

## Face to face

---

UNPRINCIPLED COALITION

### INNOCENCE OF THE ACCOMPLICES

TAMARA KALITERNA *JOURNALIST OF THE WEEKLY VREME, BELGRADE*

**Up to now The Hague Tribunal has indicted 161 person from former Yugoslavia. They were indicted because of their role in nationalistic policies, or the enthusiasm in the implementation thereof. The others are left to domestic judiciaries.**

During the trial against the "Zvornik group" before the War Crimes Chamber of the District Court in Belgrade the witness Fadil Banjanovic said on January 30th that Svetozar Andric, presently general in the Army of Serbia and Montenegro and adviser to its Chief of Staff, was a high-ranking officer in the Army of the Republic Srpska in 1992 and that he ordered deportation of Muslims from the Zvornik municipality and separated men fit for military service from women, children and old men. Men were to go to camps. Banjanovic repeated this on January 31st, and out of eight Belgrade newspaper reporters present at the trial open to the public, only one reported on this.

In The Hague indictment against the former Chief of Staff of the Army of Yugoslavia Momcilo Perisic, Svetozar Andric is mentioned as the Chief of Staff of the Drina Corps of the Army of Republic Srpska.

Natasa Kandic, Director of the Belgrade-based Humanitarian Law Centre, said in the morning of January 28th that Vojislav Maksimovic and Velibor Ostojic, whom The Hague indictments for war crimes in Foca in 1992 mention as the highest-ranking officials in that little town on the river Drina at the time when the crimes were committed, were now living in the capital of Serbia and Montenegro.

#### Fugitives

According to The Hague Tribunal Prosecutor Karla del Ponte six indictees are still at large. Four of them are in Serbia. All four of them (Ratko Mladic, Zdravko Tolimir, Stojan Zupljanin and Goran Hadzic) were citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, or Croatia, and after the war in these two former Yugoslav republics they came to Serbia and became its citizens.

In Serbia, in Obrenovac, the brothers Banovic were arrested, of which Predrag was convicted in The Hague for crimes committed near Prijedor ten years before. Nine suspects for crimes against Albanians in Kosovo in the Spring of 1999 who were re-buried in mass graves in Batajnica were arrested throughout Serbia in Autumn of 2005.

In Serbia the members of the "Yellow Wasps" sought their haven after crimes in Zvornik, and so did those who murdered 50 civilians in the Slavonian village Lovas. In Vukovar there is a pending court trial against 17 participants in a massacre in Lovas in 1991, and only one of them is present at the trial. It is suspected that the others are in Serbia. Fifteen years have passed since this crime was committed.

In November last year in Podgorica began the investigation against six former functionaries of the Montenegrin police suspected of deporting from Montenegro some 150 Bosnian Muslims whose all traces were later lost.

For fifteen years the citizens have been keeping silent in solidarity about the murder of their fellow townsman Kresimir Herceg, a Croat from the village Visnjicevo, committed out of low national motives, and likewise they were watching in silence the cassette with the pictures of the execution of Muslims in Trnovo. The cassette was on rent in the video-club "Laser".

#### Camps in Vojvodina

Danijel Rehak, president of the Association of war-camp inmates of Croatia said that in FRY there were some forty camps for captives from Croatia or citizens of Croatian ethnic affiliation. He specifically mentioned Aleksinac, Sremska Mitrovica, Begejac and Stajicevo near Zrenjanin. Camps for Croats in Vojvodina are also mentioned in The Hague indictment against Slobodan Milosevic. Managers of the camps were first lieutenant colonel Petrovic, and then officer Zivancevic.

The County Prosecutor in Vukovar has in February 2003 indicted ten top ranking persons from the Yugoslav People's Army and the civilian authorities of "Republika Srpska Krajina" for war crimes in Vukovar in 1991. Half of the Vukovar inditees live in Belgrade in luxury like generals. In August 1992 Helsinki Watch thought that for some of them (Blagoje Adzic, Zivota Panic) "evidence sufficient for initiating investigation was collected".

As "Otpor" said three years ago, the man who was Chief of Police in Zrenjanin in 1991, and who knew about camps near Zrenjanin, is now an investigatory judge. The inhabitant of Sid Jovan Mitrilo said in April 2005 that during the war the Chief of Police in Sid was Nedeljko Makijevic, who last year was heading the operations department of the same police office.

All citizens of Aleksinac, Kladovo, Sremska Mitrovica, Zrenjanin, Batajnica, Obrenovac... peasants in Visnjicevo, Petrovo Selo, Stajicevo... are silent in solidarity with the citizens of Sid. They keep silent on camps, mass graves, crimes. They find it easier to live with those under suspicion, they find it unbearable to co-exist with the truth. They find it more comfortable to be for years legally – accomplices, and morally – fellow culprits, than to be proven innocent people.

Bruno Vekaric, spokesperson of the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office, estimates that the rating of the politicians who do not hesitate to speak openly about war crimes is descending.

Culprits among us nourish the unprincipled coalition of loyal citizens, the journalists with auto-censure, the politicians wanting votes and innocent cowards, making the armor of collective responsibility.

### **Neighbor under suspect**

The EU list composed in 1999 contains 650, and the US "black list" 150 names. Millions of citizens in Serbia are on unpublicized lists of those for whom EU and U.S. visas are difficult to obtain.

The International Crisis Group has in its November 2000 study described in detail the present and former positions of 75 people in Republic Srpska connected with war crimes. The ICG analyses why these people are still at large and still present in the political, economic and administrative life of the smaller entity in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Described are persons who at that time were either directly responsible for war crimes, or are believed to have been, by the very nature of things, in such positions to have known about the crimes, instigated them, or agreed with them..

When in the first week of April 1992 Bijeljina was occupied, the non-Serb population, which made up to 40 percent of the inhabitants of the town, was in a criminal manner killed, detained into camps or expelled. Nowadays in Bijeljina live many of those who participated in crimes. Among them was Mirko Blagojevic, President of the Serb Radical Party who during the attack on Bijeljina was commanding over the para-military group "Mirko's Chet nicks", and witnesses in The Hague mentioned him as a villain in the camp Luka. In October 2005 Blagojevic was member of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Vojkan Djurkovic, major in Arkan's "Tigers", after the war led a private detective agency until he was arrested two months ago.

The wartime mayor of Trebinje, in which since 1992 there are no Muslims, was Bozidar Vucurovic, reminds the ICG. The best known truck driver from Trebinje came under investigation only in Autumn 2005.

Milan Tomic is among the most responsible ones for brutal ethnic cleansing of Kljuc, when many hundreds of non-Serbs were killed. He lives in Novi Sad.

Danilusko Kajtez is among the eleven which the ICG sees as the most responsible ones for the evil in Sanski Most during the war. He lives in Nis.

Up to now The Hague Tribunal has indicted 161 persons from former Yugoslavia. They were indicted because of their role in nationalistic policies, or the enthusiasm in the implementation thereof. The others are left to domestic judiciaries.