Austrian History Yearbook (2024), **55**, 298–311
doi:10.1017/S0067237824000043

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

ARTICLE

"Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?": Food Supply and Nutrition of the Civilian Population in Maribor at the End of and after World War I

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Abstract

The end of World War I brought not only the end of a great slaughter but also the creation of new countries, great expectations of better living conditions, and the promise of an end of scarcity. In Maribor, a contested border town occupied by Slovenian troops and annexed to the newly established State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, expectations were even higher. A part of the population opposed the town's annexation to the newly established state and compared the living conditions at home with those in Austria. As early as November 1918, the Slovene City Food Council was established in Maribor to feed the city's population. It introduced measures similar to those introduced during the war, such as food ration cards. Despite these measures, food shortages and hunger were part of everyday life, especially in the winter of 1918–19. This article discusses civilians' survival strategies, as well as continuities and discontinuities between wartime and postwar measures to improve the food supply. It shows that despite the efforts of the new Yugoslav authorities, they often continued wartime practices and food remained of poor quality and difficult to access for most of the population throughout 1919.

Keywords: Maribor; World War I; food supply; political measures; civilians; survival strategies

Introduction

"To Marburg, the second largest city in Styria, whose sons have bravely and faithfully bled for Austria, whose inhabitants have patiently and faithfully endured the indescribable and often unnecessarily great hardships caused by the war, to this with all their devotion to the monarchy, this city will have ever new trials imposed on them," wrote a journalist in the German newspaper *Marburger Zeitung* at the beginning of 1918.[1] He noted that the population was weakened and already at the edge of patience. The war, which Austria-Hungary had optimistically thought would be over by Christmas 1914, had lasted for years and exhausted the state's population.[2] Compulsory conscription and shortage of male labor, the large number of wounded and dead, military occupation of civilian buildings, the confiscation of animals, tools, and means of transport, and compulsory requisitioning of foodstuffs, as well as the widespread inability to supply basic necessities to both the military and civilian populations, had a profound impact on daily life during and after World War I.

Historical research on civilian nutrition during World War I in the Central European states has thus far focused mainly on rationing, the home front, and how the state was present in everyday life.[3] Far

[1]"Das ewig alte Lied," *Marburger Zeitung*, 5 January 1918, 1.

[2]Ernst Langthaler, "Food and Nutrition (Austria-Hungary)," in *1914–1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, eds. Ute Daniel et al.; (http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/food_and_nutrition_austria-hungary); Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge, 2004); Holger Heinrich Herwig, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914–1918*, 2nd ed. (London, 2014); Rudolf Kučera, *Rationed Life: Science, Everyday Life, and Working-Class Politics in the Bohemian Lands, 1914–1918* (New York, 2016).

[3]See Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill, 2000); Maja Godina-Golija, "Hunger and Misery: The Influence of the First World War on the Diet of Slovenian Civilians," in *Food and War*

fewer studies have looked at food shortages after the end of the war, a time of significant political and economic change in Europe that was marked by the collapse of empires and the emergence of new nation-states.[4] Similarly, several works on food during the war have focused on major cities such as Berlin, Vienna, and Prague.[5] Less research has been done on civilians' food supply and nutrition in smaller towns and administrative districts, which is the subject of our research. This article notes that even in smaller towns, which were more connected to the countryside, a severe food shortage existed at the end of and following World War I. As in the European capitals, this had devastating health and social consequences for the civilian population.

This article will not deal with nationalist conflicts and national identifications or loyalties, nor with the Slovene-German conflict in Slovenia at the end of and after World War I. Neither will it discuss in detail the political events in Slovenia and the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, as many historical studies, including several recent ones, have been published on this subject.[6] However, providing sufficient food was an essential area of political action, particularly in the postwar era. Crucially, the new Yugoslav authorities sought to augment their population's satisfaction by providing them with more and better food. In these years, the sufficiency or insufficiency of food could strongly influence the population's attitude toward the new political authorities or the state. This study will show that this feature was particularly pronounced in contested areas, including the city of Maribor.

Our main interest is the everyday life of the civilian population in Maribor, especially its provisioning and nutrition. Examining these practices shows the continuation of wartime survival strategies even after the war. Because of political promises, people expected a better life, but this did not happen. The Yugoslav government's inadequate solutions in providing nutrition left its civilians to cope with the difficult situation on their own. They resorted to various adaptations in the composition of meals, the choice of foodstuffs, illegal ways of buying foodstuffs, and innovations in food preparation. This article will show that shortages led to the development of unique cooking skills, new recipes, and substitute foods that continued to be used well into the 1920s. The economic situation of the majority of the population in Maribor improved only slowly, and food was still a subject of austerity for many years after the end of the war.

This study draws on a variety of primary sources. These include diverse archival sources, including district captains' situation reports, police reports, documents of the Municipality of Maribor, records of the Maribor District Court, documents of the National Government, posters, leaflets, and school chronicles. Newspaper articles, letters, autobiographical writings, and recipe books also play a significant role as sources.

This article offers a case study of the survival strategies and food supply of the population in the small Central European city of Maribor. Maribor is an excellent example of a city where, even as it

in Twentieth Century Europe, eds. Rachel Duffet, Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, and Alain Drouard (Farnham, 2011), 85–97; Martin Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg: Der Kampf des Hinterlandes ums Überleben 1914–1918* (Wien, 2014); Claire Morelon, *Street Fronts: War, State Legitimacy and Urban Space, Prague 1914–1920* (Birmingham, 2014); Kučera, *Rationed Life*; Mary Elisabeth Cox, *Hunger in War and Peace: Women and Children in Germany 1914–1924* (Oxford, 2019); Mojca Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno* (Ljubljana, 2020).

[4]Cox, *Hunger in War and Peace*; Friederike Kind-Kovács, *Budapest's Children: Humanitarian Relief in the Aftermath of the Great War (Worlds in Crisis: Refugees, Asylum, and Forced Migration)* (Bloomington, 2022).

[5]Davis, *Home Fires Burning*; Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg*; Kučera, *Rationed Life*.

[6]Andrej Rahten, *Od Majniške deklaracije do habsburške detronizacije: Slovenska politika v času zadnjega habsburškega vladarja Karla* (Celje, 2016); Petra Svoljšak and Gregor Antoličič, *Leta strahote. Slovenci in prva svetovna vojna* (Ljubljana: 2018); Aleš Gabrič, ed., *Slovenski prelom 1918* (Ljubljana, 2019); Boštjan Zajšek, "'Raje pa hočemo nemško umreti, kakor laško ali slovansko trohneti' – mariborski Nemci v letu 1918," *Studia Historica Slovenica* 19, no. 2 (2019): 419–66; Elisabeth Haid and Jernej Kosi, "State-Building and Democratisation on the Fringes of Interwar Poland and Yugoslavia: Prekmurje and Eastern Galicia from Empire to Nation-state," *Südost-Forschungen: internationale Zeitschrift für Geschichte, Kultur und Landeskunde Südosteuropas* 79 (2020): 32–70; Jernej Kosi, "Summer of 1919: A Radical, Irreversible, Liberating Break in Prekmurje/Muravidék? " *Hungarian Historical Review* 9, no. 1 (2020): 51–68; Andrej Rahten, *Po razpadu skupne države. Slovensko-avstrijska razhajanja od mariborskega prevrata do koroškega plebiscita* (Celje, Celovec, Gorica, 2020); Filip Čuček, "'Volkovi in hijene': Primeri 'obračuna' s spodnještajerskim nemštvom (in vsenemške 'obrambe domovine') v prevratni dobi," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 61, no. 2 (2021): 67–102; Rok Stergar, "We Will Look like Fools if Nothing Comes of This Yugoslavia! The Establishment of Yugoslavia from the Perspective of Slovene Contemporaries," *Hiperboreea* 10, no. 1 (2023): 82–101.

underwent significant political changes after the end of World War I, its inhabitants' daily life, livelihood strategies, and food supply did not significantly improve. The article also contributes to previous studies of the diet of the period by looking at postwar survival strategies and discussing specific dishes, recipes, and food innovations during these years of shortages.

The City of Maribor at a Time of Significant Political Change

Maribor (German: Marburg an der Drau), a border town in Lower Styria with 27,994 inhabitants in 1910, was situated at the crossroads of German and Slovenian cultural space. The town was home to a large and economically active German-speaking community. At the time of the Austrian census in 1910, 86.36 percent of Maribor's inhabitants stated that their language of daily use was German, while only 13.64 percent stated that it was Slovene.[7] The majority of the German-speaking population in the city was Roman Catholic, with only about 1,600 people of the Protestant faith.[8]

Maribor sat at a vital transport junction of the Vienna-Trieste and Carinthia-Budapest railway lines and of roads leading from Vienna to Ljubljana, Trieste, Rijeka, Budapest, and Zagreb. Although it was not near the front lines, its inhabitants experienced the events of the war very intensively because of its strategic location. Columns of troops swarmed through the city, and crowds of recruits gathered there. Refugees from the conflict zone, including many from the littoral region, fled to Maribor. Due to its excellent rail links, several military hospitals were established in the city, treating the wounded from various European battlefields.[9] Russian prisoners of war were also stationed in Maribor to perform forced labor.[10] This multitude of people, who temporarily settled in the city and came from different parts of the monarchy and beyond, completely changed everyday life in Maribor. As a result, many public buildings were occupied by the army and ceased to function.[11] Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian South-West Front Command was stationed in Maribor from May 1915 to March 1916 and again from March 1917 to November 1917.[12]

Life in Maribor during World War I also changed because of the many political pressures exerted by the Styrian authorities on the Slovenes and the intensification of disputes between the German and Slovene populations, especially after the adoption of the May Declaration in 1917. With this document, Slovene, Croatian, and Serbian leaders demanded unification into an independent state under the Habsburg scepter. Around 200,000 signatures were soon collected in Slovenia in support of the Declaration.[13] On 29 October 1918, the formation of the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs was proclaimed, and two days later, the National Government was formed, claiming for itself the predominantly German-speaking city of Maribor.[14] This further intensified the decades-long conflict between German and Slovenian nationalists over the city of Maribor, both of whom saw it as part of their national territory and an important political and cultural center in Lower Styria.[15]

On 1 November 1918, in the chaotic period of the disintegration of the Habsburg monarchy, Slovenian general Rudolf Maister took command of Maribor in front of astonished officers of the Austro-Hungarian army and established Slovenian military authority in the city.[16] In the following

[7]Jerneja Ferlež, "Prebivalstvo Maribora 1848–1991," *Studia Historica Slovenica*, no. 1 (2002): 79–125.

[8]Zajšek, "'Raje pa hočemo nemško umreti, kakor laško ali slovansko trohneti' – mariborski Nemci v letu 1918," *Studia Historica Slovenica*, no. 2 (2019): 419–66.

[9]Vlasta Stavbar, *Kulturno dogajanje v Mariboru v letih 1914 – 1918* (Maribor, 1998), 37.

[10]Žiga Oman, *Maribor v prvi svetovni vojni. Življenje v zaledju* (Maribor, 2014), 22.

[11]Maja Godina Golija, "Pa smo stali v procesijah pred pekarnami … O lakoti in pomanjkanju v Mariboru med prvo svetovno vojno," in *Vojne na Slovenskem: pričevanja, spomini, podobe*, ed. Maja Godina Golija (Ljubljana, 2012), 47–61.

[12]Gregor Antoličič, "Nadvojvoda Evgen 1863–1954," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 55, no. 2 (2015): 212.

[13]The May Declaration was read out on 30 May 1917 in the Vienna state assembly by Anton Korošec, on behalf of the Yugoslav Club, the club of Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian members in the Parliament in Vienna. In the declaration, Slovenes and other south Slavic nations decided to unite as an independent state. See Vlasta Stavbar, *Majniška deklaracija in deklaracijsko gibanje* (Maribor, 2017).

[14]Bruno Hartman, *Rudolf Maister: general in pesnik* (Ljubljana, 2006), 114.

[15]Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 153–54.

[16]Hartman, *Rudolf Maister*, 115.

weeks, hundreds of thousands of soldiers returned home by train through Maribor.[17] The complex situation surrounding the withdrawal of so many troops led to looting, drunkenness, and even shootings in the city.[18] Due to the disorder and the lack of Slovenian troops, which were transferred to Carinthia where the fighting for the northern border was taking place, national guards or volunteer guards were established in towns and villages to protect the civilian population and their property. In Maribor, the German city authorities established the *Schutzwehr* (Defense guard). The *Schutzwehr* was supposed to protect the personal property, workshops, and commercial and industrial establishments of the wealthy citizens of Maribor, so it was financially supported by German industrialists in the city, such as Ludwig Franz & Söhne, Th. Götz, Scherbaum & Söhne, and Piegel & Söhne.[19] In addition to the *Schutzwehr* and the German City Council in Maribor, the National Council for Slovene Styria and Slovene military units under the command of General Maister were also active in the city.

The Germans of Maribor initially refused to accept that the political and civil power in the city would have to be handed over, and their authority in the city was contested and disputed by the National Council. German authority in Maribor continued to function until 2 January 1919, when Srečko Lajnšič, the Slovenian district governor, took power. The situation in the city gradually calmed down, and the new Slovenian authorities began to turn their attention to other pressing problems: the struggle for the northern border, in which Slovenes and Germans fought for the ethnically mixed territory of Styria and Carinthia,[20] the provision of food and heating for the civilian population, the health situation, and the organization of Slovenian education in Maribor.[21] In this first year after the end of the war, despite the population's high expectations, life did not improve. The enormous economic damage caused by the war, the loss of markets due to the new borders, disease, prolonged hunger, and the exhaustion of the people also affected the lives of the people of Maribor. The scarcity of basic foodstuffs and high prices forced people to adopt survival strategies and daily practices that were not very different from those during the war.

The Food Supply of Maribor

The problematic social and health situation of the civilian population in Maribor in the last year of World War I and the year following its end was the result of more than three years of shortages of basic necessities, especially food, and of inadequately composed and calorically insufficient rations. This led to a prolonged depletion of the civilian population and was reflected in their frail health and increased mortality.[22] Wartime leaders attempted to solve this with short-term solutions and various restrictions, such as rationing and the introduction of meatless days. During the war, the food supply for both the civilian population on the home front and troops on the battlefields deteriorated month by month.[23]

[17]The exact number of soldiers who retreated through Maribor is unknown. Estimates vary from 200,000 to 1,000,000 soldiers; compare Matjaž Bizjak, "Umik avstro-ogrske vojske skozi slovenski prostor novembra 1918," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 43, no. 1 (2003): 25–36 and Tomaž Kladnik, "Vojaštvo in Maribor v času 1. svetovne vojne," *Studia Historica Slovenica*, no. 2–3 (2009): 338.

[18]Kladnik, "Vojaštvo in Maribor," 338.

[19]Regional Archives Maribor (PAM), fund MOM, Coup documents, file no. 27564/1918.

[20]At the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovenians fought for a northern national border in line with what they saw as their ethnic boundaries. The fighting ended in June 1919, when a joint Slovenian-Serbian army captured the whole of Slovenian Carinthia in present day Austrian territory. However, at the Paris Peace Conference, it was decided that a plebiscite should be held in this ethnically mixed territory. The Carinthian plebiscite was held on 10 October 1920, after which the entire territory with the Carinthian Slovenes belonged to Austria.

[21]Jure Maček, "Oris šolstva v Mariboru in okolici v letih 1918–1941," *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* 83, no. 2–3 (2012): 26–68.

[22]See also Petra Svoljšak, "Poizkus ocene vojaških in civilnih izgub (žrtev) med 1. svetovno vojno," in *Množične smrti na Slovenskem. Zbornik referatov: 29. Zborovanje slovenskih zgodovinarjev, Izola, 22. – 24. 10*, eds. Stane Granda and Barbara Šatej (Ljubljana, 1998), 225–40; Mojca Šorn, "Epidemija španske gripe v Ljubljani: "Pričakujemo, da mestni magistrat občinstvu vendar kaj pove o tej bolezni," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 61, no. 3 (2021): 95–116.

[23]Anne Roerkohl, *Hungerblockade und Heimatfront. Die kommunale Lebensmittelversorgung in Westfalen während des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Stuttgart, 1991); Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 84–86; Jernej Kosi, "Med državno zapovedanimi vojnimi

As Maureen Healy, Rudolf Kučera, and Martin Moll have shown in their studies on the food supply of civilian populations in Central European cities,[24] supplies of basic foodstuffs, especially flour, bread, and meat, began to diminish already by the beginning of 1915—this was also the case in Maribor. Disorganization of government administration was a big problem across much of Austria, but also in Prussia and Bohemia.[25] The food supply crisis in Styria was exacerbated by the fact that it had a relatively low proportion of the population engaged in agriculture due to its development of industry. This forced the region to obtain food from distant agrarian territories, which was very difficult during the war.[26]

It was not only the food supply of the civilian population that was lacking. The supply of Austro-Hungarian troops at the front was also irregular and inadequate. This had several causes, including logistical problems, the poor organization of supply, unfavorable weather and climatic conditions, an inflexible military hierarchy, and the poor economic situation, as well as a severe shortage of food in the environment where the soldiers were stationed.[27] Other factors worsened the food supply of the civilian population. At the beginning of the war, the Austrian authorities had neglected the issue of civilian food supplies, expecting the war to progress quickly and thinking they would be able to adjust civilian supplies as they went along.[28] As a result, insufficient commodity reserves were built up, and food shortages in the cities became apparent within months of the war's start. The most acute shortages were of bread, flour, milk, and meat: the staples people needed most in their diets. Because the diet of the population responds very quickly to economic and political changes,[29] of which there were numerous during wartime. They also led to shortages of other necessities such as clothing, footwear, heating, and lighting.

Given the difficulties in supplying the civilian population, the Austrian authorities set up central supply agencies to regulate and direct consumption. Within the monarchy, the distribution of food items was handled locally by the Provisioning Committees, or so-called Food Supply Offices, which organized the supply of individual districts and distributed food and necessities from the Provisioning Depots.[30] In Maribor, the food supply was regulated by the Food Supply Office of the Maribor District Captain's Office. To improve the food supply of the civilian population, the authorities adopted rationing measures, which in 1915 provided 1,300 calories per day for an adult.[31] They also attempted to restrict certain food purchases by introducing ration cards, which allowed the purchase of only a limited amount of food over a certain period. In February 1915, the first food regulations were introduced for the inhabitants of Maribor, regulating the purchase of flour and bread. Residents could only buy 1,400 g of flour and 1,960 g of bread per person per week.[32] The introduction of food regulations followed an imperial decree by Franz Joseph, issued on 24 February 1915, to place stocks of cereals and all types of flour under lock and key.[33] Despite the early introduction of bread ration cards, the supply of bread and bakery products in Maribor during World War I was significantly disrupted. As many eyewitnesses noted, food ration cards alone did not provide sufficient food for

napori in preživitvenimi strategijami podeželskega prebivalstva v času prve svetovne vojne. Primer sester Divjak," *Zgodovinski časopis* 73, no. 1–2 (2019): 125.

[24]Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 40; Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 83; Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 19.

[25]George Yaney, *The World of the Manager: Food Administration in Berlin during World War I* (New York, 1995), 22; Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 84; Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 19.

[26]Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 88.

[27]Rok Stergar, "Hrana na bojiščih prve svetovne vojne: izkušnje slovenskih vojakov," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 55, no. 2 (2015): 40.

[28]Langthaler, "Food and Nutrition (Austria-Hungary)"; Ulrike Thoms, "Hunger – ein Bedürfnis zwischen Politik, Physiologie und persönlicher Erfahrung (Deutschland, 19. und 20. Jahrhundert)," *Body Politics* 5 (2015): 153.

[29]Günter Wiegelmann, *Alltags- und Festspeisen in Mitteleuropa. Innovationen, Strukturen und Regionen vom späten Mittelalter bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 2006), 14.

[30]Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 86.

[31]See also Rudolf Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 22.

[32]Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno*, 52.

[33]PAM, Collection of posters and leaflets, TE: 31/1.

individuals during the war, and especially not enough flour and bread, which were mainstays of the diet.[34]

In 1915, restrictions also came into force for other foodstuffs in short supply, such as meat. Meat consumption was initially regulated by introducing two meat-free days a week, followed by three days when meat could not be sold or prepared, including in restaurants and public kitchens. Food restrictions continued in the following year. At the beginning of 1916, the Food Supply Office restricted the consumption of sugar (1 kg per person per month), and from the autumn of that year, meat was sold only with food coupons. Ration cards were also introduced for potatoes, fat, milk, tobacco, and coffee.[35]

The widespread shortage of foodstuffs for the civilian population was strongly influenced by the almost complete cessation of food imports from the Hungarian part of the monarchy. As Healy points out, the great majority of food imported into Austria in the prewar period came from Hungary. Hungary covered 97 percent of Austria's beef and 99 percent of its pork deficits, as well as 92 percent of its flour deficit.[36] Hungary's decision to significantly reduce exports during the war was driven by pragmatic and political reasons and was poorly received in other parts of the monarchy and often criticized in Slovenian newspapers.[37] In 1917, the food supply situation became even more acute, and shoe and clothing ration cards were introduced. In the last year of the war, the supply system and the operation of the district offices largely collapsed. In 1918, an individual received only 750 g of flour, 30 g of lard, and 550 g of potatoes a week, along with 750 g of sugar a month.[38] In the spring of that year, disruptions in the supply of basic foodstuffs such as milk and flour led to protests. Thus, at a demonstration on 13 May 1918, where Maribor German nationalists demanded a territory "all the way to the blue Adriatic," hungry protestors interrupted a speech by Mayor Johann Schmiderer, shouting: "Give us bread, meat and other foods instead. What do we need incendiary apostles for?"[39]

The summer of 1918 did not improve the food supply. The harvest was poor, and a severe frost on 5 June 1918 affected many vegetables, including cucumbers, lettuce, and beans, which were utterly destroyed, while pumpkins, potatoes, and corn were severely damaged.[40] There were shortages of all basic foodstuffs and agricultural produce, such as potatoes, cabbage, and fruit and authorities banned their sale in shops and restaurants. In mid-July, shortages were so severe that the city authorities announced that there would be no bread in Maribor for a week. Only those engaged in heavy labor could obtain it.[41] Throughout this period, the authorities tried to control the difficult situation with short-term measures, to alleviate the shortage of basic foodstuffs, and to calm the discontented population. However, their actions were largely unsuccessful, and they increasingly lost control of the food supply for the civilian population.

The autumn brought no improvement in supplies, and although the authorities forbade civilians from buying produce directly from farmers, especially flour, potatoes, and lard, which people needed as staples, the regulated supply system did not work. Some Slovenian inhabitants believed that the reason for the poor food supply in Maribor was the supposed arrogance and brutality of the Maribor municipal authorities, controlled by German nationalists, toward the Slovene-speaking farmers in the surrounding area, who in response refused to cooperate with the city authorities. Supplying the population of Maribor with basic foodstuffs was, therefore, not only an important economic and military issue but also a political one.[42] In September and October 1918, food shortages in the city led to

[34]Avgust Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno* (Maribor, 1939), 55; Jana Mlakar Adamič, *Teknilo nam je!* (Trbovlje, 2004), 15.

[35]Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno*, 100–02.

[36]Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 51.

[37]Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 86; Kosi, "Med državno zapovedanimi vojnimi napori," 127; Langthaler, "Food and Nutrition (Austria-Hungary)."

[38]Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 99; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno*, 134–36.

[39]"Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 13 May 1918, 2; on the lack of food also see PAM, fund Maribor District Court, TE 53, document no. 304/18.

[40]"Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 7 June 1918, 5.

[41]"Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 19 July 1918, 6.

[42]Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 153.

demonstrations by the civilian population demanding more potatoes, flour, and meat; in October, the authorities allowed the purchase of potatoes from relatives in the countryside.[43]

The food supply of the civilian population in Maribor had been an important political issue throughout World War I, but it became particularly acute among the political groups in the last year of the war. This involved conflicts and tensions between Slovene and German nationalists, who were actively involved in supporting the May Declaration or advocating the establishment of a large German-Austrian state, as well as conflicts between different German political groups. On 21 October 1918, ten days before the Slovenian military authority took control of the city, Karel Verstovšek, a Slovenian political leader, sent a letter of notification to Count Clary, governor and representative at the Imperial Austrian Council for Styria. In a text accompanying this letter of notification, Verstovšek pointed out that the food requisitioned from Slovene farmers in Lower Styria was secretly and unjustly distributed in other parts of the monarchy and not distributed among the population of Lower Styria:

> As President of the National Council for Slovene Styria, I protest most strongly against any requisitioning of crops and livestock in Lower Styria, especially since we Slovenes know that the Slovene peasant population will already be completely exhausted due to the smuggling of foodstuffs by the government authorities, and we are convinced that the Slovene people, as part of Yugoslavia, cannot expect any more supplies from Graz.[44]

To Verstovšek, the Slovenes of Lower Styria no longer had a future in Austria and, because of the mass national movement for the May Declaration in Styria, belonged in the new state of Yugoslavia, not Austria.[45]

The growing conflict can also be seen in Slovenian and Austrian newspaper accounts illustrating the mutual recriminations and corrupt dealings within the German community in 1918 in the city. The *Straža* and *Arbeiterwille* newspapers reported:

> There was considerable tension among the Germans over food. The German Officials' Party (*Beamtenpartei* in Maribor) accuses the German ruling party of several irregularities regarding nutrition. For example, they accuse A. Kern, the director of the city slaughterhouse, of having single-handedly transported one wagon of smoked meat destined for Maribor to Ljubljana. . . . Superintendent Höltschl, who runs the office where the milk ration cards are distributed, is also accused of various inaccuracies. The *Arbeiterwille* writes about the Dabringer Inn, where the gentlemen from the magistrate's office bring their fine white pastries, e.g., muffins, buns, etc. This is how Germans fight among themselves.[46]

The white pastries mentioned in the text of the article could be bought by German elite and magistrate officials for lunch from some German bakers (for example, from the Scherbaum bakery), despite the ban on baking white bread and pastries.[47]

The new Slovenian military authority in Maribor, which took command on 1 November 1918, was aware of the importance of providing food to the civilian population. But in a period of widespread shortages in Central Europe, the food situation in Maribor improved only gradually throughout 1919. Even though the Austro-Hungarian monarchy's elected and German-dominated municipal council was also active in Maribor, on 1 November Verstovšek, on behalf of the National Council for Styria in Maribor, called on farmers to help secure food supplies and to cooperate with the Slovene authority:

[43]"Protest delavcev proti pomanjkanju," *Straža*, 27 September 1918, 4.

[44]"Razglas," *Straža*, 21 October 1918, 1; Bruno Hartman, *Maribor – dogajanja in osebnosti* (Maribor, 2009), 32.

[45]According to research, the May Day Declaration was supported by more than 350,000 people. Vlasta Stavbar, *Majniška deklaracija in deklaracijsko gibanje* (Maribor, 2017).

[46]"Nachrichten aus Steiermark. Marburg," *Arbeiterwille*, 25 April 1918, 7; "Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 3 May 1918, 5, see complaint against Karl Rutling, PAM, fund MOM, TE: 106, file no. 19005/1918.

[47]"Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 12 May 1918, 3.

> Farmers, beware! Slovenians! We have Yugoslavia; now we need to get it right. For now, the most important thing is to provide our people with the food they need. Our brothers in Slovenian Styria must not starve to death. . . . Farmers! One more thing: store carefully all the food you have and save it so you can help your fellow locals in times of need. Only hand over what the authorities ask of you. Save the rest. Lately, our towns have been swarming with people from Vienna and Graz and various parts of Styria and Germany, offering large sums of money for groceries. Farmers, do not be fooled by high prices. Keep the goods that are worth more than today's money. No grain, no potatoes, no beans, no fruit, no pigs, no sheep, hardly anything should be sold out of Lower Styria. If you have too much of something, help your fellow locals with it, or sell it only to a buyer appointed by the district governor.[48]

The above passage suggests how food was delivered and distributed. The new Slovenian authorities would maintain a system whereby district headquarters prescribed how much food farmers must give away. In these measures, they adopted the previous Austrian system of supply by district headquarters and continued the supply of the urban population by means of food ration cards. Although this system, as historians have noted, did not work well in World War I,[49] the new Slovenian authorities maintained it even after the end of the war. In establishing their political power, the Slovenian authorities could hardly have organized the provision of food and basic necessities in any other way. In order to avoid further expressions of dissatisfaction among the population and to gain as much support as possible, they justified this method of supply in the press with appeals and explanations.

In them, the Slovenian authorities specifically emphasized that all donated food would be used for the people of Lower Styria and the local army. In Maribor, this effort would be led by the new district captain, Srečko Lajnšič, who would oversee the proper food distribution. The food given away would be used for domestic consumption; it was forbidden to sell or transport it by rail. Verstovšek also warned that food shortages could produce looting and riots, which would have terrible consequences for the lives of farmers who could not sell their produce in the city, at fairs, and at markets. He grimly concluded with a thought that reflected the importance of an uninterrupted and sufficient food supply for the political stability and development of the new Yugoslav state: "Anyone who helps bring foodstuffs from Slovene Styria to German Styria is tearing apart Yugoslavia and is a traitor to his new homeland."[50]

The provision of sufficient food became an important issue for the new Yugoslav and Slovenian authorities and was closely linked to establishing law and order in the newly formed state. It was also connected to the issue of gaining political support for the new authorities, which was particularly important in Maribor where there was a strong German community opposed to the Slovenian government.[51] To take control of this area, Slovenian political representatives became members of the city's food supply office, declaring that they wanted to ensure the complete safety and well-being of all citizens. At the same time, the National Government in Ljubljana set prices for wheat, rye, barley, oats, millet, buckwheat, beans, and potatoes. It also removed restrictions on the fruit trade and the slaughter of pigs.[52] At the end of November 1918, newspapers reported sales of potatoes, eggs, and milk with food stamps, but also that food was in short supply due to high demand. Therefore, Maribor's economic office decided to raise milk prices, while keeping them low for the less well-off in the city.[53]

In the winter of 1918/19, the situation continued to be difficult, with shortages of food and coal, and the suspension of classes in some schools for up to four weeks.[54] To improve the supply of bread, flour, and milled products to the civilian population, the National Government issued an Order of the Food Commissariat on 24 January 1919. This fixed the consumption of bread and milled products,

[48]Hartman, *Maribor – dogajanja in osebnosti*, 32; Karel Verstovšek, "Kmetje!," *Straža*, 1 November 1918, 1.

[49]To name just a few: Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg*; Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*; Kučera, *Rationed Life*.

[50]Hartman, *Maribor – dogajanja in osebnosti*, 32.

[51]"Ernährungsfrage," *Marburger Zeitung*, 21 January 1919, 2; Hartman, *Maribor – dogajanja in osebnosti*, 56.

[52]"Cene za žito in krompir," *Straža*, 11 November 1918, 4.

[53]"Cene mleka," *Straža*, 15 November 1918, 3.

[54]PAM, France Prešeren Elementary School Maribor 1838–2006, School Chronicle 1918/19, box no. 144.

stipulating that such products could only be sold in the larger settlements based on food ration cards issued by the regional governor's office. Bread and flour sellers were required to collect stubs from the cards and submit them to the district captain's office every weekend. Failure to comply with these rules brought penalties to both the seller and the buyer.[55]

In Spring 1919, the food supply improved somewhat. The district authorities encouraged farmers to work their fields as much as possible. It offered military horses to help with fieldwork; requests for horses had to be submitted to the Border Command in Maribor. The supply of lard and bacon also improved. A journalist noted that there was no shortage of lard in the city: "The Maribor district captain's office has so much lard and spelt at its disposal that each district of the city can get as much as it wants. The Chief Executive urges the municipalities to be told immediately how much money they need."[56] Maribor residents could also buy smoked meat, sugar, and eggs, and there was no shortage of bread. The conditions were very different from Austrian cities, especially Vienna, where food remained scarce and people were starving despite the war's end.[57] Slovenian newspapers exploited Vienna's supply problems and food shortages for Yugoslav propaganda. They pointed out that Germans living in Maribor must be happy because there was much more food available than in neighboring Austria and that just a week living in Vienna would quickly change their attitude toward the newly formed Yugoslav state.[58] By the summer of 1919, the situation had improved so much that it was decided to close the city-operated kitchen for the poor as it was no longer needed.[59] A correspondent from Maribor, in an article in the *Slovenec* newspaper, was pleased to note that there was no shortage of food in Maribor and that the prices were not exorbitant.[60]

However, despite the new authorities' success in tackling the crisis and distributing food to civilians, the consequences of the shortages were widespread and long-lasting. In addition to severe economic damage, the winter of 1918–19 in Maribor saw an increase in the number of deaths, mainly due to malnutrition and disease. Healy and Cox have made similar observations when writing about Vienna and Leipzig.[61] Prolonged shortages and the consumption of monotonous, poor quality, and insufficient amounts of food had severe health consequences for populations throughout Central Europe. Weakness and susceptibility to diseases such as tuberculosis due to malnutrition were also observed among schoolchildren in Maribor: "Many of them had lung diseases, and in class 2a alone, five had open tuberculosis. They were exempted from attending school until the end of the school year. I think it is only now that the consequences of the poor nutrition during the last two years of the war are really showing," wrote the headmistress of the Second Girls' Burgher School in the school chronicle.[62] Similar observations were made by headmistresses of other schools in Maribor. The health of the civilian population in Maribor, especially children and the elderly, suffered at the end of World War I and beyond. Those who did not fall from Spanish flu, tuberculosis, intestinal problems, and other ailments were mainly concerned with the challenge of providing enough food and heating for their families during the complex economic and political transition period.

Survival Strategies of the Civilian Population in Maribor

As we have shown, the political situation in the last year of the war and in the first months after had a significant impact on the daily life and the diet of the inhabitants of Maribor, which worsened, regardless of their nationality. For most of the city's residents, national categories were not particularly important in a time of severe shortages.[63] They were more occupied by the struggle for survival,

[55]PAM, National Government Decree No. 322/1919.
[56]"Gospodarske novice," *Slovenski gospodar*, 24 April 1919, 5.
[57]"Die Hungersnot in Wien," *Marburger Zeitung*, 5 October 1919, 2; see also Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of Habsburg Empire*.
[58]"Razmere na Dunaju," Slovenec, 11. December 1919, 3.
[59]"Marburger- und Tages Nachrichten," *Marburger Zeitung*, 20 July 1919, 2.
[60]"Lebensmittelmarkt," *Marburger Zeitung*, 5 October 1919, 3; "Živil v Mariboru ne primanjkuje," *Slovenec*, 24 August 1919, 2.
[61]Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of Habsburg Empire,* 249–50; Cox, *Hunger in War and Peace*, 47–49; 124–35; 181–99; Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno*, 239.
[62]PAM, France Prešeren Elementary School Maribor 1838–2006, School Chronicle 1922/23, box no. 144.
[63]Rok Stergar, "Introduction," *Austrian History Yearbook* 49 (2018): 17–22.

because in 1918 and at the beginning of 1919, the living conditions and food supply of the civilian population deteriorated significantly. How to survive this time of hunger and scarcity was a pressing issue; black marketing and profiteering flourished, as did food smuggling and bartering for other necessities of life.

The memoirs of Maribor lawyer Avgust Reisman and journalist Vinko Gaberec on life during World War I and the months that followed show that food rationing and other measures did not ensure that households had enough food to survive.[64] The poor organization of food sales made their purchase very dependent on an individual's luck, ingenuity, and their (better or worse) relations with the seller. The situation was particularly difficult for individuals from poorer families, who often did not know the shop owners or officials, and who did not have valuable items in their households to exchange for foodstuffs or to give as bribes. Food ration cards themselves, however valuable they were, were therefore scarce, and the provision of food to the civilian population was daily beset by complications, quarrels, injustice, and the black market laws and war profiteering.[65] As studies have shown, those with valuable items or money, in particular, were able to buy larger quantities of food on the black market, but the majority of the civilian population was unable to secure enough food in this way and continued to experience severe shortages of basic foodstuffs.[66] We can conclude that Maribor, like other Austrian and German cities, was not equally affected by the shortage of basic foodstuffs in all population segments. Rather, the measures taken by the authorities were largely ineffective. They did not solve the difficult living conditions of those who needed help the most, mainly the working class, petty craftsmen, and the elderly.[67]

As a Maribor resident said in an interview about life during wartime, household supply depended mainly on the relationship between housewives and shopkeepers, or on the favor or disfavor of merchants, bakers, and butchers.[68] Maribor newspapers in the autumn of 1918 repeatedly announced but then often cancelled food distributions with ration cards. This included basic foodstuffs such as potatoes, flour, and milk.[69] In his memoirs about the problematic food supply situation, Reisman wrote that fights also took place in the town on the home front:

> There were also queues at home, in front of shops, butchers, and bakers, and even before then in front of the offices, so that people with those green and brown slips could then line up in a long queue for bread, meat, kerosene, everything you needed to live . . . Those days and years were full of the same horror.[70]

In the last year of the war, the provisioning system collapsed, and the population of Maribor had to fend for themselves, as did residents in other cities of the monarchy.[71] The black market, food smuggling, and the exchange of food for other necessities of life flourished. Particularly during prolonged periods of scarcity, there were various forms of illegal food procurement and individuals who profited from these difficulties.[72] The more affluent advertised in newspapers to buy some basic foodstuffs, often posting advertisements to exchange valuable items for a small number of basic groceries. For example, someone offered a silver men's watch with a chain for 2 kg of lard and a pair of new men's shoes, a boy's suit, or a cape for lard, grease, or oil.[73] Someone else offered two hardwood beds, two mattresses, two wardrobes, and one divan for 20 kg of lard or bacon.[74]

[64]Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno*, 55.
[65]Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno,* 198; Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 101–2.
[66]Rachel Duffett, "Conclusion," in *Food and War in Twentieth-Century Europe*, eds. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Rachel Duffet and Alain Drouard (Farnahm, 2011), 268–69.
[67]Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of Habsburg Empire*, 42; Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 43.
[68]For a similar description: Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg,* 85.
[69]"Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 4 October 1918, 3.
[70]Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno*, 54–55.
[71]Moll, *Die Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg,* 105; Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 46.
[72]Duffet, "Conclusion," 267; Adamič, *Teknilo nam je!*,16.
[73]"V zameno," *Straža*, 29 November 1918, 5
[74]"Za 20 kg," *Straža*, 28 October 1918, 5.

Even such tempting offers were often not well received because food was scarce in the city in 1918 and immediately afterward. Therefore, people tried to help each other in very different ways. A common practice was to buy or exchange valuables for food from nearby farmers in the countryside, and others were lucky enough to get food from relatives in rural areas. Farmers managed to hide some foodstuffs (despite strict requisition rules), which were illegally sold or exchanged for items from middle-class households, including clothes, silver, furs, and furniture. The memoirs of a Maribor resident note that especially in the last year of the war, crowds of people went to the countryside on Sundays and carried home their stuffed rucksacks:

> When I came home with my rucksack the following Sunday, my mother gave me full credit and loaded my rucksack full of corn flour and bread, plus lard. Because that's what we went to the country for on Sundays, in whole processions, and the ladies of the highest gentility were not at all ashamed to carry bulging rucksacks.[75]

However, the authorities tried to prevent such illegal subsistence activity.[76] In the autumn of 1918, newspapers repeatedly reported that rucksacks were confiscated from Maribor citizens at the railway station. This action led people in the town to wonder where the confiscated goods had gone.[77] In line with their widespread distrust of the German city leaders, the citizens of Maribor believed that the goods were shared between the lower officials and their superiors.[78] Residents believed that these corrupt practices, which were largely unpunished and unprosecuted, allowed officials to live much better than the majority of the population.

In addition to the survival strategies mentioned above, which helped civilians survive severe food shortages, the war also brought new products, including the creation of new and alternative foods. Around 11,000 food products and their variants were developed during World War I, mainly to meet the needs of the civilian population.[79] Some of these industrial foods also appeared on the Slovenian market, such as condensed and powdered milk, potato flakes, industrial yeast, powdered eggs, artificial sweeteners, and various vegetable oils. Food shortages led to the invention of new recipes and foods that Maribor citizens could buy in shops, as butchers used blood, potatoes, and liver to make war sausages, and various types of starch were used to make flour substitutes. Among the civilian population in Maribor, as elsewhere in the monarchy, substitute foods spread; some of them were known in the diet of the rural population during previous famine periods, while others were new.[80] In the newspapers, this meager and low-quality replacement food was promoted as healthy food that would not harm the civilian population.[81] Consumption of horse meat increased, which was also promoted as being particularly healthy. It was used to make goulashes, sauces, and sausages. The consumption of meat from cats and dogs was forbidden, but newspapers occasionally reported incidents of this kind during severe food shortages.

Breadmaking was a particular problem for bakers and homemakers when flour was in short supply during and after the war. Restrictions were strict, and it was forbidden to bake bread with a high flour content, so other ingredients were added to the dough. Ground broad beans, chickpeas, beans, chestnuts, and potatoes supplemented small amounts of bread flour.[82] Ground corn cobs, ground linseed, and grape marc were often added to bread dough. In severe shortages, even straw and dried bark were mixed into the dough. The importance of ground corn cobs for breadmaking in the postwar period is

[75]Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno*, 61; Gaberc, *Brez slave*, 181.

[76]"Ernährungsfürsorge," *Marburger Zeitung*, 15 September 1918, 4.

[77]"Dopisi. Maribor," *Straža*, 4 October 1918, 3.

[78]This was reported in both Slovenian and German newspapers, e.g., *Straža* and *Arbeiterwille.*

[79]Peter Lummel, "Food provisioning in the German Army of the First World War," in *Food and War in Twentieth-Century Europe,* eds. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Rachel Duffet and Alain Drouard (Farnahm, 2011), 21.

[80]Bojan Himmelreich, "Vsakdanje življenje v Celju v obdobju prve svetovne vojne," *Studia Historica Slovenica* 9, no. 1 (2012): 489.

[81]See also Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of Habsburg Empire*, 121; Cox, *Hunger in War and Peace,* 83.

[82]Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno*, 167.

also demonstrated by the action of the new Yugoslav government, which only lifted restrictions on the export of ground corn cobs in mid-1920.[83] Since flour for bread was scarce, cooked millet or buckwheat groats and bran were also often added.

The use of potato yeast instead of baker's yeast became widespread. Home-made leavenings, made from millet flour and must or dried bread dough, were also used to bake bread. However, bread made with these substitutes and potato yeast tasted unpleasant. As Reisman wrote, war bread was very different from ordinary bread, but in the face of the severe famine that reigned in the city, people stood in lines for several hours to get it:

> The regulations were always strict about what to mix in the bread flour, but in reality, they mixed in sawdust and all sorts of inedible things into the bread flour. Even when warm, the loaves no longer had that lovely smell of bread that hungry living beings, millions of people, dream of wherever they live. However, when the bread had sat for a while, it had a bad taste and smell that made your teeth stop when you bit into the tasteless lump. And yet man wants to live! Moreover, we stood in processions outside bakeries, patiently waiting with green cards in our hands to get half a loaf once or twice a week.[84]

The preparation of mush and porridges, which had been staples for the poor in Slovenia for centuries, was also hampered by the shortage of cereals. In addition to corn and buckwheat flour, potatoes, barley flour, and corn groats were used to make porridge. Mush and porridges prepared in this way were essential dishes, especially for breakfasts and dinners, as bread was scarce in most families.

Government propaganda and newspapers promoted the gathering of wild plants and their use in food, for example, making vegetable sauces from nettles, dandelions, and sorrel, and making tea from blackberry and strawberry leaves.[85] In the last year of the war, newspapers encouraged the boiling of fruit with small amounts of sugar, picking blueberries and raspberries, baking potato bread, and making a coffee substitute from dried barley, rye, wheat, beans, and grape pips. Coffee substitutes were also made from chicory, caraway, dried dandelion root, acorns, and dried figs.[86] As a replacement for tobacco, a mixture of dried leaves of other plants, such as walnuts, vines, sloes, or turnips, was used.[87] Some common substitutes were also introduced: milk drinks were replaced with burned soup and garden products such as salads in summer instead of bread, coffee, and milk for breakfast. Homemakers revived many recipes for preparing wild plants and fruits, which had been consumed in Slovenia during the famines and shortages of the nineteenth century.[88] Substitute foods from wild plants familiar from earlier dietary periods, which were also used at the end of the war, included horsetail, dandelion, nettles, field thistle, chamomile, dogwood and hawthorn berries, chestnuts, hazelnuts, walnuts, elder, acacia and linden flowers, wild cherries, elderberries, blackberries, raspberries, cranberries, wild strawberries, and blueberries. Hunger also led to more frequent mushroom eating, which ended tragically for some. As newspapers noted, mushroom poisoning was particularly prevalent in Maribor, where food was very scarce, and where people used mushrooms as a substitute food, but often without knowledge of proper preparation.[89] Mushrooms were mainly used in soups, sauces, roasted, fried, and as an accompaniment to mousse, porridge, rice, and macaroni.

According to Kučera, in the last year of the war, only about 830 daily calories were available to the population in Austrian cities, and sometimes even less.[90] In the face of food shortages, the Austrian authorities directed much propaganda toward convincing women to prepare as modest meals as possible. This was in line with the generally accepted idea that the civilian population at home should also

[83]PAM, National Government Decree No. 343/1920.
[84]Reisman, *Iz življenja med vojno*, 55.
[85]Moll, Die *Steiermark im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 74.
[86]Šorn, *Pomanjkanje in lakota v Ljubljani med veliko vojno*, 181.
[87]Godina Golija, "*Pa smo stali v procesijah*," 56.
[88]Gorazd Makarovič, "Prehrana v 19. stoletju na Slovenskem," *Slovenski etnograf* 33–34, no. 1 (1991): 161.
[89]"Zastrupitev z gobami," *Straža*, 30 August 1918, 5.
[90]Kučera, *Rationed Life*, 23.

make sacrifices, suffer food shortages, and thus support the men of their families who were fighting at the front.[91] Useful tips on cooking in times of food shortages were published mainly in the era's newspapers, and recipes and tips were also published in the first Slovenian war cookbook, *Varčna kuharica* [The Frugal Cookbook], by Marija Remec, published in 1915.[92] The author recommended the adoption of many substitute foods available in times of shortage: instead of milk, which was in short supply, Remec advised the preparation of teas made, for example, from dried apple peels, and strawberry and blackberry leaves. As wheat flour was scarce, she advised using buckwheat and corn flour for baking cakes and pastries and corn flour and ground hazelnuts for baking biscuits. In addition to plums and apples, pumpkins, marrow, raspberries, and blueberries were also recommended for making jams.

The selection of recipes in the 1915 cookbook *Varčna kuharica* to replace the usual peacetime dishes is intriguing. The author suggests making the following types of steak due to the lack of meat: potato, bean, salad, cabbage, mushroom, and venison steak. Instead of meat sauces with pasta, she recommends preparing pasta with sauerkraut, beans, peas, spinach, anchovies, or mushrooms. She cites apples, prepared in various ways, as an essential food available even in times of scarcity. Her apple recipes can also be prepared as hearty main dishes: apples and beans, warm apple soup, red cabbage with apples, mushrooms with apples, rice with apples, and boiled apple rolls.[93]

This war cookbook was quickly snapped up and reprinted after the war, in 1920, when conditions still made it necessary to save food. Even in the postwar years, food shortages were often so severe that homemakers resorted to wartime recipes and instructions on preparing enough daily and canned food for the winter.[94] The new Yugoslav authorities sought to improve the civilian population's food supply, but food for the lower and middle classes remained expensive and therefore difficult to obtain in sufficient quantities and variety. That is why frugal wartime recipes and instructions on how to prepare inexpensive meals from not-too-expensive ingredients remained popular well into the 1920s. As in wartime, many civilians relied on substitute foods and meals composed of dishes made from cheap ingredients. The culinary skills developed during the war lasted long after the war ended.

Conclusion

The end of World War I was not only the end of great battles and senseless suffering for military and civilian populations but also the emergence and development of new battlefields—for creating new nation-states and more just social orders. Essential in this context was the issue of supplying the civilian population, organizing quality nutrition, and raising the standard of living and the related health status of the people. Good quality, sufficient, and inexpensive food was crucial because food is the most fundamental physiological need of man, and is a precondition of his other needs—social, cultural, and religious.[95] In times of food scarcity and famine, people are willing to do many things that they would not do otherwise. As journalist Vinko Gaberc writes in his memoirs of World War I:

> All those who felt hunger, or at least observed it away from the front, know about the consequences . . . so many things could be obtained for bread. Somebody exchanged a loaf of bread for an official signature that would be hard to get in different circumstances; another swapped it with a townsman for a shabby suit; the third unscrupulously bent the will of a hungry woman. Many a virtue grew feeble in the face of famine. Who could be strong when hungry?[96]

The importance of food supply on Slovenian territory was recognized by the old Austrian authorities and the newly formed Slovenian National Government, which immediately after the establishment of

[91]See also Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of Habsburg Empire*, 42; Cox, *Hunger in War and Peace*, 84.
[92]Marija Remec, *Varčna kuharica* (Ljubljana, 1915).
[93]Remec, *Varčna kuharica*, 207, 208, 231.
[94]Maja Godina Golija, *Prehrana v Mariboru v dvajsetih in tridesetih letih 20. stoletja* (Maribor, 1996), 57; Adamič, *Teknilo nam je*!, 16.
[95]Stephen Mennell et al., *The Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet and Culture* (London, 1992).
[96]Gaberc, *Brez slave*, 181.

the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs began to address this issue. Ensuring sufficient and affordable food overnight became an important factor in political stability.[97] Despite the political agitation, however, the food supply situation improved only slowly, and it was not until the summer of 1919 that a better situation was recorded in Slovenia. Unsurprisingly, continued shortages of basic foodstuffs and very high prices continued to upset the civilian population and led to protests.[98]

The issue of food supply and better social situation for the civilian population after World War I was critical in Maribor.[99] In an attempt to appease the resentment of the German population in the city, the new Slovenian authorities often emphasized in their speeches how the food supply in Maribor was much better regulated than in Austrian cities. However, the everyday reality was still tricky in the months after the war's end, and the struggle for a better life continued. Because of its totality, cruelty, and length, the war had brought painful and new experiences into residents' lives that shaped and guided their experiences for decades afterward.[100] Thus, there was little to rejoice about upon the resolution of this catastrophe of the twentieth century. In 1919 and 1920, the prices of some basic foodstuffs skyrocketed, and people again dealt with shortages. In 1922, the prices of basic foodstuffs such as meat, lard, flour, bread, milk, and vegetables were so high that Maribor was ranked the most expensive city in Yugoslavia.[101]

As a result, scarcity and hunger continued to affect the majority of the population in the years after World War I. For many people, food was of poor quality and monotonous, and there was too little. People depended on their own production and ingenuity. Despite significant political changes, little had changed in people's daily lives, which were characterized by a lack of basic necessities. In spite of improvements, the food supply remained precarious in Maribor, and in 1925, shortages for part of the civilian population were so pressing that the town again opened a public kitchen and the Karitas association, the charitable organization of the Roman Catholic Church in Slovenia, prepared warm mid-day meals for the poor.[102]

After World War I ended, new fronts opened: battles to hold onto occupied territories, define national borders, and gain political dominance. Alongside were battles for a better life, more affordable and accessible food, and a more just society.[103] In the case of Maribor and its population, food was essential to ensure peace and the population's loyalty. In this context, it is important to recall that the city's population did not experience significant nutrition changes after the war and experienced food insecurity through the 1920s.

Acknowledgment. This article is a result of research funded by the Czech Science Foundation and the Slovenian Research Agency (GF21-30350K "Nourishing Victory: Food Supply and Post-Imperial Transition in the Czech Lands and Slovenia, 1918–1923").

[97]Thoms, "Hunger – ein Bedürfnis zwischen Politik," 158.
[98]"Marktberichte," *Marburger Zeitung*, 5 October 1919, 3.
[99]"Zur Jahreswende," *Marburger Zeitung*, 1 January 1921, 1.
[100]Oto Luthar, *O žalosti niti besede: Uvod v kulturno zgodovino velike vojne* (Ljubljana, 2000), 57.
[101]"Maribor najdražje mesto v Jugoslaviji," *Tabor*, 18 February 1922, 3.
[102]"Arme Leute Küche," *Marburger Zeitung*, 20 October 1939, 4.
[103]John E. Burnett, "Glasgow Corporation and the Food of the Poor, 1918–24," in *Order and Disorder. The Health Implication of Eating and Drinking in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Alexander Fenton (East Linton, 2000), 13–29; Birte Förster, *1919: Ein Kontinent erfindet sich neu* (Ditzingen, 2018), 136–38; Cox, *Hunger in War and Peace*, 276–327.

Cite this article: Godina Golija M (2024). "Who Could Be Strong When Hungry?": Food Supply and Nutrition of the Civilian Population in Maribor at the End of and after World War I. *Austrian History Yearbook* **55**, 298–311. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237824000043