

Albanian refugee fights educational war

BY BERNARD VOGELSANG
Staff writer

Lana Obradovic knows what the Albanian refugees from Kosovo are going through.

In June 1993, Obradovic, a senior political science and international relations major at UNL, was forced to leave her hometown of Mostar, in the south of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Obradovic, 22, said it was hard for her to watch the Albanian refugees on television because it made her think how she suffered in refugee camps.

"It is not difficult to put myself in their shoes," she said.

After having survived the war in Bosnia, Obradovic has decided she wants to help change the culture of hate and killing between Serbs, Croats and Muslims that has existed in the former Yugoslavia since 1991.

Obradovic was invited to participate in a conference about the future of Bosnia and the Balkans with influential American and Bosnian officers. It was held April 8-10 at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

She also was granted permission from her UNL professors to spend the last four weeks teaching at William and Mary in a class about the history of the former Yugoslavia.

Obradovic, just back from Virginia, said although the conference was organized to discuss the future of Bosnia, it was overshadowed by the NATO attack on Serbia.

For example, the scheduled keynote speaker,

U.S. Gen. Wesley Clark, NATO Supreme Commander in Europe, couldn't come because he leads the allied attacks.

While drinking tea in the Coffee House, Obradovic said she doesn't believe the attacks will have any effect on Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic.

Obradovic said the international community has made a mistake by not supporting the opposition against Milosevic earlier.

Instead, Obradovic said, the United States legitimized Milosevic as a world leader during the negotiations that would lead to the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. This accord ended the war in Bosnia.

Now, the attack will stabilize Milosevic in power, Obradovic said. Although Serbian citizens took part in massive demonstrations against Milosevic in 1996, she said, they now stand behind their president.

"The Serbian citizens believe the whole world is against them," she said. "They now only want to survive."

Obradovic discussed her opinion about Kosovo with conference participants such as Lawrence Eagleburger, former U.S. Secretary of State; Muhamed Sacirbey, Bosnian ambassador to the United Nations; and Warren Zimmermann, former U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia.

She said the conference also gave her the opportunity to meet people who played an important role during the war in Bosnia.

Between April 1992 and the fall of 1995, Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Muslims fought hard battles for the conquest of Mostar.

During the war, some of Obradovic's relatives were killed, including her father and grandfather.

Although Obradovic said she considered herself to be a Yugoslavian, people saw her as a Muslim, even though she said she has never practiced the religion.

Obradovic fled Mostar with her mother and sister because Bosnian Croat soldiers were expelling Muslims from the neighborhood the Obradovic family lived in. Many rapes and killings ensued because of the attack.

"We left at 6 a.m.," she said. "Ten hours later, the Bosnian Croats came for me."

Obradovic said she had feared for months that the Bosnian Croats would break into her house.

"The constant dread was the worst torture I have ever felt," she said.

After four weeks in a refugee camp in Croatia and living for 1½ years in Italy, she arrived in Lincoln with her mother and sister in the spring of 1995.

Obradovic said Zimmermann, a former Washington, D.C., correspondent for the Lincoln Star, told her at the conference that Lincoln was a good place to start a new life because it is easier to integrate in a smaller community.

As a result of her stay in Virginia, Obradovic is going to coordinate an exchange of students from the College of William and Mary to Bosnia this summer.

Together with six other Bosnian students, Obradovic also wants to organize summer camps for Serbian, Croatian and Muslim children. She

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LANA OBRADOVIC
UNL student

said while doing activities, the children could learn that living peacefully together is possible.

The seven students already have the financial support of the Virginia Legislature, Amnesty International and the American Council for First Freedom.

Obradovic said her stay in Virginia had given her many job opportunities, but she would like to work for an international organization in Bosnia after graduate school.

Obradovic's sister Lea, who is a UNL sophomore film and theater major, said Lana Obradovic will intellectually fight for a better future for Bosnia.

"Lana has the strength and intelligence to help change the political situation in Bosnia so there won't be any more war and struggling," she said.

Lana Obradovic agreed. "I have an obligation to help the people of Bosnia."

Cinco de Mayo events to carry into weekend

■ Activities are scheduled to be held Wednesday and Saturday in Antelope Park.

BY JOHN HEJKAL
Staff writer

The Lincoln community will have two chances to celebrate Cinco de Mayo this year, once Wednesday and again May 8.

On May 8, the Ballet Folklorico Sabor Mexicano will be presenting costume displays and dances to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. The events, at Antelope Park, will start at 11 a.m. and will end around 6 p.m. The Ballet Folklorico will perform at Antelope Park from noon to 1 p.m., and from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Mariachi Jalisco, a band that plays traditional Mexican music, will kick things off at 11 a.m., playing until noon.

Other events throughout the afternoon include a historical fashion show, a recognition of Mexican-American military veterans and piñatas for children. All events will be in the Band Shell except the veteran recognition, which will be in the Auld Center.

The Cinco de Mayo event celebrates the victory of the Mexican

army over the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.

Anyone is welcome to the event, said Darlene Parra, a volunteer parent with the Ballet Folklorico, and Saturday's programs are free.

The Ballet Folklorico, which has been in operation since 1995, consists of 27 children ages 4 to 15. The group has been rehearsing for Cinco de Mayo since December, Parra said.

"Our mission is to bring diversity to the community," she said. "Not only do we teach dance, but we teach through dance about the Mexican culture."

After Cinco de Mayo, the Ballet Folklorico will have open enrollment for new dancers, Parra said.

"We're open to anyone that has an interest in the dance. Young, old - it doesn't matter," she said.

The ballet is one of the sponsors of the event, along with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, KZUM-FM (89.3), the Mexican-American Students Association, the Wagon Train Project and the Nebraska Humanities Council.

Parra said he expects a large turnout for the festivities.

"We're going to have at least 500 people," he said.

"I'm going to be disappointed if it's less."

Police investigate man who may have been teens' supplier

LITTLETON, Colo. (AP) - Investigators are interviewing a man who may have supplied the semiautomatic pistol used by the Columbine High School gunmen, but authorities said Thursday no arrests are imminent.

Although Jefferson County District Attorney David Thomas said early in the day that the gun seller would be arrested "in a day or two" after negotiating the terms of his surrender, other investigators later backed away from that statement.

Crime laboratory technicians are conducting ballistics tests to determine which guns fired the ammunition that killed each of the 13 victims. If it turns out that bullets fired by the paramilitary-style TEC DC-9 did not hit anyone, the gun seller may only face charges of illegal gun peddling rather than being implicated in the murders.

"We hope that we'll have some news soon," prosecutor Mark Paulter said. "As far as arrests, as far as charges, we're still up in the air with that."

Paulter said other people are being interviewed as well, but he described them as witnesses, not suspects. He declined to elaborate.

"It is not a good idea to let people know ahead of time that we are going to arrest them," he said. "They have a tendency to disappear."

On Tuesday, agents from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms visited the Blackjack Pizza shop, where gunmen Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold worked. The agents were investigating whether a pizza deliveryman acted as a middleman in the weapon transaction.

The ATF and the pizza shop managers declined to discuss the inquiry.

On April 20, Harris, 18, and Klebold, 17, killed 12 students and a teacher before committing suicide in one of the

worst school shootings in U.S. history.

Another 23 were wounded.

A diary found at the home of one of the gunmen indicated the plot had been devised for a year and they planned to kill hundreds with an arsenal of guns and bombs. Investigators have found more than 50 propane and pipe bombs at the school and the teens' homes.

The final Columbine victim to be buried, Isaiah Shoels, 18, was remembered Thursday at a spirited funeral in Denver that drew more than 5,000 mourners, including Gov. Bill Owens and other officials.

Earlier this week, investigators said Klebold's prom date, Robyn Anderson, 18, bought three of the four weapons - two rifles and a shotgun - used in the massacre. Under Colorado law, an 18-year-old without a felony record can legally furnish minors with rifles and shotguns, which are classified as long guns. Anderson has made no public comment.

A spokeswoman for Klebold's family said Thursday they had been the target of threats, which have been reported to authorities. "They are cooperating fully with the investigation," said Lisa Simon, the Klebolds' spokeswoman.

Tributes to the victims continue.

On Sunday, the Jefferson County school district is holding an afternoon get-together at scenic Red Rocks Amphitheater for students and their families, teachers and public safety workers. Classes resume Monday.

Scott Poland of the National Association of School Psychologists said children affected by the shootings may feel afraid and hopeless, and experience night terrors, for an extended period.

"This is the time for parents to talk less and listen more," he said.

Crisis in Kosovo

NATO missile hits Bulgarian house

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) - Russia pushed a peace plan for Yugoslavia on Thursday as a chastened NATO sought to explain how another of its missiles went astray, damaging a house near the capital of Western ally Bulgaria.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson arrived in Belgrade on a mission to win freedom for three U.S. POWs held by Yugoslavia. He was expected to meet Yugoslav Foreign Minister Zivadin Jovanovic and the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pavle, on Friday.

NATO, meanwhile, continued its air assault on Yugoslavia, targeting communication and transportation links. Yugoslavia's official Tanjug news agency said five missiles struck

before dawn Friday near the airport in Pristina, Kosovo's capital.

Heavy explosions and intense anti-aircraft fire were reported Thursday afternoon near an oil refinery northwest of Belgrade.

Serbian television went off the air Thursday night moments after a strong explosion.

The government asked private stations to rebroadcast the state TV news programs after attacks on the state broadcast headquarters limited its transmission range.

Bridges, highways and communications towers also were targeted, including transportation links into Kosovo.

As the bombings persisted for the 37th day, former Russian Prime

Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin launched his latest peace initiative, promoting what Moscow said was a new plan for ending the Kosovo crisis.

Bulgarian officials said a NATO AGM-88 HARM missile slammed late Wednesday into a house in a suburb of the capital, Sofia. Konstantin Varbenov was shaving on the top floor of his two-story home when the missile blew away his roof. His wife, child and grandmother, also in the house, were shaken but there were no injuries.

In Brussels, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea said an alliance jet fired the missile "in self-defense" at Serb anti-aircraft batteries but it "strayed from its target and unintentionally landed in Bulgaria," 30 miles from Yugoslavia's southeastern border.

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