Introduction

Eva V. Huseby-Darvas, Michigan and Michigan-Dearborn

Refugees

In dusk of helmet brims the eyes look stern,
Unwavering; no matter what they see
Or where they gaze -(....)
And when the owners of those eyes return
And put away their weapons there will be
An alien music in a harsher key,
New words and syntax difficult to learn.
Wars never end. Across the livid plain
The dark procession trail, the refugees,
Anonymous beneath indifferent skies,
Somnabulistic, patient shapes of pain,
Long commentary on war, an ancient frieze
Of figures we refuse to recognize 1

In January, 1993 I organized a session for the 92nd Meeting of the American Anthropological Association that was subsequently held in Washington D.C. in November of the same year. Most of the colleagues invited accepted and participated in the session that - due to the mysterious ways of the '93 Program Committee of the American Anthropological Association - became the first half of a double session that was jointly invited by the Society for the Anthropology of Europe and the Association of Feminist Anthropology. The session, entitled "Changing Boundaries, Changing Roles: the Experiences of Refugee Women in Europe and Beyond," was a considerable success2. Not only did we have a "full house" and then some, but also useful and generous responses from the audience.

The present volume, the second special issue of the East European Anthropology Review3, is comprised of some of revised working papers of the first half of that session.4 The papers focus on refugee women, who constitute a particularly endangered and rapidly growing population amid the current, post-socialist *Völkerwanderung* in Europe. The topic was a crucial

one since the late 1980s, and unfortunately, it continues to be both critical and timely in general and for anthropologists to consider in particular. According to the United Nations' High Commission on Refugees, amid the present day refugee crisis in Europe, which is the largest demographic transition there since the period that immediately followed the Second World War, approximately 70-75 percent of the refugees are women and their minor dependents.

The essays that follow (both the papers and the comments of the discussants) shed light on the plight of refugee women in increasingly reluctant host societies. On the one hand, we explored ways in which the refugee experience effect women's perception of their ethnic and gender identities, cultural heritage, social, economic, political, and familial roles. On the other hand, we also glanced at the host population's reactions to the refugee crisis in Europe. Therefore the majority of the papers also deal with the aversion of what is generally perceived as the actual and projected "invasion of foreigners." These sentiments are unambiguously expressed in rising xenophobia both in the political and popular arenas throughout the West where the debate over whom to let in is becoming, once again, a burning and much manipulated political issue. It appears that popular support is increasing for the various and growing neo-Nazi, skinhead and similar groups when they attack immigrant populations and guest workers. But they are not only expressed in the West but also in the East and Central regions of Europe where, in most cases, there is a curious coexistence of both emigration of the indigenous population, and rampant xenophobia aimed at refugees. There are countries within and beyond the former Soviet Block from where there is ongoing circular or pendular migration toward the West while there is ongoing ethnic tension, and overt xenophobia focusing on, among others, the rapidly growing populations of refugees from further east and or south, and there is much talk about the fear of "Asianization." Also, many tens of thousands from Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland become (and so many more *would like to become*) migrant workers or refugees in Austria, Germany, and elsewhere. At the same time, their homelands serve as increasingly reluctant hosts to refugees from the East and South of the region, and there is much rumble about "Balkanization." And meantime what do we in North America do? Our non-actions are best expressed in the words of Olga Klekner, a former student of mine, who wrote in the concluding line of one of her somber poems, entitled *Bosnia '93*:

(...) The world just simply turns its head
cummings was right in '56
Lets bury the statue of liberty
Once again she's starting to smell 5

Our papers are based on ethnographic field-work. Elzbieta Gozdziak (Howard) writes about Romanian *Roma* [Gypsy] women in Poland.[6] The papers of Mary Kay Gilliland (formerly Gilliland-Olsen) (Arizona and Pima) with her co-authors, and Maria B. Olujic (Zagreb) focus on refugee women in and from Croatia. Charlotte Chase (Independent Scholar) explores substance abuse among refugee women in east and central Europe. Dorothy Zinn (Texas at Austin) and Annamaria Rivera (Universita Degli Studi, Bari, Italia) co-author a paper that focuses on Albanian refugee women in Southern Italy. My paper examines refugee women from the Balkans and, as do the work of all the other participants, also explores the host population's changing responses to the growing and more and more obvious refugee presence. Since the valuable comments of the discussants are included in this volume, there is no reason to go into greater detail about the individual contributions here. Fran Markowitz (Ben Gurion University of the Negev-Israel), and Martha Lampland (UCSD) do an admirable job of discussing not only our papers and the dire situation of refugees in Europe and elsewhere, but also offer their analytical interpretations, and - particularly in the case of Markowitz - studies, including their own, among refugees in other regions of the world. So once again, we participants, express our gratitude to the discussants.

We consider the present volume a forerunner of a future, peer reviewed publication, so we will be most appreciative of your comments, ideas and suggestions about our collection as a whole and/or each of its component.

Notes

1. This poem was written by Vernon Scannell of Otley, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom, and published in 1993 by Bloodaxe Books, in Newcastle upon Tyne, in a volume titled Klaonica: poems for Bosnia, edited by Ken Smith and Judi Benson who note that the word Klaonica means slaughterhouse, butchery, shambles in Serbo-Croatian.
For their kind permission to publish it here, our managing editor, Robert Rotenberg and I thank the poet, Vernon Scannell, and the editors, Ken Smith and Judi Benson of Bloodaxe Books.

2. However, and not because I wanted it to sound too melodramatic, I titled the present collection "Needy Guests, Reluctant Hosts: The Plight of Refugee Women in Europe." This was the title we used for a session I organized for the IXth International Conference of Europeanists held in Chicago in April, 1994. In that session, however, only a few of us participated, among others, Mary Kay Gilliland and I read somewhat different versions of the papers we include in this collection, while Martha Lampland and Bob Rotenberg served as discussants. For that reason, Lampland's vital comments, while addressing the refugee situation at all times and in all places, pertain particularly to those papers.

3. Our present readers missed the first special issue: it was Volume 11, Numbers 1 and 2, Spring and Fall issue of the Anthropology of East Europe Review and was edited by David A. Kideckel (Central Connecticut State University) and special guest editor Joel M. Halpern (University of Massachusetts at Amherst). The issue is entitled and focuses on War Among the Yugoslavs. I know that a fair number of us used the issue not only for teaching courses on East Europe, but also for trying to comprehend the tragedy of the former Yugoslavia and to send extra copies to colleagues so they can do the same. I believe there are still some for sale and that Robert Rotenberg (DePaul), our managing editor, can be contacted for purchasing volumes of the second edition of that special issue.

4. In a couple of cases the authors of the manuscripts were unavailable, so the original text is included here.

5. Unpublished poem, with the kind courtesy and permission of Olga Klekner.

6. Considerably different versions of Gozdziak's and my papers were published in the 1994 *Selected Papers on Refugee Issues: III*, Jeffery L. MacDonald and Amy Zaharlick, editors. Arlington, VA: Committee on Refugee Issues of the General Anthropology Division of the American Anthropological Association.