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**Memories of Aleksandar Milošević – a Contribution
to the Research of the Collapse of the “Yugoslav Army
in the Fatherland” in 1944–1945***

Abstract: The period from October 1944 through May 1945, represents the least researched part of the Ravna Gora Movement and the history of the Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland [JVuO]. At this time, most of these forces had gone through the so-called Bosnian Golgotha, where they experienced a military collapse. One of the key witnesses of this event, Major Aleksandar Milošević, in his memoirs, described the retreat of the JVuO through Bosnia and gave his insight into the cause of the defeat. Pointing out his political resume and presenting the most important parts from his memoirs connected to the events of 1944–1945, this paper will try to shed some light on one of the most controversial and underresearched episodes of World War II.

Key words: World War II, Serbia, JVuO, Civil War, Memoirs, Political Emigration

In the last 20 or so years, Serbian historiography has started a more active scrutiny, analysis, and use of the works formed in the wing of the Serbian political expatriate community. A special part of the whole, which we call the emigrant memoirs, are the Ravna Gora memoirs, i.e. recollections and records of the surviving members of the Yugoslav Army in the

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Fatherland (JVuO). For the first time in the Serbian media, a part of those writings appeared in the early 1990s, and they were mostly about the surviving officers and political leaders of the Ravna Gora Movement and were printed in Canada in 1956, as part of the proceedings given in the *Knjiga o Draži*¹ (*The Book About Draža*). A part of those memoirs, which were rated as a relevant source, were quoted in the scientific papers of Kosta Nikolić, Bojan Dimitrijević, Goran Davidović, Miloš Timotijević, and other historians who, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, researched the history of the Ravna Gora Movement.² Some of the memoirs were printed as new or even first editions in Serbia.³ Especially important and a project worth mention, entitled “Hidden History”, was developed in 2004, by the Institute for Contemporary History, which printed critique issues of the most significant memoirists and historians from the Serbian political expatriate community, but also from allied officers – contemporaries and associates of General Mihailović, such as Albert Seitz, Ivan Avakumović, Živko Topalović, Nedjeljko Plećaš, etc.⁴

Finally, a recently published biography of General Miodrag Damjanović,⁵ written by an as yet unknown and unpublished archive of the “Draža Mihailović” Royal Yugoslav Army Veteran’s Association, sheds new light on the phenomenon of the Serbian political emigration and its orga-

1 See more: Radovan Kalabić, *Ravnogorska istorija*, (Beograd: Evro, 1992).

2 See more: Kosta Nikolić, *Istorija Ravnogorskog pokreta*, knj. 1–3, (Beograd: Srpska reč, 1998); Bojan B. Dimitrijević, *Valjevski ravnogorci, Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini u valjevskom kraju 1941–1945*, (Beograd: Srpska reč, 1998); Kosta Nikolić, Bojan Dimitrijević, *Đeneral Mihailović, biografija*, (Beograd: Srpska reč, 2000); Goran Davidović, Miloš Timotijević, *Zatamnjena prošlost, istorija ravnogoraca čačanskog kraja*, knj. 1–3, (Čačak: Narodni muzej, Gornji Milanovac: Muzej rudničko-takovskog kraja, Kraljevo: Narodni muzej, 2002–2004).

3 See more: Radomir Petrović, *Četnici istočne Srbije*, (Kragujevac: Pogledi, 2000); Sergej Živanović, *Treći srpski ustanak*, (Kragujevac: Pogledi, 2000); Dušan Trbojević, *Cersko-majevička grupa korpusa pod komandom pukovnika Dragoslava S. Račića 1941–1945*, (Kragujevac: Pogledi, 2001); Velimir Piletić, *Sudbina srpskog oficira*, (Kragujevac: Pogledi, 2002); Borislav Todorović, *Poslednji raport*, (Kragujevac: Pogledi, 2002); Zvonko Vučković, *Sećanja iz rata*, (Valjevo: Aleksandrija, 2005); Milišav Marković, *Sa Dražom u pobedu ili smrt*, (Beograd: Poligraf, 2006).

4 Within this edition the following titles were published during 2004: Ivan Avakumović, *Mihailović prema nemačkim dokumentima*; Jovan Đonović, *Moje veze sa Dražom Mihailovićem*; Nedjeljko Plećaš, *Ratne godine*; Živko Topalović, *Srbija pod Dražom*; Albert Sajc, *Mihailović, prevarant ili heroj*; Miloš Mladenović, *Lažni idoli i varljivi ideali*; Dragan Sotirović, Branko Jovanović, *Srbija i Ravna gora*; Kosta Nikolić, Bojan Dimitrijević, *Đeneral Mihailović, biografija*; Radoje Vukčević, *Na strašnom sudu*; Džasper Rutam, *Pucanj u prazno*.

5 Kosta Nikolić, *General Miodrag Damjanović (1893–1956), biografija*, (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2008).

nization in the West. However, this book has revived and generated new interest in another question: exactly how much original archive material or memoirs currently abroad has been consigned to the tooth of time? It is unlikely that we will ever find out how much precious material has been lost as a result of the carelessness of the authorized institutions, or how many unused documents of historical figures have left behind to languish in the basements of their descendant's private homes – displaced from America and Canada to Australia?

Even though private property, the documentation of Major Aleksandar Milošević (1910–2009) is one of those sources rarely preserved, arranged, and as of recently, available to historians researching the Serbian Political emigration. Their memoirs, as well as their prolific correspondence, present a new source that speaks to us about 20th century history, but firstly about the war from 1941 to 1945 and the final days of the JVuO as an organized element. Before we say more about his writings and their value as a resource, we should answer the question of just who was Aleksandar Milošević.

Biographical Information About Aleksandar Milošević

Aleksandar Milošević was born in the village of Saranovo, in Lepenica County, Serbia, on June 15/28 – on St. Vitus Day (Vidovdan) in 1910, to a family of poor farmers. The date of birth itself, and the surroundings in which he grew up, both from the family (his grandfather participated in the Serbian-Bulgarian war in 1885, and his father was in the Wars for Liberation and Unification of Serbia from 1912 to 1919), and his Fatherland, (his village is in Šumadija, not far from Viševac and Topola) had a great influence on the formation of his personality. He finished primary school in the nearby town Natalinci in 1922, and high school in Kragujevac in 1929. After that, on October 1, 1929, he enlisted in class 57 of the Lower Military Academy School and spent the next three years studying in Belgrade.⁶ When he finished school, he was ranked 54th out of 566 cadets who had graduated.⁷

6 Arhiva Aleksandra Miloševića (The Archive of Aleksandar Milošević), Prepiska, Pismo Živanu Kneževiću, 2. maj 1957; Pismo Dragoslavu Branislavljeviću, 30. septembar 1960; Istorijski arhiv Šumadije (Historical Archives of Šumadija - IAŠ), Fond Kragujevačke gimnazije, Upisnice 1922–1929. godine.

7 Arhiva Aleksandra Miloševića, Dokumenta, Svedočanstvo Niže škole Vojne akademije Kraljevine Jugoslavije pitomca Aleksandra Miloševića-Branislavljevića. - From this class, a large number of later prominent commandants of JVuO, among others: Milijan Jovanović, Commandant of the Jastrebac Corps, Živojin Žika Marković, Com-

After being promoted to artillery lieutenant on October 1, 1932, he was appointed staff sergeant of the 3rd Battery, 2nd Division of the Cavalry Artillery in Palanka. However, after only a few months, the entire division was transferred to Niš, where Aleksandar Milošević would serve the next four years.⁸

From October 1, 1937, Aleksandar Milošević signed up in the 39th class of the Military Academy College. His memories of those days are filled with descriptions of inter-ethnic conflicts, although it is not clear if he, as a cadet in those moments, could clearly feel the tension, or if they were a product of his hindsight. In September of 1939, as Milošević said, “the pre-war psychosis could be felt everywhere”. The Military Academy College, which he attended, ended sooner than usual. Diplomas were not awarded to the cadets but were supposed to be sent to each one of them at their post of service. There were no ceremonies. The new schedule assigned Lieutenant Milošević to Prizren, where he was first appointed sergeant and then battery commander in the 2nd Division of the 28th Artillery Regiment.⁹

During his service in Prizren, on October 1, 1940, Aleksandar Milošević was promoted to the rank of artillery captain second class, and a month before that he was awarded the officers’ medal for valor.¹⁰ He was in this place, as battery commander in the 31st Artillery Regiment, at the outbreak of the April War in 1941. His unit, part of the Kosovo Division, took part in this war by invading Albania and attacking the Italian occupation forces. These Royal Yugoslav Army units broke their way, in the first days of the war, all the way to the town of Kukës, but stopped their attack by the orders of the military top to retreat and come back to their

mandant of the Second Kosovo Corps, Milorad Momčilović, Commandant of the Romanija Corps, Dragiša Ninković, Commandant of the Rudnik Corps, Radoman Raičić, Commandant of the First Mileševo Corps, Milan Stojanović, Commandant of the Toplica Corps, Danilo Salatić, Chief of Staff of the East Bosnia and Herzegovina Command and a series of other commanders of brigades and members of the Corps staff. From this class was also Borislav Todorović, Mihailović’s emissary in foreign military missions, and “the Duke of Morača” Milo Rakočević. Compared to them, Aleksandar Milošević was highest in the chain of command in 1944, when he became Commandant of a Corps Group. Also, 57 former cadets from this class died as officers of the JvuO, while from the Partisans 6 of them died, and from SDS/SDK two of them.

8 Vojni arhiv (Military Archive - VA), Records of personal data of the Royal Yugoslav Army officers (Dosijej personalnih podataka oficira vojske Kraljevine Jugoslavije - DPP), dosije 1104/116.

9 Ibid.; *Spomenica oficira 57. klase Niže škole Vojne Akademije Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929–1979*, (Vindzor, 1979), 74–75.

10 MA, RDP, record 1104/116.

own territory. After a conflict with the Germans near Prizren, Milošević's unit was crushed, but he decided, with a group of soldiers, to continue resistance to the invader. In May of 1941, he successfully broke through to his homeland.¹¹

Milošević spent the period between March and July in his village of Saranovo, connecting with the officers and soldiers that avoided captivity, spreading the idea that the fighting should go on. Hearing that the senior officers had the same idea and gathered at Ravna Gora, he decided to join them with his comrades. So on July 30, 1941, he arrived at Ravna Gora, where he had his first encounter with Colonel Dragoljub Draža Mihailović. From that day on, accepting the military hierarchy and sharing his vision, Aleksandar Milošević became a part of the Ravna Gora Movement. Mihailović authorized him to work in Lepenica County, and every action he took afterwards was tied to this organization.¹²

On September 18, the Military-Chetnik Detachment of Lepenica was formed from the personnel gathered in the vicinity of Rača and Captain Milošević was chosen to be its commander. During September and October, he and his associates campaigned throughout the countryside and held many national assemblies, resulting in the unit's numerical expansion. In October, during the Mihajlović-Tito agreement,¹³ both Captain Milošević and the Šumadija officers had two meetings with the Partisan leadership when they established cooperation. However, the Partisan commanders, deeming that the rival organization jeopardized their dominance over Šumadija, violated their agreement and attacked Milošević's unit on October 12. The soldiers were disarmed and sent home, and they arrested the officers and brought them to Čačak and Užice. Milošević was to remain in Partisan captivity until he managed to escape on November 28. Upon his return, he managed to break his way to Ravna Gora to see Mihailović one more time very briefly and, getting the instructions needed from him, headed back to Šumadija. Milošević stayed in the woods with a group of soldiers and kept on his illegal activity, despite being pursued by the Germans during the entire duration of 1942.¹⁴

11 *Spomenica*, 104–115.

12 Milivoje Obradović, "Memoarski zapisi", rukopis, 82–89.

13 Dragoljub Mihailović and Josip Broz achieved their first meeting and verbal agreement in the village Struganik, on September 19, 1941. Života Marković, *Partizansko-četnički odnosi i privremena saradnja u Srbiji 1941. godine*, (Užice–Beograd: Narodni muzej Užice, Službeni glasnik, 2010), 128–133.

14 Arhiv Srbije (Archive of Serbia, Železnik - AS Ž), Ž-23, GŠS-2; Ž-28, 1 ŠK "DM".

In the spring of 1942, the Ravna Gora Movement was reorganized. In order to renew guerilla operations, they activated the forest recruits. Former Chetnik units grew into brigades, and multiple brigades formed the JVuO Corps. A part of the previously legalized personnel, Mihailović's units, which saved themselves earlier by infiltrating into the forces of General Nedić, left and headed to the "free Serbian mountains." The process of reorganization was ended in June of 1942 and from that point on, instead of the former Chetnik guerilla units, we can talk about the existence of a real JVuO. In these new circumstances, the priority task was to create an army that would maintain the guerilla strategy, but at the same time represent the backbone of a regular and acknowledged army. At that time, probably in August of 1942, the Second Šumadija Corps of the JVuO was formed, covering a large territory in Šumadija. In such a partition, Captain Aleksandar Milošević first became commander of the Lepenica Brigade and after the reorganization of the corps in December, he became commander of the entire corps as well.¹⁵

The territory controlled by Captain Aleksandar Milošević (Major Aleksandar Milošević as of June 1944) was in Serbia famous for staying uncovered by Partisan troops from 1943–1944, and was thus spared of conflicts between these two movements in the civil war. Thereby the victim count in this area was significantly less. Milošević's units, in the rural areas around Kragujevac and Rača, had more conflicts with the volunteer detachment of D. Ljotić (SDK) and the German manhunt units. On more than one occasion, the Germans arrested Milošević's associates during their raids, and some of them were later executed in Kragujevac. One of the major calvaries at the hands of the Germans was the hanging of 20 members of the JVuO government civil structure in the city in November of 1943. The biggest skirmish between the SDK and the JVuO was in February 1944, in the village of Komarice, when a large group of Ravna Gora Movement members were captured. Later their commander Lieutenant Smiljanić and 14 other men were taken to Kragujevac and shot by the Germans.¹⁶

During the war, the Second Šumadija Corps, as well as the main portion of the JVuO unit, were mostly tied to their territory as a kind of

15 Kosta Nikolić, *Istorija Ravnogorskog pokreta 1941–1945*, vol. 1 (Beograd: Srpska reč, 1999), 216–223; Pavle Milošević, *Jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini 1941–1945*, (Beograd: Srpski liberalni savet, 2005), 69.

16 VA, Četnička arhiva (Chetnik Archive - ČA), k. 106, dok. 37/7; Arhiv Srbije (Archive of Serbia - AS), Fond Bezbednosno-informativna agencija (BIA), II-30; Miodrag Beljaković, *Pod oblacima Srbije*, (Kragujevac: Jefimija, 2004), 154–157.

local militia. The situation did not change until the spring of 1944, when Serbia's political mosaic became more complicated. With the Allied invasion in Normandy, any hopes of a possible opening of a second front in the Balkans disappeared, foiling the entire strategy of the JVuO leadership. The visible political turning point of the West in this area, which primarily manifested itself in the arming of the Partisans, did not only produce a propaganda effect, but for the first time at certain areas in Serbia, the JVuO found itself in a defensive position. In July and August, two brigades of the Second Šumadija Movement took part in the fighting with NOVJ forces in the area of Toplica and Kopaonik, while Major Milošević himself was asked to join the Supreme Command of the JVuO with the rest of the Corps. On July 16, he was named commander of the JVuO's West Morava Corps Group, with which he was to secure the Supreme Command and the evacuation of the allied pilots from Pranjani during "Operation Halyard." This unit was assembled from parts of the First and Second Šumadija Corps, parts from the First and Second Ravna Gora, Valjevo and Požega Corps, and had around 2,000 men at its disposal.¹⁷

From the first days of September, the first major fighting ensued with the long underestimated enemy – the Partisan units. Their description from the pen of Aleksandar Milošević is impressionable: "We were on our positions north of Požega. During the night we were attacked from the rear. We retreated to our positions at the elevation of the village of Ježevica on September 4, in order to lead a bloody fight in the morning. They were beaten retreated, suffering terrible losses. We took back Požega and spent the night in it on September 6, 1944. On that day, they stopped our onrush north of Požega, near Rupeljevo. As soon as night fell, we heard the sounds of airplane engines. They were transporting weapons and ammunition to the communists. As night fell we were at a close distance and in a combat formation, and everything that was dropped from the airplanes landed into our hands: 42 Bren light machine guns – new, intact, still conserved with grease, a dozen light mortars, and an enormous amount of ammunition. One of our men was shaking his head and thinking out loud: "To us, our communists mean nothing. But to fight against English warehouses is impossible.""¹⁸

During September 8 and 9, the JVuO's West Morava Corps Group also fought against the Partisan units in the area of Jelova Gora. The de-

17 Nikolić, *Istorija Ravnogorskog pokreta*, vol. II, 388–391; *Knjiga o Draži*, vol. 2, prir. Radoje L. Knežević, (Vindzor: Avala, 1956), 208, 212.

18 *Knjiga o Draži*, vol. 2, 210–211.

feat of the JVuO in this area was the moment when the Partisans managed to, symbolically, “breach the gates of Serbia” and head toward the north, to conquer the most important goal – Belgrade.¹⁹ Milošević and his unit returned to their territory, where they stayed until October 1944. At that time, according to the new order of the Supreme Command, the majority of JVuO forces headed toward the mountain areas to the southwest of Serbia, to avoid a conflict with the Red Army. They were hoping that their fate had not yet been sealed and that the Western Allies would intervene on their behalf. Thus, Major Milošević arrived in the area of Kraljevo in mid-October, where he fought against the Germans, together with his soldiers.²⁰

After the conference of commanders from the ranks of the JVuO, held in Ivanjica on October 21, the troops of the Ravna Gora Movement continued their march toward Sandžak. From there, they planned to continue through Bosnia, where they would join up with the Supreme Command. The goal was “to fight to the very end, and not retreat.”²¹ The JVuO troops, including Major Milošević’s Second Šumadija Corps, moved forward in the direction of Prijepolje–Pljevlja–Čajniče and crossed over into Bosnia. Before arriving at Foča, on November 27, the JVuO’s Second Šumadija Corps had 370 men. A month later, after the first major fighting and large-scale desertion, there remained 308; 29 of whom were injured or seriously ill. After the winter march toward the north of Bosnia, with an epidemic of typhoid fever and the presence of numerous enemies that additionally thinned out the forces of the Corps – in March of 1945, there were barely more than a 100 left.²² The situation was similar in other units. All of this led to a reorganization of forces on Mt. Vučjak on March 14, when, from the remainder of the Šumadija Corps Group, a unit under the name of Šumadija Assault Corps was formed. Former corps melted down into brigades, while the old brigades had become only battalions. Aleksandar Milošević was appointed as chief of staff of the Šumadija Assault Corps after its reorganization.²³

On May 12 and 13, 1945, Milošević participated in the decisive battle at Zelengora, in which the JVuO suffered its final breakdown. With the remaining men from his decimated unit, Major Aleksandar Milošević received orders from General Mihailović to “disperse into guerilla units”

19 Kosta Nikolić, Bojan Dimitrijević, *General Dragoljub Mihailović* (1893–1946), biografija, (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2011), 397–398.

20 *Knjiga o Draži*, vol. 2, 219.

21 Nikolić, Dimitrijević, *General Dragoljub Mihailović*, 406.

22 MA, CA, k. 49, dok. 25/1, 16/2, 13/4.

23 *Knjiga o Draži*, vol. 2, 226–227.

and continue fighting against the communists in Serbia. By successfully crossing the Drina and penetrating into Šumadija, he continued his guerilla operations until June 1946. Then he managed to migrate to Greece illegally.²⁴ In 1949, he moved to Canada, where he spent the rest of his life, in the active service of the Serbian political expatriate community. He passed away in Toronto in 2009.

During the JVuO's *Bosnian Golgotha*, Aleksandar Milošević was a rare, experienced, and surviving witness of the last chapter in the history of this army. Even during the JVuO's retreat through Bosnia in 1944/1945, he wrote brief chronicles and recorded his impressions in his notebook. He first completed those notes and scripted them two times, during his stay in Greece from 1946 to 1947. Both essays, in the form of war reports, were preserved and you could say that in 1955–1956, when he had already emigrated to Canada, they served as a good basis for turning his memories into an essay called "Golgotha," which was then published in the Proceedings of his accounts from the surviving officers and political leaders of the Ravna Gora Movement, called *Knjiga o Draži (The Book About Draža)*.

His wartime memoirs in the 1960s had one more addition; in a work titled "In the Crossed Interests of the Powerful, Memories From War and the Revolution From 1941-1945," on page 131, Milošević describes in detail the events in which he participated from September of 1944 through May of 1945. All of the texts were written on a typewriter, in the Latin alphabet, neat and tidy, with only a few notes on the margin; all of them were saved and classified. According to critics, Milošević proved to be a reliable eyewitness, equally inclined to notice details and analyze complex historical processes, never writing as an apologist for the movement to which he belonged.

A few fragments from his memoirs are significant for the history of the Ravna Gora Movement, seeing how they shed light on a few, less known episodes of 1945. With certain (marked) abridgements, and using the latest version of Milosevic's manuscript from the 1960s, we are conveying some of them.

October 1944, Before Departing for Bosnia

The commander of the Corps Group still did not have any reliable information about the general situation. It all came down to what could be heard on the radio, mostly London. This was all, however, to

24 IAŠ, Viši sud Kragujevac, k. 13, dosije 463/46; k. 15; dosije 150/47.

the benefit of the communists, and seeing how it was interwoven with lies, the ones we knew on the spot, we didn't trust even the parts that were true. This is why the news about the Red Army entering into Eastern Serbia was unreliable, even in disbelief regarding some news that foreign troops would not enter Yugoslavia, either from the East or from the West. However, knowing the communists, we were in great fear, almost convinced of the possibility of the Red Army's penetration, with the goal of ensuring the takeover of power. (...) Somewhere around October 2, we received a dispatch from the Supreme Command. Its content, in the current disturbing situation gave some credibility and even a glimpse of hope. It stated that the Red Army troops entered Eastern Serbia and went on: "Treat the Red Army troops as you would treat the Allied army. Prepare receptions as for our Russian brothers." Seeing how Lieutenant Colonel Velimir Piletić²⁵ had failed to complete his orders, to question the state of the Red Army toward us, this dispatch followed a consistent logic of too many clear facts. We saw an army in them, as allies to the Western Allies, fighting against a common enemy. We considered it to be too logical, even with great fear, that they came to put some sense into our communists. In our first encounter with the Soviet Army, we realized that they were our enemy and why they had come here. To fight them, even though these kinds of situations occurred, was beyond any common sense. There was nothing left to do but get out of their way; to do what the Supreme Command ordered. In that manner was the idea, that we deliver one last blow to the invader on our territory, disabled by those whose interest was exactly that. (...)

From the direction of Gornji Milanovac, around October 8, came the Partisans and faced the Second Brigade of Kragujevac. While the front parts of the army entered the fight, clearly to stop the forces they came upon, the main force bypassed them, finding themselves under the hill-sides of the branches of Rudnik, and continued their way across the village Ramaće toward the east. Those units were joined by the rest, who slow-

25 Velimir Piletić (Belgrade, 1906 – Paris, 1972), Major of the Royal Yugoslav Army, from 1941, in charge of working in Eastern Serbia by the order of Colonel D. Mihailović. Later Commandant of the Krajina Corps of JVuO. In September 1944, by Mihailović's orders, sent to Romania, to negotiate with Marshall Tolbukhin and the representatives of the Red Army. On that occasion he was arrested and sent to Lubyanka; upon extradition to the communist authorities in Belgrade, he managed to escape and later transfer to France.

ly stopped the fight. It was clear that they were rushing toward a goal, i.e. to join up with the units of the Red Army. At that time, the Supreme Command got another telegram regarding the Red Army. It stated: "Avoid conflicts with the troops of the Red Army. Distance yourselves from them to the mountain areas". This telegram clearly stated what the posture and state of the Red Army was. There was no more doubt. Fear came through. The Red Army entered Serbia to help Tito gain power. And so, while the Western Allies helped our communists morally and financially, the Soviets did it with live force. However, the second kind of help made more sense, because they were after all – communists. (...)

After everyone else, my Corps Group also set off with a full measure of security to the road toward Kraljevo. The commander of the Corps Group ordered the retreat verbally, without any explanation whether or not that came as an order from above or as a verbal recommendation from the commander of Serbia, when they met here. We left painfully and reluctantly and considering everything, headed toward utter uncertainty. We didn't feel like leaving because we couldn't abide the circumstance that now, at the very end of the war, we had to leave our territory and not say "thank you" to the occupier for all the troubles and sacrifices he inflicted upon us. (...) In the village of Kaona, we encountered Major Kalabić.²⁶ He stayed there with some parts of his units. We also stayed there and made some arrangements. We didn't feel like moving forward again, while parts of Keserović's²⁷ Corps group passed by us and continued toward Ivanjica and further across Javor to Sjenica. (...)

There were no Partisans, except a couple of locals that now manifested their commitment or sympathies. At this point, their goal to connect with the Red Army had been accomplished completely. They headed mainly toward Belgrade. Thus, on October 17 and 18, 1944, in the vicin-

26 Nikola Kalabić (Podnovlje, 1906 – Belgrade?, 1946), pre-war Chief of Cadastral Administration in Valjevo, Reserve Lieutenant. From 1941, a Duke in the organization of Kosta Pećanac, only to find himself, in the summer of the same year, in the Ravna Gora Movement. During 1943–1944, Commandant of the Royal Mountain Guard (or Oplenac Corps) of JVuO. Killed upon being captured by OZN-a after the war, under not enough investigated circumstances.

27 Dragutin Keserović (Piroman, 1896 – Belgrade, 1945), participant of the Wars for Liberation and Unification of Serbia from 1914–1918, Major of the Royal Yugoslav Army. From 1941, the organizer of Uprising in Rasina county. From autumn 1941, he joined the Ravna Gora Movement, and in the structure of JVuO was on duty of Commandant of the Rasina-Toplica Corps Group. Captured by Partisan forces in an attempt to cross the Drina in 1945, he was sentenced to death and executed in Belgrade.

ity of Ivanjica and the direction to Sjenica, the majority of the Serbian units of the Ravna Gora Movement, i.e. the Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland, was gathered with the troops that were caught up in the storm of events. The presence of the Red Army units painted a picture of the situation in all its possible abomination. It was clear that they were here for one reason only, to raise our local communists to power. The question of “what now,” even though there was an order from the Čiča [“The Old Man” – D. Mihailović’s nickname] to stay away from the Soviet troops, inevitably imposed itself on each one of us, soldiers and officers alike. Each one of us searched for some kind of answer that would provide us with some form of tangible positive certainty and hope because stepping aside was just a tactical and purely military move. But there was no such thing, and no one wanted to go on.

Decision to Pull the JVuO Forces Back Into Bosnia

The whole condition, alongside the turmoil, as well as the assembly of the units, sought a certain total distinctness, both military and, in all of its confusion, politically. Altogether, this led to an order by Lieutenant Colonel Dragoslav Račić,²⁸ as commander of the operation, to organize a conference of all the corps and corps group commanders whose units were in the area of Ivanjica, or only those without a unit. This conference was held in a hotel called „Srpski Kralj“ or „Kruna“ in Ivanjica, on October 21, 1944. The people present were: Lieutenant Colonel Dragoslav Račić, commander of the Cer-Majevica Corps Group; Lieutenant Colonel Dušan Smiljanić,²⁹ commander of the Šumadija Corps Group; Lieu-

28 Dragoslav Račić (Godačica, 1905 – Savković, 1945), First Class Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army, one of the leaders of the Uprising in 1941, in Pocerina and Mačva as a Commandant of the Cer military-chetnik unit. He distinguished during 1941, in the fights with the Germans, especially during the siege of Šabac. In the structure of JVuO he was Commandant of the Cer-Majevica Corps Group. With a guerilla group he prolonged the resistance to the communist authorities, until November 1945, when in the vicinity of Ljubovija, he was located by OZN-a and killed fighting them.

29 Dušan Duja Smiljanić (Jabuče, 1893 – Jagoštica, 1945), participant of the Wars for Liberation and Unification from 1941 until 1918; Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army. From 1941, Commandant of the Gruža military-chetnik unit, and in the structure of JVuO Commandant of the Šumadija Corps Group. He died at the end of May 1945, in a fight with the troops of the Yugoslav Army, in an attempt to breach from Bosnia to Serbia.

tenant Colonel Vladimir Komarčević,³⁰ commander of the Sava-Kolubara Corps Group; Major Nikola Kalabić, commander of the Oplenac Corps Group (Gorska garda); Lieutenant Colonel Siniša Očokoljić,³¹ commander of the Mlava Corps; Lieutenant Colonel Sveta Trifković,³² commander of the Avala Corps; Major Miloš Marković,³³ commander of the Požega Corps; Major Steva Jovović, commander of the Toplica Corps; Captain Marko Muzikravić,³⁴ commander of the First Šumadija Corps; Major Aleksandar Milošević, commander of the Second Šumadija Corps; Captain Neško Nedić,³⁵ commander of the Valjevo Corps; Captain Dragomir Topalović, commander of the Rudnik Corps; Captain Voja Tufegdžić,³⁶ commander of the Cer Corps; Major Blaža Brajević, commander of the First Kosovo Corps (the Second Kosovo Corps under Major Žika Marković³⁷

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- 30 Vladimir Lale Komarčević (Gradac, 1906–1945), First Class Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army. During the war Commandant of the Posavina-Kolubara Corps Group of JVuO, until 1945, when he was withdrawn to the Supreme Command. After the Battle of Zelengora, he managed to break through to his homeland, but every track of him is lost there. According to available data, he was killed by a concealer from OZN.
- 31 Simeon Očokoljić (Lisa, 1908 – Belgrade, 1954), Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army, during the war, Commandant of the Mlava Corps of JVuO. At the end of the war he managed to break through to Italy where, with the headquarters in Como, he organized an important intelligence-sabotage center, whose activities stretched out to Yugoslavia. Captured by members of UDB-a in 1954, he was executed in Belgrade.
- 32 Svetislav Trifković (Umka, 1907 – Zelengora, 1945), Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army, Commandant of the Avala Corps of JVuO. On his grounds occurred the biggest crime that the forces of JVuO did in the war in Serbia, in the village Vranić in December 1943. With the majority of his forces, he backed down to Bosnia and was killed in battle with the forces of JA on Zelengora in May 1945.
- 33 Miloš Marković (Prijanovići, 1908 – Užice, 1950), Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army, Commandant of the Požega Corps of JVuO. Continued the guerilla activity in his area even after the war, until his capture in 1950. Sentenced to death and executed.
- 34 Marko Muzikravić (Bečanj, 1915 – Hercegovina, 1945), Lieutenant of the Royal Yugoslav Army, during the war Commandant of the First Šumadija Corps of JVuO. Died from the typhoid during the Bosnian Golgotha in 1945.
- 35 Neško Nedić (Lelić, 1914 – Obljaj, 1945), Lieutenant of the Royal Yugoslav Army, in the Uprising of 1941, Commandant of one of the Valjevo military-chetnik units. After that Commandant of the Valjevo Corps of JVuO. Heavily wounded in the Battle of Zelengora, he committed suicide on May 12, 1945.
- 36 Vojislav Tufegdžić (Štitar, 1914 – Bela Reka, 1945), the Guards Lieutenant, during the war Commandant of the Cer Corps of JVuO. Upon returning to Bosnia he continued his resistance to the authorities, until he was, in November 1946, surrounded on his terrain and killed in combat with the members of UDB-a.
- 37 Živojin Marković (Priština, 1911 – Rogozna, 1945), Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army, Commander of the Second Kosovo Corps of JVuO. After the war, he continued the guerrilla fight against the communists in Ibar Kolasin, until his death in June 1945.

stayed and did not leave its territory); Lieutenant Colonel Miodrag Palošević,³⁸ and Dragiša Vasić.³⁹

The situation in Serbia, which was clear to everyone, was discussed at this conference. The question was asked: What to do next? All available options came down to two possibilities: (1) step away from the Soviet troops with all of the units as they were, or (2) stay in Serbia and continue to fight.

The second option, as an expression of their desire not to abandon the people, required them to disperse into guerilla units. The first option, however, offered two possible courses of action: follow the orders issued by Mihailović, which had partially already been set in motion, or head toward Montenegro with all the remaining forces. This came from the warning that Lieutenant Colonel Račić issued at the conference, which did not have anything to do with Mihailović's opinion, which he had not been aware of at that particular time. Račić had been in contact with Pavle Djurišić,⁴⁰ who had proposed this idea. Pavle claimed that a six-month sup-

38 Miodrag Palošević (Belgrade, 1901 – Zelengora, 1945), as a boy he was a member of the Chetnik unit, with whom he crossed Albania in 1915. Then he was sent to France for schooling, and upon returning to the country he finished the Military Academy and became an adjutant of General Voja Tomić. From 1939, he served in the General Staff, and after that in assault (Chetniks) units. Before the war, he was an active member of the Serbian Cultural Club. He was with Colonel Mihailović from the first days at Ravna Gora, on various duties at the Supreme Command. He died on Zelengora in May 1945.

39 Dragiša Vasić (Gornji Milanovac, 1885 – Jasenovac?, 1945), participant of the Wars for Liberation and Unification in 1912–1918, from which he came out with an Officer rank; during the 1930s a lawyer, writer, member of the Serbian Royal Academy. A Republican in the years after 1918, in the evening of World War I he became the vice-president of the Serbian Cultural Club. During 1941–1943, one of the closest associates of General Mihailović and president of the Central National Committee. After that, he was on duties at the Supreme Command. Died during the so-called Bosnian Golgotha of JVuO; most likely captured by Ustašas and executed in Jasenovac.

40 Pavle Đurišić (Podgorica, 1907 – Jasenovac, 1945), Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army, leader of July 13 Uprising in 1941, in Vasojevići. After the split-up of the rebels, at the end of 1941, he establishes a connection with General Mihailović, who appoints him Commandant of the Lim-Sandžak Chetnik unit. In spring of 1943, during the Case Black or the Fifth Enemy Offensive, disarmed by the Germans and sent to camp Strij in Poland. He quickly escaped from there and in a quite complex circumstance, he rejoined Mihailović. On the path of the Bosnian Golgotha, he left with the remainder of his unit and a great civil refuge and got separated from Mihailović there and in an agreement with Sekula Drljević, headed across NDH towards Slovenia. However, him and his forces got disarmed by Ustašas and were, with a larger group of officers executed in Jasenovac in April 1945. Aleksandar Milošević left a negative picture of him in his memoirs, for the following reason: because of Djurišić's crimes over Muslims in Polimlje and Eastern Bosnia

ply of food and tobacco (!) had been prepared for all the Serbian troops. He substantiated his proposal with the assumption: "We will be close to the sea and can manage a part of the coast. At the moment the Western Allies make their landing, we will be the first ones there." There were no other assumptions, nor could there have been any in a general situation such as this one and our familiarity with it. The one to head toward Greece in some sort of agreement with the Albanians, appeared only abroad, with "generals" after a battle was lost.

Djuričić's proposal was dismissed immediately for completely justified reasons. Mihailović had not been aware of it. The possibility of a Western Allied landing was hard to believe. To go into the gorges and ravines of Montenegro in winter and with great forces, would mean giving the Soviets the opportunity to prevail because we would be deprived of any mobility. And finally, the availability of food was also doubtful.

Račić did not like this option. It seemed that the hope of getting closer to the sea and somehow finding a favorable way out of the situation in which we found ourselves trumped every tangible reason that was against it, so he became agitated, which was not a surprise when he was concerned. So, in that state of mind, he started to speak up against Mihailović, how he had not informed us well enough albeit he had the means to do so. It turned out, according to Račić, that Draža knew something he would not tell us. At the end of his agitated presentation, clearly, at the peak of his bad mood, he suggested that we, the commanders present at the conference, send Draža a telegram: "In the situation as it is, and because of insufficient information from you, we have decided to disband our units." Truly, the way he explained it, this was supposed to be a kind of pressure on Draža to tell us what we did not know.

Immediately, a silence came over everyone. We all looked at Račić with an expression of utter disagreement. That is when Dragiša Vasić spoke. In his short briefing, he talked mostly about Draža Mihailović's personality and that such a telegram, in the situation in which he was currently, would be an unduly applied, dreadful mental pain. After this, it was accepted by everyone, even Račić, to act precisely how Mihailović had ordered. The conference was over.

in 1942–1943, his collaboration and temporary involvement in the military structure of General Nedić in 1944, and the abandonment of Mihailović in 1945.

In Goražde

We arrived in Goražde before noon on Christmas Day. Operation Kalinovik had ended. It did not bear any fruit. On the contrary, it turned into an odyssey with the general staff also incurring heavy losses.⁴¹

The Germans were in Goražde! As I found out later, a whole battalion of their army. Attacking them would be pointless. We relocated across the bridge to the left coast, into the larger part of Goražde. We managed to avoid a skirmish with the communists, which we did not care about. But as soon as we crossed the bridge, they opened fire on us from a hill where the bridge was in range. Not even an individual could use the bridge successfully any more.

A German Army commander, a reserve officer and native Austrian, immediately asked to see our commander. The group commander did not want to meet him without the other corps commanders. There was no way out, so it happened, for the first time, that I met a German officer in a non-combat situation. Shortly, after a brief explanation about my attempt not to leave, the three of us headed without the commander of the First Šumadija Brigade, who had been there earlier and with whom we had not met yet. Upon entering a section of a partially demolished pharmacy, where the German stayed, we were greeted by a Nazi salute with a raised hand and an exclamation "Heil Hitler!" He even deemed it necessary to explain that a pure military salute was no longer being used. It could well be that our non-reaction and the bitterness on our faces had prompted him to explain. Maybe this was also the reason why he continued, strictly officially, to make it known that he had been ordered by a higher authority no longer to regard us as enemies. This attitude, which we may have forced him into, completely mismatched his appearance. He was an elderly man, grey-haired and chubby, but with a mild expression on his face. There was nothing Prussian about him. Finally, he asked us if he could be of any help to us. The group commander introduced him to the bridge situation and asked him to drive out the Partisans from the mentioned hill. He promised that it would be done immediately.

With this, our first and final encounter with him had ended. The next day, he left Goražde with his unit. While we were coming down from the pharmacy floor, a troop of Germans was already lining up on the street. Lined up as on a training ground, they headed toward the bridge. In less than half an hour the Partisans were cleared out from the hill and the

41 This refers to the failed attack of the JVuO on Kalinovik during December 1944.

bridge was in use. We took special notice of the discipline and order of an army that made huge efforts and suffered enormous losses but remained an army in the full sense of the word.

We sought to find accommodation in the city. The odds, however, were too unfavorable. It first occurred to me to see where and how the wounded and the sick were lodged. On the way out of Goražde, toward Rogatica, they were situated in a building barely holding its roof. The typhoid epidemic affected the wounded as well. Without any medication and accommodated in a more than unhealthy state, the situation was devastating. (...) In agreement with the group commander and the other corps commanders, we decided to evacuate the wounded and the sick to the train station at Mesići. Based on the Hague Convention, we had been notified that the Germans would accept and help them. So it was done and this group had the lucky circumstance of not falling into the hands of the brutality of the Ustaša. Nevertheless, they found themselves in the later emigration from the Serbian forces. (...)

None of our units were left in Goražde or its vicinity, but everyone headed toward the general direction of the north. There were no Partisans either. Faced with forces such as that one, they fled aside, avoiding any fighting. We did not stay there for long either, perhaps less than a week. In that short amount of time, we continued to steam our suits to get rid of the lice and prevent typhoid. Even today, I do not know how Dr. Milanče – Milan Milosavljević, from Lapovo, managed to find a serum against typhoid. The serum did not offer complete protection, but it moderated the effects of the disease.

Across Romania and Zvijezda, Toward Mt. Ozren

The move from Sočica to Podromanija went without difficulties or any combat situations. However, in the area of Podromanija, where we had to cross the Višegrad-Rogatica-Sarajevo road, we expected to run into some Ustašas. We arrived there in the early hours of the afternoon. Not far from the place where we crossed the road, there was an armed group on horseback. They were watching us, while we, at all times ready for battle, continued toward our goal not paying any attention to them. In their situation, they gave away two possibilities: closing the route to Sarajevo or being ready to flee if we responded by opening fire.

The road we continued along was unknown, and therefore very treacherous. We marched on the eastern area of the famous Mt. Romania. There were some snowstorms during the morning, but the afternoon

was clear and promised a night of freezing cold. This made us move faster in the hope of reaching the village of Žulj in the middle of the mountain, where we could at least expect a warm place to bed down. However, that momentum of movement was stopped at the front of the marching column. So I rushed to see what happened.

We came upon some sort of transportation lookout, which led to a semi-deforested part of the mountain. Made by hauling trees and material from the mountain, so naturally, by entering it, we got lost. We encountered a painful sight. Dozens of wounded and typhoid stricken men from the Cer-Majevica Corps Group. They stopped there because they could not move forward with their transportation. They were in a column next to the cars, and the whole length beside them had fires put out. As our soldiers came across them, as a final goodbye, they sadly added logs to the fire and whispered their final "goodbye." That slowed down their movement. They were detained there until some possibility of their evacuation was created. It is possible that this was brought up by Ustašas from this area, who slaughtered an entire group, including Dr. Kojić, which was evacuated to the Mesići train station. We entered deeper into the mountain. It was already night when we approached the village of Žulj. The clear and crisp night air, with the heavy blizzards, created a bitter chill. The incomprehensible cold, which made the fir trees crack, was eased by the thought that we were approaching the village. Oh, what a feeling it was when instead of the village we came upon an incinerated nothingness, one should survive first before comprehending! A reconciliation with the misfortune took over, through which the group recovered its strength and took the only possible choice – to keep moving forward. (...)

It was already daylight by the time we arrived. The small town we entered was dense and, somewhat unusual for a mountain area, created in some sort of intervention. By the posture of the locals, it could be seen immediately that they were used to such occurrences. The accommodation schedule was set up quickly. Those whose duty it was had far too much practice for everything to be quick and according to the wishes of those whose homes we were supposed to enter. The house in the center of the hamlet became the corps headquarters. In an already established manner, military considerations, and not comfort, were the main concern. And in this case it had an advantage, because it did not turn out that the headquarters was set up there just because Draža himself stayed in this house whenever he came across with the V. K. Quite normally, as soon as I entered the house and greeted the owner, he did not miss the op-

portunity to express his satisfaction and tell me with a sense of pride that his home could once again host a commander. I understood this mountain villager's feelings completely. Through oral tradition, when this story gets passed down from one generation to another, it will be the pride and reputation of this home, as it has been perhaps since the times of the 16th century brigand Starina Novak.

The ordinary people accepted us with sympathy. In the situation as it was, this was a meeting full of uncertainty as to where all of this was leading and what awaited us tomorrow. Exhausted and cold, each one of us tried to find a warm corner for much-needed rest. In such a situation, I saw obvious signs of typhoid fever. (...)

On that day, in that village of Kruševci, we experienced another pleasant encounter. At dawn, a group of Montenegrins from the unit under Pavle Đurišić came along. After a stopover in Rudo, they headed down the Lim and Drina rivers toward Višegrad. From there, they turned northwest toward Rogatica and Olovo. This led to our meeting here. They were a group of youngsters. It was clear that most of them were still of school age. The encounter was a surprise for both sides. We didn't know about each other. They came upon us from Olovo. They said that they had celebrated the feast of Sveti Sava there. There was an obvious desire from both sides to meet and greet each other as soon as it had become clear that this was a meeting between Serbs and Montenegrins. There was a spontaneous enthusiasm amongst blood brothers. In the extremely harsh conditions in which they were, it was a great pleasure to witness such an encounter.

The Consecration of Cemeteries

Wherever any of us stopped, we encountered cemeteries. If the communist regime had any respect for the dead and did not destroy them, those cemeteries would be an eternal monument to that terrible suffering. Here on Mt. Vučjak too, a few cemeteries were made against our will. The largest one was near the church of the village of Dugo Polje, and in one week in April, after the church service, it was sanctified. The Čiča, with all of the members of the V.K., as well as the National Committee, was present at the consecration. Also present were all the commanders of the groups with the largest number of soldiers, as well as the majority of the local units, and of course all the priests.

The consecration ceremony was performed at the recent, neatly decorated burial mound of Radosav Bogičević⁴² from the Smederevo Corps, who passed away suddenly in those couple of days. It was solemn, and in the given situation, painfully sublime. The more profound the prayer became, the people present, not only pitied but joined in the ritual with a song. The space around us echoed with strong prayer and left with a full impression of divinity. It could have been seen on the faces of everyone present as the prayer echoed – “Vječnaja pamjat” [part of a Serbian prayer]...

After the consecration, National Committee member Aca Aksentijević⁴³ held a speech. What he said was appropriate to our situation and connected with similar suffering in World War I, which he had survived. He concluded that our cause was righteous and that we should not lose hope and that, however difficult the situation may be, a suitable solution would present itself, as it happened after the Albanian Golgotha in World War I.

Upon the elderly calmness and lassitude of Aca Aksentijević's speech, Vojin Andrić,⁴⁴ who had by then already become a famous and particularly prominent member of the Ravna Gora Movement, flared up his revolutionary and youthfully powerful speech. Unlike Aca Aksentijević, he spoke about our domestic situation. Knowledgeably he shed light on the image of our domestic communists, their hard work and their responsibility for the civil war and through that the help of our occupier, as well as the attitude of the Western Allies, who used Tito as their partner. Then, confident in all things and our strength as well, he spoke about Đujić,⁴⁵

42 Radosav Bogičević (Ratari, 1920 – Dugo Polje, 1945), Second Lieutenant, Brigade Commander in the Smederevo Corps of the JVuO. He lost his father and two brothers in the war while being in the Ravna Gora Movement. Died of typhoid in Bosnia in March 1945.

43 Aleksandar Aksentijević (Arandelovac, 1889 – Belgrade, 1970), lawyer, a longtime Minister of the Radical Party and the Yugoslav National Party. Active in the Central National Committee of the Ravna Gora Movement from its beginning, and from January 1944, a member of the Executive Board of this body. Captured by the JA forces during his retreat through Bosnia in 1945, and upon the completion of war sentenced to jail.

44 Vojin Andrić (Niš, 1917 – ?, 1961), Doctor of Law, president of of the Serbian Cultural Club youth section. From 1941, he was alongside General Mihailović, firstly as the founder of the illegal youth headquarters, and after that in the propaganda section of the Supreme Command. Captured by the JA forces in Bosnia, and then convicted to serve a 20-year sentence, which he served in Sremska Mitrovica. Upon getting out of jail he was killed by members of UDB-a, allegedly while attempting to illegally leave the country.

45 Momčilo Đujić (Topolje, 1907 – San Diego, 1999), priest, leader of Uprising on Tromedja and in the Northern Dalmatia and after that a Duke Commandant of Dinara Chetnik division. With his forces, he managed to break through to Slovenia at the end of 1944, and

Jevđević,⁴⁶ and especially Pavle Đurišić. He pointed out that the immaturity of the national awareness led to a path of narrow-minded, self-centered concern, and did huge harm to the whole and its better future, in a coincidence created in foreign politics. He did not hold back from calling it a betrayal and ended his talk with the verses of the famous poet Šantić: "And now we are pure and beautiful as Gods!" ("A sada smo čisti i ko Bogovi lepi!"), no matter what the faith ahead of us is. (...)

On this gathering at Mt. Vučjak, and the relative calm that lasted an entire month and a half, the first thing that occupied our minds was the foreign policy situation. It was clear that we had been sacrificed for the sake of something. To challenge the slander, at this moment, the V.K. took over everything they could. Besides Živko Topalović,⁴⁷ who had gone abroad, and later, in August 1944, Adam Pribićević,⁴⁸ with Vladimir Bjelajčić and Kovač, in order to change our position in that direction with truth about us, the V.K. transmitted notices in the ether via "Jugopres" and "Balkanpres", with an invitation to accept gladly anyone who wanted to see the situation as it was. Such a call was transmitted to the Soviets as well, but there was no response.

Using a radio-station, in a direct connection with some foreign countries, we attempted, in the same manner, via Živko Topalović, Adam

from there to Italy, at the end of the war. He settled in the USA, where he led an emigrant association Ravna Gora Movement of Serbian Chetniks.

- 46 Dobroslav Jevđević (Miloševac, 1895 – Rome, 1962), member of Young Bosnia, and after World War I a prominent political worker and longtime minister, first of the Independent Democratic Party and after that of the Yugoslav National Party. During World War II he first performed political duties in the Western Serbian area, with the title Chetnik Duke. From 1944 he becomes a Commandant of JVuO for Upper Lika and the Croatian coast, i.e. two Corps' that existed in that area: Lika-Korduna and Coastal Corps. Before the end of the war, he migrated to Italy, where he led the Ravna Gora Organization of Serbian Chetniks.
- 47 Živko Topalović (Užice, 1886 – Vienna, 1972), lawyer, one of the founders of SRPJK in 1919. After a conflict with the leadership of the party, he founded the Socialist Party of Yugoslavia that was looked upon by communists as a hostile political group. After the Ravna Gora congress in the village Ba in January 1944, he became the president of the Yugoslav Democratic Community and one of the closest associates of D. Mihailović. In August 1944, he was evacuated to Italy, from where he will later cross to Austria and spend the rest of his life there. At the so-called Belgrade Process in 1946, he was sentenced to jail in absence.
- 48 Adam Pribićević (Kostajnica, 1880 – Windsor, 1957), lawyer, publicist and politician. Together with his brother Svetozar, one of the political leaders of Serbs in Croatia, and after his brother's death, President of the Independent Democratic Party. From 1944, he was involved in the work of the political wing of the Ravna Gora Movement. Before the end of the war, he was evacuated abroad and continued his life in Canada.

Pribićević and the rest, with the greatest possible indulgence, to stop Churchill's trade and Roosevelt's loyalty to Stalin and to shift our situation.

The Battle of Zelengora

It was the morning of *May 13, 1945*. Early morning... From the forested hilltop with diverse mountain ranges, where we stopped for the night, I scouted our surroundings and sought a liaison... The sun rose and with its first mild rays, it shone upon the rocky tops of the massive dark-grey mountain of Maglić. (...) Čiča issued orders for us to consolidate our forces in that area, in the villages of Vrbnica and Ljubina, so he could give the command for us to cross the Drina River. This situation, in the already general direction of the Drina, put everything into motion that morning. Our units were moving from every direction, accompanied by fierce combat.

I was still in my primary position. Through it, a mountain pass led Colonel Duja Smiljanić across with a certain number of men who lingered there. After him, followed some parts of the Kalabić Group. At that moment a powerful explosion was heard in the vicinity. Some of the men were approaching, running, and following them was a horse with equipment and no rider. We received the news that General Trifunović⁴⁹ had been killed. Following this group, Čiča came along, with Kalabić. In their entourage was a fourteen-year-old girl and a boy a few years younger. They were the children of the recently killed Gen. Miroslav Trifunović, Mihailović's commander for Serbia. They were pale and worn out from hunger and fatigue. Their faces did not show any pain. Maybe the poor children did not even know that he had been killed. Either that or the horrible death that kept mowing down everyone around them simply rendered them numb. (...)

The sun was already high up the sky. A storm of gunfire came from the direction of the confluence of the Sutjeska into the Drina River. It was the sound of the attack on Colonel Keserović and Lieutenant Colonel Jovović, the commander of his Toplica Corps; they had made their way to the Drina with their troops in the middle of the night.

The battle started to spread in our direction as well. Troops appointed for security were under fire from the field sections they were sup-

49 Miroslav Trifunović (Kragujevac, 1894 – Zelengora, 1945), participant of the Wars for Liberation and Unification in 1912–1918, Brigadier General of the Royal Yugoslav Army, from 1942, Commandant of Serbia in the JVuO structure. With the majority of JVuO he retired to Bosnia in 1944. He stayed besides Mihailović until his death on Zelengora in May 1945.

posed to capture. Our persistence to carry out orders and the communists determination to deliver one final blow against us turned into a fearsome conflict whose front was unknown; the conflict that gradually, in a narrow space, turned into fight to the death ... The air was filled with a confusion of gunshots from every possible automatic rifle, cannon, mortar, airplane machine gun, and bomb thrown out of airplanes. A disarray of gunfire that came from every direction... The deafening echoing through the forest and the mountain gorges turned into something so convoluted, something that could not be described. From time to time, it looked like the earth itself was shaking and falling down in a convulsion in front of the titan power of the inner forces; as if it were tensing and heaving with all its might before a volcanic eruption, while everything inside of it was contracting and cracking not allowing the satanic lava to swallow what resided on it. Then, after being lost in the distance, it vigorously tore into howls of horror, resembling something that tears the flesh, breaks the bones and causes human sobbing in a death rattle of the most severe torment... And the jumble of men both became compact and spread out in this whole shootout. It became disheveled here and there, neck and neck, and led a fight to the death.

In our drive so far, breaking through the crags of the Bosnian mountains, making a path through the snowdrift, naked, barefoot, hungry, without rest and beset by continuous fighting, we were losing our strength. It disappeared, slowly but surely, and on this day our strength and enthusiasm became insufferable. Our overall military units, with only a bullet or two in their rifles, simply became sitting ducks for the opponent.

No gathering could be executed, nor could we organize a crossing across the Drina. At this point, at the bloodiest moment of our Bosnian Golgotha, the whole mass of our forces started to head north and abandon the direction toward the Drina. It did that not by order, but by the urge to take the path of least resistance.

We too, Duja, Captain Mile,⁵⁰ and myself, with some of our men, were driven back from the hilltop where we waited for dawn, we moved through the fighting, taking fire from everywhere, toward the direction where Čiča had left. Exhausted, using our last strength to help each other, crawling on our bellies across the jagged rocks, we barely managed to

50 Milutin Milutinović (Bagrdan, 1911 – Innsbruck, 1994), Captain of the Royal Yugoslav Army, from 1944, Commandant of a brigade in the Second Šumadija Corps of JVuO. After the breakdown of Chetnik units on Zelengora, he managed to break through to Serbia, where he continued his illegal work until 1952. After that, he managed to emigrate.

be among the last to reach the woods and leave the canyon village. At that time, afternoon was getting closer and the fighting diminishing. We took a few more steps deeper into the woods and came across Čiča.

He was standing alone. Next to him, at a close distance, a machine gun was in action, on the hill that Ajdačić⁵¹ was supposed to take over. He was facing toward the machine gun's line of fire – toward the Maglić massif. He was wearing English military boots and rustic socks with beautiful embroidery from the villages of Šumadija. His trouser was ripped up on his left knee. On the left sleeve of his military shirt, under his shoulder, there was a beautifully embroidered and sewn crown and crest with the signature: "Svome Čiči – Jarušičanke" (To our Čiča – the women of Jarušice)... The afternoon sun illuminated half of his face. The dark-copper color especially emphasized the pronounced wrinkles on his worn out and gaunt face. (...) We stopped in his immediate proximity... He approached us and gave out his orders: "In groups of threes, fives, dozens, whatever you can, and with the strength of your own personal devotion and skill, everyone should press on to their home territory. Continue the fight for the sake of our people. I will be with you. Victory is ours!" He held out his hand to Duja and then to me. We said our goodbyes and kissed each other on the cheek.

About the Murder of Prisoners in 1945

It was the direction toward the villages of Vrbnici and Ljubinci, familiar territory for us. The morning sounds of cattle, shepherds and reapers was free space for us. So we headed there... In front of us, we saw some small glades. When we came across the first one, we saw a dozen people sitting here and there on the rocks, not far from each other. Motionless! The closer we got to them, the sight was more clear. In the positions in which they were sitting, they had been shot down in the blink of an eye by a burst from a machine gun. The beasts that ran away, scared off by the gunshot, were nowhere to disrupt the corpses. Everyone was in the position they were when they were slaughtered. Worms were eating their flesh, but the tough composition of the wrists dried out, so it kept the bones attached in the suits they were in. Skeletons with clothes on! Judging by their clothes, they were mainly from Posavina and were lured into surrendering by leaflets thrown from airplanes. Parts of the leaflets

51 Filip Ajdačić (Lisa, 1908 – Pološnica, 1945), Gendarmerie Sergeant, during the war Sublieutenant and Commandant of the Montenegro Brigade of the Požega Corps of JVuO. After the war, he continued the guerilla fights in his area, until November 1945, when he was killed in a conflict with the members of OZN-a.

were sticking out of the pockets of some of them, and the words said: "The war is over. Your folks back home are already enjoying the blessings of peace... Abandon those who have misled you... Whoever turns himself in with this leaflet will be released home immediately..." Nothing showed more drastically than this sight the determination of the communists to use everything they could in battle, to gain authority, (...) Silently, with everyone in their own thoughts, each man for himself, we continued, captivated by this sight. Another small glade and the same scene of a few murdered again. Judging by their clothes, they weren't all from Posavina. (...) They had probably been surrounded, without ammunition and in a dead-end situation. Maybe hope is deceptive in such situations! It was certain that they weren't given the opportunity to see what happened to the others that surrendered..."

Summary

This work represents an attempt to present to the public the biographic depiction of Major Aleksandar Milošević and his view of the final days of the Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland. This officer, who had been in that army's command structure since 1941, left credible records of events he witnessed. Some of his records are, to this day, the only source for interpretation of some key events from the of JVuO's so-called Bosnian Golgotha in 1944–1945. Here we have Milošević's descriptions of the JVuO's condition in Šumadija, during their retreat in October of 1944, the conference of the commanders in Ivanjica on October 21, 1944 and their decision to head to Bosnia, the fighting with the Partisans and the JVuO's winter march through Eastern Bosnia. Milošević even provided us with a critical view of the movement he belonged to, before it fell apart in 1945, as well as a description of the pivotal battle at Zelengora on May 12–13 1945. This is why his memories represent one of the most important sources for studying the history of the Ravna Gora Movement, especially in its 1944/1945 transition period, which has the least preserved sources.

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Резиме

Немања Девић

Сећања Александра Милошевића – прилог истраживању слома Југословенске војске у отаџбини 1944–1945. године

Апстракт: Период од октобра 1944. до маја 1945. представља најмање истражени део историје Равногорског покрета и Југословенске војске у отаџбини. За то време, главнина ових снага прошла је кроз тзв. босанску голготу, где су доживели војни слом. Један од сведока ових догађаја, мајор Александар Милошевић, у својим мемоарским записима је описао повлачење ЈВуО кроз Босну и дао своје виђење узрока њеног пораза. Указујући на његову политичку биографију и дајући најважније одломке из његових мемоарских записа везане за догађаје 1944–1945, текст покушава да осветли једну од контроверзних и недовољно истражених епизода из Другог светског рата.

Кључне речи: Други светски рат, ЈВуО, грађански рат, мемоари, политичка емиграција

Рад представља покушај да се представи биографски медаљон мајора Александра Милошевића и његов поглед на последње дане Југословенске војске у отаџбини. Овај официр, који се од 1941. нашао у командној структури ЈВуО, оставио је веродостојне описе догађаја којих је био сведок. Неки од његових записа до данас су једини извор за тумачење појединих кључних догађаја из тзв. босанске голготе ЈВуО 1944–1945. године. Овде су пренети Милошевићеви описи стања ЈВуО у Шумадији у октобру 1944, конференција команданата у Ивањици 21. октобра 1944. и њихова одлука да крену пут Босне, борбе са партизанима и зимски марш ЈВуО кроз источну Босну. Милошевић је дао и критичку слику покрета којем је припадао пред расплет 1945, као и опис одсудне битке на Зеленгори 12–13. маја 1945. године. Зато његова сећања представљају један од важних извора за проучавање историје Равногорског покрета, посебно за период прелаза 1944/1945, о којем је сачувано и најмање архивских извора.