

WELCOME TO OUR READERS!

By Barry M. Lituchy, JRI
National Coordinator

As the chief executive officer and founder of the JRI it is my privilege to welcome you to the first issue of our newsletter. Within these pages we hope to inform our Associates, friends and colleagues of our work in the coming period as well as provide news on events, research and publications relating to the Holocaust in the Balkans, on a quarterly basis.

The initial effort to establish the JRI came at the end of the final session of the First International Conference and Exhibition on Jasenovac on October 31, 1997 at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, NY, when a number of participants came together to find a new approach for dealing with the study and commemoration of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia. What was needed was an institutional and international approach to this problem modeled on the practice of other Holocaust institutions. In early 1998 a Board of Trustees was organized and the JRI was soon thereafter incorporated as an official 501c-3 non-profit corporation registered with the U.S. federal government.

The historical experience of the twentieth century has revealed that the lessons of history, and of the Holocaust especially, are not learned without struggle. We have learned from the past mistakes of others that we must fight for the truth to be known and we must cre-

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JRI OBTAINS MONUMENT FOR VICTIMS OF JASENOVAC IN NEW YORK CITY'S HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL PARK

16 February 2005

Three years and three months after the Jasenovac Research Institute filed its application, and after encountering many difficulties in the process, the Jasenovac Research Institute finally won approval today from the City of New York for the



Main monument at New York's Holocaust Park

first public monument to the victims of Jasenovac to be unveiled outside of the former Yugoslavia.

The inscription for the Jasenovac monument was formally approved by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation's Holocaust Advisory Committee yesterday afternoon, 15 February 2005, with some minor changes to the inscription. The information was trans-

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WHY JASENOVAC?

By Col. Antun Miletic, (Ret.),
JRI Honorary Advisory
Board Chairman

The Jasenovac Research Institute, based in North America but with active members in Serbia, is the only international non-profit institution concerned with scholarly research on the genocidal crimes that took place in the Ustashe concentration camp in Jasenovac. The question may be posed immediately: *Why the Ustashe Concentration Camp in Jasenovac?*

The Ustashe of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH, *Nezavisne Drzave Hrvatske*) were, by definition, national chauvinists, Nazi-Fascists, and in many instances clerico-Fascists. They came to power with support from Hitler and Mussolini on April 10, 1941, and announced the creation of the NDH. Immediately after the proclamation of the NDH, the Ustashe, led by Ante Pavelic, took control of all the prisons and jails under the jurisdiction of the Yugoslav monarchy on the territory of the former *banovine* (administrative districts ruled by a *ban*—TN*) in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Afterwards, they began announcing in their official newspaper, *Narodne novine* (the *People's Newspaper*), a series of genocidal laws regulating racial qualifications, the registration of Serbs and Jews (officially referred to as *Yids*), and the deportation to concentration camps of all Jews, Serbs and Roma.

The goal was an even greater mass incarceration of Orthodox Serbs,

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ate our own institutions with which to advance it. Without an institution such as ours it is uncertain whether the crimes of the Holocaust in the Balkans would ever be fully recognized or the victims would ever be properly honored. Without an organization such as ours the peoples most affected by these crimes – Serbs, Jews and Romas – would be intellectually disarmed in the face of those who would perpetuate racial hatred. We know that the denial of the Holocaust and of the crimes of genocide committed against Serbs, Jews and Romas in the Balkans during 1941-1945 became a conspicuous and profound problem in the 1990's. This denial was a crime of racial hatred that resulted in massive violence. "Never again!" is the first lesson of the Holocaust, and the creation of the JRI is the application of that lesson.

It is with a profound sense of responsibility and personal commitment that I urge you to support us in our efforts and to encourage others in your community to do the same. Our efforts already are yielding tangible results and influencing the work of other Holocaust institutions. Not only have we embarked on an ambitious publishing and commemoration schedule, but we are fighting for restitution of properties and assets seized from Holocaust victims in Ustashe Croatia. As part of our mission, our organization is dedicated to peace and tolerance through justice and human rights. But no understanding of human rights in the Balkans can begin without a discussion of the greatest crimes ever committed there: the triple genocide against Serbs, Jews and Roma by the Nazi, Ustashe and other fascists in wartime Yugoslavia. Let us work together to establish the truth once and for all, and help others incorporate this history into the curriculum of schools around the world.

Jews and Roma in concentration camps in accordance with the Ustashe racist-clerico-fascist politics of "the voice of blood, race and soil," along with all those who opposed the Ustashe regime, especially the anti-fascists. For this reason, the Ustashe established, between August 15-21, 1941, the Jasenovac Concentration Camp, one of the largest of Hitler's camps in Europe. It was capable of receiving indefinite numbers of detainees. On August 23, 1941, the news reports announced that the first barracks had been built to house workers who were forced by the new legal statutes to participate in projects on the Trebiza River and in the Lonje area of one of the tributaries of the Sava River, i.e., to participate in draining the Lonjska swamplands. In any case, these news reports were merely for public consumption because the Ustashe exploited the public works projects on racist principles to work the laborers to death with long hours, bad food and unhygienic living conditions, and it was directed against Serbs, Jews and Roma.

In a geographic sense, they chose the broad region from the village of Jasenovac to Stara Gradiska on the right bank of the Sava River, which was an area of more than 210 square kilometers. The Ustashe chose this spot because of its strategic position, which easily afforded security and defense; it was connected to railroad lines and surrounded by water, i.e., situated on a navigable conjunction of the rivers Sava, Una and Velika Struga in the middle of the swamplands of Lonjska Polja, while on the other bank of the Sava River was Gradina, which was difficult to reach. However, when the principal parts of the Jasenovac Concentration Camp were taken into consideration, it was a complex of buildings surrounding Baciceve Brick Works (owned by Mr. Bacic and others), where one could find: a

chain factory, a blacksmith, a locksmith, a carpentry shop, an electricians' workshop, a brick factory, a manufacturer of pliers, a tinsmith, an upholstery shop, a gunsmith, an auto repair shop, a steam-operated sawmill and a steam-operated electrical generating plant.

In the very village of Jasenovac, there was a part of the Concentration Camp called "Kozara" or POW Camp IV. POW Camp V in the concentration camp system was Stara Gradiska. Vjekoslav "Maks" Luburic received instructions for the organization of the Jasenovac concentration camp from the Dachau Concentration Camp, but he made unique changes in the method of liquidation applied to the detainees: Dachau used industrial means of liquidation; while Jasenovac would use daggers, mallets, hatchets, metal bars as the instruments of liquidation. Those who were not liquidated with these weapons died of torture, hunger and illness.

The Ustashe exceeded their Hitlerian tutors in sadistic crimes in many different ways. The laws of civilized mankind did not apply to them. The bestiality of their evil deeds are incomprehensible to the normal human mind. For this reason, the Ustashe regime determined the fate of Serbs, Jews and Roma on the basis of racial decrees concerning "racial affiliation" and laws about "the protection of the Arian blood and honor of the Croatian people," which, in essence, did not distinguish themselves from the racist laws of the German Third Reich (Hitler's Germany). The Ustashe committed the unprecedented crime of genocide in the Jasenovac Concentration Camp for the sake of creating of "an ethnically pure Croatian state" and "a pure Croatian nation." Serbs, Jews and Roma discovered that they were obstacles blocking the path toward the creation a "pure Croatian lebensraum" and national "internal cleansing." For that reason, it was necessary to systematically exterminate all the

Jews and Roma, but a special fate was reserved for the Serbs: one-third would be killed, one-third would be driven into exile, and one-third would be converted to Roman Catholicism. *Voilà*, Jasenovac was necessary for that reason, because according to the Ustashe regime, there was no place for them in the “pure Croatian nation.”

Unfortunately, to this very day, the number of Serbs, Jews and Roma (by and large elderly men, women and children), as well as anti-fascists who were killed, has not been confirmed. Estimates of the number killed in the Jasenovac Concentration Camp vary from 80,000 to 750,000, and when, in addition to this figure, are added the 180,000 people who were driven from their homes and the 240,000 people who were forcibly converted to Roman Catholicism, one gets a full picture of the genocidal crimes committed in the Independent State of Croatia by the Ustashe regime. *Why Jasenovac?* That is the answer. That was where the Ustashe committed crimes just like the ones committed in Auschwitz, Treblinka, Mathausen, Majdanek, Dachau, Buchenwald, and others.

The JRI is working to confirm the number of people killed in Jasenovac by name and surname. The results we have arrived at thus far are serious: to date more than 80,000 have been confirmed by name, place of residence, date of birth and date of death. The former Jasenovac Concentration Camp is one of the largest graveyards in Europe, and it merits and justifies the existence of the JRI.

**TN = Translator's Note*

Translated by Milo Yelesiyevich,
JRI Director

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mitted to the JRI at 3 PM this afternoon, although the actual decision had been made 24 hours earlier.

Several changes were imposed on the inscription. The City's Holocaust Advisory Committee removed a sentence stating that the total number of victims was between 350,000 and 700,000. However, they did allow the sentence stating that “hundreds of thousands of victims” were killed there. This was the fourth time that the JRI's original inscription had been revised.

The JRI's National Coordinator Barry Lituchy will go to the Holocaust Park Committee office tomorrow to review and sign the final agreement. The monument will be engraved at the end of March and the formal unveiling will be ready for the 4th annual Day of Jasenovac Commemoration ceremony on April 17th marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia.

Had the JRI not made an enormous effort and numerous protests, even this advisory meeting may never have taken place as soon as it did. JRI attorney David Gottfried helped communicate the JRI's concerns to the City's agencies as did U.S. Congressman Anthony Weiner and New York City Public Advocate Ralph Peretto. The JRI also launched a broad based letter writing and telephone calling campaign which was led by several Survivors including George Radan, Ricki Soltan and Michael Danon.

JRI Advisory Board Member Dr. Ephraim Isaac and JRI Director Darko Trifunovic also played key roles.

The establishment of a permanent monument in New York City and the significant assistance obtained along the way from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and the New York Museum for Jewish Heritage for this project marks an important achievement in the JRI's global efforts to increase worldwide awareness of Jasenovac and the Holocaust in Yugoslavia. The JRI established working relation-

ships with both of these institutions during the process of obtaining the monument.

But most important of all is that the victims of Jasenovac now will never be forgotten. And the families of those victims will forever have a place to recognize and remember them. Moreover, Jasenovac is finally being recognized as central to the study and commemoration of the Holocaust around the world

**FOURTH ANNUAL
JASENOVAC DAY OF
COMMEMORATION
CEREMONY TO BE HELD AT
NEW YORK'S HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL PARK IN
BROOKLYN ON APRIL
17, 2005 AT 2 PM**

On Sunday, April 17, 2005, the Jasenovac Research Institute will hold its fourth annual Holocaust commemoration ceremony to honor and remember the victims and Survivors of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia and their families. The ceremony will include a wreath laying, religious service and speeches by Survivors, scholars and political leaders. The names of loved ones lost at Jasenovac will be read and candles lit in their memory.

The ceremony will also include the unveiling of the newly engraved monument to the victims of Jasenovac (see article above). Representatives from various countries will be invited to attend.

April 22nd marks the sixtieth anniversary of the heroic attempted breakout by the imprisoned victims of the Jasenovac camps. The memorial is timed to coincide as closely as possible with that date.

The Holocaust Memorial Park, which is located at West End Avenue between Emmons Ave & Shore

Blvd in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn, is the only monument park commemorating the Holocaust in the New York City area.

Directions to the event can be found on the JRI website.

The annual JRI dinner will be held on Saturday, April 16th at 6 PM. The JRI Board of Directors will meet earlier that same day. The Day of Jasenovac Commemoration ceremony is open to the public, while the dinner and Directors meeting are by invitation only

JRI FACT FINDING MISSION TO KOSOVO

JRI Directors Darko Trifunovic and Barry Lituchy travelled to Kosovska Mitrovica on 31 August 2004 on a fact finding mission. Following a town hall style meeting and press conference with the Serbian com-



munity in Mitrovica, Lituchy and Trifkovic viewed the ruins of Serbian and Roma homes along the Ibar River and then traveled to the Roma refu-



gee camp in Mitrovica where Lituchy conducted interviews with a number of Roma refugees. These along with other interviews will be collected and published by JRI to document the crimes of genocide committed in Kosovo by the KLA against the non-Albanian populations

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR TESTIMONY RECOUNTS CROATIAN FASCIST NIGHTMARE

*A new release of Survivor
Testimonies from Jasenovac
Research Institute*

*The Testimony of Ricki Danon
Soltan, Produced by the Jasenovac
Research Institute, 42 Minutes,
\$20 (\$14 for JRI Associates),
includes shipping, (available
in either NTSC or PAL)*

Born 1937 in Zagreb Yugoslavia, Jewish Holocaust Survivor Ricki Danon Soltan recounts her tragic experience of loss and survival during the Croatia Nazi state - the Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945. While attempting to flee the Croatian clerical fascist regime in 1941 by train, her entire family was arrested. Her mother was sent to the Croatian camp at Loborgrad, her father and uncle to Jasenovac. Her parents murdered, Ricki and her sister are saved when two Croatian sisters promise to raise them as "good Catholics." Hear the entire story, with photographs and original film footage, and the none too surprising attitude of the present day Croatian government toward former victims of Croatian crimes of genocide, as well as its refusal to recognize the citizenship of these victims born in Croatia. The Danons were just two of over 25,000 Jews killed in Jasenovac during the Holocaust.

Special offer: For new JRI Associates, receive the video free, as well as additional materials and discounts on future books and videos, plus the quarterly JRI newsletter for \$50.

**To order: Please send a
check or money order to**

**Jasenovac Research
Institute, PO Box 10-0674,
Brooklyn, NY 11210 USA**

**or you may order online
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jasenovac.org](http://www.jasenovac.org)**

CHANGES IN THE MUSEUM

*New Confusion over Jasenovac
New Contents and Presentation
by the Museum of the Ustashe
Concentration Camp Invites
a Serious Polemic*

*By Radoje Arsenic,
Special Correspondent*

From Politika, 22 June 2004

Thursday, April 22, 2004 marked the fifty-ninth anniversary of the famous prison rebellion undertaken by the prisoners of the Jasenovac Concentration Camp in Croatia, when the last thousand or so survivors fought back against annihilation and turned on their armed Ustashe jailers. Their goal was clear: someone, at least, had to survive to tell the truth about this inhuman "death factory." Only about one hundred managed to reach freedom after they assaulted the barbed wire fencing and the armed murderers who guarded them, and the truth about the Jasenovac Concentration Camp finally emerged, and that date has remained as its symbol, honored by decades of reunions of survivors, the families of the victims and conscientious observers of the victims of fascist terror.

On the eve of this year's ceremonies, "The Stone Flower" memorial monument (erected in 1966—*TN**) by the Belgrade sculptor, Bogdan Bogdanovic, which pays respect to the victims of the largest of Ustashe concentration camps, was restored. A month or so earlier, Bogdanovic met the Croatian Premier, Ivo Sanader, in connection with this memorial monument. Sanader

bowed to the victims and rendered a judgment on the Ustashe regime, emphasizing that “one must not allow the criminal regime of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) to be forgotten.”

Calculations on the Number of Deaths

However, confusion, as well as misunderstandings, are once again arising over this most traumatic aspect of modern Croatian history as the sixtieth jubilee year of the great escape from the Jasenovac Concentration Camp approaches. The latest upheaval arose after the announcement of changes that have been effected in not only the concept, but also in the contents of the permanent collection of the Museum on the monument site. These changes have now invited significant polemics and criticism by those who are well acquainted with the subject, both in Croatia and elsewhere.

In addition, there has been no resolution of the painful subject of calculating the number of victims who perished in the largest Ustashe death camp. Slavko Goldstein, the president of the Council of the Jasenovac Memorial Site and Museum, stated that “manipulations were involved in arriving at the figure of 700,000 (victims) in order to increase war reparations, as well as to implicate the Croatians in a genocide. A (Croatian) parliamentary commission, disputing such figures, minimized the number of victims, and lowered the figure to 2,386.” Accordingly, “we are coming close to establishing the truth in connection with the number of victims, which now, according to the list of names, is 59,188, and their (total) number is around 80,000, data which has been accepted by the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. and by the Simon Wiesenthal Center.” The data that points to 700,000 victims in Jasenovac, nevertheless, is the official number provided by the SFRY, which was supported

by Josip Broz Tito and also, for example, by Miroslav Krleža, who used this figure in the *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*. So it would have been a little unusual for these two men to support efforts to besmirch the Croatian people with an alleged genocide.

At the head of the Croatian government, President Franjo Tuđman, stated that barely 40,000 citizens were liquidated in Jasenovac according to his own eye-witness confirmations. In addition to the well known frustrations connected to this dispute, Tuđman tried to “put” the two implacable sides “to rest ... by mixing the bones of the deceased (victims)” along with criminals who murdered them, i.e., a common grave and memorial in Jasenovac, to thus relativize and mitigate what actually took place there. But thanks to energetic protests from the international community and democratic domestic public opinion, this monstrous project collapsed. Now a new project is being undertaken for the reorganization of the Jasenovac Memorial site, but, taking all things into consideration, it is once again moving in a less than fortuitous direction.

According to the director of the Memorial Site, Natasa Jovicic, the main idea behind the new concept and contents of the Concentration Camp Museum is “to transform a horrible place into a life-affirming one, and that’s how, in the presentation, for example, we’re going to fit in the story about the people who once lived here before the NDH.”

Ms. Jovicic, describing this goal in greater detail, went on to say: “The human tragedies that took place in the concentration camp will be individualized by stories of people with first and last names. We documented stories of the lives of about fifty survivors (before they were sent to the concentration camp) on video, and we have family pictures depicting scenes that took place before they were forcibly taken to

the camp. We have about 4,700 personal objects that once belonged the camp’s inmates. Some of them were unearthed during exhumations of mass graves that lie along the Sava River, and others we obtained from surviving family members of those who died in the camp. And we will even present their days in captivity, and, at the same time, we will dedicate a great part of the exhibition to the courageous individuals who risked their own lives to help the victims.

Removal of the Criminal Instruments of Death

Ms. Jovicic, in accordance with the newly announced concept that the content of the permanent museum exhibition must not be such that it “provokes fear among the visitors, because hatred and revenge arise from fear.” She explained that the Museum’s displays would no longer exhibit mallets, daggers and other instruments that were used daily to kill the camp’s inmates during their captivity. She commented on the fact that such content relating to former Nazi concentration camps was not displayed in Europe; rather, she continued, they (i.e., Europeans) insist on the authenticity of the site and events. “In contrast to all those other countries (i.e., where there are Holocaust museums on the sites of former concentration camps—*TN*), we recently survived a war and we are not inclined to turn the site of this former concentration camp into a tourist location.” She declined to elaborate on how the museum would explain and present to visitors “the technology of death” applied to the prisoners of the most brutal fascist concentration camps in all of Europe, and she did not elaborate on whether visitors would be able to obtain any information at all about such matters.

This new concept for the permanent museum exhibition at the Jasenovac Monument has received serious criticism from a most unlikely source, which makes it all the more

unpleasant. The German Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia, Gerhard Weiss, not long ago visited Jasenovac and noted with unceasing skepticism “the avoidance of explicit photographs of the reign of terror.” He also took notice of the new displays in the museum: “The assignment we have received in our day and age consists in the fact that the horror from that day and age must not be forgotten, must not be pushed into the background, must not be relativized and must not be presented as something naive. The Jasenovac Memorial Monument is an expression of such responsibility.”

Ambassador Weiss, on the basis of Germany’s experience, likewise asked Ms. Jovicic: “Wouldn’t it be necessary to conceive a project that would, for instance, encompass a tour of physical locations that at one time housed the principal institutions of the Ustashe regime, as was done in Germany within the framework of *The Topography of Terror*, by which visitors are shown buildings in Berlin that at one time housed the Gestapo and other similar organizations, so that this past era presents to visitors acts of state terror in a vivid and intimate manner?”

When this journalist asked how such a presentation in Zagreb could encompass buildings that at different times housed the headquarters of the Ustashe General Command, the Headquarters of the Chief of Staff of the JNA, and today’s Headquarters of the Croatian General Staff, Ambassador Weiss remarked: “What can we do? Such is our architectural inheritance!”

(TN* = *Translator’s Note*)

Translated by Milo Yelesiyevich,
JRI Director



AN INTRODUCTION TO DONJA GRADINA

THE LARGEST EXECUTION SITE OF THE JASENOVAC CONCENTRATION CAMP

by Simo Brdar, Curator of the
Donja Gradina Memorial Area

The area of land where the Memorial area of Donja Gradina is situated constitutes the outmost north-western part of the Kozarska Dubica plain. It is confined by the Sava and Una Rivers and by a branch of the Una named the Tisina, and encompasses 800 hectares of land of the outer zone, and 116 hectares of the inner zone.

The Memorial-Area Donja Gradina is situated at 45 ° 16’ latitude and at 16 ° 57’ longitude. The average altitude of the complex is 94 meters with deviations to a minimal altitude of 91.5 meters and maximal altitude of 95.5 meters.

The Memorial area of Donja Gradina also was the largest execution place of the Ustashe concentration camp of Jasenovac and an inseparable part of the history of Jasenovac and of Pavelic’s Independent State of Croatia - coded NDH.

The “Ustashe army” (“Ustaska vojnica”) was organized by Slavko Kvaternik. It was comprised of Ustashe units, mostly volunteers under the command of the Main Ustashe Headquarters, special police forces and Domobrans (“Home Army”). In August 1941 the Ustashe Security Service (UNS) was formed as well. These institutions carried out the most severe forms of genocide against Serbs, Jews and Roma in the NDH. In order to enable only Croat and Muslim people to live in the NDH, the Ustashe authorities carried out mass physical destruction, depor-

tation and conversions of Serbs to Catholicism, systematic extermination of Jews and almost complete extermination of Roma. Mass murders of Serbs in the NDH began immediately in April 1941, with massacres in villages around Bjelovar, in Banija, in Lika, in Kordun, in Bosnian Krajina and Herzegovina. Facts indicate that from April 1941 until mid-August 1942 around 600,000 Serbs were killed in the NDH in the most brutal manner. Around 180,000 Serbs were deported to Serbia during the war. Spiritual genocide, to which the Serbian Orthodox Church was exposed, was especially pervasive. During the war 450 Orthodox churches were destroyed.

According to the model of their protector, Nazi Germany and the other Fascist regimes, the Ustashe founded concentration camps in the NDH for the purpose of a more efficient “cleansing of the nation” from undesirables. They were intended for mass internment and systematic extermination of Serbs, Jews, Roma and anti-fascists. The foundation, organization and administration of concentration camps in the NDH was the concern of the “Ustashe Security Service”.

The largest, the most monstrous and the worst possible of all camps was Jasenovac. It was founded in August 1941, on the model of camps in Nazi Germany. It was the largest torture place that ever existed in the territory of former Yugoslavia. By horrors and atrocities committed by the Ustashe, it is without precedent in the history of mankind, and by the dimensions of the crime it is the third largest concentration camp of occupied Europe during the Second World War. German camps practiced industrial genocide, but in Jasenovac men, women and children were killed in the most bestial way, the sort of which has never been recorded in history of mankind. Everything negative, pathological and criminal that characterized

the Ustashe movement, reached its peak in Jasenovac.

The Poglavnik of the Independent State of Croatia, Ante Pavelic, together with his Doglavniks, founded the infamous concentration camp Jasenovac in August 1941, near the town of Jasenovac in Lonjsko field, at the Zagreb-Belgrade railway, in direct proximity of the confluence of the Una into the Sava. The entire area around the Sava river and around its left tributaries, the Veliki Stug and Lonja, and around its right tributary, the Una, would flood in the Spring and Autumn. The Ustashe called this camp the "Headquarters of Concentration and Labor Camps Jasenovac", and they informed the public that inmates from this camp would be used for labor in draining swamps in the Lonjsko field. Since the majority of the population of the town of Jasenovac were Serbs, Ustashe partly exterminated and partly deported the population, and the town itself they turned into an Ustashe garrison.

Jasenovac spread across the territory from Kostajnica, on the left and right bank of the Una, to Stara Gradiska on the left and Bosanska Gradiska on the right bank of the Sava, spanning 60 kilometers in length. The width of the camp was 2 kilometers on the left and 2 kilometers on the right banks of the Una and Sava Rivers. The choice of Jasenovac as the site of an Ustashe concentration camp was not accidental. It is situated in the center of Serbian lands and as such it was chosen as the central point of destruction for Serbs, Jews, Roma and anti-fascists. The entire terrain of Jasenovac is surrounded by the Sava, Una and Veliki Strug Rivers, in the middle of the swampy Lonjsko field, so escape from the camp was impossible. On the other bank of the Sava there is a hardly accessible and floodable area Donja Gradina, far away from human eyes and ears, an ideal place for mass murders. Concentration camp Jasenovac was a system of camps. It was comprised of:

Camp No. 1 – Krapje;
Camp No. 2 – Brocice or Versajev;
Camp No. 3 – The Brick Factory;
Camp No. 4 – The Tannery;
Camp No. 5 – Stara Gradiska.

Camp Krapje was located in the area between villages Krapje and Plesma, south of the Strug canal on meadows at the edge of the Gornja Krndija forest, and in the forest itself there are mass graves even today. Camp space was enclosed by barbed wire. First prisoners were brought there from Zagreb in August 1941 and were all killed. Krapje camp was located 12 kilometers away from Jasenovac, upstream the Sava. The camp in Krapje was built on swampy meadows.

The Brocice camp was located on the south side of the Strug canal, at the edge of the Donja Krndija forest and along the road Jasenovac-Novska, 3 kilometers away from Jasenovac. Mass murders of inmates were performed in this camp. The existence of 43 mass graves was determined in this area. The camp was enclosed by barbed wire and secured by Ustashe sentries. Most of the inmates brought to this camp were Serbs and Jews. Camp No. 1 and Camp No. 2 were guarded by experienced Ustashe who had previously mastered their bloody work in Jadovno and Pag. Various diseases spread among inmates due to hunger, thirst and horribly poor and unsanitary accommodations. Ustase beat these exhausted inmates to death. Camp No. 1 and later camp No. 2 Brocice were liquidated after camp No. 3 – the "Brick Factory" – was founded.

When Jasenovac is spoken about, it is usually in reference to camp No. 3 – the Brick Factory. This was the central camp, not only of Jasenovac, but also of the entire system of Ustase death camps. The area of Camp No. 3 was an industrial complex, prewar property of a Serb industrialist, Ozren Bacic. This complex was comprised of a brick factory (as a central facility),

chain factory, smithy, locksmith's shop, sawmill and other buildings. The Ustashe banished Bacic, and turned this area into a concentration camp. The formation of Camp No. 3 – the Brick Factory was overseen by Vjekoslav Maks Luburic, who was appointed in July 1941 as the "commandant of all concentration camps in the NDH".

In the beginning Camp No. 3 – the Brick Factory was improvised, enclosed by several rows of barbed wire. In time, inmates themselves enclosed it on three sides by building a wall 3-5 meters high, and the fourth side was a natural fence – the Sava River. On the wall itself seven sentry towers were built, distributed in the way that from the towers it was possible to control the entire camp space, adjacent and distant surroundings. All sentry towers were supplied with large quantities of ammunition, weapons and large searchlights that were capable of lightening by necessity every corner of the camp and the vicinity. The wall itself had rows of barbed wire installed on top of it that were intermingled with high voltage power lines. Entry and exit was possible only through two gates built out of solid wood and installed into a fence made of concrete and bricks. At every gate, there were special sentries with doubled guards. In the camp space, beside barracks for inmates, there were also various buildings such as the administration of the camp, various workshops, warehouses, etc.

The Ustashe intended to liquidate as many inmates as possible in the greatest privations possible. Even today there is a dike in Jasenovac that stretches from the Belgrade-Zagreb railway to the left bank of the Sava. It was built by inmates in the most difficult conditions, they stumbled and fell into the dike and were buried in it. That dike is today called the "Dike of Death". It was reinforced with thousands of human skeletons.

A large number of inmates were liquidated on the “Granik”. This was in fact a cargo-crane that was used before the war for loading and unloading boats. It was placed over the surface of the Sava. An inmate would have to come to the Granik, kneel, cross his arms on his back, lean forward, while another inmate would tie his arms with wire. An Ustashe would hit him on the head with a sledgehammer and push the body into the Sava. Thus the Sava swallowed up thousands of inmates and became one of the largest mass graves of Jasenovac.

In order to expose inmates to the greatest privations possible, Ustashe built a small pen-camp within Camp No. 3, enclosed by barbed wire. They confined several tens of physically the strongest inmates in that pen-camp. They wanted to see how long could they last without food and water in horrible heat. Days passed and informants reported that some were still alive. That surpassed all human psychophysical abilities. The Ustashe went to see how it was possible that any of them were alive. And they had a sight to see: several living skeletons with overgrown beards, with eyes wide open. They growled like wild beasts, and all around them there were white bones of their former comrades and inmates. In those horrible throes, cannibalism appeared in Jasenovac.

It is possible to list for days the places of horrible suffering and death of inmates. The Ustashe even organized competitions in slaughtering innocent victims. Hinko Picili burned people alive in brick furnaces, thus using the brick factory as a crematorium. Camp number 4 was known as “the Tannery.” This camp was located in the town of Jasenovac itself. Most of inmates in this camp were specialized workers who were used for special labors until the moment of their liquidation.

Camp number 5 was Stara Gradiska. This is an old Austro-Hungarian for-

ness where thousands of innocents, mostly women and children, were liquidated in the most monstrous ways. Those were mostly Serbian and Jewish women, and women of other religions and nations – anti-fascists. From June 1942, children were brought here *en masse*, mostly of Serbian nationality.

By monstrous crimes, atrocities, violence and number of murdered innocent men, women and children – Jasenovac belongs to the category of the largest concentration camps in Europe during World War II. By the number of liquidated innocent citizens of occupied European countries – only Auschwitz and Treblinka stand out before Jasenovac. But the largest number of inmates were murdered in Donja Gradina.

From January 1942, the area of concentration camp Jasenovac also included the area of the village Gradina, which stretches along the right bank of the Sava, on the opposite side of Jasenovac itself, 14 kilometers away from Kozarska (Bosanska) Dubica, 10 kilometers away from Mt. Prosara and 26 kilometers away from Mt. Kozara.

Gradina is surrounded on one side by the Una River, and on two sides by the Sava river, and on the fourth side by the villages of Draksenic and Medjedja that lay under Mt. Prosara. This floodable and swampy area sporadically overgrown with forests, willowy brushwood and similar vegetation was completely isolated, inaccessible and far away from roads and larger settlements. From a military standpoint, the defensive position of Gradina was very favorable. On a line towards Mt. Prosara, with the purpose of protection, Ustashe built numerous bunkers, trenches and established strong Ustashe crews.

By January 1942, the area of the village of Gradina remained completely desolate. The Ustashe killed a part of the population, while the remaining part moved

out and hid in villages below Mt. Kozara.

Such a situation and the geographic position of Gradina enabled undisturbed mass destruction of inmates and peaceful population, because shrieks and wailing of victims who were murdered in the most gruesome ways could not be heard. That is precisely why Ustashe picked the area of Gradina for mass murder and torture. The majority of inmates from Jasenovac were transported over the Sava by ferry and murdered in Donja Gradina. Inmates waited in the camp for days to leave to Gradina, under the open sky, tortured by cold weather, hunger and other misfortunes. Whenever Ustashe criminals selected groups for “labor” in Bosnia, to inmates it seemed as salvation and the majority of them voluntarily went to the ferry that led to Donja Gradina, where they experienced the most horrible death, only because they were born as Serbs, Jews, Roma or because they were anti-fascists, regardless of their national affiliation.

The genocide of Serbs, Jews and Roma in the Ustashe concentration camp Jasenovac, and especially in Donja Gradina, was performed in the most literal sense until April 22, 1945. On that morning, the remaining inmates, about 1,400 of them, charged towards the gates of the camp to break through, so that at least someone could survive and tell the story about the horrors of Jasenovac.

What followed was a bloody and unequal struggle of barehanded and exhausted inmates against Ustashe armed to the teeth. Inmates were falling like bundles of wheat from machine gun fire. The fields of Jasenovac were covered with corpses of inmates. Around eighty inmates managed to breakthrough through the gates of the camp. It is considered that on that day Jasenovac concentration camp ceased to function actively.

The execution place of Donja Gradina, as an integral part of concentration camp Jasenovac, later Memorial-Area Jasenovac, encompasses the surface of 800 hectares. Of the total surface, 116 hectares have been explored and protected to this day. The explored surface comprises a third of the protected part and in this area, 9 grave fields with 105 mass graves have been discovered and explored. The total surface of grave fields amounts to 66,460 m², and the total surface of mass graves amounts to 10,130 m², without information about mass graves in the grave field "Vrbe".

In April 1991, Agrarian-Pedological Institute from Sarajevo performed explorations in the area adjacent to grave field "Tisina" and established the existence of another 19 mass graves, the surface and structure of which has not been determined.

Besides grave fields with mass graves, in the inner area of Donja Gradina there is also the "Poplar of Death". On that tree Ustashe hanged thousands of men, women and children, who were subjected to horrible tortures before they were hanged. The poplar tree was blown down by a storm in 1978. It was then conserved, installed on iron pillars and today it represents one of the most authentic testimonies of the Croat-Ustashe crimes of genocide.

There are three types of graves in Gradina. The first type are graves in which Ustashe herded living prisoners, clogged inside standing upright next to each other, and then they would hit them with blunt objects to the head, often not killing some of them, and then buried them. The second type are graves in which they dumped inmates who were already dead. The third type are graves in which Ustashe dumped the remains of human bodies that were left over after boiling or incineration. Namely, in Donja Gradina Ustashe produced soap out of fat parts of corpses of inmates. The remains that were created by such a process Ustashe

dumped into these graves or transported by railway to the right bank of the Sava and dumped them there.

In order to hide their bloody traces, in March and April 1945 Ustashe opened up mass graves, took out corpses and incinerated them at specially made stakes. The remains that were created by incineration were dumped into graves or transported to the same place as the boiled parts of corpses. On that place they also performed mass executions of inmates, and their corpses were dumped on piles into the Sava and its riverbank. That is how the "Dump" was created, which the people today call the "Sava Graves".

Soon in May 1945, by the order of Communist authorities, the main "cauldrons" from the Ustashe soap factory were driven out of Donja Gradina. Only in 1989, in the backyard of Stevo Borojevic in Jasenovac a sedimentary cauldron was found, and in February 1990 a high pressure tank was found in Sarajevo and a separator device, all from the Ustashe soap factory. In that year these items were transported to Donja Gradina and placed there as museum exhibits and testimonies of the horrible Ustashe crime of genocide over Serbs, Jews and Roma.

In the area of Donja Gradina there is a large number of identified grave fields and graves of victims of the Ustashe crime of genocide in concentration camp Jasenovac, but there are even more unexplored and unmarked graves. Every one of those graves is a gruesome and specific story, each one for itself, testifying to the fates of the martyrs of Jasenovac.

(To be continued in the next issue of the JRI Newsletter.)



A CRITICAL REVIEW OF PHILIP COHEN'S SERBIA'S SECRET WAR — PROPAGANDA AND THE DECEIT OF HISTORY

*By Dr. Životije Đorđević,
JRI Advisory Board*

*(The following is a shortened
synopsis in English of
Dr. Đorđević's serialized
review published in "Glas"
in February 2004)*

The Serbian nation was proclaimed guilty for all of the evils committed by others within the former Yugoslavia, even for 'occupying' its own territory on which it had been living from time immemorial. In his book "Serbia's Secret War" the now well known Serbophobe Philip Cohen employed specific kinds of disinformation to demonize the Serbian people which need to be publicly confronted and refuted.

It is Cohen's assertion that the reasons for the dismembering of Yugoslavia lay with the idea of ethnically pure "Greater Serbia" and the "terror" by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia against the Croatian people. He also asserts that Fascism in Yugoslavia originated in Serbia and Slovenia, that anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia was particularly strong in Serbia, that the Ustashe ideology was unpopular in Croatia, and that Serbs collaborated with the occupying forces.

Obviously, Cohen skips over many relevant issues. For example, Cohen fails to note that the paper Hrvatski, of 19 June 1914, wrote: "In our country, on our body there are a lot of lousy people such as the Serbs and Slavic Serbs. We have to get square with them for ever and to destroy them. From now on, it should be our aim for the future." The 3 July 1914 issue read as follows: "Our people are declaring a life-and-death struggle on the Serbs and their exile from Bosnia and Herzegovina."

Cohen's assertion about the persecution of the Croats, whom he claims were arrested on a regular basis with their political leaders and intellectuals killed, was refuted by the Ustashe newspaper *Hrvatski narod*, which in its issue of 20 June 1941 published the list of the Croats killed by the authorities of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1941. There 236 names are listed, but among all the names of these people, allegedly killed by the Serbian hand, it was said that only seven of them were killed by the Chetniks, two by the Sokols, and three of them by Puniša Račić (Dr. Dragoslav Stranjaković: *Najveći zločini današnjice*, *Dečije novine*, *Jedinstvo*, Gornji Milanovac, 1991, 565-566).

It is an impudent fabrication of Cohen's to say that only two percent of the Croats supported the Ustashe. The Ustashe and their followers and helpers claimed that they killed close to a million Serbs, about 40 000 Jews and 25 000 Romas. Herman Neubacher, the representative of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Independent State of Croatia during the war, with special tasks and authority given by Hitler, whose close friend he was, had been sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment by the Yugoslav authorities before he published his book at Göttingen in 1956, in which he wrote: "When the leaders of the Ustashe movement say that they slaughtered a million Serbs, it is, in my opinion, a boastful exaggeration. According to the reports sent to me, I estimate the number of the slaughtered and the helpless to three quarters of a million," (L. M. Kostić, *Hrvatska zverstva u Drugom svetskom ratu prema izjavama njihovih saveznika*, Melburn, Australija, 1983, 16).

Anyway, the popularity of fascism in Croatia is most evident in some of the evidence given by Cohen himself in his book. In the armed conflicts in the NDH in September 1944, there were about 350,734

people involved. If about 350,734 people served the fascistic regime of the NDH, then it does not make just 2% of all the citizens of the NDH. Nor were they the only ones under arms to support the fascistic regime and its crimes.

The fact that two unauthorized persons (General J. Janković and A. Cincar-Marković), were taken from occupied Sarajevo to Belgrade by a German plane (which would anul their legal capacity to negotiate even if they were authorized to do that) signed the Regulations to Establish the Treaty at 9 p.m. on 17 April, was considered an act of capitulation by Cohen. Such an assertion is in line with those made by the Third Reich, who proclaimed the signing of the Regulations the document of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to capitulate, having not in mind that such a Regulation, under the constitution of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, could have been signed only by the Commander-in-Chief of all Army forces, His Royal Highness.

Cohen does not bother to note the fact that the Royal Yugoslav Government announced at 6 p.m. on 17 April 1941 that the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, together with its allies, would continue its fight until the final victory and until it expelled the occupier out of the country.

The best proofs that the Yugoslav Army did not cease fighting even for a moment are the extremely repressive measures and orders of the German commanders. On 21 April 1941, the German military forces burned down the village of Dobrić. Fieldmarshal Vajks issued the order on 28 April, 1941 saying, inter alia, the following: 'Persistent attacks upon the German soldiers require that we should take severe measures.' The commander of the 11 Corps, on 29 April 1941, authorized all commanders above the rank of batallion commander to issue orders for the mass execution of all hostages by firing squad.

The commander of Division 132 ordered on 09 May 1941, the killing of every civilian on the spot if proved to be connected with the 'bandits'. On March 15 1941, Serbia was informed by way of posters that one hundred Serbs would be killed by firing squad for every German soldier killed, and for every wounded German, 50 Serbs would lose their lives.

Philip Cohen shamelessly contends that the Serbs, led by their political and intellectual leaders, 'intensively and pervertedly' collaborated with the Germans, especially the Yugoslav Army in the Country headed by Dragoljub-Draža Mihajlović, for the reason that they did not suffer during the war. Of course, the top leaders of the Third Reich never took such a view.

On 16 February 1943, Hitler wrote to Mussolini: 'I can see, Duce, a special danger in the long run plans developed by the supporters of Mihajlović. As regards the dangers potentially shown by Mihajlović's movement, I gave the orders that all his supportes should be killed in the regions occupied by our troops. It would be desirable if your Second Army considered Mihajlović and his officers as the bitter enemies of the Axis Powers.'

In any case, no one was better infromed as to whether General Mihajlović collaborated with the Nazis than the Nazis themselves. The Gestapo Chief for Serbia, Dr. Fuchs, at his trial in Belgrade in 1947 when asked by the prosecutor about the relations of Draža Mihajlović's movement with the German police, said: 'Never did the Gestapo, whose chief I have always been, have any contacts with General Mihajlović. Moreover, we have always considered Mihajlović the greatest enemy of the German people. That is why all the supporters of Mihajlović's movement have been mercilessly persecuted... the national movement in Serbia under Mihajlović's command was the

greatest danger for the security of the German troops on the Balkans, and in the last resort, it was the movement to cause the Germans the greatest troubles and' . . . At that moment, the presiding judge cut Dr. Fuchs off and postponed the proceedings.

Franz Neuhausen, who had a high position during the occupation of Yugoslavia, said at the Belgrade trial: 'We did not even notice the Partisans and Communists in Serbia. If our warehouses were constantly attacked, plundered or destroyed, it was Mihajlović's people not the Partisans to blame. They blocked all the roads to villages and warehouses before us preventing that way our exports from Serbia.'

At the Nuremberg trials the German General Alfred Jodl submitted a war report which read 'that General Mihajlović in guerrilla fights against the German forces was losing 15 to 30 soldiers on average every day in 1942-1943.'

Cohen's claim that fascism in Yugoslavia is deeply rooted in Serbia and Slovenia overshoots the mark of impudent lies. Cohen bases his 'truth' on the fact the party Zbor was organized in Serbia. It is true that the party was founded in 1935, but it is also true that in the elections at that time it took around 0.8% of the votes, and at the last elections held in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia -1938- 1.01% of the vote. If Zbor was a fascist organization, then the results of the elections tells us most persuasively how deeply fascism was 'rooted' in Serbia. Furthermore, Cohen does not tell us anything about how the Nazis and Ustashe helped fascism to 'take root' in Yugoslavia.

Perhaps Cohen's most outrageous and malicious lie is his claim that anti-Semitism in Yugoslavia was most prominent in Serbia. Attitudes toward Jews in occupied Serbia and in the NDH cannot be compared in any way. It is true that the

Jews were victims in Serbia as well - during the occupation. But in those sufferings the Serbs were friendly, trying to protect them as much as they could. It is well known that the Third Reich, headed by Hitler, on 6 April 1941, started the war against the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to use force against the Serbs - to 'destroy the bandits and plotters' nest'; hence we can say that the position of the Serbs in the occupied Yugoslavia was far from being a cause of envy. Jewish testimony is quite clear on this.

Avrama Mevorah testified on 7 May 1947, as follows: 'I had been hiding with my parents from 1941 until the liberation (October 1944) at the village of Ploče near Kopanik. There were a few Jewish families hiding in the nearby villages. Not only our host we were staying with but also the whole village knew we were the Jews and that the Germans were after us. There was nobody even thinking of informing on us. The village priest was a member of Ljotić's organization, but the villagers threatened to burn his house if something happened to us; so, he did not say a word for another three years... Not a single Jew suffered anything staying with their hosts thanks to the devotion and good-heartedness of the villagers...It is to the Serbian villagers that I can thank for my salvation, to those who had sympathy for us and exposed themselves to extreme danger as to save us.' (Zdenko Levental, ed., Zločini fašističkih okupatora i njihovih pomagača protiv Jevreja u Jugoslaviji, Savez jevrejskih opština FNRJ, Beograd, 1952, str. 42-43).

All of the persecutions of Jews in Serbia were solely done by the occupying forces.

The Head of the Military Office in the occupied Serbia, Turner, as early as of 26 October 1941, sent to all Feld- and Kreis Commanders detailed instructions to carry out the order of the Commanding

General Plenipotentiary in Serbia (Conf. No. 2848/41 of 10 October 1941). There he emphasized: 'In principle, it is confirmed that the Jews and Gypsies are the elements of disorder and as such endangers public peace and order. The Jewish intellect was the cause of this war and it must be destroyed' (No. 44/41 of 26 October 1941, NOKWč, Zdenko Levental, op. cit. 16-17).

Ante Pavelić was extremely proud of the fact that when the leaders of the Third Reich made the decision to physically destroy the Jewish nation at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 as the final solution to the 'Jewish question', they mentioned at the same time that the 'Jewish question' had already been solved in that way in the NDH. The Government of the NDH went so far as to beg the German authorities to exert pressure on Mussolini to bring back the Jews who had managed to escape from Croatia to the Italian territories. We should not forget the host of anti-Semitic laws the Croatian Parliament passed just a few days before the proclamation of the NDH which closely paralleled those of Nazi Germany.

Many concentration and collection camps were formed in the NDH. The Jewish people were tragically forced into 11 concentration and 13 collection camps. All of these camps were created by the NDH authorities who also were the only ones to manage them. Four concentration camps were formed in Serbia, plus one collection and one labor camp. However, all of the camps in Serbia were organized by the German authorities who managed them while they were in operation. The Gestapo was in command of the camps, and the Feldgendarmarie - the German military police (Zdenko Levental, op. cit. str. 15-24).

Jewish property was confiscated in the most brutal way by the NDH and by Croats. In Serbia, all Jewish property was confiscated by

the German authorities, not Serbs. Nedić was ordered to sell real estate to provide the resources for the reconstruction of the mine at Bor, which was blown up after the retreat of the Yugoslav Army. The Germans were especially interested in the copper and gold from Bor mine. Even Nedić did not follow the German instructions exactly as ordered.

The statistical data shows that on the eve of the war the Jewish population of Yugoslavia was 82 242, out of whom 67 148 (82%) were killed.

But the genocide against the Jewish population in Serbia was carried out by the occupying forces – the Gestapo, while in Croatia it was carried out by Croatian Chauvinists - the Ustashe and their supporters.

Cohen's claim that fascism was deeply rooted in Serbia and Slovenia, with anti-Semitism most evidently expressed in Serbia, is obviously a highly malicious lie. During the Second World War in Europe there did not exist a more fascist, Nazi or bloodthirsty movement than the Croatian Ustashe movement, whose members, supported by a large percentage of its own population, committed unprecedented war and genocide crimes against the Serbian, Jewish and Roma peoples.

JRI CALLS ON THE EUROPEAN UNION TO DEMAND RESTITUTION OF STOLEN PROPERTY FROM CROATIA TO ITS HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

25 February 2005

*President of the European Union
Rue Wiertz
B-1047, Brussels
Belgium*

<i>Territory</i>	<i>Number of Jews (eve of war)</i>	<i>Number of killed</i>	<i>Killed (%)</i>
<i>Banat</i>	<i>4200</i>	<i>3800</i>	<i>92,8</i>
<i>Serbia</i>	<i>12500</i>	<i>11000</i>	<i>88,0</i>
<i>Croatia, Slavonia, Srem</i>	<i>25000</i>	<i>20000</i>	<i>80,0</i>
<i>Bačka and Baranja</i>	<i>16000</i>	<i>13500</i>	<i>84,4</i>
<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	<i>14000</i>	<i>10000</i>	<i>71,5</i>
<i>Macedonia</i>	<i>7762</i>	<i>7182</i>	<i>92,5</i>
<i>Montenegro and Sandžak</i>	<i>330</i>	<i>288</i>	<i>88,0</i>
<i>Slovenia and Prekomurje</i>	<i>1500</i>	<i>1300</i>	<i>86,6</i>
<i>Dalmatia</i>	<i>400</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>37,0</i>
<i>Kosovo and Metohija</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>210</i>	<i>38,2</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>82242</i>	<i>67148</i>	<i>82,0</i>

(Milica Mihajlović, *Jevrejka na jugoslovenskom tlu*, Centar za toleranciju i dijalog, Podgorica, Forum za etničke odnose, Beograd, 2000, str. 65).

Reference: Croatia's application for membership to the European Union and article 17 of the E.U. Charter of Fundamental Rights

25 February 2005

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to you on behalf of a group of Survivors of the Holocaust in Croatia with whom our organization is working to obtain financial compensation for their stolen properties in Croatia.

The names I am furnishing below represent just a small number of individuals who were born in Croatia before World War II and whose families were persecuted, murdered and had properties confis-

cated by the Croatian government for no other reason but that they were Jewish. The confiscation of their property by the Croatian government of 1941-1945 was part of a larger planned crime of genocide perpetrated against all Jews, Serbs and Romas under their rule.

The names of the first group of individuals on whose behalf we are writing are:

Eva Deutsch Costabel,
(-address given-)
Michael Danon,
(-address given-)
Leonard Danon,
(-address given-)
Otto Friedmann,
(-address given-)
George Bozo Radan,

(-address given-)
Ricki Danon Soltan,
(-address given-)

All of these individuals are naturalized American citizens and Holocaust Survivors. In some cases, these individuals hold dual Croatian and American citizenship. In other cases their birthright to Croatian citizenship has been denied by the current government of Croatia. All of the individuals named have been denied compensation for their property. The present government of Croatia is deliberately attempting to dispossess and deprive these and other victims of World War II Croatian crimes of genocide, and evade responsibility for such crimes prior to joining the European Union. In the process they are engaging in the most extreme forms of Holocaust denial.

The Croatian government has adamantly refused either to return the properties of the above named individuals or to compensate them in any way. Legislation passed by the Croatian government makes it virtually impossible for anyone to qualify for compensation. Talks with representatives of the United States on a bilateral agreement to compensate American citizens (but not their heirs) for their loss of property have been taking place for years without result. This agreement would, in any case, contradict the individual's right to bequeath property, as guaranteed by the constitution of the European Union.

Article 17, of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights states that: "The right to property is a traditional fundamental right in democratic and liberal societies. It is contained in all national constitutions and has been established by the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice."

"Everyone has the right to own, use, dispose of and bequeath his or her lawfully acquired Possessions. No one may be deprived of his or her

possessions, except in the public interest and in the cases and under then conditions provided for by law, subject to fair compensations being paid in good time for their loss."

Croatia's refusal to come to terms with its past crimes is in direct contravention of the laws and practices of the European Union. To allow Croatia entry in to the European Union without forcing it to resolve its longstanding disputes with its own Holocaust victims would constitute both an insult and an injury to these victims as well as a travesty of immense proportions.

To allow Croatia's entry under such conditions would inevitably harm and undermine the reputation and stature of the E.U., for these are claims that will never go away or be forgotten. They must be settled legally and it is yours and the European Union's responsibility to recognize this beforehand. I feel certain you will agree.

I urge you to make the return of properties to the rightful owners without conditions a mandatory requirement for Croatia's admission to the European Union. In doing so, Croatia will not only fulfill the requirements of the European Union constitution but it will also join the rest of the European community in closing this painful chapter of its history.

*Sincerely,
(signed)
Barry Lituchy, National
Coordinator Jasenovac
Research Institute*

*cc: U.S. Ambassador Edward B.
O'Donnell, Jr.
cc: D. Sprajic, Secretary General,
Jewish Communities in Croatia
cc: U.S. Senator Charles Schumer
of New York
cc: U.S. Senator Hilary Clinton of
New York
cc: U.S. Representative Anthony
Weiner of New York
cc: Claims Conference*

JRI NEWS

JRI National Coordinator, Barry Lituchy, testified as a defense witness at the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia) at The Hague, Netherlands on March 9th, 10th and 14th, 2005 in the trial of Slobodan Milosevic. Lituchy was called to testify in regard to interviews he conducted in August 1999 with Roma, Egyptian and Albanian refugees from Kosovo who recounted how Yugoslav government forces protected them from KLA terrorism until they were later expelled from Kosovo by the KLA under KFOR and UNMIK "protection." Lituchy did follow up interviews in Kosovo and Belgrade in 2004 with Roma and Jewish refugees who told the same story. All but the Jewish interview was on video brought to The Hague. The 1999 interviews were conducted as part of a human rights delegation sponsored by the Jasenovac Research Institute to investigate war crimes.

SMILJA AVRAMOV JOINS JRI HONORARY ADVISORY BOARD

One of the world's leading scholars of international law, Dr. Smilja



Avramov, joined the Jasenovac Research Institute's Advisory Board last September. She is shown here with JRI Directors Barry Lituchy and Darko Trifunovic and (on far left) JRI Advisor Zivotije Djordjevic. Dr. Avramov is planning to attend the JRI annual dinner and Jasenovac commemoration ceremony in New York in April.

CROATIA NOT FIT FOR EU MEMBERSHIP UNTIL IT COMES TO TERMS WITH ITS FASCIST PAST

by Jonathan Levy

Nearly 60 years after the end of the Second World War, Croatia - virtually alone among EU aspirant nations - has still not denounced its homegrown Nazis known as the Ustashe. During the Second World War the Ustashe murdered upwards of 500,000 Serbs, Jews, Romas and anti Fascists. In 1945 with Berlin in flames, the Ustashe fled Zagreb, but with the help of corrupt officials in the Vatican the leadership reached initial safety in Italy and Spain. Later South American dictators like Argentina's Juan Peron and Paraguay's Alfredo Stroessner provided safe havens for the Ustashe to regroup and prosper.

Cells of the Croatian Liberation Movement, as the Ustashe officially became known in 1956, were established in Toronto, Buenos Aires, Chicago and Australia. But the Ustashe became no less deadly, embarking on a campaign of terror that included bombings, hijackings, and assassinations worldwide. The war in former Yugoslavia brought the Croatian Liberation Movement back to Zagreb in 1991, its agents involving themselves in a new wave of genocide and ethnic cleansing against Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia, and Krajina. Today the Croatian Liberation Movement continues its legacy preaching hatred towards Serbs, Jews, and Romas.

The Jasenovac Research Institute along with two dozen other groups and individuals filed a class action lawsuit against the Croatian Liberation Movement and the Vatican which remains pending in a United States federal court. This lawsuit seeks restitution and an accounting of wartime loot that even today funds the Ustashe. The current government of Croatia, while

claiming to be divorced from its fascist heritage, conveniently looks the other way while the Croatian Liberation Movement and sympathizers openly parade in Zagreb and towns throughout Croatia and Herceg-Bosna, gives the fascist salute at sporting events, and holds requiem masses for its founder, the war criminal Ante Pavelic and his henchmen. The Vatican is similarly unrepentant with its number two man, Cardinal Sodano, recently unsuccessfully requesting that Condoleeza Rice intervene in the JRI lawsuit and seek its dismissal.

Jonathan Levy, Esq.

Jonathan Levy has played the leading role in both litigating and researching the class action lawsuit on behalf of the JRI and other plaintiffs against the Vatican Bank, Franciscan Order and the Croatian Liberation Movement. His FOIA searches have uncovered hundreds of previously unknown documents exposing the true history of the Croatian fascist movement in the post-war era.

UPDATE ON THE VATICAN BANK LAWSUIT

*by Barry Lituchy, JRI
National Coordinator*

The Jasenovac Research Institute is one of the original plaintiffs in the class action lawsuit filed by attorneys Jonathan Levy and Tom Easton against the Vatican Bank, Franciscan Order, and the Croatian Liberation Movement. This class action lawsuit accuses the Vatican Bank of receiving hundreds of millions of dollars of gold and other assets looted from victims of Croatia's fascist Ustashe regime from 1941-1945. As part of its founding mandate to obtain justice for the victims of crimes of genocide during the Holocaust, the JRI is committed to seeking financial restitution of all properties stolen from

Holocaust victims. The JRI is pursuing several efforts along these lines simultaneously.

Our case against the Vatican Bank faced a major setback in 2003 when a U.S. Federal Court judge dismissed the suit on the basis that the matter was "political" and therefore not appropriate for United States' courts. This was an outcome similar to the one experienced in the parallel case of George Zivkovic against the Vatican Bank, which was litigated by the law firm Zimmerman-Reed. In both decisions the courts contended that matters concerning the Vatican (a sovereign state) are to be considered matters of U.S. foreign policy.

However, unlike the Zivkovich case (in which he was the only plaintiff), the ruling in this case was appealed by the plaintiffs and it was heard in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on October 7, 2004. A ruling on the appeal is expected some time later in 2005. In a development related to the case, Jonathan Levy has informed the JRI that he received in March through a freedom of information act request a one page U.S. government document revealing that the Croatian Liberation Movement (Hrvatski Oslobodilacki Pokret) has made threats to assassinate Croatian President Stipe Mesic and Prime Minister Ivica Racan because of their efforts to extradite Croatians to The Hague Tribunal. As we point out elsewhere in this newsletter, this is not the only issue that has recently infuriated Croatia's mass neo-Nazi movement (see our article on the Budak plaque). Since the HOP is one of the defendants in our class action lawsuit, its activities are of great interest to our attorneys and to the court.

The Croatian Liberation Movement or HOP (Hrvatski Oslobodilacki Pokret) was founded in 1956 by Croatian fascist leader Ante Pavelic as the successor to his Ustashe movement. The HOP has been active worldwide and in par-

ticular in Croatia, Argentina, the United States, and Canada. It functioned as a government in exile and coordinated terrorist activities around the world, for example murdering Yugoslav politicians and citizens. As the successor organization to the Croatian Nazi movement it has had access to the looted funds of Jewish, Serb and Roma victims of the Holocaust to finance its murderous, fascist activities, among which included the break up of Yugoslavia, the rise to power of the regime of Franjo Tudjman, and the civil war which cost thousands of lives in the former Yugoslavia. The JRI is committed to bringing worldwide attention to the dangers posed by the existence of this mass Neo-Nazi movement based in Croatia and encourages others to do the same, not only in the name of justice for Yugoslav Holocaust victims, but also for the sake of human rights and social justice for all people today. We see this as one in the same struggle.

2005 JASENOVAC COMMEMORATIVE ESSAY CONTEST FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE USA AND CANADA

*Sponsored by the Jasenovac
Research Institute*

In this, the 60th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust and the liberation or closure of the death camps including Jasenovac, the JRI is initiating an annual essay writing contest for students ages 14 to 18 to study the Holocaust in Southeastern Europe. Three prizes will be awarded to students currently enrolled in schools in the United States or Canada for an essay answering the following theme:

How does an understanding of Jasenovac contribute to a better understanding of the Holocaust in general?

1st Prize: \$500.00
2nd Prize: \$250.00
3rd Prize: \$100.00

The contest will be judged by a panel of experts comprised of scholars and Survivors chosen by the Jasenovac Research Institute.

Entries will be accepted only by regular mail and must be addressed to: Jasenovac Research Institute, PO Box 10-0674, Brooklyn, NY 11210 USA. All entries must be postmarked no later than April 5, 2005. (The deadline was extended from March 28th.)

Prizes will be announced and awarded at the Jasenovac Day of Commemoration Ceremony in New York City on April 17, 2005. Winning essays will be published by the JRI. Winners will be invited to attend and read selections from their essays at the Jasenovac Day of Commemoration Ceremony.

Rules:

1. Applicants must be born on or after January 1, 1987 and no later than January 1, 1991.
2. Essays must be typed, double spaced, and between 1500 and 5000 words including footnotes, in English.
3. Entries must be postmarked no later than April 5, 2005.
4. Applicants must provide a copy of either their birth certificate or passport and include on the cover page of their essay their name, address, telephone number, date of birth, name of school, and the name of a sponsoring teacher at that school.
5. All entries become the property of the JRI and can be reproduced by the JRI.
6. Relatives of any past or current Board Member of the JRI (Director, Advisor, or Trustee) are ineligible.

VISIT THE JASENOVAC RESEARCH INSTITUTE WEBSITE

at www.jasenovac.org and learn more about the Holocaust in Yugoslavia and its implications for contemporary history

*Recruitment Poster
for Croatian and
Bosnian Muslim SS
Divisions*



In February 1943, SS leader Heinrich Himmler established two Croatian-Bosnian Muslim SS divisions: the 13th “Handschar” and the 23rd “Kama” Waffen SS divisions. Unsuccessful in their main task - to defeat Tito’s Partisans - “it confined itself chiefly to massacring and pillaging the defenseless (Serb) Christians.” - from John Keegan’s *Waffen SS - The Asphalt Soldiers*, 1970. The recruitment poster above reads: Croats of Herzeg-Bosnia! Your Great Leaders Adolf Hitler and the Fuhrer Dr. Ante Pavelic CALL UPON YOU TO DEFEND YOUR HOMES ENLIST IN THE VOLUNTEER CROATIAN SS DIVISIONS

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Cadik Danon, The Smell of Human Flesh. A Witness of the Holocaust. Memories of Jasenovac. Translated to English by Nadezhda Obradovic. Belgrade: Nova195, 2002. 160 pages.

We Survived...Yugoslav Jews on the Holocaust. Edited by Aleksandar Gaon. Belgrade: Jewish Historical Museum, 2005

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