

Life in the Refugee Camps 1947

By Anton Žakelj, translated and edited by John Žakelj

Wednesday, January 1, 1947

From 3 - 4 a.m. this morning, it was our barracks' turn to pray in the camp chapel. We all went - except Mire. At dawn I wished everyone a happy New Year, even Brežnikar. He never says anything; even today, he barely replied.

This evening, my sister Mici cooked a special New Year's dinner in our room - meat and eggs. After dinner, everyone went to bed.

We've been refugees for a year and a half now, and our situation looks more hopeless than it did a year ago: many people think we will have to languish here for many more years. For most of us, there is no hope for a safe return home. There may be a little hope that we could move to America. Some people hope that we will be saved by a revolution in Yugoslavia.

This spring, it will be two years since we left Slovenia. At one time, I had hoped that we could return home in two years. Now I can see that won't be possible. Maybe after 20 years?

Friday, January 3, 1947

Janko Demšar returned from Feldkirchen after 14 days. My brother Jože, who has been living there, came with him, bringing potica, flour, klobase, clothes, 180 cigarettes, 15 little boxes of Swiss sugar and other good things. He also brought me 500 dinars from my brother Ciril in Slovenia.

Saturday, January 4, 1947

Our friend Silva had sent us some ration cards from the Karinthian region of Austria. Today, I

took those to a number of stores in Judenburg, but at first I couldn't find a store that would accept them. Finally, I found one that agreed to sell me some bread and meat for them.

Sunday, January 5, 1947

As we always did at home on the evening before Epiphany, we did a procession around our barracks this evening and prayed all 15 decades of the rosary. It was very cold outside. After dinner, we played "spank the judge."

Monday, January 6, 1947

Today is Epiphany, the holy day of the three kings who came to adore the baby Jesus. It's very cold outside -31 °C below zero (-24 °F)!

Wednesday, January 8, 1947

Craftspeople from our refugee camp met at Vrtačnik's barracks from 2 - 4 p.m. this afternoon. We decided to form a union, but we couldn't decide who should be president. Somebody nominated Šepin, but he refused and instead nominated me. However, a number of people wanted "opposition" candidates; they thought I was too aligned with the leadership.

We met again at 8 p.m., and this time Vrtačnik the tailor was voted as president. My sister Mici was elected to the board. People are hoping this union will help us gain autonomy for our camp. The Ukrainian camp has only 9 craftspeople, the Croatian camp has 30, while our Slovenian camp has 70. That means the Slovenians contribute most of the work, but UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) requires all proceeds from the sale of craft items to be divided into 3 equal

parts, one to each camp. Vrtačnik and Zupan will be our leaders in our fight for a fair share.

Saturday, January 11, 1947

My brother Jože returned to Feldkirchen today after staying here with us for a week. There is a train which runs from here to Feldkirchen twice a day. Jože had planned to take the 2:30 train, but it was 3 hours late.

Sunday, January 12, 1947

I went to the pastry shop with Cilka and Mici this afternoon. We each got two cups of tea and some potica.

Tuesday, January 14, 1947

We received a package today which our friend Silva had sent before Christmas. It contained 10 pounds of flour, for which we are very grateful.

Our barracks has two groups of men who work as lumberjacks each day. Janko Demšar, Karel Erznožnik and a few others work in Bretstein. The Kokelj brothers, Mire and a few others work in Lind at Scheifling's.

Because she may be pregnant, Cilka received permission to receive a little extra food in the children's dining room. The quality and amount of food we receive changes frequently, but it's usually poor quality and not enough. Right now, it's better than it used to be. Each person receives about half a loaf of bread per day. In the morning, we get coffee (very weak without sugar or milk). For lunch, we get a soup which contains peas, potatoes and some meat. For dinner we get sauerkraut, stew and other things. The Austrians, especially the communists, think we are fed too well and that we should be forced to leave. We hear there was an international conference in Vienna, at which the Russians argued that food should no longer be provided to refugees.

[Editor's note] To help you understand the situation, the following are excerpts from Mark Wyman's book, "DPs, Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951."

In 1946 and 1947 ... Austrian authorities began to seek support from any occupation power, or from all, to oust the DPs. ... The Austrian Parliament protested vigorously in May 1946 when the Allied Council for Austria assessed the country's taxpayers 56 million Schillings to aid the DPs. (page 170)

Many UNRRA leaders, occupation authorities, and, increasingly, Austrian politicians pushed for reducing or eliminating any activities that encouraged DPs to remain where they were. (page 71)

In 1947, the UNRRA's chief for DP Operations bluntly urged all refugees to go home. The UNRRA could not aid forcible repatriations, he admitted, "but to remain behind is to face the most dark and doubtful of futures. ... Seize this opportunity - now," he exhorted. "Your relatives, your friends, your country wait for you." (page 70)

Behind their fears of repatriation, in the inner recesses of each DPs memory, were experiences under communism. Outsiders lacked such experiences. (page 78)

It is undisputed that the fate of many returning DPs was death. Western Allies learned little of this for years. (page 81)

Thursday, January 16, 1947

I don't know what's wrong with Franc Demšar. He's usually a very hard worker, but now he stays in bed all day, doesn't eat, and doesn't talk. Last month, he did some work in Sršen's shoemaking shop, but even that was irregular. (I

didn't write anything about this in my diary, but I recall that Miha Sršen somehow managed to set up a shoemaking and shoe repair shop in the refugee camp. He was very resourceful and hard working. The shop did so well that he was soon able to set up a bigger and better equipped shop outside the camp.)

Friday, January 17, 1947

In honor of my father's nameday, we went to Mass, and we cooked dumplings for dinner.

Saturday, January 18, 1947

I finally received a payment from UNRRA for the lace we had delivered to the UNRRA crafts store in Judenburg. But it was only 423 Schillings. They're selling very little. People are saying the prices are too high.

Sunday, January 19, 1947

Cilka was crying this evening, but she wouldn't tell me why. For the first time, I realized how hard it will be if we don't understand each other. I don't know why she's not happy. She probably wishes I could get a better paying job. I've asked for work in many places, but without success. I help our women sell their lace, but that doesn't pay much. I wonder if she thinks I should be more like her brother-in-law Mire, who travels a lot, buying and selling on the black market. He doesn't really have anything



This picture shows a family of displaced persons ("DPs") working in a shoe repair shop in a refugee camp somewhere in Europe in 1948. The picture is from the Simon Wiesenthal Multimedia Learning Center Online.

to show for his work either.

Monday, January 20, 1947

I received a number of letters from home.

We weighed ourselves in the kitchen. Cilka weighs 132 pounds, I weigh 151, and Mici is 174.

Wednesday, January 22, 1947

I developed a new price list for our bobbin lace. I reduced the prices because we are paying less for thread, and my lacemakers are producing lace faster than I expected. I included in the prices the time I spend designing the patterns, selling the lace and obtaining raw materials. I figured my time at the same hourly rate as the lacemakers.

(I did not include anything in the price for bad debts, and I learned later that I should have. A former Nazi in the Croatian camp asked me for samples of our bobbin lace. I gave him a number of samples because he had a brother in Switzerland who was a merchant, and I hoped he would sell our lace in Switzerland. But I never received any orders and he never returned our samples. When I asked for payment, he said samples are always free.)

Friday, January 24, 1947

Since the UNRRA store has been doing so poorly, they are allowing me to again do my own selling in the neighboring towns. I went to Weisskirchen today, but sold only 73 Schillings worth of bobbin lace. UNRRA still requires me to turn over to them everything I receive. They will keep something for camp administration and then return the rest for me and my lacemakers, but we don't know when.

Again we have some commission collecting information about everyone in the camp. They want to know when we left Yugoslavia and why. Today, they asked to talk with Cilka and Mire.

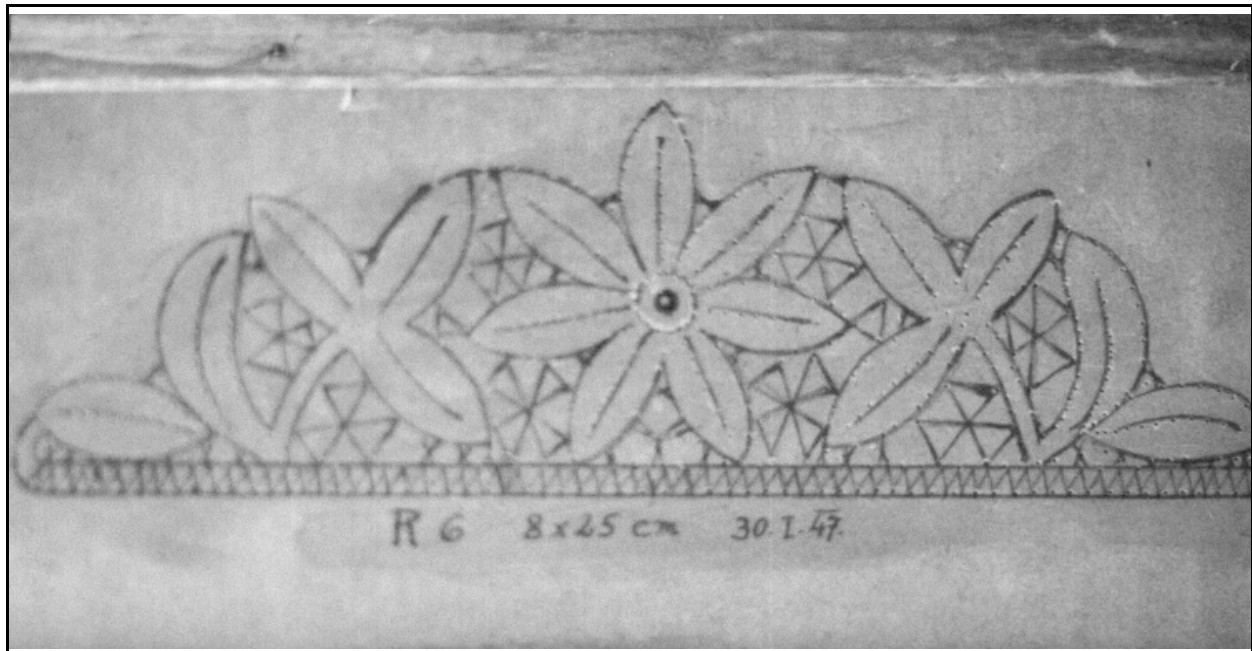
Saturday, January 25, 1947

Last year, I had convinced UNRRA to provide extra food rations for me and my lacemakers. (They normally provide extra rations for people who have jobs.) It was only a small amount of extra food, but we were so hungry, it was very important. They eliminated my extra rations in December, and have been gradually eliminating the extra rations for my lacemakers. Two more lost their extra rations today. Out of 16 lacemakers, only 8 get extra rations now.

It's very cold again - 22°F below zero.

Monday, January 27, 1947

We had music in our room last night to celebrate



This is a pattern I designed on January 30, 1947 for a lace border which could be sewn to a tablecloth or window curtain. This was one of my more simple designs, but making lace from this pattern is more difficult than it looks..

Janko's nameday.

Today I went to the Hochmetz restaurant and sold 170 Schillings worth of lace based on the new price list. (The regional government had approved my proposed new price list without any delay.)

This afternoon I cut and chopped wood till I was exhausted. Franc, Vinko and Cene don't bother cutting any wood. Mire sells whatever he brings from the woods. The Kokelj brothers and Janko Demšar bring wood to heat our barracks.

People say we will be moved to Stuttgart, in the Russian zone in West Germany. That means we could wind up being forcibly relocated by the Russians back to Yugoslavia.

After 7 weeks, I finally received an extra food ration card for my work with the lacemakers. The lacemakers also got extra cards.

Tuesday, January 28, 1947

Miha Sršen fired Franc Demšar because Franc was becoming too undependable, and not following orders.

I've been reading German and English newspapers all day. They say that an agreement has been reached in London regarding the future



Cilka Žakelj (the author's wife, center) and Mici Žakelj (the author's sister, on the right) cook food in the refugee barracks to supplement the food provided by UNRRA. Note the handmade pots and pans sitting on the wood-burning stove. On the left is Marija Lazar, making bobbin lace which was then sold to buy food and other things. The bars in the foreground are part of a bedstand. We don't know who the child is - please let us know if you recognize him/her. (Judenburg, late 1946 - early 1947. Photo by Marjan Kocmur.)

of the refugees.

Very cold again - 13°F below zero.

Levičar is bothering my sister Mici again, but Mici gets mad at me when I tell her to stop seeing him. I don't want her to marry him. I don't think he would be a good husband.

Thursday, January 30, 1947

Levičar bothered Mici again while she was working, so I reminded him to act more like a gentleman. He became upset and stopped talking. Then he played chess with Natlačen for a while, and he finally left - with the chess pieces.

Friday, January 31, 1947

I hear that, while I was gone from the room, Levičar came by and spoke very angrily about me.

Saturday, February 1, 1947

UNRRA paid me 530 Schillings for lace I had provided to the UNRRA store. They deducted 99 Schillings. I don't know what they use the deduction for.

Wednesday, February 5, 1947

This afternoon, the crafts union elected a new committee to supervise prices for refugee products. My sister Mici is representing the lacemakers.

Thursday, February 6, 1947

I received a letter from my brother Ciril, who was recently married (in Slovenia). Many people at the wedding signed the letter. I wish I could have been at his wedding.

Mici finished an exceptionally beautiful lace collar to fill an order I had obtained from a woman in Neue Siedlung. She made it from a design I drew which was based on the size specified by the woman. We had agreed on price, but when I delivered the lace today, the woman wanted a higher than normal credit for the thread which she had provided. (Since thread is so hard to obtain, we usually require people who place orders to provide us with the necessary thread.) So I charged her more than we had agreed, and then she refused to accept the lace. I don't know if I handled this correctly. (Many years later, I brought this piece of lace with us to America and then sold it to Anna Jesenko. I still think it was our most beautiful piece.)

Friday, February 7, 1947

I went to see Podhorsky because I haven't been receiving the extra food ration card I was promised. He made some excuses and said he thought I didn't want it, but finally gave me the smallest ration card.

Saturday, February 8, 1947

I received a letter from my brother Jože in Feldkirchen, saying that he had received a letter from our mother in Slovenia. She writes that a group of soldiers and tanks have camped out in the field across from Jože's house, and their officer has moved into Jože's house. Jože's wife Francka is also still living there, and our mother is worried that something may happen which will destroy Jože's marriage. Jože has decided he needs to return home immediately, regardless of the risks he may face.

Sunday, February 9, 1947

I received a telegram from Jože, saying that he is coming here tomorrow, and that he wants to take our sister Mici back home with him on Tuesday. Mici has become friends with Levičar, and we think it would be very bad for her if she married him. He often bothers her, and she has turned him down when he asked her to marry him. But she still seems to like him and may reconsider his proposal. I don't think he would treat her well.

Monday, February 10, 1947

This afternoon, we waited for some members of the British Parliament, who were supposed to visit our new lacemaking workshop. But they never showed up.

UNRRA had asked that our lacemakers begin working in a separate workshop, but this isn't working well. If they work in their own barracks, they can fit the lacemaking in with their normal household chores and get much more done.

Jože arrived from Feldkirchen at 3 p.m. He immediately asked Mici to go back home with him, but she said she would like to think about it. He replied, "You don't need to think about anything! Just pack your things and come with me!" Jože feels responsible for Mici, and he wants her to stay with him.

I didn't get involved in the argument between Mici and Jože. Mici is our best lacemaker, and I don't want anyone to think I would encourage her to stay here just so she could continue to be part of our lacemaking business. (A year later, all the single women in our camp were sent to work as maids in private homes in Canada. Mici would not have been happy in that kind of situation, so it's good she didn't stay with us.)

Tuesday, February 11, 1947

This morning I received permission from the regional authorities to travel to Feldkirchen with Jože and Mici, and to buy some thread for our lacemakers.

Mici didn't go see Levičar today, because she knew he might keep her from leaving. Around 3 p.m., we all went to the train station. Cilka, Mire, Vinko, Milica (Žonta), and Miss Verčič went with us to see us off. Many of us cried. We have no idea what will happen to Jože and Mici when they return home, and we may never see them again.

At 8:15 p.m., Jože, Mici and I arrived in Celovec (Klagenfurt) and headed for the temporary quarters of Mr. and Mrs. Jobst, where we will stay for the night. Mr. Jobst was the organist in our home village, but the communists forced him into exile. We had tea and talked, and then went to sleep on their kitchen floor. Mr.

and Mrs. Jobst still have children back in our home village, and they want to go back home to them.

Wednesday, February 12, 1947

At 8:30, we went to the Kunsthaus and bought some presents for Jože and Mici to take back to our families in Slovenia. Then we found Cilka's brother Rupert, who has been living in this area, traveling from place to place, sewing clothes for people who could afford to pay. Rupert says he will soon return home also.

We found out that Mici needs permission from UNRRA to return home. With this news, Mici became hopeful that she might have to return to the refugee camp. But Jože immediately went to the post office and sent a telegram to a higher



Anton, Mici and Jože Žakelj in an Austrian refugee camp in 1946.

ranking bureaucrat in Judenburg, who quickly replied that everything would be taken care of. At that, Mici's hopes were dashed and she again became despondent.

Around noon, we visited Mr. and Mrs. Dellafior. Jože had worked with Mr. Dellafior when he was the regional administrator for home industries, and they had become good friends. At one point during the war, it looked like the Germans would draft Jože to serve in the German army, but Mr. Dellafior (who is much older) offered to go himself and made arrangements so Jože didn't have to go. During the war, Mr. Dellafior's offices were bombed, but he survived.

Today, I reached an agreement with Mr. Dellafior for sale of our bobbin lace in Celovec (Klagenfurt). Around 3 p.m., we said goodbye to the Dellafiors and boarded the train for Feldkirchen. The train moved so slowly that Jože wanted to get off and walk the rest of the way - despite the rain. But we all stayed on, and we arrived in Feldkirchen at 7:30. Mici went to spend the night with our friends Tomaž and Dora, and I went with Jože to his apartment.

Thursday, February 13, 1947

We stayed in Jože's apartment today, preparing for his (and my sister's) return home. Jože looked for his official papers while Mici baked a potica. It appeared Jože might have an opportunity to get a ride with an Englishman, but that didn't work out. We were up till midnight helping Jože pack. He is convinced that the next few days are critical for his future, and that he must get back home to his wife as quickly as possible.

Friday, February 14, 1947

We got up at 5 a.m., finished getting everything ready and left Jože's apartment with 5 suitcases at 6:30. He is even taking his bicycle with him.

But he asked me to take his radio and a box of flour and cloth.

I accompanied them to the border crossing at Beljak (Villach). The police had some questions about the radio. Jože told them I need to take it with me for repairs.

At 9:30 we said good-bye at the train station. Mici cried. She was still hoping that we might let her return with me to the refugee camp, but Jože insisted she had to return home with him. Even I had tears in my eyes. This may be the last time I see any member of my family. I will be the only one from my family outside Slovenia. I never wanted to leave home, but now I've been cast out to the world, alone.

By late afternoon, I arrived back at the refugee camp, back to what is now my home, to my wife Cilka, who is now my only family.

Saturday, February 15, 1947

A letter arrived at the camp from our mother for Mici. We also received two letters from our friend Silva with ration cards for 12 pounds of flour and 2 pounds of meat. Cilka baked a potica.

Sunday, February 16, 1947

I wrote letters to my mother, to Mici, and others. I also listened to Jože's radio. It's a very good multi-band radio, but it does need some repair.. The reception was also interrupted by frequent outages in our camp's electricity.

Monday, February 17, 1947

I put together a 10 pound package for my family in Slovenia. I send any extra clothes and food that I can obtain here. I know the shortages there are as bad, or worse, than here in the refugee camp.

Tuesday, February 18, 1947

Mire finally returned to work with the loggers today, after resting for a week. They threatened to fire him if he didn't return. Today is "Pust," the last day before Lent. We had some special food to celebrate. In the evening, we attended a play put on by fellow refugees, but it was boring and poorly done.

I took the radio in for repairs. I received another package from Silva - coffee and corn flour.

Wednesday, February 19, 1947

We had special prayers in the chapel from 1 - 2 a.m.

Franc Demšar (one of our roommates) is talking with other people now, but not with me or Cilka, I don't know why.

Thursday, February 20, 1947

The radio is fixed - for 25 Schillings and 10 British cigarettes. Due to rumors about a required exchange of Austrian money, the value of cigarettes has almost doubled. Some people prefer to be paid in cigarettes. British cigarettes are worth twice as much as the local brands.

This afternoon I cut firewood. Everyone in our room is supposed to help obtain and cut firewood (to heat our room), but some of them manage to evade that responsibility.

Everyone in our room received mail today, except Janko and Pavle. I received letters from my sister Julka and my friend Škofic. Julka went to Škofic to retrieve some shoemaking leather, shoes and other things I had left with him when Cilka and I had to leave as refugees. Škofic says the communists took everything he had, including the things I left with him. They even took his land.

Saturday, February 22, 1947

I took some lace to Weisskirchen today and obtained 4 pounds of rye bread and 3 pounds of white bread.

Friday, February 28, 1947

This evening I sold 274 Schillings worth of bobbin lace at the hospital.

After we pay our expenses (including the other lacemakers), Cilka and I divide our income into three parts: we keep one-third for ourselves, we send one-third to our families in Slovenia, and we reinvest one-third in producing more lace.

Saturday, March 1, 1947

This morning I sold 175 Schillings worth of lace at the public health offices.

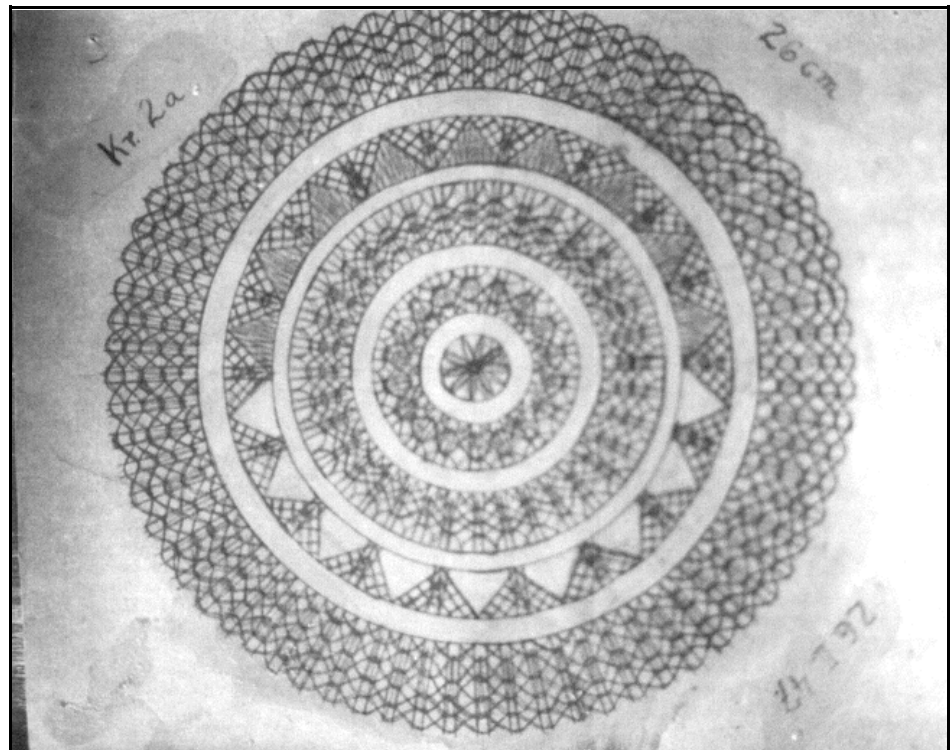
Cilka, Mire and I have now saved enough food to provide adequate supplements to the camp food for 3 months. With the constant changes in the amount provided by the camp, it is very important to have a backup supply. Right now the camp food is very bad - mostly watery soup.

[Editor's note] Here is an excerpt from Mark Wyman's book "DPs" to help you understand what the camp food was like:

Horrible food seemed universal at times. Some camps became infamous for unpalatable

provisions, and this reputation helped steer DPs away. By common consent, however, one frequent item in the UNRRA menu was so distasteful and so frequently offered that the mention of it today causes former DPs to wrinkle their noses: split-pea soup. Latvian DPs called it ... "green horror." One Latvian recalled that a major problem with split-pea soup in the camps was its lack of meat - there was usually no meat whatsoever. As they entered the dining area, the cry went out: "Are we getting the 'green horror' again?" A Slovenian echoed this, remembering with disgust that split-pea soup was served twice a day in his camp for some time: "I said 'I will never eat that again.'"

Sometimes there were other items, such as cabbage soup, potatoes and bread, but the usual problem was simply too much of one thing. That was one of the drawbacks with split peas,



One of my more complex patterns for a round doily. Drawn in the refugee camp near Judenburg on February 26, 1947.

but it occurred as well with beans and corn bread, among other items. ("The corn bread would be weeks old; we had to soak it to use it. We would get nothing but corn bread for months; then all split pea.") Visitors said that such a diet could do nothing but maintain "a lusterless sort of physical life - it gives the DP look, which is not as gaunt and starved as it is tired and bloodless." (page 54)

Sunday, March 2, 1947

This afternoon, we attended the solemn blessing of the new Stations of the Cross in the camp chapel.

Monday, March 3, 1947

I received my first letter from my sister Mici in Slovenia. When she wrote the letter, she and my brother Jože had not been able to get all the way back to our home village yet. She says they were stopped by snow in Škofja Loka. Other than that, she says she is well.

Tuesday, March 4, 1947

Mire lost his logging job. Cilka will no longer receive her supplemental food ration. We are getting only about 1,000 calories a day from the camp kitchen (2,000 is the average that is recommended for adults). Cilka is cooking our own food in our room 1 - 2 times a day to supplement the camp food.

Wednesday, March 5, 1947

After many delays, UNRRA finally paid me back 2,000 Schillings out of the 3,000 I had turned over to them from my sales of bobbin lace. (I am required to hand over all proceeds from my sales. They keep far too much for camp administration, and then I use the rest to pay our lacemakers and buy raw materials. I pay myself and Cilka at the same hourly rate as everyone else.)

Thursday, March 6, 1947

I received a letter from my sister Mici - her first letter after she and my brother Jože arrived back home in Slovenia. She writes that she arrived sick. There are shortages of food, cigarettes, clothes and other things, but people are allowed to speak a little more freely.

Monday, March 10, 1947

Today the Red Cross took me to Salzburg to see a doctor about new false teeth. The false teeth I have were made for me many years ago, when I still had a few of my own teeth. Last year, I lost the last of my own teeth, and now my false teeth don't work well. The doctor here says I may be getting ulcers because I can't chew my food.

The ride in the Red Cross auto was long and difficult. We left Judenburg at 8 a.m. and arrived in Salzburg at 4:30 p.m.. But the scenery was beautiful, especially the Salzach valley, including Schladning and other places. We crossed a mountain pass that had so much snow that we barely made it through. I got motion sickness in the car and was throwing up..

At 6:30 p.m., I was measured for new teeth. Then they drove me to a camp to stay overnight.

Tuesday, March 11, 1947

Today I was allowed to walk around Salzburg. I visited friends of Vinko Kržišnik (one of our roommates back at our camp). They gave me some food ration cards. Then I went to Majer's, where I sold 300 Schillings worth of bobbin lace. Majer showed me a large lace tablecloth which had been made by Vinko's cousin, Marijana.

The city of Salzburg does not seem to have been damaged much by the war. I saw many large American cars. In the clinic, I saw Hungarians, Poles and Ukrainians.

**Wednesday,
March 12, 1947**

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., they did more measurements for my new teeth. Then we left for Judenburg, and arrived back at our camp at 10 p.m. Today I ate more and felt better than I did going to Salzburg on Monday.

**Thursday, March
13, 1947**

Our daily ration of bread has been cut almost in half.

**Friday, March 14,
1947**

The Makovec and Ovijač families left the camp today to return home to Slovenia. I worked on bobbin lace designs. I also went to town and bought 5 pounds of apples.

Saturday, March 15, 1947

UNRRA paid me only half as much as I had expected for lace we had given them for sale.

We received ration cards from our friend Silva for 6 pounds of bread and 2 pounds of meat.

Sunday, March 16, 1947

I wrote letters to my brothers Stanko and Janez, and to my sister Mici. In the afternoon, Cilka



When I went to Salzburg in March 1947 to be measured for false teeth, I sent this postcard of the Salzburg castle to my wife Cilka. Here is my note from the back of the postcard: "My dear wife! Heartfelt greetings from Salzburg. Immediately after I arrived here yesterday at 4:30, they measured me for my new teeth. I don't know how long I will have to stay here. I will probably be back to you before you get this card. The Americans control this part of Austria, but there is not much sign of America here. I would rather be back with you in the green hills surrounding Judenburg. Sincere greetings and a kiss from your Tone."

and I went to the pastry shop.

Monday, March 17, 1947

Mire was very pleased to receive a package from his relatives in America - 400 cigarettes and a can of meat.

Tuesday, March 18, 1947

We each received 13 pounds of apples. We also got shots to protect us from typhus.

I had an argument with Büchsel, the head of the UNRRA work office. He says we're not making enough bobbin lace for them.

Wednesday, March 19, 1947

I put together four packages for family members and friends in Slovenia. Since we live with shortages here ourselves, we know how difficult that can be. So we send our families anything we can find that we don't need here - we go to stores, garbage dumps, anywhere. We send them thermos bottles, pieces of old cloth, sacks, anything that might be useful. We hear that our family members have to give the post office part of everything we send. If they don't, things like thermos bottles get broken or lost.

This afternoon, we went into Judenburg to see a display of refugee handcrafts. The British staff at UNRRA chose the best items in each of three categories. For the first category, art, they chose a painting of Judenburg by Filipič. In the second category, practical art, they chose some of our bobbin lace and a quilt tablecloth. For the third category, practical items, they chose a horsehair brush and an ironing board made by Jožef Zorko.

UNRRA director Daintree made a speech, congratulating us and promising to deliver prizes tomorrow. He also advised everyone to make plans to return to our homes, because there are no other countries willing to take us.

Thursday, March 20, 1947

Mire dug ditches around our barracks to drain the rainwater.

Cviljušac (another employee in the UNRRA office) asked me how many meters of bobbin lace can be made in one hour. Director Daintree wants 21 meters of a certain style of lace border, but he thinks the price we are asking is too high. I told him it takes a good lacemaker one day to make 3/4 of a meter. Cviljušac didn't believe me, so he asked one of the lacemakers, and she told him the same thing.

Cviljušac is worried we will be accused of selling lace at too high a price on the black market. I'm not worried about that - I've followed all the rules. Everyone else sells on the black market, but I have been aboveboard and legal about everything. People think I must be rich because I have so many lacemakers working for me, but I get paid at the same hourly rate they do.

Friday, March 21, 1947

Three more families - Klopčič, Naret(?) and Vodnik left our camp to return to Slovenia today. Vodnik is an amazing man - he could make or fix anything. In the camp, he made boots, clothes, parts for sewing machines, and other things. Every evening, he would line up his family, and each member had to report what they got done that day.

Saturday, March 22, 1947

I received a letter from my sister Mici. It's been about a month now since she returned home from our refugee camp. She still regrets leaving the camp, mostly because she had to leave her friend Levičar. But our brother Jože seems satisfied so far, especially happy that his wife stayed faithful to him, even while the officer from the tank unit was living in his house. (I heard later that his wife was very upset when she heard some of the rumors that had been spread about her.)

Sunday, March 23, 1947

This afternoon Cilka and I went to the pastry shop. Some of their prices are very reasonable.

Tuesday, March 25, 1947

I mailed Easter packages to my mother and Cilka's mother in Slovenia. The packages include small amounts of coffee, chocolate, candy, combs, handkerchiefs, and other things

which we had bought using money we earned from selling bobbin lace.

This evening, the refugee group “Oven” put on a play called “The Chain.” It was very well done. The UNRRA director spoke afterwards and encouraged everyone to make plans to go back home. He said that not more than one-fifth of us (only single, healthy workers) will be accepted for resettlement by other countries and even that will take years.

We finally received the prizes we were promised last week at the craft show - each person received 20 cigarettes, a bar of soap, shaving soap, and a chocolate bar.

Wednesday, March 26, 1947

This afternoon, we made 4 pounds of marmalade out of 10 pounds of apples. We received 30 pounds of apples during the past week, and they are quickly going bad.

Thursday, March 27, 1947

Cilka baked apple strudel.

We said goodbye to Miss Russon, who is leaving for work elsewhere. She has been the UNRRA welfare worker at our camp. Sometimes she seemed unfriendly, but she worked very hard for us. She had no patience for long-winded Croatians. The best way to get things done with her was to say one word: “Bread!” or “Thread!” When she drove her jeep to Trieste, she would usually bring us back raw materials such as thread for bobbin lace, multi-colored yarn for knitting, paint (which I gave to Slavko Smole, who used it to paint the children’s dining room), and so on. I don’t think the new welfare worker will be as helpful.

We gave Miss Russon three heart-shaped pieces of bobbin lace as a sign of our gratitude for her work. She was very thankful for our gift.

I received a letter from my sister Mici, written on the back of a design for bobbin lace. She’s sick and still regretting that she returned home. She says our father is in the hospital, but doesn’t say why.

Friday, March 28, 1947

Mire returned from a week-long trip to Celovec (Klagenfurt) (probably buying and selling on the black market). Marjan Kocmur came with him, bringing about 60 pictures which he had developed since the last time he visited our camp. A number of pictures of my sister Mici were included. When Kocmur visits a camp, he takes pictures of everyday life and then asks people if they want to buy copies. Usually, I pay him for an entire batch and then I distribute the pictures to individuals at a small markup. Sometimes, I lose money because some people change their mind and decide they don’t want the pictures.

Vrtačnik, the tailor, and his family left the camp today to return to Slovenia.

We listened to a British official speak in the camp hall. He urged everyone to return home. That prompted a heated debate.

Saturday, March 29, 1947

I went shopping in Judenburg to buy things for everyone in our room. (Cilka made me a large canvas and leather backpack for these shopping trips.) Sometimes I have so much stuffed in my backpack, I look like a pack mule. It makes sense for me to do the shopping for our roommates: I know German better than the rest, I have the time, and I am good at buying and selling things. It’s a lot of work without any rewards. The worst part is that my roommates have at times questioned whether I kept some of their money for myself. My only reward - and the best reward - is when I see their satisfaction.

This morning, we concluded a week of special religious exercises, led by Dr. Robič. Every day from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. we prayed and meditated.

Dr. Erman brought me a postcard which my sister Mici had sent to the camp, addressed to Janez Telban but clearly intended for Janez Levičar. I can see that she still misses him. But I think he would not have treated her well, and I am glad they didn't get married.

I also received a letter from my father, who is in the hospital for his eyes.

Sunday, March 30, 1947

I wrote letters to my sister, my father and mother, my brother, and to a couple friends. In the afternoon, Cilka and I walked to the pastry shop.

Monday, March 31, 1947

Our roommate Franc Demšar left yesterday on a trip to the surrounding countryside to sell shoes, but he hasn't returned yet.

Mire began working at the Zeltweg airport, where the British are clearing out the German flight training facilities. He likes the job because they give him a good lunch with a fourth of a loaf of white bread. The British are burning the furniture and the paperwork which the Germans had left. Amongst all the old papers, Mire found an American military document (marked "Secret") with pictures taken by American fighter planes when they attacked our home village during the war. (At that time, we were under German occupation.) One of the pictures clearly shows our village church of St. Martin from the warplane's viewpoint. Four people died in our village that day.

The British are finding large quantities of German bombs and munitions. They transport these bombs across the river to a wooded area

where they have excavated a large hole in the ground. They put the bombs into the hole and detonate them. People are saying that we can expect to see trainloads of American bombs arriving, to be destroyed in the same manner.

We finished a large quantity of lace border which the UNRRA director (an Englishman) had requested, but now he is offering to pay only for the value of the thread. Was he expecting us to work for nothing? What a miser! The British are all the same: they all expect to get things for free, none of them want to pay. (Fifty-six years later, we still have that lace border!)

Tuesday, April 1, 1947

We received a very welcome package of food from our friend Silva.

We heard that our roommate, Franc Demšar, is in jail, apparently because he was more than 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the camp, without official permission.

Wednesday, April 2, 1947

I worked all day on 3 broken bicycles which belong to people in our room. I hoped to make at least one good one out of the 3, but I couldn't find two good tires.

Friday, April 4, 1947, Good Friday

Cilka woke at 5 a.m. to bake a potica for Easter.

I visited Franc Demšar in jail. Since the jail provides very little food for prisoners, I brought him 9 pounds of apples, 2 pounds of bread, a little bit of butter and sugar, and 10 cigarettes. I read in the paper that he was arrested because he was riding his bike at night without lights. When he was arrested, he was carrying 13 pounds of bacon and 15 pounds of flour, probably food he had obtained as payment for

shoes he had made or repaired.

Saturday, April 5, 1947

I couldn't fall asleep till 1 a.m. last night, due to the rain leaking through our roof. We've tried patching the roof with sheet metal, but nothing seems to work.

I used a friend's bicycle to go to Weisskirchen, to sell lace and obtain some treats for Easter, but without success.

This afternoon, Cilka, Mire and I each received 3 letters. At 4 p.m., we went to the camp chapel for the traditional Easter blessing of food. Cilka took potica, sausage, eggs, apples and horseradish - special food which we had earned through our sale of bobbin lace. We had a good dinner. At 6:30 p.m., everyone in the camp went to a solemn Easter procession. With Račič, Čeč and Zupan, I helped carry a new canopy at the head of the procession. The singing and the weather were beautiful.

Mire helped with the ringing of a new bell which Gosar and Košir had made out of damaged airplane aluminum specially for this occasion. Next to the chapel, we have a 6-foot wooden tower where we had previously hung a steel rail for a bell. For Easter, they removed the steel rail and installed the new aluminum bell. Unfortunately, it didn't sound as good as the steel rail. The bell had sounded alright when they were working on it in the workshop, but when they hung it in the tower, it sounded like tin.

After the church service, we listened to my brother's radio in our room. The reception was unusually clear. For the first time, we were able to hear radio Ljubljana.

Sunday, April 6, 1947, Easter

We went to Mass at 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. The singing was beautiful, and we were inspired by a sermon about Christ's resurrection, and the hope that justice will someday prevail.

For lunch we had a good soup from the camp kitchen and Cilka baked some potatoes and meat in our room.

In the afternoon, our friends Tomaž and Dora arrived on a visit from Feldkirchen. It was a nice warm afternoon. We walked to the church at Maria Buch. In the evening, we had a good dinner of pork and macaroni.

We are very happy with the way we were able to celebrate Easter today. We had good food, and enough of it - a stark contrast to last year, when we were literally starving.

Friday, April 11, 1947

Our roommate Franc Demšar has been sentenced to 1 - 3 months in jail. The camp informed us that we will no longer receive food rations for him. I brought him a large package today: bread, apples, bacon, cigarettes, clothes, and so on. The jailer wouldn't let me talk with him. I heard they may move him to Graz, which is about 40 miles away.

For the rest of the day, I worked on a bobbin lace design to fill an order from Dr. Potokar.

Saturday, April 12, 1947

I sold 170 Schillings worth of bobbin lace at the hospital today.

My brother's radio worked well for a week after I had it repaired, but today I took it in for repairs again. I think it's breaking down because of the constant variation in our electric voltage. The electrical transformer for the camp is overloaded and often shuts down. We have been asked to not use electric hot plates in the evening, but

nobody pays any attention. The wire which runs through our room to Zupan's room glows all night. When will it start a fire?

Mire returned from his job at Zeltweg in a bad mood; he injured his arm while doing heavy manual labor.

Sunday, April 13, 1947

The camp kitchen made polenta and goulash for lunch. In the evening, we cooked potatoes and goulash in our room. In the afternoon, our roommates walked to the church at Maria Buch, while Cilka and I stayed back and wrote letters.

Cilka and I are finding differences between us: We think differently about money. I like to go for long and fast walks. She likes to go for walks in nature, but then she gets tired quickly. She was crying about our differences today. I don't know what to do.

Monday, April 14, 1947

Mire and most of his coworkers refused to go to their jobs in Zeltweg today, to protest their poor working conditions (only 10 out of 40 went). The British seem willing to make some changes.

One of the refugees in our camp sold some white flour to some Serbians. They told the authorities that it was stolen flour. The police talked to the person who sold it, and he said that one of our camp leaders, Dr. Est, was involved in obtaining the flour. The police arrested both of them.

Wednesday, April 16, 1947

I went to Fohnsdorf and got orders for 420 Schillings of bobbin lace.

The Austrian police searched barracks 13 and 16 and arrested 6 people, including Rudolf Primožič, probably because they found some

leather drive belts in his room. He had probably bought them so he could make something out of the leather, but apparently they had been stolen.

A total of 16 people from our camp are in prison now. A particular policeman seems intent on making life difficult for us.

Thursday, April 17, 1947

Mire returned to work at Zeltweg.

UNRRA has now repaid me most of what they owed me for lace sales. They still keep part of what we sell, but they really have no expenses. I do all the selling myself, while other people take their products to the UNRRA store and wait for UNRRA to sell them.

Dr. Est, Štrukelj and J. Zupan were all sentenced to a month in jail for *schwarzhandel* - buying and selling on the black market.

[Editor's note:] Mark Wyman has some interesting comments about the black market in his book "DPs, Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951" (page 116):

A Ukrainian DP recalled that "food was number one" in his camp's black market, with forays into the countryside to illegally barter with German farmers. The acquisition of bread, sugar, flour, vegetables, fruit and similar items helped enrich the dismal diet of the camps. When investigations were conducted into black market activity at the ... DP camps, the extent of illegal trade was discovered to be enormous. "Blankets issued to the refugees, food from their kitchens and articles of clothing ... all find their way into the illicit trade," the New York Times reported in January 1946.

Efforts to thwart the illegal trading made little headway on a continent where millions were participating in it - most notably the occupying troops. ... UNRRA authorities were sensitive to

the continuing complaints that DPs controlled the black market, and in November 1946 the organization's director ordered drastic steps to suppress DP black marketing ...

Friday, April 18, 1947

I went to Rauscher's to pick up the repaired radio. It was fixed by J. Jerič, who told me he was asked to take over one of the camp's paid leadership jobs, but he refused. The radio works well now.

Saturday, April 19, 1947

This morning, I was summoned to meet with the camp's new welfare officer to make plans regarding repatriation (returning home to Slovenia.) I told her I cannot return to Slovenia. If the UNRRA camps are dissolved, Cilka and I will stay in Austria.

Sunday, April 20, 1947

This morning, I wrote letters to my mother and my brothers and sisters in Slovenia. In the afternoon, Cilka and I walked to the castle ruins on the nearby hillside.

Our roommate Cene put together a package for his relatives in Slovenia, just as he does every week. He included shoes, socks, clothes and other things. I have sent things like that to my relatives, but now it's too risky. If the authorities find a refugee sending materials like that, they suspect the person of stealing or illegal trading. I told Cene I would not take his package to the post office.

Monday, April 21, 1947

We hear rumors that 90 of the 120 craftspeople in our camp will no longer be able to work in the camp. They will be required to get jobs outside the camp. Babnik, Sršen and others will actually be expelled because they were too

critical of the camp leadership.

Tuesday, April 22, 1947

Mr. and Mrs. Oven are sick with diphtheria. The entire camp is under quarantine; nobody is allowed to come or go.

Wednesday, April 23, 1947

More than 50 of our craftspeople received requests to report to the work office. Most of the local jobs which are available to refugees are inhumane. Our friend Mici Erznožnik cried when she learned that she and her husband Karl would have to report. I went with them to the office to help interpret. She was allowed to return to lacemaking in the camp, but Karl was assigned to a highway construction crew in Fohnsdorf.

A total of 22 people from our camp were assigned to work on area farms, including three of our lacemakers. When Hitler was in power, Slavic people were assigned to German and Austrian farmers. The farmers were allowed to treat them like slaves.

This afternoon, a representative of the Yugoslav repatriation commission was in the camp again. This time, there were more people interested in talking with him.

The diphtheria quarantine is not being enforced.

Thursday, April 24, 1947

This morning, I rode my bicycle to Fohnsdorf, where I sold 25 pieces of lace for 372 Schillings.

Karl Erznožnik, Babnik, Košir and Šušteršič began working at Zeltweg today. Helena, Anica and Mrs. Košir began working in a tree nursery.

Two days ago, the police searched barracks

number 10, where they seized a typewriter belonging to Čebašek. Today they searched barracks 7, but didn't take anything. In barracks 36, they found some leather belonging to Zupančič. Janez had to take it to the police station. Our roommate Pavle is very upset about all this. He says he will fight rather than let them take anything from him. His brother Franc tries to calm him down, but Franc is angry also; he says he will leave the camp if they take anything from him.

Friday, April 25, 1947

UNRRA issued strict rules to prevent the spread of diphtheria and scarlet fever. These are very dangerous diseases, especially for children. The school and the chapel will be closed for 6 weeks. Nobody is allowed to leave the camp without permission from a doctor. People with jobs will have to stay in the camp.

Despite the quarantine, I went to Judenburg without permission to take food to our friend Franc Demšar, who is still in jail. This time, the jailer allowed me to see him, but he still wouldn't let me talk with him.

This afternoon, we were each given half a pound of fresh fish and some frozen eggs. Since we have no way to refrigerate the eggs, we had to cook them immediately.

The radio is working well - we listen to Slovenian broadcasts from Ljubljana, Trieste and Belgrade.

Sunday, April 27, 1947

I wrote letters to my brother Stanko and my sister Mici. In the afternoon, Cilka and I went to a nearby auto junkyard looking for things we could use.

Štefan Zorc and Joža Zaleznik were married in the camp today.

I tried making some wooden shoes for myself (since we can't get enough leather), but they're really not useable.

Tuesday, April 29, 1947

I helped Cilka prepare leather uppers for the shoes she is making with a master shoemaker in Judenburg.

Police searched Zupančič's barracks again.

The new welfare officer asked me if I had any lace to send to Miss Russon. I told her I don't have any right now.

Wednesday, April 30, 1947

Today we each received new cigarette rations: 20 of the cheapest brand, 20 of a medium brand, and 10 of a more expensive brand. Since I don't smoke, I will be able to trade these for food and other things.

We heard rumors that the communists will attack the camp tomorrow - on May 1. People from our camp have been assigned to stand guard through the night.

Thursday, May 1, 1947

Our "guards" walked around the camp all night, on the lookout for a communist attack. At one point in the night, Vašl (one of our fellow refugees) stepped outside his barracks to see what was going on. Ristič, one of the "guards," yelled out, "*Hände hoch!*" (Hands up!) Ristič realized it was not a communist, but he grabbed him, just to play a joke on him. Vašl, barefoot and wearing nothing but underwear, thought he was being attacked by communists. He began running around, yelling "Help! Help!" Today we laughed all day about that. Even so, the guards stayed on their lookouts, just in case of a real attack.

For the first time in 3 weeks, Cilka sewed shoes today at Russheim's, the shoemaker in Judenburg. Lately, she has been sewing shoes mostly for Miha Sršen, who has his own shop with a sewing machine for leather.

Our camp has organized guards to be on the lookout all night tonight. Almost all the men are participating, except the men from my barracks. I'm not sure why they didn't ask us to join them. Maybe because we said we didn't believe there would be an attack? Maybe they wonder why so many men from my village are still alive? Why didn't more of our men go back to Slovenia two years ago with the Domobranci, to be tortured and killed?

Sometimes our barracks learns about "dangers" long after they were supposed to occur. At least that means we sleep at night while everyone else worries about the latest danger.

Friday, May 2, 1947

Another night passed without a communist attack.

At 7 p.m., we went to the camp chapel for May devotions, and again at 11 p.m. for additional prayers.

Sunday, May 4, 1947

This afternoon, Cilka and I walked with our roommate Cene to the nearby towns of Aichdorf and Hetzendorf. Cene was happy to find an inn which had beer (beer has been hard to find). Only one small glass of beer was allowed per customer, so he ordered a beer for each of us and drank all of them.

Monday, May 5, 1947

I was working on a lace design at 9 a.m. today when five policemen arrived to search our room. When they arrived, they said "Show us your

typewriter, we need to do an investigation!" "I told them we had nothing to hide and pointed to the typewriter on the table. Mire bought it for me a year ago with our hard-earned money. They insisted it must be stolen and confiscated it. Then they spent the next 4 hours going through our room and the neighboring barracks (the laundry). They took some canvas that belonged to Mire, 18 cans of food which the Kokelj brothers had received as payment for their logging work, and 50 pounds of flour. And they confiscated some English underwear, some auto parts, and saccharin tablets - all on suspicion of being stolen or black market. While they were going through everything, Cilka lay in bed, sick.

When Mire, Franc and Pavle returned from their jobs at 5 p.m., they were very upset and immediately went to the police station. Franc was able to get his cans of food back, but that was it.

I realized later that probably the reason why they came for my typewriter is that I had used it to help a friend write letters to the UNRRA director, alleging corruption among the camp leadership. Jože Zorko would come to me every day and ask me to type letters for him in German. "My complaints will be more effective if they are typed," he would say. He had evidence to back up his allegations. I'm sure they matched the typing on those letters with my typewriter.

The refugee camps are supposed to be "out of bounds" for the Austrian police, but they come frequently, they do their searches, and take whatever they want. I wouldn't be opposed if they took things that had truly been stolen. But what can we do when they take food and other things that we have earned with our hard work? To whom can I complain? To God?

The police say we couldn't possibly have so much extra food, it must be stolen. But often,

that is how our men get paid for their work - they get cans, flour, and so on. The camp food is very unreliable, so we save as much of our own food as we can - for those frequent days when the camp food is inadequate.

In the evening, we had no electricity, so we sat in our room in the darkness and talked. Cene said he won't work so hard any more. There's no point in saving anything - the police will just come and take it.

Tuesday, May 6, 1947

Franc obtained documentation from UNRRA that he and Pavle were each being paid 3 pounds of flour per week for their work. He took that to the police to prove that the 50 pounds of flour in our room was earned, not stolen, but the police wouldn't return it. The police refuse to believe that Franc and Pavle could have saved so much flour.

In the evening, the entire camp was dark, without electricity. A number of people got into a heated argument.

Wednesday, May 7, 1947

I finished a beautiful lace design to fill an order from Miss Thompson, a new UNRRA worker.

Thursday, May 8, 1947

Miss Thompson liked my design, but I can't get enough thread to make the lace.

People are saying that we will all be required to quit lacemaking and get regular jobs.

Today, I was feeling sick, just like Cilka a few days ago. Mire teased me, saying I must be pregnant.

Three Ukrainians worked on the camp's electric wires, but our room continued to be dark.

Vinko (one of our roommate) ran a wire to our barracks from an adjoining barracks that has electricity.

Friday, May 9, 1947

Two years have passed since we became refugees. How many more? 2 x 2? We want to return home - if only our homeland were free.

Today I felt better, and worked on lace designs again.

Saturday, May 10, 1947

This afternoon, I went to the offices of the regional government and talked with the commissioner for price controls, to make sure we are selling our lace at legal prices. He said our prices are not too high and, in any case, I need not worry because lace is considered a luxury and therefore its price is not controlled.

Tuesday, May 13, 1947

Today, I traveled by train and bicycle to a large store in Wolfsberg, where I sold 657 Schillings worth of lace, and took orders for \$3,200 Schillings more. They especially like my design #11 for a lace collar. We will have more than enough work for the women in our camp who know how to make bobbin lace.

Wednesday, May 14, 1947

I received a request to report to the work office. One of the officials there said I will be able to continue my lace work, but another said I will have to get a regular job. Some people, such as Mire, are traveling 30 miles and further, looking for jobs. I couldn't stand traveling that much every day.

Thursday, May 15, 1947

Today was the holy day of the Ascension. We

went to Masses at 6:30 a.m. and 8 a.m. At 9 a.m., I went to Zeltweg with a group of men who are looking for work, but there was nothing.

This afternoon I wrote to my mother for her birthday.

Friday, May 16, 1947

Lately, I've been successful in getting more orders from people in the surrounding area wanting to buy our bobbin lace. But many of my lacemakers have been required by UNRRA to get work outside the camp, and it looks like more will have to go, which means I won't have enough lacemakers to fill the orders. So today, I wrote to Marica Peternel in the Spittal camp to ask about women there who could help fill our orders.

I talked with engineer Wollman, who had ordered a large quantity of lace. I told him we will have problems filling his order because we are being required to get jobs outside the camp. He replied: "Just keep working, I'll take care of everything!" "My heartfelt thanks to you," I said.

Saturday, May 17, 1947

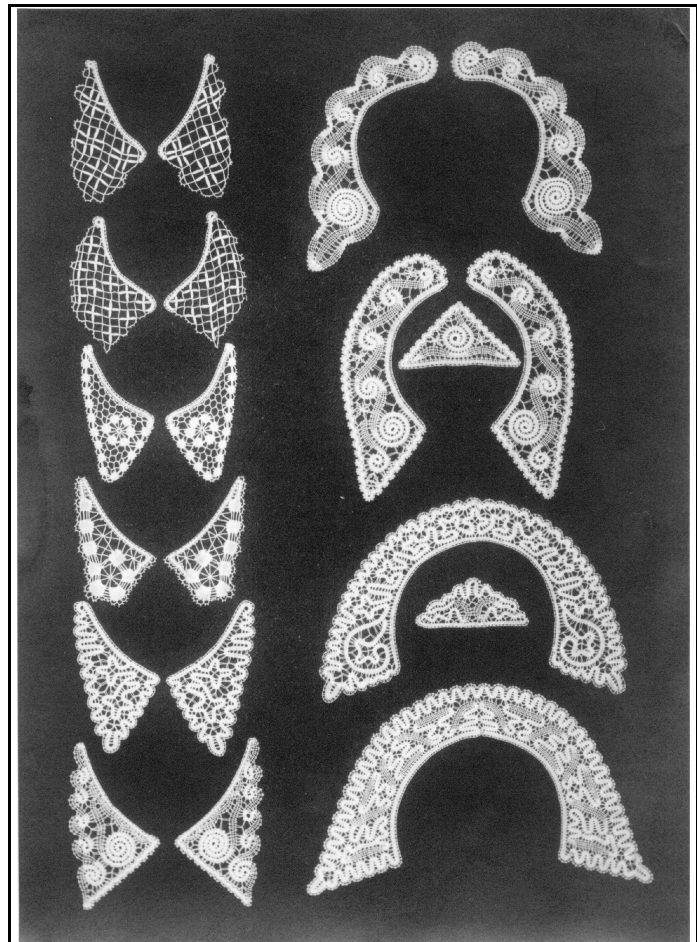
UNRRA continues to require me to hand over to the camp administration all proceeds from sales of bobbin lace. They are supposed to return most of the money, but that often takes weeks or longer. Their payment is late again because their worker didn't get the paperwork done. I had promised my lacemakers I would pay them today, but since UNRRA hasn't paid me, I had to borrow money so I could pay the lacemakers.

Monday, May 19, 1947

The camp food has been so watery lately, it

doesn't even provide a person with enough energy to die. Cilka has been cooking potatoes in our room 4 times a day to supplement the camp food, but we're still feeling hungry.

Today I drew designs for bobbin lace while I waited for Dr. Berezhansky, the new head of the UNRRA work office, who wanted to review our



I designed the patterns for these lace collars and had this picture done professionally to show to prospective customers. I travelled frequently to towns near the refugee camp and obtained orders for lace based on these patterns. The women in the camp then made the lace, and we all shared in the profits, based on the amount of time worked by each person. We used the money to supplement our meager camp rations. (Photo by Rupert Kuballe, Judenburg, 1946.)

work and our use of thread for lace. He didn't show up.

Mire (Cilka's brother-in-law) is in a bad mood because he's run out of cigarettes. I sold him 17 British cigarettes at 5 Schillings each, though I could have sold to them to others at 40.

Wednesday, May 21, 1947

A number of people from our camp have applied to emigrate to Canada, Argentina, Venezuela, England, Belgium and France. We hear that prospects for emigration are looking better.

I repaired our barracks all day, trying to fix the rain leaks, or at least channel the water so it runs to the outside after it gets into our room. We just don't seem to be able to fix the roof.

Friday, May 23, 1947

I took 8 loaves of bread to our friends Hace and Bogataj, who were sentenced to 14 days in prison for not cooperating with the investigation regarding the leather and other items found in the neighboring barracks.

Cilka and I are thinking about applying for Canada or America. I bought an English-Slovenian dictionary (by Dr. Kern) for 60 Schillings.

Saturday, May 24, 1947

For the first time in many months, I am broke and I have a cold, so I don't feel well.

Mire would really like to send something to help his relatives in Slovenia, but all he has is debts to pay. And we can't help him either.

Sunday, May 25, 1947

Cilka cooked me a Sunday dinner of chicken and potatoes. Then we took a long walk in the

woods along the Mura River. When we returned at 5, it was raining.

Wednesday, May 28, 1947

The Yugoslav Repatriation Commission showed a propaganda movie to encourage everyone to return home, but it had the opposite effect. The film showed some of the most backwards parts of Bosnia. After one of the UNRRA workers saw the film, he said: "Now I can see why you don't want to return home - this country is 1,000 years behind us!"

Thursday, May 29, 1947

Our radio is broken again, due to the continuing variations in the voltage of our electric supply.

Friday, May 30, 1947

At 6 a.m., we went to a Mass for my priest brother Stanko, who is in prison in Yugoslavia.

I sent 1,251 Schillings worth of bobbin lace to fill an order from "Kärtner Kunsthaus," and 450 Schillings worth to fill another order.

Saturday, May 31, 1947

At 6:30 a.m., we went to Mass for my mother's 62nd birthday. Her health has never been good, she needs our prayers.

Sunday, June 1, 1947

Cilka and I took a Sunday walk to the Mura River. It was hot today, and people were already swimming. In the evening, we went to a concert in a church in Judenburg. The concert included Slovenian, Ukrainian and Croatian songs. Our choir was the best, thanks to the capable leadership of Franc Zupan. The audience included many townspeople.

Monday, June 2, 1947

Someone from Fohnsdorf came to our camp, admired our lace and bought some of the nicest pieces.

Wednesday, June 4, 1947

I'm getting more orders for bobbin lace, but I don't have enough workers.

Thursday, June 5, 1947

At 8 a.m. we went to Mass for the holy day of the Body and Blood of Christ. Seventeen children had their first Communion. In the afternoon, Cilka and I took a walk in the nearby woods.

Friday, June 6, 1947

Cilka and I applied for emigration to America, Canada and Argentina. Miss Thompson, the UNRRA worker, thought we should apply for Britain, but we are sick of the British.

It does not look like there will be any more people from our camp returning to Slovenia.

Saturday, June 7, 1947

We worked on preparations for a solemn procession and celebration tomorrow.

Sunday, June 8, 1947

After the 8 a.m. Mass, almost all the Slovenians in our camp participated in a solemn procession honoring the Holy Body and Blood of Christ. I helped carry the baldachin (the canopy over the priest carrying the Eucharist).

Tuesday, June 10, 1947

A new snow covered the nearby mountains in white.

I received another request to report to the Work

Office. Was Mr. Wollman unsuccessful in obtaining an exemption so I could continue to work with my lacemakers?

Wednesday, June 11, 1947

I was very pleased to learn that the camp director approved an exemption for me so I don't have to get a job outside the camp. I can continue managing our lacemaking business.

A number of people received invitations to emigrate to Venezuela, but nobody wants to go there.

Dr. Berezghansky, the supervisor in the UNRRA work office, died yesterday after being attacked by strangers last Sunday.

Thursday, June 12, 1947

This evening, everyone attended a farewell party for the UNRRA workers. At the end of this month, UNRRA will be replaced by the International Refugee Organization (IRO).

Friday, June 13, 1947

Today is my 40th birthday. We went to Mass at 6 a.m., then most of the day I helped Cilka prepare leather uppers for her job in the shoemaking shop. Cilka baked me a potica to celebrate my birthday.

Saturday, June 14, 1947

Mire returned from a temporary job at the Celovec (Klagenfurt) airport. He said they fed him good British food, and he was very satisfied with the work.. He says he will go back.

Friday, June 20, 1947

I worked all day on a new design for a lace collar. Mrs. Van Geln, the princess of Liechtenstein, looked over our lace and ordered

several pieces.

Monday, June 23, 1947

Every Catholic in the camp received half a pound of bacon - a gift from the Irish as part of the Pope's efforts to help refugees.

Saturday, June 28, 1947

Dr. Čačinovič, the dentist, finally provided me with the lower part of the false teeth that had been promised for me over 6 months ago.

Sunday, June 29, 1947

It's two years since we arrived in Judenburg.

Monday, June 30, 1947

Franc Demšar returned to our room after 3 months in jail. He doesn't know what to do now. He was angry when he found out that Cilka had been using his flour to make the bread that I had been bringing to him in jail. We were very careful to keep his flour separate from every one else's, and to make sure that nobody even tasted the bread that Cilka made out of his flour. But he's bitter about everything and he doesn't believe that we didn't take any of his flour.

Tuesday, July 1, 1947

I worked all day to finish our accounting for the lace business for the first 6 months of the year. We have 4,600 Schillings worth of lace and thread in our inventory. I sold 16,000 Schillings worth of lace during the past 6 months. I had to turn that all of that money over to UNRRA. They kept a "tax" of 3,700 Schillings, based on 12,640 hours of work by me and my lacemakers designing, making and selling the lace. After keeping the tax, UNRRA returned (often after a month or more) 12,300 Schillings for our work, of which 2,200 Schillings was for my own time.

I visited the Work Office regarding problems with the jobs assigned to Mrs. Kejžar and Mrs. Jensterle. Their working conditions are unbearable. The bureaucrat in the Work Office yelled at me and threatened to put us all in jail for not cooperating, but we were able to arrange different jobs for the two women.

Monday, July 7, 1947

Major Brenton, the new director from the IRO, took over control of our camp today. In two hours, he visited every other barracks.

Mr. Fishinger took over camp administration of finances relating to sales of products made by the refugees. He immediately changed the policy which has required me to hand over all proceeds from lace sales. From now on, I will have to pay the camp only the tax portion, which will then be used for camp expenses.

Wednesday, July 9, 1947

Dr. Erman and Mr. Šešek (refugees who were employed by UNRRA to work in the camp administration) are being transferred to Murovca due to an on-going investigation regarding misuse of camp food and supplies.

Sunday, July 13, 1947

Mr. Kien showed me a list of refugees who will be required to report for work on area farms. The list includes a number of my roommates, one of my laceworkers and myself. My other laceworkers are too young or too old to be required to report for jobs.

Saturday, July 19, 1947

I received a letter from Mrs. Rühlicke, an old friend in Germany. She found out where we were through the Red Cross. She said she fled from the Russians, but then the Americans evicted her from her apartment, threw all her

furniture out on the street and burned it. During the war, her husband was buried under the debris from a bomb explosion, but then a second bomb uncovered him. He's still alive but very depressed about the loss of his factory. Life in Germany sounds as bad, or worse, than life here in the refugee camp.

Sunday, July 20, 1947

Cilka and I walked to Judenburg this afternoon and saw a movie. It was very interesting.

Tuesday, July 22, 1947

Our roommate Franc Demšar got a job as a driver for a repair shop in Leoben. He really wanted a job as a driver, but this means he will have to somehow get to Leoben every day, which is over 20 miles away.

Wednesday, July 23, 1947

Mr. and Mrs. Wald, from Spittal, were here for four hours to discuss their plans to take over our lace business. They propose to teach 100 women to do other handicrafts, but they would pay them less than I have paid my lacemakers. In addition, one-third of what they make would have to go to the Austrian work office and 10% to the social welfare fund. Mrs. Wald said we are charging too much for our lace.

In the evening, I called a meeting of my lacemakers to discuss the proposal from the Walds. The lacemakers voted to continue working with me.

Thursday, July 24, 1947

Mrs. Wald visited again and talked with me for two hours, but we couldn't reach any agreement. I told her I would speak with Mr. Büchsel in the camp work office and send her a written reply. I don't think he will agree to any changes, since this would mean a loss for the "Camp Fund."

Monday, July 28, 1947

Mire had to go to the hospital because a bomb fell on his leg. He was working with the British crew that is clearing the old military training airfield at Zeltweg.

This afternoon, the IRO (who is now in charge of our camp) had a meeting at which they announced they will have to cut back on the number of paid jobs inside the camp. (These jobs were considered better than most jobs available outside the camp.) My lacemakers and I will be allowed to continue our lacemaking business for the time being.

Thursday, July 31, 1947

As I often do, I walked to Judenburg (about 1 mile round trip) and bought food for our roommates. I brought back 20 pounds of white bread, 12 pounds of beans, two pounds of butter, 4 pounds of soy, and other things. Most of my roommates have jobs outside the camp during the day, so they ask me to get food for them to supplement the camp food.

After I returned, we had a downpour with hail. Water was leaking through many parts of our roof.

Friday, August 1, 1947

Ažman returned to Slovenia today. He had been employed in the camp as a cleaner.

I worked on lace designs all day.

Saturday, August 2, 1947

I tried to repair our roof with paper and tin cans. God help us if we have to live here through the winter!

Monday, August 4, 1947

I went to see Dr. Janež regarding pains under my ribs. He said I probably have ulcers and I need to go for an X-ray at the hospital.

Tuesday, August 5, 1947

I was at the hospital from 9 - 12 a.m. The X-rays confirmed that I have ulcers. Dr. Janež promised to try to arrange some better food for me.

Wednesday, August 6, 1947

Our friends Tomaž and Dora arrived for a 2-day visit from Feldkirchen.

Saturday, August 9, 1947

Franc brought some bark which we used to cover our leaking roof.

We accompanied Tomaž and Dora to the train station. We used the station's scale to weigh ourselves: Tomaž and Dora weigh 121 pounds each, Cilka is 132, and I am 143 (down from 150 two years ago).

Back at the camp, we listened to a representative of the Yugoslav Repatriation Commission, who explained some new incentives for people to return to Slovenia. It looks like about 6 - 10 of my lacemakers will accept the offer.

Sunday, August 10, 1947

We went to Mass at 8 a.m. in the camp chapel, and then 10:30 in Judenburg.

A number of people from our camp played in a chess tournament against people from the Murdorf camp. The score was 15:1 for our camp - Mire was the only one from our camp who lost a game.

Monday, August 11, 1947

Seven of my lacemakers are preparing to return to Slovenia. I calculated how much I owed them for their work and paid them. They seemed very satisfied. But I heard that someone wrote an anonymous letter to the IRO director, complaining that I don't pay my lacemakers well, that I don't treat them well, etc.

Tuesday, August 12, 1947

I asked Mr. Büchsel, in the camp work office, to conduct an investigation of my lacemaking business, to address the complaints. He assigned Mr. Kien to talk with each of the lacemakers.

Wednesday, August 13, 1947

I drew some special lace designs for the lacemakers who will be returning to Slovenia.

Thursday, August 14, 1947

At 7:30 a.m., 39 people left the camp to return to Slovenia, including the following families: Gaser, Jenšterle, Kejžar, Thaler, and Weber. Since this includes 7 excellent lacemakers, it may mean the end of my lacemaking business. I feel almost as bad as when my sister Mici and my brother Jože left earlier this year.

Friday, August 15, 1947

Today is the holy day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the afternoon, Cilka and I walked to the church at Maria Buch for litanies. On the way back, we stopped at an inn to drink beer and cider.

Saturday, August 16, 1947

I waited in stores and butcher shops almost all day to buy food for our room. Prices have risen 25 - 50% this month, and there are still shortages.

Sunday, August 17, 1947

Today was the second chess tournament between our camp and Murdorf. This time, they won 15:8.

Wednesday, August 20, 1947

Miss Verčič invited me to visit her lacemaking class. I agreed to pay her to teach the girls in our camp the art of bobbin lace.

I received approval from the camp administration to receive a fourth of a liter of milk each day, based on the doctor's recommendation regarding my ulcers. I will also buy some milk from a farmer in Murdorf.

Monday, August 25, 1947

I went back to the dentist regarding my false teeth.

Thursday, August 28, 1947

Cilka is sewing the leather uppers for 30 pairs of shoes. I am helping her.

Friday, August 29, 1947

Another trip to the dentist.

I received a letter from my brother Jože in Slovenia. He says our brother Ciril had a bad accident, in which he broke part of his backbone.

Saturday, August**30, 1947**

I put together a package including a blanket, a pot and a blouse for Manica (Cilka's sister in Žiri), and another package including pants for my father. Shortages in Slovenia are worse than here.

Sunday, August 31, 1947

This morning, we had frost.

Sršen brought me half a liter of milk for my ulcers (for 1 Schilling). He promised to bring me some every day.

Monday, September 1, 1947

The price of postage doubled today. This is important for us because it is the only way we can communicate with our families in Slovenia.

Miss Verčič is now teaching lacemaking 4 - 6



A Slovenian lacemaking class similar to the class which was taught by Miss Verčič in our refugee camp in 1947.

hours every day, with 10-12 girls attending. I am paying her 11 Schillings a day. (We agreed that I would pay her a certain amount per student per hour, and that I would pay the students for their best pieces.)

Tuesday, September 2, 1947

Mrs. Scherer is teaching English two evenings per week. UNRRA had been paying her 100 Schillings a month, but the new IRO welfare officer stopped that. She decided to continue teaching without pay.

Sunday, September 7, 1947

This afternoon we had elections for a new refugee council to advise the IRO regarding camp administration. Unlike last year's elections, there was little enthusiasm this time. Out of 330 eligible voters, 260 voted. Maček received the most votes, next Kobalč, Clemente and Jerry Zupan. I didn't run, but I got two votes.

We heard that the British Field Service arrested Fric Natlačen on suspicion of being a war criminal. (Fric is a fellow refugee who had been one of Slovenia's best gymnasts.) He was just returning from a visit to his mother in Knittelfeld when they arrested him.

Monday, September 8, 1947

Today is the holy day of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Cilka, Cene, Vinko, Janko and I took the train to Knittelfeld and then walked to the church in Sechau. We attended a solemn Mass which was celebrated by 3 priests, in the presence of 15 other priests. After Mass, one of the priests took us on a tour of the beautiful church. We returned home at 6 p.m., hungry but very satisfied.

Tuesday, September 9, 1947

At 8 a.m., 98 men left for Canada. The group consisted mostly of Ukrainians from a neighboring camp and 6 Slovenians from our camp - Jože and Franc Bajc, Ivan Preželj, Ivan Vičič, Jože Zajc, and Ivan Zupančič. Canada needs workers and is accepting able-bodied men without families.

We are cleaning the camp to prepare for a visit by a British general.

Wednesday, September 10, 1947

Everyone stayed in the camp, waiting for the British general to arrive, but at 2 p.m. we were told the visit was canceled. Cilka then went to her job at the shoemaker's, but right after she left, the general arrived to everyone's surprise. He was accompanied by a major, three officers and the camp director. They headed straight for our barracks because they wanted to see our bobbin lace.

When our camp has official visitors, they usually send them to our barracks, and I usually give them each a free sample of our bobbin lace. But there was something about this general that I didn't like, so I didn't give him anything. Later in the evening, we heard on the radio that this general (General Slim) had met with Marshall Tito and they had agreed to a repatriation of all Yugoslavs from Austria. We will not receive food or clothing until we agree to return to Yugoslavia. War criminals will be forced to return. Others who refuse to return will be moved to Germany.

We heard that General Slim received a gold watch from Tito to celebrate their agreement. It's no wonder I didn't like him.

Thursday, September 11, 1947

Everyone in the camp is very upset about last night's radio news. Many people are applying to emigrate to Peru. Our roommates say they

will apply for Canada, but there is a rumor that the men who left for Canada two days ago were stopped at the Austrian border and will have to return to the camp.

Tonight we heard better news on the radio - there were protests in London against the agreement reached by General Slim and Marshal Tito. After the protests, Britain decided to honor the decision made by British Field Marshal Alexander in 1945 to stop forced repatriation. People will not be forced to move against their will.

Monday, September 15, 1947

Of the 6 men who left for Canada a week ago, only one - Zajc - has returned. The Canadians stopped him at the Austrian border because he has a goiter. The other 5 were allowed to continue to Canada.

Tuesday, September 16, 1947

We have more orders for lace than we can fill. Today I tried making some lace myself, but found that I no longer know how. My eyes have also gotten worse, so I have trouble seeing well enough.

The IRO told our shoemakers to work together in one workshop, instead of in their own rooms, as some have been doing. If they won't move into one workshop, they will be required to get jobs outside the camp. The IRO wants to be able to watch everyone more closely, to make sure they are really working. The shoemakers agreed to move. The IRO assigned them to the barracks that used to be a kitchen for the Croats.

Thursday, September 18, 1947

I've been getting half a liter of milk each day from Sršen and a liter every other day from a farmer in Murdorf. The doctor had

recommended that I drink milk for my ulcers. I think I am now getting an adequate amount.

Saturday, September 20, 1947

This evening, Cilka and I went to watch the Circus Medrano. We admired the bicyclists, gymnasts, acrobats, horses and elephants. There were about 2,000 people in the audience.

Sunday, September 21, 1947

"Die Neue Zeit" newspaper says all 7,000 Slovenians in Austria will be repatriated. "Steierblatt" says the same thing. Everyone in the camp is upset again and feeling hopeless.

Monday, September 22, 1947

Yesterday's sense of hopelessness continues. The older woman who lives in our room (we call her "mati") can no longer eat or sleep. Some of the refugees are talking about getting jobs in the American zone of Austria, hoping that might provide more assurance against forced repatriation to Yugoslavia.

Thursday, September 25, 1947

This evening, Cilka and I visited the princess Lichtenstein in her nearby castle. (When she visited the camp recently to buy our lace, she invited us to come visit her.) She showed us her collection of 200 year old lace, including a complete wedding dress. She said a dozen women worked for many years to make that dress. It's made of the finest thread and includes unbelievable details such as flowers with honeybees, and multilayered wings on the bees. In comparison to this artistry, our products seem like rags.

The princess told us that she had been married to the duke of Lichtenstein, and they had two children. But he died in the war, flying a German warplane. Now she's thinking about

marrying a British officer whom she met in the offices of the occupying army.

Friday, September 26, 1947

When I travel to the surrounding areas to sell our lace, I usually go by bicycle. I have repaired it many times, but now it appears to be broken beyond repair. Bad luck!

I owe our lacemakers 1,000 Schillings for their work, but I don't have any money to pay them. My ulcers are getting worse.

Sunday, September 28, 1947

This afternoon, Cilka and I went looking for harvested potato fields in the hope that the farmers may have missed some potatoes. We found three fields that looked promising.

In the evening, Cilka and I went to a play put on by the refugees. We thought the acting was very poor.

Monday, September 29, 1947

Cilka and I returned to the fields we found yesterday and dug about 40 pounds of potatoes. We'll need much more to make it through the winter!

Tuesday, September 30, 1947

37 refugees from area camps left today for England. The group included Cviljušac, a Croatian who has been part of our camp administration. There were no Slovenians in the group.

Thursday, October 2, 1947

A special commission has begun interrogating all refugees from Yugoslavia.

This afternoon, I dug about 70 pounds of

potatoes that had been left in the fields by area farmers.

Friday, October 3, 1947

This morning, I dug 100 pounds of potatoes.

In the afternoon, I was invited to meet with the special commission. Even though the British run the commission, I was interrogated by a Croatian. He asked a number of questions about my work with the shoemaking cooperatives during the war. He didn't ask a single question about what I want to do in the future. I was treated like a war criminal.

I received 530 Schillings from the IRO for lace we had sold, and I borrowed 600 Schillings from Cene. I used it all to pay our lacemakers for their work, but it's still not enough.

Saturday, October 4, 1947

I felt tired and worried all day. What will they do with us?

Sunday, October 5, 1947

We have two weddings in the camp this weekend - yesterday Franc Fišer (the tinsmith) and Pavla Levičar, today Zvezdan Ristič (the photographer) and Štefana Javornik.

Cilka and I walked to the train station, where we weighed ourselves. During the last 2 months, she has gained 8 pounds, and I've gained 2.

Monday, October 6, 1947

Our friend Mici Erznožnik had a baby girl in the Knittelfeld hospital.

Wednesday, October 8, 1947

Our room kept up a prayer vigil through the night. Cilka prayed from 1 - 2 a.m., and I prayed from 2 - 3.

Thursday, October 9, 1947

I got my bicycle fixed well enough so I could bike to Fohnsdorf today, but it broke down and I had to walk back. about 4 miles. In Fohnsdorf, I sold 400 Schillings of lace to Mr. Wachter.

Friday, October 10, 1947

This morning, I got a ride in an IRO vehicle to Knittelfeld. I sold some lace and visited Mici Erznožnik in the hospital. Both she and the



Interrogation. Screening seemed almost constant in the DP camps: Initially, as shown here at the refugee center in Vanviers, Belgium, the Allied investigators sought Nazi collaborators. Later the focus shifted to eligibility for receiving UNRRA aid. Then various nations' resettlement teams launched their own interrogations, seeking worthy immigrants. (from Mark Wyman's book, "DPs" page 183)

baby looked healthy, but the nurse seemed very ill at ease. I gave the nurse some bobbin lace and asked her to take good care of Mici.

(Years later, I wondered why Mici's daughter didn't look at all like either of her parents. Her face, her body shape, her gait and behavior were all very different. I think it's possible that Mici's baby got exchanged for someone else's baby. Mici's daughter had heart problems throughout her life, which caused her to die young, in 1987. I wonder if the nurse knew that the babies had been switched when I visited them in the hospital.)

Saturday, October 11, 1947

This afternoon, Mici returned from the hospital with her baby. Her husband Karl returned from Zeltweg, where he has been working. He had

hoped to return sooner, but was under arrest for a day because he asked about taking some blue paint for a bed for his new daughter.

Sunday, October 12, 1947

Mici had to return to the hospital today due to bleeding. The baptism had to be done in the hospital. Mici and Karl's daughter was christened as Maria Jolanda. Her godparents are Cilka and our roommate Vinko.

Monday, October 13, 1947

The camp gave us some white bread today, the first time in a long time. Everyone in the camp had to go through a special vehicle for X-rays (for tuberculosis?).

Thursday, October 16, 1947

I received some nice bobbin lace from Marica Peternej in the Spittal camp. We had agreed that I would sell their lace for them.

Friday, October 17, 1947

At 5 a.m., I left on a trip to Wolfsberg without the permission we are required to obtain for longer trips. I sold 861 Schillings worth of lace to Mr. Offner, and got orders for 6,000 Schillings more. They gave me 6,000 meters of good quality thread so we can make more lace.

I took the train back to Weisskirchen and walked to the camp from there. I didn't get into trouble for traveling without permission. It was a good day.

Saturday, October 18, 1947

Another wedding today - Bore Erman and Ema Dobrovšek. I will take Erman's place in the camp offices while they go on a trip for the coming week.

Monday, October 20, 1947

This afternoon, I paid our lacemakers 9,323 Schillings in wages, and I collected 340 Schillings for a wedding gift for Bore.

Tuesday, October 21, 1947

I mailed 1,700 Schillings worth of lace to fill part of the order from Offner's, and sent 2,800 meters of thread to Marica in Spittal so her lacemakers can make more lace. We don't have enough lacemakers in our camp.

We received letters from Preželj and others in Canada - they're very satisfied.

Mici was taken to the hospital again because of excessive bleeding. (After that childbirth, Mici continued to have problems with bleeding for the rest of her life.)

Wednesday, October 22, 1947

Cilka and I celebrated our first wedding anniversary. A year ago, we didn't think we would still be here.

Saturday, October 25, 1947

I bought 200 pounds of sugar beets for me and Cilka. We cleaned them all, then Močnik cut them up with his special tool. Then we stayed up till 12:30 a.m. helping Janko and Pavle with the 400 pounds they bought.

Monday, October 27, 1947

I got up at midnight last night to cook sugar beets. The work is hard and messy. People are getting tired and irritable. The beets stick to the bottom of the pot and the wood fire has to be stoked continuously. After 14 hours of cooking, the syrup is still too watery.

Tuesday, October 28, 1947

At 6:30 a.m., we went to a Mass for my brother Stanko, who is still in prison in Yugoslavia. Then I went back to cooking the beet syrup. We made 12 liters, which we will be able to use instead of sugar, which is very hard to get.

Saturday, November 1, 1947

Today is All Saints Day. This afternoon, we visited Mici Erznožnik in the hospital again, then we stopped at an inn and drank cider.

In the evening, Cilka and I went to see a movie "Nicolo Paganini." We enjoyed the beautiful music! It's 10 years since we first fell in love.

Sunday, November 2, 1947

Filip Orlov hanged himself last night. When I saw him in the camp yesterday, he said, "My days are numbered," but I didn't take him seriously. He was a Russian who had fled from Russia to Ljubljana in 1920 and had become fluent in Slovenian. He was a good teacher of Russian and was studying English. He was sick and probably feeling hopeless about his future.

The weather today was unusually beautiful. This afternoon, we visited Mici in the hospital, then we went to the cemetery chapel next to the graves of Slovenians who were executed when they refused to fight for the Austrian emperor in 1917. We listened to a sermon and singing. At the close, the choir sang "Hear us, O Lord!"

Back in our room, Mire, who is usually not very religious, suggested that we pray all 15 decades of the rosary, which we did.

Monday, November 10, 1947

At 4 a.m., the British Field Service arrested our organist, Franc Zupan. We don't know why.

We hear rumors that British and Yugoslav troops occupied the Spittal camp, looking for

"war criminals." Everyone is feeling very hopeless; some people feel it's not safe to sleep in their own beds.

Vinko Kržišnik went to Graz for the third time regarding emigration to Canada. It looks like he will be the only tailor from our camp who will be allowed to go to Canada. Another tailor, Ivan Rozman, applied but was denied.

Wednesday, November 12, 1947

Our loggers got blood tests today as part of their request to emigrate to Canada.

We heard more news on the radio about the agreement between General Slim and Marshall Tito. About 100 "war criminals" were returned to Yugoslavia.

Thursday, November 13, 1947

Ivan Rozman, the tailor, disappeared last night. Some people think he left to visit his bride-to-be in Salzburg.

We hear that 11 refugees were arrested at the Spittal camp, but 4 escaped. The camp was surrounded by 500 troops. About 40 people have moved outside the camp because they are worried they will be forced to return to Yugoslavia.

Saturday, November 15, 1947

This evening, I received a telegram in German: "Father dead; funeral on Monday. Marica." It's not clear, but it seems to be about my father. I am in shock.

Sunday, November 16, 1947

At church this morning, people expressed sympathy for my father's death. Later in the day, I learned that the telegram was from Marica Peternej in Spittal, and she was writing about

her father, not mine. Her father was the mailman in our home village before the war, and a good friend of our family.

Monday, November 17, 1947

Vinko had to return to Graz for X-rays. The Canadians want to make sure he's not sick before they let him immigrate.

I tried every way I could to get transportation to Spittal for Miha Peternej's funeral, but nothing was available. I sent a letter of sympathy to Marica.

Wednesday, November 19, 1947

We heard news reports on the radio that all Austrian money will have to be exchanged for new money which will be worth one-third less.

Thursday, November 20, 1947

The news report regarding the money exchange has caused a panic. People are buying anything, just so they won't lose money. Even though I have more now (about 2,000 Schillings) than I usually have, I'm not buying anything.

Friday, November 21, 1947

I bought some special food for Cilka's nameday: bacon, cabbage and pork.

Saturday, November 22, 1947

Some of our roommates cooked more sugar beets into syrup. Pavle was angry because the others didn't work as hard as he did.

This afternoon, I chopped wood and cleaned the yard in front of the barracks.

Monday, November 24, 1947

Our friend Silva arrived for a 3-day visit,

bringing klobase, potica, and other good things.

Tuesday, November 25, 1947

We went to the "Festsaal" in Judenburg to see the operetta "Fledermaus." I was pleased, even though it was rather expensive. I paid over 40 Schillings for 6 of us - Silva, Cilka, Vinko, Helen, Mire and myself.

Thursday, November 27, 1947

Many of our men who have been opposed to repatriation will be moved to Trofaiach (about 30 miles from Judenburg). The group includes many members of the refugee council, and Rev. Malavašič, Oblak, Tominc and Sršen. If I had been elected to the camp council, I would probably have to move also. The IRO does not want people agitating against repatriation.

Tuesday, December 2, 1947

Many of us signed a petition against the move to Trofaiach, but it didn't do any good. Seventeen men were moved today. Some people say conditions in Trofaiach are better than here.

Thursday, December 4, 1947

I made two pairs of slippers, one for Cilka's mother and one for her sister Manica, both of whom are still back in their home in Slovenia. I started working on a pair for myself. It's snowing outside.

Monday, December 8, 1947

The post office was crowded. I mailed Christmas packages to Cilka's mother and sister.

Tuesday, December 9, 1947

At 2 p.m., I left by train for the refugee camp at Spittal. I arrived at 7:30. I visited Potočnik's barracks till 11. There were two other people

visiting Potočnik, discussing the political situation. One of them had been a higher ranking official in the former Slovenian government and was certain that everything will work out for the refugees. He said, "One evening, we will get the word over the radio that the time has come. They will bring us uniforms, weapons and munitions. Just think, 40,000 of us will make a wonderful armada to retake Slovenia!" I looked over at Potočnik, who was smirking. I wondered if they were joking. We don't have 40,000 Slovenians in Austria. And many of us are women, children and old people. God help us if we have leaders like you!

I am staying overnight with Max Petrov and Ani Tavčar. It's so cold I can't sleep.

Wednesday, December 10, 1947

This morning I visited Marica Peternelj and one of her lacemakers who are helping fill the orders that I obtain in the Judenburg area. Mr. Mavrič took me on a tour of the various homecraft workshops in the Spittal camp.

In the afternoon, I talked with Franc Stanonik, who told me how he met his wife, Minka. She was one of the thousands of refugees moving past Tržič in May, 1945. She is a nice, strong young woman.

In the evening, I visited the chapel in the Spittal camp. Even though it's not a holiday, there were many people in the chapel, praying.

After visiting the chapel, I talked with Potočnik from 8 - 11 p.m. He has decided to return to our home village in Slovenia, despite Mr. Mavrič's warnings that it would be safer to wait until next Easter, when we will all be able to return as free people. I advised him to take his chances and return now. I think it's not healthy for him to stay here.

Thursday, December 11, 1947

After a good sleep, I got up at 5 a.m. to catch a train to Villach. From Villach I went to Celovec (Klagenfurt), where I visited some old friends. Then I took a bus to Feldkirchen, where I visited our friends Dora and Tomaž. We stayed up talking till 10 p.m.

Friday, December 12, 1947

I caught a train at 6:33 a.m. to St. Veit, where I waited three hours for another train back to Judenburg. I was traveling by myself, and it was boring.

Saturday, December 13, 1947

This evening, Cilka told me she is pregnant. This is happy, but worrisome news for me. How will we support a child when we sometimes don't have enough to eat ourselves? I also worry about Cilka - it's not unusual for women to die in childbirth. If she suffers and dies, I feel like it will all be my fault. But she doesn't seem to think about these things. She's just excited and happy.

Monday, December 15, 1947

I received a letter from my father. He says two of our neighbors died. One was 81 and the other 63. Life and death continue in our home village. I sent him a Christmas package with some slippers that I had made for him.

Thursday, December 18, 1947

Cilka has been sewing shoes for Russheim, a master shoemaker in Judenburg. Today, she also hurried to finish a large lace tablecloth with flowers for an order I had obtained.

Saturday, December 20, 1947

This afternoon I rode my bike (it's fixed again) to Fohnsdorf and Fetzendorf, where I sold 187 Schillings worth of lace. It was cold and the

roads were icy. I fell down once, but I'm alright.

Tuesday, December 23, 1947

I was in stores all morning, waiting in lines to buy things for the holidays. I waited two hours just to buy some yeast so we can bake bread and potica.

The camp gave us some pork, venison, potatoes and a special holiday ration package.

Wednesday, December 24, 1947

In the morning, I chopped wood and cleaned around the barracks. We received a Christmas package from our friend Silva, but everything in it was broken.

At 5 p.m., we prayed the rosary while we did our traditional procession around our home (around the barracks). Then we had dumplings for dinner. At 11 p.m., we left for midnight Mass in Judenburg. During the service, there were about 40 young people talking loudly, laughing and making noise up in the choirloft. It ruined the celebration.

Thursday, December 25, 1947

We began Christmas with Mass at 8 a.m. and then a walk around the camp. For Christmas dinner, we had soup, potatoes, pork roast and even a little wine. A special celebration! We went to sleep at 8 p.m.

Monday, December 29, 1947

Today I helped get some coal to heat the larger buildings in our camp. Four of us from the camp helped load 8,000 pounds of coal onto a truck at the train station.

Wednesday, December 31, 1947

Mr. Kien offered me a job as a supervisor in the camp. The job would pay 250 Schillings a month, but then Cilka and I would be expected to pay back about 180 Schillings for camp food. I don't want to work for nothing. I also don't want to be in a position where I'll be harassing my fellow refugees.

For most of the day, I worked on an inventory of our lace and lace designs.

For New Year's Eve, we prayed all 15 decades of the rosary and marched in procession around the barracks. Karl and Mici joined us with their baby daughter Jolanda.

Afterwards, Čeferin and I worked on the crossword puzzle in the "Karinthian Chronicle." Then we listened to news and New Year's greetings on Radio London.

This year, there were 29 babies born in our camp, 4 people died, and 8 couples were married.