

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

28 April 2004

Witness Slobodan Ciganović said that he would stick by what he had said in the investigation. In his words, he was mobilized and sent to a unit where his superior was Jovica Kresojević. The witness Ciganović pointed out that his task was guard duty and added that at the time the crime at Ovčara had been committed he did not drive the Ult bulldozer. The witness then said that of all the indicted persons he knew Vujović by sight, Mađžarac and Vujanović. He said he did not believe that TD existed from the moment a YNA Guards brigade arrived to Vukovar. Together with Milan Vojnović he went to Ovčara to get the Ult bulldozer and picked it up after a month from the then director Luka. He said he did not know what the Ult bulldozer was used for at Ovčara and added that he had learned about the shooting that had been performed there only a month or two after the fall of Vukovar. When he was shown a part of the statement from the investigation where he had said that the defendants Vujović and Vujanović had been the commanders of TD, witness Ciganović said that he had not given such a statement.

In the beginning, witness Dragan Cvijanović pointed out that he knew all the indicted persons and that he was related to the defendants Vujović and Mađžarac, and, as there were no grounds for him to be excused from the duty of a witness, because of his kinship with the defendants, his questioning began. The witness Cvijanović said that he had been wounded at the very beginning of the combat activities, which is why he had gone to Serbia and had returned to Vukovar only on 19 November, a day after the end of the fighting. In his words, there did not exist TD Vukovar or TD Petrova Gora. The witness said that he had gone to Ovčara on 19 November, around 18:00 or 19:00 hours and that he had spent about half an hour there, looking for the members of his family. In front of the entrance to the hangar he saw a military vehicle, a Pinzgauer or an armored combat vehicle, and one or two members of the military police, and in the hangar itself, a table and a large number of people. Witness Cvijanović pointed out that there were soldiers in different uniforms and added that he, too, had a uniform and was armed. The witness then said that among the prisoners of war in the hangar he had seen Siniša Veber and Šindilj and that he had, immediately after his talk with them, gone away. Veber and Šindilj had not been injured, but he did not remember the way they had been dressed. He denied the part of the statement given to the investigative judge where he had said that the persons he had spoken with had been civilians and that some of the prisoners had bandages on their heads. He pointed

out that he had not seen any of the defendants, nor the tractor, and that he had heard about the shooting only after half a year or a year.

Witness Darko Fot stated that he knew all the defendants. In his words, during the combat activities in Vukovar, he had been the commander of the 3rd platoon of the 4th Vukovar company whose commanding officer had been his brother Siniša. The witness said that the company had some 110 persons and added that it had been a part of TD of Vukovar headed by Duško Jakšić and had been under the command of YNA. The remaining companies, in the words of Fot, were led by the late Pejić, Miroљjub Vujović and Stanko Vujanović, while, later on, a unit of volunteers of the Serbian Radical Party was formed and was commanded by Milan Lančuzanin, aka Kameni. Fot then said that on 18 November he had been at Velepromet where there were a lot of people and children, rescued from the cellars. The prisoners were across the street, at the cooperative, and some people from the hospital were among them. He saw Karlo Crk and spoke with him. The witness pointed out that men had been separated from women, that they had been searched for arms, that they had been questioned concerning their participation in the crimes so as to determine who was to be released and who was to be sent to the prison in Sremska Mitrovica. In his words, major Šljivančanin had said that all of them should be imprisoned, investigated and tried the way it was done in Nuremberg so that a camera could record what had happened in the town.

Witness Fot pointed out that, after the cessation of hostilities, he had found at Velepromet a copy of Mrkšić's order containing his appointment to the position of deputy commander of the municipal headquarters of civilian affairs and training and the appointment of Miroљjub Vujović to the position of the commander and Stanko Vujanović to the position of the chief of staff of Vukovar TD. At the end, the witness said that he had not been at Ovčara and that he had, later, heard about the shooting of the prisoners of war carried out there.

Witness Dragan Dukić said that he knew no one of the defendants and added that he had been wounded after three days and took no part in any other combat activities.

In the beginning, witness **Borislav Bogunović** said that he knew some of the defendants. In his words, he had been, from the end of June or the beginning of July 1991, the Minister of the Interior in the Government of the Serbian Autonomous Area Krajina whose president had been Goran Hadžić. Witness Bogunović pointed out that TD had existed, that at the beginning it had been self-organized, and that later on, at the meetings, its leaders had been elected. With the coming of YNA to the area of Vukovar in September 1991 TD was under the authority of YNA and its commander at that time had been Dušan Jakšić. The witness said that he had been present at the meeting of the Government of the Serbian Autonomous Area Krajina which took place at Velepromet but he pointed out that it had been only a visit to Vukovar which lasted for an hour. In his words, it was then announced that Jakšić and Antić were no more members of TD and that the positions of the commander and the deputy commander were to be filled with Miroљjub Vujović and Stanko Vujanović respectively. Bogunović added that the decision was brought by major Šljivančanin who attended the meeting for a short time. As far as the witness remembers, the meeting was held on 19 November and was attended by Goran Hadžić, Miodrag Crnogorac, Slavko Dokmanović, Vojin Šuša. Also present was Željko Ražnatović, aka Arkan. The witness said that at the moment of their coming to Velepromet, five or six civilian buses were leaving Velepromet. At the end of his testimony, the witness pointed out that suggestions were heard at

the meeting for the war crimes trials for the crimes committed in Vukovar to be conducted on the territory of Slavonija and Baranja, but the representatives of YNA rejected the suggestions.

Witness Dušan Jakšić pointed out that he knew the defendants. In his words, with the outbreak of hostilities in Vukovar, the local inhabitants of the Serb nationality organized themselves in the part of Vukovar known as Petrova Gora. Witness Jakšić pointed out that TD had existed even before the war and that he himself had been the head of its security. Before the liberation of the barracks Mile Uzelac established the headquarters of TD under the authority of YNA. In his words, there had been 170 members in the unit, and the citizens of Vukovar decided for him to be the commander of TD. In the beginning there were three companies while later on the fourth one was established. The first, most numerous company was commanded by Miroljub Vujović, the second by Stanko Vujanović and the third by Siniša Fot. From 2 October, TD was under the authority of YNA Guards brigade and from that date on he received orders directly from the command headquarters of the Operations Group Jug. TD activities were coordinated with the activities of the 1st storm troopers detachment of YNA whose commander was major Tešić and his deputy Sijaković. The witness stated that before the combat activities were ended, at the command headquarters of the storm troopers detachment, major Šljivančanin had decided for Miroljub Vujović to become the commander of TD of Vukovar. At the end of his testimony, witness Jakšić pointed out that he had not seen the prisoners of war from the Vukovar hospital as he had not been there, and added that he had heard about the shooting at Ovčara later on.