sup> Nationalism uses the existing cultures, but cannot be caused by them, because there are too many of them and they cannot be a stronger activating force than a modern, high culture.

Since many ethnic groups don't succeed in becoming nations, national states are not an unavoidable, predestinated purpose of ethnic groups. Nationalism and nation can't originate without an industrial society, so Gellner claims it can't be influenced by low ethnic cultures.

Ethnic groups, therefore, can't cause nationalism, even when they have a common territory and a strong intelligentsia which figures as a class in itself.

On the other hand, Smith claims that by discovering its ethnic past, the idea of national identity can make ethnic groups allege they are nations. The wish to protect cultural heritage and tradition gives an ethnic group a feeling of superiority. An unjust distribution of economic privileges and a cultural pressure on a cultural group can lead to the ethnic nationalism. According to Smith, ethnic identity can cause nationalism just because of its ability to persuade people in the myth of ethnic identity. Smith adds that the ethnic category simply turns itself into an ethnic community, so that the intelligentsia introduces the idea of self-determination, with the establishment of a state for the ethnic group as its final goal.

Smith points out to some problems of the modernistic theories. The first problem lies in their generality.<sup>10</sup> According to Smith, they are quite often too abstract to be easily applied to specific cases. It looks like they can cover everything, but when they ought to be counted on to clear up certain historic circumstances, they often cite extraordinary circumstances, such as the religious factor, or the history of ethnic antagonism.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Smith claims that their materialism is often one-sided. Nationalism can appear in completely divergent socio-economic environments. In rich Quebec, or in poor Eritrea, in pre-industrial or in industrial conditions. It's not easy to explain the content and the intensity of particular nationalisms using the mechanisms of global capitalism.<sup>12</sup> But the most important objection to such theories stems out of their basic claim, i.e. that nations, as well as nationalism, are a product of modernization. This view overlooks the cultural feelings and the ethnic ties with a group.

An important advantage of ethno-symbolism is in that it helps forecast which population has a chance to develop nationalistic movements under certain conditions. Modern Greece is a case in point. Its dual inheritance, Byzantine, i.e. Orthodox, and the one of classical Greece, shaped the patterns and the content of nationalism which is disposed as a rival. This suggests that nationalism would be the stronger side with the Greeks than, let's say, with the neighbouring Vlachs, who don't have such an inheritance.<sup>13</sup> Also, this approach points to an answer to the question: why people answer the call of intelligentsia for national awakening? Certainly not only because of the promised material rewards. Modernistic

theories, therefore, do not explain the direct causes and the appearance of ethnic nationalism, which develop subjugated ethnic minorities. The latter's intelligentsia tries to create a nation from their ethnic groups. In a way to achieve a cultural revolt, they have to turn their ethnic groups into political nations. Modernistic theories don't provide the best explanations for such processes.

In answering Smith's remark on the inheritance of the modern Greeks, Gellner says that they don't have a true people's memory of Pericles, or of any other heritage of ancient Greece or Byzantium. The continuity of culture is important only in a certain moment, and it's not of key significance, generally speaking. Gellner answers to this that, although it's useful to foresee what people or regions tend to develop nationalism and in which form, that is extremely difficult, if not impossible. As a proof, he quotes the fact that the agrarian world was very rich in cultures, but only two or three hundred of them turned into national states. So, Gellner doesn't deny the significance of ethnic culture, but says that its continuity from the period of pre-industrialism to the modern period isn't of paramount importance. In that respect, Gellner, in his debate with Smith, compares the ethnic heritage with a navel in the body of a new nation and of the future history of a state. It's an organ which was important in one moment, but redundant in the modern aspect. As an example, he quotes Estonia, which created nationalism out of nothing, without cultural symbolism.

It's essential to compare the statements of two authors on the importance of the system of education, as well as history, myths as factors which influence the origin of nations and nationalism. Gellner used to claim that education and culture shape the identity of an individual. According to Gellner, the function of educational system is to secure loyalty to the culture of community and society to which an individual belongs. The loyalty of an individual to sub-groups within a community should be prevented. Gellner says that modern man is loyal "not to the monarch, country or faith, but to culture".<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, Smith claims that the dominant high cultures cannot assimilate ethnic groups through education, because ethnic groups survive only through respect and practice of ethnic culture, as well as loyalty to it.

Gellner doesn't attach much importance to the history of an ethnic group or a nation, nor to the myths which link their members. He claims



that the history of a nation becomes essential when the nation gets its state. The history of a nation before the creation of a national state is not crucial, according to Gellner. Smith, on the other hand, stresses the significance of history, and of the myths as symbols, which tie an ethnic group tighter, and start the process of creating a nation.

An attempt to conclude which theory is more correct generally, would in fact be a simplification of these two theories, as well as of the problems of nationalism in general. On the basis of the material explained, it can be concluded that one theory is more applicable in some cases than the other. There are situations in which one of the theories is almost inapplicable. In the case of the Balkans, for example, Gellner's theory hardly applies, because its focus is on industrialization, which exerts almost no influence on the origin of nationalism in the Balkans. The process of creating the nations and nationalism in the Balkans has been happening mainly from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. before the industrialization seized this region. On the other hand, Smith's theory is inapplicable in the already mentioned case of Estonia, where the nation has been created without a common ethnic origin. The same applies to the cases of America and Sustralia, where the nations have been created without a common ethnic basis, which supports Gellner's theory more. It should also be noted that Gellners argument about the loyalty of the members of a modern nation to culture, not religion, is hard to apply to the nations in which the main unifying factor is religion. This is the case of the Moslems in Bosnia, and of the Jews. Also, in the case of the Serbs and the Croats, it could be said that the main basis for the creation of these two nations were the Orthodox and the Catholic creed, respectively. And so it could be concluded that in these cases the theory of Smith more applicable.

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Smith, Anthony. D. (1986). *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell Press.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Anthony. D. and Hutchinson, J. (1996). *Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Press, p.15.

<sup>4</sup> Gellner, E. (1983). Nations and Nationalism. Oxford: Blackwell Press, p.15.

<sup>5</sup> Warwick debate, Smith site.

<sup>6</sup> Nations and Nationalism, Gellner, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> Nations and Nationalism, Gellner, 1983.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, A.D. (1991). National Identity. London: Penguin, p.94.

<sup>9</sup> Nations and Nationalism, Geller, 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Warwick, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/gellner/Warwick0.html>

Gellner.

<sup>11</sup> Gellner, 1983, Nations and Nationalism.

<sup>12</sup> Warwick, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/gellner/Warwick0.html>

Gellner.

<sup>13</sup> Campbell and Sherrard, 1968, ch. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Gellner, E. (1983). Nations and Nationalism. Oxford: Blackwell Press.

**Abida Ganić**

(Novi Pazar)

## **THE TOWN NEEDS A CHANGE**

**I**n the first part of this essay, I'll explain the problem of children involvement in politics, and in the second, I'll add some shortcomings in the life of young people to the subject.

We are all aware that the conflicts between political parties in Novi Pazar have been more frequent recently. Even a shooting took place between two members of the parties in conflict, when two passers-by were wounded. At political meetings, where two parties usually shoot off their mouth and reproach each other, one can often see children who wave flags, or sing songs intended to insult members of other parties. Their parents often don't care about their participation in such propaganda.

I have always wondered if the impact of elections – with children rather prevailing in pre-election campaign – is really bigger than in a “normal” campaign. I couldn't believe the times had changed so much. When I was little, children used to be preoccupied mostly with toy-cars and dolls. Their main preoccupation now is the division between parties, rooting, waving the flags and, generally, any kind of propaganda. Representatives of these parties keep promising the moon to the voters, not caring much for all necessary rules to be abided by. It's interesting that this sort of thing happens only here. Children's rights organizations throughout Serbia have witnessed this violation of law, submitted their

report and also forwarded it to a local television station, but it was not discussed extensively. Whether our fellow townsmen thought they were right, or they didn't want anybody to interfere, was not explained, nor it would be.

The park, for which we have got financial means from various donators, looks like nothing on earth. Swings are broken and twisted; and garbage is in every corner, while children shout out slogans about the victory of this or that party.

In the recreational centre, spotlights have been put up last summer, in the hope that young people will be able to play basketball, football or netball, or go in for some other sports by night.. However, although the spotlights are turned on, not more than five or ten people come who care for a training session. The others sit in cafes or in various betting places, spending money like water, while some people take trouble to show their efforts. And when they somehow succeed, those mentioned above roll their eyes or shake their heads, without trying to do anything themselves that would make them proud. Their only occupation is evaluating others, or making comments about them. For them, another way of dressing or thinking, or any other thing that makes a difference between people, is not right. They want all people to have the same looks and thoughts and everything else. Just sitting in their corner and evaluating others, they are not aware they are making a serious mistake. They condemn every attempt at putting the town in order, every donation by foreign countries, everything that could help this town, or even the state, in any way.

Sometimes, I think our town will always be like that. Gloomy, sad and unchanged. But its good points, of which there are only a few, make me think further and look for some like-minded people. In foreseeable future, I might be able to turn things over for this town, and for the better, helping people understand what this place needs. No one knows what future holds in store for us, but I only know this town needs a change. A great change for the better.

**Saša Došić**  
(Kragujevac)

## **DO WE KNOW WE ARE A SMALL PEOPLE?**

**T**he wish of all citizens in Serbia is to join the European Union, or at least it should be. To become a full member of the EU, one has to fulfill a number of obligations which are demanded by this “community of states”. Of course, if one wishes to live better, to join other peoples in the surroundings and have an approximate living standard as they do, one must accept certain rules and principles which they share.

From 1999 to the changes of 2000, Serbia was in a political, economic, financial and cultural chaos, which was caused by a backward, conservative and dangerous policy of Slobodan Milošević and his men. There are certain demands which Serbia and Montenegro must fulfill if the country wants to enter the European Union.

One of the most important steps to be taken by the state of Serbia, that is to say by the Cabinet of the the Republic of Serbia, is the so-operation with the International Criminal Court for Former Yugoslavia, or Hague. There is a fallacy in Serbia that the court in Hague will function only for a certain period of time and complete the processes against the people who are already in its temporary prison settlement, that we’ll have to endure pressures for a little while longer, and then

everything is going to be as it was before... However, it's an error of judgement.

The ICCFY was founded by the Security Council Resolution of May the 25<sup>th</sup>, 1993, with the aim to carry out investigations and have the persons responsible brought to justice and punished for genocide, crimes against humanity, breaking the laws and customs of war, as well as for the severe transgressions of the Geneva Conventions. Therefore, the people who have committed various crimes are put on trial: for murders, rapes, torture, deportations, robbery, plundering, pillaging and alike. If we should stand behind these men as a people, if we should protect them here, in Serbia, if we should pass the Law on Assisting the Hague Defendants, it would mean that we are supporting crimes and that we are shutting ourselves out even more, instead of getting closer to Europe.

Another important segment is the recovering, consolidating and reforming of certain systems, such as administration of justice, media, health services, economy, and education. Only a state which is legally strong and democratically structured is an economically powerful one. If the courts, the prosecutor's office and the police do their job, and if the mobsters, thieves and other criminals are brought to justice, and if there is no power in the state which is above the law and order, only then can we say that we live in a legal state.

As far as the media are concerned, it's necessary to provide better informations in the minority languages, and those aimed at individuals with special needs. A further depoliticizing of the media is also necessary: media should function on the principles of professionalism and responsibility; journalists and TV stations would exercise complete freedom in providing citizens with information, becoming thus their service, as well as be totally independent from politics and parties.

Education is a very important factor in a state because it has a decisive role in establishing the values of young generations which will claim leading positions in tomorrow's society. It is necessary to change the conservative, discriminatory and racist ideas which deny modern tendencies that exist in society. The reform of education must encompass the teaching staff which not only avoids to put those stereotypes and examples of intolerance and xenophobia out of curriculum but, on the contrary, insist on them. In the process of education, there is no, or very

little, talk about basic human rights, OESCE, UNHCR, Security Council or European Union.

Of course, *conditio sine qua non* (i.e. an absolute condition) is the equality of all people in the state, be it the Bosnians, the Albanians, the Hungarians, the Slovacs or the Romanies... Members of this or that party, rich or poor, all of them should have the rights equal to those of the Serbs as the majority people. Regrettably, the minority rights in Serbia are not equal to the majority rights, and the members of minorities are constantly threatened in some sphere. For example, we are witnesses to the message "Get out of Serbia!" to the Hungarians, the Albanians, the Bosnians..., or to the cultural and historical monuments being desecrated or destroyed.

Our elementary problem is that we are people who imagine and who are "certain" that "all the world is against us", that what is good is ours, while everything that comes from outside is "dirty and sick". It is to be hoped that all this will be put in order some day, and that we shall live like all "normal people".

Somebody has said a long time ago that the basic difference between us and the Bulgarians is in that the latter know they are a small people.

**Emilija Cicić**  
(Kragujevac)

## **THE POSITION OF THE ROMANIES IN A LOCAL COMMUNITY**

**T**he Romanies in Kragujevac have a destiny similar to those in other cities of Serbia: as a group, they are at the most extreme margin. Living isolated from the social trends, in an almost parallel world, they do not have any social power. The society doesn't show interest in them and their problems, while only some individuals have an understanding of civil and collective rights. Many Romanies are not able to realize the basic civil and collective rights because they are not aware of them. More often than not, the institutions in charge, which should protect their rights, tend to reject them, rather than provide them with necessary help. The position of Romanies has got additionally worse with the wide-spread pauperization of society. A substantial number of Romanies who had been working in "Zastava" were fired. They are now either registered with the Bureau of Employment, or selling goods at the flea-market. Some categories of the Romany population are in an extremely difficult position: refugees from Kosovo, deportees from the Western countries, and child beggars without parental guidance or care.

Most of the Romanies live in unsanitary settlements, often without electricity and water, in houses made of hard or cardboard material, and some families are settled in the outskirts of town. Life in these settlements is



painstaking for the poor families which cannot provide even a minimum of food for their members. Some children have not been inoculated; the health care is poor, so that the life expectancy of Romanies is significantly shorter as compared to other population. Most of the Romanies are poor and without a permanent job because they are uneducated and without qualification, so that they cannot compete on the labour market. Only the hard, unesteemed and seasonal jobs are available to them. Looking for jobs, they are forced to move, or deal in the gray market, while some decide to beg. Many Romanies are the beneficiaries of social welfare. Even when received regularly, it is not sufficient for their basic upkeep.

Lack of education is both the consequence and the cause of the difficult material position of the Romanies. Impoverished families cannot sustain children's education, so that poverty gets transferred to the next generation. As far as education is concerned, women are the most endangered. The low general educational level renders impossible a better quality of their life, house keeping, child rearing, and achieving rights, influencing thus all domains of life.

Although elementary education is compulsory by legal acts of the Republic of Serbia, a relatively small percentage of Romany children enroll. Those who even begin their schooling drop out early, especially the girls. Many Romany children attend classes irregularly and have poor results, losing motivation and self-respect in the process. The causes for such a situation are manifold, the most significant being: children often do not speak the language in which teaching is being carried out; they are not ready for school and possess no necessary knowledge, because they have not attended a prep-school; they have no assistance in the process of learning, neither from their family, which cannot provide it for lack of its own education, nor from the school itself.

The Romanies rarely attend high school. Even if they do, they get their education mostly in two to three-year vocational schools, which make it possible for them to qualify for joining a work process. Quite rarely, they attend general education schools which allow them to carry on with schooling. Only a few young people study at advanced schools and faculties, which are within the reach of a limited number of Romanies from well-off families who are integrated in society. The number of high school and university students has been increasing in the last few years, thanks to the fellowships provided by various foundations. It is also a characteristic of the Romany children and of young, highly educated people, that a high level of assimilation occurs among them, as well as an indifference for helping out the Romany community as a whole.

On the level of state, and of system of education and local community, there has been no awareness so far of a need for special, systematic approach to the solving of educational problems of the Romany community. Furthermore, this approach, due to complexity of the problem, must be of an integrative character, based upon co-operation of the educational with other systems. It was thought sufficient for the Romanies to have equal rights with the others formally, and that their absence from educational process is tied to their way of life, tradition and low motivation. The educational institutions are closed for the Romanies, and often develop implicit mechanisms which make them loose motivation and withdraw from education.

A substantial number of Romany children are categorized and sent to special schools in which they get an inferior education. Many institutions of this kind have become schools for predominantly Romany children who are there because of pseudo-regression and educational deprivation. There is no official statistics on nationality of the children in these schools, but some data indicate that about fifty to eighty per cent of them are of Romany nationality. The majority and the rest of population have well-developed stereotypes (both positive and negative) and prejudice toward the Romanies. They have come into being thanks to a general intolerance for diversity, as well as a lack of personal contacts with the Romanies and of knowledge about their history, culture and tradition. These stereotypes have increased even more because of the rise of nationalism in recent years. The Romany way of life is most often interpreted as a consequence of their cultural and ethnic system of values, and not as a result of poverty and marginality. As long as the Romanies live in a ghetto-like environment, the attitude of others reflects in "tolerance" which manifests itself in denying their very existence and problems they face. When they try to participate in life (to study, work, or govern), they are exposed to discrimination, while majority and other communities show an evident social distance. There is almost no Romany who has not experienced some form of discriminatory behaviour: an impossibility to get employed, even if they have necessary qualifications; difficulties in carrying out their rights, and an unwillingness of the services in charge to deal with them; disdain and humiliation, verbal and physical attacks; police mistreatment; or pronouncing most severe sentences for minor offenses.

In such an environment, the Romanies don't feel accepted, which adds to their voluntary isolation. This, in turn, generates a new stereotype: such a way of life suits them. On the other hand, the prejudices of the majority people make the Romany community create their own: every

unwanted behaviour of the majority people is understood as an act of discrimination.

The Romanies are exposed to the process of assimilation by the society to which they also contribute, in a way to protect themselves. Believing that by taking on the identity of majority population they will secure a better life, some give up their roots: native language, tradition and culture, while the Romanies of Moslem faith (especially those displaced from Kosovo) change their names and cross over to the Orthodox faith. One of the reasons for a different, official and estimated, number of the Romanies, lies in this distinct social mimicry.

Within educational institutions, the Romanies are also exposed to the various forms of hidden and public discrimination by the teachers, schoolmasters, children and parents of the majority's community. This is visible in sitting in the last row of the class, as well as in the negative attitude of teachers and parents, refusal of the other children to play and mix with them, and in the verbal and physical attacks. Even the more severe violations of children's human rights are not sanctioned and remain unknown to the public at large. For there is no defined system which would act preventively and would have a worked out procedure for complaints of the sufferers, or sanctions against the offenders. The Romany community had not had the power to exert influence in this respect, the services in charge were not interested, while the educational institutions tried to protect themselves.

The Romany children, young people and their families do not feel accepted and welcome in the educational institutions. This has a bearing on the weakening of motivation for schooling, while parents often do not send their children to schools because they want to protect them, which is interpreted as a lack of interest in children and their education.

Recently, the process of ghettoization of the Romanies has continued to spread within the educational institutions, too, because the children of the majority population are being more and more withdrawn from schools in the vicinity of the Romany settlements.

Without a maximum connection between all institutions concerned (local autonomy, education, labour market, employers, etc.), there is no synergy of effects in education and employment. However, the prerequisite for all that is a better economic growth. The latter will be able to absorb the needs for various profiles of workers. The future of employment lies in small and medium enterprises, private entrepreneurs, cooperatives, folk handicrafts industry, agriculture, and the like.

**Jovana Radojević**  
(Kragujevac)

## **THE SOCIAL ATTITUDES TOWARD MARGINAL GROUPS**

The positions of people are one of the characteristics which are subject to variations. Opinions and attitudes of , people are subject to changes, more or less frequent, and under the influence of other groups of people, media, or some other means of information. The most interesting for me are the attitudes toward groups discriminated against, or groups of people in a marginal situation.

Marginal situation is a phenomenon typical of all extant societies. However, our society is at this moment stagnating at all levels, and in social relations too. The marginal situation means the condition in which there exist certain social groups that are discriminated against because of some of their characteristics, i.e. deprived of the rights which other groups have. The oldest marginal situation is the one based on sexuality. Our society is in a very difficult position because, generally speaking, it operates in an intolerant atmosphere. Wherever there are divisions on a certain basis, there is an aggressive domination by one group, mostly a majority one, over the others, such as in men-women relationships, Orthodox believers-other denominations, or homosexuals-heterosexuals. There are also the following relationships: rich-poor, beautiful-ugly,

educated-uneducated....My paper basically shows the attitudes toward, i.e. the relations with, these groups in the marginal situation. Concretely, homosexuals.

Homosexuals are one of the most prominent of these groups. In fact, they are the group which began demanding its rights from society. Homosexuality was once considered an illness, but gradually shook off that stigma. In time, the attitude toward homosexuals changed. In the last few years, there has been a lot of talk about this subject in our country. The strongest influence on public opinion has been exerted by the media, which contributed to a more favourable impression about this phenomenon in our society.

Sexual orientation is a part of a person's identity, and refers to the emotional, sexual and romantic attraction for another person. With most people, sexual orientation originates at a very early age and without any previous sexual experience. Sexual orientation is a part of the sexual identity of a person and differs from sexual behaviour because it refers to the feelings. People can, but don't have to, provoke their own sexual orientation in their sexual behaviour. Some persons can be identified as homosexual without having had any previous experience. On the other hand, those who have had sexual experience with persons of the same sex do not necessarily have to be considered homosexual or lesbian. The choice exists in the domain of sexual behaviour only, wherein we can choose whether we'll behave in accordance with our own sexual orientation. Every man has a homosexual side, so that we can observe everything as a straight line: one of its ends consists of the heterosexual, and another of the homosexual behaviour. This would mean that, in their lifetime, some people might feel different kinds of attraction, or they might have only phantasies, neither of which would necessarily bring them into contact with persons of a particular sex. Someone is considered a homosexual only if he or she says so.

There has been a lot of talk about the causes of homosexuality. Some define it as a biological, and some as a mental disorder, while others take it as an effect of the milieu. Nevertheless, most people think that it is a combination of several factors. More precisely, that neither the genetics nor the milieu has to be decisive in this matter.

Different societies treat homosexuals differently. In the USA, England, Germany and other Western countries, homosexuality hasn't just

been legalized, but brings certain benefits. According to the laws of these countries, homosexuals have a right to marry, adopt children, and teach in institutions for children and in schools. As a rule, in almost all of these countries, they can also be cabinet members or civil servants.

In Christian ethics, homosexuality is considered a horrible, mortal sin, a violation against God and human nature. In Germany of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, homosexuals and lesbians used to be thrown to the wild beasts or burned at the stake by the church. As late as in the twentieth century, the legislature of the Christian countries provided for the punishment of homosexuality.

Attitudes toward homosexuals depend on several factors. Social structures changed in the course of time, and so did the attitudes toward everything, including the homosexuals. Education (or non-education) is one of the essential factors which influence the formation of attitudes. Increasing the educational level of population as a whole, and of young people above else, remains to be worked upon. Bearing in mind that the family still exerts substantial influence in the education of the young, one must not neglect the education of the grown-ups. The latter will indirectly reflect on the young people, who will be a majority in our society some day.

However, the prejudices are on one hand understandable, because they appear as homophobia, or the fear of homosexuality. No matter how harmful or negative they might be, they play an important part, stemming from anxiety and underdevelopment of the society. Still, if we protect ourselves from something through prejudice, that "something" is, most often, only our clumsy attempt to explain to ourselves in a more suitable way something we don't quite comprehend. The media and other means of information contribute to all of that, either positively or negatively.

With an unprecedented growth of the various means of communication, an increase in their influence on opinions, relations and attitudes of the public occurred. Newspapers and various types of popular magazines, as well as radio and television which reach almost everyone in the country, without any doubt are powerful means in setting up and changing of the attitudes. These means are like some sort of a nervous system of society, or like some channels which reach all of its parts and each of its individual members. A conception has developed that an individual, as a user of the mass media, tends to feel powerless when confronted with their omnipotence.

The mass media exert a manifold influence: they inform about events in our midst and in the world, influence opinions on various phenomena, as well as conduct, from political decisions to selection of a certain film, a certain book or writer, or a particular attire. They have an incredible influence on public opinion. For example, the homosexuals had been a taboo subject once, but the media have become obsessed with it of lately. However, I see it as a problem that the homosexuals in our society are still not regarded as human beings, but rather as some sort of a "commodity" which should be legalized. I ask myself sometimes whether such views would ever change? Will our society ever stop being afraid of everything it doesn't grasp, and will it finally show willingness to see all people on equal terms? If you are a homosexual, then you have to say so, so that people would treat you as such. Automatically, you are not normal and have to be treated differently. We should influence our society to move into a different direction, not putting people, but rather things which are not good on the margin, and so try to raise the level of consciousness.

The homosexuals, as well as other groups on the margin, have been trying to show that they are normal and that they ought to have their rights guaranteed, just like the other people of a different sexual orientation. However, these attempts have been unsuccessful. That is why I believe that it's been necessary for some propaganda to be introduced. The gay parades are only one of the revolts of a group on the margin which has been oppressed by all sides. The gay people wanted to show that they do exist, that they are different, and that they should not be condemned for it. They just ask for something that the members of other groups already have. In a way, propaganda is perhaps a necessary means to show to the masses that certain groups and social strata should not be discriminated against just because they are different.

Of course, in some segments, all this can be understood, and is, as bad for the society as a whole. I think this matter is more up to themselves. They can't be forbidden, on the contrary, they are allowed, as we all are, to choose the way freely, irrespective of the society's (mis)understanding.

For the time being, the homosexuals are pretty much threatened and kept from showing their emotions in public. Their rights are not guaranteed like to the rest of us, and they are abandoned by society which cannot accept this kind of differentiation. It's still unknown whether the

homosexuality is a genetic disorder, or just the influence of environment. It is possible that it's the case of a combination of factors.

This remains unsolved for the time being. I think it will take time for people to reach a higher grade of tolerance, once they become equal. Then, one will not be put on the margin because one is a homosexual.



**Dejan Pataki**

(Novi Sad)

## **IDENTIFICATION**

**H**ow many times in my life have I heard “Why do you interfere?!”, or “Let it be, you can’t do anything about it!”. And, certainly, the most frequent phrase: “As if my voice would change anything”. I keep asking myself what is the matter here? Do people underestimate themselves and clearly say “I’m just a nobody”, or willingly sink into a collective molasses, saying: “That’s the way we are”.

In my case, the problem with identification emerged for the first time in the first grade of elementary school, when records on nationality began to be kept. The ones asked before my turn answered: “Yugoslavian”, “Turkish”, “Serbian”, Hungarian”...I have a surname which corresponds to the nation quoted last, and to the fact that my grandfather speaks Hungarian fluently. Until then, I probably haven’t seen Hungary even in the pictures, and as I admitted knowing how to count up to ten in my grandfather’s language (I could also count in English, but that wasn’t a part of my dilemma), I declared myself as a citizen of Zrenjanin.

The problem with identification reappeared in the second half of the nineties. As a declared sports’ addict, I followed every sports’ event which I could watch on state television. I was really able to list names and surnames of all national team members in basketball, fieldball, football..., and say without fail which number corresponds to which surname on the

jersey. I was completely immersed in matches, but more frequently aware of the "disturbances". The irritation began when our team, the emphasis being on the national, would be losing, or when an oversight of the referee would occur, or, simply, just like that.

As a rule, the reporters of the television mentioned above would begin to expose their analysis about the referee and all the fans present looking down on all of us. If the referee, Heaven forbid, was a German, it would be obvious that he hated us because of the II World War, and that he supported the Croats. If the referee was a Turk, the reporters would not hesitate to go a few centuries back. The culmination of such nonsense was when a certain reporter claimed during a match that our national team were just then getting revenge for the frail Serbian children who had been killed or dissipated in previous conflicts.

My experience with sports and with what I had seen was in collision with what I had heard. I couldn't reconcile with the claim that a particular referee, or a scorekeeper, didn't like us because of the coat of arms we were wearing. Contemporaries of such reporters were certain individuals who presumably had a God-given talent for predicting destiny, and for verifying the conspiracy theories in the names of world politicians, or in recently printed banknotes.

Characters of this type contributed to my confusion by promulgating quite exotic topics. Day after day, I used to find out that I shared the destiny of the heavenly people who had been the cradle of civilization, for Leonardo da Vinci was from Vinča, Saint Sava was almost the teacher of Jesus, the intergalactic centre was near Belgrade and the source of limitless power...I am aware that my ego runs pretty high, but all this is bound to be a bit too much...

The acme of my trouble with orientation as regards the state of belonging was the forcible drafting of my father and his joining the theatre of operations. As a sixteen-year old, I tried to understand whom is my father supposed to defend and whom to attack, who wants to kill my father, who is he shooting at? If he loses his life, what shall we say to our godfather in Zagreb?...

Aligned in a collective, people have lost the feeling for the values of an individual. I am allergic to the counter argument of the type: "That's the way we are!"

I'm not!

“Every Serb is called Radovan.”

Not so! I know a Zoran, and a Jelena, and another Zoran.

It is really indicative how many people here run away into collectivism and hide there from problems, defeat and responsibility. Does one always need an alibi? Being unable to align myself with “us” or “them”, I recognize the values of an individual. I have heard a true story once, which inspired me for some personal decisions and actions.

A certain gentleman from a place in Serbia decided in 1942, during the occupation, to write to Adolf Hitler. The man felt a need to react to the things which happened to him and to people around him. Through the evidence of the Belgrade Gestapo Office, the letter was forwarded to Berlin, and subsequently returned with an order. The man, whose name I can't remember, was arrested and taken to the prisoners' camp of Banjica where he was executed. Regardless of the fact that the story ends tragically, I was really impressed by this act of civilian, personal reaction.

**Jelena Mirkov**

(Novi Sad)

## **THERE IS A PEOPLE...**

**S**erbs, the best people, heavenly people, innocent lamb, democratic and patriotic people. Without concern to the circumstances, they stand behind their promises, and above all, behind the men who honestly defended their country, national heroes, as they call them. There are never enough epithets for this people who, unfortunately, is not an imaginary, but a real one, with a real country. But who are they at all, and does the world know of them?

They and those like them (their brothers), had been heard of as early as in the sixth century. There has been talk then that they are the people who live in the clans and in the tribal system, that no single man rules among them, but the democracy, and that they pass all decisions together. Even after fifteen centuries, traditionalism and consistency as regards the survival of such a system can be perceived. During that long period of time, only democracy had been metamorphosed and camouflaged, so that every trace of it has been lost. It hasn't been their fault, of course, but of a coincidence. Namely, this was the people who suffered and perished by all the peoples on this planet, and thanks be to God for giving them an alibi for all their failures and broken dreams. For they have been under some Osmanlis for five centuries, and it is not known any more who was under whom and who ruled over whom. But the fact remains that their brothers

on the other side of the world, whereinto birds come in flocks in winter, have never seen the chains of the Ottoman Empire. Then what kind of brothers are they to them? They might be, but only on the mother's side!

But to go back to the Osmanlis. It is not known whether this heavenly people wanted to get rid of the Osmanlis, or grew to like Turkish delight with Turkish coffee-cup, as well as tasty, stuffed cabbage rolls. I only know that Petar Ičko was an emissary to Constantinople, quite in vain, to make peace with the Osmanlis. It turned out the man went on a marathon of his own volition.

Well, yes, it's a strange people. Always before his time. It is not known if somebody passed more laws and constitutions, never putting them into practice. Always before his time, and always behind the rest of the world's time. Anyhow, the time difference between this country and the others is only a few decades. This difference was most prominent during the rule of the greatest liberties and peace in the country.

The time of frequent changes of frontiers and names of the country had also passed, and a brief period of prosperity occurred. Not accustomed to any kind of welfare, people began to think and scheme the new games without frontiers, succeeding in the endeavour. The whole world observes that game of theirs, in no way grasping its rules. It is giving it up slowly, giving up the metaphysics and the agnosticism that rule this people.

While the globe enjoys the worldly games which got their name after a mountain, their heads give speeches on a hill. Which song can represent and show them best to the world? They do not perceive that the world has gotten a whole picture of them already.

Is it a little more clear to you now what people are we talking about?

**Marija Živanović**  
(Kragujevac)

## **MISFORTUNE IN A MODERN FORM**

**O**f all the misfortunes that happen to my people, but also to all the other peoples, without exception, I am most upset with those involving children. I don't justify wars, which are begun by the adults, not by children who are completely innocent, but perish without even beginning to live. I think there is no punishment harsh enough to which I'd sentence such people.

This is a true story about the destiny of some people, which made a strong impression on me and made me think.

*March, 1999.*

In a village in Kosovo, there lived a happy family. Grandmother, dad, mother and children: Marina, Ivan and Mira. Marina was seven, Ivan six, and Mira one. Someone called Slobodan had a quarrel with the whole world, and so the aircraft began to fly above their village. One day, while the children were playing in front of the house, a siren sounded alarm. They entered the house, and as soon as they shut the door, there was a bang. Broken glass was flying on all sides. They screamed, but some of them even didn't. It all happened in a split

second. Amidst all that panic, they saw Ivan fall beside Marina who was already lying on the floor. Father and mother leaped, took the children in their arms and rushed to hospital. Marina was separated from her father with difficulty. He fainted after that, but mother looked somewhat composed. Father was in one operating room, Marina in another, and Ivan in the third. The baby was left at home with her grandmother. They didn't even notice her, but they heard crying from her bed. Mother neither remembered how the time had passed, nor for how long she was standing there in her old slippers. She only remembered that doctors came and told her Marina died while still at home. The blood on father was hers. She didn't stand a chance because a part of her head was blown off. Ivan had to have an operation. Bomb fragments were in his lungs, he was bleeding, but she didn't notice his other injuries. She only heard they were fighting for his life, and would have to extract one lobe of the lung. Close relatives arrived and said that Mira was all right and in the neighborhood. Grandmother was..., oh, God, if only Ivan would survive! How to deliver the terrible truth to father when he was in shock and couldn't recognize anyone.

*March, 2004.*

Five years have passed. They sold everything they possessed in Kosovo and bought a house in a place far away from the village in which they lived. They do get money, compensation and aid, but nothing can restore what they have lost.

Ivan survived. They extracted one lobe of his lung, but bomb fragments and scars all over his body remained. He is eleven now and quite smaller than children of the same age. He is not allowed to run and play soccer with his chums for he tends to choke. He wakes up frequently at night, and sometimes wets his bed. He gets some sort of pension.

Mira is six. She's rather clever and merrier than other children. She has problems with pronouncing some words and still can't remember some letters and numbers.

Father has epileptic fits. Truly, less often than several years ago. Sometimes, a bad day comes to him when he hardly talks and can't remember some faces. He must not stay alone in the house, for he becomes nervous immediately.

Mother has never taken to singing in these five years. She never turns music on when she's alone. She seldom laughs and wears only black, saying that she can't stand any colours on herself. She tries to live and be cheerful and happy because of children, but it's obvious there is little life left in her. They'll go to cemetery in a few days to light a candle. She secretly cries every day, but can't hide her reddened eyes. Relatives do come and all try to avert her thoughts, but at the end everyone returns home.

Marina's picture is on the shelf. She is not talked about. None dare ask anything about her. Everybody is under the impression that mother would die instantly if somebody would mention her name. Children have the same impression and, out of fear, don't mention their sister's name even when mother is not around. There has been some talk about hatred for the people who bombarded us. Only then she had said that she didn't hate all people, but only the man who had dropped a cassette bomb on her children. Still, she wouldn't sentence even him to live her life, and wouldn't be able to damn him to the same misfortune.

Children should be protected maximally, and be enabled to lead a normal life and have a happier childhood. In the contrary, what is the point of our life? What are we fighting for and for whom? What would we be left with if we were to destroy the most beautiful beings on this planet? What would we do with our life, if we were to destroy its purpose?

This is just one of the touching stories but, to our deepest regret, there are many, many more. Similar horrors might happen to any of us! Then, why everybody turn their heads and pretend they haven't seen anything? Many more stories like this one should be written, and people persuaded that they happened in real life. It's the only way to make people think about their actions and consequences thereof. We would then make mistakes less frequently.



**Dejan Pataki**

(Novi Sad)

## A TRADITIONAL ARGUMENT

It's been almost a year since I have been preoccupied with the matters of civic service, that is to say the conscientious objection, in Serbia. One of the activities we had undertaken at the very beginning has been to conduct a poll of citizens on the subject. The commentary which was often expressed by all those polled who disagreed with an alternative to the compulsory military service was: "My grandfather has served, my father too, and so will I. It's a family tradition." The word which attracted my attention in the argument against civic service was *tradition*. It made me think how tradition as an argument was sufficient all by itself. Approaching the subject, I have diligently looked up the meaning of the word *traditional* in Vujaklija's "Lexicon". Apart from a number of synonyms which explain the term, there was a word *usual*. A send-off of recruits to the army looks approximately as follows.

The (un)lucky young man gathers all possible relatives, friends and neighbours to a mass consumption of food, and above all of large quantities of alcohol, as usual. Music is an obligatory part of the ceremony, and the sounds of "original" folk music are traditionally imposed. The acme of the event certainly is the song "Mother must not start crying when she sees her son off to the army". To this tune, mother of the recruit is consoled by the relatives who have already welcomed someone returning

from the compulsory military service. Correct me if I am wrong, but a recruit's departure is celebrated, but he will in the next period of time carry arms, learn to kill (sorry, to defend himself), be separated from home, friends, and his girlfriend. Making the bed and tidying up the dormitory several times a day is a usual practice, as is washing the toilets with some exotic object, for example a tooth-brush. And so, is tradition a reason enough to accept all this?

It's usual that men who are successful with opposite sex, and who use this trait profusely, tend to be treated in the society as achievers. To describe those mentioned above, various epithets are used, such as *frajer*, *faca*, and the like. But if a person of female gender, with similar affinities, is in question, she is treated in a completely different way. Traditionally, epithets are used for her which, due to my upbringing, I'm not going to quote. That's traditional, usual, and by itself treated as an axiom.

The usual way of celebrating a birthday, or making a similar occasion, is very close to the sending-off of a recruit to the army, but I'd like to take it up here to the phenomenon of music which dominates these events. Regardless of the kind of music a person being honoured at a celebration, or anybody else at that, prefers in his spare time, the sounds are traditionally heard at the zenith of the event which can be classified as the so-called turbo-folk. Quite a few times, I have been witness to the people who have a perfectly good time to the tunes of the lesser (?) known stars like Seka, Maja, Ceca, Aca..., despite the fact that they own all albums of the groups called "The Ramons", or "R.E.M." (although not only due to their collectors' obsession). That this is usual seems to be a reason enough for someone to excuse his/hers screaming with the tune "Mile Likes Disco". I must add here that the word *relaxed* serves as an argument more and more frequently. But, perhaps some other time about this.

There is an interesting tradition in Central Africa. Genital lips are cut off to the young girls, and their vaginas sewn up. This act is usually carried out in an absolutely solemn atmosphere. Upon entering matrimony, the husband traditionally makes the female genitals available by knife.

No matter how tradition were decisive for the authenticity of a certain culture, it couldn't be an argument in itself. If it came to be explained in this way, it might cause a retrogression and a stereotype of the worst kind.

**Ivan Dobrić**  
(Novi Pazar)

# **THE INFLUENCE OF THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL ON SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO**

I'd like to explain in this text why it is that the influence of the International Criminal Court For Former Yugoslavia is a crucial factor of economic and social development of Serbia and Montenegro. In defense of my opinion, three stages will be presented in the following order:

1. A brief history and the fundamental task of the Hague Tribunal;
2. Pointing out the necessity of fulfilling the obligations to this Court on legal and moral grounds;
3. And, last but not least, concluding that the cooperation with Hague is the crucial factor of our country's "opening up" to European and other integrations.

## *1. A Brief History And Fundamental Tasks of The International Court In Hague*

The International Criminal Court for prosecuting persons responsible for severe violations of international humanitarian law which had been done on the territory of former Yugoslavia since 1991,

was established by the Security Council on the grounds of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The Statute of the International Court was adopted in 1993, with changes and additions of 1998.

## *2. The Necessity of Fulfilling the Obligations to That Court On Legal and Moral Grounds*

It can be seen from the above that the Hague Tribunal is a legal institution founded by the United Nations. As a member of the UN, and of the Council of Europe, Serbia and Montenegro should recognize this Court and cooperate with it. In the contrary, it would be automatically isolated from the international community, which would in no way be beneficial to the state community. Apart from the legal, there are also moral considerations. The international community's worry that domestic courts would be biased toward the accused is perfectly justified, for our legal system isn't mature still for the trial of the accused of such importance. There would be tricks and manipulations first, not only in S&M, but in the other ex-Yugoslavian Republics. In the case of the Balkans, putting the accused on trial on neutral grounds seems to be best. According to the domestic notion of morals, the criminals should be tried justly. Since S&M is not capable to do this, the job should be left to those who can really do it.

## *3. The Cooperation With Hague As the Crucial Factor Of the "Opening Up" Of Our Country To European And Other Integrations*

It's been already said that the non-cooperation with Hague would bring about the isolation of S&M by the international community. Since the politics of S&M is different, it aims at the integration with the Pact for Stability, the European Union, NATO and other institutions. Credits and help are also asked for from interenational institutions and other countries, but nothing is being given in return. This puts S&M into quite an unfavourable position. Part of the guilt is on the politicians who, for the sake of popularity, don't want to issue orders for extradition of the key accused to the Hague Tribunal. The other, larger part of the guilt, is on the people and the public opinion. The people of S&M declare themselves for

joining the European Union and for upgrading the living standard, but they are nevertheless against the extraditions to the Hague Tribunal.

It's not only that the non-cooperation of Serbia and Montenegro with Hague slows down the processes of integration, as well as the influx of foreign funds, investments and aid. It also creates an image of a "black hole" on the map of Europe, and incites isolation and perhaps new sanctions.

Statesmen should therefore take every effort to make the international obligations fulfilled regularly, so that Serbia and Montenegro could finally start toward progress, both economic and social one.

**Tijana Vladislavlavić**  
(Novi Pazar)

## **DEMOCRACY**

The notion of democracy means the rule of the people. The very concept and the way of governing a society appeared at the time of flourishing of ancient Greece. Etymologically, it signifies people (*demos*) and rule (*kratos*). Democratic practice has come into being as an opposition to tyranny which had dominated earlier history. In the societies in which there had been no democracy, the rule over people was exercised by individuals or groups. These individuals had the titles of kings, pharaohs or despots, who imposed their will on people like the *Scourge of God*. The groups which exercised power were called oligarchies, juntas and alike.

Throughout history, there has always been a high price to pay in the struggle for democracy. Just remember the numerous slave insurrections (the rebellion of Spartacus in ancient Rome), revolutions (French), as well as sacrificing many known and unknown individuals (burning of Giordano Bruno at stake, brutal murder of Martin Luther King, fighter for the rights of Negroes). Centuries-long striving for democracy is the realization of the principle of people's sovereignty, i.e. that all power comes from the people and serves the people, not the individuals (monarchs), who are, in fact, sovereign persons because they are not subject to law. May I remind you of Louis XIV, who has openly said: *I am the state!*

The basic forms of democracy are the direct and the representative one. The roots of direct democracy can be found in distant past of Greece. In the then polises (city-states), citizens took part in public affairs. Much later, in the Western Europe, the representative democracy has been developed. The advantage of direct democracy is in that every citizen participates in exercising power, but this form of democracy is possible only in small social communities. In the world of today, representative democracy prevails but has a more or less complex form from one state to another. The Parliament (*Assembly, Duma, Sabor, Seim, Sobranie...*) is the fundamental institution of representative democracy.

The free, direct, and secret elections are a basic characteristic of democracy. There is no real democracy without democratic elections, which means that every citizen of legal age can elect and be elected regardless of sex, property, and ethnic or racial affiliation. Media are an essential condition of democratic elections. They must be free and unbiased. Therefore, it is rightly claimed that media are the mirror of a democratic society.

Human rights are guaranteed only in a truly democratic society, while the formal democracy doesn't guarantee human rights and personal safety. The introducing of human rights, and their realization thereof, is a good indication of a democracy's vitality. The equality of Negroes and women has brought about an important improvement in developing the human rights and democracy in the world.

Party pluralism is quite the opposite of one-party system. Its characteristic is the competition of ideas and programmes, in which the fierce fight is going on to win over the public opinion, supporters and voters. The competing of parties in electoral procedure amounts to the increase of parties' strength, and not to the benefit of citizens. Since the parties' programmes are often the same, or similar, a manipulation of public opinion, demagogy and false promises occurs. The recall of people's representatives is possible as a corrective to the manipulation of masses, in a way to fulfill electoral promises. Bearing in mind that this step is seldom taken, as well as the complexities of such a procedure in some countries, a forcible change of government might occur, which used to happen in Latin America and Eastern Europe. The attempts of parties, especially of the small ones, to form coalitions and enter the Parliament, staying thus in power, are obvious in the party and political pluralism.

An immanent characteristic of representative democracy is the fact that it is never the rule of the people as a whole, but only of the majority. The matter of preventing the tyranny of majority over minority has thus arisen, so much so that many non-governmental or other organizations have developed in a way to establish and guarantee democratic rights of minorities. However, despite a significant progress in using the basic human and democratic rights, minorities still struggle bitterly against discrimination, and for equality.

Struggle for democracy means the fight for a republic, not a monarchy. In that regard, there are almost no monarchies in the true sense of the word, for the power and the rule of a dynasty are considerably limited and brought down to protocol (Great Britain). A catchword is being respected: *The king reigns, but the prime minister governs.*

A need to develop global institutions, such as the United Nations and the Security Council, has been recently recognized, as well as the need for regional linkage, such as the European Union.



**Bojan Petrović**

(Novi Pazar)

## **FAMILY AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

One of the frequent excuses which can be heard from young people is: "My parents don't understand children of my age." Why is the generation gap so present in our families? Why are the parents and the young people in our society literally at war with each other?

All these are questions which I wanted to deal with, in the wake of my previous interest, connected with this subject which is so characteristic of my milieu. Consequently, to bring the cultural trends closer to the real social trends and somehow expand the problem critically. While preparing this essay, I was greatly helped by the works of Thomas Gordon and Mirjana Obretković: "The Art of Parenthood", and "Family Relationships, Guardianship, and Social Work", respectively.

In the place where I live, family influence on the development of young people is in many respects different and more specific than in other places. The patriarchal type of family is still dominant. It's based on an unlimited authority of the husband and father. The authority of the senior male member is respected without question, and an absolute respect for the parents and obedience toward elders is demanded

from the children. Admittedly, this type isn't like the specific family form known in the Serbian patriarchal culture as a cooperative, but it's got quite a few elements of it. As far as the Islamic type of family is concerned, its main feature is the dominance of males over females.

Today, parents almost exclusively rely on the methods of child rearing and treating family problems which had been used by their parents, and the parents of their parents. In contrast to most social institutions, parent-child relationship seems to have remained unchanged for several hundred years.

Due to a specific upbringing and growing up, young people don't make decisions, thus respecting parental wishes and directing their own interests and work in accordance with those wishes. Cases wherein families allow children a much greater freedom of mind are rare. No matter how the times might be different, or how much young people would like and need a greater freedom in expressing their ideas, opinions and creativity, they will always meet with restrictions on the part of their parents.

Although Novi Pazar is well known as a production centre of various commodities, one cannot avoid the fact that education is something the town couldn't be proud of. Truly, higher education institutions have come into being in recent years, in the framework of which there are departments from many cities. A private university has been opened, which is really important and positive.

Problems arise only when one decides to continue with one's education in another city. For young people have problems with adaptation in new surroundings. If it happens that there is not a single "compatriot" in the new place, the phenomenon of alienation arises frequently. Due to the milieu from which they come, young people are not accustomed either to socializing of this kind, or to the freedom of expression in debates and discussions on all subjects. They find it hard to cope. All this is due to an inadequate preparation of a child for the change of surroundings.

Most parents at home briskly defend and justify their right to exercise their authority over the child. They believe in restrictions, setting up limits, demands that a child behaves in a certain way, orders and obedience. To make the child obey, they threaten him with punishment, and use it when he doesn't. If a conflict between parents and child ensues, parents resolve it always in their own favour. Such parents usually explain their "victory" with a stereotype thinking: "It's for the good of the child", "Dad knows best".

Still, everybody blames parents for problems of the young, as well as for problems which the young make for society. For it is the responsibility of the parents to persuade their children to behave in the way appropriate for both parents and society. The problem is who decides what is in the best interest of society. A child? A parent? Who knows the best? These are difficult questions, and it's dangerous to leave it to the parents to make decisions all by themselves. Everybody makes mistakes, and so do the parents. We shall also be parents some day, influencing the development of our children, but one question will always be put: "What kind of a citizen do parents send into the world of adults?"

**Erna Oklapi**  
(Novi Pazar)

## **A BIG PROBLEM OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

**T**he most difficult subject that many politicians evade, as well as the people at large, are the problems of young people today. The problem of drug consumption presents the greatest danger of all. My personal belief as regards this is simple and clear. I'm not like the "others" who "don't know" or "don't see" what is going on with young people. I don't take it as a taboo subject and don't run away from it. In the following, I want to explain that the use of narcotics by young people brings about their ruin, as well as that of the society as a whole and, finally, of the state in which drug addiction is of a mass scale.

In defending this thesis, three arguments could be presented. The first one points out to the changes in character of a person who uses narcotics. The second one outlines the loss of future for a state in which narcotics' consumption is widespread. The third and last one proves that an increase in the number of drug addicts threatens the reputation of a state/society directly.

The first argument testifies that an addict loses control over what he does. This provokes constant quarrels between close relatives and friends, and brings about the crossing over of the person to the other side of the law. This could be proved by many facts in everyday life. This points out to an explicit influence of the change in addict's character on

innocent people. Every day we hear of some murder being committed in this or that city. These are usually murders of parents because money wasn't given by them to the addict to purchase the "goods". We also hear that various thefts have been committed for the same reason. The number of offenders gets increased thus, who to a large extent, consciously or unconsciously, destroy the system they live in. I think one shouldn't hide behind these matters, but make every effort that these horrors don't get repeated.

The second argument could also be easily proved. Namely, the fact that the number of young addicts increases constantly brings about the downfall of a state. It would probably be better to say that it brings about the self-destruction, for it seems as if the state didn't care what was destroying it. It seems it finds some minor problems more important. We should have followed an old saying: "It is the young ones who inherit the world." All those young people who disappear every day might have improved the perspective of this state's system. They could have become doctors of science, or highly esteemed people, who would have helped all of us. But they didn't. We keep being shocked with the number of the dead from this cruel game, but we remain motionless. We keep waiting for our time to pass, without thinking about what will happen tomorrow.

On the other side, some young people are persecuted by the feeling of guilt for having fallen into debts because they must ask for anybody's money in a way to provide themselves with one more "satisfaction". However, they can't get out of this "game", and they try to console themselves in various ways. One of them has been completely explained with a sentence from the autobiographical book by Christiana F. "We, Children From the Station Zoo": "I probably want death so much that I can't stop". "This sentence speaks for itself. That is to say, as long as such a young person wants her own death, she exerts influence on the future of the state. Such a person draws other young people along with herself, who think that death is the only solution. Although there are some who pull themselves out of the "game", there are only a few of them. All in all, I think we should all think more about the future, because it could generally improve our present situation in the society/the state.

And, lastly, the argument that says the consumption of narcotics by young people belittles the reputation of the state could be defended in the following way. As the number of addicts increases, so does the number

of criminals. In newspapers or other media, we constantly find that the most serious offenders are exactly those who consumed or sold drugs to other victims, and to the young ones in the first place. The rate of crime, corruption and bribery in the state increases every day, which directly spoils its reputation earned so far.

As long as its reputation is at stake, the state loses support by other, more developed countries. That help is very important for the further progress of the state which happens to be in great economic crisis. Our own state is an example for this. The reputation earned should be treasured most, because it is hard to get. I think we should preserve it, and not keep losing it in a completely worthless way.

The success will be achieved only if this problem is taken as a very serious one, as a problem which we must solve soon.

**Radmila Krstić**

(Kragujevac)

## **CHILDREN'S LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT**

**T**he feelings of happiness, love, pleasure, tranquillity and fulfilment begin to fade away slowly. It doesn't take a lot to feel like this, but these feelings are sometimes so distant and unreachable. Does every child know what these words mean, or has he only read them somewhere? Does every child live in happiness, warmth, and love, or is it just their imagination and dreams which will never come through?

All people are, in fact, big children who miss laughter, play and song, and everyone sometimes wishes to be a child again, in a way to avoid problems and make up for something he might have lost in childhood.

There are children in the world who differ in the colour of their skin, language and nationality, but no one should separate and divide them because of this, for they are all the same and should have the same childhood. Many parents do not allow their children to mix with children different from themselves, for example, with children who are poorer, richer, or of a different background...Do such bans suit children, and do their development and life go into the right direction? Every child has the right to live freely, and nobody should run his life. In most cases, people are mistaken in thinking that their child will be the best in everything

if they run him like a machine. A child has the right to education, regardless of race, language and nationality, and should be provided with education in his native language. All children should be subject to the same teaching process and to learning the same languages, and in no way divided according to curriculum. A child has the right to spare time, sports and games... Children should not be forced to work. It can be seen quite often that some children earn for a living, or that some individuals engage in trade with children who are even sexually molested. Survival and development of a child depends on his living in a family full of love, understanding and happiness, as well as on whether or not he feels the family warmth.

Even today, one can see fear, disappointment, confusion and insecurity in children's faces...

Children have the right to think freely, to express themselves openly, to be free from being forced to talk about this or that, or being made into some other personalities. A nice memory of childhood should remain in a person. Childhood shouldn't be sad. Children ought to be given as much as possible, because tomorrow they are going to be adults who care for their own children. The neglected children, and those with a bad childhood, usually take to drugs, or are pursued for delinquency. Is it possible that there are children, those little, sweetest and prettiest beings, who are being punished, molested, and exposed to various conflicts? They should be accepted, given tenderness and warmth, provided a life of play, phantasy and song... Can we forget them, and do the children's rights exist? Thousands of questions, and not any right answers. Nobody should get hurt, least of all children, for no pain and suffering should be brought in. Just a little care and attention could do wonders.

I hope that some changes would occur in the world, but I also hope that the rights of children would have been solved, and that the Convention on Children's Rights, passed a long time ago (in 1989), would be really respected.