

Unresolved in Kosovo, a Year Later

To the Editor:

Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia writes (Op-Ed, March 20) that "a year ago, American and NATO warplanes began 78 days of air assaults that halted the murderous assault of Slobodan Milosevic on the Kosovar Albanians." Mr. Byrd would have done better to substitute the word "initiated" for "halted."

By the best figures available to me, the Serbs pushed 25,000 Kosovars across adjacent borders in the two years before the bombing began, and expelled approximately 750,000 more after the air assaults commenced. These figures come to fewer than 40 people a day before March 24, 1999, and to approximately 9,600 a day after that date.

In effect, the United States and NATO stepped into the trap that Mr. Milosevic had set. Kosovo is horrible enough to contemplate without congratulating ourselves for what we "halted."

NORMAN MAILER
Provincetown, Mass., March 20, 2000

To the Editor:

Senator Robert C. Byrd's March 20 Op-Ed article urging the withdrawal of United States troops from Kosovo is a bad idea. If we have learned anything since Yugoslavia began to break up a decade ago, it is that American leadership is essential for stabilizing the Balkans, especially in the military realm.

The central challenge to United States security in the post-cold-war world is ethnic conflict. Just as the United States did not shrink from new security challenges at the end of World War II, it should not shrink from its responsibility for leadership in the world of the 21st century.

I was in Kosovo in December, and saw the progress being made to build a new economy and democratic political system. The need is for leadership

such as only the United States can give.

HENRY H. PERRITT JR.
Chicago, March 20, 2000
The writer is dean of Chicago-Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology.

To the Editor:

Senator Robert C. Byrd's March 20 Op-Ed article, "Europe's Turn to Keep the Peace," makes sense. However, it does not tell us why the Europeans are slow about meeting what the United States believes are their responsibilities.

First, the Europeans maintain that United States intelligence led them into an undertaking far in excess of what they were led to believe. Remember, they (and we) were told that Slobodan Milosevic would cave in after two or three days at most. Second, they insist that the damage from our bombing is far greater than anything they could have ever imagined.

ALEX N. DRAGNICH
Bowie, Md., March 20, 2000

To the Editor:

Re "Get Real on Kosovo" (column, March 17), by Thomas L. Friedman: If you wish to truly stop ethnic hatred, the answer lies in economic recovery. You cannot expect a people bombed into submission to set aside their hatred of the Albanians or the NATO forces. Much like Germany after World War II, we must aid economic recovery in Serbia before people will put aside their differences.

When competing fiercely to put bread on the table every day, people are easily driven to extremes. A partition of Kosovo from Serbia will only further the ethnic division and keep NATO troops in the region indefinitely. A better answer is to alleviate the poverty in the region to help bring the Serbs and the Albanians together.

DANIEL MOFFAT
San Francisco, March 17, 2000

Vermont's Path For Gay Couples

To the Editor:

Re "Vermont's House: Rights for Gay Couples" (March 17): Allowing gay couples the privilege of marriage is a serious mistake.

The moral issue of same-sex unions; the basic whole idea of a same-sex couples living together without marriage; the sexual couples choosing together without marriage; the option of obtaining civil union.

If homosexuality were moral, then same-sex marriage would be approved. The bill adds to this moral providing an easy way to commitment of marriage being redefined. significance? CANCELED

Boston, Mass.

To the Editor:

Re "Legal Unions for Vermont" (editorial, March 17).

The religious right position to gay marriage is shortsighted neglect of contributions it could make. First, by extending the umbrella of marriage help stabilize those thereby bolstering families.

Second, if legal benefits into financial benefits for gay couples to have. This will not only provide with homes, but any increase in the adoption of those who are predisposed to abortion.

In a sense, the new marriage for any couple quite a middle-class notion.

Jericho, Vt.

Test Fever: What Happened to Reading?

The Oscar C

To the Editor:

Re "Stolen Oscar: Trash Bin" (news, 21): Willie Fullon

A
Tale of

Romeo
or
Juliet



Eliza Minot's
"glittering, powerful,
radiant, comic, tender"

debut novel

THE TINY ONE

A single day in the life of 8-year-old Via Revere whose mother has been killed in a car wreck and who tries to hold on to her mother by passionately remembering the paradise lost.

The N.Y. Times Book Review calls it
**"Plucky...winning...glittering...
Reading it is
like going under hypnosis**

to retrieve repressed memories—not of abuse, but of everything we'd like to remember and can't...Eliza Minot has a sharp eye, a great ear...a sorceress's ability to perceive the emotional spirals trapped in nature."
—JEFFREY EUGENIDES

"It pulses with feeling...

a remarkable work of recollection and imagination...written with beautiful, sensual detail."

—BARBARA FISHER, Boston Globe

Christopher
Lehmann-Haupt,
in the N.Y. Times, hails

**"A shining
poetic
evocation**

of a child's experience
of the loss of her mother."

**"Told with
quiet power"**

—LISA SHEA, Elle

"A beautiful beginning,"

says Mary Gordon,

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...Like Virginia Woolf in *The Waves*, Eliza Minot has the uncanny ability to reproduce the strangeness and richness of childhood."

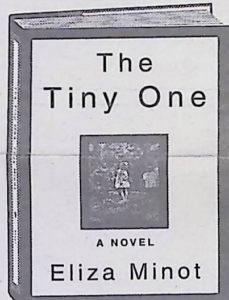
**"A luminous
novel"**

—RHONDA JOHNSON,
Entertainment Weekly

**"It bursts with
the sensuality
of childhood:**

the sticky char of burnt marshmallows, the fuzzy nap of a toy bear...the salty ocean of the summers in Maine...It is also irrepressible and comic."

—EMILY JENKINS,
Interview



**"A tender
novel,**

fresh with innocence and accuracies about the overwhelming upheaval of young loss."

—ELIZABETH STROUT

"A radiant novel

...I feel sad but it's like there's something shining in it," Via says near the end of the book. The reader feels the same way."

—JOHN BURNHAM
SCHWARTZ, Vogue

Already in its 2nd printing  **Knopf**
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Letters

Just the Factoids

To the Editor:

It may be healthier to read no biography about yourself until you are turning in the grave. So I didn't look long into Mary V. Dearborn's book (with its logo — MAILER), but after coming across Caleb Crain's review (Dec. 19), I fear that Dearborn's errors may be more numerous than her facts. I will content myself with citing three items, although I could probably list eight or ten in the review alone.

One (Crain is quoting Dearborn): "Just as he believed himself an existentialist without reading Sartre, so he believed himself a Marxist sympathizer without reading Marx." (Crain then adds "Wham!")

Yes, wham! I spent nine months in the winter, spring and summer of 1948-49 reading and brooding over "Das Kapital." I do not know any other book to which I devoted as much time. For that matter, I can also plead guilty to reading "Being and Nothingness" over many weeks and arguing in my mind with Sartre for years.

Two: "Mailer ... didn't emphasize when a drug-related prison sentence pushed a long-time friend to suicide."

This longtime friend was one of my two or three best friends, and I visited him a number of times in prison at Loretto in western Pennsylvania, a 12-hour round trip. I certainly saw a good deal of him afterward, perhaps more than all but one member of his family. I spoke at his funeral. To this day, I am haunted by his suicide.

Three: This last is egregious distortion by Dearborn or Crain, or both. "Mailer ... ends up sharing his Provincetown, Mass., home with Cohn and Cohn's 'king-size black Plexiglas bed, Italian-made furniture and strobe lights.'"

For the record, Roy Cohn did not share my home. My wife and I had him over to dinner several times. He owned the house next door. He was certainly, whatever his political deeds, an entertaining neighbor who was always ready to offer low gossip about figures in the Reagan administration. However, I never saw the inside of his house, nor his Plexiglas (ugh!) bed and strobe lights. Those details were probably furnished to Dearborn by Peter Manso, who can be char-

acterized in media shorthand as a bilious ex-friend.

If these three crude errors can be plucked so readily from the precommitted soil of Caleb Crain's review, how many other turnarounds from real events would I find if I looked further into Dearborn's opus? Considerably fewer facts than factoids, I would guess, but of course, it is not a happy literary occasion when a senior editor at *Lingua Franca* links himself uncritically to the free-floating authority of a casual biographer looking for "biffs" and "whams" and "pows." That is guaranteed to generate a host of fruit flies and factoids. (A factoid, by my long-ago definition, is a fact that never existed before it appeared in print but has been reprinted ever since.)

I can admit all of this in some degree my fault since I did not choose to be interviewed, but I still wish that Mary Dearborn had tried to get at least two sources for each of her assertions, and had relied less thoroughly on this or that bilious ex.

NORMAN MAILER
Brooklyn

Our Waterloo

To the Editor:

Carlo D'Este's review of Robert V. Remini's "Battle of New Orleans" (Dec. 19) opens with a glaring error. Although regiments of the British Army that participated in the Battle of New Orleans may have been from the Duke of Wellington's army, they most certainly had not battled Napoleon at Waterloo. The Battle of Waterloo took place in June 1815, some five months after the Battle of New Orleans.

Although the Battle of New Orleans undoubtedly propelled Andrew Jackson to greatness, Remini and D'Este do a disservice to the soldiers who fought in the American Revolution by calling the Battle of New Orleans America's first great military victory. Remini's method of dealing with Saratoga and Yorktown is to suggest that these were not great military victories because the British surrendered. One cannot seriously doubt, however, that the American victory at Saratoga was pivotal to the decision by the French to enter the war.

JEFFREY J. MIRMAN
West Hartford, Conn.

#2
LESSON

**Getting
Started:
There's No
Time Like
the Present!**



**ANY TIME IS THE RIGHT TIME
TO START INVESTING.**

When getting started, it is important that you pick the right full-service or discount brokerage. If you use a broker, make sure he or she has a good track record. This is just one of the unique but proven lessons for optimum investment performance found in William J. O'Neil's latest book, *24 Essential Lessons for Investment Success*.

In this accessible guide, the founder of *Investor's Business Daily* puts his popular and easy-to-follow techniques for building a profitable portfolio firmly in your hands—and the goal of long-term financial security easily within your reach.



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