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HOW TO APPEASE ONE'S HUNGER IN EXILE

Nine years after the outbreak of war in Croatia in 1991, it has become obvious that the refugee phenomenon is not a mere transitional and short-term social imbalance. The author utilises the ethnological momentum of "war ethnography", dealing with the ways refugees adapted their nutrition. Stimulus for more profound research come from the voices of protest in radio programmes for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Explanation of those protests are given by the other participants in the time of crisis, humanitarian workers, and by refugees themselves, confronted with the decision on whether to return to their former homes or to remain in their new communities which have demanded numerous compromises from them, including acceptance of changes in their nutrition. Combining these utterances, the author tries to evoke the times and the strategy of refugee diet.

Keywords: war ethnography, food, Croatia

Almost a whole decade has passed since the conflict known as the Homeland War broke out in Croatia, so one could well ask why I am returning to war themes, asking others and myself about events which are behind us.

Ethnological papers written in Croatia between 1991 and 1995 coincided with the time of redefinition of ethnology as a modern scholarly discipline. Perhaps the environment of war helped American authors such as Marcus, Fisher, Geertz, Tyler, Clifford and Said not merely to be presented to the cultural public in Croatia, but also to be accepted to such a great extent. There was not enough time gradually to test whether "good" modern ethnology would also be good war ethnology. Thanks to the speedy work done by several colleagues at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb (Prica, Jambrešić Kirin, Čale Feldman, Povrzanović), an acceptable analytical-textual model was arrived at which built up confidence in the possibility of researching and presenting wartime everyday life (Povrzanović 2000:151-162). In any case, empirical

ethnological research should be possible "at any time". After the series of war studies we have seen, it would be superfluous to ponder on dilemmas about the legitimacy of wartime ethnological themes, while what made those papers especially convincing was the fact that the researcher was at the same time an informant, but one with heightened responsibility. In wartime, in the methodological sense, the ethnographic encounter was endowed with new strength, while the ethnologist's collocutor had unfettered narrative freedom (cf. Povrzanović 1997:47). The "scholarly distance" and the "temporal distance" from the subject matter of research, which is frequently insisted upon, in wartime research became a mere alibi for the endless uncertainty which accompanies ethnographic writing. The "distance" is subjective and non-standard, similar to that which "grips" the observer of an art work at a museum, who is armed with diverse knowledge and sharpness of perception. With fragments of descriptions and narratives delivered from various perspectives, which make no pretence of representing the integrity of an event, the involvement and absence of distance do not represent an obstacle but, to an extent, even a research advantage (cf. Povrzanović 1992:76). That interspace which we would have earlier declared to be a stamp of quality, is only a stylogenous shift which is changed by the sensibility of the researcher's pen. But now, armed with distance, the pen moves with less inspiration perhaps, but with more ease.

Through my selection of a minor but far from trivial theme, as this one is, on how to appease one's hunger in exile, I shall try to register certain know-how and techniques of survival which were applied throughout all of that time, behind the scenes of wartime events. Will this paper be read now as a mere manual of survival, a model for some future catastrophe in small communities, which we have no wish to invoke? I do not, after all, expect such a convergence of the scholarly and social discourse.

Always a new war

Each war has its own countenance, course, and participants, so that empirical research into the Homeland War would certainly have set out in the wrong direction if ethnologists had adhered to some sort of continuity and precedent in their research. On the path of "foraging for food" from the early days of Croatian ethnology, as seen in the Radić and early Gavazzi period, we find information of the type that chewing resin helps to alleviate hunger or that collected birch-tree sap can relieve thirst. However, wouldn't questions connected with the expectation of such responses hinder us in confronting IDPs and refugees who lined up with their registration cards in front of the doors of humanitarian institutions?[1] It

[1] Croatian terminology defines *prognanici* as all internally displaced persons who were forced to abandon their domiciles which were within the borders of Croatia. A later

would only be confirmed once more that "to the wrong questions of the researcher we receive the wrong answers" (cf. Prica 1991:77).

Moreover, regarding the subject matter of research, we were not dealing with compact groups of villagers, but with fragmented refugee groups from diverse social strata, accommodated in hotels, barracks and private flats.

Statistics reveal a somewhat unexpected picture: IDPs and their problems, which was completely understandable, were more present in the Croatian media, giving the impression that were considerably less refugees than IDPs. However, in 1994, for example, IDPs were half the number of refugees.[2]

A second image which is refuted by statistics is that IDPs lived mainly in organised accommodation, in camps and hotels: 81% of people contacted stated that they were living in independent households, broken down into those living in houses allocated for their use (35.7%); in separate flats (27%); with friends or relatives (6.55%); in rented space (3%); or, in similar accommodation (16%). This is a higher proportion if we compare it with those in camps and hotels (*Progonstvo i povratak 1995*:94, 278). "Organised" IDPs were present in media programmes, and they often phoned in to contract broadcasts. The programme *Hello! Good Day, This is Croatian Radio* on Croatian Radio Television's 1st Programme, played a multiple public role between 1991 and 1996. It was a time of an overall growth in radio war reports — the most up-to-date war news was heard in these reports — and numerous contact broadcasts were established with (uncontrolled) live news, a factor which increased the number of listeners. The above-mentioned programme — which I will simply call the Broadcast from now on — was emitted regularly. To start with it had provided a link between IDPs and the institutions caring for their status and life in new communities. It soon acquired a recognisable profile: the presenter, Jadranka Kosor, became "irreplaceable", competent experts were guests on the Broadcast, while government and international delegates tried to respond to the existential questions put by the IDPs. There were often reports on new domiciles of IDPs and refugees (cf. Vitez 1996:285-310). The Broadcast held up a mirror to the life-style of the

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regulation of December 3, 1991 specified areas which were regarded as being directly threatened by the war. The IDPs were registered, and were then issued with "yellow cards", identify cards of sorts which recorded the identity of the owner, income, changes in place of sojourn, donations, and the like. The later evidence "cards" were more precise, non-transferrable, and carried a photograph of the owner.

[2] The largest number of IDPs accommodated in Croatia and abroad were recorded in mid--January 1992: 700 000, which was 15% of the population of Croatia. In April of the same year, there were 247 278 IDPs registered. In that year and the following one, with the easing of war operations, the number of refugees and IDPs fell. In that way, at the end of July, 1995 there were 198 230 registered IDPs and 190 772 refugees (*Progonstvo i povratak 1995*: 12-18). The European Union covered 90% of the costs of IDPs, and the remainder was covered by the International Red Cross, the UNHCR, and other donors (Broadcast, October 8, 1994).

IDPs whose personal histories were heard by a large number of listeners, and interesting dialogues arose between listeners, mainly from Zagreb, and the IDPs for whom the Broadcast was intended.[3]

International humanitarian workers provided answers before a broad auditorium — with translations into Croatian — obviously aware of the fact that hunger is a strategic cornerstone in all wars. From time to time, one could feel that the person sitting in front of the microphone in the studio was someone who knew his or her way around international conflicts, while listeners called them to account as if they were responsible participants in the war situation, insisting on their moral responsibility and the fact that they should be providing concrete solutions (cf. Malkki 1997:233-248).

Individual callers spoke in the tone of "the voice of conscience" (Greverus 1996:116) which was intended to influence the Croatian government and involve the conscience of the broad auditorium. They were the ones who called in with information on the distribution of humanitarian aid. They acted as a powerful stimulus to the development of dialogue, and words of praise were rarely heard. The incoming phone call contributions to the Broadcast took on an identifiable form with the mandatory greeting and introduction, and a brief presentation of the problem. The calls usually ended with the question

When are we going home?

Talking with the presenter, Jadranka Kosor, had a therapeutic effect, so the Broadcast soon had its own self-styled collaborators who called in regularly with news from their own IDP communities. One gained the impression that those voices belonged to a narrow circle of IDPs from groups who felt that they were significant, and that is the way they introduced themselves: *we people from Petrinja living in Crikvenica*, *we people from Vukovar living on the island of Vis*.

That was a time when the ones who had been displaced believed that the social imbalance would not last long, and they experienced their new domicile as a temporary destination to which they had been brought by the war; they tried to set up *temporary* limits to their social status.

The voices on the radio were not the voices of the classic informants. I could not ask the callers questions, I could not see their faces.[4] However,

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[3] The listeners included those who wanted to read "on the air" a poem or something they had written, to thank someone, to try to locate someone, to advise others of their whereabouts, to praise their accommodation, or simply to relieve their spirit. Even though I listened to everything on the Broadcast, I noted down only the comments about nutrition and set aside those which I could confirm with informants in Zagreb.

[4] In this way, the Broadcast became my "semiexperiental" empirical cornerstone. I was not "there" — to paraphrase Clifford Geertz — but "here" I was able to establish a control group of IDPs whom I visited regularly. The Broadcast had in any case become a mandatory part of their everyday life in exile. They were more than willing to explain to

I used complaints I heard on the Broadcast to prompt discussions with humanitarian organisation field workers (from the Red Cross, both the international organisation and the one from Vukovar), and with a group of Vukovar IDPs accommodated in the west Zagreb suburb of Črnomerec. The Vukovar "colony" at Črnomerec seemed to me to be an appropriate area for conducting field work. In relatively small quarters, the IDPs were living in the bed-sits of a military college, in the barracks for building contractor workers, in private accommodation with relatives, or in rented flats. In addition, the last group to come out of Vukovar included people of various professions, from labourers to intellectuals, who were of various ages. They were well-versed in the IDP situation "in the field" since at the end of 1991 there were 19 000 registered IDPs from Vukovar, scattered over 540 centres.[5]

Argentinean beef and other tinned food

Hunger is generally believed to be an element in all wars, so in contemporary conflicts hunger is a weapon of war (Kates-Millman 1995:390-400). Sometimes hunger is a war metaphor but sometimes it is also a fact which is hard to measure and define. It differs from period to period and from place to place.

Probably because of its unique biological indispensability, in the Homeland War food became a core motif which allowed for public anger and protest being built around it. *Tinned food* in the aura of Slavonian and Baranian food culture was regarded as a poor surrogate for fresh, healthy food.[6] The aversion to tinned food was increased by the fact that people from the towns and villages which had been encircled by the military, and later moved to camps, had had their fill of tinned liver paste and tinned meat. The ubiquitous can of food and bread which was waiting for IDPs and returnees from camps was experienced by the majority as a personal humiliation. "Now we are very sensitive, exasperated and angry people", said one female IDP from Vukovar in an interview with the sociologist, Milan Mesić, who used part of the sentence as the title of his book (Mesić 1992). The IDPs living in the student tract of the military college in Zagreb's Črnomerec say that the military meals they are entitled to always

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me the problems "coming over the air". By combining those levels, the two "stories", I shall endeavour to evoke the time and the strategy of nutrition among refugees.

[5] I am particularly grateful for the advice given to me in my research by Željka Holoker Zgonjanin, a woman from Vukovar, who passed through the worst possible experience of the war, while also working the entire time as a humanitarian activist. I think that all researchers have their crown "witness" with whom they can test their viewpoints.

[6] Baranja and Slavonia (Pannonia) are Croatian regions known for their fertile land which always produce a rich harvest, especially of wheat. The traditional code of hospitality is linked to the ample supply of food. Favourite dishes are: pastas, various types of sausages, pork grilled on a spit, and various cakes.

follow the same menu, while the so-called "dry" supper is always in the form of tinned meat of the Spam type and a piece of bread.

> The recruits put up with it, they will be relieved of duty, but it is hard to stand it for eight years running.

It was during 1993 that I heard the voice on the air in the Broadcast which led me to examine the "phenomenon of tinned food", when the category of dissatisfied IDPs (along with the "resigned" and the "realists", categories Mesić read off in the early days of the war) started complaining about concrete cases. One protester called in to say that there was too much canned food from donations in what was supposed to be healthy hotel food. The IDPs' questions on the Broadcast were answered by intermediaries and not those directly singled out. Thus, for example, we heard that the Government Office for Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees was allocating money to the hotels for the IDP's board (DM 4-5 per capita). It is difficult to assess whether that piece of information calmed down the protesters. The Broadcast respected the stance that the IDPs were the core victims of the war while providing little information about the fact that the war had brought overall impoverishment to the general public.

However, the fact is that the IDPs living in houses and flats were occupied on a daily basis with providing for their existence, finding their way around the institutions which handed out aid in food and clothing. Humanitarian norms speak of 1/2 kg per day of balanced basic food per person. Therefore, the individual did not have to concern him- or herself with the so-called nutritional pyramid — that was taken care of by the donors of nutritional raw material and semi-products. Distribution, however, could not take place in ideal order. Having learnt from their direct experience of war and the general state of uncertainty, many IDPs went from donor to donor and hoarded the food they were given.

The state of uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and the stress they had lived through additionally stimulated a feeling of hunger among many of the IDPs. Contrary to the principle of poverty in which deprivation is shown in a lack of meat on the menu, the Homeland War IDPs were adequately supplied with fish and meat in tins.[7]

Argentinean beef arrived regularly in the contingents of food sent by the European Union and my informant considered it to be of good quality, since it was suitable for adaptation in domestic dishes. At my request, IDPs from Vukovar collected wartime recipes which they almost

[7] Thus a surplus of meat arose for the second time in the Homeland War: the Croatian cities under siege (Vukovar, Zadar, Dubrovnik) experienced an urgent consumption of meat at the moment when their home freezers stopped working because the power supply had been cut off (Ritig-Beljak 1992:167). The young chronicler from Sarajevo, Zlata Filipović, still a little girl at the time, called this phenomenon "the meat shock" (Filipović 1994:64).

never use any more. These are not recipes from *Grandma's Cookbook* nor will they ever end up there.[8]

I have tasted the output of a successful merging of tradition and creativity in *sarma* [usually made with pork and beef minced meat wrapped in sour cabbage leaves], buns with beef added instead of the traditional pork greaves/cracklings (*kramlpogače*), *mousaka*, and they also tried their hand at cooking according to recipes adopted from other parts of the world in the preparation of dishes such as Mexican *chilli beans*. However, as my key informant told me,

> I have war experience, but I would never want to repeat it, nor would I wish it on anyone.[9]

Adapted nutrition, nutrition which nurtures the old native place habits, led me to remember Martin Scharfe's remarks directed to Claus Dieter Rath on the difference between hunger and appetite. Rath argues that appeasing hunger — the input of fuel while satisfying appetite — means pleasure (Rath 1984:46). For his part, Scharfe regards as untenable this differentiation between the primary and secondary needs — hunger and appetite (Scharfe 1986:17). To Scharfe's next question — *What is it that is pleasant in food at a particular time?* — we could answer with this refugee example by showing that, admittedly, it is also a pleasure to appease hunger; but taste, habit and the acceptance of food as cultural facts compel the woman doing the cooking to do more than simply shake out the contents of a tin onto a plate. Instead, she integrates into the meal her own know-how, skill and tradition. It is only to such a meal that the hostess can invite guests, even in exile. In exile, sensitised urban eating habits often represent an additional burden to their bearers.

A collision between concealed differences

On one occasion, an IDP living in a hotel in Istria complained on the Broadcast about the strange meals being served, in which lentils and chick--peas were continuously repeated on the menu. I remembered that in my work with IDPs from Vukovar I had gained the impression that those people had neither moved or travelled very much before they were

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[8] The recipes I mention are kept in the Archive of the Institute of Ethnology & Folklore Research, Zagreb under the title *Wartime Recipes (1991-1999)*. The audio recordings of the research herein are also preserved in the Archive, mgtf/tape 2623 and 3111.

[9] I shall quote a generally understandable IDP recipe for Argentinean Meatballs: Mash with a fork the meat from 4 tins. Add 4-5 cloves of garlic, a chopped bunch of parsley leaves, pepper generously, add some Vegeta (a patent mixture of dried vegetables used as seasoning), salt, 1 egg and 4 finely mashed potatoes which have been previously cooked in their jackets and left to cool. Mix well all the ingredients and let them stand for a time. Shape the meatballs by hand and roll them in breadcrumbs. Let them soak in 2 mixed whole eggs and a little milk. Fry in heated oil. The meatballs can be eaten with any side-dish other than potatoes. They taste good both hot and cold.

displaced, because they had been satisfied with their native towns and villages. For that reason, they had rarely been obliged to make compromises as far as food was concerned. The staffs at the Istrian and Northern Littoral hotels survived the early "poor" war years, in the tourism sense, thanks to the organised accommodation of IDPs and refugees in their facilities. Hotel managers who are forgotten today were the strategists of adaptation at that time, since they implemented the irregular Government donations to concoct three meals a day for the inhabitants of their hotels. We do forget very quickly. Most of the hotels have returned today to their original tourism purpose, but at the beginning of 1992 nutrition in the hotels still depended on private donors and the resourcefulness of the hotel-stewards. At that time, a manager of one of the Istrian hotels travelled to Zagreb hoping to find stores for "his" exiled people from Vukovar at the Vukovar Red Cross Office. He saw a store of dried chick-peas and took everything they had; chick-peas were familiar to him but completely foreign to his guests from Slavonia and Srijem, where it was also unknown to combine leguminous plants in one dish. The IDPs regarded the use of chick-peas instead of beans, or as an adjunct to beans, as a subterfuge, not being familiar with the Mediterranean *vara*, a dish (cooked in one pot) which sometimes includes as many as ten types of legumes and cereals (beans, chick-peas, lentils, corn, wheat, barley etc.). This high-calories labourer's dish is healthy and covers any possible shortcomings in daily nutrition. The IDPs tasted chick-peas in Zagreb, too, but, as the dish did not agree with them, considerable stocks were built up. Beans, although of the smaller type and obviously imported, did better with the nutritional conservatives. They also perfected a vegetarian paste: cooked beans were mashed, seasoned, and the cooled paste was spread on bread. This version of *papula*, a meatless Lenten dish known in the broad Slavonian region, also received a "paste" form in exile.

It was not long before the IDPs became accustomed to beans with turnips, a traditional dish among the Kajkavian Croats. Dried peas had also become accepted, although the IDPs had never eaten the dish before. Sometimes the unfamiliarity with the nutritional habits of the region led to comic situations. The Istrians, like the Slavonians, distil their own *rakija*, or brandy, which is so strong that it is even used as a massage agent for rheumatic ailments. The people from Vukovar would accept the offered *rakija*, which was the same colour as the mild drink they made at home, but it did not take them long to realise that that was the only similarity.

The domestic tourism workers gradually found employment in neighbouring Italy and then they surrendered their jobs to the IDPs. There were less and less conflict situations in the hotels after that, since the responsibility passed into the hands of the users of the hotels' services i.e. the IDPs themselves.

The lack of home cooking added to the feeling of nostalgia of the IDPs, particularly the older ones. The young people found onerous the long period of waiting for return to their home town, which they had left

as children. For them, the town where they were born represented a metaphor which they stored with their memories of childhood. Their eating habits had developed in a different environment. It is no wonder that it was the young who tried to find jobs as soon as possible and to establish "normal" households.

How to comply with eating habits

In 1992, a refugee called in to the Broadcast, carrying on from the discussion of the caller prior to him:

> What that Stipan said: that's the objective — to have enough.

Martin Scharfe expressed the same principal paraphrasing in these words the conversation between two refugees in a work by Bertold Brecht: *The pleasures we have when we have [enough]: peasant food.* (Scharfe 1986:22). Respecting the principle of satiety — eat as much as you can while you can — served well in exile because the foodstuffs were often donated in waves and they had to be used quickly. Although there were no other wars in Europe at the time, the food which did arrive was often very near to its *use-by* date. The humanitarian organisation workers — both male and female, although in Croatia the latter were in the majority — — went around the shops and arranged deliveries of frozen food to their warehouses. Such food, in keeping with its shelf-life, had to be used immediately or thrown away. It was also necessary to move quickly food which soon spoiled, such as the fruit which arrived from time to time.

The second principle, which had been readily adhered to by villagers, was that of seasonal food i.e. summer and winter dishes varied, depending on the period in which work was done in the fields and outside that period. It was largely impossible to apply this principle in exile.

According to an analysis carried out by the sociologist, Milan Mesić, the most modest among the dissatisfied IDPs were the small holding farmers, even though they were most overcome by feelings of uselessness. Mesić's research during 1992 shows that more than half of his respondents were satisfied with the organisation of their accommodation and the general care for them in the places where they were re-located. Each fifth respondent (19.6%) emphasised that it was very good, while 20.33% of the respondents were dissatisfied. On this basis, Mesić concluded that

> IDPs and refugees from the villages are less accustomed to state assistance, and now obviously appreciate it more (Mesić 1992:85-87).

According to Mesić's survey, small holding farmers had greater problems with the lack of money and goods, and prevailed in feeling "they would never live normally again". For that reason, they were the first to return to their repaired houses (the older people even regarded the Homeland War as being merciful: there was none of the typhus or hunger experienced during World War II).

I remember speaking with small holding farmers from the area around Osijek. Members of three generations were squeezed together into a small hut, and there was a wooden trunk in the corner filled with packaging which had been thrown away but was potentially "useful":

> Just look at us. All we produce now is rubbish.

This was painful for villagers who until then had known how to plan well the utilisation of all their income and profit.

What Mesić's survey cannot show is that the protests about accommodation and food concealed frustrations of another type. The majority of the protesters were from Vukovar; they had experienced the most bloody face of war and their departure into exile had been accompanied with numerous traumas. The statement of a dissatisfied man from Vukovar about the hotel "serving him food in a shallow plate [a dinner plate]" at first glance seems to have been a technical problem which could have been solved easily. However, this utterance is imbued with the traditional attitude that a small portion of food is deserved by and served to one whom nobody values and respects. After a meal in the Pannonian region, it is always expected that there must still be food left on guests' plates and on the table. Only a bad host offers guests food on a shallow plate.

On the other hand, inhabitants of the Northern Littoral eat objectively less than people from the Pannonian region, and unless the hotel staff took the trouble to ascertain what portions their wartime guests usually ate, instead automatically preparing the regional menu, conflict situations were sure to arise. An empty plate was an indication of a serving which was not sufficient: the hotel guests from Pannonia were used to eating fattier meals than their Mediterranean cousins, "heavy" food seasoned with ground red paprika. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to repeat what ethnologists already know, and, I assume, also humanitarian organisation staff, although it will not make the lives of IDPs any easier:

> Hunger is a subjective phenomenon at the level of the individual. Some people are hungry when they have to postpone their regular meal for only an hour or two. Others have learned to adapt to much more serious deprivation, whether as part of a ritual of fasting, as an adaptation to food shortage, or both (Crossgrove & Egilman 1995:223).

Despite how absurd it may sound, the response to the scant menu in the hotels (without breakfast, without soup) was a hunger strike. The Broadcast gave news of two such strikes in Savudrija (in Istria) and in Makarska (Dalmatia) in 1994, although the Government Office for IDPs and Refugees quickly solved the problems, explaining how the hotel managers and a handful of IDPs were manipulating with the majority, invoking the lack of respect for their dignity. The Government delegates regarded such strikes as an attempt to extort higher subsidies, and in prolonged negotiations with the hotel managements, which were not prepared for the

IDPs to be moved to other hotels, the misunderstandings were solved. During those days of "wartime tourism", those hotels would have had to close down and dismiss their staffs without the IDPs as guests.

Protests were also heard from the IDPs when the management of their camp or hotel prepared other (better) types of menus for visits by members of delegations (various European monitoring groups, humanitarian organisations, parliamentary delegations, and the like). There were also difficulties with arranging festive humanitarian meals, and Easter and Christmas parties to which not all the inhabitants of the IDP settlements, camps or caravan parks were invited. I attribute such mistakes to lack of experience in humanitarian work, an activity which had been taken care of by social institutions during the time of Communism.[10]

From the Broadcast we learnt that a restaurant called *Primorka* had been opened in Rijeka, whose guests were largely IDPs from Zadar and the surrounding countryside. Guests could eat at the restaurant or were also permitted to take home any of the three daily meals. They were satisfied with the food, all they lacked was salad. I believe that the restaurant's staff had no particular problems in putting together the menus. The food eaten in Rijeka does not differ in essence, neither in quality nor quantity, from food in Zadar. Public soup kitchens — as well as providing employment for cooks from the IDP circle — were accepted as a positive solution. They were located in cramped premises, but coming together during meals in a "new" place played a role in renewing the social links among the IDPs.

Is food reaching the right hands?

At the beginning of the war, many people regarded the diversion of food convoys and the loss of part of shipments to be a phenomenon linked particularly to the Homeland War in Croatia. Only when the European Union set up a investigative commission to look into the problem did the broad public learn that elsewhere in the world (in Africa, Bengal) an average one third of food shipments was usually lost under mysterious circumstances, with efforts being made to stop this happening (cf. Hastrup 1993:728; Mennell & Murcott & van Otterlo 1993; Harrell-Bond 1996; *Hunger in History 1995*:224-231, 400, 403). The Broadcast bubbled with reproaches connected with the distribution of food, inadequate apportioning and theft, particularly at destinations some distance from Zagreb (on the Pelješac Peninsula, in Šibenik, and so on).

At the beginning of the war, there really were many private donors. Along with non-government organisations with a long tradition such as the *Order of the Maltese Cross* and *Caritas*, the *Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, and the *Green Crescent*, new organisations

[10] From time to time, Croatian politicians visited the public (soup) kitchens, and mixed with the IDPs and ate with them. I assume that on such days the lunch offered was of better quality than usual, but there was no discrimination at the table.

sprang up such as *Nachbar im Not*, and *Drop of Goodness*. Many Croats living abroad showed surprising skill in bringing together donors. It should be mentioned that for the majority of the Croatian donors from Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Sweden, this was the first time that they had sent humanitarian packages.[11]

Small donors tried to give food directly, without superfluous intermediaries. Perhaps the caution they showed and the control they exercised was also prompted by the Broadcast on which they could hear daily discussions and complaints regarding the biased distribution of food packages, sometimes with the direct naming of the persons involved in the disappearance of donations of food and clothing.

This is one of the difficulties associated with humanitarian activities: word almost always spreads about someone passing out donations to "their own people". These rumours were almost regular, and even Caritas volunteers and workers from similar organisations, whose work was supposed to be inspired by religious attitudes and deep feeling for Humankind, were sometimes called to account.

It frequently happened that IDPs had to stand in queues waiting for the distribution of food and it was not rare for the accumulated impatience to explode in anger and rage against the workers from the humanitarian services. In the eyes of the IDPs, non-Croatian humanitarian workers fared no better than the locals... They were accused of prolonging the crisis because they were being well-paid for their work and, in addition, working in Croatia enabled them to stay in Europe, and not somewhere far off in a desert at the end of the world, where another war could call for their services. It was soon forgotten that a certain part of the Croatian population, particularly intellectuals, were given relatively well-paid employment working for the UNPROFOR in Croatia. Since it was a general phenomenon during the war and the years following it that one salary, one pension, or one disability pension ensured the support of several members of a family, their earnings were a far from insignificant factor.

There were also slanderous exchanges between the IDPs themselves. "Hotel" IDPs and refugees appeared in the queues in front of the humanitarian organisations and Local Community offices, claiming that their organised nutrition was not sufficient for their needs. It was also noted that food was stolen on the spot, and that efforts were made to appease the fear of hunger, often by excessive and unnecessary hoarding of foodstuffs.

The heads of the Government Office for IDPs and Refugees along with foreign humanitarian co-ordinators were often guests on the

[11] An example: they found a pig farm, negotiated a donation, found a small meat--processing plant which took delivery of the pigs and used them to make tinned meat products. They even found a driver.

Broadcast, presenting data in a reasoned and precise manner: Croatia needed 13 000 tonnes of food a month, and was receiving only 10; hire of warehouse space was very expensive, so that stocks had to be kept in standard, long-life foodstuffs. These officials would undertake to check on the situation in the regional offices in which, according to the protesters, food was being "lost" (Broadcast in Autumn, 1994). As it turned out, reasonable "data" could not pacify the protesters, since, according to Braudel: The people never heed the reasons for bread being expensive (Braudel 1992:144).

Surpluses at a time of deprivation: "pig-feed" packages

In the same proverbial tone, bread is a symbol of survival, and not to have a crust of bread means to starve. In fact, there was enough bread, and not even the bread-loaves from donations, such as those from the Soros Foundation, were not anything like the stony "wartime" corn bread from the time of World War II. However, the surplus of bread, the surplus of rise, and the surplus of potatoes was used by some IDPs for the renewal of a characteristic type of "wartime farming". Therefore, there were protests at the beginning of the war as soon as someone in a neighbourhood noticed that IDPs were feeding food from donations to pigs.

> A number of [refugee] cards are collected, and they go to the Community with coupons for rice from donations, for the pigs.

The IDPs could sell the hens or pigs they reared. That is how some of the villager IDPs made do, living in their allocated houses or sometimes in barracks. At Čiče Lake near Zagreb, the IDPs accommodated in barracks sold pork roasted on a spit. It was fatty meat, just as they liked it, but I did not have the courage to ask if the animal had been fed largely with rice. I did not see anything wrong in this sale of meat, especially since fresh fruit arrived only in the first year of the war, while the authorities did not organise exchange of food so that the IDP groups could obtain more varied foodstuffs. The foodstuffs sent by the European Union were stamped in English and carried the characteristic star wreath. In principle, the sale of stamped foodstuffs at the markets and similar outlets was prohibited. Nonetheless, the refugees from Bosnia, particularly, sold the donated food. Their yellowish complexions and deep wrinkles made it evident that the vendors had for a prolonged period been eating dry food (lifeless food) from donor packages.[12] The explanation they gave that they would buy milk and fruit for the money they obtained by selling their food packages seemed quite convincing, equally as their need for coffee, cigarettes and beer which it was exceptionally rare to find in donor

[12] In the opinion of numerous IDPs, their health services were well organised. As the intermittent reports on the health of the IDPs paid scant attention to nutrition as a cause of possible morbidity or mortality, I have not gone into this matter in this paper (cf. D. Matasović & A. Kaić-Rak, *Večernji list* newspaper, October 22, 1996, p 3).

packages.[13] These everyday needs, along with the one for the small pleasures of life, was not on the list of European nutritional norms. A wish common to all female IDPs was to obtain a cooking stove. But even when they were able to find a used cooker, they had to have cash to pay for what was missing from the food packages: spices, fresh paprika, celeriac, tomato paste and the like, and finally, for saucepans. Just as bread has a symbolic meaning ("not even enough [money] to buy bread"), it is also a symbolic act "to feed a pig while some people don't even have enough bread". The IDPs soon became an identifiable interest group which yearned for a normalisation and standardisation of their own lives. Certain situation models should therefore be set against all the public and implicit models of the "image and activity of the internally displaced person", which condemned everything which crossed over their conceived limits. The Broadcast contributed to the explication of these elements and the stimulation of dialogical components. In addition, the Broadcast offered feed-back information from time to time to the numerous foreign humanitarian workers, because, as Norman Cigar says:

> I would like to hear how the people who were directly involved in the war looked upon the international humanitarian presence, because it was itself the core failure of western policy, even though the West felt satisfied and gratified because of it (Cigar 1999:346-347).

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[13] I, too, was one of their customers: I bought spaghetti, flour, tinned fish, cooking oil, toothpaste and soap.

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KAKO SE NASITITI U IZGNANSTVU

SAŽETAK

U doba i iza Domovinskoga rata udio prognanog i izbjeglog stanovništva Hrvatske kretao se od 15% do 9%. Premda se načelno nastojalo zadržati prognanike što bliže domovima hrvatska je Vlada iz strateških razloga smjestila taj dio populacije u mirnije predjele Istre, Primorja i na jadranske otoke, u hotele i kampove koji su zbog rata ostali bez turista. Autorica je, prateći radioemisiju posvećenu izbjeglicama i prognanima (l99l.-l996.) saznavala o konfliktima nastalim različitim prehrambenim navikama nekadašnjih stanovnika Podunavlja premještenih u prostor Mediterana. Djelatnici hotela, priviknuti na hotelske goste, a ne na osjetljive prognanike čiji su "prehrambeni" prosvjedi često skrivali dublje ratne traume, vješto su se domišljali koristeći skromna novčana sredstva i namirnice iz europskih donacija. Slanutak i leća su jela koja prognanici nisu zavoljeli, a teško su se navikli i na manje obroke. Humaniji je oblik prehrane bio u javnim kuhinjama, posebice kad bi obroke pripremale same prognanice. U povoljnom položaju bile su obitelji koje su pripremale hranu u svom novom domu, no oni su morali skrbiti oko dobivanja namirnica iz humanitarnih donacija. Polugotova hrana i konzerve činili bi jelovnike jednoličnima, no tada su se udružili iskustvo i domišljaj. Primjerice konzerve argentinske govedine poslužile su u pripremanju tradicionalnih jela kao što su *sarma* i *musaka*. Simbolika kruha potakla je prosvjede protiv hranjenja kruhom svinja i kokoši, premda je to bio način malog broja prognanika da obogati jednoličnu prehranu i zamjenom dođe do raznolikije hrane. Europska zajednica svojim je znakom obilježila artikle i tako spriječila preprodaju donacija. Prosvjede oko nepravilne raspodjele hrane, autorica propituje i u vukovarskih prognanika smještenih u Zagrebu te time pruža dodatnu dimenziju, drukčiji stav od samodopadnog stava humanitarnih djelatnika, koji često ne ističu hranu kao točku međukulturnog (ne)razumijevanja.

Ključne riječi: ratna etnografija, hrana, Hrvatska