Dear Friends:

This brief newsletter comes in the aftermath of the assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic. As the United States prepares for intervention abroad for the second time in four years, we are reminded again of the difficulties that face Serbia and Montenegro today, and of the weighty task that we at the University face in informing and trying to explain to our students and to the general public developments in the region through courses of instruction and extracurricular events. The Njegoš Endowment Fund for Serbian Studies at Columbia has been active for nearly six years, and as you know, has sponsored a large number of lectures, conferences, and exhibits which we have publicized via invitations, email invitations, and on the web. A list of past events is available on the web at: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/REGIONAL/ECE/homepage.html. We have decided to produce a newsletter to share and visually document some of our special events with our friends and to inform colleagues of upcoming events. The meetings that we host are most often initiated and organized by Professor Radmila Gorup (212-854-5626; rjg26@columbia.edu) and by Harriman Institute Assistant Director Gordon N. Bardos (212-854-8487; gnb12@columbia.edu). Suggestions and ideas for future meetings are always welcome.

Nadine Akhund
George Yangiou

Columbia hosts many events focusing on the Balkans, and a calendar listing them can be found at: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/sipa/REGIONAL/HI/mar2003grd.html. We are planning several events for the late Spring to be announced at a later date. One earlier meeting may be of particular interest to patrons of the Njegoš Fund. On Friday, April 25, at 6:30 pm., Svetlana Rakic will deliver a talk entitled "On a Spiritual Quest: The Art of Serbian-American Painter Alexander Markovich." The meeting will take place in 1219 IAB. All are cordially invited.

John S. Micgiel
March 14, 2003

Njegoš Fund Advisory Council member Mila Lazarevich was recently awarded a medal by President Kostunica for her work in supporting Serbian hospitals. Our congratulations to Mila!
President Kostunica’s Visit

Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica

Last September, Dr. Vojislav Kostunica, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, visited the Harriman Institute to present the W. Averell Harriman Lecture before a standing room only audience at Columbia’s School of International and Public Affairs. During his lecture, entitled "The Quest for the Rule of Law: The Yugoslav Case," President Kostunica argued that the most important part of the transition from a totalitarian to a democratic system, and from socialism to a market-based economy, was establishing judicial independence and the rule of law, without which, according to Kostunica, all other efforts were doomed to fail. Kostunica also expressed his optimism that current efforts to reform the Yugoslav federation would succeed, and made a plea for the international community to continue to support efforts to rebuild the FRY and southeastern Europe.

President Kostunica and his staff with the Deans of the School of International and Public Affairs and the Fu Foundation School of Applied Science, and the Director and Staff of the Harriman Institute

Meeting with Columbia President Lee Bollinger

After his lecture, President Kostunica presented Columbia University with a personal gift of a bust of Mihailo ("Michael") Pupin, a famous Serbian immigrant who was educated and taught at Columbia University for thirty years, becoming one of the founders of modern physics. Pupin’s 1924 biography, From Immigrant to Inventor, won a Pulitzer Prize. The highest award Columbia University bestows is the Pupin Medal, presented in recognition of “Distinguished Service to the Nation in Engineering, Science and Technology.” During the ceremony, President Kostunica cited Pupin as an example of what the friendship between the United States and Serbia should strive for. In accepting the Pupin bust on behalf of Columbia University, Dr. Zvi Galil, Dean of the Fu Foundation School of Applied Science and Engineering at Columbia, noted that "I welcomed the class of 2006 to Columbia with the words of Isaac Newton, who said 'If I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.' I then named eight giants of the [Columbia] Engineering School. The first was Michael Pupin.”

Galil, President Kostunica, and the Pupin bust