

Voluntary Work and Voluntary Associations in South-Eastern Europe, 1980-2000

Veranstalter: Ana Kladnik, Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies, Technische Universität Dresden

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Bericht von: Valter Cvijić, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana

The workshop is part of the project „Volunteering in Local Communities between Late Socialism and Liberal Capitalism: The History of Volunteer Fire Departments in Germany and East Central Europe, 1980-2000“, based at the Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies (HAIT) and the Institute for East European History at the University of Vienna.

The first day of the workshop was opened by OTO LUTHAR (Ljubljana), director of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), THOMAS LINDENBERGER and ANA KLADNIK (both HAIT, Dresden), who presented some introductory remarks on the topic and the aim of the workshop. The first panel of the workshop discussed the socialist legacy of voluntarism. NIKOLA BAKOVIĆ (Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen) focused on the ritual format of partisan marches which entailed the mobility of groups of people over specific spatial distances along carefully selected geographical routes. The itineraries of these rituals were conceived as the delineation of places deemed important for Yugoslav socialist patriotism. In his presentation, Baković concerned himself with the activities of two ‘mass organisations’ which played a crucial role in facilitating the system of partisan marches throughout the federation: the Youth Hostelling League and the League of Scouts of Yugoslavia. JULIA NIETSCH (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris) presented her work on volunteering for Kosovo-Albanian ‘parallel structures’ in the 1990s. More specifically, she focused on volunteering for the Mother Theresa Society. For Nietsch, the case of Kosovo-Albanian parallel structures shows

that volunteering does not necessarily refer to an institutionalised form of helping nor is it mainly an activity performed by the middle class. In her research, volunteering was much closer to paid work and was performed out of necessity, as an activity aimed at survival and self-help, fuelled by a sense of obligation and necessity. ANNA MATTHIESEN (New School for Social Research, New York) presented a paper on NGOs, virtual voluntarism and the legacy of ‘work actions’ in Serbia. Matthiesen drew on historical resources on work actions in Yugoslavia and a nine-month period of ethnographic research in domestic non-governmental grant-making organisations throughout Serbia to argue that previous forms of volunteering practice have not disappeared, but have instead been fundamentally transformed. For Matthiesen, novel forms of volunteering practices and organisational forms reflect the present neoliberal ethos and manifest in forms that are both physical and virtual, but that remain wedded to a rhetoric that echoes the past socialist collective dynamic.

The second panel revolved around volunteering and the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. JELENA RUPČIĆ (Red Cross, Pula) argued that in order to perceive and fully grasp complex differences of volunteering as a phenomenon in the 1980s and 1990s the terms of volunteering and membership must be differentiated and the differences of the Red Cross activities during the war- and peacetime also be highlighted. During the period of the 1980s the Red Cross focussed on advocating basic principles, attracting the masses, spreading their network and volunteering in standard and occasionally natural disaster situations. The first half of the 1990s brought many refugees and a need for material resources. This was the time when donorship, alongside increased volunteer levels, showed their philanthropic traits. The second half of 1990s is similar to the 1980s. The change of political system caused the Red Cross to reduce its activities and the position of volunteers was downgraded. Even if we exclude the political dimension, as the unemployment ratio grew, the number of volunteers also grew, thanks to the widely spread phenomenon of the unemployed volunteer-

ing at the Red Cross. ZLATIBORKA POPOV MOMČINOVIĆ (University of East Sarajevo) presented her work on the context of women's activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For Momčinović, civil society is a normative ideal that includes different ethical principles such as autonomy, anti-hierarchy, solidarity, grass-roots initiatives, pluralism, voluntarism, self-assistance; yet different practices often escape these normative ideals. The civil scene has established channels of power, influence and success. 'Success' does not depend only on one's own personal dedications and work but also on donor policies which marginalise some civil society actors while pushing others forward. To some extent, marginalisation leads to a false conscience of autonomy. Momčinović argued that the very notion of volunteering has changed and should be contextualised, particularly when addressing women volunteers. The final presentation on the first day of the workshop was delivered by ANA LJUBOJEVIĆ (Center for the Study of Ethnicity, Citizenship and Migration, Faculty of Political Science, Zagreb). Ljubojević analysed the transformation of youth voluntarism in Serbia using the example of short term voluntary work camps organised in Serbia and abroad. Voluntary work existed extensively in various forms before the transition to liberal democracy and the establishment of civil society organisations, now pillars of the organisation of voluntary actions. For Ljubojević, the transition of voluntary service from one coordinated by state sponsored organisation to a civil society overlapped with and used previous infrastructure. However, while Youth Labour Actions were large state projects of national interest, mostly performed by Yugoslav citizens, voluntary work camps appeared as local initiatives addressing the specific needs of a local community as a part of larger international voluntary movement.

The second day of the workshop began with a panel on the role of voluntarism and voluntary associations within community safety structures around 1990. RADE RAIKOVČEVSKI (Faculty of Security, Skopje) analysed voluntarism through the implementation of the „All in Defence, All in Protection“ (ADAP) concept. Rajkovčevski criti-

cally reviewed and responded to the current approach and the contribution of citizens in terms of volunteering in the area of protection and rescue. His findings sought to provide an explanation for the correlation between the involvement of citizens in the protection and rescue system regarding the perception of the objectives of citizens' involvement. According to Rajkovčevski, ADAP can be seen as voluntary mass training with a relatively good speed of mobilization of resources and an easy resolution scenario. The need to raise awareness of voluntarism and enjoy a holistic approach in the civil protection activities remain a further major challenge for the states of the former SFRY, which lack a tradition of the involvement of the local community and continue to struggle with many uncertainties in the existing laws regarding the definition of the role and private sector obligations (as a substitute for the contribution of social organisations in the former SFRY). Ana Kladnik presented her research on voluntary firefighting associations and the reorganisation of the system of protection and rescue in Slovenian local communities around 1990. Kladnik presented two of the organisations responsible for protection and rescue in socialist Slovenia. The first is that of the „Firefighting Organisation“, which has a long tradition and has been extremely popular in local Slovenian communities. The second one is the „Civil Protection“, which, in socialist Yugoslavia, had control over protection and rescue activities. Kladnik looked at tensions and competition between both organisations in Slovenia and at the reorganisation of the system of protection and rescue during the 1990s.

The second and final panel focused on the perception of voluntary work and post-socialist transformation. BRUNILDA ZENELAGA and KLODIANA BESHKU (both University of Tirana) presented a paper on the 'will to volunteering' and the role of the state during the transformation of the political system in Albanian society. Zenelaga and Beshku paid attention to the role of the state and of organisations during the transformation of the political system in making voluntarism attractive to the Albanian people. Furthermore, they explored Albanian

society's attitudes towards voluntarism on the basis of a survey which analysed the attitude of *two generations*: individuals who experienced the socialist communist regime in Albania for a significant part of their lives and young people who were born in the early 1990s. Zenelaga and Beshku claimed that the legacy of the socialist past is ambivalent for it has positive aspects, such as the value of solidarity and commitment to collective interests, alongside the legacy of the abuse of voluntarism.

The workshop concluded with a roundtable on volunteering and the history of South-Eastern Europe between 1980 and 2000 with interventions from scholars from Ljubljana, Exeter, Dresden and Vienna.

Conference Overview:

Oto Luthar / Tanja Petrović (both Ljubljana): Welcome

Thomas Lindenberger (Dresden) / Ana Kladnik (both Dresden): Workshop introduction

Panel 1: Socialist Legacy of Voluntarism

Chair / Comments: Ildiko Erdei (Belgrade) / Kerstin Brückweh (Potsdam)

Nikola Baković (Giessen): Get to Know Your Country in Order to Love It. Partisan Tourism as Catalyst for Translocal Volunteering in Socialist Yugoslavia

Julia Nietsch (Paris): Volunteering for the Kosovo-Albanian „Parallel Structures“: the Case of the Mother Teresa Society

Anna Matthiesen (New York): NGOs, Virtual Voluntarism and the Legacy of Radne Akcije in Serbia

Panel 2: Volunteering and the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s

Chair / Comments: Fabio Giomi (Paris) / Igor Duda (Pula)

Jelena Rupčić (Pula): Influence of Political Changes on Volunteering during the 1980s and 1990s on the Example of the Red Cross in Pula, Croatia

Zlatiborka Popov Momčinović (Sarajevo): Question of 'Volunteering'. The Context of Women's Activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ana Ljubojević (Zagreb): „Starting an Avalanche“? Transformation of Youth Voluntarism in Serbia

Panel 3: The Role of Voluntarism and Voluntary Associations within the Community Safety Structures around 1990

Chair / Comments: Damijan Guštin (Ljubljana)

Rade Rajkovčevski (Skopje): Voluntarism Through Implementation of the Concept „All in Defence, All in Protection“: Ideology or Way to Developing a Sustainable Model of Civil Protection

Ana Kladnik (Dresden): Voluntary Associations and the Reorganisation of the System of Protection and Rescue in Slovenian Local Communities around 1990

Panel 4: Perception of Voluntary Work and the post-Socialist Transformation

Chair / Comments: Reana Senjković (Zagreb)

Čarna Brković (Regensburg): To (not) Share an Earthquake: Geopolitics of Affect in Humanitarianism in Montenegro

Brunilda Zenelaga / Klodiana Beshku (both Tirana): Dealing with the Will to Voluntarism. The Role of the State during the Transformation of the Political System in Albanian Society

Tanja Petrović (Ljubljana): Reframing Voluntary Labor in post-Socialist Serbia

Roundtable: Volunteering and the History of Southeastern Europe between 1980-2000

Moderator: Ana Kladnik (Dresden)

Tatjana Rakar (Ljubljana) / Jure Gašparič (Ljubljana) / Tanja Petrović (Ljubljana) / Ljubica Spaskovska (Exeter) / Thomas Lindenberger (Dresden) / Philipp Ther (Wien)

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