

**FROM KOSOVO  
TO JADOVNO**

**An Account of the Journey  
by  
Athanasije Jevtic, Protosyncellus**

**Translated by George B. Markovina**

93

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Belgrade

1984

(Foreword to the Canadian edition by Georgije, Bishop of Canada)

## THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX BISHOP OF CANADA

### The Horrible Witness of the Suffering of the Serbs

To all of the members of my diocese who desire to learn the sad truth and the Christian achievements of our brothers during World War II, and to the present, I recommend this exceptional book *From Kosovo to Jadovno*.

This edition of the book was printed by the Canadian Diocese and all of the proceeds from the sale of the book are sent to the fund of the Seminary School in Belgrade.

The writer of this book, Father Athanasije Jevtic, Protosyncellus in the Orthodox Church, professor of the faculty of the Seminary of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade. He is one of the students of Fr. Justin Popovic, the greatest theologian and thinker of our time.

Buy this book, enrich your knowledge and help the Seminary School!

With Archpastoral blessing,  
Your  
/signature/ Georgije  
Bishop of Canada

Day of the Holy Martyr  
Theodore Stratilat  
June 20, 1985

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## FROM KOSOVO TO JADOVNO

### AT KOSOVO

During the past several months of this Summer and Autumn (1983), I was at Kosovo several times and visited a large number of places. Among these were: Prizren and vicinity; the Sredacka and Sirinska regions; Urosevac and Lipljan; Gnjilana and nearby villages; Gracanica, Pristina, Podujevo; Vucitrn, and surrounding villages (where I once served in the army); in Mitrovica and Devica; Glogovac and Kosovo Plain; Suvi Dol and below Golesa in Orahovac and Hoca; in the monasteries Zocista and Sveta Trojica at Suva Reka; at Djakovica and Decani; the monasteries Gorioci and Istok; Klin and Djurakovac as well as in Pec and the Pec Patriarchate.

One need not speak of the beauty of the Kosovo and Metohija area! This I saw and was taken with it on my first sojourn there during my army service at Kosovo (a period of almost two full years, while we were engaged in the construction of the Kosovo highway from Vucitrn to Lipljan and Urosevac via the villages Milosevo, Lazarevo, and the Gazimestan and Veternik hills). It would be hard to say that other parts of our country were more beautiful than Kosovo and Metohija with their fields and forests, their hills and mountains, their meadows and vineyards and, most of all, the heavenly and earthly beauties of the Kosovo and Metohija monasteries with their arrestingly beautiful frescoes and icons. Everything at Kosovo and Metohija represents its own kind of a chapel of heavenly beauty; everything on this plateau touches and binds the heavens and the earth, the earthly kingdom and the heavenly kingdom. Perhaps that is why this touching and binding most often was, and still is, a well-worn cross and suffering. Thus for centuries, and still today...

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Accustomed, by habit, to follow the situation at Kosovo in official reporting, I have fairly regularly followed official reports. In these reports, during the several months I was visiting Kosovo, one could see and read much indeed and, from this information, I report here only a small portion (which naturally does not represent an "all-encompassing, detailed" analysis of the "total situation" at Kosovo. Such an analysis, in general, does not exist today, and if it were to exist, of what use would it be when the situation at Kosovo shows no essential changes?).

Thus, we have continuing comments in official reports as follows:

"The Kosovo resettlement (of Serbs) continues unabated";

"The resettlement of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo must be regarded realistically";

"The resettlement continues to represent a problem of the greatest political gravity and consequences";

"Some think the principal and only aim of Albanian nationalism and irredentism is to threaten as much as possible so that they may drive the Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo" (stated by Azem Vlasi, but he, it is said, does not agree with this opinion);

"All must feel that they are equal" (an astonishing demand over one's feelings);

"The fact that people are leaving is an excess in itself";

"The political requirements of the situation are increasingly more stable, but the enemy continues to post slogans, set fires, and attempts at sabotage and propaganda";

"The perfidious enemy has not calmed down";

"Now the 'more refined' types of pressures are increasingly being applied";

"Every day events at Kosovo continue to pressure Serbs and Montenegrins to leave, even though such cases are fewer than before"

"Although there are no exact figures, it is estimated that in the past two decades, 200,000 people have left Kosovo";

"Even today the resettlement (of Serbs and Montenegrins) is the consequence of earlier policies, which were of a feudal char-

acter here. They have been applied so long that they have been accepted in the conscience as normal”;

“The realization of the idea of the ethnically ‘pure’ Kosovo of the irredentists is much closer today than during the time of demonstrations”;

“If the rate of this exodus is not halted, the irredentists will quickly be able to realize their goal of an ethnically pure Kosovo”;

“From October 1982 to March 1983, 3,000 people have left Kosovo, while 105 citizens have returned”;

“During the past two years, about 15,000 Serbs and Montenegrins have resettled outside Kosovo”;

“Each month, about 400 Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo resettle in Serbia”;

“The crudest form of the continuing tension (in international relations) is physical attack, intimidation and pressures, and the destruction of property ... fights are frequent as are disputes, molestations, injuries and the posting of slogans on the walls of Serbian and Montenegrin homes saying, ‘Down with Serbia and Serbians’, or ‘Serbians, leave’ etc.”;

“Departures (resettlements) are without explanation”;

“The courts of Kosovo are backlogged with complaints”;

“Official agencies are not doing their duty”;

“There is no significant improvement in the updating of legal procedures at Kosovo”;

“There are still measures relating labor and self-management in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo which discriminate against Serbians and Montenegrins”;

“In recent times, there have been cases of the most loathsome methods used by the enemy beginning with the desecration of gravestones, and ending with the rape of children and the aged Serbians and Montenegrins”;

“The pressures brought to bear on the Serbians and the Montenegrins are creating insecurity not only among them, but also, to a certain degree, among the Albanians”;

“Some individual Orthodox priests also contribute to the exodus by their increased spiritual concern over the fate of the

Serbian at Kosovo" (They speak that way perhaps on behalf of 'equalization'; those who neither worry, nor let others worry);

"Who is throwing dust into the eyes of whom?";

"If one asks Serbs or Montenegrins about the general overall situation in their *Opstina* (township) (Decanska), many will shrug their shoulders. Others will say something, but only when one enters their house and they are assured of his good intentions. There are also those who maintain that 'The devil does not plow or cultivate' and it is better to keep one's tongue behind one's teeth";

"The expropriation of land of the Serbians and Montenegrins has been completed at Gornja Brezovica and in the Gazivoda District where 55 families were thrown out of their houses in midwinter when they were offered trucks to resettle them in Serbia;

"Serbian nationalists at Kosovo persist in creating the impression that nothing is changed at Kosovo and that there are no forces capable of carrying out the process of stabilization. They say that the Albanian officials are still the same ones as before and that such Serbian officials as there are, are inept careerists who cannot represent the Serbian people";

"For the third year we are hearing virtually the same estimate of the situation: the situation at Kosovo is being 'normalized and improved', but at the same time also that 'that the situation is complicated and that there are still many problems'";

"Better, at Kosovo, does not mean good";

"The fifteen-year flight, the migration of non-Albanian citizens and residents which is taking place before our very eyes, mostly quietly as sand in an hourglass, results in the fact that 608 settlements of a total of 1445 in the Kosovo Autonomous Region no longer have any Serbs or Montenegrins in them. We have approximated the figures from the 200,000 residents who have left the area in two decades";

"Let us listen to what (the nationalists) are saying, not only in a whisper: in the heart of civilized Europe, a crime is being committed against the population of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality: they are being driven from their own country. Despite



the parabolic form of this slogan, in its extreme consequences, it supports reality and it cannot be proved that there is no response and that it does not achieve the desired political effect for those who strive for it”;

“Since 1981, 10,000 Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo resettled in Serbia”;

“...And with measures and acts to stop the process of the resettlement of the Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo, it continues nonetheless, and is also confirmed by the fact that during the first three months of this year, 132 Serbian and Montenegrin families with 427 members and 705 individuals left the Region”;

“It must not be forgotten that the intensity of the resettlement cannot remain the same all the time. Initially, when there were more Serbs and Montenegrins, the exodus was greater”;

“We have not yet disarmed the bomb which still threatens our unity”;

“Several explosions at Pristina did more than any kind of pressures (unfortunately, these explosions at Pristina continue)”;

and the citations can go on and on without end.

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The real situation at Kosovo cannot be learned from reports and decrees only. Except for the tactic of “current politics”, except for the intentional or unintentional unnecessary procedures, in the media one cannot find out what is happening over all of Kosovo. It is impossible for us to find out absolutely everything (and who can?). And even when one finds out the important things, what of the details? And what is the use of all the writing when a greater fuss and protest is made over some report on Kosovo than over the tragic events themselves?

Nevertheless, we would like to make known some hitherto unknown and recent sad events at Kosovo through the notes made on our journey.

The Church of St. Petka (Paraskijeva) in the village Dobrcan, near Gnjilan (where unfortunately there is no longer a single Serbian household) was broken into and robbed several times. The last time was on St. Thomas Sunday (the Sunday following Easter) of this year. The people from the vicinity came to worship in the forenoon in larger than usual numbers; they prayed, lighted candles and left their offering on the icons and carried holy water from alongside the church; that afternoon, the church was broken into, the doors were broken down, everything in the church was thrown about and the money offering on the icons was taken. The public safety agencies, this time, as on earlier occasions, remained deaf to the complaints of the priest, Father Zivojin Kojic.

The Bishop of Prizren Pavle, and a group of us priests were stoned by Albanian children before the very Cathedral Church of Prizren after vespers on Wednesday, September 14, 1983. The Bishop, as was his custom, declined to register a complaint to anyone.

The sisters of the monastery of the Holy Trinity at Musutista, who suffered innumerable attacks, were attacked and abused again, especially sisters Katarina and Desanka who were subjected to stoning and pulling on their habit with accompanying shouts of "Kosovo is ours. You, go to Serbia", and "What can you do to me, if you register a complaint? The judge is one of us". Recently, Sister Heruvima was attacked at Musutista with the result that she is now convalescing from a consequent heart attack, probably in Belgrade.

In the town of Pec, on the eve of the holy day commemorating the Beheading of St. John (September 10, 1983), a wall surrounding a Serbian's house on Meto Barjaktari Street was destroyed at 11 o'clock at night so that his Albanian neighbor could expand his courtyard. (I learned later that the perpetrators were caught.)

In the village of Dobrusa, near Istok Albanians beat the younger brother of a Serbian who had earlier suffered the loss of 30 trees cut down in his orchard. The destruction of fruit trees and other damages to Serbian property occurs frequently all over the Kosovo region.

An Albanian student at Djakovica, in defiance of his teacher, a Serbian, wore a sweater made of the black and red stripes to class (the colors of the illegal Albanian flag).

A Serbian woman postal employee at Prizren was abused as she served at the counter. When she changed her place of work, her fate was even worse. In general, the hiring of Serbians at Kosovo is virtually impossible. This is also one of the reasons for the exodus from Kosovo.

Cases of rape of children and older women (in villages and monasteries) had a greater response of fear among the people than the press described (the press reported only some of the cases such as the one in *Politika—Svet* No. 42. October 1983 where the cry of misfortune and hopelessness of a grieving father show best the whole tragedy of our mothers, sisters, and daughters at Kosovo, "But I can't describe how it is when your little daughter is raped in your own meadow...there is no longer a life for us here. Our misfortunes have reached our throats").

Arson at the Devica Monastery has become more frequent. After the burning of all the food stored for the cattle in winter, 68 meters of fence around the old vineyard was burned on the eve of the Assumption. A juvenile, fifteen years old from the neighboring village of Lause was caught and acknowledged that he perpetrated the crime intentionally.

Unfortunately it is not news when Albanian juveniles and children attack Serbians, their homes, property, cemeteries, and holy places. The question is only, "Where did the children get such hatred and savagery for the Serbs and everything in Kosovo that is Serbian? How, for example can one explain spitting upon and throwing stones at Serbian autos and buses, Serbian travelers and especially priests, by Albanian children, not only in Pristina, and other towns, but also in the villages and at crossings (who, among us has not experienced this?). Or again, by way of example, how can one explain the desecration of the Prizren Cathedral Church with human excrement (last winter) or here recently, the monument to the heroes of the Battle of Kosovo at Gazimestan where they spelled out slogans in the Albanian language in smeared human excrement?

Perhaps really the best explanation is the one given by the abbottess Fevronija at the Pec Patriarchate as she commented on the innumerable attacks on the windows and roof of the Serbian Patriarchate by principally Albanian youths and children. She said, "They lost their faith, and want to destroy ours". The journal *Intervju* reported in detail her comments and those of others near the Pec Patriarchate on the second and the sixteenth of September 1983 setting off a bitter campaign, which is especially characteristic of the atmosphere at Kosovo.

We do not maintain that all of the younger generation of Kosovo Albanians are like that, nor are all the older Albanians hostile to Serbians and to Serbian holy places at Kosovo. Mother Paraskijeva at Devica Monastery said beautifully, "There are also among them people who want to help us and to come to tell us what is being said among them". The example of Ismail Gasiija, from the village Turjak, near Pec, is touching. Together with his sons, he fenced in the Orthodox cemetery (a deed the press did not let slip by and reported with emphasis). Or, we can say the individual relationship of the Albanians towards the Zocista Monastery near Orahovac, (where many ailing Albanians come to have prayers said for their health).

What are we to do when in this same village of Turjak, near Pec, (as also in the neighboring village where Gasi fenced in the Serbian cemetery) there is no longer a single Serbian house while at one time, there were 120 families? Another example, reported by Belgrade Television on October 6, 1983, commenting that emigration from the *Opstina* Glogovac had stopped. A Serbian from Kosovo Polje, Kosta Bulatovic replied that in Glogovac there is no longer anyone to emigrate, because only one old woman and her daughter remain. This was confirmed by verification. Similarly, there was a recent report from the township Srbica that emigration is declining, while it is known that there the Serbian population fell to only a small percentage. Perhaps, as Bulatovic, of Kosovo Polje said, success will be achieved and the emigration from the area will cease only when there are no longer people to emigrate from Kosovo.

There is a variety of pressures brought to bear on the Serbian population which we, outside of Kosovo, do not even suspect. How can a person explain, for example, when threatening letters to the Serbians are ostensibly sent by the Serbians themselves? Or, when, in the words of one Serbian from Pec, "They hardly punish (them) for actual deeds, while we are punished for words alone". One Serbian woman from below Goles, complained to me at Gracanica, "We Serbians cannot get low income assistance, while the Albanians get it as soon as they apply. They say that this situation is settled. This is how they demoralize us. Because if this is settled, then we cannot exist here. This is worse than our earlier escape from Kosovo (in 1941) because then we could return and, it was understood that was the war. But today?" Apparently this woman knew that during the last war, 70,000 to 100,000 Serbians were forced to emigrate, while for the past fifteen years, 200,000 were driven away.

Everything which we have brought out above and many other things we do not report are "not for quotation" (because, as one journalist recently reported, "It is enough to spend half an hour with some Serbian or Montenegrin to learn many frightful and secret things"). All this is witness that the Kosovo wound has not healed. This is best shown by the atmosphere at the stations, in buses, on trains, in villages and in the town squares.

Not only has the trust been lost between the nationalities, but our people, unfortunately, have lost the confidence amongst themselves and the confidence in themselves. It is not easy to note how the Serbians take leave of one another, the where, how and who bought a lot for a house, naturally in Serbia, in Krusevac, Kraljevo and Kragujevac. This is being kept secret, not only from the authorities, but also from the nearest neighbor. One villager at Gnjilan related to me that in his village, he knows that at least 20 people have bought lots in Serbia and even though they do not speak about this, they are waiting only until they leave. (I found out, to my dismay, that several of our priests from Kosovo are building houses at Krusevac or Kraljevo).

Why are the Kosovo Serbians today so unsettled and demoralized? Why do they quickly withdraw even before defending their

basic human rights? Perhaps it is because numerous attempts at resistance to wrongs against one's person or property were put down by force or persecution by authorities and frequently ended in injury and often in the loss of life. Perhaps before their eyes there is some still fresh, unhealed wound dealt to them personally, to their families, their neighbors or to all Serbians?

Still in the company of friends, at the end of our Kosovo visit, we visited the grave of the late Danilo Milincic of Samodreza, who was criminally murdered last year on his own ancestral property and was buried alongside the church at Vucitrn. There we saw another kind of Serbian position. On his memorial gravestone, which was "erected by his mother Danica, his son Ivan (posthumously), daughter Ivana, and brothers Pavle and Miroslav", there are these simple but stirring words which are witness to the indominant spirit of a people to whom Danilo and all of us belong (the full, exact text is follows).

**Son, brother, father, kinsman  
 You were killed in freedom  
 The evildoer attacked  
 And cowardly, tore apart your heart  
 And left the children orphaned  
 And draped mother, sister, brothers in black.  
 But you died heroically,  
 Defending your ancestral home.  
 A living being, however, never dies,  
 But is always with us.**

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Yes, Danilo of Samodreza did not die; he is alive and amongst us. Amongst us is also his strengthened mother Danica, his brothers, and his family.<sup>1</sup> But their sufferings, unfortunately, continue. After Danilo's burial, the grieving mother wanted to leave her home and property in Kosovo. With great effort, how-

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1. This last portion of the Kosovo section was added after our return from Jadovno.

ever, she returned after about a month and held forth there for a year. She struggled and endured new pressures and finally, recently (late January 1984) she went to Belgrade a second time to seek justice and protection from the violence and persecution on her property to which she had returned, believing in the "return to Kosovo". She still does not want to sell the property but cannot survive on it. Truly, does this tragic case not also confirm the painful avowal of many of our natives of Kosovo, "One leaves here only when one has no where else to go"?

An uninterrupted river of emigration (or a massive movement, such as a river) which continues to flow, often tearful, but sometimes bloody, unfortunately confirms the Kosovo Serbian's avowal. The fruit of "refined pressuring" confirms, in shocking detail, that many are leaving and even give the reason for leaving Kosovo! Thus, this accomplishes the plan and program for an "ethnically pure Kosovo", only somewhat quieter, and slower, more skilled and more perfidious, sometimes along with the utilization of "self-management terminology", as one journalist said. Because one must have courage and acknowledge officially that the illusion of settling the situation at Kosovo often is used only to turn attention away from something more controversial than the slow but sure process of draining primarily Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija.

Here are several of the most recent events as only some proof of this. First of all, we offer the news from Kosovo as it was reported by daily paper, "The Irredentists at Kosovo insist on declaring a new physical attack on Serbs and Montenegrins. **Attacks from behind.** – The greater the results of progressive forces in the stabilization and political security in Kosovo, the more nervous the Albanian irredentists become. This also shows the fact that the enemy changes tactics, increasing, in some cases, physical pressures on the Serbian-Montenegrin population. Three attacks on Serbs and Montenegrins which occurred in mid January 1984, each in its own way, are confirming evidence. Ismail Makoli, 35, attacked Milomir Deljanin, an employee of L.T.H. service at Pristina and was later apprehended. On January, 1984 around 9 O'clock, Deljanin went out to tighten the tag on his auto.

While he was so engaged, an unknown person came up from behind him and swung a steel chain at him. Milomir turned instinctively. The attacker had broken open Milomir's brow and then struck the stunned victim on the back three more times. Milomir's wife Stanka related that 'He would probably have killed him, had I not yelled and called for help.' The event took place in the center of town in full view of many passers-by. The attacker fled, but, owing to the quick response by the police, he was found. I called the police immediately after I took Milomir to the hospital. The judge ordered punishment of 60 days in jail for the crime. The man said in court that he did not know Milomir and attacked him on an impulse."

An Albanian youth attacked Milos Radulovic, a fourth year student at the Teachers College at Pristina without any cause. He was attacked from behind his back. Milos sustained serious body injury. Owing to the help of the doctors at the Pristina Hospital, his life is now out of danger. Milos's friends and acquaintances at school maintain that he was a pleasant person and did not know the attacker.

Mile Kostic from the vicinity of Urosevac was attacked. A man the victim had never seen before attacked this 60 year-old model farmer. "I was on an errand to buy the wife's medicine. I stopped in front of a bar to let a man coming towards me pass by. As he was passing by, he swung his fist and hit me on the chin. I fell back and, astonished, asked him why he attacked me. The stranger said, 'Because you are Serbian'".

Unmasked and examined in detail, the irredentists persist, as can be seen, at all costs in declaring anew the four basic methods of their program, "Kosovo – A Republic – Willingly, by Fear, by battle, or by Force" D. Damjanovic, *Vecernje Novosti* (Evening News) of January 15, 1984. Only a few days later, however, the following news was reported (January 26, 1984 in the same paper). Ismail Makoli, who had been in jail, following the reported incident above, was released and was again disturbing and provoking his former victim Milomir Deljanin whom he had seriously injured earlier. Milomir protested in court and the judge told him that "Makoli was taken ill" and cautioned Milomir to



“Be careful, because Makoli can also kill”! The higher court in Pristina did nothing. This, then, is only one example of the atmosphere of “justice” at Kosovo. That is why Kosovo Serbians often say, “We are not all equal before the law and not all of us have the same kind of freedom”.

Some of the most recent cases were as follows: Jeromonah (Priest- Monk) Jovan Radosavljevic, a professor at the seminary at Prizren, was struck on the head by a stone thrown by Albanian youths as he walked on the street along the Bistrica just before Christmas. The Albanian youths quickly dispersed after the incident. When he turned to passers-by (also Albanians) for help in apprehending the youths, they smiled and pointed to very small children who were playing nearby, protecting the real perpetrators. The priest’s injuries would have been more serious had it not been for his clerical head dress, the Kamilavka, which gave some protection, preventing more serious injury.

A Serbian villager from Musutista and his young son were attacked by an Albanian from the same village (the names of the perpetrator and the victims cannot be revealed at present). A dispute arose when the villager and his son tried to drive the Albanian’s buffalo from the villager’s clover field. The dispute was then taken to the court for settlement. By decision of the judge, the Serbian had to pay the Albanian who had attacked him 500,000 Dinars! A month later, Albanian youths attacked this same Serbian and his child and his horse in the same village. On this complaint, the Chief of Police decided that the Serbian was again to blame! Obviously, at Kosovo, “an animal without horns cannot fight with those who have horns” as the saying goes.

At the village of Odanovac, near Kosovska Kamenica, a young girl, M. D. was raped by three Albanians from the same village. Two were apprehended, while the third escaped. The child, it is said, is from Vukovar. The crime is now being investigated. But what good is it, when several previous cases of the rape of children in this area were without consequence for the perpetrators?

At Podujevo as Pristina Television reported recently, during the funeral of a Serbian, a group of Albanian youths from the elementary school, scandalized the affair with shouts of the char-

acteristic words and threats, "Today one, tomorrow seven!" We have earlier deplored such "upbringing" of Albanian children, but here we recalled the words of a respected Albanian, Brahim Hodze, from the village Junik, near Pec who said that these provocations by Albanian children are intentional and that they are directed at the weaker neighbors and their purpose is to drive away, that is to banish them. This well known by the parents of these children and Albanian politicians.

And finally (if there is an end to this), it is known that recently (at the end of January 1984) Hamdi Kabasi, of the village of Djurakovac, near Istok, intruded into the Pec Patriarchate and tried to damage pictures and icons and also vulgarly attacked the nuns who tried to stop him, saying, "This is not Serbia". He was sentenced to jail for 60 days.

Nevertheless, all of these listed examples (and how many more of them are not listed!) are only "negative cases" from Kosovo. There are also "positive cases". In fairness, we must list them.

At the end of 1983, the press reported a "Kosovo example of examples": near Gnjilan, in the village Zegri, and Albanian neighbor returned a house to his Serbian neighbor. The house was sold to him a year earlier. There was another such case near the village of Crnica. Such neighborly and decent behavior had also occurred at other places at Kosovo, but they are rare.

There are also cases of Albanians suffering because of their support of Serbs and Montenegrins. Alija Zecaj, a teacher from Donji Streovac, near Decani is such an example. Despite words and personal shunning by his brother Albanians, he remains steadfast in his position saying, "I cannot tolerate terror on my people and I cannot tolerate my people terrorizing other people". Because of his candor toward the Serbians, he was deprecated by the media at Kosovo (by *Rilinda*, Pristina Television, and at *Opstina* Committee meetings), but *Duga*, No. 259, a journal, reported that "no one denied what he said".

Another example are the words of an older Albanian from the vicinity of Decani. Alije Dautaj said, "Serbians and Montenegrins suffer no pressure from us, but rather from swindlers and street

urchins but they appear to be protected from someone in authority". (In Decani Township, less than four percent of the population is Serbian. Most of them had already emigrated and they still continue to leave. There are virtually no Serbians residing in the *Opstina* Glogovac, Srbica, Djakovica, Kacanik, and Podujevo).

Such thinking of the position some of those in authority, unfortunately, are neither inaccurate nor unusual. We observed this even after the recent Belgrade Television broadcast of January 27, 1984 on a program entitled, "The Jury, A Kosovo Perspective". It is astonishing that, let us say, a television broadcast or a report of a newspaper would present a distorted view of Kosovo, but what kind of reflection of Kosovo is given to us all by the continuing river of forced emigration from Kosovo and Metohija? This is less important if it is at all important for some. (And what may be said for the fact that "not a small number of Serbian officials are emigrating from Kosovo". These are the people who were engaged in the struggle to stop the emigration).

Was not professor Muhamed Kesetovic, advisor to the presidium at Belgrade, right when he stated (in *Intervju* of February 3, 1984) that, "The voice of protest of our country was always raised when the civil rights of people were threatened throughout the world. It was a strong voice protesting against apartheid in South Africa, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and the black ghetto. Last year we organized a big meeting supporting the Palestinian refugees. But we didn't do this anywhere in Yugoslavia during the sad exodus of hundreds of thousands people driven from Kosovo. This, it appears, does not occur to many, although it should. It is amazing that in our variegated society there is not always a uniform thinking and consideration of the problem of emigration from Kosovo. This uniform voice is necessary. Such a voice would express a judgement, a protest, and a disagreement with the persecution of a people in Europe, in a free socialist state".

Of this same "free socialist state" say the forced emigrants from their ancestral homes at Kosovo, almost to a man, "A country which so honorably dealt with fascism 40 years ago, permitted the

fascist idea of an 'ethnically pure' Kosovo to be born in its heartland. This is a great misfortune for all Yugoslavs. It appears that some are not even aware of this. If it would help, I know what to say. Things being as they are, it is better to be silent. To whom can I talk? Everything is already clear. I think that even the sparrows have grasped what is happening at Kosovo. Those up above know this too. the emigration of a people, however, continues" (Danilo Markovic in *Vecernje Novosti* of January 4, 1984).

On our part, independent of professor Kesetovic, we note the word "exodus" (a latin form of the Greek word Eksodos) is the biblical expression for the departure of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. This is the title of the Second Book of Moses. The book describing today's exodus of the Serbian people from their Kosovo has yet to be written.

## ON THE ROAD TO JADOVNO BY WAY OF JASENOVAC, BANIJA AND KORDUN

After visiting our shrines and holy places commemorating our martyrs at Kosovo, we got under way on our trip to Jadovno in Lika.

It is painful even to think of Jadovno! By its very name it says volumes. The name Jadovno, and the related words *Jad* and *jadikovati* (meaning, in the Serbian language, to grieve, lament, mourn) like Kosovo represents an unhealed wound. Jadovno is an immeasurable sorrow and an eternal reminder. It brings tears to the eyes and painfully disturbs the soul; it brings out of the heart, nevertheless a sad joy evoked by the song, the centuries-old Troparion;

**Thy martyrs, O Lord  
Received their crowns in suffering...**

Thy martyrs and ours, Lord, With our common path, the path  
of the God-Man.



Three events, in three days, September 21-23, 1983 invited us to our western lands. These were; the Twentieth Anniversary of the new church in Glina (celebrated on the *Slava* (feast day) of the church which is dedicated to the commemoration of the birth of the Mother-of-God); a seminar of the clergy of the Gorno-Karlovac diocese at Plaski; and the dedication of the stone memorial at Jadovno.

We started out with the students from Belgrade by auto somewhere around noon on the eve of the holy day (September 20, 1983). The road we followed took us across Srem and Slavonija, along the Sava River to Gradiska and Jasenovac.

At Jasenovac of Greatmartyrs, as we passed along bright and holy graves, we chanted the Troparion of the Holy Martyrs. We also passed by the newly built Orthodox Church at Jasenovac, constructed on the same location of the earlier church which was destroyed by the Croatian Ustashi (Everything was ready for the dedication of this church which had already been announced. It is being delayed for some strange reason).

From Jasenovac we crossed over into Bosnia, across the Sava and the Una Rivers. At the confluence of these two rivers, we stopped to listen to the waves, the waves of time and of the water. In our remembrance, came the recollection of the lines of the poem written by Ivan Goran Kovacic:

### THE CORPSES TRAVEL

The corpses float; they steer and they float;  
Green, swollen, heavy, puffed-up:  
They swell and grow as though fattened;  
And then they stop, silently gathered  
Along the black shore.

These were not merely corpses. Earlier, these were martyrs, Christ-like innocents, the holy remains of the righteous, like the

Sevastian martyrs who were thrown into the lake or like the body of the New Martyr Deacon Avakum who was first impaled and then thrown into the Danube with others. Because, in the words of the poet, this land has been accustomed to have "bones change into relics" so why then cannot the rivers also have this capability?

Afterwards we went to Bosanska Dubica to go to Mostanica Monastery for an overnight stay. As we started out from our overnight stay for the memorial to the new martyrs, it was nice to walk in file from Mostanica, the first Monastery of the new martyr Avakum, Deacon.

Mostanica is in pleasant Kozara which supplied the most victims to "feed" the neighboring death camps Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska. There were also those from this area who were sent even to Jadovno where we were now going on a pilgrimage and to pay homage.

At Mostanica a vigil service was held before retiring for the night, and early in the morning, we left for Glina so that we could arrive there in time for the holy day service dedicated to the birth of the Mother-of-God in a temple dedicated to her. Our road led us across Dubica and then along the Una River to Kostajnica. Dubica is in the southern Banija region, and from this point on, begin the places of execution of our people from the Upper Krajina region during the last war. (In Dubica at one time there was a Croatian Ustashi camp where, at the end of August 1941, about 200 Serbians were murdered. Some of these were first locked up in the church of the Holy Trinity and then were killed. The church was destroyed afterwards, unfortunately at the behest of the local Roman Catholic parish priest Ivan Benko; it was rebuilt only in 1971. In Kostajnica also a large Serbian church, three chapels and a Serbian Cemetery were destroyed).

The road through Banija region via Petrina to the Glina River reminds one of beautiful Sumadija in Serbia, only it gained more notoriety because of the greater number of victims in the war. We were sorry we could not visit the Monastery of St. Teodor Komogovina, a new martyr who binds Bosnia and Banija together in martyrdom of earlier times, with those of more recent years. (Komogovina village was burned three times during the war and

half of the population was murdered. In the village Grabovac, not far from here, near Petrinja, the Croatian Ustashi murdered over 1,200 Serbians on July 24 and 25, 1941).

We arrived at Glina via Prekop, a place where in three ravines, the Croatian Ustashi dumped the 1,200 or more Serbian martyrs murdered in the old church at Glina.

In the new Glina church, which was celebrating this day, we arrived a whole hour before the start of Divine Liturgy (which was celebrated by the Gorno-Karlovac Bishop Simeon). We thus had time to have a better look at the place and become acquainted with it. Earlier, we had been here with students, but only for a short time and in passing.

The present church was built 20 years ago (1963) and was dedicated on the same holy day which it commemorates. The principal efforts for its construction came from the religious people of Banija and Kordun led by the industrious Archpriest Nikola Diklic, from neighboring Lika, and the tireless Bishop Simeon. Despite the various troubles and obstacles (difficulties in obtaining a building permit, obstacles in obtaining the needed building materials and the destruction, at night, by unknown persons, of some of the construction completed during the day) the church was nevertheless completed in good time. Unfortunately, it was not permitted to build the church on the same site as the old church in which the Martyrs of Glina were slaughtered, but rather on a site some 150 meters away on church property).

The site where the old church stood, in the very center of Glina, there is a Memorial Home of Rest and Culture, with a swimming pool, and in the front, on the street side, there is a memorial plaque which has these words as witness for remembrance:

"The truth is written in our blood. At one time, on this place, there was an Orthodox Church and on June 30, 1941, about 1,200 innocent people were put to death in it by the blade of the Ustashi knife. The people of Banija rose up against evil and crime and went on that hard but bright path of the NOB (National Liberation War). Today at this place stands a memorial home dedicated to the victims of Fascism. It was built in 1969 by the unified action

and brotherly solidarity of the people of Banija and people throughout our socialist homeland. July 4, 1969”.

The old church, built in the XVII Century in the Austro-Hungarian baroque style because the ultracatholic monarchy would not tolerate nor permit construction of Serbian-Byzantine style structures. (We should mention here, if it is of significance, that in this old Orthodox Church in Glina, in 1846, for the first time the song *Lepa Nasa Domovina* [Our Beautiful Homeland] by Antun Mihanovic, which was set to music by a Serbian from Glina Josip Runjanin during that year. It was first performed by the Serbian Orthodox choir from Glina.<sup>2</sup> But, later, times and customs changed).

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The killing of innocent Serbians from Banija and Kordun in the old Glina church was accomplished in a most characteristic way illustrating the monstrous nature of a hellish death machine which was called “*Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska*” (Independent State of Croatia). The horrible killing of Serbians in the Glina church was done early in August 1941. Before the killings, the peaceful and naive Serbian villagers from the surrounding villages of *Srez (County) Vrginmost* were manipulated and betrayed in the most inhuman, insolent, really hellish and demonic manner. The Croatian Ustashi directed a horrible propaganda to betray the consciences and the souls of the villagers in their announced program for the “conversion of Orthodox to the Roman Catholic faith”. On August 2, 1941, (the Orthodox Holy Day of St. Elijah) the people were called to assemble at Vrginmost where, ostensibly, a Roman Catholic priest was to perform the rite of conversion, and that afterwards, they could “live freely, equal with Croats”. By accounts of eye witnesses and conversations in the villages, no agreement was made by the Serbians, nor

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2. Translator's note: This song, for those who may not know, was the national anthem of the ill-conceived Croatian puppet state responsible for the attempts to exterminate their Serbian population during World War II.



was there any agreement to be converted. The people had come to Vrginmost because they had to and to see what was happening. Many were apprehended directly and taken to Glina by force.

At Vrginmost, about 2000 Serbians had gathered, all males from the age of 16 to 60. From there they were loaded onto covered trucks and taken to Glina. Another group of Serbians from the surrounding villages were taken to Topusko and then, by truck or train, to Glina.

According to witnesses and the later admission of some of the participating Ustashi, from the very start of the tyrannical regime of the N.D.H. (*Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska* Independent State of Croatia), Glina became the place for the liquidation of hundreds and hundreds of Serbians from Banija and Kordun. According to some witnesses as early as May 12-13, 1941, 300 Serbians were killed at Glina, in its vicinity and perhaps in the church itself, because "from the Ustashi takeover of authority, the church served as their jail and their human slaughterhouse" as one of the witnesses noted. The principal crime, or crimes committed at the Glina church, as we said, were committed at the beginning of August, beginning with the holy day of St. Elijah (known thereafter as "the bloody" St. Elijah).

One older Serbian at the Glina church survived and was a personal eye witness to the crime which was also later admitted in court by some of the participating Ustashi. Thus, in his hearing before the Government Commission for the Confirmation of Crimes (Report No. 33) Dragan Bakic testified:

"On August 1 and 2, 1941, it was announced at all villages in Cemernica *Opstina* (Township) by the head, Josip Zivcic, that all Serbian males from the ages of 16 to 60, without exception, must come to Vrginmost where a Roman Catholic priest will receive them and convert them to the Roman Catholic faith. Then no one, it was said, would be allowed to disturb the Serbian converts and that they would have the same rights as Croats. In the order, it was announced that all Serbians who do not appear at Vrginmost for conversion will be killed at home. At the same time, the same order was announced at other *Opstina* of Vrginmost. On August 3, 1941, about 1,500 Serbians from the Cemernica *Opstina* went

to Vrginmost. About 700 more Serbians came on the same day from other *Opstina* of Vrginmost so that there were about 2,200 Serbians there. When the Serbians had gathered and were waiting for the conversion, armed Ustashi suddenly surrounded them. There was a large number of Ustashi, and, armed with military rifles and machine guns, they drove the Serbians to the gymnasium. The Serbians suspected that they were preparing to kill them, and about 400 of them succeeded in escaping, while 1,800 were driven into the gymnasium. They were held there under guard the whole night, and the next day 25 heavy trucks came to Vrginmost, loaded up the Serbians and took them to the Glina Orthodox church". Of the same event Antun Greguric witnessed in his testimony, "I saw the trucks taking the Serbians to the church to Glina and before the killings, the trucks took some of those inside away alive and murdered them in Glina Novo Selo" (This was written by Mladen Colic in his book *Takozvana N.D.H 1941* (The So-called N.D.H. 1941) Belgrade. 1973. pp. 370, 371).

The most shocking was the personal witness of a Serbian victim, who managed miraculously to survive though he was half-killed in the church. He was Ljuban Jednak from the village Gornja Selista, near Glina. Ten of his family were murdered in the church on that day. His witness on the "wholesale killing which then began" in the Glina church I had read earlier before our trip but now this shocking confession in such detail came back to me. (For the readers of these lines, this live witness's testimony is given in its entirety as Appendix 1.)

The description of the massacre of innocent Serbians in the Glina church by Himlije Berberovic, of Bosansk Novi, one of the Ustashi perpetrators, was particular (This horrible witness is also shown in its entirety in Appendix 2). According to him, the slaughter of the innocent victims in the Glina Orthodox church took place at night between the hours of 10:00 and 2:00 A.M and was accomplished in 7 or 8 sallies, that is, over a period of several days. At first only males were murdered, but later women and children were also brought for slaughter.

From all of this it comes out that in the Glina church, over 1,200 Serbians were slaughtered, and perhaps even 1,800 because

another 500-600 were murdered at near-by Glinsko Novo Selo and its vicinity where the killers threw the bodies in the same ravine used to dump the bodies of those who were murdered in the church.

This massacre of Orthodox Christians in a house of the Lord exceeds even the pagan savagery of Diocletian's massacre of Christians in the temple at Nicomedia early in the IV Century. Among those first victims of the massacre at the Glina church was the parish priest, Bogdan Opacic, who gave his life and his soul along with his believers and for his believers who did not deny their Orthodox faith and the use of the sign of the cross with three fingers symbolizing the trinity. The shining example of the Glina Roman Catholic parish priest must be mentioned here. He was Franz Zuzek, a Slovene by nationality, who in those evil days of 1941, continued to rescue from certain death as many Orthodox Serbians as he could. (Zuzek's deeds are described in a book by Cyril Petesic, entitled *Katolicko Svecenstvo U NOB-u 1941-45* (The Catholic Clergy in the National Liberation Struggle 1941-1945) Zagreb. 1982. pp. 89-94). Unfortunately, not all Roman Catholic parish priests were such as he, because not a small number of them at other places participated in the forced conversion of Orthodox Serbians.

The holy martyrs of Glina, who did not betray their Orthodox faith belong undoubtedly among the holy martyrs of the faith of Christ and the Orthodox Church. (The task of gathering all the names of the victims still continues. General Dusan Baich, a native of this area, gives the names and surnames and other data on 1,022 Serbians murdered at the Glina Church in his book "*Kotar Vrginmost U NOB 1941-1945*" (Kotar Vrginmost in the National Liberation Struggle 1941-1945) Belgrade. 1980. He wrote, however, only of those who were from Vrginmost villages. Our poet Ivan B. Lalic wrote the poem "*Opelo Za Sedam Stotina Iz Crkve U Glini*" (Requiem For Seven Hundred Of the Church in Glina) but, in the poem the number was only symbolic.

For these holy martyrs of Glina, we can freely apply the prophesy of the holy Seer from the Apocalypse of the Church of Christ, where it is said:

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I hear the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come and see". I looked and behold a pale green horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger and with death and with the beasts of the earth.

And when the fifth seal was opened, I saw below the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the Testimony of the Lamb which they held... And white robes were given unto them, every one of them and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little while until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Revelation 6:7-11.

This is the way it was with the Glina new martyrs: those killed below the altar, were killed for the Cross of the Lamb and for true Witness. That is why in the new Glina church, a separate altar was built for them and they are counted among the general Assemblage of the Holy Martyrs and New Martyrs from Kosovo to the Present. This altar is in the apse of the northern choir of the new church, and behind the sacrificial table of this altar are frescoes of the Holy Martyr Sava of Gorni Karlovac, Protopresbyter Stevo Ogulinski, the Martyr Mother of Orthodoxy, and several more martyrs representing children and villagers of this area wearing their national costumes. A memorial service dedicated to all these new Martyrs of Glina is served at this small altar several times a year.

In a container, or ark, on this sacrificial table there is preserved a stone from the foundation of the old church, a handful of earth which was once soaked with the blood of martyrs

of Glina and a part of the relics of the Greatmartyr Lazar, of Kosovo which is proof of the uniform fate of these new martyrs and those of Kosovo. In life and in death also everything was the same for them. They died for their faith and their people showing the same love of God and the same patriotism.

No matter how much is written and read about the suffering of the Serbian believers in Glina, and in general in Banija and Kordun, no book can replace that which can be seen and learned from the people of this area themselves. The people who came to the Glina church that day, included surviving veterans of the National Liberation Struggle, especially older women clothed in black. Our conversations with them and our priests, who, though they were much younger, knew enough of the authentic stories and witnessing from the people, lasted from after the divine liturgy until vespers, held about 5:00 p.m. along with recitations by children and appropriate speeches.

All of these liturgical and brotherly relations with the people of the area, remained in our memories as an unforgettable experience and a permanent impression that these were the Lord's people and that they have a living soul, a great soul, and a great heart, which, with faith and love of mankind, will forgive everything. But everything that they came to experience and to survive was not easy!

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From Glina, we left in the evening for Topusko, an old spa resort on the eastern slopes of Petrova Gora in Kordun. Topusko, like Glina and all the surrounding places, suffered from the Croatian Ustashi, especially in 1941. The Serbians here were locked up in the Orthodox Church of St. John the Baptist, where they were butchered and killed, or they were taken to Glina to be murdered there; to be shot at Lomic Ravine and Ratkovic Strana; or they were taken to death camps especially to the horrible Jadovno. How intimately are these people of Kordun, Banija, Lika and the entire stormy border region connected and eternally

joined to Glina and Jadovno. And we also are connected to them and along with them, form a continuum of all Serbs from Kosovo to Jadovno.

The Church of St. John in Topusko was destroyed and was rebuilt in 1971. Until that time services were held (for the first time in 1953) on the church property under open skies. This church today is one of the nicest and best organized in the Kordun region.

Our road took us further from Topusko through the village Cemernica one of the numerous Serbian villages of Kordun which suffered greatly. On a memorial here dedicated to the "fallen soldiers and victims of Fascist terror" there stands the following significant text which should be remembered (It was written by a Serbian from this village, Stanko Korac, whose father and a brother were murdered in the Glina Church):

**August 1941 was a time of horrible war and uncertainty, a time of mass extermination of Serbian people. The representatives of the criminal Ustashi government called together at this place, where the *Opstina* (Township) building stood, all adult males from the villages of Batinova Kosa, Bukovica, and Cemernica on August 3, 1941. The Ustashi took the men gathered here to Glina, where, in the Orthodox Church, on the night of August 4-5th, 1941, they tortured and killed them with the knife, mallet and rifle butt. This crime listed with others committed in Kordun and Banija, remained in history as an incomprehensible horror. In the course of four war years, 50 soldiers from the villages named lost their lives in the struggle for freedom and socialism, while the crimes committed at the Glina church, and the death of those who had taken refuge in the forests of Petrova Gora, those at Ratkovic Strana, at**

**Jadovno, and those in Ustashi camps and jails and others, accounted for 1,016 innocent lives taken from these our villages. Dear parents, brothers, grandmothers and grandfathers, known and unknown relatives and friends: You fell as innocent victims of a filthy, political freak of mankind as fighters for freedom, harmony and happiness, for our better and happier tomorrow. Let not your suffering and pain ever be forgotten.**

As can be seen from this, and from other sources, the Glina church and Jadovno were the first two principal places of the massacre of the Serbian Orthodox people of Banija and Kordun. Their place was later overtaken by the million victim death camp Jasenovac. (As an example, we should mention that about a hundred women, children and older people from Cemernica were murdered at Jasenovac). We also note that Serbian victims from Cemernica were being taken to Jadovno to be killed there May 6-10, 1941.

Our road then led us through the town of Vrginmost and then through Vojnic, also places of great sacrifice and suffering in heroic Kordun. When the hellish "new order" of the N.D.H. (*Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska* Independent State of Croatia) was established here, the Ustashi, on July 29, 1941, took from Vojnic and vicinity about 500 Serbians and murdered them at Bozic Jarak. Among them were their priests, Mile Dokmanovic, Pero Ninkovic, Mile Preuraca, and Dusan Susnjar. In the settlement Vojnic-Kolaric, they burned the church of St. Petka (Paraskijeva) to the ground with 160 Orthodox Serbians inside. The church was rebuilt and again started to serve the people in 1969, unfortunately, as in the case of Glina, at another location.

The credit for the renewal of this church and numerous other churches in the Upper border region here, belongs among others to the Bishop of Gorno-Karlovac, Simeon Zlokovic.

Because we had served with the bishop the day before at Glina and had talked with him at length, we did not visit him at his

residence in Karlovac. We stopped only for his blessing, to eat and then continued on our way with our brother-priests. We hurried to the seminar of the Gorno-Karlovac clergy at Plaski which had long ago been set for this day (September 22, 1983).

### AT PLASKI IN LIKA

We arrived at Plaski via Josipdol. The little town of Plaski and the surrounding countryside is an exceptionally beautiful part of Lika. The beautiful weather of the Autumn season added to the natural beauty of the area. But, we must leave the beauties of nature and the weather and we must speak of the suffering of Plaski and its people, at the head of whom was the greatmartyr Bishop Sava Trlajic and the priests, Milan Dokmanovic, Milan Rajcevic, Petar Vucinic, Bogoljub Gakovic, Milan Djukic, Jasa Stepanovic, Djuro Stojanovic, and Stanislav Nasadilo (an Orthodox Chech from the Parish Licka Jasenica). Their torture and death is already known although there are always some unknown details of the fatal end of this Serbian Bishop, his priests and his faithful.

That is why we inquired about where they lived, their suffering, the Bishop's residence, and where they were arrested and held and of the barn at Tomljenovic where they were held and mistreated. (While they were held and tortured, the Ustashi played recordings of the church holiday music "*Jelici vo Hrista Krestistesja...*" (As Many as are Baptized unto Christ). We wanted especially to know the particulars of the victims' transfer to Ogulin, Zagreb, the camp at Danica and Gospic and finally to Jadovno. This was because on the next day, we were to start out for Jadovno where we were to serve a liturgical commemoration to the glorification of the Lord and in their honor and to identify or associate ourselves with them.

Afterwards, we looked around (and photographed) the cathedral church at Plaski and became acquainted with our arriving brother priests. Despite attempts to remove their seminar from Plaski, or to have it held at some other place, the priests nevertheless, in even greater numbers gathered around their



one-time cathedral. The cathedral church is still under long-term reconstruction from the major damage it sustained after the arch-pastor, the priests and the faithful were taken away and killed. The number of the faithful here reached several thousand because Plaski was a purely Serbian town. The present church on that day served not only as a place for prayers before the beginning of the seminar, but also for the proceedings of the seminar itself. What is amazing and unclear here, when everything is clear...?

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Nothing is more natural for us Orthodox Serbians, than the wisdom of those words from traditional epic poetry, "*Bez' u Crkvu Kraljevicu Marko* (Hurry to the church, King Marko)". When those established and stereotyped "good relations between the church and state" are suddenly denied (usually unilaterally); and when the "social space" even though it was arranged earlier and agreed to, is closed in one's face, because of some other "celebration" which may take place three months hence, (examples of local Communist harassment of church functions), then truly the words of the traditional poetry cited above come to mind.

It was not for us to become involved in this particular problem, even though we were involved by the fact that we were invited to this seminar by the Union of Clergymen of the Gorno-Karlovac Diocese, but it is nevertheless something new to experience at first hand something which I had already long known, and that is, by whom and how the trust of our long-suffering clergy is being abused, not only yesterday but also today. (Later, I found out that this modest seminar of our priests was characterized as "hostile" and "diversionary" by those who had become accustomed to blind sectarian obedience to their ideology).

It is fortunate, and a sign of the spiritual human and Christian maturity of the majority of our clergy, and thank God, of the younger generation above all, that the most frequent theme of the clergy seminars is first the pastoral work among the people. That

includes the renewal, improvement of man's soul, heart and conscience with the faith and love of Christ, the love of God and the love of one's fellow man through, first of all, personal evangelical repentance. This was the theme of the seminar at Plaski.

Having spoken of pastoral work of our clergy among our Orthodox Serbian people today, one must truly rejoice for the amazing and beneficial gift of God: that He still gives us people and priests who discuss among themselves repentance and that they know what repentance is and what it means for man's character and for a nation; and that they again and again want to concern themselves with this amazing mystery and with the truth of the experience of all mankind which began and begins with the Gospel of salvation and making man truly more human.

The Serbian people are not a spiritually fallen people. They have not yet lost their soul and will not lose it while in their daily life they know about repentance (and this alone is the test of every other kind of daily living). It is not some kind of "cowardly" repentance, nor is it a kind of "complex" but rather a "great understanding and discernment of man" in the words of one early Christian writer, or, in the words of a national proverb, a repentance is "the most beautiful blossom of man's integrity". This is because true human, Christian repentance always means a new life.

The most sensitive and the most characteristically alive (sense of repentance) one could feel in this place during our three-day pilgrimage.

Otherwise, God help the people, the clergymen, the nation and the church which do not know repentance and do not call for it. It must begin with one's own self.

### AT JADOVNO ON VELEBIT

From Plaski we left for Gospic and Jadovno via Plitvica, Vrhovina and Otocac. Finally, on the third day of our pilgrimage, we arrived at Jadovno.

**JADOVNO** The road from Gospic to Jadovno is surfaced with asphalt to Brusanima and Karlobag. After some 7 or 8 Kilometers, it turns to the right at the village of Trnovac at a place where an unpaved road leads to Smiljan, the birthplace of Nikola Tesla which was also a long-suffering Serbian village below Velebit as were numerous other villages in Lika.

The small Croatian village of Trnovac is situated at the very foot of Velebit, not 2 kilometers from the Gospic-Karlobag road. Directly behind the village begin the ascending slopes of Velebit to Jadovno.

It is interesting to note that at the end of Trnovac, going towards Velebit, there is a Roman Catholic Church named "Our Lady of Seven Sorrows" behind this gradual intersection right beside the road to Jadovno. What an amazing and unusual symbol! The sorrows and the sufferings of the Holy Mother caused by the cross-bearing path of Her Son. It is also a great sorrow, we would add, for them who went on this "way of the cross" to Jadovno. Was it a coincidence that this church was so named? Or was it the conscience of Christian sharing of sorrows by honorable Roman Catholics of this place speaking out involuntarily in the interests of justice and identifying with those innocents banished to the dark caves of Jadovno. Whatever it was, the prophetic symbol of this church of the Holy Mother of the Crucified Christ, as the name Jadovno itself, says so much by itself.

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Much has been written and recalled about Jadovno, but it is never enough and far less than it deserves. In its singular shocking majesty, it stands even today silent and dumb, covered with the silence of the grave and the peace of martyrdom. However that may be, it is not forgotten.

We should mention here two newspaper items which appeared in print before our trip, both of them dealing with Jadovno. In the *Licki Vjesnik* (Lika Herald) of Gospic. In its issue for June 15, 1983, in the column "Letters from Readers" the follow-

ing letter from one of the readers was published in reference to an earlier article on the action of the supervisors of the *Opstina* (Township) Titova Korenica to mark, as a monument, two caves at Prijeboj where several hundred innocent victims, that is innocent Serbians, were lost:

“Having read (about the action), I remember Jadovno on Velebit where during the war, several thousands of innocent victims were thrown into a pit. With the intention of pointing to a more dignified marking of this place, I don't mean to detract from the significance of this place within the Titova Korenica area. Moreover, I think that all of these places should have a dignified recognition. I believe that there is not a grown man in our Republic, or in larger social units, who has not heard of the infamous Jadovno, which equaled all other killing places in our country by the number of its victims. Nevertheless, this memorial designation appears to be poor and undignified for such a number of victims. I was able to check this when I visited the place not long ago on a trip to Lika. The road to Jadovno is very difficult and hardly passable. It is too far to walk and it would be very risky to drive the distance after nightfall. There are neither landmarks nor signs. Anyone who is not acquainted with this area would have a hard time getting to the infamous Saran Pit which swallowed up so many innocent victims. The pit itself is also crudely and inadequately marked. The marker at the site is a miniature and is hardly visible. All of this appears so poor, neglected, forgotten and horrible. I asked myself how it is that until today nothing has

been undertaken to improve the marking of this place as a monument. Who has arranged this? I would like very much to be able to read in one of your coming issues, about some new action taken to make Jadovno more easily reached and better recognized."

signed/ Ilija Panjkovic  
Bjelovar

Another report comes from the pen of a foreign journalist Hejko Floau (in the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* (South German News) of Munich, September 16, 1983, in which, among other things, he said, "At Jadovno, in Lika which is settled by Serbians and Croatians, but falls within Croatia, tens of thousands of Orthodox Serbians were thrown in a pit 100 meters deep. 'Ecumenism?' ask the Orthodox in Serbia. 'Naturally', they answer, 'but only then when the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox express their readiness to jointly build a penitential chapel at Jadovno'".

So much for the most recent press on Jadovno and we must return to the business of our visit to Jadovno.

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From the Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Church at Trnovac, the rocky, weaving road goes up Velebit mountain for 5 or 6 kilometers on the Lika side across in the direction of Senj until one comes to a small plateau which long ago carried the most symbolic name Jadovno.

Here, on this mountain tableland, near the small settlement Jadovno, during the summer months of 1941 was the relatively short-lived but therefore all the more horrible Ustashi camp which had as its exclusive purpose the genocidal extermination of Serbians, primarily Serbians from Lika. Serbians from other areas of the then N.D.H. (*Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska* Independent

State of Croatia) were also brought here as were others of the "non- Croat population", but Jadovno was above all the was where the pits and graves of Serbians from Lika were. Jadovno became their grave only because they were of the Orthodox faith and of Serbian nationality.

As one leaves the Jadovno plateau, there is today a wooden ramp and, since the ramp was open, we continued past. The road went along the slopes of Velebit and brought us to the narrow 100 meter deep Saran Pit (The name, we were told, came from a shepherd named Saran who had fallen into the pit). From Saran Pit, the road goes obliquely along the mountain slope to the pit at Grgin Brijeg and to other deep chasms which are found in abundance in the karst.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia, the slopes of Velebit, one of the longest mountains in our country, were formed of carbonaceous rocks and contain shales and limestone, underlain with karst with strong underground circulating water. There are many fissures, whirlpools, deep pits and still deeper caverns which can be gradual with wide places forming large galleries. On the continental, or Lika side, Velebit is covered by a rather dense forest comprised of mostly beech, juniper and pine.

In all, it is an amazing mountain, with an amazing interior, and a still more amazing history! If for nothing else, Velebit will be remembered in history for Jadovno, our human, fateful tragedy of the last war, and most of all for the tragic fate of the Serbian people of these regions. It shall not be less remembered, or perhaps even more for the ill-omened fate of the perpetrators of this tragedy.

In the Encyclopedia mentioned we read, before our trip, the following lines about Jadovno, written by Savka Kalinic, of Zagreb:

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3. *Karst* is a term used to describe dry, barren, rocky terrain with caves, sinkholes, and underground streams. Underlying limestone strata (calcium carbonate) erodes, over time, dissolved by water to form pits, caves and caverns in the body of Velebit Mountain

**Jadovno, a camp to which the Ustashi took their terror campaign victims in 1941 to slaughter them there. It was located in one of the valleys on Velebit over an area of 1,250 square meters, fenced in with barbed wire 4 meters high beyond which there was a guard to a depth of 1 kilometer. The inmates, mostly Serbians, first arrived at the Gospic prison where they were organized for the camps. They went on foot from Gospic to Jadovno via the village Trnovac. The irregular terrain of the camp had to be levelled by the prisoners who then made shelters on the ground with branches. The prisoners had to work the whole day to exhaustion with virtually no food. Five kilometers from the camp there was a pit into which the Ustashi periodically threw the prisoners murdered at the pit. The last group of 1,500 were killed by the Ustashi with machine guns in August 1941; new victims were taken to Ostarije, a Velebit village on the Gospic- Karlobag road, where they were thrown in a pit at a hamlet called Stupacinovo. During the months of May, June and July of 1941, 1,000 men, women and children arrived at Gospic daily. It is calculated that the karst caves around the Jadovno Camp swallowed up more than 35,000 victims.**

After our visit to Jadovno, the second in the last two years, after conversations with many people from Lika and other regions, and after studying published and unpublished data on the Jadovno camp, it could be said that the data from the Encyclopedia above are true if one considers only the nearest "karst chasm beside the camp", that is Saran Pit which is situated about 1 Kilometer from the camp and in which were probably thrown

the 35,000 victims mentioned. But there are other pits, some of which are known today and some which had been filled and are not known. There are witnesses among the people, both Serbs and Croats, who say that the Ustashi, when they had filled a pit with the bodies of the victims, they covered the pit with earth and concrete over which they put more earth and leaves to erase any trace of their crime.

The number of victims at Jadovno furthermore exceeds the number given in the Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia.

Findings by cavers established that the depth of Saran Cave was 42.5 meters only to the place where the first bones were found and must have extended deeper in a space of 40 cubic meters, unless the chasm widened into galleries or into underground streams. The depth and the chasm at Grgin Brjieg is similar and, in the vicinity, as we have said, there are several caves which the Ustashi used and covered up all traces of their killings.

The historian Milan Basta, a Serbian war veteran from Lika, writes that, according to reports and to testimony of older people from Lika, and elsewhere, the number of the people killed at Jadovno must be 50,000 to 60,000 which ranks Jadovno, after Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska among the major death camps in the N.D.H. (published in his book *Rat Je Završen 7 Dana Kasnije* [The War Ended 7 Days Later] 1976 edition).

In our conversation with people from Lika among whom are some who have devoted and continue to devote special attention to the victims of Jadovno, we heard estimates of about 80,000 victims, and one witness mentioned a precise figure of 86,000 victims. But we should go back to the very beginning of the Jadovno Golgotha of Serbians from these regions, through which we are passing on this commemorative journey.

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Immediately after the creation of their infamous *Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska* (Independent State of Croatia) the Ustashi began their campaign of "sweeping the terrain", that is, they



continued to create as soon as possible a "pure Croatian area" (something similar to today's efforts towards "an ethnically pure Kosovo). To that end they began, first by individual killings, and then by mass killings and annihilation of all Serbians, and later killing other innocent people.

The individual crimes committed in Lika and elsewhere by the Ustashi were begun from the earliest days of their terror-regime which began immediately after the capitulation and the establishment of the N.D.H. One must bear in mind that the capitulation was declared at Gospic at 5:00 p.m. on April 10, 1941. Thereafter the Ustashi in Gospic and Lika took authority in their own hands and on the same day began the apprehension of Serbians (5 men from Smiljan; 18 men from Bogdanic) which were collected at the Gospic prison and later cast into the pits at Buzim Janci and Jadovno. (See Jakov Blazevic *Suprotstavljanja* [Resistance] vol.II. 1980 pp. 89-90)

The Ustashi first killed the Orthodox priests, the teachers and other prominent people, but there were cases where all Serbs were killed as they found them. These first crimes, the Ustashi tried to some extent, to hide in preparation for the fulfillment of their overall plan, the mass expelling and extermination of Serbians, that is the Genocide of the Serbian people by killing and conversion to Roman Catholicism. Let us first of all, look at the situation outside of Gospic.

The first large mass criminal action of the Ustashi occurred on April 29, 1941 at the village of Gudovac, near Bjelovar, where about 184 Serbian villagers were killed. After this followed a pogrom at Blagaja, in Kordun, where on May 7, 1941 the Ustashi murdered about 520 Serbian villagers from Veljun and its vicinity and among the first there were the priest Branko Dobrosavljevic, of Veljun, and Dmitar Skorupan from Cvijanovic Brdo (all of them were slain in the most cruel manner in a wooded area called "Kestenovac" near Hrvatska Blagaja. Soon thereafter, about 700 Serbians from Slunj and vicinity were murdered and a group of 500 Serbians from Vojnic and its vicinity (also in Kordun) together with the priests from the surrounding Serbian villages.

Afterwards followed the extermination of Serbians and Serbian villages in Lika, of which we will mention only some. At Josipdol, on May 20, 1941, the Ustashi filled the old school with Serbians from the village and surrounding villages, they tortured and then slaughtered, shooting them in groups. They then threw them into trenches, some half alive, put quicklime over them, and covered everything with earth. (The church in Josipdol, they abolished and used the building as an arms depot). At Plaski, as we already mentioned the Ustashi apprehended over 700 Serbians on May 29, 1941 and took them to Ogulin where they were killed along with others. There 5,000 people were killed, not counting those who were sent to the Jasenovac Death Camp.

Thereafter followed the rest of the Serbian villages and settlements in Lika where mass killings had begun already in mid-June 1941. During July, whole Serbian villages and settlements were demolished. At Prijedor, between Plitvica Lakes and Korenica, about 400 Serbians from Plitvica were murdered and their bodies thrown into a pit (The *Opstina* (Township) Plitvicka Jezera (Lakes) is a predominantly Serbian area) On the 28th and 29th June 1941, 2,500 Serbian people from Drvar and Grahova were removed. On July 1, 1941, the Ustashi burned the village Suvaja, near Donji Lapac, and killed 300 Serbians, of whom 170 were thrown in three pits while the rest were burned. On July 2, 1941, the village Osredak was burned along with the village Bujanj where everyone alive was killed and was thrown in the infamous Boricevac Pit. (This caused one of the rare instances of Serbian revenge taken on the Croatian village Boricevac). The worst crime at Bujanj was the murder of 12 young Serbian girls who were at work hoeing corn in a field ("This was the ninth of July, when 12 Serbian girls perished").

At Licko Novo Selo, 900 people were killed; at Vrhovini at Otocac (where still today there are mass graves which have not yet been examined); at Tesla's Smiljan, near Gospic, 650 Serbians were killed, of many of whom were burned alive in their houses. At the Gospic villages Lipa, Ploca and Papuc all the families caught were killed; at Divoselo village, south of Gospic, in one day, 700 people were killed; farther to the south at Medak, the

Ustashi killed and buried about 1,000 victims in the pine woods; and in Gracac and vicinity, at the beginning of August 1941, there was a mass killing of 500 Serbians. These were all part of the Ustashi genocide of the Serbian population as were also other incidents in Bosnia (where in only one small triangle between Bihac, Krupa and Cazin, 20,000 Serbs were killed, as were others in Slavonija, Srem, Dalmacija, Hercegovina, and over the entire N.D.H. (Croatia).

Worst of all was the fact that the people were often deceived with demonic lies; they were called up, forcibly gathered together and marched to their death, sometime even singing. They were told that they were going to work, some to another region while others were to go to Germany. And who would even have imagined such madness as awaited them?

As a special form of perfidy used to deceive the Serbians as bait enticing the masses, in Lika the so-called "conversion" (to Roman Catholicism) was practiced. Here, just as it was in Glina, it all ended in the mass murder of Serbians. Famous in the call to such killings of Serbians in Lika was the Udbina Roman Catholic priest Fra Mate Mogus, who, on June 13, 1941, at Udbina said, "Until now, we worked for the Catholic faith with the missal and the cross, but now the time has come to work with the rifle and the revolver. We shall banish and exterminate the Serbian people in Croatia" (published in *Hrvatski narod* (The Croatian People) June 22 and 24, 1941. In the village Kosinje, near Perusic, the Ustashi used the deception of "conversion" (only three days after the killings of Serbians at Glina) where 347 of the Serbians gathered were bound with wire and killed and their bodies burned in a house set afire. There were also such rare cases where individual Roman Catholic priest tried to save Serbian lives by "conversion". This was done by the parish priest at Dreznik, near Slunj, Dragutin Stimac, who regarded the conversion only a "formality". He even told his faithful Croats publically in church not to cooperate with the Ustashi in their crimes against the Serbians, as did also the old Fra Grga at Otocac. Unfortunately, Dragutin Stimac, charged by the Ustashi, was hanged by the Germans in 1943. (See Ciril Petesic. *Katolicko Svecenstvo U*

*NOB-u 1941-45* (The Catholic Clergy in the National Liberation War 1941-1945) Zagreb. 1982).

All of the crimes of the Ustashi in Lika mentioned were, one might say, incidental or preparatory to the principal crimes against the Serbian people which were committed during the summer months of 1941 at Jadovno.

This does not in the least reduce, nor does it understate the incredible and the incomprehensible savagery of the Ustashi in the killing of Serbians which "amazed even the occupation" (forces) as one eye witness, a native of Lika said citing also reports on the subject of the Italian commandant B. Angelini, who wrote about one of the Ustashi, the son of the Director of the Gospic High School, who celebrated, by holding a banquet, for the killing, by his own hand, of the one thousandth Serbian victim. (*Lika U.N.O.B.* 1941. *Lika in the N.O.B.* 1941. p. 154).

We said "incidental, or preparatory" because, along with these killings, the Ustashi began the mass removal of Serbian people, Jews, and Gypsies, and anyone else who opposed them, to their concentration camps from which no one ever returned. During the earlier killings and the burning of villages, some of the intended victims had escaped to save their very lives by taking refuge in the forests. Jakov Blazevic wrote, "In Perusic Kotar (*Srez*, or county) in the *Kosinj Opstina* (district), the Ustashi carried out mass murder of the Serbians in the villages Krs, Studenci, and Mlaka, among others. The houses were burned to the ground. The people who had escaped lived in caves for as long as three years."

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The concentration camp Danica is considered to be the first of the Ustashi camps. It was opened on April 29, 1941, in an old factory building called "Danica" at a place called Koprivnica. Through this camp passed many of the Serbian martyrs on their way to the death camp Jadovno on Velebit Mountain. Most of the our priests from the Gorno-Karlovac, Tuzla and Pakrac Dioceses

went through the Danica Camp along with their Orthodox faithful and other people from the various parts of this long-suffering land. Thus, for example, one whole convoy of 250 Serbians, along with 20 of their priests, were taken, under strong guard, on July 30, 1941, to Gospic, where, after an overnight imprisonment and mistreatment between July 1 and 2, 1941, they were all taken to Jadovno and thrown into a pit.

Many of our people from Koprivnica and nearby, especially the village Grubisno Polje, passed through the Danica Camp, and then to Jadovno. The mothers and the husbands of the 1,486 victims from Grubisno Polje, near Koprivnica, who were cast into the Saran Pit at Jadovno put a marker and a stone wall around the pit in 1957. The victims, the sons and husbands, from the ages of 16 to 60, even in the pit, were not forgotten by their mothers and faithful spouses. They, like the biblical myrrh bearers, first went to the grave and marked it with a stone bearing the following epitaph, "At this place, along with others from our country, the Ustashi killers murdered 1,486 victims from the *Opstina* Grubisno Polje in 1941. This memorial stone marker was erected by the society *Napredna Zena* (The Progressive Woman) of Grubisno Polje. June 2, 1957".

After establishing the Danica concentration camp, the Ustashi set up the transit camp at Gospic, which had two divisions; one for the death camp Jadovno at Velebit Mountain; and the second for Slano, on Pag Island on the Adriatic. In the *Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia*, and other published books on the Ustashi and their camps in the N.D.H., it is usually stated that the Jadovno death camp was opened in May 1941.

Judging from other evidence, however, the camp and its places of execution, must have been established before this date, that is, immediately after the Ustashi assumption of power in Gospic and Lika, and that was, as we have seen, on the afternoon of April 10, 1941. There is much evidence showing that Serbians were being held at the Gospic prison on April 10, and 11, 1941. There are survivors of that time who still remember, that immediately thereafter, the captives were put on the road to Velebit, to Jadovno. (Some of them, for example, Serbians who wanted to

take food to their relatives held at Gospic during those April days, were reliably informed by friends that the prisoners had already been taken to Jadovno. The Jadovno Camp itself, however, was only a temporary camp to hold those destined for liquidation in the pits).

It appears that Lika, and especially Gospic and vicinity, more than all other areas of the N.D.H. (Croatia) became the horrible maelstrom of exterminating Serbians. Jakov Blazevic (vol.II pp. 52-52), an eyewitness said, "The situation was especially difficult in Lika....there were atrocities on a massive scale, the formation of a death camp at Jadovno where they threw living people into deep chasms; the slaughter of Serbian people; the persecution of Communists and antifascist and full prisons. That was the picture of Lika in those days". To this end, Pavelic (the leader of Croatia) it appears, decreed that even all Croat civilians be armed at Gospic and its vicinity. The principal criminals at Gospic and Jadovno, however, were known Ustashi even before the war. They were: Juco Rukavina, Jurica Frkovic, Stjepan Rubinic, Tomljenovic, and others. They were the principal architects and supervisors of the Jadovno hell, whose horror began to spread over the countryside from the very first days of the horrible and bloody N.D.H.(Croatia).

I remember once reading the book *Ustaski Logori* (Ustashi Camps), by Mirko Persen, published at Zagreb in 1966. Only now, however, during our visit to Jadovno, did his observation become perfectly clear that the Gospic prison was selected to be the collection point for those "reluctant elements" because they considered the dark Velebit chasms useful to serve as mass graves. To this we would now add that this horrible "selection" was made perhaps also because the Jadovno pits were difficult to reach and hard to verify and the Ustashi thought that if the future turned out to be not what they expected, the nature and extent of their crimes against the Serbian people of this part of Yugoslavia could neither be investigated nor proved.

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That the liquidation of Serbians began at Jadovno in mid-April 1941, can be established by the fact that on April 20, 1941, "some Serbians from the village Sibuljina, in the Velebit foothills near the sea, were being marched from Karlobag via Baska Ostarija across the Metla Ridge to Jadovno" and on the same day they found a camp there, fenced in, with many Serbian prisoners already there. This was reported by Pavle Babac, a native of the village Sibuljina and who, until recently, was on the staff of Military-Historical Institute and the Military Encyclopedia, in Belgrade. In his book, *Velebitsko Podgorje 1941-1945* (The Velebit Foothills 1941-1945) which was written in 1965 and published recently in Belgrade, he describes the arrival of these first Serbians from Sibuljina village at Jadovno and their subsequent murder in the death pits along with other camp inmates. He also reports the shocking witness of one of the survivors of one of those Serbians of Sibuljina village, Serdja Poljak. This man miraculously survived and saved himself from the karst pit in which other prisoners met their fate. (This sole witness we show separately in Appendix 3).

Pavle Babac at the same time also describes the existing collecting prison at Gospic, from which, during these same April days, great numbers of people were sent to Jadovno. In describing the fate of other groups of Serbians from the very same village whom the Ustashi apprehended April 22, 1941 and took first to Gospic, and then to Jadovno the following day, he said, "As the first group was held at the Gospic prison, (April 22, 1941) two additional villagers from Sibuljina, the brothers Jovan and Ilija Lukic were brought in to join them. When they were brought into the yard of the prison, the brothers were surprised at the huge crowd of people in the slovenly part of the prison and the exhausted and the worried appearance of the prisoners. The prisoners sat on the ground and numbly watched the constant haste of the Ustashi who were unloading the overfilled truckloads of people brought in and then reloading the truck with special groups of the prisoners set aside for that purpose. These groups were bound together with wire and were led away in an unknown

direction (that is, to Jadovno). Each day trains and trucks were arriving more frequently and with more people than the managers at Gospic could physically ship off to Jadovno for extermination. About a thousand new prisoners were arriving at Gospic every day. This continued uninterruptedly from April 20, 1941 to the beginning of August of that year. For 70 days, this works out to be about 70,000 souls”.

We do not know why Pavle Babac set the end of the term of the death camp Jadovno at August 1941 (he had obviously wrongly stated the term to be 70 days, instead of 100 days, because Jadovno operated until the end of August 1941, as he himself states in another place where he spoke of the Slano and Metajno death camps at Pag). But what is obvious in his and in other accounts is that the apprehension of Serbians in Lika and Podgorje, their collection in Gospic prison and their transfer to the death camp at Jadovno began in mid April 1941. At the beginning of May 1941, Serbians from more distant places in the N.D.H. (Croatia) began arriving in Gospic and Jadovno. These were, for example, those larger groups of Serbians abducted from Banija and Kordun on May 6, and May 10, 1941. This, then, is how the Jadovno river of blood started to flow from about 1,000 victims each day. The river continued to flow for fully four months from mid-April to mid-August of 1941, the bloodiest year for Serbians. Once mentioned, may it never return!

It is obvious, according to the above, that Jadovno was the first death camp and it ranks first in the campaign of “mass extermination of Serbians”. The camp already was opened for this purpose in April 1941 and operated at a frenzied pace. The “auxiliary camp” as we might call it, was the camp at Slano, on Pag Island on the other side of Velebit Mountain, on the sea and the road to that camp led from Gospic via Karlobag, through the so-called “Velebit Gates”. This auxiliary camp was opened on June 25, 1941 and operated until mid-August, that is, for a somewhat shorter period than the Jadovno death camp. Both of these death camps were supplied with victims by the collection camp (prison) at Gospic. Although men, women and children were brought to the Gospic collection camp from everywhere, most were Serbians



from Lika. They were villagers taken from their fields or directly from their own houses. They were bound with wire and loaded into trucks and taken to Jadovno where the Ustashi murdered their victims. This is how the eyewitness testimony of Marija Grzetic describes it.

The Slano and Metajna camps on Pag Island were shut down in mid- August 1941 because this area belonged to the Italian Zone of Occupation. Before the shutdown of these camps, many of their remaining inmates were taken to the pits at Jadovno, although earlier, many had been murdered at Pag. (Actually, the camps on Pag Island were closed on August 19th or 20th, 1941, when the Ustashi, on orders from Zagreb, withdrew towards Gospic. The Italian Medical Detachment of the V Army Corps then came to Pag Island. Before the Ustashi left, they were to erase all traces of the camp and to reclaim the grounds. By that time, it was established that the Ustashi on Pag Island had murdered about 18,000 victims. The last group of 3,000 Serbians and some Jews were sent from Pag to the death camp at Jadovno because the operations of the Jadovno hell were intensified until just before the end of August when here also the Italian black-shirts and their army was to arrive. At that time, the Ustashi withdrew from Jadovno, destroying, as much as they could, all traces of the death camp at Jadovno.

The last remaining prisoners at Jadovno, the Ustashi murdered and threw into the pits called Saran and Grgin Breg at Stupacinovo, near Ostarije, where most of the Jews had been gathered. (Some of these may have been thrown into other pits on Velebit Mountain. As proof that the Ustashi used other pits on Velebit besides Jadovno, we shall mention here two additional pits known as *Jarcija Jama* beyond Divoselo and Olanka towards Visocica, and *Jamina*, beyond Kruscica, in the Velebit foothills. In this last- named pit, the recent discovery of the bones of several hundred victims is described in Appendix 4).

There is much evidence to establish that Jadovno was operating during the latter half of August 1941, but perhaps most distinctive is the statement of Drago Svetlicic, of Doboje (given after his escape to Serbia). Drago Svetlicic was taken to Gospic

prison on August 9, 1941 with a large number of prisoners. (... "at that time, the end of August 1941, there was a virtual river of prisoners flowing into Gospic and towards Jadovno, the great slaughterhouse of innocent people" Blazevic. vol.II p.75). On August 24, 1941, Drago Svetlicic was bound and in a group of 900 Serbians destined for Velebit. "But on the same day", he said, "the Italians arrived at Gospic and ordered a halt in further transfers to Jadovno" and the final group of prisoners from Gospic were taken by rail to Jasenovac from which camp Svetlicic escaped and came to Serbia.

It is clear then, that until that very day, Jadovno was uninterruptedly swallowing up its innumerable victims brought from Gospic "at the rate of 800 to 1200 daily" as Svetlicic stated. "They were bound with wire, two by two, and were linked by a chain in the middle of the column ...This is how they took away 18,000 Serbs while I was there. These were taken to Velebit Mountain and were killed with a blow of a solid object to the head and were then thrown in a deep chasm among the rocks".

These death camps on both sides of Velebit Mountain, especially that horrible killing place of the innocent and harmless at Jadovno were to be followed by the no less horrible death camps Jasenovac and Velika Gradiska (both of these existed and operated during the entire war years and the years of the N.D.H. (Croatia). There were other known Ustashi and fascist camps at Jastrebarsko, Lepoglava, Donji Miholjac, Kostajnica, Dubica, Kerestinec, at Samobor, near Zagreb, Lobograd, Tenja, near Osijek, Djakovo, Kruscica, near Travnik, Zemun, and Banjica, as well as the deportation and resettlement camps at Caprag, near Sisak, Bjelovar, Slavonska Pozega, Slavonski Brod, Bihac, and Vinkovci.

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The four months Jadovno was in operation, and the almost daily delivery of people in larger or smaller groups to be cast into the deep pits ranks this camp, because of the intensity of the

operations of its horrible death mill, perhaps the most awful of all the known death camps of World War II.

Testimony of surviving witnesses indicate that, somewhere about 1,000 men, women and children were arriving at Gospic every day during the months Jadovno operated. All of them were sent, principally to Jadovno to be cast into the bottomless pits of Velebit. The horrible 120 days of the existence and operation of Jadovno camp, and the even more horrible daily average of 1,000 living human beings delivered and exterminated clearly attests to the high number of its victims.

Who then needs at all costs and wherever possible to reduce the numbers or to detract from these tragic victims, who were first of all Serbians and Orthodox? We do not want to play the "numbers game" (as though it were some kind of bidding at auction) because the precise number is no longer important since there were already so many victims. It is important to remember these innocent victims and to hold their memory in religious piety; to remember and to call them to memory, this and nothing more. Because this sacred remembrance of them is a reminder also for the future. That is why and with good reason, at the entrance to the concentration camp at Dachau, it is written, "He who desires to forget the victims, also desires that they (crimes against them) be repeated".

There is testimony of various methods of liquidating the victims at Jadovno. Some to the effect that the prisoners, often half alive and even fully alive, were thrown headlong into the pit. Most often they were bound hand to hand with wire, in groups of 20 or more, and then only the first few were killed with the rifle butt, the mallet, or whatever the murderer happened to have at hand. These were then pushed into the pit, and they dragged the rest down with them as they fell. That is why even today in Lika it is said that they could hear screams and cries of people from the pit for several days or nights. One woman, a Croat, related that she heard a railroad whistle coming from the Saran Pit for three days running. This is not improbable because some, like us, found that on Velebit Mountain on still mornings or evenings, the smallest sound carries very far over the clear mountain air. Jadov-

no, however, lies at an altitude of 1,200 meters above sea level, and all of Lika, like Kosovo, is actually a plateau. Gospic, for example, even though it is on a plain, is about 550 meters above sea level.

As regards torture by the Ustashi, in the camps or elsewhere, it was said, "to be killed by a bullet was good luck" and in Jadovno camp there were also mass shootings. (I read a personal account of this at the Jadovno camp by Milan Tršćanin. He wrote, "Bursts of machinegun fire continue at Jadovno camp. They can be heard well down below, near Gospic. Even on August 4 and 5, 1941, it didn't stop. There, they shot to death over 20,000 Jews, Serbs and others whom the Ustashi sentenced to death. Death came to a certain number of natives of Divo Selo there or on that day. On the same night, Serbian villages near Gospic disappeared in flames which were horribly reflected in the cloudy night sky". (*Lika U.N.O.B. 1941* Lika in the National Liberation War 1941. p. 178.)

At Jadovno camp in the Velebit highlands, and in the depths of its pits, people were simply exterminated, no matter how. The main thing is that it was for no reason; they were to blame without fault; guilty because they were living; because they were what they were for ages. Decent and good natured, many a Lika Serbian then said, "No one can kill me by God's justice, for I am neither guilty nor deserving of punishment!" He was nevertheless killed, neither guilty nor deserving; killed by monsters, by criminals who thought up something as horrible as Jadovno, our common sorrow.

Jadovno best shows what was to be realized in Lika, in the *Krajina*, and further over the entire death dealing N.D.H. (Croatia) had not the people, the peasantry, arisen, barehanded, armed with the staff and the hoe (The peasantry rebelled by tradition, first in escape; and then in self defense).

The danger of genocide threatened the Serbian Orthodox population over the entire N.D.H. (Croatia), but nowhere as much as here in Lika and the Frontier (*Krajina*) Region. At

gatherings at Gospic during those bloody days and months of 1941, the Ustashi Vice Commander, Mile Budak, laid out the "Greater Ustashi Plan", which was to exterminate one part of the Serbians; to resettle abroad another part of them; and the remaining Serbians were to be brought into the Roman Catholic Church to become Croats. Neither he nor his N.D.H., however, kept even this promise. Budak, and others like him, such as Gutic, in Banja Luka, directly incited crowds to commit the most brutal genocide against the Serbians which horrified decent Croats, neighbors of the Serbians in the Frontier (*Krajina*) Region for ages. (The Ustashi criminals concealed their crimes at Jadovno also from decent Croats, as older, Croatian women of these regions confirmed). The incitation of crowds by Budak and others of his ilk, created Jadovno, the Glina massacre, Jasenovac and other death camps and places of torture for innocent Serbians and caused, as well the razing of perhaps some 20,000 to 30,000 homes and churches in Lika alone. Everything Serbian was erased; entire villages and parishes of Serbians. (In the Gorno-Karlovac Diocese, of 203 Orthodox Churches and chapels, the Ustashi destroyed 88 and caused major destruction to 67 others, that comprises about three-fourths of the Serbian religious properties).

In the infamous N.D.H. from Velebit to the Drina, the blood of innocent brethren, Christians, men and women, the aged and nursing babies, mostly Serbian, was being spilled during those horrible days and months when even the name Serbian could not be mentioned. The designation "Serbian Orthodox faith" was also forbidden and was substituted by "the Greek Eastern faith". Nowhere was the blood-letting as great as in this ancient, always disturbed, heroic Frontier (*Krajina*) Region. This is preserved as a horrible witness in a verse among the people:

**"Frontier Region, thou bloody garment  
Which sleeps in blood, and arises in blood  
And eats of bloody morsels..."**

Jadovno was, during these bloody summer months of 1941, perhaps the bloodiest place, but the blood of its victims was hidden. Also today, the peace and rest of its martyrs, silent and humble, is so concealed, but perceptably alive; alive and within our reach. The sacred relics of the Martyrs of Jadovno are locked deep in the interior of Velebit, and their heavenly and earthly peace and their memory is present deep in our souls, our hearts, and our consciences.

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The principal reason for our memorial trip to Velebit from Belgrade via Glina, Kordun and Lika to Jadovno was to also to preserve the memory of the victims and to pay our respects. Last year, a number of our students was here. Because remembrance continues amongst us; it is not forgotten and is renewed each time we chant unto God, "*Vecnaja Pamjat*" (Memory Eternal) for all of those who have died.

We people are often not even conscious of how great our remembrance is, not to mention that of God. That is why the thief on the cross said these words to Christ, "Remember me O Lord, in Thy Kingdom". Remembrance in Christ is also our eternity, our eternal meditation in remembrance and our unforgetting love. All of the church sacraments, and its unification of heaven and earth in Christ, the Man-God, is contained in its Divine-Liturgical remembrance. Remembrance and offering "For Each one and for All"... we remember, first of all the Lord. His Holy Church, and collectively His People, from one end of the land to the other.

One of our poets wrote the following verse about our victims in these western regions:

**"May oblivion never fall upon these victims,  
The million fallen by the hand of the Ustashi,  
And may for these burial mounds, for those  
glorious dead,  
The sound of the churchbells never cease".**

At Jadovno, we did not have church bells (there are still no church bells of the destroyed and as yet unrestored churches in Lika) but we celebrated a Divine Liturgy for them, and with them, the Jadovno Martyrs as witnesses, binding of our unity in Christ, a unity with "All the Saints" in the words of the Apostle Paul. "We still offer to Thee, Lord, this reasoned and bloodless Service — the Service of Peace and Love for those who perished in the faith of our fathers and brothers... These are Thy Martyrs and Thy Confessors at Jadovno and everywhere under Thy Governance".

Another poet from Lika, below Velebit, on his return visit to Lika with us wrote these lines:

**"At each place, left and right,  
I meet all of you, my brothers,  
And pay my respects".**

And on this day, Friday, September 10, a day commemorating the Holy Martyrs Minodora, Mitrodora, Nimphodora, and others, we also served for them a truly Divine-Liturgical Memorial Service.

At Jadovno, on that day (more precisely beginning in the evening) we placed a memorial plaque (Stone), a "grave marker" as it was called by Fr. Jovan Nikolic, of Zagreb, who spoke on the occasion. The stone was placed there by the kind, good people who are always to be found amongst us (regardless of the various attempts to discourage us by the admonition by local authorities that "our safety could not be guaranteed at Jadovno". We asked, "Whose safety? Threatened by whom?"). The marker was dedicated to "The Archpriests, Priests, and the Faithful of the Serbian Orthodox Church Who Perished at Velebit In the Jadovna Pits"

The memorial was placed at Saran Pit where there were other memorial markers (The other Pits as yet have no markers). The rite of blessing of the marker and the memorial service for "all those who were slain here by the hand of the criminal" was celebrated by His Eminence Simeon, Bishop of Gorno-Karlovac, along with about 40 of his priests and several of us from other

areas, both priests and students, including one from Kosovo, now physically distant, but always spiritually near to us, especially today.

It was moving, and touching to the point of tears to see and to experience this youthful wreath of students and priests gathered around this pit which is undoubtedly the most shocking and the most famed for its martyrs. It is a pit of an entire nation because in this pit were thrown Serbs from all parts of our country, but they were people who did not forget their own memory and their memory in God. This was marked along with other things by a blessing sent by our sacred Hilandar Monastery. The Monastery sent a wooden Cross, a candle and incense, gifts and symbols of Christ, intended to be let down into the pit of the Jadovno Martyrs on this day.

For those who perhaps will not have the opportunity of visiting Jadovno (and for other reasons, as well) we shall give the words of the epitaph on this memorial stone. But before that, we will give the epitaph on three other markers at Saran Pit.

On a small marker, on ordinary stone near the turn towards Saran Pit, the following is inscribed:

**“This is also one of the pits into which  
the Ustashi, criminals, in the service of the  
Occupation, threw thousands of people of Lika  
And other parts of our country in the Summer  
Of 1941. Never will these innocent victims of  
Criminal Fascism be forgotten. Glory to them!**

**July 27, 1961.**

The memorial was placed there probably by the local chapter of the Veterans Association.

A second, larger marker, behind the pit itself, carries the names of those victims from Sremski Karlovci (who were largely the Serbian intelligencia, as in the case of our bishops and priests which was characteristic of the way the camp at Jadovno operated).



The marker reads:

Brought to Jadovno where they fell as victims of Ustashi-Fascist terror in July 1941 were the following from Sremski-Karlovci: Milan Bozic, Borivoje Krasojevic, Aleksandar Manojlovic, Borislav Matejic, Aleksandar Matic, Prof. Milenko Piscevic, Stevan Simeonovic-Cokic, Dr. Jur., Jovan Popovic, M.D., Prof. Radovan Prosenc. This memorial marker was erected by the Sremski-Karlovci Association of Veterans of the National Liberation War.

On a small marker on a wall alongside the pit is a memorial inscription which reads: Ljubotin, Nikola. 10 X 1897- 30 VII 1941. Otocac.

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On the marble marker, placed and blessed today which was placed on the wall to the left of the Saran Pit the following words and names were inscribed in Cyrillic (unfortunately it was not inscribed with a cross, although it had 4 metal cruciform bolts):

To Archpriests, priests, and the faithful of the Serbian Orthodox Church who perished in the Pits of Jadovno on Velebit in 1941: Bishop Petar Zimonjic, Metropolitan of Dabro-Bosanski: Sava Trlajic, Bishop of Gorno-Karlovac; Priests, Nikola Ban, Milan Bozic, Danilo Brakus, Ilija Budimir, Petar Vucinic, Bogoljub Gakovic, Vojislav Gasic, Djordje Gospic, Milan Diklic, Vladimir Dujic, Milan Dokmanovic, Milojko Dosen, Milan Djukic, Lazar Zivadinovic, Mihajlo Jovanovic, Dmitrije Jerkovic, Teofan Kosanovic, Ljubomir Krnjic, Dusan Krnjevic, Bogdan Lalic, Pantelija Landup, Jovan Magarasevic, Djordje Milojevic, Risto Markovic, Stanislav Nasadil, Emilijan Nedic, Tihomir Neskovic, Pavle Obradovic, Vujadin Panjkovic, Ilija Pavlica, Dimitrije Pantelic, Stevan Popovic, Milenko Popovic, Uros Rajcevic, Petar Raseta, Milan Rajcevic, Jovan Stanojevic, Jasa Stepanov, Matija Stijacic, Djuro Stojanovic, Metodije Subotin, Petar Tovirac, Konstantin Todorovic, Antim Culimovic, Stevan Curcic, Jovan Cuturic, Aleksandar Cupovic, Damjan Strbac, Ljubomir Skoric. As a sign of piety, this marker is placed by the Union of the Associations of

Orthodox Clergy of the Socialist Republic of Croatia. Jadovno. 83.

As can be seen, here can be found the entire assembly of the Lord's Church, because our Orthodox Church neither here at Jadovno nor in general is it comprised of only of the bishops and the priests without the faithful. We all know, however, no matter what the number of the faithful, their names could not be placed on this kind of memorial, but what is to be done? (It must also be mentioned that the memorial epitaph just barely got by the censors, and was disapproved by one censor because of the words at the beginning "and the faithful").

In general, the names, the life-history and the suffering of these lost Serbian bishops, priests and faithful, whose number is known only to all-knowing God, deserve to be permanently inscribed in our hearts and we must learn to know their heaven and earthly sacrament. And the sacrament of all human beings is both heavenly and earthly; always in the nature of Man-God, as Father Justin Popovic often reminded us and as the New Martyrs of Jadovno so clearly remind us today.

If we were to inscribe the names of only those faithful who died here which we know now, our journal would have to be changed into a separate book of the Lives of the Saints. But we hope God can grant that also. In such a book could then go all the names of the martyrs here and the dead "who by faith conquered...endured cruel mockings and scourgings, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tested, they were slain with the sword....they were destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and in caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:33-39) And all these martyrs died for the faith.

For the moment, we shall mention here only two, perhaps by the Lord's Providence, who had ended their martyr's life here and rest together with their faithful. These are Metropolitan Petar, Bishop of All Bosnia, and Bishop Sava of Gornja Krajina.

Along with these two new priest-martyrs, there are also numerous others; most of them are from the Gorno-karlovac

Diocese (of the 70 lost, 22 rest here and are mentioned); followed by the Zvornik-Tuzla Diocese (of which 15 are named here). Along with their bishops and pastors here rest innumerable martyrs from among the faithful from the two dioceses mentioned. These were followed by those from the dioceses Zagreb, Pakrac (Slavonija), Banja Luka, Srem, Dalmatia, and Zahumsko-Hercegovina. Among the latter group was Archpriest Dusan Krnjevic, who, on July 21, 1941, was brought from Mostar to Gospic with 300 of his bound Serbian Hercegovinians who were then brought to Jadovno and thrown into the pits.

Of the numerous priests who died at this place and whose names are inscribed on the marker, most were brought here in a group and were thrown into the Jadovno pits on July 3, 1941 after terrible suffering at the Gospic prison, on the night of July 1, and 2, 1941. The interested reader can find a considerable amount of information collected on the these priests and on many other Serbian priests, their martyrdom, and the torments inflicted on them by the Ustashi in the book *Spomenici Pravoslavnog Sveštenstva Zrtava Fasistickog Terora I Palih U NOB* (Memorials of Orthodox Clergy Victims of Fascist Terror and Casualties in the National Liberation War) published by the Association of Priests in Belgrade in 1960. It is not clear to us, however, why the Priests Union of Croatia placed the names of only 49 priests on the memorial, apparently taken directly from the book mentioned above, and omitted known names of others such as Ilija Ilic, of Plaski, Nikola Bogunovic, of Donji Lapac, and perhaps also Pavle Katanic of Bijelinja. Secondly, we note here that the book also omits a number of other names of our Priests who died in the last war. But, we are thankful to have even those names given.

Finally, we want to note that on the memorial marker, among the names of the Jadovno Martyrs are four Priest-Monks (two from each of the monasteries of Gomirje and Tavna) as well as two deacons. All of them represented the total Orthodox Church: there were Bishops, priests, deacons, Monks and the faithful. "Preserve the fullness of Thy Church, O Lord, and Save Thy people and bless Thine Inheritance".

The activities surrounding our memorial and our respects to the Martyrs of Jadovno were completed about noon. We, however, were not in a hurry. One doesn't easily part with Jadovno; something draws one to remain just a while longer. Rarely does one feel the peace and quiet which prevails here. Here, as in Kosovo, the heavens and the earth come together, the Kingdom of Heaven and the earth are united.

We also want to add finally that our memorial was also attended by the Roman Catholic parish priest of Trnovac village, Josip Kapus, and, almost at the very end two representatives of the Socialist Union of Gospic arrived. We thank them.

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We left Jadovno and went down to Gospic, to a fraternal love feast, after which, on the same afternoon, we started through Lika for Belgrade.

Our road took us from Gospic, via Licki Osik and Bunic (where our church there was also burned to the ground in 1941 after the torture of prominent Serbians and sending the priest to Jadovno). The road led further to Korenica and then, via Plitvica and Licko Petrovo Selo towards Bihac and proud Bosnia which also did not suffer less than these areas. Passing through these areas of the Lika and Bosnia *Krajina* with a priest, a native, we heard again, on the very terrain, one might say, the story of the sufferings of the people of these lands between the Rivers Lika, Jadova, Krbava and the Una during this last war.

At Licko Petrovo Selo, we visited a recently restored church which the Ustashi had destroyed (after killing some tens of Serbians there and then taking the priest, Nikola Zagorac, who was thrown from the bell tower to his death with the words "*Nesta Krsta sa tri prsta*" (There is no longer the [symbol] of the cross with three fingers, a reference to the Orthodox way of making the sign of the cross). Thanks to God, this did not come true, as the restoration of this church in this Frontier Region testifies. Further, at Bihac, where also a large church was destroyed on Vidov

Dan (St. Vitus Day, 1941), we passed by a grave at Garavici where 12,000 Serbians from Bosnia and Lika, along with a number of Gypsies and Jews, were killed and buried in a common grave.

We didn't have time to go from Bihac to the many places of massacres and killings along the Una River towards Bosanska Krupa, Dvor, Kostajnica, and Dubica, all the way to the confluence of the Una and the Sava Rivers near the unsurpassed death camp Jasenovac under which lies a Serbian population greater than any Serbian city in the history of this long-suffering people.

The entire course of the Una river (over 200 kilometers) divides Bosnia, Lika, Kordun and Banija, all the way to the Sava and Jasenovac. This river was for ages past and remains yet a silent witness to the sufferings of the people of this region, the long-suffering Frontier Region, *the Krajina*, especially during the last war. Along this river and other smaller rivers and streams of this region, no one knows how many other places where killings occurred have yet to be found. How many more pits and unmarked graves are there?

On the road along the Una River, I recalled the verse by Jovan Ducic:

**Because the bloody rivers are everywhere  
amongst us  
The swords of the killers are all of one forge;  
Carried by grandsons where their forefathers  
carried them.**

One of our Serbians from Lika said somewhere, I'm not sure where, "Eh, one doesn't know whether the people are worse, or whether it is worse for the people". Another person, again from Lika, told me many times, "If one only knew how good these people were! What kindness was in these martyrs. May God not permit the loss of this spiritual wealth!" It appears to me that he was thinking of the suffering and the martyrdom of these Frontier Region (*Krajina*) martyrs who came mostly from these areas, from Jadovno to Jasenovac. One can compare them only with the

Martyrs of Kosovo, the old and new martyrs. For that reason we started out again from Jadovno to Kosovo.

**TROPARION (in the 8th Tone)  
TO  
THE SERBIAN NEW MARTYRS**

For your faith in God and in God's justice,  
You suffered bodily, the earth mourned,  
But you saved your souls, the Heavens rejoice;  
Your forefathers rejoice in Heaven.  
At the gates of Heaven, they greet you with song:  
"Your names are written in the Book of Eternity,  
Enter into Paradise, children of immortality".  
We, on earth, your kinsmen, cry out aloud to you:  
"New Martyrs, Pray for us!"

Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovic)  
(From the Service for the Holy Serbian New Martyrs)

**APPENDIX 1**

Taken from *Prosvjeta* monthly journal of the Serbian Cultural Society Prosvjeta. Zagreb. Nos. 584-585 July-August 1969. pp. 6-8

**GRUESOME WITNESS**

We give here the story of villager Ljuban Jednak, of Seliste (Banija). Ljuban is the sole survivor of the victims of the terrible massacre in the Glina Serbian Church. As is known, the massacre by the Ustashi in the church in Glina during August 1941, was one of the first such massacres in Croatia. After this event, there followed mass killings of Serbians in Banija, Kordun, Slavonija and Lika.

Here is the ghastly witness and the charge of Ljuban Jednak. He speaks of his experiences on that gruesome night in simple words, quietly. His simple words were penetrating, terrible. He spoke quietly, calmly, but his fingers nervously drummed on the table:

“Here is how it was” began Ljuban; “On August 1941, I was at my house at Seliste. The people in the village and its vicinity were afraid because there were rumors about that the Ustashi were killing all Serbians over 16 years of age. We were all on our guard. Every day there was news of the intentions of the Ustashi. They were said to have killed someone here, someone there. Nothing reliable was known, however, and people didn’t believe that the stories were true.

On August 29, 1941, the Ustashi descended on the village unexpectedly. There was wailing and crying as they took all the males from the houses. I succeeded in withdrawing and ran away to Balinac. As soon as I got there in one house, a woman came into the house and said, ‘Run, here come the Ustashi’. I escaped again, this time to Gredjani. There, they told me that the Ustashi were searching for me. All the males over 16 had already been taken from the village. Among them were also very old men over 80 years of age. Fear and horror gripped the village. No one knew what was to happen to those abducted. Women were condemning the Ustashi and calling them names.

I had been in hiding for some time and was thinking about what I would do. I decided to look for a more secure shelter and came out onto the road. At a terrible time!

At a crossing, I came upon an Ustashi. He grabbed me and took me to a vehicle in which there were other captives. All of them were afraid and were asking one another what the Ustashi intended to do with them. O, was I crazy to let one lone member of the Ustashi take me prisoner! I should have knocked him down and run away and could have perhaps avoided all the suffering I later experienced.

We were taken to Topusko. On the way they (the Ustashi) were cursing our Serbian mothers, they mocked us and, winking

said that they were preparing a celebration for us. We suspected the worst.

They asked us if we preferred to go to the church or to the *Opstina* (Township building). Some of us chose one place and some the other. They asked me too. I saw that it was pointless to choose, so I replied that it was all the same to me.

They sent me to the *Opstina*. Escape was impossible. We were surrounded by the criminals who were armed to the teeth. They growled at us as though we were mad dogs. Some of the men were shaking and sweating and one young boy, still a child, cried. I looked through the window and observed the Ustashi laughing in front of the building. I knew some of them. One was Franjo Butorac, and the other Stevo Mulac. I didn't believe that these men were thinking to kill us. I knew these two men and never had any quarrel with them!

We remained at the *Opstina* a long time, standing first on one foot then on the other, whispering, trying to figure out what will happen. I was hungry, but there was no food.

About 3:00 PM, a truck pulled up in front of the building. I looked out of the window: the truck was loaded with Serbians from Staro Selo, Katinovac, and Perna. I knew many of them. Among them were youths and old men. Their eyes cast about fearfully.

When the truck stopped one of the Ustashi, named Tusic, ran out to inspect the captives to see if they had weapons. They began to unload them from the truck, one by one. They were hitting the prisoners on the back and on the head with rifle butts. There were screams for help and shouts, 'Don't brothers. Save us. I implore you, in the name of God!'

Curses and more blows. The criminals then pressed towards us in the room and began to beat us with rifle butts; they kicked us and hit us with their fists. One of the Ustashi beat on the back of an old man as though on a block of wood; one could hear the blows and the heavy groans of the poor man. He was knocked down but he stood up again. The Ustasha hit him hard on the neck and blood began to flow from the forehead of the victim on his white shirt. One young boy screamed and cried for his mother.



There was beating everywhere. There was commotion and dust began to rise. Men were crouching behind tables and cupboards. Blood was sprinkled over the floor. Crude curses and the laughter of the Ustashi was mixed in with the cries for mercy of the helpless victims.

‘— — your Serbian mother, today you will urinate blood’ yelled the Ustasha savagely.

‘But sir, how have I wronged you? Stop, if you know God. Have mercy!’ cried the victims.

I succeeded in edging over to those who had already been beaten. The criminals were turning out the pockets of the victims and were taking their money. Some of them were themselves taking out their money and giving it to the Ustashi just so they wouldn’t beat them. Among the Ustashi there arose a quarrel about the money. In searching one man they found 3000 dinars and began to fight about the money...

Then they brought us out in front of the building. An empty truck pulled up. I looked around to see some familiar face, someone who could rescue me. I saw an old acquaintance Djuro Vukinovac. He was talking with another Ustasha. I moved close to him and implored him to intercede for me and to rescue me. He looked at me in surprise but immediately shook his head saying, ‘I would save you Ljuban, if I could. But you see yourself that I can’t and I’m not allowed’. He turned away from me. Then the command was given. The Ustashi gathered around the truck pushing us in with their rifle butts and gunbarrels. Some of the unfortunates climbed in. For others it was hard because of their beatings.

As the truck pulled away that Djuro whom I had asked to save me a short while earlier ran up to me. This surprised me greatly. But before I had a chance to ask him anything, he hit me on the head with his fist. His face had changed. His eyes were wide open as though he had gone mad. He grabbed for my hat and took it from me. That was all, he needed my hat! I was astonished how a man can become an animal so quickly. I could not understand. We were old and good acquaintances and never had any kind of

disagreement between us. Where then did this sudden hatred come from?

They did not take us far in the truck. They unloaded us at the railroad station at Topusko. Some Serbs from surrounding villages were already there. They were being pushed into railcars. I found myself squeezed into a freight car with 150 men. We were stepping over each other's feet.

It was unbearably hot, we could hardly breathe. Later, it was increasingly more difficult to bear the crush and the insufficient air. A terrible odor began to spread about. Older men were moaning; some fainted after about two hours; young boys were crying for help and weeping. A terrible thirst plagued all of us.

The rail car was on a siding, waiting for a locomotive from somewhere. Time passed, but it seemed to me that everything lasted for ages. I dragged myself towards the one small window and saw Stanko Zuzic, of Gredjani in front of the car where he was on guard. I called to him by name and asked him to open the door a little bit so that we don't suffocate.

'Off with you pig', was his reply.

'Stanko, if you know God, give me water', I asked.

'Off with you'.

Night was falling. Men could no longer hold back and began to lose control of their bladders as they stood, packed in the crowd. The suffocating air became even worse. The men wanted the car to go, no matter where, just so it moved. But still there was no locomotive.

The whole night passed. At dawn, preparations began for departure.

'Couple this car', we heard the order outside, 'These are going to forced labor...'

Hope rose up in all of us. To forced labor, then good! take us where you will, just don't beat us or kill us! All of us began to come alive and began to forget the pain and suffering. Justice will be found in this world for us too, we thought.

Under those conditions, the train brought us to Glina.

The doors opened noisily. Fresh air came into the car. Two by two, we jumped from the car and stood in a line. A new squad of

Ustashi met us. They looked at us hatefully. They took us in front of the Glina church.

Here, we were met by the Glina Ustashi butcher, Nikola Vidakovic:

'So you arrived, —your Vlach mothers! There, take them in, let them pray to their Serbian God. It will be for their souls....Run for the keys so that we can lock up all these worthless wretches in the church'.

They took us into the church. There were about 160 of us. They locked the church and placed a guard over it. There was space for us there and we could breathe. We were alone and we talked quietly. Some of the group were shaking their heads saying that they were going to kill us. Most hoped we would be sent to forced labor. We were thirsty and hungry. We lay down.

The latch on the door turned and a man named Paja Krestalica and Milic entered and said, 'Stand up'.

Then they made a list of all those locked up. They said they needed this list to arrange our trip to forced labor in Lika. Our hopes rose again.

Around noon some Ustashi First lieutenant came and asked us if there was among us anyone who was converted (to Roman Catholicism). Two of the group said they were and the lieutenant took them with him.

Some comforted themselves saying that those two would not have to do forced labor...

After noon, again some Ustashi entered.

'Who is Pero Miljevic?'

Pero stepped forward. 'Here, then my boy, come closer. What do you know about the Cetniks? Tell us what you know.'

'I know that there was a list of Cetniks with the clerk (at the Opstina)', Pero answered frightened.

'Are you a Cetnik?'

'No'.

'You aren't, by god! You aren't a Cetnik, eh? You Vlach whore! In 1935, who was it that fired on Malinac? ....your mother...'

The Ustashi then attacked Miljevic. They took a thick rope from the bell tower and put Pero on the floor. They beat him for a long time until he was black from bruises. At first he cried out, then he just moaned.

They went away again.

Before nightfall other Ustashi came in and said, 'If anyone has any money, give it to us to buy some food'. The men gave them their money, altogether about 6,000 Dinars. Everyone was hungry and hardly waited for the Ustashi offer.

But no one returned with food.

At dusk, a truck stopped in front of the church. It had come up quietly and we didn't hear the motor until the door was opened. We were dumbstruck. Why are they taking us away at night? But before we could recover, the Ustashi rushed into the church. Their weapons flashed in the semidarkness and the Ustashi boots echoed in the church.

'Light the candles!'

Men hurried to light the candles. For some of them, the candles would not light and they busied themselves there for some time. I am not superstitious, but I could clearly see that the large candles just did not ignite. 'This is a sign' whispered the old men, their lips quivering.

The wavering light from the candles illuminated the church and the people. Their shadows moved on the walls of the church. The criminals observed us and regarded us with hatred. The hearts of the victims were beating so hard that it seemed that they could be heard.

'Do you believe in our Leader(of Croatia)?' howled one of the Ustashi.

'We believe' some voices answered.

'Shout it out. Long live the Poglavnik (leader)'.

Some of them shouted.

'Louder. — — your Serbian mother! Louder!'...

All of a sudden, a carbine was fired above our heads.

'Lie down', cried out one of the killers. We lay one by one in a row on the floor of the church.

'Stand up!...Lie down!... Stand up...' The unfortunate men followed the commands, standing and then dropping down. This went on for some time until one of the criminals shouted to the Ustashi, 'Why are you playing around, By God..' and he turned to us saying, 'Take everything off, clothes, shoes, everything'. Hurriedly coats, trousers and other clothes fell on the church floor. Men sat down and began to take off their shoes. No one asked why they had to disrobe. Everyone hurried feverishly in the fear that something terrible would happen if they did not hurry. Only sighs and heavy breathing was heard. Our hearts were racing.

While we were undressing the criminals went around the church destroying and breaking things. They were hitting the altar with their rifle butts. Icons were knocked down and fell to the ground. Some of the hanging votive lights the criminals took down and threw them at us, cursing at us at the top of their voices.

They forced us to lie down. We were wearing only our shirts and underwear. As people gone mad, they began to walk over us and to beat us with their rifle butts and gun barrels, and kicked us with their boots anyway they could. There was a din of moaning, complaining and crying out for mercy.

'Where is Pero Miljevic?' one of the Ustashi asked.

Pero answered in a weak voice. He had already been severely beaten, and begged them not to beat him. Again they questioned him about the Cetniks.

A knife in the hands of one of the Ustashi gleamed in the candle light. We held our breath.

The Ustasha slowly came up to Pero and in a wink, plunged the knife into his throat. Pero fell without a word. Blood burst out and all one could hear was the choking of a man dying. Obviously, the Ustasha was well trained in his bloody occupation.

They asked the rest of us if we knew something about the Cetniks. One man, Stojan Bajic, said he would tell them something about the Cetniks. The poor fellow believed that he would save himself.

'Tell us everything and you will be set free to go home', the Ustasha encouraged him.

'I will tell all. Only let me go'...

Stojan was telling them something but he didn't finish his statement. They killed him too. Now killing started everywhere. 'Kill, Kill', cried one of the criminals.

"This cannot be described", and Ljuban stopped for a second and placed his hand to his forehead, "It is as though I see the whole thing now. Men kneeling and imploring the Ustashi to spare them. But, one deep blow with the knife to the throat and one falls to the left....and it is over. The victim still tries to get up but a blow to the head with the rifle finishes the criminal act. Some drew back and tried to defend themselves with their hands, others waited for the blow to fall like sheep. One of the victims was struck in the face with the knife instead of the throat. Another one was struck in the arm. One recoiled but the Ustasha went after him and caught him in front of the wall ... his brains burst from his head and blood flowed over the stone floor of the church, and slowly, in a wide stream, flowed towards the church doors.

At first the deafening shouting abated somewhat. But the killing of the helpless men continued and lasted, it seemed like an eternity. There were cries coming from those lying in the blood on the floor. They were not all dead yet. I looked at the scene, crouched along the wall. It was dark in a corner behind a little church closet. I crawled in there behind the closet and waited for the Ustashi to finish.

Silence spread over the church. The victims were lying scattered about over the entire area. Some of them were still moving a hand or a foot. Moaning could be heard from somewhere. The Ustashi were resting and wiping the blood from their knives and their rifle butts. Some of them went out in front of the church.

All at once, everything was quiet and as the criminals gathered before the door, I jumped silently from my shelter and threw myself among those killed, in the blood which was still warm. Someone else did the same thing. We stretched out as though we were dead among the other bodies. The other person who had followed my example did not fare well. An Ustasha came in and noticed him move. He then came up to him and kicked him, saying, 'Get up'. The man got up.

'Put your head on the table'.

Then he grabbed the man by his hair and pressed his head on the table. He then cut the man's throat and ordered the man to sing. Blood was gushing from the man's throat and all one could hear was the choking sound. Another criminal struck him with a powerful blow of his rifle butt. The victim's head was crushed and his body collapsed.

Three people had hidden themselves in the altar and later climbed up into the bell tower. I later found out that they stayed there two days and two nights. No promises could induce them to come down and they were finally shot by the Ustasha Stevo Mulac.

I lay among the dead Serbs in the blood and awaited my fate. The Ustashi were talking about the deed they had done. They were praising themselves and giggling. A young boy who was lying near me surprisingly raised his head and let out a moan.

'It's not finished, —mother...' With a curse, the Ustasha sprang over to him and killed him.

And now it occurred to the criminals that others may yet still be alive and they began to beat on them with their rifle butts and stab them with their knives. I got several blows with the rifle butt but I didn't move. One of the killers was stabbing the bodies. He came close to me and plunged his knife into a body lying next to me and then kneeled on my back and stabbed the body beyond me...He passed me up...The whole time, the idea that I was going to survive did not leave me.

Then they began to drag the bodies out of the church and to throw them into the truck. They grabbed me. They dragged me by my feet along the stone floor and on the step, my head hit on the stone but I endured this without a sign of life.

They threw me into the truck which was already almost full of corpses. I lay on my back. The Ustashi continued to place their victims on the truck. It was already late at night. I waited for a chance to pull myself out but none came. While I was lying there, a most horrible thing happened. They laid a corpse on top of me in such a way that the victim's severed throat arteries pressed right against my mouth...

Here, Ljuban stopped. He looked at me with a confused smile before he continued. "I did not believe that in such a short time,

a man could experience such horrors. But the idea that I would survive was fixed firmly in my brain. Perhaps that conviction was what saved me...

Here is what followed. We weren't taken very far in the truck. Soon I felt the truck leave the paved road. It went over uneven ground and I heard the order, 'Go closer to the pit'.

The butchers were waiting here. They were doing their work here, above the pit. The large pit was already half full of corpses. They were throwing us from the truck into the pit. In the pit itself, the Ustashi were stacking the corpses like firewood. Two of them grabbed me by the hands and by the feet, they swung me a few times and threw me into the pit. I fell on something soft, on the corpses. They dragged me along the pit and stacked me in an empty place in the row. I was in luck to be again near the top. I lay there for an eternity. Trucks were arriving but with living people. Here, above the pit they were killing the victims with axes and hammer blows to the head and were throwing *them into the* pit. There was not much crying out or screaming for help. In the quiet night, one could hear the axes striking the victims, an occasional cry and Ustashi curses. The bloody bodies fell into the pit. They brought a young woman forward. I think she was the teacher at Bovic. They raped her at the edge of the pit *and then* killed her with a carbine...

Late that night, the bloody work was done. Some of the killers were still in the pit, walking over the corpses searching for rings and other valuables. One of them spied my undershirt. He pulled me and turned me and struggling, finally pulled it off. He did not notice that I was alive.

It became still colder and I was beginning to shake. I was afraid that the Ustashi would see me shaking.

Above the pit, the Ustashi looked over their victims. One of the victims still moved. Carbines and revolvers raked the pit. I was hit in the foot...

Finally, everything became quiet. The killers gathered around a lantern farther away from the pit and were talking about their accomplishments. Soon, absolute darkness covered the pit and the surrounding area. I began to prepare for the escape. I looked



around and raised myself a little. Suddenly among the corpses one of the bodies moved, arose and crawled over to me.

'Are you alive?', the man asked in a whisper. I was quiet, and did not want to admit even to this victim, that I was alive. But the man was nudging and whispering to that we must run for it. We came to an understanding and agreed.

The Ustashi were busy with their stories and were farther away. It was dark everywhere around the pit. We pulled ourselves out of the pit silently one after another into some weeds. The wound on my foot burned, but I could walk. We moved farther and farther away from the light of the lantern. The voices of the killers were becoming fainter in the dark... I separated from my victim-companion, and we each went our separate way. I didn't know where I was. I wandered around aimlessly wanting to get as far as I could from the pit. I was astonished that after about an hour of wandering, I found myself close to the pit. Frantic, I turned back. My ears could pick up the drunken voices of the Ustashi killers.

I finally wandered to Majski Poljana. I hid there with my uncle Pavle Loncar, where I lived for six months...

I was the sole survivor of those in that pit. The Ustashi very quickly caught and killed my companion who had crawled out of the pit with me..."

## APPENDIX 2

Another witness, that is, an acknowledgement, comes from an Ustasha who was one of the participants in the massacre in the Glina Church, Hilmije Berberovic, from Bosanski Novi. After the killings at Glina, he came to Belgrade (where he had worked before the war, and, as one familiar with the terrain, was to secretly kill a German soldier, for which the Germans would kill 100 Serbian hostages). In Belgrade he was arrested and, before the police he admitted the following about the killings at the Glina Church:

"Early in June 1941, my company got the order to move to Glina. On our arrival at Glina, we first conducted a search of the

town and afterwards, we extended our search to the surrounding villages. This search lasted about 15 days. When the search was completed, Ustashi troops from Zagreb and Petrinja arrived. At that time, we got the order to go to the villages and gather up all Orthodox males from the ages of 20 to 45. At first we were taking only males into custody. We gathered them together in the villages and then brought them to Glina where we put them into the courthouse jail. They remained in the jail for several days until the jails were filled and then they were killed. The killing was accomplished by various means. Some were locked in the church in Glina. One thousand people could fit in the church. The commander of the company would then order 15 men to do the killing. Before they went to do the job, they were given alcoholic drinks; some were given rum, others were given other distilled spirits (*rakija*), and when they were drunk, we let them inside with knives. While the killing was being done, a guard was posted outside the church. This was done because some of the Orthodox were climbing up into the bell tower and jumping down. I was ordered to do the killing in three stages. On each occasion some officers also came along; Josip Dobric, and Mihajlo Cvetkovic, and, in addition there were also Ustashi officers. After entering the church, the officers stood by the door and observed our work while we did the killing. The killings were done as follows: some were stabbed directly in the heart; with others, we cut the throat, while still others were struck however we managed to get them. If some Serbian was not killed by the first blow, the Ustashi then finished him off with the knife. During the killings, there was no light in the church. The only light came from electric battery-powered lights held by other soldiers. There were many instances when some Serbian would attack us with his fists and even kick us, but such men were butchered right away. While the killings were going on, there was a great uproar in the church. The Serbians were shouting things like 'Long live King Peter', 'Long live Yugoslavia', 'Long live Queen Marie', 'Long live Serbia', 'Down with the Ustashi', 'Down with Pavelic' and *et cetera*. The killing began about 22:00 hours and lasted until 2:00 AM. This continued as long as there was any Serbian still alive. Such killings

in the church took place 7 or 8 times, and I took part in them three times. During the killings we were so covered with blood that our uniforms could not be cleaned so we just changed them in supply where they were later washed. After each wave of killing, the church was washed down. When the killings were completed, trucks came to carry away the corpses. Usually, they threw them into the Glina River although some were buried. Some of the Orthodox (victims) were taken to the edge of the Glina River and were then killed by machine gun fire in groups of 300 to 400 men. These were all made to stand in two rows at the edge of the river with their hands tied to one another with rope. Then they were shot with the machine guns starting with those who were closest. The corpses were thrown into the river. Some groups of Serbs were taken from the jail and were shot near Glina alongside a wooded area and were afterwards buried at the place they were killed. The Serbians were gathered up as follows: 70 Ustashi and 30 soldiers, under the command of an Ustashi officer, were sent to a given village. The village was always surrounded and a small group was sent in to gather all the Serbians. When all the people were collected in the village, we took them, under guard, to the jail. At first, we were taking only the men, but afterwards, we were also taking females from 15 to 50 years of age. During this gathering up I saw some of my Ustashi and soldier companions rape the women and the girls before they took them to Glina. I saw that some of the Ustashi and some of the soldiers as well, came in to where the women were kept and took whomever they wanted and raped them somewhere at the edge of town and then brought them back to the jail. This was not forbidden by the officers because the officers themselves also did this."

(Source; Archives of the Holy Synod of Bishops. Syn. No. 1060/237 1947, Appendix 1. pp. 46-48.)

## APPENDIX 3

A living, surviving witness of the Jadovno Camp on Velebit Mountain and the killings in the Jadovno Pits was Serdja Poljak, a Serbian from the village Sibuljina (Tribanj) near Karlobag. Taken from his village along with other Serbs, he was brought to the camp at Jadovno and was thrown into one of the pits, but miraculously remained alive to escape from the pit at night. He later joined the Partisans and was killed while serving with them in 1942. His story and his witness of Jadovno is told by Pavle Babac, in his book *Velebitsko Podgorje 1941-1945* (The Velebit Foothills 1941-1945).

“The camp near the village Jadovno and the road to the place of execution in the karst pits was described by an eyewitness Serdjo Poljak who was brought there in the second group of Sibuljina villagers from Karlobag. He was brought from the village directly to the camp and after several days, he was taken to be shot at the karst pit from which, though seriously wounded, he managed to save himself by mere chance.... On April 22, 1941, about 8:00 AM, armed Ustashi arrived from Kruscica for another group of Serbians from Sibuljina, which was somewhat larger than the previous group...This second group included Vladimir Babac, Dragan Lukic, Marko Lukic, Nikola Poljak, Serdjo Poljak, and Stevan Poljak, started out from Sibuljina for Karlobag, via Kruscica. The group made a forced march on foot across Baska Ostarija and the Metla Ridge to Jadovno ...Before noon on April 22, 1941 they were underway on foot on the road from Karlobag towards Baska Ostarija. They were bound with wire two by two and moved at a slow pace with Serdjo and Dragan at the head followed by Nikola and Stevan, with Marko and Vladimir bringing up the rear. Their guard consisted of eight armed Ustashi... The sky was cloudy and a light rain began to fall. It was already past noon. The rain had stopped. ‘We walked erect, with our heads up, peacefully and proudly, fully confident that, since we were not guilty of anything, justice and God were with us’ Serdjo related. The elder, Vladimir Babac, a man known for his natural intel-

ligence, well read and man of faith, brought with him a small scripture...

Day was coming to an end and night fell. Walking became markedly more difficult. Descending from the slopes of the Metla Ridge we saw the lights of the houses of a nearby village. From the behavior of their guards, it appeared that we were near the end of the march. Our hands bound, lurching over the uneven, rocky path towards the lights of the houses, we came closer and closer, finally arriving at Jadovno. Immediately on entering the camp, the guards stopped them for the brief, official formalities of turning the captives over to the camp guards. During this time, the bonds were removed from our hands. Holding small lanterns, the armed Ustashi took us some 10 meters farther to a small group of men who were lying on the ground...

There were over a thousand men in the camp on a relatively small, uneven karst rocky place on which there were many huts made of dry branches. The whole place was not longer than 50 meters and about 25 meters wide. The whole area was fenced in with three rows of dense barbed wire 4 meters high. Outside the barbed wire, a strong Ustashi guard was posted about a kilometer deep so that the camp could not be approached from outside, nor could one escape from it.

Our Sibuljina villagers tried in vain to find their fellow villagers who were in the earlier group. The Ustashi stopped their inquiry, ordering them to take tools and fill in the funnel-shaped hollows in the karst ground about the camp area. During the day here, as at the prison in Gospic, often one could hear the shouts of the Ustashi and the sound of trucks bringing in new victims.

Serdjo thought constantly about extricating himself from this difficult situation, feeling instinctively that his life was in danger. His first thought was to extend his right hand when it was time for the Ustashi guards to put on the wire bonds before prisoners were moved. Serdjo had lost part of his hand several years earlier when he accidentally detonated a mine while fishing. If he could manage to get bound by his right hand, he could quickly slip out of the wire and then make a break for it...

As he thought about escaping, bursts of distant machine gun fire from somewhere north of the camp made him flinch. Some men along side him said that the Ustashi had a military firing range there and were training. Small bursts of machine gun fire were heard throughout the day. Serdjo wondered about that machine gun fire and could not understand what kind of training that could be. They were given no food and the Sibuljina villagers were surprised that they had as yet not met their fellow villagers from the earlier group. As they waited, sitting on the ground at one of the hollows they were filling, they were all were asking, in whispers, the same questions about where they were to be taken and where the bound prisoners were being taken. After noon, hungry and thirsty, they continued to work on the same job until dark. Then, the machine gun fire stopped. They had come to still another night, which would be the last one for many of them. From Gospic and other places, about 1,000 men were arriving at the camp each day. So many of them came daily and could not be disposed of quickly enough, that the prisoners became uneasy. Finally, the turn of the Sibuljina villagers came on the next day. They were to go in the first group at dawn. Even these preparations were made in a hurry. Before the trucks arrived with more prisoners from Gospic, they had to make room for them at the camp. The inmates were called forward and bound with wire.

Serdjo was bound with wire to a fellow inmate just as he planned. The large camp gates were opened and they walked along the rocky road towards the west along a small forested hilltop of the foothills along the northern side of Velebit Mountain.

After about an hour's walk, before they came to the top of the hill, the guards stopped the column. The Ustashi quickly counted off 50 men, among whom were our Sibuljina villagers and took them ahead, below the hilltop to a narrow valley. A group of Ustashi were standing here, not far from a field tent in front of which there were several chairs. As they arrived their guards said, 'From there you will be called up for various work details'. One of the Ustasha added, 'Now you will get something to eat'.

The bound and apprehensive men had entered into a circle of Ustashi armed with *Smeiser* rifles. The men noticed also four machine guns set up facing the across a ravine which they noticed at the very last moment. An Ustashi officer, Rude Ric, a former teacher came up to them saying, 'Go on, forward. Hurry, Hurry'. They were taken to a small, narrow, raised rocky shelf. The officer said we are going to practice firing here and you are to help us prepare the target area across the ravine. 'Go on. Hurry'. This brought them to the very wall along the karst pit. The officer moved several paces away and the machine guns began to fire. Men began to shout and blood began to flow. The men fell like flies. The Ustashi armed with *Smeiser* rifles were standing on one side began to finish off those who were still living and pushed them from the rocky shelf into the ravine. Serdjo, as soon as he heard the machine gun fire did not wait for it to come to him. He quickly freed his right hand from the wire and jumped into the pit himself. He didn't fall far before he landed on top of a small pile of corpses and immediately pressed against a small protrusion in the rock wall, petrified with fear. He felt blood on his left hand. He had been hit by one of the machinegun bullets. He heard the machine guns go silent and the cries of the victims. Then he lost consciousness. When the last group of victims of that day was liquidated, night had already fallen. Serdjo regained consciousness either from the silence which had come over the area or from the great pain he began to feel from his wound. Through the pain, he realized that he was alive and began to try to crawl out of the ravine to the surface. His wounded hand caused him great pain, while most of his other hand was missing from his earlier accident. Nevertheless, a little at a time, he began to climb up very carefully because he feared that someone might come to kill him. Near the surface, he waited for some time listening. He heard no one and crawled out on the raised rock shelf from which he had jumped.

He walked towards the Metla Ridge of the mountain and tore up his shirt to bind his wound. He walked along the northern slopes of Velebit Mountain passing below Goli Summit and Visocica, near Rujno.

On the next day, shortly before noon, he reached Rujno and met his aged father in front of his house. He fell in his embrace, silent because of his sorrow, exhaustion and pain.

This is how Serdjo remained alive, a living witness of the Ustashi crimes and the participation of the Italian military authorities. Serdjo found secure shelter in the local counties until he went to join the Partisans soon thereafter."

(Source: Babac. Pavle M. *Velebitsko podgorje 1941-1945*. Belgrade. 1965/83. pp. 22-27.)

#### APPENDIX 4

From the press we bring here news of a recent discovery of a new pit at Velebit Mountain into which the Ustashi, at the beginning of August 1941, threw several hundred Serbian natives of Lika and the Velebit foothills. As in the case of the Jasenovac Death Camp, gradually new pits and mass graves of Serbian victims and martyrs of the infamous N.D.H. (Independent State of Croatia) are being discovered.

#### **The Trail of Discovery of the Zadar Speleologists at Velebit HORRIBLE SCENE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PIT**

At a pit called Jamina, behind Tribnje Kruscice, near the settlement Ljubotici, the Zadar cavers discovered hundreds of skulls and skeletons in the alluvial gravel and silt. Our largest mountain Velebit is often the goal of alpinists and speleologists. On Anis Point, mountain climbers train before going on to climb peaks in and out of Europe while numerous cavers crawl down into the insides of the famous mountain exploring its caverns, pits, depressions and its chasms.

In one such expedition, a group of cavers from the Zadar Speliological Association "Paklenica" descended into a pit behind Trebinja Kruscica, near the settlement Ljubotici. The Zadar cavers, led by 32 year old Ivan Lukic, went to investigate stories of people of the Velebit villages and settlements that this pit, known locally as "Jamina" is bottomless and that during World



War II, the Ustashi were throwing their victims into it. In that way, the Ustashi wanted to erase traces of their criminal campaigns and believed that this pit, even though it might not be bottomless, was deep enough that no one would ever descend into it or that the corpses would be carried away by underground streams even to the sea.

"These were stories so horrible that they were hard to believe" said Ivan Lukic, noting that they were hair-raising as he heard that at one time 180 men were thrown into the pit.

Later, Ivan Lukic and his companion cavers Zeljko Bevanda (18), Mario Drazevic (26), Sinisa Subotic (23), and Predrag Kurtin (18) confirmed the stories the people had related. When they had descended to the bottom of the pit and illuminated the cave around them, they saw a ghastly sight. Human bones were exposed in the alluvial gravel and silt.

Ivan Lukic said, "We descended into the pit at 11:00 p.m. and came out at 6:30 AM on the next day, so we had enough time to investigate and confirm the stories we had heard. Human bones were sticking out all around us and on some we could see evidence of violence. On some we could see evidence of fracture by a sharp instrument, while others looked like breaks were made by blunt objects. This confirmed the stories that these unfortunate people ended their lives in a most cruel way. By what we were able to see, one could conclude that there were even more than 180 victims in the death pit."

The pit is 75 meters deep. At the surface, it measures 5 to 6 meters across while at the bottom, it is about 10 meters across. Ivan Lukic was the first to descend into the pit. At a depth of 51 meters, he found a perpendicular shelf. To this depth, the pit was a sheer drop then it dropped to 75 meters at an angle of 75 degrees. Inside the pit, the cavers discovered a cavern 50 meters long but found nothing in it but stalactites and stalagmites.

"We had enough food and equipment to stay in the pit for several days but we finished exploring the pit in one night" said the leader of the team.

The Zadar speleologists have the experience of over 50 underground explorations. They had, at times, remained under-

ground for several days, living in very difficult conditions. The greatest depth to which they descended was 210 meters in the Muna Pit in Istria. The pit was still deeper but the Zadar cavers could not go any further because they didn't have the required equipment. They said that their most significant caving expedition was the exploration of the Jamina Pit at Velebit because they could confirm the stories which many people had refused to believe. The event was so ghastly that even 40 years later it seems unbelievable.

In the pit 180 of the people of the Lika villages Pocitelje, Divoselo and others met a horrible death during the first days of the Ustashi tyrannical regime. The poor people, mostly the elderly, women and children, tried to escape the persecution and the killings, but, at Velebit, the Ustashi met them and murdered them all. Some were thrown into the pit alive.

Even today, older residents of places below Velebit such as Tribanj Sibuljina still remember how the Ustashi threw their victims into this pit. People in the Lika villages Pocitelje and Divoselo remember the horrible killings at Velebit. "We followed the traces of these tales and in conversations with witnesses of the crimes and the relatives of the victims, we heard tales of horror and dread".

Ivkovic, A. *Vecerni List*. Zagreb. June 28 and 29, 1980.

## APPENDIX 5

## POEMS

## IN KORDUN GRAVE TO GRAVE

(Folk Song)

In Kordun, from grave to grave,  
 A mother seeks her son.  
 Finding him, on bended knee,  
 These words to him she says:  
 Oh, my son, my joy,  
 Where rests thy youth?  
 The father weeps; the mother grieves,  
 "Open, open, dear grave!"  
 The grave then opened,  
 And the son to his mother spoke,  
 "Weep not dear mother mine,  
 Heavy are thy tears for me.  
 Heavier, heavier, thy tears be  
 Than this black earth for me.  
 Go mother, and tell our kinsmen,  
 That I fell for freedom.  
 Go, mother, and tell our kinsmen,  
 To battle for our freedom.  
 Go mother, now to thy home,  
 And to my grave, return no more".

## ORTHODOX MOTHER

Hast thou sat long enough at the ashes of thy house?  
 Oh, This poor house!  
 Searching, with eye or hand, for the tiny cradle of little John,  
 The little icon of St. George; the small necklace of little Rose?  
 All is now smoke and ash; swallowed by the ceiling soot.  
 Thou, broken, strong branch; the poorest among women,  
 Orthodox Mother!

Hast thou walked enough on feet that scarcely stand?  
 Oh, these aching feet!  
 Hast thou wearied searching for thy cow Ruma?  
 Thy cow, which fed the grannies and the children?  
 Have the wolves torn her apart, or is she hidden in some grassy  
 woodland?  
 Vex thyself no more! For whom now the cheese and milk?  
 Orthodox Mother.

Hast thou wept enough over the fate of thy comrade?  
 Oh, beloved comrade!  
 Captured by betrayal and whipped as a dog,  
 Tortured, bound, and thrown into prison,  
 Yet he, drawn by his heart, does deeds great and glorious,  
 And disabled he returns to die in thine arms.  
 Orthodox Woman.

Hast thou mourned enough above that horrible pit,  
 Oh, Cursed Pit!  
 Where, with severed throats, thy children lay?  
 As they, with their Granny, called for their mother,  
 wept for her;  
 In fear, for the pit was full of people, damp and dark.  
 Silent. The seal of silence has closed thy lips,  
 Orthodox Mother.  
 Thou growest pale, thin and bent; but smother not thy pain,  
 — — thy pain too deep.  
 Let thy sorrow echo throughout the land,  
 And let it last for ages. Let all now hear how  
 Changed are thy memories, thy sorrows old, distant.  
 Thou art silent, pale. The eagle of martyrdom already crowns thee,  
 Orthodox Mother.

Vladimir Nazor  
 In a burned Serbian village  
 Near Vrginmost. January. 1943.

## FOR THE MEMORIAL AT PRKOSI

In the war, not a stone we lifted,  
Yet we perish all by execution.

We were once men, women, children,  
Now neither dust, nor shadow.

And none of us shall come again,  
We lie in the never-to-return perpetual night.

We will appear sometime at Prkosi,  
In the form of grasses, or the dew.

Stevan Raikovic

Poet's note: At the village Prkosi, near Karlovac, on December 21, 1941, the Ustashi massacred the Serbian population. On that day, 480 of the village's 608 people were murdered.

Author's note: This poem was composed for the monument at the village Prkosi, but at the last moment, it was omitted and substituted by verses of another poet.

Translator's note: On December 21, 1941, nearly 885 people were massacred at Brezje Wood, near the Village. In addition to those from Prkos, others were brought to the place of execution from nearby areas.

**TO THE NEW MARTYRS OF ORTHODOXY**  
(From Lika)

Bloody is the path, winding and steep  
 Along which those pure hearts trod,  
 And nothing could shake their faith,  
 And dissuade them from courageously following Christ.

For their true faith, they became sacrifices,  
 Conscious of why they gave their lives,  
 Knowing that at last, God raises the dead,  
 And that, without Golgotha, there can be no resurrection.

Hadzi-Nedeljko Kangrga

**REQUIEM**  
**FOR THE SEVEN HUNDRED AT THE CHURCH AT GLINA**

I will not be silent; the walls were silent  
 And were destroyed. I, alone carry them within myself,  
 Grafted onto my maturity, unspoken,  
 Decayed faces, I cannot banish them  
 From the endless glass space of endless night.  
 They are not grass. They knock at night  
 From inside attentively, on the quaking windows  
 Of my eyes; All dead, their cut throats,  
 As a blossoming rose. No, I will not be silent  
 Of these people in my very blood, because I am but one,  
 And they were then more than seven hundred.

Between the walls, behind closed doors  
 Filled with horrible waiting, as sand, they flowed  
 Through empty hands, soft before the sharp blade,  
 Conscious, under arches bending in horror...  
 I, then a boy, think of that first dull stabbing  
 Which released the body's dark, warm blood

Of the first of them; the boiling blood which quietly flows  
away;

And I hear the first cry, dampened by the red foam  
Of the throat severed forever from song,  
And unspoken words; divided  
In its dark place as a green apple,  
By steel. And that first one, who waits for his companions  
In death. That shameful and extensive death  
To accept them. These are eyes, eyes being extinguished,  
Two by two, dead lights of morning streets,  
While horror dwells in them, as a particle in a piece of ice,  
Blood flows away, curious and uncovered,  
Across flat stones. Steel, steel in flesh  
Quivering still in the vigil of a former lad.  
They fell in blood, hearing crushed; they did not hear  
The one who followed, the one with the burned out eyes,  
Or the one cut down by steel as a stalk  
Between the walls, thickened by shrieks,  
Enhanced by fear: And the red mouth,  
Of fresh wounds, remained dumb, full of blood.  
They were lying down, lying down humiliated,  
Bereft of themselves; bereft of everything but death,  
Black, and sticky, Killed, killed, killed.

I will not be silent; the walls were silent  
And were destroyed. And those from the church, who were  
dead,

Did not fall asleep. They keep watch, unasked, they keep  
watch

In the former youth. I cannot banish them.

In the breezes which move in the place the church once stood,  
Where weeds grow, red from the blood,

Let them remain. Let them keep watch unasked. Let them  
keep watch

Because they were old for me to sing a lullaby

Ivan B. Lalic

— — In the past something happened, something fearsome and great, and today, we have a more or less clear feeling of that which occurred and how it occurred. This, our feeling, drives us to speak, to give form to our memory; to see our very own suffering in the pupil of our eye and that we be witnesses who must speak.

Stanko Korac  
 Traumatic Requiem  
 (From the book of essays *Patnja I Nada*  
 [Suffering and Hope])  
 Zagreb. 1982. p. 152.

## ADDENDUM

### Observations

We publish here, as an addendum, the text of *Putevi Razresenije I Razuma (Ways of Resolution and Reason)* which was written in 1979. Even though it precedes the theme of this book, it represents a continuation of our deliberations and perhaps also an opportunity for real discussions. Before the main body of the text, we present an abbreviated text from *Pravoslavlje* (Orthodoxy) and a somewhat longer reply from *Glas Koncila* (Voice of the Concillium), organs of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, respectively.

The appearance of the editorial below in the *Glas Koncila* created so much excitement that the demand for a reaction reached, in 1979, even to the editing staff of *Pravoslavlje*. In the consideration of this, we were more inclined towards trying to arrange for opening reasonably, and calmly, real discussions on pertinent questions raised by the publication of the Archbishopric's Spiritual Chair in Zagreb rather than to treat the problem with polemics. The editing staff of *Pravoslavlje* wanted to publish an article in that vein. The text was prepared in good conscience, with a desire to speak in the language of facts and



reason, but with the stipulation that statements be critically verified. The article, even though it was of limited complexity, was delayed from issue to issue. When it was completed, it had already lost a significant degree of its newsworthiness so that it remained unpublished. Unfortunately, an unexplained and unauthorized text of the article *Putevi Razresenije I Razuma* was found in the columns of an emigrant newspaper *Nasa Rec*. That version, with inaccurate and uncorrected notes of the editors, was presented as a manuscript which was reported to have been "circulated in Croatia and Serbia as an illegal article" and that its "authorship" was ascribed to Danilo, the Orthodox Bishop at Marca. Bishop Danilo took no part in the preparation of this otherwise collective article. The author of this little book, however, did, and that is why he adds it to the book as an addendum. The text of the article *Putevi Razresenije I Razuma* for that reason, only now can be regarded as its first and fully authorized publication.

### THE POPE FORGOT SERBIA

In his speech before his trip to Poland the Pope of Rome, John Paul II, expressed his "special pleasure that multiplicity of languages at the first Pentecost was also evident in the course of history in the case of the individual Slav languages from Macedonia, across Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia, Czechia, Slovakia, and Lusatia in the West. Later, in the East, there was Ukrainia, Russia and Belorussia. I am, however, especially glad that, added to these languages, is Polish, the language of my people" (ACSA 23/79. *L'osservatore Romano* 23/79).

How a Pope, an educated man, and also a Slav, could enumerate all the Slav people and their languages, and not mention multimillion population of Serbia — — something is not in order here.

It is known that Pious X did not like Serbia.

Pious XII was silent when, in occupied Croatia and Slavonija, there was a great massacre of Orthodox Serbians by men (more precisely inhumans [monsters]) who were even from among the ranks of the Roman Catholic clergy. One can become a traitor to

God and man by cowardly silence. Our Patriarch Gavriilo, however, was not silent when faced with force. For that reason he was imprisoned in the Dachau Concentration Camp.

In Slavonic, the verb "to hate" is *nenavidet* (literally to "not see"); among our people, this was translated into the expression, "He cannot see (stand) him...". God forbid that this was the reason for the Pope's silence on the language of Serbia!

Naturally, it is much easier for us if we suppose that this Pope was not informed of the particulars of the language of Serbia. We do not expect that even an educated Polish polyglot, would have read in the original the classic *Zitije* (Lives of Serbian Saints) or the medieval *Biografije Arhiepiskopa I Kralja Srpskih* (Biography of Archbishops and Kings of Serbia). But, like every educated Pole, he read, at least, Mickiewicz, Pushkin, and Njegosh. These three most renowned Slav poets said enough in their works of the significance of Serbia among the Slavs, and more broadly throughout the whole world.

That is why it is easier for us to think that here it is a case of an inadvertent omission because of forgetfulness.

If, God willing, this Pope ever comes to visit Yugoslavia, he will then have an opportunity to see at close range, also Christian Serbia and to hear its "exalted language".

We would hope that he would go to kneel at the most horrible Serbian grave of this century at Jasenovac, as he knelt in prayer at Auschwitz...

Our Patriarchate had recently settled a disagreement with the Orthodox Pope of Alexandria. Now we hope that we can have improved relations with the Roman Pope too, especially that now, on the throne of the bishop of Rome is a Pole, a Slav.

This is one of the prayers of Holy Serbia before Our Lord Christ.

Sincerely, this papal forgetfulness is awkward; because when a person forgets someone, is it not a sign of the diminished love for the forgotten party?

But, what is most important is that we Serbians do not forget God, because, only in God is there "Memory Eternal" and forgiveness of all our omissions.

*Pravoslavlje* (Orthodoxy)  
July 1, 1979

## THE POPE FORGOT SERBIA

*Pravoslavlje*, the organ of the Serbian Patriarchate, of July 1 of this year under the caption "The Pope Forgot Serbia" refers to one of the recent papal speeches in Rome before his June 2 trip to his native Poland. The subject was that part of the Pope's speech to a general audience on Wednesday, May 30. In mentioning the Slav languages included among those of the Slav peoples who were Christianized, somehow, to a spiritual amazement of common understanding, the Pope indeed did not mention Serbia. Reading an excerpt of this papal speech in AKSA 23/79, and not knowing that the Pope, in a much more important and exhaustive speech given at Gniezno on June 3, where he especially mentioned Serbia also, the commentator of *Pravoslavlje* writes:

"How could a Pope, an educated man, and also a Slav, enumerate all the Slav peoples and their languages and overlook Serbia? Is this because of forgetfulness or an intentional reservation?"

On the basis of the speech given at Gniezno where the Pope developed a broader and more complete theme which he had only begun in that general audience, it can immediately be said that there was no "intentional reservation", nor forgetfulness but that (speech) in Rome made no pretence at being fully complete. The commentator of *Pravoslavlje*, however, took this papal "omission" as a good reason for renewing some observations for certain recommendations and propositions. Then he goes on to say that "Pious X did not like Serbia," and that "Pious XII remained silent when in occupied Croatia and Slavonija massacres of Orthodox Serbians were being committed by men (more precisely inhuman (monsters) who were from among the ranks also of the Roman Catholic clergy". In a continuation, *Pravoslavlje* nevertheless allows the possibility of a papal "inadvertent omission" and even expresses the hope that "God willing, this Pope comes to visit

Yugoslavia when he would have the opportunity to see also at close range Christian Serbia and to hear its 'exalted language'. We hope that then he would go to kneel at the most terrible Serbian grave of this century at Jasenovac, as he knelt at Auschwitz"...

It appears obvious that the commentator who prepared "The Pope Forgot Serbia" is someone who doesn't want to forget evil, while good easily slips through his memory. This is the way it is when speaking of others. There was namely, even in the press here, enough evidence of how Pope Pious XII, along with his most important associates, was not silent when massacres were taking place here. It is known also that the then Zagreb Archbishop made a special trip to Rome to inform him and gave him an extended documentation of the terror, risking being caught by the Gestapo. A witness to this was, among others, Ivan Mestrovic. If we were to permit ourselves to be drawn into this forgotten unforgetfulness, we could mention that the Catholic Church excluded from its ranks that small number of priests who participated in the terror (so the much publicized "Fra Sotona" was neither a Franciscan, nor a priest, but rather a publicly censured apostate); while there were other priests in military formations, from colonel to the lowest command, we did not hear of their defrockment. And we could renew the known fact that in the Jasenovac grave there are also Croats, Jews, Serbians and other nationalities and it would be time, in respect of the dead, to nurture love and not to strengthen fences. It should also be mentioned that it is not known what the two countries or frontier regions Croatia and Slavonija are (as the said commentator divided them) although it is obvious that the commentary was written in the present and not in Austro-Hungarian times when the homeland of the Croats was divided and partitioned like that.

Finally one should try to agree in the hope — — and regret that writings such as this in *Pravoslavljje*, at least as far as the papal visit here is concerned, that hope may be postponed or hampered.

Glas Koncila No. 15/410 July 22, 1979

## WAYS TO RESOLUTION AND UNDERSTANDING

(In lieu of a reply to *Glas Koncila*)

Thou growest pale, thin, and bent, but smother not thy pain --  
thy pain too deep

Let thy sorrow echo throughout the land,  
And let it continue for centuries; Let all hear now, how  
Changed are thy memories, thy sorrow, old and ancient.

Thou art silent. Pale. And the eagle of martyrdom already  
crowns thee,

-- Orthodox Mother.

Vladimir Nazor

Written in a burned Serbian village

Near Vrginmost

January, 1943

The short article in *Pravoslavlje* on July 1, 1979 ("The Pope Forgot Serbia") brought the *Glas Koncila* to object decisively that one oversight was noted and to object even more decisively to a reminder which obligates -- not only on this occasion. We did not hurry to reply immediately, and even less did we want to permit ourselves to aggravate the situation. We are not concerned with polemics, because the questions raised by *Glas Koncila* are more than serious. It is especially because of them that we present a dialogue of facts, rather than to resort to the temptation towards disputation. We believe that the difference in understanding is less dangerous for our conscience than the difference in truths which we recognize or reject. In order that the reader himself decide what the problem is and so that he can better follow the exchange into which we enter with heavy heart, but with a clear conscience, in the adjoining pages we present the article in *Glas Koncila* published in the issue 15/410 on July 22, 1979, in its entirety without the customary editorial comment. In the same way, avoiding rebuttal after rebuttal, we offer only some examples and data which can result in looking more openly and directly at

the questions which were raised in the statements and the motives of *Glas Koncila*.

The assertion that "in the postwar press here there was enough evidence of how Pope Pious XII did not remain silent when they were committing massacres here" still escapes us. We still do not know where one could find at least one such item. On the other hand it is widely known that alongside all the "neutrality" of the Vatican in World War II, Pious XII was among the first to congratulate the Ustasha N.D.H. (Independent State of Croatia), and received the leaders of this "country" in audience and personally bestowed a blessing on Pavelic as early as May 1941 as Pavelic "assumed duties". This was widely reported in the Ustashi and Roman Catholic press of that time:

"Precisely at 6:00 o'clock on May 18, 1941 Cardinal Maglione brought the Poglavnik (Pavelic) to Pious XII, and at the conclusion of the reception, at 7:30, the Holy Father expressed the desire to see the entire delegation of the N.D.H.". This delegation "...started out from Zagreb on May 17, 1941 in a convoy of 16 automobiles. They travelled to Trieste and there transferred to the Pope's palace train. Those who know the Vatican well say that the Pope never received anyone on Sunday for a group audience, and especially late in the evening. This gesture of His Holiness Pope Pious XII is interpreted as an act of special attention".

*Hrvatski Narod* issue for May 20, 1941.

Pavelic's audience with the Pope was reported in *Katolicki List*, issues 21 and 22. 1941:

"The warm reception of the Poglavnik and the Croatian National Delegation by the Holy Father Pope Pious XII, shows how much international significance the church ascribes to the delegation of our country when they were so quickly and nicely received".

That the relations of the Vatican and the N.D.H. did not remain on a purely protocol level is obvious from data (shown in another place below) and the fact that this same Pope, in January

1942 named the Archbishop of Zagreb, Stepinac "Military Vicar for the Croatian Army".

The principal "military" mission of this armed force at that time was the massacre of Serbians.

It is also not publicly known that this Military Vicar, Archbishop Stepinac, took any steps against the genocide of the Serbian people or that, at least within his church, stopped the crime of forced conversion to Roman Catholicism. Evidence from the press, on the contrary, shows that the *Katolicki List* reported the following news item in its issue No.38 for 1941, page 451, relating to the Archbishopric of Zagreb:

"The whole village of Budinci was converted to the Roman Catholic faith." Budinci is on the border of the Zagreb and the Djakovac Diocese near Podgorac. On Sunday, September 14, 1941, on the feast day of Elevation of the Holy Cross, the whole village converted from Orthodoxy to the Roman Catholic faith. A parish of 2,300 was organized in the village. Preparation for the conversion was made by our Franciscan Fr. Sidonije Solts, who instructed the converts in the faith for an extended time. For the rite of conversion itself, Fr. Solts was joined by other priests of this large parish and the parish of Baranja from Osijek. At the banquet in the church hall, many important speeches were given, during which there were shouts of "to the Pogalvnik and to Croatia".

While the *Katolicki List* was giving competitive publicity to conversions, the papal vicar Stepinac, was zealously trying, after this first use of force, to follow with another use of force for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Church and the "new country". A document, in the personal handwriting of the Archbishop himself, was preserved and is shown below:

Poglavnik!

I take the liberty to turn to you in the following case:

Our Trappist fathers had to leave their monastery in Reichenburg and are homeless and temporarily housed as guests of their brothers in the monastery "Marija Zvijezda" in Banja Luka. Since they would like very much to found their own monastery some-

where in the Independent State of Croatia, I am asking you, Poglavnik, to give them some kind of house or some land, so that they could prepare their own monastery.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps they could be given the Serbian monastery in Orahovica (which was once the monastery of our Paulists).

I have the honor and I most warmly recommend to you, Poglavnik, that the Trappists fathers be located in this Archbishopric to the benefit of the entire Independent State of Croatia.

Please accept my expression of special respect.

Dr. Alojsije Stepinac

Zagreb. October 3, 1941.

(An incidental but characteristic detail in the above letter demands mention that one of the oldest church memorials of Serbians in Croatia is the Orthodox Monastery and church of St. Nicholas in Orahovica, which was first mentioned in 1583; in the same town there was a baroque Catholic Church of the Holy Cross which was built in 1756, nearly two centuries later. The medieval Paulist monasteries on the Pannonian Plain had a more complicated fate than that intentionally stated in the parenthetical observation in the archbishop's letter to Pavelic: the once Paulist monastery along with a whole series of "our Paulists" owing to Hungarian provenance, disappeared long before 1918.

"The Paulist monasteries in the eastern part of the Zagreb and the Modrus Bishoprics were destroyed by the Turks, and all the rest were abolished by Emperor Josef II in 1786. Their property belonged to the Hungarian crown."

*Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia* vol.6.p.443 Zagreb.1965

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4. In the deleted text here, there was a detailed discussion of the history of the Trappists, the activity and the organization of their order. The whole text of the letter is published in *Dokumentima O Protunarodnom Radu I Zlocinima Jednog Dijela Katolickog Klera* (Documents On the Anti-national Work and the Crimes of a Part of the Catholic Clergy). Zagreb. 1946. p.122.



Orahovica, however, was only a detail in the plan developed to take over or destroy the holy places of the Serbian Orthodox Church within the territory of the N.D.H. Changing Orthodox Churches into Catholic Churches was done within the Djakovac Bishopric at Bracevci, Majur, Paucije, Dostin, Tenje, Dalj, Markusica, Kapelna, Kucanci, Budinci, Bijelo Brdo, Trpinja, Pacetin, Cepin, Martinci, Cepineli, Trnjani, Klokocevik, Topolje and Slavonski Brod. Of 203 Orthodox Churches and chapels in the Gorno-Karlovac Diocese, 88 were demolished and another 67 sustained extensive damage. In the Pakrac Diocese 54 were destroyed, and in the Zagreb Diocese, 13; in Fruska Gora, all the monasteries were damaged and robbed. Within the territory of the N.D.H., of more than 250 churches, some were simply taken over, others destroyed or damaged, while every single one was robbed. Some of the churches were used as storage places (Hadzic, Kalanj, Plasic, and Gomirje), one as a butcher shop (Slavonska Pozega); one as a lumberyard (Vrebac); others as a barn for cattle (Jasenovac, Majkovac, and Gazije).

The Zagreb Archbishop must have had many concerns similar to those of the Trappists and other "affairs of the Orders" during the time when letters to him and requests were arriving. Of these, we will mention only three here now. The author of the first letter, Dr. Privislav Grisogono (born 1879 in Split), one of the most prominent Croatian legal minds and legal writers of his time, an elected national representative of the S.D.S. party, and a cabinet member of several administrations of the former Yugoslavia, before and after January 6, 1929. He was a Croatian, of Yugoslav orientation, such as also Ivan Mestrovic (at that time!). Dr. Grisogono spent the occupation years (1941-1944), first in Zemun, and then in Belgrade, withdrawn from all activities, and wrote this letter, the contents of which were known even on February 8, 1942 when it was mailed from Zemun to "Mr. Alojsije Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb". This was a letter of a disgusted conscience of a patriot and a Catholic, in which he enumerates extensively individual bloodthirsty events. These events are gave rise, at many places, to a rage of bitterness and accusation. Here,

we will cite only the more reserved portions of Dr. Grisogono's distressing letter:

"I write you as man to man, as one Christian to another Christian. I hesitated for months, waiting perhaps for the horrible news from Croatia to stop and then I could be more collected and write a calmer letter. For a full 10 months there is widespread killing, in the most brutal manner, of Serbians over Croatia, and they are destroying their property worth billions, while the blush of shame covers the face of all decent Croats...

Why am I writing this to you, because you are not a political personality, you cannot bear the responsibility? This is why. In all this unprecedented savage crime, which is more than Godless, our Catholic Church has participated in two ways: first, a large number of Catholic priests, clerics, brothers, and organized Catholic youths actively participated. A horrible scene came to pass as Catholic priests became Ustashi concentration camp operators, and as such, ordered and approved this horrible torture and killing of Christian people. One Catholic priest even personally murdered an Orthodox priest. They could not be allowed to do this without the permission of their bishops, and if they did, they should have incurred suspension and should have been brought to trial. Since that did not happen, that means that the bishops gave their permission. Secondly, the Catholic church used all of this to force the conversion of the surviving Serbians; and while the ground was still steaming from the blood of innocent martyrs, while the cries of the victims were still tearing at the hearts of the surviving unfortunates, priests, brothers, and nuns were carrying an Ustashi dagger in one hand and a missal and a rosary in the other. All of Srem is flooded with handbills of Bishop Aksamovic; handbills printed in his press in Djakovo. In these, the Serbians are called to save their lives and their property by converting to the Catholic faith.

It was as though our church wanted to show that it knew how to kill the spirit, just as the Ustashi authority killed the bodies....

In Germany, high ranking Catholic bishops had the courage to raise their voices in support of the persecuted Jews, while with us, not a single bishop has yet raised his voice in support of the

innocent Serbians, Christians, who are persecuted more than the Jews in Germany. That is why the greatest responsibility shall fall on the head of the Roman Catholic Church and the punishment of God and man shall extend to the Croatian people if they do not repent in time for this horrible, indescribable sin".

A second supplement here is a letter of protest from the Banja Luka moslems transmitted through the Vice President of the Ustashi administration Dzafer Kulenovic. The letter, among other things, states the following:

"One part of the Catholic priests consider that their hour has come and they are taking advantage of it unscrupulously. Propaganda for Catholicism has reached such a stage that one is reminded of the Spanish Inquisition. Under their pressure and along with the toleration of public authorities, there was a mass conversion of Christians to Catholicism ... We know of many examples where the Ustashi were butchering and killing people while wearing fezes on their heads. This happened at Bosanski Novi where four truckloads of Ustashi, wearing fezes, associated with some moslem riffraff and committed a mass killing of Christians. The same thing took place at Bosanska Kostajnica, where, in the same way, in one day, 862 Christians were murdered. Some did the same thing at Kulen Vakuf. One man here, by the name of Miroslav Matijevic, of Vrtoc, was prominent. Here, 950 Christians were murdered which brought about a revenge attack of the Cetniks on June 6th when Kulen Vakuf was burned and where 1,350 moslem men, women and children were killed."<sup>5</sup>

The third supplement is in fact a request broadcast on Radio London on November 16, 1942. It was directed by none other than Dr. Juraj Krnjevic a known leader of the Croatian Peasant Party and the deputy of Dr. Macek. As a Vice President of the Yugoslav Government-in-Exile he most decidedly stopped the publication in the west of the first authentic reports of the genocide in the N.D.H. in 1941. The report came via Istanbul and succeeded in

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5. Kasic, D. *Srpska Pravoslavna Crkva 1920-1970* (The Serbian Orthodox Church 1920-1970). Belgrade 1971. pp. 193-194.

getting to London carried by a prominent Belgrade physician. In the meantime, when the Ustashi killings began to occupy much of the attention of the Allies, and the world press began to report and show photographic evidence of the massacres, Dr. Krnjevic was compelled by his party to protect his party not only from the "physical" crimes in the N.D.H.:

"The Croatian people cannot at this time call the killers to responsibility. But the time will come when in Croatia there will be again a word of the people stronger than the foreign force which today supports Pavelic. Then the Croatian people will judge all crimes as they deserve. No one shall escape this judgement.

Among other crimes, I shall report, for which we will seek a special accounting, is the forced conversion to the Catholic faith. To force someone to change his faith by the sword is more repulsive than physical murder. I do not refer to Dr. Saric, who acted like those who have lost their souls and consciences, but to you, the other leaders of the Catholic Church in Croatia, to examine your conscience (and ask yourselves) have you fulfilled your obligations 100 percent? It is not enough to establish some complicated courts and to shamefully separate yourselves from the Ustashi crimes, to cite forced conversion (to Catholicism) by the Ustashi. What is needed is your manly word of judgement in concert with the feelings of the Croatian people and the teachings of the Catholic Church. But such words, we have as yet not heard from the lips of our spiritual leaders.<sup>6</sup>

There is no knowledge of a single reply from the Zagreb capital, or none is yet available to the public. The Zagreb Archbishop, warned, remained quiet. For the entire time of the N.D.H., he did not write a "Pastoral Letter"! The primate of Croatia sent only circular letters to his district ordinariates, as, for example, this one:

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6 Simich, S. *Prekrstavanje Srba Za Vreme Drugog Svetskog Rata* (The Conversion of Serbians During World War II) Titograd. 1958. p. 152.

7 *Op Cit. Dokumenti*. Zagreb. 1946. 383.

## JURISDICTION OF THE DOMOBRAN SPIRITUAL ADVISORS

The Presidency of the Bishops' Conference  
No.22/BK - 1942

Respected Archbishop Ordinaries in Sarajevo,

I have the honor to notify the above named that I was named the Military Vicar of the Croatian Army by the Holy Throne *sine titulo*. I named reverend Stipa Vucetic as my deputy as the senior spiritual advisor at the Ministry of the Croatian Army and the very rev. Vilim Ceculj as deputy at the Senior Spiritual Advisor with the Ministry of the Croatian Army and thus delegated among them jurisdiction and all authority which were given to me from the Holy Throne.

Further, I named the Army Spiritual Advisors and designated their regional jurisdictions.

So that there would be no misunderstanding as to the jurisdictions among the Diocesan Ordinaries and the Military Spiritual Advisors, I am sending attached, the decree from the Holy Throne on the jurisdiction of the Military Ordinary for the Italian Army (S. Congr. Consistr. of April 13, 1840., AAS 1940., 280; A Croatian translation of this decree is attached). The jurisdiction extends also to me, especially points 2, 3, 6, and 8 of the decree in which the exact activities of the Spiritual Advisor are set out as well as their relations with Diocesan Ordinaries. It also spells out the relations of the Diocesan Ordinaries to the Military Advisor and the Military Advisors.

You will be notified immediately by the Office of the Military Vicariate at the Ministry of the Croatian Army as to which Military Spiritual Advisors are operating in your area.

Zagreb. January 20, 1942.

Dr. Alojzije Stepinac

President of the Bishops' Conference

The *Glas Koncila* names Ivan Mestrovic as one of the witnesses that the "Zagreb Archbishop made a special trip to inform Pope Pious XII of the killings on our territory".

Drawing on Mestrovic as a witness was less than fortunate. The most famous contemporary Croatian historians consider Mestrovic unreliable, especially his *Memoirs*, published abroad and reprinted at Zagreb in 1970. In it, the famous artist also describes his meeting with the Zagreb Archbishop in Rome in 1943. If it was any pleasure for us to do what we are unfortunately forced to do, we would cite the whole chapter (pp. 334-335) of this book on that particular visit, or on the part about his three hour conversation with Pavelic, but that would be malicious. About Stepinac informing Pope Pious XII, which *Glas Koncila* mentions, there are only these lines in Mestrovic's *Memoirs*:

"Shortly before I left for Switzerland. Archbishop Stepinac was in Rome for a very short time. He had arrived by airplane and confided in me the purpose of his trip which was to bring to the Pope all documents on the crimes done by the Nazis and the Fascists on our territory, including Occupied Dalmatia (p.334).

"Your excellency, will the Pope get to read the documents which you brought?"

"Yes, he will, or he will give it to one of the Cardinals to read."

"But you know that half of the Cardinals are for the Fascists and..."

"— I know, but the Holy Father is not and he will want to hear the truth, to be informed."

"— My God, he's Italian, and I, myself, if I were the Pope, would first be a Croat, but today's Pope has so many exalted principles and he is conscious of his exalted duties ..." (p.335)

The contents of the Archbishop's "extended documentation of the terror" are not known or that there was anything more in them than some things which were "unsatisfactory for the Italians". There was nevertheless a famous *promemoria*, ascribed to the then president of the Bishops Conference in Croatia, Stepinac and was sent to the Pope on April 18, 1943. An excerpt

from this document we bring here according to the text published in the book by Victor Novak entitled *Magnum Crimen* :

“The progress of the Eastern Schism among the Catholic ranks today threatens, in full reality, to reach its dark goals. The victory of the Great Serbian idea would mean the annihilation of Catholicism in the northwest Balkans, in the State of Croatia. Available documents do not leave any doubt. What is more, there is no doubt that such an evil event would have further consequences far across the borders of Croatia. Waves of Orthodox and offensive Byzantium would be reaching the borders of Italy, while up until now, they were dissipated on the walls of Croatia.

And further, in-as-much as the work of the Croatian clerics, especially the Franciscans, laid the foundation for the renewal of Catholicism in Bulgaria by direction of many Paulists and the rescue of the remaining believers in the Albania of Skenderbeg, the annihilation of a Catholic nation in the Balkans would also hit various scattered groups in the eternally restive Orthodox and Islamic Balkans.

Holy Father, the eyes of all of mankind, which are bleeding from a thousand wounds, are directed to you as the only one who by the exalted significance of his name brought poor mankind that which he needed— heavenly peace. In carrying peace to the world, Holy Father, think of the Croatian people, always true to Christ and to you. The young Croatian nation began in today’s very difficult conditions, as any other country which has battled desperately for its existence, stands as an example and always wants to remain true to its Catholic traditions and ensure a better and clearer future of the Catholic Church in this part of the world. On the other hand, the loss or the fateful reduction would nullify not only the 240,000 who came from the Serbian Orthodox faith, but also the loss of the whole Catholic population of this area with all its churches and monasteries. Thousands of the best Croatian faithful and priests would voluntarily sacrifice their lives to avoid this terrible possibility. In the natural order of events, unless God creates a miracle, the progress of Catholicism is closely tied to the progress of the state of Croatia; the existence of Catholicism depends on the existence of this country; the country’s salvation

is at the same time the salvation of the church. Holy Father, we believe deeply in God's mercy and God's justice of which you are the selected instrument. I ask for your fatherly concern and your prayers for our Independent State of Croatia considering that in this way at the same time I am best recommending the holy faith in my own homeland and in the Balkans. In the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I remain always your most loyal Archbishop and Metropolitan of Zagreb."

There were attempts to bring into question Stepinac's authorship of the above *promemoria* because the copy that was found did not carry his signature. In any case, it would be more comforting to doubt the authorship than to come across data which verify it. The full signature of the metropolitan, however, stands below some text on the same basic subject, even in literally the same wording as the *promemoria* in the Archbishop's *Katolicki List* of February 22, 1944 (at the time of an Allied air attack on Zagreb).

"The Croatian people achieved and earned their right to a national life and their own country by difficult and bloody battles, standing for hundreds of years in defense of the true ideals of the freedom of man and Christian culture. For this, all of Europe and its people are indebted to them and because of this the greatest preserver of real culture and the freedom of mankind, the Pope of Rome gave Croatia the honorable title of First Wall of Christianity."

At the end of this torturous confrontation, the stance expressed by *Glas Koncila* and the above citations could never be reconciled! We would be happy if nothing in the citations existed either on paper or in the living truth of the times of which we are contemporaries. We are disappointed not only because there were so many victims of evil, and so many evildoers, but because there was so much silence about this evil which was most monstrously accepted as necessary and even welcomed by one of the longest lasting periods of blindness prevailing in the "*ecclesia militans*" (*church militant*) of Illyrium. To all of this after such insistence that "the great crime" be forced "through narrow doors" and finally that the doors must be closed, if not slammed



shut, comes to us now along with the objections that *Pravoslavljje* decided to mention Jasenovac, thinking about the Pope at Auschwitz. The Catholic bimonthly press opposes remembering our Auschwitz, while one daily at late as yesterday, informs the public of new discoveries of wartime crimes at Jasenovac. Approximate data place the number of souls lying under this camp at 700,000 recently supplemented by the news reported in *Politika* on August 31, 1977, as follows:

“In the past year at localities of the six former concentration camps at Jasenovac and vicinity, 117 additional mass graves were discovered, bringing the number to 289. Among them, a grave was discovered near the village Mlaka, 12 Kilometers from Jasenovac downstream on the shores of the Sava River. With the help of army equipment which can probe deep into the earth with ultra violet rays, it was reliably confirmed that here lie the remains of between 12,000 and 16,000 women, of some 20,000 camp inmates confined at this locality. We came thus to the recognition that this was the largest killing of women in any single place in Yugoslavia and one of the largest in occupied Europe”.

Can one forget an evil which on the one hand continues to extended by new discoveries, while, on the other hand, it is being concealed and altered – especially as it applies to the illumination and the sanctity of the truth, known well in our fundamental duty in Christ and in our work. We ask then, if in the Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia (citing the most widely known source) on page 467, vol.4, it says that to the Jasenovac camp were brought “Serbs and Croats and then Jews and Gypsies”<sup>8</sup>, from whence then all of a sudden, *Glas Koncila* in its “well known fact” concerning Jasenovac and the mass graves, it lists Serbians last, adding “and Serbians”? We suspect that this sudden reorientation of the order or the identification of the graves in which there lie the martyred population of community upon community, does not lead to any good. What kind of need supersedes the truth and tempts such a

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8 In a continuation on the same page, the Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia says, “The largest part (of the victims) came by various means of transport, and were comprised of men, women and children captured in the villages or as they fled the actions of the various Ustasi units”.

thought when it does not stop even before sacred sacrifices? Is every person's life not the work of God? Is not every innocent killed by the bloodthirsty not sacred before God and man?

The victims at Jasenovac were not Serbians exclusively; it is also true that other massacres took place throughout the N.D.H. and not all the killings took place only here at Jasenovac. The method of the massacres used at Glina were applied also in massacres in churches at Svica, Kolaric, Sadilovac, Kusunji, Slavodija, Zborista, and Topusko. Jasenovac became a generic term for all of this as it also represented the Danica Camp at Koprivnica, the camp at Stara Gradiska, Mitrovica, Jadovno and so many other massive pits into which were thrown the Serbian population only because of their crime of being or belonging to their faith and their people. The symbol, therefore, is one of genocide. There was a great atrocity of genocide of the Armenians during the first World War; in the second World War, the greatest atrocity of genocide was on the Jews and the Serbians on the "frontiers of Christianity".

In the dark times of the last war it is upsetting and a revealing human truth that in the Ustashi concentration camps there were also Croatian patriots. Such bright examples of solidarity in sacrifice are salutary and do not permit ascribing the crimes to anyone but the criminals and to those who, in various guises or illusions, silently, but clearly, were accomplices or beneficiaries of the murders and forced conversions to Catholicism.

Why then are these matters brought up which are irrelevant to the basic significance of the "localities" downstream from the confluence of the Una and the Sava? The subject here is not what happened on the territory of occupied Yugoslavia during the war of liberation and the civil war. Can one not, along the way, even for the sake of allusion, touch on the tragedy of the fratricidal accounting and the revenge which led to the individual acts of madness because there are many things incomprehensible, evil, and contradictory in the battle and the movements. The subject here is Genocide, and for this there is no symmetry! It did not begin with the engagements of war, nor will it end only with the ghastly measures of revenge on the people of the disturbed areas

as it was always in the past with the existence of uninterrupted war for "the Holy Cross and Golden Freedom". Genocide of the Serbian population within the N.D.H. was intentional, prepared and calculated over a long period as an historic act of denationalization, as a final extermination of Orthodoxy "across the Drina", by fire, sword and the (forced) union with Rome. Behind the preparations for the massacres and the (forced) conversion to Roman Catholicism, there stand also corresponding "instructions in the faith", long before those done by Fra Solc, when they were experienced and foreseen by Gerasim Zelic (1752- 1828), archimandrite of Krupa, the author of *Lives*. Archbishop Stadler of Sarajevo and his assistant and later successor, Saric had, in our time, resorted to "instruction" most. In 1914, these two executed the Pocorek "punitive expedition" against Serbia. This "Caesar-Apostolic" force began the first destruction and desecration of Serbian Orthodox Churches in Macva, Podrina and Pocerina while at the same time, over 160 Orthodox priests in Bosnia and Hercegovina were among those arrested, sentenced and executed as "great traitors" of Austria-Hungary. The religious war, which at that time, was conducted under the wing of a military campaign, was continued twenty years later still more fiercely, totally after March 27 by Stadler's successor, by his settling of religious accounts, not only in his own, but in all archbishoprics. That which was presented in the *Pilipenda* of Sima Matavulj was realized in Nazor's poem *Orthodox Mother*. It was also shown in the *Documents on the Anti-national Work and Crimes of One Part of the Catholic Clergy* (Zagreb. 1946), and not only from this book nor from books alone.

In this dialogue of two religious publications, we think that the crime of coerced conversion to Roman Catholicism, and Jasenovac as an actuality and as a symbol are contained in this soul-destroying mission which spreads its law by lawlessness. Has the Roman Catholic Church ever, publicly, or by a secret act, separated itself from the terror of coerced conversions? Has it by any kind of canonical act canceled the rite by force, acknowledged its guilt, and sought forgiveness of the dead and of the living victims of religious pogroms? By showing respect for the martyrs

at Jasenovac we conceived it as an opportunity at the very place of the horror, to open ways of resolution and understanding.

Instead, oblivion is recommended as the only cure the "peace of the dead" and forgetting the word, the recognition, and the thought of repentance. Is it permissible for us to speak of forgetting evil wrought on the innocent, who are killed, and not for the dead? It is known who and before what court forgiveness can be obtained by those who free themselves from sin before God, acknowledging wrongs against men. Only the sacrament of repentance, and not oblivion, leads to the cleansing of the soul and conscience. That is why the remembrance of genocide is not the same as remembering evil; nor is remembrance the same as stirring evil blood. We speak only of the warning that the neglect of recent evils can encourage new evils which are never at rest. Oblivion of the past only encourages them. Does it not seem then, that the easy sermon on forgetting evil anticipates the evil of forgetting?

Finally, a word about the last lines of *Glas Koncila*. Referring to those who say that "along with those in the Ustashi, there were priests from the rank of colonel to the lowest non-commissioned officer in other such military formations, but we hear nothing about their defrockment". Such thinking, protected in the accustomed logic, we leave to the comments of others for whom the only certain orientation for the events and the actualities of the past war are the parity, symmetry and the equations they represent. *Glas Koncila* misspoke; the last thought detached itself and is drawing on the word which we cannot utter because we know that it leads to the end of any discussion, But this (discussion) thus started, needs to be continued. For the sake of younger and less biased readers, we shall, for all of this, repeat some of the most difficult and, for that reason, not very distinct facts:

During the years of occupation, 1941-1945, the Serbian Orthodox Church within the territories of Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, today's region of Vojvodina, and the SR Macedonia was outlawed, its church organization was completely abolished and all its spiritual caretakers were investigated or banished;

Among the 370 clergymen of the Serbian Orthodox Church lost were four bishops, while at the head of this martyred church in the second World War stands its chief, himself, the Serbian Patriarch who spent the four war years as a prisoner and ended the war at Dachau one of the most terrible concentration camps in occupied Europe.

Such a church, a victim of the war throughout its entire organization, had to overcome the most difficult of temptations in order to survive spiritually in Christ and historically among its own people; destroyed, leaderless, it had pressing duties, and no way to concern itself with individuals within its ranks for whom those murky times spread uninterrupted despair or led them to resort to expedients; such a church, in every way a scarcely existing church, could not fulfill responsibilities for those who in the war were on the defeated side, nor could it ascribe to itself favors for others of its clergy who were on the victorious side.

The Serbian Orthodox Church always shared the fate of the people whom it served in Christ throughout its entire history, through all of their common suffering. It had never done a single act in sin against God or against the honor of its people, nor did it teach anything other than love and brotherhood with all neighboring peoples, no matter what their religious confession or origin. For that reason, in short, there were never any Orthodox priests in "such formations" which were the means to commit the genocide of (forced) conversions. Not a single one!

As concerns a visit by Pope John Paul II to our country of which the *Glas Koncila* spoke, if it ever comes to pass, we would further regard it as only welcomed. Because the Pope, while he is the head of a State, the Vatican, he is also as the *Pontifex maximus*, at the same time, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, and his visit could be of especial significance. From our side, we would most sincerely welcome it also as an opportunity to set aright the relations between the Christian churches of Yugoslavia and especially that a real ecumenical idea prevails over the views of the discords of yesterday, the differences of today, and the understandings in the future. There are examples of dignity and respect to show that this is possible. Two examples

were the conduct of the Zagreb Canon Dr. Loncar before the Ustashi court in 1941, and the fraternal gesture of sincerity and hope by the Bishop of Banja Luka Dr. Pihler not too long ago. In such examples of the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, we want to see the chasm crossed, not only in isolated individual accomplishments.

And may this dialogue of fact be an example of a real Christian spirit in our thoughts and actions. We would therefore be much obliged to *Glas Koncila* for the favor of making available to us documents and proofs which would dispute all the data presented in the appendices above. Such documents we would receive with great relief. It would be much more difficult if the suspicions arising from the stated and unstated reactions of *Glas Koncila* turned out to be right. We too did not state everything, and everything need not be stated until we come face to face with everything which would help us come to the knowledge which will free our consciences, and face responsibility. We will be silent and we will deliberate before we continue our search for a common language of reason if we all are determined to do that. Until that time, let there remain with us a faith in courage for (finding) the truth, in modesty and in the love for that bread which is not returned with stones. And may the name of the Lord never be mentioned in vain.