

# *Conference Sessions*

*of the*

**First International Conference and Exhibit on the  
Jasenovac Concentration Camps**

Presentations  
Discussion Panels  
Question and Answer Sessions

**Kingsborough Community College of the  
City University of New York**



**Dr. Bernard Klein**  
**Chair, Organizer**



**Dr. Milan Bulajić**  
**Co-Organizer-Exhibition**



**Mr. Michael Zibrin**  
**VP Kingsborough College**



**Amb. Vladimir Jovanović**  
**Yugoslavia UN Ambassador**

## Reception: October 29, 1997

**Dr. Bernard Klein, Conference Organizer,  
Professor of History at Kingsborough Community College  
Interview**

**Dr. Klein:** The purpose of this conference is very simple—to establish, in somewhat objective form, what happened in Jasenovac, to establish the numbers of people who were killed there, the different categories of people who were killed, who did the killing, what responsibilities do different elements of the population bear for what happened in Jasenovac, and also trying to bring the different communities who were involved in this contentious topic together to discuss the matter in an objective area. Maybe this will help establish the facts of Jasenovac and be less friction between the Serbian and Croatian communities—although this is not our main objective. Our main objective is, from a scholarly point of view, to establish the facts. There is no reason why Jasenovac should have been left out of consideration. There is no reason why there should not have been an international conference on Jasenovac all these years. It's over fifty years, and there hasn't been such a conference. People talk about Auschwitz, talk about Treblinka, talk about different camps in Austria and Germany and Poland and other places. But somehow Jasenovac has almost been neglected, and yet it was one of the worst camps, as far as we understand.

**Interviewer:** But I understand that the camp doesn't exist anymore.

**Dr. Klein:** The camp doesn't exist—. Of course, if it doesn't exist, it's simply that the authorities that came to be, at one point or another, eliminated it, wiped it out. Unfortunately, that's what happens in many cases where these camps are just wiped off the ground. It happened in Poland to some of the camps. They make it into, convert it into, a park. So, you come there and don't even notice that this has been a place where thousands of people were killed.

## **Opening Session: October 29, 1997**

### **Dr. Bernard Klein**

#### **Professor of History, Kingsborough Community College**

It will take many, many years until we discover the real truth. People think that as time goes on, we will forget about what happened and that once this generation passes, people will no longer be interested. However, I am glad to see that the new generation is picking up where we are going to leave off. As you read the newspapers, you'll see that many nations are beginning to feel the heat, to come to terms with history.

They all try to forget about it, to deny it: the French, the Swiss, the Latvians, and the Lithuanians. When you talk to them, then they are all members of the resistance, right? We now find out that this is not the case. That most of these people were unfortunately collaborators. And luckily, the young generation is beginning to look into these matters. It took 50 years, over 50 years, to begin to investigate what has happened. I think this is going to be the case with Jasenovac as well. It's one of those camps which people have neglected because people think that all the camps were in Poland and in Germany. And nobody knows, really, that there was a camp in Yugoslavia which was just as cruel and just as gruesome as was the camp in Poland and in Austria and elsewhere.

So, we believe that we have to pay attention to this camp as well as to the others. And I am glad to see that the Holocaust Center at Kingsborough has chosen the conference to be dedicated to Jasenovac, which is one of the forgotten camps. Of course, you all know that this is a camp which is involved in controversy between two different groups. Our task is not to meddle in the controversy. Our task is primarily to establish as much as we can, as best as we can—the truth. We are not taking sides. We are not trying to demonize the Croats. We are not trying to give a propaganda advantage to the Serbians. This is not our purpose at all. Our purpose is simply to bring the truth closer. Let's establish the facts. What happened? Who did it? Why? What were the numbers? The

numbers vary from 20,000 to 700,000. You know this could not be. It would not be as few as 20,000. Probably, it could not be as many as 700,000. But let's find out. And there are ways to find out. Historians know how to do these things. They have done it in other places.

You know that at one time the belief was that in Auschwitz two-and-a-half-million people were killed. Finally, it dawned on people that it could not be. We talk about six million Jews being killed in the Holocaust. But, if 2 1/2 million were killed in the Holocaust in Auschwitz, and 700,000 were killed in Treblinka, and 500,000 were killed in Sobibor and another 300,000 to 250,000 in Majdanek—then you have 1,500,000 killed by the Einsatzgruppen—well, you end up with more than six million.

Finally historians came to the conclusion—and most people accept it now—that the number of people killed was about a 1,300,000. That does not mean that the crime is less, because it's only a 1,300,000. And if only 20,000 people were killed in Jasenovac, it would not make the crime less. But it is important to establish the truth. And that is what we would like to do. And this is the purpose of this conference. We know we are not going to succeed all the way. But if we budge a little bit, if we move the knowledge of Jasenovac a little closer, and maybe if we can bring the two groups together to talk to each other, to collaborate with each other, to work with each other, to do research together, and they can agree to gather a group of scholars who can be trusted—and there are such people—and establish the truth, we shall have succeeded.

I can tell you that many people were hoping this conference would never take place. And they tried to obstruct it as much as they could. I've been accused of being “an agent” of both sides. I probably am. I do not know on whose behalf. Nobody has paid me yet. But I'm willing to take money from anyone: Serbians, Croatians, Bosnians, Herzegovinians, Montenegrins—it doesn't matter. If I am an agent-get paid, at least. But my own purpose—and the purpose of people organizing this conference—is simple: to get to the truth. And if we clarify the truth, I'll be quite satisfied.

Of course, the accusations will not cease. We'll still be considered “agents.” But agents are human beings. It doesn't mean

because you are an “agent” that you’re evil or that you cannot have an opinion or arrive at the truth. They can. So, that’s one of their functions. Human beings operate on different levels. On one level they can be decent human beings, people interested in the truth and trying to get to the truth. And I hope this is going to be the case here: that people will deliver their papers in a scholarly fashion, an objective fashion and that they will leave their quarrels back at home. They have plenty of time when they go back to their country or to United States and the different residences to indulge in their luxuries of fighting with each other and quarrelling with each other. But for this conference, let’s try to be objective and approach this subject in a scholarly fashion. That’s what we hope, and that’s what we want.

I don’t want to make long speeches. My task is very simple: to chair this event, to introduce the speakers who will not be longer than I am and, perhaps, even a little briefer than I was. So, then you can see the exhibits and partake, if you haven’t done so, in the refreshments.

The first person I would like to call upon is the Senior Vice-President and Provost of the college. I regret to inform you that our college president, Leon Goldstein, who was supposed to have been here, has unfortunately become ill and, therefore, can’t be here. He has delegated the Vice-President to take his place and to bring you the message that he was going to deliver personally. It is my pleasure to introduce to you the Vice-President and Provost, Michael Zibrin who, by the way, comes from the country which is part of the “Little Entente”—if you remember what the “Little Entente” was. It consisted of Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia. He comes from Slovakia, the other part of Czech borders. I would like to introduce Michael Zibrin. [applause]

**Michael Zibrin**  
**Vice President of Kingsborough Community College**

Thank you, Dr. Klein. As Dr. Klein indicated, our president, Leon Goldstein cannot be with us. However, he prepared a statement in writing that he was going to deliver this afternoon, and he asked me to do it on his behalf:

“As president of Kingsborough Community College, I welcome the opportunity to provide the site for the important event—The First International Conference and Exhibition of the Jasenovac Concentration Camp. Dr. Bernard Klein, chairperson of Kingsborough History Department and founder of our Holocaust Research Center, has brought together some of the world’s foremost Holocaust scholars who will shed the light on this dark hour of human history. The conference will be enhanced by the efforts of participating scholars from Croatia as well as countries of Serbian, Jewish and Gypsy descent. We are honored that these individuals have taken the time to come to Kingsborough to present the results of their scholarship. We are also deeply honored by the presence of some of the survivors of Jasenovac who will share their testimonies as part of the conference. Far from being the end in itself, we hope that this conference will inspire further initiatives by scholars, writers and artists, concerned with questions on the Holocaust in general, and Jasenovac in particular. The museum of the Victims of Genocide in Belgrade has very generously provided the Jasenovac-related articles, documents, artifacts, pictures and video displays which will be displayed here at Kingsborough for the next month. We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Milan Bulajić—who is here, director of the museum, for allowing us to spotlight this arresting collection of artwork. Jasenovac was the locale of a great tragedy which occurred between 1941 and 1945. Equally tragic is the fact that until now this particular episode of the Holocaust has gotten relatively little attention. The conference and exhibition presents an attempt to begin learning the lessons that can be learned from the events that took place at Jasenovac. It is only through scholarship and open discussion that we can foster a climate in which this side of history never repeats itself. On a personal note, I want to state

that I have both personal and professional interests that this conference renders insights to this tragic period that is currently here under review and that we learn from these terrible acts against humanity, so this will never reoccur again.” Thank you. [applause]

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**Dr. Bernard Klein:** Thank you very much. I would be remiss in not acknowledging our gratitude to the college for its support in many ways—providing facilities and security and other expenses which the college is bearing in its contribution toward bringing this conference to be. I also would like to thank my co-worker and fellow coordinator, Barry Lituchy, who has been a tremendous help to me in bringing about this conference, and we hope to use his talent and the facilities in future situations as well.

At this point, I would like to introduce to you the Ambassador to the United Nations mission, the Yugoslav Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Jovanović. I must also tell you this, that I have invited the Croatian, his counterpart, to the Croatian mission. His response to me was that [inaudible] to concentrate primarily on international issues and that this is not in the province of his domain—which I understand, and I appreciate his frankness. And if he wishes to participate in the conference, he is welcome. I told him so in a letter. I do not know if he won't come or will come. That's his privilege. And—Mr. Jovanović. [applause]



**Vladimir Jovanović**  
**Ambassador to the United Nations, Yugoslavia**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, dear guests. The years were 1943 and 1944. And as a ten-year-old boy who went swimming with other children in the Danube in Smederevo, near Belgrade, I became a horrified witness of another event that flowed by—a river of mangled and broken bodies of men and women whom I did not know. In response to my horror and to answer my youthful incomprehension, my parents told me that those were the Serbian victims of Croatian Ustashas. In these trying days of German occupation, they, like everyone else, spoke in “sotto” voice as it were. Mindful not to be overheard by Wehrmacht soldiers, for them the Independent State of Croatia was a trusted ally of the Axis powers.

More than half a century later, the sponsors and the organizers have bestowed upon me the unique honor to speak at the opening of the Exhibition of the Jasenovac concentration camp and to open it. The exhibits and historical documents say it all. Forthtold, however fitting, far short of imparting the massive and painful tragedy of the Jasenovac martyrs—the Serbs, the Jews and the Romanies, as well as a number of Croatian Anti-Fascists. For Jasenovac was not only the least known death camp of World War II. Jasenovac was also the biggest concentration camp outside of the Third Reich, created and operated not by the Germans, but by the then Croatian state authorities. It was a system of death camps, stretching over some 150 square miles in which hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children were put to death in the most brutal way only because they were Serbs, Romanies or Jews. What makes the Holocaust of Jasenovac particularly disturbing and gruesome is that it was a triple complaint of genocide committed against the Serbs, the Romanies and the Jews, not based on anti-Semitism alone. Regrettably, the truth about this industry of mass murder at Jasenovac fell prey after World War II and was conveniently tucked away under the role of the ill-fated Yugoslav “Brotherhood and Unity.” It so happened that the Jasenovac concentration camp has not been registered in the United Nations archives of war crimes.

Moreover, the slaughter of martyrs became the subject of shameful manipulations as attempts were made to diminish the numbers and to subvert the truth. The establishment of the truth about Jasenovac is a supreme moral duty of all of us for Jasenovac also explained part of the tragedy that befell the previous Yugoslavia not long ago. The truth of the Jasenovac death camp should help us prevent these events from our not so distant past from repeating themselves and lead us along the road of reconciliation, life in peace, good neighborliness and cooperation. The two-day discussion is designed to help establish the truth and thus make a contribution to that worthy goal. In conclusion, I thank most cordially all those who made the decision and partake and had made it possible for this Exhibition to stage for the first time on American soil, the heralded country in World War II. My special gratitude goes to the Holocaust Research Center of Kingsborough Community College and its president, Mr. Leon Goldstein and chairman Dr. Bernard Klein. Without their extending cooperation, we would have been denied the documentary evidence of one of the most sinister killing grounds of World War II. Thank you for your attention.

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**Dr. Bernard Klein:** Thank you, Ambassador. Let me also point out to you that this is a new research center, and we feel that we ought to devote our attention primarily to groups of populations and areas which have been neglected by many others, especially since in Brooklyn, in this part of Brooklyn, we have a large group of Sephardic Jews. And many people think that the only Jews who were killed were Ashkenazi Jews, and that is not true. Most of the Jews in Yugoslavia were Sephardic Jews. The Jews of Bulgaria were Sephardic Jews, and they were spared mostly. Many Jews from Romania were Sephardic Jews; some Jews from Hungary were Sephardic Jews—thanks to the Turkish rule of Hungary at one time, as you know. And so it is in Greece and Macedonia and so on.

And also we have a large Russian population. So the Russian population also needs some representation. Particularly they were victims of the Einsatzgruppen, who killed 1,500,000 people, which

people do not realize. So we want to do more work on these groups, so this center will dedicate itself to this task. Last year we had a conference in Israel. We are having another one in December. If you want to come, just let me know. It's very nice there. They have different problems and different conflicts and maybe when you come back you will appreciate the conflict between the Croatians and the Serbians—and that time I met Dr. Bulajić. He came there without his wife. He told me he doesn't want to be burdened by his wife. See, he is making up for it now. He brought her with him. Glad to see you, Mrs. Bulajić.

And Mr. Bulajić delivered a paper which was quite well accepted by most people. And sensitized us to the problem of Jasenovac. And we are happy to invite him here again. He helped us in organizing this conference, and he was instrumental in bringing this exhibit here. As the Vice President has pointed out to you, he is the Director of the Museum of Genocide in Belgrade. And he has collected quite a number of artifacts and documents, which we are exhibiting here. Of course, some people are saying he is doing it as an "agent." In talking to him, I am quite convinced that he is not an "agent." He is simply a student of history. He was interested in establishing the truth. He was concerned by the fact that the truth has been neglected or not brought to light. So it's my pleasure to have him here and to introduce him to you—Dr. Bulajić.

**Dr. Milan Bulajić**  
**Director, Museum of Genocide Victims, Belgrade**  
**Researcher and Author**

Mr. Vice President, Provost Zibrin, thank you very much for your kind words and thank you for the hospitality Kingsborough College has given us—this opportunity. Dr. Klein, I can say “friend,” thank you very much. Without you this would not be possible. You mentioned the Fifth International Conference on the Holocaust in Jerusalem. You gave me your word. You kept your word. Many other very, very distinguished people promised, but they didn’t keep their word. So, all the credit goes to you, and I believe what we are doing today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow would be marked in the history of mankind.

The First International Conference and Exhibition on Jasenovac, Kingsborough College Holocaust Research Center has announced as a dark secret of the Holocaust 1941-1945 in the former Yugoslavia. What is the dark secret of the Exhibition that we are going to see today? Jasenovac, the most brutal system of Croatian Ustasha death camps, operated between August 21st, 1941 and April 22nd, 1945, encircling an area of about 240 square kilometers, or about 150 square miles, mass graves to mass graves. Jasenovac represents a plain crime of genocide against Serbs, Jews and Gypsies; the most ruthless premeditated crime against humanity in international law. Jasenovac occupies the holiest place of the remembrance hall at Yad-Vashem, set between Auschwitz, Mauthausen on the left and Coga and Supave on the right side.

The Ustasha death camp has also been placed among the holiest at Holocaust Museum Remembrance Hall in Washington, DC, thanks to our friend Dr. Michael Berenbaum, who we hope to see tomorrow. In Jasenovac, the most horrible crimes were committed against anti-fascists and resistance fighters, including Croatians. Some of the survivors of these monstrous death camps are present today in the first and second rows here. And I think that’s particularly important, and I’m especially pleased to welcome them here.

You can see in the exhibition here—designed knife Ustasha used to cut throats of the victims. We got that recently, just by accident. I happened to buy it for 500 deutschmarks.

Jasenovac is not only the symbol of the most brutal crime of genocide, it's also an example of heroism—the breakout of unarmed, exhausted and tortured inmates on April 22, 1945. The day of the breakout of Jasenovac camp prisoners has been justly proclaimed the official Memorial Day for genocide victims, like Jews of the Yad-Vashem who broke through and resisted in the Warsaw ghetto.

The problem of Jasenovac is a deep one, is a wide one. Nobody knows the victims of Jasenovac. According to historian Dr. Franjo Tudjman, actual President of the Republic of Croatia, relying only on identified German documents, the total number of Jasenovac victims is 20,000. What we have with us—researched by our small group in the Museum of Victims of Genocide, we have by names, first and last, of 19,544 little children, from one day old to fourteen years. We have brought here a Book of Death, names—first and last, experience of Yad-Vashem 77,743 victims. And we are here, as Dr. Klein rightly said, to establish the truth—the truth and nothing but the truth. Because, speaking about the numbers, I should mention the letter of Avner Shalev and Dr. Joseph Bird from the Yad-Vashem to Dr. Franjo Tudjman on May 26th, 1996. They indicate that of some 40,000 Jews that lived in Croatia in 1941, approximately 25,000 Jews were killed in the concentration and, they added, extermination camp of Jasenovac. Jasenovac was never liberated. When I saw the Auschwitz Exhibition in the United Nations, it was mentioned that Auschwitz was the last concentration camp liberated—January 27th, 1945. But Jasenovac, the factory of death, the system of death camps, worked until, as I said before, April 22nd, 1945.

The truth about the victims of the genocide committed against Serbs, Jews and Gypsies was kept hidden after the war in the archives of the United Nations War Crime Commission in New York. The Ustasha death camp Jasenovac was not even recorded. I mention that, it was mentioned by Ambassador Jovanovic, because you will see e-mail I have received from the Chief of the United Nations War Crimes Archives saying that they do not have any

evidence of Jasenovac. Research carried out in the archives of International Red Cross in Geneva revealed the only evidence, depicting the Jasenovac death camp as a friendly refugee camp, as a sort of Potemkin village, complete with a medical laboratory, doctors, women sewing and even cooks dressed in white. The production of these photos you can see here on the exhibitions.

The former commander of the Jasenovac Death camp, the notorious Dinko Šakić, Ustashe captain, *satnik*, Maks Luburić's adjutant and brother-in-law, said at a rally in 1990: "I am proud to have been an Ustasha. I am not ashamed of my name". His only regret, he said that he did not kill more Serbs to make things easier for his idol Dr. Franjo Tudjman. The innocent face of this surviving genocide criminal is also exhibited—just at the entrance of the exhibition. Anti-Serbian politicization obstructed without any rational cause the investigation and presentation of the truth of Jasenovac. Outside Yugoslavia, I should regretfully say, before Kingsborough College, it was exhibited only in Vienna at Hoffbourg Palace. So, as I mentioned in the beginning, Dr. Klein and Prof. Barry Lituchy made this possible the first time here in the United States of America. I hope it won't stop here, in the gates of New York, that it will continue to go to Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles and other places, hopefully, Jerusalem and so forth.

In the Museum of Genocide Victims, in order to establish the real truth and to be objective, not to be foreign "agent" to anybody, we are proposing to establish an International Commission of Experts to establish the truth of Jasenovac. And let me end with the words of my distinguished host in the Kingsborough College News Release—and I quote:

"Auschwitz, Dachau, Bergenbelsen—these words are guaranteed to send a chill down the spine. The infamous concentration camps are vivid symbols of humanity's capacity for inhumanity. And the survivors are everywhere regarded as uncontroversial monuments to strength of the human spirit. But what is your response to the word *Jasenovac*? Thank you.

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**Dr. Bernard Klein:** Thank you very much, Dr. Bulajić. As a student of history, I am given the privilege of making the correction. None of the concentration camps, none of the death camps were liberated by any Allies. There were three not liberated. No Ally—either Soviet Union, or the United States, or France, or Great Britain—ever went out of their way to liberate a camp or a ghetto. They came across it—it was free—never liberated, and that we have to remember. The Russians were outside of Lodz in August of 1944, thirty kilometers outside of Lodz. There were 67,000 Jews in the ghetto of Lodz. Had the Russians marched in, they would have liberated 67,000 Jews. They stopped. And they first came in Lodz in January. Meanwhile, the Germans deported all the 67,000 Jews to Auschwitz. And this is repeated time and again by the Allies. So, they share some of the burden for what happened.

The second correction I want to make is this—Jasenovac was not the last camp freed, what we call liberated. I know that Mauthausen was freed on May 5th of 1945. So, it certainly was not the last one, or may have been the last one in Serbia, Yugoslavia. Okay? So, that's just offered in friendship.

Well, I want to thank you all for coming. The conference will proceed tomorrow and Friday. Tomorrow begins at 9 o'clock. If you want to come earlier, you can partake in some of the refreshments—give you bagels, coffee, juice, cream cheese—whatever you don't have in Yugoslavia, you will have here.

We look forward to seeing you. You are now are welcome to browse around the exhibit which Dr. Bulajić brought with him here and see for yourself what has gone on there. Thank you for coming and hope to see you again. [applause]

I just want to remind you of something else I forgot about. Please give me a minute, okay. We have here Bonnie Gurewitsch of the Jewish Heritage Museum in New York, and she asked me to announce to you that while you are here you are welcome to come and visit that museum which has just been opened a few weeks ago—one part pre-war period, war period, and post-war period, and please avail yourself of that opportunity. There is some literature she brought with her. If you want to ask questions about that museum, she is here. Thank you very much.



**Dr. Bernard Klein**  
**Chair, Presenter**



**Mr. Vladimir Žerjavić**  
**Presenter**



**Mr. Antun Miletić**  
**Presenter**



**Dr. Milan Bulajić**  
**Presenter**



## **Session One: October 30, 1997**

### **Dr. Bernard Klein Kingsborough Community College**

Let me welcome you this morning again to this First International Conference on Jasenovac. As I explained to you yesterday, what the purpose of this conference is—it's simply to promote the establishment of the truth concerning this camp. As I explained to you, there are different estimates as to the number of victims from this camp, or the system of camps, ranging from 20,000—offered by the President of Croatia, to 700,000, which seems to be the common number, prevalent in the Serbian parts of the world. They cannot be both accurate. I assume neither of these is accurate. There are also other statements and other statistics offered which are questionable, such as that more children were killed in Jasenovac than in all the camps in Germany. That is a totally erroneous assumption. I can guarantee you that more children were killed in Auschwitz than in Jasenovac. And if you take it together with the other camps, there will be no comparison. We assume that between 1,000,000 and 1,500,000 children were killed, mostly Jewish children. So, hopefully, this conference will clarify some of these matters. I also would like to clarify another thing. I mentioned it yesterday, and I will mention it today. There are accusations, which are made by all parties concerned, each one accusing the other of being agents. I've been accused of being an agent; I've been accused of being duped, which is okay. I can live with it; I believe I am God's agent. My purpose is simply to get to the truth of what happened in Jasenovac. But I would also like to make this statement—is that in our deliberations and the presentations, we should maintain a professional attitude and not accuse each other, and not make comments derogatory of each other. Let the facts speak for themselves. There is no need to embellish the facts. And there is no need to accuse all Croatians of having been partners in this crime. There were some. And some people say, there were some Serbians who were also involved. That's probably true. As to what

extend, how much of a group in Serbia was involved, as they were in every part of the world and Europe. But I would like to maintain a professional attitude. And I asked all the chairmen of the sessions, that if anyone veers off this path, and anyone who begins to go into attacks and making all kinds of accusations, that they be stopped. We ought to proceed professionally, and that's what we intend to do. Now, the President of the College was supposed to have been here. Unfortunately, he has become ill. He hasn't been here all week, and he is not going to be here today either. So we had yesterday the Vice-President speaking on behalf of the President. I didn't feel it's necessary to bring him down again today. You already heard what he had to say, and we can proceed with the conference.

This morning, we are going to discuss primarily one of the most important issues—the question of numbers. And we have both speakers from Croatia and Yugoslavia, or what is presently called Yugoslavia, namely Serbia. I am sure, the numbers they are going to present are going to differ from each other. And, in the end, we may get somewhere closer to the truth. And after this conference, hopefully, someone else is going to pick up where we left off and continue the search for the truth and, finally arrive at a reasonable number that can be accepted by all scholars. As I said yesterday, this can be done. It's a matter of handing it over to scholars, objective scholars, and also of having the two sides cooperate with each other, to talk to each other—to reveal the documents they have in their possessions and to open them up to scholarly research. If that is done, I think we can arrive at this reasonable number and proceed.

Now, the first speaker is going to be Antun Miletić who is the Director of Military Archives of Yugoslavia who has written quite a number of articles concerning Yugoslavia, concerning the spirit of the time. Regrettably, Mr. Miletić's English is not as fluent as ours, and some of us may have difficulty in understanding him. He would like to read his paper in Serbian. We made arrangements to have it on the projector. Okay, if you are ready to proceed, I am going to call upon Mr. Miletić to come up here, and he will speak in Serbian. If you do not understand Serbian, you can read the contents of what he says on the screen.

**Antun Miletić, M.A.**  
**Director, Military Archives, Yugoslavia**  
**Senior Military History Researcher**  
**President, Association of Genocide and War Crimes Studies**

Ladies and Gentlemen, the subject of my presentation is “Establishing the Number of Persons Killed in the Jasenovac Concentration Camp, 1941-1945.” We are focusing here on the number of inmates killed by the Ustashi of Independent State of Croatia by their full names, dates of birth and of killing, place of birth, and ethnic background as opposed to the total number of those killed. Half a century after the existence of the Jasenovac death camp, it is difficult to understand why it is impossible to make public the death camp or to document by giving full names of the victims—how many Serbs, Jews, Romas, and anti-fascists of other nationalities were killed in a genocide committed in one place alone—in the Jasenovac camp from August 1941 to the end of April 1945. The recent crisis and dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the war, has rendered this problem even more complex in terms of establishing scientific basis for research into this largest execution site in Europe and in determining how many people perished there. Numerous researchers and academics, historians in particular, have failed to meet the challenge of addressing the problem seriously and in confronting the unknown quality. The politicalization of the whole problem and the responsibility related to it has played a great role.

Why is it that there are no reliable statistics regarding the demographic losses and war casualties suffered by the population of former Yugoslavia during World War two? These statistics could serve as a basis of establishing the real losses inflicted in the camps and especially the concentration camp of Jasenovac. It is not that Yugoslav national or foreign scientists—be they historians, demographers or statisticians—have not dealt with the problem. They even produced some results. The difference, however, are drastic. For instance, so far as demographic losses—they vary from 2,000,000 to 3,250,000.

According to Ivo Lah 2,073,000, Dragoljub Tasic 2,428,000, Vladimir Stipetić 2,200,000, Bogoljub Kocević 1,985,000, Vladimir Žerjavić [Croat scientist present at the conference] 2,081,000, Mladen Friganović, 2,042,000).

As far as casualties of the war the estimates range from 947,000 to 1,800,000. (Vegelnik 1,814,000, Stipetić 1,700,000, Paul Mayer and Arthur Campbell 1,067,000, Kocović 1,014,000, Žerjavić 947,000 + 80,000 Yugoslavs killed outside of Yugoslavia).

The official version of the former SFRY [Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia], which was published on May 26, 1945 there were 1,685,000 war casualties. The Yugoslav State Commission charged with the task of establishing the crimes committed by the occupying force and their domestic collaborators later on have established that the number of war dead stood to 1,706,000. However, a few years ago, one of the authors of these estimates, Professor Vladeta Vucković wrote that this figure included demographic losses, and that they were turned into war casualties by Edvard Kardelj (a politician from Slovenia who had high posts in SFRY and in his native republic.)

It is not difficult to deduce that in the absence of accurate data on the demographics and war losses on the territory of former SFRY, it is not possible to establish the number of killed in Jasenovac death camp either. The estimated number of victims is set between 500,000 and 1,400,000, but it is generally believed to be 700,000. The Croatian Commission (Zemaljska Komisija Hrvatske) [at the end of WWII] in charge of establishing war crimes of Occupiers and collaborators has established a public figure of 600,000 victims of Jasenovac. Because of these inaccuracies in numbers, the estimates of the dead in Jasenovac made so far vary even more drastically, ranging between 20,000 and 1,400,000.

All these are "rule of thumb" claims and are not unattainable as such and are used only for political purposes. They are not hard to challenge at all by giving full names of the inmates killed, their date of birth and murder, place they came from as well as their nationality (ethnic origin). To illustrate suffice [just] to name the

liquidated Jews and Romas in Jasenovac to come up with figure of more than 30,000 killed.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, there are many lists compiled village by village, town by town and by cities and their surrounding areas. In about 70 per cent of the cases these lists make it possible to name the dead in general and those in Jasenovac in particular. If these are fitted into the results produced by the State Commission, the republic, provincial, regional, local and city commissions entrusted with the task of establishing the crimes committed by the occupier and its collaborators concerning the number of casualties and destruction caused by war, it is possible to arrive at an approximate number of killed persons.

Several lists of war victims were drawn up after the end of World War Two, until the end of 1948. A new list was made in 1950 and again in 1952. The results of the lists so compiled were never published. On June 10, 1964 the FPRY Government decided to charge the Federal Office of Statistics with drawing up a list of war victims. The Federal Office carried out the task assigned to it and published its results in the volumes entitled "War Victims 1941-1945 (Results of Lists Compiled), Belgrade, August 1966". The cover page of that hardback edition was later stamped "Top Secret". The lists were not made available (with some exceptions) until 1992; they were shelved on the grounds that "some errors have crept in". In addition to being susceptible to political manipulation, the lists were full of inaccuracies, numerical and otherwise (e.g., many Romas were registered as Serbs or Croats, while many Jews were registered as Croats, even as Serbs). This compilation could have provoked strong resentment and confirmed in a way the claims of the Vatican and of its representative in Croatia Franjo Kuharić, as

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<sup>1</sup> Since 1979, when I began my study of Jasenovac death camp and prepared a 120-page historical account of the camp for the purposes of the Urban Planning Institute of Bosnia-Herzegovina that was to help develop a project on the Jasenovac execution site of Gradina and the erection of a monument there, I have started collecting information (last name, father's name, first name, year of birth and killing, nationality or ethnic background, comment if child was killed) on the inmates killed in the Jasenovac camp of Stara Gradiška. So that the list compiled by me now (and for the time being) includes 17,500 Gypsies and 13,055 Jews, which makes a total of 30,555 Romas and Jews killed in Jasenovac-Stara Gradiška.

well as of other minimizers of the victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp.

This compilation states, among other things, that 49,874 inmates were murdered in Jasenovac. Thus, it transpires that some 25,000 Serbs, 10,500 Jews, 8,000 Romas, 5,000 Croats and more than 1,000 persons of other ethnic backgrounds or nationality. Many examples can be used to prove that this figure is extremely low. For instance, the list compiled by the Statistics Office indicates that 175 inhabitants of the village of Nabrdje near Djakovo (Slavonia) were killed in the Jasenovac camp, whereas my list gives the number of 388; 129 people from the village of Uštice near Novska are said to have been killed, instead of 152; the list for the town of Zemun contains the names of 166 victims but the real death toll is 651; for the town of Mostar the list cites 140 and not 288 actually killed. These are just a few examples, although there are more drastic ones such as those for the Bosanska Dubica and Bosanska Gradiška areas.<sup>2</sup>

It should be pointed out as well that other scientific starting-points were adopted and abandoned and that research into the number of the victims of Jasenovac camp was started but never completed. This concerns archaeological, anthropological, pedogeographic, and forensic examinations of the camp, which covered an area of 210 square kilometers. In this respect, nothing has been done since 1960, and nothing seriously at least since 1964. After that no examination was made, which means that a mere 20 per cent of the area was the subject of study. Therefore, this cannot serve as a basis for any authoritative conclusions on the number of the killed. Short of a planned and systematic research and digging up of all of the mass graves discovered thus far (more than 200), there can be no talk of reliable results regarding the number of people killed and buried on Jasenovac execution sites (Ciglana, Gradina, Krapje, Broćice, Jablanac, Kozara, Uštice, Dubica lime kilns, Stara Gradiška, etc.)

For historians searching for objective truth, written documents of diverse provenance are primary sources, including the results of

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<sup>2</sup> From these two areas including 124 towns and villages, 17,000 men, women and children, of whom 16,000 were Serbs, were identified by their full names as victims of Jasenovac.

other disciplines relevant for establishing the number of the killed. However, sight should not be lost of the fact that the Ustashe authorities destroyed most of the documents about the Jasenovac camp. The records kept about prisoners were twice burned (at the beginning of 1943 and in April 1945). For this reason, and due to (deliberate and unintentional) negligence in the last 50 years, we have not managed to solve that problem either. Even if the records had not been destroyed on two occasions, it would have been difficult to arrive at the truth, as the Ustashe had the habit of summarily executing groups of the newly arrived prisoners not bothering to make their entries. This is particularly true of mass transports from the area of Kozara, Slavonia, Srem, some urban areas and parts of the Ustashe NDH. Transports were only recorded as well as the number of G carriages bringing in men, women and children. Also, among thousands of the discovered documents on Jasenovac, there is but a fraction of those saying that anyone "died," let alone was killed or massacred, etc.

It is also well known that the Ustashe covered up the tracks of their crimes in other ways, such as by disinterring and burning the bodies, cooking them in cauldrons, burning the living and the dead, throwing into the Sava river and burying the bodies in secluded places and moorland. Unfortunately, after the war, when demographers, statisticians, archaeologists and the medical profession did their studies, archive institutions, especially those throughout Croatia, in Zagreb in particular, as well as those in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and primarily in Sarajevo, have not done a better job. Archives did not collate the archives of the Ustashe NDH concerning the concentration camp of Jasenovac. Suffice it to glance through the published surveys-hardback editions of archive stocks and collections in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to find out that there is no heading for Jasenovac, meaning that there are no documents on the camp either. Additionally, some of the archive material of the Ustashe NDH has been destroyed to be used as a raw material in paper-making. This is irrefutably proved by the statements of archivists in Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade. The best sources for identifying by name the victims of genocidal crimes in Jasenovac are the documentation preserved by the State, Republic and provincial commissions for establishing the crimes of the

occupier and its collaborators, combined with numerous accounts and memories of the surviving inmates and other witnesses.

Of importance are also the published documents in hardback editions—collections of documents, numerous monographs and memories contained in them, scientific papers, articles appearing in the daily and weekly newspapers. They are all useful in compiling full-name lists of victims in the Jasenovac camp if used with a degree of caution and critical approach. In the final analysis, these contribute to gaining more detailed information about the (full names of) victims.

By far most complete name lists, however, were compiled by the SUBNOR (Federation of War Veterans 1941-45) organizations and camp inmates' associations. Those lists were compiled village by village and town by town, so that they include most of the settlements on the territory of the NDH state of Ustashe at that time. Based on this a very good single name list could be compiled by places from where men, women and children were taken to the Jasenovac camp of Stara Gradiška. In 90 per cent of the cases this was done simply because they were Serbs, Jews or Romas. For this reason, the recent history of the crime of genocide cannot be erased from memory, especially the memory of the Jasenovac camp within the system of camps stretching across 240 square kilometers. The victims were mostly children 25 per cent, women 25 per cent and elderly people 10 per cent, which accounts for 60 per cent of all killed in the camp. These victims, apparently, had nothing to do with the partisan guerrillas or communists for that matter. They were not connected with the Chetniks, either. (This thesis has been advanced by some in recent time.)

Many wonder why not believe the Nazis and Ustashe who gave their estimates of the number of victims in Jasenovac. Hitler's generals and officials mention the numbers of killed Serbs in the documents preserved to the present day. However, they do not say that this was done only in Jasenovac. For instance, Hitler's SS General Frike wrote on March 16, 1944 that the Ustashe had killed between 600,000 and 700,000 Serbs. Dr. Herman Neubacher, Plenipotentiary of the Third Reich Foreign Ministry for Southeast based in Belgrade, wrote that Maks Luburić, commander of the Jasenovac camp admitted to him that he had killed 225,000 Serbs.



General Edvard Glaise von Horstenau, Plenipotentiary for the NDH State, first (on February 21, 1942) expressed the view that 300,000 Serbs had been killed by Ustashe, but in late 1944 he said in a report that the "number of those with slit throats was three quarters of a million." A report dated September 15, 1942 submitted by Ustashe (Navy) Captain Andrić, Liaison Officer with the office of the Plenipotentiary General and Commander in Serbia based in Belgrade, said: "Supreme Commander Col. Friedrich Massenbach attacked the bloodthirstiness of the Ustashe against the Orthodox Christians (Serbs) claiming that to date they had killed 700,000 people in Croatia." Of course, the German occupier knew full well what their allies were doing, and it suited them to the point where their immediate economic and strategic interests were brought into jeopardy by Ustashe actions. Nevertheless, existing documents show that Nazi-Fascist occupiers (Germany and Italy) were surprised by the fact that their Ustashe disciples had surprised their masters in terms of the speed with which they "settled" the Jewish and Serb questions in the NDH State.

Surviving inmates, in their testimonies in 1945 before various commissions entrusted with the task of establishing the crimes committed by the occupiers and their collaborators said: Julio Bing: "I believe that the number is perhaps close to 1,500,000 people"; Jovan Živković: "The number exceeds one million"; Mihajlo Marić: "About one million and 400 thousand inmates have perished one way or another, Milan Duzemlić: "Some 900,000, or according to death reports there were as many as 900,000 such victims"; Dr. Josip Riboli: "40,000 Romas, 20,000 Jews, 20,000 Croats and 320,000 Serbs were murdered"; Dr. Nedo Zec: "They killed nearly 40,000 Romas, 20,000 Jews, 100,000 Croats and Muslims and about 650,000 Serbs"; Risto Stjepanović: "According to approximate figures . . . it is estimated that up to a million people were executed in the camp," and Lazar Jankov as the last surviving inmate said about the number of killed: ". . . I found out that 840,000 men, women and children killed had gone through the books."

While respecting all these statements regarding the number of victims, I still trust science the most, to establish the number of killed in the Jasenovac concentration camp at Stara Gradiška. However, all possibilities have not been exhausted yet. Apart from

the deposited documents of the State Commission, there are also those of the Town Planning Bureau and the then Ministry of Social Policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo provided for 334,114 persons killed, including 40,000 children, for 115,070 missing persons—who most probably ended up in the pits of one of more than 1,000 execution sites across Bosnia-Herzegovina, and for 33,000 killed in urban and rural areas. In addition, Croatia has an index of victims of Fascist terror, where 121,991 victims are registered by their full name, of whom 51,534 perished in the camps, mostly in the Jasenovac camp. According to the list I have compiled myself, 40,000 victims identified by their full names (16,300 Serbs, 14,000 Romas, 5,700 Jews and 300 others) met their death in the Jasenovac camp at Stara Gradiška within the territory of the former Socialist Republic of Croatia and now the Republic of Croatia. Once again, I must point out that this is not the number of killed because my efforts have not been focused on the total number of inmates killed in Jasenovac, but rather on identifying as many victims by full name as possible. A good example is the list provided by Dragoje Lukić, which contains information on the place, full name, date of birth and of killing for 19,554 children (12,113 Serb children, 5,312 Roma children and 1,927 Jewish children) all killed in the Jasenovac camp of Stara Gradiška. Taking into account that I have included full names for killed children in my list, they number 17,550. I believe that after presenting this information, no other evidence is necessary to prove that the crime of genocide did take place there. Secondly, on the basis of these two pieces of information alone, the theses propounded by minimizers of victim numbers in the Jasenovac camp become unsustainable. If we add the numbers of those killed and identified by full name, date of birth and of killing, place from where they had been taken to the Jasenovac camp at Stara Gradiška as well as their nationality and religion, i.e. 31,500 taken from the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina and 5,700 from the territory of the present Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the claims of those citing the figure of 20,000-40,000 need to be revised to correspond at least to the number scientifically established through identification of victims. In any case, there are

still many possibilities and unused sources to revise the figure of 77,200<sup>3</sup> identified victims and considerably increase it. Sight should not be lost, either, of the fact that among the killed there were those coming from the territory of Slovenia and Macedonia as well.

Finally, I should like to say a few words about the name of the concentration camp of Jasenovac. The Ustashe called it "Ustashe Defense, Command of the Jasenovac Camp" or "Labor Service of Ustashe Defense-Collection Camp III," which read above the gates to the central facility, the so-called "Ciglana" (brick works). The Ustashe leadership defended the name "labor" by insisting that they were preparing the wavering for Ustasha service to the Independent State of Croatia and forcing those not used to work to adopt "law, order and discipline." The thesis of a labor camp will also have to be corrected by those who wrote about it claiming that it was organized as a "labor camp." The identified children killed in the Jasenovac camp of Stara Gradiška completely deny it. Surely, they were not brought there to work and to force them to adopt law, order and discipline. The documents show that they were taken to the camps simply because they were Serb, Jewish and Roma children and in order to be killed because of that. And killed they were. Moreover, there are many documents of Ustashe provenance in which it was called by its true name "concentration camp of Jasenovac." Those documents were either published or are deposited in the archives. Even one of the most senior Ustashe officials, Andrija Artuković, wrote to Hitler boasting of how they had dealt with the Jewish question most efficiently as early as the beginning of 1942. How could it be a labor camp, where the crime of genocide was committed, i.e. where the question of Jews and Romas was settled by killing them and where one of the three solutions (killing, expulsion or conversion into Catholicism) for Serbs was implemented?

Antun Miletić  
Yugoslavian Historian  
New York, October 30, 1997

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<sup>3</sup> Serbs-41,936, Romas-17,500, Jews-13,055, Croats-3,400, Muslim-805, and other 304. In the camps, Jasenovac-63,317 (3C) and Stara Gradiška-11,883.

**Dr. Klein:** Thank very much. I do not know if you were able to follow the translations. I understand some people were telling me that it was difficult, so I will just give you a brief summary from my little understanding of Serbian what Mr. Antun Miletić has said. What he was basically saying is that the numbers of victims given by different sources seem to be inaccurate but that it is possible to arrive at an accurate source in light of the research that has been done on various levels, in terms of statistics, demographics, looking at the statistics of people who were deported from different villages and different towns, also by exhuming the graves of the people killed and furthermore by documents which are in possession of the various governmental authorities both in Serbia and Croatia that a decent number could arrived at and, of course, he doesn't accept the numbers given by President Tadjman or some of the exaggerated numbers given by other sources. He himself came to the conclusion, which he reached on the basis of research, and basis of names compiled, somewhere around 77,000 already known. That doesn't mean these are the number of victims.

The victims are many, many more. However, this is a beginning. He also talks about the name of the camp which was given by the Ustashi, namely that it was a labor camp designed to put these people to work and to teach them discipline; however, it is quite obvious by the records of many German and local sources that it was called a concentration camp even in those days, and the only purpose of the camps at Jasenovac and others was to kill these people—Serbs, Gypsies, and Jews.

This is my understanding. I don't know how accurate I am, but those who know better Serbian than I do will be able to correct me later on. [inaudible statement from audience] Yes, right. German sources as well.

I should mention to you that Mr. Miletić is the Senior Ministry Military Researcher and President of the Association of Genocide and War Crimes in Serbia.

Our next speaker is going to speak in English I hope, and we are going to get a different view from the Croatian side. The speaker is Vladimir Žerjavić of the Croatian Institute of History in Zagreb. And Mr. Žerjavić is a well known individual in terms of research.

He has been very much involved in the United Nations works and studies on different levels, not just on this aspect, but he has done some work on this matter as well. And we welcome him here from Croatia. He's going to give his presentation. We will see how it matches with that of Mr. Miletić and Dr. Bulajić.

**Vladimir Žerjavić**  
**Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb**

I want first to greet all participants. But more, first I want to thank Mr. Klein for giving this conference, organized by the Director of the University, and giving me the opportunity to speak about the important matter concerning functioning of the concentration camp Jasenovac during its existence in the so-called Independent State of Croatia, which was created by the fascist of Italy and Germany who wanted to rule not only Europe but to reign over the whole. Let me remind you of this effort of Germany to conquer North Africa, Italy, Ethiopia, Somalia and Eastern Japan, Eastern Asia. Fortunately, this did not happen, thanks to the Western Alliance, but also to the resistance created on the territory of pre-war Yugoslavia, especially, on the territory of Independent State of Croatia, in which most of the people were not satisfied with the Ustasha rulers. This dissatisfaction made the government weak and enabled national liberation movement to finally overcome the occupators, their supporters and collaborators. One should not forget that two Partisan fighters, from the summer '41 to spring '44 when the Western Alliance decided to support Tito—the clothing, medicaments and other vital materials as well as information about occupators' movement, came from the secret organization, centered in Zagreb with ten thousand liaisons, including myself, without which the resistance would not withstand. The ammunition was mostly coming from home guard—Domobrani, as witnessed by the released Serb prisoner of camp Jasenovac at the Nedić's commissar office in Belgrade. One of them, Radko Kornajić, stated, among others: "I should particularly underline the difference which exists between regular army and Ustasha, between them often would openly clash. While Ustasha unscrupulously made tyranny against Serbs, Domobrani behaved humanely with Serbs and avoided as much as possible military confrontation and actually directly helped us. There were about 37,000 Ustasha and about 200,000 regular army. It is known that no soldier of regular army was engaged in camps or even prisons. Rather, many of them became prisoners of the camp, because of disobedience. And with them Ustasha

behaved even more cruel, since they treated them as traitors. It is known also, that in '42, and particularly after capitulation of Italy in September '43, the whole brigade of Domobranis with ammunition joined Partisan forces. It made possible that Partisans liberated great parts of territory and organized its own governing bodies. This should be said, so that it can be understood better the situation on the territory of the so-called Independent State of Croatia. This, which was not at all independent but subordinate machine of occupators. Ustashes applied fascist regime with all system including that of concentration camp as earlier had been done in Germany, Austria and particularly in Poland. The greatest number of camps were closed already in '42 and '43 in Independent State of Croatia, but the worst and the biggest in Jasenovac remained operative up to May 2nd of '45. Second biggest was Stara Gradiška and Lepoglava, which also remained until liberation 8 May '45.

Doubts about total losses. In the year 1946, the number of 1,706,000 of lost lives in World War II were submitted by Yugoslav government to the International Reparation Commission in Paris in '46, and was protected by state authority. Therefore, demographers were calculating only demographic losses. So it was open opportunity for other writers, diplomats like Dedijer and army officers like General [Velmirteric] to speculate where so many people have been killed during four-year war—the concentration fall under the biggest camp—Jasenovac. The speculation ranged from 350,000, 500,000 and 700,000, and even one million killed in this camp.

When I returned in the country in '82, after twenty years of work abroad and retired from United service at seventy years of age, I was shocked by the big differences among various authors and why proper investigation of particular documents was not made for it was obvious that such big differences cannot be based on proper documentation. As the political tension was growing, officials in administration and statistical offices were afraid to take or undertake any work of these matters. After Dr. Franjo Tudjman, as Director of Institute for [unintelligible] was prosecuted for disclosing official data about the census in '64, I decided to make the investigation since I was not in official service. After three years of study, I came to the result to which, I later learned, came also Dr. Bogoljub

Kočović, a Serb immigrant, published in London in '85. Our comparative data are as follows, in thousands. Total demographic losses: Kočović—1,985,000; mine—2,022,000. Two demographic losses, which means diminishing theirs and increasing totality: Kočović—333,000; I—326,000. Immigration: Kočović—638,000; I have 669,000. World War's lost lives: Kočović—1,014,000; mine—1,027,000. Both studies are based on official data published by the federal statistics bureau, which follow the changes in population of Yugoslavia from the first year '21 census to '39. And after the war it was resumed again in '47, up to first post-war census on March 15th, '48. This census of '48 has given the number of population that survived the war, and only if these other taken into account, appropriate data about the number of lost lives could be obtained. This means that data submitted in the year '46 to International Reparation Commission, when there was no actual census of survivors, could be only guesses and not right and acceptable figure about the victims of the war.

Verification of statistical approach. During my investigation, I found in the institutes, archives and libraries many publication describing war situation and data about number of persons killed. Many of them provided names, places of birth, places where and how they lost their lives. I started to collect these data and found them for republic Croatia and for all municipalities: for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the biggest places of crime—Kozara, and where the biggest clashes took place and for other republics and provinces. There are 140 monographs listed in my book, which I brought here. In my book here listed obtained verified statistical method. So I was more settled that the total loss in all pre-war Yugoslavia was actually 1,027,000. According to these data, the losses by categories for Yugoslavia were: 237,000 soldiers, 501,000 as civilian victims, out of which about 285,000 in villages, because some villages were four to five times taken by Ustasha, by Partisans and so on; 216,000 in camps, pits and prisons and 209,000 quisling collaborators. Total—947,000 lost lives in the country and 80,000 abroad, mostly in camps.

Studies of other demographs: First of all I should mention Ivan Lah who has proved demographic calculations of losses of Lev Tasić and Dolfe Vogeltnik who from periods '41 to '48, mostly for



period of war, applied rate of growth of population between 1.5% to 2.13 per year while registered rate of growth from '31 was in decline and in '39 reached only one tenth percent. Ivo Lah's demographic losses amount to 1,863,000, Tasić—2,200,000; Vogelnik—2,654,000 lower version and higher—3,007,000, all for pre-war territory of Yugoslavia. I should mention here the statement of Dr. Dragutin Grupković, Director of statistical office in Belgrade, at the occasion of opening of museum, published in "Political Svet" exclusive April 1st, 1990 that expertise calculating demographic losses of war Yugoslavia are between 1,750,000 and 2,000,000. This is the figure, which gave, I think, also present director of statistical office Belgrade, which equals to that of Ivo Lah. This, however authentic, it implies, that lost lives should amount to about one million less, because from demographic losses should be deducted 650 immigrants (450 of them Germans), decline in [unintelligible] in death rate, as conflict of war 350. Dr. Bulajić, on that occasion, thanked to Dr. Grupković for his contribution in finding the way in counting the war losses or the losses of life. I should ask now Dr. Bulajić, why he did not protest to Dr. Grupković while he was saying to me that I am doing crime while calculating 1,027,000 and according to Grupković is even less, if he has demographic losses 1,875,000 killed. I should mention here, also, that experienced American demographer Paul Meyers and Arthur Campbell in studying the population of Yugoslavia Bureau of Census, Washington D.C., published in '54, calculated 1,067,000 lost lives. Further, Dr. Bulajić knows well that Dr. Vogelnik and Dr. Kadac committed fraud. While knowing the results of Dr. Vladeta Vuković calculated in '47 as 1,700,000 demographic, they submitted to Paris Reparation Commission as actual losses of lives. Since Dr. Bulajić accepts only Dr. Vogelnik calculation, because on this erroneous demographic losses may lead to losses of lives between 1,700,000 to 2,000,000, and then to 1,000,000 killed in the camp Jasenovac; on the other hand, for 597,000 victims in the pre-war Yugoslavia. Registered by Census of Victims in '64, not only on the request of Yugoslav government, but on the request of German government, stated that they represent only 59% of actual losses. Accepting this hearsay, that losses could be around to one million, if this five hundred ninety seven thousand is 59%, then total losses are one

million. This census registered 49,875 persons killed in Jasenovac and 9,578 in Stara Gradiška. But according to my investigation on Jasenovac, losses were between 48,000 and 52,000 Serbs, 30,000 Jews, 12,000 Croats, 10,000 Gypsies—total 85,000 and 28,000 in other camps and pits and prisons. So I have 113,000 killed, hundred persons more than Census of '64. So I did not trust the data of census, made twenty years later of the war, for one cannot expect to get complete data. Anyhow, does anybody believe that a new census, carried out after 53 years after the war could provide more complete data?

I had with Mr. Bulajić three confrontations in the year '89. One in Belgrade, on TV talk show, when Dr. Živanović, as a member of anthropologist team who carried excavation in Jasenovac Gradina in '64, stated that the three anthropologists calculated 700,000 bodies there. Here, however, Dr. Iva Brodar, said member of anthropology, who in the mean time died, from Ljubljana, stated in writing, that no calculation has been done, because they found only 284 skeletons in 7 graves, which were previously selected as most promising for finding a greater number of victims. So, this was false statement of Dr. Živanović and dishonest for an expert. I met with Dr. Bulajić on a meeting of scientists and anti-fascists in Vilnic in museum Jasenovac and again in Jewish community Vilnic and Zagreb organized by them President of Jewish Association in Zagreb Slavko Goldstein and community, and he was editor of my first book. But as I see now, after eight years, Dr. Bulajić still tries to find his lost 700,000 victims which actually never existed.

Here, I should also inform you that my correspondence with Yad Vashem in Jerusalem concerning victims in Jasenovac. I send them the letter of Barbara Tamil, executive Director of Canada Yad Vashem of 22 August '91, addressed to these Serbian friends: "The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem representing Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and the Holocaust Center joins with you in urging the Croatian government in Zagreb to address the concern of Croatia's one million strong Serbian minority's fear of another wave of prosecution, similar to what took place during World War II. More than one million Serbs and Jews from the Independent State of Croatia perished. Yad Vashem houses thousands of documents which attest to this fact. It is time that the Croatian government

acknowledged the genocide and apologized for the crimes committed 45 years ago.”

The answer from Jerusalem, signed by Mr. Reuven Dafni, Vice Chairman answered with the letter of May 17th, '93 addressed to me: “I was shocked by your letter and especially by the copy of Ms. Barbara Tamil letter. In respect of the question of the number of Serbs killed by the Ustasha during World War II, Ms. Tamil had no right whatsoever to write her letter without consulting us first. I assure you that the content of the letter expresses her private opinion and in no way represents Yad Vashem. First of all, I can categorically say that Yad Vashem does not have a single document attesting to the murder of one million Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia.

According to census in '31, according to Independent State of Croatia today and Bosnia and Srem is a [approximately two minutes of Mr. Žerjavić's presentation is inaudible due to technical problems at the conference] I ask Dr. Bulajić ...when he does not accept expertise statistical approach which is everywhere used as the basis for demographic study. And anthropological excavation did not produce sufficient proof for person killed there. Also, nothing new could be expected of new censuses of dead people. In my opinion, until now, there is sufficient documentation produced which proves that not more than one million lost lives in pre-war territory of Yugoslavia and that no more than 50,000 Serbs are killed in Jasenovac and other camps, pits or prison lost lives about 28,000 besides 35,000 Croats, Gypsies and Jews lost live. Sixty thousand Serbs were killed by Germans in Italy in the great offensive. There were several great offensives where they shoot with Trans bombs, cannons and so on. Thirty-three thousand were killed in clashes between Partisans and Ustasha, and 25 tied of typhus.

Nobody can deny or justify atrocities done during the war by Ustasha and myself, too. But it should be said that most of these who were guilty, were punished immediately after the war, not only by individual prosecution, but also through mass liquidation of about 50,000 on the Slovenian-Austrian border, and later on the so-called “Death” march, many of them innocent who did not want to live under communist regime.

According to war '91-'95, no desecration or destruction of the museum in Gradina has been made by Croatian forces, as claimed by Dr. Bulajić. The memorial ground on the Croatian side is not destroyed. It is protected by law, under separate authority and will be completed with the material deposited in the archives of Croatia censuses of victims of '46 and '64 other filed duplicates of the museum, but exhibits should returned from Bosnia. Serbian immigrants, periodicals are rare, wrote that Kočović and Mae are historic books Serbs leaving from Croatia and Anti-Fascist [inaudible] Jews community of Croatia and Yad Vashem accepting my results. I think that Dr. Bulajić will finally agree with them. So, in my opinion, there is no any more dark secrets in the Holocaust '41-'45 on former Yugoslavia and therefore no reason for further investigation.

My book, titled *Losses of Population in Yugoslavia: '41-'45* and the other, titled *The Likely Number of Killed in Jasenovac* are displayed here, and the interested may judge for themselves the accuracy of data contained in them. Thank you very much.

**Question from audience:** Excuse me. It was hard to understand the total amount of people killed at Jasenovac, according to your study. Could you repeat?

**Mr. Žerjavić:** Eighty-five thousand—50,000 Serbs, 13,000 Jews, 12,000 Croats, 10,000 gypsies.

**From audience:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Žerjavić:** And 28,000 in other camps, which makes 113,000. Serbs killed 322 in Independent State of Croatia. but mostly they were killed in villages, not in camps.

**Dr. Klein:** There will be opportunities of asking questions later. You could see how I was aware of what is happening here. I did not know what Mr. Žerjavić was going to say, or the others. But, somehow, I put them together on the same panel and you see what the problem is. What can you do with statistics and how you have to interpret statistics. I think certain things can be established very objectively in the terms of the grounds that Mr. Žerjavić has mentioned. We can have organized a group to travel to Jasenovac and see what is happening there, what has happened. So, if the

Croatian government wants to invite us, we'll be able to go there and take a look.

I am not taking sides. I am not saying they did destroy them, they didn't destroy them. But I am saying we are willing and prepared to go and look at it. Our next speaker is going to be Dr. Milan Bulajić, about whom Mr. Žerjavić has spoken in considerable length. And he'll have to defend himself, or just give his version of what happened. And we'll see, what other people—what the discussions, the reaction is going to be and the questions from the floor. And maybe we'll get a clearer picture. Certainly Mr. Žerjavić has already given us a different figure from what we had before—85,000 for Jasenovac, plus others. We'll get the clarification. What's your qualification?

**Question from the audience:** I didn't hear him say that he considered those 85,000 deaths an act of genocide. Does he consider that?

**Dr. Klein:** All right. I think you can ask that question when we open the floor for questions. Okay? I think he made it very clear in terms of how the victims—85,000. He broke them down into categories. Whether you accept it or not—that's another matter, but this is what he presented. It's certainly not the figure that we have been told, or which is circulating that the Croats, and certainly President Tudjman has minimized, are minimized of twenty thousand or thirty thousand. So, we have a different version from Croatian sources.

Okay. Dr. Bulajić has been the Director of the Museum of Genocide in Belgrade. And he has done a credible job of collecting documents, archives and artifacts of what happened in this camp. And I assume, again these can be verified, that they are real and genuine. And Dr. Bulajić is going to talk about dispelling the Jasenovac myth. And I am sure he will give you some statistics, supporting his thesis. Dr. Bulajić.

**Dr. Bulajić:** Thank you, Dr. Klein. I have to defend myself, and I have to present my position.

**Dr. Klein:** It is not necessary to defend yourself.

**Dr. Bulajić:** I was called at least ten times, and I have to do it.

**Dr. Klein:** Well, you are a famous man. [Bulajić laughs.]

**Dr. Milan Bulajić**  
**Director, Museum of Genocide Victims, Belgrade**

Thank you. Well, I was introduced as a Director of the Museum of Genocide Victims in Yugoslavia. Our vision is Yad-Vashem in Jerusalem. Our vision is the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington. Our vision is the New York Museum of Jewish Heritage and memorial to the Holocaust. Our cooperation goes, thanks to Dr. Klein, to Kingsborough Holocaust Research Center. So, we are in the group which is trying to establish the truth, and nothing but the truth.

Our biggest and most important project is war crimes 1941-1945. The reason of this is very simple: the census on which Dr. Tudjman is basing his Jasenovac myth, is 597,000, 597,000—wide figure, which is not only Jasenovac myth or myth in general, but the figure which was recognized by the International Commission for war crimes during Second World War is 1,706,000. So, as Dr. Klein said, well—that couldn't be. We cannot bargain, whether it's 600,000 or 1,700,000.

My political party is truth. My religion is the truth. And what we really do and what I am thankful for—this First International Conference is to establish the truth and facts.

Dr. Tudjman, in his *Wasteland of Diplomatic History*, was referring to me. Actually, my book—four-volume book on the Ustasha crime of genocide—in the trial of Andrei Artuković, 1986. Tudjman quotes: “By the end of his book, entitled instead of conclusion”—he is quoting Milan Bulajić—“he sends an invitation to a dialogue and establishment of historical truth. And Bulajić addressed to them an invitation to a dialogue in order to establish human and God's truth, so that we don't see the realization of Jones's prediction that there will come a time when people who kill you, will think they served God by that.” This is according to Tudjman, Bulajić final sentence, and Bulajić stands today to this preposterous dialog. I do regret that Dr. Tudjman is not present here, because what we are discussing today—*Wastelands of Historical Reality*—and the essence, the central *stožerno pitanje* is Jasenovac myth. So, it would be really very good to face Dr. Tudjman with his

argument and our counter argument with due respect for this personality. As a matter of fact, when his first book—*Wastelands of Diplomatic History*—was published in 1989, I was among the first who commented on that, and I invited Dr. Franjo Tudjman for a public dialog three times (fourth time was this year), but we never really got to it. On September 5, this year, I received in the Museum a Representative of the Croatian Embassy in Belgrade Aleksandar Skondorović. I proposed, in the process of normalization of relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Republic of Croatia, cooperation in establishing truth about Jasenovac. I do agree with Dr. Tudjman that this is the central, *stožerno pitanje*, of Serbian-Croatian relations. And I do believe deep in my heart that without establishing truth about war victims, more particularly, about genocide crimes, the most terrible crimes against international law and mankind, against Serbs, Jews and Gypsies and anti-fascists in Yugoslavia, there is no light in the tunnel of good relations between Serbs and Croats. With the facts running from 597,000, that is 20,000 in Jasenovac, according to Tudjman, and 500,000 to 600,000 to other sources—the Croats and the Serbs as well can be manipulated. Only when we establish the real truth and then find whose responsibility is for this, then we might see a good friendship. One thing I would like to say at the very beginning—that Milan Bulajić never and never said that Croatian people is genocide people. Never! I have many friends among Croats, many colleagues. I consider engineer Žerjavić a friend. He has mentioned a number of our dialogues, discussions, public discussions. We differ, but I hope that we, as he hopes, that we come one day for more understanding to each other. So, whatever I said in connection to Dr. Tudjman's book—*Wastelands of Historical Reality*—in his Jasenovac myth, I strongly support his appeal to establish facts on Jasenovac. And that is the reason that we are advocating for years the initiative that I put forward at the Fifth International Conference on the Holocaust, chaired by Dr. Klein in Jerusalem, December 30th, to establish an international commission of experts—repeat, international commission of experts, to establish an objective truth—that Bulajić, Žerjavić, and whoever have documents, want to present the facts. Let those international experts review them and

find the truth in those facts. That is the only way that I believe we can do it.

Well, my paper is a long one. But, before that, I am thankful, I appreciate very much Mr. Vladimir Žerjavić appearing and exposing his views here. He is citing a friend of mine and my compatriot from Montenegro—Mr. Grupković -the Director General of the Federal Bureau of Statistics and why, if I don't believe Mr. Žerjavić, why I wouldn't believe my friend Grupković? Well, Mr. Žerjavić, my beliefs are not based on friendship or personality. My beliefs are basis of my conclusion in a long and deep research of the problem. And the basic approach and basic answer to your question is this. In the first place, the 1930 population census in Yugoslavia, according to the competent international expert, was not professionally done at European level. A group of demographers of the US University in Princeton, which was a qualified university, believes that the Yugoslav pre-war demographic data are so inaccurate that they should be corrected before they are used for any calculations. The Yugoslav demographers believe that the large mistakes in demographic assessments are possible as consequence of incomplete data on the immigration of the population, depending on the death, or the birth, or race apply. Of critical importance is the fact that due to the Nazi-Fascist aggression and the break up of the first Yugoslav state, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941, the next ten-year census of the population was not carried out, as was due to. Due to thus far officially-unexplained reasons, during the first post-war general population census in Yugoslavia, no record of the victims of 1941 to 1945 war was made. Therefore, the only authentic methodology of establishing the truth is to make a list of victims of war, identified by their given name and family names, including all other data necessary for identification in the same manner as it was and still is being done by Yad Vashem. This is experience we learn. This is experience we are using now. And this is what result, what Museum of Genocide Victims has accomplished so far that I am going to present here today in Kingsborough Community College for the first time. So, this is the reason, Mr. Žerjavić, that I question not only your demographic estimates, but *all* demographic estimates. I don't believe that there is a solid basis for establishing the number of the war victims, the number of Genocide victims, less the number of the



victims of the Jasenovac camp. This is the first and important thing is our differences are. Second, you have mentioned that Bulajić still advocates 700,000 victims of Jasenovac. Never! Never Bulajić has mentioned anything! I am mentioning only the figure where I come up by identifying victims by their own names. I am quoting, but quoting—citing only—the report of the Croatian State Commission for war crimes which was officially submitted to International Commission of war crimes in 1946, where the results, where the many witnesses, not so small number as we have them present here, existed. They were testifying about these terrible crimes in camp of Jasenovac.

Mr. Žerjavić was also asking and quoting Yad Vashem sources. Well, this is a letter of Yad Vashem here. Letter dated: Jerusalem, May 26th, 1996, addressed personally to Dr. Franjo Tudjman, President Republic of Croatia, Zagreb; signed by Avner Shalev, Chairman Yad Vashem directorate; Dr. Joseph Burg, Chairman International Council. And they say here: “In 1941, about 40,000 Jews lived in Croatia. Approximately 25,000 Jews were murdered at the concentration and extermination camp Jasenovac by the Croatian USTASHA under Ante Pavelić within the framework of Nazi Germany’s masterplan for the destruction of the Jewish people.” This is the copy I was given in Yad Vashem when I was visiting them.

Well, about the question about the size of Jasenovac. Well, Bulajić speaks about system of Ustasha death camps of Jasenovac. Among eight big camps, Jasenovac was just one. And I would like to remind Dr. Žerjavić, when he mentioned that we were together, discussing the victims of Jasenovac, in Jasenovac, that in the entrance of Jasenovac there was the system of Ustasha death camps, covering 240 square kilometers. That was the Federal Republic of Croatia that existed then, and he was there, and nobody protested about these figures. Now, later on, when we were trying to measure and to find the new mass graves in the areas of system of Jasenovac camp, I enlarged in saying from 210 to 240 square kilometers. And that is an area coming from Stara Gradiška, Jasenovac, along the road of death along the Sava, up to Kostajnica, Krečane and so forth. So, these are, I think, the basic—but we will come later on. There are number of questions, but I have to speak about what I

think about it. About the history, about the revision of history, which is present in *Wastelands of Historical Reality* about anti-fascist movement in Croatia, well I might turn my other hat and tell you that I went into resistance movement in Partisans at age 13, literally in shorts. And I was not belonging to any ideology, to any party. I was just a little innocent boy with a gun in the Partisan Army and who saw what he saw. So, I know what was the situation. If we speak about resistance movement in Croatia, 1941, we can leave Croatia sources and critics from the Communist Party of Croatia. If we speak about resistance movement in Croatia, we have to think what was happening up to 1943 and what was happening after 1943—the capitulation of Italy and when Croatia was really saving itself and to slowly, thanks to the resistant Serbs from Croatia, to save themselves and to be on the side of Allies. This is the truth, but this is another subject. It really takes out of this, but I just wanted to mention that we have to establish certain historical realities.

Dr. Franjo Tudjman, general, President of the Federal Republic of Croatia. So he is somebody, his words, and that's the reason I regret he was not presently around. But this book was published in German. This book was published in English and American edition. But this book changed its own title. It's not anymore *The Wastelands of Historic Reality*. This is *Horrors of War*. It's completely different. And if you compare the German edition and the American edition, you will find that from this everything was taken out about anti-Semitism. Everything! Everything about the Jasenovac myth is inside. He apologized to Jews. He did not apologize to Serbs. He did not apologize to Gypsies. He didn't apologize to hundreds and hundreds, thousands of anti-fascists who were killed there. So, this is important to discuss, what he really thinks about this subject.

The basic subject of that book is genocide as historical necessity. He develops a "philosophy of malefaction," or justification of genocide. And I quote: "First, in history there have always existed attempts to devise a 'final solution' for foreign or undesirable racial-ethnic or religious groups through expulsion, extermination and conversion to the 'true faith.'" Secondly, there are many examples indicating that such crimes which could be defined as genocide, in terms both of their extent and their diversity, happened much more

frequently after wars ended than during the wars themselves because the victors could do then what they pleased at will, in contrast with the war time period when restraints were necessarily in view of the uncertain outcome of the conflict. Thirdly, it is rather futile to try to establish the manifestations of all of some types of genocidal behavior in only one historical segment of time. Namely, they have always existed in one form or another since time immemorial, with the same basic effect with regard to the place and time, regardless of all differences in their manifestation and extent. And fourthly, any philosophizing goes wide of the mark, and has no sense whatsoever when it attributes genocidal proclivities, their causes and objectives, to some peoples or racial-ethnic communities only, or only to some cultural and civilizational spheres and socio-revolutionary movements.

To prove his thesis about genocide as a natural phenomenon in devolution of human society, Tadjman resorts to examples about the “first chosen people,” the Jews. Quoting the Bible “that inextinguishable the law of retaliation has been legalized, the law of the ‘might makes right’ sanctified any ruthlessness in destroying one’s adversary justified. The Jewish God Yahwe himself commends the obliteration of the biblical people of Moab from the face of the earth and the fact that the flower of her youth goes down to slaughter.” Since the extermination of an alien, hostile and rebellious people is not a simple and easy job, Yahwe will issue instructions: ‘Burn one third in a fire in the center of the city . . . cut up one third with a sword all round the city; scatter one third to the wind,’ i.e. banish them, but he will also ‘unleash on them famine and beasts of prey’ (Ezek, 5:2-17).

Does not this remind one of the instructions of the Ustasha leader Dr. Mile Budak: Kill one third; expel one third; convert one third to Catholics. This is, in fact, the justification of the crime of genocide and the basis of Anti-Semitism. Tadjman also created a sickness of victims of the genocide—especially Jews and Orthodox Serbs suffer from “victimmania.” They enormously increased the number of the victims: Jews to 6,000,000, although in fact according to Tadjman, only 1,000,000 were killed; Serbs-1,700,000 although several thousand were killed.

On that basis, Tadjman tries to prove the existence of the Jasenovac myth as one of the central historical questions Mira Marković volunteered and found that Jasenovac myth was mentioned at least 105 times in 480 pages of the book. And myth is not something that is hated but of the realm of fantasy, of invention. So the camp Jasenovac is also something invented, false, something exaggerated. In order, and I quote, “to reveal the absurdity of the claim, that at Jasenovac alone 700,000 to 800,000 people were killed, I told the responsible people that this meant the execution and torment of 500 people per day, 600 excluding the holidays, or twenty to thirty people per hour—often an estimate, which is by far more important than probably the overall victims of Yugoslavia in entire World War II,” concludes Tadjman. Tadjman claims in the framework of the interpretation of the most important and controversial question of the modern history, a special place was given to the myth about the victims of Jasenovac. And it is because finally there is an attempt to support scientifically that myth by the theory about genocidal nature of every kind of Croatia, starting from Strossmayer, Yugoslavism, In Radić confederalism to Tito’s sudden basis of equality, which is not expressing hopelessness, at least expresses a deep crisis of historical sense. The actualization of the problem of the victims of war almost exclusively in the sense of the gradual increase of the already exaggerated number of victims of the Jasenovac camp,” according to Tadjman, “is doubtless; that there is in order to add more to the Jasenovac myth, in order to ascribe to it the importance of a certain event in Croatian-Serbian relations in the period of occupation and revolution. In the form of increasing exaggerating of the number of killed Serbs, in order to create the starting basis for the alleged scientific assortment of the entire modern common history. With the obvious objective to establish that until now repented special responsibility of a Croatian people.” That’s what I said at very outset—there is nothing but nothing against Croatian people. Tadjman asked the question: “Wouldn’t it be more purposeful for illumination of war that unhealthy which poisoned the relation between the nations and which is unacceptable for every man of good will, to let science study and show the results regarding the historical problem like every other question.” That’s what we are here to do. “We live in an

era, which such a thing could not be prevented. Don't then describe horrors, scream, asking that finally their truth and their falsehood be studied in monographic way.”

That is why we are here. Why this is so important? One of the witnesses—I was present at the Artuković trial in Los Angeles (on the Andrei Artuković in the Federal Court of Los Angeles) Dr. Ivo Omrčanin, former Minister Plenipotentiary of Ustasha Croatia in Nazi Germany and later professor of law at the Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts stated in Zagreb, 1990 (among other things): “ Ustasha camp Jasenovac are forgeries. That nothing is authentic. It is also made up to defame us, but nothing is original. Those films, which were made by the people whose interest they serve, and remember, that the Jews, when they run out with treasures from Hungary, found this Hollywood. The Jews, according to Dr. Ivo Omrčanin, made Hollywood out of Jasenovac.

Ustasha Dr. Ivo Omrčanin, a retired American professor of Philosophy of Law, is still enjoying the hospitality of the United States, in spite of repeated warnings. In the citing of domestic discussion, Tudjman was referring to dialogue, and we accept dialogue, we want dialogue. We are pleased that Mr. Žerjavić is here. We hope that Mr. Žerjavić will take a message from here and to say we are ready to cooperate. My Museum of Genocide Victims is ready, as I said before, to cooperate with the Institute of Zagreb and any other institutes willing to establish the real truth. But the basic question here is: Jasenovac—myth or the system of Ustasha death camps? That's what we have to resolve. That's what's the reality. That is what these survivors, present here, will tell you—what they saw, eyewitnesses; not only eyewitnesses, but those who were suffering there.

I like to submit here that Jasenovac was the most brutal system of Croatian Ustasha extermination camps, operating between 21st August, 1941 and 22nd April, 1945, covering an area of about, as I said before, 210 to 240 square kilometers. The area was surrounded by the rivers: Sava, Una, and Struga in the middle of the swamp area of Lonjsko polje, so it was almost impossible to escape from the camp. On the other side of the Sava, the Gradina region was hardly accessible and often flooded by the river, uninhabited and far from the witnesses. The existing factories, their workshops, locksmith

shops, brick factories, lumber mills, etc. would easily present the camp as a work camp to the public. The Zagreb-Belgrade railway was in the vicinity for transport to prisons.

Many people do know that the camp in the village Jasenovac was only one of the Ustasha camps in that region, Number “3C” Kozara. It was system of death camps: Krapje, Bročice, Sidrana, Kozara, Stara Gradiška, with the series of execution places: Gradina, Ustice, Mlaka, Jablanac, Krečane, Lemane. The fresh herds of prisoners were built near the village Bročice, camp Versaje or Krapje to be used for the drainage of the Lonjsko polje (plain). It was established in the territory occupied by Germany, in which there was not a single German guard—that is a very important fact—aside from appalled Nazi criminals. However, Germany, the Third Reich, bears full responsibility for that. Even the Nazi Generals were amazed at the horrors of Jasenovac. Thus, for instance, General von Horstenau—Hitler’s representative in Zagreb, wrote in his personal diary in 1942, that Ustasha camps in the Independent State of Croatia were the epitome of horror. Arthur Heffner, the other representative in Zagreb, wrote about Jasenovac on November 11, 1942: that concept of the Jasenovac camp should actually be understood as a group of several camps, several kilometers apart from each other, grouped around Jasenovac. Regardless of the propaganda, this is one of the most horrible camps, which can be compared only to Dante’s “Inferno.”

There is no evidence in history of former Yugoslavia of more children being killed in the single place than in Ustasha death camp of Jasenovac. According to new finding by the Museum of Victims of Genocide, during four years period the Ustasha criminals killed, in the most atrocious way 19,554 children from one day old to fourteen years, identified by their names, first and last, parents and places of birth. This is not yet the final number, to remind you. We are further researching and adding new names. Children were brought to Jasenovac from 1,074 different villages and places throughout the Independent State of Croatia, which at that time included Bosnia and Herzegovina. In other camps and places the genocide the Independent State of Croatia killed 74,360 children. We have all of them by names, first and last. And the big volume book is prepared now with the photos of the children, which all

dates and places of their—. As said before, I have many statements, made by the survivors. But let them speak for this. Jasenovac is not only the symbol of the most cruel crimes of genocide. It is also an example of heroism—the break out of the unarmed, weak and tortured inmates on 22nd April, 1949. By the beginning of 1945, the Ustasha were preparing the liquidation of the Jasenovac camp, in order to remove all traces of their genocide, before escaping. The ultimate liquidation of the camp began on 20th April, when the last big block of women and children executed on 22nd April, 1945 under the leadership of Ante Bakotić, some six hundred people, armed with bricks, poles, hammers and other things broke the doors, shattered the windows and ran out of the building. Some 470 people were sick and unable to fight bare handed against the armed Ustasha. So, they did not take part in the rebellion. The hundred fifty meter long path to the East gate was covered by the cross-fire of Ustasha machine guns and many prisoners were killed. Many of them were killed on walls of the camp. The remaining four hundred seventy within were killed later by Ustasha. The captives of the camp Kozara, 167 of them, also began mortal combat led by Stanko Caćesa and Zahib Bukurević about 8 pm on that same day. One hundred fifty of them managed to break through, but they were surrounded by fire so heavily that only eleven prisoners survived. The date of the breakout of the Jasenovac inmates was justly chosen as the official Remembrance Day for the victims of genocide. As Yom-Hashoa day is for the Jews.

Well, Tadjman has a different opinion on that. In *Wasteland*, he argues that truth is that camp was set up as a labor camp, with many industrial, agricultural and craft units. Thousands and even dozens of thousands of unfortunate people were brought to the camp individually, but mostly in small groups—several dozen or hundreds. But they were also released and sent to the camps or to work in Germany. Throughout all that time, the internees were sure of their strength and horrors under incredibly hard and unhealthy working conditions. And individuals, especially the exhausted and old ones, were tortured and killed at the least sign of disobedience. And from time to time usually from some death “Ustashes” or attempted escapes. They were brutally killed in small or large groups—that’s what Tadjman accepts, dozen or even

hundreds of people. In that way several, probably three to four tens of thousands internees really perished. Three to four tens of thousands perished.

That is his estimate. Tadjman quotes and mentions the extremely Anti-Semitic statement by released prisoner of Jasenovac Vojin Prnjatović given in Belgrade, under Nazi occupation, in the commissariat for refugees on 11 March, 1942, And I quote: “There were five to eight times more Jews than Serbs in the camp”—which is not true—“since they arrived earlier and managed to grab all important posts in the prisoners hierarchy, they constantly and skillfully intrigued against the Serbs for their own privileges. And since the Ustasha trusted Jews more than Serbs, the Serbs besides suffering from the Ustasha, suffered from the Jews”—which is absolutely not true—“A Jew will remain a Jew even in Jasenovac camp. But these faults are now more visible: egotism, shrewdness, stinginess, perfidy and informing are their main characteristics.” In order to confirm these allegations, for which he says, are exaggerated and show Anti-Semitic mood, Tadjman mentioned the testimonies of the prisoner Branko Popović about Jews called Bulgarian and especially that of the Croat Ante Ciliga, former member of the political bureau of the Central Committee of Yugoslav Communist Party who spend more than a year, 1940 or 1942, in an Ustasha prison in Jasenovac.

Still, Tadjman concludes in his conclusion: “It is a historical fact that Ustasha regime of Independent State of Croatia committed in an implementation of the plans of the reduction of the enemy Serb-Orthodoxy population in Croatia left a big crime of genocide against the Serbs and proportionally even bigger crime against Romanies and Jews in the implementation of Nazi racist policy. However, regardless of mythical multiplication of the Jasenovac victims, regardless of the fact that it was tenfold, the crime had been horrible and big both according to size and according to the way of execution in genocide.”

Now, my friend Dr. Klein is warning me, but I spent time in answering that which I was asked to explain some. But there are two basic things I would like to mention. There are many others, but these are the basics: The Jasenovac myth and incorrect inventory of the victims of 1941 to 1945. Because Tadjman’s basic thesis is that



according to census of war crimes 1941-1945 which resulted in 597,000 victims all together in the whole Yugoslavia. So, his simple conclusion is: if it is all total number of victims in Yugoslavia – 597,000, then whatever anybody speaks of such a number of Jasenovac victims, they are creating Jasenovac myth. But we made research on this. And we established, contrary to Tadjman's conclusion (because his idea was, this thesis was, that his census of 1964 was intended for the war damages against the Federal Republic of Germany).

So this is the true number. It's more than true number, because with any victims Yugoslavia will get more for the war damages from Germany accordingly. And the mistake of the Yugoslavia government was to put this wrong census and then bargain because the conclusion of the State Commission was that this census has covered only 56-59%. That means, you should add another 597,000 victims more than a million in actual names of them. We made an analysis from community to community, from Livno, Glamoč, Nevesinje, Stolac.

And we established in a single place, for instance, about 780 victims which were not identified. Even some known Ustasha killers were among the victims. So, this is not the basis, and couldn't be sole basis of Jasenovac myth. What is the basis for this is what we have done and what we are showing for the first time exclusive to the Kingsborough Community College, exclusively to the First International Conference on Jasenovac. This is what we have done: correcting, revising the census of 1964; by names—the methodology learned from Yad Vashem.

And we count now, by names, in the Jasenovac camp: 77,743. You can see. You can inspect. This is the first book—only names; nothing but the names here. No political text. This is book II. Only names, no text. And this is book number III. All names of the victims. So, we came closer to what Mr. Žerjavić told you before—85,000. But this is already over past Mr. Žerjavić's figures, because in this book, in this number of 77,000 we have identified, for example 10,000 Jews.

And I have shown you the document of Yad Vashem in which they wrote to Dr. Tadjman—25,000 Jews. So to the figure of 77,000, you should add 15,000 more Jews. And, for instance, as far

as Gypsies/Romanies are concerned, we have found here 5,800. While we register in the book of children, this book, children from one day to fourteen years—5,300. If we identified Gypsies children in the camp of Jasenovac—5,300—and in this, so far, identified of all Gypsy victims for 5,800 you can realize immediately how big a number should be added to this.

So, with this, it is only the situation we have on this day today, October 30th, 1997 in Kingsborough Community College. But we continue on this. But I believe this, exclusively shown to you today, is the best proof of the numbers, which was claimed by Dr. Tadjman. It was claimed by many others. And this is the real way, the only way to proceed. And for the next, I hope to be here Second International Conference that we have bigger numbers. Thank you. [applause]

\* \* \*

**Dr. Klein:** Thank you very much. I would like to point out to you that we did invite President Tadjman to the conference. He never responded to my letter. I wish he did.



**Dr. Savo Bosnitch**  
**Discussant**



**Dr. Thomas Popovich**  
**Discussant**



**Dr. Aleksandar Mosić**  
**Discussant**



**Prof. Abraham Edelheit**  
**Chair, Session Three**

## **Discussion Panel**

**Dr. Bernard Klein:** I will call upon Professor Savo Bosnitch, who was a Professor of Political Science in International Relationships at the University of New Brunswick, for his comments. [applause]

**Dr. Savo Bosnitch**  
**University of New Brunswick**

I will intend not to abuse the patience of the audience. I think in the context, we should all be grateful to the Lord that I am not a statistician. I have in 1939 written my first article in my native Sremia hometown on the religious and ethnic belonging of the Yugoslavia situation. Nothing has changed since. The Serbs and the Croats do not agree in regards to any pertinent numbers. I think that as far as the statistical data are concerned, the east is the east and the west is the west, and the twain shall never meet. We also tend to forget the forest for the trees, and I am concerned with the forest. As far as the statistics are concerned, we should adopt a motto that was in front of Dante's hell. [Latin phrase] "Give up all hope, you who enter."

Now as far as the views on Jasenovac, we must realize that that was the largest concentration camp under Hitler's New Order outside the Nazi control. It was the only one in the archipelago of some 20 more or less *finites logor*, extermination camps. Now I speak here because I had the misfortune to be almost as old as first Yugoslavia and as my hometown was included in the greater Croatia created by Hitler. I have a variety of reasons to speak because my family moved from Bosnia in 1535 and have fought in the military frontier against the Turks and defended Croatia.

They had remained Austrian officers until 1918 until my father surrendered his battalion to the Russians. My uncle was tortured and killed and probably ended in Jadonov. I also have local reasons to be here. My hometown has a large memorial, burial ground, where many of my distant relatives and of schoolmates and friends have been buried with impunity.

Finally, I have even a strange and romantic reason to be here. In 1914 when my father was a commanding officer of the large military district, Krajina, which is now called Eastern Slavonia, I courted the daughter of the local [custom, Sara Heskovic]. And I remember how shocked the bigot Roman Catholics were by this normal human "crime, that an Orthodox Serb could court a beautiful, intelligent, young girl and the scandal was because she

was Sara and I was Savo. I found the detail that she died with her two younger sisters and her mother in Jasenovac in Mr Miletić's book. My uncle is never listed in any of the lists.

When one looks now at Jasenovac, we must realize that Jasenovac for the Serbs is what Auschwitz is for the Jews [applause], and what the [Arab world] wants for the Jews, the Ustasha, Croatia, wants for the Croatian and Bosnian and Herzegovinan Serbs. Unless you realize that, all the rest is futile and an exercise in futility.

What we regret here is that due to the establishment of the communist dictatorship in Yugoslavia in 1945 by the joint support of the Allies from the East and the West, these perpetrators of the Ustasha genocide did not sit on the bench of the accused in Neurenberg. Had that happened, there would be no debate after that. [applause] We would have the status enjoyed by the Jews on this planet. The mere denial of the genocide would amount, as it does in many of the environments, to a criminal offense.

What we wish now is to establish an international, incontrovertible recognition of the fact of the Ustasha genocide. [applause] Every Serb considers that as a litmus test of your objectivity. Was there a genocide, or not? The answer must be "Yes" or "No."

Second, we would also like—and we regret that we are not the Jews—we have a [long journey]—.

**Dr. Klein:** There's still a chance for you.

**Dr. Bosnitch:** I beg your pardon.

**Dr. Klein:** You still have a chance to become one. [laughter]

**Dr. Bosnitch:** [continues] Actually, the Serbs realize that their cardinal sin was the fact that they are not Roman Catholics. If we had been Roman Catholics, we would be one nation now. The Muslims would have been exterminated a long time ago. As far as the Serbs are concerned, we thought of a mass conversion to Judaism. We might even have a UN security zone in Bosnia like in Lebanon. Apart from all that, it is very important to, since we are very grateful that the Jewish interest in the Ustasha genocide was put up for this conference.

We would like now to be treated as the Jews have been. We know what happened to Germans. For half a century, the whole world was spitting at Germans. Germany was occupied. Germany was divided.

The Jews and Israel have received 80 billion marks in indemnity. And what has happened to us? Croatia declared war on the United States, never capitulated, became automatically an ally. What has been plundered and destroyed was never returned to the Serbs. For instance, I was in Rome and had a long-time friend whose uncle was Ante Pavelić, and in 1947 in Rome, he asked, he said, “Savo, I know you will not steal from me.” I said, “Why do you say that?” He said, “Because I am now smuggling gold for the Vatican,” and they had a British uniform. He said, “All you have to do is travel from Rome with a belt here full of gold, from Rome to Milano and back, and to live in opulence. I declined the offer because I realized it was the Serb gold and Jewish gold from Ustasha Croatia that the Vatican was sending back. [request from audience for louder sound]

Okay. Usually, when I speak in the evening, there is a power failure. [laughter]

Now to go maybe in to something else—I would like to just quote one statistical detail. It was fortunately preserved by a very reliable Croat monsignor—his name was Djurić. He ended up in Switzerland. In 1948, he published a book titled [*The Red Rebel*] in Germany [and Italy]. And he, as a Croat and Roman Catholic, was very nostalgic of the first Yugoslavia. He said during the 23 years of Yugoslavia, there have been killed, executed, sentenced to death 230 Croats, which means 10 per year. Many of them were killed in demonstrations. Some of them had attempted assassination of the King and sentenced to death. There have been others who have perished in demonstrations and violent clashes which had occasionally happened in the first Yugoslavia. But these 230 victimized Croats, for right or wrong, did not provide a rational reason for the Croat revenge, which we anticipated in the case of the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

I think that I have signals here that I have spoken too much. And I think that the public would profit from asking direct question because it is impossible to cover what has been presented before us,

and I'm the only one of the three dedicated commentators from the program.

**Dr. Klein:** Thank you very much, Dr. Bosnitch. [applause] No. We have a program. We have a time element to which we have to adhere.

**Dr. Bosnitch:** If I'm allowed, I beg to disagree with Dr. Klein. Thank God that Austro-Hungary was destroyed. [laughter, applause]

**Dr. Klein:** I don't know. Well, you're a political scientist. I'm an historian. The historians—.

**Dr. Bosnitch:** I'm also a historian.

\* \* \*

**Dr. Klein:** Thank you, Dr. Bosnitch. I'm sorry we have to limit your time, but we have to present this. It took more time than perhaps we should have, and we also want to offer you for questions to the floor. So, the next one—we had to make a change in the program because Dr. Dragnich and Mr. Pasić, who were supposed to have been here, couldn't make it because they became ill. That's what happens when you're a survivor and you're advanced in age. These things begin to catch up with you, unfortunately. So, therefore, I invited Dr. Mošić to say something, to make a comment, and also Dr. Popović, who has done some work in the statistical area, to replace them.

I will call upon Dr. Mošić, who has been the former director of the Belgrade Jewish Museum to make a comment or two. [applause]



**Dr. Aleksander Mošić**  
**Jewish Museum, Belgrade**

Honorable Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for calling me to the floor. I will try hard to avoid repetition of the presentations that were already given, and therefore, please let me take emotional approach—not a negative emotional approach, but a positive one.

As you understood from Dr. Klein's words that I am from Belgrade. But very few people know that I lived for sixteen years in Croatia, and that makes me familiar with the spirit of Croatia as well as the spirit and sentiments of the people of Serbia. I used to travel for business purposes pretty often, in the late fifties and early sixties, by the afternoon "Rapid" train from Zagreb to Belgrade. And this train passes Jasenovac. As soon as the train passed the railway station of Jasenovac, people—passengers in the train rose from the seat in the compartment and went to the windows on the right side the buggy, silently looking at the grounds of the former concentration camp. They paid, in this way respect to the memory of the victims. And you will understand, that passengers in the "Rapid" train are just average of the population. I was always, every time, moved by this attitude of the passengers. After the train passed the Jasenovac site, people went back to their seats and slowly started speaking: "Hundreds of thousands are buried here". That is the general opinion of people who lived in the area. It's not an established fact by historians, not by statisticians. It is just what public opinion, the general public opinion in the area knows and accepts.

Well, you understand what my attitude is, what my approach is. I have a deep feeling that the studies about Jasenovac are not complete. I am very sure they have to be continued. I should say the case of Jasenovac has not yet been de-Nazified. We had, in Europe, a complete de-Nazification of Germany, and it worked out very-very well. In the case of Jasenovac, this de-Nazification has not been complete. And what I expect from this conference, and also from the creation of an international body, of an International Commission, to investigate a case of Jasenovac is the de-Nazification of Jasenovac.

Because, up 'till now, Jasenovac is a painful scar on former Yugoslavia, and it not only in Serbia, it is also painful scar in Croatia itself. We need to heal this scar. We need to heal these pains. We have to live together in the future. The railway, which I mentioned between Zagreb and Belgrade, has to run again and the motorway between Zagreb and Belgrade has to be frequented. And relations between our countries has to be re-established. And they can't be re-established before de-Nazification is complete. Thank you for your attention. [applause]

\* \* \*

**Dr. Klein:** Thank you, Dr. Mošić.

I will now call upon Dr. Thomas Popović, who is a Professor at Nassau Community College and is going to be presenting an address tomorrow, to react to the papers given today. Professor Popović. [applause]

**Dr. Thomas Popović**  
**Nassau Community College**

Thank you very much. As you have been told, I was called last night to be a substitute for Professor Nicholas Pasić, because I have done some research, as my paper will show tomorrow in the morning, regarding the sources concerning the concentration camp in Jasenovac and other camps. Looking at my sources, I have noticed that none of these—. Oh, I should apologize for being late. I had a class and I was driving very fast, hoping that policeman would not see me, in order to get here as fast as I could. So, I may have missed some of the presentations. I do have with me paper, presented by Antun Miletić, which I just looked at. And I have heard a great deal of what Mr. Žerjavić has said today as well as the whole presentation of Mr. Bulajić.

I would like to address myself to there presentations and make some comments. What I have heard so far, none of them—none of presenters have mentioned the claims, made by Ustasha themselves, which I find in the sources that I have looked at. How accurate they are, this is for debate. But I think they should be to account, which shows what they have done, if not, what was their intention. Many of these, or most of the information I have comes from the various representatives of foreign countries, especially from Germany—Nazi Germany and of course, some from representatives from Italy who gathered the information. And we know how Germans are accurate and sometimes too systematic. Whatever they do, sometimes it can be very drastic and distractive, as we when we are concerned with concentration camps. But their figures seem to be very accurate, as far as they could get them. And these are official reports. So they have worked on these reports and gathered necessary information. Looking at the information, provided by Colonel General Edvard Glaise von Horstenau, plenipotentiary in Zagreb. He was an Austrian nobleman; so he has all the qualities to be trusted, I believe. And he mentions that.

Ustashe have claimed that they have killed about 400,000 victims, most of whom were Serbs. And that statement, or report, was sent to the German Reich government in Germany on February,

1943. So you can imagine if this were true, how many more were killed by 1945. But this is not the only source. I have another one, which can be also very reliable, because the person who was named General [Lotar Evangelic]. As his last name would imply, he was of Croatian extraction. I believe, his father was a Croat, and his mother was an Austrian. However, he served in Austrian army and he has reported he was, of course, on Eastern Front and then he was transferred to the Western Front in the Balkans, where he had a specially formed division. And he stated the following. He complained to the Croatian high officials about a half a million Serbs being put to death.

The Croatian official responded: “Half a million in too much. There weren’t more than 200,000”. So this is a statement, made by the official from the Croatian government. And that statement, of course, was made in 1943, so we are talking at this early stage. Now, of course, these are various reports, gathered based on the information, which was provided.

And to see reality of the figures that we have received, we have to look at other reports and find out what was the population in that Independent State of Croatia. And this information is provided by German historian, who seems to be very reliable in the book, which is entitled *Collaboration or Resistance*, published in 1968. And he states that there were 3,000,000 Croats; 2,000,000 Serbs; 500,000 Muslims; 140,000 Germans; 70,000 Hungarians and 150,000 Slovenes. I guess there were others that he did not include.

So, as we know and it has been stated by Bulajić, the policy was expressed by [Budak], that at least as it concerned Serbs, one third would be eliminated, one third would be converted and one third would be expelled. We know that many of them were killed. The numbers, as pointed out by Miletić, differ from 200,000 or 400,000 in 1943 to up to 500,000 or 750,000 by the end of the war. And so, we have to find out how to ascertain exact number, rather than use certain figures, as it was done by Žerjavić—whom I heard, using only the figures offered by Croatian authorities at the camp, who really didn’t bother much the people whom they are going to eliminate. And besides, they had been criticized, and I have many sources to point out, by the German officials who were on the site, for these atrocities. And so they would, by simple rule, try to

minimize the figure, so as we say here “What goes in, that’s what comes out”. And so these figures that we get, which may look official, are inaccurate, inadequate and incomplete.

As some of the survivors who testify how many people were killed on the way and, of course, Žerjavić was careful to point out that he does not include those people killed outside of concentration camps. But, even I we use that, how are we going to compare with an independent source, which I consider Arthur Heffner as being a reliable source, because he has studied this very carefully, or French writer who traveled and gathered this information. According to information which he received in Croatia, he claims that on the order of Maks Luburić who was the Kvaternik—the commander, 80,000 victims were murdered in Gradiška, 120,000 in Jasenovac (as opposed to what we heard today)—all together was it 75,000; and just in Jasenovac one hundred twenty. And he said in other camps about 20,000; so all together would be at least 220,000 in these camps. And the rest, I guess, were people that were on the way. We know that in some villages, thousands of people were eliminated completely. And the question is: how do we gather that information? And this is why I turn to the third presenter, Mr. Bulajić. I applaud this approach to identify those victims by first name, last name and I hope, by the place name and the age. So that we’ll have complete... But are they going to get all those names, if certain families have been wiped out completely. And it will take time, especially if they didn’t get support—either from the government, because this is a very tedious and slow as well as difficult job to do and they will have to go to those places to identify the place and, also, to exhume the bodies, if the government of Croatia was not going to support.

This is why, I believe, he overstressed his criticism of Tudjman. We know what kind of historian Tudjman is. This was just a hobby, which he decided to have just before the outbreak in order to become a leader. He was, we know, a general, etc. And yet he, as a leader, could influence study, investigation and research, considering the authority that he has in that country. And therefore, I believe that was his main point or reason for discussing, at such a length, Tudjman who is not a historian, or at least, did not try to

establish the facts. And I don't think any one, even among in the Croatian circle, takes that seriously.

So, I have many examples of individual places, at least the estimates made by German officials that I will discuss tomorrow morning. And this is what I want to say today. And thank you for your attention, and I am sorry for being late. Thank you. [applause]

\* \* \*

**Dr. Bernard Klein:** Thank you very much.

Dr. Mošić had second thoughts about something that he didn't say, and he wants to say it, so we'll give him the opportunity of making that short comment.

**Dr. Mošić:** I deliberately restrained myself and did not go into any statistical details, because I thought you had a too strong a dose already. Now, I would recommend, if you want to know what was happening in Ustasha Croatia, to use these two volumes: the *Glaise Horstenau*, who was their commander and General, in Croatian, as published, they are that [inaudible]. They have never been reviewed in English. And you will see what has been happening there. I also need to give an explanation about [Fon Rendulitz]. He was not of Serbian origin. He was an Orthodox Christian, because his mother was Russian.

Now we could have a litany of these figures: German, Italian, Jewish. And we, as Serbs, we accept German sources as not pro-Serb. We accept the Jewish Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, which you all have read (it has four volumes). All these figures I have here and I have been merciful. I have followed President Tujman since 1957, and have probably published the first brief biographical sketch of him. Here he, for instance, said in 1960 (and this gives you and idea how reliable his statistical estimates are), he said: "Yugoslavia lost in the Second World War 3,750,000, almost 24% of the Yugoslav population. The Yugoslavia lost in war 1,706, 000 besides, or not including, those who have fallen in combat, who have been victimized by the Fascist occupants and their servants,

from allied and enemy bombing and all the other consequences of the war.” Now, if this man could have said that, at that time, and now has reduced that number—that says something about his statistics. I have one more question. We realize that Tudjman and Croatia has apologized to Israel. What should Serbs do to get apology from the Croatian government?

**Dr. Klein:** Thank you very much. I think, his second career is going to be statistics. I was impressed by what Dr. Popović said, concerning the policy of a “third conversion, third expulsion and third extermination”. That was a policy of Russian toward the Jews in the Nineteenth Century, and it was made by the Russian Minister, saying, “this should be our policy.” So, I guess it has survived up to the Twentieth Century in relation to other populations as well.

I will take a few minutes to open the floor for questions. And please. State the person to whom you are addressing the question. And make your question brief. Not statements, just if you have question. Okay?

### Question and Answer Session

**Question:** Mr. Žerjavić. I would like to ask: Does he consider his own figure of a 113,000 killed in the camps an act of genocide by the Croatian Ustasha government?

**Mr. Žerjavić:** I also said there is no justification for what Ustasha has done. And there were number of Ustasha in Croatia Independent state, maybe 30,000 the most. And they kept the camps and so on. But the number I got—113,000 in Jasenovac, other camps and pits and prisons is an approach statistical and by the books, published by the archives in [Karovatz]. Director of it is Serb, [Zatezaro], who gave the names of the people being killed and I took all the numbers of them.

**Dr. Klein:** The question was “Do you consider it a genocide or not?” Just “Yes” or “No.” That’s it.

**Mr. Žerjavić:** Genocide it is.

**Dr. Klein:** Yes, it is genocide.

**Mr. Žerjavić:** What is? What is Genocide? Maybe 30,000; 50,000; 130,000, one million, two million—I don't know.

**Dr. Klein:** Okay. It is genocide. Yes?

**Question:** They think that there are two camps about what had happened in World War II Croatia, especially in Jasenovac. One camp is represented by Mr. Tadjman and Croatian representors...

**Dr. Klein:** What's your question?

**Question:** [continues] That's in tens of thousands. The other camp is the Encyclopedia of Holocaust, which says six hundred thousand, and all other literature and sources are talking hundreds of thousands. The question is: How do you explain, I ask Mr. Žerjavić, how do explain the Encyclopedia of Holocaust and countless Jewish books, countless German, Italian books that are mentioning hundreds of thousands as opposed to your 80,000?

**Mr. Žerjavić:** Excuse me. There is a statistical series of censuses and of yearly data about born and dead people in Yugoslavia. A record from '21 to '39 and was said '47 up to '63 in my book. From year to year—and only six years there were no record during the war. So this is according to trend of the rate of growth and this you may count easily these six years in these years of—and this is only—and excuse me, in '45 this statistic office later become Federal statistic office. So only three years has to be counted for. Everything is in, and no other figure could be produced by anybody. What German Generals are saying from their pocket, bla-bla, this has nothing value. The books are here. The numbers are here. And no other official numbers exist, from which pocket you will take it.

**Dr. Klein:** I don't want to debate. You have a question. Mr. Žerjavić answered. Whether you accept it or not, that's another matter. Yes, in the back.

**Question:** Quickly, background, or the contexts of arguing over numbers and the fact that this, after 50 years, we are talking finally about Jasenovac and that not only the Croatians and the Ustasha, but also the Americans, the British and especially the Roman Catholic church, has also used all of their influence to minimize the numbers and, therefore, make the Serbian Holocaust go away. What is the role of all these institutions? And I compliment Dr. Klein for being a



brave man and staging this. But why should it take a brave man to talk about this.

**Dr. Klein:** Thank you. [inaudible] response. Thank you. OK.\_

**Question:** I have one question. My question is—if you invited Dr. Tadjman to the opening of Holocaust museum in light of this—. He was the only one who was invited to US Holocaust opening to—.

**Dr. Klein:** I invited President Tadjman to come to this conference, just as I invited the Serbian people. So, since he is, or claims to be, a historian and he has written a book, we felt it's appropriate to come to participate in this conference. Certainly, he would have been welcomed here. He has a point of view. What was he asking? Oh, the US Holocaust. I cannot speak for US Holocaust Museum and I have nothing to do with that. That's involved with Governmental policy, and maybe the government had some influence on the US Holocaust Museum to invite him. You have to speak to them. Yes, Sir?

**Question:** My question is to the Croatian gentleman as well. For the last fifty years, the Croatians apologists, when we bring up that our victims in pits, in which tens of thousands may have been killed. Plus, Croatian apologists will tell us, only a few hundred were killed in these pits. In 1989, the University of Belgrade opened three, I believe, of these pits—three or four—and if Dr. Bulajic will confirm this, I think, they found 20,000 skulls. So my question is: how accurate are your figures, when you lied about the victims of these pits. And we are now finding out that there are eight or ten times more than you say there were.

**Mr. Žerjavić:** Somebody established 20,000 in which pit?

**From Audience:** I think there were three or four pits.

**Mr. Žerjavić:** Three or four, yes. [Javongozevor], and in '64 it was established 1,074.

**Question:** In one pit?

**Mr. Žerjavić:** In the biggest—Jadovno.

**Question:** What about the others?

**Mr. Žerjavić:** This is the biggest.

**Question:** [cont.] Alright, but there was three!

**Mr. Žerjavić:** You see...

**Dr. Klein:** Give him the chance to answer!

**Audience:** How can we believe him?\_

**Dr. Klein:** Okay, any—. Yes, Sir.

**Question:** (translated): Ladies and Gentlemen. After learning statistical data about murdered in Jasenovac, where I was imprisoned for three years until breakout of the 22nd of April of 1945, I can state the following: It is usually said that the history is written by victors and politics is done according to daily needs.

**Dr. Klein:** One can read the English translation. I will save some time and—.

**Question:** (cont. translation): In connection with Jasenovac, I have to say that the number of murdered Jews, Serbs and Romanies, history has not been written by victor. History of Jasenovac has been written by camp prisoners themselves and nobody else. That means that the camp prisoners themselves hold opinion that over 700,000 have been killed in extermination camps. These days, politics of numbers is done according to daily needs for lessening or minimizing the number of murdered and removal of responsibilities for the most terrible crimes of this century. My opinion is that Mr. Žerjavić is conducting an auction with human souls as if he were in a kind of Sotterby's auction. If he had really done it there, it would have been a failure. Only and extreme right might have some success with this kind of auction, because they have invested a considerable amount of money for the tough times that are, unfortunately, coming.

**Dr. Klein:** Thank you for the statement. I would like to state this—this is an opinion of a survivor. In my experience, however, I can tell you that survivors have many claims and they have many opinions and give statistics. Many of them are not reliable. Yes! They went through an experience. I am a survivor! I know that myself, and I hear people in the class, in my class, who are survivors, telling me all kinds of things and I know that, historically, they are not accurate. So, yes, they can be believed in terms of their experience. However, when it comes to numbers and other things, we have to refer to scholars and see what they come up with. So I respectfully accept the testimony of the individual who spoke, as a survivor, about his experience. But I would say that the question of numbers will have to be referred to scholars for establishing the facts.

**Audience:** [Question the] scholarship.

**Dr. Klein:** Scholarship. But I am saying scholarship—of giving it to scholars who are trusted by everyone. Okay? Any other question? Yes.

**Question:** I will follow your suggestion and stick to the question. And I am not going to give any statements.

**Dr. Klein:** Okay.

**Question:** [cont.] However, I would like to just draw your attention, or rather to Mr. Popović. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that you said something about Žerjavić's "exposition." You suggested that he relied on the data supplied by Croatian authorities, which is obviously is not true. Because, obviously, Mr. Žerjavić's relying exclusively on statistical data. Now the questions. My question...

**Dr. Klein:** Let's hear your question.

**Question:** [cont.] My question goes to Mr. Bulajić. Mr. Bulajić, your data suggests that you are approaching the numbers, reached independently by statisticians and, however, you suggest at the same time, in the same time that you seem not to agree with the numbers that you yourself provide, that your books provide. Are you suggesting now that the numbers that you've reached are not correct, or that they are going to multiply again? Or what? What is your suggestion?

**Dr. Bulajić:** My suggestion is very clear. Up to October 30th, that's the identification of the victims—77,743 up to date. But I immediately indicated that if you take, for instance, the Jewish victims, because in these 77,000 Jews are identified, about 10,000—that means immediately add 15,000. And how many Gypsies? So, it's up to date. We believe, if we would be provided with funds necessary to work, we call this as a generation task because if my generation wouldn't do this, the next generation probably wouldn't have a chance to do it. And when answering your question, I will add the comment of Mr. Žerjavić, answering to Bill Dorich's question about the number other pits outside of Jasenovac. And one of the biggest, actually it was preparation for Jasenovac—Jadovno. He mentioned Mr. [Đuro Zatezalo], Director of the Karlovac archives. I know that this man has done a big project. He has already identified as I did for Jasenovac over 50,000 only in Jadovno. Over 50,000—it's a three volume big book. And there are

number sources, German and the others, which would say the same thing. So the figure of 1,974 which is only part from the census in 1964—it's one day's killing in Jadovno.

**Dr. Klein:** Okay, thank you. Let me, just before I call the last two questions, because we have to proceed—. I just want to acknowledge the presence of our state Senator, from Brooklyn, who is State Senator of New York State Legislature, Dr. [Simo Lackman] who's come to join us. Thank you very much for coming. Well, Dr. Lackman, they can not vote for you here, because they come from Croatia or Belgrade, but if you'll go there, maybe you'll be elected again. Yes, Ma'm.

**Question:** My questions are directed to the Croatian gentleman. Is it true that President Tudjman, in one of his speeches, said: "Thank God my wife isn't a Jew or a Serb"?

**Mr. Žerjavić:** I don't know what he says together with number of—.

**Dr. Klein:** Right. I think that's the question that Mr. Žerjavić does not have to answer. If he said it, if he find it—. So, he said it. What do you want him to do? He didn't dictate the book to Mr. Tudjman. So, Okay. Next question. Yes, if somebody else has the question. Okay. If there in no more questions, then we'll go to proceed and add to the lunch. Those people going to lunches in the next room, all you have to do is go out this door and go to the next door. And then we come back here after lunch. And during the lunch we have the keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Berenbaum.