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CROATIA

Continued from Page 21A

In Mir Sada camp, I met one 17-year-old girl named Diba, a refugee from BiH. She is a member of the leadership committee in Hotel Nimfa. She has been staying in Croatia for more than a year and



has no intention to go abroad because she feels that she can't leave her father in BiH even though she doesn't know his whereabouts. She is staying with her mother and grandmother in Croatia, and she wants to go back to her hometown as soon as the war ends. "People like engineers and medical experts should go back after

the war," she said, "because people in BiH will need them."

Diba is a remarkable person. She couldn't attend school in Croatia because she's a Muslim, but she wrote a protest letter, and it was published in a newspaper. She speaks perfect English and is teaching the children in the hotel English and Islamic history. In June, there was a proposal for refugees in the hotel to go to Pakistan. Both the leadership committee, including Diba, and the whole refugee group refused to go, and the leaders talked with the government and UNHCR. There were several alternative options: Going to another camp called Gascinci, finding private houses and returning to BiH. None of them succeeded, and they continued to stay in the hotel. But if there was no effective leadership in the hotel, those refugees would have been forced to go to Pakistan, where they didn't want to go in the first place.

There were corporations between the leadership of refugee camps and humanitarian organizations (both international and local). In Hotel Gareb in Brac, IMO and later Suncokret have been providing well-organized programs for both adults and children. When refugees and displaced people fled from their hometowns, they thought that they would be able to go back soon. But peace negotiations and cease-fire agreements have only names with no content, and Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats are succeeding in their aims of ethnic cleansing. Some refugees and displaced people have been spending time idly by drinking and complaining about someone else. But many of them have realized that they need to start something so that they would no longer be burdens for anyone. And those training and studying would be beneficial for them if they would be able to go back to their hometowns.

There has been a strong campaign against Muslims, including refugees in Croatia and west Herzegovina, where Bosnian Croats control. With state-controlled media, the Croatian government has been

promoting this anti-Muslim campaign, and there has been a rising tension between Croatian and Muslim refugees in refugee camps in Croatia. Since the Croatian authorities took over police control of all refugees recently, a few hundred Muslims have been forced back to BiH, against international law. AWCC and other Croatian peace organizations have publicly denounced this policy and sent a letter to the Croatian government to create a policy to make peace in BiH. At the same time, Bosnian Croats who live outside west Herzegovina (mainly in central BiH) have been subjected to attacks by the BiH army and fled as refugees.

There are problems in Croatia, but nothing can be compared to the situation in BiH. According to UNHCR, 3.6 million people are registered as refugees — the population of BiH was 4.4 million before the war, and 200,000 have died already. People in BiH are afraid of this coming winter because now there is no prospect for peace. In Geneva, there have been talks about dividing BiH territory among Croats, Muslims and Serbs. In the territory that is defended by the BiH army, there are not only Muslims, but also thousands of Serbs and Croats. Now there is a process of making two fascist-like, extreme nations (Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs), with one more potentially dangerous nation (Muslims). Who knows what's going to happen to those who have remained in BiH territory? While war of aggression is being legitimized, is it a crime to defend the internationally recognized, democratically committed state of BiH?

Once, Vaclav Havel talked about the "art of possible" and "art of impossible." Politicians usually use the former one, which is speculation, calculation, intrigue, secret deals and pragmatic maneuvering in their own political games. In the past year, four State Department officials quit for protest. However, there are many people from all over the world who are using the latter one, which is to improve people's lives. Some of them are even risking their lives simply because they are really concerned about people in and from BiH. Others even have tried to make a change in the war situation in BiH like Mir Sada. "Art of impossible" should also be pursued by politicians if they really want to solve the problem of BiH.

Peace negotiations in Geneva are not going to solve fundamental problems. Even if temporary peace is achieved, problems remain and conflicts soon start again like we have seen elsewhere in the world. If the world community keeps playing the political game but shows neither justice nor morality, who can trust whom from now on? Tragedy in BiH is continuing and it may spread to other areas. Courageous people from all over the world go there for help despite the dangerous situation.

Turn to CROATIA, Page 23A

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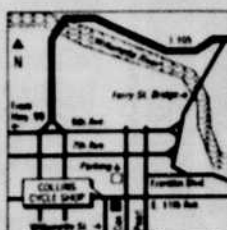
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