



The **PROJECT ON ETHNIC RELATIONS (PER)** was founded in 1991 in anticipation of the serious interethnic conflicts that were to erupt following the collapse of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. PER conducts programs of intervention and dialogue and has served as a neutral mediator in several major disputes in the region. PER also conducts programs of training, education, and research at international, national, and community levels.

PER is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with additional funding from the Starr Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Council of Europe.

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Summer 2001

BULLETIN



PREVENTING INTERETHNIC CONFLICTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION
NUMBER 16 / SUMMER 2001

Albanians as Majorities and Minorities: Athens Hosts Round Two of PER's Regional Dialogue

In the bitter aftermath of ethnic strife and warfare, a December 2000 PER roundtable in Athens brought together senior political leaders from Southeast Europe for a second round of discussions on how to prevent continuing interethnic rivalries from breaking out in renewed violence. (The first PER meeting had taken place in Budapest in April 2000. Reports of both meetings are available at PER's web site at www.per-usa.org.)

Participants in the Athens roundtable took up the most explosive issues of the day: the future of the status of Kosovo; relations between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians in Kosovo and between Serbs and Albanians in Serbia proper; the survival of the Yugoslav Federation, the territorial integrity of Serbia and Macedonia;

continued on page 8



Athens
Greece



Zarko Korac and Momcilo Trajkovic.



Hashim Thaci and Ibrahim Rugova.



Predeal
Romania

Romania: New Chapter in Interethnic Relations?

When leaders of the main Romanian political parties met in Predeal in February 2001 to discuss future cooperation between the ruling party and the Hungarian minority, it marked their first roundtable on interethnic relations since the 2000 elections. The meeting, organized by PER, brought members of the new Romanian government to the table with leaders of opposition parties, including the UDMR (Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania), to discuss new horizons for interethnic cooperation.

The Predeal meeting followed the signing of a "Protocol of Understanding" between the UDMR and the ruling party, the PDSR (Party for Social Democracy in Romania). The protocol pledges the UDMR to support the government in parliament in return for certain guarantees to the Hungarian community and reflects an important expansion of cooperation between ethnic groups in Romanian national politics. The PDSR has begun to deliver on many of the promises to the Hungarian minority that had been made under the previous government, including a new law on public administration that provides for bilingual signs in communities with at least 20 percent minority populations, as well as provisions for using minority mother tongues in the judicial system.

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PER offers five rules that reflect a decade's experience in working with antagonists in serious interethnic disputes.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Why is it so difficult to manage or resolve ethnic conflicts? The literature on interethnic relations grows almost daily. Here, PER offers its own small contribution—five rules that reflect a decade's experience in working with the antagonists in a number of serious interethnic disputes. Originally devised as a bit of compensatory humor, in fact they look likely to stand the test of time.

1. In interethnic conflicts, everyone is right.

Assertions by ethnic groups, whether majority or minority, are emotion-based and therefore fundamentally irrational. There can be no persuasive proof of which group is right and which is wrong about historical claims or about who is to blame for the conflict. Definitions of "fair" or "just" are inevitably relative and subjective. The best that outsiders can do is to lead the sides to their own agreements and compromises since there are few objective standards in interethnic relations.

2. In interethnic conflicts, bad behavior always displaces good behavior, but good behavior rarely discourages bad behavior. Typically, bad behavior wins. A current example is Macedonia: the behavior of a small group of determined Albanian extremists has provoked a forceful response from the Macedonian military, resulting in a destructive cycle of attacks and counterattacks. The establishment of a brief truce, and the willingness of the interethnic governing coalition to consider constitutional changes, did not dissuade the extremists from renewing their attack, which provoked a new and more vigorous response from the Macedonian military. Restraint rarely invites restraint.

3. In trying to resolve interethnic conflicts, the timing is always wrong. By the time the timing is right, it is usually too late. Because of the inherent difficulty of dealing with interethnic tensions, there is a tendency—especially on the part of the dominant or governing group—to deny that there is a problem or to put off consideration of claims by minorities. There is always a good reason at hand: the

country has more pressing problems; the demands of the other ethnic group are unfair or excessive; giving in to minority demands will create a political backlash among the majority. Often, serious efforts to deal with the problem come only after a serious crisis has erupted. By then, positions have hardened and conflicts that might have ended in compromise before the crisis have escalated and are unmanageable.

4. In resolving interethnic conflicts, the devil is in the details. Agreements in principle often break down when they are to be implemented.

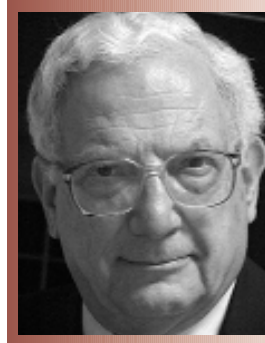
Real adjustments in interethnic relations often involve serious disruptions of extant behavior. One side must give up a traditional advantage, or some power, to accommodate the other, while the other side is likely to feel that whatever concessions were made are inadequate. Confronted with new realities, those who are affected by them and who must live with the daily consequences of agreements often reject them and try to disrupt their implementation.

5. In every two-sided interethnic conflict there are at least four sides. The sides in interethnic conflicts are almost never homogeneous but are themselves divided into factions, typically hawks and doves. The doves on each side usually have the worst of it: virtually any agreement that they reach with the doves on the other side will be attacked by hawks on both sides, who will try to prevent or undermine any agreement. (See Rule 2.)

Success in managing interethnic conflicts means finding ways around such obstacles, even while recognizing them.



Allen H. Kassof



ROMANIA: continued from page 1

Changes have also been made in higher education, for example increasing the number of university-level departments taught in Hungarian.

These measures move Romania closer to European standards for political-administrative decentralization and the treatment of ethnic minorities, and are expected to help that country's efforts toward membership in NATO and the European Union.

In addition to officials from PDSR and UDMR, representatives of the Romani community and major opposition parties including the PNL (National Liberal Party) and the PNTCD

(National Christian Democratic Peasant Party) took part in the debate. Representatives of NATO and the U.S. State Department observed the discussions, and praised the Romanians for the progress they have made in interethnic relations, citing it as an example for the entire region.

In a speech delivered on his behalf to the roundtable, President Ion Iliescu, cited PER for its decade-long work in promoting interethnic discussions in Romania, and singled out its pioneering role in opening the dialogue between Bucharest and Budapest. ■



Left to right: Mona Musca, Valeriu Stoica, Viorel Hrebenciuc, Cosmin Guse.



Left to right: Bela Marko, Peter Eckstein-Kovacs, Constantin Dudu Ionescu.

Romania Tirgu Mures

How to Implement The New Romanian Law On Public Administration?

Romania passed in April a progressive Law on Public Administration that aims to improve majority-minority relations. Among other provisions is the authorization of bilingual signs in communities with over 20 per cent minority population. The law also expands provisions for the education of minorities in their mother tongue, and provides for minority language use in public administration.

At a seminar organized in May by PER Tirgu Mures, in cooperation with the Bernady Gyorgy Foundation, a local nongovernmental organization, the practical issues of implementing the law as it relates to the use of the mother tongue were weighed by national and local government officials as well as with representatives of the minorities.

Participants to the seminar covered such topics as the compatibility of the basic principles of the law with



Left to right: Gyorgy Frunda, Laszlo Borbely, Livia Plaks, Maria Koreck.

European legislation, a sociological study of the public perception of the law, the experience of local authorities with implementation of the bilingual signs and the use of the mother tongue in public administration. The participants were optimistic that this law will improve relations between the majority and minority communities.

At the end of the seminar, the participants agreed on five points that would be essential in the implementation of the law on public administration and bring about true decentralization in Romania. ■

ROMANI NEWS

The Roma: Macedonia's Forgotten Minority

Macedonia

The violent confrontation between Macedonians and militant members of that country's Albanian minority has temporarily pushed the question of that country's substantial Romani minority to the background. But the Romani question will not go away, and will sooner or later have to be reckoned with as Macedonia struggles with the realities of a multi-ethnic society.

In October 2000, in Skopje, PER arranged for representatives of the Macedonian Romani community to have their first organized talks with government representatives in order to review the current situation of the Roma,

Skopje

Yugoslavia: The Roma After Milosevic

Yugoslavia

The end of the Milosevic regime has finally opened the door to a real dialogue between the Roma and the government about the future of this large minority. In February PER organized a roundtable that brought together leading figures from Serbia's Romani communities with newly appointed government officials. The event was co-organized

Belgrade

with OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, with assistance from the Forum for Ethnic Relations (FRY). It marked the first time that so many Romani leaders had gathered in one room to discuss the place of the Roma in Yugoslav politics.

The recent political changes in Serbia have created opportunities for advocates of Romani rights. The new regime seeks recognition and membership in international organizations and is sensitive to the human rights

to set goals for cooperation, and to begin the design of a comprehensive government policy toward the Roma—a requirement for membership in the European Union.

Romani leaders and government representatives had many disagreements about the issues facing minorities in Macedonia. But they concurred that the key components of a successful policy would be political will and a serious financial commitment by the government. The meeting also took up the status of Kosovar Romani refugees in Macedonia, and relations between the refugees and Macedonia's Romani community.

A report on the meeting is available at PER's website, www.per-usa.org. ■

claims of its Romani population.

Although there were some disagreements among the Romani leaders on how to achieve their goals, they were unanimous in asking official recognition of the Roma in Serbia/FRY as a "national minority." They called for this new status in the projected Law on National and Ethnic Minorities, which is now being prepared.

A report of the meeting will soon be available at PER's website. ■



Participants in the Belgrade roundtable. Left to right: Dragoljub Ackovic, Nada Raduski, Agnes Odri Kartag, Andrzej Mirga, Dusan Janjic, Allen Kassof, Nicolae Gheorghe, Alex Grigor'ev, Nenad Djurdjevic.



Participants in the Belgrade roundtable. Left to right: Dejan Markovic, Osman Balic, Nedzet Mustafa.

Who Really Represents the Roma?

Poland

With the question of Romani representation being raised more and more by Romani leaders and organizations as well as by international organizations and governments that work with the Roma, the problem of leadership has become increasingly salient. To tackle this question, PER and its Romani Advisory Council (PER-RAC) organized a seminar on "Romani Representation and Leadership at National and International Levels," in Krakow, Poland, in March.

Krakow

Bulgarian Roma Strive for Representation

Bulgaria

Throughout Europe, and especially in the Balkans, the Roma are poorly represented, if at all, in parliaments—the result of their own lack of effective political organization and coordination as well as discrimination by majority communities. PER has been working for some years to help the Roma enter the political mainstream, and has launched programs for Romani leaders in Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia. Now the effort has been extended to include Bulgaria.

Bistritza

PER, jointly with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (ODIHR/OSCE) organized a roundtable in Bistritza, near Sofia on the political participation of Roma in Bulgaria. Thirty-five political leaders of the Bulgarian Roma, NGO activists and govern-



Participants in the Krakow seminar. Left to right: (back row) Adam Andrasz, Dragoljub Ackovic, Petar Antic, Nadezhda Demeter, Emil Scuka, Klara Orgovanova, Vilmos Kovesi, Rudko Kawczinski, Andrzej Mirga, Nicolae Gheorghe, Ivan Vesely; (front row) Salome Hirvaskoski, Gheorghe Raducanu, Ondrej Gina.

The discussion in Krakow centered on the meaning of legitimacy, traditional *versus* modern and democratic leadership; the quality of performance; positive and negative examples of representation; and the role that leaders

should play. Participants examined the experiences of Romani nongovernmental organizations as well as political parties over the past decade and emphasized the importance of regular consultation with constituencies. ■

ment officials attended. Their counterparts from Serbia, Macedonia and Romania also participated in the May 21 event. The Bulgarian mainstream parties were also represented. Nicolae Gheorghe of ODIHR/OSCE and Andrzej Mirga and Livia Plaks of PER represented the organizers.

The discussions focused on the strategies for expanding representation of the Roma in the national parliament. Participants from Romania and Serbia cited their successful experiences in bargaining

with mainstream parties, while the participants from Macedonia strongly recommended running independent Romani lists.

The participants from Bulgaria pointed out that no mainstream party had offered Romani candidates places high enough on their lists to give them any realistic chances to get into parliament. Many of the Romani participants declared their support for the King Kiro National Movement, a newly created coalition of Romani parties. ■



Participants in the Bistritza roundtable.

ROMANIA NEWS *continued***Romania: Helping Educators to Work with Romani Children**

In April, PER's Tirgu Mures office organized the sixth in a series of workshops for teachers of Romani children. This session featured the presentation of nine new books about the Roma for teachers and students. More than twenty teachers, a school director, three school inspectors, publishing house representatives, and several journalists participated.

The workshop is part of a year-long course organized by PER to train Romanian teachers of Romani and non-Romani origin to be more effective in dealing with Romani children and their communities. As part of this initiative, PER has launched a Romani-language primer for second grade students, marking the first occasion that Romani authors have written such a textbook. The book has been approved by the Romanian Ministry of Education and will soon be in the schools. ■

From Iron Curtain to Velvet Curtain?

The anticipated eastward expansion of the European "Schengen" zone, where people and goods now move freely, may impose new and unwelcome barriers when additional countries enter the zone but some of their neighbors are left out.

What will happen when some ethnic groups are split by the new Schengen border? How can old neighbors minimize the ensuing disruptions? Will Schengen reinforce the division between the rich Europe and the poor Europe?

Hungary is a likely candidate for early admission, followed by

Slovakia. But Romania, Yugoslavia, and Ukraine face long-term, perhaps indefinite, delays. To complicate matters, Budapest is about to pass a so-called special status law giving rights to ethnic Hungarians living in other countries. Some fear that the law will

discriminate against non-Hungarian citizens of neighboring, non-Schengen countries. It is not clear how the European Union, or the neighbors, will react to this prospect.

In March, PER organized a discussion in Budapest, in cooperation with the Laszlo Teleki Foundation and with the participation of the Hungarian State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to weigh these issues. Hungarian officials and their counterparts from Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia, as well as from the European Union, discussed their expectations about the new borders and practical ways to manage the situation. ■

**PER at the Council of Europe**

PER's executive director contributed to the hearing on Romani issues before the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that was held in Paris in March. The Committee is preparing a report on Europe's Romani communities for the Assembly. Other speakers included representatives from the Council of Europe and the OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues. PER was the only nongovernmental organization to participate. ■

Serbia's Minority Issues Won't Go Away: The Vojvodina Debate

PER's Vojvodina Roundtable resumed its work in February in Palic, near Subotica. (The first two meetings had been held in Vienna in September 1999 and in Athens in February 2000.) This was the first time that the roundtable met in Yugoslavia—a result of the opposition political victory that

spelled an end to the Milosevic era. One of the key participants in this series, the president of the largest ethnic Hungarian party from Vojvodina, is now a deputy prime minister in the Serbian government. The participants affirmed their commitment to the Athens communiqué of February 15, 2000 (available at www.per-usa.org) and stressed that the communiqué should now be considered by the President of FRY,

the Government of Serbia, and the Collegium of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia as the basis for future policy in Vojvodina. The communiqué calls for the restoration of the province's autonomy that had been suspended under Milosevic.

The participants called for early steps toward practical implementation of the Athens recommendations, even while recognizing that there are many urgent and very serious problems confronting the country. They stressed that the problems of Vojvodina and its national communities can be solved within the framework of Serbia and Yugoslavia and that, indeed, this would have to be part of the democratic transformation that is required for Yugoslavia to reintegrate into European institutions. ■



Allen Kassof and Jozsef Kasza.



Left to right: Andras Agoston, Fedor Kolesar, Jon Cizmas, Dejan Janca, Tamas Korhecz, Miroslav Vitez, Sandor Pall.

ALBANIANS: *continued from page 1*

and the ebb and flow of influence between Albania and Albanians living outside its borders.

Leaders' aspirations to a cooperative future competed with their unilateral claims; calls for interethnic reconciliation often broke down over arguments about guilt and retribution.

Much of the discussion focused on the situation in and future status of Kosovo. The PER meeting was the setting for the first face-to-face confrontation between the leaders of the Kosovar Albanians and members of the new government in Belgrade. Belgrade representatives reiterated their offer of talks with the Kosovar Albanian leadership. The Kosovar leaders, supported by some of the international participants, asserted that it is too early for such a meeting. Kosovar Albanian leaders were also persistent in repeating their position that the only future for Kosovo is full independence from Serbia and Yugoslavia.

Tirana used the occasion of the PER meeting to announce that Albania wishes as soon as possible to reestablish diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which were interrupted during the Kosovo war. Belgrade replied that it was ready to do so, and relations were in fact reestablished during the weeks following the Athens meeting.

Discussing the tense situation in the Presevo Valley, participants agreed that the problem cannot be solved by the new democratic government in Belgrade alone but will require cooperation with Albanian leaders in the Presevo Valley and in Kosovo, with the international community, and especially with KFOR and UNMIK.

The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided indis-

pensable logistical and security support for the event.

Among the participants were Ilir Meta, prime minister of Albania; foreign ministers Paskal Milo of Albania and Eduard Kukan of Slovakia; Zoran Zivkovic, Yugoslav interior minister; Adrian Severin, president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly; a number of presidents of political parties from the Balkans: Fatos Nano (Socialist Party, Albania), Ibrahim Rugova (Democratic League of Kosova), Hashim Thaci (Democratic Party of Kosova), Arben Xhaferi (Democratic Party of Albanians, Macedonia), Imer Imeri (Party for Democratic Prosperity, Macedonia), Zarko Korac (Social Democratic Union, Serbia), Riza Halimi (Party for Democratic Action, Presevo region of Serbia); Bernard Kouchner, head of the UN mission in Kosovo; Daan Everts, head of the OSCE mission in Kosovo; Gert Ahrens, head of the OSCE presence in Albania; Hans-Peter Furrer, director general of political affairs of the Council of Europe; Alex Rondos, special adviser to the minister of foreign affairs of Greece; ambassadors Alexandros Mallias, director of South East Europe department in the ministry of foreign affairs of Greece; Michael Spinellis, Greek ambassador to Yugoslavia; Nicholas Burns, US ambassador to Greece; Michael Einik, US ambassador to Macedonia; Joseph Limprecht, US ambassador to Albania; Jordan Boshkov, chairman of the foreign relations committee of the Macedonian parliament; Chris Dell, head of the US Mission in Kosovo; Bishop Artemije of Raska and Prizren. George Papandreou, minister of foreign affairs of Greece hosted a reception and greeted the participants. ■

Debate on Kosovo's Future

In April, PER organized, in Pristina, a local follow-up to the Athens roundtable. Participants included Kosovar Albanian, Serb, Romani, and Bosnjak leaders as well as senior officials from international organizations based in Kosovo who had taken part in the Athens meeting, as well as some newcomers. Among the par-

ticipants were Ibrahim Rugova, Hashim Thaci, Ramush Haradinaj (leader of the third largest Kosovar Albanian party, Alliance for Future of Kosova), and Momcilo Trajkovic and Rada Trajkovic, representing the Kosovar Serb community. The meeting was facilitated by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, whose head, Daan Everts, also participated and pronounced the event the most useful he had attended in Pristina in two years.

At the roundtable, the Kosovar Serb leadership announced that they would for the first time consider participating in the upcoming Kosovo elections, subject to a number of conditions. Participants discussed the interethnic situation in Kosovo, and there was an intense debate about the events in Macedonia and their implications for Kosovo. ■

**Hungary** **Hungary and Serbia Compare Minority Laws**

In May, the Budapest office of the Project on Ethnic Relations organized a seminar for Hungarian and Serbian politicians and legal experts to compare Hungarian laws on minorities with proposals now being prepared in Serbia. Hungarian participants spoke of their experiences in crafting and adopting the Hungarian Minority Act in 1993 and described the negotiations among political parties and minority groups. They also looked at problems of fulfillment. Serbian participants presented their latest draft for a law on minorities. The conferees analyzed the Serbian draft and made suggestions for its improvement. Hungarian experts acknowledged that the draft is an ambitious document of high quality and would be a significant improvement over Serbia's present laws. They recommended that Serbia establish an ombudsman for minorities. ■



Budapest

Slovakia: Training the Police

Serious, often lethal tensions between the majority population in Slovakia and the Roma are reflected in bad relations between the Roma and the police. Romani leaders in Slovakia charge that the police are unwilling to respond to or investigate racially motivated crimes and vigilante acts against the Roma.

One answer to this problem is better police training. PER is assisting the Southern Police Institute of the University of Louisville, Kentucky to organize a series of six one-week training workshops, beginning in June 2001. The workshops promote community policing methods and the improvement of police-minority relations. Open to police officials, police trainers, as well as Romani leaders and local county officials, these seminars stress the importance of joint police-community cooperation in the policing process and provide specific examples and suggestions about how to implement such cooperation.

PER's cooperation with the institute began in Romania 1994, and continued with programs in Hungary. According to the Institute's Dr. Deborah Wilson, the key to the success of this program is the personal involvement of experienced U.S. law enforcement officials in the training workshops. In this professional-to-professional exchange, U.S. police officials provide practical information based on the experience of American police agencies. Wilson says that the American police are not necessarily "better" than their foreign counterparts, but they have had longer experience with policing in a modern, democratic society and can help to promote change. Working with U.S. police officials gives Slovak officers a chance to discuss professional problems with American professionals who confront similar issues. ■

Slovakia **Slovak-Hungarian Dialogue an Urgent Need**

In October 2000, PER convened a meeting of leading members of the parties that make up the Slovak governing coalition, as well as observers from both NATO and the United States. The meeting assessed Slovak-Hungarian relations in Slovakia, and considered what needs to be done if Slovakia is to continue to benefit from progress in achieving interethnic accord as it moves toward NATO and EU membership.

Discussion among coalition partners showed the need for more and better communication on these controversial interethnic issues. Slovak and Hungarian participants remain far apart despite their partnership in the ruling coalition, and agreed to continue their dialogue. ■



Bratislava



PER NEWS

Ambassador Walker Becomes Newest PER Board Member

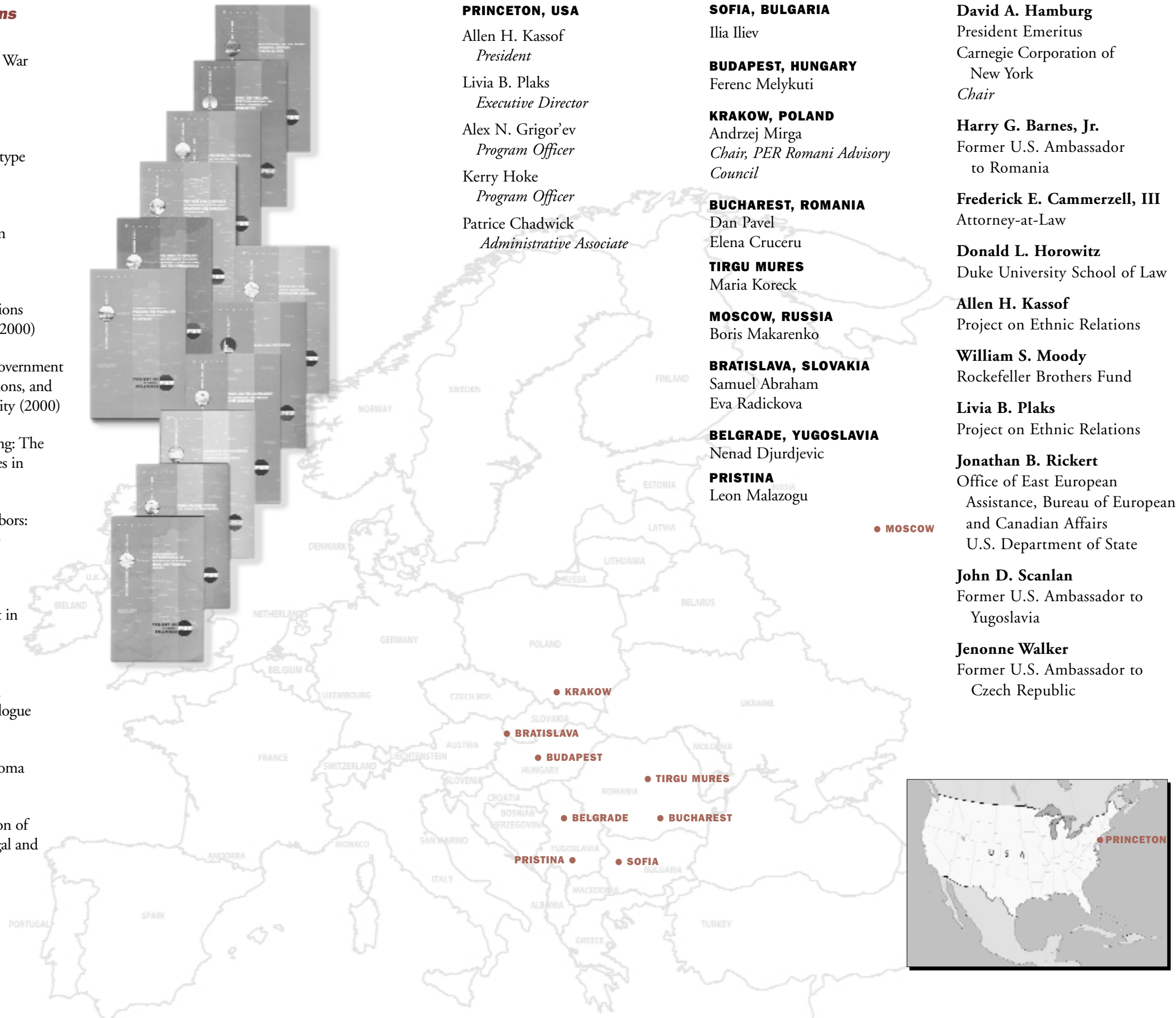
Ambassador Jenonne Walker has joined PER's governing Board effective May 2001. Walker, recently retired from a distinguished governmental career, served as U.S. Ambassador to Czech Republic from 1995-1998. She was Special Assistant to President Clinton and Senior Director for Europe at the National Security Council from 1993-1994, and has held appointments at the Woodrow Wilson International Center and at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.■

Robert Feldmesser, Long-time PER Associate, Dies

We regret to inform our readers that Dr. Robert A. Feldmesser, who served as PER's senior editor since 1993, died on January 14. He was seventy-five. Feldmesser, who was a sociologist and specialist on Russia and the USSR, held the doctoral degree from Harvard University and taught there and at Brandeis and Dartmouth. After serving as senior research associate at the Educational Testing Service, Feldmesser began a post-retirement career in writing and editing and contributed his services to PER. We are deeply indebted not only for his extraordinary generosity, but for the high editorial discipline that he brought to our publications. He was an exemplary man and a wonderful friend and colleague.■

Recent PER Publications

- Montenegro on the Brink: Avoiding Another Yugoslav War (2000)
- Roma and the Law: Demythologizing the "Gypsy Criminality" Stereotype (2000)
- Vojvodina: The Politics of Interethnic Accommodation (2000)
- The Year 2000 Elections in Romania: Interethnic Relations and European Integration (2000)
- The Roma in Hungary: Government Policies, Minority Expectations, and the International Community (2000)
- Toward Community Policing: The Police and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary (2000)
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