

situation in Macedonia. Rugova is for coexistence and not for war. "And if it works in Kosovo," LaRouche said, "then it can work in Macedonia, too."

Ibrahim Rugova, A Portrait

by Feride Istogu-Gillesberg

Ibrahim Rugova was born on Dec. 2, 1944, in the village of Cerrce/Istog in Kosovo. On Jan. 10, 1945, his father Uke and grandfather Rrusta Rugova were executed by the Yugoslavian communists. Ibrahim went to school in Pej, and completed studies in philosophy in Pristina. His great interest in literature led him to Paris in 1976-77, to the Practical School for Higher Studies, where he studied under Prof. Roland Barth. In 1984, he received a doctorate in literary science, in Pristina. At the time, he was already a well-known writer. In 1988, he was elected chairman of the Writers Union in Kosovo, and on Dec. 23, 1989, elected president of the Kosovo League (LDK), which was the first non-communist party of Kosovo.

In 1990, when former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic began his power struggle for a "Greater Serbia" in Kosovo, the Parliament there was destroyed, the Constitutional provision on the "autonomous status of the province of Kosovo" was annulled, and the ethnic Albanian population subjected to discrimination. All Albanian employees and workers were fired, and all school, radio, and television stations were shut down. Special troops were deployed and a state of emergency was declared.

Non-Violent Resistance

In this inhuman situation, Rugova was the hope of the population. His method of non-violent resistance was enthusiastically supported by the population. His philosophy is, that justice will win in the end. No matter how brutal the attacks may be, one must not give in to provocations. He said, "If we react to injustice with violence, we will lose our innocence. Violence provokes violence." He warned that, otherwise, one would be helping Milosevic achieve his goal, that is, to show the world that the Albanians are primitive separatists and terrorists.

To save the Albanian people from hunger and misery, the LDK, under Rugova's leadership, organized a 3% tax to be paid by Albanians working abroad. In this way, a school and health system could be built up. Maintaining school classes and university study was very close to Rugova's heart, as they would contribute to strengthening humaneness and self-confidence. His self-conscious attitude was an anchor of stability for the people. But because the situation did not improve, the LDK organized elections in 1992 and 1998, in which Rugova was elected president, by an overwhelming mandate. The elections were not recog-



Ibrahim Rugova (left), president of the Democratic League in Kosovo, with NATO former Secretary General Javier Solana.

nized by the Belgrade government.

President Rugova was always clear, that the Kosovo conflict had to come to the attention of world public opinion, if a peaceful solution were to be found. The LDK sent daily reports on the increasingly frequent, brutal attacks of the Serb military units, to its offices in Germany, the United States, Switzerland, and Denmark, which were then forwarded to governments, institutions, and press.

President Rugova's non-violent resistance thus won international recognition. The hopes that, despite the increasingly gruesome situation, war could be avoided, were growing. In 1995, Rugova was awarded the highest peace prize of Denmark, and in 1996, he was granted an honorary degree at the Sorbonne in France. That same year, the first American information center was opened in Kosovo. In 1998, the European Parliament awarded him the Sakharov Prize, and the following year, the peace prize of Münster, which commemorates the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years War. Rugova was given honorary citizenship in the Italian cities of Venice, Milan, and Brescia. He met with many heads of state, and was received by President William Clinton in the White House.

But, regardless, the war came. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright abandoned Rugova during the Rambouillet talks, and replaced him as negotiating partner for Kosovo with Kosovo Liberation Army leader Hashim Thaci. On May 10, 1999, President Rugova, his wife, and his three daughters were welcomed in Rome, and blessed by Pope John Paul II.

The Albanian people of Kosovo, in the elections of Nov. 19, 2001, have shown that they have not forgotten the deeds of President Rugova.