

lives, and on the edge of starvation. Wherever one goes in the city, one sees leaflet-sized death notices posted on the billboards. Bihac is a city full of "thin people"—not completely starved, but anyone you meet in Bihac is very lean. This suffering—a suffering which is practically beyond the comprehension of the outside observer—is chiseled into the faces of the residents of Bihac, and it has an intense impact on the observer who visited only six days after the lifting of the siege. Can one ever "get used to" the combination of being surrounded, fear for one's life, and hunger? One can sense a general feeling of relief over the end of the nightmare siege; but one likewise senses the dreadful psychological damage which the people of Bihac have suffered, even though they do not want to make this into a special subject right now. When, a few hours later, the Croatian military bus prepared to leave with its load of visitors, a decision was made to take two children, aged 5 and 3, back to Zagreb. Both had tiny crutches, because each had lost a leg during the siege, after being hit by Serbian grenade fragments.

Conclusions for Bosnia

Although the western media want to give the contrary impression, the soldiers and civilians in Bosnia-Herzegovina are happy, and feel encouraged, over the quick and thorough success of "Operation Oluja." For four years, Lord Carrington, Lord Owen, Cyrus Vance, Carl Bildt, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and all the other "diplomatic" representatives, have used every conceivable means to attempt to force the Croatian government to be "realistic" and to "accept" the loss of one-third of Croatia's national territory. But then, Croatia took decisive action, and created its own "facts." Now the Unprofor "peacekeeping" troops are leaving a Croatia which insisted upon defending its national sovereignty, and which—with the exception of eastern Slavonia—has now re-established its territorial integrity. And *what goes for Croatia, goes for Bosnia-Herzegovina, too*. Once again, international powers—centered in London—are putting pressure on Bosnia to be "realistic," and to write off its claims to sovereignty and territorial integrity.

But the Bosnian leadership knows full well, that it can only rely on its own powers. Under the most difficult circumstances imaginable, Bosnia has already created some important military "facts." The Bosnian leaders know that it must quickly create new military "facts," *now*, against the Serbian aggressors and their British friends. They are thankful for any form of external support—diplomatic, material, or military—but they know what it's only what they do themselves, that counts. Bosnia-Herzegovina's military-technological and economic resources are far poorer than those of Croatia. But the readiness of the Bosnian Army and the Bosnian population to make sacrifices and keep on fighting, is so great, that it can even resist the latest diktat attempts from London and from other practitioners of *realpolitik* within the diplomatic cabinets of the "great powers."

Kosova is a ticking time bomb

by Tom and Feride Istogu Gillesberg

The Serbian and British plan for a "Greater Serbia" received a severe blow with the successful Croatian-Bosnian military offensive to regain Croatian control of the so-called "Krajina," after three years of Serbian occupation, and to break the siege of the Bihac enclave in Bosnia. But that doesn't mean that Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic and his British masters have given up the idea of a Greater Serbia, and of continued war and genocide in the Balkans.

On Aug. 9, the Serbian media reported that 20,000 Serbians from "Krajina" were to be resettled in Kosova. On Aug. 10, they reported that the first 500 had already been bussed to Kosova. If not stopped, this will cause an acceleration of the process of colonization and "ethnic cleansing" of Kosova, directed against the Kosova Albanians, who comprise around 90% of the 2 million inhabitants of Kosova. This has been a fundamental theme of Greater Serbia propaganda and ideology.

A target of 'Greater Serbia'

Despite the fact that Kosova was almost entirely populated by Albanians, it was involuntarily kept as a part of Serbia after World War II. After the revision of the Yugoslavian Constitution in 1974, Kosova became an independent autonomous region of the Yugoslavian Confederation, with its own constitution and rights similar to the other Yugoslavian republics, except in questions of foreign policy and defense. When Milosevic took power in Serbia in the elections in 1986, it was under the banner of establishing a Greater Serbia, beginning by revoking the independence of Kosova, and making Serbia "whole again" by annexing Kosova. In the Greater Serbia mythology, Kosova was called the cradle of Serbia, making it the sacred soil of Serbia, that had to be reconquered, and, of course, the Albanian population living there had to be gotten rid of.

The Serbian Constitution of 1989 declared Kosova to be a part of Serbia. The tanks were sent in, and the independent authorities in Kosova were replaced by a Serbian dictatorship, backed up by the Yugoslavian-Serbian Army and paramilitary groups. The Albanian-language television was closed, together with *Rilindja*, the daily Albanian-language newspaper. The Albanian University in Prishtina, the capital of Kosova, was taken over by the Serbian authorities, and all Albanian professors and teachers fired. Only Serbian-language teaching was allowed. All higher educational facili-

ties were shut down, and only a few local primary and secondary schools, in a few villages and towns, were allowed to stay open. In all-Albanian areas, the schools were continued on a private basis; in areas with any Serbians, no matter how few, Serbian-language teaching was introduced, but Albanian-language teaching continued privately, often taking place in private homes. Prishtina University classes were continued outside the campuses. These schools often fell victim to terror, with daily reports of paramilitary groups storming into classrooms, beating up teachers, and intimidating and threatening the teachers and students.

Since 1989, about 500,000 Albanians have left Kosova. Every effort is being made to terrorize the Albanian population, so they will leave Kosova in fear or anger. Part of the order of the day is that the police and paramilitary groups, under the pretext of searching for weapons, invade Albanian homes and beat up families, regardless of whether they are young or old, or men, women, or children. They are also trying to find men who can be forced into Serbian military service, or political activists and intellectuals. These brutal "weapons searches" have caused hundreds of severe injuries and even deaths.

When the intruders leave, the homes are totally vandalized. Walls, roofs, and floors are broken up, and the furniture destroyed. The number of these visits is uncountable. In just one small district, Vitia, 500 such visits were recorded in the last six months by the Kosova Information Center. There are reports every day of people being attacked, physically abused, imprisoned, and tortured. Often, the local marketplace is attacked by paramilitary groups, and merchants, customers, and passersby are plundered and intimidated.

Since 1990, all public companies and factories have been taken over. Albanian workers are presented with a declaration of loyalty to the Serbian authorities. When they don't sign, they are fired. Over 200,000 Albanian workers have been fired in this way. Some of the jobs are then given to Serbians, but in most cases, production is simply closed down. Most of the Albanians in Kosova are, by now, totally dependent on money being brought back from family members who work abroad, and humanitarian aid, much of which is financed from Albanians abroad. Jobs and productive land are offered to any Serbian who resettles in Kosova.

A 'Serbian National Consultation'

On May 20, a "Serbian National Consultation" was held in the courtyard of the Serbian Monastery at Gracanica, with the blessing of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Many SOC members attended, including two bishops, Radovic and Jevtic. Also present was the so-called Serbian Resistance Movement (created to fight against alleged "Albanian suppression" of the Serbians living in Kosova) and Serbian parties and organizations. The Albanian-language newspaper *Bujku* reported that the participants called for an immediate forced expulsion of at least 670,000 Albanians from Kosova to Al-



A March 1994 demonstration in Augsburg, Germany. Signs read: "Freedom for Kosova! Stop British Geopolitics!" and "Stop Serbian Terror in Kosova."

bania, and a stepped-up "colonization of Kosova campaign," to ensure that all refugees from Croatia and Bosnia will be resettled in Kosova.

The population of Kosova has until now stuck to a well-organized strategy of non-violence, under the leadership of their elected government under President Ibrahim Rugova. At the same time, Serbia has had its hands full with the wars against Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia. Since Kosova is by far the least economically developed part of former Yugoslavia, and the Serbian policy has been to destroy the economy, it has not been possible for Serbia to find the hundreds of thousands of volunteers needed to colonize Kosova. Will Serbia try to solve the problem with a forced resettlement of Serbians fleeing from "Krajina," and other areas, into Kosova?

A full-scale colonization, and its partner, the well-known Serbian ethnic cleansing, will cause Kosova and the whole southern Balkan region to explode into war. After the experience of the last five years, it is difficult to imagine how peace and prosperity can exist in Kosova and the Balkans, if Kosova is forced to remain under a Greater Serbia. Only by securing the right of self-determination for Kosova, can there be peace in the Balkans and economic and intellectual development of all the people, no matter what their nationality, race, or religion. That would also be the best signal, that the horrors of a nationalist, chauvinist, and fascist Greater Serbia has been finally defeated.