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Hidden Holocaust – Documents, Interpretations and Testimonies

Summary: The study *Jasenovac – Auschwitz of the Balkans* gathers in one place numerous documents, interpretations and testimonies about the notorious camp system in the territory of the former Independent State of Croatia. Behind this book, at the same time the first volume of the trilogy, stands the name of Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, the Israeli historian and University Professor, expert for research of the Holocaust, particularly known worldwide for his research regarding Auschwitz. It is due to the comparison itself of two synonyms of evil, where the scale can adequately be seen of what is immeasurably less visible in the planetary framework, with what has become the focal point of the Holocaust remembrance, that the work of the author and his associates is of particular importance, with the emphasis on the specific features of Jasenovac camp and giving a broader context through other segments. This work encourages thinking and contributes to the remembrance culture, thus fulfilling the moral obligation towards the victims, which is also stressed by the author's team.

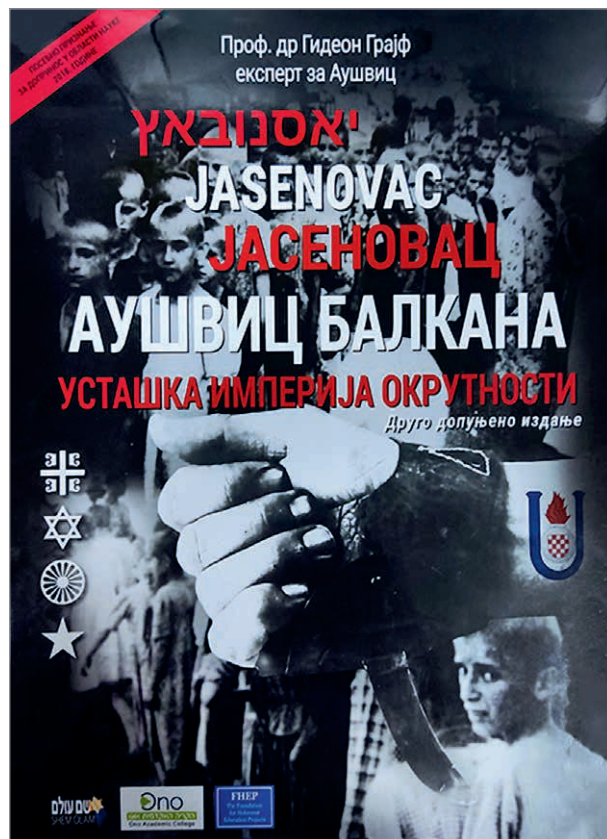
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When Jasenovac is mentioned, although it has existed much longer as a geographical notion, it is much more famous as a historical notion from the 1940s – by horrendous crimes and genocide in that territory during the Second World War. This topic is still the subject of interest of both historians and broader public nowadays, while from time to time, it also becomes part of the media agenda, through the commemoration of anniversaries, cultural products, as well as in the context of daily

political contents. Regardless of all of the above-mentioned, it has remained the subject of certain disputes, bidding with the number of victims and the like, including the attempts of revisionism.

In order to remind of the old facts and present the new ones, eight decades after the formation of the notorious camp system (established in August 1941 and disbanded in May 1945) in the territory of the former Independent State of Croatia, the second, supplemented edition

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was published of the multidisciplinary study *Jasenovac – Auschwitz of the Balkans*, with almost 800 pages, with numerous photographs^[2] (Greif, 2021). The author of this book is Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, and the publishers: the Holocaust Institute “Shem Olam” (Israel), “Ono” Academic

College (Israel) and the Foundation for Holocaust Educational Projects, in cooperation with the Poland Jewish Cemeteries Restoration Project – FHEP (USA), as well as “Knjiga komerc” for Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia. At the same time, this book is part of the trilogy about Jasenovac suffering by Gideon Greif, PhD, while other two volumes pay more detailed attention to certain segments – “Ustasha final solution before the Nazi final solution” and “Aloysius Stepinac: ustashes’ vicar – Convert or Die, 101 Reason Why He Cannot Be a Saint” (Greif, 2020a; Greif, 2020b).

Authority of Gideon Greif

The title of the first volume itself, as the focus of this review, speaks about the frightening scale of crimes in Jasenovac, certainly as easier identification or understanding at the global level to people who are unfamiliar or insufficiently familiar with the events from this territory in the middle of the 20th century, having in mind that Auschwitz is the most notorious Nazi concentration camp in the Second World War, a symbol of Holocaust. Moreover, Greif, an Israeli historian and university professor, an expert on the research of Holocaust, is particularly well-known worldwide by his research regarding Auschwitz. The testimonies

[2] First edition, *Jasenovac – Auschwitz of the Balkans. Ustasha Empire of Cruelty*, won a special award for contribution in the field of science at the 63rd International Belgrade Book Fair in 2018 (see <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/414223/Najbolji-izdavaci-Prometej-i-Sluzbeni-glasnik> (accessed on 5 August 2022))

of Jewish survivors from Auschwitz, members of the work units (“Sonderkommando”), served as the basis for his book *We Wept without Tears*, which inspired Hungarian director László Nemes for the film *Son of Saul* that won the American Academy Award “Oscar” for the best foreign film in 2016, as well as many other film awards (Greif, 2020c). Moreover, this eminent scholar, in the past few years particularly committed to the research into events in this territory, is the first to include Jasenovac and Mali Trosteneć among concentration camps for extermination, in addition to those six that were classified earlier: Auschwitz, Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor, Majdanek and Belzec.

In his advocacy for preserving collective memory and the importance of memory studies, he said, among other things:

– The truth about Jasenovac is of crucial importance for our generation and future generations. Protest against the truth about Jasenovac, which was one of the cruellest extermination camps in the Second World War, does injustice to victims because it is impossible to “protest against historical facts”. It is as if we were

killing victims once again and justifying Ustasha crimes against humanity.

In his text for the daily *Politika* of 17 February 2021, entitled “We must be the voice of innocent victims from Jasenovac”,^[3] from which the previous quote was taken, Greif also emphasizes the danger of revisionist attempts:

– Historical facts cannot be a matter of any “negotiations” of a subject of any “agreed history”. Historical facts are precise and cannot be a subject of politicization or any daily politics or erasure of war crimes from the Second World War;

– History cannot be revised. Jasenovac really happened. Auschwitz really happened. That is why we must put in all our efforts to document the crimes perpetrated by German Nazis and Ustasha.

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Against Fascist ideologies of Nazism, Fascism and Ustashism

The essence of such attitude also lies in the introductory pages of the book *Jasenovac – Auschwitz of the Balkans*, in the message written in three languages (Serbian, Hebrew and English)^[4] by the editorial board:^[5]

[3] <https://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/473126/Moramo-biti-glas-nevinih-zrtava-Jasenovca> (accessed on 6 August 2022)

[4] The segments regarding Hebrew were translated by the courtesy of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia and Dušica Stojanović-Čvorić, while English and Serbian segments were translated by Hana Poznanović.

[5] According to the information in the impressum, the editorial board included: Professor Tova Hartman, PhD, Dean of “Ono” Academic College, Kiryat Ono (Israel); David Bitton, PhD, expert on Judaic studies (Israel); Shimon Azulay, an expert on studying the Holocaust (Israel); Dr. Haim Cohen, a forensic anthropologist, National Centre for Forensic Medicine (Israel); Professor Noriyuki Inoue, PhD, law studies, Vice-Chancellor, Kobe University (Japan); Professor Kiyomitsu Yun, PhD, sociologist, Kobe University (Japan); Avi Mizrachi, Executive Director, *FHEP* (USA); Katherine Gorsuch, *FHEP* (USA); Mirko Galasso, historian (Italy); Knut Flovik Thoresen, historian (Norway); Shmuel Stefan Krakowski (former chief archivist at “Yad Vashem”); Rose Stevenson Goodnight, Vice

This book is not directed against any nation, religion or state, but against Fascist ideologies of Nazism, Fascism and Ustashism. The book is aimed at awakening the conscience of humanity about the need to oppose any racial, religious and ideological exclusion and violation of human rights. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights is the civilizational achievement of mankind which contains universal values of all nations of the world. Denying a crime is a crime! With this book, we raise our voice against revisionism of the crimes in the Second World War and we all together defend universal values of humankind!

In the continuation of the introduction, Greif points out that “Jasenovac was the long hidden Holocaust”, justifying what additionally encouraged him to research and a clear attitude:

– As an expert on Auschwitz who dedicated forty years of his life to the struggle against Neonazism and denial of the Holocaust, I was deeply concerned and shocked by the attempts of the current Croatian authorities to reduce the full scale of the crimes of Ustasha Nazi regime during the Second World War and attempts to hide brutality in oblivion (Greif, 2021, p. 11). Particularly worrying is the rise of Neo-Ustashism in the heart of Europe.

After listing numerous examples from the past

decade supporting that attitude, he also adds the following:

– As a historian and descendant of the Holocaust survivors, I raise my voice against the ghost of Neonazism that threatens Europe today, particularly against the most brutal and most infamous Croatian Ustasha Neonazism. This book is dedicated to my friend, historian in “Yad Vashem”, Menachem Shelach, who was the greatest expert for researching the Holocaust in former Yugoslavia, dedicating special attention to the Jasenovac death camp, as well as to my Nation and my compatriots, Jews worldwide, in order to preserve permanent memory of Jasenovac sufferers who deserve to be remembered in the collective memory of the humankind.

Furthermore, to prevent any dilemmas, he emphasizes both in the introductory and concluding parts of the study that the book “is not a book against Croats”, i.e. that it is a “protest against Neo-Ustashism and Ustasha ideology of dark and terror” (Greif, 2021, p. 15, 776).

A call for awakening to the nations of the world

Besides Greif, the introductory segments contain the quotes by other experts and excerpts from

President of “Wikimedia”, a descendant of Dr David Albala (USA); and Professor Israel Hershkovitz, PhD, an anatomy and forensic research expert (Israel). In addition, the following are listed as honorary members: Moshe Ha-Elion, President of the Association of the Holocaust Survivors and a member of the International Auschwitz Committee, “Yad Vashem” Directory; Mordecai Chechanover, a survivor from Auschwitz; Dr. David Alkalay, a survivor from the children camps on Rab and Pag; Eva Deutsch Costabel, a survivor from the child camp in Sisak; Jelena Buhač Radojčić, a survivor from the children camp in Jasenovac, saved thanks to Dijana Obekser Budisavljević; Gojko Rončević Mraović, a survivor from the children camp in Jastrebarsko; Milinko Čekić, a survivor from the child camp in Jasenovac, who was also saved by Dijana Obekser Budisavljević. (see Greif, 2021, p. 7)

startling testimonies of the survivors, as well as the segments of the exhibition “Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance”, held in the United Nations in New York in January 2018, within the commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is also interwoven in the continuation of the book. Moreover, there is the author text by Professor David Bitton, PhD, entitled “A Call for awakening to the nations of the world” where, *inter alia*, the following messages are given:

– Jasenovac victims and suffering are not and must not be only the matter of the region or only of historians and academic and art elite of the world, but of each and every one of us, regardless of interests or professions. That is simply a human matter. There is only one division on the planet: into humans and non-humans, i.e. those who are human and those who are inhuman. Each of us has a choice, to be human or inhuman, despite the circumstances in which we are, because there is no justification for inhumanity. Inhumanity, beastliness and blood thirst are characteristics of animals while a man, when he comes to the bestiality stage, ceases to be a man. Things ran out of control in the Second World War, during the reign of Nazism and Ustashism;

– Therefore, it is not about some people from the Balkans who “hate each other”, just as the issue of rehabilitation and canonization of Ustasha Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac does not “just” refer to two local churches in Southeast Europe. The

issue of Jasenovac is therefore an essential issue of all Serbs, Jews, Roma, Croats and antifascists, but also of the whole world, and primarily the matter of raising awareness of the need to stop Neofascism, strengthening of the capacities of the antifascist public and contributing to the efforts of the United Nations, as a historical organization for preserving peace and freedom of the nations. That is the matter of defending universal values against a dangerous precedent in the revision and rehabilitation of Neoustashism, which might encourage Neo-Nazis throughout the world (Greif, 2021, pp. 13–15).

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Comparison of Auschwitz and Jasenovac

The book may be divided into several units that include the past and the present, whereas certain contents, considered crucial by the author’s team, are encountered in different chapters. What gives particular significance is the very comparison between two synonyms of evil, called “death factories”, where the scale can be seen in an adequate manner of what is incomparably less visible in planetary frameworks, with what has become the central point in the memories of the Holocaust.^[6] The conclusions, among others, are as follows:

– Auschwitz was developed with great care dedicated to the monstrous industrialization of killing and torture. Impersonal methods of killing

[6] It is pointed out that the area of the Auschwitz camp was 40 square kilometers, or approximately 25 football stadiums, while the area of the Jasenovac camp was 240 square kilometers, or approximately 150 football stadiums (see Greif, 2021, p. 128, 418–419).

in Auschwitz were primarily based on the famous speech made by the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, who emphasized the following: “We will never get our hands dirty; we will remain clean.” The necessity of remaining clean dictated the patterns of behaviour of German Nazis who managed the camps. German Nazis were probably the cruellest, most bestial and most sadist people on this planet because the aims of the SS guards were to create suffering. For that purpose, they went to school where they learnt not to show mercy and compassion and to be as cruel as possible. They were good pupils and perfected the skill of cruelty;

– On the other hand, Ustasha were quite happy to get their hands dirty and, when their victims’ blood coloured their hands red, they were pleased, particularly in the most infamous and most brutal of all extermination camps in the Second World War – Jasenovac;

– Both camps were bloody, murderous and cruel and, while there were certain differences in the methods, the results were the same – both Auschwitz and Jasenovac have become the embodiment of death of conscience and mercy and the personification of complete neglect of human dignity and sanctity of human life (Greif, 2021, p. 126).

“Final Solution” before “Final Solution”

Focusing on the broader context of happenings in the territory of Yugoslavia, with the historical

overview of the establishment of the ISC and its relationship with Fascist Italy and others, as well as the evolution of Ustashism, the genesis is presented of the systematic preparation of genocide, supported by numerous data and photo-documents, through the title “Racial theory and racial legislation”. It is followed by “Final Solution before Final Solution”, speaking about the “Ustasha final solution before the Nazi final solution², particularly about “Gudovac 1941 – the crime road”, then about the “Final solution to the Jewish question in the ISC” and “Evolution of Ustasha anti-Semitism”, while documenting numerous evidence and selected examples of the fate of Jewish families in this territory. The genesis of crimes is also spoken in “Final solution to the Serbian question”, or “The beginning of mass liquidation of Serbs” (where it is stated that, based on the used documentation, the estimate was reached about 180,000 Serbs killed from 13 April to 26 June 1941) and “Mass liquidation on the road to Jasenovac”, and then in “Final solution to the Roma question in the ISC” (Greif, 2021, p. 253). Having all that in mind, Greif emphasizes the following:

– The Ustasha introduced the final solution, even before the Germans did it. The file about Ustasha crimes made by the Nazi Gestapo is shocking and irrefutable evidence that the crimes perpetrated by Croatian Ustasha exceeded the brutality of Nazi methods (Greif, 2021, p. 158).

Furthermore, it is important that, in one place, the book describes the development of the concentration camp, its structure and

functioning, living conditions in the camp, methods in which the “death industry” functioned, while in the subsequent chapters the following is emphasized:

– One of the most important characteristics of the camps in the ISC was that they were managed without any direct German or Italian involvement. The fascists in Italy and Germany often objected to the Ustasha management of the camps. The Nazi regime required that the Ustasha adopt anti-Semitic policies and persecute the Jews. Pavelić and his Ustasas accepted Nazi requests, but their racial policies were primarily aimed at exterminating the Serb, Jew and Roma population (Greif, 2021, p. 479).

Historical archives of Italy, Norway and Germany

The historical archives of several other countries, apart from those in the territories of former Yugoslavia and Israel, through the research of the international expert group *GH7* against history revision and for the protection of the remembrance culture, led by Gideon Greif, constitute yet another contribution in favour of the conclusions drawn in this book.

Speaking of the German influence in these territories, it is stated that “German leading politicians, diplomats, envoys and high officers of Wehrmacht in the beginning unreservedly supported the Ustasha movement, as well as their leader, Ante Pavelić”, i.e. that “first of all, Pavelić enjoyed the support of German Führer, Adolf

Hitler himself, while Hitler supported him in his intolerant anti-Serbian politics” (Greif, 2021, p. 684). In addition, it is subsequently stated that with time this attitude was changed:

– After the first Ustasha bloody massacres, some German officials and officers began to distance themselves from the Ustasha, and after mass Ustasha crimes, they were even shocked by the Ustasha inhuman bestialities (Greif, 2021, p. 684).

The research team also informed the broader public, having in mind that the focus is most often far from the north of Europe, that the prisoners from Jasenovac had reached as far as Norway:

– During the Second World War, more than 4,000 imprisoned men were sent from Serbia and the Independent State of Croatia to Norway. Over 90% prisoners were Serbs. Many of them came from Jasenovac, and were then sold by the Ustasha as slaves for Germany’s war machinery. One of the examples refers to the Serbian peasants from Jablanac, who were arrested in April 1942 and sent to Jasenovac, while women, children and the elderly were killed. The men and boys capable of working were sent to Norway to work like slaves. One hundred and thirteen peasants from Jablanac were buried in the Norwegian territory. The conditions in the camps in Norway were horrendous; many people died from abuse, hunger and cold. In some of those camps, the number of victims was as high as 75% (Greif, 2021, p. 698).

As far as Italian sources are concerned, numerous outstanding testimonies listed in the book contain the following ones that confirm the

shock of Italian soldiers and authorities at the scale of the crimes of their allies:

– Slaughters perpetrated by the Ustasha regime causes the horror among Italian soldiers who, due to the violation of the principle of the jurisdiction confirmed by Rome, often oppose to the cruelties of the Supreme Leader's butchers, while in several cases they protect the persecuted Serbs and Jews. [...] In Gospić zone, (Assistant Officer) Abate intervenes in order to save a group of Serbian women and children from the Ustasha soldiers and that is why he is killed by the Croatian soldiers, three of whom are responsible for his death [...] are killed by Italian troops – Marco Aurelio Rivelli in the book *The Archbishop of Genocide*, 1999^[7] (Greif, 2021, p. 702).

In addition, the words of Raffaele Casertano, the Italian minister in Zagreb, are also emphasized:

– Italian troops provide evident and permanent proof of compassion with Serbs and Jews, protecting them from Ustasha cruel persecution and helping them to cross the border with their possessions (Greif, 2021, p. 704).

Specifics of crimes: killing methods and the camp for children

Terrible suffering experienced by the prisoners is proved by 57 classified Ustasha methods

of humiliation, killing and torture to death in Jasenovac, according to the testimonies of the survivors, divided into five segments:^[8]

– direct methods of killing victims: drowning in the river, cyanide poisoning, killing by a hammer, killing by a mallet, killing by an axe, killing by a sickle, hanging, beheading, mass killing by a “Serb cutter”, suffocation with hands, throat slitting, knife stabbing to death, taking the heart from the victim's body, shooting, beating to death by iron bars, killing pregnant women by electrocution;

– torturing victims that in most cases leads to death: throwing victims alive into ravines, burning victims alive (pouring gasoline on them), mass burning in furnaces, impaling, boiling victims in soap cauldrons, taking out organs from live victims, throwing victims to dogs and pigs, whipping to death, skinning victims, trampling victims to death, driving nails into victims' heads, dismemberment of victims' bodies, poking victims' eyes, crucifixion (with nails), cutting off testicles, bone breaking, beating to death, driving iron nails under victims' nails, tying victims and rolling them on a board with nails, hanging by legs, staging gladiator fights (between two brothers), cutting bodies for drinking victims' blood, shackling prisoners (with iron chains), food poisoning by caustic soda, burning victims by a wielding rod;

[7] See Rivelli, 1999

[8] It is pointed out that it is the analysis by Israel Herskovitz, PhD, anatomy and anthropology professor, forensic expert and consultant of the International Expert Group *GH7* from Israel, based on the research by Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, historian and expert on death factories, Director of *GH7* (see Greif, 2021, pp. 323–325).

- special methods of killing and torturing women: taking foetuses from pregnant women’s stomachs, raping and impaling, raping and cutting breasts, raping and putting live rats into women’s genitals, raping and putting cigarette ends into women’s genitals;

- special methods of killing and torturing children: breaking children’s heads against the wall, breaking children’s heads by a mallet, impaling children on a bayonet, blinding children by forcing them to look directly at the sun;

- keeping victims in such conditions that undoubtedly caused severe diseases and death: starvation, deprivation of water, absence of toilets, extremely unhygienic conditions directly leading to contagious diseases, stimulating to cannibalism in the conditions of extreme starvation, slave work to death, freezing to death.

These terrible testimonies include the sentence of Rabi Cadik Danon, one of Jasenovac survivors:

- If I were born again and had to go to Jasenovac, I would be “happy to commit suicide” (Greif, 2021, p. 591).

Special attention is dedicated to the specialized segment or the camp for children, which lists the following elements used by the author’s team to point to the scale of crimes:

- The climax of Ustasha crimes against humanity was no doubt the establishment a special concentration camp designed for children (Greif, 2021, p. 382). Three concentration and extermination camp existed: Sisak, Jastrebarsko and Jasenovac. In these camps, about 20,000 children were killed or died due to the lack of

living conditions. Such camps have no precedence in history of mankind and even Nazi Germany did not establish camps especially for children;

- Another aspect of Nazi and Ustasha ideologies was a cruel, demonic attempt to create a new generation of children who would be trained to become the followers of these criminal ideologies. The system for achieving that goal involved sending those children to special educational institutions where they were indoctrinated by these ideologies. The indoctrination process was implemented by experts who washed the brains of the children that had no defence mechanisms. As part of the conversion of Serbian children to Catholicism and creating good Ustashes from them, children were given new names and had to forget their religion. They were given a new personality. The Jastrebarsko camp was a place where children were forcibly educated in the Ustasha ideology.

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The faces of evil and examples of hope

Behind the above-mentioned crimes, there are concrete names and faces, some of which are also listed in the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans*, also called “harbingers of death of Jasenovac dehumanization”, through brief data or longer overviews of their crimes and destinies, as well as the fact that a substantial number avoided arrest and trials through the so-called “rat channels” (Greif, 2021, p. 291, 506). The ISC was led by Ante Pavelić, about whom the following is written in the book:

– Ante Pavelić is one of the worst mass murderers in the Second World War – Ephraim Zuroff, the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Israel (Greif, 2021, p. 526);

– While we were talking, I was looking at a wicker basket on the table, on the Supreme Leader's left. The lid was lifted and it was full of seafood, or at least it looked like it, I'd say those were oysters but with no shells [...] Casertano (the Italian minister in Zagreb) looked at me and winked: "You'd like real oyster soup, wouldn't you?" "Are those oysters from Dalmatia?", I asked the Supreme Leader. Ante Pavelić took off the basket lid and, while showing me the seafood, the sticky and gelatine-like mass of oysters, he told me, with the benevolent and tired smile: "It is a present from my loyal Ustashas: twenty kilograms of human eyes" – Curzio Malaparte, Italian journalist and diplomat, speaking about his meeting with Pavelić in 1941, as described in his book *Kaputt*^[9] (Greif, 2021, p. 706).

A special segment is dedicated to the role of the Catholic Church during those years I the life and acts of the ISC, the ultimate project "Convert or Die", primarily (and through a special volume of the trilogy) the role of Aloysius Stepinac, Zagreb archbishop and cardinal, the data and attitudes about his objective responsibility, controversies regarding his canonization and opposite examples of other people's conduct in that period (Greif, 2020b). Greif's opinion about this matter is clear:

– There is no longer doubt that Stepinac knew about children being thrown alive into the fire and lime in Jasenovac. According to this fact and further 11 key points, he should never be declared a saint, since he was an "angel of death" himself (Greif, 2021, p. 164).

On the other hand, the book also contains examples of those who risked their lives to save as many children as possible, stressing that they are "the proof that even in dark times human spirit and mercy do not die":

– An interesting common point in the history of Jewish and Serbian children are the attempts of benevolent people in Serbia and occupied Europe, particularly in Poland, to rescue Jewish and Serbian children from certain death (Greif, 2021, p. 385). The striking story about Jasenovac also includes the honourable attempts of Dijana Budisavljević. This woman rescued 12,000 Serbian and Jewish children, risking her own life. Dijana Budisavljević belongs to the group of the most honourable people in history, who could not bear to see little innocent children dying in a terrible way. Having decided to do everything to rescue them, she used her Austrian origin in her brave rescue, applying sophisticated methods to give them a new life;

– A similar story speaks about the Jewish children imprisoned in the Warsaw ghetto, hungry and ill. The Polish woman Irena Sendlerowa decided to help the children and she managed to rescue 2,500 of them. She was arrested in October 1943 and

[9] See Malaparte, 1946.

the Gestapo interrogated her to get the names of the children she had rescued, but she never gave in or revealed their names. She was sentenced to death, but managed to escape after bribing the guard. For her great deed, Sendlerowa won the title of the “Righteous among the Nations”, awarded by “Yad Vashem” in Jerusalem, and became an honorary citizen of Israel.

Attempts of revisionism and bidding with the number of victims

Looking at the recent past, the book also has a separate part dedicated to 1995 operations “Storm” and “Flash”, through the context of the “repetitive wheel of history” and ethnic cleansing. Furthermore, there is also a reminder of certain impermissible symbols, Ustasha and Serbophobia war cries that can be seen and heard at manifestations at the beginning of August, i.e. at the time when Croatia celebrates its Victory Day (while in Serbia and the territory of Republic Srpska it is a day of mourning). Moreover, at the beginning of this chapter of the book, the following message is emphasized:

– The nations that do not learn lessons from history and do not cherish the culture of remembrance of the suffering in the Second World War, risk repeating historical mistakes (Greif, 2021, p. 709). The greatest ethnic cleansing in Europe after the Second World War was once again perpetrated over Serbs.

It is the separate segment, emphasized at the very beginning of the book, that deals with oblivion and attempts of revisionism, and that is why it is entitled “The ghost of Nazism threatens

Europe once again”, through the content with the following subtitles: “Ustasha commemoration in Bleiberg – an attempt to create a myth about ‘Ustasha martyrs’”, “The largest Nazi gathering in Europe”, “Death march”, “March of the living” and “The problem of institutionalized Neo-Ustashism in Croatia”. Next segments are entitled as follows: “Facing the past” (“The day when Willy Brandt kneeled as a sign of piety – *Kniefall von Warschau*”, “About revisionism: ‘For homeland – ready’ and Bleiberg” and “Memorial plaque to Aloysius Stepinac in Jerusalem”), “Appeal and petition of the Presidential Council of the Holy Jewish Congress to the Croatian government” and “Message of the President of Israel (excerpts)”, were Reuven Rivlin speaks about “Jasenovac as Auschwitz of the Balkans”, as well as the address of Alona Fisher Kamm, Ambassador of Israel to Serbia, on the occasion of the exhibition “Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance”, or the condemnation of the Croatian documentary film *Jasenovac – the Truth*, directed by Jakov Sedlar, in the open letter of Zina Kalai-Kleitman, Ambassador of Israel to Croatia.

At the very end, in the concluding part, the significance is stressed of advocating for universal values of humanity and gratitude to fighters against Fascism:

– Through the United Nations declarations, humanity advocates for universal values of humanity, and the struggle against Ustashism is not and cannot be struggle of individuals and groups; it must be unique and joint, as well as the struggle against Nazism, racism and any other fanaticism encountered by the world nowadays (Greif, 2021, p. 776).

Speaking about “controversies, revisionism and deliberate reduction of the number of victims”, Greif et al. list various sources and use evidence to deny revisionist attitudes, documenting the scale of crimes. Therefore, the recapitulation most often states that 700,000 people died in Jasenovac, as estimated by Menachem Shelach, a historian in “Yad Vashem”, an expert on the Holocaust in Yugoslavia, then the Pinkas Hakehillot – the encyclopaedia of the Jewish Community in Yugoslavia, as well as the “Memorial Site of Donja Gradina”. The official *Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia* (Zagreb, 1962) states a larger number of victims than the above-mentioned, while the Nazi estimates range from 600,000 to 700,000 victims (Greif, 2021, pp. 428–445). The estimates of the survivors reach as many as 1,400,000 victims. On the other hand, it is stated that the number of 83,000 is the estimate of the “Memorial Site of Jasenovac”, while former President of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, estimated the number of victims at 3,000–4,000.

The author’s team emphasizes that “important as it is, the number of victims should not be considered the most important element of reality concerning Auschwitz or Jasenovac” (Greif, 2021, p. 410). In addition, as a warning fact, it is stated that the precise number of victims in Jasenovac will never be determined for numerous reasons, i.e. having in mind the following victims: those who disappeared in the depths of the Sava River – so many that the bodies were exploded by dynamite in order to make way to the Nazi war monitors;

those burnt in Pičili’s furnace; those who were never born because they were taken out of their mothers’ stomachs; those who were boiled in soap cauldrons; those who were crucified and nailed to the poplar of horror in Donja Gradina and left to die slowly, while their bodies were mauled by animals; those whose graves were dug by the Ustasha in 1945 and whose remains were burnt with gasoline in order to remove all traces of the crime; those whose remains were destroyed by lime in mass graves (Greif, 2021, p. 23, 448).

Preventing manipulation with the past in the present – for the future

“At the end of the book *Modernity and the Holocaust*, in the afterword taken from the 2000 edition, entitled ‘The duty of remembering – but what?’, Bauman reminds of George Orwell’s words, pointing out that ‘if Orwell is right to claim that the control of the past ensures the control of the future, it is imperative for the good of that future not to allow those controlling the present to manipulate with the past in the manner that might make the future inhospitable for humanity and uninhabitable’”^[10] (Bajić, 2022, p. 126).

A similar message is also sent by the author’s team of the study *Jasenovac – Auschwitz of the Balkans*, which emphasizes the importance of memorialization of Jasenovac and remembrance culture in genera. That is why the conclusion states the following:

[10] See Bauman, 2017

– If it is not spoken about, future generations will not be able to recognize evil hiding behind the ideas that, as a poisonous snake, only wait for the right moment to come to the light of the day once again in the same or a somewhat changed form (Greif, 2021, p. 772).

That is why this study is one of those works that are

thought-provoking and contribute to remembrance culture, with the moral obligation towards victims. At the same time, in one place it publishes the capital material – documents, memories, analyses, with the warning that evil brought by Jasenovac as a historical concept, as well as by the Second World War in general, must never repeat.

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