

THE FIRST ROUND TABLE

ŠUŠNJAR 1941

*Proceedings - Papers,
Testimonies and Documents*



OŠTRA LUKA
1 AUGUST 2008

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ŠUŠNJAR 1941
PROCEEDINGS - PAPERS, TESTIMONIES AND DOCUMENTS

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For the publishers

Drena Kuridža
Čedo Majkić
Milan Dašić

Editorial Director

Professor Vladimir Lukić

Editorial Manager

Gojko Čičić

Editorial Board

Professor Vladimir Lukić
Ranko Pavlović
Mihajlo Orlović

Serbian-English translation

Svetlana Mitić
Dragana Ratković

Photos

Milan Dašić
Čedo Majkić
Vladimir Bibić

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Vanesa Kovač

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INSTEAD OF FOREWORD

On 1st August 2008, Oštra Luka was the venue of the 'Šušnjar 1941' Round Table, exactly sixty-seven years after the terrible massacre at the hands of the Ustashi on St. Elijah's Day, when between 7,000 and 10,000 Serbs and Jews of what was then the District of Sanski Most (the exact number has not been ascertained yet, but we should hope it will be within a reasonable period of time) were brutally killed only because they were members of a different religion and a different nation.

The organisers of the Round Table were the Municipality of Oštra Luka and the Association of Displaced Serbs from Sanski Most 'The Hearths of Sanski Most', with the seat in Banja Luka, and members of the Organising Board were: Drena Kuridža (Chair), Čedo Majkić (Deputy Chair), Professor Vladimir Lukić, PhD, Dragan Davidović, MA, Milorad Janjetović, Radovan Krejić, Dujo Milanko, Mihajlo Orlović, Đuro Ćopić and Gojko Čičić.

More than thirty papers and testimonies were heard in the Round Table, along with around forty historians, social and political workers, eyewitnesses to the persecution, writers, publicists, journalists and representatives of associations and institutions, who work hard to reveal the truth about the persecution of innocent people in World War II and other wars for liberation and to ensure the memory of them is preserved.

The Round Table, facilitated by writer Ranko Pavlović, began with Boro Kapetanović, a writer, who recited a disturbing poem about the atrocity at Šušnjar, after which V. Rev. Petar Milovac and Rabbi Jozef Atijas said prayers for the victims of Šušnjar. At the same time, they blessed the attendees. After the guests welcomed the gathering and wished it success, the papers were read and testimonies given; in the end, after a discussion, the conclusions were adopted unanimously, among which one of the most important was that similar gatherings should continue to be held, because it is one of the best ways to finally retrieve the truth about these persecutions from obscurity, into which it was pushed for decades.

Apart from the papers which were read in the Round Table and the testimonies of those who escaped the Ustasha knife and mallet, these Proceedings also contain the papers and testimonies of those who were not able to attend the gathering at Oštra Luka, because of illness or for other reasons. The deeply-moving accounts of those who survived the bloody Ustasha feast at Šušnjar by mere chance were written down by Mihajlo Orlović, a publicist and writer.

These Proceedings are published in the Serbian and English language, as the organisers of the 'Šušnjar 1941' Round Table are convinced it is one of the ways to have the international public also learn the truth about the persecution against Serbian people.

Drena Kuridža, prefect of Oštra Luka Municipality and Chair of the Organising Board of the 'Šušnjar 1941' Round Table

LIFE IN MEMORIES



Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants in the 'Šušnjar 1941' Round Table,

I would like to welcome you on behalf of the Organising Board, the Municipality of Oštra Luka, the Serbs displaced from Sanski Most and on my behalf, and to wish you a pleasant stay in the Municipality of Oštra Luka.

It is good that today we speak about Šušnjar, although sixty-seven years have passed after the terrible massacre. It is necessary to speak about the persecution of the Serbs and Jews from Sanski Most, children, women, and old people. Every memory of them extends their lives, and today we also have to say here that such persecution must not happen again to anyone or anywhere.

As I greet you one more time, I am convinced this Round Table will be a success, which is my sincere wish.

Čedo Majkić, Chair of the Association of Displaced Serbs from Sanski Most 'The Hearths of Sanski Most' and Deputy Chair of the Organising Board

ŠUŠNJAR HAS NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN, NOR WILL IT BE



Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear participants,

I cannot conceal the fact I am pleased to see so many people at this gathering, which you joined to speak about the atrocities against the people of Sanski Most at Šušnjar.

Thanks to a handful of written documents we know what happened at Šušnjar in 1941, but no one has spoken about it to date and to this day there have been no real efforts to hear the living witnesses, to write down

and record it, and as the saying goes, if there are no records of an event, it is as if it had never happened. If a nation does not make records of what has happened to it, it can only expect the same to repeat.

We know how many Serbs there were in Sanski Most in 1941, and we are aware of how many of them live in Sanski Most today. Sanski Most will soon lose all its Serbs, just as it lost its Jews; I do not know if there is a single Jew still living in Sanski Most. The goal of this gathering is first and foremost to tell who did what, what we are to do next and to send a clear message to the current officials and institutions of Sanski Most that Šušnjar has not been forgotten, that Šušnjar is not a place where they can play football, that Šušnjar is not a place they can desecrate.

With a conviction that this is exactly what we will say today and the way we will say it, let me greet this gathering once more and let me wish you successful work!

Professor Vladimir Lukić, PhD, member of the Organising Board and Chair of the Executive Board of the Association 'Jasenovac-Donja Gradina'

THE TRUTH, NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH



Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, dear fellow countrymen,

Let me extend to you my most sincere greetings!

I am particularly obliged and it is my pleasure and honour to greet you, the surviving witnesses, who were shot at but were not killed by bullets, thrashed, battered, but not beaten to death, who were faster than the villains' bullets, even though you were but children then, or rather grown-up children. You remain alive to this very day thanks to your own courage, good fortune and the help of God, bearing inside the sorrow, pain and wounds on both your bodies and souls in mourning for your dearest ones, whose final suffering you have committed to memory for good. Be proud of yourselves for having found the strength to testify to the Ustasha crimes today, 67 years later, to the crimes of our Croat and Muslim neighbours, hardly comparable to anything the age-old history or the folklore of Sanski Most remember.

By doing so, you undoubtedly settle a great debt not only with your dearest ones, but also with all the victims of the regime of the Independent State of Croatia.

The first incomplete list of victims of the fascist terror in Sanski Most was assembled in 1964; currently revised to an extent, it proves around 7,000 Serbs perished, while at Šušnjar 5,500 innocent citizens, peasants and workers were shot, mainly men, of all ages, and only Serbs and Jews – let me repeat it, at Šušnjar only Serbs and Jews were shot, and Šušnjar was created as a killing field exclusively for the elimination of Serbs and Jews. Exactly for that reason Šušnjar as a memorial graveyard should be relieved of all ideological symbols and connotations, and given what it deserves.

To change Šušnjar's name by decorating it with the aureole of a memorial commemorating the struggle against fascism, with a five-pointed star, and then demolish all People's Liberation War memorials in Sanski Most in the wake of the last war and perform Islamic commemoration rituals at graveyard Šušnjar, really a Serbian and Jewish graveyard, is too much indeed, even if we are dealing with someone repenting of their fathers' and forefathers' misdeeds. Undoubtedly, it is an uncivilised act, an act meant to obliterate the actual name of Šušnjar.

No doubt that the Star of David should be placed next to the crucifix at Šušnjar, so those two symbols can show that two feet under dead Serbs and Jews lie side by side, murdered by the hand of the same criminal.

For the reason of everything said above, we owe a particular debt of gratitude to the authors of all papers and witnesses, both those who are here today and those who were unable to come.

The fact you pronounced both the first and last names of both the victims and perpetrators speaks for itself. Even though 67 years have passed, you presented in a vivid manner the events which took place in Sanski Most on St. Elijah's Day, on 2nd August 1941, and not only those in the notorious year of 1941.

Dear friends,

You can hardly find a better way to repay what you owe your dearest ones – fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, relatives, neighbours, simply put, innocent Serbs and Jews, for whom monsters reserved Šušnjar as their final resting place, that is where previously unseen genocide and Holocaust were committed.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to those authors who have shed light on the killing field at Šušnjar from some other aspects.

In the preparations for this Round Table, many people asked several questions – why was Šušnjar not talked about, why was mentioning the massacre at Šušnjar and in Sanski Most, or uttering the word Ustashi, even the names of the convicted Ustashi, considered a heresy; why was the first list, an incomplete one, compiled as late as 1964, a memorial raised only in 1972, and is the first round table organised now, in 2008, etc.

It is very good that you, the authors of the papers – historians, teachers, writers, lawyers, researchers and others, who have presented your works before us here today, did not turn your attention to the stated questions, but were motivated only by the truth.

I am convinced the destiny of this country, which is called Bosnia and Herzegovina, is connected with the truth and nothing but the truth.

In that name, let me greet you one more time.

Rabbi Jozef Atijas

BEFORE THE COURT OF JUSTICE AND TRUTH



Dear brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, dear participants and esteemed friends,

Let us pray again for the peace of the Serbs and Jews killed at Šušnjar, a sacred killing field where the righteous were killed, the innocent victims of the fascist Independent State of Croatia.

Šušnjar testifies to the most terrible crime the human beast could do to man. If we collected all the lives which ended at Šušnjar in 1941 within a single time frame, they would make a considerable, long time span snatched from man and the world. What human happiness, what beauty, what human wit, and human existence and hope in every sense were destroyed within a day or two of rage and orgy! Those who did it then and those who minimise it today believe in nothing, not even in God, not in the worth of human life.

Pandora's box of evil was opened at Šušnjar in 1941, and it still hovers over the Balkans. We should remember for good the great pain which the

souls of the righteous ones buried here took with them to eternity. We are not entitled to forget those truths, nor do we have a right to use them to accomplish any momentary special political goals. Let us share the pain inflicted here on man and humanity with sincerity. To shoot a man means to shoot the humankind – this wisdom is old, and here they killed everything that was human, everything that was humane. Let us not assume the role of judge. Evil will be judged by the eternal justice and truth. We have been witnesses to many terrible disasters in these lands, but let us also witness to the eradication of evil. Let us be witnesses to happiness, understanding and brotherly relations among people. May the Šušnjar of 1941 never happen to anyone anywhere. May that be our holy goal, the purpose of our living. May these be the graveyards of not only the holy mortal remains of these righteous people, but also of our horrible and dark past. Let us bequeath our children a country more beautiful and better than what we found. May they at least live in peace a life worthy of man. Peace to all people and nations, peace to all those who are arriving! Peace and blessings!

Dragan Davidović, historian, MA, General Director of RTRS

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTING MATERIALS



I am a historian, and just before the war I picked a broad human and historical subject to cover – the persecution, camps, prisoners and killing fields in Bosanska Krajina, and in Sanski Most, among other places. War disrupted all our efforts to collect the documentation.

This Round Table is something that marks a watershed in how we will relate, from this moment onwards, to the victims, the investigation in Sanski Most, and not only Sanski Most, but also in Prijedor, Jasenovac, Dubica, Gradiška... I ask you to use this place and call upon all the survivors, all those who heard about this persecution from their elderly, those who have in their home archives, libraries what is called records of the 1941 to 1945 persecution, as well as the persecution from 1991 to 1995, to try and arrange that and submit it to a kind of archive foundation. Here, for a start, let it be announced that the Municipality of Oštra Luka will collect all the materials related to the area of the Municipality, the former District of Sanski Most, and beyond it.

The first thing we need to do is collect archival materials. We have plenty already, a lot was collected by Mr Bokan, who published three books, but the wars and tragedies we encountered took away so much, and I take on the assignment to complete and present to Sanski Most everything I collect. It will be more and more difficult to find the truth, as those who experienced it are leaving, the former Yugoslavia is fragmented, it is no longer possible to do research in Zagreb, in the Croatian Archives and the archives of the City of Zagreb. It is difficult to obtain any documents from Sarajevo, from the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we are equally unlikely to obtain the documentation or records of the State Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes, it will be hard for us to obtain the documents of the military and civilian courts where trials were held between 1941 and 1945, but we should not shy away from it, we should try in every possible way to obtain every single document. They are all invaluable for the final clarification of what happened between 1941 and 1945. A call needs to be issued from here to all those who remember or have any documents in their archives, to keep and send them. It will be easy for us, speaking conditionally, to make a synthesis when we have enough materials.

The second thing I can promise you is that while I am the General Director of the RTRS, you will have at your disposal the people, professionals and equipment for the collection, testifying and noting the information. Our documentaries will be at the disposal of all those who believe that they have something to say and that their testimonies are important.

*Branislav Dukić, Chair of the Republic of Srpska
Camp Prisoner Association*

NO RIGHT TO KEEP SILENT



Dear brothers and sisters, dear gentlemen,

We are gathered here today, at this sacred place, to pay tribute and commemorate over 5,500 Serbs who were killed by Pavelić's Ustashi 67 years ago in most monstrous ways, but also to say publicly that today, more than ever, Šušnjar stands as a reminder that we must do everything to prevent a crime like this from happening again.

Unfortunately, because of the current political agendas, Jasenovac is still downplayed and brushed beneath the carpet of history, as

something that happened a long time ago and as such does not have any connection with what took place in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s; still, the saddest thing of all is that the Serbian people are asked to keep silent about Jasenovac on the pretext of false brotherhood and unity, and also to keep silent about Mounts Kozara and Grmeč, about Šušnjar, Kragujevac, Loznica, Valjevo... Even today, the Serbian people are demanded to be quiet and forget about its victims, in order not to hurt the victims of the other ones, where none of us has the right to be silent.

It is true that all processes that could possibly reveal the full truth should be started, as a guarantee of peace and stability in this region. And, the way to the full truth has to start with Jasenovac, Šušnjar, Kozara, Grmeč, Kragujevac etc. – with the greatest war crime and genocide which was the cause of everything we saw in the last war. This is why primarily Šušnjar demands the whole truth, so we can prevent what might happen without that truth from reoccurring. Unfortunately, there is no sincerity on our political scene, which is the basic prerequisite for building a permanent peace. That is why all the victims of Jasenovac and Šušnjar and the other concentration camps are manipulated to fulfill the current-day political agendas, both in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia, and such agendas only widen the rift between the peoples. For the reasons stated, gatherings like this and the papers presented in them are extremely important.

Gojko Knežević, Chair of the WWII Camp Prisoner Association

BEFORE THE COURT IN STRASBOURG



Dear brothers and sisters,

I would like to address you on behalf of the World War II Camp Prisoner Association, and I would not like to repeat what the previous speakers said, because it is all true, and our Association, like the Camp Prisoner Association of the last war, struggles for the truth. The truth, which needs to be verified now, something Mr Dukić was telling about, is connected to this period, and as for the period whose ‘records’ we keep, so to say, we have filed a lawsuit with the international Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg against the

Republic of Croatia for its genocide and crimes against humanity. The lawsuit mentions Šušnjar as a major scene of the crimes perpetrated by the Ustasha hordes in this area, with the goal to destroy the Serbian and Jewish people living there, and with one more goal – to spread there and incorporate the Croatian and Muslim population. We have submitted enough evidence related to this killing field as was needed, as much as we knew as the Association, but I believe sufficient to set forth to the international Court the behaviour of the authorities of the Independent State of Croatia leading to genocide and the Holocaust.

We have succeeded in having around 8,500 camp prisoners from the area of Krajina and other areas join the Association, with the goal to gather them, have their names and register them, and not just deal with numbers. Numbers are easily manipulated, whereas you cannot manipulate names or birth places. Not only did we register those people, we also took their statements specifying who of their families and relatives perished in the Ustasha death camps, such as Stara Gradiška, Zemun, Šušnjar etc. Now that we have made this move with Strasbourg, we expect, that is we have received a positive answer from Strasbourg, which is a big thing, because they do not accept things which are not well prepared.

Let me not bother you with that, as I only wanted to pass on to you the information that something concrete has been done. We expect to hear from the descendants of the people who perished at Šušnjar, to provide us with their names, so we can complete the data which we do not have.

Milorad Janjetović, a businessman and donor, member of the Organising Board

BUILDING A CHURCH ON ŠUŠNJAR



I am sorry I have to steal some time from the sufferers who experienced and survived the horrors of Šušnjar. I only have one proposal for this gathering, and that is to find a way to build a church at the site of the persecution. Let me be the first to donate 10,000 euros, and I believe we should find a way to effect this idea.

I am 67 years old, and I only heard about this for the first time when my friend Professor Lukić invited me to help arrange and build the complex of the memorial graveyard Šušnjar. What I hear now chills my blood.

As we were tending Šušnjar, I experienced encounters with people of a different nationality, who told us we should not do that, because – what are their cows going to graze?! Only people who do not have even a bit of respect in themselves could degrade and experience us that way.

Now that the world is going to hear the truth about Šušnjar and this crime is spoken about for the first time, I do not think anyone will be able to believe it. But when we gather on Šušnjar for a second time, we should have a place to light candles, pray to God, and even hold a round table at our church.

Zoran Kostić, Chair of the RS Writers' Association

THE SERBIAN WRITERS' SAY



Ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters,

I have the honour to attend on behalf of the writers of the Republic of Srpska and on behalf of Serbian writers in general (I can grant myself with this right at this moment) the first Round Table dedicated to the subject of one such tragedy as the persecution of Serbs on Šušnjar in 1941. I await the day when Serbian writers will join this round table because, really only in the last few years, we are somehow used to hearing historians mainly (bravo to them for starting doing it, even if a bit late!), but it is absolutely incredible Serbian literature has ignored the persecution of Serbs in the 20th century as a central topic (is there anything more touching in the 20th century than the persecution of Serbs?). I really speak about the irrelevant Serbian literature which, so to say, does not register, does not archive all those horrors and the fact that one-fifth of the Serbian people was killed and vanished in the 20th century.

Let us just remember how in the last six decades, during the period of the so-called Tito's Yugoslavia, Serbian literature, the top-grade one, both leftist and rightist, slammed Serbs of both the leftist and rightist ideological

disposition for their crimes. Every single Chetnik or Partisan crime was described in the works of our leading writers, let me just mention Ćopić, Ćosić, Oljača, Davičo, who hardly wrote anything about the persecution of Jews... What I want to say is that ideological censorship in those several years played a very negative role, suppressing this subject in the name of some brotherhood and unity, which meant the co-existence of victims and executioners, which the Yugoslavia that broke up really was and which we certainly lament, including us here in the auditorium, I believe; however, I cannot stop wondering at Serbian literature for ignoring the topic even after Yugoslavia collapsed.

As I conclude my address, let me just point that the best work on this subject did not come from a Serbian pen, but from the pen of a Muslim, Skender Kulenović, which though a fact is absurd, and I only want to say there has been a lot of mistification on the part of Croatian literature. I am deeply convinced this tragedy of ours in World War II is largely minimised in literary perception. When I say that, I have in mind a poem we all know well, *Jama* (The Pit) by Ivan Goran Kovačić, which we continue to praise as a great piece of literature, while I claim it may have had a key role in the relativisation of Serbian victims. Immediately after World War II, it went without saying who the executioners were and who the victims were. Nowadays, when there are no more survivors and the context has been forgotten, the readers of *Jama* no longer know who the victim is and who the executioner is; on the contrary, in Croatia they claim the victims were their patriots, and the executioners were Serbian evil-doers and Chetniks.

This is what I had to say on this subject, wishing the organiser of this extremely important gathering will make sure and arrange to involve adequately Serbian writers in the project of future dissemination of the truth about Serbian persecution.

Dragan Divjak, *Association for the Preservation and Maintenance of Tradition 'Sana' in Belgrade*

MAY IT NOT BE FORGOTTEN



Dear friends, dear fellow countrymen, the good people of Grmeč,

I greet you on behalf of our dear fellow countrymen from Mount Grmeč living in Belgrade, on behalf of the Association for the Preservation and Maintenance of our people's tradition in Belgrade area.

I come from Skucani Vakuf. A part of my body was brutally killed and buried on Šušnjar, both a part of my body and of my neighbours' body. I think we are the last generation that can and should do everything in its power so Šušnjar and that persecution are not forgotten. That is our task, because the forthcoming generations will not know anything about that horrible atrocity. We are the ones who need to do everything we can so Šušnjar is not forgotten, and not only Šušnjar, but many other memorials in this region as well. A lot has been forgotten, many memorials and graveyards devastated. Go to Mount Grmeč, visit Jasenica and Korčanica, visit all those places where people lost their lives. Unfortunately, it took us 67 years to hold a round table and research such issues.

Fellow countrymen and friends, my duty is not to forget the region I come from, not to forget my dead, but I have nowhere to return to. They have destroyed everything, my village, my graveyard. We have to mount more effort so these things do not happen to us.

V. Rev. *Petar Milovac*

A HISTORICAL DAY FOR OŠTRA LUKA



Dear brothers and sisters,

I use this opportunity to greet all of you here as the priest of this parish, especially the organisers of the Round Table. We may openly say this is a historic day for this little town, not only for Oštra Luka but for the whole Podgrmeč region. This day is particularly important as the living witnesses are expected to testify and confess at this gathering.

Let me greet you one more time and tell you that the conclusions of the Round Table 'Šušnjar 1941' will be put in the annals of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Oštra Luka. Thank you, and may God bless you!



The First Round Table



*Papers, testimonies
and documents*

*Jovan Mirković**

THE 1941-1945 WAR CASUALTIES FROM SANSKI MOST MUNICIPALITY ACCORDING TO THE 1964 REGISTER AND ITS REVISION TO DATE



The issue of the actual number of World War II casualties in Yugoslavia brings three registers to the fore: the register of the State Commission made in 1946, the register made in 1950 by the AACPLW [Alliance of the Associations of Combatants in the People's Liberation War, S. M.], and the register War Casualties from 1964; however, none of these registers, including the documents of the Human and Material Loss Reparations Commission¹, offered a definite answer as to the actual number of World War II casualties on Yugoslav territory, including the territory of the Independent State of Croatia, or individual districts, i.e. municipalities.

The statistical department of the State Commission produced a register in 1946, but the results did not match up to the earlier estimates and errors were found in the way the work was done. According to its data, the number of casualties in the FPRY [Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, S. M.] killed in the war is 505,182 (excluding the members of the armed forces of the PLA [People's Liberation Army, S. M.], the PSY [Partisan Squads of Yugoslavia, S. M.] and the so-called quisling troops).

The 1950 register is mentioned only in the related literature; the information for Croatia from the collective charts was published, stating the figure of 155,142, i.e. 156,226 casualties.

* Jovan Mirković, historian, Museum of Genocide Victims, Belgrade

¹ Ljudske i materijalne žrtve Jugoslavije u ratnom naporu 1941-1945. godine, Beograd, Reparaciona komisija pri Vladi FNRJ [Reparations Commission of FPRY Government], 1946. In its statement, the Reparations Commission states the actual number of war casualties for Yugoslavia is 1,706,000, or 10.8% of its pre-war population. The later registers did not confirm this figure, and following some polemics, it appears it represents the demographic loss, not the actual war casualties (See: Jovan Mirković, *Objavljeni izvori i literatura o jasenovačkim logorima*, Beograd-Banja Luka, 2000, 33, 215-216, and also: *Predgovor = Foreword*, in: *Zločini u logoru Jasenovac = Crimes in the Jasenovac Camp* (phototypic edition), Banja Luka, 2000, pp. V-XIX).

The register entitled The 1941-1945 War Casualties made in 1964 was banned for a long time, as the results obtained did not correspond to the estimates, and it was only in 1992 that its findings were first published. The Register Results say 597,323 people perished as war casualties.²

The Federal Agency for Statistics made an estimate of the war casualties: the population estimate for 1948 (had the war not taken place) is 17,809,642, while according to the 1948 census, the actual figure was 15,753,132, with a discrepancy of 2,056,510, which stands for the demographic loss, whereas the actual number of casualties amount to 1,016,000, which means in actuality the casualties register included only 56-58% of the people.³

According to The Register Results⁴, these are the casualties registered according to place of residence prior to 6th April 1941 for the Municipality of Sanski Most (the 1964 administrative division):

Category	Total victims	Women only
During internment	158	48
During imprisonment	90	23
In deportation	17	7
During forced labour	5	-
In atrocities	3437	1088
Members of FYA (Former Yugoslav Army) (in captivity and the April War)	31	-
Members of PLA	1529	159
In combat and bombing	209	88
Other categories	77	30
Unknown	37	11
Total for Sanski Most Municipality	5590	1450

It also presents the war survivor information:

² Жртве рата 1941-1945. Попис из 1964. године. Reprint: Жртве рата 1941-1945. (Резултати пописа), Савезни завод за статистику Београд, 1966 (за интерну употребу), Београд, 1992

³ Извештај о извршеном попису жртава рата 1941-1945, in: Жртве рата 1941-1945. (Резултати пописа), ib.

⁴ Жртве рата 1941-1945. (Резултати пописа), ib., 27

Category	Total victims	Women only
Internees	132	54
Prisoners	51	15
Deportees	81	44
Forced labourers	42	6
FYA prisoners of war	356	-
PLA prisoners of war	27	8
Unknown categories	3	1
Total for Sanski Most Municipality	692	128

There is very little information about the casualties of war in the District, i.e. Municipality of Sanski Most in the related sources or literature, except for the monograph *Srez Sanski Most u NOB, I-III*⁵, (The District of Sanski Most in the PLC).

As for the more relevant historical literature, Fikreta Jelić-Butić and Bogdan Krizman refer to the victims in Sanski Most: "...The greatest massacres in Bosnia took place in late July in the western parts, it is estimated that during that period around 20,000 Serbs were killed in the Districts of Bihać, Bosanska Krupa and Cazin, around 6,000 in the District of Sanski Most, and also around 6,000 in the Districts of Prijedor and Bosanski Novi..."⁶

There are but a few statements in the most relevant published sources:

- "As a result of the rebellion of the Eastern Orthodox Christian peasants in the Districts of Bosanski Petrovac, Ključ, Bosanska Krupa and Sanski Most, the Ustashi shot 500 Orthodox peasants in village Hrustovo from 31st July to 8th August, in the area of authority of Station Ilidža. The bodies were buried on the spot..."⁷
- The commanding officer of the gendarme platoon from Sanski Most reported on how that evening the Ustasha company from Zagreb would

⁵ Branko J. Bokan, *Srez Sanski Most u NOB, I-III*, Sanski Most, 1980 (hereinafter: Bokan, ib.)

⁶ Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i NDH*, 167; Krizman, *NDH između Hitlera i Mussolinija*, 125

⁷ АМН [Archives of the Military-Historical Institute], c. ISC, b. 81, ref. 9/3-1: Дневно извјешће о важнијим догађајима, према податцима Оружничтва за дан 19. коловоза 1941 године (Daily report on important events, according to the information of the Gendarme Headquarters of 19th August 1941); *Zločini na jugoslovenskim prostorima u prvom i drugom svetskom ratu, Zbornik dokumenata, tom 1, knj. 1, Zločini Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 1941*, Beograd, 1993, (hereinafter: *Zločini NDH*), 535-540

shoot 65 captives from the villages in the area of authority of Station Sanski Most, Iliđža and Lušci Palanka.⁸

- “The District of Lušci Palanka... The day before St. Elijah’s Day the Ustashi came from the previously mentioned places (Sanski Most, Stari Majdan and Bosanska Krupa, note by J. M.), captured 50 Serb men from the villages of Podvidača and Lukavica, and shot them in Stari Majdan on 2nd August. The Ustashi from Sanski Most took 30 Serbs from the villages of Fajtovci and Gorice to Sanski Most and killed them there. On 2nd August, the Ustashi came from Ljubija to the villages of Budimlić-Japra and Halilovci and shot 80 Serbs – everyone they found at home...”⁹
- “Sanski Most... The night between 2nd and 3rd August, and on 3rd August 1941, 700 Eastern Orthodox Christians were shot by the Ustasha soldiers.”¹⁰

A document of the German Information Centre for Zagorje District sums up the total Serb population killed in West Bosnia in late July and early August: “The number of victims in the whole district is estimated at around 55,000 men, women and children...”¹¹

- The List of Mass Crimes... (BHSCWC) [Bosnia and Herzegovina State Commission for War Crimes, S. M.] gives an estimate of the number of casualties: Bihać, Bosanska Krupa and Cazin around 20,000, Sanski Most around 6,000, Prijedor and Bosanski Novi around 6,000, Kulen Vakuf around 4,500, Kostajnica around 4,000, Livno around 5,000, Glamoč 800 to 900¹², etc.

⁸ AMHЛ, с. ISC, b. 86, ref. 17/5-1: Извјештај заповједника Оружничког вода Сански Мост Заповједништво III хрватске оружничке пуковније прослеђује Врховном оружничком заповједништву (Headquarters of 3rd Croatian Gendarme Regiment submits Report of Commander of Sanski Most Gendarme Platoon to Supreme Gendarme Headquarters); Zločini NDH, ib., 425-427

⁹ AMHЛ, с. ISC, b. 312, ref. 55/1: Преглед масовних злочина (List of mass crimes); Zločini NDH, ib., 991; Здравко Антонић, Документа о геноциду над Србима у Босни и Херцеговини од априла до августа 1941, Бања Лука – Српско Сарајево, 2001 (hereinafter: Антонић, Документа о геноциду), 104

¹⁰ AMHЛ, с. ISC, b. 86, ref. 2/5-1 and b. 153-a, ref. 21/1-1: Извјештај заповједника Оружничког вода Сански Мост од 3. августа 1941. Заповједништву 3. хрватске оружничке пуковније (Report of Commander of Sanski Most Gendarme Platoon of 3rd August 1941 to Headquarters of 3rd Croatian Gendarme Regiment); Zločini NDH, ib., 444-445

¹¹ AMHЛ, с. ISC, b. 312, ref. 56/1: Извештај ПОЦ Загорје (Report of Zagorje District Information Centre); Zločini NDH, ib., 1018

¹² AMHЛ, с. ISC, b. 312, ref. 55/1: Преглед масовних злочина усташа у 1941. год. (List of mass crimes of the Ustashi in 1941); Zločini NDH, ib., 981-1011; Антонић, Документа о геноциду, ib., 93-126

Volume III of the above-mentioned monograph *Srez Sanski Most u NOB* gives a list of the names and a tabular summary of the ‘killed fighters’ (KF) and ‘victims of fascist terror’ (VFT)¹³, which do not contain the places excluded from the District of Sanski Most after the war (Ališići, Rasavci, Zecovi and Briševo), or the places joined to the Municipality of Sanski Most after the war (Hazići, Vrhpolje and Hrustovo).

As in 1992 the ban on *The 1941-1945 War Casualties* register made in 1964 was removed, the document was published as working material and it has since been under revision at the Museum of Genocide Victims, given the fact it has so many flaws. The current results of the register revision (full identification data: name and surname, father’s name, year and place of birth, year and place of death, perpetrators of crime), which are not final, state the information regarding the number of casualties for Sanski Most Municipality, and this information is analysed in Tables 1-11.¹⁴

According to the book *Srez Sanski Most u NOB*, 70 places were included, with a total of 5,019 war casualties (1,414 KF and 3,605 VFT).¹⁵ Our analyses include 76 places (with the settlements joined to the Municipality of Sanski Most after the war (Hazići, Vrhpolje and Hrustovo), and the settlements which are not stated in the mentioned book (Bjeline and Đurići), while places Dabar and Kozica are presented as Gornji and Donji Dabar and Donja and Gornja Kozica respectively. Not included in our database is settlement Kasapnice, whereas the books states the information related to it. We analysed the war casualties in the Municipality of Sanski Most according to place of birth (settlements), sex¹⁶, ethnic background¹⁷, year of death¹⁸, person(s) responsible for the persecution/death¹⁹, type of persecution/manner of death²⁰, cause of death²¹, and profession for the whole Municipality²². A separate table gives an overview of the number of casualties in the places excluded from the District of Sanski Most.²³

¹³ Bokan, *ib.* III, 404-727, 728-7

¹⁴ Source: Database of the Museum of Genocide Victims, *The 1941-1945 War Casualties*; the analysis was done in June 2008.

¹⁵ Table 1

¹⁶ Table 2

¹⁷ Table 3

¹⁸ Table 4

¹⁹ Table 5

²⁰ Table 6

²¹ Table 7

²² Table 8

²³ Table 9

The database contains a register of 6,215 war casualties for the area of Sanski Most Municipality, who died in 373 places, i.e. at 1,005 sites (this figure does not include those casualties for whom the place of death has not been ascertained).²⁴

According to the propositions of this gathering, we submitted to the organizer a paper with a supplement, entitled The 1941-1945 war casualties according to the revised version of the 1964 register, currently done at the Museum of Genocide Victims²⁵, and the organizers of the Round Table sent us additional information to be added to the list. There is a separate table²⁶ comparing the Museum database and the submitted list of names, where the corrections were made, and possibly after this information is entered, the total number of casualties for the area of Sanski Most Municipality will increase for another 972 names, making a total of 7,186. Some of these names will not be entered in the base as some of their identification data is missing. Given the short time we had at our disposal, we may have made occasional mistakes in the correction process; also, we did not give an analysis according to individual parameters, which we did with the database information.

In Supplement I²⁷ we present an excerpt from the database with a list of names of the 1941-1945 war casualties in the area of Sanski Most Municipality, and in Supplement II a revised version of the name list sent by the organiser of the Round Table.²⁸ We are aware that the list we submitted is incomplete and contains a lot of errors (whether it be identification data or mistakes made in entering the data), which is why we also provide here a form entitled War Victims Questionnaire.²⁹ Should you find any errors in the list, whether it be that a victim is missing, the entered data are incorrect or an error was made entering the information, it would be most useful if you could notify the Museum about it, with an individual form filled out for each victim. It is particularly important that the information is submitted for all war casualties – human loss, regardless of their national, religious,

²⁴ Table 10-11

²⁵ Supplement I (Supplement at the end of the Proceedings)

²⁶ Table 12

²⁷ The list of individual names from the 1941-1945 War Casualties, a revised version of the 1964 register

²⁸ Supplement II: Additional (revised) list of casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of birth (Supplement at the end of the Proceedings)

²⁹ Supplement III (Supplement at the end of the Proceedings)

racial, ethnic, political or military background, even more so as one of the major slips of the 1964 register was it failed to include all the categories of human loss. We are convinced that those who have information (relatives, friends, local people, anyone who may have any information) will help this action to complete the list of the 1941-1945 war casualties, which is a civilisatory duty of both the Museum of Genocide Victims as an institution, and other institutions and individuals.³⁰

Naturally, the presented information is not final, these are just the first steps in the revision of the 1964 register. The revision will make use of all the sources available, including the supplement we received from the organiser, in order to obtain the most accurate data possible and fully identify the war casualties, as closely as possible, and so turn them into real people, whereby they would no longer be just figures, but also in order to prevent any manipulations for political reasons.

Lastly, just a few words about the state and ideology which perpetrated crimes against a part of its population in a planned manner.

The Ustasha movement, as a bearer of the ideological foundations of the Independent State of Croatia, is the most extreme wing of utterly radical Croatian nationalism, combined with the proselytism of the Roman Catholic Church ('*sacra militaria ecclesia*'), which sees its survival in the implementation of the 'Blutt und Boden' theory ('blood and soil'), meaning an ethnically cleansed territory. In terms of structure, the Ustasha movement is a poor copy of the movement of National Socialists in Germany and the Italian Fascist movement, whose ideology is based in the so-called 'Croatian state and historical rights'. The structural organisation of its administration, political and social life, and its military organisation were conditional on political and ideological principles, with the aim to create 'purely Croatian living space', which would allow the preservation of 'the pure Croatian nation' (including Muslims as 'Croatian flowers', supposedly racially the purest division of the Croatian people). The prerequisite for the implementation of these endeavours was the biological destruction (annihilation) of 'the greatest enemy of the Croatian people', the Serbs (one third of the population) and the Jews, 'for whom there is no room in Croatia'. The Roma were put in the same group, as non-Aryans – a lower race. To fulfill these

³⁰ Address: Museum of Genocide Victims, 11000 Belgrade, Nikola Pašić Sq. 11/III, Serbia; Tel/ fax: ++381 11 3398 883; e-mail: yumg@bitsyu.net

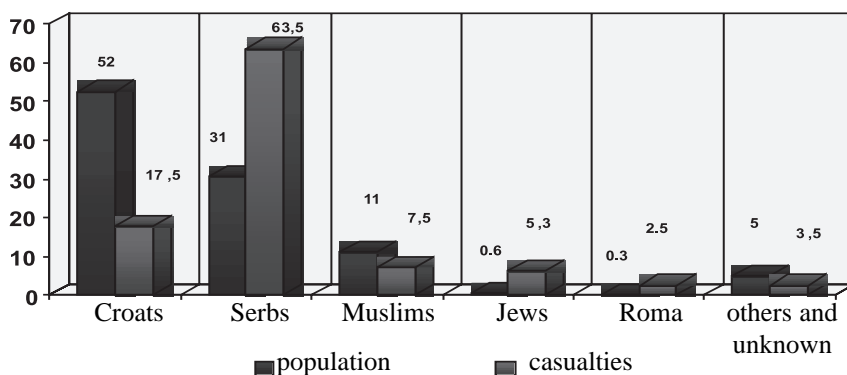
goals, it was also necessary to carry out ‘internal cleansing’, that is to destroy all the Croat and Muslim elements marked as traitors for their ‘anti-Croatian behaviour’, who ‘spoil the body of the pure Croatian nation’.

Given such ideological and political foundations, the nature of the process of implementation of the idea to create one such state was inevitably predetermined – implementation through perpetration of crimes.

The responsibility for the crime of genocide, the gravest crime against humanity, committed by the Ustasha movement, the Independent State of Croatia and its institutions, as well as individual responsibility, and not only of the actual perpetrators, are also connected to the responsibility of the bearers of the ideological foundations supporting this movement and its creation.

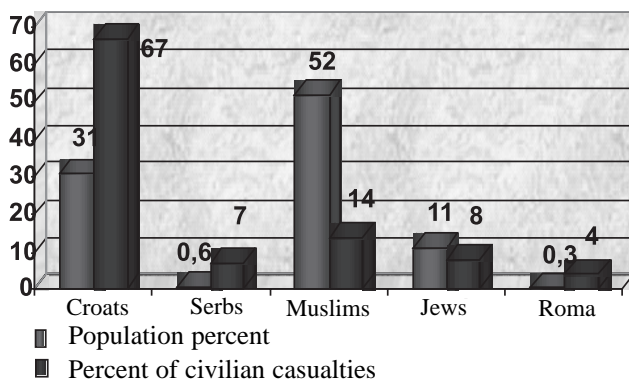
To illustrate how the policy of crime was enforced in the Independent State of Croatia against the religiously, nationally, racially and ethnically unfit population, we present a bar chart³¹, borrowed from an analysis, which gives a breakdown of the population and casualties according to their ethnic structure, the civilian casualties killed in direct violence, as well as the ethnic background and the population breakdown for the children casualties. Also included are a few photographs showing the crimes committed by the Ustashi in Sanski Most in 1941 (Dragoje Lukić Collection and the Archives of Yugoslavia, c. 110).

**Population and casualty breakdown
for ISC (%)**

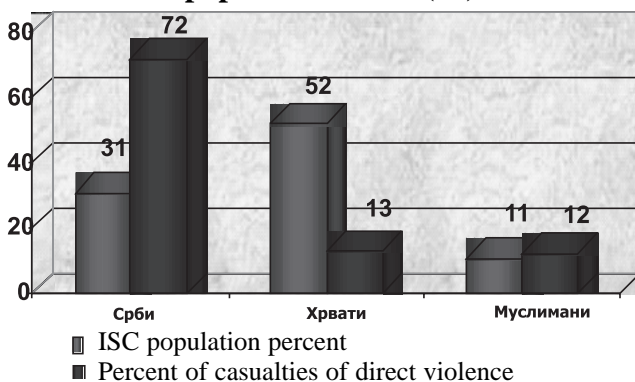


³¹ Graphic illustrations: Јован Мирковић, Страдање деце у Независној Држави Хрватској – Концентрациони логор Јасеновац (1941-1945), a presentation shown in the exhibition and speech given at the platform in Belgrade, US Embassy, 16th May 2007, and in Milan, Italy, 28th May 2007

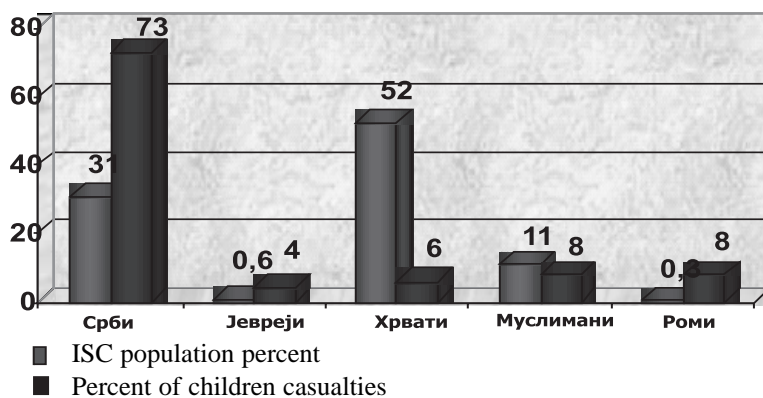
Civilian casualties in ISC according to ethnic background and population share (%)



Casualties of direct violence in ISC according to population share (%)



Children casualties in ISC according to nationality and population percent





Perpetrators with their victim, Sanski Most, 1941

MGV (Museum of Genocide Victims), Collection of documentary photographs (CDP)
AJ-P3 –II-94 (00483)



The town park in Sanski Most, 1941

MGV,CDP/FDL Inv. no. 421/AJ-P3-II-96 (00486)



The town park in Sanski Most, 1941

MGV,CDP/FDL Inv. no. 422/AJ-P3-II-96 (00485)



*The town park in Sanski Most, 1941
MGV, CDF/AJ-P3-II-97a (00487)*



*The Ustashi hanging a group of men
and a woman, Sanski Most, 1941
MGV, CDF/AJ-P3-II-95 (00484)*



*Before a dug grave, Sanski Most, 1941
MGV, CDF/AJ-P3-II-98 (00488)*



The town park in Sanski Most, 1941
MGV,CDP/FDL Inv. no. 423.



Ustasha victims near Sanski Most, 1941
MGV,CDP/FDL Inv. no. 467/AJ-P3-II-93 (00482)



*An Ustasha murderer called 'Kljako' treads over
victims, Sanski Most, August 1941*
MGV,CDP/FDL Inv. no. 588

Table 1

**War casualties in the District of Sanski Most according to the book:
Branko J. Bokan, *Srez Sanski Most u NOB*³²**

No.	Place	Population	KF	VFT	Total
	Sanski Most – District	55364	1414	3605	5019
1.	Batkovci <i>Bjeline</i>	200	4	8	12
2.	Bojište (Tuk Bobija)	352	19	47	66
3.	Bosanski Milanovac	1000	42	36	78
4.	Bošnjaci	408	21	16	37
5.	Brdari	370	17	99	116
6.	Budimlić Japra	903	27	34	61
7.	Čaplje	1043	12	72	84
8.	Dabar (Donji) (Gornji)	4365	127	330	457
9.	Demiševci	251	5	-	5
10.	Duge Njive	168	8	-	8
11.	Dževar	528	11	54	65
12.	Đedovača <i>Đurići</i>	182	9	56	65
13.	Fajtovci	420	13	134	147
14.	Garevice	250	1	4	5
15.	Glavice (<i>Predojevića</i> <i>Glavica</i>)	630	36	90	126
16.	Gorice	432	1	32	33
17.	Grdanovci	528	28	9	37
18.	Hadrovci	200	8	3	11
19.	Halilovci <i>Hazići</i> <i>Hrustovo</i>	490	30	-	30
20.	Husimovci	356	5	39	44
21.	Ilidža	391	9	11	20
22.	Jelašinovci	1059	69	262	331
23.	Kamengrad Donji	1000	10	5	15
24.	Kamengrad Gornji	1178	5	-	5
25.	Kijevo	1450	13	54	67
26.	Kljevci	2100	17	354	371
27.	Kasapnice	400	-	30	30
28.	Koprivna	500	34	62	96
29.	Kozica Donja Gornja	2100	54	17	71
30.	Kozin	361	29	-	29

³² Branko J. Bokan, *Srez Sanski Most u NOB*, Vol. III, Sanski Most, 1980, pp. 728-733

31.	Krkojevci	836	20	51	71
32.	Kruhari	1120	21	95	116
33.	Lipnik Donji	405	15	3	18
34.	Lipnik Gornji	630	66	15	81
35.	Lukavice	910	26	33	59
36.	Lušci Palanka	480	38	46	84
37.	Lužani	350	-	55	55
38.	Majkić Japra Donja		53	163	216
39.	Majkić Japra Gornja	1596	52	116	168
40.	Marini	280	23	62	85
41.	Miljevci	710	28	91	119
42.	Modra	407	3	-	3
43.	Mrkalji	350	20	-	20
44.	Naprelje	578	6	26	32
45.	Okreč	450	-	1	1
46.	Oštra Luka	500	23	61	84
47.	Otiš	476	32	66	98
48.	Ovanjska	850	-	-	-
49.	Podbriježje	400	3	-	3
50.	Podlug	520	14	171	185
51.	Podovi	446	12	8	20
52.	Podvidača	889	35	50	85
53.	Poljak	491	3	-	3
54.	Praštali	400	38	107	145
55.	Sanski Most	4500	35	153	188
56.	Sasina	1508	-	11	11
57.	Skucani Vakuf	980	21	25	46
58.	Slatina	870	34	4	38
59.	Stara Rijeka	900	3	1	4
60.	Stari Majdan	1156	15	32	47
61.	Suhača	921	9	108	117
62.	Šehovci	708	2	7	9
63.	Škrlevita	560	-	1	1
64.	Tomina	508	19	46	65
65.	Tramošnja Donja	2000	1	7	8
66.	Tramošnja Gornja		39	22	61
67.	Trnova	1108	2	3	5
68.	Usorci	680	36	41	77
	<i>Vrhpolje</i>				
69.	Zdena	1066	3	66	69
70.	Zenkovići	210	-	-	-

Table 2

1941-1945 war casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of birth and sex

No.	Place of birth	District SM (Bokan)	Total	M	W	Ch
	Sanski Most – Municipality	5019	6214	4545	1664	5
1	Batkovci	12	13	12	1	-
2	Bjeline		18	15	3	-
3	Bojište (Tuk Bobija)	66	83	61	22	-
4	Bosanski Milanovac	78	104	65	39	-
5	Bošnjaci	37	74	54	20	-
6	Brdari	116	166	120	46	-
7	Budimlić Japra	61	77	72	5	-
8	Čaplje	84	74	64	10	-
9	Dabar Donji		349	201	148	-
10	Dabar Gornji	457	153	125	28	-
11	Demiševci	5	7	6	1	-
12	Duge Njive	8	7	7	-	-
13	Dževar	65	75	66	9	-
14	Đedovača	65	65	47	18	-
15	Đurići		20	17	3	-
16	Fajtovci	147	158	94	64	-
17	Garevica	5	5	2	3	-
18	Glavice (Predojevića Glavica)	126	86	59	27	-
19	Gorice	33	39	24	15	-
20	Grdanovci	37	46	38	8	-
21	Hadrovci	11	20	14	6	-
22	Halilovci	30	37	34	3	-
23	Hazići		15	14	1	-
24	Hrustovo		59	52	7	-
	Kasapnice	30				
25	Husimovci	44	49	36	13	-
26	Ilidža	20	37	30	7	-
27	Jelašinovci	331	380	201	178	1
28	Kamengrad Donji	15	20	17	3	-
29	Kamengrad Gornji	5	17	16	1	-
30	Kijevo	67	110	92	18	-
31	Kljevci	371	437	320	115	2
32	Koprivna	96	93	69	24	-
33	Kozica Donja		46	43	3	-
34	Kozica Gornja	71	33	32	1	-
35	Kozin	29	47	40	7	-

36	Krkojevci	71	74	44	30	-
37	Kruhari	116	168	125	43	-
38	Lipnik Donji	18	38	30	8	-
39	Lipnik Gornji	81	52	44	8	-
40	Lukavice	59	81	69	12	-
41	Lušci Palanka	84	94	75	19	-
42	Lužani	55	45	43	2	-
43	Majkić Japra Donja	216	240	148	92	-
44	Majkić Japra Gornja	168	162	101	60	1
45	Marini	85	82	74	8	-
46	Miljevci	119	104	68	35	1
47	Modra	3	7	7	-	-
48	Mrkalji	20	35	28	7	-
49	Napelje	32	30	22	8	-
50	Okreč	1	3	3	-	-
51	Oštra Luka	84	103	80	23	-
52	Otiš	98	82	56	26	-
53	Ovanjska	-	2	2	-	-
54	Podbriježje	3	9	8	1	-
55	Podlug	185	139	92	47	-
56	Podovi	20	28	27	1	-
57	Podvidača	85	99	85	14	-
58	Poljak	3	6	3	3	-
59	Praštali	145	104	69	35	-
60	Sanski Most	188	536	392	144	-
61	Sasina	11	25	21	4	-
62	Skucani Vakuf	46	43	29	14	-
63	Slatina	38	61	53	8	-
64	Stara Rijeka	4	8	7	1	-
65	Stari Majdan	47	63	53	10	-
66	Suhača	117	129	82	47	-
67	Šehovci	9	17	15	2	-
68	Škrļjevita	1	14	13	1	-
69	Tomina	65	87	74	13	-
70	Tramošnja Donja	8	28	22	6	-
71	Tramošnja Gornja	61	68	57	11	-
72	Trnova	5	108	97	11	-
73	Usorci	77	94	78	16	-
74	Vrhpolje		37	28	9	-
75	Zdena	69	87	61	26	-
76 ³³	Zenkovići	-	3	2	1	-

³³ Not given in the tabular overview in the book Branko J. Bokan, *Srez Sanski Most u NOB*, pp. 728-733. Hazići, Vrhpolje and Hrustovo, which were added to Sanski Most Municipality after the war, but neither settlements Bjeline or Đurići.

Hazići	15	Bjeline	18
Vrhpolje	37	Đurići	20
Hrustovo	59	Σ	149

Table 3

1941-1945 war casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of birth and nationality

No.	Place of birth	Total	Serbs	Croats	Muslims	Jews	Others
	Sanski Most – Municipality	6214	5767	119	251	59	18
1.	Batkovci	13	12	1	-	-	-
2.	Bjeline	18	10	2	-	6	-
3.	Bojište (Tuk Bobija)	83	83	-	-	-	-
4.	Bosanski Milanovac	104	104	-	-	-	-
5.	Bošnjaci	74	74	-	-	-	-
6.	Brdari	166	163	3	-	-	-
7.	Budimlić Japra	77	72	-	4	-	1
8.	Čaplje	74	66	-	7	-	1
9.	Dabar Donji	349	347	1	-	-	1
10.	Dabar Gornji	153	152	-	1	-	-
11.	Demiševci	7	1	-	6	-	-
12.	Duge Njive	7	7	-	-	-	-
13.	Džepar	75	70	-	5	-	-
14.	Đedovača	65	65	-	-	-	-
15.	Đurići	20	20	-	-	-	-
16.	Fajtovci	158	157	-	1	-	-
17.	Garevica	5	3	2	-	-	-
18.	Glavice (Predojević Glava)	86	86	-	-	-	-
19.	Gorice	39	38	-	1	-	-
20.	Grdanovci	46	46	-	-	-	-
21.	Hadrovci	20	20	-	-	-	-
22.	Halilovci	37	37	-	-	-	-
23.	Hazići	15	15	-	-	-	-
24.	Hrustovo Kasapnice	59	46	5	8	-	-
25.	Husimovci	49	44	1	4	-	-

26.	Ilidža	37	36	-	1	-	-
27.	Jelašinovci	380	380	-	-	-	-
28.	Kamengrad Donji	20	1	-	19	-	-
29.	Kamengrad Gornji	17	2	-	15	-	-
30.	Kijevo	110	84	7	19	-	-
31.	Kljevci	437	429	7	-	-	1
32.	Koprivna	93	89	2	1	-	-
33.	Kozica Donja	46	45	-	-	-	1
34.	Kozica Gornja	33	33	-	-	-	-
35.	Kozin	47	46	-	-	-	1
36.	Krkojevci	74	74	-	-	-	-
37.	Kruhari	168	167	1	-	-	-
38.	Lipnik Donji	38	38	-	-	-	-
39.	Lipnik Gornji	52	52	-	-	-	-
40.	Lukavice	81	80	-	1	-	-
41.	Lušci Palanka	94	93	-	1	-	-
42.	Lužani	45	44	1	-	-	-
43.	Majkić Japra Donja	240	240	-	-	-	-
44.	Majkić Japra Gornja	162	161	1	-	-	-
45.	Marini	82	82	-	-	-	-
46.	Miljevci	104	104	-	-	-	-
47.	Modra	7	-	-	7	-	-
48.	Mrkalji	35	29	-	4	-	2
49.	Naprelje	30	28	-	2	-	-
50.	Okreč	3	1	-	2	-	-
51.	Oštra Luka	103	102	-	1	-	-
52.	Otiš	82	82	-	-	-	-
53.	Ovanjska	2	2	-	-	-	-
54.	Podbriježje	9	3	-	6	-	-
55.	Podlug	139	139	-	-	-	-
56.	Podovi	28	28	-	-	-	-
57.	Podvidača	99	97	2	-	-	-
58.	Poljak	6	1	5	-	-	-
59.	Praštali	104	103	1	-	-	-
60.	Sanski Most	536	404	28	44	52	8
61.	Sasina	25	-	25	-	-	-
62.	Skucani Vakuf	43	39	-	4	-	-
63.	Slatina	61	61	-	-	-	-
64.	Stara Rijeka	8	1	7	-	-	-
65.	Stari Majdan	63	43	2	17	-	1
66.	Suhača	129	128	-	-	-	1
67.	Šehovci	17	11	-	6	-	-
68.	Škrljevita	14	2	12	-	-	-

71.	Tramošnja Gornja	68	67	-	1	-	-
72.	Trnova	108	93	1	14	-	-
73.	Usorci	94	94	-	-	-	-
74.	Vrhpolje	37	3	-	34	-	-
75.	Zdena	87	84	1	2	-	-
76.	Zenkovići	3	-	-	3	-	-

Table 4

War casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of birth and year of death

No.	Place of birth	Total	Year				
			1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
	Sanski Most – Municipality	6214	1722	824	3019	429	220
1.	Batkovci	13	3	2	6	2	-
2.	Bjeline	18	5	1	10	1	1
3.	Bojište (Tuk Bobija)	83	4	9	65	3	2
4.	Bosanski Milanovac	104	12	10	57	17	8
5.	Bošnjaci	74	6	8	53	4	3
6.	Brdari	166	61	16	77	7	5
7.	Budimlić Japra	77	39	11	16	9	2
8.	Čaplje	74	46	5	12	8	3
9.	Dabar Donji	349	41	27	263	16	2
10.	Dabar Gornji	153	31	24	80	14	4
11.	Demiševci	7	-	2	1	4	-
12.	Duge Njive	7	1	1	2	2	1
13.	Dževar	75	19	9	37	5	5
14.	Đedovača	65	17	30	15	2	1
15.	Đurići	20	2	4	10	1	3
16.	Fajtovci	158	37	10	106	3	2
17.	Garevica	5	-	3	2	-	-
18.	Glavice (Predojevića Glavica)	86	2	5	68	5	6
19.	Gorice	39	12	-	27	-	-
20.	Grdanovci	46	4	12	26	1	3
21.	Hadrovci	20	-	5	12	2	1
22.	Halilovci	37	14	4	12	5	2
23.	Hazići	15	4	2	1	8	-
24.	Hrustovo	59	45	1	8	2	3
	Kasapnice						

25.	Husimovci	49	21	6	20	1	1
26.	Ilidža	37	4	8	19	5	1
27.	Jelašinovci	380	7	20	340	12	1
28.	Kamengrad Donji	20	1	6	3	9	1
29.	Kamengrad Gornji	17	1	8	3	4	1
30.	Kijevo	110	53	4	31	12	10
31.	Kljevci	437	284	62	83	5	3
32.	Koprivna	93	15	18	50	4	6
33.	Kozica Donja	46	5	8	19	12	2
34.	Kozica Gornja	33	12	6	7	6	2
35.	Kozin	47	5	9	19	9	5
36.	Krkojevci	74	8	5	55	6	-
37.	Kruhari	168	77	30	46	9	6
38.	Lipnik Donji	38	3	11	20	2	2
39.	Lipnik Gornji	52	5	7	30	3	7
40.	Lukavice	81	43	5	32	1	-
41.	Lušci Palanka	94	18	14	55	5	2
42.	Lužani	45	40	2	1	-	2
43.	Majkić Japra Donja	240	14	15	192	13	6
44.	Majkić Japra Gornja	162	2	9	141	7	3
45.	Marini	82	58	4	13	6	1
46.	Miljevci	104	6	14	79	3	2
47.	Modra	7	3	-	1	2	1
48.	Mrkalji	35	5	9	15	2	4
49.	Naprelje	30	6	2	19	1	2
50.	Okreč	3	1	2	-	-	-
51.	Oštra Luka	103	27	26	42	6	2
52.	Otiš	82	1	9	67	5	-
53.	Ovanjska	2	1	-	1	-	-
54.	Podbriježje	9	1	1	5	1	1
55.	Podlug	139	66	13	50	7	3
56.	Podovi	28	4	6	11	6	1
57.	Podvidača	99	42	7	46	4	-
58.	Poljak	6	-	2	3	1	-
59.	Praštali	104	1	6	87	8	2
60.	Sanski Most	536	182	108	165	52	29
61.	Sasina	25	9	7	4	-	5
62.	Skucani Vakuf	43	6	5	27	1	4
63.	Slatina	61	8	14	25	5	9
64.	Stara Rijeka	8	-	2	5	1	-
65.	Stari Majdan	63	15	19	9	9	11
66.	Suhača	129	56	15	53	3	2
67.	Šehovci	17	7	4	1	4	1
68.	Škrļjevita	14	2	2	7	2	1
69.	Tomina	87	36	11	28	6	6

70.	Tramošnja Donja	28	9	6	9	3	1
71.	Tramošnja Gornja	68	9	13	33	10	3
72.	Trnova	108	82	10	7	6	3
73.	Usorci	94	18	25	32	18	1
74.	Vrhopolje	37	1	2	29	3	2
75.	Zdena	87	36	25	14	8	4
76.	Zenkovići	3	1	1	-	-	1

Table 5

War casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of birth and perpetrator

No.	Place of birth	Total	Perpetrator				
			Ustashi	Germans	Muslims	Others	Unknown
	Sanski Most – Municipality	6214	1614	504	212	21	3863
1.	Batkovci	13	1	-	-	-	12
2.	Bjeline	18	3	1	-	-	14
3.	Tuk Bobija (Bojište)	83	21	1	3	-	58
4.	Bosanski Milanovac	104	24	2	2	-	76
5.	Bošnjaci	74	5	3	-	-	66
6.	Brdari	166	25	34	3	-	104
7.	Budimlić Japra	77	6	2	-	1	68
8.	Čaplje	74	4	2	-	-	68
9.	Dabar Donji	349	118	122	30	-	79
10.	Dabar Gornji	153	57	-	14	-	82
11.	Demiševci	7	-	-	-	-	7
12.	Duge Njive	7	-	-	-	-	7
13.	Dževar	75	14	14	-	-	47
14.	Đedovača	65	30	6	3	1	25
15.	Đurići	20	1	1	-	-	18
16.	Fajtovci	158	8	52	-	-	98
17.	Garevica	5	-	-	-	-	5
18.	Glavice (Predojević Glavica)	86	12	2	1	-	71
19.	Gorice	39	9	9	-	-	21
20.	Grdanovci	46	2	-	-	-	44
21.	Hadrovci	20	-	1	-	1	18
22.	Halilovci	37	-	-	-	-	37
23.	Hazići	15	-	-	-	-	15

24.	Hrustovo	59	14	2	-	-	43
	Kasapnice						
25.	Husimovci	49	13	5	-	-	31
26.	Ilidža	37	5	2	-	-	30
27.	Jelašinovci	380	210	12	84	2	72
28.	Kamengrad Donji	20	2	-	-	-	18
29.	Kamengrad Gornji	17	-	1	-	-	16
30.	Kijevo	110	8	5	-	1	96
31.	Kljevci	437	193	18	6	-	230
32.	Koprivna	93	15	22	1	3	52
33.	Kozica Donja	46	-	-	-	-	46
34.	Kozica Gornja	33	8	2	-	-	23
35.	Kozin	47	2	-	-	-	45
36.	Krkojevci	74	38	5	12	-	19
37.	Kruhari	168	20	7	-	-	141
38.	Lipnik Donji	38	3	2	-	-	33
39.	Lipnik Gornji	52	5	1	-	-	46
40.	Lukavice	81	9	-	-	-	72
41.	Lušci Palanka	94	8	3	5	-	78
42.	Lužani	45	1	-	-	-	44
43.	Majkić Japra Donja	240	121	8	13	-	98
44.	Majkić Japra Gornja	162	65	7	13	-	77
45.	Marini	82	4	1	-	-	77
46.	Miljevci	104	9	13	2	-	80
47.	Modra	7	-	1	-	-	6
48.	Mrkalji	35	2	-	-	-	33
49.	Naprelje	30	1	8	-	2	19
50.	Okreč	3	-	-	-	-	3
51.	Oštra Luka	103	26	6	-	-	71
52.	Otiš	82	3	24	-	-	55
53.	Ovanjska	2	-	-	-	-	2
54.	Podbriježje	9	-	-	-	-	9
55.	Podlug	139	15	5	10	-	109
56.	Podovi	28	2	1	-	-	25
57.	Podvidača	99	4	8	-	-	87
58.	Poljak	6	-	-	-	-	6
59.	Prašтали	104	32	7	4	-	61
60.	Sanski Most	536	156	23	1	4	352
61.	Sasina	25	3	-	-	-	22
62.	Skucani Vakuf	43	5	4	1	-	33
63.	Slatina	61	11	1	-	1	48
64.	Stara Rijeka	8	-	-	-	-	8
65.	Stari Majdan	63	27	3	-	-	33
66.	Suhača	129	36	19	3	-	71
67.	Šehovci	17	1	1	-	-	15
68.	Škrljevita	14	1	-	-	-	13
69.	Tomina	87	11	2	-	-	74

70.	Tramošnja Donja	28	3	-	-	1	24
71.	Tramošnja Gornja	68	8	2	-	-	58
72.	Trnova	108	86	4	-	3	15
73.	Usorci	94	9	6	-	-	79
74.	Vrhopolje	37	22	9	-	1	5
75.	Zdena	87	66	1	1	-	19
76.	Zenkovići	3	1	-	-	-	2

Table 6

1941-1945 war casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of birth and type of persecution

No.	Place of birth	Total	FYA	PLC	Camp, prison, deport-ation, forced labour	Direct violence (at home)	German offensive	Un-known	Other	Other types
	Sanski Most – Municipality	6214	29	1565	358	3423	632	31	168	8
1.	Batkovci	13	-	4	-	8	-	-	1	-
2.	Bjeline	18	-	9	8	1	-	-	-	-
3.	Bojište (Tuk Bobija)	83	-	19	4	46	10	2	2	-
4.	Bosanski Milanovac	104	2	47	4	43	6	-	1	1
5.	Bošnjaci	74	1	24	1	28	1	-	19	-
6.	Brdari	166	1	24	2	102	34	1	1	1
7.	Budimlić Japra	77	-	30	3	42	1	1	-	-
8.	Čaplje	74	-	11	2	57	2	1	1	-
9.	Dabar Donji	349	-	66	8	146	119	-	10	-
10.	Dabar Gornji	153	-	56	-	82	1	-	14	-
11.	Demiševci	7	-	1	3	3	-	-	-	-
12.	Duge Njive	7	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	Dževar	75	-	11	7	45	12	-	-	-
14.	Đedovača	65	-	4	2	50	6	-	2	1
15.	Đurići	20	-	15	-	3	2	-	-	-
16.	Fajtovci	158	-	13	1	77	52	-	14	1
17.	Garevica	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
18.	Glavice (Predojević Glava)	86	-	31	12	30	9	-	-	4
19.	Gorice	39	-	-	-	22	16	1	-	-
20.	Grdanovci	46	1	27	1	16	-	-	1	-
21.	Hadrovci	20	-	11	2	6	-	-	1	-
22.	Halilovci	37	1	30	-	6	-	-	-	-
23.	Hazići	15	-	9	-	6	-	-	-	-
24.	Hrustovo Kasapnice	59	-	5	2	52	-	-	-	-
25.	Husimovci	49	-	5	3	34	2	-	2	3
26.	Ilidža	37	1	15	4	16	-	1	-	-
27.	Jelašinovci	380	-	65	1	285	17	2	9	1
28.	Kamengrad Donji	20	-	10	1	6	-	2	1	-

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29.	Kamengrad Gornji	17	1	5	-	11	-	-	-	-
30.	Kijevo	110	-	20	4	77	4	2	3	-
31.	Kljeveci	437	1	44	7	353	25	1	5	1
32.	Koprivna	93	-	30	17	28	13	2	1	2
33.	Kozica Donja	46	1	35	2	7	-	-	1	-
34.	Kozica Gornja	33	2	16	2	11	-	1	1	-
35.	Kozin	47	-	39	1	7	-	-	-	-
36.	Krkojevci	74	-	9	3	53	7	-	2	-
37.	Kruhari	168	1	34	2	125	3	1	2	-
38.	Lipnik Donji	38	-	26	3	6	1	-	2	-
39.	Lipnik Gornji	52	-	33	3	14	2	-	-	-
40.	Lukavice	81	-	30	-	47	2	1	1	-
41.	Lušci Palanka	94	1	34	6	48	3	-	2	-
42.	Lužani	45	-	2	-	41	-	-	2	-
43.	Majkić Japra Donja	240	-	50	7	80	96	-	7	-
44.	Majkić Japra Gornja	162	-	42	11	53	56	-	-	-
45.	Marini	82	1	19	-	60	1	-	1	-
46.	Miljevci	104	-	31	2	55	14	-	2	-
47.	Modra	7	-	2	-	4	1	-	-	-
48.	Mrkalji	35	1	18	1	15	-	-	-	-
49.	Naprelje	30	-	5	-	11	8	-	5	1
50.	Okreč	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
51.	Oštra Luka	103	-	26	6	63	5	-	3	-
52.	Otiš	82	-	24	-	32	24	-	2	-
52.	Ovanjska	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
54.	Podbriježje	9	-	2	-	7	-	-	-	-
55.	Podlug	139	-	22	1	111	4	-	1	-
56.	Podovi	28	2	14	-	12	-	-	-	-
57.	Podvidača	99	-	38	7	51	-	-	3	-
58.	Poljak	6	-	1	-	2	-	-	3	-
59.	Prašali	104	-	24	-	42	37	-	1	-
60.	Sanski Most	536	4	134	113	262	10	3	8	2
61.	Sasina	25	2	3	2	16	-	2	-	-
62.	Skucani Vakuf	43	-	16	1	19	1	1	5	-
63.	Slatina	61	-	36	12	9	-	3	1	-
64.	Stara Rijeka	8	-	5	1	2	-	-	-	-
65.	Stari Majdan	63	-	16	14	29	1	1	1	1
66.	Suhača	129	-	12	1	95	20	-	-	1
67.	Šehovci	17	-	4	-	12	-	-	1	-
68.	Škrlejevita	14	-	4	-	10	-	-	-	-
69.	Tomina	87	1	25	3	55	1	-	2	-
70.	Tramošnja Donja	28	-	6	2	20	-	-	-	-
71.	Tramošnja Gornja	68	1	28	2	35	-	2	-	-
72.	Trnova	108	1	2	1	92	-	-	12	-
73.	Usorci	94	-	41	6	45	-	-	2	-
74.	Vrhoplje	37	3	1	7	22	2	-	2	-
75.	Zdena	87	-	5	37	39	1	-	5	-
76.	Zenkovići	3	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-

Table 7

1941-1945 war casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of birth and cause of death

No.	Place of birth	Total	Killed	Cause of death		
				Killed in action /accident	Natural cause	Missing
	Sanski Most – Municipality	6214	4270	1549	335	60
1.	Batkovci	13	9	3	1	-
2.	Bjeline	18	8	10	-	-
3.	Bojište (Tuk Bobija)	83	59	15	6	3
4.	Bosanski Milanovac	104	46	44	14	-
5.	Bošnjaci	74	27	21	25	1
6.	Brdari	166	136	24	2	4
7.	Budimlić Japra	77	44	31	1	1
8.	Čaplje	74	58	11	4	1
9.	Dabar Donji	349	278	62	8	1
10.	Dabar Gornji	153	95	54	3	1
11.	Demiševci	7	5	2	-	-
12.	Duge Njive	7	-	7	-	-
13.	Dževar	75	61	14	-	-
14.	Đedovača	65	61	4	-	-
15.	Đurići	20	6	12	2	-
16.	Fajtovci	158	126	16	15	1
17.	Garevica	5	4	1	-	-
18.	Glavice (Predojevića Glava)	86	41	32	13	-
19.	Gorice	39	36	1	1	1
20.	Grdanovci	46	16	26	4	-
21.	Hadrovci	20	4	10	4	2
22.	Halilovci	37	6	30	1	-
23.	Hazići	15	6	9	-	-
24.	Hrustovo Kasapnice	59	54	4	1	-
25.	Husimovci	49	40	7	1	1

26.	Ilidža	37	19	13	4	1
27.	Jelašinovci	380	301	63	10	6
28.	Kamengrad Donji	20	7	11	-	2
29.	Kamengrad Gornji	17	9	7	-	1
30.	Kijevo	110	82	23	3	2
31.	Kljevci	437	383	40	12	2
32.	Koprivna	93	5 ⁹	31	1	2
33.	Kozica Donja	46	7	36	3	-
34.	Kozica Gornja	33	14	14	3	2
35.	Kozin	47	8	31	8	-
36.	Krkojevci	74	63	10	1	-
37.	Kruhari	168	101	33	33	1
38.	Lipnik Donji	38	9	24	5	-
39.	Lipnik Gornji	52	15	27	10	-
40.	Lukavice	81	49	29	2	1
41.	Lušci Palanka	94	54	35	5	-
42.	Lužani	45	42	2	1	-
43.	Majkić Japra Donja	240	174	46	16	4
44.	Majkić Japra Gornja	162	113	33	15	1
45.	Marini	82	62	19	-	1
46.	Miljevci	104	69	27	8	-
47.	Modra	7	5	2	-	-
48.	Mrkalji	35	14	20	1	-
49.	Naprelje	30	20	5	5	-
50.	Okreč	3	-	3	-	-
51.	Oštra Luka	103	74	29	-	-
52.	Otiš	82	51	25	6	-
53.	Ovanjska	2	1	1	-	-
54.	Podbriježje	9	7	2	-	-
55.	Podlug	139	115	21	2	1
56.	Podovi	28	12	13	2	1
57.	Podvidača	99	56	39	3	1
58.	Poljak	6	2	4	-	-
59.	Praštali	104	80	21	3	-
60.	Sanski Most	536	347	154	31	4
61.	Sasina	25	17	4	1	3
62.	Skucani Vakuf	43	21	16	6	-
63.	Slatina	61	23	32	3	3
64.	Stara Rijeka	8	3	5	-	-
65.	Stari Majdan	63	40	19	3	1

66.	Suhača	129	114	11	3	-
67.	Šehovci	17	13	4	-	-
68.	Škrljevita	14	9	5	-	-
69.	Tomina	87	59	25	3	-
70.	Tramošnja Donja	28	22	4	2	-
71.	Tramošnja Gornja	68	32	30	5	1
72.	Trnova	108	104	4	-	-
73.	Usorci	94	51	41	2	-
74.	Vrhopolje	37	31	5	-	1
75.	Zdena	87	80	5	1	1
76.	Zenkovići	3	2	1	-	-

Table 8

1941-1945 war casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to profession

No.	Profession	No. of WC
1.	Born in the war	140
2.	Farmers	3127
3.	Industrialists, craftsmen, merchants	51
4.	Industrial, craft, construction and trade workers	345
5.	Members of the military and police	16
6.	Clerks, experts (professionals)	62
7.	Teachers	4
8.	Free professions (barristers, doctors, pharmacists)	4
9.	Political workers	1
10.	Persons with personal incomes	3
11.	Supported persons	2109
12.	Students and pupils	175
13.	Other professions	14
14.	Unemployed	15
15.	Profession unknown	23
	Total 1-15	6089
	Without records	125
	Total	6214

Table 9-1

1941-1945 war casualties in the places which belonged to the District of Sanski Most and were later added to Prijedor Municipality according to place of birth, sex and nationality

Place of birth	Total	M	W	Ch	Serbs	Croats	Muslims	Jews	Others
Ališići (Prijedor)	23	14	9	-	17	-	6	-	-
Rasavci (Prijedor)	129	99	30	-	129	-	-	-	-
Zecovi (Prijedor)	43	36	7	-	42	-	1	-	-
Briševo (Prijedor)	5	4	1	-	1	3	-	-	1
Σ	200	153	47	-	189	3	7	-	1

Table 9-2

1941-1945 war casualties in the places which belonged to the District of Sanski Most and were later added to Prijedor Municipality according to place of birth, year of death and perpetrator

Place of birth	Total	Year					Perpetrator				
		41	42	43	44	45	Ustashi	Germans	Muslims	Other	Unknown
Ališići (Prijedor)	23	1	9	12	-	1	-	7	-	3	13
Rasavci (Prijedor)	129	12	42	58	13	4	18	11	10	-	90
Zecovi (Prijedor)	43	6	19	14	2	2	3	4	-	-	36
Briševo (Prijedor)	5	1	2	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	2
Σ	200	20	72	86	15	7	23	23	10	3	141

Table 10

1941-1945 war casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of death (site) containing 5 and more victims

No.	Name of place (site) of death	No. of name variations or closer locations	Total no. of victims at site	No. of victims from SM Municipality
1.	Sanski Most ^[i]	36	1562	906
2.	Jelašinovci	17	568	524
3.	Grmeč	22	2504	371
4.	Dabar ^[ii]	19	397	303
5.	Fajtovci	8	235	209
6.	Jasenovac execution fields ^[iii]	3		178
7.	Banja Luka	17		129
8.	Kruhari	1	133	119
9.	Praštali	6	106	103
10.	Čaplje	3	113	97
11.	Lušci Palanka	16	126	95
12.	Majkić Japra ^[iv]	23	129	94
13.	Otiš	8	94	91
14.	Stari Majdan ^[v]	8	104	90
15.	Vrhopolje ^[vi]	14	171	87
16.	Prijedor	13		78
17.	Gorice	3	86	72
18.	Kljevci	3	69	66
19.	Suhača	6	105	61
20.	Krajina brigades, Partisan units ^[vii]	22		61
21.	Budimlić Japra	9	78	58
22.	Bojište ^[viii]	5	60	57
23.	Marini	5	93	56
24.	Bosanska Krupa	11		54
25.	Zemun – Sajmište	2		54
26.	Bošnjaci	2	69	51
27.	Bosanski Milanovac	8	51	49
28.	Kamengrad ^[ix]	8	57	49
29.	Travnik	1		47
30.	Miljevci	6	59	45
31.	Tramošnja ^[x]	10	45	45
32.	Crna Gora ^[xi]	9		44
33.	Kijevo ^[xii]	3	44	44
34.	Tomina	7	51	43

35.	Podvidača	6	41	41
36.	Lukavice	4	42	41
37.	Šipovo	1	384	41
38.	Brdari	8	39	39
39.	Trnova	6	94	35
40.	Lipnik ^[xiii]	10	60	32
41.	Naprelje	5	35	32
42.	Bosanski Novi	7		31
43.	Bosna ^[xiv]	7		29
44.	Usorci	6	27	27
45.	Podovi ^[xv]	3	27	27
46.	Šid – Srem front	5		24
47.	Bihać	4	2801	23
48.	Grdanovci	4	25	23
49.	Germany ^[xvi]	7		22
50.	Ključ	7		22
51.	Mount Šator	7		21
52.	Kozin	6	34	21
53.	Džever	5	20	20
54.	Skucani Vakuf ^[xvii]	5	23	19
55.	Belgrade	1		18
56.	Ljubija	3		17
57.	Sanica	5	188	17
58.	Busovača	3		17
59.	Kozara	6		16
60.	Mijatovica	3	16	16
61.	Podlug	7	11	9
62.	Šehovci	2	8	8
63.	Doboj	1		7
64.	Zenica	2		7
65.	Sremska Mitrovica	5		7
66.	Bugojno	1		7
67.	Cazin	1		7
68.	Manjača	4		7
69.	Koprivna ^[xviii]	2	7	7
70.	Sitnica	1		7
71.	Osredak ^[xix]	1		7
72.	Mrkalji ^[xx]	2	7	7
73.	Camps and prisons ^[xxi]	6		6
74.	Hadrovci	1	10	6
75.	Livno	2		6
76.	Duge Njive ^[xxii]	1	32	6
77.	Glavice ^[xxiii]	6		6
78.	Podbriježje	4	8	6
79.	Slovenija	4		6

80.	Gospić-Jadovno	3		6
81.	Modra	1	7	6
82.	Škrlejevita	2	6	6
83.	Stanić Brdo	1		6
84.	Ališići	1		6
85.	Belgrade – Banjica	2		5
86.	Rujiška	4		5
87.	Sandžak	2		5
88.	Kakanj	3		5
89.	Poljak	1	5	5
90.	Garevica ^[xxiv]	2	5	5
91.	Bosanska Gradiška	3	5	5
92.	Italy	3		5
93.	Krkojevci	4	5	5
94.	Piskavica	2		5
95.	Banija	1		5
	Various places and sites with 1-4 victims (253)	253		354
	War casualties in unnamed places			262
373	Total	1005		6214

Notes:

- ⁱ Including 8 variations on the site name 'Šušnjar', where 27 casualties were identified as originating from the area of Sanski Most Municipality. The database contains sites in Banija and Slavonia entered under site 'Šušnjar'.
- ⁱⁱ In some case, it was not possible to determine if it was Gornji or Donji (Upper or Lower), so they were entered under the same site 'Dabar', as well as 3 variations on the site name 'Crnovode'.
- ⁱⁱⁱ This includes all the sites within the Jasenovac system of camps (Jasenovac, Stara Gradiška, Gradina, etc.)
- ^{iv} It was impossible to determine in all the cases if it was Majkić Japra Donja or Gornja.
- ^v Out of 8 variations, one is by the name of 'Majdan', with 38 identified casualties, of which 3 can be related to site 'Stari Majdan'.
- ^{vi} Several similar names (total casualties at sites 289). Due to the misnaming of the places of death and errors in the entries, it is not possible to specify the number of casualties at site 'Vrhpolje' in Sanski Most Municipality.
- ^{vii} Specified or unspecified brigades from Krajina and Partisan troops, whose place of death was either given or not given (River Sutjeska, Mount Zelengora).
- ^{viii} Variations on the name 'Bojište' or 'Tuk Bobija'.

- ix It was not possible to determine in all the cases if the place was Donji or Gornji Kamengrad.
- x It was not always possible to determine if it was Gornja or Donja.
- xi Several sites.
- xii Several sites by the same name (148 casualties).
- xiii It was not possible to determine in all the cases if it was Gornji or Donji.
- xiv More variations without specifying the site (Bosnia, East, West, Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.).
- xv Several sites (76 casualties).
- xvi Includes unspecified locations, such as 'Germany', 'camp in Germany', and some concrete camps in Germany.
- xvii Site 'Vakuf' with 52 casualties, one of which is from the area of Sanski Most Municipality.
- xviii The name of fifteen settlements in different parts of the country (63 casualties).
- xix Seven places by the same name, 140 casualties.
- xx Five places by the same name, 62 casualties.
- xxi Unspecified camps and prisons.
- xxii Several sites by the same name.
- xxiii Several sites (76 casualties), Glavice, Sanski Most includes the name of Predojević Glavica.
- xxiv Several sites (147 casualties).

Table 11

**Recapitulation
1941-1945 war casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to
place of death (site)**

Number of victims from - to	Number of places	Number of sites	Number of casualties from SM Municipality
Over 100	9	129	2842
51 – 100	17	142	1240
21 – 50	26	166	879
11 – 20	24	88	341
5 – 10	44	227	296
1 – 4	253	253	354
Unnamed places			262
Σ	373	1005	6214

Table 12

1941-1945 war casualties in Sanski Most Municipality according to place of birth, a comparative overview

No.	Place of birth	District SM (Bokan)	Total WC Database	Addit. list Group of SM Inhabitants	Revised list from column 5	Total 4+6
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Sanski Most – Municipality	5019	6214	4517	972	7186
1	Batkovci	12	13	13	3	16
2	Bjeline		18	-	-	18
3	Bojište (Tuk Bobija)	66	83	-	-	83
4	Bosanski Milanovac	78	104	96	21	125
5	Bošnjaci	37	74	62	16	90
6	Brdari	116	166	138	27	
7	Budimlić Japra	61	77	73	14	91
8	Čaplje	84	74	78	32	106
9	Dabar Donji	457	349	271	44	393
10	Dabar Gornji		153	180	32	185
11	Demiševci	5	7	-	-	7
12	Duge Njive	8	7	-	-	7
13	Džever	65	75	80	26	101
14	Đedovača	65	65	67	13	78
15	Đurići		20	-	-	20
16	Fajtovci	147	158	190	48	206
17	Garevica	5	5	-	-	5
18	Glavice (Predojevića Glavica)	126	86	136	47	133
19	Gorice	33	39	34	6	45
20	Grdanovci	37	46	-	-	46
21	Hadrovci	11	20	15	1	21
22	Halilovci	30	37	17	4	41
23	Hazići		15	3	0	15
24	Hrustovo	30	59	48	2	61
	Kasapnice					
25	Husimovci	44	49	-	-	49
26	Ilidža	20	37	35	2	39
27	Jelašinovci	331	380	328	35	415
28	Kamengrad Donji	15	20	-	-	20
29	Kamengrad Gornji	5	17	-	-	17
30	Kijevo	67	110	74	4	114
31	Kljevc	371	437	382	30	467
32	Koprivna	96	93	103	25	118

33	Kozica Donja	71	46	48	11	57
34	Kozica Gornja		33	34	3	36
35	Kozin	29	47	49	5	52
36	Krkojevci	71	74	93	36	110
37	Kruhari	116	168	198	44	212
38	Lipnik Donji	18	38	-	-	38
39	Lipnik Gornji	81	52	-	-	52
40	Lukavice	59	81	69	7	88
41	Lušci Palanka	84	94	-	-	94
42	Lužani	55	45	54	16	61
43	Majkić Japra Donja	216	240	193	36	276
44	Majkić Japra Gornja	168	162	163	33	195
45	Marini	85	82	78	8	90
46	Miljevci	119	104	-	-	104
47	Modra	3	7	-	-	7
48	Mrkalji	20	35	-	-	35
49	Naprelje	32	30	-	-	30
50	Okreč	1	3	-	-	3
51	Oštra Luka	84	103	-	-	103
52	Otiš	98	82	100	21	103
53	Ovanjska	-	2	-	-	2
54	Pobriježje	3	9	-	-	9
55	Podlug	185	139	193	98	237
56	Podovi	20	28	-	-	28
57	Podvidača	85	99	112	28	127
58	Poljak	3	6	-	-	6
59	Praštali	145	104	108	11	115
60	Sanski Most	188	536	186	84	620
61	Sasina	11	25	-	-	25
62	Skucani Vakuf	46	43	-	-	43
63	Slatina	38	61	-	-	61
64	Stara Rijeka	4	8	-	-	8
65	Stari Majdan	47	63	43	15	78
66	Suhača	117	129	-	-	129
67	Šehovci	9	17	-	-	17
68	Škrļjevita	1	14	-	-	14
69	Tomina	65	87	82	13	100
70	Tramošnja Donja	8	28	24	2	30
71	Tramošnja Gornja	61	68	93	28	96
72	Trnova	5	108	3	0	108
73	Usorci	77	94	90	14	108
74	Vrhopolje		37	3	0	37
75	Zdena	69	87	78	27	114
76	Zenkovići	-	3	-	-	3

*Petar Dodik**

THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA – A STATE OF CRIMINALS



After the proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia on 10th April 1941, military units were formed in almost all towns and districts to protect the newly appointed administration, which arrived in the tanks of the invader's troops. The affection which some of our citizens expressed as they welcomed the German troops upon their entry into our land was for us the first in a series of surprises. As soon as the news arrived that the Independent State of Croatia would be proclaimed, with Ante Pavelić as chief of state, armed people appeared in Sanski

Most as well, whose task was to secure the formation of the new state. Particularly prominent were Luka Minigo, an inn-keeper, Grga Maričić and his sons, Himzo Rešić, a merchant, Talić, a cobbler, and other people. So, it was the invader, the Germans and Italians, who made it possible to establish the new regime, and they immediately instigated the policy of war mongering and antagonising the communities against one another, which eventually resulted in bitter hatred and internecine killing.

Soon after the Independent State of Croatia was declared, it was announced the Serbs, Jews and Roma were foreign elements and enemies of the state, and a vigorous campaign was mounted to destroy them by all means. At a gathering held in Sanski Most, the district-prefect of Banja Luka, Viktor Gutić, uttered a most explicit threat with these words: "The roads will wish for the Serbs, but Serbs will be no more." The complete speech of this high official of the new administration emanated hostility, especially towards the Serbs, who comprised 60% of the local population

* Petar Dodik, a lawyer and recipient of the 1941 Partisan Memorial Medal, a politician, businessman and diplomat, Sarajevo

and constituted the majority. The district-prefect openly invited the Croats and Muslims to get even with the Serbs.

To win the Muslims over for their criminal policy, the officials of the Independent State of Croatia dubbed them Croatian flowers, the flowers of the Croatian people. Unfortunately, that kind of propaganda on the radio and in the press fell on fertile ground and was accepted not only by the Croats, but also by a great number of Muslim people. The first indication of the forthcoming evil was seen as early as 6th May 1941 in Kijevo and Donja Tramošnja. The Ustashi from Kijevo, mainly Muslim, burst in the houses of the Serbian families, who were celebrating St. George's, their patron saint's day, to maltreat the host families and their guests and blow out their festive candles, the central ritual object used by Serbian people on patron saint's day. This provoked a great revolt among the local Serbs, who rose massively against the Ustashi and drove them out. They were armed, mainly with cold weapons, and with a few pieces of firearms. During this action two Ustashi were wounded.

However, soon a German unit arrived from Prijedor, armed with cannons, and it easily crushed the rebellion. They fired the cannons at the rebelling villages, while the German troops stood in a shooting formation and started towards the people, so the peasants took flight, mainly to their homes. The events on and around St. George's Day showed that the Independent State of Croatia was an artificial construct and would not survive without assistance and permanent military support.

After crushing the rebellion, on 7th May the Germans captured and led away 25 Serbs from Tomina, as well as two former gendarmes from Sanski Most, Đuro Vezmar and Nikola Martinović, a total of 27, and shot them on the left bank of the River Sava, upstream from the town, under the railway bridge. This was an act of retaliation for the two wounded German soldiers, but also a radical, cruel act, whose purpose was to intimidate the population and force it to obedience. They put the shot people onto a wagon and drove them from the railway bridge to the centre of town down Ključka Street. A German unit followed them and sang marches as they walked. According to the book by Professor Ahmed Biščević, the Serbs captured and shot were:

From Komina:

Miloš (f. Đurađ) Vidović, Mitar (f. Đurađ) Vidović, Đurađ (f. Todor) Vidović, Mile (f. Stole) Vidović, Marko (f. Mitar) Vidović, Jovo (f. Savo)

Vidović, Bozo (f. Vid) Vidović, Đurađ (f. Ostoja) Vidović, Miloš (f. Nikola) Vidović, Petar (f. Nikola) Stojanović, Lazo (f. Kojo) Kovačević, Uroš (f. Kojo) Kovačević, Ostoja (f. Mile) Kovačević;

From Lužani:

Dušan (f. Mile) Jovanović, Petar (f. Marko) Šobot, Drago (f. Lazar) Kaiš, Pero (f. Milan) Stojanović, Ilija (f. Dane) Milanko, Prole (f. Dane) Milanko, Miloš (f. Dane) Delić, Veljko (f. Tomo) Praća, Ljupko (f. Sim-eun) Šobot;

From Čaplje:

Mile (f. Jovo) Stanislavljević, Jovo (f. Mile) Knežević;

From Sanski Most:

Đuro (f. Jovan) Vezmar, Lazar (f. Josip) Martinović.

As I said before, the listed Serbs were shot at the railway bridge, and from there they were transported to the park downtown and hanged on the trees. In the mentioned book it says they had to be hanged by the Jews and Serbs. The same book contains a photograph of the people hanged on the trees. Three days later, they were removed from the trees, transported to Šušnjar and buried there, not on the Orthodox Christian cemetery, but south of it, because according to the tradition, those who die of unnatural causes are not to be buried in proper cemeteries. This is how a new graveyard and killing field for the Serbs and Jews was created at Šušnjar. Apart from the Orthodox Christian graveyard, Šušnjar was previously also the location of the Catholic and Jewish cemetery.

At the end of July and in the first days of August 1941, several thousand Serbs and Jews were shot at that place, and the exact figure was never determined. I made a list of 2,870, while at the same time, around St. Elias' Day, another 390 were killed at the railway stop in Vrhpolje, around 300 at Stari Majdan – the place called Troska, 25–50 at the ponds near Čaplje, and around 50 individually in villages Zdena, Husimovci, Suhača and Brdari. For instance, 7 men were taken away from a Vučković family and murdered, and this big household had to rely exclusively on its female workforce for future subsistence.

During the time before this period, a large number of Jews were captured and dispatched to the camp Jasenovac; none of them ever returned, and their property was looted. Only a few people remained alive, thanks to the fact they left for Italy or other countries before the persecution, while others joined the Partisans and by doing so survived.

It would be interesting to mention the book by Fikreta Jelić-Butić, entitled Устаše и НДХ (The Ustashi and the ISC), which provides a detailed, analytical examination of the policies of that state. On page 162 it says: “The biological destruction of the Serbs and Jews for the purpose of creating ‘pure living space’ for the Croats and Muslims, who make up the ‘Croatian nation’, according to the Ustasha ideology, was a unique strategic goal, somewhat different in its fulfillment.” In the same book on page 167, Fikreta Jelić-Butić lists many places, villages and towns where hundreds and thousands of Serbs were killed. It says literally: “It is assumed that in those days, in late July and early August 1941, 20,000 Serbs were killed in the Districts of Bihać, Bosanska Krupa and Cazin, 6,000 in the area of the District of Sanski Most, and also around 6,000 in the Districts of Prijedor and Bosanski Novi.”

The persecution of my family

We sat down at the table, but we hardly felt like eating, because shooting was getting closer and closer from the direction of Đedovača and Vučkovići. The heavy machine gun positioned next to the Krantić house started to shoot, which made our situation very serious. We stopped eating our lunch when we were on kefir, which in the summer days was almost regularly the second course for both lunch and dinner, and which we ate from a common wooden bowl. We went outside the house, and about two hundred metres away, at the highest spot of the road, which we called Klanac (the Gorge) because it was steep and rocky, we saw soldiers shooting and shouting.

I pleaded with the others to escape to the woods, which were not far away, but they said they did not want to leave the house. When the soldiers were around fifty metres away and turned from the public road towards our house, I suggested again we jump over the fence and run away through the fern thicket to the grove and save ourselves. Father refused, so I started for the fence on my own, to which he shouted: “They’ll kill us because of you!” I immediately abandoned my plan and stayed there with the rest of them to wait for the soldiers. I was surprised to see there were also civilians among them, even my friends from school, who mainly joined the soldiers to steal.

I watched as Adul Selman, a neighbour a bit older than I, unfastened the lariats with which our four oxen and two cows were tied in the shade of the big walnut-tree and drove them towards his home. He took them without

the slightest hesitation, fully aware we were watching, because he knew what was going to happen to us. The others set the sheep loose and drove them down the road towards their houses. Then they set fire to the rest of our property, the summer kitchen and the hearth, the maize storeroom, the unthreshed wheat collected into stacks. What took a lifetime to build and create was vanishing right in front of our eyes.

In the yard in front of our house, Alija Kamber, the unit commander, asked my father: "Ilija, where are your sons?" Father said: "They're right here," pointing to Jovo, myself and Duško, adding Mile had been taken away during forced labour and we had had no news about him since then. Alija responded Mile must have joined the Chetniks, although even at that time he knew better than us what had happened to Mile. Later, we found out that while the young men were being escorted back from work, they separated a group in Podbriježje, one of whom was my brother Mile. They were killed in the vicinity, with blunt tools, and leading the massacre were the Kamber brothers.

"The three of you, follow me," said Alija, pointing to father, brother Jovo and myself. We had no choice, but to start towards Dragica Škundra's houses, to the west of our house. As we were leaving the yard, they started beating us with rifle butts. It was absolutely clear to me they were going to shoot us. It was a true miracle they did not kill us right there, in front of the house, in the yard. Despite everything, they probably wanted to take us further away from the rest of the family: mother, sister Mara and brother Duško, who was ten at the time.

Half of the group escorting us included our Muslim neighbours and acquaintances. They went on hitting us with the butts, and one of them, I think it was the other brother Kamber, hit me heavily with the barrel of his rifle, which hurt really badly. My cloth cap went down, the kind of cap almost all Serbs wore all the time. It was a custom in the village to always wear a cap, except when you ate or slept. I did not even try to turn back and lift it. After a blow like that it was absolutely clear to me what we could expect. Now I waited for a chance to try and escape. I waited for us to approach the woods, but then I was suddenly startled by what my father had told me just before the soldiers arrived: "They'll kill us all if you try to run away!" His words echoed in me, disheartening me and driving me to dismiss the idea of escape. Father was naive and trusted what he had been told as the village headman a few days earlier at the Town Hall in Sanski Most: "Ilija, tell your villagers that nothing can happen to those who stay

in their homes.” He believed it, which is why he dismissed my attempts to persuade them to run away.

The road was such that it only allowed for us to move forward in a file. Jovo walked first, followed by a soldier, then father, a soldier behind him, then me, and a soldier behind me. More soldiers in a shooting formation walked on our left, across the fields, and also on our right, in the direction of uncle’s house, which was empty because everyone had taken refuge in Suhača on time, two days earlier. I thought that even if anyone of us ever considered running away, he would not stand a chance. As we walked, they kept asking us about the Chetniks, if there were any, if we had heard anything, etc. Even though I had returned from Dabar only two hours earlier and had some information about the rebels – I had even met some, I said I did not know anything and we had not seen or heard anything. I knew that no information I could tell them would be of any help. Besides, my young mind strongly believed that saying anything to them would be a betrayal, which is why I kept quiet about what I knew.

We got to a field. On our right, there was a little forest we used to refer to as ‘above the plain’, and somewhat to our left another forest, a bit bigger, called Rezovača. I saw the soldier walking behind Jovo shoot him in the back, his left side, in the heart. Jovo stooped lightly, pressed his hands against the spot and went on walking. The soldier walking behind father aimed the rifle at the back of father’s head, and the one behind me reloaded his weapon. It was now obvious that any fear that my escape might harm the others was absolutely groundless. I jumped to the side and ran into the forest. The soldier behind me fired a bullet and missed me; he was taken aback by my move. He was reloading the rifle, but I had already disappeared in the branches of the low vegetation, mainly hazel-wood. They fired a few more bullets. I stopped for a moment; I heard a command which I did not understand. I believe the order was to stop shooting and surround the forest, because indeed the shooting stopped and I heard voices from all around me. The forest was quite little and it was not difficult to surround it.

Running for life

I kept running in the same direction, towards the lower part of the village. A guard with a heavy machine gun was deployed there, so I figured they would not shoot in the direction of their guard. When I reached the edge of the little forest, I came across two soldiers, who were surprised

to see me. One of them raised his gun and fired. I felt the bullet whistle past my left cheek and ear, giving me a burning sensation, but it did not wound me. This startled me, so I ran back into the woods the same way I had come out. The order was to stop shooting again, for fear they might hit one another. I racked my brain about what to do. There was a hollow nearby which we used to collect rainwater so the cattle had something to drink in days of drought. The hollow was now empty because it had not rained for a long time. I got in the hollow, thinking it was the only shelter I could find there.

I lay down, kept quiet and looked around. I saw the legs of the pursuers and thought they would find me in no time at all, stab me with their knives and leave me in that hollow. The thought made me shiver and move, and I decided to run in the direction of the spot where I had bumped into those two soldiers a few moments earlier. I decided not to stop any more and keep running through the maize fields towards the guard. I counted on surprising them, as they would not expect me at the place where they had only recently shot at me. I ran into a group of soldiers, dashed right through them and kept running headlong, with all my strength. Even though the maize was low, it still meant some kind of shelter from the pursuers. After that came an open field, and that was the right moment for them to shoot me. However, those behind me could not fire freely because of their guard. Those on the right-hand side, near uncle's house, did fire, but it was more difficult to hit me at that angle.

As I ran across a clearing, I saw the guards running from Redža's house towards me to cut my way. There was another grove between me and them, about thirty metres wide. Just as I entered it, I tripped over a branch and plopped to the ground. I did not dare stand up, and instead I crawled for a few metres, then stood up and went on to run to the right, at an angle of ninety degrees, this time not towards the guards, who were quite close, but through the forest, in the direction of another grove called Zanoga. From there I ran to the next little forest, Tornjica, which was located right under our house, which brought me to the road the soldiers had taken to get to our house. I ran into the orchard and onto the road we took as we drove our cattle to graze in the woods and hills. I stooped so they would not see me and got to the woods above our house. I sat down and listened to hear if they were still chasing me, caught my breath and peed, sitting down. I did not dare stand up for fear they might see me.

I looked at the house, but I could neither see nor hear anything, so I had no idea what was happening with my mother, sister and little brother. Fearing the pursuit, I continued to move through the forest, which again was not big enough to hide in and be absolutely safe. As I knew every inch of it and every little bush, I decided to go to the most secluded place in it, to a dale called Kadina dolina (Kada's Dale). It was grown in thicket and hardly accessible. When I arrived, I realised that if they found me there, I would be trapped without the possibility of getting out. That is why I continued running towards Štrbac, with a plan to reach Dabar the same night.

On my way there I was supposed to cross a small road connecting Umci with the road Štrbci–Husimovci. As I was approaching that road, I saw an unarmed group of civilians moving in the direction of Umci. Their plan was to plunder when the troops, which were moving across the hills, arrive in Umci. Their movement was slowed by a group of Partisans shooting at them, trying to stop them entering Dabar. When the looters moved away and were out of sight, I crossed the road and went into some bushes, from where I could see the troops headed for Umci. They were more than a kilometre away, facing Dabar, and they could not see me.

Again, I felt uneasy. I was afraid of the chase, and it was two more hours before nighttime. I started through the maize fields again and crawled to a big bush in the middle of the field. I figured they would not go looking for me in the middle of a field. From that place, from the bush, I could see clearly in all directions. I stayed there until dusk. When I concluded both the troops and the looters were long gone and there was no one nearby, I got out of the bush, and through the maize, dales and groves I reached Štrbac. It was dark, but night had not fallen yet. What I found there was blood-chilling. The women were crying and wailing, and in front of the houses lay the dead bodies of Bogoljub Crnomarković and Nikola Štrbac. The last remains of some of the houses were burning down. They told me in short what had happened and asked me what was going on back in my village. I told them briefly and continued my trip to Dabar. I reached the first houses through Dol to Klepići. I got in a house, told them who I was and what had happened to me that day. They were very kind. They served me a meal and put me up for the night.

Miraculously, I had not shed a tear the whole day. It all happened so suddenly and it was so horrible that I simply could not cry when I was finally safe and sound. It was either because I was too sad or too happy about having remained alive. Whenever I think about our tragedy and the

drama I survived, I come to the conclusion it was truly a miracle I stayed alive. I tell myself I was saved thanks to some good fortune, and remember the laces on my heavy shoes were undone, which impeded my running, but I did not feel it. Amazingly, I did not lose either of the shoes, despite this frenzied and panicked race. I also remember that in the most critical moments I managed to cross myself several times as well. I was brought up that way and believed it would help me. Now, only God knows what helped me. Whether it was a favourable combination of circumstances, my courage and resourcefulness, or all of this together, or perhaps that soldier did not really have the intention to shoot me, or as our people say, 'never mind'...

It should be kept in mind that several hundred Serbs were brought to Sanski Most from the adjacent municipalities, several convoys also arrived by train, and they all ended in the previously mentioned killing fields across the District of Sanski Most. After the liberation of Sanski Most in October 1943, 7,000 people were said to have been killed at Šušnjar, a claim supported by the fact even two years after they were shot, blood kept streaming from their graves at Šušnjar. As time went by, the supposed number of casualties dropped as low as 5,000, but the exact figure was never determined. It is interesting that women were not brought or killed there, except for Draga Zurunić, whose first name before she married was Šemsa. She was the only woman from the town of Sanski Most who was killed in the summer of 1941, out of pure hatred for the fact she converted from Islam to Orthodox Christianity and married a Serb, Drago Zurunić.

The Šušnjar graveyard is located on the road between Sanski Most and Kruhari, 1 kilometre away from the town. The initiative to raise a memorial at that spot in honour of the shot Serbs and Jews was first announced in 1968/69, after which a board was formed to raise funds through citizen donations and to organise the activities connected with its construction. The Board comprised all the municipal officials, as well as several generals and officials of the Republic born in the area of the District of Sanski Most. The chair of the Board was Petar Dodik.

In its first session, the Board discussed about how to obtain a preliminary design for the memorial. It was decided not to have a public competition, as our resources were rather limited; instead, we chose to solicit offers from eminent artists. The conclusion was to contact Bogdan Bogdanović from Belgrade, Vanja Radauš from Zagreb, and Petar Krstić, a formally trained sculptor from Sarajevo.

Bogdan Bogdanović's design was not accepted because it looked like the tower of Babylon, which according to some people from the culture sector and the whole Board would not reflect adequately the persecution suffered at this place.

The preliminary design by Vanja Radauš was not accepted either, because it used human bones as the main symbol, which would possibly horrify the visitors, especially the killed people's relatives, and incite hatred towards the perpetrators, possibly even the community the perpetrators came from.

The third design was offered by Petar Krstić and was found to be the most acceptable by the whole selection team. It was a large aluminium lump, irregular in shape, which according to Krstić, the author, symbolises the suffering of the people through ages, so it could certainly symbolise the persecution of the local people in the Independent State of Croatia.

Early on in its discussions the Board was faced with the dilemma if the names of the victims of the Ustasha-fascist terror should be inscribed or not. Vanja Radauš told us: "The people who were killed and buried here have nothing left except for their names." Everyone thought it was a convincing argument so it was concluded to inscribe the names. However, the technical part of the work now created a problem. Eventually, it was decided to inscribe the victims' names on aluminium plates, with a cement prop as the base, which would be stuck and secured in the ground. Had we had enough funds to see it through, this would have been an ideal solution. However, there were several issues which divided the opinions. One of them was whether to inscribe only the names of those who were actually killed and buried there, or of all the victims of the Ustasha terror. In the end, we decided it should be a memorial dedicated to the victims of fascism and fighters in the PLW from the town of Sanski Most and the most immediate vicinity. This decision was shaped by the fact there were other killing fields, individual graves and graveyards of the Partisans. Nevertheless, more than half the names were never inscribed.

The memorial complex is dominated by a 15-metre-tall aluminium lump, floodlit at nighttime, which made it visible from afar, while in daytime sunlight also made it visible from a great distance. According to Petar Krstić's design, light and sound effects would be used inside the figure to symbolise the struggle and suffering of the people from the area of Sanski Most. Unfortunately, we lacked funds to complete that part of the design. Every year on 2nd August poets from all over Yugoslavia read their poems there.

The memorial complex was significantly altered after the Republic of Srpska was constituted in 1992 and assumed authority over the area. First of all, a large concrete cross was constructed at the foot of the tombs, which still stand 1.5-2 metres taller than the actual ground. The rationale of the people who proposed the construction of the cross was that more than 90% of those buried were believers, so marking their graves with a cross was a normal thing to do.

Some municipal officials considered the construction of the cross unacceptable and thought it should be removed. As this can only be approved by the victim families – after all, the truth is no atheists lie there – the idea to remove this religious symbol is unacceptable.

Around 20-30 plates containing the names of the Muslim combatants were removed, with regards to which a different, just standpoint should be adopted. There have been initiatives to construct the Star of David next to the cross, as a symbol representing Jewish believers.

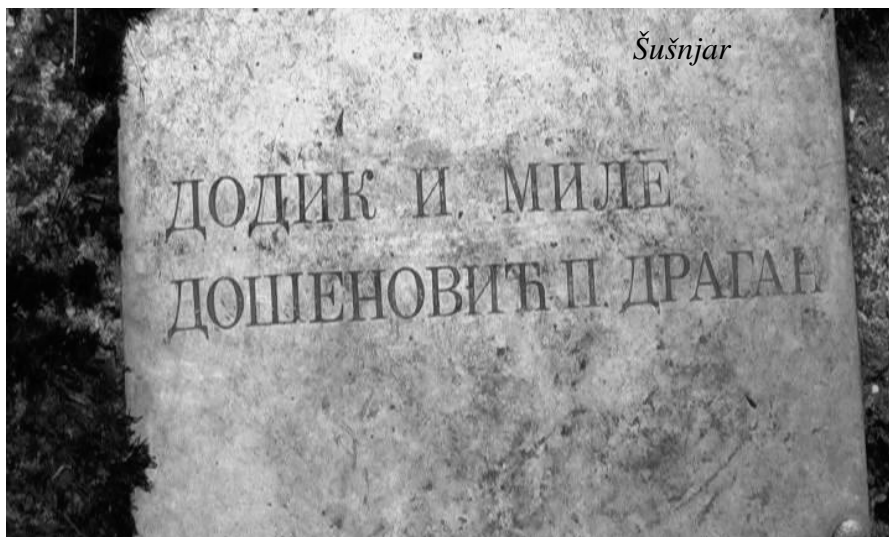
When the SDA [Party of Democratic Action, S. M.] established authority, there were new changes to the memorial complex. The fence was broken, people came there for any reason they wanted, they brought cattle to graze, even on the graves. Young people came inside the graveyard and made a mess around the memorial, and if they were made aware they were not supposed to act that way, they responded it was a park and they could play there. The SDA launched an initiative with the Federal Government to pass a decision proclaiming the complex a kind of Partisan graveyard. This led to a situation prohibiting to perform Orthodox Christian religious rituals there, which would allegedly give rise to great tensions.

On 2nd August 2002, on St. Elijah's Day, Mladen Ivanić established a political party, which started an initiative to commemorate the massacre of the Serbs at the site; this provoked a reaction by the ruling party, which threatened to ban the previously planned and announced public gathering at the site and so stop the commemoration of those events, which triggered a sharp reaction not only of PDP officials [Party of Democratic Progress, S. M.], but of all Serbs, especially the families of the people who were executed and buried there. Such actions only incite and foster the feeling of hatred among the communities, which is why it should be determined what happened there in 1941, and what institution or organisation should be in charge of maintaining and guarding the complex.

Besides, the Republic of Srpska should be requested to ask that the true, original character of the site is reinstated, as that is a site where several

thousand Serb civilians were killed, to which number we may add those killed at the Vrhpolje railway stop, Stari Majdan, the area around the grain storehouse on the left bank of the River Sana, and the Čaplje wetland. Since 1,600 Partisan combatants died in Sanski Most Municipality during the PLC, it would be advisable to reconsider whether those two categories of World War II casualties can and should be treated as one, if not through this memorial, than perhaps in papers, books, and certainly by completing the interior of the Šušnjar memorial. Lastly, decisions should be made on how and at what time those events should be commemorated every year.

The construction and renovation of the devastated parts is impossible without the assistance of the state, and since asking for sympathy or expecting any kind of help from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina would be rather unrealistic, it is only normal for us to address the Republic of Srpska. Perhaps a delegation should be appointed today and a meeting arranged with the authorities of that Entity to discuss and arrange all these issues.



*Sofija Praća – Veljović**

GENOCIDE IN SANSKI MOST

Sanski Most (162 metres altitude, 44-45 degrees latitude and 15-17 degrees longitude) lies in the valley of the river Sana, in the southwest part of Bosanska Krajina, between the mountains Kozara and Grmeč, on the crossroads between Banja Luka, Prijedor, Srnetica, Ključ, Petrovac, Bosanska Krupa and Bihać. Due to all this, the settlement, as it is today, served as a fortress for guarding the road, along the valley of the river Sana, north towards Posavina and south: Livno, Prolog, Sinj, Split, towards the sea.

Sanski Most is a prehistoric settlement of Illyrians, Celts, subsequently Romans. Our Slavic peoples settled at the end of the VI and beginning of the VII century, when they settled these areas where they live today. According to Dr Jovan Cvijić, there were various migrations of our peoples from Lika, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Posavina, the most common reasons were: searching for fertile land, diseases, religious persecution and others.

By Austro-Hungarian authorities' occupation, and constant presence of the Austrian army, the town acquired military character. Sana, Vakuf Sana until that time, was named Sanski Most, because the bridge joined one Sana river bank with the other, but even today people call this settlement SANA.

Austrian authorities immediately started to build military barracks, schools, and a railway station which has SANSKI MOST written on it even today. Many people at that time came down from the hills into rivers valleys, because agriculture was the only occupation for Dabar, Kljevci, Kijevo residents. Besides the agriculture, cattle breeding, craftwork and even primitive mining started developing. Exploitation of the coal mine and iron mine in Sasina, is proved by "šlakinja" today, and the very name Sasina after Saxons.

Germanization is felt, the German language is implemented in schools and the national language is secondary. The then Austrian authorities influenced the population of Serbian origin strongly, during which persecution of Serbs started, so that they were taken to Arad and as the political opportunities

* Sofija Praća-Veljović, retired teacher, Belgrade

started developing in Balkans, especially in Serbia, volunteers started calling in, who left Austrian army and went over to their brothers in Serbia. People from the Check Republic, Poland, Germany and Austria started settling in. Same as in all the other places in Bosnia, the population was illiterate by large, the clothes were made manually, leather coats made of sheepskin, underwear and shirts made of hemp and flax manually, a house consisted of a room and a house, i.e. a house was where the cooking was done on a hearth and a sleeping room. Various political parties started appearing, which did not bring any good amidst illiterate people. Old Yugoslavia was formed, which inherited a lot from its predecessors. The situation changed poorly, in Sanski Most as well as in the whole country, there was no electricity, the first railway was built in 1912, Sanski Most – Srnetica, for the purpose of exploiting wood for the Austrian authorities' requirements.

There was no permanent Yugoslavian army in Sanski Most, apart from one relay station located in Građanska škola (Civil school), ahead of which was Colonel Stefanović with 150 soldiers.

Various disinformation spread across the town. There was only one radio device at the house of Rasim Hromalić, called "SINGER". The press they used to get was "Politika" (Politics), "Vreme" (Time) and "Ilustracija" (Illustration). Total chaos was all over, especially when the news arrived that Belgrade was bombarded. Mobilisation of the military capable people started, as well as carts, towed by oxen and horses, which gathered around the new built hospital, near railway station, as well as bear chin young men, who received military summons, who gathered around freight wagons on the railway station, not knowing themselves where to go or who to report to.

An airplane appeared over the town, the people got scared and fled to Greda, the town outskirts, towards the graveyard, no one knew anything, the war was discussed, its consequences, and similar.

All this happened in the gloomy month of April in 1941, the people was confused, some citizens from other bans' provinces packed and fled.

Ivica Simeon, the district assessor, issued travelling passes for money, because it was difficult to get to Prijedor, while getting to Zemun was impossible.

The situation changed every moment, every place was different from the other. At night it could be noticed that an army was rushing, and this was the Banjaluka regiment in disarray. Colonel Stefanović noticed our army's disarray on time and summoned a few citizens of all nations on time and informed them on the following:

“The enemy is approaching, we have to withdraw, it would not be bad if you formed a board made of yourselves and kept order in town until you handed it over to the enemy. It is necessary to chose one commander among yourselves.” Luka Minigo replied to this, proposing himself, declaring that he was a sworn Ustasha since 1925 (he was killed in 1943 in Grmeč). Also, this officer said that it would be good to mine the bridge over Sana, but upon intervention of the citizens this idea was given up. The following day this officer and the army retreated in the direction of Ključ, joined by the gendarmerie from Sana.

During day time and especially at night, it could be noticed that our army from direction of Banja Luka was passing through Sanski Most and moving towards south, the majority of them were infantry, the soldiers carried weapons on them.

On the concrete bridge over Sana there was a wooden barrier, which was placed there by Grga Maričić, in order to stop the returning soldiers running away in disarray from their units and to disarm them. In order to strengthen their efficacy, Ustashas that were already present formed a board on their own initiative for capturing soldiers in disarray and this board was entered by the following: Dr Josip Cerjan, Dr Ibrahim Pašić, Luka Miniga, Himzo Pašić Rešić and Grga Maričić and they named it “Hrvatska zaštita” (“Croatian protection”). This board was capturing individual soldiers, taking away their weapons and taking off their military clothes and was known for unseen robbery of spare food from the big storehouse. It was formed for war purposes.

The aforementioned people, from the so called “Croatian protection” took control in their hands and proved themselves to be legal Ustashas. Mile Krunić, the town-crier, came out to certain places every hour and announced the following: “Oyez! Oyez! People, Ustasha authorities issue the order that all the citizens from other bans’ provinces leave Vrbas province...” So that Dragoljub Popović from Čačak moved out immediately followed by the others.

In order to be identified, the aforesaid power-holders at first wore white ribbons above their upper arm and later Croatian tricolour flag.

Arrival of Germans into the town

The town learnt that the Germans were advancing across Maribor further in our country. Their task was to occupy these areas without a fight, because Ustashas guaranteed this to them. The crier, Mile Krunić, announced:

“Oyez, oyez, citizens of Sanski Most, the German army is entering our town, we should receive them calmly, Hail Hitler – Croatian protection...”

One German division first sent a reconnaissance unit, which entered Sanski Most on 9th of April 1941, between 15:00 and 16:00 hrs, in the afternoon, a motorcyclist with a trailer, that had a machine gun mounted on it, followed by two or three armoured vehicles with armed German soldiers, whereas the ones at the front carried topographic maps, and the first question was: “Wo ist Kula Tomina?” Since the people that could hardly wait for them to arrive were on the square, somebody pointed in the direction of Ključ and they were on their way. Behind this reconnaissance unit, other columns arrived moving to Čekić fields and circling around the town, and the great number of those who wanted Germans to arrive, came out and cheered them. A great number of German reconnaissance soldiers settled around the building of the newly built hospital, where they immediately hanged big German flag with a swastika on it and each person that passed by at the time of rising the flag had to stop and lift their arm as a greeting; should they not do so, the guard would take them for beating.

The network for capturing soldiers in disarray was still being organized. They placed guards on the crossroads for that purpose in order to wait for them there and pass them on to the Germans, who transported them further for imprisonment.

Ustasha authorities with Dr Josip Cerjan ahead prepared a ceremonial reception for the German soldiers. Order after order was issued on a daily basis, announced by the crier, referring to German command, threatening with penalties. The town was covered with posters and swastikas. Curfew was introduced, people were threatened that if anyone was found in the street during the curfew would be shot.

The German soldiers occupied the best apartments in the town, they took food, clothes and shoes out from the Jewish and Serbian shops and sent them to their families in Germany. It is known that they took out boxes of sugar and were giving it to their horses. They took Jozo Klapić for their interpreter, so called Patašon, who lived in Petrinja after the war.

Ustasha authorities' activities

The aforesaid representatives of Ustasha authorities held a ceremonial assembly in the honour of establishing the so called ISC on 10th April 1941, in the present municipality building, in the presence of the following: Dr

Cerjan, Josip; Rešić-Pašić, Himzo; Talić, Juso; Miniga, Luka; Šeremet, Fra Ante, parish priest from Sasina, after which they went to the catholic church, for a blessing that this new Ustasha rule existed eternally.

Now, they started new actions, Ustasha groups were formed, ahead of Ustasha groups camps was a camp commander Ljevar, Mile from Sasina. He immediately went to the villages where catholic population lived in order to find loyal people, who he dressed up in Ustasha uniforms, armed them and took them to the friars for oath and loyalty to the ISC, civil servants that did not take the oath were discharged from the state service.

A familiar case is that of Drago Nedimović, an engineer, who did not make the oath, who was killed atrociously after being tortured. All this happened during the rule of Dr Ante Merkredić, who took over from Dr Cerjan, Josip. Various reprisals are known over Serbs and Jews, who were blackmailed financially for the amount between 1,000 to 5,000 dinars. In order to control income, the so called commissaries were appointed in order to control the income and make collection bigger for them. Each merchant was taken 50 to 100 thousand dinars out of their income and this money was submitted to Ustasha camp and it was shared between them just like all the other robbery.

Arrival of the Zagreb police

Month of May 1941

Since the newly formed authorities actively cooperated with Zagreb, in all fields, at the beginning of May police force from Zagreb arrived, ahead of which was Horvat, Konrad together with six other policeman, who remained in Sanski Most all the time during the slaughter and took part in it. They were joined by Barać, Jandre from Sasina, Nalić, Ibrahim; Krupić, Fehrat; Kuršumović, Salko; and Alagić, Mustafa, son of Omer, who carried out arrests, maltreatments and imprisonments of Serbs.

First hostages

In the early morning on the 7th May 1941 Ustasha authorities sent summons to the most distinguished Serbs to report to Ustasha camp, among whom were the following: Marjanović, Milan; Delić, Jovo, a merchant, Gvozden, Pero, a merchant, Brajić, Petar, a merchant, orthodox priests Grbić, Đuro and Marjanović, Jovo, who were received by Dr Ante

Merkradić, who told them that they would be held as hostages because an uprising was started in village Kijevo and should one German soldier or Ustasha get killed, Ustashes would execute the above named hostages.

Immediately after arresting these hostages, who were locked in the barracks on the railway station, Mile Krunić, the crier, announced the following: "If a single Serb attacks a Croat or a Moslem, the imprisoned hostages will be shot immediately...", saying their names.

Other Serbs that were free, felt fear from domestic and foreign enemy, understanding that life of each hostage, and others as well, was determined for reprisal in advance.

It was getting worse day after day, orders and threats by death penalty were announced.

Ustashes attack on Kijevo village innocent residents

On the sixth of May, on Saint George's Day, Ustashes attacked innocent residents of Kijevo village. They knew very well that most of the people celebrated their Patron Saint's Day that day, so that they got the rifles a day earlier in the gendarmerie station Ilidža-Tomina from the station commander Duraković, who formed a group which consisted of the following: Osmančević, Ragib; Kurbegović, Hamdija; Barać, Jandre and the others.

They put on Ustasha uniforms and started robbing the residents of Kijevo village, burning houses and beating people without any reason whatsoever.

They first came into the house of Stojanović, Veljko, a former merchant, they were beating him, tied him down by a rope and blackmailed for money. The truth is that on 4th of May Kurbegović, Hamdija arrested Veljko's brother Rajko Stojanović in order to frighten the other sighthy people, after that they have gone towards the houses of the families Kondić, Borenović and house of Miladinović, Marko.

Precisely on Saint George's Day Ustashes disturbed the people in Kijevo who were celebrating that day, stepping on their candles, turning over the tables, swearing and scaring away their guests, burnt the house of Domazet, Đurađ, beat him and asked for money and eventually killed him so tortured.

All this did not suffice for them, they went to the house of Kovačević, Dane, distinguished village merchant, beat him ill, asking for money and crops and the same happened to Čeranić, Mile.

Since none of these older men resisted, furious and drunk Ustashas went to the house of Stojanović, Rajko and Miladinović, Mirko and his son Marko, maltreated them, tied them and took them so tortured to the barracks in

Sanski Most and the following day, on 7th of May, in front of the barracks itself, before the gathered population, wrapped their eyes with kerchiefs and killed them by a single bullet each; there were many Ustashas there and among them was the camp commander from Sasina, Ljevar, Mile. THESE WERE THE FIRST VICTIMS THAT FELL IN SANSKI MOST.

Ustasha gang was not satisfied with this, but have further, and in accordance with the directions from Zagreb police, bursting into villages and robbing, burning and blackmailing. So the group of sympathisers consisting of: Pašić Rešić, Himzo from village Čaplje, Talić, Juso, a shoemaker from Sanski Most, Dr Cerjan, Josip; Miniga, Luka; Banović, Ante; Bajzović, Džemal and Božić, Joso, improvised a fake uprising in Kijevo – Tomina region, only to alarm and frighten already frightened people from these villages, among which Husejin, Šabić excelled particularly, who wounded himself in the leg, in order to show that rebels from Kijevska Gora were shooting, and Dr Gutić, Viktor rewarded him for this with 2,000 dinars.

Arrival of German penalty expedition

According to a calculated plan and instructions, Ustasha authorities invited German army from Prijedor, Bosanski Novi and Banja Luka in order to convince them that there were rebels in these areas, because the population was frightened from the previous maltreatments, driving their cattle in front of them, together with their families they left to the hills towards Kozica and Tramošinja, in order to avoid maltreatments and killings.

The following day at 9:00 hrs in the morning, German soldiers could be seen arriving by trucks from Prijedor, Bosanski Novi and Banja Luka. They split up immediately into arrows with their rifles at ready and moved towards the villages: Čaplje, Tomina and Kijevo and started beating people and burning down the houses of Kijevo, Tramošinja and Kijevska Gora residents. In these villages there were many people that fled in panic and fear, driving cattle in front of them, running before Ustasha terror, and subsequently German too, very few had weapons, because the enemy was taking it away earlier while disarming our soldiers.

Ustashas together with Germans attacked this poor and innocent people from Crvene Lokve on Jasenik, where allegedly two German soldiers were

wounded. Since the German army could not capture any of the “rebels”, they took innocent peasants that worked on the road to carry their weapons while they were maltreating the aforementioned villages. They have brought them to Sanski Most and imprisoned them separately into the old Primary school building, which already contained hundreds of other prisoners, Serbs from villages Zdena, Podlug, Kljevci, Krkojevci, Husimovci, Šehovci and Sanski Most itself.

In order to materialise their plan, the town crier, Klepić, Mile, summoned Sanski Most residents between 16 and 60 years of age to report for listing and the ones that would not report, **WOULD BE SHOT**.

The German soldiers guards were positioned throughout the town, nobody left their homes, the town was covered with Ustasha-German posters and only German flag waved with a big black swastika on it. Krunić, Mile was in the street with a drum. Truth be said, there were secret looks behind the curtains and everybody could have seen a thing or two.

So, in the Primary school cellar in unhygienic conditions there were around 360 Serbs and 13 Jews, pressed against each other, that is, imprisoned. Nobody was able to move, and they went out for personal needs accompanied by guards. They mounted machine-gunner in each corner of the prison, so that one of the prisoners Perica Zurunić asked one of the German guards: “Why are we imprisoned here?” and the German guard answered him angrily: “You will be shot today, because three German soldiers were wounded and there is 300 hundred of you.” Having had this answer Perica Zurunić retreated and everybody waited in fear what was going to happen next.

In a short while the prisoners in the cellar found out that Germans arrested innocent peasants that carried their ammunition, maltreating them, that they were attacking houses in the villages Tramošinja, Kijevo and Kijevska Gora, because they were unable to catch anybody, given that terrified residents from these villages had retreated in hills and forest.

Germans claimed that they caught these innocent peasants as rebels: Chetniks-uprising initiators, bandits.

The situation in the prison was indescribable, the night was approaching, some sleeping order was supposed to have been made, because the cellars were packed with innocent peasants and new guards were ought to be put up, Toma Šević tells so, a merchant assistant from Krkojevci.

One group of civilians arrived in the school yard and these were: Rešić Pašić, Himzo, a merchant from Čaplje, Ibrahimović, Ibrahim, a judge

from Sanski Most, Miniga, Luka, a merchant, together with few German officers.

Using the interpreter Jozo Klepić they called all the prisoners to come out in to the yard, and since there were more than 360 of them, they could not all stand in one line, but few lines had formed.

While lining up, innocent peasants started shifting one by another, which caused German soldiers' threatening, swearing at them and beating them with rifle butt ends.

Fear settled among the people and those Serbs that were brought in as rebels were in a separate formation and German soldiers watched over them more carefully. Everybody waited to see what would happen next in fear. Then one German officer appeared and started talking, which was translated by the interpreter Klepić, Jozo, called Patašon:

“It has been decided that all the people younger than 16 years of age and older than 60 be released home.”

That evening they released around 100 prisoners and the others stayed in the cellars further, overwhelmed with misgiving, fear and anticipation what would happen with them next.

The worst day for the prisoners from villages Tomina and Sanski was the 8th of May 1941. Escorting prisoners for washing up started, which lasted up to 10 hours, then taking food which was brought by parents or children for their unjustly imprisoned, but the food had to be left away in order to prevent them from seeing each other, because the prisoners were dirty and their bodies were bleeding, provided that Germans and Ustashas beat them mercilessly and made them beat each others.

Prisoners from Tomina, who were innocently captured on the road, were separately imprisoned with the priest Grbić, Đuro; Vezmar, Đuro and Martinović, Jozo, gendarmerie sergeants as well as Gvozden, Milan. They were let out for a walk later and they have not been given any water for three hours.

Now a group of civilians emerged again. Again the order to line up was given out, nobody knew anything, and there was no end to human suffering. Again the interpreter, Klepić, Jozo, called Patašon, informed:

“The order is that all those who are peaceful and diligent farmers be released to go home, but they have to stay home all the time, otherwise their families will be arrested and killed”.

Innocent Serbian peasants from Tomina stayed imprisoned still, around 25 of them, who were suspected rebels-Chetniks and 13 Jews, as hostages, always isolated from the other prisoners in mental torments.

Twenty seven shot

On the third day after being imprisoned, tortured and beat, it was the most difficult day in lives of the prisoners from village Tomine. They foresaw that it would not go well for them. German soldiers started swearing early, insulting them, most often a word “bandit” was heard and they mentioned attacking some German officers towards Ključ. They did not get any dinner that evening, so that on the 8th of May they allowed food to be brought in around 10:00 hrs, but under strict control and check, because their relatives brought the food early in the morning.

On the 9th of May around 1 o'clock in the afternoon, movement could be felt in the school yard, there were German officers, soldiers, Ustashas and civilians. Around 2 o'clock in the afternoon there were 30 German soldiers, 10 officers and 30 Italian soldiers with 6 officers, 30 Ustashas and 8 officers. German patrols were positioned just in front of the cellar where the prisoners from Tomina were located. Through the interpreter Jozo Klapić, called Patašon, a command was issued that prisoners from Tomina come out of the cellar and line up three by three, then swearing and hitting started, and they hit anybody and everybody they could and wanted to. The Italian army did not get involved in lining up.

In front of the column were the patrols consisting of three Germans, one Ustasha and one Italian, as well as at the back, and on each of their sides were the patrols consisting of 6 German soldiers with machine guns.

Such column of innocent Serbs left from the school yard, through the town park along Ključka Street followed by the song “LILI MARLENE”, loudly sang by the German soldiers.

A single living creature could not have been seen in the streets apart from Ustashas and the town police. Some peasants started throwing their wallets in front of the houses of Vlatko Živković and Jovica Stojaković, so they could give them to their families as they had some money in them.

After crossing over Mašinski most (Mechanical bridge) (narrow-gauge railway went across it for Srnetica-Drvar-Knin) preparations for shooting could be noticed, because a large group of curious people came to watch innocent Serbs' suffering.

As Šević, Toma says, situation among the prisoners was more than difficult. Every attempt of rescue which was discussed and agreed earlier, then failed. Čamber, Pero, crossing over the bridge, wanted to jump into the river Sana, but has given up. As soon as they arrived at the killing site, the Germans separated people from Tomina from other prisoners. At that moment, a German officer emerged, who said a few words and the priest Grbić, Đuro said quietly: "Brothers, nothing good will happen to us."

The interpreter Jozo Patašon translated the words of the German officer: "People, this German officer said: Yesterday, a motorcycle with three German soldiers was attacked on the road from Sanski Most towards Ključ. During this attack one German officer got killed. Due to that, in order to prevent further attacks, today 10 prisoners have to be shot for one German, that is, for the two attacked and one killed. Hail Hitler!"

This very same German officer, through the interpreter, called the priest Grbić, Đuro, to give the last blessing to the people from Tomina who were chosen to be shot. At this moment Katica Gvozden emerged at the killing site, sister-in-law of Milan Gvozden, begging the officer to spare her husband's brother Milan, even though he already took his clothes off for execution. In the meantime the priest confusedly read the prayer "VJEČNAJA PAMJAT...VJEČNAJA..." [translator's note: MEMORY ETERNAL...short orthodox Christian prayer for the dead] A number of the present people fainted, all of the Jews.

Having realised the situation they found themselves in, some were saying goodbye to the others, and one out of nine Vidović men begged the officer to spare at least one of their lives, because they had many children; the German officer was merciless and pitiless.

Now came the worst that could be expected: the COMMAND was issued by the German officer that one shooting squad numbering 24 soldiers stands 8 metres away from the victims, behind whom as many Ustashas lined up. And behind them the same number of Italian soldiers. The interpreter Patašon translated the command of the officer to bring out groups of 8 victims one after another, provided that two soldiers were shooting, one at the heart and one at the forehead. So the groups changed.

There was a third group with Mitar Vidović in it, who tried to escape, but German bullets caught him while crossing the ditch, and exactly at that time a passenger train from Drvar to Sanski Most was passing through, which prevented him so he could not cross the railway, according to Toma

Šević, who survived the shooting and died of liver cancer after the country's liberation.

In the final group Vezmar, Đuro was shot, who was arrested before, because he was hiding weapons for the needs of uprising together with his colleague, Jozo Martinović, gendarmerie sergeant, and he was reported by Mara Šašić from Sanski Most.

During the execution Vezmar and Martinović swore at Germans the worst they could and Martinović said:

“Kill me, as I am the King's soldier as long as I stand on my feet...” So the German officer issued a command that the whole shooting squad aim at them two. There were 17 bullets shot at Martinović, so that his back was completely blown up, after that a German soldier walked from one victim to another, shooting anybody who gave any signs of life. Then they were killed by the list.

After this execution, the prisoners could not recover for a long time, because this crime cannot be described in words, new lining up was ordered. Now they were supposed to carry the shot Serbs across the bridge, which was made of wood, and there was a railway on the other side and carts waited for them on the road, onto which the victims had to be loaded, so that there were around four-five carts with straw spread on their floor.

The whole road from the killing field to the town park, where the shot victims would be hung, was fresh with innocent Serbian blood, as their bodies were bleeding.

This and even sadder procession from Mašinski most was moving towards the town park in the same way they walked for the execution, surrounded by German soldiers singing the song “LILI MARLENE.”

Hanging dead friends

The prisoners that survived, transporting their dead friends, believed that they were walking towards the town graveyard, but while entering town, a commotion was felt in the town centre, they noticed ropes tied around electric poles as well as lime-trees and chestnut trees. Then the German officers ordered the shot Serbs to be hanged on those trees, so that Grbić, Đuro, the priest and parson of these Serbs from village Tomine, was ordered to hang them and Šević, Tomo and by large the Jews and any stronger prisoner. At that point, since Italians were already in the town,

they photographed their victims, which we prove with these photographs, which served as German propaganda. A photograph showing the Italian army entering Sanski Most.

The Italian army did not have a significant influence on criminal politics towards the Serbian people, and that could be felt immediately and movement was free through the town, they even instructed us to visit the graveyards, which Serbian people did.

After this biggest evil, the prisoners that survived were put back in prison by the enemy. Psychosis that each and every prisoner felt was more than difficult, none of them could talk to another, because they were out of their minds due to the scenes that were before their eyes all the time and they were thinking what else could happen to them.

The feeling of hunger or thirst did not exist; there was no sleep for their eyes.

The following day, on 10th May 1941, the enemy allowed the prisoners to take the food that their parents and friends had brought, but the German guards checked and controlled everything first.

Around 2 o'clock in the afternoon, a German officer walked into the prison and started saying something. Someone said: "Go out again and line up...", so they went towards the park for a second time followed by the German soldiers, and now the order was to take the poor worn out human bodies off the trees onto which they were hanged and put them on the carts escorted in the same way by the German soldiers singing "LILI MARLENE..." and "Von den Kaserne..." they moved towards the graveyard, and this was the saddest scene imaginable, because the bodies were stiff, twisted and stretched due to the hanging.

On 11th May 1941, around 09:30 hrs, a rumble was heard in the school yard. There were soldiers, more civilians, and some preparations. A German officer entered the prison and told them to come out, and in the yard there were more Italian soldiers than German ones or Ustashas. They already heard in the prison that around 2,000 Italian soldiers had arrived in town and they would take control over the town. The German officer spoke and Otto Goldberger, a chemist from Sanski Most now living in Israel, interpreted.

"PEOPLE, this officer said that as of today, the Italian cavalry takes over the control in town and management over you, and that the German army is moving onto other positions, that they have agreed to let all the prisoners

home until further notice.” After this speech all the other prisoners started moving towards their homes. They could hardly move due to exhaustion, fear and torture and everything they lived through and saw terrible things done to their fellow residents.

Italian army arrives and departs

During the first days of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s occupation, i.e. of the Vrbas Banat, this became an area of dispute between the Italians and Ustashas. The agreement was reached on 10th of May 1941. The border line stretched from Slovenia to Kosovo, cutting through Bosanska Krajina diagonally, crossing through the former Sana District through the villages: Fajtovci, Trnava-Behremaginica planina. There were ramps on the roads.

Italian army entered Sanski Most from the direction of Ključ on 10th May 1941 with cavalry regiment SAVOIA, with the First Division III of Artillery Regiment, which counted around 2,000 soldiers. They immediately occupied the building of the newly built hospital, gendarmerie station and surrounding houses. They tied their horses on the road around the hospital and houses.

They did not get involved in the matters of the local people; their sole interest was buying a chicken or two, and something else to eat.

In order to show that they were those in control, Ustashas immediately started arresting the Serbs they found suspicious and introduced a curfew.

They captured the following: Ačić, Drago; Ačić, Janko; Dragišić, Boško; Kabiljo, Cico; Bilalbegović, Hazim; Klepić, Mile; Živković, Lazo; Živković, Vlatko; Stojaković, Jovica; Trkulja, Niko; Levija, Sado; Albehari, Albert; Radović, Lazar; Brajić, Jovo; Basar, Ilija; Basar Dušan; Borković, Ognjen; Miličević, Lazo and Nedeljko; Kurbegović, Hasan; Čekić, Rifat; Milinković, Veso; Tupalović, Bajazit; Banjac, Simeun; Lazić, Obrad; Zurunić, Tošo and Perica; Brajić, Petar; Mandić, Milan; Marjanović, Milan and Jovan; and Delić, Jovo.

Speech of notorious chief official dr Gutić

The first executions of the innocent peasants from village Tomine on 7th May 1941 were a lesson to all about Ustashas’ and their associates’ aims.

Frequent arrests, curfew, penalty expedition for blackmailing, robberies of all types, it could have been foreboded that the real Ustasha terror was just about to follow.

Dr. Viktor Gutić, the Ustasha blood-sucker and Chief Official of SANALUKA, came to Sanski Most on 28th May 1941 and held his notorious speech. Representatives of Ustasha authorities, together with the commander of the Italian army and two lines of honorary unit accompanied by thunderous Italian fanfares, greeted the murderer. There were 4,000 citizens on the square waiting for him together with school children.

Himzo Pašić-Rešić greeted Gutić and thanked him for responding to the invitation.

Dr Viktor Gutić thanked for the invitation and started with the following words: “That he was the representative of resurrected ISC, thanking Croatia that gave the Chief of State Ante Pavelić, who lived abroad for 12 years, as well as thanking their allies and their representatives, Hitler and Mussolini, emphasising that former anti-Croatian systems did not know that over 300,000 of Croats took Ustasha oath, in Croatia as well as abroad...”

He continued in a raised tone:

“There is no more Serbian army, there is Serbia no more, there are not “gedžas” [translator’s note: gedža, the thirteenth or the last piglet, which usually becomes the strongest once it grows up; an abusive name for Serbs, meaning Serbian rednecks], our blood-suckers, no Gypsy dynasty of Karađorđević. And our roads will long for Serbs, but there will not be Serbs anymore.

I have issued out drastic orders for their complete extermination. Do not be weak towards any of them, bear in mind that they were our grave diggers and destroy them wherever you can and the blessing from our Chief of State Ante Pavelić and my own will not pass you. Anybody pleading for them by that becomes an enemy to Croatian liberty. SERBS MAY NOT HOPE for anything, and it would be the best for them to move out, to vanish from our areas and our home country....”

Himzo Pašić-Rešić, the mayor of Sanski Most, thanked Dr. Viktor Gutić, and promised on his behalf and on behalf of the citizens that he would adhere to all the instructions. After this notorious speech, Dr Viktor Gutić, together with three Italian officers and Ustasha authorities’ representatives in Sanski Most went for a joint lunch, where toasts came one after another while singing Croatian – Ustasha songs.

After a few toasts directed to his barrister colleague Dr Josip Cerjan, Dr Viktor Gutić left accompanied by his secretaries: Butorac, Vilko and

Seravia, Etor and his personal and tireless escort Ćelić, Asim towards the building of the District Administration where sympathisers from Stari Majdan, Kamengrad, Čaplje, Kijevo, Sasina, Krkojevci, Kljevci, Skrljevita, Stara Rijeka and other villages waited for them, sharing the same ideas about killing, robbing, maltreatment of innocent Serbian population. They pointed out that 27 outlaws-Chetniks were killed thanking to the brave German army. And all this should be mentioned to the others that the times of Serbian bandits had passed. On this occasion Dr Viktor Gutić financially awarded all those Ustahas that excelled in arrests, robbery and torturing innocent Serbs. Triumphant travel of the Chief Official GUTIĆ, as his reporter said, was of a great significance for Sanski Most as well as for the entire Croatian people.

This was how all the instructions that Dr Viktor gave were taken for granted and they started acting immediately, without any mercy; the Catholic clergy also joined in, as active members.

Many Serbs from Sanski Most fled without travel passes and also with travel passes that could be obtained for large amounts of money, so that dawn did not find them in Sanski Most. Those Serbs that believed and did not run away, Ustasha government killed everywhere, which is proved by three big grave mounds in Šušnjar, through which blood was seeping, because they were not buried deep, those three grave mounds in cattle market, Milin Birt, Čaplje, Kljevci and other killing fields where bones of 5,500 innocent people lay, that are marked with crosses and memorials. Facts that at present mujahideens and local vandals are destroying memorials on the graves of Serbs – martyrs, speak how many Ustasha roots remained.

Ivica Simeon, the district assessor, issued passes to some Serbs, and this was also done by Jozo Klepić called Patašon. Many crazed Serbs did not even ask how much those passes were, but just gave what they were asked. All imaginable reprisals were performed, so it was organized that refugees from surrounding villages come to Sanski Most, in order to press the domestic residents to take them in their apartments, in order for these to stay in Serbian homes later, blackmailed Serbian and Jewish families to give food, firewood, clothes and anything else they may have needed, to the refugees, many of whom were actually spies.

Since movement of entire population was carried out from north to the south of the country by the plan, the German authorities deported around 500 families from Maribor area, where Germans settled in, all this happened

in the second half of the month of July and Serbian residents of Sanski Most were imprisoned and then released every now and then. Curfew was introduced. Deported Slovenians went to collective centre Banja Luka.

Imprisonment of Orthodox priests

On the night of 10th July 1941, the Ustasha authorities arrested eight Orthodox Christian priests with their families, about eighteen of them; they escorted them into the former “Sokolski dom” sports centre, where they kept them until 12th July, and then at night transported them along narrow-gauge railway, by the train that was leaving early in the morning, at around 6 o'clock from the station in Sanski Most to Prijedor and from there to Banja Luka, to isolate them from the people. They were robbed in Banja Luka, they took their money and gold and joined them with the other priests for Caprag, after which they were transported to Serbia.

In the camp called “CENTRAL” they slept on concrete with a little bit of straw, so that many caught a cold, tortured by hunger, maltreatment and various humiliations, they went severely ill and many have died.

Mass killing of Serbian people

At the beginning of May 1941 Zagreb police arrived to Sanski Most lead by sworn Ustasha Horvat, Konrad, and immediately after that Ustashes from Ljubuški, Posušje, Široki Brijeg, Čapljina, Metkovići, Ravno arrived, organized in the thirteenth executioners' attack troop including captain Silahić, Teofik. During their arrival music was playing on the railway station.

Miniga, Luka treated the aforesaid team of Ustashes with two barrels of red wine, because he was an innkeeper, and they got so drunk and started arrests in such condition, robbing poor, terrified, innocent Serbian people.

These drunk and furious Ustashes were joined by domestic Ustashes: Alagić, Mustafa; Krupić, Fehrat; Heder, Mumin; Krupić, Husein; Muhić, Husein called Kiko, a known Ustasha, Zukić, Čiko; Tunić, Viktor; Alagić, Hamdija called Buljina, Pilić from Škljevita, Kuzmanović, Drago from Banja Luka,

Barać, Jandre from Sanski Most, Tukara, Marko from Kijevo and Ustasha mentor called “Boxer from Zagreb”.

In an organized manner, on 27th July 1941, they immediately went through the town and villages in order to arrest Serbs and Jews. They sent

summons for people to report to the “authorities”, introduced toil in order to calm down the ones they were bringing next, until they gathered them all and locked them up in cellars, the big crops storehouse and anywhere they could. No Serbian life was safe anymore. To the ones they were unable to arrest they sent some summons to report to the authorities, which was bought by the poor and inexperienced peasants further away from the town.

A familiar case is that of the Borenović brothers, who came by themselves; allegedly, they had been told that they should go and report to Ustasha camp, because anyone who was found at home and did not report would be shot. They did so and never saw the light of day again.

On the same day, on 27th July 1941, Ustashes brought Gojko Majkić from Lušci Palanka, tied up. Previously also persecuted for his progressive views, he had served some time in the Mitrovica prison, and was eventually killed in Sanski Most.

In this mass arrest, dozens and dozens of quiet and naive Serbian peasants were brought in by Ustashes and put in prison. They cheated them in all possible ways, by calling them through their informers to peacefully take refuge with the authorities, and also sent them summonses, which many did accept. It is known that the whole village of Dabar received around 700 summonses, in order to get them to come to the town and kill them all by deceit. The summonses said they were distributing coffee, sugar, salt and other supplies which the people needed, but the residents of Dabar did not respond to these summonses.

Using a train on narrow-gauge railway on 28th, 29th and 30th July 1941 Ustashes brought Serbian peasants to Sanski Most by deceiving them from the following villages: Korijenovo, Sanica, Kljevci and later from a different direction Busnovo, Tomašica, Prijedor district, locked them up in the premises of the old Primary school, gendarmerie barracks, and big crops storehouse, which presented a known torture chamber for poor, hungry and thirsty innocent Serbian peasants. Deceits circled everywhere, so that they were saying that people should go to the town to report to the authorities, to bring food and clothes on them, that many of them will be transported to Germany or Serbia. Many of these deceived martyrs Ustashes stopped on the Rešić hill side, Kumalič hill side and Čapljina fields and kill them immediately, because they knew they did not have room for them in town, the prisons were packed.

Now even bigger evil commenced over these tortured Serbs. At the crack of dawn they took them out of the prison, tied their hands by wire in

groups of four, put a lime-tree leaf in their mouths to keep them quiet and then escorted by Ustashas they were taken for execution to Šušnjar. They have previously beat and tortured them a lot in the prison, as Miljatović, Stojanka says, that people could hardly move along the road.

In these sorrowful processions they moved tied, hungry, thirsty, battered and bloody along the road without return, accompanied by shouting and swearing of furious drunk Ustashas, who were saying along the way: You are going to Serbia, mother Russia and the Red army. They were losing their caps, hats, shoes in their torments.

Besides all these torments, the felons made them sing Ustasha songs: "Pavelić, may long live thy hand, when you killed a Serbian bandit." Next, they were beaten with rifle butt-ends and clubs, which could be found even after 1941 beside the grave-mounds; the saddest thing was they had to dig their own graves, into which these butchers would bury them. They were escorted by Ustashas in olive green uniforms to the killing field, with their rifles always at ready for beating them.

There were individual killings as well, such example is of a Serbian woman who came into town to complain to Horvat, Konrad, who killed her right away from his pistol. Also familiar example is of a woman in childbed, locked up in the municipality building, she wept and shouted and no one knew what happened to her. Along Zdena street a woman was carrying a baby and Ustashas were playing should they shoot the baby or the woman's heart, they shot the baby and later they killed the woman.

Life of each Serb was in the hands of Ustasha butchers. Many prisoners were killed in the storehouse, at the Cattle market, on the bank of the stream that flew into the river Sana, where Sanski Most citizens were killed in sufferings, held as hostages, over 107 of them, while the survivors were Čučak, Vojin and Starčević, Jovan.

Gun shots could be heard during the whole day and in particular in the morning. Since cruelty did not leave them, they started going through the houses, this was how they arrested Dodik, Veljko and Miladinović, Boško, who were not even 15 years of age and killed them.

Furthermore, they improvised a fake attack of Chetniks over the hamlet Milinković, they killed Milinković, Đurađ, all of his family, and decapitated his son Vico and threw his head into the stream. They killed the Delić family, Dušan and Drago and their wives Vukosava and Dragica and they left their children behind, whose cry could be heard all the way to the town. They

killed the ill Štrbac, Stanko and his wife Milica and their children Mara and Dušan – Dućo, and they were lead by Corić, Stipe, their neighbour, also Apać, Mihajlo was killed.

On this heavy and unforgettable day, on Saint Elijah's Day, on the 2nd Aug 1941, Ustashas took out 107 hostages from the old Primary school and forced them to the Cattle market, towards the ditches by the stream, where they killed them with beating, apart from two of them, who managed somehow in blood, amongst the others, to survive these killings.

Killing of Zurunić, Draga (called Duduković, Šemsa), teacher from Tuzla, who was teaching in Fajtovci and later in Sanski Most:

Exactly on 3rd of Aug 1941 Ustashas arrived into the house of Zurunić family and asked for a teacher Draga, because she was a Moslem who converted into Orthodox religion in order to get married to Zurunić, Perica. They took her to Mašinski most barefoot, where Vidović men were shot, maltreated her while she was jumping into Sana, they pulled her out, cut open her chest, put salt on the wounds and threw her covered in blood into the river, shoot at her, killed her and buried her in a kneeling position. This was done by Ustasha Zukić, Himzo called Čiko. She left sons Predrag (17), living in Australia and Simo (5), living in Ljubljana, behind her. All their property was robbed, so that the Zurunić family disappeared from Sanski Most.

In the meantime, while innocent Serbs in Sanski Most were still being killed, slaughter and beating of innocent Serbs in villages Čaplje, Podlug, Šehovci continued. On the same day the crier informed as always: "Oyez! Oyez! People, Ustasha authorities issued an order that all men – boys older than 12 years of age should report. The ones that do not report will face death penalty."

Converting Serbian people into Catholicism

After unseen atrocities Gutić's agents started agitation with prepared statements for conversion from Orthodox into Catholic religion. Crazed with everything they have experienced and seen, they accepted these forms without any resistance. Ustasha minister at the time, Dr Tuk, issued an order and banned the name Serbian-Orthodox and named it Eastern-Orthodox religion. Pursuing of priests, and altering the name of the religion, all of this forced the terrified people and they went for the so called conversion. Discharging from work and sealing up the churches also accelerated this process of conversion.

The priests through their various agents, in villages as well as in the town, developed perfidious action regarding conversion. Well known agitators were Stanko Topić, a photographer from Kruhari, Paula Cerjan, Dr. Josip Cerjan's spouse, Marija Grgić from Poljak. They handed out summons for conversion, and they received a financial reward for this. In the so called District Administration, applications for conversion were received by Ivica Bračić, an Ustasha wearing a fez.

Noted clericalists from villages Kruhari, Poljak, Krkojevci, Kljevci, Čaplje and others went to the houses of prospective convertees to teach them Hail Mary and the Lord's Prayer and check them, because that was one of the conditions for conversion into the Catholic religion. These agents received instructions for this shameful action based on the Bishop's Ordinariate decree ref. 9259/41, signed by Archbishop Stepinac, stipulating rules as to who could be received into the Catholic religion, which read:

“That the Lord is Jesus Christ, that there is one Shepherd, one sheepfold. Residents of Eastern-Orthodox religion, cherish this advice. Đakovica Bishop received thousands of your people, who received certificates from the state authorities on honesty. Let these brothers of yours serve as an example to you and report as soon as possible for conversion into Catholic religion. As Catholics, you will be able to stay in your homes, unimpededly develop your household and raise your youth for God and the state of Croatia. In the Catholic church you will secure rescue for undying souls, according to that reprimand of our saviour Jesus Christ.” This action lasted longer than two months, after which a watchful control was carried out if these people went to the church, whether the newly born children were baptised in the Catholic Church, because they were supposed to become true Catholic believers. Majority of Serbian people from the above named villages subdued to this action, because there was great fear of atrocities, measures that had been undertaken, as well as controls by the neighbours carrying out this action.

The enemy was persistent in the actions they planned and did not give up on them. During the Catholic holidays it was sad to watch sad processions headed for the Catholic church, wearing rosaries over their hands that were sold inside the church, using them while praying to God according to the rules of the Catholic Church.

It has to be mentioned that many Serbian residents did not watch all these events indifferently; the Serbs were deserting into forests, wave of uprising spread quickly, because this was the only way to survive. The

enemy was persistent and still carried out their plans in these areas as well as in the others. When a rebel in the region of Drvar killed Home-Guard major Ferdinand Konrad on Pasjakovac, who was returning from Bravsko to Prijedor, again Ustashas started arresting and killing all the Serbs that they could lay their hands on.

Immediately after the killing of this Home-Guard major, Home-Guard army arrived into the village Dabar near Sanski Most and burnt the settlements: Sekule, Dašići, Banjci, Udovčići and a part of Đedovača. So they have burnt 104 houses and killed many old people and children in one single day. Many of those who perpetuated these crimes started robbing village Dabar, driving away the cattle and everything else they could take for them. It is known that the priest Fra Luka Tešić from Sasina participated in this robbery, taking the initiative and driving away two good horses.

In Sanski Most, Ustashas and Germans continued arrests, so the following were arrested: Rušnjak, Ana; Sakradžija, Smiljana; Bišćević, Husnija; Tontić, Boro; Tešić, Dušan; Radić, Novak; Živković, Lazo; Petković, Kristina; Ivanić, Draginja; Miljatović, Marica and Prgomelja, Persa.

After a long interrogation and beating, the prisoners were released home. The prison was located in the house of Safet Mujić in Ključka Street. All the suspects were constantly under surveillance of Ustasha authorities and their spies.

Imprisonment of Jews

One day at dawn, in the month of August 1942, Ustashas together with gendarmes arrested all the Jews living in Sanski Most, where they had homes; by large they were merchants, with a few craftsmen too.

Their houses had been previously robbed, their gold and money seized, and they were only left with their lives.

During the arrest, they allowed them only to take a pack of most necessary things. It was barely visible through the rain that was slightly drizzling, how innocent people, women and children quietly walked beside the house of Mihajlo Popović towards the gendarmerie barracks, which was located adjacent to his house. They locked them up in the station's firewood cellar, where they stayed for two days, after which they were transported to Banja Luka, where the central prison for Jews was located.

According to the data that were provided by the synagogue in Sarajevo and by Atijas (daughter of Isak) Sarnika, who lived in Montevideo – Uru-

guay, the only survived Jewish women from this transport, all the arrested ended up tragically in Stara Gradiška:

1. Atijas, (son of Rafael) Isak, born in 1887, Stara Gradiška
2. Atijas, (daughter of Halmi) Rifka, born in 1899, Stara Gradiška
3. Atijas, (daughter of Isak) Flora, born in 1923, Stara Gradiška
4. Atijas, (daughter of Isak) Ernica, born in 1925, Stara Gradiška
5. Atijas, (son of Isak) Rafael, born in 1914, Rijeka, killed by Italians
6. Atijas, Mazalta, born in 1880, Stara Gradiška
7. Atijas, (daughter of Avram) Švesta, born in 1900, Stara Gradiška
8. Albehari, (daughter of Šabetaj) Luna, born in 1900, Stara Gradiška
9. Albehari, (son of Albert) Šabetaj, born in 1937, Stara Gradiška
10. Albehari, (son of Albert) Moni, born in 1939, Stara Gradiška
11. Baruh, (son of Jozef) David, born in 1889, Stara Gradiška
12. Baruh, (daughter of Isak) Berta, born in 1899, Stara Gradiška
13. Baruh, (daughter of David) Blankica, born in 1923, Stara Gradiška
14. Baruh, (daughter of David) Ernica, born in 1926, Stara Gradiška
15. Hason, (son of Isak) Samuel, born in 1897, Stara Gradiška
16. Hason, (daughter of Mento) Erna, born in 1880, Stara Gradiška
17. Hason, (son of Samuel) Isak, born in 1931, Stara Gradiška
18. Hason, (son of Samuel) Mento, born in 1933, Stara Gradiška
19. Hason, (daughter of Samuel) Blanka, born in 1935, Stara Gradiška
20. Hason, (son of Dava) Đaja, born in 1875, Stara Gradiška
21. Levi, (son of Kodik) Eliezer, born in 1875, Stara Gradiška
22. Levi, (daughter of Elieser) Luna, born in 1899, Stara Gradiška
23. Levi, Ester, born in 1885, Stara Gradiška
24. Levi, (son of Sado) Lezo, born in 1935, Stara Gradiška
25. Kabiljo, (daughter of Cevi) Sipura, born in 1899, Stara Gradiška
26. Kabiljo, (daughter of David) Flora, born in 1926, Stara Gradiška
27. Papić, (son of Isak) Juso, born in 1889, Stara Gradiška
28. Papić, Erna, born in 1898, Stara Gradiška
29. Papić, (son of Juso) Isak, born in 1929, Stara Gradiška
30. Papić, (son of Juso) Avram, born in 1932, Stara Gradiška
31. Rajh, (son of Jacob) Benjamin, born in 1875, Stara Gradiška
32. Rajh, (daughter of Jacob) Frida, born in 1885, Stara Gradiška
33. Oštric, Benjamin, born in 1887, Stara Gradiška
34. Oštric, Julijana, born in 1896, Stara Gradiška

There used to be a SYNAGOGUE in Sanski Most, the place where Jews held their prayers, a building which the Yugoslav Authorities gave into

possession to Mustafa Berberović, a clerk from Sanski Most, whereas all of their graveyards were turned up, so they existed no more at all and this was how the Jews from Sanski Most ended up.

Since arrests and persecutions did not cease, Ustasha authorities arrested and deported to Jasenovac the following:

Mandić, Mirko; Todorović, Mile; the Velić family, the Hajder family and the Krupić family from Zdena, Marjanović, Đuja; Ivanić, Nata; Basara, Savo; Branković, Pero, Slavko and Bogdan, Bilalbegović, Ahmed and Muhamed and their parents Bilalbegović, Hazim; Ivanić, Gospava; Ivanić, Marija and Mrđa-Ljevar, Marija, accusing them of having connection with “the forest”, where Serbs running away from Ustashas were located, and the uprising was developing by far.

Ustashas watchfully followed each single Serb and planned the time of their arrest. So in the winter in 1943 Ustasha police started arresting again. Then they arrested the following: Miljatović, Marica; Ivanić, Draginja; Vuković, Kosta; Marijan, Ante; Todorović, Stole; Živković, Lazo and Praća, Kosta. The Serbs were held for six months in the BLACK HOUSE in Banja Luka, after which they were released. They were arrested by Krupić, Fehrat and Nalić, Ibrahim, Ustasha policeman. They were accused of assisting the rebels in the forest.

National enemies' trial

Immediately after liberation of Sanski Most, a number of enemy officials and spies were arrested, among whom were the following: Vajzović, Džemal; an Ustasha soldier, Miniga, Luka, a sworn Ustasha, Ćorić, Tomo, German espionage service since 1938, Sarić, Jandre; Heder, Mumin; Krupić, Fehrat; Alagić, Mustafa; Džafić, Alaga; Konvalinko, Franjo; Klepić, Jovo, a German spy, Filipović, Mile, camp commander from Ključ, whose centre was Sanski Most. They have been brought before the national court, which was presided by: Bilalbegović, Hazim, a known revolutionary in the pre-war Yugoslavia, Kovačević, Stole and Mitrov, Vojo. For their hostile activities against their own people they were sentenced to death penalty and confiscation of their entire property.

The enemy followed the entire operation and movement of Partisan army through their intelligence service, which was growing bigger every day, because this was the only rescue after all that horror of Ustasha-German persecution.

In Sanski Most there was one espionage group with Catholic priest Buzuk, Fra Miroslav ahead. Actively involved in this group were the following: Bekan, Fra Josip from Prijedor, Kozić, Ivica; Kozić, Petar; Kozić, Ladan and Kozić, Marija from Sasina as well as Mijatović, Živko from Krkojevci. This group had a task to collect the data on Partisan army movement on which they were informing their command in Banja Luka through trained pigeons from Kutina, which carried mail.

Partisan service through their bodies discovered espionage activity of Buzuk, Fra Miroslav and his associates. This priest was a guest on ZAVNOBiH [“Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Bosne i Hercegovine” - “Regional Anti-Fascist Council of People’s Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina”] meeting which took place in the building of the “Sokolski dom” in Sanski Most, and he was noticed to be going out during each brake and looking towards the sky, because he was sending report to Banja Luka in the meantime having marked the building where the meeting was taking place so that German airplanes could bombard the “Sokolski dom”. Fortunately the pigeon did not arrive to Banja Luka, but into the hands of our intelligence service.

This way our intelligence service discovered the entire group of enemies, the aforementioned priest was disclosed, he lost the trust before the people and after presented evidence brought before the court, because the people wanted the most rigid punishment for the spies. Since this was one of the most significant punishments for these crimes in Sanski Most, a commission for identifying war crimes on the territory of Sanski Most was formed, therefore an office was opened for Venclu, Andrija, Cikota, Božo and recording secretary Miličević, Aleksandra, a teacher from Sanski Most, who worked together with him in this office. It has been established that more than 5,500 men, women and children were killed on the territory of Sanski Most by Ustashas.

In Belgrade, 2003.

*Branko J. Bokan**

WAR CRIMINALS' TRIAL

Severe crimes that were committed over the people from Sana district in 1941 could not have been forgotten. Memory of them remained inerasable. Rear individuals that survived Ustasha mass tortures and killings in Sanski Most, in the Crops Storehouse, in the Primary School, behind the market, on Šušnjar, on Begina Peak in Kljevci, at Vrhpolje Railway Station, on Žegar and Čaplje fields, in Alagić field, in Troska stream, Trnava gully and elsewhere, who managed to escape the executioners from the killing field, were living witnesses to the crimes committed over thousands of people. Many of them have, escaping the executioners' hand, joined the lines of rebels immediately.

Although Partisans captured some criminals here and there, the main ones were out of their reach in fortified and defended bases in majority of towns. It was their turn when the military forces of the People's Liberation Movement strengthened, their last shelters and refuges of the criminals, out of which they did not have anywhere to run to, because in most cases they were cut off and surrounded.

When the 5th Corps of Yugoslavian People's Liberation Army troops liberated Sanski Most on 21st Oct 1943, in the morning of the same day Court Martial was formed with a task to carry out investigation and trial to the arrested and known Ustashes in particular. Stojan – Stole Kovačević was appointed as the Court president, and Vojo Mitrov and Hazim Bilalbegović as members. The Court Martial organized investigation and brought their decisions based on the regulations pursuant to the Decision on establishing court martial by the Main Headquarters of the People's Liberation Combat and Yugoslavian Resistance Movement. Before the Court was a big job, hearing out a few hundred of imprisoned Home-Guards, officers, warrant officers and soldiers, then hearing out imprisoned Ustashes, gendarmes and policeman and finally the hearing and trial to the imprisoned or additionally found Ustasha criminals known by far. The citizens themselves

* Branko J. Bokan, publicist and writer, Belgrade

helped during disclosing and finding hidden Ustasha criminals. A Moslem woman, in a long overdress and a head dress, came to the area Command, without uncovering herself or saying her name, stated that Ustasha policeman, Ibrahim Nalić, was hiding in a shuck near one house. One tenth of the Command guards left immediately to that house and asked the policeman to surrender. Since the corporal saw suspicious movement of the Ustasha under the shuck, he killed the criminal by a volley. It was learnt in a similar way that Tomo Ćorić was hiding in Sasina, the innkeeper, a known Ustasha, who prepared dinner in May 1941 to Ustasha chief official, Viktor Gutić, after his hatred rising speech against Serbs and inviting all for the Serbs destruction.

When he was arrested, Tomo Ćorić had a pistol, two bombs and a million and six hundred thousand kuna. It was just after the liberation of Prijedor in September 1944 that it was discovered he had been a German spy since 1936, based on the Gestapo archives.

Luka Miniga, the member of Ustasha board at the time of mass killings of the innocent in 1941, also managed to lay low for a few days, and then he tried to escape to Prijedor. While exiting the town he was caught by the Partisan guards and brought to the area Command. When they opened his bag, the present were surprised by its contents: it was full of money, gold and silver coins. With the help of one citizen it was learnt that the notorious Ustasha criminal Dane Banović, an Ustasha soldier in Stari Majdan, was hiding in a tun in Boško Marinković's shed, who did not live in Sanski Most at that time. He was caught and brought before the Court Martial.

Those days the Court Martial sentenced the well-known Ustasha officials to death by shooting: Džemal Vajzović, Ustasha camp commander, Jandro Sarić, Luka Miniga, Franjo Konvalenko, Suljo Rešić, Alaga Džafić, Salko Kuršumović, Muharem Muhić, Muharem Alagić, Hrusto Jakupović and Zora Tešić, a Gestapo agent.

The Court Martial also considered blame and brought a verdict by which known Ustasha officials that managed to escape from Sanski Most were sentenced, among which were the following: Ivica Simeon, the district assessor, Osman Ćehajić, Anto Banović, Juso Talić, Himzo Rešić, Viktor Tunjić, Ivica Sarić, Hrvoje Miniga and some other known criminals and Ustasha officials, organizers or executors of numerous crimes from the spring 1941 until 20th October 1943.

From village Čaplje 16 Ustashas were sentenced, who participated in great slaughter of Serbs in this village in the summer 1941.

Some Ustasha criminals believed that there would not be any witnesses that would be able to charge them for the crimes from 1941 and later, so they stayed at their homes, where they were arrested based on the very reports of those who survived mass slaughters 1941 or based on the reports by the citizens that wanted the guilty ones to be punished. Some Ustashas tried to save their lives by joining Partisans, but were discovered quickly. That happened with one Ustasha that joined 6th Krajina People's Liberation Shock (NOU) Brigade. He was soon disclosed and imprisoned in Sanski Most where the trial took place.

In the months that followed, individual Ustasha criminals were found and also put on trial. After each trial the Court Martial published announcements stating their crimes, for which each individual criminal was punished. This is how the Court Martial published their sentence on 25th of Nov 1943 which sentenced Dane Banović, Rasim Saleš and Mehmed Krupica to death by shooting and confiscating their property.¹

The Court Martial published their verdict² on 3rd of Dec 1943 by which they sentenced Ladan Klarić, the headman of village Sasina, to death by shooting. His defence during the trial was that he did everything as instructed by Fra Luka Tešić.

On 24th December 1943, the Court Martial in Sanski Most also published their verdict on death penalty by shooting for three Ustashas³: Sulejman Alibabić, from Kljevci, Smail Osmančević, called Nezirović, from Čaplje and Hamid Osmančević, from Čaplje.

Upon liberation of Prijedor in September 1944, where some Ustashas from Sanski Most were located and arrested, the Court Martial Council of the 5th Corps Military territory on 26th and 27th September and on 17th November 1944 sentenced to death by shooting, life-long deprivation of all honour rights and confiscation of property the following criminals⁴: Teufik Arnautović, Sanski Most district authorities official, Ibrahim Crnkić, Ustasha

¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina Revolution Museum, archived document number 1371

² Same as above, number 1437

³ Bosnia and Herzegovina Revolution Museum, archived document number 1403

⁴ Announcement by the Court Council with the Court Martial of Podgrmeč territory Command. The 5th Corps Military territories from 6th December 1944. Copy in the author's archive

from Trnova, Husein Sarić, from Stari Majdan, Dino Vranić, Ustasha from Kruhari, Bono Zekić, Ustasha from Sasina, Fejzo Kamber, Ustasha from Pobježje, Joso Šalic, from Kruhari, Vahid Alimović, Ustasha from Čaplje, Luka Dizdarević, German policeman and Ustasha from Šehovci, Dragutin Čengić, Ustasha from Kruhari, Luka Lučić, Ustasha from Stratinska and Ana Mijatović, a quack and Ustasha from Krkojevci.

The same sentence was applied to Kata Grgić for 4 years of toil and Mara Grgić from Škrļevita on three years of toil, because they were going from the liberated territory to the one in Banja Luka still not liberated, giving information to Ustasha on the situation in liberated Sanski Most.

These verdicts also sentenced a few Ustasha, Chetniks and other collaborators of the occupier from Novi and Prijedor districts territories.

In November 1944 the Court Martial Council of the 5th Corps Military territory sentenced to death penalty by shooting another four Ustasha criminals: Vinko Dakić, Ustasha from Sasina, Milan Sakić, Ustasha from Kljevci, Muharem Alagić, Ustasha, a grocer from Sanski Most and Milan Komljenović, Ustasha Leaguer member from Stratinska.

In December 1943, the Chetnik group which came from the territory of Manjača ambushed and killed Pajo Trkulja in Usorci, wounding another fighter in the arm; it is not known what happened to the third person, and he was probably captured. Investigation on this as well as the analysis of operation, i.e. non-operation, of the village People's Liberation Resistance, soon discovered that the Chetniks outlaws were Luka Savić, the president and Pero Vujković, member of the village Usorci People's Liberation Board and few other residents. They were arrested immediately and investigation was organized, and then they were trialled at Sanski Most Court Martial. District People's Liberation Board published their announcement on 13th Dec 1943 on the sentence of the Court Martial to all People's Liberation Boards, which read:

“We hereby inform you that a few days ago based on the gathered evidence, the President of the People's Liberation Board from Usorci was shot and a member of the People's Liberation Board for the following reasons:

1. Savić, Luka from village Usorci, because he was harbouring outlaws as a president of People's Liberation Board with the greatest enemies of our people and our authorities, used his position, sabotaged operation of the People's Liberation Board wanting to undermine power of our national authorities under the name of the board member, hiding his criminal persona. Because he obstructed mobilisation of fighters into People's Liberation Army and sabotaged gathering voluntary contributions. While the above named Savić watched how Chetniks outlaws carried pies and cakes to the robbers' gang, he was depriving our soldiers of rightfully belonging bread. Because he held meetings with criminal gang in village Usorci and knew their intentions and did not inform the national authorities about this. Because on the day when are friends were attacked he knew which direction our friends would go and informed the Chetniks gang on this.
2. Vujković, Pero from village Usorci, because he maintained connection with the biggest enemies of our people and our authorities as a member of the People's Liberation Board wanting to undermine power of our National authorities under the name of the board member commit greatest treachery by harbouring outlaws with Chetniks gangs. Because he obstructed mobilisation of fighters into People's Liberation Army and told them to hide, and they would soon leave our territory, because he was present at the meeting with a gang which was hiding in Usorci and did not inform our national authorities on that.

We tell you this for your information.

Apart from the above named, there were some more Chetniks outlaws for which it was established with certainty that they harboured outlaws, sentenced to death on which you will probably receive our announcement later.

We emphasise that Chetniks gang that stayed in Usorci killed one of our friends, Pajo Trkulja, one was wounded lightly in his arm, whereas we do not know anything for the third one until the present day”...⁵

In the autumn 1944, the Court Martial Council of the 5th Corps Military territory sentenced Mladen Crnomarković, from Koprivna, to death penalty by shooting, life-long deprivation of all honour rights and confiscation of property.

¹ District People's Liberation Board, announcement to all PLB-s from 13th Dec 1943, Regional museum in Bihać, m.f.

During the Fourth offensive by the enemy, he returned to Koprivna, waited for the Germans and put himself at their disposal. As instructed by the German military unit commander in Koprivna he used severe situation in which Partisan families were, recorded names of the persons that returned from Grmeč, and then the Germans escorted them to Zemun, where 24 men were killed in great torments, whereas Đuro Mandić, Lazo Damjanović and Jovan Vasiljević were deported for toiling in the Bor mine. Crnomarković maintained connection with the Chetniks that were crossing over from Manjača onto free Podgrmeč territory. One such Chetniks group killed Dragan Vujanović, member of the Area People's Liberation Board and so on. He was caught in the liberated Prijedor. However, in the night between 13th and 14th Sep 1944 Crnomarković escaped the investigative detention.

The Court Martial published each of their verdicts on the notice boards or in some other way. All the verdicts were communicated to the public on conferences during which Court decisions were read out. Objectivity and justness of the People's Liberation Combat Court Martial verdicts in Sanski Most got a wide support of the population in the town and in villages, because they were punishing major criminals with the most rigid penalties whereas the ones charged for smaller things got milder penalties and releasing verdicts as well as the persons for whom it was not possible to establish that they committed a crime against people or the PLC.



*Dr Milan Bulajić**

ŠUŠNJAR NEAR SANSKI MOST (1941 – 2004) Genocide over Serbs and Jews on Saint Elijah's Day 1941

After being invited to the commemoration of Šušnjar victims on 1st and 2nd Aug 2003, I wanted to familiarize myself with the factual truth about Šušnjar victims. In my four-volume book “Ustasha Crimes of Genocide and Trial to Andrija Artuković in 1986” (“Ustaški zločini genocida i suđenje Andriji Artukoviću 1986. godine”), on 3,194 pages, through index I managed to find only a testimony from Zora Delić Skiba: “In Kruhari, on the clearing called Šušnjar, where our house and property used to be located earlier, a memorial – graveyard with 5,500 victims of fascist terror is located today. Among these victims are my father and mother and my grandfather and grandmother and my uncles”¹ In my documentation I found a word from an award winner Nenad Grujičić, “Šušnjar Souls Affection” (“Milošta šušnjarski duša”) (Politika, 10th Aug 2002).

I met up with my friend and collaborator Branko Bokan, author of two-volume book “Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945” (“Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine”). On 1,356 pages, in 13 chapters, only at one point there is a mention of Vid Mijatović's murder on Šušnjar.²

Maybe I am not well informed, but if I, as an interested researcher of this area, could not get the necessary information, this should be discussed today.

Dr. Wanda Schindley accepted my proposal and went to Prijedor with me. I did not have anything to offer her as an information in Prijedor neither, about a genocide over Serbs and Jews on Saint Elijah's day in 1941.

I gave a lecture in Prijedor on a public tribune “The Truth about Genocide in Bosnia – condition to peace in Balkans”. Fundamental thesis from my study “Srebrenica – ‘Genocide’ Endgame in Bosnia (July 1995)” that Serbs did not perform a genocide over Moslems in Srebrenica, caused a big reaction, it was recorded in Serbian (“Glas” – Serbian daily newspaper)

* Dr Milan Bulajić president of the Fund for Genocide Research

¹ Milan Bulajić, volume 4, page 767, Jovan Kesar, “My Stolen Childhood” (“Djetinjstvo moje ukradeno”), Kozara National Park, Prijedor, 1988, page 96

² Branko Bokan, “Sanski Most District” (“Srez Sanski Most”), volume 2, page 102

and Moslem (“Dnevni avaz” – Moslem daily newspaper) press, bearing in mind that International Crime Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, sentenced commander of Drina Corps, general Radislav Krstić, for genocide on 46 years of prison; that former Prijedor mayor Miomir Stanić, precisely at the time when we arrived to Prijedor, on 31st Oct 2003, was passed a life sentence.

We started investigating the truth on genocide over Orthodox Serbs and Jews, when Croatian and Moslem Nazi-Ustashas on Šušnjar killed about 5,500 people for three days, on 31st of July, 1st and 2nd of August 1941.

In Serbian Sanski Most (Oštra Luka), the 22nd Traditional Literal Meetings “Šušnjar 2003” were held, under sponsorship of the mayor Drena Kuridža, where the following poets from Republic of Srpska were announced – Ranko

Pavlović, Boro Kapetanović, Mihajlo Orlović, Marinka Jovanić, Jovanka Stojčinović – Nikolić, Ružica Komar; from Serbia – Nenad Grujičić, Dragan Kolundžija; from Sarajevo – Dara Sekulić; promotion of books and presenting “Šušnjar” award for contribution to Serbian poetry; award “The Grmeč Letter” (“Slovo Grmeča”) for the best published book on the subject of homeland. The author was called to address the gathered people, gave credit to the writers and poets and suggested solemn promise that the world be told until next year about the truth on the crime of genocide that happened on Šušnjar 62 years ago.

On the territory of Republic of Srpska there is a modest monastery Klisina in a wonderful place, Serbian Sanski Most, and as dictated by Dayton, the memorial Šušnjar (5,500 Serbian and Jewish victims) is located on the territory of Moslem and Croatian Federation. I remembered Holbrook’s statement:

»Galbraight and I met Tudjman alone again on September 17. At the same time, by prearrangement, Clark, Hill, Kerrick, and Pardew met with Susak. Peter and I sat side by side on an ornate sofa, embroidered with gold trim, while Tudjman sat at my right in a Louis Quinze armchair. I told Tudjman the offensive had great value to the negotiations. It would be much easier to retain at table what had been won on the battlefield than to get the Serbs to give up territory they had controlled for several years. I urged Tudjman to take Sanski Most, Prijedor, and Bosanski Novi – all important towns that had become worldwide symbols of ethnic cleansing. If they were captured before we opened negotiations on territory, they

would remain under federation control – otherwise it would be difficult to regain them in a negotiation ... As we left the meeting, I pulled Defence Minister Susak aside. ‘Gojko, I want to absolutely clear,’ I said. ‘Nothing we said today could be construed to mean that we want you to stop the rest of the offensive, other than Banja Luka. Speed is important. We can’t say so publicly, but please take Sanski Most, Prijedor, and Bosanski Novi. And do it quickly, before the Serbs regroup.’«

These were Holbrook’s words. This was how Sanski Most and Šušnjar came under the Federation control.³

Map of demarcation

When we came to Sanski Most on the 2nd of Aug, on Saint Elijah’s Day, for the holy liturgy in the church of Saint Apostles Peter and Paul, we have been informed that on the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina territory, on 35 Orthodox Christian graveyards in Sana area, there were more than 400 tombstones profaned and 15 Orthodox churches demolished.⁴ The demolition was done after the Dayton Peace Agreement, at the time when there were not any military operations. In order to convince ourselves into the authenticity, on the same day, after the commemoration, together with Slobodan Radošević and Dr. Schindley we visited Stari Majdan and recorded the old destroyed Orthodox church of Virgin Mary’s Ascension, where the trees have already grown inside. On the other side a new modern mosque was rising.

In the town a “Public notice on the occasion of announced Orthodox-religious ceremony on the memorial ‘Šušnjar’ Sanski Most”⁵ circulated.

“Sanski Most Islam Association Majlis is concerned by the announcement from the organizer on holding Orthodox-religion ceremony on memorial ‘Šušnjar’ Sanski Most, which ought to take place on Saturday, 2nd Aug 2003.

We strongly denounce such intentions for the following reasons:

Memorial to the fascist terror victims has been erected for all the citizens from Sanski Most disregarding their religion. Provided that Bosniak Moslems also rest on Šušnjar, not a single religion has the right to change

³ Richard Holbrook, “To End a War”, Random House, New York, 1998, pp 160, 166

⁴ Statement of the Association of Serbs for Return to Sanski Most President, Drago Praštalo, Politika, 21st of July 2002, page A2.

⁵ Islam Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sanski Most Islam Association Majlis, Executive Board, reference: 01-403/2003, 31st July 2003

historical facts, customs, memorials and composition of the buried.

Sanski Most Majlis does not mind that Orthodox ceremony is performed in religious facilities and not over the bones of murdered Bosniak-Moslems instead.”

Due to Sanski Most authorities disagreement with this manifestation, the gathering and the ceremony were secured by strong forces of SFOR and numerous members of Ministry of Interior Affairs from Una-Sana Canton.⁶ In such conditions on the memorial a small number of Serbs and Jews participated, Prijedor mayoress, Nada Ševo, and Serbian Sanski Most mayoress, Drena Kuridža.

At the entrance there is a marble tablet:

“In the time period between 1941 and 1945, genocide over Serbian and Jewish people was committed by the occupier – Ustashas and Germans.

On ten killing fields and in death camps 5,500 men, women and children from Sanski Most territory lay atrociously murdered.

On this killing field Ustasha criminals shot a few thousands Serbs and Jews on the 1st and 2nd of August 1941.”

The question whether the Germans’ killing operations here had the character of genocide was answered negatively.

With deep reverence I read the other tablets:

“Here lays the truth
a greatness of a man
one town
seed of life”

“Here will a man
return a bloody debt
to a man
by faith in a man!

“Here
the air ran out of air
mercy out of reason
life out of time

⁶ B. Kahrmanović, “Memorial for Serbian and Jewish victims in Sanski Most – gathering with strong security by SFOR”, *Oslobođenje*, Sunday, 3rd Aug 2003

man out of honour”

Visiting the memorial did not match the above inscription.

The word “Serbs” was hollowed out of the memorial tablet.

Researcher Slobodan Lukić informed us that 522 tablets made of special metal containing the victims’ names⁷ were taken, that two tractor trailers of crap was cleared.

Together with Republic of Srpska rabbi Jozef Atijas and episcope Hrizostem we visited Jewish graveyard, which was almost completely ruined. I could see tears in rabbi’s eyes on the Jewish graveyard, on the Ustasha killing field where two of his brothers were murdered, Lolo and Puba Atijas.

Great Orthodox graveyard was damaged brutally. Between Jewish and Orthodox graveyards, a new Catholic graveyard emerged.

Episcope Hrizostem, and then rabbi Atijas, served a requiem and a Jewish prayer memorial to the victims of genocide on Šušnjar, gave messages of peace, that no one should ever experience terrifying killing fields from Šušnjar again or concentration camps from the Second World War and armed conflicts in the nineties in these areas. Upon invitation of rabbi Atijas, respects were paid to the other nations members, victims on Šušnjar.

Rabbi Atijas stated that since the crimes of genocide in Sanski Most on Saint Elijah’s Day in 1941 “there were no Jews in Prijedor or Sanski Most anymore.” At this painful venue of our Balkans past more than five thousand and five hundred abruptly terminated lives are reminding and begging us even at the present day: Do not forget our sufferings. Your oblivion is the most horrible sin. This voice is heard louder and louder every day, because without these people, without their holy justice, we cannot move to the true peace, future. As long as their bones rest in this Sana land, may their horrible truth live inside of us. Not for revenge, hatred, new bloodsheds, but for God’s justice and truth, for our children’s lives and future generations.” He emphasised “that even today there have been attempts to manipulate numbers of the killed and their nationalities... They do not even realise that they are taking a great sin on their souls.”

Slobodan Lukić reminded that “on this point in 1941, for only three days and three nights on 31st of July, 1st and 2nd of August, Ustasha criminals killed 5,500 men, women and children only because they were Serbs, Or-

⁷ In the evening prior to the Commemoration in 2002, 80 tags were missing, containing names of 410 out of 5,500 killed Serbs (Politika, 21st of July 2002)

thodox Christians, because they were Jews.” “And 62 years later, in 2003, Serbian people in Sanski Most is going through great and difficult temptations, deprived of their rights and humiliated without any basic, human, national and religious rights. One proof for this is that the requiem last year as well as this year was held under the ban of the current authorities in Sanski Most.

Upon returning to Belgrade, on 4th of Aug 2003 I have written a letter to Mrs Nada Ševo, mayoress of Prijedor:

Thank you for your welcome and cooperation, because it was on your invitation and through Rabbi Atijas that I agreed to come to Prijedor and Šušnjar.

I am sorry that we did not meet as agreed for finalising discussions.

I think that the round table Truth about genocide in Bosnia – condition to peace on Balkans was a success. Dnevni avaz published “Bulajić from Belgrade believes that there was no genocide in Srebrenica, Jasmin Odobašić presented the facts and data on number of killed people from Srebrenica.”

Accepting the challenge from Odobašić I responded by agreeing to meet him and that he gives me the documentation, authenticity of which I have publicly brought in question. With Mirko Glamočanin we contacted the given phone number (061) 213-439, the answer was that he was away on a trip!?! We tried another number (061) 213-441, but failed. I think Mr Baroš should inform him. We have to act straightforwardly and energetically.

Visiting the remembrance memorial was a great disappointment, the word “Serbs” was hollowed out; 252 tablets were destroyed, two tractor trailers of crap were cleared, orthodox graveyard was being demolished, destroyed Jewish graveyard, Catholic graveyard built....This has to be shown to the world. The fact that Jewish graveyard was destroyed and that Serbian graveyard was damaged opens a special opportunity.

The written protest of Sanski Most Islam Association Majlis because “on Šušnjar Bosniak Moslems rest as well “ should be reacted to immediately, new conference with their participation, to show which “Bosniak Moslems” were in the graveyard. If this was Partisan graveyard, this commemoration was devoted to the victims from 1941. It is essential to react urgently. I was prepared to stay a day or two longer because of this.

In my way, praying on the commemoration, I have decided to start writing about Šušnjar, beside the numerous obligations on my back (Fund for

Genocide Research, Jasenovac, Srebrenica), because I assured myself that there was nothing in Srebrenica, not a minimum! I already have a working title: Šušnjar near Sanski Most (1941-2003) – genocide over Serbs and Jews on Saint Elijah's Day 1941." I need help for this. Slobodan Lukić promised to provide me with the materials three times. He did not give anything to me or Dr Schindler!

I need demarcation map between Serbian Sanski Most (Oštra Luka) and Sanski Most (the Federation), to indicate how did the Serbian genocide graveyard Šušnjar come into Federation.

It was fateful coincidence that I should arrive to Prijedor at the time when the International Crime Tribunal for former Yugoslavia reached their verdict on penalty for the mayor of Prijedor, Miomir Stakić, to serve life sentence. [Today Belgrade newspaper Novosti published an article "Summons washes away verdicts" ("Poziv pere presude") including photographs of Dr Stakić's parents and children.]

The truth about crimes in Prijedor, in the light of verdict for continuation of Šušnjar and verdict of the International Tribunal, has to be documented.

All I got during my stay in Prijedor, believe it or not, was a "Book of Prijedor Municipality Missing Persons – Neither Guilty nor Deserving Blame" ("Knjiga nestalih općine Prijedor – Ni krivi ni dužni") in which Edin Ramulić accused Serbs for "genocide" over 3,227 Moslems.

And while Serbs were being accused for genocide in the middle of Prijedor, the International Tribunal in the Hague did not accept the indictment of Stakić for genocide!

I have asked Mirko Glamočanin to provide me with a video or audio record of the Public Tribune (it would be most useful if I could get a transcript so I could start analysis immediately).

It is necessary to obtain people in Prijedor most urgently that would collect and process the materials. During my return I visited Drago Šormaz in Gornji Jelavac (065) 903-858 (052) 232-091. I would also mention the names of Milenko Radivojac, Kozara Museum director (052) 211-334, Dragan Vrućinić, Korčanica Remembrance area director as well as Slobodan Lukić if he truly wants to cooperate (065) 920-906, (051) 370-372.

On my part I will do anything within the limits of possible. You have encouraged me with your promise that you would anticipate funds in your budget for 2004 for Šušnjar, Prijedor, Srebrenica as well I hope, because

we opened this issue in Prijedor. Serbian Sanski Most mayoress, Mrs Drena Kuridža, expressed readiness to follow your example.

I repeat, institutionally the Fund for Genocide Research, whose president I am, stands at your disposal as an institution.

I believe that these projects have wider significance, that the destiny of the Republic of Srpska depends on their successful realisation.

Please acknowledge the receipt of this e-letter

In anticipation of your reply,

P. S. You have particularly raised my interest regarding the testimony and documentation from your sister about Jasenovac.

Provided that with my departure from Prijedor every communication was terminated, five attempts to speak to Mrs Ševo through telephone failed also. I have written a new letter on 14th of August, in which I informed them that after Dnevni avaz and Serbian press, "Free Europe" contacted me, the show "Bridge" ("Most") by Omer Karabeg from Prague and proposed to publicly openly face Jasmin Odošić, head of the Commission for Searching Missing Persons from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 19th August 2003 at 19:05 hrs, which I accepted.

I informed her about preliminary discussions in Belgrade on 11th of August, when a working group was formed consisting of the following members: Dušan Bogdanović, general Milan Daljević, Sofija Praća Veljović, Mira Praća Milivojević, Dobrila Todorović and Petar Rodić.

I indicated onto the article in Politika from 11th of August, "On the occasion of the verdict to Milomir Stakić for crimes – Planned persecutions", ("Povodom presude Milomiru Stakić za zločine – Planirani progoni", by "the Fund for Humanitarian Law legal team" ("Fond za humanitarno pravo") from Belgrade.

I received no reply to either this letter or a new telephone call. The promised recording of the public tribune in Prijedor was not provided either!??

In Sana district in 1941, according to the census, between 1931 and 1941, around 38,100 (57%) Serbs, 18,650 Moslems (28,32%), and 9,040 Croats (13,73%) and 79 Jews lived. In thirty villages lived only Serbs, in nine villages only Moslems, in three villages only Croats, in six villages

Moslems and Serbs, in nine villages Croats and Serbs, in 17 settlements and in the town Sanski Most lived Moslems, Serbs and Croats, Jews only lived in Sanski Most, one family in Lušci Palanka.⁸

Ustasha Board had already formed District Administration of Sana district on the 18th of Apr 1941: chief Dr Josip Cerjan, mayor Himzo Pašić Rešić.

Five Ustasha policeman and ten members of Ustasha squad “Ante Starčević” were stationed in the first days of the month of May 1941 in Prijedor.⁹

In Sanski Most Home-Guard unit was stationed under the command of the captain Teufik Silahić, reinforced by a squad of gendarmerie, under command of the gendarmerie Lieutenant Fabijan Kurilić (gendarmerie station commander in Sanski Most Moslem Ustasha Bećir Duraković) and a group of Zagreb policemen.

Ustasha terror over Orthodox Serbs started already on Saint George’s Day, on 6th of May. They burst into the houses in Serbian Kijevo (Đuro Domazet, Dane Kovačević, Mile Ceranić, Marko Kondić Miladinović and others), turned the tables over, maltreated the house inmates and guests, stepped on Saint’s Day candles and thrashed dishes.

At six o’clock in the morning on 7th of May Ustashes and gendarmes shot Marko and Đorđe Kondić and Rajko Stojanović in Sanski Most in front of the Gendarmeries Barracks for expressing revolt, in presence of all those Ustashes that were in the town. They were buried on the Šušnjar graveyard. These were the first victims by Ustasha in Sana district.

On the same day the District chief, Dr Ante Merkadić ordered that all the Serbian volunteers who deserted Austro-Hungarian and joined Serbian army and fought against German and Austro-Hungarian troops in the First World War and all the internees from the camp Arad were taken as hostages: Jovo Deliće, Pero Gvozden, Petar – Pepa Brajić, Lazo Miličević, Lazar Radošević and Teofil Praća from Sanski Most, Đuro Grbić, priest from Tomina, Jovo Marjanović, priest from Dabar, Aćim Savić from Usorci, holder of Karađorđe star, Mile Marjanović from Stari Majdan, Mile Mandić and Nikola Vukić from Zdena, Aćim Svile Čorokalo from Podlug and Ljupko Malić from Dževari.

⁸ Branko J. Bokan, “Fight against Ustashes and Germans in Kijevo and Tramošinja between 6th and 8th of May 1941, separated from Military-Historical Gazette, edition 3, 1985, page 137 (“Borba sa ustašama i Nijemcima u Kijevu i Tramošnji 6-8. maja 1941”)

⁹ Report from the commander of Croatian army parts in Bosanska Krajina on fights near Sanski Most, dated 11th May 1941, Belgrade Military-Historical Institute Archives, volume 84, reference number 39/1-1.

After arresting the hostages the town-crier was announcing Ustasha order that in case of an attack on German soldiers and Ustashes the imprisoned hostages would be shot.¹⁰

Ustashes in Sanski Most started arrests of individuals in the first days of the month of July 1941. Ustashes from Donji Kamengrad, near the mill on Blija, without any reason arrested Jovo, Milan and Adam Veselinović from Bosanski Milanovac and took them to the prison in Sanski Most. From there, as it was later discovered, they were forced to Jasenovac concentration camp, where they were killed.

In July Ustashes killed Đukan Dimić and Marko Veselinović from Bosanski Milanovac, who were medically treated in Banja Luka hospital, where they took them from and killed them.

Major arrest of Serbs, partially Jews as well, started on Sunday, 27th July, in the early morning, at first in Sanski Most, then in the other settlements too, centres of municipalities and a great number of Sana district villages.

On Sunday afternoon, a young man arrived from Sanski Most to Lušci Palanka on a bicycle with Ustasha list of the Serbs that were to be arrested. Since almost all the population was Serbian in this municipality, municipal clerks were still Serbs at the time, Rade Divjak and Drago Marjanović opened the letter and informed many from that list to run. Stevo Karakaš and Stevo Čulibrk came to Lušci Palanka to see Ilija Indić. Slavko Njegovan came in front of his house running and informed them that Ustashes would collect all the Serbs in Palanka region that night. Ilija Indić, Stevo Karakaš, Stevo Čulibrk and many others scattered through the surrounding villages and informed people to hide away and do not respond to gendarmerie and Ustasha summons. Ustashes managed to catch only Gojko Majkić and Branko Vukašinović, district branch office assessor, originally from Serbia, who they caught while sleeping. They tied them both and on 28th of July escorted them to Sanski Most into the Primary school building, and killed them later.

Among the first ones Ustashes arrested Stojanka Miljatović, a fifteen year old comprehensive high school student, and locked her up in the classroom of the Primary school in the park, next to the district administration building, where she found only two other prisoners.¹¹ In front of the school building two civilians with axes were standing. Not much later the youths

¹⁰ Branko Bokan, "Sanski Most District in PLB – Ustasha Terror First Victims," ("Srez Sanski Most u NOB – Prve žrtve ustaškog terora,") Sanski Most, 1980

¹¹ Stojanka Miljatović is one of the rear witnesses that survived. Branko Bokan, Testimony of the Survivor Victims (Svjedočanstva preživjelih žrtava)– Ustasha crimes in Sanski Most, Podgrmeč and Podkozara newspapers, July – August 2003, page 21

Obrad Lazić, Nedeljko – Šule Miličević, Lolo Atijas and his brother Puba, Slobodan Tontić, a merchant, Jovo Milinković, Ilija Praštalo and the others – 50 - 60 men were brought in. Ustashas gave no food to the arrested, most of them slept on the bare floor. People from Kljevci were brought to the Primary school prison as well.

A day or two after the arrest Ustashas started terrorizing, torturing and maltreating the arrested in various ways. This was done by a drunken Ustasha with three stars on his cap together with another Ustasha, a known pick-pocket, Huso Muhić, who was slapping and kicking about twenty people from Zdena and after that ordered them to slap and kick each other. After this Ustashas burst into the classroom and were beating everybody that came their way by rifle butt-ends. On Monday, the 28th, or on Tuesday, the 29th, Ustashas brought in tied and battered Gojko Majkić and Branko Vukašinić caught in Lušci Palanka. For two-three days they were allowing the prisoners to use the toilet in the yard. As off the 30th of July the prisoners were not allowed to go out in the yard, they relieved themselves in the school hallway. Not much later, the hallway was so contaminated that it was unbearable in the classrooms too. Due to the smell Ustashas did not keep the watch in the hallway, but around the building. They would burst in to beat the prisoners. Ustashas-civilians were replaced by Ustashas in uniforms as off the 30th of July. The windows were sealed with boards.

That day, the primary school prison was visited by Martin Macan, the District Court president, municipal notary with a group of Ustashas. They ordered the arrested to line up in two lines, to come to the desk one by one and say their names, surnames, age and occupation.

When the arrested were taken out into the school yard the following day, there were a few hundreds of Serbs and a smaller group of Jews. The district chief, Ivica Simeon, appeared, who told the prisoners not to try and escape, that they were under his protection and that nothing would happen to them. After this the prisoners were returned to the classrooms and cellars, each one went back to where they were earlier. Ustashas came and put a white sheet in the middle of the room and ordered the prisoners to submit their rings, watches, photographs, everything they had on them.

On the second day of August in the afternoon a group of Ustashas came with a list and called out the names of about 30 people and told them to go to the station to load sugar and flour. In the yard they tied them up and started beating them, so that they walked with difficulty. Instead to the station they were taken to Šušnjar and killed.

They released Stojanka Miljatović, who found out that her father was killed a day earlier by Ustashas, and the youths Nedeljko – Šule Miličević and Slobodan Tontić, from the prison. All the other were killed in the two following days.

Ustashas were arresting people at the same time in Stari Majdan and surrounding villages – Podvidača, Koprivna, Suhača, Brdari, Džepar, Oštra Luka and Rasavci.

Ustashas from Ališić, brothers Stipan, Vid and Dane Banović and Ivan Čorak, Ustashas from Brdari and Began Suljanović from Halilovo Brdo, forced Serbian peasants from Oštra Luka, Koprivna and Resavci. Some of them were killed along the way in their villages.

Dane Banović, armed with a rifle, passed through Džepar that day and some other villages and as an old friend and acquaintance was telling certain distinguished heads of the families that they should report to Stari Majdan Gendarmerie station immediately. He told his neighbour and friend, a distinguished peasant, oppositionist of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia regime, Ljupko Malić: “Good morning Ljupko! How are you Ljupko? There is nothing to it! More eminent people should be recorded. Do not be scared!” On his son’s advice, Drago, who advised him not to go to Majdan, Ljupko replied that he knew what the authority was, that it should be respected and that he would go for the property, for children, because if he did not go Ustashas would burn everything. Ljupko was captured in Stari Majdan and killed along with a group of arrested people, who were executed by shooting on Troska, not far away from Stari Majdan.

Ustasha tied and forced a group of eighteen people to Troska stream and shot them there. Eight people managed to untie themselves and escape (Đurađ and Stevo Stupar, Milan Marić, Jovo Praštalo, Milan Dobrijević, Đurađ Savić, Svetozar – Vojo Adamović and Mile Bundalo). Out of 132 prisoners, only one managed to escape the shooting (Trivo Zorić, called Martić, from Resavci). The execution was done by Herzegovina Ustashas with the help of a few local Ustashas.¹²

Ustasha Mehmed Kazić advised Čaplje residents to put themselves under Ustasha protection, because German army was moving ahead from Banja Luka to Sanski Most and were killing anybody they could find at home, that they should gather by the house and storage room of the merchant, Huso Rešić, the municipality chief in Tomina.

¹² Branko Bokan, “Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945” (“Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine”), pages 92-93.

Ustashas collected all the Serbs between fifteen years of age up to old men from Čaplje and Lužani. Serbian processions were locked up in the storage room. Serbs were told that they would all go to Serbia, that they could buy anything they needed in Rešić's shop. The Serbs that responded to Ustashas summons from different villages, on the road to Sanski Most through Čaplje, were stopped by Ustashas near Rešić's shop, on Kumalići side (area where the road through the village starts inclining towards Sanski Most) and by Čaplje fields, and locked them up in Rešić's storage room because the prisons in Sanski Most were far too full already. The prisoners were starved and tortured by thirst, some of them were so battered that they were unable to move.

On the 2nd of August Ustashas were taking peasants out one by one, tied them up with ropes, forced them together in dozens to the lawns called Žegar and on Čaplje fields, on the northern edge of the village, near "the wavy road". Ilija and Jefto Čičić from Čaplje, who were unable to walk, were loaded onto carts and driven to the killing field. Gojko Ljuboja managed to untie himself, Ustashas were shooting after him, but he managed to escape. The others were forced to lay down on their stomachs into the fields and hand bombs were thrown on them. If somebody stayed alive they would shoot them, finish them off by bats and axes. 80 – 90 people were killed.

The only survivors were Marko Đurđević, Vid Kajiš, Niko Jovanić, Nikola Trivić, Vlado Čičić and Đuro Burić, who lay quietly among the dead ones and managed to escape during the night time although Ustashas were shooting after them. Father of Marko, Aleksa Đurđević also survived, who was wounded lightly in his finger, but he was tied by a rope so tightly to the killed ones and failed to untie himself. He was sitting among the killed ones all night and smoked. When Ustashas came in the morning to bury the murdered peasants, they found Aleksa sitting and smoking. He begged Ustashas to let him go, because he did nothing wrong, but one Ustasha, swearing his King Petar, hit him on the head by a pick-axe and killed him.¹³

Village Kasapnice was populated by an equal number of Serbian and Croatian population. Six Croats joined Ustashas, Mijat Šakić became a member of Ustashas from Vrhpolje municipality. Out of sixty Serbs only

¹³ Branko Bokan, "Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945" ("Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine"), pages 89-90

three rescued themselves from the Serbian families that did not run away to Dabar or Jelašinovce, the others were killed in Vrhpolje or Sanski Most.

Village Kljevci had about 3,400 residents: around 300 Serbian families and close to 2,000 people; around 120 Croatian families counting about 840 members and about 80 Moslem families counting 560 households' members. The population lived in harmony, mutual respect and appreciation. After formation of the Ustasha ISC, the following Ustashes became active in the village: Mile Jurišić, Mile Tadić Ivanković, Ibro Kenjar, Petar Jurić and others, they behaved crudely and haughtily towards the Serbian people.

On the twenty-eighth of July they summoned about sixty distinguished Serbs from Kljevci, ordering them to bring two to three boards each onto Dabar bridge, because they were building Ustasha guardhouse for the railway bridge. When they arrived around noon carrying the boards, nails and tools, Ustashes tied them up and escorted them to Sanski Most, where they were killed. Sergij Veselinović and his son Luka were battered in the prison and released because he had some Austro-Hungarian medals from the First World War.

Early in the morning, on the same day Ustashes arrested 45 people and locked them up in the cellar of Gojko Ivanković on Begina hill. During the night they were beating them and talking them into converting to Catholicism, because that was the only way they could stay at their homes. On contrary, they would have to move to Serbia or Russia, they would not be able to take anything with them, their properties would be given to the ones that would stay in the village. Some of them agreed to convert to Catholicism under torture. All the arrested were released home so they could think everything through and make a decision in three days time.

On the last day of the month July Ustashes ordered moving out of Croatian and Moslem population from Kljevci, because a front was being opened in that village "from the south, the English were coming from Drvar and German artillery was going to proceed from Sanski Most, that would fire across the village."

Only Serbian population remained in the village. On Saint Elijah's Day, on the 2nd of August, Ustashes went through the village around ten o'clock in the morning and forced out men, women and children, forcing them to move in a column from hamlet to hamlet towards Vrhpolje, rushing them all the time "because a new front was being formed against the English". Nobody was allowed to stay. Around 1,700 souls were banished from

Kljevci. There were 180 members of the families Karanović and Zmijanac only. Petar Savanović was running before Ustashas from house to house shouting: "Run, people, to the forest! Russia is in the war! The English are with us. Do not trust Ustashas. They will kill you all!" Not many people listened to him.

All the others were brought onto Vrhpolje railway station, and a few thousands of men, women and children from Kasapnice, Tomina, Čaplje and other surrounding Sana and Ključ villages have already been there. A crowd of terrified men, women and children was pushed by the river Sana, Ustashas and gendarmes were positioned on the hills with rifles and machine guns. They have first killed "the betrayer" of Croats, Mane Dobrijević, in front of the crazed mass of banished people.

An unseen massacre and barbarism of Ustashas began. They found the family of Nikola Karamović, who wanted to stay at any cost and they started beating them with rifle butt-ends. Defending himself by the fence, he threw himself on two Ustashas, knocked them down on the ground and fell over them. The third Ustasha killed him with three bullets. Terrifying rifle and machine gun fire started against the mass in the field from all directions. The people ran everywhere, towards Hrustovo and Kljevci, swept by machine gun fire from the surrounding hills. Many were killed while running towards the railway composition that arrived for transporting the banished, some of them in the wagons. There were many dead and wounded people in the open and closed train wagons.

Around four o'clock in the afternoon a train full of banished men, women and children from Kljevci left to Sanski Most. In the crowded closed wagons some women and children suffocated. Around six o'clock Ustashas opened the wagons. The arrested were lined up and escorted to the prison in the Crops storehouse. Heavily wounded Milan Karanović could not walk any further from the bridge. An Ustasha kicked Milan on the head, ordering him to walk. When he replied that he could not, he shot two bullets at him and ordered the others to throw him of the bridge into the water.

In the Crops Storehouse Ustashas separated women and children up to twelve years of age to the left and men to the right from the entrance door. Torturing commenced. They brought two empty buckets inside the prison. Who ever would approach thinking that there was water inside wanting to drink Ustashas hit them by the rifle butt-ends on their backs and heads. Rade Karanović was killed. Fourteen year old Đuro Karanović helped by

his mother and sister managed to wrap himself in some bloody sheets and escape the following day.

On the entrance into this prison Ustashas were taking away valuables (watches, rings, money).

Other groups were brought in Sanski Most as well, in the prisons in Primary school and the Crops storehouse. Many were already being killed in Vrhpolje or on the way to Sanski Most. This is where Gvozden was shot with a few bullets. Ustasha ordered Perica Zurunić to carry dead Gvozden behind the slaughter house, on Alagić field, where they killed the captured Serbs. When he carried him to there the Ustasha killed Perica too.

After torturing in the Primary school building, Ustashas transferred Mladen Gvozden into the Crops Storehouse. When one of the Ustashas started beating him again, Gvozden managed to snatch away his rifle. The other Ustasha noticed and killed him.

In a large room of the Crops storehouse Ustashas pushed the arrested from town onto one side and peasants to the other side. Three Ustashas, Kljako and the other two from Herzegovina, were beating the captives with sticks on their backs, threatening by rifles and pointing them to their heads.

Sergije Veselinović, the only living witness of the torture, died upon his return as a result of the torture. Before he died he told his friends how Ustashas were beating and torturing Todo Mudrinić to that extent that his liver was dislocated, as a result of beating and kicking Vujo Kovačić's eye popped.

In the yard of the Crops storehouse and on the market Ustashas forced people to run in groups of one hundred to two hundred people and sweep them off exhausted firing from machine guns.

The arrested were being taken to Šušnjar or Alagić field in groups, where they were being killed.¹⁴

Mass arrest followed the following day, on Monday, 28th July, when many peasants came to town on the market. Ustashas were collecting the peasants on the market, in the streets, coffee houses and inns and brought them to

¹⁴ Narrating to the Author, "Sanski Most District in PLC" ("Srez Sanski Most u NOB"), Branko Bokan, by the Alliance of Associations of Fighters in PLW (Savez Udruženja Boraca NOR-a – SUBNOR) Local municipality Kljevci soldiers, Dušan Kovačević, Đuro Karanović, 20th and 29th June 1975; report by the Home-Guard aviator dated 2nd Aug 1941 (Archives VII, Fund ISC, volume 5, reference number 1-1/2), "Sanski Most District in PLC-Majority of adult people from Kljevci was killed" ("Srez Sanski Most u NOB-Većina odraslih Kljevčana je poubijana"), volume 2, pages 87-89.

the Primary school transformed into the prison, to the Crops storehouse on the Crops market, to the Gendarmeries station, to the district prison (the district building cellar) and to the Moslem primary school building.

That day Ustashas were arresting Serbs in Stari Majdan and in some villages in the vicinity of Sanski Most and Stari Majdan.

From the 28th to the 31st July Ustashas arrested the Serbs that came to the town from the surrounding areas.

On the thirtieth of July Ustashas arrested a group of people from Hrast, a Zdena hamlet and from Đedovača. Majority was killed by axes and sticks below the graveyard called Magarica. Only five rescued themselves: Ljubo and Milan Vukić; Sava, Mirko and Ljubo Đorđević. When they dragged themselves to their houses so battered, they found them deserted. After they killed the adult men, Ustashas forced the remaining members of their families out of the hamlet Hrast. They went from house to house ordering the family members to move out immediately “wherever they know they can”. Women, children and a boy or two loaded the most necessary things onto carts and left towards the village Zdena centre, some towards Čaplje, where they had relatives.

Passing through Sanski Most they found streets crowded with refugees from the villages that were caught in an uprising that morning.

There were men, women, children, horse carts and cattle everywhere. The refugees that were arriving into town did not know where to go or what to do.

During the night between the 1st and the 2nd of August the 4th Attacking Ustasha troop arrived as well, which was called “Croatian XIII troop” (“Hrvatska XIII satnija”), “Zagreb troop” (“Zagrebačka satnija”) and “Executioners troop” (“Dželatska satnija”), under the command of Makovac (Ivica?), Filip Radoš and Gojko Kljako, the Ustashas returnees. Immediately after their arrival the troop started mass killings on all Sanski Most killing fields.

“In the night between the 2nd and the 3rd of August Ustashas killed the hostages, who I had captured at the beginning of the rebellion. It is believed that around 800 hostages were killed. The total number of the killed is not familiar, but it is still believed, that around 3,000 people were shot” informed the District chief in Sanski Most, Ustasha Ivica Simeon.¹⁵

Commander of the 3rd Croatian Gendarmerie Regiment, informed on the 6th of Aug 1941: ”3. During the night between the 2nd and the 3rd and

¹⁵ Joint report to the Gendarmerie commandship of the ISC, dated 16th Aug 1941, Military-Historical Institute Archives, Fund of the ISC, volume 86, reference 36/5-1.

during the course of the 3rd day of August 1941, soldiers-Ustashes shot around 700 Eastern-Orthodox people, who were captured as hostages, or they have however been captured on the ground during the operation of cleansing by the soldiers.”¹⁶

On the thirtieth of July, Ibrahim Suljin, together with a group of Ustashes from Ališići burst in Usorci, where they killed Mladen, Rade and Simo Crnobrnja and Simo Bašić.

Four days later, on 3rd of August, Ustashes from Sasina, Ante Mandić and Smiljen Kozić killed Vaso, Mikan and Jovan Kecman and Savan Crnobrnja. Mile Gvozden managed to escape.

On the same day, a group of Ustashes from Prijedor found Mile and Jefto Majkić, Boško Brkić and Trivo Stojanović in Milko Majkić’s shop and killed them. Drago Gončin managed to escape.

On the same day a third group of Nezir Kamenić’s Ustashes came from the village Trnova, who killed Pero Brkić and Lazar Džaja at their homes. They took away Marko and Ostoja Gončin, Niko, Pero and Todo Vasiljević, Marko and Ostoja Plavšić and Petar Andrijević and killed them in Trnova gully.

The same group of Ustashes came to Usorci the following day, caught four peasants and took them to Trnova to kill them. Upon persistent intervention of Smail Sadić, a farmer from Trnova, they let them go, because that day the killing of Serbs was stopped in Sanski Most.¹⁷

Preparations of justifying the genocide over Orthodox Serbs in Sanski Most are demonstrated in the report of Ustasha Lieutenant Kurilić:

“During the night between the 31st of July and the 1st of Aug that year, shooting was heard near the railway bridge secured by gendarmerie guards – and today around 12 o’clock one Chetnik started fire on the gendarmerie guard on that bridge. The Chetnik was killed and around half an hour later soldiers Home-Guards and gendarmes killed 4 Eastern-Orthodox people who were running away and would not stop upon being called. All this happened in the immediate proximity of the railway bridge over Sana.

Since these were killed, shooting of individual smaller groups of Chetniks was heard coming from the nearby hills, so that Zagreb troop Ustashes were sent into action immediately. At the same time Sanski Most town

¹⁶ Commandership of the 3rd Croatian Gendarmerie Regiment, reference 217/J.S., Banja Luka, 6th Aug 1941, to the Supreme Gendarmerie Commandership Zagreb

¹⁷ Branko Bokan, “Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945” (“Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine”), page 93

was closed up and all Eastern Orthodox men were captured and imprisoned in the camp.

Hostages imprisoned in the gendarmerie barracks, 65 of them, from various regions of Sanski Most station, Ilidža and Lušci Palanka, among which were the two that participated in the fight on 30th of July that year against the undersigned and a gendarme on Vitorog mountain, and who were caught in the evening by gendarmes during the retreat, will be destroyed tonight by Zagreb Ustasha troop.

At the moment there are two troops in Sanski Most, one troop of Home-Guards and Zagreb Ustasha Army troop. By their actions cleansing of Chetniks and rebels will be successfully completed...¹⁸

Arresting all adult Serbs from **Sana** started on the 1st of August. Ustashes and policeman, separated in groups of three-four men, went from house to house, summoned the heads of the families and adult men Serbs and took them to the prisons.

A few Jews were also arrested.

The only ones that did not respond to the summons were Boško Marinković, Milan – Mićuka Miljević and Veselin – Veso Bašić Marinković, who were hidden by the Moslem neighbours, or they hid in their houses.

Ustashes arrested Nikola Opalić, Kalinić, Vidaković, tailor Pero Zuber, Jovo Vojvodić, even though they converted into Catholicism, Ružica Štefić, Croatian from Dalmatia and postman Ilija Sakradžija, who was hiding at hers, and took them to the Crops storehouse on the market.

Ustasha Himzo Zukić, called Čiko, started killing Orthodox Serbs the first. Along with Ustasha criminal Kljako and two other Ustashes he arrested Pero Zurunić, a merchant and his brother Tošo, a student. Pero's wife was Šemsa Tucaković, originally from Tuzla, a teacher in Bosanski Milanovac, by marrying him she converted to the Orthodox religion, took on a name Draga. Upon complaining by Ustasha Luka Miniga, who was standing in front of his house and watched the arrest of his neighbours Pero and Tošo Zurunić, Draga (Šemsa) was tied up and arrested too. They took her to the railway bridge on Sana, up the river from the town, having tortured her, they killed her and threw her into the river.¹⁹

¹⁸ Military-Historical Institute Archives, Fund of the ISC, volume 86, reference 17/5-1

¹⁹ Narration by Milan Mićuka Miljević to Branko Bokan, 10th Jan 1974

In the new school, where many employees were Serbs, Moslems and Croats, they arrested all the Serbs and took them to prison and after that to the killing field. A communist from Banja Luka, bricklayer Smail Sobo, rescued one Serbian employee in the school attic, whom he helped to escape.²⁰

A woman came to Sanski Most to complain to Konrad Horvat, originally from Zlatari, who came from Zagreb ahead of Zagreb policemen groups. Horvat did not even want to hear her out, pulled his pistol and shot her. In wounds the woman walked over to the river Sana and died there.

Another woman had a baby in the District administration prison and went mad. She disappeared with the other prisoners in the District administration.²¹

In the streets of Sanski Most there were corpses lying everywhere.

In Podlug, Ustasha Huesin Bešić with a group of Ustashas from Trnova on the 3rd of Aug in Brlog, bottom part of Podlug, started to gather adult men Serbs in order to take them to Sanski Most and convert to Catholicism, promising them that they would return home in two hours, and that in such way their lives would be rescued and guaranteed. One Moslem and his son warned Serbs about the danger of the threat they were under, but majority of Serbs believed Ustashas, their neighbours. There were 106 Serbs from Podlug that moved towards Sanski Most, Pero Novaković and Miloš Došenović from Husimovci. Novaković suggested that they attack and disarm Ustashas, which the others did not accept, because they were frightened that their families would get killed. Novaković and Došenović used the opportunity and escaped into Komar grove, north of Pobrjeđe along the road from Podlug. While they were turning towards the Crops storehouse, Mile Radujko used the mess and ran across the yard of Ante Knežević and returned to the village.

Ustashas forced the group of 105 people from Podlug in the building of the Crops storehouse where they severely tortured them. Then they tied a group of twenty people from Podlug and took them for execution on Alagić field, northwest from Sanski Most, on the left bank of Sana, opposite the village Šehovci. When they brought them over the excavated graves, Vojin Čučak managed to untie himself and escape, although Ustashas were shooting and wounded him in the shoulder. Jovan Starčević from Krkojevci also

²⁰ Smail Sobo, "First Months of Occupation, Central Bosnia in PLC", ("Prvi mjeseci okupacije, Srednja Bosna u NOB"), volume one, page 414

²¹ Sofija Prača Veljović, «Sanski Most PLC Chronicles» («Hronika NOB Sanskog Mosta»), manuscript

managed to escape from the killing field. Nineteen people from Podlug were killed.

Ustashas separated seven young men from Podlug in the Crops storehouse – Stole Knežević, Savan Adamović, Mitar Novak, Gojko Kuzmanović, Pero Kojić, Todor Dragičević and Jovo Čorokalo, who was rescued from execution by his acquaintance from Sasina, and released them home. The rest of them were killed that day in Alagić field.

Whilst the captured people from Podlug were being taken and killed, Latif Hasić returned to Podlug with a group of Ustashas to arrest the runaway Čučak and some people that they did not find at home that morning. When they failed to find the ones they were looking for, they were telling the wives and relatives that the arrested were taken to Russia, so they asked for money that they would take to them.²²

On Monday 4th of August through the town-crier (drummer), Mile Krunić, the following was announced:

“Oyez! Oyez! As off today not everybody is entitled to kill Serbs, from today Serbs can be killed only by the members of the mighty German Reich and members of the ISC armed forces!”

On that third day of the mass execution of the Serbian people in Sanski Most and the surrounding areas, Ustashas ordered the variety band that happened to be in town, to perform entertaining programme on Alagić field, not far from the crimes scene. On that day all the shops had to be opened and all the offices had to work, in order to show “how everything was normal, that there were no killings!”²³

According to the testimony of eyewitnesses on the killing field in Šušnjar, there were two big holes excavated, about three metres wide, over two metres deep and up to forty metres long.

Ustashas tied groups of the arrested in prisons by wire or ropes, two by two, lead them through the town escorted by a group of musicians, brought them to the excavated holes, killed them with bats, picks, axes or iron bars, they slaughtered some. Sometimes they would kill them from rifles or machine guns.

²² Branko Bokan, “Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945” (“Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine”), page 91

²³ Branko Bokan, “Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945” (“Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine”), page 95; “Genocide over the Serbs from Bosanska Krajina 1941-1945” (“Genocid nad Srbima Bosanske Krajine 1941-1945.”), *European Letter*, 1996, pages 29-31

“Ustashas go to collect people every day, to rob, they are pushing children and women. It was horrible”, Katarina Čanak, the eyewitness described.

“While they are walking in the street, they hit a child carried in the arms of its mother by a rifle butt-end on the head and their brain would spill out. I watched that from the window.

“The people they would collect in the evening, they would line up in the morning and prepare the carts and horses. They put lime and tools in the carts, Ustashas music plays at the front, then the column walks, followed by Ustashas....and the people sing. They had to sing the songs that Ustashas ordered them to sing.....

“We look on Šušnjar We see: the holes have already been excavated... they are lining them up, then a machine gun fire is heard. It sweeps them in a moment. We were muted with terror....”²⁴

Role of the Catholic church in genocide over Orthodox Serbs

Summons to the Orthodox Serbs for conversion by the Catholic church was aiming at gathering Serbs, capturing them and killing them.

Ustasha report confirms that Sasina parish priest Fra Luka Tešić²⁵, a sworn Ustasha, in the summer 1941”...with his peasants was leading the slaughter around Sanski Most and the vicinity”.²⁶ In his church preaches he supported Ustashas openly and the Chief of State Pavelić. During the check of Orthodox Serbs, he was saying that now it would be Moslems’

²⁴ Katarina Čanak is from Gornja Sanica. Together with a bigger group of women and children she was transferred to Sanski Most. As a Croat she was released. She went to the house of Lazić family in town near the Railway station in Sanski Most. She watched from the attic window secretly how Ustashas escorted the arrested Serbs and took them for execution. Narration by Katarina Čanak to the author Branko Bokan on 28th of June 1977. “Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945” (“Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine”), page 94, footnote 30

²⁵ Fra Luka Tešić, born on 29th Nov 1883, in Žabari, Ivanjska parish, district Banja Luka, parents Mato and Marija, maiden Radman, named him Ivo. He completed classic comprehensive high school in the Franciscan Seminary in Visoko, he was admitted in the Franciscan order on 15th July 1911 in Guča Gora; completed theology studies in Sarajevo; he ordained on 16th of July 1916 in Banja Luka; holistic assistant in Jajce, parish priest in Šimići, Šukrovac, Kiseljak, Novi Šeher and Sasina (1937-1943)

²⁶ Report from Banja Luka Protection Police inspector, Pero Simić, dated 28th Oct 1942, Branko Bokan, “Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945” (“Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine”), page 98

turn. As a war criminal he was sentenced to death.²⁷ He was shot on 24th Dec 1944 in Prijedor (according to Province Archives in Sanski Most).²⁸

The parish priest from Stara Rijeka Nikola Tojčić,²⁹ during the church preaches publicly supported Ustashas and the Chief of State Pavelić. On a few occasions he could have rescued Orthodox Serbs from getting killed by Ustashas, but he did not do so. He sent his men to Dževar, Brdari and neighbouring villages to advise Serbs to convert to Catholic religion and that they would be saved from Ustashas that way. When they arrived to a certain spot in Marići, Ustashas waited for them and killed them. Sima, Jova, Bogdan, Dušan and Milan Dobrijević were killed then. Đorđe and Đuro Samardžija fell down unhurt among the shot and managed to escape.

During the “voluntary” group conversion that was performed by the parish priest Nikola Tojčić, a group of Ustashas armed with machine guns was provided.

The Germans, based on the statements of refugees from the ISC, produced a report on the situation in the former Vrbas ban’s province (west Bosnia) dated 1941, between April 1941 and March 1942”.³⁰ It was recorded that on Saint Elijah’s Day in Sanski Most, slaughter was carried out, that Ustashas killed 2,862 men, women and children.

In the report on situation in these areas to the Commandership of the 3rd Gendarmerie Regiment in Banja Luka, Ustasha Lieutenant Kurilić informed that between the night of the 2nd and the 3rd of August Ustashas shot around 700 Eastern-Orthodox people, who were captured as hostages or the soldiers caught them during the action of cleansing on the ground. District chief from Sanski Most, allegedly, went to Banja Luka on the 2nd of August to intervene with the people in charge of the hostages, but it was too late because they had already been shot.³¹

In the report of the District administration of Sanski Most, the District chief Ivica Simeon, stated that in Sanski Most in the night between the

²⁸ According to Marijan Karaula: «Fra Luka was a real man from the people, born from the people, merged with people, so he understood the people’s soul. This is why the people sacrificed and worked, and the people loved him as his true people’s uncle and spiritual Shephe rd. Maybe they were the true reason why the communist picked on him in Prijedor, who took him from the parish house in Stratinska, sentenced and shot him on the Christmas Eve Day, 24th Dec 1944” [Victims and martyrs (Žrtve i mučenic), pages 115-116; Bosna Srebrena, 1945, edition 3, page 39; Saint Ana Gazette (Glasnik sv. Ane), 1945, page 88]

²⁹ Nikola Tojčić, born on 19th Jan 1892, Ključ, ordained on 11th June 1915, parish priest in Stara Rijeka (District department for Internal Affairs Sanski Most, reference 201/45, State commission, reference 12901, Yugoslavia Archives 584-12)

³⁰ Bericht über di Lage im gew. Verbasbanat (West Bosnien) in dem Zeitraum April 1941 – Maerz 1942, 26 Maerz 1942.

³¹ Military-Historical Archives, Fund of the ISC, volume 86, reference 2/5-1

2nd and the 3rd of August Usthas killed hostages that he had captured at the beginning of the rebellion. He assessed that around 800 hostages were killed, that the total number of the killed was not familiar that he believed 3,000 people have been shot. The cause of the rebellion was not known, he believed that communist agitators did that, since Chetniks acted under the red flag with cheers to Russia and Stalin!!³²

In the German report it was stated that two graves were excavated, each one hundred metres long, four metres wide each, two and a half metres deep each, that Usthas killed around 4,000 Serbs at that spot, around 3,000 near the storehouse, another 3,000 on the other killing fields of this district, more than 10,000 Serbs in total in this entire district.³³

In Sanski Most 4,326 Serbs were killed.

In Prijedor 4,038 Serbs.

In Bosanska Krajina 88.437 Serbs in total.³⁴

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³² Branko Bokan, "Sanski Most District in PLC 1941-1945" ("Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine"), page 98

³³ Zwei Flüchtling sagten aus, 15 April 1942. Branko Bokan, "Sanski Most District in NLC 1941-1945" ("Srez Sanski Most u NOB 1941-1945. godine"), page 96, footnotes 39, 40; "Ustasha Crimes in Sanski Most" ("Ustaški zločini u Sansko Mostu")

³⁴ Branko J. Bokan, "Genocide over the Serbs from Bosanska Krajina", page 68 ("Genocid nad Srbima Bosanske Krajine)

*Judita Albahari-Krivokuća**

MEMORIES
of the suffering of Serbian and Jewish people
in Sanski Most in 1941

By the placid, quiet, indigo-blue River Sana, in the heart of our Krajina, lies the town of Sanski Most, the town I was born in. Once, in the bygone 1930s, living there meant closeness, cordiality and mutual respect.

In World War II, during the regime of the Independent State of Croatia, it was hard to imagine that as early as 1941 such a monstrous slaughter of the Serbian and Jewish people would take place in that tranquil town. Unfortunately, there are hardly any records of this atrocious massacre in the historical annals of our sordid past.

Šumarice, Kraljevo and other killing fields on the territory of Yugoslavia from that period **HAVE BEEN MARKED FOREVER**. Why? Who pushed into obscurity the cruel and violent slaughter of the Serbs from Krajina? Also, the loathsome raging on those graves in the last war 1990–1995 ought to be publicly and officially denounced, and the culprits named. Primarily, we are to blame for it, the survivors – their brethren!!!

After we escaped from the railway convoy headed for Jasenovac at the Prijedor railway station, my family – father, mother, little brother and I secretly returned to Sanski Most. We hid in the family house of Avram Atijas in Ključka Street. Exposed to great danger themselves, as hiding camp escapees meant the penalty of death, the Atijas family received us with kindness. That was October 1941.

We met sorrow and pain in the town on the River Sana and the neighbouring villages, looming over the whole of Krajina like a heavy, black veil, unlikely to go away for centuries. The long, black gowns and pallid, wraithlike faces of the women only rarely seen on the streets of the town caused sorrow in everyone, even in those who had not suffered a loss to the ghastly trenches.

Up to six thousand, maybe even more young, healthy, old and frail inhabitants of Sanski Most, in little groups of six, each of them tied with a piece of wire, were taken to the nearby hillock called Šušnjar. Shot dead or half dead by the indiscriminate gunfire of the Ustasha criminals, they

* Judita Albahari-Krivokuća, B. Agr., Belgrade

fell into long, shallow trenches. For a long, long time, fresh blood came out of the trenches and leaked downhill. That scene tormented the already anguished souls of the heartbroken mothers, children and all their relations. Everyone recognised his or her own blood in the cut-up stream of blood. This deepened the sorrow of the decimated population of Sanski Most..

This massacre was only a tiny spot on the map of the criminal misdeeds of the notorious fascist monster, as fascist camps had already been set up across enslaved Europe. However, the thing impossible to grasp was that the people we had until then lived side by side, our friends even, collaborated with the fascists and calmly witnessed the terrible massacre. Allegedly, so many people were put six feet under in retaliation for two killed soldiers. In their narrow minds, Germans thought that was the way to tame the people. Nay, this only forced them to make their resistance to the aggressor ever greater and fiercer!

The following Jews from Sanski Most were killed:

1. Brothers Samuel Atijas – Puba, Salamon Atijas – Lolo, sons of Mazalta Atijas, a widow; her son Šimon Atijas – Mimo was also taken in custody, but thanks to a gendarme, a prison guard, who took pity on the child, he was released in secret
2. Puba Kabiljo, son of the rabiner of Sanski Most
3. Nahmijas – two brothers (names unknown)
4. Sado Levi
5. Doja Hajon, one of the richest Jewesses in Sanski Most; they cut her throat on the bridge and threw her in the River Sana

This information is part of the local oral tradition and needs to be checked.

It was difficult to see widow Mazalta, Puba and Lola's mother, wail and weep sorely over the loss of her beloved children, never leaving her little bench and smoking one cigarette after another. When her seventeen-year-old son Mima returned home alive, he sparkled a tiny life-giving light in the deep dark of old Mazalta's soul!

Today, though significantly delayed, we need to pay honour to the innocent victims, tend their glorious graves, fence the graveyard and make it green with plants. Every year, on the day of the slaughter, we need to bow to their innocent shadows, with a religious ceremony for the dead, for they were all believers. On that day, in the presence of the local and international press, the young generations should be told about the crimes of the Nazi Germany, as well as of our local traitors at that time!!!

*Dr. Nedeljko – Šule Miličević**

MEMORIES OF WAR DAYS IN 1941

In the days of anticipation of events that should have followed after the 27th Mar, I turned 16 (4th Apr 1941), in fact, I stepped into the age of a young man, and did not even imagine that I would mature so quickly, much more than my age allowed, over night.

And this is how it happened, that is, how this has remained in my memory after so many years have passed.

Morning, 6th April 1941, Sunday. “Belgrade bombarded! Germany declared war to Yugoslavia!” The news spread from mouth to mouth, from house to house, quickly, although there were only few radio devices in Sanski Most at the time. I remember, opposite the Town Hall a Moslem Hadžo had a coffee house, who owned a radio and would turn it up so loud that it could be heard afar. People were disturbed, but still had no idea what will happen to them. For ten days life seemed quiet, far from the events.

At this time in Sanski Most, the assessor was certain Croat Simeon. When Slavko Kvaternik proclaimed the Independent State of Croats, the Yugoslavian army, retreating, passed through Sanski Most partially, consisting of motorized units and pilots.

Germans arrived on 12th - 13th of April, at first with two SS officers, followed by the other units, motorized, with tanks, machine guns and other weapons, and the soldiers were all young, well fed, haughty.

A welcome board was organized, with the barrister Cerjan ahead, and the board consisted mainly of Croats and Moslems, and I believe that there were one or two Serbs in it as well, whose names I cannot recall. There was a mass of people on the reception, mainly Croats and Moslems, who were applauding cheerfully admiring the force. I was there too. Since the pre-war time there were two families of Volk Deutschers in Sanski Most. While German units were passing through, one of these German ladies stood next to me. Like many others, she admired them saying: “Look at

* Dr Nedeljko – Šule Miličević, Banja Luka

that force, who can measure up to them!", and I turned to her and said: "It is easy with Yugoslavia, we will see what happens in six months time." On my other side, stood Nikola Marjanović, called Dalmatian, who addressed me saying: "Quiet, child, do not say anything!"

The following day, on 14th of April, Miloš Todorović Basara, son of Ilija Basara, Rafajlo Atijas and I were arrested. They told us that we were hostages and that we would be shot if anything happened to any of the Germans. We spent the time in prison mainly being silent, only Rafajlo would try to amuse us with a witty remark or a joke. I still remember one court anecdote that my children already know by heart. A Gypsy was summoned before the court to testify about a murder on a wedding and he said the following: "I am begging God and the honourable court. There was a wedding and a pilaf. Sahans were walking: sahan jumped on sinija, sahan jumped off sinija, sahan jumped on sinija, sahan jumped off sinija.... Then they swore at each other. A knife emerged, somebody squeaked – o' my, it 'as Huso! Very typical for such a witness.

They released us from the prison on 20th April, on Hitler's birthday, this is how we learnt that too.

On the fifth of May, Stojanović was killed, on the eighth of May news spread that a German was wounded. All the Serbs between 16 and 60 were imprisoned immediately from the town and the vicinity. We were locked up in the Primary school, in the cellar in the yard, and we were guarded by German soldiers with their machine guns pointed at us. My father was imprisoned together with me. They lined us up and said that every tenth would be shot. Whether they were counting or not, I do not know, I know that 27 Serbs were shot, out of which there were 7 Vidović brothers from Tomina. Subsequently, they hanged those bodies on the trees in front of the park so that people could watch them. I remember that beside the brothers Vidović, gendarme Vezmar and another gendarme, whose name I do not recall, were shot too. Milan Gvozden was among the arrested as well, but he was released immediately probably on someone's intervention.

We were released the following day. After this I immediately left to a village near Kotor Varoš, where my sister Seka was a teacher, and I also spent a few days at Veljko Miljević's house, Neđo Miljević's brother. This was where I met the priest Kajica and stayed with him too. When I returned I found out that while I was away conversion to Catholicism was carried out, so at least I avoided that. At that time Italians arrived to Sanski Most.

They were not militant, they cared about wine and women.

So everything was fine until 22nd of June, when Hitler attacked the USSR. It was Sunday, Italian priest held a mess in the square (military priest). The following day they captured us, a few youths, on pretence that we were “prosperous”. I cannot remember the names of everybody that were there (there is a photograph in the book “Sanski Most 41-45”), but I know that there were also Moslems and a Croat, Ivica Sarić, who was released 2-3 hours later. We knew that he was a provocateur, which was confirmed later, because he was an Ustasha. We were in prison from 23rd to 29th of June and under guard dug trenches. At the same time there were some older people imprisoned, among them my father too, but they were captured for only 2-3 days. At that time there were about ten gendarmes from Zagreb, ahead with some Horvat. Local police was with them too: Ibro Nalić, Salko Ferhatović and Jovo called “Police”. The gendarmerie chief was a certain Duraković (replacing the killed Vezmar).

Somewhere between Petrovac and Drvar a soldier was killed on 26th of July. I was arrested again on the 27th July (I think it was Sunday).

When the execution was completed he came to get me and Tontić and took us to the storehouse. Actually, one group was shot on Šušnjar, the other by the storehouse, the place we called “Jandura”. It was horrible there. The storehouse was full of smell, all sorts of bodily discharges, peasants sheepskin coats soaked with blood. We stood in front of the storehouse and he showed us a photograph that laid on the floor. It was a photograph of Jozo Milinković, for whom he told us that he battered him to death and when he asked him his last wish at the end, I quote literally, ”and he, a fool, instead of asking me to let him go, he asked me if he could pray to God”. Then he killed him and continued to tell us, that it came to him sometimes, to free somebody. He said that he probably killed about 10,000 Serbs, but he rescued 1,000 maybe, because it used to come to him sometimes, or he failed himself sometimes and similar. “There, I released you too.” Then he took us to the camp commander who congratulated us hoping that we would make good Croats now. Then he took me home, where my poor mother, though mourning my father’s death, had to thank and treat him.

I know it is a bad thing to do mocking people with bodily deformities, but I have to say that his mind must have been deformed partially for his looks – short, ugly, bowlegged, extremely cross-eyed, messed hair, horrible.

When all this misfortune came to an end, they were looking for volunteers to work in Germany. Since we were still uncertain what could happen

again any day, I applied saying that I was 18. I spent two months in Berlin, watched magnificent images of bombarding, and I was supposed to work on clearing the ruins, where I had a good fun digging and searching for books until I was transferred on the jobs of building embankments. Since the control was weak, I would take a piece of bread with marmalade in the morning, and with few vouchers that we received once a week, I would go into town and keep myself warm in a super market. That was when I saw escalators for the first time. In fact, apart from cucumbers and salted bloaters (dried herrings) there was nothing to be bought. Two months later I got an infiltrate on my lungs and I was discharged home. Together with me in Berlin were also Veso Bašić (Memorial Medal Holder), Brane Crnobrnja and his brother who was scared so much that he lost his mind in the end. Upon my arrival to Sana I was treated at home and in the hospital and then I went to Banja Luka to continue my studying in comprehensive high school. During my school days I went to Sana often, socialising with the youth that was in anti-fascistic mood. Sanski Most was liberated on 20th Oct 1943 and I joined Partisans on 23rd Oct 1943 having previously graduated. Braco, Dragojlo and some other Moslems went with me to the II Artillery Division of the V Corps. Prior to my joining the Partisans, Stojanka Mijatović visited me and offered me to stay as a Youth manager in Sana, but I did not want to, so nobody could say anything against me.

For the whole time spent in Partisans I was a common fighter, because I was disobedient. On the first day the commander tasked me to chop woods and I rejected. I watched some that were fawning upon with their servility to the commissary or commander and I was sick with all that.

I participated in the attack on Banja Luka and met Mirko Vranić there, who introduced me to Petar Mečava and they invited me to come over to their unit. However, at the time we were attacked by Germans and they got to Šeher, so we started running everywhere and at the end it brought me back to my unit and I lost Mirko. It was general truth that we attacked in the most organized manner, but while withdrawing we ran like headless chicken, so that units recomposed with difficulty. On one occasion, it was a harsh winter I was a guard by the headquarters. It was so dark that you could not see a finger before your eye. I could see a weak light out of the headquarters (a single floor building or similar). I went closer to the window and saw a guy from headquarters and a nurse “rolling”. I swore under my breath, frozen, and fired in the air. The people from the headquarters ran out and I said “I heard something there”, nobody replied, that was why I was shooting.

You could see there what the people were really like, and this was confirmed not long after the liberation, when, for example, son of Himzo Rešić, who was the mayor at the worst times, Sane, was admitted to the Communist Party. There were cases like this in abundance, but this is why my sister Seka was a teacher in villages for a long time, and my sister Kova, after returning from Serbia where she was a refugee could hardly get any employment and was proclaimed to be a Great Serb (which she was and it serves in her honour – Milka’s remark).

Antun Kratofil, the Dark Murderer, originally from Ivanić grad in Moslavina, was killed in 1942 as we heard, escorting captured Serbs in Germany.

(I, Milka Miličević, his spouse, would like to add something. He was very honest and intelligent, with wide general and medical knowledge. He was, however, an unrestrained spirit. As a student, he was summoned to cooperate with State Security Administration (“Uprava državne bezbednosti”- UDBA), just before completion of the studies. He declined without a second thought, but there were another honest Serbs that survived 1941 or knew about him from the stories, so they were not able to remove him completely, although that stain followed him through his entire working age.

When he fell sick on 14th of July 1981 he kept digging through the past and he would tell me a few times: “Milka, I was punished by God, because I did not remember to ask that Ustasha to rescue my father too. But, Milka I was only 16 years old, I was scared, I did not think of that.” That haunted the poor man often and all my attempts to prove him that God did not punish that way, were in vain.

While narrating to me during the last year of his life he would tell me: “WRITE, MILKA, LET IT BE REMEMBERED”.)

In Banja Luka, 1995

*Miodrag – Mića Vezmar**

ABOUT CHILDHOOD AND ŠUŠNJAR



My name is Miodrag Vezmar, known better as Mića. Just before the war started in 1941, I went to the second grade, but as it is known, the school was terminated.

The school I attended did not have a name, it was simply called the Primary school.

I apologize if something may not be clear in this memory of mine, because I had a stroke, so I express myself with a difficulty. But, I remember everything, everything I say is true and relevant.

I will start with the month of April 1941 when Viktor Gutić came to Sanski Most – the then district-prefect, I do not know what he was at the time. He held the speech in front of the park and all the Serbs were forced and had to listen to his speech under pressure. And there were some lines in his speech that were causing fear: that the mills should be moved by Serbian blood, that roads would forget Serbs because they would vanish and many other bad things. Immediately after that reprisal started. The first order was to announce that all the Serbs were obliged to cut off the tips of their kitchen knives, so they could not use them allegedly. These days, more precisely, on Saint Mark's Day, 8th May 1941, my father Đuro, nine Vidović men and another assistant of my father's, Lazar Martinović, who previously used to be Catholic and then accepted the Orthodox religion, were shot. I have to go back a little there. My father managed, since he was the commander of the gendarmerie station, to pull out a box of carbines, to bury them in the shed, but was scared that they may search and find them, so that he and this Martinović guy together carried and buried them at night under Sana. Unfortunately, this was noticed by our first neighbours, the Šašić women, I remember some of the names, Beta, Ana. This ended in such way that my father was killed for this together with the Vidović men, when 27 people

* Miodrag-Mića Vezmar, teacher, Banja Luka

were killed on the 8th May, they were escorted along the Ključka street, I and my late brother watched, father threw himself, Ustasha grabbed him away from us and took him away. They were taken up on Nazidić field, across the railway bridge and shot, and after that were carried back in blankets, loaded onto prepared carts and driven to the park where they were hanged on the trees.

As much as I can remember, which I will never forget, as boys, my brother and I, and some others went to play football on the present "Podgrmeč" football ground. Next to the present lower goal-post we suddenly found someone's arm, leg, head and so on. When we looked a little closer, we saw that these were dead people that were killed overnight and then covered with straw, because they did not have time to remove them. This was at the end of July.

There is one thing that I forgot to mention, from the date of shooting my father until the entrance of Ustashas in Sanski Most at the beginning of August, according to the then positioning of the enemies, fascists, the Italians were positioned in Sanski Most, not the Blackshirts, but their regular army that was really fair and during their stay in Sanski Most we had some sort of freedom, if one can say so. However, upon arrival of Ustashas, everything changed. The first Ustasha action was to summon all adult Serbs

between 16 and 70 to report to the Town Hall, park, the old school, where they were imprisoned immediately.

Slaughtering these captured people was done on Saint Elijah's Day, 2nd of August, then 3rd of August and 4th of August 1941. The execution would normally start around 7 o'clock in the morning and last until 9 o'clock. That was the time when they would make a break, and in the evening they would start around 6 o'clock, again until 9 o'clock, during the day light. If anyone would be swept by a volley and wounded still moving, they would finish them off by a pick, shovel, anything, just to destroy them. I have to mention, that I as a boy, second grade primary school pupil, watched them bringing the peasants from the vicinity by "ćiro" [translator's note: the name that people gave to the first locomotive and then it became a synonym for any train] to the former company "the 20th October", where the road crossed the railway. Peasants were in white pants (the then dress), black hats and so on. They would unload them all immediately out of the wagons for transporting cattle, tied, beaten with anything, rifle, rifle butt-end and so on. Children were crying, mothers were crying, but that was of

no help whatsoever. They were all taken to Šušnjar and liquidated there. It is important to emphasise that this massacre was mainly done by Ustashas that came from Herzegovina, Stolac, Čapljina, Mostar, whereas the local ones, on pretence that they did not want to interfere, to stay “fair”, were less involved. But, however, they did not defend anybody either.

There are many other things that remained in my memory from that time, that do not fade away even today. I remember one summer day when the execution was being done on Šušnjar. The temperature was high, four Ustashas entered the yard, blood on their uniforms. They came to look for brandy. My mother was already wearing black clothes [translator’s note: Serbian custom when mourning the dead] and one of them said: “Oh, we sorted this one out, there will be brandy...” and so on. They had to get brandy, there was no other option, forcefully, and four of them drank a litre in half an hour and moved on.

After the slaughter, one night, two, three or four days later, I do not know exactly, my mother told me this, somebody tapped on the window and said: “Run to Serbia, you are anticipated to go to Jasenovac.” The same night, my mother took me and my late brother Nikola for our hands, onto the train, straight to Belgrade. The border was in Sremska Mitrovica then. I can never forget how they received us in Serbia. Mother got a pension, for seven days a flat as well, so that all the problems were resolved in a short time. I think, it was better by far then it was in this pervious war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

And at the end I have to mention some families that were really honest during this war. These are the families of Velid Bišćević and Aga Jakupović, Hašimović and some other, I cannot remember them all. The following example speaks for the fact that there are human beings among the criminals. When my father was captured and he was supposed to be executed, Croatian police from Zagreb burst into our house. They were rummaging through the closets, turning the clothes over and they suddenly found the picture of Karađorđević family. This Croatian policeman turned around, saw that nobody else was there and said: “I did not see anything.” This is how we, although I thought it was the end of us, luckily got out if this.

You asked me if taking people to Šušnjar was in masses. No, they were taken in groups. Say, a train composition arrives, now they were taking 30, and then again 30 more, and then another 30 and again and again all the way.

I would like to mention further that apart from execution on Šušnjar, there was execution of Serbs that were imprisoned in the Crops storehouse, on the left bank of Sana. These were prevalingly peasants, farmers from Podlug and some other villages from the left bank of Sana. They were captured inside, a few hundreds, perhaps even thousands, they opened the door and took them out in groups and lead them somewhere. The people that were inside did not know where they were taken. There were suggestions to attack when the door opened, but some older people were talking them out of this, claiming that the authorities would not do them any harm. I personally knew late Ilija Čučak, because his child attended my school. He told me that he was walking in one such group, and when he came to the hole and looked in it, and saw that everybody were dead in the hole, everybody killed. He jumped over it in two-three jumps, as one gets strength in such moments, and started running towards the railway bridge over Sana. They were shooting after him and he was wounded in the arm, but he kept running all the way to the mouth of the river Pliva. This was where he crawled under the bank, they followed him, swore at his Serbian mother, they did anything and everything, but could not find him. Čučak, Vojin, waited until the dark and transported himself to Grmeč and stayed alive that way, lived up to the green old age. Also, one more man stayed alive on Šušnjar, I know his surname, but I do not know his surname, it was a certain Bodiroža. Since Ustashas were shooting in volleys, and they were tied, it pulled him down too. When they fell in the hole, they would throw only one layer of soil over them. He managed to keep quiet and bite through whatever he was tied with. At night he crawled out of the soil and ran to Grmeč over Sana.

What do I know about the prison in school?

My father was imprisoned in the school. There were no speakers at the time, there was no public address system, but there was a town crier. On his superiors' order the crier announced that all the Serbs were to report to the Primary school. My father, as a loyal citizen, responded and went there. When he arrived there, he found imprisoned Vidović men and some other people that I do not know. He and this Martinović guy walked inside, and the following day, on the 8th of May, they took them outside and counted them for execution 1, 2, 3, 4, 5..... to the number 27. They counted 27 of them and then, it was around 4 o'clock in the afternoon – at the front a shooting squad walked, then the prisoners, then my father, 27 of them to be

shot. The moment they were shot the Italians entered the town. However, I have to say one more thing. I, my late mother and my late brother, were going up towards the bridge, we were halted by Ustashas and almost shot, because they pushed us against the fence by their knives, this was how they injured my arm, and also my brother's arm. But, an officer of theirs came by and told them to leave us alone.

Were there children shot on Šušnjar and if I am familiar with that?

When the wagons arrived bringing peasants from Kljevci, Tomina, Krkojevci, from above areas, among them were a grandfather, a son, a grandson, his son and then his son. Meaning – four generations. The children were six years old, five, depends. They held onto their mother's skirts, crying, mothers were crying, but help was not coming from anywhere. Everyone closed themselves in the houses and at the end, when the execution was done, all the Serbs that stayed alive, had to wear a white ribbon around their arms with impressed stamp of their authorities.

And, was it known who excavated the grave holes on Šušnjar?

They did. It was not Serbs. The holes were prepared prior to execution.

Not only people from Sanski Most perished. Village Kljevci was demolished entirely, then Palanka, Fajtovci, Lipnik.... The ones that did not manage to run in the forest, lost their lives. They were brought by trucks directly to Šušnjar, where the execution took place. Mostly groups of 30 people were shot – they would drive them in and there was a volley, they fell in the hole and then they put a little soil over them and then lime and then the following group...

When the memorial Šušnjar was built, they say that blood was seeping through the graves.

I know when the memorial was built, I heard that blood was seeping through, but I did not see that. It was not blood seeping, but lymph, because 5,500 people were buried there after all, healthy, young people. Criminals were performing execution. The most dangerous ones were from Poljak, certainly Dževar, and I know their surnames too – Kuželj, Muhić, Zukić, these were the Ustashas. A Kiko, Zukić. This one was thrown by Serbs through the window on his head, the Partisans.....

If you are interested I can tell you who did these crimes. I said that direct execution, that is the shooting, was done by a group as they called them-

selves “brigade” (“zdrug”), Ustasha brigade, from Herzegovina and these were Ustashes from Stolac, Čapljina, Mostar... And, objectively speaking, there were honest ones in Sana too, but they can be counted on a hand fingers. There were more of those that were inclined to Ustasha movement. I remember one certain Ustasha whose name was Kiko Zukić. He frightened people out of their wits. Well, a friend, my father’s best friend, we could not have had a single Patron Saint’s Day without him as our main guest, his depute, depute of a police station commander, it was some Duraković, who was directly to blame for my father’s then murder. I am not saying that he would not have been killed when there was the execution in August, but he would not have been killed in May. And perhaps he would have managed to escape. But, we Serbs are such people, who believe in companionship, we trust friendship, and this is always at a high cost for us. When my father was shot and hanged in the park, we were collected the following day and brought in front of the park to watch them hanging and swaying in the breeze. We had to watch because if we did not want to, we knew what would have happened. Death would have happened. And I had a friend who hanged my dead father, his name was Toma Ševa, from Krkojevci, who hanged my father and knew where he was buried. And we have not known to the present day where they were buried exactly. True, there is a tablet where the memorial is and my father’s name is on there, but we are not sure whether he was buried there.

Upon arrival of Ustashes again to Sanski Most at the beginning of August, we felt immediately that nothing good was coming. And that night was really difficult. We noticed that they, their patrols were moving along the streets, that they were going through the ditches, between carts, banging against the windows and so on. The following day, when the crier summoned people to report, the ones that did not report, they successively entered my street, Ključka, started from the end of the street, from house to house, collected Serbs and took them to the school. And from the school to Šušnjar. And on Šušnjar was the end. It was particularly horrible, as I said already, the night before the slaughter. We, the Serbs were smaller than poppy-seed. At that time, you could have killed a Serb, not to answer for them at all, and if you killed a dog, you would have to answer for that. Meaning, we were out of the law. And in order to make it easier for ourselves somehow, we gathered in three-four houses and we slept in one house and discussed what we would do and how; some were for escaping, some for

laying still, some for this, some for that, but in the end you did not have anywhere to go, because everything was surrounded, everything sealed, you did not have a place to run to. You had to wait for your destiny and what would happen next. And the following day, when it dawned, whatever had to happen, happened. Sometime, around 1975, I and my late brother were walking home one night and were passing by the park in which our father hanged. This was difficult for us, so we went to fetch a saw, manual saw, and started cutting the tree. The police came along and asked us: “What are you boys doing? Go ‘ome, this is not your business.” We obeyed and went home. But, what happened seven, eight days later? There was a storm and a thunderbolt stroke this tree, split it apart and it had to be knocked down. This was how our wish was satisfied.



*Milan Crnomarković**

CRIMES IN SANSKI MOST



Division of Yugoslavia in April 1941

Upon Yugoslavia's and its army's capitulation the occupation system has been established dividing Yugoslavia by line of demarcation from the Julian Alps to the Lake Prespa: into German, Italian and the Independent State of Croatia (ISC) territories. This line has been drawn through Bosnia south from Bosanski Novi, north from Sanski Most, across Bronzani Majdan, Šipovo, Travnik, Ivan sedlo, Jahorina and Rudo.

According to this Grmeč territory was within Italian occupation zone.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was being divided by various criteria and the constantly pending question was: whose was it – Serbian, Croatian or Moslem? The aim of these divisions was to disunite the nations in order to manipulate them more easily, especially Moslems, whose leaders claimed that it was them in particular that were neglected in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Vlatko Maček, leader of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) was saying as early as 1935 that Moslems were the purest Croats, and in 1941 Ante Pavelić together with his chief assistants proclaimed them to be “the Croatian flowers”.

Ustashas have initiated and materialised their control by horrific genocide over the Serbian people. Involving a part of Moslems in it with simultaneous negation of their national identity they precisely tried to transform Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia into “clean Croatian territory”, as it would be said today – ethnically cleansing the Serbs and calling Moslems

* Milan Crnomarkovic, People's Liberation Combat Member, Partisan Memorial Medal Holder since 1941. Dabar, Sanski Most.

as their own. Active party cooperation between Croats and Moslems started since that time.

Multiparty system was in effect in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. There were 22 political parties on the political stage. A live political pre-election activity was carried out for members' of parliament chairs. In 1938, Yugoslavian Moslem Organization (YMO) and Dr Džafer Kulenović had a significant influence in Sanski Most, Ključ, Bihać and Krupa, whereas in the villages at the base of Grmeč significant influence of Branko Miljuš and Nurija Pozderac was present. Apart from these parties, Local Board "Gajreta", founded in 1905, takes a significant role among Moslems on cultural-education field. There were merchants, caterers and an odd craftsman in this Board. The Board organized analphabetic courses, housewife education course especially for Moslem women, as well as picnics, parties, shows and other. It revived its operating in 1930 and it had its own magazine in 1934.

Whilst "Gajret" was gathering Moslems, even Serbs willing to cooperate, solely for cultural-education assignments, in the meantime another Moslem association "National Mainstay" ("Narodna uzdanica") was gathering pro-Croat orientated Moslems, joined around the CPP, that is, the united opposition. The Moslems in the "National Mainstay" have actually formed the Moslem wing of the CPP, lead by Dr Džafer Kulenović.

Apart from the above said, it should be added regarding the YMO that after unexpected death of its leader Dr Muhamed Spaho, this duty was taken by Dr Džafer Kulenović, from Kulen Vakuf, who was one of vice presidents of the YMO while Spaho was alive. During his election for the YMO president he agreed under the proviso that no one objected his maintaining contact with Dr Ante Pavelić, leader of Ustashas organization and emigration to Italy.

Therefore, the YMO, under the influence of Dr. Džafer Kulenović, immediately after German occupation of Yugoslavia and establishment of the so called ISC, literally accepted duties in Pavelić's Ustasha "Independent" Croatia. It was under Kulenović's particular influence that a large number of poor Moslem people joined armed forces of the SS Legion, as well as Croatian Home-Guard and Ustasha Units participating in mass slaughters of Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Formation of Ustasha leaguer in Sanski Most

Ahead of the “National Mainstay” in Sanski Most in the years before the II World War were the following: Himzo Pašić Rešić, Juso Talić, Osman Čehajić and Luka Miniga. Upon the country’s occupation in 1941 they have become prominent Ustasha officials. Very skilfully and extremely secretly have they implemented Ustasha ideology in “Gajret”. It has been established that Luka Miniga was a sworn Ustasha since 1925 in Sanski Most.

Ivica Kojić, assistant to Zagreb Minister of Interior Affairs, founded Ustasha organization in the railway station Vrhpolje in April 1941. Ivica’s father was the Chief of Vrhpolje station, originally from Jezero near Jajce. This has allegedly been a visit to his father.

During the early days in 1941 in the village Kljevci the rebels found a notebook hooked behind a roof rafter of the house owned by the secretary of Ustasha organization, Nikola Bakarić, a Croat, containing a list of Ustashas. This was how Ustashas organization was disclosed in this area. Ustashas organization was also founded in Kamengrad, whose secretary was Đulaga Halilović, who was killed in 1941.

Subsequent to proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC) Ustashas Leaguer was formed in Sanski Most which was joined by the following: Mile Ljevar, a merchant from Sasina, Dr Josip Cerjan, a barrister from Sanski Most, Martin Macan, the Court President, Dr Ibro Ibrahimović, a judge, Luka Miniga, an innkeeper, Himzo Pašić Rešić, a merchant, Jozo Talić, a shoemaker, Mile Lujčić, a peasant from Sasina, Nikola Tojčić, parish priest from Stara Rijeka, Fra Ante Šeremet from Sanski Most, Luka Tešić from Sanski Most, Ante Banović, an innkeeper from Sanski Most and Osman Čehajić, a baker from Sanski Most, all of whom were Moslems or Croats. Upon formation of this Leaguer, armed groups of Ustashas appeared in Sanski Most, lead by Grga Maričić, a wealthy peasant from Zdena, which was organized by Luka Miniga in order to secure Ustasha control in the town. The Leaguer consisting of the above listed members held a ceremonial assembly on the occasion of proclaiming the ISC. After the assembly was held they went to the church where the friars held a service of gratitude.

Once Ustasha authorities were established, majority of the most reactionary people amongst Croatian and Moslem people joined Ustashas, known thieves, nationalists, chauvinists, moral tramp, social rabble, but also a part

of poor peasants and poor craftsmen, which Ustashas drew in their lines by emphasising negativity of “Great-Serbian politics”, economic poverty and supporting their lowest motives, passions and instincts for robbing other people’s property.

German goals in the I and II World War were known, however, in order to understand war goals of Hitler’s Germany, special value has his book “Mein Kampf” containing explanation of enslavement of Europe, genocide against Slovenes and Jews, as well as that Germans were the “superior race” above others. This book produced fascist ideology about dividing people on “higher” and “lower” races, and among “lower” some nations such as the Jews, Romanies and Serbs were classified, that should be enslaved and ethnically cleansed, in order not to contaminate the “higher race”.

Pavelić’s Ustasha organization, as known, emphasised its goals: one third of the Serbs to be killed, one third banished and one third converted to another religion.

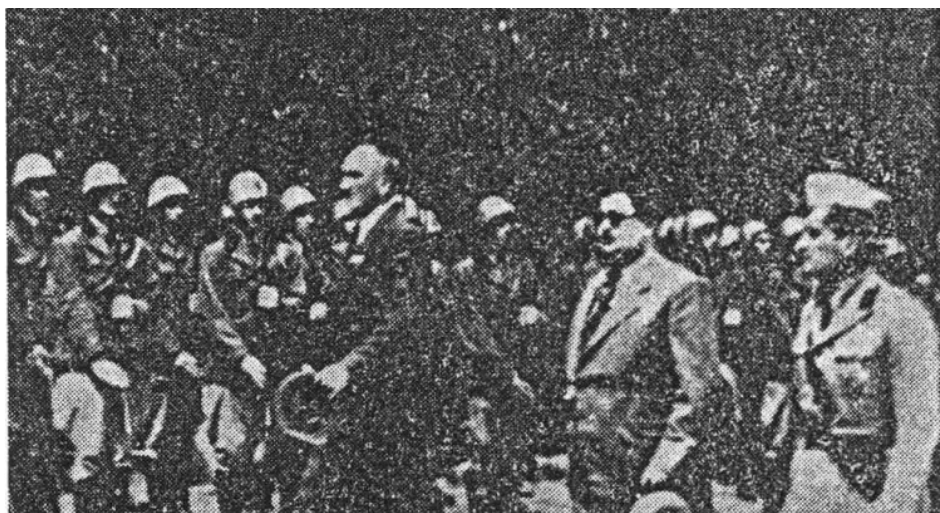
Reactionary fascist ideology of “blood and soil” – that only one people can live on one territory – at the end of the 20th century has not been as intense anywhere else as in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

German troops arrived in Sanski Most mid May 1941 and during their entrance they were covered with flowers, by Ustasha orientated people, and they have taken major points immediately, passages and streets. Fascists and Ustashas started robbing merchants’ shops belonging to Serbs and Jews. German soldiers shared robbed goods with Ustashas and the Germans packed their share and sent it to Germany.

In order to demoralise the people more, German fascists behaved arrogantly, shamelessly and terrorizingly. For that purpose they used all the means within their technical superiority. For the purpose of immediate military and political support to the German occupier, Ustasha authorities by their decree appointed Dr Josip Cerjan as the District President in Sanski Most, and after him, the end of May, Dr Ante Merkadić, then Ivica Simeun, who, with the support of fascists, immediately undertook various military and other brutal measures to take away weapons brought from the former Yugoslavian Army and to disclose the hidden ones. They issued a proclamation, that is, an order, that anybody who did not submit their weapons would be shot. In this order, in a form of propaganda, it has been emphasised that it would be impossible to hide weapons because Germans could find it easily using searching dogs and devices with magnets and

wherever you would hide it they could find it. People were worried and due to the fear for their families they submitted weapons by large. Ustasha boards were formed in the municipalities, in smaller places, the so called “squads”. In Sanski Most municipalities Ustasha units were managed by the camp commander Mile Ljevar, at the beginning 56 people joined Ustashes on the territory of Sana municipality.

At the end of May Ustashes organized a great meeting in Sanski Most using force and threats, where around 4,000 Croats and Moslems were present. At the meeting notorious Ustasha chief official from Banja Luka Dr Viktor Gutić spoke. On this occasion he invited Croats and Moslems to get ready for killing Serbs and Jews, to prepare ropes for hanging, promising that they would give them their properties.



Ustasha Chief Official Viktor Gutić at the meeting on 28th May 1941 announced extermination of Serbs.

Among the other things, in his mad ecstasy he was saying: “Roads will long for Serbs, but there will not be Serbs anymore”, as well as “Srbe na vrbe” [translator’s note: a rhyme – hang Serbs on willow trees] and similar. “I have issued drastic orders for their complete economic destruction. Do not be weak towards any of them. Always bear in mind that they were our grave-diggers and destroy them wherever you can. Anybody that pleads for them has become an enemy to the Croatian liberty and other peoples’.”

On the territory of Sasina municipality and for the villages of Sasina, Škrljevita, Trnova, Šehovci, Poljak, Kruhari, Ustasha Leaguer numbering 55 Ustashes has been formed, majority of them were from Sasina and Škrljevita.

Their protagonist was Ante Popović from Tomašica, who maltreated people in a maleficent manner, and Serbian peasants killed him in Miljakovci in 1941. After that Ustashas captured around 190 Serbs from Bosnovi and surrounding villages and upon horrific torturing shot them in Sanski Most. Apart from these, they also captured 5 Serbs by deceit and 15 while patrolling and killed them all. Fra Luka Tešić, a member of secret Ustasha organization, has been preparing joining of Croatian peasants from these villages into Ustasha organization as early as in the time of old, that is, the first Yugoslavia.

On the territory of Stari Majdan municipality there were 64 Ustashas. At the end of July they shot around 130 Serbs in three rows. At the place called Troska, in the immediate proximity of Stari Majdan, the following managed to escape the execution by shooting: Milan Marić from Brdari, Đurađ Savić and Trivo Zorić from Ništavci, Jovan Praštalo from Stari Majdan, Stevo Stupar and Milan Dobrijević. In this municipality conversion of Serbs into Catholicism was performed by Fra Nikola Tojšić.

In the municipality Tomina there were 49 Ustashas organized within Ustasha squads including Ustashas from Gornja Sanica. They killed 490 Serbs on the killing field in Vrhpolje. In the village Čaplje 160 were shot on the field called Žegar and 120 Serbs near the house of Kumalić family and 20 in Tomina. More than 770 Serbs in total. In the villages Kljevci and Lužani Ustashas killed all the adult men and a few women and children. In the municipality of Kamengrad 61 Ustashas were registered. They were capturing Serbs from Fajtovci, Gorica, Skucan Vakuf and Dabar, transported them tied up to Sanski Most. In the village Gorice they killed all the adult Serbs from the Rodić family. Đulaga Halilović excelled as a cutthroat, a peasant from Kamengrad (killed in January 1942 as a combatant Alaga Džafić).

In one single day, on Saint Elijah's Day, 361 Serbs from the village Kljevci were swept off by a machine-gun volley. Completely innocent, only for being Serbs. Two little boys, that were 8 to 10 years of age, Svetko and Rade, watched behind a bush how Ustashas were beating their grandfather, father and brother using rammers, and then, when they had them unconscious, they shot them at the back of their heads by pistols.

In the municipality Budimlić Japra Ustasha organization was formed comprising of 16 Ustashas. At the end of July these Ustashas imprisoned around 40 Serbs in the gendarmerie station cellar. The prisoners were

released by rebels on 31st of July 1941. There were around 300 Ustashas in Sana County at the end of July 1941, organized by military principle. Battalion headquarters, troops commands and units whose task was liquidation of Serbs.

Serbian resistance against Ustasha terror

When the District President called civil servants to take an oath if they wanted to stay in service, one of prosperous and spitefully brave Serbs, a forestry engineer, Drago Nedimović, from Sanski Most, publicly rejected to do so. Ustashas captured Drago and shot him at the end of July. A group of prosperous and fighting patriots from Sanski Most, including gendarmerie sergeant Đuro Vezmar, gendarme Ivan Martinović and others, gathered 12 rifles and a few boxes of ammunition. Ustashas found out about this through their agents and shot them in public. Gendarmerie sergeant Gojsović from Ilidža was also shot because he gave 80 rifles from the storehouse to the peasants. Brothers Gvozden and Ibanić from Sanski Most also gave resistance. They were slightly and brave men, courageous Serbs. Ustashas avoided meeting them; instead, they killed them by deceit.

On the sixth of May a group of Ustashas from the village Kijevo, under the influence of Husejin Šabić (son of Salih), and under Ustasha camp instructions, were performing provocative terror in order to find collected weapons in villages Kijevo, Kruhari, Bare and Tomina. Ustashas entered homes of some Serbs that were celebrating St. George's Day, maltreated them, swore at the Patron Saint's Day, stepped on and threw around the Patron Saint's Day candles, koliva [translator's note: boiled sweetened wheat which is used religiously during prayers in the Eastern Orthodox and Greek-Catholic religion], bread and food from the table and beat some individuals. Ustashas injured Serbian spiritual feelings, and due to this terror a few hundreds of Serbs, peasants and labourers from the following villages gathered: Tramošinja, Ilidža, Kozica, Podovi and Tomina, with a number of varioustrifles, pistols and other weapons and many axes, hey-forks, sticks and similar to defend themselves and not allow Ustashas to come to their villages.

The first armed resistance of Kijevo peasants against Ustasha tyranny

On the slopes of Kijevo mountain they defended access roads to Tramošinja and when Ustashas tried to enter the village, rebels prevented them by using

weapons. Resistance of Serbs on Kijevo mountain near Sanski Most against German fascists and Ustashas in 1941 was one of the first resistances of Serbs against occupation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Killing Serbs on Šušnjar

Ustasha control and Ustasha military command, following up such events and manner of killing the Serbs in the ground, arrived to the conclusion that Serbs in Sana district cannot be killed in this manner. They have asked for help from aside. In the first days of May a group of specially trained policemen from Zagreb arrived, who were lead by Konrad Horvat (convicted after liberation), which was the state police and had a task to implement anticipated measures of Ustasha control. These specially trained policeman participated in many executions, from May to the beginning of August 1941, together with other Ustashas and with the so called "executioners" company, which consisted of Ustashas from Herzegovina predominantly, from the surroundings of Ljubuški, Čapljina, Metković and Posušje.

Hundreds and hundreds of Serbs were publicly summoned for hard labour (toil), born between 1914 and 1921. These were young people in the peak of their strength. Assembling points were: Kamengrad, Stara Rijeka, Sasina, Čaplje, Vrhpolje, Tomina and other places. They were toiling even though there was not a need for these works. The feeling was that by this Ustashas wanted to have control over adults, because they feared armed resistance and this way they could collect them later more easily and take them to killing fields. These people were deployed from meeting points in groups along the road, and at 12:00 a.m. it was lunch time, they brought the food from home. During lunch the group leader would give them lectures how he would not beat them anymore, that they should be coming to work regularly, that authorities should be respected, how the new authorities would prepare decision on reduction of taxes for the peasants and other. The group leader Mujica excelled the most in various deceits, promises and lies.

At the end of July in Ustasha prisons there were a few thousands Serbs. They were captured by Imotski company Ustashas, lead by Ante Zdiler from Imotski, with participation of local Ustashas. During the time of mass slaughters of Serbs and Jews, at the end of July and August, complete Ustasha apparatus on the county territory was engaged, thus Ustashas killed around 6.000 Serbs on a few killing fields. This number included victims

that Ustashas brought by trains from districts of Ključ, Bos. Petrovac, Prijedor, the village Tomašica and Bos. Novi, who were executed in Sanski Most. (Commission for researching crimes executed by the occupiers and Ustashas was provided with the data by Mihajlo Škundrić, who worked on the railway Prijedor – Srnetica, as a railway man – brakeman, originally from Gornja Sanica. Later, he was battalion commander in the First Krajina detachment.) A few cutthroats from Sanski Most became known by mass slaughter and other crimes such as Himzo Zukić Điko, Husein Muhić Kiko, Buljina Alagić, Mustafa Alagić and Viktor Čilić.

Ustashas commenced mass killings of Serbs, Jews and Romanies on the 1st of Aug 1941 on Šušnjar killing field. According to the allegations of the eyewitnesses, two big holes were excavated, around 3 metres wide, 2 metres deep and up to 40 metres long. Groups of Serbs captured and tied by wire were lead to these horrible mass graves. This is where they shot them by rifles and machine guns, beat by rammers, picks, axes, iron bars, most often on the head, but on the other sensitive parts of the body, too. Some of them were slaughtered by knives, and then thrown into these large, blood covered mass graves, together with a number of Serbian corpses who were shot by rifles and machine guns.

According to the data from the Commission for researching crimes of the occupiers and their assistants, on this field of killing around 5,500 Serbs were killed and on the killing field near the storehouse on the Cattle market around 2,000 Serbs were killed. The killing was done continuously from the 1st till the 3rd of August in the evening. On the killing field on the

Cattle market Ustashas made Serbs to move running in groups of 100 up to 200 people in order to exhaust them as much as they could and so exhausted they beat them by bars and sticks and also shot them by machine guns like that in groups. When Ustashas started pursuing Serbs from Kamengrad for execution, little Mujica was there with horse carts, small Bosnian horses, with floor and a wooden ladder, with a task to assist Ustashas. While persecuting the Serbs, running and fighting started, and Ustashas were beating Serbs with picks, shovels, hoes, axes, hammers, scythes and other objects. There were people lying on the road and ditches with smashed heads, broken arms, legs, asking for help. Mujica was loading the wounded into the horse carts together with one Ustasha and drove them to Šušnjar and on the road ponds of blood and human brains remained, there were 5 to 6 wounded people in the carts. Mujica got two dinars per each wounded person. He was able to transport a larger number of wounded people during a course of a day. That was the earning of his life.

When Ustashas were throwing battered Serbs into excavated holes, weeping started in Šušnjar, screams were heard and seeking for help, and one of the wounded people was saying in a feeble voice: "Mujica, I f... your mother, why did you deceive us!" From different killing fields the following managed to escape: Vujin Čučak from Podlug, Jovan Starčević from Dabar, Lazar Dragičević from Kljevci, Gojko Ljuboja, Mile Vukić, Dušan Bodiroža, Vlado and Mirko Čičić, Marko Đurđević, all from Čaplje and Rade Brkić from Jelašinovci, who escaped from Bosanska Krupa. These are living witnesses of horrible scenes of Ustashas pogroms. Rade's story is very sad and horrible when he says: "I escaped from the territory of Bosanska Krupa, from Crno jezero (Black Lake) into which many Serbs were thrown, how all the men, women and children that Ustashas were taking onto killing fields kept looking at Grmeč, and then tears would start running from their eyes." Rade was a brigade commander during the People's Liberation Combat and he was proclaimed a Yugoslavian national hero.

When there was a prize competition for the memorial to Šušnjar victims, the best solution was given by sculptor – artist Vanja Radauš from Zagreb, member of the People's Liberation War. Among the others, this solution contained fires and bars through which blood was pouring and there were names of the victims that would be written on the memorial. This did not appeal to some of the fellow-fighters and neighbours and it was given up. The third prize on the Competition was won by the sculptor Milovan Krstić from Belgrade and the memorial was started to be made. However, somebody did not like this, so they cut off its base. The contractor made the memorial out of metal sheets, but Krstić waived it because it was not being made by the project.

The story about this author was told by Mirko Stanić, member of the Competition Commission.

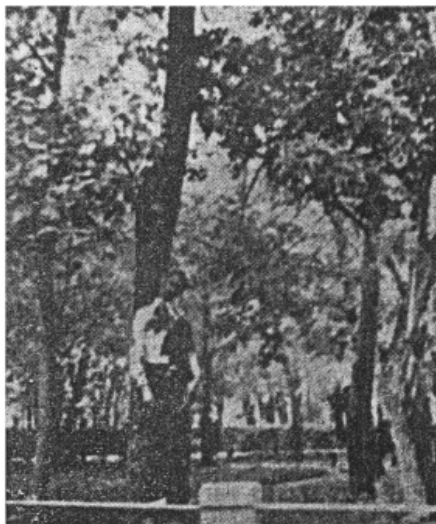
Around 1960, when the grave mound was formed on the mass grave Šušnjar and earth started covering the mass grave, under the pressure of the earth blood started to seep and it was seeping through the land for 4 to 5 years. All this shows that the words of Ivo Andrić, our Noble prize winner, about hatred were true and that much water will flow in the river Sana until all hatred has gone. After all, this was shown by the previous war.

German occupier used national and religious intolerance which ruled in this area for years, and Ustasha board had around 300 Ustasha prepared for liquidation of Serbs in July 1941. Ustashas used those circumstances very skilfully and (quickly), with German support, performed genocide over Serbian people.

People often ask this question: How could it happen that three Ustahas could take hundreds of Serbs for execution? During capturing, beaten and battered, people lost the power of clear judgement and reaction due to fear for their families. Good organization was missing also, and it was rather difficult to win the trust among the scared.

One of the biggest delusions is to believe in authorities, hoping they would protect you, because you did nothing wrong. In such crucial moments these unaware and politically delayed Serbs were not able to find a way out. This is why the Communist Party considered all its omissions and for a very short period of time performed a twist in mobilisation of people against German and Ustasha fascism and hatred towards Serbs of wider range in Sana district, which the time would also show later.

In the evening of the eighth of May 1941, in Gornja mahala, above the railway bridge in Sanski Most, German fascists shot 27 Serbs from Tomina, Lužani and Čaplje in the presence of captured Serbs and Jews. After execution they ordered 27 corpses to be hanged on trees in the town park of Sanski Most, where they hanged for about two days.



Patriots shot and hanged in the town park in Sanski Most on the 9th May 1941

Sadism and fascism of German fascists manifested in the fact that they ordered Serbs and Jews to hang the corpses.

The following people were shot – **from Tomina:**

Vidović, son of Đurađ, miloš, born in 1902,

Vidović, son of Đuro, Mitar, born in 1904,

Vidovic, son of Todor, Đurađ, born in 1908,
Vidović, son of Stole, Mile, born in 1912,
Vidović, son of Mitar, Marko, born in 1894,
Vidović, son of Savo, born in 1921,
Vidović, son of Vid, Božo, born in 1920,
Vidović, son of Ostoja, Vlado, born in 1903,
Vidović, son of Nikola, Miloš, born in 1917,
Vidović, son of Ostoja, Đurađ, born in 1909,
Stojanović, son of Nikola, Petar, born in 1922,
Kovačević, son of Kojo, Lazo, born in 1915,
Kovačević, son of Kojo, Uroš, born in 1903,
Kovačević, son of Mile, Ostoja, born in 1898,

from Lužani:

Jovanović, son of Mile, Dušan, born in 1914,
Šobot, son of Marko, Petar, born 1922,
Kajiš, son of Lazar, Drago, born in 1903,
Stojanović, son of Milan, Pero, born in 1900,
Milanko, son of Pane, Ilija, born in 1911,
Milanko, son of Pane, Prole, born in 1915,
Dekić, son of Pane, Miloš, born in 1910,
Praća, son of Tomo, Veljko, born in 1913,
Šobot, son of Simeun, Ljupko, born in 1902,

from Čaplje:

Stanisavljević, son of Jovo, Mile, born in 1904,
Knežević, son of Mile, Jovo, born in 1917,

from Sanski Most:

Vezmar, son of Jovan, Đuro, born in 1904,
Martinović, son of Lazar, Josip, born in 1900.

After these atrocities German fascists left Sanski Most and immediately after they left, Italian fascists arrived into town and ordered that these corpses were taken off the trees and buried.

It was in Sanski Most that German fascists started implementing fascist ideology of cleansing “the lower race” – Serbs, Jews and Romanies for the first time in Balkans.

*Drago Trninić**

ŠUŠNJAR IN 1941

Genocide, and particularly all kinds of crimes against Serbs in World War II, were very much concealed and covered up, on purpose and for one reason or another. Most of the crimes were attributed to the invading forces, on the one hand, while on the other the victims were divided equally as Muslim, Croat and other, in the name of fake brotherhood and unity, and for the purpose of covering up the atrocities of the Ustashi against the Serbs.

Immediately after its regime was installed, the ISC began to implement the CPR [Croatian Party of Rights, S. M.] project designed by Ante Starčević, 'the father of the homeland', to annihilate 'the Balkan scum', 'the impure Slavic Serb breed'. In the first few weeks the new Ustasha authorities implemented all kinds of discriminatory measures with great intensity – from restrictions with regards to public transport, to the one which banned bathing at public beaches (bathing forbidden for Serbs and dogs); the raging Ustashi kept repeating at many places and on a daily basis the Serbs could not stay in the ISC, they had to leave or stoop. They had to become Roman Catholic Croats, or otherwise they had to leave their homes for a life of exodus and uncertainty. The most radical solution was intended for the majority of Serbs – genocide – the annihilation of both them and their families.

Within the first month after the quisling ISC was proclaimed, the Ustasha authorities committed atrocious crimes against the Serbs, from seizing their property to executing complete families. The Ustasha leaders made appearances at conventions, folk gatherings, inviting their supporters to join in the extermination and persecution of the Serbs, stating that one part of the Serbs needed to be banished, the other converted and the third executed.

One action was particularly brutal – the harassment, persecution and killing of the Serbs from the region of Sanski Most. Immediately after the ISC was declared on 10th April, there was a lot of turmoil in Sanski Most, which Luka Miniga, an inn-keeper and a zealous Ustasha, benefited

* Drago Trninić, Senior Curator-Historian, Museum of the Republic of Srpska

from, imposing himself as chair of the board which would enforce law and maintain order in the town until the invading forces arrived from Zagreb. It was mainly the Croats and Muslims who entered this self-appointed 'People's Board' (Martin Macan, Ibrahim Pašić, Juso Talić, Anto Banović, Osman Čehajić and others). On 15th April, the Board officially greeted the arrival of a German unit. The Serbs, as the most numerous and the most ethical community, disrupted the functioning of the Ustasha administration in Sanski Most. It was immediately, as early as the end of April, that the Ustashi directed all their dirty criminal schemes against the Serbs. By the way, in the period from 1921 to 1939, around 38,000 Serbs lived in Sanski Most, or 57%, around 18,650 Muslims, or 28.32%, around 9,040 Croats, or 13.73%, and 79 Jews, or 0.7%; in total, the District of Sanski Most had 65,800 inhabitants.

The first Serbs were dismissed from work in Sanski Most at the end of April and in early May 1941, first from the gendarmerie, and then from all other sectors (economy, education, well-fare). After that, the Ustasha authorities started to disarm the Serbian population, harass them, threaten, blackmail, persecute and kill them.

The crimes and the killing of innocent people first began in Kijevo and Tramošnja on 6th May 1941, when bands of Ustasha criminals from the Muslim settlements headed for the Serbian settlements, set on provoking a conflict. In the villages of Kijevo and Tramošnja, as they cursed the patron saint's day celebration, they started with open assaults on the female members of the celebrating families, after which verbal insults grew into an open physical conflict. A minor German artillery unit came all the way from Banja Luka and fired its cannons at the Serb houses. Around 28 Serbian peasants from the family Vidović were captured in the conflict, after which they were shot and their bodies hanged in the town park of Sanski Most. This was a signal to the Serbs they had no right to defend themselves or the honour of their daughters and the lives of their children, not even from villains.

After this atrocity in Sanski Most, the Ustasha authorities openly invited their people to destroy the Serbs and Jews. Viktor Gutić, a chief Ustasha official, was the most important local figure, whose criminal misdeeds set an example for the crimes against the Serbs and Jews. Viktor Gutić received the highest praise and commendation from Ante Pavelić, the Ustasha Poglavnik [leader, S. M.], and was delegated the absolute authority to persecute the Serbs.

On 28th May 1941, Viktor Gutić paid a visit to Sanski Most. The people of that town had to wait for hours to welcome the Ustasha butcher. In June

and July 1941, the people of Sanski Most awoke every day with a feeling of apprehension, because Ustasha crimes against the Serbian population were a daily occurrence. For example, on 11th July 1941, the Ustashi took in custody several Orthodox Christian priests and their families, moved them to Banja Luka, then to the camp in Sisak, from where they were banished to Serbia.

As the terror of the Ustasha authorities against the Serbian population of Sanski Most intensified, life in that town in the second half of July practically died down. For instance, on Mondays, which was the weekly market day, the town was empty, so those days the lives of the Serbian population in Sanski Most was unbearable. From 28th July to 3rd August the Ustasha authorities in Sanski Most committed unprecedented atrocities against the inhabitants of Serbian descent from the neighbouring villages of Dabar, Kijevo, Čaplje, Lužani, Kasapnica, Podlužani and Majdan.

Sixty-seven years later it can only be guessed how many inhabitants perished at Šušnjar, but that number certainly ranges between four and five thousand killed. Let me share a characteristic piece of information related to those events, which is unfamiliar to the general public. I had an opportunity to find out a lot about the crimes of the Ustasha authorities from the people involved in those dramatic events in Bosanska Krajina from 1941 to 1945 (Ljubo Babić, Ilija Došen, Milan Zorić, Nikola Kotle, Boško Šiljegović, Velimir Stojnić). I was present when they spoke in Dravar in 1983/1984 about their perceptions of those events. They agreed on one: there were a lot of casualties, at least 15 to 20 thousand Serbs were killed at Garavica, 500 to 600 victims in Krnjeuša, and 4 to 5 thousand innocent victims at Šušnjar. It seems to me that information about the number of casualties in Sanski Most is closest to the truth. Working as a curator at '25th May' in Dravar, I recorded all that on a magnetic tape, figuring that one day it would be important for revealing the actual truth about all those crimes of the Ustasha authorities.

The Ustashi killed the misfortunate captives with mallets, picks, knives, iron bars and wooden bats, while the 'lucky' ones were killed with firearms. Thanks to the witnesses of the Ustasha crimes and the survivors, the perpetrators of those crimes against the Serbs and Jews from all those place are known. The key Ustasha butchers-bloodsuckers were five members of the Hasić family (Latif, Hasan, Mujo, Himzo, Džafer), five of the Kamber family (Alija, Islam, Čerim, Fejzo, Ibrahim), four of the Banović family (Stjepan, Vid, Ivica, Dane), two of the Čorak family (Ivan, Anto). We should

not forget the infamous cut-throat Tojko Kljaka, also Filip Radoš, Lieutenant Fabijan Kurilić, and the notorious criminal Bećir Duraković.

I use this opportunity to point out before this gathering that the crimes against the Serbs in World War II and in the last civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995 should be approached in a most professional and responsible way, in a sense that everything needs to be researched systematically, documented and then presented to the general public. In that way, the many international institutions dealing with these issues will have a lot more appreciation and respect for us. Also, we will then know the objective truth about what really happened in this region from 1941 to 1995.

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*Dušan Bogdanović**

THROUGH FACTS TO THE TRUTH

/Per argumenta ad veritatem/

The Serbian people is probably the only in the world that was exposed to unbelievable persecution throughout its history. /A similar or perhaps greater tragedy was that of the Indians of the United States of America/.

When in 1463 the Turkish army conquered the town of Ključ, which lies about 30 kilometres away from Sanski Most, it captured and killed the last Bosnian sovereign, Stevan Tomašević. That was the end of the Bosnian state. The famous saying, “so Bosnia fell with a whisper,” dates back to those times.

Until that time those lands were inhabited by Orthodox Christian Serbs and by a far smaller number of Roman Catholics, who considered themselves Serbs at the time.

Both we and the whole world know how the Turkish authorities treated the population of Bosnia. It was terror which used the most drastic methods of torture, with putting live people on stakes as one of the most horrendous. What followed was forced conversion to Islam. Next, underage male children were taken away to Turkey, where they became Turkish soldiers, and joined its elite military units – the Janissaries.

However, when Turkish rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina ended, came the Austro-Hungarian occupation. The Austro-Hungarian administration immediately chose to help the Roman Catholic population in all sectors of life, especially supporting its economic, cultural and educational growth. What began immediately was the incitation of hatred towards the Serbian people, where the Roman Catholic Church was particularly active. It opposed the Yugoslav idea, which in the second half of the 19th century became popular not only with the Serbs, but also with a considerable number of Croatian intellectuals, especially those of Dalmatia. The local institution of the Roman Catholic Church and its policy was generously supported and helped by the Vatican.

* Dušan Bogdanović, teacher, diplomat and recipient of the 1941 Partisan Memorial Medal, Belgrade

The Austro-Hungarian administration waged a campaign of terror against the Serbian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina just before World War I. The hatred towards the entire Serbian people culminated in Austro-Hungary's war against Serbia from 1914 to 1916, when genocide was committed against the Serbian people. They killed children, women and the elderly. They even raped underage girls and killed them after the crime.

Archibald Reiss left a remarkable account of the genocide and atrocities against the Serbian people in Austro-Hungary's war against Serbia; he was a doctor who came from Switzerland to help the people of Serbia, and stayed with the Serbian troops the whole duration of World War I. Following the war, he stayed in Serbia – in Belgrade, and lived there for the rest of his life. At his own request, he was buried in Belgrade. He wrote a series of outstanding works dedicated to the Serbian people. He was probably the greatest friend of the Serbian people. When in 1918 the common state of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed, it was expected that the hatred towards the Serbian people, previously fostered, would vanish. However, that did not happen. A part of Croatian intellectuals, especially the Roman Catholic Church, opposed the unification. Their efforts were endorsed and supported particularly by Austria, which acted revengefully towards the Serbian people, which was the main contributor to the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Some Croatian intellectuals, who stood out in their opposition against the joint state of Serbs Croats and Slovenes, emigrated from the country for the reason they could not engage publicly against the new state. They were given asylum primarily in Italy and Hungary. There they were provided substantial assistance, in every aspect. The Vatican also proved supportive. Very soon they found a way to organise themselves and published numerous texts against Yugoslavia, where they particularly attacked the Serbian people. Not only were they given support in those countries, their campaign against the common state of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, in particular against the Serbian people, was also encouraged.

The man who assumed the leadership of the extremist emigration was Ante Pavelić, the most notorious criminal among the Croatian people. While in emigration, they started the publishing of the newspaper *Ustaša – Vijesnik hrvatskih revolucionara* (Ustasha – Gazette of Croatian Revolutionaries), whose first editorial dated February 1932 had the heading *Ropstvo je dodijalo* (Fed Up With Slavery), signed by the *Poglavnik*¹ /Ante Pavelić, note by D. B./. In the subsequent volumes, mainly in the editorials by the

¹ Historical, the title in Croatian of the leader of the Ustasha movement, S. M.

Poglavnik and articles by Mijo Babić, we can read that “the shame should be washed with blood,” that “when blood starts to spill, it will gush in streams,” “drops of blood will turn into gushes and rivers, for the blood of the enemy /Serbian blood, D. B./ will run in streams and rivers, and bombs will scatter their bones like wind scatters the husks of wheat,” for “every Ustasha is poised... to thrust himself upon the enemy, with his body and soul, to kill and destroy it,” where “the main say will be that of dedication, revolvers, bombs and sharp knives of the Croatian Ustashi, who will cleanse and cut whatever is rotten on the healthy body of the Croatian people”. Already in September 1932, its call to “drive the dogs across the River Drina” is spelt in capitals, and a month later a sirdar is celebrated because “wherever he gets, the Serbs he captures/he erases everywhere even the last trace of their existence.” From a feuilleton by Slavko Goldstein published in the daily *Politika*, 22nd July 2008, Tuesday, page 29.

Texts of this nature were continuously published in the Ustasha press and regularly smuggled into Croatia, where the Ustashi already had its underground movement.

In April 1941, Ante Pavelić and his Ustashi, with the support of Germany and Italy, ‘created’ the so-called Independent State of Croatia, which also annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of course, it was his present from Hitler and Mussolini, who during his emigration continuously assisted in his preparations to destroy Yugoslavia.

Upon his arrival in Croatia, Pavelić’s focus was on the formation of an army, which consisted of the Ustashi and the Croatian Home Guard. The most radical men of the Croatian and Muslim background were selected for the Ustasha troops. Their leadership were Ustasha extremists, who had returned from emigration. Pavelić considered the Ustashi his elite army. They were criminals who inflicted brutal torture on their victims before killing them.

Slavko Kvaternik, one of Pavelić’s closest associates, wrote in his *Sjećanja* (Memoirs): “Pavelić, rasovi² and the returning Ustasha emigrants boiled with hatred and the wish to revenge on the Serbs. Twelve years in emigration, during which we lived and wished for revenge, turned them into psychopaths, people mentally sick from wanting a bloody reprisal. I found proof of this in every spot, and whoever was not like them, he was stigmatised a traitor of the Croats.”

² The unofficial name given originally to five extremely influential Ustashi who returned from exile to Zagreb in April 1941 with Ante Pavelić, S. M.

All those villains and the most brutal war criminals, including Ante Pavelić, who killed about one million Serbs, Jews and Roma on the territory of the so-called Independent State of Croatia and survived World War II, left for the United States of America and some countries of Latin America, an operation facilitated by the Vatican in the first place, where they received a friendly welcome.

On Yugoslavia's request, the United States of America extradited some war criminals, but only when they had almost reached their nineties. Some were brought on stretchers in the courtroom in Zagreb to stand trial.

Glaise von Horstenau, Wehrmacht's plenipotentiary in the Independent State of Croatia from April 1941 to summer 1944, gives a similar account. In a summary of his diary entries, he concludes: "Pavelić trod back on the soil of his homeland in April 1941, intent on no less... than to annihilate, by sword and fire, the 1,800,000 Orthodox Christians living mixed with the country's four million Croats and 700,000 Muslims." Allegedly, Himmler himself was abhorred when Dido Kvaternik, in their first encounter in the last days of May 1941, spoke about the plans to kill two million Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia /from Slavko Goldstein's feuilleton in the daily Politika, 22nd July 2008, Tuesday, page 29 – D. B./. The principle idea of the annihilation of Serbian people was most tersely expressed by a leading interpreter of the Ustasha ideology, Dr. Mladen Iveković: "The Croatian state cannot exist if it has 1,800,000 Serbs living in it, and a strong Serbian state behind our back... therefore, we make efforts to have the Serbs disappear from our lands." It was in this spirit that the Ustasha media spread the cult of vengeance, hate and knife: "The knife, revolver, bomb and time bomb, they are the idols... they are the bells that will announce the break of dawn and the resurrection of the independent Croatian state!" – From Slavko Goldstein's feuilleton in the daily Politika, 22nd July 2008, Tuesday, page 29.

"Hitler received Pavelić in audience on 6th June 1941, at 3 p.m. The audience, with the tea-serving ceremony, lasted two hours.... On 6th June 1941, at 11 a.m., Pavelić was welcomed by Ribbentrop at the railway station in Salzburg, who talked to him about the most important issues before lunch: the deportation of Slovenes from Styria and Carinthia to the Independent State of Croatia and of the Serbs from the Independent State of Croatia to Serbia,... measures against the Jews, a special status for the Muslims,..." – From Slavko Goldstein's feuilleton in the daily Politika, 25th July 2008, Friday, page 30.

"Pavelić began his audience with Hitler with his expression of gratitude to the leader of the Third Reich for enabling the Croatian people to have their

independent state. ...Pavelić... in the context of that he also brought up ‘the Serbian issue’ in the Independent State of Croatia. Hitler first commended ‘the plans to move the Slovenes to Croatia and the Serbs from Croatia to Old Serbia. Then he concluded ‘the Serbian issue’ with the well-known and frequently cited statement, which was probably prepared in advance because in the transcript it is quoted word by word and specially emphasised:

“Anyway, if the Croatian state wants to be really solid, it will have to implement an intolerant national policy for 50 years, because too much tolerance in those matters can only cause damage.”

Pavelić returned from the Berghof to Zagreb on 7th June 1941. ... He understood Hitler’s statement about “an intolerant national policy for 50 years” as strongly supportive of the Independent State of Croatia’s strict policy against the Serbs – which the statement was. ... “Dido Kvaternik stuck with the pattern he brought back home on 2nd June 1941 after his conversations in Berlin: concentration camps, death camps.” – From Slavko Goldstein’s feuilleton in the daily *Politika*, 26th July 2008, Saturday, page 29.

However, on Pavelić’s order and even before he was given approval by Hitler, the Ustashi began the mass killings of Serbs in April 1941. Pavelić, who had appointed his closest associates to high positions in the Government of the Independent State of Croatia, decided to send them to those parts of the Independent State of Croatia where the Serbian population constituted the majority, where they would hold gatherings and explain ‘the policy’ of the Government of the Independent State of Croatia towards the Serbian people.

Viktor Gutić arrived in Sanski Most on 28th May 1941. According to the 1931 census, the District of Sanski Most had 46,777 inhabitants. Out of that, there were 28,285 Serbs, 6,727 Croats, 11,652 Muslims, 49 people belonging to other Christian denominations, 63 people of unknown religious background, and 1 evangelical. In conclusion, the Serbs outnumbered the sum of all the other communities.

At the gathering, which mainly brought together the Croatian and Muslim population, Viktor Gutić said among other things: “The roads will wish for the Serbs, but the Serbs will be no more.” So, this was an explicit call to kill Serbs. Immediately after that the Ustasha authorities in the District of Sanski Most began to prepare plans to annihilate the Serbian people. First, they summoned all the male population to mend roads, and once they collected them, they would transport them by lorries to prison in Sanski Most. According to plan, they first captured the richest people, the merchants, craftsmen, and the wealthier, more respectable Serbian peasants.

They were particularly 'keen' on the Thessaloniki volunteers. These were the Serbs who fled Austro-Hungary during the war against Serbia to join the Serbian army. A number of Serbs had defected to the Russian army; Russians did not deploy them as their soldiers, and instead, in agreement with the Serbian authorities, they sent them to Greece. They travelled to Greece by ships via Siberia and around Asia. There they joined the Serbian army to fight side by side with it in the fiercest battles against the Austrian and Bulgarian armies on the Thessaloniki front, hence the phrase 'the Thessaloniki volunteers'. Following Serbia's liberation and the end of World War I, they returned their homes. These people came from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. One of them was Rade Bogdanović, my uncle.

The Ustasha authorities were particularly anxious to find the Thessaloniki volunteers, because they were young people, experienced in waging war, and as such they could organise and lead the Serbian people to resist the Ustasha terror.

When the war ended, the authorities of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes rewarded these volunteers by granting them the best farming land in the joint state, mainly in Serbia, i.e. in Vojvodina and Kosovo.

My uncle was granted an estate in Banat. He travelled over to see the land. He did not like the endless plain without any woods or hills, so he returned to his Skucani Vakuf and started a family there. Apart from him, other Thessaloniki volunteers, a small number of them, also refused to be resettled in other areas and stayed in the places where they had lived previously.

Next came the intellectuals, clerks, university and secondary school students.

They employed the secondary school students in various institutions so they could have control over them. For example, from my village, Skucani Vakuf, they summoned three members of my family, the Bogdanovićs – Jovo, Milan and Dušan, myself, as well as Rade Divjak, our neighbour, to Gornji Kamengrad, to the office which kept cadastral books, written in Cyrillic script, as most of the population of the District of Sanski Most was Serbian, to copy those books to new ones in Latin script. Every day we travelled from our village to Gornji Kamengrad, which is 15 kilometres away from Skucani Vakuf. There we used the Latin script to copy the data to these new books, introduced by the Ustasha administration. We were watched by a Muslim armed with a carbine. He was not strict. He would go to a pub and return only when it was time for us to go home.

As everyone already knew the Ustasha authorities were arresting the Serbs, we were bound to be taken into custody in Sanski Most one day.

In the final days of July 1941, as the four of us set off from Gornji Kamengrad to our homes in Skucani Vakuf, before us came Ago Gazibara, a

shoemaker from whom my uncle Rade bought shoes for his son Milan and myself, as we needed to be decently dressed, as students of the secondary school in Sanski Most. He told us: "Children, don't come here again, because they might send you to prison in Sanski Most." Ago was a really good and noble man, and if we had not listened to him, the Uštashi would have sent us to prison and our lives would have ended in the Šušnjar graveyard.

On our way back home, although we argued a bit, we agreed not to go to Gornji Kamengrad again. Very soon the Serbian people rose up in a rebellion, and the four of us joined in the very first days. Only Jovo Bogdanović was killed as a prisoner by the Uštashi in the spring of 1943 – the other three of us survived the days of war.

In late July 1941, the Uštashi summoned the relatively richer and more respectable Serbs of our village, Skucani Vakuf, to Sanski Most. There were about 150 households in our village, of which 42 were Serb, and the rest were Muslim. The Uštashi asked their informers in the villages to provide them with the names of the respectable, wealthy Serbs. We never found out who produced that list for Skucani Vakuf.

The following people from Skucani Vakuf were summoned to Sanski Most: Rade D. Bogdanović /my uncle, a Thessaloniki volunteer/, Petar B. Delić, Mile R. Divjak, Jovo D. Majkić, Marko A. Momčilović, Ilija S. Šuput and Mile S. Šuput. They agreed that my uncle Rade would take them all to Sanski Most by his wagon and horses. When they came to Sanski Most, the Uštashi let my uncle return the wagon and horses, telling him to come to Sanski Most again.

On his way home, uncle Rade dropped into the pub in Kamengrad, owned by a Muslim, an acquaintance of his. He asked uncle why he had gone to Sanski Most. When my uncle told him he had taken his neighbours to Sanski Most, the publican told him, he practically begged him, not to go back to Sanski Most by any means, as the writing was on the wall. That publican, whose name I cannot remember, was also a very good man, he did not collaborate with the Uštasha authorities and helped the Serbian people as much as he could.

My uncle came to our neighbour's house. His wife, my aunt Milica and mother Stana, who were both widows /Mihajlo, aunt Milica's husband, was killed somewhere, and my uncle Stojan died at an early age – I do not remember his death/ and the ten of us children, born between 1923 and 1930, begged uncle not to go back to Sanski Most, which was 25 km from our village. However, he would not listen to us, and kept saying: "I can't leave my neighbours, we'll share the same fate." He walked to Sanski Most. Of all those people who were detained in Sanski Most, only Marko Momčilović returned home, only to be killed in his home by the Uštashi in 1943.

In the first days of August, these people were brutally tortured and killed at the ŠUŠNJAR graveyard, like many other Serbs.

Towards the end of February 1943, Jovo Bogdanović and my brother Dane (born in 1930) were captured by the soldiers of the 7th SS Division Prinz Eugen, which was made up of the Germans from Vojvodina, the so-called Volksdeutsche – German people. Jovo had a hand grenade and gun ammunition. He was killed in the presence of my brother Dane. This was a terrible stress for the twelve-year-old Dane.

Jovo's killers took my brother Dane with them. They had reached village Miljevci when our mother Stana caught up with them and found her son in the column. She asked them to let him go, but they did not want to. Mother took Dane by the hand and walked with the column to village Fajtovci, 7 km away from Miljevac. Mother had an idea there: she told an officer Dane was infected with typhus. The soldiers of this unit spoke the Serbian language. The officer ordered to release him and mother took him home. If they had not heard he was ill with typhus, they would not have freed him.

Walking along with the column, mother saw Krajo Indić, who was the same age as Dane, so she asked them to free him too, which they accepted.

Right after he returned home, Dane left home and joined the Partisan army. His friends from the village left with him, the same generation as Dane, born in Skucani Vakuf in 1930: Ranko Divjak, Ilija Šuput, Slavko Šuput and Mile Cvjetičanin.

Ilija Šuput was killed on 1st January 1944 during the Partisan raid on Banja Luka. My brother Dane saw him die, as he also took part in that attack, while Mile Cvjetičanin died on 2nd August 1944 in the raid on Petrovac.

Out of ten children, nine of us fought in the People's Liberation Combat, while Mirko, the eldest, was taken to Germany as a prisoner. When the war ended, he returned from Germany, where he spent the whole war working on a rich German's farm.

Branko Bokan, the best and the most prominent researcher of the events which took place in Bosanska Krajina in the war of 1941–1945, concluded, after years of research, that 88,437 Serbs, Jews and Roma were killed in late July and the first days of August 1941 in the Districts of Bihać, Bosanska Krupa, Cazin, Bosanski Novi, Bosanska Dubica, Prijedor, Bosanska Gradiška, Banja Luka, Sanski Most, Ključ, Bosanski Petrovac, Bosansko Grahovo, Mrkonjić Grad, Glamoč and Jajce. Of the three ethnic communities, the number of the killed Serbs is by far the largest.

*Luna Albahari**

MEMORIES OF SANSKI MOST

The little Bosnian town of Sanski Most is located on the banks of the River Sana, the banks connected with a charming wooden bridge. One of the banks was inhabited mainly by Serbs, Croats and Jews, while the other mainly by Muslims.

After finishing school, in 1916, I came to Sanski Most and got a job at a bank; that was my first-time employment. It was in that little town that I got married and gave birth to my children, so I have very fond and dear memories of it.

There were ten or so Jewish families in Sanski Most, and the oldest, the most respectable and the richest among us was Elazar Lezo Levi. He had a merchant shop in the centre of town, and his house was the most beautiful in Sanski Most. He had a lovely wife; we all called her tija Ester. Not only because she was a good homemaker and mother, she was also truly kind-hearted. She was the madrina (godmother), of every single Jewish child that was born. As the oldest and the most respectable inhabitant of Sanski Most, tiju Lezo had in his safe keeping our kituba (wedding gowns). Tiju Lezo and tija Ester had two sons and six daughters. The daughters got married, son Sado worked in the shop alongside his father, while the youngest Lunica stayed with the parents. Tiju Lezo, tija Ester, daughter Lunica and grandson Lazarenko perished in Jasenovac. Son Sado was shot in Sanski Most in 1941, while son Jakob and daughters Grasija, Erna and Donka remained alive and moved to the US after the war.

The second family was that of Hajim Kaveson. His wife, whom we called aunt Đoja, was very funny. Small, quite fat, she loved to dress up (put on jewels). Indeed, she had very expensive jewellery, so during the holidays she came to temple with a lot of jewellery on. There was an anecdote about aunt Đoja, which was told by the Jews of Sanski Most over and over again, and everyone had a sweet laugh about it. In fact, aunt Đoja loved eating, and she ate a lot. On one occasion she fell ill and they had to call the doc-

* Luna Albahari, a paper previously published in the magazine Јеврејски преглед (Jewish Review), Belgrade, August 1982

tor. When the doctor asked her about what she had eaten, she replied in a mixture of Spanish and Serbian: “Mi fižu, I komer nothing. My Hajim no keru (doesn’t want to), so I have to. A little bit of pasta, a little bit of meat, a little bit of spinach, a little bit of dulse (sweets), and a little bit of everything.” It turned out aunt Đoja had not had a snack, she had had a square meal. Hajim had a hardware shop and lived a good life. They had no children. Hajim’s brother’s children, Braco and Ido, and their mother Blanka also kept a shop across the River Sana. Blanka died early, in 1930, while Ido left for Zagreb some time in 1940, so in 1941 the remaining members of the family (after tiju Hajim died in 1940) were aunt Đoja and Braco with his family. They were all killed.

The families of two brothers, Avram and Isak Atijas. Isak and his wife Rifka, the daughter of tiju Kalmi from Banja Luka, also had a merchant shop in the centre of town. They were tiju Leza’s main competitors. They had three daughters and a son, Rafael. They all perished, except for the oldest daughter, Sarinka, who lives in South America.

Avram Atijas and aunt Mazalta. They lived in Ključka Street, by the bank of the River Sana. They had a beautiful house, which always resounded with laughter and jesting. Although they lived a life of relative poverty, they had seven children, of which six sons and one daughter. Youths always gathered at their house, especially in summertime, when people came to bathe around their ‘boat’ (a beach, an arranged access way from their beautiful garden to the River Sana). The brothers called their sister Švesta (after Schwester, sister), so everybody else called her the same, although her real name was Sarinka. The sons were handsome and tall, and I may say openly they were the best-looking Jewish children in Sanski Most. They were all either formally educated or trained as craftsmen.

When we moved from Sanski Most to Lušci Palanka, and after my sister Rena moved to Banja Luka, we came to Sanski Most for the holidays of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and stayed with aunt Mazalta. Those were festive and memorable days: many of us would gather around the table, with the children’s merry and carefree hubbub. During the massacre in Sanski Most in 1941, aunt Mazalta’s two sons were shot immediately, while she and the rest of the children, except for two sons, Mima and Hajim, perished in the camps.

From 1907 my sister Rena and her family lived in Sanski Most. My kunjado Jako Albahari, i.e. my husband David’s brother, had a merchant shop. When World War I ended, my husband Davo joined his brother, so

they had one shop. We all made a living from that shop: my sister's eight-member family and the six members of my family. We lived good lives, in harmony and love. We separated in 1927. We went to Lušci Palanka, while a few years later my sister and her family moved to Banja Luka, and then to Hrvaćani near Prnjavor.

It is hurtful to me to think about my sister and her lovely children: Moric, Rahela, Matilda, Šalom Mito, Flora. They were all good-looking and tall; and among them the most beautiful was Matilda, the prettiest girl in Sanski Most. She had beautiful big blue eyes and dark hair; she was tall and well-built. Except for Flora, everyone perished in the last war. I am glad my kunjado Jako and his son Šalom Mito died fighting against those fascists; at least they took revenge for my sister's brutal murder committed by the Chetniks. The only one who remained is son Šalom Mito, who now lives in Sarajevo with his family.

Albert and Luna Albahari had a clockmaker's shop. Albert was killed immediately, in 1941, while Luna and her two sons perished in Jasenovac.

Our rabiner David Kabilo and rubisa Flora had a large family: three sons and five daughters. In fact, David lost his wife and married a second time, so the children came from two marriages. He was a merchant, but because he had the best religious education, the citizens chose him to be their rabiner. Kabilo was very close to my sister's family and they often visited one another. Every Saturday, after leaving the temple, they met over a glass of brandy and zelena. His children left home before the war, they got married, so only his oldest son Puba and daughter Flora stayed with him.

His youngest son Cevi was captured in Belgrade distributing propaganda leaflets, and as a Communist, he stood trial and was banished to Bosnia. He was imprisoned in Bihać, in the Bihać Tower. He would have been killed by the Ustashi in 1941 and shared the destiny of the other prisoners if there had not been a Catholic priest, who managed to get him out of prison. So Cevi escaped to Split and found his father there. After the liberation, they left for Israel. Cevi died in the Arab-Israeli war in 1948. Puba, the oldest son, was killed immediately in 1941; daughter Luna survived the war, she fought in the liberation war on Mount Kozara; Bukica and Kika, two daughters, lived in Israel; everyone else was killed by the fascists.

Isak Papić, a cobbler. He lived a life of hardship, so the whole Jewish community used to help him. His oldest son was also a cobbler, and he opened a shop in Ključ. He died from typhoid; as there was not a Jewish cemetery in Ključ, his father buried him by the River Sana and raised him a tombstone, which, people say, still stands there.

Juso Papić, a barber. He and his whole family perished in Jasenovac. The camp survivors say he worked as a barber to the last day, but they murdered him anyway just before the liberation.

Oto Goldberger, a pharmacist. During the raid on Sanski Most in 1943, he managed to escape with his family and joined the Partisans. He left for Israel in 1948 and today he lives in the city of Zion.

David Baruh and his wife Berta kept a little merchant shop. They had two daughters, Blankica and Nina (Sarina). Unfortunately, that family also perished.

Apart from Oto Goldberger, there were two more Ashkenazi families living in Sanski Most. Benjamin Reich and his wife Melvina ran a restaurant at the railway station. Melvina was the sister of the goalkeeper of the Banja Luka-based club 'Makabi'. Oštric had a tinsmith's shop. Both families perished.

A temple was never raised in Sanski Most; instead, they adapted a building to be used as a temple. Everyone met there for holidays, weddings, berit mila, and all those gatherings were happy events for us. Tiju Kalmi came from Banja Luka for berit mila (the circumcision of male children). We all lived like one family; we shared all our joys and sorrows.

Nevertheless, in Sanski Most we lived in neighbourly relations with others too. I will never forget the families dear to me, those of Ana Takić, granny Mara Kovačević, Anica Dodik and her husband Kosta, a postman, aunt Marta, and many others. It is hard to talk about the fate of these families. When the Ustashi took control of the town in 1941, they committed a mass slaughter of the Serbs from Sanski Most and the surroundings: around 6,000 people were killed. With them perished Albert Albahari, Puba Kabiljo, Sado Levi, brothers Puba and Lolo Atijas. I always wonder about the evil in those Ustashi, which made them capable of killing and molesting those peaceful and innocent people. Everything should be done so that never happens again.

*Duško Radić**

PAINFUL MEMORIES THAT DO NOT FADE AWAY

Memories of the perishing of Serbs in the area of Sanski Most district in 1941, and in particular the ones of my closest relatives, have been engraved deeply in my memory, so that even 67 years later they did not fade away, and even now some images come before my eyes and disturb me.

In the village Šehovci, north of Sanski Most, at the distance of 1.5km, there was a hamlet Radići in which five households lived, closely related between themselves, bearing the same surnames after which the hamlet was named after all.

On the hill above them there was a hamlet Zagaj in which eight Serbian families lived. More to the north from Zagaj, in Gornja Trnova, lived a Serbian family, immigrants from Lapac – Lika. The hamlet Radići belonged to the Moslem village Šehovci which counted around 115 households. The chief of the village was mukhtar Osman (son of Behrem) Talić.

Hamlet Zagaj belonged to the village Poljak, which counted about 80 Croatian households. The chief of the village was the headman David Marijan.

Family Zorić, immigrants from Lika, lived in Gornja Trnova, Catholic. The headman of this village was Jozo Mlinar.

The April war in 1941, capitulation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and German army arrival to Sanski Most, found me as an apprentice with Pero Zuber. I was learning to become a tailor and lived at my master's place. I had just turned 13. This is why my boyish memories are full of surprises, heavy events and burdens for my age at that time.

I remember that one troop of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia army was stationed in primary school in Sanski Most at that time. I happily visited those soldiers with a group of boys of my age. We observed them and watched them carrying their duties and perform other regular jobs. We noticed that they were glad also that we visited them so they made contact with us whenever they were able.

One day we were surprised and sad when we found out that the soldiers have gone somewhere, that they were not there anymore and that we would not see and visit each others again.

* Duško Radić, LL.B., Sanski Most

Not long after that master Pero told me that people's board was formed with Dr Josip Cerjan ahead and that he, together with his board, took over the power from the district chief until that time, Dragoljub Popović. After handing over the duty, Popović went to Serbia together with his family. His wife, Mara, maiden Opalić, extraordinary nice and dear to us, was our primary school teacher. Even after we finished our school we were glad to meet her and greet her in the street. Now we would not meet or see her again.

During the change over and constituting authorities on the district level, a change over of the mayor also took place. The mayor Džaferbeg Bišćević handed the duty over to Himzo Pašić – Rešić, a merchant until then. He retired from the mayor's duty under the excuse that he was ill and that he would not be able to carry out his duty anymore. The real reason of his retiring was that he did not want to serve Ustasha authorities. The citizens have experienced these changes with fear, and especially Serbs, because they knew what they were losing and who were the ones seizing the control. In the events which followed this manifested in its full light.

Mid April, while formation of new authorities was still ongoing, the first German army unit arrived. Welcome was organized, and as we found out a ceremonial reception was also given.

Our curiosity was especially stirred up by numerous machinery, armoury and disciplined behaviour of soldiers and officers. On the other side, the reception organizers tried to be as intimate and as kind as they could in contact with the guests. This suited us and beside the other things, we met German officers in groups and greeted them with raised arm saying Hail Hitler. They greeted us back the same way. In this euphoria and atmosphere Mirko Vranić came from somewhere, who was a student at the time, later in the war and after the war our distinguished commissary and a general. He walked to me and pulled me for my ear asking: "Do you know what you're saying and what those words mean?" When I said I did not know and that the others were saying that he answered me: "Go home right away and I will explain it to you what do they mean." I grew up together with Mirko, members of one family traditionally godfathered members of the other, and this is why he felt so free to behave like that with me.

In the first half of April, armed groups started appearing who called themselves "Croatian champions" ("Hrvatski prvaci"), "Ustasha cores" ("Ustaška jezgra"), "Croatian patriots" (Hrvatske patriote") etc. These groups were armed prevailingly with hunting weapons, rarely military

ones. Their task was, as they were saying themselves, to preserve peace and order. They intercepted Yugoslavian soldiers, disarmed them, took military clothes and equipment from them. The most active were the groups of Grga Maričić, from Zdena, Tomo Tomić, from Kruhari, Dane Banović, from Brdari, Ante Banović, from Sanski Most and Poljak, Mile Ljevar from Sasina and others.

One day at dusk three riders appeared across the town bridge, by uniforms one would say that they were officers. A group of us children ran towards them to see them better. However, we were outrun by Grga Maričić with two more armed Ustashas, who ran out of the town park shouting: "Give in!" These soldiers stopped, but instead of giving in one of them pulled a pistol out and pointed it towards Grga. When Grga saw his, he ran away with his men back to the park. The riders continued their trip and galloping through the Ključka street left in the direction of Ključ. Later we found out that one of the riders was Petar Škondrić from Sanica.

In the second half of April Serbs were discharged from gendarmerie and police and men that suited Ustasha authorities were appointed on leading positions. Some of them were very active in torturing and killing Serbs. Among the first people that were replaced on their duty was gendarmerie station commander, Đuro Vezmar. He was killed later and together with a group from Vidović family was hanged in the park.

Gendarmerie and police structure together with Ustashas became main footing of Ustasha authorities. Their first main task was disarming Yugoslavian army members who avoided arrests and returned to their homes. Gendarmes and Ustashas searched villages and town parts for collecting weapons and military equipment and while doing this they performed violence over peaceful population, mainly Serbs. These reprisal measures were extended from harassment and threats to blackmailing. Commissaries were appointed in merchants' shops belonging to Serbs and Jews. Serbs were banned from craft business and manufacturing activities. This is how my master, Pero Zuber, by agreement transferred his shop to Rudolf Katarina, in order to continue with his work and preserve the existing property. Katarina worked before as a highly qualified employee. After taking away their shops and banning certain activities some Serbs left to Serbia, such as: Veso Milinković, Boško Marinković, Jovo Delić and some others.

Upon Yugoslavian army disarray, one evening a group of soldiers visited our houses in Radići, 10 of them, armed. They said that they were withdrawing from Croatia and that they were going home on the territory of

Glamoč and Grahovo. Residents of Usorci directed them towards us. We received them, took them to a safe place so they could have some rest, and prepared some food immediately for the road. After a shorter rest the soldiers were seen out in direction of Kruhari. They had to cross their way to this village over night for their own safety.

These soldiers left nine rifles to us and one machine gun as well as a certain quantity of ammunition. They took a few hand bombs, two pistols and military bayonets with them.

We packed the weapons adequately and my brother Milan and Veljko, my cousin (son of my father's brother), took them to the forest and buried them, but they neither left us a sketch nor told us the micro location. After they were shot, we were digging through the whole region for a few times, but never managed to find the weapons.

Ustasha terrorist measures were continuously becoming stronger, especially over Serbian population. Serbian villages were under constant supervision of Ustashas, constant controls were carried out followed by robbery and taking away their property on pretence of compensation for protection of population in the villages settled with Croatian and Moslem population. Local protection groups were formed, i.e. organized patrols and their task was to guard the villages from Chetniks.

In Šehovci, our village, night watches were organized, which involved my Radić family as well under instruction from mukhtar. In this way they kept them all under control. During the course of a day Hasan Talić, called Pobro, came to our hamlet two to three times a day, always finding a reason for his visit. This was made easier by the fact that he was our first neighbour, our houses were about 300 metres away from the Moslem houses.

Our family's Patron Saint's Day is Saint George's day. We celebrated it as it was a custom, as before, but we did not have any guests from other places. The only people that came were godfathers, best man and relatives from the neighbouring hamlet Zagaj, we called them Brđani (Highlanders) and they called us Poljani (Lowlanders), because our houses were located in the field by the road between Šehovci and Trnova. Our Moslem neighbours did not visit us on Saint George's Day, as they did in the previous years, but they organized observing and following to establish which of our guests did visit us. In the afternoon Ustashas visited us: Nikola and Jozo Maričić, since they knew my father well, Pero Radić, they stayed in our house. We have welcomed them as it was a custom. They were very much interested if we had any guests and who were they. When they received

our answers they did not react at all, they behaved prudently, they said that the reason of their visit was control of the terrain for which they were in charge. They told my father that if he noticed any happenings, visits and similar to inform them immediately.

During these days of May we found out that Ustashas arrested Rajko Stojanović from Kijevo, and that they were bursting into houses of the people that celebrated Saint George's Day, were scattering their Saint's Day tables, throwing away the dishes, stepped on their Saint's Day candles and maltreated the house inmates. Ustashas continued robbing the peasants' properties, but were met by rifle shots from adjacent houses, on the border between Kijevo and Tramošinja, so they had to retreat and run away to the Moslem Kijevo.

On seventh day of May when I came to Sanski Most, I noticed that there were more people in the streets than usual, and children in particular, and I decided to join them. Then I found out that three rebels were shot that day in front of the gendarmerie station and that the citizens were invited to see them. The town-crier Mile Krunić informed the citizens on the executions that were done, shouting that the same would happen to anybody who would stand up against the authorities. When we reached the spot we saw three dead bodies lying on the lawn. It was a terrible sight and many people were terrified, us, children got scared and ran away. We found out that the following had been killed: Rajko Stojanović, Đurađ and Mirko Kondić from Kijevo.

As soon as tomorrow the Germans from Prijedor arrived and started fighting against the rebels in Tramošinja and Kijevo immediately. Gun shots were heard, artillery was used as well and around noon smoke in Tramošinja was seen, probably from the burnt houses and other buildings.

German commander ordered that all Serbs and Jews should be arrested. The town-crier invited all the Serbs and Jews between the age of 16 and 60 to report to the primary school building in order for them to make a list, and who did not report would be shot. Nobody was supposed to move in the town apart from the ones that were on their way to the school building. As they were reaching the school building they were being captured and imprisoned in the school cellar. In the afternoon residents from Tomina, Lužani and other surrounding villages were brought and arrested. In the school yard they formed groups of the families Vidović, Kovačević, Čičić and others. There were 24 of them. To the people from Tomina they joined the following: Vezmar, Martinović, Milan Gvozden, orthodox priest Đuro

Grbić and the Jews. They locked them all up in the school cellar and set guards around them. On the ninth of May the prisoners were taken out from the cellar, lined up in the yard of the school in the presence of a German general who came from Banja Luka to be present while the hostages were shot. They forced the arrested people from the yard through the park into the Ključka street up to Mašinski most on the river Sana. They took them across the bridge on the left bank and separated 28 people from Tomina who were told that they would be executed by shooting because one German soldier was killed and two were wounded. Then the execution commenced. When it was finished, the remaining hostages carried victims over to the right bank, loaded them on the carts and drove them to the park, where ropes were already tied on the trees. The Germans were taking photographs of the hostages together with the victims and then they ordered them to take the victims into the park and put them underneath the trees and then hang them. Twenty-eight shot and then hanged hostages gave a terrifying sight. Everybody that passed across the square was forced to pass through or by the park, and other citizens were invited to come and see the hanged. Everyone that passed by was threatened that the same would happen to anybody who tried to jeopardize the life of a German soldier or was against this country. Normally, these threats were directed at Serbs and Jews.

The following day, hostages from the school were taken into the park to take off the hanged ones. They loaded the victims onto carts, took them to the Orthodox graveyard Šušnjar and buried them at the end of the graveyard. The ropes onto which the victims were hanged on the trees in the park swayed for a long time.

(NOTE: These victims' grave was recently discovered and has not been marked yet, not even now.)

After all these events and increasingly difficult situation, which was present in the town, I was not able to stay in the apprentice anymore, so I went back to my family in Šehovci.

My parents and relatives asked me about the situation in town curiously and what was happening. I told them what I knew and saw, I spoke about arresting Serbs in particular after the fight between the German army and Tramošinja village residents, bringing, arresting, shooting and hanging Vidović men in the town park. This event shook us all the most and filled us with fear that Ustashas could commit crimes over us too. However, the opinion prevailed, especially among the men, that the worst would not happen to us, because we were loyal citizens, there were no revolt among

us or any events due to which Ustasha would persecute us, we obeyed the authorities. Such were our views.

They went for watches regularly and guarded the village together with the Moslem neighbours. It is interesting that those watches were placed between our hamlet and Moslem part of the village and directed north towards Usorci

and Tomašica, where Chetniks could attack from, as they said and were supposing. This way, our hamlet was outside the line of village protection. During the course of a day a man who was put in charge by mukhtar came and checked whether we were at home, whether anybody left. Men did not go into town, but only women and I sometimes and this was only when something was ought to be supplied, bought for the requirements of the house. While going into town, we had to go by the Croatian families and these were Mirko Vranić's and Jerko Filipović's family. Someone from their families went to town together with us for getting the supplies or we would give them the money and one of theirs would go into town and bought what we needed and we would wait at their houses. This was how we got supplies and other necessities.

At the end of May, I do not recall the date, we received information from mukhtar that a great district-perfect was coming from Banja Luka to Sanski Most, Viktor Gutić. He would, among the other things, hold a speech to the citizens, and that people should go and welcome him. Ours were discussing should they go and what would be the consequences if they did not go. The women were scared and talked them out of going, fearing that Ustashes may deceive them, capture and kill them. At the end they agreed not to go, but to send me instead. I was a child and Ustashes would not have maltreated me and if something undesired should happen I would be able to manage somehow and escape. So I went to the reception for Viktor Gutić. It was a great ceremony that they prepared for him, there was a great number of people, I recognised some Serbs among them too. They took out all the school children, among which I merged as well. Gutić was greeted by the mayor Himzo Rešić and wished him welcome. There were many Ustasha officials and authorities' representatives on the speaker's platform with the district chief Ivica Simeon.

Gutić held a rather lengthy speech, but what was the worst and what was impressed in my memory were the words: "Serbs, Jews and dogs do not have a place among us, they are our grave diggers and finally we have to cleanse them. Serbs may not hope for anything, and it would be the best for them to move out to Serbia and vanish from our areas."

It was sad to listen to this speech. There were no positive reactions from the audience, only the children applauded and authorities' representatives groups and Ustashas gathered on the platform. The people left peacefully, sadly and without any positive feeling.

When I came home they all gathered around me immediately in order for me to tell them how the reception ceremony went. When I told them everything I heard and what happened, everybody had this strange feeling, and the fear of the worst possible events visibly increased.

After this conversation, my uncle Mile, who was the oldest, said something like this: "We do not have anywhere to go, we have to stay here, we did nothing wrong, so whatever God's will may be - so be it. The authorities never destroyed their innocent people, so this one would not either." The others agreed with him and so we continued to live and work. Occasionally Ustasha patrols came to our hamlet and these were always the same men. These were: Maričić – Nikola and Joso. They knew my father Pero well. My father's sister was married in Vranješ family on Đedovača, and they were neighbours with the Maričić family. They would meet often when my father went to visit his sister and this is when he would pass by their house.

On Sunday, before Saint Elijah's Day, around 10 o'clock in the evening, we were visited by Ustashas Maričić and when we gathered in front of our house they asked my father and then the others whether anybody came to visit us that day. Father said that his nephew Branko Vranješ came to ask them to go and harvest the wheat. He replied that they could not because they had to harvest their own. At that point out of the dark a Moslem emerged and said that he went into the field to get some crops and met a man with a bag of crops on his back who asked him to give him a ride and told him that he was going to the mill to grind the crops. He took him onto the carts and asked him where he was coming from and he said that he was coming from Radići. My father explained that there was a family Majkić in Kruhari that was called Radići and that maybe that man was from Kruhari. Ustashas were satisfied with such explanation emphasising: "We are looking after you, but you are obliged to look after yourselves too and to inform us or mukhtar about any suspicious events." Two days before Saint Elijah's Day shooting started from the direction of Šušnjar, which was heard occasionally. All day long we could hear whizzing of bullets that flew over our houses. These bullets came from the direction of Šušnjar, which was six to seven hundred metres away from us. This shooting continued the following day. All this caused greater fear among us, especially among women. They were frightened that the men would be killed, so they begged

men to go and hide in the adjacent forest until this stopped. They did not listen to them, saying all the time that they did nothing wrong and nobody would kill innocent people.

On Saint Elijah's Day, on the 2nd of Aug, around 12 o'clock, six Ustasha burst in front of our house suddenly. We were all gathered and we were sitting because it was a Saint's day, we did not do anything. We recognised one Ustasha, Asim Čekić, who lead these Ustashes to us. One Ustasha told us that they came to take all the major men to Sanski Most to sign loyalty to the ISC and then they would be returned home. While he was saying this to us, the other Ustashes spread into the houses and without presence of anybody from the family searched the houses. Later it was discovered that they took money and other valuables that could fit in their pockets. While they were doing that, we were all sitting gathered and talked to this Ustasha, there were no attempts of violence, everything looked normal, more or less. My cousin Veljko (son of my father's brother) even asked the Ustasha if he could go and relieve himself, which was granted to him. Veljko walked peacefully, without escort or supervision, and around 50 metres behind the house he relieved himself and came back. He could have escaped without any trouble if he wanted. Then the other Ustashes approached us and asked that major men come with them. My aunt asked for permission to pack some clothes, to bring something with them, and she got this answer: "They do not need anything, they will be back soon." So they moved down the road and when the men separated one of the Ustashes turned around and pointed his finger on my cousin Petar (son of my father's brother) and then me too, that we should go too. We came along too. There were eight of us altogether: Radić, Pero – my father, Radić, Milan – my older brother, I – Radić, Duško, Radić, Mile – my uncle, Radić, Veljko – son of Mile, Radić, Petar – grandson of Mile, Radić, Lazar – my uncle and Radić Ilija – son of Lazar.

We walked peacefully to the road and when we turned towards the town, Ustashes cut our way and turned us the other way, towards the village Trnova. This was where the mess started, we started shouting that they told us we were going to Sanski Most. At that point, Ustashes, as if they were ordered, attacked us murderously, started hitting us with their rifles and Asim Čekić, since he did not have a rifle, but a pistol, quickly fetched a stick from the fence and started beating us. In a moment they battered us so badly that some of us could not move. They were hitting the taller ones harder preventing them to defend or run. My uncle Mile had a dislocated leg in the hip, Veljko had a broken arm, Lazar also a broken arm, Pero was

hit in the face, his teeth broken and scattered into his mouth, so that he could not speak, he was only moaning with pain. Me and Petar got beaten less, I guess because we were the youngest and therefore less dangerous for them. So tormented they forced us towards Trnova. They ordered us that the ones that could move somehow, lead or dragged the ones that could not move themselves. I and brother stuck to our father, Veljko dragged his father Mile, and Ilija and Petar dragged Lazar. We were so battered and scared that we simply lost our reason. I was simply paralysed. I heard my uncle Mile saying: "You are killing us." They continued to beat and push us along the way and since we were unable to move anymore they turned us away from the road by a stream called Trnjak and dragged us for another 30 metres. This was where they stopped us and started lining us up for shooting. None of us was able to speak or cry. I was with my father all the time and when Ustashas turned away to take the distance for shooting, my father pushed me hard away from him so that I fell among the willows, that was I guess a signal to run away and I ran down the stream towards the river Sana. I heard shouts behind me: "They are running away!" and at the same time there was shooting followed by silence. I reached Sana soon and jumped into the water. This was when I sobered up a little and came to my senses. I was a good swimmer so I swam up the river to one leaning willow and crawled underneath the tree, so that only my mouth and one part of my head were above the water surface so I could breathe. When I went still, the water around me cleared quickly. I heard voices on the bank, some of them were running up the river shouting:

"There is nothing here!"

I stayed in the water just before night, when I went out onto the bank, through a cornfield, and then through a forest I went to Gornja Trnova, to the house of Stevo Zorić. I found Đuka near the house – daughter of Stevo and let her know I was there. She ran to me on the edge of the forest and was saying terrified: "Didn't you get killed, we heard that all the Radić men were killed?!" I asked her to tell my Mom that I was alive and that I was near their house. She left immediately and her sister Mara came to me who brought me some food and a sweater because I only had a shirt and trousers on me. One hour later Đuka came to me again and told me that she went to the house of Đorđo Ljepojević and that they sent a child to tell my mother that I was alive and that I was at their house. She said that she found Petar Radić there, he also ran away and was hiding near Đorđo's house.

After Petar's and my escape the following were killed on the killing field that day:

Radić, (son of Petar) Mile – 54 years old

Radić, (son of Mile) Veljko – 22 years old

Radić, (son of Jovo) Pero – 47 years old

Radić, (son of Pero) Milan – 18 years old

Radić, (son of Marko) Lazar – 52 years old

Radić, (son of Lazar) Ilija – 17 years old

Three fathers and three sons were killed. Radić, (son of Vaso) Petar, grandson of Mile Radić and Radić, Duško, son of Pero escaped the execution.

Our third uncle and brother of Lazar, Todor Radić, who lived in Podlug, was killed together with his son Ostoja, when the people from Podlug were killed.

When Ustashas finished shooting the Radić men, they immediately went to hamlet Zagaj, capturing nine Serbs and took them to Sanski Most and locked them up in the gendarmerie barracks. The imprisoned were: Radujko, (son of Pero) Gojko; Branković, (son of Mile) Stojan; Ljepojević, (son of Vaso) Đorđo; Ljepojević, (son of Đorđo) Mile; Ljepojević, (son of Vaso) Miloš; Ljepojević (son of Petar), Đurađ; Kaurin, (son of Petar) Ljubo and Vajkanović, (son of Nikola) Mile.

These men were kept in prison until mass shooting of Serbs stopped. They were visited every day by their families bringing them food and changing clothes. After the shooting stopped these men were returned to their homes escorted by Ustashas and on the order by camp commander, Ante Banović.

I found out later that the camp commander agreed with Šehovci mukhtar, Osman Talić that Ustashas catch Radić men and kill them and then arrest

Serbs from Zagaj and bring them to him. Ante himself was saying to the survivor Serbs that it was done like that and that he personally rescued them.

Headmen from Trnova – Catholic, Joso Mlinar, took weapons among the first ones and worked on organization of authorities, police and gendarmerie as well as preserving the territory and implementation of peace. However, when Ustashas started persecution of Serbs and Jews, imprisoning them, robbing and killing them, he said to the Ustasha chief that he as a Croat was prepared to fight for Ustasha matter further, but that he could not persecute and kill innocent people. He gave them his rifle saying: “Kill me, but I am not giving up my firm attitude on this, I am retreating to the duty of a headman in my village.”

As soon as he arrived home he went to the Serb Stevo Zorić, they were related through godfather or best men relations, and told him that Ustashas

will persecute Serbs and kill them and that he and his son Pero were to hide immediately, and to hide in such way that even their families did not know where they were, but only him as a headman and his best man. Zorić men hid immediately. Ustashas from Moslem Trnova came a few times, looked for them, maltreated their family, but did not find them, because the family really did not know where they were. This is how headman Joso Mlinar rescued his best men-godfather, Serbs Stevo and his son Pero Zorić.

Two days later I arrived home together with Pero. We had to come by night for security reasons. My mother rejoiced to see me: “My son, at least I have you left.”

We continued to live in constant fear, we were threatened, that we would be killed, to go to Grmeč because we belonged there. Us two boys were hiding during the day time and came home only at night.

One day we were visited by David Marijan, headmen from Poljak. He brought some financial aid and said that he was sorry for our killed fathers, and that Šehovci mukhtar together with Asim Čekić were to be blamed for their death. “We have protected and rescued our Serbs from Zagaj. You Radić families will not belong to Šehovci anymore, I will assign you to Poljak. In future anything you may need you will address me, I will provide you help and protection.” After this visit we felt a little bit easier, somewhat safer. However, threats and maltreatments still came from some of the neighbours from Šehovci, so we had to move to Zagaj with Serbs, our friends and relatives.

We went to work at our property from there, but always in the company or escorted by a Catholic. They were some sort of protection for us.

We stayed in Zagaj during the first half of 1942, until the first unsuccessful attack of Partisans on Sanski Most. Then Ustashas burnt down our houses, and my family went to Kruhari at my Mom’s relatives, I and Petar joined Partisans.

After liberation of Sanski Most, Radić hamlet residents that survived came back to their houses bare sites of fire and rebuilt these properties and continued living in freedom.

In 1995, residents of Radić hamlet, together with the Serbs from Zagaj, were forced once again to leave their homes and move into new exodus. All the property left behind then was destroyed, the graveyard was profaned and destroyed, so that they were unable to return and they did not have anywhere to return to.

There are no Serbs in these areas anymore.

*Zorka Delić-Skiba**

THE NINE WAR ORPHANS OF DUŠAN AND DRAGA DELIĆ FROM KRUHARI



My mother

My mother was the daughter of Teofil Praća, who fought in World War I on the Thessalonici front, and Anđa Arsenić. In 1927, when she turned sixteen, Drago Delić, the son of Pero, a young man two years older than herself who came from Kruhari, gave her a red apple as a gift at a fair in Sanski Most. Back in the home region, when a young man presented a girl with a red apple, that was a sign he liked her and intended to marry her. As Drago lived in the country and was a farmer, while his bride-to-be was born in Sanski Most and was a townswoman, when her father Teofil heard his daughter had fallen for a peasant and was going to marry him, he advised her she had better marry the forester from Sanski Most, who fancied her and lived on a government salary, because life in the country was difficult. One night Dragica decided to elope, and in the yard her Drago was waiting for her on a white horse, as he had decided to steal her. He mounted her on the horse before him and they set off for Kruhari. He brought her home, where they were welcomed by Drago's brother Dušan, his wife Vukosava and their one-year-old son Draško. By 1941, there were nine children in their joint household. Dušan had four: Draško, Petar, Slavka and Rada, and Drago had five: Nevenka, Dara, Milan, Zorka and Jovica.

I have only vague memories of my earliest childhood, but it was certainly a happy one until I was five. I was surrounded by mother's love and attention, father's care, numerous brothers and sisters, living in a warm home and having plenty of food to eat. All summer long I would go and bathe in the River Sana with my sisters. I played with Žučko, my dog, rolled in the

* Zorka Delić-Skiba, teacher, Oštra Luka

grass chasing chickens and ducklings. As for fruit, I liked apples best. My happy and careless childhood was interrupted some time in the second half of July 1941. That was when I saw my mother for the last time. The last thing I remember about her is the look of her beautiful, warm and sweet eyes, as she petted and kissed us, the nine children, one by one, and then told us to go into the maize field to hide away from bad people. The maize was right behind the house and it was almost two metres tall. We, the children, did not know then who we needed to hide away from, but mother's anxious behaviour and the tears in her eyes told us we were in great danger. She rushed us to go into the maize field as soon as possible.

She instructed Nevenka to take care of me; after she nursed Jovica, she told Dara to look after him, and lull him in her arms so he could fall asleep fast. She cautioned Slavka to look after her sister Rada. She asked Draško, the eldest, to take care of the eight children, and should anything happen to her, to take us to Tramošnja, where we had a lot of father's relations.

No sooner had we moved in the maize field than someone set fire to our house and stable, with several cows, two horses and a black bull inside, which father took to Mount Grmeč to compete in bullfights. The terrible roar of the cows, horses, but most of all of the black bull, choking from the smoke inside the burning stable locked from outside, pierced my ears and echoed in my head. I saw my mother open the door of the stable and the misfortunate cattle came out. I was frightened mother would get caught in the flames. As she started towards the maize field, I saw a man in a black uniform with a gun in his hand cut her way. I heard my mother and remembered every word she said:

“Omer, you villain, why did you burn my house and stable? Give me back my husband or brother-in-law, how can I raise nine children on my own?” (Vukosava, the wife of mom's brother-in-law, died before the war in 1939, after giving birth to Rada, after which my mother took care of her brother-in-law's children).

Omer, as my mother called him, took the gun, aimed at mother and shot her. I watched as he hit her in the forehead between the eyes. She fell, and then a flaming stable beam fell over her, turning her into a flambeau before long.

Fearing the nine of us might end like our mother, we set off fast in order to get deeper in the maize field as quickly as possible. Suddenly, we heard men's voices:

“Omer, let's get in the maize field, the children must be hiding there. You go first, and we'll follow you!”

At the same time, Jovica, whom my nine-year-old sister Dara was carrying in her arms, started to cry. Draško, whom mother had ordered to look after all of us, told Dara:

“Make Jovica quiet any way you can! If he goes on crying, the Ustashi will find us and slaughter us all.”

Jovica was now almost completely calm. For some time we listened to the men’s voices, to the ugly words addressed to us. The searchers were probably furious they were not able to find us so they swore:

“Little bandits! Fucking little Chetniks!”

Finally, we heard:

“It’s getting dark, we’re looking for them in vain, let’s get out of the maize field!”

When all went quiet again and it was almost dark, we also left the maize field. Before the burned stable we found mother’s feet, the only part which had not burned. All of a sudden, Šarulja, our cow, turned up before us – she also got out of the maize field. She had burns all over her belly, but her udder was fine and full of milk. We had not had anything to eat all day and really appreciated Šarulja’s milk. As we had no pot that Nevenka could use to milk the cow, she called me first:

“Zorka, get down, open your mouth and get close to Šarulja so I can put some milk in your mouth!”

After I was full of milk, Nevenka called sister Dara to come over with Jovica, so she could feed him with milk. Jovica was a year old and Nevenka thought he would open the mouth, like me, and then she would squirt in milk from Šarulja’s udder. As he did not open the mouth, Nevenka told Dara:

“Sister, wake Jovica up! Funny he’s asleep, because he must be hungry, he hasn’t eaten anything all day.”

Dara tried to wake Jovica up, but she was not able to. Nevenka found this funny, so she took Jovica from Dara to wake him up herself. In a moment she screamed painfully and said:

“Sister, Jovica is not alive! What have you done to kill him?”

Then Dara burst into tears and said she had squeezed a cloth into Jovica’s mouth for him not to cry, so the Ustashi would not find us and kill us all, but she had not thought he might die because of that. Draško, Petar and Mile dug a grave near the stable, where we buried mother’s feet and Jovica’s body. Draško found two boards and made a cross, we all crossed ourselves with three fingers, and Draško, instead of an Orthodox Christian

priest, said some prayers for the forgiveness of their souls. We lay on the grass in our yard, beneath the crown of the great apple, full of red fruit, and fell asleep. When we woke up in the morning, we had apples and drove cow Šarulja to graze so we could have enough milk. Like us, the children, Šarulja did not know where it was safe or unsafe for her to graze. As she began to graze on the meadow belonging to Dino Vranić, our neighbour, suddenly neighbour Vranić came out of the house with a gun in his hand, aimed it at us, the children, and said crossly:

“Can it be there are more Deliće still breathing?”

He started to shoot. In fear he would kill us, the eight of us children hid behind the cow. All the bullets ended in the cow. That was how our Šarulja finished. We were not able to bury her because Dino Vranić butchered and ate her.

Thanks to the maize field, my mother, brother Jovica and Šarulja the cow, who gave their lives so the eight of us would survive, I said to myself I must never forget them.

After we were orphaned in the war, the biggest problem for us, children, was what to eat and where to sleep. All Serbian houses in Kruhari were burnt, and no Croatian family would let us in for the night. As for food, there was enough fruit and vegetables in the summer, but what would we do once winter came? Draško came up with a solution for all of us. In daytime we hid in our maize fields, and when darkness fell, we stole inside their stables, careful not to be seen by the owners, and slept on straw alongside their cattle. Whichever stable we got inside, we first checked if our cows, horses and the black bull were among their cattle. We accepted the fact they were not alive and the Ustashi had captured, butchered and eaten them, just as Dino Vranić had done with our cow Šarulja. In order to get money, and so get food, which we were hungry for, Draško said to his sister Slavka:

“As of today, every day you will go to Sanski Most with Zorka and Rada and beg. Rada is as pretty as a picture, and Zorka has such gentle eyes, just like her mother’s.”

Šušnjar

Every day, as Slavka took Rada and me to beg in Sanski Most, we went past our estate, which we called Šušnjar. There were two large and deep pits dug there. Draško told us that our fathers, if they had been alive, would never have allowed Muslims to dig pits on their land. Slavka asked him about how he knew they were not alive, and he replied:

“Stojanka, who was locked in the grain storehouse, told me she had seen with her own eyes how they stabbed the two brothers, Drago and Dušan, with bayonets, only because they didn’t want to break each other’s arms and legs, as the Ustashi ordered them.”

Nevenka, who heard all that, told Draško:

“Do ask Stojanka, if she really saw it all, if she knows who stabbed our fathers with bayonets.”

Draško replied:

“Who else but Dino Vranić, our neighbour, who killed our Šarulja.”

He stabbed with a bayonet the newborn baby boy of Cvijeta Delić, our aunt, who told me about it herself. After that she changed so much I am afraid she might lose her mind. She kept telling me she was afraid Dino Vranić would return to her house, because he had told her he would not be happy until he had cut off both her breasts.

Draško and Nevenka, being the oldest, agreed they would sooner or later take revenge on Omer Alagić and Dino Vranić, if they remained alive.

I did not like having to go Sanski Most to beg with Slavka and Rada. I would get some kunas and stale bread, and most of the time I was being humiliated. When the householders saw us dirty as we were, in ragged dresses and barefoot, they said straight from the door:

“Get out of here! Shame on you for begging, get out of here before we unleash the dogs!”

There were only very few good people, who would let us inside the house, feed us and give us some change.

I remember well, it was 31st of July, 1941. I did not know the date at that time. After a day of begging, Slavka, Rada and I set off quite late to return from Sanski Most to Kruhari. We were at the railway station when darkness closed in on us and we did not dare move on in the dark, but we also did not know where we would spend the night. We got in the waiting lounge of the railway station in Sanski Most, in order to spend the night sitting on the benches in one of the rooms, which there were several. However, all the benches were already occupied by the homeless, which is what the three of us were as well. They were sitting and sleeping, snoring loudly. They smelt of brandy. Secretly, so no one would see us, we climbed to the attic. There, a young woman was sleeping on the planks. There was room for us too. First, we looked through a tiny window; we saw the moon was full, shedding light on everything around. There was no one on the street.

We lay down on the boards and fell asleep. Suddenly, we were awakened by some noise and tumult. The woman who we did not know got up first. She looked through the little window and said:

“May God root out both you and your offspring, what could these poor peasants do wrong?”

Slavka and I looked through the window next and saw a long column of men moving very slowly one after another. They were tied with wire and ropes. The Ustashi kept hitting them with rifle butts to make them move faster. Slavka asked the unknown woman where those men came from and where they were being taken. She replied:

“They were in the grains storehouse, and now they are taking them to Šušnjar to throw them in the pits, at nighttime, when no one can see it.”

All night long we listened to the muffled blows and the cries of the misfortunate people.

In the morning, when we set off for Kruhari, we went past Šušnjar. The pits were blanketed with lime and earth. Draško jumped before us from behind a bush near Šušnjar. He said he had waited all night, worried and frightened the Ustashi had captured and thrown us in the pit at Šušnjar.

When Slavka told him we had watched all night as the Ustashi took the people away, who they had probably taken to Šušnjar and thrown in the pits, and that she had watched to see if she would recognise her father or uncle among those miserable people, Draško replied to her:

“I told you they’re not alive. Waiting for you, hidden in that bush, I also saw that column of people, and I hardly recognised Nikola Delić, our uncle, as one of them. I watched and recognised Viktor Tunjić as he hit our uncle in the head with a wooden mallet, just at the pit, while Dino Vranić stabbed him in the stomach with a bayonet before he fell in the pit. This terrified me and I could no longer watch what they were doing; I couldn’t sleep a wink all night. They probably did the same to the others. I think our uncle Nikola was half alive when they threw him in the pit. As I walked past Šušnjar, I heard people in the pit crying and calling for help; they were still alive, but they ended in the grave as if they were dead for real.”

Shortly afterwards, blood came out of the pit at Šušnjar, penetrating the ground and running in streams. All the wells in the village were full of human blood. We had to go down to the River Sana to drink water. Draško forbade Slavka, Rada and me to go to Sanski Most so we would not go past Šušnjar and see that blood, which smelled in the hot summer sun and attracted swarms of huge green flies. Draško told us that only Nikola Delić,

our uncle, had managed to get out of the pit. He told us he had seen him come out of the pit and had not recognised him. He had looked 30 years older, wrinkled and gray-haired, and he was only 25 years old when the Ustashi threw him in the Šušnjar pit on St. Elijah's Day. When we told Draško we would like to see uncle Nikola, he replied he had run away in the woods right away so the Ustashi would not see him and kill him, and he would join the Chetniks there. They were the Serbs who had managed to escape the Ustasha knife. Draško said the people helped them with food and weapons, so one day they could revenge on the Ustashi for the crimes at Šušnjar.

Once Draško came really upset. He was picking mushrooms in the woods and saw Teofil Praća, my grandfather, driving his wagon along a forest trail. All of a sudden, two Ustashi ambushed him, jumped before the wagon and aimed their rifle guns at granddad. He stopped the wagon. The Ustashi told him to remove the horse blanket in order to see what he was driving. When they saw weapons and food in the wagon, they shot granddad, without asking him where he was taking it. They were sure granddad was helping the Chetniks, taking them food and weapons, and they were waiting in an ambush to catch him red-handed and kill him. Draško recognised one of the Ustashi. His name was Viktor Tunjić. I cried because I would not see my grandpa again. I remember his long moustache and thick dark hair. Sofija Praća, grandpa's daughter from his second marriage, buried him on the Orthodox Christian cemetery in Šušnjar, after Draško told her where she could find her father's dead body.

Nikola Delić, my uncle, like many other Chetniks, joined the Partisans, but he was soon killed on the Grmeč battlefield.

Serbs convert to Roman Catholicism in Sanski Most in 1941

In the second part of his book *Sanski Most u NOB* (*Sanski Most in the PLC*), on page 105, Branko Bokan gives us a description of how the Serbs were converted in Sanski Most.

During the mass arrests of the Serbs from 27th July to 2nd August, following the call of Friar Ante Šeremet, a Roman Catholic priest, and Nikola Tojčić, a parish priest, Serbs converted to the Roman Catholicism, or otherwise they would all have been killed. Almost all Serbian families from Sanski Most and the surrounding villages made requests to convert from Eastern Orthodox Christianity to Roman Catholicism. All those who submitted the request were given some prayer books from which to learn how to say prayers and how Roman Catholics cross themselves.

In those days, after 4th August 1941, there was a long line of Serbs standing before the Roman Catholic parish office in Sanski Most to get papers confirming their 'voluntary' conversion to Roman Catholicism.

Slavko Odić has a German photocopy of the letter dated 6th September 1941, in which a woman from Kljevci, the District of Sanski Most, informs probably her husband working in Germany that all the inhabitants of Dabar have asked to be converted to Roman Catholicism and how their requests have been sent to the Bishop in Banja Luka through a friar. A certain sum in Croatian kunas needed to be paid for the administrative stamps to be put on the requests.

In his memorandum dated 18th April 1943, Alojzije Stepinac revealed the fact he had in his possession 240,000 requests by the Serbs he had received over two years, asking of their own accord to convert from Eastern Orthodox Christianity to Roman Catholicism. Not during the five hundred years of Turkish rule did Serbs make so many requests and been given pieces of paper confirming they had become Mohammedan Serbs.

My first conversion

Nevenka made eight requests, saying we wanted to convert to Roman Catholicism of our own accord, and submitted them at the Roman Catholic church.

Right after the mass slaughter of the Serbs at Šušnjar, in fear the Ustashi might kill the eight of us as well, 15 days later we went to the Roman Catholic church in Sanski Most together with grandmother Milja, the sister of Teofil Praća, my grandfather, who was married to a man from the Majkić family. Over 80 members of the Majkić family were thrown in the pit at Šušnjar. In the hot August sun, in a long line of women, children and old people, we stood before the Roman Catholic church and waited for our turn.

Grandmother Milja was to get her approval first. When Friar Šeremet asked her if she wanted to convert to the Roman Catholic faith of her own will, she kept quiet. When the friar repeated the question, grandmother Milja replied:

“How can it be of my own will, after you killed all those people from my family, the Majkićs?”

Friar Šeremet told the armed Ustasha standing next to him to see grandmother Milja out of the church. I watched as the Ustasha repeatedly hit

her in the back with the rifle butt until she finally left the church. The next one was my sister Nevenka, even though she had handed in eight requests earlier. As she only had enough kunas for two approvals, while there were eight of us, we were given only two approvals. One of them read:

The Roman Catholic Parish Office in Sanski Most, and then underneath:

“Nevenka, Dara, Milan and Zorka, the children of Draga Delić from Kruhari, are hereby accepted in the Roman Catholic faith, by the official decision of the Bishop’s Office in Banja Luka. They are issued this approval and will be considered equal as all other Roman Catholic citizens.”

It was signed by Nikola Tojčić, the parish priest, and had a church stamp from Banja Luka. It was dated 20th August 1941.

The second approval read:

“Draško, Petar, Slavka and Rada, the children of Dušan Delić from Kruhari”..., and the remainder of the text was identical.

As of 20th August 1941, owing to those two approvals, the eight of us Serbian war orphans of the Eastern Orthodox faith were Roman Catholic Croats.

Although we had a prayer book, I did not know how to read, so I had not learned any Roman Catholic prayers or how to cross myself the way Roman Catholics do. Luckily, the friar did not ask us anything; all he wanted was to be rid of us as fast as he could. We were equally happy we had received the approvals without much toil.

Friar Šeremet told my sister we needed to report to Dino Vranić with those approvals, he would hire us as labourers, and then we would not die from hunger and cold during the winter; also, as we were now Roman Catholic and Croatian, it would be inappropriate if we begged in Sanski Most, and we should not do it any more, because by doing so we only embarrassed the Croatian state.

Dino Vranić’s wage labourers

After we left the Roman Catholic church in Sanski Most, we went to Kruhari, to our Croat neighbour from before the war, Dino Vranić, now an Ustasha, to ask him to hire the eight of us, all children, all war orphans, as wage labourers.

Draško told us he would poison all his cattle and kill him as well, and then run away in the woods to join the Chetniks, but warned us not to tell anyone about that.

Vranić's wife was already in the yard of their family house, waiting for us, and she told us in a cold voice:

“You are not to go inside the house, you belong in the stable, with the cattle!”

Next, she told us what our chores would be:

“Nevenka and Dara, you two will need to milk the four cows and two goats twice a day and make cheese and cream from the milk. Draško and Petar, you two are to drive the cows, horses and bull to pasture and clean their stalls in the morning and in the evening. Slavka, you will come to the house, as and when I say so, to do the dishes, laundry and mop the floors. Mile, you will look after the pigs and geese, you will drive them to graze, gather the eggs and pluck the feathers for the pillows.”

Next, she turned to me and told me I was to take care of the ducks, take them to the river to swim every day, after they had laid eggs. Finally, it would be Rada's duty to look after the hens and chickens. I loved ducks, and I remember how I used to play with them and imitate their swaying gait. Before, my ducks had obeyed me, but I did not know what Dino Vrančić's ducks were like or for how long they would obey me. Before I found out where the ducks were, Draško and Petar were already taking the cows, two horses and a black bull out to drive them to pasture. They did not disobey; instead, they swished their tails to show they had met before. When I saw the black bull, I was sure it was our bull, and the same with the horses. We used to have five cows, Šarulja was gone, so four more remained. When mother was alive, she released them all from the stable the Ustashi had put on fire so they would not choke with smoke. It is quite possible our first neighbour had taken our surviving cattle for himself. When I found the ducks, I took them to the river. How happy I was when I realised the ducks, like everything else, were my parents' animals. Better for them to be alive, even if now they belonged to the Ustashi, than to have been slaughtered and eaten by them. When darkness fell, we laid some straw to lie on in the stable and went to sleep together with our cattle. The important thing was we were not hungry and we had a roof over our heads. We barely ever saw Dino Vranić. He left early, clad in a black uniform, always with a rifle gun hung on his shoulder, with a bayonet fixed at its end. He returned in the evening, when we were already going to sleep.

Draško abandoned the idea to poison all of Dino Vranić's cattle because all the animals were ours, and we loved them. Draško also quitted the plan to kill Dino Vranić, because then he would have to escape to the woods and join the Chetniks, and so leave us at the mercy of the Ustashi.

We did not have an easy time as wage labourers with the Vranić family. It was the most difficult for my brothers. Not only did they have to take care of the cattle, they also had to do the rest of the work on the farm. They mowed the grass, turned and made hay and put it up in stacks. In October, they harvested all the maize, both that belonging to Vranić and ours, which grew behind our burnt house, and which yielded more grain than ever. We all joined in to harvest our maize as quickly as possible. How grateful I was to that maize for being alive. I petted and kissed every single cob ear I picked. From the maize field I kept looking at the burnt stable, cried and called to mother. For a moment I felt the gaze of mother's gentle eyes, which then vanished, burning up in a flame. I wanted to visit her grave, cross myself with three fingers, pray for the forgiveness of her soul, but I could not find her and Jovica's grave anywhere. Someone had removed the wooden cross, and the grass and weed around the stable were so tall I could not find anything.

We worked for Dino Vranić until mid-April 1942. He told us about the order whereby the Independent State of Croatia would take the war orphans in its custody, saying an Ustasha would soon come to take us to the railway station in Sanski Most. From there, we would be dispatched to Croatia on a narrow-gauge train, where we would be placed in an orphans' home. The first stop would be Jasenovac. Nevenka left us and decided to join the Partisans. I cried as we parted, but she told me she did not trust the Ustashi, that was only a way for them to get hold of us too and kill us, just like our parents. Having heard Nevenka, Petar and Dara also left us and joined some Serb refugees, who had arrived from Mount Grmeč. As I was afraid Draško might leave us too, I told him:

“Stay with us, remember you promised my mother you would look after us.”

The five of us stayed together, Draško, Slavka, Mile, Rada and I; in fear and suspense, we waited for the Ustasha who would take us to the railway station.

In cattle cars

The man who came to take us away was Omer Alagić, a man who father hired before the war as a wage labourer; he was now dressed in the Ustasha uniform and armed. How come he called for us, of all the people? He took away our father, who never returned, and killed our mother. He could tell we hated him by the way we looked at him. He spoke to Draško,

who walked in front of the four of us; wishing to give an excuse for the evil he had done us, he told him:

“Your parents did not deserve what I have done to them. They did so much for me before the war. They fed both me and my family. If it hadn’t been for these Ustashi from Zagreb, Šušnjar would never have happened. Now you’re going to Croatia, and beware of the Croats. They hate you much more than we, Muslims. There are good people among us, but you can count good Croats on the fingers of one hand. They’re not here now. After stuffing Šušnjar with the Orthodox, they left.”

There were cattle cars waiting for us at the railway station. Many children were already inside. Draško asked Omer where those children came from, and he told him:

“They’re orphans from Bihać, Drvar, Ključ, Bosanski Petrovac, we collected them from villages, there are also kike war orphans among them.”

When the Ustashi packed us inside the cattle cars, there were so many of us in one car that they hardly shut the iron door.

Culprits for the genocide against the Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia

Culprits for concealing the truth about the number of Serb casualties

The pit on Šušnjar is not the only one where genocide was committed against the Orthodox Christian Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia in 1941. Numberless pits are known to exist, wherever there was once Serbian population in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This subject was forbidden until recently. The pits in Croatia and Herzegovina have been partially examined and the number of their victims is known, as well as the perpetrators; this is thanks to the late Perović, originally from Old Herzegovina (his book about the persecution of the Serbs in Herzegovina in 1941 was secretly published by the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1959), and to Mr Dane Lastavica, an ethnic Serb from Croatia (his book *328 jama, septičkih jama i bunara* (328 Pits, Cesspools and Wells) in 1941 Croatia was published in 2007 in Novi Sad, Serbia). Practically, we have no knowledge of the pits in Bosnia.

Encouraged by the Round Table, I felt I needed to add some more incontrovertible facts that I know to that paper, which are very important for proving the truth about who ordered and who committed the terrible genocide at Šušnjar, where in a short time 5,500 Serbs perished; people

even say that in the area of the District of Sanski Most 10,000 Serbs were killed during the war, out of the 38,000 registered in the census in 1939.

I was six when the Ustashi took me from Bosnia to Croatia in a cattle car. From 24th April to the summer of 1944, I was at the children's concentration camp Jastrebarsko, 30 km away from Zagreb. Slavko Dasović, a Croat, took me from the camp to Zagreb; I was really grateful to this man, who was at that time an officer of the Croatian Home Guard and a camp guard. After the staging of the monodrama *Djetinjstvo moje ukradeno* (My Stolen Childhood), written by Jovan Kesar, in the amateur theatre in Prijedor in 1982, I was invited to see the director of the Museum of the Revolution, who showed me all the documents he had about the atrocities at Šušnjar in 1941 related to Slavko Dasović, my step-father, and said:

“The way you speak about Slavko Dasović in the monodrama, for whom you have nothing but praise, is probably because you don't know the actual truth, and it is my duty to tell you about it, no matter how you react.

The mass atrocities at Šušnjar began with the arrival of Slavko Dasović, then an Ustasha captain, and his company Ante Starčević from Zagreb. Konrad Horvat and a police platoon, along with Fabijan Kurilić and a gendarme platoon, arrived at Sanski Most together with them, also from Zagreb. They were assisted by the local Croatian and Muslim Ustashi, policemen and gendarmes, headed by the notorious Bećir Duraković.

They were all the direct culprits for the death of 5,500 Serbs at Šušnjar, but none of them has ever been convicted for those atrocities. The genocide committed against the Serbs in the numberless pits across the Independent State of Croatia was orchestrated by its political leadership, led by Poglavnik Ante Pavelić. It was thanks to the pits they were able to fulfill entirely their plan to kill one-third of the Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia. No one has ever been held accountable for it. Of all the countries defeated in World War II, only the Independent State of Croatia never signed the capitulation.

In mid-1986, the Government of the United States of America released the documents of its intelligence service. They clearly show the Vatican organised to transfer Pavelić and his 200 Ustashi, accountable for the genocide against the Serbs in the pits and camps, from Croatia to Argentina, thus saving the Independent State of Croatia from being proclaimed a genocidal state and from paying reparations to over two million Serbian victims. Many people wonder why the genocidal torture and killings of the Serbs, Jews and Roma in the Independent State of Croatia were not publi-

cised more, both locally and internationally. It is clear that in that way the genocide would be stripped of all the nationalist, ideological and political whitewash. The actual truth was disclosed only when Bertrand Russell, a British historian and philosopher, came to the conclusion the Vatican is accountable for concealing the truth about the genocide and the number of the people killed in the Independent State of Croatia.

Recently, Pope Benedict XVI stated concentration camps are a disgrace to humankind. If he had in mind the German and Croatian camps during World War II, then it is a disgrace to the Vatican only, not all of the humankind. The Vatican should also take its share of the responsibility, in order to punish the culprits, compensate the victims or their descendents and do justice, at least partly. May they be supported in their effort by the Nazi Germany and the Independent State of Croatia, the two states which the Vatican first recognised after they were initially created, and whose blessing they had in opening the concentration camps which the Serbs, Jews and Roma do not acknowledge as their shame, but as the sorrow and pain of the whole humankind.

It is never too late for the truth. Efforts should be made to hold an international conference, where the local and international public will learn about the genocide against the Serbian people in the Independent State of Croatia, about the pits, concentration camps, even camps for Eastern Orthodox Christian children. Indeed, murdering children is a disgrace for the humankind, and it is even more so for those who ordered those terrible atrocities.

We, the Serbian war orphans and children-camp prisoners, should request that the Vatican open its archives and stop hiding the truth about the persecution of Serbian people, especially Serbian children in the Independent State of Croatia, in order to rid the humankind of this shame. Otherwise, we will rightly accuse them of initiating genocidal actions in World War II.

Culprits for the mass conversion of Serbs

The world knows very little about the pits and camps in the Independent State of Croatia, but it knows far less about the conversion of Serbs, which is another crime committed against the Serbs. Historian Branko Bokan claims the most massive conversion of the Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia was committed in Sanski Most, in August 1941, right after the mass slaughter of the Serbs at Šušnjar.

We as the survivors of the bloody St. Elijah's Day in 1941 (mainly children, women and old men) lived in fear we could be killed like our dearest

ones, a fate we were constantly threatened by the Croatian Ustashi, unless we changed our religion, so we massively accepted the call of the Roman Catholic Church to convert from Eastern Orthodox Christianity to Roman Catholicism. We received leaflets which said:

“Eastern Orthodox Christianity is the greatest curse of humankind. There is no morality in it, no principles, no truth, no justice, no honour.”

In his memorandum dated 18th May 1943, Alojzije Stepinac, the Archbishop of Zagreb, whom the Pope from the Vatican appointed a vicar apostolic, informed the Croatian public that he, together with the Independent State of Croatia, has to his credit the conversion of the Eastern Orthodox Serbs to Roman Catholicism, and that by mid-1943 as many as 240,000 Eastern Orthodox Serbs had been converted by force. He was proclaimed a war criminal after the war, but he was released and put into house arrest, following the intervention of the Vatican. To show him its gratitude for converting so many Serbs, the Vatican promoted him to a higher rank, the rank of cardinal, and after his death, it beatified him. It is clear who ordered this mass conversion. Today, his relics are at the Zagreb Cathedral, where nuns decorate him with fresh flowers every morning. Roman Catholics from all over the world come to Zagreb to bow before the relics of the saint-criminal. Even dead, Alojzije Stepinac fills Croatia's treasury with money he earns thanks to religious tourism. The international conference should acquaint the local and international public with this crime against the Serbs, i.e. the conversion of 240,000 Serbs. The Independent State of Croatia fulfilled the plan of the Vatican as well, which was to convert one-third of the Serbs from the Eastern Orthodox to the Roman Catholic faith, and turn them into good and obedient Croats.

We, the Serbian war orphans and camp prisoners of the Independent State of Croatia, originally from Bosnia, who were converted three times – first back at home, the second time in children's concentration camps, and converted into Roman Catholicism in Croatia the third time, after we were adopted by Croats – we will inform the Vatican about it and ask to hear from it what role it played in the conversion of the Serbian people and their children in the Independent State of Croatia.

If they give us no reply, we will hold them accountable for the crimes related to the conversion of the Serbs.

*Stojanka Mijatović–Erceg**

A CRIME OF HUMAN FREAKS

*“Yesterday’s world is gone, gone forever.
Let us explain the world to the world with history.”*

Lucien Fevre

Our local annals, memoirs, records of different events from our home regions, and further away, across Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Croatia, make up series of survivor reminiscences – of the people who witnessed the events in the horrible days of 1941, in which they lived, using evidence to show the horrible images of those evil times of World War II, incomprehensible to the arriving generations. At that time the criminal, fascist, quisling Independent State of Croatia was created. This construct was led by its chief Ante Pavelić and his Ustashi, many of whom swore allegiance even before the war, of the Croatian and Muslim background, who committed unthinkable atrocities and pogrom against the Serbian, Jewish and Roma people.

In 1941, like never before or after, in the recent or ancient history of any people, including ours, did such mass atrocities or efforts to eradicate a nation take place at their age-old homes, in the twentieth century of the civilisation of this region, likewise in my home region, Sanski Most, which was the killing field in one of the greatest pogroms in our Bosanska Krajina in 1941.

That pogrom, or rather genocide, was a comprehensive, official plan of the state and political leadership of that so-called State of Croatia, which is evidenced in numerous orders and regulations of its administration, mainly perpetrated by imported, pre-war, sworn Ustashi, and new ones recruited locally, from the home region, with many morally degenerate fellows – Ustashi from both nations. Our people, both the Serbian and Jewish, though faced with extinction, despite such monstrous intentions and plans, had no

* Stojanka Mijatović–Erceg, teacher and recipient of the 1941 Partisan Memorial Medal, Belgrade

way of supposing it would happen exactly that way; still, it did, it happened in a very perfidious way. Unarmed people were captured without resisting, cheated and told they were going to unload sugar, flour and alike at railway stations, the same as what they told us, and then captured us just as we were going out in the schoolyard; when we realised we had been tricked, with the Ustashi surrounding us, it was too late. They were tricked, and we were tricked by Ivica Simeon, which I will describe in my account from the prison and what we had to withstand there.

May my memories and testimony be dedicated to the prison victims and their shadows, my father Vid Miljatović, a merchant from Sanski Most, who was imprisoned in a back building of the former gendarme station, and who got out thanks to the goodness of a gendarme guard, probably a good man, maybe one of the Slovenes working there (there were former gendarmes banished from Slovenia) – Mimo Atijas, telling him he had to go, as our people say ‘for his own sake’, seeing he was the only young fellow among the older remainder, said: “Go and don’t come back again...!”, and so saved him. Mimo Atijas saved himself, while his brothers Puba and Lolo were in prison with me and were killed on Šušnjar with the others.

Mazalta was the name of the mother of the late Puba, Lolo and Hajim, a volunteer in the Spanish Republican War, who was injured and survived the war, one of the three volunteers from our district, who later died in Israel. She perished in Jasenovac, like her daughter Švesta. Mimo, a Yugoslav People’s Army officer, died in Belgrade; a good friend of my brother’s, he often talked with him, remembering father and the other prisoners. Owing to the relatives of late Luna and David Albahari’s family, and their children Flora, Rahela, Judita and Moric, after his escape from Sanski Most to Drvar, chance wanted him to join all of them in the People’s Liberation Movement. He always said he survived thanks to a sensitive guard at the Ustashi prison. Before I go on with the sad story about the events in my hometown and the villages around it, and about the equally vivid images that still linger before my eyes, as they are so powerful in my mind and revive the horrors of the agony of thousands and thousands of people during a period of our relatively recent past, something should be said about the co-existence of the Serbs, Croats, Muslims and Jews, about the living conditions of the mixed population, both locally and across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From times immemorial, people lived in different conditions. Earlier epochs equally failed to take into account the composition, interests or aspirations of historical traditions. There was anti-feudal resistance to foreign

administration, the oriental Islamic civilisation which Turks brought to the Balkans; next, resistance to Austro-Hungary, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, when the imperial powers found the Balkans attractive for different kinds of exploitation and political domination, at a time when the new liberating power of the Yugoslav ideas was becoming stronger. The political relations and compromises between the bourgeoisies of all kinds in pre-war Yugoslavia, generally rather backward in a social, political, cultural, educational and medical sense and suffering all kinds of hardships, contributed to these strained relations. An underdeveloped agricultural country, in World War II it became a favourable place to incite nationalistic and chauvinistic hatred through the impact of conservative circles and religious clerical Roman Catholic leaders, which the fascist aggressor benefited from. It did not only become a base for exploiting natural resources, but also people, for the sake of vicious fascist ideas and interests. The majority lived in darkness, ignorance and acceptance of what they were served, which made it a manageable environment for the fascist aggressor and the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia alike, to find servants, ethically degenerate people, who would commit the most reprehensible atrocities both with and without them, atrocities unprecedented in earlier history. The efforts to estrange and eradicate communities, such as the Serbian, Jewish and Roma, left a horrible mark in that period, which is hardly comparable even to the Mediaeval Inquisition.

Nationalist aspirations, through civil political parties too, spoilt the relations among the people, supported by ignorance, poverty and misery. For that reason, I will give a short overview of the influence and activities of civil parties, as well as the population figures prior to 1941.

The District comprised the following municipalities: the town of Sanski Most, Stari Majdan, Lušci Palanka, Budimlić Japra and Tomina.

This is the population breakdown according to ethnic background:

- Serbs – 38,000
- Muslims – 18,650
- Croats – 9,040
- Jews – 90 (approximately)

Thirty-one villages were inhabited only by Serbs, those of: Otište, Bojište, Jelašnovci, Grdanovci, Bosanski Milanovac (formerly Eminovci), Dabar, Đerdovača, Gornja and Donja Majkić Japra, Kozin, Gornji and Donji Lipnik, Slatina, Potkraj, Glavica (Predojevića), Miljevc, Praštala, Duge Njive, Suhača, Mrkalji, Hadrovci, Podlug and Koprivna.

The population of the following nine villages was all Muslim: Okreč, Vrša, Modra, Gornji and Donji Kamengrad, Zenkovići, Hrustovo, Vrhpolje (added to Ključ in 1933) and Demišovci.

The following three villages were inhabited by Croats only: Stara Rijeka, Sasina and Škrljevita.

Serbs and Croats inhabited these nine villages: Krkojevci, Kasapnica, Bošnjaci, Lušci Palanka, Marini, Garevica, Batkovci, Ovanjska and Kruhari.

Serbs, Croats and Muslims co-existed in twenty settlements, those of: Kljevci, Zdena, Budimljij Japra, Fajtovci, Naprelj, Gorica, Lukavice, Podvidača, Brdari, Čaplje, Podbriježje, Poljak, Šehovci, Trnova, Stari Majdan, Dževar, Oštra Luka, Kijevo, Lužani, and in the town of Sanski Most.¹

In the last elections in 1938, among those who ran for representatives were members of the Yugoslav Radical Party (JRZ) and joint opposition. The campaign lists also included Hođera's 'borbaš' ('fighter'), candidates of the joint opposition, which included the Agrarian Party, the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and the Yugoslav National Party with their candidates. Dimitrije Ljotić's list – 'Zbor' ('Convention'), had its own candidate and a group of supporters, Ijotićevci, in Sanski Most. The Yugoslav Radical Party exerted influence on the Serbian community, the Yugoslav Muslim Organisation (JMO) influenced the Muslims, and the Croatian Peasant Party the Croats. In 1935, the Yugoslav Muslim Organisation left the opposition and joined the Yugoslav Radical Party. The Croatian Peasant Party joined a group of Muslims, whose members supported the Croatian cause in the Independent State of Croatia and constituted the Ustasha authorities in Sanski Most together with the other Ustashi – Croats. One thing is worth mentioning now, the secretary of the Ljotić movement for the Vrbas Banat was Lazo Milinković, a veterinarian and student of law from Sanski Most, followed by Dušan Dodik, also from Sanski Most. Having returned from Italy once, Lazo praised the Italian Fascist movement. They both died in 1941 – Dodik died in the bombing of Smederevo, and Laza was perfidiously killed by the Ustashi. The information about this is presented in the section describing the prison, where he was kept in the same room together with his father Jovo and myself. Following that experience, he was done with fascism. As far as Sanski Most District is concerned, it must be admitted

¹ Бранко Бокан, Хроника Санског Моста, part I – Until July 1941

its industry was not developed, and as a result neither was the workers' movement, but there was a fine group of free-thinking and progressive workers engaged in the United Workers' Syndicates (URS). The brown coal mine at Suhača worked until 1936, and after its closure the workers transferred to the Ljubija mine and its plants at Stara Rijeka and Kozin. There were two low-capacity sawmills in Lušci Palanka and Budimljić Japra, and lumbering and floating works were located at Čaplje, mainly employing seasonal workers. Workers were also employed seasonally on Mount Grmeč on wood exploitation, which was all the property of the forestry and railway enterprise ŠIPAD, which also owned the narrow-gauge railway from Prijedor to Drvar, where a pulp mill was located.

Unemployment was high in the decade preceding the war, as a consequence of the world economic crisis in 1929–1933, which affected all the regions of our county. The fact that 80% of the population was illiterate additionally slowed changes in economy, agriculture and other sectors. All this aggravated the poverty of the workers and farmers, and everyone else. Production decreased, export stagnated, including all produce; shops went bankrupt and the number of craft workshops dropped. Apart from that, financial institutions holding investors' funds also went bankrupt, the private banks in Sanski Most and Prijedor, from which goods were exported to Austria and Italy. This was a period when the farmers were on the brink of collapse, heavily indebted and forced to leave their homeland and look for seasonal work in Slavonia, Serbia, Montenegro, while some people even departed for America or France. Our country was agricultural, with low output and primitive cultivation methods, yielding poor crops, insufficient for one to feed his family. Besides, illiteracy and ignorance hampered advance in all sectors. Traditional, conservative and religious constraints in familial, social and class relations directed the inclinations of those impoverished through minimal spiritual culture, making them fertile ground for all kinds of exploitation and resignation to the life offered, especially later, before World War II, when certain people committed crimes without ever reconsidering those acts, as a means to express their personal internal negativity and the negativity of the social superstructure.

In the town and neighbouring villages people worked in trade, catering and craft shops. Most of them were members of the United Workers' Syndicates. There were people from Sanski Most, Stari Majdan and Lušci Palanka, among them some very progressive, communists, who had jobs outside the area of Sanski Most, so they frequently visited Sanski Most. Noted among them were Gojko Majkić from Lušci Palanka – a machinist

expelled to Palanka; Jozo Šašić, a Croat – he used to live in Palanka, a member of the People's Liberation Movement; Ahmed Kadić from Stari Majdan. At that time, they were all either members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, or candidates for membership. From 1931, Milan Gvozden also resided in Sanski Most; a lawyer, member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, who was tried in Bihać and who later withdraw – he was killed in the slaughter. Simo Miljuš from Lušci Palanka was the best known in the whole area, very well known, an old member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, who was engaged in the workers' movement before the liberation in 1918, and when the work of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was no longer restricted, he was Zagreb's representative in the Constituent Assembly on the list of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. After he returned from Moscow, where he attended the sessions of the Comintern, when the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was banned, he came into conflict with the authorities and was expelled to Lušci Palanka. He lived and worked there, but kept a low profile, as he was under constant surveillance. It was thanks to him that Milan Bundža was admitted into the Communist Party while doing his national service in Veles. They were by no means connected, but their actions were always leftist. Next, Gojko Majkić, a machinist – more will be said about him when writing about the conditions in the prison. He spent time with people from Sanski Most, leftists, who were not members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia yet, such as Hazim, Mirko Branič and others whom I do not know, and with Dr. Mladen Stojanović in Prijedor. I borrowed the information about Miljuš, Gojko Majkić and Milan Bundža from Branko Bokan's *Хроника Санског Моста* (The Chronicle of Sanski Most), part one.

The events around and the actual formation of the criminal Independent State of Croatia, as well as the circumstances preceding the slaughter, account for the absence of the local branches of the Communist Party or the League of Young Communists (SKOJ); there were plans to set them up, and the main candidates were Hazim Bilalbegović, Mirko Vranić and Slavka Miljatović (my elder sister, who became member of the Prijedor branch of the League of Young Communists before the war). The Ustashi assumed all the political lines of activity and took the place of the progressive secondary school and university students from pre-war Yugoslavia, so the processes continued. A group of us youths, led by Slavka, were thus compromised, even though we were all minors, and we were all tried in the Ustasha institutions, we were even taken under Ustasha escort to Bihać to witness the trial of Cevi Kabiljo, alias Cico. We were taken there under gendarme

escort, who drove us from Sanski Most to Bihać (Stojanka Miljatović, Milan Tončić, alias Braco, Nedeljko Milićević, alias Šule, Obrad 'Svile' Lazić and Flora 'Seka' Kabiljo.

The April War and the terror brought by the occupation of our country brought appalling hardships in the life of our people in Sanski Most. The formation of the servile Independent State of Croatia, the Ustasha administration and their political organisations created an atmosphere of constant psychosis, intimidation and existential uncertainty, of hate towards the Serbian and Jewish people, encouraged by those very same authorities. The people did not know where to go, as they felt pressed to comply with their wish to move away, to depart for Serbia, which some did. Others converted to Roman Catholicism because they thought they could remain alive by doing so and possibly retain their jobs at a time when Serbs and Jews were generally dismissed from work. This was a period of great uncertainty. After the Yugoslav Army signed an unconditional surrender on 18th April 1941, the invading forces split the former Yugoslavia and used their politics to fuel the fear and terror, which would intensify following the establishment of their quisling state.

Like all wars, this one brought an end to many lives and many youths. With all the ordeals which befell us and which went on and on, came a time of murder, pillage, confiscation and a time of ongoing insecurity. A time came when people were banished from their homes, but in a very perfidious way. People were told everyone would be evicted, they were openly let know this, so many fled to Serbia without being explicitly instructed. All movable and immovable property was shortly in use again, without any expropriation documents. Shops were seized from the Jews and Serbs, along with many other things. Pillage was at its height, and people became increasingly intimidated. There were rumours of camps, which no one knew much about. There was chatter of Island Pag, which already received its first prisoners, Jews. People spoke about how much they could take with them in case they were captured to be sent to a camp – some said up to two kilograms, others up to five. Later, there were stories of those Ustashi who had returned from Janko Pusta's estate in Hungary and other countries, and that evil things would start happening. Such was this period of insecurity.

Arbitrary killings began much earlier, before the July and August slaughters. Law had no binding force when it came to Serbs or Jews. Later, there were sporadic cases where some Ustashi from Sanski Most and the surroundings stood trial for their crimes and plunder; unfortunately, Sanski

Most and the surrounding area were a rather infamous part of Bosanska Krajina for the terrible scenes and killings. People were killed without a trial, in the streets... for example, a Serb originally from Busnovo was hanged in the Roman Catholic village of Sasina only because he was passing by, he was there by accident. Arrests were so common they are hardly worth speaking of, just like hostages, who would be subjects of elimination in case of any kind of rebellion.

There are good and sensitive people in all nations, and Croats and Muslims are no exception. Unfortunately, the majority of them were not like that; still, the kind-hearted individuals and those who denounced the crimes against the Serbs and Jews have to be written about and given due credit for it, especially after the slaughter, when a large group of people became aware that was not going anywhere, and began to dissociate themselves from the crimes committed. Annihilation was the culmination of the politics of the Independent State of Croatia – a great deal of individual killings, arrests, intimidation, and finally the pogrom. This is why we have to wonder – where was man, as a factor characterised by all sorts of peculiarities, on the spectrum of human existence? What was the motivation behind inhumane doings, which forced man to such bestial acts and brutality?

The administrative and political regime of the Independent State of Croatia was installed during this period. When Germans arrived from Prijedor, they were officially greeted in a parade decorated with Croatian and German flags, which I attended with my girlfriends; also present were the officials of the Ustashi administrative and political bodies and organisations, headed by Dr. Josip Cerjan, a barrister from Sanski Most, and the hot-headed Ustasha men and women, among whom particularly Sofija Deronja and Elza Prokop stood out, while the most notable was certainly Dr. Cerjan's wife, Paula Cerjan. She protested on the occasion when she found Luna and David Kabiljo at the inn 'Kod Ade', near the park; she did not want to sit at the same place with them, so they had to leave the inn. It was just an incident, but it tells a lot about the spoilt relations and hatred towards the Jews. By the way, 'the dodderer' was an elderly woman with four grown-up children, originally from an Ustasha family from Prijedor, whose oldest daughter was married to the notorious head of the District of Sanski Most, then kotar², Ivica Simeon; one year earlier Dr. Viktor Gutić had been his best man at their wedding. After greeting the Germans and their initial entry,

² Croatian for county or district, S. M.

they had a formal lunch at Toma Ćorić's inn, where all kinds of praises and promises were heard coming from Himza Pašić-Rešić, Dr. Cerjan and the commander of the Italian units, in relation to the recently begun process of drawing the demarcation line, divided into three parts.

Right before Germans entered Sanski Most, the remainder of the Yugoslav Army were stationed in the larger buildings, such as the primary school and other accommodation spaces, including our house, which was located on the corner of Ključka Street and 'Kaljavi sokak' ('Muddy Alley'). It was a two-storey house, with four rooms in the front area and a loft on the second floor, as well as a grain storeroom and a stable for a couple of officers' horses. They used the house as a veterinarian station and many boxes with medicaments had been taken inside. As the Germans were about to march in, they hurriedly got ready and rode away on their horses, leaving everything in the house.

A couple of days before the retreat, representatives of the Yugoslav Army formed a war board for the interim period on behalf of the former Yugoslav administration, composed of Serb, Jewish, Croat and Muslim representatives. Shortly Dr. Cerjan set up a board composed only of Croats and Muslims. Alongside him, a member of the board was also Luka Minigo, an inn-keeper from Sanski Most, an ardent Ustasha from before the war, an elderly man, whose inn before the war served as a gathering place for a number of friars, mainly church officials; there were stories, so far without any conclusive evidence, that Pavelić himself was one of the visitors, coming dressed in a friar's robes. This is nothing but mere speculations. Mile Ljevar, a merchant from Sasina, also entered the board, and so did Nikola Tojčić, the parish priest from Stara Rijeka, Martin Macan, chair of the Sanski Most District Court, Dr. Ibro Ibrahimpašić, a judge, Himzo Pašić-Rešić, a merchant from Sanski Most, Mile Lujić, a farmer from Sasina, Ante Banović, an inn-keeper from Sanski Most, Friar Luka Tešić, the parish priest from Sasina, Friar Ante Šeremet, the parish priest from Sanski Most, Osman Čehajić, a baker from Sanski Most, and Juso Talić, a cobbler from Sanski Most, who emigrated to Turkey after the liberation, maybe even before it. Apparently, they were all keen Ustashi, previously keeping a low profile, now throwing bouquets at the aggressor.

At the same time, this was a period when civil servants pledged allegiance, while the Serbs and Jews were dismissed from work. Very few Serbs managed to stay in the administration for a while after converting to Roman Catholicism and acknowledging the Ustasha authority. There were rumours that a Serb, last name Klepić, a primitive fellow married to

a Croatian woman, was their agent. The voices of the Ustasha men and women were becoming louder and louder in Sanski Most; in their state of ecstasy, they made it clear to the Serbs and Jews where they belonged. In the period before the massacre, there was a campaign promoting conversion to Roman Catholicism, seizure of the Jewish and Serbian shops and property; there was pillage and expropriation of estates, valuables and other possessions, without any receipts ever being issued. We watched in silence as the arrogant Ustashi, mainly of young age, swaggered with the looted possessions, clothes and footwear. Now and then people would recognise their belongings on them, like our new walking boots bought in Slovenia, with their recognisable yellow insets, which could not be found in Sanski Most; my sister had them. We watched and just let them know those were our things.

Sanski Most was teeming with pre-war Yugoslav policemen and gendarmes from what was then the gendarme station, of Croatian and Muslim nationality. The commander of the gendarme station was Bećir Duraković, an ardent Ustasha who joined the movement before the war. The policemen and gendarmes would turn into a compact team, who would then (May-June) do a good job with the support of the Zagreb police, headed by Konrad Horvat and the loyal police from Sanski Most – Ibrahim Nalić, Ferhat Krupić, Salih Kuršumović, then agents like Ivica Sarić, many members of the Banović family from Sanski Most and village Brdari, also the Božić family from Sasina and Zaim Dudić from Zdena (a scumbag, known by the people of Sanski Most as a market pickpocket (Monday was market day)). Dudić was the torturer in the local prison; prompted by Captain Silajdžić, the two of them together slapped the arrested members of the Marjanović and Mandić families from Zdena with their hands and an opanak³. More on this in the prison account. In their company were also Mile Sorić, a roadman, Zafer Cerić, a scrounger, and many others. Zora was the name of the busiest informer, a Serb woman, I think she was the only one; her maiden name was Delić, she came from Kruhari, just bellow Šušnjar, once a peasant girl, who used to supply us with milk together with her mother Mara. Before or in the war, she married a working man, who, unlike her, never compromised himself. I used to see him after the liberation. As for her, as an Ustasha and German informer, she told on the people helping the People's Liberation Movement, schemed with soldiers and informed the Ustashi about all sorts of things. She and her husband ran a small inn

³ Strapped soft-soled leather footwear, S. M.

in Boško Marinković's house, who had earlier fled to Belgrade. On one occasion, when the Ustashi took into custody some local supporters of the People's Liberation Movement, she was seen at Ljubka Ljepojević's house, peeping out from behind the door and pointing a finger at my mother, whom the Ustashi were hitting and tearing her hair, saying: "Hit her! She's the most dangerous of the 'red', her daughter is a Partisan" (hinting at me). She informed on a number of supporters of the People's Liberation Movement, and after the liberation she stood trial and was the only woman who was shot with the rest of the convicted Ustashi. Klepić's brother was a good man, married to a woman from Sanski Most; he had two children, he never did any harm to anyone, and he remained alive thanks to his wife Mileva, who was a maid in the house of Dr. Ibrahimpašić, a judge, and his wife Safija, a teacher, who begged her husband to spare his life, which he did. The whole Serbian community of Sanski Most supported the People's Liberation Movement, while only a small number of them, plain and uneducated people, lacking strength of character, joined the Ustashi; fortunately, there were not many of them. They had a face, but no character. With the assistance of such scum, and they were many on the Ustasha side, mainly refugees and people coming from Muslim villages, who were trained under the guidance of the Ustasha and Home Guard troops, with their captains Makovac and Silajdžić, they were to prove great help during the slaughter of the people at the time of the pogrom.

As I reconstruct in my mind what I witnessed first hand, I cannot but write about something familiar and previously described in Branko Bokan's *Hronika*, which gives a realistic account of the first public shootings of the 'Chetniks', as they used to call the Serbs. On 5th and 6th May, they arrested Rajko Stojanović (a landowner who lived in Čaplje with his family, resettled from Sanski Most in the 1920s), a suspected 'Chetnik', as well as Marko and Đuro Kondić-Miladinović from Srpsko Kijevo – on 7th May, at six in the morning, they were shot in Sanski Most, on the lawn in front of the little house of Milo Krunić, a news crier from Sanski Most, i.e. across from oružnička postaja⁴, formerly the gendarme station, where I stood with a few girlfriends and watched the shooting.

On 6th May, St. George's Day, the Ustashi began their operations under the pretext they were searching for weapons in the nearby villages around Sanski Most, which brought them to Srpsko Kijevo, where they vandalised the tables used on patron saints' day in a most humiliating way and

⁴ Croatian for military station, S. M.

harassed the men, women and children. The peasants, provoked and hurt, rose up in rebellion. The Ustashi yielded and returned to Sanski Most through the Muslimansko Kijevo, asking for backup from the Ustasha and German troops. The peasants from Kozica, Hazići, Stratinjska and Obrovac above village Kijevo heard about the fight and came to help the people of Tramošnja and Kijevo with the weapons they had at hand, as well as with forks, axes and stakes. They had machine guns, which the Yugoslav army had left. One of the rebels was Risto Kovačević, a noted worker and communist, the man who organised the rebellion in the area of Mulež. Together with Vid Đaković and Dorđe Suljić, he tried to channel the uprising. German support arrived from Prijedor and Banja Luka, and on 7th and 8th May they clashed at the widely known Sjenokos in Kijevo, where the rebels met the troops frontally, their resistance still spontaneous, without real leadership. Some Ustashi and Germans were wounded, among whom Husein Šabić, an Ustasha from Sanski Most. When the night fell, the Germans were forced to return to Sanski Most and ask for additional reinforcement. At that time, on 7th May 1941, the head of the District of Sanski Most, Dr. Ante Merkadić, was in Sanski Most, and he gave an order to capture some hostages, Serbs and Serbian volunteers from World War I who fought against Germany and the Dual Monarchy, as well as internees from Arad, among whom my father, who spent four years there. People said the hostages would be killed if the Muslims, Croats and Germans were attacked, in accordance with the German orders previously issued under the command of Captain Henigs. On 8th May 1941, at around 3 o'clock in the morning, German troops used heavy artillery during the fight at Sjenokos and succeeded in crushing the rebellion, i.e. the rebels withdrew, while the Germans and Ustashi captured all the men they found on their way and forced them to Tomina. Upon the arrival of an Italian officer, who took control of the sector for the purpose of intervention, the crowd dispersed. Then, the Germans and the Ustashi, together with Franjo Hafner, the parish clerk from Tomina, went and searched Tomina, Lužani and Čaplje and arrested a certain number of people, who had not taken part in the fighting at Sjenokos, and took them to Sanski Most.

Three hundred and fifty hostages were already in custody in Sanski Most, captured in Krkojevci, Podlug and from some villages. They cherry-picked around a hundred hostages, among whom fourteen people from Tomina, including ten brothers from the Vidović family, nine people from Lužani, and two from Čaplje and Sanski Most each – twenty-seven in all. Lined up two by two, escorted by German and Italian soldiers and the local Ustashi,

they were driven to the gravel pit under the railway bridge in Sanski Most. The remaining 73 hostages watched their execution, after which they carried their dead, blood-covered acquaintances back across the bridge to a previously prepared wagon; afterwards the bodies were hanged on trees in the town park in Sanski Most, as a grim warning to its inhabitants, so generations could speak about the retaliation of the civilised 20th-century people. According to the testimony of hostage Milan Đurđević, Redžo Kurbegović, a cobbler from Sanski Most, was present when the hostages were taken away; on hearing that twenty-seven people would be shot, he said in the presence of all those Ustashi officials and authorities and German and Italian representatives and troops: “Don’t kill the people, let me go to Kijevo and try to calm the people down, and if I can’t...” – the voice of humanity was heard here. It was sad and distressing to watch, as we watched from our house as the wagon filled with lifeless bodies, piled on top one another, passed along Ključka Street, before our houses, as we stood behind closed windows, suppressing our weeping and sobbing, and the cries we could not let out, while our hearts were breaking with sorrow. We shivered as we did not know what might happen to us the next day. It was even uglier to see those bullet-riddled bodies hang and sway, their faces turned to the square – a scene that sent a chill down everyone’s spine, even the enemy’s.

The events in Sanski Most in mid-May were only a prelude to the most massive bloody killings which were about to take place. In an attempt of the Ustasha administration to poison the already spoilt relations between the Muslim, Serb and Croat communities, the Ustashi and their ideologists made explicit threats, in an effort to prepare and engage as many members of the Muslim and Croat communities in crimes against the Serbs and Jews. The Ustasha ideologists attended every single local public assembly or rally, especially in places with mixed populations. When an order was issued to remove all the parish registers from Orthodox Christian churches and submit them to the Roman Catholic parish priests, this made the Serbian communities very concerned, given the fact the Orthodox Christian priests had already been expelled to Serbia. Viktor Gutić and Mile Budak spoke at that time: “...Those who were baptised Orthodox Christian should immediately convert to Roman Catholicism, so we are not forced to take any special steps about that.”⁵ In May 1941, when Gutić returned from a

⁵ Quotations from speeches given by the Ustasha officials based on the document Злочинства окупатора (Crimes of the Occupiers) of the State Commission for Crimes, ref. 12/1, b. 312, Military Historical Institute, Belgrade.

visit to Ante Pavelić, the chief of the Independent State of Croatia, who authorised him to continue the previously begun atrocities and persecution, he arrived in Banja Luka and stated in front of the top Ustasha officials: “To my great pleasure and to the benefit of the people, I have attended to some major, very important matters. Now I am to begin the grand operations of cleansing the Croatian Bosanska Krajina of all unwanted elements, especially Banja Luka, for it is to become the capital of the Independent State of Croatia. No doubt, the toughest and the most extreme measures possible will be undertaken. What I have undertaken so far is but a mere trifle, a paltry thing... really, you can just imagine what awaits the enemies of the Independent State of Croatia. With regards to this matter, we have been given the upper hand when it comes to our lovely region, and I wish to serve the will of God and the will of people. All the undesirable elements in our region will be destroyed within the shortest time possible, they will be cut up root and branch, and the only thing to remain of them will be bad memories.”⁶ Also, here is what he said at an Ustasha rally in Banja Luka: “...But, as of tomorrow, I’ll press it harder. Backbones will break... Give this message to our enemies, tell them – backbones will break! There’ll be cleansing... No mercy. The poglavnik and Croatian ministers can hardly wait to come to cleansed Banja Luka, and that’s going to be soon, we are going to get down to work fast. I’ll be the iron broom here, and let me tell you, may none of you come to me and beg for the good of the enemy.”⁷

When he visited Sanski Most as the chief Ustasha official and great parish priest of the District of ‘Sana’ and ‘Luka’, to make an UNHEARD-OF speech at the famous rally held on 28th May 1941, the local Ustashi gave an official reception and an honorary review of the Italian unit. He was then greeted by Himzo Pašić-Rešić, who thanked him for responding to their invitation, after which Gutić, asking for support, uttered explicit threats in front of around 4,000 people and said, among other things: “No more Serbian army! No more Serbia! No more Serbian peasants, our bloodsuckers, the Gypsy Karađorđević dynasty is gone, and here also the roads will wish to see Serbs, but there won’t be any Serbs left. I have issued strict orders for their annihilation. Show no mercy to a single one of them. Always bear in mind they were our murderers and destroy them wherever you can, and you will not want the blessing of our leader or my blessing. Whoever pleads for them will automatically become the enemy

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

of Croatian freedom... May Serbs have nothing to hope for, it is best for them to leave, may they disappear from our lands, from our homeland.”⁸ After that, Himzo Pašić-Rešić thanked Gutić for his patriotic words and instructions for future actions, and on behalf of his citizens he promised he would thoroughly follow those instructions.⁹ At Toma Čorić’s a splendid lunch was held; after the commander of the Italian garrison and Gutić made toasts, Dr. Josip Cerjan also proposed a toast and uttered words of thanks. Despite the explicit attack against the Serbs, it was hard to anticipate the ending would be that tragical. Along with the others, a very important speech, extremely stirring, was made by Dr. Mirko Puk, who competed with Dr. Milan Budak as to which of the two was a greater Croat, and in it he said: “...The Serbs came to our lands as the dregs and rubbish of the Balkans. We cannot allow having the rule of two peoples in our people’s country. God is one, one is the people that rules, it’s the Croatian people...”, while at one session Mile Budak, deputy head of state, said he believed in the Croatian words “either move away or bow before us”, and let me tell you, you will either move out of our homeland by yourself, or we’ll expel you by force!”¹⁰ This was all arranged step by step in order to trick the most ignorant, those whose energy needed to be used for the execution of bloody atrocities.

The acts of these educated people were so inhuman, their thinking narrow-minded, chauvinistic and nationalistic; then let us not speak about those who were primitive, illiterate, of limited intellectual capacity, conservative with regards to any issue, those bearing the marks of serious backwardness and conventionality, who given the low level of their emancipation could only take the bait of the promises of the Ustasha fanatics, who were to push them into the abyss of unparalleled atrocities. Torture, slaughter, kill – that was going to be the motto of one reckless policy. They would push them and use them for atrocious, horrible crimes. What kind of fluid had the power to spur a man with a normal psyche to turn into an instrument of a group of fanatics, a force, to awaken in his person wild, brutal impulses to invent special methods of death for his victims. Even animals are susceptible to the educational influence of man to perform what is good and useful, whereas in 1941 human powers and the reasoning of certain people failed.

Early in July an interesting thing happened to a group of camp prisoners originally from Bihać, who were among the first people of Bosanska Krajina to be taken to the camp at Bosanski Petrovac, among whom there were also communists from the Bihać branch of the Communist Party. Someone at the camp

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Бранко Бокан, Хроника Санског Моста, part I, Until July 1941, p. 289

¹⁰ Ibid, quotations.

found out the Ustashi from Bihać were again after them, just before the massacre which a great number of Ustashi were to commit there. When Čedo Gavrilović found out I had got out of prison in Sanski Most and was writing about those days of death and mass killings, he wrote me a letter about the current situation in the towns and villages of Bosanska Krajina and about the suffering the people had to endure. Among other things, [he also wrote] this: “Right after I arrived in Petrovac, I got in touch with Vojo Kreco and asked to be connected with Ilija Došen, because he was the only man in the area who knew me well from the Belgrade student movement. However, after discussing it with a few comrades, Kreco supposedly asked me to stay in the camp in Petrovac as a commissar, and along with this political duty, I was also to make sure the distribution of food and other things to the people from Bihać was even. Very soon... Kreco disappeared and he never showed up in Petrovac again.” How absurd was the thinking of that man – instead of helping them to escape from the camp, as those were banished people, especially as there was another camp nearby with the Jews banished from Bihać, who had been taken everything, even the rings on their hands.

Next he wrote: “News of massacres against Serbs was coming from everywhere, and the Ustashi from Bihać also visited the camps – Vlado Bunić and Pero Šinić, asking to see me, Đuro and Vlado Funduk. Braco Stojanović from Petrovac, who had taken refuge in Belgrade, asked his uncle Purkarević to transfer his comrades (us) and some other people to Serbia, as he regularly travelled from Belgrade to Petrovac to fetch the property of some merchants from Petrovac who had also fled. This time he set off in lorries (3 lorries) and with a big group of people, including a German from Banat who had supplied them, in return for a hefty sum, with all the documents they needed from the aggressor authorities in Belgrade. In order to move more easily through the Independent State of Croatia, they wrapped the bonnets with Swastika flags – but even so, they weren’t able to transport anything this time (author’s remark – This was a period when Serbs were being arrested in preparation for the massacres and for the purpose of greater control by the officials of the Independent State of Croatia.). Vlado, Đuro Funduk and I kept vigil, hiding day and night... We waited for them... They loaded us onto a lorry, we lay on the floor and they covered us with the tarpaulin from all the three lorries. Hungry... Exhausted... We arrived in Sanski Most at nighttime and then came across and were stopped by an Ustasha patrol. The men in charge of the convoy were in the first lorry; they started talking to the police, were then joined by all the drivers and assistants, and what followed was a long discussion... We were in the last lorry. We had stopped at a rather dark tree line... We came out from under the tarpaulin and decided to jump off and try to escape. Then, a

window opened on the house in front of which the lorry was parked, with two girls peeping out cautiously. They were watching us... Suddenly, the window opened wider, and one of them called in a hushed voice: „Đuro, Đuro...” Đuro peered at her and obviously delighted, he whispered quietly: “Slavka...” Slavka realised what was happening; in a split second, she was in the yard, opened the door slightly, and one after another – Vlado, Đuro, myself and the rest (eight people) slowly got off the back of the lorry and crossed the dark yard into the house. Đuro told me Slavka was his schoolmate from the Prijedor Gymnasium (after he was expelled from the Gymnasium in Bihać...) and went on to compliment her both as a person and comrade. A few minutes after we had got off, the Ustashi surrounded and searched the lorry. I remember Slavka was to be tried in the Ustasha court a couple of days later, so we invited her to flee with us, said we would hide her underneath the tarpaulin without telling the crew of the lorry. Fed, refreshed and recovered, before dawn we crawled back under the tarpaulin and were soon off.

I keep Čedo Gavrilović’s letter in my archive. It was my sister and I who peeped out the window cautiously. The same morning my sister took the first train and fled to Prijedor, where she contacted Ilija Stojanović and Dr. Mladen Stojanović. They gave her the address of a Belgrade contact; she was supposed to find someone called Dr. Besarević. When she reached Belgrade, the city was in ruins after the bombing; she was not able to find the address and the house. She stayed with our local priest and his family, who had also fled there; she got a job working on a building for food, and after a while she got in contact with the League of Young Communists, an organisation working illegally. Ilija was the secretary of either a Party branch or a branch of the League of Young Communists, and Mladen Stojanović had not been arrested yet. It is known that during the attempt to arrest him Mladen started a fire at the Girls’ Vocational School in Prijedor and fled to Mount Kozara. He was a friend of my father’s; they had known each other since before World War I because they had both supported and been members of the Young Bosnia movement, for which my father Vid Miljatović, a merchant from Sanski Most, was interned in the camp Arad in Romania, taken out of the Austro-Hungarian army; there he spent four years with the others (there were people from Sanski Most there...).

Čedo Gavrilović, who wrote me the letter, was a retired lieutenant-colonel, a member of the People’s Liberation Movement from 1941 and of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia from before the war; he was also the secretary of the local League of Young Communists Committee of the pre-war Bihać branch of the League of Young Communists. He was living in Split at the time when he wrote

this letter. Đuro and Vlado Funduk – members of the Bihać and Prijedor branches of the League of Young Communists, died in the war as combatants of the People's Liberation Movement. My sister Slavka, who joined the Prijedor branch of the League of Young Communists before the war and was a combatant of the People's Liberation Movement from 1941, lives in Belgrade today.

In those days 300 Slovenes came to Sanski Most; following the annexation of the lower part of Styria, they were banished from Maribor, Celje, Ptuj and other places, and first deported to Slavonska Požega, and then to Sanski Most. During the massacre, they were accommodated in the pre-war building of the 'Sokolski dom' sports centre. There were many progressive young people among them, and such people always find those similar to them, as if through inertia. At first, they were locked inside the building, fenced off with barbed wire, guarded by the Ustashi, but after the massacre they were released and looked for accommodation on their own in Sanski Most and Prijedor. My brother Dragoljub Braco Miljatić was to meet them first; more precisely, he met Mihajlo and Milan Mihelić when I was in prison. My mom sent them food, and Braco passed it over the wire to them; she always did things for other people, and she could feel no other way for those deported Slovenes, because she was also Slovene by descent. She sent them more food through Braca, and when I was released from prison, they were instantly asked to join the underground group which helped the rebels, about which I immediately informed Hazim Bilalbegović. They promptly engaged in underground operations, after which some joined the People's Liberation Movement, while in 1942 the Mihelić family left for Prijedor, where they took part in the underground operations of the Prijedor branch of the League of Young Communists. In 1942, they were detained by the Ustashi, escaped from prison and went to Mount Kozara. They fought in the People's Liberation Combat from 1941, were decorated with the 1941 Partisan Memorial Medal, and eventually retired as colonels. Our friendship continued in Belgrade after the war.

The Slovenes watched the passage of the column rushing from the railway station, forced by the Ustashi. Those people came from Kljevci, Čaplje, Vrhpolje, even from Lička Kaldrma, captured in villages and at railway stops on the way, regardless of where they came from; before that, they captured people in their gardens, houses, and they put everyone, including women and children, on ŠIPAD's train headed for Sanski Most, where they disembarked and were forced across the square and over the River Sana bridge into the cattle shed, which already contained people detained previously. They watched as those people were consistently maltreated. Those who succumbed were killed. The women and children were later released, while the men were taken to Šušnjar and killed. That day, we who were in prison

also heard the stomping of the Ustashi's boots, screams, noise and shooting, and we saw a poor woman fall behind the newsstand and roll down the slope towards the park. The newsstand belonged to Milan Mijatović (and his wife Mileva), who also perished in the massacre. The prison window limited our field of vision, but still we managed to see when they threw someone in the River Sana.

Before their arrival at the cattle shed, they also killed 28-year-old Milan, Đuro Karanović's brother (today, Đuro Karanović is a retired general living in Belgrade), right in front of his mother. First they shot him in the ankle, and then threw him off the train from the railway bridge into the River Sana. Dušan, the other son, was detained and taken to Šušnjar with the others. Only Đuro evaded this kind of fate thanks to his mother's sense, who wrapped him in a woman's kerchief and managed to pull through with the mass of women who were released. Đuro told me there were babies too, more precisely, a six-month-old baby from Kljevci, whom mother held with her hands above her head to keep it breathing, as there was little air in the attic. That boy, as I found out later, worked as a teacher in Sanski Most. Unfortunately, I was not able to locate him afterwards. We will never know how many people perished, as they were killed everywhere and at random.

Beside this, the Mihelićs told me they had to wait on the Ustashi during imprisonment, and they could hardly believe the conversations they heard while standing aside. They were appalled by what they heard. They heard about a Serb victim, who was killed by an Ustasha from Kamengrad, and who boasted about the killing method he used: "I stabbed him with a bayonet so hard that the bayonet got stuck in the floor! And all the while, this Serbian bitch never cried once."

Hostages were frequently put in prison before the actual massacre, as potential guinea pigs, because according to the Ustashi and Germans' orders, they were executed whenever a soldier was wounded or killed. The Ustashi always knew exactly how many and what people they had at their disposal, both old and young, including those very young; among them there were also Muslims and Croats, and these people were forced to work, for example, dig trenches or do other work along the roads. At the same time, forced labour was used as an instrument of control of the Serbs and Jews on a daily basis, whom the civilian Ustashi as well as the Ustashi in uniform, who were there to make sure they did not escape, could put in the death prisons as needed. At the same time, in order to make it easier for them to make arrests, the Ustashi created situations of panic, which were unreal, based on the calculated policy of riots. The people forced to work were guarded by the local Ustashi, one of which was Grga Maričić, a

well-known fellow from the nearby village of Hrast, and his sons, Mile Sorić, a roadman from Zdena, Jure Banović, Dane from Sanski Most and Brdari, Srećo Ljevar from Sasina, Muktar Cerić from Zdena, Husein Mušić from Tomina, and others. They incessantly kept an eye on this lot of 'small fry'. At the time before the massacre, when the people were arrested, many Serbs doing forced labour went to the prisons of death, but we must not forget, as Mićo Došenović says (one of the forced labourers, originally from the village of Grdanovci, a retired general), that there was also Džanan 'Gale' Ramić (a roadman from Kamengrad, who later collaborated with the People's Liberation Movement, and was strangled by the Ustashi from Stara Rijeka in 1942), who did not allow the men and youths working on the road section he was in charge of to be taken to the death prisons. If only there had been more people like Džanan!

The truth about my sordid life, along with those actual events, is a tragic story about one period in our country, the period of the regime of the fascist Ustasha state, in that violent war; even today it sends a chill down my spine and my heart beats heavily whenever I recall the suffering of our people; those memories are deep in my mind and will not be forgotten as long as I live. Only my participation in the People's Liberation Movement was a relief.

I will describe the arrest and the days spent in prison until the first group was taken out and sent to Šušnjar. This account is sad but true. After so many years, I still often experience it, and the words of Ibrahim Nalić still echo in my head: "Master Vid, get your daughter ready, I'm taking her to prison!" It was after four o'clock in the morning when my father heard these words, and he told me then: "C'mon, child, we have to go." So, on 27th July 1941, when I was 16, my father escorted me to the prison; he signed a paper where he pledged his life, asking the Ustashi to let him take me home overnight and bring me back again the next morning before six. He took me home and brought me back for two days, and after that I never saw him again, as he was also arrested, and by the time I got out of prison, he had already been killed on Šušnjar.

I was one of the youngest detainees, I believe the only person the same age was Obrad 'Svile' Lazić, who was brought to the same prison as I was, the very same morning, with his brother Branko and father Pantelija, chief of the railway station in Sanski Most. Already in custody was Nedeljko 'Šule' Milićević, whose house was in a central position at the square. He was in the company of three more prisoners. More people were taken in custody, of whom Puba and Lola Atijas, both electrical fitters, were somewhat younger; together we made up a group of youths whom the Ustashi called 'the red', while the older Serbs they nicknamed the 'Chetniks'. The prisoners quickly filled all the rooms in the school. We saw crimes from the school windows, some

of them previously described, such as the column. After the column incident, the Ustashi boarded up the windows so we could not watch any more; it was dark after that. Our room, which faced the park, had a group of citizens from Sanski Most in it. Then, they brought all the adult men from Zdena by the last name of Marjanović and Mandić, around 12 of them. In the other classrooms were peasants from Tomina, Čaplje, Podlug, Fajtovci, Šehovici, and some other villages in the vicinity of the town. The room was packed. The classroom facing the River Sana had its own entrance, and it was also full. The room in the basement, which lay right below ours, was filled with the Jews from Sanski Most. Those Jews were released after Ivica Simeon's speech, two days before we left for Šušnjar, only to be deported to Jasenovac in 1942, where they all perished.

Something would happen every day during my stay in prison. As early as Wednesday, the Ustashi brought in sheets, each held by two, some even by four men, and told us to put into them the money, gold and rings we had on us. In my pocket I had a ballpoint pen, very fine for that time, and a photo of myself, and they told me I had to give them too. After that, on Wednesday, Judge Macan came with Vejsil Vajzović, his court clerk, the brother of the well-known hairdresser from Sanski Most, whose third brother was an Ustasha. They brought in a small table and two chairs. Macan had worked as a judge in Sanski Most even before the war. He was married to a Serb woman from Banja Luka. At that time, he was member of the Ustasha Town Council, together with Himzo Rešić, Toma Ćorić and the others. Earlier, people considered him a fine gentleman, well-mannered, who rubbed his hands together when he spoke. He repeated this gesture in the prison, while the citizens asked him: "What will happen to us, judge?" Rubbing his hands as usual, he quickly responded: "I don't know, I don't know, I don't know". Next, Vejsil got down to work and took our personal information. When it was my turn, I answered the questions, saying I was the daughter of Vid Miljatović, a merchant from Sanski Most, that my name was Stojanka and I was 15 years old (in fact, I had just turned sixteen around that time in prison). I am not familiar with whether they did the same kind of registration in the other premises, because we were not allowed to mix with them or leave our room.

We kept receiving food from home until Wednesday, and this food hid little notes sent to prison by Hazim Bilalbegović and Mirko Vranić. Hazim informed us that Nada Marjanović, a teacher and the daughter of Marjanović, the priest from Sanski Most, had been put in the District Prison and released soon afterwards, after which she had been raped by Kljako, an Ustasha, who had arrived together with the Ustashi from Herzegovina and

Slavonia; Simeon had arranged for her to leave quickly for Belgrade, as she was an acquaintance of his wife Ljerka's, the daughter of Dr. Josip Cerjan. I suppose he wrote this because he was worried about me, and he wanted me to know the Ustashi had taken some four to five girls from Sanski Most to a room and undressed them; suddenly, there was shooting on the street and they went out quickly, while the girls jumped at their chance and escaped. I was young at the time; although I attended the Prijedor Gymnasium, I was raised traditionally, and I was by no means aware that something like that could happen to me or the others – eventually nothing ever happened. I spent all this time in that classroom with my fellow-citizens. The most important thing Hazim wrote was brief and clear: “Anything can happen, even the worst can be expected from the Ustashi... try to kill the guards!” The guards were not so many at the time – there were two old Muslim Haj pilgrims at the entrances, probably refugees, wearing the traditional Muslim trousers with baggy seats, and in their hands they each held an axe in a raised position, ready to hit anyone who tried to break free. The Ustashi stood a bit further, and I heard they were civilians, mostly refugees from the neighbouring Muslim villages.

After receiving Hazim's message, it was clear to everyone there was nothing left for us to do but escape, and that was the real truth. Only our good, excellent Hazim could have enough courage to commit something so brave. He probably received the information from his brother-in-law, a lawyer and the district sharia judge. Also, he was an acquaintance of Ivica Simeon and the rest of the Ustasha administration in Sanski Most (following the liberation, he became our diplomatic representative in Egypt). Only he was capable of providing such information to the underground fighters of the Muslim origin.

Among the good operatives were also Haim Ibrišagić, alias Štroco, who supplied our helpers with all kinds of passes, Hasan Kitić, mobilised in Sanski Most as a Home Guard captain – he had his own unit, stole weapons and gave them to Partisan troops, and Ibrahim Aganović-Hašimović, who had his own team of cattle and smuggled ammunition by hiding it in hay. Hasan (well-known as a writer and teacher, an underground member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia) arrived in Sanski Most that summer to take the place of Draga Zurunić, the former District Education Officer, after she was murdered. Draga Zurunić (her maiden name Šemsa Tabaković) worked as a teacher in Bosanski Milanovac, then called Eminovci, married Perica Zurunić in Sanski Most and converted to Orthodox Christianity. She was a notable intellectual, head of the Yugoslav branch of 'Sokoli' ('Hawks')¹¹, and she was the one who always started a dance

of *kolo*¹² at the celebrations on St. Sava's Day. Provoked by Luka Minigo, an inn-keeper, Himzo Zukić, called Ciko, arrested her and took her to the *mahala*¹³ in the direction of the railway bridge on the River Sana. As she understood what was going to happen, she wrenched free and jumped in the River Sava. Unfortunately, he caught up with her and killed her. Then they buried her in a pit in an upright position. Simo, her father-in-law and a well-known landowner from Belgrade, came to Sanski Most after its liberation; his both sons were killed at Šušnjar, and now he transported his daughter-in-law's mortal remains to their family tomb at Šušnjar. I should also add that Himzo Zukić's brother was Adem, our family coachman, a wonderful, honourable man, who always informed dad about the Ustashi's activities. Mom told me that when I was in prison, before dad was arrested, he came to the house and begged him to take mom and go with her to his home in the mahala to hide there. Not even then did father believe it, and he just said: "Adem, when did I ever do harm to anyone? I hired poor Muslim folk and did nothing but good, never harm! Why would they kill me?!" In a quiet debate in our prison room, the older Serbs turned down Hazim's proposal, while a few of us youngsters agreed with it. They refused as they feared what the consequences would be for their families. Only Drago Ačić was on our side and said: "Well, I also have a family and five children, but I want to try and get away with them." (He meant us.)

The same day the guards informed us that a rally would be held in the school yard, only with the people from our room and the Jews from the basement, and the chief of district, Ivica Simeon, would attend it. That was exactly what happened, and he addressed us. Among other things, he also said this: "Citizens, don't be afraid, don't try to run away, nothing will happen to you, you're under my protection, not a hair on your head will be harmed."¹⁴ After that, there was no sense in insisting on the escape. He probably said this because he had heard rebels had already freed hostages from the prison in Budimlić Japra.

The Ustashi kept on maltreating us, the prisoners. The first incident was the previously mentioned confiscation of the jewellery, money and other things, after which they started beating people. In our prison the villagers of Zdena were beaten first. Probably someone had a grudge against them, because there were also many Ustashi from Zdena. There was Zaim Dudić,

¹¹ A sports society, S. M.

¹² Traditional folk dance in the Balkans, S. M.

¹³ A neighbourhood with narrow streets and low, oriental houses, S. M.

¹⁴ The verbatim quote, as I remember it.

‘formerly’ a local pickpocket, who came with the Ustasha Captain Silajdžić. After the Ustasha guards from the corridor brought in a chair for Captain Silajdžić, he put Dudić next to him and called all the Marjanovičs and Mandićs from Zdena, as many as there were, to form a line next to Dudić. Silajdžić then looked across the room, as if searching for someone, and when he saw me hiding behind my father’s colleague’s back, he put out his arm and beckoned me with his finger, grumpily: “You, red, come over here!” I froze with fear and was so reluctant to get up, that my fellow-citizens eventually told me: “You have to go.” I had to watch as the captain first slapped these people, on both cheeks, each one of them, their heads turning from side to side with the force of the blows. After that, he ordered Dudić to do the same thing. The cheeks of the people from Zdena were all red. When Dudić was done, Silajdžić told him to take off his opanak and beat them with it on both sides. After that, the people from Zdena were bloody. He sent them back to their places, injured and covered in blood.

Just as Silajdžić had left the room, there was a commotion and they pushed in Gojko Majkić, a machinist, a man expelled from the Party and banished to his birth place, and Branko Vukašinović, formerly the assessor for the Municipality of Lušci Palanka. They were dubbed ‘the rebels’, which they were not at the time. The two of them told us they had been arrested while asleep in bed, put into fetters and onto a car, and brought to Sanski Most. It was from them in prison that we also learnt there really was a rebellion and the people imprisoned in Budimlić Japra had really been set free; hearing their stories, we wished they would come and set us free as well. The Ustashi frequently spread alarming news about the rebels, and in their reports they wrote as they saw fit. Beside the fact they caused confusion and insecurity, they really did it so they would possibly have a reason for killing the hostages. All this happened after Simeon’s speech, and the older prisoners were in a state of shock, not knowing whether Ivica had lied to them or told them the truth. One time, on Simeon’s permission and on Dr. Veso’s proposal, they released Jova Milinković’s older son – Veso, because he had a high fever and quinsy. His deck chair stayed in the room and Jovo Milinković gave it to me to sleep in the centre of the room, because my father had stopped visiting. That night I slept on it, and in the morning, when it dawned, they told me “our little girl, our princess” had called for dad in her sleep and cried. Given my age, they used baby talk with me, and on the whole they were really kind. During that period, Gojko and Branko told us what they had experienced in Palanka and about life there in general, as well as about a possible attack by the rebels, which in reality was neither realistic nor possible, but we still desired it. It was at that time that the Ustashi felt encouraged by Simeon’s saying that no one would be hurt and believed the Serbs had been tricked. It was with that kind of conviction that they got killed.

At a time when horrible things were happening everywhere, there were lovely, selfless people, more in the Muslim and fewer in the Croat community, who disapproved of them, who even helped. One of them was our coachman Adem Zukić, then also Muharem Alagić, an assistant clerk in the former town administration, who hid 'Perican' – Pera Vidaković, also a former clerk, in the attic of the Town Hall. At first, Lazo Živković hid in the attic area of his house and shop; when it became really dangerous, Ante Tunić, a baker, concealed him in an oven that was not in use, until the slaughter was over. Ante himself had an Ustasha evil-doer for a brother; it was Viktor Tunić. There were more such cases, but I know only very little about them.

Arrests continued across the town, the prisons were getting full, 1st and 2nd August were approaching. It was 31st July, Friday; all of a sudden, to intimidate the people, the Ustashi in uniform burst in through the door, followed by Mustafa Alagić, a known policeman from Sanski Most, and a number of civilians with bars and stakes of all sizes (people said they were refugees from the Muslim villages in the surroundings). We figured they were drunk; immediately they stepped inside, they started hitting everyone around, using rifle butts, bayonets, stakes, metal bars and alike. They attacked like rabid dogs. "You'll remember the Ustashi from Herzegovina!" they said. As the people fell, I got horror-stricken again and fled to the back, hiding behind the backs of the people older than myself. As they hit, I fell on the floor and by doing so avoided receiving heavier blows, whereas with the adults, it did not go that well. I had bruises, but not nearly as many as them. The hardest thing was when they had to lie down and stand up quickly, on the Ustashi's command. Whoever could not was beaten. The people whose heads were injured got the worst of it, especially Brako Vukašinić, who was bleeding. The same thrashing repeated with the peasants in the neighbouring rooms; I went there and saw a dead man's body on the floor. I felt horrible, as I recognised the man; I used to see him in my dad's shop, they called him 'the American' – he must have been to America. His gold teeth were sticking out of his open mouth. Surely he did not take those gold teeth of his to the grave, and his grave must have been the River Sana. Later, I found out his name was Đuran Mišić.

Branko bled the most heavily. Although I was afraid, somehow I managed to pluck up the courage and put my strengths on the test – I dressed the wounded, although I had no idea how to do it, and removed blood from the wounds of those who were seriously hurt. There was also Gojko with minor injuries, then Pero Gvozden, not to mention the Marjanovićs and the Mandićs, who were in critical condition. I beat my fear of blood. Never in my life had I seen it before; as I was actually unable and weak, I cried and shivered, why

was I not better at it, because that was the first time I had been faced with those things. Every sigh of pain and every sob echoed in me like scream; frightened as I was, I kept the sobs in, only to let them burst out with force. When we had no more handkerchiefs or cloths or water, we asked the Ustashi to let the people go to the pump and wash themselves – they did not let them. They said: “Only the little one can go”. So I went with too few small bowls and a small number of cloths, so they had to tear their shirts. I descended and went to the pump again and again, dispelling my fear, and I was no longer afraid of the Ustashi, I, who was afraid even of the dark as a little girl. I was not afraid even of the ‘pilgrims’ with the axes at the entrances. A young Ustasha followed and watched over me; I looked at him churlishly, which was my only revenge. I walked and cried, I cried as I went back, and watched those bloody shirt rags.

This truth is painful; as I put it into words, I cry and experience it again. This reality is harsh, extremely cruel, and the reason I write about it is so it can be instructive for all the forthcoming generations. It is impossible today to explain this misery of the humankind; those specimens coming from that specific environment were probably drunk, for I could not find any other explanation for it. Never was more pain endured than at that time, when lives hung by a thread and depended on them – on the Ustashi – lives of crowds, but also of individuals. That harsh truth of life and the reality of those events simply tell the story of one period, of a tragedy which took place in the bloodiest of states, if it can ever deserve to be called a state. It is a story of the suffering and acts of the people during that period. My memories may be identical to many other memories of the time of Pavelić’s Independent State of Croatia, which brought to our lovely town cowards, morally degenerate and soulless people to commit a most dishonourable act of unprecedented atrocity. Those memories endure and never fade, nor will they ever be suppressed, and they speak of many things. Judging by their physique, those were people, but inside they condensed bestial instincts, or else how could they do all those things to powerless and unarmed people with such sadism? I have never, ever been able to explain that to myself. Such behaviour is in the field of study of psychoanalysts, psychologists and sociologists. As incarnations of psychopaths, those tyrants committed all kinds of atrocities, like the worst brutes or antisocial types of fellows, bullies with sadist inclinations, whom the Ustashi exploited to achieve and reach their end goals, without any moral, ethical or other values, and as for their acts visible in their ‘ego’, they only measure up to psychopaths and perverted people in their freakishness, to people with deranged perceptions. It was a major human tragedy in a little town, a town whose people had their troubles, worries, joys, who were innocent victims taken away to be executed

like lambs, and slaughtered on the order of seemingly mentally sane people – all this constructs a picture of bloody retributions and monstrous reality.

While we were in custody, the new detainees told us about the rebellion in Drvar, and then in Palanka. The news echoed and reached everyone. We really thought someone was going to save us. At the time of the massacre, on hearing Hazim was a communist, the infamous Ustasha 'Kljako' (the Cripple, after his maimed finger) cut the palate in his mouth before the district administration building. All those Ustashi vented their brutality in the most heinous ways; I guess they took pleasure in it.

As Saturday, 1st August, arrived, we expected just anything; however, things got somewhat quieter. We were not able to see anything through our prison windows, and all we could do was peer through the cracks in the planks. On Saturday, 1st August 1941, around five o'clock in the afternoon, when the summer heat starts to subside, they told us – lying again: "Go get ready because you're going to the railway station to unload sugar and flour." They were getting ready, and we were waiting for them to let us go out, into the yard. I got in the corridor after they called for me. In the corridor I saw 4-5 Ustasha officers, they were more than ever, and Husein Šabić was among them, a tall man in a civilian suit. He asked me in front of them what my name was, and I answered; then he asked me how old I was, I said fifteen, lying. "Who are your parents?" to which I said I was Vid Miljatović's daughter. He explained to the Ustashi I was the kid and said: "She is just a kid who was holding the books in her hands, but the older one..." I said: "It wasn't her fault." "Shut up, kid!" and so I shut up. I did not understand anything in the conversation. In the meantime, my people were getting out in the yard and forming a column of pairs. Šule and Svile were there, along with everyone else. Later, I understood the act of this Ustasha; thanks to my good parents, he used to make a good wage working for my honourable father, so my mother, Marija Marica Miljatović swore him through Jozefina, a waitress, on the bread she had given him, to free her child, for they had already killed her father.

A minute later it would have been too late. Despite the fact Simeon had asked them to set me free, which Mirko Vranić begged him to do as his neighbour and someone he used to spend a lot of time with, the man said: "No, she's going to die." Jozefina gave him mother's message through a Croat woman Šabić he was living with out of wedlock, and thereby swore him. I was saved by the Ustasha who received 2,000 dinars as a reward for crushing the May Rebellion.

According to what Šule Milićević told me, present in the same column was Anton Kratohvil, an Ustasha who often visited their home to eat, and who boasted before his mother and sister Koviļjka about having killed personally around 1,500 Serbs. They asked him to save Šule, and he did

get him out of the column, and then also Svile, except that Svile had to be paired with someone who was tied. So Svile was among the last to stay in the column. Šule told me more about Kratohvil. He told me he was ugly, stocky and cross-eyed, so he disliked good-looking, blond and tall people. He said he used to play with people saying "I want this one, I don't want this one." At Šušnjar he tortured Laza Milenković, a veterinarian, and in the end asked him what his last wish was. Lazo replied he wanted to say prayer to God. After he fulfilled his wish, he killed him.

I said goodbye to my friends and the other people from prison in the schoolyard; I was to go home, and they were to be taken, tied in rows, to their final resting place at Šušnjar. Their walk to Šušnjar was difficult and sorrowful. They were followed by the people of Sanski Most living along the street, who watched secretly from behind their curtains and listened to the cries and screams of the unfortunate column. The first people I met on my way home were my Jewish girlfriends, who peeped out of their yards; they told me the grim news: "They killed your dad a few days ago." I just wanted to rush off to Mom, who had made such enormous sacrifices, only to see her and so she could see me alive.

My release from prison and my subsequent life would be shaped and obtain a final form during and after the People's Liberation Combat, the combat in which I and many others fought with all our hearts from the very beginning to its end in 1945. Our memories and testimonies about the period provide evidence to depict our recent and for me not so distant past, but still not enough to explain many things. Things ask for much braver interpretations and we should draw lessons more freely from World War II, the war against fascism, characterised by the most ruthless methods used in physical and mental harassment, whose consequences have left monstrous scars in my homeland as well.

*Vukašin M. Davidović**

IN MEMORY OF MURDERED FATHER MILAN AND UNCLES STEVAN AND DUŠAN

Why is the uncle crying?

While we were coming back from school to Zdena, very often we, the children, were asked in by our favourite aunt Sava Marjanović, who we called Seja, and she would always treat us with something.

On one occasion we found uncle Trivo, holding a glass of brandy in his hand, crying and singing:

“Hey Ustashas, Ustashas, I fuck all that is yours,
I fuck a little grey bird of yours, Ante Pavelić!”

We helped our aunt to lift him on the bed, because he was an invalid since birth and he moved using crutches. This scene was unforgettable and it searched for an answer to the question asked later to the mother: “Why was uncle crying?” From the then understandings about Ustasha crimes over Serbs in Zdena, Sanski Most and wider, a question always imposed itself: How was it possible to kill a man, especially a woman and a child, who and why were they doing that?

Looking back on the history of crimes over Serbs

Writing anything about crimes, about anybody’s crimes, would not be logical, without looking back at the history, where the truth is undefeatable fact. I remembered my mother’s curses: “May earth throw their bones out!”, or “May snakes suck their eyes out!” and others, while she was talking about death of our fathers. At that time it seemed to me as if I could see myself in her arms and my brothers and sisters holding onto her skirt, while being taken away into the prison and then from the prison home and eventually into the Catholic church for conversion into Catholic religion. Some “’ost” was discussed whose significance we could not understand for a long time, and they were picking on my older brother, because he could not pronounce that properly and for spitting out the “’ost” and that some priest would castrate him because of that.

* Vukašin M. Davidović, teacher, Prijedor

These tragic events left a permanent seal on each Serb that experienced that and naturally on me as well, who listened to the stories of the older about bloody 1941.

I was not able to find peace until the present day until I found some written evidence and the answer to the question: "For what and why?". The survived martyrs have written volumes of books about this, because nobody ever succeeded in their plans to destroy a nation and so the Croats failed to do that either in 1941.

Croats' origin

Three nations, of three different religions, live in in Bosnia and Herze-govina, and it can be said with certainty that these religious differences were always the cause of conflicts. In the first volume "Croats in the Light of Historical Truth" ("Hrvati u svjetlu istorijske istine") and in the second "Sanctuaries in Flames in the Name of the Christ" ("U ime Hrista svetinje u plamenu") by Veliša Rajičević Psunjski, reprinted edition in 1944, publisher IPK "Nikola Pašić", in 2004, the author described Croatian crimes over Serbs, in a several centuries lasting history of these two nations. The Balkans has always been a "barrel of gun powder", which was related to arrival of Croats into these areas, and after them naturally the Turks. Religious interests, Catholicism now and Islam then and often both together, left a deep mark in relations between the nations in these areas. Croats always left their door open for their connections with Romans, Germans and if required Slovenes in the course of their poor history.

The most significant Croatian historical authority, Ferdo Šišić, has written in 1914: "Branimir killed prince Zdeslav in the spring of 879 and addressed the Pope IVAN THE EIGHTH in Rome and so disunited from the Constantinople Patriarch." At that time Orthodox Serbian people got eternal Jesuit opponent in Croats, who leaning on the western Catholicism, directing all their attention to moving their territory boundaries on the account of historically Serbian and ethnic territory. I will mention Tomislav here, who seized all the power in 924 and had completely torn himself away from the Serbian community. Ever since then stealing of Serbian history commenced, which Croats always apportioned to themselves. We are the witnesses that Franjo Tuđman was writing such "HISTORY", by which Yugoslavia would have never been liberated, if the Croatian Home-Guards did not supply Partisans with weapons in the II World War.

Tomo Maretić in his book “Slavs from the Ancient Times” (“Slaveni od davnina”) wrote: “We have already said that Serbian name could be found with old authors, such as Pliny and Ptolemy.” and Franjo Rački in his book “The Slavs’ History” (“Istorija Slavena”) has written that Serbs had juridical courts at the age of Christ”.

Croatian chauvinism and greediness, supported by Vatican, grabbed away great Serbian historical wealth. Belgrade was always deceived by false brotherhood, sunk into some sort of a materialistic dream, watched unprecedented harangue and piracy over Serbian ethnic heritage, as well as unseen offending of the greatest Serbian sacred things. Our historian and a fellow countryman, born in Slatina, Dr Vaso Glušac, named this “historical shamelessness”. It would take me far away to name examples of converting Serbs into Catholicism in Vojna Krajina and especially during the time of Marija Terezija, when the fighting against the Turks was mostly lead by Serbs. J. J. Zmaj wrote about this in his book “the Maple” (“Javor”) in 1875. He stated names of 15 Generals and Field Marshals from the Austro-Hungarian Army from that time, which were Serbs by origin. I will mention only two of them here, General Jefto Ljubibratić, Conte de Trebinje, and Field Marshal Andrija Stojčević. A Serb could not become an ordinary copper without previous acceptance of Catholic religion.

Converting Serbs into Catholicism in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

During the Austro-Hungarian rule, Croats got great support and extraordinary privileges, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and all by the principle of Croats as good servants. With help of Hungarian Congress in 1878 Vienna court delegated Vojna Krajina for management to Croatian bans by a decree, because they helped during occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is why they have covered our territory with friaries and some Roman-Catholic seminaries, which produced staff, enabled for conversion of Serbs and Moslems into Catholic religion.

Austro-Hungarian Minister in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Benjamin Kalaj as a young writer of “The Serbian People History” (“Istorije srpskog naroda”) has written: “Enough be said that based on the best Slovene scientists’ researches, all Slovene people in ancient times were called Serbs.” “During his management of Bosnia, Serbian-Moslem people found themselves between two fires, before the biggest physical and spiritual temptation”, our author Psunjski quoted. They proclaimed Moslems as Croats, which caused

pre-eminent Moslems in Bosnia and Herzegovina to write a protesting bill on the 24th Aug 1894, titled “To our religion-enemies” (“Našim din-dušmanima”), which Croats did not want to publish in Zagreb “Horizon” (“Obzor”), instead it was published in “Srbobran” from Novi Sad, edition 74 from 1894. The bill was signed by 18 pre-eminent Moslems, such as Muharem-Bey Kulenović, then Bey Biščević and others. People were imprisoned because children did not go to school, because of recruiting into Austro-Hungarian army, which our great Petar Kočić described well in his works, writing that one of the Serbs near monastery Gomionica picturesquely said: “I would rather be pursued by a Turkish sabre than an Austrian feather.” Youth patriotic organization was formed “YOUNG BOSNIA” (“MLADA BOSNA”). Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, came to Sarajevo on the most important Serbian holiday VIDOVDAN (Saint Vitus’ Day), to watch the manoeuvres and military parade. Familiar events and the I World War were at the door step and Serbs in Sanski Most would remember them well by evil.

The green staff

(Account by brother Rade Davidović, 2006 in Prijedor)

The I World War was lead by Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with major military goal: “Drang nach Osten”, i.e. penetration towards the East. Only Serbia was in the way and a reason for the war had to be found. Murder of Ferdinand in Sarajevo came very opportunely. In all the Slavic countries under Austro-Hungarian rule, general satisfaction was expressed, only in Croatia they organized anti Serbian demonstrations, and in Zagreb on Jelačić’s Square Ivan Franko was inviting Croats to get even to Serbs. In Slavonski Brod, Petrinja, Đakovo and other places, his Frankovci [translator’s note – organization of Josip Franko followers – Croatian radical nationalists hostile towards Serbs] invited to war against Serbs. And eventually Austro-Hungarian army attacked Serbia, of course, across the River Drina. Serbs, Moslems and Croats were in this army wearing the same uniforms under joint command, who could not get it impressed why the “feldveble” called them Bosnian beasts.

In Sanski Most all the Serbian shops were closed and the goods were robbed. Around 200 Serbs found themselves in Romania, in the camp Arad, headed by Risto – Riljo Pavlović, an excellent merchant and head of family, who left his bones there far away. In the town on the River Sana life faded away. After a certain period of time, life went back to motion and

something stirred up sleepy town life. In my Zdena the mukhtar (head of local government) Omer-Bey Krupić received a letter in his Serbian language and that German language: “Omer-Bey if you care for your life, do not come to Jelašinovci to collect ‘the third’ “ [translator’s note: they collected one third of everything the peasants harvested in a form of a tax]”, signed by the leader of Komits [translator’s note: small military formations members, who fought in Komit or Chetnik manner against the foreign occupier, imposed authorities or existing regime], Pero Topić.

After leave, wounding or simply not responding to the summons, mobilised Serbs did not go back to their units in Austro-Hungarian army, but were hiding in forests. They were named “the green staff” and national authorities, through headmen and mukhtars, were tasked to arrest them and return them to their units or kill them if necessary using their semi-military formations called “Šuckori” [translator’s note: Moslem and Croat militia units formed by the Austro-Hungarian government – particularly active in Bosnia and Herzegovina]. There were all nations among Šuckori. A number of Komits hid on Čelić spur (elevation 960), Mrežnica (elevation 688) and Gradina (elevation 731). There was a cave in Mrežnica and this is where their base was. Deputies of the leader Pero Topić were Đurađ Čičić from Čaplje and Milan Novaković from Husimovci.

Omer-Bey invited another ten beys, among whom was Bey Cerić from Miljakovci near Prijedor, to come and help him with their loyal men and punish together the Vlachs’ impudence, unheard of since Turkish times up to the present day. The story remains that Topić was some “zugsfuhrer” or “feldvebl”, because he set up typical tactical military ambush in Gradina, closer location Kaldrma, the point where it was easy to jump out and after the first volley carry out a surprise attack and finish the job by knives.

After the first volley Omer-Bey was killed, Cerić-Bey was wounded and the others, that were not killed, ran away. They went into this adventure to rob something and get some use out of it anyway. Then they broke both arms and legs to the Bey from Prijedor, sat him on a horse and sent him to Sanski Most by some woman, again with a note in two languages that this would happen to anybody who would come to collect “the third”. This event is for deep analysis because it was a precedent of major events and changes in political, cultural and social life of our people. Events from May 1941, confirm significance of this analysis. Therefore, a conclusion is imposed on the intention to sow the seed of hatred in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Seed of hatred in the first Yugoslavia

Ante Trumbić formed Yugoslavian board in Paris, with the goal to “patch” Croatia to Serbia, so that he could come to an independent country more easily through Serbia, which he succeeded to do. The first goal was to cover up the crimes that Croats committed in Mačva in 1914. Bosnia and Herzegovina National Council declared for uniting of Yugoslavian people. Trumbić, as Minister of Foreign Affairs used the murder of Croatian Parliament members in 1928 and immediately asked for separation of Croatia from the joint country, the then Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. This was followed by a new name and this was Kingdom of Yugoslavia, at the time when Ustasha party of Ante Pavelić went illegal as well as at the time of the Communist Party. After murder of King Aleksandar in 1934 in Marseilles, preparations for bloody 1941 commenced.

Genesis of the Croatian crime

I will use our author Psunjski here, who was the contemporary of all the events and crimes that Croats committed against Serbs. He mentions the Sibirje rebellion near Slavonski Brod, which was organized and led by Friar Mihovil Praskić with a song: “May Pavelić’s arm blossom in flowers for killing a Serbian bandit.” (“Cvijetom cvala Pavelića ruka, koja ubi srpskoga hajduka.”) On this occasion all the bilingual notice boards were ripped off the schools, town halls and others, i.e. the ones that had Cyrillic alphabet writing on them, not to mention insults on the account of Serbs. Franciscan comprehensive high schools in Split, Mostar, Visoko, Široki Brijeg, Sunja and theological faculty in Zagreb, raised “warriors of Ustasha consciousness”, as it was stated in the newspaper “the ISC”.

Already familiar Roman-Catholic seminaries only continued their operation. Pavelić’s chief assistant Mile Budak in “New Gazette” (“Novi list”) dated 16th June 1941 wrote: “We sent Ustashas and friars into villages and towns, who carried materials for rising Ustasha hatred underneath their cloaks throughout the ISC and our friends Germans and Italians, when the time came, did not only find us completely prepared, but liberated too.” I will only name some other Croats that gave their contribution towards such operation on spreading the hatred against Serbs: Dr Milivoj Žanetić, Fra Cecelj, parish priest Ilija Tomas from Klepci near Mostar, Fra Bjelobrk from Metkovići and Fra Dr Srećo Perić from central Bosnia, directed Ustasha to kill all the Serbs, his sister first who was married to a Serb, and then to come and see him for forgiveness of their sins.

Always and everywhere Catholic priests were ahead – friars or “uncles”, as they called them. Example from Foča of a certain Croat Drago Kolovrat, who was taking a live baby out of a woman’s insides, shouting that he was taught so by his parish priest “that in Orthodox religion not even a baby should be left alive in a womb”. There were so many examples of crimes against Serbs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia that all the conditions were set for the crimes from 1941 only to be continued as something that started even before the war. Agreement Cvetković-Maček from 1939 on banning work and dismissal of all Serbian patriotic organizations, and formation of Croatian banovina, was the deed of Vlatko Maček, leader of the CPP together with the first ban Dr Ivan Šubašić, indicating what was going to happen only two years after this. Serbian clerks, teachers, gendarmes and others employed in any institution, same as our writer Psunjski, received a warning under the death threat that they had to leave Croatia. Agents of Maček’s “Croatian civil protection” (“Hrvatske građanske zaštite”) were armed with special automatic pistols for this occasion.

Results of the Croatian crime in Sanski Most - Šušnjar

Looking at historical developments only in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia it can rightly be concluded that Croats carried out great preparations for the crimes in 1941, they only waited for an appropriate moment on historical and political stage. This moment came by German attack on Yugoslavia. What preparations have been made with us in Sanski Most, to have made that 1941 as tragic? On the territory of the ISC there were 288 Serbian churches and monasteries destroyed and only in 24 districts of Bosnia and Herzegovina around 80 churches and other buildings.

Ustasha organization in Sanski Most was formed by a barrister Dr Josip Cerjan, for whom I am convinced that he was sent on this territory as an agent from Zagreb. Such were a teacher in Dabar, Milan Udovičić and Sana friar Antė Šeremet. This trio formed Ustasha organization called “PEOPLE’S BOARD” (“NARODNI ODBOR”) which was joined by: LJEVAR, MILE, merchant, MARTIN MACAN, president of the Court, LUKA MINIGA, an innkeeper, NIKOLA TOJŠIĆ, a parish priest from Stara Rijeka, LUKA TEŠIĆ, a friar from Sasina, MILE LUJIĆ, a farmer from Sasina, ANTE BANOVIĆ, an innkeeper. These ten members of the board were Croats. Then there were also the following four Moslems from the town: IBRAHIM PAŠIĆ, a judge, HIMZO REŠIĆ, a merchant, OS-MAN ĆEHAJIĆ, a baker and JUSO TALIĆ, a shoemaker. The fifteenth

member of this board was GRGA MARIČIĆ from ZDENA, who had his own group, involving his four sons as well, being tasked for security of this board. Namely, this board consisted of 11 Croats, out of which there were three Catholic friars. The aim was clear, to secure obedience to the highest church level and this was the Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac from Zagreb. As I understand it, this board was formed before the murder of King Aleksandar in Marseilles 1934. In fact, my neighbours from Zdena, Drago Marjanović and Đuro Udovičić confirmed this to me, based on the fact that the aforementioned Milan Udovičić was their teacher that year. He had a battery operated radio device and when the King was murdered he dismissed the students and celebrated a whole week with the board members in Luka Miniga's inn in Sanski Most. This is the house between the Zurunić family house and coffee-house "Hunter" ("Lovac").

When the ISC was proclaimed, this board held a ceremonial assembly, greeting this event, and after that they went to the Catholic church in town, where Fra Ante Šeremet and other friars held a service of gratitude. As far back as the 15th of April this board organized a reception to 132nd German Infantry Division in Sanski Most. Holding German flags, ribbons with swastikas around their sleeves, with Croatian "chessboard" symbol [translator's note: Croatian Coat-of-Arms resembling to and commonly known as chessboard - šahovnica] and three-coloured flags, as the CPP members, they spread the carpets in front of the automobiles so that a German officer would not get his boots dirty with town, Sana, dirt. They were on their way to meet them and by the house of Boško Marinković the act of greeting to the liberators was performed, as they said. Of course, this was followed by a ceremonial reception, followed by a toast in the honour of liberation from detested royal rule.

This is what happened the following day, on 16th of April – curfew, with announcement of death penalty to anybody who was found in the street after that time. Three Serbs and a Jew were caught, under accusation that they set fire to a German truck, which was a trick. Proclamation for Serbs was that they had to submit weapons, military equipment and radios. Patrol arrested all the people that returned from the army, provided that they sent Croats and Moslems home and Serbs into prisons.

German officers occupied the best houses and apartments. The district chief, Dragoljub Popović, originally from Čačak, handed over his duty to the board president, Josip Cerjan, and the then mayor Džafer Biščević, handed the control over to Himzo Rešić. Gendarmerie station commander Đuro Vezmar handed his duty to the gendarme Bećir Duraković. Handing

over the power was also done in village municipalities and all this was finished in three days, until the 18th of April.

Serbs could not carry out any functions whatsoever. All the power was taken over by the so-called “Wild Ustashes” (“Divlje ustaše”), as members of different parties, where there were not any military formations, and they called themselves “the Ustasha Army” (“ustaške vojnice”). The first execution happened on 7th of May 1941 by killing three Serbs from Kozica and these were: Đuro Kondić, Marko Kondić and Rajko Stojanović. And why? Well, the day before, on Saint George’s Day, great Serbian Patron Saint’s Day, Bećir Duraković, provoked a conflict as tasked, by insulting Serbs, Serbian Patron Saint’s Day, stepped on Patron Saint’s Day food, put candles out, swore Serbian mother to the heads of the families and touched their wives. Such insults the Serbs could not take, but confronted, so he ran away and shot himself along the way and like a headless chicken went back to Sanski Most and told his story. On the same day at 17:00 hrs they were fighting against Serbs until 21:00 hrs.

The following day, on the 8th of May, a German battalion from Banja Luka arrived, one company from Kostajnica and one motorized battery from Prijedor and Serbian resistance was broken by 11:00 hrs already. On that day, around 300 hundred people were caught, which were released home by the Italians, and Franjo Hafner, naturalized Austrian, who worked as some notary in Tomina, and who was already registered as Ustasha, arrested around 30 Serbs of his own accord and took them to Sanski Most. This all happened in Tomina. German commander in town, Captain Hennings, ordered arresting of Serbs from Zdena, Podlug, Krkojevci, Dabar, Husimovci, Suhača, Đedovača and Kljevci and that evening around 350 Serbs, one Croat and 30 Jews were imprisoned in the school cellar. The following day, on the 9th May 29 Serbs were shot, out of which ten were from Vidović family from Tomina, and on 10th May in the morning they were all hanged in the park.

Major Ustasha chief official from Banja Luka, Dr Viktor Gutić, on 28th of May ended a great meeting in Sanski Most with the following words: “Destroy Serbs wherever you can and the blessing from our leader Ante Pavelić and my own will not pass you.... Serbs may not hope for anything, and it would be the best for them to move out, to vanish from our areas and our home country.” Then he called up on the stage a devil in human clothes, slaughterer Š. H. who slaughtered the largest number of Serbs that day and awarded him with 2,000 dinars. The Serbs in Sanski Most felt the consequences of his such instructions very soon and paid with their lives

every day; the crimes reached their peak with the mass slaughter on St. Elijah's Day, on 2nd August 1941.

Head priest Vid Marjanović in his "MEMOIRS AND CHRONICLES" ("MEMOARIMA I LJETOPIŠU") on the page 31 has written: "On 10th of July 1941 I was escorted to the "Sokolski dom" building in Sanski Most, where I found my parents and two sisters with children. During the following day and night the other priests from Sana district were escorted in as well together with their families. We were visited here by various emissaries suggesting us to convert to Roman-Catholic religion as that was our only salvation." On the page 37 the head priest said: "At the beginning of September 1941 in Mali Crnuć my father visited me and told me about horrible crimes, on Saint Elijah's Day, in Sanski Most and adjacent villages, and I asked him: "Were there any survivors among the Serbs then?" and he answered that only two had survived, and these were Stanko called "LONGA" and a certain Lukica. They were supposedly left to maintain Serbian breed. My father stated that he heard that about 10,000 people had been killed." A refugee from Sanski Most, a neighbour, Dragica Dobrijević, also said to the head priest Vid: "Liquidation of prisoners was carried out on the nights of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of August, and this was immediately after they were arrested, most of them were killed on Šušnjar and the old market in Sanski Most, at the stream called Kujin potok – Troska and a grove by the name of Predojevića gaj, near Stari Majdan, at the railway stop in Vrhpolje, in Kljevci, Čaplje, Lužani, Budimlić Japra and other villages. The number of the killed ones, mainly Serbs, including a few Jews, according to what I heard, over those three days only in the month of August, was around 10,000 souls."

Arresting Stevan Davidović

Stevan was the headman of Zdena village. I know that Svile Čorokalo had the same role in Podlug and in Krkojevci it was Lazar Čamber. In all the villages the headmen were the power holders. In the places where Moslems formed ethnic majority these were "mukhtars". All the headmen were summoned into the Town Hall at the new mayor's office and were given some instructions for work. Then they were released home. However, after the 7th of May and the first execution of the three Serbs, and Captain Henings's order, a patrol came to fetch Stevan as soon as on the 8th of May, and since they did not find him home, they left a note that as soon as he arrived he should report to the Town Hall, at the mayor's office, for new instructions.

Stevan had to go after a big drama in the family and questions YES or NO and that Hamlet's "To be or not to be". All the holders of "Karađorđe star" were arrested as well as all the holders of any military ranks and various credits and medals. In Zdena these were Milan Mandić and Nikola Vukić. These men were locked up in the gendarmerie station, which was then called "oružnička postaja" (gendarmerie station in Croatian) and were liquidated among the first ones and who knows in which manner.

Manners of killing Serbs in Sanski most

KILLING IN "KARA" (by the description of Safet Burina, "PODGRMEČ IN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION COMBAT", volume 1 ("PODGRMEČ U NOB", tom 1) – on the killing field at the Cattle market Ustashas were forcing people in groups of 100-200 into "kara", to run until exhausted, until they started falling down with fatigue, and when they all would fall down, then they would beat them by bars and sticks and eventually shoot them like that in groups by a machine gun. KARA is the type of combat between infantry and cavalry, when 10 x 10 soldiers fight against cavaliers. Meaning that our martyrs ran in two karas.

SLAUGHTER IN SANSKI MOST (Rade Brkić, the national hero) – THE CROPS STOREHOUSE - The ones that remained in the storehouse were tortured in a terrifying manner. For example, Ustashas ordered ones to beat the others with hammers and rammers. On the command "Hit him" every person that said "I can't" was shot by a pistol bullet.

Command that a victim shouts "Long live Ante Pavelić or the King Petar" was followed by a shot and one young life would extinguish. Ustashas forced the Serbs from Sanski Most and surrounding villages in this storehouse on the market day on the 28th July. They put the women and children up in the attic. The storehouse was 40 x 12 metres. Among the others, they also locked 600 youths in there from the toil. Until dawn in the ground floor of the storehouse there was not one single live prisoner. Nobody could ever describe the terror of women and children in the attic.

Jovo Čorokalo

Godfather Jovo Čorokalo was from Podlug, and by some old kinship through being godfather, he called us in Zdena his godchildren. He called me that way too. When godfather Jovo was returning from work from the sawmill in Zdena, he had to cross over our land "Fences" ("Ograde"), because that made his road shorter to Podlug. We, from Podlug, says the

godfather, were locked up in the crops storehouse, behind the school, on Sana bank, where the slaughterhouse for cattle used to be. The fact that the guards took some people out at night using the old phrase: "Come out to have a smoke and chat in the moonlight" we knew, that person would never come back, and as the guards changed from different villages they would call out their neighbours and slaughtered them and threw them in the water.

However, the machine guns were the worst. On each side of the storehouse they had machine guns, one placed up and the other down. The storehouse was full and he would order: "Get up!" and we would all stand up and then he would order "Lie down!" and then we would all lie down. That was how they allegedly trained us. On the order "Lay down!" the upper machine gun started firing. The ones that did not lay down, one knew what happened. When we lay down, the lower machine gun started firing, so the ones that did not stick to the ground, we could hear the cries of the ones that got caught. They called it "Serbian iron" ("Srpska pegla").

Jovo says that they took the remaining ones over the hole, shot them or killed them by bars and picks on their heads, and ends the story there: "...and I was tiny, so the others fell over me. You see what my legs are like, if there was not for this stick I would not be able to go to work. This is where 150 of my neighbours from Podlug were killed and three Ustashas from Pobježja took them away. Until past midnight I was laying like that covered by bodies of my neighbours listening to their drunken praising, and just before dawn I got out and rescued myself."

Miladin Papić from Kljevci for the record to Davidović, Vukašin in 2004, in Prijedor:

"As a ten-year-old boy, I was herding cattle in Kljevci, with my Croat neighbours in summer 1941 and Ivanković, Pero, a boy of my age, Croat, asked me if I knew why we, the children and women, had stayed alive after the men were killed. After I answered that I did not know, he explained it to me: "Because it is yourselves that are supposed to do the autumn seeding, and until Saint Luka's Day the latest, and then they will kill all the Serbs. Until our Christmas we will convert Moslems into Croats, and in the spring we will become Germans." After I asked him how he knew this, he said that he had heard this from his brother, Gojko Ivanković, who was a member of Ustashas and that they have discussed this the previous night at the meeting."

Stanislav – Braco Blonski, to Davidović, Vukašin, May 2008:

"By my house in Prijedor, Ustashas passed by singing: "The cross with three fingers disappeared and so did the religion that washes their bottom." ("Nesta krsta sa tri prsta, a i vjere što guzicu pere.") I was 17 years old then and after that I joined the Partisans."

A child in the street...

[Hazim Bilalbegović, "Podgrmeč In People's Liberation Combat", volume 1 ("Podgrmeč u NOB", knjiga 1)]

Ustashas brought Serbian people from all directions. They were beating them along the way by anything and everything, killed, slaughtered them there, right away in the street. A Serb was out of the law, anybody could kill them, there at the spot, so we watched when they killed a woman that was carrying a dead child and the other two were holding onto her skirt. The following day we saw a crazed child wondering in the street calling for its mother. At that point two Ustashas came out of a coffee-house, half drunk, I know that one of them was called Šaro, originally from G. Sanica, and were laying a bet, Šaro was the first to kill the child there in the street.

Ustashas in the yard

Since Stevan Davidović was arrested and probably murdered, one day a group of Ustashas from Naprelj unexpectedly burst in Davidović family settlement and sat down in the shade underneath a vine. Aunt Mika told her sister-in-law, Boja, to cut the chicken and she already started making a pie. Brandy appeared as well and Ustashas were discussing which one of them would get the house, which one the barn, which one the outbuildings and the rest. I will not mention surnames of those Ustashas. They returned from the town, where they registered as Ustashas, got uniforms and rifles and then went straight to Zdena to chose properties, a house and other property because this was their reward for loyalty. Mother Boja sent one child 10 years old to fetch the neighbour Sadik Krupić. Sadik-Bey, upon hearing out the newcomers, ordered: "Get out of my village, go back where you came from and do the things your way there, here I have it my way!" This is how our property remained.

Months of death

Killing Serbian people in Sanski Most lasted for the whole months of May, June and July 1941. This was done by Ustashas from those village municipalities, like for example Tomina, where there were 49 sworn Ustashas. They killed the people in Vrhpolje (Bosnian Vrhpolje), 450 people, in Čaplje 160, on the field called Žegar 120, by the Kumalić family houses and in Tomina itself 20 people, which comes to the total of 770 men, women and children. In Gornja Sanica 560 were killed and in Busije 500 men, women and children. In Brdari, Suvača and Dževvar as well and the largest slaughters were done in Stari Majdan at the place called Troska,

where around 150 Serbs were killed and the ones they did not manage to kill there they took away to kill them on Šušnjar. On the territory of Stari Majdan, the people was wondering crazily, hear-there, from the forest into the clear, from the cornfields straight into the river, into the water, where complete families drowned. Some of them fell in Ustashas hands, out of which only few escaped. And which was a big disgrace for Majdan Moslems, they took the clothes off the murdered Serbs and wore it proudly in Majdan town.

During those three months Serbs from the surrounding villages were brought in every day, officially imprisoned, and at night taken out on Šušnjar and killed in all possible ways: by bars, picks, by strangling, slaughtering by knives and stabbing by bayonets into the heart, cutting off their heads with previous maiming by cutting off their ears, noses, arms, etc. The largest slaughter was done by the 13th troop, which carried a title “murderous” and their members were from the vicinity of Čapljina, Ljubuški, Gabela, Metkovići, Posušje and Široki Brijeg. This lasted until the end of July 1941, and the peak of the Serbs killings was in August 1941. A day earlier, Srećo Ljevar arrived to Dabar, a brother of the camp commander, Mile Ljevar, and in the hamlet Crnovoda caught around 60 people and took them to Sanski Most for execution. And then came the most important moment after the Serbian rebellion in Kozica and killing the three Serbs on the 7th of May. Then Nikola Lukić and Gliša Banjac, the Serbs from Dabar, organized resistance, attacked Ustashas and set the prisoners free. I know personally that this giant, massive man, Nikola Lukić, never parted from his machine gun, that he had taken then from some Ustasha.

This was a big historical day for Serbian people, which represented awakening, coming to their senses and realising the truth that we had to fight back ourselves and fight back the attacks equally. Another such attempt of Ustashas was when they tried to make a burst from Naprelj in direction of Serbian villages Bošnjaci and Miljevci and they encountered strong resistance. The last days of July 1941 were like that. Ustasha authorities in Sanski Most and around 300 registered Ustasha were frightened. The Serbs were on the move. And they immediately started digging large graves on Orthodox-Catholic-Jewish graveyard on Šušnjar.

These were two holes, 3 metres wide, 2 metres deep and about 40 metres long. Author Safet Burina in his edition “Podgrmeč In People’s Liberation Combat 1” (“Podgrmeč u NOB 1”) stated that the Serbs were captured by Ustashas from “the Murderous troop” which was lead by Ante Zdiler from Imotski, who killed around 6,000 people on a few killing fields and on Šušnjar. Since Ustasha fanatics were saying that “all Serbs and Jews should be killed” it was clearly said who the victims were.

Milan Indić in his testimony about crimes of Ustashas in Sanski Most on the page 485 in the edition “Podgrmeč In People’s Liberation Combat” (“Podgrmeč u NOB”) stated: “The largest executions were on the first, second and third day of the month of August 1941. During these three days on the whole territory of Sanski Most district there was 6,500 – 7,000 people killed. Apart from shooting those from the prisons, groups of Ustashas were going through the villages, gathered people, took them into gullies and shot them. Civilian thieves followed Ustashas.”

Converting Serbs into the Catholic religion

In accordance with the decision of all governing structures of Croatian State in 1941, parallel to killing Serbs in Sanski Most, a process of persecution across Drina into Serbia was also ongoing. Of course, the wealthier Serbs gave the fortunes that they had for the privilege to rescue their families and their lives. In Sanski Most conversion into Catholicism started immediately parallel to the beginnings of killing Serbs. The head priest Vid Marjanović alleged 10th of July and certainly after 3rd August when already everybody was killed. Ustashas did not dare to make “visits” into Serbian villages anymore to get new victims. The resistance was already organized, and rebels - guerrilla soldiers in Lušci Palanka had connection with Kozara and Drvar. However, Catholic friars continued the crime with a variant number 3 – one third was to be converted into Catholicism. Zdena and nearer villages under management of Fra Ante Šeremet, were already converted. “Haven’t I told you, convert and save your lives, it does not matter, there is only one cross anyway!” Our mothers carried us and took us to the Catholic church.

Milan Indić in his testimony, writing about Serbian people tragedy in the vicinity of Stari Majdan, after the killing, said about converting into Catholicism: “Many gathered around an old lady, who was sitting in front of the house. She raised eleven children. With her voice lost she would sometimes say: “Run, run into the forest and try to save at least one life.” Up the orchard, Milka came into the village, a dark and big woman. She sat by the sad old lady and with effort let out a tear. The old lady took a bag with money out of her chest and said to Milka: “Rescue my children... ask for anything you want”. This is why I came, they should all go to Marić grove.

The shooting has been stopped for those that accept our religion. Come on, hurry. On a small lawn underneath a mulberry-tree Frano was explaining conversion into Catholicism to a group of people the same way like Milka. After a while from direction of Marić grove shots were heard. That was how Ustashas were doing conversion. Fra Nikola Tojčić (Tojšić) from Stara Rijeka was preaching to the remaining Serbs: “For these that we kept alive, the over forgiving Creator is telling us that we also should have mercy, to accept them in our Catholic religion”. Everybody was handed out a small prayer book, through Croats from Stara Rijeka,

that visited villages and handed out these booklets for the Serbs to learn new prayer. Firstly learn that it is not “May God help you” (“Pomozi Bog” - traditional Serbian greeting), but “Praised Jesus and Mary” (“Hvaljen Isus i Marija” – traditional Croatian greeting). Converting was scheduled for Friday. Frano was proud during the catechism knowledge check because his students were the best.

On Friday, a crowd of women and children and few men, walked towards the Catholic church. They were escorted by one clerical person, in groups, so that Ustashas did not kill them. They stood in front of the altar inside the church. The priest was praying and the people repeated after him, but not so loud. Some would mumble something and some would only move their lips. The priest stopped and warned them to speak the words out accurately and loudly so he could hear them. When they were supposed to kneel down they clumsily kneeled on one knee. After collective prayer, they started approaching the priest individually. When it was tall Boja’s turn the priest asked her bringing the spoon to her mouth: “Is it your free will?” and Boja answered: “Well, I have to, how can it be free will when you killed all of my family.” The priest asked again: “Say clearly, is it your free will or not?” and Boja: “No”, and then the priest said “Go out”. Gojko, holding a handkerchief over his mouth went outside and spitted everything out so nobody could see him. Going back home after the deed, many went of the road and vomited.”

Desa Marjanović - Mirković

“After my Marjanović family was killed, we all converted into Catholicism. There were 5 of us sisters, all under 10 years of age, and the rest were the boys. The youngest child was not even a year old. There were two girls living with us, who were refugees from somewhere. We called them “mujahers”. However, they woke us up every Sunday and rushed us not to be late for a service in Catholic church. Later we realised that they were sent by the church, to supervise our family.”

Why is the uncle crying

In 1941 there were 34 men, women and children killed from my Zdena. The list of these martyrs is an enclosure to this text. Among these victims are their children too, like the family of Stevan Purkić, which was killed in its entirety. Only one female child and one old lady stayed behind the Kudra family. Together with this enclosure listing victims from Zdena from 1941, there is another enclosure, list of people from my village from 1941, Jasenovac concentration camp victims, also 32 victims. None of them, from both killing fields, survived. The families Todorović, Mandić, Kudra, Purkić, Davidović and others have a great number of perished, three, four, eight, etc. However, the family MARJANOVIĆ has the highest number of perished members. These were the children of uncle Trivo, his brothers, nephews and others, 10 members of the family Marjanović. This is why the uncle was crying, swearing the mother of Pavelić and his Ustashas and mourning for his Marjanović family and he did not stop mourning for them until the day he died.

Breadth of the Slavic soul

For the purpose of democracy Serbian people never measured their victims, for their wide Slovene soul, they forgot easily and by action of daily politics, they had to forgive the crimes that were committed over them, primarily by Croats. Examples from 1944 speak the best about what they are like, when Anglo-Americans bombarded Belgrade, and in one cinema in Osijek a journal was shown about that. The present audience was hysterically clapping their hands and applauding. One of the most recent examples is when Stjepan Mesić was in Australia, with the original Ustashas, he was singing Ustasha songs, immediately before the war in 1991.

The list of victims from Zdena

The list of the Serbs from Zdena killed on St. Elijah's Day in 1941

1. Vukić, Vico
2. Vukić, Nikola
3. Vukić, Vaso
4. Đurđević, Dušan
5. Vručinić, Nine
6. Vručinić, Božo
7. Vručinić, Jovo
8. Vručinić, Mića
9. Vručinić, Spase
10. Davidović, Stevan
11. Đurđević, Nikola
12. Jakišić, Dane
13. Jakšić, Luka
14. Jakšić, Vlade
15. Kovačević, Đuro
16. Ljuboja, Jovo
17. Mandić, Milan
18. Mandić, Mara, mother of Milan
19. Marjanović, Mile
20. Marjanović, Veselin
21. Marjanović, Vojislav
22. Marjanović, Pero
23. Marjanović, Zora
24. Marjanović, Pero – the forester
25. Milošević, Ljubo
26. Milošević, Todor
27. Mijić, Nikola
28. Petrović, Obrad
29. Prtija, Jovo

30. Prtija, Simo
31. Topić, Pero
32. Čalić, Đuro
33. Cvjetković, Ilija
34. Sakradžija, Ilija

List of residents from Zdena perished in Jasenovac concentration camp since 1942

1. Vručinić, Stevo
2. Vručinić, Joka
3. Vručinić, Dara
4. Davidović, Milan
5. Davidović, Dušan
6. Kudra, Pero
7. Kudra, Mara, spouse of Pero
8. Kudra, Vaso, son
9. Kudra, Zora, daughter
10. Kudra, Milka, daughter
11. Mandić, Mirko
12. Mandić, Sava, spouse of Mirko
13. Mandić, Božo, son
14. Mandić, Đuro, son
15. Marjanović, Nikola
16. Marjanović, Dara
17. Marjanović, Đuja
18. Marjanović, Gojko
19. Purkić, Stevan
20. Purkić, Jelka, spouse
21. Purkić, Dara, daughter
22. Purkić, Mileva, daughter
23. Prtija, Trivo
24. Topić, Bojana
25. Topić, Mitar, son
26. Todorović, Mile
27. Todorović, Ruža
28. Todorović, Uroš
29. Todorović, Milica
30. Todorović, 10 years old child
- Todorović, 8 years old child
- Todorović, 6 years old child

*Zdravko Kecman**

ŠUŠNJAR, NARRATIVE MEMORY

There was no knowledge about Šušnjar for a long time. It was not talked about. It was not supposed to be heard off and there was not even a thought about mentioning condemnation of any kind whatsoever. The crime which was not talked about, about which it was not desirable to talk officially, it was one in multitude of similar and much worse crimes. The justice should not come out in public, nothing should be said. Some minor given sentences were within other committed crimes. In general, everything was to be hidden officially. Truthfully, fascism was defeated. It was defeated by those who were on the guillotine of sacrificing. In ninety-nine percent these were the Serbs. It was – to be or not to be. Who were the murderers, to point a finger in the criminal, and especially where they came from, from which nation, that could only be discussed in whisper. And people whispered. Everything was under the veil of secret, in silent reconciliation with the crime. Therefore, there were no annual memorials, lighting candles and other ceremonies that belong to the victims. The earth was silent, and people walked over it mutely. Years passed one after another, dozens of years. And it would remain like this for who knows how long hadn't a murderer's arm raised again from the dark before this new war, and then fear of genocide appeared among Serbian people again. Each Serbian house spoke in fearful whisper. It was known where this fear was coming from. And it was not coming from yesterday, not from the previous war, but from many centuries behind. This was a feeling before the oncoming danger, something written in peoples suffering genes. The same executioner and the same victim emerged again. Gnostic remembrance is deep, much deeper than we know, than we can imagine, it has been written in us.

Stories about Šušnjar (but also about Kozara, Jasenovac, “the bloody River Drina”) and other venues, started circling around us, me, each individual, very early. Namely, in the first years of my life, when everything was happening very close, in time. By rule, they entered our deepest pores, our human memories, and they got that gamma, which remains inerasable. Which we write inside ourselves consciously and unconsciously even deeper. I had an unexplainable feeling, whenever I went to Šušnjar, as if I was going,

* Zdravko Kecman, writer, Banja Luka

climbing up some sanctuary where God resided with his spirit. And this was the spirit of the victims, which was one, which was indestructible. However, the memory was expanding. Besides Šušnjar, there were many other smaller “Šušnjars”, on Sanski Most territory, that it makes it difficult to number them all. Because, not everything happened only on Šušnjar, during those Saint Elijah’s days in 1941, everywhere around people were taken away from their homes, or were caught and killed in some other way.

So the stories about Šušnjar circled around us all, following us when we went to sleep, while talking, which was passed by the older ones, who knew how everything happened. And how and where it was happening. The wind that would blow at night, leaves that would fall off the trees, retelling stories by a paraffin lamp, where and whose father, mother, uncle, neighbour were killed, pressed deeply in the memory. The soul remembered, and that could be the right word. Chance travellers that would stay overnight in the house, also talked and refreshed memories even more. The schools that we went to, were silent about it more or less, because together with us were the children, descendants of those where the murderers came from. Ustasha – was one word. And one image. You could remember that because it created an image itself. Knife in hand, black uniform (although there were others too) and Ustasha letter on the cap: “U”. The symbol marked itself. We knew everything about the murdered ones. Not only their names and surnames, but we knew the houses where the widowing wives were wearing black clothes later during their whole lives, where their children, brothers, fathers came from, if they were not killed too, because the entire houses, families, were erased most often. We even met some of the murderers in the streets, in town, the older told us in whisper and pointed them out. Their children also went to school with us, even though none of us ever thought of saying anything to them. People believed that such horror would never happen again. But it did, under the same threat. In the last war, but only by a different enemy. We were satanized by others, which we did not even dream would happen.

Namely, narrative memory. These stories were so obvious, real, vivid and entirely explained themselves. We could even picture their images. From these stories names with a letter “U” on their caps emerged: Ante, Ivo, Joso, Hasan, Ale, there were more and more of them. Apart from the town Sanski Most, it was known from which other villages they came from. These villages will be written permanently in our memories. (Even though many in them were not held responsible.) These were our neighbouring villages: Sasina, Trnova, Čaplje, Ališići, Briševo, Husimovci, Kamengrad... The murderers were neighbours. Prior to this they came to our houses often, had lunch with the other house inmates, did harvesting and other jobs in

fields, by all rules they could be trusted that they would not even think about such a thing ever. We knew that “the Headquarters” for all these crimes was the town Zagreb. Domestic Ustashas were shoulder by shoulder with those from the closest Chief of State’s surroundings. (Later I read a book by Italian journalist Curzio Malaparte “Kaputt” in which it was written that the Chief of State Ante Pavelić offered him a basket full of Serbian eyes brought to him by his loyal Herzegovina Ustashas.) Zagreb was the town of Blackshirts that had their sleeves rolled up and shining knives on their belts and in their boots.

Later, while growing up, stories, true, written nowhere, entered our memory, but with a deeper conception. Conception which was warning. Our town

Sanski Most still had living trees (it still has them today) onto which Serbs were hanged. Common people, peasants. And the town residents. We had a constant feeling that high between the boughs their bodies were still swaying. We realised that they hanged them that way in order to terrify already terrified people even more, to kill every substance of life in them. This terror, exactly this, was being passed into us for years. The terror of remembrance. Every image, every event could have been imagined, because it was so obvious. On Šušnjar and in other smaller places, there were more killed people than leaves that would cover their graves in autumn at least for a short while.

(Prior to the oncoming last war, there was not a single person in Podgrmeč, and in the whole country who did not feel that the same noose was tightening around their necks. This was a deep memory that we were not aware of until then.) Memory revived even more at that time. And, of course, with it came the fear. We started mentioning who was killed from which house again. Everything was known precisely, by names.

Jovan Kecman’s uncle was killed by Ante Mandić in Sasina. Ibrahim Nezirović met granny Stana on the road and swung a carpenter’s axe to cut her head off. She caught him with her arms and miraculously rescued herself, ran away. She was covered in blood. Ale Ališić, they say he was toothless and limping, brought wire from his storage outbuilding and said: “I have more wire, as much as you may need.” We took this image with our memory too. Rusty and worthless wire served excellently. They killed them! Killed! Gospova Kecman was rushing through Usorci bareheaded, with messed hair and without a kerchief, which women wore back then. Similar or even worse things happened in all the villages of Potkozarje and Podgrmeč. Later, there were more and more

stories that were passed on verbally. Because of them, our bones often shivered at night, and the dark became thicker. This is how we remembered them deep inside ourselves. We have carried them and lived with them.

There were 110 people from Podlug, located immediately by the town, taken from Podlug and killed. In Krkojevci, many years later a memorial monument was erected. Two people rescued themselves from the grave before shooting: Đuro Đurić and Markan Đurđević, they had a pocket knife in their pocket, cut the rope and got lucky – escaped. These fortunate cases were few. Like, for example, in Usorci, when Ustashas came to the door of Todor Crnobrnja (Salonica veteran) and his son Aleksa (who jumped out on the other side through the window and escaped). But the other Crnobrnja, Rodić, Džaja, Brkić and other families failed to escape. So the whole Sana land transformed into Šušnjar.

*On the graveyard Šušnjar, where
five and a half thousand people
were killed, human hair grew*

*In Sasina where they killed
a number of sightly people from Usorci,
mirrors, combs, glasses
and other personal belongings were excavated.*

*The combs looked like centipedes
glasses like eyes' shells*

*The hair did not grow
as if they did not have any*

*If the murderers drank water out of eyes
as if they were small cups
what did they turn into*

(from the book by Z. Kecman, "Graffiti Echoing" ("Odjek grafita"), Rad, Belgrade, 1995)

One climbs up to Šušnjar as if under heaven. The grave-mounds are underneath heaven. We climb on it in order to see better. Not only the past, but the present as well. Even the future. And to be as close to the truth as possible.

*Dušan Praća**

THE ŠUŠNJAR LITERARY FESTIVAL AND ŠUŠNJAR AS A LITERARY INSPIRATION

“I bow before the dead of Šušnjar, after which was named this prestigious award I receive, aware that along with a literary aureole it also bears one of the living life and the living death. This is a recognition that brings me, a petty, sinful laureate, to a road of self-sacrifice and indebtedness personified in the quietness and vigil of praying. “

(Nenad Grujičić: The graciousness of the souls of Šušnjar – the speech given upon his winning the Šušnjar Literary Award)

This short excerpt from the speech by poet Nenad Grujičić upon his winning the Šušnjar Literary Award somehow imposed itself as the right and appropriate introduction to what there is to say and what has to be said about the Šušnjar Literary Festival and Šušnjar as a literary inspiration. Only a condition of deep inveteracy in one’s language and (thereby) in the being of one’s people, a deep ethnic awareness, but above all a heightened poetic self-awareness could be embodied in such words, charged with sense, humbleness and a feeling of indebtedness to the innocent, persecuted people.

Although Šušnjar was one of the major killing fields in Bosnia and Herzegovina and all Yugoslavia, the issue of it was passed over in silence for a long time, or people spoke about it in undertones or privately when celebrating their patron saint’s day (which the Communist regime basically frowned on), at folk gatherings, bee-parties, or when distilling brandy. But even then it was done with caution and in a conspiratory kind of way, because there was always the imminent threat, in each and every situation, of a nearby stranger, someone whose assignment was (people also assigned themselves with this kind of task) to repeat those ‘heretical stories’ in ‘a certain place’. What happened then is well known. The guardians of brotherhood and unity, ‘the engineers of human souls’ would take the matter in their own ‘righteous hands’. You just keep talking, my boy! Indeed, we should not wonder at the fact there is not a single folk song about the massacre that really did take place on St. Elijah’s Day. Oh, ‘gentle’ was the ‘friendly’ squeeze around the people’s ‘white necks’. So gentle that the people’s genius went quiet, the genius which has turned into songs and epics all its history, like no other

* Dušan Praća, writer, Banja Luka

people has. Is this not more evidence of the price the whole Serbian nation paid and is still paying thanks to its naiveté and restraints, but also thanks to the negligence of (its own) authorities and (its own) institutions.

The post-war generation (the one after World War II – as all our generations lived during and/or between wars) knew about the golgotha at Šušnjar as much as their families remembered (that is, only a part of it), while the official institutions taught these people the euphemism of ‘the victims of fascist terror’. As if this fascism did not have its identity card, as if it had been a natural disaster.

It was 27-28 years after the mass killing of the Serb (and Jewish) people at Šušnjar that the memorial was raised. This was also an occasion to manipulate the proposed designs. The one selected was a work by sculptor Milovan Krstić, which received the third award, and it was adjusted to suit the ‘aesthetic’ taste of the powers that be at the time; as a result, Krstić, the author, disowned the memorial, because it was not made according to his design.

The great memorial and commemoration ceremony of the victims of the slaughter committed on St. Elijah’s Day is the Šušnjar Literary Festival. However, the organization or holding of these literary gatherings was not any easier for us (given the way we are). It began in 1975, on St. Elijah’s Eve, at Šušnjar, thanks to the hard effort and enthusiasm of the literary youth of Sanski Most. The poetry reading event that evening spontaneously turned into a folk gathering and a close lyrical encounter of the living Serbs with the killed Serbs, murdered according to the will of God. This bothered SOMEONE, so we had to wait as long as eight years before the following literary gathering. In their unequal struggle against the current guardians of ‘bright future’ and gaolers of the past, the young literati of Sanski Most succeeded in restarting this literary event. After that, after August 1983, this literary gathering was held regularly. Since 1995, following the expulsion of the Serbs from Sanski Most, the Šušnjar Literary Festival has been held exterritorially, in Oštra Luka.

In the last 25 years that it has continuously taken place, the literary event on St. Elijah’s Day has hosted hundreds of writers, who sacrificed their poetry on the altar of the victims of Ustasha terror in the genocidal Independent State of Croatia.

Due respect must be paid to all those who helped publicise these tragic events. Before all, it is historian Branko J. Bokan, the author of a three-volume monograph about Sanski Most, and its publisher, as well as his associates, witnesses of the Ustasha crimes, but also the efforts of some other authors (for example, Milan Crnomarković and Petar Dodik), who helped shed light on the mentioned historical dark.

The death of the Serbian people in the Podgrmeč region in the first days of August 1941 still awaits befitting literary works, worthy of this tragedy, worthy of its martyrdom, which no living mortal can fully conceive. Should we disregard (but) a few works of several poets (from Sanski Most), this apocalyptic theme has not really taken root in the Serbian literary soil.

Why so? Thanks to the censorship, or possibly self-censorship, during that period. It is true, when it comes to creative work, that certain themes were taboo in the previous regime, most of which had to do with nationalism and the issue of who did what to whom in World War II. Let us hope there are no more taboos and this topic is duly covered in the books to be written in the future.

According to what has been published to date, to our knowledge, there are only very few authors who, together with their literary works (mainly poems), responded to this topic.

MIRKO STANIĆ in his poem NA HILJADE (BY THOUSANDS) (signed November 1944) addresses the Šušnjar victims, and in three rhyming quatrains he tells about how the Ustashi captured them, innocent as lambs, “tricked because they trusted”, “put them on the altar of violence”, and then “celebrated their beastly victory”.

NEDELJKO RAŠULA in his poem VARLJIVA NADA (AN ILLUSORY HOPE) (Šušnjar, 2nd August 1995) laments over the killed and asks the forthcoming generations not to forget “the grave victims, irretrievable youth, / the fatal days of the bloody summer, / all the betrayals, brutalities, other horrendous acts”.

The poem POETSKI ZAPIS NA ŠUŠNJARU (A POETIC INSCRIPTION ON ŠUŠNJAR) by DUŠKO STOJISAVLJEVIĆ is carved in the memorial in the shape of a cross, raised on Šušnjar in the early 1990s.

STEVKA KOZIĆ PRERADOVIĆ, a poet from Banja Luka (the only one in this short overview not from Sanski Most), in her poem NA MOSTU OD RIJEČI (ON A BRIDGE MADE OF WORDS) (Banja Luka, 11th December 1995) sympathises with the displaced people of Sanski Most, and among other things says: “On a poetic night / THE MURMUR OF LIVING ŠUŠNJAR / as if a wound was healed with a wound, // I rush to meet / THE PEOPLE FLEEING SANSKI MOST / on a bridge / made of words.” Her line THE MURMUR OF LIVING ŠUŠNJAR was borrowed and used as the title of the book of poems from the Šušnjar Literary Festivals.

In his poem ŠUŠNJAR (August, 1992), GOJKO MANDIĆ bows to “the shadows of the dead” and believes “the spirit of this people does not break here”.

GORAN OSTIĆ in a short poem OTIĆI... KAKO? (LEAVE... HOW?) (Reflections on the graveyard Šušnjar in Sanski Most) deliberates over “how to leave the graveyards / how to move the graveyards / how to carry ourselves by ourselves”.

SAVA BILBIJA in her poem NA ŠUŠNJARU (ON ŠUŠNJAR) seemingly identifies with the victims, all ecstatic, and produces pathetic juvenile lines, full of pain.

BORO KAPETNOVIĆ in his poem ŠANSONA O PET HILJADA MRTVIH SRBA NA ŠUŠNJARU (A CHANSON ABOUT FIVE THOUSAND DEAD SERBS AT ŠUŠNJAR) (1992) achieves a highly poetic effect. Powerful expressiveness and inexhaustible energy erupt from his piercing lines: “Imagine a picture my dearest, / On foot to Šušnjar to death / Marches St. Elijah / with five thousand saints.”

Finally (although we hope this does not put a stop to the literary story of Šušnjar), in 2005 MIHAJLO ORLOVIĆ published a book of short, concise and horrendous stories GRAD NA JEZERU KRVI (A TOWN ON A BLOOD LAKE), which he based on the testimonies of the living martyrs who survived the massacre (the book lists the names of twelve witnesses); it is like a FOLK TALE, according to the comments of Branko Brđanin, the book reviewer, where it is “as if these letters whisper the souls of the long dead, pardoned and saved by salvation, the Christian souls of God’s servants in slumber, Orthodox Serbs, sons and daughters, Lord’s servants”. At the same time, this little book of short stories is also the only book which deals entirely with the Šušnjar tragedy

These are the writers (nine in all) who have written about the persecution of the Serbian people at the site called Šušnjar near Sanski Most in the month of August, 1941, and that is what they had to say

I am hopeful this gathering will help us understand better who we are and what we are. Like so many times before, we collect pieces of life to put life together again. Now that our homes lie empty and covered in weed, “houses abandoned and grass-coated, of which nothing but foundations remain”. And finally, now that Serbophobes of all colours attack our national identity and integrity from inside and outside, when they try to deprive us even of ‘human credibility’.

I believe this is exactly what will help us toughen up and win the honour and dignity and all the human rights which civilized man in society is entitled to.

*Mihajlo Orlović**

STORIES OF TERROR

In the 1980s I decided to write a book about the atrocity at Šušnjar. My intention was to hear the survivors' accounts as well as the people who had any knowledge of this unprecedented crime. Listening to their stories was a blood-curdling experience. I put the manuscript away for the simple reason I could neither read nor edit it, as the horrors which the survivors told me about were such that a normal person feels shocked and abhorred even after many years. Yet, I made a book of these accounts of horror. The stories are short and unbelievable. The following accounts illustrate best the horrors which took place at Šušnjar on 2nd August 1941.

Nail soup

They locked my father in the old school in the park. When I brought him food once, I noticed the nails on his fingers were missing.

I asked him what had happened. He said the Ustashi had pulled his nails and made soup from them.

Then they made the prisoners eat it.

(Told by Sofija Prača-Veljović)

A boastful butcher

It was morning. The sun was so embarrassed it would not come up. Everything around us flamed with the colour of blood.

An Ustasha and a man with a missing arm turned up in front of our house. Blood oozed out of the wound. It was new.

The Ustasha asked for milk. Mother gave him some, he drank it bottom up and pointed to the bleeding man.

“I did this to him.”

(Told by Cvijeta Vuković)

* Mihajlo Orlović, publicist and writer, Banja Luka

Revenge

The Ustashi brought a father and son to a pit on Šušnjar. The father recognised a neighbour among them. He knelt before him and started to kiss his shoes.

“I pray to you like I would pray to God, kill me first, and not my son.”

The poor man knew the Ustasha was going to kill them. He wanted to die first and keep a flicker of hope the butchers would spare his son’s life.

“Shame on you for asking something like that,” the Ustasha kicked him in the face.

He cut the body of the misfortunate young man in pieces, throwing them at the feet of the tied father.

(Told by Mirka Stanić)

One good turn deserves another ‘good’ turn

Himza had a nickname, Čiko. He was a good-for-nothing. Everyone avoided him. Only Jovan, a wage labourer from Dabar, bought him a drink once in a while.

When the Ustashi came to Sanski Most, this freak saw it as an opportunity. He put on the black uniform and became a butcher.

Jovan, the wage labourer, was one of the captives. When Ustasha Čiko saw him, he went up to him and told him he remembered him.

“I haven’t forgotten you. For all the good things you did for me, I’ll repay you with good. I won’t make you suffer. I have a sharp knife. It’s as mad as a hornet. I’ll cut your throat so fast you won’t even wince.”

(Told by Mirka Stanić)

Beautiful Boja

Every year when autumn arrives, I remember Boja Atelj from Kljevci. She had the beauty of a fairy. Not even angels could have made her any prettier. She liked quinces and always had some. Wherever she went, the smell of quinces followed her.

Four Ustashi, from a family called Kenjar, stripped her naked and assaulted her.

Smiljana, her sister-in-law, tried to save her.

The Ustashi broke her arms and legs. Though injured, she begged them not to dishonour beautiful Boja.

After they defiled her, the Ustashi cut the misfortunate girl in pieces and threw her in a bush.

(Told by Stoja Mudrinić)

The eye

At Vrhpolje, near the narrow-gauge railway stop, the Ustashi rounded us up. They circled around us, their guns at the ready, and threatened.

The sun of St. Elijah's Day blazed down, and the terrified people begged and wailed. An old woman in a white kerchief whispered:

"In God I trust. What can man do to me? I'm not afraid of anything."

"Maybe man cannot, but I can," an Ustasha glowered at her.

A gunshot was heard. The old woman fell.

Then something happened that I will never forget. Two young people were standing, holding a boy in their arms. Suddenly, there was gunfire. The man and the child were shot and collapsed. The young woman could not take the pain. She pricked her eyes with her nails. Blood came running down her face. Her screams pierce the air.

Next, they put us on a train and took us from that cursed Vrhpolje to Sanski Most.

They put us in a grain storehouse there. The young woman, the one who had lost her husband and son, put her eye out.

(Told by Stoja Mudrinić)

Do the people of your faith die?

They were put in a line along a pit. An Ustasha walked back and forth in front of them.

"You have a chance. Convert to our faith."

No one said anything.

"I'm telling you one more time!" he threatened.

An elderly man stepped forward from the crowd.

"Do the people of your faith die?" he asked.

"People die, whatever the faith," the Ustasha allowed.

"If that's the case, then I don't want to get a bad name," the old man returned to the crowd.

(Told by Todor Crnobrnja)

*Božo Raković**

PLENTY OF CORDAGE AND BULLETS FOR THE SERBS

I was born in Podlug in 1927. My father had nine children, two daughters and seven sons. Father was a farmer and drove a raft on the River Sana on days when it was navigable. I finished primary school in Sanski Most and attended the Gymnasium for three years. As a child, I used to listen to the elderly tell stories about World War I and the Army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Those stories thrilled me.

In April 1941, after the Kingdom of Yugoslavia collapsed, the Ustashi formed a tabor [a unit, S. M.] in Sanski Most, compounded by some kind of rojevi [squads, S. M.] in the villages around. I knew a few Ustashi personally: Luka Minigo, Himzo Rešić, Grgo Maričić, Viktor Tunjić... As I found out later, the Ustashi were engaged in Sanski Most in secret for many years before that.

When the Kingdom surrendered, I went to town and sold milk. One day an Ustasha asked me my name. When I told him, he just said: "Beat it!"

On 6th May, many Serbian families celebrated St. George's Day. The Ustashi were resolved to spoil the festivity. After capturing and killing several peasants, the Serbs put up self-defence. We were in Podlug and did not know what was happening. I remember then they captured almost all people from Podlug and locked them. My father was one of them. The news spread they would be shot if a German was killed or wounded. The Italians arrived. They said Sanski Most was their zone of occupation. They let the people from Podlug go. We were relieved, but instead they shot and then hanged 27 peaceful peasants from Tomina and some other places. I saw them with my own eyes. They were a terrible sight.

I happened to be in Sanski Most on 28th May 1941 and heard Viktor Gutić's speech. I found his words frightening, especially when he said the Ustashi had plenty of cordage and bullets for the Serbs.

Himzo Rešić applauded so hard he got tired. The arrival of the Italians brought relative stability. The Ustashi confiscated the Jewish and Serbian

* Božo Raković, B. Pol. Sc., Bijeljina

property. I remember our people from Podlug were forced to work every day. We had no information as to what was happening in the adjacent villages, especially in Podgrmeč.

A huge pine stood before our house, with a well underneath. The pine provided a deep shade. Many people of Podlug would come there and talk. The news spread that the Ustashi from Trnava were capturing people in the hamlet of Brlog. They were led by a man called Husein Bešić. They captured all men aged above 15. The people debated under our pine about what to do. Some favoured the idea to set off a rebellion and put up resistance against the Ustashi. The others, the older ones, were against. They thought the Ustashi would kill everyone in retaliation. The peasants quitted the idea of mounting resistance. My father said he did not mind getting killed, but he did not know how the whole affair would end, and he had nine little children.

Father suspected the worst. He put on old clothes and met the Ustashi in front of our house. An Ustasha grabbed me by the hand, set on taking me with them. Mother found a way to make him let me go. Vojin Čučak, who had managed to escape, told us the Ustashi's beating became harsher and harsher as they approached the town. They hit them ruthlessly. Mile Radujko got sick from the thrashing. They left him in a yard. As soon as he felt better, he ran away. Latif Hasić came to look for him, but did not find him there. The Ustashi killed all the hostages from Podlug. The whole village was in mourning. Only wailing and crying were heard.

It seemed the Ustashi thirsted for blood and could not quench it. They returned in search for those who had managed to hide away. We were most afraid of the Ustashi from Pobježje. Shortly, some Croats appeared, namely our protectors. They asked us to abandon our faith and convert to theirs. And so we did, just to save our lives.

Soon we found out the people from Podgrmeč had mounted a rebellion. We wanted to cross to the free territory. We succeeded in the winter of 1942. In the shelter of the dark, all the families fled to Koprivna. In the spring of 1942, the Ustashi launched an offensive from Prijedor and Sanski Most. We were forced to retreat in the direction of Podgrmeč. My family settled down in the village of Skucani Vakuf, with the family of my father's school friend Duško Bogdanović.

Despite the large number of casualties, 53 people from Podlug joined the struggle against the fascists. Fourteen of them died for freedom.

*Milenko Bašić**

WE CALLED THE CRIME ON ŠUŠNJAR A SLAUGHTER

The people who had the upper hand in Sanski Most during this period were Himzo Rešić, the Chief of District, a lawyer and a police clerk, Ivica Simeon, barrister Cerjan's son-in-law, Osman Čehajić, Luka Minigo, an inn-keeper, Judge Ibrahim Ibrahimpašić, Josip Cerjan, a barrister, Jandre Sarić, a railway worker... Many of them joined the Ustasha movement before the war.

In late July 1941, a massive crowd of the Serbs from Sanski Most were arrested and taken in custody in the school premises. The Ustashi detained my father as well. Mother, an energetic woman, dashed to see Ivica Simeon, and begged him to set father free. Father was moved from the storehouse to the premises of the Town Hall. After that, he got ill and died soon afterwards. He told us he had seen as Ivica Simeon killed Ljumović, an engineer from Montenegro, and a man called Nedimović from Banja Luka. He beat them unconscious. They vomited blood and pieces of intestines.

At nighttime, I watched the Ustashi take away columns of tied prisoners in the direction of Šušnjar. Ghastly was the sound of the treading of their feet. Their arms were tied and their mouths stuffed with grass to stop them yelling. If someone spit the grass out, he received ruthless blows with rifle butts. At the same time, new hostages were brought from the neighbouring villages, and there were women and children among them. They were taken to the storehouse. They were killed and thrown into gravel pits.

A slaughter was what we called the crime on Šušnjar.

* Milenko Bašić, retired teacher, Belgrade

*Pero Vukić**

THERE IS ALWAYS A SURVIVOR TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT AN ATROCITY

The Ustashi captured all the adult men of Podlug. I was sixteen at the time and wanted to join the column. Mother would not let me. She sent me inside the house and told me not to talk to anyone. She went to town to find out what was going to happen with the captives. The children playing in our yard did not see a new Ustasha patrol, whose task was to capture those who had managed to hide. When the murderers were already in the yard, my brother slipped away and ran to tell mother. One of the Ustashi opened the door to my room, where I was hiding and reading a book of poems. He drove me out into the yard and told me to kneel. Shortly, my mother arrived. When she saw me kneeling, she fell before the Ustashi and started begging them to let me go.

“He’s still a child,” she said.

One of the Ustashi asked her if she had any money. She said she had some. A few days earlier we had sold a calf. The Ustasha followed her into the house. He took all the money and father’s watch. As they were leaving, they told us we were not to leave the house.

A few days later, mother advised me to go to Dabar, to my uncle’s, to a safe place, and on 19th September 1941, I succeeded in reaching free territory.

Vojin Čučak, who managed to get away from the column of tied Serbs, told me about how the Ustashi tortured the captives. For example, they asked an old man if any of his family were among the detainees. He told them. Then, they gave him a stick and told him to hit them. Of course, he would not do that. Then, they told his relatives to hit him. They would not, so they beat all of them unconscious.

Vojin was among the last people in the column that was going to be executed. He managed to untie himself, and when they were near the River Sava, he jumped in the water. The murderers shot at him, but he managed to escape. This attests the rule that there is a survivor of every atrocity to testify to it afterwards. Our people from Podlug were killed at the old market, and their executioners were the Ustashi, the neighbours from Trnava.

* Pero Vukić, retired colonel and publicist, Belgrade

By the way, the man in charge of converting the Orthodox Christian Serbs of Podlug to Roman Catholicism was Jure Banović. Right after the invasion, he came to us and told my mother that all Serbs, especially those whose families volunteered in World War I, would be banished and their estates seized. My mother asked him what she should do. He proposed she should convert to Roman Catholicism.

“I’ll give you a prayer book, you learn a few prayers, and then you go to our priest and convert.”

As a result, I was a Roman Catholic for 23 days.



*Slavko Ačić**

WHEN FATHER CRIED

My father was among the first captured. I went to the prison to take him food. On the eve of St. Elijah's Day, the Ustashi told us not to bring food anymore. When I returned with a full pack, my mother cried.

"That's it. They're going to kill them," she said.

Just before it dawned on St. Elijah's Day, we heard the pounding of feet. We went out on the street. The Ustashi were driving columns of tied people to Šušnjar. My father saw me. He was tied. I saw tears in his eyes. Our neighbour, who was in the column with my father, saw his wife standing before the shop and shouted:

"Goodbye, Mika, goodbye, dear, I'll never see you again."

An Ustasha hit him with a rifle butt. He fell. The other prisoners dragged him forth. Endless columns followed one another, and shots were heard from Šušnjar, mixed with cries. Our mothers lit candles and began to cry. They knew what was happening on Šušnjar.

A few days later some Muslims put the dead on the axle of their wagon and drove them round the town. They called our women and asked them if they needed intestines or wood.

* Slavko Ačić, Sanski Most

*Dušan Ačić**

BLOOD KEPT STREAMING FROM ŠUŠNJAR FOR A LONG TIME

It was until around 1947 that red liquid kept streaming from the mass graves on Šušnjar. We tended our cows and they kept away from that liquid. They turned their heads and bellowed. Hearing them was terrible. Namely, Šušnjar is clay. It is impermeable and retained the blood of the killed.



* Dušan Ačić, Sanski Most

*Duro Veselinović**

THEY BROKE THEIR WORD

I was fifteen at the time. I was an apprentice to Master Ljuban Veselinović, learning how to make opanci [traditional soft-soled leather footwear, S. M.].

Right after the invasion, the Cyrillic signs on the shops and institutions were replaced with those in Latin script. Some of our Muslim and Croat neighbours put up the Ustasha insignia and began parading up and down the streets. After the peasants of Kijevo, Tramošnja, Tomina and other villages put up self-defence in response to the Ustasha crimes, our village, Podlug, was put under close surveillance. On 7th May 1941, the Ustasha authorities ordered our people that all men aged 16 and above had to report in the town. If they disobeyed, they would be killed. Around 120 inhabitants of Podlug went to town. They were detained by the Ustashi, who assigned Ustasha Omerica, a dustman, to keep watch over them. The arrival of the Italian soldiers saved them from imminent death. They were released, but it was the peaceful peasants from Tomina who died in their stead.

After that, my village, Podlug, was under constant surveillance by the Ustashi from Trnava and Pobrježje. Their peasants stood at the crossroads. They had axes and checked us up.

The mass arrests began in late July and people were taken captive. Ljuban Veselinović, a respectable craftsman, an opanci-maker, asked Ibrahim Jakupović from Pobrježje for help. The man refused and did not want to speak to him. Next, he talked to Maho Kamber. This one came to the village and said not a hair on our heads would be harmed.

On Holy Martyr Marina's Day, someone advised us to keep vigil during the night. Indeed, the Ustasha mob burst in from Pobrježje. They were led by Islam Kamber. As they approached the houses, someone asked them: "People, what are you up to? We're not sleeping." Islam Kamber yelled: "What are we up to?! Attack. Kill and burn!"

As he said that, the women, children and men all rushed out of their houses and took flight. I ran to the centre of the village. I woke a man up and cried in despair: "Run! The Turks are going to kill us all!" This muddled him. He started asking what Turks, but when he heard the shooting, he immediately knew what was happening. We spent the night in all kinds of hideouts.

* Duro Veselinović, recipient of the 1941 Partisan Memorial Medal, Belgrade

On 31st July all went quiet. Maho Kamber came and told us to harvest his oats. We had his word nothing would happen to us.

The peasants agreed and went to the field. Just then two riders came – the Ustashi, and asked if everyone was there. When the people confirmed, they went away. The next day, 1st August, some Muslims came to check what the situation was. The women brought them food, and Ljuban presented them with opanci. They also gave us their word nothing would happen to us. They said it as they devoured the food our women had cooked.

That afternoon, Arif Jakupović came to the village and said every house should put up a white flag. Nothing would happen to those who obeyed. He also gave us his guarantee. Within a half an hour a white flag flapped above every house in Podlug.

The next day, 2nd August, the news spread around the village that the Ustashi were advancing from Trnava. They collected the people and took them to town. A group of the Ustashi also set off from Pobjriježje. They were led by a man called Bućan. They came to the house of Ljuban Veselinović and captured every person they found. They forced the captive peasants to the centre of the village. Someone suggested they should resist. However, many disagreed. They thought the Ustashi were not going to harm them. They drove them and killed them all. The next day, the Ustashi from Pobjriježje noticed there were more people in the village. They came and captured them, and then took them to Magarice, where they murdered them. Within a few days, one small village lost more than 140 of its men. Horrible!



*Zora Majkić**

THEY KILLED MY TWO BROTHERS

My brother Nikola was doing his national service when the Kingdom of Yugoslavia capitulated. The war found him on the border. Hiding from the Ustashi and Germans, he managed to get home after quite a while. He had hardly had enough time to rest, when an Ustasha from Sasina knocked on our door. He ordered Nikola, Niki as we called him, to join the forced labour group the next day. He went with the other peasants. They worked for five days, after which we received the news they had been taken in custody. Mother went to see what had happened. She took him some food and clothes to change. The Ustashi drove her away. When she returned, she was beside herself. She said she had seen a terrible scene – a pile of dead peasants from the neighbouring Serbian villages. She cried and wailed. Yet, a second evil visited our home almost immediately. The Ustashi came and ordered Mirko, the younger brother, who attended the Gymnasium of Sanski Most, to go with them. He was only 16. Mother begged the Ustashi not to take him away. She threw herself before their legs, begged, cried... In vain.

I remember some people from the Croatian and Muslim villages, who came and persuaded our people to go to town and surrender to the new authorities. Allegedly, they would not be harmed. Some took the bait and went of their own accord. Those who went never returned.

A few days before St. Elijah's Day, and particularly on that day, heavy gunfire was heard on Šušnjar. My mother yelled:

“They are shooting Mirko and Nikola.”

The gunfire went on and on. We hid in the maize and trembled there. The women, children and men from Škrljevitica, Roman Catholics, were on their way to church. They were all dressed up. They sang and rejoiced. Horrible! After the massacre, we went to Šušnjar. Piles of corpses lay there.

Tomo Majkić, my late husband, was a child at that time, and every now and then he would tell us about an event when his family harvested oats in a valley. All of a sudden, the Ustashi appeared on the road above the valley.

* Zora Majkić, maiden name Grulović, Novi Sad

They were escorting an old man from Tramošnja; he was tied. One of them beckoned Tomo over.

“Kid, come over here.”

His mother started to beg the Ustasha:

“Don’t take him away. He is just a child!”

Her cries were useless. The Ustashi tied Tomo together with the old man from Tramošnja and drove them off in the direction of the town. Suddenly, when they were midway, shots were heard. This alarmed the Ustashi. Tomo asked one of them to untie him so he could undo his trousers. Namely, he was so afraid he needed to pee. The Ustasha told him he could not. Then Tomo offered him money. He had it on him by chance. The Ustasha agreed. Tomo made off right away. The Ustashi shot at him. He managed to escape and saved himself from what would have been certain death. He went to Tramošnja, to the free territory.



C O P Y

151-18/29

GENDARME STATION SANSKI MOST

No. 344/class. 8th August 42 /VIII.

A proposal to dispatch to concentration and labour camps the below-listed unfit persons as dangerous for the public security.

Introduction as in the previous lists, omitted,

1. Ana Mutakovac, an Eastern Orthodox Christian town midwife, rightly suspected of maintaining contact with the Partisans in secret.
2. Ana Rušnjak, an Eastern Orthodox Christian, also rightly suspected of maintaining contact with the Partisans in secret and helping them in secret.
3. Desa Kragulj, an Eastern Orthodox Christian,
4. Persa Brajić, widow of late Jovo, an Eastern Orthodox Christian,
5. Kristina Petković, widow of late Milan, an Eastern Orthodox Christian,
6. Stevan Purkić, from Zdena, an Eastern Orthodox Christian,
7. Mile Todorović from Zdena, an Eastern Orthodox Christian,
8. Jela Novaković, wife of Dušan, with family, because her husband is in the Partisan movement
9. Goja Gvozden, daughter of late Ostoja
10. Nada Gvozden, daughter of late Pero
11. Petar Kantar,
12. Lazo Živković,
13. Ante Marijan, from Šehovci, a Roman Catholic, socialises with persons who support the Communists so in the month of June of this year, when German forces were capturing town Prijedor, he said these words in the presence of Mato [Čovsnić] from S. Rijeka "It's not true the Germans won Prijedor back from the Partisans, no one _____ to force them out of Prijedor.
14. Marta Vasić, wife of late Milan
15. Mica Vasić, daughter of late Milan,
16. Muharem Mujić, a merchant,
17. Ibro Karabeg, a merchant,

18. Bećo Alagić, son of Muharem, from S. Mosta, socialises with Communists Muhamed Kadić and Hamo Čehaić, rather than the fact their families are on Partisan territory, so he is suspected of supporting and helping Communists.
18. Progomolja Stana, wife of late Lazo,
19. Progomolja Persa, daughter of late Lazo,
20. Progomolja Ruža, daughter of late Lazo,
21. Opalić Mara, daughter of late Nikola
22. Prošić Saveta, wife of late Pero, because her son Zdravko is in the Partisan movement
23. Tontić Radmila, wife of late Stevo,
24. Branko Miljević, a baker,
25. Marko Brajić, a merchant, for helping the Partisans, in secret which is clear from the found letter which was found in village Miljevci during the search of a house, which shows he sent them 1/2 litre of iodine and other necessities. Because of this Brajić was arrested and taken to court, and was later released.
26. Grbić Persa,
27. Grbić Mara,

I submit the afore report for a further decision, for any further stay of the named persons in the town would be damaging for the general interest of Croatia and the interests of our allies.

Station Commander, Sergeant
Duraković

C O P Y

151-18/29

GENDARME STATION SANSKI MOST

No. 832 of 30th June 1942

A proposal for dispatching unfit and dangerous persons to a concentration camp

TO THE DISTRICT OF SANSKI MOST

Based on the provision published in the people's gazette no. 188 dated 26th November 1941, on the dispatching of unfit and dangerous persons to concentration and labour camps for custody, I propose to the addressee that the persons listed below be arrested and dispatched to concentration and labour camps, more precisely:

1. Ante Marijan, son of late Frano from v. Šehovci,
2. Vojko Marčeta, a retired forester from Slatina,
3. Mile Topić from Lušci Palanka,
4. Desa Radić, wife of Novak,
5. Marija Mrđa, wife of late Slobodan,
6. Milka Vasić, daughter of late Milan,
7. Mara Todić, daughter of Dušan,
8. Lucija Ljevar, wife of late Vaso,
9. Mile Todorović, from Zdena,
10. Stevan Purkić from Zdena,
11. Nikola Marjanović from Zdena,
12. Persa Prgomolja, wife of late Lazo,
13. Ana Mijakovac, wife of late Lazo,
14. Mika Radović, wife of late Lazar,
15. Persa Brajić, wife of late Jovura,
16. Kristina Petković, wife of late Milan,
17. Kantar Petar,
18. Čorokalo Mirko, son of Dragan from Podlug,
19. Dušan Todić,

20. Nikola Radić from Zdena,
21. Svetko Kragulj, from Kruhari,
22. Veso Majkić,
23. Lazar Živković, a tin-smith,
24. Bilajbegović Muhamed, son of Ahmet,
25. Smilja Sakradžija, wife of late Mile,
26. Prošić Saveta, wife of late Pero,

All the listed persons are unfit and dangerous for public order and security, which they jeopardized, and they jeopardize the peace and tranquility of the Croatian population and the achievements of the struggle for liberation of the Croatian Ustasha movement, who previously helped and still help communist Partisan crimes in a clandestine way, which was best proved by their mood on 26th June/VI/1942 on the eve when the communists attacked the town of Sanski Most, then their bad mood on 27th June 1942 after the communists were defeated by our army during the night of 27th June 1942.

Any further stay of the named persons in Sanski Most would be damaging and dangerous for the interests and benefit of the Croatian people, so I ask the addressee to make a decision following this proposal with all haste in order to remove them from the town of Sanski Most to concentration camps.

Station Commander, Lieutenant
Duraković, in his own hand

151-17/29

GENDARME STATION IN SANSKI MOST

Ref. 340/class. 7th August 1942

A proposal to dispatch to a concentration camp families whose members are in the Partisan movement, more precisely:

Based on the Provision published in the people's gazette no. 188 dated 28th November 1941 on dispatching unfit dangerous persons for custody in concentration and labour camps, I propose that the below-listed families from town Sanski Most as very dangerous for the public order and security, the interests of the Croatian people and the achievements of the Ustasha liberation movement, be dispatched to concentration and labour camps, more precisely:

1. Bilajbegović Ahmet, with family, because his son Hazim is in the Partisan movement.
2. Novak Radić, because his wife Desa and son Zdravko are in the Partisan movement.
3. Lucija Ljevar, with family, because her son Mladen and daughter Jela are in the Partisan movement.
4. Marija Đumić, because her daughter Gospava is in the Partisan movement.
5. Dušan Todić, because his sons Ratko and Slavko are in the Partisan movement.
6. Rade Dobrijević, because his wife Gospova and 2 children are on Partisan territory.
7. Marija Mijatović, an inn-keeper, because her daughter Stojanka is in [...].
8. Radović Milka, because her son Milan is in the Partisan movement,
9. Stanisavljević Smilja, with family, because her son Jovo is in the Part. movement
10. Nikola Radić, with family, because his son Nikola is in the Partisan movement,
11. Vranković Sava, with family, because her sons Branko and Slavko are in the Pa [...].
12. Đelić Vlado, family, because he is in the Partisan movement,
13. Opalić Sofija, family, because her daughter Jovanka is in the Partisan movement
14. Đelić Ivka, because her husband Vlado is in the Partisan movement,

15. Ljubanić Srđan, family, because her son Dušan is in the Partisan movement,
16. Milka Adamović, family, because her son Branko is in the Partisan movement,
17. Stana Ubiparip, with family, because her son Zdravko is in the Partis. movement
18. Milica Sribljanin, born Kovačević, because her husband Pero is in the Part. mov.
19. Darinka Todorović, mother Đuja Marjanović, with family, because Darinka and her children are on Partisan territory.

I ask that the decision be made to dispatch the stated families to concentration and labour camps because their further stay in town would be damaging to the general interest of the Croatian people, beside the above said, it cannot be ruled out that all the stated families helped the Partisans and maintained contact with them in secret.

I submit the above list of the stated families and ask for a further decision.

Station Commander, Sergeant
Duraković in his own hand

This memorandum is registered in the District Head Office Sanski Most as entry no. I ref. class. 507/42 of 8th August 1942.

C O N C L U S I O N S
of the First Round Table ‘ŠUŠNJAR 1941’,
held on 1st August 2008 in Oštra Luka

The Round Table ‘Šušnjar 1941’, held on 1st August 2008 in Oštra Luka, was organised by the Municipality of Oštra Luka and the Association of Displaced Serbs from Sanski Most ‘The Hearths of Sanski Most’, with the seat in Banja Luka. It gathered around 40 historians, public sector workers and researchers, distinguished combatants in the People’s Liberation War, survivors, writers, journalists and others, and over 20 papers and testimonies were delivered by witnesses and survivors – it should be remarked that Šušnjar was one of the biggest killing fields in World War II on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, where under the aegis of and in cooperation with the fascist invading forces the Ustasha construct of the Independent State of Croatia, supported and assisted by the Roman Catholic Church, committed genocide against Orthodox Christian Serbs and Jews, against powerless old people, women and children, only because they were followers of a different religion and came from a different nation. The Round Table adopted unanimously the following

c o n c l u s i o n s :

1. The proceedings - the papers, discussions and conclusions of the Round Table ‘Šušnjar 1941’, will be published in the Serbian and English language.
2. A round table on Šušnjar is to be held every other year, in order to collect as much historical and documentary material as possible as well as testimonies of the survivors of this crime of genocide, so the truth about it can reach the world.
3. A board is to be formed which will consist of researchers and experts, i.e. a commission for research into the genocide and Holocaust in Sanski Most, and also round tables and similar conventions on Šušnjar are to be held.
4. Research should continue into the atrocity and genocide on Šušnjar and at other killing places in Sanski Most.

5. Efforts will be made to ensure the killing field Šušnjar is not maintained as a universal anti-fascist memorial, but as a memorial ground where innocent Serbs and Jews perished for the fact they came from a different nation and followed a different religion.
6. Concrete activities will be undertaken for the relevant institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to admit the real nature of the killing field Šušnjar (as well as other killing sites), which is a place where innocent Serbs and Jews were executed, and the same quality maintenance will be requested for it as for other memorials. Also, appropriate memorials are to mark all the places along the banks of the Rivers Sana and Una where Serbs, Jews and Roma were brutally tortured, murdered and thrown in the water, in order to keep alive the memory of the innocent victims of fascist Ustasha terror.
7. Since members of only two nations were killed on Šušnjar, Serbs and Jews, it should be requested that the Star of David, the Jewish symbol, be placed next to the crucifix, and no other symbols, especially not those containing ideological symbolism or denoting other nations or religions.
8. A museum of documentation related to the crime on Šušar is to be founded (initially, this can also be a museum collection kept at another institution), which would collect, store and present to the public documents on the atrocity and persecution, witnesses' and survivors' audio and video testimonies, books on Šušnjar and other exhibits.
9. A library dedicated to Šušnjar is to be established within one of the libraries in Oštra Luka or Banja Luka.
10. The incomplete list of victims made in 1964, which was presented in the Round Table, will be published as an offprint and uploaded onto a relevant website, after which it will be checked, corrected and supplemented. This process should commence as soon as possible to determine the approximately exact number of the Serbs and Jews killed.
11. An initiative will be undertaken to record the casualties in Sanski Most Municipality of all wars which took place in the 20th century (World Wars I and II, 1992-1995 Patriotic War...), and make them publicly available in an appropriate way.
12. The names are to be collected of all those who participated in the crime, who brutally murdered Serbs, Jews and Roma in the area of Sanski Most and elsewhere in the name of the Independent State of Croatia. This should be done as quickly as possible, while there are still surviving witnesses.

13. Attention should be given to the maintenance of the memorial on Šušnjar and other killing sites in the area of the former Municipality, i.e. District of Sanski Most.
14. Efforts should be encouraged to write and publish scientific, historical, journalistic and literary works on Šušnjar and other killing fields.
15. Provided the conditions are met, the possibility should be considered to construct a small place of worship (chapel) where religious ceremonies (Eastern Orthodox Christian and Jewish) can be performed to commemorate the victims of Šušnjar. With regards to that, we express our deep gratitude to Mr Milorad Janjetović, who during the Round Table 'Šušnjar 1941' readily offered to donate 10,000 euros for its construction.
16. The media should be urged to report and testify objectively and extensively to the great crime of genocide on Šušnjar in 1941 and to the efforts to preserve the memory of the innocent victims.
17. Cooperation should be established with the institutions engaged in the preservation of other memorials commemorating innocent Serb, Jewish and Roma victims, such as Donja Gradina, Šumarice near Kragujevac, the Museum of Genocide Victims in Belgrade, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Association 'Jasenovac-Donja Gradina' Banja Luka, the International Commission for the Truth on Jasenovac, and other institutions and association with the same or similar missions.
18. Efforts should be mounted to initiate research into the crimes of genocide, Holocaust and expulsion of Serbs and Jews during the wars in this region in the 20th century.
19. The organisers of this Round Table, Oštra Luka Municipality and the Association of Displaced Serbs from Sanski Most 'The Hearths of Sanski Most, are recommended to urge in a timely manner the relevant bodies and institutions with the initiative to hold the central commemoration ceremony for the innocent victims of the Republic of Srpska in 2011 at the Šušnjar Memorial, within the broader campaign of commemoration of seven decades since the beginning of persecution of Serbs, Jews and Roma in World War II.
20. Representatives of the Organising Board will present the conclusions of this Round Table to the relevant institutions and individuals of the Republic of Srpska.

Professor Vladimir Lukić, PhD

HUMAN AND MORAL DUTY

When I received the first three or four papers before the Round Table and when I read them, I said to myself: if two more are this good, the Round Table is certainly going to be a success. In fact, many of them arrived, each better than the previous. I must say one more thing: one evening I read two papers and was not capable of reading a third, because one does not have the strength to read such disturbing texts one after another.

We all know well the world did not begin with us, that we are not the first to rebel, the first to start the search for the truth about the massacre at Šušnjar, but the truth is, very little has been done about it and we have to continue the research in order to accomplish what the previous generations failed to do, and could not do. The memorial at Šušnjar looks the way it does; if we were to construct it today, it would be different.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Mr Bokan because he wrote at a time when writing about Šušnjar was not exactly easy. Why was it that way? What I heard about the pits of Herzegovina where the innocent Serbian people ended their lives from my mates in secondary school who came from Herzegovina was more than everything I learnt in history class, and they heard about Šušnjar from me. That is how it was. But let us not go back to what was before... When we began to talk about whether we should hold a round table about the massacre at Šušnjar, a lot of people told us we should not go ahead with it. People are scared. And our people say: if you are scared, do not throw in your lot. There are enough of those who are not afraid, who know what they need to say, who know what their duty is to say. Just a while ago a man told me: "When I put this on paper, it lifted a heavy burden from my shoulders, and it seems to me no one would write it down the way I did, and this testimony of mine is very important."

The Organising Board, the Municipality of Oštra Luka and the Association of Displaced Serbs from Sanski Most 'The Hearths of Sanski Most', along with all the people you can see here, did everything to organise this Round Table the way it should be. Therefore, I ask those authors who have failed to submit their papers to do so, and I also ask you to submit any documents you may have which are relevant. We have already got three very important documents

and you will be able to see them in the Round Table Proceedings, which, let me say again, will be published in Serbian and English.

Let me ask you to bear in mind that we still have a lot of very important work to do with regards to Šušnjar. For instance, probably for the reason of lowering the number of people who gather at Šušnjar on the day when we commemorate the innocent victims, the administration in Sanski Most asks for permission for the gathering and asks if we informed the police about the gathering beforehand. Šušnjar cannot be announced to anyone. It was announced on St. Elijah's Day in 1941, and who says the relatives and friends cannot visit the graveyard?! I believe you all agree that commemorative events at graveyards such as Donja Gradina, Jasenovac, Šušnjar and others should not be announced.

Last autumn, when we came to Šušnjar to tend the memorial, we were given a hostile reception. They thought we would provoke them. However, when they saw we really tended and arranged the graveyard, they showed up, just seven days ago, telling us that, allegedly, they wanted to join in; their utility workers did nothing more but mow the grass. They totally disregarded the fact a part of the fence is missing and someone has rooted up the forty cypresses planted along the fence.

Let me ask you one more time to submit any documentation, that is any historical evidence of the crime that you may have or obtain, be it originals or photocopies, to the Municipality of Oštra Luka, the Association of Displaced Serbs from Sanski Most, or any of the organisers of this Round Table, who will keep the documents safe. Therefore, I am grateful to Colonel Vukić, Duško Bogdanović and the others who have sent me truly substantial materials, which will be stored at a place where it will be possible to safeguard it.

Prepare yourselves for the future gatherings, for the future round tables, motivate others to join in, tell them it is their human and moral duty.

Let me thank the organisers one more time for doing everything that was in their power. The success of this gathering will be reconfirmed with the publication of the proceedings of the papers and testimonies, and all the participants will receive a copy as soon as they are published.

Once again, thank you all for your great contribution to this gathering and for your efforts to make the truth about the persecution of innocent people in the Independent State of Croatia of the Ustashe publicly known.

Drena Kuridža

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dear Round Table participants,

Before I conclude the work of this important convention, I wish to say a few more sentences.

For several years practically the same group of people tried to hold a round table and failed. This year, to the pleasure of us all, I believe we succeeded in actualising this idea in the best possible way. I hope we can all agree with the conclusion that similar gatherings should be held every three or four years.

Let me thank Mr Dujko Milanko and Mr Milorad Janjetović for helping with the maintenance of the memorial at Šušnjar. I also thank Priest Petar Milovac and Rabbi Jozef Atijas, who said prayers for the souls of those brutally murdered at Šušnjar. I am also grateful to Mr Ranko Pavlović for his contribution to the achievements of this Round Table. We owe a debt of gratitude to Mr Dragan Davidović, who assisted us with the media presentation of the Round Table. Let us not forget the contribution of the journalists, who will present to the public what we talked about here today.

This concludes the work of the Round Table and we remain assured that we will gather again in the future with the same goal and with the best of intentions to leave to the forthcoming generations a truthful testimony about the persecution of their ancestors.

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