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YUGOSLAVIA: IS HISTORY  
REPEATING ITSELF?

Cong. Helen Delich Bentley

The tragedy that is modern-day Yugoslavia has a way of reaching out to ensnare any one who reads the news or watches the shelling of ancient cities, the destruction of farm villages and--the deaths. Reports that over 15,000 have been killed in the fighting in the last year and a half tear at the heart.

To those of us who know the country, who have friends and/or relatives still living there, it is a particular horror. To be asked--as I have--by one's government, to help out at such a critical time in the history of a nation is not only an honor, but a duty.

There is so much at stake--not only for the people of Yugoslavia, but also for the European Community and ultimately, for the United States.

Reports from the European press and the foreign diplomatic community carry an urgency reminiscent of news out of central Europe prior to both world wars. The factions are the same. The alliances are the same. God save us, the terrible headlines are the same. Now even Czechoslovakia is breaking apart.

For what scant comfort it is worth, most likely, Yugoslavia will not trigger a Third World War, but it could well trigger a 2nd Vietnam. Fueled by foreign arms merchants, a form of low intensity warfare can be waged in Yugoslavia for years. However, there is always the threat of it spreading--not as a brushfire--but as a fire in the many ethnic roots reaching into every European nation.

The London Daily Telegraph on May 11, 1992, headlined "Conflict could lay foundation for Islamic state in Europe." The commentary points out the strong pan-Islamic views of the Muslim president of

add one...  
Bosnia-Hercegovina while France struggles to integrate the more than 3 million Muslim emigres from former French colonies in North Africa.

Other European Countries are finding that the Muslim guest workers, taken in during the economic expansion of the '70s and '80s, have become a source of growing political discord in the economic downturn of the '90s. Needless to say, these nations are concerned with the religious overtones of the fighting on the Balkan peninsula.

Neighboring Greece worries that Moslem Albania will move on *slavic* Macedonia isolating the Greek Orthodox minority there. Hungarians in Vojvodena look longingly toward their "homeland" while Romania reaches out to Moldavia and Croatian militia are fighting inside Bosnia-Hercegovina. What started as a civil war has quickly become anarchy.

There are no excuses for the actions of any of the leaders who have brought this nation to tragedy and I, personally, have been very harsh in my criticism of *Slobodan* Milosevic, the President of Serbia. The Washington Post on June 8th carried a story about a young American mother, Shayna Lazarevich, who is seeking the return of her two kidnapped American children from inside Yugoslavia. The article quoted from a letter I had written to Milosevic--on her behalf regarding his treatment of the kidnapping of these American children--"considering this display of callousness--if not outright deception--it is no wonder that Serbia is viewed as a world pariah."

My recent trip to Belgrade--paid for with my own money--was, in part, to intervene on Shayna's behalf. I am hopeful about her plight, because last year I was able to secure the release of a young Albanian-American arrested in Kosovo. Currently, I am seeking the release of a young Croatian-American from New York captured in March but never listed for exchange.

add two...

In such matters I have been able to help the U.S. government as well as these young people and their families. Whether we like it or not, Milosevic has to be dealt with since--in the elections of 1990-- he was the elected President of the Republic of Serbia and he now controls the predominantly Serbian Yugoslav army. Whatever messages need to be carried representing the best interests of the United States, by birth and background, I am uniquely qualified to get through to the Yugoslav government.

What are the odds that the future of Yugoslavia may ultimately effect my constituents in the 2nd District of Maryland? The same as they were twenty-five years ago that I could be sent to Vietnam to cover that faraway war for a Baltimore newspaper or, that two years ago, my neighbor's son would go to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait right after bootcamp instead of being stationed in California.

My generation came of age in World War II, served in Korea, were senior advisors during Vietnam and, hopefully, learned through the victories and the defeats that at every step along the road toward major confrontations--good negotiations, possibly, could have saved lives and nations. From my long labor negotiating experience and my familiarity with Yugoslavia, and the many factions involved, this is such a time in history.

The role of mediator is not a popular job whether representing the best interests of the people of Maryland during a threatened strike at the Port of Baltimore or serving the long term interests of the United States for peace and stability in Central Europe. However, if there is an opportunity to serve a greater good, if my efforts can save lives, then as an American, I believe I cannot turn away.

###

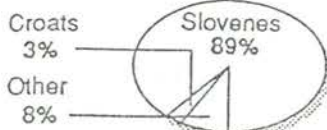
# Yugoslavia: Fragmented land of the southern Slavs

Yugoslavia's 24 million people are divided among 24 ethnic groups, three major religions. Nation has three official languages, written in both the Russian (Cyrillic) and Latin alphabets.



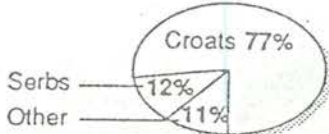
## Slovenia

Population: 1.9 million  
Language: Slovenian  
Alphabet: Roman



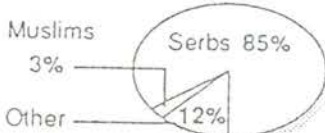
## Croatia

Population: 4.6 million  
Language: Croato-Serbian  
Alphabet: Roman



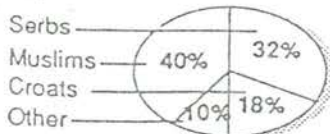
## Serbia

Population: 9.3 million  
Language: Serbo-Croatian  
Alphabet: Russian



## Bosnia and Herzegovina

Population: 4.1 million  
Language: Serbo-Croatian  
Alphabet: Russian



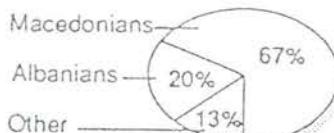
## Kosovo

(Province of Serbia)  
Population: 1.6 million  
Language: Serbo-Croatian  
Alphabet: Russian



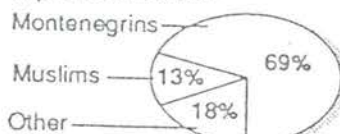
## Macedonia

Population: 1.9 million  
Language: Macedonian  
Alphabet: Russian



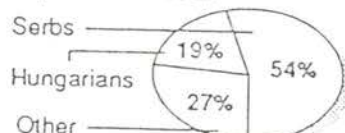
## Montenegro

Population: 600,000  
Language: Serbo-Croatian  
Alphabet: Russian



## Vojvodina

(Province of Serbia)  
Population: 2.0 million  
Language: Serbo-Croatian  
Alphabet: Russian



## Recent history





- 1918: Following Austro-Hungarian defeat in World War I, formed as Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes
- 1929: King Alexander I names country Yugoslavia, begins dictatorship
- 1934: Croatian terrorists assassinate Alexander
- 1941: Army overthrows pro-German government; Germany, Italy invade; Josip Tito organizes resistance army
- 1945: Becomes communist republic under Tito
- 1948: Soviets break diplomatic relations
- 1955: Relations with Soviets resumed
- 1974: Nine-member Presidency created to lead after Tito's death
- 1980: Tito dies
- 1990: Four of six Yugoslav republics elect non-communist governments
- 1991: Tensions unresolved; premier warns federation may break up

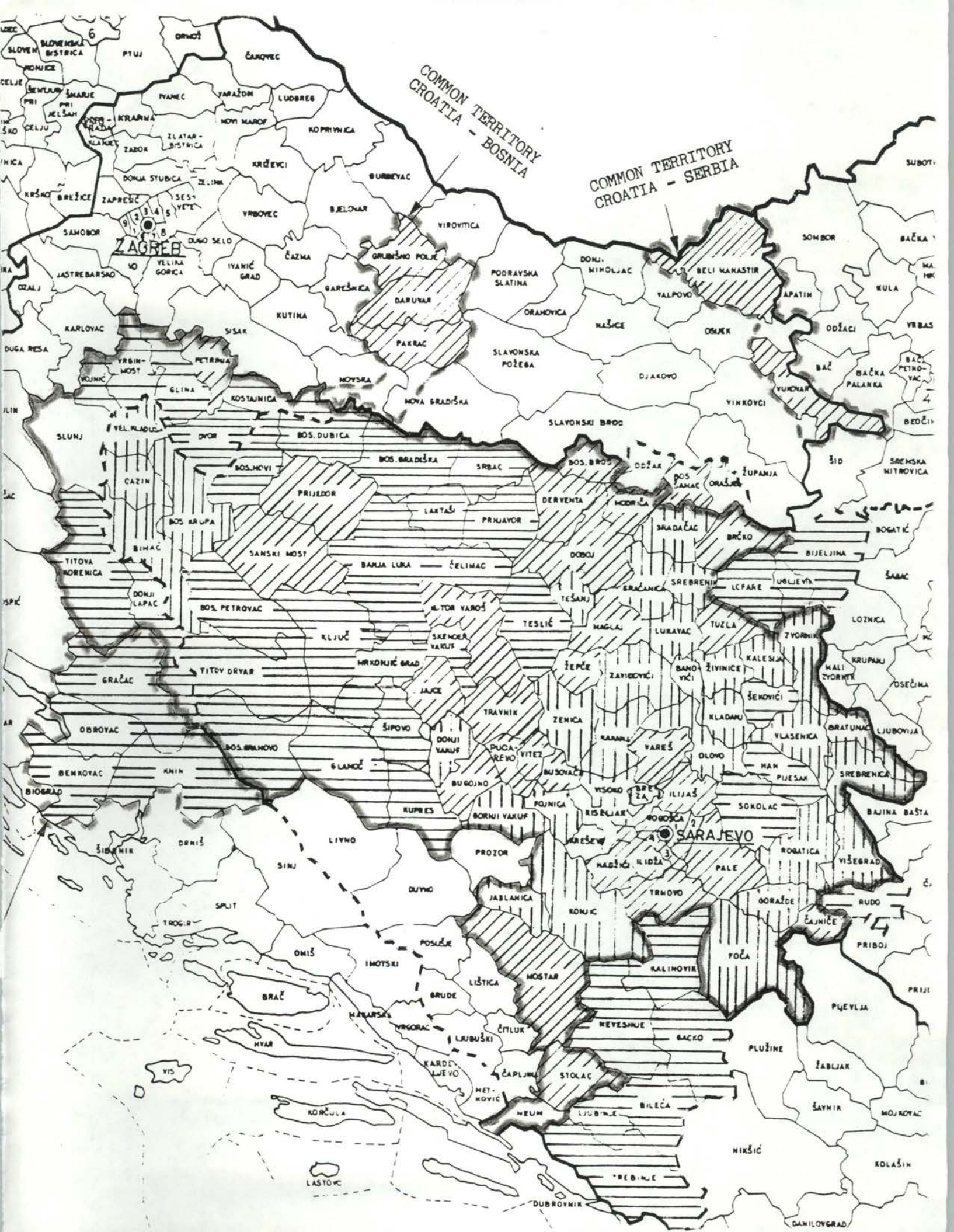
SOURCE: Yugoslavia Statistical Yearbook, Europa Yearbook, World Book; Research by PAT CARR



CROATIA AND BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA  
 Ethnic distribution by counties  
 (Census of 1981)

LEGEND  
 Applicable only to Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina

-  Counties without absolute majority
-  Counties with Croatian absolute majority
-  Counties with Muslim absolute majority
-  Counties with Serbian absolute majority



# Genocide, once



**A**gain



**THE USTASHI TERROR OVER SERBS IN 1991**





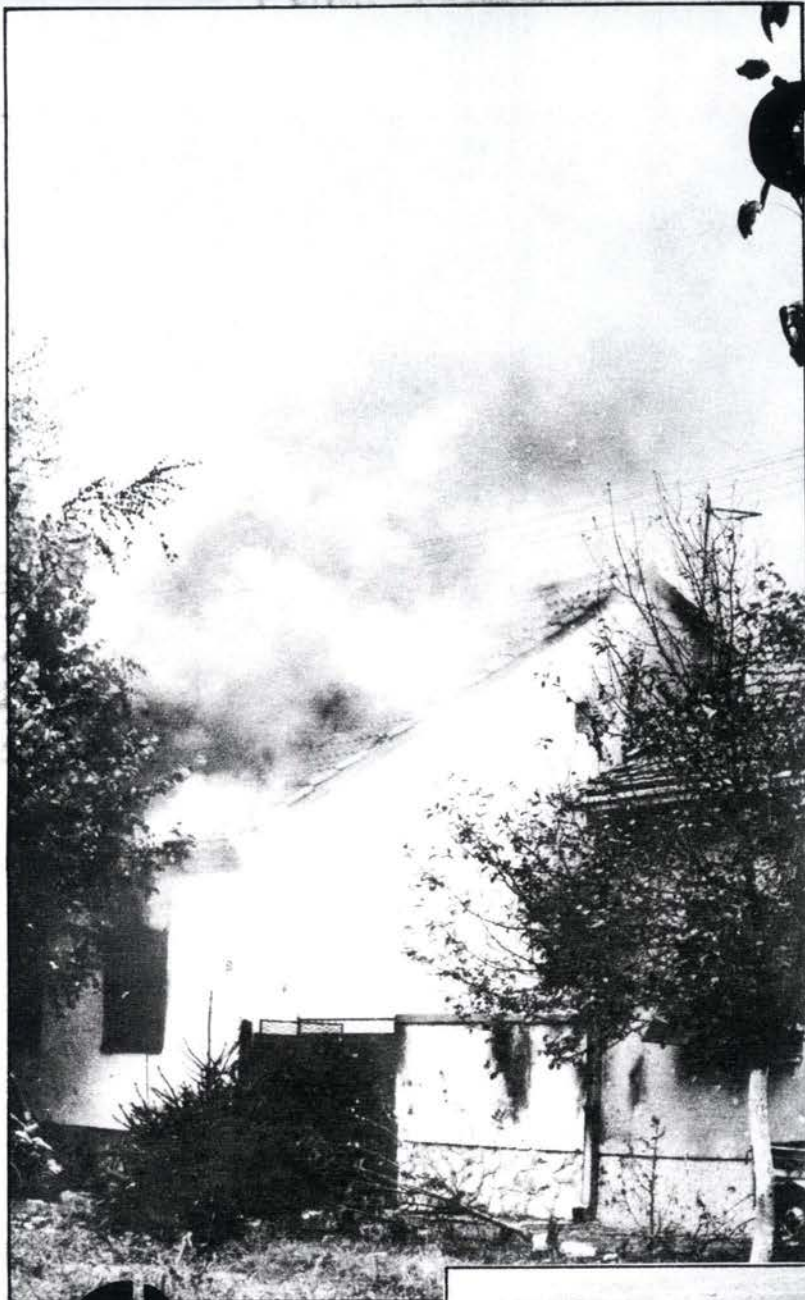
# **Genocide, once Again**

**THE USTASHI  
TERROR OVER  
SERBS IN 1991**



# once

The village of Sarvaš, September 91: A Serbian house in flames. The innocent Serbian civil population was victimized by the terror of the Ustashes and their mercenaries.



# Genocide



This Serb of Petrinja (Banija) was first tied to a pole, within a shoe factory grounds, and then tortured and finally killed by the

# Again

The village of Kijevo, near Knin (Krajina): This woman, a Serb, killed in her own yard, is another victim of the Ustashi mercenaries.

Petrinja: The Usthas set this house on fire, and then killed its owner - a Serb - in his own yard.



The Ustashi warriors attack everyone who is a Serb. By killing journalists they are trying to prevent the truth about the tragic fate of the Serbian people in Croatia from penetrating into the world. Four journalists of the Beograd Television were killed by the Usthas out of an ambush. From the immediate vicinity, they shot Zoran Amidžić (41), Bora Petrović (33), Dejan Milićević (25) and Sreten Ilić (44), who were sitting in a visibly marked vehicle of the TV crew.

# once



The children and an old woman who managed to escape from the village of Velika Žuljevica.

**By the beginning of October 1991, Markobašić - an Ustashi, a monster in a human body, proud of a necklace that he had made out of fingers of the Serbian children, was arrested. What are the Croatian "independence", "democracy" and "civilization" going to be like when such beasts who are able to slaughter, cripple and burn children just because they are of another faith and nation, are fighting for them.**

# Genocide

By the end of September, at least 14 reservists were killed and slaughtered by the Ustashas in Karlovac, on the bridge of the river Korana. The body of the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) reservist killed while trying to cross the Korana river.

# A gain



**T**he children, and not only the civil population, are the victims of the Ustashi attacks. One of the wounded is also a nine months old Živka Gagić from Benkovac.



**D**ara Berić (65) of Donji Kuljani was killed by the Ustashes and then thrown into the river Una.

**V**lado Božić was brutally killed, tortured and mutilated.



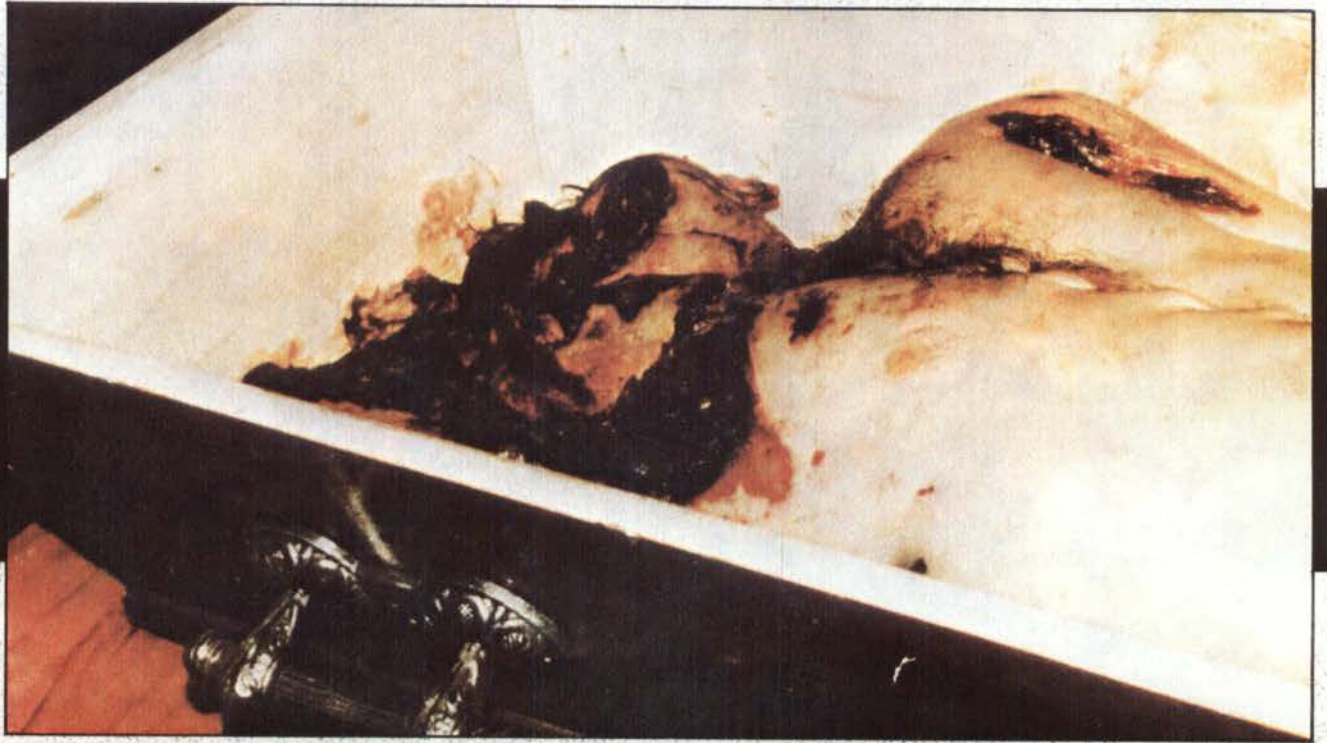


The members of the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) and the Territorial Defense were killed upon capturing. One of them was killed with his arms tied down.



Srdan Cvetković, born in 1967. Caught alive. The Ustashes mutilated and killed him.





Dušan Marković, born in 1963. Caught alive. Found dead on September 4, 1991, at the village of Laslovo, massacred.

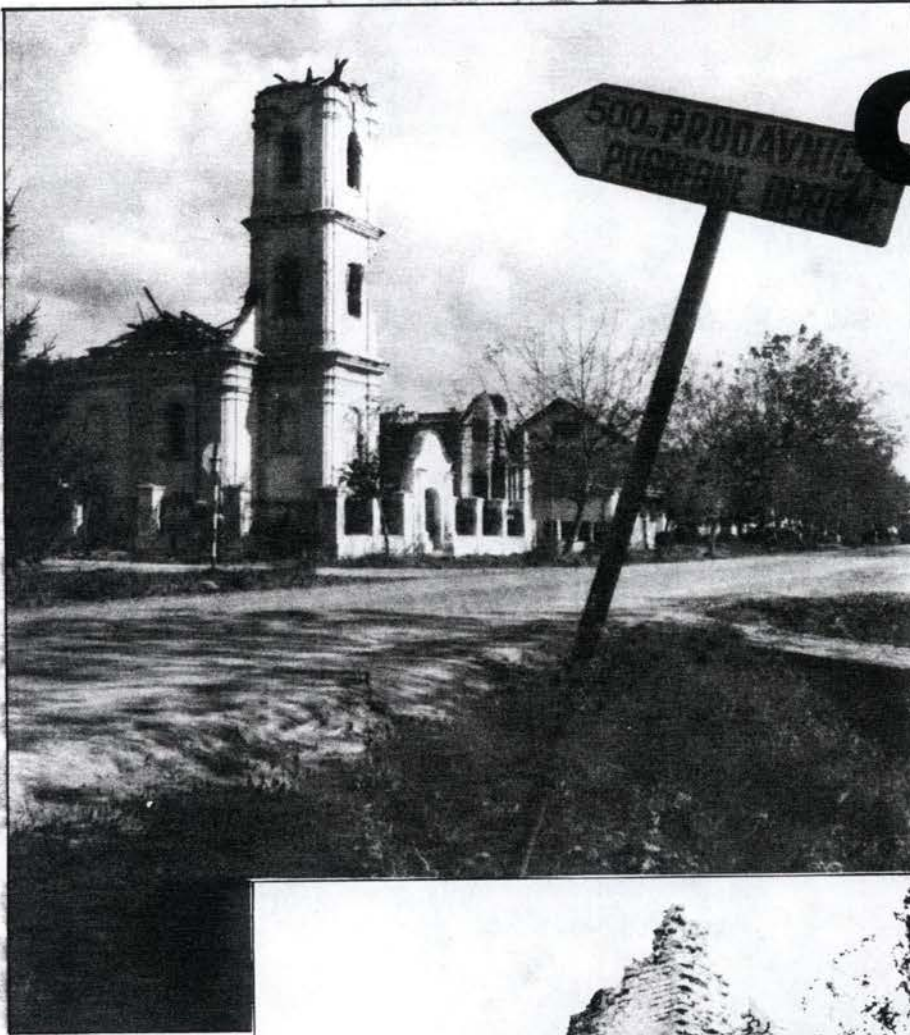




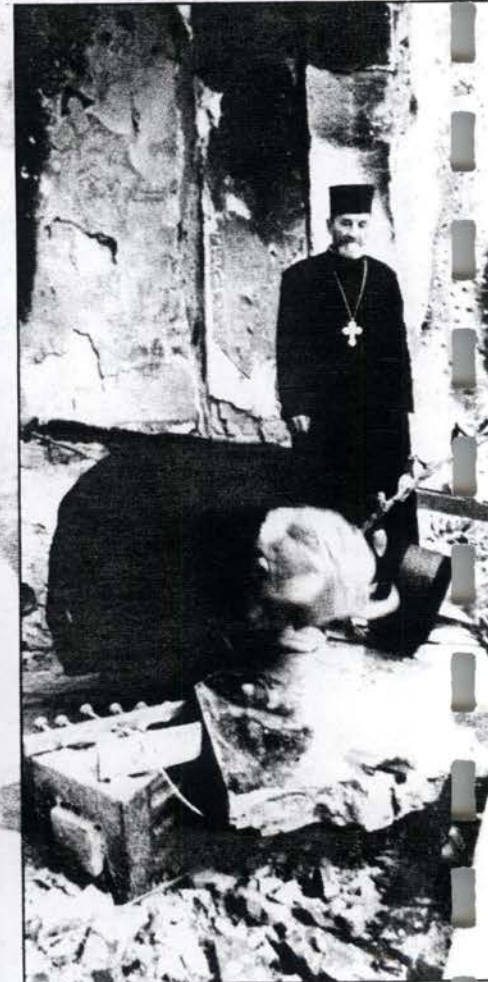
# once

**Everything that is Serbian is a target for the Fascists. Over 150 Orthodox churches have been demolished, while the priests were arrested, mistreated and jailed.**

**T**he Orthodox temple of St. Nicholas erected at Vukovar in 1735. The Ustaszas razed the temple down to the ground, robbing and destroying its rich treasury.



**A** demolished Orthodox church at Tovarnik... and at Sarvaš.



**O**n the picture: Bishop Lukijan of Slavonia and Baranja kissing the demolished church altar.

# Genocide

# Again

The Orthodox church at Jasenovac, the notorious place where, in the course of the four years of the Second World War, the Fascists and the Ustahas brutally murdered over 700,000 Serbs, Jews, Gypsies and anti-Fascists.



Orthodox church of St. Spiridon, in Petrinja was built in the 18th century. Father Pera by the ruins of the Church which was mined by Ustahas.

# SERBS ARE

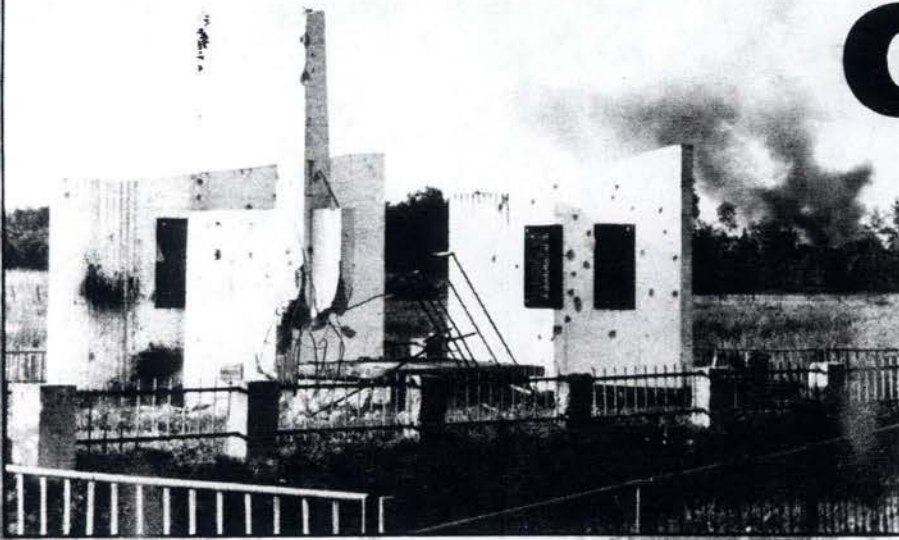




# THE VICTIMS

VUKOVAR, 1991

# once



**A** monument to the anti-Fascists of the Second World War, at the village of Mišević, in Banija, was blown up.

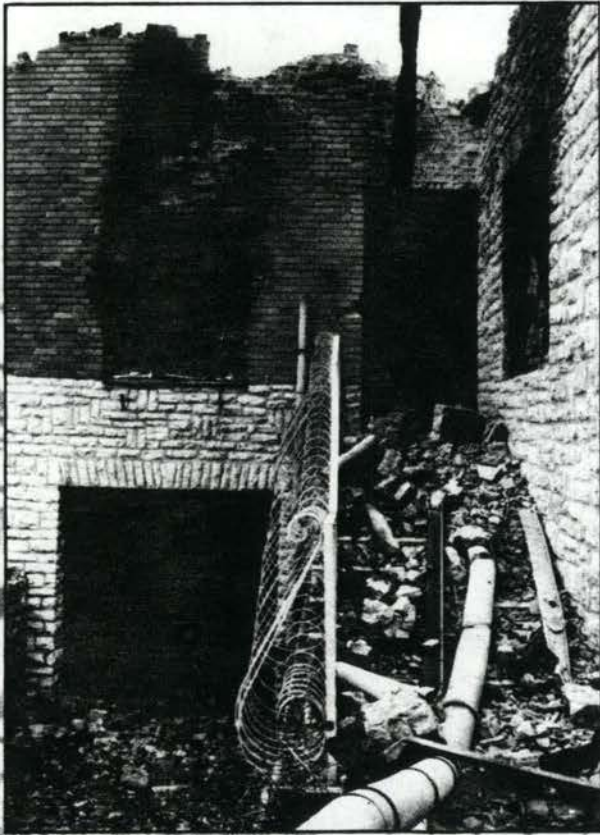
**Everything that is anti-Fascist is also being demolished.**



**A**nd in this demolished house, at Topusko, there was a museum with a documentation about the Fascist crimes against the Serbian people committed in the Second World War .

**ONCE**

# Again



**Blowing up and demolition of the building and houses belonging to the more prominent Serbs started in the spring of '91. This culminated in burning the whole Serbian villages and settlements.**

**T**his Serbian house at Bijelo Brdo (Slavonia) was destroyed by the artillery grenades.



**T**he main square at Topusko:  
The Serbian houses today.

# once

It was only after Vukovar had been liberated that the dreadful crimes of the Ustashi Black Legions committed over the Serbian population were brought to light. Every day new facts are being discovered. Corpses of hundreds of people, including those of children, brutally killed just because they were Serbs, are in the group graves.



# Again

Children, women, old men - the helpless civil population who had not managed to move out, were killed, thrown into group graves or left without being buried by the Fascists.



VUKOVAR, 1991 - MASSACRE OF THE SERBS



# once



**A** ferry on the Danube, near Vajska, saved tens of thousands of children, women, old people.



**At least 130,000 people, mostly of them women, children and old people escaped to Serbia alone in face of the Ustashi terror. The Serbs abandoned their houses and estates and fled with the things they could carry in their hands.**

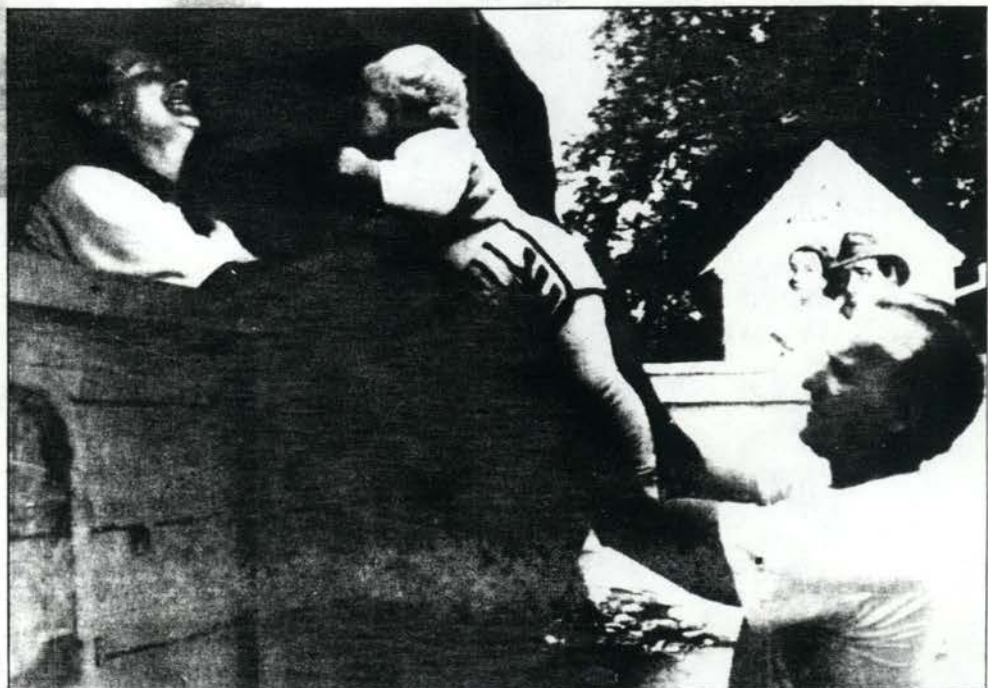
**T**hrough the woods, to Danube and freedom in Serbia.

once

# Again



The refugees from Trpinj waiting for the ferry at Vajska.



The village of Mirkovci, August 1, 1991. From the father's hands into the mother's. The children and wife are leaving, while the father remains to defend the village and the hearth upon which his ancestors have been living for centuries.



# once

**The members of the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) have been welcome in the Serbian villages and towns as liberators and a safe protection against the Ustashi genocide.**



# Genocid

**T**he people has also self-organized itself to defend its villages and its national being.

**T**he men are on guard.

**T**he women are preparing food.

# Again



**C**hildren, women, old men - the helpless civil population who had not managed to move out, were killed, thrown into group graves or left without being buried by the Fascists.

**V**ukovar, 1991: A moving testimony of the repeated Ustashi genocide of Serbs.

Vukovar, 1991





**GENOCIDE, ONCE  
AGAIN  
THE USTASHI TERROR  
OVER SERBS IN 1991**

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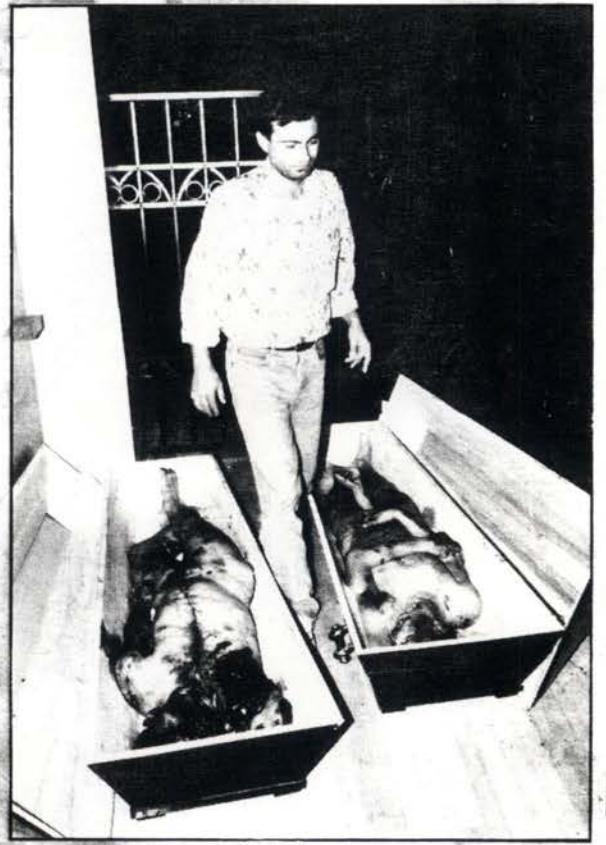
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## The Roman Catholic Church and Genocide in Croatia 1941-45

Just before I sat down to write this paper, I heard the editor of the Serbian newspaper in Knin giving an interview to the BBC. "Remember", he said over the crackling telephone line, "we Serbs had our Auschwitz, too; it was called Jasenovac". Jasenovac can legitimately be compared with Auschwitz in the annals of human horror. Nobody knows how many Serbs, Jews and Gypsies were hacked to pieces with butcher knives, beaten to death with clubs and rifle butts, worked to death on detachments or died of fright, illness and starvation in the Croatia death camp. A Serb friend of mine recalls being pulled by his mother from the rails of a ferry on the river Sava near Jasenovac in 1941 as he stared at the bits of human anatomy bobbing on the current. In the archives of the Italian foreign ministry in Rome there is a file of photographs of the butcher knives and mallets used in the camp and elsewhere by the Ustase (pronounced Ustashe) in their pogroms as well as pictures of the mutilated victims. Those pictures have been indelibly burned onto the retina of my memory. Vladko Macek, the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, was arrested and sent to Jasenovac on the 15th of October 1941, six months after the foundation of the *Nezavisna Drzava Hrvatska, the Independent State of Croatia*. He described it in his memoirs:

*The Camp had previously been a brick-yard and was situated on the embankment of the Sava river. In the middle of the camp stood a two-story house, originally erected for the offices of the enterprise...The screams and wails of despair and extreme suffering, the tortured outcries of the victims, broken by intermittent shooting, accompanied all my waking hours and followed me into sleep at night. (1)*

Macek was too important to be hacked to death, but he was too dangerous to be left. One of these who guarded him night and day was an Ustase officer who used to make the sign of the cross each night before going to sleep. Macek pointed out the monstrosity of his actions. I asked if he were not afraid of the punishment of God. "Don't talk to me about that", he said, "for I am perfectly aware of what is in store for me. For my past, present and future deeds I shall burn in hell but at least I shall burn for Croatia.(2)

This combination of Catholic piety, Croatian nationalism and human bestiality raises uncomfort-

able questions about what happened fifty years ago in Europe and why. The standard image of Fascism has been sketched for us by secular historians and sociologists. For most of them religion is an opiate of the elderly, a childhood complaint or, perhaps, the source of an occasional pang of guilt. As a result, recent explanatory approaches to the holocaust and genocide in the second world war, with the notable exception of Arno Mayer's *Why did the heavens not darken?*, confront the questions with resolutely secular assumptions. At best nazism and fascism have been seen as surrogate religions, taking the place of traditional christianity, in a world in which God had long since died and been interred.

Yet Croatia was by no means the only avowedly Catholic state in Hitler's new order. Father Tiso's Slovakia bore the cross as prominently and deported its Jews as thoroughly as did Ante Pavelic's Croatia. Much of the legitimacy of Petain's Vichy regime came from those traditions of reactionary catholicism which had never accepted the republic, the separation of church and state, civil marriage and divorce and Jewish emancipation. The story of German protestantism's enthusiastic reception of the Nazi renewal of morality has been traced by a small industry of scholars and was recognized by the church itself in a collective act of expiation in 1945.(3)

In all these studies, religion and churches react; they do not act. Even those who criticize the silence of (Pope) Pius XII never suggest that the Vatican caused the massacres; the issue is whether the Pope and the clergy did enough to stop them. The Croatian case will not fit such comfortable secular categories. Croatian fascism, the Ustase movement (the word means "to stand up" or "rebel"), combined Catholic piety, Croatian nationalism and extreme violence. The terrible evidence of those years and the terrible revenge claimed in ours reminds us of the religious wars of the sixteenth century. The Croats were Catholic the way that people of South Armagh are Catholic; religion, nation, and self merged into an explosive, unstable mixture.

This essay, written to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Wannsee Conference of the 20th of January 1942, like all such history, begins with the moral obligation of every historian simply to remember what happened, not to let the suffering and cries

of those years simply die away. We cannot understand the tragedy of Yugoslavia in the 1990's unless we remember the tragedy of the 1940's. It may also serve to remind us that the professional historian belongs to an untypical group of people: well-fed (on the whole), literate (more or less), dispassionate, objective and remote from daily life. This is not a description which fits the majority of mankind. Historians need to remind themselves at all times and in all places of the horror, violence, cruelty, unreason, indifference, exhaustion, ignorance, hallucination, greed, cynicism, generosity, kindness, bravery, good humor, loyalty, honesty, self-sacrifice and charity which make their subject, their fellow human beings, so hard to define and even harder to explain.

The establishment of a Catholic Croatia and its immediate resort to genocide confronted the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Croatia and the Vatican in Rome with a terrible dilemma. The Nuncio to the Italian government, Monsignor Francesco Borgoncini Duca, a man who made two trips to darkest Calabria to bring the Holy Father's greetings to the Jews interned at Ferremonti Tarsia,(4) rebuked Stiepo Paric, the Croatian minister to the kingdom of Italy "about the well-known atrocities of the Croatians against the Orthodox Serbs and Muslims and the violence perpetrated against them." As he reported to the cardinal secretary of state, Cardinal Luigi Maglione,

*I added that the Catholic church cannot and will not make propaganda by violence. Jesus said "go and preach" not "So and take the people by gun shots". He replied that 350,000 Orthodox had "converted" . I replied that these conversions did not persuade me very much for a conversion sentiment was necessary...He said, "sentiment will come later".(5)*

On the other hand, the Independent State of Croatia, the NDH, enshrined in its constitution and laws of which the aims of the church had desired for decades and had despaired of achieving. First, the conversion of the schismatics, as the youthful Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac said to the Regent Prince Paul in 1940,

*The most ideal thing would be for the Serbs to return to the faith of their fathers, that is, to bow the head before Christ's representative, the Holy Father. Then we could at last breathe in this part of Europe, for the Byzantinism has played a frightful role in the history of this part of the world.(6)*

As for the Jews, the semi-official diocesan weekly *Katolicki List* had condemned them fre-

quently during the 1930's as the source of communism, free-masonry, abortion and irreverence. Jews were aliens and could not be true Croatians. Nor were any tears shed for the destruction of the unitary kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav government had, according to Father Ivo Guberina, reader in the University of Zagreb, undermined Catholicism in every way. It built "*splendid Orthodox churches*" in towns historically and actually Catholic:

*The government of Belgrade helped both morally and materially the foundation in Croatia of the so-called "Old Catholics," which was intended as a means to make Catholics go into schism... Going over to Orthodoxy was more or less openly favoured...Mixed marriages at the expense of the Catholic church were skillfully encouraged...Catholic areas were systematically colonized...(6)*

Now at last, as *Katolicki List* wrote on 21 April 1941, not quite two weeks after the establishment of the new Ustase state, the dark days of humiliation were over.

*The NDH is thus a fact established by the Almighty Providence on the 1300th anniversary of Croatia's first links with the Holy See. The Catholic Church has been the spiritual leader of the Croatian people for 1300 years in all its difficult, painful and joyful days now accompanies the Croatian people with Joy in these days of the establishment and renewal of its independent state.*

The Serbs, observed the new minister of education, Mile Budak,

*are not Serbs but people brought here from the East by the Turks...as the plunderers and refuse of the Balkans...God is one, and the people that (He) governs is also one: and this is the Croatian people...It would be as well for them to know our motto: "EITHER SUBMIT OR GET OUT." (10)*

The new state was not, however, the result of a heroic uprising by the people of God but of outside intervention. At 5:15 A.M. on the 6th of April 1941, the Wehrmacht crossed the frontiers of Yugoslavia and Greece from the north and the east. Zagreb fell on the 10th of April, Belgrade on the 12th and six days later Yugoslavia capitulated. On the 27th of April, German troops after unexpectedly fierce resistance from the Greek and British forces finally entered Athens.

The Germans and their allies redrew the Balkan map. Yugoslavia ceased to exist. On the 10th of April 1941 the Independent State of Croatia was proclaimed with its capital in Zagreb, its frontiers

from the Drau and Danube (Rivers) in the north-east to those parts of the Dalmatian coast left by the Italians in the south. A line running north-west to south-east divided the new state into German and Italian spheres of influence. Slovenia was split on the same basis with the southern part, including the capital Ljubljana, annexed to Italy, the northern part to Germany. Hungary annexed outright Backa and Baranija and the region of Medjumurje. Bulgaria "redeemed" what it had always regarded as its ancient provinces of Macedonia and Thrace. Serbia was put under direct German military rule and **Serbs and their officers were**, according to OKW (High Command of the Wehrmacht) instructions, "to be treated exceptionally badly" (11). As Mark Wheeler has put it, "This was no simple military defeat. It was the fracture and destruction of an entire ruling order and of the political and national conception that underlay it." (12)

The new Croatian state lacked everything. It scarcely had enough autos to drive its cabinet officers about, but it soon developed legislation to please Hitler. Within three weeks of its establishment, it passed legislation defining Jews in racial terms. In the months of May and June 1941, it rapidly passed the laws that the Nazis had taken years to work out, prohibiting inter-marriage, employment of Aryan female servants by Jews, marking of Jewish stores and persons, registration of property, removal from the bureaucracy and professions and the "Aryanization" of Jewish capital. As early as May 1941, some of the Jews of Zagreb were rounded up and sent to the Danica camp and later in the summer to Jasenovac (13).

The real enemy were the Serbs. As Mark Wheeler wrote, **the NDH came to power with "a threefold scheme to rid Croatia of its "oriental" minority - by expelling a third to rump Serbia, forcibly converting a second third to Roman Catholicism and slaughtering the remainder"** (14). The numbers involved were impressive. While the new Croatian state had doubled its territory which the former Yugoslav state had allotted to it (Croatia) as an autonomous region, much of it had inconveniently large settlements of non-Croats. Of the 6,700,000 citizens of the new state (of Croatia) only 3,300,000 were Croats. There were 2,200,000 Serbs, 750,000 Muslims, 80,000 Jews, 70,000 Protestants and other minorities (15).

Hitler left the Independent State of Croatia to the Italians as part of their sphere of influence in the Balkans, but negotiations between Italy and the new

Croatian state produced no easy agreement. **Ante Pavelic, its leader or Poglavnik (Fuhrer), modeled himself and his Ustase movement on Mussolini and fascism.** He owed his and its survival to fascist protection and support during the 1930's when Pavelic and his followers were in exile in Italy. In spite of his debt to Italy and to Mussolini, he was appalled when the Italians annexed historic Croatian lands on the Dalmatian coast. Most of the coast with its beaches, the (Serb) Dalmatian islands, the cities of Zara, Dubrovnik (ancient Serbian port) Split, and the city and bay of Kotor (of Serb Montenegro) either became provinces of metropolitan Italy or were subsequently occupied by the Italian Second Army. Hitler refused to intervene and Pavelic had no choice but to sign a state treaty on the 18th of May 1941 in Rome (16).

By the time that Pavelic arrived in Rome, the character of the new regime was already clear. Hundreds of Serbs had already been killed within the first three weeks by methods later perfected by the SS *Einsatzgruppen*. Serb men, women and children were forced to dig ditches into which their mutilated bodies were then hurled, often still alive. At Otocac early in May 1941, the usual slaughter was made worse by holding back the Greek Orthodox priest and his son to the end. The boy was cut to pieces under the eyes of his father who was then forced to recite prayers for the dying. At Glina on 14 May 1941, the Serbs were invited to hear a *Te Deum*. Once inside the church, the *Ustase* officer asked whether any present had certificates of conversion. Two did. The rest were hacked to death inside the sanctuary (17).

The distinguished Austrian military historian Edmund Glaise von Horstenau had persuaded the German High Command that it needed an expert to handle the German-Croatian relations and secured an appointment as "*plenipotentiary German General in Agram (City Zagreb - which means 'to scratch out')*" (18), one of the first of many Austrian officers to serve in the Balkans. A week before the state treaty was signed, Glaise summed up his first impressions in a report from Zagreb dated 12 May 1941:

*"the Croatian revolution is largely the revolution of old men and former Imperial Austrian officers...A heavy burden, alongside the Italian mortgage, is the deep conflict with the Serbians, a consequence to a considerable extent of the unholy policies of the Magyars (Hungarians) in the last years of the Danube Monarchy..."* (19).

By early June the Carabinieri in Split were reporting streams of Serbians and Jewish refugees crossing into Italian territory with tales of atrocities and massacres carried out by the Ustase (20). Glaise von Horstenau reported that:

*"According to reliable reports from countless German military and civil observers during the last few weeks in country and town, the Ustase have gone raging mad."* (21)

He reported that Serbian and Jewish men, women and children were literally hacked to death. Whole villages were razed to the ground and the people driven into barns to which the Ustase set aflame. At one point the Ustase had thrown so many corpses into the River Neretva near Matkovic that the government began to pay peasants a 100 *krune* for each body hauled out, lest they float down stream into the Italian zone.(22) Neighbors murdered neighbors, as Menachem Shelach points out, people whose families had lived side by side for generations.(23) The Croatian militia were often egged on by local priests. When an Italian Junior officer asked a Croatian priest for his authorization, the priest replied, *"I have one authorization and only one: to kill the Serb sons of bitches."*(24) Early the following year Cardinal Tisserant confronted the Croatian emissary to the Vatican, Dr. Nikola Rusinovic, with the appalling behaviour of Croatian Franciscans.

I know for a fact that it is the Franciscans themselves, as for example Fr. Simic of Knin, who have taken part in attacks against the Orthodox populations so as to destroy the Orthodox Church (in the way you destroyed the Orthodox church in Banja Luka). I know for sure that the Franciscans in Bosnia-Herzegovina have acted abominably, and this pains me. Such acts cannot be committed by educated, cultivated people, let alone priests.(25)

Observers within the German army also disapproved of the uncontrolled violence. Early in July 1941 Glaise reported with dismay that the Croatians had expelled all Serbian intellectuals from Zagreb. When he went to see the *Poglavnik*, Pavelic promised humane treatment for them. The fact that they were allowed 30 kg of luggage made Glaise suspicious.(26) He had good reasons. On the 10th of July, he reported the *"utterly inhumane treatment of the Serbs living the Croatia"*; the embarrassment of the Germans who *"with six battalions of foot soldiers"* could do nothing and who had to watch the *"blind, bloody fury of the Ustase."*(27) On the 19th of July, he wrote:

*"Even among the Croatians nobody can feel safe in this land anymore...The Croatian revolution is by far the harshest and most brutal of all the different revolutions that I have been through at more or less close hand since 1918."*(28)

The Italian representative in Zagreb, Casertano, reported with equal dismay that:

*"Persecutions of Jews are continuing. Foreign influence [i.e. German] is clearly visible in the recent decree prohibiting Jews from circulating in the city before ten in the morning and at any hour in markets or banks."*(29)

Small communities were not spared. The adjutant major of the 32nd Infantry regiment stationed in Bileca recorded in the unit's war diary on the 16th of June that

*"searches and arrests are continuing day and night. Numerous murders have taken place. Jews and Serbs are being robbed of all their goods by the Ustase who are profiting from that in their greed for personal enrichment"*.(30)

Meanwhile in Zagreb, the NDH had set about re-conquering the country for the true faith. In June 1941 all primary and infant schools belonging to the Serbian church were closed and the ten percent tax levied by the state for the Orthodox Church abolished. In July the use of the phrase *"Serbo-Orthodox religion"* was forbidden and replaced by the term *"Greco-Oriental"*. On 14 July, 1941 the Ministry of Justice and Religion issued a decree to the bishops within the territory of the NDH in which it announced that Orthodox converts were forbidden to join the Greco-Catholic church, that is, the Greek rite churches in communion with Rome, and added...

*the Croatian government does not intend to accept within the Catholic church either priests or school-masters or, in a word, any of the intelligentsia - including rich Orthodox tradesmen and artisans... Reception of the common Orthodox people and the poor is allowed after instruction in the truths of Catholicism.*(31)

In a speech to the Sabor (parliament) in February, 1942 Pavelic explained that he had nothing against Orthodoxy as such but the Serbian Orthodox Church could not be allowed to exist within the NDH because Orthodox Churches were always national. It had been the state religion of the old Yugoslav kingdom, its bishops and priests were all Serbs and hence inadmissible in Croatia.(32)

The Catholic hierarchy within Croatia watched the unfolding events with complicated and conflicting feelings. Archbishop Stepinac, who was a man of deep personal piety and puritan tastes, could not fail to welcome the establishment of a Catholic State. He said in a sermon at a penitential rally of 200,000 people at Marija Blstrica in June, 1943,

*...we are all deeply convinced that this dreadful war with all its evil consequences is a justified punishment of God for so many sins... sins of impurity, adultery, disorderly marriage, abortion, contraception, drunkenness, thieving and cheating, lying and swearing, indifference to holy days, to Sunday mass and the holy sacraments; indifference to holy days, to Sunday mass and the holy sacraments, they all cry to heaven to vengeance.(34)*

While the NDH enforced a puritanism which he welcomed, it assumed an authority in matters of faith and doctrine which he could not. The Minister of Justice and Religion bombarded the bishops in the new state with decrees like the one just cited. Wholesale deportations of Jews and Serbs worried him, not least because the NDH apparently made no distinction between those converted to catholicism and those who were not. The Archbishop began discreetly to protest. On 16 July, he wrote to the Minister of Justice and Religion to complain that it would be against the spirit and duty of the Catholic Church to refuse to receive the whole intelligentsia on principle. Christ came into the world to save all men.(36)

A week later he wrote directly to the *Poglavnik* himself:

*I am convinced that these things have been happening without your knowledge and that others may not dare to tell you about them; so I am all the more obliged to do so myself. I hear from many sides that there are instances of inhumane and brutal treatment of non-Aryans during the deportations and at the camps, and even worse that neither children, old people nor the sick are spared. I know that among recent deportees there have been converts to catholicism, so that it is even more my duty to concern myself with them. Allow me to make a general observation; the measures which have been undertaken would have their full effect if they were carried out in a more humane and considerate way, seeing in human beings the image of God; human and Christian consideration should be shown especially to weak, old people, young and innocent children and the sick.(36)*

The Archbishop had, in effect, condoned the end but condemned the means. He must surely

have known, as General Glaise knew, that the NDH intended to carry out its own "final solution" of the Serb question. A state agency, the *Drzavno Ravnateljstvo za Ponovu* [state directorate of renewal] had been charged with its execution. A day after the Archbishop's letter, the Minister of Education, Mile Budak, speaking in Gospic made clear that one third of the two million Serbs would be deported, one third converted to Catholicism and one third killed.(37)

While Budak was announcing the genocide was now official in Croatia, the *Poglavnik's* ally, Adolph Hitler, began his greatest enterprise. At 03:15 on the morning of the 22nd of June 1941, "Operation Barbarossa" went into effect and German troops crossed the frontiers of the Soviet Union. The communist parties of all the Balkan states now joined the anti-fascist front and in time came to dominate those movements. Yugoslav communists were free to attack the Croatian fascists directly and so took to the hills.

Non-communist Serbs had not been sitting idly waiting for extermination. In rump Serbia, bands of irregulars, known as *Cetniks*, had gathered around the Serb general staff officer Draza Mihailovic, who was loyal in his way to the exiled king and the Allies. The Serbs of Montenegro and Croatia, especially those behind the coastal strip in towns such as Knin and Gracac, took up arms. Incidents like the following became common. Two lorries of Italian fascist militiamen, 55 black shirts, two officers and a doctor set out from Bileca in the hills behind Dubrovnik for Gacko in the mountains of Hercegovina. Thirty-five km from Bileca the transport was caught in a storm of automatic fire and explosions. The militiamen threw themselves to the ground crying, "*siamo Italiani! siamo Italiani!*" [we are Italians!], at which point the firing suddenly stopped and a group of sheepish Serbs emerged from the undergrowth to apologize for mistaking the fascists for *Ustase*. They also reported that in the next village they had found 200 Serbs corpses.(38)

The situation was rapidly becoming intolerable for the Italian occupation forces. As the Serbs took to the hills and fired back, the Italian army got caught in the 3 cross-fire. In the meantime they had to watch as the "friendly and allied independent state of Croatia" committed atrocities in front of their barracks. On the 24th of June the governor of Dalmatia, Giuseppe Bastianini, wrote a strong letter to Rome. Italians troops were

*"constrained to stand by inactive in the face of*

*such acts carried out under their very eyes... I cannot guarantee that in reaction to some act of violence carried out in our presence there will not be an energetic intervention which could collide with the sensibilities and sentiments of the local "lords and masters".*(39)

The Vatican too had problems with the new state which pressed its claims by every means available. The British minister, for example, demanded that the Holy See condemn "*the brutal and unjustified attack on Yugoslavia*" as did the exiled government of the kingdom of Yugoslavia, still accredited to the Holy See.(40) The Croats pressed hard for full recognition as a Catholic state. When Pavelic came to Rome to sign the state treaty with Italy, the Pope refused to receive him as a head of state but conceded "*an audience without exteriority, as to a private person, as to a simple Catholic*".(41)

In the long run the Vatican could not leave the new state without any direct diplomatic channels and in late July 1941, Cardinal Maglione informed Archbishop Stepinac that His Holiness intended to send an Apostolic Visitor to the bishops, not a Nuncio to the state. The Pope named a Benedictine father, Monsignor Ramiro Marcone, for this delicate mission.(42) Although Mgr. Marcone spoke no Croatian, his secretary, Father Masucci, soon learned it and for the greater part of the war the two Benedictines passed on vital information from and to the Holy See. By August 1941, the Vatican understood only too well what was happening in Croatia. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Belgrade begged the Pope to intervene to prevent "*the violent persecutions being carried out in the kingdom of Croatia against the Orthodox Serbs... an outrage to good sense and civil law... not to mention Christian charity*".(43)

In November 1941, Bishop Misic of Mostar wrote the Archbishop Stepinac:

*... a reign of terror has come to pass... men are captured like animals. They are slaughtered, murdered; living men are thrown off cliffs (as in Medjugorje). The under-prefect of Mostar, Bajic, a Moslem has said - he should keep silent and not utter such things - that at Ljubinje in a single day 700 schismatics were thrown into their graves. From Mostar and Capljina a train took six carloads of mothers, young girls and children ten years old to the station at Surmanci... they were led up the mountains and mothers together with their children were thrown alive off the precipices...*(44)

The Archbishop wrote another letter to the Poglavnik (Führer) and protested.(45) The episcopal conference met and sent in a protest but at the state opening of parliament in February, 1942, the Archbishop blessed its proceedings and the Poglavnik.(45) On the first anniversary of the establishment of the NDH, *Katolicki List* wrote enthusiastically that

*under the former government freemasons, Jews, communists and such people had a big say and abortion was widely practiced... One year of freedom and independence and what a rich harvest for the Croatian people. The NDH is a renewal of Zvonimir's Croatia and the Poglavnik follows in his footsteps.*

A solemn *Te Deum* was celebrated and the Archbishop preached a sermon.(46)

Private protests and interventions continued. The Germans, well informed as always, regarded Stepinac as "*Judenfreundlich*"(47), and even the Yugoslav government in exile grudgingly admitted in July, 1942, that "*according to reports from Serbs in Zagreb, Stepinac is behaving well*".(48) Yet he never spoke out nor openly criticized Pavelic and his regime. Nor did he imitate his colleague in Slovakia who had a pastoral letter read out, signed by the entire Slovak episcopate, condemning the deportation of the Jews.(49)

The silence of Archbishop Stepinac recalls the greater silence of Pius XII and the Holy See. In October 1942 d'Arcy Godolphin Osborne, British ambassador to the Holy See, wrote a furious letter to monsignor Tardini, Vatican under-secretary of state, complaining that if His Holiness granted an audience to Pavelic, it would create a very bad impression in England:

*the Croatian regime over which he presides and his Ustase [sic!] have been responsible for the murder of some 600,000 Serbs and at the present moment his troops are destroying Serbian villages on Bosnia and exterminating the Serbian population.*

Monsignor Tardini noted that in conversation with the ambassador he had responded that Osborne, who had been instructed by his government to make such a protest, had exceeded his competence. In the margin he observed "*il Ministro e, da qualche tempo, un po' eccitato*".(50) Whatever passion or cries of outrage the Vatican archives reveal always comes from the outside; for Maglione and his staff the whole world appeared to be "*un po*

*eccitato.*" Harold Macmillan caught the special atmosphere when he had an audience with the Pope in 1944:

*A sense of timelessness - time means nothing here, centuries come and go, but this is like living in a sort of fourth dimension. And at the centre of it all, past the papal guards, and the monsignori, and the bishops, and the cardinals, and all the show of ages - sits the little saintly man, rather worried, obviously quite selfless and holy - at once a pathetic and tremendous figure.* (51)

Archbishop Stepinac shared with the Pope the selflessness, the austerity and, from the reports of those close to him, the holiness as well. But his world was not timeless. He lived amidst the terrors and dangers of the greatest charnel house in human history. Moreover, as the scanty evidence presented so far makes clear, there can be no question that he did not know what was going on. He was not an old man - he had been consecrated when not yet forty and was in his mid-forties during the Second World War. He showed great personal courage and dignity both during his trial by the communist regime in 1946 as a war criminal and in the long years of imprisonment which he had to undergo. Some commentators have argued that Pius XII was simply weak. Nobody has ever suggested such a thing about Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac. Why then did he keep silent?

Part of the answer can be read in a circular he published after the bombing of Zagreb on 22 February 1944:

*I raise my voice in bitter protest and justified condemnation against those who do not flinch from any measure...and are destroying the living organism of the Croatian people...Croats have fought over the centuries to defend the ideals of the real human freedom and Christian culture...Because of which the Pope, the greatest defender of real culture and freedom of mankind, gave them the honorable title of "Antemurale Christianitatis".*

A few days later he declared in a letter to d'Arcy Osborne that "*without exaggeration one can assert that no people during this war has been so cruelly stricken as the unhappy Croatian people*". (52) Not a view which would have been shared by Jews, Poles, Great Russians, Ukrainians, White Russians, Serbs of Gypsies. Stepinac failed to see that because in the end Croats were the only people who mattered to him, and with the exception of those Italians he had known as a seminarian: the only people he had ever known. Archbishop

Stepinac saw himself as the pastor to his people; he was both archbishop and nationalist. Indeed, as we have seen, nationalism in the Balkans was hardly a secular category; to be Croatian was to be Catholic. He had welcomed the foundation of the NDH; he had repeatedly said prayers and offered thanksgiving for it; he had celebrated with ecclesiastical pomp and splendour its official holidays and its leader's birthday. He had half-condoned atrocities because they were committed by "our" people and not "theirs". The Croatian emissary to the Holy See, Nikola Rusinovic noted with satisfaction during the Archbishop's visit to Rome in 1942 that Stepinac was

*really belligerent about the potential enemies of our country...In his attack on the Serbs, the Cetniks and the Communists as the cause of all the evil that has befallen Croatia he produced arguments that not even I knew.* (53)

In a visit to Rome in late May of 1943, the Archbishop told Prince Lobkowitz, who had replaced Rusinovic as emissary of the Independent of Croatia to the Holy See, that

*he had kept quiet about some of the things in which he is not at all in agreement in order to be able to show Croatia in the best possible light. He mentioned our laws on abortion, a point very well received in the Vatican. Basing his arguments on these laws, the Archbishop justified in part the methods used against the Jews, who in our country are the greatest defenders of crimes of this kind and the most frequent perpetrators of them.* (54)

Such behaviour may be reprehensible but it is all too common. How many Jews excuse Israeli violations of civil rights, illegal deportations and police brutality "*to be able to show Israeli in the best possible light*"? After all, if given the chance, "*they*" would destroy "*us*". Strong and secure national states can afford tolerance and legality; "*we*" have to use every means available. "*We*" are threatened with extermination.

It may help to place Archbishop Stepinac's equivocations in more familiar context if I compare him with another prelate, the late Cardinal Tomas O'Flaich, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland, who died on the 8th of May 1990. *The Times* in its obituary wrote of him:

*His sense of identity with the Catholic people of South Armagh from whom he sprang and whose spiritual leader he became could be doubted by none who knew him...The very attributes which endeared him to the local people made him appear*



*narrow-minded and one-sided on the broader stage.*

What were these attributes? "simple habits of speech, behavior and leisure interests"; for example, he would regularly turn out to support the local Gaelic football team in his hometown of Crosmaglen. He was a passionate Irish linguistic nationalist and changed his name from "Fee" to its Gaelic form. He taught Irish medieval history, founded and in due course preside over, the association of Irish-speaking priests. He has a brilliant record of firsts and *summa cum laude* and became lecturer and then professor at Maynooth. In 1974 he became its president. In short, he was for the non-Catholic world, the very embodiment of the "impossible Irishman", loved and revered by his people, as *The Times* put it, "the right man at the right place at tragically the wrong-time". (55)

In Crosmaglen the time is never right. Since the seventeenth century South Armagh has been a frontier zone, the border between one ethnoreligious community and another. Crosmaglen was the site of a famous atrocity in 1791 and of bomb outrages in 1991.(56) Out of Crosmaglen, son of the local primary school teacher, Cardinal Tomas O'Flaich, a warm, pious and saintly man, rose to be Primate, while remaining not merely the spokesman but the embodiment of Crosmaglen and South Armagh.

The people of Croatia are border people. As Archbishop Stepinac reminded his congregation in 1944, the Pope had consecrated them by giving them "the honourable title of *Antemurale Christianitatis*" or, as Father Ivo Guberina put it "the bulwark and stronghold of Catholicism and Christianity in its most critical moments".(57) Like Archbishop O'Flaich, Archbishop Stepinac came from the heart of his people. He was, born on the 8th of July, 1898, in Krasic, southwest of Zagreb, into a large, prosperous peasant family. He always saw his pastoral mission in service to those peasant communities from which he, a man of the people, had sprung.

Like the Jews of Israel, the Protestants of Northern Ireland and the Afrikaaners of South Africa, the Croatians are surrounded by peoples more numerous than they. They count and re-count their numbers. Contraception, known in Croatian Catholic writing as "the white plague" (*bijela kuga*) offended God's laws and betrayed the Croatian people. Religion and nation demanded the same behaviour. How could a Croatian priest, a man concerned

for the future of his people, condemn a state which had not only outlawed abortion but introduced the death-penalty for those daring to practice it?

Like almost all European nationalisms, Croatian nationality itself had only been defined and then wrongly, in the nineteenth century. The father of modern Croatian nationalism, Ljudevit Gaj, confronted a situation common to almost all eastern European national movements in their early stages. There were in Croatia three spoken variants and no literary language when in 1825 Gaj began his crusade to create an "Illyrian" nationality.(58) This was not different from the dilemmas of the Slovaks, whose language was divided between a Protestant, old Czech variant and numerous, unwritten variants spoken by the Catholic communities or that of the Daco-Romans in Wallachia and Moldavia. Whatever national identity is, it is not self-evidently "out there" like the system of tillage or the character of the geology. Nationalism, like religion, rests on an act of faith, an act of self-definition; it provides an answer to the question "Who am I?" by saying "you are one of us".

These considerations help to explain how and why Archbishop Stepinac and the higher clergy in Croatia were guilty, in the words of *The Times*'s obituary of Cardinal O'Flaich, of "half-condonation of violence" but they do not excuse them. A massacre is a massacre whether by "our" people or "their" people. Internment without trial, beating, deportations and forced conversion are crimes against humanity whether "our" people do it or "theirs". Archbishop Stepinac had a duty to condemn the murder of Serbs no matter how deep his Croatian feelings. Had he done so, the editor of the Serb paper in Knin might be covering local news instead of giving interviews to the BBC.

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## Notes

The primary and secondary sources on which this paper rests are listed below in the notes. About half the references have been drawn from German and Italian military, political and personal archives. For the student of Croatia during the war, and especially of the relations between the German military and political authorities and the Independent State of Croatia, the personal correspondence of General Edmund Glaise von Horstenau is essential. It can be found in folders 1-13 of the file RH 31 III "Bevollmächtigter deutscher General in Agram", housed in the West German Federal Military Archive in Koblenz. Glaise von Horstenau had a rank as SS Brigadeführer, equivalent to his Wehrmacht rank of Generalleutnant. Hence some of his personal correspondence is housed in the SS files in Berlin Document Centre. Peter Broucek is the author of a three volume edition of the papers of Glaise von Horstenau in which much of the material can be found, *Ein General im Zweilicht. Die Lebenserinnerungen Edmund Glaises von Horstenau*, 3 Vols. (Vienna, 1980, 1983, 1989). The Italian military and diplomatic archives are unusually rich because the Independent State of Croatia was nominally an Italian protectorate. In order to make reference to these primary source less tedious, I refer to the page and note number in my recent book *All or Nothing: The Axis and the Holocaust 1941-1943* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990) as follows: "Steinberg, p-274, n. 134". The other primary source used in this paper are the diplomatic documents published by the Vatican itself in the series *Actes et Documents du Saint Siege Relatifs a la seconde guerre mondiale*, Vols. 4, 5 and 8, (*Libreria Vaticana*, 1975), which I have abbreviated below as "StS". Other references are drawn from secondary sources. I do not, alas, read Croatian.

## Bibliography

1.Vladko Macek, *In the Struggle for Freedom*, (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1957), p. 234

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3.J.S. Conway, "How Shall the Nations Repent? The Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt, October, 1945", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 38, No. 4 (1987).

4.Steinberg, p. 80 and p. 280 notes 117-19

5.Borgoncini Duca to Cardinal Maglione, 22 September 1941, StS, Vol. 5, No. 95, pp. 245-5.

6.Stella Alexander, *The Triple Myth. A Life of Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac, East European Monographs Boulder No. CCXXVI* (New York, 1987) p. 26

7.Ibid, p. 52

8.Carlo Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII*, trs. Bernard Wall (London, 1970) pp. 267-8.

9.Alexander, p. 90

10.Falconi, p. 277

11.Steinberg, p. 271, n. 43

12.Mark Wheeler, "Pariah" to "Partisans to Power: The Communist Party of Yugoslavia" in Tony Judt (ed. *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe*, (London, 1989) p. 124

13.Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews*, rev. and definitive edn, 3 vols (New York and London, 1985) vol. 2, pp. 710-11

14.Wheeler, p.129

15.Falconi, p. 274

16.Steinberg, p. 24 ff for the negotiations that led to the partitioning of the Balkan territories, which all qualified observers considered absurd.

17.Falconi, p. 271

18.Steinberg, p. 271, n. 48

19.Ibid, n. 53

20.Ibid, n. 56

## INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA

was proclaimed on April 10, 1941 and all power was given to the Ustashi. Ante Pavelic arrived with the German and Italian troops to Zagreb from Italy escorted by well armed, ruthless band of terrorists from the Ustashi training camps. Their background had been one of blackmail, murder and assassination. Their financial and moral support came from Hitler and Mussolini as well as some religious sources. Their first step-to establish their dictatorship. Their ranks of loyal followers were swelled quickly by the youth, anti-royalist Croatian chauvinists, fanatics, criminals and even many members of the clergy-all dedicated for a "Greater Croatia", an abortive conception originated by Dr. Ante Starcevic in the last century. Genocide in its worst and most destructive form was inflicted upon the Serbs in 1941-1945 by the members of the Croatian fascist movement, the Ustashi. This crime was organized and directed against the Serbs as a nation and as a religious group with the aim of wiping them out and creating "an ethnically pure Croatian territory."

So tyrannical was their rule that between 1941-1945 more than 1,000,000 Serbs, 80,000 Jews and 30,000 Gypsies-men, women and children, perished in a gigantic holocaust without quite understanding their "crime."

### *This is CROATIA*

"This state, our country, is only for Croatians, and not for anyone else. There are no ways and means which we Croatians will not use to make our country truly ours and to clean it of all Jews and Orthodox Serbs. All those who came to our country 300 years ago must disappear. We do not hide this our intention."

Dr. Milovan Zanic, Minister of Justice, Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945

"Don't come to me unless you have killed 200 Serbians!"

Ante Pavelic, Croatian leader-Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945

Kill all Serbs. First of all kill my sister, who is married to a Serb, when you finish this work, come here to the church and I will confess you and free you from sin."

Father Srečko Perić of Gorica Monastery, 1941

"We shall kill one part of the Serbs, we shall transport another, and the rest of them will be forced to embrace the Roman Catholic religion. This last part will be absorbed by the Croatian elements."

Dr. Mile Budak, Minister of Public Education and Creeds, 1941-1945

"The women and children are to be killed immediately. Do not wait for night, for twenty-four hours have already passed since our chief issued his orders that not a single Serb must be left alive."

Father Božo Simleša

"If you can't kill a Serb or a Jew you are an enemy of the Croatian State."

Andrija Artuković, Minister of Interior, 1941-1945

*New York Times*, January 1, 1942: "At Korenica hundreds of persons were killed but before they died many of them had their ears and noses cut off and then they were compelled to graze on grass. The tortures most usually applied were beatings, severing of limbs, gorging of eyes and breaking of bones. Cases are related of men being forced to hold red-hot bricks, dance on barbed wire with naked feet, wear a wreath of thorns. Needles were stuck in fingers under the nails, and lighted matches held under the noses. Of the murders on the large scale in the village of Korito 103 peasants were severely tortured, tied in bundles and thrown in a pit...then gasoline was poured over all the bodies and ignited."

An eye-witness, Gordana Friedlander testified against Ante Vrban, Ustasha Commander of Stara Gradishka concentration camp, notorious for killing thousands, especially children, said: "...At that time women and children came daily to Camp Stara Gradishka. Vrban ordered all children to be separated from their mothers and put in one room. Ten of us were told to carry them there in blankets. The children crawled about the room and one child put an arm and leg through the doorway, so that the door could not be closed. Vrban shouted 'Push it!' When I did not do that, he banged the door and crushed the child's leg. Then he took the child by the whole leg, and banged it against the wall until it was dead. When the room was full, Vrban ordered that poison gas be used to kill the rest." And what did Artuković's Ante Vrban say? "I did not kill hundreds of children personally-I only killed 63."

"From Mostar and from Čapljina a train took 6 carloads of mothers, young girls, and children to the station at Sumaci. There they were made to get off the train, were led up to the mountains, and the mothers together with their children were thrown ALIVE off steep precipices. In the parish of Klepci 700 people from the surrounding villages were murdered."

Bishop of Mostar, November 7, 1941

The famous Italian writer Curzio Malaparte in his book "Kaputt" reports on his visit to Ante Pavelic, the head of the Independent State of Croatia, whose official title was "Poglavnik": "...The Croatian people," said Ante Pavelic, "wish to be ruled with goodness and justice. And I am here to provide them." While he spoke, I gazed at a wicker basket on the Poglavnik's desk. The lid was raised and the basket seemed to be filled with mussels, or shelled oysters--as they are occasionally displayed in the window of Fortnum and Nason in Piccadilly in London. He looked at me and winked. "Would you like a nice oyster stew?" "Are they Dalmatian oysters?" I asked the Poglavnik. Ante Pavelic removed the lid from the basket and revealed the mussels, that slimy and jelly-like mass, and he said smiling, with that tired good-natured smile of his, "It is a present from my loyal Ustashis. Forty pounds of human eyes."

(Quoted from page 266 of "Kaputt", E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1946)

Ljubo Jednak survived: "The slaughter began... The butchers drenched in human blood... Then as I was thrown into the ditch several bodies followed. I was so terrified to move... Then I heard a voice whisper 'Are you alive?' I didn't answer. Finally, he asked again, 'Are you alive?' We crawled out of the ditch and on our stomachs we reached the cornfield. We separated. He was shot. I was lucky."

"Damned them...look this one is still alive...shoot!" - Ustasha 1942 (and 1991)

## SERBIAN PEOPLE MUST NOT AND WILL NOT LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!

21. *Ibid.*, n. 57
22. *Ibid.*, p. 272, n. 59
23. Menachem Shelach, Heshbon Damim. *Ha, Zlat Yehundi Croatia 81 yidav haitalim 1941-43* [*Blood Reckoning. The Rescue of Croatian Jews by the Italians*] (Tel Aviv, 1986) p.30
24. *Ibid.*, p.31, note
25. Falconi, p.308
26. Steinberg, p. 272, n. 63
27. *Ibid.*, n. 64
28. *Ibid.*, n. 65
29. *Ibid.*, n. 66
30. *Ibid.*, n. 67
31. Falconi, p. 276
32. Alexander, p. 68
33. *Ibid.*, p. 90
34. *Ibid.*, p.105
35. Falconi, p. 281
36. Alexander, pp. 71-2
37. *Ibid.*, p. 71, note
38. Steinberg, p. 272, n. 68
39. *Ibid.*, n. 69
40. Osborne to Cardinal Maglione, 7 April 1941, StS, vol. 4, p. 447, No. 313; Legation of Yugoslavia to Cardinal Maglione, 17 May 1941, *ibid.*, p. 498, No. 355.
41. Note de Mgr Montini, 16 May 1941, *ibid.*, pp. 491-2, No. 348; Note de Mgr Tardini, 17 May 1941, p. 495, No. 352; Note de Mgr Montini, 18 May 1941, p. 500, No. 358.
42. Cardinal Maglione to Archbishop Stepinac, 25 July 1941, *ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 106, No. 21.
43. Archbishop Joseph Ujic to Cardinal Maglione, 24 July 1941, *ibid.*, vol. 5 pp. 104-05, No. 20.
44. Alexander, p. 80
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-5
46. *Ibid.*, p. 90
47. Steinberg, p. 80 and p. 280, n. 115
48. Alexander, p. 101
49. Steinberg, p.119 and p. 286, n. 132
50. Osborne to Tardini, 3 October 1942, StS, vol. 5, pp. 736-7, No. 498
51. Owen Chadwick, *Britain and the Vatican during the Second World War* (Cambridge, 1986) pp. 302-03.
52. Alexander, pp. 104-05
53. Falconi, p. 314
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 315-16
55. The Times, Obituary, 10 May 1990.
56. J. Smyth, "The Men of No Property": *Irish Radicals and Popular Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1992) p. 49-50. See also pp. 40-41 for South Armagh as a trouble spot and 46-47 for the frontier as an ethnic and cultural divide. I am grateful to Dr Jim Smyth, my colleague at Trinity Hall, for helping me to understand the world of nationalism in Ireland. He is, of course, not responsible for the conclusions I draw from his lessons.
57. Falconi, p. 265
58. Elizabeth Murray Despalatovic, *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement*, East European Monographs Boulder, No. XII (New York: Columbia U.P., 1975) pp. 18ff

# ANTE PAVELIC

## PART I

Slowly moving people and with the dust was a smell, sickly and thick, smell of death and decay, of corruption and filth. I passed through the barrier and found myself in the world of a nightmare.

At the end of the second World War the full horror of Nazi rule was exposed. The allies promised the world that they would bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. There were 150,00 war criminals named, only 50,00 were caught, 100,000 of them escaped.

**This film is about one man: Ante Pavelic. Pavelic is no ordinary war criminal. He is the forgotten furor of the second World War.**

In Yugoslavia Pavelic and his Ustase Party embarked on their own personal holocaust, with the full blessing of Hitler and his Nazis.

**Pavelic's orders condemned half a million (more than 500,000) of his own countrymen to death and he ranks along side Hitler and Mussolini for sheer evil.**

We can now reveal how Pavelic escaped justice, in spite of the fact, that, he was hunted by the armies of Russia, Great Britain and America.

**The Americans discovered a secret network that implicated the Vatican, two (2) Popes and Western (the British) intelligence. Pavelic is the key to that Network, a network the Americans code named THE RATLINES.**

Good evening.

Ante Pavelic was a particularly brutal and uncompromising tyrant. To understand how someone as notorious as Pavelic could escape, it is first necessary to appreciate the chaos of Eastern Europe in 1945. The second World War unleashed a bloodbath in Eastern Europe.

It was here that the majority of the civilians died in the camps and the killing fields of the holocaust.

The Germans redrew the map of Eastern Europe, invading some countries and forming alliances with others until the Nazi Empire dominated

the entire region (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary and Yugoslavia with Italy, Bulgaria and Albania as allies of Germany).

In all these nations, Germans found willing collaborators, local nationalists, inspired by hatred to work for the Nazis. Nowhere was this clearer than in the Balkan Republic of Yugoslavia where the Croat National Party (Ustase) was fighting for Independence (from Yugoslavia).

From exile, Pavelic organized a pre-war campaign of terror and assassination:

"By his hand, two nations were plunged into grief. Within a few minutes, the end had come. Barely five (5) minutes after landing on French soil, (King) Alexander of Yugoslavia was Dead."

Pavelic was tried in his absence and found guilty of the plot. He (Pavelic) found safe haven in Italy, under the protection and patronage of Mussolini.

In Italy Pavelic founded the Ustase, or rebel party, symbolized by the Croatian Checkerboard. The Ustase Party was a terrorist organization committed to the destruction of the Yugoslavian State. In secret training camps, they prepared for power, swearing their oaths to Blood & Soil.

In 1941, the British backed a coupe to topple the pro German Government (Croatian Ustase) in Yugoslavia. Hitler was furious. Operation Barbarossa, the assault on Russia, was delayed. The Wehrmacht turned on the Balkans (Serbs) instead.

The Yugoslavian defenses collapsed (thus opening the door for communism). The entire campaign took ten (10) days. Hitler was so angry at the delay to his plans for the invasion of Russia that he meted-out special punishment to the capital: Belgrade (with policy of executing 1,000 Serbs per day).

The conquering armies divided-up the spoils. Yugoslavia was cut up like a cake. Germany's allies were all given territories (Croations, Italians, Hungarians, Bulgarians & Albanians). The Nazis occupied Serbia, and Croatia became another puppet state (for the first time in the history through the might of the Nazi Army.

The flag bearers of Croations were invited to form a government. Croatia became independent and Pavelic's dream of power had become a reality but only with the blessing of Nazi Germany.

Once in power, Pavelic revealed his true colors: The three (3) week old government passed anti-Jewish laws that were stricter than the Nazi's. Within two (2) months, the government turned on its old ethnic enemy (since WWI), the Serbs. The Ustase announced a program of deportation, Catholic conversion and extermination for the country's two (2) million Orthodox Serbs. It was the beginning of four (4) years of genocide.

At a meeting in 1941, Hitler told Pavelic that, if the Croatian state wishes to be strong, it must pursue a policy of national intolerance for 50 years.

"The Croatians had the notion of forced conversions, it was an idea that had seized them and they proceeded (with) a program, on their own and forced Orthodox Christians to become Catholic Christians, namely of the Vatican rite."

Armed Ustase bands went out into the countryside and rounded up thousands of Serbian peasants. Mass conversions were held out in the open.

"A group of Croatians or Ustase would come into a village and address themselves to a little child and ask them to make the sign of the cross. And the Orthodox make the sign of the cross in this way: touching the right shoulder first. The Latins make it this way: touching the left shoulder first and then the right. And according to the story or legend or rumor if the little child made the sign of the cross in the Orthodox way, that meant that he was a Serb and they killed him."

"It was a, quite openly, a racist movement and they took particular pride in that and you couldn't have a better example than that of Dr. Vudak who was the minister for religion and education. When asked by a journalist what the government (Croatian Ustase) policy would be for the non-Croatian racial and religious minorities, he said, "For them (the Serbs), we have three (3) million bullets."

The Croatians had their own concentration camp at Jasenovac on the banks of the river Sava, where many thousands were murdered (5000-7000 per day, in a 120 day period). They killed with astonishing and primitive brutality.

**The victims were murdered in medieval fashion. Hammers and knives were used in contrast to the chilling efficiency of the Nazi death camps.**

On one occasion in 1942, the camp guards made bets to see how many inmates they could kill

in one night. A guard named Petar Brasiko won by slitting the throats of 1360 prisoners (Serbs, mostly the old, women & children) with a special knife.

"I think that even the SS & the Fascists didn't much like some of the things that the Ustase were doing. Especially the ordinary German & Italian Soldiers were shocked by the lengths to which they (the Ustase) worked."

**When Pavelic met Hitler a second time, he boasted that the Jewish Problem was solved in Croatia before Hitler had done so in Germany.**

"Marshall Tito, the leader of the Yugoslav partisans poses for the newsreel cameraman for the first time. A thorn in the Germany side, he and his guerrilla bands have waged constant war on the invaders. Hiding in the mountain passes, these patriots strike swiftly and suddenly at superior Nazi forces. Many women are in the group that time and again have won towns and villages against heavy odds. Brave men and women who will never bow to the invader or let Yugoslavia die."

"Yugoslav army advances. People come out into the street to greet and welcome their heroic liberators."

The war was over, Pavelic fled in panic with a convoy of loyal Ustase.

"Hitler's routed band, an army of assassins and killers, is taking to flight in a cowardly fashion. The Ustase are running away with all those who have smeared their hands in the people's blood."

They headed for the Austrian border. In May of 1945, under the cover of darkness, they crossed over in to the British control zone, here at Maribor. The British army on the ground, under the command of Field Marshall Alexander, apparently knew nothing of this. **The Most Wanted Man in Yugoslavia (Ante Pavelic) Had Vanished into Thin Air.**

**At Yalta, the allies had agreed to repatriate war criminals, but in 1945, this was easier said than done (Instead, they helped them escape).**

"The shattered refuge (mess) of conquered Germany is a graphic symbol of the desperate need of reconstruction of Post War Europe. Disorganization everywhere."

Ante Pavelic had disappeared into a Europe in complete chaos. From the Baltic to the Adriatic, Europe was awashed with refugees. Millions were channeled into DP Camps where their identities could be checked. Some were the victims of Fascism, others were war criminals and collaborators.

But who was who?

"People had been deported and displaced and they wanted to go home or on the other hand, some of them said, why should I go home when my country is occupied by the red army, by the communists. Well, among the tens and hundreds of thousands of refugees, there were undoubtedly some Nazis, Germans, or War Criminals from Yugoslavia (Croatian Ustase) or from Hungary for that matter and naturally they didn't use their own names. If they had any papers, they destroyed them and they passed for refugees."

"The war is over, but for them, there is still no peace."

"Some no doubt are guilty of crimes in their own lands, others lived in countries which changed hands during the war. Others again have suffered so bitterly in their own country that they are afraid to go back (for example, Serbs from Kosovo)."

"It is true that the British and the Americans were on the look-out. There was a blacklist you know and they were on the lookout for the escaping Nazis. Now, how do you make a distinction between that kind of an individual, who is a needle in a haystack, in the midst of this mass of refugees."

Eighteen million human beings, race, language and identity sunk in a common mass.

Throughout 1945, Tito's diplomats demanded the arrest and extradition of Pavelic and his Ustase henchmen. The Yugoslavs had already in their hands thousands of defeated Croats (most of whom were pardoned and let go), but they wanted the leaders who had already crossed the border. The British foreign office and the U.S. State Dept. promised the Yugoslav (Serbian) allies that this would be done. Allied units combed the areas under their control without finding any sign of the wanted man.

In July 1945, Tito's ambassador in London told the British Foreign Office:

"Pavelic has been made prisoner by the troops of Field Marshall Alexander and is now in the part of Austria under the control of the British Army."

The British Foreign Office categorically denied this. They told the Yugoslav Embassy in London:

"Every effort is being made to discover the present whereabouts of Dr Pavelic."

British intelligence (falsely) informed the Foreign Office of rumors that Pavelic was either in Salsburg in the American Zone or that he was in the hands of the Soviets.

Austria was divided into zones between the British, the Americans, the French and the Soviets, but the Yugoslav suspicion focused on the British Zone. Throughout 1945 and 1946, their accusations became more detailed. Pavelic was in a villa near Klagenkuert. Pavelic was in a Monastery disguised as a Monk. Pavelic was seen near his family home at Bardishal (sp).

In August 1946, the British Embassy in Belgrade told the Yugoslav Foreign Office that these allegations were ungracious and unfounded.

"Pavelic has at no time been in British custody nor has his whereabouts been known to any British Authority."

Three months later, in telecommunications, the British Foreign Office admitted:

"It is becoming increasingly clear that many of the more important hoodlums are taking refuge under the wing of the (Catholic) Church."

Thanks to the American Freedom of Information Act, and recently declassified documents in the U.S. Public Archives, we now know how so many war criminals slipped through the allies hands. Researchers in America, Australia and Yugoslavia have reconstructed the route taken by Pavelic down The Ratlines. His story is typical of the thousands of others who escaped.

"In December of 1946, intelligence from Austria noted that it was more and more likely that Pavelic was in Italy and that his whereabouts were known to a Dr. Draganovic and no one else. Dr Draganovic had offered his help to Pavelic in Austria and had supplied him with false ID Papers."

"In April in 1946, Pavelic left Austria accompanied by Ustase lieutenant. Both were dressed as Roman Catholic Priests."

In Milan, (Italy) Pavelic used the papers supplied by Draganovic to obtain a Spanish Passport in the name of Don Padro Gonna. By May of 1946, Pavelic had made his way to Rome. Finally it became obvious that he had found sanctuary inside the Vatican Property.

**\* Who was Draganovic?  
\* And what Vatican soil was Pavelic using as a refuge?**

Dr Draganovic was a Croatian Priest living in Rome. He was the Secretary of the Brotherhood of San Jeronimo and San Jeronimo was the Croatian College attached to the Vatican.

"I think that there is no doubt that many of the Croat Priests and Clergy in the Croat college felt very strongly nationalist and therefor very strongly inclined ,rather, to overstep the mark."

Draganovic was also a man with a past. During the war he had held an official position in the Ustase government. Tito's Yugoslavia classified him as a War Criminal.

"He was a Bosnian and a rather super patriot, super nationalist better to be said, and he took it upon himself the mission of rescuing his Croatian contraries and he was terribly active and of course he was a prime target for the attacks of the Tito government after the war. I guess he deserved it -- he has terribly active."

In spite of this, the allies (British) allowed him to enter the (DP) camps.

"In order to assure normal religious assistance to Catholic prisoners as well to exercise that mission of charity proper to the church (to save as many War Criminals as they possibly could)."

*\* But What was Draganovic really doing?*

"The missions intelligence branch submitted a quite important report on the activities of Fr. Draganovic and the Croat College. In the Summer of 1945, Draganovic made a personal tour of the camps and made contact with the chief Ustase representatives. Close liaison was maintained between San Jeronimo and the Ustase troops throughout Italy and also Austria. This lead to the formation of a political intelligence service."

Draganovic was also distributing false ID Papers to the Faithful within the camps. The value of these documents in post war Europe can not be under estimated. The documents in question were International Red Cross papers.

"They weren't passports, they were Identity Cards. So and so says he is so & so and it was on a piece of paper. It did not guarantee that so & so who said he was so & so was really indeed so & so, but in the bureaucratic machinery that was necessary."

There were two (2) organizations that could help him with these papers. The Vatican refugee Commission could vouch for an individual and so could

the national representatives of the Red Cross. The Croatian representative of the Red Cross was none other than Fr. Draganovic and the Croatian arm of the Vatican Refugee Commission was the Institute of San Jeronimo.

The American files on Draganovic stated:

"The Croatian confraternities issues false identity cards to the Ustase. With such documents and with the approval of the Pontifical Commission, passports can be obtained from the international Red Cross where Draganovic has some way of securing their issue."

Ivo Omrichan was one of these ways. He was former Croat Diplomat living in Rome, working closely with Draganovic.

"I personally could go either to the delegation of the international Red Cross and procure a passport of such Cross or go to the Italian Police in town to get them either regular Police Paper or the Nascent Passport."

Thanks to Draganovic and the Croatian Ratline, Pavelic now enjoyed a new identity and the sanctuary of the Vatican.

The route from Austria to Rome started in the camps. Here Draganovic handed out false papers in running to Italy, and on to the neutral territory of the Vatican, hidden from the scrutiny of the allied Nazi hunters. In their pursuit of war criminals, the allies were slowly piecing together an intelligence picture of The Ratlines, particularly the Americans. Their investigation into false ID papers and Pavelic both pointed to Fr. Draganovic, for Pavelic had evaded capture so far. CIC (the American Counter Intelligence Corp) was not far behind. The Road Detachment Corp had believed that they were on the verge of arresting Pavelic, were it not for his Vatican protection. By 1947, the file showed that it was an open secret within western intelligence, that the Vatican was protecting Ustase fugitives and hiding Pavelic himself.

"I think that most people in Rome who were interested in that sort of a thing realized San Jeronimo and particularly Fr. Draganovic were doing everything they could to get these Ustase, high ranking Ustase, out, including Pavelic himself, out of Rome and to somewhere safer."

But a further shock was yet to come. ...Special Agent Gawyn of the American CIC infiltrated a spy into the Croatian College. This spy reported that San Jeronimo was:

"Honeycombed with cells of Ustase operatives.



In order to enter this monastery, one must submit to a personal search for weapons and identification. All doors are locked, and those that are not have an armed guard. A password is necessary to go from one room to another. The whole area is guarded by armed Ustase youth in civilian clothes and the Ustase salute is exchanged constantly."

According to the CIC Draganovic was also holding clandestine political meetings with senior Ex-Leaders and Ministers from the Ustase Government.

San Jeronimo appeared to be offering more than just sanctuary. It was protecting a government in exile.

In January 1947, the Americans discovered that Pavelic himself had been in San Jeronimo. By February, they had traced him to the monastery of St. Sabina on the left bank of the Tiber.

The Americans convened a top secret meeting in 11th of April 1947 to plan Pavelic's arrest. The CIC was determined to avoid a diplomatic incident and therefor could not arrest him on Vatican soil.

"I think that if the fields interrogative police had simply marched into the Croat College there would have been a definite break of international law and a break of relations with the Vatican."

Pavelic was living at an address in Rome which was believed to be a Vatican library. The file shows that Pavelic was always one step ahead of his would be captures, moving from one Vatican Safe House to another. When he traveled, he traveled in a car with Vatican plates. He managed to stay out of reach with the help of Draganovic who had a spy of his own.

"Draganovic had direct contact with an individual at the American Secret Intelligence who told him everything that Draganovic wanted to know about, secrets of maybe other secret services."

These problems concealed the real obstacle to his arrest. In July, CIC chief of operations ordered that Pavelic be taken into custody on sight. A week later, the same order was changed with a hand written rider with new instructions: "Hands Off."

This mysterious respite allowed Pavelic to leave Rome on the last leg of The Ratline.

"Pavelic knew that I can procure Argentinean entry visas without questions asked. When Draganovic sent a passport of the Red Cross, I did go to the Argentinean authorities, got a visa, turned it back, so Pavelic could leave Italy."

In the autumn of 1947, Pavelic made his way to Genoa with a false passport supplied by Draganovic in the name of Pauble Iranian, a Hungarian refugee.

In Genoa, another Croatian priest was the last link in the ratline. Fr. Petranovic was wanted by the Yugoslavs as a suspected war criminal. He arranged passage on a ship going to South America and told Draganovic how many berths were available. Draganovic would then send that number of passengers from Rome.

The final details of Pavelic's departures are shrouded in mystery, but it is known that he left Italy by sea and travelled to safety in Buenos Aires.

"By that time, and this is about two (2) years after the end of the war, I would say that there were very few war criminals amongst the people in the camps, some of them had gotten there and taken a chance, but most of them had been smuggled out of Italy to a safer place. Of course they all popped up again in the Argentine where they set-up a new Independent State of Croatia."

"President Peron, now holding the rank of Brigadier General, reviews the Argentinean army and navy."

In Argentina Peron employed Pavelic as a security advisor. Peron gave 35,000 entry visas to the Croatians to form a power block against the Communists.

"A new leader for a key nation for a western hemisphere solidarity."

**\* Why was the church protecting a man responsible for the murder of more than 500,000 people?**

**\* Why was a lone Croatian priest able to protect Pavelic, a man hunted by every army in Europe?**

**\* Why was the institute of San Jeronimo condoning his activity?**

**\* Why was the Vatican hierarchy not in control of its rank and file? Or was it?**

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# ANTE PAVELIC

## PART II

Croatia was one of the Vatican's favored nations. It was a buffer against the Eastern Orthodox Church. Pavelic's wartime regime was stridently Catholic.

"The Catholic church and the Ustase were like hand and glove in the state of Croatia."

Fr. Draganovic was on the committee for forced conversions. Fr. Petranovic was an alleged concentration camp official. Arch Bishop Stipanac was a member of the Ustase parliament. The Catholic support that Pavelic had enjoyed, continued throughout his dictatorship.

One of the first acts of the Ustase government was to outlaw the Orthodox church. It legalized deportation and murder in the name of the Catholic Religion. Death squads even crucified some victims.

After 10 months of these horrifying atrocities, the state opening of parliament still received the blessing of Archbishop Stepinac and papal representative Marccone.

Archbishop Stepinac served at Ustase ceremonies blessing volunteers for the SS with the Ustase symbol of "THE GUN, DAGGER AND GRENADE" lay on the altar.

Franciscan monks took an active part in the military campaign. Monasteries were given over to Pavelic and used as military bases. At the Jasenovac death camp, the commandant was even a Franciscan Friar.

Shortly after he ascended to power in 1941, Pavelic had a private audience in the Vatican with Pope Pius XII.

D'Arcy (Godolphin) Osborne, the British ambassador to the Holy See, was asked by the foreign office to convey its dismay.

His reception of Pavelic is deplorable. Its done more to damage his reputation (of the Holy See) in this activity than any other act since war began.

The Vatican was unmoved. In 1942, Geovani Montini, the Asst. Sec. of State, intimated to a representative from the Ustase, that the Holy See can not imagine A Croat who is not a Catholic. In Croatia, Pavelic vigorously pursued this thinking to make it a reality.

In May, 1943, Pope Pius XII again received Pavelic in yet another private audience.

"I know the British and the Americans in particular I know I talked to Tipman, an American Sgt. here, and he was quit perplexed, I know that irritated them that the Pope received Pavelic. Pavelic was a Catholic, no doubt about that, and if he comes to the Pope as a Catholic, the Pope can't refuse — He's an important Catholic. So the Vatican explanation to Tipman was ... The Pope did not receive him as head of the Croatian state but as a Catholic. But on the face of it, it looks as a sort of a recognition and obviously, Pavelic of course, played it up as recognition of Croatia."

Although official recognition was withheld, the Vatican did receive Croatian unofficial representatives on many occasions. Pope Pius XII even called Pavelic a much maligned man.

The Communist victory in Yugoslavia brought an end to the political power of the Catholic church. Tito's new state had no place for the clergy. Members of the old regime were imprisoned or executed. Catholic Croatia was swallowed up by communist Yugoslavia.

Although the tide of war had separated Croatia from the Ustase, it did not separate the Ustase from the church. The link was Draganovic.

"Draganovic was a loud performer, he was seen everywhere, everybody knew what he was doing."

One of the priests working with him in 1946 gave a tape interview to our researchers. Monsignor Stimcheck revealed that Draganovic often discussed the work at San Jeronimo with Monsignor Montini, Vatican assistant secretary of state.

"Draganovic would go and look for Montini seeking advice. On a particular case their relations were excellent...Draganovic would ask Montini to get more visas to open the door for the people of the camps...On many occasions, Montini approached Draganovic and asked him to save people in danger; so there was a personal relationship..."

Did Draganovic know Pius XII? Of course, through Montini, and the Pope estimated him highly because he was a great man.

"Monsignor Montini was the Pope's right hand man and the secretary of state for humanitarian activities. He was actually operational director, so he would have come in contact with Draganovic or

with any refugees who would come in contact with his own limited range of action, and as we know it, he (Montini) became POPE PAUL VI."

The Vatican hierarchy was allowing Draganovic to help Pavelic and other war criminals escape down the Ratline.

**\*What did the Vatican hope to gain?**

"An American CIC agent, William Gawyn, discovered that a secret anti-communist group called Intermariam held the answer."

Intermariam means between the seas, and in the '20's and '30's a federation of Catholic States from the Baltic to the Adriatic was Vatican policy to fight the thread of Bolshevism.

"In the '30's you know, Stalin was a pretty powerful man and communist propoganda was extremely potent, and Pius XI who died in 1939 was a vigorous opponent of communism and mobilized The Catholic Organizations to fight communism. And was he wrong - of course not."

Intermariam was a political group formed in the 1920's after the Russian Revolution. It was composed of Catholic Nationalists committed to holding the line against the communists, a Catholic curtain across Europe.

"Communism was a threat to the church on two levels. (1) On the theological, theoretical ideological level, namely, on the theory that God does not exist and this modern society should be based on Godlessness. And then the second (2) On the Practical level of simple persecution. Stalin annihilated the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union and the communist party abroad was obviously following suite. If they could ever get control of the political power they'd do it, follow the same pattern, so on the estoppel level, there was a perfectly good reason for the Catholic church, and above all, the leadership of the Pope, to take a very dim view, indeed, of the Soviet Union especially under Stalin."

In the East, the church was fighting for its very existence. This life and death struggle drew it into the Political intrigues of Intermariam and The Ratline.

The final chapter in The Ratline scandal was exposed to Gawyn of the CIC by the confessions of a former Hungarian Nazi War Criminal Herren Zwyder. As an informer, he could not have had better credentials. Before the war, he was an active mem-

ber of Intermariam, and he escaped to Rome down The Ratline. His story contained remarkable revelations. He claimed that British and French Secret Services were involved with Intermariam before the war, funding its activities and protecting its agents.

When the Ustase assassinated the King of Yugoslavia, the British had protected one of the plotters, Pavelic's right hand man, Artukovic. Artukovic later became minister of the interior in wartime Croatia and a British agent.

Intermariam had attracted the pre war attention of the British as a ready made anti-Bolshevik organization. Britain's secret intelligence service was widely regarded as being nationalistic and fearfully anti-Bolshevik in its aim. To Stewart Menzies, who became a head of that organization in 1939, was a staunch anti-Bolshevik, himself and a member of the British elite.

Before war broke out, some members of the British Elite were openly pro Fascist and supported Hitler. They saw the Nazis as the protectors of Europe, defending it against communism and used their powers of influence to say so. The doyen of this group was the Duke of Windsor:

"Accompanied by Dr. Lahey, the Duke (of Windsor) begins his tour of inspection of industrial conditions, with a visit to a suburban factory ... as he has explained to him, in detail, Germany's methods of organizing labor.

The war inflicted a deadly blow to the hopes of a Nazi-British Pact against the communists. In fact, by 1945, all hopes of containing communism had vanished. The red army liberated Eastern Europe from the Nazis and occupied it themselves. Local Nationalists, the Vatican and the West all had to face the fact that Stalin was now in charge.

"The countries of the Intermariam (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia) had now become the communist block. The war had turned the dream of a Catholic curtain into the reality of an IRON CURTAIN."

The war was a brief interruption in the fight against the communists.

"Communists are RED FASCISTS, Stalin will not STOP of his own volition. He can only BE STOPPED."

The Yugoslavs had been right, Pavelic had been protected by anti-communists in the Vatican. The Yugoslavs had also pointed the finger of suspicion at the British.

**\* Had they (Yugoslavs) been right?**

In 1945, the British and the French secret services had revitalized their link with the Fascists, just as the Vatican had done. Gawyn reported that when Pavelic crossed into Austria:

"He was protected by the British in British guarded quarters for a two (2) week period. Due to the inevitable embarrassment to the British command, he then left these quarters, but remained in the British occupation zone for (2) to (3) months more – still in contact with the British intelligence service."

Gawyn further stated that:

"A British Lt. Colonel was put in charge of two (2) trucks, laden with the supposed property of the Catholic Church, in the British Zone of Austria. These two (2) trucks entered Italy and went to an unknown destination."

This is the treasure that was taken by the Ustase in their flight from Zagreb. Some of the gold never left Yugoslavia and it was later found in a Franciscan Monastery (today's Medjugorja). This was the gold stolen from the murdered Serb victims of the Ustase. The treasure that did leave was placed in the hands of Fr. Draganovic.

"Draganovic was saying that the money will be used for the liberation of Croatia."

Copies of the pri-intermar were circulated in the displaced persons camps in Austria and Italy and the Ustase radio stations operating from outside the British zone.

"Well I think that it was very difficult for anyone to keep adequate control over the camps. Partly because there weren't the men to do it. But what they did manage to do, the D.P.'s, and there were quite a lot of them, was to set-up a regime and administer themselves, a regime of their own. You could buy a tommy gun on the black market for a kilo of coffee, and there were quite a lot of them to arm themselves and there were deserters and brigands of one kind or another living in the hills. And that is exactly what the Allied governments, the British government, wanted to put a stop to."

In 1947, a deal was made with Tito: the Allies would return high-ranking Ustase but not the rank and file. One of the negotiators was Brig. Fitzroy Maclean. Hunting war criminals was not top of the Allied priority list.

"My job was (1) to take a team and identify these people as far as possible and (2) get those who hadn't got anything against them were not and could not possibly be regarded as war criminals to

(3) find somewhere and get them out of Italy and relieve the pressure on the Italian government to return them."

The camps were full of anti-communists with wartime experience of fighting the Soviets (Note: Since the Soviets were Allies, then these must have been Allied enemies.) They proved to be fertile ground for recruiting intermar agents, including wanted war criminals.

"At the start, the British funded the action and the report of the money, given to the intermar, was coming from the British."

It now appeared to Gawyn that the British SIS were behind the Vatican's evacuation of the Ustase leaders and the revival of intermar. By the story alerted the American's to the potential of intermar as a ready-made anti-communist network. Gawyn promptly told his superiors...

"The most outstanding feature of these complex activities is the inability of these anti-communists (Ustase, Nazis, Fascists) to find a stable base for their operations. It is the opinion of this agent that friendly coordination by the U.S. would build a firm base for the future."

The U.S. was joining the recruitment drive for these anti-communists. The practical problem was how to protect these recruits from the constant danger of kidnap and arrest by the communists. Trials in Yugoslavia highlighted the danger.

Archbishop Stepinac's show trial was used as a propaganda platform to accuse the Vatican, Ustase, and the West of plotting against the communist state. The Americans needed a secret way of getting their new friends out of danger, and they turned to Fr. Draganovic.

"CIC sent their people without saying anything. CIC would say here the people and we would say fine, come, and then the people would say their names, their new names, probably, and got their papers and slowly sent out with the regular Croatian ways. American's supplied about a \$1000 for each individual."

The inconceivable had happened. The victorious Allies were helping Fascist war criminals escape, under the cover of the Vatican Ratline, often disguised as priests."

#### **Draganovic now had U.S. backing.**

"The agreement consisted of simple mutual assistance. These agents assist persons of interest to Fr. Draganovic and in turn, Fr. Draganovic will assist persons of interest to this command. Some of these

persons of interest to this command. Some of these persons may be of interest to the de-nazification policy of the Allies. Therefore, this operation cannot receive any official approval."

Allen Zellus and James G. Zangleton, who were later to rise to the top of the C.I.A., used the Ratline to smuggle NAZI scientists and the (NAZI) intelligence experts from Germany itself. We now know that this is how Klaus Barbie escaped to Bolivia.

Barbie was known as the butcher of Leon and was wanted by the French. After the war he was recruited by the Americans and worked for the CIC in Munich. The French discovered this and demanded his extradition. The CIC gave instructions, "that Barbie was not to be handed over, regardless what the state department might say in public." Barbie knew too much.

French conservatives could be embarrassed because he (Barbie) might reveal that some of DeGaulle's colleagues had been NAZI informers. Specifically Barbie threatened to expose that he got information from Francois Ponset during the war. It was a sneer that would provide French communists with a spectacular propaganda coup.

Francois Ponset had been DeGaulle's representative to the International Red Cross and was the French high commissioner for Germany. Rather than embarrass conservative friends in France, Dallas sent Barbie down the Ratline.

When Barbie met Draganovic, he (Barbie) asked him why he (Draganovic) was helping. Draganovic replied that he was saving Nazis and anti-communists because, "we've got to keep a sort of reserve on which we can draw on in the future."

"Draganovic continued to be a practicing priest while he was doing, what he could, for the Ustase. I think being an active party, active member of the Ustase movement from the beginning."

Fr. Draganovic was not alone; clarets from Germany, Austria, and Hungary all had their own Ratlines.

**The crimes of The Second World War were well known to the Vatican, but still they allowed their priests to protect the guilty. Why?**

### **\*What did the Vatican gain?**

The Vatican was exploited by some of the worst war criminals of the 20th century. But it was exploited willingly. Paranoia about communism made the leaders of the Catholic church blind to the difference between good and evil. **THEY BETRAYED THE FAITH OF MILLIONS.** The Vatican in the name of Christian charity was saving war criminals.

### **\*What did the Allies gain from the Operation Ratlines?**

"The Inter-Mariam network they rekindled after the war was riddled with Soviet spies. The man appointed by the British to head secret anti-Soviet operations, including the recruitment of NAZI's was Kim Filby. Filby defected to Moscow in 1963. The CIA had to reexamine all security clearances given to the NAZI fugitives by MI-5 and MI-6. More than a decade of cold war operations was hopelessly compromised."

### **\*What did anybody gain?**

The only winners were the thousands of wanted war criminals who escaped by the Ratline. They left Europe devastated by their crimes and were give new lives and identities in return. It was their reward for fighting the Communists before, during, and after the Second World War.

**ANTE PAVELIC  
ANDIJA ARTUKOVIC  
GUSTAV WAGNER  
KLAUS BARBIE  
FRANZ STANGL  
WALTER ROUFF  
JOSEF MENGELE  
ADOLF EICHMANN**

**"We've got to keep a sort of reserve on which we can draw in the future."**

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