



## **Study Mission Of the Peace Movement (France)**

### **In Southeast Europe**

#### **Situation of the population and position of the civil society**

*From November 29 to December 12 th 2001*

*(Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Vojvodina and Serbia)*

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## 1. Reminder of the mission's objectives

On June 20, 1999, at the end of the war in Kosovo, a call<sup>1</sup> from several organizations and personalities of South East Europe and France is launched from Skoplje. The co-signers hoped that the stabilization, the reconstruction and the development of the whole region would become reality through the active participation of the civil society<sup>2</sup>. Among other things, they demanded:

- The creation of aid funds for non-nationalist Southeastern European Non Governmental Organizations and their projects in order to give momentum to democratic life and to give back to the people the control over their own destiny.
- To take action towards trust building, including at the forefront, generalized UN-controlled dispositions for the disarmament to allow the return of *detente*, the return to a normal public life and to assure the security of ethnic minorities.

It was also suggested to set up a vigilant network among NGOs to facilitate dialogue, the diffusion of information and solidarity on actions determined by a common agreement in the European continent.

But to succeed in such a project, it was necessary to contact once again Southeastern European NGOs. A study mission by the Peace Movement was thus planned for the end of 2001. The aim of this mission was:

- To evaluate the situation of the populations;
- To grasp the spirit of the actors of the local civil society, to know their current objectives, their priorities;
- To determine how could it be possible to set up, not only a common line of thought but also common strategies.

Along those lines, a letter from the Peace Movement was sent on October 16, 2001<sup>3</sup>, addressed to partnership NGOs or potential partners of Southeasth Europe, in particular of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Vojvodina and Serbia.

To direct a common line of thought, we proposed our interlocutors to address questions like:

- How can we favor the co-safety and the co-stability at the same time in the area and in the European continent.
- How are the stakes and the consequences of the Pact of Stability, the U.N, NATO and the OSCE for South East Europe perceived ?
- How can we strengthen the tide towards a culture of peace ?

Our delegation met with thirty-two organizations or structures between November 29 and December 12, 2001. This meetings were held in Zagreb (Croatia), Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Podgorica and Cetinje (Montenegro), Novi Sad, Tresnjevac, Backa Palanka, Zrenjanin (Vojvodina) and Belgrade (Serbia).

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix

<sup>2</sup> Here is an interesting definition of the role of the civil society given by A. Najam, American Sociologist and Economist of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (“ Understanding the Third Sector: Revisiting the Prince, the Merchant and the Citizen”, Non-profit Management and Leadership, volume 7, MIT Cambridge, 1996) :“ The model of the civil society, domain of the Citizen, which, through his affiliations, in particular those who hold an essential position: the organizations, whose actions are generally financed by voluntary contribution (thus which do not emanate from the domain of the Prince – the State), aims often to a certain redistribution of goods ( that transcends the domain of the Merchant), is attached to the defence of the interest of its members, shares values within spaces of open debate (at the risk of finding himself in conflict with the Prince or the Merchant) ”

<sup>3</sup> See appendix

## **2. Synthesis of the situation of the population**

### **Croatia**

The Croatian population seem preoccupied by the entry project in the European Union. Even if this objective is felt very strongly, the idea shared by our interlocutors is that you can not expect everything to come from the outside. Rather, it is more appropriate to rebuild the country ourselves.

The question of the return of the refugees is very sensitive, and often the necessity to stabilize the economic and social situation of the local population is set forth as a preliminary. The implementation Catholics in historically multi-cultural area by President Tudjman hasn't facilitated this project among the people. The relationship between Croatians and Serbians remains conflictual despite what is stated in official discourses. In Croatia, there were about 20 % Serbs. Only 2 or 3 % are left. Furthermore, the events of September 11, 2001 have sparked hostile sentiments towards the Muslim population.

Women's rights remains a strong impulse for the activities of the civil society.

### **Serb Republic**

The atmosphere remains tense. Certain aberrations are symptomatic of a certain institutional void. For example, even when there are no Bosniac visas, a visa for the RFY might grant you entry in this Zone by the police officers of the Serb Republic; which means that these, on the one hand, get rid of Bosnia-Herzegovina laws and on the other hand refer to them when applying RFY Law. More serious aberrations testify of the complete disrespect of international laws, a disrespect that is displayed with pride. Thus, in a coffeeshop near Foca, portraits of Mladic and Karadzic are exhibited without the least dissimulation.

The desire to erase the traces of a history still not well accepted is omnipresent : most of the indications in public buildings and signposts written with Latin letters have been crudely ripped off ; only Cyrillic inscriptions have been retained.

The monthly salary in this republic is around 200 DM.

### **The Croat-Muslim Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina**

While many factories are abandoned, some voices are coming out to say that this situation is being maintained so that these factories can be yielded for a handful of dollars to outside investors or to those who grew rich during the war.

The BiH exported in a variety of domains: coal, salt, iron, wood processing, electromechanics digitally controlled machines, chemistry, cars and arms sells.

The country lives today with a subsistence economy. The currency of the country has been replaced by a converted DM and uncertainties remain in relation to the entry of the Euro. No visible efforts to raise awareness has been made on this topic unlike in Montenegro or in RFY.

The monthly salary is currently of an average of 430 DM. Unemployment is estimated at 60 %. A teacher with 36 years of seniority receives 237 DM in pension funds.

As of now, there are still 20 000 thousand disappeared of which half are from Srebrenica but a good number of our interlocutors insisted on the fact that you need to take into account all the disappeared and not just those that made visible through the media.

It seems that the multiplication of new mosques whose architecture is not locally inspired but rather copied on those of Saudi-Arabia is not well accepted.

Reconciliation lies in the economic reconstruction and the restoration of dialogue amongst communities and amongst religions.

### **Montenegro**

Although not directly effected by war, the region suffered from international isolation . The country is in transition. The most important factor is the strengthening of democratic life that cannot be fully realized without the participation of women in the public sphere. The situation of women and children is emblematic of what is going on in society. Thus, in light of an example, a militant told us that the contraceptive method the most widely used is still abortion. A particular attention is dedicated to the development of an educational and a university system independent from the RFY

The struggle against corruption is a primary concern but it seems just as important to fulfil successfully some work on citizenship.

A member of Parliament of the SDP, Ranko Krivokapic (member of the coalition in power and a member of the committee for Human Rights) thinks that you must “ build the roof before furnishing the house ”. He adds that so long that Montenegro will not be sovereign , it doesn't foresee the possibility of a real work towards the restructuring of society.

Some nationalists say they are ready for war if Serbia refuses the sovereignty of Montenegro. They hope for the US and EU support ( which does not seem to be a given considering the latest declarations of Javier Solana and of Jacques Chirac who came in RFY at the beginning of December 2001).

The average monthly salary is of about 250 DM and the middle class is nonexistent.

The Montenegro penal code allows citizens to have translators in front of the IPTY. An association from Montenegro , CEDEM<sup>4</sup> organizes seminars on topics of individual rights, equitable judgment , the cooperation with the IPTY and on methods of defense in the face of such a jurisdiction.

### **Vojvodina**

A particular focus is that of inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue considering the coexistence of numerous communities (26 according to official census) and the border with Hungary, Romania and Croatia. Because of a great number of migrations, the census is uncertain.

The demilitarisation of the region seems to be a priority since too many troops, including paramilitary groups, remain in Vojvodina.

The region is in a transition phase but the slowness of the necessary reforms is strongly felt, from which stems a certain desire of greater autonomy from Belgrade.

The situation of industrially polluted rivers mobilizes many environmental organizations, which marks an environmental concern.

### **Serbia**

The ousting of Slobadan Milosevic opens new perspective, with at the same time the will to integrate constructing Europe and to set up necessary reforms to ensure the rebirth of social and economic life.

The country seems to be coming out of a long period of autism and lots of resources will have to be gathered.

The priority is given to the economic and social situation of the people due to the striking poverty level. (70 % of the population lives under the poverty line).

The economy is ruined. A study shows a high illiteracy rate, in particular in the southern rural zones of Serbia. According the certain estimations, this rate reaches 30 % when only 5 % of the population have a university level diploma.

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<sup>4</sup> CEDEM : *Center for Democracy and Human Rights*)

The most awaited reforms are relative to justice, to police, to media and to the constitution. It is also considered necessary to review the history books which are considered by the democrats as being genuine military workbooks preparing for war. Other projects are being examined in order to develop alternatives to the academic institution .

A negative feeling pervades towards minorities, as well as persistent xenophobic and nationalist attitudes. A defiance of anything that comes from the 'West' is still very present, as a result of the previous propaganda at a time when it is urgent to face up to history. All this is not easy and the process of reform will necessarily be long. For the moment , the general sentiment is above all that Milosevic has lost the war. The road will be long before being able to face up to history.

**List of organizations the Peace Movement met**

<b>Country or Region</b>	<b>Organizations et interlocutors</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	Zenska Akcija (Women's actions from Rijeka) - Shura Dumanic
	CMS Centar za Mirovne Studije (Center for pacifist studies) - Vesna Terselic
	Dr Lino Veljak (Philosophy professor, member of Circle 99 in Sarajevo)
	ARK (Anti-war campaign)
<b>Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>	AMI (Institut of Peace Initiatives) - Sabina Krupic
	CNA – Center for non violent actions
	JOB 22 - Zdravka Jevtic-Garbo - (judge)
	Helsinki Comitee of Sarajevo - Mustafa Cero
	Krug 99 Sarajevo (Circle 99 – organization of independant intellectuels) - Slavko Santic
	Zene Zenama (Women for Women) - Jadranka Milicevic
	Oci u Oci (Center for inter-religious dialogue) - Karin Kaufmann Wall and Josip Katavic
<b>Montenegro</b>	Zenski Klub Princeza Ksenija (Women's Club " Princess Ksenja ") - Gordana Mugosa
	CEDEM Centar za Demokratiju i Ljudska Prava (Center for democracy and human rights) - Srdjan Darmanovic
	SDS party of Montenegro - Ranko Krivokapic - (vice president)
	NGO colletive of Cetinje - Velizar Veso Roganovic
	Women's Association of Cetinje

<b>Vojvodina</b>	Movement for peace of Pancevo - Mirko S. Mandrino
	Panonska Zora de Zrenjanin (Dawn of Panonie) (Environmental movement) - Prof. Vukoman Maksimovic
	Drustvo za Toleranciju Backa Palanka (Society for Tolérance of Backa Palanka) - Zdravko Marjanovic
	Radio Fedra in Backa Palanka
	RTV of Novi Sad - P. Jovanovic, D. Granja, M. Nedeljkov, D. Pop
	Vojvodanski Pokret – Movement of Vojvodina ; Center of liberal studies of Vojvodina - Dr. Miroslav Ilic
	Vojvodina office of the Helsinki Comitee Helsinki of Serbia - Pavel Domony
	“ Spiritual Republic of Zitzer ” of Tresnjevac - Vilmus Almasi
	Radio Fedra of Zrenjanin
	NGO coordinator of Zrenjanin - Biljana Stajic
<b>Serbia</b>	Grupa 484 - Vesna Golic
	Zene u crnom (Women in Black) - M. Rakacha
	Circle of Belgrade - Jelisaveta Blagojevic
	Helsinki Comitee of Belgrade - Milanna Saponja – Hadzic
	Beogradski centar za ljudska prava (Belgrade center for Human rights) - Dr. Dimitrijevic - - Ruzica Zarevac and Borko Nikolic
	Anti-war center of Belgrade Irina Subotic



### 3. Synthesis of the preoccupations of the NGOs<sup>5</sup> encountered in South East Europe

<b>Preoccupations And priorities</b>	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>Vojvodina</b>	<b>Serbie</b>
- Relations between the republics or regions coming from Former-Yugoslavia	- Process of “ conversational truth ” according to Vesna Terselic on the past and on all the criminals - denounce nationalisms - Activities of mediation between communities	- Arrest criminals of war to facilitate efforts of reconciliation - Develop inter-religious dialogue	- General will to arrive at sovereignty (a referendum is planned for April 2002) and hope it will be done through a compromise with Serbia	- Develop an inter-ethnic inter-religious dialogue - Will for autonomy in the face of the centralism in Belgrade	- Necessity to revise the history manuals - To outlook according to others , not just according to oneself
Civil control of the army and projects of demilitarisation	- Contribute in the legislative work for a civil control of the army	- Permit objections of consciousness and reduce the length of the military service	- Initiatives for objections of consciousness	- Project “ Farewell to arms ” and demands of demilitarization of the region. This process should permit to economically revitalize the region - Take the first steps to allow objections of consciousness	- Need of civil control on the army and the military budget  - Demilitarization of people’s consciousness
Human Rights	- The return of refugees and displaced is subject to the condition of a stabilized economic and social life. -The fight against discriminations and domestic violence is a priority that will favour the struggle for human rights in general	- Major preoccupation concerning the question of the disappeared - A campaign is under way about the sexual violence suffered by young girls and young women - The defense of women’s rights will develop a broader logic of the defense of human rights. - Organization of research centers, independent from the authorities	- A campaign is under way about the sexual violence suffered by young girls and young women (1girl out of three) - An act of solidarity for the 700 refugees and displaced is being conducted.	- A campaign is underway about the sexual violence suffered by the young girls and young women	- A campaign is underway about the sexual violence suffered by the young girls and young women - Acts of solidarity for the refugees and displaced (700 is being conducted (700 are counted) - organization of independent research centers and universities independent from the authorities
Participation of the civil society civil in public life and in questions concerning development	- Favor democratic trends - Stay vigilant in regards to the eventual return of the nationalists, denounce mafia habits. - Politics of baby steps to contribute to legislative work on the basis of human rights defense and a culture of peace. - Admit that solutions cannot come from the outside	- About 60 % of NGOs created through emergency acts have disappeared and/or their actions don’t currently have any legibility - Citizen involvement is still low because a certain number of associations reason in terms of ethnic belonging - denounce the nationalisms and the fundamentalisms coming from all sides - Necessity to reconstruct economic and social infrastructures : let’s not waste time if we want to be able to live together	- 1500 NGOs exist in Montenegro - some research is underway about environmental issues - Laws about on Organizations were the result of negotiations between the government and the civil society that were able to contribute to it	- Develop a civil society based on bringing together the population; necessity to make transparent the functioning of Organizations - engagements for the ecology	- 16000 NGO exist and a structure of foreign exchange with international NGOs is in place. - No democracy without democrats and without a strong civil society, independent from the authorities - Need of a legislative text structuring civil society.

<sup>5</sup> Notice : these are elemetns gathered from the NGOs we met. It might not necessarily represeth the generale point of view of NGOs in the country in question .

<b>Preoccupations And priorities</b>	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>	<b>Montenegro</b>	<b>Vojvodine</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
- Develop a culture of peace	- Working towards a growing awareness of people and of the new recruits ( in particular on alternatives to violence) - Educative work directed to children and youth on the questions of non-violence and of the respect of alterity.	- Acts of monitoring to enforce the resolution of conflicts and to develop a culture of peace in all of society. Establishing horizontal connections to share experiences and to reduce the procedures. The general idea is to transform this into a concrete attitude in the daily life	Some work is under way and is developing around the basis of a civil and non violent education (represent 90 % of NGOs created in opposition to the war).	- Favor people's voices because silence can be dangerous - Setting the contribution of the media to aim the promotion of citizen initiatives. - Engagements for the education of peace particularly addressed to the youth.	- The NGOs are working towards a civic and non-violent education, in particular for the youth
Point of view on the peace accords	Need to revise the Dayton accords ; - Abolish the visas between the republics of former Yugoslavia	The Dayton accords have frozen the after war situation - absurdity of the visas between the countries emanating from former Yugoslavia			- Acknowledge the frontiers in order to erase them in the relations between the countries emanating from former-Yugoslavia
Point of view on the Pact of Stability	Opacity of the structure, just as those of the European Union. Feeling that only the humanitarian type projects and of limited duration are taken into account.	- Inefficiency of the Pact for the civil societies and hasn't raised awareness of the necessary developments from the structuring of social and economic life		- Civil society not taken into account - Consider opaque the structure of the Pact of Stability	- Wish to participate in the European integration and to benefit from the Pact of Stability.
Point of view on the 'OSCE'	Programs limited to education	NGOs feel restricted to humanitarian programs and of limited duration.			Some contacts which don't add up to anything concrete.
Thoughts about civil society	- critical and corrective role of the authorities - Role to play to recreate the dialogue among the peoples	Need for the organizations to have a multi-ethnic trait so that civil society may contribute to citizenship	Carry the values of life and call to a non-violent exit of the referendum.	- Develop ethical values and take into consideration the environment	- Make civil society more legible and more visible
contacts	Interest for the demilitarisation of the Mediterranean area	Take actions for the resolution of conflicts and for the culture of peace by sharing and exchanging experiences	Take action for the resolution of the conflicts and for a culture of peace by sharing and exchanging experiences	Take actions for the resolution of conflicts and for the culture of peace by sharing and exchanging experiences.	- Take action for the resolution of conflicts and for the culture of peace by sharing and exchanging experiences. - demilitarize people's consciousness

#### 4. PRESENTATION OF NGOs IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

##### *4.1. Meeting with Vesna Terselic (Centar za Mirovne Studije (CMS) – Research Center for Peace ), Zagreb - November 29, 2001*

Vesna Terselic, our interlocutor, an important figure in the movements for peace in Croatia. Born in 1962, was one of the main agents in the creation of the anti-war campaigns of Croatia in 1991 (ARK), of which she was the national coordinator during several years. After studying Philosophy at the University of Zagreb, she was active in street theater performances, then, with all her energy, in environmental issues. She played an important role in setting up the Alliance of the People of the North for the Environment and Development and put a lot of time and effort in the preparation for UNCED<sup>6</sup> in Rio. Also, she obtained the alternative Peace Nobel Prize in 1999. Despite her numerous responsibilities, she will present to us in detail the activities of the CMS.

The CMS is a Non Governmental Organization with non lucrative ends that works for the promotion of non-violence and for changing society by linking together education, research and activism. The Center is member of the Anti-War Campaign of Croatia, a network of more than 20 groups of civil society that advocates non-violence, women's rights and human rights. The CMS emerged from different forms of engagements aiming to the construction of peace in Western Slavonia (project Pakrac 1993-1997 based on volunteer work, project Info Center 1995-1997).

With its two main programs, the Program of Research for Peace (Program Mirovnih Studija) and Program of the Construction of Peace (Program Izgradnje Mira), the CMS supplies information, contacts and support to projects and initiatives for peace all the while working as a self-training and support center for the activists –man and women – that are working towards peace, woman's rights and human rights. The CMS dedicates a lot of time and effort to the promotion of the democratization process of the Croat society, which lives a post-war period under the signs of a social, economic and cultural transition. Working to create links between different initiatives in the region, the CMS contributes, through exchanges of experiences and through the support of research projects, to the accumulation and the deepening of knowledge on development and, to the promotion of the competence of the trainers. The CMS contributes efficiently to the strengthening of activism and to the education of peace by pulling from, in its different programs and by comparing the different contexts, the experiences of Croatia and of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Part of the activities of the CMS are organized within the framework of workshops : a methodology based on the basis of interactive communication is proposed to the participants, in order to motivate personnel work and a collective search for solutions in terms of prevention or of managements of conflicts. Specific work is underway on gender relations, and on the question of personal and national identity. For some time, the CMS organized regular protests (once a week), mainly through concerts in the center of the city of Zagreb and with the participation of the youth. These protest aim to promote a reflection on violence and to make the public conscious of its immanent dangers. An intervention of this type – to which have participated youth from the police training school – actually took place November 29, 2001. The participation of the youth from the police training school, in an action emanating from the civil society and aiming to promote a culture of peace, constitutes indubitably a symbol of the spirit of these activities, but also hopes for democracy in a country where the weight of the nationalist past and of the clerical pressures remain heavy.

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations Conference on the Environment and on Development (UNCED), Rio De Janeiro, 1992.

Involved in the process of democratization, the CMS participates as well, through the promotion of a culture of peace, in the elaboration of legislative texts (civil control of the army for example). However, Vesna Terselic notices that Parliament does not have at its own disposal enough time to discuss the legislative texts, often crafted in advance. On the other hand, certain contributions are pulled from OSCE documents.

According to Vesna Terselic, the CMS must prioritize some research on truth that would not limit itself to the factual truth, but one that would take into account the material fact while at the same time, attempting to dig deeper in what has been occurring in people's minds for the last decades. This work should lead, according to Vesna Terselic, to what she calls a " dialogual truth ", that would look into all the war criminals, and not only the wars that brought about the dissolution of Tito's Yugoslavia. She thinks that modes of expression and dialogue should be found concerning questions that remain sensitive in a country looking for its path by turning a lot more to Western Europe than the countries coming out of former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, she considers that this search for truth should operate independently from the Commission for Reconciliation, that can not constitute to itself the only answer regarding the issue of memory.

Vesna Terselic is convinced that reconciliation won't be possible without cultivating the respect of differences, human rights and non-violence. She mentions, among other things, that the difficult problem of the return of refugees and the displaced can't be adequately treated without taking into consideration the economic and social problems that should be arranged beforehand.

#### ***4.2 Meeting with Lino Veljak, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb, Zagreb - November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001***

Lino Veljak is one of the prominent figures of the alternative scene (intellectual, political and in civil organizations) of Croatia, but also of the entire region of former Yugoslavia. He figures amongst the main leaders of Actions of the Social-Democrats of Croatia (ASH), one of the six parties of the coalition currently in place and one of the four having supported the candidacy of Stipe Mesic at the February 2000 presidential elections. Born in Rijeka in 1950, Lino Veljak studied Philosophy and Sociology in Zagreb where he graduated in February 2000. Since then, he has participated in anti-nationalist and dissident movements of Croatia. Already in 1974, with a group of engaged people (including Zoran Djindjic), he became conscious of the importance of subversive actions. He pursued his studies and obtained a doctorate. He started to work at the Institute of Philosophy at Zagreb as well at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb where he currently heads the department of Ontology and of Epistemology. Before his recent political engagement, he was active on the political front throughout the 1980's becoming, in 1989, one of the founders of the Union for an Alternative Yugoslav Democracy (UJDI)<sup>7</sup> and of the modern Social Democrats. In terms of work in civil society, he participates in the works of Circle 99 of Sarajevo and of the Circle of Belgrade, two organizations of intellectuals and figures of civil society coming from the democratic and anti-nationalist tendencies of former Yugoslavia. He also participates in the works of the Center for the Transition towards Democracy with his project « To Democracy » (ToD), which unites since the

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<sup>7</sup> Close to the alternative political and economical research advocated by Ante Markovic, the last Yugoslav Prime Minister elected in 1989, that launched a series of economic measures to lead the country out of crisis, the Union for an Alternative Democratic Yugoslavia (UJDI) formed early 1989. It comprised as well a strong branch in Kosovo and looked for paths towards democratisation by suggesting constitutional changes and bills on political and associative (civil organizations) rights. A working group dedicated to Kosovo elaborated some political propositions for the resolution of the conflict. Numerous official protests were organized to learn from the experiences of democratic transitions of Eastern Europe. One of the priorities was political pluralism for democratic elections, but this was ignored, equally by the political party in power in Yugoslavia than by the principal opposition parties in the republics. This phase ended in 1990, with the first free elections, which were won by the nationalist parties in all the republics. War then seemed imminent.

1990s theorists whose priority is to support the engagements of leftist democratic forces in the period of transition towards democracy, towards a strong civil society and a modern market economy.

As an intellectual and a man of action who often participates in the meetings organized by the Women in Black of Belgrade<sup>8</sup>, Lino Veljak puts a lot of time and effort studying the outcome of the nationalist and belligerent years as well as an evaluation of future perspectives for the countries coming out of former Yugoslavia.

He considers that it is advisable to favor democratic tendencies in order to avoid situations of vengeance or any return of nationalist or fundamentalist (or whichever the ideology or the beliefs they proclaim themselves) based ethnic hatred. However he is conscious that 'democracy cannot correspond to a final state, but that is a process or a on-going fragile balance that is not guaranteed once and for all, it must be continually confirmed and constructed'<sup>9</sup>.

He bears a lucid outlook on the situation of transition that Croatia is undergoing. Aware that nationalism is still the main threat in the whole region, he states as an example one of the numerous tentative of the nationalists to remain in power through their control over the media. The matter in hand is that of Zoran Vukman, an ultra nationalist that worked during several years at the radio "Free Dalmatie". Lino Veljak thinks that vigilance is more than necessary when it is known that 15 to 20 % of the population is still sensitive to radical ideas. He highlights that the nationalists are manipulating, among other events, September 11, 2001 in order to obtain international support against the Muslims by feeding the confusion between Muslims and fundamentalists. He considers that the question of the price of the transition to democracy is raised with acuteness after the events in New York and Washington that have somewhat modified the international context. This question could be; "If there aren't enough means for the renewal and the reconstruction of the abandoned region (and, for the main part destroyed), who are the most credible agents (and the least costly) for geostrategic interests in the zone of defence."

For Lino Veljak, the key issue is the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina where the nationalists want to maintain the gains of the ethnic cleansings, particularly considering that in the Muslim-Croat Federation, "the HDZ kept its hegemonic power within the Croat community [...]"<sup>10</sup>. Even today, the Croat extremists are actually allying themselves with the Serbian extremists from Bosnia. According to Lino Veljak, they need one another to successfully carry out their nationalist projects. He considers, nonetheless, that there exists hope in the fact that the Croat civil society exerts a critical pressure and a corrective role of the authorities.

Lino Veljak thinks that the Dayton Accords, which have frozen the situation of ethnic cleansing, should be revised; he highlights that civil society should be included in this process. In regards to the European Union, he hopes that it will pressure the governments in power to abolish the visas between the countries coming out of Former Yugoslavia, which would facilitate the construction of a civil society in the region and reinforce the path towards democracy.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Stasa Zajovic (ed), *Zene za mir*, Zene u crnom, Beograd, avgust 2001 (Stasa Zajovic (éd), Women for peace, women in black, Belgrade, august 2001).

<sup>9</sup> Milos Nikolic (éd), *Demokratija i socijalna pravda*, VII Medjunarodna Skola, Herceg Novi, 16-19. January 2001, Centar za tranziciju ka demokratiji – ToD i Ujedinjeni gradjanski sindikati "Nezavisnost", Beograd, septembar 2001, p. 161 (Milos Nikolic (éd), Democracy and Social Justice, 7 th International school, Herceg Novi, January 16-19 Janvier 2001, ToD and the United Citizen Union "Independence", Belgrade, September 2001, p. 161) This declaration was made in the framework of a round table dedicated to the theme of: « NGOs and Trade Unions in the process of transition to democracy, a developed civil society and a modern market economy ».

<sup>10</sup> L'Etat du Monde, *Annuaire économique, géopolitique mondial*, Paris, la Découverte, 2002, p. 516.

#### **4.3. Meeting with Shura Dumanic (Organization of women from Rijeka), Zagreb - November 30th , 2001**

Shura Dumanic, international journalist of Bosniac background, has lived in Rijeka, Croatia (city close to Trieste) for some years now, where she is responsible for the Organization of the Women in Rijeka- a secular structure, mainly feminine and pacifist that works towards reconciliation and in favor of a culture of peace. She leads, mainly in association with the Ciotat Committee of the Peace Movement, some events in favor of orphans, children, women, elderly and the refugees of all ethnic background.

All the activities carried out since the beginning of the war that have shaken Former Yugoslavia, with this dynamic, courageous and very humane women, focused on two main objectives, namely : avoid the worst when it is still possible then, when the war has imposed its own rules in spite of it all, help as much as possible the civil victims of violence and of the ethnic cleansing.

Shura Dumanic is convinced that in Croatia, as in the rest of former Yugoslavia, women have been the most engaged in the fight for human rights. And it is them again that are at the head of concrete engagements for civil society and human rights. In regards to the activities of the Women of Rijeka, they organized mainly around the following themes :

- Promoting human rights in general and women's rights in particular (struggle against domestic violence<sup>11</sup> ; struggle in favor of women's emancipation and their participation in public life) ;
- Develop local solidarity ( including a remedial school work to the Rom populations settling in Rijeka) ;
- Promoting tolerance and working towards helping people have confidence in themselves.

Shura Dumanic regrets that the struggle of the 'anti-globalization' activists do not include that of peace in general and that of a demilitarization of the planet which she estimates particularly essential. She highlights furthermore the importance of environmental questions in countries that are devastated by war and whose completely neglected production apparatus raise numerous environmental problems. She also thinks that mafia tendencies within the army should be combated more actively since, according to her, it is the army, as an organization, that supports the mafia behaviors as seen for example in the drug traffic

#### **4.4. Meeting with Jadranka Milicevic (Zene zenama – Women for Women), Sarajevo - December 3rd, 2001**

Jadranka Milicevic is part of those women who have a strong sense of organization without all the while forgetting the necessary humane approach to social relations. Figuring among the most prominent activists of the women's struggle for peace, Jadranka Milicevic is a member of the Administration Council of Zene Zenama (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and of women in Black (Yugoslavia). It is in the latter framework that she was a part of a delegation that went to Brussels at the European Parliament for the 9th conference of The International Network of Solidarity of Women Against War ( or Network of Women in Black Against War) that was created in July 1992 in Novi Sad during the first conference organized by the Women of Belgrade and the Women of Italy<sup>12</sup>. On the occasion of the Conference in Brussels, a call of solidarity with Palestinian women was launched. It must me

<sup>11</sup> A telephone number " SOS violence " was created consequentially.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. " Zene u crnom protiv rata u Evrepskom parlamentu " in Stasa Zajovic (éd), *Zene za mir*, Zene u crnom, Beograd, avgust 2001, pp. 72-73. (" Les Femmes en noir contre la guerre au Parlement Européen ", in Stasa Zajovic (éd), *Les Femmes pour la paix*, Femmes en noir, Belgrade, august 2001).

noted that besides her engagements for women's rights and human's rights, Jadranka Milicevic also participates in the discussions of Circle 99 in Sarajevo.

A primary notice iterated by this engaged women was the following : “ People still reason too much on ethnic basis. Work on citizenship is yet to be led ! ”

Additionally, Jadranka Milicevic remains lucid on the situation of civil society. She notices that after a long period of what we could call a « hyper production » of organizations – some of these organizations were actually but a continuation of international NGOs, others only fit within the framework of economies of subsistence – a certain void could be felt in the non-governmental sector in regards to structures explicitly oriented towards a cultivation of peace and conducting concrete and concerted actions towards this direction. In effect, during the first period of the ‘hyper-production’, which was also when the international community still granted major aid packages in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a multiplication of structures occurred, which corresponded more so to a sort of crumbling away than a real distribution of the fields of actions and/or roles. To get hold of the subsidies, several structures claiming similar objectives – often too vague – were often created; these rarely worked truly together. Jadranka Milicevic admits to find herself in the impossibility to estimate with precision how many of these structures have survived today. She thinks that right now a « new » generation of civil society – that would focus on comprehensive work towards a durable culture of peace – should develop. Its work should orient itself in other respects around the issues of women's rights – which, she highlights, cannot be dissociated from questions of human rights – and around the search for truth on the disappeared that would take into account all the disappeared, not only those of Srebrenica.

According to Jadranka Milicevic, the main structures that have led, since the beginning, comprehensive work towards a culture of peace and that remain active are the Circle 99 ( that unite intellectuals, theologians, philosophers, but also activists), the Anti-War Center of Ibrahim Spahic (this latter represents the emblematic milestone of the pacifist movement and is dedicated to a representative political engagement of democratic trend), the Helsinki Committee ( which essentially gathers in formations on human rights violations), the Center for Non-Violent Actions – CAN ( which works in depths to change the concrete attitudes necessary for a culture of peace).

In regards to the Zene Zenama Group (Women for Women), in which Jadranka Milicevic is one of the main animators, it works since 1997 on the question of women's security. It also organizes training cycles and events aiming at prevention against daily violence. Developing access to public life for women constitutes also one of their major objectives.

Among these preventive events, the group Zene Zenama set up a service of psychological and social advice that intervenes on the problems linked to war and domestic violence. The telephone “ SOS women”, guarantee a 24/24 service to listen to women victims of all sorts of violence. It works thanks to the benevolent engagement of several women living sometimes in far off parts of the city and assuming, with little means, all the costs of transportation with the sole objective to ensure the functioning of the service. Jadranka Milicevic shares her concern to ensure the prolongation of the telephone service “ SOS Women ” and says that she would like to obtain funds in order to be able, if nothing else, to reimburse the transportation costs.

Concerning the access of women to public life, Zene Zenama is undertaking a long term project with, for objective, to redefine the place of women in society. Jadranka Milicevic thinks that women could be the vector of a new citizenship that would rely on civic rights And since, according to what our interlocutor says, women's rights cannot be dissociated from human rights, the Zene Zenama group is also active on the front of reducing the military service and creating a civil service.

Finally, concerning the question of reconciliation, Jadranka Milicevic considers that the international community should do everything to stop and judge as soon as possible Mladic and Karadzic. She highlights that it is difficult to talk about reconciliation and even less of sustainable

peace, when war criminals, that symbolize not only in BiH but in the entire region a destructive nationalism, live freely and continue to be venerated as national heroes. Also, she concludes, the arrest of Mladic and of Karadzic would not only facilitate the work in terms of a true reconciliation between the different communities, but also constitute the condition *sine qua non* so that this reconciliation can finally become possible.

#### **4.5 Meeting with the CNA organization (Centar za Nenasilne Akcije – Center for Non-violent Action), Sarajevo - December 3, 2001**

On the bank of Bosnia which flows in the heart of Sarajevo, in a little neighborhood not far from the library, we discovered the activists of the Center for Non-violent Actions.

We were impressed by this group which elaborates a very pragmatic process in favor of a culture of peace. In addition to the group of Sarajevo, another group is operational in Belgrade. Some partnerships are also developed with some structures from Great Britain and in Germany. The CNA also participates to the network of the Center for a Creative Resolution of Conflicts. These partnerships aim essentially towards exchanging experiences. This is also valid for the actions that happened recently in Croatia on the initiative of Vesna Terselic.

The funding of the CNA currently relies on funds provided by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This center is made up of people who advocate non-violence as well as deserters from all over the region. It puts a lot of time and effort towards the construction of sustainable peace which relies on teaching and learning peace. Its activities being carried out in all the countries of former-Yugoslavia (except Slovenia), the CNA thus wants to contribute to the resolution of the conflicts in the whole region. The work that the center does in this direction relies on a horizontal network. The creation of networks where all the agents participate on the same level to the elaboration of common actions constitutes, indeed, one of the main objectives of the CNA that refuses to work as a centralized structure organized according to a pyramidal schema.

From a practical point of view, their approach to building sustainable peace is carried out through a series of training : initial or basic training but also perfecting training addressed to the trainers currently in the course of elaboration. The initial training lasts 10 days and above twenty people participated in it. During the training of the groups, the CNA strive to preserve an equilibrium between men and women, different regional origins of the participants as well as their urban or rural background. The training sessions revolve around different themes concerning the culture of peace, (forms of violence for example) that are defined beforehand. To avoid that candidates without any real motivation benefit from the training sessions – one of the principal objective of these being the multiplication of initiatives in favor of a culture of peace and the creation of a strong network- the candidates of the training sessions must initiate the procedure by writing a letter in which they state the concrete projects they wish to set up. Students, militants of human rights, professors, educators and youth from political parties constitute the public most concerned by these training sessions, being that announcements about these sessions are so widely diffused.

Within the framework of these training sessions, the CNA works on four types of problematics, including : forms of expressions, techniques allowing the resolution of problems, group work and approach to concrete situations. This work aims to transform concrete attitudes in daily life. A manual gathering the techniques that are utilized is at your disposal on the web site of the CNA: <http://www.nenasilje.org>

In regards to the training sessions addressed to the trainers – a project in the course of elaboration – it aims to multiply the number of trainers, always with the objective to spread the network of initiatives for peace. This training session lasts six months.

The CNA is very demanded by international institutions. It has been recently contacted by the OSCE to conduct some work in Kosovo. Furthermore, the center actively follows the current events and politics of the region including, in particular, the programs of stabilization proposed by the international community. Regarding the Pact of Stability, the CNA sent a contribution to the OSCE, which recently held a meeting in Athens, in which it stated its reticence to the way in which the question of security was addressed. The CNA clearly said that human security is not properly considered by this organization.

#### ***4.6. Meeting with Slavko Santic (Krug 99 - Circle 99), Sarajevo - December 4 th, 2001***

“ We are strongly convinced that living in diversity and tolerance is the heritage of the inestimable values of our past and a safe basis for a peaceful and happy future of all citizens of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina ” is a common declaration from the members of “ Krug 99 ”. The Circle 99 of Sarajevo is a group that unites independent intellectuals from all tendencies since 1992. One hundred forty thinkers and professionals from all disciplines are a part of it, (you can find side by side lawyers, economists, historians, journalists, artists, engineers and pacifist activists). The Circle 99 works on the premise of a free organization where people of all origins, cultures and intellectual orientation can be found ; this premise incarnates, according to them, the only possible perspective for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Slavko Santic, emblematic figure of contestation Bosnia-Herzegovina, remembers that during the siege of Sarajevo, it was impossible for him, like all the other members of Circle 99, to consider leaving the city and go abroad. He adds that while the bakers continued to make bread and the tramway drivers guaranteed a minimum of services at the risk of their own life ( they're the real heroes of this war he highlights), the independent intellectuals of Circle 99 understood that it was their duty to get involved in a group work : one of informing the Bosniac citizens but also the international community on what was really going on, while also carrying out a campaign for a peaceful and new Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In spite of this project of a sustainable and long term pacifist society, only the Foundation Heinrich Boëll currently funds Cercle 99. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, international aid continues to follow the trend of funding projects on ethnic basis, thus deepening the tensions between the communities. Despite the financial permanent difficulties, Circle 99 continues to edit a periodical magazine of non restricted thoughts , “ Revija slobodne misli ” (Review of Free Thought) and to campaign on a certain number of questions.

Circle 99 conducts its regular actions to political figures in order to push away, from the authorities, the nationalist forces of the region. It organizes forums and debates, meetings with political figures who have responsibilities in the BiH government and who embody democratic leanings. The current discussions revolve around the types of post-war transitions for former-Yugoslavia. Issues over privatization, corruption, and of the mafias who have benefited from the war and who prefer the status quo since, according Slavko Santic, they are the only winners of the war , are primarily discussed.

Slavko Santic is greatly disappointed by the stability pact. Lots of money has been spent in a scattered and inefficient way. The pact interventions don't have many concrete results and are not generalized. The pact didn't raise any awareness on development. But it now seems essential to hurry in order to find sustainable development solutions. “We should not waste our time figuring out if it's possible to live together, we have to work together”, he concluded.

Concerning the September 2001 events, Slavko Santic thinks the international community finally takes into account the risks of terrorism and is beginning to wonder about a real place of civil society. But at the same time, paradoxically, it is losing interest in South-East Europe.

#### **4.7 Meeting with Mustafa Cero (Helsinki Committee Helsinki of Sarajevo), Sarajevo – December 4th, 2001**

The Helsinki Comity for human rights in Bosnia-Herzegovina is a non-governmental, independent organization, with not for profit goals created on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1995. It currently has about a hundred members. The Comity was created from the principles written in the Helsinki International Federation Statute. It aims to protect and promote, and also monitor human rights all over Bosnia-Herzegovina's territory. As a matter of fact, it is a member of the Helsinki International Federation for human rights. It collects information about human rights violations, working at the same time on concrete problems such as the situation in the three constitutive parts of the BiH, the Medias situation, the question of human rights and that of disabled war victims. The Comity has also developed a judicial service concerning the matter of the disappeared.

Through periodical reports, public position taking, the publication of a bimonthly bulletin, the Comity informs on the current situation of human rights in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The bimonthly bulletin, "FaxLetter", has been edited since 1996 where concrete cases of human rights violations are being reported. A yearly report is published in order to gather miscellaneous information. The Comity also publishes books about human rights questions such as the *Human Rights Dictionary* by Delila Dizdarevic. A study on prisons in BiH was recently realized aiming to inform on the conditions of detention<sup>14</sup>.

The efforts of the Comity aim to contribute to the building of a democratic society in which the respect for human rights will be a strong priority. The Comity is particularly involved in activities aiming at :

- Promoting human rights ;
- Monitoring the human rights situation in BiH;
- Reacting against human rights violations ;
- Procure judicial assistance to citizens whose rights are endangered ;
- Bringing suggestions and propositions to legislative organs so that the new and existing laws respect international standards in matters of human rights ;
- Publishing periodical reports and writing documents related to human rights ;
- Bringing to the media's attention questions related to human rights ;
- Organizing public debates around questions concerning human rights ;
- Searching for information and published reports about the situation of ethnic and religious minorities, prison conditions, the functioning of the legislative power and the police force;
- Monitoring in the field of information, freedom of speech, and media freedom, but also detecting any use of hate language within BiH Medias ;
- Promoting contacts and cooperation with similar organizations within the world; particularly with the Helsinki National Comities and the Helsinki International Federation, and engaging the Helsinki Comity in activities related to the protection of human rights outside of BiH.

In agreement with the OSCE, a monitoring activity took place around the elections. It deals with the preparation of the campaign and the progress of the elections. This work is accomplished in

partnership with other NGOs in the form of seminars and round-table conferences. It will be reactivated for the 2002 elections.

According to Mustafa Cero, the matter of the return of refugees needs a structural answer. Currently, it is not really dealt with since there are prerequisites concerning the economic and social stability of the country, as well as the political will of the authorities in power. He also notices that the place of civil society is essential as a critical force of the authorities, and for the contribution of multiethnic citizens. He emphasizes that this shows the long path still ahead.

Although the funding obtained by the Comity are always short term ones and concern limited projects, Mustafa Cero thinks it is hard to consider the idea of common funds for development to NGOs. On the one hand, it is not in the habits of international donors, on the other hand it would be hard to control the use of the fund considering that the situation of the civil society is still complexe.<sup>14</sup> However, the Comity is searching for partners within the European Union in order to set up projects targeted to specific regions. An exchange could take place in this direction with French decentralized communities.

#### ***4.8. Meeting with Karin Kaufmann Wall et Josip Katavic (Center for inter-religious dialogue “Oci u Oci”<sup>13</sup> founded by Fra<sup>14</sup> Ivo Markovic), Sarajevo – December 4<sup>th</sup> 2001***

Here are two very enthusiast young people who presented to us the activities of the Center for the inter-religious dialogue “Oci u Oci” created in 1992 despite the fact its official registration took place in 1996. Its founder, Fra Ivo Markovic, professor of Franciscan theology, also directs the inter-religious Assembly and obtained in 1998 the “Activist Religious” prize (“Mirovni djelatnik”) which was awarded this same year by the Tannenbaum Centre for the inter-religious understanding. The prize has been created on the initiative of Richard Holbrook as a support to religious activists who put their lives in danger to serve peace, reconciliation and the respect for human rights. The prize has been awarded to Fra Ivo Markovic in recognition of his engagement for peace during the Bosnia-Herzegovina war and especially for his work, during the post-war period, on reconciliation in favor of stabilization of life.

The Centre aims to use religions’ pacifist potentials in order to build inter-religious dialogue. From a practical point of view, this dialogue building is carried through chants or religious texts. The central activity of “Oci u Oci” is the management of a choir which elaborates a program of chants from all religions. However, the choir is not only open to believers; being an atheist does not impede from becoming a member. The religious chants create, according to the members of “Oci u Oci”, the bridge between the souls; the choir is symbolically named “Pontamina”.

Its 60 choir members have given concerts in all parts of ex-Yugoslavia (including Belgrade) but also in the USA, (in some of the most prestigious auditorium) as well as in some European countries. The choir has already recorded several discs which deserve careful listening.

This action, which consists of gathering choir members from all horizons and from all religions in one same choir, seems fundamental to the members of “Oci u Oci” for Bosnia-Herzegovina which was, before the war, representative of a multiethnic mosaic society. They consider that “freedom in the union of differences” can be accomplished through the dialog of souls, therefore following the steps of the “Pontamina” choir, the name of this uncommon choir.

<sup>13</sup> Litteraly “ Face to face ” .

<sup>14</sup> Father.

Another project is taking shape, collecting in a unique library all the religious texts which develop pacifist ideas. It can serve as a basis for investigative work on the culture of peace. This project already gives rise to controversies among conservative religious circles.

After meeting with our delegation, Karin Kaufmann Wall and Josip Katavic were very interested in establishing contacts with organizations such as "Justice and peace" or other structures which propose inter-cultural or inter-religious dialogue. We commit ourselves to establish a contact between them and an audiovisual production company in France (and particularly with the director, François Stuck) who works in a similar way.

#### ***4.9. Meeting with Sabina Krupic (Alternativna Mirovna Inicijativa (AMI) – Alternative Initiative for Peace), Sarajevo - December 4<sup>rd</sup> 2001***

Founded three and a half year ago, this research center on peace wants to develop learning activities, seminars or workshops on non-violence for children.

AMI is currently looking for local partnerships to nourish a specific method of education for children. Contacts are already established with Vesna Terselic in Zagreb, with the Center for inter-religious dialogue " Oci u Oci ", the Helsinki Committee of Sarajevo and the Center of Humanitarian Action of Backa Palanka. In the meanwhile, it seems that their projects will benefit from maturing a bit.

#### ***4.10 Meeting with Gordana Mugosa (Zenski Klub " Princeza Ksenija " - Feminine Club " Princesse Ksenja " ), Cetinje - December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001***

Gordana Mugosa is above all an activist for women's rights but also a very active animator of the culture of peace in the historical capital of Montenegro. Convinced of a necessary sovereignty, she is worried about the way the next referendum will occur, being that the local nationalists are ready to do anything to gain this sovereignty .

The Associations' Collective of Cetinje, which she animates, is in the works of calling for an awareness to reduce tensions whatever be the results of the Referendum planned in April 2002. From her point of view, the risk of civil war is not absent. The Collective wants to alert the public opinion and conduct some work in the direction of the courts of the European Union for a political agreement and a compromise with Serbia. This Collective works in local networks with sixteen other organizations as well as the participation of some youth, environmentalists and pacifists. Each group suggests themes to be discussed and some possible actions upon which an agenda of actions is set up. The network is not centralized and works in a horizontal manner

The idea of the Feminine Club « Princess Ksenja » was born during a first women's action working with the Women in Black of Belgrade at the time of the bombings on Dubrovnik. A first meeting against the war took place in February 1992 in Cetinje. Some women mobilized, then, against the youth mobilization and defended the idea of the right of objection of consciousness.

Their activities then developed around the following programs :

- Open seminars to the public on anti-militarism, feminism, citizenship and non- violence ;
- Working on the representations and the contexts of war ;
- Support activities to women, victim of domestic violence, with the setting up of a crisis phone line;
- The promotion of the women's creativity ;

- Prevention programs in the domain of health and awareness on health and contraception.<sup>15</sup>

Since year 2000, an initiative was developed to campaign on the theme of the refusal of violence towards women. The Feminine Club “ Princess Ksenja ” also participated, alongside with numerous structures of civil society of Ex-Yugoslavia, to the initiative of December 10 th, 2001, the International day of Human Rights. Debates, workshops, and public protests took place on the same day in Rijeka, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Podgorica and Belgrade. A specific campaign against sexual violence on young girls and women – to which “ Princess Ksenja ” participates – is under way in different parts of former-Yugoslavia (BiH, Montenegro and Vojvodina). She uses as a basis the results of studies according to which, in Yugoslavia, one girl out of three is concerned with sexual violence in her family environment. From the practical point of view, raising the awareness of the public opinion on this theme uses a poster with three girls holding each other by the shoulders and who have their backs turned (a way to signal that shame still lies today on the victim !).

#### ***4.11. Meeting with Ranko Drivokapic, parliamentary of the SDP (Social-Democrat Party of Montenegro), Podgorica - December 5 th, 2001***

Thanks to Gordana Mugosa, we were able to meet this parliamentary responsible of The Human Rights Committee. He thinks that stability builds through the normalization of the political and economical situation, and strongly expects and hopes for an active participation of the civil society. On this basis, he defended and passed a legislative text structuring the environment of civil society which was discussed with representatives of civil society<sup>16</sup>.

Ranko Drivokapic highlights that the current economic situation is the consequence of ten years of wars, the monthly salary of Montenegro being of about 250 DM. Even if they have not directly reached Montenegro, the country suffered nine years of destructions which have completely destabilized the region. Today the commercial fleet is destroyed. Tourism has a hard time starting over even if a real potential exists. But we cannot rebuild and reconstruct a country without being free from the centralizing and nationalist powers of the RFY.

According to him, the fall of Milosevic has opened up the new opportunities. Nonetheless, obstacles exist: the middle class has disappeared, the working class is impoverished, the reforms of the Federation are still too slow and corruption remains. Thus, his metaphor: “ Now is the time to rebuild the roof before thinking of furnishing the house ” . But in order to do so, he adds, sovereignty must win by way of the referendum.

Ranko Drivokapic is convinced, that as long as it remains critical and independent, civil society has an important role to play. It then carries along values of life and constitutes a strong and active fabric of social life (1500 NGOs counted in Montenegro).

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<sup>15</sup> Gordana Mugosa highlights that the main method of contraception for Montenegrin Women is still, unfortunately, abortion

<sup>16</sup> The CEDEM (Center for Democracy and Human Rights) actively participated in the elaboration of this legislative text structuring the environment of organizations and associative life.

**4.12 Meeting with Srdjan Darmanovic (CEDEM – Center for Democracy and Human Rights), Podgorica - Decembre 6 th, 2001 :**

Founded in 1997, the CEDEM does public opinion polls and analysis of the situation of the people. In addition, the center collaborates with the European Initiative for Democracy, the Institute of Studies and Security (Paris), the Global Movement for Democracy, the Centre for Pluralism, as well as with some U.S. pacifists.

Other activities are related human rights, the questions of individual rights and judicial questions in particular. Seminars with magistrates and lawyers are organized on the theme of fair trial, the abolishment of the death penalty and torture, of the cooperation with the IPTY, and of the systems of defense before such a jurisdiction<sup>17</sup>. A manual directed to the police has also been elaborated and widely distributed.

The CEDEM actively participated in the elaboration of the legislative text on organizations in civil society. Even if not all of their propositions were fulfilled, it was an interesting process. Indeed, the definite legislative text takes into account 80 % of the propositions directly coming from civil society. The CEDEM circulates documents to NGOs of the region so that these can use it as a basis for their work. There is currently a debate on the question of the taxation of the activities of the organizations and on the obligation of the State to participate in organizations of civil society. The government budget planned 600.000 DM for the year 2001 but nothing has yet been planned for year 2002.

According to Srdjan Darmanovic, the civil society in Montenegro – a country in transition searching for new paths to elaborate a democratic process - is a recent phenomenon : for the last three years it also consists of a mass phenomenon since we are witnessing a multiplication of associative structures and NGOs. They focus on the protection of human rights, of rights specific to women being that Montenegro represents a very patriarchal society, on the ideals of peace ( NGOs created in direct opposition to war) and on certain political questions. He thinks that an effort must be made to make the actions of the NGOs more legible and to permit their professionalisation. In order to work in this direction, the Center put in place monitoring workshops and a judicial support service for the NGOs .

Srdjan Darmanovic evaluates at 54 % the chances of the independentists at the referendum on sovereignty. He hopes that a compromise will be settled in Serbia. Indeed, if the Federal government decides to boycott the results of the referendum, the situation could become difficult.

Srdjan Darmanovic highlights the fact that the Montenegro economy is facing some difficulties and that it relies almost entirely on foreign aid (The most important is American: Montenegro will be the second beneficiary of U.S. aid after Israel !). He notes that this situation is not favorable because the stability of a country can not eternally rest on foreign aid. According to Srdjan Darmanovic, economic stability should rest on concrete responses that would take into account the needs of the population as well as a normalization of the relations with neighbouring countries. He thinks that the greatest attention should be turned towards questions of development and security for the whole region.

**4.13. Meeting with general managers and cultural program's managers of the television of Novi Sad organized by Mirko Mandrino - December 7 th 2001 :**

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<sup>17</sup> According to the Penal Code of Montenegro, the Montenegrins could be brought to the IPTY.

It isn't very frequent that a delegation from the Peace Movement is received by television managers ! Especially when these hope to develop a cooperation with French regional televisions that could give birth to a contract, and whose objectives would be the participation of the regional televisions in the exchange of experiences between the civil society of Vojvodina and that of the rest of Europe. This participation would take shape under an exchange of information, even maybe programs coming from societies of production that are interested in people's lives and that of civil society and to which associated televisions would guarantee access.

A first step was undertaken in this direction through a televised interview of our delegation by the director of the cultural programs and three journalists. These hoped to know more about the methods of Western pacifist movements and showed, through their questions, a certain interest for civil society as a partner of social change of great importance for a country in transition

Mirko Mandrino, to whom we owe the meetings we could have in Vojvodina , and who works in networks with all the representatives that we met, engaged in the construction of civil society (the managers of the Radion Television of Novi Sad, Pavel Domony of the Vojvodina Office of the Helsinki Committee from Serbia, Miroslav Ilic of the Vojvodina Movement, Vilmos Almasi of the " Spiritual Republic of Zitzer " from Tresnjevac, Zdravko Marjanovic of The Society for Tolerance of Backa Palanka, Biljana Stajic, coordinator of the NGOs from Zrenjanin and journalists from radio Fedra) is one of the key figures in the struggle for the freedom of the media, the respect of human rights and the culture of peace in Vojvodina. Furthermore, he works in strict cooperation with Lino Veljak of Zagreb, Jadranka Milicevic of Sarajevo and other representatives of the civil society working, since the beginning of the war in former Yugoslavia, for a peaceful way out of the conflicts and for a society respectful of the rights of all citizens<sup>18</sup>. Trained as an engineer in telecommunications, he works as an expert in Pancevo where he was one of the initiators of pacifist groups that have been engaged since the beginning of the wars in former- Yugoslavia in favor of peace, individual rights and freedom of expression<sup>19</sup>.

#### ***4.14 Meeting with Pavel Domony (Office de Voïvodine du Comité Helsinki of Serbia), Novi Sad December 7 th, 2001 :***

The office of Vojvodina of the Helsinki Committee of Serbia, located in Novi Sad, intervenes in three domains : judicial support for the victims of human rights violations and refugees, a minority rights watch and in the organization, once a month, of a forum dedicated to concrete problems.

Pavel Domony, in charge of the Office, presents a particular situation of Vojvodina where there is a multi-ethnic community comprising of Hungarians (Catholics and Orthodox), Slovacs (Lutherans), Romanians (Romanian Orthodox Church), Ukranians (Greco-Catholics) and Roms (Orthodox and Muslims) and Serbs (Serb Orthodox church) ; thus the importance of tolerance and of interreligious dialogue.

According to Pavel Domony one of the problematics to which the Helsinki Committee of Novi Sad is currently confronted is the question of censuring the populations. He highlights that in Vojvodina censoring represents a real difficulty and remains non reliable, especially since, in the past, several

<sup>18</sup> It is important to highlight that the networks of initiatives and of position taking against the war exist in all the countries emanating from the dissolution of former Yugoslavia ; some of these networks have been active since the beginning of the 1990s marked by the beginnings of wars with the rise of nationalists in power in Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

<sup>19</sup> For more information refer to the interview granted by Mirko S. Mandrino on InterRadio about the situation of radios in ex-Yugoslavia, entitled " The situations of radio brought to a chasing game " and accessible on Internet at the address : [www.amarc.org/interadio/Vol9\\_No2/Francais/html/europe.htm](http://www.amarc.org/interadio/Vol9_No2/Francais/html/europe.htm) but also on InteRadio, 666 Sherbrooke Ouest, bureau 400 , Montréal, Québec, Canada H3A 1E7, Tel: (1-514) 982-0351, Fax: (1-514) 849-7129, Email: amarc@amarc.org.

census – each contradicting the previous census – took place: their results (manipulated according to the interest of the central power) thus depended on the way in which the populations were registered. Indeed, certain populations were not registered in the same way and appeared, at times, in different censuses under different origins

Just like a good number of our interlocutors, Pavel Domony will be very critical and will have no illusions as to the Pact of stability, a structure he considers very opaque. For him, the representatives of civil society were kept away from the Pact in which they are not enough taken into account. The invitation to debates and forums on the situation of minorities and refugees remained formal. The trade unions, too, were kept away from the discussion related to the Pact ; Pavel Domony thinks that the absence of trade unions inaugurates an economic terror. Finally, he will signal that the donors of the Pact of Stability have a good part of financial aid transit through the States, which raises many questions in regards to the allocation of the funds.

#### **4.15 Meeting with Miroslav Ilic (Vojvodjanski Pokret - Movement of Vojvodina), Novi Sad - December 7<sup>th</sup> 2001 :**

Miroslav Ilic is a medical doctor and president of the Executive Committee of the Movement of Vojvodina which, all the while supporting initiatives during the transition period within the framework of the parliament of Vojvodina, defends the idea of a broader participation of the civil society in the debates on the reforms and the future of the province by organizing round tables independent from institutions. According to Miroslav Ilic these offer more freedom of expression and tribunes to discuss openly the question of autonomy which is at the center of the current debates in a province that *Mondes Rebelles* does not hesitate to classify in 1999 amongst “the forgotten of former Yugoslavia”<sup>20</sup>. This man is full of energy and jumps head first at the center of the preoccupations of the inhabitants of Vojvodina. He thinks that despite the provocations of paramilitary groups or of the red berets (guards of Milosevic, still based in Vojvodina ), the situation is on the way, little by little, towards stabilization. It is consequently recommended to set up a project of demilitarization in Vojvodina particularly since several troops are stationed in the province and this concentration of armies represent a permanent menace for this geostrategic area.

This is how he comes to present the project, “Farewell to Arms” which mobilizes several NGOs that estimate that problems will not be resolved by force and that Vojvodina must be demilitarized in order to contribute to the security of the region and to allow intercultural dialogue all the while allowing economic and social development. In order to contribute to this project, philosophers, sociologists, and citizens are mobilized, and propose as well a path for objectors of consciousness.

In conclusion, Miroslav Ilic declares that the Movement of Vojvodina hopes to participate to NGO initiatives related to questions of setting up co-security in Europe in partnership with the OSCE. So that this can be possible, he asks for an active support of the project “ Farewell to arms ” and says to be searching for partnerships.

#### **4.16 Participation of the delegation of the Peace Movement to a round table<sup>21</sup> gathering NGOs from Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and from Vojvodina on the theme : Building which civil society ? Backa Palanka - December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001 :**

<sup>20</sup> Jean-Marc Balencie, Arnaud de la Grange et Jean-Christophe Rufin (éd), *Mondes rebelles, Guerres civiles et violences politiques*, l'Encyclopédie des conflits (édition revue et augmentée), Editions Michalon, Paris, 1999, p. 1429.

<sup>21</sup> This round table was organized with the support of the American Freedom House, the Society for Tolerance of Backa Palanka headed by Zdravko Marjanovic.

**Opening of the debate : Mr Mirko Mandrino speaks (Pancevo Action Group for Peace)**

Mirko Mandrino has a disenchanted outlook on the current situation of the civil society in general and of civil society as it has been developing for some time in South East Europe in particular. According to him, three distinct sectors are part of what we commonly call civil society. There are firms with entrepreneurs, the state and finally non lucrative organizations.

According to what he says, NGOs must develop ideas of solidarity, human values, notably generosity. He notices that most of their members come from the middle class. However, he highlights that a certain amount of so called specialists from all horizons, which we find within a good number of NGOs - and above all among the most powerful NGOs- are always traveling or attending international conferences while losing track of the problems of the populations. Furthermore, he emphasized the fact that a different list be made between NGOs that substitute the States' responsibilities and those that work within the framework of an independent activist movement and who carry humanist values.

A certain vigilance is necessary on the relations between civil society and the donors. It seems essential to not be running around looking for funds without defining the objectives beforehand. It is a matter of working a politics of baby steps in relation to the concrete realities and to stay grounded to the preoccupation of the people.

**Mr. Milan Ivanovic speaks (Center for peace and the promotion of a democratic civilization of Osijek - Croatia) :**

For Milan Ivanovic the five characteristics of the society where NGOs carry out their work are : pluralism, the rights of the market, state of law, freedom of education and tolerance . Civil society recognizes the realities of the conflicts which matters to resolve within the framework of the law .

According to him, before 1991, organizations were located within the spheres of socialist states (out of twenty thousand organizations, two thirds were inherited from socialism). Then, the sector opened up in the domains of environmentalism and human rights, and this within the difficult hardships of war. But the situation of NGOs were dependent of foreign aid and of a certain ethnocentrism There are currently six to eight thousand organizations of this new model. Women's organizations helped foster an autonomous civil society and have done a lot for the development of human rights.

Pacifist organizations like ARK or human rights organizations like the Helsinki Comittee take action to facilitate dialogue between the migrant communities resulting from the wars. The activities of these different organizations have, among other things, contributed to the fall of Tudjman. Since he departure of the latter, a new momentum exists. Right now, the range of actions of these different organizations must be enlarged to change the values upon which a society relies on to take into account the human capital that it disposes.

**Mr. Besenyu Sandor speaks (Hungarian Peace Movement “ Dél-magyarországi civil szervezetek szövetsége ”) :**

Besenyu Sandor starts by stating the fact that Hungarian society is in transition and that, consequentially, its civil society is as well. In these conditions, the main question is for the construction of democracy.

But the NGOs are kept away from public life and find themselves in marginal sectors where politics and the State are not involved. Corruption and the authorities attempt to marginalize this civil society from the important questions. For this reason, civil society must choose between these three alternatives: end up disappearing, to be professionalized or to keep living through foreign aid. What is

certain, highlights Besenyu Sandor, is that the authorities are disqualified because it does not take into account the needs of the people and does not recognize the benefits of a civil society in the constructions underway.

Within the projects that the Hungarian Peace Movement develop , Besenyu Sandor brought forth a project for the protection of the artistic and architectural heritage for which they would like some help from Unesco and from the European Community. He is personally convinced that culture carries humane values and allows a society to develop.

#### **Mr. Mirko Mandrino speaks**

Mirko Mandrino highlights that in order for NGOs to gain credibility, they must be more grounded with the people in order to be up to the job . The entire near future of the civil society is a matter of its relation to the people and its relation to morale and humane values.

#### **Mr. Patrick Simon speaks (Peace Movement, France)**

Patrick Simon's first step was to present the range of activities of the Peace Movement. His second step was to go over the procedures of the delegation and the objectives of its mission regarding NGOs in South East Europe<sup>22</sup>. Then he developed two points :

- In the debate of the construction of civil society, civil society must be cautious to not substitute itself to the responsibilities of the State, even if it is sometimes necessary to intervene according to the realities of the moment; and that's that on the issue on solidarity of victims of war.
- In the procedures of actions from organizations, it is a matter of defining the objectives independently form the criteria of the donors so that there can exist a real partnership and to be able to stay critical of the authorities in power. This is an important issue considering the fact that authorities in power often try to instrumentalize organizations by relegating them to the social spheres that they themselves neglect. On its part, Civil society should develop its own dynamic.

The issue is to raise awareness to develop a culture of peace and contribute to a new social movement where each becomes a citizen, where each will have the right to be simply human. But for this, it is important to listen to people, to start with their preoccupations and engage in a dialogue oriented towards a culture of peace. The issue should be human security: it is a matter of securing the people before securing financial investments and to create bridges between the different cultures and communities.

#### ***4.17 Interview of the Peace Movement delegation on the radio of Backa Palanka –***

***December 8 th, 2001 :***

The delegation of the peace movement was invited for an interview for the second time. The second interview was allowed by the local radio of Backa Palanka. As in Novi Sad, where we interviewed by television , we accepted the invitation. We could notice that there exist a definite interest by the local medias for the procedures and the processes of the actors of civil society in

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<sup>22</sup> Refer to the letter of October 16 th 2001 in the Appendix.

general, and for pacifists in particular. This interest notably translates by open programs on the local civil society.

#### ***4.18 Meeting with Biljana Stajic, coordinnator of Zrenjanin NGOs, and with environmental and pacifist activists, Zrenjanin - December 2001 :***

In Zrenjanin, moreso than in the capitals, pacifist activists seem decided to work in cooperation with activists from other organizations. Thus several actors of civil society presented to us the situation of their commune and the situation in Vojvodina that suffered the backlash of the war. Once more, the notice of a situation of transition is put forward.

In Zrenjanin, a collective of organizations exists since 1988. It counts four hundred members including forty active members and works on civic education in several fields.

- Teaching work with children and youth with the objective of raising awareness on the environment. This work is particularly undertaken by the organization “ Zdrav Zivot ” (“ A Healthy Life ”) ;
- Work dedicated to the media ; development of a privileged cooperation with the Fedra radio de Zrenjanin (to which we also accepted an interview) aiming to promote the participation to civic society ;
- Working towards the protection of the river Vega, taking shape through the struggle against uncontrolled dumping and industrial degradation. In addition, they are working to raise environmental awareness through the organization of ‘eco-tribunes’, the realization bulletin for the people, and the realization of films. This work is particularly undertaken by the environmental movement “ Panonska Zora ” (Dawn of Panonia), organization headed by Mr.Vukoman Maksimovic ;
- Work addressed to women concerning domestic and daily violence.

#### ***4.19 Paying homage to Jelena Santic in Belgrade – December 9, 2001***

The last destination of the delegation of the Peace Movement was in Belgrade where our movement kept in touch with numerous contacts since the first actions against the wars, in particular with an amazing women, Jelena Santic, who recently passed away, who was our guest already in 1998 during the Ferney Voltaire Conference on the outcome of the Dayton Accords.

On December 9th, a small protest was organized by her family and friends. On this occasion, the Peace Movement offered her family the tape of Arielle Denis’ movie “ More powerful than Weapons ” in which Jelena Santic told accounts, in October 1995, of the struggle for peace during wartime.

#### ***4.20. Participation to a second round table within the framework of the International Day of Human Rights, Belgrade –December 10<sup>th</sup> 2001:***

Within the framework of the international day of Human Rights , a meeting was held in Belgrade taking shape as a round table gathering representatives of civil society. A representative of the U.N.O. Mission also took part in the debates.

**Opening of the debates : Mr. Richard Towle Speaks, Mission chief of the UN Commission of Human Rights.**

The tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 brought attention to the debate of human rights and the dangers that terrorism represent for civil populations that remain its main victims. It becomes urgent and important to defend human and democratic values. In countries in transition, democratic reform of the institutions must accompany itself of the strong participation of civil society.

Moreover, efforts for reconciliations involves justice and the search for truth, as the recent discovery of a grave around Belgrade reminded us, following the war in Kosovo, and shows that we must question history and search an alternative to violence to resolve conflicts of interests. In this situation, organizations are guides on the road to human rights.

**Mr. Dimitrijevic speaks, Responsible of the Movement of Belgrade for Human Rights and member of the Circle of Belgrade :**

The Serb community is coming out of a long period of autism from the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. It becomes important to look at the realities in relation to others and not only in relation to ourselves, Serbs. The respect of rights shouldn't only occur through laws because it is a matter of an ethical duty. There will not be democracy without democrats.

What is missing in our education is that we have the tendency to embellish our history. When we ratify texts on human rights, we must be conscious that the path towards their application is a long one.

Beyond the Milosevic period, there was a mental basis for what has happened. Thus, education is a priority. We must take into account the necessity to now change the laws and our institutions .

**A journalist of *Vreme* speaks, who has become Ambassador of Serbia:**

The discourse on human rights raised in our country much distrust during the period of the Cold War : it was considered as coming from elsewhere, from the enemy. We paid the price of this suspicion! It is the principal origin of the disasters in which our country was plunged into during the Milosevic period.

Our country's transition starts with this heavy past that ended on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2000. Entering in transition means that we must integrate the human rights discourse. The current regime understands the importance of human rights in the construction of a democratic country. However, it is important to note that it is not enough that the efforts in this direction be undertaken solely at the level of the summit, of power ; it is of capital importance to give life to this notion at the heart of the whole population.

Furthermore, a discussion on human rights within the country should allow us to open a dialogue with international institutions by the very fact that , thereon, we are not stigmatized as being Serbs that support Milosevic.

**The turn is to the audience to speak up. Here are some elements of the debate with the audience composed of NGO representatives and media :**

Several changes are brought forth. On the one hand, it is a matter of providing a legal framework for change. Thus, the judicial framework must be deeply modified and punctual changing from a few judges is not satisfactory. On the other hand, it is urgent to change the constitution

There still exists violent groups that act against changes. Additionally, violent practices against certain minorities persist ( some police continue to mistreat the tziganes (Hungarian gypsies) and the people who watch don't react).

**4.21. Meeting with Ruzica Zarevac and Borko Mikolic (Movement for Human Rights in Belgrade, headed by Mr. Dimitrijevic), Belgrade - December 10 th, 2001**

The bulk of the activities of this movement focus around the theme of education for youth, of interventions directed towards jurists to form leaders respectful of protection of human rights, the enunciation of the past in order to raise awareness on tolerance and reconciliation. A youth bus project that would drive through the regions of former Yugoslavia is being prepared with the help of the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Amongst the numerous activities, the Movement for human rights published a European citizenship passport of the youth that develops questions on the relationship to others, rights and obligations. An annual report taking the shape of a social census is edited by the Movement on questions of human rights in regards to the legislation and the non-respect of human rights. The movement intervenes additionally so that RFY signs the European text of human rights. Currently, a study is being led comparing the law of the RFY and of the E.U. Studies are in the course of elaboration on questions of Communitarian law of the European Union as in the question on Euro-Atlantic integration <sup>23</sup>.

Other domain of intervention : the development of alternative university programs. It is a matter of reviewing all the history manuals, to expand knowledge and the review the procedures of homologation of diplomas and of qualifications. According to Ruzica Zarevac and Borko Mikolic, a study shows that only 5 % of the youth undertake university studies and that there exists a very high illiteracy rate estimated to 30 % in the rural areas .

The Movement recommends to review the law on organization that goes back to 1982 but does not wish to be inspired by the text voted in Montenegro seen as too liberal ( it does not take enough into account according to Ruzica Zarevac and Borko Mikolic the means of funding). From their point of view, this new text should distinguish the local organizations from those of international status. It should also elaborate the modes of functioning and the question of funding.

Our two interlocutors proved to have a strong interest in the CNA activities of Sarajevo ( in particular in the initial training programs and the training program for trainers). It appears that they did not know of the CNA group even when they have a branch in Belgrade.

**4.22. Meeting with Mariana Rakacha, (Women in Black), Belgrade – December 10th 2001 :**

“ Women in Black ” is one of the main structures with which the Peace Movement has worked with as early as 1991 in South Est Europe. Thus, it seemed very important to us, to take notice of the points on which this pacifist structure intervenes since the post-Milosevic period.

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<sup>23</sup> NATO

The Women in Black came down in the streets in Belgrade for the first time on October 9th 1991 to protest against the violence of the regime Slobodan Milosevic. Inspired by the Israeli model of women's contestation against the violence in Palestine, they silently protested, in the public space, against war, militarism, nationalism and the violence towards women. They also set up an « anti-war marathon of Belgrade » that supported men opposing their military service and deserters back from the front. Since, « Women in Black » constitutes an informal international network where women get involved, united by pacifist, feminist and multi-culturalist ideals .

In Belgrade, at the time when we met them, a protest was taking place on the Square of the Republic within the framework of the international day of human rights, with the participation of its main leaders. And it's Miriana Rakacha, a young activist that met with us.

On top of their involvement, since the beginning of the war in former Yugoslavia, in civil disobedience against the war and nationalism, the group is now focused on mobile workshop activities dedicated to women's issues. Their activities take place in the five main cities of RFY in order to help develop local organization. The workshops are organized horizontally and in networks. Thus, a local group participates in the activities of other groups, which allows numerous and regular collaboration.

Furthermore, solidarity actions are led today with Afghani women of the Rawa Group, and with organizations that work on the question of the disappeared of former-Yugoslavia.

That being said, the priority for the moment of the « Women in Black » group is to have a more political approach. :

- Demilitarization of people's consciousness ;
- Take actions against the war ;
- Objection of consciousness ;
- Questions of the State's responsibility and of citizen responsibility ;
- Questions of reconciliation in relation to recent history and searching for truth.

**4.23 Meeting with Milanka Saponja-Hadzic (Helsinki Committee of Belgrade), Belgrade - December 10<sup>th</sup> 2001 :**

Like the majority of the Helsinki Committees that we met during our study mission, this Committee grants priority to the economic and social situation of the population. Here is how Milanka Saponja-Hadzic describes the situation in Serbia:

Great poverty exists (70 % of the population lives beneath the poverty line). The economy is ruined. Also, a negative feeling exists towards minorities; xenophobic and nationalists sentiments still persist. The right of refugees raises big problems, and so does the state of health of the population.

A distrust of everything coming from the West is still very present, resulting from previous propaganda. History must be confronted. All of this is not easy and the reform process will be a long one. As of now, the general sentiment is the following: Milosevic lost the war but working to confront his legacy still remains!

The Committee evaluates the situation and informs those who have responsibilities in setting up the transition. The Committee thinks that international NGOs will still have to energetically put pressure on the question of human rights. Necessary efforts will have to be undertaken in the field of police and justice; and proceed to question the current institutions all the while taking into account the local conditions and mentalities. You cannot simply and purely import what is done elsewhere. However, we must work together on the conditions of peace and of human security. His point of view on the Pact of Stability is mitigated. Some contacts exist but nothing concrete is coming out of it.

**4.24 Meeting with Jelisaveta Blagojevic, Belgrade Circle - December 10<sup>th</sup> 2001 :**

The Circle of Belgrade, that originated from an organization of independent intellectuals, exists since January 1992. It currently has about 500 members. Its founding origin rests on the following declaration: "The first concern of the Circle of Belgrade is to favor values from diverse democratic, civil and open tendencies of the plural society. This open circulation must promote independent creative activities . "

From the start, the Circle developed and supported critical positions against totalitarian ideologies, as well from the right than the left. Additionally, it has been opposed to intolerance (cultural, ethnic, political...), to hate propaganda, to aggression and to war. It has been opposed to nationalisms and ethnocentrism, ethnic cleansing, all that encourages war crimes, barbarous destruction of cities and the forced displacement on the territory of former Yugoslavia. All the activities of the Circle of Belgrade are subordinated to these objectives.

The clearest proclamation of the general goals are contained in the preamble of the *Status of the Circle of Belgrade* :

" The Circle of Belgrade is an association that advocates the establishment of a free, open, pluralist, democratic and reasonable civil society. The Circle of Belgrade promotes a general culture of peace, dialogue and of cooperation, as well as political, religious, national tolerance ( and of any other differences). The Circle of Belgrade promotes the creation of institutional basis for the protection of all human rights and differences, civil liberties and of the rights of others. The Circle of Belgrade works as much on theoretical aspects than on the practical affirmation of these questions, and aims to cooperate with similar organizations in Yugoslavia and elsewhere. "

At first, meetings took place every Sundays. A trip to establish contacts was undertaken in 1994 in Sarajevo. From then on, the Circle has published documents on nationalisms and has constituted an international network with, amongst others, *Transeuropéennes* of Paris, the Circle 99 of Sarajevo, and the Judicial Center of Sarajevo.

An engagement to raise the awareness of the youth on the importance of civil society, democracy and of participation to citizen life is undertaken through seminars. A reflection involving several actors is currently under way on the theme "Peace is possible". Other groups of reflections including figures such as Etienne Balibar and Jacques Derrida are set up. They allow an exchange of experiences whose results are published through collective publications. Projects of publishing a book is underway. It aims to create alternative studies, independent from the authorities, including in the university domain. In addition, a partnership exists between Slovenia on the theme of "Accept borders to erase them". This project aims to recreate links. A dozen of meetings have already taken place

According to Jelisaveta Blagojevic, the current problematic is in regards to the culture of civil society that is still perceived as being anti-governmental. She thinks that the activities of the NGOs, who do not work enough together, should be made more legible and more visible. For her, several problems persist; that of the creation of a law structuring civil society, that of the place for independent media, and that of universities and the access to knowledge and education.

#### ***4.25 Meeting with Vesna Golic (Group 484), Belgrade – December 10<sup>th</sup> 2001 :***

The Group 484 is part of, along with Women in Black, of our main interlocutors since 1991, and warm relations always bring us back together us.

Group 484 is an organization of citizens that has the status of a not for profit NGO, founded in 1995 in the goal of bringing humanitarian, judicial and psychological aid to the numerous refugees that left to Serbia. Its engagement initially involved 484 families of refugees (thus the nomination of the group). The objective was to organize a psychological support (assisting people who have to overcome war related traumas and adapt to new environments), support and counseling during the decision process concerning the choice between reintegrating your home or staying in the greeting country; initiation to non violent communication workshops, along with some of the respect of human rights, life in multi-ethnic communities, working with children having developmental problems.

Along with aide to the refugees and to the displaced, the organization started very early to develop the propagation of a culture of peace, dialogue, understanding and cooperation starting with concrete projects. The self-organization of the families of refugees as a method aiming to resolve sustainably their social status is an example of this. The restoration of trust in East Slovenia, in Baranija and in East Srem (aid to the inhabitants of Vukovar, Illok, Tovarnik, Sotin, Miklusevac, Markusica, Cakovac), distributed by engaged refugees that want to assure the protection of human rights, social, judicial and humane aid.

More generally, it is a matter of building new non-violent foundations to rebuild civil society. This means that the organization works on questions of gender equality and on rights to difference, that it defends the principals of solidarity, tolerance, democracy and responsibility. For this reason, the organization encourages men to put a lot of time and effort into the life of their social environment.

With time and in agreement with other mission, appeared the need to found a club with the goal of promoting civil culture. The "Club 484" is a meeting place for communication and education open to all the inhabitants of Belgrade. The activities of the club take place in the framework of

workshops and taking shape through presentations, classes, tribunes, seminars. Amongst the themes studied, the following can be pointed out: self confidence and the fact of not being afraid of the other but going towards him.

Concerning the youth, the reflection is directed towards questions of identity, human rights and communication, but also of non-violence, of the critical outlook along the lines of civil society. The animators are specialized speakers, Psychologists, Sociologists, Doctors, Artists. A particular attention is brought to certain groups: refugees, women, children, members of national minorities.

The Group 484 is currently developing three main programs:

- Humanitarian work targeting local population with as an objective to help the Health institutions;
- Judicial and psychological support to refugees and displaced, searching for permanent solutions in regards to legislation for their rights and the involvement of the beneficiaries in the activities of the group solutions. Activities and actions are set up particularly to the populations originating from Kosovo and Krajina. This work is done in partnership with the Refugee Network of South East Europe. A meeting in June 2001 of the NGOs intervening in this domain took place and should follow through in January 2002 on specific themes, such as legislation, the settling in greeting countries and the lobbying in international institutions.<sup>24</sup>
- Development of civil society through educative actions to non-violence (for example, the making of non violent games for children); through decentralized actions so that local groups can become autonomous and multi-ethnic; by the setting up of clubs for the promotion of civil society at the heart of the population. Also, activities of awareness raising to citizenship are set up with school teachers within 54 schools in 32 cities.

The relation to other NGOs is building little by little, and goes beyond the urgency that was related to the fight against Milosevic. Changes must occur soon to insure the transition towards democracy. This must enact itself through a strong civil society. A partnership exists between the ECRE network of NGO that intervene on human rights at the international level, as well as with the European Network of Refugees.

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<sup>24</sup> According to Group 484, Norway, Sweden and Holand correctly greet refugees where as there are numerous problems in France and Great Britan.

## 5. Testimonies of ‘ordinary people’ :

### Vilmus Almasi

Encountered in Tresnjevac, a village north Vojvodina on December 7th 2001, Vilmus Almasi, a young man with a kind smile tells, in a half deserted cafe in the countryside, a story which seems to come straight out of the craziest imagination of Kusturica. And yet, this is definitely a real story of a group of men and women who organized and mobilized to protest the war, at the very moment when mass hysteria hits the country with the beginning of the war in Slovenia and when the waves of mass enrollment particularly hit the towns in Vojvodina of Hungarian majority. Tresnjevac, a town of Hungarian majority, thus became the symbol of pacifist contestation. Here is its story as told by Vilmus :

In Spring 1991, war hits Slovenia. Although apparently far away, this first war generates a good number of worries and raises some first questions : who does it serve, isn't it unreasonable to fight it ? This is how, since the start of the war in Slovenia, men and women of Tresnjevac, spontaneously start to meet in a local coffeeshop , where, as people are playing pool, there is an open discussion on the possibility of refusing to participate in a war whose motives are neither understood nor shared. It is actually at the same period, more or less, that Vilmus will communicate a letter to the military authorities of Yugoslavia, reminding them that during his regular military service, he took oath - he had then enrolled like all the others called by the JNA - to defend Yugoslavia against foreign attacks but not to take part in a civil war on his territory.

Very quickly, the war starts getting closer and a new front opens in Vukovar, barely a hundred kilometers from Tresnjevac. With the start of this new war, JNA, the Yugoslav Army, which, for evident reasons, does not incorporate youth of Croat origins, starts to massively recruit in Vojvodina.

This is how the police starts to increase their control over the town and its surroundings. Even in Tresnjevac, out of 2200 inhabitants, right in the middle of a recruiting campaign which will remain strong until May 1992, 200 youth are called to take up arms.

On May 1992, women then organized a big mobilization to openly protest against the enrollment of their children in war. On this occasion a petition written in five points is launched. The petition demanded :

- The interruption of the general enrollment ;
- The repatriation of those who left for the front ;
- The peaceful resolution to the conflict in Croatia;
- The creation of an anti-war group ;
- Some explanations on the reasons of the conflict.

Starting on this date, as to them, the youth of Tresnjevac ‘took under siege’ the ‘Billiard Coffeeshop’ with the help of a good part of the population (up to one thousand came to support them), where they stayed 62 days. During the first three days of the siege, some 80 armors and tanks of the Yugoslav army stationed themselves around the town to undertake a psychological war and discourage the action led by the people of Tresnjevac. They will only leave because the media were alerted – the Hungarian television and the BBC were giving accounts of the events.

During the siege, in order to parody the creation of new republics on ethnic basis, the youth decided to create a republic that would ignore frontiers, they baptized it the “Spiritual Republic Zitzer”. Its creation being declared, the Spiritual Republic of Zitzer was assigned an emblem - three billiard balls- and its anthem: Ravel's Bolero. Several pacifist actions were led to support deserters and to gather testimonies.

Several protests and cultural activities also took place in the same coffee shop, which, more than being a place of contestation, it has become a place of encounters and meetings. Just as noticed Vilmus, when you stay together for 62 days, you have time to think, discuss and to think again.

Out of the 200 people mobilized for this action, five did jail time: three Slovaks, one Serb and a Hungarian, our interlocutor, and we want to add our friend Vilmus. Before being condemned to four months of jail time, Vilmus who was several times- between March and September 1993 - called in to the military tribunals, managed with good sense and humor to postpone the date of his incarceration by relying on the flaws of the judicial system of a state in complete decrepitude. Though perfectly speaking Serb-Croat, he postponed his trial by deploying a law which grants him the right to demand the presence of a translator; then it is the presence of a mediator of consciousness that he will impose to the tribunal, which not being able to provide one, decides to postpone the trial to an ulterior date. This game cleverly played with the Justice system of a country that got caught by its own hypocritical discourse according to which Yugoslavia is not in a state of war – no official declaration took place- is an integral part of the Vilmus' dedication to peace and real justice for the country. When he exhausted the recourse to all legal means, Vilmus goes by himself to the prison of Subotica to show that he is fully ready to assume his decision and refuse to take arms and that, in the name of this refusal, he complies with the sentence declared against him.

Isolated in the beginning of his incarceration, he asks his friends, who are doing a hunger strike, to protest against the poor treatment he is enduring, to stop the strike with which they are only worsening his situation. Little by little, the conditions of this incarceration ameliorate, and his friends living in Germany gather a considerable amount of money thanks to which the Prison of Subotica rents him for 100 DM a day to an employer – who pays the jail with the money gathered by his friends – which allows Vilmus to leave the prison environment during working days.

Vilmus talks about his memories, produces brilliant analysis, keeps on a smile and an open-mindedness like all those who have remained honest and integrate. Then he smiles and talks about the constructions of his house, working in the fields. He alternates from Serbo-Croat to Hungarian and greets all those who enter the coffee shop; then he confides that he was happy to have been able to meet us and that when spirits come together; frontiers disappear. Thank you Vilmus of this lesson of wisdom and tolerance !

### **Zdravko Marjanovic**

How can you speak about Zdravko's testimony that we met during the round table organized by the society of Tolerance of which he is the President ? How can you situate the discourse of this man, who, by constantly bearing upon himself the tearing of the town, Backa Palanka (Voivodine) - now split by the fluvial frontier of Ilok, the Croat city – sinks into an incriminating speech against solely one nationalism, the Serb, as if he could free himself from the heavy burden of the past by harshly condemning it ? What meaning should we give to Zdravko's purposes who willingly blends personal memories with those from the events after which the city of Backa Palanka, located a few kilometers away from Vukovar, became the epicenter of a fierce strategy, aiming not only the total destruction of a city (which, then, became the symbol of a total war between Serb and Croat nationalisms), but also and above all, the definitive eradication of any perspective for Croats and Serbs to live together.

Zdravko, strongly felt the years that foreshadowed the war. For him; there was at first a period of lethargy, those years of the meticulous and programmed preparation of a war aiming to create States 'ethnically' pure. This is how ethnic cleansing started, at first, at the heart of the JNA (federal army) which had progressively gotten rid of all non-Serb elements, and later at the heart of the population. Provocations from the JNA followed, associated with politics of intimidation, particularly those led by the Croats. These politics had as a predictable consequence, the beginning of displacements of people

who, not being able to take the bullying and the consecutive attacks anymore, left their houses to find areas where they will constitute a majority. Using a ferocious propaganda, based on historical manipulations, these politics, led here and there, achieved to have a lasting stigmatization of the 'others' who become, in this way, enemies to shoot down or at least to flee.

Zdravko, who is president of a radio group amateur of the pre-1991 Yugoslav period, observed the progressive rise of the black tide of warrior nationalisms which took over his country, by exchanging with his friends, of all nationalities and religions, some analysis and interrogations. Already in this period, they ask themselves what must be done to block the pursuit of politics that can only lead to lasting wars. They then feel close to the ideas of Ante Markovic, liberal Croat and head of the former government of the Yugoslav Federation, whose Yugoslav project based on economic reforms and structural politics unfortunately failed, for the elections of diverse Republic. As soon as 1990, Ante Markovic told, to those who were willing to listen to her, that taking considering the importance of the crisis, Yugoslavia will fatally follow one of the following paths: one of economic and political reforms with the support of the international community, which would allow the country to come out of a deep structural crisis in which it was sinking into for at least ten years, or the path of nationalist programs that would lead into conflicts and wars. History unfortunately showed us that the second path was privileged and that, to paraphrase Ante Markovic, having missed its opportunity to Europeanize the Balkans, the nationalist leaders but also the international community contributed to the Balkanization of l'Europe.

In this uncertain situation, in which it was more than important for those who defended the ideals of Ante Markovic, for the most part, like the amateur radio group, it become more than urgent to create a place of exchange and tolerance. This is how the amateur radio group progressively became a separate alternative network that would permit men and women who defended non-nationalists values and called for a dialogue to concert one another; to exchange their point of views, to call for tolerance and peace. All the moreso in the 1990-1991 years, when it was difficult to know and even less to establish what was really going on; it became a duty for Zdravko to attempt to understand the situation represented in these circumstances. He, who admits to have understood at the time at least only one thing: " that if an ideological war began in Belgrade, the physical war started in their area, Backa Palanka, where several months before the beginning of the first hits on Vukovar, heavy artillery and canons were positioned and dug up along the line of the Danube in the event war broke out". Additionally, it seems that the separation of territories had already been defined by the Serb nationalist authorities of Slobodan Milosevic and the Croat Nationalist authorities of Franjo Tudjman. Let's just add that it was along these lines that the Federal army shot night and day on Vukovar; these nightmarish nights and days which he will never be able to forget and which still haunt him.

In this way, since the beginning of the year in 1993, following a meeting with Jelena Santic, emblematic figure of Yugoslav pacifism<sup>25</sup> and after having attended a round table organized on the initiative of Pancevo gathered around Mirko S. Mandrino (who evidently was part of the amateur radio group) the idea came out of changing the amateur radio group into a Society for Tolerance of Backa Palanka. However, The Society, active since 1993, had to wait several years so that it could be officially recognized and, as an organization, to benefit from a record deal that only came in 1997.<sup>26</sup>

In Ilok, on the other side of the Danube, which is now in Croat territory, Zdravko still has friends whom he can still visit regularly thanks to a permit which he seems to be proud of and that was granted to him because he lives in the border zone. However, even if the Danube is not an insurmountable border for him, his eyes look perturbed when he stops to contemplate, from the side of the bank where Serb artillery were stationed several years before, the nocturnal fireflies of the Croat

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<sup>25</sup> Recently past away.

<sup>26</sup> In several countries of ex-Yugoslavia, some organization couldn't obtain the registration of their status; which means that their date of creation is not necessarily the one that comes up. Thus, at Tuzla, in Bosnia-Herzegovina the organization " Pomoc Tuzlanskim Skolama " that organized stays with structures of Western Europe for the children victim of the war between 1994 and 1999 is still not registered as such.

City, those of the other side. Memories start welling up from his youth, where he discovered the joys of life for the first time at the bar on that other side. “ From the area where we are standing from, barges regularly brought inhabitants of the two cities from one riverbank to the other. Right now the river separates us although a bridge was recently built a bit farther away. But it’s not the same ! It will never be the same ! ”

Several minutes before he told us about his own attempt to rebuild, on a small human scale, another bridge torn down : the one that allowed some time ago, the Serb, Croat and Muslim population to live together in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He confided that “ My Serb grand parents lived in Bosnia, only my parents settled in Vojvodina”. “ My grand father’s best friend was his Muslim neighbor. When my father got baptized, my grand father asked him if he was willing to be the child’s godfather. This is how, through links of godfatherness, this Muslim family became part of ours. I know this story because it was told to me by my father, but I never had the opportunity to get to know the descendants of my grand father’s Muslim friend. After the Dayton Accords, at the time where my own son had to be baptized, I decided to find this Muslim family and when I found them, I asked my grandfather’s friend’s grandchild if he would accept, in his turn, to be the godfather of my own child. He accepted and a great friendship has grown since then. I know it’s not much, but for me it has all its importance. All the more since during the war I lost a brother that was in the Croat Army when my son recruited in the Federal Army he adds.

Today, he confides: “ It becomes very important that people be able to speak, say what they feel and express themselves. They should be able to exteriorize with words what they hold inside them, even if they have to express some hatred, prejudice and distrust buried inside. Silence is the most dangerous thing. ” Then, as if we had to conclude, he quotes Marko Miljanov, this Montenegrin Poet who said: “ *Junaštvo je kod braniš sebe od drugoga. Cojstvo je kada braniš drugoga od sebe.* ” (“ Heroism is when you defend yourself against the other, humanity is when you defend the other from yourself ”).

### **Testimonies from Milan, an Albanian of Voïvodine**

What to say of Milan which we got to border only a brief instant, certainly too ephemeral to grasp the wealth that emanated from this man ? All the more so, since this former was not the kind to yell out his story from the rooftop. He was sitting there, in a restaurant on the border of the Danube separating Backa Palanka in Vojvodina from Ilok, Croatia with his sad look turned inside, in which even the blindest of man could easily read some sadness, even some suffering – if not to say a definite suffering – that even himself could not name. We glanced for the first time on the occasion of the round table of the Society of Tolerance of Backa Palanka (of which he is a member), where, without participating to the discussions, he attentively captured the words of each speakers. Then, as Zdravko Marjanovic and Mirko Mandrino are vividly exchanging some, at times, impassioned words, we saw Milan leave towards what one could call ‘nowhere’, this painful interior area but oh so much richer than the agitation of a world without values nor values.

His story, that he confided to us in few words, as if a single succinct formula could recapitulate an entire life similar to others, others who have lost everything or rather who have nothing more to lose !

Milan, Catholic Albanian, settled as a baker in Vojvodina in 1975 where according to certain rumors, he bakes the best, the real *burek* of the region (that we didn’t get to taste unfortunately !). Then, with the years of Milosevic, his rights of citizenship and his working permit are revoked; the situation is such that his own employee working at the bakery is forced to stop working for a “ siptar ”<sup>27</sup>. The vicious circle of moral violence and the mechanisms of intimidation are setting up,

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<sup>27</sup> Not pejorative for an Albanian

with the objective of expulsing Milan from Backa Palanka, the city where he settled where, just like natal Kosovo, it was a part of Yugoslav territory of before 1991.

Even if, stigmatized as a Jew during the Nazi period, Milan never thought to leave his Bakery nor his city. Could he do otherwise, him whose children don't even speak Albanian, because they were raised in Vojvodine, the multi-ethnic, in the mind of a citizen? Could he do otherwise, he, whose children had to suffer the insane years during which only the nationalists of all horizons won over the country. Those nationalist, that at least benefited from a general impunity that allowed them to violate rights, exclude, even kill all those whose name was different? Could he do otherwise, he who ended up not being expelled because of his religion but who was refused the right to live from his work?

And its because neither the discourse of the political class today, neither of the representatives of the 'western' countries who, after having supporting the dissolution of Yugoslavia want to close their eyes not only on the claims of the sovereigntists (Those of Montenegro for example) but also on the violations of human rights in their process they are so eager to call democracy (the regime Vojislav Kostunica), that Milan keeps the sadness in his eyes of those who cannot count on anyone anymore. Its probably for this same reason that he keeps on working in his bakery where, to attract customers, he sales bread and this delicious *burek* underneath the cost of production.

Milan, this man who advocates tolerance, will he have on day the right to an answer? We owe them to him so that he can finally feel that we want to listen to him and want to speak again?

### **Testimony from Jusef, Bosniac of Zavidovici**

We met Jusef in the train that was taking us to from Zagreb to Sarajevo passing through Banja Luka and Doboij.

Jusef, a man in the sixties which appeared to us as an embodied Bosnia: a mosaic of contradictions, a good hearted look and willing to speak with this humor that makes you go from laughters to tears, from melancholy to derision; this humor that allows to dissimulate the sorrows because it is not decent to spread your interior suffering, this humor often qualified as Bosniac humor. Jusef, the "Sarajlija" (the Sarajevian) that was coming back from Zagreb where he went to undertake some research in the Archives in order to continue writing his book (his second one already) which will witness of the life of his commune, that of Zavidovici.

This is how Jusef told us about the story, the one that is ignored but also the one that has been perverted to turn into a weapon of exclusion and hate; what this same story can bring him and what it can bring to its country if only it turned into *magistra vitae* for all the communities and help them to live better together, to understand that this whole time, it was the people who were the victim of this war. Then his look is perturbed when he evokes, in the span of an instant, his painful memories of the Siege of Sarajevo, the insane almost fatal nature of this war; after which he goes on, with a magic trick to a jock to dissimulate his unease: "I leaved in the area that then became Serb of Sarajevo Sarajevo" – he confides. "When I was forced to go, leaving everything behind me, to the Bosniac part of Sarajevo, I started to look for some essential furniture (bed, wardrobe etc.). That's when I saw an a classified add in the local newspaper written by a Serb who was himself obliged to leave the Bosniac part and selling his furniture for a price out of range. When I introduced myself to him, I asked him if I had to call him comrade – as in the Tito period- or Mister, as the politically correct form of the crazy period we were living. That's when he answered: Do as you wish. Anyway, what will this change? When I received my pension fund of 1500 DM they called me 'comrade'. Right now I currently receive less than 200 DM, just like you I am condemned to misery and they call me Sir!"

Then, as the police of the Serb Republic irrputed in the train to control the passports at the border between Croatia and Bosnia (we entered the Serb Republic) he does a resigned gesture and says with an ironic smile: "Look at how proud they are, how they defend their country!". Jusef

confides that he has a hard time to accept that there are so many customs to and police control when he goes from Zagreb to Sarajevo. He then remembers, with a nostalgia that is not dissimulated, of the time when he could move from one area of Yugoslavia to another, that time when Yugoslavia was one same country. Then, he adds : “ We’ve only learned to criticize the Tito period, but it wasn’t all that bad then ! ” Can we at the same time, to feed our over-simplified classifications classify Jusef among the so-called “ yugo-sentimentals ” ? Our answer is: of course not ! Simply because we cannot accuse Jusef to be bothered when him, a Muslim from Bosnia proclaiming himself atheist, having actually done, like a good number of the members of his generation – some studies in Belgrade (that he says to enjoy because of the spirit of the inhabitants; is victim of discrimination in Zagreb because of his Belgrade accent; we cannot accuse him to regret that the comrades in arms of his son, who fought in the Bosniac army, look at him with distrust just because of his accent; we cannot accuse him either to miss the time when he could go to Belgrade without a Visa to go visit some old college friends. We cannot accuse him of regretting that, because of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the historical archives of his commune, Zavidovici – which he so needed for not only his research but also to access his memory, are now situated in another country where, because of his meager pension fund, he can go there only on rare occasions. Finally, we cannot accuse him – unless to consent to intellectual speculations with doubtful motives – to regret to be reduced to misery, to live in a destroy country for which he sees no future, to denounce that numerous manufactures that exported before in countries around the world are barely maintained and even abandoned for the most part as if it was all about devaluated them so that they could be sold to foreign investors pour a fist full of dollars.

And it is maybe for these reasons that he writes the memory of his natal commune. It is maybe again for these same reasons that he admits to be confronted to a terrible dilemma: should he publish the results of his meticulous research tracing the economic (wood industry), sociological, but also historical of the people of Zavidovici that suffered so many wars in the course of the 20 th century ? Since Jusef, he, recognizes the terrible weight of history and the danger of its manipulations. And when we ask him if it does not bother him (we were in the middle of Ramadan) to look at us eat our *burek* bought at the last minute at the train station Zagreb, he does a large gesture of the hand and says: “ I have enough suffered of hunger during the war to do Ramadan today ! ”. After which, we take out a tiny bottle of Brandy and pass it on to Jusef drinks one sip out of it and to give it back to us as if it was a peace pipe we were handling.

**Poetic mood*****Paris Balkans***

Zagreb, tournée vers l'Ouest, tourné vers son passé,  
A la recherche d'une vérité dialogale.  
Rijeka qui construit son ouverture vers la Méditerranée,  
Des humains qui refuse le repli national.

Sarajevo, ville aux plaies béantes se souvenant de ses peurs  
Comme les soirs où les gens déambulent d'un pas pressé  
Rappelant ainsi le souvenir où ils étaient la cible des snipers  
Mais communauté pleine de désirs, déjouant les fantômes du passé.

Son cœur bat et le nôtre aussi.  
Rencontrer cette ville n'est pas un hasard. A Cuj<sup>28</sup> !  
C'est construire le dictionnaire de la vie.  
C'est un regard droit dans les yeux. A Cuj ! A Cuj !

Encore des portraits infâmes, des rumeurs.  
Mladic et Karadzic affichés dans un café.  
Encore un besoin de vérité sur les disparus, sur les horreurs.  
De rendre justice face à ce douloureux passé.

Cetinje qui rêve d'un retour à la souveraineté.  
Quel qu'en soit le prix, avoir ce toit  
Avant de pouvoir meubler, de trouver sa citoyenneté.  
N'a-t-on pas assez joué avec l'effroi ?

Backa Palanka qui regarde avec tristesse Vukovar  
Sa ville voisine, là où se trouve une famille écartelée.  
Voïvodine qui recherche du regard  
Les autres, pour une parole encore brisée.

Blessures de femmes, violences d'hommes  
Encore et encore le besoin de se regarder en face,  
De se dire : on doit se respecter comme  
On ne peut détruire indéfiniment pour trouver sa place.

Cicatrices encore visibles,  
Se dire que demain est un autre jour.  
Pas encore de risibles  
Amours.

Balkans qui veulent s'oublier  
Et se redéfinir comme Europe du sud-est.  
Silences qu'il faudra briser  
Pour oser dire ce que l'on est.

Alors avec toi, Shura, Jadranka  
Vesna, Déa, Jelena,  
Joseph, Boban et Mirko,  
Brisons le statut quo  
Faisons ensemble le paris des Balkans  
Tant qu'il en est encore temps.

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<sup>28</sup> Une exclamation (à prononcer " a tchouille ") qu'il serait possible de traduire en français avec " Et bien ! ", ou " Que faire ! " et en anglais avec " Well ! ".

## **APPENDIX**

- Call from Skoplje of June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1999
- Letter of the Peace Movement from October 16<sup>th</sup> to NGOs of South East Europe

## **Appel d'Organisations Non Gouvernementales de l'Europe du Sud-Est et du reste de l'Europe - 20 juin 1999 -**

La guerre au Kosovo avec les horreurs de l'épuration ethnique et les bombardements de l'OTAN en République Fédérale Yougoslave ont causé un nouveau traumatisme en Europe du Sud-Est. Les populations de cette région étaient déjà durement éprouvées par une grave crise économique et sociale dans leur marche forcée vers une économie de marché. Une aide économique majeure doit être décidée par la communauté internationale pour permettre le retour des réfugiés et sécuriser les populations voisines qui ont le plus souffert du conflit et de ses dévastations dans le tissu économique.

Nous, Organisations Non Gouvernementales, considérons comme une priorité du moment la prise de mesures concrètes pour permettre à la société civile de la région de s'inscrire dans les processus de stabilisation et de reconstruction.

C'est en (re) dynamisant la vie démocratique de l'Europe du Sud-Est, sur des bases non-nationalistes et dans le respect des droits humains, des droits des femmes et des enfants, des droits des minorités, que seront jetées les bases d'une paix durable.

Pour cela nous demandons :

- Une conférence internationale sur la reconstruction et le développement de toute la région - sans oublier la RFY - avec la participation des représentants de la société civile. Il faut que les populations soient associées le plus rapidement possible et le plus près du terrain à la reconstruction et au développement sur la base de leurs besoins ;
- La création d'un fonds d'aide au fonctionnement et aux projets des Organisations Non Gouvernementales non nationalistes de l'Europe du Sud-Est pour dynamiser la vie démocratique et rendre aux populations la maîtrise de leur destin ;
- Des mesures de confiance pour permettre la détente, le retour à une vie publique normale, et à la sécurisation des minorités ethniques, au premier rang desquels figurent d'importantes mesures de désarmement généralisé, sous contrôle de l'ONU.

Nous nous proposons :

- De formaliser l'existence d'un " réseau de vigilance " entre Organisations Non Gouvernementales de l'Europe du Sud-Est et Organisations Non Gouvernementales de toute l'Europe pour permettre le dialogue, la diffusion d'informations et la solidarité sur des actions et des projets en direction des populations civiles ;
- De lancer l'idée d'une Conférence des Organisations Non Gouvernementales de l'Europe du Sud-Est et de toute l'Europe pour coopérer ensemble à la stabilisation de la région et à la prévention des conflits.

### **Premiers signataires :**

Savka Todorovska, (Organisation des Associations de Femmes de Macédoine),  
Bogdan Denitch, (Président de l'Institut pour la transition vers la démocratie), Croatia,  
Sonja Lokar (Slovénie, Forum des Femmes),  
Ivan Aleksic (Centre des études politiques de Belgrade, Yougoslavie)  
Irina Subotic -Belgrade, Yougoslavie)  
Jelena Santic -Groupe 484 (Belgrade, Yougoslavie)

Dr Vesna Nikolic-Ristanovic (President, Victimology Society of Serbia)  
Vesna Stanojevic, Counseling against family violence, Belgrade (Serbia)  
Michel Baumale, Maire de Stain (France)  
Arielle Denis, Mouvement de la Paix (France)  
Patrick Simon, Mouvement de la Paix (France)

**PEACE IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE**  
**Joint declaration of Balkan and European NGOs**  
**June 20th 1999**

The war in Kosovo and the Nato bombing of the FRY have caused a need deep trauma in the South-Eastern Europe region. The populations were already confronted to a very big economic crisis, due to the “ transition period ” A major economic support should be decided by the International community to allow the return of refugees, and to secure neighbouring countries which have mainly carried the weight of the war, which has worsened the economic devastation.

We, as NGOs, consider it a priority to create the conditions for the civil society , to participate in the process of stabilization and reconstruction. We believe that the bases of a lasting peace will be guaranteed if a new impetus is given to democracy in the South-Eastern Europe, on non-nationalist grounds and in the respect of human rights, of women’s and children’s rights, in the rights of minorities.

Therefore we demand:

- An International Conference on reconstruction and development of the area, including Yugoslavia (R.F.Y.), with the participation of representatives of the civil society (NGOs, Trade Unions, citizen groups,...) It will ensure the ability for populations to take part in this process on the basis of their needs.
- The creation of a financial fund to help NGOs in their work and projects, to implement a new dynamics of democracy and give back to populations a control over their destinies.
- Confidence-building measures to facilitate detente, the return to a normal public life and the security of ethnic minorities, at the forefront of which stand important comprehensive disarmament measures, under UN control.

We propose to :

- formalize the existence of a “ watch network ” between Balkan and European NGOs to help for dialogue, the circulation of information and solidarity on actions or projects.
- launch the idea of a Conference of Balkan and European NGOs in order to cooperate together for the region’s stability and for conflict prevention.

Skoplje June 20th. 1999

Savka Todorovska, (Union of the Women organization of Macedonia),  
Bogdan Denitch, (President Institute for Transitions to democracy), Croatia.  
Sonja Lokar (European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity, “ CEE Network for gender issues ”  
Ivan Aleksic (Centar za proucavanje alternativa/ Center for Policy Studies from Belgrade,yugoslavia)  
Irina Subotic -Belgrade, Yougoslavia)  
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### Le Mouvement de la Paix

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St. Ouen, le 16 octobre 2001

Le Mouvement de la Paix (France), né en 1949 sur l'initiative de scientifiques, de résistants et d'humanistes est une organisation non gouvernementale qui sensibilise l'opinion publique en menant des actions, souvent en partenariat avec d'autres ONG, qui visent l'abolition de l'arme nucléaire et des armes de destruction massive et qui militent contre toute forme de guerres, de violences et en faveur d'une culture de la paix.

Depuis 1991, le Mouvement de la paix s'est efforcé de nouer des liens avec les associations et groupes anti-guerres des républiques d'ex-Yougoslavie. Notre démarche a été de les inviter pour populariser leurs analyses et leurs objectifs en France, en Europe et dans toutes les tribunes internationales où cela a été possible (ONU, Parlement Européen, rencontres internationales d'ONG). Nous avons envoyé de nombreuses délégations de citoyens et de personnalités dans toutes ces républiques, pendant et après les conflits. Certains de nos comités ont monté des projets humanitaires d'urgence, mais ce qui nous a semblé important a été de fournir des tribunes aux forces de paix d'ex-Yougoslavie pour qu'elles puissent se faire entendre.

Comme ONG pacifiste, il nous semble important aujourd'hui de nouer de nouveaux contacts. Or en Europe occidentale tout comme en Europe centrale et orientale, nous sommes confrontés à des réalités, des enjeux et des situations différentes qui sont parfois très complexes, voire même difficiles. En Europe du Sud-Est, par exemple, la situation en Serbie est nouvelle depuis la mise en examen de Slobodan Milosovic par le Tribunal Pénal International ; en Bosnia-Herzegovina et en Macédoine les tensions entre communautés restent très vives. Plus largement, nous sommes confrontés à de nouveaux défis, ceux en particulier qui nous obligent à nous poser sérieusement la question suivante : comment concevoir la sécurité des personnes et comment envisager la résolution des conflits ? Toutes ces questions ne peuvent que souligner tout ce qui nous unit et rapprocher les préoccupations et les intérêts que nous avons en commun.

C'est pourquoi il nous est apparu nécessaire de **vous rencontrer afin d'échanger nos analyses respectives, mieux comprendre comment la société civile dans l'Europe du Sud-Est développe ses propres réflexions et actions, dégager éventuellement des axes de travail communs. Cette démarche s'inscrit dans nos initiatives actuelles pour contribuer à la construction d'un nouveau réseau européen pour la paix.** Nous aimerions particulièrement avoir un échange avec vous sur les questions suivantes :

- Quelle est la situation actuelle des populations dans l'Europe du Sud-Est : où en sont-elles ? A quoi ressemble leur vie quotidienne ? Comment y voit-on l'avenir ?
- Par rapport aux populations civiles comment se pose la question de la paix et de la sécurité ? Comment évalue-t-on leurs chances de réussite ?

- Comment peut-on favoriser à la fois **la co-sécurité et la co-développement dans la région et sur le continent européen ?**
- De quelle manière sont perçus les enjeux et les conséquences du Pacte de stabilité pour l'Europe du sud-est ?
- Quel rôle et quelle place doivent tenir des institutions comme l'O.N.U. et l'O.S.C.E. par rapport à ces enjeux de paix et de sécurité humaine ? Quel regard porte-t-on sur l'OTAN et l'Union Européenne ?
- De quelle politique de sécurité commune avons-nous besoin en Europe ?

Toutes ces raisons et bien d'autres nous incitent à prendre contact avec vous en vous faisant part de notre désir de vous rencontrer. Notre organisation propose qu'une délégation de deux à trois personnes se rende dans votre pays afin de vous rencontrer. Nous souhaiterions pouvoir le faire dans la deuxième quinzaine de novembre 2001 selon un calendrier que nous pourrions établir ensemble.

Dans l'attente de votre réponse, nous vous indiquons l'adresse de notre site Internet où se trouve l'essentiel de nos contributions concernant les Balkans : <http://www.paixbalkans.org> .

Veillez agréer nos plus chaleureuses salutations pacifistes.

Pour le Mouvement de la Paix, sa commission Balkans :

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WEB Balkans <http://www.paixbalkans.org>

WEB national : <http://www.mvtpaix.org>

St. Ouen, le 16 octobre 2001

The Peace Movement (France), born in 1949 on the initiative of scientists, resisters and humanists is a nongovernmental organization which works to raise the consciousness of the public opinion by taking action, often in partnership with other NGOs, that aims to abolish nuclear weapon and the weapons of mass destruction and which militates against any forms of war, violence in favour of a culture of peace.

Since 1991, the Movement of peace has worked to tie bonds with organizations and anti-war groups of the Republics of former-Yugoslavia. Our procedure was to invite them so they could make their analysis and objectives known in France, Europe and all international platforms where that was possible (UNO, the European Parliament, international meetings of NGO). We sent many delegations of citizens and figures in all these Republics, during and after the conflicts. Some of our committees put together humanitarian projects promptly, but what seemed important to us was to provide platforms so that the momentums for peace in former-Yugoslavia could be heard.

As a pacifist NGO, it seems important to us today to create new ties. However in Western Europe just like in central and Eastern Europe, we are confronted with realities, stakes and different situations which are sometimes very complex, and even difficult. In South-Eastern Europe, for example, the situation in Serbia is new since the examination of Slobodan Milosovic by the International Penal Court; in Bosnia-Herzégovine and Macedonia the tensions between communities remain very tense. More generally, we are confronted with new challenges, particularly those which oblige us to ask the following questions seriously: how is the safety of the people conceived; how is the resolution of the conflict considered? All these questions can only highlight all that unites us and brings together the concerns and the interests that we have in common.

This is why it appeared necessary to us to meet you in order to exchange our respective analyses, to better include/understand how the civil society in South-Eastern Europe develops its own reflections and actions, to possibly release from the common axes of work. This process falls under our current initiative to contribute to the construction of a new European network for peace. We would particularly like to have an exchange with you on the following questions:

- What is the current situation of the populations in South-Eastern Europe: How are they doing ? What does their everyday life look like? Which future to they face ?
- In regards to civil society, how is the question of peace and safety understood populations how put the question of peace and safety? How are their chances of success evaluated?

- How can we support the Co-safety and the Co-development at the same time in the area and in the European continent?
- How are the stakes and the consequences of the Pact of Stability perceived for South East Europe ?
- What role and which position should institutions like the U.N.O. and the O.S.C.E. hold in regards to these issues of peace and human safety? How are NATO and the European Union perceived ?
- Which common safety policy do we need in Europe?

All these reasons and many others encourage us to contact you to announce our desire to meet you. Our organization suggest that a delegation of two or three people comes to your country in order to meet with you. We hope to be able to do so during end of November 2001 according to a calendar which we could establish together.

Until we hear back from you, we indicate the address of our website where you can find the essence of our contributions concerning Balkans is: <http://www.paixbalkans.org>

Sincerely yours

For the Peace Movement , the Balkans commission