

SARAJEVO

The last surgeons soldier on

By CARSTEN WIELAND

THERE are only three surgeons left in Sarajevo. One of them is Professor Faruk Konjhodzic, who is also manager of the biggest hospital in Sarajevo. He works at least 12 hours a day and clings to the idea of organising an international meeting of surgeons in Sarajevo. "We have collected a lot of experiences during the war," says Konjhodzic. "We would like to pass them on."

In the beginning he and his colleagues read books about medical treatment in the Vietnam war. "The books mentioned helicopters," the surgeon laughs. "We don't have them, of course." But the doctors did not give up and turned to books which spoke about medical treatment in the war of the Middle East. From them they did not gain much advice either.

"Since this year there is a new medical dogma," says Konjhodzic proudly: "The Bosnian dogma." He has already started a book about it.

"Our experience is part of the old world," he says. "We only have a single ambulance and the petrol is scarce." One third of the injured, he says, are brought into hospital in private cars. The others are carried by friends or are transported on wheel-barrows.

In the first year of the war Konjhodzic operated without gloves. Today they are available again, but they are cleaned and reused, like table clothes and aprons.

Thread for stitching wounds is also scarce. The doctor often has to perform brain surgery with local anaesthetic.

All this is stressful: Since the war Konjhodzic smokes again after a break of 23 years. "We are under psychological stress," he says. "With the cigarette we are not alone." But foreign organisations often leave him and his colleagues alone.

"A couple of times we have given lists of urgently needed things to our visitors," he shrugs his broad shoulders. "I don't know what happened to them."

When medical supplies do arrive, the expiry date has often been exceeded. "For most of the people it is many words only," Konjhodzic is disappointed. The serious humanitarian organisations like "Medecins sans Frontieres" can only provide 40 to 45 percent of the needs.

The doctor does not have a high opinion of the UN. "Half of the goods they give to the Serbs anyway," he says with anger.

Inhabitants who live in the Serbian occupied parts of the city are not allowed to come to the hospital. "This was forbidden by their so-called government," says Konjhodzic. "Instead, injured people are supposed to go to Belgrade for treatment." But some 60 000 Serbs have stayed in Sarajevo. One third of the employees in the hospital are still Serbs, among them the director of the psychological ward. This is especially crowded.

"Many people in Sarajevo feel like they are living in a concentration camp — they can neither come nor go."

"We are the victims," he insists. "Of course, people from both sides are suffering, but the people over there," and he points to the dangerous hills, "have chosen aggression. They could live with us if they wanted."

But this is a dream. Every day three or four newly injured people come into the building. Soon, there will not be room for more.



□ WAR DEAD: A fresh grave overlooks the war-torn city of Sarajevo.

In the distance, a rumbling of war

By CARSTEN WIELAND

THE waitress with flashy make-up serves Turkish coffee in tiny brass pots. The tea comes with much sugar and is called *chai*. The muezzin is calling from the minaret outside, but in the small cafe western pop-music is booming from modern bass boxes at the wall. The guests pay with German marks only.

The bitter reality returns when four soldiers take a seat at the neighbouring table. The round tables outside on the cobbled pavement remain empty. For in the background the mountains are rumbling. There, snipers lurk and peer into every side-street with their binoculars.

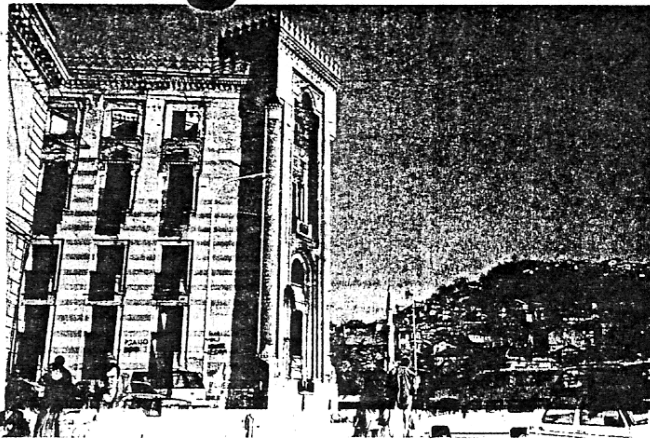
Metres away from the cafe, mosques, a synagogue, a Catholic and an orthodox church decorate the old city.

A stone symbol of Sarajevo's diversity used to be the old city library. The Moorish style linked Spanish and Arabic architecture. Since spring 1992 only a stone skeleton stands. Not one book has survived the napalm bombs which came from the surrounding mountains. Even the firemen who tried to extinguish the fire were targets for the snipers. For the mountains were rumbling in the background.

But the inhabitants of Sarajevo cling to the co-existence of cultures with pride. Four religions in one place: "This does not even exist in Jerusalem," they say, and it is unique in Europe.

"Defending the diversity in Europe means defending Bosnia-Herzegovina," urges Mirko Pejanovic, president of the Serbian Community in Sarajevo and head of the Civic Democratic Party in Bosnia. The Serb is receiving a group of young people from beyond the mountains, the Young European Federalists. "Tolerance can't be destroyed by force," he preaches to the young people and pauses. "The only question is, how long this tragedy will last." And the mountains are rumbling in the background again.

Turkish coffee and lemon syrup are on the table. Fresh orange juice is a luxury even at receptions in the government building. But not even syrup is available in the



□ SHATTERED CULTURE: The bombed ruins of Sarajevo's library, which once boasted the biggest collection of books in the Balkans.

only free radio station of the city. "Studio 99." Drinking water is ready in plastic cans in the basement. Nobody is working in the upper floors anymore. The radio building is scarred by shell splinters and surrounded by concrete plates. From the damp, smoky basement the journalists broadcast 24 hours a day, for democracy and tolerance, as they put it.

The station and the circle of intellectuals, "Circle 99," collected 150 000 signatures for a free and unified Sarajevo, says the reporter Zoran Ilic. There is a dark poster above him showing soldiers carrying the Olympic flag onto the battlefield. Inscription: "Olympic Games, Sarajevo 1994." The mountains are rumbling in the background.

The UN has settled behind the bushes, next to the hidden entrance to the radio, because the government building is only a few minutes away. From there, UN armoured cars take politicians, helpers and visitors to the airport — down Snipers' Alley, past overturned busses and wrecked cars.



□ BITTER IRONY: A poster in the studio of Sarajevo's free radio station.