

“We Don’t Want a Country of Invalids and Fresh Graves”

Yugoslav Women Against War

By Jill Benderly

In July, I received this letter from my best friend from Yugoslavia, a lesbian feminist activist from Belgrade (the capital city of both the republic of Serbia and the Yugoslav federation):
Dear Jill,

The situation here is hell. I don't know any more which is better or worse: Political campaigns like Bush's, so highly programmed up to details and psychological impressions; or this one where you cannot count on any rational principle we assumed is in the political game. I mean, people are dead on both sides, and both of these types of politicians inflict hate in me. It is enough to see Bush or Baker on TV, the way they hold their bodies, the color of tie they choose, the tone with which they say certain words....Or this one where, in one day, politicians change their decisions, the country is in chaos,

control is lost, and lots of spontaneous groups of people are doing whatever they want: Taking guns, offense, defense....There is not one law or constitutional order which one can count on being respected.

It comes out in little things like this: There is a local order to send small planes to spray against mosquitoes. But in certain places pilots are afraid that someone will mistake them for army planes and shoot and they refuse to go on duty. So people cannot live on account of the mosquitoes!

Yesterday in famous Centinje (the old capital of Montenegro, way up in the mountains) there was supposed to be a religious meeting because of St. Paul or

St. Peter's Day. In the middle of the crowd there was an old Montenegrin partisan who fought in the last war, and he screamed, "Long live Tito and long live Yugoslavia!" That was the end of the religious part — men started to fight with each other, there were lots of guys dressed up as Chetniks (Serbian monarchist guerrillas) and the whole fighting started and two men were injured!

The famous traditional Yugoslav film festival from Pula is now a Croatian festival with guests invited from other republics. The new director of the festival, who is stupid like a wood, said that before the festival was everybody's and therefore nobody's, but now we know whose it is! As if nobody's-everybody's is not an idea where everyone can start with equal opportunity. (Ah, the old communist ideas, some of them will never come

Feminist in a man's world: Lopa Mladjonovic in Belgrade.

