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Steve Pratt, *Duty of Care*, Simon and Schuster, Sydney, Price Aus\$ 27-40, Reviewed by James Pettifer

In March 1999, Steve Pratt and a number of colleagues were working as humanitarian workers in Serbia, for CARE Australia, and were arrested and imprisoned, after being charged with espionage by the Yugoslav military authorities. According to the book jacket, ex-Australian Prime Minister and sometime chairman of CARE Australia, Malcolm Fraser, believes that you should 'Read this story and understand that good ordinary people, undertaking extraordinary humanitarian work, became pawns in a much larger international struggle. For their efforts in providing assistance to those in need, they paid a terrible price.'

The book is certainly worth reading, although perhaps not for the reasons recommended by Mr Fraser. Most of the first part is a routine account of a good standard military career, in uniform and in Canberra, and then taking up international community jobs in Iraq, Zaire and elsewhere. As far as it is possible to tell from the fairly sketchy account provided, Mr Pratt was not a spy and spent his time in humanitarian activities, but this work was in post-conflict zones, northern Iraq particularly, and did involve collection of information about ground conditions to pass on to UNHCR and other governments and agencies.

Mr Pratt arrived in Yugoslavia in the early Kosovo war period, and soon encountered the mass of competing loyalties and pressures on his staff, and the equally bitter internecine rivalries with CARE itself, where CARE Australia was the lead section of CARE for Yugoslavia, and was clearly run by people with strong pro-Belgrade views, who saw the KLA as 'nothing but murderers and smugglers', while other sections of CARE, such as CARE Germany, CARE Austria and CARE USA had a different outlook. The reader is given a rather crude and potted account of recent Kosovo history, with all the usual points made, but there are marked lacunae in Mr Pratt's account of CARE's activities. There are also frequent factual and spelling errors in the account of the war itself, so that for instance, the keynote massacre of the Jashari family at Prekaz in early 1998 is referred to as 'the Jariah family'. There are passages of open and passionate defence of the Milosevic regime security apparatus, so that we are told.

'Through the second half of 1998, the Western press was barking about Serb-instigated 'ethnic cleansing', but from what we could see this was not the case. In their ham-fisted and often brutal way, the MUP units would warn villagers to evacuate.'

This Dixon of Dock Green image of the MUP in 1968 was not shared by the independent journalists who were also on the scene, or now, by at least some people in the current Serbian government. It also did not stop the VJ military authorities from picking up Mr Pratt and his colleagues and convicting them of spying.

I worked as a part-time Balkan analyst for CARE International just after these events and their shadow hung heavily over what has always been an outstanding generous and well run humanitarian organisation. What the reader would not learn from Mr Pratt in this book is how far the white Anglo-Saxon elements in CARE, principally CARE Canada and CARE Australia, were implicated in what many people would regard as intelligence work, even to the extent that the Canadian government, through CARE Canada and the Canadian international development agency placed an intelligence gathering contract to recruit ex-military personnel to monitor events in Kosovo. It also appears that data collected was meant to be shared with the Serbian government, and so there was an exact and precise collaboration involved with the Milosevic regime. Although Pratt and his co-defendants were not part of this operation, knowledge of it had reached Belgrade, and it certainly compromised Pratt in his trial.

It also appears to me that much of what happened owed more to Murphy's Law than any planned conspiracy. Most CARE sections seemed to me to be run by dedicated humanitarian workers who had the usual liberal-left outlook of people who worked for INGO's and this led them towards a strong pro-Albanian position (almost always), and a pro-KLA position (quite often). Sitting in Canberra or Ottawa with no first hand knowledge or experience of the war, foreign policy grandees like Malcolm Fraser were dependent on intelligence from official source which contained profoundly pro-Milosevic assumptions. The pernicious influence of the 'organised crime' lobby was already bringing distortions to the intelligence evaluation process in the EU countries, hindering rational evaluation of the KLA and what it represented in Kosovar Albanian society. It was not surprising the twain did not meet, and the whole episode will be interesting to future historians in estimating the role of Western intelligence in reinforcing the Milosevic regime and Belgrade in the ex-Yugoslav conflicts. The value of intelligence collected will also need to be debated, as, at least from what Mr Pratt reveals, there was not much in his sit reports that anyone in Tirana, Belgrade or Canberra could not have learned from the internet or the newspapers.

Ymer Minxhozi (Ed.), *Leter e Panjohur e Enver Hoxhes mbi Kosoven Dokumenta te Arkivave Ruse*, (Unknown correspondence of Enver Hoxha concerning Kosova Documents from the Russian Archives), Botimpex, Tirana, 2002, Reviewed by James Pettifer.

This small but important volume contains a number of documents drawn from a much larger Russian collection, 'Eastern Europe – Documents in the Russian Archives Vol II, 1944-1953'. This was published in Moscow in 1998, and the material is drawn from the hitherto closed archives of the President of the Russian Federation, and the archives of the Foreign Ministry. It is of value in illuminating the role Kosova played as an issue in the Tito-Stalin split, and Stalin's attitude to Enver Hoxha and Albania generally. Some of the material – or at least the central points involved – have been described by Hoxha in his book *The Titoists*, but its useful to have the actual diplomatic correspondence to verify his attacks on Tito, the old renegade from Belgrade', in his view.

It comprises a letter from Hoxha to the Soviet party in April 1949, a hitherto unknown dispatch from Stalin's ambassador in Tirana, Chuvakin, from March 1948, other material from Chuvakin about border issues, a report of the key meeting on 23 March 1949 between Hoxha and Stalin, and another dispatch about Chuvakin's view of a discussion he had with Hoxha's right hand man, Mehmet Shehu, about Kosovo.

In general, the documents confirm the picture that Stalin and the Soviet communists were not sure what to do about Kosovo in the immediate aftermath of World War II, and did not see it as a particularly important factor in the split with Tito. Enver Hoxha and his comrades of course did, and the temptation to push the Kosovo issue at the time of the break was strong. The wily Chuvakin, though, knew what Stalin and Molotov wanted to hear, and concentrated in his reporting on the internal issues, particularly the continued problem of armed resistance in northern Albania to communism. The Russians were clearly most interested in issues relating to the position of Hoxha in the leadership struggles against the Titoist agent Koci Xoxe, who was later imprisoned and shot.

After the break with Tito, Albania badly needed economic help from the Soviet Union, and much of the account of the meeting between Stalin and Hoxha is taken up with economic and development issues. Stalin produced fatherly lectures and Hoxha seems to have responded politely. The material about Shehu is somewhat opaque, but the Russians seem to have felt that Shehu and his tough cadres should have a free hand in wiping out northern 'nationalist' resistance to the regime, as there was the ever present danger that the northern chieftains such as the Bajraktaris of Diber might be bought off by the Yugoslavs / and / or the West and be used against the Tirana regime, a 'Northern Alliance' of that era.

In Albanian eyes, the publication of this material is likely to improve Hoxha's generally poor reputation with the Kosovar Albanians, although possibly not that much. He seems to have done what he could to raise the issue with the Russians. Hoxha suffered from the fact that Kosovo was not of any kind of vital interest of Tirana and Belgrade. Behind all this is the shadow of Yalta, and Stalin did not wish to see border changes in the Balkans, or to give Tito any excuse to draw his new Western friends into a war on his side that could subsequently be turned against other satellites, or even the Soviet Union itself. It is often said and written, with good reason, that in the Balkans the Greek communists were the main victims of Yalta, but there is a good case for the aspirations of the Kosovar Albanians to be added to any list.

The Chuvakin material offers a tantalizing glimpse into the world of Stalin's Balkan diplomacy, and it will be interesting to see whether Chuvakin – who remained involved with Albanian affairs in Moscow until late in his long life, and in my opinion remained 'Everest', in a sense – actually wrote his rumoured account of his long period as Soviet Ambassador in Tirana before he died.

It is also an irony of the situation that the current EU policy of endorsing all existing Balkan borders as fixed for ever actually rests on no more than arbitrary splits in the communist movement in 1948-9, and Western policies designed to cope with communist Yugoslavia

and the communist Soviet Union, both defunct states. The foreign policy apparatchiks of Brussels have taken on Stalin's otherwise dead political inheritance in the Balkans.