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# The Ustasha Genocide Over the Serbs – the Continuing *dolus specialis*<sup>[2]</sup>

*With all different ideological characteristics that accompanied the genocide over the Serbian people in 1941 and 1991, there is a red thread connecting them.*

– Smilja Avramov<sup>[3]</sup>

**Summary:** The key characteristic of the criminal aspect of the genocide, which distinguishes it from other violations of international humanitarian law and raises it to the level of the “crime above all crimes”, is the existence of the so-called genocidal intent of “complete or partial destruction of a specific national, ethnic, racial or religious group”. The gravity and monstrosity of the content of such intent, as a rule, require that it is deeply rooted in the conscience of the members of the group perpetrating this crime, while such inveteracy also implies the permanence of the intent, or genocidal idea. During World War II, the Serbian people, together with Jews and Roma, in the Independent State of Croatia were the victims of the genocide, the crime that abhorred even the Nazis. The idea and intent of the extermination of the Serbian people from the territory considered as Croatia’s national territory by the Croatian nationalists, although existing for centuries in the past, got its “theoretical formation” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, primarily in the works of Ante Starčević, who was called the “Father of the Fatherland” while he was still alive. The Ustasha openly showed their enthusiasm and inspiration by Starčević’s works during World War II, claiming that there would not have been the Independent State of Croatia if it had not been for Starčević. The Ustasha ideology persisted after World War II, primarily through the activities of the Ustasha emigrants, but Croatian nationalism, open to accept the Ustasha ideological legacy, also persisted in the territory of Croatia itself. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the revival of the idea about the secession of Croatia and its realization also led to the revival of the idea of the Serbs as a “destructive factor” in Croatia and the necessity of their elimination from that territory. Tuđman’s Croatia resumed the Ustasha ideology in all its elements, including its attitude towards the Serbs and the genocidal intent, which had been largely realized during World War II. Drawing on the experience from the ISC, the Serbs became organized and prevented the repetition of the fate of their ancestors and relatives killed during World War II, but did not succeed in avoiding the “ethnic cleansing” from the territory of Croatia. The manner in which today’s Croatia interprets events both from World War II and

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[3] See Avramov, 2008, p. 7

from the 1990s shows that the Ustasha ideology is still deeply rooted in the significant element of the Croatian society, including practically the entire top government of Croatia. An essentially important element of the Ustasha ideology is its genocidal intent towards the Serbs still living in Croatia.

**Keywords:** crime, genocide, intent, destruction, group, Croatia, Ustasha, continuity

## 1. ABOUT THE NEED TO REMIND OF THE USTASHA GENOCIDE

Pursuant to Article 1 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the signatory states are obliged to prevent and punish the crime of genocide. Just as with all other criminal offences, when it comes to genocide, preventing future crimes is equally impossible without clear, unambiguous, continued and systematic pointing to the same crime cases in the past. This is even more important if there is a tendency of denying some of the crimes of that kind in the past.

Clear, unambiguous, continued and systematic reminder of the genocide crimes against Serbs, as well as Jews and Roma, in the Independent State of Croatia, is not only a legal obligation, but also a moral debt to the victims, their families and next of kin, towards the nations whose victims they were and a debt towards history. This obligation even surpasses the above-mentioned legal obligation. It refers both to the signatory states and to the members of both the victim nation and the nation whose members perpetrated the crime.

Speaking of the events in the course of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during his mandate as the UNPROFOR Commander, while pointing out that both at that time and later during the war, there was no genocide attributed to the Serbs

(“With 28,000 soldiers under my control and with the permanent contact with the UNCHR and the officials of the International Red Cross, we did not witness any genocide, but murders and massacres everywhere as typical of such conflict conditions. I believe that none of my successors and their troops did not see anything to an extent claimed by the media”), General Satish Nambiar (in his text of 6 April 1999, in which he objects to the NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), also said: “Labelling Serbs as evil, and all others as good, would be not only counterproductive, but also unfair. In my experience, all sides were guilty, but only the Serbs admitted not being angels, while others insisted on it” (Nambiar, 1999). Such discordance does not exist only regarding the wars of the 1990s, but also World War II and the history of our region on the whole. The Serbs should point to their own crimes and condemn them. However, if other nations refuse to speak about their own crimes in general, particularly those the victims of which were the Serbs, the Serbs must not keep quiet or insufficiently loud, and they must persist in pointing to the crimes perpetrated over the by others. This is even more important because in the course of history of Serbian suffering in crimes perpetrated against them just because they were Serbian, was drastically larger than the suffering of the members of other nations at the hands of the Serbs.

The truth is not truth unless complete, while partial truth may often be more dangerous than total untruth. That is why unilateral presentation of things, as indicated by General Nambiar, is something that must be overcome. It would be good to overcome such state of affairs by positive acting of all the nations in the region. However, if others do not want it, along with the foreign support, the Serbs and the Republic of Serbia must put in maximum effort to point to total untruth and make it available to everyone. It is only in this manner that the repetition can be avoided of negative events and processes in history, the repetition we have experienced many times to date.

Since the end of the 20th century to date, there have been serious, intensive and rather dangerous campaigns of historical revisionism, both at the level of the media, quasi-science and abuse of education, and, wherever possible, even though diverting historical trends in practice in the direction opposite to that from the first half of the 20th century. Historical revisionism is particularly directed towards the nations that suffered the heaviest burden of World War II, such as Russians and Serbs (who also suffered the greatest casualties in World War I as well). Objecting to revisionism that takes place at verbal and spiritual levels is a prerequisite for more successful revision of the results of historical trends in the past, particularly the struggle against the Central Powers in World War I and the Axis Powers in World War II. The Serbian people fell victim to the acts of aggression at the end of the 20th century in the revisionist process itself, starting from the assessment of the bearers of that process that such a small nation that played a great role in two world wars is the weakest link in the

victorious coalitions from those wars, which should actually start the revision.

Calculating and refraining from presenting the truth about the suffering of one's own nation throughout history for the sake of good relations with the neighbours, not disturbing or irritating the nations from which the crime perpetrators came etc., is not only morally impermissible, but also counterproductive. Namely, insufficient emphasis on the Ustasha genocide over Serbs, Roma and Jews, and subsequent revival of the temporarily concealed Ustashism slightly less than a century later, is the most illustrative example that refraining from open and clear presentation of the truth causes an opposite effect to the expected one.

There is no "inconvenient time" for pointing to the crimes perpetrated against the Serbian people, particularly the Ustasha genocide over Serbs, Roma and Jews during World War II. Such pointing is always, sadly, timely and convenient, even more convenient yesterday than today, while today it is more convenient than tomorrow. Continued existence of the Ustasha genocidal intent realized in World War II and prevented (however, excluding the terrible crimes against the Serbs) thanks to the defence action of the Serbs from Krajina in the early 1990s, is the best indicator of such necessity. This paper will speak of the above-mentioned continuity.

## 2. *DOLUS SPECIALIS* AS A DISTINCTIVE ELEMENT OF THE NOTION OF GENOCIDE

Although throughout history of humanity there has been a large number of attempts, unfortunately successful at times, of physical extermination of

racial, national, ethnic or religious groups, genocide as a criminal act has been spoken about only since the time of World War II or, more specifically, from the moment in 1943, when the lawyer of Polish-Jewish origin, Raphael Lemkin, coined the term from Greek *genos* – family, tribe, race, and Latin *occidere* – to kill, and used it as the title of Chapter IX in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, published in November 1944. Although in the preparations of the Nuremberg trial and in the proceedings themselves, Lemkin's term was used in some documents and situations, the Charter of the International Military Court and the judgment of 30 September and 1 October 1946 does not use the word genocide, while the acts it corresponded to the notion of genocide, particularly the ones perpetrated in wartime conditions and the only ones to be subject to criminal prosecution, were classified under the notion of crime against humanity. The General Assembly of the United Nations, at its first session, adopted Resolution 96 of 11 December 1946, entitled “The Crime of Genocide”, which confirms that genocide is a crime according to international law. The criminal act of genocide was legally formed only with the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on 9 December 1948, at the third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, held in Paris, which came into force after the deposition of the required twenty ratified instruments, on 12 January 1951. Within international law, the definition of the notion of genocide from this Convention remained isolated for decades, while national legal systems in the majority of the countries incriminated this act by, among other things, also by respecting the obligation imposed

to the signatory states by the Convention, introducing certain minor variations in the corresponding provisions that reflected different understandings of this criminal act in respective countries. It was in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that genocide was incriminated in the statutes of international criminal courts, both in the Roman Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted on 17 July 1998 and effective as of that date, after depositing sixty ratification instruments on 1 July 2002, and in the statutes of somewhat earlier established *ad hoc* criminal courts for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, whereas it should be noted that the provisions of these statutes referring to genocide do not deviate from the provisions of the 1948 Convention, thus omitting from the scope of the criminal act of genocide the crimes such as “ethnic cleansing”, “cultural genocide” (“culturicide”) or physical destruction of political opponents (“politicide”), classifying them within the framework of crimes against humanity or some other criminal acts (the inclusion of the above-listed acts in the incrimination of genocide was also attempted, but with no success, after World War II) (Schabas, 2009, pp. 33–46).

The 1948 Convention, which stipulates in Article 1 that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which the signatory states undertake to prevent and to punish, in Article 2 defines genocide as follows:

“Article 2

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Just as any criminal act, genocide also has its objective and subjective elements, which in Anglo-Saxon law is denoted as *actus reus* (guilty act) and *mens rea* (guilty mind). *Actus reus*, the objective element of the crime act of genocide is the actual commission of that act, and potential forms of that commission are listed in the above Items 1) to e). *Mens rea* of this criminal act consists of two elements. The first of these two subjective elements must exist in every criminal act, but in a different degree. It is, in fact, guilty mind, which can have the form of premeditation, direct or potential, and negligence, conscious or unconscious. In the criminal act of genocide, the highest degree of guilty mind is sought, or direct premeditation, which means that it is necessary that the perpetrators of the act wanted to com-

mit that act and to cause a harmful consequence deriving from that act. Therefore, it is not sufficient for them to know that their act may cause a harmful consequence and that they agreed to it (potential premeditation) or, even less, that they knew that a harmful consequence might occur, but they casually thought it would not happen or that they would be able to prevent it (conscious negligence – *luxuria*) or that they did not know or were not aware that their act might cause a harmful consequence although they had and, in line with their abilities, they could foresee it (unconscious negligence – *negligentia*). The requirement for direct premeditation actually derives from the second element of *mens rea* of genocide, i.e. it is impossible to meet the second requirement if there is no direct premeditation regarding the specific forms of the act of commission and its consequences. The second element is intent, which is denoted by the Latin term *dolus specialis*. Unlike the required subjective attitude of the perpetrators towards the act itself and the direct consequence of such act, which is not explicitly stated in the definition of the criminal act in Article 2 of the Convention, *dolus specialis* in relation to genocide is explicitly stated in that Article, that (some of) the actions from the framework of *actus rei* (Items a to e) are commit-

[4] Article 3 stipulates the following:

“Article 3

The following acts shall be punishable:

- a) Genocide;
- b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- e) Complicity in genocide.”

ted “deliberate complete or partial destruction of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such”. This is called a genocidal intent.<sup>[5]</sup>

The genocidal intent is an intent to “destroy” one of the listed groups or part of it. Destruction should imply physical and/or biological destruction, although the last form of commission, in Item e), “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” represents the identity transferring of children, who are eligible due to their possibly forgetting the original identity and adopting the new one in all its elements (this was applied by the ISC authorities among Serbian children, primarily those from Kozara, after the German-Ustasha-Home Guard offensive at the end of the spring and the beginning of the summer in 1942; that transferring was combined with killing the children, either directly or letting them die in unbearable camp conditions).

The attempt of including “cultural genocide” and “ethnic cleansing” in the essence of the criminal act of genocide, as acts that do not imply physical or biological destruction, failed on the occasion of adopting the Convention in the General Assembly in 1948. Namely, the Draft Convention prepared *ad hoc* by the committee contained a proposal that, apart from physical

and biological destruction, or extermination of members of the given group, cultural genocide should also be included, which would imply the destruction of specific features of the members of the given group without their elimination in biological terms. The Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, when adopting the text of the Convention, did not accept it, although a number of the participants in its work were in favour of including cultural genocide in the essence of the crime of genocide.<sup>[6]</sup> Including the crime that would subsequently be called “ethnic cleansing” in the notion of genocide was proposed by the Syrian delegation, in an amendment that would also include in genocide “the imposition of measures aimed at obligating the members of the group to leave their homes in order to avoid the threat of subsequent abuse”; however, this amendment was also rejected. Therefore, forcibly transferring children to another group was exempted from the requirement that *actus reus* of genocide should imply physical or biological destruction of members of the given group (Schabas, 2009, p. 39). Neither subsequent international documents incriminating genocide nor the case law of international criminal courts or the International Court of Justice met the re-

[5] Aa intent is a required element of the essence of some criminal acts in different national laws, such as criminal act of fraud from Article 208 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, Nos. 85/2005, 88/2005 – corrected., 107/2005 - corrected, 72/2009, 111/2009, 121/2012, 104/2013, 108/2014, 94/2016 and 35/2019), which refers to “whoever with intent to acquire unlawful material gain for himself or another by false presentation or concealment of facts deceives another or maintains such deception and thus induces such person to act to the prejudice of his or another’s property...”

[6] At the session of the 6th Committee of the General Assembly, held on 25 October 1948, the majority of its members voted for excluding cultural genocide from the text of the Draft Convention, as follows: “With 25 votes in favour, 16 against and 4 refrained, while 13 delegations were absent from the voting, the Committee decided not to include in the Convention those provisions referring to cultural genocide” (see *Official Records of 1<sup>st</sup> Part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> session the General Assembly*, 1948, p. 206)

quirements for expanding the scope of the notion of genocide and including the acts that do not imply physical or biological destruction of the given group or part of it, such as cultural genocide or ethnic cleansing, as well as including other groups that would be the subject of destruction, apart from national, ethnic, racial or religious groups, such as political opponents, which would mean expanding genocide into politicide. All this, naturally, did not imply impunity for the listed acts that remained outside the scope of genocide, because they were covered by the incrimination of the crime against humanity or some other acts (e.g. multiple murder as a form of grave murder) (see Šuvaković & Rakić, 2017, pp. 59–75).

As far as the number of victims is concerned in the criminal act of genocide, two questions arise. Since *dolus specialis* from the cited provision of Article 2 of the Convention represents an intent of “total or partial destruction” of some of the above-listed groups, the first question refers to the extent of the intended “partial destruction”, or whether such intent to destroy several members or a very limited number of members of a group because of their affiliation to the group (according to the Convention, “as such”), constitutes a genocidal intent or whether a larger number of victims involved in the destruction intent is anticipated. Although the Convention does not establish any lower limit for partial destruction, below which there would be no genocidal intent, it is still considered that the genocidal intent should refer to a “significant”, i.e. “substantial” part of the group. Therefore, the

International Law Commission, in its reasoning of the notion of genocide from its Draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind, prepared in 1996 at the request of the UN General Assembly, where the act of genocide is defined in the same manner as in the 1948 Convention, states as follows:

“... the intent must be the destruction of a group 'on the whole or partially'. The intent is not necessary for the whole destruction of the group worldwide. Nonetheless, the crime of genocide, by its very nature, involves the intent to destroy at least a substantial part of a particular group” (*Yearbook of the International Law Commission* 1996, 1998, p. 45).

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This attitude has already been advocated by experts for genocide, including Lemkin himself, who in 1950, during the debate in the US Senate and the ratification of the 1948 Convention, said that “partial destruction must be of substantial character in order to affect the whole”.<sup>[7]</sup>

Despite the fact that eventually it draws a wrong conclusion about the actual number of Srebrenica Muslims as compared to the entire group of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, in particular, about the significance of male military capable members of that part of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the survival of the entire part of the group, the Appeals Chamber of the Hague Tribunal, in Paragraphs 12–14 of the cited second-instance judgment in the case

[7] Taken from the judgment of the Appeals Chambers of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia of 19 April 2004, in the case Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstić (Case No. IT-98-33-A), Paragraph 10 (see <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/acjug/bcs/krs-aj040419b.pdf>, accessed on 20 August 2022).

*Krstić*, presents the proper general attitude about establishing the required substantiality of the part of the group subject to destruction in the criminal act of genocide (from the provision of Article 4 of the Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which corresponds to Article 2 of the 1948 Convention):

“12. The intent requirement of genocide under Article 4 of the Statute is therefore satisfied where evidence shows that the alleged perpetrator intended to destroy at least a substantial part of the protected group. The determination of when the targeted part is substantial enough to meet this requirement may involve a number of considerations. The numeric size of the targeted part of the group is the necessary and important starting point, though not in all cases the ending point of the inquiry. The number of individuals targeted should be evaluated not only in absolute terms, but also in relation to the overall size of the entire group. In addition to the numeric size of the targeted portion, its prominence within the group can be a useful consideration. If a specific part of the group is emblematic of the overall group, or is essential

to its survival, that may support a finding that the part qualifies as substantial within the meaning of Article 4.

13. The historical examples of genocide also suggest that the area of the perpetrators' activity and control, as well as the possible extent of their reach, should be considered. Nazi Germany may have intended only to eliminate Jews within Europe alone; that ambition probably did not extend, even at the height of its power, to an undertaking of that enterprise on a global scale. Similarly, the perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda did not seriously contemplate the elimination of the Tutsi population beyond the country's borders. The intent to destroy formed by a perpetrator of genocide will always be limited by the opportunity presented to him. While this factor alone will not indicate whether the targeted group is substantial, it can - in combination with other factors - inform the analysis.

14. These considerations, of course, are neither exhaustive nor dispositive. They are only useful guidelines. The applicability of these factors, as well as their relative weight, will vary depending on the circumstances of a particular case.”<sup>[8]</sup>

[8] Paragraphs 12–14 of the judgment of the Appeals Chambers of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia of 19 April 2004, in the case *Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstić* (Case No. IT-98-33-A) (see <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/acjug/bcs/krs-aj040419b.pdf>, accessed on 20 August 2022). It should be noted that this is both the criterion of substantiality of the act in quantitative terms (and the significance of the act within the group in qualitative terms, which is referred to in the last two sentences (see Schabas, 2009, p. 39). The qualitative significance of killing men for the physical (non) survival of Srebrenica Muslims in Paragraph 28. Of the second-instance judgment in the case *Krstić* is described as follows:

„28. The Trial Chamber was also entitled to consider the long-term impact that the elimination of seven to eight thousand men from Srebrenica would have on the survival of that community. In examining these consequences, the



The second question regarding the number of victims is related not only to the intent itself (the intended scope of the destruction of the members of the given group), but also the number of people who were actually killed in the specific case. In that respect, the International Law Commission states in its above-mentioned 1996 report:

“...the intent must be to destroy a group and not only one or several individuals who happen to be members of a specific group. A forbidden act must be committed against an individual due to his/her membership in a specific group and as a gradual step towards the general aim of destroying a group. An individual’s affiliation to a certain group, and not an individual’s identity, is the decisive criterion in determining direct victims of the crime of genocide. The group itself is the final target or intended victim of this type of mass criminal conduct. The act undertaken against individual members of the group is the means used for achieving the final criminal goal regarding this group”

(*Yearbook of the International Law Commission* 1996, 1998, p. 45).

Therefore, in case a smaller number of the members of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group is killed as a “gradual step” towards the destruction of that group or its substantial part as a “final target”, it may be stated that it is genocide. This is further supported by the fact that Article 3 of the Convention also incriminates “an attempt of genocide” (while it remains to be elaborated when there is only an attempt, and when the act of genocide has actually been committed).

The number of killed members of the group will, in any case, in specific situations, be an important indicator of the existence of the intent to destroy physically or biologically, in part (substantially) or totally, the given group as the “final target” of the crime.

Reminding that with genocide, according to the very provision determining the essence of that criminal act, the intent must be destruction of a group “as such”, the International Law Commission added in the above-mentioned report

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Trial Chamber properly focused on the likelihood of the community’s physical survival. As the Trial Chamber found, the massacred men amounted to about one fifth of the overall Srebrenica community. The Trial Chamber found that, given the patriarchal character of the Bosnian Muslim society in Srebrenica, the destruction of such a sizeable number of men would “inevitably result in the physical disappearance of the Bosnian Muslim population at Srebrenica”. Evidence introduced at trial supported this finding, by showing that, with the majority of the men killed officially listed as missing, their spouses are unable to remarry and, consequently, to have new children. The physical destruction of the men therefore had severe procreative implications for the Srebrenica Muslim community, potentially consigning the community to extinction.”

That the qualitative property, or significance of the victims is relevant to the assessment whether part of the given group that is subject to destruction is such that the conditions have been fulfilled for such destruction to be qualified as genocide, is completely true. However, the application of this criterion in the given case is wrong regarding Srebrenica military capable men in order to claim that it is genocide and not a war crime against prisoners of war.

that the General Assembly in its Resolution No. 96 of 11 December 1946, entitled “The Crime of Genocide”,<sup>[9]</sup> distinguished between genocide, as an act of denial and deprivation of the right of that group to existence, and homicide, or murder, as an act of denial and deprivation of the right to life of individual human beings (*Yearbook of the International Law Commission 1996, 1998, p. 45*).

Finally, although the Convention envisages both the responsibility of individual perpetrators (Article 4) and of states (Article 9) for genocide, whereas individuals are tried before international or national criminal courts, while the responsibility of a state is determined by the International Court of Justice, William Schabas is right to stress the significance of the plan and policy of a state or analogous entity in this criminal act within international law:

“The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has adopted the view that an individual, acting alone, can commit genocide to the extent that he or she engages in killing with a genocidal intent. The problem with such analysis is that it loses sight of the importance of the plan or policy of a State or analogous entity. In practice, genocide within the framework of international law is not the crime of a lone deviant but the act of a State. The importance of a State policy becomes more apparent when the context shifts from individual prosecution to a broader and more political determination” (Schabas, 2009, p. 41).

### 3. THE USTASHA GENOCIDE IN WORLD WAR II – GENODICAL INTENT DEMONSTRATED IN WORDS AND DEEDS

Although, during socialist Yugoslavia, the attempt, honest among some and dishonest among others, to build the relations of “brotherhood and unity” between Yugoslav nations resulted in the fact that the Ustasha genocide in World War II was not spoken about on a scale that would be normal and necessary regarding the crime of such proportions and gravity, throughout the existence of that state and almost to the beginning of direct preparations for the secession of Slovenia and Croatia, neither political circles in the country or in the expert literature and journalistic publications there were no major attempts to question whether genocide had been committed against the Serbs, Roma and Jews in the ISC. What is more, there was not even more substantial question about the estimated number of the genocide victims contained in the 1947 report of the Reparation Commission in the Government of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, entitled “Human and Material Victims of Yugoslavia in the War Effort 1941-1945” (with the passage of time, the question of the number of the victims, both in the ISC and in Jasenovac, became, so to say, the central question in debates, even in the Serbian circles, about the Ustasha crime against Serbs, Roma and Jews, somehow obscuring the key essential thing: that in the ISC, against the members of the above-listed nations,

[9] Resolution 96 of the General Assembly of the United Nations (see <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/209873>, accessed on 20 August 2022).

the crime had been committed that was by all means a mass one and, by its bestiality, it can be said, an unprecedented one, the crime that in all its elements corresponds to the essence of the criminal act of genocide.<sup>[10]</sup>

The proportions of the Ustasha crime against the Serbs, Roma and Jews (even taking into account only the minimal estimates of their number, such as the 1964 list of victims, with their first and last names, while it is clear that in the event of a mass crime committed in wartime conditions, a substantial number of victims must remain out of the reach of the knowledge of the body in charge of establishing the list), the crime directed at the members of these three nations as the victims due to their national (and religious) affiliation, the fitting of the Ustasha crime, committed in the ISC as a Nazi puppet creation, into a broader context and broader frameworks of the genocide committed by the Nazis against the Jews and Roma (with the extended circle of the victims to the Serbs, as a category that was the Ustasha primary target group for extermination) and, finally, unambiguous statements of Ustasha leaders about their intention – could simply leave no room for any doubt regarding the classification of this crime as genocide.

During World War II, even the German officers pointed to the gravity of the Ustasha crimes, showing a high degree of abhorrence at the Ustasha brutalities, despite the fact that the Germans were mainly concerned about those crimes resulting in

the strengthening of the liberation movements.

As early as 17 February 1942, or only ten months after the establishment of the ISC, the following was written in a Gestapo report to the Reich Commander Heinrich Himmler:

“As the most important cause for the escalation of the activities of the gangs must be attributed to the crimes committed by the Ustasha squads in the territory of Croatia over the Orthodox population. The Ustasha squads did not commit their misdeeds bestially only over the male and military capable Orthodox inhabitants, but they particularly and tortured helpless elderly people, women and children. The number of Orthodox people massacred and sadistically tortured by the Croats to death amounts to about 300,000. Due to these crimes, many Orthodox people have fled across the border to Serbia and with their testimonies caused a huge shock among the Serbian population” (Kazimirović, 1987, pp. 128–129; Janjić, 2022, p. 192).

Of course, the notion of genocide did not exist at that time, but in the Ustasha crime the Nazis recognized even worse evil than that committed by themselves.

In his memoirs from the 1950s, Hermann Neubacher, Hitler’s special envoy for the Balkans, wrote, among other things, the following about the nature and proportions of the ISC crime against the Serb:

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[10] Jovan Janjić speaks in quite a reasonable and convincing manner about the harm of the tendency, present in the Serbian science as well, to reduce the number of the victims of the Ustasha genocide, either from an attempt to be “objective” or from other reasons (see Janjić, 2022, pp. 189–216).

“The recipe for the Orthodox, applied by the Ustasha Supreme Leader, the President of the Independent State of Croatia, Ante Pavelić, reminds of the bloodiest religious wars: ‘One third must convert to Catholicism, one third must leave the country, and one third must die!’ The last item of the agenda was realized. When the Ustasha leaders speak about having killed one million Orthodox Serbs, including babies, children, women and the elderly, it is, in my opinion, exaggeration and boasting. According to the reports sent to me, the number of innocent, unarmed and slaughtered Serbs reaches about 750,000.

When I, who knows which time in a row, put on the agenda in the General Headquarters, the report about the truly abhorrent things taking place in Croatia, this was Hitler’s reply:

‘I have also told the Supreme Leader of Croatia that it was impossible to eradicate this minority just like that, because it is simply too large!’

Yes, if one knew the limit of the destruction of one nation! Hasn’t that limit been exceeded even after killing one man? ...” (Neubacher, 2004, p. 50).

“The recipe for the Orthodox” spoken about by Neubacher corresponds to the formula presented by Pavelić’s close associate (among other things, the Minister of Religion and Science of the ISC and then the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the ISC) and

one of the Ustasha ideologists, Mile Budak, PhD, in the speech delivered in Gospić on 22 July 1941:

“We will kill one part of the Serbs, displace another part, while we will convert others to Catholicism and thus merge them with the Croats. In that way, every trace of theirs will be covered, and what will remain will be a bad memory of them.”<sup>[11]</sup>

At the rally in Nova Gradiška, on 2 June 1941, President of the legislative Committee, Minister Milovan Žanić, PhD, said:

“There is no method we as the Ustasha will not use in order to make this country truly Croatian and clean it of the Serbs” (Davinić, 2018, p. 120).

Mladen Lorković, who was the ISC Minister of Interior Affairs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for the Relations with the German Army, stated the following in June 1941:

“The Ustasha movement emphasized in its principles that the Croatian land must belong to the Croatian people and that it must be cleaned of those who are the greatest misfortune to us” (Davinić, 2018, p. 121).

Viktor Gutić an official from Bosanska Krajina during the period of the ISC and an Ustasha com-

[11] This speech by Mile Budak and the Ustasha formula for resolving the Serbian question was emphasized by many authors (see the International Court of Justice, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia), Judgment of 3 February 2015, *Separate opinion of Judge ad hoc Milenko Kreća*, p. 532, available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/118/118-20150203-JUD-01-12-EN.pdf>, accessed on 21 August 2022; Novak, 2011, pp. 786–787; Gaćinović, 2018, p. 502; Davinić, 2018, p. 120).

missioner for Banjaluka, invited his followers to take action against the Serbs in his speech in Sanski Most, on 30 May 1941 with these words:

“Destroy them wherever you come across them, and rest assured that you have my own blessing and the blessing of the Supreme Leader” (Davinić, 2018, p. 121).

It was Viktor Gutić that used much more explicit vocabulary to express the plan that was proposed by Mile Budak and that was familiar to the Germans as well:

“We will send these Serbian Gypsies to Serbia, a number of them by train, and others along the Sava River, with no boats. The undesired elements will be eradicated by covering each and every trace of them and the only thing that will remain will be a memory of them. We will kill all Serbian vermin above the age of fifteen and we will put their children into cloisters and make good Croats out of them” (Gaćinović, 2018, p. 491).

The goal of the ISC regarding the Serbian population in its territory was written after the war (1945-1946), in prison, by General Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, special commissioner of the German Reich in the ISC (“Plenipotentiary General to the Independent State of Croatia”):

“Pavelić... had completely different goals from me. In the newly created 'Independent State of Croatia', there were 4,000,000 Croats, 1,800,000 Serbs and 700,000 Muslims. His intents were as

follows: one million and eight hundred thousand Orthodox Serbs should be killed, at any cost and by all means” (Glaise von Horstenau, 2013, p. 526).

Stating that concentration camps were initially made by the British in the Boer Wars, Glaise von Horstenau says the following:

“However, these places of terror and horror in Croatia, under the rule of Pavelić, whom we brought to power, is the ultimate terror. Yet, it is the worst in Jasenovac...” (Glaise von Horstenau, 2013, p. 526).

Although the above-listed German authors did not tend to give any precise data about the number of the victims in the ISC (or in Jasenovac), while the Gestapo speaks about an approximate number, von Horstenau did not mention any estimate at all, whereas Neubacher says that it is an estimate that does not derive from his own direct knowledge. Their testimonies are invaluable because, thanks to their positions, they definitely had a broad insight into the events in the territory of the ISC, and a direct or indirect insight into some elements, through the information received from their associates from the field (direct knowledge was larger with von Horstenau, since he was in person in the ISC, while Neubacher resided in Belgrade). There should be no doubt about the seriousness and meticulousness of the German intelligence sources. What is primarily important in these testimonies is that they unambiguously learned about the Ustasha intent to destroy the Serbs physically in the territory of the ISC and about the fact that such intent was realized in the cruellest manner possible, which

caused dismay among the Germans themselves. There is a certain tendency of underestimating the “probative value” of these testimonies by German high officials in the Balkans, due to the alleged lack of their direct insight into the details.<sup>[12]</sup> However, these are the witnesses with a broad insight that is necessary for the complete picture and that must be combined with the testimonies of other witnesses about the details. Finally, in the process of creating the most complete picture of the crime in question, all sources of knowledge (witnesses of events with different levels of knowledge, archive materials and other documentary materials and findings of statisticians, demographers and other experts) have their own place and significance.

On the website of the Yad Vashem SHOAH Resource Center, certainly one of the most credible institutions for the question of genocide in World War II, primarily over the Jews, but also over other nations, the proportions of the crime against the Serbs and Jews in the ISC were described as follows:

“Germany invaded Yugoslavia in April 1941 and divided the country among its allies. The territory of Croatia was united with Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Independent State of Croatia and placed under the control of the Ustasha movement. Almost immediately, the Ustasha began their campaign for ‘cleaning Croatia of foreign elements’. This mainly referred to the Serbian Orthodox minority living in Croatia, which was rather despised by the Catholic Ustasha. More

than 500,000 Serbs were killed by terribly sadistic methods (mostly in the summer of 1941); 250,000 were banished, while as many as 200,000 were forced to convert to Catholicism.

Another group of ‘foreign elements’ that the Ustasha wanted to destroy was the Jewish population in Croatia, which reached the number of approximately 37,000. ... In total, about 30,000 Croatian Jews died during the Holocaust – 80 per cent of the Jewish population in this country.”<sup>[13]</sup>

Even at the time when historical revisionism – which was particularly intensive on a larger scale after the unification of Germany and, in the territory of Yugoslavia, at the time of the preparation and beginning of the secession of Croatia and Slovenia, supported by Germany, and subsequently of Bosnia and Herzegovina (which was actually the same period of time) – had already resulted in the creation of the whole movement at different levels (in politics, quasi-science, media etc.) and begun openly minimizing and denying the proportions, importance and nature of the Ustasha genocide in World War II, in Croatia itself there were still sober voices continuing to point to what was evident. Thus, a very precise determination of the nature of the Ustasha crime was presented by Croatian historian and President of the Council of the Memorial-site Jasenovac, Zorica Stipetić, PhD, at the commemorative gathering in 2008. She stressed that “... it is necessary to continue permanently: Jasenovac is the place of genocide over the

[12] <https://www.muzejgenocida.rs/2020/10/29/nemacki-oficiri-o-broju-zrtava-u-jasenovcu/> (accessed on 21 August 2022).

[13] [https://www.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205930.pdf](https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205930.pdf) (accessed on 21 August 2022).

Serbs and Roma, the place of the Holocaust over the Jews, the place of the war crime against antifascists and political opponents, regardless whether they were Croats, Bosnians or members of any other nation”<sup>[14]</sup>. Therefore, although in Croatia there is a general tendency of relativizing the Ustasha crimes, and even of repeating the practice, there are still individuals in Croatia who do not dispute the fact that genocide was committed over the Serbs, Roma and Jews in the ISC. If the Croats from Croatia can say something like that, and even insist on the “permanent repetition” of the claim about the Ustasha genocide, why would we refrain from the permanent and loud repetition of that claim, since our own compatriots, and many of our relatives, were the victims of that genocide – namely we are the members of the nation that was the victim of that “crime above all crimes?”

The destruction of the Jews in the ISC was integral part of genocide over the Jewish nation, the Holocaust, which was committed in all the territories controlled by Nazis and their allies and collaborators. Similarly, there was genocide over the Roma, which had a large scale in the territories under the Nazi control. In the ISC, the Serbs were also destroyed for identical reasons (because of their affiliation to a specific nation), by the same people, with the same means, with identical bestiality and largely in the same places. If destruction is qualified as genocide, the same qualification must refer to the destruction of others. The above-listed statements of the Ustasha leaders from the period of the ISC more than clearly speak of the genocidal

intent that was implemented during the existence of the ISC.

#### 4. USTASHISM AND NEO-USTASHISM - THE CONTINUITY OF THE GENOCIDAL INTENT

After the collapse of Nazism, both within its own framework and within the Independent State of Croatia, the Ustasha ideology disappeared, including the ideas and intent of the physical destruction of the Serbs from the territory of what was considered the Croatian territory by Ustasha. Despite large proportions of the committed genocide, as well as post-war displacement primarily to the territory of Vojvodina, a number of Serbs (“the remnants of the slaughtered people”, in the words of poet Matija Bećković), mostly due to the fact that they rebelled, managed to survive and persist in this territory.

The torch of Ustashism, and even the genocidal intent as its essential element, was largely preserved by the Ustasha leaders and other members of the Ustasha movement who, including Pavelić himself, managed to escape to the West (to West Europe, North America and Latin America), owing to the help and channels of the Catholic Church and western intelligence services. In Yugoslavia itself, during several post-war years, from 1945 to 1950, a number of uncaptured Ustasha and Home Guard members formed guerrilla squads, so-called “Crusaders” (*križari* or *škripari*), which were hiding in the middle of nowhere and preparing for armed

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[14] <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/1107525.html> (accessed on 21 August 2022).

actions. Their leader was Vjekoslav Maks Luburić, the ISC officer who ran the system of the Ustasha camps during the war and who later emigrated to Spain, where in the mid-1950s he formed a terrorist organization “Croatian National Resistance” and led it until his death in 1969.

The emigration Ustasha movement, evidently not only tolerated but also supported in the West, was rejuvenated with time, while its old members, the participants of World War II, passed their ideology to younger generations. In limited conditions for action, they reduced their practical, violent activity primarily to terrorist attacks, both abroad (wounding of Yugoslav consul in Munich, Ante Klarić, in 1965; murder of the officer in the Yugoslav consulate in Stuttgart, Sava Milanović in 1966; assassination of the Yugoslav Ambassador in Sweden, Vladimir Rolović, on 7 April 1971; planting the explosive and crashing the JAT airplane on flight 367 from Stockholm to Belgrade on 26 January 1972, etc.), and in Yugoslavia (planting the explosive on the railway Rijeka-Zagreb in 1963 by the members of the organization “Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood” from Australia; planting explosives in the cinema “20 October” in Belgrade, on 13 July 1968 and, on 25 September of the same year, in the cloak-room of the Main Railway Station in Belgrade by the members of the organization “Croatian Liberation Movement” from Germany etc.). There were also attempts to infiltrate Ustasha groups from abroad to organize an uprising in the Croatian regions in Yugoslavia (the first attempt of that kind occurred as early as 1945, when 20 Ustasha entered Yugoslavia

from Italy, but they were soon found and arrested, a particularly important attempt of that kind was made in 1948, when in the operation called “The Tenth of April”, led by Božidar Kavran, pre-war Ustasha who commanded all Ustasha troops after 1943, about one hundred Ustasha entered Yugoslavia from Austria, under the command of the leading Ustasha figures notorious for their misdeeds from Pavelić’s ISC – Ljubo Miloš, Ante Vrban and Luka Grgić, whose plan was to organize an uprising in collaboration with the local “Crusaders”, but they were all arrested in the operation “Guardian” of the State Security Administration. Important attempts of this kind also include that from 1972 when, after the elimination of “Maspok” in Croatia, a group of 19 members of the Ustasha emigrant organization “Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood”, known as “Bugojno Group”, convinced that there was still the potential for Croatia’s uprising manifested during Maspok, was infiltrated to Yugoslavia to organize an uprising within the operation “Phoenix”. However, the Yugoslav authorities succeeded in preventing it in the operation “Raduša 72”, in which the infiltrated Ustasha were eliminated).<sup>[15]</sup>

Increased intensity of terrorist activities, at the time just before, during and immediately after Maspok, the nationalist and secessionist movement from the beginning of the 1970s, points to the essential connection between that movement and the Ustasha emigration, i.e. the similar ideological foundation in their background, regardless of the fact that the most influential “Maspok” members came from the ranks of the Communist League.

[15] For further details about terrorist actions of the Ustasha emigration, see: Ganović, 1979; Bulatović & Spasić, 1993.



That connection will be manifested particularly clearly at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, when in the process of Croatian secession, the synergy of Maspok and (neo)Ustasha tradition and ideology played a significant role. The leading places in the Croatian Democratic Union, after its coming to power in 1990, in the Republic of Croatia were also held by the people who had been arrested because of their participation in “Maspok”, such as Franjo Tuđman (who, as a historian, had, in the meantime, become well-known for historical revisionism and, in particular, the minimization of the Ustasha crimes as well), the founder and president of the Croatian Democratic Union, and then the President of the Republic of Croatia; Stjepan Mesić, who was first the President of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and then a member of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the President of the Croatian Parliament and after a period of opposition activities, due to his alleged disagreement with Tuđman, the President of the Republic of Croatia (from 2000 to 2010); Janko Bobetko, who became the Head of the Main Headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (1992–1995) etc. The rise and the electoral success of the Croatian Democratic Union was substantially contributed to by the financial support from the Ustasha emi-

gration, mainly the extremist one, including the organizations openly advocating Ustashism.<sup>[16]</sup> The connection between one part of new authorities from Croatia itself and pro-Ustasha emigrants was also materialized through including some of the members of Ustasha emigration in the state apparatus, for example Gojko Šušak, who was to become the Minister of Defence in 1991 and stay in that position until his death in 1998. Even some active Ustasha from World War II, still alive at that moment, were given certain positions. Miro Barešić, who assassinated Vladimir Rolović, returned to Croatia to take part in the war, and he was killed at the end of July 1991 as the commander of a unit within the Armed Forces of Croatia. He was posthumously promoted to the rank of major, while a monument in his honour was erected in the village of Drage, near Pakoştan, in 2016.

This is what Jelena Guskova says about the revival of Ustashism in Croatia in late 1980s and early 1990s:

“The Ustasha tradition was rehabilitated: the symbols of new Croatia repeated the symbols of the fascist ISC; the association ‘Croatian Home Guard’ was formed; some war criminals from World War II were rehabilitated (such as the Ustasha Minister of Education, mile Budak, then

[16] In a recent interview for *Glas Istre*, the eminent Croatian lawyer and former Head of the Punishment Department of the District Prosecutor’s Office in Zagreb, Anto Nobilo, said that after Tuđman’s statement at the First General Gathering of the Croatian Democratic Union in the hall “Lisinski” in Zagreb, on 24 February 1990 – that the ISC was not merely a fascist creation, but also an expression of the Croatian nation’s desire to have an independent state, as well as due to the fact that the ISC was financed by the Croatian extreme emigration – there was an initiative for arresting Franjo Tuđman and Josip Manolić and for prohibiting the Croatian Democratic Union (see <https://www.glasistre.hr/hrvatska/nobilo-za-glas-istre-mogao-sam-zatvoriti-tudmana-1990-i-staviti-hdz-van-zakona-specijalci-su-vec-bili-spremni-u-ilici-797695>, accessed on 22 August 2022).

86 | Dragan Mujić who had killed about four hundred Serbs and others); the monuments in honour of victims of fascism and partisan cemeteries were desecrated. Only in Dalmatia more than 2,000 monuments in honour of victims of fascism were destroyed. The names of the villages, streets and enterprises were changed, wherever their previous names somehow referred to the presence of the Serbs. There appeared cafés and restaurants called 'U' (the Ustasha sign), and in many barracks, public institutions and in public places the portraits of Ante Pavelić were displayed. Franjo Tuđman entrusted the officials of the Ustasha movement from the ISC period with high positions: Ivo Rojnica, who had been given the war merit medal by Pavelić, became Croatian Ambassador to Argentina. Rojnica said that he would repeat everything he had done from 1941 to 1945. The ideologist of the Ustasha youth, Vinko Nikolić, became a Member of the Parliament. Croatia even began celebrating as its holiday the day of the declaration of the former ISC, 10 April. Ivan Gabelica, the political secretary of the Croatian Party of Rights, pointed out: 'From exile, blood and tears of the Croats, Ante Pavelić rose. That is why today we should still use the means advocated by Pavelić, with the aid of which he led to the creation of the ISC'" (Guskova, 2003, pp. 204–205).

There were many other positive statements by outstanding politicians about the Ustasha and the ISC. Particularly popular was part of Franjo

Tuđman's speech from the First General Gathering of the Croatian Democratic Union, held in the Hall "Lisinski" in Zagreb, on 24 February 1990:

"The advocates of hegemonistic-unitarist or Yugoslav greater-state views see in the program goals of the Croatian Democratic Union nothing else but a request for the revival of the Ustasha ISC. However, they forget that the ISC was not merely a 'Quisling' creation and 'fascist crime', but also an expression of both political aspirations of the Croatian people for its own independent state, and the knowledge of international factors, in this case of the Government of Hitler's Germany, which was creating a 'new European order' on the ruins of the Peace of Versailles Peace, about Croatia's aspirations and geographical borders. Accordingly, the ISC was not just a whim of the Axis Powers, but a consequence of completely determined historical factors."<sup>[17]</sup>

Having in mind the gravity of the crime committed against Serbs, Roma and Jews, as well as Croatian and other antifascists, in the ISC, during a short period of existence of that creation, which practically makes it a synonym for crime, and not just any crime, but the crime of bestial genocide, it is a completely meaningless attempt to show this statement of Tuđman more benign than it really is, with the note that "although it was undoubtedly a disputable reinterpretation of history, it is obviously not the rehabilitation of the ISC as well", and that "the main goal of Tuđman's politics was to realize

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[17] <http://free-zg.t-com.hr/zdeslav-milas/FT/ft-03.htm> (accessed on 22 August 2022).

the idea of the national reconciliation, and not the rehabilitation of Ustashism.”<sup>[18]</sup>

In his speech in Sydney, on 30 May 1992, on Croatia’s Statehood Day, Stjepan Mesić said:

“... In World War II, the Croats won twice and we must tell it to everyone, both our friends and our enemies. The Croats won in 1941, when on 10 April they declared the Croatian state. Namely, the Croats did not declare the state because they were fascists, but because they had a natural and historical right to the state. The outcomes of World War II are known. But it is also known that the Croats won for the second time in that war because they sat at the table of the victors together with the Allies. So, we must tell those who think that the Croats were on the opposite side, those who want to win over those Allies and defame the Croatian deeds, we must tell them the following: the Croats were in favour of the Croatian state, and did not wage the war either for white or for red flags. The Croats waged the war only for the red, white and blue flag.”<sup>[19]</sup>

Another well-known address was that of the Croatian General-Major Branimir Glavaš, one of

the founders of the Croatian Democratic Union and leading figures of that party in Slavonija, to the members of the Armed Forces of Croatia, exchanged as prisoners of war, in Nemetin, near Osijek: “Feel free to say you are Ustashas! You are! And you have come to your homeland.”<sup>[20]</sup>

Particularly indicative is what the Croatian authorities did in 1990 – the former Square of the Victims of Fascism was renamed into Croatian Nobles Square, which, it can be openly said, symbolically represents the repeated killing of the same victims, while openly taking the side of their killers (Guskova, 2003, p. 204). However, because of the huge harm caused by this renaming from 1990 to the international reputation of Croatia, this square was once again named the Square of the Victims of Fascism in 2000, and on that occasion, the shameful act was characterized as “an error of the former authorities”, while there was also clear resistance to the restoration of the old name.<sup>[21]</sup>

Petar Džadžić makes an interesting comparison of different fates of Nazi and fascist leaders, on the one hand, and the Ustasha leader, on the other hand, as well as of different fates of their movements and ideologies. As a matter of fact, this is not merely a comparison, but largely an

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[18] Speaking about the “distortion of Tuđman’s interpretation of history”, this author states that “Tuđman, in fact, never supported Ustashism, but his idea of ‘all-Croatian reconciliation’ inevitably rehabilitated the Ustasha in a certain manner or at least introduced their story into the public discourse”. Well, did he rehabilitate them or not? Such scale of contradiction and confusion is unavoidable when there is an attempt to defend something that cannot be defended (in the article published in Serbia, which exudes intolerance towards the Serbs) (see Cipek, 2008, p. 23).

[19] The speech recording is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8JFNhylo9Y> (accessed on 22 August 2022).

[20] The address recording is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ey9rpzpgpa8> (accessed on 22 August 2022).

[21] <https://net.hr/danas/zagreb-trg-hrvatskih-velikana-ponovno-postaje-trgom-zrtava-fasizma-oe405c50-b1cf-11eb-a69c-0242ac140042> (accessed on 22 August 2022).

explanation of different fates of these movements and ideologies:

“The fate of Nazi and fascist leaders in certain terms symbolizes the fate of the Nazi states and the Nazis in them. Hitler and Goebbels committed suicide and ordered their remains to be burnt, not sparing their closest ones. Mussolini was hanged upside down by the Italian rebels in the same square from which his victorious Olympic voice of the Caesar of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had boomed while he was Duce. Only Pavelić found his way and made a narrow escape, or thanks to the door widely opened by the Roman Pope, when the moment came, he crossed the Atlantic. He was the only one to die naturally, as an old man, in his bed. The same narrow escape, or secretly opened door, were also used by the Croatian Nazism, preserving itself and its people until better times” (Džadžić, 1995).

There is plenty of evidence about the plans of the Croatian authorities regarding the Serbian population after the victory of the Croatian Democratic Union in 1990 elections, including the statements of the highest officials.

In January 1991, the public in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was the recordings made by the intelligence agents of the Yugoslav Army as a result of their secret following of the activities of illegal armament of the Croats with the weapons

from abroad at the end of 1990 and the beginning of 1991. The frightening statements of the “main hero” of those events, Croatian Minister of Defence Martin Špegelj (after whom the whole event was named “Špegelj Affair”) about the plans to kill the members of the Yugoslav Army and their families, include his words about what would be done with the Serbian population in Croatia, mainly in Krajina, with the most important centre in the town of Knin:

“We will solve Knin by slaughtering everyone. We have the international recognition for that we will slaughter them, especially now when that whore won in Serbia.”<sup>[22]</sup>

Fortunately, thanks to the experience gained from the ISC, the Serbs from Krajina got organized and avoided the fate planned for them by Špegelj and other Croatian top officials. However, that the above-cited words about the intentions of the Croatian authorities were rather serious was also confirmed in the situations where the Serbian population in some parts of Krajina lost protection and were left to the mercy of the Croatian army and police. Namely, in the third most important action through the violation of the peace agreements by the Croatian armed forces after the arrival of UNPROFOR, the operation Medak Pocket in September 1993, primarily in the villages of Divoselo, Čitluk and Počitelj, all the people living there were killed, the total of 88, including women and the elderly.

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[22] The transcript from the trial of President Slobodan Milošević in the Hague, when part of the conversation was played in which Špegelj reveals the above-mentioned plan (see <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/Transkripti/Milosevic/Transkripti/Transkripti%20sa%20sudjenja%20Slobodanu%20Milosevicu%20%2825%29/Transkript%20sa%20sudjenja%20Slobodanu%20Milosevicu%20-%2025.%20januar%202006..pdf>, accessed on 22 August 2022).

The cattle were killed and the villages were destroyed to the ground. The UN document entitled “Report on the Medak Operation and Assessment of Human Casualties and Material Damage” states the following:

“UNPROFOR has conducted a systematic investigation of conditions in the Medak area; and the events described in the report show that the Croatian Army attack in the area on 9 September was fully coordinated and planned. It met little or no Serb resistance. Croatian troops killed most of those who were unable to make good their escape, regardless of age, sex or status; a number are still missing. Massive destruction to property was conducted by the Croatian forces during their advance, and particularly during their withdrawal. Virtually all houses and outbuildings in the villages and surrounding h8.11lets were destroyed, many by explosion. Wells were destroyed or damaged. Household chattels were deliberately destroyed, and almost all remaining domestic animals killed. During a period in which UNPROFOR personnel were prevented from moving into the area, in accordance with a prior agreement with the Croatian Army, the destruction was completed, UNPROFOR members hearing explosions and shooting, and, shortly after, observing houses in flames. Thus, a comprehensive scorched earth policy was practised by the Croatian Army.”<sup>[23]</sup>

French General Jean Cot, who as the UNPROFOR commander visited the region of Medak, later said the following:

“I found no signs of life, either of people or animals, in several villages we passed through. The destruction was complete, systematic and deliberate.”<sup>[24]</sup>

A particularly significant indicator of the existence of the genocidal intent in the Croatian top government during the 1990s is a statement made by Franjo Tuđman. (Since the genocidal intent had also existed in the ISC, this is also an indicator of the continuity of the genocidal intent, because it is hardly possible that in less than a century, the same nation can create two separate, mutually unconnected genocidal intents towards the same target group, or group of victims, whereas the above-mentioned revival of the Ustasha iconography and rhetoric, and the celebration of Ustashism from the ISC in the 1990s are indicators that it is the same genocidal intent that lasts.) At the meeting of the expanded composition of the Main Headquarters of the Croatian Armed Forces, held in Brioni on 31 August 1995, for the purpose of preparing the operation “Storm”, Tuđman said the following:

“We should solve this. Both the south and the north. And how should it be solved? It is now the topic of our today’s debate. We should assault

[23] Report on the Medak Operation and Assessment of Human Casualties and Material Damages (see <https://search.archives.un.org/uploads/r/united-nations-archives/5/e/1/5e1ad13153cfe245e6f43c47f33c167137342b55411b1d093c4bdo7e8fa928df/S-1835-0032-0011-00002.PDF>, accessed on 22 August 2022).

[24] <http://www.srpska-mreza.com/Krajina/Medak-intro.html> (accessed on 22 August 2022).

the Serbs so hard that they practically disappear, meaning that those who are not attacked immediately, must capitulate within a few days.”<sup>[25]</sup>

Although the operation of the Croatian Armed Forces resulted in banishing about 250,000 Serbs from the territory of Krajina,<sup>[26]</sup> which was certainly the largest ethnic cleansing in the entire Yugoslav crisis, the fact is indicative that the goal of the Croatian authorities was to make the Serbs “disappear” from the territory they had lived in for centuries and they had originally settled as empty space, not displacing any nation from it, while paying the price of that territory with their blood, defending it from the Ottoman Empire.

William Schabas, the leading world expert for genocide, presented the following comparison and qualification of the above-mentioned statement by Tuđman in Brioni:

“In the villa of the Criminal Police of Nazi Germany in Berlin, at the address Am Groen Wannsee 56–58, on 20 January 1942, a meeting was held of the leading politicians of Nazi Germany, where it was decided about the destruction of the Jewish people in the territory of Europe. At the meeting chaired by Hermann Heidrich the decision was made to banish the Jews from the

living territory of the German people and from certain territories of life interests of the German people. On 31 July 1995, on the islands of Brioni, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman convened an almost identical gathering of conspirators. At that meeting, Tuđman established the goal of the operation “Storm”, i.e. to make the Serbs “disappear” from Krajina. He saw genocide as a solution to the long-term problem of the Serbs and wrote about it unambiguously in the Brioni transcripts”<sup>[27]</sup>

This attitude to the Serbs as a community that had to be eliminated from the territory in question was also confirmed by Tuđman’s words in the speech held in Knin on 26 August 1995, within the manifestation “The Train of Freedom”, celebrating the victory in “Storm”, and the opening of the railway line Zagreb–Split, when he said, among other things: “... there is no return to what used to be, to have the cancer spread in the midst of Croatia that destroyed the Croatian national being and prevented the Croatian people from being really alone in its own territory...” (Bekić, 2016, p. 20). At the anniversary of “Storm”, on 5 August 1996, Tuđman said: “We have returned Zvonimir’s Croatian town under the wing of our mother, our homeland of Croatia, as pure as it was during Zvonimir’s

[25] The sound recording of the meeting, contained in the so-called “Brioni Transcripts”, is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELcS6CxzEVM> (accessed on 23 August 2022).

[26] <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2005/8/42f38b084/home-10-years-croatias-operation-storm.html> (accessed on 23 August 2022).

[27] <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/olujja-zlocin-bez-kazne/1142330/galbrajtovi-prsti-olujji-zapad-predumisljajem-zmurio-planiranje-proterivanja-srba-hrvatske> (accessed on 23 August 2022).

reign.”<sup>[28]</sup> Such rhetoric overwhelmingly reminds of the above-cited rhetoric of Milo Budak, Milovan Žanić, Mladen Lorković, Viktor Gutić and other officials of the ISC. Namely, it is the same matrix, the same idea and intent. The genocidal one.

## 5. THEORETICAL ROOTS AND THE FOUNDATION OF USTASHA RACISM AND GENOCIDAL INTENT

Just as German Nazi racism and anti-Semitism needed its theoretical foundation, according to which Hitler presented his racist views in the book *Mein Kampf* (1925), the Ustasha genocide over the Serbs was preceded by racist “theoretical” foundation characterized by particular hatred towards Serbs (anti-Semitism and racist attitude towards Roma was borrowed by the Ustasha mainly from German Nazis).

The hatred towards Serbs had been present among the Catholic clergy in Croatia and Croatian feudal lords for centuries. The following excerpt by Vasilije Krestić speaks eloquently about the reasons for such hatred and the level it actually reached:

“... Namely, unlike the Catholics, the Serbs were not due to pay various contributions to the Catholic church and its clergymen. In Croatia, thanks to their status of free peasants and their military status of frontiersmen, the overwhelming major-

ity of Serbs were not turned into serfs. Again, thanks to their status of free men, they were not due to pay numerous feudal contributions. In order to subdue them into serfdom, the Croatian feudal lords used all available means, even brutal physical force against the intractable and tough ‘Orthodox schismatics’. Historical documents reveal numerous cases of drastic on Serbian Orthodox population in Croatia, but the most indicative is the report of Ambroz Kuzmić, supervisor of Zagreb bishopric property, of November 13, 1700, in which he said that ‘it would be better to slaughter all Vlachs, rather than allow them to settle here’. Of course, they should be slaughtered because they were not serfs, they were not Catholics, and they refused submissiveness to the feudal lords and to pay their fees and taxes.

Elaborating on his proposal, Ambroz Kuzmić explained that the ‘Vlachs’ were more of a nuisance to the noble state and enlightened by the Emperor, rather than an advantage, because ‘neither His Imperial Majesty nor the noble state will be at peace with them’. This means that, according to historical proofs, already at the very beginning of the 18th century, feudal circles in Croatia, out of religious and class antagonism, were ready to commit genocide against the Serbia Orthodox population on their land, but under special conditions and against their will, thus violating their feudal rights” (Krestić, 1998, pp. 4–5).

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[28] In the next sentence of this speech, Tudman, speaking about the growing share of the Serbs in the structure of Knin population, Tudman shows his sympathy for the Ustasha victims from World War II, equalizing them with the Croatian victims who were on the opposite side from Nazis and Ustasha: “As early as World War II, after all those misdeeds and victims suffered by the Croatian people, all those victims on both sides, in Knin there still lived the Croatian majority population, but it was gradually decreasing...” (see Bekić, 2016, p. 22).

Although the hatred towards Serbs had been present among Croats for centuries, the father of anti-Serbian racism is considered Ante Starčević, PhD, Croatian politician and writer from the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>[29]</sup> the co-founder, with Eugen Kvaternik, of the Party of Rights, who advocated liberation from Austrian and Hungarian rule and the creation of the Croatian state. Croatian writer Eugen Kumičić<sup>[30]</sup> called Starčević “the father of the homeland”<sup>[31]</sup> (Džadžić, 1995, p. 310) and this title has remained widely accepted among the Croatian people to date (the title shared with Franjo Tuđman from the 1990s onwards). Ante Pavelić associated Starčević’s parenthood of the Croatian homeland with the state in which he was the Supreme Leader (“I am telling you, if it had not been for Ante Starčević, there would be no Croatian state today”), while Miroslav Krleža described him as “the most lucid Croatian mind”<sup>[32]</sup> (see Unknown author, *Ante Starčević*, 1942, p. 62). One of the particularly significant “praises” Starčević received was that by the Ustasha ideologist and founder of the Croatian National-Socialist Party, Stjepan Buć, who spoke about Starčević as the predecessor of Adolf Hitler’s racial theory,<sup>[33]</sup> as well as the praise by Mladen Lorković, another Ustasha ideologist and Minister of the ISC, who said the following about

Starčević: “As much as Starčević was against Slavism, he was also against socialism, and that is why he ranks among the earliest predecessors of racism” (see Buć, 1936; Džadžić, 1995). Comparing Starčević with his contemporaries, theoreticians of racism, Frenchmen *Joseph Arthur de Gobineau* and *Georges Vacher de Lapouge*, as well as British-German author *Houston Stewart Chamberlain*, called “Hitler’s John the Baptist” because of the great influence of his work on the Führer, Petar Džadžić notes that Starčević’s racism, unlike *Gobineau’s*, had a more pronounced pragmatic nature, which actually made him more poisonous and dangerous:

“If he did not precede one *Gobineau*, who, despite everything and first of all, was a melancholic thinker, Starčević could be a predecessor of the pragmatic racism that almost openly invited to dealing with ‘lower’ races, as Chamberlain did when referring to Jews, in the same way as Starčević himself referred to Serbs.”

(In addition, Starčević presented his racist attitudes slightly later than Gobineau, but before *de Lapouge* and Chamberlain.) (Džadžić, 1995).

Apart from the fact that in his works he considered Croats a “higher” and “ruling” race, originating

[29] 1823–1896.

[30] 1850–1904

[31] Starčević as the “Father of the Homeland” is also mentioned in the book *Ante Starčević*, published in Zagreb in 1942, by the Printing Shop of the Main Ustasha Headquarters, with the note that Starčević was first called like that by Eugen Kumičić (see Unknown author, *Ante Starčević*, 1942, p. 18).

[32] [https://www.intermagazin.rs/koreni-genocida-ante-starcevic-i-hrvatska-genocidna-misao/#google\\_vignette](https://www.intermagazin.rs/koreni-genocida-ante-starcevic-i-hrvatska-genocidna-misao/#google_vignette) (accessed on 24 August 2022).

[33] [https://www.intermagazin.rs/koreni-genocida-ante-starcevic-i-hrvatska-genocidna-misao/#google\\_vignette](https://www.intermagazin.rs/koreni-genocida-ante-starcevic-i-hrvatska-genocidna-misao/#google_vignette) (accessed on 24 August 2022).



from Iran (therefore, an Aryan race), Starčević also dealt with lower races, among which he included Slavs, Jews and Roma. However, he paid special attention and gave special space to Serbs, defaming them in the majority of his works, but particularly in *Towards Slavism or Croatism* from 1867, *The Name of Serb* from 1868, *Several Notes* from 1870, *The Slavoserbian Breed in Croatia* from 1876 and *Letters to Hungarians* from 1879 (see Starčević, 1867; Starčević, 1968; Starčević, 1870; Starčević, 1876; Starčević, 1879).

In order to develop a genocidal intent, i.e. an achievable “intent of complete or partial destruction of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such”, it is, as a rule, necessary to exercise a psychological influence on the members of the group that will commit that crime, whereas the scope of the crime of genocide, which is by the nature of things must be large, also demands a widely spread criminal intent, so as to ensure a sufficient number of perpetrators and a sufficient extent of support to the crime. Therefore, it is necessary to create a strong motive, a strong urge to commit a crime of such degree of breadth and monstrosity. Starčević’s work contains important elements of the sensibilation and motivation of a sufficient number of Croats for the crime of genocide, which will occur on the first occasion, when objective circumstances are created for it, slightly more than half a century after the publication of Starčević’s texts and his political activity, in which he promoted his attitudes.

An indispensable element for creating the opportunity for the members of one group to be

ready for the mass killing of the members of another group (*actus reus* of the committed crime does not necessarily imply, theoretically speaking, the multiplicity of actual victims, although in practice such multiplicity is, as a rule, necessary to draw a conclusion about the genocidal intent, but it does not affect the fact that the genocidal intent must include either the entire group that is the victim or a substantial number of its members in order to be considered the “part” of the group in the meaning ascribed to it in the Convention) is the creation of such a profound racist attitude, which implies dehumanization of the members of the group as victims of the crime. With civilized nations, a murder of a man is embedded in the ethical code and in the psyche of each individual as something extremely negative and impermissible, while mass murder of people, including children, women and the elderly (which occurs in the case of genocide) is particularly seen as impermissible. That is why the above-mentioned dehumanization is necessary – to kill beings that by their characteristics are not at the human level, but at the level of animals, or even below that level – does not constitute such a misdeed that the perpetrator’s conscience cannot allow. Ante Starčević’s works abound in the elements of dehumanization of Serbs which, as an ethnic group, he calls Slavoserbs (“The name *Slavoserb* is ethnic for that breed; it is not worthy to be replaced by any other name”),<sup>[34]</sup> primarily those from the regions he considers Croatian lands. In addition to stating that “Croats are the ruling people and that the name

[34] Here it should be noted that the word “breed” used by Starčević does not have a derogatory meaning and character. He simply used that word in the meaning of the “race”, while using it also to denote the Croats and other nations (see Starčević, 1879, p. 5).

of Serbia derives from slaves”,<sup>[35]</sup> which is minimal degradation of Serbs in comparison to what comes afterwards, in many places Serbs are ascribed animal characteristics. Therefore, in response to the Serbian negative reaction to the rights-based proposal in the Parliament, Starčević writes:

“On that occasion, a wise man could see that there were two combined characteristics of Slavoserbs.

Someone has said that Mr. Stojanović claimed that the national politics is dangerous for the people, or something in such terms. This was met by the grunting of the Slavoserbs, just like the animal that feeds on bacon. And after several blows, the ranks of those Slavoserbs resembled real dogs, which all run away when one is hit. We made the Slavoserbs silent with only a few words.

And these Austrian puppies, having lost yet another battle, left the Parliament” (Starčević, 1876, p. 25).

Treating Serbs like pigs (which should not be criticized for being the way they are, but which should be “stood in the way”, and it is well known how to do it when pigs are concerned), is repeated in Starčević’s following words (in his reply to the objection of an interlocutor that Slavoserbs should not be criticized for having such nature):

“... If I heard that someone was torn by pigs, I would not be surprised and I would not object to

them. But it does not mean that pigs should not be stood in the way and stopped from attacking people” (Starčević, 1879, p. 11).

So, once again he mentions pigs and then goes on to mention criminals:

“Let us be completely clear. You know that there are differences between English pigs and those from Turopolje. The same refers to Slavoserbs. They are the scum of the slaves of Europe, Asia and Africa. But all Slavoserbs are for slavery, for any evil, for any misdeed, just by their nature, like pigs are for the mud. If we put together all the misdeeds of the criminals from Lepoglava, they would not account for three per cent of the misdeeds they dream about on the sly, the ones that are done in reality by the best and most honest Slavoserb. If you refuse to accept this as indisputable truth, you will be always deceived” (*Ibid.*, pp. 10–11).

To these zoological comparisons of Slavoserbs, others species are also added, only to prove that Slavoserbs cannot be good men:

“There is no truth in which I am more strongly convinced than what I have told you about Slavoserbs. I am absolutely certain that a beast cannot become a horse, and equally a Slavoserb cannot become a good man” (*Ibid.*, pp. 10–11)

or:

[35] This is only one of many places where Starčević speaks about the Croats as noblemen, and about the Serbs as servants or slaves (here citing an author from the 17<sup>th</sup> century) (see Starčević, 1868, p. 29).

“I am certain that Slavoserbs do not grunt and bleat without a reason” (*Ibid.*, pp. 7–8)

or:

“I will not change my opinion.... It is the same to teach a Slavoserb or an ox...” (*Ibid.*, p. 19)

However, Starčević goes even further in his dehumanization of Serbs, labelling them as a lower species than animals:

“They are a slave breed, the litter worse than any other. If we take three degrees of perfection in a man: the animal degree, the common-sense degree and the mind or soul degree, Slavoserbs have not entirely reached even the lowest degree, while they are unable to rise above it. They have no conscience, they cannot read properly; they cannot learn anything; they cannot be either better or worse than they are; they are, except for the alertness and slyness acquired through practice, they are absolutely equal in all aspects; whether

they are full or hungry, they cannot be quiet or bark on their own, but they always do what they shepherds order” (*Ibid.*, pp. 10–11).

Nevertheless, not even Starčević could face the fact that the Serbian nation had glorious history and great historical figures, which is in collision with his previously stated attitude towards Serbs as a breed at the lower level than that of animals. Starčević finds a solution to this problem by claiming that many important historical figures from the Serbian national corpus were actually Croatian, which was in line with his claim that “from Triglav Mountain to Thessaloniki, there was only one nation – the Croatian nation.”<sup>[36]</sup> That is how he includes the following figures among Croats; Emperor Dušan and other members of the Nemanjić Dynasty,<sup>[37]</sup> Miloš Obilić,<sup>[38]</sup> Saint Sava,<sup>[39]</sup> Arsenije Čarnojević<sup>[40]</sup> etc., while, according to him, Despot Lazar Branković was “a Croatian convert.”<sup>[41]</sup> According to Starčević, who was of Serbian origin himself, because both his parents were converted Serbs, in the eastern parts of the Croatian national territory, the “Croatian

[36] <http://www.nspm.rs/istina-i-pomirenje-na-ex-yu-prostorima/ponosni-djaci-ante-starcevica.html?alphabet=I> (accessed on 24 August 2022).

[37] “In Stefan-Dušan the last trace of the honourable Croatian dynasty of the Nemanjićs was lost, which through centuries, as kings, ruled in the eastern and northern regions of Croatia” (see Starčević, 1876, p. 29).

[38] “Miloš Kobilić proved to be a Croat...” (see Starčević, 1876, p. 30).

[39] “They say, namely, that Saint Sava Nemanjić seceded the Eastern Croatian Church from the Patriarchy of Istanbul” (see Starčević, 1876, p. 99).

[40] “Arsenij Cernović was from a reputed Croatian family” (see Starčević, 1876, p. 68). “Arsenij Cernović, the Archbishop of the Eastern Church of the Greek Rite, and of the patriarchal rank” (see Starčević, 1876, p. 69).

[41] “After his death [Emperor Dušan’s death, emphasized by the author B.M.R.], there was disorder in these lands, and after fierce upheavals, Lazar Branković became the ruler in most of those lands. He was a Croatian convert, but obviously of impure blood. With him, the foreign people came to power and ruled these lands” (see Starčević, 1876, p. 29).

breed” was overwhelmed by the “impure breed” and “impure blood”:

“Were the Turks in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries really that strong as history and their deeds claim? Would the Turks have advanced in that manner if the Croatian breed had not been overwhelmed by the impure breed in Albania, Raška and Serbia, and destroyed in Bosnia? Let us judge: in Herzegovina itself, the Turks had plenty to do, and it seems that they waged wars for today’s Dalmatia from Kotor to Zadar between 1499 and 1570. Turkish power was much greater there than earlier, but till, every foot of the land was robbed, and the human breed was defended there” (Starčević, 1876, pp. 34–35).

Apart from dehumanization, a necessary element of psychological preparation for genocide is the creation of paranoia, i.e. awareness of the danger posed by the nation of the victims to the nation of the perpetrators. In that manner, by building a belief that it is necessary to remove such danger to own nation, future perpetrators of the crime are motivated, or encouraged to act. In Starčević’s work, this element is also present because, according to him, Slavoserbs are “essential, worn traitors”, “who had promised to wipe the Croatian people from the face of the earth, and they are working on it”, and that is why Slavoserbs pose a great danger to the Croatian nation:

“I will not change my opinion: the Croatian breed is in great danger; it will have difficulty in recovering; the Slavoserb breed, as a tool of slavery and evil, was, is and will be cherished by all foreigners,

because no foreigner could destroy our people the way Slavoserbs did it; it is the same to teach a Slavoserb or an ox; Slavoserbs will admit everything and allow everything as you wish, and certainly say something but do the opposite; whenever Slavoserbs utter the words people or homeland or freedom, or any other good word, they have already caused harm or are causing harm to our people at the moment ...” (see Starčević, 1870, p. 25, 27, 28; Starčević, 1879, pp. 19–20).

According to Starčević, the above-listed characteristics of Serbs, from which danger derives of the Croatian people being wiped from the face of the earth, are unchangeable and incorrigible:

“If Slavoserbs had a spark of wisdom and honesty, they would not be Slavoserbs; if they had a spark of love for their homeland, they would not be traitors of the Croatian people” (Starčević, 1870, p. 32).

In the situation where two above-mentioned elements have been built of the psychological foundation for initiating the genocidal action, dehumanization of victims and paranoia, and when there is no way of changing such situation by milder, softer means, the members of the allegedly threatened nation can only forcibly eliminate the source of the alleged danger. Starčević points to such means, giving the task to the new generation of Croats to apply it:

“The Croatian people has recognized the impure blood that has caused the disgrace and misfortune to it; the Croatian people considers that

blood foreign, Slavoserbian; the Croatian people will not allow the slavery breed to desecrate the holy Croatian land; the Croatian people has given a new generation that will recover and strengthen its fortune..." (*Ibid.*, p. 58).

This is what he said in broader terms, with all the required elements of psychological preparation:

"Slavoserbs are a scum nation, a kind of people who sell themselves to everyone and at any price, and they give Croatia to any buyer in exchange for levies; they are a kind of people who will be bought by everyone for a bowl of potatoes, if nothing else is offered; they are people who everyone would be ashamed of, except for Austria and other bad governments; they are people who could only be assigned by a true government the task of cleaning the pipes; they are people who, by their slave nature, are opposite to everything that is good, glorious, magnificent; they have sworn to wipe the Croatian people from the face of the earth, and they are working on it. Those are Slavoserbs, the strength of Austria in Croatia. Until they are exterminated, let Austria keep such support as no one is envious of it" (*Ibid.*, p. 28).

Therefore, according to Starčević's instruction to the new Croatian generation, to prevent the desecration of the holy land of the Croats, the Slavoserbian breed should be exterminated.

The ideologist with such influence as Starčević, whose distorted ideas shaped the political action of creating all independent states of Croatia to date, had, of course, a number of followers in the field of quasi-science. The most prominent among them is

Ivo Pilar, the author of the book *South Slav Question and the World War*, published first in 1918 in German, under a German pen name, while the translation was published in 1943/1944 and later in 1990 (Südland, 1918). In 1991/1992, the Institute of Social Sciences "Ivo Pilar" was founded in Zagreb. Another important ideologist of Croatian racism is Dominik Mandić (1889-1973), Franciscan priest and historian, and the author of a number of books, for example: *The Croats and the Serbs, two Old Different Nations*, *Bogumil Church of Bosnian Christians*, *Red Croatia, State and Religious affiliation of the medieval Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *Ethnic History of Bosnia and Herzegovina* etc. This includes a number of active Ustasha and their corroborators, who, apart from the practical application, they also contributed to the theoretical elaboration and "enrichment" of racist anti-Serbian thought, whose founder (although not the earliest advocate is Starčević – for example, already-mentioned Mladen Lorković (1909–1945), who, having participated in the establishment of the ISC in 1941, became the Minister of Foreign Affairs of that vicious creation; Krunoslav Draganović, a Catholic priest who will become one of the key organizers of the "ratlines", which were used by a number of Ustasha leaders at the end of the war to flee abroad, primarily to Latin America (Dominik Mandić also took part in that activity), Filip Lukas (1871–1958), Professor of Geography and President of *Matica hrvatska* consecutively from 1928 to 1945, above-mentioned Mile Budak and others (Džadžić, 1995).

The fact that Ante Starčević was the proto-ideologist of the Ustasha in World War II was confirmed by the Ustasha themselves. Namely, in the book *Ante Starčević* (1942) published in Zagreb by

the Printing Shop of the Main Ustasha Headquarters, the following is written:

“Even now we remember with gratitude the Father of our Homeland who was the first to ignite true Croatian national conscience with his rebellious power.

“Starčević’s program is realized nowadays by the Supreme Leader. He, one of the most faithful advocates of Starčević’s science, has told the followers of the Croatian Party of Rights in October 1941, among others, these significant words: ‘I am telling you, if it had not been for Ante Starčević, there would be no Croatian state today...’ (Unknown author, *Ante Starčević*, 1942, p. 62).

Although this book attempts to present Starčević, “the Father of the Homeland” at the same time as a Croatian nationalist (in positive terms) and as a great humanist, what he said about Serbs and what Pavelić did to Serbs stands in close correlation.

This is what today’s Croatian literature itself says about the influence of Ante Starčević’s thought in modern Croatia:

“Although Ante Starčević’s political views and his work have been suppressed for decades, even proscribed, it is surprising how the content of his lecture about Croatian statehood has almost entered the subconsciousness of Croatian people” (Barišić, 1997, p. 129).

Yes, subconsciousness is the right word. Having in mind the content of Starčević’s “lecture” about Serbs (mainly, but not only about them), within the context of the topic we are dealing with, it is rather dangerous.

## 6. CONCLUSION

That in the Independent State of Croatia, genocide was perpetrated over Serbs, Roma and Jews during World War II, has been for decades considered practically indisputable, while political reasons imposed speaking of this topic to a limited extent. During the existence of the ISC, the Ustasha personally confirmed that the Croatian racist thought, finding its realization in the genocide in World War II, had its roots in the works of Ante Starčević, and subsequently of Ivo Pilar. A number of Croatian politicians from the 1990s did not even hide their fascination with the Ustasha and Pavelić’s Independent State of Croatia, thus confirming their following relationship towards the ISC, both with iconography and their attitude to Serbs, which implied an aspiration of banishing them from the territory of this state. Even nowadays Croatia celebrates both the ISC and the brutalities perpetrated over the Serbs both during World War II and in the 1990s. The feeling of any guilt and responsibility was practically non-existent. Historical revisionism, which first emerged in the form of reducing the number of victims, subsequently turning into the denial of crimes, is now assuming increasingly scandalous proportions. Therefore, in 2017, Croatian “historian”, long-standing Director of the Croatian Historical Museum in Split, Stjepan Lozo, published the book entitled *Ideology and Propaganda of Great Serbian Genocide over the Croats – Project ‘Homogeneous Serbia’ 1941*, in which he claims that in World War II, the Serbs first, as of June 1941, initiated a preventive propaganda action of accusing the Croats of the genocide, and then they perpetrated the genocide over the Croats. Stjepan Lozo is not an isolated individual with

distorted views of the world, which is proved by the fact that the promotion of the third edition of his book was held in the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb, and that the Director of the Archives, Dinko Čutura, spoke at the promotion and supported Lozo's claims.

Historical revisionism that is present in Croatia is only part of the broader historical revisionism, primarily regarding the roles played by the key actors in World War II, with a special tendency of denying the critical role of the Soviet Union in the victory over fascism, while even ascribing this country part of the guilt for the outbreak of the war.

With such state of affairs, there is increased responsibility of our historical, legal and socio-

logical sciences, as well as other sciences to persistently present the truth about the events from distant and recent past, particularly about our nation being the victim of the genocide crime, in order to contribute to the failure of the attempts at counterfeiting historical facts. The commitment of eminent experts such as Viktor Novak, Smilja Avramov, Vasilije Krestić and others to the topic of the Ustasha genocide and the results of their work should be a signpost for the necessary direction of our research activity.

This is important not only because of the truth as it is, but also because of the fact that the idea and intent of the genocide, whose victims our nation was, still persist.

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