

HUMAN RIGHTS IN YUGOSLAVIA (Senate - May 03, 1990)

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Mr. RIEGLE. Mr. President, on April 24, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a hearing focusing on human rights in Yugoslavia. I was pleased to participate in that hearing and to offer my support to those fighting for human rights in that country, particularly Mr. Dobroslav Paraga.

In testimony presented at the hearing, Mr. Paraga asserted that 'Yugoslavia, without pause, continues to trample fundamental human rights and freedoms as they are drawn in the Helsinki Accords and the Universal Declarations of the Rights of Man.'

More than 8 months ago, the Senate unanimously adopted Senate Resolution 169, which I submitted, calling for greater respect for human rights in Yugoslavia and commending the work of Mr. Paraga. Congressman **William Broomfield** then submitted identical legislation, House Resolution 240, in the House.

Mr. President, the negative reaction of not only the Yugoslav Government, but, even more disturbing, of our own State Department, to these resolutions, has raised serious questions about the commitment of our Government to supporting respect for fundamental human rights around the globe.

The Congress must resist efforts by the administration to shift the burden of guilt away from the offending government and onto individuals, such as Mr. Paraga, who are simply seeking to practice, and to guarantee for others, fundamental human rights.

Mr. President, last week's Human Rights Caucus hearing made a vital contribution to that effort. I congratulate the caucus chairmen, Congressman **Tom Lantos** and Congressman **John Porter**, and all members of the caucus for their fine work, and I ask that the text of Mr. Paraga's testimony be printed in full at this point in the **Record**.

The testimony follows:

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Dear Members of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and Members of the Senate:

I, Croatian activist for Human Rights, along with my friends and associates, struggle for a small piece of the freedom and democracy that your citizens in the United States of America enjoy every day.

In many parts of the Yugoslavian Federal country the state of human rights is akin to being in the middle ages, Ethnic Albanians in the south are even more oppressed than Croatians are in the north. Albanians constitute 10 percent of the

total population of Yugoslavia, yet they bear as much as 80 percent of the total number of political prisoners.

On the eve of this hearing the Yugoslavian administration fearing this gathering in the U.S. Congress has put a halt to its incredible actions in the Kosovo region, but countless victims and political prisoners remain. One of these Juraj Pilko has just written on his treatment from his jail cell in Stara Gradiska where he is enduring 6 years of incarceration for sending 6 letters to foreign destinations.

Following S. Res. 169, dated August 4th 1989, and sponsored by Michigan Senator Donald Riegle, the first ever resolution related to Yugoslavia and condemning the trampling of human rights in Yugoslavia, their administration promised to implement a multi-party system which has still not been carried out in 4 out of a total of 6 republics.

Upon Rep. William Broomfield's introduction in Congress of H. Res. 240 for protection of human rights in my country, and during which time he simultaneously sent home visiting Yugoslavian Prime Minister Markovic, who was looking for a handout, empty-handed, the Yugoslavian Secretary of State requested in the Croatian Assembly complete amnesty for political prisoners, a request which not only has been set aside but, in direct contradiction to it, the number of political prisoners rose significantly.

Last week just prior to the very beginning of this hearing, the Yugoslavian administration reached a decision to pardon 108 political prisoners. Among those pardoned is the well-known Albanian writer Adem Demaqi who has spent a total of 29 years incarcerated for the sole reason of having founded one of that regime's impermissible opposition parties. Demaqi was in fact released from prison two days ago into what amounts to be house arrest, as evidenced by the presence of the special forces of the police and the dispersal of the throngs of well-wishers welcoming him home by threats of open fire upon them if they didn't disperse within 20 minutes.

In the meantime thousands of others, not as well-known as Demaqi, remained incarcerated. Likewise in 1977 prior to the conference on European Security and Collaboration in Belgrade, the authorities announced the pardon of 763 political prisoners, of which in reality 26 were released. Among those released was the well-known dissident Mihajlo Mihajlov, who is present here among us today.

In Yugoslavia, moreover, the political police responsible for persecuting millions of the population, for physically liquidating its political opponents, and who perpetuate this reign of terror, have never been disbanded. The secret police is, to this day, the instrument of repression because of its protection of the Communist party and its monopoly on power.

The pinnacle of this kind of manipulative reign is represented by their choice for the President of the Electoral Commission for the first multi-party elections in Croatia in 51 years, which were held 2 days ago. Mr. Milko Gajski, President of the

Electoral Commission and now also president of the Supreme Court of Croatia, is directly responsible for my maltreatment in the investigative jail in Zagreb. He is responsible for the torture and death of my friend Ernest Brajder in the same jail, for the hundreds and hundreds of rigged political processes as well as electric shock treatment tortures. He had been the president of the District Court for 20 years in which this jail and torture chamber are located. Just because of this unacceptable fact the conducted multi-party elections in Croatia could not have been orderly or legitimate.

Recently, in Zagreb, I was personally elected by secret ballot, and coincidentally without my presence, into the innermost leadership of one of the newly created political parties in Croatia. Meanwhile according to the regulations governing the organization of parties, I am prohibited from assuming my duties because I presently am under a political sentence, exiled from Croatia to neighboring Slovenia.

Even though the presidents of the Human Rights Caucus, Rep. Tom Lantos and Rep. John Porter on October 26, 1989 wrote the president of the Federal Yugoslavian government, A. Markovic, to ensure respect for human rights and to allow for the investigation of the mysterious death of Ernest Brajder who died in custody in 1980, Markovic, to this day, has not done this, and, furthermore against myself he has not set aside the court sentence of jail and prohibition of public appearances. But then Markovic during his visit to Washington, when addressing members of the Foreign Affairs Committee, declined any kind of guarantees for my undisturbed return to my homeland.

This past month I sent to the address of everyone of the approximately 190 members of this respected caucus photographs and names of the innocent Yugoslavian citizens killed in February of this year, whose only crime was to be on the streets demanding the establishment of a multi-party system and free elections.

Yugoslavia has not at all resolved its problems of respecting basic human rights nor its problem of respecting the equality and national sovereignty of the small nations which, whether they wanted to or didn't want to, reside within her. By this behavior Yugoslavia, without pause, continues to trample fundamental human rights and freedoms as they are drawn in the Helsinki Accords and universal declarations of the rights of man.

While in my country I am forbidden to speak, sentenced to silence. Here in the American Human Rights Caucus and your Senate, you have made it possible for me to speak openly and publicly, welcoming me and all people who dream of freedom and justice in the jails of Yugoslavia. The Human Rights Caucus and the Senate of the United States of America are magnificent examples of how the American nations defends the freedom of the small nameless man as well as the freedom of enslaved nations.

H. Res. 240, introduced by Rep. William Broomfield, is necessary and indispensable because the governing body of Yugoslavia only comprehends this kind of language and also because Yugoslavia, as opposed to the Soviet Union, is completely dependent for its survival upon the economic aid of the United States and the West.

Some members of Congress and some of the administration of the State Department oppose this resolution and unintentionally prolong the continuation of dictatorship in Yugoslavia. From this spot I invite them to a higher understanding to help H. Res. 240 through the election because the path to freedom and justice cannot be stopped by anyone.

Therefore, I am hopeful in the name of all those oppressed and thirsty for respect and human rights that H. Res. 240 will be adopted by you on the floor and that the opposition against it will cease in the subcommittee for Europe and the Middle East.

I would also like to express my deepest respect and gratitude to the Human Rights Caucus, particularly to Tom Lantos, William Broomfield, John Porter and William Lipinski and to the Senate of the United States of America, particularly Donald Riegle, Carl Levin, Paul Simon, Alan Dixon, Jesse Helms, John Chafee, and Edward Kennedy for this day today and for all that you have done and are doing for freedom and the defense of the persecuted and humiliated in my homeland and the whole world. Thank you, God Bless America: Dobroslav Paraga.

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