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### "The Last Bullet for the Last Serb":

### The Ustaša Genocide against Serbs: 1941-1945

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## **“The Last Bullet for the Last Serb”:<sup>1</sup> The Ustaša Genocide against Serbs: 1941–1945<sup>2</sup>**

*Michele Frucht Levy*

While participating in Hitler’s Holocaust against Jews and Roma, wartime Croatia’s collaborationist government, the Ustaša (Insurgent),<sup>3</sup> conducted its own genocide against the Serbs within its territories. As the title of Marco Rivelli’s 1978 text, *Le Génocide occulté*, makes clear, this phenomenon remained largely unknown in the West until the 1990s. Of the principal external actors, post-war German attention focused on the Holocaust. Italy still resists fully confronting its less than pristine role in the Balkans, so that Rivelli’s work, completed in 1978, was not published in Italy until 1999.<sup>4</sup> The Vatican, meanwhile, has yet to release its documents on the subject.

Within Yugoslavia itself, Ustaša perpetrators strove to conceal their crimes once it became clear that Tito’s Partisans would win the Yugoslav Civil War. After the Partisans executed the *Četnici* (Cetniks or Chetniks, Serbian paramilitary forces) and Ustaša troops they had captured, Tito encouraged all ethnicities to bury their war memories so that Yugoslavia could build a new nation based on brotherhood and unity.<sup>5</sup> While politically expedient, this policy initially limited public discussion and scholarly discourse on the subject. The West, meanwhile, bankrolled prominent Ustaše reborn as anti-communist agents, while America’s popular consciousness all but forgot about the Balkans until Yugoslavia imploded.

Despite Tito’s attempts to forge a single national identity, ethnic tensions surfaced in Yugoslavia as early as the 1960s. After his death in 1980, nationalist intellectuals and writers produced a spate of books, articles, and novels on the genocide, much of it propagandistic. Power-hungry politicians used these works to stir latent memories and manipulated wildly inflated or deflated numbers to garner power. Thus Vladimir Žerjavić, a Croat scholar whose calculations significantly revised the earlier numbers, observed: “Our polemics about our [World War II] losses escalated so much that they threaten a new war, to avenge those killed 50 years ago.”<sup>6</sup> Then in 1991–1995, sites of Serb mass deaths again became places of violence. In 1992, when Croats blew up a monument in Šurmanci to Serbs murdered by the Ustaša,

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one explained: “We killed the dead because they kept them alive.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, as Kerstin Nyström suggests, “... it is reasonable to argue that the Second World War was resumed in 1991.”<sup>8</sup>

This violent eruption rekindled Western interest in the area.<sup>9</sup> A number of histories appeared, many by journalists who had covered the war. But most alluded to the Ustaša genocide only briefly or suggested that rival ethnic and political groups massacred each other’s civilian populations, which, while true, managed to obscure the history of that phenomenon. As Marko Attila Hoare suggests:

The *Ustaša* genocide of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies in the territory of the so-called “Independent State of Croatia” in the period 1941–1945 is a subject about which historians in the West have to date had little to say. English-language accounts by journalists and others have often been as empty of serious analysis as they are full of gory descriptions of atrocities.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, a recent genocide textbook designed for university students contains a case study on Serbian ethnic cleansing in Bosnia that mentions only World War II “massacres” as historical background.<sup>11</sup> Even though Western scholars have at last begun to examine seriously the Ustaša and its genocidal program, their works are mostly studies that address a single facet of this complex event.<sup>12</sup> I therefore intend my essay as a broad overview of the genocide in its various aspects, that we may glimpse its full extent and better understand both the event itself and its role in the history of post-war Yugoslavia and its successor states.

Yugoslavia’s signing of the Tripartite Treaty with Italy and Germany on 25 March 1941 initiated that sequence of events which led to the creation of the *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* (NDH—Independent State of Croatia). On 27 March, angry pro-British officers of the Yugoslav army and navy overthrew the government of Prince Paul, and installed his 17-year old cousin, Peter II, as ruler. On 6 April, German planes bombed Belgrade as part of Operation Marita. Originally intended to remove the British from Greece, and then expanded to punish the errant Yugoslavs, the Axis invasion successfully dismembered the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Over the next few days, the Ustaša, led by Ante Pavelić, infiltrated the paramilitary arm of the *Hrvatska seljačka stranka* (HSS—Croatian Peasant Party), while on 9 April, in a radio broadcast to Croatia from Berlin’s Kaiserhof Hotel, Andrija Artuković (“the Butcher of the Balkans”) exhorted Croats to kill Serbs. The ultra-nationalist Ustaša sought support from Croats angered by their perceived inferior status in Yugoslavia. For Serbia had a long tradition of political independence and supplied pre-World War II Yugoslavia with its core political system and ruling dynasty.

The next day, Slavko Kvaternik, who would become commander-in-chief of the Croatian armed forces (the military arm of the Ustaša state), announced the creation of the NDH. Many members of this small group of nationalist Croatian terrorists had recently returned from exile, most of them from Italy, where the *Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione dell’Antifascismo* (OVRA—Organization for Vigilance

and the Repression of Anti-Fascism), Mussolini's secret police, had supported them. Others returned from Yanka Puszta, a small Hungarian town and fascist stronghold on the Yugoslav border, and Germany. Kvaternik then administered the new government until Pavelić, the architect of Yugoslav King Aleksandar's assassination in 1934, returned to Zagreb from Italy on 15 April and declared himself *poglavnik*, or *Führer*. To the chagrin of many Croats, Germany let Italy keep Dalmatian territory it claimed during the invasion (Korčula, Mljet, Krk and some smaller islands, as well as the hinterland of Zadar and Split and some territories that Italy had controlled since 1918, including Zara/Zadar and Lastovo). But since the NDH received most of Bosnia-Herzegovina, an area larger than Tomislav I's tenth-century kingdom, Croats could still idealize its romantic origins.<sup>13</sup>

With relatively few members in April 1941, the Ustaša enhanced its narrow base by drawing support from nationalists, students, intellectuals, the petit bourgeoisie, peasants, and Catholic clergy.<sup>14</sup> Pavelić's agents also successfully recruited from among the diasporic populations in Italy, Germany, Belgium, and South America, appealing to those who embraced the Ustaša goal of a pure Catholic Croatia.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, Croat scholar Branimir Anzulović asserts that Croats from the Dinaric Alps, which straddle the Adriatic coast of the Balkan Peninsula from Croatia to Albania, joined the movement in numbers much higher than their ratio to the general population. The high percentage of Dinaric Serbs who fought in the recent Bosnian War mirrors this, as nationalist Serb media encouraged post-Tito Serbs to "remember" the earlier atrocities against Serbs in the Dinaric regions of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina—a historical quid pro quo.<sup>16</sup>

Ustaša headquarters served as the center of the hastily erected NDH government infrastructure designed to secure its idealized utopia. It included three branches: one dealing with political and organizational matters; the Ustaška vojnica (Ustaša Corps), a Nazi-like paramilitary group separate from the *Domobranstvo*, or regular army; and the Ustaška nadzorna služba (UNS—Ustaša Supervisory Service). The latter coordinated the implementation of government policies with a branch of the Interior Ministry, the Ravnateljstvo za javni red i sigurnost (RAVSIKUR—Office for Public Order and Security), that housed *Ustaška obrana* (Ustaša Defense) and *Ustaška redarstvo* (Ustaša Supervision), its security arm. Slavko Kvaternik's son, Eugen, known as Dido, headed both the UNS and RAVSIKUR, thereby controlling all internal security and intelligence agencies, even those under Andrija Artuković, the Interior Minister. Vjekoslav "Maks" Luburić led the Ustaša Defense, which would manage Pavelić's extensive concentration camp system.<sup>17</sup>

Eager to distance itself from the Serbs, cement ties with Germany, and claim a Western identity,<sup>18</sup> the Ustaša tried to claim that Croats had Gothic roots. There were approximately 1.8 million Serbs, 700,000 Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks), 40,000 Jews, 28,500 Roma, 300,000 from other minority groups, and 4.8 million Croats in the NDH. The Bosnian Muslims were declared "the blood of our blood ... the flower of our Croatian Nation"<sup>19</sup> and granted rights and privileges. But according to Education Minister Mile Budak, "1/3 of Serbs we shall kill, another we shall

deport, and the last we shall force to embrace the Roman Catholic religion and thus meld them into Croats.”<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Croat historian Branka Prpa-Jovanović suggests that “the Ustaša, although a small minority of the Croatian people, also recruited among the Slavic Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina for a program of brutal repression of communists as well as outright genocide against the Serbian population within the ‘independent state.’”<sup>21</sup> Once the Jews and the Roma were effectively eliminated, such a policy would finally enable the Ustaša to claim that it had created a nation of ethnically pure Catholic and Muslim Croats.<sup>22</sup>

Before addressing the genocide itself, let us first explain the use of that loaded term, which Serb nationalists appropriated and aggressively deployed for ideological purposes in the 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, throughout World War II, Yugoslavia fought a bloody civil war in which Serb *Četnici*, Croat and Muslim Ustaše, and communist partisans of all ethnicities brutally massacred one another and destroyed their respective villages. All sides inflicted brutal violence against civilians. One might then question the virtue of applying “genocide” to one particular group and not the rest. Here I find Tomislav Dulić’s classifications helpful:

*Genocide* is the total or substantial destruction of a religious or ethnic group by a state or similar political actor by a method that includes but is not limited to intentional, continuous and systematically organized annihilation.

*Attempted Genocide* is the attack against a religious or ethnic group by a state or similar political actor, where the perpetrator has attempted but not succeeded in total or substantial destruction, by a method that includes but is not limited to intentional, continuous and systematically organized annihilation.

*Ethnocide* (“*ethnic cleansing*”) is the intentional and systematic forced removal of a religious or ethnic group by a method that includes the commission of organized massacres.

*Massacre* is the incidental mass killing of members of a religious or ethnic group in a local community that may or may not be organized by a central political actor.<sup>23</sup>

According to these definitions, the *Četnici*, who possessed a rudimentary ideology, no state apparatus, a decentralized, territorially dispersed leadership, and the lack of an effective media network for propaganda, engaged in ethnocide and massacre in an effort to create their own imagined community of Orthodox Serbs. On the other hand, the Ustaša controlled the NDH with strong Italian and German backing.<sup>24</sup> Its ideology was based on Pavelić’s Seventeen Principles (institutionalized through legal codes enacted at the local and national level, and expanded in 1942), while its central leadership, with its clearly defined bureaucratic and military hierarchy, dominated the Catholic Church and the media. The NDH was thus positioned to commit either genocide or attempted genocide, depending on how one weighs the number of those annihilated, a fiercely contested figure that reputable scholars generally agree will remain elusive because of the absence of credible records.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, according to Generalmajor Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau, the German Plenipotentiary General in Zagreb, Kvaternik had privately promised that the Ustaša would ultimately

exterminate "the remaining one and a half million Serbs, including women and children."<sup>26</sup> His son Dido suggested that Anti-Serbdom was "the quintessence of the Ustaša doctrine, its *raison d'être*."<sup>27</sup> More recently, Croat scholar Jozo Tomasevich has suggested that "only the resistance of the Partisans and, to a much lesser extent, Serb *Četnici*, saved the Serbs in the territory of the NDH from total disaster."<sup>28</sup>

A brief examination of Pavelić's Seventeen Principles, written during his Italian exile and revised after the NDH was formed, should clarify the ideological foundation of the Ustaša movement and the laws of the NDH:

1. The Croatian nation is an independent ethnic and national unit, a nation by itself, and in that sense it is not identical with any other nation nor is it a part or a tribe of any other nation.
2. The Croatian nation has its original and historical name, Croat, under which it came 1300 years ago to its present territory, and under which it lives today. That name cannot and must not be replaced by any other name.
3. The Croatian nation made its present country its homeland already in ancient times, inhabiting it permanently, becoming one with it and giving it the original and natural name Croatia. That name cannot and must not be replaced by any other name.
4. The land which was occupied in ancient times by the Croatian people, and which became their Croatian homeland, extends over several provinces, many of which had their names even before the arrival of the Croats and some of which were given their names later, but all of them constitute one single Croatian homeland, and therefore nobody has the right to claim for himself any of those provinces.
5. The Croatian people came to their homeland of Croatia as a completely free nation in the time of the Great Migrations, by their own will, thus conquering that land and making it their own forever.
6. The Croatian nation was completely organized when it came to its Croatian homeland, not only in a military sense but also in a familial sense, so that it immediately founded its own state with all of the attributes of statehood.
7. The state of Croatia was already formed when many other nations lived in complete chaos. The Croatian nation preserved its state through the centuries until the end of the World War, and never abandoned it, not by any act or by any legal resolution, nor did it give away its rights to anyone else, but at the end of the World War foreign forces prevented the Croatian people from exercising their sovereign right to form their own Croatian State.

The first seven principles stated that Croatia was an ancient state with claims to land within its historic boundaries and with a people bound by a single ethnicity. They also had a right to exist freely as a nation without the threat of outside intervention. Thus Pavelić simultaneously repudiated post-World War I Croatia's existence as part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and affirmed that the NDH was the historic nation-state of the Croatian people.

8. The Croatian nation has the right to revive its sovereign authority in its own Croatian State in its entire national and historical area, that is to say to reconstitute a complete, sovereign and independent Croatian state. This reconstitution may be accomplished by any means, including force of arms.

Pavelić rewrote this eighth principle after April 1941 to reflect the new national reality and reject any obligations, whether internal or external, which did not strictly adhere to the Seventeen Principles.

9. The Croatian nation has the right of happiness and prosperity, and every single Croat has that right as a part of the Croatian nation. Happiness and prosperity can be revived and fulfilled for the nation in general and for individuals as members of the nation only in a complete, sovereign and independent Croatian state which must not and cannot be a component of any other state or any creation of a foreign power.
10. The Croatian nation is sovereign, therefore only it has the right to rule an independent state of Croatia and to manage all state and national affairs.
11. In the Croatian state and in the national affairs of a sovereign and independent state of Croatia no one can make decisions who is not by origin and by blood a member of the Croatian nation, and in the same way no other nation or state can decide the destiny of the Croatian people and the Croatian state.
12. The Croatian nation belongs to western culture and to western civilization.

The tenth and eleventh principles implicitly excluded Serbs, Jews, and Roma, who were not Croat “by blood,” from political activity in the NDH, while the twelfth officially asserted the Croatian identity as Western, an important step in distancing itself from negative Western constructs of Eastern Europe and the Balkans.<sup>29</sup> This further isolated Croats from other Yugoslav groups, who were now seen as non-Western and, hence, Eastern.

13. The peasantry is not only the foundation and source of life, but it alone constitutes the Croatian nation, and as such it is the bearer and agent of all state authority in the Croatian state.
14. All classes of the Croatian people constitute one unified whole, defined by their Croatian blood, who can trace back their origins and who maintain a permanent familial connection with the village and the land. In ninety-nine out of a hundred cases someone in Croatia who does not originate from a peasant family is not a Croat at all, but a foreign immigrant.
15. The material and moral wealth of the Croatian state is the property of the people, therefore the people are the only ones authorized to possess and to use it.
16. The essence of the moral strength of the Croatian people is found in an orderly and religious family; its economic strength is in agriculture, communal life and the natural wealth of the Croatian land; its defensive strength is in its valor, and its educational and cultural progress is based on a natural genius and proven ability in the fields of science and learning. Craftsmanship is the helping hand of the entire peasant economy.
17. Balanced breeding, the promotion and perfect of these virtues and branches of national life, is the goal of all public welfare and of state authority as such, because they have guaranteed survival for centuries of existence and will guarantee the prosperity of future generations of the Croatian nation and the existence of that security in the independent Croatian State.<sup>30</sup>

Principle Thirteen articulated one of the Ustaša’s “creation myths,” the centrality of the peasant,<sup>31</sup> which, among other things, labeled the *krajina* Serbs who had migrated



to the frontier between Bosnia and Croatia several hundred years earlier as immigrants and non-Croats.<sup>32</sup> The fourteenth principle better defined the idea of "racial purity," while the sixteenth linked the Ustaša to the Catholic Church by stating that "the essence of the moral strength of the Croatian people is found in an orderly and religious family life." Finally, the seventeenth principle's reference to "balanced breeding" echoed Nazi racial ideas about blood purity.

The 17 April 1941 Law for the Defense of the People and the 30 April Law Decree on Citizenship provided the legal basis for the NDH's policies towards Serbs, Jews, Roma, and unpatriotic Croats. Though the Ustaša would murder over 80% of the NDH's Jews and Roma, their principal target was the Serbs. According to Milovan Žanić, the Minister of Justice:

This has to be a country of Croats and nobody else, and the method does not exist which we as *Ustaša* would not use in order to make this country truly Croatian and cleanse it from the Serbs, who have threatened us for centuries and would threaten us at the first opportunity.<sup>33</sup>

Such statements laid the groundwork, ideologically, for the genocide against the Serbs.

Given the traditionally strong presence of Serbs in the Yugoslav army, the Ustaša attacked that institution first. Shortly before Kvaternik announced the creation of the NDH, Pavelić broadcast a radio speech from Florence calling for Croat soldiers to "remove Serbian officers, pledge allegiance to the Ustaša flag, and turn your rifles against those who had captured the Croatian people, desecrated all things sacred to Croats, and taken over Croatian homes and Croatian land."<sup>34</sup> On 6 April, Foreign Minister Mladen Lorković reported that a group of Croat soldiers, "following the call of the *Poglavnik* and the voice of our Croatian blood, rose against the Serb officers and the Serbian army units," an action that prevented Yugoslavia's Fourth Army from proceeding to the military front. Finally, on 11 April, one day after declaring the birth of the NDH, Kvaternik announced the exclusion of "undesirables" from the military.<sup>35</sup>

On 13 April, after disarming Serb officers and soldiers, the Ustaša created Croat gendarmeries, units that were later augmented with Croat *Volksdeutsche*, ethnic Germans descended from colonists originally sent by Vienna in the eighteenth century to repopulate demographically weakened regions of their Balkan territories. Of the approximately 500,000 *Volksdeutsche* throughout Yugoslavia, most of whom were deeply loyal to the Third Reich, about 170,000 resided in Croatia, where they lived in a virtual state-within-a-state during the war.<sup>36</sup> The exclusion of Serbs in the NDH army meant that 30% of military-aged youth, a group known for its military prowess, could not be called upon to serve when manpower shortages later occurred.<sup>37</sup>

Between 13 and 30 April, the Ustaša used these new laws to strip Serbs of their citizenship, livelihoods, and possessions. Those who tainted Croatia's purity could now be legally killed—which clearly applied to impure Serbs, now labeled "Greek



Easterners,” because of their purported link to the East. Serbs were purged throughout the judicial system, in all levels of government, the diplomatic corps, the medical profession, and so on. This caused havoc throughout the NDH, since incompetent zealots often replaced experts. A revamped legal system allowed for “courts of three,” essentially kangaroo courts, to adjudicate legal matters. In time, even this façade faded away; once tried, the accused could be summarily executed or sent to a concentration camp. The Ustaša then ordered its legal structures meshed with those of the now entirely “pure” Croat government, disrupting local jurisdictions and further alienating many Croats. The Cyrillic alphabet was likewise banned and, on 30 April, the Ustaša defined a citizen of the NDH as an Aryan who was actively loyal to the NDH, threatening those Croats who questioned Ustaša practices.

By May 1941 the Ustaša had Aryanized the bureaucracy, the professions, and the currency (the Croatian kuna replaced the banned Yugoslav dinar). Unofficially banned from civic and public social activities, Serbs had to wear blue armbands bearing a large P, for *pravoslavac* (Orthodox). This was later replaced by yellow tin neckplates. In June 1941, efforts were made to purify the Croatian language of all “Eastern” (i.e. Serbian) words, and to close all Serbian schools. Serb businesses were likewise seized, and in August the Ustaša nationalized all Serbian real estate and property, which was to be turned over to the Croats and *Volksdeutsche*.<sup>38</sup>

Expulsions, the first pillar of the tripartite Ustaša plan to create a pure Croat state, began on 18 April, when the government seized land in Slavonia and Srem from Serb veterans who had fought in the Yugoslav army during World War I. Between May and June 1941, more than 5,000 Serbs fled or were driven into German-occupied Serbia.<sup>39</sup> The government established the Office of Colonization to resettle Croats on reclaimed land, but the steady stream of battered refugees strained the resources of the German authorities in occupied Serbia, who wanted to exchange Serbia’s Slovenes for Croatia’s Serbs. The Ustaša complied and began nocturnal raids to round up Serbs, which often left families just half an hour to gather papers and no more than 50 kilos of property. The elites, which included Serbian community leaders, intellectuals, and particularly Orthodox clergy, the backbone of the Orthodox communities, went first. By the end of 1941, half of 577 Serbian Orthodox clergymen in the NDH were dead, imprisoned, or deported.<sup>40</sup>

The Ustaša opened holding camps, which allowed them to round up large numbers of Serbs and deport them to Serbia. Many, though, were robbed and killed by the Ustaše before reaching the camps. While poor record keeping makes it impossible to determine the exact number of deportees, Jozo Tomasevich suggests that by the summer of 1942 almost 200,000 Serbs had crossed into Nazi-occupied Serbia as transferees or refugees.<sup>41</sup>

Forced conversion to Catholicism was another way to rid the NDH of Serbs.<sup>42</sup> It also highlights the problematic role of the Vatican and the Croatian Catholic Church in the Ustaša’s genocide. The Vatican had long supported the idea that Croatian Catholics guarded the religious boundary between East and West. Croats

shared this view of themselves as a heroic bulwark against both Islam and Orthodoxy. Education Minister Budak stated in August 1941:

The Drina is the border between the East and West. God's Providence placed us to defend our border, which our allies are well aware and value, because for centuries we have proven that we are good frontiersmen. Therefore, we were dubbed "Antemurale Christianitatis."<sup>43</sup>

But the rise of the Soviet Union underscored the importance of the Croats as a defense against communism, which Pius XII identified as an immediate and dangerous threat to global Catholicism. This strengthened his interest in Croatia.<sup>44</sup>

To legitimize his government, Pavelić sought full diplomatic relations with the Vatican. His request for a papal audience was turned down several times. The Vatican explained that it had to remain neutral towards states created during the war. But on the evening of 18 May 1941, four days after the infamous Ustaša murder of hundreds of Serbs in the Orthodox Church in Glina, the Pope gave Pavelić, who had come to Rome on political business, a brief private audience.<sup>45</sup> Though the meeting stopped short of fulfilling Pavelić's wish, many among the Allied and Axis powers felt it meant that the Vatican had granted the NDH *de facto* recognition. A memorandum from the Yugoslav government-in-exile's Legation in London, for example, strongly protested the Pope's audience on 12 June.<sup>46</sup> On 3 October 1942, London's Minister to the Vatican, Sir Godolphin Francis d'Arcy Osborne, worried that Pavelić would seek another audience with the Pope while on a scheduled visit to Rome, since "his reception in 1941 by His Holiness caused a very bad impression in official and unofficial circles in England . . ."<sup>47</sup>

In August 1941, the Vatican appointed Giuseppe Ramiro Marcone as an "apostolic visitor" to the NDH. Pavelić had earlier requested a papal nuncio.<sup>48</sup> But this allowed the Vatican to maintain close contact with the NDH while stopping just short of diplomatic recognition. Thus, while the Pope may not have known the extent of the Ustaša's violence against its minorities during his May meeting with Pavelić, Marcone was now able to keep him well informed. In addition, the Vatican began receiving reports from Italian and German sources that claimed that as many as 300,000 Serbs had already been killed. In March 1942, for instance, Cardinal Eugène Tisserant told Nicola Rusinović, one of two "unofficial" Croatian representatives to the Vatican:

I know for a fact that it is the Franciscans themselves, as for example Father Simic of Knin, who have taken part in attacks against the Orthodox populations so as to destroy the Orthodox Church. In the same way you destroyed the Orthodox Church in Banja Luka. I know for sure that the Franciscans in Bosnia and Herzegovina have acted abominably, and this pains me. Such acts should not be committed by educated, cultured, civilized people, let alone by priests.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, according to German, Italian, and eyewitness reports, many Catholic clergymen in the NDH, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, encouraged, took part in, or led massacres and acts of brutal violence against Serbs.<sup>50</sup> Pius XII refused to see Pavelić again,

even privately.<sup>51</sup> But in response to pleas on behalf of endangered Jews and Serbs, the Vatican issued only discrete recommendations that the Ustaša moderate its behavior.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, while some clergy in the NDH committed war crimes in the name of the Catholic Church and others protested the genocidal actions of their government, the nationalistic young Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, practiced a wary ambivalence. He was an early supporter of Pavelić and the Ustaša's goal of an independent Catholic Croatia. He proclaimed in a letter to his clergy:

Honourable brothers! There is not one among you who recently has not been a witness to the greatest events in the life of the Croatian people, among whom we work as the harbingers of Christ's Gospel. These are events which have brought our people to embrace a long dreamed and yearned for ideal. These are moments in which the tongue does not speak, but the blood through its mysterious connection with the soil, in which we have become aware of God's light, and with the people from which we have emerged.<sup>53</sup>

As the highest Catholic official in the NDH, Stepinac advised Croatian clergy not to tolerate Orthodox Christianity, which Pavelić considered a political force rather than a religion.<sup>54</sup> This was linked to the fact that the Serbs had enjoyed political dominance in Yugoslavia, with the Orthodox Church wielding considerable political power. Yet neither Pavelić nor Stepinac acknowledged similar aspirations for their own Church and its powerful mother Church in Rome.

Scholars debate the degree of Stepinac's contact with the Ustaša. Vladimir Dedjier, Tito's colleague, alleges that Stepinac entertained the Poglavnik and his inner circle, blessed the military and police, and publicly performed services as the highest Catholic official in the NDH.<sup>55</sup> But while some Western sources cite Dedjier's claim, his strident anti-Catholicism renders it suspect, and little objective evidence exists in its support. In any case, despite his initial enthusiasm for the NDH, Stepinac soon began to question the regime's mandate of forced conversion. Many clergymen embraced these conversions as a way to increase the number of Church members; some even sought to convert already doomed Serbs and Jews at the very last moment, to be certain that they died as members of the "true faith." But the Vatican recognized only "good faith" conversions, rather than conversions forced upon desperate individuals. To complicate the matter further, on 14 July 1941, the Ustaša's Ministry of Justice decreed that no educated Orthodox Christian artists, intellectuals, or merchants could be converted, despite its campaign of forced conversion. This made it even more difficult for clergy to determine the appropriate action to take. Nevertheless, whole villages of Serbs were forcibly converted. Of those, most were later murdered despite their conversions.<sup>56</sup> In the end, the forced conversions that had begun sporadically in the spring of 1941, intensifying in late autumn of that year, faded by 1942 as Serb resistance grew and Serbs saw that conversion did not guarantee security.<sup>57</sup> Both Yugoslav and Western historiographers cite the figure of 240,000 Orthodox Serb converts.<sup>58</sup>

Loyal to Rome and Pavelić, Stepinac at first sought to uphold the positions of both, but reports of large-scale massacres caused him to shift his stance on conversion.

Rather than enforcing the Vatican's insistence that conversion was only appropriate "for the salvation of the soul," he began to advocate those that might save lives.<sup>59</sup> In November 1941, he convened a Bishops' Synod to discuss this question. It concluded that government authorities should not harm Jewish converts to Catholicism—though the Ustaše frequently disregarded the bishops' stand.<sup>60</sup>

Stepinac now worked privately to limit the impact of Pavelić's policies. Pavelić complained to the Germans about his less-than-supportive archbishop and asked that the Vatican remove him from his post.<sup>61</sup> On 24 May 1942, Stepinac spoke out against genocide from his pulpit, mentioning Jews and Roma, though not Serbs.<sup>62</sup> He also questioned the government's authority to make policy regarding Catholic rites such as baptism and conversion. But his private protests did not deter Pavelić. At his trial in 1946, Stepinac stated that his conscience was clear: "I say, before God, the people, the diplomatic corps so far as they are present here . . . that I am completely innocent, and history will fairly judge my whole work."<sup>63</sup>

The end of Stepinac's story resembles that of Pope Pius XII, who was later praised and denounced for his actions during the war. In 1946, Stepinac was tried and found guilty as a Nazi collaborator with strong ties to the Ustaša. He was sentenced to 16 years' hard labor, but released after five years. He was placed under house arrest in Krašić, where he was born, and died of a blood clot in 1960. Pope John Paul II beatified him as a Martyr to the Faith in 1998. The campaign for his beatification collected and publicized a number of testimonies about his work on behalf of the Jews, though not on behalf of Serbs.<sup>64</sup> But his supporters have so far failed to get Yad Vashem to declare him a "Righteous Gentile (Righteous among the Nations)." Stepinac remains an ambiguous, controversial figure who is still esteemed by nationalist Croats and reviled by nationalist Serbs.

Extermination, the third and most chilling Ustaša method for cleansing the NDH of Serbs, included massacres throughout Serb-populated areas of Croatia's *krajina* and Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as a network of concentration camps. Hundreds of Catholic clergy played central roles in these efforts to murder Serbs. For example, eyewitness and survivor testimony as well as Italian and *Wehrmacht* reports note the enthusiastic participation of some Franciscan priests (the order that brought Catholicism to Bosnia) in massacres, while the management of Jasenovac, Croatia's most brutal concentration camp, fell twice to priests. One, Miroslav "Majsterović" Filipović (his nickname meaning master or craftsman) commanded the Jasenovac concentration camp and later its Stara Gradiška subcamp for women. Filipović, a Franciscan monk, was warned by his religious superiors about his role as an Ustaša chaplain. In 1942, Marcone suspended him for his chaplaincy. Filipović had a reputation in Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška as a master sadist. After the war, Filipović was tried and convicted as a war criminal. He was hanged wearing his Franciscan robe and cross. In spring 1943, the former priest Ivica Brkljačić replaced Filipović.<sup>65</sup>

One Ustaša emblem, a dagger superimposed on a Catholic crucifix, symbolized the power of force with faith, while new recruits swore oaths of loyalty on daggers, knives,

and crosses.<sup>66</sup> Given Pavelić's sixteenth principle, which stated that the "essence of the moral strength of the Croatian people is found in an orderly and religious family," and Stepinac's early enthusiasm for the Ustaša, strongly nationalist priests and monks could consider themselves latter-day Crusaders, holy warriors fighting to preserve the sanctity of their Catholic state against Orthodoxy and communism. For example, Mate Mugos, a pastor from Udbina, remarked: "Until now we have worked for the Catholic faith with the prayer book and with the cross. Now the time has come to work with knife and revolver."<sup>67</sup>

Massacres, often accompanied by looting, began just a few weeks after the NDH came into existence in April 1941, and continued for its duration. However, by 1943, the Ustaša military had to face increasing attacks from the Partisans, whose ranks were swollen with recruits from all ethnicities. Ideologically motivated militias, working with local Croats and Muslim recruits, generally carried out the massacres against Serbs. This frequently created tension with the less ideologically motivated *Domobranstvo*, which sometimes participated in killings but more often than not attempted to restore order after violence had devastated an area. By the fall of 1944, the Ustaša sought to unite the two branches, and on 1 December the *Domo-branstvo* had come under the *Obrana*, an arm of the secret police that maintained security for the concentration camp system, staged raids on villages, and engaged in heavy fighting near the end of the war. This meant fewer checks on violence.<sup>68</sup>

The first significant attack, on 27 April 1941, near Bjelovar in Croatia proper, was justified by the local Ustaša authorities as retaliation for a falsely alleged Serb massacre of Croats, a policy that the Ustaša employed throughout that spring and early summer.<sup>69</sup> At first only Serb men were singled out for murder, usually beginning with the most influential members of the community. On 12 May, six days prior to the Pope's private audience with Pavelić, Ustaša forces killed 260 men at Glina, south of Zagreb. At Otocac, another 331 men had their heads bashed in with axes, while on 31 May, near Trebinje, between 120 and 270 Serbs were rounded up and killed, again ostensibly because they were *Četnici* who had killed Ustaše. An outraged von Glaise-Horstenau reported that 2,300 men were murdered after a round-up of villagers near Banja Luka.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the Muslim commander of the regional gendarmerie, Muharem Aganović, reported that, in fact, these were unprovoked assaults on Serb civilians in their homes,<sup>71</sup> which eyewitnesses confirmed. But the massacres continued, including one led by Leo Tongl on 24 May against villages near Ljubinje. The Ustaše murdered all of the Serb men they arrested, including many new Catholic converts. On 2 and 3 June, between 120 and 170 men from the Trebinje area were similarly murdered.<sup>72</sup>

The same month, the Ustaša executed large numbers of Serb civilians in the Karst region, shooting them and tossing their bodies into nearby limestone pits. Some were still alive when they were thrown into the pits. On 3 June, local recruits led by Herman Tongl, Leo's brother, rounded up 167 Serb men from two villages near Korita, imprisoned them on the pretext that they would stand trial, and transported them to the Golubnjača pit, where they were killed.<sup>73</sup> Informed of the Korita incident by the

bishop of Mostar, Alojzije Mišić, Stepinac protested to Pavelić privately. But Tongl told wary local Muslims in eastern Herzegovina:<sup>74</sup> "We cannot be satisfied and will not stop until the total extermination of the last Serb from our Independent State of Croatia. The last bullet for the last Serb."<sup>75</sup>

On 22 June, the Ustaša initiated the so-called Vidovdan massacres, spreading rumors that the Serbs planned a major offensive against Croats and Muslims on Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day), 28 June. Particularly important to Serbs, Vidovdan commemorates the date in 1389 on which, according to Serbian myth, Serbia lost the Battle of Kosovo to the Ottoman Turks. Using this ruse, Tongl enlisted local Croats and Muslims to massacre Serb farmers in four districts. Once the attacks began, the Croats targeted women, whom they raped and brutalized, and children. Some were killed and thrown into pits; others were transported to spots along the Neretva River near the Adriatic Coast and executed there. When local Muslims in Bileća, a predominantly Serbian area, interceded to win the release of Serbs who had been arrested,<sup>76</sup> the Ustaša realized its success in carrying out the massacres depended upon its "ability to pacify the Muslims and Croats," i.e. to secure their support and trust. As Dulić suggests, "Where such pacification succeeded, they [the Ustaše] were more or less free to initiate the destruction process."<sup>77</sup> Attacks in southeastern Bosnia killed fewer Serbs than those in eastern Herzegovina, except near Višegrad, where Serbs and Jews were executed along the Drina River for a month.<sup>78</sup>

Once Pavelić abruptly ordered an end to the massacres on 27 June, the Ustaša began massive deportations of Serbs. The Ustaše blamed the Vidovdan "rumors" on Jews, asked Serbs to return to their farms, and decreed that 100 Serbs would be killed for every dead Ustaše. But despite Pavelić's order, the mass killings continued throughout the summer, as did the deportations to newly constructed concentration camps. In the villages around Prebilovci, Ustaše operatives arrested all Serbs and sent them to a collection camp at Čapljina, where they were killed and thrown into a pit near Šurmanci.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to Tongl's group, so-called "wild *Ustaše*" units, answerable to no one, terrorized the area. Some were led by Franciscan monks carrying crosses, while others, made up of Croat zealots from the diaspora, murdered 260 Serbian community leaders between 1941 and 1942.<sup>80</sup> Outraged at the barbarity, and fearful that such violence would spur Serb resistance and destabilize the region, *Wehrmacht* commanders protested bitterly to Pavelić.<sup>81</sup> On 9 August, he ordered the killings stopped, though they continued throughout the rest of the war. Herbert von Troll-Oberfell, Chargé d'Affaires in the German legation in Zagreb, wrote the Foreign Ministry in Berlin that

The Serbian question has become considerably more acute in the last few days. The ruthless carrying out of the resettlement with many unfortunate bi-products, and numerous other acts of terror in the provinces . . . are giving even the sober-minded Croatian circles reason for serious concern.<sup>82</sup>

And he was right. Over the previous few months, a Yugoslav army Serbian colonel, Dragoljub Draža Mihailović, had formed the nucleus of a Serb guerilla army, the



Četnički odredi jugoslovenske vojske (Chetnik Detachments of the Yugoslav Army). What followed were Četnik massacres of Croat and Muslim villages. By July, the Muslims and Croats generally held the towns, while the Serbs held sway in the forests and countryside. The resulting chaos prevented Germany from gaining full control of the region.<sup>83</sup>

The *Obrana* (Ustaša Defense Brigade) units caused more problems by committing acts so horrific that the Germans urged Pavelić to disband them.<sup>84</sup> In a desperate effort to see order reestablished in NDH-controlled territory, the Germans even suggested that the Ustaša allow Serbs to become “Croats of the Orthodox faith.” By September 1942, Pavelić had removed Jure Francetić, the head of the Crna legija (Black Legion), and “officially” dissolved it, though it remained active under Major Rafael Boban.<sup>85</sup> Another division of the *Obrana*, led by Vjekoslav “Maks” Luburić, who was in charge of all NDH camps, ordered all Orthodox villages razed near Jasenovac. The Germans distrusted Luburić, whom one *Wehrmacht* report described as a “neurotic, pathological personality.”<sup>86</sup>

Continued German criticism of *Obrana* initiatives forced Dido Kvaternik, Chief of Ustaša Internal Security, to resign in September 1942.<sup>87</sup> Regardless, between 10 June and 30 July, *Wehrmacht* units, supported by Ustaša troops, conducted their own extensive “pacification” campaign against Partisans in the Kozara Mountains of western Bosnia. One of the officers involved in this operation was Kurt Waldheim, who was serving as a communications officer with a *Kampfgruppe* in Bosnia. He later became Secretary-General of the United Nations and President of Austria. In July, Pavelić awarded Waldheim the Order of King Zvonimir (an eleventh-century king linked to the Ustaša myth of the glorious Croatian medieval kingdom), following the first successful wave of massacres. During the operation, the Germans and the Croats displaced some 60,000 predominantly Serb civilians, many of whom were ultimately killed or sent to the camp that came to embody the horrors of the Ustaša regime, Jasenovac. Of those sent to Jasenovac, most died.<sup>88</sup> The extent of the campaign caused Glaise to write, “Kozara was cleared to the last man, and likewise, the last woman and last child.”<sup>89</sup> Waldheim’s involvement in Operation Kozara did not come to light until 1986, when he was running for the presidency of Austria. The Austrian government appointed a special commission to look into the charges, which were later found to be true. These revelations did not stop his election as Austria’s president, nor Pope John Paul II from making him a Knight of the Order of Pius IX.<sup>90</sup>

The deteriorating situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina adversely affected Bosnian Muslims. Vulnerable to radicalized Serbs, they could no longer afford to remain neutral and began to join Ustaša, German, or Partisan units as well as the Muslim Volunteer Legion, and, in a few cases, the Četnici. Like those Četnici, Ustaše and *Domobrani* who later joined the Partisans, some Muslims shifted allegiances as the need arose. On paper, the Ustaša guaranteed Muslims equal rights as pure Croats. Indeed, to highlight Muslim inclusion within the NDH, Pavelić built a mosque in Zagreb and named Osman Kulenović, a Muslim leader from a powerful Bosnian



family, as his vice president. In 1941, Osman's brother, Džafer, replaced him, remaining in that position until 1945. But Kulenović was viewed by many Muslims as a figurehead, and Pavelić ignored Muslim pleas on behalf of their community.<sup>91</sup>

Muslims saw themselves as increasingly endangered by the brutal behavior of the Ustaša troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the complicity of the Catholic Church.<sup>92</sup> Throughout 1941, Muslim leaders sent letters and petitions to various higher Muslim, Croat, Italian and German authorities that criticized the unnecessary bloodshed and the discrimination they experienced, despite the government's guarantee of equality.<sup>93</sup> The petitions also pointed out Bosnia's unique history of tolerance as a Muslim kingdom under the Ottoman Turks. A letter of protest signed by 200 Sarajevo Muslims, dated 12 October 1941, accused the Ustaše of using "fezzes and Muslim names" to provoke Serbs against Muslims.<sup>94</sup> A memorandum from Banja Luka Muslims, dated 22 November 1941, criticized the regime's violent treatment of Serbs and accused some Catholic Croats of encouraging Muslim "*ološ*" (scum) to murder Serbs and to force Serbs who had earlier adopted Islam to convert to Catholicism.<sup>95</sup>

Ustaša indifference to the plight of Muslims led many to place their hopes in the Germans. A group of Bosnian Muslims sent Hitler a memorandum dated 1 November 1942, that stressed their Gothic roots, decried Ustaša killings in Bosnia, asked to expand the Muslim Volunteer Legion, and sought "an autonomous Bosnian region under the direct supervision of the *Wehrmacht*."<sup>96</sup> While Germany could not afford to do anything that would further affect its uneasy relationship with Pavelić's government, Jozo Tomasevich links Himmler's desire to create a Bosnian Muslim SS division to the November memorandum. Three months later, on 10 February 1943, Hitler gave the order to begin recruiting.<sup>97</sup>

Many Muslims, however, did participate enthusiastically in attacks on Serbs. Some joined the Ustaša directly, while others fought in the Prinz Eugen Waffen SS division, which was made up principally of *Volksdeutsche* from Yugoslavia. In 1943, Himmler signed an agreement in Sarajevo with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hadj Amin el Husseini, to form the first non-Germanic SS unit, the 13th Waffen Mountain division, the SS Handžar (1st Croatian), named for the celebrated Turkish battle knife, the scimitar. The Grand Mufti hoped to create a pan-Islamic force that would join the Muslims of Europe with those elsewhere. Himmler, who believed the Arabs were fierce fighters, thought that the Bosnian Muslims would make good soldiers.<sup>98</sup> When Pavelić objected to the plan, the Germans allowed more than 1,000 Croat officers to join the Handžar division. Nearly 21,000 Muslims enlisted to fight for their homeland under German and Croat leadership. They mutinied when they were sent to France for training.<sup>99</sup> Some later served in Silesia, others on the Russian Front. In 1944, the division returned to Bosnia, where it became involved in large-scale actions against Serbs in the eastern and northeastern areas. After heavy desertions, the Handžar division was transferred from northeastern Bosnia to northern Croatia in September of the same year. Other Muslim recruits were attracted to the 23rd or "Kama" (a Turkish short knife) Waffen SS division, though these were later placed

in the Handžar division, which continued to wreak havoc in Bosnia until both units were disbanded at the end of 1944.

The Ustaša also opened more than 20 transit, containment and concentration camps throughout its territories in the summer of 1941. That following July, the Ustaše rounded up civilians of all ages and began to intern entire families in these camps.<sup>100</sup> On 25 November 1941, Pavelić, Andrija Artuković, and other Ustaša leaders signed an order decreeing the building of camps for “undesirables”, legitimizing this tactic.

Women and children fared poorly in the Ustaša camps. Those who could work were frequently sent to Germany as “slaves.” Others were killed or died of disease. But children had an especially difficult time because they were often separated from their mothers and were sent to special camps such as Jastrebarsko and Sisak. Professor Ruža Rupčić, a Croat prisoner at Stara Gradiška, reported that “In July 1942, the Ustaša selected 2000 children whom they said were incapable of living, put them in one room, and killed them with cyanide.”<sup>101</sup> Mara Vejnović-Smiljanić, a Serb professor from Croatia, recalled having seen nuns “apply liquid to children’s mouths with brushes,” which caused the children to scream, writhe in pain, and at last die.<sup>102</sup> Božo Švarc

saw the *Ustaše* grab small children [from Kozara] and whirl them in the air above their head so fast until they ripped their arms off, leaving the Ustaše holding only the arm. The other *Ustaše* would try to catch the flying bodies of the children on their bayonets.<sup>103</sup>

A few child prisoners were adopted by Croats, who hoped to reeducate them. After the Kozara murders, “Maks” Luburić tried to organize an Ottoman Turkish *devirme*, an annual tax on Orthodox villagers that involved rounding up and sending 12-year-old boys to Istanbul for conversion to Islam and training them as Janissaries, an elite Turkish military unit. He arranged to have 450 Serbian boy prisoners “adopted,” labeled as Janissaries, and trained as Ustaše in the camp. Not surprisingly, the experiment failed.<sup>104</sup> A former child prisoner at Jasenovac, Dragoje Lukić, has documented that 19,554 children, the majority of them Serbs, died at Jasenovac.<sup>105</sup>

Though there were between 22 and 26 camps in the NDH network, Jasenovac has come to represent the horrors of genocide in wartime Yugoslavia.<sup>106</sup> Questions and controversies about the number who died there have led to the creation of separate Serb and Croat historiographies marked by vitriolic exchanges between scholars, as well as opposing “victim” myths.<sup>107</sup> Official records are limited, either missing or destroyed. German and Italian reports from that period as well as eyewitness testimony offer figures too high for credibility. A *Wehrmacht* document dated 6 December 1943, for example, informed Berlin that 120,000 had been “liquidated” (*liquidiert*) at Jasenovac.<sup>108</sup> But whereas Nazi efficiency and a distant bureaucracy was able methodically to record the deaths of millions, Ustaša incompetence, inefficiency, conflicts over camp oversight, and random acts of violence resulted in poor records. In addition, Ustaša officials burned camp records in 1943 and 1945.<sup>109</sup>

The number of dead has become a weapon in a political game played to serve ethno-national ends. For as noted above, Croat and Serb nationalists generally deflate or inflate figures according to their respective political needs. Estimates range from Croat leader Franjo Tuđman's 30,000 to the more than a million cited by Serb nationalist and anti-Milošević novelist Vuk Drašković. For this reason, many contemporary scholars now cite Žeravić's more balanced estimate of 85,000 deaths in Jasenovac, which he admits excludes the 28,000 who died in transit or were murdered directly outside of the camp walls.<sup>110</sup> But it is generally conceded that historians will likely never be able to determine the exact number of murders there.

Jasenovac was located about 100 kilometers southeast of Zagreb in a marshy area down river from the Dubički lime pits. The Zagreb–Belgrade railroad ran nearby, which facilitated prisoner transports, while the Sava, Una, and Velika Struga Rivers, which bounded the camp, created a triangular piece of land with watery borders. The Sava's western side, meanwhile, was a sparsely populated plain susceptible to flooding, which made it easy to dispose of bodies but difficult to escape and survive. These constraints, as well as the two barbed wire fences that surrounded Jasenovac III and the Sava on the unfenced side, meant that breakouts were unlikely until the final days of Jasenovac in April 1945.<sup>111</sup>

Jasenovac was divided into five camps: I, Bročice, and II, Krapje (August 1941–December 1941); III, Ciglane—the brickyards, the central killing ground (November 1941–late April 1945); IV, Kozara, the work camp, which, with Ciglane, operated until the Partisans liberated it at the end of the war (February 1941–late April 1945); and V, Stara Gradiška, originally intended for political prisoners (summer 1941 until late April 1945, just before III and IV). More than 5,000 children were sent to Stara Gradiška after the mass deportations from Kozara and other areas in the summer of 1942. By the winter of 1942/1943, women and children from the Đakovo camp were sent to Stara Gradiška.<sup>112</sup>

Dido Kvaternik's Office III of the Ustaša Intelligence Service administered Jasenovac until June 1943, when it was placed under the main public security office. Maks Luburić's defense forces were in charge of its security, and in September and October 1941, Luburić and his forces rounded up the Serbs in neighboring villages, sent them to Jasenovac, and built a military garrison in the area. Following the German model, the Ustaša appointed foremen and deputies from among the prisoners to manage camp life. Ex-police and imprisoned Ustaše formed a willing circle of informers that kept a tight rein on prisoners.<sup>113</sup>

Though lacking German technology, Jasenovac III became a death camp for most of those sent there. Its 88% mortality rate was higher than that of Auschwitz, where 84.6% of the inmates died.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, while most Ustaša camps were closed by 1942 or 1943, Camps III, IV, and V continued operations until late April 1945, and received prisoners from other camps. Luburić, who toured Nazi camps in July 1941, modeled Jasenovac after Sachsenhausen.<sup>115</sup> Since the camp had once been a brickyard, its commandant, Ivica Matković, Luburić's first deputy, directed engineer

Hinko Pičili (later a camp commandant) to design a furnace there in 1942. It functioned as a crematorium for dead prisoners, although survivor testimony suggests that some, including children, were thrown in alive. Eduard Šajer described the “stench of burning human bodies” that spread across the camps, adding that, “Many Jews I recognized from Sarajevo were all burned alive in this way . . .”<sup>116</sup> Sadik Danon remembered a sudden “smell of grilled meat” that reminded him of the kebabs of Belgrade restaurants. Nearby, the Ustaše were “throwing people into the blazing brickyard furnace alive; that was the smell of human flesh.”<sup>117</sup>

Luburić also had a gas-chamber built at Jasenovac’s Camp V after unsuccessful experiments with gas vans. A considerable number of inmates were gassed during the three-month experiment with sulfur dioxide and Zyklon B. This method was abandoned because of poor construction of the gassing chamber. In the end, such technologies proved unnecessary. For by far the largest number of men, women, and children who were murdered in this so-called “political” or “labor” camp died from starvation, disease (especially typhus), and beatings or assaults with mallets, maces, axes, poison, and knives. One, the *srbosjek*, or Serb-cutter, was a long, curved knife attached to a partial glove and designed for cutting throats. In addition, guards regularly executed large groups en masse outside the camp itself when they arrived and threw the bodies into the Sava River.<sup>118</sup>

Unlike the German-run camps, which emphasized anonymity and efficiency, Jasenovac specialized in one-on-one violence of a particularly brutal kind. From 25 to 27 December 1941, for example, guards attacked the Serbian barracks with mallets, assaulted the prisoners, tied their hands together, and killed them with knives and mallets. They then threw their bodies into nearby trenches.<sup>119</sup> Guards were allowed to beat inmates indiscriminately, while camp commandants like Filipović (dubbed “Fra Sontona,” or Brother Satan) and Dinko Šakić and his wife, Nada Luburić-Šakić (sister of Maks Luburić),<sup>120</sup> sated their appetites with acts of ingenious torture.<sup>121</sup> Jewish survivor Eta Najfeld called Filipović “the very personification of evil,” because of his notorious one-on-one crimes against men and murder of women and children. On one occasion, Majfeld reported that Filipović “summoned all Serbian women and children to the cellar of a prison and then had some kind of dam opened so that water from the Sava River flooded the cellar,” trapping and drowning them all.<sup>122</sup>

From December 1943 through August 1944, conditions at Jasenovac eased somewhat under the command of Ivica Brkljačić, though executions continued. But after several inmates escaped, the camp authorities clamped down again. Prisoners continued to be sent to Jasenovac and were usually killed upon arrival.<sup>123</sup> By fall 1944, Camps III and IV held between 3,000 and 3,500 prisoners. After the Ustaše discovered a resistance plot in III and hanged its leaders, the authorities began to dismantle Stara Gradiška (where another cell went undetected) and sent the remaining prisoners to Camps III and IV. The liberation of Belgrade on 20 October 1944 forced the camp authorities to begin eradicating evidence of the murders. Prisoner crews exhumed mass graves and burned old corpses before being killed and burned by the next crew.<sup>124</sup>

In late 1944, the numbers of inmates in Jasenovac dwindled. But prisoners still arrived, and 200–300 prisoners were sent to Germany to provide additional labor to the Third Reich. In the winter of 1944/1945, prisoners noticed allied bombers in the area. Then on 30 March 1945, Good Friday, Partisan aircraft bombed the camp, accurately hitting buildings rather than prisoners, and bombed again on 5 and 7 April. Blaming prisoner deaths on the allies and the Partisans, who were even then advancing on the camp, the Ustaše began mass liquidations. On 21 April, they marched perhaps 700 women and children to their deaths and locked the remaining 1,000 to 1,400 men into the *šusteraj* (shoemakers' building). When the doors opened the next morning, unarmed prisoners rushed the guards and tried to escape. Most were shot before reaching the Sava. Only 80 survived the escape attempt. Afterwards, the Ustaše torched records and buildings before fleeing. After the Partisans arrived on 25 April, they forced captured *Domobranci* to level what remained of Jasenovac.<sup>125</sup>

The story of how the principal Ustaša leaders fled the NDH—replete with trunks of loot, secret hiding places, Vatican accomplices, murderous betrayals, and ratlines—belongs in a spy novel. The records of the US State Department and Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC) ironically remain reliable sources because of the direct involvement of these agencies in the escape of these war criminals.<sup>126</sup> Although Yugoslavia captured and executed Filipović in 1946, many in the Ustaša high command escaped immediate captivity, some for years. Luburić fled to Spain, where an agent of Uprava državne bezbednosti (UDBA—the Yugoslav secret police) assassinated him in 1969.<sup>127</sup> Artuković escaped to Ireland and later settled in southern California, where he lived until his extradition to Yugoslavia in 1986. Tried and sentenced to death, he died in prison of natural causes in 1988. He said during his trial that he did not have any knowledge of killings beyond those necessary to protect the NDH. Dinko Šakić and his wife Nada lived comfortably in Argentina until 1998, when they were extradited to Croatia. He was tried and found guilty in 1999 and sentenced to 20 years' confinement. He died in a prison hospital on 20 July 2008.<sup>128</sup> Nada was found innocent and released.

Many of the Ustaša leaders who fled the NDH found shelter in the College of San Girolamo degli Illirici, a monastery for Croatian monks near the Vatican.<sup>129</sup> Fr. Krunoslav Draganović, an Ustaša lieutenant-colonel, directed the fugitive enterprise at San Girolamo. As vice chief of the Ustaša's Bureau of Colonization, Draganović had overseen the confiscation of Serb property in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He also served as the army chaplain at Jasenovac until Stepinac sent him to Rome in mid-1943 as the Ustaša's second unofficial representative.<sup>130</sup> At San Girolamo, Draganović worked with the US CIC to send Ustaše abroad. He also arranged Klaus Barbie's (the Gestapo's infamous "Butcher of Lyon") successful flight to South America.<sup>131</sup> Through his efforts, many of those responsible for the NDH's mass murders found refuge in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Portugal, Spain and the US, where they became the heroes of the Croatian diaspora.<sup>132</sup> Interestingly, just a few days after the death of Pius XII in 1958, the Vatican Secretary of State asked Draganović to

leave San Girolamo. He then began to work for US Army Intelligence until they dismissed him in 1962, when they found his information no longer worth their investment. He then retired to Vienna, only to resurface inexplicably in Tito's Yugoslavia, where he lived and worked quietly in Zagreb until his death in 1979.<sup>133</sup>

Ante Pavelić, the architect of the Ustaša genocide, fled to Austria disguised as a priest. From there he was smuggled into Italy, where he, too, established contact with San Girolamo. When the US explored the possibility of extraditing him, the CIC warned that such a move could hurt the Vatican and expose US anti-communist agents. The US military agreed and backed off.<sup>134</sup> In 1948, Pavelić fled to Argentina, where he remained until 1957. On 9 April of that year, one day before the anniversary of the founding of the NDH, he was shot twice either by an agent of the Yugoslav secret police, or perhaps by a former *Četnik*, Blagoje Jovović, a Montenegrin by birth, who claimed responsibility in his memoir. Pavelić, who survived the assassination attempt, sought refuge in fascist Spain to avoid potential extradition. Franco granted him asylum to reciprocate the support that Croats had shown him during the Spanish Civil War.<sup>135</sup> Before his death in 1959, Pope John XXIII blessed the former NDH dictator.<sup>136</sup> A leading Croatian newspaper in Buenos Aires printed the following eulogy:

May the Spanish soil weigh lightly on our brave head of state until the day the Croatian patriots will have taken him to the liberated Independent State of Croatia, which he had resurrected through his unflinching struggle and which he through his great sacrifice had held out as an everlasting goal of the whole Croatian people for all times!<sup>137</sup>

This passage clearly reveals the powerful ethno-nationalist sentiments harbored by some in the diasporic Croatian community, which 30 years later would play a vital role in the birth of the new Croatian state, the death of Yugoslavia, and the Bosnian debacle. They supplied money, publicity, and arms to fulfill, at last, their dream of a free, independent nation of Croatian Catholics.

Forgotten in all of this was the Ustaša genocide of the Serbs and other ethnic minorities during World War II. The actual number murdered by the Ustaša regime remains a source of controversy: some nationalist Croats suggest a figure of 60,000, while some nationalist Serbs cite 1,500,000. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, suggests a figure of between 300,000 and 400,000. The numbers most widely accepted today are those of the Croat Žerjavić and the Montenegrin Serb Kočović. The former cites 307,000 Serb victims (1989) and 322,000 (1997), while the latter in 1985 projected 333,000.<sup>138</sup> Whatever the actual count, the relatively large number of men, women, and particularly children massacred or sent to Jasenovac and other camps neutralizes the official Ustaša claim that the dead were combatants fighting to destroy the NDH, except in the sense that, as non-Croats, they threatened "the national interests and the preservation of the biological survival of the Croatian people."<sup>139</sup>

Finally, then, if Tito's goal of a multi-ethnic communist state demanded that Yugoslavs forget the past, Freud taught us the power and cost of memories repressed.



As noted above, even before Tito died, cracks had appeared in the golden façade of his state. After 1980, nationalist Serbs began to exhume bodies and memories in the lands of the former NDH—Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina—to stir up renewed fear of their Muslim and Croat neighbors among *krajina* and Bosnian Serbs. As Monroe Price suggests, "Spurious reports of new atrocities were bolstered by reference to past genuine ones."<sup>140</sup> Meanwhile, the former Partisan, Franjo Tuđman, the so-called "Father of Croatia" who became its first president in 1990, pronounced the NDH "not simply a quisling creation and a fascist crime" but rather "the expression of the historical aspirations of the Croat people."<sup>141</sup>

Ilana Bet-El stresses the authoritative power of the words "I remember" for "allocating blame and defining justice in terms of personal and national memory."<sup>142</sup> Yet if Croat and Serb mythographers alike embellished truth and distorted history for the sake of nationalist ideals, the buried truths—ever fragmentary, like the bones that once were bodies in the limestone pits—demand our scrutiny. In the 1990s and even today, potent Ustaša-era symbols still stir emotion in the former Yugoslavia: Jasenovac, graphic images of Serbian war dead, the checkerboard-*šahovnica*,<sup>143</sup> the *kuna*, and black T-shirts commemorating the infamous Black Legion. Croat rock-star Thompson (Marko Perković) performs concerts attracting as many as 40,000 at a time and highlighting his nationalist, often explicitly pro-Ustaša lyrics, Black Legion shirts, the Nazi salute, and the Ustaša rallying cry, "*Za dom—Spremni* [For the homeland—Ready]." Arguing that the "grand narratives" of Croatian histories since independence pay little attention to the NDH and Jasenovac and portray Croats as "the victims of other national groups and history," Maja Brkljačić states:

The history of the twentieth century in Croatia is depicted as a continuous line of events, people, and historic institutions that all serve as prototypes and are not recognized for their uniqueness. They are, as Funkenstein has pointed out about collective memory, links in an ongoing past that has never ended.<sup>144</sup>

Thus, whether in Serbia, Croatia or the West, an important but neglected or manipulated chapter in the history of Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia remains the Ustaša genocide, whose major components and issues I have sought to introduce here.

## NOTES

1. This constitutes the last phrase of a frequently cited speech by which Hermann Tongl, Ustaša operative in Eastern Bosnia, sought to enlist Croat and Muslim villagers in actions against their Serb neighbors. See n. 5.
2. The research for this paper was supported by a grant from the Department of Research and Development, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and a fellowship from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
3. The noun Ustaša refers to the government itself, while its plural, Ustaše, designates members of the various branches of that government.
4. Italian soldiers in Mostar helped Jews reach Italian camps on the Adriatic, where, despite Mussolini's orders, they generally treated Serbs and Jews comparatively well, enabling



many of the latter to reach Italy. But Italy had sheltered and supported the Ustaše in their exile, invaded Ethiopia in 1936, invaded Albania in 1939, with Albania entered Greece in 1940, and in 1941 allied with Germany in Operation Maritsa, annexing much of the Dalmatian Coast (thereby angering Croats and precipitating mutual hostility), as well as parts of Montenegro, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, Italians failed to intervene in the Ustaša massacres of Serbs and Jews, stood by as the Ustaša on Pag carried out genocidal operations there, and helped round up the Jews near Rjeka. Between 1941 and 1943, moreover, Italy struggled fiercely with Germany over territory and authority in the NDH, often using Serb *Četnici* to help defeat the Partisans, an alliance that included supplying food and arms to Serbs, which angered Croats.

5. The *Četnici* had existed since the nineteenth century, when bands of 10, *četi*, hid in the forests of Ottoman-occupied Serbian lands to raid Ottoman targets and thus achieve Serbia's independence. On 5 June 1941, after the Korita incident, Serbs began forming units to resist the *Ustaši*. Initially royalists, most later became Serb nationalists, collaborating with the Germans or Italians when it served their cause.
6. Job, *Yugoslavia's Ruin*, 8. Žerjavić and Bogoljub Kočović, a Montenegrin Serb scholar, have produced the most credible work on the numbers of dead in Yugoslavia during World War II.
7. Bax, "Mass Graves, Stagnating Identification, and Violence," 11.
8. Nyström, "The Holocaust and Croatian National Identity," 272.
9. Indeed, the West actively intervened in Bosnia despite having only a fragmentary knowledge of its peoples' history.
10. Hoare, "The Ustaša Genocide," 29.
11. See Hewitt, "Ethnic Cleansing," 296–318.
12. Ramet explicitly suggests of her edited volume: "The collection of articles in this volume is an attempt to remedy this deficit." See "The NDH," 403.
13. Redžić, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 84.
14. Dulić cites a number between 2,000 and 4,000 in *Utopias of Nation*, 81. Biondich suggests a core group "not exceeding 10,000 members" in "Religion and Nation," 79.
15. Paris, *Genocide in Satellite Croatia*, 22.
16. Anzulović, *Heavenly Serbia*, 142–43.
17. Dulić, *Utopias of Nation*, 82.
18. During and after the eighteenth century, the West essentialized and racialized Balkan ethnicities, advancing the notion of two Europes, the civilized West and the barbaric, atavistic East. Enlightenment travel narratives commonly figured Eastern Europe as oriental, irrational, and barbaric, its people dark and degenerate. Indeed, while historically and geographically peripheral to the West, Eastern Europe proved vital to its psyche. For this trope of the West's internal opposite, like the *topos* of Europe's external other, Africa, enhanced Western claims to civilization and reason. To escape the sting of Western stereotypes, the west of Eastern Europe named itself Mitteleuropa, Central Europe, thereby gaining distance from the Balkans, the "true threshold to the Orient," replete with barbarism, tribalism and "ancient hatreds." Maria Todorova calls this discourse "Balkanism," akin to Said's Orientalism. See such works as Jezernik, *Wild Europe*; Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*; Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*.
19. This position emerged partially from the mythic view articulated by nineteenth-century Croat nationalists that Bosnian Muslims were descendants of medieval Croat settlers in Bosnia who had embraced the Bogomil sect before converting to Islam. Here, Dulić quotes Pavelić (Dulić, *Utopias of Nation*, 85).

20. Many scholars cite this quote, variously attributing it to Budak or Kvaternik, often crediting as its source Dedijer's *The Yugoslavian Auschwitz and the Vatican*. But Dulić, *Utopias*, suggests that he has found no primary source that can confirm its reality (101).
21. Prpa-Jovanović, "The Making of Yugoslavia," 58.
22. Later in the war, the Ustaše would target Muslims, as also happened during the Bosnian War—as, for example, when Croats and Muslims ethnically cleansed Mostar of Serbs, then took separate sides of the city (divided by the Neretva River) and attacked one another. This suggests that while paying lip service to the ideal of Muslims as "blood brothers," Croats in fact saw them as potential rivals.
23. Dulić, *Utopias*, 22.
24. The fascist governments and armies of Germany and Italy played a considerable role in the NDH as they variously fought and allied with *Četnici*, battled Partisans, and vied with one another for power in the region.
25. The Serbian Milan Bulajić cites a figure of 1,850,000 dead Serbs, a quote even higher than the inflated total Tito's representative presented to the International Reparations Commission in 1946, which purported to include all the war dead. Croatian revisionists cite figures as low as 35,000 for the total number of Serb war dead. But most contemporary scholars find the figures of the Montenegrin Serb Bogoljub Kočović and the Croat Vladimir Žerjavić more digestible. David Bruce MacDonald cites the figures of 487,000 and 530,000, respectively. See *Balkan Holocausts?*, 162. However, Žerjavić himself sets 322,000 as a likely figure for Serb dead, with 85,000 of those in camps and the remainder in villages. See "The Most Likely Numbers of Victims Killed in Jasenovac," 21.
26. Dulić, *Utopias*, 100.
27. See Biondich, "Religion and Nation in Wartime Croatia," 72.
28. Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 106.
29. Indeed, the Balkans themselves internalized negative Western stereotypes from Balkanist discourse. Thus, Todorova declares that *Imagining the Balkans*, her pioneering work on the subject, "emphasizes the extent to which the outside perception of the Balkans has been internalized in the region itself" (39). Within Yugoslavia, Eastern Orthodox Serbs came to believe themselves the last proud Christian warriors in the land of the infidel Turk, while Westernized Catholic Croats projected onto Serbs the worst aspects of Eastern civilization. That the Ustaša labeled Serbs "Greek Easterners" aptly demonstrates this point.
30. "Principles of the Ustaša Movement."
31. For while Croat nationalism, like its Serb counterpart, depended upon the "volk" for support, it was historically framed and promulgated by the intellectual elite.
32. The government, however, viewed the *Volksdeutsche* as kinsmen. See discussion on page 813.
33. Dulić, *Utopias*, 88.
34. Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 58.
35. *Ibid.*, 78.
36. Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 282.
37. As *domobrani* increasingly deserted to join the Partisans after 1943, it appears that the government may have conscripted Serbs, some of whom were ultimately liquidated in Jasenovac. See the testimony of Miloš Despot, "Death and Survival in Jasenovac," 138. Hoare, moreover, notes that the Ustaša conscripted Serbs in Bosanska Gradiška region; see "The Ustaša Genocide," 34.
38. Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 381–87.

39. Ibid., 393.
40. Three were in prison, five died of natural causes, 217 were killed by the Ustaše, 334 were deported to Serbia, and 18 fled to Serbia on their own. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 104.
41. Tomasevich suggests that at least 300,000 Serbian refugees or deportees had come to Serbia by the end of the war. See *Occupation and Collaboration*, 219.
42. While most scholars see this practice as emerging from the Catholic foundation of Ustaša ideology, Mark Biondich suggests that the Ustaša acted from a secular desire to achieve the “neutralization of Orthodoxy in the western Balkans.” Thus, he argues that these conversions were essentially a political tactic. He nonetheless maintains that “the ‘marriage’ between the Church and Ustaša state was consummated during the Second World War.” See “Religion and Nation,” 114, 81.
43. Dulić, *Utopias*, 85.
44. Phayer, *The Catholic Church*, 32.
45. *Actes et documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale*, Book 4, 500.
46. Ibid., 545.
47. Ibid., Book 5, 736.
48. Mgr. Tardini, aide to Pius XII in the Secretariat, in a note dated 13 June 1941, suggests that Pavelić was “furioso” about this, since the Pope had granted Slovakia a nuncio. See *Actes et documents du Saint Siège*, Book 4, 547.
49. Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope*, 259.
50. Early sources include Dedijer, *The Yugoslavian Auschwitz*; Paris, *Genocide in Satellite Croatia*. Innumerable eyewitness accounts can be found today, including several cited within this paper.
51. A note from Montini dated 5 July 1943 suggests that while Pavelić seeks a papal audience, even if private, the Pope will attempt to avoid an encounter “si verifichi a Roma.” See *Actes et documents du Saint Siège*, Book 7, 404. As to the alleged meetings, I have not yet been able to verify them, though they may be noted in papal memoranda from Tardini or Montini.
52. When, for example, Sarajevo’s Chief Rabbi Freiburger wrote regarding the plight of Sarajevo’s Jews under Bishop Šarić’s anti-Semitic and anti-Serb reign, the Vatican instructed Marcone to respond “prudently, tactfully, in accordance with the circumstances.” See Shelah, “The Catholic Church in Croatia,” 332.
53. Dulić, *Utopias*, 80.
54. This would seem to validate Biondich’s position.
55. Dedijer, *The Yugoslavian Auschwitz*, 103.
56. Dulić, *Utopias*, 95.
57. Mark Biondich offers compelling evidence that while many scholars date the mass conversions from the spring, the main thrust did not take place until late autumn. See “Religion and Nation in Wartime Croatia,” 88–90.
58. Ibid., 111.
59. Ibid., 94.
60. Breitman notes that Stepinac served as the Ustaša military chaplain; see Breitman et al., *US Intelligence*, 205. See also Shelah, “The Catholic Church in Croatia,” 330.
61. One German report by Herr Dörnberg, dated 20 April 1942, states: “Er [Pavelic] a-üsserte sich dabei in ablehnender Form über den Agramer Erzbischof. Auf den Papst war er sichtlich sehr schlecht zu sprechen und bemerkte, die Kroaten seien zwar zum grossen Teil Katholiken, aber gar keine Anhänger des Papstes und der päpstlichen Kirche.” [Büro des Staatssekretärs, Bind 3:32]
62. Jansen, *Pius XII*, 151.

63. Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 563.
64. So, for example, Esther Gitman, a Croatian-born Israeli, wrote a dissertation on Stepinac and is currently publishing articles that document his work on behalf of Jews.
65. According to Miloš Despot, that spring Brkljačić briefly eased camp conditions, before resuming oppressive policies that summer. See "Death and Survival in Jasenovac," 136.
66. Gumz, "Wehrmacht Perceptions of Mass Violence," 1025.
67. *Novi List* (Croatia), 24 July 1941.
68. See Allen Milcic, "Croatian Axis Forces in WWII," <<http://www.feldgrau.com/a-croatia.html>> (accessed 16 September 2009).
69. According to Tomasevich, Siegfried Kasche, the German envoy to the NDH, learned this from Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lorković. See Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 397–98.
70. Popovich, "Primary Sources," 93.
71. Dulić, *Utopias*, 125.
72. Again, the Ustaša used Chetnik attacks as a pretext for the executions. *Ibid.*, 126.
73. *Ibid.*, 129.
74. The Muslims rightly worried that such massacres would mobilize Serb resistance and that they themselves would likely serve as the targets.
75. Dulić, *Utopias*, 127.
76. *Ibid.*, 144.
77. *Ibid.*, 145.
78. *Ibid.*, 179.
79. Šurmanci is the location highlighted in the article by Bax, cited at the beginning of the present paper.
80. Again, Dedijer and Paris address this. As both a high-ranking communist under Tito and a Serb, Dedijer had strong political reasons to disparage the Church. But Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau, the German commanding officer in the NDH in 1941, likewise condemned both Ustaša atrocities in Bosnia and the highest official of the Church in Bosnia, Ivan Šarić, whom he identified as a Croat extremist who supported genocide as a solution to the Serbian problem. See Adeli, "From Jasenovac to Yugoslavism," 121.
81. In "Wehrmacht Perceptions of Mass Violence," Gumz explores the *Wehrmacht's* perceptions of Ustaša violence compared to its sense of its own strategies against Serbs. He pays particular attention to the Germans' language, suggesting that "words like 'cleansed' or 'elimination' bestowed on German efforts a clinical and restrained appearance; an appearance undermined in fact by the wholesale brutality associated with these operations." See 1029.
82. Adeli, "From Jasenovac to Yugoslavism," 137.
83. Gumz discusses this at length in "Wehrmacht Perceptions of Mass Violence" and "German Counterinsurgency Policy." See also Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 122–25.
84. Its first and fifth divisions, the Crna legija, or Black Legion, were led by Jure Francetić and composed of some 1,000–1,500 Muslim and Croat refugees from villages in Bosnia-Herzegovina that Četnici or Partisans had raided.
85. Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 422.
86. Rosenbaum, "Jasenovac as Encountered in OSI's Investigations," 72.
87. Pavelić had both Kvaterniks removed. Tomasevich suggests that he perceived Slavko as his rival, Dido as a cause of tension with the Germans, and realized that he might blame army failures on both of them. See Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 439–42.
88. Rosenbaum, "Jasenovac as Encountered in OSI's Investigations," 83.

89. Gumz, "Wehrmacht Perceptions," 1023.
90. Herzstein, *Waldheim*, 71–78, 233–47.
91. See Dulić, *Utopias*, 237–40; Jelinek, "Bosnia-Herzegovina at War," 279.
92. See Jelinek, "Bosnia-Herzegovina at War," for a general discussion of the Muslim response to the genocide and Biondich, who examines the negative Muslim response to forced conversions, in "Religion and Nation," 107–09.
93. For specific names, see Dulić's section on "Muslim Resolutions," in *Utopias*, 228–36. Jelinek mentions that Dr. Lemr, local representative of the Company for South-Eastern Europe Ltd (a front agency for the German secret service), petitioned his superiors, Deputy Prime Minister Kulenović wrote the local governments in the Sana and Luka districts, and prominent Muslims in Sarajevo wrote Kulenović (284).
94. Dulić, *Utopias*, 231.
95. Jelinek, "Bosnia-Herzegovina at War," 279.
96. Tomasevich, *Occupation and Collaboration*, 495–96.
97. *Ibid.*, 496.
98. *Ibid.*, 500.
99. This incident is referred to as the Mutiny at Villefranche.
100. Rosenbaum, "Jasenovac as Encountered in OSI's Investigations," 68.
101. Goldstein, *Anti-Semitism; Holocaust; Anti-Fascism*, 97.
102. Vejnović-Smiljanić, "The Suffering of Children," 226.
103. Švarc, "The Testimony of a Survivor," 140.
104. Dulić, *Utopias*, 249–50.
105. Lukić, *Rat i djeca Kozare*. Lukić has written a number of volumes detailing the fates of children across the NDH whose lives were caught in the Ustaša net.
106. The figure is cited by Goldstein and Goldstein, *Jews in Jasenovac*, 9. Ramet states that "there were some 26." See "The NDH—An Introduction," 402. Among the camps were: Loborgrad, in northern Croatia, administered by *Volksdeutsche*, Krušica, near Travnik (mainly for women and children, sent to Loborgrad and finally to Auschwitz when the camp was closed in 1942), Đakovo, near Sarajevo (also for women and children), and Jadovno, near Gospić (which may have held as many as 35,000 prisoners).
107. To counter Serbian propagandists' egregious inflation of the dead at Jasenovac, Croat strategists exaggerated the numbers of dead Croats in the Bleiberg incident in fall 1945.
108. Rosenbaum quotes from a "heavily footnoted" OSI report housed in the US National Archives and originally classified as "Secret": T-120/5793/H306076-87. See "Jasenovac as Encountered in OSI's Investigations," 72.
109. Miletić, "Establishing the Number of Persons Killed," 6. See also the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Jasenovac website, <<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/jasenovac/frameset.html>> (accessed 16 September 2009).
110. Žerjavić, "The Most Likely Numbers," 18.
111. Sabolevski, "Jews in the Jasenovac Group," 102.
112. Erlih, "Kula," 158.
113. Indeed, since 6 of 22 foremen were Jews, Franjo Tuđman blamed them, not Ustaše, for Jasenovac brutalities. Since the publication of his "history," *Bespuća*, many Serb and Croat eyewitness testimonies have directly refuted this.
114. Dulić, *Utopias*, 280.
115. Goldstein and Goldstein, *Jews in Jasenovac*, 15. But Lituchy cites Dachau as the influence; see Lituchy, *Jasenovac*, xxxix.
116. Šajer, "The Stench of the Crematorium," 80.
117. Danon, "Recollections of Jasenovac," 181.

118. Kennedy et al., *The Library of Congress World War II Companion*, 683.
119. Goldstein and Goldstein, *Jews in Jasenovac*, 20. See also Novaković, *Crimes in the Jasenovac Camp*, 63.
120. Several survivors note the particular brutality of the Ustaše women. See, for example, the testimonies of Erlih and Štefica Serdar Sabolić in *Jasenovac and the Holocaust in Yugoslavia*, 155, 173, and Šajer in "The Stench of the Crematorium," 85.
121. Among other sites, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum library houses both oral and written eyewitness testimony and photographs that document the particularly ghastly nature of the killings at Jasenovac.
122. See Despot, "Death and Survival in Jasenovac," 132. Indeed, innumerable accounts now exist. Thus, for instance, Gaon's two-volume collection, *We Survived*, compiles survivor testimony from Jasenovac and other camps, including Dachau and Auschwitz, while Lituchy's *Jasenovac* also includes a number of eyewitness testimonies by Serbs, Jews, and Croats detailing the horrors of the camp. See also the online sites of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: <<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/jasenovac/frameset.html>> (accessed 16 September 2009) and <<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?ModuleId=10005449>> (accessed 16 September 2009).
123. Delibašić, "Varieties of Psychopathological Behavior among the Ustashe at Jasenovac," 233.
124. Despot, "Death and Survival in Jasenovac," 139; Erlih, "Kula," 160.
125. "The Jasenovac Extermination Camps," Holocaust Education and Archive Research Team, <<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/othercamps/jasenovac.html>> (accessed 16 September 2009).
126. See such works as: Neitzke, *Ustaša Gold*; Milan and Brogan, *Soldiers, Spies and The Ratline*; Aarons and Loftus, *Unholy Trinity*; Eizenstat, *U.S. and Allied Wartime and Postwar Relations and Negotiations*.
127. In Spain he operated a printing press, "Drina," a symbolic name for diaspora Croats since Budak famously stated in 1941: "The Drina is the border between East and West" (Dedijer, *The Yugoslavian Auschwitz*, 130). Interestingly, his publications also included the diaries of Marcone's Zagreb secretary. See Dulić, "Tito's Slaughterhouse," 92.
128. In his weblog a month after the funeral of Sakić, Marko Atilla Hoare noted that he was buried in full Ustaša uniform and that the presiding clergyman, Vjekoslav Lasić, had said that "the court that convicted Dinko Sakić convicted Croatia and the Croatian nation," that "the NDH is the foundation of the modern Croatian homeland," and that "every honorable Croat should be proud of Sakić's name." See Hoare, <<http://greatersurbiton.wordpress.com/2008/08/05/croatias-ustashas-from-treason-and-genocide-to-simple-national-embarrassment>> (accessed 16 September 2009).
129. Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope*, 266.
130. Breitman et al., *US Intelligence*, 211.
131. Records of the Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC) show that government funds helped provide maintenance and travel for these exiles, seen as potentially useful weapons in the Cold War against the growing communist threat. See Neitzke, *Ustaša Gold*, 3, 8; US Department of Justice, Criminal Division, *Klaus Barbie and the U.S. Government: A Report to the Attorney General of the United States*.
132. Thus, for example, Yossi Melman suggests in "Tied up in the Rat Lines" that Juan Peron granted entry visas to 34,000 Croats.
133. Breitman et al., *US Intelligence*, 217. The circumstances under which Draganović came to Yugoslavia remain a mystery.
134. Neitzke, *Ustaša Gold*, 149–50.



135. That event split an increasingly divided Croatia, with nationalist Catholics supporting Franco and those who leaned communist favoring his rivals.
136. This, at least, according to the Argentine newspaper *Hrvatska*, February 1960. See Paris, *Genocide*, 279.
137. Dedijer, *The Yugoslav Auschwitz*, 313.
138. For Žerjavić, see *Gubici stanovništva Jugoslavije u drugom svjetskom ratu*, 61–66 and “The Most Likely Numbers of Victims Killed in Jasenovac,” 21. For Kočović, see “Žrtve Drugog svetskog rata u Jugoslaviji.” Interestingly, each gave a lower number for his own ethnicity. For a good overview on the numbers issue, see Srđan Bogosavljević, “The Unresolved Genocide,” 146–59.
139. Dinko Šakić made this assertion at his trial. See Croatian News Agency (HINA), “The Trial of Dinko Šakić.”
140. Price, “Memory, the Media, and Nato,” 143.
141. Nyström, “The Holocaust and Croatian National Identity,” 269.
142. Bet-El, “Unimagined Communities,” 206.
143. The *šahovnica* pre-dates and differs slightly from the flag of the NDH, but its red and white checkerboard clearly evokes the latter.
144. Brkljačić, “What Past is Present?,” 50.

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