

Ovčara case
Trial for the war crimes against the war prisoners
War Crimes Chamber of the District Court in Belgrade, Serbia
Number of case: K.V. br.1/2003

Trial Chamber: Vesko Krstajić (the presiding judge), Gordana Božilović-Petrović (judge) and Vinka Beraha-Nikićević (judge).

Prosecutor: Deputy War Crimes Prosecutor Dušan Knežević.

Defendants: Miroљjub Vujović, Stanko Vujanović, Jovica Perić, Ivan Atanasijević, Predrag Mađžarac and Milan Vojnović, Serbs from Croatia.

Report: Nataša Kandić and Dragoljub Todorović, victims representatives

21 March 2005

At the beginning of his testimony, witness **Branislav Preljić** said that at the time of the fighting in Vukovar, he was a journalist of *Politika Ekspres*. In Preljić's words, his colleague Jovan Dulović had a permit to enter Vukovar, because he was a newspaper correspondent. The witness pointed out that Dulović, in November 1991, was asking about a persons with a driver's license, as he had to go to Vukovar, and he went with him. They stayed four or five days in Vukovar and they were housed in the home of the Pajić or Pejić family. Preljić then said that Dulović knew many people and volunteers and pointed out that, one morning, by car, they had gone to the hospital. Šljivančanin was there and he did not allow entry into the hospital. In his words, there were many people there, and members of YNA, and he saw the people leaving and entering the hospital. The witness then said Dulović had taken statements from the members of TD and the members of YNA and added that, these days, in Vukovar, there were all kinds of rumors. One morning, maybe two days after the visit to the hospital, Dulović spoke with the people and, suddenly, he started crying and said: "Something terrible has happened at a certain Ovčara." In the words of the witness, he had learned about the events at Ovčara from the media because those days, in Vukovar, there were no talks, nor many details, about what had happened there. The witness Preljić pointed out that he remembered Dulić talking with some people, but he was sitting at the distance of two meters and did not hear the conversation. The witness was informed that Dulović had said that he had talked about the events at Ovčara at captain Radić's headquarters which was situated in a house across the road from the house they were stationed in and that a certain volunteer, a woman named Dragica, had told him and Dulović many details about the events. Thereafter, witness Preljić stated that he remembered how, in the house across the road, there gathered both the volunteers and the soldiers, that there were stories from the front line, but that he did not remember anybody talking about Ovčara. He remembered Dulović talking with a woman in uniform, that he had used his notebook, but he did not remember the details as he had not heard the conversation. The witness stated that he did not understand how something like this could have happened at Ovčara in the presence of YNA and added that he could not believe something like this. In his words, he had heard a comment in Radić's headquarters "What did they do there!" Preljić pointed out that the only thing he remembered from the time was Stanko who used to wear a brimmed hat and in whose house Radić's headquarters were stationed. However, the witness failed to recognize defendant Vujanović. The witness then said that he remembered the nickname, Štuka, and that he thought that Dulović had introduced him to that young man who, in his opinion, was in a group of volunteers. At the end, witness pointed out that he also remembered Stanko's wife, defendant Nada Kalaba who, in his words, did not carry arms.

At the beginning of his testimony, witness **Tomislav Peternek** said that it was not fitting to call

journalists as witnesses, that this time he had come voluntarily, but he added that the next time he would not honor the summons and would come only if forced to do so. The witness Peternek stated that, luckily, he had not been with Dulović. He was a photographer and he did not listen to the stories, he only took pictures. He pointed out that, on 18 November 1991, together with Novković from *Politika*, he had gone to Ovčara since he had learned that negotiations concerning surrender were conducted. There, on the right, they saw a hangar, while on the left there were negotiations concerning the surrender. Later on the witness presented a photograph he had taken there showing a column of people and the surrender of arms. The witness then pointed out that he was the first to enter the hospital where he took a number of photos and added that he had spent the whole morning there. In his words, he had entered the hospital together with Živković and had seen rather many officers and soldiers. He had been in Vukovar from the beginning of the fighting and learned the nicknames of many combatants. He quoted the nicknames: Đani, Kina, Kameni, Ceca, Topola and Cetinje. In his words, the volunteer units were under the command of the Guards brigade and he has their photographs in his documentation. When he was shown Dulović's statement that he and the witness had slept together in a house and that Topola had told them there what had happened the previous night at Ovčara, witness Peternek said that that was a lie and that they did not speak about the events at Ovčara in his presence. Peternek refused to hand over the photographs of the combatants he had taken so they could be recorded by a documentation camera and invited the presiding judge to his studio and take a look at the photos. The reason for this, the witness said, was the fact that for him the persons in the photographs were national heroes. However, later on Peternek agreed for some of the photographs to be presented. Continuing his testimony, Peternek pointed out that he knew Štuka who was an active soldier of the YNA Guards brigade. Asked about the people from Vukovar he had known at the time, Peternek said that he knew Kameni, Stanko and his wife Nada, Miroљjub Vujović and Katić. He then pointed out that he had no knowledge about the events at Ovčara and added that he had first heard something about the events at Ovčara at the time of Klajn, but he never learned who was murdered nor who had committed the murder. In his words, there was no feud between him and Jovan Dulović but he did not like anybody adding to his public image at the expense of somebody else. At the end, Peternek pointed out that he was against the use of his photographs until it had been made clear whether a journalist must testify or not.