

## Editors Notes

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Well, at long last, please accept for your consideration this special issue of the *Anthropology of East Europe Review* devoted to anthropological understanding about the current crisis in Yugoslavia. We know it has been long in coming and we appreciate your patience and especially that of the various contributors. Despite the amount of time involved in putting this out, we feel that this set of articles make a real contribution to our knowledge of the Yugoslav events.

Anthropological research in Yugoslavia has a long and impressive history dating mainly to the inter-war period and the work of Philip Mosely, Vera St. Erlich, and a number of Yugoslav ethnographers as well. Encouraged by Mosely's work, and facilitated further by the greater degree of openness that socialist Yugoslavia offered foreign social scientists compared to the other East European nations, Western anthropologists early on established themselves in the south Slav lands and produced a range of impressive books that covered rural and urban Serbia, kinship and ritual kinship, Slovenian and Slavonian villages, and Bosnian ethnicity, to name a few. Throughout this post-war research endeavor, the nationalist question in Yugoslavia, thought not exactly dismissed, was diminished in scope. Though south Slav nationalism contributed to many Twentieth Century world conflicts, Titoism appeared to neutralize many of its contentious issues. The common threat of ever-imminent Soviet and Warsaw Pact invasion, the common political economic organizational model of Worker's Self-management, and the country's leadership of the non-aligned movement produced a state where nationalism was something to negotiate and anthropology and social science had the leisure to consider it only one matter among many.

This is not to say that there weren't hints throughout the 1960s and 1970s of what was to come. Periodic incidences of ethnic-based violence, impasse at the level of the post-Tito state council, republican complaints of unequal development and unequal taxation all gave notice of the impending disintegration. However, too much else was happening throughout Europe to pay it much mind. The country, after all, had a market system, its citizens could emigrate at will, and in any East-West conflict it would assuredly take our side even if it feigned neutrality.

As events and incidents built, however, Yugoslavia again began to take center stage. The impetus for this special issue on the crisis thus began in the summer of 1988 when Sam Beck and David Kideckel were in Zagreb at the meeting of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. All around us, in the midst of this meeting devoted to anthropology as a pan-human and unifying discipline, were small but telling signs that the Yugoslav confederation was coming apart. Some Serb and Croat anthropologists could barely communicate, there was palpable resentment over the responsibilities for creating the meeting's scientific program, as well as a constant host of what appeared to be petty squabbles over entertainment, food, committee appointments, and venues. Discussions about the sensitivities we observed occupied considerable amount of our time and prompted us to begin talk of the need for an anthropological compendium on developments in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, actual events made this all the more necessary.

As the crisis picked up steam through 1989, and gained further intensity with the collapse of East European communism, the ascendance to power in Serbia and Croatia of nationalist leaders, and the first incidences of violence in Kosovo over Serb grievances, the focus of this issue became clearer still. However, it did not crystallize until Autumn 1991 as Slovenian and Croatian declarations of independence brought the first exchanges of fire between Yugoslav republics.

This edition offers a number of works by anthropologists from diverse national traditions and diverse Yugoslav field experiences who attempt to make some sense and order out of one of the greatest and senseless tragedies of the late twentieth century. We asked Joel Halpern to serve as special editor of this number given his forty plus years of experience in Yugoslav society and his persisting contacts with individuals on all sides of this horrendous conflict. As guest editor Joel has commissioned an impressive set of papers to further our understanding of the Yugoslav tragedy. As you will see, the papers are noteworthy for the even, yet passionate, tone they adopt and the insightful arguments they develop. Unfortunately, they are also symptomatic of the current crisis in that they offer no solutions nor do they purport to do so. As Gene Hammel implies in his contribution, solutions can only

come from within the parties to the conflict themselves and with each passing day this appears less and less likely a possibility. Though the papers offered here have much reasoned information to aid our understanding of the conflict, the anthropological community too has not been able to totally escape engaging in these events in a partisan way. Two of the last three business meetings of the East European Anthropology Group at the AAA have been characterized by occasional acrimony sometimes to the point of mirroring some of the extreme partisan sensitivity that has resulted in this current Balkan conundrum. Finally, as we met last year in San Francisco while the war in Bosnia was in full swing, our response was non-existent. The shame, futility, confusion, and danger that I think so many of us felt came out in absolute silence, both at the meeting of the East European Anthropology Group and at the Business Meeting of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe. We regret the misunderstanding and acrimony especially because, as these articles clearly attest, we have so much to offer. We regret even more the silence and hope this issue of the Review helps redress this.

To be sure, debate about the conflict, especially joined by individuals who have devoted their careers to the study of Yugoslavia, the Balkans, and Eastern Europe, is appropriate and necessary. However, we owe it to ourselves, our discipline, and in particular to our Yugoslav colleagues, friends, and informants, that our voices seek reason and favor life and liberty, so as to give whatever small amount of solace we can in the midst of the madness.

For those of you interested (and I am sure that includes most of this readership), please note that a special AAA/SAE committee on the crisis in Yugoslavia, chaired by in-coming SAE president, David Kertzer (Brown) has been formed and will organize an open session on anthropological responses to the crisis at the up-coming

Washington AAA. Its AAA session will be held on Thursday, November 18, 12-1:30 in the (I think) International Ballroom Center and will essentially be an open forum for individuals to express their views of the situation and what appropriate responses we ought to make. If you will be unable to attend the session or the AAA, but still want to make your opinions known, feel free to contact David Kertzer.

Finally, this issue represents the last edition of the Anthropology of East Europe Review for which I have editorial responsibility. Taking over the then *Newsletter of the East European Anthropology Group* from Bill Lockwood three years ago, we sought to turn the Newsletter into a more standard journal that could be of use to anthropologists actively at work in the region. We hope we have at least partially achieved our goal. In retrospect, I understand how the events of the last three years conspired to both make this goal more attainable and yet much more difficult. As East Europe went through the cataclysm of revolution and post-socialist transformation and as events proceeded at the torrid pace of the last few years, it became more difficult to offer timely articles on the region. Many articles submitted about one or another current event or issue were hopelessly dated even before they reached us. At the same time, however, the transformation itself has afforded us a lively context, indeed, and has helped bring Europe and East Europe again into the forefront of anthropological consciousness.

For the future, the editorship of the AEER passes to the triumvirate of Bob Rotenberg (DePaul), Eva Huseby-Darvas (Michigan-Dearborn) and Mary Kay Gilliland Olsen (Arizona). We know that their stewardship will retain the vigor of our journal. However, we again remind you that our continuity can only be achieved by your contributions.

## Notes on the Second Edition

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This edition is substantially a reprinting of the edition that was distributed to members of the East European Anthropology Group in November 1993. Gene Hammel's was the only article to undergo any major revision. His was the oldest in the original set and needed to be refreshed in the light of recent events. The diacritical marks on Serbo-Croatian names have been

inserted and other parts of the text cleaned of most of the typographic errors. The publishing of a newsletter will never be as careful as that of a book or journal of record, and this is a newsletter. I apologize head of time for any errors that still remain in the text and beg the reader's indulgence for what is really a one-(busy) person operation.