TOPIC 1: Following Traces of Lattuce/Trnovo Salat

Ana Kovačič

LJUBLJANA – MY CITY
Why I have chosen this topic?

I moved to Ljubljana when I was 18 years old, when I enrolled at the university. I had visited Ljubljana maybe three or four times before that, but after hardly six months in Ljubljana I already felt I had lived there forever. Ljubljana became my city and it still is today, even if after I retired I moved into a house 15 km away from the city.

I have always liked strolling around the town streets, particularly at the banks of the Ljubljanica river and the market place, which is one of the most beautiful I have seen around the world. It has a magnificent position in the city centre, at the foothills of the castle and the magnificent Plečnik arcades, rising out of the Ljubljanica river. The arcades separate the market place from the rest of the city and at the same time connect it with it with beautiful bridges. In the past there were only the Dragon bridge and Three bridges, today there is also a very interesting and modern Butcher's bridge. It is interesting that only ten years ago there were only butcher's shops under the arcades, while today they offer mainly bread and other bakery products, milk products and various vegetarian foods, so that the name of the bridge is not very up-to-date.

I had worked for some time for the market inspection and I have some interesting memories on occasional actions we used to have. In the socialist time, just like before the World War II, we persecuted mainly resellers, who represented competition to the producers who had the right to sell their produce on the market. But there were not many domestic producers and these came with their barrows from Trnovo and Krakovo and brought small quantities of vegetables. At the time the lettuce was mainly from Split. The producers were sending it to Ljubljana by train in enormous wicker baskets and their relatives took it to the market to sell. Also flowers (mainly carnations) from Split and its surroundings were brought in the same way. Tomatoes, pepper and water melons came from south Serbia or Macedonia.

Nowadays when I visit Ljubljana, I always visit the market as well. I grow vegetables by myself, but I still like to see what is new, I buy some good plants or fruits from the Primorska region: cherries in spring, peaches and apricots in the summer, persimmon, grapes and apples from the Štajerska region in autumn. This is also where I buy homemade butter and yoghurt, walnuts and hazelnuts. You cannot buy better sour cabbage and turnip than on the Ljubljana market.

I always take a stroll down the flower street, so that my eyes can feast on all the beautiful colours and flowers. I buy a bunch of dry flowers here every autumn. Dry flowers are characteristic of this market place.

Pogačarjev square has been hosting the ecologic market for some years now. Here I can buy good biologically produced food. Here I buy mainly wheat, flour and wheat produce with the producers holding a certificate of ecologic/organic production. A baker preparing and baking various types of bread from the ecologically produced wheat flour is very interesting. He is always surrounded by a lot of people and especially children like to help him.

I never miss the »Ecofeast«, which has been taking place the first weekend in September for ten years now, There is a great variety of ecological foods for sale and you can get a lot of information on lectures, as well as on the stalls of producers.

Ljubljana and the market are particularly beautiful in December, when everything is ornamented with lights and pretty wooden stalls are scattered by the Ljubljanica river and Pogačarjev trg, where you can buy handicraft products for New year's presents or you can have a glass of mulled wine or a cup of hot tea.

The market place is where I always meet some acquaintances and we have a chat over a cup of coffee.

I always take all my visitors, especially foreigners, to the Ljubljana market place, and they are always enthusiastic about what they see and experience.