
Promoting Tolerance at the Local Level
The Role of Civic Organizations, Local Government and the Media

April 23-25, 1993
Sofia, Bulgaria

**NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

National Democratic Institute For International Affairs

conducting nonpartisan international programs to help promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions



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NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is based on a seminar organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs in Sofia, Bulgaria from April 23 to 25, 1993. Entitled "Promoting Tolerance at the Local Level: The Role of Civic Organizations, Local Government and the Media," the seminar brought together 55 participants from communities in Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Romania and six international civic organizers from Belgium, Germany, Northern Ireland and the United States. The report was written by the project manager, NDI Program Officer Lisa C. McLean. It was edited by NDI Senior Program Officer Susan J. Atwood and NDI Editor Doug Stevenson. NDI Program Assistant Jason A. Keiles, with assistance from NDI Field Representative Robin Freedman and NDI Program Assistant Kathy Toomey, served as the rapporteur.

NDI owes special thanks to the National Endowment for Democracy for providing funding for the seminar and this publication, to the staff of the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR) for their assistance in organizing the seminar and to BAFECR and the Pro Democracy Association in Romania for their superb efforts to identify the appropriate participants.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) sponsored a pilot project designed to foster creative methods of promoting healthy community relations by involving citizens in the democratic process, demanding accountability and influencing opinion-makers. The seminar, entitled "Promoting Tolerance at the Local Level: The Role of Civic Organizations, Local Government and the Media," was held in Sofia, Bulgaria from April 23-25, 1993.

The seminar brought together 55 participants from 10 multi-ethnic communities in Bulgaria and Romania and one community in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. (See Appendix A for a list of regional participants.) Participants included civic organizers, local journalists and elected local officials from Blagoevgrad, Kurdjali, Razgrad, Shumen and Sofia in Bulgaria; Skopje in Macedonia; and Bucharest, Constanta, Sfintu Gheorghe, Sibiu and Timisoara in Romania. Ethnic groups represented included Albanians, Bulgarians, Germans, Gypsies, Hungarians, Macedonians, Romanians and Turks.

The seminar was co-sponsored by the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR), with assistance in identification of Romanian participants from the Pro Democracy Association (PDA) in Bucharest. The two organizations were formed in 1990 to train domestic election monitors. In non-electoral periods they develop and organize civic education and citizen participation programs that promote democratic values among citizens and elected leaders.

The April 1993 seminar evolved as a follow-up to a December 1991 NDI-sponsored regional seminar, "Is Europe Big Enough for All Europeans?" In planning the April 1993 seminar, NDI staff addressed the desire of civic organizations, local government and media to gain skills in developing programs to prevent an escalation of tensions based on traditional stereotypes and to promote understanding of the roots of ethnic tension and tolerance of cultural diversity. Rather than emphasizing the specific rights guaranteed to minorities or the historical roots of tensions, NDI designed a seminar that focused on the responsibilities of civic

organizations, local governments and the media to work together in order to engage citizens and local leaders in a positive community dialogue. In addition, the seminar addressed specific techniques available to fulfill these responsibilities. International participants from Belgium, Germany, Northern Ireland and the United States were invited to share methods that had worked in their communities and to discuss how these methods or others could be used successfully in the region. These experts were chosen for their experience in and understanding of civic organizing, media advocacy and/or local government and included: Gil Bachrach from Munich; Anthony Gallagher from Belfast; Richard Lobenthal from Detroit; Patrick Merloe from San Francisco; Josephine Moerman from Ghent; and Marie Nahikian from New York City.

The seminar was not intended to prescribe solutions but, rather, to develop constructive strategies for addressing ethnic tensions. (See Appendix B for seminar agenda.) Regional participants listened to plenary presentations about the roles of local government, media and civic organizations in resolving ethnic tensions in Belgium, Germany, Northern Ireland and the United States. Hypothetical case studies conducted in workshop groups enabled participants to combine these examples with their own skills to resolve ethnic problems in situations akin to their own environments.

The positive atmosphere created during the three-day seminar demonstrated to participants that it is possible for people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds to meet without discord to discuss practical methods of ensuring the development of peace and democracy in the region. The discussions emphasized that democracy requires the participation of the citizenry.

Participants committed themselves to organizing roundtable discussions and conferences to popularize the concept of tolerance in their own communities. In addition, they expected to use problem-solving techniques highlighted at the seminar to address ethnic tensions in their communities. In particular, participants said they had learned: methods of identifying problems and their causes; strategies to combat resultant conflicts; and the importance of factual accuracy, personal responsibility and flexibility when confronting ethnic tensions. By the end of the seminar, elected local officials, civic organizers and journalists demonstrated a clearer

understanding of how they could utilize each other's expertise and contacts to realize common objectives.

I. BACKGROUND

NDI has conducted democratic development programs in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989. These programs have involved international election monitoring, technical and material support for civic organizations, and training to strengthen the role of political parties, civic organizations, parliaments and local governments in new democracies. In addition, NDI has sponsored several regional conferences to promote the development of regional political and civic networks and to encourage the sharing of experiences.

A. NDI Conference on Ethnic and National Minorities, December 1991

In December 1991, the Hungarian-based Democracy After Communism (DAC) Foundation and NDI co-sponsored a seminar to address concerns raised about increasing ethnic tensions in the newly democratizing states of Eastern and Central Europe. The seminar, entitled "Is Europe Big Enough for All Europeans?", brought to Budapest nearly 70 political party activists, members of parliament, government experts on minority issues, journalists and academics from Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the then-Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia and Ukraine. International experts from Belgium, Nigeria and the United States gave plenary presentations and led workshop sessions.

The seminar initiated a dialogue about the definition and protection of ethnic and national minorities and promoted cooperation and understanding among young, politically active leaders throughout the region. It also demonstrated that growing ethnic tensions in Eastern and Central Europe derive from a lack of knowledge and understanding about the social conditions of minority communities, the rights of ethnic and national minorities and the aspirations of those minorities.

Seminar discussions revealed that, since the advent of democracy in Eastern and Central Europe, the economic reforms underway in these countries often affected most adversely the ethnic and national minorities. These same minorities under communism frequently: 1) were used by the communist regimes to create the illusion of broad support for illegitimate governments; 2) were subject to violent assimilation campaigns that forced many to flee their countries; or 3) remained in their country of residence and lost many of their economic, cultural and political rights. Minorities often viewed the lack of post-communist government efforts and resources directed to address these inequities as evidence of continued discrimination. Similarly, majority communities interpreted government efforts to counteract years of minority economic, political and cultural discrimination with suspicion. In addition, reactionary forces sought to blame minority groups for the economic, social and political problems in their respective countries.

At the same time, seminar proceedings underscored that there was a dearth of information throughout post-communist Europe about international standards for protecting the rights of ethnic minorities, about model laws in established democratic societies to guarantee minority rights, about social conditions of minorities and about violations of minority rights within individual countries and in neighboring countries. This lack of information contributed to suspicion and misunderstanding that could fuel ethnic tensions and lead to civil strife. Given these realities, NDI organized a seminar in April 1993 to promote private and public cooperation in the battle against intolerance in local communities.

B: Evolution of April 1993 Seminar

Seminar discussions in December 1991 laid the foundation for the development of the April 1993 seminar agenda. The experiences of the Eastern and Central European participants and of the experts from Belgium, Nigeria and the United States that were shared at the December 1991 seminar established that ethnic minority tensions in the region often have their roots at the local level. Local populist leaders and/or demagogues throughout the world use historical ethnic stereotypes to interpret and manipulate local events and circumstances in the absence of reliable information sources. However, in post-war Europe, ethnic minorities were

assimilated, majority and minority cultures were mixed, or minority communities were dominated in tiny, scattered pockets of land.

In post-communist European countries with large ethnic minority populations, demands for independent self-governance become more urgent because existing governments have not guaranteed the basic rights of minorities -- or there is a perception of a lack of guarantees. A public opinion poll conducted by the U.S. Information Agency suggested that nationalist sentiment in Central and Eastern Europe increases in direct relation to respondents' sense that their economic, cultural or political rights are threatened in a given situation.

Local tensions arise therefore when stereotypes are used to argue variously that: 1) minority rights will be trampled; or 2) the strength of the minority will prove to be a long-term threat to majority rights. Local leaders can ease ethnic pressures by engaging citizens to question leaders, to demand information about rights, to challenge the demagogues and to promote understanding within and between ethnic populations about the economic, social and cultural issues at the root of ethnic tensions and about common goals and needs that transcend ethnicity. As a first step to combatting ethnic and national tensions, stereotypes need to be discarded. In this context, community leaders can work together more effectively to promote among cultures tolerance, acceptance and appreciation of diversity.

NDI determined that based on this analysis community leaders (*i.e.*, civic organizers, local governments and the media) could benefit from the opportunity to develop organizational skills necessary to achieve the following objectives:

- To help civic organizations learn to identify minority/majority interests and to promote methods of reconciling divergent interests in a small community.
- To introduce local elected officials to responsible leadership techniques, including heightening their awareness of the need for, as well as particular approaches to, promoting tolerance and warning them of common errors of leadership that often fuel ethnic tension.
- To apprise local print and radio journalists of ways in which their respective media could combat stereotyping, promote harmony and educate the citizenry.

II. PROGRAM DESIGN

NDI developed a program agenda addressing ethnic and national minority tensions that, if successful, could be duplicated or adapted for other regional programs or for programs in a particular country.

A. Participants

When inviting participants, NDI targeted communities rather than countries in order to emphasize the importance of community leaders working together at the local level. After sharing with them the program's agenda and assumptions, NDI asked the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR) and the Pro Democracy Association (PDA) in Romania to help target communities and select participants from within each town. Both BAFECR and PDA enjoy extensive national networks and were able to provide valuable advice about the appropriate communities to invite. From five communities in Bulgaria, one in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and five in Romania, NDI invited an elected official, two or three civic organizers and a journalist.

Based on the BAFECR and PDA recommendations, the communities chosen included Constanta, Sfintu Gheorghe, Bucharest, Sibiu and Timisoara in Romania; Sofia, Blagoevgrad, Shumen, Razgrad and Kurdjali in Bulgaria; and Skopje in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.¹ In some of the communities, there were no apparent ethnic tensions at the time of the conference, but the areas were chosen because of their multi-ethnic composition. Other communities had already encountered tensions.

NDI secured the participation of six international experts from multi-ethnic communities. Each was experienced in or with local government, civic organizing and the media. The experts included:

¹ NDI included the Skopje community as an initial step in developing a wider democratic development program in the newly independent republic.

than 3 million people to participate in a candlelight vigil against neo-nazism and anti-foreigner violence in Germany in 1992.

Anthony Gallagher, a social scientist at Queen's University in Belfast, Northern Ireland, who was working on an ethnic minorities database to be used for conflict resolution and on efforts to promote reconciliation between the Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland.

Richard Lobenthal, a sociologist and the Michigan director of the Anti-Defamation League, an organization dedicated to social change that uses public opinion to influence the political process.

Patrick Merloe, a lawyer and adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco School of Law. Merloe, has also served as counsel to the International Human Rights Law Group and Article 19, the International Center Against Censorship (London). He was a participant in a number of NDI programs in Eastern and Central Europe, and has since joined NDI as its Senior Associate for Election Processes.

Josephine Moerman, an elected Flemish Liberal Party member of the local council in Ghent, Belgium -- a community with a large minority population -- where she serves on the council's police academy board; the committees of finance, industry and harbor, traffic and police, and community relations; and on a special council committee on relations between Belgians and migrants.

Marie Nahikian, director of Habitat for Humanity's New York City office and an advocate for minority community issues, such as housing for low-income families, has extensive experience leading community development projects in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York.

B. Program Agenda

The program comprised plenary sessions and workshops. At plenary sessions, international experts used examples from their native countries to address the roles of elected local government, civic organizations and local media in mitigating ethnic tensions.

Later, the large group divided into small groups to work on three hypothetical case studies. Each case study presented an ethnic community problem in an imaginary country, drawing upon a combination of real-life situations in participants' countries. The individual case studies each treated a separate issue: 1) cultural rights discrimination; 2) economic rights discrimination; or, 3) political rights discrimination. For a detailed account of workshop discussions, see pages 21-32.

Each workshop included participants representing diverse expertise and a range of communities. Two international experts served as facilitators in each workshop. In the workshops, participants imagined themselves as the professional group (local government, media or civic organization) and addressed issues raised during the previous plenary in order to develop a response to the case study presented.

At plenary sessions following the workshops, participants discussed solutions to the case studies. Organizing and advocacy materials were translated into the seminar languages and distributed to the participants to reinforce the techniques discussed.

III. PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Plenary Sessions

1. Addressing Ethnic Tensions at the National and Community Levels: Strategies Used in Belgium, the United States and Northern Ireland

a. The Case of Belgium: Appeasement at the National Level

Josephine Moerman explained that Belgium is a country of 10 million people speaking three different languages. In the north, six million Belgians speak Flemish, while the 4 million southern residents speak French. On the country's eastern border, approximately 60,000 Belgians speak German.

The area that is now Belgium was at times part of France, Austria and Spain before attaining independence in 1830. Moerman said that presently Belgians have no strong sense of national identity in part because of this history of occupation. She said Belgians live under one flag as, essentially, three distinct nations separated by language, and many Belgians live in communities where a minority within the community uses only the minority tongue.

Brussels is typical of the splintered ethnicity in Belgium. The capital city is ostensibly bilingual and bicultural; yet, despite its location in the Flemish north, 85 percent of the residents speak French. Moerman explained that Flemish speakers resent the use of French in part because the language, traditionally the tongue of the ruling class and the government, symbolizes French domination of the Flemish. To counteract such disaffection and historical tension, local governments were recently permitted to choose the language that would be used to conduct local government business.

Changes to the constitution in 1988 divided the country into three territorial regions: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. Because of the creation of these regions, three additional reforms were introduced, Moerman said. The first of these reforms ceded more power to the individual regions to control education, public works and transportation. In addition, national laws were subordinated to regional laws, and the reform accorded each region the authority to define its own institutions that would interact with the central government. Moerman explained that with increased responsibility came increased resources and that the regions currently handle 40 percent of the financial resources collected by the central government.

The second reform restructured Belgium as a federal-state composed of regions and communities and provided for a system of direct elections to parliament. The third reform decreased the number of members in the lower house of national parliament from 212 to 150. It also decreased the number of representatives in the upper house from 184 to 71, of which 40 senators were to be directly elected (25 from Flanders, 15 from Wallonia). The reform also granted the upper house exclusive competence to vote "no confidence" and the power to vote on legislation. The Senate also assumed responsibility for mediating problems related to ethnic and national communities in Belgium.

As the powers of the federal and local governments became more interlinked, tensions in Belgium were more commonplace, Moerman said. To address these jurisdictional pressures, the federal government created a "constitutional court." This new forum comprised judges and retired politicians and, together with the Senate, was charged with promoting tolerance and

resolving disputes among the ethnic communities in Belgium. However, the "court" had limited powers of arbitration.

Moerman hypothesized that the decentralization of power could eventually cause the dissolution of the Belgian state. The country has stayed together so far, she said, because funds have been available to appease the interests of the disparate communities. The existence of state-funded schools for each linguistic group and of a state-subsidized health care system contributes to the maintenance of ethnic tolerance. However, speaking as a local legislator, Moerman said that Belgium's current economic situation would not permit continuation of such extensive government programs. With a national debt of 130 percent of GNP and an annual budget deficit of 6 percent of GNP, Belgium had the highest debt as a percentage of GNP of any industrialized state.

Flanders, once the poorest region in Belgium, has become the most affluent; while Wallonia's development has fallen behind. As a result, Moerman said, the Flemish do not feel responsible for the country's tremendous debt and have refused to accept large cuts in their budgets. The political fight for resources in Belgium thus reflects inherent cultural and linguistic tensions, according to Moerman.

However, three fundamental characteristics of the Belgian state would likely prevent its dissolution, Moerman said. The first was the monarchy that represented an important symbol of national identity for all ethnic communities; the second was precisely Belgium's enormous debt, which would be hard to divide among the regions; and the third was the capital of Brussels, situated in Flemish Belgium with a Francophone majority.

b. *The Case of Washington D.C.: Empowerment at the Community Level*

Marie Nahikian said that, for many years, Washington, D.C., the capital city of the United States, had no voting representation in Congress and did not elect its own local government authorities. Washington's hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, many of whom were minorities, paid federal taxes, but the federal government appointed local officials and

controlled the city's budget. In the Washington neighborhood of Adams Morgan, the lack of an effective garbage collection system was an important problem for residents in this community who related the government's failure to pick up garbage to minority issues.

Nahikian and other neighborhood residents, who believed the purpose of government was to protect citizen rights, created a neighborhood association, called the Adams Morgan Organization (AMO). Leaders convened weekly neighborhood meetings for residents of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds to discuss concerns of the neighborhood. Among a large number of other issues of interest to the neighborhood, AMO organized a campaign on the premise that garbage was everybody's concern regardless of ethnicity or race.

After successfully calling the government's attention to the garbage collection problem, AMO began to mobilize residents on other community issues. For instance, community members pushed the government to establish a community park for their children. It also lobbied the U.S. Congress for legislation to protect low-income renters from displacement by higher income families.

AMO served as a powerful forum for community members to demand more resources for their identified needs, Nahikian said. As the association's actions grew more public, it gained strength from more community members, and politicians became more interested in the Adams Morgan community. The U.S. Congress eventually created a charter for Washington, D.C. that allowed it to elect its own local government authorities and to send a non-voting member to the U.S. House of Representatives. In this charter, the city government was given limited budgetary and revenue-raising authority that enabled it to make decisions about the distribution of public services throughout the city. The elected city council eventually passed legislation creating Advisory Neighborhood Councils (ANCs), elected by residents to provide advice to the city government on a wide range of citizens' concerns. The ANCs were largely based on a model proposed by AMO.

Nahikian said that the Adams Morgan experiment demonstrated that ethnic and racial groups share similar basic concerns; people like to feel that they have a degree of control over

their community. However, in order to exercise that control, Nahikian said that individuals needed the strength of numbers to bring issues to the attention of government officials, be they on the national or local level. She urged participants to recognize that common, cooperative action could force politicians to act.

c. *The Case of Northern Ireland: Community Relations*

The violent conflict between Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland spanned 800 years, Tony Gallagher said. Of the 1.5 million residents of Northern Ireland, 60 percent were Protestant and considered themselves British, and 40 percent were Catholic and considered themselves Irish. Between 1961 and 1991, about 3,000 people were killed and 34,000 people were injured because of the conflict. One in four persons in Northern Ireland knew a friend who had been killed or injured; and one in 10 had a relative who had been killed or injured.

Gallagher said there had been little integration in Northern Ireland over the years. Protestants and Catholics attended different schools. Neighborhoods and jobs segregated the population. Political parties and economic inequalities reinforced religious divisions. To diffuse the strained relations in Northern Ireland, nongovernmental organizations and government placed a high priority on the need to increase opportunities for contact between Catholics and Protestants and to promote equal opportunity. In addition, civic groups attempted to encourage tolerance of cultural pluralism.

Gallagher's research showed that participants involved in social conflict in Northern Ireland tended to engage in two types of behavior. First, they over-emphasized the common identity of their own group. Second, they tended to exaggerate the differences between their own group and the other group. In effect, these two tendencies: 1) resulted in increased intolerance toward dissident voices within one's own group; 2) strengthened theories of ethnic or racial purity; 3) elevated the significance of symbols; and 4) created the impression that the "other" group was following an extreme agenda. Instead, Gallagher said, individuals should be

encouraged to recognize the plurality of opinion within their own group and in the "other" group in order to exercise their ability to acknowledge and tolerate differences.

Gallagher's research identified five possible approaches to establishing community contact between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland:

- The first approach was natural contact. It was inevitable that Catholics and Protestants would meet each other in their daily life. When two strangers met in Northern Ireland, the first thing that each did was to determine the religion of the other. If the strangers discerned that they were from different communities, they would refrain from certain discussions.
- The second approach achieved contact through *ad hoc* initiatives that brought the two communities together.
- The third approach was contact accomplished with community development techniques in which Catholics and Protestants were encouraged to develop and interact with one another.
- The fourth approach involved institutional contact between the Catholics and Protestants that resulted because the two communities were often represented within the same established organizations.
- The fifth approach was through the establishment of model communities in which Catholics and Protestants worked together to create and to live in a harmonious environment.

Gallagher said his experience has shown that, for the most part, one-time events had little effect on the conflict in Northern Ireland. Instead, a full program of activity was usually more effective. To promote tolerance, he said, it was necessary for government and civic organizations to define short- and long-term goals. Institutional support from community leaders such as school headmasters and from objective outsiders was also very helpful. In organizing activities, it was wise to avoid assimilationist approaches to tolerance (*e.g.*, the compulsory use of a common language.) Finally, every organization needed to plan for crisis events.

Gallagher's research revealed several lessons that had been especially useful in establishing successful community contact between Catholics and Protestants. These included:

- the use of neutral venues for the conduct of activities to combat stereotypes;
- the choice of activities that highlighted what the two groups had in common; and,
- the choice of activities that promoted tolerance for different identities.

A fundamental principle of democratic society is the notion of equality, Gallagher said. The conflict in Northern Ireland demonstrated the problems associated with ethnic divisions that had produced ethnic inequalities. However, he reminded participants that no-one need be trapped inextricably in history. Governments need to accept the desire for equality, especially when considering minority issues. Similarly, citizen's organizations could promote concepts of equal opportunity at the local level.

2. Local Government Institutions Working to Promote Ethnic Tolerance

a. All Politics is Local

Patrick Merloe said that true democracy often takes place at the local level in the United States. The concerns of local government are the health and welfare of the population within the community. Local governments must ensure that public services are available equally to community residents.

As the public service provider, the local government affects more than just those who use the city or county services, Merloe said. First, the local government hires people to fill government positions. Second, the local government contracts with local businesses for public works projects (*e.g.*, building airports, roads, canals) and the provision of services (*e.g.*, garbage collection, tree removal, street paving). Third, the local government purchases supplies and leases office space from the local business community.

In San Francisco, only 46 percent of the population is of European descent, Merloe said. The city's population comprises 30 percent Asian and/or Pacific origin, 11 percent African-American, 7 percent Latin American and 1 percent Native American; the remaining 5 percent are of other backgrounds. Because of this diverse population, the city government has stringent

laws that make it illegal to discriminate against people because of gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, race or disability. In addition, the San Francisco government requires government contracts with local businesses to stipulate that employers do not knowingly discriminate against a prospective employee. Private companies and businesses working on local government contracts also are required to provide the government with a written plan that details the company's efforts to recruit a multi-racial, gender-balanced workforce.

The city government sponsors initiatives to mediate conflicts and promote tolerance in order to address the inherent tensions among the ethnic communities, Merloe said. Merloe considered the most significant of these initiatives to be the establishment of a Human Rights Commission. Comprising 21 appointed members, the commission reviews employment contracts and legislation, designs tolerance education programs for integrated inner-city schools and public works projects and organizes training programs intended to reduce tensions within low-income housing projects.

The Human Rights Commission is a model of what government can do at the local level to ameliorate community relations and prevent violence, Merloe said. For example, the commission examined cases of violence against Asians in San Francisco and worked with the city police to identify situations of potential conflict and mediate solutions. The commission also worked with the prosecutor's office to sensitize judges to ethnic concerns.

Merloe said that civic organizations had played an instrumental role in pushing city government to create the services described above. These organizations work together to coordinate discussions and seminars that bring together ethnic groups. Recognizing the value of such civic initiatives, city government created a clearinghouse to ensure access for interested citizens to information and services available from civic organizations.

b. Local Structures Created to Serve Community Needs

To discuss the role of local law enforcement forces in ethnic minority tensions, Josephine Moerman described the situation in Ghent, a Flemish provincial city with a population of about

340,000. Moerman said that the city had a homogeneous community until 1973. Then, large numbers of immigrants from Turkey and northern Africa began to settle in Ghent and because of language barriers and religious differences, community relations became strained. Not only did immigrants speak Turkish or Arabic, most were Muslim; ethnic Flemish in the area were predominantly Christian. The different religious traditions created discord between native Belgians and the immigrants, and prevented immigrants from easily assimilating into the native population, Moerman said.

Native Belgians increasingly enrolled their children in private schools as more immigrants sent their children to the Belgian schools. Belgians in less affluent communities who could not afford private schools were developing resentment toward the rising tide of immigrants in the public schools. The belief by many Belgians that Turkish and North African immigrants were to blame for the average unemployment rate of approximately 10 percent, even though they often performed jobs Belgians were unwilling to take, further kindled disaffection. Resentment led to subtle forms of discrimination. For example, Moerman said members of the police force were more likely to stop immigrants than native Belgians to ask for their papers because the police believed that there were more criminals among the immigrant population.

In response to these problems, the local government in Ghent took measures to provide education with bi-lingual teachers and special remedial courses for immigrant students. A special police force was established to detect and intervene in potential ethnic problems, Moerman said. Unfortunately, more minorities were not represented on the force because only Belgian citizens could serve on the police forces. This special unit was tasked to act as a liaison between the immigrant communities and the town's mayor and legal system. In addition, neighborhoods established special committees to confront potential ethnic community relation problems. Moerman said that the Ghent city council continued to monitor the special police force and the ethnic situation in the city to find additional methods of enhancing inter-ethnic relations.

Resentment provided fertile ground for fascist political groups in Belgium that were emerging and gaining popularity as the immigrant population grew, Moerman said. She said

that these groups fueled already established prejudices. In Ghent, fascists criticized the government for discriminating in favor of the immigrants and for too easily dismissing the problems of ethnic Belgians. Fascists considered the establishment of a police force for the protection of immigrants as discriminatory toward native Belgians.

3. Using the Media to Raise Public Awareness

a. *Creating News*

Marie Nahikian described the garbage collection problem in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington to illustrate a method of using the media. Garbage collection in this community was less efficient than in the more affluent, less ethnically diverse communities of the city, and residents' complaints received little attention from either municipal government or the media.

As a result, frustrated residents organized to clean up the neighborhood themselves, Nahikian said. One morning, the residents of Adams Morgan piled all of their uncollected garbage on a neighborhood street. The fact that the street became blocked by the action drew media coverage of the community's plight. The city government then moved quickly to resolve the problem. In this instance, the neighborhood organization made appropriate decisions about the type and timing of neighborhood action in order to attract media, Nahikian said.

b. *Seven Basic Rules for Media Effectiveness*

Drawing on Nahikian's example, Richard Lobenthal said that an organization must know how to use the media to be effective. If it understood how newspapers and television/radio stations functioned, a civic group could use the media for its own benefit and could influence the editing process. Lobenthal told the audience to remember a few important points when trying to attract media attention:

First, journalism is a competitive business. As with other businesses, participants needed to learn how to use that competition to their advantage.

Second, not every activity of a civic organization is suitable for news.

Third, the media are only interested in timely events that are easily explained. Civic groups should bear in mind that:

- complicated issues often are distorted so main points should be clear and precise;
- an audience loses interest if a subject is described in too great detail; and,
- care should be taken to correct factual errors in the media -- correcting misinformation may reinforce the mistake because, to correct it, the error may be reprinted or announced on the air again.

Fourth, journalists often know little about the matter on which they are reporting.

Therefore, the individuals being interviewed should be specific and precise and should educate the reporter about the larger issue. Examples often prove useful.

Fifth, moderate and reasonable statements compete with radical and extremist positions for attention in the media. The media are often attracted to the sensational.

Sixth, the press can be held accountable for being unfair and can be forced to be more reasonable.

- Although most reporters and editors in the United States want to be fair and professional, publishers and broadcasters need to make money. Therefore, civic groups needed to be ready to help journalists convince their employers to print or broadcast the story as is.
- Background discussions can educate producers, managers and sponsors about the subject being covered and its importance.
- In the United States, people stage protests against television or newspapers that have been unfair so that other newspapers and television stations cover the protest to make the competition look bad. However, journalists possess a more dedicated

audience than an unknown individual or group so participants must be organized when staging protests.

Finally, copies of all news stories on the organization or local government should be kept for future reference. The most effective use of a news story often comes about well after it appears when it is quoted in advertisements, speeches and posters.

In conclusion, Lobenthal said that the media had a responsibility to report things objectively. For example, if local journalists recognized there was unfair hostility toward a certain minority group, they could write stories about positive minority role models. In San Francisco, there was a community initiative to get the news media to report on the reduction of ethnic discord rather than its promotion. A community-instigated discussion on promoting inter-ethnic tolerance in the media succeeded in raising sensitivity among producers and directors.

4. Developing Grassroots Efforts To Promote Tolerance

Patrick Merloe said that change in the United States often required citizens to organize mass events that drew the attention of government to a problem. To combat discrimination, minorities often used mass information campaigns and economic boycotts against people and organizations alleged to have discriminated. Citizen organizations also used education campaigns to publicize their positions on local issues. Merloe said citizen initiative campaigns were instrumental in convincing the San Francisco government to create a human rights commission.

Similarly in Philadelphia, 55 percent of the population was African-American, and there was a large population from Puerto Rico, Merloe said. At one time, in this fifth largest city in the United States, police were allegedly exacerbating community tensions between the African-American community and other ethnic communities. Residents formed a civic organization to monitor police behavior. The organization also engaged lawyers to sue in alleged cases of discrimination. The suit resulted in a court order restraining police activity, and through a series of negotiations with lawyers and civic groups the city established a citizens' board to review complaints concerning police behavior.

Intolerance often stems from personal and cultural attitudes that can be changed through education in the schools and through other avenues, but short-term initiatives can also influence attitudes, Merloe said. Civic organizations must first define ethnic tolerance to effectively promote changed attitudes. Merloe outlined four elements of intolerance: 1) lack of knowledge that often results in application of traditional stereotypes; 2) desire to belong to an identifiable group; 3) insecurity and fear of violence, particularly at times when structures are disintegrating and the economy is in decline; and 4) need to relieve frustrations.

Merloe said there were a number of ways to address these factors that affect intolerance. For example, in instances where people organize or associate with one another in order to belong to an identifiable group, there may be members of that group who advocate intolerance of others. Such positive role models should be promoted and encouraged to challenge leaders who advocate intolerance. Similarly, specific steps could be taken to address economic and social insecurity to reduce tensions that foster intolerance. Discussion sessions and sponsorship of community resources such as recreational facilities in communities were among the initiatives that could be organized to permit individuals to relieve frustrations, Merloe said.

Merloe said that the tactics chosen should be sensitive to existing realities, and goals should be short-term and specific. Existing tensions might suggest the need to calm anxiety and to create tolerance within each ethnic group first before building tolerance between communities by forcing two ethnic groups into a dialogue.

The target audience of any initiative also needed to be defined. Merloe identified four categories of supporters to which a civic organization could reach out: 1) those seeking information on the issue; 2) those who support the basic premise of the civic organization, regardless of knowledge of the issue; 3) those who contribute resources to the organization's activities; and 4) those who are willing to contribute time and expertise. Merloe said that choice of tactic would define the necessary tasks for each category of supporter as well as the number of supporters needed from each category.

B. Workshops²

1. Cultural Rights

Case Study

The President of the Republic of Mamaria, Dr. Irina Ilirev, today issued a decree that the Pulban minority language schools will be closed at the end of the school year given the government's fiscal crisis. The decree also states that the central government's Minority Education Office will be closed. In addition, plans to establish Gypsy language schools and print Gypsy language textbooks in September will be suspended because of the fiscal crisis.

As you know, Mamaria is a multi-ethnic country in Eastern and Central Europe that recently emerged from a communist dictatorship. Under the communist system, the central government sponsored all schools throughout the country and prescribed the official curriculum for each school. Schools continue to be state-sponsored since the democratic transition; and, although the curriculum is still dictated by the central government, several requirements associated with political education of the population have been eliminated.

Official figures indicate that the population of Mamaria is 70 percent ethnic Mamarian and 20 percent ethnic Pulban. The remaining 10 percent of the population includes Gypsies, Armenian and Jews. The ethnic Pulban political leaders argue that official statistics grossly underestimate the ethnic Pulban population. These leaders believe that ethnic Pulbans comprise 40 percent of the population.

In some areas of the republic where there was a concentrated ethnic Pulban population, the communist government sponsored all-day education in the Pulban language. These schools continued to operate after the democratic transition. There has never been any tradition of education in the Gypsy language or culture.

In Raion X, 40 percent of the population identifies itself as ethnic Pulban, 40 percent considers itself Mamarian and 20 percent considers itself Gypsy. In Raion X, there are 45 elementary schools. Of these, two are Pulban-language schools. No information has been released regarding the money, the school closures, or the closure of the government's Minority Education Office will save the government has been released. No information can be found about how many people will lose their jobs as a result of the government decree.

The leader of the Pulban Democratic Party called a demonstration for two days from now. The ethnic Pulban community in Raion X is expected to turn out heavily for the event.

² The hypothetical case studies used at the conference are reproduced here in their entirety followed by the conclusions reached in each of the workshops (i.e., local government, media, and civic organizing).

This evening, already, the Pulban leader made a statement on local radio saying that the measure is a further step in the ethnic cleansing of the Pulbans from the region and the country.

a. Instructions to Local Government Workshop Participants

The mayor has called an emergency midnight meeting to discuss preparations for the demonstration. Some members of the city council have argued that the demonstration should not be permitted because it will raise tensions. Other members -- namely ethnic Pulban -- feel that the demonstration is a free expression of the cultural discrimination of the Pulban nationality in Mamaria.

You are on the city council for Raion X. About half of the city council members are Mamarian and the others are Pulban. There are no Gypsy representatives. One third of you are members of the National Democratic Alliance, one third are members of the Social National Party and one third are members of the Pulban Democratic Party. What should be the local government's response? Is there anything that the local government can do to calm the situation created by the national government? Tonight is the brainstorming session for immediate and long-term responses to the decree.

Workshop Participant Conclusions

Participants decided that the local government council should release a statement to the media indicating the council's support for the protection of human rights through peaceful means. The mayor was to be encouraged to allow the demonstration to take place and to meet with the police force before the demonstration in order to encourage respect for an orderly and peaceful demonstration, participants said.

Participants also decided that the local government council should approach the national government about financial considerations necessitating this decision. In addition, participants would have the local government look into the possibility of funding from its own budget a

public education program regarding minority rights to be designed based on a public opinion poll of attitudes toward minority rights.

Participants reported that a Roma (Gypsy) delegation planned to meet with the national government on its educational needs in order to ensure the protection of its rights. If the national government lacked interest in the minority concerns, the Gypsy population of Mamaria planned to organize a general strike.

b. Instructions for Media Workshop Participants

You are a radio journalist in Raion X. The editor of the radio has called a meeting to decide how to cover the demonstration, the local government's actions and the expected increase in tensions. As a journalist, what do you think should be the radio's policy? Should the chief editor adopt some guidelines for his reporters? If so, what should those be?

Workshop Participant Conclusions

Participants reported that journalists recognized the burden of responsibility to cover the event accurately. Therefore, journalists were expected to act independently and impartially and to prepare accurate and objective reports. Participants said that the radio station planned to:

- direct journalists at the demonstration to report on their impressions and to interview demonstrators and local officials;
- monitor the local government's actions;
- interview the leaders of the demonstration, business groups and local ethnic groups;
- seek an interview with the president of Mamaria on her decision; and
- broadcast hourly news of the demonstration.

Participants concluded that the chief editor should develop ideas for making continuous appeals to the people to avoid intolerance. In particular, participants suggested a radio

discussion with members of the minority and majority communities to discuss the issue. Other participants suggested that an editorial be aired that addressed the basic principle of democracy, which permits the majority to exercise its authority over the minority. The editorial also should suggest that pluralism requires that minority rights be taken into account and protected.

c. Instructions to Civic Organizing Workshop Participants

You are one of the leaders of a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan civic organization. The civic organization's membership is dominated by ethnic Mamarians. A board meeting is called to determine if there are positive steps that can be taken to ease the tensions that will inevitably mount. As you prepare for the meeting, what ideas do you plan to suggest at the meeting? What are the positive merits of these initiatives? What do you think your ideas might accomplish? How do you think your ideas can be implemented?

Workshop Participant Conclusions

Workshop participants said that, since minorities paid taxes, minorities deserved the right to be educated in their minority language. Therefore, in the immediate future, participants said that the civic organization should use its influence to encourage the mayor, the churches, the schools, the political parties and the trade unions to participate in the demonstration and to encourage the press to cover the demonstration constructively. Participants also said the mayor should be urged to contact the police and inform it of its responsibility at the demonstration.

In the longer term, the civic organization would distribute information about the rights of minorities according to the European Convention, participants said. The participants also decided that civic organizers should prepare and send a letter to the national government on methods of reducing ethnic tensions. Specifically, the civic organization should recommend that, at the very least, the national government maintain language education in the schools as an elective course. The civic organizers should solicit the support of the local government, the police, the political parties and the trade unions in drafting the letter. The participants also

reported that civic organizers planned to petition the community for donations necessary to keep the schools open.

2. Economic Rights

Case Study

The National Assembly of Rolgania dominated by the democratic Union of Civic Society passed long-awaited restitution legislation. According to the local Landech-language newspaper in the town of Iani (read by most ethnic Landechs), the legislation will return land to owners in 1945, who were primarily absentee, ethnic Rolganian landowners.

As you know, Rolgania is a multi-ethnic country in Eastern and Central Europe that recently emerged from a communist dictatorship. The population of Rolgania is 80 percent ethnic Rolganian and 11 percent ethnic Landech. The remaining 9 percent of the population includes Gypsy, Armenian and Jewish communities. Seventy percent of the ethnic Landech population lives in Iani and surrounding areas; a similarly high percentage of the country's total Gypsy population also resides in the region. The ethnic Landechs and Gypsies were never treated well during the communist administration. Nevertheless, the social security system gave them a steady income whether employed or not. When employed, the ethnic Landechs and Gypsies worked as poppy seed harvesters in the summer in Iani and as bunker constructors throughout the country in the winter.

According to the Landech-language newspaper, the legislation gives the previous owners inalienable rights to land. There is no restriction on re-sale of restituted land for any price at any time. And, in their haste to pass the legislation, the National Assembly left out any reference to the fate of government housing on the restituted land. As a result, the Landech-language newspaper tells the readers that ethnic Landechs are likely to be homeless and unemployed with the implementation of the legislation.

a. Instructions to Local Government Workshop Participants

You are staff members of the Rolganian deputy mayor in charge of privatization in Iani. He has just received the legislation and understands that much of the responsibility for implementation of the measure will fall to the office of the ethnic Landech mayor. What decrees and legislation would you recommend to the deputy mayor for dealing with the issue? He has called a strategy session tomorrow for his top advisors on the issue.

Workshop Participant Conclusions

Participants agreed that ethnic tensions could easily increase if local communities were denied control over laws affecting them. A majority of participants said that the legislation was deliberately discriminatory against minorities and that economic and ethnic clashes were likely. In fact, several said that Landechs would be unlikely to obey the legislation. One participant said that a law that affected minorities so much was undemocratic if it was passed without the approval of minorities. However, a minority of participants said that the law was the law -- even if people did not like the law -- and therefore had to be obeyed.

Turning to the case study, the participants perceived as their first order of business the verification of the accuracy of the newspaper story. If the legislation had been passed as reported, all participants recognized that the mayor's first act should be to determine how local government property could be distributed to compensate the Landechs for their lost homes and lands. The mayor's office was expected to conduct a thorough review of all the people who would be affected by the legislation, participants said. In fact, participants thought it wise to conduct a survey of all plots of land within the municipality and then to determine a proportion of land that should be used to compensate displaced individuals.

In addition, the mayor should assure the citizens publicly that compensation was his first priority. Participants said that the mayor should resign if he could not find a solution to the compensation problem. When one participant suggested that the mayor find a way to stall action, participants criticized the mayor for already taking so long -- they were sure he must have known of the possible advent of this legislation.

Participants also suggested that the mayor use the schools to send home with children information on the legislation for their parents to read. Moreover, the mayor should organize a forum to discuss the law at which minority groups would be represented.

Some participants said it was the responsibility of the newspaper to publish the law for citizens to review. With increased knowledge, ethnic Landech citizens could ask their

representatives to find a mutually beneficial solution for themselves and the ethnic Rolganians. Majority and minority communities working together to determine the future of property rights to the land was expected to increase participation in government at the local level.

b. Instructions to Media Workshop Participants

You are the editor of a major Rolganian-language newspaper in Iani. You have just received the *State Gazette* in which the legislation has been printed. As you suspected, the information in the Landech-language newspaper is entirely incorrect. It leaves the ethnic Landechs with the impression that they will lose everything. However, guarantees for national minorities have been incorporated into the law. As an ethnic Rolganian, you are furious that the Landech-language newspaper so misrepresented honest legislation. What action will your paper take to inform the citizens. Do you feel any responsibility to discredit the Landech-language newspaper?

The ethnic Landech mayor and the Rolganian deputy mayor have called you to ask your advice on devising a local government press strategy to combat the Landech-language newspaper's story.

Workshop Participant Conclusions

All participants said that discrediting the Landech-language newspaper would not be constructive. They said any such action would create hostility between ethnic Landechs and ethnic Rolganians. Instead, every effort should be made to correct the mistakes that were printed in the Landech-language newspaper, participants said. They decided that one of the primary goals of the Rolganian-language newspaper editor should be to provide accurate, objective coverage of the legislation.

Participants suggested that, in order to avoid misunderstandings, the text of the law should be published as well as articles by ethnic Landechs and ethnic Rolganians concerning their opinions on the law. The newspaper should contact a civic organization to provide an

expert who could write a simple interpretation of the law for public consumption. Educational articles in the Rolganian-language newspaper should emphasize that parliamentary acts are binding for everyone and that ownership is an inalienable right.

c. Instructions to Civic Organizing Workshop Participants

You are the leader of a grassroots organization based in Iani. The deputy mayor in charge of privatization has just called you to attend a meeting to discuss the published legislation. By telephone, she has indicated that the legislation does not contain any funding for education about the privatization. She has invited you to a brainstorming session on how a multi-group (print and broadcast media, political parties and civic organizations) campaign could be established to publicize information on the legislation. What suggestions will you bring to the deputy mayor's office?

Workshop Participant Conclusions

The fact that the Landech-language newspaper represented the source for information concerning the legislation created some uncertainty among participants about the accuracy of the printed material. Therefore, civic organizers said the mayor needed to take responsibility for ensuring that correct information was disseminated. Civic leaders and individuals could also provide information to local government regarding problems of implementation.

Participants said that the national government had never analyzed the effect such legislation would have on local communities when it drafted the legislation. Therefore, participants underscored their opinion that the local government, not the national government, should write legislation. Since the legislation had already passed the parliament, participants said it was the local government's responsibility to inform the national legislative body of the negative consequences of the legislation on the citizens of Iani. Participants suggested that the mayor convene a meeting of local political party leaders to achieve consensus on suggested amendments to the legislation that would then be forwarded to the parliament.

Participants said that civic organizations should assist local government by providing facts and information on specific difficulties of implementation and by putting pressure on parliament to recognize the inequities in the legislation. Civic groups also should hold town meetings with citizens to promote understanding about the draft law.

3. Political Rights

Case Study

Official election results last year gave the mayoralty and the majority of the city council in Z-grad to the ethnic Banpols. Ethnic Bulcenian President Zhiicrov issued a decree today creating regional governors. The decree includes names of all the appointed governors. Everyone of them is ethnic Bulcenian.

Bulcenia is a multi-ethnic country in Eastern and Central Europe that recently emerged from a communist dictatorship. The population of Bulcenia is 75 percent ethnic Bulcenian and 8 percent ethnic Banpols. The remaining 17 percent of the population is Gypsy. While a small percentage of the population, the ethnic Banpols live in concentrated communities, unlike the larger Gypsy population. Sixty percent of the ethnic Banpol population lives in Z-grad and surrounding areas. The ethnic Banpols were never treated well during the communist administration. Therefore, the election of an ethnic Banpol mayor from the Banpol Democratic Party in Z-grad excited the ethnic Banpol majority. The governing National Democratic Organization is not a strong party in Z-grad, although the National Social Democratical Party has done increasingly well in recent local by-elections.

During the last year, ethnic Bulcenians, organized by the National Social Democratical Party (the reformed communist party) blocs in the region, have staged numerous demonstrations against ethnic Banpols. The demonstrations have protested ethnic Banpols attempts to establish "an ethnic Banpol dictatorship" in the region linked to leaders of the neighboring Banpol government. At the national level, the National Social Democratical Party seeks adoption of a law that would proscribe ethnically based parties.

The decision of the National Democratic Organization to appoint regional governors has equally angered ethnic Banpols. After 45 years of communist dictatorship, ethnic Banpols finally have achieved some degree of governing authority that reflects their majority in the region. But the government has agreed to appoint the governors because National Democratic Organization hardliners threaten to force a government collapse without this concession. The governors will be responsible for allocating national funds to municipal governments.

a. Instructions to Local Government Workshop Participants

You are the ethnic Banpol mayor. Develop a 12-month plan to defuse tensions and promote reconciliation in Z-grad.

Workshop Participant Conclusions

Participants said the source of community intolerance had to be identified before a plan could be developed. Participant debate was guided by a consensus that ethnic tensions should be solved within the community and that local government policies that favored one ethnic group should not be taken at the expense of other ethnic groups.

The first order of business was to initiate direct talks with representatives of local government and use the media to diffuse tensions and disseminate information about the rights of ethnic groups, participants said. The media should emphasize the rights of each ethnic group to use its own language, organize its own cultural activity and educate itself. Participants considered cooperative actions as important to healthy inter-ethnic relations and suggested that local government support the following policies to alleviate any misunderstanding among ethnic groups: 1) introduction of bilingual street names; 2) promotion of dialogue between local and national majority parties; 3) establishment of mutually accepted symbols of government; and 4) attention to concrete problems of local government. In addition, participants said that local government policies to stimulate the development of small- and medium-size entrepreneurs and ensure equal opportunity employment for minorities would help promote understanding among ethnic communities.

As part of the 12-month plan, participants recommended that meetings be held with the newly appointed regional governor on a weekly basis to discuss common problems and the role of the mayor and local government. Participants suggested the identification of an arbitrator to handle ethnic disputes that might arise as a result of the decree. Finally, participants said that local government funds should be used to hire experts to conduct research on human rights, the results of which should be publicized through the local press.

b. Instructions to Media Workshop Participants

You are a member of the multi-ethnic editorial board of the largest local weekly newspaper. What stories about this issue will you put in the next edition of the newspaper? What other activities should the newspaper undertake?

Workshop Participant Conclusions

Participant discussion concentrated on the funding and independence of the local newspaper and the composition of its editorial board. Ideas for articles included: Gypsy culture; Banpol culture; discussion of the decree on appointed governors; publication of the decree; discussion of an ethnic rights law; and discussion of a political party law.

c. Instructions to Civic Organizing Workshop Participants

You are one of the leaders of a civic organization created to protect the rights of ethnic Banpols. Tomorrow there will be a meeting to decide what action to take. What will you recommend as the best course of action for the organization? What factors should you consider?

Workshop Participant Conclusions

Participants said that the decree violated one of the underlying principles of democracy: protection of minority rights. Because the regional governors were not directly elected, their intentions were unknown. But participants said that the governors were likely to act on behalf of the national government and that any issue raised by ethnic Banpols at the local level might not be considered at the national level.

Participants said civic organizations should play an active role in protecting national peace. They should help ethnic Banpols effectively identify commonalities between their interests and national interests so that the national government would be more likely to judge minority interests as national ones. Civic organizations should also assist ethnic Banpols to

identify coalition partners within the Gypsy and opposition political communities so that the minority might negotiate successfully with the national government for repeal of the regional governor decree, participants said. Participants also said that the civic organizers should explore the possibility of appealing the decree to the constitutional court or of working with the National Democratic Organization to reach a reasonable solution.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional participants and international experts evaluated the program at the final plenary session and in written evaluation forms. In general, regional participants, international experts and NDI judged the seminar to have been a very positive and unique initiative, which focused on local approaches to the promotion of positive community relations rather than on broad human rights or cross-border issues. Regional participants, international experts and organizers all commented on the importance of local citizen participation to the growth and success of a democracy. One participant reported that he would return to Romania with the belief that anyone can organize a group of people interested in raising citizen consciousness. An ethnic Turk participant from Shumen summed up the emotion created by the seminar by saying he was "especially moved to see all these people with different ethnic backgrounds striving for peace and democracy." He admonished participants to "remember the seminar discussion when you return home."

NDI made the following observations and recommendations on program accomplishments and follow-up based on participant comments.

A. Realizing Program Objectives

In organizing this program, NDI did not seek to duplicate the important efforts of conflict resolution specialists in handling complex ethnic issues in Eastern and Central Europe. Instead, NDI's purpose was to provide regional participants from civic organizations, local government and media with a wider awareness of their roles and responsibilities in addressing local issues. It was hoped that lessons gleaned from the seminar would prove fundamental to the promotion of positive inter-ethnic relations and positive democratic governance relations in each community.

The seminar title, "Promoting Tolerance at the Local Level: The Role of Civic Organizations, Local Government and the Media," suggested to participants two different themes: 1) discussion about issues of ethnic tolerance and 2) provision of specific skills-building techniques for the organization of tolerance promotion initiatives in each community. Given the limited time available in the three-day seminar, the first theme was more thoroughly addressed than the second. One international expert suggested that similar programs in the future include an additional day for the participants to practice specific "how to" techniques. Another expert noted with surprise that many of the regional participants appeared "not to recognize their power or right to seek change" despite their roles in promoting enormous change in the last several years.

Regional participants said they would return to their communities better versed in addressing inter-ethnic relations with problem-solving and early intervention techniques and with

an understanding of the need for flexibility, accuracy and tact. In addition, participants noted that the promotion of ethnic tolerance requires constant activity -- people must be willing to examine problems and solutions from different points of view, find common points of agreement and gather complete information on ethnic tensions. Finally, participants realized the importance of promoting inter-community tolerance through the creation of contacts among local government, media and civic organizations.

B. Regional Participation

Much of the success of the seminar and its ability to concentrate on local initiatives can be attributed to the participants and the process used in their selection. By choosing participants based on community affiliation and by providing translation in three languages (Bulgarian, English and Romanian), NDI, BAFECR and PDA were able to invite a professionally and ethnically diverse group of participants who were not frequent participants in international conferences. In addition to ethnic Bulgarians, Macedonians and Romanians, participants included ethnic Albanians, Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks), Hungarians, Gypsies and Turks. Elected mayors from several cities and villages were present, as well as local party leaders, local journalists and volunteers from BAFECR and PDA.

Future programs of this type should include invitations to additional civic organizations, as well as to leaders from churches, schools and trade unions. Community-specific programs of this type should ensure -- to the degree possible given limited resources -- the participation of an audience that is not only representative of the multi-ethnic character of the community but

representative of other interest groups in the community as well.

In the future, less emphasis on the ethnic character of participants should help to balance the discussion between ethnicity (and "tolerance") and the roles of civic organizations, local government and media. Organizers should ensure that different ethnic groups are invited based on each group's leadership role in civic organizations, local government and the media and the group's desire to solve common problems in the community.

C. Program Format

The three-day program was divided between 1) informational plenary sessions where the international experts presented strategies and models that had been successful in their own multi-ethnic communities and 2) workshops in which the participants developed solutions to a series of hypothetical case studies. The plenary sessions and the experiences of the experts interested the regional participants, although the seminar demonstrated that experiences were not always directly relevant to participant realities. In future programs, organizers should have several regional participants describe effective models used in their own communities as a method of stimulating discussion.

The hypothetical case studies worked extremely well at the seminar. Regional participants considered the methodology to be creative and relevant, and several of them expected to replicate it in future seminars on ethnic tolerance or other issues. The success of the methodology can be ascribed to the hypothetical nature of the case studies, which reflected

the types of situations that have arisen in a number of communities in the region. Avoiding addressing a specific, real-life situation prevented discussions from becoming so emotional that participants lost sight of the workshop's goal of developing solutions. The workshops enabled participants to apply lessons learned in the plenary sessions, to use their own skills and to practice exercising tolerance from the point of view of other ethnic and professional groups. Case studies should be detailed enough so that everyone understands the workshop scenario and discussion can commence immediately. Similarly, it is essential to ensure that workshop facilitators and participants fully comprehend the purpose of the exercise and their roles in it.

D. Program Content

The NDI program focussed on the intersection of roles and rights. Regional and international expert participants evaluated this approach positively. Nevertheless, organizers and participants identified the role of the media as the weakest part of the program. NDI had hoped to highlight the role of the media in influencing ethnic tensions. But, discussion in the media workshops concentrated on media techniques for civic organizations and local government and therefore served as an additional workshop on solutions for local government and civic organizations. Organizers of future programs should eliminate the media as a separate focus given seminar time constraints.

Organizers were necessarily required to limit the scope of the seminar in order to achieve the NDI objectives and, as a result, many topics were left out of the discussion. A few participants suggested that the cultural rights topic should be expanded in future programs to

address separately and additionally religious tolerance and education as distinct from cultural rights. Another expert said that a more thorough discussion of budgetary aspects of local autonomy (including legal and administrative considerations) in regard to reducing tensions at the local level would prove useful in future programs.

E. Ideas for Future Programs

All participants planned to share the information they had acquired with their organizations, local governments and media outlets. In addition, many participants said they planned to share information with others in the communities through roundtable discussions, press reports and follow-on seminars. Concrete initiatives were already planned by the Razgrad community, in a predominantly Turkish populated area of Bulgaria; by the community of Timisoara, in a predominantly Hungarian populated area of Romania; and by the community of Skopje.

The program provided most participants with adequate information to organize follow-on activities with the assistance of BAFECR and PDA. NDI offered to help the communities with program design, if necessary, and to provide international experts, if funding permitted.

NDI's future plans are to focus on the issues of local empowerment and skills-building in participant communities and others. NDI has technical assistance programs underway in Romania and Bulgaria and has plans to initiate a program in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. NDI assistance in these countries is aimed at providing civic organizations with the

expertise to educate citizens and politicians about their roles and responsibilities in a democracy. The problem of ethnic intolerance -- especially in the Balkan region -- is an important deterrent to democratic development. Participants learned techniques for promoting democratic dialogue and fundamental ideas about the principles of democratic dialogue. NDI will continue to support strong, well-functioning democratic institutions in the Balkans and their programs to promote democratic dialogue in the pursuit of stability and peace in the region.

APPENDIX A

Regional Participants

1:30 PM -
2:30 PM

Plenary Presentations of Media Code of Conduct - Room #8
Rapporteur for Group B
Rapporteur for Group C
Rapporteur for Group A

Commentary: Gil Bachrach, Germany
Marie Nahikian, U.S.
Richard Lobenthal, U.S.

Chair: Lisa C. McLean, NDI Program Officer

2:30 PM -
3:00 PM

Break - Outside Room #8

3:00 PM -
4:00 PM

Citizen Organization Plenary - Room #8
Role of Citizen Organizations in Engaging the Public: Richard
Lobenthal, U.S.
Role of Citizen Organizations in Disseminating Information:
Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland

Chair: Susan Atwood, NDI Senior Program Officer

4:00 PM -
5:30 PM

Workshop Sessions: Plan of Action for Citizen Organizations

Cultural Rights: Gil Bachrach, Germany
Patrick Merloe, U.S.
Group C

Economic Rights: Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland
Marie Nahikian, U.S.
Group A

Political Rights: Richard Lobenthal, U.S.
Josephine Moerman, Belgium
Group B

5:30 PM -
6:30 PM

Plenary Presentations of Citizen Organization - Room #8
Rapporteur for Group C
Rapporteur for Group A
Rapporteur for Group B

Commentary: Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland
Patrick Merloe, U.S.
Richard Lobenthal, U.S.

Chair: Lisa C. McLean, NDI Program Officer

Шумен / Shumen

Живко Милчев (Zivko Milchev)
Сабри Галиб (Sabri Galib)
Снежана Масларска (Snejana Maslarska)
Даниела Русева (Daniela Ruseva)
Халми Амза (Halmi Amza)

Кърджали / Kurdjali

Неджиатин Родоплу (Nedjiatin Rodoplu)
Радан Хаджнев (Radan Hadjiev)
Христо Андонов (Christo Andonov)
Стойко Стоянов (Stoiko Stoianov)
Боян Саръев (Boian Saraev)
Ресн Нурн (Resie Nuri)

Разград / Razgrad

Гюнтер Тахир (Ghunter Tahir)
Ивелинна Иванова (Ivelina Ivanova)
Георги Китанов (Georgi Kitanov)
Анелия Атанасова (Anelia Atanasova)
Георги Милков (Georgi Milkov)

MACEDONIA / МАКЕДОНИЈА

Скопје / Скопје

Alexander Georgievski (Александър Георгиевски)
Ljubisha Georgievski (Любиша Георгиевски)
Numan Salai (Нуман Салај)
Peter Temelkovski (Петер Темелковски)
Boris Trajkovski (Борис Трајковски)
Kiril Andonovski (Кирил Андоновски)

ROMANIA / РУМЪНИЯ

Bucharest / Букуреш

Adrian Sorescu (Адриан Сореску)

Bogdan Teodorescu (Богдан Теодореску)

Dan Cristescu (Дан Кристеску)

Constantin Tutunaru (Константин Тутунару)

Costel Vasile (Костел Василе)

Constanta / Констанца

Marius Calcan (Марнус Калкан)

Batfa Marius (Бафта Марнус)

Acstola Ghiunev (Акмола Гюнев)

Nicolae Rosca (Николае Роска)

Mariana Tuscali (Мариана Тускали)

Sf. Gheorghe / Св. Георге

Vajna Hajnalca (Байна Хайналка)

Eugen Tomiuc (Юген Томиук)

Mihai Rauca (Михай Раука)

Laszlo Zsigmond (Лазло Зигмунд)

Carol Mihai (Карол Михат)

Sibiu / Сибю

Cornel Halimadi (Корнел Халиманд)

Marius Gheorghiu (Марнус Джорджю)

Viorica Barbu (Вьорика Барбу)

Anne Weber (Анне Вебер)

Costica Maxim (Костика Максим)

Timisoara / Тимишуара

Stefan Varga (Стефан Варга)

Gheorghe Tatar (Георге Татар)

Corneliu Popovici (Корнелиу Поповици)

Zoltan Marosi (Золтан Мароси)

Milin Miodrag (Милин Миодраг)

APPENDIX B

Agenda of the Conference



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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PROMOTING TOLERANCE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: THE ROLE OF CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA Sofia, Bulgaria April 22-25, 1993

PARTICIPANT AGENDA

THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 1993

- Early Afternoon** Romanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian participants arrive at Hotel Sofia. Greeted by NDI/BAFECR staff.
- Late Afternoon** Bus departs from Hotel Sofia to Palace of Culture. Exact time of bus departure to be announced during hotel check-in.
- 4:00 PM -
5:30 PM** Participant Registration - Outside Meeting Room #3.1
- 5:30 PM -
7:30 PM** Welcome and Introduction - Room #3.1
NDI and BAFECR staff
Participant Introductions
- 7:30 PM** Reception hosted by NDI and BAFECR
7th Floor - Panorama Cafe

FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1993

- 7:30 AM -
8:20 AM** Breakfast at Hotel Sofia
- 8:30 AM** Bus departs for Palace of Culture from Hotel Sofia.
- 9:00 AM -
9:30 AM** Opening Plenary - Room #8
Expert Introductions
Review of Seminar Agenda
- 9:30 AM -
10:30 AM** Keynote Address: Reducing Ethnic Tensions at the Local Level
Room #8
The European Perspective: Josephine Moerman, Belgium
The U.S. Perspective: Marie Nahickian, U.S.
Chair: Susan Atwood, NDI Senior Program Officer

10:30 AM -
11:00 AM

Break - Outside Room #8

11:00 AM -
12:00 PM

Local Government Plenary - Room #8

Local Government Initiatives and Legislation that Recognize
the Rights of Minority and Majority Communities: Patrick
Merloe, U.S.

The Special Role of Law Enforcement in Ethnic Minority
Tensions: Josephine Moerman, Belgium

Chair: Lisa C. McLean, NDI Program Officer

12:00 PM -
1:30 PM

Lunch Discussion - Room #8

Local Government Initiatives to Combat Anti-Foreigner
Sentiment: Gil Bachrach, Germany

1:30 PM -
3:00 PM

Workshop Sessions: Devising a Local Government Plan

(Three workshop groups will be assigned for the duration of the
seminar. Each group will rotate through various cultural, economic
and political rights case studies. Workshop rooms will be assigned at
the end of the plenary session.)

Cultural Rights: Gil Bachrach, Germany
Patrick Merloe, U.S.
Group A

Economic Rights: Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland
Marie Nahikian, U.S.
Group B

Political Rights: Richard Lobenthal, U.S.
Josephine Moerman, Belgium
Group C

3:00 PM -
3:30 PM

Break - Outside Room #8

3:30 PM -
4:30 PM

Plenary Presentations of Local Government Plan - Room #8

Rapporteur for Group A

Rapporteur for Group B

Rapporteur for Group C

Commentary: Patrick Merloe, U.S.

Josephine Moerman, Belgium

Marie Nahikian, U.S.

Chair: Susan Atwood, NDI Senior Program Officer

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

4:30 PM -

5:30 PM

Discussion: Grassroots Initiatives to Promote Tolerance - Room #8
A European Experience: Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland
An American Experience: Patrick Merloe, U.S.

Chair: Lisa C. McLean, NDI Program Officer

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1993

7:30 AM -

8:20 AM

Breakfast at Hotel Sofia

8:30 AM

Bus departs for Palace of Culture from Hotel Sofia.

9:00 AM -

10:00 AM

Media Plenary - Room #8

Role of the Media in Shaping Public Opinion: Marie Nahikian,
U.S.

Encouraging Media Responsibility and Fairness: Gil Bachrach,
Germany

Chair: Susan Atwood, NDI Senior Program Officer

10:00 AM -

10:30 AM

Break - Outside Room #8

10:30 AM -

12:00 PM

Workshop Sessions: Developing a Code of Conduct for the Media

Cultural Rights: Gil Bachrach, Germany
Patrick Merloe, U.S.
Group B

Economic Rights: Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland
Marie Nahikian, U.S.
Group C

Political Rights: Richard Lobenthal, U.S.
Josephine Moerman, Belgium
Group A

12:00 PM -

1:30 PM

Lunch Discussion - Room #8

Role of the Media in Reinforcing Stereotypes in the United States:
Richard Lobenthal, U.S.

1:30 PM -
2:30 PM

Plenary Presentations of Media Code of Conduct - Room #8
Rapporteur for Group B
Rapporteur for Group C
Rapporteur for Group A

Commentary: Gil Bachrach, Germany
Marie Nahikian, U.S.
Richard Lobenthal, U.S.

Chair: Lisa C. McLean, NDI Program Officer

2:30 PM -
3:00 PM

Break - Outside Room #8

3:00 PM -
4:00 PM

Citizen Organization Plenary - Room #8
Role of Citizen Organizations in Engaging the Public: Richard
Lobenthal, U.S.
Role of Citizen Organizations in Disseminating Information:
Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland

Chair: Susan Atwood, NDI Senior Program Officer

4:00 PM -
5:30 PM

Workshop Sessions: Plan of Action for Citizen Organizations

Cultural Rights: Gil Bachrach, Germany
Patrick Merloe, U.S.
Group C

Economic Rights: Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland
Marie Nahikian, U.S.
Group A

Political Rights: Richard Lobenthal, U.S.
Josephine Moerman, Belgium
Group B

5:30 PM -
6:30 PM

Plenary Presentations of Citizen Organization - Room #8
Rapporteur for Group C
Rapporteur for Group A
Rapporteur for Group B

Commentary: Tony Gallagher, Northern Ireland
Patrick Merloe, U.S.
Richard Lobenthal, U.S.

Chair: Lisa C. McLean, NDI Program Officer

6:30 PM -
7:30 PM **Break**

8:00 PM - **Dinner at a local restaurant (location to be announced).**

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 1993

7:30 AM -
8:20 AM **Breakfast at Hotel Sofia**

8:30 AM **Bus departs for Palace of Culture from Hotel Sofia.**

9:00 AM -
12:00 PM **Concluding Plenary - Room #8**

- **International Expert Concluding Remarks**
- **Rapporteurs Concluding Remarks**
- **Question and Answer Session**
- **Participant Evaluation**

Chair: Susan Atwood, NDI Senior Program Officer

2:00 PM **Bus Departs for Ruse, Bulgaria for Romanian participants.
All other seminar participants depart.**

APPENDIX C

Newspaper Articles on Conference

Shoumen Municipal Newspaper, 5 April 1993

International Seminar Promotes Ethnic Understanding

Tolerance at local level, the role of local government, citizens' organizations and the mass media in ethnic understanding

The seminar organized and sponsored by the US National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR) was held under this motto in Sofia one week ago. The participants included local government employees, as well as leaders of citizens' organizations and journalists from Macedonia and Bulgaria. Representatives from the Shoumen region included Zhivko Milchev - businessman, Allied Roma Union; Sabri Galib - executive secretary of the MRF District Council; Hilmi Amza - mayor of Vurbitsa; Daniela Rousseva - lawyer; and, Snezhana Maslarska - a journalist from Radio Shoumen and BAFECR leader. The seminar conducted by specialists on citizens' organizations, the mass media and local government from Belgium, Germany, Northern Ireland and the USA. Rather than dictating or offering ready solutions, the experts described models and skills used in their countries which could be adapted to the problems of the different regions in conformity with their political, economic and cultural conditions.

The seminar aimed mainly at aiding the preservation and development of ethnic understanding by joining the efforts of citizens, the authorities and the mass media. To what extent this is possible and what the obstacles are was made clear in the views of the seminar participants:

Misroslav Sevlievski, BAFECR National Secretary: "New solution of ethnic problems. Hitherto it was assumed that they emerge at a local, but are solved at a national level. We wanted to promote the understanding that if local ethnic conflicts are created, they should be solved locally."

Dimitri Ivanov, international affairs journalist and BAFECR deputy chairman: "Ethnic relations in Bulgaria have been 'tapped', but Bulgaria is a country which declares itself a one-nation state. If this stand should be disputed by two sides - the Turkish and the Macedonian - it would fuel different types of nationalism which would invariably feed each other. This would lead to an exacerbation of relations between the ethnic communities. Bulgaria is at a crossroads: in the south - the influence of Turkey on which the world is pinning the hope that it will play the role of a model democratic Islamic state, and in the north, the Slav influence - the process of disintegration will soon be followed by integration. If the impact from the south turns into pressure, the impact from the north would be likewise - a complicated situation for Bulgaria. It is not the first time the country is facing such a situation, but it is true that it has never properly solved this problem, it has always made mistakes."

The seminar conclusions will, of course, be drawn later, once the questionnaires filled in by participants at the start and end of the conference have been considered. NDI Program Director Susan Atwood believes that the organizers are most pleased with the constructive spirit of the discussions and by the fact that the participants managed to break away from the concrete

problems of their region.

"We saw representatives of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) from Macedonia, of IMRO from Blagoevgrad and an MRF leader standing and conversing side by side, something which one finds hard to imagine when reading the press," said Miroslav Sevlievski. The emotional final accent was set by Sabri Galib from Shoumen with the comparison: "Just as all flowers have an equal right to the sun, so people of different ethnic origins are equal on earth. The rose, the tulip, the hyacinth...every flower has its own distinctive fragrance, but only together do they have an aroma of a bouquet."

Snezhana Maslarska

GOOD LEADERS KNOW HOW TO LISTEN TO GRASS ROOTS OPINION

An interview with Lisa Maclean, program coordinator of the National Democratic Institute for Eastern Europe in USA

The seminar you are taking part in, co-sponsored by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECE), is on the promotion of ethnic tolerance and the role of civic organizations, local government and media. Is tolerance inherent in human nature or is it to be cultivated?

Yes, tolerance is to be cultivated. Our seminar is based on the concept that intolerance has its roots in old stereotypes and its alternative should be the development of relations based on common interest and mutual respect. A large group of organizations in the USA is trying to provoke discussion on the promotion of tolerance.

What is your opinion on the tolerance of the politicians from the so called new democracies and how could we cultivate it in them?

In my opinion the transition from communism to democracy should have brought about a change in people's outlook too. The old system was intolerant to differing viewpoints and sometimes it seems to me that this intolerance is still present in the new democracies. And it regards not only ethnic issues but economic, cultural and political reform issues too. A great part of our programs are dedicated to this purpose - the promotion of dialogue and understanding within the limits of a given party, between different parties, in all spheres generally.

You were monitoring the 1990 and 1991 elections in Bulgaria. Could you compare the degree of tension in those days and at the present moment?

In my opinion things have changed in this respect. In 1990 the tension was caused by the elections while today it is caused by economic problems.

Do you see any tendency taking shape?

I could not predict any tendency but we should have in mind that Bulgaria is already a democratic country. And what we are trying to achieve with this seminar is the enlargement of this experience by the promotion of democracy on all levels. I think dialogue will lead to mutual understanding and lessening of tension.

At which level do you think Bulgarians have better mutual understanding - at the local or at the national?

I think at the local level. At the local level people have common interests and they bring them together.

What is your recipe for the solution of ethnic problems?

There are no universal recipes, of course. Ethnic problems are caused by different factors. We always bear this in mind when we come here because we know that ethnic tension in Bulgaria is caused by entirely different factors than in the USA. And with the risk of repeating it once more, I will again state my conception that any disruption in relations is due to disruption in dialogue. If we manage to keep the dialogue going it could be seen as an universal formula.

How do you see the role of media in our country from this point of view?

We had plenary sessions and work shops on the role of media. They were focused on media coverage of ethnic problems. I was pleasantly surprised that most of the participants knew how to present the problems in a way that would not provoke ethnic tension. Mr. Bachrach from Germany made a very interesting presentation on media created image. One of the participants, a Gipsy minority representative, said: "The press is always saying that we are people who are constantly committing crimes." I agree that sometimes media, without realizing, tends to create stereotypes and certain attitudes.

Representatives from different ethnic groups from Bulgaria, Macedonia and Rumania took part in the seminar. Were there any professional surprises for you?

No. We had made a good choice of the participants and 60 participants came who were really willing to work for democracy, to learn new things, to work hard. They all wished to communicate and work together.

Mrs. Maclean, you are the program coordinator of NDI in Hungary? What are the processes that you witness there?

It is not that different from Bulgaria. Up to 1990 we used to work with all political parties. We were instructing them in election campaign work, attraction of membership and electorate. After the election we started working with the Parliamentary parties on procedures, majority and minority issues. Now we are looking forward to the 1994 elections. In my opinion the Hungarian political parties are comparatively strong but their survival on next elections depends greatly on their organizational work. In comparison with Bulgaria they need serious work on the leadership of the parties and on the citizenship.

Do you think that a perfect political party could emerge in an ex-totalitarian country?

No, I don't think so. Such a party does not exist in the United States either. But when we are discussing the constitution of a party it is not a matter of theory. It is a matter of being a good organizer, a good leader. Good leaders know how to listen to grass roots opinions. We are putting the stress here. It is what we are trying to achieve in Bulgaria in our joint work with BAFE, which is a non-political organization. Our common work is dedicated to the development of a net-work of civic activists and useful programs for civic education.

What will you be working on up to the summer vacation?

There is not such a thing as summer vacation. In the United States you do not go on a vacation for a whole month. If you are lucky you could get a week. In August I will be travelling between Hungary and Bulgaria, organizing consultations for political parties in Hungary and continuing the work with BAFE, planning future civic seminars.

Thank you, Mrs. Maclean.

The interview was taken by Vanya Paunova

МЕЖДУНАРОДЕН СЕМИНАР ОПРАВЯ ЕТНИЧЕСКОТО РАЗБИРАТЕЛСТВО

*Гарантност на местно ниво, ролята на местната власт,
гражданските организации и средствата за кърво осведомяване -
за етническо разбирателство*



NATIONAL DEMOCRATY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Fifth Floor Washington, D.C. 20036

Представителите на местната власт на семинара в София преди седмица, организиран от спонсорирани от Националния демократичен институт за международни връзки А-ДМВ-САЩ българското сдружение за местни избори и граждански права БСЧИВ. В семинара взеха участие слушатели на местните власти, както и лидери на граждански организации и журналисти от Румелия, Македония и България. Ст. Шуманският рорик представител на форума бже - Живко Милев - Благоевград, Обединени демократи съюз, Сабри Гализ - спонсорен секретар на Сърбията съвет на ВМО, Кметът на Врбница - Милан Мило Даниел Русова - сръбски Снежана Масларска - журналист от Радио Шуман и лидер на БСЧИ. Семинарът организиран от специалности по граждански организации, медиите и местно управление от Босния, Германия, Сърбия, Полска и САЩ. Експертите не изпуснаха и диктундаха решения, а споделиха модели и умения, използвани в техните страни, които могат да бъдат адаптирани към проблемите на различните работни събрания политическите или икономическите и културни условия.

Целта на семинара бе общо в стремежа за подобряване на кърва-

нето и развитието на етническото разбирателство чрез обединените усилия на гражданите, управленето и медиите. До колко това е възможно и какви са препятствията става ясно от мненията на участниците в семинара: Мисослав Севлиевски - национален координатор на БСЧИ - „Ново решаване на етническите проблеми. До сега се приемаше, че те възникват на местно ниво, а се решават на национално. Искахме да предложим разбирането, че ако се създават етнически конфликти по места, те трябва да се решават по места.“

Сюзан Атууд - прозоремен директор на НДИ - „Бяхме много политеснони, организираните семинари, тъй като знаехме колко дълбоко вкоренени в историята са етническите взаимоотношения. Обсървахме се, че няма да стигнем до конкретни алог, всеки ще иска да вземе микрофона и да говори за обстановка в своята страна. Опасвахме се от силно политизиране на дискусиата“.

Димитри Иванова - журналист международник и заместник председател на БСЧИ - „Етническите взаимоотношения в България са „разконсервиранни“, а България е страна, която обявява себе си за еднонационална държава. Ако това е становище бже оспорено от две посоки - турската и македонската - би се създаде почва за различни национализми, а те винаги се подхранват взаимно. Цел се стигне до изостряне на отношенията между етническите общности. България се намира на кръстопът - от юг - влиянието на Турция, на която светът възлага надеждата да играе ролята на образци на демократична ислямска държава, от север - славянското влияние - процесите на дозинтеграция скоро ще бъдат последвани от процеса на интеграция. Ако влиянието от юг стане натисък и влиянието от север ще бъде натисък - една сложна ситуация за България. Тя и друг път е изпадала в подобно положение, но е ясно, че никога не е решавала правилно

този проблем, винаги е правила грешки.“

Изводите от семинара разбира се ще бъдат направени по-късно, когато се об работят анкетните карти на всички участници, погледени в началото и края на конференцията. Според Сюзан Атууд организаторите са на доволни от конструктивния тон на дискусиите и от това, че участниците са успели да се отдалечат от конкретните проблеми на своя регион.

„Видваме да стоят един до друг и да разговарят представителите на ВМРО от Македония, ВМРО от Благоевград и лидер на ДП - нешо, които четемки процапи, че обик не може да се допусне“ каза Мисослав Севлиевски, а емоционален филм постави Сабул Гали от Шуман със сравнението - „Както всички цветимат еднакво право на слънце, така и хората различан етнически произход са равноправни на земята. Розата, аз ето съм бела... всеки цветимат своа неповторим аромат но само заедно имат цвят на букет.“

Снежана МАСЛАРСКА

Семинарът на ИДИ и Българското гражданско правозащитно общество, в които участват, има за тема толерантността и ролята на гражданските организации и местните органи на управление и средства за масово осъществяване. Раждането на човек толерантен или толерантен човек е често пъти резултат от възпитание.

Да, толерантност може да се възпитава. Нашият семинар има за целта да даде възможност за изясняване на проблемите, които се поставят пред нас в старите стереотипни, вместо да се различават отношенията на обществото и етническите общности. В САЩ има чала опит да се създават дискусии, за да подкрепят създаването на толерантност.

А какво мислите за толерантността на политическите т. нар. мовем движения и как да я възпитавате у тях?

Аз смятам, че с прехода от комунизма към демокрацията е било необходимо да се променят отношението на хората. В старата система нямаше нетърпимост и нетолерантност спрямо определени етнически и политически групи, че тази нетолерантност продължава да съществува в новите демокрации. Не само по етнически въпроси, но и по отношение на националността, на културните въпроси, на политическата реформа. Много от нашите програми са предназначени за това - да се насърчават диалогът и разбирателството в самата партия, между отделните партии, изобщо във всички области.

Вие бихте наблюдавали на изборите у нас през 1990 г. и през 1991 година. Можете ли да сравните двата избора и да кажете какви са различията?

Мисля, че това ниво е вече малко по-високо. Изглежда, че съществуват напреднически, порочни от различен фактор. През 1990 г. напреднически се наблюдаваше на ниво, свързано с изборите, а днес то е свързано с икономията.

Отговорете ли на въпроса: каква е ролята на политическите партии в България днес?

Не бих могла да предскажа тенденцията, но трябва да помня, че България е вече демокрация. И това, което искам да направя с този семинар и което предвиждам, че всички българци биха искали да направят,

с да се опитаме да задълбочим този опит, като установим демокрацията на всички равнища. Смятам, че в процеса на нашия разбирателството ще продължи и се надявам, че повече и повече му ще липсва да мамалаянски на напреднически.

Къде според Вас ние, българите, се различаваме повече - в отделни региони или на национално равнище?

Струва ми се, че на местно ниво. Там хората имат общи интереси и това ги обединява.

Знаете ли решенията за решаване на

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за Източна Европа



ДОБРИТЕ ЛИДЕРИ УМЕЯТ ДА ЧУВАТ КАКВО МИСЛЯТ ХОРАТА "ДОЛУ"

рските, за да не предизвикат етнически напрежения. Бел България от Германия говори много интереси за младши, които придават медията. Един от пресрещаните - представител на циганите, каза: "За нас пресрещането е важно, че сме хора, които вършат несправедливо престъпления." Аз съм съгласна с това, средната без да съзнават това, средствата за масово осъществяване могат да намалят стереотипи и да пресрещават напреднически.

В този семинар участваха представители на различни етнически групи от България, Румъния и Македония. Имаше ли професионални изменения за вас?

Не. Успяхме добре да подберем нашите участници и при нас работиха 60 души, които действително искаха да взградят демокрацията, да научат много, да работят заедно... Те всички имат желание да общуват помежду си, с другите общности.

Г-жо Маклийн, Вие сте координатор на програмата на ИДИ в Унгари. Какви промени наблюдавате там?

Не е чак толкова различен от България. До преди 1990 г. ние работихме с всички партии от политическия спектър. Тогава ги обучавашме как да участват в изборите, да се съберат, да принасят членове. След изборите работим с парламентарните партии, как да се работи с мнозинството, но също и с малцинството. Сега работим с очакване на изборите през 1994 г. Но моя оценка унгарските политически партии са умерено силни, но очакването им през следващите избори зависи от много организационна дейност и за разлика от ситуацията в България, при тях има нужда от сериозна работа между ръководствата на политическите партии и отделните граждани.

Възможно ли е според Вас в една по-млада перфектна като по-висока политическа партия?

Не, не. И в Съединените щати няма такава свързана партия. Но когато говорим за създаването на партия, в това няма нищо теснолично. Става въпрос за това как да се добър организатор, как да сте добър лидер и...

Добрите лидери са тези, които умеят да слушат и да чуват онова, което мислят хората "долу". Ние поставяме упоритостта върху това как точно могат да се извършват тези неща. То много прилича на онова, което правим в България с БСЧНП, което не е политическа организация. С тях работим по това как да се наградят хората от граждански активисти и да организираме добри програми за гражданско обучение.

Какво Ви предстои до лятната ваканция?

Нама такава неща (сбесе се) като ваканция. В САЩ не колкото във ваканция за цял месец. Ако нямаме съвет, можем да вземем един ративно ще пътувам между Унгари и България, като организирам консултации за политически партии в Унгари и продължава работата с българските служители за четири месеци, при ангажиран граждански семинар.

Благодаря Ви, г-жо Маклийн.

Интервюто взе Вана ПАУНОВА