

PROJECT ON ETHNIC RELATIONS

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 high-level intervention and dialogue and serves 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.

Individuals and institutions wishing to receive PER publications should write to:

**PROJECT ON
ETHNIC
RELATIONS**



15 Chambers Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08542-3707, USA
Telephone: (609) 683-5666
Fax: (609) 683-5888
E-mail: ethnic@compuserve.com
<http://www.netcom.com/~ethnic/per.html>



**VOJVODINA: THE POLITICS
OF INTERETHNIC
ACCOMMODATION**

**PROJECT ON
ETHNIC
RELATIONS**



VOJVODINA: THE POLITICS
OF INTERETHNIC
ACCOMMODATION

VIENNA, AUSTRIA
SEPTEMBER 23-25, 1999

ATHENS, GREECE
FEBRUARY 13-15, 2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	1
Note on Terminology	4
THE VIENNA MEETING	5
Characterizations of the Problem	5
Proposals of the Vojvodina Hungarians and the Serb Response	10
What Should the Next Steps Be?	14
THE ATHENS MEETING	25
Changes Since the Meeting in Vienna	25
Is a Discussion on Interethnic Relations Timely?	29
The Vienna Communiqué	36
The Athens Communiqué	39
List of Participants in Meetings in Vienna and Athens	42
Other PER Publications	44

PREFACE

This preface to the account of discussions between the Serbian democratic opposition and leaders of the Vojvodina ethnic communities about the future of Vojvodina is being written in June 2000. We do not know how much longer the Milosevic regime will remain in power, but sooner or later it will collapse. Its most deplorable legacy will be the deliberate and systematic destruction of the fragile interethnic accommodation that had once characterized the region. Much of the resulting suffering and damage is beyond repair any time in the near future: It is difficult even to conceive of normal relations between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians before another lifetime goes by.

Nevertheless, Serbia remains a multiethnic country. If the Serbian democratic opposition is to succeed, it needs to work with the minorities. It needs their support and their votes now, and it needs to come to power prepared with a fair and effective minorities policy. The minorities, in turn, need a democratic future.

Vojvodina represents one of the best opportunities for cooperation. It is a multiethnic region of Serbia that has long been characterized by a rich blend of peoples—Serbs, Montenegrins, Hungarians, Croats, Romanians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Roma, and others. The nationalist assault by the Milosevic government upset traditional arrangements, creating life-changing losses for many members of the minorities as they were deprived of status, employment, and legal protection.

The minorities of Vojvodina did not turn toward secession or armed resistance, but instead tried for many years to coax the Milosevic government to reverse its practices. By the time of the Kosovo war, however, even the most optimistic among them realized that their only hope lay with a completely new government in Belgrade, and they increasingly looked toward the democratic Serbian opposition.

But the opportunity for the Vojvodina minorities and the democratic opposition to make common cause is more complicated than one would wish. This document summarizes two discussions—one in Vienna in September 1999, and a follow-up meeting in Athens in February 2000—between leaders of the Vojvodina opposition parties (including Serb and ethnic minority parties) and the major Belgrade-based opposition parties and coalitions. The talks produced a political document to which all of the participants subscribed, but the difficult

path to this result and the problems of coordination since then are a forecast of more complications ahead.

Briefly, the Vojvodina representatives argued for the restoration of local administrative autonomy and for legislative and constitutional measures that would recognize the self-governing authority (within Serbia) of the several ethnic communities of Vojvodina. But the Serbian opposition parties expressed reservations about granting ethnically based autonomy, claiming that the Serbs themselves had been so grievously wounded by recent events that any further dilution of their status and influence would be unacceptable. Moreover, they argued, taking up the cause of minorities at this time would expose them to politically damaging charges by Milosevic that they were anti-Serbian.

The fact that the sides were nevertheless able to reach full agreement (albeit only after their second meeting) was therefore a considerable accomplishment. We shall have to see whether their efforts will bear fruit in a new Serbia. The opposition parties, which were to have submitted the document to the collegium of presidents of the united opposition, have not yet done so. Meanwhile, not only the opposition political parties but all democratically minded people in Serbia are under assault by a regime that becomes ever more repressive as its demise approaches. Those who took part in these meetings under such harrowing circumstances—within hours after the Athens meeting, official Belgrade broadcast accusations that they had betrayed Serbia, and hinted at personal reprisals—deserve our admiration for their courage.

Whoever succeeds to power in Serbia will find the question of Vojvodina waiting. Fortunately, the discussion leading to resolution has begun.

We are grateful to Tibor Varady and Dusan Janjic for their indispensable advice in organizing these meetings. Their persistence and wisdom during Serbia's long night will surely be celebrated in a

future democracy. Alex N. Grigor'ev, PER program officer, prepared this report, and it was edited by Robert A. Feldmesser, PER senior editor. PER assumes full responsibility for the text, which has not been reviewed by the participants.

Allen H. Kassof, *President*

Princeton, New Jersey

June 2000



From left to right: Tibor Varady, Laszlo Jozsa, Jozsef Kasza.



From left to right: Zarko Korac, Dragor Hiber.

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

In this report, the English (and Serbian) spelling of the name “Kosovo” is used, rather than “Kosova,” the spelling preferred by Albanians. The term “Kosovar” is used as an adjective for Kosovo and as a noun to denote inhabitants of the region, whether Albanians, Serbs, or others. In addition, “Yugoslavia” or “F.R.Y.” is used for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, or Serbia-Montenegro; and “Bosnia” for Bosnia and Herzegovina. These designations are strictly for the sake of simplicity. Finally, “Serb” and “Croat” are used as ethnic terms, whereas “Serbian” and “Croatian” are employed when referring to Serbia and Croatia, and this report uses “Muslims/Bosnjaks” to denote ethnic Muslims living in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.



From left to right: Jon Cizmas, Emil Fejzulahi, Dusan Mihajlovic.



From left to right: Tahir Hasanovic, Predrag Simic, Milan Mikovic.

THE VIENNA MEETING

September 23-25, 1999

CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

The discussion was opened by an American who asked the participants to provide an objective characterization of the situation in Vojvodina. It is very important for all sides, he noted, to understand the exact nature of the problem and whether indeed there is a problem at all. He invited a Serb from Belgrade and a Vojvodina Hungarian, both of whom are experts on the situation and are not affiliated with any political party, to respond to this request.

The Vojvodina Hungarian participant began by saying that both the Yugoslav federal and the Serbian republican governments have been avoiding the ethnic problems of Vojvodina for more than a decade, just as they have avoided the problems of ethnic minorities in other areas.

The result is that these problems are increasingly difficult to solve. Yet, he went on, the problems can be solved to everybody's benefit. He noted that there was interethnic peace in Vojvodina until the mid-1980s, when Slobodan Milosevic

came to power in Serbia—not a democratic peace, but peace nonetheless. There were separate schools for Serbs, Hungarians, Croats, Romanians, Ruthenians, and other minorities. Specific laws were adopted to ensure the multiethnic character of the province. These laws were not perfect, but they were respected by the authorities. Minority languages had been freely used in public offices along with Serbian. This practice has all but vanished. The number of minority schools has been sharply reduced; and in those that still exist, more and more subjects are taught in Serbian rather than in minority languages. Under a new Serbian law, the names of places in minority languages are no longer to be used for official purposes.

Of course, he said, these examples are not dramatic, but the constant narrowing down of the multicultural character of Vojvodina and of the province's autonomy is a very serious and sad process. The system that

Constant narrowing down of the multicultural character of Vojvodina and of the province's autonomy is a very serious and sad process.

protected a multiethnic Vojvodina was crushed by the so-called “antibureaucratic revolution” led by Milosevic in 1989. That revolution was also responsible for fanning nationalist feelings in Yugoslavia, in Serbia, and in Vojvodina, followed by ethnic and civil conflicts. Up to this day, nationalism is the guiding ideology of Yugoslavia.

Because of all this, this participant continued, it is only natural that many ethnic minorities want to organize themselves, and over the years this movement has gained strength. It is founded on the belief that minorities should be able to determine their own destiny; their natural right to decide who is going to be a director in a minority school, and who is going to be a manager in a factory in one of their own towns, should be

recognized. This is why the present opportunity for dialogue in Vienna is of such great importance.

The primary goal of the Hungarians is not secession but local self-government or local self-administration.

Over the years, the Hungarians of Vojvodina have made a number of proposals for increased autonomy. It is very easy to label such proposals as “separatist,” as a way of denying

the legitimate aspirations of ethnic Hungarians. But these proposals need to be discussed, for the sake of Hungarians, for the sake of other minorities, for the Serbian majority, and for Vojvodina, Serbia, and Yugoslavia as a whole.

The Serbian participant agreed that one of the country’s major problems is the absence of a serious discussion of minority problems. He said that the initiation of the discussions in Vienna brought to mind the dialogue organized by the Project on Ethnic Relations in New York in April 1997 between the Serbian parliamentary and Kosovar Albanian political parties. The participants in that meeting sat down to talk about a problem that seemed to be solvable at the time. Today, the Kosovo problem is impossible to solve, after great amounts of blood have been shed this year in Kosovo by both ethnic communities. As at the time of the New York meeting, the current ruling parties and most of the opposition parties are neglecting minority problems. They think that it is enough to have one or two minority representatives in their ranks and to give lip service to programs for addressing the problems.

This participant pointed out that there are national, regional, and international aspects of the problems that are under discussion. On the

national level in Serbia, there is a fear of creating and then losing another Kosovo, fear of a new conflict, this time over the Vojvodina province. In the Serbian press, parallels are constantly being drawn between the two constitutionally autonomous Serbian provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. There are, however, important differences between them and the political activity of the Vojvodina Hungarians and the political activity of the Kosovar Albanians. In reacting to Milosevic’s repressive policies in Kosovo, the Albanians, led by Ibrahim Rugova, boycotted the Yugoslav and Serbian state institutions throughout the 1990s, whereas the Hungarians have participated and continue to participate in state-related functions. The Kosovar Albanians created paramilitary formations, led by the Kosovo Liberation Army, but the Hungarians of Vojvodina not only have no such formations, but have explicitly expressed their preference for solving their problems in talks with the authorities in Belgrade and through participation in the work of the republican and federal parliaments. The primary goal of the Hungarians, this participant said, is not secession but local self-government or local self-administration. Hungarians by their policies and actions created a very favorable atmosphere for discussing minority problems in Vojvodina.

Those who have agreed to take part in the Vienna meeting, this participant continued, disagree on a number of things, but they agree on one thing: that we live in a state that is undemocratic and totalitarian. Yugoslavia does have a constitution, but it is constantly being violated. One man in this state, Slobodan Milosevic, has absolute power. The source of his power is not the constitution; it is intimidation of the political circles and the population. Even if one reaches an agreement with Milosevic, there are no democratic or constitutional mechanisms to make him abide by it. In connection with Vojvodina, this participant continued, Milosevic did make a number of promises to the leaders of both the Vojvodina Hungarians and other minorities, and even to the minister of foreign affairs of Hungary, but none were kept. There is a complete lack of meaningful dialogue between the government of the country and the leadership of the country’s ethnic minorities.

Another problem that complicates matters, he said, is that the Yugoslav federal state has not been functioning properly for almost two years. The federal government has been appointed without the consent of Montenegro, one of the two republics that constitute Yugoslavia. The federal state and the federal government therefore

lack legitimacy from the viewpoint of Podgorica.

This participant also noted a significant difference in the nature of ethnic policies in the two republics. Montenegro, under the leadership of President Milo Djukanovic, has chosen a democratic path of development, with a multiethnic republican government that is actively pursuing economic and political reforms. A ministry for the protection of rights of persons belonging to ethnic and national minorities has been established, led by an ethnic Albanian working alongside a Muslim and a Croat. Montenegro is also working on a new set of laws in cooperation with Muslims/Bosnjaks, Albanians, Croats, Roma, and other ethnic minorities.

Serbia, on the other hand, continues to be ruled by a totalitarian and undemocratic regime that suppresses development of the ethnic groups on its territory. This refers not only to Hungarians, but also to

In Yugoslavia, there is a complete lack of meaningful dialogue between the government of the country and the leadership of the country's ethnic minorities.

Muslims/Bosnjaks, Romanians, Slovaks, Roma, Croats, Albanians, Bulgarians, Ruthenians, and other ethnic minorities. The Serbian state has introduced a number of restrictive laws that undermine the position of ethnic minorities. These include a law on the sale of property, a law on the official usage of languages, and laws regarding schools and the university. As a result of the school law, for example, many of the principals who have been appointed by Belgrade to head minority schools do not even speak the language of the particular minority. New laws on ethnic minorities are critically needed. PER and other organizations that have a decade of experience in dealing with issues like these elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe can be of great help here.

As for the democratic opposition in Serbia, this participant continued, the Serbian Renewal Movement, the parties that make up the Alliance for Change, and other parties have not sufficiently defined their minority policies. They have not articulated what kind of Serbia they want to see in the future. They declare that they want to build a democratic and prosperous Serbia, and they claim respect for minority rights, but they have not answered the crucial question of whether they want a multiethnic Serbia, although most of them do want a Serbian national state. In

fact, it would be fair to say that the minority parties have used nationalist appeals to gather support just as much as the Serbian parties have.

Both the Serbian majority and the minority opposition parties have to look at the Vojvodina issues from a purely pragmatic perspective that includes the views of the international community, the upcoming federal and republican parliamentary and presidential elections, and the roles of the mass media and public opinion. They do have some common interests. The essential question is whether the present regime in Belgrade is going to survive. We need to do everything that is needed to make a democratic Serbia a reality.

On the regional level, Budapest, Bucharest, and other capitals in the region are concerned with the Vojvodina problem, though for different reasons.

Hungary is seeking a wider scope for the self-government and autonomy of the Vojvodina Hungarians, just as it is seeking increased self-administration for the Hungarians in Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine. Romania is concerned about the Hungarian requests for autonomy in Vojvodina in the same way it is concerned about similar requests by the Hungarian minority in Romania and with the possibility of independence for Kosovo.

In some circles in Serbia, there is a fear that, if a conflict were to erupt in Vojvodina, NATO might intervene, as it did earlier in Kosovo, since Hungary is now a member of NATO. Short of intervention, it is unclear what form of leverage NATO could employ in this part of Yugoslavia. On the other hand, it is clear that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could employ a carrot-and-stick policy in Vojvodina. Renewal of Yugoslavia's relations with OSCE and respect for OSCE principles in this part of Europe are of crucial importance.

Another Serbian participant agreed that the situation and the security of ethnic minorities in Serbia have worsened, but, he added, it has also worsened in all other parts of the former Yugoslavia, such as Croatia and Bosnia. The recent events in Kosovo are especially horrifying. Serbs, Roma, and many other minorities are denied all basic rights. Moreover, it is an overall regional process; similar things are happening in other

The democratic opposition in Serbia has not sufficiently defined its minority policies. They have not answered the crucial question of whether they want a multiethnic Serbia.

parts of post-Communist Europe—for example, in the Baltic countries, he said.

Serbs did not want to be a minority in Croatia or Bosnia, or in Kosovo. That is understandable, because recent history has proven that as soon as they became a minority, they lost most of their rights. Indeed, unless one supports the rights of all minorities, sooner or later there will be a Kosovo-style scenario. Minorities should be treated with respect; they should be asked about their problems and about possible solutions to those problems. The majority and the minorities should sit down together and look at what can and should be done. We can talk about general majority-minority issues, but clearly there are also a number of concrete steps we can fully agree on. It is fine that we are all here in Vienna at the invitation of a third party, but we should have more such meetings—in Novi Sad, Subotica, Belgrade, and other places in Serbia.

PROPOSALS OF THE VOJVODINA HUNGARIANS AND THE SERB RESPONSE

A couple of months before the meeting, several of the ethnic Hungarian parties in Vojvodina had made public their proposal for a political restructuring that would lead to autonomy in Vojvodina. (Not all the Vojvodina Hungarian parties supported the proposal in full.) This proposal was called “Agreement on the Political and Legal Framework for the Self-Government of Vojvodina and the National Communities of Vojvodina.” The core of the proposal, which was backed by the government in Budapest, is a three-step process: personal autonomy for members of the Hungarian minority, territorial autonomy for areas with a majority Hungarian population, and provincial autonomy for Vojvodina.

The proposal was described in detail by one of the participants at the meeting. It states clearly that the Hungarian minority views Vojvodina and their own national minority as being part of Serbia and Yugoslavia. It calls for the affirmation of a guarantee of equality of the national, religious, and cultural values and the historical traditions of Serbs, Montenegrins, and persons belonging to other national communities in Vojvodina, and for the self-organization of those communities and the preservation of their mother tongue and culture.

The proposal declares that the Hungarians in Vojvodina should have the right to public and official use of their language in oral and written form.

The Hungarian language is to be on an equal footing with Serbian in all townships in Vojvodina where ethnic Hungarians make up 5 percent or more of the population or where they number at least 500. The laws and regulations of Yugoslavia, Serbia, Vojvodina, and the townships should be published in the Hungarian language as well as in Serbian. In such localities, the names of the districts and streets are to be given in both the Serbian and the Hungarian languages, and Hungarians should be allowed to use the Hungarian spelling of their names. There should be one Hungarian-language medium-wave, one short-wave, and one television frequency supported by the state but controlled by the ethnic community.

The Hungarian minority views Vojvodina and their own national minority as being part of Serbia and Yugoslavia.

Also, Hungarians should be allowed to use and display their national symbols in conjunction with the state symbols of Serbia and Yugoslavia. Education in the mother tongue at all levels should be provided. The ethnic community should determine the instructional programs and curricula of the minority-language schools.

Further, the proposal also calls for proportional representation of Hungarians in the state organs and administration and for budgetary funding of educational, cultural, and scientific institutions and public media organizations, in numbers commensurate with the tax contributions from persons belonging to the Hungarian community, but at a minimum of 17 percent of the budgetary resources. Hungarians are to be proportionately represented in the police force.

With the aim of exercising their rights concerning their mother tongue, culture, education, media, and the preservation of their national identity, the Hungarian community proposed the formation of a National Council, to be elected by the direct vote of the ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina. In the meantime, a Provisional National Council has been formed, consisting, first, of those elected to the Yugoslav, Serbian, and Vojvodina parliaments as representatives of the ethnic Hungarian political parties, and second, of one-fifth of those elected to the local governments, with due regard to proportional representation of the ethnic Hungarian parties.

Finally, in addition to steps toward the provincial autonomy of Vojvodina, the proposal called for the creation of a district self-govern-

ment made up of the townships where Hungarians are a majority: Ada, Backa Topola, Becej, Coka, Kanjiza, Mali Idjos, Novi Knezevac, Senta, and Subotica.

The official response from Belgrade has been strong opposition to the proposal, claiming that it would lead to the dismemberment of Serbia and the creation of a Greater Hungary. Various parties of the Serbian opposition added that the Hungarian demands might weaken the democratic forces of Serbia and help the Serbian Radical Party of Vojislav Seselj. They are saying that this should be of some concern to the

The degree of autonomy in Vojvodina cannot be the same as that in Kosovo, for a very simple reason: In Vojvodina, the Serbs are the majority population.

minorities because their rights will be respected only in a democratic Serbia, which is possible only with the victory of the democratic opposition.

One of the Serbian participants said that he does not agree that the demands for the self-organization of minorities are legitimate. According to him, Kosovo is a terrible precedent,

in which the process of the destruction of the Serbian state started from similar demands. Serbia should not be a region for experiments of this kind. This participant also noted that, despite the strong and legitimate criticisms of the policies of the present Yugoslav federal administration, it is important to respect the existence and the laws of the Yugoslav state. He was insistent that Kosovo is a part of Serbia and that any claim to the contrary would be a grave violation of United Nations Resolution 1244 and of the Kumanovo agreements between the generals of NATO and the army of Yugoslavia.

This participant distributed to the other participants a declaration on Vojvodina that was adopted by his party in 1994. He pointed out that this declaration was especially relevant today, because there are forces inside and outside of Serbia that are trying to turn Vojvodina into a new Kosovo, as a pretext for the deployment of foreign troops there. He repeated the words of the president of his party, that when he says Serbia he means “a new, rich, democratic, and European Serbia with Vojvodina as one part, but with a special status and position within it.”

This declaration, “Vojvodina in Serbia,” acknowledges that, to the shame of the present rulers in Belgrade, Vojvodina has been humiliated and

plundered, particularly in the economic and cultural spheres, to an extent that arouses the just anger of the Serbs, Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, and all other ethnic groups living there. This party supports recognition of the economic, political, territorial, cultural, and ethnic peculiarities of Vojvodina as an integral part of Serbia. Since 1990, the party has supported a decentralized system of power in Serbia, with forms of economic autonomy for the regions and municipalities. The party recognizes all the particular characteristics of Vojvodina, the ethnic and cultural ones above all.

This party considers that the rights denied to ethnic minorities actually reflect upon the people of the majority. If the Serbs deny civil rights to ethnic minorities, it is to their shame, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the world. The party is against what it calls “any territorial, political, or cultural barriers between the Serbs and other ethnic groups in Vojvodina.” Its general principle is that all the regions and municipalities in Serbia should enjoy broad autonomy, which means that local self-government would be Hungarian in the districts and municipalities with a Hungarian majority. The same applies to the Romanians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, and others.

The existing provincial assembly of Vojvodina, its government and administration, should have decision-making powers on economic, cultural, and judicial matters, but these powers, or those of local bodies, should in no way jeopardize the territorial sovereignty of Serbia. As provided for in the constitution, the assembly of Vojvodina makes decisions about ethnic minority rights and their implementation according to European standards. The assembly should also have the right of legislative initiative in the parliament

The most important element in the solution of the present-day problems of Serbia and Yugoslavia is the decentralization of power.

of Serbia, and these initiatives should have priority in the parliament’s deliberations. However, the degree of autonomy in Vojvodina cannot be the same as that in Kosovo and Metohija, for a very simple reason: In Vojvodina, the Serbs are the majority population.

The most important element in the solution of the present-day problems of Serbia and Yugoslavia, this participant stressed, is the decentralization of power. That is why his party is supporting the creation of a working

provincial assembly and provincial government for Vojvodina. He agreed, however, that the dissatisfaction of minorities with the state of affairs in the country is a sort of measure of the level of democracy in today's Serbia. He said that many minority requests are legitimate but that the minorities have to keep in mind that the Serbs were and still are a majority in Vojvodina—almost 60 percent of the overall population of nearly two million. Hungarians are 17 percent, Croats not quite 5 percent, Slovaks 3 percent, Romanians 2 percent, and Ruthenians 1 percent. The minorities should respect the state they live in and respect the borders and laws of that state. Only after these prerequisites are met can one discuss the demands of the minorities.

This participant concluded by saying that his party is increasingly concerned with the way that the Vojvodina Hungarian parties are stating their demands, and with the way they are supported by Budapest, which is a NATO capital. The party is concerned with both the timing and the nature of these demands. He criticized several of the provisions in the proposal of the Vojvodina Hungarians regarding language rights and said that the document needs a thorough legal analysis as well as a serious discussion. Finally, he said that while he supported the idea of this meeting in Vienna, it would make more sense to hold such a gathering in Serbia. Responding to this remark, an American participant noted that meetings of such a nature and with international observers are impossible in a Serbia that is ruled by a group of indicted war criminals.

WHAT SHOULD THE NEXT STEPS BE?

Another participant from the same party said that sometimes the broaching of even legitimate questions could be extremely counterproductive. In this context, he alluded to the meeting that PER organized in New York in April 1997, which brought together for the first time—and, as it turned out, the last time—the heads of all the major Serbian parliamentary (except the Socialists of Milosevic and the Radical nationalists of Seselj) and Kosovar Albanian political parties. Similar discussions now about Vojvodina, he said, could change the situation in the province. He stated his opposition to raising such questions at a time when there is a grave danger to the very existence of the Serbs in Kosovo. To do so might help the Milosevic regime consolidate its power. He also recalled the meeting of the Hungarian and Albanian prime ministers, Viktor Orban and Pandeli Majko, in Tirana in the summer of 1999, where they dis-

cussed, among other things, the question of Vojvodina. He expressed doubt that such consultations would have any positive influence on the situation in Yugoslavia.

Today, he asserted, the priority of both the Serbs and the minorities in Serbia should be to facilitate the eventual victory of democracy. A regime must be established that is capable of solving minority problems in a democratic and legal way, with respect for the constitution and in dialogue with the minorities. He criticized the Vojvodina Hungarians and other minorities for having helped the Milosevic regime get to where it is now by collaborating with him at previous times. Bringing up minority issues in current circumstances is dangerous, he concluded.

This statement brought a sharp rejoinder by a Vojvodina Hungarian participant, who said that he had been listening to speeches of this kind for ten years. It was precisely the postponement of a serious discussion of minority issues by both Milosevic and the Serbian opposition which produced the results that are seen today in Kosovo. This participant also said that he felt offended that the Hungarians and other minori-

The priority of both the Serbs and the minorities in Serbia should be to facilitate the eventual victory of democracy.

ties in Serbia are considered to be just a “voting machine.” He tried to explain that, by creating the Provisional National Council, the Hungarians had in fact helped the majority Serbs to consolidate a democratic base, because this council is supported by 84 percent of the Vojvodina Hungarians, who elected representatives to the federal, republican, provincial, and local assemblies and councils. He also pointed out that the council is prepared to be a political partner when the opposition wins power. He said that the Vojvodina Hungarians would be happy to cooperate with the democratic opposition and in fact consider themselves to be a part of that opposition, but it is difficult to cooperate with an opposition that constantly postpones meaningful discussions with the minorities and in addition is beset by continuous interparty bickering. How could Hungarians join a united opposition if it does not exist? How is a majority-minority democratic bloc possible if the major opposition parties, the Serbian Renewal Movement of Vuk Draskovic and the Democratic Party of Zoran Djindjic, cannot agree with each other?

At the present stage, he went on, all that the Vojvodina Hungarians want is a dialogue.

He added that Vojvodina Hungarians and their political parties always supported the opposition, and that opposition presidential candidates always got more votes than Milosevic in areas with a Hungarian majority. Spokesmen of the Vojvodina Hungarians have stressed on several occasions that they are loyal to the state they live in and are asking only for autonomy within that state. They are not asking for separation or secession. They are a peaceful and loyal minority that does not possess

The postponement of a serious discussion of minority issues produced the results that are seen today in Kosovo.

weapons and has no paramilitary groups. The participant voiced strong dissatisfaction with the repeated requests that the Vojvodina Hungarians confirm their loyalty to the state and the calls for dialogue—an extremely limited dialogue at that—only when an election is approaching. The problems that the Vojvodina Hungarians are facing today need to be discussed. For example, why is it that only half of them can continue their education in their mother tongue? The problems are significant and, left unattended, will worsen with time.

A participant representing another Vojvodina political party said that the opposition and the minorities should consider how they will act when Milosevic is no longer in power. He called on “fellow members of the opposition” to accept the minority demands. “If we are going to be called traitors because we accept such demands, we will be traitors only to Milosevic’s concept of the state, in which minorities are not respected and do not feel at home.” The democratic opposition should not be afraid of the regime’s media, either, he went on. The opposition must acknowledge that the situation of minorities in Serbia is grave and demands urgent attention. There are communities in Vojvodina where 50 percent of the population is Hungarian and yet there is not a single Hungarian in the leadership of the municipal council or even among the principals of the Hungarian-language schools.

A minority representative from Vojvodina said that it was idle to keep saying that the Serbian democratic opposition and minority parties are open to a dialogue when the fact is that they do not meet on their own initiative. Only the insistence of PER made the present meeting possi-

ble. He expressed the hope that it would be the beginning of a process that would be continued. He called attention to the situation of the Croats in Vojvodina, pointing out that they are not even officially recognized as a minority under current Yugoslav and Serbian law. Over the course of the last ten years, he said, 45,000 Croats were forced to leave Vojvodina, and these people will most likely never come back. He gave support to the democratization and decentralization of Yugoslavia and the self-organization of minorities. Both the majority and the minorities have to understand that they have responsibilities for their own people and responsibilities for the state they live in.

A representative of a Serbian opposition party said that there are two ways of dealing with the country’s problems. One is to work within the existing governmental framework; the other is to work with the opposition in efforts to get rid of this government and of the system it represents. He agreed with other participants that there are a number of very important issues that must be dealt with before a dialogue on minority issues can be even started. There needs to be a change of political culture in Yugoslavia before the minority problems can be tackled seriously.

This participant called on the Vojvodina Hungarians to stop supporting the regime in Belgrade. In effect, he said, they were helping the regime by talking to Milosevic and by participating in all the elections in Serbia and Yugoslavia, even those that were boycotted by everyone but the extreme nationalists of Seselj’s party. If the minorities do not join the opposition in its struggle, why should they be respected by that opposition? A minimum set of joint actions is needed, and a discussion of what the minorities might hope for in the event of the opposition’s victory and the establishment of a democratic Serbia.

A Vojvodina Hungarian leader reiterated that this meeting was a good beginning; the minorities and the opposition should continue the discussion as soon afterward as possible, working toward the adoption of a set of common principles that would then be open to all Serbian democratic parties. He said that he understands the sensitivities of some to bringing up minority issues now, after the tragedy that the Serbs have been experiencing in Kosovo in the second half of 1999. Nevertheless, he said, it is his responsibility as a leader of the Vojvodina Hungarians to discuss the “existential nature” of the problems that they are facing. He also stated his recognition of the fact that other Vojvodina minorities face similar problems.

He reaffirmed that the Hungarians of Vojvodina do not want separation from Yugoslavia and so it is absolutely irrelevant to speak about their loyalty to the state. Hungarians have never thought of Vojvodina outside of Serbia. He also said that his party came to the meeting in Vienna not with any illusion that the problems of the Vojvodina Hungarians could be solved there, but only in the hope that “we could talk to people who will understand us.” Failure to engage in such discussion will just make matters worse. There is a danger that the patience of the minorities will soon run out. He said that he knows about the existence of Hungarian nationalism in Vojvodina and is willing to talk about it, but at the same time he wanted to show what was happening to the Hungarians there.

He gave some concrete instances of what he meant. In the city of Subotica in northern Vojvodina, where Hungarians are in the majority, there are more signs in the Cyrillic script than in the Latin, even though a state law says that signs in that part of the country should be bilingual. Of the fifty directors of enterprises in Subotica, only six are ethnic Hungarians. Are Hungarians stupid and not capable of managing factories? There are no Hungarians in the police, the army, or the customs service. Why should the Hungarians be loyal to a state that shows no trust in them? There are only three Hungarian school principals—and even those three are members of Milosevic’s Socialist Party of Serbia. There are principals in the Hungarian schools who do not even speak Hungarian. Ninety-five percent of school-board members are Serbs. But do not Hungarians know who is the best police officer, the best school principal, the best manager in the communities they live in?

He blamed the Serbian government for this situation but said that the response of the Serbian opposition has not been satisfactory, either. The Hungarians are repeatedly told that they should sit and wait while the Serbs deal with the Albanian question, while the struggle for democracy in Serbia is going on—all sorts of reasons for not discussing the Hungarians’ grievances. The important opposition parties did not even want to read the Hungarian proposals. This meeting, he said, was the first chance for the leaders of some of the ethnic Hungarian parties from Vojvodina to meet with the leaders of one of the major opposition parties in Serbia. All the documents have been sent to them, but nothing is heard from them afterward except, “Wait until we win power in Serbia and then we will discuss all your issues.” This Serbian party says that it has adopted a declaration about Vojvodina, but where are the Hungarians in that Serbian Vojvodina? Where are the Hungarian con-

cerns in that declaration? Why were the Hungarians not consulted while the declaration was being drafted?

This participant said he felt offended that some in the Serbian democratic opposition consider Hungarians to be part of the Milosevic camp. Hungarians have never participated in the Milosevic government and certainly have never held the position of deputy prime minister, as some in the Serbian democratic opposition have. The Hungarian parties have participated in the elections because they were trying to solve their problems with the legal means provided by the constitution. Hungarians are not in a position to choose whom they will talk to.

It must not be “we” the minorities and “they” the Serbs, but “we” the opposition in Serbia and “they” the regime of Milosevic.

Twice they asked for a meeting with Milosevic, because he was after all the president of Serbia—and it was the Serbian vote that twice made him president of Serbia, not the votes of the minorities.

The situation is not all bad, however, this participant continued. The Serbian parties in Vojvodina are paying attention to the Hungarian problems and have entered into serious dialogue, and cooperation exists with the Vojvodina Hungarians. In addition, there are a number of smaller parties in Belgrade with which a good working relationship exists. Some have even been willing to discuss the Hungarians’ recent proposal for autonomy. If the Serbian opposition is willing to discuss only territorial autonomy for Vojvodina, without getting into the specifics of the Hungarian proposals, then it will be clear that Serbia is very far from becoming a democratic country. Hungarians are willing to stay in Serbia, but they need urgent attention to their concrete problems.

An American participant agreed that it is time for the Serbian democratic opposition and the Hungarians and other ethnic groups in Vojvodina to launch a thorough discussion of minority-related issues. The current Serbian and Yugoslav governments cannot produce any meaningful results for the Serbian people. Sooner or later, this bankrupt and internationally isolated government will collapse. Thus, it is important for the Serbian democratic opposition to start, as soon as possible, a meaningful discussion with Serbia’s minorities if it wants their help in democratizing the country. Minorities in Serbia represent a significant share of the voting population. The Serbian democrats should not be under any illusions: Whatever they do by way of improving minority-majority rela-

tions will be used by the ruling parties in Belgrade to label them as traitors to the so-called “Serbian cause.” It is therefore important for the opposition itself and the opposition and the minorities to bring about a degree of unity on the relevant issues, and they must talk about how far the sides can go in order to achieve that unity. The sides do not have to accept each other’s proposals, but they need to find the lowest common denominator. In any case, some political attention has to be paid to the minorities in Serbia.

The Serbian opposition, he concluded, should look into the possibility of combining the issues of the minorities in Serbia with the issues of the Serbs from Kosovo and of the Serbian refugees from Croatia and Bosnia. One way of doing this is to appoint an interparty commission on minority and refugee issues, with an explicit declaration that the work of such a commission is in the interest of the general public, including the ethnic Serbs. The opposition will have to tackle these issues in the new Serbia, anyway, so why not start now?

A minority leader from Vojvodina brought up the problems of the Romanians in that province. The Romanians, who like the Serbs are Christian Orthodox, lived very closely with their Serbian neighbors for centuries, sharing the good times and the bad. The Serbian state run by Milosevic, however, has not done anything for the Romanians and has not even treated them with respect. One of the main concerns of the Romanians is the assimilation that is occurring. It has gone so far that many Romanian children do not identify themselves as Romanians. The number of Romanian-language schools has declined by 50 percent. It sometimes seems that the Romanian community in Vojvodina had more rights in the Austro-Hungarian Empire than it does in today’s Serbia. Careful consideration should be given to decentralization and to the restructuring of the law in order to deal with minority grievances in the areas of local self-government and administration, culture, and education.

A Serbian politician from Vojvodina supported the call for dialogue between the leaders of the minorities and of the opposition. Dialogue never creates problems, it usually solves them. The problems of the minorities in Vojvodina should be addressed first on the provincial level, because it is easier for smaller communities to deal with their problems. He spoke highly of the quality of the Hungarian proposal and said it should be taken seriously because it does come from one of the minority ethnic groups. He supported the idea of creating an interparty com-

mission of opposition and minority groups to consider these issues.

A participant from Belgrade said that, while it is important to have a dialogue, it is also important not to manipulate the issue. For example, Milosevic frequently uses one of the Hungarian leaders to make it look as if a dialogue is going on and everything is fine. He said that his party is already cooperating with one of the Hungarian parties from Vojvodina.

A Hungarian from Vojvodina noted that the Hungarians in Vojvodina always voted for the opposition in presidential elections in Serbia. Not a single Hungarian party has ever entered the government. Every important Hungarian politician has sat down with Milosevic at some point, but so has every important opposition leader in Serbia. That is not important. The minorities of Vojvodina want to participate in working for change to improve their own status. However, it is absurd to have elections first and only afterward to decide what languages the ballots are going to be in. There should be no fear that Vojvodina will leave Yugoslavia, but there is a danger that the people of Vojvodina, and perhaps even the other people of Yugoslavia, will leave Yugoslavia. In fact, they have been leaving for the last ten years. It might be Milosevic’s goal to have more dissatisfied people outside of Serbia, but it should not be the goal of the democrats.

Minorities should be loyal only to a state that is loyal to its minorities.

A representative of one of the leading opposition parties in Belgrade objected to the tone of the discussion. In particular, he did not like the classification of participants in the meeting into “we” and “they.” We have to have partnerships and cooperation, not alienation. He pointed out that his party, in contrast to other parties, had sent a strong and representative delegation to this meeting. It must not be “we” the minorities and “they” the Serbs, but “we” the opposition in Serbia and “they” the regime of Milosevic. If we start seeing our problems as common ones, we will know that we are on the right path; if not, then we are doomed. The minorities do have legitimate concerns and a compromise has to be worked out. He observed that most of the minority problems in today’s Europe are being solved through European integration. Everyone should support a European orientation for Serbia and work together toward democracy. “Together, we have to make clear what kind of Serbia we want to live in.”

A Hungarian politician agreed that the question of democracy should be addressed in both Serbia and Vojvodina, but, he said, these two issues should not be mixed together. He spoke about the importance of personal autonomy for Hungarians and other minorities in Vojvodina. The Hungarians should be given the right to elect representatives to an ethnic body able to make decisions about minority schools, language usage, and related issues. Even while Milosevic is in power, the opposition can do a lot, especially in those cities where it holds power. There is nothing new or unusual about disunity among the Hungarian parties in Vojvodina. The same situation exists in other countries. There are always some who want to cooperate more with the government and others who want to cooperate more with the opposition.

A Serbian politician said that it was clear to him that the ethnic Hungarians and the Serbian opposition parties are members of a single coalition, a coalition for change in Serbia. He pointed out that his party has always been in favor of dialogue and compromise. That is why its representatives attended the PER meeting in New York in April 1997. If there is no dialogue, there is no trust and no solution. When dialogue fails, war starts.

Serbia's integration into the European Union, he continued, is the only way of providing the country with security and prosperity. This is in the interest of not only the majority and the minorities of Serbia but of all the states of the former Yugoslavia. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is a good vehicle for Serbia's transition into the EU. Yugoslavia should become, however, a democratic and a decentralized state. In such a state, Vojvodina might become a modern European region. His party supports autonomy for Vojvodina and sees it not as autonomy only for Hungarians and other minorities but as autonomy for the Vojvodina Serbs as well. All citizens of Yugoslavia should want autonomy for Vojvodina. This participant also pointed out that there is more in common between the opposition and the minorities than there are differences between them. However, one way of starting a dialogue is to agree to disagree first.

A Hungarian politician added that there are cases of cooperation between the Serbian opposition and ethnic minorities. In the last presidential elections, his party supported a Serbian oppositionist because he had declared that he supported the rights of minorities in the fields of culture, education, and language as specified by the EU and that he also sup-

ported different models of local and special self-government. This candidate had said that minorities should be loyal only to a state that is loyal to its minorities, and that the state should secure for its minorities all the rights it is asking for Serbs elsewhere.

A West European participant pointed out that meetings between the majority and the minorities are important as a way of preventing Kosovo-style violence. Before the events in Kosovo, he said, he heard the Serbian opposition promise to talk to the Albanians after the elections, but then it was too late. The present meeting shows that in at least one area the representatives of different groups can sit down together to seek some sort of consensus. The West Europeans can support the dialogue morally and financially, but the sides that are involved must start the process first. The Hungarians have been very patient and constructive so far, he concluded, and the sooner there is a positive answer for Vojvodina, the sooner Yugoslavia can be integrated into Europe.

An American participant noted that the Hungarians have suffered real losses, but it was not the Serbs in this room who caused them. The Hungarians are skeptical about the general nature of the discussion, and rightly so, for they have heard exactly the same from Milosevic. However, the Hungarians are actually doing a favor for the Serbian opposition, because they are mapping quite clearly and frankly where the problem is. In some other countries of the region, minorities play a cat-and-mouse game with their respective majorities. It is understandable that the Serbs feel wounded after Kosovo, but it is also understandable why the Hungarians are asking for special treatment. The two sides must engage in a political negotiation, and it is clear from this meeting that it is within their capacity to start working together on solving the problem.

A Serbian participant warned that the problems of Serbia and its minorities are not going to be solved merely by getting rid of Milosevic. The problems will remain after he is gone. The main problem is not an individual but the society as a whole, its dominating mentality. The fact that the Serbian democratic parties sent representatives to the PER meeting in April 1997 whereas the Socialist Party did not participate showed who is really interested in solving Serbia's problems. Vuk Draskovic, Miroljub Labus, Dusan Mihajlovic, or Vesna Pestic should not be blamed for "losing Kosovo." On the contrary, they should be applauded, for they were willing to talk to the Albanians and work toward finding compromises. Finally, it must be kept in mind that the Hungarians are not the only

ones who want something from the majority. The Bulgarians, Romanians and Vlachs, and other minority ethnic groups in Serbia have concerns as well. The Serbian democratic oppositionists should declare unequivocally that there will never be an ethnic war in Serbia again.

* * *

The participants spent the last hours of the meeting discussing the text of a concluding communiqué statement that had been prepared overnight by a group of the participants. As one of the participants pointed out, the communiqué statement does not have the standing of a “legal document,” but is a way of starting a meaningful dialogue, a political process, an expression of intent to work seriously toward solving the difficult problems of Vojvodina. Several participants declined to subscribe to the document; their separate statement was inserted in the text.

Concluding the meeting, an American participant said that the Serbian political leaders should look around at their neighbors, who are integrating into Europe at a rapid pace. Yugoslavia is last on the list of countries to be considered for European integration, although ten years ago it was first, she said. How soon Yugoslavia will enter onto the path of integration depends on the Serbian democrats and their attitude toward Serbia’s minorities.

THE ATHENS MEETING

February 14-15, 2000

CHANGES SINCE THE MEETING IN VIENNA

The meeting opened with the observation by an American participant that changes in the Serbian opposition movement that have occurred since the meeting in Vienna give grounds for optimism.

This participant reminded the others about the proceedings of the Vienna meeting, where the minority representatives presented a proposal on what the institutional arrangements might look like in a Vojvodina that would guarantee or advance the rights of ethnic minorities. The representatives of the democratic opposition from Belgrade, he said, had positive or mixed reactions. They seemed to accept the idea of regional autonomy but were worried about ethnic autonomy. He also reminded the participants that the representatives of two political parties did not agree to the final document that was adopted in Vienna.

He called on the democratic opposition to reach a more coherent consensus on the issues of ethnic minorities, which not only would strengthen the democratic opposition’s standing today but also would improve its chances in the future. Furthermore, it would help the opposition to move through these issues more rapidly and to avoid some controversies that might arise when the opposition comes to power. The opposition is showing that it is capable of restoring decent relations among the ethnic groups in Serbia and that it is prepared to deal with nationalities policies in a future democratic Serbia. He then turned to two of the participants and asked them to describe the post-Vienna developments in Serbia in connection with minority issues from their points of view.

The participant from Belgrade said that, in retrospect, the document that was agreed on in Vienna looks much more significant than it did when it was adopted. It defined very well the nature of relations between the government and ethnic minorities in a future democratic Serbia. It is in line with OSCE requirements, and it has helped to foster cooperation in the field of ethnic relations.

He went on to say that the Serbian democratic opposition is now in a better situation, because conflicts within the opposition have diminished and a stronger and more meaningful interparty cooperation has emerged. This certainly has had a positive influence on the relations between the demo-

cratic opposition in Serbia and the leadership of ethnic minorities. On the other hand, he said, the situation that Serbia is in is worse than it was in 1999. The regime of Milosevic is in agony, and a considerable fragmentation of the institutions of the state has begun. Serbian society has entered a stage in which violence dominates. This involves both organized crime and politics. In this situation, the state cannot guarantee anything to its citizens.

These conditions, however, have strengthened the coalition of the Socialist Party of Slobodan Milosevic, the Yugoslav United Left of Mira Markovic (Milosevic's wife), and the Serbian Radical Party of Vojislav Seselj. It is clear that they will stay together until the very end. As far as minorities are concerned, the government is clearly showing that it is not going to change its policies.

Democracy in a multiethnic state cannot exist without an ethnic dimension.

There is a welcome change in the involvement of the ethnic minorities in Serbia. In September, only the ethnic Hungarians of Vojvodina were active in defining their future in Serbia and the future of interethnic relations. Today, other minorities are following suit, producing their own policy documents. Muslims/Bosnjaks in Sandzak are now active in proposing ways of reforming their status. They are asking for different forms of autonomy.

On the other hand, this participant noted, there is a serious deterioration in ethnic relations in the south of Serbia, in the valley of Presevo, where the majority of the population is ethnic Albanian. There is open conflict there between the state of Serbia and the ethnic minorities. The situation is deteriorating in Sandzak as well. Nor has there been any improvement in the situation in Kosovo, especially in the town of Kosovska Mitrovica, where conflict between the Serbs and Albanians is continuing and even escalating.

This participant concluded by saying that the democratic opposition needs permanent and strong communication among its constituent parties and between them and the minorities on issues of interethnic relations.

A Vojvodina Hungarian participant said that it seems the opposition in Serbia still would like to put off discussions on interethnic relations. He reaffirmed the belief that he expressed in Vienna that the questions of the

democratization of Vojvodina and Serbia and of the democratization of ethnic relations are not different processes but parts of the same process. They should develop together rather than separately. There is not a single multiethnic democracy in Europe where some sort of autonomy arrangement for minorities is not part of the institutional structure. Democracy in a multiethnic state cannot exist without an ethnic dimension, and that dimension will not be created without difficult work by democratic forces.

He added that, for the first time in the history of Yugoslavia, a multiethnic opposition is being formed. The minority parties in a multiethnic opposition consider the issues of minority rights to be their primary concern. Inclusion of such parties in a multiethnic opposition improves the quality of such opposition. After all, both the Socialist Party and the Yugoslav United Left are multiethnic parties; some of their minority members are even in relatively high-level positions, though they certainly do not represent minority concerns.

Another Hungarian from Vojvodina said that the document adopted in Vienna testified to the fact that the democratic opposition in Serbia is ready to begin discussion of minority issues and to seek ways of resolving them. It is also clear, he said, that the minorities themselves should take actions to realize their demands. Since last year, the ethnic Hungarian community in Vojvodina has done something in that direction. The Hungarian Provisional National Council that was formed by a number of ethnic Hungarian parties from Vojvodina has started its work; it has begun to map out the problems that are facing the Hungarians in Yugoslavia and to propose possible ways of solving them. The members of the council are bringing these problems to the attention of political audiences both inside and outside of Yugoslavia. This process of forming ethnic national councils is not limited to Vojvodina; in Kosovo, the Serbs who remain there are also organizing themselves into a national council.

Democracy alone does not solve ethnic problems. Solutions will come from a persistent and serious minority policy.

An official of one of the opposition parties in Belgrade agreed that the most important development since the meeting in Vienna was the unification of the opposition and that the parties of ethnic minorities in

Serbia are a part of that union. This process has not yet been completed, but ethnic Hungarian and other minority parties have agreed with the rest of the democratic opposition to participate together in elections, with a united list. The opposition is asking for elections on all levels: local, republican, and federal. The opposition does not have all the answers to the problems of ethnic relations, but it does have the will and the desire to talk about these problems and to seek solutions for them in a new, democratic Serbia. Democracy alone does not solve ethnic problems; consider the situation in Quebec or the Basque region of Spain. Solutions will come from a persistent and serious minority policy based on an honest conversation between majorities and minorities, he concluded.

Another participant from Belgrade said that the situation has changed since the meeting in Vienna and especially since the time a couple of years ago when it was still possible for the minorities to talk to Milosevic. Now it is clear that the only political force in Serbia that the minorities

The opposition in Serbia has accepted the fact that it is a multiethnic opposition.

can talk to and get a positive response from is the Serbian democratic opposition. The current government in Serbia, said another leader of a Serbian opposition party, does not represent Serbian national interests. On the contrary, it has

inflicted and continues to inflict an incredible amount of damage on the Serbian people. By not respecting the constitutional norms of autonomy in Serbia, the Milosevic government helped to bring about the tragedy in Kosovo. Now this government is threatening the very lives of the leaders of the democratic opposition.

An ethnic Hungarian participant said that the 1999 OSCE summit in Istanbul was another significant development since the meeting in Vienna. Before the summit, there was some question about whether autonomy was desired or not, he said, but the Istanbul final documents recommend autonomy as an institution for the preservation of minority rights. In Serbia, all that's left to discuss is what kind of autonomy is needed. The question of autonomy for Hungarians, Muslims/Bosnjaks, and other minorities is one set of issues, separate from the issue of regionalism. If Serbia wants to get back into the OSCE, it should play by the OSCE rules.

A U.S. participant commented, however, that most European docu-

ments, including the one signed in Istanbul, cite autonomy as a possibility, as the highest standard in respecting minority rights, but not a necessity. All Serbian opposition parties favor regional autonomy for Vojvodina, but there are certain traditions of dealing with minority issues there. The opposition should capitalize on the victories that it has achieved since the meeting in Vienna. Especially important is the fact that the presidents of Hungarian and Muslim/Bosnjak political parties, together with other opposition leaders from Serbia, signed a document of principles on January 10, 2000. This clearly shows that the opposition in Serbia has accepted the fact that it is a multiethnic opposition; there is no way to deny this basic characteristic.

IS A DISCUSSION ON INTERETHNIC RELATIONS TIMELY?

At the outset of the discussion, a political leader from Belgrade had expressed the opinion that nobody should expect the Serbian democratic opposition to produce a detailed program on Vojvodina, or on interethnic relations in general, just now. The opposition, he said, is engaged in a brutal fight with Milosevic, and in that situation, the opposition politicians are afraid for their own lives. This led another participant to ask the discussants to seek a balance between, on the one hand, the immediate and urgent needs of the democratic opposition and, on the other, the needs and desires of the minorities in Vojvodina for some kind of assurances that went beyond a mere assertion of principles. The two polar positions are clear. One is a detailed and elaborate document that was proposed by the Hungarians in 1999. The other is the position of the opposition in Serbia that recognizes that there is a minorities problem but is not able to give detailed solutions in advance. The purpose of this meeting, said this participant, is to find a balance between these two positions. The opposition is not in the government, so it cannot provide a detailed charter, but the minorities in Vojvodina point out that they have gotten lots of promises, including promises from the Milosevic government, but none have been fulfilled. It is absolutely clear that the minorities will not be reassured by generalities.

Another participant tried to put the question in a wider context. Do the parties of the democratic opposition want a multiethnic Serbia? What is the scenario it sees for the future? If not autonomy, then what is the

plan? The opposition has to be clear, to itself and to the minorities. This would also help Serbia when conditions allow it to pursue Euro-Atlantic integration. It will show outsiders that the opposition is serious about its minority policies, she said.

A Belgrade politician said that at this moment Serbia and Yugoslavia are in an extremely complicated and dangerous situation. Possibilities for a peaceful exit from this situation are very limited. Citizens are asking for change, but the government is becoming more and more repressive. There is a clear possibility that Milosevic will use force against the country's own citizens.

However, this participant went on, this difficult situation should not stop the opposition from considering various ways of solving the issues of interethnic relations. Serbia is a multiethnic state. Consequently, it is urgent for the opposition to clearly say how it views the future of interethnic relations in Serbia after Milosevic. The parties of the Vojvodina Hungarians have made their proposals clear, and it is a matter of honor for the Serbian democratic opposition to discuss those proposals and to respond to them. It is not difficult to accept most of the ideas that the Hungarians of Vojvodina have about their future. For example, why not support their proposal for establishing a national council that would deal with issues of culture and education and would cooperate with a future democratic government? Why not support their proposal for displaying multiethnic signs? Why not support their proposal for using their language in local administration? (To this, an ethnic Serb participant from Vojvodina added that, in his opinion, there should be six official languages in Vojvodina. Vojvodina has always been a multiethnic entity, he said, and that is "our tradition.") The democratic opposition should promise the return to Vojvodina of the real autonomy it once had.

Another participant argued that it is the status of Vojvodina itself as a multiethnic entity that needs to be discussed, even before any discussion of interethnic relations. Vojvodina has always been compatible with a united Europe but never was and never will be compatible with Milosevic's totalitarian regime.

A colleague of his agreed. The problems of the Vojvodina minorities could be solved only in Vojvodina, he said. This was clear from the Vienna document. If so, then the problem of the status of Vojvodina

should be dealt with first. It is easy to accomplish significant progress in Vojvodina, building on the traditions and on the legal instruments that already exist. Vojvodina is, therefore, not merely the best framework for solving the problems of the Vojvodina minorities; it is the only one.

It is important to keep in mind, a Serb from Vojvodina added, that the Serbs in Vojvodina, who are a majority in the province, see two possible futures for the status of Vojvodina in a democratic Serbia: as an autonomous province or as a republic. He expressed confidence that both options are acceptable to the Vojvodina minorities, but they should take part in discussing the choice between them. If the minorities are not interested in discussing the future status of Vojvodina, then Milosevic has achieved a victory. In Montenegro, President Milo Djukanovic and his democratic coalition won the elections because of the votes of the minorities of Montenegro. Thus, the minorities are responsible for the future of the territory they live in. This responsibility is not less than the responsibility of the majority for their land and not less than the minorities' responsibility for their own rights.

The democratic opposition should promise the return to Vojvodina of the real autonomy it once had.

An ethnic Hungarian participant disagreed. He said that the status of Vojvodina and the problems of minorities are two different questions. The question of Vojvodina's autonomy is a Serbian issue. The minorities are not against a wider autonomy for Vojvodina; on the contrary, they support it, but they are primarily concerned with their own status, their own rights and freedoms. Minority problems have to be dealt with whether or not there is autonomy for Vojvodina. Resolving the issue of autonomy is not to be a prerequisite for dealing with minority issues. Autonomy is a very difficult issue and will require lengthy discussion. A serious conversation about the problems of minorities should not be put off, as it has been for the past ten years. It is high time for the democratic opposition to start talking. The minorities' demands are clear and are easy to accommodate. When the minorities ask for autonomy, he said, it means that they are loyal to the state that they live in, that they respect the integrity of the state within which the autonomy is to be exercised.

He formulated the position of the Hungarian minority in Yugoslavia

in terms of five principles:

- The demand for autonomy is a compromise between a unitary Serbia and independence from Serbia. The Hungarian minority recognizes and respects the state of Serbia and is loyal to this state.
- Autonomy for Hungarians in Serbia should include both personal and territorial autonomy.
- Questions of democracy and questions of minorities in Serbia should be dealt with simultaneously.
- Any agreement reached between the Hungarian community and the democratic opposition in Serbia should have international guarantees. It is clear from recent experience that only agreements with international guarantees will be respected.
- If the opposition wins in a democratized Serbia, minorities should be provided with proportional representation in the governmental institutions.

Another minority representative said that when a democratic Serbia is established, a council for national minorities should be formed within the government. This council should consist of representatives of national minorities from all across Serbia, and it should have not only consultative authority but also decision-making powers. Minorities should be represented in the parliaments, governments, and courts at all levels.

A participant from Belgrade said that the question of interethnic relations is separate from the question of the democratization of Serbia and should be dealt with in a separate way. Nevertheless, democratization is a sine qua non for solving the problems of interethnic relations, and conversely, solving the ethnic problems is crucial to democracy. At the present time, the Serbian opposition should not be proposing a detailed institutional system; it should speak about the nature of the institutions that it wants to achieve in a democratic Serbia but leave the process of building these institutions to the future. The opposition and the minorities should chart the strategy for a minority policy, but the specifics could be agreed on later. Parts of the document from Vienna could be a good basis for such a strategy. He suggested that a document of this kind could be accepted by all the parties participating in this meeting.

Another participant from Belgrade reminded the others that the opposi-

tion is not presently in power. The major goal of the opposition is to win elections, he said. The question of interethnic relations should be considered only to the extent to which it helps to improve the opposition's chances of winning the upcoming elections. However, after the elections this issue should be dealt with again and on a much more detailed level.

Responding to this and other remarks, an American participant pointed out that a debate on the timeliness of a discussion on interethnic accommodation in Serbia is missing a crucial point. Some connection should be made, he said, with the real losses that have been suffered by the Hungarian and other minorities, losses that were connected to their ethnicity. Everyone suffered losses in Vojvodina and in Yugoslavia; the Serbs have suffered, too, but the losses suffered by the minorities were on a purely ethnic basis. These are not simply abstract violations of constitutional principles; they are losses of real jobs, the disappearances of ethnic Hungarian school principals from Hungarian-language schools, and many other forms of deprivation. If the daily life of Hungarians, Romanians, Croats, and others had been thus altered in the last decade, they would not be asking for specific, detailed reassurances.

After the loss of Kosovo, Serbian voters are very sensitive to the issue of autonomy.

Any document on ethnic relations that the opposition adopts should have real consequences. The opposition should make a solemn pledge to the minorities that their losses will be compensated, and it must say that it will never tolerate abuses of Serbia's ethnic minorities in the future. The key to the strength of the opposition on this issue will be its unity. If the opposition parties take a united position on the issues and defend each other, then they will gain the moral high ground against Milosevic and will be able to do whatever they want; but if they hesitate or hold back, troubles will inevitably come.

A leader of a party from Belgrade responded to these comments by saying that there is no question about whether the opposition supports the minorities or not. His party, for example, has good relations with the Vojvodina minority parties, including the Muslim/Bosnjak factions in Sandzak. On the other hand, being pragmatic, the party is very dubious about drawing up a detailed policy on minorities before the elections in Serbia. This party is not itself opposed to that idea, but it must sacrifice

some of its decision-making ability for the sake of unification of the opposition. Even if this party is ready to work closely with the minority parties, there are other elements in the opposition in Serbia that are not. In addition, discussions on these issues give a pretext for Milosevic to attack the opposition. The participant said that, even before he and his colleagues left Belgrade for Athens, they were attacked on state television by the minister of information, who accused them of contributing to the further disintegration of Yugoslavia, ignoring the fact that the document adopted in Vienna specifically called for respect of Serbia's and Yugoslavia's territorial integrity.

The united opposition, including the minority parties, has to show Milosevic that any effort on his part to unsettle interethnic relations will be his political death.

Another party leader from Belgrade pointed out to the participants that it is difficult for the opposition to talk about minority issues while Kosovo continues to be a bleeding wound of Serbia. After the loss of Kosovo, Serbian voters are very sensitive to the issue of autonomy.

This assessment was seconded by another opposition leader from Belgrade, who said that the opposition parties have to recognize that they have reached no agreement on a minimum for ethnic policies. Furthermore, he said, Vojvodina is not a top issue on the opposition agenda. He also asked participants not to forget the problems of the Croats, the Roma, and other minorities. In fact, the Roma are the largest ethnic minority in Serbia outside of Kosovo, but they are not represented anywhere in the bodies of power, they have no political parties, and nobody is speaking for them.

A Vojvodina Hungarian leader urged his opposition colleagues from Belgrade to continue serious discussions of minority issues. He said that because of the steps that were taken by the opposition at the end of 1999 and the beginning of 2000, the parties of Vojvodina Hungarians are now recognized as a part of the Serbian democratic opposition. All those concerned have finally realized, he said, that they would not achieve anything by working separately. There are more understanding and a more positive attitude toward minority problems today than there were only last year.

The Vienna document, this participant continued, is a strong statement, and any modification, any minimization of its points, would be unacceptable to the Vojvodina Hungarians, for it would be a step backward. The minorities need to hear what will happen when the opposition is in power: what the schools will look like, and the textbooks, the media, the cultural institutions, even the factories. Another important issue is the future of privatization in Serbia. How will the ethnic minorities participate in that process? Will it be a fair process? Efforts must continue to build trust among the different parties of the Serbian democratic opposition. He concluded by reiterating the strong support of the Vojvodina Hungarians for a united democratic opposition.

In this context, a participant from Belgrade repeated his suggestion that a joint body of the parties of the united opposition be formed that would deliberate on the issues of interethnic relations. He also said that Serbia should produce a draft of a new minority law, a new minority policy, and new constitutional arrangements for the minorities. He was supported by a Vojvodina Hungarian, who said that, besides politicians, this joint body should include experts on minority issues as well. The participant from Belgrade added: "The united opposition, including the minority parties, has to show Milosevic that any effort on his part to unsettle interethnic relations will be his political death. The opposition and the minorities should show that the minorities will never again vote for Milosevic."

* * *

At the end of the first day of the meeting, the participants formed a committee that drafted the final document. Following a discussion, the participants agreed on the document that is appended at the end of this report.

PROJECT ON ETHNIC RELATIONS

Roundtable on Interethnic Relations in Vojvodina

Vienna, AUSTRIA

September 23-25, 1999

C O M M U N I Q U É

On September 23-25, 1999 in Vienna, leading democratic political personalities from Serbia, representatives of the most influential Serbian democratic political parties and parties of Vojvodina Hungarians, Romanians, and Croats discussed interethnic relations in Vojvodina.

The participants in the meeting included *Andras Agoston*, President, Hungarian Democratic Party of Vojvodina; *Gordana Anicic*, Member, Presidency, Serbian Renewal Movement; Member, Yugoslav Federal Assembly; *Jon Cizmas*, President, Union of Romanians in Yugoslavia; *Emil Fejzulahi*, Vice-President, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina; *Alex Grigor'ev*, Program Officer, Project on Ethnic Relations; *Dejan Janca*, Member, Presidency, Vojvodina Reform Democratic Party; *Dusan Janjic*, Director, Forum for Ethnic Relations; *Laszlo Jozsa*, Vice-President, Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians; *Allen Kassof*, President, Project on Ethnic Relations; *Jozsef Kasza*, President, Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians; Mayor, Subotica; *Milan Komnenic*, Vice-President, Serbian Renewal Movement; Head, Serbian Renewal Movement Group, Yugoslav Federal Assembly; *Zoran Lutovac*, Chairman, Committee on Ethnic Relations, Democratic Party; *Ferenc Melykuti*, Representative in Hungary, Project on Ethnic Relations; *Dragoljub Micunovic*, President, Party of Democratic Center; *Dusan Mihajlovic*, President, New Democracy Party; *Sandor Pall*, President, Democratic Union of Vojvodina Hungarians; *Livia Plaks*, Executive Director, Project on Ethnic Relations; *Predrag Simic*, Foreign Policy Adviser to the President, Serbian Renewal Movement; *Bela Tonkovic*, President, Democratic League of Croats in Vojvodina; *Tibor Varady*, Professor, Central European University.

In an intensive discussion and exchange of views, the participants (with

the exceptions noted below) agreed on the following: (The Serbian Renewal Movement and Mr. Agoston declined to subscribe to the document. SPO considers that the autonomy of Vojvodina inside Serbia corresponds with the interests of democratization and decentralization of Serbia and with its sovereignty and territorial integrity. This autonomy is the best framework for resolution of problems of national communities, including their individual and collective rights, since these questions can be more easily and efficiently solved on the local level. SPO considers that in Vienna there was an open and tolerant discussion in which different opinions were expressed. This discussion should be continued with the purpose of finding acceptable solutions as soon as possible.)

1. The autonomy of Vojvodina within the Republic of Serbia corresponds to the interests of democratization and decentralization of Serbia as well as the preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also represents the most suitable framework for the resolution of all issues pertaining to the national communities. These issues are more efficiently resolved on the local level.
2. It is necessary to develop modern institutional guarantees for the rights of the national communities in Vojvodina (in Serbia, FR Yugoslavia), including the right of national communities to self-organization for the purpose of preserving and developing their identities, especially in the fields of education, media, and culture.
3. The self-organization of national communities through adequate autonomy arrangements in keeping with relevant documents of the OSCE and the Council of Europe is necessary for the more efficient organization of multicultural communities of citizens of Vojvodina, as well as for democratization of Serbia. Taxes and other financial contributions paid by members of national communities should constitute the financial foundation of their self-organization. The organizations of national communities should freely allocate the portion of the budget earmarked for culture, science, education, and the media, proportionate to their taxes and financial contributions to that same budget. Regarding national communities that cannot satisfy their needs in this way, the principle of positive discrimination shall apply.
4. The right of national communities to use their own language should not be lesser than it was in Vojvodina in the 1970s and 1980s. This

particularly applies to the reaffirmation and precise definition of the use of language in curricula, schools, the state organs, in documents, in the media, geographical names, etc.

5. Free media and the right to establish private schools and cultural and academic institutions is the principle that should be applied to all citizens, including members of national communities.
6. Decentralization and greater autonomy for municipalities, including the management of respective shares of revenues, is an important element of the modern democratic system of government. Regionalization and formation of administrative districts requires taking into account interests of citizens and interests of ethnic communities.
7. Support for the democratic forces whose goal is the inclusion of Serbia in European integration processes is in the common interest of all citizens and national communities of Vojvodina and Serbia.
8. The continuation of the democratic dialogue and cooperation between the representatives of national communities and all democratic forces in Serbia is the way to resolve problems in ethnic relations. This excludes the possibility of resorting to any form of interethnic violence. Solutions shall be sought within Serbia.
9. Hannes Swoboda, Vice-Chairman, Commission on Southeastern Europe, European Parliament, participated in a part of the discussion as an observer.
10. A member of PER's Romani Advisory Council informed the participants about the problems of Roma and Sinti.
11. The participants thank the Project on Ethnic Relations for providing a framework for a useful discussion and expect the process to be continued.

* * *

After the meeting in Vienna, *Goran Svilanovic*, President of the Civic Alliance of Serbia and one of the leaders of the Alliance for Change sent a letter to the Project on Ethnic Relations affirming his party's support for the Vienna document.

PROJECT ON ETHNIC RELATIONS

Roundtable on Interethnic Relations in Vojvodina

Athens, GREECE

February 14-15, 2000

C O M M U N I Q U É

On February 14-15, 2000 in Athens, leading democratic political personalities from Serbia, representatives of the most influential Serbian democratic political parties and parties of Vojvodina Hungarians and Romanians continued the discussion on interethnic relations in Vojvodina that started in Vienna on September 23-25, 1999.

The participants and observers in the meeting included *Andras Agoston*, President, Hungarian Democratic Party of Vojvodina; *Nenad Canak*, President, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina; *Ion Cizmas*, President, Union of Romanians in Yugoslavia; *Ilija Djukic*, Member, Main Board, Democratic Party; Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee, Democratic Party; former Minister of Foreign Affairs of FR Yugoslavia; *Alex Grigor'ev*, Program Officer, Project on Ethnic Relations; *Tahir Hasanovic*, Secretary General, New Democracy Party; Member, Executive Board, Coalition Dan; *Dragor Hiber*, Vice-President, Civic Alliance of Serbia; *Miodrag Isakov*, President, Vojvodina Reform Democratic Party; *Dusan Janjic*, Director, Forum for Ethnic Relations; *Laszlo Jozsa*, Vice-President, Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians; *Allen Kassof*, President, Project on Ethnic Relations; *Jozsef Kasza*, President, Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians; Mayor, Subotica; *Zarko Korac*, Coordinator, Alliance of Democratic Parties; President, Social Democratic Union; *Zoran Lutovac*, Chairman, Committee on Ethnic Relations, Democratic Party; *Milan Mikovic*, Member, Presidency, Serbian Renewal Movement; Head, Serbian Renewal Movement Group, National Assembly of Serbia; *Sandor Pall*, President, Democratic Union of Vojvodina Hungarians; *Livia Plaks*, Executive Director, Project on Ethnic Relations; *Predrag Simic*, Foreign Policy Adviser to the President, Serbian Renewal Movement; *Tibor Varady*, Professor, Central European University; *Slobodan Vuckovic*, Chairman,

International Affairs Committee, Party of Democratic Center.

In the intensive discussion and exchange of views, the participants agreed that the talks in Vienna and Athens showed that the democratic opposition in Serbia is capable of resolving – *inter alia* – the issues of interethnic relations in Vojvodina in the way that would imply a consistent respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of FRY and Serbia, the democratic principles, international standards, and values, and legitimate demands of national communities.

The roundtable participants agreed that the democratic opposition in Serbia has to respect the following:

1. The autonomy of Vojvodina within the Republic of Serbia corresponds to the interests of democratization and decentralization of Serbia as well as the preservation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also represents the most suitable framework for the resolution of all issues pertaining to the national communities. These issues are more efficiently resolved on the local level.
2. It is necessary to develop modern institutional guarantees for the rights of the national communities in Vojvodina (in Serbia, FR Yugoslavia), including the right of national communities to self-organization for the purpose of preserving and developing their identities, especially in the fields of education, media, and culture. The national communities can form national councils that are to decide alone or with state bodies on the issues of education, culture, and the media.
3. The self-organization of national communities through adequate autonomy arrangements in keeping with relevant documents of the OSCE and the Council of Europe is necessary for the more efficient organization of multicultural communities of citizens of Vojvodina, as well as for democratization of Serbia. Taxes and other financial contributions paid by members of national communities should constitute the financial foundation of their self-organization. The organizations of national communities should freely allocate the portion of the budget earmarked for culture, science, education, and the media, proportionate to their taxes and financial contributions to that same budget. Regarding national communities that cannot satisfy their needs in this way, the principle of positive discrimination shall apply.

4. The right of national communities to use their own language should not be lesser than it was in Vojvodina in the 1970s and 1980s. This particularly applies to the reaffirmation and precise definition of the use of language in curricula, schools, the state organs, in documents, in the media, geographical names, etc.
5. Free media and the right to establish private schools and cultural and academic institutions is the principle that should be applied to all citizens, including members of national communities.
6. Decentralization and greater autonomy for municipalities, including the management of respective shares of revenues, is an important element of the modern democratic system of government. Regionalization and formation of administrative districts requires taking into account interests of citizens and interests of ethnic communities.
7. Support for the democratic forces whose goal is the inclusion of Serbia in European integration processes is in the common interest of all citizens and national communities of Vojvodina and Serbia.
8. The continuation of the democratic dialogue and cooperation between the representatives of national communities and all democratic forces in Serbia is the way to resolve problems in ethnic relations. This excludes the possibility of resorting to any form of interethnic violence. Solutions shall be sought within Serbia.

The participants of the roundtable expect the presidential collegium of the united opposition of Serbia to support these positions and to undertake measures for their implementation.

The participants of the Athens roundtable thank the Project on Ethnic Relations for providing a framework for a useful discussion and expect the process to continue.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN MEETINGS IN VIENNA AND ATHENS

Andras Agoston, President, Hungarian Democratic Party of Vojvodina

Gordana Anicic, Member, Yugoslav Federal Parliament; Member, Presidency of Serbian Renewal Movement

Nenad Canak, President, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina

Jon Cizmas, President, Union of Romanians in Yugoslavia

Ivan Djordjevic, Chief of Staff, New Democracy Party

Ilija Djukic, Member, Main Board, Democratic Party; Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee, Democratic Party; former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Emil Fejzulahi, Vice-President, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina

Nicolae Gheorghe, Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Alex Grigor'ev, Program Officer, Project on Ethnic Relations

Tahir Hasanovic, Secretary General, New Democracy Party; Member, Executive Board, Coalition Dan

Dragor Hiber, Vice-President, Civic Alliance of Serbia

Miodrag Isakov, President, Vojvodina Reform Democratic Party

Dejan Janca, Professor of Law; Member, Presidency of Vojvodina Reform Democratic Party

Dusan Janjic, Member, Project on Ethnic Relations Council for Ethnic Accord; Director, Forum for Ethnic Relations

Laszlo Jozsa, Vice-President, Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians

Allen Kassof, President, Project on Ethnic Relations

Jozsef Kasza, Mayor, Subotica; President, Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians

Milan Komnenic, Head, Serbian Renewal Movement Group, Yugoslav Federal Parliament; Vice-President, Serbian Renewal Movement

Zarko Korac, Coordinator, Alliance of Democratic Parties; President, Social Democratic Union

Zoran Lutovac, Member, Main Board, Democratic Party; Chairman, Committee for Ethnic Minorities, Democratic Party

Ferenc Melykuti, Representative in Hungary, Project on Ethnic Relations

Dragoljub Micunovic, President, Party of the Democratic Center; Co-chairman, Coalition Dan

Dusan Mihajlovic, President, New Democracy Party; Co-chairman, Coalition Dan

Milan Mikovic, Head, Serbian Renewal Movement Group, Parliament of Serbia; Member, Presidency, Serbian Renewal Movement

Sandor Pall, President, Democratic Union of Vojvodina Hungarians

Livia Plaks, Executive Director, Project on Ethnic Relations

Predrag Simic, Foreign Policy Adviser to the President, Serbian Renewal Movement

Hannes Swoboda, Vice-Chairman, Commission on Southeastern Europe, European Parliament

Bela Tonkovic, President, Democratic League of Croats in Vojvodina

Tibor Varady, Professor, Central European University

Slobodan Vuckovic, Chairman, International Affairs Committee, Party of Democratic Center



From left to right: Dusan Janjic and Bela Tonkovic.



From left to right: Milan Komnenic, Dejan Janca and Gordana Anicic.

OTHER PER PUBLICATIONS

- *Romanian-American Symposium on Inter-Ethnic Relations (1991)*
- *The Romanies in Central and Eastern Europe: Illusions and Reality (1992)*
- *Nationality Policy in the Russian Federation (1992)*
- *Interethnic Relations in Serbia/Yugoslavia: Alternatives for the Future (1993)*
- *The Media of Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Reporting on Interethnic Relations (1994)*
- *Managing Ethnic Conflict: The Kona Statement (1994)*
- *Countering Anti-Roma Violence in Eastern Europe: The Snagov Conference and Related Efforts (1994)*
- *Ethnonationalism: Fears, Dangers, and Policies in the Post-Communist World (1995)*
- *Slovakia Roundtable in the United States (1995)*
- *Democratic Processes and Ethnic Relations in Yugoslavia (1995)*
- *Russia and Eastern and Central Europe: Old Divisions and New Bridges (1996)*
- *Second Slovakia Roundtable (1996)*
- *Ethnic Relations: A Selected Bibliography (1996)*
- *Reporting in a Post-Conflict Environment: Bosnian and Croat Journalists Meet (1996)*
- *The Media and the Roma in Contemporary Europe: Facts and Fictions (1996)*
- *The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy Paper (1997)*
- *Prevention of Violence and Discrimination Against the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe (1997)*
- *Enhancing Regional Security: Russian and Central European Perspectives (1997)*
- *The New York Roundtable: Toward Peaceful Accommodation in Kosovo (1997)*
- *Images and Issues: Coverage of the Roma in The Mass Media in Romania (1997)*
- *Self-Government in Hungary: The Gypsy/Romani Experience and Prospects for the Future (1997)*
- *Political Leaders on Interethnic Relations and Regional Security in Central Europe: A Roundtable (1998)*
- *Interethnic Relations in the Balkans: New Generation, New Politics (1998)*
- *Schools, Language, and Interethnic Relations in Romania: The Debate Continues (1998)*
- *The Roma in Bulgaria: Collaborative Efforts Between Local Authorities and Nongovernmental Organizations (1998)*
- *Baltic-Russian Relations in the New Geopolitical Framework (1998)*
- *Political Participation and the Roma in Hungary and Slovakia (1999)*
- *Building Romanian Democracy: The Police and Ethnic Minorities (1999)*
- *Catastrophe in the Balkans: Serbia's Neighbors and the Kosovo Conflict (1999)*
- *State Policies Toward Romani Communities in Candidate Countries to the EU: Government and Romani Participation in Policy-Making (1999)*
- *Montenegro on the Brink: Avoiding Another Yugoslav War (2000)*
- *Roma and the Law: Demythologizing the Stereotype of "Gypsy Criminality" (2000)*

