



VLADIMIR MILČIN

Executive Director of the Open Society Institute Macedonia, theater director and professor at Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Skopje. One of the founders of the Association of Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (UJDI) in 1987, and one of the founders of the Helsinki Citizen Assembly in Macedonia in 1992. Since 1991, he has participated as a speaker in a number of international conferences, seminars and workshops on political topics and cultural issues in the local region and around the world.

»On the one hand, I feel somewhat pleased because Macedonia is ahead of all the surrounding countries in a number of things when it comes to the non-majority communities. On the other hand, I am dissatisfied because I thought and hoped that Macedonia would advance faster in a number of things, including the minorities and the vulnerable groups. It becomes clear straight away that, just like in many other states, the Roma are the most marginalized non-majority community in every aspect. There are numerous reasons for this, which the state and the politicians may use as an explanation, but not as an excuse.« (Interview, National Roma Centrum, February 28, 2007)



MILKA TADIĆ MIJOVIĆ

Prominent Montenegrin political activist and independent journalist writing and reporting (also for numerous foreign media houses) on political and social themes. Long-standing director of the Monitor – first Montenegrin independent weekly magazine, which has been supported opposition to Serbia and urged for Montenegro independence for a long time. Lecturer at Faculty of Political Sciences in Podgorica and speaker on many domestic and international conferences and seminars.

»Because of Kosovo, the pro-Serbian opposition is calling for an uprising, organizing demonstrations and asking the authorities not to acknowledge the reality of the situation. As if Montenegro could influence the most powerful western countries to change their minds. After the recognition by Washington, Paris and London, an independent Kosovo is a fact they will have to accept. If they turned around and looked back on the difficult years behind them, the leaders of the pro-Serbian opposition would realize that it was not the US and the EU that created Kosovo. The independent Kosovo is, above all, the product of politics that was pursued by the very same opposition and that adopted the ideology of the nationalist Belgrade, the Serbian Academy, the misguided authors and their leader who at the monument of Gazimestan declared war on everyone who would not share his insanity. The youngest country in the world is the result of a political practice that strived to rule Kosovo through crime, ethnic cleansing and constant violations of human rights. Now they are reaping what they sowed.« (Pučisti na oblasti, Monitor 905)



VETON SURROI

A famous Kosovo Albanian publicist, a former politician, founder and until recently leader of the ORA reformist political party, and a member of the Kosovo Assembly since 2004. In 1997, he established one of the biggest Kosovo Albanian daily newspapers Koha Ditore and remained its editor-in-chief for a number of years. He also founded the local chapter of the Association of Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (UJDI) and the first Independent Trade Unions of Kosovo in 1989. He is a member of the Committee for International Cooperation and European Integration.

»The independence of Kosova is not a matter of flag, anthem or emblem. It is not a matter of Battle of Kosovo or Illyrian-Dardanian continuity, either. Neither is it a matter of isolation from others. In the 21st century, the independence of Kosova is a matter of management, security and of prospect.« (Why Kosova needs independence?, KosovaReport - Countdown to Independence, October 17, 2005)



SRĐAN DIZDAREVIĆ

Founder and president of the Bosnian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. In 1996 he became a member of the Executive Committee of the International Helsinki Federation. He has extended experience in diplomacy; he worked at the embassy of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Paris and as Minister of Foreign Affairs in shadow government of Bosnia

and Herzegovina. He is a member of the Association of Independent Intellectuals Krug 99 and, since 1998, a member of the Independent Media Commission.

»Since until recently the most important issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been peace-keeping, it is no wonder that in the area of respect for human rights we are trailing behind most of the countries of the old continent. The number of various complaints received in the last twelve or thirteen years is approaching 50,000. During the first years they were mostly related to property and returning to homes – 85 percent of grievances concerned these issues. Today, however, we are facing an increasing number of questions about economic and social rights, workplace relations, discrimination, minority groups, ethnic minorities, rights of the handicapped and women, family violence, etc. The authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not accepted the culture of human rights and still do not understand their significance.« (Vlasti ne razumiju značaj ljudskih prava, Nezavisne novine, December 10, 2007)

JOVO BAKIĆ



Teaching Assistant in Political Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. For the last ten years he has been dealing with national conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia. He has especially focused on Serbian and Croatian nationalisms and the idea and ideologies of Yugoslavism before the WWI, during the War, and between the two World Wars. The foreign press writing on the dissolution of the Socialist Yugoslavia and its Wars of Succession have also been in the focus of his attention. He is a prominent political analyst and a well known speaker at conferences around

the world.

»Today, Kosovo acts as an ideological smoke screen for Serbia. It is an excellent excuse for Serbia not to do its job and to continue fishing in troubled waters. After all, 'you're not supposed to have fun during war-time'. That is why we have no elections, no Constitutional Court judges and an incomplete ambassadorial core. We know nothing, but that is not a problem since we can always talk about Kosovo, a topic we know everything about, a topic we can feel. The issue of Kosovo has enslaved the minds of many. We are dealing with something that we have no influence on, or almost no influence on, when we could be dealing with things we could actually have an influence on.« (Kosovo kao dimna zavesa, Blic, September 23, 2007)



IVO BANAC

Bradford Durfee Professor of History at Yale University. From 1995 to 1999 he was the University Professor of History at the Central European University Budapest, where he also directed the OSI/CEU Institute on Southeastern Europe. Author and editor of numerous books, reviews, articles, and collections. He served as the co-chair of the Open Society Institute Croatia and as the Director General of the Inter-University Centre, Dubrovnik. He was also the minister of environmental protection and urban planning in the government of Croatia (2003) and a member

of the Croatian parliament (2003-2007). He is a corresponding member of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (HAZU), the president of the advisory council of the "Vlado Gotovac" Institute in Zagreb and the president of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights.

»[The Glavaš case] opens the door to possible manipulations of the executive power ... in judicial and legislative branches... Due to that and because of the weak position of Croatia in international institutions, (...) the Croatian Helsinki Committee must caution the public that all political instances in Croatia ought to conduct only those policies that display the spirit of liberal democracy and the rule of law. Anything else places us in a political culture that not only closes the doors of Euro-Atlantic integrations to Croatia, but also threatens the constitutionally guaranteed division of power.« (Croatian Helsinki Committee Statement no. 2/2008, January 14, 2008)