



## George Djuro Budimir: Bearing Witness

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of George Budimir, the founding editor of the English section of our beloved Pokret newspaper *Srbija*. George's prolific writing about our ancestral homeland of Krajina—especially the Tromedja region of Lika, Dalmatia, and Bosnia—has been instrumental in preserving our shared history. His dedication extended to chronicling the experiences of the men and women of the Dinara Chetnik Division (DCD), ensuring that their legacy lives on in the hearts of future generations.

Through his descriptive prose, George bridged the generational gap, providing the descendants of the heroic men and women of the DCD with an enduring link to their roots written in English. His works resonate with the strength, resilience, and hope that define our heritage, inspiring us to honor and uphold the remarkable legacy of our forebears.

My personal connection with George began in September 2005 when I purchased his book, *Bearing Witness: The Tale of a People and Their Legacy (An Immigrant's Story)*. Within that book—and the thoughtful note he sent me along with it—his deep devotion to his homeland shone through. He wrote:

*"I was in Nadvrelo again this year – in May – mainly to visit the cemetery since there is no one living there, no one to take care of family that rest there. Nadvrelo, like most of Krajina, is a sad place these days. Much of that sadness, as well as happier days, is portrayed in my book."*

George's heartfelt words served as both a reminder and a call to honor those who came before us. When I was elected Secretary of our Movement in May 2006, our collaboration began, and over time, I was fortunate to learn from him. In June 2013, I had the honor of succeeding him as editor of *Srbija*, a role I accepted with great humility.

I also fondly recall his leadership during our efforts to restore the Holy Trinity Church in Mala Popina, Lika—a testament to his desire to preserve Serbian history in the Krajina.

Our last Congress together in May 2024 remains a treasured memory. That Sunday afternoon, George was celebrated with an extraordinary achievement award from Pokret President Marko Vučenočić. Sitting beside him and sharing in his honor during the banquet was a privilege.

George's legacy is great, not only in the extensive historical records and writings he left behind but in the enduring impact his writings had on all of us. His unwavering dedication to preserving our history has created a treasure trove of knowledge that will inspire and inform future generations.

From his book *Bearing Witness*, here are a few excerpts of the invaluable history he left us:

*From the Forward by Alex Dragnich:*

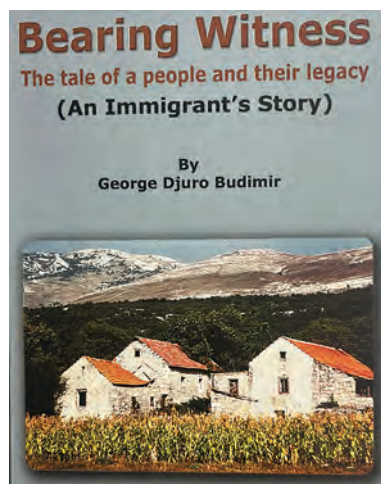
"This is an account of the twentieth century tragic history of a people (the Serbs) in the Krajina region of Yugoslavia (a part of Croatia), but it is also an epic story of a people and their way of life that existed before tragedy struck. It is also a history of life among the refugees after they left Yugoslavia. The Krajina region was settled by Serbs 300 years ago and that was their homeland until the Yugoslav civil wars, when in 1995 they were murdered or driven out and their properties looted or destroyed, becoming the victims of the largest ethnic cleansing in those wars.

The author, George Budimir, was old enough to witness the establishment of the pro-Nazi regime in Croatia at the beginning of World War II, the destruction of Yugoslavia by the German Nazis and the Italian Fascists, and the coming of the Second or Communist Yugoslavia. He left his small native village of Nadvrelo in December 1944,



describing the many difficulties and hazards along the way, ultimately finding his way to Canada, his new home.

Budimir went back to his village in the late 1990s, and gives us in masterful prose, often lyrical, a picture of what he found - silence, empty fields, burned-out houses (his onetime home a "roofless shell"), none of the sounds of life that were part of his life. This prompted him to write about that past.



By concentrating on his village as it once was, it becomes a sort of nucleus of the way of life for the entire region. In beautiful flowing prose, he describes the vigorous life, often appearing idyllic, that once pulsed there. The people, he says, were characterized by love, trust, tolerance, and self-reli-

ance. In interesting and often fascinating detail, the author describes phases of life in Nadvrelo: he provides us a description of the seasons that is truly picturesque; his account of going to school, church, and other aspects of life are engaging and absorbing.

*From the Preface by George:*

"Ever since Yugoslavia was brought prematurely to life in 1918, it has been at the mercy of the expansionist policies of its more powerful neighbors - Italy and Germany. The *annus horribilis* arrived in 1941, the year in which hope for civil society was extinguished by the invasion of Yugoslavia. The Nightmare of that war cast the country into an age of anxiety from which it has never recovered... The tragedy of Nadvrelo, and of the many Nadvrelos in the Serbian part of Croatia, must count as one of the great moral and political failures of recent human history."

*From the Chapter One - The Village Cemetery:*

A walled-in cemetery lies in the middle of our village in the southeastern corner of a large field we called *Magareće Polje* (Donkey Field). It has been the burying place for the people of Nadvrelo for many generations, probably since the first Serbs arrived into this area in the 1500s and founded the village. Today, as I step in through the metal gates, all is silence. The rows of tombstones are concealed by wild vines and tall grasses; the smell of rotting grass is strong in the air. Against the far wall are several maple saplings that hadn't been there when I visited last, nine years ago. Near the entrance stand two sentinel pine trees, mute witnesses to the many deaths of Nadvrelo's young and old... Here, under the waving tall grass, in the ground that yielded their corn and potatoes, sleep Nadvrelo's last inhabitants. For a moment, I stood still to let it all sink in. I was shocked by the state of the cemetery, overwhelmed by the enormity of what had happened here. Impossible to believe that at the end of the 20th century an entire village could be wiped off the face of the earth."

**Thank you, George Budimir. Memory Eternal!**

VD

### News

### BOSNIAN MONSTER CONVICTED IN AMERICA: Tortured Serbs in the camp, got 65 months and will be deported from the USA! Laughed during the sentencing!

Source: [serbiantimes.info](http://serbiantimes.info), Jan. 25, 2025

In a court in the American city of Boston, a sentence was handed down to Kemal Mrndžić (51), a guard commander in the notorious Čelebići camp in Bosnia, where Serbian prisoners of war and civilians from Konjic, Jablanica, and the region were killed and tortured during the war. Mrndžić was sentenced to 65 months in prison, and extradition proceedings will be initiated against him, and he will be stripped of his US citizenship and pension. After serving his sentence, he will be extradited to Bosnia and Herzegovina and they will be asked to try Mrndžić for war crimes committed during the 1990s in the Čelebići camp.

Due to the fact that there were no laws in America at that time to prosecute war crimes, Mrndžić was only tried in this case for crimes committed on US territory, where he repeatedly lied to state authorities and immigration officers in order to obtain refugee status and then become a US citizen, concealing his true identity, participation in the war conflict, and the abuse of Serbian prisoners.

Željko Živak, a Serb from Konjic who lives in Chicago and one of the main witnesses for the prosecution, was present at the sentencing: "The sentence is not adequate for the

evil that Mrndžić inflicted on us, but considering the crimes for which he was tried in America, we can be satisfied because he received a sentence that is above the maximum that was prescribed. Namely, due to aggravating circumstances, the judge added ten more months to the maximum sentence of 55 months due to aggravating circumstances, namely due to the fact that numerous witnesses confirmed that Mrndžić had tortured them in Čelebići, Živak points out.

He adds that the convicted Mrndžić behaved inappropriately during the sentencing and did not show any sign of remorse: "He laughed during the sentencing and at no point admitted what he had done, nor did he repent or apologize. He behaved like a heartless monster, the same one who hit me and took a piece of bread from me at a time when I thought I would die of hunger in the Čelebići camp, the same one who broke two of my cousin's ribs just because he got in his way."

Željko Živak is grateful to people from the US Homeland Security and the office of the Massachusetts Attorney John McNeil: "I was surprised at how professionally they did their job and how dedicated they were to getting the truth out about the crimes committed against us Serbs in Bosnia. They did everything they could and showed touching respect for everything we went through."

Mrndžić lived in America for over 25 years, and the trial revealed, among other things, that he presented himself as a Serb in the US during that period. Those most responsible for his arrest and subsequent conviction were his victims, the Serbs he tortured in the camp who, like him, came to America after the war. With their harrow-

ing testimonies, they contributed to Judge Joshua Levi stating during the sentencing that he was "moved by the heartbreaking testimonies of the camp survivors, whose physical and mental pain inflicted on them by Mrndžić and his colleagues haunts them even 30 years later."

Živak particularly emphasizes prosecutor McNeil and his attitude towards the case: "Since America did not have a law on war crimes in the 1990s, he insisted that the US, upon extradition, insist that Bosnia and Herzegovina try Mrndžić for war crimes. He expressed doubts that, if he were to be tried in Sarajevo, he would receive a deserved sentence and pointed out that the facts show that the courts in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina sentence Serbs for the same crimes while acquitting Bosniaks or sentencing them to lighter sentences than Serbs."

He also says that this verdict is a real denial of the writings of Bosnian media, who tried to cover up the crimes in Čelebići and wrote that the whole story was made up.

In the Čelebići camp from 1992-1995, Bosnian-Croatian forces brutally killed about 30 people of Serbian nationality, for which only three camp commanders have been convicted so far.

### Balkan Cold Cases #1: Croatian Officer Murdered for Exposing War Crimes

Source: [balkaninshight.com](http://balkaninshight.com), Jan. 24, 2025

Croatian officer Milan Levar was one of the few who was ready to testify about war crimes committed by his fellow troops in the

Gospic area in 1991 - and paid for it with his life. In the first of our Balkan Cold Cases series, BIRN examines whether justice was ever done.

One Monday in August 2000, Milan Levar went into his garage workshop with his ten-year-old son to repair the old Fiat that he was keeping there.

Moving the wheels that had been removed from the car, he activated a bomb that had been planted there, killing him on the spot. The tragedy could have been even worse - his son Leon was just a few metres away from him at the time of the explosion, but managed to survive.

The death of Milan Levar was a black mark on the reputation of the Croatian and symbolised the state's inability to face the dark side of its history. Levar was one of the few people who was ready to testify about the crimes committed by Croatian Army soldiers against Serb civilians in the Gospic area during the war in 1991. He paid for his courage with his life.

In Gospic in the autumn of 1991, people were taken without charge or trial from their homes and shelters to the surrounding forests, where they were killed. A wall of silence surrounded the crimes; anyone who dared to speak about them risked death. But Levar, a Croatian Army officer who was serving in Gospic, did not want to remain silent.

"He was literally ordered to take people out of a shelter to be killed. When he refused, that was point the point of no return," his widow Vesna Levar told BIRN. "He said that there was no way that he would pull a man out of a shelter and kill him just because he was a Serb," she recalled.



BOOKS

A Must-Read Journey Through History: “No Bread Tomorrow” by Mila Evanovich

*No Bread Tomorrow* by Mila Evanovich is a beautifully crafted work of historical fiction that I cannot recommend highly enough. Set against the tragic backdrop of World War II in Serbia, the novel portrays the immense sacrifices, hardships, and enduring spirit of the Serbian people. The protagonists are members of Draza Mihailovic’s Ravna Gora Chetnik Resistance Movement. The narrative also touches on events in the Krajina region, further enriching its historical depth.

Evanovich’s writing captures both the complete devastation of war and the inti-



mate struggles of her characters, making for a story that is both heart-breaking and inspiring. She doesn’t shy away from documenting the brutal realities of loss, but her portrayal of resilience and survival offers a poignant reminder of the strength of our Serbian human spirit.

What makes *No Bread Tomorrow* even more compelling is that it’s the first book in a planned trilogy. Readers can look forward to following the protagonists as they navigate life beyond their homeland, journeying through displaced persons camps and eventually emigrating to the United States. This broader arc promises a rich exploration of the immigrant experience, making the se-

ries not just a historical account but also a deeply human story of the Serbian people.

The novel is not only a page-turner but also an accessible and engaging way to connect with Serbian history. For anyone interested in understanding the past through powerful storytelling—or simply seeking a gripping, emotional read—this book is an absolute gem.

Purchasing options for the book can be found on the website [milaevanovich.com](http://milaevanovich.com).  
VD

**Back Book Cover**

**Kragujevac 1941** : Amid the encroaching shadows of World War II in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, embroiled in its own complex, bloody civil war, Zora Brković emerges as a beacon of unwavering resilience and hope for her Serbian people. An inimitable healer and a devoted mother of seven, she grapples with an unfulfilled marriage to her lackluster husband, Peda, who naively dismisses the imminent threat of Hitler’s forces. But when he stubbornly refuses to send their

two fighting-aged sons to safety in America, it sets them on a terrifying course. As their nation teeters on the brink of war, Zora’s determination to save her children propels her on a treacherous journey filled with danger and uncertainty.

In the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, Zora and her sister, Sava, become part of the Royalist Resistance, a formidable force of women determined to fight for the survival of their families and the future of their homeland. Zora entangles herself in a perilous situation, guarding dangerous secrets that, if revealed, will result in certain death for herself and those around her.

This narrative is a testament to the indomitable strength of the human spirit. An exquisitely tender tale inspired by real-life events, this novel will linger long after the final page, and will beg to ask the toughest question— how have we never heard of these events in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia before?

IN MEMORY - СЈЕЋАЊЕ НА НАШУ ДРАГУ ПРЕМИНУЛУ БРАЋУ И СЕСТРЕ



Djuro Budimir  
1928-2025

Djuro (George) Budimir was born on March 23, 1928 in the village of Nadvrela, Lika, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, to parents Toma and Anka.

During World War II, Djuro was a member of the Dinara Chetnik Division, about which he wrote and spoke extensively throughout his long life, thus leaving an indelible mark on the courage and honor of that fight to defend the Serbian name and life in the territory of the *Tromedja* (Bosnia-Lika-Dalmatia border).

At the end of that war, like thousands of others, he left his country rather than submit to communist tyranny and the new Ustashes dressed in new clothes, knowing and remembering what genocide they had

committed against the Serbian people during the war.

“Every Krajina man is a born soldier, it has been said. When I try to cast my mind to those WWII days I think that at times I felt that those Krajina men were not only brave but indestructible. The thought of fighting for their land, their people, their families made them braver still. There was no lack of courage and valor at Padjene, Golubic, Gracac, Korana and many other battlefields. Crossing the Socha River in May 1945 was the last battle they fought, and their first step into another world. New challenges followed: new country, new customs, new culture, new home, new life. Many came to Canada, some groups settling here in Hamilton area where they played a vital role in social and cultural life in this part of Ontario,” Đuro Budimir wrote about that time in the newspaper “Srbija”.

In January 1948, after three years of refugee life in camps in Italy and Germany, Djuro moved to Great Britain.

In 1957, he immigrated to Canada, arriving in Hamilton, Ontario, where he gladly joined the Serbian national and cultural

community. He was one of the founders of the Serbian Church of St. Nicholas and an active member of the Serbian Chetnik Movement Ravne Gore, as a long-time editor of the English section of the newspaper “Srbija” and honorary Vice-President of our Serbian Chetnik Movement.

His passion was reading and collecting books on the history of Serbian culture and heritage for the Chetnik library at the Memorial House in Winona.

Djuro Budimir was educated in Yugoslavia, Italy, Great Britain and Canada at Mohawk College in Hamilton. He retired after a career in the Ontario Ministry of Transport and Communications – in the Electronic Technology Division.

In addition to technical articles and manuals, he wrote many essays and stories for publications such as “Serbia”, “Serbian World”, “American Srbobran”, “Voice of Canadian Serbs”, “Brić” and others.

He published the author’s definition of *Nikola Tesla* in the book “*Znamenitosti srbske kulture i istorije*”, is the author of the memoir about the war and emigration period “*Bearing Witness*” and co-author of

“*Krajina, Tragedy of a People*”, and “*Stones and Rattlesnakes, Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina*”, for the Canadian Serbian Council.

Djuro Budimir is a recipient of the *Jovan Ducic Literary Award*.

After a short period of declining health, he breathed his noble soul at the age of 97 on January 16, 2025, at Juravinski Hospital in Hamilton.

With his departure to the kingdom of heaven, Djuro Budimir joins his wife Joan (2011), sisters Sonja Karamatic and Mira Budimir, leaving behind in mourning his sons Mirko and daughter-in-law Janice, David and daughter-in-law Patricia, Todd Budimir and daughter-in-law Arlene, as well as his daughter Melanie Selby and husband Dan; grandchildren Jessica (Neil), Ashley, Jordan and Logan; great-grandchildren Olivia, Tegan and Hannah.

**May the Almighty grant our Djuro Budimir a heavenly kingdom and may the eternal memory of a steadfast Serb and writer of special kind remain among us.**  
D. C.



Acim Beric  
1927-2024

On Monday October 7th, 2024, at the age of 97, another decent, honourable, proud patriotic Serb and DCD veteran, Acim Beric left this life.

On Monday November 11th, 2024, Acim was buried at Birstall Cemetery Leicester after a funeral service at St George's Church in Leicester. In the presence of his son Nicholas and partner, Kumovi and a large group of friends the funeral service was carried out by his local priest, Father Boris.

Father Boris expressed his condolences to the family with warm, moving words.

At the graveside President Dusan Buac gave a speech on behalf of the *Pokret* of which Acim had devoted his life to.

*‘Honourable Father Boris, grieving family, relatives, godparents, friends, brothers and sisters.*

Here at this sad hour, we gather to pay our last respects, to say our final farewell and thank you, to escort him to his eternal resting place, the beloved husband, best man, good virtuous Serb and Chetnik, our resting brother Acim.

Acim passed away peacefully on Monday 7th October 2024.

Acim was born in 1927 in the village of Markovac, in the former Yugoslavia, to parents Nikola and Draginja.

In 1939, Acim's education was cut short due to the outbreak of World War Two. Acim joined the Dinarska Cetnicka Divizija as a fighter. In 1944 Acim and other Chetnik fighters left the Kingdom of Yugoslavia across the Alps into Italy and down to Naples, then on to Germany, to eventually arrive in Britain.

He first settled in a Camp in Hampshire but had suffered with poor health and was treated for TB. Acim then went on to help with a travelling theatre group around Cirencester and the Cotswolds. From there he moved to Corby camp, and then on to Leicester in the 1950s.

Acim started working at the Grand Hotel, Leicester as a chef.

In 1956 Acim met and married his wife Pauline Bakewell and moved into their family home in Birstall, Leicester. In their marriage they were blessed with two sons, Nicholas and Darren.

Acim started training in Engineering and worked as an engineer until his retirement in 1992. He also purchased a rental property and became a landlord with his best friend Dusan Petko in 1974.

Unfortunately, Acim’s wife Pauline passed away suddenly in 2003 and his son Darren who had suffered with kidney problems for most of his life passed away in 2005.

Acim spent a lot of time in his garden, which gave him great joy, growing fruit and vegetables. In the last stages of his life Acim was cared for by his son Nicholas.

The Movement of Serbian Chetniks Ravna Gora gives you great gratitude for being a faithful and active member of the movement. Dear brother Acim, I bid you farewell today on behalf of us and the Council of Management of Serbian Chetniks Ravne Gore UK.

May the Lord God give your noble soul paradise in the Kingdom of the Lord, your son Nicholas and daughter in law, Kumovi and close family and friends our sincere condolences.

Eternal Glory and Eternal Thank You. May God give your family good health so that they can endure the grief and pain.’

The Daka was held at Gynsills Leicester.  
**Nikola Dubaic**



Jeka Strinic  
1947-2024

Jeka Strinic, age 77, of Chicago, passed away December 15, 2024 with her family by her side. Born February 6, 1947 in Kosovo to the late Djuro and the late Marta Jelic, she was the beloved wife of the late Dusan; loving mother of Marija (Ed) Mosley and Vladimir Strinic; dear sister of the late Bogdan Jelic, Smilja Andjelic, the late Milan Jelic, the late Ika Babic, Stevan Jelic and Ljuba Vukovic. Fond aunt and cousin of many. Jeka was a long-time member of Holy Res-

urrection Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, and the Kolo Srpskih Sestara. She was active in the Movement of Serbian Chetniks Ravne Gore Circle of Serbian Sisters, serving as long time first vice president of the Chicago Chapter Kolo and making koljivo/zito for our memorial services. She will be dearly missed by Kumovi, family and friends in the United States, England, and abroad. Funeral Service was held at Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Cathedral and interment at St. Sava Monastery Cemetery in Libertyville, Illinois.

*Memory Eternal to our dear sister, Jeka!*



# Ustashas: A Nationalist Movement or Religious Cult?

by **Bosko Ivkovic**  
September 27, 2024

**VII. The Forgotten Killing Pits**

In May 1941, the natural ravines of the Dalmatian hinterlands were converted to killing pits, where Serbs and others would be easier to dispose of, especially since there was no need to waste time digging graves. The victims didn't even have to be killed but thrown into pits alive. The Italians were outraged and forced closure of the death camps at Jadovno and the Pag salt pits in August 1941. The killing pits were all but forgotten. Once the pits were closed, a new series of camps was already set in motion – the **Jasenovac complex** on the Sava River in the German zone.

**Stupacinovo** was only one of seven collection camps in the **Jadovno complex**. There were a total of five pits in Stupacinovo used for killing. An Italian officer, with the assistance of some inhabitants, claimed to have found the **Ploca pit** on September 4, 1941. He recorded that it was located to the north-east of the village of Stupacinovo, surrounded by tree trunks and well hidden. The mouth of the pit was nine by six meters. When he threw a rock into the pit, he heard the rock hit the water after waiting some time. He found hair, letters, pictures, empty wallets, change, and bullet casings. He also wrote that he took three photos, which were never recovered. Close to the Ploca pit were the **Badanj, Duliba, and Vranzina pits**. The Ploca pit cannot be located while the other pits remain undiscovered. In 2016, one of the three **Katine pits** was discovered. There are rumors that the bodies of Serbs killed in this last civil war were also thrown into this pit. In the same year, the **pit at Grgin hill**, one of the 32 registered pits, was also discovered.

These pits are **unmarked** while efforts are made to keep people, especially the Serbs and truth-seekers, away. A bomb had been placed on the edge of the **Prijebojska pit**, between Korenica and Licko Petrovo Selo. It is evident that Serbs and those seeking the truth are not welcome. The **Jadovno 1941** research team noticed the bomb and decided it was best to return the same way they came to the pit, realizing there may be other such deadly explosives in the area. The contingent that went there in 2012 learned that this pit was larger than the Jadovno pit. On July 31, 1941, 119 Serbs from Korenica were thrown into this pit. An unknown number of Serbs from Licko Petrovo Selo, Plitvicki Ljeskovac, and Plitvice were thrown into the same pit.

**Djuro Zatezalo**, a professor and leading expert on the Ustasha genocide, cited that during the 132 days that operation of the Gaspic system of death camps lasted, 42,225 of the people were transferred into camps, and 40,123 of them were killed. **He collected personal names and data of 10,865 of the victims.** Among the killed people, **38,010 were Serbs, 1,999 Jews, 88 Croats, 11 Slovenes, 9 Muslims, 2 Czechs, 1 Russian, 1 Roma, and 1 Montenegrin.** Out of the 40,123 people killed, **Ustashas murdered, 32,103 people in the Gaspic-Jadovno camp** and execution sites, while **8020 were murdered in the Slana and Metajna camps on the island of Pag.** These death camps were the *predecessor* to Jasenovac.

**VIII. The Genocidal Movement**

The Ustashas in Gaspic started their movement in the 1930s, and through legal associations – “*Brotherhood of Crusaders*,” sports association “*Victoria*,” gymnast organizations “*Croatian Hero*,” and other organizations such as “*Mary’s Congregation*” – they spread the Ustasha ideology which in 1941 had a strong influence on Croatian youth. Gaspic became a stronghold for the

## PART FOUR

Ustashas. The most infamous Ustashas, murderers, and butchers came from the ranks of the “*Brotherhood of Crusaders*.” On April 10, 1941, the Ustashas in Gaspic established the “*Liberation*” group and the *Ustasha Support Detachment* (PUO) which numbered several hundred members deployed in so-called death squads, and under **Vladko Macek’s** protection, they started with arrests and killings. They performed a larger part of their purpose – **to destroy** certain ethnic and religious communities – just within the first four months and before there was any resistance. This culminated into genocide as Ustashas were deployed to other parts of Lika in order to establish Ustasha authority and to arrest and transport Serbs to the Gaspic collection camp, and then into the wild of the Velebit. The Serbs were in fact lambs being led to slaughter.

Whether the Serbs were gullible, hopeful, or in disbelief of their planned fate is something we can never understand. The jury was out and a plan had been set in mo-



tion to systematically kill all Serbs, Jews, and Roma. In his book *1941: The Year That Keeps Returning*, **Slavko Goldstein** gives genocide a human face as he provides a detailed account of the people, places, dates, and extent of Ustasha genocide in the Independent State of Croatia. There was no indication that a genocide had been set in motion. And when it did expose itself, the captured victims didn't try to escape even when they had a chance, believing that by enduring their terrible, degrading, and humiliating lives in the camp, they were in some way protecting their families from bloody reprisals.

A friend from Petrinje, now living in Novi Sad, told me that he doesn't understand how four Ustashas can lead a group of over seventy victims to slaughter on a promise of returning, make them dig their own graves, kill them, and then have a few victims bury them all before being killed themselves. He said that if seventy victims rushed four Ustashas, sixty would live. Instead, they were all killed. **Mile Bozic**, one of two survivors of the *Ivanovic Jarak slaughters* in Kordun explained how twelve Ustashas killed over 380 Serb civilians – mainly from Glina, Vrginmost, Vojnic, Krnjak, and surrounding villages in Kordun – on July 29, 1941 through deception. The Ustashas set up a so-called registration office requesting Serbs to bring food and perishable goods such as flour, cheese, eggs, etc. In return, they would be recorded in a registry believing they would return home. Little did they know this was a “**house of horrors**” where there was a front room for processing and an adjoining back room where they would be murdered, typically by slitting their throats or a blow

to the head with an axe or hammer, and then dumped behind the house. This was a deceptive but lethal assembly line.

The deceptive nature of the Ustashas was prevalent wherever Serbs were slaughtered. Organized terror was premeditated and thoroughly prepared. Educated people – priests, teachers, lawyers, merchants, craftsman, etc – were the first to be rounded up in a village and then arrested with the promise that they would return. Rather, they were executed in the nearby woods or some distance from the village. I hate to think that **Nikola Tesla**, the great scientist, would have been executed in his village of Smiljan had he been home. The Ustashas established a concentration camp in **Smiljan** through which 5000 inmates passed. This camp was part of the Gaspic complex of death camps. **Thirty-nine Teslas were murdered.** The house in which Tesla was born, as well as the Serbian Orthodox church in which his father had served as a priest, were destroyed by the Ustashas in 1941. **Yet today, the Croatians have chosen to mint coins with an image of Tesla after murdering his entire family and relatives.** I'm sure Tesla would have objected to such an honor. It may be more appropriate to mint coins with the image of those who burned down Tesla's house and fought for a Greater Croatia.

When the Axis powers were on the verge of losing the war, Ustashas, like all war criminals, tried to escape in fear of being prosecuted and executed. Citing their Roman Catholic faith, **Ante Pavelich** and

**avoided, and concealed by the Croatian government and its citizens.** Following the independence of Croatia from Yugoslavia, a monument commemorating the victims of the Glina massacres – a marble tablet bearing the names of Serbs killed in the massacres – was removed by Croatian authorities. The monuments on Velebit and the island of Pag were also destroyed, as well as the memorial plaques at the Saranova Pit, the biggest tomb for Serbs and Jews in the complex of Ustasha death camps. The commemorative plaque placed in the bay of Slana in memory of the victims of Slana and the gates of Pag was repeatedly destroyed three times and doesn't exist today. The commemoration plaque in the railway station in Grubisno Polje was destroyed twice and doesn't exist today. The commemorative plaque at the Saranova pit in the memory of the victims of Grubisno Polje was destroyed twice, however, the third one erected in 2010 still stands today. However, a monument at Jadovno to commemorate the 40,000 Serbs murdered by Ustashas does not exist and never will. The victims never received proper burial. Their graves are the pits that have long been erased.

**The Ustashas have destroyed all traces of their unspeakable crimes.** They have covered the execution sites with rocks, logs, earth, and some of them even with concrete. Even those humble memorials that were built during the Socialist era, mostly on the initiative of the descendants of the victims and with minimal financial aid, were destroyed in 1991, and in the following years. The families of the victims have erected collective crosses for the victims at the sites of their suffering. Five holy wooden crosses shine on the Velebit mountain and the island of Pag. For how long, only God knows. The Serbs have finally learned their lesson: don't waste your time and hard-earned money. **Today, there is nothing to testify to what happened in the summer of 1941.** The monument at Jasenovac still stands, but the truth of what happened there and the enormity of the crimes remains to be hidden.

**Serbs continue to resurrect this part of history in different forms.** Serbian filmmakers produced a film recently based on the testimonies of survivors called *Dara from Jasenovac*, which deals with Ustasha war crimes and atrocities that took place at the Jasenovac concentration camp. The film was met with mixed reviews from international critics. Positive reviews praised the film for dealing with a lesser-known episode of World War II that gets little to no coverage from the international public, while negative reviews blame it on the Serbian government's nationalist propaganda aims. The Los Angeles Times referred to the film as “*nativist and manipulative*.” I can't but think that PR firms hired by Croatians are the ones manipulating history. Although the movie seems sensationalized and unbelievable, I'm sure survivors who saw it with their own eyes would argue that the movie doesn't do justice to what really happened.

A popular Serbian filmmaker, **Emir Kusturica**, said that without a past, we cannot have a future. The Croatians have buried their past, while the descendants of those murdered in the countless bottomless pits of the cursed Velebit have realized that it's futile to explain their tragedy and keep the memory of the victims alive.

/ To be continued /

**VIX. Erasing the Past**

**The Ustasha genocide** is nothing but a horrific memory for the survivors and their families. **The truth about Ustasha camps and killing sites have been suppressed,**

Serbian Chetniks Newspaper “SERBIA”

English section Editor: Dr Vera Dragisich

Published monthly .

Subscription for Canada and other countries \$35.00 year

Air Mail \$40.00

269 Glover Road Stoney Creek

ON L8E 5H6, CANADA

Tel. (905) 643-6973

Fax: 905 -643-9365

www.ravnagorachetniks.org

E-mail: SerbiaEnglishSection@ravnagorachetniks.org