

University of Massachusetts Amherst

From the Selected Works of Joel M. Halpern

2003

Interview with Joel Halpern [regarding fieldwork in Serbia] conducted by Mirjana Prošić-Dvornić

Joel Halpern

Interview with Joel M. Halpern conducted by Mirjana Prošić-Dvornić
October 2003 to April 2004 (Revised in **April 2007**)^[1]

Fifty Plus Years Later (the date of the original interview is 2003 it is now almost four years later)

In 1947 you left your native New York state to attend University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. You intended to study chemistry but got a degree in history. What happened?

In fact I **had** completed my freshman year at **New York University's**, Westchester campus (Westchester is a northern suburb of New York City where my family moved from the City when I was nine years old). Soon after I had transferred to **the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor**, I realized that chemistry was not my "cup of tea". I wanted to study something that was a bit adventurous and which offered opportunities to travel, go on expeditions **this was without doubt a romantic vision that I had**. History, combined with many anthropology classes seemed to promise such a professional life style. I also attended geology and astronomy **seminars and special lectures** and (note deletion) and spend as much time as possible in museums. **The Natural History Museum was a special attraction for me** I really enjoyed that. **At that time I was into collecting both minerals and invertebrate fossils and I met people who could help me understand the material I had collected in my hitch hiking travels in northern Michigan and in northern Ontario. As a matter of fact I did my first writing and published articles about these matters. (Do you wish to know more?)**

After you had earned your undergraduate degree, you continued your studies at Columbia University. Why did you select to be involved with the Russian Institute, one of Columbia's programs, and anthropology? Had you already made up your mind to pursue a university career, or were you perhaps interested in diplomacy?

I do not really know why I **had** chosen that particular path. **My combining classes at the Russian Institute with those offered at the Department of Anthropology very much appealed to me. I did not get any support from the anthropologists for this decision it was my own unique academic pathway. I never did get the formal certificate offered by the Russian Institute but I took a number of courses as in Soviet Political Institutions, Marxian Economics,**

^[1] The original interview with Professor Halpern was published in Serbian, as an Annex to the first Serbian translation (revised and supplemented edition: "Srpsko selo: Društvene i kulturne promene u seoskoj zajednici 1952-1987, Etnološka biblioteka, vol. 2, Belgrade: Srpski genealoški centar, 2006) of his book "A Serbian Village" (Columbia University Press 1956; second revised edition: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967). The purpose of the interview was to understand the circumstances under which a foreign scholar could conduct his field research at the time of limited freedoms imposed by the communist regime. The point was to record the views of the researcher himself, to share the experience as seen with his own eyes and expressed in his own words. In a way it was a reverse situation of what Professor Halpern was doing in the field. While he was recording the villagers' way of life and their values, we were recording his views of the overall situation. In my view, it is particularly valuable information because it spans his experiences over an extended period of time, for almost half a century, so that it reveals the dynamics of change as well. I have to emphasize that I was very careful to give Professor Halpern an opportunity to talk about all the issues that were important to him and that he had brought up on numerous occasions in our previous conversations about his experiences in Serbia. **Here he contextualizes his Balkan researches within the total framework of his career.**

Russian Literature and Soviet and Russian History including legal aspects. I did, however, follow the anthropological curriculum leading to a doctorate degree which I received in 1956. The 1950s were, of course, at the height of the Cold War. I was, of course, aware of the general political scene and the rise of the Red baiting Senator McCarthy. But involvement with Soviet studies offered, in my mind, a specific, exciting, romantic thrill of the forbidden. Further one of my professors, Philip Mosely had a direct involvement with negotiating with the Soviets and he subsequently wrote a book about this topic. Viewed from another perspective, from the very beginning of my graduate studies, I was interested in interdisciplinary approaches to the study of complex societies. Although my immediate objective was anthropological field work the possibility of a diplomatic career also crossed my mind. That is why, immediately after I defended my doctoral dissertation in 1956,

I took the formal government exams to become a diplomat working at the State Department. But when an opportunity came later, in the same year, I accepted a position to work in the American foreign aid program in Community Development in Laos. To accept this post I turn down the possibility of becoming a diplomat since I had passed the formal exam. It should be noted that both my initial full-time employment with the Human Relations Area Files in Washington, at the American University,

Living in Laos, first as State Department employee from 1956 to 1958, and later exclusively as a researcher in 1959 and 1969, did influence my academic career. The Southeast (note change) Asia became the other important area of my anthropological interests. My first stay in Laos which also happened to be the longest (note omit) also included a month-long visit to India where I became familiar with the well-developed community development program. On my consequent Asian stays, I traveled to Thailand, Nepal and Vietnam. My work was not related to active U.S. military activities in the area although, of course, all official U.S. political activity was aimed at fighting communism But during the Second Indochina War which was focused on U.S. involvement in Vietnam there was related U.S. military actions in both the adjoining countries of Cambodia and Laos. (note omit). I, however, was glad to have had an opportunity to serve (note omit) as an advisor to the American government working with the United Nations Mekong Committee This work involved (note omit) dealing with the socio-economic consequences resulting from the building of huge hydro-electrical dams (note omit) on the Mekong River One should not simplify and note that this work was directly related to national plans which were either directly or indirectly related to the U.S. military presence. One of the important points of contact was the work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers involvement with compiling a huge and much needed resource atlas mapping of the area. Reflecting back on the military activities of that period it is certainly important to note both the constructive and destructive aspects of the U.S. presence. At the same time that the Corps was mapping the delta area in Vietnam with a goal of economic development there was also the extended U.S. of Agent Orange and defoliation for security purposes. As is well-known this activity has had a long-term negative effect on the resident population. .

It is naturally self-serving to claim a kind of ideological purity but from the late 1950s I have written extensively about the negative aspects of American aid policy. although the full disaster of the American experience was not then readily apparent. (extensive revision

here) It is also necessary to state now, more than fifty years on that the American defeat did not bring a full good life to the people of the area. Some of the same problems remain. Only recently have I read detailed scholarly reports by anthropologists from the area about how young rural people in Laos are dying because of the lack of the most rudimentary medical facilities. Yet the leadership enjoys prosperity. Further now there are new problems as corrupt members of the new Lao elite participate in the clear cutting and looting of the hardwood forests for sale abroad. Simple corruption can have some results which can be relatively easily ameliorated. This is not true of massive ecological destruction. . Although there was no reason for me to hide anything, during the Communist period in Eastern Europe, I was very careful to keep these two geographic areas of my interests, Southeast Asia and the Balkans, (note editing) separate. But this never was entirely true. (note editing) Thus the Introduction to the first edition of *The Serbian Village* was written while I was resident in Luang Prabang, then the royal capital of Laos. The activities of the king and his court in those days were wedged between the two Indochina wars, the one that the French had lost in Vietnam in the early 1950s and the subsequent war that the Americans were about to embark on in the following decades, ending with the fall of Saigon in 1975.

(note omit). For a time in the late 1960's through the 1970's I thought that American policy towards Yugoslavia was much better conceived than our policy in Southeast Asia, largely because we had less room for political maneuvering and manipulation in the former. But in retrospect, the anti-Soviet communist motivation for support of Tito's regime seems more questionable as a policy momentarily convenient for both sides at the same time. The inability, or lack of desire or, more precisely put, the opposition of Titoism to any meaningful support for a democratic society based on some sort of a West European model was of little concern to the U.S at that time. Consequences of the absence of this concern still haunt the present. The rural people such as those of Orašac were never given a chance to freely use their imagination and skills to promote the development of their country. Instead a phony social democracy, as exemplified in worker' self-management, was forced upon them. Also, as Djilas first began to observe publicly during our first visit, a new elite of communist party functionaries and Partisan war veterans, already composed a new privileged group. American imperial policies both in Yugoslavia and Laos seem to have been built more on opposition than affirmation. Retrospection is facile. The past in the future often lacks clarity.

While in graduate school, you met Professor Phillip Mosley. As it turned out, it was a decisive moment for your career.

Phillip Mosley, a professor at Columbia and the first director of the Institute for Russian Studies (omit) was one of the founders of (omit) Eastern European studies in the USA. He taught history, international relations and specifically Soviet foreign policy(. For a time he was Director of Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations). I also attended lectures on the Communist political system, Russian literature and the Soviet economy.

But, let me return to Mosley. Something rather unusual had happened to him earlier. At the time he was applying for grants to continue his studies of Russian diplomacy concerning the Dardanelles, he was advised by the Social Science Research Council to go to the Balkans instead and study the societies there. He , however, first went to the Department of

Anthropology at the Lond School of Economics, located within the University of London. After these studies traveled extensively. throughout the Balkan Peninsula (I called the Rockefeller Foundation which at that time supported the Social Science Research Council and they may have correspondence on this matter) As well known, he focused his research on *zadruga*, the extended family type, and published several important studies on the subject. Let me mention two more interesting facts about Mosley. First, he was one of the principal negotiators at the Trieste Peace Treaty. Second, he was a **colleague of Margaret Mead** and that is why she was chosen to write the Introduction to a collection of thematically very heterogeneous essays presented by his colleagues and followers from all fields of scientific research Mosley himself was pursuing at the posthumous conference in his honor held at the University of Indiana in the early 1970's. By the way, Margaret Mead was a member of my doctoral dissertation defense committee. For the American-Yugoslav/Serbian anthropological-ethnological relations, as well as for me personally, of crucial importance was the fact that during his research in Yugoslavia Phillip Mosley had established a close contact with Milenko S. Filipović.

This circumstance was very important when you were deciding where to go for your field-work experience, which is, as we know, a compulsory part of the graduate studies in anthropology. In addition to your academic advisor at Columbia, Professor Arensberg, and help you had from Professor Mosley in finding a suitable field-research location, you had acquired another, unofficial mentor on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean who also played a decisive role in your decision making process to come and work in a Serbian village. He continued to provide valuable advice and willingness to listen to your presentations and discuss your progress. Please tell us more about how you met, and then developed a professional association and friendship with Milenko Filipović.

His acquaintance with P.Mosley, helped Professor Filipović win a grant from a Rockefeller Foundation for a year-long study in the U.S. In his application he mentioned that would like to go to London and study with Malinowski and visit English villages which he would then compare to the Balkan rural settlements.**I have no idea where this statement came from The actual statement Mead made in her introduction to Communal Families in the Balkans: The Zadruga, Essay by Philip Mosely and Essays in his Honor, edited by Robert F. Byrnes (who was a bastard but don't put that in the text) But do put this in: Robert F. Byrnes who was a professor at Indiana in their Slavic and East European jprogram was a former CIA agent who subsequently obtained an academic job – the conference was held in 1975 and the book was published by University of Notre Dame Press in 1976. I was originally invited to submit a chapter for the book but Byrnes subsequently rejected my contribution. The reason that he did this was that I objected to the Mosely biography by Leonard B. Schapiro an expert on the Communist Party. He writes on p.3 of his brief biography of Mosely” The work (jpublications) for which he will be best remembered is his contribution to Western understanding of Soviet diplomatic practice, Soviet mentality, and the nature, development and prospects of the Soviet system of government and of Soviet foreign policy aims,” i.e. as a Cold Warrior and quite an appropriate thing for an ex-CIA agent to say.but I wrote Byrnes saying that I felt that this essay was inappropriate in a book on the zadruga and representing a conference at which some of the invited guests (including Rada Fabijanic) were from Communist countries as were some of the contributors. I thought that it might be embarrassing to those participants because at that time the Cold War was far**

from over. For my trouble and concern he returned by contribution without comment but only with the single word rejection. I think that this incident is significant as a measure of the times. Mosely was fascinating because he had these two separate careers as, from another is the separate existence of my work in Southeast Asia from my work in the Balkans.

Filipovic was also interested in meeting foreign researchers who have studied in the Balkans, But this did always happen – thus a bit earlier when **Filiovic** was teaching at the University of Skopje **Jozef Obrebski**, the Polish anthropologist, did his year long research in Macedonia but there is no evidence that the two ever met. **Obrebski** subsequently went on to get his PhD with **Malinowski** in London. But in Romania **Filipovic** did have contact with **Gusti** who with his colleague **Stahl** was engaged in rural sociological studies. He also expressed his desire to expand his research from ethnological and anthropological themes to sociological ones.. **Filipovic** also noted with regret the absence then of a Sociology Departemnt at Belgrade University. His second regret was that outside of an international congress in Bulgaria, he had “no opportunity to study abroad”. (Where does this information come from? I forget – was it my recollection?)

In August 1939 just before the outbreak of World War II (which, of course didn't come to Yugoslavia till April 1941) **Filipovic** filed an application with the Rockefeller Foundation to study at the University of London with **Malinowski**. He decided to remain at home and it was not until 1951 when, with **Mosely's** help the application was renewed and he came to the United States for the 1951-52 academic year.. He spent most of his sabbatical at Harvard working with **Albert Lord** and other professors there. He met with **Mosley** in New York in the fall of 1952 where I met him for the first time at **Mosely's** office.,(I wonder what the source of this statement that **Filipovic** met **Mosely** several times during his U.S. stay – does this come from his letters?) and I clearly remember his taking the train to visitus in our apartment in a New York suburb.,

A possibility to go to Yugoslavia was to me much more attractive than the other alternative I had, namely to join a Harvard research team, led by the sociologist **Alex Inkeles**., I believe the project ws supported by the Air Force and the objective was to interviewdisplaced Soviet citizens in America and in Germany. To my mind this was not a real fieldwork experience and the suggestion of **Filipovic** that I come to Serbia and Yugoslavia was a much more attractive one. Fortunately I had a source of funds so that I was able to make plans and not be dependent on a research grant. Actually my application for a Ford Foundation research grant was rejected despite the strong support of Professor **Mosely**. Actually there is a bit of irony here considering that my subsequent research in rural Serbia has been well funded by a variety of research organizations over the course of almost fifty years beginning in 1961. .

When I first came to Belgrade in summer of 1953, I went straight to **Filipović** who was at that time working at the Ethnographic Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art. Soon after, I met Professor **Drobnjaković**, the head of the Ethnological Department (School of Philosophy, University of Belgrade) at that time, who was also doing research in Šumadija with his two assistants, **Srebrica Knežević** and **Milka Jovanović**. At that time they were conducting

research in Jarmenovci, a village in **near Rudnik in central Šumadija**, which **had been** selected as one of the locations **for a United Nations rural developmental programs**. **It was in Jarmenovci that I first** encountered the Serbian folk culture **and was essentially the beginning of my** research process. **I remember it as a very pleasant mountain village and the family I stayed with was most welcoming**. I later learned that some years later Filipovic's other daughter, who was a math teacher, had a summer home there.

However, I have soon moved on to Orašac, a village known as the site of the First Revolt against the Turks in 1804. Although both Jarmenovci and Orasac were to be sites of the UN's rural development program it was only in Jarmenovci that a small factory for fruit processing was eventually built. The United Nations had in mind a community development type program but the Communist government felt that they had no need of Western ideas about rural development but they were very interested in the equipment and financing that the program provided. .

As a consequence my initial visit to Orasac, or more precisely put, my permit to go to Orasac for my research project was sponsored by the Central Council of Agricultural Cooperatives (Glavni Zadružni Savez) and the Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, headed at that time by Krista Djordjević. The development program was actually headed by an engineer, Zdenko Hahn who at that time headed a bureau at the Central Statistical Office. What is most interesting for me reflecting on these events of more than 50 years ago was that they reflected, above all, the way the then rather orthodox Communist regime treated visiting foreigners. Certainly, it would have been most logical for the University to make all the arrangements but it seems clear at this remove in time that they had no authority to do anything because of security considerations so an improvised system was worked out. My wife and I were registered at students at the University, although we never attended a class and I received support from Professor Drobnjakovic at the University and Filipovic at the Serbian Academy. Further, it was clear to me that both Djordjevic and Hahn were trusted Party members. But it is now also clear to me that all four were members of the old bourgeoisie. They behaved quite differently from other officials whom I had met who owed their positions not to any education or technical training but rather to their wartime service in the Partisans and progress through the party hierarchy. All this seems somewhat antique today but was rather of supreme importance at the time.

During our first one-year long stay in Serbia, my wife, Dr. Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern and I visited Professor Filipović in his home on Sundays whenever we were in Belgrade. We were always invited to stay for dinner and enjoy a delicious meal prepared by his wife and daughters. (One of them, Radmila Filipović-Fabijanić, was **then** just beginning to study ethnology at the University of Belgrade. He patiently listened and critiqued my **fieldwork** in Orašac **I certainly didn't question what was for me the most comfortable patriarchal setup**. For while the two of us conversed in his study my wife, and his wife and daughters were all in the kitchen preparing the Sunday meal. Barbara very much enjoyed the experience of being enveloped in the welcoming atmosphere of this Serbian family. Although not only was Filipovic from Bosnia but his wife was from Istanbul although I never did learn the details. The apartment itself was in a plain and somewhat dingy small prewar apartment house on a

small street off a main boulevard but it was most accessible by trolley. By contrast our rented room was also in a prewar building but one better equipped and with an elevator and also located very near the city's center. .

In addition to providing me with ethnological insights based on his long fieldwork and knowledge of the Serbian ethnological literature he also helped me to become familiar with the classical writings in the field and with the broader cultural aspects of what was then Yugoslavia for Filipovic was born in a railway settlement in Bosnia not too far from Sarajevo and after his University studies in Belgrade he obtained a teaching job at the University of Skopje.. Also thanks to his broad views I discovered valuable publications by physicians concerned with rural health.

Milenko Filipović was an exceptional scholar in many ways. He was one of the best products of Cvijić's school, but he was at the same time very successful in tracing his own path, in carving an alternative approach focusing on dynamics and functions of the culture he simultaneously studied and belonged to himself. His Serbian colleagues were more locally oriented, with their vision turned inwards, solely to their own folk culture without comparative insights or sociological interests. **At this point in history it certainly is worth emphasizing that although he was a patriotic and dedicated Serb he always saw the Serbs as part of a broader multiethnic framework. It is certainly significant that not only was he born in Bosnia and had lived in Macedonia but that also the most successful parts of his postwar career were in Bosnia where he was fully accepted by the academic establishment and not marginalized as he was in Serbia. However, although his daughter Rada went to live and work in Bosnia as an ethnologist Filipovic, upon his retirement, chose to return to Belgrade where his other daughter continued to live. It certainly is worth noting that both of Rada's husbands were Croatian. My last memories of Filipovic were in the late 1960s when I visited him in his new and comfortable Belgrade apartment. In his spacious study the walls were lined with his neatly arranged field notes. Despite his large published output only a small portion of his writings were published. I continue to hope that one day these papers will surface and some deserving portion of them will be published.**

You and your wife were a very young couple (newlyweds as a matter of fact) when you first came to Serbia. Your relocation from New York suburbia to Orašac must have been accompanied with something like a cultural shock.(note editing of question)

*****8I begin my editing here

I(note editing) I was in Europe for the first time in 1949 when I traveled through parts of **northern** France, the Swiss Alps and **northern** Italy on a bike. I went as far as Naples, and from there I hitchhiked to Scandinavia. I spent some time in Sweden with the **Saami** (Lapps) just as they were **rounding up** their reindeer. The following summer I was in **northern Alaska**, on the Seward Peninsula, among the Eskimo (**note** edit). There, I worked **with** an archeological **team** **I also found** my own adventures, visiting a **placer** gold mine and **joining local people** hunting for small white whales (**Beluga**). I **from Koztzebue** and then hitchhiked back to New York. During **the early years of** my graduate studies I joined other expeditions, for example, an archeological dig in New Mexico, **as an undergraduate I had searched for** search for fossils in

Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and explored for uranium in northern Ontario. All by way of saying that I had some travel experience before arriving in Yugoslavia. But it is certainly true that the Balkans were a new world to me..

Still, all these were more summertime adventures and various professionally related skills-acquiring instances than experiences of extended fieldwork as defined by Malinowski. While it is certain that your familiarity with quite a few foreign countries and their cultures were helpful in your getting used to living in a Serbian village, it was still an entirely different predicament. You could not hitchhike back to New York once the summer was over, but on the contrary, you had to remain in the village for an entire year (and, let me add, at that age, early 20s, a year feels like an eternity!) and you had to collect meaningful data that would enable you to write and defend your doctoral dissertation. It seems like quite a bit of pressure. Could you please describe your first impressions, apprehensions, hopes and desires once you landed in Serbia.

What you say is quite true and our time in Serbia, especially in Orasac, represented my first major fieldwork. But all this happened a very long ago. In 1956 Barbara wrote a memoir her that remains unpublished. It concerned her impressions of life in Serbia at that time. But it is not only her memoir but our field notes which record our experiences. To date these also remain unpublished. But my dissertation which became the book, *A Serbian Village*, does, of course, deal with life then, now more than a half century ago.. This is why my last visit to Orasac in the fall of 2006 was such a wonderful experience which I had the privilege of experiencing with fine student assistants from the anthropology department in Belgrade and also with a colleague from the University of Graz who had written his doctoral dissertation on the demography of Orasac and its surrounding region. .

If we place our first visit to Orašac in a broader time perspective, it took place more than one quarter of the time since the First Uprising and that event seems to have taken place so long ago i.e. the 200th anniversary of the First Revolt took place in 2004 and we were first there at the time of the 150th anniversary in 1954. Still, I remember our first time in Orašac, in what now seems like a bit of romantic aura. This in spite of scarcity of consumer goods, and, more important, the political repression combined with the then relative isolation of a dictatorial regime looming like a Damocles' sword over everyone's head. For, of course, at that time there were relatively few tourists especially when compared to the millions from Western Europe that began to come a decade later. For us it was very pleasant.

It was the time before plastic waste and the piling up of long-term garbage like abandoned cars.. In those days everything was reused multiple times until much of the waste seem to degrade naturally without conscious effort. . In those days there were no privately-owned vehicles, and women on public transportation would lift their skirts in a certain way before taking a seat so that the skirt would last longer.. It was also the time when the differences between village and city dwellers, in patterns of speech and dress were (Note edit) readily discernable. In Older a few of the older men still chanted the heroic epics accompanied by the single string *gusle*. They also had an attentive. Beginning in the 1960s when radios became almost universal and TV made its appearance there was the competition of a

football (soccer) match or a sit-com .No one seemed to have much time for an recitation of an epic.

But in the early 1950s in the evenings time was still spent around a fire in an autumn evening. The crops were harvested and women did their spinning while young people sang folk songs amidst thoughts of courtship. One doesn't want to paint too rosy a picture about what might seem like authentic relationships but people did talk a lot, tell tales and sing songs without the distraction of mass media with its passive audience. .On holidays, especially the *slave*, the celebration of a family's patron saint, which involved the visit of the parish priest to individual homes. This took place despite the dominance of the communist ideology and its atheistic orientation. The government was keen to replace religious holidays with state holidays and everywhere in public spaces was the iconography of Tito. . *Slava* was interesting also because it reaffirmed, through hospitality rituals, relations between affinals (groom's and bride's families, kinship through marriage) in an otherwise emphatically patriarchal and patrilocal society. Of course other traditional festivities were also at variance with the official state holidays, along with regime-staged demonstrations and rallies For example, Christmas was a regular work day. Now it sometimes seems in the 21st century that to observe daily life that these times never were. .

Despite our romantic aura which Barbara and I put on full display during the filming of the "Halperns in Orasac" daily life was reple with hardships for all. .For example, on an everyday basis, children were sent away on winter mornings from warm homes into the cold, wind and blizzard, to walk alone, or with other pupils, from the neighborhood along backroads and, if necessary, through snow drifts to the village school often some kilometers away. Lard might be rubbed on hands to ward off the cold when there were no mittens.

We felt privileged in Orasac and other villages that , despite political propaganda about the negatives of Eastern capitalistic societies we were almost universally cordially welcomed. to their homes As two young Americans (they referred to us as " *Vi-Dečko* " ("you,-polite form, boy") and Barbara was sometimes spoken of as "*Mlada* " ("bride").. At that time they looked to America with respect and even envy, as a country whose standards and achievements should be emulated. They used to say: "Give us 50 years without a war, and Serbia will become a small America." How different it was in 2006, although I continued to be welcomed into homes by my old friends and even by strangers still not a few of the villagers raised the question of the American bombing. Interestingly these questions were not raised in my formal TV interviews or even , for the most part, in the book receptions I attended. .

Although World War II atrocities were not forgotten or even healed, and they had to live through daily hardships of trying to survive economically, the villagers were proud, dignified, secure in who they were and their hoped for future, confident in their own abilities. Optimism was radiating from almost every single villager. The following episode illustrates this point well. Our hosts were the proud owners of several pieces of high-quality German-soldier's stainless-steel mess kit which stood in sharp contrast to the poorly manufactured domestic aluminum silverware which easily broke... This difference to them was a positive sign that even though at this time Yugoslav industry was still not able to produce a adequate silverware yet, there , were able to defeat the well equipped Germans war machine. In these days of unquestioned

American military power this is a lesson that the U.S. has yet to learn.in the war, in spite of the latter's superior weaponry.

I am not saying that there were not "cultural surprises" when we encountered different customs. Surprises already began on our first trip to Orašac. We took a train from Belgrade to Mladenovac, and then a narrow **gauge** railway to Arandjelovac, the county seat. From there to Orašac we rode in a horse-drawn **peasant** cart that belonged to a villager who was returning home and who was asked by the President of the Village Council to bring us along. Just as Barbara was getting ready to climb into the seat next to him, he motioned to her to climb to the back of the cart, already filled with geese. I, as a male had the privilege of taking the front seat. My wife and I quickly became aware of the differences in defining and performing gender roles in a patriarchal setting.

All these were truly valuable experiences. On our later visits to Orašac we brought our three daughters with us. They also share fond memories of the times spent in the village. Today they are all married women with children of the age they were when they traveled to Orašac. The villagers were particularly fond of our oldest daughter, a physically able then teen ager., She was strong enough to perform a number of farming tasks. We have a lot of photos **of** her working in the field, stacking hay and carrying buckets. Our middle daughter also worked in the field, took care of the cattle, pigs and poultry and helped our hostess, Ljubica Stojanović with house chores. **Such as hanging out the laundry to dry. (please note edit here it is important that reference to her husband be eliminated).** Our youngest daughter who was nine years old in 1978 when you (M. Prošić-Dvornić) were with us in the village, she tended to pigs and fed poultry. It does not come as a surprise that Orašac and Serbia have left a lasting mark on their lives.**My oldest daughter who now works for the U.S. government Accountability Office which critiques official programs of the U.S. Congress has encountered office colleagues who are interested in how she learned about other cultures and was able to describe her experiences in an objective way. Such methods of ethnographic work they feel can be sometimes useful in the approaches they suggest for writing their reports on other cultures.**

. *A Serbian Village* is **now something of an** historic document about a time and the lifestyle that then prevailed but has now, **in certain essential ways**, disappeared. My photographs, of which only a small segment is printed in **Serbian village books, including the recent , Serbian translation, also have a related** significance. **Even now it is still possible to recall the excitement of a Saturday market in Arandjelovac, It was an integral part of the village life, with visits to sell livestock or produce and, in turn, purchase items from town artisans and vendors from other regions. Some of this activity persisted to late in the 20th century and was captured in the 1980s film, "The Halperns in Orasac."** This is so even though some **craft shops began to disappear even by the 1960's.** **There were other aspects to these town fairs as well , it was also a time for young villagers to get acquainted as groups of marriageable age girls and boys strolled along the main street participating in the "looking over" (gledanja) process. Both bachelors and maidens were dressed in their best. The men's folk costume was, at that time, still partly worn but the women's distinctive peasant dress had even then disappeared. But the drama of market day was not limited to courtship along the main street it was all part of the overall market experience. As, for example, at the livestock market men would bargain and then proceed to the final stages of**

negotiating by slapping each other's hands until they shook hands on the price of the final trade..

END for today Beginning 4 27

Of course, the passage of time did not only witness the disappearance of the old, but also the introduction of the new and positive. We personally experienced the significance of a series of economic developments. When we first came to Orašac, the household we stayed at, although belonging to a rather well-to-do family, had neither electricity nor running water. They did not even have their own well. However, already towards the end of our first stay, electric power came to the hamlet, which was, of course, a much anticipated event. School girls from the neighborhood created corn embellished chandeliers to adorn the new light bulbs. But even more significant was **our hosts'** digging of their own well in their yard. Ljubica, our hostess, did not have to go down to a glen to a rather distant **but helpful** neighbor to fetch **the** water from his well. She no longer had to shoulder her yoke of heavy buckets after filling them with water **and carry them** up the **quite steep** hill several times a day. Barbara's job was to fetch water from distant ponds (about 800 meters away) that was given to the cattle. Having their own well really helped women with their traditional chore of supplying water for the household, farm animals and watering the vegetable and flower gardens.

How did you decide where to live in Orašac, or was it decided for you by somebody else?

No, we did not choose ourselves. The decision had been made by the Village Council at a meeting held before we came to Orašac. The household of Žarko Stojanović, the Council Secretary at that time, was selected as our residence. It was a politically safe choice since Žarko was a state employee. In addition, his wife, Ljubica, was regarded as one of the best housekeepers in the village. Žarko's parents, grandpa Mileta and grandma Radojka, and **their** children, Ruža and Milan, lived with them in the same household. We were very fortunate to enter into a **three** generational household. On our later visits we continued to stay at their house and in time we have become really good friends, especially with the children. We followed their lives, shared their happy and sad moments. **By the 1990s everyone in the first two generations had died..**

Žarko committed suicide about twenty years ago. That was a very tragic moment. He had been depressed for some years before his death, and that had affected his health. He was a very complex and sensitive man, an idealist who had to come to terms with numerous disappointments. He fought in World War II with the Partisans, but only towards the end of the war which did not make him a **Prvi Borac, one who joined the communists at the outset in their war against the Germans after they had occupied the country and thus a stalwart** member of the privileged elite. He was neither a member of the Communist party, nor did he pursue a military career like his uncle and brother did, which would have also placed him in the upper social echelons. He became the Secretary of the Village Council instead., a position he held for **less than a decade after World War II.. In his position as Village Secretary he had** once been very active in arranging for the compulsory agricultural deliveries from the peasant farms in the village. **He became very disillusioned with his work and traumatized** by the strong government **government actions in what were envisaged as part of the drive** for collectivization, **which was subsequently abandoned..** He was also deeply **affected** by his war

experiences. For example, he could never behead a chicken. He once told me that he had seen too many Gypsies whose throats were slit, like they were livestock^{2[2]}. He never told me who the perpetrators were, the Serbs or the Germans, but clearly he would have had a chance to better observe the people whom he was fighting, the common enemy, **the Germans.** **But the** After giving up his administrative/political career, he returned to farm his small holding with care, diligence and pride. His holding was only about three hectares, well below the ten-hectare maximum amount allocated to peasants under the land reform.

I believe that one of the things that had made Žarko profoundly unhappy was his son's decision to become an auto mechanic and permanently move to **Belgrade**. Milan's refusal to succeed him on his land, his most valued possession, hurt him deeply. One of the images that comes to mind was that Žarko made a point of carting the hay for his cattle to the little barn in his yard in front of **where Milan's wedding guests were seated at the wedding feast.** He was very devoted to his two cows that he also used to pull the farm wagon and plow. This had inevitably affected the butterfat content of their milk, but nevertheless he was very proud of the cheese his wife made out of that milk and which he was pleased to take to his regular customers in Arandjelovac and sometimes even Belgrade. His farm was his life, almost his obsession. Unlike other villagers, I **had** never seen him go to the village café. **But his son Milan also loved the village and in the years after his retirement he often came to the village, staying at the old family house where he entertained his daughter and her children.**

I also vividly remember his reaction when during our second visit, **in the early 1960s**, I showed him a copy of *the "A Serbian Village"* book.. He **reflected**, "What is this, nothing but pieces of paper. If I were to spend money I would much rather be remembered for building a fountain where people could water their horses on the **road up the** Bukulja mountain than just making a bit of paper!" His remark was not, I think, meant to be unkind. He was not so much denouncing my research and publication, as he was asserting what truly mattered in **his** life, according to his set of values. Being an independent peasant landholder on his small parcel where he employed old fashioned agricultural techniques, which were already at that time an anachronism, was for him his life and ultimately cause for his untimely, tragic death. **But he insisted on pursuing his vanishing dream.**

I do not know about the incidence of rural male suicide in Serbia in the last decades of the twentieth century. But certainly, the progressive abandoning of land in the 1970's and 1980's has been a very important historical factor which, **if time allows**, I would like to write about. Do many of those who have immigrated to the cities now have summer residences in the village? **Some vacated** farm land in Orašac was taken over by Serbian refugees from Bosnia and Hercegovina during the latest Balkan wars in the 1990s. It would be important to assess as to

^{2[2]} There is a different example that comes to mind which reveals villagers' contempt and disdain for Gypsies to the point of not preventing their easy death. We were at the village graveyard one winter for one of those collective memorial feasts for the dead. The snow was very heavy that year and it was very cold. A Gypsy woman had come from Arandjelovac to partake in the memorials for free food and drink. She got a bit drunk and began falling down in snow drifts as the villagers were leaving the graveyard and the night was coming on. Barbara insisted that Ljubica helped her with the women and take her to a nearby house of the villager we knew very well. They requested permission for the woman to sleep off her drunk in the barn where cows and horses would provide enough warmth and ward off her freezing to death. He vehemently refused. Then they dragged the woman to the Village Council where Žarko was just finishing his day work. He banked the fire and let her sleep it off on the office floor.

weather the way of life Barbara and I found in Orašac in 1953-54 is now essentially nothing more than a memory culture. A peasant culture as we had known it has come to an end and with it collapsed the entire oral tradition that was still vital at the time of our first visit. **Several weeks in the fall of 2006 provided an opportunity to briefly appraise the situation. This is not the place for a definitive report but it does seem that peasant agriculture is becoming a memory. A few descendants who have held on to the land do keep bees and a bit of a garden but all other forms of livestock have disappeared from many former households. A few villagers who have earlier migrated have chosen to retire in Orasac but a far greater number of individuals with no kin in the community have purchased vacation homes near the road. .**

After Žarko had passed, the family house was abandoned as Ljubica moved to her daughter's and son-in-law's house near the main road. They built the house upon their return to the village after a long period of working in Switzerland.

It is a lasting pleasure for us to stay in touch with Milan and Ruža and their families. We were deeply touched when Milan called us at the time of 9/11 incident to determine if we were alright and that no one in our family was harmed. I had been in touch with him in 1990s when he went through hard economic times like so many people in Serbia. **Thus it was with great pleasure that I was able to see him in the fall of 2006 and, as usual, he was a great help to me in my research.**

We were very fond of the entire Stojanović family. **and ******* mutually considered ourselves to be close friends and we thought of their hamlet as our second home. We were happy to witness any economic development and in the early 1980's we contributed to the voluntary fund to build a **permanent** road in their part of the village. This marked the end of a **difficult** dirt road on which it was equally hard to walk or drive in rainy weather. **The soil had a clay like consistency which was good for the raw materials used by the electric insulator factory in Arandjelovac but very slippery when wet..**

You mention repressions against the villagers?

Having contacts with Americans at the time of our first stay in the village was not without a risk. I remember one event that took place soon after our arrival to the village. Our first stop was the village coffee house (**kafana**). We were soon approached by a woman whose brother lived in Chicago. She asked us why we had come from America to this "God forsaken place". She disappeared after that and we **did** not see her for several months. She was in jail.

Once by chance I witnessed an instance of physical repression. I went to the police station in Arandjelovac to take care of some visa issue. I happened to open a wrong door and I saw policemen beating-up a villager. I myself was a victim of **an organized** professional demonstrators by official thugs. **This was** at the time of the Trieste crisis. They physically attacked me in the entry hall of the apartment building in the y Belgrade center where my wife and I **rented a room.. I thought** that that was a mistake, that they had confused me with someone else. **For I had read in the Belgrade papers that foreigners were not to be harmed in the demonstrations.** They **only slightly** bloodied me, but they did not use bars or heavy implements and there certainly was no attempt to kill me. They left me after I began yelling in

English. **after they first asked me in Serbian if I was a foreigner and I switched to English when the blows began to fall. It was these hired demonstrators who had been** specifically ordered to leave foreigners alone.

All later trips to Serbia, during 1960's and 1970's, **until** 1990 when my wife and I were there last together, were connected with unpleasant hardships of acquiring permits for field research and living under **the suspicious scrutiny of the local** authorities . **Clearly, a consistent attempt was made to keep us** on a short official string. During our first long stay we were granted visa **permits** for only a few months at a time. **Then on each occasion as the permit was about to expire** we had to **return** to Belgrade to renew **our permit..** It was a **very unpleasant task to return to the major internal security headquarters of what was then called the** UDBA **(Evidently this building was severely damaged by NATO bombs in 1999) It was located on** Knez Miloša Street, just a few blocks down from the American Embassy. It was really tedious to repeat the same procedure over and over again, and I admit I was burdened with severe self-censorship. I was always very careful not to make a wrong move, not to say a wrong word, or write a wrong sentence, to avoid anything that could jeopardize our chances to go back to Serbia and Orašac **Although from today's perspective when inquiring foreign journalists can be behaded in some countries our travails may have seemed minor and they were but nevertheless the scrutiny and obligations created something of a garrison state of mind when dealing with this sort of officialdom.** .

But changes did take place from the time of the very restrictive 1950s For example, research topics that the Social Policy Programm of the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, Netherlands, undertook on , Socialism and Democracy conducted in two Šumadija villages in 1971 and 1972 (the Report, consisting of five parts, was published in August 1972), was exactly the type of work I avoided in the 1950s and 1960s for fear of being too political and possibly banned from the area. Also i considered the possibility that the consequences of such research but have an adverse effect on the local people. Not, of course, the significance of the research but the security focusing on how the researchers got access to local people.. Still, I cannot say that we lived in fear. The Yugoslav government at that time depended on American economic and military aid, and the worst thing that could have happened to us was deportation. However, we never really thought that that was an even a remote possibility.

I will not forget the many ways in which the new ideological order inhibited us in our research. I was even more concerned to protect the villagers from any potential inconvenience or harm. I remember with particular displeasure a little essay contest I conducted in the Orašac school in which I asked the pupils to write about the history of their village, about childhood, favorite holidays and their hopes for the future. Small prizes were offered for the best essays. Fortunately, for whatever reason, the teacher did not read the essays. After returning to Belgrade I read them very carefully and discovered that some of the children wrote in what might now be called a politically incorrect way. One child, in particular, described how his section of the village, suspected of having Chetnik sympathies during World War II, had been burned down by the Partisan forces. I immediately became alarmed about the possible consequences to this child, and his family, if this paper should fall into official hands. At that period of our first stay in the village, **i.e. the early fifties**, World War II was the **dominant** time marker in all conversations (“before” and “after The War”), but officially it was celebrated as the **time of**

the Partisan victory over **the** Germans and **the** internal enemies, the Chetniks. Every village had its monument to the Partisan dead, while the deaths of the Chetniks and others officially passed unnoticed. Thus, anybody exposing Partisans in negative light would **be thus questioning the authority of the State and in potential** trouble. **As earlier noted we were introduced to this fact of life when we first arrived in the village** I suppose it would have been possible to remove the child's name from the essay, but there was still his handwriting. The discovery of such a paper in my possession would obviously have also imperiled my stay in Orašac. In any case, although I hated doing it, I immediately burned the "offending" essay in the bathroom of our Belgrade apartment, which we shared with a Montenegrin minor official and his family. I flushed the remaining ashes down the toilet.

I was always careful not to accumulate my field notes and other materials in my Belgrade or in the village. I made sure they were mailed promptly out of the country, to my address in the States, often in ways other than through the Yugoslav mail. I never wanted to take a chance of someone making lists of local names or interpreting data in a possibly harmful way.

Of course, now on my .most recent visit in the fall of 2006 the political parameters had completely changed. It was a distinct pleasure to work through my colleague at the University. No permits were needed. Also all the overt political indicators had changed. One of my first thoughts was to look for the five pointed communist star in the graveyard, marking the deceased as a party member. Such markers may have persisted but I didn't find any. In paying a courtesy call at the office of a ranking administrative official in Arandjelovac I was struck by the two framed portraits on his desk. One was of the leader of the First Revolt and the founder of the dominant dynast of Yugoslavia, Karageorge. The other was of the World War II leader of the Chetniks, Draza Mihailovic, who was executed by the Communist government after the war in a show trail. There was also, the new to me, museum honoring the First Revolt located next to the village church.

It seems that it was becoming harder and harder to get all the necessary permits as the time went by. This in turn seems to be in sharp contrast to the alleged gradual democratization of the society from the early 1970's on. I have met you and Barbara in 1978 when the Department of Ethnology has asked me to accompany you during your stay in the village, because of the changes enforced in the 1974 revision of the Constitution and specific laws and regulations that stemmed from it. According to them, foreign researchers were allowed to leave the metropolitan area (Belgrade in this case) only if accompanied of a domestic "opposite number". That is how I had become your companion, your "guardian angel". It could have been a very awkward situation, but luckily for all of us, and contrary to your experiences with the authorities, you have always had only positive rapports with colleagues throughout Yugoslavia. You knew that you could not conduct your research without my participation, and I knew that you were very relaxed in my presence becoming more and more convinced as the time went by that I had nothing but professional interests in mind. Let me confess: the president Countu Council in Arandjelovc found a moment when you were engaged in a conversation with one of his aids, to tell me, in strict confidence, that they expected me to report anything I may find questionable or suspicious in your actions. Contrary to his expectations I did not assure him that I would do that, but that I was convinced that you would never do anything to cause them to become suspicious, with or

without my reports. He understood me very well and nobody has ever approached me again with similar suggestions there. Months after our return from the village, I was asked to go to the Ministry of Interior for “debriefing”, but I told them flatly that there was nothing to “debrief” me about. They did not pressure me at all, but they did offer some advice to the “young scientist” (perceived also as “naïve”, I am sure) how field research is very sensitive matter and that a lot of seemingly harmless information can be used to weaken the defense of a country. You, your wife and I and my family have met many times after that, in Yugoslavia, USA or in a third country while attending international anthropological conferences, but I was never approached again. I guess I was a disappointment as a potential counter-espionage agent.

I do have the distinct impression that things were always changing. In our stay in Yugoslavia in 1961-62 there was a much freer atmosphere than there was a decade earlier in 1953-54. Although I am not saying that I did not have some difficulties in 1964 while working with a group of American graduate students in Bosnia, generally speaking I know that the situation became much tenser again in the 1970's. That had to be attributed to the change in political course and its legalization in the 1974 Constitution.

But, as for our colleagues, it was always a great pleasure to work and socialize with them. There were many scholars in our and older generation with whom we have had good collegiate relations. Let me mention a few. Dr. Miloš Macura, Director of the Serbian Statistical Bureau in 1953-1954, and of the Federal Statistical Bureau 1961 helped us to obtain detailed demographic data, with names, from all post World War II censuses not only for Orašac, but for all other parts of the former Yugoslavia in which I had conducted research. It must be said that over the decades of my work there I obtained for Orašac a total of some forty data bases of varying degrees in length. I have to strongly emphasize that at that time the Yugoslavs/Serbs were much more open and generous in sharing data with scholars than the U.S. rigidly controlled census data which could only be released with names some seventy years later. Other colleagues have helped with me in collecting archival data. It is very difficult for me to single any one of them, or even list all of those who have made a major contribution to my research. However, I do have to mention the village council clerk who had worked with me in great detail (of course, I was happy to compensate his overtime after office hours) and provided me with vital records and other local data which were extremely important in enabling me to do subsequent analyses.

As for other forms of collaboration with the local colleagues, of course they could have been more elaborate, intensive, in formal (for instance joint projects, student exchange) as well as informal kind, but there were never any conflicts. Some officials in Belgrade have shown a great degree of understanding the nature of our work and have helped us when needed. If our colleagues were assigned special tasks, like you were, the outcome depended on their own approach and attitude. You for one, thought nothing of it. On the other hand, if a person had a separate political agenda, then the events could have taken a different course.

Villagers too were not giving in to the pressure from the authorities. Once, during our 1953-54 stay, the police from Arandjelovac came to speak with our hosts while we were away, possibly in Belgrade (so, yes, there was monitoring, I guess). I do not know if I ever knew or possibly cannot remember who was actually at home that day, but a story that came out of the encounter

is as follows. Baba Radojka (Mileta's wife and Žarko's mother) spoke to the policemen and said: "What a shame to think that your mother brought you up to be a policeman!" I am not aware that Žarko and his family suffered any disability for housing us on our visits for all those years. After all, his home was chosen as our residence by the Village Council.

Many years later, in 1987, when Kamenko Katić, a Belgrade television documentary reporter, was filming a story about us and our work in the village, for his very successful series "Mentioned in Passing", a policeman came up to his crew at the market in Arandjelovac with the intention of chasing them away for "illegal action". The crew was quite angry, yelled at him that he does not know the law and send him away in no time.

On the other hand, I will mention one instance when the authorities were asking me to do them a favor. Obviously, I was under the watchful eyes of Yugoslav diplomats in the U.S. as well. I remember a ludicrous incident from the 1960s when word went out through Foreign Ministry channels to drum up support for Tito's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. One of the diplomatic representatives hunted me down at a family wedding in New York City to plead with me to write to Oslo to the Nobel Peace Committee to nominate Tito for this honor. One can imagine how desperate they were for support and what kind of pressure these diplomats were to engage in these derisive efforts.

In spite of the precautions you have so diligently worked out, you still could not avoid being connected to some alleged spying activities.

I was never officially accused of espionage but my name was **published in Belgrade newspapers as having a connection** to other **foreigner's** alleged spying activities. **Attention was directly mainly to Americans and American universities. These accounts first appeared in the late 1960s. For some time I had wondered how my name first came to the attention of the security police. In the early 1970s a student drew my attention to a book** written by a retired U.S. army general on psychological warfare, *A Serbian Village* was quoted as an excellent source for understanding Serbia and Yugoslav culture in general. Of course, I did not write a book for the **needs of the U.S. army** or for any type of warfare. The general in question has come across the book in **his independent research** and he **made the evaluation in compiling his bibliography. At the same time it should be stated that much research in the U.S. on Eastern Europe during the Cold War period was financed by U.S. government agencies and a significant amount has been written about this. But, at the same time, it should also be stressed that there was a great deal of cooperative research by Yugoslav scholars such as sociologists with colleagues in Western Europe and the U.S. Some of it concerned applied interests as in the field of public health. There had also been a tradition of such cooperative research in pre World War II Yugoslavia This was partly financed by the League of Nations and also by organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation. As referred to earlier by Professor at Columbia, Philip Mosely had a grant to do such research in the Balkans, including Yugoslavia, in the late 1930s. But it is also true that the ethnologists, with whom I was in contact, worked in a relatively isolated field. But even here if one looks at the history of Yugoslavia, and specifically of Serbian scholarship there is significant contact from the beginning. This is specifically true of the icon of Serbian ethnology, Jovan Cvijic. Before World War I he had studied in France and at the time of the Versailles**

conference he wrote monographs and pamphlets on Serbian human geography and history designed to influence the peace delegations on behalf of the new Yugoslavia. What was new in all of this and part of my experience was the hostility of the conservative security service of the Yugoslav state and their hostility toward the West.

I mentioned earlier that there were some difficulties in Bosnia in 1962 and 1964. In 1962 **I undertook research with groups of students in** sociology, political science, law and other social sciences, **including ethnology**, students in all parts of Yugoslavia to gather information on socio-economic life, family structures, division of labor and other similar topics, based on a questionnaire that I took me and Professor Vojin Matić, a methodology professor at the University of Belgrade, a year to design. When the field research had been completed I deposited copies of all gathered materials to all university departments and research institutes that have, through their students' and associates' participation, taken part in this project. A segment of the research conducted in Serbia was published in one of the publications of the Ethnographic Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art. Only in Bosnia and Hercegovina I did not deposit the materials myself. One of my research assistants, a nice, hard working law student, promised that he would deposit them for me. In the meantime he decided that he wanted to pursue a career with the police, so instead of taking questionnaires, field notes, and other documents to be archived at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Sarajevo, as he had promised, he turned them over to the police to help advance his career goals. As a result there was a lot of negative press in Sarajevo, but of course, no connection or proof of "spying intent" could be found. A little later, in 1968, another team of American scholars, William Lockwood and his wife Yvonne, working in the Bugojno area (at that time a part of Bosnia and Hercegovina, one of the former republics comprising the Yugoslav Federation), were encountering their share of trouble. Only Lockwood, a child of the 1960's and its anti-government ideology, did not think of going to the American Consulate in Sarajevo to seek help through official channels. Instead they were deported and denied a reentry visa. They had to give up their field research in Yugoslavia and continue to work with Croatian minority in Austria.^{3[3]}

The second incident that involved me happened only two years later. In 1964 I was conducting field work with a group of graduate students from Brandeis University in the environs of Vareš and Maglaj. The purpose of this summer expedition was not to gather any particular data but rather to provide them with the opportunity to master some of the fieldwork techniques. There were no problems during our stay there. However, later on, in 1968, one of the students, Leon Bresloff, decided to come back to Yugoslavia, to Orašac and Bugojno, and continue the research on his own. Unfortunately he picked Bugojno, a sensitive area because of the presence of

^{3[3]} William and Yvonne Lockwood were investigating the impact of markets and fairs on peasant life. However, the authorities claimed, which was all duly and loudly reported in Bosnian press, that there were multiple denunciations filed by ordinary civilians about Lockwood's transgressions of the scope of the research as it was described in his application. He has taken advantage of the villagers' hospitality and trust and ventured into areas of questioning that the informants did not feel comfortable with. He would, according to the witnesses, insist on male informants telling him where exactly they had served their army term. This was characterized as "extracting information of military importance". Further, he demanded the villagers to sing songs disparaging other ethnic groups and nationalities. If the informants refused and said that they did not know any songs with such content, he would play back the recordings he had previously made. This line of questioning was characterized as provoking "inter-ethnic intolerance in Bosnia and Hercegovina". The police believed that scientific research was only a smoke screen for espionage (*Oslobodjenje*, Sarajevo, February 29, 1968).

military facilities and industry, to criticize the Yugoslav version of socialism and advocate Albanian model of Communism. In the spirit of the time, he was deported from the country as a spy, and "*Oslobodjenje*" featured an article on the well known spies, Lockwood and Bresloff, pretending to do scholarly research. My name was mentioned as well, not as a spy, but as a spy's professor. Ten years later a Belgrade daily, "*Politika*", published an article and a separate brochure entitled "Science and Espionage" in which a large number of American research projects were qualified as works with dual purpose: scholarly and intelligence. My name was listed there as well. It was only a newspaper article, not an official accusation, but still it was a very unpleasant experience. I was never denied a visa or a research permit. To the contrary, every mention of my name in the espionage implying context was followed by an oral confirmation from the upper official echelons that I was welcome to return to Yugoslavia and continue my work there.

Sometimes, these newspaper articles could have a hilarious twist. For example, Žarko was once in Belgrade delivering cheese to one of his regular customers. While he was measuring his product, he looked over his customer's shoulder to see what he was reading in the newspaper. It was one of those articles insinuating my covenant espionage activities. It was truly ironical that he in whose house I was staying and who knew my every move, read something so absurd about my work when he was far away from his village. Žarko was not scared. He found the episode quite amusing.

This is not the end the "spy novel" in which you were allotted a prominent role. There is still another bizarre sequel in which you play a very different role.

Yes, that last episode was truly the most bizarre of them all. I still cannot understand how all those connections were made. It starts in late 1980s or early 1990s when the weekly "*Duga*" published a brief biographic article on Lawrence Durrell, a well-known British novelist, poet, dramatist and travel write, and the author of the critically acclaimed "*Alexandria Quartet*". (It is known that he was a British intelligence officer during World War II in Cairo and Alexandria). Durrell was appointed a press attaché position in the British Embassy in Belgrade (1948-1952). During his stay he collected materials for another book, "*White Eagles Over Serbia*", published in 1957. "*Duga*" also reprinted extracts from this espionage novel which depicts the authentic atmosphere in Belgrade at that time and British attempts to destabilize Tito's regime in which Durrell played a significant part. The article was illustrated with a strange conglomerate of photographs. Some of them made perfect sense. There was one of Mr. Durrell, a popular flamboyant bon vivant, admired in Belgrade for his unconventional lifestyle. Then there were a few images by the internationally famous German-born fashion photographer, Helmut Newton, known for his erotic studies of nude women. The photos representing beautiful nude women in provocative poses, juxtaposed by fully dressed male figures attentively and appreciatively, mostly visually, inspecting their naked bodies with an aura of fetishism, fitted very well into the story of espionage, eroticism and mysteriousness of the profession. The remaining three photographs were, however, a total puzzle. They were my photographs taken in Orašac in 1953-54 that were reprinted without my knowledge or permission, in violation of all copyright laws, from "*A Serbian Village*", or more likely, because of the accessibility of the source from "*Pregled*" ("*Review*"), a magazine published by the American Embassy. In one of its issues in 1987, Barbara and I have published a joint article on our long term research in Orasac and the

dynamics of change in the rural culture. The article was illustrated with a number of my photographs, three of which have appeared in “*Duga*”. One was showing an elderly couple in front of their dilapidated, modest home. The other represented twin sisters and their family holding beaded chandeliers. The third one, however, was the most bizarre and intriguing. It represents us as a young couple dressed in Ljubica’s and Žarko’s Šumadija-style folk costumes that they wore only on special occasions and kept as their burial attire. A circumstance under which this photograph was taken was also bizarre. One day during our first stay in the village, in 1953, our friends, an American history professor and his wife, stopped by the Stojanović’s household to spend a lazy afternoon with us. They thought that it would be fun to put on the costumes and take photographs dressed as Serbian peasants. We took turns, first our friends, then us. We posed at the door of the old house which was not torn down after the new one had been built, but turned into a pig sty. I used this photograph for the first time in 1987, in the TV documentary series “Mentioned in Passing”. After that the same image appeared in “*Pregled*”, then in “*Duga*” and finally on the cover of the first Serbian translation of “*A Serbian Village*”. A few years ago I attached it to a brief article on the use of photography in anthropology. I have never suspected that a snapshot taken for fun out of boredom would experience such an interesting history. The bizarre twist is in the figure caption in the “*Duga*” article. It reads: “Healthy peasant component: a bastion against Communist dictatorship.” What a turn in symbolic meanings: from a spy to Serbian peasant defender of the nation against Communism. There are actually layers and layers of meanings hidden in this photograph and its connotations. In the “White Eagles over Serbia” Durrell’s characters, intelligence agents, are camouflaging themselves as Serbian peasants by adorning folk attire: baggy trousers tacked into awkward riding boots, greasy fur hat, typical woolen coat. The transformation was complete. I believe that any further comments are redundant.

You have thus, through a manipulation of a neutral photograph, even become involved, not knowingly, with the revived Serbian nationalism of 1990s. A journalist needed a visual symbol of nationalism, but his construction was based on very shaky grounds, on false assumptions, on a fraud.

It seems so. But let me add that I have never been impressed that local people were much concerned with the idea of having all Serbs in one (mono-ethnic) state (although my last contact with the rural Serbian people prior to this interview was in 1990, that is before the latest aggressive redefining of national identities from above and the latest bloody ethnic wars). I have witnessed more the expression of essential patriotism, a pride in military service and determination to fight foreign aggressors from the Turks to the Germans. I would like to see the honest, hard-working, patriotic, and entrepreneurial people of Orašac together with their compatriots from all of Serbia firmly establish a peaceful, truly democratic state congruent with their values.

Sixteen years later, in the fall of 2006, you have returned to Serbia again for the promotion of your book “A Serbian Village” printed for the first time in Serbian translation. This is finally, although grossly overdue, a recognition of your important contribution to the broadening of our knowledge and understanding of Serbian rural culture, past and present, and its change over time. You have provided a necessary complementary view of the culture through the eyes of an outsider and a scholar who was trained within different research paradigms. Your extensive

research, constant quest for new topics and numerous publications and presentations throughout the world have made a small Serbian village famous in the world of anthropology. If the book had been available sooner in the local language it would have left, I am sure, a stronger impact on earlier generations of Serbian ethnologists/anthropologists. We cannot undo the past, but we can hope that this will become an inspiring piece of literature, a solid stepping stone to all our colleagues aspiring to conduct community studies. Our hope is that there will soon be established a Joel M. Halpern archive somewhere in Serbia as well, storing your incredibly rich materials collected over many decades: filed notes, historical documents, census data, tapes with interviews and examples of oral tradition, thousands of photographs, literature and much more. You have recently donated copies of your documentation, now in digitalized version, to some important institutions in the United States, as for example National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution. Recently you have also deposited parts of your archives, pertaining to particular subject matter (center for the study of family and household structures in Bradford, England, or territory (Department for the History of South-Eastern Europe at the University of Graz, Austria; ethnological departments at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia and Skopje, Macedonia to those relevant institutions.

We would all like to know what your impressions of Orašac were sixteen-year later and in the aftermath of the post-communist period and the tumultuous times of transition. But it is the story of different era, of new beginnings and new dilemmas. We are very grateful for your taking us in an interesting and stimulating journey of your fieldwork experiences during the Communist period. We feel as if we had conducted a fieldwork of a fieldwork, so to say. We have peeped behind the curtain and we have discovered a well of interesting insights into your work and the circumstances under which it had been carried out

Thank you very much.

*Mirjana Prošić-Dvornić, Ph.D.
Northwood University
Midland, Michigan, USA*

March 2007