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Media News

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I n s t e a d o f a n I n t r o d u c t i o n

Svijet Fades Away?

The Sarajevo *Svijet* has not appeared on kiosks for several weeks now. In the last July issue the editorial board announced a short break, until August 28. "In the meantime, we will gather strength and money for new projects," the editor stated. August has passed, and the review has still not appeared.

Middle-aged and older readers remember *Svijet* as a once highest circulation Bosnian magazine and one of the most popular in the former Yugoslavia. Those who read it in the post-war period recognized it in kiosks by its full color design and attractive graphic design, unlike most other Bosnian-Herzegovinian editions. Our analysts have assessed the paper's content to be a very relaxed review of a civic orientation, with a mild inclination towards the left wing and a sharp sting towards incumbent authorities. Its specialty was not to feature exclusive investigative items, disclose scandals, provoke powerful political leaders and various thugs, who would assault journalists in the street, summon them for interrogation (or "informative conversations" as it is called in Bosnian) and sue them in court. Some pages were too sophisticated and their selected target group was so-called meditating readers. They could never constitute "massive readership." However, media with ideas permeated with humanism, not only in Bosnia but wider, enjoyed strong support from international donors.

Svijet is in a crisis or is definitely leaving the media scene because it cannot adapt to the para-market, while donor interest is abating. *Svijet* can certainly find its place in the range of different reviews and papers, but it cannot count on having a high circulation. It is simply not a paper, which can raise its circulation by having newspaper vendors shout out the main headlines. The concept of *Svijet* has not found the key to entering the rudimentary Bosnian

newspaper market, nor does that market yet have a need for media diversity and political pluralism. Actually, the market practically does not exist. It is held captive by narrow-sighted ethnic options, invisible borders, mistrust, and poverty of the population. However, it is still some kind of a market and those who want to go into publishing must master the methods and techniques of business as much as journalistic skills.

Finally, a question: have conditions been established for media in Bosnia to become self-sustainable? Donors who have been generous until recently are sending this message to the local publishers. We call on publishers, editors and all other media experts to express their opinions and experiences.

And as to *Svijet*, our wish is that it does not leave our media scene in silence. (Z. U.)

JOURNALIST ETHICS (4)

Journalists on Their Mistakes and Dilemmas

There is almost no professional journalist organization in the world that does not have its ethic rules or code. Many books have been published on ethics, and lately there have been, in particular in countries in transition, many ethic handbooks and various guidelines, which serve to guide journalists on how to resolve the ethical dilemmas they encounter in their work. Still, the journalist, as a person who thinks, who autonomously decides about his or her conduct, quickly and with no chance for correction, is countless times faced with a dilemma of whether a certain, seemingly professional act, is at the same time ethical. Which solution is better? Can ethics deaden the journalist's cutting edge? How to be ethical and at the same time exclusive?

Any experienced journalist will list numerous dilemmas that he or she has encountered in the course of work. Some mistakes have remained as experience for the whole life. For a journalist who wants to be professional, which includes being ethical, ethical guidelines are not enough. With them in the pocket, such a journalist cannot manage unless he or she has enough personal professional experience, education, broad spirit and routine to assess any situation quickly.

Precisely this is the reason why *Media Plan*, with support from National Endowment for Democracy Washington, has started a series of journalist workshops across Bosnia-Herzegovina in which journalists analyze individual cases of (un) ethical conduct of their colleagues. Participants in the workshops are first shown different cases from



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RTV programs and newspapers, after which discussion is opened, and only in the end are they told whether journalist organizations, the public or relevant state bodies have reacted, and if so, in what way. In the workshops in Brcko and Zvornik (September 17 and 18), three cases were presented upon which the Independent Media Commission (IMC)¹ from Sarajevo has reacted, and one case each from the United States and Croatia, to which the public there had reacted.

Media News presents in this issue what journalists who participated in these workshops said on that occasion.

First Example: Violation of Privacy

That journalists can be faced with a big challenge was shown by an example of March 19 of this year, when TV Mostar in its primetime news program broadcast a report on the assassination of the deputy police minister of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Jozo Leutar. The report zoomed Leutar's disfigured face several times as he was being admitted to hospital. IMC assessed this as a violation of Leutar's privacy and warned TV Mostar about the report. In the explanation of the warning, IMC said that radio and TV organizations should show consideration when selecting material that shows the consequences of natural disasters, accidents and human violence. "Before presenting such scenes, broadcasters must balance the wish to serve the needs of truth and the desire for compassion against the risk of sensationalism, causing distress or the possibility of unwarranted invasion of privacy." the IMC quoted the radio and television editing code as stating (IMC, Sarajevo, August 1998).

The editor of RTV Mostar said in his reply that it was possible the footage had upset people, but the mistake was caused by the tight deadline for preparing the report.

However, most journalists who joined the discussion in the journalist workshops maintained that the IMC was too harsh in this case. Radisa Ilic, Radio DAS Bijeljina, opined that IMC was seeking puritan journalists in a "non-puritan environment." And then he continued: "Not a single journalist would resist the temptation to show basically exclusive footage about the consequences of an assassination. Leutar is not an ordinary citizen. He is a senior state official and therefore showing his disfigured face, a consequence of a political assassination, was necessary," Ilic stated. Nedjo Djurovic, Radio Brcko journalist and Radio FERN correspondent, shared his opinion. "If the aim is to show the truth, it was necessary to zoom the disfigured face. The only point of discussion is whether it should have been done only once or several times in the report," he said.

Suad Alagic from TV Brcko had a different opinion. He assessed it was immoral from the author of the report, but also from the news program editor, to insist on showing the deputy minister's grave injuries. According to him, it is distasteful for his children to watch it on TV. He also expressed his opinion that dismal footage can raise political tension, and that the "truth" which journalists were trying to portray, could have been shown in a little less distasteful way. ONASA's Banja Luka correspondent Branko Peric wondered: "Imagine if this footage is watched by his children who are five or seven years old," emphasizing that zooming a disfigured face is an unethical act.

However, most of the journalists present did not accept these arguments. Many journalists justified the conduct of the TV Mostar cameraman and editor by saying that people in Bosnia-Herzegovina have seen much "more disgusting" footage on TV, and that the consequences of an assassination, no matter how terrifying, should not be hidden.

¹ IMC decisions on these examples given in *Media News* no. 34.

The following questions remained unanswered among journalists in Breko:

- Ⓔ **What is a bigger journalistic mistake: to fail to show an event in its full dimension through footage, or to hurt the personal feelings of the family and the integrity of the person in question?**
- Ⓔ **How would viewers have reacted if the station's competition had shown this footage on their TVs, while TV Mostar failed to do so?**
- Ⓔ **Would the commission have reacted with the same attention (to prevent a person's privacy from being violated) if it had been an anonymous, unknown person?**

Second Example: Instigating Hatred

Polemics was also provoked by the punishing of Erotel from West Mostar for carrying someone else's inflammatory views in its program. Erotel on December 16 last year, within a directly broadcast program from Croatian state television on ecology (Ecology and ethics – cuttlefish), showed an item/commentary which speaks in an inflammatory way about George Soros, as well as Jews and Serbs, whom nationalistic circles consider to be Croatia's enemies. Among other things, the commentary says: "...the main person is certainly George Soros, a crazy backroom dealer and malicious speculator. He has stolen billions, he gives millions and he always collects interest in the form of ink ...the disgusting Serb-Jewish lobby, which keeps appearing over and over so that Croatia would be toppled. These are cautious masons, many of them are sexually perverts..." IMC assessed this content as a violation of the Code's provisions on decency and civility, which EROTEL who took the program from HTV was responsible for, and punished the station.

Radio journalists agreed that such content incites chauvinism and extremism, but they also wondered whether it is all right to punish a media organization for content presented in a program taken from another medium which its editors have no control over.

"Most radio and TV stations have contracts to directly broadcast some programs, mostly from larger media. Does that mean that we must listen to those programs and censor them right away during direct broadcasting?" Susan Radjen, editor of Bijeljina-based BN TV news program, asked. Most other participants in the workshops confirmed that it was impossible to react during a program, from which the conclusion could have been drawn that "we in Bosnia-Herzegovina will have to answer also for things which we do not mean or say." Journalists maintained that content shown during transmission of foreign programs, especially ones that are trusted to work professionally, could not be influenced.

However, IMC representative at the workshops Predrag Bajevic was explicit in his position that the RTV program code without any doubt stipulates media responsibility for everything that is broadcast on its waves. "Every media organization that has received a broadcasting license has accepted responsibility for everything that can be heard on its frequency, regardless of whether it has produced it itself or has taken it from another media organization," IMC deputy spokesman Zinaida Babovic said. "If someone's program is transmitted, then a risk is also accepted," Babovic was categorical. According to her, it does not matter which program is being transmitted and what is its character and image. "Responsibility also exists when transmitting the BBC, Voice of America or Free Europe, if they contain something that is in disharmony with the local regulations," the deputy spokesperson stated. To our question whether a medium may avoid being punished if the editors disassociate themselves from a disputed content which is broadcast on its channel or if they present counter-arguments the following day (as suggested by Branko Peric from Banja Luka), Babovic said that this does not affect the fact that a violation was committed. "It would be desirable for the medium to disassociate itself from a disputed content, but that does not

change the position in regard to the fact that a violation was committed. But it may have a bearing on the severity of the punishment,” Independent Commission officials told us.

Media practice is yet to answer a question that has remained unanswered in Brcko and Zvornik:

- Ⓐ **Should direct transmission of someone else’s program be interrupted due to the danger of broadcasting unethical content which cannot be influenced (and therefore eliminate all risk of punishment), or should such relations of trust and professional respect with the partner be established that would reduce such a risk to the lowest possible degree?**

Third Example: Intolerance

A lot of attention was attracted by the well-known “Srebrenica case.” Namely, IMC requested from Radio Srebrenica’s editor’s recordings of programs broadcasting on February 7 and 8, 1999. This was done in order to check out a complaint received from SFOR and the UN Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina according to which RTV Srebrenica allegedly broadcast material that may not have been in line with the IMC code (i.e. a statement from the Serb Radical Party committee). In an official statement, the party had emphatically condemned and requested sanctions for the “organized visit of about 15 Serbs, so-called ‘Poturice’ (a historically pejorative name for Bosnian Muslims used by Serb nationalists) from Srebrenica to Tuzla at the invitation of Hakija Meholic, an Ustasha who slaughtered, torched and committed evil against Srebrenica’s Serbs in the latest war which was imposed on us, which claimed the lives of our dearest.” It also said that the Serb Radical Party is in the future forbidding these Serbs to “on behalf of Srebrenica’s Serbs, patriots and on behalf of the Serb Municipality of Srebrenica, offer a hand of reconciliation to Muslims who have caused us grief and who have destroyed everything that we have.”

IMC maintained that the broadcasting of this statement violated the part of the Code related to decency and civility, which says: “Language which could incite to violence, disorder or hatred must not be used. The gratuitous use of language likely to offend must be avoided.” Radio Srebrenica was fined for its conduct.

The journalists present in both workshops agreed that broadcasting such content practically called for a lynch of “bad” Serbs and raised inter-ethnic tension in Bosnia-Herzegovina. True, Radio Srebrenica’s director Momcilo Cvjetinovic objected that not all of the facts given in the IMC decision were true, in particular that according to which “Radio Srebrenica failed to keep recorded tapes.” However, the aim of the workshop was not to arbitrate between this media organization and the IMC Council, but to start a discussion on the meaning of a statement with such messages in RTV program. Most journalists emphasized once again that this was a transmission of someone else’s statement, not the position of the editors. This remark provoked the reaction first of Branko Peric, ONASA Agency Banja Luka correspondent, who said that journalists must have the last say in selecting information and judging what should be broadcast, and then of Tihomir Bijelic of Radio Ravne Brcko, who said that journalists must resist pressure from the authorities to broadcast inflammatory statements.

Dragana Curcic from the paper *Most* (Zvornik) said that journalists are squeezed between demands to give all parties equitable access to media and demands to censor their “unfavorable” texts and messages. All journalists stressed the pressure from local authorities encountered in small communities, which are difficult to resist.

The workshop moderator Zoran Udovicic pointed out that there seems to be a controversy between the professional obligation concerning an official statement to preserve its essence and the author’s message on one hand, and the requirement to avoid having such a

message cause anxiety, conflict or intolerance on the other. However, if such a message denies basic human rights and practically calls for someone to be lynched, in that case the journalist can refuse to air such information.

On the example of the broadcasting of this unethical statement, a discussion developed both in Zvornik and Brcko on how a journalist or program host should behave if a message, which causes hatred or upsets the public is uttered by a guest in a live show. IMC representative Predrag Bajevic suggested some sort of a warning that should be given to such a guest (“are you aware that you have violated positive conduct,” “are you willing to retract your message,” “can you take responsibility for it,” etc.). Branko Peric from Banja Luka suggested applying a more efficient, but less formal method: to make a new report or program the following day to reduce the effect of such unethical conduct of the guest by showing a different position.

Still, among the participants in these workshops two questions remained incompletely answered:

- ⌚ **How not to become a censor (of self-censor), while at the same time ensuring that all media messages should have exclusively civilizational and humanistic messages?**
- ⌚ **How to deal with politicians who do not care what they say and what punishment the Independent Media Commission may pronounce for it?**
- ⌚ **How to achieve to have everyone satisfied?**

Journalism is constantly judged by the general public. It will never be without pressure nor will journalists ever be able to satisfy everyone. Journalists will have to overcome all the dilemmas they are faced with by using their own heads, knowledge and experience.

Media Plan will continue with this series of workshops in Trebinje, Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar. (R. U.)

M o n i t o r i n g

TV Sarajevo’s DANAS and DAN DANAS (Sept. 21 – Sept. 27, 1999)

Sarajevo Canton Television – TV Sarajevo started working two years ago. From an experimental program, an hour or two before the RTV BiH primetime news program, it developed a whole-day program, every day from 0715 to 1930 hrs., when it transmits RTV BiH (its primetime news program). The main news program DANAS is on every working day at 1830 hrs., and a magazine-type program called DAN DANAS is on Saturdays at 1730 hrs. Both programs focus on coverage of event and issues in the Sarajevo Canton, which encompasses the city of Sarajevo and several neighboring municipalities. The population is mostly Bosniak, but in the city of Sarajevo it is estimated that there are also 15 to 20 percent of Croats, Serbs and others.

We monitored these two programs, as representative ones in the news cycle, from September 21 to September 27, 1999. The aim was to see how this television station covers issues that influence the lives of the canton’s population.

TV Sarajevo is a public station founded by the Assembly of the Sarajevo Canton, one of ten cantons that make up the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Cantonal TV stations also exist in Tuzla, Bihac and Gorazde.

The Authorities and Geography

A half-hour of news program every day except Sunday – that is a lot of time and in TV journalism it a very powerful weapon for influencing viewers. In the monitored period from September 21 to 27, each DANAS program featured successively 10-12 reports and approximately the same number of short items and news, although the programs were sometimes two to three minutes shorter.

From the analyzed program it is clear that the canton's official policy has been originally transferred onto the cantonal TV program policy. Therefore, the main sources of information in the DANAS program are cantonal and municipal authorities and administration structures in public institutions. The press office of the Canton Government on Sept. 21 directly initiated some reports that were made during the week. Leaders and officials from different levels in the Canton, City and municipalities appeared in all of the programs: Belkic, Buljina, Basic (Sept. 21); Gacanovic, Belkic, Basic (Sept. 22); Hela, Neimarlija and directors Obradovic and Pilavdzic (Sept. 23); Muharemovic (Sept. 25 and 27), etc.²

If an interview with a minister is too long – as with Resul Basic – it is divided into two interviews and broadcast on two consecutive days (Sept. 21 and 22). On two more occasions we noticed one interview being turned into two (N. K. and M. P. – Sept. 25). Obsession with government officials goes so far that meaningless statements are broadcast, such as, for example, one by Gacanovic: "...what I especially value is that intellectuals do not compromise themselves in giving in to these daily political issues..." (in an interview with Montenegrin writer J. Brkovic on Sept. 23). In "noting" the thoughts and statements of people from the authorities, the station goes so far that it completely failed to mention in this program the report on the passport of Mehrez Audouni (a Tunisian with a Bosnian passport who was arrested in Turkey on charges of terrorism), which was submitted to the Canton Government by the Canton Minister of the Interior.

The realization that journalists are spending most of their time in meetings and in putting microphones under officials' noses is confirmed by statistics. In the monitored period, reporters used various meetings as their sources of information 41 times, while they were the authors of reports only 25 times.

However, if by its program policy the Cantonal TV broadcast DANAS is close to the cantonal authorities, geographically it does not cover the entire Canton. The municipality of Vogosca was mentioned only once (Sept. 23 – "Convoy for Krizevci"); Ilidza also only once (Sept. 25 – "Lumber theft"); and Hadzici and Stari Grad once each (in the context of an item on prostitution and nightclubs – Sept. 25). In all other cases journalists moved around the municipality of Centar (where the authorities are seated and where buildings in which different events are taking place are located), the municipality of Novi Grad, the Dobrinja settlement, from which came most items on the return of refugees and displaced persons to Sarajevo. After these six programs, the conclusion that is imposed on viewers is that this is a television station for the central part of the city.

The structure of TV items is in line with the character of this television as a cantonal station (regional); out of 70 broadcast items – 45 dealt with local issues. We noticed that 16 items focused on so-called federal issues, and not a single one was on the Republika Srpska.

² Beriz Belkic – president of Sarajevo Canton Government, Munib Buljina – Sarajevo Canton Government minister, Resul Basic – Sarajevo Canton Government minister, Rasim Gacanovic – mayor of Sarajevo, Jasmina Helac -- Sarajevo Canton Government official, Nagib Neimarlija – New Town municipality president, Meho Obradovic – director of Elektroprivreda company, Enes Pilavdzic – director of Vodovod company.

Return

The most visible link between the program policy of the editors who make the DANAS program and the cantonal authorities' efforts to implement the return of refugees and displaced persons (which is a hot issue that has to do with preserving the multi-ethnic character of Sarajevo) is a series of items on this issue, which were broadcast every day – sometimes even twice.

Every day at least one item was aired from Dobrinja in which residents whose apartments were destroyed during the war have now been getting the keys to their reconstructed buildings. The authors of these reportages were different. All of them put happy or less happy returnees in front of the camera in the same style: “everything is happening smoothly.” And if someone said another person had already moved into his or her reconstructed apartment – the journalist seemed not to hear it. Author G. M. (Sept. 22) said: “Are you satisfied with how it has been repaired?” The returnee woman answered: “I still have not been inside, because another person lives there.” The reporter continued: “And if that person moves out – do you plan to return?” The woman answered: “Of course, forever!” The journalist failed to point out the problem of forcible occupation of apartments, but concluded: “Some did not receive keys because they did not have documents.” This is probably true in some cases. But, out of 44 apartments, only 11 have been moved into (Sept. 20). It cannot be documents are a problem in as many as 33 cases?!

Still, despite many flaws and the frenetic shout of journalist S. S (Sept. 27): “GOVERNMENT EXPEDIENCY GIVES RESULT!”, who praised the government for the return of a person from Srebrenica to his hometown, this was an extremely useful series. Together with two statements from the OHR, OSCE and UNHCR on the deadlines that were expiring, which were also announced – the series deserves a positive mark.

Economy

In the monitored program there was actually no economy. In addition to news on the opening of a renovated open market in Alipasino polje (Sept. 23) and an item aimed at frightening residents that the power company ELEKTRO DISTRIBUCIJA is stepping up controls – only two so-called economic reports were aired. The first was a report on a session of the Cantonal Chamber of Commerce managing board, in which a million figures were mentioned which made it difficult to follow (Sept. 27 – G. M.) and a report on a ceremony at GOSPODARSKA BANK on a campaign called 100 Loans – 100 Projects (Sept. 24 – without stating the name of the author). Director M. Misić's statement was interesting and informative.

Two expanded news items were shown about the AUTOFEST fair at Skenderija (Sept. 23 and 24) – but even that event was not given the appropriate significance.

Hot issues – privatization, corruption, collapse of banks, lack of money, unemployment, Volkswagen in Vogosca, Energoinvest and so on did not receive the attention of TVSA journalists this week.

Culture

Cultural items were rich and well made. The Sarajevo Days of Poetry were covered through reportages (a very good reportage on Sept. 22 “Poets in high school” – author V. S.). Several well covered book promotions and an excellent item on the 87th birthday of the Apolo movie theater, by H. D. (Sept. 22)

Multi-Ethnicity

After watching all six programs – one does not get the impression that they were about a multi-ethnic Sarajevo. Except for a report on the Gospodarska bank, not a single item dealt with the lives or problems of Serbs or Croats in Sarajevo. True, strictly Bosniak issues were not emphasized either. However, in all six programs only one non-Bosniak official appeared. It was police inspector Dragan Miokovic who heads an investigation into a lumber theft in a reportage on this issue (Sept. 25). Also, only one non-Bosniak journalist was spotted in the DANAS broadcasts from Sept. 21 to 27, 1999 (statistics based on the authors' full names).

Other

Several short items with useful information for residents were regularly announced in the DANAS broadcasts. Service information – who will be without water or electricity and when – were an integral part of every broadcast. The restoration of the gas supply was announced (which is the key issue for Sarajevans this coming winter) as well as the arrival of pensions. A statement by the spokesman of the Pension-Invalid Insurance Bureau, Zarif Safic, that people entitled to social benefits “to their misfortune” will not get their benefits together with their pensions, sounded more than cynical (Sept. 21).

In all six broadcasts – only one sports item!!! (Sept. 25) – an interview with the sitting volleyball team coach, M. Hrustemovic.

General Impression

Usage of inflammatory language was not noticed in items and reports made by journalists. However, it is obvious that the Cantonal TV crew does not have enough professional experience in using all advantages of TV. Faces of people in meetings prevail on the screen, instead of people in everyday life and work. (Media Plan Monitoring Center)

O p i n i o n s

How to Make a New Radio-Television

After the failure of the ruling political parties and parliament deputies to agree on the character of the public radio-television system in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the international community's High Representative imposed a decision on establishing a public RTV service for the whole country, a law on the federal RTV BiH and a decision on the transformation of Serb RTV into Radio Television of Republika Srpska. These decisions encountered different reactions from the public, in particular from the political establishment – from rejection, reluctant acceptance, conditioning their implementation, to disbelief in the possibility that these projects will be carried out.

Unfortunately, professionals working for the present public (state) radio television stations in Bosnia-Herzegovina were not invited nor did they themselves show any desire to say how they would make a radio and television that would suit the population, listeners and viewers, their subscribers, and finally – the peoples who live here and whose political will should be respected. Unless they want politicians and the international community also to design the

program for them (which cannot be ruled out by any means) , RTV workers are faced with a tough job.

The time available for the status organization of the BiH Federation RTV, reconstruction of the Republika Srpska RTV and the public RTV service at state level is running out fast. Media News has invited six prominent journalists, directors and media experts working for the present RTV BiH and Republika Srpska RTV to present their opinions on how to make a TV and radio program which will implement the letter and spirit of the High Representative's decisions.

RTV of the BiH Federation – Mission Impossible?

(written for Media News by Strajo Krsmanovic, BiH Television editor)

The reasons for the establishment of RTV FBiH, the way in which it is being created, the historic period in which all of this is happening, shows, in my opinion, that this is a project task with an impossible framework and that it will be difficult to expect a satisfactory result from this job. The reasons, of course, are not of a professional, but of a political nature.

If the political context were more favorable, there would be no difficulty to establish in a very short time a new radio-television on the foundation of the present RTV BiH, in line with the law regulating this field, which would produce and broadcast a lively, attractive and generally good quality program.

But... this word "impossible" has to do with politics. Generally looking, a federal radio-television will function in full capacity only when the BiH Federation functions in full capacity. For the time being, the Federation exists as an assigned legal and political form, not as a state and territorial functional unit of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Residents of the Federation, objectively looking, have never accepted the Federation as a natural form of a state and territorial community and continue to treat it, everyone for their own reasons, as a necessary evil, not a natural framework for developing regulated political, legal and all other relations.

The Federation is really not such a framework, either by its form or content, because it has appeared as a necessary evil, actually as a possible form of truce between formerly warring factions, not as a form of life and progress for its residents in the future.

However, since the balance of political forces in it is still the same as it was in the time when war broke out in its present territory, it is to be expected that the Federation will continue to exist in the way it exists today, and that the forms of its political organization, including its future radio-television, will serve as a necessary evil and a possible space for new, various confrontations.

This assertion may be best supported by the compromise made in the provision of Article 16 of the Law, which concerns the forms of organization and manner of functioning of the two Federation television channels. This article says that this television will broadcast program on two COMPLEMENTARY channels, which stipulates a very clear and precise framework of what the program should look like. At the same time, paragraph two of the same article says that one channel will broadcast predominantly in the first and the other predominantly in the second language of the constituent peoples in the Federation, which as a solution automatically rules out complementary channels. Namely, complementarity in the professional meaning of the term means that the first channel will broadcast series, news, cultural, educational and entertainment program, while the second channel will broadcast sports and other entertainment program. In such a solution, it is usual that the television will produce one main news program and broadcast it on both channels at the same time. This kind of solution, which exists with most television stations which have two channels, is difficult to harmonize with the provision on the manner of using the two languages envisioned by the

Law because it is more than obvious that no one would accept to have his or her language predominantly used on such a designed second channel, and even less on the first channel.

The intention of those who insisted on this way of using language is obvious. They maintain that with the help of political pressure they will be able to bring about two completely separate national channels, and that they will ignore the provision on complementarity. It is no secret that this policy is advocated by HDZ BiH and that it is being presented as the vital interest of the Croat people in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is difficult, actually impossible, to find an adequate answer as to how the vital interest of one of the two constituent peoples is endangered if the only logical solution is applied – to use both languages equally on both channels.

What we are interested in here is how to overcome this impossible confrontation. Practically, the following may happen. The managing board of the future RTV FBiH will appoint a director and deputy director from the two constituent peoples, and they will in the same way appoint the editor-in-chief and his deputy. They in turn will establish programs and teams as they see fit.

Regardless of the fact that the legal solution envisions that they will manage both channels equally, it is very probable that the Bosniak part of this team will be responsible for the Bosniak and Bosnian part of the program, while the Croat one for the Croat part. The aim of the Bosniak “program” will be to broadcast its part of the program on both channels, while the aim of the Croat one will be to have Croat program produced and broadcast on only one channel. There can hardly be any compromise between these two positions. Experience in such cases shows that the Croat concept has prevailed and has been accepted in practice. There are numerous examples for this, and the most transparent one is the functioning of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, where all political positions are separate. The situation is similar in the case of the functioning of the FBiH Government and the House of Peoples of the FBiH Parliament. Although they sit together, in a single political body, Croat officials and Bosniak officials implement all decisions separately, and they even distribute money from the budget using the principle “how much for Bosniaks and how much for Croats?” The federal radio-television will also function according to this model provided it is established at all. (It probably will be due to tremendous pressure from the international factors in Bosnia-Herzegovina).

If these predictions come true – and it is hard to believe that a different, more normal and better solution will be reached – then we will get in Bosnia-Herzegovina another “Frankenstein,” which will have quite solid financial support (a very serious and relevant solution related to the establishment of the federal RTV is the envisioned transparent manner of financing through subscription), although it is not quite clear whether the generated income will go to the single account of the future RTV FBiH (probably yes) and whether it will be used together or separately (probably separately, analogous to the functioning and financing of other institutions in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina).

To all of this we should add the understandable psychological resistance of the present RTV BiH employees, which is a consequence of the conflict between feelings and reality. Namely, for 10 years they have been made to believe that it is a state, Bosnian-Herzegovinian television, which has been really watched only on one third of the country’s territory. Now it will be watched in one half of the country, but it will “fall” to the status of being a television of the BiH Federation. It seems that no one wants RTV FBiH except for people from the international community who are consistently and literally implementing imposed solutions here in a pragmatically simplified way that yields very little serious result.

All this makes the job of creating RTV FBiH and in general regulating media space in the field of electronic media an impossible mission, and therefore neither quick nor spectacular results should be expected in this field despite the great efforts and even greater financial resources invested in this project.

Six Marks for Six RTV Networks?

The *Dnevni avaz* paper wrote that the Sarajevo Canton Assembly for this year approved 2.6 million KM for Sarajevo Canton Television TVSA. A total of 1.4 million KM has already been spent for equipment, while 1.2 million is being used for salaries and other dues for employees.

The paper published a statement by the television's director Nedim Djuheric, who says that television is an expensive project and that these resources are basically not as high as opposition cantonal deputies have been criticizing. Djuheric also presented the idea that cantonal television stations, as public services, should be partly financed from subscription. According to him, the best solution would be if one KM from the compulsory 6 KM subscription for the present RTV BiH is set aside for cantonal television stations. "Why should viewers only pay for federal television, when they decided through (parliament) deputies that they want cantonal televisions," Djuheric wondered in *Dnevni avaz*.

The paper also wrote that 300,000 KM has been set aside for the Tuzla-Podrinje Canton radio-television for six months, while a 2.5 million KM investment is envisioned for the establishment of the Zenica-Doboj Canton radio-television.

The Office of the High Representative has warned cantonal authorities in the BiH Federation several times that they are spending huge amounts of money for cantonal television stations while they do not want to finance the future federal TV, which shows a tendency for exercising political control over these stations.

A public information TV service is soon to be established at state level. As things stand now, two federal RTV channels, one channel each of RTV and the Public RTV Service, cantonal television systems, and perhaps a hundred or so local radio and TV stations owned by municipalities will all lay claim to the modest subscription of six KM which the impoverished citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina are supposed to pay.

Bosnia-Herzegovina has neither the financial nor the creative resources to fulfill this many wishes.

A Thirst for Information or Drowning in Data

Numerous theoreticians today determine the Internet according to the principle of self-regulation and free access to information. What does that mean in practice? In the United States the Internet is described using the Wild West metaphor, an area that is not completely civilized and in which everyone manages as best as they can in order to survive. Therefore, there is neither legal regulation nor sanctions. In addition, on the Internet it is impossible to impose a one-sided approach to any problem because, for example on some USENET newsgroup, a different opinion will always appear. In communities with a developed democratic tradition and freedom of the press, such a situation is completely natural. However, in many countries in which the Internet is still at its start, its users are fascinated with the diversity of information that they can find, and the possibilities of its their different processing. For, only China and Indonesia have tried to censor individual contents on the

Internet, while in all other parts of the world freedom of offering and using information from the Internet is absolute.

The battle of Internet is not for censorship and bans but for presenting one's own beliefs and arguments. The Internet has become a global communication medium because information offered on it can potentially reach more people than satellite television. Therefore, media giants such as CNN and NBC have accepted the Internet as a supplementary medium on which they offer information in a different way, while at the same time presenting themselves as companies. Their structure of presenting stories is based on non-linearity. A story about some ordinary event starts with an analysis – of what happened. It is usually followed by: data on the parties involved, generalization, statistics, a look to the past, legal regulations, which else may know something about it. And everything is achieved via links.

A hyper-textual way of linking different contents is shown by Dr. Nenad Prelog, Zagreb, on the example of the movie *English Patient*. A wrinkled bed-sheet on a hospital bed leads us to the Egyptian desert, and the sound of a nearby engine recalls a ride in a convoy. It is similar with smells and tastes: ice cream brings us back to our childhood, the smell of a linden tree inspires melancholy thoughts of a long-ago love. And, in that lies the answers to the question – why multimedia is replacing more and more the traditional ways of presenting information or reality in general. And all that is possible with the help of the Internet.

Still, many people characterize the Internet as being a surplus of information and a deficit of knowledge, a drowning in information and a thirst for information, etc.

Usage of the Internet in Bosnian-Herzegovinian journalism is just starting. Most media do not have any access to the Internet. Many journalists still do not know how to use a computer, and even those who do know do not have enough skills to search databases or to know of any which may be of interest to them. Web sites made by media who have decided to go on the Internet are usually not professionally made (see analysis in *Media News* no. 37/38)

Media News will in several issues publish articles written by its professional associate M.S. Marija Putica from the Journalism Studies at the University of Mostar, on what is computer journalism, how to use the Internet for professional needs in journalism, and how to design your own news site on the Internet. (To be continued in our next issue).

N e w s

NTV 99 Transmitter Destroyed

In the night between September 20 and 21 an explosion destroyed Sarajevo-based Independent Television 99's repeater station. After a one-day break in program, TV 99 appeared on the screen once again, but from an alternative location and using a reserve transmitter. The perpetrators of the attack are two brothers in whose garden on a hill near Sarajevo the transmitter had been mounted. S. T., who was arrested soon after the act, claims he did it in revenge against "99" director Adil Kulenovic, who did not want to pay out his salaries earned from October 1, 1997 until this day. He also claims that in addition to renting out his land, he was responsible for technical maintenance of the transmitter. However, director Kulenovic says it is municipal land, not private, and that Tabakovic was an extremely irresponsible worker.

This is the second destroyed TV 99 transmitter. In 1995 unidentified perpetrators planted a fire in the station's transmission premises and interrupted the program of the newly established TV station. The case was never solved, but people in Sarajevo were convinced

that the act was motivated by political reasons because TV 99 at that time, as an objective and independent station, was under attack from nationalists and extremists.

First Regional Media Project

UNESCO Paris, fund for supporting regional programs, approved financial assistance for the first regional media project in southern Europe – “Communication Network for Free and Professional Journalism.” The program stipulates that Media Plan School of Journalism in Sarajevo will admit students from the whole region as of next year. The program also envisions an exchange of journalism students and trainers work on joint research projects and starting a regional analytical Internet service “Media News.”

The network, established on the initiative of Media Plan Institute from Sarajevo, encompasses 10 professional organizations for training journalists and media research in Slovenia, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Albania and Macedonia. ●

On the Threshold of a New Century



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Think with your head!

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