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City, country don't meld in Sarajevo

■ **ORIGINS:** Armani suit-clad attitudes clash with refugee peasant customs

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — War battered Sarajevo's buildings and tattered its tradition of multi-culturalism. But now that peace has come, many natives see a new threat to their once cosmopolitan city: the country bumpkin.

"You can call me a racist, but the difference between Sarajevans and those who are not is clearly visible in every aspect of life," said Boris Saric, between sips of coffee at the trendy Kogo bar.

"They dress different, talk different, drive, eat, think — everything. They are just different and don't fit in."

Such language is often used by Serbs, Croats and Muslims to explain why they could no longer co-exist in what used to be a multi-cultural Bosnia.

But for Saric, who is of multi-ethnic heritage, and others born in Sarajevo, coexistence in their city is less a matter of who you are than where you come from.

If you're from the city, you're OK, regardless of ethnicity. If not, you're not.

It is a common sentiment in the Balkans, where city life is on a par with the West but peasants often live in conditions reminiscent of the last century.

Sarajevans are no different. Their city had a trendy reputation while part of Yugoslavia, and most of them consider its spirit intact, despite the Serb shells that left few buildings unscarred.

Sarajevo is clawing back to normality. Discos, restaurants and chic stores are open again.

But the feel is different. And

so are most of its people. Shabbily dressed peasants, bodies bent and faces care-worn, now mingle with perfectly made-up city women, men in suits or designer leather and denim jackets. Muslim women in the baggy pants and kerchiefs of the countryside are a frequent sight.

The first refugees started arriving in April 1992, as their nearby towns and villages fell to the Serbs. By late last year, the Bosnian Health Ministry had registered 110,000 displaced people in the city. Another 90,000 others were not listed because they stayed with friends and relatives.

That means refugees make up 65 percent of Sarajevo's now shrunken population of 360,000. And their country ways irritate many natives — especially since other issues, such as daily survival, are no longer cause for worry.

Differences often come to a head in buildings shared by natives and rural newcomers.

"The whole building smells different. In fact, it stinks," said Nedžad Imamovic, a 25-year-old actor and native Sarajevan. "They leave the shoes in front of the doors, when they cook they open the door and all the smell of garlic and onions in the weird dishes they prepare fills the building."

Selim Beslic is one of the newcomers. He fled the eastern Muslim enclave of Srebrenica before it fell to the Serbs last July. Now living with relatives, he said it's difficult to adjust.

"I had a nice life back home. I did not ask to come here," said the 54-year-old refugee, dressed in old rubber boots, a black beret and a worn overcoat. "To tell you the truth, I prefer my life in Srebrenica to the one here. But

"
You can call me a racist, but the difference between Sarajevans and those who are not is clearly visible in every aspect of life. They dress different, talk different, drive, eat, think — everything. They are just different and don't fit in.

— Boris Saric
Sarajevo resident

"
what can I do now? I have nowhere else to go."

Beslic said he and his family try to blend in, but can't.

"Life here is so much different," he said.

Some, like Imamovic, struggle to understand the plight of people from backwoods villages with no electricity and running water.

"It is not their fault they were driven out of their homes in a village somewhere," Imamovic said.

Others have no patience. Saric, 38, dressed in an Armani suit and splashy tie, said all newcomers need at least two generations to forget "the peasant habits they have."

What little tolerance exists is found among the elderly who have seen war come to Sarajevo before.

"All this about country and city folk is not important," said Halid Begic, 70, as he enjoyed the sun in a city park. "Every war changes people and cities."

"The only important thing is that we have survived."

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To be eligible, a candidate must be:

- ✓ An undergraduate student at the University enrolled for a minimum of six credit hours per term in three of the four academic quarters of his or her term as Editor, or
- ✓ A graduate student at the University enrolled for a minimum of three credit hours per term in three of the four academic quarters of his or her term as Editor.

Applicants must be in good academic standing.

Interested parties should pick up an application packet, which includes a job description, at the ODE front desk in Suite 300 EMU or call 346-5511 for more information.

Completed applications must be returned to the ODE Board of Directors in the ODE office by 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 2, 1996. An individual will be selected by the Board on April 16, 1996.

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