

SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA 1941-1945

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

Thirty-three years ago, I wrote sections of my doctoral dissertation "Serbian Orthodox Church 1941-1945". In this context, the chapter "Serbian Orthodox Church in the Independent State of Croatia" was created. I published my doctorate in three editions - in 1997 (two) and in 1998.

Being aware of the importance of the topic, the tragic perishing and consequences that remained on the territories of the former Independent State of Croatia, I edited the mentioned chapter and published it in 2002 as a separate book.

In the past years, no scientific research paper has appeared that would surpass what I have written. However, a dozen articles on certain topics were published that somewhat helped clarify certain tragic events, but did not change my interpretations. The texts were written by Serbs, Croats and Russians!

Due to the interest among educated historians in several countries about the Independent State of Croatia, I thought that they should also point out the specific relationship of the Ustasha policy towards Orthodox Christianity within the framework of the centuries-old plans of the Vatican related to the Balkans. This is how this edition in English was created.

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The content of the Serbian language edition from 2002 was somewhat adjusted, but the changes have not disturbed the essence.

I aim to provide the international readers with the opportunity to learn more about one of the dark sides of the Second World War, which is the destruction of the spiritual dimension of the Serbian Orthodox civilization in the Balkans.

1.

THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA IN APRIL 1941

The Balkan peninsula represented a tempting prey for Germany and Italy, which sometimes made their strategic interests interweave. What they had in common is the dissatisfaction with the outcomes of the First World War and the intention to revise and annul the dictates of the Versailles Peace Treaty.

In announcing the attack on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on the 27th March 1941, Adolf Hitler accused the Serbs of being the main perpetrators and culprits for it. The directive on the dismemberment of Yugoslavia was based on those accusations. The head of the German High Command, General Wilhelm Keitel, wrote on the 28th March, in his order "Guidelines for Propaganda against Yugoslavia", that Germany's opponent is exclusively the Serbian government because, despite far-reaching concessions and significant guarantees, it started the war against Germany.¹

Italy has been planning for decades to conquer the other side of the Adriatic, in this case, the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

¹ Ladislaus Hory, Martin Broszat, *Der kroatische-Ustascha Staat 1941-1945*, Stuttgart/Deutschland, 1964, 64 (hereinafter: L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*); Ferdo Čulinović, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*, Beograd, 1970, 387 (*Ferdo Čulinović, *Occupying division of Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 1970, 387) (hereinafter: Ф. Чулиновић, *Окујайторска појела...*).

The first stage of implementation was completed on the 3rd April 1941, when the plan to attack Yugoslavia was worked out in detail.

With the general plan of Germany and Italy on the breakup of Yugoslavia, on the 12th April Italy was left to solve the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro on its own. That plan did not specify the role that was intended for Italy in the sense in which it was planned and specified for Hungary and Bulgaria.

The last in a series of reasons for the disunion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was determined and defined at the Vienna Conference held on the 21st-22nd April, and by Hitler's request made on the 24th April.² The real meaning was the total degradation of Serbia to the territorial framework from Belgrade to Grdelica. It was told for Serbia then that it should remain as shrunked as possible and that special measures must be applied to it.³ This is justified by the need to break up the "Serbian-Versailles" state formation.

More serious conflicts between the allies arose a little earlier, when in Zagreb, on the 10th April Slavko Kvaternik proclaimed the Independent State of Croatia with the abundant help of German officers, without including Italy. However, Italy and Benito Mussolini had been helping the Ustasha movement of Ante Pavelić for years, so that they could reach the other side of the Adriatic with him, as allies. The misunderstandings of the allies were soon overcome by dividing the Kingdom of Yugoslavia into two interest zones separated by a demarcation line.

At the end of March 1941, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the German Reich, Joachim von Ribbentrop, reported to his consul general in Zagreb to "inform the Croatian leaders through secret, most suitable channels that Germany envisages the creation of an independent Croatia within the framework of the new European order if the Yugoslav state collapses through its own weakness. They can

² *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o Narodnooslobodilačkom ratu jugoslovenskih naroda*, XII/1, 36-40 (**Collection of documents and data on the National Liberation War of the Yugoslav people*, XII/1, 36-40) (hereinafter: *Зборник докумената...*).

³ Ф. Чулиновић, *Окупајторска јоџела...*, 390. (*F. Culinovic, *Occupying division...*, 390.)

achieve that goal most effectively by completely giving up further cooperation with Belgrade."⁴

Hungary was included in Hitler's first combination with Croatia, after the news from Belgrade on the 27th March. On that day, he spoke with a Hungarian deputy about plans to attack Yugoslavia. That Hungarian-Croatian relationship would resemble the old one. Another combination envisioned Croatia as an autonomous state under Hungarian influence. Only the third combination, announced on the 12th April in the "Guidelines for the Breakup of Yugoslavia", envisaged an independent Croatian state.⁵

The independent State of Croatia was created by Italians and Germans, and only then did they hand it over to the Ustashas. The implementers of the proclamation were only Germans. One of the most important in that action, Colonel Dr. Edmund Veezenmayer, personal envoy of Joachim von Ribbentrop, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the German Reich, informed his people in Berlin that he personally led the initiative and implementation of the proclamation.⁶ Because of this, Veezenmayer was called the "midwife of Ustasha Croatia". Later, he became disappointed in Croatia because of its overall policy, including its attitude towards the Serbian people.⁷

Croatia was formally proclaimed by Slavko Kvaternik on the 10th April 1941.⁸

The proclamation of the Croatian state was experienced by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, as a major turning point in the life of the Croatian people, as he believed that

⁴ L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 255, 42; Смиља Аврамов, *Геноцид у Југославији у светлоси међународној права*, Београд, 1992, 165 (*Smilja Avramov, *Genocide in Yugoslavia in the light of international law*, Belgrade, 1992,165) (hereinafter: С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*).

⁵ Ф. Чулиновић, *Окупирана Југославија...*, 170-171 (*F. Culinovic, *Occupying division...*, 170-171); L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 42.

⁶ Ф. Чулиновић, *Окупирана Југославија...*, 202 (*F. Culinovic, *Occupying division...*, 202).

⁷ *Nemačka obavешtajna služba*, V, Београд, 1958, 14-15, 90 (*German Intelligence, V, Belgrade, 1958, 14-15,90) (hereinafter: *Немачка обавештајна...*).

⁸ "God's providence and the will of our ally, and the arduous centuries-long struggle of the Croatian people... determined that today, before the day of the resurrection of the son of God, our homeland, the Croatian state, will also be resurrected." – *Hrvatski narod*, 10. 4. 1941 (*Croatian people, 10. 4. 1941)

Yugoslavia had broken up into parts and Croatia had become an independent state.⁹

That Croatian state was somewhat different from the ideas of the creators. An officer later wrote about it: "Instead of organising the state that the Reich gave them, the Ustasha are using the opportunity to unleash their feelings of hatred in a hellish way, accumulated over the years, against the local Serbs.¹⁰ Another German on official duty in Zagreb, SS-Lieutenant Colonel Siegfried Kasche, a fanatical and militant Nazi in every respect, supported the Ustashes like no other German officer.¹¹

The independent State of Croatia seems to have been planned by Pope Pius XI in 1937, when the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia removed the proposal of the Concordat with the Vatican from the agenda.¹²

They interpreted the Independent State of Croatia as the act of Jesus Christ: "Ustasha Croatia was created by Christ and it will be Christ's." Christ and Ustashes, Christ and Croats go together in history."¹³

In 1519, Pope Leo X said of Croatia that it was "antemurale christianitatis", the bulwark of Roman Catholic Europe towards Orthodoxy. That qualification was repeated in the 20th century. Archbishop Stepinac explained it most clearly when he claimed that the best guarantors for the Croatian people would be God and the Catholic Church.¹⁴ However, Ustasha Croatia was a product of the theories about the "voice of the country, race and blood", from which Germany under Adolf Hitler was born in 1933.

The Nazi theory about living space is often mentioned in Croatia as well. That science had to justify everything that came later. Hit-

⁹ Alojzije Stepinac, *Dnevnik*, 10. 4. 1941 (*Alojzije Stepinac, *Diary*, 10. 4. 1941)

¹⁰ Arthur Hafner, associate of General Edmund Glaise von Horstenau – Немачка обавештајна..., 124 (**German Intelligence...*, 124).

¹¹ L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 61.

¹² Edmond Paris, *Convert or die*, Chino/USA, ?, 36 (hereinafter: E. Paris, *Convert or...*).

¹³ „Krist i Hrvati“, *Nedjelja*, Zagreb, 6. 7. 1941, 2 (**“Christ and the Croats”, *Sunday*, Zagreb, 6. 7. 1941, 2)

¹⁴ Alojzije Stepinac, *Dnevnik*, 30. 8. 1940. (*Alojzije Stepinac, *Diary*, 30. 8. 1940)

ler explained the creation of Ustasha Croatia by the political need for peace in those regions in order to put economic power to good use.¹⁵

The Independent State of Croatia had its origins in history because, according to the Ustasha champions, the ideas of Ante Starčević were healthy seeds that sprouted thanks to Pavelić and the Ustasha into a "wonderful, magnificent and sublime fruit".¹⁶

Two days after the declaration of a new state on the territories of Yugoslavia, a state that is still at war, Archbishop Štepinac blessed the Ustasha military commander Slavko Kvaternik. On that occasion, he thanked him for his courage and foresight in announcing the creation of the Croatian state in the name of Ante Pavelić. Two days later, the archbishop greeted Pavelić and the Ustashas who arrived in Zagreb from Italy.¹⁷

The Croatian government took an oath on the 16th April in front of the Roman Catholic priest Vilim Cecelja, Mufti of Zagreb Ismet ef. Muftić, and evangelical episcopal vicar Michael Becker. They swore on a booklet of the *Ustasha Principles* (*in the original: *Ustaška načela*), while Mile Budak read the principles, in the interim.

After the requests of Ustasha leader Ante Pavelić sent to Berlin and Rome for recognition, he received answers: "It is a special joy and pleasure for me to be able to inform you that the German Reich recognises the Independent State of Croatia at a time when the Croatian people found their long-desired freedom through the victorious encroachment of the Axis powers." Another Ustasha friend, Benito Mus-

¹⁵ Адолф Хитлер, „Биланс рата на Балкану“ (*Adolf Hitler, "War Balance in the Balkans") (speech at the session of the Reichstag on the 4th May 1941), *Књижевне новине*, Београд, 9. 6. 1992. (**Literary Newspaper*, Belgrade, 9. 6. 1992)

¹⁶ Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i NDH*, Zagreb, 1977, 144 (*Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustasha and the Independent State of Croatia*, Zagreb, 1977, 144)(hereinafter: Ф. Јелић-Бутић, *Усташине...*).

¹⁷ There were 195 Ustashas who arrived from Italy with Ante Pavelić. This information was constantly mentioned when trying to justify the destruction of Serbian national identity. Stories about "two or three Ustasha trucks" were also used for the same purposes. With that play on words, they wanted to prove that so many people could not have killed many Serbs – Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i ustaše*, Zagreb, 1986, 403 (*Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić and the Ustasha*, Zagreb, 1986, 403).

At the beginning of 1944, there were about 235,000 soldiers, officers and non-commissioned officers in the Independent State of Croatia. There were about 23,000 Croats in the "Handschar Division" and about 70,000 in the German police and Wehrmacht units. It means that there were in total about 330,000 Croats in military units in the Croatian state - С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*, 289 (*S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 289).

solini, wrote: "I welcome the new Croatia with the greatest pleasure, which today won the long-desired freedom, when the Axis powers destroyed the artificially created Yugoslavia."¹⁸

The words from the telegram congratulations from Berlin and Rome, from which it can be seen that Germany and Italy created a state for the Croatian people, meant nothing to many in Zagreb. According to the notes of Archbishop Stepinac, the creation of Ustasha Croatia represented a turning point in the history of the Croatian people. Additionally, the day of the proclamation of the state, the 10th April 1941, he considered the day of implementation of a long-dreamed and desired ideal. Therefore, he advised his subordinate clergy to readily respond to "the sublime work of preserving and improving the Independent State of Croatia". At the end of April, the archbishop indicated, with a circular, to his subordinate clergy how to treat the new state. He emphasized that he was speaking to them as a representative of the Church, begged and urged them to strive and work with all their might to make Croatia God's land.¹⁹ As the Roman Catholic church organization is strictly hierarchical, which means that there is a strict and enviable discipline, it is clear what followed after the Archbishop's words. This meant that ordinary Roman Catholic priests could speak freely as Mato Moguš, the parish priest from Udbina in Lika, did: "Until now, we

¹⁸ Roman Catholic pastor Petar Pajić explained the appearance of Adolf Hitler with the following words: "Until now, the Lord has spoken through the mouths of his disciples, papal circulars, sermons of preachers." But there was no response to his words and his calls. Now he decided to change his method. He will organise his European and world missions: they will no longer be led by priests, but by great military leaders with Hitler at the head. Their sermons will be heard, but this time, thanks to cannons, machine guns, bombers and their bombs". – *Katolički tjednik*, Sarajevo, 31. 8. 1941. (*Catholic Weekly*, Sarajevo, 31. 8. 1941)

¹⁹ Војни архив, фонд НДХ, 310а-3/4 (*Military Archives, the Independent State of Croatia Fund, 310a-3/4) (hereinafter: BA, НДХ (МА, NDH)); *Ibid*, 310a-27/4.

The inhabitants of Croatia had to behave in accordance with the words of the Archbishop of Vrhbosna, Ivan Šarić, who spoke in front of the German officers: "I am an Ustasha... Every son of the people is called and obliged to be an Ustasha." – *Novi list*, Zagreb, 29. 7. 1941 (**New Leaflet*, Zagreb, 29. 7. 1941); Archbishop Šarić also wrote the following words in the newspaper: "Let us once and for all stop with stupid and unworthy claims of Christ's disciples, that evil and corruption should be fought in a fine, elegant way... Pope Gregory VII cleaned the church of God from many thorns and weeds not with subtlety but with a strong hand, which was governed by a holy upheaval." – *Katolički tjednik*, Zagreb, 15. 6. 1941. (**Catholic Weekly*, Zagreb, 15. 6. 1941)

For numerous services to the Independent State of Croatia, Pavelić awarded all the archbishops and bishops, except for Alojzije fra Mišić from Mostar, because he died before that.

have worked for the Catholic faith with a prayer book and a cross, and now it is time to work with a rifle and a revolver."²⁰

The Ustasha leaders often mentioned "God's providence" as a significant factor in the creation of the Independent State of Croatia. It was an old Jesuit propaganda phrase that even in 1940 they tried to prove theoretically.²¹ If the Independent State of Croatia, according to that teaching, was *Civitas Dei*, then the Roman Catholic Church itself bears the blame for everything that came later.²²

What happened to the Serbian people during the Second World War can also be interpreted as the return of some debts from the previous war in a previously unheard way. At the same time, "Serbian guilt" from the interwar period took on unreal proportions and dimensions, which shows that German Nazi policy justified the coming repression of the Serbian people in advance. Thus, the Serbian people received an unfair political mortgage for everything that happened before in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and it threatened to kill any desire for the future in it.²³ The obliteration of the Serbian people, apparently, was arranged on the 6th June 1941 by Adolf Hitler and Ante Pavelić.²⁴

²⁰ *Novi list*, Zagreb, 24. 7. 1941. (**New Leaflet*, Zagreb, 29. 7. 1941)

²¹ Franjo Sanc, „Providnost kao sudbina“, *Život*, 3-4, Zagreb, 1940, 190-235 (*Franjo Sanc, "Providence as destiny", *Life*, 3-4, Zagreb, 1940, 190-235).

²² Archbishop Stepinac said: "Because, no matter how intricate is the web of today's fateful events... it is still easy to discern the hand of God at work... God did it and our eyes are full of admiration." - Alojzije Stepinac, *Dnevnik*, 10. 4. 1941 (*Alojzije Stepinac, *Diary*, 10. 4. 1941); They also interpreted the Croatian state like this: "It was, as an ideal, carried in the souls of our ancestors for centuries, until Almighty Providence accomplished it in the year of the great jubilee." The Catholic Church, which for 1300 years spiritually guided the Croatian people in all their difficult, painful and joyful days, follows with festivity and joy the people in these days, their rise and restoration of national independence." - *Katolički list*, 16/1941, 187-188 (**Catholic News*, 16/1941, 187-188).

²³ In discussing and searching for the sources and origins of the hitherto unprecedented German Serbophobia, the personal vanity of Adolf Hitler, who participated in the First World War as a soldier of Austria-Hungary, must not be neglected. This corporal never managed to suppress his complexes and vanity from consciousness, which left traumatic consequences for many German officers at the time. - L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 41.

²⁴ Гојко Вујићић, „Немачка окупација југословенских територија 1941–1945“, *Војно Историјски гласник*, 1-3, Београд, 1992, 37 (*Gojko Vujičić, "German Occupation of Yugoslav Territories 1941–1945", *Military Historical Gazette*, 1-3, Belgrade, 1992, 37).

2.

THE OBLITERATION OF SERBIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

There are no exact data on how many inhabitants lived in the Independent State of Croatia in April 1941. There are only estimates: German estimation, that there were about 6,275,000, and Croatian estimation, that there were about 6,439,000 inhabitants. At first glance, the differences are almost negligible. However, when looking at the nationality of the population, the situation is quite different. There are much fewer Croats according to German than according to Croatian estimates! Estimates of the number of Serbs also differ drastically. Namely, the German figure is 1,925,000 and the Croatian figure is 1,250,000 Serbs.²⁵

²⁵ There were several German estimates of the population of the Independent State of Croatia. According to the first data, there were about 2.2 million Serbs and about 3.3 million Croats – С. Аврамов, *Геноциг...*, 264 (*S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 284); Other data were created by the assessment of officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the basis of reports by intelligence officers, according to which there were about 1,925,000 Serbs. – Slobodan D. Milošević, *Izbeglice i preseljenici na teritoriji okupirane Jugoslavije 1941–1945*, Beograd, 1985, 134 (*Slobodan D. Milošević, *Refugees and immigrants on the territory of occupied Yugoslavia 1941–1945*, Belgrade, 1985, 134) (hereinafter: С. Д. Милошевић, *Избеглице...*); Ф. Јелић-Бутић, *Усташе...* 106 (*F. Jelić-Butić, *Ustasha...106*); Jovan Marjanović, *Ustanak i narodnooslobodilački pokret u Srbiji 1941*, Beograd, 1963, 22 (*Jovan Marjanović, *Uprising and National Liberation Movement in Serbia 1941*, Belgrade, 1963, 22) (hereinafter: Јован Марјановић, *Устаник и...*). German historians did not accept this information – L. Horry, M. Broszat, *Der Croatische...*, 68-69.

The German officer Arthur Hafner wrote the approximate data in a report that he handed over to his superior, General Edmund Glaise Horstenaus. According to Hafner, there were 3,069,000 Croats or 50.78%, 1,847,000 Serbs or 30.56% - Vasa Kazimirović, *NDH u svetlu nemačkih dokumenata i Dnevnika*

Edmunda Glez Horstenau 1941–1944, Beograd, 1987, 105 (*Vasa Kazimirović, *the Independent State of Croatia in the light of German documents and the diary of Edmund Glez Horstenau 1941–1944*, Belgrade, 1987, 105) (hereinafter: В. Казимировић, *НДХ у свејћлу...*).

The official Croatian statistician, Zvonimir Dugački, believed that in April 1941, about 33% or 1,847,000 of the total population of the Independent State of Croatia could be Orthodox Serbs - *Хрватски народ*, 19. 5. 1941. (**Croatian people*, 19. 5. 1941) This information was copied in later years by almost all Croatian emigrants in their books, magazines and newspapers – Jere Jareb, *Pola stoljeća hrvatske povijesti*, Buenos Aires, 1960, 87–88 (*Jere Jareb, *Half a century of Croatian history*, Buenos Aires, 1960, 87–88). Jesuit Krunoslav Draganović was more precise than Dugački, who wrote about 1,885,943 Serbs. – Krunoslav Draganović, *Opći šematizam katoličke crkve u Jugoslaviji*, Sarajevo, 1939, 354–357 (*Krunoslav Draganović, *General Schematism of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia*, Sarajevo, 1939, 354–357)(stated according to: Viktor Novak, *Magnum Crimen*, Beograd, 1986, 601).

On the territory of the Independent State of Croatia, according to the calculations of the commission of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, in April 1941 there were 2,403,998 Orthodox Serbs in eight dioceses – *Гласник Српске православне цркве*, бр. 4, Београд, 1946, 53 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, No. 4, Belgrade, 1946, 53); Архив Синода Српске православне цркве (*The Archives of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church), Записници (*Minutes), Син. бр. 1060/зап 237 од 27. марта 1947 (*Synod No. 1060/Minutes 237 of March 27, 1947) (hereinafter: АСин,...). However, in the Memorandum of the Synod on 15th January 1942, submitted to General Heinrich Dunkelmann, it was written that there were so many Orthodox Serbs according to the state census of 1931 – ВА, Нда, 1-2/3.

According to the 1921 census, 2,674,844 Croats and 1,558,718 Serbs lived on the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. According to estimations for April 1941, there were 3,284,500 Croats (or 46.59%) and 2,294,316 Serbs (or 32.54%)– Архив Синода, Фасцикла „Прогони Срба у Бановини Хрватској (*Pogroms of Serbs in the Banovina (Duchy) of Croatia) 1939–1941“ (hereinafter: АСин, Прогони Срба...).

At the beginning of 1941, there were eight dioceses of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the territory of the Banovina of Croatia, and there were 856,255 Orthodox Serbs who lived there. – АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1060/зап. 237 од 27. марта 1941. (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1060/Minutes 237 of March 27, 1947)

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, based on the decision of the Parliament from 1939, collected numerous data on the destruction of Serbs in Croatian Banovina (*Duchy). In that very rich documentation, hitherto unused and unknown to researchers, there is also the following data: In Croatian Banovina (*Duchy), there were complete dioceses of: Dalmatia (with 120,233 Orthodox Serbs), Zagreb (58,908), Pakrac (143,242), Gornji Krlovci (333,266), parts of Dabar-Bosna (24,923), Zahum-Herzegovina (34,833), Zvornik-Tuzla (95,160) and Belgrade-Karlovac (45,700), or 856,255 inhabitants – АСин, Прогони Срба..., Извештаји архијереја Синоду, нерегистровано (*The Archives of the Synod, Pogroms of Serbs..., Reports from the archbishop to the Synod, unregistered).

Historians did not even agree when it came to the number of Orthodox Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia, so everyone had their own figures.: Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, (*Branko Petranović, *History of Yugoslavia*) 207 – around 2,000,000; Б. Миљуш, *Революција...*(*В. Miljuš, *Revolution...*), 79 – around 2,200,000; Радоје и Живан Кнежевић, *Слобода или смрт* (*Radoje and Živan Knežević, *Freedom or Death*), Seattle/United States of America, 1981, 43 – 1,885,943.

There are examples of one author stating two different data in two books – Ferdo Čulinović, *Stvaranje nove jugoslavenske države*, Beograd, 1959, 15 (*Ferdo Čulinović, *Creation of a new Yugoslav state*, Belgrade, 1959, 15): around 2 million; Ф. Чулиновић, *Окупијайорска погдела...*, 72 (*F. Culinovic, *Occupying division...*, 72): 1,925,000.

The directorate of the Ustasha Police of the Independent State of Croatia, by its order of the 23rd July 1941, required all subordinate authorities to register the Orthodox Serbs.²⁶ In that announcement, they informed that the work did not include Serbs who were converted in the past months.

In the orders on the registration of the Orthodox Serbs, there was also an explanation that Montenegrins, Russians, Ukrainians and Romanians of the Orthodox faith should not be listed. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, in a notice dated 14th May, announced that the local and regional Ustasha authorities do not treat the Serbs and the Montenegrins equally, explaining that the Montenegrins did not violate the interests of their state.²⁷ On the 9th August 1941, the State Directorate for Reconstruction ordered the mandatory arrest of those Montenegrins who declared themselves as Serbs, and their internment to emigrant camps. Towards the Russians, the local authorities had to act according to the order of the Ministry of the Interior dated 31st May 1941, according to which decisions were made in each case individually and without any template, which is valid for the Serbs. In August 1941, such orders were also sent from the Directorate to the lower levels of government.²⁸

At the beginning of August 1941, the Directorate for Reconstruction sent out its order in a circular letter regarding the attitude towards Orthodox Romanians and ordered that they should not be treated as Orthodox Serbs. This was interpreted as the claim that they are "members of a friendly country".²⁹ The Orthodox Ukrainians also received

Even foreign publicists and historians, who studied and wrote about the Independent State of Croatia, had different figures. A. Manhattan, E. Paris and K. Falcons wrote about 2,200,000 Serbs– A. Манхатан, *Кайџолички џерор...*, 35; Edmond Paris, *Genocide...*, 49; E. Paris, *Convert or die*, 49; Carlo Falconi, *The silence of Pius XII*, Boston-Toronto, 1970, 274 (hereinafter: C. Falconi, *The silence...*).

²⁶ BA, НДХ, (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia) 156-1/1; *Ibid*, 176-13/2; *Ibid*, 179-2/13; *Ibid*, 195-1/20; *Ibid*, 203-19/2; There are many feedback reports in the Military Archives: BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 174-8/11; *Ibid*, 202-1/14.

²⁷ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 175-10/4-3; *Ibid*, 171-4/10.

²⁸ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 203-2/34.

²⁹ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 143-47/4; *Ibid*, 179-6/6; *Ibid*, 189-2/9; *Ibid*, 203-34/2.

similar treatment in the Croatian state. And they, in relation to the Orthodox Serbs, were privileged in every respect.³⁰

Poglavnik (*the leader), Ante Pavelić intended to create the Independent State of Croatia based on legal norms. He was so vain that he personally reviewed and signed all laws, regulations, and orders. He wanted to show "state legal historicism", i.e., state law propagated by Ante Starčević and his successors, the "Pravaši". The real reasons were in the desire to demonstrate the creation of a "new European order" in action, using the example of the Independent State of Croatia.

The times of obliteration followed for the Serbian people, when laws, orders and regulations declared them a second-class people. The Serbs, who were said to have worked against the Croatian people, had to be condemned.³¹ According to the Ustasha laws, Serbians were not the same as Serbs, so they had to lose their jobs.³²

In Germany, Jews had to wear armbands with the inscription "Jews" or "J". In the Independent State of Croatia, Serbs had to wear a ribbon that read "Serb", and a bit later "P" which meant "Orthodox" (**Pravoslavni/Православни*).³³ However, this "Orthodox" did not apply to all those who were of the Orthodox faith: it did not apply to Romanians, Ukrainians and Russians. They were released from that obligation. In general, the laws against Serbs did not apply to other Orthodox.³⁴

Everything that was usually associated and identified with Orthodoxy and Serbian national identity was prohibited by a series of laws. Banning it meant condemning it to extinction. Laws and legal provisions were promulgated almost daily. The first ban concerned the Ser-

³⁰ Ukrainian leader Vasyl Voitanovsky asked the Croatian government for their opinion on the status in the new state – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 237-56/2; *Ibid*, 201-12/22; *Ibid*, 203-14/1.

³¹ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 171a-2/1.

³² *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), Zagreb, 7. 6. 1941.

³³ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 313-35/1.

³⁴ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 143-47/4; *Ibid*, 189-9/2; *Ibid*, 201-12/22; *Ibid*, 203-14/1.

bian Cyrillic alphabet.³⁵ Serbian expressions used in everyday speech and language were forbidden.³⁶

The use of the name "Serbian Orthodox faith" was forbidden, and it was ordered to use "Greek-Eastern faith", and some time afterwards, in accordance with the laws on the new Croatian spelling, "Greek-Eastern".³⁷

The change in the name of the religion entailed the prohibition of collecting church taxes for Serbian Orthodox municipalities.³⁸

Serbian confessional national schools and entertainment centers were prohibited.³⁹ Orthodox religious teaching, as a subject, was no longer allowed to be taught in schools. Formally, it could only be taken as a private exam.⁴⁰ The holidays celebrated by the Serbian people with their Church were banned, the first to be forbidden was Vidovdan.⁴¹

School funds that had the names of Serbian rulers and other significant historical figures had to change their names and accept purely

³⁵ This order had only two articles. The first read: "1. The use of the Cyrillic alphabet is prohibited on the territory of the Independent State of Croatia". On the same day, the "Executive Order" was announced, which determined what should be done to destroy the Cyrillic alphabet in three days. – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), Zagreb, 25. 4. 1941.

Hatred towards the Cyrillic alphabet can also be seen in the ban on making tombstones, which was ordered by the Ministry of the Interior in early June 1942. – Архив Југославије, Државна комисија за утврђивање злочина окупатора и њихових помагача, Инвентарски број 11.544 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, State Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and Their Helpers, Inventory Number 11.544) (hereinafter: АЈ, 110, Инв. бр...). Before this ban, the same thing happened in 1915 (after the occupation of Serbia by the German army) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, when it was ordered by General Stjepan Sarkotić.

³⁶ On the 16th May 1941, the Ustasha head of Krajina, Viktor Gutić, delivered this order to all local government institutions: "I order that Serb-Serbian terms be put out of use in all official correspondence, and that pure Croatian terms be used." – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 318-35/1.

³⁷ *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 19. 7. 1941; *Hrvatski narod* (*Croatian people), Zagreb, 21. 7. 1941.

³⁸ *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 25. 6. 1941; Ministry of National Economy, Department for Financial Affairs, by order No. 10.481-1941 forbade the "determination and collection of patriarchal and diocesan surtax".

³⁹ *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 21. 6. 1941.

⁴⁰ Orders: No. 37.251-1941 on the 30th August 1941, and No. 67.259-1941. on the 31st October 1941.

⁴¹ „Крвави биланс Независне Државе Хрватске“, *Специјално издање „Ревизија 92“*, Београд, 1991, 43. (*"The Bloody Balance of the Independent State of Croatia", Special Edition "Revija 92", Belgrade, 1991, 43)

Croatian names.⁴² After the school funds, the property of Serbian institutions in Sremski Karlovci came next for revocation and prohibition.⁴³

The Croats were even bothered by the Julian calendar, so they banned it as well.⁴⁴

Throughout the Independent State of Croatia, there were many settlements that had something reminiscent of Serbian in their name. The Croatian authorities were zealous in name changes, and this continued throughout the existence of their state.⁴⁵

The obliteration of Serbian national identity and the crimes were not the result of the arbitrariness of various Ustasha bodies, institu-

⁴² Order no. 18.682-1941 on the 4th July 1941.

⁴³ On the 19th September 1941, Head Ante Pavelić, together with several ministers, signed this order: "The entire property of the 'Karlovci Grammar School Publishing House', the 'Serbian People's Church Clerical School Fund' and the 'Stefaneum of the Archdiocesan Orthodox Serbian Priest's Dormitory' in Hrvatski Karlovci becomes the property of the Independent State of Croatia." – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941.

⁴⁴ *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 4. 12. 1941.

⁴⁵ Place names have been changed:

Sremska Mitrovica = Hrvatska Mitrovica – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 26. 6. 1941;
Putnikovo Brdo = Kvaternikovo Brdo – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 22. 8. 1941;
Srpske Moravice = Hrvatske Moravice – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 25. 8. 1941;
Sremski Karlovci = Hrvatski Karlovci – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 28. 8. 1941;
Gradinsko Karadordevo = Tomislavovac – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Novo Obilićevo = Zvonimirovac – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Njegoševac = Našički Antunovac – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Zelinja Srpska = Zelinja Srednja – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Kalenderovci Srpski = Kalenderovci Gornji – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Grapska Srpska = Grapska Donja – (*Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Suho Polje Srpsko = Suho Polje Donje – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Raskršće = Križanje – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Petrovo Polje = Schonbron – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 20. 9. 1941;
Suhomlački Milanovac = Suhomlački Antunovac – *Nova Hrvatska* (*New Croatia), 25. 9. 1941;
Mikleuški Aleksandrovac = Orahovac – *Nova Hrvatska* (*New Croatia), 25. 9. 1941;
Mikleuški Petrovac = Florianovac – *Nova Hrvatska* (*New Croatia), 25. 9. 1941;
Hadžičevo = Pavelić Selo – *Nova Hrvatska* (*New Croatia), 25. 9. 1941;
Srpsko Selište = Moslavičko Selište – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 3. 10. 1941;
Srpsko Polje = Hrvatsko Polje – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 6. 10. 1941;
Srpska Kapela = Hrvatska Kapela – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 6. 10. 1941;
Carev Lazarevac = Kašljevac – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 23. 10. 1941;
Mrkonjić Grad = Varcar Vakuf – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 12. 11. 1941;
Bosanski Aleksandrovac = Adolfstal – *Narodne novine*, 6. 12. 1941.

tions and individuals, but rather it was a state job planned much earlier. In Italy, under the good protection of Benito Mussolini, Ante Pavelić was preparing for the future. In 1936, he wrote the work program of the future Ustasha state imitating Adolf Hitler and his *Mein Kampf*.⁴⁶

The Ustasha spokesmen claimed that the Serbs exploited the Croats during the entire existence of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, i.e. the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and therefore they believed that revenge, according to the logic of "for a bitter wound, bitter cure" is the only justice. Under the phrase "bitter wound", the Ustashes meant some kind of invented crimes against the Croatian people in the period 1918-1941 saying that Croats in their "glorious but bloody history" did not suffer as many victims as they did in the last 22 years.⁴⁷

And many Roman Catholic priests said how the "Serbian issue" should be resolved. They felt that they had to deal with that as well because the Ustasha movement sought and found its supporters among Roman Catholic priests. The most radical was the pastor from Doboј, Dr. Dragutin Kamber.⁴⁸

During the meeting between Hitler and Pavelić, the leader of the German Reich said to the Ustasha chief: "After all, if the Croatian state wants to be completely solid, a nationally intolerant policy must be pursued for fifty years, because excessive tolerance in these matters only causes damage."⁴⁹ Thus, Pavelić was given a free hand to solve the "Serbian issue" in the Ustasha state. The Serbian issue could have been solved by the disappearance of the Serbs.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Work program of Ante Pavelić – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 85a-25/6; "Slaughtering should be performed. That which drinks the blood of the Croatian people should be slaughtered, so that this evil never appears in the Croatian community again." – *Ustaša (*Ustasha)*, 7/1932.

⁴⁷ *Hrvatski narod (*Croatian people)*, 11. 4. 1941; M. Landercy, *Kardinal Alojzije Stepinac (*Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac)*, Đakovački Selci, 1989, 87 (hereinafter: М. Ландерци, *Кардинал...*).

Juraj Krnjević, minister in the Yugoslav royal government in London, interpreted the destruction of the Serbian people as revenge for the "oppression of Catholicism by the Serbian Orthodox Church". – С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*, 46. (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 46.)

⁴⁸ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 85-38/15.

⁴⁹ Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i ustaše*, Zagreb, 1986, 489 (*Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić and the Ustashes*, Zagreb, 1986, 489) (hereinafter: Б. Кризман, *Антие Павелић...*).

⁵⁰ "No one who is not a member of the Croatian nation by descent and blood" - this is how Ante

Hitler's general Lotar Rendulić, whose father was from the village of Popovo Polje in Lika, said that if he had twenty divisions, he would kill everyone he could, thinking primarily of the Serbs. Siegfried Kasche, "extraordinary representative and plenipotentiary minister of the Great German Reich" in the Independent State of Croatia, seemed to know his Fuehrer's words well, when he told Harold Turner, the head of the Administrative headquarters of the military commander of Serbia: "For me, a Serb is only valuable when he is dead."⁵¹ After the words of the Ustasha protector in front of Adolf Hitler, the German plenipotentiary in the Balkans, Hermann Neubacher, said of the Serbs that since April 1941, in Croatia, they "became game to be shot."⁵²

Minister of Internal Affairs Andrija Artuković said on the 5th May 1941 in Slavonski Brod: "There is no mercy here! We know that great Croatia can survive only when we exterminate from the roots everything that is Serbian."⁵³

What was Serbian was easy to be identified when they separated it from Croatian in every respect: Krunoslav Krstić and Petar Guberina on the differences between the Serbian and Croatian languages; Rudolf Bićanić with the story of the economic robbery of Croatia; Krunoslav Draganović with the story of the emergence of Orthodoxy among Roman Catholics; Mladen Lorković on the thousand-year-old Croatia.

On the 12th June 1941, the head of the district police area of the Great Bribir and Sidraga district, Juco Rukavina, said: "We will turn everything Serbian into fire and ashes... There is and cannot be peace with the Serbs." We will destroy their homes before they destroy the Croatian state."⁵⁴

Pavelić wrote, a few years before the creation of the Croatian state, explaining who would not be able to live in Croatia – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 85a-25/6.

⁵¹ Ešref Vražalić, *Okupacioni sistem u Jugoslaviji u svjetlu međunarodnog prava*, Sarajevo, 1966, 196. (*Ešref Vražalić, *The Occupation System in Yugoslavia in the Light of International Law*, Sarajevo, 1966, 196)

⁵² С. Аврамов, *Геноциг ...*, 174. (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 174.)

⁵³ *Obljetnica Nezavisne Države Hrvatske*, Zagreb, 1943, 92. (**Anniversary of the Independent State of Croatia*, Zagreb, 1943, 92)

⁵⁴ Miodrag Bijelić, „Sabirni logor u Slavonskoj Požegi 1941“, *Zbornik Historijskog instituta Slavonije*, Slavonski Brod, 5/1967, 186. (*Miodrag Bijelić, "Concentration camp in Slavonska Požega 1941", *Proceedings of the Historical Institute of Slavonia*, Slavonski Brod, 5/1967, 186)

The largest execution site of Serbs, the Jasenovac camp complex, was a place where, according to the creators, an unlimited number of detainees could fit.⁵⁵ Ljubo Miloš, one of the commanders of Jasenovac, said that the camps were created to exterminate Serbs.⁵⁶

The liquidation of Serbs was carried out by killing and looting property in cities and towns, which turned into Serbian tombs.⁵⁷

When the Serbs began to oppose Croatian crimes, Eugen Kvaternik announced an order in which he cruelly threatened that for every head of a Croat, including Muslims and Catholics, he would shoot 50 of the most prominent Serbs.⁵⁸

Roman Catholic priests also justified the destruction of the Serbian people, of course in their own way.⁵⁹

Several Croats, who were pro-Ustasha oriented, justified the destruction of the Serbs. According to their interpretations, in the first place it is the origin of the Serbian people in those regions and their relationship with the Croatian people.

The origin of the Serbian people in Croatia was discussed in public gatherings, in state institutions, for example in the Croatian Acade-

⁵⁵ Налог војсковође Славка Кватерника од 27. 4. 1942. godine (*Order of military leader Slavko Kvaternik dated April 27, 1942) – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 202-5/18; *Ibid*, 162-31/3; *Ibid*, 191-11/1.

⁵⁶ Лазо М. Костић, *Ко је крив за злочине наг Србима у „НДХ“*, Швајцарска, 1972, 168 (*Lazo M. Kostić, *Who is guilty of crimes against Serbs in the "NDH"*, Switzerland, 1972, 168) (hereinafter: Л. М. Костић, *Ко је крив...*).

⁵⁷ Ђ. Слијепчевић, *Југославија...*, 441-442. (*Dj. Slijepčević, *Yugoslavia...*, 441-442)

⁵⁸ Наређење Заповједништва копнене војске (*Order of the Command of the Ground Forces) – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 84-27/1.

⁵⁹ "Against such an opponent, defense with the sword is also allowed, and if necessary, also preventive, without waiting for attacks." After this, it is easy to understand why the same priest Ivo Guberina uttered the following words: "These are the principles on which the natural law depends, and for that, every Catholic in conscience is obliged to implement and help to implement them into action. If the Ustasha movement took it upon themselves in the current circumstances to implement it in Croatia, to obstruct it would mean, at the very least, to be unaware of their Catholic calling..

In such circumstances, it would be a sin against the Creator to stand aside in the momentous struggle... Croatian Catholics are given the opportunity to show how much they are God's fighters. It is the duty of Catholics to undertake everything, so that what is important and positive in the Ustasha movement bounces off... It is a religious duty to support the Ustasha movement... The Church will be much more comfortable if its believers are so conscientious that they fight in the ranks of the Ustasha movement." – *Hrvatska smotra* (*Croatian Review), 7-10/1943.

my. That's how Filip Lukas explained that Serbs should be divided into two groups, western and eastern. The western group consists of those Serbs who "do not work for the freedom and culture of the country and people they live among, except for rare individuals."⁶⁰

What was being prepared for the Serbian people was the solution of the Serbian question or the "Croatian racial revolution". The racial revolution meant destruction, migration and conversion: "We will kill one part of the Serbs, we will expel others to Serbia, and we will convert the rest. And what remains will be only a bad memory of them" - as Minister Mile Budak said. That was the plan of the "Ustasha holy trinity" which in reality represented the implementation of the racial revolution in Croatia.⁶¹

Serbs were first killed secretly: secret circulars with lists for liquidation were sent to trusted people and Ustasha confidants. Then they did it publicly.⁶²

The press started the harangue among the masses of the Croatian people.⁶³ Pavelić himself was the first to practically do it with the order on the 24th April 1941, according to which in the state administration, the leaders of the Orthodox faith had to leave their jobs to Roman Catholics, that is, to Muslims.⁶⁴

The brutal and ferocious cleansing performed by the Independent State of Croatia towards the Serbian people surprised even some German officers.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ф. Јелић Бутић, *Усташице...*, 139. (*F. Jelić-Butić, *Ustasha...*, 139.)

⁶¹ Any other naming of the extermination of Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia is improper and incorrect. An inappropriate designation is, for example, "fascist crimes", because that way the criminal is not determined nationally but ideologically.

⁶² Announcement of the State Commission for the determination of the crimes of the occupiers and their aids, 7-33, Belgrade, 1945, 376.

⁶³ "There is no Serbian nation in the Independent State of Croatia, there is no so-called Serbian-Orthodox Church... There cannot be Serbs or Orthodoxy in Croatia, and the Croats will make sure that this is fulfilled as soon as possible." - *Hrvatski narod* (*Croatian people), 30. 7. 1941.

⁶⁴ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 1-1/1.

⁶⁵ General Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, for example, wrote: "Thus, the destruction of the Orthodox population remains the goal of the Ustashes, who, as before, want to solve the problem of two million autochthonous Serbs in their notorious way." - В. Казимировић, *НДХ у светлу...*, 69. (*V. Kazimirović, *the Independent State of Croatia in the light...*, 69.)

The German officer Rudolf Ibbeken was tasked, as a historian, by the commander-in-chief of Southeast Europe to justify the participation of German military units in crimes in military operations. After the war, before the military court, when asked "What were the methods of the Ustasha and who did they fight against?", he answered: "The main enemy of the Ustasha were the Serbs." The struggle of the Ustasha against the Chetniks was the struggle of Croatia - fascist Croatia - against national Serbia".⁶⁶

The Chetnik movement, according to Ustasha propaganda, was the Serbian army's way of warfare in the past. When state propaganda blamed the Chetniks for evil, it meant the entire Serbian people. However, a Chetnik is synonymous with a warlike fighter, if necessary, very aggressive and ready for brutality. Thanks to the Ustasha propaganda, this representation of the Chetniks evoked in the Croatian people a terrible sense of indulgence for their own crimes. The Ustasha Croats were criminals ready to destroy Serbia.⁶⁷

The Roman Catholic prelates, such as the Herzegovinian bishop Alojzije Fra Mišić, also observed the obliteration of Serbian national identity. He wrote about it: "People were caught like beasts. Slaugh-

Due to the Ustasha brutality in killing Serbs, there were cases when German courts tried Croats who committed crimes. There is information about this in the documents that were referred to as complaints about German behavior towards Croats – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 75-14/4; *Ibid*, 162-9/8.

Even the Italian officials did not remain silent during the crimes against the Serbs. Thus, on 9th July, 1941, the vice consul from Banja Luka reported in a telegram: - "As it is known, the population of the area of the former Vrbas Banovina is made up mostly of Orthodox, followed by Muslims and Catholics." The Orthodox are divided into two groups of Serbs, i.e., Orthodox Christians born in Croatia and those originating from Serbia, and Serbians, i.e., Orthodox Christians born in Serbia. They represent the richest people in this parish so far. This privileged position, enjoyed by the Serbs, has ceased to exist today, because the same Orthodox Christians are destined to disappear from this area." – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 153-13/5.

⁶⁶ Л. М. Костић, *Ко је крив...*, 167. (*L. M. Kostić, *Who is guilty...*, 167.) The author refers to: K. W. Bönnie, *Die deutschen Kriegsgefangene in Jugoslawien 1941-1949*, Band I/1, München 1962.

⁶⁷ "The Ustashes broke into our village like beasts and picked up innocent people, those people who earned their living with plows and hoes, and they killed those people in the most horrible way." Do you know about the pits in which there are hundreds of innocent people lying, these are women and children killed with sledgehammers, tied with wire and thrown into the water. Do you know about terrible tortures, arson and looting of property? The Ustasha executioners did more harm to this nation in five months than the Turks did in 500 years of their rule." From the response of the command of a Serbian detachment from the vicinity of Konjic to the calls of the Croatian Ustasha authorities to surrender and lay down their arms – АВИИ, НДХ (*Air Force of the Independent State of Croatia), 244-36/1.

tered, killed, thrown alive into the abyss. Women, mothers with children, adult girls, weak male and female children were thrown into pits."⁶⁸ He did not write only to Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac of Zagreb. He also wrote against the Serbian people to the leader Pavelić.⁶⁹

On the 26th June 1941, Božidar J. Dragičević, a theologian who escaped the Ustasha slaughter, wrote in the Krka monastery: "One of the greatest miracles in the history of mankind happened: In the name of Christ, the devil was served; the bloodiest crimes were committed in the name of Christ. Those who served Christ became the greatest executioners. The blood of Orthodox sons, the tears and mourning wear of countless mothers, brothers and sisters, are mostly their work. They begged Christ to bless their hatred against the Serbs. They gave the most horrible interpretation of Christ. He, who is mere Love, who endured suffering on the cross out of love, is being asked to bless their crimes."⁷⁰

Italian colonel Maurizio Bassi described the events he saw in Croatia. He wrote about the crimes: "It happened that the rivers of Croatia and Bosnia were stained with Serbian blood."⁷¹

Communist proclamations from the beginning of September 1941 also mentioned the perishing of the people, without specifying the victims nationally: "...brutally tortured, thrown into the pits along our Velebit, into our rivers, not Serbs and Jews, but just people".⁷² At the same time, about the obliteration of the Serbian national identity by the Croatian Ustasha, the communists from Mostar reported to their authorities in Montenegro: "There is a fratricidal struggle going on in

⁶⁸ From the letter of Bishop Alojzije Fra Mišić of Herzegovina on the 7th November 1941 to Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac of Zagreb – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 236-58/3.

⁶⁹ Until recently, the claim was repeated that the bishop of Mostar, Alojzije Fra Mišić, was the only Roman Catholic bishop, that is, the archbishop, who opposed the Ustasha crimes. It is possible that it was the first month or two of the existence of the Independent State of Croatia. Later, he also became loyal to the Ustasha leadership – Сима Симић, *Херцеговачки бискупи за време окупације Југославије*, Београд, 1990 (*Sima Simić, *Bishops of Herzegovina during the occupation of Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 1990); Documents containing information about the bishop's solidarity with the Ustashes – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 236-58/3; *Ibid*, 320-1/7.

⁷⁰ Entry in the Book of Visitors (*Књига њосетилаца) of the Krka Monastery, 35-36.

⁷¹ Л. М. Костић, *Ко је крив...*, 173. (*L. M. Kostić, *Who is guilty...*, 173.)

⁷² BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 67-31/3.

Herzegovina." The (political) party bodies of Montenegro should not interfere with this.⁷³

After the arrival of the first refugees in Serbia, it became known what was happening to the Serbian people in the Independent State of Croatia. However, it was not allowed to be written about in the newspapers, it had to be kept silent. The commissar administration of Serbia received information from people who could be trusted. Aćimović and his Council of Commissars immediately responded to the German military commander of Serbia in order to protect the Serbs from the destruction carried out by the Ustasha state.⁷⁴

The Council of Commissars sent its representatives to Croatia several times, first to rescue people individually, and then everything that could be saved, naturally, with the help of the Germans.⁷⁵

Some people turned to Dimitrije Ljotić for help. Numerous facts about the perishing were presented in the petitions.⁷⁶ And to Milan Nedić, the president of the Serbian government, ordinary people wrote and begged him to save the Serbs from destruction in the Ustasha Croatia.⁷⁷

Several letters with reports on the situation and requests for help were also written by Bogdan Rašković, the special representative from Belgrade.⁷⁸

⁷³ *Херцеговина у НОБ*, II, Београд, 1986, 327. (**Herzegovina in the National Liberation Struggle*, II, Belgrade, 1986, 327)

⁷⁴ Letter from the Commissioner for Finance dated 15th May 1941 to Milan Aćimović asking him to protest to the Germans – Државни архив Србије, Комесаријат за избеглице и пресељенике (*State Archives of Serbia, Commissariat for Refugees and Displaced Persons), unregistered (hereinafter: ДАС, Комесаријат за избеглице...).

⁷⁵ Bogdan Rašković had a special place among the people who saved Serbs from the Independent State of Croatia. His reports were submitted to the highest instances of the Serbian government – ВА, Нда, 1а-3/1; Many biographers of Alojzije Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb, wrote among other things, that he received Bogdan Rašković in Zagreb at the end of December 1942 since he was recommended by Josip Ujčić, Archbishop of Belgrade. In the talks, Rašković allegedly approved the rechristening of Serbs as a beneficial act for the Serbs. However, such assertions lack any foundation. – Ivan Mužić, *Pavelić i Stepinac*, Split, 1991, 77 (*Ivan Mužić, *Pavelić and Stepinac*, Split, 1991, 77) (hereinafter: И. Мужич, *Павелић...*).

⁷⁶ The letter dated 8th June 1941 to the president of the Yugoslav National Movement "Zbor" (*Збор), Dimitrije Ljotić – ДАС, Комесаријат за избеглице., (*Dimitrije Ljotić - State Archives of Serbia, Commissariat for...) unregistered.

⁷⁷ Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Legacy of Radoslav Grujić, unregistered.

⁷⁸ ВА, Нда, 1а-3/1.

Novica Kraljević, on behalf of Serbs from Herzegovina, protested at the end of August 1941 because of the perishing of Serbs and in a letter addressed to Pope Pius XII.⁷⁹

The Germans protested with a verbal note to the Croatian authorities because of their attitude towards the Serbs. Croats tried to conceal it all.⁸⁰ Despite Hitler's tolerance of Ustasha crimes, there were German officers who tried to help the Serbs in various ways on the ground.⁸¹

Italians also protested in Zagreb. That's why Pavelić complained about them as bad allies!⁸²

The perishing of the Serbs became known in London as well. Thanks to that news, on the 6th June 1941, King Peter wrote to American President Franklin Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII.⁸³ The Yugoslav royal government, through its embassy in the Vatican, protested first on the 31st October 1941, then at the beginning of November and on the 8th December 1941, and demanded the cessation of the crimes in Croatia.⁸⁴

At the end of 1941, the government drew up a Memorandum for the governments of Great Britain, the United States of America and the Vatican.⁸⁵ The royal government believed that the extermination of the Serbian people was the "magna carta" of the Croatian state. Therefore, it begged the President of America to intervene with the Vatican.⁸⁶ To such appeals, Roosevelt could only protest to the Pope through his embassy in the Vatican.⁸⁷

⁷⁹ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 85-3/14.; *Ibid*, 183-4/1; *Ibid*, 313-4/1.

⁸⁰ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 73-24/2.

⁸¹ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 234-55/1; *Ibid*, 239-33/213.

⁸² Б. Кризман, *НДХ између...*, 130. (*B. Krizman, *the Independent State of Croatia between...*, 130.)

⁸³ Архив Југославије (АЈ), фонд Емигрантска влада (103), бр. 3-29. (*Archives of Yugoslavia (AJ), Emigrant Government Fund (103), No. 3-29.)

⁸⁴ АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 12.905; АЈ, 103, 3-29. (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 12.905; АЈ, 103, 3-29.)

⁸⁵ АЈ, 103, 3-29. (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 103, 3-29.)

⁸⁶ Veselin Đuretić, *Vlada na bespuću*, Beograd, 1983. 170 (*Veselin Đuretić, *The Government in the Wilderness*, Belgrade, 1983. 170.) (hereinafter: В. Ђуретић, *Влада...*)

⁸⁷ АЈ, 103, 32-186. (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 103, 32-186.)

The Patriarch of Constantinople sent a protest to Pope Pius XII because of the destruction of the Serbs. That protest was published by some Turkish newspapers.⁸⁸

In the Hungarian Parliament, in Budapest, there were several protests due to the destruction of Serbs: the first to do so was Baron Josif Rajačić (the 26th May 1941), and later Endre Bajči Žilinski.⁸⁹

Archbishop Stepinac received letters from devouts. There were also those who, out of the deepest Christian motives, asked him for protection for the Serbs. The archbishop did not mention a single word about any of these letters in his otherwise carefully written diary. Bogdan Rašković came to the archbishop from Belgrade, with the recommendation of Belgrade archbishop Josip Ujčić, and asked him to help the detainees in Jasenovac.⁹⁰ However, the archbishop never did anything for what his devouts begged him to do.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Branko Miljuš, *Revolucija u Jugoslaviji 1941-1945*, Beograd-Lozana-Sarajevo, 1991, 95 (*Branko Miljuš, *Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-1945*, Belgrade-Lozana-Sarajevo, 1991, 95) (hereinafter: Б. Миљуш, *Револуција...*).

⁸⁹ Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Legacy of Radoslav Grujić, unregistered; AJ (*Archives of Yugoslavia), 110, Reg. no. 16.746.

⁹⁰ Milan Bulajić, *Misija Vatikana u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj*, II, Beograd, 1991, 772 (*Milan Bulajić, *Mission of the Vatican in the Independent State of Croatia*, II, Belgrade, 1991, 772) (hereinafter: М. Булајић, *Мисија Ватикана...*).

⁹¹ Among those who wrote to the archbishop and begged for help for the victims was the Roman Catholic priest Ambrozije Benković, who sent a letter on 1st July, 1941 describing the atrocities and protesting over the perishing of Orthodox priests. – Alojzije Stepinac, *Dnevnik*, IV, 312 (*Alojzije Stepinac, *Diary*, IV, 312); They wrote to the archbishop: "One of your faithful Catholics begs you to ask for mercy from our *Poglavnik* (*Leader) Dr. Ante Pavelić, as much as is in your power, to prevent the slaughter of children, old women and elders of the Orthodox faith. In Lika, they slaughter children, women, and the elderly and throw them into pits and abysses." – *Ibid*, 300; At the beginning of July 1941, a Croatian woman wrote a letter to the archbishop with many descriptions of perishing: "First of all, please forgive me for addressing you, but believe me, my soul cannot rest, since I saw and learned about the atrocities committed by our baptised people with Serbs and Jews. I am asking you, as our vicar of God, to mediate something at least in Rome, with our good holy father the Pope." – *Ibid*, 312.

The behavior of the Roman Catholic church prelates was very eloquently explained by a Croat in a letter to the Archbishop of Zagreb on 10th June, 1941: "In these difficult times, when blood is poured into the streams, when thousands of people are slaughtered and killed, when villages and towns are laid waste, those of our innocent brothers and the most virtuous soul of our race, our Orthodox brothers, you gentlemen of the Church dignitaries, as if nothing concerns you and as if you know nothing, although the whole world and especially all the Slavic nations know that the horrors of slaughter and devastation originate only and exclusively from of your monasteries and Kaptol." – *Ibid*, IV, 310.

In historiography and journalism, not only Yugoslav or Serbian, but also worldwide, from the Second World War until today, as an example of sincere protest against the suppression of Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia, the alleged letter of Prislav Grisogono, sent on the 8th February 1942 to Archbishop Stepinac, is most often mentioned and quoted.⁹² A few months earlier, Grisogono also wrote to Ustaša minister Milo Budak, but there was no response. On the contrary, Budak was even more eloquent in his threats after that.⁹³

Slovenian Roman Catholic priests who were deported to Serbia by the Germans in mid-1941 wrote an extensive letter of protest to Belgrade Archbishop Josip Ujčić.⁹⁴

Muslims from various cities of the Independent State of Croatia were also against Ustaša crimes, often to save themselves from accusations, or to attribute it all to individuals. The protest petitions to the authorities in Zagreb were written in Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Prijedor, Bosanski Petrovac and Mostar.⁹⁵ But the crime still continued.

According to one communist historian, "the vast majority of the Croat and Muslim population fenced themselves off from crime and remained on the sidelines, and only individuals participated in this Ustaša excessive atrocities."⁹⁶

The number of Serbs who died in the Independent State of Croatia has never been accurately or even approximately determined.⁹⁷

⁹² ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 197-22/12; *Ibid*, 242-21/2; *Ibid*, 242-33/2; *Ibid*, 256-2/7; *Ibid*, 310a-17/4. The letter was also mentioned and quoted by D. Martin, A. Manhattan and E. Paris.

⁹³ David Martin, *Ally betrayed*, London, 1946, 58.

⁹⁴ АСин, Прогони Срба у Хрватској 1941-1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, Persecution of Serbs in Croatia 1941-1942), unregistered; AJ, 110, Reg. no. 249. Archbishop Ujčić, similar to Archbishop Stepinac, merely got the letter.

⁹⁵ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 62-12/5; *Ibid*, 72-32/2; *Ibid*, 310a-15/4; *Ibid*, 310a-35/1.

⁹⁶ Pero Morača, *Jugoslavija 1941*, Beograd, 1971, 48. (*Pero Morača, *Yugoslavia 1941*, Belgrade, 1971, 48.)

⁹⁷ Instead of listing all the literature, which contains both correct and incorrect data, the book that was published in the Serbian language in several editions is the only one listed here, because it has the abundance of data – Лазо М. Костић, *Хрватска зверства према исказима њихових савезника*, Мелбурн, 1983. (*Lazo M. Kostić, *Croatian Atrocities According to the Testimonies of Their Allies*, Melbourne, 1983)

There are many reasons for this, few are justified, many more unjustified. Determining the number of victims is a very complex job that requires multidisciplinary research by a team of experts, from historians to statisticians.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Rather than adhering to any of the previously mentioned assertions, only a handful will be highlighted from the extensive collection of data on the victims, organised in a specific logical sequence: During a meeting on 6th June, 1941, Führer Adolf Hitler and Leader Ante Pavelić agreed on the "disappearance" of approximately one million Serbs. – *Slavonija u NOB*, Slavonski Brod, 1966, 64. (**Slavonija in the National Liberation Struggle*, Slavonski Brod, 1966, 64.) In a Chetnik leaflet from September 1941, it was written that around 25,000 Serbs had perished – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 67-32/4.

In a communist leaflet printed in September 1941 by the order of the Communist Party of Croatia, it was written that about 25,000 Serbs had lost their lives. – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 213-2/3; A leaflet created in January 1942 in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia mentioned about 300,000 murdered Serbs – Janko Pleterski, *Nacija, Jugoslavija, Revolucija*, Beograd, 1985, 408 (*Janko Pleterski, *Nation, Yugoslavia, Revolution*, Belgrade, 1985, 408) (hereinafter: J. Плетерски, *Нација...*); The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia, in its proclamation from January 1942, announced: "Pavelić launched a bloody and unprecedented pogrom against the Serbs in history." 300,000 innocent Serbs, men, women, old people and children fell victims to the savage blood-thirsty Ustashes." – J. Плетерски, *Нације...*, 409 (*J. Pleterski, *Nation...*, 409); Ivo Lola Ribar, secretary of the Union of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia, wrote to the Provincial Committee for Serbia in August 1942 that "about half a million Serbs" had perished. – *Зборник...*, II/5, 169 (**Proceedings...*, II/5, 169);

At the beginning of August 1941 in Belgrade, the Serbian authorities captured one of the Ustasha slaughterers who participated in the crime in the Orthodox church in Glina. At the hearing, he said that around 350,000 Serbs had been killed in the Independent State of Croatia by then. – B. Ђурегић, *Влада...*, 171. (*V. Đuretić, *The Government...*, 171.)

One of the emissaries of the Yugoslav royal government wrote that by November 1941, about 500,000 Serbs had perished - B. Ђурегић, *Влада...*, 172. (*V. Đuretić, *The Government...*, 172.)

The Yugoslav royal government's informant from Croatia, Franjo Gaži, mentioned in a letter to London that there were 750,000 killed Serbs. – Ljubo Boban, *Hrvatska u arhivima izbjegličkih vlada 1941-1943*, Zagreb, 1985, 341 i 473 (*Ljubo Boban, *Croatia in the archives of refugee governments 1941-1943*, Zagreb, 1985, 341 and 473) (hereinafter: Љ. Бобан, *Хрвајўска...*).

On 8th September, 1942, Minister of War and Chief of the Supreme Command of the Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland, General Dragoljub Mihailović, reported to his president about the perishing of the Serbian people. On that occasion, he wrote that "according to verified reports, 600,000 Serbs were killed by the Croats." – AJ (*Archives of Yugoslavia), 103, 17.

In June 1943, Serbian Prime Minister Milan Nedić wrote a letter to King Petar in which, among other things, he mentioned that around 600,000 Serbs had been killed in the Independent State of Croatia – Бошко Н. Костић, *Истїина о Милану Недићу*, Београд, 1992, 71. (*Boško N. Kostić, *The Truth about Milan Nedić*, Belgrade, 1992, 71.)

The German command for the Southeast in its report on the 2nd July 1943 also mentioned about 400,000 killed Serbs – Ivan Avakumović, Mihailović prema nemačkim dokumentima, London, 1969, 34 (*Ivan Avakumović, Mihailović according to German documents, London, 1969, 34) (hereinafter: И. Авакумовић, *Михаиловић...*).

At the session of the Great Anti-Fascist National Liberation Assembly of Serbia held on 9th December, 1944, one of the communist leaders, Dobrivoje Vidić, said that by November 1944, 650,000 Serbs had perished – И. Авакумовић, *Михаиловић...*, 34. (*I. Avakumović, *Mihailović...*, 34)

According to the legal provisions in the Independent State of Croatia, the Serbian people disappeared as their name was banned. According to secret circulars, Serbs were no longer Serbs but Orthodox. As the Serbian Orthodox religion and everything related to it has been banned in the meantime, the Serbs have become "Eastern Greeks" for the Croatian government, and this is how they were named in all official documents. Formally looking at this process, it is understood that it is, in fact, the destruction to the point of devastation of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

In all the plans for the expulsion of the Serbs, there was constant talk about the inhabitants of the Orthodox faith, later as of the Greek-Eastern religion. This naming of the nation, its reduction to a religious component, is not accidental. Namely, the expulsion of the Orthodox population is actually a religious cleansing of the territory. In the same context, conversion is part of Roman Catholic proselytism. In fact, it must be called the most correct name: the war of Roman Catholicism against Serbian Orthodoxy (in the circumstances of the existence of the Independent State of Croatia).

By expelling the Orthodox population, that is, the Serbian people, from the Independent State of Croatia, an ethnically and religiously homogeneous state would be created. Such a state was the ultimate goal of the Ustasha ideology and the strategic policy of the Vatican.

The cleansing of the Orthodox population by deportation to Serbia was perfidious and elaborated to the extreme. This can also be understood on the basis of the following several documents: The Croatian government took care of the religious purity of those who were to be resettled. As there were mixed marriages in many places, the question arose of how to act in such cases. For this reason, on the 24th July 1941,

In September 1942, the Ustasha liaison officer in Belgrade reported to his superiors in Zagreb about a meeting organised by General Alexander von Lehr: "Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Colonel Fr. Massenbach attacked the bloodthirsty Ustasha activities against the Orthodox, claiming that they have killed 700,000 people in Croatia so far and that the Germans must bleed because of Croatia's wrong policy." – BA, HJIX (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 89 -14/2.

A commission of the Serbian Orthodox Church estimated that around 800,000 Serbs perished in the first two years in the Croatian state. – *Гласник СПЦ*, 4/1946, 53. (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 4/1946, 53)

the Directorate once again sent out "Instructions for emigration of families of two faiths" to all its regional authorities.⁹⁹

The first phase of the destruction of the Serbian people was terrible terror and intimidation, so that they would emigrate to Serbia themselves. The deportation to Serbia was the implementation of Ante Starčević's ideas about "returning" the Serbs to the areas from which they came to Croatia. According to the same teaching, Drina and Sava are the borders of the people. The answer to the question of what to do with the Serbs was, also according to Starčević and his followers and successors: Across the Drina or in the Drina! In the first months of the Ustasha state, there were countless proposals for where the Serbian people should be resettled. Thus, a Roman Catholic priest suggested that the Serbs should be moved to Serbia and later from there to the swamps of East Germany.¹⁰⁰

On the 19th April 1941, in many Serbian villages, the Croats threatened the people and spoke of the fate that was intended for them. As of the 23rd April they were telling them that they had to move out within 5 days.¹⁰¹ Until then, the Serbs were not used to such threats, so they did not take it too seriously. However, when the Croats stopped threatening and started with terror and persecution, they started to sober up and look for some solutions.¹⁰² In the meantime, the Croatian government

⁹⁹ By carefully reading these instructions, one can understand the goal of the long-term Roman Catholic policy: "If the husband is of the Orthodox faith, the wife is Catholic, and the children are Orthodox, then the whole family can be left only and only in the case, if the husband did not particularly stand out politically in an anti-Croatian sense, and if he is not too economically strong, he could still be dangerous." The historical instruction also shows how important it is to have younger family members who are Roman Catholics: "If a Catholic man lives in concubinage with a Catholic woman and has children who are Orthodox, then they must be evicted." In the same context, there is also the following condition: "If an Orthodox man lives in concubinage with a Catholic woman and there are children who are also of the Catholic faith, then that whole family is to stay." – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 289-33/2; *Ibid*, 170-12/18; *Ibid*, 179-60/2.

¹⁰⁰ *Slavonija u NOB-u*, Slavonki Brod, 1966, 66. (**Slavonia in the National Liberation Struggle*, Slavonki Brod, 1966, 66.)

¹⁰¹ С. Д. Милошевић, *Избејлице...*, 113. (S. D. Milošević, *Refugees...*113)

¹⁰² The Communist Party of Croatia printed proclamations in which it considered unnecessary the fear that there would be some kind of relocation to Serbia or other dangers of mass crimes – Станко Опачић Ђаница, *Србин у Хрвајској*, Београд, 1989, 35. (*Stanko Opačić Čanica, *A Serb in Croatia*, Belgrade, 1989, 35)

mentally decapitated the Serbian people with a multitude of laws and orders and thus showed them that they have no place in that country. Along with these laws, the persecutions initiated by the speeches of many officials, priests and ordinary Croats began.

The legal provision on the 24th June 1941, signed by Leader Ante Pavelić, created the State Directorate for Reconstruction. The first director was Josip Rožanković.¹⁰³ The main project of this ministry was to relocate Serbs from the Independent State of Croatia to Serbia for the purpose of population replacement. The State Directorate for Reconstruction had three branches, in Banja Luka, Osijek and Sarajevo, as well as a number of corresponding lower authorities in districts and municipalities.¹⁰⁴

On the 29th June 1941, the Croatian government issued a secret circular ordering how the resettlement should be carried out.¹⁰⁵ The plans to expel the Serbian people were first announced with placards. First it was done in Zagreb and then in other cities.¹⁰⁶ Even before these placards, many Serbs were evicted from Zagreb, which was done on the 5th June.¹⁰⁷

The expulsion of Serbs from the Independent State of Croatia was part of Germany's strategic plans for the organisation of Europe. Namely, the Germans planned to relocate Slovenes to Croatia and then to Serbia, and at the same time they planned to relocate the same number of Serbs from Croatia to Serbia.¹⁰⁸ In order to implement these

¹⁰³ In the leadership of the Directorate for Reconstruction, the following were also engaged: the head of immigration Stjepan Vedrina, the head of immigration Milutin Jurčić, colonel Stjepan Jendrešić as a special representative of Slavko Kvaternik, Tomo Grgić and Dragutin Penava as representatives of the Main Ustasha headquarters – *Narodne novine* (*National Newspaper), 24-26. 6. 1941.

¹⁰⁴ Mirko Peršen, *Ustaški logori*, Zagreb, 1990, 115 (*Mirko Peršen, *Ustasha camps*, Zagreb, 1990, 115) (hereinafter: М. Першен, *Усташки логори*).

¹⁰⁵ "The displacement of Serbs must be carried out in a ruthless manner." It is necessary to prepare the lists of those who will be deported to Serbia on time. Arrests and internments are carried out day and night without respite. The arrested person is obliged to get ready in 30 minutes at the latest." – Хрватски државни архив (ХДА), НДХ, Државно равнатељство за понову, 95/41. (*Croatian State Archives (CSA), Independent State of Croatia, State Directorate for Reconstruction, 95/41)

¹⁰⁶ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-13/2; *Ibid*, 201-31/2; *Ibid*, 203-31/2; *Ibid*, 204-2/11; *Ibid*, 239-33/2.

¹⁰⁷ *Hrvatski narod* (Croatian people), 8. 5. 1941; BA, Нда, 43а-48/2.

¹⁰⁸ The most complete work on war migrants and refugees was published by Slobodan D. Milošević.

plans, the representatives of Germany and the Independent State of Croatia agreed several times. At those meetings, the migration and resettlement plan was changed every time, which included the number of possible resettlers.¹⁰⁹ On the same occasion, there was a meeting of representatives of the Independent State of Croatia and the military-occupied territory of Serbia ("German Serbia" or Nedić's Serbia).¹¹⁰

Many different data have been published about the number of Serbs who were expelled in an organised manner, as well as about the number of refugees and resettlers from the Independent State of Croatia to Serbia in general.¹¹¹ It is impossible to determine what that number is, and in any case it is not lower than 200,000.

¹⁰⁹ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 234-55/1; *Ibid*, 244-48/1; *Ibid*, 268-23/3; АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 7.637. (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, Inventory Number 7.637.)

¹¹⁰ Allegedly, Milan Nedić and Ante Pavelić discussed the resettlement of Serbs from the Independent State of Croatia at the beginning of September 1941 in Zemun. The meeting was organised by the German intelligence service as part of the implementation of strategic plans for the creation of a new European order – АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 12.597. (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, Inventory Number 12.597.)

¹¹¹ According to the findings of a commission created by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, about 300,000 Serbs were expelled from the Independent State of Croatia. – *Гласник СПЦ*, 4/1946, 53. (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 4/1946, 53)

The Commissariat for Refugees under the government of Milan Nedić wrote about 400,000 refugees, of which 82,000 were children – Milan Borković, *Kontrarevolucija u Srbiji 1941-1944*, I, Beograd, 1979, 198-199 (*Milan Borković, *Counter-revolution in Serbia 1941-1944*, I, Belgrade, 1979, 198-199); Станислав Краков, *Генерал Милан Недић*, II, Минхен, 1968, 183 (*Stanislav Krakov, *General Milan Nedić*, II, Munich, 1968, 183) (hereinafter: С. Краков, *Генерал...*). Another source, closely related to the government, wrote about 200,000 refugees – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 234-55/4.

The Military Minister and Head of the Supreme Command of the Yugoslav Army in the Homeland, General Dragoljub Mihailović, informed his government in London in mid-August 1942 that there were about 104,000 Serbs from the Independent State of Croatia in Serbia. – С. Краков, *Генерал...*, II, 183.

Based on the preserved documentation of the State Directorate for Reconstruction on the organised resettlement of Serbs, 13,234 people arrived in Serbia – Andrija Ljubomir Lisac, „Deportacije Srba iz Hrvatske“, *Historijski zbornik*, 1-4, Slavonski Brod, 1956, 137. (*Andrija Ljubomir Lisac, "Deportations of Serbs from Croatia", *Historical Anthology*, 1-4, Slavonski Brod, 1956, 137.)

According to the reports of trustworthy people of the government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1942, around 120,000 people had been resettled from Croatia by then – Љ. Бобан, *Хрвајска...*, 53 и 477. (*Lj. Boban, *Croatia...*, 53 and 477.)

According to the report of the German Security Service from Belgrade, on 17th February, 1942, unprecedented crimes against the Serbian people took place in Ustasha Croatia: "The number of Orthodox, massacred and tortured to death by the most sadistic methods, must be estimated at around 300,000 people. Due to these atrocities countless Orthodox fled across the border to the rest of Serbia." – Л. Хоры, М. Бросзар, *Дер Кроајисцхе...*, 120.

3.

CONVERSION INTO ROMAN CATHOLICISM, GREEK CATHOLICISM (*UNIFICATION) AND ISLAMISATION

In the interwar period, the Balkan Peninsula, and thus the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, was an area where a mission, as advocated by the Vatican, had to be carried out. And Yugoslavia, according to the Vatican, represented a state that "spread dangerous Byzantism" (in this context, this meant Orthodoxy), to the detriment of "Western civilization" (which meant Roman Catholic Europe). The most expedient solution, according to the planners of the strategic Vatican policy, was proselytism.

Proselytism, in its essence, reflects the true feature of Roman Catholicism, which is missionary work in its broadest sense and form.¹¹²

The characteristics of missionary work can be expressed by the principles "Extra romanum ecclesiam non est salus" (There is no salvation outside the Roman Church) and "Graeca fides nulla fides" (Greek faith is not faith). These principles also denote the politics of Roman Catholicism, which has its own special name, which is ultramontan-ism.¹¹³ In this case, it is deepening and fueling religious intolerance be-

¹¹² Branko Petranović, *Istoriografija i revolucije*, Beograd, 1984, 365. (*Branko Petranović, *Historiography and Revolutions*, Belgrade, 1984, 365.)

¹¹³ The term "ultramontanism" exists in the Dictionary of the Serbo-Croatian language by Lujko Bakotić and denotes a doctrine or a way of thinking and behaving, which is excessively favorable to the Roman Curia.

tween Roman Catholics and Orthodox, in the territories where mixed Serbs and Croats live. The determination of the borders of the maximalist territory of Great Croatia and the declaration of the entire population in that territory as Croats, regardless of religious differences, had a special significance.¹¹⁴ In 1925, the editors of the official newspaper of the Jesuit order in Zagreb, *Život*, published an article about the plans facing the Roman Catholic Church in areas where Croats lived. With the accusation that Byzantine Orthodoxy was disastrous for the national development of Croatia in the Middle Ages because it was allegedly "the cause of our national disunity. Since we, Croats and Serbs were of one religion before Orthodoxy, it was only in the 11th and 15th centuries that Orthodoxy separated us into two religions".¹¹⁵ This interpretation of the Orthodox as former Catholics was repeated at the beginning of 1935 by the then elected Coadjutor Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, in a conversation with Robert Schuman, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Parliament. The Archbishop of Zagreb wrote those words in his diary: "For over 300 years, our grandfathers defended this country and this city with a sword in their hand from the uncrossed." And what the grandfathers preserved, the grandchildren, who have deeply fallen morally, will help in evil those who themselves were once Catholics."¹¹⁶ He wrote almost the same words in January 1940: "The most ideal thing would be for the Serbs to return to the faith of their fathers, i.e., to bow their heads before the Vicar of Christ - Holy Father."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ The following were declared as Croatian national territories: Banska Croatia, Montenegro as Red Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina as Turkish Croatia, Dalmatia as White Croatia, and Carinthia and Styria as Quarantine Croatia. Furthermore, the population was renamed. Thus, Slovenes became Alpine Croats, Serbs were Orthodox Croats, Muslims were the flowers of Croats – Mirjana Gross, *Povijest pravaške ideologije*, Zagreb, 1973, 46. (*Mirjana Gross, *History of Right-Wing Ideology*, Zagreb, 1973, 46.)

¹¹⁵ At the end of the text, part of the plans for the following years is revealed: "Therefore, we can justifiably say that national disunity will end in our country when the Orthodox return to their faith and become Catholics, as the majority of Croats are." – *Život*, 3, Загреб, 1925. (**Life*, 3, Zagreb, 1925.)

¹¹⁶ Quoted by: Ivan Cvitković, *Ko je bio Alojzije Stepinac*, Sarajevo, 1986, 35–36 (*Ivan Cvitković, *Who was Alojzije Stepinac*, Sarajevo, 1986, 35–36) (hereinafter: И. Цвитковић, *Ко је био...*). In 1990, the President of the Republic of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, handed over the Diary of Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac to Cardinal Franjo Kuharić of Zagreb, thus preventing historians, especially Serbs, from using it.

¹¹⁷ И. Цвитковић, *Ко је био...*, 39. (*I. Cvitković, *Who was...*, 39.)

These words of Archbishop Stepinac had their origin in the vow of Pope Pius XI, which he said to his nuncio Emergild Pellegrinetti before leaving for Belgrade, and he wrote them down: "The Holy Father told me when I was coming here the words of Christ: There are other sheep that are not yet in my flock and they should one day be moved into my flock, so that there will be one shepherd and one flock."¹¹⁸

However, it was not only the Croatian territorial maximalist program that satisfied Archbishop Stepinac in his plans for the Roman Catholicisation. After returning from Belgrade, from a reception with King Alexander, on the 3rd July 1934, and arriving at his office in Kap-tol, he wrote in his diary that Serbia would be Catholic in 20 years if there were more Roman Catholic priests.¹¹⁹

The Vatican official propaganda in 1941 referred to all Orthodox Serbs outside of Serbia as "Croatian dissidents," considering them schismatics or apostates from Christianity.¹²⁰

In pursuit of converting Orthodox Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia, the Catholic Church defined numerous directions of action that can be grouped according to their meaning and content. The first is the implementation of the strategic policy of the Vatican Church towards Orthodoxy. That policy is in its essence warlike and expansionist, with a strong touch of missionary work among Orthodox Christians (which the Vatican age-old policy does not recognise as Christians and therefore calls them schismatics). Another reason is the acquisition of

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 98.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 35.

¹²⁰ The terms "schismatics" or "apostates from Christianity" were created only a century or two after the schism in Christianity. It is believed that they were first used by the Crusaders in the 12th century. Namely, for them the members of the church in Byzantium were apostates from Rome.

The Vatican, in its response on 25th January, 1942, to the note of protest from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, regarding the converting of Serbs, approved the work of Roman Catholic priests, justifying that it was done with "Croatian dissidents". – Сима Симић, *Ватикан против Југославије*, Београд, 1990, 58 (*Sima Simić, *Vatican against Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 1990, 58) (hereinafter: С. Симић, *Ватикан против...*); It is a repetition of the old thesis from the Middle Ages that Orthodoxy is not a religion. The essence of this is the "teaching" of Pope Boniface VIII (died in 1303), who said that "there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church": „Политичко-верска активност Ватикана на Балкану кроз векове“ – АЈ, 110, Reg. no. 611-332. (*"The Vatican's Political-Religious Activity in the Balkans Through the Centuries" – Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, Inventory Number 611-332.)

material wealth through the looting of Orthodox property. The third reason is Roman Catholicism, which enables rapid and successful denationalisation, i.e., assimilation, first cultural and then spiritual until the total disappearance of Serbs.

The conversion and the extermination of Orthodoxy led to the total destruction of the Serbian Orthodox Church. This was also the official policy of the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia.¹²¹ Dominik Fra Mandić wrote that Pavelić wanted the religious unity of the inhabitants of Croatia and thus transferred all responsibility from the Roman Catholic Church to the Ustasha government.¹²² One of the biographers of the Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, wrote completely opposite words about Ante Pavelić's attitude towards religion. Namely, the biographer recorded the conversation between Pavelić and Ivan Meštrović. Pavelić said that the Orthodox should not be forced to convert to Catholicism, because it is much more important that they declare themselves as Croats. In that case, he will also be of the Orthodox faith. On the same occasion, Pavelić stated that he does not care much about the Roman Catholic Church either.¹²³

All the Ustasha and clerical press wrote about Croats solely as God's people, about Croatia solely as Catholic Croatia. This is fully confirmed and explained by Archbishop Stepinac's words in his diary written a year before the war, that God and the Roman Catholic Church are the only guarantors of the Croatian people.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Italian General Pietro Marchi wrote about the situation in Croatia in his report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Galeac Cian. On that occasion, he also wrote about the conversion of Orthodox Serbs based on a conversation with Pavelić. Marchi heard from Pavelić that he focused his hopes on the Catholicisation of the Serbs because that was "the basis of his program." – Avro Manhattan, *Catholic Terror Today*, London, 1969, 37 (hereinafter: A. Манхатан, *Католички терор...*).

¹²² Љ. Бобан, *Хрватска...*, 214. (*Lj. Boban, *Croatia...*, 214.)

¹²³ Alojzije Benigar, *Alojzije Stepinac hrvatski kardinal*, Rim/Italija, 1974, 366 (*Alojzije Benigar, *Alojzije Stepinac Croatian Cardinal*, Rome/Italy, 1974, 366) (hereinafter: A. Бенигар, *Алојзије Стейпинац...*).

¹²⁴ И. Цвитковић, *Ко је био...*, 51. (*I. Cvitković, *Who was...*, 51) The Ustasha Independent State of Croatia was supposed to be God's country. This is what Archbishop Stepinac said to his subordinate clergy in the Circular on 27th April, 1941 - "God has done it and our eyes are full of admiration." That state had to be monotheistic, that is, Roman Catholic – *Glasnik Sv. Ante*, Загреб, 5-6/1941. (**Official Gazette St. Anthony*, Zagreb, 5-6/1941.) In that state, Christ would symbolically be the king. – *Nedjel-*

Until now, only a few researchers have written about rechristening, as part of the Ustasha program for solving the Serbian problem in the Independent State of Croatia. Historians and publicists, even many from the Serbian Orthodox Church, do not use appropriate terms when they write and talk about religious events during the Second World War (1941-1945) in the territories of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. There are many reasons for that. Members of the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church itself deliberately used the wrong terms for certain ritual actions. For centuries, Roman Catholic terminology almost didn't include the terms "Orthodox" and "Orthodox faith". In addition to other things, the inappropriate use of terms to explain religious concepts can be indirectly justified by decades of suppression of religion from all spheres of social life, especially in the last fifty years of the reign of communist impiety, in which the Serbian Orthodox Church was carefully controlled in every respect.

The terms "*prelazak u rimokatoličku vjeru* - conversion to the Roman Catholic faith" and "*prevodenje u rimokatoličku vjeru* - transferring to the Roman Catholic faith" are synonyms, which are not in the spirit of the Serbian language.¹²⁵

The term "pokrštaivanje - Christianisation" is in the spirit of the Serbian language, although, at first glance, it is Croatism. The most accurate and appropriate term for the religious actions that the Ustasas and the Roman Catholic Church carried out together towards the

ja, 6. 7. 1941. (**Sunday*, 6. 7. 1941.) In this newspaper, it was often written: "Christ and the Ustasas, Christ and the Croats." In history, they go together", were the most common justifications of the Ustasha state. Viktor Novak considered this teaching to be monstrous thoughts that even the Vatican would be ashamed of as "abnormal exaltations of unbalanced maniacs". - Viktor Novak, *Magnum Crimen*, Beograd, 1986, 836 (*Viktor Novak, *Magnum Crimen*, Belgrade, 1986, 836) (hereinafter: V. Novak, *Magnum Crimen*).

¹²⁵ These terms were used, among others, by Bogdan Krizman, Fikreta Jelić-Butić, and Mladen Colić. The group that used various terms is wide and it is not necessary to mention them one by one.

Petar Vukelić used the book *Прекршћавање Срба за време другој свјетској рати* (**Reconversion of the Serbs during the Second World War*) by Sima Simić and used the term "покрштавање" (*conversion) - П. Вукелић, „Окупациона власт и систем националне дискриминације у Срему за време Независне Државе Хрватске“, *Зборник за друшћвене науке Мајице српске*, 35, Нови Сад, 1963, 123-126. (*P. Vukelić, "Occupational power and the system of national discrimination in Srem during the Independent State of Croatia", *Social Sciences Proceedings of Matica Srpska*, 35, Novi Sad, 1963, 123-126.)

Orthodox Serbs is the term "prekrštavanje – rebaptism (to another denomination)", which means "baptism of a person who has already been baptised (in the church of another Christian denomination)".¹²⁶ And the term "rimokatoličenje - converting into Roman Catholicism" is correct, but much less used in speech and text.

The Roman Catholic Church and the Croatian authorities converted the Orthodox Serbs in the spirit of the centuries-old aspiration of the Vatican Roman Catholicism towards Orthodoxy.¹²⁷

Conversion to Roman Catholicism in the Independent State of Croatia essentially represents the most severe form of spiritual terror against the Serbian people. That act humiliated individual and national dignity. From the state's perspective, conversion i.e., the Croatisation of the Serbs was not in accordance with the theory of one political nation with multiple religions. From the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church, it is the movement of the "Christian bulwarks to the East" in order to implement the theories of the early Middle Ages about the creation of one church organisation for all Christians in the world. The interpretations of members of the Roman Catholic Church about "dissidents", that is, apostates from Christianity, should also be understood in this context. That doctrine was brutally implemented in the Croatian Ustasha state for four years. And Ustasha Croatia was marked as "antemurale cristianitatis" - the bulwarks of Christianity, as a holy warring Croatia.

Conversion to Roman Catholicism was forbidden to the wealthier layers of the Serbian people, the intelligentsia and, of course, the clergy. Physical liquidation was destined for these people, because their

¹²⁶ Juraj Kolarić denied rebaptism because he believed that the Roman Catholic Church recognises the ritual of Orthodox baptism. Instead, he wrote "converting to another religion", without any explanation as to why he uses that particular phrase – Juraj Kolarić, *Pravoslavni*, Zagreb, 1985, 175; The correct term was constantly used by Sima Simić, Slobodan D. Milošević, and to some extent Đoko Slijepčević, Ljubomir Durković-Jakšić, Ivan Mihovilović, Joža Horvat and Zdenko Štambuk. Ferdo Čulinović used the terms "Catholicisation", "converting to Roman Catholicism" and "converting to Catholicism".

¹²⁷ Several historians have written about the relationship of the Vatican towards Orthodoxy in the Balkans throughout the centuries. Among them, the most significant is Jovan Radonjić – *Римска курија и јужнословенске земље*, Београд, 1950. (**The Roman Curia and the South Slavic Countries*, Belgrade, 1950.)

property was supposed to be the foundation of the development of the Croatian state. In addition, the intelligentsia was not suitable for rapid denationalisation like other layers of the Serbian people.¹²⁸

The legal provision prohibited the use of the name "Serbian Orthodox faith", and instead of it "Greek-Eastern faith" had to be used.¹²⁹

The ban is justified in commissioned texts by several professors from the University of Zagreb. One of those professors, Edo Lovrić, published a text at the beginning of September 1941: "On the name of the Eastern Church in the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia until the end of the World War".¹³⁰ Lovrić wrote about the earlier names of the Orthodox faith, of which the expression "graeci ritus non uniti", which means "united of the Greek rite", was the only one used in official, Vatican use. For the Orthodox Church, the only expression "ecclesia Graeci ritus non unitas" was used, which means "united church of the Greek rite". The essence of these Latin terms is expressed by the word "united", which means that those believers are not, through the Union, subordinate to the Roman Pope but still remain under the spiritual direction of their patriarchs.

The problem of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Independent State of Croatia represents, it can be freely argued, the belated reaction of the Vatican to the refusal of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to accept the Concordat in 1937. Of course, only in other times, conditions and circumstances. The reaction was in terms of the doctrine of Roman Catholicism from 1439, according to which "the Holy Roman Church believes that no one who does not belong to the Roman Church - not only polytheists,

¹²⁸ One of the historians who explained well the essence of the conversion of the Serbs was Slobodan D. Milošević – „O prekrštavanju pravoslavnog stanovništva u NDH u vreme Drugog svetskog rata“, *Istorija 20. veka*, Beograd, 1985, 71-92 (*Slobodan D. Milošević - "On the conversion of the Orthodox population in the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War", *History of the 20th century*, Belgrade, 1985, 71-92); Bogdan Krizman also understood the essence well –*NDH između Hitlera i Musolinija*, Zagreb, 1986, 120. (*The Independent State of Croatia between Hitler and Mussolini, Zagreb, 1986, 120.)

¹²⁹ *Narodne novine*, 19. 7. 1941 (**National Newspaper*, 19. 7. 1941) That decree has only two sentences: "After the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, the name 'Serbian Orthodox faith' is no longer in accordance with the new state regulations." Therefore, I order that in the future the name 'Greek-Eastern religion' will be used."

¹³⁰ *Alma mater croatica*, 1, 3arpe6, 1941. (**Alma mater croatica*, 1, Zagreb, 1941.)

but also Judeans, heretics and schismatics - cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, but all will go to eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his servants if they do not turn to the Church of Rome before death."¹³¹

Orthodoxy, as a religious problem, was interesting to Archbishop Stepinac in a special way. He often spoke about it at public meetings and in sermons in churches, so he wrote the only real solution, as he thought, in his diary on the 17th January 1940. That solution meant that the Serbs would bow their heads before the Pope and recognise him as their leader.¹³²

Representatives of the highest Croatian authorities, Leader Ante Pavelić and Minister of Worship and Education Mile Budak, signed the Legal Provision on the transition from one religion to another and announced it on the 3rd May.¹³³ Due to many misunderstandings on the ground, problems arose around conversion, so at the end of the month, the Croatian authorities had to compile and publish the Instructions on the occasion of conversion from one religion to another.¹³⁴ An analysis of the title of the legal provisions shows that the Croatian government understands Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy as two different religions, not as parts of one Christian religion.

¹³¹ That eternal fire was predicted on 15th December, 1937 by Pope Pius XI in his address on the occasion of the appointment of new cardinals: "The day will come - and I wish I didn't have to say it, but I am deeply convinced - the day will come when there will not be a small number of souls who will regret that they did not large-mindedly, generously and actively receive such a great good as that which the representative of Jesus Christ offered to their country." - С. Симић, *Ватикан у рочишћу...*, 22. (*S. Simić, *Vatican against...*, 22.)

¹³² "It would be most ideally for the Serbs to return to the faith of their fathers, i.e. to bow their heads before the Vicar of Christ - the Holy Father." - Alojzije Stepinac, *Dnevnik*, III, 413. (*Alojzije Stepinac, *Diary*, III, 413.)

The doctrine according to which the Roman Pope is the successor of Jesus Christ was explained by Pope Pius IX: "I am the successor of the apostles, I am the vicar of Jesus Christ, I am the only one who has the authority to manage Peter's tomb - I am the way, the truth and the life." Whoever is with me is with the Church, and whoever is not with me is outside the way, outside the truth, outside life": „Политичко-верска активност Ватикана на Балкану кроз векове“ - АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 611-332. (*"The Vatican's Political-Religious Activity in the Balkans Through the Centuries" - Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, Inventory Number 611-332.)

¹³³ *Narodne novine*, 5. 5. 1941 (**National Newspaper*, 5. 5. 1941); Slobodan D. Milošević was wrong when he wrote that this order was published on 9th May, 1941 - С. Д. Милошевић, *О прекришћавању...*, 73. (*S. D. Milošević - *On the conversion of...*, 73.)

¹³⁴ *Narodne novine*, 27. 5. 1941. (**National Newspaper*, 27. 5. 1941)

The clerical press heartily supported conversion laws and measures. *Katolički list*, which took the lead in this, announced that they do not emphasize the existence of the Ustasha Croatian state for proselytising reasons, but for purely practical purposes.¹³⁵ In this case, it is clear that the author of the text is referring to the Croatian state, which should help proselytism.

Even though conversion is a work on which the state and the Roman Catholic Church worked together, the state authority, in the first article of the Legal Provision on the transition from one religion to another (which requires that a confirmation of conversion be requested from the authorities), placed itself above the church hierarchy.¹³⁶ Therefore, the complete conversion should have been a state political action, that is, the state's job.

The Roman Catholic Church in the Independent State of Croatia fully accepted all laws on conversion, even the primacy of the state in the process. However, conversion was also their activity. Therefore, on the 15th May, the Archbishop's office published its directive circular entitled "Decree of the Archbishop's Spiritual Table in Zagreb", which explained the conditions for the conversion in great detail.¹³⁷ In fact, the archbishop's circular informed and justified the Catholic-clerical consent to carry out the long-conceived work, explaining the Ustasha religious-ecclesiastical legal provisions and orders.

In order to clarify the contents of the archbishop's clerical circular to the clergy as well as possible, propaganda and informational texts for church newspapers were ordered from the Kaptol, with "scientific" explanations of the reasons for conversion. Archbishop Stepinac himself, answering various questions from current issues, explained terms such as "current Catholics or apostates from the Catholic Church" and said that his church does not need half-hearted but whole Christians.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ *Katolički list*, 3. 6. 1941. (*Catholic News*, 3. 6. 1941.)

¹³⁶ *Narodne novine*, 5. 5. 1941. (**National Newspaper*, 5. 5. 1941)

¹³⁷ *Katolički list*, 15. 5. 1941 (*Catholic News*, 15. 5. 1941.); Carlo Falconi, *The silence of Pius XII*, Boston-Toronto, 1970, 279-281 (hereinafter: C. Falconi, *The silence...*).

¹³⁸ *Katolički list*, 27. 11. 1941. (*Catholic News*, 27. 11. 1941.)

Of course, such terms refer to Orthodox Serbs, whom the archbishop obviously does not count as Christians.

On the 18th June 1941, the Bishop of Senj, Viktor Burić, sent to all his priests the "Regulations for Admission to the Catholic Church", which they had to strictly adhere to and respect during the process of converting.¹³⁹ His example was probably followed by other bishops and archbishops, some earlier and some later. The Croatian government, through its Ministry of Justice and Worship, i.e., the Department for Religious Affairs, which was headed by Radoslav Fra Glavaš, instructed all local and subordinate authorities, in the form of a circular issued on the 14th July 1941, to carry out the converting together with the Roman Catholic church organisation and in agreement with a new order.¹⁴⁰ Of course, with a note that Serbs will not be allowed to enroll in the Uniate, that is, the Greek Catholic Church. The circular on converting justified the state policy, but it had no support in church canons. Namely, church legislation did not recognise mass converting as a canonical category. All archbishopric and episcopal ordinariates received this circular, with a request and appeal to inform all parish offices in a highly confidential form.

The words that strictly emphasized that the Croatian government did not allow Orthodox priests, teachers, the intelligentsia and the wealthier classes of Serbs to convert to Roman Catholicism had a special place in the text of the Circular. At the same time, they emphasized that the poorer Orthodox population should be converted with instruction about Catholicism. Such words clearly expressed the essence and reasons of religious conversion. Likewise, it is clear that they prevented the conversion of the intelligentsia and the richer layers of the Serbian people. Physical liquidation was predicted for them, for the purpose of the confiscation of property and other assets. Archbishop Stepinac published this circular, immediately after receiving it, in the next issue of the official newspaper of his archdiocese.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ BA, HJX (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 310a-23/1.

¹⁴⁰ BA, HJX (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 87-6/37.

¹⁴¹ *Katolički list*, 8. 8. 1941. (*Catholic News*, 8. 8. 1941.)

Stjepan Bokšić, a professor at the Faculty of Theology, wrote a commentary along with the text of the Circular of the Ministry of Theology and Education and published it in *Katolički List*.¹⁴² The text was also reported by the official newspaper of the Diocese of Đakovica with the note that all priests must read it.

The Archdiocese of Zagreb has formally shown that it directly participates in baptism by publishing the "Regulations for Admission to the Catholic Church".¹⁴³ All archbishops and bishops, after receiving the state circular on rechristening, sent the compiled instructions to their subordinate priests. The Bishop of Senj, Viktor Burić, was the first to do it.¹⁴⁴ On the 16th July 1941, Archbishop Stepinac, through his Vicar General Josip Lah, wrote to the Ministry of Justice and Theology and responded to their Circular on Rechristening. The bishop warned the authorities not to allow the religious conversion of people who want to save their lives in this way, believing that they should be protected from them. In the opposite case, the bishop wrote, those "elements" would get into the Croatian national organism and tear it apart more easily. Vicar Lah was against the ban on converting of the Serbian intelligentsia, citing the teaching that Jesus Christ came to save all people. However, the vicar did not protest at all that the Orthodox priests would also be converted.¹⁴⁵

The bishop of Križevci, Janko Šimrak, that is, the Greek-Catholic (Uniate) bishop, informed his priests about the true goals of the rechristening: "Now it will be obvious that we did very little just because we were indecisive and because we were afraid of small obstacles and people's objections. Every great work has its opponents, but that's why we must not lose heart, because it is about a holy union, about saving souls."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² *Katolički list*, 3. 6. 1941. (*Catholic News*, 3. 6. 1941.)

¹⁴³ *Katolički list*, 11. 6. 1941. (*Catholic News*, 11. 6. 1941.)

¹⁴⁴ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 87-6/37.

¹⁴⁵ С. Симић, *Прекријивање Срба...*, 63-64 (*S. D. Milošević - *On the conversion of...*, 63-64.); C. Falconi, *The silence...*, 281-182.

¹⁴⁶ *Eparhijski vjesnik križevačke biskupije*, 2/1941, 10-11. (**Eparchy messenger of the Križevac Diocese*, 2/1941, 10-11.)

On the 30th July 1941, the Croatian government announced a new circular in which new guidelines were given on religious conversion. According to those guidelines, the conversion of Orthodox into Greek-Catholics, i.e. Uniates, is prohibited, except in places where such parishes already exist; they allowed Protestantisation as long as it would not help anyone to be classified as a German national minority.¹⁴⁷ The circular was so important that it was signed on behalf of the government by Mirko Puk, Minister of Justice and Theology, and Andrija Artuković, Minister of Internal Affairs, Blaž Lorković on behalf of the Main Ustasha administration, and Čurić on behalf of the State Directorate for Reconstruction. And on this occasion, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church very quickly sent the received state directives to their subordinate offices and published them in their official newspapers. Archbishop Stepinac did the same.¹⁴⁸ What makes this circular of the Ministry of the Interior particularly interesting, and what makes it different from the earlier ones, is that it contains a recommendation for the group religious conversion of Serbs.¹⁴⁹ The head of the Religious Department, Dionisije Fra Juričev, otherwise the personal clergyman of Leader Pavelić, recommended such religious conversion, demanding that it is to be understood in the most correct way and supported by all means.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ *Katolički list*, 8. 8. 1941 (*Catholic News*, 8. 8. 1941.); ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 182-31/1; *Ibid*, 87-3/37. The circular was published by: С. Симић, *Прекршћивање Срба...*, 60–61 (*S. Simić, *Conversion of the Serbs...*, 60-61); Вељко Ђ. Ђурић, *Прекршћивање Срба у Независној Држави Хрватској – Прилози за Историју верској геноцида, Београд, 1991*, 45–46 (*Veljko Đ. Đurić, *The Conversion of Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia – Attachments to the History of Religious Genocide*, Belgrade, 1991, 45–46) (hereinafter: В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Прекршћивање Срба у...*).

¹⁴⁸ *Katolički list*, 8. 8. 1941. (*Catholic News*, 8. 8. 1941.)

¹⁴⁹ There are many documents about mass conversion in archives such as Croatian Archives in Zagreb, Historical Archives in Slavonska Požega, etc. This material has been insufficiently used because it is very inaccessible. Likewise, very little has been published. And what was published was mostly what is in the archives of Serbia – В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Прекршћивање Срба у...* (*Veljko Đ. Đurić, *The Conversion of Serbs...*)

¹⁵⁰ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 182-31/1. Dionisije fra Juričev said this to the Orthodox Serbs in the village of Stazi in Bania, during the conversion: "Nobody but Croats can live in this country, because this is the country of Croatia, and whoever will not be rechristened, we know where we will go with him." Up in these regions, I had everything from a chicken to an old man cleaned, and if necessary, I will do it here as well, because today it is not a sin to kill even a small child

Even the top of the Roman Catholic Church in the Vatican was indirectly involved in the religious conversion of Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia. Namely, on the 17th July 1941, the Holy Congregation for the Eastern Church sent a letter to the president of the Episcopal Conferences, Archbishop Stepinac, in which he emphasized the thesis on the origin of the Orthodox Serbs from the ethnos of the Roman Catholic Croatian people.¹⁵¹

In mid-September 1941, the supreme Croatian government, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, hastened the religious conversion.¹⁵² The reasons why both sides, state and church, did that are simple: they wanted to do it all as quickly as possible, due to political and other circumstances that concerned the solution of the so-called "Serbian issue" as a whole, bearing in mind the manner of the "Ustasha Holy Trinity" by Minister Mile Budak.¹⁵³

The State Directorate once again informed all subordinate authorities that, according to Pavelić's personal wish, the Religious Department was established to take care of the religious conversions.¹⁵⁴ However, the Ministry of the Interior considered that the Government Presidency had already established a special Religious Department in the State Directorate for Reconstruction, whose jurisdiction includes issues of this religious conversion.¹⁵⁵ Finally, both state institutions agreed on the purpose of the Religious Department, so they concurred to put all material and spiritual resources at its disposal.¹⁵⁶

of seven years old, who is in the way of our Ustasha order... Even in my priest's robes, you should know that, when necessary, I am ready to take a machine gun in my hands and put to death all that is against the Ustasha state and government, down to the cradle." – Josip Horvat, Zdenko Štambuk, *Dokumenti o protunarcodnom radu i zločinima jednog dijela katoličkog klera*, Zagreb, 1946, 59 (*Josip Horvat, Zdenko Štambuk, *Documents on anti-national work and crimes of a part of the Catholic clergy*, Zagreb, 1946, 59) (hereinafter: J. Хорват, З. Штамбук, *Документи...*).

¹⁵¹ V. Novak, *Magnum Crimen*, 623. (*V. Novak, *Magnum Crimen*, 623.)

¹⁵² *Katolički list*, 1. 10. 1941 (*Catholic News*, 15. 5. 1941.); BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 310-1/23; *Ibid*, 182-31/1.

¹⁵³ С. Симић, *Прекришћавање...*, 69-70. (*S. Simić, *Conversion...*, 69-70.)

¹⁵⁴ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 182-31/1; *Ibid*, 213- 41/2.

¹⁵⁵ *Katolički list*, 31/1941. (*Catholic News*, 31/1941.)

¹⁵⁶ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 203-1/52.

The haste to perform the religious conversion was encouraged by the state leadership several times, first at the end of July, then in the middle of September 1941. In mid-October, the head of the Religious Department Dionisije Fra Juričev did it. Such was the haste that the previously legal method was now accelerated by omitting Ustasha detainees and inmates as instances in deciding on the suitability of the converts.¹⁵⁷

In a letter issued on the 24th October 1941, Dionisije Fra Juričev informed all state authorities about collective religious conversion as the best, fastest and most desirable solution to the Serbian issue. In his work, Juričev repeated the earlier recommendation that Gypsies and Aromanians should not be allowed to be converted.¹⁵⁸

State authorities announced, another in a series, a legal provision that regulated the payment of various expenses to priests for performing the religious conversion.¹⁵⁹ With the opening of new parishes, the expenses of priests increased. In addition to all that, there were a lot of expenses related to the remodeling of Orthodox churches into Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic churches, the purchase of various books, etc. That is why the bishops individually asked the state authorities for money.¹⁶⁰

The prelates of the Roman Catholic Church in the Independent State of Croatia, as one side of the participants in the conversion of Orthodox Serbs, at their Episcopal Conferences on the 17-18th November 1941, also discussed that activity.¹⁶¹ The general conclusion of the con-

¹⁵⁷ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 182-31/1; Ibid, 213- 41/2.

¹⁵⁸ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 182-31/1.

¹⁵⁹ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 313-54/1.

¹⁶⁰ Letter from the Bishop of Đakovo to Antun Akšamović to the Great Župa of Vuka on the 3rd October 1941 – ХДА, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 4.800. (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 4.800.)

¹⁶¹ Herzegovinian Bishop Alojzije Fra Mišić was not present at the Episcopal Conferences. Viktor Novak explained this expressed his disagreement with rechristening and cited a letter to Archbishop Stepinac, in which he wrote that the Ustashes arrested rechristened Serbs in churches and killed them in front of the courtyard. – V. Novak, *Magnum Crimen*, 630. (*Viktor Novak, *Magnum Crimen*, 630.) They informed the public about their work – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 227-12/34.

ferences was that the Roman Catholic Church, on the basis of dogmatic principles, is the only one obliged to solve the problems of conversion, because it is authorised to do so by the Divine Law and by canonical provisions. For them, rechristening was a covenant work, so they had to take it all to a higher level. Therefore, the Croatian Catholic archbishops and bishops and the Greek Catholic bishop elected between themselves, the so-called the "Committee of Three" consisted of: the president of the Episcopal Conferences and the Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, the Bishop of Senj, Viktor Burić, and the administrator of the Diocese of Križevac, Janko Šimrak. The board was supposed to be the supreme advisory body for the conversion of Orthodox Christians, which would necessarily coordinate its work with the work of the Ministry of Justice and Theology.

In addition to the Committee of Three, there was also a "Working Executive Committee", which consisted of professors from the Faculty of Theology in Zagreb. Among them, the most famous by name was Krunoslav Draganović, probably the most important.¹⁶² This committee was supposed to, in addition to other tasks, collect data on problems in the field and propose possible solutions. Unfortunately, there is no information available about their work.

The Episcopal Conference also based its conclusions on the provisions of the Holy Congregation for the Eastern Church, issued on the 17th July 1941. It is interesting that the congregation considers the Orthodox Serbs to be "united", those who once, allegedly, "belonged to the Catholic Church but withdrew from the Catholic faith under threats and pressure from the Orthodox". Priest Krunoslav Draganović is the creator of the phrase "apostates from the Catholic Church", which he used in his dissertation. The Congregation understood rechristening as a need and the activity of the bishops in Croatia in that work as their "contribution for the proper development of Catholicism".¹⁶³

¹⁶² Krunoslav Draganović received his doctorate in 1937 at the Oriental Institute in Rome. The title of the dissertation is "Massenübertritte von Katholiken zur 'Orthodoxie' im kroatischen Sprachgebiet Zur der Turkenherrschaft". See about Draganović: С. Симић, *Прекришћавање...*, 5-14. (*S. Simić, *Conversion...*, 5-14);

¹⁶³ BA, HДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 227-12/34.

The participants of the Episcopal Conferences addressed Leader Pavelić with a letter in which they presented him with their conclusions, which, according to them, were conditioned by their excessive love and care for the Croatian people, for the Independent State of Croatia and for the Catholic faith. The bishops justified their conferences with many errors in performing the religious conversion, which they had to correct because they contributed to the fact that all the planned work was not completed as desired.¹⁶⁴

The Roman Catholic press wrote in its own way about the "religious unity" of Christians in the Balkans. Orthodoxy is most often accused of Croatian national disunity by claiming that Croats and Serbs were once of the same religion, Roman Catholic. But, according to those claims, Orthodoxy was expansionist, so many Croats, accepting Orthodoxy, became Serbs. Therefore, it is time, the Jesuits wrote in their newspaper, for the Serbs to "return to the old faith and thus become Croats again."¹⁶⁵

Many Roman Catholic priests had to go to their bishops for instructions before going to different regions to perform the religious conversion. While giving them instructions for work, they were also told about the importance of that work, comparing it to that of the Ustasha. The work of the priest was "fighting with spiritual weapons, which cultivates the soul, defends the divine law."

Instructions for the near future for Roman Catholic priests were written and published immediately after Archbishop Stepinac's visit to Rome in 1937: the Pope spoke about one flock and one shepherd.¹⁶⁶ And the Pope's wishes were best understood by Bishop Antun Akšamović of Đakovica, or someone close to him, when he printed the leaflet "Friendly Advice", which, among other things, read: "The Son of God, Jesus Christ, came to earth to prepare for eternal life and to bring salvation to people. That is why he announces to us: there will be one

¹⁶⁴ В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Преокришћавање Срба у...*, 64. (*V. Đ. Đurić, *The Conversion of Serbs in...*, 64.)

¹⁶⁵ *Život*, 3, Zagreb, 1941. These interpretations were repeated until the end of the Croatian state – *Hrvatski list*, 27. 2. 1942. (**Croatian Review*, 27. 2. 1942.)

¹⁶⁶ *Hrvatska straža*, Zagreb, 7. 12. 1937. (**Croatian Guard*, Zagreb, December 7, 1937.)

herd and one shepherd. This means: There will be one church and one church master who is Christ's deputy on earth and high priest in Christ's church. We need to implement that unity in the Independent State of Croatia."¹⁶⁷

The newspaper, which was under the auspices of the archbishop of Vrhbosna, Ivan Šarić, wrote very zealously about the need for the religious conversion. Their explanation was most often reduced to claims that Catholicism is the majority religion in the Ustasha state, that is, the religion of the majority of the state's people.¹⁶⁸ Emphasizing the state people represented the strengthening of the old Frankovian theses about one political, state people.

Immediately before the rechristening, throughout the Croatian state, through radio, brochures, leaflets, proclamations, sermons and in many other ways, a terrible propaganda was launched, which was supposed to help finish what had not been done in the past centuries. In particular, those leading in terms of texts about rechristening are: *Novi list*, *Hrvatski list*, *Nova Hrvatska*, *Hrvatski narod*, *Katolički list*, *Katolički tjednik* and *Spremnost*. There were cases when newspapers, which were published in Vienna, spread texts from the Croatian press about rechristening in a way that suited the Roman Catholic side, as well as the Croats. Even airplanes were used to distribute leaflets and proclamations.¹⁶⁹

In order to give special significance to the rechristening, preparations were made for the rechristened Serbs to be received by Leader Pavelić himself.¹⁷⁰ These forced encounters were even filmed and the stories were shown in magazines.

The exact or approximate number of the converted Serbs during the period of the Independent State of Croatia has never been deter-

¹⁶⁷ J. Хорват, 3. Штамбук, *Документи...*, 55 (*J. Horvat, Z. Štambuk, *Documents...*, 55); A. Manhattan, *The Vatican's...*, 82.

¹⁶⁸ *Katolički tjednik*, Sarajevo, 10. 8. 1941. (**Catholic weekly*, Sarajevo, August 10, 1941.)

¹⁶⁹ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 3191-25/2; *Ibid*, 319a-36/2.

¹⁷⁰ Pavelić received converts even on the days of the Episcopal Conferences in November 1941 – *Katolički list*, Zagreb, 46/1941 (**Catholic News*, 46/1941); *Hrvatski narod*, 19. 11. 1941. (**Croatian people*, 19. 11. 1941.)

mined. Local authorities, as well as all Roman Catholic priests, had to keep records of rechristening. In order to determine the approximate number of the converted Serbs, one should first of all take into account the very technology of rechristening, that is, the legislative regulation on the recording of this "covenant work".

The legal provision on conversion from one religion to another contained several parts. The first stage involved submitting an application to the district area, that is, to the city administration, about the wish to be converted. On the basis of the application, a confirmation of application was obtained.¹⁷¹ The same was repeated in the Circular issued on the 30th July 1941, with the addition that certificates of integrity are issued by district and municipal authorities in agreement with Ustasha headquarters and camps.¹⁷² This article of the Circular is interesting because of the wording that municipalities, that is, districts, are obliged to report on the number of those who were allowed, or refused, to convert. This meant that a good record would be kept of the number of people registered to convert, but also of those who would not be allowed to do so.¹⁷³ The head of the department several times asked all regional authorities for detailed reports in which they had to answer the questions of how many Orthodox there were, what interest there was in conversion, how many had been converted, how many had announced that they would be converted, who was teaching them Catholicism, why they did not opt for the religious conversion, etc.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Clause 1 Legal provisions – *Narodne novine*, 5. 5. 1941. (**National Newspaper*, 5. 5. 1941.) There are numerous examples of such work in: *Grada za historiju NOP-a Slavonije*, knj. 2, 5-6. (**Material for the history of the National Liberation Movement of Slavonia*, vol. 2, 5-6.)

¹⁷² Clause 2 of the Circular 48.468/1941 – BA, НДХ (**Military archive, Independent State of Croatia*), 182-31/1. Published in: В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Прекришћавање Срба...*, 45-46. (**V. Đ. Đurić, The Conversion of Serbs ...*, 45-46.)

¹⁷³ The report of the Osijek divisional area from the 18th October 1941 on the performed converting around Osijek, Nova Gradiška, and Vinkovci – BA, НДХ (**Military archive, Independent State of Croatia*), 61-30/18. During the creation of the Department of Religion at the Ministry of Justice and Theology, it was planned that all those who were rechristened would be registered: The Ministry's call for renewal issued on 12th September, 1941 – BA, НДХ (**Military archive, Independent State of Croatia*), 203-52/1.

¹⁷⁴ The notice of the Department of Religion issued on the 24th October 1941 – BA, НДХ (**Military archive, Independent State of Croatia*), 182-31/1. Published in: В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Прекришћавање Срба...*, 59-61. (**V. Đ. Đurić, The Conversion of Serbs ...*, 59-61.)

In addition to these requirements, the Department of Religion imperatively demanded that all of this be submitted to them in the form of a detailed monthly report.

Since the work regarding the rechristening seemed to the Croatian authorities to be time-consuming, the Department of Religion ordered to discontinue with the previous way of working, i.e. to omit asking for a decision from the Ustasha headquarters and camp inmates.¹⁷⁵ This directive contributed to a significant acceleration of conversion into Roman Catholicism, as mass conversions of Serbs began.¹⁷⁶

In the meantime, the Department of Theology asked its subordinate authorities to register the converted in the (newly opened) registers of births and baptisms.

The reports of regional districts, city authorities and all organisations of the Roman Catholic Church, which have been preserved in the archives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, are unreliable for assessments of the converted in a broader sense. Estimates about the converts on certain, smaller, territorial units are possible because some materials have been preserved.¹⁷⁷

The Department of Religion planned that many Serbs would be converted, about a million, provided that everything went as planned.¹⁷⁸

Conversions were so numerous that a great many new parishes had to be opened, and this was possible only with the help of the state. Because of this, in the greatest momentum of action, Dionisije Fra Juričev had to often turn to Pavelić himself for help. After their talks, the

¹⁷⁵ Circular no. 48/41 issued on the 16th October, 1941 – BA, НДХ, 182-31/1. Published in: В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Прекршћивање Срба...*, 56. (*V. Đ. Đurić, *The Conversion of Serbs ...*, 56.)

¹⁷⁶ The letter from the Bishop of Đakovo, Antun Akšamović, dated 3rd October 1941, to the authorities of the Great Parish of Vuka about the rechristening in the village of Tenja, when about 6,000 Serbs were converted in a few days, including about 600 children – ХДА, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 4800 (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 4800); BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 61-30/18.

¹⁷⁷ Such was the case with small local archives in Croatia, such as the Historical Archive of Slavonska Požega – *Grada za historiju NOP-a Slavonije*, књ. 2, 71. (**Material for the history of the National Liberation Movement of Slavonia*, vol. 2, 71.)

¹⁷⁸ Ј. Хорват, 3. Штамбук, *Документии...*, 117 (*J. Horvat, Z. Štambuk, *Documents...*, 117); It happened that they also converted Jews and thus saved their lives for a short time. Then others got their wealth – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 199-5/3.

Ministry of Justice and Theology addressed all the bishop's ordinariates with recommendations for further work, with ample state financial assistance.¹⁷⁹ Of course, the money also meant a new incentive for pastors and their work in creating new converts and new parishes.

In order to perceive, at least partially, the dimensions of the religious conversion, it is worth reading the data from several documents. The first is the report of the great prefect of the parish of Baranja from the 11th December 1941, where it was recorded that 95% of the approximately 2,200 Serb inhabitants of the Belo Brdo municipality were converted into Roman Catholics on the 26th November alone.¹⁸⁰ The second relates to the planned trip of the head of the Croatian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Germogen, to the areas of the Great Župa (*the administrative district) of Vuka: the manager of the Roman Catholic parish office informed the administrative state authorities in mid-June 1942 that in Vukovar, Borovo Selo, Lužac, Trpinja, Pačetin and Bršadin about 80% of Serbs were converted.¹⁸¹ A similar report from the Episcopal Ordinariate from Đakovo was sent to the Department of Religion at the beginning of October 1941. The report stated that almost the entire Serbian population, about 5,000 people, women and children, were converted in the areas of Čepin and Tenja.¹⁸²

In some places of Herzegovina, the Italians prevented the conversion, so the action failed. Due to the disruption of the action, the local Roman Catholic priests complained to their competent ordinariate.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ ХДА, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 4.800. (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 4.800.)

¹⁸⁰ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 213-4/9;61-30/18.

¹⁸¹ The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Archives fund..., unregistered.

¹⁸² ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 61-30/18; ХДА, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 4.800. (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 4.800.)

¹⁸³ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 189-2/10; The letter was addressed to the Bishop of Herzegovina Alojzije Fra Mišić, which means that he knew very well what was happening in his diocese. With that, the claims that he was an exception among bishops and archbishops in the Independent State of Croatia are also not justified. – Сима Симић, *Херцеговачки бискупи за време окупације Југославије*, Београд, 1990 (*Sima Simić, *Bishops of Herzegovina during the occupation of Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 1990) (hereinafter: С. Симић, *Херцеговачки бискупи...*).

While in some parts of the Independent State of Croatia the conversion was very successful, in others it was very weak. This was the case, for example, in the Great Župa of Posavje, as evidenced by the numerous reports of the prefect sent to the Ministry of the Interior in early 1942. Namely, in Posavina, almost no Serbs were converted, so the prefect asked for help from the authorities in the capital.¹⁸⁴

The first official number of converted Serbs, pronounced in Zagreb, was announced in a letter from Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac on the 12th May 1943 to Pope Pius XII. The archbishop mentioned 244,000 converted Serbs.¹⁸⁵ This information was accepted by the researchers of the Second World War in Yugoslavia, Viktor Novak,

¹⁸⁴ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia) , 174-36/2. It was similar in Bania – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 61a-54/8.

¹⁸⁵ *Suđenje Lisaku, Stepincu, Šaliću i družini, ustaško križarskim zločincima i njihovim pomagačima*, Zagreb, 1946, 289-306 (**Trial of Lisak, Stepinac, Šalić and company, Ustasha crusader criminals and their helpers*, Zagreb, 1946, 289-306); In this context, it is worth mentioning the assertions of Archbishop Stepinac's biographer, that Bogdan Rašković, an emissary of the Serbian Red Cross, allegedly told him (Stepinac) during a meeting in December 1942 in Zagreb: "Most prominent, let everyone convert, only to save their lives." – И. Мужих, *Павелић...*, 77. (*I. Mužić, *Pavelić...*, 77.)

Ivo Bogdan, a journalist and Roman Catholic priest, wrote in September 1941 that, until then, around 70,000 Serbs had been rechristened in the diocese of Banja Luka. This is, by the way, the first known information that has been published – *Vrhbosna*, 9-10, Sarajevo, 1941, 210. Informants of the Yugoslav royal government also wrote from various places in Europe about the situation in the Independent State of Croatia, and thus also about the conversion. One of them, Grga Andelinović, wrote about 80,000 converted people. In a report dated 23rd December, 1941, he wrote that it was a small number, considering that it only applied to the territories controlled by the Ustasha authorities. – Љ. Бобан, *Хрватска...*, 344 (*Lj. Boban, *Croatia...*, 344). Stjepo Perić, the representative of the Independent State of Croatia in Rome, met with the papal nuncio in mid-September 1941. On that occasion, Perić told him that until then, around 350,000 Orthodox Serbs had been rechristened. When the papal nuncio asked Perić if all this was done sincerely, he replied: "The feeling will come later!" – С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*, 384 (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 384). On 26th February, 1942, Nikola Rušinović, the representative of the Independent State of Croatia in the Vatican, wrote to Minister Mladen Lorković about his conversation with Archbishop Stepinac during his visit to the Pope. The archbishop spoke of 100,000 converted people and mentioned the possibility of doing so with another 400,000 Serbs. – И. Миховиловић, *Тајни документи...*, 102 (*I. Mihovilović, *Secret documents...*, 102). At the end of October 1941, in a highly confidential conversation, Leader Ante Pavelić said that Christianisation was the great hope of the Croatian state. On that occasion, he also mentioned about 250,000 rechristened Orthodox Serbs – И. Мужих, *Павелић...*, 43 (*I. Mužić, *Pavelić...*, 43). Pietro Marchi, the Italian general in Zagreb, after the conversation with Pavelić, in his report to Minister Galeac Ian, wrote down the leader's words: he told him that by then about 250,000 Serbs had already been rechristened. – С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*, 387 (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 387).

Sima Simić, Bogdan Krizman, Fikreta Jelić Butić, Branko Petranović, and many others of lesser importance and knowledge.¹⁸⁶

In its post-war announcements, documents and publications, the Serbian Orthodox Church accepted the figure of 240,000 converted Serbs as its official data.¹⁸⁷

All local authorities in Croatia informed, in various ways, Orthodox Serbs to apply for conversion and warned them of the consequences of not responding. This was done through circulars in which the perishing was explained as a census of all the unconverted.¹⁸⁸ The Croatian authorities did not speak publicly about the possible consequences of turning a deaf ear to the call, but communicated them in mutual relations, from lower to higher instances, as a judgment of only two or three words. The sentence was a punishment for not submitting a request for conversion, and it was very short and clear: "place in a camp".¹⁸⁹

The highest Croatian authorities several times, in their orders and circulars, warned their subordinates to accept converted Serbs in the same manner as other Roman Catholic Croats. However, all this had no impact on the field because the Serbs who were converted upon the request had no protection.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Mladen Colić accepted the figure of 244,000 rechristened. However, he added that in 1941 alone, around 100,000 Serbs were rechristened – *Takozvana Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, Beograd, 1973, 372 (**The so-called Independent State of Croatia*, Belgrade, 1973, 372); Mike Aarons and John Loftus wrote that "during the war, Pavelić forcibly converted tens of thousands of Serbian Orthodox Christians under the threat of death." – *Пацовски канали*, Београд, 1991, 81 (**Rat Ducts*, Belgrade, 1991, 81). Ivan Cvitković mentioned 240,000 converted Serbs – И. Цвитковић, *Ко је био...*, 167 (*Ivan Cvitković, *Who was...*, 167). (Cvitković referred to the book I. T. Dragoun, *Le dossier du cardinal Stepinac*, Paris, 1958); The same information was accepted in their works by Edmond Paris, Hervé Laurier and Avro Manhattan.

¹⁸⁷ *Гласник СПЦ*, 1946, 53 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 1946, 53). АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1060/зап. 237/1947 (**The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1060/Minutes 237/1947*). This information was cited by many authors and accepted as the most accurate.

¹⁸⁸ *Građa za historiju NOP-a u Slavoniji*, II, 28, 48, 63, 64 (**Material for the history of the National Liberation Movement of Slavonia*, II, 28, 48, 63, 64).

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 56, 61, 63, 64.

¹⁹⁰ ВА, НДХ (**Military archive, Independent State of Croatia*), 182-31/1. The same fate was experienced by the Serbs who were forced to accept Islam – ВА, НДХ (**Military archive, Independent State of Croatia*), 195-7/18.

Converted Serbs were accused of communism, so they were sent to a camp in Gospić, or to Jadovno on Velebit. The fact that they were converted did not save them from that.¹⁹¹ Therefore, the circulars should be understood only as a perfidious game. There were several cases where Serbs were converted and then killed in churches.¹⁹² There are many cases of mass killing of converted Serbs, and the Chetniks or communists were blamed for it, under the pretense that they did it, because that was how they punished the people who allowed themselves to be converted.¹⁹³

Although equality with other Roman Catholics is formally guaranteed by laws and orders, there are many cases of converted Serbs being harassed in various ways, for example, by being fired from their jobs. Thus, the Ministry of Education, in April 1942, ordered that no teacher or tutor should remain in schools without being converted. And this order was changed very quickly, so there was not a single teacher in the schools who was formerly of the Orthodox faith and was converted or became a Muslim in those days.¹⁹⁴

Even inmates in concentration camps, those who had only hours or days left to live, had to accept the religious conversion. However, there were also cases when the conversion to Roman Catholicism meant salvation from the camp.¹⁹⁵ It happened that Serbs sought salvation in accepting Protestantism. However, the Ustasha soon punished them, usually by sending them to Jasenovac, a camp from which there was no return.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ В. Дедијер, А. Милетић, *Против заборава...*, 265. (*V. Dedier, A. Miletić, *Against oblivion...*, 265)

¹⁹² Such is the case of the massacre in the church in Glina – L. Hory, M. Broszcat, *Der Kroatische...*, 101-102.

¹⁹³ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 61a-54/8; *Ibid.*, 61a-54/6.

¹⁹⁴ Архив Института за Историју, Бањалука, 7010/42 (*Archives of the Institute of History, Banjaluka, 7010/42).

¹⁹⁵ АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 12.901 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, Inventory Number 12.901); Alojzije Benigar claimed that Archbishop Stepinac saved the converted Serbs from the camp by petitions addressed to Leader Pavelić. However, Benigar provided no evidence. – И. Цвитковић, *Ко је био...*, 87 (*Ivan Cvitković, *Who was...*, 87).

¹⁹⁶ С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*, 384 (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 384).

The real goal that was to be achieved by the conversion was shown and announced by the Croatian Ustasha authorities in a directive from the Presidency of the Government on the 13th January 1942, addressed to all state institutions. The directive consisted of only two sentences, the first of which was: "You are informed that Greek-Easterners who have converted to the Roman Catholic faith are considered Croats."¹⁹⁷ A little later, they announced that this also applies to those Serbs who accepted Islam.¹⁹⁸ In this way, they confirmed in practice the "Ustasha holy trinity" according to which one part of the Serbs should be killed, the other part should be deported to Serbia and the rest converted to Catholicism and thus melted into Croats!

The first communist organisation to react to conversion into Roman Catholicism was the District Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia for Srem, in December 1942. The leaflet "No to Forced Conversion" was printed in which the Serbs were requested not to convert, but to fight with the "Croatian brothers" against the occupiers.¹⁹⁹

The members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, realistically, met with the conversion in the fall of 1942, during the arrival of units with the Supreme Staff in the Bosnian Krajina. Even then, they had a clear and unequivocal attitude towards it, based on the reports from the units from Bania and Kordun.²⁰⁰

Various institutions of the communists, in special ways, declared what they thought about conversion. This was done first by local committees, written in proclamations and leaflets, etc. They did so in a

¹⁹⁷ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 160-26/8; Ibid, 190-45/3.

¹⁹⁸ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 200-15/7.

¹⁹⁹ Б. Петрановић, *Србија...*, 359 (B. Petranović, *Serbia...*, 359).

²⁰⁰ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 28-13/1. The local Ustasha authorities in Bania complained to the superior authorities that the communists were hindering the conversion of the Serbs by forcing them to return to Orthodoxy. However, the reality was quite different. Namely, after the conversion, Croats killed many Serbs and accused communists or partisans of those crimes. When, in December 1942, Vlada Zečević, the religious officer at the Supreme Headquarters, spoke with a Roman Catholic friar in the vicinity of Cazin, and asked him why they were converting the Serbs, the friar replied that they did it because they had their own authority. Immediately afterwards, he suggested to Zečević that they, the partisans, should return all converted Christians to Orthodoxy, since they were in power at that moment. – Станко Младеновић, *Пош Влада Зечевих*, Београд, 1975, 230 (*Stanko Mladenović, *Priest Vlada Zečević*, Belgrade, 1975, 230).

text in the newspaper *Srpska riječ* (*in the original: *Српска пујеч*), the newsletter of the Serbian Club of Councilors of the National Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Croatia (*in the original: Zemaljsko Antifašističko Vijeće Narodnog Oslobođenja Hrvatske - ZAVNOH*).²⁰¹ Something similar was published by *Borba* (*in the original: *Борба*), in March 1945, in the "Questions and Answers" column, the official position on religious conversion: everything they said about it in the National Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Croatia on the 25th August 1944 was repeated.²⁰² That decision read: "It is established that the involuntary and forced conversion of a certain number of Serbs from Orthodoxy to Catholicism or some other religion caused by the violence of the occupiers and their helpers is fundamentally devoid of any morality and justification, that it is contrary to the guaranteed freedom of religion and conscience".²⁰³ The text in "Borba" did not talk about the essence but hid the truth by not naming the culprits, using emphatic rhetoric about symmetry, the occupiers and their helpers, etc.²⁰⁴

Arthur Hafner, one of the officers from the staff of General Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, in mid-June 1941, had his own position on the conversion of Orthodox Serbs. At the same time, he observed the impact of all this on events in Croatia, having in front of him also the global interests of German politics towards religion, in this case Orthodoxy. In his report, he wrote that forced conversion should be stopped, regardless of the fact that it was initiated by the top of the Roman Catholic Church. This request must be understood in the context of German plans to create a new Orthodox church organisation in Croatia, which would not have the customs of Serbia but of Croatia.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ *Српска пујеч*, 4. 9. 1944 (*Serbian word, 4. 9. 1944).

²⁰² *Борба*, 20. 3. 1945 (*The Struggle, 20. 3. 1945).

²⁰³ Slobodan Nešović, Branko Petranović, *AVNOJ i revolucija*, Beograd, 1983, 569-572 (*Slobodan Nešović, Branko Petranović, *The Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia and the Revolution*, Belgrade, 1983, 569-572).

²⁰⁴ "О насилном превођењу Срба у католичку веру", *Борба*, 20. 3. 1945 (*"On the forcible conversion of Serbs to the Catholic faith", *The Struggle*, 20. 3. 1945).

²⁰⁵ ВА, НАВ-Н-Т-501, 265/335-340; Б. Кризман, *НДХ...*, 128-130 (*B. Krizman, *Independent State of Croatia...*, 128-130).

The secretary of the Vatican embassy in Zagreb, in the Independent State of Croatia, Giuseppe Masucci, considered conversion to be a saving act, which would save the lives of the Orthodox. This is what he said to Bishop Lah during the conversation. He never said from whom the Orthodox were saved by conversion.²⁰⁶ Krunoslav Dragano-
vić claimed that he had never witnessed the conversion in "Serbian vil-
lages where it was forced." However, he never explained why the con-
version was performed.²⁰⁷

In historiography, it is a well-established opinion that the bish-
op of Herzegovina, Alojzije Fra Mišić, protested against the con-
version. But Sima Simić factually denied that.²⁰⁸ The same was
claimed and written about certain Roman Catholic priests who al-
legedly saved Serbs by issuing the certificates on rechristening.²⁰⁹
To these facts should be added the claims of some biographers of
Archbishop Stepinac that the very idea of rechristening originated
with the Orthodox Serbs, and not with the Ustasha or the archbish-
op.²¹⁰ In this context comes the story that Ustasha leader Pavelić
cared little for religion and Christianity in general, considering it to
be below the level and importance of a state issue, such as the crea-
tion of Croatia. He allegedly told the famous sculptor Ivan Meštrović
that he did not care much about the Catholic faith, so Serbs should
not be Catholicised by force. For Pavelić, the most important thing
is their Croatianisation. He said that he will accept Orthodoxy him-
self when the Serbs recognise that they are Croats.²¹¹ However, ac-
cording to others, Pavelić was in other political spheres. Namely,
Archbishop Stepinac, said for the leader that he did not think as
a Christian but as a political practitioner who enabled the Roman

²⁰⁶ Б. Кризман, *НДХ...*, 142 (*B. Krizman, *Independent State of Croatia...*, 142).

²⁰⁷ М. Аронс, Х. Лофтус, *Пацовски канали*, 109 (*M. Arons, H. Loftus, *Rat Ducts*, 109).

²⁰⁸ С. Симић, *Херцеговачки бискупји...*, 15-20 (*S. Simić, *Bishops of Herzegovina...*, 15-20).

²⁰⁹ *Херцеговина у НОБ-у*, II, Београд, 1986, 195 (**Herzegovina in the National Liberation Struggle*, II, Belgrade, 1986, 195).

²¹⁰ М. Landercy, *Kardinal Alojzije Stepinac*, Moslavački Selci, 1989, 103 (*M. Landercy, *Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac*, Moslavački Selci, 1989, 103) (hereinafter: M. Landercy, *Kardinal Alojzije Stepinac...*).

²¹¹ А. Бенигар, *Алојзије Стейинац...*, 366 (*A. Benigar, *Alojzije Stepinac...*, 366).

Catholic Church to work on "returning many apostates to the true Catholic Church".²¹²

Catholic publicists wrote that Archbishop Stepinac had to move his priests in order to save them from the Orthodox Serbs because, allegedly, they were in danger of being killed for strictly adhering to religious regulations and thus delayed the conversion.²¹³

In the protest letter of a group of Roman Catholic priests of Slovenes, expelled and settled in Serbia, to Belgrade Archbishop Josip Ujčić, the conversion of Orthodox Serbs was mentioned and condemned.²¹⁴ The events in the Independent State of Croatia and their consequences for German interests were very inconvenient, considering the plans for peaceful territories. On 17th February, 1942, the head of the Security Service from Belgrade reported on those occasions to his authorities in Berlin, especially on the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and the conversion of Orthodox Serbs. He claimed that the violent Roman Catholicisation was accompanied by unprecedented crimes against the Serbs.²¹⁵ There was no sign of any reaction from Berlin.

After the first news about the destruction of the Serbian people in Ustasha Croatia, after the two memoranda of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church sent to the German administrative and military authorities in Belgrade, there were various reactions in London, the seat of the Yugoslav royal government and a place with many politicians who fled from Yugoslavia.²¹⁶ News of the destruction reached London in various ways. The news sometimes mentioned the

²¹² С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*, 310-311 (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 310-311).

²¹³ M. Landercy, *Kardinal Alojzije Stepinac*, 15 (*M. Landercy, *Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac*, 15); A. Бенигар, *Алојзије Стјећинац*, 538 (*A. Benigar, *Alojzije Stepinac...*, 538); Franjo Tuđman, *Bespuća povijesne zbiljnosti*, Zagreb, 1989, 403 (*Franjo Tuđman, *The Abyss of Historical Reality*, Zagreb, 1989, 403). The Slovenian priest Kuhar, who lived and worked in America, wrote that Catholics have the right to convert to Roman Catholicism, but he condemned it if it was done by force. – А. Манхатан, *Католички џепор...*, 101 (*A. Manhattan, *Catholic Terror...*, 101); A. Manhattan, *The Vatican's...*, 116.

²¹⁴ See the integral version of this letter in: В. Ђ. Ђурић – *Прекрышаванье Срба у...*, 139-144 (*V. Đ. Đurić, *The Conversion of Serbs in...*, 139-144).

²¹⁵ M. Broszat, L. Hory, *Der Kroatische...*, 120.

²¹⁶ AJ (*Archives of Yugoslavia), 103, Mission in the Vatican, unregistered.

rechristening.²¹⁷ Based on the knowledge of all this, the royal government sent a protest to the pope in the Vatican, the president of the United States of America and the government of Great Britain. There were cases when the protest addressed to the Vatican government was exclusively about the rechristening. However, there were no echoes or reactions to all that.²¹⁸

The tragic fate of the Serbian people and the Serbian Orthodox Church, and especially the rechristening, was the subject of several memoranda that the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church wrote and sent to Milan Nedić and the German military commanders of Serbia. Thus, on the 15th January 1942, a memorandum was submitted on the occasion of the rechristening in the Independent State of Croatia.

The very act of rechristening of Orthodox Serbs in some parts of the Independent State of Croatia was photographed by Italian officers, and later published in their newspapers, commenting on it with a lot of irony and cynicism.²¹⁹

The World Union of Churches and the International Christian News and Information Service, whose headquarters were in Switzerland, received news from the Yugoslav consulate there about the suffering of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Independent State of Croatia. Some of it was published in official gazettes without further comment.²²⁰

In June 1941, and in the following months, all Ustasha leaders emphasized Muslims as the purest Croats, saying that their mentor, Ante Starčević, was the first to emphasize this.²²¹ This meant that Islam was equal to Roman Catholicism in Ustasha Croatia. Religious equality was only formally and politically justified at the time of the creation of the state. Muslims did not have security in every respect, unlike Roman Catholics, and because of this there were several protests by the Islam-

²¹⁷ These are various reports and letters about the situation in Croatia – Љ. Бобан, *Хрвајиска...* (*Lj. Boban, *Croatia...*)

²¹⁸ AJ (*Archives of Yugoslavia), 103, Mission in the Vatican, unregistered.

²¹⁹ С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*, 388 (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 388).

²²⁰ AJ (*Archives of Yugoslavia), 103, Mission in the Vatican, unregistered.

²²¹ *Katolički dnevnik*, 20.7.1941. (**The Catholic Journal*, 20.7.1941.)

ic religious leader, reis ul ulema, to the Ustasha government in Zagreb. The religious leader complained about the treatment of (Orthodox) Serbs who were Islamised under the then present circumstances.²²²

Serbs, due to terror and perishing just because they are Orthodox, accepted Islam, wanting to save themselves. Muslim clerics promised them protection if they accepted Islam.²²³ However, in those regions, where Muslims were the majority population, this was no guarantee for them, as there is sufficient information in the complaint of the Muslim leader to the Ustasha state authorities.²²⁴

Local Muslims, mostly in Ustasha uniforms, forced Serbs to accept Islam, with great harassment and threats.²²⁵ There were other cases, completely opposite. Namely, the Muslims themselves, led by their hodjas, offered Islamisation as a salvation. There were also many cases of the Muslim population waging a real religious war, invading villages, threatening, robbing and killing, in order to force as many Serbs as possible to accept Islam.²²⁶

Islamisation did not save the Serbs from destruction, there were cases when entire villages inhabited by Serbs were Islamised and after a few days everyone alive in them was killed.²²⁷

The Islamisation of the Serbs was predicted by the bishop of Kotor and the administrator of the Dubrovnik diocese, Pavao Butorac, in a letter to Archbishop Stepinac in November 1941. In the letter, he wrote, among other things, that they must count on the fact that the Serbs will accept Islam out of spite for the Catholics. Therefore, he proposed not to send priests among the Serbs who would rather use a knife and a gun than a cross.²²⁸

²²² BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 169-2/30; *Ibid*, 189-4/19; *Ibid*, 213-45/3.

²²³ Letter from the Prefect of the Great Parish of Krbava and Psat – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 195-5/10.

²²⁴ Letter of reis-ul-ulema to the Presidency of the Government of the Independent State of Croatia – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 169-30/2; *Ibid*, 213-3/45.

²²⁵ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 174-9/7.

²²⁶ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 195-10/5.

²²⁷ Е. Лорјер, *Убице...*, 106 (*Е. Lorijer, *Killers...*, 106).

²²⁸ В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Прекршћивање Срба у...*, 72 (*В. Ђ. Đurić, *The Conversion of Serbs in...*, 72).

In the Križevac Diocese, that is, the Greek Catholic Diocese, the desire of the bishops for the Orthodox to become Uniates is noticeable. The Croatian government did not allow it.²²⁹ Radoslav Fra Glavaš, head of the Department of Divine Worship of the Ministry of Justice and Divine Theology, in a circular issued on the 14th July 1941 required all episcopal and archbishopric ordinariates to inform their subordinate parish offices in a very confidential manner that they would not allow the Orthodox to become Uniates.²³⁰ The Croatian authorities, in a circular issued on the 30th July unequivocally warned about their earlier orders, according to which unification is not allowed, except in places where such parishes have existed since earlier times.²³¹ Although the government emphasized the ban on unification, such cases still occurred in 1942. The ultimate goal of this process was the same, which is Croatianisation.²³²

Before the war, there were about 5,000 Rusyns and Ukrainians in Prnjavor and its surroundings. There was also an Orthodox parish where Grigorije Križanovski, a priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church, worked. The Ustashas arrested him like the other Serbian priests, with the intention of deporting him to Serbia. Križanovski was arrested and taken to Caprag near Sisak. From there, they returned him to Banja Luka and there offered him to side with the Greek Catholics, that is, the Uniates. The Croatian authorities wanted to persuade him to cooperate, so that he would become a kind of guide for other priests. Križanovski refused all that and was therefore sent back to Caprag and exiled to Serbia.²³³ A similar issue happened to the priests in the villages near Koprivnica and Osijek. In the village of Plavšinci near

²²⁹ XDA, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 5.612-B-1942 (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 5.612-B-1942).

²³⁰ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 87-6/37.

²³¹ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 182-1/31.

²³² Letter from the Ministry of Justice and Theology dated 1st May, 1942 to the Uniate or Greek Catholic bishop of Križevci, Janko Šimrak – XDA, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 5.612-B-1942 (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 5.612-B-1942).

²³³ ДАС, Комесаријат за избеглице..., (*State Archives of Serbia, Commissariat for Refugees...) Statements of priests, unregistered.

Koprivnica, the Orthodox priest agreed to the unification, but there were no people because they were all sent to the concentration camp in Jasenovac. A few Roman Catholic and Uniate priests offered the Orthodox priest from Slavonska Orahovica to accept the union, in order to persuade all the peasants of the surrounding villages to do the same. However, nothing came of it.²³⁴

²³⁴ В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Прекршћивање Срба у...*, 75 (*V. Đ. Đurić, *The Conversion of Serbs...75*).

4.

THE DESTINY OF THE PRIESTS OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The April War of 1941 found Metropolitan Petar of Dabar-Bosnia in the center of the Church Metropolitanate.²³⁵ After the bombing of Sarajevo, his friends urged him to take refuge in the monastery of the Holy Trinity near Pljevlja. He stayed there until the 21st April when he returned to Sarajevo. His friends advised him to take refuge in Serbia or Montenegro. However, the Metropolitan did not obey to the advice and waited for his fate. The first to visit him (on the 27th April) were German officers to search the metropolitan building. The commissioner of the Croatian authorities for Bosnia, Božidar Brale, a Roman Catholic priest and sworn Ustasha from earlier years, forbade the Metropolitan and priests to use the Cyrillic alphabet. He refused, so the punishment soon reached him. That was the beginning of his suffering. The Metropolitan summoned those priests who could come to him and advised them what to do.²³⁶ Metropolitan Petar was arrested on the 12th May 1941 and taken to the Ustasha police.²³⁷ After three days, they returned

²³⁵ *Сјоменица православног свештеника – жртва фашистичког терора и њених бораца у НОБ-у 1941–1945*, Београд, 1960, 21-22 (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy – victims of fascist terror and fallen fighters in the National Liberation Struggle 1941–1945*, Belgrade, 1960, 21-22) (hereinafter: *Сјоменица православног свештеника...*) (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy...*).

²³⁶ Testimonies of priests expelled to Serbia – *Гласник СПЦ*, 32/1951, 49-50 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 32/1951, 49-50).

²³⁷ The arrest warrant was written by Roman Catholic priest Božidar Bralo – E. Paris, *Convert or die*, 73.

him to the metropolitan building to collect some of his belongings. On the same day, they took him to Zagreb. In prison, he was treated like a common criminal. He was transferred from Zagreb to the Kerestinac prison near Samobor. He was detained there until the 12th June and then driven to Gospić. There are several versions about his further destiny.²³⁸

The proclamation of the Independent State of Croatia found the Diocesan of Banja Luka, Platon, in Banja Luka.²³⁹ On the same day, he was ordered to leave the Ustasha state as a Serbian. However, he remained in the city, in Banja Luka, in the center of his diocese. In the meantime, the Germans arrived at the diocesan's palace and occupied several rooms for their own needs, but did not harass Diocesan Platon. On the 27th April, the Ustasha Commissioner for Krajina, Viktor Gutić, requested in a letter from Diocesan Platon to appoint a deputy archbishop who will do the archbishop's work since he, Platon, must leave.²⁴⁰ The Diocesan refused. In his reply, he wrote to Gutić: "I was canonically and legally appointed by the competent authorities as the

²³⁸ The place of martyrdom of Metropolitan Peter remains unknown – Љубомир Дурковић Јакшић, "Учесће патријарха Гаврила и Српске православне цркве у догађајима испред и за време марта 1941 и њихово страдање у току рата", *Гласник СПЦ*, 6/1980, 146 (*Ljubomir Durković Jakšić, "The participation of Patriarch Gavriilo and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the events before and during March 1941 and their suffering during the war", *Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 6/1980, 146). According to the statements of the expelled Serbs, Metropolitan Petar was imprisoned in Gospić in August 1941, in serious condition and with his beard shaved. Further fate is unknown – DAS, Commissariat for Refugees, unregistered, statement of Milan Ljuština from Donji Lapac. According to the first, he was taken from Gospić to Koprivnica. There he became utterly ill, so they had to take him to Stenjevec hospital near Zagreb. All traces of him are lost there. This news was also heard in the Patriarchate, so Metropolitan Josif asked Nedić to intervene with the German military-administrative authorities, to check the authenticity of everything with the Croatian Ustasha authorities: Писмо митрополита Јосифа Недићу од 2. јула 1942. године – АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1759/зап. 250 (*Letter from Metropolitan bishop Josif to Nedić dated July 2, 1942 – The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1759/Minutes 250). Nedić replied only in October 1942 that the fate of the metropolitans was unknown – The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1841 on 5th November, 1942. According to another, he was taken to the Jadovno camp on Velebit and killed there in some execution ground, together with many priests and ordinary people: the name of the metropolitan was on the list of martyred archbishops and priests, carved into the rock on Velebit, and it stayed until 1992. – Атанасије Јевтић, *Ог Косова до Јадовна*, 250 (*Atanasije Jevtić, *From Kosovo to Jadovno*, 250); According to the third, he was taken from Gospić to the Jasenovac camp, where he was killed and thrown into a furnace.

²³⁹ *Споменица православног свештјеника...*, 23 (*Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy...23).

²⁴⁰ *Hrvatska krajina*, Banja Luka, 29. 4. 1941. (*Croatian Frontier, Banja Luka, 29. 4. 1941.)

Diocesan of Banja Luka, and as such I have committed myself before God, the church and the people to take care of my spiritual flock, permanently and steadfastly, regardless of the circumstances and events, inseparably tying my life and destiny with the life and destiny of my spiritual flock and remaining in their midst on spiritual guard for all the time as long as the Lord supports me in my life, staying with my flock like a good shepherd who lays down his soul for his sheep."²⁴¹ The Diocesan's answer was his death sentence.

On Sunday, the 4th May, the Croats ordered the Diocesan to leave the city within a few hours. On the same day, he turned to Banja Luka bishop Josip Garić for help.²⁴² That same night, the executioners, the Croat Ustasha, came and took the Diocesan and episcopal vicar from Bosanska Gradiška, Dušan Subotić, in the direction of Kotor Varoš. Their bodies were found on the 23rd May, 1941 in the Vrbanja River. They massacred them alive, gouged out their eyes, cut off their ears and noses, pulled out their beards, beat their legs and arms, and slaughtered them. They were killed by a bullet in the back of the head.²⁴³ This is how Diocesan Platon ended his life.

The April War of 1941 found Bishop Sava in the episcopal center in Plaški.²⁴⁴ The Italians occupied that area and held it until the end of May 1941. Then the Croat Ustashes came. They immediately arrested a group of prominent and wealthy Serbs, among them Bishop Sava and several priests. This happened on the 21st May 1941. A few days later, the Ustasha camp prisoner Josip Tomljenović ordered the bishop that he must, as a Serbian, leave Croatia. The bishop refused and thus determined his destiny. He was arrested on the 17th June, together with

²⁴¹ Лубомир Дурковић-Јакшић, *Плајтон Јовановић епископ бањалучки, Крајувјевац*, 1986, 132 (*Ljubomir Durković-Jakšić, *Platon Jovanović, Bishop of Banja Luka, Kragujevac*, 1986, 132).

²⁴² Bishop Josip Garić of Banja Luka had a part in shaping the fate of Diocesan Platon – V. Novak, *Magnum Crimen*, 687; E. Paris, *Convert or die*, 72-73.

²⁴³ The manuscript "Прогони и страдања српских православних епископа у Независној Држави Хрватској" – АЈ ("Persecutions and suffering of Serbian Orthodox bishops in the Independent State of Croatia" – Archives of Yugoslavia), 103-17, page 11; Announcements of the State Commission for Determining the Crimes of Occupiers and Their Helpers No. 66-93, Belgrade, 1946, 77.

²⁴⁴ *Сјоменица православних свештеника...*, 25-26 (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy...*, 25-26).

three priests.²⁴⁵ They were driven from Plaški in the direction of Gospić. The last time this group of priests was seen was in the middle of August 1941, when they were taken in a crowd of about 2,000 Serbs to Velebit, to the death camps.²⁴⁶

The events of April 1941 found Metropolitan Dositej of Zagreb in Zagreb.²⁴⁷ On the same day, as soon as the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia was declared, he was arrested together with his deacon.²⁴⁸ In prison, they treated him like a common criminal. There, on the orders of the Ustasha, the metropolitan was beaten by other detainees. Since he was sick, but also tortured, the Croatian authorities, out of fear that he would die in their prison, transferred him to the Roman Catholic Hospital of the Sisters of Mercy. Instead of being treated in the hospital, he continued to suffer humiliation and insults.

Metropolitan Dositej, in a very difficult mental and physical condition, was brought to the railway station on the 8th May 1941 and put on a train to Belgrade.²⁴⁹ After arriving in Belgrade, the tortured Metropolitan was treated in a sanatorium from the 9th May. In the meantime,

²⁴⁵ That the camp head Josip Tomljenović ordered the arrest and liquidation of the bishop and other priests can be seen in the letter of the Ministry of Home Affairs No. 2858/Taj U as of 8th May, 1943 – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 92-55/4.

²⁴⁶ Borivoje M. Karapandžić wrote that the bishop was killed in Plaško, which is not true – Боривоје М. Карапанџић, *Грађански рат у Србији 1941-1945* (*Borivoje M. Karapandžić, *Civil War in Serbia 1941-1945*), Cleveland/USA, 1956, 32.

²⁴⁷ *Споменица љавославних свеишеника...*, 25-26 (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy...*, 25-26).

²⁴⁸ *Novi list*, Zagreb, 9. 5. 1941 (**New Leaflet*, Zagreb, 9. 5. 1941); There were also authors who wrote as follows: "The Ustashes (on an unspecified day in mid-1941) also killed the Serbian Orthodox Metropolitan Dositej of Zagreb, whom they arrested at the end of April of that year." – Ф. Чулиновић, *Окујавиторска љодјела...*, 345 (*F. Čulinović, *Occupying division...*, 345). The date of arrest is different with some authors. In *Споменица љавославних свеишеника 1941-1945* (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy 1941-1945*) it says that it was on 10th April. The same was written by Dušan Kašić – "Српска црква у тзв. Независној Држави Хрватској", *Српска љавославна црква 1920-1970*, 186 (*Dušan Kašić – "The Serbian Church in the so-called Independent State of Croatia", Serbian Orthodox Church 1920-1970, 186). Ђоко Слијерчевић in books *Историја Српске љавославне цркве* (*History of the Serbian Orthodox Church) does not mention anything about that event.

²⁴⁹ It has not been determined at whose request Metropolitan Dositej was sent to Belgrade. However, there are indications that this was done at the German request. There were authors of Roman Catholic provenance who wrote that the metropolitan was saved thanks to the Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac. Their claims are groundless because they did not provide any evidence – И. Мужих, *Павелић и Стейинац*, 73 (*I. Mužić, *Pavelić and Stepinac*, 73); M. Landercy, *Kardinal Stepinac*, 97 (*M. Landercy, *Cardinal Stepinac*, 97)

he was examined by specialist doctors. Their statement was clear and it showed a very tragic physical condition. The treatment lasted about three months. For several months, he was placed with friends, and then in the Vavedenje monastery. In the meantime, since the consequences of the torture from Zagreb were severe, due to which the metropolitan was unable to take care of himself, the Synod appointed him a guardian. He died on the 13th January 1945 in Belgrade and was buried in the gate of the Vavedenje monastery in Senjak.²⁵⁰

The expulsion of priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church from the Independent State of Croatia was first mentioned at a meeting of German and Croatian representatives on the 4th June 1941 in Zagreb. On that occasion, it was said that it was reciprocity for the Roman Catholic priests who would be expelled from Slovenia to Croatia.²⁵¹

On the 2nd July 1941, the State Directorate for Reconstruction formed the Committee for the Relocation of Orthodox Priests to Serbia. The board soon sent a circular to all local authorities with an order for the arrest of Orthodox priests.²⁵² With the same order, they demanded the priests be brought to the prepared concentration and emigration camp Caprag near Sisak.²⁵³ Initially, it was planned to create only one collection and emigration camp, but later two collection centers were created: Danica near Koprivnica and Slavonska Požega.

A week after the formation of the Committee for the Relocation of Priests, on the 9th July, the Croatian authorities requested accurate information from their subordinate authorities on the number of priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church.²⁵⁴ The arrests of Orthodox priests, planned for the 10-11th July 1941, did not function as it was expected. There were several reasons for the partial success of the action. Several priests previously fled to Serbia.²⁵⁵ In the meantime, in the insurgent

²⁵⁰ *Гласник СПЦ*, 4/1945, 46-48 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 4/1945, 46-48).

²⁵¹ BA, Ha, 49-3/1.

²⁵² BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-3/1; *Ibid*, 201-9/22.

²⁵³ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 180-59/1.

²⁵⁴ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 170-10/12.

²⁵⁵ 18 priests escaped to Serbia from the Independent State of Croatia in various ways. – *Српска*

units there were also priests from the first days who protected themselves from the Ustasha and perishing, but also because of the feeling that they should be with the armed people.²⁵⁶

The arrest and internment of the priests in the camps took place on the 9th August, also on the basis of the order of the State Directorate for Reconstruction sent to all authorities.²⁵⁷ At the same time, that circular also contained an order to prohibit all remaining priests from any further religious activity.²⁵⁸ This order was supposed to be the crown of all punishments that were related to the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Independent State of Croatia. In the meantime, many priests were killed in various ways and at various execution grounds. Those who were detained and relocated to Serbia were far beyond this number.²⁵⁹ And those who, by chance of fate, remained alive and free, were prohibited from any further work.²⁶⁰ A few days after the priests' arrest, all local authorities had to submit reports to Zagreb. Many such reports

йравославна црква – Њена йрошлосй и садашњосй, Београд, 1992, 41 (**Serbian Orthodox Church – Its Past and Present*, Belgrade, 1992, 41).

²⁵⁶ According to the report of the regional authorities from Knin, none of the priests in northern Dalmatia were arrested because they took refuge from the Ustasha in time. – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 201-38/16).

²⁵⁷ On the 12th July, the police directorate from Sarajevo informed the authorities in Zagreb that they could not arrest all the priests in their area. On that occasion, they wrote that they subsequently arrested a priest, who was in the hospital for treatment in the meantime, and that they would take him to the concentration camp in Caprag near Sisak. – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-4/1. "Related to the instructions given earlier, arrest all the remaining monastics and monks, and the Greek-Eastern priests together with their families and escort them to the emigrant camp Caprag near Sisak. This applies only to priests who are Serbs by nationality and to Montenegrins, who felt themselves to be Serbs." – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 180-59/1.

²⁵⁸ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 180-59/1; Two weeks later, on the 24th August 1941, to be exact, the regional district in Irig informed all its subordinate authorities that "on the basis of the order no. 7891 of the State Directorate for Reconstruction in Zagreb issued on the 18th August 1941, in the area of this district, arrest all Orthodox priests, all monastics and monks from 8 monasteries, and immediately remove deacons from the monastery." – *Злогела и йреси*, Београд, 1990, 23 (**Crimes and Sins*, Belgrade, 1990, 23).

²⁵⁹ The writing of the Police Directorate from Sarajevo, which on the 15th July informed the State Directorate again that they could not arrest Metropolitan Petar (Zimonjić) and several other priests from Sarajevo, is very unconvincing. – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-3/1.

²⁶⁰ Thus, on the basis of the order of the Directorate for Reconstruction of the Subregional District in Osijek, priest Lav Dosjedal was banned from working. – ДАС, Комесаријат за избеглице..., нерегистровано (*State Archives of Serbia, Commissariat for Refugees..., unregistered).

have been preserved. Thus, on the 14th July, the administration of the Great Župa of Vrhbosna informed Zagreb about the arrest of a priest from the vicinity of Rogatica and his deportation to Caprag.²⁶¹ The authorities from Sarajevo reported in great detail about their action. In their report, they kept silent about the fates of several priests, among whom there was Metropolitan Petar.²⁶² After the second phase of arrests of the remaining priests, a detailed letter about the newly arrested and deported priests arrived from Sarajevo on the 12th August. But it did not write about the real fate of those who were arrested much earlier.²⁶³ The Subregional district of Vlasenica reported in detail about the arrest, but also about the fact that they did not find all the priests.²⁶⁴

During the arrest of the priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church, they did not care that there were Russians and Ukrainians among them. A few days later, an order came from Zagreb that the priests from Montenegro, who did not consider themselves Serbs, must be treated differently than the others.²⁶⁵ It was similar with the arrested Russian and Ukrainian priests, so they were released until further notice.²⁶⁶

German officers in Zagreb found out about Croatian plans to arrest and expel all living Orthodox priests from the Independent State of Croatia. They talked about this with Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac and they heard that he endorsed everything.²⁶⁷

²⁶¹ This document mentions the families of priests: Josif Roganović, Sava Ristic, Dušan Veselinović, Miloš Jevđević, Veljko Mijatović and Atanasije Korosić. – А ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-9/1

²⁶² ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-3/1.

²⁶³ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 2006-34/1.

²⁶⁴ They didn't arrest: Dušan Bobar from Vlasenica, Ljubo Jakšić from Han Pijesak, Drago Mazgijević (should be: Dragomir Maskijević - author's note), Janko Savić from Knežina, Miloš Savić from Milići. These priests were arrested and killed significantly earlier. – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-14/4.

²⁶⁵ The letter from Dimitrije Vitković, archbishop's deputy, to Metropolitan Dositej of Zagreb, in November 1941 – АСр, Комесаријат за избеглице.. (*State Archives of Serbia, Commissariat for Refugees...), unregistered.

²⁶⁶ The case of priest Serafim Kupčevski is interesting: he stayed in Zagreb until the 21st August 1941, when he was sent to a displaced persons camp. From the camp, instead of going to Serbia, he was returned to Zagreb, where he stayed until the proclamation of the Croatian Orthodox Church.

²⁶⁷ И. Цвитковић, *Ко је био...*, 88 (*I. Cvitković, *Who was...*, 88).

The concentration and emigrant camp Caprag near Sisak was formed at the beginning of July and disbanded at the end of September 1941.²⁶⁸ Similar to all other camps in the Independent State of Croatia, this camp was under the direct command of the Third Department of the Ustasha Supervision Service. The first inmates were Orthodox priests from Lika, Kordun, Zagreb and the surrounding area, northern Croatia and Slavonia, with members of their families. The second group of detainees was from Bosanska Krajina, which arrived on the 13th July. The next group was from Srem and Eastern Bosnia and arrived during the period from the 15-17th July.²⁶⁹

The first transport from the Caprag camp to Slavonski Brod, Vinkovci, Zemun and Belgrade started on the 17th July 1941. The expulsion of priests to Serbia was also carried out in the second half of August, when another 30 priests left. Exactly how many priests there were in the Caprag concentration camp near Sisak, that is, how many were expelled from there to Serbia, has not been determined exactly. The data published in historiography and journalism after the Second World War are very different: they mainly wrote about 270 to 338 emigrant priests.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ There is a competent written recollection: Василије Перовић, „Сећање на Цапрашки логор“, *Сјоменица поводом осамдесетогодишњице окупације Босне и Херцеговине (1878-1958) и педесетогодишњице анексије (1908-1958) и четрдесетогодишњице ослобођења и уједињења (1918-1958)*, Београд, 1959, 116 (*Vasilije Perović, "Remembrance of the Caprag Camp", *Memorial on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878-1958) and the fiftieth anniversary of the annexation (1908-1958) and the fortieth anniversary of the liberation and unification (1918-1958)*, Belgrade, 1959, 116); Д. Страњаковић, *Највећи злочини...*, 439 (*D. Stranjaković, *The Greatest Crimes...*, 439); М. Першен, *Усташки логори...*, 118 (*M. Peršen, *Ustasha camps...*, 118); ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 234-1/55; *Ibid*, НДХ (*Independent State of Croatia), 315-1/6.

²⁶⁹ Ва, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 315-1/6; М. Першен, *Усташки логори...*, 116 (*M. Peršen, *Ustasha camps...*, 116); Владимир Дедијер, Антун Милетић, *Прошеравање Срба са отаџбина 1941-1944*, Београд, 1989, 42 (*Vladimir Dedijer, Antun Miletić, *Expulsion of Serbs from their Homeland 1941-1944*, Belgrade, 1989, 42) (hereinafter: В. Дедијер, А. Милетић, *Прошеравање Срба...*).

²⁷⁰ Priests with families were mostly in the first transports. The means of transport and the exact number of priests expelled have not been determined to this day, nor have many things related to the perishing of the Serbian Orthodox Church been clarified. The Church itself bears a significant portion of the blame because it has never initiated an investigation into the perishing of its priests.

Dragoslav Stranjaković, the best connoisseur of the perishing of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Second World War, was the first to write that 270 priests passed through Caprag – *Највећи злочини садашњице*, Београд, 1991, 437 (**The greatest crimes of today*, Belgrade, 1991, 437) (hereinafter: Д.

The camp in Slavonska Požega was formed as an auxiliary camp to the one in Caprag. It was mainly occupied by monks from the monastery from Fruška Gora. According to the testimony of one of the detainees, upon arrival in Serbia, there were about 200 monks in the camp.²⁷¹ It is not easy to determine when this camp was disbanded. Regardless of some claims that this was done at the end of September 1941, there were also imprisoned Serbs, including priests at the end of October.²⁷²

On the 29th April, the Croatian authorities established a camp in Koprivnica. On the same day, about 300 people from the surrounding towns were brought to it. Among the detainees, the Orthodox priests who were extremely mistreated were brought, mainly from the dioceses of Zagreb and Gornjokarlovačka. Almost every night, people were called out, among them priests, so that they would soon be taken from the camp to the execution grounds.²⁷³ According to the recollections of one of the imprisoned, later expelled, priests, there were 26 of them in this camp. Only 10 were expelled from the camp to Serbia, and 16 were killed in various ways.²⁷⁴

Страњаковић, *Највећи злочини...*); Atanasije (Jevtić) accepted Stranjaković's information as reliable and accurate. – *Великомученички Јасеновац*, Београд, 1991, 31 (**Great Martyrs of Jasenovac*, Belgrade, 1991, 31); Vladimir Dedijer and Antun Miletić wrote that 324 priests with 255 of their wives and 467 other family members were rounded up and expelled. – В. Дедијер, А. Милетић, *Пројектовање Срба...*, 42 (*Vladimir Dedijer, Antun Miletić, *Expulsion of Serbs...*, 42): This data was disputed by one of the co-authors in his second text. – Antun Miletić, *Усташка фабрика смрти 1941-1945*, Београд, 1988, 41 (*Antun Miletić, *Ustasha factory of death 1941-1945*, Belgrade, 1988, 41) (hereinafter: А. Милетић, *Усташка фабрика...*).

²⁷¹ The letter from the Minister of Justice to Milan Nedić – ВА, Нда, 1а-4/3; The information that there were 200 priests and monks in the camp was not confirmed in the research.

Slobodan D. Milošević published two different data; once that 28 and another time that 50 priests were expelled. – *Избеглице и преселеници...*, 151-154 (**Refugees and migrants...*, 151-154); Miodrag Bjelić announced that 28 priests had been expelled. – *Сабирни логор...*, 209 (**Concentration camp...*, 209).

²⁷² The Priest Sava Dimović was sent from this camp only on 6th October, 1941. – АСин, XIII/85/1941 (*The Archives of the Synod, XIII/85/1941).

²⁷³ The priest Dimitrije Joka wrote about the Danica camp, where he himself was imprisoned until he was deported to Serbia. – *Своеница православних свештеника...*, 189-192 (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy...* 189-192).

²⁷⁴ From this camp, they were sent to various execution sites: Protodeacon Lazar Živadinović; priests Adam Marin, Nikola Ban, Milan Božić, Đorđe Milojević, Jovan Magarašević, Milan Dokmanović, Uroš Rajčević, Milan Đukić, Petar Vučinić, Vladimir Dujić, Stevan Čurčić, Jaša Stepanov, Jovan Stanojević,

The local Croatian authorities very zealously reported to their superior authorities in Zagreb about the progress of the arrest and internment of priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Thanks to those documents, preserved in various archives, many controversial facts can be discussed, for example the number of expelled priests.

Roman Catholic priest, parish priest from Doboј and Ustasha confidant, Dr. Dragutin Kamber, wrote to leader Ante Pavelić in September 1941: "We were very expeditious: we expelled their priests, confiscated most of their property, killed a large number, and let the others know that they would not to be able to stay with us as Serbs and Orthodox."²⁷⁵

In historiography and journalism, as well as in texts written by priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church, it is still not definitively written how many priests were expelled from the Independent State of Croatia to Serbia. The data are very different, so it is possible to group them by author. The first group consists of the authors who wrote about 324, the second group about 338, the third about 334 expelled priests.²⁷⁶ The valid data should be those written in the report

Ilija Pavlica, Pantelija Landup; and two seminarians. Those deported to Serbia were: Iso Pejnović, Dimitrije Joka, Milan Radeka, (unknown name) Popović, Nektarije (Dazgić), Dositej (Obradović), Joakim (Babić), Dositej (Stojanović).

²⁷⁵ Б. Миљуш, *Революција...*, 92 (*B. Miljuš, *Revolution...*, 92); When these parts of the letter from the parish priest Kamber are read, it is clear how, in the first months of the Independent State of Croatia's existence, all Serbian clergy disappeared, which was intended for all Serbs in the Ustasha state. – Ruben H. Markham, *Tito's imperial communism*, Chapell Hill/USA, 1947, 68. Not much should be blamed on the authors who were not familiar enough with the documents, so they wrote that "around 1,000 priests came (defected and resettled) to Serbia." – Ристо Грђић, *Српска црква на Историјској њрекрејници*, Београд, 1969, 16 (*Risto Grđić, *Serbian Church at a Historical Turning Point*, Belgrade, 1969, 16). Nor should much blame be attributed to the authors who wrote that "over 400 priests were expelled." Avro Manhattan did not differentiate between collection or displaced persons camps and concentration camps. – *The Vatican's...*, 88.

²⁷⁶ The information on 324 expelled priests was stated by: М. Першен, *Усташки логори*, 114 (*M. Peršen, *Ustasha camps...*, 114); А. Милетић, *Усташка фабрика...*, 41 (*A. Miletić, *Ustasha factory...*, 41); The information on 338 priests is from a report dated 22nd August, 1941, by a German liaison officer between the military commander of Serbia and the embassy in Zagreb. They used it as a very reliable source. – Д. Кашић, *Српска црква...*, 196 (*D. Kašić, *Serbian Church...*, 196); М. Борковић, *Контрареволуција...*, И, 199 (*M. Borković, *Counterrevolution...*, I, 199); С. Д. Милошевић, *Избеглице...*, 157 (*S. D. Milošević, *Refugees...*, 157). The information on 334 priests is stated by: Д. Кашић, *Српска црква...*, 195 (*D. Kašić, *Serbian Church...*, 195); Слободан Милеуснић, "Мученичко страдање Српске православне цркве на подручју тзв. НДХ у току II светског рата", *Српска православна црква – Њена прошлост и садашњост*, Београд, 1992, 41 (*Slobodan Mileus-

of the Holy Synod of Bishops: 639 priests escaped and 500 priests were deported.²⁷⁷

The perishing of the clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Independent State of Croatia has been the subject of many studies and texts. For the past fifty years, not a single scientific and research work has been done, the results of which would be the closest to the truth about what happened to the Serbian Orthodox Church in the first months of the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia. Instead, a great amount of data without criteria has been published so far. Unfortunately, authors from the Serbian Orthodox Church also did that. In their texts, there were claims about the perishing of "several hundred precious lives of Orthodox priests and archpriests and hundreds of thousands of parishioners".²⁷⁸

Roman Catholic priests also participated in the murders of Orthodox priests, directly or indirectly, in various ways.²⁷⁹ The people at the very top of the Independent State of Croatia were well aware of this, from numerous reports from the field.²⁸⁰

nić, "The Martyrdom of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Territory of the So-Called Independent State of Croatia During World War II", *The Serbian Orthodox Church – Its Past and Present*, Belgrade, 1992, 41). There were authors who published two different data in one book without further explanations and without citing the sources. Two figures, 324 and 562 priests, were cited by A. Miletić – *Усташка фабрика...*, 41 (*A. Miletić, *Ustasha factory...*, 41); At the end of 1941, an unknown author compiled a table with a lot of data about the priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church. However, his table has a lot of mathematical errors when it comes to addition, so it is very difficult to distinguish what is correct and what is a mistake. According to this author, 497 priests were expelled and fled to Serbia – *ВА, Нда*, 40-15/9.

²⁷⁷ However, in two places in the records, there are different pieces of data, so those should also be taken with caution. – *АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1070/зап. 237/1947.* (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1070/Minutes 237/1947.)

²⁷⁸ Душан Штрбац, „Осврт на пређени пут“, *Удружење православној свештенства Југославије 1898-1969*, Београд, 1969, 13 (*Dušan Štrbac, "Reflection on the Path Traveled", *Association of the Orthodox Clergy of Yugoslavia 1898-1969*, Belgrade, 1969, 13).

²⁷⁹ Miladin Minić, a priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church, was killed on the 27th May 1941 by the Roman Catholic priest Eugen Gujić. – *ВА, НДХ* (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 85-8/3; *Сјоменица...*, 95 (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy...*, 95).

²⁸⁰ In one of the reports from the commander of the ground forces, Marshal Vladimir Laxa, among other things, it was written: "On the 27th May, Catholic priest Eugen Gujić from Gora village, district of Zenica, killed Serbian priest Milan Minić, a Chetnik." – *ВА, НДХ* (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 85-8/3.

When defections from the Croatian state to Serbia began, something was learned about the perishing of the clergy. With that, the Synod ordered the collection of data and the creation of documentation that would be used for various purposes.²⁸¹ They first benefited from this work in mid-July 1941 when writing a Memorandum intended for German General Ludwig von Schroeder, the military-administrative commander of Serbia. Bishop Platon of Banja Luka and 38 priests were listed in the Memorandum.²⁸²

And in the second Synod Memorandum, which was handed over to General Heinrich Dunkelmann, the new military-administrative commander of Serbia, in August 1941, the information about martyred priests was given. However, it was just copied from the earlier Memorandum.

Many priests perished in concentration and emigration camps created for Serbs. Thus, 26 priests were brought to the Danica camp near Koprivnica. During their stay, 16 priests and 2 theology students were killed, the rest were exiled to Serbia.²⁸³

The first Orthodox priest who was killed by the Ustashas was Miloš Petrović from Bosanski Lužani, diocese of Zvornik-Tuzla, on the 14th April 1941.²⁸⁴ Miloš Mandić from Gračac, diocese of Gornji Karlovac, was killed by having his head cut off. Priests Bogdan Vranješević and Simo Banjac were slaughtered.²⁸⁵ Priest Novak Mastilović was in the group of Serbs that

²⁸¹ There are indications that the interned Patriarch Gavrilo advised the bishops who visited him to gather documentation about the perishing of the clergy and the people. – *Мемоари...*, I, 538 (**Memoirs...*, I, 538).

²⁸² By detailed analysis and comparing numerous data, it is evident that the list contains many errors (For example, priests Ratko Jelić and Dušan Klipa survived the war, numerous names and surnames are incorrectly written, etc.). It is not possible to correct all of these here for countless reasons.

²⁸³ *Споменица...*, 189-192 (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy...*, 189-182).

²⁸⁴ In the written report of Bishop Nektarije to the Synod, dated 22nd December 1941, the circumstances and time of the murder of this priest were explained. The Croats who killed him took a picture of themselves with a gun and published that picture in the newspaper – ДАС, Комесаријат за избеглице..., unregistered (**State Archives of Serbia, Commissariat for Refugees...*, unregistered). In *Споменица православног свештеника 1941-1945* (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy 1941-1945*) it is written: After the proclamation of the so-called Independent State of Croatia on the 14th June 1941, Ustashas attacked the home of the priest Petrović and killed him." This inconsistency forms the basis for the assertion that he was killed on the 14th April. – *Споменица...*, 114 (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy...*, 114).

²⁸⁵ Edmond Paris, *Genocide in satellite Croatia*, Chicago, 1962, 104.

the Ustashas wanted to kill. However, he saved himself and fled to Montenegro.²⁸⁶ Priest Đorđe Bogić from Našice was killed in a brutal manner, after torture, tearing of the skin, and cutting of body parts.²⁸⁷ Branko Dobrosavljević from Veljun near Karlovac and Stevan Čurčić from Ogulin were also killed in similar tortures, in front of their families.²⁸⁸

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill wrote on one occasion, in a letter to American President Franklin Roosevelt, that he had heard about the priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church being burned by the Croats.²⁸⁹ German General Lotar Rendulić said that the Croats killed all the Serbian priests.²⁹⁰

The most famous execution ground, after Jasenovac, was Jadovno on Velebit and it "received" at least 80,000 Serbs in the summer of 1941. Among those victims were priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Petar of Dabar-Bosnia and Bishop Sava of Gornji Karlovac died there (most likely), along with more than 50 priests.²⁹¹

The first (collective) data on the perishing of priests was published in 1943 in America under the auspices of the American-Canadian bishop Dionisije. According to the text, in the diocese of Gornji Karlovac in 1941 there were 135 priests and 85 of them were killed.²⁹²

²⁸⁶ The report of the Command of the Gacko armed detachment – А ВИИ, НДХ, 143-39/9.

²⁸⁷ The letter from the German Embassy in Zagreb to the Administrative Staff of the Military Commander of Serbia – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 233-15/2.

²⁸⁸ The letter from the Administrative Staff of the Military Commander of Serbia to the German Embassy in Zagreb – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 233-15/2.

²⁸⁹ С. Аврамов, *Геноцид...*, 43 (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 43).

²⁹⁰ Владимир Дедијер, Антун Милетић, *Против заборава и шабуа*, Београд, 1991, 178 (*Vladimir Dedijer, Antun Miletić, *Against Forgetfulness and Taboo*, Belgrade, 1991, 178).

²⁹¹ Atanasije Jevtić wrote that 51 priests perished on Velebit, in Jadovno. He replaced the data engraved on a rock at the site of the massacre. – *Ог Косова до Јадовна*, Београд, 1987, 251 (**From Kosovo to Jadovno*, Belgrade, 1987, 251); Antun Miletić uncritically copied the information from *Споменница (*Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy)* "that 52 priests and one bishop (Petar, Metropolitan of Dabar-Bosna) perished in Jadovno" – *Koncentracioni logor Jasenovac*, I, Београд, 1986, 57 (**Jasenovac concentration camp*, I, Belgrade, 1986, 57) (hereinafter: А. Милетић, *Концентрациони логор...*). According to data from a publication of the Serbian Patriarchate, 55 priests and (probably) two bishops perished in Jadovno – *Српска православна црква - Њена прошлост и садашњост*, Београд, 1992, 38 (**The Serbian Orthodox Church - Its Past and Present*, Belgrade, 1992, 38).

²⁹² The book was published by the American-Canadian Diocese. – *Martyrdom of Serbs*, Libertywill/USA, 1943, 177.

The diocese of Gornji Karlovac is an example of terrible perishing in all possible forms: "Of all the dioceses of the Serbian Orthodox Church, it suffered the most in terms of the number of human victims and materially." 140-150,000 Serbs were killed; 73 priests and a bishop. 145 churches and 45 chapels were destroyed, etc."²⁹³

Thanks to the documentation collected by the Patriarchate during the war years and some other subsequent data, a list of martyred priests was published in the calendar Crkva (*in the original: Црква) for 1945 - "Obituary of Serbian Orthodox Archbishops and priests who died, and who were executed and killed during the occupation". The list was made by the diocese and contains the names of 193 Serbs and two Czechs. In the accompanying text, he writes about the causes of the perishing and the criminals: "The greatest number of Serbian priests were killed in the most ferocious and brutal way by the infamous Pavelić's Ustashas and by the hateful occupiers - Germans, Italians and Hungarians."²⁹⁴

The State Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and Their Helpers, which collected documentation and material after the Second World War, had numerous data on crimes against the clergy. The members of this commission wrote that before April 1941 there were about 800 priests and 160 monks of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Independent State of Croatia.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ ASyn, Minutes, Synod no. 967/record 188 of 17th February, 1948; There is a lot of information about the number of martyred priests of this diocese, all of them are incorrect. Most authors agree that before the war there were 157 priests in the diocese. They all had the same source - Црква, календар за 1941 (*Church, calendar for 1941); This information was also used by: Мане Пешут - „Српско питање у Хрватској“, Гласник СИКД Њеџош, 51/1983, 94 (*Mane Pešut - "The Serbian Question in Croatia", Gazette of the Serbian Cultural and Historical Society Njegoš, 51/1983, 94). However, when they write about martyred priests, there are many different claims: Dušan Korać wrote that 70 were killed and 30 died in the camps - Банија и Кордун..., 142 (*Banija and Kordun..., 142); Mane Pešut published a list of 96 priests who were killed - Революција у Лици 1941-1945, Билефелд/Немачка, 1966, 375 (*Revolution in Lika 1941-1945, Bielefeld/Germany, 1966, 375). Thus, for example, the State Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and Their Helpers claimed that out of 135 pre-war priests, 85 were killed in the war - АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 12.897 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 12.897).

²⁹⁴ Црква, 1945, 32-35 (*Church, 1945, 32-35); It is interesting that there is no mention of the Bulgarians as occupiers, from whom the Serbian clergy also suffered during their rule in some areas of Serbia.

²⁹⁵ АЈ, 110, 611-358/9 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, 611-358/9); In the study "German and Usta-sha crimes against the clergy and believers in occupied Yugoslavia", it is written: "Together with their

At one time, before 1958, the Synod compiled a "List of Orthodox priests killed in the Independent State of Croatia" for the needs of state authorities. It was signed by the chief secretary of the Synod, Bishop German (Đorić) of Moravica. According to this document, the Croatian Ustasas killed 128 priests. The martyred members of the hierarchy are listed by their titles and classified by diocese. Although the list was made many years after the war, it is unclear how the mistakes happened, so that the living priests were declared dead and Ustasha's victims. (On the list of victims there is also the name of hieromonk Dositej (Obradović) from the diocese of Gornji Karlovci. However, he survived the war.) In the same way and for the same reasons, the "List of Orthodox priests who died in the camps in the Independent State of Croatia" was compiled with 48 names of priests.²⁹⁶ Although the name of the document implies one thing, the list also has other information. For example, the name of the bishop of Banja Luka, Platon, was listed even though he was not killed in an Ustasha camp.²⁹⁷ The second post-war commemoration of the number of martyred priests was in 1958: "More than 500 priests were martyred".²⁹⁸

The most effort and patience in the search for the truth was invested by Uroš Zonjić, who published his findings, amateur in nature, in the magazines of the Serbian emigration. The text "The Perishing of the Serbian Clergy in the Second World War" represents the pinnacle of his efforts.²⁹⁹ He classified the victims according to the miscreants:

flock, Orthodox priests also suffered at that time. Thus, according to the data for Bosnia only, out of 320 priests, 39 were killed (1 bishop, 35 priests and 3 clergymen), 224 were expelled, 6 were interned, and 45 remained in their places thanks to the popular uprising, while there is no data for 6. – AJ, 110, Инв. бр. 16.492 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 16.492); In another study by the same commission, it was written that "over 100 Serbian priests died, and many others were lost after the terrible abuse in the camps." – AJ, 110, 611-359 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, 611-359);

²⁹⁶ ХДА, Јавно тужилаштво Хрватске, IIIa/9, кут 3 (Croatian State Archives, Public Prosecutor's Office of Croatia, IIIa/9, corner 3).

²⁹⁷ Similarly, the mistake regarding the fate of Hieromonk Dositej (Obradović) is repeated.

²⁹⁸ Гласник СИКД Његош, 2/1958, 63 (*Gazette of the Serbian Cultural and Historical Society Njegoš, 2/1958, 63).

²⁹⁹ Uroš Zonjić asked the readers of Гласник СИКД Његош (*Gazette of the Serbian Cultural and Historical Society Njegoš) magazine several times to help him in his search. – Гласник СИКД Његош, бројеви 27/1971, 28/1972, 29/1972 и 32/1974 (*Gazette of the Serbian Cultural and Historical Society Njegoš, issues 27/1971, 28/1972, 29/1972 and 32/1974).

victims of the Croatian Ustashas, victims of the communists, etc. Zonjić wrote that "two metropolitans, three bishops and 182 priests" were killed by the Croatian Ustashas. He wrote that Metropolitan Dositej of Zagreb and Bishop Nikolaj of Zahum-Herzegovina were also victims of the Croatian Ustashas. He also included novices, religion teachers and theologians as priests, which is not correct because they were not priests. In addition, there are examples where he stated only one of the data, name or surname. There were also several completely wrong data in the name and surname. Regardless of all these objections and errors, this work has a deserved place in the search for the ultimate truth.³⁰⁰

The perishing of the Serbian clergy was an incidental topic for many writers and historians.³⁰¹ Unfortunately, until today, no text has been written that would be the closest to the truth, when it comes to the number of victims. Out of the quite significant ones, it is worth highlighting the following: *The Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy 1941-1945* (*in the original: *Споменница православној свештеништва 1941-1945*) which does not include the data on the priests killed by the partisans. By counting the biographies, it can be seen that four nuns and 339 priests were killed. Of the most important values are the short biographies of the martyred priests. This book was used by many researchers and they copied data from it without checking them.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Гласник СИКД Његош, 33/1977, 55 (**Gazette of the Serbian Cultural and Historical Society Njegoš*, 33/1977, 55).

³⁰¹ Research into the destruction of priests was also challenging for some church dignitaries, such as Metropolitan Vladislav (Mitrović) of Dabar-Bosna. On the occasion of the centenary of the Reljevo-Sarajevo Serbian Orthodox Theological Seminary, he wrote an appropriate text with a list of former students who died in the Second World War at the hands of the Croatian Ustasha and the Italians. He used only one source for this list, *Споменница православних свештеника 1941-1945* (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy 1941-1945*) – Црква, 1983, 67-72 (**Church*, 1983, 67-72); Some Serbs who emigrated around the world after the war printed several publications in which they published lists of the martyred clergy. The first published text "Bloody Harvest by the Ustashas" (*in the original: Усташка крвава жетва) had 160 names of priests, 2 bishops and 1 metropolitan. Next to the name, the place of service and the rank were listed. Reading all that, it can be seen that the author did not know church ranks very well. – Гласник СИКД Његош, 1/1958, 72-82 (**Gazette of the Serbian Cultural and Historical Society Njegoš*, 1/1958, 72-82).

³⁰² Čedomir Drašković, in the text "Victims of the Clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church during the Second World War" (*in the original: Жртве свештентства Српске православне цркве у току Другог светског рата), compiled a list of 357 members of the Church. He did it primarily, based on the aforementioned *Споменница* (**The Memorial*). His data differ from *Споменница* in more than a

According to the official data of the Synod, from the 6th April 1941 to the 9th May 1945, 481 priests were killed by various perpetrators and in various ways.³⁰³

After the fragmentation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Serbia represented a refuge for the Serbian people and the only salvation from destruction. There were many reasons for forced migration, the most important being the German strategic plans on ethnic cleansing for the purpose of settlement and the plans of the Independent State of Croatia on the relocation of the Serbian people to the East.

Refugees arrived in Serbia in an unorganised manner, which resembled the violent disturbances, and by deportations, which began with the relocation of Slovenes to Croatia with, at the same time, the relocation of the same number of Serbs to Serbia.

dozen names of martyred priests. – „Жртве свештенства Српске православне цркве у току Другог светског рата“, *Удружење православног свештеника 1989-1969*, 241–255 (*"Victims of the Clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church during the Second World War", *Association of Orthodox Priests 1989-1969*, 241–255). Dušan Kašić wrote that the Ustashas killed 187 priests, 30 monks and 2 religion teachers. These data are most often cited as correct in the literature and publicism. – Душан Кашић, „Српска црква у тзв. Независној држави Хрватској“, *Српска православна црква 1920-1970*, 191 (*Dušan Kašić, "The Serbian Church in the so-called Independent State of Croatia", *Serbian Orthodox Church 1920-1970*, 191); А. Милетић, *Усташка фабрика...*, 41 (*А. Miletic, *Ustasha factory...*, 41); Б. Петрановић, *Србија...*, 126 (*В. Petranović, *Serbia...*, 126). One Belgrade publicist, in a polemic about the martyred clergy, wrote that the Ustasha killed 208 priests without providing any specific information about the sources of his claims. – *Ју панорама*, Београд, 1. 1. 1990 (**Ju panorama*, Belgrade, 1. 1. 1990). Milan Bulajić is one of the authors with more information than usual about the perishing of priests at the hands of the Ustasha. He compiled a list of 222 members of the Serbian Orthodox Church who died in 1941-1945 "as victims of the Ustasha genocide." He listed six archbishops and 216 priests. However, even these data are not correct in many facts. By reading it closely and comparing it with other texts, for example *Споменница православној свештеници* (**Memorial of the Orthodox Clergy*), many incorrect claims are observed. – *Усташки злочини генцида и суђење Андрији Артуковићу* 1986, I, Београд, 1987, 304-307 (**Ustasha crimes of genocide and the trial of Andrija Artuković* 1986, I, Belgrade, 1987, 304-307) (hereinafter М. Булајић, *Усташки злочин...*); Several foreign historians and publicists also wrote about the perishing of Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia. In this context, they also wrote about the perishing of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The most famous among them, Edmond Paris, wrote that the Croatian Ustasha killed 171 priests. – *Genocide...*, 79; E. Paris, *Convert or...*, 185-189; Avro Manhattan wrote that out of the 135 priests killed by the Ustasha, 85 were from the diocese of Gornji Karlovac. In another book, he wrote that out of a total of 700 priests, about 400 were in the camps. – А. Manhattan, *The Vatican's...*, 88.

³⁰³ Асин, Записници, Син. бр. 1060/зап. 237/1947 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1060/Minutes 237/1947).

In mid-May 1941, Adolf Hitler accepted the plans of the Croatian state authorities to "reduce the extraordinarily strong Serbian minority in Croatia." When Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop told him that there were many Serbs, Hitler mentioned earlier relocations in Poland and recommended that the same should be done in Croatia. He told the Croats then that if they want their, Croatian, state to be permanent, then they must implement a nationally intolerant policy for the next 50 years.³⁰⁴

The planned relocation was agreed upon at the meeting from the 21-25th May 1941 in Belgrade. The meeting was attended by many German and Croatian state, military and intelligence experts.

From May to August, at least 100,000 Serbs fled from the Independent State of Croatia to Serbia. Croatian authorities resettled around 9,900 Serbs during August.³⁰⁵

The Commissariat for Immigrants and Refugees was created in Serbia. In that institution, at the end of August, data were obtained on at least 200,000 exiled refugees from the Ustasha state and at least 100,000 more from other regions.³⁰⁶

The resettlement of the Serbian population from Croatia was difficult because it was followed everywhere by unprecedented crimes.³⁰⁷

It was the German plenipotentiary in Croatia, Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, who objected to Ante Pavelić and asked for a change in the

³⁰⁴ L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 97.

³⁰⁵ Andrija Ljubomir Lisac, Deportacije Srba iz Hrvatske 1941, *Historijski zbornik*, 1-4, Zagreb, 1956, 126 (*Andrija Ljubomir Lisac, Deportations of Serbs from Croatia in 1941, *Historical collection*, 1-4, Zagreb, 1956, 126); Later researchers accepted this information as certain. – Слободан Д. Милошевић, „Избеглице и пресељеници у Србији 1941“, *НОР и Револуција у Србији 1941-1945*, Београд, 1972, 71-86 (*Slobodan D. Milošević, "Refugees and Immigrants in Serbia 1941", *National Liberation Struggle and Revolution in Serbia 1941-1945*, Belgrade, 1972, 71-86).

³⁰⁶ According to data from Nedić's letter to General Bader dated 16th September 1942, there were at least 400,000 refugees in Serbia – ВА, Нда, 1-19/7; German generals also talked about refugees during the war and after the war on various occasions: Franz Neuhausen spoke about 420,000 in July 1943, and about 400,000 refugees at the hearing in March 1947. – М. Борковић, *Контрареволуција...*, I, 199 (*M. Borković, *Counterrevolution...*, I, 199); This is also confirmed by: L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 107.

³⁰⁷ The representatives of the various military departments of Germany's allied countries, in liaison with the military-administrative commander of Serbia, learned about this very precisely and concretely. One of those officers was Ladislaus Hori, co-author of the book about the Croatian Ustasha state. - L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 104.

way of operating. Pavelić only acknowledged the justification of the complaints, noting that this was characteristic of all revolutions.³⁰⁸

The President of the Council of Commissioners, Milan Aćimović, wrote complaints to the German military-administrative commander of Serbia, General Ludwig Schroeder, regarding the perishing of Serbs in other parts of the former Kingdom.³⁰⁹ This memorandum was forwarded from Belgrade to Berlin. But there was no response from there.

There were about 500,000 refugees from various regions who found salvation in Serbia, from children to the elderly.³¹⁰

The military-occupation territory of Serbia was itself overloaded with numerous obligations towards the occupying authorities. However, Serbia also received about 500,000 exiled and refugee Serbs from other parts of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In that sea of the unfortunates there were more than 600 priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The exiled priests reported to the church authorities for help and getting a job. Everyone had the obligation to write a report on "all the events that they experienced before the exile and under what circumstances they were ostracised."³¹¹ The Synod decided that the financial aid to priests was to be given in the order as they apply.³¹² Later, when exiles from various regions arrived massively and in transportation, the Synod had a really difficult task, but he performed it very successfully.³¹³

The first conveyance of priests, exiled from the Independent State of Croatia, arrived at the Topčider railway station in Belgrade on the

³⁰⁸ Л. Хору, М. Бросзат, *Der kroatische...*, 99-100 (*L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 104).

³⁰⁹ Л. Хору, М. Бросзат, *Der kroatische...*, 96 (*L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der kroatische...*, 96).

³¹⁰ Slobodan D. Milošević, „Migracije Srba iz NDH u Srbiju i stav KPJ o tom pitanju”, *Istorija 20 veka*, 1-2, Beograd, 1991, 150-153 (*Slobodan D. Milošević, "Migration of Serbs from the Independent State of Croatia to Serbia and the position of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia on that issue", *History of the 20th century*, 1-2, Belgrade, 1991, 150-153). Đoko Slijepčević states the same information. –*Југославија...*, 355 (**Yugoslavia...*, 355).

³¹¹ АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1060/зап. 237/1947 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1060/Minutes 237/1947).

³¹² АСин, IX/172/1941 (*The Archives of the Synod, IX/172/1941).

³¹³ Decree of the Synod No. 2384 issued on the 14th October 1941 – АSyn, XIV/71/1941 (*The Archives of the Synod, XIV/71/1941).

1st August.³¹⁴ They were welcomed by the Commissariat for Immigrants and Refugees. Three conveyances of priests from the Caprag concentration camp near Sisak arrived in Arandjelovac.³¹⁵ There they were met by Metropolitan Josif and several officials of the Patriarchate. They received, as first aid, four back wages each.³¹⁶

The Synod had its own commission that collected written reports from all the priests. According to the records of this commission, 599 priests escaped and were exiled.³¹⁷ The commission obtained data in various ways. Thus, some bishops wrote reports to the Synod about exiled priests and their fate. These are reliable data, but incomplete because the situation changed almost every day, even in the first half of 1942.³¹⁸ These data should also indicate the number of expelled or escaped priests. However, that number cannot be accepted as correct because some priests were not able to write, due to a difficult mental and physical condition, and some died in the meantime, etc. For these and similar reasons, various data on the number of priests who were expelled or fled to Serbia have been written several times.³¹⁹

³¹⁴ This information is conditionally correct. Namely, as early as 17th July, priests from the concentration and emigrant camp Caprag near Sisak arrived in Serbia. In support of this, a letter from a commander of the Serbian gendarmerie dated 15th August 1941, addressed to Minister Aćimović with the claim that there are many bishops and metropolitans in Serbia who are natives or refugees from other regions. – *ВА, Нда*, 27-3/1.

³¹⁵ *АСин*, XI/147/1941 (*The Archives of the Synod, XI/147/1941).

³¹⁶ *Ibid.* Dušan Kašić wrote two different versions about this event. – *Српска православна...*, 196 и 230 (**Serbian Orthodox...*, 196 and 230).

³¹⁷ *АСин*, Записници, Син. бр. 1060/зап. 237/1947 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1060/Minutes 237/1947).

³¹⁸ Thus, on the 14th August 1941, Metropolitan Josif, in his capacity as administrator of the Metropolitanate of Belgrade-Karlovci, wrote about 90 priests assigned to that diocese and accepted 20 more to be accommodated. – *АСин*, XI/147/1941 (*The Archives of the Synod, XI/147/1941). Furthermore, Bishop Venijamin of Timok composed a report on the 20th September 1941, and sent it to the Synod. – *АСин*, IX/26/1941 (*The Archives of the Synod, IX/26/1941); About new priests in the Diocese of Žiča until the 19th February 1942. – *АСин*, I/220/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, I/220/1942).

³¹⁹ Dragoslav Stranjaković already had documentation on the perishing of priests in 1941, making his data all the more significant. His information about the number is only approximate and incidental, as he states that around 700 expelled or refugee priests arrived in Serbia from the Independent State of Croatia. – *Највећи злочини...*, 19 (**The greatest crimes...*, 19); Dusan Kašić did not compile comprehensive data on refugee and expelled priests; instead, he only did so for the territory of the Independent

Among the Orthodox priests who found salvation in Serbia was Đorđe Konstantin from Chaldea in Asia Minor. However, it is not clear where he escaped from. Like all other priests, he also received some money from the Synod as first aid.³²⁰

All refugees and exiled priests were assigned to vacant or newly formed parishes, to hospitals, as assistants to episcopal priests, elders of churches and parishioners, especially the sick ones.³²¹

There are no special data about the life and work of priests and monks, in the new circumstances and conditions, so it could all be concluded that they performed almost normal work. In the same way, the priests are part of the Serbian people who, due to circumstances, participated in the civil war. Because of this, there were exiled or escaped priests who over time joined, directly or indirectly, one of the military formations.

After arriving in Serbia, several priests died as a result of torture and mistreatment. But some also died of old age. According to the official newspaper of the Serbian Patriarchate, during the war, around twenty exiled or refugee priests died in Serbia. But when these data are compared with others, for example with *the Memorial of Orthodox Priests 1941-1945* (*in the original: *Споменником православних свештеника 1941-1945*), doubts emerge because the question arises as to which source is more accurate. If it is known that the *Glasnik* (*in the original: *Гласник*) was printed under very complicated conditions of German censorship, it is clear why numerous inaccuracies were written regarding the death of the priest.³²²

State of Croatia. He wrote that 334 priests were expelled to Serbia. – *Српска црква...*, 195-196 (**Serbian Church...*, 195-196).

³²⁰ АСин, XI/248/1941 (*The Archives of the Synod, XI/248/1941).

³²¹ All bishops in Serbia submitted data to the Synod regarding the numerical status of their clergy, including those who were refugees or expelled. – АСин, II/208/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, II/208/1942); In the allocation of expelled and refugee priests, there was only one case where a priest refused the offered parish. Bishop Venijamin wrote to Metropolitan Josif about this." – АСин, XI/161/1941 од 4. јула 1941 (*The Archives of the Synod, XI/161/1941 from July 4, 1941).

³²² The fates of the priests are as follows:

1. Dragomir Ostojić, archpriest from Zvornik in the Zvornik-Tuzla Diocese, was the first priest to die (on 3rd September 1941, in Banja Koviljača) after arriving in Serbia. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 5/1942, 31; *Споменница...*, 106) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 5/1942, 31; **The Memorial...*, 106) There is also another version of the death of this priest: he was killed by the Germans during a punitive expe-

dition near Banja Koviljača in September 1941.

2. Dušan Kecmanović, retired district archpriest from Banja Luka, Banja Luka Diocese, died on the 19th June 1942, in Srpski Itebej. He was 76 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 5/1942, 31; *Сѵоменуца...*, 89) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 5/1942, 31; **The Memorial...*, 89);

3. Stojan Trkuljić, parish priest from Mrkonjić Grad, Banja Luka Diocese, died on the 5th April 1942, in Belgrade. He was 77 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 5/1942, 31; *Сѵоменуца...*, 140) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 5/1942, 31; **The Memorial...*, 140).

4. Milanko Borić, parish priest from Ploče, diocese of Gornji Karlovci, died on the 18th May 1942 in Belgrade. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 7/1942, 47 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 7/1942, 47); He is not mentioned in *Сѵоменуца* (**The Memorial*).

5. Georgije Živković, parish priest from Šašinac, Belgrade-Karlovci Metropolitanate, died on the 23rd June 1942, in Arandelovac. He was 71 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 8/1942, 55. *Сѵоменуца...*, 70 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 8/1942, 55. **The Memorial...*, 70); The name of this priest is Gligorije in *Сѵоменуца* (**The Memorial*), whereas in *Гласник* (**Gazette*) he is mentioned as Georgrije).

6. Stojan Vranješević, retired archpriest from Bihać, Gornji Karlovci Diocese, died on the 20th July 1942 in Belgrade. He was 72 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 9/1942, 66: *Сѵоменуца...*, 47) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 9/1942, 66; **The Memorial...*, 47).

7. Milorad Lukić, parish priest from Pazarić, Dabar-Bosna Diocese, died on the 12th August 1942, in Žabari. He was 34 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 10/1942, 73; *Сѵоменуца...*, 92) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 10/1942, 73; **The Memorial...*, 92).

8. Georgije Nedeljковић, parish priest from Belegiš, Belgrade-Karlovci Metropolitanate, died on the 28th August 1942, in Belgrade. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 10/1942, 73 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 10/1942, 73). There are no data about this priest in *Сѵоменуца* (**The Memorial*).

9. Ljubomir Vlačić, deputy hierarch of the Dabar-Bosna Diocese, died on the 23rd August 1942, in Belgrade. He was 79 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 10/1942, 73; *Сѵоменуца...*, 50) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 10/1942, 73; **The Memorial...*, 50).

10. Jovan Mikić, parish priest from Martinac, Belgrade-Karlovci Metropolitanate, died on the 29th November 1942, in Šabac. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 1/1943, 5 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 1/1943, 5). There are no data available about this priest in *Сѵоменуца* (**The Memorial*).

11. Danilo (Bilbija), archimandrite of the Tavna Monastery, Zvornik-Tuzla Diocese, died on 28th December, 1942, in Banja Koviljača. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 2/1943, 12 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 2/1943, 12). There is no available information about this priest in *Сѵоменуца* (**The Memorial*).

12. Danilo (Brzaković), hegumen of the Fenek and Jaska Monasteries, died on the 26th March 1943, in Grocka." (*Гласник СПЦ*, 6/1943, 48 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 6/1943, 48). There is no available information about this priest in *Сѵоменуца* (**The Memorial*).

13. Jovan Jevtić, parish priest from Maglaj, Zvornik-Tuzla Diocese, died on the 1st June 1944 in Belgrade. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 7/1944, 55 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 7/1944, 55). There is no available information about this priest in *Сѵоменуца* (**The Memorial*).

14. Nikola Skakić, parish priest from Sarajevo, Dabar-Bosna Diocese, died on the 23rd March 1944, in Belgrade. He was 76 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 7/1944, 55; *Сѵоменуца...*, 132) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 7/1944, 55; **The Memorial...*, 132).

15. Vojislav Zonjić, parish priest from Obrez, Belgrade-Karlovci Archdiocese, died in 1944 in Belgrade. He was 31 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 8/1944, 62; *Сѵоменуца...*, 74) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 8/1944, 62; **The Memorial...*, 74).

16. Aleksa Popović, parish priest from Dobrljin, Banja Luka Diocese, died on the 5th December 1944, in Belgrade. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 10-12/1944, 89 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 10-12/1944, 89). There is no available information about this priest in *Сѵоменуца* (**The Memorial*).

17. Nikola Ercegovac, parish priest from Kirin, Gornji Karlovci Diocese, died on the 26th January 1945,

From the regions under the rule of the Independent State of Croatia, three priests escaped from perishing to the territories annexed by Italy. They got new parishes there and continued to do priestly work and therefore received priestly salaries. Priests' salaries were also received by those priests whose parishes (from the Dalmatian diocese) were located in the annexed territories. The Italian civil authorities paid for Bishop Irinej, 21 active and two retired priests, and eight priests' widows.³²³

In mid-October 1941, Siegfried Kasche, the German representative in Zagreb, found out that the Italians helped the priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church in perishing from the Croats.³²⁴ He accepted it but did not take any action considering his attitude towards Ustasha politics.

At some church celebrations in Tromeda, the Italians helped the priests in various ways: Italian officers were present on the holiday of the Dormition of the Theotokoes (the 28th August 1941) in Knin. Before that, they brought two priests in their cars. Italian kindness was described in the sermon by a priest when he said that after three months, Serbs are freely gathering around the churches, thanks to the Italian authorities.³²⁵ At the beginning of September 1941, in the church in Drniš, the monk Nikanor (Kalik) served memorial services. In addition to numerous Serbian people, there was also an Italian colonel. During

in Belgrade. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 1-2/1945, 12 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 1-2/1945, 12). There is no available information about this priest in *Сјоменица*) (**The Memorial*).

18. Slavko Vujasinović, parish priest from Dubica, Banja Luka Diocese, died on the 16th January 1945, in Belgrade. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 1-2/1945, 12 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 1-2/1945, 12). There is no available information about this priest in *Сјоменица*) (**The Memorial*).

19. Dositelj (Vasić), Metropolitan of the Zagreb Diocese, died on the 13th January 1945, in Belgrade. He was 67 years old. (*Гласник СПЦ*, 4/1945, 46-48; *Сјоменица...*, 23) (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 4/1945, 46-48; **The Memorial...*, 23).

³²³ Whether this was done in agreement with Bishop Irinej cannot be determined. The letter from Metropolitan Josif dated the 17th July 1942, to the Synod. – АСр, Комесаријат за...(*State Archives of Serbia, Commissariat for...), unregistered.

³²⁴ L. Hory, M. Broszat, *Der Kroatische...*, 116.

³²⁵ The report of the garrison commander in Knin on the 1st September 1941 – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 313-4/1.

that time, a troop of his soldiers was lined up in front of the church.³²⁶ A similar thing happened in mid-September in Sinj, when a liturgy was held, which was served by priest Marko Plavša. During that time, Italian officers secured the church.³²⁷

In early October 1941, the Command of the 2nd Infantry Regiment from Knin wrote to its Ministry of Foreign Affairs about an event that had recently taken place in Knin. Namely, on the 5th October, one of the Chetnik leaders, Momčilo Đujić, a priest from Strmica, held a memorial service for the Serbs who died in the fight against the Croats in the Orthodox church in Knin.³²⁸ This event took place thanks to the permission of the Italian authorities.

³²⁶ The report of the county prefect David Sinčić on the 8th November 1941 – BA, HДX (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 221-35/5.

³²⁷ The report of the district area of Sinj on the 17th September 1941 – BA, HДX (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 235-20/2.

³²⁸ The letter from Eugen Kvaternik, Head of the Directorate for Public Order and Security, on the 17th October 1941, to Andrija Karčić, Commissioner with the Second Italian Army in Sušak – BA, HДX (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 221-3/4.

5.

THE DESTINY OF CHURCH BUILDINGS IN THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA

The Croatian government, in its announcement on the 26th June 1941, informed the subordinate authorities about the proposal for solving the so-called Serbian question.³²⁹ On the basis of the preserved and available documentation of Croatian provenance created in later times, it can be safely asserted that in this proposed solution there was talk of the formation of a committee that would have the task of taking care of the demolition of Orthodox churches in the country. Likewise, it can be claimed that this work was done in agreement with the competent institution, with the State Directorate for Reconstruction, because there are clear orders that the demolition of churches and the removal of bells was done for them.³³⁰

At the beginning of September 1941, the State Directorate for Reconstruction informed the local authorities by circular letter that it was in charge of all facilities of the Serbian Orthodox Church.³³¹ In the

³²⁹ This document has not been published, nor has it been used or cited by any researcher, even in parts, to date, so it is only possible to speculate on its contents. – *Злогдела и преси*, 34 (**Crimes and Sins*, 34).

³³⁰ The Croatian authorities ordered the demolition of the church in Bosanska Kostajnica. – ВА, НДХ, 203-2/2; The order to demolish the church in Rajevo Selo near Brčko – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 75-5/4; The report on the demolition and burning of the church in the village of Radović near Cetinje – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 1-24/2.

³³¹ The circular from the State Directorate for Reconstruction issued on the 9th August 1941, was copied in the proclamation of the District Area of Irig on the 4th September 1941, instructing subordinate authorities to close all churches and monasteries. – *Историјски архив Београда*, НДХ (*Historical Archive of Belgrade, Independent State of Croatia), unregistered (hereinafter: ИАБ, НДХ,...).

meantime, numerous local authorities informed their superiors about the situation on the ground, about the conditions and the state in which the Orthodox churches were located. Thus, on the 23rd September 1941, the Subregional region in Zemun asked for information on the state of the Orthodox churches in its region. The municipalities of Karlovčić, Deč, Krnješevci, Šimanovci, Petrovčić, Obrež, Kupinovo, Ašanja and Zemun responded to that call.³³² Almost all of these reports were identical to the reports from Bosanski Brod: "I report that the Orthodox churches in Mala Brusnica, Vinska and Liješće have been closed and sealed and the keys have been taken and are being delivered to the above mentioned."³³³

However, these affairs did not run smoothly and without problems. In one of the cases, otherwise typical for the territory of the Independent State of Croatia which was in the Italian zone of interest, the following happened: the local Croatian authorities in the place of Ravno in Herzegovina, based on earlier orders from Zagreb, closed the Monastery of Zavala. But the Italian authorities opened it and allowed the Serbian Orthodox monk to continue his work freely.³³⁴

In the period from April 1941 until the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church in April 1942, only once did the Orthodox Serbs request the opening of their church for worship. Of course, nothing came of it because the supreme Croatian government had long ago decided what to do with the Serbian Orthodox Church.³³⁵

The looting of Serbian churches was usually followed by demolition in various ways, by burning or destroying, partially or com-

³³² Their reports were nearly identical: 'I report that the registers, along with other office books and archives of the local Greek Eastern parish, have been taken over by this municipality. The Greek Eastern church is locked, and the key is kept by the undersigned chief.' – ИАБ, НДХ (*Historical Archive of Belgrade, Independent State of Croatia), unregistered.

³³³ The report of the garrison station in Donji Klakar near Bosanski Brod. – BA, НДХ, 202-14/18; The district of Zemun received reports on the condition of churches from all subordinate authorities (from Karlovčić, Deč, Krnješevac, Šimanovac, Petrovčić, Obrež, Kupinovo, Ašanja, and others). – ИАБ, НДХ (*Historical Archive of Belgrade, Independent State of Croatia), unregistered.

³³⁴ The letter from the district area of Ravno – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 244-36/1.

³³⁵ The Serbs, residents of Kalinovik, appealed to the administration of the Great Parish of Vrhbosna to allow them to open their church for Christmas 1942. However, the Directorate for Public Order and Security prohibited the opening. – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 182-7/1.

pletely.³³⁶ And this part of the plan of the Office for the demolition of Greek-Eastern churches was carried out during the entire time of the existence of the Independent State of Croatia. There were cases when the government forced it but also when they delayed it, which depended on the situation.³³⁷ During that time, all sorts of things happened in the churches. In the days of the first crimes against the Serbian people, in the summer of 1941, Croats raped girls, most often in altars.³³⁸

In the place of Udrežnje, Herzegovina, at the beginning of June 1941, the Croats slaughtered the locals.³³⁹ In Jajce, in the church, they slaughtered 158 Serbs.³⁴⁰ In many Serbian villages in the interior of the country, the Croatian authorities forced the Serbs to bring straw to the church and then burned them all together. Croats and Muslims committed terrible crimes against the Serbian people, most often they slaughtered them. They did this, for example, in Glina, where they slaughtered more than 1,000 Serbs in the church, then set it on fire³⁴¹; in Draksenić, they imprisoned 360 people and slaughtered them in one day, so that, according to witnesses, blood crossed the threshold of the church; in Kusunje, they set fire to a church full of people, having previously brought a lot of straw; in Kolarić, around 80 men and a dozen women who brought them food were set on fire; in Zborište, they burned mothers with small children in the church; in Dobro Selo, in a

³³⁶ The church in Međeda Donja near Banja Luka was demolished by bombs. The same church was set on fire in August 1942. – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 61a-42/15; In a similar manner, the Memorial Ossuary of Serbian soldiers from the First World War was also demolished. – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 1146-25/1.

³³⁷ The correspondence between the supreme authority in Zagreb, local authorities of the Great Parish of Posavje, and local authorities in Rajevo Selo regarding the demolition of the Orthodox church – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 175-7/32; The local Croatian Ustasha authorities were not able to demolish the Orthodox church in Bosanska Kostajnica, 'since it is impossible to reach them, as the villages where they are located are controlled by Chetnik communist gangs.' – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 204-10/2.

³³⁸ Бошко Н. Костић, *За Историју наших дана*, Лилл/Француска, 1949, 28 (*Boško N. Kostić, *For the History of Our Days*, Lille/France, 1949, 28).

³³⁹ *Херцеговина у НОБ*, II, 451 (**Herzegovina in the National Liberation Struggle*, II, 451).

³⁴⁰ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 85-45/11.

³⁴¹ The massacre in the church in Glina is mentioned countless times in historiographical works and publicistic literature. – Konstantin Fotitch, *The war we lost*, New York, 1948, 119.

church full of people, they threw bombs; in Sadilovac, they set fire to a church full of people, even children in cradles.³⁴²

Many churches were turned into stables, warehouses, slaughterhouses and buildings for other purposes, sometimes into Roman Catholic or Uniate churches.³⁴³

In Bosnia, churches were destroyed by the Ustasha Muslims, in Croatia by the Ustasha Croats. Germans or Italians did it the least. The damaged churches were demolished by professional masons, on the orders of the Croatian authorities, that is, the Department for the Demolition of Serbian Churches that existed at the Main Ustasha Establishment in Zagreb. The most common labor force in the demolition was Serbs and Jews, who were constrained to do it by force.³⁴⁴ Some churches were demolished by the local Croats themselves, for various reasons, usually they were rewarded for their work with building materials or something else that satisfied them.³⁴⁵ Roman Catholic priests also took part in these affairs, under the pretext that there are no more Orthodox priests because they were converted before that.³⁴⁶

³⁴² Црква 1992, 39 (*Church 1992, 39).

³⁴³ The destruction of Orthodox churches became known even in Switzerland, in the World Council of Churches. – *Internacional cristian press*, Geneva, March/1942; About the destruction of Orthodoxy in Europe during 1941, an article was also published in the magazine. – *Orthodox church bulletin*, London, 13/1942.

³⁴⁴ The Jews, forced by Croats, demolished the church in Jasenovac. Around 80 people died during the demolition. – А. Милетић, *Јасеновац*., II, 927 (*A. Miletić, *Jasenovac*., II, 927); About the demolition of the church in Ilok – АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 14. 654 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 14.654).

³⁴⁵ In Ruma, in Srem, an Orthodox church was demolished by a Croatian, Nikola Mužević, without orders or permission from higher state authorities. As he was looting at the time, the great župan (*leader of the administrative unit župa (or zhupa, županija) Ante Nikolić from the Ministry of Internal Affairs wrote against him. – АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 11.541 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 11.541); There are numerous testimonies from Serbs and Orthodox priests about these events. One testimony that can be considered typical and characteristic for many regions of Croatia was given by the residents of the village of Tenja near Vukovar: "On the 12th October 1941, we were forcibly converted from our Serbian Orthodox faith to the Roman Catholic faith... The newly appointed parish priest, Franjo Jungvirst, moved into the former parish house of the Serbian Orthodox priest, who had been expelled... That house was located in the same courtyard where the Serbian Orthodox church stood, which the Ustasha authorities ordered to be demolished on the very day of Orthodox Christmas, the 7th January, 1942, and the church property was plundered, the assets were dispersed, and the bells were taken away." – *Злогела и греси*, 19 (*Crimes and Sins, 9).

³⁴⁶ About the demolition of the church in Rajevo Selo in Posavje – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 175-7/32.

The bishop of Križevci, that is bishop Janko Šimrak, joined the action of destroying Orthodox churches, when he sent professor Špira Petranović to the Lepavina monastery to prevent its destruction, but also with the task of taking it over in its entirety. Bishop Šimrak wanted to do the same with the monastery as he did with the church in the village of Lepavina, that is to turn it into a Uniate building.³⁴⁷

In the summer of 1941, the Germans expelled from Slovenia several hundred Roman Catholic priests of Slovene origin. They were also housed in Orthodox monasteries. As pastors in new parishes, they participated in the demolition of Orthodox churches. They did that on Saint Sava holiday in 1942 in Bučje near Pakrac, together with the locals.³⁴⁸

In April 1942, some smaller, local authorities ordered, probably based on orders from Zagreb, to cease the demolition of Orthodox churches.³⁴⁹ This was done as part of the plans for the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church.

How many Orthodox churches were looted and demolished, and devastated in other ways, has never been accurately determined.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ *Hrvatski narod*, 3. 3. 1942 (*Croatian people*, 3. 3. 1942).

³⁴⁸ С. Аврамов, *Геноциг...*, 401 (S. Avramov, *Genocide...*, 401).

³⁴⁹ The proclamation of the Great Parish of Vuka – AJ, 110, Инв. бр. 10.591 и 11.541 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 10.591 and 11.541).

³⁵⁰ The most affected, in every aspect, was the Gornji Karlovci Diocese. The Synod wrote in 1947 that in the diocese there were 220 churches in April 1941 and that 188 churches were vandalised. – АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1070/зап. 237/1947 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1070/Minutes 237/1947); In mid-1948, it was written that 145 churches and 45 chapels had been demolished during the war. – АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 967/зап. 188 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 967/Minutes 188) on the 17th March 1948; In mid-December 1952, the Synod informed the State Commission for Religious Affairs about the destruction of buildings during the war. In that letter, among other things, the fact that there were 189 churches in the Gornji Karlovci Diocese before April 1941 and that 175 churches were destroyed in various ways during the war was mentioned. – AJ, 110, ф-25, док 1-8; Ibid, Reg. no. 16.492 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, f-25, doc. 1-8; Ibid, Reg. no. 16.492); However, according to the report of Pov. 08-156/1-1960 on the 19th December 1960 of the Republic Commission for Religious Affairs of the SR of Croatia, the Gornji Karlovci Diocese had 180 churches in April 1941, of which 24 were demolished during the war, 39 were demolished to the ground, 59 were partially demolished. – AJ, 144-46-398 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 144-46-398). The former archbishop of this diocese, Bishop Simeon (Zloković), stated that there were 203 churches in April 1941, and that 88 of them were completely destroyed during the war, and 87 were severely damaged. – Симеон владика горњокарловачки, *250 година Епархије Горњокарловачке*, Београд, 1964, 88 (*Simeon, Bishop of Gornji Karlovac, *250 years of The Eparchy of Gornji Karlovac*, Belgrade, 1964, 88). Dušan Korać wrote about 258 churches and 5 monasteries that were destroyed – Dušan Korać, *Banija i Kordun u Narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi i socijalističkoj*

The supreme Croatian authorities from Zagreb repeated the order several times in the summer of 1941 to confiscate all things from the facilities of the Serbian Orthodox Church. This was also done on the 23rd August by printing and sending a circular to the addresses of numerous lower government bodies throughout the state. But even without those orders, too much had already been done. For example, in the village of Ležimir, the county of Sremska (at that time Croatian) Mitrovica, the church was looted already in June 1941.³⁵¹

A typical example of how it was done can be seen from the following case: the Ustasha arrested the priest Kosta Stanišić in his house in Livno and killed him. After that, all his property was looted for the benefit of the state.³⁵²

Ustasha head Josip Tomljenović personally arrested Bishop Sava (Trlajić) and other Orthodox priests in Plaško at the headquarters of

revoluciji, Zagreb, 1981, 142 (*Dušan Korać, *Banija and Kordun in the People's Liberation Struggle and the Socialist Revolution*, Zagreb, 1981, 142); Velimir Terzić wrote about 450 demolished churches and 800 damaged churches. – *Slot Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1941*, Beograd, 1983, II, 607 (**Collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941*, Belgrade, 1983, II, 607). Mane Pešut claimed that out of 237 churches, as many as there were in April 1941, 213 were destroyed in different ways and in various forms. He was the only one who stated the exact number of churches because he used the right data source (Calendar *Црква (Church)* for 1941) – „Српско питање у Хрватској“, *Гласник СИКД Њерош*, 51/1983, 94 (*"The Serbian Question in Croatia", *Gazette of the Serbian Communist Party of Croatia* Njegoš, 51/1983, 94);

The post-war State Commission for Determining the Crimes of Occupiers and their Collaborators, in its reports, most commonly stated 450 destroyed and 800 damaged Orthodox churches in the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. – AJ, 110, 675-466 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 100, 675-466); AJ, 144, 5-103 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 144, 5-103). The same information was stated in the books by: A. Манхатан, *Католички терор...*, 70 (*A. Manhattan, *Catholic Terror...*, 70); A. Manhattan, *The Vatican's...*, 88; E. Paris, *Genocide...*, 213.

The Serbian Orthodox Church announced in its publications that more than 430 churches had been destroyed – *Православље*, Београд, 1. 7. 1991, 7 (**Eastern Orthodoxy*, Belgrade, 1. 7. 1991, 7); The information about 450 vandalised churches is also stated in the publication *Српска православна црква – Вена йрошлосй и садашњосй*, Београд, 1992, 19 (**Serbian Orthodox Church – Its Past and Present*, Belgrade, 1992, 19); However, Risto Grđić was very specific: 330 churches, 49 chapels and 20 monasteries were destroyed. – *Српска црква...*, 15 (**Serbian Church...*, 15).

³⁵¹ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 52-42/1.

³⁵² The report of the Livno District – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 235-36/2; It is worth mentioning that the Italian military authorities temporarily prevented this looting, but they couldn't defend the property for long, so it was still sold for the benefit of the Croatian state. In this context, we should also mention the case of the Svetosavski Dom in Mostar. Namely, the Croatian authorities looted and closed this building. Priest Vukan Rodić tried with the help of the Italian military authorities to reclaim the looted property and reopen the Svetosavski Dom for use. – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 235-42/3.

the diocese of Gornji Karlovci. Tomljenović took all things of value from the congregational church, including paintings that had artistic value.³⁵³

The taking over of belongings from Serbian churches and parish homes, according to the plan of the competent authorities, should have ended with a report on the (alleged) handover, in the city administration.³⁵⁴ Orthodox churches were also looted in 1942, and there are preserved documents about this. A characteristic case took place in Valpovo: in mid-March 1942, the Subregional district in Valpovo informed the Ministry of Justice and Theology about affairs in the Orthodox Church. At the end of the letter was, among other things, the following: "at the Valpovo municipal administration these items are stored: 12 paintings, out of which 6 large and 6 small, 1 book of the Holy Gospel, supposedly in a gilded cover, 2 table candlesticks, 2 large hanging chandeliers with lamps."³⁵⁵

The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church also participated in the looting of Serbian churches in a special way. This was done by priests based on the orders of their bishops and archbishops, usually in agreement with local authorities. A characteristic example of this is the actions of Bishop Antun Akšamović of Đakovica. In the meantime, with the permission of the state authorities, he converted numerous Orthodox churches into Roman Catholic ones, because at the same time he was rechristening the Serbs. All this was done according to reasoning: if there are no Orthodox believers, then there should be no Orthodox churches, that is, new churches should be created for the new Roman Catholics. On the 8th June 1942, Bishop Akšamović informed the Croa-

³⁵³ The report of the Municipal Authority in Plaško – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 92-55/4.

³⁵⁴ "According to the provision of the Great Župa of Vuka on the 25th August 1941, Ref. No. 124-1941, and the decision of the city authorities on the 30th August 1941, Ref. No. 33-1941, the commission members Josip Petričić, city secretary Duško Marcelja, music professor, and Mato Subotić, professor, met at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in the church and proceeded to move movable items to the warehouse in the house of settler Grinvald, Dr. Pavelića Street No. 12. The following items were moved from the church... 2 holy water basins and lids, 5 flags and spears, 4 large candlesticks and 1 small one, 2 chairs with a picture... In the church, hanging electric chandeliers remained, parts of the iconostasis, seats and benches were attached to the wall." – AJ, 110, 679-14 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 100, 679-14).

³⁵⁵ АХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 2361 (*Croatian State Archives, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 2361)

tian State Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb about which Orthodox churches were converted into Roman Catholic ones and about the destiny of their inventory. He listed 20 churches.³⁵⁶

How many Orthodox churches were looted has never been determined exactly. However, there is a lot of data about it, which makes it easier to research. Based on them, there were also conclusions in the style: "...more than 40 train cars of church art and other historical values were robbed."³⁵⁷

³⁵⁶ "On the territory of our diocese, the former Greek-Eastern churches that have been converted into Catholic churches are the following:

1. Bračevci - Đakovo district. All things are in the storage of the congregational church in Đakovo.
2. Bračevci - Đakovo district. All things are with the parish board.
3. Paučje - Đakovo district and Veliko Nabrđe, Đakovo district, both of these villages belong to the parish branch whose seat is in Lev. Townships. Things are found in the same churches.
4. Dopsin - Osijek district. Things are located at the same church. This village belongs to the parish branch in Šodolovca, Osijek district.
5. Tenje - Osijek district, the Greek-Eastern church demolished together with the belongings was disposed of by the competent district area.
6. Dalj - Osijek district, the Greek-Eastern church and buildings were under the management of a special administration and under the supervision of the competent district area.
7. Markušica - Vukovar district, artifacts from the respective church at the new parish board.
8. Kapelna - Donji Miholjac district, artifacts are at the local parish board.
9. Kućanci - Donji Miholjac district, artifacts are at the local church board.
10. Budimci and Poganovci - Našica district, joint parish office with the seat in Budimci, artifacts are at the parish office.
11. Bijelo Brdo - Osijek district, the belongings are located at the parish office, with its seat in Sarvaš.
12. Borovo selo - Vukovar district, parish office with its seat in Vukovar (parish office). Artifacts are with the new parish committee.
13. Trpinja - Vukovar district, the parish office has not yet been established, but the church has been converted into a Catholic church. The municipal administration there will know where artifacts are. This parish outpost also includes Bobota; artifacts are located near this church.
14. Pačetin and Bršadin, the parish office has not been established, the municipal offices there will know where artifacts are.
15. Čepin - Osijek district, the parish church was demolished, the belongings of that Greek-Eastern church are located at the new parish office.
16. Martinci Čepinski - Valpovo district, the belongings are at the parish board.
17. Trnjani - Brod district, the church was demolished, the municipality there will know about artifacts.
18. Klokočevik - Brod district, the church was demolished, the municipality in Trnjani will know about the artifacts from there.
19. Topolje - Brod district (Topolje Novo) church demolished, the municipal administration in Garčin will know about the items.
20. Brod n/S. - the church was demolished; the district area will know about the artifacts from there. - AJ, 110, 679-160.

³⁵⁷ Слободан Милеуснић, „Мученичко страдање Српске православне цркве на подручју тзв. НДХ у току II светског рата“, *Српска православна црква – Њена прошлост и садашњост*, Београд,

The State Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and Their Helpers also collected data on the damage suffered by the Serbian Orthodox Church. According to those conclusions, more than 1,000 churches were looted and more than 300 various icons were taken.³⁵⁸

In the total destruction of the buildings of the Serbian Orthodox Church, a special place belongs to the removal of church bells. Namely, that work was also organised by the State Directorate for Reconstruction, through local authorities throughout the country. Those orders were identical and clear.³⁵⁹ There are traces of what the authorities intended with the bells: the bells from the church in Jasenovac were removed for melting.³⁶⁰ There were cases when bells were taken to Roman Catholic buildings and hidden there or placed instead of existing, weaker ones.

The activity of robbing the bells was not always without difficulties either. Several reports of the local authorities have been preserved that they could not rob the Orthodox church because there were Chetnik units in the villages. There were many such cases.³⁶¹ The number of bells that

1992, 43 (*Slobodan Mileusnić, "The Martyrdom of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Territory of the So-Called Independent State of Croatia During World War II", *Serbian Orthodox Church – Its Past and Present*, Belgrade, 1992, 43). An outstanding example of providing accurate data on the material destruction of the Serbian Orthodox Church is the text by Risto Grdić, although he did not analyse them, but only wrote about them broadly and without further explanations. – Р. Грђић, *Српска црква...*, 15 (*R. Grdić, *Serbian Church...*, 15). Among the works on this topic, the following should be singled out as a solid example of how research should be done: Милоје Николић, „Ратна штета Епархије жичке и Митрополије Београдско карловачке од априла 1941. до августа 1942“, *Гласник СПЦ*, 1985, 308-315 (*Miloje Nikolić, "War damage to the Eparchy of Žiča and the Archbishopric of Belgrade and Karlovci from April 1941 to August 1942", *Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 1985, 308-315).

³⁵⁸ АЈ, 110, Инв. бр. 16.492 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 16.492).

³⁵⁹ "Immediately remove all the bells from the Orthodox churches and deliver them with the inventory to this District area within 48 hours under the threat of the most severe punishment." In other orders, there were also wordings like this: "The bells of the churches in the village of Slabinja, Bačvani, Čitluk, Strigovo and in Bos.Petrinja are to be taken down." – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 203-2/2; Such orders are numerous, such as the order of the District outpost in Bosanska Kostajnica on the demolition of churches in the area around Bosanski Novi – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 203-2/2.

³⁶⁰ А. Милетић, *Јасеновац*, II, 927 (*A. Miletic, *Jasenovac*, II, 927).

³⁶¹ It is reported that the previous order cannot be complied with for the time being because the Greek-Eastern church is under difficult circumstances, that is, there are Chetnik groups there, which

were removed has not been determined, although there are more pieces of information. Thus, the State Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and Their Helpers determined that more than 700 bells were taken.³⁶² And after the bell was removed, the church was usually demolished, down to the foundations. Most often, objects of other purposes are made from the material. So, for example, the material of the destroyed church in Kotor Varoš was used to build the "Hrvatski dom".

Numerous armies caused the destruction of the monasteries and other church buildings in Srem during the 1941-1945 war, which was processed in great detail by the Provincial Commission for the determination of the crimes of the occupiers and their helpers, in the first months of 1945, that is, immediately after the war. The destruction of the monasteries in Fruška Gora are described in detail in the documentation collected by the Commission for determining damage to cultural and historical objects in the territory of Vojvodina. This commission was formed on the 2nd February 1945, and it consisted of excellent experts on the subject: Svetozar Georgijević, Dr. Radoslav Ilijić and Mladen Leskovac. Their collaborators, also excellent experts, Dr. Lazar Mirković and Arch. Đorđe Tabaković, compiled a "Report on damage to Serbian Orthodox monasteries and their regional churches in Fruška Gora" on the 29th December and submitted it to the Commission. The report was accepted a day later, on the 30th December 1945.

The Provincial Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and Their Aids in Vojvodina, i.e., its members, good experts with the necessary documentation, easily prepared the study "Crimes on cultural and historical monuments and objects in Srem", which is an excellent resource to use.³⁶³ Since the enumeration would be long, we will only dwell on examples of destruction.

is why intervention regarding the removal of the bell would now be superfluous": Report of the commander of the Bosanska Kostajnica station, Reg. no. 182 on 6th October, 1941 – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 203-2/2.

³⁶² AJ, 110, Инв. бр. 16.492 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 16.492).

³⁶³ For many years, it was believed that all copies of the paper had disappeared. However, one preserved one was published by Dinko Davidov in the form of a book *Злогдела и њеси*, Београд, 1990 (**Crimes and Sins*, Belgrade, 1990).

In the middle of August 1941, the Croatian authorities from Zagreb issued an order to all lower regional and district authorities, what they should do with the Orthodox churches.³⁶⁴

At the end of August 1941, the State Directorate for Reconstruction decided that the property of the Šišatovac Monastery became the property of the Independent State of Croatia.³⁶⁵ Similar decisions were written for other monasteries located in Fruška Gora. Thus, it was decided that all the property of the Krušedol monastery, which until then had been registered as the property of the Directorate for Reconstruction, would become the property of the Institute for Colonisation.³⁶⁶

There are many testimonies about what it was like to close churches and monasteries and list their property. The prior of Velika Remeta monastery, Mitrofan (Vidaković), wrote about what happened to him after he was deported to Serbia: "While we were lying on the floor, the Ustasha together with prior Melentije searched the entire monastery and found the requested money. According to prior Melentije, they found and took a little more than 15,000 dinars."³⁶⁷ Radoslav Grujić and selected experts from Belgrade arrived in April 1942, with considerable help from the German authorities, in some monasteries in Fruš-

³⁶⁴ That order was also valid for the district government in Irig: "You are invited, based on the Circular of the State Directorate for Reconstruction in Zagreb dated the 9th August 1941 no. 2446/20-1941 for the area of this district, to close and seal the Greek Eastern Churches in all places, and to hand over the registry books of the Greek Eastern Churches to the competent municipal authorities, so that they can keep them until further orders. At the same time, you are invited to perform an inventory of the entire movable and immovable property of the Church, as well as the inventory of the property of the departed Greek Eastern priests, and to submit a report on the completed work. Circular no. 2446/20-1941 of the State Directorate for Reconstruction has not been found to date, but is only mentioned indirectly; A document sent to the District Region in Irig cited according to the copy – *Злогела и іреси*, 24 (**Crimes and Sins*, 24).

³⁶⁵ Copy of Decision No: N. 2/2 on the 25th August 1941 – *Злогела и іреси*, 30 (**Crimes and Sins*, 30).

³⁶⁶ Copy of Decision No: N. 7/7 on the 24th October 1941 – *Злогела и іреси*, 32 (**Crimes and Sins*, 32).

³⁶⁷ The "inventory" of property was less harsh in the Hopovo monastery: "From the Grgeteg monastery we went by truck via Irig to the Hopovo monastery. This monastery is inhabited by Russian monks and nuns. This circumstance made our mission very difficult. They were constantly at our heels and begged us not to take this or that item from them, because they needed it for worship... I took a silver baroque set for Reconstruction. We loaded all the assets from Hopovo into a train car in Hrvatski Karlovci." - AJ, 110, Inv. no. 249/p. 49 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, inventory no. 249/p. 49). Copy of the report of Stjepan Gotvald, representative of the State Directorate for Reconstruction from Zagreb – *Злогела и іреси*, 28 (**Crimes and Sins*, 28).

ka Gora, with the task of transferring the saint's relics. About his stay in the Šišatovac monastery, he wrote: "After this work was done, I entered the altar with the others, where I noticed that all the most necessary objects for worship, such as the antimins, the gospel, the chalices, and so on, without which liturgical services cannot be performed, had been taken from the holy throne and the altar. Then I asked them to show us the treasury, the library and the monastery cells, and on that occasion, I stated: that the treasury was completely emptied, down to the last piece, and the library, for the most part, remained in its place, but the cupboards were left open and at the mercy of the discretion and interest of the commissioner." The other monasteries visited by Grujić and the team for the rescue and transfer of the saint's relics were in a similar state.³⁶⁸

Although almost completely looted and emptied, the monasteries in Fruška Gora were still attractive buildings. Bishop Akšamović of Đakovo was interested in the Ravanica and Jazak monasteries.³⁶⁹ Not only the bishop of Đakovo was interested in Orthodox monasteries: the archbishop of Zagreb, Štepinac, agreed with the supreme Croatian authorities to place the expelled Roman Catholic priests from Slovenia, of which there were 86, in Fruška Gora. In this way, even the top of the Roman Catholic Church in the Independent State of Croatia participated in the destruction of Orthodox holy places.

On the 22nd May 1941, at the proposal of the Ministry of Education, Ante Pavelić signed the Legal Provision on the Prohibition of Alienation and Transportation of Ancient, Artistic, Cultural-Historical and

³⁶⁸ Radoslav Grujić's report - Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Radoslav Grujić's legacy, unregistered.

³⁶⁹ "Petition No. 2473/1941 contains the same matter, for which the Father Guardian of the Capuchin Monastery from Osijek was with you. This order located its seminary and novitiate in Karlobag, that is, in a completely passive area, which is a very difficult situation for a young religious. That is why I asked for the retreat of the two monasteries of Ravanica and Jazak, where the seminary and novitiate of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchins would be located. Thus, the Ravanica monastery would house the parish office and economic administration, while the Jazak monastery would house the seminary for the novitiate. These monasteries have large estates of fields and vineyards, as well as large forest complexes. Forests will become state-owned, while arable land, vineyards and orchards can be given to the Capuchin Fathers." – *Злогдела и греси*, 33 (**Crimes and Sins*, 33).

Natural Monuments from the Territory of the Independent State of Croatia. Based on this provision, the manager of the Croatian National Museum of Arts and Crafts, Vladimir Tkalčić, received an order according to which his museum was given the right to "take over and deliver all objects of a cultural, historical and artistic nature from all Orthodox churches and monasteries referred to in paragraph 3 of the mentioned legal provisions, through his representatives to the Croatian National Museum in Zagreb".³⁷⁰ In addition to this right, the manager was also informed of the following: "This provision must be implemented quickly, strictly and confidentially with the personal disciplinary and material responsibility of all parties."³⁷¹ This legal provision was known to all local authorities in the country and they had to treat it responsibly because it was written in the notices to all great prefects.³⁷²

In the midst of the fiercest suppression of the Serbian people and their culture, the concern of Croatian scientific institutions (which can also be interpreted as looting) for the preservation of cultural treasures in Serbian churches and monasteries began with the departure of Vladimir Tkalčić to the Gomirje monastery. He was obliged to do so by the order of the Ministry of Education on the 12th July 1941. He did it together with experts from the Conservation Institute from Zagreb. The second part of the work in Fruška Gora began on the 29th

³⁷⁰ Even today, it is a big mystery why Vladimir Tkalčić did all that in Orthodox churches. It is still not possible to speak exactly about his intentions. Did he do it as a representative of the Croatian Ustasha regime or as a professional museologist? When considering, we should take into account the fact that the authorities from Zagreb paid for all of this! In this context, it is worth looking at the testimony of Radoslav Grujić about Vladimir Tkalčić. – *Злогела и іреси*, 239 (**Crimes and Sins*, 239).

³⁷¹ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-6/2; According to Vladimir Tkalčić's testimony, this order was not signed by the director of the Ministry of Education, Mile Budak. The proposal for the order was written by museum curator Božidar Murgić. – *Злогела и іреси*, 27 and 235 (**Crimes and Sins*, 27 and 235).

³⁷² "On the basis of the cited legal provision of the Head of the Independent State of Croatia, it was determined that all antique objects of artistic and cultural-historical value from Greek-Eastern churches and chapels are to be handed over for storage to the Croatian State Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb, which is already partly done on the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. For this reason, please issue urgent orders on your part, so that the implementation of this legal provision in the area of the Great Župa of Gora will also be fully implemented." – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 179-6/2.

August and ended on 16th September 1941.³⁷³ In the same operation, things from parish churches from places all over the Independent State of Croatia were brought to the Croatian State Museum of Arts and Crafts.³⁷⁴

In the looting of Orthodox churches, there were also cases of un-planned destruction: after collecting things from Buvač, Smoljanović Brdo, Močil, Munjava, Petrovo Ličko Selo and Radovica, during the (planned) temporary stop in Slunj, a building was intentionally set on fire and everything there was burned.

On the 19th February, 1942, Vladimir Tkalčić informed all the administrators of the Fruška Gora monastery in a circular letter that he had not finished his work last summer and intended to continue it. On that occasion, he wrote that libraries and archives must remain in their place. He suggested what should be done in order to preserve them until the arrival of the museum envoy from Zagreb. However, nothing came of it because the Croatian military and civilian authorities, in the meantime, destroyed almost everything.³⁷⁵

Stjepan Gotvald was one of the members of the team for taking over the church belongings. He was a typical example of an intellectual who accepted Ustasha ideas. Therefore, he put all his skills and knowledge at the service of the Ustasha authorities, whose representatives

³⁷³ During that time, things were taken from all the monasteries in Fruška Gora: Beočin, Bešenovo, Đipša, Grgeteg, Hopovo, Jazak, Krušedol, Kuveždin, Privina Glava, Rakovac, Ravanica, Šišatovac, Petkovića and Velika Remeta. At the same time, numerous things were taken from parish churches around Srem, from Jazak, Krušedol and Kamenica and transferred to Zagreb. On the 15th October 1945, Radoslav Grujić (in the presence of Vladimir Tkalčić) gave very detailed information about the things that were in the Fruška Gora monasteries until April 1941 to the National Commission for Determining the Crimes of the Occupiers and their Helpers in Zagreb – AJ, 110, 679-368 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, 679-368).

³⁷⁴ Bastaji, Bijela, Bjelovar, Bračevci, Brinje, Crna Vlas, Dalj, Bodica near Dalj, Daruvar, Doljani, Đakovo, Glavaci, Ivanić Grad, Kobaš, Karlovac, Klokočevik, Koprivnica, Bosanska Kostajnica, Hrvatska Kostajnica, Komogovina, Mečani, Laze Sremske, Lepavina, Lučani, Mirkovci, Mreznica, Novi Jankovci, Ogulin, Orahovica (monastery and parish church), Orolik, Osijek, Otočac, Otok, Pakra (monastery, parish church and chapel), Pakrac (bishop's palace, palace chapel, parish church and cemetery chapel), Pauče, Petrinja, Plaški, Prokike, Senj, Sirač, Srpske Moravice, Staro Selo, Sivica, Tobolić, Trnjani, Tržić, Veliko Nabrđe, Vinkovci, Virovitica, Vodoteč, Vojni Tuk, Vrbovsko, Vrhovine, Zalužnice and so forth. – AJ, 110, 679-368 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, 679-368); *Злогела и њресу*, 27-29, 234-235 (**Crimes and Sins*, 27-29, 234-235).

³⁷⁵ *Злогела и њресу*, 31 (**Crimes and Sins*, 31).

he willingly served and flattered them by bringing gifts from his trips to Serbian monasteries. From the trips, he reported to the Directorate for Reconstruction, which delegated him.³⁷⁶

Among the Serbs who were connoisseurs of church values, who were in Croatia during the summer months, there were different opinions about how to save the riches from the buildings of the Serbian Orthodox Church. One of the most famous and expert, Boško Strika, had many acquaintances among scientific workers in Zagreb. In addition, he was also an associate of the Zagreb museums, so he met managers such as: Vladimir Tkalčić, Viktor Hofiler, Đuro Sabo and Milovan Gavaci. At the beginning of July 1941, Strika spoke to them about antiquities and valuables in the buildings of the Serbian Orthodox Church and warned them of the danger that threatens those valuables. Therefore, he recommended that it is desirable that all monastery antiquities and other church values be transferred as soon as possible to Zagreb, to the Croatian National Museum of Arts and Crafts. According to Strika's testimony, these museum members accepted his proposals and, on this occasion, addressed the government in Zagreb. Boško Strika was convinced that, thanks to the efforts of the supervisor

³⁷⁶ Thus, on the 1st September 1941, he wrote: "The palace of the patriarchate is completely preserved and empty... We have started moving the library out, which takes up 6 trucks in volume and is quite valuable... I will bring writing desks, carpets, chairs, and one principal's set for the Reconstruction." In his second report, he wrote: "From Hrvatski Karlovac, we shipped museum objects from three churches and the patriarchal castle. Two train cars of books are for the university library, different furniture, pictures and other objects, 5 train cars in total, were sent to Zagreb for the Art and Craft Museum, some paintings for the picture gallery, some furniture, which is otherwise worthless for other purposes, were sent to the Croatian theater (throne, canopy, gilded chairs and old curtains)... 2 large bronze busts of Patriarch Georgije Branković should be poured for the bust of Father of the Fatherland Ante Starčević for the Ministry of Home Defense and finally I sent some furniture for office premises of Reconstruction. A total of 8 train cars were loaded and sent... In the cathedral church, a beautiful iconostasis remained that could be donated to the Greek Catholic church." In the third report, Gotvald wrote, among other things: "Most of those objects are valuable for the Serbs, as proof of their cultural activity and their strength in these Croatian regions, where those monasteries are cultural hotspots and strongholds from which Serbia systematically spread." – *Злогела и њесу*, 35 (**Crimes and Sins*, 35).

In this context, the words from the publication that was printed on the occasion of the exhibition "Iz kulturne prošlosti Srba u Hrvatskoj" ("From the cultural past of the Serbs in Croatia)" in the History Museum of Croatia in 1969 seem very cynical: "All exhibited items were saved from Orthodox churches by Croatian museum workers during the last war." – *Hrvatski književni list*, Zagreb, 15/1969 (**Croatian literary newspaper*, Zagreb, 15/1969).

of the Croatian museums, the government approved it and then determined how to deal with the church's wealth until the arrival of the museum workers and its removal to Zagreb. After the items from Krušedol and other monasteries in Slavonia were brought to Zagreb, to the Croatian National Museum of Arts and Crafts, Strika was among the enumerators. He claimed that they listed everything and then stored them in museum depots.³⁷⁷

Vladimir Tkalčić delivered and deposited numerous church items in the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb.³⁷⁸

With numerous laws, regulations and orders, the Croatian authorities planned to seize all the material values of the Serbian Orthodox Church and thus completely ruin it, i.e., destroy it.

During the arrest of the Orthodox priests and archbishops, and the search of their apartments, everything of value was taken from them. In everything that happened in the episcopal palace in Zagreb, not even paper (bank) valuables were neglected, and they did not hesitate to confiscate very heavy things, such as, for example, the metal cash register of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Diocese of Zagreb.³⁷⁹

The commissioner of the Croatian government for Eastern Slavonia, Marko Lemešić, a lawyer from Ruma, as early as on the 30th April 1941, appointed a commissioner for the Diocesan Administrative Board in Sremski Karlovci. The commissioner was supposed to have authority over the church municipalities and monasteries of the archdiocese of Belgrade-Karlovci, which was then located on the territory of the Independent State of Croatia. Commissioner Andrija Ludvig, head of

³⁷⁷ The letter from Boško Strika in 1942 to the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church - Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Legacy of Radoslav Grujić, unregistered.

³⁷⁸ Thus, he delivered 4 chests of objects and 40 chests of books from Pakrac, 81 objects and 80 chests of books from Plaški, 9 items and 20 chests of books from Beočin. On that occasion, 6 chests of archival materials from Plaški were handed over to the Croatian State Archives. After the war, in July 1946, this wealth was delivered to Belgrade in 11 train cars – AJ, 110, 679-368 (*Archives of Yugoslavia, 110, 679-368); *Злочина и пресуду*, 238–239 (**Crimes and Sins*, 238-239).

³⁷⁹ In the letter of Dimitrije Vitković, archbishop's deputy, addressed to Metropolitan Dositej, it is stated that they took the bank books of the Lepavina monastery, the church of Sveta Petka in Zagreb, the church municipalities of Celje, Maribor and Ljubljana, and other valuables - DAS (*State Archives of Serbia), Commissariat for Refugees, unregistered.

the tax administration in Karlovci, on the 14th June announced an order according to which all monasteries and their new administrations must request all approvals from him. The commissioner imagined that, through subordinate commissioners, he would manage the other monasteries. They will live and receive a salary at the expense of the monastery. The settlement of Muslims and Croats from Bosnia on the monastery estates was planned.³⁸⁰ Therefore, on the 21st June he ordered the commissioners to draw up "inventories of the entire movable and immovable property of the monastery with all the details, especially with regard to cattle and other live inventory, mark the expected income and returns, give an inventory of all foodstuffs, especially lard, meat, wheat, corn, wine, brandy and others, then the inventory of the treasury, the state of the monastery treasury, the list of cash, valuables and securities."³⁸¹

Buildings in Sremski Karlovci, the former church and cultural center of the Serbian people, were especially thoroughly looted. In mid-September 1941, a legal provision was published on the acquisition of the property of "Serbian institutes and institutions" in favor of the Croatian Ustasha state. Like numerous previous orders and provisions, this one also legalized the seizure of Serbian church property in favor of the Croatian state. In this case, it was about confiscation of the entire property of the "Karlovci Grammar School Publishing House", the "Serbian People's Church Clerical School Fund" and the "Stefan-eum-a-Archdiocesan Orthodox Serbian Priest's Dormitory".³⁸²

"Blagodjejanije" - a boarding-type charitable institution, founded by Metropolitan Stefan (Stratimorović), in which free food was dis-

³⁸⁰ The commissioners for the monasteries in Fruška Gora were: Jaša Seder for the monastery Rakovac, Josip Bemiler for the monastery Mala Remeta, Pavle Jelašić for the monastery Ravanica, Matija Škrobalek for the monastery Jazak, Andrija Pekarić for the monastery Krušedol, Antun Pekarić for the monastery Velika Remeta, Metodije Bardić for the monastery Hopovo, Milan Branković for the monastery Bešenovo, Mirko Purgar for the monastery Grgeteg, Filip Ditrh for the monastery Šišatovac, Stipan Rukavina for the monasteries Kuveždin and Đivša, and Matija Žagar for the monastery Beočin.

³⁸¹ *Злогела и іреси*, 119 (**Crimes and Sins*, 119).

³⁸² *Narodne novine*, Zagreb, 20. 9. 1941 (**National newspaper*, Zagreb, 20. 9. 1941); Here it is certainly worth paying attention to the passion with which Croatian administrators changed Serbian names by translating them into the (new) Croatian language.

tributed to poor students, was demolished and ruined because it was occupied by the Ustasha army during the war years. The high school boarding school was transformed, in the summer of 1941, into a boarding school for Roman Catholic nuns who used it until the end of the war. From the summer of 1941, the Theological seminary was a boarding school of the Croatian Teachers' School. Later, the German special police, the Gestapo, came to the building and stayed there almost until the end of 1944.³⁸³ The Patriarchal Palace in Sremski Karlovci (at that time Hrvatski Karlovci) was, from the first days of April 1941, the target of numerous raids due to its momentousness, architectural appearance and riches inside the building. All libraries of inestimable value were taken from it: metropolitan, theological and those belonging to Dimitrije Ruvarac.³⁸⁴ All of this was done according to the order of the State Directorate for Reconstruction, which on the 5th July 1941, required the local authorities to take all things from the library in the Seminary.³⁸⁵ Later, the same fate befell the wealth of the archbishopric and Metropolitanate of Karlovac in a well-established and proven way: first, the State Directorate re-announced the legal provision on the confiscation of all property in favor of the Independent State of Croatia, and then the local authorities did their work.³⁸⁶

On the 13th November 1941, the Directorate for Reconstruction, rather to say its "Serbian department", ordered the district area in (Croatian) Karlovci to send all valuables, valuable papers and other things taken from the Serbs during the expulsion, as well as similar items

³⁸³ *Злогела и њреси*, 108 (**Crimes and Sins*, 108)

³⁸⁴ In 1945, Marko Orešković, a then employee of the University Library from Zagreb, a special representative by order of the Croatian government, spoke in front of the State Commission in 1945, and said the following: "When I came to the Patriarchate on the occasion of taking over the library, there was no one there, but there were noticeable traces of the presence of German soldiers. All the furniture in the patriarchate was taken away, except for a few old dirty beds and chairs used by the Germans, while the library was untouched. In general, the patriarchy gave the image of robbery and devastation." – *Злогела и њреси*, 113 (**Crimes and Sins*, 113).

³⁸⁵ *Злогела и њреси*, 112 (**Crimes and Sins*, 112). Of all this wealth, however, the most valuable was the library bequeathed by Ilarion Ruvarac.

³⁸⁶ The legal provision No. 225/993 on the 6th August 1941 on confiscation of property from all persons who left the Independent State of Croatia was the basis for the seizure of this wealth. – *Narodne novine*, 7. 8. 1941 (**National newspaper*, 7. 8. 1941).

from the monastery, to Zagreb. It is not known what the local government did after receiving the order. Only later, in January 1943, did the two commissars report what they were doing. They wrote that they had taken away all the valuable papers collected from the former church committees and sent them to the Directorate for Reconstruction.³⁸⁷

Leader Ante Pavelić ordered that a Croatian Ustasha "Civil Service School" be opened in (Croatian) Karlovci, in the building of the patriarchal palace. That was done on the 1st August 1941.³⁸⁸

In the days when the Serbs, with the help of the Italians, wanted to open those churches that were sealed, the Croatian authorities demanded from the Italian command not to allow such a thing. Such a case happened in Trebinje on the 26th September 1941.³⁸⁹

When the Croats wanted to seize all the movable and immovable property of the Monastery of Zavala near Ravno in Herzegovina, which they had previously closed and expelled the monks (or they themselves had escaped the destruction), the Italians opened the monastery and returned the escaped monk to perform his service unhindered.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ *Злогела и њреси*, 128 (**Crimes and Sins*, 128).

³⁸⁸ The school secretary, Pavle Dragičević, spoke to the *Graničar* newspaper about the school: "In this school, boys with perhaps still undeveloped ideology have come, but when they enter this magnificent building, they are overtaken by a strange feeling, not because they have entered someone else's richly furnished building, but on the contrary, they feel that it is a common Ustasha place, that the foundations of Ustasha are strong and indestructible as well as the foundations of this school. This building is an ideal place for the education of Ustasha officials. Perhaps this building was built for former purposes opposed to ours, but now it is and will be the hearth of Ustasha ideology and its principles, Ustasha struggle and progress." – *Злогела и њреси*, 117-118 (**Crimes and Sins*, 117-118). These words almost tell everything: according to Pavelić's visions, in the core of Serbian national identity and Orthodoxy in Karlovci, in the palace where Serbian patriarchs lived and worked, the Ustasha ideology had to be taught. The school principal, catechist Franjo Tetkić, a dedicated Ustasha captain trained on the Janka-Puszta in Hungary, worked most for that idea.

³⁸⁹ The request to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Zagreb on the 18th September 1941 – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 213-18/3.

³⁹⁰ The letter from the regional district head from Livno dated the 25th August 1941 – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 235-36/2. The letter stated, among other things, that "former Greek Orthodox priest Kosta Stanišić from Livno unexpectedly disappeared back in the month of July of the current year along with his entire family." The truth is quite different. Namely, the priest was arrested and killed. For a similar event, see also the letter from the regional district head from Ravno dated 26th September 1941, addressed to the State Directorate for Reconstruction. – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 244-36/1.

When the Ustashas from Drniš in Dalmatia tried to set fire to the Orthodox church, Italian soldiers prevented it by threatening to use force.³⁹¹ At the beginning of September 1941, Bishop Irinej came to Drniš accompanied by an Italian colonel and a photographer. They inspected and filmed the damaged church and parish house. As the damage was not great, the church was opened and soon there was a liturgy, i.e., a memorial service for the victims.³⁹² Something similar happened in the nearby village of Kričke.³⁹³

³⁹¹ „Dnevnik komande divizije Sassari“, *Krvavi bilans Nezavisne Države Hrvatske, Revija* 92, Beograd, 1991, 41 "Diary of the Sassari Division Command", *Bloody Balance of the Independent State of Croatia, Review* 92, Belgrade, 1991, 41.

³⁹² BA, HДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 221-35/5; Ibid, 233-42/2.

³⁹³ The report of the Grand Prefect from Knin dated 5th October 1941. – BA, HДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 220-36/7.

6.

CROATIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

At the beginning of 1942, the policy of the Croatian authorities to solve the "Serbian issue" changed, primarily under the influence of German demands to calm down the suppression. However, this did not mean giving up the final goals. Namely, the policy change had only a formal character. The creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church must also be viewed in this context. It represents an immediate, i.e., temporary and short-term, easing of the policy of extermination of the Serbian people. The ultimate goal remained the same, and it is clearest in the words of Mile Budak, one of the ministers: "We will kill a part of the Serbs, we will expel a part, we will convert the rest to the Catholic faith and thus make them Croats, and what remains will be only a bitter memory of them." At the same time, that policy aimed at the denationalisation of the Serbian people, given the fact that after the suppression, it reduced it to a confessional community. In other words, the Croatian government took away the Serbian people's right to their national determination, leaving them the kind of Orthodoxy, within the framework of a new (pseudo) Church organised in the Roman Catholic spirit.³⁹⁴

A lot has been written about the reasons for the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church after the Second World War, in emigration

³⁹⁴ This was best explained by Ante Pavelić, when addressing the members of the Parliament: "Gentlemen, no one touches the Orthodox, but there cannot be a Serbian Orthodox Church in the Croatian state." I say once again: there can't be a Serbian, and there can't be a Greek-Eastern church either!" – *Narodne novine*, 1. 4. 1942 (**National newspaper*, 1. 4. 1942).

and in the country, in various ways and with various intentions.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁵ The authors of Roman Catholic and ultra-Croatian provenance explain that the Ustasha movement arose as a response to Serbian crimes and the dictatorship in Croatia. According to it, anti-Serbism in Croatia was a consequence of Belgrade's twenty-year rule over Zagreb. One of them, a Roman Catholic theologian, explained that the consequence of such a policy was the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church – Juraj Kolarić, *Pravoslavni*, Zagreb, 1985, 174 (*Juraj Kolarić, *Orthodox*, Zagreb, 1985, 174) (hereinafter: J. Коларић, *Православни*). Kolarić's views were accepted by Franjo Tuđman – *Bespuća povijesne zbiljnosti*, Zagreb, 1989, 399-400 (*Franjo Tuđman - *The Abyss of Historical Reality*, Zagreb, 1989, 399-400) (hereinafter: Ф. Туђман, *Беспућа...*).

Ferdo Čulinović also interpreted the creation of the new Church as the impotence of the Croatian state to carry out plans to destroy the Serbian people to the end. – *Окупијорска ђојела...*, 346-348 (**Occupying division...*, 346-348).

Eugen Dido Kvaternik considered the new Church a way to pacify the Serbian people. – „Riječi i činjenice“, *Hrvatska revija*, 5, Minhen-Barcelona, 1955, 69-70 (*"Words and Facts", *Croatian Review*, 5, Munich-Barcelona, 1955, 69-70). Kvaternik claimed that the creation of the new church was some kind of Pavelić's spite against Archbishop Stepinac. See also: Ivan Mužić, *Pavelić i Stepinac*, Split, 1991, 48 (*Ivan Mužić, *Pavelić and Stepinac*, Split, 1991, 48) (hereinafter: И. Мужич, *Павелић и...*). The emissary of the Vatican in Zagreb, Giuseppe Ramiro Marcone, wrote on the 5th May 1942 to Cardinal Luigi Maglione, about the reasons for the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church as well. He wrote that it was ordered by Ante Pavelić, after learning that it was not possible to convert all Orthodox Serbs. – И. Мужич, *Павелић и...*, 47 (*I. Mužić, *Pavelić...*, 47). Видети и: И. Цвитковић, *Ко је био...*, 116 (*I. Cvitković, *Who was...*, 116).

Stjepan Gaži, one of the leaders of the Croatian Peasant Party, wrote to his party comrades in London that the new Church was created at the request of the Italian crown. In another letter, he wrote that it was all just a joke. Similarly, Vječeslav Vilder, a political leader from Croatia, wrote the same. – Љ. Бобан, *Хрватска...*, 52, 66, 477; The second reporter from Zagreb saw the Germans as the main initiators of the formation of the Croatian Orthodox Church, and in July 1942, he wrote to Juraj Krnjević, a member of the Yugoslav royal government. – Љ. Бобан, *Хрватска...*, 161 (*Lj. Boban, *Croatia...*, 161).

Miloš Oberknežević, one of the participants in the creation of the new Church, justified the Ustasha creation by emphasizing that it was an affirmation of the religiously diverse Croatian nation, adding that it represented the resolution of the Orthodox problem. – „Razvoj pravoslavlja i Hrvatska pravoslavna crkva“, *Hrvatska revija*, 2, Minhen-Barcelona, 1979 (*"Development of Orthodoxy and the Croatian Orthodox Church", *Croatian Review*, 2, Munich-Barcelona, 1979) (hereinafter: М. Оберкнежевић, *Развој православа...*).

For Fikreta Jelić-Butić, the new Church was just a part of the terror towards the Serbian people. – *Ustaše i NDH*, Zagreb, 1978, 176-178 (*Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustasha and the Independent State of Croatia*, Zagreb, 1978, 176-178). In another smaller co-authored work, Fikreta Butić and Ivan Jelić wrote that "the solution to the Serbian issue lies in the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church, which was intended to serve as a mediator between the state and the Serbian population." In the end, the authors concluded that the Ustasha authorities "were not willing to make more radical changes in the previous position of the Serbs; however, even that was not done." In this statement, the words "defining the legal status of the Serbs" sound very unusual. The only sense could be in a very strange belief that the position of one nation could be managed by regulations regarding the establishment of a new Church. – Fikreta Butić, Ivan Jelić, „Prilozi za proučavanje historije NDH u razdoblju 1942-1943. godine“, *Putovi revolucije*, knj. 1-2, Zagreb, 1963, 339-356 (*Fikreta Butić, Ivan Jelić, "Contributions for the study of the history of the Independent State of Croatia in the period 1942-1943.", *Paths of the Revolution*, vol. 1-2, Zagreb, 1963, 339-356).

Franjo Tuđman accepted the Croatian Orthodox Church as something justified and necessary. – *Bespuća...*, 399-400 (**The Void...*, 399-400).

Some of the justifications for the creation of a new Church speak of the need to calm the situation in the Independent State of Croatia in view of the imperative requirements imposed by German interests and the conduct of the war in the East.³⁹⁶

Rasim Hurem wrote in the text "Correction of the Ustasha Policy towards the Serbs (*in the original: Korekcija ustaške politike prema Srbima)" that the Ustasha regime only had to change its policy of destruction towards the Serbs with this Church. However, this did not mean that they gave up on their ultimate goal because they continued to implement the policy of destruction until the end of the war and never renounced it. – *Kriza Narodno oslobodilačkog pokreta u Bosni i Hercegovini krajem 1941 i početkom 1942 godine*, Sarajevo, 1972, 206-209 (**Crisis of the People's Liberation Movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942*, Sarajevo, 1972, 206-209).

Viktor Novak wrote that the new church was only the realisation of the Vatican's dream of a Catholic Balkans and ultimately served for the denationalisation of the Serbian people. – *Magnum Crimen*, Beograd, 1986, 599-804.

Serbian historiography has written very little about the issue of the Croatian Orthodox Church. – Slobodan D. Milošević, „O prekrštavanju pravoslavnog stanovništva u NDH u vreme Drugog svetskog rata“, *Istorija 20 veka*, 2, Beograd, 1985, 71-92 (*Slobodan D. Milošević - "On the conversion of the Orthodox population in the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War", *History of the 20th century*, Belgrade, 1985, 71-92); М. Булајић, *Усташки злочин...*, 392-398 (*М. Булајић, *Ustasha crime...*, 392-398). Đoko Slijepčević wrote somewhat more significantly on the issue. – *Историја Српске православне цркве*, 3, Beograd, 1991, 91-105 (**History of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 3, Belgrade, 1991, 91-105). Slijepčević used feuilleton as the main source. – Svetozar Lozo, Milenko Doder, „Hrvatska pravoslavna crkva - agentura okupatora“, *Vjesnik*, Zagreb, 21. 2-13. 3. 1976 (*Svetozar Lozo, Milenko Doder, "Croatian Orthodox Church - agents of the occupiers", *Messenger*, Zagreb, 21. 2-13. 3. 1976).

Dušan Kašić, in the work "The Serbian Church in the so-called Independent State of Croatia", understood the essence, judging that the Serbs should have been made harmless, denationalised and assimilated into Croats in a way that was somehow more painless than all previous. – *Српска православна црква 1920-1970*, Beograd, 1971, 183-204 (**Serbian Orthodox Church 1920-1970*, Belgrade, 1971, 183-204).

Vladimir Dedijer only retold the aforementioned Kašić's text. – *Vatikan i Jasenovac*, Beograd, 1987, 487-489 (*The Vatican and Jasenovac*, Belgrade, 1987, 487-489).

Sima Simić only stated that a new Church was created, stating that the essence lies in the subjugation of the Serbian nation. – *Прекршћивање Срба за време Другој светској рату*, Beograd, 1990, 101 (**Conversion of Serbs during the Second World War*, Belgrade, 1990, 101).

Dragoljub Živojinović and Dejan Lučić wrote that all of this with the Church served for "misleading the international public, and otherwise for controlling the remaining, unconverted Serbs." – *Varvarstvo u ime Hristovo*, Beograd, 1988, 696-699 (**Barbarism in the Name of Christ*, Belgrade, 1988, 696-699) (hereinafter: Д. Живојиновић, Д. Лучић, *Варварство...*).

Mile Konjević tried to write something more specific about the place and role of the new Church, but it was reduced to repeating the data published until then. – „Мјесто и улога Хрватске православне цркве у усташкој политици према Србима“, *Зборник за историју Мајнице српске*, 7, Нови Сад, 1973, 180-189 (*"The Place and Role of the 'Croatian Orthodox Church' in the Ustasha Policy Towards the Serbs", *History Collection of of Matica Srpska*, 7, Novi Sad, 1973, 180-189).

³⁹⁶ Croatian government circulars addressed the local authorities. – ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 203-49/5; *Ibid*, 213-22/7. This interpretation was also accepted by some authors, for example Herve Laurier. – *Ubice u ime Božije*, Beograd, 1987, 107.

The Croatian press attributed the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church to state interests, giving that event historical significance. For this purpose, they often used the metropolitan of Zagreb, Germogen, to whom they had previously composed what to say, i.e., to read.

Ustasha and pro-Ustasha texts, which were published during the war, in various yearbooks, calendars and other publications of the Croatian Orthodox Church, justified the creation of a new Church. It is characteristic of all of them that they deliberately overlooked what happened to the Serbian people until then.³⁹⁷

The initiative for the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church came from the German side. This was directly suggested to leader Ante Pavelić in the summer of 1941. However, he spoke publicly about the need for a new church organisation for the first time at the Assembly only in March 1942.³⁹⁸

In the Parliamentary Committee for Judicial and Religious Affairs, during the discussion on the property of church municipalities, a new church organisation was also mentioned as an implementation of Pavelić's ideas about the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church, instead of the Serbian Orthodox Church. One of the officials also spoke about the intention to subjugate the Serbs in this way and turn them into Croats. Those words also contained the essence of the creation of the new Church.³⁹⁹ At the first following session in the Committee, the discussion on the same topic continued, but in a new context. Namely, before noon on the same day, a delegation of Committee members visited Leader Pavelić. The councilors understood that it was primarily a political issue and not something else. The head of the Committee, Vinko Krišković, thought that everything would be able to end with the crea-

³⁹⁷ *Pravoslavni kalendar za 1943. i 1944. godinu; Glas pravoslavlja.*

³⁹⁸ Booklet of Ante Pavelić's speech: *Poglavnik Saboru i narodu*, Zagreb, 1942. – BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 85-10/15; *Iz Poglavnikovog govora pred Hrvatskim Državnim Saborom* – Архив САНУ, Инв. бр. 14.537/11 (*From Poglavnik's speech before the Croatian National Assembly – Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, inventory no. 14.537/11).

³⁹⁹ ХДА, НДХ-Hrvatski državni sabor, k-30, *Zapisnik 3. sjednice Odbora za pravosudne i bogoštovne poslove od 11. 3. 1942* (*Croatian State Archives, Independent State of Croatia - Croatian State Parliament, k-30, *Minutes of the 3rd Session of the Committee for Judicial and Religious Affairs from March 11, 1942*).

tion of one church municipality for the state. The creation of only one Orthodox church municipality justified the state's policy of christianisation.⁴⁰⁰ The committee could not do anything specific because the whole matter was under the jurisdiction of completely different institutions.

The Croatian authorities were in a hurry to implement the plan to create a new Church. Therefore, German intelligence officers, accustomed to the creation of new church organisations in Orthodoxy, gathered a group of Serbs whom they instructed to sign a petition for the establishment of a church municipality.⁴⁰¹ The signatories were then received by Pavelić himself. All this was done to show how the new Church is the answer to the demands of the Serbs. The dismissed priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Vasilije Šurlan, was in the group that wrote the petition and visited Pavelić.⁴⁰²

On the 3rd April 1942, Pavelić signed the Legal Provision on the Croatian Orthodox Church.⁴⁰³ After that, the Minister of Justice and Theology allowed the establishment of the first ecclesiastical municipality of the Croatian Orthodox Church.⁴⁰⁴

On the 9th April 1942, Vasilije Šurlan invited Orthodox priests (of the Serbian Orthodox Church) to cooperate in establishing a new or-

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid*, Записник 4. сједнице Одбора за правосудне и богоштовне послове од 12. 3. 1942 (*Minutes of the 4th session of the Committee for Judicial and Religious Affairs from March 12, 1942).

⁴⁰¹ After the initial news about the intentions of the Croatian Ustasha authorities to create some kind of Croatian Orthodox Church, the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church closely monitored all these events. - The Archives of the Synod, file "Croatian Orthodox Church" (hereinafter: АСин, Хрватска православна...).

⁴⁰² Šurlan has long been discredited. He was a pronounced Germanophile and Croatophile – АСин, Хрватска православна...(*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered.

⁴⁰³ *Narodne novine*, 9. 4. 1942 (**National Newspaper*, 9. 4. 1942); *Hrvatski narod*, 4. 4. 1942 (*Croatian people*, 4. 4. 1942); *Spremnost*, 26. 4. 1942 (**Readiness*, 26. 4. 1942); *Za dom*, 9. 4. 1942 (**For homeland*, 9. 4. 1942); ВА, НДХ (**Military archive, Independent State of Croatia*), 171-2/8; *Ibid*, 175-2/8.

⁴⁰⁴ The legal provision was signed by Ante Pavelić and Mirko Puk.
"Article 1: On the territory of the Independent State of Croatia, the Croatian Orthodox Church, which is independent (autocephalous), is established.

Article 2: The structure and scope of the Croatian Orthodox Church is governed by the constitution, which is confirmed by the Head of the Independent State of Croatia.

Article 3: The implementation of this legal provision is entrusted to the Minister of Justice and Theology.

Article 4: This legal provision acquires legal force as of today." – *Hrvatski narod*, 4. 4. 1942 (*Croatian people*, 4. 4. 1942).

ganisation. This call was also broadcast on the Zagreb Radio Station, and printed in most newspapers.⁴⁰⁵

The first church mass (liturgy) was held on the first anniversary of the declaration of the Independent State of Croatia, on the 10th April 1942, in the Church of the Holy Transfiguration in Zagreb, and Šurlan officiated with the assistance of three Russian monks. Ustasha and state officials were at the mass.⁴⁰⁶

The next two months were spent searching for priests and dignitaries. At the same time, they were thinking about what to do so that this Church would be recognised by other Orthodox churches.

A Constitution was written for the new Church, promulgated on 6th June, 1942. On the same day, Pavelić signed the Decree on the Appointment of the Metropolitan.⁴⁰⁷

The German intelligence officers who prepared all the activities related to the creation of the new Church also took care of the dignitary. They found him even earlier in the person of a (white emigrant) Russian, Archbishop Germogen of Yekaterinoslav and Novomoskovsk.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ *Hrvatski narod*, 9. 4. 1942 (*Croatian people*, 9. 4. 1942).

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 11. 4. 1942.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 7. 6. 1942.

⁴⁰⁸ Metropolitan Germogen had an interesting life path. The German officers did not trust him for his ecclesiastical vocation, so they asked him to prove it. - Музеј Српске Православне Цркве, Архив митрополије (*Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Archives), 774 од 6.11.1944. Grigorij Ivanovich Maksimov, in monasticism Germogen, was born in 1861 in a Cossack family in the village of Nogavsko. After primary school, he completed high school and seminary. He studied at the Academy of Divinity. For a while, he worked as a priest in Novocherkassk. Thanks to his abilities, he quickly advanced in his service. He became an official of a divinity school, the Women's Gymnasium in Novocherkassk, but soon moved to the men's gymnasium in Ust-Medveditskaya (*present day Serafimovich). He did not stay there for long either; he moved to another diocese. In the following years, he was the rector of the seminary in Saratov. After his wife passed away in the meantime, he became a monk and received the name Germogen. In the turmoil of the October Bolshevik Revolution, as the bishop of the Don Army with the title Archbishop of Yekaterinoslav and Novomoskovsk, he was on the opposite side. After the civil war, along with the army, Germogen left Russia. He stayed in Mount Athos for a while and then came to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. By decision of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, he was appointed to be in charge of the diocese in Greece, with its seat in Athens. After the revolution in Greece, he returned again to Belgrade. He stayed in monasteries: Rakovica near Belgrade, Ravanica, and Grgeteg in Fruška Gora. It was there that he was situated during the April War of 1941. He was a member of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The share of German initiators in the formation of the Croatian Orthodox Church is significant. For the German side and their global policy in the Balkans, and therefore for the Croatian side, it was paramount and imperative to conciliate the people and war operations in Croatia. In this context, their involvement in the creation of a new church form for the Serbian people can be observed. The German officer, Siegfried Kasche, proposed to Pavelić as early as in the summer of 1941 the creation of a new church organisation for Serbs. The organiser of the activities around the new Church was Hans Helm. His operatives were Yugoslav citizens Volksdeutsches - Marbot Schumacher and Adalbert Kungel, experts in matters of religion.⁴⁰⁹ Miloš Oberknežević, who was an official in Sremski Karlovci before the war, helped them and directly participated in the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church. Later, he worked as the personal secretary of Metropolitan Germogen. Oberknežević and Metropolitan Germogen were old acquaintances.

The Vatican centuries-old strategy of proselytism in the Balkans and Orthodoxy can also be interpreted in relation to the Croatian Orthodox Church. We learn about this from a letter dated 8th May 1943, from the papal envoy in Zagreb, Giuseppe Ramir Marcone, to Cardinal Mallione: "In February and March of the previous year, the Leader, seeing that the rapid conversion of dissidents was impossible, intended to create a Croatian schismatic church with one metropolitan: The church was created, but the schismatic hierarchy in Belgrade did not recognise it, and the metropolitan was excommunicated."⁴¹⁰

The official response of the Vatican to the creation of the new Church was never published, but the Vatican administration was satisfied with its creation. This is evidenced by the reports of Nikola Rušinić, the representative of the Independent State of Croatia from Rome, sent to Zagreb after the visit of the Archbishop of Zagreb, Alo-

Biographical data about Grigorij Ivanovich Maksimov, monastic name Germogen – Вељко Ђ. Ђурић, *Усташи и православље*, Београд, 1989, 174-175 (*Veljko Đ. Đurić, *Ustasha and Orthodoxy*, Belgrade, 1989, 174-175).

⁴⁰⁹ About these two German intelligence agents. – *Nemačka obaveštajna služba*, VI, Beograd, 463 (**German Intelligence Service*, VI, Belgrade, 463).

⁴¹⁰ И. Цвитковић, *Ко је био...*, 116 (*I. Cvitković, *Who was...*, 116).

jzije Stepinac, to the Pope. Rušinović wrote that the proclamation of the new church in the Vatican was well received and that the Holy See sees that event as a path to religious union and the disappearance of Orthodoxy in Croatia. In the opinion of the Vatican prelates, the Croatian Orthodox Church represents the most precious gift that Croatia can give to the Holy See.⁴¹¹

However, there were also different views on the Croatian Orthodox Church. In the same report, Nikola Rušinović wrote that Cardinal Eugene Tisserant belittled the Ustasha creation by saying that the Germans recognised the Croatian Orthodox Church, when together with the Croats they killed all the Serbian clergy and 350,000 Serbs. In November 1942, Cardinal Tisserant spoke in the same tone to another Croat, diplomat who succeeded Rušinović, Erwin Lobkowitz that the new church organisation meant nothing, because it was created by the will of the leader and could disappear by his will.⁴¹²

The first (foreign) organisation that congratulated Metropolitan Germogen on his election and appointment was the Russian Church Municipality from Sarajevo. This municipality also congratulated the establishment of a new Church, which is not unusual if it is known what was the political and military position of a number of Russian emigrants, i.e., Cossack soldiers and elders.⁴¹³

The Croatian Orthodox Church had to receive recognition from other Orthodox churches, first from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and then from the closest Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church,

⁴¹¹ *Suđenje Lisaku, Stepincu, Šaliću i družini, ustaško-križarskim zločincima i njihovim pomagačima*, Zagreb, 1946, 309 (**The trial of Lisak, Stepinac, Šalić and the gang, Ustasha-Crusader criminals and their helpers*, Zagreb, 1946, 309).

⁴¹² Ivan Mihovilović, *Tajni dokumenti o odnosu Vatikana i ustaške NDH*, Zarge6, 1952, 118 (*Ivan Mihovilović, *Secret documents on the relationship between the Vatican and the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia*, Zagreb, 1952, 118) (hereinafter: И. Миховиловић, *Тajни докуменџи...*).

⁴¹³ The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate, doc. no. 4 од 8.7.1942. (hereinafter, Музеј СПЦ, Архив митрополије...).

A congratulatory message was also sent to Germogen from Sarajevo on behalf of the Church Court. However, that institution has not existed since May 1941, when Metropolitan Petar was arrested and the priests expelled. – АСин, Хрватска православна...(*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered.

which in this case was the Mother Church.⁴¹⁴ Metropolitan Germogen therefore begged Leader Pavelić for state mediation with the wartime allies of the Ustasha Croatia so that they would recognise his church.⁴¹⁵ Before that, at the end of 1942, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Croatia, he asked the Constantinople Patriarchate for canonical recognition. In his request, the metropolitan also asked for the priests and especially the bishops that he needed.⁴¹⁶ What was the answer from Constantinople is not known. It is only possible to assume that there was none. There is a basis for this assumption in documents from 1943, in which Metropolitan Germogen again begs for state engagement for recognition from Constantinople.⁴¹⁷

Metropolitan Germogen tried to get recognition from the Russian Orthodox Church, that is, from its Synod, which was then in Belgrade. There are no published documents about it. Miloš Oberknežević wrote about these possible contacts. However, nothing exceptional and concrete can be concluded from his writing either.⁴¹⁸

Immediately after the proclamation of the new Church, Miloš Oberknežević, at the persuasion of German intelligence officers Hans Helm and Adalbert Kungel, stayed in the Hopovo monastery and then in Belgrade. In Hopovo, he persuaded Archbishop Germogen to assume the post of metropolitan (and later patriarch) in Zagreb.⁴¹⁹ The archbishop did not report on those conversations to his Synod, but he wrote that he would not do anything more than what was within the

⁴¹⁴ There were other views about which Church the Croatian Orthodox Church originated from, considering that the appointed head, Metropolitan Germogen, was a member of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in the title of Archbishop of Yekaterinoslav and Novomoskovsk. Based on these facts, claims were made that the Russian Orthodox Church is in fact the "Mother Church". However, such things have no factual basis, it is well known which Church the Croatian Orthodox Church was founded in place of and under what circumstances. Not to mention the clergy, facilities and members.

⁴¹⁵ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије...(*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate), document number 192 dated 10th July 1942.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid*, document no. 329 and 330 dated 27th July 1942.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid*, doc. no. 562 dated 12th July 1943.

⁴¹⁸ М. Оберкнежевић, *Развој православлѝ...*, 253 (*М. Oberknežević, *The Development of Orthodoxy...*, 253).

⁴¹⁹ *Nemačka obavешtajna služba*, V, Beograd, 1958, 615-616 (**German Intelligence Service*, V, Belgrade, 1958, 615-616).

scope of his vocation and the duties he has in his (Russian) church. There is another version which says that he also begged for the recognition of the new Church, demanding that no case be made of his behavior or not to be punished for violating church canons. This letter seems to have been written by one of the more important authors of the project on the Croatian Orthodox Church, although he knew very well that it was impossible to respond positively to the requests.⁴²⁰ The president of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church (Abroad), Metropolitan Anastasije, informed the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church about all this, to which he also later conveyed the news that reached him.⁴²¹

The blessing of the Serbian Orthodox Church from Belgrade for the new church organization in Zagreb was sought in several ways, unofficially and officially.⁴²²

The archbishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church who were in Serbia, from the first days of May 1941, closely followed what was happening to the Serbian people and the Church. The sufferings of the church organisation and the priesthood were followed with special interest and, accordingly, actions were taken, from the creation of special commissions to the writing of a memorandum to the German military commanders in Serbia. In this context, there were also reactions to the

⁴²⁰ *Ibid*, 423.

⁴²¹ Archives of the Synod, Syn. no. 1638 and 1639/Minutes 357/1942. Archbishop Germogen wrote to Metropolitan Anastasius that no one had invited him to Zagreb. Metropolitan Josif of the Russian Synod also learned about that letter. All correspondence about the Croatian Orthodox Church between archbishops Germogen, Anastasius and Josif has been preserved. - АСин, Хрватска Православна...(*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered.

⁴²² Miloš Oberknežević wrote about unofficial attempts and claimed that Patriarch Serbian Gavriilo from the Vojlovica Monastery, where he was interned, through the deputy of Metropolitan Josif of Skopje, instructed that everything should be done to achieve some kind of normalisation of the Orthodox situation in the Ustasha Croatia. Likewise, Oberknežević claimed that Patriarch Gavriilo approved the election of Archbishop Germogen himself as the head of the new Church. However, such claims have no basis, as can be seen when analysing the sources, first of all the Memoirs of Serbian Patriarch Gavriilo. - М. Оберкнежевић, *Развој православања...*, 251 (*М. Oberknežević, *The Development of Orthodoxy...*, 251). There were also claims that approval was obtained from Moscow for Archbishop Germogen to take over the new Church. However, such claims have no basis. - АСин, Хрватска Православна...(*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered.

creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church in Zagreb.⁴²³ The first reactions were as early as in February 1942, after the speech of Minister Mirko Puk in the Parliament. The Synod concluded that it is necessary to draw up a Memorandum that will be disclosed. One of the copies they thought they were going to hand over to General Paul Bader, the military-administrative commander of Serbia at the time, so that he could pass it on to his superiors in Berlin.⁴²⁴

At the session held on the 30th April 1942, the Synod concluded that the creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church was a serious violation of the canons that posed a danger to Orthodoxy. Based on the opinion of experts in church and canon law, the Synod could not recognise the Croatian Orthodox Church.⁴²⁵

The Synod wanted to inform its hierarchy, the Prime Minister of the Serbian Government, Milan Nedić, and through him the German military authorities, regarding everything that had been happening, in order to protect the national and church interests of the Serbs in Croatia. However, the Germans prevented the publication of the Synod announcement as well as the sending of letters from the Patriarchate of Belgrade to other sister Orthodox Churches.⁴²⁶ The Synod could not

⁴²³ All that documentation has been preserved in the Archives of the Synod, folder "Хрватска православна црква" ("Croatian Orthodox Church").

⁴²⁴ АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 96/ зап. 6 од 17. марта 1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 96/Minutes 6 of March 17, 1942).

⁴²⁵ The synod ordered expert opinions from experts in church canons, Sergey Troitsky and Justin (Popović), - АСин, Хрватска православна...(*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered. Based on the opinion of these two experts, the Synod, in the explanation of its decision, concluded, among other things:

"1. The proclamation of the autocephaly of the Croatian Orthodox Church is not within the jurisdiction or competence of the state authority, especially because the Church is a divine institution, and the Head of the Independent State of Croatia, who performed this act, does not even belong to the Orthodox faith;

2. This autocephaly is not an expression of the will of the local Orthodox people or its hierarchy, which has been destroyed, and the Orthodox population has been forced to convert to Roman Catholicism;

3. There are no other canonical conditions for the establishment of the autocephaly of the Croatian Orthodox Church." - АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1150/зап 222 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1150/Minutes 222).

⁴²⁶ АСин, Син. бр. 1638/1942 и 1639/зап. 357/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, Synod No. 1638/1942 and 1639/Minutes 357/1942). Nedić conveyed the Synod's request for assistance in sending a new memorandum to Minister Velibor Jonić, who then went to Felix Benzler, Special Envoy of the

even deliver its decision on non-recognition of the Ustasha creation to Metropolitan Anastasije, the president of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia. Nevertheless, the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church refused to recognise Metropolitan Germogen and his Church, treating the Serbian Orthodox Church as competent. The Russian Synod soon decided to initiate legal proceedings before the Ecclesiastical Court against Metropolitan Germogen for his grave canonical transgression. As the first of the punitive measures, Metropolitan Germogen was forbidden to continue worship service. The second was removal from membership in the Synod.⁴²⁷

Metropolitan Germogen tried to go to Belgrade as well, since he could not personally find out about the decisions of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church. For the sake of his travels, he begged the Ustasha Supervisory Service and the Ministry of Justice and Theology for permission to travel.⁴²⁸ The planned travel was not accomplished for several reasons, the most important of which is that Hans Helm and Adalbert Kungel did not allow it. Namely, in the meantime, through Miloš Oberknežević, after his return from Belgrade to Zagreb, they found out about the decisions of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Along with Oberknežević, German officers also sent Vasilij Šurlan and Petar Lazić to Zemun to examine the terrain. However, they did not complete the planned work.⁴²⁹ Oberknežević was somewhat more successful. He was received in the Patriarchate by the Secretary of the Synod. In the conversation, he listed some of his merits for the Serbian Orthodox Church and asked for new instructions for his work. When the secretary asked him to write down what he said,

German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and member of the staff of the military-administrative commander of Serbia. On that occasion, Benzler demanded rigorous shortening of the content of the text and stated that he would not allow the publication of any alternative version. – АСин, Хрватска православна... (*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered.

⁴²⁷ АСин, Хрватска православна...(*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered; *Гласник СПЦ*, 4/1946, 54 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 4/1946, 54).

⁴²⁸ ХДА, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 5364 (*Croatian State Archives, Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 5364).

⁴²⁹ АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1638 и 1639/зап. 357/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1638 and 1639/Minutes 357/1942).

Oberknežević did so but did not sign, justifying it with fear.⁴³⁰ On that occasion, the secretary of the Synod told him that the Serbian Orthodox Church does not want to have any dealings with people who are "traitors of the Serbian Church and the Serbian people".⁴³¹

The Serbian Orthodox Church reacted as best it could, trying to neutralise the Croatian Orthodox Church. It appealed to the German military-occupation authorities in Belgrade and the Serbian government of Milan Nedić, but to no avail. However, it managed to inform the world about its fate, when the American-Canadian bishop Dionisije announced his appeals. Namely, the bishop composed and, on St. Nicholas Day in 1942, he sent an appeal to Cordell Hull, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United States of America.⁴³² But that was the end of it.

Metropolitan Germogen tried to get recognition from the Romanian Orthodox Church, so he addressed its Synod. In the letter, he explained the way of creating the Church and justified his work with Christian reasons.⁴³³ In explaining the situation in Croatia, the metropolitan did not mention the destruction of the previous church organisation in those areas.

Recognition of the new Church was also sought in Bulgaria, a country that was on the side of Germany and Croatia. However, so far there are no documents about it, apart from newspaper reports that the Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church "received with joy the establishment of the Croatian Orthodox Church".⁴³⁴

In the middle of November 1942, in Bosnian Krajina, in the town of Srpska Jasenica, a gathering of Orthodox priests who were in the partisan army was held. From that gathering, the "Epistle to the Serbian People" was sent, in which, among other things, they condemned

⁴³⁰ АСин, Хрватска православна...(*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered.

⁴³¹ *Ibid*; АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1638 и 1369/зап. 357/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1638 and 1639/Minutes 357/1942). Oberknežević did not write about his stay in Belgrade.

⁴³² *Martyrdom of Serba*, Chicago/USA, 1943, 253-264.

⁴³³ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. бр. 700/2 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 700/2): The concept was composed on a typewriter, and it was further edited and amended by Miloš Oberknežević and Metropolitan Germogen.

⁴³⁴ *Hrvatski narod*, 16. 6. 1942 (*Croatian people*, 16. 6. 1942).

Metropolitan Germogen, calling him a self-proclaimed person and a humiliation for Orthodoxy.⁴³⁵

On the occasion of the proclamation of the Croatian Orthodox Church, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia, i.e. the Commission for Slavonia, at the end of April 1942 wrote in a proclamation that Pavelić was resorting to a new method of deception by creating the Croatian Orthodox Church. They believed that he was being helped in this by the Orthodox priests who were ready for betrayal as they invited the people to the churches where the Ustashas had killed the Serbian people and the Orthodox priests until recently.⁴³⁶

The few Roman Catholic priests, who were oriented towards the partisan struggle, had several conferences of their own. But they did not say or write a single word against the new Church.⁴³⁷

Regardless of all the refusals of the Orthodox churches to recognise it, the Croatian Orthodox Church existed during the war, until May 1945.

From the day of the announcement of the establishment of the new Church in the Independent State of Croatia, and in the following several days, the Croatian authorities propagated their work in various ways. This was done through newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, leaflets, proclamations and other means.⁴³⁸ All this was to convince the Serbian people that their freedom was being regained.⁴³⁹ In this way, the state

⁴³⁵ Споменница православних свештеника – жртјева фашистичкој терору и палих бораца у НОБ-у 1941–1945, Београд, 1960, 174 (**Orthodox priests Memorial – victims of fascist terror and fallen fighters in the National Liberation Struggle 1941–1945*, Belgrade, 1960, 174).

⁴³⁶ *Gradja za historiju NOP-a Slavonije*, II, Slavonski Brod, 1963, 155. Pavle Gregorić, „NOB u sjevernoistočnoj Hrvatskoj 1942“, *Sjećanja i dokumenti*, Zagreb, 1978, 100 (**Material for the history of the national liberation movement of Slavonia*, II, Slavonski Brod, 1963, 155. Pavle Gregorić, "The National Liberation Struggle in North-Eastern Croatia in 1942", *Memories and Documents*, Zagreb, 1978, 100).

⁴³⁷ There's no mention of the Croatian Orthodox Church in Ćiril Petešić's book. *Katoličko svećenstvo u NOB 1941-1945*, Zagreb, 1982 (**Catholic clergy in the National Liberation Struggle 1941-1945*, Zagreb, 1982).

⁴³⁸ *Nova Hrvatska, Hrvatski narod, Za dom, Graničar* (**New Croatia, Croatian People, For Homeland, Border guard*) and other newspapers also published numerous articles about the new Church. At the beginning of May 1942 and several times later, according to the decision of the Presidency of the Government, texts were published in the form of leaflets and thrown from airplanes. – BA, НДХ (**Military archive, Independent State of Croatia*), 68-33/7; *Ibid*, 69-33/7.

⁴³⁹ Savić Marković Štedimlija, one of the active participants in the creation of the new church organ-

would be calmed down and what the German factors were looking for would be achieved. The next opportunity for propaganda appeared at the beginning of June 1942, during the proclamation of the Constitution of the Croatian Orthodox Church, the election and enthronement of Metropolitan Germogen of Zagreb.⁴⁴⁰

The propaganda effect was below all expectations, at least according to reports from various parts of Croatia. The reports cited various reasons for the non-acceptance of the new Church by the remaining living Serbs.⁴⁴¹ A great propaganda campaign was initiated by Leader Pavelić himself when he ordered that the behavior towards the Serbs must change so that they accept the new Church as their own. As guarantees, Pavelić mentioned the existence of the law on the establishment of the Church and its Constitution.⁴⁴² He then ordered the opening of Orthodox churches on the anniversary of the creation of the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia, on the 10th April.⁴⁴³

Local commanders received orders from Zagreb to propagate the new Church. Therefore, they had to go around and convince the Serbs that this was a good thing because it would provide them with an equal status with the Roman Catholics. Those commanders forced the village leaders to beg the Croatian authorities to allow them to open churches and create church committees.⁴⁴⁴ This was aimed to prove that, by the act of creating a new Church, Croatia allowed the freedom of Croatian Orthodoxy through a law that was presented as a "genius move of the Leader".⁴⁴⁵

During the first few months in the Independent State of Croatia, more than 800 buildings of the Serbian Orthodox Church were destroyed, set on fire, looted, devastated, demolished and otherwise

isation, wrote that after its establishment, there was a cessation of terror against Orthodox Serbs, which has no real basis. – И. Мужих, *Павелић...*, 52-53 (*I. Mužić, *Pavelić...*, 52-53).

⁴⁴⁰ *Hrvatski narod, Nova Hrvatska and Narodne novine* (*Croatian people, New Croatia, National newspaper) wrote about the metropolitan and the Constitution.

⁴⁴¹ BA, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 62-35/2.

⁴⁴² *Ibid*, 150-18/11.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid*, 181-33/2.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 175-24/11.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 171-2/8.

damaged. During that time, around 50 buildings were looted and then turned into Roman Catholic and Uniate churches. When the Croatian Orthodox Church was proclaimed, several places of worship that had previously suffered and were closed had to be equipped. It started first in Zagreb and then in other places.⁴⁴⁶ First, the Church of the Holy Transfiguration in Zagreb was opened, which was attended by members of the Parliament, the Home Guard and the Ustasha movement. The first service was served by Vaso Šurlan with the participation of three priests.⁴⁴⁷

The opening of the churches was accompanied by reports that were forged to the great extent.⁴⁴⁸

The act of opening several churches was personally attended by Metropolitan Germogen. The press attached great importance to it. In several cases, this was done by his special envoy.⁴⁴⁹

But there was also a ban on the opening of churches. Namely, the Croatian government did not allow the opening of churches if they were not in the function of the new Church.⁴⁵⁰

The Ministry of Internal Affairs demanded the restoration of previously destroyed churches for the needs of the Croatian Orthodox Church, although it is not competent for such matters.⁴⁵¹ All that had a propaganda character. When churches were to be opened, there were numerous problems that were deliberately not resolved. With that, the state denied its policy of religious equality.

There were pleas for help from several places, so that the previously damaged church could be restored to some extent and equipped for services. There are no documents that help from Zagreb ever arrived. There is information that the locals restored the church themselves,

⁴⁴⁶ ХДА, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 7929 (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 7929); БА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 181-33/3.

⁴⁴⁷ *Hrvatski narod*, 11. 4. 1942 (*Croatian people*, 11. 4. 1942).

⁴⁴⁸ *Hrvatski narod*, 25. 2. 1942 (*Croatian people*, 25. 2. 1942).

⁴⁴⁹ БА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 313-14/1.

⁴⁵⁰ БА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 87-4/21.

⁴⁵¹ БА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 313-14/1.

but it is not clear whether it was voluntary or under the coercion of the authorities.⁴⁵²

The opening of churches was accompanied by the creation of parishes. This work was handled by the Metropolitanate, but under the constant supervision of the authorities: the Croatian authorities had the last word in writing decisions, certificates, permits and similar written documents.⁴⁵³ The opening of new parishes was prescribed by a special act of the Ministry of Justice and Theology.⁴⁵⁴ The order was published in the form of a circular. It was later supplemented and changed. It also happened that the inhabitants of some villages demanded the creation of church municipalities in order to save themselves from conversion.⁴⁵⁵

The creation of parishes of the Croatian Orthodox Church was allowed only after the promulgation of the Constitution, in June 1942. Over time, numerous problems arose. In addition to the others, the question arose whether the former church municipalities of the Serbian Orthodox Church are allowed to be restored. That problem was solved by a secret circular in which the continuity of the old and the new Church was forbidden. When in the autumn of 1942, Metropolitan Germogen's trip to Croatia was planned, parishes and church municipalities had to be created very quickly. However, that job was not at all easy because there were no people, no churches, and no priests.⁴⁵⁶

In the meantime, the Croatian government changed the way of accepting new believers into the church community by allowing the parish priests of the Croatian Orthodox Church to make lists of their believers. According to the preserved and available documentation, i.e. the records of the Zagreb Metropolitanate, it can be concluded that at the end of December 1942 (fictitiously) there were 42 parishes in which 51 priests

⁴⁵² ХДА, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богошговља, 3093/1943 (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 3093/1943).

⁴⁵³ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. 468, 1389 и 1392 из 1943. године (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 468, 1389 and 1392 dated 1943).

⁴⁵⁴ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 141-1/3.

⁴⁵⁵ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. 121/1942 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 121/1942).

⁴⁵⁶ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 313-14/4.

worked. These parishes did not have work permits from the competent Ministry. The fictitious existence of parishes can be seen in the decrees of Metropolitan Germogen on the appointment of certain priests.⁴⁵⁷

According to Article 9 of the Constitution, the Croatian Orthodox Church had the rank of patriarchy, headed by the patriarch, who was also the metropolitan of Zagreb at the same time. The church was supposed to be episcopal with four dioceses: Brod, with headquarters in Bosanski Brod, Petrovac, with headquarters in Bosanski Petrovac, Sarajevo, with headquarters in Sarajevo, and Zagreb, with headquarters in Zagreb. Lower administrative-territorial bodies were "bishop's vicarages" or "archbishoprics", and they consisted of "župa(s) (=districts)", or "parishes".

Archbishop Germogen of Yekaterinoslav and Novomoskovsk was appointed by the decree of Leader Ante Pavelić as the head of the Croatian Orthodox Church in the rank of the Metropolitan of Zagreb.⁴⁵⁸ He was solemnly enthroned on the 7th June 1942 in Zagreb, in the Church of the Holy Transfiguration, which was designated as the Principal Church. A little later, the Croatian government also appointed archpriests vicars: Nikolaj Ružencov in Sarajevo, Anatolij Paradijev in Zenica, Vasilij Jurčenko in Šid and Serafim Kupčevski in Zagreb.⁴⁵⁹

Along with the metropolitan, Miloš Oberknežević was appointed secretary, Joca Cvijanović was appointed church affairs officer, and Aleksej Borisov was appointed priest at the Metropolitanate.⁴⁶⁰

As the head of the Croatian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Germogen performed numerous administrative duties, visiting parishes in areas where Ustasha rule existed. He was constantly accompanied by agents of

⁴⁵⁷ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. 67 М од 28. 1. 1943 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 67 M dated 28. 1. 1943).

⁴⁵⁸ Savić Marković Štedimlja explained to Ivan Mužić that they first tried to persuade a certain Serbian, a widowed Orthodox priest and a professor of Canon Law at the University of Budapest, to accept the position of the head of the new Church. However, he refused the offer. – И. Мужих, *Павелућ...*, 50 (*I. Mužić, *Pavelić...*, 50). Regarding the appointment of Metropolitan Germogen. – *Hrvatski narod*, 6. 6. 1942 (*Croatian people*, 6. 6. 1942).

⁴⁵⁹ *Glas pravoslavlja*, 15. 4. 1944 (**Orthodox Voice*, 15. 4. 1944).

⁴⁶⁰ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. 40/42 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 40/42).

the Ustasha supervising service.⁴⁶¹ As a Russian, he tried to help the priests and nuns who were in the zones where the authorities were Germans.⁴⁶²

There were Serbs who considered Metropolitan Germogen to be an ordinary chess piece in the hands of the authorities and the Croatian Orthodox Church to be a chess board.⁴⁶³

How much the Croatian authorities counted on him can be judged by where he was located and how his activity was financed: Metropolitan Germogen often asked for money so that he could buy food.⁴⁶⁴

Regardless of his powerlessness, the Metropolitan tried to help. Therefore, he addressed the ministers, and even Pavelić himself, but each time without success.⁴⁶⁵

Metropolitan Germogen, in accordance with the Constitution of the Croatian Orthodox Church, was looking for priests who could become bishops. Therefore, he also wrote to some of his acquaintances from earlier times, whom he thought would help him. One of them was Archimandrite Seraphim Palajda, from the monastery of the Holy Prophet Elijah in Constantinople.⁴⁶⁶ The Metropolitan advised the Archimandrite to appeal to the Ecumenical Patriarch to produce him as a bishop. In the end, he suggested that he come to Zagreb.

The first and also the last bishop was appointed in the Sarajevo diocese in August 1944. By the decision of the head of the Independent State of Croatia and the Minister of Justice and Theology, the priest from Visoko near Sarajevo, Spiridon Mifka, became the bishop of Sarajevo.⁴⁶⁷ The archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bishop

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid*, document 501 dated 22nd May 1943.

⁴⁶² He also addressed Siegfried Kasch. – Музеј СПЦ, Архив митрополије..., док. 790 и 891 од 14. 10. 1942 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 790 and 891 dated 4. 10. 1942).

⁴⁶³ Музеј СПЦ, Архив митрополије..., док. 380 од 24. 7. 1942 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 380 dated 24. 7. 1942).

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid*, док. 643 од 11. 9. 1944 (*doc. 643 dated 11. 9. 1944).

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid*, док. 901 од 19. 11. 1942 (*doc. 901 dated 19. 11. 1942).

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid*, unregistered, 27. 7. 1942.

⁴⁶⁷ *Hrvatski narod*, 15. 8. 1944 (*Croatian people*, 15. 8. 1944); *Glas pravoslavlja*, 17. 8. 1944 (**Orthodox Voice*, 17. 8. 1944).

Visarion Puiu, also participated in the ordination of Bishop Spiridon. He was sent by the Romanian patriarch, who in this way indirectly recognized the Croatian Orthodox Church.⁴⁶⁸

The creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church represented a significant financial burden for the state. Financial aid and all funds in the form of grants were regulated by the law of the State Treasury.⁴⁶⁹ In May 1943, Metropolitan Germogen asked the state authorities to allocate part of the previously looted wealth of the Serbian Orthodox Church for management and use. However, those requests, like many others, were not heard.⁴⁷⁰

The Metropolitan received a salary as a civil servant, as indicated in the Provision on Appointment.⁴⁷¹ But that money was not enough for a normal life, so he often asked the state authorities for help.⁴⁷²

Spiridon Mifka was born in 1902 into a Roman Catholic family. He completed the first grades of gymnasium and a vocational trade school in Zagreb. He finished the remaining grades of gymnasium in Varaždin and Split. He was baptised in the Orthodox Church in order to later enroll the seminary in Sremski Karlovci. He completed seminary in 1927 and then got married. He worked as a deacon in Plaški. He was ordained as a priest only in 1938 in Bosanska Krupa. As a priest, he served in Srpska Jasenica and in Sunja. In 1939, he left his family and went to Serbia. (There are indications that he did this because of his bisexual tendencies.) – АСин, Хрватска православна..., unregistered). He stayed in monasteries near Čačak, in Studenica, in St. Naum, in Stara Srbija, and finally, before the war, he came to the Veta Monastery near Pirot. At the beginning of the Bulgarian occupation, Spiridon went through Bulgaria to Germany. He returned to Croatia at the end of 1942. He reported to Metropolitan Germogen and in January 1943 received a parish in Goražde. He stayed there until September 1943 when he went to Visoko near Sarajevo. He remained in Visoko until his election as the Bishop of Sarajevo. Moreover, Spiridon caused many problems for Metropolitan Germogen, which was documented accordingly. (Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. бр. 1108 и 1109 од 27. 11. 1943) (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 1108 and 1109 dated 27. 11. 1943).

The Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church requested in 1943 from its officials a biography of Spiridon Mifka with all the relevant documents. After a month or two, he received it. – АСин, Хрватска православна... (*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered. There is more detailed information about Spiridon Mifka in the book. – В. Ђ. Ђурић, *Усташе...*, 196-199 (*V. Đ. Đurić, *Ustasha...*, 196-199).

⁴⁶⁸ *Glas pravoslavlja*, 17. 8. 1944 (**Orthodox Voice*, 17. 8. 1944). The participation of Bishop Visarion Puiu in the consecration of Bishop Spiridon was the reason for the rupture of relations between the Serbian and Romanian Orthodox Churches. Reconciliation did not occur until 1946. – *Гласник СПЦ*, 4/1946, 54 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 4/1946, 54).

⁴⁶⁹ ВА, НДХ (*Military archive, Independent State of Croatia), 87-4/21; *Ibid*, 87-4/38.

⁴⁷⁰ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. 505 од 22. 5. 1943 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 505 dated 22. 5. 1943).

⁴⁷¹ *Hrvatski narod*, 7.6.1942 (*Croatian people*, 7. 6. 1942).

⁴⁷² When his son came from Belgrade, Metropolitan Germogen begged the authorities for financial assistance so he could buy clothes and shoes for him. – Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док.

In order to improve the situation and show that the Croatian Orthodox Church is a real organisation, Metropolitan Germogen tried to gather believers around the Church, asking them for help. He explained it by normal need and usual giving.⁴⁷³ There was no response, so all that remained was pleads and requests, since the people did not accept this Church as their own.

During the planning and creation of the Croatian Orthodox Church, the Croatian government and German intelligence officers counted on a certain number of priests of the Orthodox faith, former priests of the banned Serbian Orthodox Church.⁴⁷⁴ It was supposed to be the basis of the whole organization. The first ecclesiastical municipality was created in Zagreb, and there were its president Petar Lazić and several citizens. The first priest in this municipality was Vasilije Šurlan.⁴⁷⁵

On the 25th June 1942, Vladimir Sokolov, who was assigned a parish in Koprivnica, was appointed as the first priest by decree of the Metropolitanate of the Croatian Orthodox Church in Zagreb.⁴⁷⁶ Sokolov was also the first priest whose parish was taken away.⁴⁷⁷

When he arrived in Belgrade and spoke at the Patriarchate, with the secretary of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Miloš Oberknežević showed a list of priests who allegedly applied to work in the Cro-

1001/1943 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. 1001/1943).

⁴⁷³ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. 1028/1943 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. 1028/1943).

⁴⁷⁴ И. Мужих, *Павелић...*, 50 (*I. Mužić, *Pavelić...*, 50). Monk Joasaf (Rusnak) from the Bešenovo Monastery wrote in his report to the Synod at the end of October 1942 that he was offered a parish. He refused the offer, and as a result, he was expelled to Serbia. – АСин, V/80/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, V/80/1942).

⁴⁷⁵ Vasilije Šurlan, as a priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church, caused a lot of problems for his archbishop in the years before the war, so he was dismissed. – АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1638 и 1639/зап. 357/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1638 and 1639/Minutes 357/1942).

⁴⁷⁶ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., док. бр. 1 од 25. 6. 1942 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. no. 1 dated 25. 6. 1942).

⁴⁷⁷ The decision on the confiscation of the parish was written in the Ministry of Justice and Theology. - Музеј СПЦ, Архив митрополије..., док. 126 од 8.7.1942 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., doc. 126 dated 8. 7. 1942).

atian Orthodox Church.⁴⁷⁸ There were 20 Russians and 42 Serbs on that list, including 11 monks, 29 lay priests and two theologians.⁴⁷⁹ It is difficult to determine how and when this list was created. It can be assumed that it was compiled with the help of German intelligence officers.

Decisions on the appointment of priests were issued by the Department of Divine Worship of the Ministry of Justice and Theology and then sent to the Metropolitanate. Metropolitan Germogen protested against this practice, but without success. There were two types of decisions for the appointment of priests, one by the Department of Divine Worship, and the other by the Zagreb Metropolitanate. By comparing the data of these decisions, discrepancies can be seen. This led to individual priests suing each other before the Croatian Ustasha authorities.

Based on the preserved decisions, it can be seen that the Croatian Orthodox Church had (about) 70 priests during 1942. However, the reality was quite different: during the preparation of the new Church, the Croatian authorities drew up lists of priests or persons who could be priests. In later months, it turned out that among them there were also persons who could not be priests, because they did not have the appropriate educational background. There were also those who were not old enough for service, but also those who were too old.

According to the preserved documents of the Zagreb Metropolitanate, the Croatian Orthodox Church had 69 priests in 1942.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁸ The name of Đorđe Milojević from Novi Pavljani was also on the list of priests who, supposedly freely, applied to work. However, this priest was killed in Jasenovac. However, Oberknežević promised to save him – АСин, Хрватска православна... (*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered.

⁴⁷⁹ АСин, Записници, Син. бр. 1638 и 1639/зап. 357/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, Minutes, Synod No. 1638 and 1639/Minutes 357/1942); Metropolitan Josif had that list but forwarded it to the Synod and the Patriarchal Steering Board. According to him, the list is mostly fake. - АСин, II/176/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, II/176/1942).

That the Croats had participated in making the list of priests for the new Church the Synod also found out from its (unfinished) theology students. They wrote about how they were being recruited for the priesthood. – АСин, II/48/1942 (*The Archives of the Synod, II/48/1942).

Lists of priests – АСин, Хрватска православна... (*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), unregistered.

⁴⁸⁰ Музеј СПЦ, Архив митрополије..., разно (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., various).

When the names of the priests of the Croatian Orthodox Church are read, it can be seen that among them there were also those who were killed in 1941, however the decisions on the appointment and allocation of the parish were written for them. Documents show that all the priests around Knin served in the new Church. This is not possible since that territory was ruled by the Dinaric Chetnik Division. These two examples prove the claims of a fictitious church organisation.

The number of priests of the Croatian Orthodox Church, relatively speaking (because it was compiled according to preserved documents), changed from month to month. There are also very strange data, which further confirms the fact of the fictitious organisation of the Church. For example, according to one report of the Ministry of Justice and Divinity, that is, the Department of Divinity, at the beginning of May 1943, there were 73 priests in 55 parishes.⁴⁸¹

When comparing the documents from 1943 with those from 1944, there is a significant difference, not only in the names of the priests but also in the places where they allegedly worked.⁴⁸²

In the preserved documents, it is written that since January 1944, 56 priests "worked" in this Church.⁴⁸³

At the end of 1944, many priests "stopped" their work, the most common reason for this was "anti-state work" and disobedience to Metropolitan Germogen.⁴⁸⁴

According to preserved documents, since January 1945, only five priests "worked" in the Croatian Orthodox Church in Zagreb.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ XDA, НДХ, Министарство правосуђа и богоштовља, 3079/43 (*Croatian State Archives, The Independent State of Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Religion, 3079/43).

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, 1170 dated 28. 12. 1943.

⁴⁸³ Музеј СПЦ, Архив митрополије..., разно (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., various).

⁴⁸⁴ Based on available and preserved documents, due to their "anti-state activities," they lost their positions (and these were almost all from the surroundings of Knin, as they were part of The Dinaric Chetnik Division): Nikola Vukojević, Ljubomir Vrcelj, Nikola Stojisavljević, Naum Milković, Mirko Vujatović, and Nikanor Kalik. Marko Plavša from Split, Nikola Semčenko from Vukovar, and Dimitrije Mrihin also lost their positions. – Музеј СПЦ, Архив митрополије..., разно (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archive of the Metropolitanate..., various).

⁴⁸⁵ Музеј СПЦ, Архив Митрополије..., 65/45 (*The Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Ar-

With the entry of partisan units into Zagreb in May 1945, the Croatian Orthodox Church also disappeared. Metropolitan Germogen, Bishop Spiridon of Sarajevo, priests Kupčevski, Mrihin, Borisov, Cvijanović, and the head of the Department for Religious Affairs, Radoslav fra Glavaš, were arrested on those days. They were tried by the Military Court of the Zagreb City Command at the end of June 1945.⁴⁸⁶ However, there are still no relevant documents about the execution of judgments, other than indirect stories. The rest had different fates.⁴⁸⁷

According to the explanation of the death sentence by firing squad, Metropolitan Germogen is guilty of "receiving the position, name and title of Metropolitan of Zagreb, and later the so-called Patriarch of the Croatian Orthodox Church, which was created after the criminal Pavelić". On the same occasion, Bishop Spiridon was sentenced to death by hanging, because, according to the explanation of the verdict, he was guilty because: "as a priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church, he accepted in 1943 on his own initiative, and through Germogen, the position and title of priest of the so-called the Croatian Orthodox Church in Zagreb, which was created after the criminal Pavelić, in order to carry out a complete occupation as easily as possible". However, there are still no relevant documents other than circumstantial stories related to the execution of judgments.⁴⁸⁸

After the entry of the Red Army and partisan units into Belgrade (in October 1944), life was stabilised in many areas where the Germans had been expelled. The Serbian Orthodox Church also operated

chive of the Metropolitanate..., 65/45).

⁴⁸⁶ *Политика*, Београд, 2. 7. 1945, 6 (**Politics*, Belgrade, 2. 7. 1945,6).

⁴⁸⁷ Војни суд команде града Загреба, Суд. број 290/45 од 26. 6. 1945. године – HDA, Zemaljska komisija za utvrđivanje ratnih zločina, Glavni urudžbeni zapisnik, br. 4984/1945, kut. 70 (*Military Court of the City of Zagreb Command, Court No. 290/45 dated 26. 6. 1945 – Croatian State Archives, National Commission for the Determination of War Crimes, Main Registration Record, No. 4984/1945, box 70).

⁴⁸⁸ In mid-June 1945, Metropolitan Josif asked the Minister of the Interior of Yugoslavia, Vladimir Zečević, to ask Metropolitan Germogen questions that would clarify many ambiguities about the Croatian Orthodox Church. The Synod soon received detailed hearings from Metropolitan Germogen and Bishop Spiridon on the issues proposed by Metropolitan Josif. – АСин, Хрватска православна... (*The Archives of the Synod, Croatian Orthodox...), нерегистровано.

in such circumstances. Among the decisions of the Synod, a recommendation was made to the priests of the Croatian Orthodox Church according to which all those who recognised it and worked in it, could continue their work in their main Church, in the Serbian Orthodox Church.⁴⁸⁹

The disappearance of the Croatian Orthodox Church was marked in several ways. There is, for example, a note in the book Protocol of the Zagreb Parish: "On the day of the liberation of Zagreb (the 8th May 1945) the 'Croatian Orthodox Church' ceased with its work, and on the 10th June 1945, the church of the Holy Transfiguration of the Lord in Zagreb was reopened and consecrated and it was continued with the official organisation of the Serbian-Orthodox administrative parish in Zagreb with a new serial number and Cyrillic alphabet."⁴⁹⁰

The termination of the Croatian Orthodox Church was also confirmed by the decision of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the 27th March 1946: "With the end of the so-called Independent State of Croatia and the disappearance of the non-canonical hierarchy of the so-called autocephalous Croatian Orthodox Church, the establishment of this church must be considered null and uncanonical, and the autocephalous Croatian Orthodox Church itself as well as its former hierarchy schismatic in the sense of the earlier decision of the Holy Synod of Bishops on the 30th/17th April 1942 no. 1150/ 222."⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ *Гласник СПЦ*, 4/1946, 55 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 4/1946, 55).

⁴⁹⁰ „Протокол прелаза ср. православних епархије загребачке“, књ 4, 169 (*"Protocol of the Transfer of the Serbian Orthodox Eparchy of Zagreb", book 4, 169).

⁴⁹¹ *Гласник СПЦ*, 4/1946, 52-56 (**Gazette of the Serbian Orthodox Church*, 4/1946, 52-26).

CONCLUSION

The Independent State of Croatia was part of the German New Europe. Croats gained the right and the opportunity to solve their internal problems by themselves. The Ustasha plans envisioned a state where only Croats would live, where there would be no other name. This primarily referred to Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Croats thought that they would solve the Serbian problem in the spirit of the Roman Catholic symbolism of the Holy Trinity, adapted to the Ustasha plans. That "Ustasha Holy Trinity", disclosed by one of their leaders, predicted the destruction of the Serbian people and their national culture in the Independent State of Croatia. The extermination was to be carried out according to the following: "one third to be killed, one third to be expelled and what remains to be converted to Catholicism and turned into Croats".

The independent State of Croatia was accepted by the absolute majority of the Croatian people and the Roman Catholic clergy led by archbishops and bishops. Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac told his subordinate clergy to respond readily to "the sublime work of preserving and improving the Independent State of Croatia". His instructions were best explained by the priest Mato Moguš from Udbina with the words that until those days, the clergy worked for Roman Catholicism with a prayer book and a cross, and since then with a rifle and a revolver. The archbishop's vow was carried out by more than 1,000 Ro-

man Catholic priests in various ways, from ordinary slaughterers to concentration camp commanders. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church is directly responsible for what happened in the Croatian state. The accusation gains significance when it is known that no Roman Catholic priest publicly protested against the crimes against Serbs or Jews during the entire war.

The Ustasha leadership and the Independent State of Croatia solved the newly created problems of the Serbian people in the most brutal and inhuman way. Furthermore, in the Independent State of Croatia in April 1941, there were Serbs: according to German estimates, 1,925,000, according to Croatian estimates, 1,250,000, and according to the estimates of the Serbian Orthodox Church, 2,403,998 persons. As stated by the German plans for the new organisation of Europe, the Serbs, as part of the Slavs, were to be destroyed and resettled on the other side of the Drina. The Ustasha leadership carried out these plans already on the first day of the existence of the Croatian state. By the end of 1941, more than 400,000 Serbs were gathered in collective, immigrant, and concentration camps, more than 250,000 were expelled and evicted, more than 400,000 were killed and about 240,000 were converted. At the same time, more than 160 priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church were killed and more than 550 were expelled. At least 330 churches, 50 chapels and 20 monasteries were looted, set on fire, demolished or destroyed in other ways, and more than 50 churches and monasteries were converted into Roman Catholic and Uniate churches. The cultural-historical value of everything destroyed is immeasurable. The Serbian Orthodox Church was destined for the same fate as its buildings, people and hierarchy together.

The conversion of Orthodox Serbs was the implementation of the centuries-old inclinations of the Roman Catholic Church to create one faith and bring Christians under the rule of the Roman Patriarch, according to Roman Catholic teaching the only heir of Christ ("one flock and one shepherd"). Another meaning of conversion is the denial of orthodoxy and denationalisation of Serbs for the sake of Croatisation. The Independent State of Croatia has accepted conversion as a busi-

ness of state interest. At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church was doing its part. The state provided the legal basis, the Episcopal Conference of Roman Catholic prelates justified conversion, the clergy did the work. Historical documents show that there was not a single refusal to carry out the conversion nor any protest, from the ordinary priest to the archbishop, not counting the protest letter of the Slovenian priests expelled to Serbia handed over to the Roman Catholic archbishop of Belgrade, Josip Ujčić. It is also evident that there was not a single protest by members of the state authorities. The laws forbade the conversion of wealthy Serbs, teachers and priests. Physical liquidation was planned for them. And one of the reasons was their economic and material wealth, which was necessary for the Croatian state. Poorer Serbs represented an easier task for denationalisation and conversion. The converted ones did not gain any of the promised rights, for example equality with the Croats. It is a historical truth that many were killed after the conversion. The most drastic example is the massacre on the 30th May 1941 in the church in Glina, when the Roman Catholic priest Franjo Žužek first converted the Serbs and made them Roman Catholics, and then the Ustashas killed them as Croats. Official data from Kaptol in Zagreb from mid-1943 spoke of 240,000 converted Serbs. Historical science has accepted this information as the closest to the truth, disregarding the fact that conversion was carried out until the end of the war, that unification is also a form of conversion and that Islamisation was also carried out.

From January 1942 to mid-May 1945, the destruction of Serbia did not stop, but only slowed down. In that time there were no more organised expulsions and resettlement, which does not mean that individual Serbs did not continue to leave the Independent State of Croatia in various ways and strive to reach Serbia. Many were brought to concentration camps and killed. This is how more than 200,000 Serbs perished. Churches and monasteries were less looted, demolished and destroyed sporadically, because in March 1942, according to German plans and orders, the Croatian Orthodox Church was proclaimed. The creation of a new church organisation was only part of the global plans for the sur-

vival of some form of Orthodoxy, similar to the creation of the Ukrainian or Hungarian Orthodox Churches. The hierarchy of this Church consisted, to the greatest extent, of the former clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church or the Russian Orthodox Church abroad. The majority were Ukrainians, a little less Russians and the fewest Serbs. And the proclaimed head, Grigorij Maksimovich Germogen, was Russian. The Croatian Orthodox Church did not have any canonical foundations, but it still existed, and that is to the extent the Croatian authorities were pleased to. The absurdity of all this can be seen in the example of the clergy. Namely, according to the remuneration lists, up to 80 priests served. However, the reality is quite different: many from this list were killed in the summer months of 1941, a few did not have the right to priesthood from earlier years, a few were without proper qualification, a few monks had families, etc. The special interesting fact in the list of priests is that the Croatian authorities "counted" among them twenty priests who were in units of the Yugoslav Army in the homeland or in territories controlled by it, as is the case with the Dinara Chetnik Division. The Croatian Orthodox Church used about twenty churches, but no monastery. The exact number of members of this church, i.e. true believers, is not difficult to guess if one knows the other facts about the fate of the Serbs and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Independent State of Croatia. In any case, it is insignificant.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

The illustrations come from the author's personal documentation, from online portals, and from various publications.



Division of the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in April 1941



The administrative division of the Independent State of Croatia



The administrative division of the Serbian Orthodox Church, according to the Constitution from 1931 until after April 1941



The Archbishop of Peć, the Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci,
and the Serbian Patriarch Gavrilo



Metropolitan Josif of Skopje



The Bishop of Dalmatia, Irinej



Metropolitan Dositej of Zagreb



Metropolitan Petar of Dabar and Bosnia



The Bishop of Gornji Karlovac, Sava



The Bishop of Banja Luka, Platon



Bishop of Zahumlje and Herzegovina,
Nikolaj



The Bishop of Zvornik and Tuzla,
Nektarije



Pope Pius XII



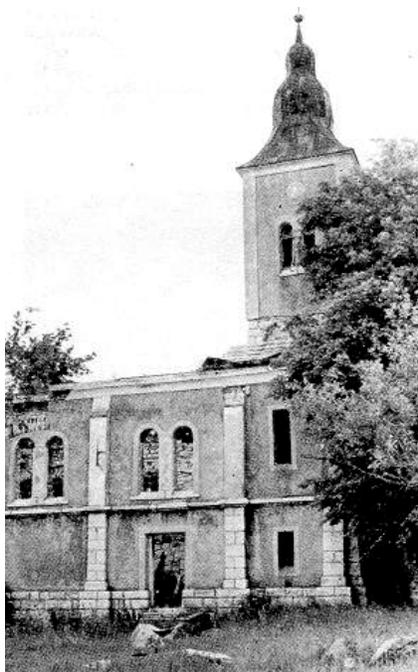
The Bishops in the Catholic Church associated with Ante Pavelić



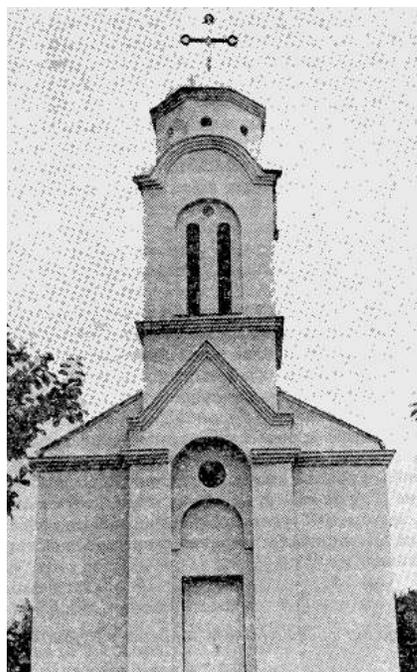
The Church of St. Archangel Michael in
Mlaka near Jasenovac



The Church of St. George the Great
Martyr in Grubišno Polje



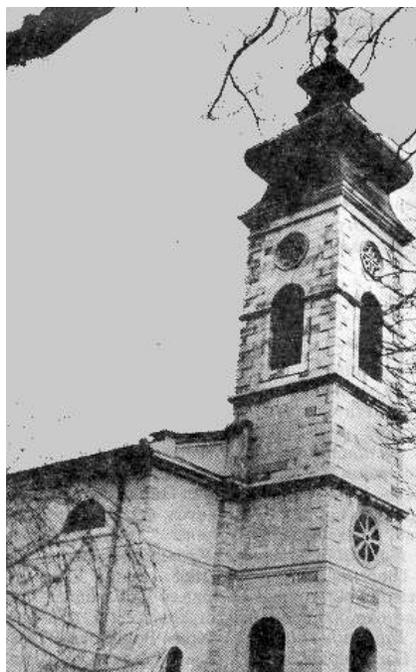
The Church of the Assumption of the
Virgin Mary in Korenica



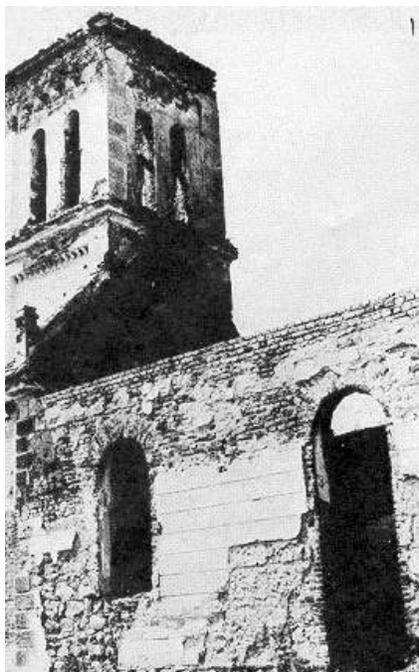
The Church of the Holy Venerable
Mother Paraskeva in Pljevlja near Šipovo



The Church in Sirač



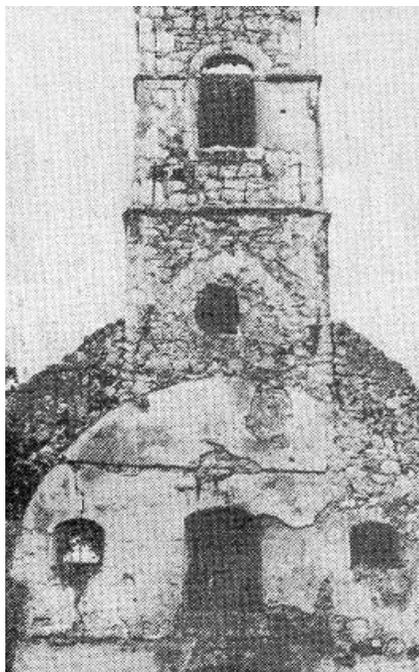
The Church of the Assumption of the
Blessed Virgin Mary in Livno



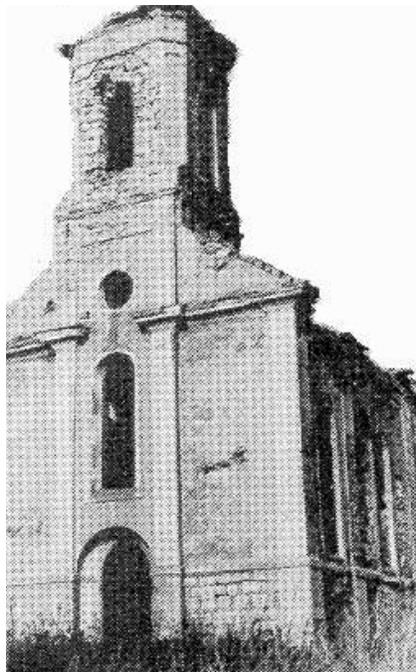
The Church of St. Nicholas in Blatuša



The Church of the Transfer of the Relics
of St. Nicholas in Soboština



The Church of the Nativity of the Virgin
Mary in Sadilovac



The Church of the Transfiguration of the
Lord in Mutilić



The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed
Virgin Mary in Glina



The Church of the Descent of the Holy
Spirit in Dubica



Remains of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Glina



The Church of St. Panteleimon of
the Old Hopovo Monastery



The Church of St. George
the Great Martyr in Divoš



The Church of St. Spiridon in Petrinja



The Church of St. George in Kusunje



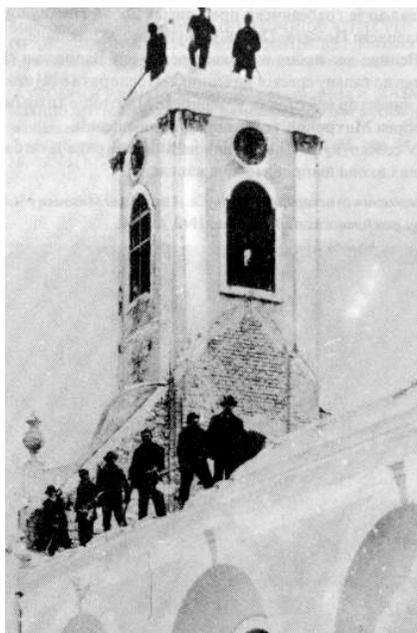
The Church of St. Archangel
Michael in Gradina



The Church of the Descent of
the Holy Spirit in Glamoč



The Church of St. Archangel Michael
in Poplat near Stolac



The Church of “summer“
St. Nicholas in Tenja



The Church of the Holy Trinity in Bihac



The Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Bosanska Doljana



The Church in Grmuša



The Church of St. Elijah in Jablanac



The Church of St. Paraskeva (‘Petka’) in Kolaric



The Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Kupinovo



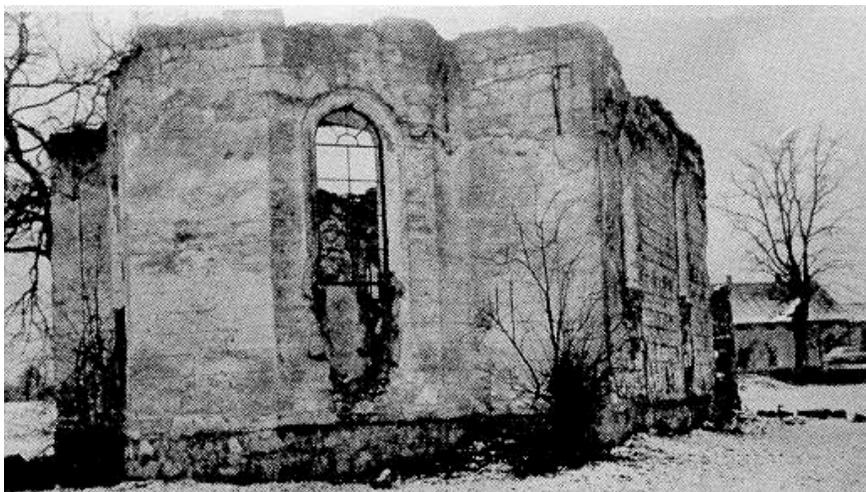
The Church in Lipa



The Church of St. Sava of the Kuveždin Monastery



The Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Osijek



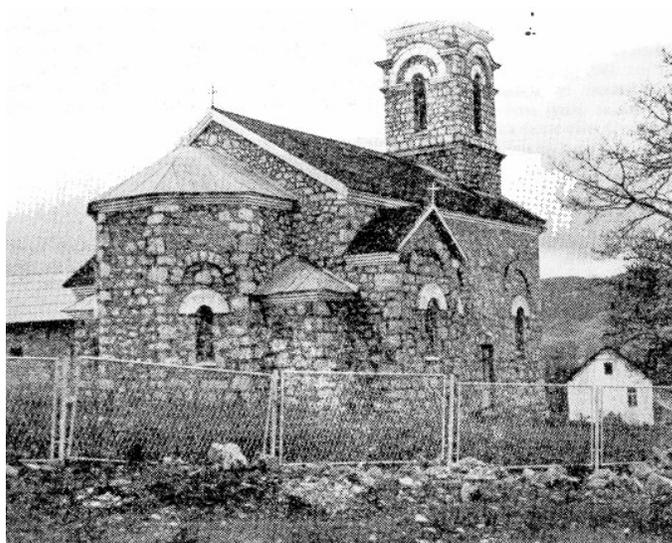
The Church of St. Apostles Peter and Paul at Pritoka



The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Prskovi



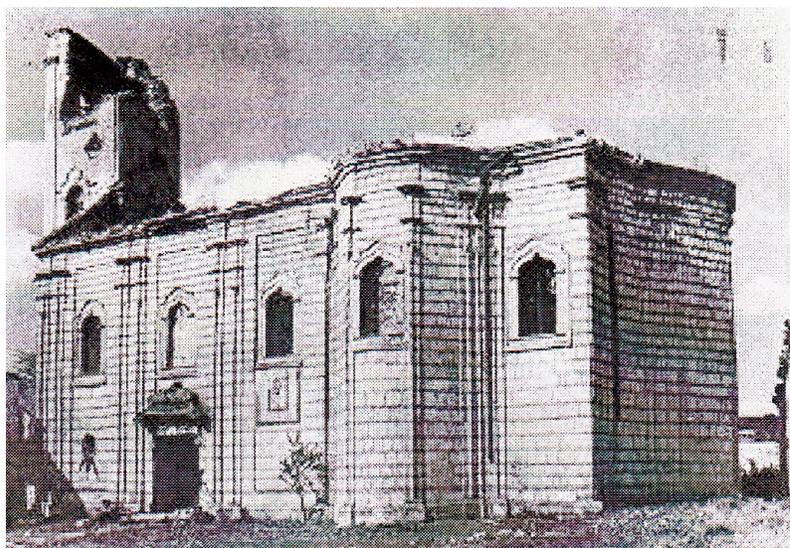
The Church of St. John the Baptist in Šipovo



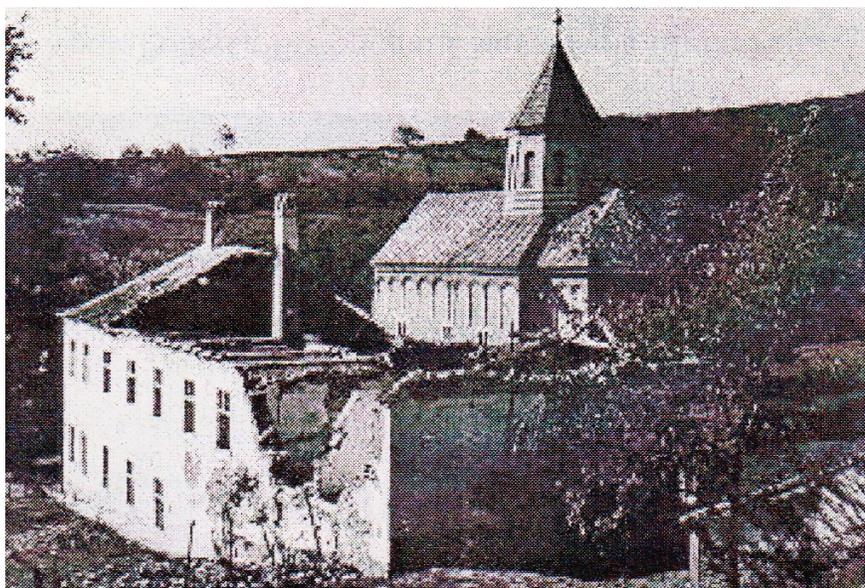
The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Strojice



The Church of St. Nicholas of the Monastery of Divša (Đipša)



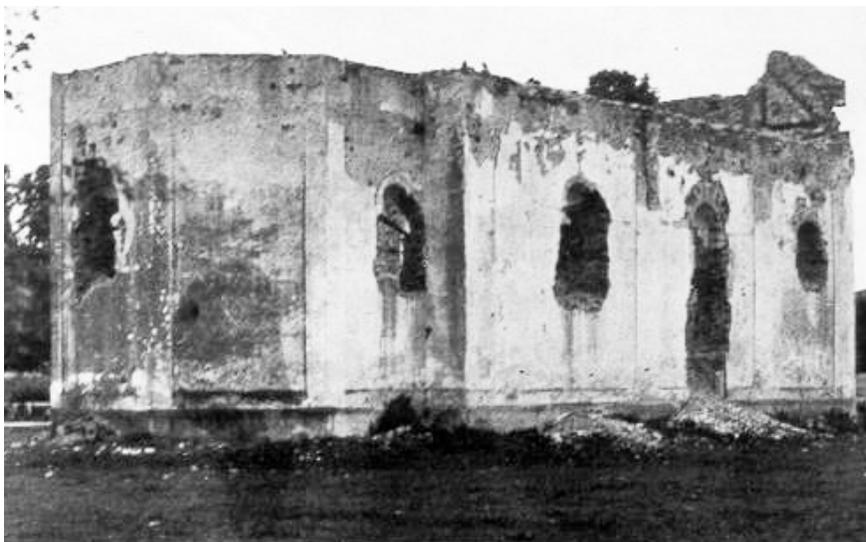
The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Šišatovac Monastery



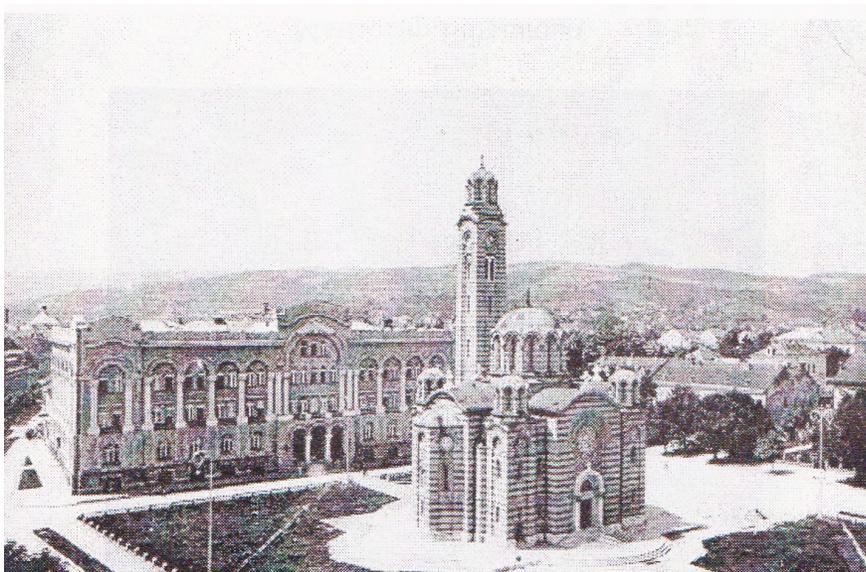
Mala Remeta Monastery



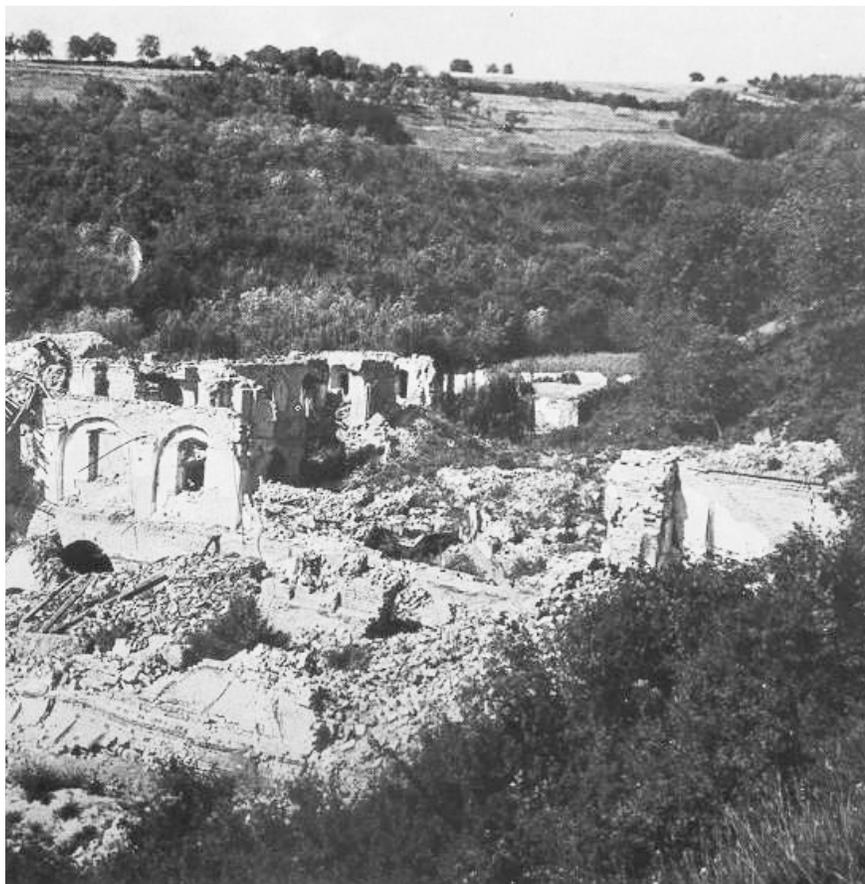
Kuveždin Monastery



The Church of the Ascension of the Lord in Vojnić



The Church of the Holy Trinity in Banja Luka



Bešenevo Monastery

NEZAVISNA DRŽAVA HRVATSKA
PREDSJEDNIČTVO VLADE
Broj 2684
Primljeno, dne 26 / 6 1941 _____ priloga

MINISTARSTVU UNUTARNJIH POSLOVA
Odjelu za Srbe
--Z-A-G-R-E-B

Predlog u pogledu riješenja srpskog pitanja dostavlja se
na nadležno uređivanje i upotrebu.
U Zagrebu, dne 27. lipnja 1941.

Za predstojnika:
V. Burić



The proposal for addressing the Serbian issue in the Independent State of Croatia (AH, the Independent State of Croatia, Government Presidency, 2684)

RAVNATELJSTVO USTAŠKOG REDARSTVA
NEZAVISNE DRŽAVE HRVATSKE U ZAGREBU
Srpski ošjak

Srpska iskaznica br. 866
za Srbina *Đorđijak Aleksandar*
iz *Zagreba* rodjen *1904*
Mjesto rodjenja: *Bjelovar*
Stan: *Kromajurov ul.* Državljanstvo: _____
prijavio se kod ovog ravnateljstva: *10-VII-1941.*

NEZAVISNA DRŽAVA HRVATSKA

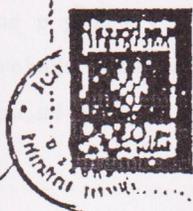
Droj. *19093/4-T.* Putovanje odobreno po
Ravnat. za jav. red i sigur.
poslovom na ckrst. od 4.VI.
1941. br. 3210

REDARSTVENO RAVNATELJSTVO U ZAGREBU
DOZVOLA ZA PUTOVANJE

za *Đorđijak Julijan* rođj. *1904*
u *Bjelovaru* sa primanje *Kušanica*
stan *Kromajurov ul. 4* koji putuje iz Zagreba u
Zemun, Beograd *inamov.*
dozvola vrijedi *5 (pet)* dana.



Ove dozvole mora imati sa sobom i ličnu iskaznicu.
Zagreb, dne *10-VII-1941.* Ravnatelj Redarstva



Addressing the Serbian Question in the Independent State of Croatia
(Private Collection)

23/1

NEZAVISNA DRŽAVA HRVATSKA
 DRŽAVNO RAVNATELJSTVO ZA POHNOVU
 Zagreb, dne 16. srpnja 1941.

Broj: 903 1941.

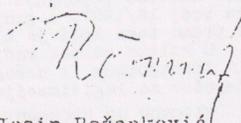
~~Kotarskom predstojništvu -~~
~~Predstojništvu gradskog redarstva -~~
 " / Bos. Kostajnica

Nalaže se, da u smislu danih uputa okružnicom ovoga Ravnateljstva Ptk. broj 26/41. od 2.VII. 1941. odmah uhitite sve u popisu navedene osobe zajedno sa svim članovima uže obitelji /žena, djeca i ostali ukućani članovi obitelji./, ----- te da ih pod oružanom sigurnošću prepratite u sabiralište, a po tom u logor u Yasac Caprag

Upozoravate se, da je ovo strogo tajne prirode, hitnog i neodgodivo, te da svaki propust podpada pod udar propisa o prijemkom sudu, te da za pravilno izvršenje gornjega odgovara svaki predstojnik osobno.

Kako je pak to posao od velikog državnog interesa, pozivate se, da istome neodgodivo i odmah sa svom ozbiljnošću pristupite, te da u roku od 48 sati podnesete izvještaj ovom ravnateljstvu što ste izvršili u smislu danih uputa.

Ujedno izvolite u istom roku i povremeno dostavljati izvještaje ovom ravnateljstvu o toku uredovanja, kao i eventualne opaske, kako bi ovo ravnateljstvo moglo uskladiti svoje naloge prema faktičnim prilikama i praksi.-

Državni ravnatelj:

 Josip Rožanković



The order issued by the Croatian authorities on the 16th of July 1941, regarding the arrest and internment in the Caprag camp (A VII, the Independent State of Croatia, 203-31/2)

DRŽAVNO RAVNATELJSTVO ZA PONOVO.

Broj: 2440/RG/1941.

Zagreb, dne 9. kolovoza 1941.

Predmet: Uhićenje popova, postupak sa Rumunjima, Crnogorcima, Makedoncima i Rusima

Svima kotarskim oblastima
Svima ispostavama
Svima redarstvenim ravnateljstvima
Svima Velikim župama
Svima gradskim poglavarstvima
Svima izseljeničkim logorima



monahe i kaludere, te U vezi sa već ranije danim uputama uhititi sve, još preostale grčko-istočne popove zajedno sa njihovim obiteljima i prepratite ih u iseljenički logor Caprag kraj Siska. Ovo se odnosi samo na popove koji su po narodnosti Srbi i na Crnogorce, koji su se osjećali Srbima.

Izuzmite one popove, koji su usljed bolesti ili starosti nesposobni za transport.

Sa imovinom iseljenih popova postupite prema također ranije danim uputama, to vrijedi i za crkveno blago i svu crkvenu imovinu.

Preostalim popovima bilo koje narodnosti zabranite svako daljnje vršenje njihovih crkvenih funkcija.

Podjednako se obavještavate, da je izuzeto od izseljenja u Srbiju žiteljstvo rumunjskog, makedonskog/bugarskog/, ruskog i ukrajinskog porijekla kao i oni Crnogorci, koji se nijesu ogrješili o imena terese hrvatskog naroda i nijesu se isticali i smatrali Srbima. Na ova lica nesmiju se primjeniti mjere, koje se poduzimlju protiv opasnih i nepoćudnih Srba.

Matice grko-istočnjaka, moraju preuzeti nadležna općinska poglavarstva time, da izdavaju matične izvadke i da vrše upise rođenih i umrlih, do daljnje odredbe. Za svoj ovovrsni rad općine su odgovorne višim državnim vlastima.

O preuzoću Matice interesirano općine putem kotarskih oblasti moraju izvijestiti ovo ravnateljstvo.

Državni ravnatelj:

P.S. UPOZORENJE!

Ustanovljeno je, da se već jednom iseljeni Srbi, koji su iseljeni na bilo koji način, vraćaju na stara ognjišta sa raznovrsnim legitimacijama. U koliko se u takovim slučajevima radi o t.zv. dobrovoljcima, koji su deposeđirani sa bivših dobrovoljačkih zemljišta, treba svakoga takovoga popratnika uhapsiti, popuniti karticu generalija i imovinsku/takove kartice popunjaju se kad netko t.zv. samostalno iseljenje, okružnica broj 16/1927/ i prepratite ga u logor Caprag, Sl. Požežu ili Bjelovar, prema tome koji je bliži.

U koliko se pak radi o povratniku, koji je iseljen našim iseljeničkim transportom iz našeg iseljeničkog logora, treba ga odmah uhapsiti i zajedno sa legitimacijom vratiti onamo odakle je došao t.j. preko granice. NAPOKON SE UPOZORUJU KOTARSKI PREDSTOJNICI I PREDSTOJNICI GRADSKIH REDARSTVA, DA NI U KOJEM SLUČAJU NISU OVLAŠTENI IZDAVATI DOZVOLE ZA POJEDINAČNO ISELJENJE IZ NEZAVISNE DRŽAVE HRVATSKE, JER JE ZA TO ISKLJUČIVO NADLEŽNO SAMO OVO DRŽAVNO RAVNATELJSTVO.

The order issued by the Croatian authorities on the 9th of August regarding the arrest of Orthodox priests and their internment in the Caprag camp (AVII, the Independent State of Croatia, 180-59/1)

OPĆINSKO POGLAVARSTVO
Broj 1905.
26. / rujna 1941. g.
U ŠIMANOVCI

Predmet: Izveštaj o Grčko-istočnim parohijanima.-

Na Broj: 1375/1941.god.

KOTARSKOJ OBLASTI

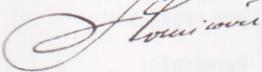
Z E M U N.

Izveštava se naslov da na području ove općine još do danas bora-
vi Grčko-istočni sveštenik g.Vsevold Horvat 33.god.star koji je do da-
nas vršio dužnost sveštenika pri ovdašnjoj Grčko-istočnoj crkvi.

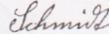
Ovaj sveštenik poreklom je Rus,izbeglica koji je za sveštenika
ovamo došao iz općine Maradić kotara Irig prije 2.meseca dana.

Podjedno se izveštava naslov da su matice rođenih,umrlih i ven-
ganih od gore imenovanog sveštenika oduzeti i pohranjeni kod ove opći-
ne, a ovdašnja Grčko -istočna crkva zaključana je,ključevi od iste nala-
ze se u rukama potpisanog načelnika te se prema tome nikakove funkcije
u istoj ne obavljaju.-

Opć.bilježnik:



Načelnik:



The report from the Croatian authorities regarding the fate of
the Orthodox priest, the church, and the property (Historical Archives of Belgrade,
the Independent State of Croatia, unregistered)

RAVNATELJSTVO ZA JAVNI RED I SIGURNOST

ZA NEZAVISNU DRZAVU HRVATSKU

Z A G R E B U

Broj. 4742.P.1941.

T. b. Kvaternik
U Zagrebu, dne 25. rujna 1941.

Predmet: Služba Božje u grčko-istočnoj crkvi u Sinju, izvještaj.

MINISTARSTVU VANJSKIH POSLOVA

u/

28/3-2
200-
Z A G R E B U

Kotarska Oblast, Sinj T/br.927 od 17. rujna 1941. dostavile je ovom Ravnateljstvu slijedeće izvješće:

„Dane 14. rujna 1941. god. oko 10.30 sati održana je liturgija u grčko-istočnoj crkvi sv. Petra u Sinju. Liturgiju je služio Marko Plavša paroh grčko-istočne crkve u Sinju. Liturgiji je prisustvovalo oko 30 osoba, od ovog broja samo dva muškarca, a ostalo ženske. Za vrijeme liturgije ulazna vrata crkve su bila potpuno zatvorena, a oko crkve pet italijanskih vojnika i to 4 sa puškama i jedan narednik kao vodja patrole sa revolverom. Dva vojnika su šetala ulicom sjeverno od crkve, a dvojica ispred kuće Barićevih zapadno od crkve i to u neposrednoj blizini crkve.

Kada je liturgija završena paroh Plavša sastao se pred crkvom-- sa italijanskim narednikom i sa njime ostao nekoliko minuta u razgovoru kojom prilikom su pušili cigaretu.

Sto je paroh za vrijeme održavanja liturgije prisutnim govorio u crkvi kao i sa italijanskim narednikom poslije svršene liturgije nije se moglo provjeriti.

Pogovara se da je u propovijedi paroh Marko Plavša istakao, da se ima zahvaliti italijanskoj vojsci da se liturgija može održati!

Dostavlja se Naslovu na znanje i upotrebu.



ZA DOM SPREMAN !

Ravnatelj:

Eugen Kvaternik

NEZAVISNA DRZAVA HRVATSKA
MINISTARSTVO VANJSKIH POSLOVA

Br. T. 574 Prim. 8/8

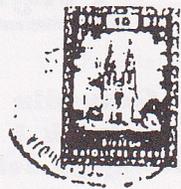
Prilozi _____

Eugen Kvaternik's report on the liturgy at the church in Sinj
(A VII, the Independent State of Croatia, 235-20/2)

Br. 1049/41

Obitelj Meandžija

Glina kb. 11



Nakon što ste Vi dobili Kolarovi pri-
stanak (kopi je nalazi u arhivu nadb.
dub. stola u žrtu) preuzvireni je Nadbiskup
zagrebački dr. Alojzije Stepinac svojim
odlukom br. 7356 dd 28. 11. 1941 primio
u krilo sv. rkt. Crkve.

Stoga kava se u dužnost savjestan
polazak službe Božje!

Budite izvorni krvi, koja Vas prigrla,
nezavisnoj državi Hrvatski i njegovom
Oglavniku.

DEKANAT

CRKVE

NOTARA GLIJSKOGA

Glina, 30. prosinca 1941

Franjo Žvaka,

župnik, dekan

nadbiskupski konzultor



Confirmation of the conversion of Serbs

PRIJATELJSKI SAVJET

Gospodin Isus Krist je objavio da će biti jedan ovčinjak i jedan pastir. Ovu sliku je uzeo iz svakdanjega seljačkoga gospodarstva, da ga ljudi bolje razumiju. Sin Božji Isus Krist je došao na zemlju, da za vječni život pripravi i da spas done-
se svim ljudima. Zato nam on objavljuje: Bit će je-
dan ovčinjak i jedan pastir. To znači: bit će jedna
Crkva i jedan vrhovni crkveni poglavar, koji je
Kristov namjesnik na zemlji i vrhovni svećenik u
Kristovoj Crkvi.

TO JEDINSTVO CRKVE TREBA DA PRO- VEDEMO U NEZAVISNOJ DRŽAVI

HRVATSKOJ.

Stanovnici grčko-istočne vjere!

Cujte ovaj prijateljski savjet. Biskup djako-
vački primio je do sada u Svetu Katoličku Crkvu
na hiljade gradjana, koji su od državnih vlasti do-
bili svjedodžbu čestitosti. Ugledajte se u ovu svoju
braću, pak se prijavite što prije za prelaz u Ka-
toličku Crkvu. Vi ćete kao katolici moći ostati u
svojim domovima. Vi ćete nesmetano unapredljivati
svoje gospodarstvo i odgajati svoju omladinu za
Boga i za državu Hrvatsku. Vi ćete u Katoličkoj
Crkvi osigurati spas neumrlih duša prema onoj
sve oj opomeni Spasitelja našega Isusa Krista: „Ne
će u kraljevstvo nebesko doći onaj, koji govori:
Gospodine, Gospodine, nego onaj koji vrši volju
Oca nebeskoga“.

Prijatelj naroda

Bisk. tiskara — Đakovo

252
42

Priepis!

NEZAVISNA DRŽAVA HRVATSKA
PREDSJEDNICTVO VLADE
GLAVNO TAJNICTVO

Broj: 818-XI-2-1942.

U Zagrebu, dne 13. siječnja 1942.

Predmet: Srbi prelaznici na rimo-
katoličku vjeru - upisi-
vanje narodnosti.

M.M.O. H.P.J.
190-45/3-2
190

MINISTARSTVU UNUTARNJIH POSLOVA
Tajničtvu ministra
ZAGREB

Saobćuje Vam se, da se grko-istočnjaci /Srbi/ koji su
prešli na rimokatoličku vjeru - smatraju Hrvatima, te se kao
takvi imadu upisivati u službenom postupku.

O prednjem obavjestite područne urede.

M.P.

Glavni tajnik:
V. Cvitković, v.r.

NEZAVISNA DRŽAVA HRVATSKA
MINISTARSTVO UNUTARNJIH POSLOVA
Tajništvo ministra

Broj Taj: 485-I-4-1942

Zagreb, 20. siječnja 1942.

Predmet: Kao gore.

SVIMA ODJELIMA, ODSJECIMA, PODODSJECIMA M. U. P.
VELIKA ŽUPA - SVIMA
REDARSTVENA OBLAST ZA GRAD ZAGREB
GRADSKO POGLAVARSTVO ZAGREB

Prednje se dostavlja na znanje i postupak.
Velike župe obavjestiti će područne državne i samo-
upravne oblasti.

ZA DOM SPREMNI!

Obći pomoćnik
Ministra unutarnjih poslova:

Henj

na prijemu
Eg.

10. 1. 1942.

24. J. 42
252
T. Kotarskoj oblasti - 1-6j
T. Župskoj redarstvenoj oblasti - 1-10
T. Gradskoj poglavarskoj -
Na znanje i postupak (u upisnicama, da Kotarske
oblasti imaju o govoreći obavjestiti sve područne državne
i samoupravne oblasti.
S. J. S. S. S.

The directive from the Croatian authorities to register converted Serbs as Croats (A VII, the Independent State of Croatia, 190-45/3)

Kotarska Oblast
Prs.br.121
4/IX-1941
I R I G

Predmet: Popis crkvene pokretne i nepokretne
imovine i zatvaranje grčke istočnih Crkava.

G. Stjepan Pap
Ket. Pristav

O V D J E

Pozivate se, da na temelju okružnice Državnog ravnateljstva za penevu u Zagrebu od 9. kolovoza 1941. br. 2446/20-1941 na području ovog kotara u svim mjestima zatvorite i zapečatite grčke istočne Crkve, a matice grčke istočnika imate predati nadležnim općinskim poglavarstvima time, da ih imaju voditi do dalje odredbe.

Ujedno se pozivate, da savezne sa gornjim uređivanjem obavite popis cjelokupne Crkvene imovine pokretne i nepokretne, kao i popis ~~ostalih~~ ostalih grčke istočnih pepeva, a o izvršenom podnijeti izvještaj.

Trešak ovog uređivanja pada na teret Državnog Ravnateljstva za penevu.



Upravitelj Kotara:

Barčič

The letter from the district of Irig dated 4th of September 1941,
regarding the closure of facilities belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church
(Zlodola i gresi, Belgrade, 1990, 24)

BISKUPSTVO ĐAKOVAČKI MARIJAT

Đakovo, 20. kolovoza 1941.....



Broj 35. Prs./941

End adqators molimo davesti goruži broj

Predmet:

Ugledni gospodin

Dr. RADOVAN GLAVAŠ, odjelni predstojnik Ministarstva za Bogoslovlje

Z A G R E B

Čast mi je Vašem uglednom Gospodstvu u privitku dostaviti prepis dviju predstavki, koje sam po posebnom delegatu predao državnom uredu za narodnu ponovu u Zagrebu.

Predstavka broj 2473/941 sadržaje istu stvar, radi koje je kod Vas bio O. Gvardijan kapucinskog samostana iz Osijaka. Ovaj red je svoju Bogoslovlju i novicijat smjestio u Karlobagu, dakle u posve pasivnom kraju, što je za redovnički podmladak veoma teška okolnost. Zato sam zamolio odstup dvaju manastira Ravanice i Jazak, gdje bi se smjestila Bogoslovlja i novicijat OO. Kapucina, tako da bi u manastiru Ravanici bio župski ured i ekonomska uprava, dok bi u manastiru Jazak bila Bogoslovlja sa novicijatom. Ovi manastiri imaju velike posjede polja i vinograda, a i velike komplekse šuma. Šume će se sigurno podržavati, dok se oranice, vinogradi i voćnjaci mogu dati Ocima Kapucinima, tako da iz ovoga imutka mogu uzdržavati svoje Patere kod uprave župe Vrđnik i one kod uprave ekonomije, u tu svrhu bi se kod Ravanice odstupilo gratis 60-80 jutara, a kod manastira Jazak 100-120 jutara.

Predstavka broj 2624/941 sadržaje molbu za odstup besplatni jedne zgrade u Srij. Karlovcima kako je u molbi obrazloženo.

Ove predstavke Vam u prepisu dostavljam uz zamolbu, da bi ih izvoljeli Bržavnom Ravnateljstvu za narodnu ponovu preporučiti na povoljno riješenje.

Isto tako Vas, Gospodine Odjelni Predstojniče, molim, da bi izvoljeli Gospodinu Ministru tople preporučiti ovostranu predstavku od 2. kolovoza o.g. broj 2590/941. Ova sam predstavku podnio iz razloga što danas niti pučanstvo, niti općinski organi stare naredbe za ovršno utjerivanje luknarskih beriva iz godine 1921, 1932 i iz 1934 ne smatraju obaveznima; zato je potrebno da se donese novo naređenje u smislu ovostrane predstavke.

Ovom se prilikom koristim, da Vam, Gospodine Odjelni Predstojniče, izrazim svoje osobito štovanje i naklon



NEZAVISNA DRŽAVA HRVATSKA
MINISTARSTVO PRAVOSUĐJA I BOGOSLOVLJA

Primljeno, dne 10. 11. 1942. 194.....

Biskup đakovački

A letter from Bishop Antun Akšamović of Đakovo, dated 20th of August 1941, addressed to Fra Glavaš, the chief in the Ministry of Worship, in which he requests the monasteries of Ravanica and Jazak (Zlodela i gresi, Belgrade 1990, 33)

HRVATSKI NAROD

GLASILO HRVATSKOG USTASKOG POKRETA

GODINA IV. BROJ 442.

ZAGREB, SUBOTA 6. LIPNJA 1942.

CIJENA 3 KUNE

Položaj pravoslavlja u Hrvatskoj

Položaj pravoslavlja u Hrvatskoj... (The text continues with a detailed analysis of the Orthodox Church's situation in Croatia, mentioning the impact of the Ustaša regime and the role of the Metropolitan Ante Pavelić.)

Poglavnik je potpisao Ustav HRVATSKE PRAVOSLAVNE CRKVE

Prvim mitropolitom zagrebačkim imenovana je Njegova Preosvećenost arhiepiskop GERMEN — Svečano ustoličenje u nedjelju 7. lipnja

Ustav HRVATSKE PRAVOSLAVNE CRKVE... (The text reports on the signing of the constitution for the Croatian Orthodox Church by the Metropolitan and the subsequent consecration of the Archbishop of Zagreb.)

NEČOVJESTNOST ENGLSKOG POSTUPKA S ZAROBLENICIMA

Dostojan odgovor ovisničkog ratnog vodstva... (The text discusses the inhuman treatment of prisoners of war by the British and provides a response from the military.)

GLAVNI STAN VOJNE BESICIA... (The text continues with military news and reports on the treatment of prisoners of war.)

NEZAVISNA DRŽAVA HRVATSKA NIJE VIŠE NIČIJA NEGO HRVATSKE CRKVE JE DOBRU HRVATSKO SELJACOKO NARODA.

Iseljena Hrvatska svečano će proslaviti Antunovu... (The text mentions the commemoration of Ante Pavelić's departure for exile.)

Lakomni političari i stratezi

Članak... (The text is a political commentary criticizing the actions of certain politicians and strategists.)

The Zagreb newspaper "Hrvatski narod" dated 6th of June 1942, discusses the Constitution of the Croatian Orthodox Church



Ante Pavelić and the Metropolitan of Zagreb, and the head of the Croatian Orthodox Church, Germogen

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Veljko Đurić Mišina

**Serbian Orthodox Church in
the Independent State of Croatia**

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