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SUMMARY OF COMMENTS OF HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN JOVAN
OF ZAGREB AND LJUBLJANA
OCTOBER 9, 1991

1. Historical Background

- during WWII (1941-45) the Nazi puppet regime of the Independent State of Croatia conducted a state policy of genocide and forcible conversions to Roman Catholicism of the Serbian population located within its territories
- during this well documented reign of terror, some 450 churches were destroyed by the Croats. Some were burned to the ground with their faithful inside them (such as Glina).
- 4 Bishops of the Church and 250 Serbian Orthodox priests were taken away by the Ustasha and brutally massacred.
- hundreds of thousands of Serbs, as well as Jews and Gypsies, were killed in the concentration camp in Jasenovac or were thrown into pits such as Prebilovac or Jadovno, all in Croatia

2. Examples of Religious intolerance since 1990

Zagreb

- in March/April 1991 during the requiem mass being served in His Eminence's cathedral church of the Holy Transfiguration a mob of Croats waving the Croatian flag burst into the Church during the service and interrupted it
- On the holiday of St. Petk a, October 27, 1990, in the evening the residence of His Eminence in Zagreb was repeatedly harassed by unknown individuals ringing the doorbells. The doors were spattered in spit and urine.
- On St. Sava, January 1991, the doors of the Cathedral church were smashed in and on numerous occasions the church doors were urinated upon - the church glassed in bulletin board is regularly smashed
- on June 28, 1991, on the Serbian Orthodox holiday of Vidovdan, mobs outside the cathedral church threw bottles at the windows and walls
- the passers by including several members of the police sitting in an adjoining cafe did not intervene
- the Cathedral church walls have been spray painted both with swastikas and with the word "massacre"
- September 12 and 15th of 1991, while His Eminence was walking from his residence to the Cathedral Church mobs of Croats gathered around him as he walked shouting Orthodox and obscenities at him and he expected at any moment to be physically attacked

Covač

- this Serbian village was the subject of a massacre by Croats of the old people and women who were left in the village and were unable because of infirmity or age to flee
- on May 8, 1942, the Ustashe also killed women and children in this same village

Gredjani

- the Serbian Orthodox Church here was destroyed by the Croats using grenades

Virovitica

- on May 16, 1991, three Orthodox Bishops, Georgije of Canada, Longin of Australia and Lukijan of Slavonija reconsecrated the churchyard of the site of the previous church which was destroyed by the Croats during the Ustashe regime. This service included the placing of a large cross into the ground.
- As they left the churchyard they watched as two men from the crowd entered the yard and smashed the cross over their knees to the applause of the crowd.

3. Attacks on the Hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church

Bishop Nikolaj

- on his way to the funeral of His Holiness Patriarch German in September 1991, near Sibenik the Croatian Special Police body searched both His Grace and his deacon
- while they were being searched others of the police shouted why are you searching them why don't you just let me kill them

Bishop Lukijan

- several months ago the residence and cathedral church of Bishop Lukijan of Slavonija which is located in Pakrac was ransacked by the Croatian Special Police - the residence was turned into a barracks and the church into a munitions storehouse and artillery nest
 - in September 1991 on his way back from the funeral of Patriarch German Bishop Lukijan was detained by the Croatian Special Police and held **NAKED IN THE COURTYARD OF THE POLICE BUILDING FOR SEVERAL HOURS.**
- Yesterday, His Grace was taken by the Croatian Police. His whereabouts are unknown. No reply has been received by the Holy Synod to their inquiry

St. Petka Monastery in Zagreb was vandalized and everything in the place was trashed

Kuprivica

- members of the Croatian special police broke into the church and interrogated the priest asking for Chetniks

Sisak

-after Easter this year explosive were thrown through the doors of the church which was so badly damaged that it can no longer be used

- the church walls were scribbled with "we are ustasha" and "death to Serbs"

- a Croatian organization wrote to the Serbian Orthodox priest and said they would kill him if he did not leave

Veliko Grdjevac

- the words "Independent State of Croatia" and "death to Serbs" were written on the walls of the church

-the priest received death threats and has since fled

Velike Zdence

- members of the Croatian populace broke into and ransacked the parish priests home - he has since fled

Grubisno Polje

-the Croatian DEMocratic Union and the Croatian Special Police have blocked entrance to the church doors and the doors of the parish house

- the parish priest was held in virtual house arrest and was told that he could not go anywhere unless he was accompanied by a member of the Croatian Special Police

Nova Gradiska

-during the war the church in this town was destroyed by the Ustashe

- the newly erected church was again destroyed several weeks ago by dynamite

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF HIS EMINENCE
METROPOLITAN JOVAN OF ZAGREB-LJUBLJANA

His Eminence was born in 1936 at Medinci, near Podravska Slatina (today's Croatia).

Having completed High School, he entered in 1951 and graduated in 1956 from the Rakovica Theological Seminary, near Belgrade.

Following Seminary, he entertained graduate studies from 1959 - 1963 and graduated from the St. Serbian Orthodox Theological Faculty in Belgrade.

He spent 1964 and 1965 in post-graduate studies in Germany.

As a priest, he was occupied in professorial capacity in Prizren from 1966 - 1967. He was then a professor of theology at the Theological Seminary in Krka Monastery in Dalmatia from 1967 - 1977.

He has been the Serbian Orthodox Bishop in Zagreb since 1977. In 1979, Bishop JOVAN was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan and given the title of Metropolitan of Zagreb-Ljubljana.

Since 1983, he has been a member of the World Council of Churches, and this year in Canberra, Australia, he was elected a member of the Executive Board of the World Council of Churches.

Currently, he is the Vice-president of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church. From 1989, with the illness of the late, Patriarch GERMAN, Metropolitan JOVAN was the *locum tenens* to the Patriarch Throne, until the election of Patriarch PAVLE in 1990.

The Diocese (Metropolitanate) of the Metropolitan encompasses all of Slovenia and parts of Croatia from Zagreb to Virovitica.

The last time he was able to celebrate the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in his see in Zagreb was on 15 September and in Kranja, near Ljubljana on 16 September 1991.

On his recent journey from Kranja to Belgrade, he traveled through the Croatian front lines, where he was stopped enroute 10 times by Tudjman's Croatian Police control. At several of the control points, he was greeted by a gun in his face.

As such, His Eminence, Metropolitan JOVAN is the most earnest eyewitness to the events in the war zone of Yugoslavia.

8 October 1991
Chicago, Illinois