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Croatia's Denial of the Right to Remember at Jasenovac

Last month, something utterly astonishing took place, an act so brazen that it should have received far more attention worldwide than it did.

In an incident that speaks volumes about Croatia's commitment to preserving the past, Zagreb denied a request by Serbian President Aleksander Vucic to pay a private visit to Jasenovac, where his grandfather was murdered by the Ustashe during the dark days of World War II.

The right to remember, that most basic and fundamental of liberties that underpins human dignity, was simply tossed aside by Croatian authorities with little regard for the callousness of their actions.

By denying Vucic the opportunity to mourn his family's loss, as well as that of the nation he was elected to lead, Croatia was insulting not only the living but also the memory of the dead.

In effect, the Croatian leadership has turned the Jasenovac memorial into a political tool, a weapon with which to score a few points on an invisible scoreboard.

It is so obvious that it should not even need to be stated, but apparently it must: the mass murder of Serbs and Jews perpetrated by Hitler's fascist allies in Croatia is something that should be above politics and free of manipulation.

The soil of Jasenovac was sanctified by the blood of the countless Serbian and Jewish victims that was spilled there. It can not and cannot become profaned through petty politics.

Jasenovac embodies and symbolizes the cruelty that men are capable of, and it serves as a warning to future generations of the dangers posed by senseless hatred. But as time passes, and new generations mature into adulthood, it becomes ever more essential to keep the memory of the past alive, lest it be lost.

For as the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, once noted, "Without memory, there is no identity, and without identity, we are mere dust on the surface of infinity."

Over the years, President Vucic has demonstrated both through words and deeds how much value he places on historical memory, particularly with regard to the Holocaust. In 2020, to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Vucic ordered that a yellow flag bearing the Star of David, similar to the badge that Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust, fly alongside the Serbian national flag outside the presidential office in Belgrade.

Vucic then took to Twitter, where he tweeted a photo of the flag with a caption stating, "This sign

Author's photo: shavei.org

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was a symbol of an attempt to destroy the Jewish people by the Nazis. Today it is a badge of honor. 75 years later. Never again." It was a simple yet powerful gesture, one that served both to remind and to educate Serbs and Jews alike about their shared suffering.

Contrast this with Croatia's attempts in recent years to rewrite the historical record, which even prompted the World Jewish Congress in 2018 to petition Zagreb to cease its revisionist policies.

6 | Back in the summer of 2013, when Croatia formally entered the European Union, there were high hopes that its embrace by the rest of the continent would lead to a sincere and honest reckoning with its past. Sadly, those hopes have largely been dashed.

Just three months ago, the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts issued a document calling on the government in Zagreb to block Serbia's path to EU membership if Belgrade refused to renounce what it called "the myth of Jasenovac".

Less than 80 years have passed since the demise of Croatia's fascist Ustashe regime. How quickly and easily some would choose to forget!

Croatia's entry to the EU was the culmination of a grueling and demanding decade-long process that required the implementation of numerous changes in a variety of fields, ranging from intellectual property law to the free movement of capital. This was done to bring Croatia in line with accepted EU practices.

But however much the Balkan state may have tweaked its legal system and upgraded its food safety and environmental protection standards,

there is one thing Croatia has demonstrably failed to do: come to terms with its disgraceful record of mass murder during World War II.

Most of us are aware of camps such as Birkenau, Dachau, Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen, where the Germans and their henchmen systematically slaughtered millions of innocents.

But how many outside the Balkans have even heard of Jasenovac or the horrors that were perpetrated there by Croatian fascists?

Known as „the Auschwitz of the Balkans,” it was the largest of a network of camps established by the independent state of Croatia, which the Nazis set up on April 10, 1941.

Hitler assigned the task of ruling Croatia to Ante Pavelic, head of the Ustashe movement, which vowed to rid the country of Serbs, Jews and other minorities.

Following in the Germans' footsteps, Pavelic passed racial laws against the Jews, imposed restrictions on their freedom of movement and banned them from various professions.

Ultimately, the Ustashe murdered more than 30,000 Jews, or 75 percent of the country's prewar Jewish community.

But it was the two million Serbs then living in Croatia who were the primary targets of Pavelic and his quislings.

With a bloodlust rivaled only by that of their Nazi patrons, the Ustashe set about the task of „cleansing” Croatian soil by torching Serb villages, beheading priests and herding Serbian worshipers into Orthodox churches before setting them alight. Over 200,000 Serbs were forcibly converted to Catholicism, with the active help and encouragement

of the Archbishop of Zagreb, Aloysius Stepinac.

But it was at the Jasenovac camp that the Croats unleashed their most bestial cruelty, by many accounts killing countless thousands in an orgy of indescribable savagery.

Jasenovac had no gas chambers or murder machines, so each killing had to be carried out the old-fashioned way: with knives, bars, axes or even hammers.

If Auschwitz was the epitome of mechanized murder, Jasenovac was the embodiment of manually orchestrated massacre.

In an interview in the Serbian newspaper *Politika*, the late Jasa Almulic, an author and journalist who previously served as president of the Belgrade Jewish community, described Jasenovac as “barbaric,” saying that „the murders were predominantly carried out manually.”

“Very seldom did they use bullets,” he said, „because they believed the victims ’didn’t merit it.” Almulic went on to describe some of the Ustashe’s methods, which included cutting out the eyes of their victims and slitting their throats, throwing live prisoners into brick furnaces and poisoning children.

The Ustashe even employed a special knife they called a “Srbosjek,” or “Serb-cutter,” to slaughter as many Serbs as possible.

There are numerous detailed accounts of the malevolence that was perpetrated at the camp. Eduard Sajer, a Jew from southeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, was imprisoned in Jasenovac in November 1941. His parents and four of his five siblings were murdered there, and in an interview for the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, he recounted

some of the Ustashe’s chilling practices, which included the use of blowtorches and welding rods for torturing inmates.

Sajer also described how his younger brother was bludgeoned to death by Croatian guards with a sledgehammer before his own eyes, and how he watched in horror as a group of Jews from Sarajevo were burned alive.

After the war and the establishment of Communist Yugoslavia, the camp was bulldozed and Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito sought to suppress the story of Jasenovac because he didn’t want it getting in the way of creating a new Yugoslav identity.

As a result, Croats were not forced to confront their past or their dark deeds, a reality that continued even after the demise of Yugoslavia and the declaration of Croatian independence.

Indeed, even though Croatian leaders have traveled to Jerusalem to offer words of apology at the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, the legacy of the Ustashe remains very much alive and even admired among some Croats.

A decade ago, large memorial masses were held in two Catholic churches in the Croatian cities of Zagreb and Split for Ustashe leader Pavelic, despite the fact that he was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

Can you imagine a similar event taking place in Rome for Mussolini or in Berlin for Hitler? A popular musical group in Croatia, the Thompson rock band, regularly drew tens of thousands to its concerts, where many young people proudly dressed in Ustashe uniforms. The band also included Ustashe slogans in some of its songs, and has even sung lyrics calling for the elimination of Serbs.

A key part of the problem lies in the fact that the memorial museum erected by Croatia at the Jasenovac site seems to have been deliberately designed to obfuscate the true nature of what took place there.

Dr. Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, once described the exhibition at Jasenovac as an „educational disaster”, pointing out that it provided little if any information about who the Ustashe were or what their sinister ideology was.

8 | It is time to compel Zagreb to confront its sinister past. History and its lessons cannot and must not be squelched, regardless of whether it is politically convenient.

The Croatian authorities need to drastically revise the memorial at Jasenovac and stop hiding behind blurry language. Bans should be imposed on holding memorial services for Ustashe officials,

and Holocaust education should be made a priority in Croatia’s schools.

At a time of rising extremism and anti-Semitism across the continent, it is essential that Croatia’s hidden Holocaust, as embodied at Jasenovac, not be shunted aside.

Europe is still in a position to make these demands, and it should not shy away from doing so, especially when even the President of the Republic of Serbia is denied the right to pay tribute to Jasenovac’s victims.

Instead, visits to the site should be intensified and students should be brought to learn about and cherish the memory of the Ustashe’s victims.

It is our collective responsibility to do so, lest the memories slowly drift off into the mists of history, taking the lessons that we and future generations ought to have learned along with them. That cannot be allowed to happen.

Articles



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Jasenovac, the Camp and its Historical and Moral Meaning

Summary: The paper gives an overview and stages of the development of the Ustasha concentration camp Jasenovac, during the existence of the "Independent State of Croatia" (ISC) in World War II. The fact is emphasized that the policy of the "Final solution" (for Jews and Roma, and in Croatia for Serbs as well), which was implemented by Nazi Germany, chronologically looking, was actually first applied in the ISC, and then in Germany. According to several criteria, the comparison is made between the concentration camps Auschwitz and Jasenovac, while particularly insisting on the brutality in the Ustasha killing of the victims in Jasenovac.

Keywords: concentration camps, "Independent State of Croatia", Nazis, Ustasha, World War II

Introduction

"The Jasenovac camp was the lowest level to which mankind could fall", said the survivor Đorđe Miliša and he was certainly right. The cruelty that prevailed in the Jasenovac camp makes it to a hell on earth. Yechiel Dinurs, also known as Ka.Tzetnik, said about another hell on earth, the Auschwitz camp complex and the concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, that it was „another planet", where normal, human values were turned upside down (Gutman & Berenbaum, 1994). We could say the same about the Jasenovac camp even if its reality in some central points differs from Auschwitz's reality. In order to give some insight in the historical and moral meaning of the Jasenovac camp, I will conduct a detailed comparison

between Jasenovac and the much more known Auschwitz. By analyzing the differences and the similarity between the two camps, we can draw a clearer picture of what the existence of Jasenovac means historically and what it means for us today. In order to be able to analyze the essence and the character of the Jasenovac camp and its historical and moral meaning, I will first have to refer to the historical development of the camp. How was it established and which developments in the Ustasha State led to its existence? After that I will start with the thorough comparison with Auschwitz.

The establishment of the camp

Ruth Elias, a survivor of Theresienstadt, used to say: "If you who were not there in Auschwitz and did not

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experience it on your own body, will never be able to reconstruct even one second of what we underwent in that Hell called Auschwitz” (Długoborski & Piper, 2000).

Dorđe Miliša, another survivor of Jasenovac, wrote in his book entitled “Jasenovac - Hell”: “Everything that one could write about Jasenovac camp could only be a pale picture of Jasenovac and what it was, because no one could ever overdo it when writing about Jasenovac and what happened there. The Jasenovac camp was the lowest level to which mankind could fall” (Miliša, 1945).

12 | Even if both, Elias and Miliša are right when they say that every word we write about both Auschwitz or Jasenovac, cannot make us understand the true reality of the camps, the suffering of the prisoners and the agony of those murdered, it is still important to convey all the historic fact about the camps, their background and the history of their establishment, their functioning and their end.

The establishment of the concentration camps in the territories of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC) was closely connected to the increased spreading of terror by the Ustasha. As a consequence of the mass arrests of Serbs, Jews, Roma and undesirable Croats, the Ustashes’ needs for the creation of camps grew. The camps quickly became the places of internment and incarceration of all persons deemed enemies of the Ustasha regime (Greif, 2020a).

In the beginning the creation of the camps and their supervision was in the hands of the Ustasha Supervisory Agency [Ustaška nadzorna služba,

UNS], headed by Eugen Kvaternik. He was the director of the Directorate for Public Order and Security [Ravnateljstvo za javni red i sigurnost, RAVSIGUR], established in early May 1941, as a special department of the Ministry of the Interior (Greif, 2020a). UNS and RAVSIGUR were given the authority to create camps and send prisoners to them. When in early 1943 the UNS was dissolved, the RAVSIGUR remained the only agency with such authorities.

Eugen Kvaternik was given jurisdiction over “all police agencies, armouries, local commands and all state self-government bodies”^[2]. Jozo Tomašević says that “never before in history were the Croats exposed to such administrative, police and legal brutality and abuse as during the Ustasha regime” (Tomašević, 2001, p. 300). Dido Kvaternik was the son of Ustasha leader Slavko Kvaternik and took part in the assassination attempt at King Alexander in Zagreb. At the end of the war he escaped to Argentina, where he died in a car accident.

In a Gestapo report to Heinrich Himmler of February 17, 1942 it is stated that that very year there was a greater activity of groups which

“include the atrocities of the Ustasha units in Croatia against the Orthodox population. The Ustashes commit their acts of bestiality not only on adult men, but also on the helpless old, women and children. The number of Orthodox who the Croats massacred and sadistically tortured to death reaches about three hundred thousand.”^[3]

[2] In UNS, there was a special Department No. III which directly managed the concentration camps (see *The Rise of the State of Croatia*, 1942).

[3] <http://dictionnaire.sensagent.leparisien.fr/Bleiburg%massacre/en-en>, (accessed on December 1, 2016)

The establishment of the camps went through several phases. The first phase was the establishment of the so-called “collection sites” [“sabirališta”] also called collection camps, deportation camps. These were places where the arrested, mostly Serbs, were kept temporarily. They were then deported further from there. These „collection sites” were located all across the ISC. The most famous and largest were those in Caprag near Sisak, in Bjelovar and Slavonska Požega.

The second phase, which ran along simultaneously with the first, included the building of concentration camps, the well-known “death

camps” (Greif, 2021). The first camp of this type was “Danica” near Koprivnica. This was followed by Jadovno near Gospić, Stara Gradiška, Jasenovac, the Slana and Metajna camps on the island of Pag,^[4] Kruščica, Loborgrad,^[5] Đakovo,^[6] Tenja,^[7] Jastrebarsko,^[8] Kerestinec, Lepoglava, Sisak,^[9] Caprag, Gornja Rijeka, Feričanci, Vinkovci, Slavonska Požega, Bjelovar and others. In all the ISC there were 24 camps in total.

The Jadovno camp near Gospić was the first in which mass murder of Serbs and Jews took place. Daily the Ustahas brought prisoners in large groups to Gospić and then to Jadovno, where they

[4] In the summer of 1941, there was a concentration camp for Serbs and Jews on the island of Pag. There prisoners from the collection camp in Gospić were brought. Mass killings were conducted there; when the camp was disbanded in the middle of August, around 3000 Serbs were shipped to Jadovno and the last group of around 450 Jews to Kruščica (women), Jadovno and Jasenovac (men). The camp in Kruščica, near Travnik, existed in around the same period and in it were imprisoned mostly women and children, the majority of them Jews.

[5] From September 1941 to autumn 1942 there was a concentration camp in Loborgrad, near Zlatar Bistrica in the Croatian Zagorje. Besides a number of Serbian women, around 1300 Jewish women and children were imprisoned, having been brought there from Kruščica.

[6] In December 1941 a camp was established in Đakovo, intended mainly for Jewish women and children of whom there were about 3000. A large number of them were executed. In July 1942 the camp was disbanded, and the remaining prisoners were taken to Jasenovac.

[7] In June 1942 a temporary camp called Tenja was established in Osijek. In it almost all the remaining Jews arrested in Osijek and other places in Slavonia. The camp held around 3000 people. Their liquidation began in mid-August, mostly in Jasenovac.

[8] The Jastrebarsko concentration camp was built near the town of Jastrebarsko. It was in operation during 1942. The worst aspect of this place was that it was a camp for children, mostly those captured in Kozara and other parts of the ISC. The barracks abandoned by the Italian army, the castle of the counts of Erdödy and a Franciscan monastery where the first transports of children from the Stara Gradiška camp arrived in 1942. They were followed by children from the camp farms in Jablanac and Mlaka. To the village of Rijeka, three kilometers away from Jastrebarsko around 2000 children were brought. In both camps there were around 3,336 children). The children were loaded onto trains and transported to the mentioned locations where their hair was cut and they were dressed in uniforms. They slept in sheds on straw and some of them were included in the camp organization (see <http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/>).

[9] At the beginning of August 1942, the camp in Sisak was established. Serbs from the Kozara region, captured after the German-Ustasha offensive, were brought there. These were mostly the elderly, women and children. This camp had a special cap for children, who were separated from their parents. Groups of elderly prisoners were transported to Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška.

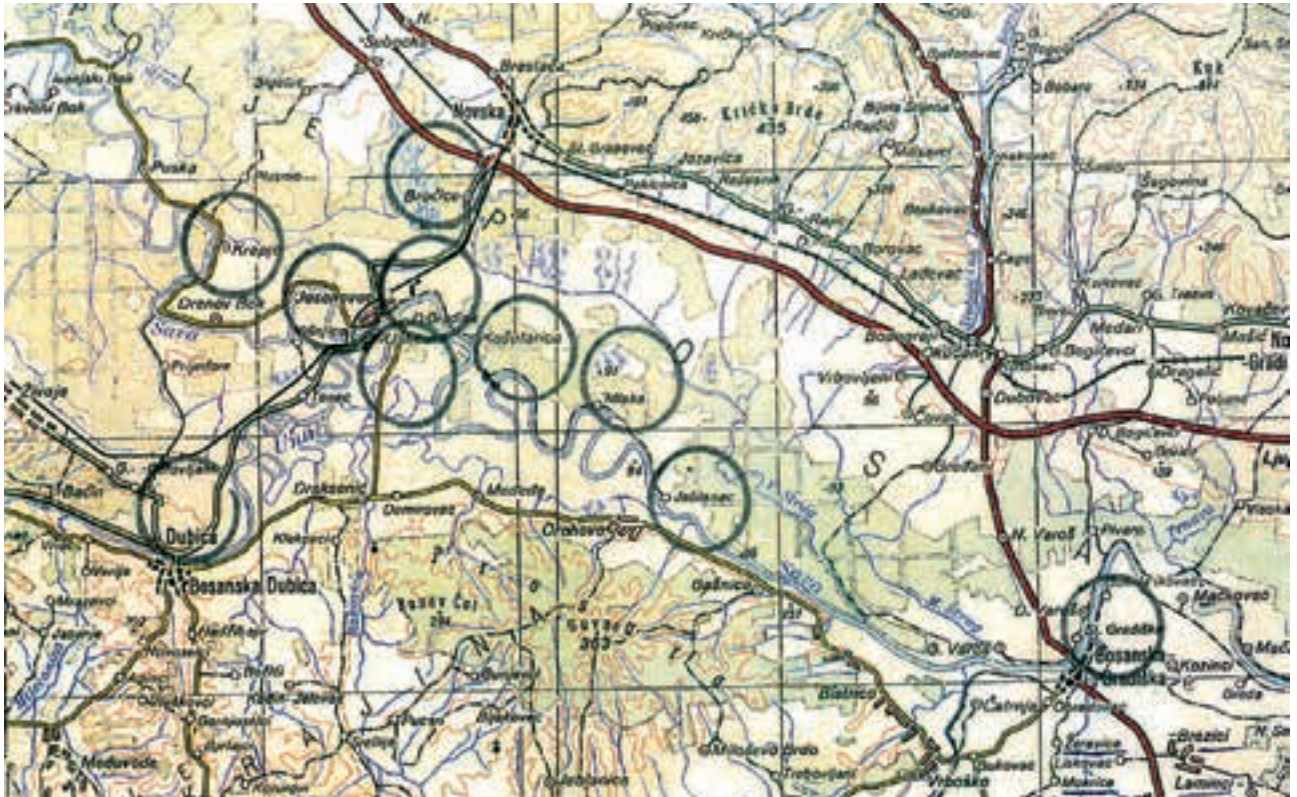


Photo 1: Map of the Jasenovac camp system with an area of 240 km²

Source: Institute of Military Geography, Belgrade, Serbia.

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

were killed and thrown into deep ravines. Amongst the killed were many communists. According to available data, around 35 000 people were killed in Jadovno. The camp was closed in August 1941 (see Zatezalo, 2007; Israeli, 2013; Mojzes, 2011).

The Ustashes organized “a whole range of different collection centres and camps for different purposes” (Peršen, 1952, p. 29). Although it was not until January 25, 1941 that the Legal Decree on the Transportation of Undesirable and Dangerous Persons to Forced Internment in Collection and

Labour Camps (Peršen, 1952, pp. 19-20) was passed, many of the “death camps” were already established and even disbanded (Slana and Metajna on the island of Pag, Danica in Koprivnica, Jadovno near Gospić, Kruščica near Travnik).

Due to the Italian reoccupation of the demilitarized zone and the growth of the popular uprising (started on August 5, 1941) the Ustashes were forced to quickly disband the camps in Gospić (Jadovno) and Pag (Slana). The last group of inmates that the Ustashes did not manage to kill were transported on

19, 20 and 21 August 1941, via Jastrebarsko, to the new camp of Jasenovac, while some were brought to Kruščica near Travnik (see Miletić, 1986, p. 20; Lengel-Krizman, 1996a, pp. 91–102; Lengel-Krizman, 1996b, pp. 247–256; Dizdar, 1990).

The establishment of the first camps was directly managed by Eugen Dido Kvaternik, while their director was Mijo Babić – Giovanni, who after his death was succeeded by Vjekoslav Luburić Maks, who with a few breaks remained in the position until the end of the existence of the ISC. Vjekoslav Luburić is the person directly responsible for the organization of the Jasenovac camps (Peršen, 1952, p. 44).

The Jasenovac camp began to operate in the summer of 1941, when the Ustasha brought the first groups of Serbs and Jews to the camp that was later named Camp no. 5 (Greif, 2021). For the above-mentioned reasons, the camp had to grow quickly, and soon Camp no. 2 was created. The exact timeline of the creation of the various Jasenovac camps (1 and 2) varies with different authors and therefore remains a question which should be adequately researched. From November 1941 the camp grew considerably, Camp no. 3 was established, followed by Camp no. 4). In the camp, “undesirables” were imprisoned, regardless of their faith. This was also a feature of the Stara Gradiška camp. In Stara Gradiška and Jastrebarsko in particular, women and children were slaughtered.

The Ustasha Jasenovac death camp was built to receive 3000 prisoners at the most but the headquarters of Poglavnik Ante Pavelić in Zagreb did not share this view and on April 27, 1942 they issued the order to all local institutions “that Jasenovac can receive an unlimited number of prisoners”

(McCormick, 2017). The Jasenovac camp complex covered an area of 240 square kilometers, from Krapje – 12 kilometers west of Jasenovac, and the Dubički (Baćinski) limekilns – some twenty kilometers upstream of the Una River to Stara Gradiška – about thirty kilometers east, and from Strug in the north to the Draksenić-Bistrica line in the south (Mirković, 1980, p. 7).

The Jasenovac concentration camp – unlike the temporary, improvised camps established shortly after the creation of the ISC – was the first systematically built concentration camp and the largest death site on the territories of occupied Yugoslavia (Barbić, 1987, p. 67). Due to the Italian demands to reoccupy Zone B, which contained the Gospić group of camps (Gospić, Jadovno, Pag), the ISC had to remove its armed forces and disband these concentration camps. Therefore, what was required was the security of a space which could be used for the intended purposes: the extermination of a portion of the population, but also the use of slave labour. Research conducted up to this date, published historiographic papers and memoirs have not yet provided us with the answer why the camp was established precisely in Jasenovac. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the geographical layout of Jasenovac was favourable as it was connected by land, railway and river routes and was relatively close to Zagreb (around 100 kilometers), it was surrounded by water (the rivers Sava, Una and Veliki Strug), which protected the settlements and the camp from potential attacks, while on the other side there were marshlands – Lonjsko and Mokro. The old, incomplete plans for draining the marshes and land improvement provided the Ustashas with a ruse with which to deceive the public and conceal

the true purposes of the building of camps in the area. For this reason, the Directorate of Land Improvement and Regulatory Works was established.

Jasenovac is the first Ustasha camp that operated following Nazi principles (Greif, 2021). Maks Luburić, the Ustasha official managing the camp, had spent some time in Germany, as a guest of the Gestapo in early October of 1941. On that occasion he visited several German concentration camps, and on return to the ISC he reorganized the existing camps and created new ones, following the German model.^[10] In Jasenovac, the “Jasenovac Collective Camps Command” is formed.

The system of Jasenovac camps included the camps numbered 1 to 5, as well as other camp facilities and locations (killing grounds, farms, etc.) (Greif, 2021). “Jasenovac Camp no. 1” was near the village of Krapje, 12 kilometers upstream (west) of Jasenovac. The first transports were brought to two sheds on stilts in the fenced area near the forest Gornja Krndija, near Strug, between the village of Krapje (where the later Officers’ School was established) and Plesmo.^[11]

“Jasenovac Camp no. 2”, called “the Forest”, was in the area of the Bročke Jasenine, on the road Jasenovac – Bročice, along the edge of the Donja Krndija forest. The area enclosed with wire contained three sheds. Due to the autumn flooding,

in November 1941 the Ustashes destroyed Camps 1 and 2 and most of their inmates. The remainder were sent to the industrial complex of the Bačić and Partner company (1.5 kilometers along the Sava from the centre of Jasenovac), where “Jasenovac Camp no. 3” called the Brick Factory was established.^[12]

In the town of Jasenovac itself there was an industrial building called the “Tannery” [Kožara], which became Camp no. 4. The Camp in Stara Gradiška in some documents is called the “Command of the Stara Gradiška Collection Camp”, while in others it is referred to as Camp no. 5 in the Jasenovac camp complex (Miletić, 1986, p. 23). Besides the official name “Ustasha Defense / Command of the Jasenovac Collection Camps”, or “Command of the Jasenovac Collection Camps”, other names were used: “Concentration Camp Jasenovac” and “Collection and Labour Camp Jasenovac” (Miletić, 1986, pp. 20-21).

The camps of the Ustasha Supervisory Agency (UNS), although they were called collection and labour camps, were in fact extermination camps (*Vernichtungslager*). This is particularly evident in the example of the Jasenovac group of camps, while before these were established, the Gospić group of camps did not even bear the name “labour camps”. The Command of the Jasenovac Collection

[10] “The plans for the camps were made by captain Luburić while he was still an émigré. After visiting the German camps, they were improved”. (Excerpt from the Report of Siegfried Kasche of February 1942 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Reich on the situation in the Jasenovac concentration camp (see Barbić, 1986, str. 170).

[11] Plesmo – Croatian village in which the Communist Party of Yugoslavia existed as far back as 1935, and whose population joined en masse the People’s Liberation Struggle; even before the war it was called “Little Moscow”.

[12] The front gate had a large sign with the inscription “Labor Service/Ustasha Defense/Collection Camp no. 3”, and a large letter U (the Ustasha sign) above which were the words “All for the Poglavnik” [“Sve za Poglavnika”].



Photo 2: Entrance gate to Jasenovac

Photo documentation Donja Gradina Memorial Site. Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

Camps also managed at certain times the camps at Đakovo^[13], Lepoglava, as well as their respective farms, and besides the farms near the camps (Mlaka, Jablanac, Bistrica, Gredani, etc.) there were also outposts in Feričanci and Obradovci (see Zečević-Popović, pp. 245-247; Danon, p. 68)

The guarding of the Jasenovac camps was performed by the units of the Ustasha Defense Department 3 (Department for Camps) which had been made into a separate military formation. The members of the Ustasha Defense, besides directly securing the camp and performing guard duties, also guarded the prisoners who were working outside the camp perimeters and took part in individual and mass liquidations, as well as repressive

activities in the area around the Jasenovac camps (Barbić, 1986, p. 163).

The management of the camps was external, i.e. Ustasha, headed by the “Commander”. It had seven different “departments” which issued working orders, organized procurement, punishments, interrogations, tortures and liquidations. They maintained contact with institutions outside the camps while the internal administration included a “logornik” (a prisoner, usually a criminal or imprisoned Ustasha, although sometimes they were decent and uncompromised) and “grupniks”, heads of groups of a hundred, fifty and ten prisoners (usually informants, criminals and beaters).

Two categories of prisoners were brought to the camp: those with a conviction and those without. According to the “Legal Decree on the Transportation of Undesirable and Dangerous Persons to Internment in Collection and Labour Camps”, the length of imprisonment varied from three months to three years. These convictions, which were issued by the Ustasha police as a branch of the UNS were mockeries, as all prisoners were in fact sentenced to death, while the “three-yearlings” [“trogodišnjaci”, prisoners with three-year sentences] were immediately executed on arrival (Barbić, 1986, p. 163).

The cruelty and depravity of the manner of executions, their sheer number and scope, mean that the atrocities committed in Jasenovac “go beyond any human imagination” (Iveković, 1945, p. 16). The killing with firearms, the killing with knives, mallets, hammers, bludgeons, axes, adzes, the killing by hanging, drowning, burning, death as a conse-

[13] “Shortly after the arrival of women prisoners from Stara Gradiska, the Ustasha Defense takes over the internal management of the Đakovo camp. The Ustasha arrive to the camp on March 29, 1942, headed by Ljuba Miloš and the Ustasha Ensign Jozo Matijević. All access to the camp is taken over and the guards are removed” (see Vasiljević, 1985, p. 195).

quence of hard labour, starvation, water deprivation, infection, poisoning, the exposure to the cold, torture and sadism – these were everyday events in the Jasenovac camps (Barbić, 1985, pp. 153-178).

One of the most important characteristics of the camps in the ISCC was that they were managed without any direct German or Italian involvement.^[14] In fact, the fascists in Italy and Germany often objected against the Ustasha management of the camps. The Nazi regime required that the Ustasha adopt antisemitic policies and persecute the Jews. Pavelić and his Ustashes accepted Nazi requests, but their racial policies were primarily aimed at exterminating the Serb population (McCormick, 2017). When the Ustashes needed more recruits for the destruction of Serbs, the ISC even distanced itself from the Nazi antisemitic policy, promising honorary Aryan citizenship, and consequently freedom from persecution, to Jews who were ready to fight for the ISC (Tanner, 1997, p. 149). As this was the only legal way to save themselves from death and persecution, a certain number of Jews joined the armed forces of the ISC.^[15]

Jasenovac and Auschwitz

Analyzing the nature, the essence and character of Auschwitz and comparing it to Jasenovac, permits, without any feeling of exaggeration, or artificial invention, to speak about the historical and moral meaning of Jasenovac. Ervin Miller, a survivor of Jasenovac, said the following: “Indeed, the camp

was infamous for its brutality, where the systematic extermination surpassed even the Nazi methods. It has often been referred to as the Auschwitz of the Balkans” (Greif, 2021).

While Auschwitz all over the world has become the symbol and synonym of the cruelties of the Holocaust, even the existence of Jasenovac is unknown to many – even those who intensively dealt with the history of World War II and the Holocaust. This is of course fact that should be changed as soon as possible! Both camps, Auschwitz and Jasenovac, although belonging to different geographical spaces, are synonyms and symbols of the extremely cruel regimes they represented: Auschwitz has become a synonym for the whole Holocaust and Jasenovac has become synonym for the Ustasha criminal regime.

Both places, Jasenovac and Auschwitz, embody the non-human principles of the two regimes, and their murderous attitude towards anyone they considered an enemy, an undesirable or inferior person, or those who did not enthusiastically support the regime.

A thorough comparison between the Auschwitz chain of camps and the Jasenovac chain of camps reveals many identical aspects relative to the development of the camps, the technique of killing and the attitude of the perpetrators towards the prisoners. Naturally, there were also significant differences between Jasenovac and Auschwitz, due to the origin and mentality of the criminals and to their psychologies.

[14] See <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Jasenovac.html>

[15] Some authors give the number of 5000 (see Tanner, 1997, p. 149-150).

Through generations, human society developed a code of moral values in order to protect its cultural achievements and ameliorate the moral codes of civilizations. This system of moral codes was completely annihilated in Auschwitz, as well as in Jasenovac (Greif, 1998, p. 10). Three thousand years of civilization were destroyed at once and replaced by a destructive, murderous, anti-human set of values. Darkness obscured humanity and millions of people had to live under the brutal rule of terror. That is exactly what Yehiel Dinur meant, when he called Auschwitz “another planet”. Auschwitz, the biggest Nazi concentration and extermination death camp and Jasenovac, the biggest complex of Croatian Ustasha concentration and death camps, were both sites which deserve the title Hell on Earth (Greif & Carlsen, 2012, pp. 237-292). In the following minutes we are going to compare the two Hells.

Both the Nazi and the Ustasha regime were motivated by racial theory, which dictated their policy and their behaviour. National Socialist racial theory was central in all spheres of German public life from January 30, 1933 on. When the new regime came to power, the whole nation was obsessively considering the question of blood purity and racial purity. The results of the investigations into racial origins were crucial for the career and even life for each individual. German medical doctors and geneticists collaborated with the regime and helped to decide who was to be taken to the special program for “euthanasia”, the murder of so-called life unworthy to live. Anti-Jewish legislation was based on racial principles and led to mass discrimination and hatred directed towards the Jews in Germany and later in any country under German occupation (Długoborski & Piper, 2000).



Photo 3: The legal provision prohibiting the Cyrillic alphabet, adopted on 25 April 1941. One in a series of racial laws through which Serbs, Jews and Roma were outlawed.

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

The Ustasha regime was greatly influenced by German racial theory and fully adopted it. From the first day of the existence of the Independent State of Croatia, the government implemented racial laws against the Jews, Serbs and Roma, using the exact methods of discrimination which were already in place in Germany. The racial laws had a strong effect on the daily life of Jews, Serbs and Roma, who lost their position in laws, lost their civil rights and their property. Finally, the laws enabled the authorities to deport them into concentration camps (Greif, 2020b). All these racial laws paved the way for the policy of annihilation.

As a result of racial legislation and the policy of discrimination against elements which were defined as hostile to the Croat nation’s spirit, Serbs and Jews were forced to wear identification marks which aimed to publicly humiliate them. For the Jews it was the letter “J” for “Juden” or Jews and the Serbs were forced to wear the letter “P” or “pravoslavci”, meaning “Orthodox Christians”.



Photo 4: "Orthodox Christian mark"

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

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Auschwitz is known as the biggest "factory of death" among the camps which Nazi Germany established in order to implement the Final Solution of the Jewish Question (Greif, 2005). However, at the beginning of its existence Auschwitz was not an extermination camp. The original intention of the National Socialist authorities was to build it as a prison for the local Polish population, suspected to be hostile and dangerous to the German army or found guilty of acts of resistance.

The turning of Auschwitz into a Factory of Death was the result of previous experience, based on the methods of the German mass killings implemented during the Barbarossa Operation. This operation started on June 22, 1941. In the framework of the Barbarossa Operation, about 1.6 million Jews were murdered by the "Einsatzgruppen", mostly by shooting, partially in gas vans. This system of mass murder was problematic for the perpetrators for several reasons. It was too slow, too expensive and psychologically problematic for the murderers, who had to look directly into the eyes of the victims.

During the few months of such mass killings, as conducted in "Babi-Jar", the German command-

ers responsible for the "final solution", decided to change the method completely and instead of shooting introduced permanent killing centres where no guns were to be used but poisonous gas (Rees, 2005). The new system solved all the problems that I just mentioned. It was cheaper, quicker and the killers did not have to look into the eyes of their victims. The only contact with the murdered victims were the screams which emerged from the gas chamber and which could be heard around the area.

The mass killing process in Auschwitz was completely impersonal (Długoborski & Piper, 2000). As we shall see later, in Jasenovac the system was different. It was personal, direct, manual - a close, intimate, passionate murder (Greif, 2021).

On the basis of the criminal and pathologically-distorted ideology of the National Socialists and the Ustasha, the similarities between the two camps are easy to distinguish. The Ustasha regime was to a very great extent influenced by Nazi Germany and its ideology and wanted by all means to demonstrate this close relationship to National Socialism. The best example of this is the fact that the Final Solution of the Jewish question in Yugoslavia was introduced by the Ustasha even before it was introduced by the Germans. When the Ustasha started implementing anti-Jewish measures in April 1941, the "Final Solution" was not even decided on by the German Nazi authorities (Greif, 2020b).

The killing process in Auschwitz was more sterile and cleaner, with some distance between the murderers and their victims, whereas the killing process in Jasenovac was more direct, and the murderers enjoyed looking at their victims being murdered and tortured and did not need any physi-

cal distance during the execution of their crimes. This point demonstrates that the Ustasha killers acted according to more barbaric lines of behaviour than the Germans, a fact which even German visitors to Jasenovac mention in their reports. In this sense, the report of the General Gleise von Horstenau, German military envoy to Zagreb is worthy of note. For the German officers the methods of Ustasha killing were too wild and too barbaric in comparison to the system enacted in the factories of death (Auschwitz Birkenau, Chelmno, Belzec, Treblinka, Majdanek, Sobibor, Maly Trostenec). Despite their demonic crimes, the Germans still wanted to be considered cultured.

Photos which exist show us the amusement and fun of the Ustasha murderers while performing their crimes. They did not have psychological problems while doing their cruel deeds nor did they feel any twinge of conscience. This difference allows us to state that the killing process in Jasenovac was much more barbaric, brutal and primitive (Greif, 2020a, pp. 560-561). The “sophistication” needed by the Germans to protect their “soul”, was not needed by the Ustasha killers.

In order to implement the new killing system in Auschwitz, a new mass murder process was developed, based on the use of poisonous gas. At the beginning of 1942, two sites of mass murder were prepared in Birkenau, a sub-camp of Auschwitz, to which the killing activity was transferred from the Main Camp. The murder was conducted in two buildings, the so called “Red house” or “Bunker 1”, and the so called “White House”, or “Bunker 2”.

The first transports of Jews, who were deported to their death by the RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*), reached the new killing facilities

in Birkenau in February 1942. Due to the process of further modernization, the two bunkers were temporarily abandoned, and four new modern buildings emerged in spring 1942, gas chamber and crematoria 2-5.

This steady tendency of the modernization of the industrial mass killing is strongly differing from the mass killing in Jasenovac, where the process of killing can be defined as very primitive from the beginning until the very end. That does not imply that the primitivity had any impact on the number of victims but shows the primitive way of thinking of the Croat Ustasha criminals, who were satisfied with their own bestial ways of killing and did not look for ways to modernize, pleased as they were with the existing methods.

The German method resembled a typical industrial process, namely, the purpose was to obtain the greatest results (in this case, the murder of the highest number of innocent people) for the least cost. Nevertheless, the teams in these camps, the Nazi Germans and the Ustasha Croats as well, had a very important common denominator. They were trained not to show the slightest sense of mercy, sympathy or empathy towards their victims. On the contrary, they enjoyed their brutal and aggressive behaviour, and looked for new methods of torture, a way to prolong the prisoners’ death and competed who could inflict the most extreme torture, humiliation and death.

The Ustasha however, were very happy to dirty their hands and the bloodier their hands, the happier they were.

Inside the German killing facilities the principle of remaining clean was introduced by using Jewish slaves in a variety of activities which allowed

the German murderers to keep their hands clean. Hundreds of Jews were recruited to the special squad, the "Sonderkommando", which were forced to conduct the most humiliating work in the process of killing, although the killing itself was conducted exclusively by the German SS. The slaves had to carry the bodies of the murdered Jews to the crematoria, to remove their valuables, gold teeth and cut the women's hair, to throw the bodies into the crematoria ovens and finally to throw the ashes into the surrounding river. In this way the perpetrators had only to give the orders and not execute the work with their own hands. The impersonal method of killing in Auschwitz was principally based on the famous speech held by the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, in which he 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 the German team of the camps. In Jasenovac such an idea of cleanliness did not exist.

The regulations in Auschwitz were clear and permanent: there was a significant difference between those who were sent immediately to their death after being selected on the ramp by a medical doctor, and those who could temporarily remain alive and become slaves (Wagner, 2000).

Those who were sentenced to death, 75 to 90 percent of the newly arrived, usually did not live for more than 4 hours after their arrival. The others, 5 to 15 percent, were selected to become slaves.

For those who became prisoners, the biggest challenge was to survive under the inhuman conditions which prevailed in the camp. It was especially important to maintain the desire to live. This desire was essential for the continuation of the will to live.

Jasenovac survivors report the same psychological principle. As long as they did not lose their desire or passion to live, they had a chance of survival. In Jasenovac however, the life of the prisoners was more chaotic, there was not the same amount of constant and clear rules a prisoners could adapt to in order to improve his chances of survival.

Both camps underwent a long process of dynamic development. As I already mentioned, Auschwitz did not start as an extermination camp. In 1940, its first goal was to be a concentration camp for the local Polish population, a large prison for Poles suspected of being hostile to the German occupying forces or suspected to be part of the Polish underground movement (Gutman & Berenbaum, 1994). Only late in 1941, after the decision on the "Final Solution" did Auschwitz become an extermination camp, where the "Final Solution" of the Jewish question was to be implemented. From June 1941 it also was a concentration camp or a large prison for Soviet prisoners-of-war, who were captured during the Barbarossa Operation.

The fact that until late 1941 Auschwitz was not yet a Factory of Death does not mean the prisoners were not treated brutally and bestially or that they were not murdered. This is not the case. Many prisoners died or were murdered from the first day of the existence of Auschwitz, because of the harsh conditions, the cruelty of the guards, and the fundamental policy of maltreatment, dehumanization and starvation.

Jasenovac was a place of death from the first day and the mass killing there did not require any official decision, like the decision of the Final Solution (Greif, 2020a). Nevertheless, even Jasenovac underwent some changes which were caused by

the war developments, or by political changes in the region, and it was dependent on the successes and defeats of Nazi Germany.

The killing methods in Jasenovac, developed over time and became more extreme and brutal, based on the same principles of non-humanity and non-mercy, in the attempt to cause the utmost suffering to the prisoners.

Another difference refers to the policy of secrecy: the Germans tried to hide the reality from their victims by distributing lies and fake information of what awaits their victims, disguising the killing sites as showers or public baths. The murderers of Jasenovac were more direct and thought they had nothing to hide, committing their crimes under open skies (Greif, 2020a).

A very clear point of similarity is the greed of both the Germans and the Ustasha. The victims, murdered or imprisoned, had to hand over all their property which they brought to the camp, and the perpetrators were now the new owners of their property. Possessions such as apartments, bank accounts, jewellery, valuables were already confiscated before arrival in the camp. The Germans were no doubt the greatest murderers in history but also the greatest thieves. The Ustasas acted under similar lines and started the confiscation of property of Jews and Serbs by April 1941.

The Ustasha authorities, under the leadership of Poglavnik Ante Pavelić, tried to imitate Germany, and became even more extreme (McCormick, 2017). The pupil wanted to become more extreme than the teacher.

Another point of similarity is the fact that the camps were a state inside a state. No ministry, no court, no politician, could intervene in the reality



Photo 5: Woman with children arriving at Jasenovac

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

of the regulations of the camps. The SS and the Ustasha saw the camps as their own kingdom and felt they could do anything without being criticized, inspected or punished. They felt they could continue with their barbaric crimes forever. Indeed, Auschwitz and Jasenovac were among the longest

lasting concentration and extermination camps, remaining in operation almost until the end of the war – until January 1945 and April 1945, respectively.

Until the last moment the camp staff were sure they could go on uninterruptedly forever, not realizing that the war was going to come to an end very soon. For Nazi Germany the “Final Solution” and the existence of Auschwitz were more important in 1943 and 1944 than any other national interest, even becoming the most important national interest (Posner & Ware, 1986). In light of imminent defeat in the war, the annihilation of the Jewish people was considered the most important goal. The Ustasha came to the same conclusion and considered the continuation of Jasenovac as the most important interest of the ISC (Greif, 2021).

Another point of similarity is that in both camps there was a total loss of sanctity of life. The life of the victims had no value, whereas death was worshipped. In both places, death was developed into an art and into an ideology. It seems that the members of the SS and the Ustasha competed among themselves who would become more cruel, more barbaric and more sadistic. The policy of a non-human attitude prevailed in both places, robbing the prisoners of the minimal human dignity, minimal living conditions, minimal sanitary conditions, trying to ruin their inner spirit and their psyche, exploiting their bodily strength and finally killing them in various methods: by poisonous gas, burning alive, cutting bodies into pieces, starvation, beating, hanging etc.

In both camps, an inversion of values existed. In Auschwitz as well as in Jasenovac, a different scale of values was adopted, which stand opposite to the normal values of the world before WWII. In

other words, the 10 commandments were reversed. For instance: “Thou shalt not kill” was reversed to: “Thou shall kill”. There is a famous sentence written by the Jewish poet Paul Celan that says, “Death is a Master from Germany”. The same can be said about the Ustasha: “Death is a Master from Croatia”.

Despite the sense of security that there would be no punishment for the crimes, both camps had severe measures of security to prevent the outside world from getting information of what is going on in the camps. Accordingly, every effort was made to not allow the prisoners to escape. Any attempt at escape was considered the worst crime.

In comparison to Auschwitz, some of the camps attached to Jasenovac were dedicated to only female or child prisoners (Greif, 2020a). Auschwitz sub-camps did not have such places and women and men stayed together, although always separated.

Both camps tried to exploit the physical power or energy of the prisoners for their own benefit, by establishing factories or workshops as the possibility of replacing the laborers with new slaves was so easy. However, the similar policy of not supplying enough food or adequate working conditions, caused the quick death of slave workers in both places and the industry or semi-industry in both camps was not productive due to the inhuman treatment of the prisoners.

Both camps deprived the prisoners of the most natural needs of human beings. Among other aspects it is important to emphasize the lack of proper medical treatment. Prisoners who became sick or exhausted could not get help and died in pain, getting no medication or almost no medications. In Auschwitz the so-called hospital had nothing in common with the normal clinics or hospitals,

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providing no real treatment or real medications (Gutman & Berenbaum, 1994). A similar situation existed in Jasenovac. Sick prisoners, knowing that the so-called hospital would not cure or heal them, preferred not to complain and continued their slave work hoping to be cured naturally. In both places it was clear to the prisoners that complain about their health would just bring them closer to their death. In both places the medical staff was involved in the criminal activities.

Comparing Auschwitz and Jasenovac, the first might be considered to belong to the 20th century, while Jasenovac reminds us more of the inquisition of the 16th century, which used primitive methods of torture and killing. Unfortunately, those primitive methods were not less effective than the German ones.

The “modern” character of Auschwitz and the primitive character of Jasenovac can also be seen in the case of the administration. Auschwitz had a very modern administrative system (Gutman & Berenbaum, 1994). It had several departments, secretaries, translators, adjutants, a technical team etc. All this was linked to the German government. There was, of course, a big gap in the normal correspondence between offices, but we should not forget that this correspondence tried to hide the huge crime. On the other hand, Jasenovac did not have any of this. It had no offices, no regular correspondence, nor intelligent Jewish secretaries. It was a primitive reality with no necessity of official administration. In comparison to Auschwitz, Jasenovac did not produce any secret diaries or reports (Greif, 2021). The most important Auschwitz documents are called the Auschwitz Scrolls, which describe the miserable lives of the Jews belonging to the “special squad”.



Photo 6: Older man taking off his wedding ring
at the camp entrance.

Photo: Jasenovac Memorial Site, photomonography, Nataša Mataušić. Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

In both places, prisoners never gave up their hope to be liberated, and made attempts at escape. In Auschwitz, relatively speaking it was easier and hundreds of prisoners tried to escape. Most of them did not succeed, like in the case of Jasenovac, where they tried even though it was more complicated and riskier and only towards the end did the prisoners have some success in breaking out of the camp. The constant attempts of escape show us that the spirit of the prisoners was not destroyed.

Another significant difference is that in Auschwitz there was an underground movement, quite well organized (Czech, 1997). Whereas in Jasenovac there were no conditions for the creation of such a movement.

The similarity between the two camp systems is primarily the result of the fact that National Socialism was similar to Ustashism. Both are extreme,

destructive ideologies which planned and executed murderous plans which brought about the annihilation of millions of innocent people. By understanding that Ustashism is no different to Nazism we might better understand to the criminal acts of the ISC government.

Extremely significant is the fact that the Ustaša introduced the final solution, even before the Germans did it (Greif, 2020b). The persecution of Jews, their deportation to the Jasenovac camps, the confiscation of their property and all the anti-Jewish steps were introduced earlier than in Germany, where the final solution started only in 1941. Jasenovac became the slaughterhouse of the Yugoslav Jews even though at that time Auschwitz was not yet a concentration camp (Lituchy, 2006). The conclusion arises that the Ustaša were quicker than the Germans in their final solution or alternatively that the crimes of the Ustašas were the final solution before the final solution.

The speed of the policy of persecution by the Croatian government was much faster than the speed of the German government. The Croatian pupil was quicker than his German teacher.

Auschwitz and Jasenovac symbolize the extreme policy of dehumanization of the body as well as the spirit and the means of reaching those goals were mainly terror and humiliation. The sanctity of human beings did not exist – the only human beings were the murderers themselves, who got the best possible conditions and food and enjoyed the property of their victims. The dehumanization was conducted towards all prisoners in both camps, mainly to Serbs, Jews and Roma, and all others who were considered dangerous or undesirable or inferior. In certain cases when prisoners were ready to

collaborate, they got better conditions, but with no guarantee that this would continue forever.

Both camps had only two kinds of people: the group which had everything and the group which had nothing. In both camps, the attitude of unnecessary suffering was used, in order to amuse those causing the suffering. Murdering or killing a prisoner without causing suffering was not enough for the perpetrators. Unless the prisoner was tortured and humiliated, his death was not enough. Unnecessary torture is a term developed by the American sociologist Daniel J. Goldhagen in his book "Hitler's Willing Executioner 1996". For these purposes, a variety of methods were introduced to prolong the process of death, causing the victim horrible suffering on the one hand, and amusement for the murderers on the other hand. In Auschwitz and Jasenovac, all repressed, brutal and evil emotions could be expressed without any fear of the consequences.

Within the framework of terror, the camp authorities in both places tried to implement an extreme policy of punishment for real and imaginary crimes. For any form of disobedience, the prisoners were punished severely, and very often the punishment was death.

A point of similarity of camps is that after the war, there were attempts at diminishing the number of victims and to characterize the camps as slave labour camps and not death camps. This tendency, in the context to Auschwitz is called Holocaust denial, but we might use the same term concerning Jasenovac. There is a denial of Jasenovac and the Ustaša crimes by the young generations, and both unfortunately continue to this today. Morally, this phenomenon, can be seen as a second mur-

der of the victims. The denial murders the victims for the second time, while ignoring their existence desecrates their human dignity and is a murderer of their memory.

Since the causing of pain and endless suffering was important for the perpetrators in both Auschwitz and Jasenovac, on personal initiative by the guards, new instruments of torture were developed. In Auschwitz, the place which was the most creative in developing the tools was the Political Department (*Politische Abteilung*). Infamous was the “Schaukel”, developed by the SS man Wilhelm Boger. It was an instrument which broke almost all the bones of the prisoner under interrogation. Torturing the prisoners was a daily phenomenon and the sky was the limit in causing pain to a prisoner who had to be punished. Exactly the same occurred in Jasenovac, where an Ustasha guard invented the new device called the “Serb cutter” and other instruments of torture and death (Greif, 2020a). Places like Auschwitz and Jasenovac enabled people with sadistic tendencies to express themselves perfectly.

Humiliation was extremely important for the Nazis. Humiliations were used against the Jews but also against non-Jews. The most favourite form of humiliation was public humiliation with the participation of the audience. Concerning Jews, the policy of humiliation did not stop when the German policy changed in 1941. From expulsion to the final solution, the Jews had to be humiliated even minutes before they were gassed in the chambers when men and women had to undress before being gassed. Even before, during the mass killing of the “Einsatzgruppen” Jews had to undress before being shot to death. In Jasenovac the same policy

of humiliation was introduced for the amusement of the killers.

Both places, Auschwitz as well as Jasenovac, started very modestly. At the beginning, Auschwitz was nothing more than one small concentration camp of only 28 buildings, called the main camp or “Stammlager”. Later on, new sub-camps were added. The most important and biggest one was Birkenau which was opened at October 1941. Later on, 43 other sub-camps became part of the Auschwitz camp complex and the so-called „Interessengebiet” (Adelsberger & Langbein, 1961). Auschwitz then was divided into three parts: “Stammlager”, “Birkenau” and “Monowitz”.

A sense of self-confidence and power caused both places to grow and grow steadily. In 1943 Auschwitz became an empire. It had 44 sub-camps or branches spread across an area of 40 square kilometers (Megargee, 2009, pp. 203-276). The same happened with Jasenovac, which grew and developed many sub camps in an area of 240 square kilometers, where people were imprisoned. Therefore, Auschwitz and Jasenovac can be called kingdoms of suffering, dehumanization and death (Greif, 2021). The rapid expansion of both camps symbolizes the passion of power of the SS and Ustasha and simultaneously shows us how the ideology of death became significant and even popular. Two vicious regimes had the desire to enact their policy of death and in order to implement it, they needed a lot of space, not hesitating to use thousands of guards to implement this policy and to prevent any prisoners from escaping. In times of war the dictatorships strangely focussed on such investments which demand a lot of manpower, budget and energy that could also have been used for the war effort.



Photo 7: Rounding up Jasenovac inmates

Photo: Documentary from 1945. „Jasenovac“, Archive of Yugoslav Cinematheque.

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

Important as it is, the number of victims should not be considered the most important method concerning Auschwitz or Jasenovac. Since the death of one person is a tragedy of itself, for the tortured and murdered person the question of how many others were murdered is not important.

“Holocaust denial” started immediately after the end of WWII, with attempts to suppress the mention of the crimes of German National Socialists, to reshape their character, or to completely deny the existence of the crimes. Most deniers are not professional historians, barring few, and they base their argumentation on false information and on twisted facts. Among professional historians who belong to the deniers was David Irving who lost a trial to professor Deborah Lipstadt in Great

Britain, a defeat which was a big blow to the industry of falsification of the Holocaust. Interestingly the denial of the Holocaust concentrates almost exclusively on Auschwitz, which shows to what extent Auschwitz is a symbol of the Holocaust. The killing machines were destroyed by the Germans before leaving the camps, which helps the deniers to distort history.

In the case of Jasenovac, the tactics are almost identical, trying to minimize the crime or trying to change the meaning of the camp, making it out to be a slave labour camp and not death camp, that the deaths were the result of living conditions and not murder. Behind the tendency of denial stands the difficulty of generations living after the event to accept the guilt, to live with it, to ask the victims

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and their children for forgiveness. By reducing the scope and avoiding mention of the crimes, generations after the war hope to clean their conscience.

It is necessary to emphasize that the second and third generation do not bear any guilt. They only bear the collective moral responsibility, which includes primarily accepting the facts, and trying to prevent such a crime in the future. Manipulating with the number of victims is a very dangerous weapon, and it is our moral duty to prevent any distortion of the number of the victims. Most historians agree, that in Auschwitz the total number of victims was about 1.5 million, 90% of them Jewish victims. Other sources use lower numbers, as for instance 1.1 million. The multinational memorial site at the end of the ramp of Birkenau mentions the number of 1.5 million. The difference in numbers derives from the fact that the German authorities of Auschwitz did not register those who were selected for immediate death, but only those who were to be slaves, which were only around 5-15% of those who were deported to the camp. The percentage of those sentenced to immediate death was 75-90% on average.

The most reliable historian, who tried to figure out the number of victims by the Ustasha in Jasenovac, was the late historian Menachem Shelach who published his book "History of the Holocaust – Yugoslavia", as part of the big project published by Yad Vashem called "The History of the Holocaust". Menachem Shelach was considered the most prominent expert of the history of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia and was the first to publish the complete history of the Jewish Holocaust in Yugoslavia. He refers to the numbers of victims using this formulation: „the Croats mur-



Photo 8: Notorious commander of Ustasha camp of death Jasenovac, Vjekoslav "Maks" Luburić (left).

Photo: Documentary from 1945. „Jasenovac“, Archive of Yugoslav Cinematheque. Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

dered in Jasenovac many hundreds of thousands of Serbs”, by using such a formulation Shelach means at least 500 thousand Serbs. After he finished his book, he told me that he is certain the number is much greater and that it is closer to 1 million. Yad Vashem Institute in its reference to Jasenovac on the website mentions about 600 thousand Serbs murdered in Jasenovac. It means that Israeli scholars fully accept the Serbian calculations. The Shem Olam Institute mentions that there were at least 750 thousand Serbian victims.

The greatest number of killings in the ISC were committed in Jasenovac. The true number is, however, still a matter of debate. According to the data of the Land Commission of Croatia for the Establishment of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators, the number of victims ranges



Photo 9: Seal of Jasenovac camp.

Photo documentation Donja Gradina Memorial Site. Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

from 500 000 to 600 000.^[16] The historian Tomislav Dulić says that there were 700 000 killed in Jaseno-

vac and adds, correctly in our opinion, that if there were more than 100 000 victims then Jasenovac is surely one of the largest concentration camps in Europe during WWII (Dulić, 2005, p. 281).

According to Hermann Neubacher, the special envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Third Reich to Yugoslavia, in Jasenovac more than 750 000^[17] people were brutally killed, while Bulajić states that the number of victims was over 700 000 (Bulajić, 2007). The historian Vladimir Dedijer quotes the letter of Ernst Fick, general major of the German SS troops, sent to Himmler on March 16, 1944. In the letter Fick states that the Ustashes killed between 600 000 and 700 000 people in Jasenovac (Dedijer, 1987, p. 644). According to the more recent data of the International Commission, more than 800 000 innocent victims were sent to their death in Jasenovac and Donja Gradina, exclusively because they were Serbs, Jews, Roma or antifascists.

The number of victims is difficult to establish for several reasons. The first is that the people brought to the camps were registered only if they had personal identification or another similar document. The Serbs gathered from the fields, and the Roma in particular, for the most part did not have such documents. Convicted persons were registered, but these camp documents were carefully

[16] (See Barbić, 1988, pp. 81-97; Barbić, 1985, pp. 154-155; Miletić, 1986, p. 38). In the first text, Barbić lists the numbers given in other papers, which range from 400 000 to 800 000. The most commonly given number is 700 000 of victims. There are authors who decrease the number and mention 40 000 victims (like Cardinal Kuharić on the commemorative mass for Aloysius Stepinac held on February 10, 1981); I. Supek and F. Tuđman: 50 000. There are also authors who talk about the number of 1 million (Terzić, Bulatović and others). Both groups focus on the victims belonging to their nationality.

[17] “The slaughter of Serbs by the Croats is amongst the most vicious mass murders in world history. I witnessed Ustasha leaders brag about the fact that they butchered one million Serbs, including infants, children, women and the elderly” (see Neubacher, 1957, p. 31).

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destroyed on two occasions: In order to hide their crimes, UNS and Luburić personally ordered the destruction of camp documents in December 1942 and January 1943, before the UNS was disbanded by legal decree. The liquidation of the camp in April 1945 included the destruction of all documentation. There were other attempts to hide evidence of the crimes: the killing of the remaining prisoners, the digging up and burning of corpses, the mining and burning down of the buildings in the camp and in Jasenovac. Also, many were not only not registered but they did not even pass through the camp gates, but were taken directly to be killed. Additionally, the number of missing children is unknown because a large number of Serbian children were forcibly converted to Catholicism and taken to orphanages or families. For this reason, it is impossible to estimate how many were killed and how many were taken away.

The climax of Ustasha crimes against humanity, was no doubt the establishment a special concentration and extermination camp designed for children.^[18] Three concentration and extermination camps existed: Sisak, Jastrebarsko and Jasenovac. Such camps have no precedence in history of mankind and even Nazi Germany did not establish camps especially for children.



Photo 10: Knife for mass slaughters
known as “Srbosjek”, produced in the factory “Solingen”
– “for the hand to wear out less”.

Photo documentation Donja Gradina Memorial Site. Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

The ideological background for the crimes against children on behalf of Nazi Germany and on the behalf of the Ustasha are identical. The idea was that children who belonged to the undesirable races have to be considered the “biological future” of that race and therefore should be totally and completely eliminated. Jewish babies as well as Serb babies would grow one day and might take revenge

[18] “Genocide against children in the ISC is the most drastic expression of the planned Ustasha Final Solution. Only in the Independent State of Croatia were there camps for children, where around 23,500 young ones lost their lives. Jasenovac, the most brutal and infamous of the ISC death camps, swallowed 19,432 children. Most of the children murdered and identified come from Kordun, Lika, Banija, Slavonija, Bosanska Krajina, east Bosnia and Herzegovina, mostly populated by Serbs, while Jews mostly lived in urban areas. They were only children, and among them there were babes in diapers, who could not even say “mama”. The names of the children whose lives were extinguished in the Ustasha Final Solution during WWII were identified thanks to the extensive archival documentation gathered by the Commission for the Establishing of Crimes of the Occupiers and their Collaborators. The matter was covered by Dragoje Lukić in his book “Bili su samo deca” [They Were Only Children] and Mile Dasić in the book “Iz kolijevke u Jasenovac” [From the Cradle to Jasenovac]” (see Greif, 2020a).



Photo 11: Adolf Hitler meets Ante Pavelić 1941

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)

against the German or Croat, a situation which has to be prevented by all means.

The Jasenovac camps were never liberated by any army unlike Auschwitz. The Jasenovac camp inmates made the final breakthrough, three months after Auschwitz was liberated on 27 January 1945 (Greif, 2021). After the Allied bombing of the camp in March and April of 1945, many buildings inside the camp were destroyed but extensive excavations and the destruction of the corpses of the victims was

still taking place. Luburić ordered that all prisoners should be executed and that the camp and town of Jasenovac had to be torn down and burned to the ground, so as to hide all evidence of the crime. The last group of 700 women was killed on April 21 (Lituchy, 2006, p. 51, 114). That very same day all the remaining male inmates (on rollcall there were still around 1073 inmates present) were locked up in a two-story building in the eastern sector of the camp (Mataušić, 2008, p. 115). In the night

of April 21 and 22 they attempted to escape from the camp. Only 106 of them survived the camp breach (Lituchy, 2006, p. 52). Around 407 of the sick, elderly and weak inmates did not participate in the breach. They were most likely killed later and burned together with the camp buildings (Mataušić, 2008, p. 115). The same day, only a few hours later, the inmates from the “Tannery” attempted to escape. Out of 176, only 11 survived.

The abandoned village of Jasenovac and the destroyed camp were first entered by the Artillery Regiment 1st Battalion 4th Serbian Brigade of the 21st Serbian Division of the Yugoslav Army on May 2 and 3, 1945 (Lituchy, 2006). The battalion that entered Jasenovac was given the orders to guard the evidence of the crimes until the arrival of the state commission which would ascertain the crimes of the occupiers. In the camp, torture chambers were found, as well as Pičili’s furnace, corpses, skeletons (partial and whole) of inmates. Between 200 and 600 members of the ISC army were arrested and a wall 1.2 kilometers long and 4 meters high that surrounded the camp was torn down. The existence of the hell on earth that Jasenovac had been had finally come to an end.

The various examples which were mentioned in this historical introduction, lead us to the conclusion that among criminal regimes there is the worst but sometimes even worse than the worst. Nazi Germany brought criminality against humanity which the world had not seen to that point. Analyzing all the above-mentioned manifestations of evil it is not difficult to come to the conclusion that the Ustasha regime and its atrocities were even worse than German Nazi atrocities. The Ustaschas’ wicked minds overshadowed in many aspects the murderous minds of the Nazis. The techniques of murder of the Ustasha were much more brutal, wilder and more malicious. The Croats even surpassed the Germans in their wickedness and in their bloodlust (Greif, 2020a). It seems that they lost all humanity. It is therefore justified to define Jasenovac as the Auschwitz of the Balkans. We have emphasized the common denominators, the differences and the identical aspects and although it is not always possible to compare the two regimes, in this case it is legitimate and even recommended in order to send a warning to the world: Auschwitz and Jasenovac should never be repeated again.

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ДИРЕКТНИ НАЧИНИ УБИЈАЊА ЖРТАВА

1. Давање у реци
2. Тровање цијанидом
3. Убијање чекићем
4. Убијање маљем
5. Убијање секиром
6. Убијање српом
7. Вешање
8. Одсецање главе
9. Масовно убијање „србосјеком“
10. Гушење рукама
11. Пререзивање гркљана
12. Пробадање ножем до смрти
13. Вађење срца из жртве
14. Устреливање
15. Премлаћивање насмрт гвозденим шипкама
16. Убијање трудница струјом

МУЧЕЊЕ ЖРТАВА КОЈЕ У ВЕЋИНИ СЛУЧАЈЕВА
ДОВОДИ ДО СМРТИ

17. Бацање живих жртава у јаме
18. Спаљивање живе жртве (поливање бензином)
19. Масовно спаљивање у пећима
20. Набијање на колац
21. Кување живих у казанима за сапун
22. Вађење органа из живих жртава
23. Бацање жртава псима и свињама
24. Бичевање до смрти
25. Драње коже жртава
26. Гажење до смрти
27. Укуцавање ексера у главу
28. Комадање тела жртава
29. Копање очију
30. Разапињање (са закуцавањем ексера)

DIRECT METHODS OF KILLING VICTIMS

1. Drowning in the river
2. Poisoning with cyanide
3. Killing with a hammer
4. Killing with a mallet
5. Killing with an axe
6. Killing with a scythe
7. Hanging
8. Decapitation
9. Mass killings with the "Serb-cutter"
10. Strangulation
11. Slitting of throat
12. Knifing to death
13. Removing the heart of the victim
14. Shooting from firearm
15. Beating to death with iron bars
16. Electrocuting pregnant women

METHODS OF TORTURE WHICH MOSTLY LED TO DEATH

17. Throwing the living into pits
18. Burning a living victim (dousing with petrol)
19. Mass burning in furnaces
20. Impalement
21. Boiling the living in vats for soap
22. Extracting organs from living victims
23. Throwing the living to dogs and pigs
24. Whipping to death
25. Flaying
26. Trampling to death
27. Driving nails into the heads of victims
28. Dismembering
29. Gouging out of eyes
30. Crucifying (with nails)

31. Одсецање тестиса
32. Ломљење костију
33. Премлаћивање
34. Набијање ексера под нокте
35. Везивање жртве и њено ваљање по дасци са ексерима
36. Вешање за ноге
37. Организовање гладијаторских борби (брат на брата)
38. Засецање ради пијења крви
39. Окивање ногу логораша бухагијама (гвозденим ланцима)
40. Тровање хране каустичном содом
41. Прогоривање жртве лемпицом

ПОСЕБНИ НАЧИНИ УБИЈАЊА И МУЧЕЊА ЖЕНА

42. Вађење фетуса из стомака трудних жена
43. Силовање и набијање на колац
44. Силовање и одсецање дојки
45. Силовање и стављање живих пацова у гениталије
46. Силовање и стављање опушача у гениталије

ПОСЕБНИ НАЧИНИ УБИЈАЊА И МУЧЕЊА ДЕЦЕ

47. Разбијање дечије главе о зид
48. Разбијање дечије главе маљем
49. Набијање деце на бајонет
50. Ослепљивање деце тако што су терана да гледају сунце

СТАВЉАЊЕ ЖРТАВА У УСЛОВЕ КОЈИ НЕСУМЊИВО УЗРОКУЈУ ТЕШКЕ БОЛЕСТИ ИЛИ СМРТ

51. Изгладњивање
52. Држање затвореника без воде
53. Недостатак тоалета
54. Потпуно нехигијенски услови који директно доводе до заразних болести
55. Стимулисање на канибализам у условима крајњег изгладњивања
56. Робовски рад до смрти
57. Смрзавање

31. Removing testicles
32. Breaking of bones
33. Beating
34. Driving iron pins under finger nails
35. Tying up the victim and rolling him over a board with protruding nails
36. Hanging by the feet
37. Organizing gladiatorial fights (brother against brother)
38. Cutting to drink the blood of victims
39. Putting victims in iron shackles
40. Poisoning of food with caustic soda
41. Burning victim with soldering iron

SPECIAL WAYS OF KILLING AND TORTURING WOMEN

42. Removing the fetus from the woman's womb
43. Rape and impalement
44. Rape and cutting off breasts
45. Rape and putting living rats in genitalia
46. Rape and putting cigarette butts in genitalia

SPECIAL WAYS OF KILLING AND TORTURING CHILDREN

47. Smashing the child's head against a wall
48. Bludgeoning the child's head with a mallet
49. Bayonetting
50. Blinding by forcing the children to look at the sun

PLACING THE VICTIMS IN CONDITIONS WHICH INEVITABLY CAUSE SERIOUS ILLNESS OR DEATH

51. Starvation
52. Deprivation of water
53. Lack of sanitary facilities
54. Unhygienic conditions which directly lead to the outbreak of infectious disease
55. Stimulating cannibalism by causing starvation
56. Slave labor to the death
57. Freezing





Photo 12:

Ustasha crime: decapitation, December 1942.

Photo documentation of the Museum of the Victims of Genocide, Belgrade. Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)



Photo 13:

Ustasha crime: decapitation, December 1942.

Photo documentation of the Museum of the Victims of Genocide, Belgrade. Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)



Photo 14

Photo: Archive of Yugoslav Cinematheque.

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)



Photo 15: Victim of Ustasha terror with a stone around waist and in the mouth. The corpse was taken out from the Sava River, downstream from Jasenovac. The shot was taken in 1945.

Photo documentation Donja Gradina Memorial Site.

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Photo 16: Ustasha crimes against children in Srebrenica, 1941

Photo documentation of the Museum of the Victims of Genocide, Belgrade.

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)



Photo 17: Divoselo (Lika), A girl stabbed by knife.
Italian photos of Ustasha Crimes.

Photo documentation of the Museum of the Victims of Genocide, Belgrade.

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)



Photo 18: Dead bodies were just thrown into the river.

Source: Archive of Yugoslav Cinematheque.

Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)



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Genocide over the Serbian People in the Independent State of Croatia (1941–1945)

Summary: From its very establishment in 1918, the Yugoslav state strived to be the state of “reconciliation”. That is why the crimes over Serbs perpetrated by Austria-Hungary were not largely emphasized in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Yugoslavia, particularly not the crimes by Croats in occupation units, but conscientious researchers have still left their testimonies about them (see Reiss, 2019). For the sake of “reconciliation”, nothing was said about the genocide over the Serbian people in WW2 in the territory of the ISC. Because of the strategy of “keeping silent about the genocide”, crucially and for years, in the name of brotherhood and unity of Yugoslav nations, the topic did not have its place in the primary and secondary school curricula; the genocide crime perpetrated over the Serbian people was not discussed in history textbooks; for decades, it was not the topic in literature, while historians did not research the genocide crime or wrote substantially about it. However, if several generations of the representatives of the historian profession have an “alibi” for such behaviour, the generation of those writing in Serbian culture today must also take an attitude towards that sensitive topic. “To speak up” about the genocide over the Serbian people in the 20th century primarily means to write critically about the past times, with no passion, rationally and based on historical sources, “the way it really occurred”.

Keywords: genocide, Independent State of Croatia, racial laws, Serbs, Jews

Genocide, as defined by the Resolution of the General Assembly of the OUN, No. 96 of 11 December 1946 and adopted on 9 December 1948 as the Genocide Convention that came into force on 12 January 1951,^[2] **has constantly accompanied wars and been the undesired part of the history of Serbs in the 20th century.** The “crime under

international law”, which means “killing members of the group”, “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group”, “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”, “imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group”, “forcibly transferring children

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[2] There are essential differences between the understanding of genocide in the 1946 Resolution and the 1948 Genocide Convention, which, according to Smilja Avramov, practically reduces it to the “biological destruction of the group” (see Avramov, 2008, p. Avramov, 2008, p. 78).

of the group to another group” etc., was present in all 20th century wars that affected the Serbian nation. By its tragic scope and bestiality, the crime of genocide over the Serbian nation in the years of the Second World War (1941–1945) in the territory of the Nazi creation of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC), was definitely the most devastating one. Silence about that crime has prevailed for decades.

42 | Genocide over a nation is never a phenomenon exclusively determined by the time of its occurrence, but a social phenomenon with a long previous history. Therefore, the suffering of the Serbian people in the territory of the ISC was preceded by decades-long destruction of its name, Orthodox Christianity it confessed, the alphabet it used. In the last decades of the 19th century, Serbs were labelled as the “disruptive factor” in the Croatian society, considered “traitors”, bearers of “Byzantium” unknown to Europe, opponents of “West European culture”, “bandits”, an element dangerous “in its thoughts and in its racial composition”, a “breed” that is prone to “conspiracies, revolutions and ousting from power” ... The researchers of this phenomenon state that Serbs are rarely called by their real name – Serbs – by the Croatian press and influential Croatian politicians, but many other names or even more often derogatory words are used for them: “Gypsies”, “Wallachians”, “Byzantines”, “so-called Serbs”, “brood”, “Serbians”, “muddy bastards”, “horrendous slave creatures”, “slave breed”, “trash”, “brood to be killed by the axe”, “dogs” ... (Krestić, 2014, pp. 11–12). In that manner, they are deprived of human dignity, given animal features and dehumanized.

This hard-to-understand hatred towards Serbs was encouraged by Croatia’s political thought that

had no tolerance towards others. The realization of that exclusive and restrictive politics actually meant “opening” the conflict with Serbs, labelled by the representatives of political parties and religious prelates as “Orthodox schismatics” whose presence in the territory considered solely Croatian by Croatian politicians was contentious. After the destruction of the name, political annihilation inevitably led towards systematic attempts to displace Serbs from the environment in which they had lived for centuries. It was equally supported by forced displacement, physical liquidation, conversion to Catholicism, annihilation of religious and cultural identities, change in the national awareness, and erasure of memories...

Within the context of shaping exclusive ideas about the nationally clean, predominantly Catholic Croatia that covered the entire ethnic and socio-historical space in which the Croatian nation lived in the past (Greater Croatia), politically advocated first by Eugen Kvaternik and Ante Starčević, and subsequently by other political followers (Josip Frank, Ante Pavelić and others), Serbs were denied the right to national distinctiveness and were threatened by extermination. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, anti-Serbian and anti-Orthodox feelings continued to expand further. It was also contributed to by the fear of conservative structures in the Croatian society from liberal ideas, pan-Slavism, Yugoslavism, and the spirit of the new era indicating the possibility of Serbs and Croats becoming closer. The ideas of Greater Croatian chauvinism and ideology of militant clericalism were not disseminated only by the representatives of the extreme right wing (“Pure Party of Rights”, subsequently “Party of Rights”) and clericalists (Franco-Furtimas), but

also by all those who thought that Serbs were in the way to the realization of the idea of Greater Croatia.^[3] Those who expressed fear from Orthodox Christianity were afraid of cultural, economic and political rise of Serbs (see Krestić, 2007). In such a society, a significant influence was gained by exclusive anti-Serbian, anti-Orthodox, anti-Yugoslav and anti-Slav “racial nationals” that expressed racial, religious and national intolerance. Its ideal – “pure Croatism” – was equally advocated by the followers of the Party of Rights (*Frankovci*) and cleric. From their cooperation, the “racial concept” was formed, which, in the second half of the 1930s and particularly in the Second World War, will be manifested in clerical Nazism (Novak, 1989, pp. 3–5).

In Croatia’s state territory, according to the political attitudes founded in the utterly fictitious “Croatian state and historical right”, which was advocated by the largest and most influential part of Croatian political parties, politicians and reputed intellectuals, there could be only one nation – Croatian “political” nation.^[4] According to the political and legal interpretations, it was composed of all the inhabitants of Croatia, regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation^[5] (Krestić, 2007, pp. 36–85).

Those were political ideas aimed at making the multinational territory into, ethnically speaking, unique, nationally homogeneous Croatia. Others, who insisted on preserving their own national, cultural and religious identities, were not recognized political individuality and national particularity and, in certain historical situations, even the right to live. Political and clerical propaganda marked resistance to the conversion to Croatism as the dissemination of the idea of “Serbian nationalism” and the aspirations of Serbs to obtain political and other privileges that did not belong to them. In that manner, among the conservative population of the Croatian village and the masses living in towns, the feeling was created that even the mention of the name, the confession of Orthodox Christianity, the use of national symbols, economic life and the very existence of Serbs were a “political offense” that should be sanctioned (Krestić, 2007, pp. 25–66).

With time, in political life, an increasingly present “belief” was spread that there were no Serbs whatsoever, but that those were Orthodox Croats, “traitors of their homeland and blood”, who should be forced to accept the Croatian state idea and return to the religion of “their fathers” (Krestić,

[3] The geo-political position of the Triune Kingdom (Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia) which, according to many, without Bosnia and Herzegovina as the specific “belly” and “core” of the future state, did not fulfil the basic conditions for political, economic and strategic survival and progress, caused further conflicted between Croatian politicians and religious dignitaries with Serbs as the largest nation in that territory and a potential threat to the achievement of the goals of the Croatian politics. In fact, the Orthodox population accounted for 43% of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the beginning of the 20th century, under the influence of Catholicization and migratory movements, the percentage of Catholic population rose from 18% to 23% while that of the Muslim population dropped from 39% to 32%.

[4] The series begins with E. Kvaternik, A. Starčević, F. Supilo, J. Frank and continues with V. Maček, A. Pavelić etc.

[5] Before the 1848 revolution, the “political” nation had been composed only of the noblemen, and afterwards the term included all Croats and other inhabitants of Croatia who obtained the Croatian national-political identity, regardless of their nationality.

2007, pp. 78–85). For these reasons, the historical moment for the actual clash with the Serbian people had been awaited for decades, while for the realization of the plans that essentially meant the “solution” of the Serbian issue in the territory of Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, a creditor was sought in the circle of great powers.^[6] In the propaganda, the destruction of the Serbian people was regarded as the “natural right” of the Croatian people, while the outbreak of the wars (the First World War and later the Second World War) were welcomed as a moment when Croatia will free itself from Serbs (Krestić, 2007, pp. 119–134). Therefore, the cohabitation of Serbs and Croats in the Yugoslav state (1918–1941) was not a reason but only a potential pretext for the crimes perpetrated during the Second World War. A rational explanation for the genocide crime perpetrated against the Serbian people may be found only in the attempts of Croatian Ustasha authorities to realize their politics of “Croatian state and historical right” in the war circumstances, which implied either assimilation or destruction of the Serbian people (the requests were as follows: entire Croatia within ethnic and state-historical boundaries should be formed; it should be ethnically clean Croatia; it should be Roman-Catholic Croatia). In the Croatian political thought, everyday practice of the Ustasha movement, and in the state politics

of the ISC, the Serbian people were marked as the mortal enemy of the Croatian state, while the suppression of Serbs was declared an act of patriotism (Krestić, 2007, pp. 135–159).

*

The Independent State of Croatia was declared on 10 April 1941.^[7] It was the “state”:

- created in the war conditions and contrary to international law;
- constituting an expression of the new Nazi order in Europe (existing equivalently to Adolf Hitler’s order itself);
- totalitarian in its character, and close to the Third Reich by its ideology and political organization.

Its Supreme Leader Ante Pavelić was simultaneously:

- the leader of a Fascist-type extremist and terrorist organization;
- the head of a totalitarian state with “racial laws”, which “raised” the perpetration of genocide crimes to the level of a legal obligation and enabled the formation of specific “bureaucratic instruments” (institutions) for its implementation;
- the creator of the racist ideology that constituted the foundation for destroying Serbs, Jews and Roma;

[6] In the First World War, it was the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, while in the Second World War it was Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

[7] The declaration of the ISC was initiated by the personal envoy of Joachim von Ribbentrop, Colonel Edmund Veesenmeyer. This Nazi creation was ceremoniously declared on 10 April 1941 by Slavko Kvaternik (more in: Čulinović, 1970; Jelić Butić, 1977; Požar, 1995; Dimić, 2017).

– the person who held the overall power (dictatorial authorities) in his hands).

The ideological basis of the Ustasha movement was made by the synthesis of the teaching about “Croatian state and historical right” of A. Starčević and J. Frank and the “peasant ideology” of S. Radić. In its foundations, an extremely nationalist and racist policy strived towards the formation of “purely Croatian living space” where the existence for the “purely Croatian nation” would be ensured. The prerequisite for fulfilling these goals was the biological destruction of the “greatest enemies” of the Croatian people and the Croatian state – Serbs, Jews and Roma. Because of the “non-Croatian behaviour”, many Croats were also persecuted due to being considered “a stain on the body of the pure Croatian nation” (Principles of the Croatian Ustasha Movement, in: *Požar*, 1995, pp. 57–90; J. Mirković, 2014, pp. 48–48; Živković and Kačavenda, 1998).

The character of the ISC was convincingly supported by the legislation. Immediately after its declaration, the Croatian state enacted the Legal Decree on the Oath of Allegiance to the State of Croatia” (10 April 1941); “Legal Decree on the Defence of the National and the State” (17 April 1941); “Legal Decree on the Preservation of the Croatian National Property” (18 April 1941); “Decision on the Elimination of the Street Names with Nothing in Common with the Croatian metropolis and the Croatian People” (19 April 1941), and “Legal Decree on the Prohibition of Cyrillic” (25 April 1941). By the end of April 1941, the following legislation was adopted: “Legal Decree on the Establishment of the Croatian State Department for the Language (28 April 1941); “Regulation on the Harmonization of the Work of the Ustasha Organization with Govern-

ment Authorities” (29 April 1941); “Legal Decree on the Citizenship” (30 April 1941); “Legal Decree on the Racial Affiliation” (30 April 1941), and “Legal Decree on the Protection of the Aryan Blood and Honour of the Croatian Nation” (30 April 1941) (Mirković, 2017, pp. 45–74). In the days when the recognition of the ISC by the Vatican was expected and the meeting of A. Pavelić and Pope Pius XII was prepared, the Independent State of Croatia adopted the “Legal Decree on the Conversion from one Religion to Another” (3 May 1941), “The Supreme Leader’s Statement about the Foreign Politics Implemented in Line with the Politics of the Axis Arch-authorities” (6 May 1941), decisions about the movement regime of Serbs and Jews, their displacement from the northern parts of Zagreb, the obligation of wearing “Jewish signs” (7 May 1941) and “blue bands” that marked Orthodox Christians (Požar, 1995, pp. 133–220). It was racial legislation that enabled the genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma to become part of the state politics. Warped Catholicism, which too often cited morality, law, justice and piety, permitted crime against those categories of population that had previously been marked as church enemies and all those against whom the “crusade war” was waged.

The analyses of the ISC legal order show that it does not even exist in the Quisling creation, i.e. that it manoeuvres between the „order of force”, which is designed for the categories of population including Serbs, Jews and Roma, and the incomplete “order of law”, that applies only to the privileged categories of population. A large number of the laws and regulations was, as perceived by the legal experts, “to an unbearable extent” unjust and it did not ensure the survival of the whole nations

living in the territory of the ISC o (Zdravković, 2017. pp. 21–44). In other words, the laws and bylaws of the ISC legalized terror exposed entire nations to annihilation and planned genocide, while ensuring the formation of the ethnically clean territory. With the same aim, all measures and actions were organized and implemented by the Ustasha authorities regardless of the enacted laws and the created “legalist framework” (so-called Ustasha wild terror)^[8] (Goldstein, 2012, p. 50).

In many segments, the Ustasha regime resembled the Nazi regime in Germany. “The Legal Decree on the Defence of the National and the State”, as well as other regulations deriving from it, completely disenfranchised and placed Serbs, Jews and Roma outside the legal framework and left them without protection. At the same time, those legal acts established the institutions of the Ustasha power and reign of terror (police, army, secret police, special courts, concentration camps etc.). “Nationally intolerant politics” was recommended to the ISC authorities by Adolf Hitler himself (see Đurić Mišina, 2002, p. 24). In addition, Germany supported all those measures leading towards the “national reorganization of the territory” with the use of force (Avramov, 1992, p. 174). Crimes against Serbs were accompanied by the statements of the Supreme Leader and Croatian high officials, openly saying “there would be no tolerance” or “mercy” towards that nation and its religion. Serbs were threatened by “extermination”, “devastation” and

“destruction”.^[9] It was indicated that everything Serbian would be turned into “fire and ashes”, and the use was mentioned of the methods of “cleansing” Croatia from Serbs and doing everything to make them “disappear” or become just a “bad memory”.^[10] Genocide was conducted through numerous forms of physical and psychological violence. It was the most absurd expression of the program that had been prepared and supplemented for decades.

First arrests of Serbs by the previously made lists began in the night between 10 and 11 April 1941. Individual crimes against Serbs began on the same day. Massacres of Serbian civilians began in the vicinity of Petrovo Selo on 17 April 1941. Mass crimes may be registered as early as the end of April 1941. The first of them was committed in the village of Gudovac, near Bjelovar, when about 200 wealthier Serbs were shot to death. First camps for Serbs and Jews were established at the end of April and the beginning of May 1941. The quotas according to which 50 respectable Orthodox Serbs should be killed for each killed Croat were determined as early as 25 May 1941. The rewards to Ustasha for killing Serbs were introduced at the beginning of June 1941. The activities of “wild cleansing of the field”, which turned into mass liquidations of Serbs, became part of everyday life in the ISC as of June 1941. They were followed by mass slaughter in Sanski Most, Ključ, Bosanski Petrovac, Bihać, Ljubinje, Drvar, Glina etc. (see J. Mirković, 2014; J. Mirković, 2006; Jelić Butić, 1977; Bulajić, 1988).

[8] More about the legal order in the ISC in: *Legal Order of the ISC*, 2017 (papers by M. Zdravković, Z. Mirković, T. Mladenović, M. Davinić, I. Vuković, I. Krstić, M. Jovanović, D. Popović, D. Đukić and N. Kršljanin).

[9] The statements of the Supreme Leader Ante Pavelić, the Minister of Interior A. Artuković, the Minister of Justice M. Puk, the Ustasha Director J. Rukavina and others.

[10] The statements of M. Lorković, M. Budak, M. Žanić, D. Jurčev and others.

Serbs were burnt in their places of worship. They were thrown into the ravines throughout the ISC. They were liquidated in numerous camps: “Stara Gradiška”, “Gospić”, “Jadovno”, “Slana” and “Metajna” on the island of Pag, “Daruvar”, “Jastrebarsko”, “Slavonska Požega”, “Vinkovci”^[11] Only the Jasenovac camp complex, which is called “the planet of death” by many, “swallowed” several hundred thousand Serbian lives. Special legislation regulating the functioning of the camps was also in force.^[12] Approximately 400.000 Serbs went through the collection and concentration camps in the territory of the ISC. According to German sources, more than 750.000 Serbs were killed in the territory of the ISC (Ekmečić, 1999, p. 144). It was an attempt of the Ustasha authorities, as German high officers noted, to force the solution of the “Serbian issue” in the territory of the ISC, i.e. by physical liquidations, forced displacement and conversion, so as to destroy the population that accounted for almost one third of the ISC population (about 1.9 million people).^[13] Out of the registered victims in the territory of the ISC, Serbs accounted for 63.95%. The largest number of them were civilians (76% of all victims)

died in the camps (30.92%) and in direct terror (34.68%). In the ISC, 74,981 Serbian children were killed. It was the only state in war-stricken Europe with exclusively children camps (see J. Mirković, 2014, pp. 47–69; Petešić, 1990; Bulajić, 1988).

The number of Serbs in the ISC was also reduced through forced displacement or, as the Ustasha propaganda referred to it, by “returning” Serbs to the territories they had come from.^[14] The statements of the Ustasha officials, spreading fear and the application of terror also encouraged self-initiated emigration. The displacement from Zagreb began as early as 5 July 1941. According to available data, about 250.000 Serbs were forced to move out of the territory of the ISC. It was part of the plan of “ethnic reorganization” of Europe, which was insisted on by the Nazis. Within Germanization of the annexed parts of other countries, it was planned to displace about 260.000 Slovenes as well (Maribor, 6 May 1941). The possibility of settling them instead of Serbs in the territory of the ISC encouraged Archbishop Stepinac to condition it with the deportation of the same number of Serbs to Serbia. His “wish” came true and he

[11] In the territory of the ISC, more than 20 concentration camps were established.

[12] We will list some of the legal acts: “Legal Decree on the Establishment of the State Directory for Renewal” (24 June 1941) and, on its basis, the “Prohibition Order of the Government’s Presidency” of 26 June 1941 and “Circular Decision of the State Directory for Renewal” of 2 July 1941 on the establishment of the Department for Displacement, its organization and tasks, describing the conditions for the establishment of the collection centres; “Extraordinary Legal Regulation and Order” of 26 June 1941 and the Order of the Minister of Interior about its Publication; “Legal Decree on the Internment of Undesirable Persons to Forced Stay in Collection and Labour Camps” of 25 November 1941.

[13] The data about the number of Serbs in the territory of the ISC range from 2.4 million (according to the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and 2.2 million, according to Germans) to 1.25 million (official sources of the ISC). Most authors state the number of about 1.9 million Serbs (see Đurić Mišina, 2002, pp. 16–18).

[14] On 24 July 1941, the legal regulations about the displacement of Serbs were adopted – “Instructions for the Displacement of Two-Religion Families”; “Legal Decree on the Formation of the State Directory for Renewal” of 24 June 1941; secret Circular Order on the Displacement of Serbs of 29 June 1941.

confirmed the arrangement made at the meeting in Zagreb on 4 June 1941, when it was decided to expel 205.000 Serbs from the territory of the ISC to Serbia in the following four months. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia became most directly responsible for the perpetrated genocide crime (AJ, 110–617, hearing of S. Kasche; N. Kisić Kolanović, 2011, pp. 773–800).

A particular target of the Ustasha authorities was the Serbian Orthodox Church. According to the data of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, 171 priests were killed in the territory of the ISC, including three bishops (Petar Zimonjić, Platon Jovanović and Sava Trlajić). Many outstanding priests later died of the consequences of torture and maltreatment. In the war years, the Ustasha destroyed 450 Orthodox temples and damaged another 800. According to the data of the Serbian Orthodox Church, 639 priests fled from the territory of the ISC, while 599 were exiled. Mass and individual crimes against the Serbian people took place in 48 temples. The paradigm of crime is the slaughter in Glina, where at the end of July and the beginning of August 1,564 people were killed, while some of them were burnt in the Orthodox Church. Together with the places of worship and parish homes, archives, libraries and treasuries were destroyed, property was robbed, and relics, church bells, paintings and artefacts were taken away. Such destruction of the Serbian Orthodox Church has a pronounced economic dimension as well. It was a spiritual and cultural genocide, the erasure of the trace of existence of Serbs in this territory (Mirković, 2016, pp. 5–7).

In the activities of forced conversion, about 250.000 Orthodox Serbs were converted to Roman Catholicism. In that form of genocide, the Ustasha authorities had the unlimited support of the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church in the ISC, whose prelates advocated conversion to Catholicism, i.e. “returning” Serbs to the “faith of their forefathers” (see Đurić Mišina, 2002, pp. 43–79; Cvitković, 1986). In that process, the starting point was the falsification of history, and the attitude that Serbs used to be Catholics and should be returned under the wing of the Roman Catholic Church. There was even mention of as many as 230,000 Croats who had been converted to Orthodox Christianity between 1918 and 1941. All research shows that it was the falsification of history and that all those people, probably born in mixed marriages between Croats and Orthodox Serbs, who in the agrarian society of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had accepted the religion and nationality of their fathers, and were thus considered by the Roman Catholic Church as converts into Orthodox Christianity. The point of everything, however, was concealed in the tendency to use conversion in order to make Orthodox Serbs disappear from the territory of the ISC. For that sake, the very term “Orthodox” was changed into “Greek-Eastern”. Another term, “schismatics”, was widely used (Simić, 1990, p. 58). In any case, conversion of Serbs to Roman Catholicism “opened” a road towards the loss of not only religious, but also of national identity, and towards denationalization. “Religious unity”, advocated by the Roman Catholic Church, coincided with the intentions of the Ustasha authorities to use violence in order to

realize “ethnic unity” of the ISC inhabitants.^[15] In the whole process of conversion, the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in the ISC had the support of the Holy Congregation for the Eastern Church from Rome and Pope Pius XII himself.

A particular strike against the Serbian Orthodox Church occurred at the beginning of 1942 by the formation of the “Croatian Orthodox Church”. It was the move of the German military structures in the ISC, which insisted on it under the pretext of allegedly “calming down” and “mitigating” the politics of annihilation of Serbs. With this act, Serbs were temporarily reduced to a confessional community. They were deprived of their name, Orthodox Christianity was reduced to a “pseudo-church” established in the Roman Catholic spirit, and the process of conversion of the Serbian people to Catholicism was intensified (Đurić, 1990).

The robbery of the Serbian property was one of the motives and measures of the Ustasha authorities designed to suit the creation of living conditions leading to partial or total destruction of Serbs. In the beginning, the measure of property confiscation was “spontaneous” and accompanied other forms of genocide over the Serbian people in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia (liquidations, displacement, and conversion to Catholicism). With time, the Ustasha regime strived to enact special regulations and laws, thus creating the impression of the legal state. The foundation for that “legal order” was the Austrian General Civil Code, which, during the war year, was “amended” by numerous

legal regulations with the “practical meaning” for the authorities, but with the worst “discriminatory character” for Serbs and Jews. The aim was to confiscate their property, and thus the means for life (survival). There were also regulations that were not discriminatory themselves, but relied on other legal regulations and legal practice, thus referring only to certain categories of citizens. Outside the legal framework, reality was filled with “wild chaos”, bare violence and the absence of any safety for Serbs. Those measures and everyday forcible actions of the Ustasha authorities in the confiscation of property destroyed the imposed impression of “Draconian legality”. The “right” to real estate in the ISC was granted only to those citizens considered desirable by the Ustasha regime. There were neither Serbs nor Jews in that category of citizens. The Independent State of Croatia was not a legal state because in it, just as in its German model, the essence of justice, i.e. “equal treatment with equals” was avoided. The value of the property confiscated from the Serbian people in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia has never been precisely determined. However, it is more important to state the fact that discriminatory regulations about the confiscation of the Serbian property led to complete or partial physical destruction of the Serbs in the territory of the ISC (Kršljanin, 2017, pp. 291–333).

The Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia were persecuted because they were:

- Serbs (nationally);
- Yugoslavs (nationally and politically);

[15] About the legislation enabling and encouraging religious conversion, see: “Circular Decision” and “Instructions for Religious Conversions” of 14 June 1941; “Legal Decree on the Conversion from One Religion to Another” of 3 May 1941; “Instruction on the Occasion of Conversion from One Religion to Another” of 27 May 1941.

- Orthodox Christians (religious reasons);
- Liberals or communists (ideologically);
- Opponents of the Croatian state and renegades (political crime);
- Wealthy people whose property should be confiscated (economic reasons).

Overall criminalization of Serbs is underway. The genocide policy was implemented and accompanied with propaganda like any other bureaucratic measure and action (without considering the

consequences). The crime has been legalized and begins by destroying cultural and spiritual values of the Serbs. It is the state with no rule of law and legal security of citizens, in which there were racial and discriminatory laws, in which the right of force prevailed over the force of law, in which terror over the population of a different religion and nation was legalized and made constituent part of the state project whose final aim was the “final solution” of the Serbia, as well as the Jewish and Roma question.

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Photo 1: This map shows the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. From 1941-1943 the ISC had a population of 6.3 million. During World War II in the Ustasha state 74 762 children lost their lives, of which 60 643 were murdered or tortured. Taken, with the permission of the author, from the book *Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans* by Gideon Greif (Teper LTD, Garey Tikva, Israel, 2021)



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The Idea of a Greater Croatia and Genocide as an Instrument for its Realization^[2]

Summary: The paper consists of two selected chapters from the author's monograph published under the title *Through Genocide to a Greater Croatia*. The text points to the development of the great state idea among the Croats, aimed at creating the ethnically pure and Catholic state of Croatia, which is followed from the middle of the 19th century to modern times. The genocide over the Serbian people perpetrated in the so-called "Independent State of Croatia" from 1941 to 1945 was also guided by that idea. The idea was continued during Tuđman's coming to power in 1990, and one of the first moves of the new government was to change Croatia's Constitution by turning the Serbs in Croatia as a constitutional nation into a national minority.

Keywords: Croatia, genocide over Serbs, continuity of the Greater Croatia state project.

Croatia was constantly spreading threatening rumors about Serbia's intention to create a greater Serbia and its aspirations to a greater Serbia hegemony. This was an enviable adjective mentioned in all anti-Serb speeches delivered before the Yugoslav and the international public. The intention of these attacks was, on the one hand, to present the Serbs and Serbia as an aggressor with great territorial aspirations, and on the other, to conceal their own aggressive and territorial appetite for the ethnic, state and historical territories which belonged to the others.

This tactic is well-known as a constant feature of the Croatian policy. Actually, Croatia inherited this political approach from the collapsed Austria-Hungary whose campaign of demonizing the Serbs and their efforts for liberation and unification of their people was becoming increasingly intensive with the increase of their own appetite for the Balkan territories and their promotion of the German policy of *Drang nach Osten*. According to this tactical approach, everything that was Serbian was, as a rule, proclaimed greater Serbian in order to nip in the bud all Serbian interests conflicting with

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[2] The Editorial Board of the journal *Napredak* publishes exceptionally this paper as a reprint, which has been done for the first time in this journal, having in mind the significance of this paper as well as the scientific oeuvre of Academic Vasilije Krestić. With the permission of the author, this text has been reprinted from the chapter *The Idea of A Greater Croatia and Genocide as An Instrument for Its Realization and Conclusion* from his book *Through Genocide to A Greater Croatia*. The citation style has been adjusted to the rules of the journal *Napredak*.

the Austrian ones. Following in the wake of the Austro-Hungarian anti-Serb policy in which they also participated, and as of the 1848 Revolution to this day have rather often been in its frontlines, the Croatian politicians with the greater Croatia ambitions in all historical periods arrogantly attacked the Serbian policy, always calling it greater Serbian. By attacking the Serbian and the greater Serbian idea as a rival to the Croatian and a greater Croatian idea, Croatian politicians did not only dream about a greater Croatia, but continuously and persistently worked towards its establishment, according to Machiavellian principle that ends justify the means, even genocide against the Serbs in view of their extermination.

Croatian territorial aspirations have a rather long history. Although rather small in numbers and in a small territory, the Croats have always fostered great imperial ambitions. The case in point are their various regional names, such as: “Alpine Croats” (for the Slovenians), “Orthodox Croats”, and “united Croats” (for the Serbs), or “the flowers of the Croatian people” (for the Muslims), then “Turkish Croatia”; “Red Croatia”, “White Croatia”, “Carinthian Croatia”, which were all the territories in Bosnia, Montenegro, Dalmatia and Slovenia. The Croats had fostered these names for centuries and instilled them into the conscience of the Croats, in order to develop in them the awareness of Croatia’s greatness and the numerical strength of the Croats.

Although I. I. Tkalac already in 1866 warned that states cannot be established on the ground of “old papers and virtual: territorial claims”, the

policy based on the Croatian state and historical right could only be greater Croatia oriented. Their almost paranoiac ambitions in this regard are best illustrated in the views expressed in the paper of the Party of Rights, *Hrvatska*, which in its article entitled “Which is the Right Croatian Policy and Who is Promoting it?” (*Koja je prava hrvatska politika i ko je zastupa?*) (No. 6,1871, No. 6) claims: “According to the Croatian state, historical and ethnic right, Croatian territories spread from Germany to Macedonia, from the Danube to the sea and also encompass the following provinces: Southern Styria, Carinthia, Kranjska, Gorizia, Istria, Croatia, Slavonia, Krajina, Dalmatia, Upper Albania, Montenegro, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Rascia, Serbia, which all have one name: the State of Croatia. Croatian territories encompass over 4000 square miles, with the population of up to eight million.”

This view published in *Hrvatska* was not an isolated case, a statement made by an irresponsible journalist or politician, or the result of a cranky obsession, but a natural outcome of a deeply rooted and widespread conviction. Already in 1869, in his letter to Don Mihovil Pavlinović, Eugen Kvaternik wrote that if the policy of the Party of Rights were followed and the Croatian state and historical right were respected, then “not from the Drava River to the sea, but from Salzburg Tyrolean Alps to Kosovo and Albania, the flag of the pure and undivided Croatia would be flown!”^[3]

Indoctrinated with the expansionist idea of greater Croatism and “armed” with the state and historical right, “the Croatian Academic Youth”

[3] A letter to M. Pavlinović, by E. Kvaternik, Zagreb, June 22, 1869 (see Krestić, 1995, pp. 143-144).

supported by Ante Starčević, the father of the Fatherland, claimed not only Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also “the whole of Albania, Rascia, upper Moesia or today’s Serbia as Croatian lands!” (Archives of Serbia, Collection of donated and purchased documents, v. LX, No. 39; Šidak, 1972-1973, pp. 281-303). One of the supporters of this “specific aspect of Croatism” even wrote that “the Croatian King was invited to hoist the cross on St. Sofia Church in Constantinople” (Jagić, 1930, p. 324).

Đuro Deželić, a well-known Croatian writer and publicist and a follower of Starčević’s Party of Rights, in 1879 published his book *Croatian Ethnicity or the Soul of the Croatian People (Hrvatska narodnost iliti duša hrvatskog naroda)*, in which he claimed that since they were populated by the Croats, the Croatian territories encompassed the present Dalmatia with Boka Kotorska, Bosnia, i.e. Turkish Croatia and Rascia (the Novi Pazar Pashaluk), the present Herzegovina up to the source of the Neretva River, even in 1789, when Engel wrote his history of Turkey, was still called Turkish Dalmatia, and finally Montenegro with Northern Albania” (see Jagić, 1930, pp. 179-180).

In order to realize its aspiration to Bosnia and Herzegovina, on August 23, 1878, in its address to Franz Joseph, the Croatian Parliament expressed hope that Bosnia would be organized so as “to pave the way to its annexation to the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, in due time” (Ćorović, 1995, pp. 196-197). The aspiration to Bosnia and Herzegovina was so strong that Bishop Strossmayer, in his letter of 24 March 1878, said with indignation: “Our people are looking at Bosnia and Herzegovina like a vulture at its prey, unaware of the fact that all our internal logic is against it. How can we expect to be

liberated by those who simply cannot stand us, who are ready and eager to obliterate us and pronounce an anathema against us” (Ćorović, 1995, p. 197).

Almost twenty years before, when he was not yet disappointed in Austria and its policy towards the Croats, in his confidential memoranda to Prime Minister Count Rehberg, Strossmayer had tried to persuade the most responsible political factors in Vienna to get more actively involved in the solution of the Eastern question, suggesting that with the help of the Croats and the Military Border region (Vojna Krajina), Bosnia and Herzegovina would “fall into their hands like a ripe apple” (Krestić, 1976, p. 400). By offering Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, the Bishop wanted to tear those lands from the Turks, incorporate them into the Monarchy, and after gradually getting closer to them, to annex them to Croatia at the appropriate moment, if possible. Considering Bosnia as one of the Croatian lands, in 1879 Strossmayer wrote to Marijan Marković, Bishop of Banja Luka: “What is Bosnian is also Croatian, and what is Croatian is also Bosnian” (Mužić, 1969, p. 29).

The Program of the Party of Rights drafted at the beginning of November 1893 was the evidence of greater Croatia aspirations. The first article of this Program reads as follows: “*The Croatian state and natural right* should be implemented in *establishing the integral Kingdom of Croatia*, by uniting Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Rijeka, Međumurje, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Istria, Kranjska, Carinthia and Styria within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy (Mazzura & Derenčin, 1894, p. 12, italics by V. K.)

When they speak about “establishing the integrated Kingdom of Croatia” and the intention

of annexing all the above-mentioned lands, this implies that in the past all these lands were united. Actually, in their endeavors to establish a greater Croatia, the members of the Party of Rights not only in their party program, but also through their other numerous texts, disseminated distorted historical facts. In fact, the Croats had three categories of territorial claims: “the real territories”, i.e. Croatia, Slavonia and the City of Rijeka with surroundings; the lands claimed on the ground of their virtual right: Međumurje, Dalmatia, the Kvarner islands, part of Istria and the north western parts of Bosnia, and the territories claimed on the ground of “the Croatian state and natural rights” which the supporters of the greater Croatia idea were eager to see incorporated into Croatia. Therefore, in its Program of 1893, the Party of Rights incorporated the whole of Bosnia, Styria, Carinthia, Kranjska and entire Bosnia and Herzegovina, although they had never been part of Croatia. Anyway, the project of establishing a Greater Croatia, which was to be realized state by stage, was completed in the second half of the 19th century and in the subsequent decades only amended and complemented with new suggested strategies and tactics to be implemented in the realization of the desired objective.

For each of their maniac territorial claims, e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vojvodina, parts of Slovenia and Montenegro, the Croats had numerous explanations grounded on historical, natural,

ethnic, geographical, economic, geopolitical and numerous other reasons. They had a very well-developed strategy and a perfectly functioning system in this regard. The Croats most violently attacked and condemned every side claiming the territories they coveted. In connection with their maniac greed for territories, it should be recalled that during the whole period, from the second half of the 19th century to this day, the Croats have permanently demonized the Serbs, as they are doing nowadays. According to the Croats, the Serbs were bandits and highwaymen and mean and cunning Byzantines. The Serbs were bandits from Šumadija and Chetniks, whereas they, Croats, were cultivated, great humanists and a peace-loving people who are on different grounds entitled to the territories claimed arbitrarily by the Serbs, because the Serbs are predatory, a factor of instability and a source of crisis and conflict and war mongers (see Südländ, 1990, p. 383; Pavelić, 1977, p. 486; Vučić, 1995, p. 165). In this way, thanks to their obstinacy which commands admiration, armed with perfectly developed tactics, unobstructed and very often supported by the short-sighted and irrational policy of Belgrade, they managed to elevate their greater Croatia claims to the level of justified and legitimate rights. Once they had achieved this objective, they did not conceal their readiness to realize their national and state claims at all costs, including the implementation of the most brutal force.^[4]

[4] As early as 1911, in Article 7 of the Croatian Youth Program (Mladohrvatski program), the young followers of Starčević emphasized: “Young Croatism as the most pronounced expression of radical propaganda for a greater Croatia will be disseminated in all Croatian regions listed in the political program and in all Croatian settlements, mostly by means of agitation from mouth to ear, through the press, the cultural institutions which will be founded, *and in extreme cases, by all other means*” (Italics by V. K.). (Demetrović et al, 1911, p. 4).

The Serbs did not manage to react appropriately to such practice. Imbued with the idea of Yugoslavism, sincere and credulous promoters of brotherhood and unity, they were always behind the time and appalled after having revealed the truth and childishly confused wondered why the Croats hated them and why they were doing so much evil to them.

Hrvatski dnevnik (The Croatian Daily), a paper published by the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which supported a racial approach to the solution of the territorial question, in a series of its articles discussed the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to whom this territory actually belonged. In 1907, all these articles were collected and published in Sarajevo in a separate booklet entitled *Croatian Bosnia, We and "They" Over there (Hrvatska Bosna, mi I "on tamo")*. On the first pages of this book poisoned with Franko-Furim ideas, we read: "A number of geographic, ethnographic and historical circumstances in Bosnia have defined its position with regard to the Monarchy, and even more its political Croatism which actually represents a cultural link between Europe and the East and between the Monarchy and Bosnia. In the most difficult historical circumstances, this link was perhaps looser, but it was never broken. This Bosnian Croatism is actually the ethnic link between the territory in which the Croatian tribe established its first, although a very small state, and the present Croatia. It is on the ground of state law that this link entitles our king to feel in Bosnia as its ruler, and not as its appointed governor. In a nutshell: only Croatism, be it Christian or Islamic, is called upon to bridge the gap between Europe and the Balkans.

This feeling is simmering and living in all of us and it clearly defines the task which we are to perform during our historical and cultural development, which is *in the first place the rapprochement of Bosnia to Croatia and paving to Bosnia the way to Monarchy and to the heart of Europe through Croatia, because it is its only way, no matter from where you start. In this way, Croatism will be resurrected, because blood is thicker than water!*

We are aware that we shall be faced with serious resistance in pursuing this objective, but *we have been fighting this battle already for a long time against the elements which tend to cross to the other side of the above-described gap, as if attracted by an invisible centrifugal force to get out of the state community with the Monarchy. Until yesterday, these elements demonstrated their loyalty and today those who used to call us their Croatian brothers are weaving the nets and throwing them across the Drina River, in their brotherly embrace eager to deprive us of our historical right and our ethnicity and sell us with pleasure to Belgrade – in Terazije Square! But we are still standing on this side of the crossroads, whereas they will remain on the other side!*" (all italics by V. K., see Demetrović et al, 1991, pp. 5-6).

This was the spirit which imbued the greater Croatia circles, which in their paper *Croatism (Hrvatstvo)* described the kind of relations they intended to establish in this phantasmagoric, big state, which for centuries had preoccupied their dreams. In the first issue of this paper, published in Zagreb on May 2, 1904, in its editorial entitled *Our Program*, we also read: "We shall fight for independence of the Catholic Church, for its rights and institutions, against all attacks, regardless of which side they come from. It will be our tasks to secure

58 | conditions for social recovery in Christ in all walks of life. By using all available constitutional means, we shall endeavor to secure the greatest possible organic extension of the Croatian state law... In Croatian lands, we shall recognize only one political people – *Croatian*, only one official state flag – *Croatian*, and only one official language – *Croatian*.” Vehemently attacking the Croats inclined to cooperation and harmony with the Serbs, the paper *Hrvatstvo* wrote: “Here is Christ and over there anti-Christ.”_Here, a pure and glorious Croatism under the Croatian flag, and over there, irrational principles and a chaotic mixture of various flags. Here is our pride inherited from ancient Croats who did not allow a single foot of their territory to be taken away from them without bloodshed, and over there are those who are granting to others Croatian lands soaked with Croatian blood, as if they were old rags, and all this on behalf of harmony with those who do not care for harmony even with their own brother, unless he agrees to have his right hand cut off. What brotherhood!

On top of all this, you accuse us in your message that we will be responsible for the widening gap between the Serbs and the Croats!

Who has so far bridged the gap? You? When and how? You had enough time to do it! Where is the harmony you are talking about? The kind of harmony which some Serbs want to achieve with you every ox can achieve with the butcher, just by putting the head on the chopping block. We simply do not need this kind of harmony, because we would stop being what we are and what we want to be – Croats [...] In view of their [Serbian – V. K.] political usurpation, we simply cannot reach any agreement with them before they recognize as Croatian the

lands that belong to us on the ground of the Agreement (Nagodba) [of 1868 – V. K.], which provides for: one flat – Croatian, one language – Croatian, and *one political people – Croatian*.”

In addition to constantly laying their claims to Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was a bone of contention between the Serbs and the Croats, after the 1848/49 Revolution, and particularly after 1860, the Croats started fighting over Srem. Disregarding the fact that the majority population in Srem were Serbs and Orthodox, the Croats claimed this region on the ground of their historical right, with the objective of incorporating this region into a greater, ethnically pure and Catholic, united Croatia. Moreover, at that time, and even much later, Srem was also included in geographical maps of Croatia. In the controversy over where Srem belonged, actually two principles and two rights clashed: the Serbs insisted on a more up-to-date natural and ethnic right and claimed Srem on these grounds, whereas the argument of the Croats was based on their historical right from the feudal period and, as such, was rather obsolete at that moment. The approach of the Serbs and the Croats to these two mutually exclusive rights over Srem has actually determined their relations all this time up to the present day and, being a controversial problem, it will not be easily solved.

The Croats did not tone down their Greater Croatia aspirations after the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians either. In new and, in many respects, different circumstances, the Greater Croatia idea was not only stealthily, but publicly demonstrated. Thus, Stjepan Radić, President of the Croatian Republican Peasants' Party, in his interview to London Daily News, published

on July 22, 1922, intentionally offered false data on Bačka, Baranja and Banat, claiming that “it was illogical and irrational to call these regions Vojvodina”, since “the Serbs with regard to the Croats represented a negligible minority there. (!) Therefore, these lands should not be governed as purely Serbian and a referendum should be held under the supervision of the League of Nations, with only one gesture: “Serbia – Belgrade or Croatia – Zagreb” (Kulundžić, 1989, p. 177).

A year later, in his letter of September 23, 1923, from London to the Presidency of the Croatian Republican Peasants’ Party, Radić requested new maps of Croatia and the Croats to be drawn which, in addition to Croatia, would include Slavonia, Dalmatia, Međumurje, Prekomurje “with Krka and Kastva”, and all former Austro-Hungarian lands (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bačka, Banat and Baranja), even Montenegro and Macedonia. In his instruction for such geographical presentation of Croatia, with explanations in French in English, because the maps were addressed to the foreign public, Radić particularly emphasized: “In the territory from Subotica to the Adriatic Sea, all districts with Croatian population of over 50% (in Bosnia, Catholic and Muslim Croats were treated as one group) should be marked with blue lines, and the Orthodox districts with the red ones.”^[5]

Vlatko Maček, who inherited Stjepan Radić, continued to conduct very faithfully the greater Croatia policy of his predecessor. His objective was to create, under the leadership of the Croats, a state encompassing all Yugoslav lands which were for-

merly under Austro-Hungarian rule, and establish with Serbia some kind of an “association of interests”. Like Radić, he also supported the idea of a plebiscite in view of dividing Yugoslavia into two parts: up to the Drina River, and over the Drina River”. In his statement in 1935, he said that each of the following regions – Vojvodina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, even Dalmatia, through their deputies elected to the Constitutional Assembly, should be entitled to decide which side they would like to join. In other words, if Vojvodina wants to go with Serbia, let it go, and if it wants a special status in Serbia, let it be so. Also, *if Vojvodina wants to be out of Serbia, fine, and if it wants to b with Croatia, or separate, it is also fine [...]*”. Jovan Jovanović Pižon, Head of the Peasants’ Party, left a testimony of Maček’s territorial claims on the grounds of his confidential talks with Prince Pavle Karađorđević. During his encounter with Maček, before the Cvetković-Maček Compromise, Prince Pavle asked him: “What is Croatia in your view?” Maček answered: “Croatia is the Primorska and Savska Banovinas”. During their second meeting, Maček claimed Dubrovnik and the Vrbaska Banovina, with 90% of Serbian population. During their third meeting, Maček’s appetite grew bigger. He claimed Srem to Ilok, Brčko with its surroundings, Bijeljina, Travnik, Fojnica and Herzegovina (*Notes by Jovan Jovanović Pižon of 26 March 1939, Archives of Yugoslavia. Collection of J. Jovanović*).

Croatia’s intention to expand over as big a territory as possible fully surfaced after the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia. Dis-

[5] The original letter is the property of Dr Aleksandar Vlaškalin. I take this opportunity to thank him for his kind permission to use it.

60 | satisfied with its size, through Doglavnik Slavko Kvaternik, they were trying to enlarge it. In his telegram of May 14, 1941, Siegfried Kasche, Head of the German Legation to Zagreb, informed his Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kvaternik's aspiration "to expand the Croatian territory down to the Albanian border, including the towns of Priboj, Prijepolje and Pljevlja". Kasche supported this Croatian claim with the explanation that "Croatian troops were already stationed there". However, Italy was firmly against this. Count Ciano qualified Kvaternik's claim as "Croatian imperialism". In his *Diary* for June 30, 1941, he noted: "Now Pavelić would also want the Novi Pazar Sandžak. An irrational and groundless claim. I have a letter signed by the Duce, in which he rejected these aspirations" (Avramov, 1992, p. 265).

According to Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, author of the book on the German BND (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*), during Tito's absolute rule and unlimited power, Ivan Stevo Krajačić, one of his key politicians in Croatia, was the author of a draft plan on the establishment of a "sovereign Croatia", which would include Bosnia and Herzegovina, and actually spread over the territories within the boundaries of the former Independent State of Croatia in 1941 (Schmidt-Eenboom, 1955, p. 213; Avramov, 1997, pp. 193-194). This is one of numerous irrefutable proofs on the continuity of the greater Croatia aspirations, particularly with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The political systems, legal frames, regimes, social orders and leaders had changed, but the Croatian politics remained unchanged, particularly with regard to Croatia's aspiration to expand its boundaries up to the Drina River.

In the past and to this day, the geopolitical position of Croatia has been one of the numerous

standing issues which jeopardized and disturbed the relations between the Croats and the Serbs. Speaking about the geopolitical position of Croatia, most of the Croatian politicians and geopoliticians, both in the past and nowadays, agree with Vjekoslav Klaić, a well-known Croatian historian, who said that Croatia "reminded of a widely split sausage". They also compared Croatia's position to a banana or the crescent. According to the general view of politically competent Croats on this issue, the state of such a shape was untenable and had no conditions for progress. Antun Radić explained that "the unification of Dalmatia with Croatia would look like the crust on a piece of bread, and Bosnia and Herzegovina would be the middle taken out of this Croatian bread [...] If we want to eat our bread, we also need the middle, which means that we need Herzeg-Bosnia" (Dom, 4 April 1901, No. 7, p. 16). For Antun's brother Stjepan, Bosnia was "the stomach of the rest of Croatia. If you deprive the man of his stomach, how can you expect him to live?" (Radić, Predavec, Novljanin, 1910, p. 146). According to Frano Supilo, "Croatia without Bosnia would always be a toy in the hands of the master of these now occupied regions, i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina (Supilo, 1970, p. 179). Croatian politicians concluded that if Croatia wanted to secure a permanent economic and financial independence, it should expand its territories. *Hrvatski dnevnik* from 1940 discussed this issue in the following way: "Croatia will not be able to secure its permanent existence in its present shape, and therefore it needs some new regions for its own economic development" (*Hrvatski dnevnik*, 30 January 1940, No. 1346).

In the opinion of Dr. Ivan Pilar, one of the most eminent and respected Croatian geopoliticians,

known under the pen names Südland, Dr. Juričić and Florian Lichtträger, “from the geopolitical view, The Triune Monarchy without Bosnia and Herzegovina, had no future and was untenable in the geopolitical, economic and political sense (Pilar, 1918, p. 21). Also, according to Dr. Pilar, “Croatia and Slavonia, separated from Bosnia and Dalmatia, which are its integral parts, are reduced to a trunk unable for life” (Südland, 1990, p. 319). Dr. Pilar, the author of the book *The South Slavic Question (Južnoslovensko pitanje)*, reprinted four times in several decades, twice in Croatian and twice in German, in his brochure *The World War and the Croats and Their Attempted Option Even Before the End of the War (Svjetski rat i Hrvati. Pokus orientacije hrvatskog naroda još prije svršetka rata)*, published in 1915 and 1917, publicly announced what the strategic objectives of the Croats should be. In his brochure, Dr. Pilar, alias Dr. Juričić, said: “The Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia with its elongated and narrow territory of small depth, extending in two directions (in some places, Dalmatia is only several kilometers wide>), is not able to develop into any state or a political center, so that in this shape it has no future as a national and political body. In our opinion, the awareness of this fact was at the root of our eagerness to find a wider frame for our national development even before 1878, and in view of this objective, give our support to Illyrism and Yugoslavism. The Triune Kingdom secured the basic living conditions only after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the territory of the Triune Kingdom, there is very little hope for the Croats to survive. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on Bosnia and Herzegovina as one of the most essential prerequisites for national survival

and political development of Croatian people. If they remain forced to live within the framework of the Triune Kingdom, the Croats will only vegetate. On the other hand, they will be able to live only if they obtain Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Südland, 1990, p. 65). According to Dr. Pilar, Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia are the shell, and Bosnia and Herzegovina the core of Croatia (Pilar, 1918, str 26).

Sticking to the idea of the shell and core, the Lexicographic Institute of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, with Miroslav Krleža at its head, in the fourth volume of the *Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia (Enciklopedija Jugoslavije)*, issued in 1960, enclosed to the entry on Croatia, also published a map which included the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, up to the Drina River, as Croatian territories, without omitting a single foot of the land on its left bank. On the other hand, in the seventh volume of this *Encyclopedia*, published in 1968, Krleža did not apply the same method. The map enclosed to the item on Serbia has the boundary on the left bank of the Drina River, crossing over to the left bank only at some rare spots, Only the naïve and stupid, or maybe the corrupted Serbian members of the Editorial Board of the *Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia*, could overlook these shameless Croatian egomaniac claims to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This approach of the Lexicographic Institute in the 1960s was nothing new and unusual with regard to the Croatian appetite for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Behind them, they had over a century-long tradition of such practice. As early as 1862, Josip Partaš, on the ground of Franjo Kružić’s draft, produced a map entitled “Historical map of the entire Kingdom of Croatia with the boundaries of the present regions and important old and new places”

The map was printed in famous Zagreb printing shop of Dragutin Albreht. The historical map of Croatia encompassed Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the southwestern parts of Serbia and the southeastern parts of Slovenia.^[6]

The ethnographic map which Nikola Zvonimir Bjelovučić included in his booklet published in Dubrovnik in 1934, under the title *The Ethnographic Boundaries of the Croats and Slovenians (Etnografske granice Hrvata i Slovenaca)*, also included the map compiled by the author in 1933, on *Ethnographic Boundaries of the Croats in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and in the Neighboring Countries (Etnografske granice Hrvata u Kraljevini SHS i okolnim zemljama)*. The significant territorial expansion of Croatia in this map more than obviously reminds of Pavelić's ISC. It included the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bay of Kotor all the territory down, somewhat south of Bar, parts of western Bačka, the region of Baya in Hungary (then and now), parts of Hungary southeast of Pech, a long belt along the Drava River, from St. Martin in the east down to Donja Lendava in the west, and the whole of Srem. Intentionally presented in general lines and imprecise, the map drawn by Bjelovučić actually reflected the greater Croatia territorial aspirations rather than the factual ethnic situation. This map encompassed all the lands that used to belong to Croatia on the ground of the Croatian state and historical right. For Bjelovučić, the ethnic composition of the population was only a pretext

for expressing indirectly the greater Croatia state and political objectives (Krestić, 1994, p. 286).

In view of the above summary presentation of this subject on which voluminous studies could be written, even the reader less familiar with the aspirations of the former generations would conclude without hesitation that the above-mentioned were the sources that inspired the present generation of Croatian politicians who defend the Croatian frontier on the Drina River, e.g. academician Dalibor Brozović and others, and who, like Franjo Tuđman, recalling the Croatian state and historical right, appropriate the Bay of Kotor and Bačka, but at the same time are eager to preserve the administrative boundaries between the former Yugoslav republic established by the AVNOJ.

The answer to the key question regarding the current relations between the Serbs and the Croats and the causes for the outbreak of the war between them can be found in today's program of the followers of the Party of Rights and the Furtims, who were the predecessors of Pavelić's Ustashi, and who recognized only one-Croatian flag to be flown in greater Croatia.

Dr. Ivan Pilar's ideas permeated the overall Croatian policy. They constitute the very foundation of the national ideology and the geostrategic objectives of the Croatian people. Therefore, it is not surprising that Petar Vučić, contemporary author of the book *Political Destiny of Croatia, Geopolitical and Geostrategic Properties of Cro-*

[6] It should be noted that the map of greater Croatia with the boundaries extending from Kotor on the Adriatic Coast to Zemun at the confluence of the Danube and the Sava Rivers, was drawn at the First Croatian Catholic Congress, held in Zagreb in 1900. On that occasion, Croatian historians "used their very best efforts to prove that this was historically Croatian ethnic territory" (see Ekmečić, 1992, p. 98).

atia (Politička sudbina Hrvatske. Geopolitičke i geostrateške karakteristike Hrvatske (Zagreb, 1995), openly and without hesitation states that, after the capitulation of Italy in September 1943, and the abrogation of the Roman Accords, the ISC was territorially rounded up and that its geopolitical and geostrategic ideals had materialized with regard to its size, shape, position and all geopolitical and geostrategic properties. The only problem of this ideal Croatian state was “the presence of a large number of non-Croatian population” (Vučić, 1995, p. 221). In the Croatian Ustashi state, rounded up in 1943, the above-mentioned author emphasized: “Although in many respects only an unrealized dream, the ISC remains a permanent witness of our lofty aspirations to establish our own state and a proof of high morals of the Ustashi revolutionary movement, which, by supporting this (although only partly realized) state project, has become a true promoter of the Croatian historical and statehood ideals and ideology” (Vučić, 1995, p. 221). This way of thinking perfectly coincided with Dr. Tuđman’s statement that the Independent State of Croatia reflected “the historical and a thousand-year long aspiration of the Croatian people to obtain their own independent state”. The naïve and the ignorant ones were surprised and disturbed by this statement, in spite of the fact that it was fully in line with the century-long aspirations promoted throughout all Croatian political efforts.

Not long ago, a Catholic priest, in his sermon delivered in the Church of the Wounded Jesus, in the center of Zagreb, spoke about greater Croatia that included the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Drina River, which proves that this aspiration has always been the Croats’ ideal of state hood

and their lodestar. In his sermon, he called for the establishment of “a more beautiful, greater and happier Croatia”, with Banja Luka at its center, which was the wish of Poglavnik Ante Pavelić. Preacher Vjekoslav Lasić, a Dominican, expressed hope that the Poglavnik’s wish would one day come true, in view of “a rather strange shape of the present Croatia” (Pilić, 1997).

Petar Vučić and the Dominican priest Lasić were not isolated fanatics. They only expressed loudly the prevailing opinion in Croatia and the view on its future. Radomir Milišić followed in their wake. In his book *Creation of Croatia, an Analysis of National Strategy (Stvaranje Hrvatske, analiza nacionalne strategije)* (Zagreb, 1995), he said: “Since the destiny of Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely the destiny of the Croats in it is inseparable from Croatia and the Croats, Croatia and the Croats should use their very best efforts to make it as close to Croatia as possible (because the Croats are a sovereign people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and will be able to defend the status only with the help of the republic of Croatia), and Croatia will have to follow vigilantly the developments in this territory so vital for its interests. The territories which the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina defended and secured for themselves represent the very foundation of their sovereignty in this state and a proof that without the Croats Bosnia is not viable as a state” (see Milišić, 1995, p. 12).

These are only a few examples which prove greater Croatia territorial aspirations based on the Croatian state and historical right. However, all followers of the policy of Eugen Kvaternik and Ante Starčević, who hold power in Croatia today and whose programs, as I. I. Tkalac says, “are based on

old papers and virtual territorial claims”, have an insatiable appetite for territories. It is needless to waste words on proving that the Ustashi of Ante Pavelić based their entire policy on the Croatian state and historical right. Both aspects of their policy, the open and the secret one, based on the Croatian state and historical right, during the 1941-1945 war revealed to the appalled, abhorred and disgusted international public its criminal face and its bloodthirstiness, which was actually the logical outcome of a distorted and basically sick policy whose main objective was to develop pathological hatred for the Serbs in order to initiate the most horrible genocide ever remembered.

By obstinately claiming Bosnia and Herzegovina as an integral part of Croatia “in order to help it live and not vegetate”, according to Stjepan Radić, the Croats “were taught to believe that there was no free and united Croatia without Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Radić, 1971, p. 289). If the Croats fostered this idea when they were under the Austro-Hungarian rule and later when they joined Yugoslavia, then there is no reason to challenge Stjepan Radić’s statement. Moreover, it is more than evident that today this idea is even more widespread among the Croats. Actually, by creating ethnically cleansed Croatia, the Croats managed to get closer to the realization of their geostrategic objectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Without Serbs in Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, without the internal factor of disturbance as they call them, the Croats will be able to invest more strength and will have to face fewer obstacles and problems in their efforts to swallow up Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with their Serbs and Muslims, from a more favorable geopolitical position. If the Serbs face this

situation unprepared, if they allow to be seduced and deceived by the idea of Illyrism, Yugoslavism, brotherhood and unity or togetherness, they will pay a very high price for their naivete, shortsightedness, superficiality, ignorance and stupidity, and will never again be able to recover, because the balance of power will shift to the benefit of the Croats. Like Croatia, Serbia will also have to follow closely the development in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a region of its vital interests. If Serbia does not give up quarreling with Bosnian Serbs over different ideological, political, party and personal issues, and if Serbia does not take into account its own global state interests, it will definitely lose this battle with the Croats, because there is no doubt that the Croats most eagerly strive to expand their state territory all the way to the Drina River and even all the way to Zemun, on the opposite side of Belgrade.

In view of the above-said, it becomes evident that throughout their entire common history, to this day, the Croats and the Serbs could never live in peace and harmony. Their relations have always been seriously jeopardized by the Croatian policy based on the state and historical right and on the institution of the Croatian “political” (constitutional) people. History has shown that Croatian social and political forces which had the strength to reject the postulates of the outdated feudal society, including the historical and state right and the institution of the “political” people, could nevertheless reach agreement with the Serbs and cooperate with them, even avoid all otherwise inevitable controversies, the case in point being the joint activities of the

Croatian and Serbian politicians in the period of the Croatian-Serbian coalition between 1905 and 1918. Moreover, the Croatian social groups and political parties that had rejected the fiction that in the Croatian state territory there was only one, “political” Croatian people, had not only settled all the differences between them and the Serbs, but also conducted with them joint national and political activities, which culminated in the creation of their common state in 1918. On the other hand, some segments of the Croatian society and some political parties which steadily and rigidly defended the Croatian state and historical right and the Croatian “political” people as the only one living in the Croatian territory, and the idea that the Serbs were actually “Orthodox” Croats and, as such, only a part of the Croatian “political” people, were in constant conflict, almost at war with the Serbs, and were ready to implement even the most brutal means in the effort to make them adhere to their policy. Such were the followers of Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik, the supporters of his Party of Rights, the Franco-Furtims of Josip Frank, the Ustashi of Ante Pavelić, the followers of Franjo Tuđman and this Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ) and other less known politicians in Croatia today.

It is totally inappropriate to pose the question about the reasons for the breakup of Yugoslavia and why the war between the Croats and the Serbs in Croatia took place on the Croatian soil and who is responsible for this war, when it is a well-known fact that within the framework of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, every day, every week and every year in the League of Communists of Croatia and under its auspices, the social and political forces supporting the Croatian state and historical right

were growing increasingly strong and turning this political institution into a stronghold of this idea. The stronger these forces, the weaker the links between the Croats and the Serbs became, until they finally broke up. From the statements of many Croatian politicians who appeared on the political scene after the defeat of communism, the Serbs in Croatia and the whole of Yugoslavia concluded that the evil was approaching that that the tragic events from distant and recent past would be repeated. Since the history of the Serbs in Croatia was very little researched and wrongly interpreted and taught, which again is not accidental, very few, even among the most responsible ones, were able to explain the causes of the approaching evil. Everything culminated the day when, at its session of December 22, 1990, the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) abolished the status of a constitutional people to the Serbs and transformed them into a national minority. At that moment, it became clear that the new government in Croatia, with Franjo Tuđman at its head, was going to follow in the wake of Poglavnik Ante Pavelić and all his predecessors, promoters of the Croatian state and historical right in their policy, and who established the institution of the “political” people in the effort to create, on the basis of forged documents, ethnically pure, Catholic, united Croatia as the embodiment of their centuries-long dream.

In Croatia, the opinion prevailed and still prevails that the “Croatian thought” could be translated into reality only after the extermination of the Serbs. Thus, the Serbs became the target of Croatian extremists and promoters of the idea of Croatia exclusivists coming from different social strata. These attacks, with shorter or longer interruptions, depending on current circumstances,

66 | have been going on for over a century to this day, always with the same objective in mind: creation of a greater, ethnically pure, Catholic and united independent state of Croatia. This is the only explanation for anti-Serb demonstrations in Zagreb in 1895, 1899 and 1902, the 1908/1909 anti-Serb trial for high treason, the 1914/1915 pogroms of the Serbs, and the genocide against the Serbs in 1941-1945. This is also the only explanation for the secession of Croatia and the destruction of Yugoslavia in 1991, and the intention of Croatia to defend its territory at the Drina River. By reducing the Serbs, a constitutional people according to the Croatian Constitution until December 1990, to the status of a national minority, was nothing but the continuation of the policy based on the idea of one “political” Croatian people. As a result of this policy, the Cyrillic alphabet was abolished in Croatia and the adjective “Serbian” was deleted from the name of the official language in Croatia, which is now only Croatian and no longer Croatian or Serbian. For the same reason, the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts became the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Mass demolition and burning of Serbian houses, arbitrariness in issuing or denying the certificate of citizenship to the Serbs, requests for their signing the declaration of loyalty, eviction from their homes, dismissal from job, murders and forcible displacement in the service of the “Croatian thought”, all these acts of violence stem from the principle of Croatia’s state and historical right.

All Serbs, not only those from the territory of the former Socialist Republic of Croatia, must once and for all understand and remember where the causes hide of all the evils affecting them in

their “co-habitation” with the Croats. If they do not understand and remember it, there is an objective danger that, incautiously and irresponsibly, they will once again enter a new joint community with the Croats. Before the Croats free themselves from the remains of the feudal society, before they once and for all free themselves from the policy based on the Croatian state and historical right, before they accept modern civilian and political principles, they will not be a suitable partner for “co-habitation” with any nation. That has already been experienced by the Hungarians, Italians and Serbs. It will certainly be experienced by the Muslims soon, regardless of the fact that in the last century, the father of the homeland, A. Starčević, said that they were the “flowers of the Croatian people”. The Croats should be enabled to realize their aspirations and all their ambitions in their own ethnic territory, without causing harm to anyone. When and if that ever happens, which will be judged by the future generations, it will be possible to think about the new “co-habitation” with that people.

The aim of this paper is to show in main points the key moments that contributed to the creation of genocide ideas and to draw attention to their various manifestations. Such knowledge – no matter how significant for the scholarly elaboration of the past – can also be useful in recognizing today’s genocide thoughts and their potential manifestations in the future.

At the end of this contribution to the history of the genocide idea against the Serbs in Croatia, I would like to emphasize that it is not simple and easy to write about this topic. Created in distant past, developed for centuries, to this day, the genocide idea may be followed only by comparative re-

search into the history of the Croats and the Serbs in Croatia. Since that comparative research is at its very beginning, the difficulties are huge and

multiple. It may also be the reason why this paper is of pioneer character and, as such, is probably not faultless.

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The Ustasha Genocide Over the Serbs – the Continuing *dolus specialis*^[2]

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^[3]

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 19th 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 quite 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 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st 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.”^[4]

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.^[5]

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.^[6] 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 1st Part of the 3rd 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”.^[7]

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.”^[8]

[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

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”,^[9] 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.^[10]

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:

[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.”^[11]

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.^[12] 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.”^[13]

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 (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”^[14]. 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

[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).^[15]

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.^[16] 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 Nobile, 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/nobile-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).

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."^[17]

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

[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.”^[18]

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.”^[19]

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.”^[20]

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.^[21]

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

[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 20th 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.”^[22]

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.

[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.”^[23]

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.”^[24]

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.”^[25]

Although the operation of the Croatian Armed Forces resulted in banishing about 250,000 Serbs from the territory of Krajina,^[26] 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”^[27]

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.”^[28] 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).

[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 19th century,^[29] 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^[30] called Starčević “the father of the homeland”^[31] (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”^[32] (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,^[33] 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 (accessed on 24 August 2022).

[33] 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”),^[34] 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”,^[35] 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 17th 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.”^[36] That is how he includes the following figures among Croats; Emperor Dušan and other members of the Nemanjić Dynasty,^[37] Miloš Obilić,^[38] Saint Sava,^[39] Arsenije Čarnojević^[40] etc., while, according to him, Despot Lazar Branković was “a Croatian convert.”^[41] 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=1> (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 14th and 15th 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 subconscious of Croatian people” (Barišić, 1997, p. 129).

Yes, subconscious 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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Ideological Self-obsession and the Burden of Victims. Review of the ISC case

Summary: In this paper, we intend to present the anchor points of the Ustasha ideology that used to be the foundation of the Independent State of Croatia. This puppet creation, made on the ruins of the Yugoslav monarchy, promoted nationalist fury. Its intention was to create an ethnically clean state in the territory where, in geopolitical terms, it was impossible without an exodus and execution of the population with other nationalities. Commitment to anti-Semitism was used by this state as an impetus for national intolerance towards Serbs and it largely exceeded the intended pattern of the Nazi Holocaust. The remembrance culture was created presenting the past as a decades-long struggle, the cause of which was mostly attributed to Serbs. The culmination was the Yugoslav dungeon. Young generations were brought up and educated to represent national purity and to serve the Supreme Leader loyally. The personality cult was the crown of such furious ideology that, in its decisive intention to reach its realization, despite the resistance of the reality, used all available means. The war and uncontrollable hatred were favourable circumstances for the final solution to the Croatian question that, in the Ustasha ideology, was impossible without the thorough solution to the Serbian factor. The consequences of this were innumerable victims.

Keywords: ideology, hatred, Ustasha, Serbs, victim

National purity and adjusted interpretations

Having decided to implement "Directive No. 25", Nazi Germany, led by Führer Adolf Hitler, intended to punish decisively and energetically, in the shortest period possible, the coup leadership of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Serbian people^[2] because

of the refusal to join the Tripartite Pact, despite the assurances by Dušan Simović's government to the contrary. This decision was not made in the rashness of Nazi anger towards Serbs, although it was guided by that anger. The idea about destroying Yugoslavia as a Versailles and Great Serbian creation was the backbone of the new world order in the southeast of Europe. In that respect, German

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[2] "German army is not coming as an enemy to Croats, Muslims and Macedonians. It wants to protect them from Serbian nationalists" (See Nikolić, 2009, p. 12).

intelligence service agents had worked for years in the past on the internal destabilization of the Yugoslav monarchy (Marković & Vučković, 2021).

One of the most important segments contributing to the development of the crisis, despite the intentions of the Yugoslav government Cvetković-Maček and the signed agreement, was the escalation of nationalist intolerance among Croats. It was enticed by the militant squads of the Croatian Peasant Party, as well as the increasingly pronounced activity of the Ustasha movement. Their unambiguous “open sympathies” were directed towards Nazi Germany’s struggle for “New Europe”.

The new order, as interpreted by the Ustasha, implied the fall of the existing order and “the dungeon of Yugoslavia”, as well as the resistance to the status of the “Serbian spoils and colony” (Novak, 1986, p. 531) because “Ustashism created a new man in the new order” (Bzik, 1944, p. 21). With the hope that the “new order” would soon prevail in the geopolitical territory of Southeast Europe as well, Germany was expected to attack the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The attack occurred on 6 April 1941 and proceeded with individual unprecedented examples of heroism, on the one hand, and the surprising speed of degradation and collapse of the defensive human and military potential of the Yugoslav army, on the other hand.

Encouraged by the belief that the victory of “totalitarian states of Germany and Italy” (Novak, 1986, p. 531) is not questioned, the Ustasha promote their own creation on the ruins of the still existing state. Ante Pavelić’s opinion that “Croatia will be the Ustasha state” (Bzik, 1942, p. 42) began to be implemented. The introduction to the implementation of this policy was “resistance to the Serbian

enemy force... that held the Croatian people and the Croatian homeland in shameful slavery” (Bzik, 1942, p. 72). The collapse and separation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as interpreted by the newly created nationalist ideology, was the defeat of the “Jewish-democratic and Versailles world” (Bzik, 1942, p. 30), whose exponents in the Balkans were Serbs and their national-assimilating ambition.

The Independent State of Croatia, or “Axis creation” (Trifković, 2020, p. 209) was declared by Eugen Kvaternik, in the absence of Supreme Leader Ante Pavelić, with the support, with no participation or trust of Italian leader Benito Mussolini, who strongly believed that Pavelić was his “only pawn in the Balkans” (Matković, 2002, p. 64). After his arrival in Zagreb, Ante Pavelić took an oath in which, among other things, he stated that in his work he would observe “the Ustasha principles” (Novak, 1986, p. 548).

Categorized in 17 points, these principles, in the form of a pamphlet with the pronounced nationalist rhetoric and through demagogical content, promote that “Croatian people has its supreme right (sovereignty) by which it is the only one to rule in its state” (Pavelić, 1941, p. 8). Moreover, “in the Independent State of Croatia, decisions must not be made by anyone who is not a member of the Croatian nation by ascendants and by blood” (Pavelić, 1941, p. 9). It was a specific “paradigm shift” (Mitrović, 2001), or rejection of the unique Yugoslav state and expressing the need for a national state that, with its boundaries and interpretations, became a nationalist claim and imposed homogenization. This need clearly pointed out that the state and the nation constituted a unity, although historical processes do not confirm it fully and among all nations

and states. Insisting on that connection between the nation and the state, according to Ernest Gellner, creates nationalism that “fatefully turns one to the other” and where “one without the other is incomplete, and that is a tragedy” (Gellner, 1998, p. 26).

The creation of a homogeneous state was the programme interest of the Independent State of Croatia. This “worldview” is certainly not “innocent” and it emphasizes an irrational moment in the formation of the national idea occurring through a fierce struggle with the “dialectical method”, i.e. the method of a critical approach to real historical processes, with no self-deceit or self-delusion in imagining one’s own greatness. Intellectuals popularizing this approach to the interpretation of social phenomena and the development of the national idea and state “reduce the reason and mind, uncritically admiring intuition... creating myths” (Lukács, 1966, p. 14). In such mythical catharsis, national ideas dedicated attention mostly to the ideological development of youth. Through militarist training and discipline of attachment to the movement, the atmosphere of patriotic charge was created with the intention of, if necessary, not hesitating in the event sacrifice was needed.

The ideology of nationalism was presented as a faith whose dogma warned about the revival of paganism and rituals, thus embodying the Croatian identity. “Nationalism in its essence is not just love for one’s country and nation – but, in the first place, religion. Every religion has something unpredictable and inexplicable to the mind, has something that is taken as final and undeniable truth – or better, it is taken as reality; either true or imagined reality, but reality that affects minds and souls... Nationalism is a faith because it believes... in its mis-

sion, which means its special, Godsent and higher value” (Karamarko, 1941, p. 14).

An emotional attitude of the nationalist to the territory and readiness to make sacrifice for it was the message of the Ustasha ideology and, in that context, it constituted part of the exclusive principles of “New Europe” as perceived by Nazis... “Soil and blood are the fierce strength that moved and moves nations and individuals in the struggle for their rights. Soil and blood are the source of strength, which has kept us for more than a thousand years on this ground and finally taken us to the creation of our own state” (Oršanić, 1941, p. 3). The symbol of “blood and soil” became a complete ideology only with the embodiment and symbolism of the national leader, or the Supreme Leader. To him, the development of the cult of personality and blameless and exemplary actions that should motivate revolutionary idealism of the young, together with simultaneous insistence on their unre-served loyalty. “The Ustasha youth must transfer its meaning of life and work and creation into the world of eternal ideals – because only they create fighters who live for ever... The Supreme Leader’s youth must, together with him, create Croatia as He would like it to be. Namely, Supreme Leader’s Croatia is not an area of personal aspirations and enrichment and materially inebriated people – but Croatia where eternal values are holy: justice, truth, honesty, order, work and law” (*Ustaška mladež*, 9 November 1941, p. 2).

It was the road of deepening geopolitical uncertainty strengthened by the exclusive regime insisting and persisting on clear ethnic and homogeneous territories which were equal to the state borders. In their “murderous *reductio ad absurdum* national-

ism” (Hobsbawm, 1993, p. 147),^[3] as emphasized by Hobsbawm, or “Judgment Day nationalism” (Ekmečić, 2008, p. 392), as described by Ekmečić, they relied on “mass extradition or extermination of the minorities” (Hobsbawm, 1993, p. 147).

The promotion of nationalist fury and pure blood faced the newly formed state with the demographic situation in which Serbs accounted for one third of the population, or almost two million inhabitants. Serbs were presented as a destructive factor in the development of the ideology of the Independent State of Croatia. The solution to this problem became one of the most important interests of the developing simulacrum. In that respect, it was necessary to stigmatize the historical role of Serbs as an enemy in the development of the Croatian state and national independence. “The alleged Serbian predominance” (Hobsbawm, 1993, p. 149) became a doctrinarian obsession guiding the state politics of the ISC. The interpretation of the past developed in the direction of pronounced Serbophobia. Serbs became the archetype of the enemy and the focal place of eruptive national intolerance. Distancing from Serbs reached the scale of negating own racial origin. “It is worth mentioning the fact that shows that, after the cessation of the Eastern Gothic state, vivid memories of that nation remained among their direct descendants, Croats” (Dugački, 1942, p. 25).

The Yugoslav state was the symbol of Croatian forced submission, while King Aleksandar Karađorđević was the most responsible person for the national collapse. “Serbian violence had reached

its climax in the bloody dictatorship introduced by the Serbian king with the aim of not only forcibly conquering the Croatian people forever, but also to erase its name and any trace of its existence from the face of the earth” (Bzik, 1942, p. 69). The creation of the unified Yugoslav state occurred, in the context of this interpretation, opposite to the aspirations of the political and Croatian national elite. For that reason, exceptionally pronounced attention was paid to the processes of opposing integration from 1918.

Its media presence was particularly visible through the remembrance and lamentation over the events of 5 December 1918, when armed resistance was put up in the streets of Zagreb against the unification. “Every Croat is familiar with the history about 5 December 1918... On that day, several squads of the Croatian Army went out in Zagreb, to Jelačić Square, in order to make a coup against the unification with Serbs and Slovenes into a single state” (*Ustaša*, 5 December 1943, p. 1). The defeat suffered on that occasion marked the beginning of the forced rule and occupation that deprived the Croatian nation of the right to self-determination and the state. “In the days of December 1918, Croatia searched for life. Croatia searched for the future. Croatia searched for freedom, looking for it in the sacrifice and the revolutionary campaign; Croatia searched for it in blood” (*Ustaša*, 7 December 1941, p. 5). Sole responsibility for these dramatic processes was ascribed to the “uncultured Serbian people” (*Ustaša*, 6 December 1942, p. 8) and “the undesired community of the supposed Yugoslav-

[3] Hobsbawm emphasizes that the Ustasha declared themselves as greater Nazis than the SS (See Hobsbawm, 2002, p. 105)

ism” (*Ustaša*, 6 December 1942, p. 8) which was imposed by the Serbian people in an invasive and hypocritical manner. In addition, in *Ustasha Views* from 1944 we can read that the greatest enemy of Croats is “coup-inclined Serbs and Great Serbian tendencies” ... which “has for many years brought up in our territories, in all possible manners, its janissaries, arming them and instructing them, at the moment when the Croatian state is created, to take their hidden weapons into their hands and by any means prevent the building of the Croatian state” (Bzik, 1944, p. 66).

It was a suggestive and reduced view of instruction that in the recent past negated all complexity of the phenomena, aware that its “brave new world” is being built exactly on rejecting “unpleasant historical facts” (Huxley, 1977, p. 12). The creation of the independent state proceeded through a difficult struggle and heroism of ancient proportions, against the enemy that remained identical. “At the beginning of this struggle, initiated by the Croatian nation immediately after the establishment of the ISC, no Croat doubted or hesitate when thinking who to fight. We knew, we felt that the struggle starting between the Croatian people, on the one hand, and partisans, Chetniks and communists, on the other hand, was nothing but the struggle between Croatism with Great Serbian politics that systematically for years had been preparing plans to destroy the Croatian nation” (*Ustaša*, 7 March 1943, p. 1).

Obsession with the strictly defined enemy, which was seen as the Serbian people, was constantly and repeatedly emphasized. It was also sought in the development of “historical memory”. “The Croatian people got its state christened name a thousand years ago. That name was recognized in the international world uninterrupted until 1918, while after 1918, Serbs tried to change it by their Eastern Saint Sava Orthodox rites and name it as Yugoslav” (*Ustaša*, 1 April 1945, p. 2). The Serbian usurpation of the freedom of Croats was the continuity of the historical development of this nation. “For three hundred years already, Serbs have been the greatest obstacle round our necks. With so many of them and with them as they are, there is never happiness in our Croatian state... We must kill one third, one third will flee, while one third will convert to Catholicism and become Croats!” (Goldstein, 2012, p. 113).^[4] In this process of forced spiritual denationalization, there was specific rivalry with the intention of certain local hodjas, particularly in the region under Kozara, to make Serbs “accept Islam” (Arbutina; Bogunović-Ljubičić; Radaković, 2022, p. 7).

Continuing this narrative, in line with the current geopolitical regrouping, the image was developed about new-old alliances in the Balkans. “The whirlwind of migration took us Croats, as well as Bulgarians, to the Balkans. We settled on the western edge of the Balkans, and Bulgarians on the eastern one... We used to be neighbours for

[4] According to Slavko Goldstein, these are the words of Vlado Singer, an Ustaša officer who gave up his Jewish identity and participated in many crimes, such as the killings in Glina in 1941, for the sake of proving his proper religion. However, it was enough for him to win trust because the Holocaust ideology did not tolerate Jews, no matter how committed and loyal they were. He was imprisoned in Jasenovac and killed several months later.

more than two hundred years, from 803 to 1018... The Balkans is represented by these two brotherly and friendly nations, both by their position and their strength... throughout history, Serbs placed themselves between like a wedge, lustfully looking at our national territories... In the recent history, Bulgarians and Croats always appear together, side by side. They have a common enemy in Serbs and those from London and Paris" (*Ustaška mladež*, 16 November 1941, pp. 1–2).

In line with the search for a "new man" of new European and world order, led by Nazi Germany, it was necessary to accuse Serbs even of the most extreme cultural and identity owning aspirations. "Just as all great people want to be declared as their own by many nations, Greeks and Serbs also want to take them away from Bulgarians. We know very well that Serbs want to declare dear God as their own by saying 'God is Serbian.' That is why we will valiantly let them continue further fervent desire to take away St. Cyril and St. Methodius" (*Ustaška mladež*, 16 November 1941, p. 11). The real situation in which the process of forced Bulgarization proceeded was not written about because it was close and comparable to the process of forced Croatization and conversion to Catholicism. The cultural and identity genocide, as well as the forced conversion are labelled as sacrifice and, in that manner, the imagination, through the reversed process opposed to reality, was satisfied.

It grew concurrently with the intensity of crime that was actually perpetrated against the same enemy. That is how the bizarre conscience of the nationalist schizophrenia coped with the bloodthirsty acts it perpetrated. It was an "illness

that darkened cognition and blocked conscience" (Goldstein, 2012, p. 112). As such, it was a doctrine that, according to some testimonies, became the "fetishism of the state".

The notion that victims were actually executioners was accepted as a motive for the continuation of killing and the preparation for new feats. "The spirit of destruction and annihilation, infinite and hellish hatred towards Croatian people and Croatian state" was a cynical excuse for the identical feeling cherished towards Serbs. While ascribing the crime in which "outlaws butcher people, roast them on the stake, poke eyes of the living, break bones, throw men, women and children into open fires, skin them, take out the hearts from the living, pour resin over them and set them on fire, cut off limbs, noses, ears, throw barely live people into ravines and bury them, rape girls in front of their parents, take away children from their mothers and impale them on knives, put horseshoes on people, kill individuals and groups" (*Ustaša*, 22 August 1943, p. 6), Croats actually emphasize their own inhuman acts with the insatiable need to ascribe them to those against whom they were perpetrated.

Within that context, the preservation of impermissible pretentiousness of own megalomaniac national and state interests was also visible through ascribing such aspirations to those who endangered the process of a great and ethnically clean state solely by their historical presence, forced to defend themselves. "Serbian chauvinists, supposedly dissatisfied with their narrow region, are trying to cross their borders and expand..." That "Great Serbia will be ethnically clean ... in their struggle, they set a goal to clean Sandžak of Muslim

population, and to clean Bosnia and Herzegovina of Muslim and Catholic population ... they want to move that Muslim and Catholic population under the ground, so that they can settle in this territory” (*Ustaša*, 4 August 1943, p. 6). This media attention and false image deriving from it were part of the project about the justified necessity of the existence of independent and ethnically clean ISC.

Although, with the passage of time, reality supported it less and less, while the defeat was imminent, there was an increasing need for cherishing media self-deceit. This fiction culminated in facing the most shameless and unseen project that took place in the multipurpose Jasenovac concentration camp. In March 1945, when the state construction of exclusion and paroxysm collapsed, an article about this camp was published. It was written in the form of a record of the journalist who, with his text, intended to show an allegedly ordinary day and status of the prisoners. Behind such writing, there is definitely a hidden need to deny the accusations for perpetrated crimes, but, consistently with its ideological narrative of impeccable nationalist ideology, it is not recognized; on the contrary, its upbringing-educational character is emphasized through sarcastic remarks about equally odd everyday routine visible outside the camp as well. “When it is written and spoken about Jasenovac, curiosity appears from all sides, and feasibility... However, things are not so simple and ordinary. The national and state community had to protect itself in some way from those unconscientious, impertinent or just deluded individuals, who do not think and do not know to respect that community” (*Ustaša*, 4–11 March 1945, p. 4).

At the very beginning of this text, the role of Ustasha is made relative, while the landscape that has been remembered by the Ustasha crimes is mentioned within the context of the enemy’s crimes. “At the entrance to the camp and in some places with groups of people, we encounter the Ustasha guards. That is their only duty here. Nothing else. The camp is surrounded by the large wall of bricks and barbed wire... Somewhere in the fog, in the north, we can discern the shape of Papuk, while on the other side, there is Kozara. Two concepts that denoted partisan fury, rule and power – while here, between them, there is a place trying to make people out of them...” (*Ustaša*, 4–11 March 1945, p. 4).

The emphasis is laid on the morality and discipline that are imposing and observed by everyone. “The inevitable and just strictness. For all. Including the guards... At the entrance, the new prisoner is received by other prisoners, camp inmates, the sentenced ones. Namely, the whole management of the camp is held by the prisoners themselves... At the proposal of the prisoner-supervisor, punishments or awards are given. Punishments involve transferring to a harder job, the prohibition of writing, receiving packages... However, there is a surprising fact here. Many have expressed the wish not to return to their previous jobs” (*Ustaša*, 4–11 March 1945, p. 4).

The message about many of them staying to live “like free people! Being regularly paid, just like all workers in their profession” was the ultimate mimicry and ideological cynicism. In the carefully pursued narrative of innocence, it is a prolegomenon worthy of the culmination of the false statement speaking about the status of the

children in the camp. “The question of the children has been solved here. Little children, nicely dressed and with ruddy cheeks, standing by their teachers – prisoners, are trained for crafts every day... In the morning, the children are at work, while in the afternoon they attend school or do their military duty. At the same time, they are prepared for life as workers, developed as fighters, so honest Croats, the Ustasha, are made and bred here!... I have seen that their living quarters are far better than those of the majority of the refugees throughout Croatia... I have seen their shoes and they are also far better than the shoes of many who are free...” (*Ustaša*, 4–11 March 1945, p. 15). The members of this community, which is more than satisfied with its status, is supervised by “one Ustasha officer – an Orthodox Christian. His brother was killed somewhere on the front. They have been Ustasha ever since 1941” (*Ustaša*, 4–11 March 1945, p. 15). Less than two months after this text, there was a desperate breakthrough of the camp prisoners from Jasenovac.

In the Easter issue of the journal, published in 1945, just before the defeat that few in the movement wanted to admit, the validity of own goal and the generosity to other nations, including Serbs, were still emphasized. “In 1941, they were allowed to choose the border towards the East. We did not take a centimetre more. As a matter of fact, we took less than belonged to us! That same year, we could attack Serbia with our Ustasha legions and pillage it. We let the enemy be and felt sorry for its lunacy” (*Ustaša*, 1 April 1945, p. 1). It was not enough to defeat this state creation in military terms – “the state of the lunatics” (Miletić, 1988, p. 7).

It was necessary to destroy its distorted ideology and inform the population that was subordinated to it by presenting the truth about its real actions. Research was also required as a moral and a scholarly obligation. The development of research depended on the credibility of the new state and its readiness to face reality, regardless of its own ideological needs and, in that respect, state interests. Then avoidance followed, because the priority was new unity that had to keep silent and take unspoken memories into oblivion. Although the written trace was hidden, scarce and scattered, the new state kept neglecting and irresponsibly treating it (Milošević, 2021). Nevertheless, suppression could not prevent the eloquence of perpetrated crimes. A way was sought for “the dead to open the eyes of the living” (Vujošević, 1989, p. 400).

Reality of suffering

In contrast to the ideological imagination about the justness of the ISC, the reality witnessed and historiography recorded that Jasenovac was the largest camp in Europe that was not managed by Nazis, but the Ustasha movement obsessed with paroxysm and Serbophobia, which used favourable circumstances to establish the state and, like a puppet, subordinated its blind fury to the Axis powers.

The disastrous number of victims in the territory of the ISC, which was “filled with killing grounds” (Ekmečić, 2008, p. 462), and which has remained controversial and indefinite to date, is the subject of numerous impugnments and attempts to

reduce the number of victims to an acceptable level. In the present, it should testify in favour of a new, equally vicious ideology of alleged facing with painful moments in the recent past of compatriots, and repentance for perpetrated bestialities. It is formed on the bases of adjusting to the dominant interpretation that the public opinion of Europe cherishes the need to popularize and accept responsibility and critically view own prejudice.

The promoted attitude is actually a farce that does not speak about the modern society and democratic maturity, but witnesses to a more serious extent essential revisionism that hides perpetrated crimes by insisting on the testimonies about Serbian crimes and vindictiveness, allegedly directed against innocent civilians at the end of the 20th century. In that way, through the narrative gradation, the “proved” crimes of the Serbian people are reflected onto the past and a rather unpleasant prejudice is created about the permanent need of Serbs for an ethnically clean state and for the displacement of undesired and unassimilated members of other nations.

That returns us to the maelstrom of nationalism from the period of the Second World War, on the basis of which the Ustashism ideology about stigmatization of Serbs is becoming actual and valid for its new followers nowadays. Such revisionism is also supported by certain part of European historiography (Zundhausen, 2009). This interpretation promotes the attitude about pretentious Serbs who, in their obsession with the creation of a national state, resort to the systematic process of ethnic cleansing. In that way, it justifies the relativization of indisputable sacrifices suffered by Serbs, through

the process of denial of the numbers, because numbers show megalomania and exaggeration of one nation, destructively inclined towards the stable geopolitics of the Balkans.

In such atmosphere of distrust and suspicion, “Pandora’s box of comparing crimes and number of victims” was opened (Lajbenšperger, 2019, p. 124). It was conditioned by political circumstances and, despite the work of numerous committees, the promoters of the familiarity with the number of victims have most often been current political actors. Their manipulation, depending on the ideological need to keep or take over power, was ready to degrade the victims in Jasenovac. It advocated a thesis about 1,000 people who dead – and were not killed (Geiger, 2020, p. 534) or a thesis that “mostly Croats” were the victims in Jasenovac (Kaleb, 1971, p. 15).

However, the preserved testimonies sound devastating even for this type of pathological paroxysm and Serbophobia. The testimonies about murders and bestialities are sublimed through incredible tranquillity of the words told by Vukašin from Klepci near Čapljina: “Child, just do your job!” These words caused momentary fury in Žile Frković, the executioner who did not win that night because his fellow guard slaughtered 1,350 prisoners, the same ones who, according to the above-mentioned article, did not want to leave the camp and the human socialization it provided. Frković had nightmares and testified about himself as the “last carrion” (Miletić, 1988, p. 94), who was persecuted by Vukašin, but his frenzy and the spasm of hatred forced him to perpetrate further crimes.

Suggestive reduction of the number of victims was also aimed at discrediting the established demographic losses (Lajbenšperger, 2019, p. 101) of almost two million inhabitants after the Second World War. While Serbian insistence on over 700,000 victims in the Jasenovac camp was characterized as an obscure and fabricated story, which to Serbs constituted “a social law” (Tomasevich, 2010, p. 813) was not brought to question. In this manner, the interpretation of the Serbian opinion about the number of victims was belittled as a dogma encouraging self-deceit and developing the pathology of self-pity. From

it derives an uncontrolled urge of vindictiveness that the Serbian people allegedly put under the regime responsible for the war conflict in the territory of the Yugoslav state in the last decade of the 20th century.

Undefined relations regarding victims have become a strong impetus to nationalist antagonism. In that respect, it is difficult to accept the attitude that “Jasenovac is the deepest wound of Serbian and regional history” (Marković, 2021, p. 5). It is true for Serbian history, but, after all, not for the current regional interpretation of the past.

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Suffering of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Independent State of Croatia

Abstract: The Church is a spiritual institution in which people of faith exercise their spiritual needs and accordingly build their spiritual being. The Church consists of the clergy and people of faith. Without people of faith, there would be no Church. Hence, all things pertaining to the Church are of relevance to people of faith; and vice versa, all things concerning people of faith are of relevance to the Church.

In the area controlled by the clericalist-fascist Independent State of Croatia (ISC), both people and the Church were exposed to persecution, terror, and killings. The Serbs were killed not only because they belonged to a different nation and because of their national being, but also because of a different religion, because of their spiritual being. They were killed because they were Serbian and Orthodox.

The Ustasha movement manifesto is indicative of this, having been publicly declared in the words of leaders of the Ustasha state. The genocide Ustasha manifesto, in the sections regarding the Serbs - which suggested that one third of the Serbs should be killed, one third should be banished and one third converted to Catholicism - is a clear indication of planned activities the result of which was supposed to be the spiritual and physical demise of the Serbs. If man's religion is subject to attack, if the desired outcome is for man to be lead or forced into giving up his religion in order to be converted to someone else's religion, it is then the spiritual murder - killing man as he was until that point. Specifically, this was the objective of forced conversion of the Orthodox Serbs to Catholicism in the ISC.

This task was carried out in accordance with the formally declared Ustasha agenda. And for the purpose of achieving the highest results possible, the Serbian Orthodox Church was particularly exposed to attacks.

Keywords: Independent State of Croatia (ISC), Roman Catholic Church, genocide, Serbian people, Serbian Orthodox Church

Introduction

During the occupation by the clericalist-fascist Independent State of Croatia, this state aspired to use World War II to accomplish its priority, its

genocide objective: destruction of the Serbian nation and the Orthodox faith in the broad region of former Yugoslavia, where, with the approval of Nazi Germany, a puppet regime was established. The Serbs, as the strongest ethnos in that region,

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were treated as the arch enemy - which, among other things, will be confirmed by activities exercised by Croatia in terms of spiritual and physical destruction of this nation, as well as by the number of Serbian victims. As a result of racial and Nazi motivation of the Ustasha authorities, the victims of genocide in the ISC, apart from the Serbs, were Jews and the Roma.

The origin of the planned crime is confirmed by the timeline of events itself: Germany attacked Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, while only four days later, on 10 April, the ISC was established. From the very first day of its establishment, the ISC showed its main objective - to do away with the Serbs and the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox faith is at the very core of the Serbian national identity and this is the reason why in the strong action undertaken against the Serbs, their spiritual being and the Serbian Orthodox Church are assaulted.

Devised genocide

It was only one day after the ISC was declared on 11 April 1941, that Radio Zagreb made an announcement to the residents of Zagreb that they should give a warm welcome to the German army and decorate the windows with flowers. Besides this, the residents were invited to wait for further orders and announcements to be delivered via the radio. People residing outside Zagreb were instructed to immediately refer to the parish offices, where they “will be given by the priests instructions for further activities to be conducted.” A clear conclusion can be drawn that even before the ISC was

established, the parish offices, namely the priests, had been given Ustasha instructions on what the planned activities were and on what was to follow. In this respect, renowned history professor Viktor Novak, PhD, who quite meticulously demonstrated and substantiated actions of the Croatian Ustasha state and the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia, notes: “This is the most apparent sign that the entire institution of the Church in Croatia put itself at the service of the high treason movement and of the newly-formed circumstances, in which church institutions, primarily parish offices, became an instrument in the hands of the Ustasha system and the Ustasha ISC, and that obviously they had been prepared beforehand for such a course of events. Namely, who would have dared advise citizens to refer citizens to institutions for all, even classified announcements, if they had not been positive that such important orders would be followed and carried out during the initial time of taking over the power? Those could have been only the most trusted ones” (Novak, 1986, p. 542).

The instruction and encouragement to the Roman Catholic clergy and future (wartime) activities were given by the leading person of the Church in Croatia - the Archbishop of Zagreb, Aloysius Stepinac. It was on the first day after the establishment of the ISC - 11 April 1941, Good Friday - that he visited his friends and acquaintances, who had taken ministerial positions in the first provisional government, prior to Ante Pavelić's arrival in Zagreb. One of the people (“bloody terrorists”), who was to become “famous” for his activities in Croatia's “bloodiest regime”, was Milovan Žanić, PhD, who was were given competences over the Minis-

try of Interior in those days. Archbishop Stepinac paid him a visit, welcoming him on his behalf and on behalf of the Church of Croats, had a lengthy conversation with him, as was joyfully published in the Ustasha press.

The next day, on Good Saturday, the then Deputy Supreme Leader Slavko Kvaternik, the self-proclaimed “army leader”, and subsequently marshal, visited the Supreme Head of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia, Archbishop Stepinac. The archbishop paid him a return visit on the same day. In a story about this visit, the *Catholic Paper* reports that the Archbishop expressed the Ustasha dignitary “not only his congratulations on the establishment of the ISC” but at the same time “his condolences” for the death of his brother Petar Kvaternik, an Ustasha outlaw who died in combat with the regular troops of the Yugoslav Army in Crikvenica, at the exact time when the establishment of the ISC as well as its secession from Yugoslavia were announced in this place (*Ibid*, p. 543).

The early days of the ISC, from Good Thursday (when it was created) to Easter Sunday, showed that the Ustasha state and the Roman Catholic Church shared the same orientation and that they acted together towards it. The same was noted enthusiastically by the Ustasha press. Thus, *The Croatian News*, in its Easter edition, underscores the importance of mutual visits between Ustasha leaders and Archbishop Stepinac and, accordingly, the paper reports on the first cordial meeting between Kvaternik and Stepinac, as well as the fact that the Archbishop of Zagreb welcomed the Deputy Supreme Leader, in the following manner: “This was to mark

that a close collaboration was established between the Ustasha movement and the highest representative of the Roman Catholic Church authorities in the State of Croatia” (*Ibid.*, pp. 543–544).

What the Ustasha press emphasized as particularly important was visit of Archbishop Stepinac to the Ustasha Supreme Leader Ante Pavelić on the 16 April. Following this, what resounded even more strongly was the news, also broadcast on the radio, that the archbishop organized a banquet for Ustasha emigration army officers in his residence, which was extensively illustrated with many photos in the press.

“All of these activities of Archbishop Stepinac, which were duly followed by the Zagreb press and then by the press in all other towns, were also broadcast via the radio in order for the clergy throughout the country to be aware of the position of their spiritual leader in Croatia, according to the new situation”, Professor Viktor Novak reasonably concludes.

To support this, Professor Novak gives the following example: “A large number of eyewitnesses and reliable persons have reported that in the Franciscan Convent Split, which is located by the sea, a microphone was mounted, and news was announced all day long, including the smallest details about the Archbishop of Zagreb! It was clear to everyone, and the same was believed and noted, as was subsequently yet to be seen, that Archbishop Stepinac wholeheartedly supported the new situation” (*ibid.*, p. 544).

At Easter, as was customary, Stepinac gave a sermon in the Zagreb Cathedral, and on that occasion, he announced to the parishioners the glorious day of the establishment of the ISC. In this man-

ner, he identified himself with the creators of this clericalist-fascist formation.

In his sermon, the archbishop stated that all things would be better once the name of God was observed and respected, the day of God, Father, and Mother and “lawful heads and provisions of the Holy Church...”; it is only then, he notes, that the days of peace might be expected. Then he prayed to the resurrected Jesus for Croatian people that were “about to enter a new period of their lives” (*Ibid.*, p. 545).

What ensued was a hate campaign (based on lies) against the Serbs; invitations were sent demanding that they be exterminated and then, upon such thorough preparation, persecution, arrests, and killings and, wherever possible, mass killings followed, mainly of the Serbian Orthodox people. Various bestial atrocities were committed, and all this for the ultimate goal - genocide against this people, and then against others who were not to the liking of the Ustasha authorities.

Historiography, which is based on relevant facts, speaks for a reason of genocide against the Serbs in the ISC. Additionally, scrutinising more thoroughly this pogrom against one nation, it will be seen that mass killings of the Serbs were perpetrated not only because they were Serbs, on the basis of their national identity, but also because they were the bearers of the Orthodox faith, because of their sense of spiritual belonging. What was aimed at was spiritual and physical annihilation of the Orthodox Serbian people.

This was confirmed in the early days of the Ustasha regime, when the first reforms of the police measures resulted in activities aimed at labelling and discriminating against people of the Orthodox faith.

The Orthodox Serbs in Zagreb, as well as in other towns, were ordered to wear around their arms a blue band with the Cyrillic letter P (for *pravoslavac*, or Orthodox/), thereby indicating that in the Ustasha ISC they were outlawed. Thus, this letter P, used to mark Orthodox persons, became the sign of a Pariah.

The statements issued by the Ustasha leaders unequivocally confirmed that they were inconvenienced by the Serbian nation and the Orthodox faith. Their activities were put at the service of the Roman Catholic Church, and so they assumed an ostensibly “holy duty” to eradicate the Orthodox faith or to integrate it into the Roman Catholic faith. They were rather open about their intentions, and they expressed them freely at rallies, while the Ustasha press enthusiastically reported about it. In this manner, they carried out mass mobilisation for further action, aimed at achieving their declared intentions.

Therefore, after his visit to the Vatican, high Ustasha dignitary Mile Budak held a large Ustasha rally in Križevci on 6 June 1941. He invited the participants to gather after the Mass, which had to be attended by all the people who were convoked. Afterwards, this became common practice. Not infrequently the Mass was held outdoors, and then the altar was used as a pulpit from which the Ustasha harangued the attendees. At the 6 June rally, Budak interpreted religious relations in the ISC saying, among other things, the following about the Serbs: “They joined religion with ethnicity, and they said: ‘Our churches and our monasteries are our cornerstones.’ That is why they erected them in Celje, Maribor, Sušak, and Split. However, God willing, this cornerstone of theirs will vanish from

Croatia because you cannot set cornerstones on someone else's farmland..." (*Ibid.*, p. 603).

Budak as the Ustasha ideologist emphasises that ideology and actions undertaken by the Ustasha state are based on religion - the Roman Catholic faith. What underlies this, as is still later to be seen and ever more vociferously and clearly heard as the main theme, is the demand to do away with the bearers of the Orthodox faith. At a major Ustasha rally held in Karlovac on 13 July 1941, Budak, among other things, says the following: "Brothers and sisters! The entire Ustasha movement is based on faith. First and foremost, this is our strong faith in the just cause, our strong faith in God Almighty, who never abandons the righteous ones. It is on our loyalty to the Church and the Catholic faith that we base our entire operation because history has taught us that, if we were not Catholics here, we would have perished long ago... I am convinced that if we were not Roman Catholics, we would otherwise perish. We do know this and in the past twenty years [since Yugoslavia was created – *the author's note, J.J.*], irrespective of the fact that not all of our clergymen always behaved the way they should have behaved. Still, Belgrade could not climb over this strong bastion. Belgrade prohibited everything but this faith, which is professed by all of the Croatian people, but Belgrade could not prohibit this faith, and this was our strength. This is why the Ustasha movement encourages this sense of faith, because it is an important ingredient of our soul and foundation of the Ustasha movement. [...] So, brothers and sisters, it was these sacred things, the Church, faith, and family, that our biggest enemies attacked with the greatest force. And our biggest enemies are

the Serbs and Bolsheviks. The calculating enemy always seeks the most vulnerable spot, and this is where they try to strike. But it is exactly there that the enemy encountered the strongest resistance because the ideology of the Ustasha movement is based on these foundations (*Ibid.*, pp. 604–605).

What can be read in Croatian papers of the time, which was so meticulously reported by Professor Viktor Novak in his monumental work *Magnum Crimen*, almost all speeches delivered by the Ustasha leaders resonate with more or less overt invitation for a pogrom against and persecution of the Serbs, especially of Orthodox believers. Namely, at a rally in Vukovar on 8 July of the same year, the already mentioned Mile Budak said: "They are united solely with the Orthodox faith, and we have still not succeeded in assimilating them. However, they should know that our motto is: *you either bow down or you will be exterminated!*" Masses of Ustasha supporters at the rally applauded these insinuations.

Then at a rally in Pakrac, held on 20 July 1941, Budak mad a fiery speech to the masses, urging them to hate and do away with the Serbs. He said: "You know all too well the saying: 'Put one Serb at the table and serve him a meal; tie the other one, put him in a sack and sit on him. The one sitting at the table thinks the same as the one lying under the table! So, also remember this: When with a Serb, just eat one half of the bowl and what remains of the bowl, hit him on the head with it and kill him, otherwise he will kill you..."

And finally, in Gospić, at a great rally, Mile Budak quite clearly announced the Ustasha plans for complete eradication of the Serbs: "We will kill a portion of the Serbs, others will be displaced while

the rest will be converted to the Catholic faith and thus, they will become Croats” (*Ibid.*, p. 605).

Plan of the genocide. Plan for the eradication of one nation.

Other Ustasha leaders spoke along the same lines. At an Ustasha rally held in Nova Gradiška, Milovan Žanić, PhD, the above-mentioned Minister, pointed out the impossibility of cohabitation between Roman Catholics and Orthodox believers within the boundaries of one state, as required by the authorities of this state. This is what he said: “Fellow Ustashes! Let it be known. I am speaking openly. This state, this motherland of ours, must belong to the Croats and no one else. So, those who have come here are those who should leave. Events over the centuries, especially during the 1920s, show that any type of compromise is out of the question. *This will be the land of the Croats and no one else, so there is no method that us Ustashes will not utilise to make this land truly Croatian and to cleanse it from the Serbs, who have been a threat to us for hundreds of years and who would do the same at the first opportunity. We are not hiding this, it is the policy of this state and once we have completed this, we will have completed what is written in the Ustasha principles.* Let it not be forgotten that outside our borders, in America alone, there are approximately 800,000 Croats, and we will not forget those poor people who went to America to earn a living, because they had no bread in their own country; we will not forget those people. These people should come back here and resettle at the hearths which will be previously cleansed by us.”

At a rally held in Križevci on 6 July 1941, Ustasha Minister of Justice Mirko Puk, PhD, called the

Serbs looters, scum and trash of the Balkans. In his view, it was not possible to have two nations living together in the same state, and it was especially impossible for both nations to rule. He repeated Budak’s threat to the Serbs that they should either move or bow down, which was welcomed with loud cheering of bloodthirsty Ustashes. So, he elaborated on this further: “You either move out of our motherland of your own free will or we will expel you forcibly” (*Ibid.*, p. 606).

At an Ustasha rally held in Donji Miholjac on 27 July 1941, senior Ustasha dignitary Mladen Lorković, PhD, who was later to become Minister of Foreign Affairs, openly stated that from the Croatian people “must be removed all those elements who are a misfortune to that people, those elements who are alien and strange to them and who destroy the sound forces of these people, those elements that have over decades and centuries pushed from one adversity to another”. To be more precise, he added: “These are our Serbs and Jews” (*Ibid.*, pp. 607–608).

A contemporary of the abhorrent events of the time, Professor Viktor Novak, PhD, summarised such statements by saying: “And so is said by almost all Ustasha dignitaries, laymen and clergymen alike.”

The minions, Croatian people and all those who follow ideology and the Ustasha state authorities were mobilised in order to engage in exterminating the Serbs and the Orthodox faith. This was openly advocated in particular by the Supreme Leader’s great supporter and Banjaluka commander Viktor Gutić, PhD; on his journey through Krajina, in Bosnia, he promoted hatred of the Serbs, inviting

the Ustasha movement followers to persecute the Orthodox population, thus disseminating horror and terror. Wherever he went, the Roman Catholic clergymen met and welcomed him as alleged saviour of the whole region. In his speech in Sanski Most, he declared persecution and full extermination of the Serbs. He said: "There is no longer Serbian Army! There is no longer Serbia! There are no longer Serbian rednecks, those who suck on our blood, there is no more the Gypsy House of Karadorđević, and soon enough, our roads will want Serbs on them, but there will be no Serbs any longer. I have issued drastic orders for their complete economic annihilation and there will be new instructions for their compete extermination. Don't have a soft spot for any of them. You must always keep in mind that they were the diggers of our graves, so destroy them wherever you may see them, and you will not lack the blessing of our Supreme Leader. All those who stand up for them will consequently become the enemy of Croatian freedom... The Serbs should have no hopes, and the best thing for them to do is to move away, to disappear from our lands" (*Ibid.*, p. 608).

These threats, based on lies and hatred were, as a matter of fact, an agenda for the eradication of the Serbian Orthodox population. The ensuing events confirmed this. What ensued was the pogrom – arrests, collecting people and taking them to camps, mass killings with bestial atrocities, persecution, conversion to Catholicism etc.

The suffering of the Orthodox Serbs in the territory of the clericalist-fascist ISC had such a large scale that the then high official of the Third Reich, German Minister of Foreign Affairs and spe-

cial envoy for the Balkans (1940-1945), Hermann Neubacher, wrote in his memoirs that the events in Croatia "were among the most atrocious mass killings in world history" (Neubacher, 2007, p. 85).

Assimilation and killings of the Serbs in Croatia

From the very outset of the war, news of the suffering of Serbian population and the Serbian Church in the occupied territories of Yugoslavia, especially in the ISC, started pouring into the Serbian Patriarchate. The refugees coming to Serbia brought the news of atrocities the Serbian people were exposed to in these territories. Many of them were eyewitnesses who could credibly testify about horrendous blood thirst and violence suffered by the Serbs (Report of the Holy Synod, 1991, p. 99). Office of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church was assigned the task to obtain reports on the events survived by each priest, a refugee from Croatia, and the description of circumstances under which they escaped. This was the only way for the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian society to be informed about circumstances and events in the regions outside Serbia (*Ibid.*, p. 100).

In this manner, volumes of documentation were compiled, and the documentation was so extensive that the Synod offices could not handle all of it or properly process it in order for the public to become aware of the suffering. This is the reason why in 1941 the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church established a special committee – *the Committee for Collecting Data on the Suffering of the Serbian People under Occupation* - whose task

was to collect materials on the suffering of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian people in the regions of Yugoslavia that remained outside the territories of Central Serbia and Banat. The Committee was chaired by priest and renowned historian Radoslav Grujić, Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology. According to a set of instructions issued by the Committee itself, the Committee collected 4,504 reports. Based on those reports, data was collected, compared, and chronicled, and subsequently summary reports and memoranda were written. It was by the end of 1942 that three memoranda of the Serbian Orthodox Church on crimes against the Serbs in the ISC were compiled. In the third *Memorandum*, in the chronological order, its compilers wrote the following words on the first pages: “This *Memorandum* takes into account solely a shorter period of time, mainly between April 1942 until mid-1942, apparently. [...] This is the first part of the material which we hereby make available for the purpose of the provision of interim information. [...] According to testimonies of refugees and accounts we have heard from the other side, an approximate number of killed Serbs - men, women, and children - in the “Independent State of Croatia” until the beginning of 1943 is 700,000. It is impossible to determine the exact number today” (Jevtić, 1990, p. 21).

The *Memorandum* initially speaks of “first persecutions and tortures of the Serbs” and “demolition and destruction of their homes, churches and settlements” in the ISC, and among other things, the following is specified: “In a rabid fit of demolition and extermination of Serbian people, thousands

of Serbs’ houses were burnt down, entire villages destroyed, entire municipalities alike, so not a single living soul stayed there. In particular the Serbian churches and monasteries were demolished...” (*Ibid.*, pp. 21–22).

A report by the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which was prepared for its first post-war session (held on 27/14 March 1947) states the following: “The pivotal point of the political programme of the newly created state (the ISC) was integral elimination from its territory of all Orthodox and Serbian elements, which in these territories represented a substantial minority of 2,403,998 inhabitants, as compared to the total number of the Serbian population of approximately 7,000,000” (Report of the Holy Synod, 1991, p. 97).

The “Church Government” goes on to state the following in its report: “Mass killings were preceded by all kinds of unprecedented barbaric torture, which the Serbs had never suffered in their history, not even at the hand of the cruellest enemy. The number of human victims, gender and age indiscriminately, included all social strata and all categories of professions. The previous assessment was approximately 800,000 victims (*Ibid.*, pp. 97–98).

The report of the Synod of the Serbian Church then reads as follows: “In this general persecution of the Orthodox Serbian population, Catholic parish priests and monks and nuns (mainly Franciscan) had a prominent role in certain towns, be it as organisers or as direct executors of the most vicious atrocities.”

The Synod acknowledges that the “main strike” of the ISC authorities “which relied on the Roman Catholic Church” against the Serbs was “aimed at

the very Serbian Orthodox Church and its organisation”, and the same conclusion is also drawn from a large number of murdered priests (in excess of 170) and banished and refugee priests, excluding monks. Then, the material demolition is also presented: “From the killing of clergymen, demolishing and looting cathedrals, town churches, monasteries, village places of worship and episcopal residences, buildings from which eparchy church institutions operated, parish halls, church municipality buildings, monastery lodgings, church treasuries, archives and libraries, even the gravest acts of sacrilege of our holy temples, the obvious aim was to prevent any form of existence and functioning of eparchy and local church authorities in the territory of the newly established Croatian state, while allowing for extensive exercise of converting Orthodox Serbs to Catholicism and the Greek Catholic faith” (*Ibid.*, p. 98).

The Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church then notes: “This exercise, which was thoroughly planned and systematically carried out against the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people, was based on a prior agreement with the Roman Curia, which unequivocally follows form a document called Congregation for the Eastern Orthodox Church, dated 17 July 1941, the recipient of which was the Archbishop of Zagreb, as Chair of the Croatian Bishops’ Conference. Namely, this document contains certain paragraphs, which are very suggestive of the Vatican’s position, e.g., that Rome expects major success “in the field of conversion of the non-included (i.e., Orthodox Serbs in Croatia), thus submitting them to the Pope”. It expresses gratitude to the

Archbishop of Zagreb for the success achieved until then in his exercise of conversion of the Serbs to Catholicism and, at the same time, it encourages him and territorially competent bishops to proceed with their work in the direction they were heading, so as to ensure proper growth of Catholicism, “since now there is such a high hope for the conversion of the non-included” (*Ibid.*, pp. 98–99).

The Serbian Church Patriarchate notes that this document was compiled in Rome following the visit of Ante Pavelić (the Supreme Leader of the Croatian state) to the Pope, at the time when the Serbian people and the Serbian Orthodox Church were outlawed, which “without a shred of doubt resulted as a logical consequence of this visit, during which the Pope was given an exhaustive report on internal circumstances in the Croatian state, as well as on the guidelines of Croatian internal policies for the present and the future”.

After this visit and the Congregation document whose issuance ensued, a more intensive exercise of conversion of the Serbs to Catholicism followed. At the *Bishop’s Printing Shop* in Đakovo, a pamphlet was printed, and then distributed among the Orthodox Serbs in Slavonia and Srem, inviting them to join the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time, the Serbs were warned that this was the only way that would allow them to “be able to stay at their homes”, that “they will not be further persecuted and killed” and that, seemingly, in this manner they will ensure that “their souls are saved”. The result of this exercise was such that approximately 240,000 Orthodox Serbs converted to the Roman Catholic faith (*Ibid.*, p. 99).

Non-canonical establishment of the Croatian Orthodox Church

The Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church notes that the illegal Croatian government was not satisfied with what had been done since “completing the task, according to their agenda, to kill one third of the Serbs”, it did not quite accomplish the other objective, i.e., that one third of the Serbs are forced out across the Drina River; nor was the third objective accomplished to a sufficient extent, to convert one third of the Serbs to Catholicism or Greek Catholicism. Hence, another task was undertaken: “to gradually deprive the rest of the Orthodox Serbs of their national feature by forming a new Orthodox autocephalous church which will be of purely Croatian nature (*Ibid.*, p. 99).

It was on 3rd May 1941, only a month after the establishment of the ISC, that its Supreme Leader Ante Pavelić issued the *Decree on the Conversion from One Religion to Another (Narodne novine, No. 19, dated 5 May 1941, pursuant to which the process of conversion was simplified (Janjić, 2018a, p. 692).* During the first year of the war, there was mention of the Roman Catholic priests competing who would convert more Serbs to Roman Catholicism. One of the reasons for conversion to Catholicism was to artificially increase the number Croats by a million or more inhabitants (Prodić, 2020, pp. 33–34). In this manner, on the one hand, the Croatian (Roman Catholic) factor was strengthened while, on the other hand, the Serbian (Orthodox) factor was weakened.

Although there was mass conversion from the Orthodox faith to Roman Catholicism, in early 1942

the Ustasha authorities realised that their religion-related policies had failed to entirely deliver the desired results. Namely, it was noted that many Serbs were not sincere about their conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, but converted out of fear for their lives and the lives of their families, out of fear of Ustasha terror (Janjić, 2018a, p. 693). This is why they made a turn in their plan of assimilation and extermination of the Serbs and degradation of the organisation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the ISC territories. On 3rd April 1942, Supreme Leader Ante Pavelić issued the *Decree on the Establishment of the Autocephalous Croatian Orthodox Church* and then, based on this, a *Constitution of the Croatian Orthodox Church* was declared on 5 June of the same year.

Having learned about this, the Holy Synod declared the process of establishing the would-be “church” as being “illegal and in breach of the canons” at its session held on 30/17 April 1942 (*Ibid.*, pp. 693–694).

The Ustasha authorities persevered in this direction. They made attempts at finding a reputed Serbian Orthodox monk who would be installed as the head of the “Autocephalous Croatian Orthodox Church”. To this end, young hierodeacon Varnava (Nastić) was brought from Sarajevo to Zagreb, in an attempt of the authorities to appoint him the head of this quasi-church organisation since he enjoyed a good reputation among the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. However, he openly and resolutely declined this (Janjić, 2018, pp. 19–21).

Then the Ustasha authorities coerced the Russian immigrant bishop Germogen, the former archbishop of Ekaterinoslavskiy and New Moscow, and

installed him as the head of the so-called Croatian Orthodox Church, with duties of the Metropolitan of Zagreb. He was enthroned in Zagreb on 7 June 1942. Following this, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia excommunicated Gergemon from its ranks, denounced his actions and imposed a ban on him officiating the holy liturgy. However, he paid no heed to this. Two years later, on 15 August 1944, Germogen and the envoy of the Patriarch of Romania, Metropolitan Visarion Puiu, ordained Spiridon Mifka, whom the Ustasha Supreme Leader Ante Pavelić appointed the Bishop of Sarajevo, in the Orthodox Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Lord in Zagreb (Janjić 2018a, p. 694).

The Serbian Orthodox population knew and felt that this quasi-church organisation had no foundation in the canons and that they could not save their souls in it, hence this organisation, with only a handful of problematic priests, could not play a more significant role nor could it protect the Orthodox population from their suffering. Crimes against the Serbs were still committed, the Orthodox were converted to the Catholic faith, and there was still the *Office for Demolishing Orthodox Churches* in force (Kašić, 1971, p. 203).

Proof of mass atrocities

It was in the early days of the war that the Serbian Orthodox Church in the ISC territory was decimated. Out of the eight eparchies, only one (the Zvornik-Tuzla Eparchy), had an actively serving bishop during the war. Three Eparchy (Arch) Bishops - Petar, the Metropolitan of Dabar-Bosnia, Sava, the Bishop of Gornji Karlovac, and Platon, the

Bishop of Banjaluka - were brutally killed in 1941, in the early days of the war. Dositej, the Metropolitan of Zagreb, was arrested together with his deacon on the same day the clericalist-fascist state of ISC was declared; he was badly beaten up, tortured and abused in the Zagreb prison. After such savage torture, on 8 May 1941, he was transported to the railway station and put on the train to Belgrade; he died of consequences of his Zagreb torture in Belgrade, on 13 January 1945. Nikolaj, the Bishop of Zahumlje and Herzegovina, was beaten up and banished to Serbia. He died in Sokobanja on 26 March 1943. Irinej, the Bishop of Dalmatia, based on Croatian accusations of him being an English agent, was arrested by the Italians (since his episcopal see was in Šibenik, in the Italian occupation zone) on 8 November 1941. He was later taken to a prisoner-of-war camp in Italy. Valerijan, the Vicar Bishop of Srem, was undergoing medical treatment in Split when the war broke out. He passed away immediately after that (Janjić, 2018a, pp. 23–24).

Further activities aimed at the destruction of the entire body of the Serbian Orthodox Church continued.

Upon the end of the war, on 10 July 1945, the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church sent Arsenije, previously the Vicar Bishop of Moravica, to Zagreb. He was given authority as the administrator of as many as four eparchies – those of Zagreb, Gornji Karlovac, Pakrac, and Dalmatia.

After becoming familiar with the situation in the field, Bishop Arsenije reported to the Synod as follows: “The Eparchies of Zagreb and of Pakrac are severely ravaged: many churches are demolished, while the remaining ones were looted. There are

126 | areas without a single church left. In some towns, between 50% and 80% of the Serbs were exterminated. Priests, if there are any who survived, returned to their parishes and have started the revival of church life with great difficulty: arch hierarch heads have been appointed in district administrative units. They are converting back to the Orthodox faith those who were forced to covert to Roman Catholicism; they are renewing certain church municipalities and appointing interim administration; where possible, they are restoring conditions for officiating the holy liturgy, however with substantial difficulty (Report of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, *Ibid.*, pp. 119–120).

In its Report on activities performed during the period 1941–1946, which was submitted to the Holy Assembly at its first post-war ordinary session (held in May 1947), the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church described the wartime suffering in the Eparchy of Gornji Karlovac as follows:

“Before the war, there were 220 churches and chapels in the Eparchy of Gornji Karlovac. Out of this number, Ustashas, punitive expeditions and war operations led to the demolition of burning down of 188 of them. Only 23 churches and 9 chapels have remained in the entire eparchy. However, they are also damaged, and in particular, the interior was damaged in almost all of them. Liturgical objects and church records have been preserved only in Srpske Moravice and Karlovac.

Gomirje, the only monastery in this eparchy, was demolished and burnt down. The monastery land and entire property were confiscated by Ustashas in 1941. The forest was cut down. All the monastic buildings were burnt down and demolished.

The monastery now has no land, no forest. [...]

Before the war, there were 157 priests in the Eparchy of Gornji Karlovac. Of them, 70 priests were killed, while 86 survived. Out of the 86 priests, only 17 returned to the eparchy in 1945, of whom 16 were regular priests and 1 hieromonk and one regular priest from the Eparchy of Dalmatia, who was temporarily appointed.

Lika, Kordun and Banija look extremely demolished. In the counties of Otočac, Brinje, Ogulin, Glina, Kostajnica, Dvor and Bos. More than 50% of Serbian houses were torn down in Krupa, with more than 70% in the Gračac county. In the counties of Lapac, Udbina, Korenica, Gospić, Perušić, Slunj, Vojnić, Vrgin Most, Bihać and Cazin, in excess of 90% of Serbian houses were torn down and burnt down.

The church municipalities are the owners of their land only formally in land registries. Money deposit booklets of some church municipalities were forcibly taken by Ustashas, who withdrew the funds. The remaining money deposit booklets must be amortised, pursuant to the new legislation, so the amount of the funds will be very small.

The Eparchy of Gornji Karlovac had a population of 449,000 Orthodox inhabitants in late 1940. Many of them were killed, died of typhoid and other diseases, or lost their lives in combat. A number of the inhabitants moved away to Srem, Banat and Bačka. By the end of November 1945, approximately 60,000 people emigrated. If emigration had been stopped, there would be approximately 240,000 people in the Eparchy now. So, this would account for one half of the number of people in 1940. There is not a single parish in which Ustashas did not kill at least 200 persons, mainly adult men. However,

there are many towns and villages in which they killed 1,000-1,300 people (Crkveni Bok, Dubica, Bos, Dobro Selo), 1,500 (Čemernica, Divoselo) and as many as 2,000 people (Plaški). Once all data has been collected, the situation in the Eparchy will be found to be even more horrendous and excruciating.

There are only 20 parishes in which interim administrative offices have been formed. Additionally, the General People's Defence organisation appointed a commissariat of two persons in the church municipality of Karlovac, of whom one person is a woman. In other church municipalities, there are no priests or any form of church municipal administration" (*Ibid.*, pp. 120–121).

The Synod reports on the situation found in the Eparchy of Tuzla and Zvornik in the following manner:

"The people of the Eparchy of Tuzla and Zvornik, especially in its eastern parts, suffered enormous atrocities. The villages were burnt down, the houses were demolished; you can travel for hours on end without seeing or meeting anyone on the roads. The number of clergymen in this eparchy reduced dramatically: Ustashas killed 27 priests, Germans 2, Chetniks 1, partisans 10; 2 priests died in the prisoner-of-war camps in Germany, 9 of them died during the war, 2 were sentenced to a term in prison, 3 of them are currently in prison. This totals 56, which means that the number of clergymen was halved.

Three churches were completely demolished, while many were damaged and desecrated; ceremonial robes, liturgical objects and books were destroyed; some parish halls were burnt down, some demolished and some were damaged. The monas-

tery lodgings were either burnt down or so severely damaged that without extensive renovation, it will be impossible to provide accommodation in them. The monastery-owned forests were cut down and depleted, the furniture in monasteries was taken away or destroyed beyond repair, livestock was either driven away or slaughtered.

Upon the end of the war, the Holy Synod describes the situation in the Eparchy of Dabar-Bosnia in the following manner:

"When Germans and Ustashas were thrown out of Bosnia, His Eminence Bishop of Zvornik and Tuzla, Nektarije, administrator of the Eparchy of Dabar-Bosnia, visited Sarajevo for the first time (from 27 June to 5 July). On Saint Vitus Day, in the Sarajevo Cathedral, he officiated the Holy Liturgy and memorial service for all those who had been killed for holy faith and the motherland. Before the liturgy, the ceremony of small consecration of the cathedral was held because no liturgies had been held there since the war broke out, with the exception of the period when Spiridon Mifka served in Sarajevo.

Compared to other eparchies, the situation in the Eparchy of Dabar Bosnia was satisfactory. The archives of the Church court and the Metropolitan were completely preserved, as well as the library, furniture, even dishes and tableware in the Eparchy itself.

But, the people of this eparchy, especially in East Bosnia and Sandžak, suffered immensely. A large number of priests were killed. Ustashas killed 14 priests, Italians 2, partisans 7; 4 priests are currently imprisoned, while 8 priests died during the war" (*Ibid.*, p. 121).

When presenting the situation found in the Eparchy of Zahumlje and Herzegovina, the Synod reported to the Assembly that in the episcopate building “there was nothing left: furniture, archives, library - everything was looted and destroyed”, while the Department for People’s Protection - counter-intelligence service (OZNA in Serbian - moved in after the war was over. The report continues as follows:

“The Serbian population in Herzegovina suffered immensely and they were left destitute, especially in towns. [...] The once well-off church municipality of Mostar is no longer able to pay the sexton and the bellringer. The situation is not much better in other church municipalities in this eparchy.

The number of clergymen in this eparchy was substantially reduced. Out of 67 priests from both orders that the Eparchy once had, in the month of June 1945, there were only 9 of them, of whom three were so old and ailing that they needed assistance, while one of the priests became minister in the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The monasteries were entirely destroyed or burnt down, while the furniture was stolen” (*Ibid.*, p. 122).

The Synod goes on in the following manner about the situation in the Eparchy of Banjaluka after the end of the war:

“Religious life of the Orthodox population in the Eparchy of Banjaluka, as well as for the most part of the ISC, during the occupation and Ustasha terror was in its external manifestation entirely paralysed because the clergymen were banished. In rare cases of priests in the ranks of the People’s Liberation Army (NOV - partisans) or Chetnik units, people were guarded about them because they had their doubts about such persons being true priests, so the people were reluctant to them officiating the liturgy and did not even ask them to do so. Nevertheless, although because of Ustasha terror it was not possible for the Serbs to express their religious sentiment, the Orthodox population never ceased to be deeply pious and devoted to its Church. Their inner religious being re-emerged only upon the appearance of their priests who started returning from exile. The people cried when they met their priest again, kissing both his hand and his robe.

Thanks to the clergymen having been driven away to Caprag in time^[2] and subsequently transferred to Serbia, only 5 killed priests were killed in the Eparchy of Banjaluka (4 by the Ustashas and 1 by the Germans). Additionally, 13 parish priests died as refugees in exile. There are 107 parish priests in the Eparchy. 58 parish priests returned during 1945, while 8 of them stayed in Serbia. Furthermore, location has not been established for 8 priests, whereas 1 priest never returned from captivity... The people

[2] The Caprag camp, i.e., Ustasha concentration camp in the vicinity of Sisak, was the place where at the beginning of World War II the priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church were mainly deported, together with the members of their families. Other Serbs were later brought to this concentration camp before being deported to Serbia. This concentration camp was operational until September 1941. Instead of the banished Orthodox priests, Roman Catholic priests were brought and appointed.

being so happy about seeing their priest in their local communities again is something that was the basic reason for parish priests to feel morally strong. Truth be told, this was not the case everywhere; in the administrative regions of Bosanska Dubica, Bosanski Novi and Jajce, where there was continuous battleground, the people were less committed to the Church, especially the youth. [...]

A total of 20 churches were completely torn down. Eleven churches were partly demolished, to the extent that they were no longer suitable for the liturgy. The antimins, liturgical objects, ceremonial robes and books were for the most part destroyed, and it is difficult to find anything that is necessary for the church.

Many parish halls were demolished or burnt down, while the majority of them is entirely unusable without extensive repairs. Both churches in Banjaluka were demolished and the holy liturgy is held in a large room within the Metropolitanate building, which had been turned into a chapel and consecrated on 16 December 1945. The Metropolitanate itself suffered extensive damage but once the (communist) County People's Committee moved in, it was repaired. The archives, library and store-room of liturgical books issued in Sarajevo were also destroyed.

Before the war, there were 416,000 Orthodox believers in the Eparchy. According to still unconfirmed data, approximately 100,000 people were killed in the Eparchy, i.e., one quarter of the total population..." (Report of the Holy Synod, 1991, pp. 122–123).

The clericalist-fascist ISC occupied Srem in the territory of Serbia, which, according to church

administrative organisation, was within the competence of the Archiepiscopate of Belgrade and Karlovac. This is how the Synod reported to the highest Church body on the situation there:

"In Srem, we have found 28 demolished, and 62 damaged churches, not including the monasteries. 23 parish halls were torn down while 56 of them were damaged. The buildings and the lodgings were demolished in the monasteries of Kuveždin, Grgeteg, Hopovo, Bešenovo, Jazak and Rakovac. The temples within the monastery of Mala Remeta and the lodgings in the monastery of Fenek were also torn down. The temples and lodgings in the monasteries of Šišatovac, Velika Remeta and Privina Glava were partially demolished. Minor damage was caused to the monasteries of Vrdnik, Krušedol and Beočin. [...]

The parish land is not managed by the church administration, nor is the monastic land managed by the monastery administration because both types of land were almost arbitrarily taken away and divided by the local people, even before the adoption of the Agrarian Reform Law. Only in two or three cases was it possible for the Church bodies to lease the land and receive the rent in money or in kind.

In the monasteries of Beočin, Jazak, Privina Glava, Kuveždin, Mala Remeta, and Fenek, there are one or two monks who have started managing the monasteries to a certain extent. They reside in one room of the monastery lodgings because other rooms are occupied by local civil authorities. However, it is impossible for these monks to go anywhere near the monasteries of Šišatovac, Krušedol, Velika Remeta, Grgeteg, Hopovo, Vrdnik,

Rakovac, and Bešenovo. Instead, they live in the villages surrounding the monasteries where they serve as parish priests.

In spiritual terms, the circumstances encountered in Srem were more than desperate. In some towns and villages, people have become completely disinterested in faith and the Church. With huge efforts of the clergymen who returned, circumstances later changed for the better..." (*Ibid.*, p. 118).

Bishop Arsenije, as already noted, was entrusted with administration of the Eparchy of Dalmatia. According to his report dated 9 October 1945, "circumstances of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian people in Dalmatia are better than in Lika, Kordun and Banija". The reason for this is that Dalmatia was under Italian occupation.

The bishop reports to the Church authorities in Belgrade as follows: "The Italians inflicted immense harm to the Serbian population. In fact, the Ustasas could not perform fully to their satisfaction there, and that is why no mass carnage of the Serbs took place, as was the case in the territories run solely by the Croats. Unfortunately, a large number of Dalmatian Serbs died in mutual conflicts. It is estimated that approximately 10 percent of the Serbian population was either killed or died in combat in Dalmatia.

Before the war, there were 50 priests in the Eparchy of Dalmatia; 20 priests were killed, 10 emigrated abroad, while 20 of them stayed in the Eparchy, which means that each priest is in charge of two or three parishes.

The Orthodox Cathedral in Šibenik was severely damaged in the bombing, so the liturgy is held in the cemetery church. In Split, the liturgy is

still held in a hall because the cathedral remained unfinished. The chapel adjoining the church in Zadar was hit by a bomb but thanks to one Roman Catholic clergyman, almost all liturgical objects and valuables were preserved. The church in Knin was demolished in the bombing. The church in the village of Bribir was burnt down. Other churches in villages remained unscathed.

The Krka monastery is completely preserved. This monastery did a lot of good to the people, especially during the times of famine. The other two monasteries, Krupa and Dragović, were damaged and until His Eminence Bishop Arsenije arrived, there was no one there. The prior of the Krupa monastery was killed, whereas the prior of the Dragović monastery was sentenced to 10 years of forced labour. His Eminence appointed a monk to serve as administrator for the parish near the Dragović monastery, and another monk near the Krupa monastery, so that they could take care of these monasteries at the same time..." (*Ibid.*, pp. 126–127).

After World War II was over, communist Yugoslav authorities, attempted to impose the policy of "brotherhood and unity", which entailed concealing facts pertinent to the tragic past, concealing the truth, the avoidance to reveal the extent of wartime suffering that was caused by "fratricide", as well as the number of destroyed or damaged Orthodox churches and other buildings belonging to the Church. In a State Religion Committee document, dated 25 November 1963, which was labelled as *classified* since it was for internal use only, it is mentioned that during the war, the total number of completely destroyed or severely damaged Church buildings was 774 (665 churches, 37 monasteries

and 72 chapels). Of this total number, only in the territory of the then Socialist Republic of Croatia (excluding Bosnia and Herzegovina and other territories occupied by Ustashes), 341 churches were torn down... (Perić, 1991, p. 7).

An especially striking story about suffering of the Serbian Orthodox people is connected with the Church of the Nativity of the Holy Mother of God in Glina. This is where on two occasions, in late July and early August 1941, according to the researchers' estimates, approximately 1,700 Serbs were killed, of whom slightly over one thousand, together with their families, were invited by the Ustasha authorities to be supposedly converted to Catholicism.

After one month, Ustashes demolished the church (built in 1826) in which they committed mass atrocities. When the war was over, officials of the new communist state initiated the exercise of removing the remains of the demolished church, allegedly for the sake of building an adequate memorial site. Once the area was cleared of the remains, the authorities started stalling the construction of the memorial site to the victims killed in the Glina church. In 1972, a memorial centre was built on the former church site. It was used as the community centre, and accordingly hosted various cultural and entertaining events. In the late 1980s, the issue of building the memorial was revisited and there were initiatives to do it. The memorial site to those killed in the Glina church was supposed to have the names of all the victims engraved in it. It was not completed until late July 1995 and it was only several days later, in early August, that a new pogrom against the

Serbian people was carried out, so what had just been built was then demolished. Afterwards, the memorial site was renamed to the Croatian House! (Čalija, 2021, p. 7).

Conclusion

The Independent State of Croatia (ISC) - in the words of its leaders, which was also apparent in their actions - based its Ustasha movement on the Roman Catholic faith. From the very establishment of the ISC, it was noticeable that it and the Roman Catholic Church acted jointly in this region. Concordance between them could be seen both in words and in actions (actually done or failed ones) of the Head of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia, the Archbishop of Zagreb, Aloysius Stepinac.

The Ustasha plan and agenda for the killings, persecution and conversion of the Serbs also involved actions by the Roman Catholic Church, because "conversion to the Catholic faith" could be performed only by someone who was in its service. Through their publicly declared motto, that was meant to be heard by the Serbian people in the ISC - *you either bow down or you will be exterminated*. What was demanded of the Serbs was their spiritual submission, or their physical extermination. Submission, which in its very nature also entails spiritual "stooping" and "breaking", was initially attempted to be performed through conversion to Catholicism. And when this exercise of proselytism failed to produce the desired results, they attempted to achieve them with non-canonical means, by creating, contrary to the canon law, the "Croatian Orthodox Church".

It is specifically for this reason that enormous effort was put in dismantling the organisation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the territory of the ISC but also in destroying and killing, i.e., removal

of the Serbian Orthodox Church from this region.

Consequently, during World War II, the Serbian Orthodox Church suffered the worst atrocities in the territory of the clerical-fascist ISC.

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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.

Keywords: Jasenovac, Auschwitz, Gideon Greif, genocide, Holocaust

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: ustashas’ 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 Ustashes 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 Hershkovitz, 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).

144 | 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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Croatia's Protest and Exhibition "Jasenovac — the Right to Remembrance" in the United Nations, on the Occasion of the Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2018

"Croatia's protest to Serbia because of Jasenovac is as if Germany wrote a protest to Jews because of the Holocaust".

Aleksandar Vučić,^[2]
President of the Republic of Serbia

Abstract: "Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance" was the first exhibition of the Republic of Serbia about Jasenovac in the UN, but also the first one with the topic of Jasenovac after the Second World War and, with 7 tons of equipment and exhibits, the most monumental exhibition in the history of the United Nations. It was held in the UN in New York's East River, from 26 January to 2 February 2018. The director of this exhibition was Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, a world-renowned historian of the Holocaust and an expert for death camps in the Second World War and the Head of the International Expert Group of Historians "GH7 – Stop to Revisionism", while the coordinator of the Serbian-Jewish academic cooperation and all the segments of the exhibition preparation was Ambassador Ljiljana Nikšić, PhD. The exhibition was opened by First Vice-President of the Government of Serbia and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivica Dačić, in the presence of the children-survivors of Jasenovac and other children camps in the ISC, who spoke for the first time after the Second World War in the United Nations.

The Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in its full capacity, through all international organizations and in all possible ways tried to stop the exhibition, also by sending a diplomatic protest to the UN Commission, the State Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and the EU. The Republic of Croatia based its protests (unsuccessfully) on the "territorial principle", since Jasenovac is situated in its territory. The United Nations took the side of the Republic of Serbia, accepting its argument that the purpose of the exhibition was the remembrance of the victims of Nazism and fascism, and that it was a matter of preserving the culture of remembrance related to the victims of the death camps in the Second World War, to whom the International

[1] omd@mfa.rs

[2] <https://beta.rs/politika/82708-vucic-hrvatska-protestna-nota-srbiji-kao-kad-bi-nemci-ulozili-protest-jevrejima>
(Accessed on 10 August 2022)

Holocaust Remembrance Day is dedicated, taking place in the United Nations every year. The Croatian diplomacy conducted a persistent campaign with the UN Commission, with the condition that “negotiations should be initiated between Belgrade and Zagreb” about the exhibition, and that the Serbian ambassador to Zagreb should “receive the approval” from the relevant bodies in the Republic of Croatia, and only afterwards discuss it in the UN. This was followed by the protest of the Serbian side.

The exhibition was the product of the Serbian-Jewish academic project. World agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press, Deutsche Welle, Washington Post and others, reported about the protest of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also wrote in detail about the exhibition and about the camp in Jasenovac, as well as about 57 methods of brutal killing that had been applied in the camp, which placed the exhibition in the focus of the worldwide attention. Immediately after the exhibition opening, on the margins of the OSCE Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism in Rome, the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs had a meeting with Pope Francis, but also with the President of the World Jewish Congress, using the occasion to familiarize them with Serbia’s attitudes against the initiative of the Republic of Croatia for the canonization of Ustasha vicar and arch-bishop Aloysius Stepinac, and expressing his concern over Neo-Ustashism in Croatia.

The exhibition “Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance” in the UN brought about significant changes in the approach to Jasenovac, and resulted in the first official visit of a president of Israel. In July 2018, Reuven Rivlin was the first President of Israel who visited Belgrade and Zagreb and, on that occasion, also visited the Memorial Complex of Jasenovac and paid respects to the great martyrs of Jasenovac. During his visit to Belgrade, together with President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić, he unveiled the plaque with the name of the street dedicated to the founder of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, whose father and grandfather were born in Zemun. Moreover, the result of the exhibition was also the Appeal of the World Jewish Congress to Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković to adopt the Law on the Prohibition of the Use of Ustasha Greeting “Ready for the Homeland” and to remove the memorial plaque of the Croatian Defence Forces with the engraved inscription “Ready for the Homeland” from Jasenovac.

Keywords: Ustasha extermination camp of Jasenovac, exhibition in the UN 2018, protest of Croatia’s Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, remembrance culture, international reactions and diplomatic results

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Photo 1: Presidents of Serbia and Israel, Vučić and Rivlin, at the ceremonial unveiling of the plaque for Theodor Herzl Street in Zemun, in honour of the historical, first visit of an Israeli president to Serbia after the Second World War, on 26 July 2018, only six months after the exhibition dedicated to Jasenovac in the United Nations.



Photo 2: Under the headline "Rivlin Tells Croatia to Face Its Fascist Past", Israeli daily "The Times of Israel" writes that it was on his visit to Jasenovac "death camp" from the period of the Second World War that Reuven Rivlin appealed to Croatia to "deal with its past".^[3]

[3] <https://www.rts.rs/page/stories/ci/story/3/region/3213288/izraelski-dnevnik-rivlin-u-jasenovcu-ocitao-lekciju-hrvatima.html>

Reactions and diplomatic results of the exhibition “Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance”, the first one in the UN

The coordination of the exhibition “Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance” was entrusted to the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and represented a specific diplomatic challenge and a response to the exhibition of the Republic of Croatia in the European Parliament, about “blessed” Aloysius Stepinac – “the pillar of human rights” (held in 2016) and the exhibition about “Greater Serbian Aggression in the Homeland War”, in the residence of the Ambassador of Croatia in Morocco (2017). It was staged after thorough preparations within the realization of the two-year Serbian-Jewish academic project initiated in 2016 and crowned by the Agreement on Cooperation between the Serbian Ministry of Education – Minister Šarčević – and Professor Greif, PhD, from Shem Olam Faith and Holocaust Institute in Israel. The exhibition was the result of the work of the historians from seven countries, the members of the International Expert Group GH7 – Stop to Revisionism, headed by the world-renowned expert for death factories, Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, and the Director of the exhibition about Jasenovac. The coordinator of all the activities in the realization of the Serbian-Jewish academic project was Ambassador Ljiljana Nikšić, PhD. The exhibition was opened by the then First Vice-President of the Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, and the children survivors of the ISC camps spoke for the

first time in the United Nations: David Alkalai, MD, from New York, who survived the camps on the islands of Rab and Pag; **Eva Deutsch Costabel** from New York, the survivor of the camp in Sisak; Smilja Tišma, the founder of the Association Jasenovac; the child survivor Jelena Buhač Radojčić, whose life story served as the basis of the first and only film about Jasenovac so far, *Dara from Jasenovac*; and Gojko Rončević Mraović, the child survivor from the camp of Jastrebarsko.

At the very entrance, in front of the hall of the General Assembly of the United Nations, there was a poster with the text in Serbian and English saying that the exhibition was not directed against any nation, religion or country, but that it was the UN contribution to the efforts in preserving the remembrance culture related to Serbs, Jews, Roma and all anti-Fascists who were cruelly killed in one of the most brutal and notorious extermination camps, the total of eight of them, in the Second World War.[4]

The honorary guest was Ms. Rosie Stephenson-Goodknight, Vice President of *Wikimedia*, and the descendant of the famous Serbian diplomat of the faith of Moses, David Albala, MD; who deserves the credit for Serbia being the first country to recognize the Balfour Declaration from 1917, i.e. the Jews’ right to return to their homeland.

On the same day, 26 January, on the Holocaust Remembrance Day, Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, Director of the exhibition and the leading expert for Auschwitz, *Sonderkommandos* and the Holocaust, had a lecture about the genocide in Jasenovac, pointing out that his lecture was aimed at protecting the remembrance culture for the victims of the

[4] The extermination camps in WWII: Auschwitz, Chelmno, Belzec, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka, Mali Trostanec and Jasenovac.

Second World War. In 2018, Professor Greif also published the first volume of his trilogy about the ISC, *Jasenovac – Auschwitz of the Balkans*.

The participants of the exhibition were divided into three groups: the technical team, the delegation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which included the children-survivors, and the media group. The exhibition was also attended by a large number of ambassadors of the countries in the region, as well as the EU member countries and other countries from all over the world. The exhibition was broadcast in the media by *Večernje novosti*, the crew of Radio-Television of Serbia, as well as world agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press, Deutsche Welle, Washington Post etc.

After two years of working on the academic project of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the relevant partners from Israel and seven more countries worldwide, as well as the International Expert Group GH7 – Stop to Revisionism (2016–2018) headed by Professor Greif, PhD, expert for death factories in the Second World War and director of the exhibition "Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance", the exhibition about Jasenovac in the House of the National Assembly of Serbia, which was opened by the President of the National Assembly, Maja Gojković,^[5] and the Ambassador of Israel, Alona Fischer-Kamm, PhD, and the first exhibition in Hoboken (USA) during 2017, which was organized by the envoy of the President of the Republic, V. Božović, and President of the Assembly of the Diaspora and Serbs in the region, MP Kostić, were followed by the exhibition "Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance" in the UN headquarters in New York, on 26 January 2018.

Protest of the Republic of Croatia to the UN Commission, State Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and the EU, and ensuing reactions

Analyzing the effects of the protest of the Republic of Croatia against the exhibition "Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance", the overall assessment is that the protest was counterproductive for the Republic of Croatia and its Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, and that among the key international factors it encountered disapproval, condemnation and surprise, and that, largely contrary to all expectations, with its negative campaign, the Republic of Croatia indirectly even led to the promotion and interest of the world public in the Serbian-Jewish exhibition about Jasenovac in the United Nations.

Croatia's Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs tried in all ways to stop the exhibition "Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance" in the UN. First it protested in the UN Commission, with the condition that "negotiations should be initiated between Belgrade and Zagreb" about the exhibition and that the Serbian ambassador to Zagreb should "receive an approval" from the relevant authorities in Croatia, and only then discuss it in the UN. It was followed by the protest of the Serbian side, which emphasized that Israel did not ask Germany for an approval for organizing exhibitions about Eichmann or Hitler. After the consultations at the highest level, in which it was legitimately emphasized that "Jasenovac was not a territorial question of Belgrade and Zagreb",

[5] https://rtv.rs/hu/drustvo/otvorena-izlozba-jasenovac-pravo-na-nezaborav_820577.html (Accessed on 11 August 2022)

but a question of the remembrance culture for the Holocaust victims and genocide in one of the most brutal death camps in the Second World War. On the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, marked by the UN every year, the official approval of the UN Commission was given for this exhibition, although only several days before its opening. The procedure of obtaining the approval from the UN bodies was made more difficult in an attempt of Croatia to prevent the 7-ton equipment from arriving on time and being ready for its placement on 20 and 21. January, because the UN has the practice of staging exhibitions only at weekends.

In the meantime, the Republic of Croatia also protested in the State Department in Washington and in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem, first citing the "territorial principle", because Jasenovac is situated in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, and saying that Nataša Mataušić, the Director of the Memorial Complex Jasenovac, had not been contacted although an "approval" should have been asked from her, while in the protest note itself, among other things, the Croatian side stated that the exhibition "offended the victims" and used them for current political purposes.

In that respect, President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić assessed the protest note of the Republic of Croatia as unsubstantiated in the media, pointing out that "the Croatian note to Serbia because of Jasenovac was as if Germany wrote a protest to Jews because of the Holocaust".

Soon after the closing of the exhibition and the Croatian protest, President of Croatia Kolinda Grabar Kitarović sent an invitation to President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić to visit Croatia on 12 and 13 February, which was accepted by the Serbian side.

In all media comments, Serbian highest-level officials pointed to the unsustainability of the "so-called territorial principle", according to which "only Croatia may speak about Jasenovac, because it is situated in its territory" and to the unsubstantiated protest of Croatia against the exhibition and the presentation of the facts about Jasenovac, stressing that in this way the victims and their descendants were deprived of the right to dignified remembrance. In order to prevent the prejudging of the Vatican's decision about the role of Aloysius Stepinac in the Ustasha genocide in the ISC, the Croatian side insisted that before the decision about the canonization, the expression of any opinions should not be allowed about the role and deeds of Aloysius Stepinac. In that respect, the poster was not on Stepinac, but instead on the brutal killing of Vukašin Mandrapa, who was canonized in 1998 as Holy Jasenovac Martyr Vukašin Mandrapa of Klepci, and the fate of Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, who was canonized by the Catholic Church in 1998 because of her martyrdom in Auschwitz.

The antipodes to the canonization of Aloysius Stepinac, Vukašin Mandrapa and Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross



Photo 3: Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein



Photo 4: The fresco of the Holy Jasenovac Martyrs in the crypt of Saint Sava Temple, the suffering described and incorporated into the foundation of the identity of the Serbian people

The key observations regarding the protest of the Republic of Croatia are as follows:

1. The planetary central manifestation, the Holocaust Remembrance Day, is marked every year in the United Nations "without consultations" with Berlin, Vienna, Rome and Tokyo, and without "their protest".

2. Tel Aviv does not consult Berlin and Vienna when staging exhibitions about Eichmann or Hitler, nor does it ask for permission to open an exhibition about death camps, although Dachau, Auschwitz

and Mauthausen are not situated in the territory of Israel.

3. Croatia's protest against the exhibition about Jasenovac was not supported by international factors. On the contrary, the cabinet of Secretary General António Guterres approved the exhibition, the State Department and Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not join Croatia's "protest" according to which, among other things, Serbia allegedly "offended the victims" and "manipulated" with the exhibition, not contributing to the reconciliation in the region.

4. On 2 February, Ms. Zaharova, Spokeswoman of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the press conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, explicitly supported the exhibition "Jasenovac - the Right to Remembrance", pointing out that the exhibition had contributed to the struggle against revision of the history of suffering in the Second World War.

5. Associated Press, Reuters, New York Times, as well as Washington Post, Deutsche Welle and others reported about Croatia's "protest" against the exhibition, with the mandatory explanation about the location of the camp and the methods used in Jasenovac, thus indicating that it was one of the most brutal death camps in the Second World War. This was in favour of the Serbian foreign policy interests in disseminating the truth about Jasenovac.

6. Afterwards, First Vice-President of the Government and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, met Pope Francis in Rome, on the margins of the OSCE Conference on Combating Anti-Semitism, as well as President of the World Jewish Congress, Lauder, and Executive Director R. Singer. On that occasion, he informed them about Serbia's attitudes to Croatian revision-

ist attempts in relation to Jasenovac and the ISC and the rehabilitation of Ustasha criminals from the Second World War, inviting them to visit the exhibition after their return to New York.

7. Afterwards, on 31 January 2018, on the margins of the central manifestation of the Holocaust Remembrance Day in the UN, the exhibition “Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance” was visited by General Counsel of the World Jewish Congress, Menachem Rosensaft, and Chief of the Cabinet of the World Jewish Congress, Daniel Radomski.

8. The fact that the exhibition is the result of the Serbian-Jewish academic project led by the world-renowned expert for death factories, Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, and that as many as seven historians from seven countries worked on it, served as a deterrent from the assaults on the “validity of historical facts” and the complaint about the so-called “lack of consultations” of the Serbian history with the historians from other countries.

Scientific lecture of Professor Gideon Greif, PhD: “Jasenovac – Auschwitz of the Balkans”

In the morning, the lecture on the topic “Jasenovac – Auschwitz of the Balkans” was delivered by Professor Gideon Greif, PhD, who is the main historian of Shem Olam Faith and Holocaust Institute in Israel, world-renowned expert for Auschwitz, Majdanek, Jasenovac and *Sonderkommandos*. Speaking about the killing methods in Jasenovac and comparing “manual killing of the victims in Jasenovac” and “industrial killing” in Auschwitz, he emphasized that the main goal of the exhibition was to foster the remembrance culture for

Serbian, Jewish, Roma and anti-Fascist victims of the Holocaust and genocide in Jasenovac, one of the most brutal and notorious out of the total of eight extermination camps in the Second World War. Among other things, he emphasized that it was the greatest and the most monumental exhibition about Jasenovac, with 7 tons of equipment and exhibits, which was first staged in the United Nations. Concerning the protest of the Republic of Croatia, he stated that he had never received a protest note from the German Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the course of 42 years of publishing works, organizing exhibitions and scientific conferences about Eichmann, Auschwitz and death factories. Speaking about the exhibition for Deutsche Welle, *Večernje novosti* and other media, Israeli historian Gideon Greif said that it was not contention in any respect; on the contrary, he found it unique and indispensable in the struggle against revision of history and the emergence of Neo-Ustashism.

The speech Serbia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs at the ceremony of exhibition opening in the UN and the invitation to Croatia’s Prime Minister Andrej Plenković to pay respects to the victims of Jasenovac

Opening the exhibition in the UN, Ivica Dačić, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, emphasized that the exhibition was aimed not only to familiarize the international public with a less known chapter of the Second World War, but also to warn about the danger of reviving the ideology and political practice that had led to such atrocities. “Part of such attempts are also non-scientific

reinterpretations of the events and processes from the period of the Second World War that are becoming part of public speech and justify crimes. Our duty is to fight against it because forgetting crimes is a new crime and an invitation for its repetition". Quoting the protest of Croatia's Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, he stressed: "We also here, in the course of the organization, faced the objection of one country saying that we manipulated with numbers and facts. There are no manipulations at all; these are historical facts, first and last names, statements of the survivors". He also said that Serbia did not accuse anyone except for criminals and those defending those criminals because it was the basis for something like this to repeat in the future. "We have not come here to argue, but our nation suffered the greatest casualties in Jasenovac and the ISC during the Second World War. It is our obligation to remember it. That is why we are here and that is why the UN were formed – so that fascism must never repeat and we strongly support that belief."

In 1960s, the memorial site was built in Jasenovac e, partly under the pressure of the victims' families. That is why death camp of Jasenovac must remain one of the most important symbols of the Second World War. Dačić emphasized that the victims that had fallen for the ideals of a better and free world must not be in vain.

At the end of his speech, he sent an invitation to Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia: "Just as Plenković is going to Jerusalem to pay respects to the victims in Yad Vashem, we expect him to do it in Jasenovac and to say loudly who the victims are. Whether there are 50, 100 or 700 of them; if only one man was killed because

he was Jewish, Serbian or Roma, it is a disgrace to the humanity."

Messages of the exhibition display

The exhibition constitutes a modest contribution to the preservation of universal values of humanity and the UN's global efforts aimed at preventing the emergence of revisionism and rehabilitation of Neo-Nazi and Neo-fascist ide-



Photo 5: The poster from the exhibition "Jasenovac - the Right to Remembrance", 26 January 2018, the United Nations

ologies of exclusion and all forms of discrimination and fanaticism.

It supports the UNICEF efforts towards protecting the most vulnerable category of population, by fostering children's rights to a happy childhood, taking into account that the Ustasha death camp was also a camp for children, where 20,000 were brutally killed.

The main aim of the exhibition is to foster the remembrance culture for Serbian, Jewish, Roma and anti-Fascist victims of the Holocaust and genocide in Jasenovac, one of the most brutal and notorious out of the total of eight extermination camps in the Second World War.

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Exclusive details of the exhibition display

The panels, photo-walls with memories, sculptures and drawings by artists and artefacts that belonged to Jewish and Serbian victims were also displayed, together with the archive material, in posters in Serbian and English, as integral part of this exhibition. The objects and archive material were used from the state and private archives, museums and art collections, such as: the Memorial Centre Donja Gradina in Republic Srpska, the Museum of the City of Belgrade, the Museum of Jewish History in Belgrade, the Archives of Yugoslavia, the Archives of the Yugoslav Cinematheque, the Archives of Israel and the USA, the National Archives of Oslo, the Archives of Germany, Italy and Croatia (publications from the Memorial Centre of Jasenovac by author Nataša Mataušić), as well as from the private archives from Haiti (property of Emile Saint-Lot's family), the sculpture collection of Nandor Glid from Belgrade etc.

- The visitors could see the fate of 91 members of the family of Serbian-American inventor Nikola Tesla, killed in the Ustasha genocide in the ISC, 13 of whom were killed in Jasenovac in the Second World War, as well as 13 members of the Herzl family from Zemun, the family of Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism; and the fate of Rabi Daniel Isaac Danon, who was cruelly killed in Jasenovac, as well as the fate of Ida Fogel and her whole family. The visitors could also see the medallion made of

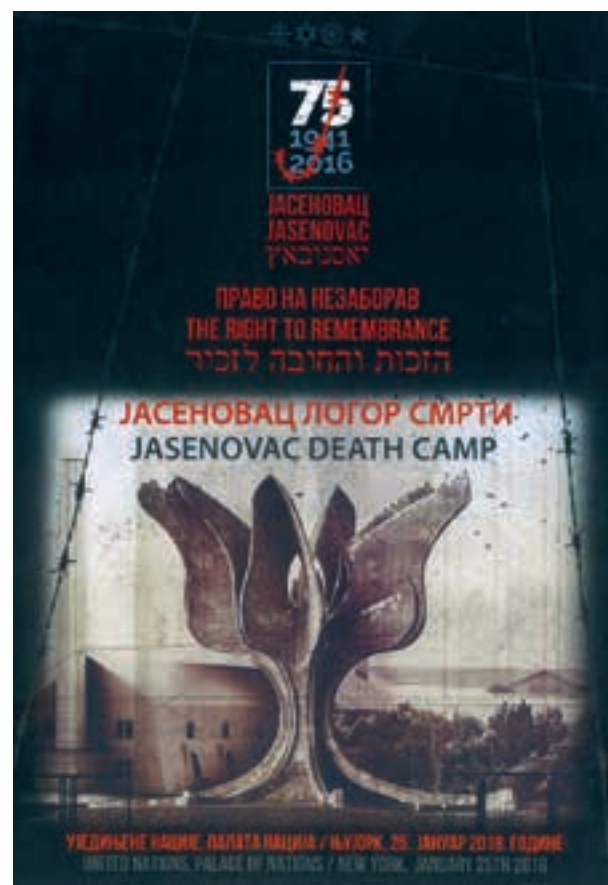


Photo 6: The poster from the exhibition "Jasenovac - the Right to Remembrance", 26 January 2018, the United Nations



Photo 7: The medallion of Ana Koch, a Jewish lady from Belgrade's high society, property of the Museum of the City of Belgrade

gold, diamonds and rubies, which belonged to Ana Koch, a lady from Belgrade's high society, who died in the death camp, just as many members of her family who were killed in death camps Auschwitz and Jasenovac.

• The victims' personal belongings, as well as the tools used by the executors in Jasenovac, such as the "Serb cutter", or an axe head, were displayed for the first time in the United Nations.

• The speech of the Rapporteur of the Third Committee, His Excellency Emile Saint-Lot, from the private archives of his family from Haiti; Emile Saint-Lot and Eleanor Roosevelt, the first Chairperson of the Committee for Human Rights, presented the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Paris, in Palais de Chaillot, on 10 December 1948.

Technical characteristics of the exhibition display, unique in the UN history, and challenges

Upon the official request of the Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the UN, the relevant UN bodies assigned 108 m² for the exhibition about Jasenovac, published the abstract on the UN website and entered it in the Event Calendar on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day; however, the UN bodies did not allow the removal of the gift-exhibits from Brazil, Greece and Hungary that presented the details of Rio carnival and of Ancient Greece. This was the main challenge to the engineering team, which was overcome by putting up the 7.5-metre-high backdrops; at the same time, this was a feat of its own that entailed obtaining additional certificates for the exhibition.

This is the greatest and the most monumental exhibition not only of Serbia in the UN, but also the greatest in the history of the UN since 1945. Namely, with 7 tons of the equipment and exhibits (and the 7.5-metre-high backdrops, with black draperies hung on the aluminium structure and girders in order to make an ambience unit and hide the exhibits that could not be moved, in line with the UN decision, and with the walls long as many as 15 metres), Serbia presented the victims of Jasenovac



Photo 8: The sculpture catalogue for the exhibition “Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance”



Photo 9: Miodrag Milivojević, master of light from the exhibition technical-operational team, is placing the illumination on the 10-metre-high backdrop next to the poster about the suffering of 91 members of Nikola Tesla’s close and distant family.

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Photo 10: "Jasenovac Scream", the work of academic sculptress Katarina Tripković, an exhibit

in a multimedia way, through the Serbian-Jewish project on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Two LED screens, 6 metres by 5 metres, were placed on two opposite sides and every day from 22 January to 2 February, from 9.00 am to 6 pm, the list was shown with the names of the children brutally killed in Jasenovac, with the moving archive material from 1945 and the situation found in Jasenovac, from the Archives of the Yugoslav Cinematheque.

Authors of the exhibition - historians and artists

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The coordinator of the Serbian-Jewish academic project, Ambassador Ljiljana Nikšić, PhD, was re-



Photo 11: Monument to the Dachau victims made by the academic sculptor Nandor Glid, Yad Vashem, Israel

sponsible for the Group of Historians from seven countries, GH7 – STOP TO REVISIONISM. The Director of the exhibition was Professor Gideon Greif, who is also the author of the book *We Wept without Tears*, which served as the basis for the Academy-awarded Hollywood film *Saul's Son*.

Professor Gideon Greif elaborated the concept and the guidelines of the exhibition, while the exhibition itself was realized in cooperation with the members of the International Group of Historians GH7 – Stop to Revisionism: Rabbi Avraham Krieger, PhD, the founder and Director of the Holocaust Institute in Israel; Professor Barry Lituchy, the founder and Director of the Jasenovac Research Institute in New York;

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Photo 12: The gallery format of the Monument to the Dachau victims made by the renowned academic sculptor of the Jewish Community from Serbia, Nandor Glid, was also one of the total of 40 exhibits and bronze sculptures displayed in the United Nations.



Photo 13: The exhibits from the exhibition: the posters of the International Expert Group GH7 and the gallery format of the sculpture *Hundred for One and Death Cart* by academic sculptor Nandor Glid

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Professor Emir Kusturica, the founder and Director of Andrić Institute in Višegrad and the UNICEF Ambassador; Dario Vidojković, PhD,

the historian from the University in Regensburg, Germany; Knut Flovik Thoresen, the historian from the National Archives of Norway in Oslo;

The gallery format of the sculptures made by the academic sculptor Nandor Glid displayed at the exhibition in the United Nations, 2018



Photo 14: „Death Cart“ 2



Photo 15: „Death Cart“ 3



Photo 16: „Hands“



Photo 17: „Crystal night“ #1



Photo 18: „Crystal night“ #2



Photo 19: „The Cart of Death“ 4



Photo 20: „Hundred for One“
The original is in the Museum of Kragujevac



Photo 21: „The Cart of Death“ 5



Photo 22: „Menorah in flame“

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Photo 23: "Mauthausen"

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Mirko Galas, the young historian from the University in Udine, Italy; Colonel Antun Miletić, former Director of the Army Archives of Yugoslavia. With Dean of the Faculty of Architecture,

Professor Vladan Đokić, PhD, a group was set up for making a multimedia mock-up of Jasenovac. The mock-up weighed 2 tons, was 10 metres long and 3 metres wide, and it showed the space with



Photo 24: The drawings of academic painter Dragan Jelovac, MA, from the private collection, the series of 15 etchings entitled "Jasenovac Magnum Crimen"



Photo 25: "The live wall of remembrance in the UN" – Stop to Revisionism! We are still alive – we remember! – 26 January 2022, the United Nations

The photograph of the participants with outstretched arms and with the message STOP to revisionism, from the opening ceremony of the exhibition "Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance", left to right: Rosie Stephenson-Goodknight, the descendant of David Albala, MD; Ambassador Ljiljana Nikšić, PhD; David Alkalai, MD, the child-survivor from the camps of Rab and Pag (86 years old); Eva Deutsch Costabel (96), the survivor of the camp in Sisak; mother Jelena Buhač Radojčić (86), the survivor of Jasenovac; Uncle Gojko Rončević Mraović (85), the survivor of the children camp of Jastrebarsko; First Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ivica Dačić; Serbian Ambassador to Washington, Đerđ Matković; Ana Sofrenović, the hostess of the opening ceremony and the UNICEF Ambassador.

the buildings of Jasenovac camp which covered 240 km² (the size of about 150 football pitches) and was six times larger than Auschwitz, which took up the area of 40 km².

Apart from the historians, researchers and public figures, the following authors with different artistic expressions made an outstanding contribution to this exhibition: academic sculptor and Professor Gabriel Glid, PhD, the son of Nandor Glid, the famous sculptor who immortalized the camp inmates through his monuments in Dachau, Mauthausen and in Yad Vashem, in honour of the Holocaust victims; Ljubiša Mančić

and Katarina Tripković; Dragan Jelovac, MA, academic painter; the author of the Wall of Remembrance was Vukica Mikača, the art photographer, while the song "Open the Door, Brother" was performed by Jadranka Jovanović, the opera prima donna, Steve Hunington Jungo Chokue, the human rights activist from Kenya, and Ana Sofrenović, while the music arrangement was made by Vojkan Borisavljević. The programme moderators were Ana Sofrenović, UNICEF Ambassador (2011) and actress, and Vjera Mujović Preiss, actress. The visual identity of the exhibition posters with the archive material and pro-

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Photo 26: The poster "The Wall of Jasenovac Remembrance", made by Vukica Mikača; a segment from the exhibition in the UN, hosted in Andrićgrad by Emir Kusturica, the founder and Director of Andrić Institute and consultant of the International Expert Group GH7 - Stop to Revisionism

motional material, flyers and books, were made by graphic designer Ivana Dakić with a group of talented young designers.

The programme and participants at the opening ceremony

Besides Minister Dačić and Professor Greif, the opening ceremony of the exhibition was also attended by Serbian Ambassador to the USA, Đerđ Matković, and Serbian Ambassador to the OUN, Milan Milanović; Ambassador Ljiljana Nikšić, PhD, coordinator of the Serbian-Jewish academic project "Jasenovac"; Mirjana Živković from the Consulate General of the Republic of Serbia in New York, and Bishop Irinej Dobrijević.

The unique "Live Wall of Remembrance" about Jasenovac and Ustasha death camps was made by special guests from Belgrade and New York, the children-survivors from the camps of Jasenovac and Jastrebarsko – Jelena Buhač Radojčić, Smilja Tišma, Gojko Rončević Mraović, who all live in Serbia, and, from New York, Eva Deutsch Costabel and David Alkalai, the survivors of Rab, Pag and Jasenovac, who met for the first time on this occasion. The Serbian, Jewish and Roma anthems were sung by Ana Sofrenović, former Ambassador of good will in the campaign conducted by UNICEF, in cooperation with "Pampers", for African children, and an outstanding actress of Serbian-British origin.

Steve Hunington Jungo Chokue, the founder of the Joint Forum for Peace in Kenya and the ac-

tivist against racism, sent a video-message for the opening ceremony.

A music video-clip was also played under the name “Open the door, brother – a man like you” of the promoter of the campaign STOP TO REVISIONISM, by the music arrangement by composer Vojkan Borisavljević, and performed by Jadranka Jovanović, the prima donna of Belgrade Opera, Ana Sofrenović and Steve Hunington. The film *Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance*, prepared by the Archives of Yugoslav Cinematheque in Belgrade, with the authentic film material about the situation found in Jasenovac in 1945, and with the statements about Jasenovac made by the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, Her Excellency Alona Fischer Cam, PhD, Ambassador of Israel to Belgrade, Professor Greif, PhD, and the camp survivors, were also part of the programme.

The honorary guest was Ms. Rosie Stephenson-Goodknight, Vice President of *Wikimedia* and descendant of the reputable Serbian army officer and diplomat of the faith of Moses, David Albala, MD, who deserves the credit for the first recognition of the Balfour Declaration. The first government to approve the Balfour Declaration was the Government of the Kingdom of Serbia in 1917, and a copy of that document was also displayed at the exhibition because it a testimony of Serbia's attitude towards Jews and the permanent support to the Jewish community in Serbia.

The presence of VIP guests

The opening ceremony was attended by the greater part of the diplomatic and consular corps (38 out of 192 diplomats from the UN member states) who were

welcomed by the Mission of the Republic of Serbia in the UN and the Consulate General in New York. According to the records of the Mission of the Republic of Serbia in the UN, there was a number of diplomats from our region at the ambassador level (23), as well as from the EU member countries, from Africa, Asia and Latin America. According to the report of the Mission, the diplomats at the ambassador level were from Germany, Switzerland, Argentina, Monaco, Kazakhstan, Lichtenstein, Belarus, Georgia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Honduras, Cambodia, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand, Cuba, Kenya, Benin, Burundi, Tonga and Paraguay. The guests at the deputy ambassador level came from India, Brazil, Canada, the Russian Federation, Armenia, Poland, Pakistan, Hungary, Fiji, Venezuela, and there were also the representatives of the USA, Italy, Israel, the Holy Chair, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, as well as the Secretariat and different departments of the UN.

There were representatives of the Serbian diaspora, while the leaders of the World Jewish Congress from New York met Minister Dačić in Rome and the General Counsel Menachem Rosenhaft and Chief of the Cabinet of President Lauder, D. Radomski, visited the exhibition on 31 January 2018, at the central ceremony on the occasion of the Holocaust Remembrance Day, which was opened by UN Secretary General, António Guterres.

Education of young people about the Holocaust and genocide in the Second World War

The opening ceremony was also attended by the best students from the Universities in Belgrade and New York, who participated in the preparation

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of the exhibition and contributed to its realization, including PhD student Dejan Jovanović from the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. For the needs of the exhibition, the leaders of the Union of Jewish Municipalities in Serbia, President Robert Sabadoš, Secretary General Danijela Danon, who

had given the personal belongings of brutally killed Rabbi Daniel Isaac Danon from her family's private archives, then Rabbi Asiel Isaac, Vladimir Cizelj, PhD, Nenad Fogel, as well as the representatives of the Museum of Donja Gradina, the Museum of the City of Belgrade and many other institutions and

EXHIBITION "Jasenovac - the Right to Remembrance", in the House of the National Assembly of Serbia, from 28 April to 9 May 2017, the Victory Day over fascism



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Photo 27: The painting exhibition in the House of the National Assembly - the testimonies of the victims converted into the paintings of academic artist, Professor Dragan Jelovac, and the great "weeping gate", which was placed by the Ethnographic Museum and the National Theatre - 6 metres high and 16 metres long - with the written names of 20,000 children brutally killed in Jasenovac



Photo 28: One of the total of 30 sculptures by academic sculptors Ljubiša Mančić and Katarina Tripković from the exhibition “Jasenovac - the Right to Remembrance”, displayed in the House of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia as integral part of the exhibition “Jasenovac - the Right to Remembrance”



Photo 29: The students of the First, Zemun and Fourth Belgrade Grammar Schools, eye to eye with the atrocities in Jasenovac

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Photo 30: The address of Jelena Buhač Radojčić, whose life story from Jasenovac served as the basis for the film "Dara from Jasenovac", at the Great public lesson about Jasenovac, at the ceremony of closing the exhibition on 9 May 2017, the Victory Day over fascism and Victory of Europe Day.

individuals gave an immeasurable contribution by donating books and brochures that were taken to the Library of the United Nations.

In fact, the exhibition "Jasenovac – the Right to Remembrance" has been staged, on the whole or in segments, in the following places: 1) the Faculty of Philosophy, 2) Andrić Institute, 3) the House of the National Assembly of Serbia, 4) the Gallery in Hoboken, New Jersey, the USA, 5) the United Nations in New York, 6) the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, 7) the Museum "Kragujevac October", 8) the National Museum in Kraljevo, 9) "Ono" Academic College in Jerusalem, where the work of academic sculptress Katarina Tripković, *Jasenovac Scream*, was presented on 20 November 2019, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the first Serbian-Jewish academic centre in the history of bilateral relations, which is called "Saint Sava and Yehuda Alkalai". On that occasion, the first memorial plaque was placed in honour of Saint Sava in the very centre of Jerusalem, while the last one was placed in 2021, at the Faculty of Law, the University in Belgrade, when the 2-ton mock-up of Jasenovac was displayed, with the accompanying exhibits from this exhibition.

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Further steps needed in the protection of the remembrance culture for the ISC victims

Some of the key results of the exhibition are: 1) the summit meeting was held between President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić and President of the Republic of Croatia Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, which was the first bilateral

 **WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS**
 REPRESENTING JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN 100 COUNTRIES ACROSS SIX CONTINENTS

PETITION TO STOP HOLOCAUST REVISIONISM

TO: Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenković and Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović

As a supporter of the World Jewish Congress, I stand with the Jewish community in Croatia in calling for the establishment of an international historical commission on the Holocaust in Croatia.

I am concerned about what appears to be attempts to downplay the full extent of the crimes of the Ustasha regime during WWII.

Examples of this include:

- The placement of a plaque featuring "Za dom spremni," the Ustasha salute in the municipality of Jasenovac. While the plaque was presumably taken down in September 2017, the leader of a Croatian veterans group has said that it is being moved to another location.
- At the permanent exhibition of the Jasenovac camps, the history of the site presents what were concentration and death camps as mere labor camps.
- In April 2016, Croatian Minister of Culture Zlatko Hasanbegović publicly celebrated *Jasenovac – The Truth*, by the Croatian filmmaker Jakov Sedlar, which falsely presents Jasenovac as a labor camp, and claimed that the number of victims from this camp had been exaggerated.

In this time of resurgent anti-Semitism throughout Europe where Jewish communities are confronted with a renewed sense of unease and danger, it is more important than ever that governments make every effort to protect and defend their citizens, and offer an honest and accurate remembrance of their nation's past crimes against humanity.

Any ambiguity about the role of the Ustasha regime in the Holocaust erases the atrocious crimes they committed against Jews, ethnic Serbs and Roma.

It is vital to establish an international historical commission consisting of recognized international Holocaust scholars, historians, and representatives of the communities that were victimized by the Ustasha during the Holocaust. Such a commission would gather the appropriate research and set the record straight on the crimes of the Ustasha during WWII.

Such an action will send an important message to your community, to Jewish communities throughout Europe, and to other European governments who attempt to rewrite the true and painful history of WWII and the Holocaust.

Respectfully,

 **WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS**
 AMERICAN SECTION

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visit of the Serbian President after five-years' delay, 2) for the first time, the president of Israel, i.e. Reuven Rivlin, visited the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Croatia, 3) the Petition to

all Jews of the world was sent and the Appeal of the World Jewish Congress to the President of the Croatian Government, Andrej Plenković, and President Grabar Kitarović, to stop revisionism

and to condemn the Ustasha crimes in the ISC.^[6] Segments of the petition of the World Jewish Congress to Croatia's Government to stop revisionism and condemn the Ustasha regime in the Second World War (image above)

Nowadays, after all attempts at revisionism by the state institutions in the Republic of Croatia, such as the Memorandum of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts that the Serbs should give up the "myth about Jasenovac"^[7], the publication of the book in the State Archives of the Republic of Croatia which claims that the Serbs "*in fact carried out the genocide over the Croats*"^[8], as well as the recent prohibition of the visit of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić to Jasenovac^[9], a conclusion can be drawn that points to the necessity of adopting the Resolution about Ustasha Genocide in the ISC in Serbia's National Assembly, which was initiated by the children survivors from Jasenovac and presented by Smilja Tišma, the oldest MP of the 12th convocation of the Assembly and the founder of the Association of Jasenovac Camp Inmates (7 December 2021), and also the necessity of an international recognition of the genocide over Serbs through a Resolution in the UN. The Resolution would serve as a lightning rod against history revision, with the intensified education, publication of books and

films about the suffering of Serbs, Jews and Roma in the ISC, so that no one could ever "prohibit" the dignified remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust and genocide in the ISC, where the "Ustasha final solution", initiated in Gudovac, near Bjelovar, on 28 April 1941, as many as six months earlier than the "Nazi final solution" in Babyn Yar. The international recognition of the Ustasha genocide in the ISC would lead to the genocide being recorded in world historiography, while the Ustasha ideology, together with the Nazi ideology and Fascism, would be described in historical textbooks worldwide as one of the deadliest ideologies of the 20th century. Without unveiling the suffering in the ISC, the history of the Holocaust and genocide in the Second World War is not complete. In that respect, among other things, for the purpose of the development of understanding, reconciliation and good neighbourhood relations in the region, it is also necessary to support the academic circles and encourage them to write about it, as well as the efforts of anti-Fascist organizations and the Association of Survivor Camp Inmates, so that "Jasenovac Oath" should be kept "IT MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN", in order to help new generations in the Balkans to foster the remembrance culture and keep the legacy "JASENOVAC – NEVER AGAIN".

[6] The petition and the appeal Congress of the World Jewish Congress from 2018. after the United Nations exhibition about Jasenovac

[7] <https://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/508354/Memorandum-hrvatskih-akademika-opasan-diktat-i-ucena>

[8] <https://www.republika.rs/svet/region/373945/stjepan-lozo-homogena-srbija-1941>

[9] <https://www.euronews.rs/srbija/politika/55860/hrvatska-nije-odobrila-vucicu-posetu-jasenovcu-ostre-reakcije-beograda-selakovic-ovo-je-zastrasujuca-oduka/vest>

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<https://support.worldjewishcongress.org/page/4404/petition/1?locale=en-US>

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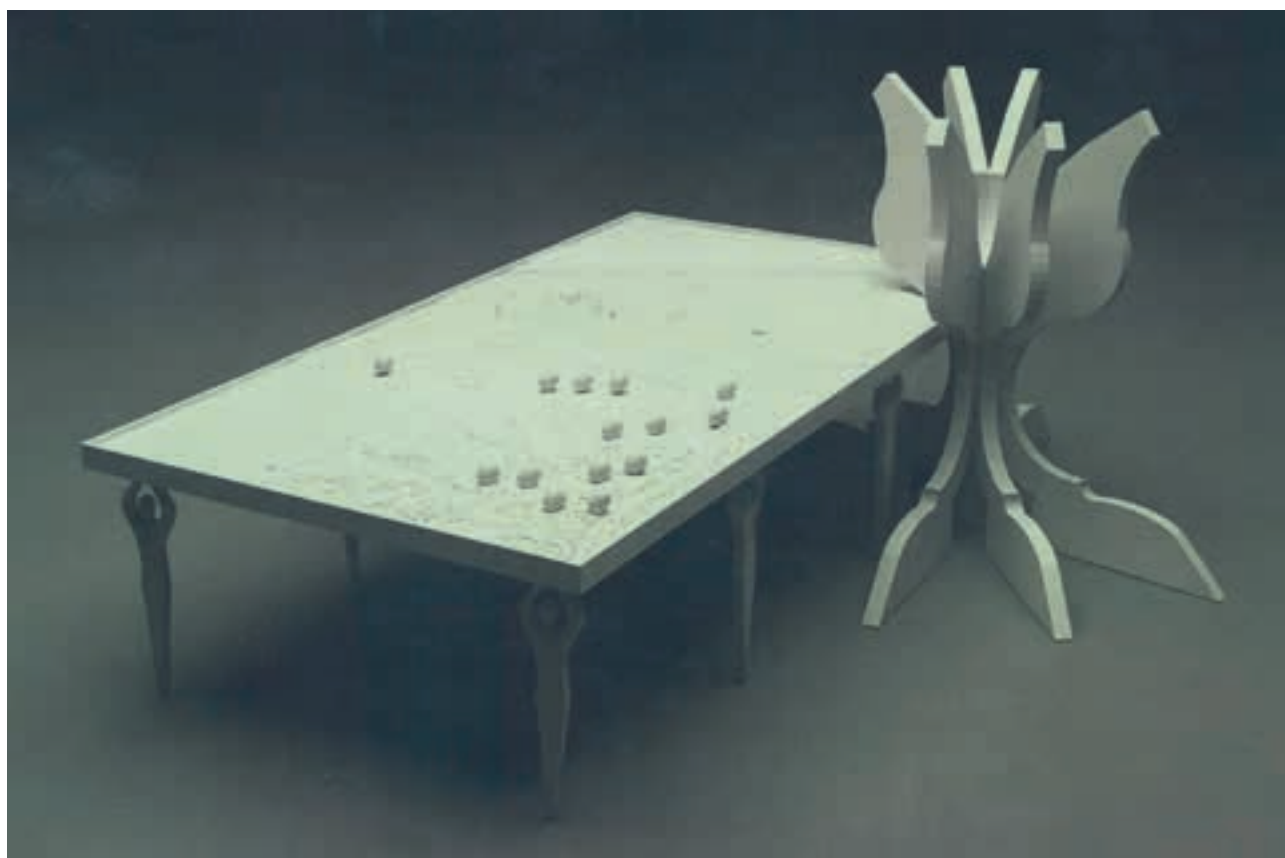


Photo 31: The multimedia model of Jasenovac weighs two tons, shows the area of the Jasenovac camp of 240 km², six times larger than Auschwitz

Proposal for a Resolution on Genocide^[1]

Република Србија
Народна скупштина
07. децембар 2021.г.
Београд

РЕПУБЛИКА СРБИЈА
НАРОДНА СКУПШТИНА
БЕОГРАД
Број: 07.12.2021
СТ/СН/0234/21

ПРЕДСЕДНИК НАРОДНЕ СКУПШТИНЕ
ИВИЦА ДАЧИЋ

На основу члана 99. става 1. тачне 7. Устава Републике Србије, члана 40. став 1. тачна 1) Закона о Народној скупштини (Сл. гласник бр 99/2010) и члана 180. став 1 Пословника НС РС бр. 20/12 подносио ПРЕДЛОГ РЕЗОЛУЦИЈЕ О УСТАШКОМ ГЕНОЦИДУ НАД СРБИМА, ЈЕВРЕЈИМА И РОМИМА У НЕЗАВИСНОЈ ДРЖАВИ ХРВАТСКОЈ (1941-1945) и проглашење 28. априла за Дан геноцида над Србима у 20. веку, са предлогом да се донесе по хитном поступку, баш на 80-ту годишницу од када је 28. априла извршен масакр у Гудоцу код Бјеловара 1941. наме је почело „усташко коначно решење“ и усташки геноцид, чак 6 месеци пре „нацистичког коначног решења“, а у знак сећања на жртве НЦХ, циљених напора Удружења преживелих деце логораша из Јасеноваца и других усташких логора смрти, посебно оних који су били специјализовани за децу, залажући се да се усташки геноцид, кроз аргументовани академски дискурс и кроз овај акт осуди и представи светској јавности као важан део историје геноцида и холокауста у Другом светском рату и колективно меморије човечанства.

Предлажемо да се, у складу са чланом 167. Пословника НС РС, предлог Резолуције усвоји по хитном поступку.

ПРЕДЛАГАЧИ



07-12-
023429743017

Смилја Тишма
најстарији посланик,
преживело дете логораш Јасеноваца,
оснивач удружења преживелих Јасеноваца

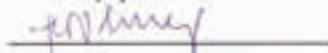

Ана Караџић


Здравко Јовановић

[1] This text is the translation of the Resolution on the Ustasha Genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma in the Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945) that was proposed in the 12th convocation of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on 7 December 2021 by Smilja Tišma, the eldest MP and camp survivor, and the MPS from different groups of that convocation of the National Assembly, at the initiative of the camp survivors and their associations.



Маријан Ристичевић



Жељко Томић



Бојан Торбица



Братислав Југовић



Радован Тердишић



Владан Глишић



Ђорђе Комленски

**RESOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
ON THE USTASHA GENOCIDE OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA
AGAINST SERBS, JEWS AND ROMA (1941-1945)**

Bearing in mind examples of the countries who achieved recognition of genocide committed against their people (such as Israel, Armenia, Namibia, Rwanda etc.) and the fact that this December 2021 marks the end of the marking 80 years since the beginning of the genocide against Serbs, Jews and Roma people which began with the founding of Independent State of Croatia (hereinafter: ISC), with this act National Assembly starts a process of international recognition of genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma in the ISC,

Providing unconditional support to the long-term initiative of the still living Jasenovac prisoners-of-war-camp, who are now in their ninth decade of life and are tireless in their efforts to recognize the Ustasha genocide of the Independent State of Croatia over Serbs, Jews and Roma in the period 1941-1945,

Advocating to ensure the tradition of preserving a culture of remembrance, tolerance and coexistence in peace in the spirit of good neighbourly relations and contribution to international peace, stability and security, with a view to ensuring substantial peace and stability in the region through dealing with the past in order to raise future generations on the foundations of friendship and understanding: the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia:

1. Condemns any denial of the Ustasha genocide in the ISC, the use of Ustasha symbols and the Ustasha salute "ready for home", as well as a revision of history

2. Indicates that the Ustasha crimes against Serbs, Jews and Roma during the Second World War in the ISC were planned and premeditated and committed genocide as defined by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations on 9 December 1948 and not to become obsolete;

3. Points out that the crime of Ustasha genocide in the ISC, due to its brutality and use of 57 methods of torture and killing in Jasenovac, as well as the essence and character of the Ustasha ideology, represents a significant part of the history of genocide and the Holocaust in World War II and the collective memory of humanity, therefore this Resolution also has a significance for world historiography, due to the fact that the history of genocide and the Holocaust in World War II is incomplete unless the Ustasha genocide and the Holocaust committed in the ISC are clarified and condemned and piety towards brutally murdered victims is preserved.

4. Emphasizes the necessity to include the study of the phenomenon of Ustashism in educational and scientific programs, as well as the "Ustasha final solution" started in Gudovac, 6 months before the "Nazi final solution" in Babin Yar, as an example of one of the deadliest ideologies of the 20th century that took about a million Serbian lives in the ISC

5. Especially emphasizes the fact that ISC was the only country during World War II that has specialized camps for children; In that sense, The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia undertakes to proclaim 28 April as the **Day of Genocide over Serbs in the 20th century**, commemorating the day when the first massacre was committed in Gudovac, as part of the implementation of the genocide plan in the ISC.

6. The Day of Genocide over Serbs in the 20th century will be commemorated on 28 April, in a state ceremony that will take place on the river bank near Nebojša Tower, with the participation of the river flotilla, at the place where corpses coming from Jasenovac in the Sava River were buried.

7. All the Government bodies are obliged to start immediately legal, political and diplomatic activities for the international recognition of the genocide over Serbs in the ISC.

By this Resolution, the **National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia** supports the Declaration on Genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma in the ISC adopted by the Parliament of the Republika Srpska, the Jerusalem Declaration on Jasenovac, the Petition of the World Jewish Congress, as well as the Decision of the Austrian Government to prohibit the use of the Ustasha symbols, and undertakes that the Resolution on Genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma in the ISC, especially in memory of and reverence for the victims of Jasenovac in the period 1941-1945, should be submitted to the competent UN bodies and other relevant international institutions for adoption as an international act.

In order to ensure complete and unobstructed implementation of this Resolution, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia will enact a separate law on the construction of the *Memorial Centre about the ISC Genocide* in Belgrade, thus ensuring that the Government and the competent state bodies take proper care of preserving the remembrance culture regarding the genocide and the state narrative about the suffering of Serbs, Jews and Roma in Jasenovac, the ISC, because suffering is part of the identity of the Serbian nation that was victim to three genocides only in the 20th century.

This Resolution enters into force on the eighth day from the day of its publication in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia".

In Belgrade, _____ 2021

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Ivica Dačić

Justification

I Constitutional basis for adoption

Article 99, Paragraph 1, Item 7, and Paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia represent the constitutional basis for the adoption of this resolution, which stipulates that the National Assembly enacts laws and other general acts within the competence of the Republic of Serbia and performs other tasks determined by the Constitution and law as well as in the Article 8, Paragraph 1 of the Law on the National Assembly, and Article 9, which, among other things, stipulates that the National Assembly adopts declarations and resolutions.

II Reasons for passing the resolution

The adoption of the Resolution on Genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma in the ISC (1941-1945), with a special focus on the Jasenovac death camp, aims at pointing out the immeasurable victims and anti-fascist tradition of the Serbian people in the National Assembly, expressing commitment to spirit and norms UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions for the Protection of Victims of International and Non-International Armed Conflicts, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the ICC Statute and stability in the region and good neighbourly relations through dealing with the past in order to raise future generations on the foundations of friendship and understanding.

History obliges us to remember all the significant dates that marked the sufferings of all people during World War II, among which our people suffered enormous sacrifices.

Also, this Resolution has historical significance for humanity, due to the fact that the history of genocide and the Holocaust in World War II is incomplete, unless the Ustasha genocide and the Holocaust committed in the Independent State of Croatia are clarified and condemned and piety towards brutally murdered victims is preserved.

- *Providing* unconditional support to the long-term initiative of the still living Jasenovac prisoners-of-war-camp, who are now in their ninth decade of life and tireless in their efforts to permanently preserve the memory of the Ustasha genocide of the ISC over Serbs, Jews and Roma in the period 1941-1945. year, as a kind of contribution to the universal values of humanity - freedom, equality, life of a worthy man and unity in the differences of humanity that defeated fascism, Nazism and Ustashism in World War II, and on the occasion of 80 years since the establishment of the ISC and the Ustasha genocide and the Holocaust,

- *Bearing in mind* the fact that 2021 marks the 80th anniversary of the Nazi army attack on 6 April, 1941 by bombing Belgrade, as well as the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the "Ustasha final solution" which began on 28 April 1941 with the massacre of Serbs and Jews in Gudovac, near Bjelovar, 6 months before the "Nazi final solution" in Babin Yar, as well as 80 years since the establishment of Jasenovac, one of the most brutal and notorious death camps out of a total eight camps in World War II, the paradigm of suffering entire families in the ISC, of which 91 members of Nikola Tesla's family died in the ISC, 14 of them in Jasenovac, together with 13 relatives of Theodor Herzl,

- **Advocating** to ensure the tradition of preserving a culture of remembrance, tolerance and coexistence in peace in the spirit of good neighbourly relations and contribution to international peace, stability and security, with a view to ensuring substantial peace and stability in the region through dealing with the past in order to raise future generations on the foundations of friendship and understanding,

- **Warning** that the genocide against children in the ISC was the most drastic expression of the planned "Ustasha final solution" and the Ustasha genocide, before which the living wall of memory is represented by still living witnesses - the surviving children of the children's death camps in their ninth decade of life. Only in the Ustasha ISC there were specialized war - camps for children, and only in Jasenovac, one of the most brutal and notorious of a total of eight death camps in World War II, where as many as 57 methods of liquidation were identified, the lives of 19,432 children were brutally taken out of a total of 71,560 children killed in the ISC,

- **Recalling** that the Ustasha genocide in the ISC in the period 1941-1945 resulted the brutal murder of hundreds of thousands of people in the ISC, primarily Serbs, and tens of thousands of Jews and Roma and other minorities, with 84 massacres, 2,643 local crimes, 47 Ustasha war camps, 84 karst pits into which living people were thrown. Among other things, a special example of the Ustasha genocide is in the Serbian Orthodox Church in Glina, on 3 August 1941, when 1,030 people were slaughtered in one night, and in Petrova Gora, in March 1942, as many as 2,500 refugees were brutally slaughtered and killed.

- **Pointing out** that ideology of Ustasha, and thus the "Ustasha final solution", as well as Nazism and the "Nazi final solution", starts from the "voice of the blood of race and country",

- **Emphasizing** that the Ustasha genocide in the ISC was committed barbarically and brutally, mostly "by hand" (using 57 methods of killing), with knives, hammers, axes and special blades, the most famous of which is "Serb slaughter", and one of the examples of bestiality is slaughter Rabbi Isak Daniel Danon and Vukašin Mandrapa from Klepci, while the "Nazi final solution" in the death camps was characterized by destruction in gas chambers, where there was no direct contact between the killers and the victims,

- **Underlining** that the "Ustasha final solution" on 17 April 1941 already received a legal basis "in the legal provisions for the protection of the people and the state", and the persecution and destruction of Jews was legalized on 13 April 1941 legal provision on racial affiliation and the legal provision **"on Aryan blood and parts of the Croatian Aryan people"**.

- **Pointing out** that the Ustasha Quisling's ISC was a kingdom of madness and darkness and began the Ustasha genocide, starting the "Ustasha final solution", on 28 April 1941 in Gudovac near Bjelovar, even 6 months before the "Nazi final solution", which followed in September Babin Jar in Ukraine, in order to achieve the same goal, "ethnically cleansed space".

- **Starting** from the Convention on the Non-Obsolescence of War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity of 1968 when genocide was exempted from the principle of obsolescence,

- **Expressing** commitment to the spirit and norms of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Additional Protocols to the

Geneva Conventions for the Protection of Victims of International and Non-International Armed Conflicts, genocide and the Statute of the International Criminal Court,

- *Condemning* unreservedly all forms of religious intolerance, discrimination, harassment or violence against people or communities based on ethnic or religious grounds, wherever they occur,

- *Noting* that no one born after 1945 is a criminal of the Ustasha genocide, although some may have been the sons and daughters of those who committed crimes against Serbs, Jews and Roma, appealing to present generations to have a responsibility to ensure that these crimes never happen again, and that the act of condemning Ustasha crimes is a departure from the Ustasha genocide committed in World War II, a defence against attempts to rehabilitate the Ustasha ideology, giving young generations a chance to grow in spirit good neighbourly relations, goodwill and friendship,

- *Ensuring* the victims and descendants the right to a dignified memory, children to grow up happily and safely in the spirit of good neighbourly relations and friendship,

- *Promoting* freedom and tolerance through educational programs that would indicate the danger of spreading the ideology of the Ustasha movement,

- *Pointing out* that the history of the Holocaust and genocide in World War II is not complete without studying, educating and condemning the Ustasha ideology and "Ustasha final solution", and in order to prevent "second victimization" of the Ustasha ISC victims, the devaluation of the victims of Serbs, Jews and Roma and their drastic reduction,

- *Committing* the Ustasha genocide and the Holocaust in the ISC to enter the collective memory of humanity, as a warning to people of the dangers posed by Ustasha ideology and hatred on ethnic and religious grounds, as well as Ustasha racism, Ustasha anti-Semitism, and the Ustasha anti-Serb sentiment.

III Funding

For the implementation of this resolution no additional financial resources are needed in the budget of the Republic of Serbia.

IV Reasons for adoption by urgent procedure

Marking the 80th anniversary of the uprising of the Serbian people against fascism, the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the "Ustasha final solution", genocide and the Holocaust in the ISC and the 80th anniversary of the establishment of Ustasha war camps, especially Jasenovac as a paradigm of suffering of Serbs, Jews and Roma and others in the ISC, and having in mind the fact that on 6 April 1941 there was a bombing of Belgrade, and that on 22 April there was a breakthrough of Jasenovac, we believe that it would be necessary to adopt this Resolution in April, more precisely on 22 April, the Day of the breakthrough of Jasenovac in memory of all the victims and genocide in the ISC.

Therefore, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia with this Resolution indicates the following:

1. It most strongly condemns Ustasha crimes and genocide against Serbs, Jews and Roma in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia in the period 1941-1945, especially

in the Ustasha war death camp Jasenovac, where 57 methods were used to monstrously kill detainees, especially children and even new-born babies.

2. It supports the Appeal of the World Jewish Congress for the condemnation of Ustasha crimes in the Independent State of Croatia and Jasenovac, as well as the decision of the Austrian Government from 2018 which prohibits the use of Ustasha symbols in Austria, on the occasion of annual events in Bleiberg.

3. It condemns any denial of the Ustasha genocide in the Independent State of Croatia and the use of Ustasha symbols and the salute "ready for home" and supports the initiative of the Coordination of Jewish Communities of Croatia to legally sanction the use of Ustasha iconography to prevent all forms of rehabilitation and promotion.

4. 28 April is proclaimed as the "**Day of Genocide over Serbs in the 20th Century**" on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the first Ustasha genocide in Gudovac near Bjelovar, which marked the beginning of the "Ustasha final solution", six months before the "Nazi final solution" world historiography of genocide and the Holocaust in World War II. This date is marked every year and enters the calendar of important dates marked by the Republic of Serbia, as another expression of solidarity in preserving the culture of remembrance of the victims of the Ustasha genocide in World War II as one of the greatest genocides in the 20th century, which is at the same time a contribution to the fight against anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, neo-Ustashism and a contribution to the marking of the International Holocaust Day, which was first marked on 27 January 2006 by the UN Resolution at the initiative of the State of Israel and it is marked on the day of the liberation of Auschwitz.

5. Empathy is expressed for the surviving children of the detainees, as well as for their families, and all countries are called upon, both in the region and around the world, to condemn the genocide committed in the Independent State of Croatia in the period 1941-1945.

6. Education and further improvement of understanding of historical facts that led to the Ustasha genocide in the territory of the ISC 1941-1945 is **encouraged**, since the Ustasha genocide is important for the history of genocide and the Holocaust, for the world historiography of World War II and the collective memory of humanity.

7. Ratification and full implementation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide, War Crimes, Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes against Humanity and the adoption of additional laws against the use of hate speech based on ethnic and religious intolerance are **guaranteed**, and are necessary to fulfil the obligations under that convention and other acts, so that the crimes of ethnic cleansing, which, unfortunately, were repeated in 1995 in Operation Storm, would never happen again.

8. It undertakes to develop educational programs that will instil in future generations lessons learned from the Ustasha genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in order to prevent them from ever being repeated and revitalized, in order to prevent the rehabilitation of the Ustasha ideology, which in addition to the Nazi ideology was one of the deadliest ideologies in the history of the 20th century.

9. It takes an attitude that violations of human and minority rights to a dignified culture of remembrance for the victims of the Ustasha genocide can be early indicators of the

possibility of a new genocide and in that sense commits to the adoption of additional legal and other legally binding acts.

10. The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia supports the Declaration on Genocide against Serbs, Jews and Roma in the ISC adopted by the Parliament of the Republika Srpska, as well as the Jerusalem Declaration on Jasenovac and undertakes that the Resolution on Genocide against Serbs, Jews and Roma in the Independent State of Croatia, especially in memory and reverence for the victims of Jasenovac in the period 1941-1945, be submitted to the competent UN bodies and other relevant international institutions for adoption as an international act.

11. The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia calls all relevant international institutions and UN member states, as well as organizations dealing with the study, memorialization and education on the Holocaust and genocide, to accept this Resolution and to include the Holocaust and genocide committed by the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia during World War II in their programs, as an example of one of the deadliest ideologies of the 20th century.