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of 4th International Conference on Jasenovac
Banja Luka, 30-31 May 2007

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Banja Luka
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Foreword

The volume containing the papers presented at the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac, published just before the actual gathering of the Conference, is now enriched with these proceedings holding the participants' addresses; together, they present a whole to the public, which serves as evidence of the efforts, over sixty years later, to reveal the truth or at least a part of it, about some very important events which left indelible marks. The fact this Conference was held proves and justifies dealing with these significant events from our not too distant history, in order to learn the lesson and prevent similar things from happening to the forthcoming generations, which already occurred at the end of last century.

Together with the fact that researchers from the region took part, the event was particularly important as it attracted and gathered researchers from other countries, who clarified, from their own perspectives, what took place here and bequeathed us lessons and messages. It is of great importance that the Jewish community is putting increasing stress on the persecution of their own people in the Jasenovac system of camps.

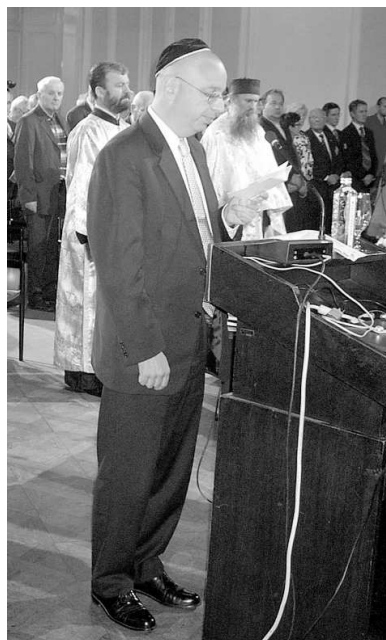
The generous support of the Government of the Republic of Srpska and their dedication to help continue to hold this conference is encouraging and supportive for all those who deal with this matter professionally, or who simply wish to promote the truth for other reasons and present to the public their discoveries in this manner as well.

Janko Velimirović

Each International Conference on Jasenovac proved more successful than the previous, but in the case of the Fourth one, had we only gathered and distributed the three Conference Proceedings, it would still have been a complete success.

Professor Srboľjub Źivanović, academician

DAY 1, BANSKI DVOR, CONCERT HALL OPENING CEREMONY WITH GREETINGS





Professor Vladimir Lukić

Ladies and gentlemen,

After the terrible crime of genocide committed in Jasenovac, one of the most monstrous death camps in Europe, we often heard the ancient words of the Bible: **God, forgive them, they didn't know what they were doing!**

As much as we may be ready to forgive, we should, perhaps we even have to wonder: **Maybe they did know what they were doing, maybe they still do?**

For in the past and today likewise, the masterminds behind these crimes are hiding, the causes that led to them are minimised or ignored, the traces that serve as evidence of the killing of the innocent are insolently destroyed, and not only is the number of victims minimised, so is the suffering which the camp prisoners endured. Many people should bear the burden of guilt for these events; instead, they hide the fact that in Jasenovac unborn babies were killed alongside children, women, old people, which means people of all ages, and insist it was a labor camp. Indeed, a 'labor' camp it was, especially used for the mindless extermination of Serbs, Jews and Roma, for whom the Jasenovac system of camps was designed in the first place. We shouldn't forget the political opponents of fascism, who died in the cruel 'factory of death' in Jasenovac.

The victims and their descendents are additionally stripped of their dignity by the fact that the new exhibition at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum not only disguises the crimes but also blurs the difference between the victims and their executioners. The propaganda tricking the international community into believing the exhibition concept is modern and contemporary, whose real agenda is avoiding any similarity with Auschwitz, Treblinka or other World War II camps, revealing itself as an attempt to redefine the notion of genocide, undoubtedly repeats the genocide committed against the innocent victims of Jasenovac. Conferences like this one, the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac, are very important for disseminating the truth; this truth has to be based solely on facts, which is also



the best way to stop the efforts of those trying to misrepresent these places of torture and execution as almost humane labor camps, while they were really set up for the sole purpose of exterminating complete nations.

It is truly my great pleasure to welcome you. I do this with great reverence for the victims of Jasenovac, bearing in mind moral values and the values of civilised human society. First and foremost, I would like to greet the camp survivors.

Let me welcome His Grace Hrizostom, the Bishop of Bihać and Petrovac, as well as our old acquaintance, guest and friend, Mr. Yitzchak Asiel, the Chief Rabbi of Belgrade. Let me greet Professor Rajko Kuzmanović, Chair of the Academy of Sciences and Art of the Republic of Srpska. I'd like to welcome Professor Stanko Stanić, the Vice-Chancellor of Banja Luka University. Let me welcome Mr. Dragan Čavić. Let me welcome Mr. Dragoljub Davidović, the Mayor of Banja Luka. I would like to greet Mr. Nikola Kragulj, the Prefect of Gradiška Municipality. Let me greet all the other municipality prefects and representatives. I am particularly happy to welcome those who come from the world of economy, a number of executives and others. I welcome representatives of religious communities. We have an old friend here, Mr. Arie Livne, who is also representative of the World Jewish Congress. Let me to use this occasion to greet him in that capacity as well. We also have with us Mr. Alfred Gerstl, a man known for his friendly ties with the former Yugoslavia, especially with Serbs, who participated in the People's Liberation War. You will have a chance to hear more about him later and I greet him most warmly. Let me welcome representatives of many different associations, members of the media and all of you, dear guests. Let me apologise in case I have forgotten someone...

Comment from the audience: The Prime Minister.

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: Well, no, because at the same time he is President of the Organising Board, so it wouldn't make much sense if we welcomed him on behalf of the Organising Board, which would mean he's welcoming himself. I would like to propose the Chairs: Professor Bernard Klein, Chair of the Commission for Establishing the Truth about Jasenovac – sir, please; Professor Srboljub Živanović, academician, chair of the Department of the Serbian Academy of Science for Great Britain, Ireland and a few more countries; Mr. Milorad Bukva, MSc, Director of the Public Institution 'Donja Gradina Memorial'; our old friend, Dr. Wanda Schindley, whom you all know very well, and, of course, myself. Let me ask Instructor Goran Latinović to read the letter of the President of the Republic.

Dr. Milan Jelić

President of the Republic of Srpska¹

To the Organising Board of the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac

Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests and honorable participants of this Conference,

It is with pleasure and a feeling of extraordinary honour and gratitude for your invitation to the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac that I greet you all most warmly and wish you fruitful work and a pleasant stay in the Republic of Srpska. At the same time, I inform you with regret that I am unable to attend the Conference for legitimate reasons. I support your dedication to use your scientifically grounded and expert work to contribute to revealing the truth about the real nature of the Jasenovac camp, to investigating and discovering the personal and collective identities of the victims, to revealing the genocidal and criminal deeds in the former Ustasha state and to ensuring a rightful and continuous investigation and research of this matter as well as full media interest in this site once used to exterminate Serbs, Jews, Roma and other opponents of that political regime, which all comes at a time immediately after the 62nd Jasenovac Breakout Commemoration. That makes this Conference even more significant, because we have seen attempts to minimise and manipulate maliciously not only the crimes which took place back then, but also the persecution during the most recent tragic conflict in the region. All bodies and institutions of the Republic of Srpska will help to ensure an adequate status for the Jasenovac-Donja Gradina Memorial Park, which is of great importance for the Republic of Srpska. We expect that the messages of this Conference will help ameliorate the situation and relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, especially in the context of strengthening tolerance, reconciliation and neighborly relations. Let me greet you warmly once more, deeply convinced this Conference will be a great success.

President of the Republic of Srpska,
Dr. Milan Jelić

¹ Dr. Jelić's letter was read by Mr. Goran Latinović

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: Of course, one easily forgets a thing or two, and I seem to have forgotten to greet members of the diplomatic corps, so I use this subsequent opportunity to do so. Let me now ask Mr. Milorad Dodik, President of the Organising Board and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska, to get the floor and open the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac. Mr. Prime Minister, please.

Mr. Milorad Dodik

Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska

Good afternoon everyone! I wish this Conference success and I am glad I am here to open it and welcome all of you, our dear guests, who have already visited here several times, in particular the camp survivors, the material witnesses of what we are trying to prove and show – that genocide certainly took place at the Jasenovac camp and was never officially denounced, which is why the community has to be regularly reminded and informed about it in this manner so it is never forgotten.

Many people on the Organising Board worked hard side by side with me to make this Conference happen. I am happy I had a chance to work with them on the preparation of the necessary logistics. I am convinced it is going to be a success, I am convinced that the facts and the truth about Jasenovac will be again the outcome of this event here in Banja Luka, but I am also sure that it will rather be a binding event for us, the next generation responsible for preserving and keeping the memory of Jasenovac, to do more in order to create a memorial park at Gradina, before all, so that it serves as evidence to its visitors of the magnitude of the crimes which took place there and the proportions of the suffering which happened there.

Jasenovac is very important from the aspect of the circumstances nowadays. A lot of people here struggle to understand our reality and obviously



it won't happen unless they understand and know what occurred at Jasenovac. Everything that happened there most certainly made an indelible mark on the other events befalling the same people who were persecuted only because they belong to a different nation and because they believe in a different God.

Words cannot express the brutishness of atrocities at Jasenovac. They happened there and they can only be part of our sadness, which stubbornly recurs as memory of the terrible ordeal and suffering of women, children, old people and men who were someone's target and thus perished, lost their lives in terrible pains and unbearable suffering.

Just like the previous three Conferences, it is a goal of this Conference to promote the truth about Jasenovac. It has to be that single event that will bring new or confirm the existing information and evidence; it has to be an event we can trust completely; this Conference has to deal only with the truth, it should not and must not be an event to allow any kind of politicizing or minimizing the history of Jasenovac in any way. Anything else but the truth will mean minimizing and distorting the truth about Jasenovac.

Of course, those people who have spent years and years investigating and promoting the Jasenovac truth have a lot more to say than me. This is where I'll finish and let me wish a pleasant stay in the Republic of Srpska to all of you who came here from many different countries – from America, England, Israel, from Austria, Serbia and other countries – and let me reassure you that the Government of the Republic of Srpska is committed to sponsoring and supporting this Conference permanently and building a memorial park at Gradina, which will present and evidence the terrible atrocities which happened there in a most dignified way.

Therefore, I wish you success in what we have been struggling to do for years, which is promoting the truth and presenting it clearly. Perhaps we are also to blame a little bit for failing to achieve more, but I believe these Conferences are a good opportunity for this and they have to go on and happen in the future; with more luck this would have been the fortieth one or God knows which, and not only the fourth. In that sense I certainly support the continuity of these conventions.

Let me welcome you all one more time. Thank you for making the effort to come to Banja Luka and take part in this convention, which means so much to all of us in the Republic of Srpska, to all our people, especially to the families of the Jasenovac victims and survivors. Thank you very much!

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: Next I would like to give the floor to our great friend, I should also say a great humanitarian, Mr. Livne. Please.

Mr. Arie Livne

Prime Minister, representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Christian Church, Rabbi, the Chief Rabbi of Belgrade, the former President of the Republic of Srpska Mr. Dragan Čavić, dear guests,

This is the second time I have spoken before the Jasenovac Conference. Given my age, I assume it is the last. But I can tell you one thing. I stand here before you, I survived those days. Very few of us are still here. The truth is, I was not at Jasenovac, but my whole family was killed in the Holocaust, partly in Auschwitz, partly in Hungary, partly in Croatia, in Jasenovac, those family members who came from Koprivnica. I managed to survive. I stand before you here with my head hung, excited, because I believe I should tell you some things since I really trust this is my last address to this Conference.

I had certain doubts regarding this Conference, which I consider very important. Of course, my doubts did not revolve around whether it is important or not; it is very important. I asked myself: what is it that we're investigating? What are we investigating? What can it be that we don't know? We don't know who the killers were, who the victims were? What is it we don't know? Are we supposed to investigate why the Ustashe, why the Usta-sha Croatia – or perhaps the Nazi Germany, which was behind the affair in the ideological sense – why were they exterminating us? Dear friends, we will never find that out, just as we will never know the number of victims. This issue of the number of victims is one thing that's bothering me. One victim is absolutely enough for me for the whole Holocaust – my mother, who was gassed at Auschwitz and cremated at Auschwitz. That is the Holocaust for me. As for whether there were seven hundred thousand victims at Jasenovac, or there were five hundred thousand, or six hundred, or four hundred... First



of all, we'll never know. Who we should point the finger at because we'll never know is another issue. We didn't record where the people were. More or less that could have been established, not all the figures accurately, but that could have been established pretty closely. Now we'll never know. Therefore, my opinion is we can't investigate that.

Investigating why it was done is even less possible. This hatred against Serbs in the first place – because the victims at Jasenovac were primarily Serbs, Jews were secondary – let me tell you, this hatred against Serbs is beyond comprehension. I think we'll never be able to realize why, how and what for. Because of religion – definitely. The Catholic Church... that is not my domain, I am not someone who researches the church... but we can say conclusively the Catholic Church was certainly one of the major culprits behind this terrible crime which took place in Croatia, first and foremost at Jasenovac, about which we are speaking right now. I believe that... Professor Živanović told me yesterday... after I opened the exhibition on Jasenovac, I said there we must never forgive. He said – we do forgive. I believe we should not forgive, forgiving may be a Christian virtue, but let me tell you one thing: this crime was such that it does not allow forgiveness, it does not allow forgetting, it doesn't allow forgiving and there is no need to forgive. They killed hundreds of thousands of people for no reason, women, children...

Let me tell you, I am 86 years old and I haven't slept for nights – this may sound like an exaggeration, it's really a figure of speech – but I think a lot about what happened to us. There's one more question: what happened to us after the war? What have we done over the last sixty years to keep the memory of those who were killed, even though they were innocent? Let me tell you a sad thing – we haven't done anything. I mean Serbia, since the Republic of Srpska – I said once it is Serbia's periphery, and I was given a knocking for it – it was Serbia's responsibility to do what Jews did, to build a big museum in Belgrade, similar to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, so the world can remember and children can take tours, schools, so what happened to those people is learnt about and remembered. Serbia – it was a victim two times. Serbia was a victim during the war, Serbia was a victim after the war as well. The world – it is as it is, we can't make it better, we lack the means to do it. It is as it is, it does not remember who its friends are, who its enemies are, but we must remember. If we are going to talk about siding with the good and the bad, we sided with the good, we sided with the Soviet Union, America, England, France and the other allies, and we were one of the winners after the war. We were the only country in Europe which fought from day one – with weapons in our hands, not just empty talk, we sacrificed hundreds of thou-

sands of victims. What did we get in return? Nothing, zero! Whose fault is it? Perhaps it is also our fault a little bit, but it's mainly the world's fault. But the world is the way it is. We can see that today on a small scale in the case of the Republic of Srpska, but I think we should remember one thing here, and that is why we're here. We won't be able to discover anything else except for what we know, and we know this – we were killed, we were victims, and we know who the criminals were.

Jewish people – we have a different view. What I'm saying – Jewish people remember for centuries, they remember both their friends and enemies for thousands of years. And this is where I come to... I am truly sorry because I will be speaking a bit longer than I had planned, but I think this is a convention where I need to say what I really think because I won't have another chance. Jewish people lived alongside Serbian people for centuries, more than five hundred years in brotherhood, friendship. There was never anti-Semitism in Serbia. The Serbian Orthodox Church was never anti-Semitic like the Catholic Church, Serbia was our friend. When the President of the Republic of Srpska was in Israel – that was Dragan Čavić at the time – and visited the President of the Parliament, who then acted on behalf of the President because the actual President was not in the country, this man said to him – Mr. President, Jews are a nation that remembers its friends and enemies for centuries. Serbs are our friends and we will remember that for centuries.

Dear friends, why have I touched on this issue? To my astonishment and to the astonishment of the whole Jewish world, there have been manifestations of anti-Semitism and neo-fascism in Serbia in the last few years, which is unbelievable, I should say, because there are no Jews in Serbia. There is a very small number of them, they are mainly old people who have no impact on either its economic or political life, meaning, there is absolutely no reason for it. Why this is happening – we can't tell. Let me tell you one thing. Don't... Then there is this well-known story – you know, we had this bombing, Albright, Holbrooke, Berger, they were behind Clinton at the time. Is it right to say that because of those people, who are of Jewish origin but are actually Americans, do they extend their guilt on all of the Jewish people, if there can be such guilt, is it right to blame me, who I think did more for Serbia than any other person in the world during the Kosovo crisis and the bombing of Belgrade? Now really, I received a medal for it, thank you; but on behalf of the Jewish victims who are no more I have to say this is absolutely unfair to the Jewish people. Remember, dear friends, remember, I ask you. Neo-nazism and neo-fascism begin with anti-Semitism, always and everywhere! Do not let that happen! Do not let it happen because there is no need for it. The last thing Serbia needs now is earning a reputation internationally as an

anti-Semitic country. With all the problems it is facing, that's the last thing it needs.

Let me greet you. Thank you for giving me another chance to speak. I thank you and I still hope – who know, I might be here again in two years' time, or somewhere else... my friends always say, you've been telling us for five or six years now this has been your last time. I really hope it won't be that way, so let me greet you warmly, I love you and I wish you all the best. Welcome!

Mr. Arie Livne: Dear friends, this is indeed a great honour for me. We have with us Professor Alfred Gerstl. Alfred Gerstl was President of the Austrian Parliament. He's a Jew living in Gratz, he is now retired. He is here with his wife. On 7 July 2000 he opened an exhibition in Vienna about the bombing of Belgrade, and he said what NATO is doing to Belgrade equals Hitler's crimes. That man is now here, with us, and he has come to this Conference.

Professor Alfred Gerstl

It is a great honor for me to be invited here, especially because we're in Srpska and I feel closely related to Serbs. There are special reasons for this – Serbs were always there for minorities and the weak. As an 84 year old, I remember 1938, when the first Jews had to flee Austria, Belgrade was open. Two more nations were open-handed: Mexico and China.

That is why I would like to tell you about the occasion when I received the President of China in Vienna in the capacity of President of the Parliament. I thanked him for the fact that a Vienna-born Chinese, Dr. Rosenfeld, could be awarded the honor of becoming their chief army doctor. He was a Jewish refugee in Shanghai. The President of China gave me a hug and in 1998 I visited Shanghai to open a museum of Dr. Rosenfeld.

The reason I told you this is we are gathered at a convention which should rebuild a bridge. It makes me proud Croats and Slovenes are among the attendees here. I openly protested in the Austrian Parliament against the internecine war in Yugoslavia. Therefore, I hope this congress will prove to the young generations worldwide there is a future for co-habitation.

Thank you very much.²

² This is the original address by Professor Alfred Gerstl in German:

‘Es ist für mich eine besondere Ehre, dass ich hier eingeladen wurde. Vor allem in Srpska, wo ich mich sehr verbunden fühle mit Serben und dies aus der Begründung heraus, weil

Mr. Arie Livne: It is my honour... Let me be honest with you. This is a medal of the Simon Wiesenthal Institute made in commemoration of late Simon Wiesenthal. I've brought it to the Prime Minister, but I'll give it to doctor... to the professor. The Prime Minister will forgive me, there's going to be another occasion, next time I come here I'll bring it to him.

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: Thank you very much! Would anybody else like to extend a welcome...? Please, Your Grace – Bishop Hrizostom.



Serben immer Minderheiten und Schwachen geholfen haben. In Rückerinnerung, auch ich als 84-jähriger, in Rückerinnerung wird sehr aufgezeigt, dass 1938, als die ersten Juden aus Österreich flüchten mussten, Belgrad offen war. Und noch zwei Nationen waren damals mit offenen Händen: Mexiko und China.

Und ich möchte das deshalb hier sagen, als ich als Präsident des Bundesrates den Präsidenten von China in Wien im Parlament empfangen habe, habe ich mich bei ihm bedankt, dass ein Chinese zu so hohen Ehren kommen konnte, nämlich der Chefarzt der Armee zu werden, der in Wien geboren ist, Doktor Rosenfeld. Er war geflüchteter Jude nach Schanghai. Und der Präsident von China umarmte mich und 1998 durfte ich ein Museum in Schanghai eröffnen für Doktor Rosenfeld.

Ich habe diese Sache nur deshalb zur Sprache gebracht, weil hier ein Kongress stattfindet, der ebenfalls wieder eine Brücke bauen soll. Darum bin ich stolz, dass auch Kroaten und Slowenen anwesend sind. Ich habe nämlich ganz offen im Parlament Österreichs mich gegen den Bruderkrieg in Jugoslawien ausgesprochen. Und so hoffe ich, dass dieser Kongress der Jugend in aller Welt vor Augen führt, es gibt noch eine Zukunft für das Leben miteinander.

Ich danke Ihnen.'

Hrizostom, Bishop of Bihać and Petrovac

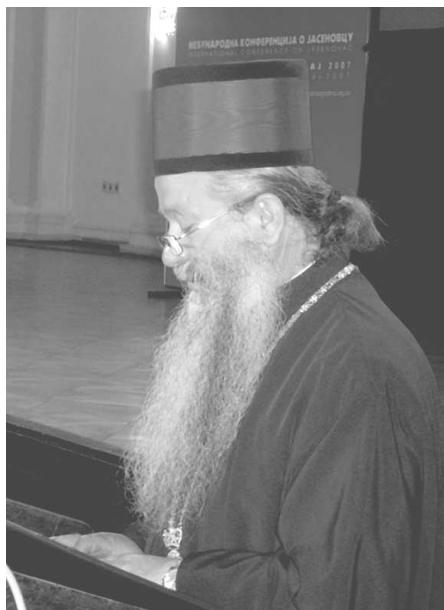
Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska, ladies and gentlemen,

It is our honour to welcome you on behalf of His Holiness Serbian Patriarch Pavle and members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, who I represent at this Conference. We give you the prayers and blessings of His Holiness and members of the Holy Synod for a successful Conference.

The victims of the Ustasha genocide committed against the Serbian, Jewish, Romani and other communities continue to stir powerful emotions and the feeling of pain over their innocent suffering. Likewise, the Ustasha crimes of genocide committed throughout the Independent State of Croatia raise the same old question: what generated this devastating hatred and evil in individuals or groups of people who our martyred ancestors believed were their friends and good neighbors until 10 April 1941? Quite often they were related by blood, both closely and distantly. Is this about the Cain syndrome or something else?

Historians will be quick to identify the roots and genesis of the Ustasha genocide in the region in political, national and religious speculations. Other scientists are likely to explain these matters in the same way. However, the issue of crime still problematises the Church, because evil lurks incessantly, like a plague, right before our eyes. At the same time, the world is silent, watches peacefully as evil wins over good, as good and virtues are won over and killed by means of force.

Our Holy Church is hopeful this Conference can achieve such results that will protect the victims of genocide at Jasenovac and Donja Gradina against increasing minimisation and profanation. Namely, we can see how the Ustasha crimes at Jasenovac and Donja Gradina are being relativised.



We rely on this Conference to respond firmly to this and other similar happenings, as well as to the quasi-scientific speculations of certain individuals and institutions in the Republic of Croatia.

We are all shocked by the latest attempts to equalize and link Jasenovac and Donja Gradina with Bleiburg and the so-called Way of the Cross! The Bleiburg and Way of the Cross strategy is used for a new, blatant and full-scale political and spiritual promotion of Ustashahood. It is very important, and such are our expectations from you, that this Conference recognizes this and similar phenomena, identifies them as such and reacts in an adequate manner, because they diminish the dignity of the victims of Ustasha genocide at Jasenovac and Donja Gradina.

Jasenovac and Donja Gradina are rightly the focus of your research. However, it is our duty to remind you of the many other sites of mass execution and camps, namely Garavice near Bihać, where 15,000 people were victimized and killed, then Šušnjar in Sanski Most with 5500 victims, Gopsić and Jadovno in Lika, and many other places in the region.

I would also like to welcome you on my behalf as member of the Serbian Orthodox Church Board for Jasenovac and thank you for your efforts and your kindness.

We are particularly grateful to the sponsors of this Conference, the Government of the Republic of Srpska, for its readiness and resolve to sponsor one such important gathering of researchers.

Also, many thanks to the organizers of the Conference for everything they've done to make it a success, should God allow it. Thank you.

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: We thank the honorable Bishop.

Mr. George Bogdanich

Message to the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac

My name is George Bogdanich, I'm Serbian American, producer of the documentary *Yugoslavia: The Avoidable War*. I was invited to the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac in Banja Luka. Unfortunately, I can't make it, but I wanted to offer my best wishes and strong support for the efforts of

this organization which is telling the story that the world needs to hear, the horrific events between 1941 and 1945 against Serbs, Jews and Gypsies. It's a story that needs to be told and understood, and it reverberates among our people and will to the end of time. So, I hope to work for you in the future years and wish the best.



DAY 1, BANSKI DVOR, CONCERT HALL

Mr. Branislav Dukić

Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants and guests at the Conference,

My name is Branislav Dukić and I am President of the Republic of Srpska Camp Prisoners' Alliance, which is a nongovernmental organisation working to ensure crimes against Serbs in the Republic Srpska do not continue after the armed conflict finished. The truth is, we are speaking about Jasenovac today, but Jasenovac is the actual cause of the bloodshed which happened in 1990s. I say after the armed conflict on purpose, because the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued using other weapons, it is still waged by certain powers trying to achieve their wartime goals now, at peace, first and foremost the goal of centralizing Bosnia and Herzegovina, which the Republic of Srpska should blend in. These powers are openly supported by leaders of the so-called international community in what they do, the same international community that set fire to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia so it could then put the same fire out using its own means and methods, always at the expense of the Serbian people, wherever it may be or live.

The mentioned team chose as a highly important tool for its endeavors suppressing the truth about the persecution of Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, which is especially true of Bosnia and Herzegovina nowadays. The truth is suppressed because the historical facts and causes which led to the tragic, bloody conflict in the region are looked on with minimisation and depreciation and because victims and executioners are perfidiously selected, the aim of which is to design an official truth which will serve the momentary political goals. The problem lies in the fact we are dealing with political goals which directly oppose the interests of the Serbian people, with persistent attempts to tag it the reputation of a genocidal nation, which should best disa p-



pear along with its historical, national and cultural identity. The objective of all fairytales, including the fairytale of Euro-Atlantic and God knows what other integrations, may be to have the Serbian people become part of the so much noised about Europe, but disgraced, handicapped and bereft of its right to dignity. That is why we have seen and heard so many monstrous fakes, lies, deceits and other dishonorable acts which do not suppress only the truth, but also the assumptions for any supposed conclusions that would contradict the official stance which more and more obviously casts the Serbian people in the role of bloodthirsty hordes, looters, born as criminals and aggressors. Being researchers yourselves, it is most certainly clear to you we are faced with a treatment which ignores assumptions and statements based on objectivity, historical facts and the preconditions which led to the events in 20th century. This is all discarded and brushed beneath the carpet, on top of which we are cynically told the supposed international community is sick and tired of our history, while it has had enough of its history as well. This kind of sarcasm may come only from those who never actually suffered in the course of their history, those to whom Serbian flesh served for centuries as cannon ammunition which they needed in making their own histories.

Sarajevo is the city where I lived for 33 years. I arrived there from Bosanski Petrovac and lived in an apartment which I was eventually removed from, accused I was taking up occupation on myself by using a small mirror to guide the Chetnick artillery to target my apartment – in 20th century! Sarajevo was the place where as an internee and a camp prisoner I came to wish anybody's artillery would end my suffering and the brutal torture I endured only because I was Serbian. Sarajevo is the seat of the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where justice is delivered for war crimes by the same man and the same people who tried the 5,555 Serbs at the 'Victor Bubanj' Barracks. According to the 1991 census, 156 thousand Serbs lived in Sarajevo; those people were banished only because they did not want to identify as aggressors, criminals, murderers or any other insulting and humiliating labels they were hurled. Sarajevo is a city which had 126 camps. In the history of two World Wars there wasn't a city in the world with 126 camps, with 30 thousand Serbs, of whom 5 thousand perished in Kazani and other pits only because they were Serbs, owned an apartment and had a little mirror.

The United Nations stakeholders had to know, i.e. they had to see the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was ruthless and respected no humanitarian principles, and they had to see it was waged in accordance with the motto 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. They were not able to accuse Serbs for their own shameful failure to protect the Serbian people and the Republic of Srpska Krajina simply because Serbs were there no more as they had been

forced to flee into exodus thanks to such fine protectors, an exodus unseen in the aftermath of World War II. As victims of this war, just like victims from Šabac, Loznica, Jasenovac, Kragujevac, Valjevo and other places where Serbian people were executed – like never before, you as historians and researchers have to persist and not give in as you fight for the truth we owe to the victims and future generations, who must not live to experience the same destiny, or who should at least know what, why and how and what can happen to them.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, it is a sad fact that the Jasenovac case was opened only after the trial at the International Court of Justice in The Hague ended. What is even sadder is that the current political agendas keep minimising Jasenovac and brushing it underneath the rug of history as something which happened a long time ago and so has no connection with the events taking place in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1990s. And yet, the saddest thing of all is that the Serbian community is asked to continue and keep quiet about Jasenovac, equal to how we had to keep quiet during the era of fake brotherhood and unity. The Serbian community is still asked to be silent and it is asked to forget about its victims in order not to hurt the victims on the other side.

No one here has a right to remain silent. The truth is we should open any processes whereby we can establish the truth, which would in the process serve as a guarantee of peace and stability in the region. Our journey towards the truth has to begin with Jasenovac, the biggest war crime and a case of genocide, which was the cause of all the consequences we faced during the latest conflict. This is why it is primarily Jasenovac that requests the whole truth, so we can prevent similar events from recurring, as they could easily happen again without that truth. Unfortunately, there is no sincerity on our political scene, which is a main prerequisite if we are to build peace permanently. That is why the victims, both those of Jasenovac and of other camps, are subjects of manipulation serving narrow political agendas. And these agendas increasingly widen the rift between the nations.

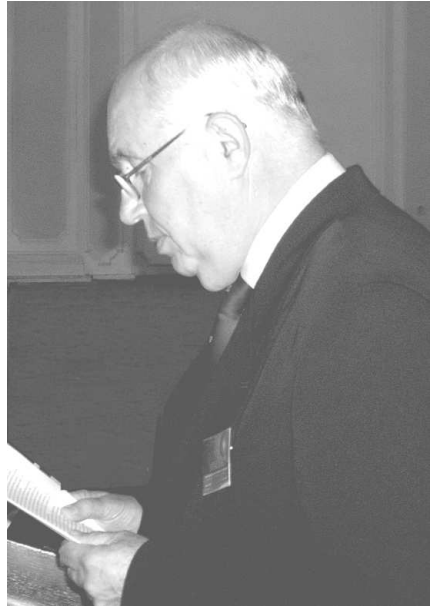
For the reasons stated, these conventions and the papers that are presented are extremely important, primarily because the language spoken here is the exact language of science, documents and facts, i.e. using such means which is avoided in political debates which do not seek or aspire to the truth, justice or humanity; on the contrary, they are unscrupulously politicized for the purpose of personal promotion and to the detriment of the people, the Serbian people in the first place. For the reasons stated, I would like to see this convention help establish the truth about Jasenovac, the truth which will be objective and impartial, so no political bravura or adventures can contradict it

in the future. The Republic of Srpska Camp Prisoners' Alliance, which I represent at this Conference, will be eager and available to you at all times to assist in our common endeavor so one day our children do not have to experience what we have been through. Thank you.

Academician Srboljub Živanović

*Forensic observation on the efficiency of
and muslim croatian murderers way of
killing and torchering of their serbian,
jewish, and roma victims*

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th International Conference on Jasenovac,
Banja Luka, 2007, p. 38



Mr. Lazar Lukajić³

The worst massacre of peaceful and loyal village residents in a single day in the long history of humankind took place on 7 February 1942 in villages around Banja Luka – Drakulić, Šargovac and Motike. Ante Pavelić had plans to make Banja Luka the capital of his Independent State of Croatia, so he conducted ethnic cleansing operations in and around the city. Two thousand five hundred Serbs, from babies to old people, were slaughtered in a single day. The massacre was led by a Franciscan friar from Monastery Petrićevac near Banja Luka called Tomislav Filipović. After the massacre, the Ustasha authorities



appointed him Commander of the Jasenovac concentration camp – as a reward. Once in Jasenovac, he proved a real monster, an unparalleled monster, which earned him the nickname ‘Friar Satan’.

I recently published a book on this mass slaughter entitled *Friars and Ustashe Kill* (Fund for Genocide Research, Belgrade, 2005); I also had a paper about Friar Satan published in the Proceedings of this Conference.

As the Fourth International Conference is taking place in Banja Luka, close to the venue of the terrible slaughter, where on 22 June 2003 Pope John Paul II sanctified Ivan Hans Merz, an Ustasha ideologist, making him the first ever Catholic saint on Serbian territory, Academician Prof. Dr Srboľjub Živanović from London and several other Conference participants wanted to have at least one survivor of that crime at this gathering. I suggested that Ljubica Vučić of Motike could testify here; she was 11 at the time of the massacre and has seven visible scars on her body made by the Ustasha knife. Professor Wanda Schindley from Texas and Vladimir Bibić from New York filmed Ljubica and her scars a few days ago. I have brought Ljubica here so

³ Mr. Lazar Lukajić’s introduction and conclusion to Ms. Ljubica Vučić’s account were edited for publication by Mr. Lazar Lukajić, who also authored the comments in the footnotes following the account for the reason of greater clarity.

she can give us her account in person, although she won't show us her scars here as it would be inappropriate for her to undress.

Ljubica Vučić will be speaking now; her maiden name was Vasić.

Ms. Ljubica Vučić

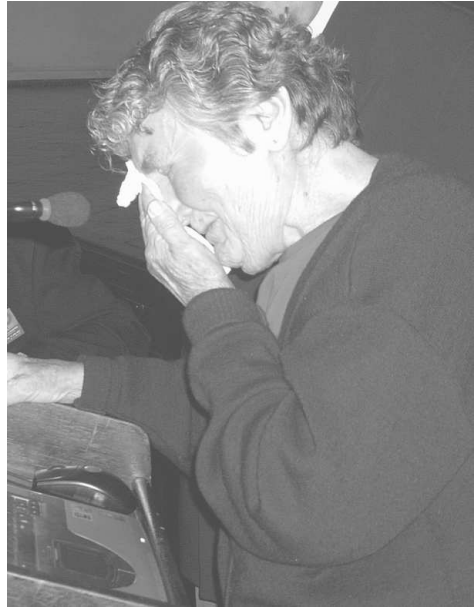
Will you let me say everything that happened to me?

Academician Srboljub Živanović:
Please speak freely.

Ms. Ljubica Vučić: I wish everyone here all the best. Now listen to what I have to tell you about my life.

I was eleven then. I went to school, I was in the fourth grade. That Saturday I was at home until 9 in the morning. Mother sent me to Mihajlo Vasić's home, which is about half a kilometer away from us. She sent me to fetch the flour. She had left some flour at their home on her way back from the mill. She told me: 'Darling, go get the flour,' she said. 'It's Saturday, somebody might visit them, let it not make a mess at the neighbors.' I took the path in the snow. When I got out of our house, I turned round when I was at the crossroads. Some soldiers gathered and went to Šargovac. But I had no idea... Guardsmen visited our house every day. As if we had been free. May no one ever be free the way we were then. I looked at our house two-three times from the crossroads and moved on.

When I set off and got down to Mihajlo Vasić's house, where I was supposed to take the flour, I found them sitting. A woman was bathing a baby boy, Mihajlo Vasić's grandson. The old man must have been seventy, maybe even older. I warmed myself quite nicely there. It was wintertime. The snow was above my head, back in 1942. I sat down and told them I'd come to get this thing. They put the flour in the bag, put the bag on my shoulder and I was off again. I had hardly walked ten meters when I heard someone say: 'Ljubica, come back!' I turned around. There was nobody there. Only the path meandered in the snow. There I was, an eleven year old, now holding this lit-



the bag I had on the shoulder. I turned around. There was nobody. Then again: 'Ljuba, come back!' Nothing, I didn't speak, just stood there. When the voice said the same thing the third time, I went back to the house, the same house. They told me: 'Why have you come back?' I said: 'Somebody called me back.' That's how it was! I remember well... Now I can remember more things. When I was younger, it was different, now I recall more often how I survived then. So I returned.

Just as I had got back and taken the flour off the shoulder, two Ustashe showed up at the door. They had helmets on, knives on their rifles, those bayonets. They came and said: 'Old man, get down here!' Mihajlo was on the roof, removing the thick snow. It was a half-timbered house, like all the others at that time. I just stood and watched. He got down. 'Where are your horses?' If they hadn't been his neighbours, they wouldn't have known about the horses, if they had been Herzegovinians, or from somewhere else. 'Where are your horses?' I just watched. 'They're in the stable.' 'Where's your money?' 'I don't have any money.' 'Take your robe off!' He took off his robe. And I just stood and watched. He took off the robe. The guy slit his neck in a split second. Blood... They took him by the legs and arms and threw him in the new untrodden snow, and I heard him growl there like a lamb when you're butchering it. I just stood watching! They took the robe and covered him. I bolted into the house, to the other people in the family. They stormed in and started chasing the members. There was a woman there from Pavlovac, she dashed out of the house with her naked baby boy in her arms. She dashed down the road, that's the Motike road now, trying to get away. I just watched. All that time I kept watching, benumbed. They stabbed her in the back. The child fell in the untrodden snow and she fell down. They got the child and put a knife through it.

And the blood, I beg your pardon, when they killed the old man, they took it from the bayonet like this and ate it. I saw it all with my own eyes. What was I to do! I was petrified but I had to watch. Because I was right there. That's how it happened... Now, they took to... When they killed the woman, they killed the child, they killed the old man, I saw them coming this way. There was this boy, he was maybe five years older than me. He was in secondary school. They chased him out and killed him. They chased the old woman out. She had been lying. And they cut her head off. I watched it happen right before me. They cut her head off. And the veins in the neck came spurting...

Mr. Lazar Lukajić: Deva?

Ms. Ljubica Vučić: No... Yes, yes, Deva. They cut her head off... And the veins went spurting with blood. The head went under the stove, under... there, under the bed, and the body just lay there. When they killed everybody, they turned to me. They said...

Mr. Lazar Lukajić: Where were you hiding?

Ms. Ljubica Vučić: I was hiding... I wasn't, it was impossible for me to hide. I just kept jumping round... behind the stove, jumped to and fro, over the old woman. I skipped five times over the dead people there. I paid no attention to who they were, if they were children. Suddenly, I heard them say: 'C'mon, let's hear 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary'. Tell us the prayers.'⁴ Here's what I said – like a shot: 'Seeing you doing this, I can't remember even the things I normally know.'

Mr. Lazar Lukajić: They were checking if you were Catholic.

Ms. Ljubica Vučić: Sure thing. They had it all on paper, how many members there were in each house. So I said to them: 'I can't,' I said. 'Seeing you doing this, I can't remember even the things I normally know.' One of them said to the other: 'What are we going to do with her?' 'Stab her!' I tried to jump over the old woman and hide in the corner. They hit me with a bayonet here, in this vein. And I fainted. One thing crossed my mind – where are my brothers now? My whole world rushed through my mind, the little rock where I used to play with my brothers, and... And they stabbed me over and over again. But I barely thought about it. They stabbed me another six times, apart from that seventh stab.

I woke up in the middle of the night, burning with fever. I was conscious again. I shouted: 'Mother! Mother!' So they don't forget where I was, a little girl. 'Mother!' Nothing. When I realized where I was – the windows and the door had been open all night long, and it was a long winter's night. I just lay there through the night, just like that. I had heavy shoes on, because I went to school, and they were full of blood. They were completely frozen. Those shoes felt as if someone had lain a heavy bough over my tiny legs. And

⁴ The Ustashe knew how many members there were exactly in each Serbian home. Their Catholic neighbors had given them the information. When they found Ljubica in Mihajlo Vasić's house, they weren't sure whether she was Serbian or Catholic, as Catholic children used to visit Serbian homes. That is why they ordered her to tell the prayers 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary', which is something a Catholic child of her age could do – remark by L. Lukajić.

I survived it, lying like that... When I woke up during the night, I crawled across the room on my knees and elbows, like on all four. I shut the nose and mouth. I knew this, I was a school kid. The wounds kept swelling out, hissing. I heard them – prrrrh... Luckily, they probably hadn't hurt the heart, so... And I came to the cauldron where that woman had bathed the child. She had brought water from a puddle. And I drank a whole cauldron of water that night.

This sort of gave me some strength. But I was also all sleepy. They came back to plunder. They kept cursing the man that the horses belonged to. Yes! They also cursed the man the cows belonged to, or what. They plundered, took it all away. I moved about slowly. I didn't dare show myself to anyone. I moved slowly, went up the log. There was a log-cabin there. Slowly, slowly, I tried to get out. I was hardly able to. I got out and made two steps and all of a sudden those bad stray dogs – I was always afraid of them when I went to school. They surrounded me, scratching me with their paws. And they took me down. I got up with a little stick. They took me down again, sniffing at me and licking me. When they were about to... They gave up. I could see they were getting playful. Dogs sense things, just like people. They only can't speak. When they gave up on me, I started moving again slowly supported on the little stick. The sun, stars – it was all before my eyes. I couldn't see. I was all covered in blood. Stinky... I went up to the first house. I got inside. They had started cooking lunch. The door was open. There wasn't a soul inside. The lunch was there, on the stove, exactly the way it had been when they had sat down to eat. I went on, to another house. I kept hoping somebody was still alive. I couldn't go on after that. When I got inside this second house, that was it, I just got in. The beds were made. I just fell on a bed and covered myself, feeling ill as I was.

When the plunder began, some people arrived. They looted the house. But they didn't find me. What was I to do! I was tiny, I just shrank. They didn't look in the beds. They looked at what they could steal. Another gang came and they didn't find me either. The third did. 'Look,' they said, 'there's someone here.' They uncovered me. It was my friend Mirko Josipović, a Catholic, we shared a desk at school. He was there with some looters. They started looting. Then he saw me, and he said: 'Ljubica, what are you doing here?' The way I was, all wet, I just said: 'I don't know a thing.' He said: 'Do you want to go with us?' 'I'll go if you're sure your people won't kill me. If you're going to kill me, kill me here, where my people were killed.' He said to somebody called Božo, he was a big man, they were stealing together: 'Take her up!' He took me up as I was – sick, wounded, bloody, a sad little nothing, too pitiful to even look at.

He covered me with a coat so I wouldn't see the dead. He covered my head with a coat. But as they walked... The coat slipped from over one of my eyes, as if it had had a hole in it. And I could see through it with my one eye. Up there, on the plain, poor people. The villagers, butchered, ripped apart. All my people dead. Corpses, one next to another, lying there. There were some still living. Gosh, what was under them! The killed, the broken... What can I say, there's nothing I can say, you know better than me how I survived. I was just quiet. I didn't dare utter a sound. I just kept watching. Božo said to Mirko, this guy who went to school with me: 'C'mon, get that man's shoes.' The people from Motike were all cultured, the most cultured after those in Banja Luka. They had good shoes – those heavy shoes. I sure know it. But – take the shoes off! I said: 'Don't! The legs are stinky.' He said: 'Either cut off the legs or take off the shoes!' What was I to do! I just kept quite. What it was he did, what it was he took off...

That guy, Božo, he carried me. I looked towards the stream, towards their side of the stream. The stream was ours. The people on this side were Orthodox, those living across the stream were Catholic. The place we were headed for now, those were their houses. There were about three hundred Ustashe between us and the stream, marching. I told him, I said to this guy carrying me, Božo: 'Don't take me there,' I said. 'They'll kill me if I get to your side.' 'They won't ask a thing.' What could I do, I plucked the courage, I saw there was no help for me any way. Aw, he took me there and the Ustashe went away. They just kept walking, singing, screeching, singing. And they had knives fixed on their rifles. They went to our hamlet.

He took me to their house, to Mirko's house, the guy that I went to school with. I used to walk past that house every day, on the way to school and back.

Mr. Lazar Lukajić: The Josipović house?

Ms. Ljubica Vučić: The Josipović house. Pejo's. The old man's house. He had two sons, Marko and Ilija. One of them was a gendarme, while the other one was an official, by the school, he was an Ustasha, like him. And, my dear ones, my darlings, let me tell you all, that's how my life was. When I came to their home, old Pejo was sitting, speaking honestly – I'm certain to die sooner or later – the man was crying. He said: 'Who is that?' He said: 'Ljubica.' Next, he said: 'Our Milan's Ljubica?' My father built the Motike road. He was a road builder from [...] to the Sava waters, and he built the road, and they worked with him when he was building it, and when he saw who I was, he took me. That man, Božo, asked me: 'Who do you want to stay with,

[fuck]?’ I [said I would go to] Marko and Pejo’s family because I went to school with their children every day.

When they brought me, the women... they gently took off my frozen clothes, the clothes soaked in blood, next they gave me a bath and I barely knew anything or sensed anything until the morning... they said they had noticed I shivered here a little bit, but basically I was unconscious. She said I had shouted at her at the break of dawn: ‘Mother, give me water!’ She had rushed and fed me milk. That was his daughter-in-law, the old man’s daughter-in-law. That’s how it was, and I got a bit better. When the old man’s son working in the police came, he told him: ‘Ilija, go to Banja Luka to our doctor and tell him one of the children has been badly cut.’ He said: ‘Tell him to give us the medicines.’ The man went and came back. How that goes, I don’t know. When he got back, he came back after some time and brought the stuff. I know... it was like – we were sitting, they turned me on the hip, some alcohol and ointment. There’s a strip on the bottle, the little bottle with alcohol. They uncovered the wounds, all of them frozen and sticking out – forgive my language – black and blue. When they spread the ointment, honestly, I thought that was the end of me. I lay on my knees and forehead for two months, day and night. I had to until the wounds healed up.

When it was all over, after I had been through it all, when I had got a bit better, they took me to church. They gave me Communion, what do I know what they did, I wasn’t... I was always just quiet, I never dared speak.

After they had done all that to me and when they... They took my cattle, my crops, they took it all, brought the cows there... They took it all to the school to kill the animals for the Ustashe. As for the Ustashe I saw – they sang in our village for three days and nights. They made merry. They killed the sheep, they killed the oxen, they killed and did whatever they wanted. And they made merry. Let me tell you about that too.

Mr. Lazar Lukajić: Now tell us how many people were killed in your family.

Ms. Ljubica Vučić: Eighteen people in my family were killed – brothers, mother, father, sisters, uncles, their children... All of them, eighteen were killed.

After I had gone through all this, the liberation came. Let me tell you everything. Three policemen came to me, when was that – in 1945 or 1946, I can’t tell for sure. ‘Are you Ljubica Vasić Vučić?’ ‘That’s me.’ ‘You mustn’t say to anyone what happened to you,’ they said, ‘that mustn’t be talked about

because this is now the time of brotherhood and unity.’ So I never spoke about it.

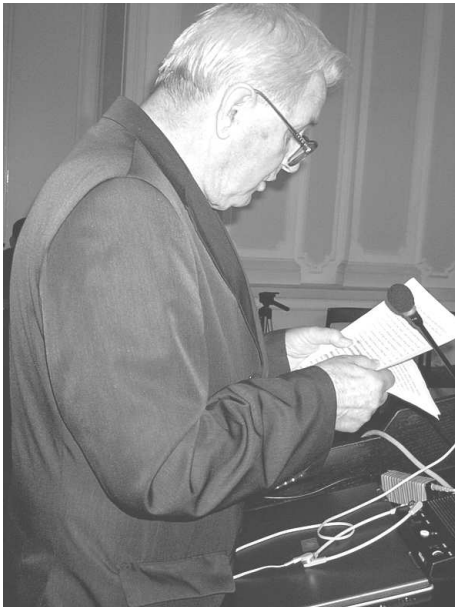
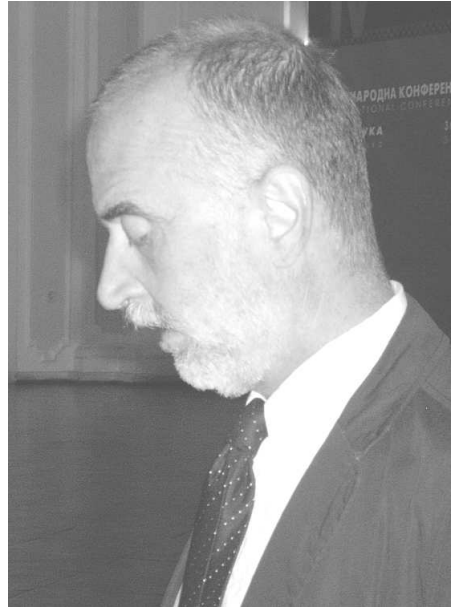
Mr. Lazar Lukajić: Let me tell you two more things. She was picked up because at two o’clock Germans banned all further killing. Whoever was killed, they were killed by two o’clock on February 14, after which they collected the survivors. I grew up with Ljubica, and I described all this in detail in my book *Friars and Ustashe Kill*, and she is one of the few survivors, there may be three or four of them who are still alive, and I compiled a list of 2300 people who were killed. Ljubica is one of the last survivors.

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: What’s to be said after this story? Indeed, no comment. Thank you, Professor Živanović, thank you, Mrs. Ljubica. To bring our Conference to an end and for everyone to say what they came here for, I would like to ask you to stick to the rules stated on the site. Those presenting a paper may take between 10 and 15 minutes to present their papers. As for those who failed to send their papers to be published and plan to submit and present them now, they may take up to 10 minutes, while discussions may last 5 minutes each. If there’s more time at the end, we will certainly be able to change this. Thank you very much. I would like you to announce the next speaker.

Mr. Vladimir Umeljic

TANGO MORTALE OR BALKAN
RENDITION OF THE “LIES ABOUT
AUSCHWITZ“

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th International Conference on Jasenovac,
Banja Luka, 2007, p. 127



Dr Zoran Lakić

*Parallel Reading of the Documents
about Crime on the Grounds of
Former
Yugoslavia*

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th
International Conference on Jaseno-
vac, Banja Luka, 2007, p. 62

Mr. Dragan Cvetković

*Jasenovac in the System of the Suffering
of the Civilians in the Independent State
of Croatia – A Quantitative Analysis
(or Numbers Once More Revisited)*

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th International Conference on Jasenovac,
Banja Luka, 2007, p. 69



Mr Paul Mojzes

*Examination Of Genocide: Truth And
Justice Instead Of Political And Eco-
nomic Gain*

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th International Conference on Jasenovac,
Banja Luka, 2007, p. 83



Dr. Milan Bulajić

Dear friends, my paper has been published in both Serbian and English. I don't intend to read it, let me just remind you that its subject is the open revisionism at the Jasenovac Memorial Area – and most importantly – divided by the border, the role of the Vatican and the absolute necessity and urgency to inscribe the whole complex of Jasenovac, on both sides of the River Sava, on the World Heritage list and ensure its protection by the United Nations. That is the only way not just to reveal the truth but also prevent its destruction, something we are witnessing today.



Just before me you heard an address saying that at Jasenovac there weren't more than... that there were 120 thousand [*victims*] at Jasenovac, 122,300 to 130,100. This was supported with plenty of statistical data, percentages, only to make it easier to believe. This is an issue that deserves to be discussed and there will be a chance to speak about it. All I would like to say is that at the First International Conference, which was held in New York, a representative of the U.S. Ministry of Justice, based on the State Department Archives and the U.S. National Archives, showed me a facsimile of a document – he showed me, in person, with a facsimile of a State Department document – where on 6 December 1943 Germans estimated the number of victims at Jasenovac at 120 thousand, those at Stara Gradiška at 80 thousand. Let me reiterate this – on 6 December 1943 in two camps – 200 thousand. To this we need to add all of the bloody 1944 and the first half of 1945.

This is really difficult and sad and shameful, but we are all partly responsible for the fact that 62 years later we are still playing games with the Jasenovac figure, which ranges from 700 thousand, according to the President of the Republic of Srpska, who stated so at Donja Gradina this year, down to no more than 90 thousand, as was heard across the River Sava. The most difficult and the least acceptable thing is, if we have Mesić saying this or those who in a way represent the neo-Ustashe, that is understandable, but if we have

Slavko Goldstein saying it, the former President of the Jasenovac Memorial Area, that is really beyond comprehension and difficult to accept.

There has been a lot of speaking about the figure of 700 thousand and this is now called a Serbian myth. We are short of time today, but in my paper you can see it is by no means a Serbian myth. Milan Bulajić never used the figure of 700 thousand, honorable Professor Živanović presented figures higher than 700 thousand, and he is much more competent because he was the first to exhume those graves. I stuck to the figures I could defend as an international law expert, and that is the information stated in *The Encyclopedia of Genocide*, the American *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, which says hundreds of thousands. Whether that means three hundred or perhaps it's seven hundred, or maybe it's – I never questioned that because I couldn't. While I was at the Museum of Genocide Victims, we tried to collect the names, the victims' full names, the safest way, and as the previous speaker said, that amounted to over 85 thousand. However, that number, my friends, is a minimum, minimum, minimum! Because there are no witnesses for many regions, as for the Roma, no one knows who they were or what they were, they never got inside the Jasenovac camp and were ferried across the Sava instead and killed there on the spot.

Since we're short of time, I don't want to speak about how far the minimization goes, that the Croatian Sabor says the figure's as low as two-three thousand, that the Croatian Academy of Sciences supports a certain opinion and that it has been published that in all camps, at all killing fields, in all parts of Jasenovac there weren't – two-three thousand – but not more than five thousand. No, we won't even talk about it because it's a crime, a crime which has gone unpunished. Well, there you go, now you have figures at this so-called new exhibition, which claims 69,842. It doesn't specify what it is, if it is the final count and so on, but when you break it down, you get 39,580 Serbs, 14,599 Roma, 10,700 Jews, and so on and so forth... Now, that is really, really... But how come nobody's reacting? Why is it we can hardly hear any voices of protest saying it's a crime? Minimization, such minimization of the victims that we're talking about. I would like to stress in particular that now you can hear such theories in Belgrade too, with Croatian historians now quoting Serbian historians as they minimize the genocide victims.

We are faced with revisionism, with thorough revisionism – historical, factual – by the Jasenovac Memorial Area, by the Museum of Genocide Victims, drastic, unscrupulous. I don't know if you've all been told, dear friends, but there are no more Serbs there. There are supposed victims from Slavonia, from Lika, from Mount Kozara, but there are no Serbs anywhere. Your Grace Bishop, no Orthodox Christians are mentioned there. To conclude, they are

doing what they shouldn't be doing, we are all watching it and we are not exactly reacting. That is why I began with – and you'll see that in the Declaration which will be translated – the principal issue, the key issue is putting the whole genocide complex, on both sides of the River Sava, under the protection of the United Nations. There's the precedent of Auschwitz, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage list as site number 80. Therefore, we have... we also have that precedent.

The question is how we can achieve it. Now, that will depend on all of us. Let me inform you that in 1995, which means 12 years ago, I visited Paris in the capacity of Director of the Museum of Genocide Victims, where I met the Director of the World Heritage and proposed to him in writing that the Jasenovac complex be put in the authority of the United Nations. I was truly pleased when I received the information and saw a document with the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia supporting the Museum proposal. At the Second International Conference on Jasenovac, which was held here in Banja Luka, the Government of the Republic of Srpska, the man who was then the Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Srpska and who is currently the Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska, backed the letter. The question is – what is the next step and who should take it? My opinion is that Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a state, should also support it, because Entity backing isn't enough. God made me an optimist and as such, I still believe it is possible, given the fact that a book was published recently about the Muslim victims in Jasenovac. Therefore, every victim, regardless of their religious background, regardless of anything, deserves it, and I believe and think we could appeal to the Muslims and the families of Muslim victims to join us. In my opinion, Slovenia should also do it because there were Slovenian victims too – not many, but there was a considerable number of victims. I also think and believe the State of Israel should support it given the fact a big number of Jews perished at the Jasenovac camps on the hands of Ustasha clero-fascists. In conclusion, we'll have to do our best about it.

Where should we search for the truth? Let me assure you, based on years of research – the truth is in the Vatican. When *Politika* published my two-volume book in 1992 entitled *The Role of the Vatican in the Independent State of Croatia*, when I learnt you are bound to be stigmatized whenever facts are published at the Vatican's expense, next I went to the Vatican before my book was published. The first time I wasn't even able to get in through the entrance, the second time I was officially nominated by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to be accredited as an official researcher at the Vatican. The Vatican said yes and I was received by Monsignor Metzler, Prefect of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano; I showed him my manuscript and said – this ma-

nuscript hasn't been published yet. It is an indictment of the Vatican. Please, study it, and if you can put your finger on anything in the book that's incorrect, I'll rip it up right before you [...]. They didn't even wish to speak to me. In short, I finally said – I quoted the Holy Bible – we use the same Bible, don't we – the truth will set you free – all in vain, it was no good, and then I said – there's nothing else for me to do but activate this old computer of mine, I mean, this one [*indicating to his head*]... and publish it as a previously unplanned chapter of the book. And so I did.

In conclusion, I think and suggest that everybody should unite, all the victims, Orthodox Serbs, Jews, and all the other victims, the Roma, and we should ask for, insist, run an international campaign to open the Jasenovac archives. That's where we'll find the truth, I assure you, probably along with the victims' gold. Thank you.

Rabbi Jozef Atijas

Dear Chairs, Your Grace Bishop, reverend fathers, dear ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, it is neither pleasant nor easy to speak about one such gruesome, difficult, complex issue and utter the word Jasenovac, which chills blood and turns one's mouth into stone. Here, I stand before you and I am one of those descendants who lost no more, no less but precisely 153 members of my closest family, the Atijases on the father's side and the Elezars on the mother's side, 153 members.

Jasenovac is the most painful, the most shameful, the saddest and the most morbid place that humankind and history can remember ever. This was a place where the quick envied the dead. Human honour and dignity were degraded beyond recall. Requesting answers as to how many and who was killed there and what happened, 62 years after the apocalypse and cataclysm – I think speaking about it is rather difficult and inconvenient. My religion obliges me to say the things I am going to say. It is



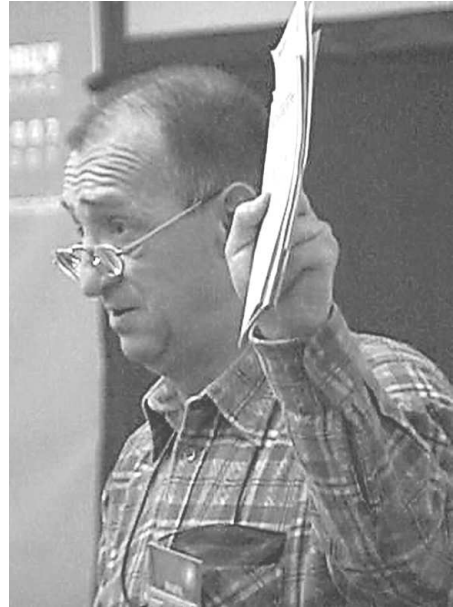
not easy. My children, whether five people, fifty or five hundred, or perhaps 50 thousand or 500 thousand people were killed at Jasenovac – the truth is brutes killed humans there, the worst possible evil occurred. What is the difference between the plate reading 700,000 Serbs, or the Croats – when we were in Jerusalem the previous time, where I participated in the Conference with a paper – they started at 50 thousand, now they’ve reached the figure of 90 thousand – what is the difference between someone killing 90 thousand and 700 thousand people? The same crime, the same sin, it can never be more vicious. With all due respect and trust in the man who is with us here, a dear personal friend of mine, Professor Bulajić, requesting and asking from Croatia that the Jasenovac Memorial on both sides be declared heritage under the protection of the international UNESCO... You’ll see, I think that will be bringing a hornet’s nest around our ears. Croats will say immediately it means violating the integrity and sovereignty of their independent [beautiful] [country]. And, you’ll see, there’s going to be a lot of opposition. Still, we’ll have to persist, as they say, hope and persevere, and so on. How to resolve those issues and in what way – it will be very difficult to come by answers that might make things any easier for us.

As for this Conference, I would plead with you and it would make me happy if at least 62 years after the apocalypse and cataclysm suffered by the people of this region we can draw a conclusion that similar things should never happen again to anyone anywhere. That our children, who need to continue living their lives after us, should see, first and foremost, how to learn the lesson that they need to work towards co-habitation with their friends, their neighbours and whoever wishes to live with us based on mutual respect and appreciation. God, let us persist in this hope, in this wish of ours, and God, may our wishes and prayers be answered. Thanks!

Academician Srboljub Živanović: Thank you for this discussion. I will feel free to say a few words about the paper presented by Mr. Dragan Cvetković. Mr. Cvetković, when you author works of this kind, you have to base them on a valid sample. Unless you’re using a valid sample, you will draw incorrect conclusions. If you wish, we can discuss it afterwards, but your conclusions are absolutely faulty. They are not grounded in science. I apologise! Thank you! Please!

Mr. Milosav Knežević

Your Grace Bishop, Your Excellency Chief Rabbi, dear friends of the Serbian people, honourable Professor Bulajić, honourable Professor Živanović, let me first apologise to all of you who are present here for reacting from the audience, from my seat, to the appalling attempt to mystify us. I will have to warn the gentleman [*Dragan Cvetković*] not to play with the most terrible crime in the Balkans. For your information and so you may never say it again, I will have to tell you... [*the Chairs ask the speaker to introduce himself*] My poor self is Milosav



Knežević, an Orthodox Christian citizen of Banja Luka. For your information, what I have here in my hand is my personal relic, which I inherited from my father. This object, which is a relic for me, for [a] survivor [...] people, was made in 1946. This is the State Commission of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, whose responsibility was to investigate the victims of the genocide committed at Jasenovac. The President of the Commission was Dr. Vencjeslav [...], the Commission Secretary was Ante Stošić.

And now, for the reason of one appalling lie which you told here about my friends – I was the one who initiated the Banja Luka Society of Serbian-Jewish friendship – you told an appalling lie and said that Jews were not killed in this region because, excuse me, according to you, they were deported to Germany. [*tape interruption*] ‘...Earlier two-three thousand Jews on Josa Matijević’s order.’ You ought to be ashamed of yourself for what you said. You presented a terrible fake, you gave us a breakdown of the 1964 census. For your information, if you cherish the ambition to be a serious person and not be abused by history fakers, there were also censuses in Yugoslavia in 1947 and 1948.

And now, because of you and the figures you presented here, which are absolutely appalling, let me tell you what were the conclusions of the first State Commission, which was nominated to investigate the number of people

killed in Jasenovac. According to them, this figure ranges from 500 to 600 thousand. I should also tell you that three months ago I visited the Holocaust Museum in Berlin, where in my heart I cried because the Croatian Ustashe hide behind Germany and there isn't a single word saying that the Croatian Ustashe killed not only Jews in this region, not only Serbs, but also the Roma. Again, for your information, no honourable man should allow another deceit coming from Muslim thinkers. During the many years I have been researching the victims of Jasenovac, I never came across the name of a single Muslim who died at Jasenovac as a victim of the Independent State of Croatia. But for your information and for the sake of those who have sent you here to do what you're doing, I will inform you about the following with pleasure: [Osman Hadžić], one of the most notorious killers at Jasenovac, [...] [Hadžić], a high-ranking official, Mujo Jusić, lieutenant, Šaban Jusić, a low-ranking official, [Ahmet Kapetanli], first lieutenant, [Irfan Skočibušički], officer, [Rašid Užičanin], a high-ranking official, Alaga Dukić, sergeant. Imagine, Muslims – butchers, and you are trying to sell us, the victims, the lie that Muslims stood side by side with us, Jews, Serbs and the Roma, in the same line of victims waiting to be butchered. We know you are faking history, but don't do it before us! We are still sane enough to defend our victims. We won't allow such deceptions!

I apologise, my emotions are running high, but I am fully reasonable, I am fully conscious, and let me give my modest support to the two gentlemen here who are the guiding light of the Serbian people, Mr. Srboľjub and Mr. Bulajić, and let me criticize my Banja Luka co-citizens – there are too few of us here today to see these heroes fighting against windmills to prove the bloodiest crimes caused due to the fascist regime, [which spread] to our local region. I hope you have enough strength to do away with the charlatans trying to profit from these crimes, where Jewish, Serbian and Romani people were persecuted, so you may have genuine knowledgeable people who will do what you ask them. Please, do not let this happen for we now have individuals turning this crime into a business. Let me thank you sincerely for giving me this much time!

Ms. Ivanka Klincov

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude and first greet you all as my friends. I will not be naming individual people, but let me thank you for giving me the pleasure to be present at one event so important for my life, at my age, which is approaching an old age, where I can speak publicly about my forefathers who all died in wars, from the First – let me mention the Salonica volunteers – from my grandfather, to the Second World War. In the last of my first ten – I'll



keep this short, don't, I won't... [*the Chair interrupts the speaker and asks her to introduce herself*] Ivanka Klincov, maiden name Vasiljević. I was born at the foot of Mount Kozara and I am living in Banja Luka. I am a mother of two and I have five grandchildren. Let me now... let me go on now where I stopped. So, this is my first chance ever to speak out about them: about the ten World War II victims, my closest kindred – my father, two uncles on my father's side, three uncles on my mother's side, I'll stop right there – they left seventeen children behind.

My wish is to contribute and help some of the addresses here with my discussion, by being here, so we can broaden our knowledge a bit with one realization, one discovery – I found among my dead mother's belongings, which she bequeathed to me, two postcards she received from my father, who wrote them from Jasenovac, and I also found a postcard which he sent her as a recruit while doing the national service, at a time when they were still dating. By comparing the two handwriting samples, I realized by mere chance it wasn't written by my dad, it was written by somebody else. I followed this trail and I found a clause saying it was a reward for his hard work and good conduct. My dad is writing to his brother – who is dead already, only he doesn't know he's dead – he is writing and asking about us, the children, he says he's fine, he doesn't need any money – I won't be reading the cards – if only we could send him cigarettes – my father never smoke before that, just for

you to know. This means somebody was cheating using my father, they were cheating using so many other victims, and they are still doing it. We have to learn the truth and we have to work together, all of us, to make sure this truth is the truth indeed, regardless of what it is, but make sure it is known and we don't have to walk again with our heads hung.

One more piece of information which I remember well. As a little girl – I was born in 1939 – at one time during the war, they collected all the war orphans, there was quite a big number of us, in front of the local farm cooperative, and they put us in groups before sending us away. A funny coincidence – all the boys, all the males were sent to Zagreb, Varaždin; as for the girls, we went to Višegrad and many other places, to go to school there. All my male cousins, there are five of them, are Croatian citizens today, married to Croats, their children are also married – they are Croats now. What I'm saying is this was another – we didn't know that at the time, we didn't dare resist, we didn't dare say a word, including my mother, my aunt on my father's side, my two aunts on my mother's side, they were widows and they were always on the first line – which is even more evidence of how many years they've been tricking us.

I am so glad and let me thank you one more time, this is the first time that I as a member of my two big families, the Vasiljevićs and the Hrvaćani family, my mother was born into a Hrvaćani family, had a chance to say something publicly, so thank you one more time !

Mr. Aleksandar Savanović

Good afternoon, greeting to all of you. My name is Aleksandar Savanović and I am a teacher of philosophy and sociology. I happen to be in the final stage of the research which is largely related to events such as Jasenovac – if that is appropriate to say in the first place – although it is not my primary focus. So, how is it possible for something like that... The first question that comes to mind if we're reflecting on the phenomenon Jasenovac is really Bishop Hrizos-



tom's question asked at the very beginning of the Conference; he asked – what happened actually? How could Jasenovac happen in the first place? Because we... although Mr. Livne said before that we will never get an answer to that question, from the point of view of one generation living well after Jasenovac which can reflect discursively on the event, I would like to go back to this question and consequently ask how Jasenovac was possible and what we can conclude to have happened.

So, taking into account what the previous speakers said from the rostrum, the overall impact of the political implications of Jasenovac, the cover-up or minimization of the crimes and whatever can be seen as a political connotation of that event, it seems to me the principal question is still, in fact, how was Jasenovac possible? If we look at this photo, namely, this lady's testimony today, the survivor, I've forgotten her name, Tanja Sakun, we simply find ourselves in a position where we have to wonder how this was possible in the first place.

It is possible to consider this issue by following the trail of the large body of self-reflective thought written in German after World War II. German authors, or rather authors writing in German produced a huge body of literature dealing with this matter. There's no need for me to name them all, you are probably more familiar with them than I am, names like Fromm, members of the Frankfurt School etc. their thinking took the same direction.

Let me remind you of two thinkers who wrote about and anticipated events such as the Holocaust, where the Jasenovac genocide may be taken to typify such phenomena, before those events actually took place. One of them is well known with regards to this context. That's Freud and his definition of the human propensity of self-destruction. The second one is less known. That's – I mean, of course, we are dealing with another famous philosopher, but he is less known in this context – and that's Nietzsche, who may have been the first to name the beast in man and who concluded that this beast – like Freud, he concluded the beast is the key to the human essence and as such it is impossible to eradicate. I find the two thinkers interesting in the sense that they claim there are no political, sociological or other aspects that can lead to Jasenovac-like genocide – let me repeat, using comparisons in this case probably isn't at all appropriate; instead, they simply say it has to do with human nature, brought out by certain external circumstances, such as historical circumstances, which ultimately brings about such events. So, both thinkers start with the Christian premise of inherited sinfulness and interpret it as the predicament of man forced to live, which I believe is Heidegger's definition; man experiences his existence as painful and can ultimately relieve his pain in two ways: the first one is – thinking logically – the first of the two

ways is by destroying oneself as the subject of pain. By this we mean sublimation such as hermitage, asceticism etc.; eventually, it may be understood as the issue of suicide in the tradition of Camus. So, we can relieve the pain by destroying ourselves as subjects enduring pain.

The second way is, in fact, the subject of this... and yet, so is the first one, I mean, it reveals a lot about the victims, whose behavior is quite often inexplicable. For example, preparing for this Conference, I read Ervin Miler's testimony, and I have to admit that a lot of things in his account – I wouldn't like to use too strong terms – shocked me. Let me give you one example: namely – this is probably a classical account from concentration camps – he survived a shooting. He was taken away to be shot; among other things, his brother died in the shooting, but he survived, by pure chance, as other people, the dead, fell over him; interestingly enough, he wasn't thinking about how to escape, whether by, say, swimming across the River Sava or something else; instead, he spent the whole time thinking about how to return to the camp without being noticed. Which he did, he returned to the camp. Luckily – take this luckily in inverted commas – his hair went gray during the shooting, although he was 18, and they didn't recognize him afterwards; eventually, he actually did survive the breakout and escaped from the camp, which is proof of what theory today defines as the 'death drive'.

However, in this particular case the other option imposes itself as crucial, which is the subliminal or symbolic destruction of the world seen as the cause of man's suffering. Both these thinkers and many philosophers after them share the same view, and as I don't want to speak about this too broadly or at too much length, I would like to read one excerpt from my paper which explores this matter and perhaps brings up some ideas or interpretations which I wouldn't dare elaborate on here as I don't feel competent enough, but they might be seen as ideas or interpretations related to the current events in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

So, the second option, which is destruction turned outwards, is of greater interest for the topic discussed here. This form of destruction has to be shrouded in a veil of subliminal destruction of principles of individualization and merging with the collective being. It has to, because only by hampering principles of individualization can one be free from responsibility, thus removing the barriers set before the beast in man through the process of socialization. One's merging with the collective being frees that individual from personal responsibility, which is transferred to a higher identity, group, nation or ideology. Besides, merging with superpersonal, fully deliberated, is a symbolically presented aspiration to unite with a world which would relieve us of pain. The mechanism drawn up here is convincingly illustrated by such phe-

nomena as witch-hunts by the Inquisition or orgies practiced at ceremonies in ancient times. They represent a socially sanctioned mechanism for the beast to break out and resort to such types of violence as sacrifices or auto-da-fe, while the perpetrators or beast carriers are free from punishment of the supergo by virtue of their identification with a superpersonal institution such as the church or a ceremony.

This interpretation brings us into the area of the argument which is the focus of this Conference, because world wars, mass killings, genocide and concentration camps are premeditated only if seen as a manifestation of individual madness, historical coincidences or as a result of manipulation, ignorance and ideology. In terms of their nature they are a manifestation of the liberation of a suppressed unconscious force which is innate in human nature but kept at bay by barriers created for centuries in an effort to suppress our instinctive nature, which now has at its disposal means of modern-age technical rationality in combination with one's obliteration as an individual and their merging with the masses. I would like to refer to something that is commonly discussed in philosophy lessons at university, which is Heidegger's notion of technology, which shows that technology or, say – Max Horkheimer and others wrote about it – which shows that technology may be used – that would Cyclone B or gas vans, we've all heard so much about them – so, it may be used in this second sense, or the context of relieving oneself of pain.

I have to admit my interpretation in this paper is in a way discursive, abstract and theoretical and in a sense it is inappropriate for conventions of this kind. After hearing the account of that lady today who survived the massacre and when we are dealing with testimonies of that kind, that really puts us in a position where theoretical discourse about such events is in a way inappropriate and may lead to... Even though I bravely chose to speak theoretically about Jasenovac, nevertheless, when you do see an actual victim, it still seems inappropriate and leaves a bad taste in the mouth, at least in my case; I don't know how others may feel about it. In that sense, I would like to finish what I wanted to say by concluding that in this way we actually look for scholarly ways to approach Jasenovac. We certainly can, that is I am convinced we can speak about the actual victim figure, with more or less certainty, about coverup, about political implications and so on, but as for the actual nature of the genocide committed at Jasenovac, in the sense that the Bishop mentioned it – meaning, what exactly happened and how such brutality is possible – speaking about it in a discursive, scientific way is very difficult, if at all possible. That would be all from me.

Dr. Mladenko Kumović

Until ten years ago Vojvodina had the Historical Museum, which was merged with the Vojvodina Museum, ultimately creating the Museum of Vojvodina. I am an expert employee, I work as an expert on these and other similar projects. In its archives the Museum of Vojvodina stores lists of victims who died on the territory of Vojvodina, which we have been working on for several decades, with around 40 thousand names. Over the last few years we have been revising the lists and my job, among other things, has been dealing with the Jewish victims in the Srem region, including... meaning the region of Srem in a geographical sense, i.e. the land which is today part of Vojvodina but also the land which is now located in Croatia. The outcome of what I have been working on in the last two-three years is a study which has just been published. That is exactly its title, *The Persecution of Srem Jews in the Holocaust*, and among other things it contains the lists of victims, whose number is currently 2,084 – we will never have the exact number – out of approximately 2,200 Jews domiciled in Srem before the war. To conclude, around 90% died in the Holocaust. Apart from the victims, the book also contains documents, genuine Ustasha documents from that period, there are cutouts from the Ustasha press covering the subject, as well as a series of other information related to the subject.

However, my today's presentation won't be about the book because, as I said, the book has been published and those who want the information, they will have it, they can find it there. My paper was published in the Proceedings and, of course, I won't read it here, since it was published in both Serbian and English, I'll just comment on some of the information there, and the subject deals with how reliable is the list of victims published in 1964, which has been receiving a lot of attention lately, as a resource for estimating or calculating the number of victims, where, of course, I took this material, the study I worked on for years, the persecution of Srem Jews, as my control sample. So, apart from what I've already said, the paper presents the exact



number of the murdered Jews in Srem and how many of them were recorded in 1964. According to and based on that register or census, of course, it is possible to draw conclusions on Jasenovac, since most of the Srem Jews died in Jasenovac.

So, what is given here is the report of the Commission investigating the crimes against Jews in Vojvodina, which was made in 1945, as you know – we've already heard someone speak today about that Commission, which investigated the crimes of the aggressors at Jasenovac, working very seriously on investigating those crimes in 1945, 1946, 1947 and 1948. As it appears, however, those data have simply been forgotten, or forgotten on purpose, while based on this I claim they are very reliable, of course, based on this case.

There was a special commission in Vojvodina investigating the crimes of the aggressors against Jews. It was made up of five highly responsible people. Julij Dohnji was at the head of the Commission, he was a reputable Vojvodina barrister, a Jew, and there were four more members who were very precise in the sense they used court procedures, summoned witnesses, investigated how many Jews lived there before the war, how many were [found there after the war], how many returned from internment, etc., and, as you can see, they concluded that a total of 1,811 Jews perished in Srem. Back then their information was incomplete because it was very difficult to have the exact number of Jews in Srem because they were a very mobile community, so many of them moved to Srem from other areas at the beginning of the war, and the actual number of Jews was around 2,200, and as I said before, we ascertained by name and surname the figure of 2,084 victims. Back then the Commission got the count of 1,811 victims. In conclusion, this is a highly reliable figure and it was obtained as early as 1945.

That is the number we got in this study, their names and surnames, birth places, mainly their occupations too, their ages, etc. According to the places – as you can see, they mainly lived in towns, relatively large towns, most of them in Zemun, next in Vukovar, Sremska Mitrovica, etc. Here's a comparison between the actual data, meaning the actual victim count and the 1964 census. You'll be able to see that for some of these places barely one-third, or even one-tenth – meaning, every tenth victim was recorded in the 1964 census. This is drastic in the case of, let's say, Zemun – look, only 33.35% of the victims were recorded in 1964 out of the actual people killed, or say for Šid – 21% out of those actually killed, etc.

To prove that the census was inaccurate and that it would be impossible to draw any reliable conclusions on its basis, especially conclusions related to the ethnic breakdown, which is another issue previously

talked about here, I have prepared a sample for you, copies of a few lists, where you'll be able to see it was indeed malicious, and no wonder my colleague presented a figure which is stated there, thirty and something percent Croats, when engineer Jeon Demajo, born in 1875, is Croat; then, Bela Dojč, also Croat, Oto Dojč, etc. Here, if you look further, you can see Leon Farhi, Erih Farhi... This is so obvious, I mean, if you're anything like honest about these names, you won't write these people were Croats. The next page, here you go, you can see further how misleading it is, although I would prefer to say now malicious mistakes made in the lists.

So, my ultimate conclusion would be: if we wanted to use the 1964 census as valid, after comparing it with the presented sample of Srem Jews, we would then have to multiply by five the figure which our colleagues from the Museum of Genocide Victims obtained based on the census, which is a figure now quoted by Croats too, in order to obtain the approximately accurate figure, if we accept this sample as a control sample. Of course, I cannot claim this sample is good, but it is a sample for one region and for one ethnic community.

Alen Budaj

Minimisation of the Number of Jewish Victims Exacerbates the Crime at Jasenovac

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th International Conference on Jasenovac, Banja Luka, 2007, p. 167



Mr Milorad Bukva

Nylon Grave Mass Grave in Glavinac - Cvijeta Drageljeva Deposit Depot or Sava River Graves (Author's researches) Simo Brdar

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th International Conference on Jasenovac, Banja Luka, 2007, p. 184



Protosingel Jovan Ćulibrk⁵

Thank you.

The work I am going to present has been published in both the Serbian and English version, so I am going to present it with slight changes. Namely, I would like to refer to what Arie Livne brought up here today, which is, in a way, the issue of identity of the Serbian people today. Mr. Livne spoke about an issue which, of course, hurts him the most, which is the occurrence of anti-Semitism amongst Serbs. Naturally, there was anti-Semitism in World War II, Ljotić's movement was strongly anti-Semitic, although we have to be realistic and say that Ljotić's movement



was never seriously accepted by the Serbian people because, apparently, there was something about it that most Serbs felt was strange. Whether we like it or not, it is only fair to say publicly that in his famous 1944 document *Draž Mihailović* said everything that should be said about this aspect of Ljotić's 'preaching', as well as about what his followers did. Not all Serbs are saints, as much as they may swear to be true Orthodox Christians, and here's another thing which has to be said: ultimately, as Apostle Paul said – 'Trust with your heart to be righteous, confess with words to earn salvation.'

Let me return to the subject of Serbian identity. The fact it was becoming a major issue was obvious in September 1984, when the reconstructed Church of St. John the Baptist at Jasenovac was consecrated. If you were there and saw that crowd of several tens of thousands of people gathered there, you witnessed the beginning of the spiritual and national regeneration of Serbs, if not on both sides of the River Drina, then at least we can be very sure about the western side. What is this essentially about? It is about the fact that this new event, which took place between 1941 and 1945, genocide against the Serbian people, has certainly been the single most important event

⁵ The transcript of the paper presentation and the subsequent participation in the discussion edited and verified by the author

since the Kosovo Battle. It was a crucial, far-reaching historical event, which changed the national being, just as this being was changed by the Battle of Kosovo. Just as the Serbian people were not the same after St. Vitus' Day in 1389, we were not the same after 22 April 1945, if we take the date the last internees broke out as the date when Jasenovac ceased to exist.

During the four decades following the closing of Jasenovac the self-establishment of this identity among the general public was interrupted, neglected and hindered. In terms of its core quality, of course, this new aspect of identity was fostered by the Serbian Orthodox Church, to the extent the Church was or wasn't capable of doing it, given the circumstances it had to endure. In any case, what matters is that an event linked to the Church, to a house of worship, marked the people's transformation and resuming the search for national identity.

I will be speaking about one aspect of this identity which sparked off strong reactions in the Western scholarly thought and in our country too. That is the so-called 'Jewish trope'.

In 1985, Vuk Drašković, the author of the then widely read novel *Knife* – it still remains to be seen if it will stand the test of literary history – wrote his 'Letter to the Israeli friend'. It was a letter addressed by the Serbian writer to a fictitious Israeli writer, where he presented the Serbian people as the thirteenth, the most wretched and the most tragic of all Israel's tribes, 'converted' to Jewishness by approximating the age-old Jewish suffering with its long history of trials and ordeals. For us to be able to picture the importance of the trope, let me quote Kosta Nikolić, who said the big problem of Serbia and the Serbian people in the second half of 1980s, the watershed years, lies in the fact the public opinion about its history was not shaped by historians, but by journalists. If you read, say, the magazine *Duga* in 1980s, you know very well what I am talking about. Unfortunately, our public opinion and historical awareness were shaped by many others – not only by journalists, and so was our spiritual and national identity. This is a sad fact, but it remains a fact.

Now, what happened next with the 'Jewish trope'? The trope – by virtue of Matija Bećković's poetry and the words of his 'Kaža', but also thanks to a number of other writers – it wasn't exactly dominant, but as a metaphor it grew in power and clarity, exploiting the similarity between Serbs and Jews. Of course, like any other good metaphor, it was very difficult to fault. Indeed, the two nations both suffered a lot through history, and not only did we use to live side by side, not only was the Kingdom of Serbia the first country in the world to support the Balfour Declaration, ultimately leading to the building of a 'National Home' for Jews, the State of Israel, in December 1917 – we were

also interned in camps together and fought together – at one moment in 1942, Jews made up three-quarters of all Partisan physicians in Bosnia. There were very few incidents during our common struggle, and in April 1944 Draža Mihailović wrote the mentioned letter, strictly forbidding any maltreatment of Jews because, let me paraphrase it, ‘in this war the persecution of Jews exceeded that of the Serbs’. In any case, there was a solid base for the ‘Israeli’ metaphor.

However, back in 1980s, the national histories of the former Yugoslav peoples functioned on the principle of inverted mirrors, which hasn’t changed much to this day; consequently, there were immediate reactions to Drašković’s metaphor. Denial was the first type of response; it came from Croats, who denied Serbs the right to identify with Jews. What followed were attempts, especially during the first half of 1990s, to prove that Serbs could not claim any right to be compared with Jews; in fact, they were worse as anti-Semites than Croats. At the same time, they were trying to prove Croats themselves, even the Ustashe, were not anti-Semitic at all, but unfortunately, they were forced by Germans to treat Jews in such an ugly manner. I am simplifying it, but if you look at the book *Serbia’s Secret War* by Dr. Philip Cohen, which was published in 1997, that’s about how it was.

The book was panned the same year in the leading scholarly journal dealing with the subject matter, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, which is published in Washington – if you’re interested, you can check it in my paper – and the review said the book may have asked the right questions, but it basically fell far from any real research. Of course, there was never any scientific treatment of this in the Balkans. There was a considerable debate on who’s anti-Semitic and to what extent; in fact, this debate is still going on and is very likely to continue in the future. What’s more, there was also the second kind of response, although quite rare, calling the persecution of Croats, mainly that at Bleiburg, the Holocaust.

The only attempt to exploit the Jewish trope back in 1980s, which drew a lot of public attention, was the famous incident at Cankarjev dom – this was already 1989, when Slovenia backed the Albanian miners at Trepča – when the attendees put on Albanian national caps with the stars of David on them – naturally, this was enough to trigger off the reaction of the Jewish community.

From 1991 to 1999, as Marko Živković demonstrates in his excellent text ‘A Wish To Be a Jew: the Power of the Jewish Trope in the Yugoslav Conflict’, every single ethnic community living in the former Yugoslavia appropriated the ‘Jewish trope’ in one way or another. I remember hearing a Macedonian woman at Yad Vashem, who said Jews and Macedonians were

two Biblical nations: namely, there's a place in the New Testament where a man living in what was Macedonia at the time speaks to Apostle Paul, telling him not to go to Asia but come to Europe instead. Of course, for an indoctrinated person, this man was a predecessor of today's Macedonians, like Alexander the Great. This exemplifies the views of Robert Hayden, a very serious and bold man, an anthropologist from Pittsburgh, whose participation in this Conference would have been a very nice thing; he says this failure of historical awareness reflects the failure of history as science taking place in the former Yugoslavia in 1980s, especially in 1990s.

Let me now turn to the next transformation of the 'Jewish trope': the book entitled *Balkan Holocausts: Serbian and Croatian Victim Centered Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia* by David Bruce McDonald, a 300-page volume exploring how Serbs and Croats abused the 'Jewish trope' in 1980s and 1990s. This brings us to a very important argument and it has to be told: to a greater or lesser degree, the 'Jewish trope' was undeniably abused by all Yugoslav ethnic communities, including Serbs, first of all, in their search for identity, but also out of the perception this could win them political points by drawing Israelis to their side, or at least by pulling them apart from the other party because, by definition, Israelis are considered to have a reason to side with Serbs. Let me illustrate the second kind of effort with the case of Igor Primorac and his actions related to the Balkans in 1990s. Formerly a professor at Belgrade's Department of Philosophy, he moved to Israel and countered Israel's 'pro-Serb' stance, which was how he perceived it – that is, if Israel's more profound and better understanding of the situation in the Balkans, in comparison with other countries around the world, should ever be perceived as 'pro-Serb'.

The 'Jewish trope' saw its second transformation in the United States. There are two books, by Samantha Power and by Peter Novick, which claim that in 1990s there was a sudden increase in the awareness, as they like to put it, of the Holocaust in the United States. Both authors say it was the use of Holocaust-related discourse, the way our young colleague just put it (let us be a bit old-fashioned in the sense of the narrative techniques used), in the case of the Bosnian war that resulted in a heightened awareness of the Holocaust. So, as he speaks about the Holocaust abuse by Serbs and Croats in his synthesis, David Bruce McDonald fails to disclose the fact that the two parties which actually benefited the most from using the term Holocaust to describe the persecution of their ethnic communities were the Bosnian Muslims and Kosovo's ethnic Albanians.

The thinking of Michael S. Desch, a man who lectures at the chair founded by the former CIA Director Robert Gates, currently the U.S. Secre-

tary of Defense in Bush's Administration, is on a different trail. Power and Novick claim that even though the Holocaust (read: the 'Jewish trope') was equally abused in the case of Bosnians and Albanians, this may still have saved tens of thousands of people by helping provoke the U.S. military intervention. We shouldn't forget the abuse of the 'Jewish trope' reached its climax with Elie Wiesel at the Washington Holocaust Museum opening ceremony, when he asked Clinton to intervene in Bosnia (this happened on 22 April 1993, the anniversary of the Jasenovac breakout, making it great material for theories of conspiracy). Given the previous U.S. involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the only thing remaining was direct military intervention, which ensued in April 1994, when the NATO air force downed several aircraft of the Republic of Srpska Army. Let's move on now. On the contrary, Michael S. Desch says the 'Jewish trope' actually proved counterproductive, as it lulled the Bosnian Muslims and Kosovo's ethnic Albanians in hope of military intervention, directly accounting for a series of actions they took which ultimately led to their ruin and to the sacrifice of their own people.

In conclusion: the 'Jewish trope', as much as it may have been abused or not used or used in a positive way, makes but a small part of the discourse on Serbian identity back in 1980s, which is not very different in the case of the other Yugoslav nations. This little portion of the discourse is undoubtedly significant, but it also most certainly led to the inflation of related writings, overblowing the importance of this minor part of identity or identity debate, in search for the 'Holy Grail' of history in 1990s, which is the cause leading to the breakup of Yugoslavia.

According to some authors exploring the mentioned discourse, the genocide debate going on in 1980s and 1990s flared up the feeling of hatred between the Yugoslav nations (which previously never existed or would not have escalated otherwise), eventually helping to manipulate the Yugoslav nations and push them into a conflict. Of course, what I'm saying is a bit simplified, perhaps I am also trivialising some things on purpose. There are different interpretations and conclusions about the relevance of the 'Jewish trope' and there is also a huge body of related literature: let me just tell you that the British Library catalogue displays 78 pages listing the titles which could be found at there in 2000 on the subject of the Balkans in 1990s, with a large percentage interpreting and identifying the genocide debate as the phenomenon leading into the conflict.

This focus on the 'Jewish trope' and the genocide debate, putting the blame on it for the conflict – it practically extinguished the actual Holocaust and genocide research. On the one hand, we have a pile of literature dealing with the genocide debate, which means secondary and tertiary literature,

while on the other we may have one or two ongoing projects researching the victims of Jasenovac.

That's a disaster and perhaps it is our own fault too. However, now that we've got rid of futile debating, we can finally summon up the strength and face the fact that 62 years after Jasenovac was shut down we still need to do real, serious research. That's a disaster, but we still have a chance. Thank you!

Dr. Životije Đorđević

We used to believe the powers of the Triple Entente helped Serbia create the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on 1 September 1918 in recognition of its sacrifices in World War I, thus realizing the dream of all Southern Slavs, as was commonly reckoned back in those days. However, it shortly turned out this assistance came as an expression of the need to create a state which would be capable of stopping Germany and Austria from advancing eastwards, obstruct Russia's potential reliance on the Balkan Slavs and, eventually, make sure 'Allahü Ekber' is never heard before Vienna's city walls again.



However, not all Yugoslav peoples welcomed the newly-formed state with the same enthusiasm. Six days after the proclamation of its unification, Zagreb and Roman Catholic Croatia, which had by then proved to be the Vatican's striking fist, demonstrated against this state. The states hostile to its foundation were certainly Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Albania. They were joined by the Vatican and the Comintern, whose Fifth Congress held in 1924 declared or rather adopted as its obligation to help the efforts of Macedonia, Croatia and Slovenia to secede from the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Unfortunately, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia embraced the same policy and collaborated with all movements in the history of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, irrespective of their political affiliation. The cre-

ation of the Yugoslav Kingdom was not approved of by Italy either, which believed it had not been given a large enough portion of Dalmatia, which is why it fully supported Dr. Ante Pavelić and his Ustashe, who at the time fought to unify Croatia with Slavonia and Dalmatia and create the 'Tripartite State', which would then break away from the Kingdom of Serbia.

When the German Reich attacked the Soviet Union, it did not take long for Stalin to issue a call to all communists to help the 'First Country of Socialism'. Josip Broz used this as a convenient excuse – with the knowledge of Dido Kvaternik, Minister of the Interior of the Independent State of Croatia, he set off for Serbia to do the same thing Dr. Ante Pavelić was doing in the Independent State of Croatia, exterminate the Serbian people and its elite by sacrificing a hundred Serbs for one dead German. There could be no mistakes. Only three days after signing the Armistice Agreement between the German and Yugoslav armed forces, 30th German Division leveled the village of Donji Dobrić, after the advance guard of 60th German Division had run against a Chetnick unit from the village. Eleven days after the invasion, Feldmarshal von Weichs, Commander of 2nd German Army, issued an order to take the most severe reprisals against the Serbian population in response to their multiplying perfidious attacks against the German army. So the massacres began.

From September 1941 to July 1942, 37,477 people were shot in Serbia. The mass executions of hostages continued the whole time of the invasion. The figures were horrible, but what was happening in the Independent State in Croatia was far more appalling. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed in Jasenovac using the most brutal methods. On 16 March 1944, SS Major-General Ernst Fick sent a report to Heinrich Himmler, his commanding officer (this report went to Heinrich Himmler, not just anybody, and it was written by a major-general), saying the Croats, as he put it, 'slaughtered between six and seven hundred thousand innocent victims in the Balkans fashion'. That was what Germans said as the invaders; that was what their officials stated, who knew they were the invading force and as such, it was only their trust territory, and they would be considered responsible for everything that happened within that territory.

Andrić, an Ustasha military ship commander, who was the liaison officer to the Belgrade-based German Plenipotentiary and High Commander for Serbia, reported on 15 September 1942 that Feldmarshal Lehr was in Belgrade on 27 and 28 August; during a meeting he chaired, the 'Supreme Commander of the German Gendarmerie' Meisner spoke in the most gruesome terms about the Ustashe's bloodbath of the Orthodox Christian population (this is a quote), after which he would not let Andrić discuss the victim count

and instead replied to him: 'We know very well, based on well-known facts and with reliability that 700 thousand people have been killed in the Independent State of Croatia so far.' This was said on 28 August 1942.

On the other hand, Neubacher sent reports to Hitler, both as a friend and as his plenipotentiary for this part of the Balkans; in his memoirs he said explicitly the high officials of the Ustasha movement boasted of having killed a million Serbs; 'however, I see it as an overstatement, as according to the documents I have been receiving (himself as Hitler's plenipotentiary – the author's remark), around three-quarters of a million have been killed.'

The investigative commission appointed by Croatia published Milan Duzemlić's testimony, who stated in front of the Commission that as Secretary of the Jasenovac Municipality, he had in his hands the official lists with around nine hundred thousand people killed in Jasenovac prior to 21 December 1943.

In 1964, they appointed the commission Professor Živanović was talking about. I would like to add a few details in connection with his speech. In a documentary made by Milorad Bajić, a documentary film director, the professor stated that, among other things, it should be taken into account they only counted the exhumed victims when they were conducting the examination, they were not able to tell how many victims died for months by being boiled in twelve huge 2,200-litre cauldrons, whose bones were taken away in coal wagons to be disposed of in the Sava. They were not able to investigate how many victims were burned, some of them still alive, in the crematorium Engineer Picili built by adapting the kiln at the brick factory. They were not able to investigate the cases of those who were hit with mallets, hammers and steel bars at Granik directly at the River Sava and sent floating to Belgrade as 'meat supply for Jovan's Market'. Bearing all those facts in mind, Živanović stated that certainly over a million people were killed in Jasenovac, while the official figure of 1,706,000, which Franjo Tuđman called sacred, is incorrect, he even said it is criminal, because according to him the number of the actual victims, not demographic, is around two million.

However, all these facts were insufficient to baulk the powerful forces ready and willing to destroy all the documents, all the evidence of the crimes of genocide committed against the Serbian people, as well as to falsely minimize the count of victims as much as possible. The cycle of lies began during the war. In February 1942, Josip Broz reported to Moscow from Foča that Ante Pavelić had put in the Jasenovac camp over ten thousand of 'Croatia's best sons'. Next, in March 1944, the party paper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia reported that a total of 18,914 people had died in Lika, Banija and Kordun by March 1944, which was more than a

downright lie! After the liberation came Franjo Tuđman, who claimed that no more than 30 to 40 thousand people perished at Jasenovac. Tuđman felt free to bring Jure Paršić as his key witness, a Catholic priest at Jasenovac during the war, who, according to Tuđman, was promoted to the rank of Ustasha Captain thanks to his beliefs. Indeed, what better witness would he need for this kind of testimony?

More and more frequently, we have been hearing stories lately from new agitpropists telling tales about Serbian mythomania and genocidal obsession, waving about Bogoljub Kočović's pamphlet and his unconfirmed and incorrect assumptions. Here is what this is about. In his book Bogoljub Kočović says there were never any migrations into Kosovo and Metohija during the war and especially not after the war – although, to tell the truth, he refers to the province as Kosovo, omitting the name Metohija, thus adopting the term promoted by the ethnic Albanian separatists. Furthermore, Kočović claims the people who were banished from Kosovo during the war actually returned to their land. Both these claims are in direct contradiction to what happened in actuality. It is well-known there was a law banning those people from returning, and the fact is also that the statisticians dealing with immigration concluded that around three hundred thousand Albanians moved to Kosovo and Metohija from Albania between 1941 and 1948. Those who know facts claim at least 120 thousand settled there during the war. Regardless of the exact figure, which nevertheless must have been over two hundred thousand, they were found there and listed as Yugoslav citizens in 1948, which seemingly reduced the number of victims in Yugoslavia. Next, as his input figure, Kočović assumed Yugoslavia had 15,810,000 inhabitants in 1941 – we don't know what his source was, because that is not true – and next he adopted 1.25 as the population growth rate, which has no foundation with regards to what the trend was in Yugoslavia before that. With such incorrect input data, he obtained the incorrect figure of 1,014,000 of the actual victims in Yugoslavia.

However, researchers say something else. Tasić, formerly Director of the Demographic Center at the Federal Agency of Statistics, calculated Yugoslavia had 2,438,000 demographic victims and 1,400,000 actual victims. Mr. Frumkin got 2,120,000 demographic and 1,500,000 actual victims. Velimir Terzić, Head of the Yugoslav Army Headquarters, claims Yugoslavia lost 1,650,000 victims in World War II, and in claiming so, he quotes a document filed at the Archives of the Institute of Military History. Finally, Adolf – Dolfe Voglenik, Director of the Federal Agency of Statistics, like Tasić – the two were the best statisticians in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as well as after the war – he started with the official figure according to which Yugoslavia

had 16,413,000 inhabitants in 1941. Following the demographic trends in Yugoslavia between 1921 and 1941, he calculated the population growth rate in Yugoslavia between 1941 and 1948 at 1.84, not 1.25 (as calculated by Kočović), and based on the initial parameters he calculated Yugoslavia's demographic loss at 2,824,000 and its actual loss at 1,824,000, not 1,014,000, as was 'established' by Kočović.

Yet, despite all this, we hear more and more about this genocidal obsession, unfortunately, in Belgrade – and even more unfortunately, such stories come from the people who should be very careful about what kinds of statements they make. Is genocidal obsession the list with 20 thousand Serbian children killed in the Jasenovac camp, or at least those from Mount Kozara, 11,194, aged six and a half on average? Is that obsession with genocide? The fact that apparently every eighth or ninth citizen was killed during the war – is that mythomania? I should rather say that at the root of this we have a fear this research might lead to a very logical and very important question of which killing fields continued to serve their initial purpose after the Germans withdrew? For example, who opened a new killing field in Kragujevac stretching from Šumarice, Erdoglijski potok, Metino brdo, Kapislana within the grounds of the Military and Technical Agency? The number of victims buried there largely surpasses those at Šumarice. There are many such killing fields across Serbia. They are unmarked and the authorities still keep quiet about them.

As much as we may strive to accept one figure or another, whether we want it or not, we have to put in the effort to have the victims listed individually. People will be fooled if they believe the promise it is possible to count the victims using geophysical methods. Locating the graves – perhaps, but there is no way the victims can be counted. Yet, the names of both the victims and their murderers should be listed. The Governments of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, also of Serbia, have failed to do it, most certainly not incidentally. They knew very well the international community would accept something as true based on the information it was presented. Our authorities have failed to present the facts to the international community, based on which the international community would learn the truth, i.e. the truth which reflects the facts as they are, not our deals or negotiations.

Finally, the victims most certainly deserve that we make this effort. It is going to be more difficult than it would have been at the time when we were supposed to do it, but it is not impossible. Young generations expect us to, so they can learn a lesson based on the history of their people, which we

were obviously incapable of. Let us not hide behind the word 'impossible'. It is true complete villages and habitations were devastated, but it is still possible to find survivors who can tell what people died in those villages. We are fully aware we will not obtain the accurate figure, but we are certain this figure will be within the range of divergence, after which we can stop guessing if it was three or seven hundred thousand people who perished at Jasenovac.

In conclusion, it is time to remind certain people of the 14th century wisdom, which says: 'Hold your tongues, you who never think about the consequences.'



Academician Zdravko Antonić

Jasenovac in the Light of Dr. Nikola Nikolić's Writings

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th International Conference on Jasenovac, Banja Luka, 2007, p. 220

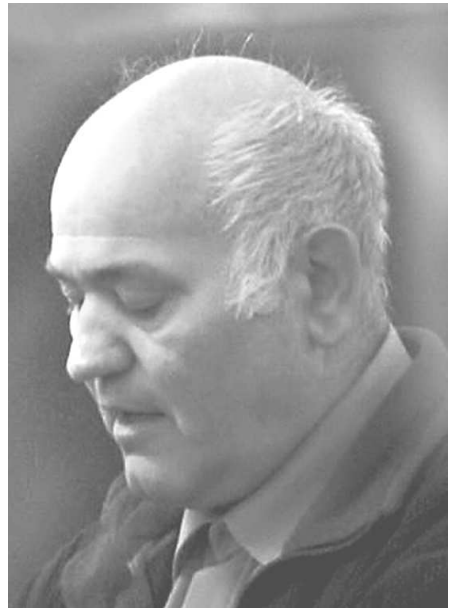
Professor Ostoja Đukić

Dear colleagues, honorable Chairs and all Conference participants, I extend my deepest appreciation to you all.

My name is Ostoja Đukić and I am a professor of ethics at the Faculty of Philosophy. I am going to say something about the unpunished crime of genocide in Jasenovac from the ethical aspect.

It was said long ago – it was John Donne, the great Renaissance poet, who said that we should be wary, whatever happens in the world happens to every man, which is why he wrote the famous lines: ‘Ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee.’ Whatever happens to a nation or to one man may happen to any nation and any man, and the Talmud wisdom instructs us that saving one man means saving mankind. I wrote the book *The Sphinx of Civilizations*, which took me on a trip down the darkest allies of the human soul through history, the souls of kings, emperors, oligarchs, tyrants, conquerors, psychopaths, vandals, ruthless rulers, shameless and remorseless generals and commanders, also torturers, raging hordes of evil-doers, arsonists, also murderers, various tyrants, hardened criminals, sadists, avengers, enticers, inquisitors and many others, and I assure you that those who committed crimes in history, they committed those horrors, left behind them traces of madness, inhumanity, hatred, persecution, pogrom, brutal killing, orgies, vengeance, what we can call disturbed psyches, and spiritual and moral and physical decadence and devastation.

In part those crimes were explained by Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky in his works, but there is so much more remaining for the time which has come, i.e. our time, which is now behind us, and the time yet to come, where it is difficult to capture and explain the things that happened, the most heinous crimes in the history of mankind. However, the crime of genocide committed by the raging Ustasha beasts in the notorious camp Jasenovac surpasses all previous misdoings [by] a disturbed human mind, a pathological psyche, the power over the blood and spirit of fellow man are capable of



doing. So, that was the worst anyone is capable of doing. What happened in Jasenovac, our 'Wailing Wall', the most abominable crimes in the history of human civilization were committed. There were some other crimes committed by Mongols, those committed in India, in the Middle East, some other civilizations, but these crimes surpassed all other crimes of in the history of human civilization, [*they surpassed*] what Turks did, and also Albanians. Also, these crimes were more extensive and we may say [*inaudible*].

Therefore, the Croatian State Commission, which, of course, investigated the crimes of the aggressors and their accomplices, said that, in terms of its unprecedented martyrdom and graveness and brutality, Jasenovac was one of the bloodiest of all Nazi camps in Europe. No comment is necessary if we know that both Germans and Italians were horrified by what Ustashe did. There were different killing methods and arsenals. Let me not name them here, they have been named; I only wish to say it was committed with sadism, sarcasm, cynicism, with humiliation, molestation, spite and denial of all human norms and values. Furthermore, as Vardić rightly put it, what happened beats all human fantasy and imagination. The Ustasha butchers killed more people in World War II than Osmanli Turks did in history in this region or in the broader European surroundings. In conclusion, this shows clearly what kind of crimes they were. We should say that many villages on and around Mount Kozara lost their entire populations, there are mothers there who never removed their black mourning kerchiefs. So, it is clear what happened there.

Brutal and barbaric methods were used to kill the weak, which is women, children and older people, not to mention other people, patriots and all the others who died in that camp. The Ustashe and Croatian Home Guard destroyed the documents, witnesses, publications and wanted to kill the truth. That they cannot do. The truth and justice resurrect from the pits poured with concrete and want to speak up, if late; may the truth and justice win, no matter when. The time has come for the other side to speak out. The more the truth and justice were suppressed, the more they were revealed and brought to daylight, becoming stronger, more eloquent and more convincing. What was going on in Ustasha prisons and camps was an unprecedented Calvary. As for the moral side, I can say those were moral precedents, degeneration, they led into a moral abyss which no one can escape or be saved from. We can say it was the fulfillment of what John the Revelator prophesied in his Apocalypse, or even more that that.

We can see Serbs were continuously punished across history, since Turkish times, by Albanians, by Austro-Hungarians in World War I, by fascist Germany and other conquerors. The thing may have been – their house stood mid-way, many had to stop by. As for the agenda the Orthodox Church

fought for, for the world to find out – the world has found out certain things, but the world was deaf and mute. It was always Serbs who were stunted on what was their. There is God, now we know the truth, justice is here, although with delay. The world should have recognized them and undertaken steps to uncover the crime for the world to know the real truth, because what we had was a mysterious myth extending across our history, and the goal is to demystify it.

As for the number of victims, whether there were five hundred, six hundred, seven hundred, a million, a million and a half or a million two hundred thousand, it is hard to tell. Now, as for the victims register, perhaps 82 thousand, 88 thousand, as established by the Genocide Museum stating their first and last names, but we could also continue and reach a higher figure. In that sense we certainly need to make an effort and I believe our history and the public will learn maybe not the whole truth, but at least 90 percent of that truth.

Next, what Tuđman stated at the conference, that the figure is 20-30 thousand – that deserves harsh criticism. That has nothing to do with either justice or the truth. The goal is to minimize the crimes and equalize the victims and the criminals, which was exactly what the census speculations aim at. It is certain that neither the Nuremberg Court nor the courts of the Federal National Republic of Yugoslavia, the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republics of Croatia and Serbia did anything much to shed light on these dirty deeds and assemble the victims' names. We know that the trials organized by Croatia were but farce, a mere mockery, cunningly staged tragicomedies, giving more pleasure to those who returned to be buried here instead of revealing the truth, because people were tried for crimes against civilians and so on, not for crimes of genocide, which certainly took place in Jasenovac.

As a man and a philosopher, I would like to ask a question: throughout the war certain people were in charge and Jasenovac was never attacked; also, it was never visited afterwards either. Maybe there were powerful forces defending it and it was not possible, but still this leaves us to doubt and wonder. History should be rewritten, a scientific discipline focusing on the subject of Jasenovac, especially as we need to know where we were persecuted and how many of us perished there; there is another puzzle here that demands to be solved, Krajačić-Bakarić, and we should certainly not forget Josip Broz's role in all these events, regardless of how we may feel about it. I would like to support Patriarch German and Wiesenthal, we definitely need to ask for, but we must not forget. We forgive, and there you go, what we forgave and didn't punish, in World War II genocide took place in Jasenovac, but then ethnocide

repeated, other crimes against the Serbian people repeated too, we may say. The Serbian community living in this region has been vilified and therefore the truth about Jasenovac would mirror what Serbs went through in World War II, as well as in the latest war; consequently, many things would undoubtedly be understood more easily.

Perhaps Ivo Andrić's works could give an explanation of what is happening here and of the ongoing hatred, but we are dealing with double standards and two truths. Some are given orders, blackmailed, commanded with the use of force, while others are asked to go along, to be cooperative. Some are tried at The Hague, while others are allowed to stand trial in their own countries. The Serbian people experienced a precedent in the latest war, which is proved by double standards, and we should ask where the truth and justice are because they are designed by those with force and power.

I would certainly recommend taking into account the Croatian documents speaking about that period, because many facts have been revealed which can be the basics and a starting point for further research. Let me express my thanks to those people who have made a contribution, in particular to Milan Bulajić, for his enormous contribution, as well as others who helped keep the subject of Jasenovac in focus, making it possible for us to resolve a number of riddles of contemporary history.

Discussion

Protosingel Jovan Ćulibrk: We have some more time and the Chairmen will allow to have a short discussion, if anybody would like to say something. Let me add something myself, very briefly, related to this lecture, i.e. related to the question why Jasenovac was not liberated. There's a book, it was published recently (although it's not that recent, it dates back to the early 1990's), by Slavko Odić and Slavko Komarica, which sheds light on some of the aspects of this issue. The book does not exactly answer the question, but it identifies the third most important person, Andrija Hebrang, apparently as the man who blocked the initiatives and proposals to liberate Jasenovac.

Comment from the audience: I've read the book.

Protosingel Jovan Ćulibrk: That would be all. Would you please introduce yourself?

Mr. Ilija Lukić:

I have been presented with this opportunity, so thank you. First of all, I think it is a terrible pity and shame that this auditorium, this concert hall was empty this morning, and it's not full now either. Why young people, students are not here – that is a serious question. I am certainly one of those – or rather my whole generation – who lived in total illusion.

I'll tell you about an event which has to do with Jasenovac. I mean, the statements we can hear now – Hebrang is mentioned, others too, I don't know, whoever. Well, gentlemen, we know very well who was commander-in-chief at the head of the chain command. That is very well known. I spent 1,727 days in the latest war learning how it felt to fight on other people's land while your hometown and your homeland are peacefully at sleep. A man, I believe he came from Prnja-



vor, talked to me in one of the offices some time around 60th anniversary of the Holocaust, the breakout of inmates from Jasenovac, the victory against fascism; at that time I was one of Mr. Dragan Čavić's team, the former President of the Republic of Srpska. He wanted his account, which can be placed on about two pages, to get some attention or be given some room in the context of commemoration of the mentioned 60th anniversary. He gave me the exact details of his arrival at village Rajić as member of a Partisan unit – this village is located between Okučani and Novska, on the old road, not the highway, to make things clearer, it lies further to the north and in parallel with the Belgrade-Zagreb road – and he said: 'We were headed for Jasenovac. Mud, swamps...'

Protosingel Jovan Čulibrk: Excuse me, which year are you talking about? I don't know...

Mr. Ilija Lukić: The same year the inmates broke out of Jasenovac. You'll have your answer from this story... And he says: 'They fired at us from machine guns from the watchtowers, we tried to use a mortar' – I was corrected just a while ago, I thought it was 82 mm, those calibers are well known, but Father Jovan said it had to be a 81-mm mortar gun. This is only a little digression. They tried to mount it two or three times, but it didn't work because of mud. And then, the same day the prisoners broke out, as they were withdrawing, they came across some children dressed in Ustasha uniforms, wearing big letters 'U'; of course, what else could they do but disarm them. The children were extremely arrogant and kept threatening that their commanding officers... would punish them. The children were taken to the headquarters, I don't know what ever happened with them, I reckon they were released; those children had been given the task to search the swamps for those poor people who had managed to break out of the camp.

That is the story the man told me, I hope he hears about this somehow. Right now I can remember neither his first nor last name, I may have it written somewhere in my schedule book, but, there you go, I was not ready for this, nor did I know I would have this opportunity. Nevertheless, German hordes and the others crossed Slovenia undisturbed, they went across Croatia, came to Bosnia and under his command they dragged themselves around and about the Neretva and Sutjeska Rivers and elsewhere, and they died, they certainly did. It was only when this man, whose story I have just told you, was standing at the door that I said: 'So much could have been done.' I said: 'Well, sir, who should take the blame it wasn't?' He said: 'We all know very well.' I asked: 'Who?' 'Josip Broz.' 'Oh!'

Protosingel Jovan Ćulibrk: Mr. Lukić, this was all filmed by Mr. Bibić and you have now settled up with the man who was the source of this story, because now we will have it forever.

Academician Zdravko Antonić:

Since we only have very little time, I would suggest we leave the issue raised by our Professor Bulajić for tomorrow, which we should decide on after we return. I think it's a very interesting issue – can we step this up and in what way, and how do we take this to the level of international protection?

What I would like to say now is that today, as an achievement of this Editorial Board, we have presented this book in Serbian and English, and I would like to remind you of the foreword, which has six pages, by our colleague Academician Ekmečić... Professor Vlado Lukić, Milan Bulajić and myself met in Belgrade, and hardly did, hardly did he... being so exhausted from writing his book *A Long Way's Journey Between Slaughtering and Ploughing* and all, but he still accepted to write this, and as for me... I have some sources, documents from 1941, when his father Ilija was taken away and slaughtered in Herzegovina, and when I showed him that, he wasn't able to refuse... I mean, he felt morally obligated to do it.

Another thing I wanted to say, our colleague Životije Đorđević brought up an issue which to my mind is really ticklish, and no matter how much I may have researched it, it keeps calling me again and again, and that's the issue that in 1915 the Treaty of London offered Serbia to be unified as Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. The proposal was rejected then by Mr. Pašić and King Alexander, because they figured they should attempt to unite all Southern Slavs. The way I feel about it is exactly how Dučić felt about it, and also as Professor Krestić spoke about afterwards, it's just like traffic – there's no going back once you've made a mistake. Accordingly, how do I put this, a broader spiritual concept of the unification of Southern Slavs developed at that time; instead of choosing to cut a clear swathe and subsequently welcome in those who would want to join them, they went for the broad initiative and it all watered down in the end... In World War I Serbia lost a million and three hundred thousand people, which means it lost a critical mass. Between 1918 and 1928 the Parliament assembled [...] from Zagreb and Ljubljana, Vienna and Budapest, [universities], and once they had this debate going, it made Puniša Račić lose his temper and

pull a gun. In my opinion, that was the end of that Yugoslavia. So, those are complex issues, but indeed, they are interesting for discussion and further research. Thank you!

Dr. Životije Dorđević:

I am familiar with the debate and I am familiar with the claim that engineer Nikola Pašić and His Royal Highness King Aleksandar I aspired to creating the largest possible state out of sheer megalomania, eventually bringing such terrible misery to the Serbian people. The facts are totally different. In late 1918, Nikola Pašić was invited from Corfu to London, and when he arrived there, he had to wait a little bit longer before he was received by the British Prime Minister, just to make it clear who's who. The first thing Lloyd George asked him was: 'Mr. Pašić, why are you against the unification of Croatia and Slovenia with Serbia?' Pašić, a wise head, spoke right: 'Excuse me, your information is not correct. First of all, we want to know what will belong to Serbia after the war, and then we will invite our brothers and let their people decide whether they want to live with us or not.' Surely Aleksandar's opinion was no different, because his father, who fought in this region and had a very bad experience with Croats, was not a bit enthusiastic about them. Therefore, they most certainly had no megalomaniac agendas when they chose to create a large state. The creation of this sizable state was simply the product of the fact England and France needed a somewhat stronger state in the Balkans, one which would be capable of confronting Germany and Austria, while on the other hand, it could stop the 'White Bear' from laying her paws on the Balkans. That is the great truth.

Mr. Dragan Cvetković:

I wanted to speak in connection with the presentation by Mr. Kumović, my colleague, entitled 'How Reliable is the Victims Register From the War 1941-1945 (Composed in 1964), and How Accurately Does it Show the Real Number of the Victims in Jasenovac?' I asked to speak because I agree with colleague Kumović on many things, especially the number of the killed Jews originally coming from the region of Srem, which is 2,083. I agree with him there are a lot of mistakes in the 1964 census, that in part some Jews were... their nationality was changed, they were registered mainly

as Croats, but also as Serbs or Hungarians. The problem he has brought up here, the fact that the census does not give an accurate number of the Jews killed in the places or municipalities in Srem, partly arises from Mr. Kumović's using records listing the war victims according to their places of birth, not their places of residence, meaning, the places they were residing at when the war started, which is the period which was processed in the research. As Mr. Kumović said himself, as he remarked, this is something historians are familiar with, between 1918 and 1941 Jews were the most mobile community not only in Serbia but in all of Europe, changing their places of residence, which makes it directly impossible for them to be listed in Srem as war victims, because, as I said, they were listed according to their birth places. For example, the number of Jews killed in Bosnia is higher than the number registered as living in Bosnia. Likewise in Macedonia, two thousand more Jews were registered to have been killed in Macedonia when compared with the number of those who were actually living in Macedonia. Since we know the exact figure, 7,731 victims, there is... there is a list made by Germans of the people who were deported in October 1943, so, we have around two thousand people who were living in... especially the Jews from Bitola, who left Bitola after 1918 and settled in Belgrade, Srem, Vojvodina, as well as part of the Bosnian Jews, from Bosnia, who moved to Croatia [...] a smaller part of them.

Now, I am really bothered by one thing here – in fact, not that it bothers me, it's just that since Mr. Kumović criticises the census as inaccurate, meaning it can't be used to obtain correct information whatsoever, as I said, the figure which Mr. Kumović got is 2,083 victims. If we subtract from this number those that belong to Croatia, which is 358 from Ilok and 404 from Vukovar, I won't take into account the smaller places cited here, so, we have 762 killed Jews from there only. If they are subtracted from 2,083, the result says 1,321 people were killed in Srem together with Zemun. Since we know in advance that the Zemun Jews were taken straight to Jasenovac and perished there, while Jews from other places in Srem were first interned at the Cibalije football pitch in Vinkovci, the Vinkovci transit camp, after which they were moved, transported to Zagreb, where, according to Jaša Romano, the smaller part was sent to Jasenovac and the bigger to Auschwitz, we get the figure of just over 1,320 Jews, where it says 200 were deported to Auschwitz, leaving us with the figure of 1,100 killed Jews. Based on the 1964 count, as I just presented it to you, as I saw it on page 78 of the book you've published, the Conference Proceedings, you can see easily that in my research into the persecution of Jews, I wrote that between 1,094 and 1,152 Jews from Srem including Zemun died, if I'm not mistaken. Therefore, Mr. Kumović and I got

the same result, approximately 1,100 Jews from Srem died in Jasenovac, including the Jews from Zemun. Therefore, I don't understand how we were able to get the same result if the 1964 census is not valid. Thank you !

Academician Srboljub Živanović: Here's what this is about: I would like to know if this... the place where you work, is it called the Institute of Genocide Research...? (**Mr. Dragan Cvetković:** The Museum of Genocide Victims.) Museum, fine, never mind the name of the institution – does your institution have any information about the corpses which were carried by the River Sava and the Danube and does it know their background, age, sex and how they died? Has this institute ever bothered to send his researchers, let's say, to the Zemun Cemetery, where they can find the stones with the names and surnames of Jasenovac victims? Has this institute ever made an effort to discover the names of the fourteen members of my family who died? Not even I know their identities. Therefore, how dare you ground your works on a botched count and present your slides here with some statistical data saying how many Muslims died, how many Croats died, how many Serbs, etc. Based on what, if your corpus is so lousy? It did not include what it was supposed to. Collecting as many names is the useful thing, but, say, in the last few days different people have been giving me books and works I didn't know of previously, where they listed victims' names and surnames for individual places. It's normal to expect to have literate people in small places too, who can sit down and write about the things that happened. Have you managed to collect all those documents, lists, to be in a position to say that your corpus was 80, 100 or 200 thousand, or whatever you claim it was? In conclusion, instead of wasting your time and producing these grand studies based on lousy samples, you may as well have your Museum do something and collect the information which is still available. Thank you!

Dr. Mladenko Kumović:

I am sorry we don't have enough time to go back to what I've shown you. I spoke about the facts, the actual facts found in the 1964 victims census and the actual number of Srem inhabitants who were killed. According to the register – let me repeat this one more time briefly – according to the 1964 register, in Srem, which means the geographical region of Srem, both the part which is in Vojvodina and the part in Croatia, according to the 1964 register, 668 Jews died, and they actually were listed as Jews. The figure we obtained

of the actual number of victims, by name and surname, is 2,084. That means that only 35 percent were listed. However, there's another problem; in fact, it's not a problem, this percentage is even lower, because by mistake the 1964 register listed more Jews for Vukovar than the actual number of Jews who died in Vukovar, which again distorts the picture. Based on all this – this is something we can calculate accurately – only 20 percent of the victims were listed in the 1964 census, which is why I claim, according to my sample, that this figure may freely be multiplied by 5, the figure now estimated at 120 thousand according to the Jasenovac victims count, according to the count obtained by the Museum of Genocide Victims, because only every twentieth Jew was listed in 1964, I mean, every fifth, only 20 percent. So, that would support the findings of the Croatian State Commission standing at around 600 thousand, i.e. between 500 and 600 thousand. That's the correct information and there's nothing, I mean, we can [...] as long as we like, but what I'm saying is a matter of fact, what the register says and how things [...]. Anyway, as you could see, the State Commission, i.e. the Commission which investigated the Jewish victims in Srem in 1945 got the figure of 1,800.



DAY 2, BANSKI DVOR, CONCERT HALL

Discussion

Dr. Milan Bulajić:

Since we're going to Jasenovac today, I would like to say something about the currently important issues related to Jasenovac [...]

According to the Croatian media, here's what they said on the anniversary of new Croatia's independence at the Homebush Sports Center in Sidney, where Stjepan Mesić, the current Croatian President, was a key speaker: 'We created our state after 900 years; yet, Croats were not idle those 900 years. They incessantly fought for the Croatian cause and a Croatian state. After all, Croats won World War II two times, and this is something we have to say to everybody, to both our friends and our enemies. Croats won in 1941, when they proclaimed the Croatian state on 10 April. Because Croats did not proclaim their state because they were fascists, but because it was their fundamental and historical right to have an independent state. But we all know what the outcome of World War II was, and we also know that Croats won the war a second time, because they celebrated the victory in that war alongside the Allies.' Next, he spoke about Jasenovac: 'What they are now asking Croats to do, saying – go now and kneel at Jasenovac, kneel here – we don't have to kneel before anyone, we won two times, while everybody else won once only. We won on April 10, when the Axis Powers recognised the Croatian state, and we also won at the end of the war because we were again on the winning team.'

I was in Jasenovac for the commemoration ceremony when Stipe Mesić said something very important: 'Genocide, the Holocaust and war crimes happened at this place, at Jasenovac. But,' he goes on to clarify this in a most cunning way, 'crime doesn't have a nationality. Who perpetrated the horrors which took place 60 years ago?' Just as the 'perpetrators of the fascist terror' have a nationality – Germans, Italians and others – the Ustashe also have a nationality – they were Croatian. Therefore, we can't say criminals don't have a nationality. However, the most important thing for me to say today, so you may know it before we go and visit Jasenovac, at the time when he was President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Stipe Mesić was asked for his interpretation of why the Serbs living in this region were

afraid of the symbols and iconography that largely resembled the iconography of the Ustasha ideology and the Ustasha movement, given the fact it was the iconography under which the terrible genocide against Serbs occurred; here's what he answered – this is extremely important: 'It wasn't Croats who committed genocide against them in this local area, it was done by the foreign aggressor. Serbs have been tricked into believing this lie, and now they are afraid, those people are afraid, and it was Germans who committed this genocide' –Germans, who were never at Jasenovac, committed genocide against Serbs.

I believe this is important for us to know, because if we are addressing the public, the international community, which doesn't know what happened at Jasenovac, we have to bear this in mind, because we are dealing with most blatant revisionism. Imagine, a highly reputable person participating in this Conference was trying to convince me yesterday Stipe Mesić was a strong opponent of fascism. I don't think he is. Thank you!

Rabbi Jozef Atijas:

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear brothers and sisters, the Fourth International Conference is slowly coming to an end. The emotions are indeed running high and by the time it all subsides, we will certainly come to a conclusion, God is gracious, everybody will leave this Conference with their own convictions and their own thoughts. Still, let me say this, the victims of Jasenovac are warning us, the victims of Jasenovac are reminding us that what happened there must never be forgotten. The fact that nobody identified those victims is a huge mistake and a serious omission made a long time ago, because every victim deserves to be identified by their name and surname. Instructed by the adage from the Bible, from the history of Noah's arc in the Old Testament, which says: 'Whoever saves one life saves the world entire; whoever kills one life kills all humankind' – Jasenovac has to be a warning, Jasenovac has to be a lesson that such things, God forbid, should never happen again to anyone anywhere.

There is one more thing I would like to share with you and it will probably make some of you feel like you're losing reason. In the vicinity of Vlasenica, on the way to Han Pijesak, there's a place called Han Pogled. I heard about it... I think it was in 1991, which means it was about twenty years ago, from my older brother Kačavenda, Bishop of Tuzla and Zvornik – near that place, Han Pogled, my dear friends, there's a spot in the woods, in a

meadow, three pits, where they brought Jews from Rogatica, Vlasenica, Višegrad, Tuzla, even from Sarajevo, where they were killed along with the most reputable local Serbs. I have visited and seen this place several times already; local people say that approximately 2,100 people were killed there, may God forgive them, nothing less than 2,100 victims, including women and children. There's even a living witness, a local forestry engineer, who was a child and apparently survived by chance. I appeal to this Conference to record this somehow, to get in touch with the Prefect of Vlasenica Municipality and the authorities of this country... They were victims of the Holocaust and of genocide, and all such places of execution should be marked, all such places of execution should be designated and the [graves] of the victims should be duly marked and remembered.

In hope these conventions have a truly more profound effect in the future, primarily in the sense this is never forgotten and is remembered for good, I wish you all the best and may God grant you his peace and blessing. Thank you!

Mr. Lazar Lukajić:

Since this is a discussion, let me share some observations with you. The most important issue for the whole Serbian nation at this moment is relieving it of the reputation of a genocidal people, because it is now seen as the most genocidal nation of all nations around the world. Let me remind you, Mr. Bulajić spoke about this, Alija Izetbegović and Franjo Tuđman and Mesić fought bitterly to cleanse the reputation Croats earned owing to Jasenovac, because... *[tape interruption]* ... doesn't deserve this appreciation. Thank you!

Mr. Dragan Cvetković:

Dear ladies and gentlemen, yesterday I was denied the right to take part in the discussion after my presentation, and since this is a discussion, I am going to assert my right now.

I'll be speaking about the text of the presentation by Mr. Bulajić, who is present here, who said my work and my presentation were pure manipulation. Let me give you an example of manipulation. In his text published in the Conference Proceedings, Mr. Bulajić says on page 97... he reports, interprets an article by *Vjesnik* which reviews my book and says that after ten years of

work Dragan Cvetković has established that 80,022 people were killed in the Jasenovac camps. You see, Mr. Bulajić fails to quote these are our current findings obtained after reviewing the the 1941-1945 war victims records. Unbelievably, the Croatian journalist's report is accurate and says those are the current findings, while the total estimated count of the Jasenovac victims stands at 120-130 thousand, which Mr. Bulajić fails to do. Moreover, Mr. Bulajić further says that since I have calculated that Serbs make 60 percent of all the people who died in Jasenovac, Mr. Bulajić says: 'Consequently, according to Cvetković's research, 32 thousand Serbs perished at Jasenovac.' Excuse me, 60 percent of 80 thousand is 48 thousand, not 32 thousand, which means you only dropped a half.

Now, since Mr. Bulajić obviously can't do his math – or he did it on purpose, I really can't tell – let me show you some more things whose formulation is rather tendencious. Mr. Bulajić's book about Jasenovac – let us not get off the subject – *Jasenovac – Jewish-Serbian Holocaust and the Role of the Vatican in Nazi Ustasha Croatia 1941-1945*. Yesterday we heard Father Jovan Čulibrk speak about the abuse of the term Holocaust. The second thing in the title which grates on my ears is 'Nazi Ustasha'. The ideology of the Ustasha movement contained no elements of National Socialism, as implied by the title; the ideology of the Ustasha movement embraced the Italian-type corporate fascism. Never mind this, the map is much more important. (**Rabbi Jozef Atijas:** [...] no way, sir. Italians never killed.) They didn't kill, sir, but the ideology of the movement was based on corporate fascism, not on National Socialism. There's a difference. Scholarly research specifically distinguishes between Italian and German fascism. [...] wrote about it abroad, Todor Kuljić wrote about it in our country, he examines the Ustasha movement, its ideological postulates, in a whole chapter of his book *Fascism*; academician Andrej Mitrović also wrote about it and so did many others.

So, let us return to the book and the map. This map is in the book as well, it is slightly bigger, so let me show it to you – the map is entitled 'Suffering of the Jews in the Independent State of Croatia'. This is what the book says next: 'The places from which Jewish people were deported to the places of execution of the system of liquidation Ustasha camps of genocide Jasenovac.' So, let me translate this for those who don't speak English: [*he translates the caption into Serbian*]. Among other things, you can see all the places in the Independent State of Croatia, but there are also arrows marked as 'From Germany and Austria', so, from Germany and Austria, from Czechoslovakia and Poland; from Romania; from Kosovo and Metohija. There isn't a single historical document to prove that Jews were deported from Germany and Austria, from Czechoslovakia and Poland, from Romania to the conce n-

tration camp Jasenovac. I am not saying there weren't Jews from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania who died in Jasenovac – there were some. But they weren't deportees. They weren't deported to the camp Jasenovac, they got to the camp in three distinct ways. The first one was – some Jews foresaw the forthcoming events and immigrated to Yugoslavia. Some of them were given the citizenship of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, others were granted stay permits in Yugoslavia, but still they all ended up at the camp Jasenovac after Yugoslavia's occupation. As for the second group, they fled after their home countries were occupied by Germans, or immediately before that, and got to Yugoslavia as refugees; they were caught there and again a part of them finished in Jasenovac [...] and other camps. The third way was – as you know, Jews were the most mobile community in Europe, and many among them who were born abroad were in Yugoslavia on the grounds of marriage or business ties, and they ended up in Jasenovac. But, as I said, none of them was deported to Jasenovac. (**Rabbi Jozef Atijas:** Deported to Opatija... to Rovinj.)

One more thing that [bothers me] about this map is the fact the Independent State of Croatia is presented as comprising Baranja...

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: Mr. Cvetković, you are now reviewing a book here.

Mr. Dragan Cvetković: I am simply talking about manipulation.

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: You were criticized yesterday for your approach to a totally different matter.

Mr. Dragan Cvetković: Excuse me, I was called a manipulator, I only want to show what manipulation is. Baranja and Međumurje were placed within the borders of the Independent State of Croatia; I beg your pardon – the fact that Baranja and Međumurje were first occupied and next annexed by Hungary is common knowledge for every eighth-grader. In conclusion, Mr. Bulajić either increases the number of victims of the Independent State of Croatia or reduces the number of people killed by the Hungarian fascists, i.e. the Jews and Serbs from Baranja and some from Međumurje. That's all.

Rabbi Jozef Atijas: Honourable convention, I am not used to speaking much, really; what I've said so far is too much already. But, still, let me say something about myself, if you know me – you know who I am, if you don't, let me tell you – I have been doing this job, Judaism, for as long as 40 years now. [My comprehensive study of] [...] started in 1966.

I would like to let my dear colleague who just finished speaking [know] one thing: sir, do you know what happened in Brčko on 10 December 1941? You do or you don't, tell me, you do or you don't?

Mr. Dragan Cvetković: I don't. Actually, I do.

Rabbi Jozef Atijas: Well, if you do, let me just remind you what it was. The whole Jewish community, from the youngest child to the oldest person, were tricked and brought to the Brčko Municipal Hall for supposed registration and kept there the whole day. They were kept there on no water or food; at eight o'clock in the evening they took their shoes off at -20°C and were then taken to the Brčko bridge. They were all killed on Montana Ksantini's order and thrown into the River Sava. On December 16, six days later, a group of Jews from Austria, Poland and Czechia were confined in Brčko; they were looking for a way to keep safe by [crossing] to Brčko. They were all killed at Jovo Hadžić's cemetery. Dear sir, this is not manipulation. That... do you know what happened in Šabac?

Mr. Dragan Cvetković: I don't.

Rabbi Jozef Atijas: Do you know what happened in Kladovo? I could go on and on with stories like this, but you know what – it's ugly and tasteless and impertinent and I don't know what to call it, when somebody lectures us about our agony, it's really hurtful. It was because of things like this at the previous Conference in Jerusalem that I... it was very unpleasant and I have to admit I have a quick temper, which is not good, and I almost... I was offended by Slavko Goldstein – it's a pity Arie Livne is not here – I claim 153 members of my family were killed – how could I ever come up with that number? You know how – I got their birth certificates and said – here they are, Mr. Goldstein. We all know how those things happened, so please don't broach them now. If I could get 153 birth certificates of the people who didn't return in 1945 and I never saw them, then tell me what could have happened to them. That's not manipulation. What manipulation is – I've learnt that from a man sitting here – minimizing a crime is a crime in itself; by disparaging it you become an accomplice. If you glorify it, you're committing a double crime, you are killing those who are already dead. Let's get over with this now.

Mr. Mile Imerovski:

My voice is rather raucous but I hope you understand me. I am a theologian and a historian; I have been researching this issue since the day I... I have been both blessed and cursed. My blessing is that even though I didn't know what my actual background was, I always lived a humble live, but it always tickled me why except for my brother and his family bearing the family name of Imerovski, and my family and my children who go by the same last name, there are no others; I complained to a priest and said – something must have hap-



pened during the war. He said – that's easy, all you need to do is to look in the Jasenovac lists. And so a year and a half ago, I found the rest of my family in Jasenovac. So, there are Imerovskis in Jasenovac, I just didn't know they were there. I don't want to sound pathetic, but you see, I consider my life a c-omplished, I never suspected before I had Jewish blood in me. I have studied the texts of both the Old and the New Testament and I was always keenly i n-terested in the matter, only to realize after I had completed the work – maybe I intuitively sensed it was something I owed my ancestors . Thank you!

Ms. Ivanka Klincov:

My name is Ivanka Klincov, my maiden name is Vasiljević. For those who don't know it, I addressed the convention yesterday, and now I would like to ask you, that is I would like to thank the organizers for inviting students, I believe I spotted them at the entrance, if that's correct, which I'm really glad about because it is very important for them to hear the truth, just as it is for us. I was never into research and I appreciate those who are, those who write books and those who have authored books. But please, the purpose of

this Conference is not for us to try to convince one another of how things happened. We need to hear the voices of the survivors, of those who experienced it, those who had victims to count in their own families, and let us turn to that information and not to some figures written or counted by God knows who, where or when. I certainly don't understand the people who never lived in this area and who didn't experience any of it first hand. I'll say it again – with all due respect for all researchers and authors and professionals and research associates. So, I would like to appeal to this Conference one more time for agreement, discussion, to adopt the presented Declaration, instead of arguing and debating in front of these students, who are now probably at a loss as to what kind of conclusion to make and what kind of opinion to have, especially as they weren't here for the Conference yesterday. Please, once again, let us move on in that direction, and let me say again in hope I don't offend anybody, it is very important, vitally important that we hear the people whose memories extend to those days, which we cannot disregard, despite what somebody said, that all those stories have been told many times. That is not true. Let me tell you, when you reach a certain age, your real, genuine memories sort of come back. You remember everything more clearly. You know very well that we lived a long time without hearing or reading or seeing any of it. In the end, regardless of what I've asked you to do, regarding the most recent conflict, we shouldn't wait for another sixty years before you who are young today start gathering and trying to remember this last conflict. Make the most of today, make us write the truth about this last war while we're still around. We certainly know about it. Let me tell you, many things are being kept in secrecy today. The same way Jasenovac was kept secret after 1945. Thank you very much!

Dr. Milan Bulajić: All I'd like to say is that it was this speaker who is now asking the floor that I discussed about yesterday and spoke about regarding manipulations. Regarding how he got the figure of 122,300-130,100 victims, and also referring to how realistic the Croatian sources are. That was my warning against manipulation. As for the 80,000-victims count we compiled, it was me who found the lists and always claimed it was a minimum, minimum, minimum.

Mr. Dragan Cvetković: Firstly, Mr. Bulajić, I don't know what Croatian sources you're referring to because I used exclusively the corpus of the Belgrade-based Yugoslav Archives and the others – The Military History Archives and other archives. Secondly, I would like to thank Mr. Atijas for touching on the incidents in Brčko, the Kladovo transport and the people who died

in Šabac and partly at Sajmište. But, that is exactly what I was talking about. Those people were emigrants who happened to be on Yugoslav territory. After the German aggression against Yugoslavia, the Independent State of Croatia was formed and part of those people ended up in the camps we spoke about, a part ended up in communist camps, and one part in Jasenovac. But Mr. Bulajić claims they were deported from Germany, Austria, Czechia, Poland and Romania. Being a Jew, you know very well what it means to be deported – it means putting people on a train and taking them straight to a concentration camp. There isn't a single document to prove there were deportations from Germany, Czechia, Poland, Austria and Romania directly to Jasenovac. Not a single document. It's a fake one hundred percent. Or utter ignorance. Now, let Mr. Bulajić say which it is, is it a fake or ignorance. Or perhaps Mr. Bulajić has some new documents we don't know about. But he didn't mention them in his book. He didn't analyse them and he didn't attach them either. I'd really like to see those documents because that's the normal procedures in the science of history. Fine, but let me see them. Thank you!

Rabbi Jozef Atijas: The fact is those people were not sent on package tours, they were killed in Jasenovac.

Mr. Dragan Cvetković: I absolutely agree.

Ms. Smilja Tišma:

I was initially provoked and upset yesterday by Mr. Cvetković's presentation of figures and other information in his address. I don't want to talk about everything, but let me just give you a short piece of information, which is very important, and this is for the sake of those who are not familiar with it. I think we are dealing with an abuse of the 1964 census, which was carried out by the Federal Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Policy. They launched a census in 1964 following the initiative of the Yugoslav War Veterans' Alliances and other institutions interested in



the genocide committed in Yugoslavia 1941-1945 and the total victim count for Yugoslavia. However, the census failed to produce the desired results. Less than 40 percent of the expected materials were collected from around Yugoslavia. So, that's below 50 percent. Let me tell you, in particular because no one ever said it, it's a lie, just as those figures are a lie – no lists arrived from the regions that most of the victims killed in the genocide originally came from. For example, this is true of my home region. I was working at the Ministry. I watched for days if the materials would arrive – they never did. I'm talking Grubišno Polje, Bjelovar, Daruvar, Glina, Lika etc., etc., let me not go on. That's the true story of the census. The Federal Agency of Statistics processed the data. What Mr. Cvetković is talking about – Mr. Bulajić was telling the same things before him as Director of the same Museum – this figure of over eighty thousand is based on the census materials that came in. The Federal Executive Council put a ban on the findings. The Museum took the ban off – I don't know why. The fake data were certainly of use to Mr. Franjo Tuđman; they are now being elaborated by the Soros Foundation, various courses, initiatives to build mutual understanding and agreement between Croatian and Serbian scholars... (**Rabbi Jozef Atijas:** Goldstein's in it, don't forget him.) Goldstein, etc., etc. Please – it's all a lie. Nobody says the census achieved a minimum of the minimum, as Dr. Bulajić just put it. You use materials which are inaccurate. Nobody says the census never really achieved what it was expected to. I beg your pardon, just to make things clear, this research was not carried out by the Museum. You have been copying and adding figures, just doing your private calculations. It was a lean census which never produced any results and it shouldn't be used. Besides, you need to know it was a census which never responded to the needs, the ideas which initially launched the census, and that's a fact.

Rabbi Jozef Atijas: Excuse me, if somebody asked you now, you were in this top job, why are things the way they are, say, why shouldn't it be accurate? Can you answer it? I'll take the blame for you, so be free and tell us.

Ms. Smilja Tišma: No, this... It'll give... Otherwise... All right, please, let me...

Rabbi Jozef Atijas: Will you tell us why?... [*interpreting her stupefaction and silence*] You've said enough...

Ms. Smilja Tišma: I'm sure this is going the way it is because it's in somebody's interests, just as it always is.

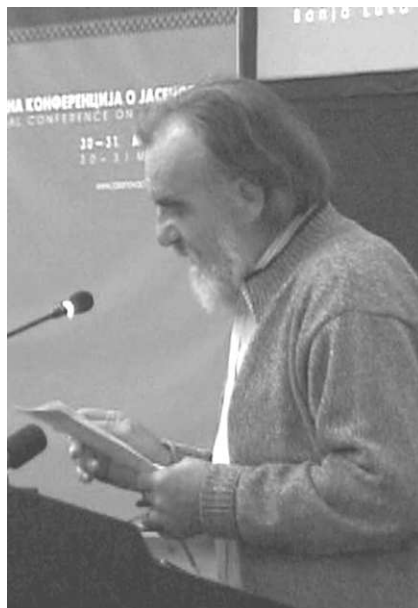
Rabbi Jozef Atijas: So you wouldn't lose your job, and you aren't going to lose your pension now, so tell us why it was like that. Go ahead, tell us.

Ms. Smilja Tišma: Thank you.

Mr. Nedeljko Goga:

For those who don't know me, I am among the youngest, perhaps I am *the* youngest surviving prisoner of Stara Gradiška, Jasenovac and Sisak; I was also a victim, heavily disabled, etc. However, I would like to draw your attention to a crucial thing, which is – I don't know if what I'm saying is being recorded... Is it being recorded? It's important for it to be recorded.

In December 1997, an international round table was set up, similar to this one here, to use the stolen riches, the gold around the world – Britain initiated the foundation of a reparations fund and immediately invested a million pounds, while the American Secretary promised to invest 25 million dollars in the reparations fund, which would be used to indemnify the victims of the Nazi terror. Now, the question is, what are we doing about it – when I say we, you know what I mean – what are we doing to get access to those funds, to get access to those institutions, to get access to the allocated funds? Most of the talk is about the valuables taken from the Jews and others. May it be so; however, I know, while I was living in Bern, the Jews largely managed to receive the reparations from this fund, but when I showed up in Bern, Switzerland, with an eminent lawyer to represent us, the Serbian children, primarily the children – I played the sympathy card, let me express myself using slang here, the sympathy card in order to access – I informed them and they looked very motivated to make sure not everything goes to the Jews; there was this attitude because they felt they were being blackmailed by America – that's politics, I don't want to talk about it; nevertheless, I know this matter very well – they said they would in-



investigate it. It was said all the money allocated for reparations had gone into a Jewish fund. However, God Himself couldn't get a single penny out of their pockets. This is something we'll have to work on. I went to the American Embassy and they received me, we normally... I explained everything to them carefully and they were surprised because they never heard anything about these things.

So, practically, this is about us finding a way to establish a body which would represent our interests in this area too. I would like to ask you to record this somehow, I couldn't have done it in any fewer words, because this matter is really broad.

Thank you. I don't remember if I introduced myself. My name is Nedeljko Goga and I come from Mount Kozara.

Professor Marija Đurić:

Dear ladies and gentlemen, there is a complex of graves at the Donja Gradina killing field which are located outside the embankment along the River Sava and are subject to flooding. Primarily for that reason, but for many other reasons as well, there is an initiative to exhume this part of the killing field and bury the skeletal remains in a safe part of the memorial. The Laboratory for Anthropology of the Belgrade School of Medicine has given Mr. Lukić a plan and a proposal specifying the extent and methods to be used in the exhumation.



This time I would like to speak about the scientific disciplines involved in this process and the possibilities it opens from the viewpoint of science.

So, first of all, this will be about forensic anthropology, which is a relatively new science, recently established as a discrete research discipline; however, as we could see in the case of Jasenovac, examinations related to forensic anthropology were carried out as early as 1960s. Today, forensic anthro-

pology deals primarily with the identification of victims or unknown people and is involved in the investigation of war crimes, which is connected with our focus today.

The 1977 Protocol additional to the Geneva Convention stipulated that all victims have to be identified prior to their burial, which greatly contributed to the development of the discipline, making forensic anthropological investigation mandatory for all mass graves since that time onwards.

I'll skip the part of my presentation explaining the locating process, specifying the extent and commencement of mass grave exhumation works because I saw that after me there's going to be a paper on geophysics, which will probably be speaking about it, but since the slide is here, let me show you this forest. This is an examination we conducted this and last year at Oplenac. This is about a platoon of soldiers, with 32 soldiers, who belonged to the King's units in Oplenac. In 1942 the German Headquarters was located at Oplenac and they shot these soldiers. There, you can see a cross on this tree. There are eye-witnesses from that time and they claimed the place was in that part of the forest, and somebody had had this idea to engrave a little cross in a tree which grew this big in the meanwhile. Here, look at the whereabouts of the grave. Of course, we were able to locate it with the assistance of archeologists and all the bodies were exhumed, processed anthropologically and we are currently working on their identification by comparing the DNA samples taken from the bones with the blood samples of the dead people's living relatives.

After geophysicists, who locate a mass grave, the first team that needs to be engaged is a team of archeologists, who exhume the grave. Slow and meticulous archeological exhumation, with good documentation, photographing, making sketches, locating the skeletons in situ, identifying their positions, is a condition for collecting the right, accurate information which produces accurate and reliable research data about the buried bodies and the artifacts found with the bodies. When it comes to war crimes, courts today insist on the so-called chain of evidence, and if this case was ever brought to court, the chain of evidence would have to be presented for this investigation too. That means every single item has to be photographed, marked with a special number, packed in a certain way, has the same markings throughout, etc. Simply, this is something that has to be ensured.

I'd like to skip the part that describes the changes the body undergoes after its burial, but let me draw your attention to one issue, one of the main issues that forensic anthropologists have to deal with, and that's the issue of whether the injuries, or more precisely, whether the deformations detected on the bones result from injuries received before death or we are dealing with

postmortal manipulations of the corpse, deformations caused by the chemical properties of the soil, deformations caused by animals etc. For example, an animal activity on human remains may leave traces like these and they can absolutely resemble trauma received before death. So, this is where experts need to be consulted, meaning forensic anthropologists and coroners, and these are some delicate issues that we have to deal with when investigating a mass grave. You can see here one example of a postmortal deformation of a deformation inflicted during the person's life – this comes from Oplenac, look at this opening in the shoulder blade made by a bullet, that's right, and here's one... fracture of the forearm which happened when the person was alive because there are traces of the bone healing. However, not only animals, but also lying in the ground and vegetation roots can leave marks on bones which can simulate antemortem injuries.

What is it that a forensic anthropologist practically solves? First, it's the question of whether all of the skeletal remains found are human. Of course, there are situations when this is absolutely clear; however, in some it's not. Look at this case. We have a newborn baby's tibia and chicken bones. Simply, this is an example where you see it's not always... and it really takes a specialist who works with these things. These images come from Kosovo, from the killing field Glodani near Radonjić Lake; if you remember, this group of corpses was discovered just before the bombing, they weren't buried, they were lying on the surface of the ground, and they are the corpses of the Serbs killed by Albanians on a farming estate just before the bombing. Now, this is a mark showing where the victim was shot, a bar was inserted to show the direction of the bullet, but basically what is needed is describing the bones accurately and defining precisely the extent of the decomposition of the remains.

Next, the issue that has been talked about here quite a lot, and it is talked about a lot for every mass grave site – what is the number of the persons buried? Anthropology can answer the following question for every individual mass grave: what is the minimum number of persons buried? Not the exact number, but the minimum. This is calculated by identifying the most frequent bone. We don't have separate, individual skeletons in mass graves, we have a mass of mixed bones which are disassembled. By counting the bone which is the most frequent – let's say the left heel bone – the most frequent bone will tell us the minimum number of persons, of course, with possible corrections – depending on whether we are dealing with children or adults, as for that, we can... That's right; this is the question which anthropology can... In conclusion, it cannot tell us how many people were buried, but the minimum number of persons in it.

Next, depending on how preserved the skeletal remains are, they can give us some demographic information. First of all, the age of the person at the moment of death. This method is relatively precise in the case of adults. One method is by looking at the pelvic girdle; the other one – you can see it here – is based on the sternal ends of ribs. Those are the methods we can use today, based on which we can determine a person's age at the moment of death with great certainty, if the person was relatively young; if it was a middle-aged person, say, over fifty – we usually deal with a decomposition time-span of around 20 years, so we say between 60 and 80 – approximately, that would be how precise those methods are today.

However, if we are dealing with a person who was still growing, then we can be absolutely precise – as precise as give or take one year, or even 6 months. When it comes to children's skeletons, the most precise method is the teeth eruption, development of teeth and formation of tooth crowns. Another method when it comes to children, which is also very precise, is by looking at the age of the epiphyseal union of long bones.

The second question which anthropology can answer is the person's sex, the sex of the person the skeletal remains belonged to. If the whole skeleton has been preserved, especially the pelvis, the difference is obvious, and our experience with the mass graves we have worked on over the last several years – if the pelvis has been preserved, our assessment of the victims' sex has been correct in 100 percent of all cases. If not all of the skeleton has been preserved and we have, say, only the skull, over the past years we have been successful in 60-70 percent of all cases. This is our experience and it generally corresponds to the international experience in the sense of the reliability of individual methods used to determine the sex.

Next, we can tell the approximate height of the person before death, and we're relatively precise, give or take 5 cm. We can say something about the morpho... if the skull has been preserved, like in this case here, these are skulls from the Batajnica case – we can say something about the morphological characteristics of those people's faces and possibly something about their racial background, although we have to be very careful with those conclusions given the extent of individual variations.

Finally, anthropology is very much involved in the process of identification; regardless of the method we're using, identification basically comes down to comparing antemortem and postmortem information. This means comparing the information we have about a person during their lifetime and what we find examining the skeleton. Of course, the most reliable method today is DNA matching, however, only if we have living close relatives. Other information shouldn't be neglected either, such as dental attrition, especially

today, if we can compare it with valid dental records. Finally, [radiographic] findings, lesser checkup reports, history of illnesses, earlier fractures, all those things are important for the process of identification.

In the end, this team has to be multidisciplinary. This means it can have archeologists on it, it can have anthropologists, it has to have coroners to perform autopsies and establish the possible causes of death. What's important, it should also have monitors, independent monitors, whose presence would simply ensure the investigation is absolutely impartial. Thank you !

Academician Srboljub Živanović: I am grateful to Professor Đurić for this interesting and instructive lecture, and I think this lecture is an eye-opener for all those who have heard about anthropological examination, but do not have a clear idea of what it really is.

Mr. Jared Israel

**REDUCING THE NUMBER OF JASENOVAC VICTIMS MEANS:
“BUILDING A WAY FOR A NEW USTASHE”⁶**

In 1993, looking for some balance in an article that was otherwise a glorification of Croatian secessionist leader Franjo Tudjman, the *Washington Post* solicited a dissenting opinion from the late Simon Wiesenthal.

As quoted by the *Post*, Wiesenthal attacked Tudjman's claim that some tens rather than hundreds of thousands were murdered at Jasenovac, which was, according to Tudjman, a harsh labor camp, not an extermination camp. Here are Wiesenthal's comments, as published. (The bracketed text and the ellipse are from the original.)

“‘Like the deniers [of the Holocaust], he reduced the number of victims,’ said Simon Wiesenthal, the well-known Nazi hunter, in a telephone interview. *Wiesenthal said his research suggests ‘a few hundred thousand were murdered’ in Jasenovac alone* during World War II. To Wiesenthal, the real danger in Tudjman's work is not the specific numbers ‘but the diminution of the problem. ... *The long-term danger is that he is building a way for a new [fascist] Ustashe.*’” [My emphasis - J. I.] [1]

As quoted, Wiesenthal speaks of a “few hundred thousand” Jasenovac victims. Since the word “few” is ambiguous, it is worth noting the actual figure given by Wiesenthal's Documentation Center in Vienna:

“There is still dispute over the total number of those who died in Jasenovac camp. *The Simon Wiesenthal Documentation center in Vienna, which researches Nazi war crimes, believes the figure is 500,000.*” [My emphasis – J. I.] [2]

Wiesenthal issued his warning that cutting the number of Jasenovac victims meant “building a way for a new Ustashe” some two years before Croatia's murderous eviction of almost the entire Serbian population of the Krajina region in 1995. This eviction put Tudjman and his associates in control of a virtually *serbenrein* Greater Croatia, including Croatia proper, Dal-

⁶ Mr. Jared Israel's article arrived with delay for publication in the Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac and is therefore published here. Dr. Wanda Schindley read a summary of the article at the Conference.

matia and Krajina. Thus, two years after Wiesenthal's warning, Croatia had gone a long way towards fulfilling the old Ustashe's goals.

Rather than attempting straight forwardly to silence all discussion of the Holocaust in Croatia, the Croatian government and supporting/sponsoring forces have embraced Jasenovac in order to trivialize it.

Their ideal whitewash portrays Jasenovac as a labor camp where, yes, some crimes were carried out by some Croats, motivated, as Efraim Zuroff, head of the Jerusalem office of the Wiesenthal Center recently put it, by "fanatical patriotism." [3]

This, rather than the truth: that the Jasenovac system of camps was a killing machine designed to eliminate the Orthodox Serbian, as well as the Jewish and Roma populations in the 'Independent State of Croatia'; that the ideological motivation was not patriotism, fanatical or otherwise, but a fusion of Nazi 'blood-and-soil' racism and Catholic fanaticism; and that the killing was led in significant measure by Catholic clerics.

Nothing in life is easy. Those promoting Croatian Holocaust revisionism have been resisted even in Croatia, although not, as some claim, by Croatian President Mesic. Thus before and after the November 27, 2006 opening of Croatia's exhibition at Jasenovac, Ms. Julija Kos, author of *Alef bet židovstva* (*Alphabet of Judaism*) [4] and an expert member of the Executive Committee of the Jasenovac Area Memorial Council (JUSP), was quoted in *Slobodna Dalmacija* (*Free Dalmatia*) saying:

"This is a scandalous shame. Among 136 lines of text [in the exhibition brochure – J. I.] about victims there is not a single one that is not insulting to the victims. Jasenovac is called a labor camp. It says that among the inmates were prostitutes and criminals, which is astonishing." [5]

On Nov. 27, just after the exhibition opening, the online newspaper *Jutarnji.hr* reported:

"An incident was caused by Julijana Kos, member of the [Jasenovac Memorial Area] advisory board who told journalists from RS [the Bosnian Serb Republic – J. I.] that the Museum is a scandalous shame for Croatia and that the 'Ustashe would be glad' [about] such an exhibition." [6]

Making clear they disapproved Ms. Kos's criticisms, *Jutarnji.hr* commented, sarcastically:

“Many journalists from Republika Srpska satisfied their curiosity in visiting Jasenovac with such statements.” -- See footnote [6]

By contrast, the *Jutarnji.hr* article adopted a favorable tone in quoting Croatian writer Ivo Goldstein (whom the English-language media routinely cites as an “independent” researcher who has supposedly determined that no more than 85,000 people were murdered at Jasenovac):

“Ivo Goldstein said that her [Kos’s – J. I.] statements denounce the state and are baseless. He added that these kinds of statements serve an internal quarrel within the Jewish community in Croatia.” -- See footnote [6]

Several days before the opening, *Radio Free Europe* reported that Kos criticized plans for the exhibition while Goldstein opposed her in a meeting of the Jasenovac Council Executive Committee. Here is *RFE*:

“It should also be noted that the two [Kos and Goldstein – J. I.] belong to the two opposing currents in the Jewish community of Croatia, so according to him her statements simply represent the opinion of the Jewish community of Zagreb - from which Dr. Goldstein split away. He said:

“‘The Jewish Community has for a couple of months been blaming the leadership of Croatia for anti-Semitism. Of course such a thesis, as well as Ms. Kos’s claims [about the exhibition – J. I.] are senseless and baseless.’” [7]

Moving ahead to November 29th, the day after the opening, *Jutarnji.hr* published Ms. Kos’s correction to their Nov 27th story:

“I did not, as you said, give an interview ‘to journalists of Republika Srpska.’ Instead I gave an interview to three TV stations, one of which was HRT [Croatian Radio-TV – J. I.], which was then presented in their TV news. I didn't say that ‘The Ustashe would be content.’ I said that ***if the Ustashe were in power today, they would create exactly that kind of exhibition. (I remain true to my statement)***.” [My emphasis – J. I.] [8]

In creating ‘exactly the kind of exhibition’ that the Ustashe would have created, the Croatian authorities enjoyed the help of advisers from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), which is controlled by the US State Department.

According to media reports, the USHMM advisers advocated calculating the numbers of Jasenovac victims by counting victims' names. Since for the most part the Croatian Ustashe did not record victims' names, and since they wiped out the entire population of many Serbian villages, so that nobody was left to remember their names, therefore counting names is sure to drastically minimize the scope of the crime.

Associated Press reported that, in response to the accusation that counting names must of necessity produce a drastic undercount of the number of victims:

"The head of the memorial, Natasa Jovicic, insists the list [of victims – J. I.] will be updated as new information arrives.

[One might ask, 'from where might this "new information" concerning the names of victims emerge'? Will the Ustashe slaughter more people, but this time keep records? – J. I.]

"Jovicic, who also lost relatives in Jasenovac, said 'a crime of genocide was carried out here *on tens of thousands of people* who had names.' The list's aim was to 'present victims by showing their individual fates, collective and individual suffering, their plans and hopes that were destroyed when their lives were taken.'

"Diane L. Saltzman from the U.S. Holocaust Museum agreed, saying it was 'important to present the individual victims. *It's about me, about you, about everyone. It's about human beings.*'" [All emphasis is mine – J. I.] [9]

No, Ms. Saltzman, this is not 'about' generic human suffering. The clerical-fascists did not slaughter 'you, me, and everyone'; they were selective. Indeed, since their goal was to liquidate people they portrayed as racial and religious enemies, whose presence corrupted Croatia, selectivity was their central point.

Meanwhile, those who resist the Croatian exhibition's victim-count of 69,000 are assaulted from unexpected quarters. On Dec. 5, 2006, Efraim Zuroff of the Jerusalem office of the Wiesenthal Center published a piece on Jasenovac.

(In this paper I refer to both the Jerusalem and Los Angeles offices of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. As far as I understand, these are organizationally distinct. In any case, neither office was organizationally connected to the late Simon Wiesenthal or to his Vienna Documentation Center.)

Dr. Zuroff's article appeared on the website of the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, whose target audience is English speaking Jews, people who may be expected to oppose Holocaust denial if they are aware that it is happening.

In this article, Dr. Zuroff made what I consider a demagogic attack on those who uphold the count of 700,000 people murdered at Jasenovac.

To understand his attack, you should know that the main part of the Jasenovac camp system is divided between a site on the northern bank of the Sava River, near the town of Jasenovac, located in Western Slavonia, which Croatia invaded and seized control of in May 1995, and a site on the southern bank, which is part of the Bosnian Serb Republic.

Setting up his attack, Zuroff praises the Croatian-controlled site, whose "Spanking new, modern state of the art historical museum" opened with "an impressive ceremony" including top Croatian officials.

He contrasts this with the site on the Serbian side, "where there is only a desolate expanse full of mass graves with no exhibition of any sort and nary a single visitor in sight."

Considering that Mr. Zuroff never explains what happened at Jasenovac, an uninformed reader might well conclude that those "mass graves" contain victims killed by Serbs, instead of, for the most part, Serbs, as well as other victims of Croatian fascism.

Having oriented readers in this way – positive towards Croats, negative towards Serbs – Zuroff writes this about the numbers:

"On the northern bank, the new museum presents precise statistics on 69,842 Serbs; Jews; Gypsies, or Roma; and anti-fascist Croatians murdered at Jasenovac. On the southern bank, an antiquated, minimalist wooden fence memorial commemorates the unlikely figure of 700,000 victims killed at the most notorious of the concentration camps created and run by the fascist Croatian Ustasha. That figure, it should be noted, was given official sanction by the Communist Yugoslav regime, which like Communist regimes elsewhere was not adverse to manipulating figures for propaganda reasons." [10]

The Croats have "precise statistics," while the Serbs present an "unlikely figure" rooted in Communist propaganda.

No matter that Croatia's precision is based on counting names of victims in a death camp complex *most of whose victims were killed before actually entering the camps* – so that their names couldn't have been recorded even if the Ustashe had wanted to record their victims names, which they did not.

The Croatian “precise statistics” are an order of magnitude lower than the 700,000 figure that Zuroff scorns. Since he praises the one (in the tens of thousands) and dismisses the other (in the hundreds of thousands), he must also dismiss as unlikely this text, which appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* in June 1998, concerning the upcoming trial of Jasenovac commander Dinko Sakic:

“Sakic, who served as the last commander of the notorious Croatian concentration camp Jasenovac, in which *hundreds of thousands of inmates (mostly Serbs, but Jews and Gypsies as well) were murdered* was among the numerous Croatians who joined the fascist Ustasha movement and actively participated in the mass murder of Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies in independent Croatia.” [My emphasis – J. I.] [11]

And he would also of necessity scorn, perhaps as being a dupe of Communist propaganda, the person quoted in April 1998 in an *Agence France Presse* dispatch:

“[Who] said *‘about 600,000 people’ lost their lives at the camp*, but did not specify whether that was during Sakic's tenure.” [My emphasis – J. I.] [12]

The problem is, it was Zuroff who wrote the 1998 *Jerusalem Post* article, and it was Zuroff whom *Agence France Presse* was quoting in 1998:

“*Zuroff said ‘about 600,000 people’ lost their lives at the camp*, but did not specify whether that was during Sakic's tenure.” [My emphasis – J. I.] -- See footnote [12]

How did Zuroff's own testimony in 1998 become “unlikely” and ‘Communist propaganda’ in 2006?

While the Croatian government aggressively asserts that some number between 69,000 and 85,000 were murdered in Jasenovac, the Washington-based Holocaust Museum, controlled by the US State Department, has adopted a stand of lofty neutrality by setting an upper limit of 100,000 dead. How they are able to a) not know how many were killed but b) nevertheless know the upper limit I cannot say.

That aside, in a May 1, 1998 State Department press briefing on the upcoming trial of Jasenovac commander Dinko Sakic, spokesman James Foley said that the US government had:

“...A copy of a captured Nazi document located in the U.S. National Archives, by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Special Investigations, which indicated -- this document -- that *as of December 6,*

1943, some 120,000 people had been killed at Jasenovac, which is the site of the massacres, ***along with 80,000 people at Alt Gradisca*** [should be Gradiška Stara – JI] ***and 20,000 in other camps*** in Croatia. The United States is making a copy of this document available to Croatian and Argentine prosecutors. [My emphasis – JI] [13]

Since the Jasenovac death camp complex includes Jasenovac proper and Gradiška Stara, therefore, according to this report from the US State Department, 200,000 were killed in the Jasenovac complex by December 1943. Jasenovac opened in August 1941, so at this time it was 28 months old. Adjusting the 200,000-figure for the full 44 months that Jasenovac was functioning yields a rough total of 314,000 people killed. This is surely an undercount, but apparently an insufficient undercount, as demonstrated by the fact that *no* media ever accurately reported what Foley said, while the Holocaust Museum, controlled by Foley's own State Department, puts the victim-count at 100,000 *maximum*.

While the Croatian, US and, I should add, German establishments and media, and even some people who are supposedly fighting for the truth, all press for a 90% reduced victim count, there is a related pressure from some Serbian Orthodox and Jewish religious figures.

Consider the case of Rabbi Kotel Da Don and Serbian Orthodox Metropolitan Jovan, of Zagreb and Ljubljana. (Kotel Da Don was recruited in 1998 from outside Croatia to serve as a rabbi for the Zagreb Jewish community. His contract was dramatically *not* renewed by the Zagreb community in 2005 but he nevertheless stayed in Croatia, remaining politically active.)

Kotel Da Don and Metropolitan Jovan are cited without criticism on the web pages of the Jasenovac Committee of the Serbian Orthodox church, approving a Catholic church effort to get everyone to 'share' some Jasenovac religious experience:

"After [a] meeting of Roman-catholic Bishop of Požega Škvorčević and rabbi Kotel Da Don on Friday November 5, [2006] an initiative for common prayer in Jasenovac was revealed. Orthodox Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana Jovan supported [this] initiative 'if it will lead to common understanding and to overcoming of petty politics.'" [14]

The problem is, the problem isn't petty politics. It was Jews, Serbs and Roma who got killed at Jasenovac, while the Catholic church has never admitted that, as stated in Yad Vashem's *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*:

“Many Catholic priests, mainly of the lower rank, took an active part in the [Croatian] murder operations.” [My emphasis – J. I.] [15]

Such is the power of the Catholic church that, even in reporting this horrific information, Yad Vashem’s *Encyclopedia* attempts to moderate its criticism by stressing that the clerical murderers were “mainly of the lower rank,” as if to suggest rank-and-file clergy out of control.

However, since the great majority of Catholic clergy in Croatia are, of necessity, of the lower rank, it follows that a) the *Encyclopedia* is reporting that the murderers came from a more or less typical cross-section of Catholic clergy and b) *some* came from the higher rank, that is, they were Bishops. Therefore, one could rewrite this sentence as follows:

‘Many Catholic clerics took an active part in the [Croatian] murder operations. While most of the Ustashe’s clerical killers were lower clergy, some were Bishops.’

With all the pressure to forgive and forget, is it any wonder that even those who know what happened at Jasenovac are tempted to surrender to the view that ‘The squabbling over numbers is ugly; if even one person was murdered, it was a Holocaust’?

I maintain that, ugly or not, it is crucial that we defeat the attempt to enshrine lies about Jasenovac, especially concerning the numbers. Not only because trivializing the victim count means murdering what remains of those Serbs, Jews and Roma whom the Ustashe murdered in a manner that erased even their names. Not only because, as Mr. Wiesenthal said, cutting the numbers paves the way for a new Ustashe. But also because the victim count is crucial for determining what happened in the 1940s, with great implications for today, especially regarding the political role of the Vatican.

Here is why.

The German Nazis spent most of a decade before taking power in 1933, and eight years after that, preparing the ground for their ‘final solution’ - crushing the powerful opposition of communists, socialists and of a part of the Catholic Centre party; indoctrinating the population, especially youth, in ‘race culture’; and gradually escalating the persecution of Jews, before launching the mass extermination campaign early in World War II. But the core of the Croatian Ustasha organization was exiled in Italy right up until April 1941, when the invading Axis powers handed them control of a Greater Croatia. Within days, the mass murder of Serbs began.

If no more than tens of thousands of people were murdered in Jasenovac between 1941 and 1945, then the crime *could* have been the work of a

fringe element, put in power by the Nazis – hardcore Ustashe aided by a relatively small collection of sociopaths, ruthless power-seekers and fanatical racists. People one might find anywhere.

But if:

-- 600,000 to 700,000 people, or more, mainly Serbs, were killed in the Jasenovac death camp complex, with additional hundreds of thousands killed where they lived by the Croatia's Black Legion SS;

-- if this was done in a territory of Greater Croatia, with a population of 6.3 million, of whom just under 2 million were Jews, Roma and (overwhelmingly) Serbs; [16]

-- if the Croats conducted this mass murder without much direct German assistance, using the crudest of weapons - wooden mallets, knives, a brick oven in which they burned people, and rivers in which they drowned them;

-- if the killing began immediately after the creation of the Ustasha state;

-- if (and in fact this was and remains the case) Serbs and Croats not only speak the same language (Serbo-Croatian) but have accents that are regionally, not ethnically, determined, so that a Serb and Croat raised in Zagreb will sound the same, and both will differ from an ethnic Hungarian raised in Belgrade; if Serbs and Croats also cannot be distinguished by appearance nor even, reliably, by their names;

-- if, therefore, the rapid differentiation of Orthodox southern Slavs from Catholic southern Slavs, i.e., of Serbs from Croats, and the capture, transport and killing of many hundreds of thousands of Orthodox Slavs required not merely a disciplined cadre of Ustashe doing the killing in Jasenovac and in the field, but the active participation of many if not most Catholic Slavs, assisting the Ustashe's racist-religious crusade, refusing to shelter their Orthodox twins and, instead, identifying them for the Ustashe and helping the Ustashe to hunt them down if they tried to hide;

-- if all this was true, then we must ask ourselves: how did the few hundred Ustashe exiles who were installed as the rulers of this greater Croatia get such massive support *immediately after their return to Zagreb from years of exile in April 1941?*

In 1998, the Croatian news agency HINA quoted Croatian President Franjo Tudjman as telling reporters that Croatia is "a country supportive of the principles which the Catholic Church and the Vatican preach and advocate," and that Croats are a "**people within which it** [i.e., the Catholic church – J. I.] **lives.**" [My emphasis – J. I.] [17]

If Tudjman's description is accurate - if the Catholic church today "lives within" Croats, despite half a century of Communist schooling - then imagine the extent of Catholic influence *before* World War II.

To be sure, Germany and Italy installed the Ustashe in power, but the German Nazis did not militarily occupy the Ustashe's 'Independent State of Croatia,' as a hostile force, the way that they occupied Serbia.

The Ustasha fascists could not have ruled without such military occupation, let alone wiped close to half the Serbian population and most Jews and Roma, absent strong clerical support. The Catholic church and only the Catholic church had the ability to deliver the minds of Croatian Catholics, preaching that forcibly converting and, more often, murdering Serbs was not a mortal sin but a religious duty.

Consider:

If, *starting long before the German invasion of 1941*, the Catholic church began indoctrinating Croats with clerical-fascist beliefs, based on which most Croats would actively or passively support mass murder when called upon to do so;

If the clergy agitated for Ustasha rule in the crucial months just before the Axis invasion;

And if the clergy participated in the mass murder of Serbs, Jews, Roma and the massive forced conversion of Serbs *after* the formation of the Ustasha state;

Then, since the Catholic church is a hierarchical and disciplined organization, the Vatican had to be involved, which disproves the Vatican's current claim, that during the period before and during World War II they opposed fascist mass murder.

Even the English-language media contains documentary evidence that the Catholic church was involved in fascist indoctrination, forced conversion of Serbs to Catholicism, and murder.

Case in point: an Oct. 2, 1946 *New York Times* article on the trial of Croatian Archbishop Stepinac, which I have transcribed in full:

"Archbishop Aloysius Stepinatz refused today to speak in his own defense after the prosecutor had begun the second day of the primate's trial with evidence of collaboration and forcible conversion of Serbs to Roman Catholicism.

"The Archbishop admitted in questioning that 'I had no reason to oppose' the work of a committee of three dealing with conversion matters, of which the prosecutor accused him of being the chairman. The evidence was taken from the Rev. Djuro Maritch, a former Ustashi

captain who admitted that he had been sent to villages to carry out forced conversions. He said that the peasants had appeared frightened, but he had not seen actual oppression.

“After this evidence, the prosecutor, referring to a large number of conversions, said to Msgr. Stepinatz: ‘Were you not surprised that several hundred thousand Serbs swung to Catholicism with an overnight discovery of an all-abiding and supreme faith?’ The prelate answered: ‘Conditions were unusual.’

“He continued, addressing the court: ‘Mr. President, I am not going to defend myself and at the end of the trial I will make my speech as I am permitted. My conscience is clear and I am not going to say more about it.’

“During the two hours of questioning in which many documents were read in evidence against the Archbishop, the prosecutor referred to the Ustashi decorations accepted by the primate. ‘If I had not accepted, things would have been worse,’ Msgr. Stepinatz replied.

“The court room was packed and Bishop Joseph P. Hurley, the Papal Nuncio, attended.” [18]

Please note that:

a) while Stepinac is quoted saying he would *not* testify, he did in fact testify;

b) in his testimony he was not meek (indeed, he was sometimes sarcastic) and he did not admit fault. So he did not behave in any of the ways consistent with (though not exclusive to) this being a show trial (i.e., one in which the defendant is coerced to be part of a staged performance).

Since this was therefore not a show trial, Stepinac’s testimony is of documentary interest. Notice that he did not deny the specific charges. Indeed, regarding forced conversions, he admitted the charge in a mocking way, but stated that his conscience was clear.

I would say, Stepinac’s behavior makes sense if, after the Ustashe’s defeat in 1945, the church wanted to keep the fires of Ustasha belief burning in the general population. For Stepinac, a key Croatian church leader and a key focus of Catholic political propaganda worldwide, to deny his actions, or, worse still, to admit he had been wrong, would have demoralized the rank-and-file, and so he adopted this tone of disdain, telling the rank-and-file: bide your time. The Ustashe will be back.

As to the role of the church in the period *leading up to* the formation of the Ustasha state, this is indicated in the *New York Times* of February 17, 1941. Less than two months before the Nazi German invasion of Yugoslavia, this was a time of intense Fascist subversion in Croatia.

The February 1941 *Times* piece is a masterpiece of deceptive construction, remarkably, entitled “Vatican Aid sought for Croat ***Patriots.***” (My emphasis).

The “patriots” are Catholic priests supporting the Ustashe, who were at the time guests of the Fascist Italian dictator Mussolini. (They were under indictment in Yugoslavia for terrorism, including the assassination of the King of Yugoslavia and the Foreign Minister of France, hence the need for Mussolini’s hospitality.)

Since one may deduce from the *Times* article that the Croatian Catholic clergy are serving as Ustasha agitators, and since most people read the beginning of a given article and little more, the *Times* uses the term “patriots” instead of the term “Ustashe” in the headline, thus helping uninformed readers to avoid an unsettling news experience.

I have studied many *Times* articles dealing with the Catholic church during the 1930s and World War II, and it is my observation that the *Times* often seems to have performed a service for the Vatican, publishing reports from ‘reliable sources’ concerning church positions, and thereby informing the Catholic rank- and-file where the church stood on key issues without the Vatican having to go on record. But conditions change, and yesterday’s political instructions to the rank-and-file may be today’s embarrassment, which the Vatican would perhaps prefer to erase. However, unlike the Vatican’s own archives, which can be sealed or selectively misplaced, the media record is available to researchers. So these leaked reports from the Vatican now constitute an historical resource.

In the Feb. 17, 1941 article, the *Times* informs Catholics about the Vatican’s stand on Yugoslavia: to destroy it and set up a Fascist Croatian state (just as the Vatican had backed fascist forces in Spain, Italy, Slovakia, Germany, Father Coughlin the US, and so on). This was not sensational news in 1941, because the Ustashe had not yet killed hundreds of thousands of people - but it is an embarrassment now, since the Vatican claims the Croatian church was *forced* to cooperate with these super-Fascists, and that they did so only *after* the creation of the Ustasha state. Not before. And yet here is counter-evidence: Stepinac, the top leader of the Croatian church, went to Rome two months prior to the Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia, to discuss the problem of helping priests arrested for distributing pro-Ustashe literature.

Here is the first paragraph of the article:

“The Archbishop of Zagreb is intervening at the Vatican, seeking the freedom [note the positive term ‘freedom’ – J. I.] of Catholic priests detained in Croatia in connection with the circulation of political literature [ah, ‘political literature’ – such a kind way to describe Ustasha propaganda calling for ‘racial’ liquidation – J. I.], according to information from usually well-informed Croat political circles tonight.

“Archbishop Alois Stepinac left Zagreb early this week for Rome and has already begun conferences in Vatican City.” [19]

Despite the reference to ‘conferences’ – note the plural, indicating there were multiple meetings about defending the Ustasha priests – the *Times* goes on to explain that Church leaders are downplaying the political significance of Stepinac’s trip; but then, in the third paragraph, the *Times* tells us:

“Nevertheless, it is known that the Archbishop has interested himself in *the cases of several Catholic priests detained for questioning* at Osijek, Zagreb and other Croat cities *about the appearance of ‘Free Croatia!’ pamphlets, attributed to Ante Pavelic, the Croat Separatist leader exiled in Italy.*”

[My emphasis – J. I.] -- See footnote [19]

Notice that by paragraph three the Ustashe have been demoted from “patriots” to “separatists.” Pavelic was leader of the Ustashe, which, you will notice, the *Times* has avoided mentioning by name. In the fourth and final paragraph, the *Times* (which, for some reason, then and now, often publishes propaganda in the beginning of a foreign affairs report only to segue into telling some of the truth at the end) describes the Ustashe accurately, but it still does not mention them by name:

“Despite numerous rumors that the pamphlets and recent bombings at Zagreb [*bombings!* - J. I.] are part of a single subversive effort to undermine Croat unity, police information on recent events in the bombings case indicates that the time bombs were manufactured and planted by *a separate Fascist organization* [in other words, separate from Pavelic’s Ustashe. My emphasis. – JJ], some of whose members are now imprisoned in the Croat capital.” -- See footnote [19]

To translate, fill in and summarize: Archbishop Stepinac held multiple meetings with Vatican officials (probably from the Secretariat of State) to micro-manage defense of clerical-Fascist priests arrested for inciting Croatians to support a Fascist seizure of power, followed by the elimination of ‘foreign

elements,' i.e., Serbs, Jews, and also Roma. The church didn't support just any bomb throwers; they favored the Ustashe, who were at that time fugitives from justice and guests of Mr. Mussolini.

Since the Ustashe could not have attempted to eliminate many hundreds of thousands of Serbs, indeed, could not even have run Greater Croatia, absent the Catholic church's ideological preparation of ordinary Croats and its organizational participation in running the state; since, therefore, the Catholic church was a key support for Ustasha mass murder; therefore, minimizing the number of victims hides the staggering criminal responsibility of the Catholic hierarchy including the Vatican.

The 700,000 Figure: A Creation of Tito's Communists? Or just the Truth?

As quoted earlier, Efraim Zuroff of the Jerusalem office of the Wiesenthal Center claims that the 700,000 count was invented by Yugoslav Communists, "manipulating figures for propaganda reasons." -- See footnote [10]

In fact, figures of this order of magnitude were nobody's invention. They were (and remain) the truth.

In 1946, a time when the Ustasha crimes were a burning issue in Yugoslavia, with immense pressure on the Communist leadership to *do* something, the government of the Croatian republic, part of the Yugoslav state, conducted an investigation and published a report, with a minimum count of Jasenovac victims:

"We will mention below some fifty mass crimes carried out by the Ustashe in Jasenovac, and if we add the number of prisoners who were killed individually to the number of victims in mass executions, we arrive at the figure of approximately 500,000 to 600,000." [20]

It is clear from the report that this was a *minimum* because a) nobody knew how many people, mainly Serbs, the Ustashe had thrown into rivers, e.g., the Sava, dead or soon to be, and b) upon arrival at Jasenovac, groups of prisoners were often executed to the last man, woman and child, without ever having entered the Jasenovac camp proper, therefore leaving no witnesses.

The Croatian government report was *not* a propaganda attack on the Catholic church; indeed, it completely ignored the organizational and ideological role of the Catholic church, inventing an imaginary Croatia in which few people supported the Ustashe, the logical conclusion from which would be, as I have noted, that the Fascists did not have church support:

“The leaders of the Ustase organization knew before entering Yugoslavia that they had no support among the people, and could only preserve their power through the use of terror.” -- See footnote [21]

Alas, a fantasy.

Interestingly, Croatian leaders, such as the *faux*-antifascist, Stjepan Mesic, and Franjo Tudjman before him, have repeated the Communist myth that most Croats opposed World War II clerical fascism. [22]

To paraphrase Mr. Wiesenthal, all the efforts to minimize the degree to which Croatian clerical-fascism has penetrated the thinking of the Croatian population facilitate the reemergence of Ustasha power in modern dress.

In any case, in 1946 the Yugoslav Communists reported that 500,000 to 600,000 or more were murdered in Jasenovac. What was reported in the non-Communist West? Below are excerpts from *New York Times* articles published in 1948, 1961, 1972, 1984 and the watershed year, 1991.

July 12, 1948: In an article that mocked both sides of the Stalin-Tito quarrel – i.e., it was thoroughly anti-Communist - the *Times* mentioned Jasenovac in passing, while reporting Yugoslavia’s arrest of agents of the defeated Croatian Ustashe:

“A third [arrested Ustasha] was Ljubo Milosh [sic!], described as commander of the Ustashi concentration camp at Jasenica [Jasenovac], where *more than 800,000 persons* perished during the war.” [23]

So, the Yugoslav Communists reported that at least 500,000 to 600,000 had been murdered, while, two years later, the *Times* reported a death toll of more than 800,000.

May 20, 1961: Covering the Adolf Eichmann trial, the New York *Times* reported testimony of “Alexander Arnon, wartime secretary of the Jewish Community in Zagreb”:

“Mr. Arnon said Croatian Fascists ran most of the concentration camps in Croatia and killed ‘hundreds of thousands’ of Serbian gentiles. *In Jasenovac alone, 600,000 persons, including 2,000 Jews, were killed, he said.*” [24]

Notice that Mr. Arnon refers to “Jasenovac alone.” Jasenovac was a complex of death camps, in which the main site was also called ‘Jasenovac.’ So he is apparently saying that, while 600,000 died in the one camp, Jasenovac, alone, many more died in the entire complex.

In 1972, the *Times* reported that 800,000 were murdered in Jasenovac. This was in an article of special interest because it describes Yugoslav Communist policy. According to the *Times*, rather than exaggerating Jasenovac for propaganda purposes, as Mr. Zuroff claims, for many years the Communists *suppressed* discussion of Jasenovac in order to avoid offending Croats.

The article states that, in 1972, in response to a sharp increase in Ustaša terrorism, including the hijacking of a Swedish airliner, the Communists for the first time began to inform young Yugoslavs about Ustashe mass murder, with the result, according to the *Times*, that:

“...Even schoolchildren in Belgrade, who had not heard of the Ustashi, are beginning to raise questions and are learning of the torments inflicted by Yugoslavs on Yugoslavs during the war.” [25]

What kind of Communist propaganda campaign suppresses all discussion of the event at issue for 25 years?

Here is the *Times* in October 1972:

“[...] ***The Jasenovac camp*** was operated by the Ustashi, the Fascist movement that gained power in Croatia in 1941 through collaboration with German and Italian invaders of Yugoslavia.

“***As many as 800,000 people - mainly Serbs, Jews and gypsies*** but also Croatian and other opponents of the Ustashi - are believed to have been shot, hanged, clubbed to death or drowned in the nearby Sava River [the initial Jasenovac site was on the banks of the Sava - J. I.] during the war years before the Ustashi fled from advancing Yugoslav and Soviet troops.

“The transformation of the Jasenovac death camp into a memorial park, with only a small museum to give visitors some insight into the camp's grim history, seems to symbolize ***an effort by the postwar Yugoslav authorities to let the wounds of wartime fratricide and atrocities heal for the sake of a united country.***

“Over the years, the Ustashi terrorism began to fade from memory. ***To avoid stirring up old resentments, the Yugoslav authorities discouraged publication of explicit writings and photographs about the atrocities. Only a few weeks ago, a court ban was imposed on a book that deals with the Jasenovac camp.***

“***Although the Ustashi are in exile and their young recruits have carried out occasional acts of terrorism against Yugoslav diplomats***

and officials abroad, the Belgrade authorities have refrained from all-out counter-attack, for they are apprehensive of offending the four and a half million people of Croatia and reluctant to risk opening old wounds between the Serbs and Croats.” -- (All emphasis is mine – J. I.) -- See footnote [25]

So, the Yugoslav authorities not only suppressed discussion of Jasenovac, they went easy on Ustasha terrorists for fear of “*offending the four and a half million people of Croatia*.” If, as the Communists claimed, Croats were overwhelmingly antifascist during World War II, why would a counter-attack against exiled Ustashe terrorists offend 4.5 million Croats living in Yugoslavia?

October 7, 1984: The *Times* made no mention of Jasenovac from 1972 until 1984, when, in a piece discussing a long-postponed papal trip to Croatia, the *Times* wrote:

“Another question is whether the Pope will visit the site of the Jasenovac concentration camp, 60 miles southeast of Zagreb. Among the displays at a museum on the site is a photograph of Cardinal Stepinac being received by leaders of the Ustachi, the Croatian collaborators of the Nazis and Italian Fascists.” [26]

In his Dec. 5, 2006 article, Efraim Zuroff claims that Communist exaggeration and ethnic enmity explain the existence of what he implies is a long-term dispute over the number of victims at Jasenovac. But none of the *New York Times* articles we have examined so far reported the existence of any dispute at all. In complete contradiction to Zuroff, the Communists cited a lower victim count than did the *New York Times* and suppressed discussion of Jasenovac (for example, banned books on the subject). Although the Communists promulgated the absurd fairy tale that Croats had been overwhelmingly antifascist, they were in fact afraid to strike back at Ustasha terrorists lest this offend Croats! It was the Communists who seemingly tried to avoid conflict with the Catholic church, while it was the *Times* that reported the truth.

But the *Times* abruptly changed its policy in 1991.

March 4, 1991: In 1991, the *Times* wrote about Jasenovac for the first time in seven years. What a difference from the 1972 article, quoted above!

“The enmity between Serbs and Croats, who make up the largest of Yugoslavia's six republics, has deep roots. About 30 miles from Pakrac, at the Jasenovac concentration camp, *tens of thousands of Serbs, gypsies and Jews* were killed when it was run by the fascist

puppet government of Croatia during World War II.” [My emphasis – J. I.] [27]

From a fascist extermination camp where “**more than 800,000 persons** perished,” Jasenovac has in a few years evolved into an expression of ethnic enmity where “tens of thousands...were killed.”

What does it mean that the *Times* neither explained, nor even acknowledged, that it had reduced *its own report* of the magnitude of the Holocaust in Croatia by 90% or more?

Could it be, that in the new political situation, with Germany, the U.S. and the Vatican backing and directing a second Croatian secession, Jasenovac had become a problem? That if what happened there was truly recounted, it would have to mean that, as the *Times* reported in 1972, that Croats had overwhelmingly supported the Ustashe?

As I argued earlier, this would implicate the Catholic church, and it would support the Serbian charge that the second Croatian secession, in 1991, was motivated by the same mixture of *volk* racism and Catholic fanaticism as the first, in 1941.

The main resistance to post-1990 Jasenovac revisionism has come from Serbian and Jewish groups and individuals. The *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, published in 1989 by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust remembrance authority, includes articles stating that 600,000 people were murdered at Jasenovac. Similarly, Simon Wiesenthal publicly attacked Croatian number-cutting as “paving the way for a new Ustashe.” And the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles (as opposed to Efraim Zuroff’s office in Jerusalem) also has apparently resisted the 90% revision in the count of victims at the Jasenovac complex.

This has been noted in the media. Thus, in a November 2, 1998 article about the upcoming trial of Jasenovac camp commander Dinko Sakic, the *New York Times* reported:

“Thousands of Serbs, Gypsies, Jews and anti-fascist Croats died in the camps. It is estimated in Croatia that 85,000 people died in Jasenovac, **though Jewish groups put the toll much higher.**” [My emphasis – J. I.] [28]

Also, in discussing the upcoming Sakic trial, the Australian *Courier Mail* reported:

“The estimate [of victims at Jasenovac – J. I.] in Croatia is 85,000, but Serbs have put the toll as high as 700,000, and Jewish groups put it at 600,000.” [29]

This resistance to revision, by Serbian and Jewish groups and individuals, holding to estimates that had been substantiated and accepted up until the time that Croatia seceded (in 1991) – this resistance has been a real problem for the US State Department, the Vatican, the German government, the Croatian government and others who have a stake in minimizing the crime of Jasenovac.

Their solution has been to develop a credible force of people and institutions which, while projecting the appearance of wanting to inform the world about the horrors of Jasenovac, and while perhaps appearing to represent Serbs and Jews, do one or more of the following:

- a) minimize the numbers;
- b) advocate compromise over the numbers in order supposedly to ease ethnic tensions in the Balkans;
- c) attempt to ‘depoliticize’ Jasenovac, presenting it either as part of some supposed ethnic civil war, or as an example of the universal problem of human cruelty;
- d) advocate unity of all, bringing representatives of Serbs, Jews and (to a lesser extent) Roma together with representatives of Croatia and the Catholic church because ‘we’re all in this together,’ or we are ‘one under God,’ and so on.

Based on study of the mass media, I would say the watershed event in the creation of this diversionary force has been the trial of Jasenovac commander Dinko Sakic.

A full discussion of the trial is beyond the scope of this paper.

However, let me say, briefly, that the point of this trial was to present an image of a new Croatia, in which many, including part of the leadership, were supposedly fighting to get all Croats to face the past and reject fascism. For this purpose, the trial had to be held in Croatia. This was arranged.

The media presented the Sakic trial as a morality play, the theme of which was ‘confession and redemption.’ This spectacle, projecting the false impression of change, created a pressure in public opinion to ‘move on,’ thus facilitating the creation of a force, among Serbs and Jews, who would seemingly ally with some supposed progressive Croatian leadership, supposedly led by Stjepan Mesic. One important aspect of this process was that in the course of the trial, the media began reporting the 85,000 figure not as what Croatia put forward, but as the ‘reasonable’ count, or even as unchallenged fact.

To see how the 90% reduction was transformed into the ‘accepted’ figure, consider these two statements by Dr. Efraim Zuroff.

The first is from a June 1998 article in the *Jerusalem Post*, quoted earlier. Written when interest in Jasenovac was increasing because of the upcoming Sakic trial, it projects Efraim Zuroff as a forceful opponent of Jasenovac revisionism. In general, during 1998, newspapers were reporting that, while some Croats put forward figures of a few thousand victims at Jasenovac, the serious fight was between those who advocated a figure of around 85,000 (put forward by Croatia) and 600-700,000 (from Jewish and Serbian groups.) Thus, the London *Financial Times* reported:

“Jewish groups estimate the death toll at more than 600,000 while Vladimir Zerjavic, a Croatian demographics expert, puts the number at around 85,000.” [30]

It was in this context, that Zuroff wrote:

“Sakic, who served as the last commander of the notorious Croatian concentration camp Jasenovac, in which ***hundreds of thousands of inmates (mostly Serbs, but Jews and Gypsies as well) were murdered*** was among the numerous Croats who joined the fascist Ustasha movement and actively participated in the mass murder of Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies in independent Croatia.” [My emphasis – J. I.] -- See footnote [11]

So: Zuroff very strongly affirmed that hundreds of thousands were killed in Jasenovac and very firmly pointed out that the mass murder a) was carried out with the involvement of many Croats and b) was mainly directed against Serbs.

Now, consider a letter Zuroff sent to the *Jerusalem Post* on Nov. 9, 1999, just after the conclusion of the Sakic trial. Instead of again affirming that hundreds of thousands were murdered, mostly Serbs, Zuroff, early in the letter, attacked the imaginary monster of Communist-inflated numbers:

“It is true that, for political reasons, various Yugoslav agencies grossly inflated the number of the victims at the Jasenovac concentration camp.” [31]

What are these grossly inflated numbers, Dr. Zuroff?

Would they be the “***hundreds of thousands of inmates, mostly Serbs***” you wrote about in June 1998? Dr. Zuroff does not say. Instead, he sets up a straw man using some absurdly low Croatian figures, in order to make a forceful-sounding, but in fact illusory, attack on Croatian revisionism:

“But it appears that the opposite is currently taking place in Croatia under the auspices of the Sabor [Croatia's parliament].” -- See footnote [31]

What is this “opposite” development?

“A commission established in 1991 (shortly after Croatia achieved independence) to determine the number of Nazi and Communist victims in Croatia recently submitted its findings to the parliament.

“According to this report, which was supported by all but one of its members (24 of whom are members of parliament), only 4,797 Croats were murdered in concentration camps during World War II, 2,238 of these in Jasenovac.” -- See footnote [31]

Not even Franjo Tudjman, who invented Croatian revisionism, claimed that only 2,238 people died in Jasenovac; this figure is truly the mother (or perhaps father) of revisionist straw men. A figure that *nobody* could take seriously.

Zuroff now refutes this straw man by ‘defending’ exactly the figure previously described as being advocated by the Croatian government and its apologists!

“These figures [i.e., 2238 – II] do not reflect the historical facts. In Jasenovac alone, approximately 85,000 civilians were murdered during the years 1941-1945, among them about 18,000 Jews.” -- See footnote [31]

And so, what was presented as the Croatian (i.e., revisionist) position *prior* to the Sakic trial is staunchly defended in the guise of fighting revisionism *after* the Sakic trial. And notice – while in his first piece, Zuroff said that the victims were mainly Serbs, in the later piece he refers to “Croats” and to “civilians” who were the victims.

The powerful forces – international factors, some would say – such as the State Department, the German government and the Vatican, who are behind the new Croatian Holocaust revisionism, have goals, such as whitewashing the Vatican’s role in World War II, demonizing the Serbs, and getting Croatia into various European institutions. Aside from facilitating these goals, which are harmful to humanity, the attempt to sell the 90% reduction in the count of the victims of Jasenovac is an outrage because it a) denies the terrible suffering of hundreds of thousands of people, and b) greatly downplays the deadliness of clerical-fascism, which affected Croatia, Slovakia, Spain, Italy, Germany, the U.S. and other countries – and can again.

Footnotes

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- [2] "Victims of Croat camp remembered as camp commander is sought," *Agence France Presse* -- English, April 19, 1998,
- [3] "Ethnic hostilities prevent truth from being told about Jasenovac," Efraim Zuroff, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, http://operationlastchance.org/Writings_23.htm
- [4] <http://www.moderna-vremena.hr/novisajt/shop/prikazknjige.asp?Pid=6805>, or use the URL:
<http://tinyurl.com/3523fz>
- [5] "Julija Kos: Museum acceptable to Ustashas," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, <http://slobodnadalmacija.com/20061128/novosti02.asp>
- [6] "Mesic - Will children be able to understand what happened here?" Vlado Vurušić, *Jutarnji.hr*, Nov. 27, 2006, <http://tinyurl.com/2e7z4l>
- [7] "New Museum Exhibition is still Questionable," Ankica BARBIR-MLADINOVIC, *RFE*, Nov. 22, 2006, <http://tinyurl.com/2w3grz>
- [8] "Julija Koš: Ustaše bi nacinili takav postav" ("Julija Koš: Ustashas would make such an exhibition"), *Jutarnji.hr*, November 29. 2006, <http://tinyurl.com/2kwfm7>
- [9] "Newly expanded WWII concentration camp memorial opens in Croatia," *Associated Press Worldstream*, November 27, 2006, SNJEZANA VUKIC
- [10] "Ethnic hostilities prevent truth from being told about Jasenovac," Efraim Zuroff, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, http://operationlastchance.org/Writings_23.htm
- [11] "Croatia's trial," *Jerusalem Post*, June 2, 1998, OPINION; Efraim Zuroff
- [12] "Mystery surrounds whereabouts of alleged WWII war criminal in Argentina," *Agence France Presse*, April 08, 1998
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- [14] <http://www.jasenovac-info.com/arhiva/>
- [15] Menachem Shelah, "Croatia," in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Jerusalem/Tel Aviv, 1990; English translation, New York/London, p. 328
<http://tenc.net/croatia/encr.htm#many>
- [16] Menachem Shelah, "Croatia," in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Jerusalem/Tel Aviv, 1990; English translation, New York/London, p. 323
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- [17] "Croatian President Assesses Importance of Pope's Forthcoming Visit," *BBC Monitoring Europe - Political* Supplied by *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, September 28, 1998
- [18] "Stepinatz refuses to Defend Himself; Admits not opposing Forcible Conversions but Insists Conscience is Clear," Special to *New York Times*, Oct. 2, 1946
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[19] "Vatican Aid Sought for Croat Patriots; Yugoslav Prelate Is Said to Ask Freedom for Jailed Priests," by Telephone to The *New York Times*, Feb. 17, 1941 <http://tenc.net/times/step.htm#1>

[20] "Crimes in the Jasenovac Camp," The State Commission of Croatia for the Investigation of the Crimes of the Occupation Forces and their Collaborators, Zagreb, 1946, p. 33 <http://tinyurl.com/36eug9>

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Zločini u logoru Jasenovac, Zemaljska komisija Hrvatske za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača, Zagreb, Naprijed, 1946

[21] "Crimes in the Jasenovac Camp," The State Commission of Croatia for the Investigation of the Crimes of the Occupation Forces and their Collaborators, Zagreb, 1946, p. 8 <http://tinyurl.com/36eug9>

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[23] "Yugoslav Officers Studying in Russia Back Tito Fully," by M.S. Handler, *New York Times*, July 12, 1948

[24] "Eichmann Trial Witness Shows How He Escaped Nazis' Wrath," by Homer Bigart, *New York Times*, May 20, 1961

[25] "Yugoslavs Assail Croat Dissidents," by Raymond H. Anderson, *New York Times*, Oct. 1, 1972

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[29] "Death camp leader to face judges," *Courier Mail* (Queensland, Australia), June 19, 1998

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Professor Vladimir Lukić

Ladies and gentlemen, let me extend my warm greetings to you on this occasion.

The initiative to build a memorial park at Donja Gradina is just over thirty years old. Actually, in 1975, unhappy with the flower-shaped monument at Jasenovac, unhappy with its administration and the design of the museum planned for construction there, the Executive Board of Bosnia and Herzegovina chose to have a new project. Unfortunately, a year or two ago we spent quite some time searching for this project. It is all in the paper and I won't speak about it, but I will say something about our delusion, very serious and very difficult to get rid of, which has to do with the authentic looks of the graveyard... Let us see the picture... you can stop there. They say this is authentic and, according to international regulations, nothing should be constructed there, nothing should be touched. Six or seven years ago we received a message from the Babićs of Kozarska Dubica, saying this cemetery is a Serbian disgrace, but also a disgrace for Jews and the Roma and for all other nations.

When the Jasenovac exhibitions came into focus, we were supposed to respond. We were supposed to; in fact, we then recalled that a plan was produced from 1975 to 1980, a project that was to have been implemented. Next, we began to record everything that was ever written or proposed, and the project you see here has been adopted by the Assembly of the Association 'Jasenovac-Donja Gradina', the Assembly of the Foundation 'Jasenovac-Donja Gradina'. The project has been discussed by all the bodies of these two associations, by the Chair and several members of the Republic of Srpska Academy of Sciences, and it was also brought up for discussion at the Serbian Academy of Science and Art in Belgrade. We were fully supported everywhere.

There is really no need for us to make war against Croatia as to what they should do – they can do whatever they want. Honestly, if we were in their shoes, perhaps we would be acting similarly. However, we wish to build an information center, which was in the previous project, we wish to build a museum, but a museum which will have genuine documents, three-dimensional objects, and whoever visits the museum, they will be able to see if it really was a labor camp. But I want images of Jasenovac as it was during the war. We have managed to find the materials of six aerial photographing sessions made since 1945, and we also photographed Donja Gradina from the air this year [...]. So, we have authentic photographic material from different

periods and this is a perfect opportunity for us to put together a mosaic of what the notorious Ustasha camp actually looked like. That has to be done, and it'll be on experts to specify whether it should indoors or out of doors. Whoever visits Donja Gradina will be able to see the museum, but they will see the camp as it really was, as many call it – I myself have learned from many it was the most monstrous camp in Europe, and it wasn't a German camp, it was a camp of the Independent State of Croatia.

Furthermore, I believe the project defines all the other relevant details. The project was adopted following a public plebiscite and the 1980s plan, and I have already told you which institutions have discussed or approved the project. In fact, what remains is a single proposal – building a monument for the children prisoners; next, a victims' memorial and – this last proposal has been a matter of dispute between us and certain parties – we should build a house of worship for Serbs, for Jews, for the Roma. It is my pleasure to inform you that we have been given the green light by the Serbian Orthodox Church, they have even proposed a location, and we believe it will be taken into account.

Some people ask: what if others come asking for what they should get? Well, we'll certainly comply, provided they meet certain requirements. The first requirement: was the Jasenovac camp originally made for them? The Jasenovac camp was made for Serbs, for Jews, for the Roma, and I deeply apologise to the other victims, those who didn't support the regime of the Independent State of Croatia – they were collateral damage victims in this affair. I apologise again for using this expression, because [they weren't persecuted] in other places and in other camps, while Jasenovac was a special camp built to exterminate these [*communities*]. But, I've made a promise and I will do my best to have a house of worship for others too, as long as they can prove the number of their people involved in arrests, torture and killings was one person lower than their casualty count. I believe that should solve the problem.

Next, I particularly want to stress one thing: it is not true there is an international regulation specifying how killing fields are to be marked or what can be built on them. There was a dispute at a conference once, a long time ago, immediately after the war, where it was said that every country should take care of and preserve their killing fields, preserve the sites as they are, and that nothing should be changed at any rate, and so on. A local architect sort of played with some of the solutions here; we have only parts of the information center designed back in 1980s. However, all this should be taken with reserve, of course, because building anything requires a structural analyses, and in this particular case we are obliged to do the structural calculations because

of the victims too, because of the victims' bones, which, according to the accounts of the residents of Donja Gradina – they say – wherever we dug, both inside and outside the village, we found bones, we found skulls, etc. Finally, Professor Đurić explained to us really nicely how this is done. Finally, when this is completed, all the items we find can be used in the future as valuable exhibits for our museum, etc.

Also, I have to tell you that wherever we presented this, and we spoke very openly, we received full support; we had support several years ago too, today we have the support of the Government, which is behind it, support of the President of the Republic of Srpska, support of the Chair of the People's Assembly etc. That's what's important for Donja Gradina. However, there's one more thing in this project, which you will be able to see for yourselves: opening a department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Banja Luka – or, if you wish, at the Institute – which will research Jasenovac, but not only Jasenovac; it can give young students, undergraduates etc. master theses, doctoral dissertations and so on. The library 'Jasenovac' has been opened in the National and University Library and owing to many among you here that library is growing bit by bit, and so is growing the documentation center thanks to people's donations and our purchases, and there will also be room for a part of these books there, in that section.

You were there last night – [*the event*] ensued a proposal of the Association 'Jasenovac-Donja Gradina', after a conversation with Mr. Dodik – to tell the truth, he was not the Prime Minister at the time – a conversation with the Mayor – there, you saw the Banja Luka memorial built in commemoration of the Jasenovac victims, and our initiative will be dedicating squares to the victims of Jasenovac in the seven or eight municipalities in the Potkozarje Region, or perhaps naming streets after them. We proposed that as part of our project and have already made some contacts suggesting that Serbia should do the following – first, research the persecution of Serbs in the Balkans in the last two centuries; second, Serbia should begin to build its 'Yad Vashem' in Belgrade; there is some information chances are land will be allocated for this purpose and I believe this initiative should be taken very seriously.

It is definitely the ambition of this Association to continue its activities beyond Jasenovac. The moment when – and we are negotiating the preparations of the regulatory plan for both the village and the area of the Memorial – after that it'll be the law, then this project, which has to be adopted by the Assembly, and then we can proceed with its implementation.

That would be all, thank you very much! I will be available if you need me.

Discussion

Protosingel Jovan Ćulibrk:

I would like to add a few comments following Professor Lukić's speech.

As far as temples in memorial areas and at executions sites are concerned, this is not about breaking new ground, we can simply go to Dachau. There are plenty of temples at Dachau to cover practically all of Donja Gradina. Why? Because a big number of Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy were imprisoned at Dachau, and I guess you know the Serbian Patriarch Gavrilko and Nikolaj, the Bishop of Žiča, were interned there too. Given the fact Dachau was not only for Jews, it was used for a number of purposes, and it was also the first camp opened in Nazi Germany, used to intern a large number of clerics of different faiths and different denominations – since the end of the war, one of the dominant commemorative features of Dachau has been a strong religious memory of the camp during the time it was operational. Other places share this characteristic of Dachau, of course, with sensitivity, measure and caution.

When it comes to the initiative to relocate graves, our brethren from the Jewish community will probably have something serious to say about it, because according to Jewish laws and customs there is a problem with moving bones from graves, which needs to be said in time to prevent any possible disputes.

As for Belgrade, I can inform you that in June last year, during an academic exchange of Israeli and Serbian experts, a representative of the Serbian Ministry of Culture and Mr. Avner Shalev, Chair of the Yad Vashem Directorate, met at Yad Vashem and agreed to have Yad Vashem take part in building a memorial at Staro sajmište [Old Fair]. I can't tell you how far they've gone with the project or how it's going to be achieved, but this is the information this convention should have.

Academician Srboľjub Živanović:

I would like to thank Father Ćulibrk for this information. Let me assure you it would not occur to anyone nowadays to dig Donja Gradina, take out those bones and disturb the victims, and the only graves that should be looked at

and dug and their victims reburied somewhere safer are those in danger of being eroded by the River Sava, those which can no longer stay where they are. Naturally, since they are holy martyrs, there are going to be religious buildings there and they will be duly buried thanks to the donations of our people from the country and abroad... We have with us Mr. Oton Urban; he has already presented a number of proposals to the Bishop of Banja Luka for temples or churches that can be erected at the site in memory of the victims, most of all in memory of the children victims, and they will all be considered. Professor Lukić forgot to tell you we will have a competition and people will be able to put forward suggestions, after which a bid commission will have to look at it all carefully, as we expect a big number of experts to contribute, primarily town planners, geologists, hydrologists and many others, in order to complete the work.

Mr. Aleksandar Radeta:

Ladies and gentlemen, greetings to you all, especially to the camp prisoners. My name is Aleksandar Radeta and I am Secretary of the Office for Tracing Detained and Missing Persons of Republic of Srpska. Let me tell you in a few words that during the preceding period our office... There's a site located in Gradiška Municipality, directly across from the camp Stara Gradiška, holding a big unprotected mass grave; following people's reports we have been visiting the site and trying to collect and bring the skeletons eroded by the water to the local Memorial Charnel House. After hearing this speech

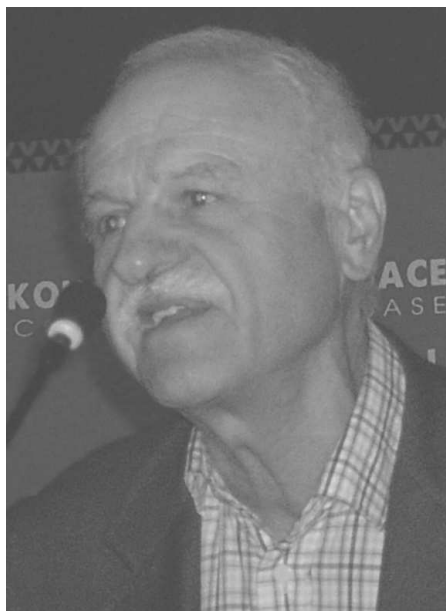


about the preservation of endangered mass grave sites, I would like to report this mass grave as seriously endangered and say that in the area of Gradiška, just below this mass grave site, when the water level of the Sava is low, a lot of bones can be seen protruding from the grave, while quite frequently when sand is excavated from the Sava, skeletal remains from the same spot are of-

ten found in the sand. For this reason I would plead with this convention to find a way to preserve this endangered grave and our office will certainly be there to help you.

Mr. Desimir Vujnić:

My name is Desimir Vujnić, an engineer originally from Glamoč. I live in Belgrade and I have been following the events and developments related to genocide for 50 years. This covers and is connected not only with Jasenovac and Gradiška, but with a number of places throughout the so-called ‘Independent Monster State of Bloodia’, which is the proper way to call it in accordance with neo-Croatian, since they replace ‘h’ with ‘k’, and they should accordingly change ‘Nezavisna’ to ‘Neovisna’.⁷ Saying it was a fascist state pleases them like no other compliment. The only right tag for that monster-state is to call it clerical and inquisitory, for such monstrous crimes were committed there, unprecedented during thousands of years of human history. Since the invention of the wheel and the fire and all the way to the satellite, no other crime can measure up to it.



According to what Putin said on 9 May, during the parade commemorating WWII Victory Day, the Russian toll was 27 million, the Jewish was six million; as for Serbs, we simply don’t know, because we were impeded for 50 years under the pretext of the supposed brotherhood and unity, basically a euphemism for nothing but a mere anti-Serb chauvinist coalition extending from the Vardar River to Slovenia, which proved in 1991, because those various Ustasha activists did survive under the guise of struggle

⁷ The speaker’s play on the name of the Independent State of Croatia stresses the trends in Croatia since 1991 to radically alter the vocabulary and linguistic properties of the Croatian language, thus separating it strongly from Serbian, which used to be one language, changing even the words that were once officially used by Croats, notably during the WWII Independent State of Croatia. Mr. Vojnić’s sarcastic comments have a social, historical and linguistic background and it would take a lot of space to translate or explain them – remark by S. Mitić.

against the Cominform, etc. This explains the phenomenon of, for example, Jure Bilić, not Jure Bilić the politician, but Jure Bilić as the biggest Ustasha from Doboj, who became one of the key communist figures after the war, after the Cominform Resolution⁸. I survived only thanks to the supposedly fascist Italian army, who came to Glamoč in September 1941 and saved the remaining Serbs by taking them to Split, where we lived until Italy capitulated, after which Germans arrived and immediately killed the Jews who were there. For instance, I used to live at Balkan Street 6; there was a Jewish family on the first floor, who were refugees from Travnik. One day I saw they were simply missing, even the five-year-old boy that I used to play with. I had some photographs of us together and gave them all to late Mr. Enrik Josif in Belgrade, along with their names and surnames. Some survived by crossing the Adriatic to Italy and so on, but most of them didn't. All those Serbs who stayed in Split and failed to reach Serbia using some kind of magic tricks were taken to Jasenovac. The figure mentioned is eight thousand, and no one even knows about it!

What I am saying is that the extent of genocide against Serbs is much greater than Jasenovac and Gradina. My uncles and another fifty relatives were killed on the spot, in Guber. My mother always used to say regarding Livno the figure was eighty. When we exhumed the bones in 1991, the list turned out to have over a hundred members of the Radeta family! I don't know if it's been pulled down, apparently not. Yesterday I was late because I continued my bus ride to Glamoč to see the Catholic church where the remaining Serbs and myself were converted in 1941, by force. Our military pulled it down in this war out of bitterness, because there never were Croats there at all, only very few. Serbs made 92 percent of the population, there were 7-8 percent Muslims and only very few Croats. Now the streets there bear the names of Ante Starčević, Dr. Alojzije Stepinac, while in the stead of the little church demolished in the last civil war, where I was converted and made to learn 'Ave Maria' as a five year old, they made a gigantic modernist church bigger than this hall, and a huge parochial residence in wood, something like quasi-ethnic, with trees and so on, and in front of it, five meters from the spot where I was converted, a huge Alojzije Stepinac memorial! Are they ever going to stop faking things? That's a more serious crime than the one they committed in 1941.

I have heard so many lies over these fifty years in order to reduce the figures, and one of the main witnesses, a key witness, is Jovan Živković, who kept records from 1942 to the end of 1945 on Ustashe's order and submitted

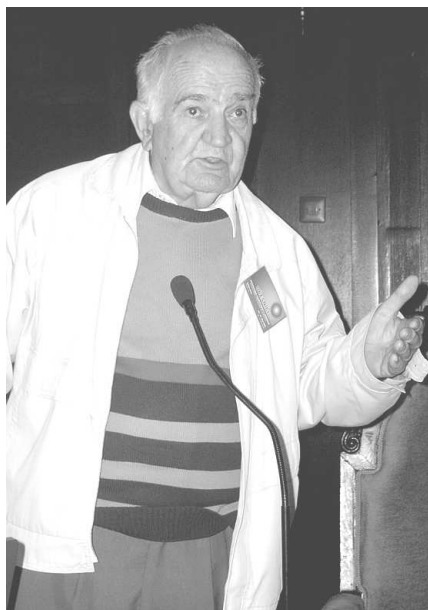
them to the Ustasha authorities daily, so we know exactly what the official figure was... We basically dug him out because he had been hiding from Krajačić and had stayed silent the whole time. We dug him out and heard his account. He kept the exact figure; on 21 April there were 1,098 men and 920 women. The principal book-keeper, again on the order of the camp command, was a Jew called Milan Jun from Zagreb, and there were also two Serbs, Milan Davidović and Jovan Živković, who helped him on a daily basis; we heard his account at the 'Jovan Pašić' bookstore in the presence of doctors and other people and it was published in *Argument* in April 1994, I believe, I have it, I can give you handouts, I did it at the previous symposium. They recorded the discussion there, but the typist transcribed it so badly I can hardly recognise it as my commentary. I don't know if the same is going to happen this time. What's important... this guy, Jovan Živković, who kept the secret for 30 years, whom we finally heard, pressed and... Milorad Bajić made a film about him. That is a most extraordinary testimony. He saw more there than the Ustashe, who alternated. He saw daily as people were being killed and kept detailed records putting his own life in danger, and on 21 April, when they heard the cannons of 21st Division, they first summoned Milan Jun to bring his books; of course, they slaughtered him, he never returned; next, around six o'clock, they took those 920 women. The women even sang as they were taking them to be executed, bravely, and then it was clear they would kill them⁹ too the next day. During the night they agreed they would break out of the camp. Among the people who knew the exact figures Milan Davidović and Jovan Živković are gone too. They copied it and put in their pockets – in case they survived. A lot of people hanged themselves that night because they weren't capable of running away; whoever chose to go upcountry came across mine fields, marshes and guards and got themselves killed. Those who tried to swim across the Sava – the water was cold and only two people managed, a student and late Josip Perlih, a Jew, who died recently, who was a veteran prisoner, experienced, and swam and dove downstream. He lost the little scrap of paper, but after 500-600 meters he got out onto the bank and managed to get to 21st Division, which had received orders to stand in front of Jasenovac for seven days!

The Srem Front was broken through on 12 April, at the cost of a spine-chilling human loss, without 'Katchushas', without Russian tanks, attacking the German machine guns with no more than ten bullets each, and the Front was broken through in such circumstances, allowing them to advance 180 km in ten days and liberate Gradiška. Over the next ten days

⁹ The male camp prisoners

they would have reached the Slovenian border and caught all the Ustashe and the Ustasha authorities; do you know how far they advanced? Thirty kilometers! They entered Jasenovac on 2 May, one day after Berlin fell. Who should take the blame for that? Krajačić, and who knows what other higher-ranking officials. Enver Ćemalović, who bombed Jasenovac five times – at the time he was the Airforce Commander-in-Chief – he only bombarded the prisoners' buildings, not the Ustashe's buildings. Luckily, this guy, Jovan Živković, survived and kept the list, with his extract from Jun's notebook; he lost the paper, but he memorized the figure. It was all encoded. Serbs were Orthodox Croats and they came and left Jasenovac. That was the 'kill' code. According to his records, the Serb figure is 704 thousand, 39 thousand Roma recorded as Gypsies, and not even Klara Mandić knew how many Jews exactly; I asked her at the church opening ceremony, and she said: 'Twenty thousand.' Well no, this guy wrote 24 thousand. When all this is added up, plus the thousand who remained, that makes 768 thousand.

How did I discover the last three figures which he forgot? When Tuđman was in Sweden in 1968, he said 'exactly 68 thousand', say, '375'. Speaking from the point of mathematical probability, those two figures are unlikely to turn out to be identical 30 years later, meaning Tuđman simply removed the first figure of 7 from 768, and claimed 68 was the accurate one, which basically helped me get the ones, tens and hundreds. Unbelievable, that is the official figure! It does not include those thrown into the Dubica lime kilns. There were people who never got inside Jasenovac. That makes the figure horrendous! Concealing it after the war, which I witnessed for 40 years, was a far more hideous crime; luckily, I put down the names for my home region and gave Mr. Bulajić the list of the people thrown into the Koričina pit on 30 July 1941. If we take into account the rest, it was such a gigantic crime, not only Jasenovac and Gradiška, but also the Jadovno pit, which I visited and saw with my own eyes and stepped in, and a dozen other pits, the only adequate memorial for it, since what we have in Jasenovac is mockery and since Jews have the Yad Vashem, just as it should be – they're not like Serbs, they remember the 4,000 years of their history, it's about time we also... [*comment from the audience specifying the duration of Jewish history*] Yes, according to the calendar. Well, then St. Sava's Temple in Belgrade should be dedicated not only in memory of St. Sava, but of all Serbian victims of genocide in the First World War, in the Second World War and the last war too. Thanks!



Mr. Ilija Ivanović:

My name is Ilija Ivanović. I was at the Jasenovac camp from 1942 to 1945, until 22 April. I am one of the few living people who took part in the breakout on 22 April 1945. I would like to say a few words.

Why are certain ideologists, theoreticians and people who learnt something about Jasenovac from books and interpretations only killing again those who were killed? Why are you playing with the information that somebody made up and wrote down? I assure you that while I was in Jasenovac, during those three years, there were numerous transports and

people were brought in, but they never got inside the camp and were directly taken to the ferry, to Granik, ferried over to Gradina and killed, and those were, for the most part, complete families, women, children, old people. Second, Serbs, Jews and the Roma were at Jasenovac, crowds of them, without convictions, without receiving sentences. All the others, Croats, Muslims, they were sentenced to a year, two, three, except for the Partisans captured at the Sutjeska, the Neretva River or elsewhere, they were executed just like the others, regardless of their ethnic background.

I... I am sorry to hear what people say when they start speaking about Jasenovac. I've just read in this book over there about the visit... when the International Red Cross was there; I have to contradict [...] what my friend wrote there. He says that a Red Cross Commission came – [...] he wrote it – to the Jasenovac camp. I was there when people were hanged, as well as when the Red Cross Commission came for a visit on two or three different occasions. I don't know why, but there he wrote there were no preparations beforehand. I assure you, two or three days before it we didn't know what was going on, all of a sudden they were cleaning the camp, everything in the camp was washed. Next, they picked and searched for the new arrivals to the camp, those were not completely exhausted yet; people who knew how to play football – they even made a pitch and brought the Ustashe [*tape interruption*].

And just imagine the food. That day, when the Red Cross Commission arrived, we were given thick beans, we got pieces of meat inside, we got more bread, but the day after it was the same old story again. That's the truth, [...], not what some people are making up, saying there were no preparations – there sure were.

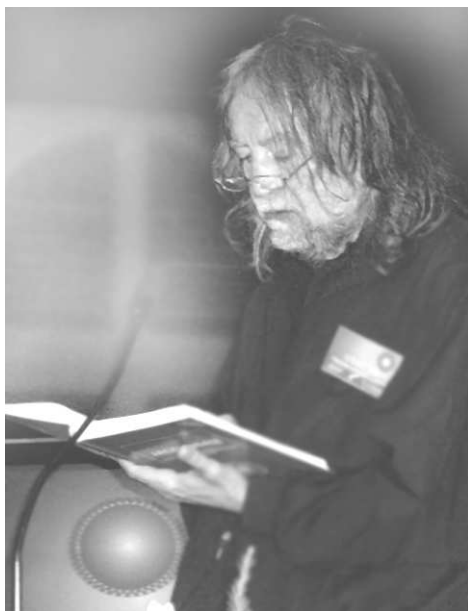
I could go on and on about Jasenovac, but as I can see my time is limited and I've run out of patience. People, telling the whole story would be impossible. I am simply surprised by certain theoreticians like Jurčević, I read his *Last Competitions*, with his descriptions and minimization. Let them burn in their own hell. Let them be ruffled now in defense of some data, let them make up whatever they want. Facts are stubborn and they do not let lies break through easily. Forgive me for choosing to quote a Serbian poet now, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, who says in one of his verses: 'The truth is a hero, it's as hard as a rock, when a dragon lurks above it, when you think it's small, to victory it romps!' Victory is the truth. Many of those mystifiers are trying hard today to prove this or that; many have said here – even one victim is a disaster [for a community]. Where are the children from Mount Kozara? That story Tuđman used to tell, about a couple of tens of thousands, when the count is 19-20 thousand dead children coming from Mount Kozara only, [dozens of names]. I was thirteen and a half back in 1942. Around 350 boys were brought in with me. Fifty-six of us remained in the autumn, only fifty-six. Everybody else was executed. Gone. They forced them to work around... bring in the harvest and God knows what, after which they brought them back and killed them. They had this strategy according to which the camp was what they called a labor camp in the spring – [there have been comments about that too, labor] [...] – there was quite a large number of prisoners in the spring because they were needed for different kinds of work, and now they stress that to prove it was a labor camp. So it was, in that they had to work like slaves in those various buildings. They made the fetters they were fettered in, they made knives at the metal shop which were used to slaughter them with, they manufactured everything. If that's a labor camp, then indeed it was a labor camp. They manufactured what they were going to be killed with. They manufactured everything to destroy Serbs, Jews and Gypsies first and foremost, but also other anti-fascists, of any background, be that Croats, Muslims, etc.

DAY 2, BANSKI DVOR, CONVENTION ROOM

Mr Mićo Jelić Grnović

*A Living Camp: Jasenovac 1941
Through 2007*

JASENOVAC - Proceedings of 4th
International Conference on Jaseno-
vac, Banja Luka, 2007, p. 321



Ms. Zorka Delić-Skiba:

Thank you for coming to make this Conference solemn and to hear my account. I am not here as a historian, I am not here to give a speech, simply, I am here as a victim, as a child victim. It is extremely difficult for me to speak about myself, but by speaking about myself I will also be speaking about the hundred thousand children who perished in the Independent State of Croatia, who were absolutely innocent, just like me. Practically all those children lost their parents very early, like me.

I was born in Kruhari near Sanski Most four years before the war. I saw with my own eyes, hidden in a cornfield, there were nine of us, an Ustasha kill our



mother. I... I was four and a half. My father was also killed and thrown in Šušnjar along with five thousand and a half Serbs. Shortly I lost both my father and my mother and another twelve of my kin of the Delić family. No doubt, I was a child, but they say you grow up once you've lost your parents. This means I grew up at four and a half. I watched many things through the eyes of a grown-up person, not of a child. I was hardly ever merry, I hardly ever sang, I grappled with life, and whatever happened to me since I was orphaned, I made a mental record of it and it became part of me permanently. I bore for a long time, for about thirty-five years, a scar on the neck from a knife, a scar on my lungs – I suffered from a serious case of pneumonia – and a scar on my psyche. I used to dream dreadful dreams for years, I would wake up, call my mother, weep, I wetted the bed for quite a long time. I had to see neuropsychiatrists almost until I was eleven. I... it was terribly difficult for me, I lived in Zagreb, I was adopted from the camp, they changed my name, I have been baptised and converted three times and could never speak out about my memories of the war and the camp. Simply, in Zagreb, that... even if I said something, everybody at school and everywhere else would immediately – you're lying, you couldn't possibly remember that, you were a child – so I simply accumulated and kept this experience of suffering to myself for thirty-five years and never told anyone about it.

In 1979, similar to this evening, this is the second time I have attended an international conference of this kind, I was in Jastrebarski. Another gentleman is present here, Nedjo Goga, who was also at Jastrebarski then. I received an invitation for this conference, which is the international conference of children prisoners of Jastrebarsko, and I went to Jastrebarsko. That was extremely difficult for me, I wasn't... I was absolutely unprepared for that kind of rally. All of a sudden, in the middle of the rally, the hostess said: 'It is our great honour to have with us a child prisoner, a girl, who is an educator and comes from Mostar. She is now going to tell us about her memories of the war and the camp.' I... my legs buckled, I... she took me by the hand and led me up the stairs, and there were four and a half thousand youths and pioneers there. They had all come to hear me speak about my suffering as a child during the war. And me, instead of speaking, I burst into tears. Then I heard a teacher say: 'Common, let's encourage the comrade, an applause, let us give her some strength.' And next, the whole auditorium began to... an applause, and that helped me pull myself together and I said to myself – you see, you've come here to renounce the crimes of those people who were capable of hurting innocent children. Those children were God's children, so don't you dare – even if your heart should fail you... even if I die, I must renounce the atrocities of the Ustashe and of the Independent State of Croatia, no matter

what it does to me.

I started my account with how I saw, hidden in corn, the Ustashe kill my mother. And, I said some things, but, you know, at the time I had no idea how I had got the scar on the lungs, or on the heart, or on the psyche, or on the lungs. Simply, I didn't know. I had it, but I didn't know how I had got it. Believe me when I say that it took me fifty years, almost to this day, to search for the criminals who did these heinous things to me. I searched for... what was the most difficult for me was realising where precisely those things happened to me, the time when they happened, the people who did it to me, because if you don't know those things, they can easily tell you – yeah, right, you're only making things up. I have succeeded in figuring it all out, but as I figured it all out, I realised – I wouldn't really want to talk about it, it is so terribly difficult for me, but I have to, I have to speak out for the sake of those dead children, who cannot speak for themselves. The story of my suffering is also their story, for that was the suffering of Serbian Orthodox Christian children.

Let me tell you about the things as they happened, from the beginning. I'll finish quickly because I don't have the energy to speak very long. After I became an orphan, they put us onto cattle cars, the cars were full, and with the children from Mount Kozara our first stop was at Jasenovac. They made us get off there. Believe me, I have experienced hunger and thirst and lack of oxygen. It is still the hardest when you're out of air. We weren't able to breathe inside those cattle cars, we didn't have air. When they pulled the car doors open, half the children in the cars were already dead, in faeces, in urine, they simply suffocated, we had been crammed like sardines.

Then, the next thing harder than hunger is thirst. For, as I say, I was little. We were on a kind of unbroken ground, water was all around us, but they wouldn't let you drink, and we were absolutely parched. Instead, it was from a marsh. For nights after the war I would dream about it – the Sava River, I don't even know if it was the Sava, a river, marshes, I kept dreaming about it over and over again, waking up and – water, water, I'm thirsty, I get up and drink water in the middle of the night. We were allowed to drink some other water, from some marshes, and there were corpses floating in the marshes whose hands were tied with wire, which were already decaying and there were some red worms crawling all over them. And if you drank that water, it was hard not to have one of those worms get in your mouth, there were so many of those worms. There, that's how things go. When you're really thirsty, you drink that kind of water too.

Jasenovac was already full of prisoners; those children who were lucky enough, who had mothers, they sent them to Croatian villages. Of

course, once there, they slept in sheds and served as labor force to their host families, and as for us, who had no parents, they expressly opened children's camps. The most notorious camps were those in Gornja Rijeka near Križevci, Sisak and Jastrebarsko near Zagreb. I spent two years in that camp, in Jastrebarsko. The camp commander was a nun called Ana Barta Pulherija. The camp was frequently visited by Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac, in fact, it was also his camp. He issued orders as to what to do with the children, together with the Ustashe who would punish us for everything – if you peed in the bed, if you asked for your mother, if you had lice and they fell down onto a white sheet of paper as they combed us – how many blows or slaps you received depended on the number of lice that went down on the paper. We were full of them, we had lice on our heads and were all scabby, our bodies itchy all over. I had grave, practically open wounds in my lungs, I had urine constantly running from the bladder, puss kept coming out of my ears. That was how I looked back in Jastrebarsko. Those frequent punishments, that additionally...

There were about a thousand children sleeping there. They separated the male children and put them in some barracks, they immediately dressed them in Ustasha caps and uniforms. The boys hated the uniforms because they also remembered that it was in such black uniforms [...] evil people with arms had killed their parents, but they were forced to wear those uniforms. The older girls were on the first floor of an old, abandoned castle belonging to Count Erdedy and they served as maids. They cleaned everything, everything, whatever needed to be done on the estate, and as for us, the little ones, up to age five, they put us in the basement of the old castle, damp, [with some straw inside], so we slept on the ground. There was spiderweb and bats above, and we were terribly afraid those bats might get into our hair or our eyes... they had those big claws – or so it seemed to us, I don't know, that they were bigger than they actually were. Mice kept running under us, along with some black bugs.

Each morning Franjo Ilovar, the grave-digger, came round – there was this heavy iron door – at the break of dawn, and when he opened that iron door that would wake us all up, he took [...] and threw out the dead children with a big spade. The children died most commonly from dysentery and typhus. And then, [...] came once, as I was told by my older fellow prisoners, there were four of us in the camp, [...] came and said: 'As of today pack the live children too, let's get rid of those [mischievous] children from the basement as soon as we can.' So I was also one of the live children at the bottom of that wagon. And when he came to the Croatian graveyard, that was where he crammed us into some pits, when he got there, he expected that by the time

he had got there, those at the bottom, the living children, would have been stifled by the dead, they wouldn't have been able to breathe, so they would have died on the way. And as he was emptying the contents into the pits, I was at the bottom of the wagon, and now in the pit I came on top, among the last. And he started covering us with dirt. I kept taking the dirt off my eyes with my little hands and he stopped. He couldn't believe somebody was still alive. Now, I can't explain this to you. I got out of the grave. Whether it was him who helped me, or he first left and then I came out, I don't know, but I did get out of that grave.

Another thing I recall... I mean, this is all so hard – again, as they were trying to cleanse the children from the basement as fast as possible, [...] brought a few of us, maybe a whole class, to Ustasha Petar Lolin, who... he came originally from Ljubija near Prijedor, he was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment, died just a few days ago at an old age – he was... at that time he was fairly young. He had a long dagger, it must have been this long, sharp on both sides, with a pointed end. We stood abreast in a line, the nuns assisted us, every child's head had to be held up and pulled back so he could do his work faster, slit the necks, push the knife straight in the larynx. That is the most sensitive part. That immediately stops the oxygen and you die within five minutes. So that was what he did. The nun would pull the head back and the blade would come out here at the other end of the neck and the child died quickly. When the children were dead, he took their eyes out and put them in a small basket. People said afterwards he bragged about how many Chetnik children he had slaughtered.

I was the last. Now, he may have tired or I don't know what, I cannot explain that, but he stabbed me too, I have a scar. He stabbed me with the dagger, and as the nun pulled my head back, I stood eye to eye facing my executioner. He also kept looking at me, seeming surprised by my calmness – the other children had screamed, cried, I waited for my turn, I had no idea what the butchering meant, what it would do to me, and then with me he just – stopped, not knowing what to do, and I stood looking at him, and instead of pushing the knife all the way through, he took it out. Whether he had got tired of killing or it was my eyes, a child's eyes, innocent, or something about it in him... I don't know, but apparently some humanity sparked off in him too, all in all, I was the only survivor of the butchering spree. And that's how I got this scar. Until recently I didn't know who had done this to me.

Then, as I said, for many years after the war I was mentally very... I often dreamed about it at night and so on, let me now finish. Now, as I said, I was absolutely unprepared in Jastrebarsko, I cried, I said some things, I only said about how the nuns used to beat me. And as for this time, I thought I

wouldn't be able to at all. I have spent the last half hour just sitting there and crying. These people before, and everything I've heard, it has upset me so much, all of it, because I am part of it, of all these historians' accounts, all of them, I felt it on my own skin. It's different when you read about it, or somebody tells you about it, but I felt it all on my own skin. Believe me, when it comes to the figures, how many children, is it fifty thousand, or this many, or that many... And like it can only be taken seriously if you have the children's names. How are we ever to find out if whole families were thrown into pits in 1941 and there is no one to report all those children. Mount Kozara – it was common for a family there to have ten children. Where are all those children, how is that possible? I mean, ten thousand, what is ten thousand? What I'm saying is the figure was a lot higher.

Now, I am a mathematician by profession. In my camp prisoner's diary... I ran a kind of... whoever signed up for my math practice group, I asked them: 'How many relatives did you lose at Jasenovac?' I had everybody answer. For example, there's Gojko, a colleague of mine, who came from Bijeljina, I asked him to come, and he is the only surviving member of a family of twelve children, plus the mother and father, so out of a total of fourteen. I put it down. Another one said – I lost eight. The next – I lost that many. And when I added it all up – now I reckon, I figure seven hundred thousand died at Jasenovac, meaning altogether, the children, the women, the men, everybody. So, fine, that's the figure I have.

Now, I have my figure, my sample, the five hundred people I interviewed, and out of these five hundred, I have... I separated the children – so, out of five hundred killed at Jasenovac of whom my camp inmates survive, so, five hundred who are still alive, but I don't know how many are not alive, two-three thousand – well, I added it all up, the killed, the adults, the grandma, grandpa, mom, dad, children, and put it all underneath – so, I had about, I don't know, two and a half thousand – I put it underneath those seven hundred thousand, and I also put the two and a half thousand children, and the result was over two hundred thousand children who perished at Jasenovac. And that is...

I told Mr. Lukić about it, and he said – you're right, you see how you managed to... But there are those who do not share my people's opinion. They say – stop imagining, that's not true, the figure can't be true. It's ten thousand at the most. I claim right here and I can prove that out of those seven hundred thousand over two hundred thousand were most certainly children. Now, you see, when one ethnic community loses so many of its children to murder, that community... does that community have a future? Well, that must be the goal of all that, those wars, for a nation to disappear, maybe Orthodox Christianity

together with it, maybe that is what Roman Catholic Europe and the Vatican wish for, to cleanse Europe of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, because it was so extensive... They say – Orthodox Christianity is Europe's greatest evil, greater than Protestantism. So, we were this great evil to Europe, us, those two hundred thousand Orthodox Christian children.

Forgive me for [...] I had to do it. As I said, I had made my decision – even if I collapse here and die, never mind, it's important I say it. But there, I've managed to... *[applause]* Thank you kindly.

Dr. Milan Bastašić:

There are 125 preserved huge mass graves below the ground at this site. There are burial fields with identified graves. There are many mass graves at the great memorial park into which they threw the slaughtered children. If you look at the Donja Gradina Memorial Park brochure, it says 'Children's Graveyard' under those [identified] mass graves. Apart from these two words in the brochure, there is nothing at the site that would inform the visitor that the mass graves contain corpses of murdered children. I wasn't aware of that myself until recently, and it was thanks to providence or by mere chance that I escaped the same fate some time in November 1942.



I think that these mass graves with slaughtered Serbian children may not be called a graveyard. This most certainly inadequate title may have been adopted after the consecration ceremony, I don't know, but that is not the only criterium to label this site as such. The concept of graveyard is linked to dying and burying the dead, it is related to what is one of the most fatal events in human life. There are different terms denoting the process of funeral and of burying dead people in a graveyard, [...] burial ceremonies. A corpse is buried or placed in a specially dug grave.



Mr. Bogdan Petković:

My name is Bogdan Petković, I am a Jasenovac survivor. Let me tell you right away, I did not survive thanks to the breakout, I was deported to Germany for labor. My account on this camp is in a book which has been published. This is [...], where I can express an opinion [...] the inmate surroundings which I belong to. The first would be – the Jasenovac myth. That began with Franjo Tudjman, i.e. he quoted Vasa Bogdanov, and that is the most serious offence for us, the camp inmates, to call all the suffering, all the monstrous atrocities, everything we experienced, calling it a myth. I described it in here, what they say [...] I don't care, that it's a tale, a makebelieve, inconclusive, fake and so on. It may never be labelled as such.

One more thing – there are speculations in books, in the press and on television that Jasenovac was not a concentration but a gathering and labor camp. Well, excuse me, but concentration means gathering people. All concentration camps were at the same time labor camps too! It can't be they brought those poor people there to mope about but rather to work, so they could exhaust them through labor, by underfeeding them, so as many as possible would perish. I don't know if that's so – Auschwitz, Treblinka, they were all labor camps.

Another thing – I've been in a labor camp, in a war prisoners' camp and in a concentration camp. Excuse me, the labor camps in Germany, the Arbeitslager, they were the places where people slept and ate, while we actually worked in companies. They were not convicts. They were... those people were collected from around Europe and brought there for labor. But they enjoyed the freedom of movement. We had the Ausweis, we went to work, came back from work. I was given a wage every Saturday, just like the Krauts who worked with me.

Ms. Smilja Tišma: And still they also indemnified the victims recently. You

received indemnification recently, even though you were given wages.

Mr. Bogdan Petković: Yes. And after the working... I had Sundays off. We went to Prater, went to the cinema and so on. The camps were different in that, I'd say, that with the labor camps... you could go in and out, of course, one had to have the Ausweis.

The war prisoner's camp – I spent two months in a war prisoners' camp in Zagreb. Excuse me – there we didn't work. We didn't work there; we would sit, play chess, wait for our portions of cooked macaroni at noon and so on. We were given newspapers, we received visitors, but we didn't have the freedom of movement. [We couldn't] go out of the camp. [...] Let me also tell you that the regime at the war prisoners' camp in Zagreb at [...] controlled by the Germans was more liberal than that held by the Croatian Home Guard, as some people escaped from that camp and there was no retribution. [*some attendees comment on how it was Croats who managed to escape*] (**Comment from the audience:** At that time you were Croatian as well.) Sure thing. It was the same for everybody. [*the audience disagrees*] [...] That camp was more liberal than the Croatian Home Guard's camp.

Another thing that I would like to speak about – the purpose of the Jasenovac camp. There are some books and papers saying its purpose was to collect people there to reclaim the Lonj Field. (**Ms. Smilja Tišma:** I wrote that as it is, but I didn't read it.) Excuse me – the Poglavnik issued a decision on 27 April, the fourth month of the year, 1942, and here's how its purpose was defined. It says... It was addressed to the Ministry of the Croatian Home Guard, the Headquarters of the Ustasha Forces, Ministry of the Interior and the Supreme [...] And it goes – The Command of the Ustasha People's Service, the reference number, informed that the concentration and labor camp Jasenovac may admit an unlimited number of inmates – while the Jasenovac camp, ever since its opening until 22 April 1945, had but six barracks – six barracks! That could accommodate a maximum of a thousand and five hundred inmates. [That meant] – any surplus was sent to Gradina. What they could hope to find there were neither barracks nor tents, but [...].

Question from the audience: Excuse me, what happened with the brick factory belonging to the Vukobratović family? What was it used for? Tell us all so we know.

Mr. Bogdan Petković: One more thing that is offensive to us, the camp inmates – no one could ever have imagined or assumed that the Jasenovac camp and its butchers would be glorified in a song. In a song, excuse me! Here, I'll

read it to you. In the Zagreb daily *National* of 6 January 2004 there are the lyrics of a song performed by Marko Perković Thompson. Here's what it says:

Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška
That's Max's butchers' home.
Trucks go rushing through Imotski,
Driving Jure Francetić's 'blacks'.
There was a slaughter house at Čapljina,
Many a Serb was drained by the Neretva.
Oh, Neretva, roll your waters by the hillside,
Take Serbs into the blue Adriatic.
Who would have thought only last year
That Partisans would be celebrating Christmas.
What mother fucker said
The Black Legion's not coming back?
The bright star over Metković
Greet for us Ante Pavelić!

There, you see, that's the song of that singer of ours, and the Netherlands banned his performance. Recently he wanted to perform in Sarajevo, [...] protests and he probably never performed there either. A year and a half ago I wrote some kind of protest against it, saying we, the camp inmates, protested against it; our President took it to the daily *The Voice of Srpska* [*Glas Srpske*], but they didn't publish it because it's not news anymore! It's from times gone, it's passé, it's outdated, and so on. You see what happens to us.

Finally, We haven't received any response from Croatia yet regarding our reparation claims. I sent my claim in 2001, next after a couple of months I sent them an urgent letter – there has been no reply. None. Some people received replies saying they were not authorized to do it, and so on and so forth. That's how things are. (**Question from the audience:** Where are you living?) Officially, I am living in Croatia, spending half of my time there, and the other half here.

Ms Dobrila Kukolj

It's really impossible to describe my suffering and ordeal – during one part only – there was so, so much. Now here I... I'm already upset after hear-



ing all these stories, especially Ilija's. I will try to tell you briefly about something else here.

I will not be speaking here about the Jasenovac camp, or the camp at Stara Gradiška, or the Gospić camp, [Jadovno, where] 38 thousand [unidentified] victims perished... were killed, who are hardly ever mentioned. I will not be speaking about the camp on the island of... at other sites. Or about the 5680 children who were taken from Jablanac and [Mlaka] to Zagreb and Sisak for adoption by Croatian families. There isn't much sense speaking about any other aspect related to the genocide against the Serbian Orthodox Christian

people in the Independent State of Croatia since according to the date of the respectable Ms Nataša Mataušić, by 2001 1106 books were written and published, along with 400 [...], records, articles and 100 collections of document. I don't want to guesstimate the number of victims, which will never be calculated with accuracy by anybody. For example, who can calculate the number of unborn children who were still inside their mothers? That figure is most certainly not negligible either. That is why the number of victims can only be guesstimated or bid, depending on what you prefer.

I assume there are reputable historians who [...] [in order not to, as they say,] the genocide against the Serbian people in the Independent State of Croatia was committed according to the instruction of the Croatian state. The state administration at all levels took part in the genocide, along with a considerable number of the Catholic clergy, priests of the Islamic community and a number of the Catholic and Muslim population.

2. The Independent State of Croatia was not an artificial creation, [like Quisling states], it was the state of the Croatian people, and Croats had waiting for centuries for its establishment.

3. The Independent State of Croatia was not occupied by anyone in World War II, least by Germany or Italy. The armies of this state, by the name [...] of Croatia, were friends and allies, and they only fought the Partisans, who were mainly made up of Serbian fighters.

4. The Independent State of Croatia had all the characteristics of a sovereign state as defined by international conventions, its territory, its popula-

tion, its legislative and popular administration.

5. The Independent State of Croatia was recognized by such European states as Germany, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania. Those states established diplomatic relations with the Independent State of Croatia at embassy level.

As for the camps created by the Independent State of Croatia on its land for Serbs, Roms and Jews, they were not Ustasha camps, they were the camps of the Independent State of Croatia. One thing I have to say, when the Independent State of Croatia was founded and declared on 10 April 1941, a significant role was played by the Ustasha movement headed by Dr. Ante Pavelić, while in the sense of nation building, Ustashe were only one segment of the criminal structure of the Independent State of Croatia.

Historians seek to prove the concentration camp Jasenovac was a labor camp where, well, yess, people sometimes died and there was a little bit of killing, while the main purpose of the camp was to produce goods for the Croatian state. No doubt, there were production facilities at the Jasenovac camp, for it was only logical to use the labor force of the Serbian inmates for manufacturing, but only until the workers' exhaustion and their extermination. The Jasenovac concentration camp was not founded to manufacture different kinds of goods in it, but to kill the inmates in the camp using different kinds of torture, irrespective of their age. Therefore, it was a death camp because it was its main purpose. If it had been a labor camp, then the camp administration would have opened the camp gates on 22 April 1945 and released the remaining 1220 inmates. And this never happened. The camp stuck to its killing practices because 117 inmates survived out of the whole lot, while the remainder, 1103 inmates, was killed while attempting escape.

What I've said so far is a short introduction, and what else I would like to say briefly... I said the exact number of the victims of the Croatian death camps will never be ascertained even approximately. Besides, the Serbian Orthodox Christian population was killed in an organized manner all across the territory of the Independent State of Croatia, not only in camps. I would like to mention the victims who the Croatian authorities ferried across the Sava River [...] [the number is needed in a different way]. Of course, this number will never be determined with any reliable accuracy either. I should mention the Commission of the Kozarska Dubica WWII Veterans' Alliance, which said in its report in 1961: '...the extensible figure [...] to two hundred thousand victims killed at Donja Gradina.' The newspaper *Politician* [*Političar*] of 31 August 1977 says: 'Over the last year another 117 mass graves have been discovered at 6 sites of the Croatian graveyards at Jasenovac', a figure which eventually rose to 272. And not all the graves have been

discovered yet.

Most certainly we could speak here about the graves at Donja Gradina as well. Those graves there, why... are they visible to the visitor's naked eye? Unfortunately, it is possible that a part of those graves is there, but they are not as conspicuous as they should be. Given our endeavours, those graves are highly likely to disappear in time, as 60 years have passed and nothing has been done. In his book [*Trial*] [...] Dr. Milan Bulajić writes that immediately after World War II ended lists were submitted to the United Nations holding the names of war criminals in order for the United Nations to form an international tribunal to prosecute those criminals. The lists were mislaid there, and what about the copies? There aren't any.



Mr. Cadik I. Danon Braco¹⁰

IN SEARCH FOR THE GOSPEL TRUTH

Dear friends, the camp Jasenovac was one of the biggest in Europe for its number of victims, but it was certainly the most brutal one for its methods of killing and torture. The perpetrators have admitted the crimes committed in camps throughout Europe and preserved them as they once were. The traces of what the camp looked originally have been destroyed at only one site, the camp Jasenovac. A rich decorative park with a memorial was constructed instead, which is more than inadequate for this

site and arouses resentment. Today's democratic Croatia denies the evildoings committed at Jasenovac, it denies it was a Nazi-type camp and it also denies the number of its victims.

Immediately after World War II a Yugoslav state commission assessed that over 700,000 thousand people were killed at the Jasenovac camps, while a commission of the Croatian Parliament, Sabor, claims a bit more than 2,000 people died. All disputes over the victim figure are meaningless until an

¹⁰ The speech subsequently edited by the author

objective expert investigation of the matter has been carried out. After the war they began an extensive census of the victims, there were expert examinations of the graves, especially at Donja Gradina. The figures obtained were high and someone ceased the investigation. This work has to be resumed immediately and brought to a conclusion.

Croatia's attempts to present Jasenovac as a labor camp are a trick and a bestial lie. Let me tell you about Tuzla, where in December 1941 my father and I were arrested and deported to Jasenovac with another 130 Jewish men of age. I am the only survivor of the whole group only thanks to the fact and escaped and joined the Partisans. I was one of seven camp prisoners who agreed to use a very risky chance to escape. The deal was not to escape in order to save our lives but to die with guns in our hands as free men – fighters. As for Tuzla, after the men had been taken away, women remained there with children and there were over 500 of them. They were all taken to camps and no one survived. I wonder if there's a need to offer any more typical case of radical genocide. The terrifying thing is that the Ustasha authorities in Croatia designed and put in place such methods of killing and torture that which was the culmination of their sadism. They tried to make one's dying as long and as painful as possible. The Ustashe did it with a smile on their face, enjoying the victim's suffering. Let me tell you about one Ustasha sergeant.

When we got to Jasenovac, our friends and acquaintances, who had already been in the camp for a long time and knew how to avoid the perils coming from those Ustasha criminals, warned us against the things we needed to be alert about. As I said, the first person we came across after entering the camp was Nisim Montiljo from Kiseljak near Sarajevo, who was a few years older than me. Every summer my family went to Kiseljak for the holiday; we had been friends for many years. Along with other useful advice, he warned us to be on guard against an Ustasha sergeant called Žuća. To help us recognise him, Nisim described his looks in detail, telling us he was most easily recognizable by his red hair, a big yellow handlebar moustache, his medium-sized stature and a short, fat neck. He told me to keep away from him and avoid any contact with him.

It was around noon one day, I was putting scattered bricks in a pile near the brickyard, and I suddenly caught a glimpse of an Ustasha sergeant who matched Žuća's description. I had just piled some bricks into a stack a meter and a half tall and was getting ready to start to pile another. Žuća was passing just a few meters away from me. I realised it was getting dangerous and stood behind the brick stack. An exhausted-looking, emaciated camp prisoner dressed in a long black coat was walking his way. He seemed like an educated man. He was walking slowly, with effort, and once he had got close

to Žuća, he stood in attention and took his hat off with his right hand, according to the camp regulations. Žuća went up to him, looked at him head to toe, scowling. This took a while and then his shrill, piercing voice was heard. He asked him where he came from, and the camp prisoner, his voice sounding scared, told him he was from Zagreb. Žuća immediately asked him about his nationality and profession. The prisoner said he was Jewish and by profession he was an attorney. Hearing that, Žuća laughed cynically and snapped at the poor man: 'Oh, a Jewish swine and a blood-sucking lawyer too! You robbed us and sucked our blood! We'll kill you all!'

Peeking from behind the bricks, I saw the man was petrified with fear. Žuća ordered him to turn around with his hands behind his back, took out a piece of wire he apparently had ready in the belt and tied his hands quickly. He now ordered the bound man to turn around, which the man did. Žuća grabbed the man's hair with his left hand and pulled his black-handled Ustasha dagger with a sudden, practised movement and stabbed it into his neck so its sharp point penetrated the other end. The murderer had a lot of practise in this manner of killing because the man kept standing on his feet. Žuća didn't want to slay his victim right away and intentionally pushed the dagger between the trachea and the larynx. Blood came trickling on both sides of the neck, while the murderer could take his own sweet time and revel in the victim's horror.

The abominable scene made me forget about Nisim's warning. I kept looking, paralysed by the monstrous crime. The man opened his mouth, releasing a stream of blood. He was still standing, but Žuća slowly took a box out of his pocket in which he kept his Herzegovinian tobacco called 'škija', opened it, took a piece of cigaret paper, placed it between two fingers of his left hand and evenly spread tobacco on it to roll a cigaret. After he rolled it, he wetted the paper with his tongue, took out a lighter and lit up. After having the first puff, he began cursing Jews and lawyers again, threatening them with a most brutal death. He smoked luggishly, with pleasure, blowing puffs back into the victim's face. When he finished the cigaret, he pressed the butt against the listless man's face. Suddenly, with a swift movement of his right hand, he took hold of the dagger handle, while at the same time he hit the man on the forehead with his left hand. These two movements cut the man's windpipe and aorta and he collapsed. Blood spurted from the slit neck. The man lay with the death rattle in his throat; Žuća licked the sides of the dagger, saying to himself: 'Boy, isn't Jewish blood so sweet!'

To clean the knife completely, he bent and rubbed it against the coat of the dying victim. As he bent up, a smile of pleasure flickered across his

face until he put the dagger back in its sheath. Then he turned left and right and shouted in a piercing voice: 'Grave-diggers! Grave-diggers!'

Two prisoners showed up almost immediately with a stretcher. As if they had been at the ready, as if they had known in advance where and when the crime was going to happen. They put the poor man, who was still heard growling, on the stretcher and took him away. Žuća adjusted his belt with a contented movement and briskly walked away for another bloody tour of the camp, in search of new victims.

It took me long before I could move from the bricks, petrified, unable to believe what my eyes had just seen. I asked myself a thousand times – why they were doing it, what for, why they were thinking of the most brutal methods to kill us. Are we ever going to be able to answer that question?

During the time I was imprisoned in the camp, long lines of cattle cars arrived almost daily, packed with internees. At times, even two or three such trains would arrive in one day. There were also people arriving on foot, long lines with practically complete village populations, ranging from babies to older people. The Ustashe ferried most of the new arrivals across the River Sava to Donja Gradina, a Serbian village whose inhabitants had been previously killed. That was the killing field and the victims were thrown into long graves. Let me describe an incident which I saw happen with my own eyes from the vicinity.

It was March 1942. The day was cold and gloomy and it was drizzling. I was one of a group of prisoners cleaning the space around the camp gate. The tall two-piece gate secured with dense barb wire started to open. There were two tall wooden watchtowers on both sides of the entrance gate, with strong floodlights and guards with machine guns. I curiously looked at the entrance. A few meters away from the gate I saw a line of men, women and children. The Ustashe were brining them in, hitting them with rifle butts. When they came closer, I could tell by their clothing they were Serbian peasants from Bosnia. They were frightened, confused, and the Ustashe kept hitting them mercilessly, hailing curses and threats on them. I spotted a group of women with children; among them was a comely young woman wearing a kerchief. She must have been twenty-three, twenty-four. She had a baby in her arms, while a cute but scared-looking four-year-old boy was holding on to her skirt.

The Ustashe separated the children from the parents in a roughest manner. The mothers were heard screaming, the children were crying. An Ustasha went up to the young women with a baby in her arms, pulled the boy away from her and pushed him to the side where the other separated children were. The crying and screaming were getting louder, while the sadists' faces

beamed with contentedness. The Ustasha who had pulled the little boy apart from the woman approached her again as he now wanted to take the baby out of her arms too. The mother's face showed anger and fear, but also the resolve not to let them get the baby, which she now pressed harder against the chest. The Ustasha grabbed the baby with his both hands trying to pull it out, while the woman, holding the baby fast with her left arm suddenly caught at the Ustasha's throat with her right hand and squeezed him so hard he started to choke, rolling his eyes and sticking his tongue out. Seeing what was going on, another Ustasha approached the woman from the back and hit her hard with a rifle butt, sending her down in the mud. She fell directly over the baby, who was crying more and more loudly. The Ustasha who had been being strangled pulled himself together, turned the woman on her back and reached for the baby again. He was now furious, not only because of the resistance the woman was putting up, but also because she had embarrassed him in front of his Ustashe. Enraged, he kept pulling at the child; the women pressed the child hard against the chest with her both hands and wouldn't let go of the baby. Burning with rage, he hit the woman in the stomach with the heel of his boot and pulled the baby with a jerk. The woman lay on the ground, listless and dazed. The Ustasha cursed: 'Serbian mother fuckers, we'll kill you all! Who do you think you were strangling!'

The child was now in his hands, crying; he cursed and removed the swaddling band, took it by the legs and started spinning it. He spun it with more and more power and unexpectedly hit the baby against the ground next to the mother's head. The child's head burst like a ripe melon, its blood and brain splattering over the mother's maddened face. The poor woman yielded a scream of despair and lost consciousness. I saw they grabbed her by the legs and pulled her to the side.

They took the children separated from the parents to the recesses of the camp and I lost sight of them. The children's cries and screams were getting weaker. The desperate mothers kept calling their names: 'Milan! Marko! Marija!'

The adult peasants were taken to the River Sava, which ran right by the side of the camp. They ferried them to Donja Gradina, where the mass slayings were committed. There was this forbidding clattering sound of the capstan used to reel the steel rope with which the ferry was moved across the river. Crying and whining faded in the distance, along with the sinister sound of the departing ferry.

The camp gate was shut again. Those who were kept in the camp were faced with a long time of suffering before death, and this is how it went:

- The food was meager and could keep you going for barely a month;

- Hard labor additionally exhausted the prisoners, who died en masse;
- Diseases such as typhus and dysentery increased the death rate.

Every morning we had to take the dead out of the barracks and put them on pile in front like logs. Grave-diggers took it on from there. They frequently made us form a line in front of the barracks in the middle of the night, after which they would light our faces with a torch, cherry-picking those who looked weak and worn out, sending them to another line intended for execution; all they kept saying was: you, you, you... *[A lady participant in the audience asked Mr. Danon to describe an incident of children mass slaughter, which he accepted.]*

It was a sunny morning in March. After the terrible procedure in which children were separated from their parents after they had all been brought in from a village in Bosnia, we were standing in line before the barracks, waiting for someone to take us to work. An Ustasha came and started selecting the prisoners looking young and strong. We were given shovels and picks and taken for the gate. It immediately crossed my mind this would be a job outside the camp grounds and maybe I could grab a moment and escape. I never lost hope and waited for a chance to escape whenever we left the camp.

We left the camp walking in line with two people abreast; there were about twenty of us and they took us eastwards, to the field of Lonj. We walked a kilometer. The Ustashe stopped us and an Ustasha NCO, a corporal, took four pickets and stuck them in the ground, marking the corners of a sizeable rectangle. He said briefly: 'Dig here to the depth of six feet.' I understood very well we were digging a huge mass grave.

It was a bright, sunny day. We were pleasantly warmed by the sunshine of early spring. We began digging, while the Ustashe yelled curses at us forcing us to work faster. The hole was huge, so by digging at a frantic pace we were only capable of finishing the job around two or three in the afternoon. We were fatigued and sat down on the ground to get some rest. I saw Ustashe approaching in the distance, with an unrecognizable mass of something moving along. When they came closer, we could clearly make out it was made up of children of different ages, ranging from two to five or six years of age. Judging by their clothes, they were mainly Serbian and Jewish children, all of them looking wretched, tired out, famished. According to my estimate, there were over two hundred children there. I thought the children from the Bosnian Serb transport must be among them. I heard an Ustasha tell the children: 'Come with me, I'm taking you to your mothers...'

Twenty of them followed, believing his words naively. When they got close to the pit, a few Ustashe went up to the children and surrounded them, taking one child after another, passing them on closer and closer to the pit.

The last Ustasha in line, who was standing next to the pit, had a common carpenter's hammer in his hand. He would receive a child, give it a heavy blow in the back of the head and throw it in the pit. A shrill scream was heard after every blow, followed by a thud as the body fell in the pit. For a short while everything was silent after that.

Famished children were commonly separated from their parents at the camp in Stara Gradiška and tortured to death in most brutal ways.

We watched this from a 30-meter distance. After they had killed the first group, one of the Ustashe went to the big group of children standing a hundred meters away and used the same trick, by promising he would take them to their parents, to bring them to the pit. The children in the big group couldn't tell what was going on because the Ustashe were sheltering the pit and the terrible thing happening there with their bodies.

I turned my back so I wouldn't have to watch this horror any longer. An elderly Jew was standing next to me, whining in pain and helplessness. He raised his eyes to the skies and said loudly: 'Lord, if you exist, send your lightning down on these villains and kill them!' But the skies above us remained silent and nothing could stop what the Ustashe were doing. And yet, they were versed in doing their gruesome work and finished it quite fast. They told us to cover the pit. We worked until dark, dreading they might kill us as well, because the Ustashe always tried to destroy the witnesses of their crimes and atrocities.

When the work was done, we returned to the camp again walking in line two by two. I had witnessed a most dreadful atrocity and walked like a zombie, desperate and benumbed. I heard the voice of the prisoner walking by my side: 'We were lucky they didn't kill us too.' Despite everything, I also felt some secret happiness over the fact I was alive.

Now that I've told you this, it would be impossible not to react to the new exhibition at Jasenovac, whose authors have done their best to conceal the committed crimes. I believe we need to put a lot more energy in our struggle to disseminate the truth about Jasenovac and bring the perpetrators to justice. The situation is alarming and we must not waste time any more.

I am one of the rare survivors who are still alive and on behalf of the numerous victims and their descendants, I request that the relevant authorities immediately file a lawsuit to the International Tribunal in The Hague for the perpetrated genocide and identify its perpetrators in the Nazi state of Croatia. They should also file a reparations claim on behalf of the victims of genocide and their descendants.

Thank you for being such an appreciative audience. [*most of the people in the room were crying*]

Mr. Ilija Ivanović

Let me introduce myself so you know who I am. I am Ilija Ivanović of Donji Podgradci, who spent three whole years at the Jasenovac camp and happened to survive the breakout on 22. April 1945.

I listened patiently to the accounts. I could speak to you for very long, but I appreciate your patience. I would like to tell you only one thing: the Jasenovac camp was a death camp, built specially to exterminate Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, also anti-fascists, those who opposed the Croatian politics at the time. The Ustashe had the main say. Nonetheless, you should not forget there were criminals among those other units, the so-called regular Croatian army, i.e. Croatian Home Guardsmen. What I'm saying is this handful of Ustashe would not have been able to do what they did if they hadn't had public support at that time, where some were supposedly mistaken, delusional, this and that. When I escaped from Jasenovac on 22 April 1945, I fell once more into the hands... Home Guardsmen caught me as I was trying to cross the railroad into the woods. He ambushed me behind a bush, grabbed me by the hand. I was 16 at the time. Now, look, I wasn't able to break free from him, nor did I have the strength. Back in 1945 I was 16 and a half; when I returned home, I weighed 35 kilos. Everybody felt pity for me. And, one more thing: I can speak about the Jasenovac camp for hours, but I sympathise with you, I've run out of patience myself, I don't want to bother you anymore. Still, some... let me tell you about one or a couple of incidents.

In 1942, when they brought us after the Ustasha offensive, around four... three to four hundred boys aged 12 to 15 arrived with this group. Let's say, let's round it off at 350, they were all boys from Mount Kozara, they were peers. In the autumn of [1945], a hundred of us still remained, supposedly selected for craftwork. Along with those hundred boys, late in the autumn a group of boys from the initial group returned too. They were brought back from somewhere, they came back. When I talked to them and came, they said they had been in different villages – Bistrica, Gašnica and here in Vrbaška – where else – in Potkozarje and the area around Dubica, that Ustashe guarded them, made them pick and collect the harvest. That's what they had been doing. After they brought them back, they stayed a single night. I had a cousin in this group, Branko Zmijanac, my aunt's son, who came back, he was brought back to Jasenovac. He was sick. He was in some kind of... they put them in a porch, [...]. I found out they had arrived. I went to him, brought him

water to drink. The next morning my master sent me – I had been assigned to a master at the barber's at the brickyard, [Alkavac Mojč] from Zagreb, a Jew. He sent me to fetch some soap, which we had no idea was produced from human flesh, human bones, maybe even from some relatives of mine who ended at [Gradina].

Now look, I was headed back with it and stopped by at the barracks to see that cousin of mine, aunt Branka's son, whatever. Silence, not a soul there. During the night or late the previous night, the Ustashe to Donja Gradina... All I could see were scattered village bags and trifles. They weren't there, clearly, no more, they were gone. Next...

Comment from the audience: They killed people three days before the breakout. Massacred them. So say [...].

Mr. Ilija Ivanović: Another time I went away in the autumn, I was also sent from the brickyard to fetch soap. When I was coming back... It was a autumn, late autumn, there used to be a cabbage field worked by the inmates behind the camp kitchen, and right behind it there was wire and a watch, as the wall hadn't been built yet. An inmate sneaked there before me, jumped inside – there wasn't... only a thin wire or two, it was inside the camp – and he pulled and picked a cabbage head and ran back eating greedily. An Ustasha was behind the kitchen and yelled at him: 'Hold it, hold it!' The guy stopped. He ran over to him, I was walking maybe fifty – not even fifty, thirty meters away from them, in passing – he came up to him, the guy begged him – he wouldn't do it again, it was his first time. [*The Ustasha*] said: 'I have been waiting to catch you for a long time.' He took out that long two-bladed dagger and slaughtered him before my eyes. For cabbage! I darted to the barber's at the brickyard and started yelling about what had happened all shaken, but the older inmates told me: 'Hush' – they used to call me 'son' there because I was young – 'son, hush, that's nothing.' I was perplexed, what do they mean – it's nothing, they just slaughtered a man back there, and he says it's nothing. That's what happened then.

One more thing, let me tell you, it's not true what they're saying – Jasenovac [*was*] a labor camp. I will speak in percentages, even though that's not very popular. As for the percentage, it was a labor camp nine to ten percent. Somebody had to work to produce food for those Ustashe, to do this or that, build the embankment of death there, they had to erect that wall around themselves, produce bricks so they could build a wall to stop them from running away, etc., make fetters so they could be fettered at the metal shop – it was the inmates who did all that. It's now this latest pro-Ustashe support on

the rise in Croatia who keep saying it was a labor camp. That much is true, the people had to work. They had a mass of people, so they made us go pick corn in the autumn, but they permanently destroyed and [brought] people in. Most of the men, women, children and old people who were deported to Jasenovac never even got inside their so-called labor camp; instead, they immediately turned them to Gradina, for the ferry and for their execution. Those transports practically arrived every day and the majority of them were women, children and old people. As an [underage] boy at that time, I couldn't figure out those people were gone. I can understand [...], even now, today, I can understand that people can kill an opponent who's of age, but I cannot understand nor will I ever that they can destroy little children, babies, that complete families went missing in Lika, Slavonia, not to tell you about... not to mention my Mount Kozara and this area, all of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srem all the way to Zemun, that they brought in transports of people who never got inside, maybe there are not even any records of them anywhere.

I managed to get out by mere chance. Let me tell you this too. I... during the breakout, when we escaped from the Jasenovac camp on 22 April 1945, I didn't know about it. I can't claim now I was some kind of organizer. I wasn't. I was a 16-and-a-half-year-old boy back then. The grown-up men, as they had locked us up in a building, all of us, there were around 1100 of us there, and during the night they came and took away the people they suspected might organize something, [...]. However, they didn't manage it fully. At that time, during the night, they planted mines all around the camp, all those... around what was supposedly a labor camp. There was the brickyard, metal shop, estate, [...], carpentry shop, where we produced tools, I know it personally. I saw many times Luburić, Friar Filipović Majstorović and Ćilipi and others. I spent three years there. Look, then, on 22 April, I mean on 21, they killed the last remaining women, not a single woman was left alive. They took them to Gradina and put us in the building where they used to be [kept]. In the morning... I remember a peer of mine, Dušan Trpuš of Sovjak near Bosanska Gradiška, who always had a rope around... In the morning he hanged himself, maybe ten to fifteen minutes before the breakout. There was a sudden rush. In the breakout I saw everybody was running, so I started running too and got out, let me not go on and bother you any further.

Question from the audience: Ilija, please, stay there one more minute and answer this question: when you escaped from the camp, out of 1,220 inmates, 106 got to the woods, while 1,114 stayed on heaps, cut by machine gun fire. You stayed alone, stung all over, looking terrible, with your feet bare and full of blackberry and hawthorn prickles. You found yourself among Home

Guardsmen, but you never told us what the Guardsman did with you? Since Croatian Home Guardsmen were considered a better army, they treated us with more mercy, while it was Ustashe who were the killers, what did he do with you?

Mr. Ilija Ivanović: He caught my arm. I ran straight into him. He caught my arm and took me straight to Ustashe. Then I changed my first and last name, I called myself a different first and last name, let me not bother you with it, I told a story, that's it.

Question from the audience: Tell us, you faked your identity. What was your nationality when you introduced yourself? When you introduced yourself to the Ustashe, a different first and last name, whose names were they and what nationality were you then?

Mr. Ilija Ivanović: I told them my name was Stipe Franić, my father's name was Josip and my mother's was Jozefina. In truth, my father's name is Mile and my mother's Olga. I also said I came from Dubrave near Bosanska Gradiška, and I kept lying and quibbling. They were playing cards in a bunker and asked me a few questions. Nothing. Then Germans passed by in a double-header with a huge hook shaped like a sickle, and they checked all the rounded sleepers, threw fliers to the Ustashe, and – how should I put this, [...]. I am very sorry, that flier would be worth millions and millions today. I am very sorry. In that flier... let me tell you... back then I was like a radar, I absorbed everything, you can send a 16-year-old boy, I retained it all. The Ustashe read the flier. It said – I'll try to paraphrase it: Croatian brothers, Ustashe brothers, we are getting ready, we are losing the war; infiltrate yourselves into that society, get inside, dig, undermine, the final victory will be ours. You know what, I couldn't stop thinking about that... I can't, there is something about it that could have been uncovered. That's how it was – there, you see what happened. Croatia was first recognized by Germany and the Vatican, I don't know, all those who [...] *[applause]*. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL PAPERS

Professor Rajko Doleček

ACTION TO PREVENT COVERING UP THE TRUTH

Dear friends,

Let me send you very warm greetings from the Czech Republic. It is with bitterness I have been receiving the news of the attempts of the fathers and grandfathers of the Jasenovac Ustasha executioners from Croatia, supported by their patrons and, unfortunately, like-minded Western allies, to present the Jasenovac horrors as a labor camp, a place where prisoners may have died, but certainly not a place where mainly Serbs or Roms died. My mom's family, who was a Bosnian Serb, lost over 40 members in the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia, of whom two close kindred died at Jasenovac.

Recently, I published a book in the Czech Republic, a 400-page volume entitled *Uncensored Images from the History of the Yugoslav Brethren – Who Broke Yugoslavia Up*, where I wrote about Jasenovac, the most notorious concentration and extermination camp in the fascist Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945), where around 500-600,000 internees were killed, including children. They were mainly Serbs, with 20-25,000 Jews, 40-80,000 Roms (since that time Roms have been extinct in Croatia), opponents of the fascist regime in Croatia. N. Lewis, an American journalist, wrote about a particularly cruel killing method practiced at Jasenovac (*A Death Camp in the Nazi Croatia*, the *New York Times*, 14th November 2001). He estimates approximately 100,000 prisoners were killed, mainly Serbs. There is a memorial plaque for the Jasenovac victims standing at a prominent place at the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. I saw it with my wife. We shouldn't forget the monumental work *Magnum Crimen* by Croatian professor Viktor Novak (1948), who wrote more than 1,000 pages to describe the crimes committed in Croatia, including Jasenovac, by the Ustasha criminals assisted by a group of the Roman Catholic clergy against their Orthodox Christian brothers.

These days many international liars and rascals are trying not only to minimize the number of Serbian victims at Jasenovac, but to practically present it as a place where not that many Serbs were killed at all. The Roma have been completely removed from the list of victims of the Ustasha executioners at Jasenovac. They are trying to rewrite history, to turn Jasenovac, a symbol of massacres and brutality, into a kind of labor camp. What would Jews say if someone tried to turn Auschwitz into a forced labor camp for the slogan 'Arbeit macht frei', and minimize the unbelievably high number of Jews massacred there? Just as denying the Holocaust committed against Jews in Nazi Germany is now a punishable offence in many countries, the same should be done with those trying to trivialize the mass slaughters of Serbs at Jasenovac, a camp which surpassed even the Nazi camps with its brutality, as written by the mentioned American journalist N. Lewis.

Ms. Smilja Tišma

CONCENTRATION CAMP JASENOVAC, REVISIONISM AND FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear friends and comrades, dear friends victimised by the same enemy,

It is my great honour and pleasure to have this opportunity to greet this highly esteemed conference and all its attendees on behalf of the Alliance of 1941-1945 Independent State of Croatia Genocide Camps Inmates and Their Descendants. In particular, I would like to greet the highly reputed gentlemen – the attending researchers, representatives of certain institutions, who explore the issues of crime and genocide, benefactors and commemorators of the victims of fascism, and I especially wish to greet Professor Bernard Klein from the U.S., Chair of the Jasenovac International Commission, together with the Commission members.

I am exceptionally grateful to the Government of the Republic of Srpska and the Prime Minister, Mr. Milorad Dodik, for making it possible to hold the International Conference on Jasenovac in Banja Luka in such financially difficult circumstances, also unfavourable from many other aspects.

The Alliance on whose behalf I am speaking here gathers members who were only children, ranging from new born babies to those aged 14, during a time that was devastating for these people – Serbs, Jews and Roms in the Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945, descendents of the camp prisoners and victims of Nazi fascist Croatia and preservers of the memory of the victims.

Some research has been done and many books, studies, monographs written on the subject of the Jasenovac concentration camp, revisionism and struggle for justice, as well as on what led to the creation of similar killing fields used to execute innocent people, on how atrocities were committed, how victims were killed and mass crimes committed, but all that is incomplete and incomprehensive to account for the total area of the former Yugoslavia. The truth about the mass crimes committed against the Serbian, Jewish and Romani people in the Independent State of Croatia during World War II is coming out with difficulty, but we must persevere, for only one thing is certain – that has to be continued.

‘The truth about the Jasenovac camps is a disputed truth – a highly disputed, aggressively disputed truth,’ says Professor Michael Berenbaum from Los Angeles, California, in his preface to Dr. Milan Bulajić’s book *The Role of the Vatican in the Nazi Croatia*.

The Independent State of Croatia, as we know, was established suiting the will and with the assistance of the Vatican, Nazi fascist Germany and Italy.

On 10 April 1941, the Croatian people in Zagreb came out en masse to greet the Germans with songs, strewing flowers on the streets they passed. There is no information that any place else in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia the German invader was welcomed with flowers and singing in praise of its glory as it happened in Zagreb.

The Independent State of Croatia was a fascist creation. It used German laws and followed the instructions of Nazi fascist Germany in creating its camps. Yet, Croatia surpassed Germany in terms of the methods and manner of committing atrocities in the camps and at other execution sites, in which sense Jasenovac is more infamous than Auschwitz, which normally has the reputation of the most horrible camp in invaded Europe.

On 11 April 1941, the day after the Kingdom of Yugoslavia capitulated, Pavelić showed up in Zagreb with his 300 Ustashe. Now, it is important to say that prior to that Croatia had not been an independent state for eight centuries. The whole time one foreign administration replaced another on Croatian land – Venetian, Turkish, Italian, Hungarian, Austro-Hungarian.

Pavelić's Ustasha authorities immediately began the rule of terror. The first arrests of reputable Serbs took place as early as 14 April 1941 throughout the Independent State of Croatia and these people were subsequently deported to camps – Danica, Lepoglava, Gospić, Jadovno, Pag, Sremska Mitrovica, Bjelovar and others. The camp Jasenovac was opened on 19 August 1941 and the inmates from some of the above mentioned camps were relocated. Administratively the Independent State of Croatia covered Bosnia and Herzegovina and Srem all the way to Zemun and the River Sava. There were camps all over its territory – 83 camps and admission stations for deportees. The most notorious of all was the camp Jasenovac, which in truth comprised a system of camps – Bosanska Gradiška, Mlaka, Cerovljani, Sisak, Đakovo, Gornja Rijeka, Staro sajmište (Old Fair) in Zemun and many more. A camp was opened in Gornja Rijeka near Križevci specially for Jewish women and children – in agreement with the decree that all 'unwelcome and dangerous persons are to be interned in camps'. There were special camps for children in Stara Gradiška, Sisak, Jastrebarsko and other places. Today, Croatian officials claim they were labor camps for children, ranging from new born babies to those aged 14.

The decree dated 26 November 1941, ordering that 'unwelcome and dangerous persons' are to be imprisoned and kept by force in concentration and labor camps, meant a formal legalisation of the Nazi Ustasha system of genocide camps in the Independent State of Croatia.

After the proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia, Vejkoslav Luburić Max, one of the most infamous criminals of 20th century and commander of all concentration camps in the Independent State of Croatia, ordered to his subordinate Ustashe that they should do their best to eradicate the Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia without mercy and at any cost, because that was a strategy that had to be put in place. Likewise, Milovan Žanić, President of the Independent State of Croatia's Legislative Commission, stated on 31 May 1941: 'There are no methods to which we, the Ustashe, would not resort to in making this land Croatian and cleansing it from Serbs. Destroy them wherever you can.' Those days, many similar statements were heard coming from officials of the Independent State of Croatia, similar to Ante Starčević previously, in 1774, when the program was first drawn up; Ante Starčević was member of the Croatian Party of Right, who used to say their goal was 'uniting Croatia, Dalmatia, Rijeka, Međimurje, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Istria, Carniola, Carinthia and Styria within the borders of a Greater Croatia – the Habsburg Monarchy'.

Apart from exterminating the Serbian, Jewish and Romani people in camps in the Independent State of Croatia, a large number of the victims

perished as they were taken away from home, butchered and killed, thrown into abysses, rivers, wells. Dane Lastavica of Sremski Karlovci has been doing research for several years and has identified 309 different killing fields. His description of each site contains its geographical name and a local name, with a total of around 86,542 victims listed with their full names. The pits into which victims were thrown were between 50 and 70 meters deep, and very few victims managed to escape the slaughter and dying in this way. For example, Ljuban Jednak was the sole survivor of the slaughter in the Glina church in 1941 (1,038 victims); gravely wounded, he crawled from under the corpses and stayed alive, suffering a serious bodily disablement. He lived to see another massacre in 1991-1995 and died three years ago, as a refugee in Serbia. An appalling massacre was perpetrated at the Sremska Mitrovica cemetery in June 1942 – 9,642 victims, village men, both old and young, Serbs with some Jews and Roms. One of the survivors was Mr. Đorđe Krstić, an engineer from Belgrade and a member of the Alliance; he was still a child at the time; he deceased a month ago. His father and grandfather instructed him and two other boys to escape from the line they were standing in, waiting to be massacred, and he survived. There is evidence of the event at the Sremska Mitrovica Home Museum. The victims were brought from Sremska Mitrovica and the neighboring villages – Lačarak, Martinci, Kuzmin, Čalma, Erdevik, Bingula, Divoš, Bosut; complete male populations were killed in villages Vizić and Đipsa, all the houses were burnt. There were many similar killing fields, and as said previously, Dane Lastavica has identified 309 such sites. Jews and Romanis were killed on the spot, without mercy.

Basically, in 1935, Ante Pavelić elaborated Ante Starčević's programme drawn up in the second half of 19th century; he did it with his associates, Ustashe, wholeheartedly supported by the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church, which helped to accomplish it consistently. The goal was destroying all Jews and Romanis; it was almost fully accomplished for the Roma, while some Jews survived. As for the two million Serbs living in the Independent State of Croatia prior to World War II, one-third was to have been converted into Roman Catholicism, one-third banished and one-third killed. Whatever remained unaccomplished after 1941-1945 was completed in 1990s; the same masterminds and perpetrators repeated these crimes ('Storm', 'Flash', 250,000 banished Serbian families, their homes torched, victims massacred around Lika, Kordun, Bania, Slavonia). The proven methods dating back to 1941-1945 were used to commit these crimes.

Just before World War II, in 1940, around 30 thousand Jews were living in Croatia, along with another 4,000 who had fled other countries to take refuge there. Slightly more than 82,000 Jews were living in the Kingdom

of Yugoslavia, of which 62,000 perished, which makes around 82 percent. According to 1941 Croatian Ustasha records, there were 39,500 Jews living on Croatian territory at the time of the proclamation of independence.

Ognjen Kraus, President of the Zagreb Jewish Community, said publicly at the Jasenovac Commemoration on 25 April 1999: 'Jasenovac was the biggest Croatian extermination site for the Jews of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia... There are 3,000 Jews living in Croatia today, while 21,000 perished in the Ustasha genocide. This place has to stay a permanent memorial for the victims of the Ustashe and a warning for the future and for the humanity. May this serve as testimony of the truth of what transpired. It needs to be said clearly who committed the genocide.'

In September 1942, the Independent State of Croatia's Foreign Minister said: 'There cannot be the State of Croatia as long as a single out of eight million Serbs is living in it, and as long as we have a strong Serbian state behind our back, which is a constant threat for us. Therefore, we are happy that the Independent State of Croatia was founded at this very moment and it is only now that we can resolve this issue... We are doing our best to cleanse the Serbs and remove them from our lands; ...So far, a lot has been done.'¹¹

The number of victims is continuously manipulated, thus repeating the genocide against its innocent victims. Today 4.3 percent Serbs are living in Croatia, out of 12 percent living there before the events in 1990s.

The crimes and genocide were planned and organised by the Independent State of Croatia and it was the Ustashe who perpetrated that crime; unfortunately, the implementation of those plans is now in its final phase.

According to German sources, by 6 September 1943, 600 thousand victims perished in Jasenovac, 75 thousand in Stara Gradiška, 86,543 victims in the Gospić system of camps, and only these few incomplete figures amount to around 750 thousand. Crimes continued to be committed after 6 September 1943 until 22 April 1945, when inmates broke out of the Jasenovac camp. What about the figures from other killing fields, which were also previously mentioned through individual examples? In his book *Wastelands of Historical Reality*, published in 1989, Franjo Tuđman claims between 10 and 20 thousand victims died in camps at the most. Officially, Croatia's state that not more than 80 to 86 thousand victims died.

Nonetheless, based on the research conducted to date, estimates in both published and unpublished documents claim that a total of around

¹¹ The quote was taken from Dr Milan Bulajić's book *The Vatican in the Nazi Croatia*, p. 9

1,400,000 to 1,450,000 Serbian, Jewish and Romani people died in the Independent State of Croatia during World War II. This may be taken as the accurate figure.

Croatia pressed charges against Serbia before the International Tribunal for the alleged crime of genocide perpetrated by Serbs against Croats, instead of the opposite taking place, Serbia bringing charges against Croatia for the crime committed, because Croatia did commit genocide.

In order to prove Croatia's responsibility for the genocide committed against Serbs and other people, for destroying their lives, property and cultural heritage during 1941-1945 and 1991-1995, it is with the utmost urgency that these appropriate measures should be undertaken:

1. Serbia and the Republic of Srpska have to pass a resolution demanding that Croatia admits it committed genocide against Serbs, Jews and Romanis as a precondition for its ascension to the European Union, just as France did in the preceding months for Turkey and the genocide it committed against Armenians in 1915; and

2. Countercharges have to be brought against Croatia for the committed genocide and for it to pay the reparations for the lost lives, property and compensation of other types of damage, as defined at the beginning of the passage.

The information displayed in the new exhibition at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum, opened on 27 November 2006, shows best how far today's Croatia can go.

A separate poster reads that 69,842 victims died, of which 39,580 were Serbs, 14,599 Romanis and 10,700 Jews. A number of Muslims, Croats, Slovaks and others are also presented, making 4,000 altogether. What about the other victims – at least those 80 thousand that official Croatia spoke about? You cannot tell who committed those crimes, what country it happened in; there are screens displaying lines of people, without saying who those people are, where they are coming from or which nation they belong to; there is nothing to remind the visitor how the victims died, who killed those victims, there isn't a single name – whether that of Max Luburić, Dinko Šakić, Ljubo Miloš or anyone of the many other murderers; most importantly, there is nothing to explain who built those camps, there isn't a tiniest replica of the camp, its description is missing, etc. The Roma were killed at the Uštica camp. A single grave holds the bodies of 12,500 Roms, while another eight graves have been detected but are still unexamined. It is estimated there are another 4,000 victims in those graves, maybe more. The exhibition doesn't say anything about that.

A delegation of our Alliance attended the new exhibition opening

ceremony and they gave their opinion on the exhibition, which was published in the column 'Between Us' in the daily *Politika* on 22 December 2006; the article was entitled 'Whitewashing the Jasenovac Truth'. There was a lot of writing about the new exhibition in various daily and weekly newspapers. Slobodan Kljakić, a *Politika* reporter, said on 2 December 2006 in the column 'Views': 'Emotions, ideological, political and state rationales should back off for the benefit of critical research and the moral imperative to <face the truth of the past>'; he continues by quoting a few speakers at the opening – Stipe Mesić, who said that 'the brutality and horror that took place there are not shown sufficiently'; Ivo Sanader – 'it needs more emphasis'; Julijana Koš, member of the Council, said 'the exhibition is shameful and horrible, and Ustashe would be very pleased with it'. In terms of some of its key elements, it is as if Dr. Tuđman's claim of the 'Jasenovac myth' come into being with the 'new display', says Slobodan Kljakić at the end of his text.

It is particularly worthy reporting the opinion of Ephraim Zuroff, Director of the Center Simon Wiesenthal in Jerusalem, about the new exhibition. It was published on 5 December 2006 in an article in *Globus*, Zagreb, entitled 'Ustashe are not anonymous killers'; among other things he says: 'Stipe Mesić, Ivo Sanader and the Sabor Chair Vladimir Šeks stress it is a country of humanist values, which sees its future as part of Europe, and discarding the Ustasha evil... the fact Jasenovac was built to look like Treblinka and other Nazi camps is not true, because Treblinka was built after Jasenovac; there is no mention of Dinko Šakić and the others, while the perpetrators are referred to as 'Ustashe', as if they had been some anonymous murderers; I was very disappointed by the exhibition', says Mr. Zuroff and wonders why there are no photos showing Vjekoslav Max Luburić, Ivica Matković or Miroslav Filipović Majstorović or Ljubo Miloš or Dominik Piculi, or Šakić at least. As if there had been no personal responsibility involved in the genocide against the Serbs and Roms, in the Holocaust against the Jews and in the killing of Croatian anti-fascists... The list does not specify the victims' ethnic or religious background. That reminds me of Franjo Tuđman's effort to turn Jasenovac into a national altar for all Croatian victims and perpetrators. It's a big problem if it's trying to lump them together.' In the end, he also says: 'To my astonishment, there isn't a single photo there showing any of the camp commanders or any of the key criminals.' A number of dailies published similar or identical reviews.

The graves at Donja Gradina holding the Jasenovac victims, who were killed in the genocide, cover an area equalling a medium-sized town. The victims were either first killed and then taken to the field, or they were brought alive and subsequently massacred there. There are two killing fields –

Jasenovac and Donja Gradina, which made a single space from 1941 to 1945. There have been commemorations at Donja Gradina since several years ago. These are too very important complexes. Since we know what the new exhibition at Jasenovac looks like, this imposes a serious need to come up with a solution of how to arrange and build the Donja Gradina Memorial Park to fulfill the need and the requirements to have a permanent memorial which will commemorate with dignity the hundreds of thousands of victims who perished tragically in the Ustasha butchers' atrocities and found peace at those grounds.

In 20th century mass crimes and large-scale genocide were committed against Serbs on three occasions, in World War I, World War II, and we also have the persecution at the end of 20th century, from 1991 to 1995. The crimes perpetrated in the Independent State of Croatia during World War II are the most appalling crimes suffered by the Serbian people in that century, which will be remembered and have to be remembered by generations and generations in the centuries to come. Therefore, it is necessary to create the conditions needed to make the memory of those tragic victims eternal, as a human and moral value, passing this memory from generation to generation through centuries.

Unfortunately, little is known today about the camps which once existed in the states which formerly constituted Yugoslavia, about the camp Jasenovac and other killing fields. The state ought to introduce as obligatory lessons in primary and secondary education, as well as in textbooks, as appropriate (history textbooks, readers and other literature) in order to present contemporary history and the genocide committed in World War II. Unlike other European cities, Belgrade does not have a permanent exhibition yet, one which would be accessible to the broader public, especially to its foreign visitors, who now visit Belgrade daily. For a while now the Alliance has been pushing forward this idea at the relevant institutions. It is essential that a memorial be built in Belgrade for all the victims of fascism.

The issue of paying reparations to the camp prisoners and victims of fascism living in the Republic of Srpska and Serbia has been taken very seriously, especially by the Alliance of Camp Inmates covering the Republic of Serbia. The Alliance has been dealing with this issue for some time now, but with no results. This issue was raised at the Second Conference on Jasenovac in 2000 as well. The issue of reparations was fully presented from different aspects at the Symposium 'Jasenovac – Days of Commemoration of Genocide Victims', held 21-23 April 2005 in Belgrade, in a paper entitled 'The position of the Independent State of Croatia genocide camp survivors

and prisoners' descendents'.¹²

The Declarations adopted at the previous International Conferences on the Jasenovac camps and the one which will be adopted at this Conference are not goals in themselves, but rather a serious ambition and a need to initiate and conduct certain activities on an international level in a certain direction, with the aim of a broader international promotion of the awareness of the Holocaust, genocide and other mass crimes committed in World War II, so those horrors never happen again to anyone.

We believe the messages of the International Conference on the Jasenovac camps are such that we have to treat and act in accordance with the adopted documents with a lot of attention and responsibility in order to implement them.

The principal considerations and a conclusion proposal

The twentieth century will be remembered in history as a century of numerous armed conflicts worldwide, of horrible crimes and destruction of people and property.

In particular, the Serbian people suffered terrible persecution for the reasons of its national, religious and ethnic background.

It is well known that through history Serbs fought and died for freedom and for their state, and that they also helped other people in this fight.

In his correspondence with Professor Rastislav B. Petrović, Dalibor Brozović, a Croatian scientist, says among other things: 'You, Serbs, had one way of creating your state, we had another. You spilt blood in the battlefield, we did it in times of peace, capitalising on your blood. As for us, Croats, we say and write many things which have nothing to do with science, only to make it science in the end. We ask for a lot to gain little, eventually we get all of it, even more.'

It is high time Serbs admitted it as a fact and demanded that once and for all it is recognised that the most serious crimes and ethnic cleansing were perpetrated against Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia in World War II.

The Independent State of Croatia was a fascist creation which planned and organised to commit crimes against the Serbian, Jewish, Romani and other people supporting anti-fascist views. Ustashe were only the perpetrators of those crimes, committing them in the most monstrous ways,

¹² The materials presented at the Symposium were published in the book of proceedings *Jasenovac – Days of Commemoration of Genocide Victims 2005/06*

unprecedented in the civilised world. It was Pavelić himself who designed a special knife for killing Serbs and called it the 'Serb-cutter'. A monstrous design by an ever more monstrous designer. The knife was manufactured by the famous German factory 'Solinger'.

Serbs are known as a freedom-loving people, never as invaders or perpetrators of crimes.

In World War I Serbs and Jews fought together, side by side. The same happened in World War II. At the same time, Croats had a division made up of Ustashe and Croatian Home Guardsmen sent to the the Eastern Front to fight along fascist Germany. In World War I they fought alongside the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, against Serbia, killing and hanging Serbian people across Mačva and Šumadija regions.

All humbleness aside, it was Serbs who won freedom for the Yugoslav people. Fleeing the Ustasha knife, Serbs formed Partisan units to fight against fascism the early days of 1941, especially in Lika, Kordun, Slavonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, all those regions where Ustashe were committing crimes. At the end of World War II, in 1945, the Partisan units of the People's Liberation Army had over 82 percent Serb fighters and less than 3 percent Croat fighters.

The current Croatian authorities say Croatia came out a winner in World War II. Unfortunately, this lie, repeated over and over again, is now taken as the truth.

The fascist ideas generated in 1941-1945 lived on in Croatia, one of the republics in the former Yugoslavia, even after 1945. What other explanation is there for the MASPOK events in the early 1970s, and especially for the events in 1990s? The crimes repeated once more based on people's ethnic and religious backgrounds, in the same ways and using the same methods as in 1941-1945, except that this time Serbs did not stand still waiting to be killed and deported to camps. Through all this Croatia enjoyed the generous help and support of the Vatican, Germany and, unfortunately, the United States of America. On 19 June 1941, Croatia declared war against the U.S., but the U.S. has apparently forgotten everything about it, as well as the crimes committed by Croatia in World War II.

The crimes happened again because the criminals were never brought to justice. Assuming the fake motto of 'brotherhood and unity', Croatia never accepted the responsibility for killing several hundreds of thousands of people in a most monstrous way – around 1,450,000 innocent Serbian, Jewish, Roma and other people, only because they were members of another ethnic group and professed a different faith.

Even 62 years after World War II, we still do not know the exact

number of victims and the extent of material damage (demolished churches, desecrated cemeteries, burnt and demolished houses, looted property).

According to international law, the statute of limitations does not apply to these crimes. Undeniably, Croatia committed genocide against Serbs and it has to pay for it. Of all the prisoners held at the genocide camps in the Independent State of Croatia from 1941 to 1945 and their descendents, only those victims who are currently officially residing in Serbia have received no reparations, along with a smaller number of prisoners from Bosnia and Herzegovina who have not exercised their rights either, as far as we know.

The German foundation 'Remembrance, Responsibility and Future' and Geneva-based IOM, an international association of camp prisoners, failed to inform the prospective beneficiaries about the possibility to submit their requests by 31 December 2001 to obtain reparations. The Alliance addressed a request for help to the German Chancellor Schröder, Ms. Merkel, the Managing Board of the Foundation in Berlin, some institutions in Serbia, but none of them sympathised with the former prisoners residing in Serbia or helped support their 529 requests submitted to IOM in Geneva in late 2003, demanding that they be decided in the affirmative, even though they were submitted after the set deadline of 31 December 2001.

Only Mr. Rasim Ljajic, Minister for Human and Minority Rights, demonstrated the willingness to help solve the problem, albeit late, as the joint institutions of Serbia and Montenegro ceased to exist in the meantime. The missions of the Foundation and IOM in Geneva also ended in late 2006.

Croatia brought charges to the International Tribunal against Serbs for the crimes of genocide allegedly committed against Croats, instead of the opposite taking place.

There have been proposals, fully elaborated and specifying funding sources, to build a memorial in Belgrade, the capital of the former Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro, currently the Serbian capital, dedicated to the victims of fascism who perished in World War II, something that has been done by many European states. By preserving the memory of the victims of fascism we pass this memory on to young generations, so that such horrors never happen again to anyone anywhere on our planet.

Young generations nowadays know very little about the mass killings of Serbs, Jews and Roma. The state and institutions in the education sector do nothing, or they do not do enough, to make sure school books are supplemented with the subject matter of the true events in contemporary history, the crimes committed in World War II.

One of the biggest culprits for the bad situation when it comes to these issues is the state, as it does not deal with or offer to solve the many

issues concerning the victims of fascism, camp survivors and their descendents. We have informed this respectable conference about some of the problems, as it is our wish to prompt the officials to consider these issues, while before all we ask this respectable conference for support regarding the issues which will be contained in the Conference Resolution. For that purpose we propose the following:

- In order to assess the approximate total number of victims of genocide, it is necessary to secure the funding and other requirements, in order to take the necessary steps to research further the located mass graves, locate those which haven't been located yet, as well as make it possible to publish the findings of the examinations conducted to date;

- Preserve the memory of the innocent victims of the Independent State of Croatia from 1941 to 1945, who died only because they belonged to a different nation and religion, so that such horrors never happen again; steps should be taken by state institutions to rebuild the memorials demolished in 1991-1995 and erect a memorial which will symbolise all victims of fascism in the former Yugoslavia;

- Take action to build a memorial at the site of the camp Staro sajmište (Old Fair) in New Belgrade; the Alliance has presented this initiative to the relevant institutions;

- Organize museum exhibitions to inform the broader public about the crimes committed from 1941 to 1945;

- The countries whose citizens suffered as victims of Croatia's genocide have to pass a resolution demanding that Croatia admits the 1941-1945 and 1991-1995 acts of genocide, just as France did a while ago for Turkey and the genocide it committed against Armenians in 1915; and

- Request with the utmost urgency that countercharges be pressed against Croatia demanding reparations for the lives it destroyed, for inflicting ordeal and suffering, destroying human dignity, looting and demolishing the property and cultural heritage of the Serbian people in World War II, as well as during the 1991-1995 events;

- Take steps and insist the prisoners of the genocide camps in the Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945 and their descendants exercise their right to reparations for the persecution and pain they experienced in the camps. For that purpose, it is necessary to create a legal framework in the national legislation, as previously proposed by the Alliance to the relevant institutions in Serbia. The avoidance to solve this case means a new act of genocide is being committed against the prospective beneficiaries, leading to a political problem, since some of our members from Bosnia and Herzegovina have already exercised this right. As prospective beneficiaries residing in

Serbia, we have an impression that we were intentionally denied the right to obtain the reparations through the German foundation 'Remembrance, Responsibility and Future';

- Take steps and insist the state assumes greater responsibility in resolving these and other issues and also solves them in an institutional manner.



DAY 2, BANSKI DVOR, CONCERT HALL

DECLARATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JASENOVAC

Mr. Janko Velimirović:

...Adopted the Declaration, while the Commission, the International Commission for the Truth about Jasenovac, which was established at the Second International Conference, sat in Banja Luka the day before yesterday and drew up a Draft Conference Declaration. You've got the handouts with the text, I'll read it in Serbian, and if there's a need to translate it into English for those participants who speak English, they have got the text, so I think perhaps it won't be necessary for interpreters to interpret it, but it'll be as they wish. You can do it simultaneously, but you have the text before you, you have the Serbian version as well, I am going to read it, and after that we can open a discussion before its adoption.



So, the Fourth International Conference for Establishing the Truth about the System of Death Camps Jasenovac in the Independent State of Croatia from 1941 to 1945, when genocide was committed against Serbs, Jews and the Roma, adopted this Declaration in its plenary session held in Banja Luka on 30 and 31 May 2007:

1. It supports the decisions and the Declaration adopted at the Third International Conference on Jasenovac, held at Hebrew University in Jerusalem on 29 and 30 December 2002.
2. It proposes to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the Governments of the Republic of Srpska, Croatia and Serbia to file a

lawsuit to put under UNESCO's international protection, i.e. on the World Heritage list the Jasenovac system of camps used for to exterminate Serbs, Jews, Roms and opponents of the Ustasha regime, whose original area is currently divided by the border between the states of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

3. It demands from the Government of the Republic of Srpska, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Governments of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Montenegro to introduce into their curricula the subject matter of genocide, especially the genocide committed at the Jasenovac system of death camps.

4. It fully supports the project 'Donja Gradina Memorial', as well as multi-disciplinary research in accordance with the project 'Jasenovac-Donja Gradina'.

5. It recommends that site Uštica, where mass graves containing more than 12,000 Roms are located, should be investigated urgently. By the way, Uštica is located on the Croatian side.

6. It denounces the minimisation of the executed Serbs, Jews and Roms in the media and publications, as well as the misrepresentation of the Jasenovac camp in the new exhibition of the Jasenovac Museum.

7. It demands from the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Governments of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska to file a lawsuit against the Republic of Croatia for the genocide committed against Serbs, Jews and Roms at the Jasenovac system of camps, where the genocide was committed.

8. It criticizes as negative and denounces the work of the Jasenovac Research Institute – you have it in English here – in New York, in America, and its Director Mr. Barry Lituchy, for his attempts to ban the distribution of the first edition of the English version of the Proceedings of the First Conference on Jasenovac, which was held in New York. The version published by the Jasenovac Institute is deemed a fake for its distorted and incomplete presentation of the testimonies and paper presentations of the participants at the mentioned Conference.

9. It recommends that the future International Conferences on Jasenovac be held at Banja Luka and at Donja Gradina, the place where the victims were killed. It is also recommended that the International Commission on Jasenovac gather at least once every year.

10. It supports the request to submit a request to the U.S. Congress and similar institutions to discuss the genocide committed by the Independent State of Croatia against Serbs, Jews and Roms in the Jasenovac system of death camps and adopt the necessary conclusions.

11. It proposes to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Governments of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska to file a reparations request to the International Tribunal at The Hague against Croatia to indemnify the victims of genocide and their descendants for the genocide committed at the Jasenovac system of camps from 1941 to 1945 by the Independent State of Croatia.

So, that is the text, and it is now on you to adopt it. Let me open the discussion and you can give suggestions for the final version.

Ms. Smilja Tišma:

[When we were writing] our report for this Conference, the first version of the material we submitted... I speak on behalf of the Alliance of the Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945 Camp Inmates and Their Descendants. The Alliance covers the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro. It's now only Serbia, but most of us are living in Belgrade and the vicinity, Banat, Bačka, [...], there is a small number of us in Serbia, Kraljevo, Vrnjačka Banja, Arandelovac and so on, but most of us are in Belgrade and the surroundings, Novi Sad, Sombor, Pančevo and so on.

We proposed two points in our first material. First, Croatia isn't going to admit it committed genocide. Since the war to this day, it has been trying in all possible ways to deceive people and the international community, but most of all us, the closest witnesses, the descendants, who have a first-hand experience of being in camps and know what the situation was and what that Croatia did, what monstrous things it did around the camps. There were eighty-three camps throughout Croatia, both concentration camps and those permanent, such as Jasenovac, Sisak, Stara Gradiška, Bjelovar, Jadovno, no need for me to name them all – eighty-three. In the initial material we requested that a reparations lawsuit should be filed. That's first.

And the second, which is in fact the first, it comes before this second issue, the reparations, forcing Croatia to admit it committed genocide against the Serbian people by setting as a condition a resolution by the states who suffered in the crimes committed by the Independent State of Croatia, which is primarily Serbia – the majority of us are living in Serbia today – and the Republic of Srpska, where also a large number of people perished during World War I... I mean, from 1941 to 1945 – those countries should sign a resolution as a condition before Croatia joins the European Union. That is the only way. They've been digging using all possible means, both legal and illegal, both in

the international and local legislation, to prove they did not commit the crime, that it was not the state that did it, but rather the Ustashe, supposedly it was some Ustashe, while for a fact it was specifically the Independent State of Croatia that did it during World War II, while the Ustashe were its executioners, they merely obeyed the orders of the Independent State of Croatia. That point has not entered in the Draft Declaration. The second thing is the reparations issue, which is point 11, that's in. That was the proposal of our Alliance.

However, we have decided to expand slightly the conclusions we proposed. I have spoken with Mr. Lukić, he told me it would be added, and I see it has been added – to introduce into school textbooks, to oblige the states to introduce certain subjects into their history textbooks, mother tongue readers for primary school and so on, because in Serbia – I'm speaking about Serbia again, I have been living in Serbia for [45] years – unfortunately, those children, people in upcountry Serbia, hardly know anything about the genocide camps in the Independent State of Croatia. Not to mention schools of further education, universities etc. We have been pushing this issue for three or four years now, but the government, unfortunately, I have to say it, the government in Serbia has been deaf when it comes to these things. Let us try through this channel, this way, this is an international conference, after all. We as camp prisoners have gathered here and we have a right to have our say. If we didn't say it after 1945, at that time I was a primary and secondary school student, we can say it now, clearly and loudly, that the Independent State of Croatia committed genocide against Jewish, Romani and Serbian people. Let us not use the word 'Ustashe', they were mere executioners. That should be in history textbooks, in mother tongue reading compilations and so on, so that children, the young generations that are coming can learn the real truth about it.

That is what I wanted to say. I would like you to add this point too, to pass a resolution in the Republic of Srpska, i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, to adopt it, to oblige our Slovenian friends too, as well as all the other republics to [join] this resolution and that we request Croatia is banned from... until... Excuse me, if France could request it against Turkey for the genocide committed against Armenians in 1915, why shouldn't we do it today? Fine, it has been 60 years since the event, but the truth is here, we are the living evidence of that truth. Thank you!

Mr. Lazar Lukajić:

What Ms. Smilja just explained, we formulated it at our joint meeting at the round table in Belgrade on 9 March this year. I will not be elaborating on the same points because I've already written it, it'll be in the book, and I have a specific proposal and [will present it] to you within two minutes.

As for point 7, I propose the following: 'We request from the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Governments of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska to file a lawsuit against Croatia for the genocide committed against Serbs' – and then erase the rest – 'Roms and Jews', and set it as a condition for Croatia's ascension to the European Union, just as France conditioned Turkey's ascension to the European Union. Nothing else, that would solve 50 percent of all the issues we brought up. If I need to repeat, I disagree with the formulation that takes into account only Jasenovac; instead, condition Croatia's ascension to the European Union on the grounds of the complete genocide, not only on that at Jasenovac. That's defective. That is one formulation.

The other one, as a Serbian language teacher and puritan, I can't... **(Comment from the audience:** Jasenovac is a synonym for all the camps.) We've agreed on that. I... this is a specific formulation; if necessary, I can revise it again afterwards. Secondly, even though I am a Serbian teacher, I am not a language puritan, but I believe there is something about point 8. 'It criticizes as negative the work of Mr. Barry Lituchy... for his attempts to ban the distribution of the first edition of the English version of the Proceedings' – that is not an English version, it's a version in the English language. That should be... that can change the meaning significantly, and I wouldn't deal with the other things here as a language editor and a proof-reader, I am just drawing your attention to the linguistic formulation of what definitely might give rise to confusion. That is not an English version, that is a version in the English language.

That's it, those are the two corrections I suggest. If you want me to formulate them precisely, so I will. Thank you!

Dr. Milan Bulajić:

Regarding point 2, since I am sure... we are sure Croatia isn't going to accept this proposal, I think this point should be reinforced by adding Slovenia and the State of Israel.

Secondly, from the aspect of editing, points 7 and 11 should follow each other. My second amendment refers to the denouncement of this ... of the

ban of the Proceedings of the First International Conference. The Conference should recognize what the Banja Luka Organising Board did by publishing the Serbian edition of the First International Conference. That is very important so we don't have manipulation like this in the future.

Dr. Wanda Schindley:

Regarding the minimization of numbers, this issue should simply stop because the minimum of minimum was established by the Croats in 1946; the Germans had a higher number, so we don't need the minimization, it should simply go away. We take the Croat figures and the German figures.



Ms. Smilja Tišma:

I appreciate this colleague of mine, that is my fellow sufferer Lukajić, but I would still like to underline this point and read it: 'Conditioning the ascension of the Croatian state to the European Union with a resolution of the states against whose citizens the Independent State of Croatia committed genocide from 1941 to 1945, which will request that it admits the genocide committed from 1941 to 1945, as France recently requested from Turkey over the genocide it committed against Armenians.' That is how we formulated it, although his proposal is not bad either. Still, maybe we should keep them apart because they are two different issues after all.

Prof. Milutin Pejić:

I have one proposal to make, which is adding to the Declaration that an Institute should be founded to research the Serbs killed perhaps from 1941 all the way to 1995. Really, in five years' time there won't be any living witnesses left, and we are obliged both to the future generations and the victims to have the exact figure, which is... Our enemies, so to say, do have such institutes. For example, you have 18 doctors of sciences in Zagreb working exclusively on this [...].



Mr. Savo Štrbac:

My name is Savo Štrbac. I have been researching or investigating the crimes committed during the latest civil war in Croatia, where the largest part of the Jasenovac killing field was located. I won't be speaking about the similarities or parallels, but very briefly about the Declaration.

Points 7 and 11 definitely follow one another, in terms of their order as well, but also in terms of the issues they cover. Point 7 of this Draft says: 'It requests from the Council of Ministers' – requests – what about it? What if this is something we've requested before and nothing happened, and nothing ever does?

This is my field of work. There are a lot of questionable issues here, starting with whether the Resolution, i.e. the 1948 Genocide Convention is



applicable retroactively to World War II. There are other legal issues, such as who is legitimately entitled, actively or passively, to file this lawsuit, i.e. to be the plaintiff and the accused, and before which court. I'm afraid the states you listed are all faced with this problem and won't be able to handle it in yet another two years after the International Conference.

I suggest one or both the proposed points are slightly modified and an expert team is formed as part of this Conference that will be headed by lawyers and war crime experts, who will examine these problems closely and offer a specific proposal regarding all the questionable issues, thus placing them¹³ before an accomplished act. Therefore, it is first on this International Conference to resolve the problems, if this can be done in the first place, in which way it should be done, drawing on all available legal resources, laws, international, national, and then they should simply put it right under their noses – here you are, you can profit from law, you now have your weapons and do it. Should we stay where we are, it seems to me, since I am familiar with these issues – you know, we have been dealing with issues related to this war, you know there is only one sentence on the grounds of the War Crimes Convention, the recent one, Bosnia and Herzegovina's charges against Serbia, and there have been no other cases, even though the Convention was passed back in 1948.

That would be it, if you understood me, and I believe I was clear enough, so thank you.

Dr. Životije Dorđević:

I have read the Declaration and I have two objections. First, Clause 10 says: 'It supports the request to submit a request to the U.S. Congress and similar institutions to discuss the genocide committed by the Independent State of Croatia against Serbs, Jews and Roms in the Jasenovac system of death camps and adopt the necessary conclusions.' I believe that a request formulated in this manner is rather out of the ordinary, at least in diplomatic practices. I am not a diplomat, but still I think it is not quite right. For what I know, you can put in a request to someone as long as you are in a position to order them, so I would appreciate it if we could correct the text, at least somewhat, in the following way, if possible: 'We support the efforts to' – not 'submit a request' but – 'recommend to the U.S. Congress and other similar institutions to attend to' – instead of 'discuss about' – 'the genocide commit-

¹³ The stakeholders

ted by the Independent State of Croatia against Serbs, Jews and Roms in the Jasenovac system of death camps and adopt the necessary conclusions.’ So, I think the subject matter proposed for examination is too broad and it would be useful for us, as the proposing party, to present the previously prepared materials to those to whom we address our proposal.

My second serious objection is regarding Clause 8. I am partly familiar with the case under consideration and I object to both its first and second part. Let me begin with this: ‘The version published by the Jasenovac Research Institute is deemed a fake for its distorted and incomplete presentation of the testimonies and paper presentations of the participants at the mentioned Conference.’ I have the book and I have read it. We might debate about whether or not it provides enough facts, but according to my opinion, there is no way we can prove we are dealing with a fake. I know something else – no one rushed to publish the monograph of the First International Conference on Jasenovac. The volume disputed by Mr. Lituchy was published fairly late, several years after the event. Next, two parties published the proceedings practically simultaneously. The Institute accused the other party of unauthorised usage of the materials which are a property of the Institute. The case was brought to the American court. I do not see why this conference should be involved in a case which is being considered by the American court. On the other hand, I am convinced at least 90 percent of the people attending this conference have never even seen the book, and they are now expected to judge it. Therefore, I believe this clause of the Declaration, under these conditions, may be seen as an attempt to involve this conference in someone’s manipulations, which might affect the court ruling.

Simply, I believe this clause should be removed.

Thank you!

Mr. Lazar Lukajić:

If we’re going to discuss everything, we’ll need three days before we adopt the Declaration. What the previous speaker said, that a commission should be formed etc., those are the particulars, because that is understood. Putting in a request to Croatia as a condition for its EU ascension, while other services or expert bodies, legal etc. will, naturally, do the fine points; we cannot go into details here now.

Mr. Dragutin Bjelajac:

Chairmen, dear guests and other participants of the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac, I would like to share with you the following announcement on behalf of a large group of survivors and camp prisoners who are still alive, based on the discussions we've had in the previous month.

We have prepared a proposal similar to number 11 of this Declaration, but we aren't going to read it now because it is already contained in point 11. Nevertheless, I would like to say on behalf of this large group of prison survivors that we support this Declaration and we genuinely want it to be adopted, except that I would like to ask you to amend slightly number 11 of this Declaration. Let me read only its final two lines and so remind you, and then say what we would like to see added. Now, I won't read everything it says right away, but this only: '...To the International Tribunal at The Hague against Croatia to indemnify the victims of genocide and their descendants for the genocide committed at the Jasenovac system of camps from 1941 to 1945 by the Independent State of Croatia.' What is it I would like to see added? In order not to limit the crimes of Croats against Serbs and their state against us to this small part, but include all the crimes committed, because we were butchered, killed – at streams, on snow paths, in gardens, in yards, in our own homes, in churches, wherever they were in a situation to do so, which is why I would like to state, I have to tell you about this ... Right here, in the vicinity of Banja Luka, on 7 February they killed... *[the Chair interrupts the speaker reminding him the incidented has been presented previously]* No, please, just add [...]. So, add the crimes in general; I won't be speaking about *[incomprehensible as the speaker continues simultaneously with the Chairmen's intervention]*.



Mr. Gojko Knežević:

Let me extend my greetings to this Conference. [May I introduce myself] – I am President of the World War II Camp Prisoners' Alliance for the Republic of Srpska. I've read the Declaration, it is very good, except that I would add to the part where reparations are requested, where it says the Council of Ministers and the others are cast in the role of the plaintiff, that the Prisoners' Alliance be added to this apparatus which is going to press charges against Croatia, and not at The Hague but in Strasbourg. That's one thing.



Second, I need to inform you, and I guess you have already learnt from the media and television, that we have been involved in very serious activities for half a year now... preparing materials for a lawsuit. This is after we had addressed both the Council of Ministers and our Government etc., but they all just nodded their heads, patted us on the back, without anyone actually doing anything. The time has come and this Conference is now at a stage where we understand that we really need to sue Croatia to the International Human Rights Tribunal in order to... We can do this. Then, I guess, it would only be fair toward those who pioneered [...] for six months at full speed... Let me also tell you we have signed up four thousand camp prisoners, former camp prisoners, not only from Krajina, so to say, but from Bosnia and Herzegovina too. They are all Serbs; and not only Serbs, there are also a few Muslims, who enjoy an equal membership status, they are [...] they are all former camp prisoners, they have the same rights as everyone else. Since we represent them legally as well, I believe we should be included in the text of the Declaration, so that the Camp Prisoners' Alliance takes part alongside the Council of Ministers. If that should not happen, then we'll press charges against Croatia on our own, as the Camp Prisoners' Alliance, because that...

Let me tell you one more thing: I have been invited and in two or three days I will be a guest in 'Latinica'¹⁴ in Zagreb, where I'll need to... This is probably going to be about this Conference and I'll have to take a lot of blows [...], but I have to be ready. I can't go there and stare like a stuck pig, right? So please, let me be informed and present the situation there in a proper way. Include the Alliance in the text of the Declaration.

Academician Srboljub Živanović:

We have now heard a whole series of objections, proposals and recommendations, and I suggest that the Declaration be... the organizers consult lawyers and other interested institutions, first and foremost state institutions, so that the objections raised or the proposals made are incorporated accordingly in the Declaration, whereas I ask you to accept the Declaration now with these amendments and authorize the organizer to prepare the final version.

Comment from the audience: Excuse me, [...], formally and legally we cannot adopt all of it, because we don't know what the final text of the Declaration is going to look like.

Prof. Vladimir Lukić:

Please, let me tell you, it is quite common for conventions like this, congresses even, in the world as well – at least formerly – to delegate to somebody, and that should be the organizer, to reconsider all these objections, include those which are valid and discard those which cannot be included. I have to tell you this: ever since we started working on the Declaration, I have had a problem with exactly those things which Mr. Savo Štrbac brought up. Those will be the key issues of all our activities. What is it that the state can do, what is it that the Association can do, etc. But let us not discuss about that at this Conference. Look, now again, I was almost going to say: how come this girl stood forth now and is now discussing the things that should have been dealt with before? She has now triggered a huge number of formative issues which should become part of our lives, let me not tell you where. In con-

¹⁴ A popular talk show on the Croatian television discussing different political, economic and social subjects, named after its host, Mr. Latin; the name of the show also coincides with the Serbo-Croatian word for the Latin script.

clusion, some things will have to be adopted as conclusions, some thing will be included in the projects, in the Association's proposal, and for the purpose of implementation, as much of it as possible should be put in the Declaration.

Academician Srboljub Živanović: All right. Professor Lukić's proposes that we should adopt this.

Mr. Lazar Lukajić: I suggest we adopt this Declaration with every confidence [...] and adopt it, because it can't be done in any other way.

[The Conference votes on the Draft Declaration.]

Academician Srboljub Živanović: Fine, this was obviously an overwhelming vote in favour of this... That is right, the Draft. I would like to ask Professor Lukić to...

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, thank you all for finding the time and strength to come here and join in this work. Before all others, I would like to thank the participants who presented papers, because we've heard a number of truly exceptional papers. I don't remember many conferences where hardly any objections could be stated against anyone paper, or even any of the parts – including the occasions where I intervened asking you to omit this or that – not because I thought it wasn't good or it shouldn't be said, but simply because I wanted us to place a lot of issues in the context of Jasenovac. So, the most profound gratitude goes to those who made an effort and wrote a paper, sent it, presented it, came here and so on.

One thing is sure, though – I am in the debt of my many associates, who spared no effort and volunteered – meaning, without getting a single penny in return, as we say – in doing a lot of the work. You've got the books. The material was such that the translators, our people, had to search around the world for the presenters from the First Conference, the Third Conference in Jerusalem, and you can imagine the strain they had to take.

However, none of this would have happened, not like this, if we hadn't had the support of the Prime Minister, if we hadn't had quite a number of people supporting us, if our media hadn't backed us, if we hadn't had a number of local hard-working scholars with their authority and reputations on our side, etc. We had to take a trip to Belgrade to get the foreword for our book. I would like to use this opportunity to thank profusely my old friend and neighbour, academician and professor Milorad Ekmečić. Don't forget to read this preface for it is really well worth reading.

Thus, I've said something about the participants. I am particularly grateful to the people from Canada, America, Central Europe, England and all those who came from abroad. Of course, many, many thanks to Professor Bernard Klein, Chair of the International Commission for Establishing the Truth on Jasenovac, many thanks to his wife, who found the strength to accompany her husband and be here – as you can see, she has been listening about our problems and about our distresses, which is... [applause] We have partially expressed our gratitude to Professor Klein by proposing and supporting [the initiative] that the President of the Republic of Srpska, Dr. Milan Jelić decorate Professor Klein with a high medal, for which we are very glad and extremely happy... [applause] ...as the other day we were there when the respectable professor received this high decoration.

Of course, I am grateful to all of you who attended here the whole time. I am also grateful to those who were generally in accordance – I beg your pardon, there is no such conference where everybody will agree, but do not ever speak in such terms that might distance us from our issues – some people will be for, others will be against, and life will still go on after that.

We will try to publish the discussions, at least most of them, everything that has been filmed, the presentations we heard which have not been published, but in case we are not able to, we'll try to put them on our web site – not try, we are going to put them on the web site, and you all know about the web site – and so make the materials available.

Furhtermore, let me call upon you about one more thing: we are creating a Documentary Center, we have the Jasenovac Library – I think I may have seen here Mr. Ranko Risojević, our reputable man of letters, who is the Library Director and who managed to find some room to start this library, despite all the difficulties he has had – and whoever has an extra sample or can afford to give a book away, please donate it to our library so it may grow and we may stockpile it at one spot.

Furthermore, we believe the next Conference should be held in approximately three years' time at the latest; however, should such a need arise, it can take place earlier, but no later than within three years' time, and we are working on securing such a position for the Public Institution 'Donja Gradina Memorial', currently headed by Colonel Milorad Bukva, an MA, so it can bear the burden of everything, with us only assisting it in a way.

That would be all I wanted to say. We have a CD with materials about Jasenovac, really exceptionally good materials, which we prepared for 60th Annual Commemoration of the Jasenovac Breakout, and let me invite our foreign guests first – by 'foreign' we still mean countries outside the former Yugoslavia – so please let them have this CD first, including all those people

who don't have it. As for those who have it, please do not take them so we can send them away abroad. That would be what I had to say.

Academician Srboljub Živanović:

Let me thank Professor Lukić. I would like to read the names of the Commission members proposed by the International Commission for Establishing the Truth on Jasenovac. After a discussion of the International Commission, we propose and ask Professor Bernard Klein to remain the Commission Chair. The proposed Commission members are: Srboljub Živanović, Academician Elena Guskova from Russia, Dr. Milan Bulajić – I don't think there is any need to explain why these members – Professor Wanda Schindley from United States, Romani Rose proposed by the Roma organisation from Germany, George Bogdanich from the United States, Tim Fenton, from Great Britain, John Peter Maher from the United States, Jared Israel from Israel and Zoran Pejašinić from the Republic of Srpska as the Coordinator.¹⁵ That would be the members of the International Commission.

Prof. Vladimir Lukić:

I knew he would forget to read something. We took part in the proposal; since this is our Association and since we are in Banja Luka, in the Republic of Srpska, and we also took on the burden of the organization and – how do I put this – have a very strong sense of the Commission's work and contribution, we suggested that a number of young people should be added to the Commission.

Given the fact we have a big number of people from the United States of America and Canada, or as we call it, from across the pond, our second nomination was... We proposed honorable Professor Živanović as Deputy Chair, and in order to have a working connection at all times, in order that the Commission has a permanent connection with the base, or if you'd rather have me say – with the Republic of Srpska, the Government, the associations, etc., and the Memorial, i.e. the Public Institution 'Donja Gradina Memorial',

¹⁵ The names of some of the Commission members and their home countries were mispronounced by Professor Živanović and are stated here correctly. Also, Mr. Zoran Pejašinić was initially appointed the Commission Coordinator and subsequently replaced by Mr. Goran Latinović.

we nominated a young historian who has been performing the duties – or rather – he found himself having to do the job of the Association Secretary, so we proposed him as the Coordinator, etc.

Now, I mediated the proposal simply out of the wish to have a working Commission, meaning they should convene and communicate continuously with the Republic of Srpska, or rather with the Public Institution ‘Donja Gradina Memorial’. Thank you very much! [*applause*]

If I understood well, this applause means you accept the proposal? (**Comment from the audience:** That’s right.) Thanks!

Dr. Milan Bulajić:

As we are about to conclude this serious work, I would like this Conference to give a special credit to the Organising Board for putting in a great deal of effort and having this Conference accomplish what it has, also to the President of the Organising Board, Mr. Milorad Dodik, the Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Srpska, and especially to the one person who assumed all of the burden, had his assistants, or rather chose his assistants, but basically shouldered the whole affair – I should know, because I was there too – whether it was in the morning, in the evening or late at night, our channels of communication were always open, we worked on it non-stop. I mean, what Professor Lukić did was so much more than just organize this great Conference. The project ‘Jasenovac-Donja Gradina’ is his idea, his initiative – [*applause*] – and I think this Conference should give a special credit, a special recognition to Professor Vladimir Lukić for everything he has done. [*applause*]

Prof. Vladimir Lukić: Except that I won’t repeat what Mr. Arie said yesterday – he said it was his last – but I will do my best to make sure we are together again at the next conference. Thank you very much! Thank you for coming and I believe you will take with you some nice messages from Banja Luka and I believe you had a nice time here, just as we always do. I wish you a good journey and hope we meet again for the next Conference in the time that I mentioned. Thank you so much! [*applause*]

DECLARATION OF FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JASENOVAC

The Fourth International Conference dedicated to establishing the truth about the Jasenovac system of death camps in the Independent State of Croatia 1941 through 1945, where genocide was committed against ethnic Serbs, Jews and Roma, held in Banja Luka on 30 and 31 May 2007, adopted this Declaration in its plenary session:

1. We support the decisions and the Declaration adopted at the Third International Conference on Jasenovac, held at Hebrew University in Jerusalem on 29 and 30 December 2002;
2. It is proposed to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the governments of the Republic of Srpska, Croatia and Serbia to initiate the proceedings to ensure UNESCO's international protection (World Heritage) for the Jasenovac system of camps, which was used for exterminating ethnic Serbs, Jews, Roma and enemies of the Ustasha regime and which was located in the Independent State of Croatia, in an area of land currently divided into two parts by the state borderline between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia;
3. Full support is given to the project of construction and arrangement of the Memorial Area 'Donja Gradina', as well as to multidisciplinary research as proposed in the project 'Jasenovac–Donja Gradina';
4. It is recommended to begin as soon as possible the examination of Uštica, the location of the mass graves of more than 12,000 Roma;
5. We denounce the attempts to minimise the number of ethnic Serbian, Jewish and Roma victims in the media and publications, and the misrepresentation of the Jasenovac camp as shown in the new exhibition at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum;
6. It is proposed to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the governments of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska to bring a lawsuit against the state of Croatia for the genocide

- committed against ethnic Serbs, Jews and Roma in the Jasenovac system of camps;
7. It is proposed to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the governments of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska to submit or support reparations claims to the International Court of Justice in the Hague to indemnify the 1941–1945 Jasenovac genocide victims and their descendants, an obligation which should be accepted by the Republic of Croatia;
 8. It is proposed to initiate the proceedings and request that the Republic of Croatia acknowledges the genocide committed in Jasenovac by the Independent State of Croatia and complies with the request to indemnify the victims of Jasenovac and their descendants as a precondition which it will have to fulfil before it is allowed to join EU;
 9. We criticise as negative and denounce the actions of the *Jasenovac Research Institute, New York, USA*, and its Director Mr. Barry Lituchy for their attempts to ban the distribution of the First Edition of the English version of the Proceedings of the First Conference on Jasenovac held in New York on 29-30 October 1997. Hereby we deem the proceedings published by the Jasenovac Research Institute fake, as it offers a distorted and incomplete version of the testimonies and addresses of the Conference participants;
 10. It is proposed to initiate discussions and adopt the necessary conclusions in the US Congress and other similar institutions regarding the genocide committed by the Independent State of Croatia against ethnic Serbs, Jews and Roma in the Jasenovac system of death camps;
 11. It is requested that the Vatican opens its Jasenovac archives;
 12. It is proposed to the Government of the Republic of Srpska, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the governments of Croatia and Serbia to introduce into their selected school syllabi the subject matter of genocide in Jasenovac;

13. It is requested from the public radio and television stations and the press in the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia to ensure objective reporting on the system of camps in Jasenovac, as well as broadcast related programmes as part of their education schemes and publish related series of articles or feuilletons.
14. It is recommended to hold the upcoming international conferences on Jasenovac in Banja Luka and Donja Gradina, the actual location where the victims were executed;
15. We support the proposal that the Government of the Republic of Srpska should continue to support and sponsor the Jasenovac Conference;
16. We support the establishment and activities of the Association 'Jasenovac-Donja Gradina';
17. Hereby we acknowledge the merits of the Organising Board as publisher of the Proceedings of the First International Conference (Serbian edition), as well as of the Proceedings of the Third and Fourth International Conferences (Serbian and English editions).

Banja Luka, 31 May 2007

Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR ESTABLISHING THE TRUTH ON JASENOVAC

1. Bernard Klein, United States, Chair
2. Srboľjub Źivanović, Great Britain, Deputy Chair
3. Elena Guskova, Russia, member
4. Milan Bulajić, Srbija, member
5. Wanda Schindly, United States, member
6. Romany Rose, Germany, member
7. George Bogdanich, member
8. Tim Fenton, Great Britain, member
9. John Peter Maher, United States, member
10. Jared Israel, Israel, member
11. Zoran Pejašinović, Republic of Srpska, Coordinator

INTERVIEWS DURING THE VISIT TO JASENOVAC AFTER THE CONFERENCE

Mr. Vladimir Bibić:

Interview with Dr. Milan Bastašić

Mr. Milan Bastašić: I am Milan Bastašić, a physician, originally from Grubišno Polje. I lived in Zagreb for thirty-eight years. As for Jasenovac, I was brought there in early October 1942 with the men – the mother and sister were taken to Sisak – and I spent two months at Jasenovac. When I came back home, I contracted typhus, and later my mother said – when you got home, all you had were the head and the knees. That supports the argument Jasenovac was a labor camp.



Mr. Vladimir Bibić: Please, would you describe your internment at Jasenovac?

Mr. Milan Bastašić: When we arrived here, first they beat somebody called Joca, a guy from Veliki Grđevac. Terrible. That gave me the first shock at the camp, although when I got here, I was already terrified after the slaughter of the Serbs in Grubišno Polje, my hometown, and on Mount Bilogora at the end of September and the beginning of October.

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: What year was that?

Mr. Milan Bastašić: That was the beginning of October 1942. I was left with the men again. They took some children back to the carriages, back with the mothers and old people, while I stayed here with a neighbor I knew from before, his step-father and a boy from Mount Kozara. They drove us inside a

fenced-off enclosure, where we looked at the River Sava, figuring – if they threw us in, I would swim, drink water from it, as we hadn't got any water or food from Tuesday to Friday, when they embarked us onto those cattle cars at Grubišno Polje. The food arrived, which we could neither drink nor eat, i.e. it was in a kind of saucer. However, the people working there said – the guys bringing us this water are so skinny and exhausted. As a twelve year old, I couldn't tell. Afterwards, they cut our hair. Finally, they put us under some kind of eaves, while on the other side this guy, this neighbor of mine from Grubišno Polje, a boy aged 17... A certain guy called Đurić, Đurić Kramarić, an orphan from Mount Bilogora, used to live with his family; he had joined the Ustashe in Jasenovac. When we got here, this guy, Pero, spotted him and shouted: 'Đurić!' thinking – they slept in the same bed and ate at the same table at Pero's parents' home for two or three years – and when this guy saw him, he said with disgust: 'To hell with you,' he said, 'you're here too!' The step-father shoved him: 'Shut up, Pero,' he said.

After a short while there was no one there I knew. Pero disappeared and so did Tošo; those people – there were 81 people in my carriage alone, according to the older people, terrible conditions. Afterwards they put me up in some kind of barracks, among some children. Then they... we went to work on the embankment, bring tree branches, etc. I saw terrible things there, people being beaten up, etc., you understand, those poor horses draughting at the embankment and dying, and then one night they said – the sick children... the sick children, they said, should not leave the barracks tomorrow, they said, I don't know what reasons they gave, what else they explained. Next, a teacher came to me, I had been sick for two days, my legs were all swollen – terrible – and he said: 'Milan, make sure you go to work tomorrow. The sick are going across the Sava.' When we got back from work the next evening, we found this guy, Stojan Dardić from Veliki Peratovac; he was about three years older than me, and we found another boy who was there. 'Where are the others, what is this?' He said: 'I was asleep, I didn't hear anything.' The other one said: 'When I saw they were chasing and beating these [guys] out of the barracks..., I covered myself, didn't want to tell them I was here.'

The next evening they came again. Some little Ustashe and some adults too, and said: 'No children are to go to work tomorrow.' I was then taken away, after some kind of breakfast, let's say it was breakfast, with a group of children who were also there, I don't know where they had been brought from, and there may have been around sixty of us, in my opinion. We waited there, they asked us to form a line, then dismissed us, so I... I had failed to bring with me the rag blanket I had had with me; instead I had taken somebody's comforter and packed it, and an Ustasha asked me when I..., he

said: 'What do you need that for?' I said: 'Well, it's mine.' 'Go on, throw it away, your throats will be gaping open in a half an hour, you won't need anything.' I said nothing, threw the thing in the mud, that... They dismissed us again and we walked around the kitchen; we tried to eat that sugar-beet there, it didn't work, and then we turned back again for a little while... And now, finally, those Ustashe started yelling: 'C'mon, fall in, fall in!' Then they yelled: ['We're tying!'] I had no idea what this was about. I don't know what happened then.

However, a man came from the embankment and said: 'Who's Milan Bastašić?' I answered, saying: 'That's me.' 'Come over here.' I got out, startled, but he just walked on, without telling me anything, so I walked after him. There were two or three Ustashe standing nearby and they said nothing. So we went away and they took me to a room and two men introduced themselves to me, saying: 'My name is Žiga.' The other one said: 'I'm Geza.' I said: 'My name is Milan.' Fine, that was funny enough for us. And I stayed there. They said: 'Your task will be to bring in the wood and dust,' and so it was.

I stayed there for a while, kept going to dinner regularly, did this and that...

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: That was at the Jasenovac camp?

Mr. Milan Bastašić: At the Jasenovac camp. Once I saw – I didn't count them myself, it was the adult prisoners who told us so afterwards – 16 people were shot there because, supposedly, they had stolen some potatoes and had been discovered in the kitchen, or whatever, something like that happened. When we set off in the morning – at that time my task was still to go pick the hemp with the other children – and there we saw the ground had been scraped with a shovel, there was still blood there, there was still muck at the spot where those people had been shot, and we went on and picked the hemp. We pulled seeds one by one, ate them, got a terrible diarrhea, and so on.

Now, one day... Some people here spoke about the soap factory, this guy, Ilija, whom I met here, we recalled some things together; I didn't use to know him back then because he used to serve at a barber's who came from Grubišno Polje originally. After a while I was at the soap factory... they said: 'Mišo, guard Keco is looking for you.' 'What is it?' He said: 'Looks like you're going home.' I thought to myself – they must have found me somewhere on the list of those destined for the River Sava, really we would say 'across the Sava', and they now found out I hadn't gone. I didn't know about Gradina. There was this expression, 'across the Sava', which for us meant 'in

the Sava'. He took me to a barber's shop there. Some people were having a shave. An Ustasha stood up. This guy said: 'That's him.' 'What's your name?' I told him. 'Follow me.' So I followed this man who had a 'U' letter on the left-hand side, and he took me to this Ustasha... to this office [...] there. He asked: 'What's your name?' – this and that, and then more again – 'Can you read?' 'I can.' He said: 'Did you go to [...]?' 'I did,' I said, 'I was also in the Ustasha youths,' I said. You know, it was their version of the pioneer movement. Then I read something like [the first] order, and then something else saying the Croatian authorities couldn't touch me, and so on.

Now, he said to an Ustasha – c'mon, he said, he should take me to the warehouse to give me the clothes. I got to the warehouse and it was full of clothes. 'Take your clothes off.' I took my clothes off. It crossed my mind – I'd take my clothes off now and then he'd kill me, because people used to say they often recognized the clothes of the killed. They would say somebody was going to Germany, this and that, they would say all sorts of things, and the next day they saw the hats and the suit, they recognized them as belonging to the people who had been there. So I stood there for a while. The guy brought me a shirt, I put the shirt on, I don't know, pardon me but I never got the underpants, and now he was putting on me some [...], patterned trousers, plus-fours, which I never wore, I was a village boy, even though I was always dressed neatly. In the end, he brought me a coat. Now, I thought to myself, [...] maybe he would let me walk after all. But I was not going anywhere. He let me keep the bag, he also left me my [bucket]; I asked him to keep some dirty trousers which were all stiff from getting soaked in mud during the day, etc. Next, I went to... the guy dressed me. He took me back to show me and said... Yes, and as we were walking to the barber's, one of the teachers called me over. He said: 'Mišo, hold on for a second,' and gave me a rug. He said: 'You're going home.' I said: 'I don't know,' again this and that, and so on, and I also met that guy, Milan the Bosnian, a barber from Grubišno Polje, at the embankment, and that was a surprise for us when we arrived. The barber said, this guy, the Bosnian, how? Because on 26 April he was arrested and taken to Koprivnica together with another 507 Serbs from Grubišno Polje. In July they all went to Gospić, to Jadovno, to meet the dagger and hammer; among them was my 18-year-old brother, my father too, and this barber was sent to Jasenovac because they were already collecting skilled workers, handicraftsmen to build Jasenovac, naturally, for Serbs.

Now, when I came out and the Ustasha showed me there, he said to me: 'Stay here and wait for lunch, then you'll go.' Poor me, I walked back and forth, and next I saw him carrying bread. I said: 'You know what, give me the bread' – it was like a brick, 15 decagrams. I said: 'You give me the

bread, and I'll go with you to the station in Jasenovac.' And he said: 'Well... I don't know, well, fine, let's go...' Eventually we set off and he spotted a railway man. He said: 'Go, run after that railway man.' He took me out of the gates. Poor me, I saw the railway man, started running after him, but I wasn't really able to, weak, this and that, but still I trotted after him somehow.

Finally, I came to the railway station. That's where the old trousers ... I saw a Muslim boy with a fez eating unleavened cornmeal bread. 'Give me some of that bread,' and he went: 'I won't,' he said, 'maybe mother has some.' I offered his mother those pants and said: 'I have these pants, do you have anything for me?' 'Well, I have no money.' I said: 'How about cornmeal bread? Let me have some.' 'Well, I don't have...' 'That'll be enough, ma'am.' She gave me some cornmeal bread and I felt absolutely reborn. A woman there pushed me to sell her the rug, so I sold the rug for a hundred kunas¹⁶. That was how I lost... [...] I got on the train. The conductor checked me and then returned after a while. 'C'mon, sit down,' he told me. I sat down. There was a gentleman there, he started asking all sorts of questions; I didn't speak because I had been told, they had said – you've been here, you've worked well and that's why we're releasing you – they had said and, I don't know, something like – don't speak too much or we'll bring you back. That's pretty much how it was.

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: So, that was the end of it?

Mr. Milan Bastašić: Yes. I sat on the train and – I don't want to bother you with it now – somehow we left for Zagreb, then on the train for Bjelovar; an old Home Guardsman – they said he was a lieutenant-colonel, and he felt pity for me because I was standing, and in the end he told me: 'If there isn't...' I went up to him, I didn't have anyone, I didn't know mother and sister had returned from the camp after Germans released them from Sisak because no one from the family and no relatives had joined the Partisans. They ... Some Germans kept saying – keine [...] Frauen and Kinder, this and that, and some teachers knew that story and said – well, sir, they said, gentlemen officers, they said, we were so and so, this and that...

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: In conclusion, would you be so kind to tell me how you feel about the horrors [*taking place*] while you were at the camp, such things? What did you see?

¹⁶ The currency of the Independent State of Croatia, which was reintroduced as the national currency in Croatia after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia

Mr. Milan Bastašić: Look. Naturally, I saw it all with the eyes of a twelve year old, in a matter-of-fact manner. I don't know – I would see a pile of corpses every morning, they would simply be there, in front of the barracks. Those who were still half alive, they would slide down... this and that, some people came in with wagons, they would put them onto the wagon, once or twice, depending on how many there were, and take them away. Later I found out the hospital was nearby, near that barracks.

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: Did you see them kill anybody?

Mr. Milan Bastašić: Only those sixteen people, when they made all of us form a line before dinner. Then they killed those sixteen people like some ...

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: How were they killed?

Mr. Milan Bastašić: They lay. They lay, so we mainly heard the shots...

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: How did they kill them? With a rifle, a gun...?

Mr. Milan Bastašić: With a handgun. With a handgun. They killed them with a handgun. And, as I said, we saw blood there in the morning as we went to work there, to pick the hemp and eat hemp seeds. We saw the spot had been scraped clean with spades, and so on.

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: Thank you. Thanks.

Mr. Milan Bastašić: Many years later I got the information from the Belgrade Museum, the names [*of the victims*] from Grubišno Polje and Mount Bilogora, including Veliki Grđevac. A thousand one hundred and – I believe – seventy four were killed at Jasenovac.

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: They were the local people?

Mr. Milan Bastašić: The local people. So, except for me, nobody from Mount Bilogora returned from Jasenovac alive. And this is how I got out. [...] Ustasha from Grubišno Polje was a good friend of my uncle's – [*they used to visit each other*] on patron saint's day, at Christmas, Easter, and so on – but he failed to save him in 1941 when he was arrested together with my father, brother, little cousins and so on – now my mother went over to him, after she

had returned from the camp, and said: 'Luka' – because he was her brother's friend, she said – 'you know my oldest boy died with my Luka' – because my father's name was Luka – 'and the younger one is in Jasenovac.' She said: 'Please, give me some kind of approval, an order, so they can let him go.' 'Oh, [Evica], I musn't, you know, blah, blah, he's at Jasenovac, God knows if he's still alive. It's Jasenovac, I can't.' Poor mother, there was nothing she could do but walk out. Where should she go next? She went to the Eastern Orthodox priest's daughter, a teacher, Ms. Leposava Orušić, who had been her teacher, Luka's teacher, she had taught my father, my brother, sister and me! One more time... well, she used to [...] us, the children, She was very [reputable], [...]. Mother went over to her and told her: 'I went to see...' – and cried, etc. The teacher put on her coat. 'Go now,' she said, 'go home.' She went to Luka. 'Luka,' she said, 'why didn't you sign an order for [Evica] for her little one so she can go and get him out of Jasenovac?' 'Well, you know, Ms. Leposava, I mustn't, that's Jasenovac,' and so on and so forth. 'C'mon, c'mon, Luka.' 'You know, who knows if he's still alive, he's in Jasenovac,' he said, you know. 'C'mon, Luka, you sign the paper for [Evica], and if he's not alive, you've done your part.' Mind you, eventually, Luka signed an order with his tail between his legs. After he signed it, mother set out for Zagreb, came across a dear lady who was working at the Ustasha precinct and she said, when she saw [...], and it wasn't a [weekday] [...]: 'Go home, dear' – after they had searched all the institutions where those poor children were held, including those from Mount Kozara, here and there, I couldn't be found anywhere. 'You go home,' she said, 'if he's alive, he'll come back.' Mom got home on Tuesday evening, Thursday morning I was back.

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: Thanks Good! Thank you so much!

Interview with Dr. Milan Bulajić

Reporter: Do you have any information and what is your comment on the victims – we have heard about the figures presented, which have officially been lowered here to around 70 thousand – that the Croatian Board might press charges against the Conference organizers to the Council of Europe, no less, vis-à-vis a supposed falsification of information? And please also your comment on the Fourth Conference and, generally, on today's visit to Jasenovac.

Dr. Milan Bulajić: Well, you see, first of all, look at this monument. Is this a camp? Does anything here remind you or anyone else of a camp? When I came here for the first time for a science conference, that was twenty or thirty years ago, I said – this is a golf course, this is not the Jasenovac camp. That's the first thing. Secondly, when the figures are concerned, why haven't they displayed at their Museum, the Museum organized by Croatia, the 1946 Report of the Croatian State Commission, which was sent to the International Commission for War Crimes, which said: the exact figure will probably never be established, but according to what we found here – there was a lot here that still stood undamaged and so on and numerous witnesses – the figure ranges between five and six hundred thousand. That was the Croatian State Commission. Why hasn't that been displayed in the exhibit, and then everybody can say what they want about it.

The second thing is the Museum... Center Wiesenthal, *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, which also speaks about six hundred thousand, whereas it's been tagged a 'Serbian myth', the seven hundred thousand figure. Many other Croatia's high officials also said seven hundred thousand. I myself never promoted that figure, even though I have been accused of doing it many times. I simply said what others said. Yet, with the Report of the Croatian State Commission, the most convincing fact for me happened at the First International Conference, which was organized by Professor Klein, when Dr. Rosenbaum, Director, from the U.S. Ministry of Justice, brought me personally a document from the Department of State, which they received through the U.S. National Archives... Well, excuse me, that is a first-rate document and in that document it says that, according to the German estimate, on 6 December 1943 there were 120 thousand victims at Jasenovac, 80 thousand at Stara Gradiska. So, two hundred thousand at those two camps alone. However, let me remind you that this German report was made on 6 December 1943,

meaning we should add to it December 1943, all of 1944 and a half of 1945. That is an authentic document.

Finally, as a researcher, I would like to say – I am so frequently so hard to convince, I have been promoting the figure stated in *The Encyclopedia of Genocide*, the American *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, which says – hundreds of thousands. So, not 69 thousand, not what Goldstein and others have been saying, 90 to 100 thousand at the most, or perhaps you heard yesterday some of our... somebody from Belgrade who said 125 thousand – hundreds of thousands. It doesn't specify how many hundreds of thousands, but... Finally, on 22 April last year a small memorial was erected in New York dedicated to the victims of Jasenovac, which says again – hundreds of thousands! Why doesn't the Museum say so?

The Collection of video materials of Mr Vladimir Bibic about all International Conferences on Jasenovac. One copy of collection is in Assotiation "Jasenovac-Donja Gradina" in Banja Luka.



Interview with Mr. Danon I. Cadik

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: Mr. Danon, would you be so kind to tell us what your impressions are of this Museum?

Mr. Danon Cadik: Let me tell you, I have read a lot in the press about what they have been doing and what they want to accomplish, but I would never have imagined they were capable of something so base, trivializing and speaking so disparagingly about putting on an exhibit which does not show at all what happened here.

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: Still, I had an interesting reaction. When I saw those people getting on those carriages, treated like cattle, pushed, I think it's obvious... what I'm saying is I felt the tragedy in that part, so in a way they did show it...

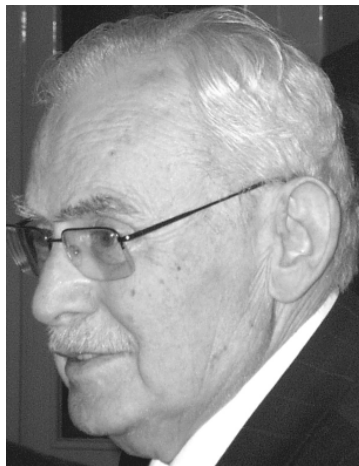
Mr. Danon Cadik: But that's a minimum, minimum... You can't see any of the murders. You can't see the dead, not one. You can't see the children, not a single child. Only as they are taking them away for execution. Nothing. That is ironic, sarcastic. I can't find the right words to voice my discontent and anger.

Mr. Vladimir Bibić: I am so sorry. Thank you very much.

PROFESSOR DR. BERNARD KLEIN DIES

Professor Dr. Bernard Klein, Chair of the Department of History, Philosophy and Political Science at New York's Kingsborough Community College and President of the International Commission on Jasenovac, died on 11 August 2007 at the age of 79.

Professor Klein was born into a Jewish family in the Ukraine on 15 October 1928. As a boy he was taken to the notorious Nazi camp Auschwitz with his mother, his two sisters and a brother. He was the only family member to survive the Holocaust. After the war he emigrated to the US, where he received university education. He spent his lifetime career researching the suffering of his people in the Holocaust and his accomplishments earned him great international renown.



As a historian and an internationally recognized expert on the Holocaust, Professor Klein made an enormous contribution towards establishing the truth about Jasenovac, a notorious camp in the Independent State of Croatia. Wishing to help tell the truth about Jasenovac to experts and the general public worldwide, Professor Klein undertook to organize the First International Conference on Jasenovac, which was held at New York's Kingsborough College in October 1997. That Conference, as he said, cut the practice of minimizing the number of victims of Jasenovac and 'drew attention to the Jasenovac commanders'. Professor Klein also deserves the credit for helping organize and hold the Third International Conference on Jasenovac at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in December 2002. In the meantime, he took an active part in the Second International Conference on Jasenovac in Banja Luka in 2000, and seven years later he was welcomed again in the Republic of Srpska. Namely, despite the fact he was already fatally ill, Professor Klein together with his wife joined the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac, which took place in Banja Luka in late May 2007. On that occasion he visited Jasenovac and Donja Gradina and denounced the new permanent exhibit at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum.

Since its foundation and until his death, Professor Klein chaired the International Commission for the Truth about Jasenovac, which was established largely owing to his efforts and dedication.

At the Fourth International Conference on Jasenovac Dr. Bernard Klein was decorated with a Medal of Honour with Gold Rays by Mr. Milan Jelic, President of the Republic of Srpska, for his great contribution in uncovering the truth about Ustasha crimes in the Jasenovac system of death camps. He received the decoration from Professor Dr. Vladimir Lukic, Chair of the Executive Board of the Association 'Jasenovac-Donja Gradina' and deputy of the President of the Republic of Srpska.



