

# The Kosova question

by Ivès Zilli

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## La Question de Kosovo

Interview with Ibrahim Rugova by Marie-Françoise Allain and Xavier Galice  
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This book shows the truth about Kosova, a truth that should make the friends of "Greater Serbia" blush for shame. The question of Kosova is unfortunately little known; however, it is on the reconquest of this autonomous republic of former Yugoslavia, 90% of whose citizens are ethnic Albanians, that the expansionist policy of Serbia's "führer" Slobodan Milosevic has focused.

This interview with Ibrahim Rugova, former President of Kosova (*EIR's* interview with him appeared in our Feb. 26, 1993 issue), took place in Switzerland, because the current regime forbids entry to most foreign observers and journalists. Ibrahim Rugova is the president of the Democratic League (Non-Violent Movement) in Kosova. He has been threatened with death several times by the current regime. The interview shows us that no Albanian is safe, not in his own house, not in the streets of Kosova. Since 1981, the Albanians have been subjected to prosecutions and severe persecution; they are occupied, dominated by the Serbian minority and the Belgrade leadership.

The Albanians of Kosova rose up in 1981 to demand that they be allowed to form a republic within the Yugoslav Federation. At 2 million, they were the third largest population group in Yugoslavia, behind the Serbs and Croats. The demonstrations were put down with typical ferocity: bathed in blood, by means of tanks, planes, torture, and unheard-of terror.

Kosova was ravaged, without witnesses, without any reaction from Europe. It was in Kosova that the partisans of the Greater Serbia policy, for the first time, put their bloody farce into practice. They claimed that they were pushed out by the Albanians, Bosnians, and Croats. They put out the line with great fanfare that the Albanians in Kosova carried out ethnic cleansing against the Serbs, the very people against whom they practiced such crimes. They said that the Albanians of Kosova had raped Serb women, while they were themselves planning such ignominy. For the last three years, the Albanians have been subjected to continuous repression; every day there are arrests, harsh sentences, and torture. The

system that was established in Kosova since its autonomy was suspended in 1989-90 is one of the most coercive in Europe.

Of the 2 million ethnic Albanians living in Kosova, 800,000 have been interrogated by the police in the last three years; even the Serbian police give out the figure of 584,373. Arkan, wanted by every police agency in Europe for crimes and assassinations, was a Serbian deputy in Kosova up to December 1993! The Albanian schools have been closed down, the regional parliament dissolved, television and publications reduced to silence, many of the young people are being forcibly conscripted into the Serbian army to fight in Bosnia, and sometimes those who refuse service are executed.

## Explosive situation

Rugova responded to a question about possible unfolding scenarios for Kosova: "Things are very clear and very simple. I'm giving you a frank, realistic answer. Everyone knows what the solution is: for us to be free to organize our lives. But if a conflict breaks out in Kosova, it will be a massacre, a catastrophe for everybody. The situation depends on Serbia. It's possible that the string will snap, and people will take to violence against all the soldiers and Serbian civil forces who are very well armed: That is where the great danger lies.

"We have come to a pass such that we cannot have peaceful demonstrations, because it's too dangerous to go out into the street. If they kill 100 people in one blow, people are going to react and will get caught up in the gears. If something happens, it will be more tragic than in Bosnia and Croatia. Because, as I've already said, the Croats have a police force, a territorial defense force, as does Bosnia, but we, we are totally without defense. Then, if people are able to flee, they have a chance—because the border with Albania is very mountainous, as is the one with Macedonia; otherwise, the border with Albania is closed, and we have seen that Macedonia and Serbia have closed their borders with great effectiveness. Kosova has two plains, where there are 2 million inhabitants, and they have been cleared out from Mitrovica to the border. . . . If [the Serbians] wanted to start or provoke a conflict, they could sacrifice 200,000 Serbs. It's mad, but they could sacrifice them to get the territory. Because, now, they are thinking in terms of territory and not in terms of economy or even human beings."

Albania is the only country in Europe which over a history going back two millennia has lost half its territory and over half its population. In 1695, as Ismail Kadaré put it, "one of mankind's greatest geniuses, Gottfried Leibniz, maintained before the academy of his country the thesis that the Albanian language was of Illyrian origin." History shows us that we must help the people of Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosova resist the oppression of the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia, or face having those who are helping Greater Serbia continue to reduce the region to ashes!