

Dubrovnik siege: 'A genocidal project'

The Milan daily Avvenire's special correspondent Maurizio Blondet filed the following story from Curzola. It was published by the paper on Oct. 15. Below is EIR's translation:

There is a ham radio operator who calls from Dubrovnik, under siege for two weeks. He says there is no water in the city, there is beginning to be a shortage of food. He says that many children and old people are suffering already from dysentery. He says he will soon have to stop transmitting his SOS because his electrical batteries are being used up and there is no more fuel or energy.

He passes me to Ivo Jelic, a Croatian deputy who speaks Italian: "It is not the Serbian people which is committing this aggression on us, it is the criminals of the Army. Many Serbs live in Dubrovnik, and they have implored the Army not to fire on the city. But they have bombarded us, they have killed Serbs and Croats alike. They killed Milan Milisic, a poet here, a Serbian, a beloved anti-communist dissident. They destroyed the house of the head of the Serbian Democratic Party. And now they have reduced us to hunger and thirst. I myself drink half a glass of water a day, to leave enough for my three children. They want to starve us to death. Why? Maybe because they want to take over Dubrovnik to make it the port of Greater Serbia: It's the port closest to their ally, Montenegro. But Dubrovnik has always been Catholic, that is, Croatian: Within its walls there are 48 Catholic churches and only two Orthodox ones. Europe should say to the Army: Stop it, or we will attack you. These are people who only understand the language of force. Help us."

We are listening to his voice growing weaker from the ship *Liburnija*, anchored in the port of Curzola. Dubrovnik is just a few tens of miles from here, but it is unreachable. The ferry *Marina*, which we were told was departing for the city, will not accept passengers. Not even the married couple who traveled with us from Fiume, who live in Dubrovnik and want to join the two children they left in the besieged city—much less journalists. "No point in insisting," says Captain Maresevic of the *Marina*. "Last night we left with passengers, among them several journalists and foreigners. Two warships stopped us in sight of the port. They took two of our sailors hostage. And then at two o'clock in the morning they forced us to turn around. They told me point blank, 'We want no journalists.'"

Not even an official ship from the Republic of Bosnia was allowed to pass to recover 400 Bosnian children who were there in a summer camp. Two English journalists tried

SOS from Vukovar

Vukovar is a strategically located town on the Danube River border between the communist-ruled Serbian republic and Croatia's ethnically mixed eastern region of Slavonia. It was put under siege by the Greater Serbian Army after Croatian fighters, estimated at about 4,000, refused to lift a blockade of the local federal military base.

A convoy of the French organization Doctors Without Borders succeeded on Oct. 20 in evacuating 114 trapped patients. The item was reluctantly covered by the media.

EIR learned the following terrible details from a person who was part of the convoy. While people were dying there, the Army imposed conditions on the convoy: No medicine nor hygienic equipment was allowed into Vukovar; absolutely no women, children, nor hospital staff could be evacuated. One hundred and sixty patients had to be left behind in the Vukovar hospital, which lacks medicine and plasma for transfusion—the hungry, thirsty, ill inhabitants of Vukovar are in no condition to give blood. One doctor fainted when he saw the condition of the wounded. Yet none of this is reported.

The following statement from Vukovar was received in German at *EIR's* bureau in Wiesbaden:

"Today Oct. 17, 1991, is the 55th day that the inhabitants of Vukovar (currently 15,000, of whom more than 2,000 are children; before the war there were 80,000 inhabitants) have lived without water, electricity, and telephones. For ten days there were not even candles, and we lived in total darkness. Every day more than

to get there by land, on the dangerous coastal highway. They were caught by a machine gun-toting soldier and forced to abandon their car in no man's land. For two weeks, not one car, not one liter of water, not one scrap of bread, has arrived in Dubrovnik, which is teeming with 10,000 refugees from neighboring countries. The most beautiful city of Dalmatia is dying.

An evil, genocidal project must be in the heads of the Yugoslavian generals: Perhaps they want to have death empty the city, to repopulate it with Serbs. Day by day, hour by hour, it is expected that they will lift the land and naval blockade, as they promised, but instead, the blockade is continuing. Above all, they keep out journalists. "They don't want the world to know the truth," a woman tells me.

But does the world want to know? To get here to the island of Curzola, almost in view of the besieged city, I made a long trip by sea, listening to Italian radio from the border coast. I heard many commercials, many reports on the bad

2,000 rockets, mortars, and artillery strike the city, which is bombarded from the air and besieged by tanks.

"David and Goliath—that's how everyone defines the struggle of the defenders of Vukovar against the Serbian aggressor. Food is coming to an end, there are no more medical supplies. Medicines are lacking above all for wounded and sick civilians, who are holed up in the cellars.

"Vukovar itself is living in cellars. The city is totally destroyed. There are no more supplies, and there is no possibility of leaving. The convoy with food relief and medicine did not get through.

"The nearly 2,500 defenders are completely completely exhausted and underfed. The last stocks are divided up—one can among several guardsmen.

"The defense of Vukovar is amazing; it borders on a miracle. Already several times the Serbian side has reported Vukovar has fallen, but 'the city stands,' goes the refrain of a song about Vukovar, which originated in the last few days.

"Vukovar knows, the defenders and inhabitants of Vukovar know, that the city has become a legend. And they will never give up.

"How miraculously the rubble puts up resistance. The blackened walls fight doggedly on, the buried cellars throw the aggressors back.

"If Vukovar falls, Croatia falls, but above all, Europe will fall.

"On Thursday, Oct. 10, it seemed to have gone that far. The aggressor announced victory. But once again Vukovar could say: 'Still here!' How much longer?"

weather, and a lot of chit-chat. Not a word on the "Dalmatian Florence," which is dying. Nothing on the monstrous warlords who are annihilating a defenseless people only 120 kilometers from [the Italian port of] Ancona. I left Fiume under a torrential rain, and while the ship was leaving the port, I saw a hill behind the city blow up: 50-meter-high flames, there was a concert of explosions, and the forest caught fire. I later learned from Croatian radio that the generals had ordered the big Katarna barracks to be blown up, because they feared it might fall into Croatian hands. Later, they started talking about a lightning strike.

Meanwhile, beings who appear to be invaders from another world, inhuman and brutal, are destroying the coast, woodland by woodland, city by city. Their actions show that the Slovenes and Croats are right: How can they go on living together with such creatures? But Europe will catch on when it is too late. Perhaps when Dubrovnik, the ancient, has become a charnel house.

Croatian Information Minister

Is U.S. playing at divide and conquer?

"The international community has strongly criticized Serbia for aggression, but in terms of real politics, it has, in fact, helped the aggressor," Croatian Information Minister Branko Salaj charged in Frankfurt, Germany during an Oct. 10 press conference. "This weapons embargo against Yugoslavia only hurts the Croats, while, on the ground, it gives strong support to the aggressor, telling him he should go on. The political declarations of support for Croatia are for the galleries, but it is the real politics that counts." Salaj said that the policies of most governments in Europe, including those like Germany and Austria which have been verbally pro-Croatian, are far behind their own people. "Even in Britain, which has the most pro-Serbian government in Europe, the mood among the population, or among British journalists I meet, is different."

Branko Salaj was asked by *EIR* whether he agreed that the Bush administration, in order to build its "new world order," would want to keep the Serbs and Croats at each others' throats for as long as possible, as a way to ultimately undermine continental Europe. He answered: "There's something in what you're saying. But it is a risky business to undercut Europe. It would lead to many difficulties in the years ahead; it could lead to a confrontationalist attitude. Of course, there are understandable apprehensions in Europe, given American behavior after the invasion of Kuwait, when American ambassadors went to European capitals not only asking for, but demanding contributions, in cash, for the Gulf war. But in the long run, American policy, the policy of that new world order, would probably be less of direct confrontation and more of a *chef d'orchestre*, assigning the various roles to play to the various players as an orchestra conductor does. It would be a kind of divide-and-rule diplomacy toward Europe, playing different countries off against each other."

EIR's reporter asked the minister whether he would agree with the comparison of Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic to Cambodia's Pol Pot. "We are pretty much of the same opinion," he said. "They are destroying not only our people but our identity, our culture, our religion. Look at the huge attacks on our churches, for example. These are attacks we have not seen before in any war in Europe. Our prime minister said in his recent speech that Hitler and Mussolini didn't inflict the kind of damage of these objects, that the Serbians have in this dirty war. They are destroying not only our heritage, but our dignity. Why else systematic attacks on ambulances, on vehicles marked with Red Cross markings?"