

## Speech of Slobodan Milosevic at Kosovo Polje

April 24-25, 1987

There is no need for us trade places with each other in order for us to seek accountability for you, as our colleague suggested a short time ago in the discussion. That is our duty. When the issue is about this unpleasant event today and the police intervention, responsibility will take shape regarding this intervention for which there was no reason. When our friend Mitar filled us in on what happened in front of the building, you know well that in a single minute we agreed that order isn't maintained by the police, but you take this upon yourselves in the interest of the safety of the citizens and children who are there. Proof that we correctly agreed is that order was thoroughly maintained and that the issue is about the people who behaved in such a lordly way.

At the conclusion of this discussion I wish to say a word or two about how they assess, how they qualify our gatherings such as these. To be brief, gatherings such as these aren't nationalist gatherings. Gatherings such as these aren't gatherings of enemies. But that is exactly why I know that the majority of the nation thinks that way in this hall and elsewhere, we can't allow this for the very reason that this is not a gathering of enemies, but of citizens. We can't allow ill-wishing people to misuse nationalists which every upstanding person must oppose. We must protect brotherhood and unity like the pupil of our eyes. But because of exactly that, today when brotherhood and unity are jeopardized, we must and can win. Neither do we wish, nor are we able, to divide people into Serbs and Albanians, but rather we must create delimiters both for the upstanding and progressive ones that fight for brotherhood and unity and national equal rights and for the counter-revolutionaries and nationalists on the other side.

Further, I want to tell you, have faith that not one of the problems about which you spoke, literally not one word about them, will be left out before the members of the Central Committee SK Serbia. And that's not to say we're just informing them, but rather we'll solve them in the environment of our institutional system. I feel compelled to say this at the outset, because it isn't even physically possible to speak of all the questions that have been raised here.

To everyone today, throughout all of Yugoslavia, it is clear that Kosovo is a huge problem for our people that will be very slowly solved. I must, meanwhile, tell you that Kosovo has been the only problem, or at least the only larger problem for the Yugoslav people, that could surely be solved faster and better.

But Kosovo has struck us as the weightiest problem during a difficult economic crisis, when standards have fallen drastically, when prices have climbed, when there are more unemployed.

And that's how it is a political crisis: Yugoslavia is a nation unsettled by separatists and nationalists as you well know in many of your areas, even those not far from here on Kosovo, and at last, when anti-Yugoslav and anti-communist forces are all the more present and all the more aggressive. As you see, all at once and all at the same time there were many serious problems and that's why our people and the communist party have a huge load and show slowness in their solutions.

And in the solving of all these problems the communist party hasn't always been unified, and because of that it couldn't be adequately effective. I'm not saying this to chastise them, because I wouldn't have the right to do that, but rather I'm merely making a determination.

So that we could solve the problems on Kosovo, like all the other problems that we have, it falls upon us to have a unified communist party, and that unity is the most critical task facing the party today. That wish for unity has been rightfully expressed by almost every speaker at the two-day meeting held by SK Serbia. I am faithful we have taken a sizable step toward the unity of SK Serbia and SKJ. And really, with unity we can solve many problems, if not all. Without unity we can't solve even one.

In spite of many changes, some of you have brought up here, at least those that have till now attempted, and especially in the last year, that the state of things on Kosovo in economic and political and other terms are dissatisfying.

Kosovo is also underdeveloped, unemployment is high, it is in deep foreign debt. What is hardest of all, there is an ill-intended element present and at work in many functions, and in the political realm. We spoke about that yesterday at the meeting of the Presidency PK Kosovo.

We spoke about the fact that the process of education and training, such as the personnel in political taxation, and others has the spirit of separatism and often counter-revolution.

The process of settling Serbia and Montenegro under economic, political, or ordinary physical pressure created what was likely the last tragic exodus of an entire European population. The last time such a procession of despairing people set off was in the middle of the century.

I know that you don't need to listen to more of what was, and some guy's analysis of the present situation doesn't interest you either. That's fine. You and all of us can be interested in and need to be interested in only those agreements that can change things for the better, that solve this position which reasonable people, above all, you, and then us also, aren't satisfied with.

But I want, at first anyway, to assure you that enough measures in the spheres of material life, political relationships, political processes, are taken every day and that the tempo of these changes in the next months will be faster.

In material growth Kosovo is constantly investing, separatism and nationalism have received an infusion of counter-revolutionism and have achieved larger and larger procedural changes, but are being rooting out via legal, administrative and politico-ideological measures. Nobody is satisfied with the speed of this process, not in PK, not in SK SKS, not in SK SKJ. Yesterday we determined this in the meeting of the Presidency of PK. But the process has gained some speed and I am confident that this speed will increase. And you need to know that.

But, it's understood, from that I don't think to suggest that the matter is settled and that we have reason to be satisfied. On the contrary, Kosovo is still poor today; the poorest portion of our country. Albanian separatists and nationalists have calmed down somewhat. They're banking on time, and it's understood that conditions are working for them. But they need to know, on this plain tyranny will be no more. Progressive people won't give up Kosovo, neither will Serbia nor will Yugoslavia.

And in a political light the perception is very present that the desire for an ethnically pure Kosovo is well-founded and possible. That foundation is here [in Kosovo].

Since, from the premise that SAP Kosovo political party of the nation of Kosovo, who propounds counter-revolution, is proposing the natural consequence that in that sense the province should be effectively transformed into a republic, through which in reality are taken the first, but not ignorant, steps toward shattering the territorial integrity of SR Serbia and SFRJ. We have, with our colleagues, understood the cost, progressive people in Kosovo have understood it also, and in Serbia, and in Yugoslavia.

When one has in sight all that we've accomplished, and all that is left that must be done, and what is remaining is inappropriately more than that which is accomplished, what is before us aren't tasks and responsibilities, but rather a great patriotic offensive whose goal needs to be material and cultural growth of Kosovo and free and fulfilling life for its citizens.

But first some misunderstandings must be cleared up. Among citizens there is an understanding that all the peoples living in this province that aren't calling out their nationalism every day, just like they don't do a daily roll call of their sex, age, social ancestry, education or profession.

In that sense we can't speak of minorities nor of majorities on Kosovo. Serbs, Montenegrins, aren't minorities in relation to Albanians on Kosovo, just like Albanians aren't a minority in Yugoslavia, but rather they are nationalities that live together under equal rights with other nations and nationalities in three of our socialist republics.

The premise of an ethnically pure, economically and politically autonomous, untethered Kosovo isn't possible by political ideals or ethically, but at the end of the line, that premise isn't in the interest of the Albanian nation. This kind of nationalism would exclude it from all circles, and it wouldn't just slow down, but stop its growth in both economic and a completely spiritual sense. Just like Enver Hoxha with his politics, so is the tiny Albanian nation still one very underdeveloped people, isolated from Europe, shut off from any possibility of taking part in the dynamic life of today's world.

And this part of the Albanian nation is striving toward Europe, toward being a modern nation, there is no need to stop them on that path.

Nationalism always means isolation from others, being locked in a closed circle, and that also means stopping growth, because without cooperation and connection with Yugoslavia, and then widening vistas, there is no progress. Every nation and nationality which shuts itself off and isolates itself behaves irresponsibly toward their constituents' growth. That is why before anything else, we communists must do all that is required to eliminate the consequences of nationalist and separatist behavior, and counter-revolutionaries forces, as on Kosovo, so in other parts of our land.

But our goal is to emerge from a state of hatred, intolerance and mistrust. That all people on Kosovo live well. And that is why, in relation to that goal, I want to tell you colleagues, yes, you need to stay here. This is your land. Your homes are here, your memories.

You won't very well give up your land just because life in it is difficult, just because you've been pressured by crime and humiliation. It was never in the spirit of the Serbian and Montenegrin nation to bow before adversity, to demobilize when they need to fight, to demoralize when times are tough.

You need to stay here because of your forefathers and because of your descendants. You would shame your forefathers and disappoint your descendants.

But I'm not proposing that you should stay tolerant, hold on, and bear this situation with which you aren't satisfied. Quite the contrary. You need to change it, together with all the progressive people here, in Serbia and in Yugoslavia.

Don't tell me that you can't do it alone. It's understood that you can't alone! We'll change it together, we, Serbia and all of

Yugoslavia! We can't in our time return the national fiber to the Kosovo population in the past tense. But we can at least stop the exodus, we can assure the condition that all people that live on Kosovo be in their homes, live under equal rights and equal allotment of Kosovo economic opportunity before anything else, and then all other opportunities.

In the ears of some of the European population this desire sounds absurd, humorous in the present era. They would with good reason ask: aren't the lives and jobs of citizens, their safety and equality, their rights and duty regulated by charter and law?

They regulate when they enforce, and when they don't enforce then there is no regulation, then you must with every key political office warn the organs of the state, an organ must rightly do its job.

That job, the job that must enforce the charter and law on Kosovo, is in the interest of all its residents. Serbs and Montenegrins, but also Albanians, colleagues. Because, if we legalize a state which has no law, then all those that are outlaws are exposed and at the end of the line are in danger. Today from unenforced law Serbs and Montenegrins are suffering the most, but tomorrow that could be Albanians as well. That is why instituting respect for the law, order and equality really is in a deep historical sense in the interests of all citizens of Kosovo. This is the first and most urgent thing that we can accomplish together on Kosovo.

And the second is next: it has to do with the return, especially of talented people, to Kosovo. I firmly believe that we cannot stop the process of moving away while there is no incentive for the process to return to Kosovo.

The return of Serbs and Montenegrins to Kosovo is a process. We can't issue a decree and by force return people to where they don't want to be. But we can launch a political campaign to create material, economic, employment and cultural conditions such that they who because of dissatisfaction and abuse of rights left, would return, guaranteed that in their homes and workplaces this would really happen. In creating those conditions all progressive forces can and must get involved, communist and youth, all that is respectful and progressive in all of Serbia. And there cannot be even one cost too great to accomplish this.

Ordinarily in our political language we speak like we aren't in favor of campaigning, but rather prefer drawn-out processes. In this situation the state of affairs is so alarming that we must bring a campaign, and the right campaign, for returning 50, then 100, then 200 professors, doctors and other crucial talented people, qualified workers, and the rest. This campaign needs to bring a process. Only then will things look like the exodus of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo can stop.

And seriously, friends, in Yugoslavia salaries are low and prices are high, the prices of shoes and books are high, it's hard to take a vacation. But we won't because of that very well give up Yugoslavia and settle in a happier and richer land. Those are rather more worthwhile reasons to stay in our country and make it richer and happier. It's possible to make this happen, but through one mandatory condition: to accomplish the separating of the forces of socialism, brotherhood and unity, and progress from the forces of separatism, nationalism and conservatism. In that separation of progressives from reactionaries Serbs and Montenegrins on Kosovo surely will receive the support of many Albanians, communists and Albanian people among whom they have relatives and friends, and their children's friends. Because here everyone's common goal is the cultural and economic growth of the province, so that people, all people, live better and happier. Around that goal all respectful working people should gather, that is the principle of brotherhood and unity on Kosovo.

That is why I believe that those who carry the spirit of brotherhood and unity, equal rights and progressiveness can be and must be the only working class of Kosovo, because those that are unified have identical interests, and the least reason to divide into nationalism.

She strove to fight against greater abuses, only she can win in this.

Surely, SK and others must assess why their nation is coming back, because its proof, as someone said here, that the nation believes in the party. That is exactly why I want to say, friends and colleagues, that in all of SK, in the leadership SK we'll do all that we have, as SK, given ourselves to do.

Everything in question is on our schedule: rights, freedom, culture, language and letters. Everything in question from beginning to final changes, from kindergartens to courtrooms. In that forest of difficult problems that anger and worry and exacerbate the upstanding people of Kosovo, Serbia and Yugoslavia, only worrying and exacerbation aren't enough. But the preparedness of the nation and Kosovo and Serbia and Yugoslavia to solve these problems and for everyone to give their due, and for everyone to roll up their sleeves and solve things is the only guarantee that we will solve the systemic, economic and political problems on Kosovo.

In that sense we don't have anyone else in whom we should trust, friends and colleagues, but in ourselves.

I want to also assure you that every member of the leadership of the Socialist Republic of Serbia and Yugoslavia will always be ready for conversations like these and for constant presence on this job together.

Rest assured, this is a feeling that is uplifting all of Yugoslavia. All of Yugoslavia is with you. The issue isn't that it's a problem for Yugoslavia, but Yugoslavia and Kosovo. Yugoslavia doesn't exist without Kosovo! Yugoslavia would

disintegrate without Kosovo!

Yugoslavia and Serbia will never give up Kosovo!

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