

# JASENOVAC

RESEARCH INSTITUTE QUATERLY



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## THE JRI IS FIGHTING FOR PROPERTY RESTITUTION FOR USTASHE'S VICTIMS

By Barry Lituchy, JRI National  
Coordinator

*In this issue we remember our friend  
and colleague Traian Stoianovich,  
Professor Emeritus*

*of European History at Rutgers,  
renowned author and scholar on the  
Balkans, and a staunch supporter  
and Advisory Board member of the  
JRI. JRI Director Norman Markow-  
itz pays tribute to a very kind, gentle  
and wise friend. Also in this issue  
we continue our series of articles on  
Diana Budasavljevic, translated into  
English for the first time by our fellow  
editor and Director Milo Yelesiyev-  
ich. Accompanying this piece is our  
Advisory Board Chairman Antun  
Miletic's review of the Diana Bud-  
isavljevic Diary published in 2003  
as well as a letter to the JRI from  
Diana Budisavljevic's grandson.  
We are also proud to announce the  
results from the first annual Jaseno-  
vac Commemorative Art Contest for  
students in Republika Srpska spon-  
sored last year by the JRI and again  
this year. Last year's contest drew  
entries from over 800 students in the  
Republika Srpska in which aspects  
of Jasenovac and the Holocaust were  
studied and expressed in painting.  
Also we are announcing our essay  
contests for students studying the  
continued on page 2*

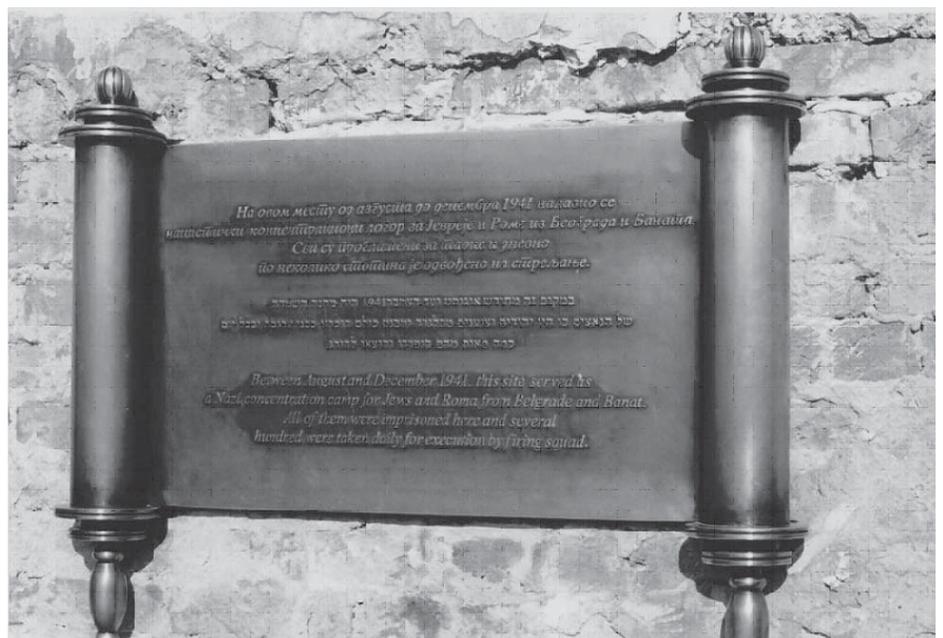
## UNVEILING AT THE "ARTILLERY BARRACKS"

By Aleksandar Masic

Dr Vojislav Kostunica Prime Minister of Serbia, unveiled the memorial plaque on the wall of the former Artillery Barracks for the first concentration camp in Belgrade, and also in Serbia. This camp was in operation from August until December 1941. It was the forerunner of the concentration camp in the halls of the Belgrade First Fair on the left bank on the Sava River. The prisoners of the Artillery Barracks were Jewish males, from the age of 16 onwards, and they were immediately declared as a hostages. As such, between 100 and 400 were shot daily.

The ultimate toll amounted to five thousand victims. The last three hundred men were sent to the Fair Ground to prepare the larger concentration camp. They were also brutally shot by the Gestapo immediately after completion of their work.

The plight of the inmates and their families was commemorized by Dr Rajko Djuric (pron: Rayko Georich) Chairman of the Roma Holocaust Foundation, and Mr. Aca Gaon (pron: Atsah Gahon) Deputy President with The Federation of the Jewish Communities, as well as by the Rabbi of Belgrade and of Serbia, and by the Serbian Orthodox Priest of Southern Belgrade, who said the benediction and sermon. A crowd of some three hundred attendees were present, notwithstanding the cruelly freezing wind. The memorial plaques symbolized the open Torah scrolls.



Between August and Decembar 1941 this site served as a Nazi concentration camp for Jews and Roma from Belgrade and Banat. All of them were imprisoned and several hundred were taken daily execution by firing squad.

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*Jasenovac and the Holocaust in the US, Canada, Serbia & Montenegro, and Republika Srpska. And we also are announcing the Fifth Annual Day of Jasenovac Commemoration ceremonies to be held at New York's Holocaust Memorial Park on 30 April 2006.*

*Since the lessons of the Holocaust extend to the present day and rightfully shape our contemporary understanding of human rights, in this issue we are presenting a sample of the work of Elizabeth Bieber (to be published in full by JRI) on the plight of Serbian and Roma refugees in Kosovo – a humanitarian catastrophe that needs resolution long before any final political status for the region is decided. It is our moral responsibility not to let the world forget the victims of these much more recent crimes of genocide.*

*Also in this issue we are honored to publish the reports of our friend and colleague Heirmonk Jovan Culibrk of the Jasenovac Committee of the Serbian Orthodox Church who reports on the extensive work of the Serbian Orthodox Church on Holocaust education and its cooperative activities with Yad Vashem in Israel.*

*The JRI also is moving ahead with its publishing schedule which includes the authorized collection of papers from the 1997 Jasenovac Conference along with new works by Antun Miletic and Zivotije Djurdjevic.*

## **The JRI and Croatian Property Restitution Issues**

Most Survivors of the Ustashe never received any kind of compensation for the property that was stolen from them. The JRI has been committed to correcting that since its establishment as a necessary step to secure some measure of justice for the victims. For more than a year now the JRI has been engaged in

ongoing discussions with the US government, Holocaust organizations and the European Union about property restitution for victims of the Holocaust in Croatia. Since the end of 2005 this issue has evolved and our efforts have moved to a new level. There is a lot of disputed property in Croatia and the issue has created enormous controversy there because both the US and some European countries are putting pressure on Croatia to address it. Croatia's future status in the world will depend on how well it deals with its past.

Croatia passed a property restitution law in 1990 and then

tia governing property claims. And no country had such a bilateral agreement in place. Late last year the US government proposed to Croatia that the two countries needed to begin negotiations on such a bilateral agreement to enable US citizens to apply for property restitution. Also the US government is seeking to ensure that the agreement will include property expropriated from 1941 to 1945. The JRI will work with the US State Department and other agencies to process the claims of all victims (Serbian, Jewish, Roma and others) and push for a final settlement of this issue (see our announcement).

### **ANNOUNCEMENT:**

#### **CLAIMANTS FOR PROPERTY CONFISCATED IN PRESENT-DAY CROATIA ASKED TO CONTACT JRI**

**The Jasenovac Research Institute has been in regular communications with the US government and other Holocaust organizations in our efforts to expedite financial compensation for all individuals who lost property under the 1941-1945 Ustashe regime. At this time it is not certain what the provisions of an eventual Croatian claims program may be. But the JRI is assembling a list of US residents who believe they have a claim for property in Croatia and will forward this list to the US State Department. Once a claims program is announced the claimants on that list will be contacted directly on how to proceed with their claims. The JRI also will provide this information to members of the US Congress, the EU and to Holocaust institutions when needed to press that the compensation process begins as soon as possible without any further delays. Claimants who lost property after 1945 also will be assisted.**

amended it in 1991 and 1993. A new law in 1996 banned "non-Croatian citizens" from making claims. A ruling in 1999 against six clauses in that law paved the way for the Croatian parliament to amend that law in July 2002 and extend the right of property compensation claims to foreigners. But the law now only applied to citizens of countries that had bilateral agreements with Croa-

There were two previous US-Yugoslav settlement agreements covering expropriated property in Croatia: one for the years 1939 to 1948 and the other for 1948 to 1964. But both of these applied only to individuals who were US citizens at that time. The JRI is collecting information from Survivors and their heirs in order to push these claims. However, we still have a long way to

go. We must mobilize a political campaign and contact our Congressional representatives to fight for this. Opposition to such measures is fierce in Croatia as evidenced by the reaction to the bilateral agreement with Austria in late 2005. But Croatia's agreement with Austria may explain Austria's cheerleading for fast track entry into the EU. What is certain is that we must fight hard now to ensure that Croatia's entry into the EU or any bilateral agreement with the US hinges on how it compensates the victims of its fascist Ustashe past.

### **Litigation Regarding a Book on the 1997 Jasenovac Conference**

Last year the JRI along with other plaintiffs filed a copyright infringement suit against the publishers of a book containing unauthorized and inaccurate versions of papers published at the 1997 Jasenovac conference organized at Kingsborough Community College. The book in question contains an unauthorized copyright attributed to Kingsborough Community College as well as false and defamatory statements against some of the presenters, including one of America's most esteemed Nazi hunters, Eli Rosenbaum. The book did not even have the correct title of the conference on its cover. On January 24, 2006 Judge Raymond J. Dearie of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York issued a broadly worded injunction prohibiting distribution of Wanda Schindley aka Dallas Publishing's publication "JASENOVAC: Proceedings of the First International Conference and Exhibit (sic!) on the Jasenovac Concentration Camps."

The Court concluded that defendants' book contains unauthorized versions of papers presented

at the 1997 Jasenovac Conference at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn. The injunction prohibits defendants Schindley & Makara, and all others in active concert or participation with them, from selling or distributing the infringing book. The Court considered but rejected defendants' arguments that they had some form of implied consent to publish the book, and other arguments. Violations of the Court's injunction are a contempt of court and may result in penalties. Makara has since settled and agreed to a permanent injunction.

The authors whose work was misappropriated without their consent or knowledge feel vindicated by this decision and hope that the case can be settled swiftly. Ms. Schindley refused all offers of settlement we proposed including support for her to distribute Survivor testimonies. In any case, the JRI will publish a correct and authorized version of the papers presented at the conference in April.

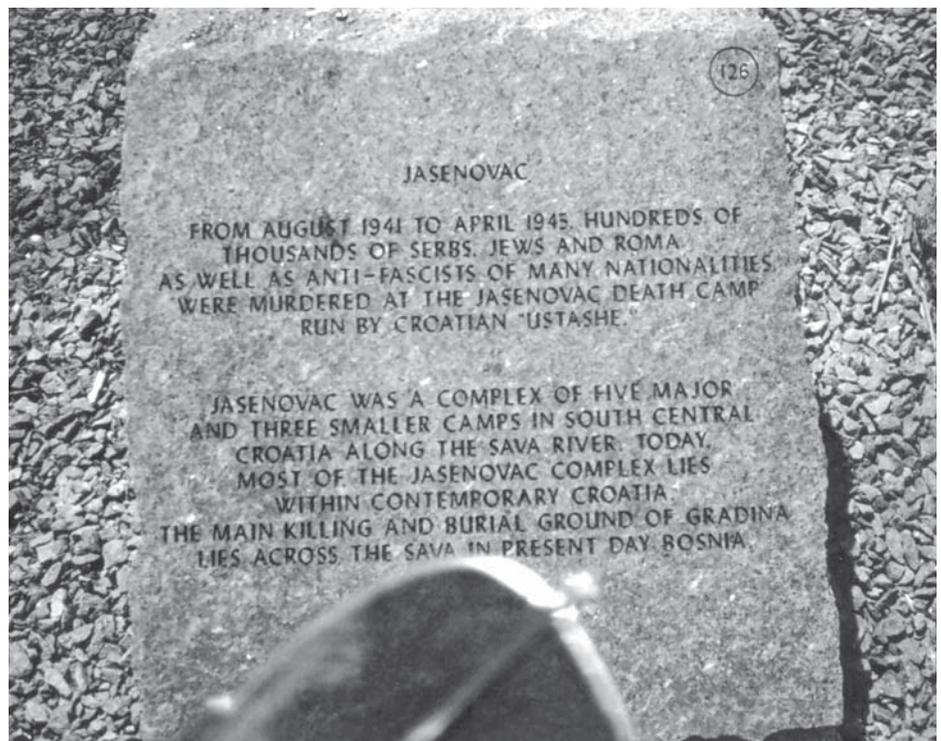
### **READERS LETTER:**

I was very happy to see the article about my great-grandmother Diana Budisavljevic, but there are also so many other very interesting articles and news! I found particularly interesting the articles about the Jasenovac camp itself, and the role of the Vatican in helping the Ustashe criminals escape to Latin America countries. I've read a book some time ago, I believe its title in English is "The Real Odessa", it's a great and very detailed book about the Vatican helping Nazi and Ustashe fugitives, like Eichmann and Pavelic, to arrive in Peron's Argentina.

Leonardo Rasica

### **CORRECTIONS:**

We apologize for omitting the credit to the photo which appeared in the last issue of the Jasenovac monument established last year by the JRI in New York's Holocaust Memorial Park. The photographer was Erica Sherman of Courier Life Publications. We are republishing it here with the correct caption.



*Inscription at the Jasenovac Memorial Stone in the Holocaust Garden on the bank of the Sheepshead Bay in New York*

# HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE BALKANS: FOCUS ON CROATIA

## PLANNED PERSECUTION-A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ON THE SERBS IN CROATIA

By Milan Jaksic

From *Politika*, December 5, 2005

*The Trouble Started when the Serbs Were Unlawfully Deprived of their Status as a Constituent People, Emphasizes Twenty-Five-Year Old Urska Slapsak*

LJUBLJANA. Urska Slapsak, a young Slovenian historian, recently defended her dissertation, entitled "The Rights of Serbs in Croatia after 1991," in the History Department of the Ljubljana School of Philosophy. Her intention, she emphasized, was to investigate what Croatian policies had done for the protection of its minorities, primarily the Serbs. Furthermore, she began with the 1990s: events before and after the war when, according to her thinking, the rights of the Serbian minority in Croatia experienced the greatest decline. "A judgment about who was the aggressor, i.e., who had 'more blood on their hands' in all of these events, was not the aim of my dissertation."

"The memory of these events is still fresh and they resist objective treatment. This theme will be investigated further. History is not a static science. I wish to make a

contribution that is as objective as possible at this moment," is the way Ms. Slapsak puts it in her dissertation.

### The Breaking Point

The breaking point occurred with the changes in the Croatian Constitution in 1990 when the Serbs in Croatia were redefined from a constituent people into a "minority." The Christmas Constitution, as it is commonly referred to, provoked a conflagration. It was passed by a session of the Croatian Parliament in 1990. The Republic of Croatia did this because it feared Serbian autonomy. The problem really lies in the fact that the Serbs were unlawfully deprived of their status as a constituent nation in Croatia. The change was passed [in the Croatian Parliament] with a simple majority instead of two-thirds majority. In this manner, the Serbs were deprived of numerous rights or, better said, special rights which they had enjoyed earlier.

After that, the political atmosphere became heated and it came down to an all out struggle. Even at that moment, it was altogether clear that Tudjman wanted to ethnically cleanse the Serbs from Croatia with his policies, and that he wanted to remain faithful to his policy of separatism and chauvinism," emphasizes the young historian.

Urska, analyzing the measures that the Croatian government undertook to restore the status of the Serbian minority in Croatia after the death of the first Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman, noticed, despite a slow but certain advancement in the normative sense, great troubles being encountered in carrying out matters that had been promised or even legally sanctioned. All that, in her words, avails Tudjman's goal that the number of Serbs remaining in Croatia be as small as possible.

She further justified her assertion with the growing Croatian Ustashe sentiments before the start of the open Croatian-Serb conflict. "Tudjman had Ustashe-oriented followers even during the 1990 elections. 'Demographic problems must be resolved by the army.' Tudjman's announcement made it clear to every member of his party that it was necessary to establish an ethnically pure Croatia by forceful Croatization of the territories," emphasizes Urska. Her dissertation quoted the entire text of Tudjman's announcement: "One must proceed from the fact that the army may be the most effective means for finding a solution to the state's domestic necessities. Taking into consideration our situation, such as it is, we've got the liberation of occupied territories [to deal with] and we have such necessities that it is precisely the army that is the most effective

*component in state policy for finding a solution to the demographic situation in Croatia. Croatiandom must be strengthened in Istria.... We did not create the Republic of Herceg-Bosna and the HVO by accident.*” Ms. Slapsak, availing herself of this quotation, wanted to point out that this was a statement about planned persecution, and not about any kind of spontaneous exodus of Serbs from Croatia.

Ms. Slapsak’s dissertation introduces statistical information about the continuous decline in the Serbian population in Croatia: in 1948, according to her information, the Serbs comprised 14.5% of the population; in 1981, 11.5%; in 1991, 12.2%; and in 2001, 4.5%. The latest [Croatian] census ignored refugee Serbs, regardless of their Croatian citizenship, and their right of return. Ms. Slapsak cross-bred these facts with Tudjman’s strategy of ethnic cleansing into her dissertation, despite the fact that Tudjman had died some time earlier.

### **Provoking Fear**

Urska, while composing her dissertation, used a variety of sources: most of them Croatian but also Slovenian. One her most interesting quotations is taken from “Dela” in Ljubljana. This newspaper published an article in 1994

about the origins of the war in Croatia, which took a position that even contradicted the one held by official Slovenian observers.

“Tudjman’s policies provoked fear of Greater Serbian aspirations with the intention of concealing his own imperialistic ambitions. He provoked fear of Yugoslavia and Yugoslav ambitions. He provoked fear of Yugoslavia and Yugoslav unity in order to conceal his own Croatocentric disposition and his exclusive concept of Croatiandom. He emphasized the primitivism of Orthodoxy in order to conceal his own genuine Roman Catholic clericalism. He spread fear with the [alleged] expansion of an “unnatural” Communist movement in order to

mask the totalitarian meaning of his own government.

**“He relied on an ideology of endangerment in order to silence an ideology of class, thereby exterminating and destroying the meaning of his own political-economic regime, which is built on the premise of a ‘Croatian ideology.’”** This section is well argued and is executed in a studious and scholarly manner. Ms. Slapsak’s dissertation even turns its attention to the policies of Slobodan Milosevic. She reminds us, indeed, that Milosevic reacted to Tudjman’s provocations by emphasizing how Serbia had to defend its fellow Serbs in Croatia.

Translated by Milo Yelesiyevich



*Uruška Slapšak*

# SHARP CRITICISMS IN THE SERBIAN PRESS OF NEW EXHIBITS AND DEVELOPMENTS AT JASENOVAC

## JASENOVAC

From Politika, January 27, 2006

The Jasenovac Concentration Camp was not a concentration camp, it was instead a “labor camp,” historian Ivo Goldshtein informed us on the TV program “Klopka,” which is true, along with the fact that it was a “death camp” and that “Jasenovac inmates were needed to strengthen the economy of the Independent State of Croatia.”

Such untruths and others like it, which the new exhibits in the Jasenovac Memorial Museum have put on display, resemble an ambition borne of “immediate needs” and “requirements” to impose to harmonize on the interior of a nightclub, a slaughterhouse, a gambling casino and a boutique. One must not underestimate the danger that such qualifications may supersede the truth, the genuine reasons for the existence of the grievous Jasenovac killing field, “the Yugoslav Auschwitz.”

“Experts,” who claim that the reality of our lives really doesn’t exist, are besieging us from all directions. One area they hold par-

ticularly dear is the denial of history, a reality that for us remains a heaping pile of our experience, like pebbles of our consciousness, morals, knowledge and unconscious.

“What does not serve itself does not serve the history of mankind, which allows it to fade away,” wrote Nietzsche in 1887, prophesying European nihilism, an age of global cleansing and rewriting history.

In the beginning of the 1960s, members of a revisionist wave in historiography set into motion something identical when they argued that Nazi concentration camps were “labor” camps, and not “concentration” camps.

In these parts, the revisionist spark kindled the imagination of Dr. Franjo Tudjman, who defended the thesis that the Jasenovac Concentration Camp was a “Communist myth,” and that it was merely a “labor camp.” He availed himself to the same methods that Holocaust deniers used who claimed that the Holocaust was a fabrication of Jewish propaganda.

This violent juggling of terminology was inflicted on us long ago. At its root, one finds a mania for the denial of reality, the obfuscation of history and subsequent

fabrications. It is about planned and organized memory loss.

The adherents of the “work camps” theory would be right, only under the condition that a reasonable person would accept at face value the message that adorned the arch above the gates of these same camps — “Work will set you free.”

This message was concerned least with the unfortunates who were wedged into electrified barbed wire fences, martyrs who were devoured by hunger and labor. They were even brought to these camps to be victims of gas chambers, crematoria, clubs and butcher’s cleavers, to be mere numbers in death’s accounting ledger, and not to set themselves free through work.

The message on the arches above the gates of the Nazi concentration camp, “Work will set you free,” is today a reliable witness that these camps were not “work” camps, but just concentration camps, meticulously planned and deadly persecutions as part of the Nazi genocide strategy.

The Jasenovac concentration camp was an indisputable expression of this and other such strategies. (C.K.)

Translated by Milo Yelesiyevich

# REVULSION AND DEFENSE: THE NEW MEMORIAL MUSEUM IN JASENOVAC FACES A DILEMMA

By Slobodan Kljakic

From: *Politika*, Tuesday, January 31, 2006

*Some People Are Reminded of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) because of the Events Taking Place at the Memorial Museum, but the Directors of the Memorial Complex Are Taking the Criticism as Grounds for Disqualification from the Their Institution.*

The project for a new permanent exhibit in the former Memorial Monument in Jasenovac has been promoted by the representatives of the Croatian government for the last two weeks in the presence of diplomatic representatives of the USA and Israel in the Republic of Croatia. The host was Natasha Jovicic, director of the institution.

At the end of last week, a three-day seminar for the education of teachers and students on the theme of the Holocaust ended in Zagreb. The representatives of the Yad Vashem Museum in Israel and the Shoah Foundation in the United States were the principal speakers at the conference. Natasa Jovicic organized the event.

## Rumors of a Scandal

These events concealed the rumors of a scandal in which Natasa Jovicic once again played the leading role, because at the end of last year, representatives of the Serbs, Jews, former concentration camp inmates and anti-fascist fighters from Croatia withdrew from further cooperation with the Council for the Memorial Monument in Jasenovac, which Ms. Jovicic heads.

They rendered this decision because their candidate, historian Zorica Stipetic, was outvoted in favor of a local functionary of the HDZ, Zoran Prpic in the election of the new president of the Council.

The first round of voting (November 9) was deadlocked (4:4), but in the next round of voting (November 28), the deciding fifth vote for Prpic was cast by the Director, Ms. Jovicic, in violation the by-laws of the Memorial Monument.

After that, in the middle of December, the grandiose bas-relief (ten by three meters) by the famous sculptor Dusan Dzamonja, was removed from the on-site display of exhibits. He made this statement for Zagreb's "Vijesnik" (December 15):

"Natasha Jovicic, the Director of the Memorial Monument, informed me by telephone after the bas-relief had been removed, and she justified it by saying that it 'doesn't fit

conceptually in the new Museum exhibit'. I reacted sharply to this and I explained to her that this was tantamount to a barbaric act of destroying the monument, to which she replied, without the slightest trace of shame, that it was about 'an ordinary bas-relief', and that was when I hung up on her. I think that she ought to be suspended from her post for having made such a statement."

Dzamonja stated for "Slobodna Evropa" on December 19 that they had notified him by telephone that the bas-relief did not fit conceptually with the new system, the reason being that it was ideologically outdated. "What is ideologically outdated in Jasenovac?" asked Dzamonja, who was dumbfounded by the statement made by the newly elected President of the Council of the Memorial Monument that it was about 'some wooden logs in chains'.

Dzamonja himself cites as proof that the bas-relief, called "To the Victims of Jasenovac," appeared in 1967, and that it was his "anthology work," his "judgment of fascism, which was thought up by an extermination machine, something from the most monstrous nature that exists in our history," that is "some kind of [i.e., his version of, Author's Note] 'Guernica,'" and expresses in the most forceful fashion Jasenovac' drama of fascist terror and crimes

conjured by racial hatred and intolerance.

At the end of the 1960s, Dzamonja created works dedicated to the victims of the concentration camps in Dachau and Auschwitz, which still stand today in their respective memorial exhibits.

The Jewish Community in Zagreb “expressed its revulsion” immediately after the removal of the bas-relief, and sought to have the work returned to the place where it had stood for almost forty years.

“The justification that the bas-relief does not fit in today’s exhibition concept of the Jasenovac Memorial Monument reminds us of the explanations given by Ivan Verner, the Mayor of Zagreb during the Independent State of Croatia, who used it as a basis for razing the Zagreb Synagogue (‘the temple does not fit with the [sredidben] basis for the for the organization of Zagreb’),” the Jewish Community of Zagreb said.

### Conflict between Two Poetics

“This announcement is largely unprecedented and it has not been well thought out; it is a disqualification of our institution,” was Director Jovicic’s appraisal, and she explained that Dzamonja’s bas-relief “did not fit in” with the Museum’s new concept, which is being developed by

Leonida Kovac, Custodian for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb. Kovac’s concept decided in favor of “a substantially new, contemporary exhibit.”

Two themes by “outstanding experts in the field” have been brought to play in the construction of a new Memorial Museum and a new educational center where youngsters will come face to face with “the consequences of denying human dignity.”

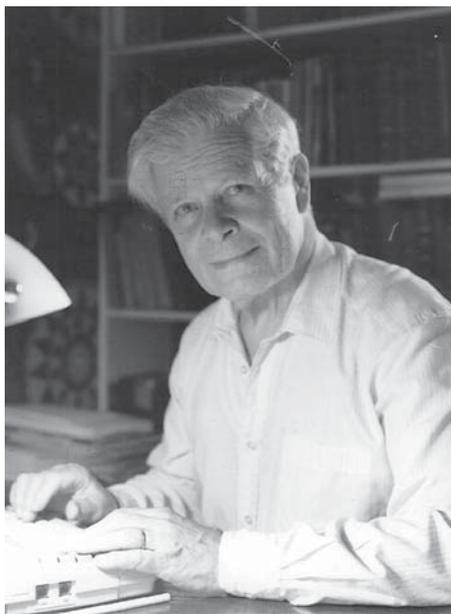
Jovicic is convinced that the new permanent exhibit will secure “a space for a discussion of the victims because contemporary museology and historiography have established such an approach.”

The project is not simply bringing together young people. Jovicic emphasizes that “the architect” of the “Cvet” (“Flower”) Monument, eighty-three-year-old Bogdan Bogdanovic, is actively participating in the project. “We use his words, which deserve to be anthologized, as our motto: *Threaten no one, summon not revenge and hatred, but conceal not the truth.*” She claims that each and every manipulative aspect of the victims of Jasenovac vanishes with such a concept, which is the only one possible. “*Jasenovac is being separated from corrupt political themes*”, she stated in a recent interview with “Slobodna Dalmacija” (January 19).

“The polemic,” said Jovicic, “has opened one important cultural dilemma: are we to bequeath a flower or bones to the victims of Jasenovac? Namely, the bas-relief composition created by the academic artist Dzamonja is bones carved from wood and chains, while Bogdanovic’s monument is a concrete flower. And that is ‘Bogdanovic’s’ question: What can you offer to the victim — bones or a flower? We decided in favor of the flower!”

Natasa Jovicic and Bogdan Bogdanovic have, in any case, put forth their own obviously mutually agreeable esthetic in a book they co-authored, “Apsolutno paf” (“Absolutely Dumbfounded”) (published in 2002 in Zagreb), based on conversations conducted in 2001, which were initiated after the April Commemoration to the victims of the Jasenovac Concentration Camp that year. It is obvious that the problem with the new exhibits in the Memorial Museum in Jasenovac far outrun the framework of “a cultural dilemma.” Otherwise, such an announcement about the new exhibits, as expressions of “the absence of all manipulations with the victims of Jasenovac” never would have occurred, and it will be judged to be just that, an expression of the manipulation of historical truth.

Translated by Milo Yelesiyevich



## *Remembering Traian Stoianovich*

*By Dr. Norman Markowitz, JRI  
Director, Professor of History, Rutgers  
University*

Traian Stoianovich, a world renowned scholar of Balkan history and a member of our JRI Advisory Board passed away after a long struggle with cancer. Of Serbian Yugoslav background, Traian was born in Graješnica, Macedonia in 1920 and grew up in Rochester, New York. At a time when it was difficult for working class people and immigrants to achieve higher education, he graduated from the University of Rochester, served in the U.S military after WW II and received a doctorate from the University of Paris in 1952, where he became a major figure in the internationally influential AnnaleSchool

of history. He applied his education to the study of the Balkans, publishing **A Study of Balkan Civilization** (1967) which is regarded as both a classic and a major educational text. After his retirement he published a four volume collection of articles and essays, **Between East and West, the Balkan and Mediterranean Worlds** (1992-1995) and also **Balkan Worlds: The First and Last Europe** (1994) rich in its insights and understanding for both the Balkans and European civilization. Many of his works were translated into Serbian and published in Yugoslavia, and he continued to work as a scholar right up to his death on December 21, 2005.

I had the privilege of knowing Traian Stoianovich as an outstanding colleague and friend at Rutgers University, both before and after his retirement. A kind and gentle man, Traian was fiercely proud in a non-chauvinist way of his Serbian heritage and of the achievements of the Serbian people. He detested not only the NATO war that devastated Serbia and dismembered Yugoslavia, but what he regarded as the racist libels and slanders directed against the Serbian people both during and after the war. When the politicians and generals who directed that war of aggression are ugly footnotes to history, his work as a scholar and his enormously

positive achievements as a teacher will continue to live.

Traian is survived by his daughter, Diana Revson, his grandsons Tripp and Alex Revson, his wife Marcelle Stoianovich, and his son, Christian Stoianovich.



# THE YAD VASHEM DELEGATION'S VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

By Hieromonk Jovan Ćulibrk,

## The Jasenovac Committee of the Serbian Orthodox Church

In conjunction with the Republic Secretariat of Religions, the Jasenovac Committee of the Holy Council of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the Foundation Jasenovac – Donja Gradina, on the 29th and 30th of January of 2006 an official delegation of Yad Vashem – Holocaust Victims and Heroes Memorial Authority from Jerusalem, composed of Ms. Zita Turgeman, Yad Vashem coordinator for Europe, and Mr. Yiftach Meiri, an Associate, visited the Republic of Srpska. The visit was organized on the occasion of January 27th, the International Day of the Holocaust Memory proclaimed by the United Nations in 2005.

Beginning with "Poplar of Horror," the delegation visited the Memorial Area Donja Gradina, Jasenovac's killing and burial ground, on Sunday, January 29th. There, Turgeman and Meiri were greeted by Minister Dušan Antelj, former Prime Minister Vladimir Lukić, and the Director of the Memorial Area Simo Brdar who gave the tour to the visitors. After Donja Gradina and on its way to Banja Luka, the delegation visited the killing grounds of Draksenić and Drakulić, both in the area of Kozara mountain.

At 17:00 the same day in the Cultural Club Saint Sava in Banja Luka, Mr. Meiri held the workshop "Life in Warsaw Ghetto" for educators of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Republic Pedagogical Institute, which is well known to former students of Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies and teachers of theological schools of the Serbian Church. Zita Turgeman, a lecturer at the International School for Holocaust Studies, gave a public lecture "Yad Vashem today" at 19:30 in Banski Dvor in Banja Luka

On the second day of the visit, Monday January 30th, beginning at 09:00 in the Government of the Republic of Srpska, a meeting was held of the Yad Vashem delegation with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Labor and Veterans, Republic Pedagogical Institute, the Foundation Jasenovac–Donja Gradina, the Jasenovac Committee of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Archives of the Republic of Srpska, the Museum of the Republic of Srpska and the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Banja Luka. The subject was further cooperation between institutions and organizations in the Republic of Srpska dealing with the Holocaust and the Holocaust education with Yad Vashem, especially with its International School in the field of education. The meeting was followed by a press conference, held in the press room of the RS Government, beginning at 10:30.

The Yad Vashem Delegation met the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska Dušan Stojičić at 11:00 and at the noon they met Jefrem, the Bishop of Banja Luka and the Chairman of Jasenovac Committee of the Holy Council of Bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The Yad Vashem Museum of Holocaust in Jerusalem possesses in its archives a 62 million pages of documents about the Holocaust, over 260,000 photo documents, several thousands of video notes of witness testimonies, two million pages of testimonies, more than 3,2 million names of the Holocaust victims, and a library with more than 90,000 books in all languages.

According to the words of Zita Turgeman, what was most shocking for them was their insight into the dimensions of the crimes of genocide during the Second World War in this area. "What I felt was the wish and desire to learn and to hear; to talk about the crime publicly and openly," said Yiftach Meiri to the press. They gave a number of interviews to the local press and television media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in Serbia and Montenegro.



# SEMINARY ON JASENOVAC FOR TEACHERS AT THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS

Banja Luka – Jasenovac, October 19-21 2005

By Hieromonk Jovan Ćulibrk

A three day-long seminar for seminary professors regarding the Jasenovac death camp, which was organized by the Jasenovac Committee of the Holy Assembly of Bishops, concluded in the monastery of Moštanica on October 21.

This seminar, with participants representing all seven of the seminaries of our Church (about 15 in all), was held in Banja Luka, the village of Drakulić and at the Jasenovac and Donja Gradina Memorial Areas.

The Holy Assembly of Bishops in 2004 decided that during all five years of studies at the theological seminaries some time will be devoted to Jasenovac and all other aspects of genocide in the Second World War. This seminary was prepared in order to provide teachers with the knowledge and educational tools teachers will need to teach the topic of Jasenovac.

The seminar began with prayer at the Holy Trinity Cathedral held by His Grace Jefrem, Bishop of Banja Luka. The opening ceremony at the Saint Sava Cultural Club included speeches of His Grace Jefrem, Minister Dušan Antelj of Government's Secretariat of Religions, Mr. Miloš Milinčić of the Educational Institute, former Prime Minister Vladimir Lukić, Mr. Vasilije Karan in the name

of survivors and a letter from Mr. Arie Livne in the name of the World Jewish Congress.

Lectures were held by professors Jovan Mirković (*Historical facts and Historiographical Problems in Connection With Jasenovac*), Predrag Lazarević (*Jasenovac in Literature and National Consciousness*) and hieromonk Jovan Ćulibrk (*General Historical Framework of Genocide During the Second World War - The Serbian Orthodox Church and Jasenovac*).

This seminar provided participants with a particularly important opportunity to hear the testimonies of surviving Jasenovac inmates Vasilije Karan, Stojka Trivić-Marčeta and Gojko Knežević, who gave his testimony at the very scene of the crime in the Jasenovac concentration camp.

During the course of the seminar the CD *Jasenovac - Industry of Death* prepared by the Jasenovac Committee and the film *The Grey Zone* were presented in the workshops as educational tools. Educational workshops were held by graduates of International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, father Dragoslav Topolac and Mr. Duan Pavlović.

The participants of the seminar pilgrimaged to the killing fields where

so many Serbs perished in Drakulić near Banja Luka, in Draksenić and the Jasenovac and Donja Gradina concentration camp complex, where so many Jews, Romas and anti-fascists also were murdered. Holy Liturgy was served as the central event by the seminar participants with His Grace Bishop Sava of Slavonia in the monastery of Jasenovac, which is also the seat of the Bishop of Slavonia. Mr. Simo Brdar gave a tour in Donja Gradina (where a short memorial service was held) and Ms. Jelka Smreka welcomed participants in Jasenovac Memorial Area.

The final session was held in the monastery of Moštanica and all participants agreed that the spiritual value of this seminar and its educational importance will have tremendous impact on their further pedagogical work with seminarians, the future spiritual pastors of the Serbian people. Participants asked the Holy Assembly of Bishops to make visits to Jasenovac mandatory for all students of seminaries, and the proposal was accepted immediately at November's session of the Council.

The seminar was made possible through the gracious help of the Secretariat of Religions of the Republic of Srpska Government and its head Mr. Dušan Antelj.

## BOOK REVIEW:

### DIANA BUDISAVLJEVIC, DIARY 1941–1945

**Published by:** Hrvatski drzavni arhiv, Zagreb i Javna ustanova Spomen podrucje Jasenovac, **Stampa:** Kriscanska sadasnjost, **d.o.o. Zagreb, 2003, 306 pages.**

**Reviewed By Col. Antun Miletic (Ret.),**

**JRI Honorary Advisory Board Chairman**

Diana Budisavljevic, née Obexer, was born in Innsbruck, Austria. She came to Zagreb in 1919 and married Dr. Julija Budisavljevic. She returned to Austria in 1972, where she died on August 8, 1978. Diana was in Zagreb when WWII broke out in the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the quivering Ustashe Independent State of Croatia was proclaimed on April 10, 1941. She found out about the mass murder of Jewish and Serbian women and children in Ustashe concentration camps in October 1941. From that moment on, she dedicated her life to saving and providing for these children, and she left behind a notebook entitled “The Actions of Diana Budisavljevic.” She received a great deal of help in this humanitarian undertaking from her husband Julija, her two daughters, Marko Vidakovic, Djuro Vukosavljevic, Kamil Bresler, Ljubica Becic, Dragica Habezin and others because the

circle of supporters kept constantly growing. The first entries she made about the concentration camp for women and children in Lobar Grad dates from October 23, 1941, and afterwards she noted concentration camps in Zlatar and Gornja Rijeka. However, the Ustashe did not regard her “actions” kindly, and it was only upon the intervention of the Germans that she was granted a letter of permission, dated February 26, 1942, i.e., allowing her to engage in rescuing and aiding children from these aforementioned concentration camps. In May 1942, these two concentration camps were closed after some 200–400 Serbian women and children had passed through them, while the concentration camp at Gornja Rijeka-Castle was transformed into the “Home for Refugee Children” (Djecji dom za izbeglicku djecu).

Diana became interested in April 1942 in the concentration camp in Djakovo, where 1,875 Jews and about 50 Serbian women had been interned at the end of 1941. Of course, that number grew to 3,000 concentration camp inmates by July 1942. Typhus was raging in the camp, and more than 500 died. Then the remaining inmates were transferred to the concentration camp of Jasenovac and immediately taken by ferry to the Gradina killing fields where they were executed. That was the first time Diana found out about the system of concentration camps in Jasenovac, i.e.,

Camp V in Stara Gradiska and the children who were interned there (June 8, 1942).

Meanwhile, this humanitarian group preoccupied itself with supplying food and other necessities for transporting these men, women and children to Germany. The rescue of children from the Stara Gradiska concentration camp began on July 7, 1942, when the first transport took 100 children. On May 28, 1942 Diana Budisavljevic met with Archbishop Alojza Stepinac for a second time (after the first meeting on March 12, 1942, Diana had noted “... the results of my meeting were largely negative”). We are surprised by everything that Stepinac promised at this second meeting, but of course none of it ever materialized. Immediately after the first transport, a second one followed with 650 children and the conclusion that the life these children led in the concentration camp was horrible.

When Diana made a third trip to the Stara Gradiska concentration camp on July 15, 1942, she received information about the children interned in a concentration camp in the village of Mlaka (which belonged to the system of concentration camps in Jasenovac). But now there is a paradox about that date in her “Diary”: one may surmise that Diana made this entry on that day (July 15, 1942) because under that date, she wrote:

*“The children were in the concentration camp all summer and only in the late fall did the Ustashe bring those children who had survived. November 12, 1942, 91 seriously ill children, and there were 300 more that we had to leave behind.”* The question must be asked if these entries in “The Actions of Diana Budisavljevic” follow in chronological order from July 16 to November 12, 1942, for how is it possible to know on July 15, 1942 what took place on November 12, 1942? The entry for that day exists but there is no indication why it stands as an entry from July 15, 1942. In the period beginning July 15, 1942, children from the Mlaka and Jablanac concentration camps were rescued along with children from parts of the Jasenovac concentration camp. However, on August 2, 1942, entries in the “Actions” note a departure for Jasenovac and the transfer of 906 children from Mlaka, 800 of whom were moved to Sisak, while 106 infants were transferred to Zagreb.

The children’s concentration camp in Sisak was established in August 1942 in three different locations where about 4,700 children were relocated, while the children in Zagreb were moved to the Institute for the Rearing of Deaf-Mute Children, and after that to Josipovic and to the Jeronismka Castle. Diana received information that in Mlaka, which was part of the Jasenovac system of concentration camps, the Ustashe “*don’t know*

*what to do with small children and they’re throwing them into the river [i.e., the Sava River, Author’s Note].”*

1,200 children were found in the Jasenovac concentration camp itself (IIIc) on August 5, 1942 who were then transported to Sisak. In Diana’s August 11, 1942 entry, we learn that 68 children died in the children’s concentration camp Gornja Rijeka. Until the end of 1942, and afterwards, she continued to rescue children from the Stara Gradiska concentration camp. She created a card catalogue index of the rescued children, worried over the children who were still in concentration camps and [resettlement centers], and she was concerned with the placement of children with families, in particular village families, who were interested in taking them. At the end of 1942, the “Children with their Mother’s” foundation was established near Kartas. Its goal was to reunite some children with their mothers and to provide financial aid for their support because these mothers had lost their homes which had been located on battlefields where military operations (in Kozara and elsewhere) had taken place.

Over the course of 1943, she continued to be involved with the placement of children and providing them with food, clothing, shoes and medicine. During this entire process, Diana’s group relied on Caritas and the Red Cross and a

few women from Sweden and Switzerland. In any case, their principal assignment was to get the remaining children out of Jasenovac and to collect all children from areas of fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Operation “Black and White”). And after that, they had to prepare a list of children who had to be provided for, i.e., they had to create a card catalogue file. This task was undertaken once again in 1944 and it resulted in an index of 12,000 catalogue cards bearing the names of children who had been rescued. That was the result of “Diana Budisavljevic’s Actions.”

It was a tremendous success to rescue 12,000 lives, compared to those who had already been confirmed, according to identification by first and last name, to be dead [19,283 children, *Author’s Note*]. And it is necessary to know if there are any figures in the “Diary” about the number of boys and girls who were killed [1,202 were killed in concentrations camps in 1944, and 331 children were killed in 1945, *Author’s Note*]. One third of the “Diary” is composed of appendices containing 80 documents, i.e., various documents and facsimiles as supplements to individual entries in the “Diary” or as the evidence Diana gave in “Actions of Diana Budisavljevic.” In May 1945, Diana turned over the card catalogue of rescued children to the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Croatia, and on February 2, 1947 she made her own report in “The

Actions of Diana Budisavljevic.” In the end, one may ask the question why Diana did not publish it for 31 years, because it would have been far more authentic and the translation more appropriate, just as one may ask why the Croatian government archive afterwards kept the report secret for another 25 years.

In the end, there is one criticism that can be made of the editors of this volume: why didn't they confirm the authenticity of the "Diary" with a few facsimile pages from the original manuscript in order to show how she wrote it up and when, because only then can we be certain of the authenticity of the "Diary." And as far as the supplementary materials in the appendices are concerned, it is, indeed, incredible that not one single catalogue card out of the 12,000 with vital statistics and a photograph of the child was included. It is a pity that such a noble woman as Diana Budisavljevic, an Austrian, who rescued so many Serbian, Jewish and Roma children, enjoys no recognition whatsoever, but she deserves a memorial monument and streets to be named after her in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Serbia.

Translated by  
Milo Yeesiyevich, JRI Director

## VATICAN BANK LAWSUIT UPDATE OF 23 FEBRUARY 2006

By Jonathan Levy

San Francisco: Attorneys for plaintiffs in *Alperin v. Vatican Bank* a lawsuit seeking recovery of assets looted from Yugoslavia during the Second World War and converted post-war by the Vatican Bank and Franciscan Order reports progress on several fronts:

The trial court has approved a Fourth Amended Lawsuit that substantially enhances the existing claims and adds the Serbian Republic of Krajina in Exile as a Plaintiff. Additional facts about how the Ustasha Treasury came to the Vatican Bank, Vatican dealings in gold bullion and the involvement of the Franciscan Order in Rome and Chicago have been added.

The deposition of the only known witness to the Vatican and Franciscan money laundering, former Army Counterintelligence Special Agent William Gowen is set to continue in Dallas on March 9, 2006. Gowen's eyewitness testimony has revealed so far that Vatican official Fr. Krunoslav Draganovic admitted to Gowen that he received up to

ten truckloads of loot in 1946 at the Franciscan controlled Croatian Confraternity of San Girolamo. Gowen also testified that the leader of the treasure convoy, Ustasha Colonel Ivan Babic, boasted to Gowen of using British uniforms and trucks to move the gold from Northern Italy to Rome. As for the Ustasha Treasury's ultimate destination, Gowen concurred that it could have gone nowhere but the Vatican Bank.

Gowen's testimony is likely to remain unchallenged by any living witness given the recent death of former long-time Vatican Bank President, Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, who likely knew of the Ustasha transaction but never spoke of it.

Further the United States Supreme Court has denied a Vatican Bank and Franciscan Appeal to halt the lawsuit. The US State Department has also denied previous requests by the Vatican Secretariat to dismiss the lawsuit.

For more information you may contact Jonathan Levy at resistk@yahoo.com

# THOUSANDS OF DESTINIES CONTAINED IN ONE SINGLE DIARY

By Drago Kastratovic and Uros Soskic

*(Part 2 of the JRI Quarterly's 4 part series of articles on Diana Budisavljevic. Part 1 appeared in issue Vol I, No. 2.)*

There is a lot of information in the diaries of Diana Budisavljevic. And as a person reads this manuscript, a picture appears of that brave women who dressed in the uniform of a Red Cross nurse in order to reach the children in the camps. She twice went to see the children of Kozara in Stara Gradiska; she went to Mlaka three times, and once to Jablanac. Now, after having studied all the chroniclers of this war who depict all problems and dangers Zagreb's activists and patriots faced, we can see to what extent Diana took the initiative.

She found the time, as well as the means, to collect data on 12,000 children and managed to save that information about the children of Kozara until the liberation because she kept duplicate records. She worked day and night on her records with Ivanko Dzakula. She says this about it in diary: *"Ever since autumn 1942, it has been impossible to get children out of the camps, and professor Bresler was suspended. I must reorder the data so that we can contact the parents of these children, who were sent to work in Germany. Thus, we were able to answer three to four thousands inquiries we received from Germany. The Red Cross in Zagreb alone requested information on about 1,500 children. Beside that, we received about 1,000 queries from different parts of our country [Croatia]. And people are always arriving in person to inquire about children."*

In February 1943, Diana met with a representative of the International Committee for the Red Cross and begged him to find a way to get permission so that they could get the children out of the camps. She insisted that there were thousands of children in these camps and that they needed help. The Red Cross representative from Geneva promised that he would try, but his attempt was unsuccessful because the Ustashe secret service saw to it that hundreds of families in Zagreb and the surrounding area took in the children of Kozara. They did not like doing that, but it was much worse for them if news about the Ustashe's cruel treatment of the children traveled outside the country. Their solution was to deny that they [Croatian families] were taking in children from the camps.

## Help from Switzerland

How the Ustashe authorities regarded the massive effort of these people to take in Kozara's children can best be illustrated by the news that arrived from Novska, Stara Gradiska and Sunj. In those towns, the Ustashe slaughtered those children and their guardians in order to terrify the population, and they sent some of the children and their guardians to the camps. How the people of Zagreb reacted to the unfortunate children of Kozara is illustrated by another piece of information. At about the same time, a transport of about hundred orphaned children from Ustashe families arrived in Zagreb. Despite a large press campaign and attempts in official circles to find families to adopt those children, not one family in Zagreb answered the appeal. Ustashe authorities were forced to find homes for those children. Diana, undaunted, found a solution with the Swiss Red Cross. In the winter of 1943, each Zagreb family that took in a child from Kozara got a half of liter of milk. In those days, this was valuable help. Children that were in villages received aid from Caritas. Parents came to the Red Cross in Zagreb almost every day to discuss the children and the progress they were making, and some of them received clothing, shoes and money.

Diana Budisavljevic writes that Prof. Bresler was forced to take a vacation in April 1943. So now she was alone in her attempt to get permission to help the children in the camps because the other activists in the Red Cross were not in a position to get in touch with officials who could make such decisions. In May, with the help of the wife of the Swedish consul, she requested that the Swedish government provide aid to the children of Kozara. And it is important to note that the wife of the Swedish consul helped Diana nurse children in Josipovac, and that the wife of the Swiss consul adopted one of the children of Kozara. Diana next wrote that: "When there was an opportunity, we sent clothing for children and mothers to Kordun via secret channels. We helped sick women

who were returning from forced labor in Germany; we helped transports that were taken by force to Germany, and gave the women and children food, clothing and other necessities. Money was collected by reliable people, and donations which were often made by people came to my husband's hospital as patients. The people who made donations always asked that they remain anonymous so we could not take down their names."

### **Every Penny Was Accounted For**

With precision that did not omit the smallest details, she made a list of food, clothing, medicine, canned milk, toys, children's clothing, coats, gloves ... and everything that she managed to buy and give to the children in the camps with the money that was collected. From October 25, 1941 to June 20, 1945, she raised 3,008,092 kuna. She was very careful about how she spent it.

She saved receipts and bills for all expenditures. It is especially interesting that from July 17 to August 3, 1942, she sent 1,263 cups, 300 spoons, 24 night cups, lemon valued at 13,600 kuna, tea, and medicine to the children of Kozara in Jastrebarsko. She sent 50,000 kuna to the orphanage in Kukuljeviceva in Zagreb at the request of Dr. Desanka Ristic-Stampar. Zagreb, October 13, 1943: 1,000 calcium tablets were shipped to Jasenovac via the Red Cross. Zagreb, December 28: clothing was sent to the camp in Sisko. We can see how valuable Diana Budisavljevic was to the Zagreb NOP. Not only could outlawed fighters and activists rely on her at any given moment, but she surprised them with her initiatives and extraordinary organizational ability. The other man, who, according to all available documents and memories, a major figure in the rescue of Kozara's children, was Professor Kamilo Bresler.

### **"Everything Was Getting Dark Around Me..."**

All those who participated in the rescue of the children of Kozara with whom we spoke recall Dr. Bresler as an extraordinarily unselfish and humane man, and that is confirmed in every line of his diary entries concerning the children of Kozara. He writes: *"After the young children were disinfected and bathed, they were laying down in the barracks in two rows. I was walking up and down between them, making sure that none of them had rolled off their blankets onto the dirt floor. I came upon one boy who was lying between two bruised infants who were only a few days old, who had rolled onto the dirt floor as if he wanted to say that he do not belong there. I bent down to put him back in the row where he belonged. As soon I reached for him, he gave me his hands, clung to my fingers like a limpet and rose. Everything was getting dark around me ... I took hold of the child by his armpits and clasped him to my chest. He nodded his head a few times ... he was hungry ... He wanted his mother's breast ... I gathered him under the folds of my coat and left the barracks to find something warm for him. At that very moment, my older brother arrived in a Red Cross vehicle. "Where are you going with that kid" he asked me. I don't know myself how these words come out of my mouth: 'Take me to mom's house, so I can feed him.' My brother silently turned around and drove us there. We rang the bell. Our elderly mother, who raised seven of us, appeared at the door. I opened my coat and revealed the naked child, and silently put him in our mother's arms. She took him in her old, trembling hands, her eyes having grown misted over, pressed him to her chest and took him to a room. Our sister's sewing machine hummed all night long, sewing shirts and diapers from material she and my mother had, because from that day on, he stayed in our home to enlighten our mother's twilight years with joy and playfulness."*

One might conclude that these words were written by a simple village teacher who was horrified by the frightful events taking place in the city, and not words written by the patient organizer of a great undertaking to rescue children from an Ustashe death machine. And all of Prof. Kamil Bresler's testimony reads like that: it is filled with love for children who were swept away by the winds of terrifying events and taken far away from their homes. Bresler's case confirms the old saying that people from large families have a lot of compassion and understanding for others. He cared about each and every passer-by in the occupied city. A lot of young people whose growth and development he followed later came to shake his hand before joining the Partisans. It was particularly hard on him to see one young man who was wavering in his decision. He was aware of danger in which he would leave his parents if he went to free territory, but he clearly saw that he could not sit and do nothing. His parents, of course, impeded his departure and the tension became unbearable. Bresler paid that young man a visit one night and told him that his hesitation was not only torturing his mother but it was also putting

him in danger at the same time. The young man understood, and Bresler kept thinking of him until the very end of war.

### **Bresler's First Move**

Such a man could not have reacted differently than by jumping to his feet and doing the impossible when Diana Budisavljevic broke the terrifying news to him about the fate of Kozara's children. He describes the beginning of that great undertaking:

*"I'm getting into my car and going on a trip to enlist people to cooperate one person at a time. I'm going to vanquish their temerity. I'm going to everyone that I have worked with over the years one by one. Things are going a lot of easier than I had expected. Hundreds of people promised me cooperation and readiness to sacrifice to the end. First of all, the men and women from the Red Cross. They promised me nurses who would take the responsibility of traveling with the transports. I advised reliable nurses to inform responsible women in the city and to take them with the nurses from the Red Cross. I'm going to pay a visit to old friends in Center for Hygiene. There, I find a lot of understanding and support for my undertaking. I'm not getting out of the car; instead, I'm going to the next village where our first teacher's school for public nursery schools is located. The school is administered by an experienced and brave comrade (Tatjana Marinic). The teachers, by and large children who themselves were orphans, had grown up in orphanages where they never witnessed sinful behavior, evildoing and misery. I explain to them, briefly and to the point, their mission. The children's eyes were filled with tears. They all promised to cooperate. They will interrupt their schooling. Then I got a specialist, a pediatrician, and Dr. B. Dragisic, who had been banned by Ustashe along with his wife, who was also a doctor, and other doctors, nurses, and aides. Because of the shortage of doctors, I secretly sent a nurse to Serbia where she got two children's nurses from a hospital. Next I went to Jastrebarsko where there is an orphanage, and I have been told that there are some abandoned Italian barracks, stables and an empty convent. The barracks are spread over three different nearby locations. They are nothing more than wooden walls covered by a roof. There is no floor. Only few of the barracks have wooden floors. With help of my friend, Dr. Davil from Kotar, we got the local people to clear away the garbage, to cover the floor with gravel, and to get plenty of reeds. We emptied the historic old castle which was once an orphanage. We improvised rooms in a large, empty barn for the healthy children, and we turned the orphanage into a children's hospital. Doctors, nurses, engineers, hygienicists and laborers worked feverishly to finish the very first shelter for the children of Kozara, and all right under the nose of the Ustashe butchers, who demolished all the floored barracks right before our very eyes. We managed to save only two barracks, so we simply took the children there. For the others, we had only flimsy wooden shacks with a dirt floor. In town, I opened all of the stores and took all the remaining beds, sheets, dishes and food which I prepared for transport to Jaska. Doctor Cernozubov, an epidemiologist, collected an entire pharmacy along with instruments, and mobilized an entire team of health care personnel. After few days of back-breaking work, we were ready to accept the first transports."*

And so on, page by page. Kamil Bresler and Diana Budisavljevic filled their diaries with valuable information, and because of that, their writings are important documents not only enrich the study of the efforts to rescue the children of Kozara, but also because they shed light on the difficult battles in the war of liberation that was fought in and around the area of Zagreb.

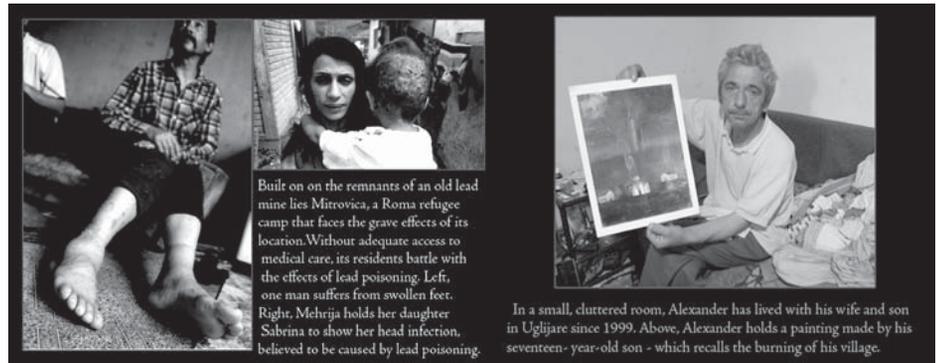
Translated by Milo Yelesiyevich



## Human rights in the Balkans

### KOSOVO: AN ENDLESS HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE?

In the summer of 2005 the JRI sent photographer Elizabeth Bieber to document the continuing tragedy of the victims of the “Humanitarian Intervention” in Kosovo. Bieber took hundreds of photographs of the devastation and persecutions suffered by the non-Albanian population, particularly the Roma and Serbs. Bieber conducted interviews and documented the shameful betrayal of the refugees by the UN-KFOR occupation, many thousands of whom remain in refugee camps or shelters in unsafe and unhealthy conditions of squalor. Nearly seven years after the bombing which was supposed to “liberate” this region of Serbia, nothing has been done to compensate the hundreds of thousands of ethnically cleansed Serbs and Romas. Despite this shameful failure to address one of the world’s worst humanitarian catastrophes and injustices, world leaders are meeting to discuss a possible secession of the region. The JRI calls on all human rights organizations and the international community to demand a halt to such discussions until the homes of these refugees can be rebuilt and their security and human rights can be guaranteed. Below is a sample of Elizabeth Bieber’s work on the urgent crisis facing refugees, to be published by JRI. These photographs are harsh reminders of the crimes perpetrated by Albanian terrorists particularly on the Roma and Serb populations, and the continuing indifference of much of the international community.



#### *Jasenovac research Institute Quarterly* Volume I, Number 3, W-S 2006

##### Editorial Board

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The Jasenovac Research institute is a non-profit human rights organization and research institute committed to establishing the truth about the Holocaust in Yugoslavia and dedicated to the search for justice for its victims. The JRI promotes research and activities designed to enlighten the world to the crimes of genocide committed at Jasenovac and wartime Yugoslavia against Serbs, Jews and Romas and provides assistance to all groups and individuals who likewise seek justice for these victims.

A Report on the First Annual Jasenovac Commemorative Art Contest for Students in the Republika Srpska, Co-Sponsored by the Jasenovac Research Institute

### AN EXHIBITION OF FIGURATIVE STUDENT ARTWORK

Marking the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Victory over Fascism and In Memory of the Victims of the Ustashe’s Crimes of Genocide in the Jasenovac Concentration Camp

*By Simo Brdar, Curator of the Donja Gradina Memorial Area*

An exhibition of selected figurative works by elementary and middle schools in the Republic of Serbia on the theme of “Jasenovac” opened in

the exhibition hall of the Regional Memorial Monument for Donja Gradina on October 25, 2005.

The Jasenovac Research Institute in New York, headed by historian Barry Lituchy, publicized the event that marks the sixtieth anniversary of the victory over fascism with a recollection of the victims of Jasenovac, the Ustashe concentration camp. The contest was successfully organized and announced in cooperation with the Jasenovac Research Institute in New York, the Regional Memorial Monument for Donja Gradina, and the Educational-Pedagogical Institute of the Republika Srpska.

The Musical Ensemble of the Academy of Art in the Republika Srpska opened the event with a unique and atmospheric musical program.

Milos Milincic, the director of the Educational-Pedagogical Institute of the Republika Srpska, emphasized publicly the arrival of 830 figurative art works by students from elementary and middle schools. Milincic also pointed out that it was difficult for the commission to examine all of the art works and to choose the best among them. He added that a selection of 180 works of art was exhibited in the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Banja Luka. That exhibition ran for almost the entire month of April 2005, and it drew several thousand visitors. Milincic emphasized that the visitors to the exhibition were astonished by the artistic evocation of our most difficult past.

The three best figurative pieces were announced at the opening ceremony for the exhibition, and the artists shared a considerable financial award that was offered by the JRI.

First Prize went to student **Jelena Vasic** from the "Branko Radicevic" Elementary School in Bratunac. **Dijana Dzilit** from the "Vasa Cubrilovich" Elementary School in Gradiska took Second Prize, and **Mirjana Mudrimich**, a student from the "Djura Jaksic" Elementary School in Banja Luka, took Third Prize.

The prizes were awarded by JRI Director Darko Trifunović on behalf of the Jasenovac Research Institute, the Educational-Pedagogical Institute, and the Regional Memorial Monument for Donja Gradina to the student artists.

Aleksandar Mošić, also a JRI Director and Editor and Chief of its magazine, pointed out that this institutional call for entries for the best figurative and literal art works will be announced each year as a tradition. Simo Brdar, the Director of the Regional Memorial Monument for Donja Gradina, which is a public institution, said that this exhibition will be open to the viewing public until April 2006.

Ms. Svetlana Siljagegovic, director of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Inheritance in the Republika Srpska, opened the ceremonies before the Ministry of Education and Culture in the Republika Srpska.

## 2006 JASENOVAC COMMEMORATIVE ESSAY CONTEST FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE USA & CANADA

Sponsored by the Jasenovac  
Research Institute

In commemoration of this, the 61st anniversary of the end of the Holocaust and the liberation or closure of the death camps including Jasenovac, the JRI is sponsoring its second 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 11, 2006.**

Prizes will be announced and awarded at the Jasenovac Day of Commemoration Ceremony in New York City on April 30, 2006. 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, 1988 and no later than January 1, 1992. 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 11, 2006. 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.



Radio and television personality Barry Farber addresses participants at the unveiling of the Jasenovac Monument in New York City, 17 April 2005. The Fifth Annual Jasenovac Day of Commemoration will be held on Sunday 30 April 2006 at the Jasenovac Monument at Holocaust Memoria Park in Brooklyn, New York from 2:30 to 5 PM.

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